

A Reformed perspective of the Presbyterian Church in Korea's adoption of their "Twelve Articles of Faith' in 1907

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ABSTRACT

Reformed churches (including the Presbyterian Church) have regarded themselves as confessional churches. They have represented through their confessions what they believe and what they should do. In this regard, the adoption of a confession is a very important issue that determines the identity of the church. The first presbytery meeting of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK), which was established in 1907, adopted “the Twelve Articles of Faith (TAF)” as their standard of faith. Since then, however, the PCK has not been built up with a clear identity as a Reformed Presbyterian Church. The reason is that, from its beginnings to the present, the PCK has been indifferent to their confessions (TAF, Westminster Confession of Faith [WCF]), and the confessions have been a mere formality which practically plays a small role in the PCK.

Given this context, this study evaluated the justification of the PCK’s adoption of the TAF in 1907 from a Reformed perspective on confessions of faith. To achieve this aim, the study investigated the historical background and motivations of the PCK’s adoption of the TAF in 1907. In this process, the leading figures whose thinking was the basis of its adoption were also examined. As a foundation for the evaluation, the study conducted an investigation into the Reformed perspective on confessions of faith, and examined the theological tendency of the TAF through the analysis of the structure and content of the TAF.

This study aimed to contribute to rediscovering the meaning and value of confessions as a precious heritage in the Reformed tradition, and to stimulating the restoration of this confessional heritage as a solution to the various problems and confusions in the PCK that are currently caused by the loss of identity as a Presbyterian Church.

Key terms

Twelve Articles of Faith (TAF), Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF), Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK), American missionaries, Reformed tradition, confessional revision or replacement, catholicity of Confessions, church unity

OPSOMMING

Gereformeerde kerke (insluitend die Presbiteriaanse Kerk) beskou hulleself as belydeniskerke. Deur middel van hulle belydenisse verklaar hulle wat hulle glo en wat hulle moet doen. In hierdie opsig is die aanvaarding van 'n geloofsbelydenis 'n baie belangrike kwessie wat die identiteit van die kerk bepaal. Die eerste Presbiteriaanse vergadering van die Presbiteriaanse Kerk in Korea (PCK), wat in 1907 gestig is, het die "Twelve Articles of Faith (TAF)" as sy geloofstandaard aanvaar. Die PCK is sedertdien egter nie opgebou met 'n duidelike identiteit as 'n Gereformeerde Presbiteriaanse Kerk nie. Die rede is dat, van sy begin tot vandag, die PCK onverskillig gestaan het teenoor sy belydenisse (TAF, Westminster Confession of Faith [WCF]), en is die belydenisskrifte 'n blote formaliteit wat prakties 'n geringe rol in die PCK speel.

In hierdie konteks het die studie die regverdiging van die PCK se aanvaarding van die TAF in 1907 vanuit 'n Gereformeerde perspektief op belydenisse ondersoek. Om die doel te bereik, het die studie ondersoek ingestel rakende die historiese agtergrond en motiverings van die PCK se aanvaarding van die TAF in 1907. In hierdie proses is 'n ondersoek gedoen oor die leidende figure wat se denke die basis van die aanvaarding was. As basis vir die evaluering is 'n ondersoek gedoen omtrent geloofsbelydenisse vanuit 'n Gereformeerde perspektief, asook oor die teologiese tendens van die TAF deur middel van die analise van die struktuur en inhoud van die TAF.

Die studie het beoog om by te dra tot die herontdekking van die betekenis en waarde van geloofsbelydenisse as die kosbare erfenis in die Gereformeerde tradisie, en tot die stimulering van die herstel van hierdie belydeniserfenis as 'n oplossing tot die verskillende probleme en verwarring in die PCK wat tans veroorsaak word deur die verlies aan identiteit as 'n Presbiteriaanse Kerk.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BC	Belgic Confession
CD	Canons of Dordt
HC	Heidelberg Catechism
ICRC	International Conferences of the Reformed Churches
OPC	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
PCC	Presbyterian Church in Canada
PCI	Presbyterian Church in India
PCK	Presbyterian Church in Korea
PCUS	Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Southern)
PCUSA	Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Northern)
PCVA	Presbyterian Church of Victoria in Australia
SVM	Student Volunteer Movement
TAF	Twelve Articles of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in Korea
WCF	Westminster Confession of Faith
WLC	Westminster Larger Catechism
WSC	Westminster Shorter Catechism

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In 1884, about 130 years ago, the first resident missionary, Horace Allen (1858-1932), stepped onto Korean soil. Twenty-three years later, the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) was established and adopted their Twelve Articles of Faith (TAF)¹ of the Presbyterian Church in India (PCI) as their doctrinal standard at the first Presbytery meeting in 1907. In the early days of the PCK, the influence of missionaries was almost absolute in its formation and development; with the influence of American missionaries being especially overwhelming. Although the home Churches of the missionaries had the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) as their doctrinal standard, the missionaries adopted the TAF rather than the WCF as a statement of faith for the PCK. They regarded the TAF as the best confession for the PCK. Since then, the TAF has been one of the official confessions of the PCK.

In the 1950s, the PCK was divided into several Churches (*Kosin*, *Kijang*, *Hapdong* and *Tonghap*). All the Churches except *Kijang*² adopted the WCF along with the TAF as their doctrinal standard. The confessions, however, are nothing more than just a formality in the Churches. They are regarded as reference books, and in practice, they are not a guide for ministry and church life. In fact, a large number of members of the PCK don't even know what their confessions are.

In the Reformed tradition, Reformed churches (including the Presbyterian Churches) have codified the reformed reading of the Scripture in public confessional documents (Scott Clark, 2008:151). In other words, Reformed churches have historically expressed their own identity through the Reformed confessions based on the Scripture. In this respect, the PCK has followed the confessional Reformed tradition in its form. Ironically, however, the confessions in the PCK have not really played a significant role and, as a result, its identity as a Reformed Presbyterian Church is very faint.

¹ The formal name of the Twelve Articles of Faith (TAF) was in India, "The confession of faith of the United Church of Northern India"; and in Korea, "The confession of faith of the Korean Presbyterian Church". However, it has been more often called the name of "Twelve Articles of Faith", especially in Korea, than by its official name (Hwang, 2011b:200; cf. Curtis, 1911:284). In this dissertation, therefore, the name of the confession of both the Indian and Korean Churches will be referred to as "the Twelve Articles of Faith". Its original text is attached as Annexure 1.

² *Kijang* was separated from the PCK in 1953 due to their progressive liberal theology (especially in the view of the Scripture). After that, *Kijang* continued to adhere to the TAF as their doctrinal standard, and in 1972 they created and adopted their own confession of faith.

Where did this gap come from? What was the spirit in terms of the statement of faith that the PCK first received from the missionaries? In this study, therefore, the PCK's adoption of the TAF in 1907 is evaluated from a Reformed perspective to answer these questions.

1.2 Background

The TAF was first introduced and adopted by the "Council of Missions Holding the Presbyterian Forms of Government", which was established by four Presbyterian missions in Korea: the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Northern, PCUSA), the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Southern, PCUS), the Presbyterian Church of Victoria in Australia (PCVA) and the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC). The Council decided to establish an independent Korean Presbyterian Church and appointed a committee to prepare a doctrinal standard for the Church in advance (Charles Clark, 1930:127). The committee studied various confessions such as the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Helvetic Confession, the Canons of Dordt and the Westminster Confession of Faith (Charles Clark, 1919:284). In the meantime, the committee was aware of the existence of the TAF drawn up in 1904 in the PCI, and after studying it, reported to the Council of 1905 that the TAF would be the most suitable confession for the PCK that was to be established. The Council then adopted the TAF as the doctrinal standard of the PCK before its establishment. The first presbytery of the PCK in 1907 decided to have a one-year verification period for the TAF, which was finally adopted at the second presbytery meeting of 1908. The text of the TAF was included in the minutes of the presbytery meeting of 1910. After the PCK divided into four Churches, most of them adopted the WCF as their doctrinal standard in the 1960s and 1970s. Nonetheless, the TAF also has been consistently included as a public ecclesiastical document in the constitutions of the Churches.³

1.3 Problem statement

In the Reformed tradition, the Reformed churches, including the Presbyterian Church, have always been confessional (Scott Clark, 2008:159; Bavinck, 2011b:420). They have expressed their own identity through their confessions as to what they believe and practise. In this respect, the adoption of the TAF in 1907 was a very important event in determining the identity of the PCK. If this is the case, has the PCK established its identity firmly as a Reformed Presbyterian Church by the adoption of the TAF? When one looks back on the past 100 years of the history of the PCK, it seems as if it did not. The history of the PCK shows that their confessional

³ *Hapdong* and *Tonghap* included the TAF as a basic creed so far in their constitutions. In the case of *Kosin*, since they adopted the WCF in 1969 as their doctrinal standard, the TAF was included in the appendix to the constitution. The TAF, however, was not included in the latest constitution revised in 2011.

standards have not played practically their roles. Although they have been accepted, but they have not been a guide to actual ministry and church life (Yoo, 2002:42). The PCK did not give sufficient consideration to the confessional tradition of the Reformed churches (including the Presbyterian Church) and to build its own identity firmly with the aid of confessions.

Currently, as a result, ignorance of and indifference to their confessions are rampant in the PCK. A large number of the members of the PCK do not even know what their confessions are. Various heresies have widened their powers, and members of many churches have been misled by their false teachings. In the case of church officers, although they are required to subscribe to their standards of faith, the subscription is often only a formality. Many church officers do not even know the contents of the standards of faith and do not conduct their duty according to the standards. A significant number of sermons in the PCK are therefore not in the Calvinistic tradition but could be classified as Arminian, Pentecostal and even secular (Heo, 2001:25). Many pastors have caused the hierarchy of the pastoral office by monopolising high authority in the church, just like the medieval bishops, and the power game between pastors and elders is darkening the future of the PCK. Furthermore, a lot of the Presbyterian denominations that were divided without confessional cause have been zealously engaged in the modern ecumenical movement (Yoo, 2002:42-43).

Consequently, currently the identity of the PCK as a Presbyterian Church is fragile. A number of complex factors may have affected the current state of the PCK, but one of the greatest causes can be found in its origin. This is because, in a mission field, the theological and doctrinal foundation of a church that was given by the early missionaries has a decisive influence on the shape and colour of the church in future. Looking back into the history of the PCK, in this regard, one sees that this has been the case from its very inception when it adopted the TAF as their standard of faith.

Therefore the research question that flows from the exposition above is:

Can the adoption of the TAF in the PCK be justified in accordance with a Reformed perspective?

Questions that arise from this problem are the following:

- What were the background of and motivation for the adoption of their TAF?
- What is the Reformed perspective on confessions of faith?
- What is the theological nature of their TAF?
- How should the PCK's adoption of their TAF be evaluated?

1.4 Aim and objectives

1.4.1 Aim

The aim of this study is to evaluate the PCK's adoption of their TAF in 1907 from a Reformed perspective.

1.4.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- study and analyse the historical background of the PCK's adoption of their TAF;
- study and analyse the Reformed perspective on confessions of faith;
- study and analyse the theological nature of the TAF in comparison with the WCF;
- evaluate the PCK's adoption of their TAF from a Reformed perspective.

1.5 Central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that the PCK's adoption of their Twelve Articles of Faith was contrary to the Reformed perspective on confessions of faith in its motivations and content.

1.6 Methodology

The study was conducted from the Reformed perspective.

The following methods were applied to answer the research questions:

- To present the background of the PCK's adoption of the TAF, a literature analysis was conducted following the historical study method. This analysis focused on Korean church history with the emphasis on the process leading up to the first Presbyterian meeting in 1907 and the motives for adopting the TAF at the meeting. A literature analysis following the literary survey method was also conducted concerning the early sources relating to the adoption process of the TAF within the PCI, and the theological position of American missionaries, who played a leading role at the time.
- To investigate the Reformed perspective on confessions of faith, a literature analysis following the literary survey method was conducted regarding the role and authority of confessions, and confessional revision or replacement in the Reformed tradition.

- To analyse the contents of the TAF, structure and content analysis was conducted by comparing it with the WCF.
- To evaluate the PCK's adoption of their TAF in terms of the contents and motives, the critical analysis was conducted using the preceding chapters as a guide.

CHAPTER 2

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND MOTIVES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA'S ADOPTION OF THEIR TWELVE ARTICLES OF FAITH

2.1 Introduction

How and why did the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) adopt their Twelve Articles of Faith (TAF) as their doctrinal standard? These are the first questions that need to be discussed in order to evaluate the justification of the adoption. This chapter therefore aims to trace the historical background and motivations of the PCK's adoption of their TAF. This chapter firstly traces the historical process from the arrival of resident missionaries to the adoption of the TAF at the Presbytery meeting of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church in 1907. Then the chapter traces the origin of the TAF in the history of the Presbyterian Church in India (PCI) and examines the early sources of the PCK in relation to the TAF. Finally, it indicates the consequences by analysing the theological position of American missionaries, who had an almost absolute influence at that time.

2.2 Historical background

2.2.1 The process up to the first Presbytery meeting of the PCK in 1907

2.2.1.1 Periods of beginnings (1884-1892)

The first resident missionary, who came to Korea on 20 September 1884, was Horace Allen (1858-1932) (Paik, 1927:91; Clark, 1930:66). He was a medical doctor meaning that the first resident missionary in Korea was a layman. After half a year, on 5 April 1885, Rev. Horace Underwood (1859-1916), who was a first evangelistic worker, arrived in Incheon with Rev. Henry Appenzeller (1858-1902), a Methodist missionary (Clark, 1918; Shin, 2011:240). John Heron (1856-1890, medical doctor) came to Korea in June of the same year. All of them (except Appenzeller) were members of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA), and they set up the Korea Mission of the PCUSA in Korea (Charles Clark, 1918:10). Following them, several missionaries of the PCUSA came to Korea: Rev. Samuel A Moffet (1890), Rev. William Baird (1891), Rev. William Swallen (1892), Rev. Graham Lee (1892), and others. The number of missionaries in the PCUSA who came to Korea until 1910 was around forty (Kang, 2009:50). The missionaries of the PCUSA were the first people to start missionary work in Korea. They expanded their mission fields to many areas of Korea: *Gyeonggi* Province

(northwest) including *Seoul*, which was the capital of Korea; *Chungbuk* (central region), *Gyeongbuk* (southeast), *Hwanghae* (midwest), North *Pyeonggan* (northwest), South *Pyeonggan* (midwest) (Kang, 2009:49-50). They also played a significant role in theological education. Two-thirds of the professors at *Pyeongyang* Theological Seminary, which was the first theological seminary in Korean church, were missionaries of the PCUSA until 1938, when the seminary was shut down because it had opposed the shrine worship that was enforced by Japan (Heo, 2004:246).

The Mission of the PCUSA was a representative group which led missionary activities in Korea and had the most significant impact on the place of theology and religious life in the PCK (Heo, 2008:58; Shin, 2011:241). In 1889 missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria in Australia (PCVA) came to Korea and started their missionary work centred in the *Gyeongsang* Province (southeast). In 1892 missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) came and started their missionary work in *Jeolla*, *Chungcheong* Province (southwest), and in 1898 missionaries from the Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) came and made *Hamgyeong* Province (north) their mission field (Lee, K.S., 2007:99-101).

The four Presbyterian Churches, PCUSA, PCUS, PCVA and PCC, thus sent missionaries and started their missionary activities in Korea. The Presbyterian Churches in Korea, therefore, were built and grew under the influence of the Presbyterian Churches in America and Australia rather than of the Reformed Presbyterian Churches in Europe (Heo, 2008:62). Among them the influence of the PCUSA was almost absolute⁴ (Heo, 2001:21; Kim & Gan, 1997:86).

2.2.1.2 Period of the Council (1893–1906)

2.2.1.2.1 Period of the Council of missionaries (1893-1900)

The missionaries of the PCUSA and the PCVA thought that it would not be right for their missionary activities to compete with each other in Korea, which was a new mission field, and therefore organised the Presbyterian Council in 1889 to cooperate with one another (Shin, 2011:270). Its official name was the “United Council of Missions of the American and Victorian Churches”. The first chairman of the Council was Heron (PCUSA), the secretary was Rev. Joseph Davies (1856-1890, PCVA), and the charter members were Underwood (PCUSA), Allen (PCUSA) and Rev. Daniel Gifford (1861-1900, PCUSA) (Charles Clark, 1918:14-15). The

⁴ The total number of missionaries who came to Korea before liberation from Japanese colonial rule in 1945 was estimated to be about 1 500, of which about 70% were American. Among the total number of missionaries, Presbyterian missionaries accounted for 44.5%, which is 1.8 times more than the Methodists' 26.3%. And out of 671 Presbyterian missionaries, 79% were American - the PCUSA: 339 (50.5%), the PCUS: 191 (28.5%), the PCVA: 78 (11.6%), the PCC: 80 (11.9%) (Lee, 2012:299).

Council, however, did not continue for several years from the following year due to the sudden death of Davies. Meanwhile, missionaries in the PCUS came to Korea in 1892. Taking this opportunity, the “Council of Missions Holding the Presbyterian Forms of Government”, organised by missionaries of the PCUSA and the PCUS, and afterwards the PCVA and the PCC, joined in it (Charles Clark, 1918:209). At that time, the Council was just a meeting for discussion and fellowship among the missionaries. The home Assemblies of the four Missions still had an authority to govern the churches in Korea which were built by each Mission. So the missionaries not only reported the facts about the organisation of the Council to their home Assemblies but also requested to allow the Council to take a role as a Presbytery in Korea. As a result, the roles of a Presbytery, such as the selection and training of ministers, the execution of the sacraments and discipline, were fulfilled by the authority of the Council by 1900. Under the Council were the church sessions in the different provinces. The Council set up two bodies named the Committees of Council, one for *Pyeongyang* and the north, and one for Seoul and the south. In 1901 two more were set up in the *Jeolla* and *Gyeongsang* provinces in the south, and in 1905, a fifth in *Hamgyeong* in the northeast. The sessions were to report to the Committee of Council, which was to report to the Central Council. Later the Committee of Council was called Presbyterial Committees, of which ordained missionaries, Korean elders, and helpers⁵ were members (Rhodes, 1934:385). The Council was the governing body for all the churches until the organisation of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church in 1907 (Rhodes, 1934:385; Cha, 1928:17-18).

