

SPIRITUALITY AND CHRISTIAN MISSION:
A JOURNEY OF THE YOUNGNAK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SEOUL, KOREA

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Today, I'd like to talk about some dynamic components of missions. What is a true dynamic component in missions? What does it really mean? Let us try to find some of them by looking at Apostle Paul's first journey in Asia Minor and also let's see if we can find a dynamic component in the ministry of Rev. Han, Kyung Chik who was a pioneer of Church Planting in Korea. Lastly, I'd like to share my personal ideas about mission and some of my own dynamic components in missions.

I. The Dynamic Components in Missions of Apostle Paul

Let us first look at the dynamic components of Apostle Paul. As all of us know, he was one of the most influential characters in Christianity. Some exaggerate Paul's great influence in Christianity by saying, "Christianity, which we refer to as the religion of Christ, is seen more as the religion of Paul." It simply means nothing more than trying to say that Paul's influence was beyond measure. When you carefully look at the Book of Acts, c. 9: v. 1 ~ v. 12; c. 22; and c. 26, you can see the story of Paul's conversion which is repeated three times in the text. The first recording was written himself to deliver his own personal experience, but the other two were confessions that he shared by word of mouth. As we can see his story being recorded three separate times, it is obvious that the dynamic components which occurred to continue missions are found in these three stories. The testimonies by Apostle Paul were inspired by three things. They are, first, his personal assurance of the Gospel through repentance. Secondly, he received a vision. Thirdly, he became more passionate than ever before.

Apostle Paul through his conversion came to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The very first event was to meet Jesus Christ. This was the one he had been persecuting himself. He had never thought that he would actually meet Jesus Christ, but he actually came to know him personally. What a shocking event for Paul to meet the man who he had been persecuting and hating as an enemy. The next thing Paul realized was that he was completely wrong to consider himself as the most righteous. In verse 4, he confessed that he fell down on the ground. In verse 9, it is written that he didn't eat or slept for 3 days. In that period of time Paul was repenting. In 1 John 1:9, it is written that if we confess our sins, he gives us grace and he forgives our sins. In verse 17, it talks about the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Further if you have assurance of forgiveness, then the Holy Spirit will be present and active. Then one will experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit. To put this into other words, when one repents of his sins, he or she experiences the grace of forgiveness, and then receives the fullness of God. When you are sure about the grace of forgiveness, you will realize that God has forgiven your sins on the cross and you will accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of your life. As Apostle Paul mentioned several times in his epistles, he completely experienced that he was a new creature through Jesus Christ.

Apostle Paul's baptism by Ananias of Damascus is a proof that he had been converted objectively. His knowledge of Jesus Christ was a very important fact which brought Paul's assurance of the Gospel. A medical doctor can work to heal patients with his or her medical knowledge. A doctor becomes more even more confident as he/she receive clinical training and experiences of patients who are healed. However a doctor can still be involved in healing

patients even if they don't have a full knowledge and amount of experience that will bring a deeper assurance of their profession.

Likewise a pastor can be involved in the spiritual care of their people. He/she can teach biblical knowledge and theology and it will have an impact on the recipient. However without their own personal assurance through their own experience of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the pastor will not be a witness of the Gospel. When a pastor delivers the Gospel without personal assurance, there can't be a spiritual change or healing. This is how the Apostle Paul was able to start his mission. Again, the starting of his mission points to a full assurance of the Gospel and a conviction that Jesus Christ is his own personal Lord and Savior.

Secondly, the Apostle Paul was able receive a vision through the following event. It is written in verse 15, that Jesus clearly spoke through Ananias as to what kind of vision and ministry Saul would have. By following the vision that was given by Christ, he uniquely witnessed the Gospel to the gentiles in Antioch and Asia Minor. He also traveled to Macedonia as you can see in verse 16. He, then, went across Europe to do missions. When you look at Acts chapter 19, it is not too difficult to know that Rome was his final destination. The other Apostles also reached out to the gentiles, but they could not have imagined witnessing in Rome or across Europe. Through Paul's vision for the gentile world, you and I have faith in Jesus Christ. We became the fruits of his contributions to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, Apostle Paul was able to have passion in missions through his assurance of Jesus Christ and the Gospel. In verse 16, Jesus told what kind of sufferings Paul would have to face in the upcoming future. Similar to the size of the regions that Paul worked to spread the Gospel, he also took that size of enormous amounts of suffering. In the Book of Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 23, he talked about the sufferings he experienced. He was beaten, sent to prison, starved after shipwreck. He experienced various kinds of suffering. However, such suffering did not stop him from continuing his mission, no matter how severe his sufferings were.

