



Missionaries and Colonialism in Zambia

A Comparative Approach to Nineteenth Century British and Contemporary Korean Missionaries

Hyunwoo Koo

Harvard University, Massachusetts, United State

hyunwoo_koo@mail.harvard.edu

Abstract

There are about ten Korean missionaries in Zambia, which is Christianized since experiencing colonial era under Western Christians. This situation brings a question regarding to their uniqueness compare to the nineteenth-century-British missionaries: how are these Korean missionaries distinct from Western evangelists and what has shaped this difference? To answer the question, this paper compares several groups of missionaries by consulting historical records, established literature, and interviews produced by author. Especially, voices from the Korean missionaries in Zambia reveal the distinctiveness of themselves as the people who share the experience of living under colonial rule, and suggest their role within Zambian Christianity and society.

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Introduction

In 1991, Frederick Chiluba declared, “Zambia is a Christian nation.”¹ Indeed, a number of reliable statistics show that at least eighty percent (80%) of contemporary Zambians claim to be Christians.² Also, according to historical studies of Zambian religions, Zambian culture and society has been Christianized since experiencing colonial era under Western Christians.

¹ David M. Gordon, *Invisible Agents: Spirits in Central African History* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012), 181. For detailed discussion on the role of Christianity in Chiluba’s government and Zambian society, see Gordon, *Invisible Agents*, 178–98; Isabel Apawo Phiri, “President Fredrick J. T. Chiluba of Zambia: the Christian Nation and Democracy,” *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33, no. 4 (2003).

² *World Christian Encyclopedia* says eighty-two point four percent (82.4%) of Zambians claimed to be Christians in 2000 (David Barrett, George T. Kurian, and Todd M. Johnson, eds., *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Surveys of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, vol. 1 [New York: Oxford University Press, 2001], 818) and the *Atlas of Global Christianity* says that in 2010, over eighty-five percent (85.3%) of Zambians were Christians (Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, eds., *Atlas of Global Christianity: 1910–2010* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009], 116). *The Pew Research* has the most radical number, claiming that in 2010, ninety-seven percent (97.5%) of Zambians considered themselves as Christians (“Global Christianity,” Pew Research: Religion and Public Life Project, last modified December 1, 2014, accessed March 25, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/interactives/global-christianity>). According to the same study, sixty-seven point eight percentages (67.8%) of Zambians engaged in the Protestant churches, and this number excludes the Roman Catholics and Other (or marginalized) Christians.

Nonetheless, about ten Korean missionaries and their families have devoted their efforts to propagate their religion in Zambia. What, then, has made them to go to this heavily-Christianized nation? What aspect, characteristic, or context leads them to expect a different outcome than their predecessors, the British evangelists in the nineteenth century? In other words, how are these Korean missionaries distinct from Western evangelists and what has shaped this difference?

One possible answer that I want to highlight in this paper is the attitude, experience, and actions of those two groups with respect to colonialism. It is common knowledge that early modern colonial powers and Christian missionaries were engaged with each other both intentionally and unintentionally, actively and inactively, directly and indirectly. Thus, William Roger Louis lists, in his introduction to the fourth volume of *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, the role of missionaries as one of the most important seven factors of British colonialism.³ It is true that the paradigm of colonialism is not the only tool with which to read Christian mission history, and it is dangerous to generalize missionaries as the advocates of colonialism and Western imperialism without deep and careful study. Nevertheless, this comparative and historical survey that pays close attention to the relation between Christianity and colonial forces is meaningful because the study reveals the role of Western missionaries and their religion in colonial Zambia and Korea. It is also important since the study suggests a valid approach to understanding contemporary missionaries in Central and Southern Africa from the global South, including Korea, which also experienced a colonial era.

This paper compares the nature of several groups of missionaries by consulting historical records and established literature. First, I will suggest a literature review of British missionaries and colonialism in Zambia. Here, I will include voices from both anthropologists and historians, Westerners and Africans in order to allow a diversified approach. Then, I will conduct a historical overview of Christianity in colonial Korea. In this part, I will reveal what Christianity was for Koreans by focusing on Korean Protestants' and American missionaries' reaction to Japanese Empire. The last part of this paper will consist of interviews with Korean missionaries in Zambia, the descendants of those who survived in colonial Korea. Their comments will demonstrate how they understand the colonial enterprise in Zambia and how they connect their identity to where they have devoted their lives. This paper is not willing to encompass all Western missionaries in

³ Judith M. Brown and William Roger Louis, eds., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, vol. 4: *The Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 17–18.