2.2.1.2.2 Period of the Joint Council (1901-1906)

Even though the Council came to play a role of a presbytery, the missionaries had been pondering about establishing an independent Korean Presbyterian Church. The objective of the Council was “the uniform organisation in Korea of but one native Church holding the Reformed Faith and the Presbyterian form of Government”⁶ (Rhodes, 1934:385; Charles Clark, 1918:15). In other words, the Council was regarded as a kind of preliminary apparatus before the establishment of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church (Council of Presbyterian Missions, 1918:214). Cha Jae Myeong (1928:17-18) said about the Council in his book

⁵ “Helpers” were chosen by missionaries at first to help the works such as teaching Korean and translating the Bible. Later they helped mission activities like preaching (teaching) the gospel, Bible translation, and church planting as a temporary church office (Shin, 2015:9-10).

⁶ However, in 1905, the Council agreed with the Methodist Church to establish a united Church in Korea, the so-called “the Church of Jesus in Korea” and adopted the TAF and Form of Government of the PCI instead of the WCF and the (Westminster) Form of Presbyterian Church Government (1645) (cf. 2.2.2.2; 2.3.4.4). It can be deduced, therefore, that their main concern was “the uniform organization in Korea of one native church” rather than “holding the Reformed Faith and the Presbyterian form of Government”.

Joseonyesugyojangrohoe sagi (sang) [The history of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Vol. 1)]
as follows:

*“Gonguihoeleul jojighayas-seuni sihoenan janglaeui jeogbeobdaelo seollibhal
chilihoega hyeonchulhagi jeon-enan jeongwon-eulo chilihanan sanghoega
doeyeosnanila ... Sihoenan janglaeui jeongsig chilihoeui yebijeog gonghoela
gawihaliloda. [This Council came to a Higher Court ruling with full authority until the
appearance of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church, which will be
established legitimately in the future ... This Council should be called a preliminary
assembly of the formal Presbytery meeting in Korea.]”*

Since the missionaries knew well that the Council, which consisted only of missionaries, could not be the Presbytery in the right sense, they wanted the Korean leaders to be trained in general Presbyterian procedure, and to be prepared to take an active part in the management of the churches (Hwang, 2007:291; Charles Clark, 1930:123). With this purpose, the Council decided that, beginning with 1901, double sessions of its meetings should be held: half of the sessions (English session), as in the past, with the missionaries meeting only, and half (Korean session) with the missionaries and some Korean delegates: elders and helpers. This period from 1901 to 1906, when the double sessions were held, was called “the Period of joint Council” (Charles Clark, 1930:123).

In the English session missionaries discussed and decided on choosing and disciplining theology students, establishing an independent Korean Presbyterian Church, establishing the rules of the Council, and so on (Cha, 1928:82-83; Charles Clark, 1918:19-20). In the Korean session, missionaries and Korean delegates discussed the circumstances of the churches in each area and determined the methods of helping weak churches in need with contributions from churches (Cha, 1928:82-83; Charles Clark, 1918:18-19). Ecclesiastical power resided with the missionaries in the English session, and the role of the Korean session was limited because there were no Korean pastors at that time and the Korean delegates were inexperienced in church duties (Charles Clark, 1918:18). The Koreans were being trained for the time (1907) when the power would be given to them.

In addition, some preparations were made for the organisation of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church during this period (1901-1906) (Rhodes, 1934:386). In 1901 the Council appointed a committee of five missionaries to formulate plans to establish an independent Korean Presbyterian Church. On 9 September 1902 the Committee reported the plans to the Council and the missionaries began a discussion to officially organise an independent Korean Presbyterian Church based on the plans. They decided to establish it when there were twelve

churches with more than one elder and three ordained Korean pastors (Charles Clark, 1918:26). They also decided to prepare a confession of faith and church order in advance for an independent Korean Presbyterian Church (Charles Clark, 1930:127). At the same time they asked their home Assemblies to authorise the organisation of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church (Charles Clark, 1918:28). The PCC and the PCVA approved it, but the PCUSA and the PCUS refused permission at first on the grounds that it was still premature to organise an independent Korean Presbyterian Church. They said that it would be better to organise it after a fair number of Korean ministers had been produced, and Korean members held a majority in the Council (Charles Clark, 1918:36-37). However, in the end the PCUSA and the PCUS approved it in 1905 after considering the positions and opinions of missionaries who were working in the mission field (Kang, 2009:68). After getting permission, the Council decided officially that an independent Korean Presbyterian Church would be organised in 1907 (Charles Clark, 1918:40-42), and that seven theology students expected to graduate at that time would be ordained as pastors at its first Presbytery meeting (Kim, 1971:100-101).

2.2.1.3 Establishment of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church (1907)

The first Presbytery meeting was held, at last, on 17 September and an independent Korean Presbyterian Church was established.⁷ It was 23 years after the first resident missionary (Allen) arrived in Korea. The first Presbytery meeting had 78 members, consisting of 38 missionaries and 40 Korean elders (Park, 2012:154). There were seven sub-Presbyteries⁸ under this Presbytery (Lee, S.G., 2007:19-20). The reported religious situation of the PCK, at that time, was as follows: 53 elders, 131 helpers, 984 worship places, 402 schools, 17 890 communicants, 21 482 adherents and 69 098 attendance (PCK, 1980a [1st]:6-7). At the first Presbytery meeting, seven Korean theology students (Seo Gyeong Jo, Han Seok Jin, Song Lin Seo, Yang Jeon Baek, Bang Ki Chang, Kil Seon Ju, Lee Ki Pung) were ordained as pastors, who graduated from *Pyeongyang* Theological Seminary that year. The confession of faith (TAF) and the form of government prepared beforehand by the Council was adopted (PCK, 1980a [1st]:8-10).

⁷ While the Reformed Church defines the local church as a complete universal church (BC, Art. 27), the Presbyterian Church regards the local church as a member of the universal church (WCF, 25:4). The Presbyterian Church also regards the Presbytery as the universal church where the local church is a member (Westminster Assembly, 2018:603-607). Therefore the day of the first Presbytery in 1907 was considered to be the beginning of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church in the PCK (cf. PCK, 1980a [1st]:7-8).

⁸ The sub-Presbyteries became Presbyteries in 1912 when the General Assembly of the PCK was organised.

2.2.2 The process of the adoption of their TAF

2.2.2.1 The preparation process of the Missionary Council

As stated above, the missionaries of the Council had discussed the establishment of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church since 1902. In that year they also appointed a preparatory committee for the preparation of a confession of faith for the yet to be established church (Charles Clark, 1930:127). The missionaries intended to prepare it in advance and to present it at the first Presbytery meeting of this church (Charles Clark, 1918:27-28). The name of this committee was “the Committee on the Translation of Church Standards” and its members were Underwood (PCUSA), Baird (PCUSA), James Gale (PCUSA), William Reynolds (PCUS) and William Foote (PCC).⁹ They scrutinised several confessions from ancient to modern, including the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Helvetic Confession, the Canons of Dordt and the Westminster Confession of Faith (Charles Clark, 1919:284). It is not clear what methods they used for scrutinising these.¹⁰ During this process, they were informed about the TAF having been adopted in 1904 by the Presbyterian Church in India (PCI), and after studying it, they reached an agreement that the TAF would be the best fit for an independent Korean Presbyterian Church. They reported their findings on the TAF. As stated above, it was accepted first by the Council in 1905 before the establishment of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church (Charles Clark, 1918:41-42).

2.2.2.2 Adopting process in the Presbytery meetings

In 1907 the first Presbytery meeting of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church determined to adopt the TAF as their standard of faith and a form of government.¹¹ It was as stated above,

⁹ Park Yong Gyu (2009:88-89) described them as missionaries representing the Presbyterian Church of Korea and stated four things they have in common: 1. They left a lot of writings with a great desire to learn. 2. They had worked as professors at Pyeongyang Theological Seminary. 3. They were influenced by the revival movements and had a great passion for the gospel. 4. They were very positive about the ecumenical church union movement.

¹⁰ Park Yong Gyu (2009:89-90) assumed that each member of the committee studied each part among the confessions selected, and then they gathered together and reached a common consensus by sharing the results of their respective studies.

¹¹ It was the (Westminster) Form of Presbyterian Church Government (1645), which was first submitted to the Council in 1906 as the church order of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church. But the Council did not adopt it and decided to lay it on the table for a year for further study. The following year, on the grounds of the weakness of the infant church, the first presbytery of the PCK rejected it and adopted a brief, simple form of church government based on the general principles of the Presbyterian Church. The form of government consists of four sections and seven minor regulations (Sec.1 “Church”, Sec. 2 “Procedure of worship”, Sec. 3 “The officers of the Church”, Sec. 4 “Church Government”) (PCK, 1980a[1st]:31-41). As in the case of the TAF, it was also a slight modification of the form of government of the PCI (Hwang, 2007:297-298; Jeon, 2008:45-49).

however not a complete but a probationary adoption (PCK, 1980a [1st]:8, 11). The Presbytery selected a seven-member research committee to examine the TAF and the form of government for one year and to report its result at the next presbytery meeting. The committee consisted of four missionaries and three Korean pastors.¹² It is not clear, however, when the TAF was fully adopted by the PCK because there is no record of it in the minutes of the presbytery meetings. In the minutes of the second meeting of 1908, there is no record of the complete adoption of the TAF, but only a record of the decision to extend the study by the appointed seven members for another year (PCK, 1980a [2nd]:18). However, there is no record of the complete adoption of the TAF in the minutes of the meetings held in 1909 and 1910, but the full text of the TAF and the form of government is included in the appendix to the minutes of 1910 (PCK, 1980a [4th], 33-39). Some therefore believe that the TAF was finally adopted in 1910 after examination of a total of three years (1907-1910) (Chae, 1971:153; Kim, 1971:102). It is more reasonable, however, to assume that the TAF was fully adopted in 1908 after one year's verification. This is because the book *"Janrogyohoesa jeonhwijip [Collected works regarding the history of the Korean Presbyterian Church, its constitution and assembly]"* by Charles A Clark (1918:50-51) and the book *"Joseonyesugyojangrohoe sagi [The history of the Presbyterian Church in Korea]"* by Cha Jae Myeong (1928:183) referred to the fact that the presbytery meeting of 1908 fully adopted the confession and the form of government based on the report of the committee. Charles Clark (1918:50) further stated that the clerk did not record it in the minutes by mistake.

The decision to extend the study by the committee for another year, recorded in the minutes of 1908, is presumed to be actually related to the form of government. The title of the committee that occurs in the minutes of 1908 is different from that of the committee in the minutes of 1907. The title in the 1907 minutes was "the committee for examining the confession and the form of government", but in the minutes of 1908, it is given as "the committee for examining the form of government" (PCK, 1980a [1st]:8; PCK, 1980a [2nd]:18). Based on this, it can be inferred that: The TAF was fully adopted by the Presbytery meeting in 1908, as well as the form of government. However, since there was a need for the further study of the form of government, such as its operation and application, the presbytery meeting decided to have it studied by the same committee for another year. Therefore, in sum, the TAF was considered from 1907 and fully adopted in 1908, and then it was attached with the form of government as the appendix in the minutes of 1910.

¹² Missionaries: Gale (PCUSA), Samuel A Moffet (PCUSA), Baird (PCUSA), Reynolds (PCUS), Korean pastors: Bang Ki Chang, Han Seok Jin, Yang Jeon Baek (PCK, 1980a[1st]:12).

2.3 The motivations for the adoption of their TAF in the PCK

2.3.1 The views of later theologians on the motivations

Some theologians have noted that the reason for the adoption of the TAF in the PCK (or for not adopting the WCF) lay in the circumstances of the PCK at the time. Kim Yeong Jae (2005:203-204) assessed that the adoption of the TAF in the PCK was based on the cultural situation in the mission field and consideration of the religious autonomy of the PCK. According to him, it was truly gratifying that the missionaries did not just bring the WCF, which contained specific cultural and historical elements, to the newly organised Korean Church. Lee Jang Sik (1983:32) claimed that it was too big a burden and inappropriate to adopt the WCF for an infant Korean Church. Yang Nak Heung (2008:89-90) also noted that the WCF was so theologically developed and subdivided that it was not appropriate for an infant Church, therefore the missionaries adopted the TAF rather than the WCF. Yong Hwan Gyu (2013:156) assumed that certain contents of the WCF (e.g. Chap. 23, "Of the Civil Magistrate") would have been a stumbling block to adopting it because Korea was under Japanese colonial rule at the time.

Some others have expressed the view that the TAF was adopted in the PCK with the unity of the churches in mind. Lee Yeong Heon (1978:129) noted that the spirit of the adoption was to promote unity and a bond among the Presbyterian Churches of Asia. Min Gyeong Bae (1982:271) agreed that the reason of its adoption was the hope that the TAF may become the confession of the Presbyterian Churches of Asia, and show to be a bond among them. Hwang Jae Buhm (2007:296) pointed out that the TAF was adopted in order to unite the Presbyterian churches, which were divided by the four Missions (PCUSA, PCUS, PCVA and PCC) at the time. According to him, the TAF played a role as the ideological framework for the union of the missionaries from the four Missions and for one presbytery of an independent Korean Presbyterian Church.

In addition, some noted that the adoption of the TAF reflected the theological tendency of the early missionaries. According to Lee Sang Gyoo (2012:303), the reason for the adoption of the TAF was that the missionaries did not seek to establish the Reformed Presbyterian tradition, for if they had pursued it, they would have insisted on the WCF. Lee Jae Keun (2011:39) also noted that the adoption of the TAF was due to the fact that the early missionaries were not strict Calvinists but evangelicals with broader openness. Yoo Hae Mu (2002:37-38) claimed that the missionaries were satisfied with introducing the TAF to the PCK because they followed the tradition of the New School in the American Presbyterian Church, which was indifferent to confessions of faith, although they were in the tradition of the Old School with regard to the view of the Scripture.

To summarise the views of the theologians: The TAF was adopted because it was regarded to be suitable for the circumstances of the PCK at the time. In particular, it was adopted with the union of the Churches in mind. It reflects the theological tendency of the missionaries, showing that they were not strict Calvinists but evangelicals with a broader openness.

To examine whether these views are reasonable, the following sections first study the background of the making and adopting of the TAF in the PCI, and then review two sources¹³ that provide clues as to the motivations for adopting the TAF in the PCK. And finally, the theological tendency of the early missionaries is discussed.

2.3.2 The TAF in the history of the PCI

2.3.2.1 Historical background

Since the mid-19th century, many Presbyterian missionaries from various Western countries came to work in India. They began some small-scale union movements with the desire that the Presbyterian Churches in India would work together (Hwang, 2008:201). Meanwhile, a conference of representatives from the American Presbyterian Church, the Church of Scotland, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America, and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, was held on 5 January 1871 in Allahabad, Northern India (PCI, 1905:138). The “General Organization of the Presbyterian Church in India” was proposed at the conference. It favoured a general organisation, rather than an organic union, based on the Westminster standards (Parker, 1936:130). The second conference, composed of representatives of the American Presbyterian Church, the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the Reformed Church in America and Reformed Presbyterian Church, was called in the Jumna Church, Allahabad, on 16 November 1871. The representatives thought that an all-Presbyterian union was desirable, but at that time it was unfeasible. So they proposed regular conferences of ministers and elders for the purpose of consultation and cooperation of the Churches (Manshardt, 1926:617). The third conference, which was held in Allahabad on 30 December 1872, was a preparatory meeting for the formation of a Presbyterian Union in India. The following Churches were represented at the Conference: American Presbyterian Church with seventeen, American Reformed Presbyterian Church with three, American United Presbyterian Church with two, Church of Scotland with one, Free Church of Scotland with eleven representatives, Irish Presbyterians with three, the (Dutch) Reformed Church in America with

¹³ Those are the report of “the Committee on Translation of Church Standards” and the article by Charles Clark “*Joseon yesugyo jangrogyohoe singyeongron [An essay on the Confession of the Presbyterian Church of Korea]*”. The theologians’ views on the motives for adopting the TAF are mainly based on these two sources (cf. 2.3.3).

one, and United Presbyterian Church of Scotland with four, making a total eight Churches and forty-two representatives (Parker, 1936:131). "The Presbyterian Union in India" was proposed at the fourth conference on 26 November 1873, and the fifth conference, which was held on 23 December 1875, decided that the name of the Presbyterian organisation should be "the Presbyterian Alliance of India" and adopted its constitution of five articles (Parker, 1936:132-134).

The first Council of the Alliance was held in 1877. Since then, the Council met every three years until the fifth Council in 1889, but after that, it was not held for eleven years. The sixth Council, after such a long break, was held in Allahabad, in February 1901, from which time onward the Alliance made every effort to consummate the union (Parker, 1936:150). Based on this, "the Presbyterian Church in India (PCI)" was constituted, which was an alliance of twelve different Presbyterian bodies represented in the work in India,¹⁴ at the eighth Council, which was held in the Jumna Church, Allahabad, in November 1904.