Why did he take all those sufferings? It's because he had a passion for his mission. His assurance of Jesus Christ and the Gospel had started a fire in his heart. He couldn't stop doing what he was doing. There may have been a fear that he would be cursed if he did nothing for Christ. The dynamic component for Paul was his assurance of the Gospel, and it was the assurance that brought his passion for his mission. Through Paul's life time, he was able to personally witness so many people in so many different countries who became followers of Jesus Christ.

II. Dynamic Components in Missions of Rev. Han, Kyung Chik (1902~2000)

I, secondly, would like to tell you about the dynamic components in missions by Rev. Han, Kyung Chik. He was the founder of Young Nak Presbyterian Church, where I am now serving. He dedicated his whole life to minister from the church. However, his ministry is not limited to one or two particular churches. His ministry had an impact on all the churches throughout Korea. Many Christians in Korea today still refers to him as the model pastor of Korea. Rev. Han was born in 1902, and he passed away in 2000. He actually majored in Science as a young university student. One day during summer break, he experienced a growth process of one's assurance of faith. He was at a missionary resort on the beach. He was serving as a secretary for an American missionary. At that time, Korea was under Japanese occupation, and he was studying science so that he could become a successful person and make a contribution to his nation. However, at the beach, he came to the realization that science would not make a radical change. It was only the Gospel that would transform a person entirely. He became assured that science would not save his country from misery, but that the Gospel could. That is why he decided he would study theology. After he graduated from college in Korea he was able to go to the states to study. He studied

sociology in Kansas at Emporia State University and then moved on to study theology and he graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1928. When he was about to start his doctorate at Yale University, he developed the symptoms of tuberculosis. At that time Tuberculosis was a fatal disease which could not be healed. After three years of suffering with Tuberculosis, God called him once again. In Rev. Han's prayer, he confessed his desire to achieve success as a graduate from the doctoral course, but he made a vow that he wanted to go back to minister in Korea. He pleaded with God to extend his life for three more years by allowing him to return to Korea. These two experiences became very important dynamic components to continue his mission after he returned to Korea. He carried his ministry back to Korea with a burning passion.

Rev. Han, first, was persecuted in his ministry because Korea was still under the Japanese occupation. Japan had engaged in a war with the US. Because Rev. Han had studied in the US it brought him many disadvantages. He could not get approval from the Japanese Government to become a professor to teach at Soongsil University which was his mother school. Due to pastoral ministry in Sinuijoo City, he was investigated by the Japanese police officers and after severe torture they put him in prison. During the war in 1942, the Japanese Government finally forced him to resign as a pastor forcing him out of the church ministry. Therefore, he ministered for three years until the war was finished in a welfare facility called Borin-won for orphans and widows. After the Japanese's surrender in 1945, the communists in North Korea governed the northern part of Korea where Sinuijoo was located. Many church leaders including Rev. Han were arrested, oppressed, and again persecuted. Rev. Han had to flee from persecution and go to South Korea.

This is when Rev. Han planted Young Nak Presbyterian Church. In the midst of enormous physical sufferings, he kept his passion in ministry. He also ministered in this new church with great vision. Some key elements of Rev. Han's vision were evangelism, education, and service under the theme of evangelizing the nation. He was able to help plant about 600 churches in South Korea. In a young, under advanced country Rev. Han helped as a pioneer to contribute service to the community. Young Nak Church established and still runs non-profit organizations and facilities for orphans, the disabled, widows, and the elderly people. Further, he focused on the education for the young. He built many schools from secondary schools to universities. Presently our church operates nine schools. Rev. Han continued to emphasis evangelism. One of the fruits was missions in the military. Korea required young men to serve three years in their military duties; therefore every man had to go into the military. So the evangelism mission in the military became a really important field. Under the purpose of evangelizing the whole entire Korean nation, our church continues mission strategically through church planting, relief facilities and missions in schools and military.

Another noticeable mission was Rev. Han's vision of missions in North Korea. Young Nak Church started to put more emphasis on missions in North Korea in 1990. Rev. Han won the Templeton Freedom Award in 1992. That award is given to individuals who contribute to the human race through religious activities. Several people of note such as, Billy Graham, Mother Teresa, Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, and others have received this award. The prize was equivalent to nearly one million US dollars, and Rev. Han donated it to missions in North Korea.