Zambia and Korea. This paper does not aim to criticize a specific group of evangelists, nor does it argue that foreign missionaries, including Koreans, are necessary for Zambians. The primary goal of this paper, however, is to highlight the uniqueness of Korean missionaries in Zambia, as the people who share the experience of living under colonial rule, and to suggest their role within Zambian Christianity and society.

Discussion and Result

British Missionaries and Colonialism in Zambia

It is not difficult to encounter historical and anthropological critiques that name nineteenth and twentieth British missionaries in sub-Saharan Africa as *cultural imperialists*. For example, William R. Hutchison, one of the historians who have led the discourse, argues that the teachings and activities of missionaries were used as theological and moral justifications by colonial forces.⁴ Anthropologists John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff also claim that British missionaries colonized the mentality and spirituality of Africans so that political colonization would be expedited.⁵ According to Andrew Porter, the major arguments of those wide-spread critiques can be summarized as: “Missions were the van of Europe’s expansion.”⁶ Benjamin C. Ray views this issue of connection of the evangelists to colonial officers by focusing on the missionaries’ benefit: “Only when European colonialism became firmly rooted in sub-Saharan Africa in the late nineteenth century did Christian missionaries ... succeed in making large numbers of converts. ... [T]he missionaries were partners with the Western political and economical forces.”⁷ Ray continues his argument by insisting that eradication of traditional beliefs and rituals was an urgent task for both the colonial government and missionaries. According to his explanation, African Traditional Religion (ATR) was a threat for political institutions connected to the political power of local chiefs; for missionaries, African religionists were their rivals in religious

⁴ William R. Hutchison, “A Moral Equivant for Imperialism: Americans and the Promotion of ‘Christian Civilization,’ 1880–1920,” in *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era: 1880–1920: Papers from the Durham Consultation, 1981*, eds. William R. Hutchison and Torben Christensen (Aarhus, Denmark: Christensens Bogtrykkeri, 1983), 174.

⁵ Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. 1: *Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 198–251.

⁶ Andrew Porter, “‘Cultural Imperialism’ and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780–1914,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 25, no. 3 (September 1997): 367.

⁷ Benjamin C. Ray, *African Religions: Symbols, Rituals, and Community* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2000), 170.

competitions.⁸ Allan H. Anderson analyzes how a part of African Christians reacted to Western colonialism and the missionaries who were attached to it. He says that one of the major causes of the rise of African Independent / Indigenous / Initiated churches (AICs) was Africans' religious expression of opposition to both Western colonial institutions and mission churches.⁹

However, it is invalid to simply generalize Western missionaries as colonialists. Although the dominant scholarship has tended to view missionaries as a component of the European colonial package, "[t]he range of models in the relationship between missionaries and the early colonial state remained," as Adrian Hastings points out.¹⁰ In fact, according to Dana Robert, "the icy grip of the 'colonial paradigm' over mission history began to thaw" in the 1990s.¹¹ Robert also opens a significant discussion of missionaries' *positive* influence on political situations in Africa by saying: "Did modern colonialism 'convert' the missionaries, or did the missionaries 'convert' colonialism?"¹² Comaroff and Comaroff's work also implies the danger of a simplified understanding of Christianity and colonialism. Although they criticize Western missionaries' collusion with colonial forces, Comaroff and Comaroff consider that some core parts of Christian teaching speak to social and political justice. Thus, when they criticize the pro-colonial activities of missionaries in nineteenth-century-South Africa, Comaroff and Comaroff also provide an image of Christian revelation and revolution: "The ultimate power of Christianity ... is enshrined in the fact that it took many decades for blacks to cast aside the language and ideology of the mission; to move, that is, from revelation to revolution."¹³ Thus, it becomes obvious that we need to pay careful attention to avoid overgeneralizations.

For a closer look, I would like to consult the literature anchored in the history of Zambian Christianity in particular. First, similar to the broader discussion of sub-Saharan Africa, it has been a generally accepted argument for decades that the nineteenth-century British missionaries in Zambia were connected to colonial power. Although most missionaries' fundamental motivation was to Christianize Zambians, they had an additional role expected by the colonial

⁸ Benjamin C. Ray, *African Religions...*, 173.

⁹ Allan H. Anderson, *African Reformation: African Initiated Christianity in the 20th Century* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2001), 24–29.

¹⁰ Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa: 1450–1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 428.

¹¹ Dana Robert, Introduction to *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914*, by Dana Robert (Grand Rapid, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), 2.

¹² Dana Robert, Introduction to *Converting Colonialism...*, 20.