In this process, the issue of a confession of faith as a doctrinal statement of the Alliance was raised. The Scottish Missions and the Canadians favoured a short statement of faith. The Welsh and American Presbyterians were satisfied with the WCF. There was a debate on whether to have a long or a short confession, but the latter finally prevailed. The Alliance decided to draw up a synopsis¹⁵ of the WCF, which might "be helpful to the better understanding of the doctrines", and the basis for that was the confessional document of the Synod of Southern India (Parker, 1936:151). The Synod was a coalition in South India of the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland and the Reformed Church in America, and the confessional document was drawn up as a basis of union in 1901. The confessional document was based on "a Statement of Doctrine and Questions for the Ordaining of Office-bearers in the Native Churches of India", which was adopted by three Scottish Churches in India. This statement had been prepared between 1878 and 1883 under the stimulus of the interest in the Pan-Presbyterian Alliance (Parker, 1936:151-152). The statement was also adopted in the Presbyterian Churches in China when they were united in 1890 (Curtis, 1911:283; Hwang, 2008:203). In 1904, the first General Assembly of the PCI adopted the confessional document of the Synod of South India as their doctrinal standard, with some slight revisions. The confessional document of the Synod

¹⁴ The following is a list of the Churches:

"The Church of Scotland, the Gopalgunge Evangelistic Mission, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, the Presbyterian Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church of England, the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America, the Reformed Presbytery of India, Synod of Original Seceders, the United Free Church of Scotland, the United Presbyterian Church of North America, and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church" (PCI, 1905:140).

¹⁵ The matter of whether the TAF can be regarded as a "synopsis" of the WCF will be examined in Chapter 4, which deals directly with its contents.

of Southern India became the TAF of the PCI as a result. It originally consisted of eleven articles – the tenth article was divided into two parts in the TAF. According to Kenneth Parker (1936:156), in comparison to the confessional document of the Synod of Southern India, the TAF introduced more phrases from the WCF, explained the sacraments more fully, gave more prominence to Christ, added a pronounced Nicean and Chalcedonian emphasis to his person, and inserted a clear statement of the doctrine of election.¹⁶

2.3.2.2 The motivation for the adoption of the TAF in the PCI

The TAF was based on the confessional document of the Synod of Southern India, which in turn was rooted from “the Statement of Doctrine and Questions for the Ordaining of Office-Bearers in the Native Churches of India”. They all had as background a movement for the union of several Churches in India. The TAF of the PCI, therefore, was also intended to the union of the Churches. In the course of the union of Missions from several Presbyterian Churches in India and of churches established by them, the TAF was written and adopted for the purpose of the union of the Presbyterian Churches (especially, of North India). Furthermore, the TAF was also adopted by other denominational Churches such as Methodist, Baptist and by some other national (Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon) Churches.¹⁷ In this respect, Hwang (2006:203) evaluated the TAF as the most ecumenical confession in the Asian Christian community. In conclusion, it can be said that in the history of the PCI the greatest motive to draw up and adopt the TAF was the “Union of Churches”.

2.3.3 Early sources of the PCK

2.3.3.1 A report of the Committee on the Translation of Church Standards

In 1905, the “Committee on the Translation of Church Standards” presented a report on the confession of faith for an independent Korean Presbyterian Church, and reported to the Missionary Council as follows (Charles Clark, 1930:129):

“We desire to state that the Committee has not attempted to formulate a new confession, but, after consideration of the historic Confessions, Revisions,

¹⁶ In his book, the contents of the confession of faith of the Synod of Southern India is introduced in a form comparable to the TAF (cf. Parker, 1936:153-156).

¹⁷ In 1924, the PCI became the “United Church of Northern India” by unification with congregational churches, and in 1970 it became a part of the “Church of North India”, which was a united church on the basis of the TAF. The following churches were united as the Church of North India: the Baptist Churches in Northern India, the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, the Methodist Church (British and Australian conferences), the Methodist Church in Southern Asia and the United Church of Northern India (Hwang, 2011b:200, Parker, 1936:175-189).

Declarations and Statements of Doctrine of many Presbyterian Churches in the homelands and the confessions adopted by the churches on the Mission fields, has selected this one, which we believe to be the one satisfactorily meeting the need of a confession for the Presbyterian Church of Korea. The Preamble only being changed, it is the confession of faith adopted last year by the recently organized National Church of India, and we propose it in the hope that it may become the confession of faith, not only for the churches of India and Korea, but of all the Presbyterian Churches of Asia, and prove a bond between them.”

The Committee reported that the confession of the PCI best met the need of a doctrinal standard for an independent Korean Presbyterian Church in comparison with some other confessions. Even if the report did not specifically mention at what point the TAF was most appropriate, what can be inferred from their statement was that it was most useful to prove a bond between all the Presbyterian Churches of Asia. The TAF was a confession for the union of various Presbyterian churches in India (Hwang, 2006:203; see 2.3.2.2). The Committee placed a high value on it and hoped that, as in the case of the PCI, several Presbyterian Churches in Korea would be united by the TAF, and further bonded with other Presbyterian Churches in Asia.

2.3.3.2 “*Joseon yesugyo jangrogyohoe singyeongron [An essay on the confession of the Presbyterian Church of Korea]*” (Charles Clark, 1919)

Charles Clark was one of the missionaries who had the greatest influence in the formation of theology in the early Presbyterian Church in Korea.¹⁸ He introduced the advantages of the TAF in his article, “*Joseon yesugyo jangrogyohoe singyeongron [An essay on the Confession of the Presbyterian Church of Korea]*”, which provides a clue as to why the PCK adopted the TAF as their standard. In the article, he praised the TAF as the most precious and extraordinary confession than any other confessions in the world as follows (Charles Clark, 1919:289):

*“Joseonsingyeonggi gandanhana yuchihan singyeonggi anioni wanjeonhan
singyeongimyeo iboda useunghan singyeonggi sesange eopgo yetnal
singyeongjunge uri singyeongboda bujokhan geoti maneumyeo Westminster
singyeongirado i singyeongboda useunghadago hagi eoryeouni i singyeonggeun*

¹⁸ Harvie Conn (1966:36-41) stated that the three most influential missionaries in the PCK were Charles Clark (PCUSA), Samuel A Moffet (PCUSA), and William Reynolds (PCUS). They are considered to have formed the theological foundation of *Pyeongyang Theological Seminary* (Hong, 1984:136). Charles Clark had taught pastoral and Christian education at *Pyeongyang Theological Seminary* for 31 years, producing 50 volumes in Korean and 6 works in English, and at least a third of each issue of *Shinhakjinam*, the theological review issued by the *Pyeongyang Theological Seminary*, came from his pen (Conn, 1966:38). He made a very rich and diverse contribution such as a “missionary, pastor, evangelist, theologian, practical theology professor, Biblical commentator, writer, and architect” for the pastoral and theological development of the PCK (Lee, 2005:24-25,29-33).

hyeonsidae hyeongpyeonedo jeokdanghago seonggyeongedo jeokapani gwihan bomuliroda ... [The Twelve Articles is simple but not childish, but rather perfect. There is no better than it in the world, and there are many deficiencies in the old confessions¹⁹ in comparison with it, and it is hard to say that the Westminster Confession of Faith is better than it. The Twelve Articles is a precious treasure which is suitable for the Bible as well as the present age ...]

Clark's praise for the TAF was that it was suitable not only for the present age but also for the Bible. For him, however, the statement that the TAF was suitable for the Bible only meant that it contained universal contents of the Bible that would not cause controversy (cf. Chapter 4). In his assessment of the TAF, his focus was on the fit for the present age rather than on the Bible. He pointed out the other advantages of the TAF, all of which were focused on its suitability in the present age, as follows (Charles Clark, 1919:288-290):

First, the TAF is simple and clear to prevent arguments.

*"Uri singyeongeun mangukjangrohoesingyeongjunge gajangjoheun geosini Westminster singyeonggwa gita yumyeonghan irgob singyeongboda naeuni uri singyeongeun gandanhago myeongbaekhayeo argiga yongihan geosira. Yetjeok singyeonge daehayeo torongwa jeongroni mani saenggieoteuni ineun jomokjunge myeongbaekchi mothan geoti inneun yeongoinde garyeong eoriniwa taekhasimgwa yejeonge daehan dorie gwanhan jomokdeurira. Uri singyeongeun ireon dorie daehayeo myeongbaekhi malhayeonneungoro jeongnoni balsaenghal geunwoni eomneunira. [The Twelve Articles is the best among the Presbyterian confessions of all over the world, and it is better than the Westminster Confession of Faith and other seven famous confessions because **it is simple, clear and easy** to understand. Regarding the old confessions, there have been a lot of controversies and conflicts because some contents of the old confessions are not clear, such as about children, election and predestination. Our confession, however, is evident as to those, so **there is no source of controversy**'.²⁰]*

¹⁹ The old confessions that Clark referred are the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Helvetic Confession, the Canons of Dordt and the Westminster Confession of Faith (Charles Clark, 1919:284).

²⁰ The doctrines of election and predestination (especially, the double predestination of the Canons of Dordt [CD] and the WCF), which emphasise the sovereignty of God, and the contents about the salvation of infants and infant baptism in the old confessions have caused controversy with Wesleyan-Arminian Methodists, who emphasise human behaviour, and Baptists, who do not accept infant baptism. Charles Clark considered the contents of the old confessions as unclear. For him those doctrines were not firmly based on the Bible, but rather only part of the wide range of views that can be interpreted in different

Second, the TAF is suitable for the East.

“Dongyanggwa seoyangui hyeongpyeoni budonghani seoyangeseoneun ujugyodoriga siljiro sinjaege geokjeongdoeneun doriga anirado dongyangeneun keun gwangyega iteuni uri singyeonge ireon geojitui haeseoki balsaeng andoedorok juuihayeotneunira. ... [Because the circumstances of East and West are different, philosophical ideas can cause many problems for believers in the East, though it is not a problem for those in the West. Accordingly, the Twelve Articles was carefully written to prevent the false interpretation related to the philosophical thoughts.]”

Third, the TAF is more useful than the WCF in the union with the Methodist Church.

“Tto jangrogamridugyohoe yeonhapmunjereul inhayeo hoejipayeoteul ttaee yeonrohan gamrigyopaseongyosau mali du gyohoege yeonhapage doemyeon uri gamripaga Westminster singyeongeun chaeyonghagiga geuknanhani i indogukeseo chulraehan singyeongeul chaeyonghagiga eoryeopji anihada hayeoteuni gamripaui dareun gyoyeokjaneun eotteoke saenggakhalneunji aljimothageoniwa gahi almanhan ilinira. [At the meeting to discuss the union of the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church, an old Methodist missionary said that “It is very difficult for the Methodist Church to adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith, but not difficult to adopt the confession from India”. This makes it easy to guess what other ministers in the Methodist Church think.]”

Clark regarded the TAF as a confession best suited to the situation of the PCK as an infant church at that time.²¹ The TAF was a contemporary confession written in India, which belonged to the East and was a mission field like Korea, unlike the other confessions, which were written

ways. The TAF on the other hand omitted or diluted such controversial contents. The TAF therefore gave denominations room for various interpretations. In the Reformed view, this may be the uncertainty of the TAF, but Clark assessed this as the clarity of the TAF (cf. Chapter 4).

²¹ Early missionaries did not regard the PCK as inferior to their home churches in terms of her status. Clark (1919:289) said that it was never true that the PCK's confession (TAF) was different from the confession of American churches (WCF) because the missionaries regarded the PCK as inferior to their home churches due to differences between the civilizations. He said that because the TAF is the most precious and extraordinary confession than any other confessions (including the WCF) in the world with the three reasons mentioned above (2.3.3.2), the missionaries adopted the TAF as the doctrinal standard of the PCK. However, even though the missionaries did not regard the PCK as inferior to their home churches, they perceived the PCK as totally different from their home churches. They thought that the WCF (and other confessions of the Western churches), written in the West a long time before and having sources of controversy that might be an obstacle to the union of Churches, was not suitable for the PCK. They did not, however, consider much about the unity of faith between their home churches and the PCK in adopting confession of faith. In this respect, they regarded the PCK as just an infant church in a mission field with short history belonging to the culture of the East, entirely different from Western churches. In viewing the PCK merely as an infant Church, they disregarded the universal nature of the PCK.

long ago in the West. In addition, it was specifically aimed at the union of several Churches in India (cf. 2.3.2). In his view, therefore, the TAF was also the most appropriate confession at that time in the union with the Methodist Church in Korea, as some strict Reformed doctrines, which might have caused controversy, were simply mentioned or omitted (cf. Chapter 4).

2.3.4 The theological position of the early missionaries in Korea²²

George Marsden (1991:2-3) described the 19th century American evangelicalism as follows:

“Evangelical” eventually became the common British and American name for the revival movements that swept back and forth across the English-speaking world and elsewhere during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Central to the evangelical gospel was the proclamation of Christ’s saving work through his death on the cross and the necessity of personally trusting him for eternal salvation. In America, the way for the revivals had been prepared in part by the strong Puritan heritage of New England. ... Most major reform movements, such as antislavery or temperance, had a strong evangelical component. Evangelicals had a major voice in American schools and colleges, public as well as private, and had much to do with setting dominant American moral standards. Especially in its nineteenth-century heyday, then, evangelicalism was a very broad coalition, made up of many sub-groups. Though from differing denominations, these people were united with each other, and with persons from other nations in their zeal to win the world for Christ.”

The characteristics of evangelicalism mentioned by Marsden are revivalism, emphasis on the saving work of Christ through his death on the cross, strict moral standards and ecumenicism.²³ In view of this, the early missionaries were typical 19th century American evangelicals. They passed on to Korea the characteristics of this 19th century American evangelicalism described by Marsden. Here we will take a closer look at the following evangelical features of the early missionaries in four ways: theological conservatism (Biblicism), religious-ethical rigorism, revivalism and ecumenicism.

²² Since the influence of American missionaries was the greatest in the early days of the Korea mission, this part focuses especially on the theological position of American missionaries.

²³ David Bebbington (1988:16) defined the characteristics of evangelicalism in four ways: “conversionism (the belief that lives need to be changed), activism (the expression of the gospel in effort), Biblicism (a particular regard for the Bible), and crucicentrism (a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross)”.

2.3.4.1 Theological conservatism (Biblicism)

Arthur Brown (1919:540), who was a general secretary of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions of the PCUSA, described the early missionaries in Korea in his book, *The Mastery of the Far East*.

“In theology and Biblical criticism he was strongly conservative, and he held as a vital truth the premillenarian view of the second coming of Christ. The higher criticism and liberal theology were deemed dangerous heresies. In most of the evangelical churches of America and Great Britain, 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, particularly in the Presbyterian group of missions.”

Charles Clark (1934:56) revealed thirteen secrets of the marvellous success of the Presbyterian mission in Korea at the Anniversary, and the number one secret was that “from the beginning, nearly all members of the Mission have held notably conservative views on theology”. He said, “Some of the quoted evidence of their ‘conservative’ theology included a strong emphasis on human sinfulness and salvation through the blood of Christ alone, the acceptance of the supernatural in the Scriptures, and the belief in the finality of Christianity”.

It was their view of the Scripture, especially, that reveals their conservative theological tendency. They emphasised the Scripture as the infallible Word of God. Samuel A Moffet, a missionary of the PCUSA, pointed out that the missionaries were faithful to the Scripture: “the Mission and the Church have been marked pre-eminently by a fervent evangelistic spirit, a thorough belief in the Scriptures as the Word of God, and in the Gospel message of salvation from sin through Jesus Christ” (Conn, 1966:27). He also answered to the question of the secret of the great success of the evangelistic work in Korea: “the fact that the one great God-given means for the Evangelization of a people is His own Word, and that the emphasis which has been placed upon the teaching and preaching of the Word of God has brought God’s own blessing” (Samuel A Moffett, 1909:28). Herbert Blair (1934:117,121) reported at the “50th Anniversary Celebration of the Korea Mission of the PCUSA” in 1934 that the missionaries placed the Bible in the supreme position as the inspired and authoritative Word of God. He also said that the Bible was the one textbook emphasised and studied in the PCK and that the Presbyterians had accepted the Bible as the very Word of God. Park Hyeong Yong (1976:11), who was one of the leading conservative Korean theologians in the history of PCK, described the missionaries as follows:

“Hanguk chogi jangrogyo seongyosa daebubuni seonggyeonggwane iteoseo cheolducheolmi bosujeokiyo, gaehyeokjuui choesangui pyoeoin “ojik seonggyeong” iran gaehyeokjuui ipjange seo iteotdeon geotida. [Most missionaries were thorough conservatives in their view of the Scripture, and they had the Reformed position with “Sola Scriptura”, the best slogan in the Reformation.]”

In the strict sense, however, the missionaries' view of the Scripture was close to biblicism, an adherence to the literal sense of the Bible. They emphasised, therefore, ethical rigidity based on the Scripture, but did not attach much importance to historical confessions or theological traditions in understanding or interpreting the Scripture. In this vein, Lee Sang Gyoo (2007:54) pointed out that the influence of the biblicism of missionaries led the PCK to be indifferent to confessions of faith.

2.3.4.2 Religious-ethical rigorism

High religious-ethical standards and social reforming were the important features of the 19th century evangelicalism. Those were the keys to a strong evangelical movement, in particular groups such as New School and the Congregational Church of Connecticut, which had hoped to make America into God's kingdom (Lee, 2011:37). The early Presbyterian missionaries also showed such evangelical features. Brown (1919:540) described the missionaries as follows:

“The typical missionary of the first quarter-century after the opening of the country was a man of the Puritan type. He kept the Sabbath as our New England forefathers did a century ago. He looked upon dancing, smoking, and card playing as sins in which no true follower of Christ should indulge.”

