

# **Abraham Kuyper in the Past, the Present, and the Future of the Korean Church: A Focus on the Presbyterian Church\***

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I The Lord Word Church | Systematic Theology I

## **Abstracts**

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In recent decades, as interest in Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) has grown worldwide, the Korean church has gradually increased its attention to Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism, as well as his Reformed theology. In previous studies on the relationship between Kuyper and the Korean church, a brief overview of the Korean church and its problems was presented, concluding that Kuyper's specific theme might contribute to resolving those issues. In this paper, I examine the acceptance trends of Kuyper in the Korean church throughout Korean Protestant history as a whole in

order to suggest a proper direction for future acceptance, particularly in regard to his Neo-Calvinism. Firstly, I outline the historical background to introducing and establishing of Dutch theology within the history of Korean Protestantism. Secondly, through analyzing most academic papers and translations on Kuyper since the first academic work in the 1960s, I present the characteristics of the trend of Kuyper's acceptance in the Korean church.

By this analysis, I argue that when applying Kuyper's specific themes to the Korean church or academic disciplines, we should consider his broader and more organically related themes together. In future acceptance of Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism, the shared content found in both the Dutch Neo-Calvinism revival and the Korean church revival should serve as an evangelical foundation that should be maintained and enhanced. In addition, the future acceptance of Neo-Calvinism needs to refer more to Herman Bavinck in terms of principle, and Kuyper in terms of content, rather than following the incomplete traces of Neo-Calvinism.

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**[ Key Words ]**

Abraham Kuyper, Korean Protestant History, Neo-Calvinism, Early Korean Missionaries, Korean Reformed Theology, Common Grace, Sphere Sovereignty

## I. Introduction

The conference *Christianity and Culture: The Heritage of Abraham Kuyper on Different Continents* was held to celebrate the centenary of Abraham Kuyper's famous *Stone Lecture on Calvinism* in 1998 at Princeton in the United States.<sup>1</sup> It served as a catalyst, along with other celebration conferences, to revitalize the overall studies on Kuyper and to establish related research institutions.<sup>2</sup> Suppose it had been held as planned for Abraham Kuyper's death centennial in New York and Amsterdam in 2020, another conference on *Kuyper Centennial Secularism and Spirituality* might have contributed another accelerator for a comprehensive study of Abraham Kuyper(1837-1920) in such

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\* The paper was scheduled to be presented at the Amsterdam Conference to commemorate Abraham Kuyper's death centennial in 2020, when I was a visiting fellow at the Herman Bavinck Center for Reformed and Evangelical Theology at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam from 2019 to 2021, but it was canceled because of a resurgence of coronavirus. I am deeply grateful to Drs. van den Brink and van den Belt of the VU Amsterdam and to Dr. George Harinck of the Theological University Kampen for allowing me to research at VU and for preparing this unexpected presentation. It is my pleasure to thank Juliia Demianchenko for discussing the content and reviewing it in English. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Dr. Hong-Yul Jung, president of ACTS University, for his invaluable guidance and encouragement during my studies as a student at ACTS University and also at VU Amsterdam.

1 As a result of the conference, the following papers were published the following year. Cornelius van der Kooi and Jan van der Bruijn, eds., *Kuyper Reconsidered: Aspects of His Life and Work*, VU Studies on Protestant History, 3 (Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 1999)

2 For example, *The Abraham Kuyper Center for Public Theology* was established to commemorate the *Stone Lectures on Calvinism* delivered at Princeton in 1898. *The Kuyper Center Review* has published revised and edited versions of selected conference papers since 2010.

an atmosphere. According to the 1998 conference, Kuyper's influence primarily affected the United States, South Korea, and South Africa, and this influence was accommodated in various ways based on the history and environment of each country.<sup>3</sup>

Hamel's *Journal and a Description of the Kingdom of Korea, 1653-1666*, was the first written record of the encounter between Koreans and the Dutch. Hamel and his coworkers working for the Dutch East Indies were shipwrecked while sailing from Indonesia to Japan and landed on Jeju Island in Korea during the middle-seventeenth century. In response to questions concerning their hometown and status, they replied, "Hollanders from Amsterdam" to the officials of the Joseon Dynasty.<sup>4</sup> Since then, until the twentieth century, not only had there been little interaction between the two countries but Dutch Reformed theology had also not been spread directly into Korea. Nonetheless, Dutch Reformed theology as historical Calvinism has taken a significant place in Korean Presbyterianism in the present day.

Kuyper is widely recognized as one of the Dutch Reformed theologians

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3 Bong Ho Son, "Relevance of Sphere Sovereignty to Korean Society," in *Kuyper Reconsidered*, 179–89; B. J. van der Walt, "Christian Religion and Society: The Heritage of Abraham Kuyper for (South) Africa," in *Kuyper Reconsidered*, 228–37; G. Harinck, "A Triumphant Procession? The Reception of Kuyper in the USA (1900–1940)," in *Kuyper Reconsidered*, 273–82

4 Hendrick Hamel, *Hamel's Journal: and a Description of the Kingdom of Korea, 1653-1666* (Seoul: Royal Asiatic Society Korea Branch, 1998)

in Korea. While the tendency to accept Kuyper as a historical Calvinist continues, the influence of Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism has been gradually increasing in response to the various challenges and demands the Korean church has faced, especially since the late 1980s. It is necessary first to discuss the current trend of Calvinism in the Korean church and to present an overall tendency to accept Kuyper's influence.

A 2015 Korean census indicates that Protestants comprise about 20 percent of the total population, accounting for nearly 42 percent of those who identify as having a religion.<sup>5</sup> This census is noteworthy for two reasons. Among the most significant facts is that for the first time, Protestants, who have a history of only 150 years, have surpassed Buddhists, who had had the largest number of adherents for thousands of years, although it must be considered complex factors such as the growing apathy towards religion in Korea. Secondly, more than 70% of Protestants identify as Presbyterians, making them the most Protestant. There are two main denominations of Presbyterian churches in Korea: the Presbyterian Church of the Korea and the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea. A dispute over biblical criticism led to the separation of two sects with similar

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5 National Statistical Office of Korea, "2015 Population by Gender, Age, and Religion," accessed on October 14, 2022, available at: [https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT\\_1PM1502](https://kosis.kr/statHtml/statHtml.do?orgId=101&tblId=DT_1PM1502)

names. The Presbyterian Church of Korea, which represents most Korean Presbyterians, adheres to traditional Calvinism, whereas the Presbyterian Church of the Republic of Korea has a more progressive theological orientation. This paper focuses on the Korean Presbyterian Church, given its relationship with Abraham Kuyper, although progressive Presbyterian churches have played a significant role in Korean Protestantism. In this sense, the terms the Presbyterian Church or the Korean church in this paper refers to the Korean Presbyterian church in the same sense.