¹³ Comaroff and Comaroff, "Christianity and colonialism in South Africa," 18.

enterprise. Historian David M. Gordon presents a radical argument in his monograph on the history of Zambian spirituality and politics:

There is a widely held misconception that Christianity in Africa inspired peace, while colonialism caused trauma and violence. According to this idea, the violence and disruption caused by Christianity and Christian missionaries were due to their role as agents of colonialism; the missionaries were not “true” Christians. To the contrary, as in other periods in the history of Christianity, Christian spiritual beliefs engaged with violent histories, and sometimes inspired violence. Christian spirits could be violent agents.¹⁴

Here, Gordon not only criticizes the missionaries’ association with colonialism, but also denounces the violent nature of Christianity. For Gordon, the religion itself conducted violence in Zambia proactively unlike Comaroff and Comaroff who propose that Christian traditions, in part, denounce violence.

It is too simplistic to suggest that all Christians in Zambia were allied to colonialism. R. Drew Smith argues that there was a range of responses to the colonial state. He says, “While the historic, Protestant mission churches have been fairly reliable allies of the state, the Catholics ... have proven to be a much more difficult political challenge.”¹⁵ Comaroff and Comaroff’s notion of Western missionaries’ anti-colonial lessons also imply the danger of a simplified understanding of Christianity and colonialism. Although they criticize Western missionaries’ collusion with colonial forces, the anthropologists consider that some core parts of Christian teachings speak to social and political justice, unlike Gordon who regards that Christianity itself has been pro-violent and pro-imperialistic. Thus, when they criticize pro-colonial activities of missionaries in nineteenth-century South Africa, Comaroff and Comaroff provide an image of Christian revelation and revolution: “The ultimate power of Christianity ... is enshrined in the fact that it took many decades for blacks to cast aside the language and ideology of the mission; to move, that is, from revelation to revolution.”¹⁶ According to David Maxwell, the history of Zambian Christianity contains an example of the move from revelation to revolution in the nineteenth century:

Anti-colonialism did not necessarily engender opposition to ideals and principles of Western institutions, including Christianity. Indeed a great deal of anti-colonialism was based on the acceptance of these ideals and principles, accompanied by an insistence that conformity with them indicated a level of progress that qualified the African elites the right to govern their own nation-states. ... It was hardly surprising that African nationalism drew upon evangelical language. In Northern Rhodesia [now Zambia] in

¹⁴ Gordon, *Invisible Agents*, 14.

¹⁵ R. Drew Smith, “Missionaries, Church Movements, and the Shifting Religious Significance of the State in Zambia,” *Journal of Church and State* 41, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 525.

¹⁶ Comaroff and Comaroff, “Christianity and colonialism in South Africa,” 18.

March 1953 Harry Nkumbula [1916–1983], an ex-mission teacher, now African Methodist Episcopal Church member, publicly burned seven pages of the White Paper outlining plans for federation in the presence of a number of chiefs and a large crowd after singing ‘O God our Help in Ages Past.’¹⁷

Although Christianity had a role within African nationalist movements, this example from a Rhosadian / Zambian leader does not show how British missionaries reacted to colonialism and nationalism in the 1950s. What, then, was their stance? John Stuart’s study successfully reveals this issue. He states that missionaries were aware of the movements and hoped to participate in the nationalists’ cause.¹⁸ However, many of them hesitated to actively become involved since they had to take account of the colonial officials and British politicians before delving into this risky group.¹⁹ Therefore, according to Robert Rotberg’s classic work, Zambian nationalists needed to leave or reject mission churches even though many of them were trained by Western missionaries.²⁰ Stuart does indicate that some of the missionaries realized and admitted the fault of the colonial rule over Zambia in the mid-1950s, and actively enrolled in the independence movements.²¹ Nevertheless, general attitudes of Zambians toward British missionaries were not positive. We can sense this in Roland Oliver’s voice presented in Stuart’s work:

Possibly, the Anglican Church came off worst, as being most closely associated with the ruling power; but it would be no good for Presbyterians to plead that they were Scottish nationalists, or Methodists that they abhorred the Establishment – in African eyes, all alike were identified with those who bore rule.²²

For Zambians, British Christianity was the object of African “suspicion and contempt.”²³ An artifact displayed in the Livingston Museum also reflects this emotion that Zambians have had toward Western missionaries. In the picture, a man is holding the Bible in one hand and a gun in

¹⁷ David Maxwell, “Decolonization,” in *Missions and Empire*, ed. Norman Etherington (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 298.

¹⁸ John Stuart, “‘Speaking for the Unvoiced’? British Missionaries and Aspects of African Nationalism, 1949–1959,” in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 192.

¹⁹ John Stuart, “‘Speaking for the Unvoiced’...”, 184–85.

²⁰ Robert I. Rotberg, *Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia, 1880–1924* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 147.