Ethical reforming was also a significant aim of the missionaries' work in Korea from the beginning. The missionaries' “Puritan-type” of religion was evident in their emphasis on the high religious-ethical standards for Korean believers (Ryu, 2008:377). At the time, there were widespread customs in Korea such as Shamanism²⁴ (the worship of spirits, good and bad) and ancestor worship²⁵ stemming from Confucianism. Furthermore, in the eyes of the missionaries,

²⁴ Harry Rhodes (1934:48-49) said about Shamanism in Korea: “Today the sound of the ‘kooŭ’ (practicing of magic) in every Korean village, over the sick, is evidence that the belief still exists. The sorceress (*mutang*) is supposed to ascertain the will of the spirit and name the ransom; the blind sorcerer (*pansu*) is supposed to have inner vision and to be able to decide the destiny or tell the fortune of the one who calls him. Mrs. Isabelle Bird Bishop estimated that demon worship cost Korea \$1,250,000 a year.”

²⁵ Rhodes (1934:54-55) wrote about the custom of ancestor worship in Korea: “The corner stone of Confucianism is ancestor worship, which is the result of extending filial piety to the dead. To have one or more sons, came to be regarded as the greatest of blessings. This is the object of marriage and the cause of polygamy. The family tree is jealously guarded, grave sites are carefully selected, and sacrificial days are religiously kept. ... Koreans believe that every man has three souls, and upon death, one goes

Korea was getting sick due to various evils and abuses, such as excessive drinking, thoughtless smoking regardless of age or sex, and the practice of polygamy. In this situation, the missionaries normally insisted on high religious-ethical standards of acceptance of Korean converts as members of the Church. They required the candidates to be qualified for at least six months to four years (Samuel A Moffett, 1909:24). The candidates for baptism were required essentially to read the Bible and to know the basic Christian doctrines to demonstrate the truthfulness of their conversion by making at least one person a believer as the fruits of his evangelistic works (Ryu, 2008:378). They also had to abandon any form of “ancestral worship”, to abstain from drinking, manufacturing or selling alcohol, and to stop gambling, smoking (Ryu, 2008:380-381). The practice of polygamy was not permitted. No one was baptised who was living in an irregular marriage relationship as the concubine of someone else’s husband (Charles Clark, 1930:113). The missionaries also emphasised observance of the Sabbath as the single most important religious obligation. They regarded it as a criterion for distinguishing true believers from those who were not (Ryu, 2008:379).

2.3.4.3 Revivalism

2.3.4.3.1 American revival movements in the 19th century

During the 18th and 19th centuries, especially in America, the word “evangelical” became a name referring to the revival movements (Marsden, 1991:2). There were a series of massive revival movements taking place in England and America during that period. During the second revival movement of the early 19th century, in particular, most Protestant Churches in America were influenced by the movement, and the Churches were rearranged depending on how the Church grew by the revival movement (Ryu, 2001:95).

Charles Finney (1792-1875) played a central role in the second revival movement. He drove the American churches into the heat of revivalism until the mid-19th century. Finney was originally ordained as a pastor of the Presbyterian Church, but later he denied the doctrine of predestination and limited atonement. Eventually, he left the Presbyterian Church and became an independent Congregationalist (Ahlstrom, 1975a:558). Finney introduced a new type of faith to the Presbyterian churches in America, which was different from the traditional Presbyterian faith. He was convinced that the broken relationship with God could be restored if human beings themselves repented and returned to God (Finney, 1876:14). For Finney, the revival was neither

to Hades, one to the grave, and one to the ancestral tablet. ... Wailing is indulged in, mourning clothes are put on, and offerings to the dead on set days are made both at the grave and before the ancestral tablet at home. The greatest obstacle to Confucianists becoming Christians is that they are required to give up the worship of their ancestors.”

a miracle in any sense nor a reliance on miracles. The revival was just a purely philosophical outcome through the right use of secure means, that is, the result produced by applying the means (Finney, 1960:13).

In the second half of the 19th century, Dwight Moody (1837-1899) greatly influenced the American churches. He was an unshakable premillennialist. This is evident in his famous statement, which summarised his philosophy of evangelism, in the context of his sermon on the return of Christ: "I look upon this world as a wrecked vessel," he said. "God has given me a lifeboat and said to me, 'Moody, save all you can'" (Moody, 1971:193). He conducted passionate missionary works and evangelical preaching based on his premillennialism. He made his home in Northfield the site for summer Conferences which were the popular new evangelical institutions. The Conferences led to the formation of the Student Volunteer Movement (SVM) in 1886, the largest mission organisation at the time. For several years after that thousands of collegians in America and England pledged to be missionaries through the SVM. The goal of the SVM was "the evangelisation of the world in this generation" (Marsden, 2006:35). Many of the missionaries who came to Korea were influenced by the SVM.

Moody's revival movement resulted in revitalising the American church's religious life. However, it also resulted in the church neglecting the historically inherited spiritual legacy of confessions of faith and neglecting the doctrinally sound church construction (Heo, 2008:78). Moody regarded doctrine and confessions of faith as unnecessary. He supposedly held that formulations of doctrine were not in the sphere of the Holy Spirit but the sphere of reason and therefore without authority and useless (Gundry, 1982:65). He also said that "He (Jesus Christ) is not a creed, a mere empty doctrine, but it is He Himself we have", and that "the greatest mistake of the present day is the following of this creed and that one, and this and that Church, and a great many listen to the voice of the Church instead of the voice of God" (Gundry, 1982:66-67).

Through these revival movements, the American evangelicalism, which emphasises human volunteerism in the fields of personal salvation and social reform, became a general trend of American Christianity. Revival movements tended to be pietistic activism, "moderate anti-Calvinism, semi-Pelagianism, or Arminian theology" which emphasises the ability of the human being to accept the evangelical message voluntarily (Marsden, 1985:5). It also tended to emphasise the simplicity of the gospel and to ignore the doctrinal differences among the Churches (denominations) (Heo, 2008:78).

2.3.4.3.2 Missionaries' revivalism

The missionaries who came to Korea were the children of 19th century evangelicalism, whose key element was revivalism (Ryu, 2008:389). Most missionaries were affected directly or indirectly by Moody's revival message in their schooldays and were influenced by the revival movements (Kim, 1992:157). It can be confirmed by examining the origin of the missionaries and their missionary activities in Korea.

Among the 575 Protestant missionaries who came to Korea from 1884 to 1910, 239 missionaries, 41.5% of the total, were involved in the SVM (Lee, 2011:28).²⁶ Most of the missionaries who had a great influence in the early days of the Korean mission came from the McCormick Theological Seminary, located in Chicago, where Moody's influence was great and was very positive towards the revival movements²⁷ (Park, 2007:469-471). Only 17 graduates became missionaries during the 54 years from 1830, when the McCormick Seminary was founded, to 1884. In contrast, 17 students became missionaries in just three years from 1885 to 1888, and from 1885 to 1929, 235 graduates served as missionaries around the world (Lee, 2011:16). Of the 17 missionaries from McCormick who came to Korea from 1888 to 1910, 15 were affiliated to the SVM (88.23%) (Lee, 2011:28).

The fact that American revivalism in the 19th century influenced the early missionaries is also evident in their actual activities. They relied on revivalistic methods of personal conversion and emphasised on individual pietism, evangelism, and Bible study, which were the basic characteristics of the SVM (Ryu, 2001:137). The cornerstone of their missionary works in Korea lay in the system of Bible Training Classes (Davis, 1910:39). These unique meetings were not regular Sunday Bible classes, but rather annual Bible conferences like the Keswick and Northfield Conferences, which were annual gatherings of evangelical Christians in England and America. In Korea's Bible Training Classes, the themes such as a victory over sin, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, obedience to God's will, and Christian service, especially evangelism were emphasised. These were the contents that missionaries repetitively heard in the SVM and at the revival gatherings in their home country (Ryu, 2008:392-393).

²⁶ Lee Jae Keun calculated this number by analysing the "List of Student Volunteer Missionaries to Korea, 1888-1910" in the book, *Sources of Korean Christianity* (Oak, 2004:500).

²⁷ McCormick Theological Seminary followed the Old School's position that called for traditional Calvinist orthodoxy as outlined in the Westminster Standards in the period of controversy between "Old School" and "New School" (1839-1869). However, after the death of Cyrus McCormick in 1884, who had served as a member of the board of trustees of the seminary and strongly supported Old School, both sides coexisted in the seminary. Lee Jae Keun (2011:7-8) noted that the missionaries from McCormick Seminary were a typical group representing the American Presbyterian missionaries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that combined the revivalism of the New School, which emphasised pietistic devotion over the confessional tradition of the Old School, which emphasised doctrinal rigidity.

The revivalist features of the missionaries were most prominent in the Great Awakening, which shook the Korean church between 1906 and 1907. A massive revival movement similar to the American revival movements of the 18th and 19th centuries took place across denominations in Korea. Especially in January 1907, a Great Revival took place in *Pyeongyang*, where many people confessed their sins, repented and changed their lives. There was a report that 14 000 people among the 40 000 to 50 000 people of Pyeongyang at the time gathered every Sunday for prayer and Bible study (Oh, 2006:359). The hot wind of great revival swept the churches across the country, and thousands were converted (Park, 2007:894-895).

Through this revival movement, the PCK settled as a revivalist Church that accepted the general American evangelical tendencies which emphasised the direct history of the Holy Spirit and the subjective individual experience.

2.3.4.4 Ecumenicism

2.3.4.4.1 Doctrinal inclusivism of the PCUSA in the 19th century²⁸

Since the 1800s, active immigration to the western frontier took place in the United States. Everywhere immigrants went, churches were built, which meant that ministers were desperately needed. The PCUSA, however, could not supply as many ministers as needed. Under these circumstances, the Presbyterians became aware of the necessity for a coalition with the Congregational Church of Connecticut, and therefore, in 1861, “the Plan of Union” was established between the General Assembly of the PCUSA and the Congregational Association of Connecticut. Through this union, the PCUSA grew in quantity, but it gradually moved away from the Presbyterian principles, and the seeds of discord and struggle were sown in the churches (Heo, 2008:88).

The PCUSA was influenced by a speculative theology like the “new heaven” of the Congregational Churches in New England, which resulted in internal tensions and divisions within the PCUSA (Hong, 2005:59). It eventually led to, as mentioned above, two sides among the Presbyterians, the Old School and the New School. The Old School tried to uphold the confessional and political tradition of the Presbyterian Church, while the New School took a very inclusive position (Oh, 2006:296). In the end, in 1861 the churches belonging to the New School organised their own General Assembly separately so that the PCUSA was divided into two separate organisations, the “Old School” Presbyterians and the “New School” Presbyterians.

²⁸ The PCUSA was the first national Presbyterian denomination in the United States. In 1861, the PCUS split from the PCUSA because of disputes over slavery, politics, and theology precipitated by the American Civil War.

After the Civil War, in 1869, the two sides were reunited. The merger of Old School and New School Presbyterians gradually weakened the forces of the Old School and strengthened the theological and doctrinal inclusiveness of the New School (Heo, 2008:90). Twenty years later, in 1889, a proposal to amend the WCF was presented to the General Assembly but was rejected. The same proposal, however, was re-posed to the General Assembly in 1900, and finally, some revisions to the WCF²⁹ were made at the General Assembly in 1903 (Anon, 2003:204). The revision allowed the PCUSA to easily reach out to the union with the Churches that embraced the Arminian doctrines. In 1906, the PCUSA became integrated with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which had a doctrine of synthesising Calvinism and Arminianism (Ahlstrom, 1975b:321).

Since the end of the 19th century, the doctrinal inclusivism of the New School became the general trend in the PCUSA. Therefore the first missionaries who came to Korea in those days would have been affected significantly by such a trend. It can be seen in their actual mission policy, which promoted union with the Methodist Churches in Korea.

2.3.4.4.2 The missionaries' ideal of one united native church in Korea, including the Methodists

In the early days of the mission in Korea, missionaries from Presbyterian and Methodist Churches gathered frequently and held prayer meetings together. They made efforts for unity in many ways (Paik, 1927:414-415). When the missionaries in the summer of 1905 gathered at a prayer meeting at the house of Dalziel Bunker, a Methodist missionary, they had a passionate desire for the union of all the Christian forces in Korea (Underwood, 1918:237). Consequently, the "General Council of Protestant Evangelical Missions in Korea" was constituted between the four Presbyterian Missions and the two Methodist Missions (North and South) on 15 September 1905, at a joint meeting of Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries (Paik, 1927:416). The aim of this Council was "cooperation in the missionary works and eventually the organisation of one native evangelical church in Korea" (Conn, 1966:48-49). Samuel H Moffett (1962:48) noted that this aim was ratified at the second annual meeting of the Council, with 196 missionaries, representing about 95% of the total Protestant missionaries in Korea at that time, and the vote was unanimous.

²⁹ This revision of 1903 was done in three ways. The first was to provide a basic framework for interpreting the contents of the WCF by placing "a declaratory statement" at the beginning, a second was to modify or delete some contents of the WCF, and the third was to add two new chapters (34. "Of the Holy Spirit", 35. "Of the Love of God and Missions") to the original thirty-three chapters. This revision transformed Reformed doctrines of the WCF, such as limited atonement and effectual calling, into ecumenical and Arminian content (Ahlstrom, 1975b:321; cf. 3.5.1).

In February 1906, the first executive committee of the Council gathered at the house of Underwood, a missionary of the PCUSA, and examined whether there were doctrinal problems in the integration of Presbyterian and Methodist views. They concluded that it had found no difficulty in harmonising the doctrines of the two Churches (Heo, 2008:153). The Council decided to hold an ecumenical revival service in the first month of the lunar calendar every year. In accordance with the resolution of the Council, missionaries of the PCUSA, the PCC and of the Methodist Churches gathered together and held joint revival services in *Seoul*, *Wonsan* and *Pyeongyang* in 1906 (Lee, 2011:33). Furthermore, the missionaries in the Council sought to join other mission groups such as the YMCA and the British and American Bible Society, and independent missionaries in the Council (Ryu, 2001:103).

A few missionaries took a negative stance on the General Council with some questions and hesitation regarding the union (Moore, 1905a:692) but on the whole, the absolute majority of the missionaries were positive about it. The “Joint Council of Presbyterian Missions in Korea” was very positive in the union movement. When the Council convened in September 1905, the Seoul Presbyterian Committee on Union made an offer to the Council to carry forward the establishment of one united church in Korea, because “the time to establish ‘the Church of Jesus’ or ‘the Church of Christ in Korea’ was ripe” (Moore, 1905b:904). Swallen of the PCUSA, chairman of the union committee in 1907, claimed to find “no difficulty in the way of harmonising the doctrines of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches in Korea” (Conn, 1966:49).

Although the movement of Presbyterian and Methodist Churches to achieve the goal of one united native church in Korea was not realised,³⁰ this history of building one united native church in Korea showed that most of the early Presbyterian missionaries did not pay much attention to the identity of the Presbyterian Church and were satisfied with wider evangelicalism.

2.3.4.4.3 The division of territories between the Presbyterian Churches and the Methodist Churches

The “General Council of Protestant Evangelical Missions in Korea” which was, as stated above, formed between four Presbyterian Missions and two Methodist Missions in 1905, decided to divide and allocate the territories where the mission activities of the Presbyterians and Methodists were overlapping (Paik, 1927:418-419). This division of territories had the advantage of reducing excessive competition, friction between the two Churches and financial waste, but it also had disadvantages.

³⁰ Conn (1966:49) noted two obstacles that stopped the union – the home boards’ unfavourable reaction (especially the PCUS) and the lack of desire for it among the Koreans.

The division of the territories led to the problem that a church which had already affiliated in a denomination suddenly changed into another denominational church. For example, when a province or county with a Presbyterian and a Methodist church was assigned to a Methodist Mission, the two churches became a single Methodist Church, and therefore the members of the Presbyterian Church suddenly had to belong to the Methodist Church. It was regarded as suppressing the conscience of the believers, and therefore often provoked great resistance among the members.³¹ Moreover, it made the distinction between the Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Church meaningless.

A missionary said, “If we consider it safe and right to enjoin our native Christians to give up Presbyterianism and become Methodists, why cannot we scrape off these old barnacles of sectarianism which have hindered our progress too long, at least far enough to enable us to organize and perfect that true union in the Korean Church?” (Anon, 1910:45). In the end the division policy was possible because the missionaries did not have much interest in the identity of the Presbyterian Church or the difference in doctrine between Presbyterian and Methodist (Heo, 2008:154).

2.4 Summary

The PCK was established in 1907, 23 years after the first resident missionary, Horace Allen, arrived in Korea in 1884, and the Confession of the PCI was adopted as the standard of faith of the PCK. In the early days of the PCK’s formation and development, the influence of the missionaries was almost absolute, and the influence of American missionaries, among them, was overwhelming. Most of them were strongly influenced by the American evangelical revivalism of that era, which freely crossed the fences of denominations within the framework of conservatism, rather than adhering to the Reformed faith of the Presbyterian Church and valuing Presbyterian identity.

The missionaries had a conservative view of the Scripture and emphasised Christian ethics and social reforms that required a high level of moral standards. They pursued a revival characterised by repentance, conversion and renewal through Bible classes or conferences and actively participated in ecumenical works. These were the characteristics of American

³¹ The minutes of the Second General Assembly of the PCK in 1913 recorded a report showing the resistance of the Presbyterian Church members who were forced to be incorporated into the Methodist church by the division of the mission field. Members of the Presbyterian Church in *Hwanghae* Province who were incorporated into the Methodist Church by the decision of the General Assembly, were gathering separately without being governed by the Methodist Church, in opposition to the decision, and therefore the General Assembly had to send a letter to them to submit to the Methodist Church (PCK, 1980b [2nd]:33).

evangelicalism of the time, which blended the experiential piety faith expressed in the Revival Movement of the New School and the confessional Presbyterian tradition of the Old School.