Calvinist tradition in Korea has likely shifted from an Orthodox Calvinism close to Fundamentalism to a somewhat flexible Calvinism over recent years. In 2018, *the Korea Reformed Theological Society* held its 44th academic symposium celebrating the 400th anniversary of the Canons of Dordt. Yung-Han Kim, emeritus professor at Soongsil University, delivered the keynote address entitled “The *Dialogue* between Orthodox Calvinism and Conservative Arminianism.” He argued that Orthodox Calvinism should be moved toward a sober Calvinism that can communicate with moderate Arminianism, rejecting both hyper-Calvinism on the right wing of Calvinism and liberal Arminianism on the left wing of Arminianism.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Yung-Han Kim, “The Dialogue between Orthodox Calvinism and Conservative Arminianism,” in

As with Korean Calvinism, the interest in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism has grown, along with interest in Kuyper's traditional Calvinism. Kuyper is widely referred to as one of the three world's greatest Calvinists in the Korean church, including B. B. Warfield and Herman Bavinck, or as one of the four world's greatest Calvinists adding Charles Hodge.<sup>7</sup> This meaning is closer to traditional Calvinism or Orthodox Calvinism, especially as a strict Calvinist. In recent years, however, the Korean church's interest in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism has increased as the social responsibility of the church has emerged as a significant issue, keeping the preservation of Kuyper's traditional Calvinist image.

This paper examines how Kuyper's legacy benefits the Korean church in this context. Few studies have examined the trend of Kuyper's influence in the context of the history of the Korean church, including reception trends. Previous studies of the relationship between Kuyper and the Korean church presented a brief overview of the Korean church and its problems, concluding that Kuyper's specific theme would assist in resolving those issues.<sup>8</sup> This paper chronologically examines the

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*The Historical Meaning of the 400th Anniversary of The Canons of Dordt and the Korean Church*, Korean version (Yangpeong: The 44th Academic Symposium of the Korea Reformed Theological Society, 2019), 7–28.

7 The descriptions can be found not only in dissertation and academic theses but also in the publisher's introduction to the Korean translation of writings of Kuyper.

8 Bong Ho Son, "Relevance of Sphere Sovereignty to Korean Society," 179–89; Jeom Ok Kim,

distinctive characteristics of a research trend of Kuyper in the Korean church by analyzing almost academic studies and translations relating to Kuyper from the first scholarly paper on Kuyper in the 1960s up to the present. In light of these findings, I will propose appropriate directions for the future reception of Kuyper in the Korean church. To accomplish this, I will first explore the theological characteristics of early missionaries and the early Korean church; second, the introduction of Dutch Reformed theology during the time of the establishment of Calvinism in the Korean church; third, the trend of acceptance of Kuyper in the Korean church, and lastly a proper direction for the future acceptance of Kuyper.

## **II. The Theological Characteristics of Early Missionaries and of the Early Korean Church**

Kuyper founded the Free University in 1880, whereas Korean Protestantism began about in 1884/85 with the arrival of American missionaries,<sup>9</sup> although Christianity, including Roman Catholicism,

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“The Relevance of Abraham Kuyper’s Doctrine of Sphere Sovereignty for the Korean Presbyterian Church,” Th.M. Thesis (Calvin Theological Seminary, 2000).

9 Eug Kyu Park, *Lecture Notes on the History of Korean Church*, an unpublished book, Korean version (Yangpeuying: ACTS University, 2008), 3. Cf. The page refers to a page merged into a PDF

had been infiltrated and spread in the country.<sup>10</sup> Given the relationship between the Korean church and Dutch Reformed theology, Korean Protestantism can be divided into four stages which is generally not a distinction in Korea. However, by doing so, it provides more clarity regarding the relationship between the Korean church and Kuyper in the history of the introduction and establishment of Dutch Reformed theology in the Korean church. The first period began in 1884 when early Korean missionaries began to serve in the Korean church, and it lasted until the 1920s before educated Korean theologians and pastors started to serve in the church and seminary. Early Korean missionaries were dedicated to missions and biblical education with hospital and school ministries in Korea. Therefore, the theological tendency of early missionaries had a profound influence on the Korean church.

The second period began in the late 1930s when Korean students

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document.

10 Cf. The contact between Korea and Christianity was with Nestorian through China around the 8th century, and the oldest known contact to date was through the 1593 Imjin War (Japanese invasion of Korea). It was the oldest contact in the literature, and it was visited by Gregorio de Cespedes, a Spanish priest who stayed in Japan at this time. After 1636, Seogy (Catholicism) was introduced to Korea through Silhak schools (scholars who pursued the modernization of Korea). In the case of Protestants, the first missionary to Korea was Karl A. F. Gützlaff, a German Lutheran pastor who traveled to Jeju Island through Hwanghae Province in July 1832. His visit to Korea was his first contact with Korea and the Protestant church; cf. Karl Friedrich Gützlaff, *Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832, and 1833, with Notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands* (London: Frederick Westley and A. H. Davis, 1834); Ho-ik Heo, *The Life of Gützlaff and His Mission Activities in Joseon* (Seoul: Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea, 2009)

whom early Korean missionaries had educated returned after studying abroad and began teaching in the divine schools. This period lasted until the 1960s; Dutch Reformed theology was introduced to the Korean church and was established to some extent as part of the identity of Korean Reformed theology. Dutch Reformed theology was rooted as a form of historical Calvinism within the Korean church. The 1960s marked the period during which the interest in Kuyper in the Korean church, for the first time, emerged academically, with two articles published.

The third period spanned the 1970s, when industrialization and democratization began in earnest in Korea, to the late 1980s, when they were completed. During this period, Christianity in Korea had grown rapidly and unprecedentedly, and Dutch Reformed theology became more prominent in Korean Presbyterianism. The interest in Kuyper in Korean churches was primarily revealed as traditional Reformed theology until the late 1980s.

The fourth period began after the late 1980s and continues to the present. A new set of challenges and demands in the Korean church emerged after Korea had completed industrialization and democratization. As a result of a variety of internal and external factors, the interest in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism has gradually grown while

maintaining interest in his traditional Reformed theology.