²¹ Stuart, “‘Speaking for the Unvoiced’? British Missionaries and Aspects of African Nationalism, 1949–1959,” 193.

²² Church Missionary Society Afg O16/1, Conference of British Missionary Societies Africa Committee minutes excerpts, 28 Nov. 1958, cited in “‘Speaking for the Unvoiced’? British Missionaries and Aspects of African Nationalism, 1949–1959,” by John Stuart, in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 193.

²³ *Ibid.*

the other. Though a single artwork does not represent the whole of Zambian Christianity, this illustration in the museum named after David Livingstone (1813–1873), a pioneer missionary in sub-Saharan Africa, does reflect a common image of Western missionaries in Zambian society.



Picture 1. The Double Face of Colonialism
The Colonialism Collection,
Livingston Museum, Livingston, Zambia
Photo: Seung Jung

Jacob K. Olupona claims that “[t]o say that this new wave of missionaries [late eighteenth century and nineteenth century British missionaries] were not officially an organ of the [colonial] state is not to say that they were without ulterior motives.”²⁴ Still, it is a complex task to reveal nineteenth-century-British missionaries’ concealed motivation. In other words, it is particularly difficult to figure out if they had political, cultural, and / or religious imperialism underneath their evangelical slogan. However, as Jehu Hanciles remarks, the fact that Western missionary movement “largely coincided with the expansion (and termination) of Western colonialism” can hardly be denied.²⁵ Even though a part of the missionaries can be argued as anti-colonialist figures, many British Christians in Zambia engaged with or acted as part of the colonial enterprise in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Like many other historical studies, this paper upholds the meaning of this historical investigation because it can be connected to the contemporary world. A recent publication by Kapya Kaoma, a Zambian scholar, successfully

²⁴ Jacob K. Olupona, *African Religions: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 97–98.

²⁵ Jehu Hanciles, *Euthanasia of a Mission: African Church Autonomy in a Colonial Context* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 1.

discloses the continuing issue of colonialism in Zambian society, which was passed down by the missionaries who resided in the land a hundred years ago. He writes:

[Some] missionaries used their influence, especially within the educational system to encourage Africans [in Zambia], to oppose colonialism. But, just as some missionaries sought to challenge colonialism, others – the majority defended it. This environment did not change even after independence, unfortunately. ... This situation explains the dilemma of the Church's responses to the new, often despotic, leadership ... How could the Church speak against the [political] leadership?²⁶

Colonialism in the History of Korean Christianity

One of the most obvious commonalities that Zambian and Korean Christians share is the presence of Western missionaries within their colonial histories. However, compared to Zambia and many other African countries that had missionaries from the colonizing country, the majority of Protestant missionaries in Korea were from North America in the twentieth century — not from Japan, the ruling force. There are two major reasons for this. First, Japan was not a country that sent out many missionaries. According to historians including Sebastian Kim and Kirsteen Kim, Western missionaries in the nineteenth century preferred China and Japan as their mission fields in East Asia, since those countries had larger populations and since Westerners heard about the huge persecutions of Catholics in Korea.²⁷ As a result, Japan had some native Christians before Korea. However, there was not a meaningful number of Protestants in the late nineteenth century in Japan when the first Protestant missionaries from North America, including Horace N. Allen (1858–1932), Horace G. Underwood (1859–1916), John Heron (1856–1890), Henry G. Appenzeller (1858–1902), and William B. Scranton (1856–1922), arrived in Korea.²⁸ Second, American missionaries successfully established their status in early Protestant mission in Korea thanks to their active involvement in mission works and relationship to the Japanese. In the late nineteenth century, Korea was threatened by many foreign forces, including France, Russia, the U.S., and Japan, and most Western countries sent Protestant missionaries to Korea after they concluded treaties with the Korean government.²⁹ However, Americans acted as the leading group among

²⁶ Kopya Kaoma, *Raised Hopes, Shattered Dreams: Democracy, the Oppressed and the Church in Africa (The Case of Zambia)* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World, 2015), 45.

²⁷ Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 55.

²⁸ Motokazu Matsutani, "Church over Nation: Christian Missionaries and Korean Christians in Colonial Korea" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2012), 1; 59–60.

²⁹ Kim and Kim, *A history of Korean Christianity*, 54–55. For further information, see Andre Schmid, *Korea between Empires, 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

Protestant missionaries when they translated the religion into the Korean language and culture.³⁰ Moreover, according to Motokazu Matsutani, some American missionaries had a positive relationship with the Japanese government, which expedited and secured American missionary activity before Japan officially colonized Korea in 1910.³¹ Thus, Americans became the prevailing group in Korean mission under Japanese colonialism.