In line with this evangelical spirit, they adopted the TAF as a standard of faith of the PCK. They regarded the TAF as the most suitable confession for the infant church in the mission field of the East and, in particular, for church union. They had the hope of building one native church in Korea through the union of the four Presbyterian Missions and the further association with other denominations, including the Methodist Church. They engaged in a vigorous union movement, such as organising the “General Council of Protestant Evangelical Missions in Korea”, and dividing the mission fields between themselves and the Methodist Missions. In this regard, the TAF of the PCI was the most suitable confession for the purpose of “unity”. The TAF was a typical evangelical confession that was written for the unification of several Presbyterian churches in India, which was a mission field like Korea, and easily shared by the non-Calvinist denominations such as Methodism, because the contents that might be a stumbling block in the union were omitted or very briefly stated.

CHAPTER 3

THE REFORMED PERSPECTIVE ON CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, the historical background and motives of adoption of their Twelve Articles of Faith (TAF) in the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) were discussed from a chronologically descriptive and historical perspective. The TAF was adopted because it was regarded as suitable for the circumstances of the PCK at the time. In particular, the TAF was adopted with the union of the Churches in mind. The question arises whether these were the proper motives to adopt the TAF.

This chapter provides the Reformed view on confessions of faith to establish whether the PCK's adoption of the TAF fitted into the framework of Reformed principles. In order to find a basis on which the evaluation on the PCK's adoption of the TAF will be examined, the Reformed perspective on confessions of faith will be addressed. First of all, it classifies and defines certain terms related to confessions and their roles. Secondly, the authority of confessions will be discussed in the context of the Scripture and the Reformed tradition. Finally, the purpose and condition of confessional revision or replacement are discussed on the basis of church history and the Reformed perspective.

3.2 Classification and definition of terms related to confessions of faith

The terms "doctrine", "dogma", "creed", "articles of faith" and "confession" are distinct, but contain basically common content and are often used indiscriminately.

"Doctrine", from Latin *doctrina* ("teaching"), refers to the content of what is taught. For Christians, doctrine is "the teaching of the Scripture on a particular theme" (Rogers, 1985:27). Since there are always many different opinions on the understanding and interpretation of doctrines, the Church, after discussing the material on a particular subject, determines the correct interpretation of the material and decides if it is consistent with the Bible's teachings. The publicly determined and accepted doctrine is called "dogma"³² (Kim, 2006:13). In other words, when the Church faces a new problem and reflects on, formulates and publicly adopts doctrine, this doctrine becomes dogma (Yoo, 2003:68). However, dogmas cannot strike an absolute tone

³² The word "dogma", from Greek *dokein* ("to be of the opinion"), denotes that which is definite, that which has been decided and is therefore fixed (Bavinck, 2011a:28).

of voice on their own authority and in their own name but only because and insofar as they rest on the authority of God and can appeal to a “God has said it” (Bavinck, 2011a:46).

“Confession” can be said to be “a confessional expression of dogma” located between doctrine and dogma (Jeong, 2016:31). Dogma indicates a pronouncement of the truth that is derived from Scripture, and confession has the meaning of the Church’s response to the truth (Kim, 2006:13). The Roman Catholic Church regards the Church as the highest authority in making a definitive pronouncement, and therefore the doctrine (dogma) accepted by the Church is not only authoritative but also cannot be changed or rejected. In the era of the Reformation, in this regard, reformers preferred the term “confession” rather than “dogma”. The dogmas of the churches of the Reformation were embedded in their confessions (Van Genderen et al., 2008:4).

“Creed”, from Latin *credo* (“I believe”), is usually used to refer to the confessions of the Early Church: the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed. The confessions are called “ecumenical creeds” or “universal creeds” because they have been endorsed and accepted by most Christian Churches (including Reformed Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Churches and Lutheran Churches). Especially, this is a term that is primarily used in the Western branches of the Church. The Eastern Orthodox Church accepts the Nicene Creed, but not the Apostles’ Creed or the Athanasian Creed (Lane, 2007:63; Schaff, 1931a:29-30).

“Articles of faith” and “Creed” are used as alternatives. “Articles of faith” is a term of interest in the context of creed. Sometimes the term also applies to confessions which do not classify as a creed, in which case it refers to the articles of confessions (Kim, 2006:14).

“Catechism”, from the Greek *katekhein*, has the meaning of “instructing orally” or also “echoing”. This means that catechism is echoing or reverberating the Word received from God back to God (Kim, H.S., 2005). Catechism makes the learner understand and know the content well by finding questions and confirming the answers from the Scripture. Through this, catechism ultimately aims for the learner to confess faith correctly with his lips as the Scripture teaches (Yong, 2013:35). “Catechism” refers to catechism education, and it also refers to catechisms written for catechesis education.

3.3 The roles of confessions

Ian Hamilton (2010:9) noted that confessions have contributed to the church’s four basic tasks: “worshipping, witnessing, teaching and guarding the truth.” He said, “In fulfilling these tasks confessions have performed the function of helping, clarifying and exhibiting what the church is,

what it believes and what it understands the Christian faith to be". In a similar context, the roles of confessions can be defined in three things as follows: doxology, identity and unity.

3.3.1 Doxology

"Confession" is *homologia* in Greek, which is a compound of *homos* ("the same") and *lego* ("say") or *logos* ("word, speech"). Hence *homologia* means "agreement, consent"; the verb *homologeō* means "to say the same, agree in one's statements", particularly in law courts (Verbrugge, 2004:410). To confess therefore is to agree with God and to say the same thing as God, that is, to say the Word of God revealed to us. (Bos, 2002:2). When Peter confessed, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16), Jesus replied, "This was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven" (Matt. 16:17). Peter's confession was not created by himself but was made known to him by the Father in heaven. When we confess our faith, the content is not from ourselves but from God. The revelation of God given to us, not our experience of God, is the basis of our confession (Gootjes, 2001a:376). In other words, we learn the Word revealed from God, and we repeat it toward God as we have learned (Kim, H.S., 2005). This confession, therefore, is "sacrifice of praise to God" (Heb. 13:15), "to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11). In this sense, confessional documents that the churches confess publicly are the churches' "Amen" to the Word of God (Kim, 2011:156) and they make the church actively participate in the act of giving back God's things to God, that is, in worship and praise (Trueman, 2012:156-157). Furthermore, it is the exemplary instance of the church's submission of all aspects of its life to the prophetic and apostolic witness (Webster, 2005:76). John Webster (2005:69) said that:

"In making its confession, the church lifts up its voice to do what it *must* do – speak amazement of the goodness and truth of the gospel and the gospel's God. Creeds and confessional formulae exist to promote that act of confession."

3.3.2 Identity

Confessions of faith are also called a "symbol", which means a mark, badge, watchword, test (Schaff, 1931a:23), as a pointer toward the truth (Rogers, 1985:31). Philip Schaff (1931a:26) noted that the first object of confessions was "to distinguish the church from the world, from Jews and heathen, afterwards orthodoxy from heresy, and finally denomination from denomination". A public confessional document of the church indicates "belonging, safety and security" to those belonging to the identified church. In contrast, for those who do not belong, it is a landmark that "excludes" (indirectly "invites") them (Krüger, 2007:551-552). Thus confessions are an appropriate instrument for identifying the church (Hamilton, 2010:199). The

functions of confessions as a mark of identity can be specified in the following three ways: educational, protective and declaratory (or missionary).

3.3.2.1 Educational

Firstly, confessions of faith help believers to understand accurately and to confess the content of the Scripture. In other words, it makes concrete the content of our faith. The confessions made by and used from the time of the early church were mostly related to baptism. For example, the Apostles' Creed was widely used as a kind of confessional document for those about to be baptised and also as a kind of catechism to instruct new Christians in the essentials of the faith. Baptism was administered when confessing faith in the Triune God, which the creed summarised. They therefore had to memorise the creed and publicly confess it before being baptised (Gootjes, 2001a:363). In this respect, confessions crystallise what we believe, giving us the ability to articulate our faith. In other words, confessions allow believers to express the content of their faith in thoughtful and accurate words recognised by the Church, not in unclear words. As a result, the content of the faith will have the correct form in the believers' mind, and they will be able to accurately express and explain their own faith (Gootjes, 2001a:364-365).

Secondly, confessions can be used to teach the whole Scripture in a balanced way. Before Jesus ascended, he said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey **everything** I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20). When only some of the Scripture, not "everything" of it, is emphasised with a certain bias, the Church will lose its spiritual balance and health. False teachers are always biased in their teaching by advocating or emphasising only a part of the Scripture. Confessions are a good way to avoid these dangers by keeping this command of Jesus, because it teaches the core doctrines of faith, reflecting all the will of God which is emphasised throughout the Scripture (Kim, 2011:154). According to Irenaeus's analogy, confessions function like "a pattern for a mosaic, helping us see how the various tiles fit together to form the beautiful image of a king" (Roberts & Donaldson, 1867:32). Confessions thus equip us to read each passage of Scripture in light of the whole and with the ultimate purpose of the Scripture in mind (Allen & Swain, 2015:111). This is also true in the public preaching and church education. Like all people, preachers (or teachers) have different preferences. As a result, preaching or church education can be biased to either side, and groups with different ideas within the same church (or denomination) can emerge. But confessions can limit the

shortcomings of the preachers (or teachers) because they can teach “everything” in a balanced way without being biased³³ (Gootjes, 2001a:365).

Thirdly, confessions of faith are a way to preserve and transmit to posterity the faith as the Church has understood it (Osterhaven, 1964:17). In particular, it is the catechesis education that the Reformed churches have used for the purpose of the succession of this faith. Catechism, however, did not originate in the Reformation, but was instituted by God himself, and has always been practised in the Church (Ursinus, 1956:11). In the Old Testament, the children of Israel were taught God’s salvation, the law, the promise of the gospel – in the family by their parents, and in the schools by teachers of religion (Ex. 12, 13; Deut. 4, 6, 11). Also in the early days of the Christian church, outstanding theologians and teachers of the Church, such as Clemens and Origen, continued to work in the Catechetical School (Jeong, 2016:62-66). Reformers only revived this tradition of the church.³⁴ They wrote and used the catechisms as a stepping stone to bring the covenant children to a true confession of God. The Palatinate Church Order of 1563 states that the final purpose of catechism is to make the children in the church publicly confess their own faith and participate in the table of the Lord (Niesel, 1938:148). Klaas Runia (1968:103) said that, in the case of Reformed churches on the European continent, the benefits of catechetical education are as follows:

“One can hardly overestimate the benefits that are thus afforded the young people. They are constantly confronted and challenged by the Word as it is taught. Their consciences are touched. In fact, many of these young people come to true conversion simply through catechetical classes. Their conversion may not be so spectacular, but it is often more solid and lasting than more emotional conversions. At the same time they are mentally and spiritually equipped to face the problems of school, university or professional life.”

3.3.2.2 Protective

There have been many deceivers, throughout the history of the Church, who changed the message of the gospel and thereby led many astray (Zandman, 2007:140). In response to this danger, the Church has always made statements that refute those errors by confessing, “We

³³ In this point, not all confessions are appropriate. While the confession such as the Heidelberg Catechism (HC) is helpful in this regard, some confessions (e.g. the Canons of Dordt) have a specific focus and will be less helpful.

³⁴ In medieval times, education for children in the church was neglected because of faith in the centre of Mass, but with the Reformation, preaching became the centre of worship and emphasised teaching the children the Word. As a result, about 60 Catechisms were written at the time of the Reformation, and developed with mutual influence (Yoo & Kim, 2006:14-15; Klooster, 1981:173-174).

believe this” based on the Word of God. Confessions of faith thus are milestones and fingerboards of the truth which the Church has kept against many false teachings in its history Church (Schaff, 1931a:23). Through these confessions, the Church has confessed true faith, rejected false teachings and passed on true piety to posterity. Confessions have also helped the church to be firmly established on the truth, especially by protecting the pulpit. Confessions provide a hedge that makes preachers’ preaching remain in the Scripture. Preachers should preach the Word within the bounds of their confessions so that the risk of misleading the congregation can be prevented. For the congregation, confessions make them discern the preacher’s messages. It also provides clear standards for the elders who are obliged to keep preachers from preaching what is contrary to God’s Word (Gootjes, 2001b:382-384).

3.3.2.3 Declaratory (or Missionary)

The Scripture says, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Pet. 3:15). The Church has to declare and testify to those outside the church fellowship what they believe, what the character of the community is, and how they should live. Confessions of faith serve this witnessing task of the church. Abraham Kuyper (1891:388) noted that: “A creed is not for the purpose of stating our own surmises or conjectures, but for professing that we, on the basis of God’s revelation, possess most certain knowledge.” With its confession, the church makes plain that it is and desires to be “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). Furthermore, declaring and witnessing the faith as taught by the Scripture to those outside the church is also inviting them into the church. Confessions should not be just kept in the vault of the church, but should be printed on banners and hung above the door of the church. Fritz Krüger (2007:551) said, “They (confessions) are intended to be raised like banners in front of a marching crowd, urging them on to enter the world in the Name of Jesus with his message of reconciliation and peace”.

3.3.3 Unity

Paul commanded his readers “to glorify God with one heart and mouth” (Rom. 15:6), “to stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel” (Phil. 1:27), and “to make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit” (Eph. 4:3). The church of Christ is essentially one. So the church must be one, and its unity must be revealed to the world. Jesus Christ prayed for this (Jn. 17:20-21). Reformed confessions are a useful instrument for the unity of the church. Without the right standards of unity, people may judge and act on the basis of their own thought. However, when confessing the truth of the Scripture together through the confessions, true unity can be made in spite of many great and small differences within the church (Kim, 2011:169). Because the confessions are the repetition or reproduction of the Scripture content, it presents

the right standard of unity – “the unchanging Word of God”. In this sense, the confessions are also called “Standards of Unity”. They express the unity of the church by witnessing to the faith which we have in common and distinguish it from other interpretations of life which would contradict it (Osterhaven, 1964:17). Confessing the confessions together makes it possible for each member of the church to publicly identify the unified faith of a common gospel with every other member. Herm Zandman (2007:150-151) defined the confessions as “a bond of unity in which members may hold each other to account” and “a bond that they may celebrate around the Lord’s supper table”. The confessions can also be a good criterion for the ecumenical unity of the church in truth by illustrating what different denominations understand by God’s truth (Hamilton, 2010:200). Furthermore, the confessions confirm that we have the same faith with every other believer throughout history who has confessed the faith in Christ (Trueman, 2012:144). Article 27 of the Belgic Confession (BC) states the following about the church:

This holy church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same Spirit (Beeke & Ferguson, 1999:188).

At the International Conferences of the Reformed Churches (ICRC) of 1997, the document entitled, “Biblical principles of the unity of the church”, which was submitted by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), states that the foundation of the church unity is Christ, the gospel of Christ, and “the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God” (Eph. 4:13), and it is summarised for us in our confession of faith (OPC, 1997:101).

3.4 The authority of confessions

3.4.1 Confessions as a Biblical tradition

3.4.1.1 Tradition in the New Testament

The New Testament word for “tradition” is *paradosis*, which may denote the act of handing over or the material which is handed over (Bruce, 1970:20). The word *paradosis* occurs 13 times in the New Testament (Balz & Schneider, 1990:21). It sometimes has a negative meaning when referring to the pharisaic traditions added to God’s law (Matt. 15:2, 3, 6; Mark. 7:3, 5, 8, 9, 13), and when it is used to describe a pharisaic and self-justified approach to God that is distinct from the Christ-centered gospel of salvation and justification by faith alone, grace alone, and Christ alone (Gal. 1:14, Col. 2:8) (Scott Clark, 2008:7).

The word *paradosis*, however, is also used favourably in other places in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians 11:2 the apostle Paul praises the Corinthian church for remembering Paul in everything and for holding “the traditions (*paradoxeis*)” just as he passed them on to the church (1 Cor. 11:2). In 2 Thessalonians 2:14-15 Paul encourages the Thessalonian Christians to stand firm and hold to “the traditions (*paradoxeis*)” that he, with all the apostles, passed on to them. Here the traditions refer to “our gospel” in verse 14. God called them to faith through the gospel, which is the tradition Paul delivered to them. Paul also commands in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 to keep away from every brother who is idle and does not live according to “the tradition (*paradosis*)” that the Thessalonian Christians received “from us”. In these verses, the tradition is the teaching that Paul received from God and passed on to the churches. According to Scott Clark (2008:8), “It is clear that Paul was not averse to describing his teaching as a tradition, that is, a body of theological or moral instruction that was to be received and considered authoritative and binding”.

There are other passages in the New Testament where tradition is referred to without the actual word *paradosis* being used. The contents of this tradition include a summary of the Christian message, expressed as the confession of faith, with particular emphasis on the death and resurrection of Christ, and various deeds and words of Christ, as well as ethical and procedural rules for Christians (Hanson, 1962:10; Bruce, 1970:29).

It cannot be said that, therefore, that tradition is unhelpful or even unbiblical, since the Scripture itself testifies about it.

3.4.1.2 The Reformed perspective on tradition

The Reformed position on church tradition is different from one position like the Roman Catholics who place tradition equal to or above the Scripture, and also different from another position like some modern evangelicals who reject tradition putatively.

The Roman Catholic Church declared at Trent (session 4) that:

“It receives and venerates with an equal affection of piety and reverence the said traditions as well as those pertaining to faith and morals as having been dictated either by Christ’s own word of mouth or by the Holy Spirit and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession (cited by Bavinck, 2011a:481).”