## 1. Theological Characteristics of the Early Missionary of the Korean Church

It was during 1884 that Horace Newton Allen, a medical missionary sent by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA), was sent to Korea at the request of Joseon, the last dynasty, to prevent the increasing invasion of Japanese imperialism and to assist in the modernization of Korea. Allen was the first Protestant missionary in Korea. In the following year, 1885, two Protestant clergies, Horace Grant Underwood and Henry Gerhard Appenzeller, were dispatched to Korea, leading the respective Presbyterian and Methodist missions.<sup>11</sup> Explicit mission activities were prohibited except for school and hospital ministries at that time. As early missionaries began their activities in Korea after 1884, American Presbyterian missionaries and those from other nations profoundly impacted Korean theology, liturgy, and Christian life in the Korean church. Between 1884 and 1945, when Korea was liberated

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<sup>11</sup> Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 62; Cf. Clark, Allen D., *A History of the Church in Korea* (Seoul: Christian Literature Society, 1971)

from Japanese colonialism, approximately 1,500 missionaries were sent to Korea. Of these, 76% were American missionaries, and the majority were Presbyterian missionaries.<sup>12</sup>

A primary theological background of the early missionaries was Evangelicalism, associated with the revival movement of their day.<sup>13</sup> Although they came from different denominations, most Protestant missionaries who came to Korea until 1910 were college graduates from the United States and Canada. They were recruited through *the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM)* or its precursor or *the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)*, which was closely related to the SVM. They shared the common 'holiness' tradition of the D. L. Moody revivals and the Northfield Conference of the 1870s. Accordingly, the theological features of the early missionaries were primarily pietistic Evangelicalism, which is somewhat related to Fundamentalism or Calvinism. Their belief focused on the Bible, the Cross, conversion, and activism and stressed the perfecting work of the Holy Spirit in the believer, focusing on rescuing

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12 Sang Gyoo Lee, *History and Theology of the Korean Church*, Revised Edition, Korean version (Seoul: Word of Life Books, 2014) 21; Cf. Sang Gyoo Lee, *To Korea with Love: Australian Presbyterian Mission Work in Korea, 1889–1941* (Melbourne: PCV, 2009), 301.

13 Along with the American North Presbyterian Church (1884), the American North Methodist Church (1885), the Australian Presbyterian Church (1889), the American Baptist Church (1889), the Anglican Church (1890), the American Presbyterian Church (1892), the American Southern Methodist Church (1896), and the Canadian Presbyterian Church (1898), The Holyness Church (1907), the Salvation Army (1908) and others, sent missionaries to Korea.

souls in peril. Additionally, their tendency toward premillennialism at that time motivated them to evangelize Korea within a short period.<sup>14</sup> According to Ung Kyu Park, the theological characteristics of early missionaries in the Korean church were mainly characterized by Pietist Evangelicalism and Fundamentalist Evangelicalism, while Progressive or Ecumenical Evangelicalism and Classical or Puritan Evangelicalism emerged gradually.<sup>15</sup>

## 2. The Characteristics of Early Korean Protestantism

Among the most prominent characteristics of early Korean Protestantism is the Bible-centered tradition that continues to this day. Since they were not permitted to enter Korea before 1884, Chinese missionaries secretly sent both Chinese and Korean Bibles to Korea, which were translated partially. Koreans were baptized for the first time in Manchuria in 1876 by Scottish United Presbyterian missionaries Ross and McIntyre, who were sent as Chinese missionaries by the Scotland United Presbyterian Church in 1872. They also began translating the

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14 Sebastian C. H. Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 63; Cf. Dae-young Ryu, *Christianity and Modern Korean History*, Korean version (Seoul: Pureun Yeoksa, 2009), 390–91.

15 Eug Kyu Park, *Lecture Notes*, 13–14.

Bible into Korean, distributed by Korean colporteurs. Before the start of the Korean missionary movement in earnest, colporteurs made a significant contribution to the spread of the gospel by distributing translated Bibles in various regions. As a result, believers in Korea arose and formed communities of faith. “Before the first Protestant missionaries arrived, Ross’s coworkers smuggled hundreds of scripture portions into the Korean peninsula from the north.”<sup>16</sup> As early as 1887, *The Jesus Bible Vision* (Ross Version) was published as the first Korean New Testament translation.<sup>17</sup>

Early missionaries’ influence of Evangelicalism, which respected the authority of the Bible and its application, enforced and established a Bible-based tradition in the Korean church. The tradition of Bible study was so much the hallmark of early Korean Christianity that one missionary called it *Bible Christianity*.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the Confucian tradition in Korea, which dominated the Joseon Dynasty for 500 years, strengthened the biblical tradition in Korea. Confucian tradition in Korea, which respected the authority of canons and put them into practice in a literal sense through study and meditation, adapted its

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16 Sebastian C. H. Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 56.

17 Sebastian C. H. Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 56–59.

18 Sebastian C. H. Kim, “The Word and the Spirit: Overcoming Poverty, Injustice and Division in Korea,” in *A History of Korean Christianity*, 132.

principles for forming a biblical-centered habit. Additionally, it made accepting biblical teachings by early missionaries easier.

Nevius Plan was another factor in enhancing Bible-centered tradition in the Korean church, which was a church planting method for China Inland Mission. The strategy was based on three self-principles: self-support, self-governance, and self-propaganda. Applying the Nevius Plan to the Korean Protestant church in 1891 was adapted to accommodate Korea's indigenous culture. Especially the three-self principles were made possible through a focus on Bible studies. As Charles Allen Clark, one of the early missionaries, described it, the core of Korean Nevius' policy is not the three self-principles but rather the emphasis on the Bible, which forces the three self-principles to emerge by themselves when believers become overwhelmed by the study of the Bible. Consequently, a large amount of Bible study was initiated in the Korean church, which also led to the establishment of the divine Schools.<sup>19</sup>

In this sense, while biblical criticism has rarely developed in the Korean church, the tradition of infallibility and inspiration of the Bible has remained significant in Korean Presbyterian churches, especially since

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<sup>19</sup> Sebastian C. H. Kim, *A History of Korean Christianity*, 55–57.

Calvinism was established.<sup>20</sup> Evangelical Calvinists in Korea have been shaped by a Bible-centered tradition that emphasizes Bible study and Sakyonghoe in many churches, along with the piety of the Pyongyang Great Awaken Movement in 1919. Compared with the revival of Calvinism in the Netherlands in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the importance of Bible authority, Bible study, and Bible practice appear to have been shared with Korean churches.

### **III. The Introduction of Dutch Reformed Theology during the Establishment of Calvinism in the Korean Church**

Despite the undeniable influence of American Christianity, Korean Evangelical Protestantism remains close to the distinctive Korean religion. It is theologically conservative, very zealous for practice, and characterized by a hierarchical structure influenced by Confucianism. Although Korean Evangelicalism is closely related to American Evangelicalism and shares many other characteristics, Korea still sets itself apart from other countries.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Sebastian C. H. Kim, "The Word and the Spirit," 132.