Korean and Zambian Christians share parallel histories in which Western missionaries cooperated with the colonial government in their respective countries. Although colonial officials and missionaries in Korea were from different countries, most American missionaries did not show strong anti-colonial sentiments, similar to many British missionaries in Zambia who had bonds with colonial power. In fact, according to Matsutani, they blocked Korean Christians from contributing to Korean independence movements.³² There are several reasons why American missionaries hindered Korean Christians' nationalistic activities. First, in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, American Protestant missionaries in Korea strongly believed that religion should be separated from the secular world (i. e. political and social issues),³³ due to their conservative theology.³⁴ Therefore, it was impossible to be an active evangelist and nationalist at the same time for Korean Christians under American missionaries' supervision. Second, the missionaries did not want their church and its members to be put in difficult circumstances by participating in nationalist activities. Timothy Lee claims that Americans not only worried about challenges from Korean nationalists regarding their apolitical stance, but also feared for the security of Korean Christians.³⁵ American missionaries' anti-Ŭibyŏng attitude is a representative example that confirms this point. According to Matsutani, missionaries concluded that the church needed to oppose Ŭibyŏng movement – the military action of a voluntary army which revolted against the Japanese in the early twentieth century –

³⁰ See Sung-Deuk Oak, *The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876–1915* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 33–84; 221–304.

³¹ Matsutani, “Church over Nation,” 61.

³² Matsutani, “Church over Nation,” 215–17.

³³ An earlier example of church-politics separation policy can be found in the regulation that Presbyterian missionaries proclaimed at the Mission Council in 1901. *Kŭrisŭdo Sinmun* (Oct., 3, 1901), 318.

³⁴ Arthur Judson Brown, a former Presbyterian mission officer, indicates the conservative nature of Protestant missionaries in Korea. He says, “In most of the evangelical churches of America ... conservatives and liberals have learned to live and work together in peace; but in Korea the few men who hold ‘the modern view’ have a rough road to travel. Arthur Judson Brown, *The Mastery of the Far East* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1919), 540.

³⁵ Timothy S. Lee, “A Political Factor in the Rise of Protestantism in Korea: Protestantism and the 1919 March First Movement,” *Church History* 69, no. 1 (March 2000): 136.

not only because members of Ŭibyŏng movement opposed all foreigners, including Americans, but also because Korean Christians were harmed in battle or arrested by the Japanese due to their participation in military acts.³⁶ Third, the Japanese Empire was a better government for the missionaries. For them, functional and modernized society was preferred for the effectiveness of their missionary activities,³⁷ but the Korean government prior to Japanese rule was incompetent at sustaining such a stable society.³⁸ Therefore, missionaries thought it was better to have the Japanese control Korea instead of letting Koreans govern themselves. Moreover, in order to destroy a spiritual part of Korean-ness, the Japanese government attempted to exclude native Korean beliefs and rituals, such as shamanism,³⁹ which was also one of the missionaries' chief objectives.⁴⁰ Therefore, according to Matsutani, many of them believed that "the less political hope for Koreans, the better for Korean Christians."⁴¹ Although there were some American missionaries who clearly opposed colonialism,⁴² the Japanese occupation of Korea was a positive situation for many American Protestant missionaries.

Missionary control over Korean Protestants and their prohibition of nationalist movements seems powerful since it is difficult to point to clear evidence of Korean churches' official contribution to the nationalist movement until 1919. According to a number of historians including Albert Park, however, Korean Protestants were clandestinely continuing their nationalist actions.⁴³ Their endeavor to liberate Korea from the colonial enterprise was explored in the March First Movement, also called Samil Independence Movement, which was a series of protests for the national independence of Korea from Japanese force triggered on March 1, 1919.⁴⁴ Statistics show that Protestants' role was significant in the movement. Of the thirty-three signers

³⁶ Matsutani, "Church over Nation," 201–4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 195–96.

³⁸ For an example of American Protestant missionaries' evaluation of Korean government, see Arthur Judson Brown, and Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Board of Foreign Missions, *Report of a Visitation of the Korea Mission of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions* (New York: The Board, 1902), 1–3.

³⁹ Kwang-ok Kim, "Colonial Body and Indigenous Soul," in *Colonial Rule and Social Change in Korea*, eds. Hong Yung Lee, Yong-Chool Ha, and Clark W. Sorensen (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 264–65.

⁴⁰ Sung-Deuk Oak describes how Appenzeller opposed shamanistic spirits. Oak, *The Making of Korean Christianity*, 2.

⁴¹ Matsutani, "Church over Nation," 215.