The Vatican Council (session 3, Chap. 2) also declared that:

“This supernatural revelation is contained in written books and in the unwritten traditions that were received from the mouth of Christ Himself by the apostles or

from the apostles themselves under the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and that have come down to us, transmitted, as it were, from hand to hand (cited by Bavinck, 2011a:481).”

According to Heiko Oberman (1992:286), the Roman Catholic Church believes that: “The Christian faith reaches the church in every generation through two sources, the written and unwritten tradition. The extra-scriptural apostolic tradition should be regarded with an equal affection of piety and reverence as the canonised written tradition, the Holy the Scripture”. They place tradition in an equal position with the Scripture. However, in fact, tradition has a higher authority than the Scripture. They believe that the Scripture is incomplete and has to be supplemented by tradition. For them, the tradition is not a supplement to the Scripture, but the Scripture is a supplement to tradition. While the Scripture alone is not sufficient, tradition alone is (Bavinck, 2011a:487).

Oberman (1992:280) described this Roman Catholic position of the relation between tradition and the Scripture, the “two-sources theory which allows for extra-Biblical oral tradition”, as “Tradition II”, and calls another approach of their relation represented by the Reformers, which compete with the Roman Catholic position, a “single exegetical tradition of interpreted the Scripture” as “Tradition I”. With this distinction, Oberman (1992:282-283) noted that the representatives of Tradition I did not refuse the validity and importance of tradition and indeed regarded tradition as “the execution of the custodian’s task of the church”, but that they never accepted that any tradition, whether it was a church tradition in terms of the interpretation of the Scripture or an extra-scriptural apostolic tradition, would be regarded as having authority equivalent to the Bible.

In the opposite position to the Roman Catholic Church, some Christians have a putative rejection of church tradition. They regard the Reformation as a struggle between the Scripture and tradition. To be accurate, however, the Reformation was not a struggle between the Scripture and tradition, but a struggle between different kinds of traditions, that is between scriptural tradition and unscriptural tradition (Trueman, 2012:15-16). In the debate between John Calvin and Cardinal Sadoletto through the exchange of letters, in response to Sadoletto's accusation that Protestants had abandoned the tradition of the church, Calvin responded that the Protestants had the true tradition (Calvin, 1966:40-42; 59-63). In short, Calvin understood the Reformation not as a struggle between the Scripture and tradition but as a struggle between scriptural tradition and unscriptural tradition (Trueman, 2012:16).

The banner of people who reject tradition is the principle of “*sola scriptura*”. They consider this principle to indicate that the tradition of the church never play any constructive role in the life or

thought of the church (Trueman, 2012:15). *Sola scriptura*, however, was not intended by its original advocates in the time of the Reformation as an absolute rebuke to tradition or a denial of genuine ecclesiastical authority (Allen & Swain, 2015:49). *Sola scriptura* does not mean that the Scripture is the sole source or resource of theology and that the Scripture is the sole authority for theology (Lane, 1994:300-322). *Sola scriptura* was not “*nuda scriptura*”, which means the Scripture approached in a vacuum (George, 1988). It is unfeasible. The essence of *sola scriptura* is that the Scripture is the “final authority or norm” for theology and Christian belief, that is, it was intended to subordinate all the traditions to the primacy of the Scripture (Lane, 1994:300-326).

The 1559 French Confession of Faith (Art. 5) expresses this as follows:

And inasmuch as it is the rule of all truth, containing all that is necessary for the service of God and for our salvation, it is not lawful for men, nor even for angels, to add to it, to take away from it, or to change it. Whence it follows that no authority, whether of antiquity, or custom, or numbers, or human wisdom, or judgements, or proclamations, or edicts, or decrees, or councils, or visions, or miracles, should be opposed to these Holy Scriptures, but, on the contrary, all things should be examined, regulated, and reformed according to them (Cochrane, 1966:145-146).

The Belgic Confession of Faith (Art. 7) says the same:

Neither do we consider of equal value any writing of men, however holy these men may have been, with those divine Scriptures; nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees, or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, for the truth is above all; for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself. Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever doth not agree with this infallible rule which the apostles have taught us, saying, Try the spirits whether they are of God (Beeke & Ferguson, 1999:16).

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1.10) also states that the Scripture is the supreme judge as follows:

The Supreme Judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture (Westminster Assembly, 2018:11).

The Reformed approach to tradition does not regard the past as to be ignored, suspected, and canonised, but rather treats it as worthy of respect only based on the correspondence with the Scripture (Scott Clark, 2008:10).

3.4.2 The relationship between the Scripture and confessions

Reformed churches have attributed authority to the Reformed confessions. The confessions have a binding authority to require individuals to submit to something intellectually and morally outside of themselves, and to listen to the voices of the church from other times and places (Webster, 2005:74; Trueman, 2012:48). It is not because the confessions have an authority that is intrinsic to themselves, nor just because the church authorised them, but because it has been convinced that whatever professed in the confessions is wholly based upon the God's Word (Murray, 1982:271-272). Herman Bavinck (2011b:420-421) defined the relationship between the Scripture and confessions as follows:

“The confession is not a statement alongside of, let alone above, but far below Scripture. Scripture alone is trustworthy in and of itself (αὐτοπιστος, *autopistos*), unconditionally binding us to faith and obedience, unchanging; a confession, on the other hand, always remains examinable and revisable by the standard of Scripture. It is not a standardizing norm (*norma normans*) but at most a standardized norm (*norma normata*), not a norm of truth (*norma veritatis*), but “a standard of doctrine received in a particular church,” subordinate, fallible, the work of humans, an inadequate expression of what the church has absorbed from Scripture as divine truth and now confesses on the authority of God's Word against all error and deception. The church does not coerce anyone with this confession, nor does it fetter research, for it leaves everyone free to confess otherwise and to conceive the truth of God in some other sense. It listens attentively to the objections that may be advanced on the basis of God's Word against its confession and examines them as the confession itself requires. Only it refuses and has to refuse to degrade itself into a debating club or a philosophical society in which what was a lie yesterday passes for truth today. It is not like a wave of the sea but like a rock, a pillar and foundation of the truth.”

The confessions are summary statements of the Word of God. They are not a replacement for, supplementation of or improvement upon Holy the Scripture, but a repetition thereof. That is, the truth contained in the confessions is derived from the Scripture (Machen, 1973:150). This is the authority of the confessions. Its authority is inseparable from its submission to the Scripture. In other words, the authority of the confessions is thoroughly limited to the Scripture. In the

Reformed churches, the confessions have never been placed beside or above the Scripture, but are always subjected to the test of the Word of God. The confessions, therefore, are open to public scrutiny and can be, and must be, corrected and revised based on the Scripture.

In summary, the relationship between the Scripture and the confessions can be described as “a structure from the Scripture to the confessions and from the confessions back to the Scripture”. Reformed churches confess their faith based on the Scripture (through their confessions) and constantly returns to the Scripture by confirming that the confessions depend on the Scripture.

3.4.3 Unity in the diversity of confessions

In the history of Reformed theology, there has always been a genuine and substantial unity amidst the diversity and that unity is expressed in the Reformed confessions (Scott Clark, 2008:28). While the *Konkordienbuch* (*Book of Concord*), the official collection of Lutheran confessions, focuses on the thinking of a person named Luther, the confessions of the Reformed Churches do not grant special authority to Calvin (Busch, 2003:35). The confessions of the Reformed churches were written by various persons or ecclesiastical assemblies, respecting the orthodox theological position of the churches, and developed in their mutual theological exchanges and influences. According to Scott Clark (2008:28-29), no fewer than 25 major confessions or catechisms appeared between 1523 and 1675.³⁵ In the space of 152 years, the Reformed churches published, on average, a major confession every six years.³⁶ Bavinck (1894:22) noted that one of the strengths of Calvinism, in contrast to Lutheranism, is to allow various minor shades and to avoid all mechanical uniformity in the application of its theological and ecclesiastical principles. However, despite this diversity of the confessions, the doctrine was substantially the same in all the major documents (Scott Clark, 2008:29). Schaff (1877:15) noted that:

“The Reformed confessions present the same system of Christian doctrine. They are variations of one theme. ... The difference is confined to minor details, and to the extent to which the Augustinian and Calvinistic principles are carried out; in other

³⁵ E.g., Sixty-Seven Articles (1523); The Conclusions of Bern (1528); Zwingli's confession of Faith (1530); Tetrapolitan confession (1530); confession of Basel (1534); First Helvetic confession (1536); Calvin's Catechisms (1537, 1541); Genevan confession (1536-37); Zürich Consensus (1549); confession of the English Congregation in Geneva (1556); Forty-Two Articles (1553); Thirty-Nine Articles (1562-71); Gallic confession (1559); Scots confession (1560); Belgic confession (1561); Second Helvetic confession (1566); Heidelberg Catechism (1563); Second Scots confession (1580); Irish Articles (1615); Canons of Dort (1619); Westminster confession and Catechism (1647-48); Consensus Helvetica Formula (1675) (Scott Clark, 2008:159).

³⁶ In addition to the major confessions or catechisms, there were many regional, local and minor confessions during the times (Cf. Niemeyer, 1840).

words, the difference is theological, not religious, and logical rather than theological.”³⁷

Schaff (1877:16) also pointed out in detail that the Reformed confessions are consistent in “Bibliology, ecumenical or old catholic in Theology and Christology, Augustinian in Anthropology and the doctrine of predestination, evangelical in Soteriology, Calvinistic in Ecclesiology and Sacramentology, and antipapal in Eschatology”. The unity and consistency of the Reformed confessions, in particular, was publicly confirmed at the Synod of Dordt, which was a meeting of international Reformed churches, by collectively stating their faith with “the Three Forms of Unity”³⁸. Willem van’t Spijker (2009:54) pointed out that it is a fundamental feature of the Reformed tradition that a confession of faith among the various confessions goes through a verification process.

In conclusion, the Reformed churches have pursued the unity of the church through the unity of confessions. But this unity is different from the Lutheran confessions in that it does not mean the standardisation of the confessions. Reformed churches have pursued substantial unity in the content of their confessions, but have allowed diversity in their expressions.

3.4.4 Subscription to confessions

3.4.4.1 Degree of the binding of confessions

There have been many debates about the degree of the binding of the confessions, specifically the *quia* or *quatenus* form of confessional subscription (Schaff, 1931a:26). *Quia* is the earlier approach to subscribing to confessions: the confession is acceptable and binding “because (*quia*)” it is consistent with the Scripture. The other approach is *quatenus*, meaning the confession is acceptable and binding “insofar as (*quatenus*)” it is in line with the Scripture. Therefore, the *quia* approach is unqualified subscription, while the *quatenus* approach means one can subscribe to the confession with reservations.

The early Reformed practice was *quia* subscription. According to David Hall (2018:279), from Calvin’s Geneva to the early 18th century, “obviously subscription meant submission to the stated doctrine and a whole-hearted embracing of the credenda, without equivocation or mental reservation”. The continental Reformed practice was to subscribe to the Belgic Confession (BC), the Heidelberg Catechism (HC) and, after 1618, the Canons of Dordt (CD) without exception,

³⁷ For documentary proof of this agreement by means of extracts from the confessions themselves, see Hall (1842).

³⁸ “The Three Forms of Unity” is a collective name for the Belgic Confession (BC), the Canons of Dordt (CD), and the Heidelberg Catechism (HC).

and in the Presbyterian Church in Scotland as well it was usually requested to subscribe the WCF without exception (Duncan III, 2018:2063-2068; Godfrey, 2018:1795-1798; Ward, 2009:97). In the 18th century, however, greater distance between confessions and the Scripture began to appear. Hamilton (2010:12-13) noted that a doctrinal decline in Scotland by the 18th century was caused by the change from the earlier Scottish subscription, which subscribes to the whole doctrine contained in the WCF, to an undefined “substance of the faith” within the WCF. In 1720 the Irish Presbyterians adopted a version of the *quatenus* approach requiring ministers to hold to the “substance of doctrine” when subscribing to the WCF (Scott Clark, 2008:163). In the Netherlands, the Dutch Reformed Church also allowed *quatenus* subscription in 1816, and it was one of the issues that prompted the *Afscheiding* (separating) of 1834 (Godfrey, 2018:1838-1839; Sinnema, 2007:279-280). In view of this, it can be seen that the degree of the binding of confessions in the Reformed tradition was not a secondary issue, but an important issue that distinguished the doctrinal identity of the church.

Among early colonial American Presbyterians, there were controversies between strict subscribers and nonsubscribers (or loose subscribers). The former asserted that confessional subscription was necessary to maintain the church’s doctrinal purity, while the latter questioned whether it was Biblical by claiming that only the Scripture was the norm for the order and maintenance of the church (Scott Clark, 2008:163). At the General Synod of 1729, the WCF and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms (WLC, WSC) were adopted as standard documents for the church, and the controversy continued over the intention of the Adopting Act of the Synod, whether it was intended to be the strict subscription or the loose subscription. The Synod declared in the Preliminary Act of 1729 that “all the ministers of this Synod, or that shall hereafter be admitted into this Synod, have to declare their agreement in, and approbation of, the standards, as being in all the essential and necessary articles, good forms of sound words and systems of Christian doctrine, and do also adopt the said confession and catechisms as the confessions of our faith” (PCUSA, 1904:94).³⁹ In the afternoon session the Synod also declared that the only exceptions taken to the confession were to some clauses in the 20th and 23rd chapters with respect to the civil magistrate “having a controlling power over Synods with respect to the exercise of their ministerial authority; or power to persecute any for their religion,

³⁹ No candidate could be admitted unless he declared his agreement with all the “essential and necessary” articles of the confession. In case any minister or candidate who found himself with any scruple concerning any article of the confession had to declare his scruple to the presbytery or synod. The presbytery or synod judged his scruple or mistake to be only about things not “essential and necessary” in doctrine, worship or government. If his scruple was not about the “essential and necessary” doctrines, he should be treated with the same brotherly love, friendship and kindness, but otherwise he was judged ineligible for ministry in the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA, 1904:94).

or in any sense contrary to the Protestant succession to the throne of Great Britain (PCUSA, 1904:95)".

Some argued that the Adopting Act of 1729 was a victory for the side which wished a strict subscription to the confession (see Smith, 1993:51-57; see also Knight, 1984a:56-63; 1984b:20-55), while others insisted that it was favourable to the non-subscription side because it allowed the ministers to be inconsistent with the confession, with reference to "all the essential and necessary articles" (see Briggs, 1890:56-63; 1889a:464-474; 1885:208-221). These conflicting claims arose because those wishing for a strict subscription to the confession emphasised the actual adopting action with the only exception clearly stated in the afternoon session, while those who favoured non-subscription emphasised the Preliminary Act adopted in the morning session, which makes reference to "all the essential and necessary articles" (Barker, 1984:3-4). Since that time, the problem of what the allowance of exceptions means and of how many exceptions may be taken has been controversial in the Presbyterian Church.⁴⁰

There are two representative competing contemporary approaches to confessional subscription within Reformed circles in America: "full subscription" and "system subscription". At stake in this argument was the meaning of "system doctrine" in the second ordination vow, used by American Presbyterians since 1788: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of this Church, as containing the **system of doctrine** taught in the Holy Scriptures?" (Scott Clark, 2008:171).

The full subscription view holds that the ordained is subscribing to all the doctrines in the doctrinal standards, even though it does not require a subscription in terms of adopting every word or expression of them; they are all part of the system of doctrine (Smith, 1993:46-47). More specifically, the doctrinal standards are nothing more or less than "The very doctrines of the Word of God" (Smith, 1993:69; Knight, 1984:31). It is not permitted for the ordained to teach any exception contrary to the standards to preserve orthodoxy (Smith, 1993:72; Knight, 1984:53).

The system subscription view also requires the adoption of the confessional standards as a whole, but it allows for non-essential doctrinal exceptions not belonging to the "system of doctrine". The "system of doctrine" means that "the necessary and essential articles of the Reformed, Calvinistic or Augustinian faith, that is, the system of doctrine of the Westminster standards (Barker, 2001:8-9)". In this view, the Presbytery has decisive authority to determine

⁴⁰ James Payton (1986:131-135) argued that "the unique precision of the Westminster standards made it difficult to require the same unqualified subscription which the church had demanded of previous confessions such as the Three Forms of Unity".

whether one's scruple is contrary to the system of doctrine. By the system subscription view, the demand that the ordained should not teach his scruple not belonging to the system of doctrine is unbiblical because "it binds his conscience to something other than the Word of God and thus elevates the standards to the authority of the Scripture (Barker, 1984:3)".

Proponents of full subscription complain that the system view allows too much latitude to ministers and presbyteries in determining what the system of doctrine is. Scott Clark (2008:172) asserted that the system view is a kind of *quatenus* subscription. John Fesko (2003:697), on the other hand, noted of the system view that "officers must subscribe to the standards because (*quia*) they contain the doctrines of the Scripture as understood by the Church, but they can bind the conscience only in so far as (*quatenus*) the teachings of the standards accord with the Scripture". This means the ordained can take exceptions to the standard documents in so far as (*quatenus*) his scruples correspond to the teachings of the Scripture. He also insisted that "it is the only formula that can guard against assigning the standards too much authority and equating them with the Scripture as well as guard against giving them too little weight and relegate them to impotence or a museum relic (Fesko, 2003:697)". Contrary to Fesko it should be noted that the confession itself states the Scripture as the highest standard for faith and life⁴¹. If the confession itself states this so precisely, then no one can elevate it to the position that itself denies. As seen above, the controversy over confessional subscription has been ongoing in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. In contrast, in the history of the PCK, the controversy concerning the binding of confessions has never occurred. Even in the early days of the PCK's adopting the TAF as their confession of faith, there was no issue of confessional subscription even after some Presbyterian Churches adopted the WCF in the 1960s. Although church officers subscribe to the WCF, it has often been a pro forma. As a result, many of the church officers are ignorant of the contents of their confessions. This is evidence that the PCK has been indifferent to their confessions, and the confessions have been a mere formality which plays practically a small role in the PCK.