<sup>21</sup> Rebecca Y. Kim, *The Spirit Moves West: Korean Missionaries in America* (Oxford: Oxford University

The understanding characteristics of Calvinism in the Korean church was almost established in the 1960s,<sup>22</sup> about which a contemporary theologian Harvie Conn illustrated that “Korean Calvinists are well armed,”<sup>23</sup> and this perspective has been maintained in a strict sense<sup>24</sup> or a general sense.<sup>25</sup> First, it follows the tradition of the Reformation with traditional Reformed confessions, considering the Canons of Dort as the foundation of the historical Presbyterian movement. Second, it adheres to Puritan traditions, particularly the Westminster Confession of Faith. In addition, it follows the tradition of Reformed theology, such as the Dutch Reformed theology of the seventeenth century. Calvinism in the Korean Presbyterian church was closely related to Fundamentalism. This theological character indicates that the pietistic Evangelicalism of Korean churches founded by early missionaries has evolved into a more fundamentalist tendency. This Calvinism has become the dominant form of Christianity among Korean Presbyterians, accounting for most

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Press, 2014), 12.

- 22 Sang Woong Lee, “A Study on the Relationship between Park Hyung-Ryong and the Dutch Reformed Theology,” Korean version. Th. M. thesis (The Graduate School of Chongshin University, 2004), 160–64.
- 23 Harvie Conn, “Abraham Kuyper” by Frank Van den Berg, Korean version, *Presbyterian Theological Quarterly* 31/2 (1964): 66–69.
- 24 Youngkyu Kim, *17th Century Reformed Theology*, Korean version (Anyang: Anyang University Graduate School of Theology, 2000)
- 25 Jae Sung Kim, *The Heritage of Reformed Theology* vol 1: *The Emergence and Character of Confessional Calvinism*, Korean version (Seoul: Jireh Publishing Company, 2001)

Protestantism in Korea.

When Calvinism was established in the Korean Presbyterian Church, Dutch Reformed theology played a significant role, taking a prominent place in Korean Calvinism. Dutch Reformed theology was not directly transmitted from Dutch missionaries or churches. Since the 1920s, Korean ministries who studied at Princeton University and Westminster Seminary in the United States introduced Dutch Reformed Theology to Korea. Hyung-Yong Park in Systematic Theology and Yun-Seon Park in Biblical Theology contributed significantly to the establishment of Korean Calvinism.

Hyung-Ryong Park studied at old Princeton University under the guidance of J. G. Machen (1881-1937) and Geerhardus Vos (1862-1949) from 1923 to 1925 and also studied at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for a year.<sup>26</sup> When the General Assembly of the Korean Presbyterian Church in 1935 was discussing the debate of biblical criticism and women's rights, he represented the position of Orthodox Calvinism in the debate. It was regarded as establishing Korean conservative theology by itself: "As the Jubilee year arrives, it is evident

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<sup>26</sup> Sang Woong Lee, *Explorations into Dr. Hyun-Ryong Park*, Korean version (Seoul: Solomon, 2021), 35–38.

that the Korean church, which was founded based on the conservative theology of the early missionaries, is now being led by Korean conservative theologians.”<sup>27</sup>

In the United States, Hyung-Ryong Park was not much influenced by Dutch Reformed theology, but he did learn some Reformed theology from the old Princeton University. After returning from studying abroad, He had an opportunity to come into direct contact with Dutch Reformed theology. In Manchuria, he used *Systematic Theology* by Louis Berkhof as a textbook when lecturing on dogmatics at Bongcheon Theological Seminary. *Systematic Theology* of Berkhof was compiled and supplemented by an overview of Bavinck’s *Reformed Dogmatics*.<sup>28</sup>

*Systematic Theology* of Berkhof was one of the primary textbooks of a seminary lecture on systematic theology in most Korean Presbyterian seminaries until the late 20th and early 21st centuries. This book contributed significantly to the introduction and dissemination of Dutch Reformed Theology. That is why Korean students went to the Netherlands and the United States to study Dutch Reformed theology, especially the theology of Hermann Bavinck. Given this, the Korean

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27 Sang Woong Lee, *Explorations into Dr. Hyun-Ryong Park*, 40–42.

28 Sang Woong Lee, *Explorations into Dr. Hyun-Ryong Park*, 66–68, 89–94.

Presbyterian Church followed Dutch Reformed theology as it was in the tradition of Dutch Reformed theology in the seventeenth century. The Korean church also acknowledges the revival of Calvinism in the Dutch during the late 19th and early 20th centuries in terms of Reformed theology.

## VI. The Trend of Acceptance of Kuyper in the Korean Church

### 1. The Korean Church's Reception of Kuyper until the late 1980s

Therefore, Kuyper's reception in the Korean church until the 1960s was primarily related to his doctrines in Dutch Reformed theology, and this trend continued until the late 1980s. As an example, Hyung-Ryong Park cited in his revised edition of *Dogmatics Theology* more Dutch theologians than American theologians except for A. A. Hodge and Charles Hodge. Over 90 times, he cited Kuyper's words in all areas of doctrine, from prolegomena to eschatology.<sup>29</sup> Despite Kuyper's fragmentary presentation

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<sup>29</sup> Sang Woong Lee, "A Study on the Relationship between Park Hyung-Ryong and the Dutch Reformed Theology," 141-44.

in the Korean church, it is sufficient to note that the Korean church views him as a strict Calvinist.

Exceptionally, Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism was, however, the subject of two book reviews in the 1960s. In the 1960s, two related reviews were the first scholarly works on Kuyper in Korea. In the first article, Dr. Cheol-Ha Han, one of the contributors to the establishment and development of the ACTS University in Korea, reviewed Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism* in its English translation published in 1953.<sup>30</sup> He first introduced Kuyper's perspective of a further defined Calvinism to the Korean church as a system of life and the kingship of Christ in all areas of life. It was in contrast to Ludwig A. Feuerbach's *lecture on The Essence of Christianity*.<sup>31</sup>

In 1964, Harvie Conn published the second review on Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism in his review of the book *Abraham Kuyper*, written by Frank van den Berg and published in 1960 and translated into Korean by Gichan Kim and published in 1993.<sup>32</sup> Harvie Conn illustrated in the review that the Korean church should know Kuyper more than just as a theologian but as a person who acted to realize the Calvinist ideal in every

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30 Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism. Six Lectures Delivered at Princeton University under Auspices of the L.P. Stone Foundation* (Grand Rapids: MI, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1953)

31 Han Chul-Ha, "Kuyper, Abraham Lectures on Calvinism, Korean version, *Presbyterian Theological Quarterly* 29/1 (1962): 108-12.