When he made the church mission slogan he stated it to be, "Thirty Million People to Christ." At that time, the whole population of Korea was thirty million and his vision was to see the whole nation brought to Christ. Next, he made another slogan saying, "Fifty Million People to Christ." You see he realized that the total population of both North and South Korea was fifty million. Even though at that time there were only one million and five hundred thousand Christians in Korea Rev. Han had a vision. It seemed at that time to be an unbelievable slogan. However, we now have ten million Christians in South Korea.

Rev. Han was the true founder of churches in Korea. Even at the moment of his retirement, he planned another vision to evangelize the entire continent of Asia by

establishing the Asian Church Development Foundation. The dynamic component which enabled Rev. Han to continue to minister with passion throughout the rest of his life was having the assurance of the Gospel.

III. The Dynamic Components of My Ministry.

Lastly, I'd like to share my stories. I was a Christian born into a Christian family. My Father was also a Pastor, so I grew up in the church. I really think it was a real blessing in my life. I participated in the choir, and volunteered as a Sunday school teacher. I was really happy with my faith and church life. However, I experienced a turning point when winter vacation in my first year of high school was about to finish. I went to a revival service, and the guest pastor delivered a powerful sermon on repentance. Many people had repented and they shared how their lives had been changed. However, I sat there thinking that I didn't have any sins to repent. I was so sure that I was living as a good example to other fellow students, and I didn't go anywhere, but school. I just simply thought that people who repented had committed really terrible sins. Surrounded by so many people who had repented, I became curious and started asking them how they were able to come to repentance. A man told me to open up the bible and look through the Ten Commandments. I still felt I had nothing to repent, but I felt that I must need to because almost everyone there had repented. So, I looked at the Ten Commandments to see whether or not I had any sins to repent. I started to look at the first commandment all the way to the last one, but I was staying far away from others for a possibility of being embarrassed. I didn't want my sins to be exposed to anybody. I looked at each commandment carefully. Yet, I couldn't find any sin. After repeatedly reading them several times over and over I started to think about my sins. The Holy Spirit brought to mind sins that I had never want to recall. I wanted to hide them and I certainly didn't want to expose them. I just wanted to be ignorant of my sins. I rationalized with myself to believe that those were sins that others were also doing as well. When I tried to hide my sins, God showed me my sins in a vision. I could no longer hide them or deny them. He vividly brought my sins to my clear memory in a vision. It was like God had the best database. I wanted to think that I was a righteous person. It was a moment that I felt the most embarrassment as I realized that I was an awful sinner.

At that moment I confessed my sins with my own lips, I also realized that now I had the assurance that my sins were forgiven. I also became sure that I am a new creature and I have a new life in Christ. I am confident that Jesus Christ is my personal Savior and the Lord of my life. After that experience, I continued to serve my church doing the same ministry, but I realized that I had been serving with my own diligence and for my own satisfaction. Now, I could serve with a clear assurance of Jesus Christ, I had a passion and I was filled with thanksgiving in my heart before God.

Today, I also have a vision to evangelize Koreans. I am still working to plant more churches and to help nurture churches. I am serving for missions in schools, military, and in local communities. North Korea has always been our key interest and challenge. More than thirteen thousand people have escaped North Korea and have come to the South. They are a target of our missions. Some who have come here are studying theology. Among them some are being nurtured to serve as the next leaders of missions in North Korea. The people from North Korea usually find it hard to adopt the democratic and capitalistic way of the society in the South, so we are praying for them and trying to help them find jobs. We also have a bible study group and trying to spiritually nurture people from North Korea. The difference of their ideas and verbal expressions make it difficult to feel comfortable joining existing bible study groups. We also send supplies and necessary aid to help people in North Korea. The current policy in our church is to venture help to children in North Korea only through goods and supplies without sending cash donations.

My personal dynamic component in missions is also my assurance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I have been saved in the midst of sin. I am assured that Jesus Christ is my personal Savior and the Lord of my life. When you have these assurances, your passion for witnessing the Gospel, overflows with joy. Then, you will have a vision to share the Gospel with someone.

I desire to also see the young generation to find an assurance of the Gospel, and that it starts up like a fire in their vision and a passion in their soul to continue in missions.