3.4.4.2 Range of the binding to confessions

Confessions are not merely the theology of individual, but the theology of the church as one body. They should be, therefore, agreed not only by the church officers but also by all the members of the church. In the continental Reformed tradition, members of the church, as well as church officers, are still expected to agree and accept their confessions (Scott Clark,

⁴¹ "The supreme judge, by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture" (WCF, 1.10) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:11).

2008:180; Zandman, 2007:135). In the Dutch tradition, in general, church officers subscribe either by a way of placing his signature beneath the confessions of the church or by a way of signing a form of subscription, and church members also bind themselves to the confessions by taking an oral oath in the public profession of faith (Janssen, 2009:403). This can be supported by a thorough education in the confessions in the church. Covenant youth in the Reformed churches are regularly trained to gain an understanding of the confessions and are examined with regard to their understanding at a proper time (Zandman, 2007:149-150). As a result, they accept and agree to the confessions of the church as their own confession in the public profession of faith. On the form of the profession of faith of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches (CANRC, 2018), the first question is:

“Do you wholeheartedly believe the doctrine of the Word of God, summarised in the confessions and taught here in this Christian church? Do you promise by the grace of God steadfastly to continue in this doctrine in life and death, rejecting all heresies and errors conflicting with God’s Word?”

The *Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Africa* (GKSA, 2018) also requests an agreement to this question:

“Do you heartily believe the doctrine contained in the Old and the New Testaments, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and taught in this Christian church, to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation, and do you promise by the grace of God steadfastly to continue in this profession?”

This is also equally required of those seeking membership from outside the Reformed churches (Zandman, 2007:150). Like this, the Reformed churches have requested not only ministers but also all members to receive and agree to the confessions of the church. It makes the person confirm whether his or her beliefs fit in with the church’s. Furthermore, the members are clearly aware of their identity that they belong to the church by the same faith. The members of the Reformed church therefore often have great pride in their church and usually go to Reformed churches in any region or country where they move to (Heo, 2001:27-28).

However, the Presbyterian Church, especially in America, has taken a different position from this tradition. Only church officers are required to subscribe to their confessional documents, while prospective members need to profess just several basic and universal doctrines of Christianity. The PCK received the tradition from the American Presbyterian Church. In the PCK, there is no thorough catechetical education for prospective members, so there is also no asking about an agreement to the confessional documents. Only the acceptance of the basic doctrines

is required. Answering the following questions is required on the profession of faith (PCK [Kosin], 2015:63):

“Mun (1): Yeoreobuneun eoryeoteul ttaee bumoui sinanggobaekgwa seoyakeuro seryereul badateumeuro ijeneun geu gobaekgwa seoyakeul yeoreobun jasinui geoteuro samgo seongsilhi jikigiro maengsehabnikka? [Q1: Since you were baptized by your parents’ confession and pledge when you were an infant, do you now swear to keep the confession and pledge as your own?]”

Mun (2): Yeoreobuneun jasini hananim ape joeininjul almyeo dangyeonhi geuui jinnoreul badaya hal saramijiman hananimui keusin jabie uihayeo guwoneul eodneun gil oee somangi eobsneun jain geoteul insikhabnikka? [Q2: Do you acknowledge yourselves to be sinners in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?]”

Mun (3): Yeoreobuneun ju yesu geuriseudoga hananimui adeulisimgwa joeinui gujuisimeul mideumyeo bokgeume malhan bawa gati guwonhasil ineun ojik yesu geuriseudo han bunppunin jul ala geureul yeongjeobhago geuegeman uijihagiro jakjeonghabnikka? [Q3: Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Saviour of the sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?]”

Mun (4): Yeoreobuneun jigeum seongryeongui eunhyemaneul uijihago geuriseudoreul jochneun jaga doeeo modeun joereul beorigo geuui gareuchimgwa mobeomeul ttaraseo salgiro jakjeonghabnikka? [Q4: Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will abandon all your sins and endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?]”

Mun (5): Yeoreobuneun ijebuteo gyohoeui gwanhalgwa chirie bokjonghago seonggyeolgwa hwapyeonggeul irudorok noryeokhagiro jakjeonghabnikka? [Q5: Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, from now on, and promise to study its purity and peace?]”

Heo Soon Gil (2001:26) pointed out that this in fact makes them members of a cosmopolitan church, not members of the Presbyterian church. They belong to the Presbyterian church just because their names have put on the church register, not because they have agreed to and accepted the confession of the church. They therefore can move easily from the Presbyterian church to other churches (denominations) without any conflict of faith or conscience and maintain a relativistic ecumenical mind in ecclesiology. This has happened frequently in

Presbyterian churches in Korea. This is also related to disciplining members. If a member deviates significantly from a doctrinal point in the confessions, the elders cannot discipline him with the confessions in principle because he or she did not subscribe to them. Only the church officers are within the scope of the binding authority of the confessions, not all members. According to Zandman (2007:137), “this has resulted in an ever-increasing slackening of supervision over the Lord’s Supper, permitting admittance to all who profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour apart from any specific confessional framework”. Furthermore, this might create “double standards” and “varying types of membership” in the church (Bavinck, 1998:82). Scott Clark (2008:179) also pointed out that “establishing two distinct relations to the same constitutional document would seem to be a recipe for confusion and effectively two churches within one”.

3.5 Confessional revision or replacement

3.5.1 Historical data

Confessions of faith should never be placed beside or above the Scripture. It should always be examined by God’s Word. In other words, the church can and has erred in her confessions, and therefore the confessions should always be open to modification and revision in accordance with the clear teachings of the Scripture. This is even stated within the confessions themselves (cf. BC, Art. 5, 7; WCF, 1:10) (Allen & Swain, 2015:111-112). However, this does not mean that confessions are open to endless revision. In the 17th century, the Arminians viewed that only the Scripture could be the rule of faith and that the confessions (Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism) were products of human study (Sinnema, 2007:266). They therefore demanded that the confessions should be permitted to erase, to alter, or to add whatsoever it pleased at any time, and that the next or a subsequent Synod should be allowed to do the same work over again and revise anew the already revised confessions (Arminius, 1863:264-275). At the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619, these claims by the Arminians were rejected, as implying a disregard for the work of God and a denial of the Kingship of Christ over his Church (Kuyper, 1891:392). The Belgic Confession (BC) had been revised several times, but the revisions did not result in substantial changes in the context and meaning (see Gootjes, 2007:117-159). After “The Three Forms of Unity” were approbated as official statements of doctrine by the Synod of Dordt, they have so far been authoritative standards in most Reformed churches without substantive change.

In contrast, in the Presbyterian Church in America, there have been many controversies over the revision of the WCF, and it has been revised several times including substantial changes in terms of its theological tendency (the 1903 revision). In 1788 the Synod of New York and

Philadelphia revised Chapters 22.3, 23.3, and 31.2 of the WCF (to the direction of excluding the involvement of civil magistrate in ecclesiastical matters), and in 1887 the final sentence of Chapter 24.4, which forbade marrying the close kindred of his wife (or her husband), was removed by the PCUSA.

The demands and controversies for the revision of the confession surged in the 19th century. Alexander Cheyne (1986:25) has styled the years between around 1860 and 1910 as the time of “the Great Confessional Controversy”. At this time, the various Churches took up the task of redefining their relationship to the confessions. There were various factors behind the movement to revise the confession, such as Darwinian science, Biblical criticism and liberalism (or modernism). As a result, the PCUSA revised the WCF more radically in 1903. These included changes to the existing Chapter 16.7 (the text on works done by unregenerate men was rewritten), 22.3 (the last sentence stating that it is sin to refuse an oath imposed by lawful authority was removed) and 25.6 (the text on the head of the church was rewritten, and the identification of the Roman Catholic pope as the Antichrist was removed). Two chapters (34. “Of the Holy Spirit”, 35. “Of the Gospel of the Love of God and Mission”) were added. A “Declaratory Statement” explained that Chapter 3, “Of God’s Eternal Decree,” should be interpreted in accord with the belief that God loves all mankind, and Chapter 10.3, which speaks of “elect infants,” should not be regarded as the teaching that those who died in infancy were lost. The 1903 revisions were one step in a gradual theological change by a toning down of the Calvinistic emphasis on the confession. In an editorial published in 1936 Gresham Machen (1936:69-70) characterised the revisions of 1903 as “compromising amendments”, “highly objectionable”, a “calamity”, and “a very serious lowering of the flag”. Bavinck (2011a:204) also criticised the 1903 revision as follows:

“Still, the influence of the modern mind is also penetrating the Northern Presbyterian Church. The revision of the Westminster Confession, which was under study for many years, was concluded and put into effect in 1903. In the process only a few changes were made, but the additions and omissions, the two new chapters on the Holy Spirit and the love of God and missions incorporated in it, as well as the Declaratory Statement, which contradicts certain false interpretations of Reformed doctrine, are obviously all intended to strongly highlight – alongside of the particularism taught in the confession – the universalism of the love of God, of the atonement, of the preaching of the gospel and the offer of grace, of the work of the Holy Spirit, and of the salvation of all children who die in infancy. ... It is remarkable in any case that at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church North held in May 1905 – hence, two years after the revision had been adopted – that

denomination united with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which, in 1770, was born out of revivals and in its confession decisively adopts the Arminian position. Thus Reformed churches and theology in America are in a serious crisis. The dogmas of the infallibility of Holy the Scripture, of the Trinity, of the fall and human impotence, of particular or limited atonement, of election and reprobation, and of everlasting punishment are either secretly denied or openly rejected. There is clearly no rosy future awaiting Calvinism in America.”

3.5.2 Modern minds in terms of confessional revision or replacement

3.5.2.1 Contextualism

Many of those who advocate the change, revision and redefinition of confessions obviously take context more seriously. This position is related to “historicism (that everything is changeable)” and “postmodernism (that everything is relative)” (Strauss, 2005:154). More specifically, they assert that the old confessions are outdated and outmoded, and will not do, so that the Church should revise the confessions in accordance with the times and circumstances, or make a new confession for each generation. This is the same claim as made by the Arminians (see 3.5.1). They also regard confessions as expressions of “religious psychology of individuals or particular religious communities”, rather than statements of “transcendental truth”, so that the claims of the truth by one community do not apply to others in any real way (Trueman, 2012:44). To them the confessions are nothing more than interesting historical documents. Christian Link (1999:260) claimed that “the indissoluble relationship between confessions and context implies that a confession can never function normatively in a context other than the one from which it originated”. This mind is also found in the PCK’s adoption of the TAF in 1907. The early missionaries who came to Korea thought that the WCF was not suitable for the PCK because the WCF was created in a different time (17th century) and in the different culture (West). They therefore regarded the TAF, which was created at a similar time and in a similar circumstance, as the better confession for the PCK. The priority of the criteria by which they assessed the excellence of the confession was apparently “context”, and the consideration of the catholicity of confessions was relatively overlooked (cf. 3.5.3.1). Machen (1973:154) described this contextualism in terms of confessions critically as follows:

“Since doctrine, they say, is merely the expression of Christian experience, doctrines change and yet the fundamental experience remains the same. One generation expresses its Christian experience in one doctrine, and then another generation may express the same Christian experience in an exactly opposite doctrine. So the Modernism of today becomes the orthodoxy of tomorrow, which in

turn gives place to a new Modernism, and so on in an infinite series. No doctrine, according to that theory, can remain valid forever; doctrine must change as the forms of thought change from age to age.”

3.5.2.2 Tolerance and ecumenicism

The revival movements in the 18th to 19th century, the resulting increase in missionary enthusiasm and the shifting of centre of gravity from doctrine to life, tended to reduce the gospel to the simplest principles for the bonds of each denomination and to emphasise God’s impartial love to all mankind (Shin, 2011:60; Bavinck, 1894:2). In this context, especially in the case of the WCF, it was alleged that, by focusing attention on the doctrinal formulation, it contributed to a barren orthodoxy. Confessions were regarded as a distasteful thing because claiming one position as truth is automatically making the other side false (Trueman, 2012:48). Charles Briggs (1889:7-8), one of the leaders of the revisionist movement in America, called the confessionalists (who opposed the revision of the WCF) as displaying orthodoxism, accusing them of the following:

“Orthodoxism is unwilling to learn; it is haughty and arrogant, assuming the divine prerogatives of infallibility and inerrancy; it refuses to accept the discoveries of science or the facts of history on the pretense that [these] conflict with the orthodoxy of the standards, preferring the traditions of man to the truth of God.”

They claimed a greater tolerance of a variety of viewpoints, but at the same time it has led an increased intolerance of any claims to final or absolute truth (Lane, 2007:235). In this respect, the purpose of demanding the revision of the WCF was to dilute the traditional Reformed doctrines in the confession, thereby making it a confession acceptable to the various denominations.

Briggs (1890:45) urged the revision of the WCF as follows:

“The revision of the Westminster Confession is a theme that is now absorbing the attention and stirring the hearts of Presbyterian churches throughout the world. For revision is no local or temporary movement. It is a product of the evolution of Christian life and thought in our century. It is the swell on the wave of the advancing tide of Christianity that is sweeping on not only the Presbyterian Church, but all denominations of Christians, towards the realisation of the grand ideals of Christian truth, unity, and perfection.”

Schaff (1889:552) also asserted:

“We need a theology and a confession that is more human than Calvinism, more divine than Arminianism, and more Christian and catholic than either; a confession as broad and deep as God’s love, and as strict and severe as God’s justice. We need a theology and a confession that will not only bind the members of one denomination together, but be also a bond of union between the various folds of the one flock of Christ, and attract the ungodly world, that it may be converted by the regenerating and sanctifying power of the everlasting gospel.”

The early missionaries, who came to Korea, also had these minds. They hoped to establish one native church in Korea, and that was one of the main motives for adopting the TAF as a confession of faith of the PCK.

3.5.3 Reformed view in terms of confessional revision or replacement

3.5.3.1 Catholicity of Reformed confessions

Confessions have been constructed throughout the ages by people from very different contexts. Obviously they address those issues in the manner of that era. We must therefore understand the events surrounding the time when the confessions were written. This does not mean, however, that the truth confessed in the confessions is valid only for a specific time and situation but that the enduring truth of the confessions was confessed in a specific time for a specific purpose (Borrasso, 2016:120). Confessions in the Reformed tradition have been recognised as having transcendental significance, not merely local or antiquarian interest, because they are summaries and repetition of scriptural truth. Machen (1973:155) said that “those who gave us the great creeds of the church believed that the creeds that they produced were true in the plain man’s sense of the word ‘truth’, and that the truth they contained would remain true forever”. The modern minds in confessional revision require a new confession that includes contemporary practical issues (e.g. justice, war, peace) and contemporary theological issues (e.g. homosexuality, women in office), or a revision to such a direction. This, however, is cause for anxiety for Reformed churches because it may lead to cut off the confessional branch they are standing on (Busch, 1999:529-530). The Reformers wished but to repeat what God had dictated in His Word. Their confessions neither will nor can be anything else than a joyful response and a faithful echo to the Word of their God (Kuyper, 1891:386). For example, the Belgic Confession was written on behalf of the suffering and persecuted Reformed Christians in the Low Countries, that is, the confession was a political testimony from the outset. Its contents, however, were focused on summarising the purity of the gospel and defending the orthodox Christian faith. The first concern of Guido de Brès, its author, was to prove with the confession that the Reformed churches stood in continuity with the church of all ages (Bolt, 2013:7). In this

sense, if the confessions are silent about certain things, then perhaps it is because the Scripture does not explicitly teach those things. Furthermore, the Reformers never proceeded to formulate their confessions until after and only so far as the Holy Spirit had clearly given them to understand the meaning of the divine Word on disputed points (Kuyper, 1891:386). In other words, they have discerned between *dogma de fide* (dogma of the faith) and private opinion; or confessional issue and non-confessional issue (Cooper, 2013:6; De Witt, 1890:28-29). So, on the one hand, the confessions are silent where the Scripture does not speak clearly, for example, the nature of the creation days in detail and the salvation of those dying in infancy.⁴² On the other hand, they have confessed something in detail in the process of advancing to an ever clearer understanding of the truth, for example, covenant theology and the doctrine of justification (Scott Clark, 2008:151).

In conclusion, in spite of distinctive emphases on aspects of faith in various historical contexts, the confessions assure that each other is the faithful expression of the same gospel (Yu, 2014:375). Even though they do not capture everything in the Scripture and do not deal with every possible theological issue, they frame the key teachings on which the others depend and are rightly understood. For centuries, Reformed synods, educators and cultural leaders have interpreted and applied the confessions to the issues of their day (Cooper, 2013:6). They were able to associate themselves with various cultural contexts because they made their confessions (and 'the Scripture' as its content) the normative standard (Strauss, 2005:155). In the Reformed tradition, therefore, their confessions are never relics of the long-dead past. They are living and still new. John Cooper (2013:6) noted as follows:

“They are not antiquated straightjackets that frustrate God’s Spirit by blocking novelty and reform. They remain living, reliable summaries of Biblical truths for faith and life from which to express and contextualize the gospel wherever God gives us opportunity.”

⁴² According to Kuyper (1891:387-388), the Reformed confessions did not go beyond on this point than was warranted by the Scriptures and had been revealed by the Spirit spreading light on the Scriptures. On the one hand, the Reformers only stated in their confessions “how God would have us consider such infants, and this consideration based on the divine Word made it imperative to look upon their infant children as elect and saved, and to treat them accordingly”. On the other hand their confessions are silent in regard to the infants of the heathen. It was not intended to deny that God is able to perform his hidden work of grace in these little ones also; but where the Scriptures did not pronounce on this point, they thought that the Church too neither could nor should speak.