32 Frank van den Berg, *Abraham Kuyper* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960); Frank van den Berg, *Abraham Kuyper*, trans. Gichan Kim (Seoul: General Assembly Press, 1993)

sphere. In this sense, he evaluated that Korean Calvinists are well-armed in theory but remain indifferent to politics and silent on social issues such as brothers' and workers' rights. Consequently, Calvinism in the Korean church is closer to conservatism or Fundamentalism than to Kuyper's Calvinism. He concluded that Kuyper's Calvinism, which implies the Kingship of Christ and Reformation in all aspects of life, is an appropriate stimulus for the Korean church.<sup>33</sup>

However, few publications or academic theses on Kuyper's Neo Calvinism have been published since the 1960s, except for some articles on Kuyper's *Lectures on Calvinism*. Since the first translation was published in 1971, *Lectures on Calvinism* has maintained a considerable interest in Korea, becoming a representative work of Kuyper in the Korean church.<sup>34</sup> In *Lectures on Calvinism* of Kuyper, however, few studies and issues related to Neo-Calvinism were discussed, such as themes of sphere sovereignty, common grace, and Calvinism as a worldview, and a life-system, except for a partial interest in the 1980s.

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**33** Harvie Conn, "Abraham Kuyper" by Frank Van den Berg, Korean version, *Presbyterian Theological Quarterly* 31/2, (1964): 66–69.

**34** After being first translated into Korean and published by Young Nahm Park in 1971, it was republished three times until 1993, and after being translated into Korean and published by another translator, Gichan Kim in 1987 it was republished four times until 2020; Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism*, trans. Young Nahm Park (Seoul: Se Jong Publishing Company, 1971, reprinted in 1974, 1979, 1993); Another translations, *Lectures on Calvinism*, trans. Gichan Kim (Seoul: Christian Digest, 1996, reprinted in 2000, 2002, 2006, 2020)

Another remarkable example of interest in Kuyper's Neo Calvinism before the middle and the late 1980s is when Christian students held a reading discussion to uncover what the biblical worldview would be appropriate for these situations where civil protests against the military dictatorship heated up in the 1980s, they interested in Kuyper's common grace with the themes of other theologians.<sup>35</sup>

On the contrary, Kuyper's various godly books were translated and published in Korean and continued to attract the attention of the Korean church, such as *To be Near unto God, The Practice of Godliness*,<sup>36</sup> and *Women of the Old and New Testament*<sup>37</sup> and *The Death and Resurrection of Christ*.<sup>38</sup> A translation of *To be Near unto God* by Dr. Sung Koo Chung, who has dedicated himself to studying Kuyper, published in 1984, reprinted six times until today, has been included as a Christian classic by

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35 Heon Soo Kim, "The Doctrine of General Grace; Kuyper, Schilder, Van Till, and Discussions at the Christian Research Society." Korean version, *Faith & Scholarship* 9/1 (2004): 231–32; In addition to Kuyper, *the Christian Research Society*, which began in 1984, dealt with books such as Herman Bavinck, Brian Walsh, Middleto, Gerhalders Boss, Hermann Ridelbos, George Aldon Rad, and Henry Van Till.

36 Abraham Kuyper, *The Practice of Godliness*, trans. Hwa-ja Yu (Seoul: Word of Life Books, 1981, reprinted in 1993)

37 Abraham Kuyper, *Women of the Old and New Testament*, trans. In Han Lee and Sun Ook Lee (Seoul: Eun Hae Press, 1978); *Women of the Old and New Testament*, trans. Society of Christian Literature Publications, (Seoul: Maengmillan, 1985, reprinted in 1987, 1991, 1997); *Women of the Old and New Testament*, trans. Society of Christian Literature Publications (Seoul: Han Geul, 2005)

38 Abraham Kuyper, *The Death and Resurrection of Christ*, trans. Yu-bae Kim (Seoul: Emmaus Press, 1990)

Christian Digest Press since 1987.<sup>39</sup>

In conclusion, it was not until the end of the 1980s, when industrialization and democratization had been completed in Korea, that Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism received any attention from the Korean church, except for two reviews in the 1960s and the emergence of interest according to social participation demands during democratization. However, Kuyper's devotional books continued to attract attention. It will be discussed later whether the leading cause of this indifference is Korea's Calvinism, which is too conservative, or whether the Neo-Calvinist ideal is somewhat inappropriate for the process of industrialization and democratization, or whether interest in Neo-Calvinism increases just when social participation is demanded.

## 2. The Korean Church's Interest in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism since the late 1980s (1): Overall Tendency

There has been a continuing interest in Kuyper's traditional Calvinism in the Korean church, while the interest in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism has

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<sup>39</sup> Abraham Kuyper, *To be Near unto God*, trans. Sung Koo Chung (Seoul: Chongshin University Press, 1982); idem, *Christian Classics 13* (Seoul: Christian Digest, 1986; reprinted in 1987, 1989, 1998, 2002)

increased gradually since the late 1980s. During the 1970s and 1980s, Korea experienced rapid industrialization and democratization. Although the Korean conservative church had grown rapidly and unexpectedly during this period, they were generally indifferent to the political and social problems arising from the oppression of the military dictatorship and from the process of industrialization and democratization.

A civilian government was elected by free election in 1987 in place of the military regime. Since then, the Korean church has become more interested in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism. The title of this book, *Christianity as a Life-System*, an abbreviated English version of *The Lectures on Calvinism*, reflects the Korean Church's interest in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism, translated into Korean by Sömun Kang and was published in 1987.<sup>40</sup> In addition, various translations of Kuyper's biographies indicate an increasing interest in Kuyper, including *Abraham Kuyper*, written by Frank van den Berg in 1993,<sup>41</sup> *Let Christ Be King*, written by Louis Praamsama in 2011,<sup>42</sup> *Abraham Kuyper*, written by William B. Edmerns

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40 Abraham Kuyper, *Christianity as a Life-System*, trans. Sömun Kang, (Seoul, Sae Sun Press, 1987, reprinted in 1992)

41 Frank van den Berg, *Abraham Kuyper* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960); Frank van den Berg, *Abraham Kuyper*, (Abraham Kuyper), trans. Gichan Kim (Seoul: General Assembly Press, 1993)

42 Louis Praamsama, *Let Christ Be King: Reflections on the Life and Times of Abraham Kuyper*, trans. Sang-Woong Lee (Seoul: Blessingman Press, 2011)

in 2012,<sup>43</sup> Seong-Koo Chung's biography, *The Life and Thought of Abraham Kuyper*, published in 2010.<sup>44</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the increasing demands and obligations for social participation raised in the Korean church increased Kuyper's interest in Neo-Calvinism. I will cover the related content in several categories as a whole. The first point to consider is the relationship between democratization and industrialization and the Korean church's interest in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism. Whether the correlation between the two variables would be statistically valid is necessary for collecting a large amount of data from other countries with similar experiences. In addition, it is necessary to consider several other variables related to Korean social participation. However, at least it is found that when industrialization and democratization are complete, interest in Neo-Calvinism is higher than when they are not.