⁴² One of the most extraordinary examples is Homer B. Hulbert (1863–1949). For his anti-colonialism, see Homer B. Hulbert, ed., *The Japanese in Korea: Extracts from the Korea Review*. S.I.: s.n., 1907.

⁴³ Albert L. Park, *Building a Heaven on Earth: Religion, Activism, and Protest in Japanese-Occupied Korea* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015), 78.

⁴⁴ Albert L. Park, *Building a Heaven on Earth*, 78–79.

of the March First Declaration, nine were Methodists and seven were Presbyterians.⁴⁵ In addition, about twenty-two percent of people prosecuted by the Japanese government due to their participation in the March First Movement were Protestants.⁴⁶ Even though these numbers do not verify that Korean Protestants were the most prevailing group in the movement, it is clear that a meaningful number of Protestants actively engaged in the movement. Moreover, if we note that the total number of Christians was around two percent of the national population,⁴⁷ it is fair to say that many Korean Protestants were aligned against imperialism, even though American missionaries did not encourage their members to be nationalists.⁴⁸

After the March First Movement, the colonial government's policies on religions extensively affected the nature of Christianity in Korea. In the 1920s, the Japanese officers switched their methodology for controlling Koreans to the new "Cultural Policy," a modest way to govern their colonists, since they realized that oppression alone was insufficient in preventing resistance to colonial rule.⁴⁹ The state scaled back its military-style rule and offered less-limited freedom to Koreans in order to relax the government's control over Koreans' lives, including their religious activity.⁵⁰ However, in the late 1920s, the Japanese state restarted the regulation of Christians by pressing them to worship at Shinto shrines. In 1925, the government constructed Chosŏn Shrine in Seoul and established ten Shinto camps throughout the country.⁵¹ Due to the oppression, most American missionaries experienced uncertainty about keeping their educational missions. Initially, according to Kim Sŭngt'ae, most Protestant missionaries wanted their mission works to be permitted by the government, so they admitted the "legitimacy" of the colonial enterprise.⁵² Therefore, the missionaries did not actively oppose the government's policy on religions. Moreover, when the government violently forced Korean Christians to practices Shinto

⁴⁵ Matsutani, "Church over Nation," 328–29.

⁴⁶ Matsutani, "Church over Nation," 332–33.

⁴⁷ Matsutani, "Church over Nation," 333.

⁴⁸ In fact, many American missionaries assisted Koreans by providing medical treatment of the injured and reporting the situation in Korea to their homeland during the March First Movement. However, as Lee says, although their participation in the movement was crucial, it was an unwitting contribution. Lee, "A Political Factor in the Rise of Protestantism in Korea," 138.

⁴⁹ Park, *Building a Heaven on Earth*, 80.

⁵⁰ Park, *Building a Heaven on Earth*, 81–82.

⁵¹ Park, *Building a Heaven on Earth*, 82.

⁵² Kim Sŭngt'ae, *Singmin-gwollyeok-gwa Chonggyo* [Colonial Authority and Religion] (Seoul: The Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea, 2012), 141.

ceremony and oppressed the missionaries, many of the Americans renounced their mission schools and left Korea.⁵³ Although it is true that some Americans participated in Korean Protestants' radical anti-colonial and anti-Shinto movement, there were very few compared to the number of missionaries who went back to America.⁵⁴

Conversely, for Korean Protestants, Japanese oppression of their religion worked as a catalyst to strengthen their religious and national identity. They did not have their own government that protected them from Japanese power; they did not have a home outside of the Korean Peninsula where they could seek refuge. The only way to keep their Christian identity was refusing Shinto ritual, and this protest caused mass persecution. According to Samuel H. Moffett, son of a first-generation American missionary in Korea, there were approximately two thousand Christians who were imprisoned, and about fifty Protestants became martyrs due to their rejection of worshiping at Shinto shrines.⁵⁵ Kim argues that this protest was not only religious, but also nationalistic. He says, "Although their struggle seems more religious-oriented and nationalistic feature is additional, in fact, these two aspects were indivisible and closely related to each other."⁵⁶ Kim also introduces a story of a lay woman who was released after suffering in prison, depicting a snapshot of how Korean Christians thought about colonialism and their religion: "Only after I saw, with my own eyes vividly, how the Japanese mistreat Koreans, I could understand why Moses killed the Egyptian. ... Lord! We also need our nation. People without their own nation are dead. ... Religious freedom is valid only after establishing our nation."⁵⁷ Thus, as Chung-Shin Park says, "Undoubtedly, the Korean Christians identified 'the time' of the Messiah's coming with national independence."⁵⁸

Korean Missionaries in the 21st-Century-Zambia

Therefore, for many contemporary Korean Christians, the biological and religious descendents of those who suffered from colonialism, Christianity is not merely a religion, but a heritage that their ancestors preserved and transmitted by overcoming the torment of usurpation

⁵³ For detailed historical records and data, see Kim, *Singmin-gwollyeok-gwa Chonggyo*, 68–143.