Second, in industrialization and democratization, the Korean church has proliferated and, as a result, has become a responsible member of Korean society. Therefore, unlike before, the demand for social participation has increased. In addition, the Korean Church neglected

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**43** William B. Edmerts, *Abraham Kuyper*, trans. Korea Christian Political Research (Seoul: Kumran Press, 2012)

**44** Seong-Koo Chung, *The Life and Thought of Abraham Kuyper* (Yongin: KingdomBooks, 2010)

social participation, such as human rights and public welfare, during industrialization and democratization. As a reflection, the Korean church's tendency to fulfill its social responsibility after industrialization and democratization was completed increased Kuyper's interest in Neo-Calvinism. Furthermore, the reason for the increased interest in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism in the Korean church is that, as informatization, openness, and globalization progress, the Korean church faces new challenges regarding social participation.

### 3. The Korean Church's Interest in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism after the late 1980s (2): Specific Tendency

In the 21st century, one of the reasons that increased interest in Kuyper the most was because *the Abraham Kuyper Translation Society* has been translating its collected books of Kuyper into English and published since 2011. One of the purposes of the translation of *the Abraham Kuyper Translation Society* was to help the Western world and the Christians of other continents in times of great upheaval and uncertainty.<sup>45</sup> Among

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45 Jordan J. Ballor and Melvin Flikkema, "General Editors' Introduction," in *Common Grace: God's Gifts for a Fallen World: The Historical Section*, Abraham Kuyper, edit, Jordan J. Ballor, Melvin Flikkema, and Stephen J. Grabill, trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman and Ed M. van der Maas, vol. 1, *Abraham Kuyper Collected Works in Public Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; Acton Institute, 2015), ix-xi.

these books, *Common Grace 1* was translated into Korean by Gi-Hwa Son and published in 2017.<sup>46</sup> *Our Program* was translated into Korean by Gi-Hwa Son and published in 2018 under the title *A Christian Political Manifesto*, including a recommendation by G. Harinck, who introduced the book's character and recommended reading.<sup>47</sup>

However, Kuyper's works which were not included in the collected books of the *Abraham Kuyper Translation Society* for English translation were also translated into Korean and published. For example, a speech by Kuyper in 1891, *The Social Question and the Christian Religion*, was translated into Korean by Kye-Kwang Cho and published in 2005.<sup>48</sup> In 2020, *Sphere Sovereignty* was published by the translation of Taeyeon Park, who translated four volumes of *Reformed Dogmatics* of Bavinck into Korean.<sup>49</sup> The translation of *Sphere Sovereignty* from the original Dutch version into Korean and publication reflecting the growing Korean church's interest in Neo-Calvinism.

Additionally, the activities of theologians who have returned from the Netherlands have acted as catalysts for this growth. In the past, they

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46 Abraham Kuyper, *Common Grace 1*, trans. Won-Ju Im (Seoul: Revival and Reform, 2017).

47 Abraham Kuyper, *Our Program, A Christian Political Manifesto in Korean*, trans. Gi-Hwa Son (Seoul: New Wave Plus, 2018)

48 Abraham Kuyper, *The Social Question and the Christian Religion*, trans. Kye-Kwang Cho (Seoul: World of Life Press, 2005)

49 Abraham Kuyper, *Sphere Sovereignty*, trans. Tae-Hyeun Park (Seoul: Daham Literature, 2020)

mainly focused on Reformed theology or Calvinism, but recently they have been actively engaged in Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism, including themes of the Reformed view of culture and Christian or Reformed worldview through publishing and providing lectures in schools and public meetings. For example, Professor Jae-Won Kim of Goryeo Graduate School of Theology, who holds a Ph.D. in Theology from Kampen Theological University, has given lectures on Neo Calvinism in seminary and public conferences.<sup>50</sup>

Moreover, they contribute to a greater understanding of Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism within the Korean church by providing terminology and background information. It appears to contain detailed introductions to Kuyper's life and thoughts, concepts involved, a background on the Free University and Neo-Calvinism, and translations of related themes into Korean.

The third interesting concern is Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism and its application by Christian scholars in other fields. A constitutional scholar, Kuk-Woon Lee, suggests that Kuyper's idea of sphere sovereignty can be applied as a concept of "constitutional Protestantism" rather than an aspect of the Kingship of Christ in Korea.<sup>51</sup> Another scholar, Myung Heon

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50 Jae-Woun Kim, *Reformed View of Culture: Kuyper, Skillder, and the Third Way in the Light of the Church-centered* (Seoul: SFC Press, 2015)

51 Kuk-Woon Lee, "The Acceptation of Abraham Kuyper's Political Thought in Korean Society," Korean version, *Faith & Scholarship* 18/3 (2013): 127-55.

Lee, a Christian economist, has linked various concepts of Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism to the introduction and application of the Christian view of economics, not only within the Christian economic field but also in other areas of economics. According to Myung Heon Lee, Kuyper's theistic views on fiscal policies derive from the theory of Sphere Sovereignty and the organic perspective on societies, which are substantially different from those of Adam Smith.<sup>52</sup>

In the fourth hand, among the most notable features of the Korean church's study of Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism is its attempt to apply certain concepts of Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism as an alternative solution to specific problems in the Korean church and theology. At the conference commemorating Abraham Kuyper's 100th anniversary, Bong-Ho Son suggested that Kuyper's sphere sovereignty could help solve both the dualistic worldview that underlies the severe problems in the Korean church and the theoretical basis for the Korean civic movement.<sup>53</sup> As another example, By drawing attention to the dualistic aspect of conservative Korean churches, Kuyper's concept of sphere sovereignty may also help resolve each social participation issue facing conservatives and progressives alike in the Korean socio-political situation since the

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52 Myung Hoon Lee, "Abraham Kuyper's Views on Fiscal Policies Compared with those of Adam Smith," Korean version, *Journal of EU Studies* Vol. 20, No. 1, (2015): 121–56.

53 Bong Ho Son, "Relevance of Sphere Sovereignty to Korean Society," 179–89.

1960s. Additionally, Kuyper's Calvinism concept of a life-system and common grace may assist in resolving some Korean church problems.<sup>54</sup>

A further radical proposal involves a call for transforming the confessional tradition of Korean Calvinism into a new direction. In his critique, Dong-Chun Kim points out that Korean Calvinism has been indifferent to both the world-forming and transformative aspects of Calvinism. He suggests an alternative called "social Calvinism," which reflects both the cultural transformation of Neo-Calvinism in the Netherlands and the perspective of liberation theology in the Reformed Church and Black Theology of South Africa to fulfill the social responsibility of the Korean church.<sup>55</sup>

In conclusion, the Reformed theological position of Kuyper remains prevalent in the Korean church, and the prevalence of Neo-Calvinism and its increasing application is an encouraging and gratifying development. However, as a system of life, Kuyper's sphere sovereignty or worldview should not be solely based on fragmentary content centered around definitions. Neo-Calvinists, including Kuyper, would easily not agree with social engagement in the same way as liberation theology

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54 Jeom Ok Kim, "The Relevance of Abraham Kuyper's Doctrine of Sphere Sovereignty for the Korean Presbyterian Church," 101–35.