⁵⁴ Kim, *Singmin-gwollyeok-gwa Chonggyo*, 143.

⁵⁵ Samuel H. Moffett, *The Christians of Korea* (New York: Friendship Press, 1962), 75.

⁵⁶ Kim, *Singmin-gwollyeok-gwa Chonggyo*, 267–68 (translation my own).

⁵⁷ Kim, *Singmin-gwollyeok-gwa Chonggyo*, 268 (translation my own).

⁵⁸ Chung-Shin Park, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 133.

and martyrdom.⁵⁹ Thus, it is possible to see that Korean missionaries are striving to propagate their religious expression, living evidence of their decolonization another land and people victimized by colonization – Zambia. It is true that not all Korean missionaries’ primary motivation for their mission is rooted in anti-colonialism. Also, it is perilous to examine the phenomenon only with the lens of colonialism. However, this approach can be one meaningful way to understand why Korean missionaries are working in Christianized countries, particularly in Zambia. To reveal their perception of colonialism and Christianity, I will highlight several points from interviews with three Korean missionaries in Zambia, Rev. Sung Sik Park (the director of Serving In Mission Zambia, formerly Sudan Interior Mission, who was trained by Korean Evangelical Holiness Church), Rev. Daniel Youngmin Kim (a church planter sent by International Mission Board, Southern Baptist Convention), and Rev. Seung Jung (a mission organizer works for The Korea Baptist Convention and the Zambia Baptist Association; he is currently residing in Korea). We can spot how their own words speak to the initial questions of this paper: why are they devoting their lives to Zambia? How are their reactions to colonialism distinct from the nineteenth century British?

The first aspect that I would like to highlight from the interviews is how the missionaries value Korea’s colonial history within their missionary activity in Zambia. Kim clearly mentions that sharing similar histories is “a great bridge that connects us to Zambians.”⁶⁰ For him, it is a meaningful rapport between him and Zambians, including the members of his church. He continues, “Because many Zambians do not distinguish Asians from Europeans sensitively (most of them just call us foreigners), it is important to have a unique aspect that links us to Zambians.”⁶¹ Park also admits that Koreans are not distinguishable for many Zambians: “Due to their lack of understanding on East Asian history and geography, many Zambians do not know where Korea is and how Korea is different from China and Japan.”⁶² Then, he addresses the meaning of having a similar experience: “Thus, they surprise when I talks about colonial history of my country. The similar histories assist us [Zambian Christians in his church and himself] to understanding each

⁵⁹ It is true that not all Korean Christians clearly against colonialism and Shinto ritual. Although they were not the majority of Korean Christianity, there were denominations, churches, and individuals who were pro-Japanese. For detailed information and reference to primary sources, see Kim, *Singmin-gwollyeok-gwa Chonggyo*, 145–226.

⁶⁰ Daniel Youngmin Kim, interview by author, June 20, 2015.

⁶¹ Daniel Youngmin Kim, interview by author.

⁶² Sung Sik Park, interview by author, April 25, 2015.

other in addition to cultural intimacy.⁶³ Jung uses more straightforward language to express his experience. He says, “It [the fact that Koreans have parallel experience of colonization] dramatically benefits us [members of his community] to be united. We feel more amiable and have more sympathy after sharing the tragic history.”⁶⁴

Another point that I want to emphasize from the interviews is connected to Kaoma’s observation of the continuity of colonialism in Zambia. Kim points out how Westerners’ influences are great in contemporary Zambian society. He says, “Since Westerners still provide what Zambians need, including industrial technology, capital investment, and medical expertise, Zambians tend to rely on Western forces. Moreover, there are some Zambians who claim that colonial era was better to live.”⁶⁵ Park names the rise of Chinese enterprise in Zambia as a new colonial force: “Now, Chinese capital is overwhelming in Zambian industry. Chinese construct a number of factories and transportation facilities, such as highways. However, Zambians know why Chinese are investigating their money in Zambia; they know all services by Chinese will become the tools for a new phrase of colonization, economic colonization.”⁶⁶ In addition to the colonial continuity in the social realm, Jung argues the continuation of religious imperialism in Zambian Christianity:

The Caucasians in the colonial era delivered their religion and evangelized Zambians, but they did not train those converts responsibly. Instead, they [the British missionaries] treated Zambians as their servants, plundered their labor, forced unconditional obedience to the missionaries, and only taught religious hope in order to block Zambians from realistic resistance against British colonial enterprise. ... After independence, Zambian pastors replaced the leadership of churches. Though, they became senior pastors only under Western missionaries’ supervision. The Westerners still had control over the [mainline] churches and Zambian leaders in many cases. Zambian pastors needed to keep the connection with the missionaries in order to afford their churches. For those Zambian ministers, Zambian Christianity was still under religious imperialism.⁶⁷

According to the voices of Korean missionaries, Zambia is still experiencing colonialism, and the Koreans find it problematic; they believe that this situation is hindering political and economical “progress” in Zambia.⁶⁸ Kim connects this issue to his role in Zambia, as a missionary from the

⁶³ Sung Sik Park, interview by author.