55 Dong-Chun Kim, "Social Calvinism and Social Publicity of Korean Church," Korean version, *Christian Social Ethics* 32 (2015): 147–85.

or black theology. It is organically related to each other that Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism addresses specific topics. Due to this, it is imperative to take into consideration all background issues when discussing any theme. This backdrop includes, for example, the relationship between special revelation and general revelation, the kingship of Christ, and the sovereignty of God.

In addition, some papers point to the problem of abuse of authority in the Korean church due to the Confucian tradition. This study focuses primarily on Kuyper's sphere sovereignty in an attempt to find a solution. However, Kuyper offers us a broader perspective. Kuyper's criticism of the uniformity of modernism, his argument that no minister, institution, or another form of mediator exists between God and man, and that the only mediator is Christ in relation to abuse of authority in the church, provides a more direct and helpful perspective.<sup>56</sup> *The Common Grace*<sup>57</sup> and

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56 Abraham Kuyper, "Uniformity: The Curse of Modern Life," in *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; The Paternoster Press, 1998), 19–44. See for Kuyper's conversion and his Reformed spirituality, Abraham Kuyper, "Confidentially," *Abraham Kuyper: A Centennial Reader*, ed. James D. Bratt (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Carlisle: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; The Paternoster Press, 1998), 45–61; Abraham Kuyper, *Calvinism: Six Lectures Delivered in the Theological Seminary at Princeton* (New York; Chicago; Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1899), 18–22.

57 Abraham Kuyper, *Common Grace*, ed. Jordan J. Ballor, Melvin Flikkema, J. Daryl Charles (vol. 2–3), and Stephen J. Grabill (only vol. 1), trans. Nelson D. Kloosterman and Ed M. van der Maas, 3 vols, *Abraham Kuyper Collected Works in Public Theology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; Acton Institute, 2015–2020)

*Pro Rege series*,<sup>58</sup> although not yet fully translated into Korean, can be a valuable resource in a variety of applications.

## V. Conclusion: An Appropriate Foundation and Principles for the Future Application of Kuyper

Based on our discussion of Kuyper's acceptance in the past and the present of the Korean church, I propose the appropriate foundations and principles for Kuyper's acceptance in the future. First, it is regarded that the shared content of the revival of the Korean church and the revival of Neo-Calvinism should be preserved as an evangelical foundation. The second consideration is that in the future acceptance of Neo-Calvinism, we should refer more to Herman Bavinck in terms of the principle and more to Kuyper in terms of the content.

In the first place, the foundational factors considered common to both revivals of the Korean church and the Dutch Calvinist during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, can be considered essential regarding

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58 Abraham Kuyper, *Pro Rege: Living under Christ's Kingship*, ed. Jordan J. Ballor et al., trans. Albert Gootjes, 3 vols, Abraham Kuyper Collected Works in Public Theology (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; Acton Institute, 2016–2019)

accepting and spreading the gospel. Therefore, when the Korean church applies Kuyper's theology, it is imperative to maintain and strengthen these essential elements as an evangelical foundation. Both revivals share the following attributes: the authority of the Bible, the importance of Bible study and its practice, and Reformed spirituality based on the assurance of salvation and hope of heaven, and ordinary believers as subjects of reformation, and active participation in reality. The related contents are beyond the scope of this paper.<sup>59</sup>

In the second place, it is expected that Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism will gradually increase acceptance in the Korean church over the coming years. When applying his Neo-Calvinism, I suggest following more Bavinck in terms of application principles and more Kuyper in terms of application contents. I present here the relationship between Kuyper and Bavinck as well as the principle and purpose of general revelation, which is one of the biggest debates within Neo-Calvinism.

The foundational basis of Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism is the sovereignty of God, which "led Kuyper to four important related and derivative doctrines or principles: common grace, the antithesis, sphere sovereignty,

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<sup>59</sup> I will present this topic under the title "An Evangelical Legacy in the Revival of Dutch Neo-Calvinism and of the Korean Church" on November 15–17, 2022, at the 74th Annual Meeting of the *Evangelical Theological Society* in Denver, the United States.

and the distinction between the church as institute and the church as organism.”<sup>60</sup> Initially following Kuyper loyally, Bavinck gradually became more critical of the movement because the later tendency gradually evolved into speculative and philosophical rather than practical in the later period. That was in contrast to its sound balance in the early days.<sup>61</sup>

It is significant to consider Bavinck’s concept of the relationship between general and special revelation as a critical point in his nature and grace motif. This relationship ultimately determines the characteristics of religious life and social participation as a whole. Based on one’s understanding of this relationship, he could be regarded as Pietistic, Liberal, or Roman Catholic. From this point of view, Bavinck’s critique of Kuyper centers on the function and role of common grace. By systematizing common grace independently, Kuyper and his followers gradually separated common grace from special grace, whereas Bavinck did not attempt to separate common grace from special grace,

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60 John Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck’s Two Essays on the Imitatio Christi: Between Pietism and Modernism* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2013), 134–35; cf. see for the whole, 134–43.

61 See for details on the chronological and content aspects of the relationship between Kuyper and Bavinck, Bolt, *A Theological Analysis of Herman Bavinck’s Two Essays*, for Bavinck and Kuyper: Background, Career and Significance, 12–19; Bavinck as Kuyper’s Loyal Follower and Supporter, 143–54; for Bavinck’s critique of Kuyper, 168–292; Cheol-Dong Park, “A Comparative Study on the Relationship between Revelation and the View of Culture of Herman Bavinck and Karl Barth,” Korean version, Ph.D. Dissertation (The Graduate School, ACTS University, 2017): 48–52.

maintaining its importance.

Kuyper and his followers' systematization of common grace led to the separation of common grace from special grace. Common grace had independent goals and principles and formed a system in which two graces were reconciled at the end of time. As a result, Kuyper's Neo-Calvinism almost disappeared after the mid-20th century in the Netherlands, facing severe criticism.<sup>62</sup> In addition, the infant baptism debate with common grace controversy caused the Reformed Church in Grand Rapids to split up in the United States during the early twentieth century.