⁶⁴ Seung Jung, interview by author, May 19, 2015.

⁶⁵ Daniel Youngmin Kim, interview by author, June 20, 2015.

⁶⁶ Sung Sik Park, interview by author, April 25, 2015.

⁶⁷ Seung Jung, interview by author, May 19, 2015.

⁶⁸ Seung Jung, interview by author, May 19, 2015; Daniel Youngmin Kim, interview by author, June 20, 2015.

country that also has colonial history: “We also experienced colonialism. We also experienced war. We also experienced poverty. Thus, we are capable to become exemplar for Zambian churches. We need to be one of their post-colonial models, so they can overcome their difficulties.”⁶⁹

Even though all three missionaries generally agree with the idea of being models for Zambians, they provide varied answers for the questions of how they can be a prototype and what kind of model Koreans can be. First, Kim argues that Korea’s economic success can be a great evidence of “God’s blessing.”⁷⁰ “Therefore,” he continues, “the fact that Koreans overcame the hard time and Christians played important roles motivates Zambian Christians to actively devote themselves to church.” Jung also focuses on Korea’s economic achievement. He says, “How Korea became one of rich countries after colonial period appeals to Zambians. Many Zambians in my community considered Korea as a role-model for their country. Therefore, it is important to let them know what Christians need to do by underlining what Christians did in Korea.”⁷¹ Meanwhile, Park approaches the issue differently. He says,

I do not introduce Korean Christianity as an ideal exemplar to follow. In fact, I encourage the members of my church to learn lessons from the ethical and spiritual collapse of Korean Protestantism. I want Zambians to see how Korean Christians are struck with prosperity theology and how Koreans lost their anti-colonial and anti-imperial evolvment. ... It is better to be in difficulty and better to starve. I hope Zambians never follow Korean Christians’ path.⁷²

It is interesting to see how different the missionaries evaluate Korea’s post-colonial history. While Kim and Jung praise the economic advancement, Park criticizes the dark side of modernization in Korea. While Kim and Jung try to draw attention to the role of Christianity in the progress, Park points out Christianity’s negative connection to the capital and the ruling forces.

Their answers can represent the body of Korean missionaries in general since Park mentioned that long-term missionaries in Zambia gather together regularly to share what they experience and what they think;⁷³ at the same time, these interviews are still limited and cannot completely cover all individual missionaries’ thoughts on the issue of colonialism and Christian mission. Nevertheless, it is meaningful to see how their comments are coherent and speak to the

⁶⁹ Daniel Youngmin Kim, interview by author, June 20, 2015.

⁷⁰ Daniel Youngmin Kim, interview by author.

⁷¹ Seung Jung, interview by author, May 19, 2015.

⁷² Sung Sik Park, interview by author, April 25, 2015.

⁷³ Sung Sik Park, interview by author.

established literature. In addition, the Korean missionaries suggest the significance of their role in Zambian Christianity based on what Zambians and Koreans experienced in their history. Thus, as Jung argues, “[Because Koreans share colonial experience,] Koreans are one of the most appropriate groups who can conduct their missionary activity in Zambia. This is why we are devoting ourselves in Zambia, which takes more than twenty hours to go.”⁷⁴

Conclusion

Koreans experienced colonialism by the Japanese Empire, which won control over Korean Peninsula among other imperial countries, including the United States. Under this circumstance, a number of Korean Christians resisted colonial forces in order to defend their national and religious identities when many American missionaries hesitated to make their decision. This historical survey discloses one of the factors that distinguish Korean missionaries from the nineteenth century British missionaries. This distinctiveness of Korean missionaries is also a crucial reason as to why their work is meaningful in Zambia, where a number of British-rooted and America-origin denominations and ministries are active,⁷⁵ and where the land shares a tragic colonial history with Korea.

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⁷⁴ Seung Jung, interview by author, May 19, 2015.

⁷⁵ Smith, “Missionaries, Church Movements, and the Shifting Religious Significance of the State in Zambia,” 548–50.

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