To avoid following this path, the Korean church should adhere more to the aspect of Bavinck's principles. It should not systematize common grace, including general revelation, nor separate it from special grace, including special revelation. In place of the proper relationship between the two, Bavinck's apt remark replaces it:

Special revelation certainly is set antithetically over against all the corruption which gradually entered into the life of the peoples. However, it takes up, confirms, and completes all that had been from the beginning

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**62** Van der Kooi, "A Theology of Culture: A Critical Appraisal of Kuyper's Common Grace," in *Kuyper Reconsidered: Aspects of His Life and Work*, 95–101. Cf. Arnold A. van Ruler, "Kuyper's Idee Eener Christelijke Cultuur," in *Onze Tijd*, 12/13 (Nijkerk: Callenbach, 1940)

put into human nature by general revelation and had been preserved and increased subsequently in the human race.<sup>63</sup>

In addition, Bavinck's Christological integration is also suggested based on a supernatural worldview and the universality of Christ's Mediator, although it is not discussed in this paper.<sup>64</sup>

Nevertheless, Kuypers's numerous legacies, including the common grace series, the series on social participation, and the role of Christian parties in politics, afford us many advantages and insights even today, despite the differences in backgrounds and circumstances. Even though Neo-Calvinism did not exert a significant influence on Dutch theology today, Neo-Calvinism has left many cultural heritages in today's Netherlands, such as the primary neutrality of the press,<sup>65</sup> the guarantee of education autonomy, and the political tradition that "A democratic party does not

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63 Herman Bavinck, *The Philosophy of Revelation: The Stone Lectures for 1908-1909*, Princeton Theological Seminary (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1909), 188-89; Cheol-Dong Park, "A Comparative Study," 102-08.

64 See for Bavinck's Christological union, E. P. Heideman, *The Relation of Revelation and Reason in E. Brunner and H. Bavinck* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1959), 129-230; Cheol-Dong Park, "A Comparative Study," 134-66, 290-350; Nelson D. Kloosterman, "A Response to 'The Kingdom of God is Twofold': Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms in the Thought of Herman Bavinck by David VanDrunen," *Calvin Theological Journal* 45/1 (April 2010): 165-76; Cheol-Dong Park, "An Integrative View on Faith and Knowledge of the Deity of Christ in Herman Bavinck: Norms for an Integrative View on Various Aspects of Special Revelation," *Korean Journal of Systematic Theology* vol. 67 (2022): 136-44.

65 Irving Hexham, "Understanding World Religions - Chapter 22: What can Christians Learn from Abraham Kuypers?" accessed on October 14, 2022, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aczzBHfTzbY&list=PL9ipsMVn3xMBZmw7OzrVsOnYjgTbJDQwG&index=2>

represent group interests but rather an elaborate view of the common good.”<sup>66</sup> As for application content, if Kuyper’s works are well received critically, his vast legacy will undoubtedly benefit us.

Finally, as some applicable examples, there are currently discussions regarding the problems of the Korean church and how to improve them in various aspects. According to a study, the main reason for the decline of the Korean church following rapid growth is a lack of both the pastor’s philosophy of education and the leader’s philosophy and proper alternatives are suggested.<sup>67</sup> As a theological movement, the ACTS Theological Synoptic Movement pursues theological enterprises toward a redeemed life that encompasses the whole of the broad reality of salvation, including doctrines and piety.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, both a function of public theology and the public nature of the church are suggested that these can be utilized to overcome a situational challenge such as the Covid-19 pandemic.<sup>69</sup> In these cases, the Neo-Calvinism of Kuyper, which results

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66 George Harinck, “Neo-Calvinism and Democracy: An Overview from the Mid-Nineteenth Century Till the Second World War,” in *Calvinism and Democracy*, ed. John Bowlin, vol. 4, The Kuyper Center Review (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 17–18.

67 Byoungchul Joseph Jun, “A Qualitative Study on The Crisis and its Factors of Decline of the Korean Church Education,” Korean version, *ACTS Theological Journal*, vol. 30 (2016): 141–77.

68 Sang Hwa Han, “ACTS Theological Synoptic Movement and the Central Truth of Christianity,” Korean version, *ACTS Theological Journal* vol. 28 (2016): 9–42.

69 Seong Hun Choi, “The Post-Covid-19 Era and the Publicity of Korean Churches: As Viewed through Worship Service and the Sense of Community,” Korean version, *ACTS Theological Journal*,

from his reflections on the issues such as the relationship between common and special grace, dualism, and anthesis to which all three cases are involved, would more profoundly offer significant insights into the solution of these. Accordingly, when the Korean church applies Kuyper's legacy, the following criteria should be considered: a comprehensive examination of organic and related themes, keeping foundation related to the gospel, and appropriate discernment of application principles and application contents.

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## 한국 교회의 과거, 현재 그리고 미래에서 아브라함 카이퍼: 장로교회를 중심으로

박철동(연구자)

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### 국문초록

최근 수십년 동안 세계적으로 아브라함 카이퍼(1837-1920)에 대한 관심이 높아짐에 따라 한국 교회에서 카이퍼의 개혁신학에 대한 관심이 지속되는 가운데 그의 신칼빈주의에 대한 관심도 점차 높아지고 있다. 카이퍼와 한국교회의 관계에 대한 선행연구들은 한국교회와 그 문제점에 대한 간략한 개요를 제시하고 카이퍼의 특정 주제가 이러한 문제를 해결하는데 도움이 될 것이라고 결론지었다. 본 논문의 목적은 한국 개신교 전체 역사 속에서 한국 교회가 과거부터 최근까지 카이퍼를 수용하는데 나타나는 특징을 분석하여 그의 신칼빈주의의 향후의 수용을 위한 적절한 방향을 제시하는데 있다. 첫째, 본 논문은 한국 개신교의 전체 역사의 맥락에서 네덜란드 신학이 한국 교회에 도입되고 확립되는 역사적 배경을 개괄하였다. 둘째, 1960년대 카이퍼에 대한 첫 학술 저술 시기부터 현재까지 카이퍼에 대한 대부분의 학술논문과 번역서를 분석하여 한국교회에서

카이퍼의 수용 경향의 특징을 제시하였다.

나는 이러한 분석을 바탕으로 카이퍼의 특정 주제를 한국 교회 내 이슈나 또는 다른 학문 분야에 적용할 때 카이퍼의 보다 광범위하고 유기적으로 연결된 관련 주제들이 함께 고려되어야 한다고 주장한다. 카이퍼의 신칼빈주의에 대한 향후 연구에서, 네덜란드의 신칼빈주의 부흥과 한국 교회의 부흥에서 공통적으로 나타나는 내용은 유지되고 강화되어져할 복음적 토대가 되어야 한다. 나아가 신칼빈주의의 불완전한 과거 자취를 따르지 않기 위하여 신칼빈주의의 수용시 원리적인 측면에서는 바빙크를, 내용적인 측면에서는 카이퍼를 보다 참조할 필요가 있다고 제안한다.

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**[ 주제어 ]**

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