In the 1903 revision, by contrast, the PCUSA interpreted Chapter 10.3 of the WCF, which speaks of “elect infants”, as meaning that all those who die in infancy are included in God’s election by the Declaratory Statement.

3.5.3.2 Confessions as an instrument of true unity based in the same faith

The Word of God is immutable, and therefore must be taught and applied in all times and places. The church is found anywhere and anytime, because the church in all times and places is united in the same faith based on the Word of God (Janssen, 2009:377). As mentioned earlier (3.5.3.1), the Reformers in the 16th and 17th centuries self-consciously regarded themselves as “catholic”. Their intention was not to establish a new church, but merely to reform the existing “catholic” church. They therefore saw themselves belonging to the tradition of the great early ecumenical creeds and emphasized confessing the universal Christian faith, not their own special thoughts (Allen & Swain, 2015:153; Strauss, 2005:155). In this regard, the Reformed confessions can be called the “umbilical cord” that binds them (also us) to the universal Christian church (Strauss, 2005:153). Roelf Christiaan Janssen (2009:377) noted that “with the historical confessions, the church expresses its unity with the church in the past. By promising fidelity to the confessions in the future, the church expresses its unity with the church of the future”. According to Norman Shepherd (1973:23), it is the nature of confessions that their content exhibits steadfastness in the catholic faith in the contemporary situation. If we break this bond, therefore, we may be cut off from the universal Christian church and reduced to a false church (Strauss, 2005:154).

Furthermore, the catholicity and unity of the church operate within the boundaries of holiness and apostolicity (Letham, 2010).⁴³ The attempts at revision based in the tolerance and coalition movements, however, tended to require broad doctrinal statements designed to keep all the various sects in the tent. The aim was not to faithfully reflect the teaching of the Scripture, but to reflect the diversity of views in churches. According to Hamilton (2010:206), this is “a new kind of confessionalism”, in which the public confession of the church is determined by the agreed opinions of people rather than the teaching of the Scripture. Machen (1973:153) noted that in most cases the statements are “not really evangelical at all, but utterly vague”. James Philip (1986:127) also pointed out that the motivating reason for such change is a substantial disagreement with its scriptural and reformed character. The “advance” or “development” envisaged is not a richer and fuller exposition of Biblical truth, but a deletion of, and departure from, truths that are no longer acceptable. Sybrand Strauss (2005:156) warned of the danger of this kind of ecumenism as follows:

“But if this “balancing” should imply that the Reformed confession is, in itself, insufficient and should therefore be complemented by the ecumenical, it becomes

⁴³ The catholicity of the church has “quantitative aspect (in all times and places)” and “qualitative aspect (in the unity of the true faith)” (Janssen, 2009:291).

hazardous. Then we fall victim to a holistic type of ecumenicism, in which the unique Reformed contribution is relativised – definitely not to the benefit of ecumenical theology. If we may only be “generically Christian”, emphasising only the lowest common denominator of what we believe, ecumenicity has become a monster, which devours confessionality.”

In conclusion, the ecumenical work of the church is not to pursue “a uniform and homogeneous Christianity”, but to represent as Reformed churches “the one and universal church” (Ernst, 2003:93). Thus faithfulness to the historical confessions is not a contribution to a barren orthodoxy or harming the unity of the church. Through their confessions, the Reformed do not confess “their denominational distinctiveness”, but rather, “in their concrete location and with their own understanding, they confess a universal church” (Busch, 2003:26). They have professed the same faith in their various confessions and have learned from each other. Furthermore, in contrast to modern ecumenism, it is sometimes the duty of the churches to firmly maintain the walls that are separating church if the walls are matters concerned with submitting to the Word of God in accordance with the publicly adopted confessions on the basis of the Scripture (Geertsema, 1986:143). A booklet entitled “For the Sake of True Ecumenicity” published by the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland [vrijgemaakt]* (GKN[v], the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands [Liberated]), contains the following statement:

“Ecumenical fellowship is possible only when cooperating churches can honestly declare with regard to each other’s confessional standards, that they are in conformity with the Word of God. In no other way can form be given to the first rule of true ecumenicity, that it shall serve unity in truth. The churches, cooperating in ecumenical fellowship, must also have the mutual confidence that they all sincerely maintain their standards and live up to them (cited by Van Burgel, 1989:78)”.

3.5.3.3 Conditions of confessional revision or replacement

On the basis of the two positions of the Reformed perspective related to the revision of confessions (3.5.3.1; 3.5.3.2), two conditions can be defined for the revision: first, “to advance in the direction of greater precision and fullness of doctrinal statement”; and second, “as a manifestation of the universality of the Church in the unity of the true faith”.

First, confessional revision or replacement should be a development to a greater and fuller doctrinal statement. Historically, the church has spoken emphatically and decisively concerning the great doctrines of the Christian faith, in advancing to an ever clearer understanding of the truth, in particular, through efforts to adhere to the Biblical truth against heresies (Philip,

1986:126). In the Church of Scotland, for example, the Scots Confession was replaced by the WCF on the grounds that the WCF was found to be most in agreement with the Word of God (Philip, 1986:127). Benjamin Warfield (1892:329-330) noted that if there is call for a revision at all, it is obviously for clearer and more precise definition, for a higher and more finished construction, and for developing the structure of the old Reformed theology along its own essential and formative lines in the face of the new systems of error and in conquest over them.

Second, confessional revision or replacement should be a manifestation of the universality of the church in the unity of the true faith. Preserving the unchangeable teachings of the Scripture by confessing it in public ecclesiastical documents and binding to the documents is to express the universality of the church in time (Janssen, 2009:377). According to Vilmos Vajta (1962:31), thus, “confessions must be in agreement with the apostolic faith, testified to by the Holy Scriptures as it has been proclaimed and confessed through all time in a true line of continuity to our day. Hence the church has striven that her loyalty be directed to a confession which has an ecumenical dimension”. The purpose of the revision of confessions, therefore, should be to more clearly reveal this universality of the church based on the unity of the true faith. To do this, according to Kuyper (1891:394-395), there must be a practically unanimous testimony of all the churches, and not the least danger of one-half of the Consistories or Classes obtruding their opinion on the other half. In the foreign Churches of the Reformed confessions, furthermore, a similar conviction must have led to similar results, before this new stage of symbolic development can be entered upon. Kuyper (1891:386) said in more detail:

“Calvinists do not speak out in a full-voiced confession until they are assured that the same voice has likewise spoken from the heart of their brethren in all Churches and countries. Only after perceiving that the one Spirit has by means of the one Word everywhere produced the same conviction in the hearts of all that move in the same current, they feel warranted to make a public profession in the name of the Church and to formulate in writing that same faith which has been sealed with the blood of their brethren at the stake. Hence it is that Calvinists always and everywhere have struck the same keynote in their confessions; that they subscribed each other’s symbols; that in drawing up and revising their Standards they always solicited one another’s advice; and that in point of fact in their various creeds they have professed on and the same faith”.

3.5.4 Adoption of confessions in mission fields

"Mission" is one of the church's most important missions. The aim of Mission is planting the church of Christ⁴⁴ in the mission field beyond just evangelization and humanitarian work. "The Great Commission" given in Matthew 28, which is essential for the church's missionary calling, is a command for planting the church of Christ in all nations, beyond a command of evangelization (Kwon, 2006:5-13). Jesus commanded the apostles "to make disciples" of all nations by "teaching and baptizing" them (namely, by preaching the gospel and administering sacrament continuously). As seen in the book of Acts⁴⁵, Christ gathers his church, which is built on the teaching of the apostles and prophets, by Word and sacrament (Bavinck, 2011b:312). Mission must therefore be for the purpose of planting the church, and include the continuous ministry of Word and sacrament (Horton, 2011:899; Kwon, 2006:13-14).

In particular, in relation to foreign missions, the church to be built in the foreign land should not be just a national church, but the universal church that confesses the same faith in the gospel, despite differences in nationality, race, and language⁴⁶. It must be assured that churches in any time and any place should demonstrate their unity in the holy universal church (Vajta, 1962:37). In this regard, confessions can be used as an important means of revealing the universality of the young (or infant) church and confirming the unity between the mother (or old) church and the young church. Therefore, in order to build more thorough Reformed churches in the mission field, it is required that the Reformed confessions (and church order) are transmitted and established. Of course, the young churches in the mission field do not necessarily have to accept the confessions of the old churches as they are. Apparently the young churches can confess the apostolic faith in other thought-forms. At the same time, however, it is not a reasonable idea to refuse the (western) confessions as irrelevant for the young churches in the mission field (Vajta, 1962:34; cf. 3.5.3.1). What must be premised on the adoption of a new confession of faith in the mission field is the confirmation about the same faith expressed in new forms has also been confessed in the confession of the mother church.

⁴⁴ This does not mean just to build a church building, but to establish a local church engaging in "the pure preaching of the gospel" and making use of "the pure administration of the sacraments".

⁴⁵ "Those who accepted **his message** were **baptized**, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to **the apostles' teaching** and **to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread** and to prayer (Acts. 2:41-42)."

"Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped **teaching and proclaiming the good news** that Jesus is the Christ (Acts. 5:42)."

⁴⁶ In this respect, the missionary goal of the Reformed churches (including the Presbyterian Church) is to establish a (Reformed) church that confesses the same (Reformed) faith in the mission field. The Reformed churches have regarded themselves as the universal church inheriting the very apostolic faith and the work of ancient church (compare Leith, 1981:96-97; cf. 3.5.3.2).

The PCK's adoption of the TAF in 1907 was not, however, for the purpose of establishing a universal church (specifically a Reformed Presbyterian Church) based on the same (Reformed) faith. The early missionaries on the contrary hoped to build one native church in Korea through the ecumenical church union, and the adoption of the TAF was for the purpose. It was difficult to say that the same faith confessed in the WCF was expressed in a new form in the TAF because the strict Calvinistic colour of the WCF was diluted in the TAF.

3.6 Summary

Reformed churches have historically been confessional churches. What the Reformed confessions are saying is what defines 'Reformed' (Van Genderen *et al.*, 2008:xi). They have declared that "the Reformed Doctrine is that system of the truths of divine revelation, obtained from the teachings of the Word of God", and that "it has been embodied in their standards" (Bosma, 1907:1). In other words, the Reformed churches have believed that their confessions are faithful representation of the teachings of the Scripture. In the Reformed tradition, thus, the confessions have been acknowledged as a means to glorify God as the churches' amen to the Word of God, to reveal their distinct identity, and to unite in the truth.

Also, the Reformed churches have attributed authority to the Reformed confessions. Even if the confessions have been never placed beside or above the Scripture and have always been subjected to the Scripture, they have been regarded as having binding authority, and are not merely interesting historical documents. The Reformed churches, therefore, have considered it necessary to be bound to the confessions by the way of subscription.

Furthermore, the confessions were not inherently authoritative so that they were open to revision or replacement. This should, however, be approached carefully, and only in a proper and orderly manner. Therefore, the demands of the confessional revision or replacement based on modern minds (contextualism, tolerance and ecumenicism) have been rejected. The fact that many Churches come together to make a single document does not mean that it is an ideal confession, nor does it constitute a better confession as a result of amending it to suit every whim of men or every change of theological fashion. Confessions should take account of the new generation of people, but always have to pay attention to what the Scripture is saying and make sure that the content of the Scripture is more clearly understood on this basis. In the Reformed tradition, therefore, the most important thing in the confessional revision or replacement was a clear Biblical guarantee. And this is the principle that should be applied equally in adopting a confession of faith in young churches of mission fields.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THEIR TWELVE ARTICLES OF FAITH

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 explained the Reformed perspective on confessions of faith. The answers to the following questions were discussed: What are the roles of confessions? What are the basis and limit of authority of confessions? What are the conditions of confessional revision or replacement (in particular, including the adoption of confessions in the mission field)? The answers to these questions provide the basis for evaluating the validity of the adoption of their Twelve Articles of Faith (TAF) in the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) from a Reformed perspective. In addition, one more necessary evaluation criterion is the theological nature of the TAF. Depending on this, it will be determined whether the adoption of the TAF in the PCK is reasonable or not in the Reformed perspective.

This chapter therefore first introduces the evaluations of the theological inclination of the TAF, and then analyses its structure and contents, especially in comparison with the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF)⁴⁷. The research limits the comparison to the WCF to analysing the TAF because the TAF was regarded as an abridged version of the WCF and that all of the four Presbyterian Churches (Presbyterian Church in the United States of America [PCUSA], Presbyterian Church in the United of America [PCUS], Presbyterian Church of Victoria in Australia [PCVA], and Presbyterian Church in Canada [PCC]) to which the early missionaries belonged had the WCF as their doctrinal standard. In addition, since the WCF has been recognised as one of the most representative Reformed Confessions⁴⁸, it will be possible to

⁴⁷ The WCF to be used for this is a version before the 1903 revision with addition of chapter 34, 35.

⁴⁸ There have been some criticisms of the WCF. Some such as Robert Kendall, Charles Bell, and Holmes Rolston claimed that the WCF had been separated from the Reformed tradition and turned into a theology inspiring suspicion, instead of offering comfort, because of the overreliance on election and the doctrine of the decrees of God (Kendall, 1997; Bell, 1985; Rolston, 1972). James Torrance (1986:40-54) criticized the covenant theology (or federal theology) of the WCF as a re-adoption of the Medieval dualistic model (Nature-Grace). Thomas Torrance (1996:126), a brother of James Torrance, also regarded the Westminster theology as a terrible product of 'Protestant Scholasticism'. The WCF shows that, as they claimed, there are more scholastic theological methods than previous confessions such as the Belgic Confession (BC) or Heidelberg Catechism (HC). Through the 17th century, theology developed in a direction to emphasize logic and systematicity. In this respect, the WCF took a scholarly and apologetic scholasticism form for the clarity of doctrinal explanations, rather than the reflection of pastoral and educational theology of the previous generation, and therefore it was structured very systematically compared to previous confessions (e.g. BC, HC) (Kim & Seo, 2013:40). In its content, nonetheless, the WCF is on exactly the same lines as the previous Reformed confessions. Jacob Kamphuis (2005:65) said that the contents scattered in the Three Forms of Unity were stated consistently in the WCF. It can be also said that the WCF and the previous Reformed confessions are supplementing each other by revealing the truth of the same gospel although they are expressed in different ways in different times (Spijker, 2009:78-79, 85-86). Each of these confessions reveals the theological development of the

judge the theological inclination of the TAF from the standpoint of Reformed theology. Therefore, by understanding the differences and features of the TAF in comparison with the WCF, the reasons why the PCK adopted the TAF will become clearer and will it be possible to evaluate whether the reasons were legitimate.

4.2 Evaluations of the theological inclination of their TAF

Evaluations of the theological inclination of the TAF are generally divided into two aspects. One is that the TAF is a very Calvinistic confession. The other regards it as a comprehensive evangelical confession that is conservative but diluted with strict Calvinistic features.

Paik Lak Joon (1927:426) noted that the TAF consisted of contents of strong Calvinistic tendency, because it affirmed “the sovereignty of God, the deity, the virgin birth, and the substitutionary atonement of Christ, the double procession of the Holy Spirit, the predestination of men, the irresistibility of grace, a belief in sacraments, bodily resurrection and the final judgement”. In the same vein, Kim Yang Sun (1971:102) and Min Kyung Bae (Min, 1982:272) also evaluated the TAF as a confession that has a strong Calvinistic tendency. Shin Bok Yoon (1992:118) assessed that the Korean Presbyterian Church had publicly established Reformed theology by adopting the TAF as their standard. Kim Kil Sung (2009:22) asserted that the TAF clearly expresses the identity of the Presbyterian Church as a thoroughly Calvinistic confession. Kim In Su (1994:190) noted that the TAF holds a strict Calvinistic theological position and that there are no shortcomings as an orthodox Presbyterian confession. According to him, the TAF has the potential to cause disputes with other theologies because its doctrines are overly closed, so that it does not allow for the entrance of different theologies.

Some theologians do not agree with these evaluations. They argue that although the TAF contains contents of Reformed theology, there is a lack of defining it as a thorough Reformed confession. According to Hwang Jae Buhm (2011a:484), the TAF is a summary of the Westminster Standards, but does not have strong Calvinistic inclination by omitting such things as “the predestinarian *ordo salutis*, the threefold offices of Christ, Christ’s spiritual presence in the Lord’s Supper, and the three marks of the church”. Lee Sang Gyoo (2012:303-304) noted that the TAF cannot be defined as a thorough Calvinistic confession, but merely expresses

Reformation in its own way. Herman Bavinck (2011a:183) noted that the positive development of Reformed dogmatics reached its zenith and at the same time its terminus in the WCF along with Canons of Dordt (CD) and so on. The WCF therefore has been praised in many parts of the world as one of the richest and most ripe fruits of the Reformation (Kamphuis, 2005:61-62). The 1967 General Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland [vrijgemaakt]* (GKN [v], the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands [Liberated]) adopted a statement from a regional Presbytery that assessed the WCF as a thorough Reformed confession of faith (cited by Kamphuis, 2005:37,74). Consequently, there will be no difficulty in defining the WCF as a representative Reformed confession along with the Three Forms of Unity.

basic doctrines acceptable to everyone except the theological liberals. Kim Yeong Jae (Kim, 1992:148) also claimed that some Reformed doctrines are severely diluted in the TAF by the influence of evangelism. Park Yong Gyu (Park, 2009:136) noted that it is hard to regard the TAF as a strict Calvinistic confession, because it has no content of double predestination, covenant thought, the perseverance of saints, Biblical inspiration, and so on. According to Yang Nak Heung (2008:89), the TAF covers the core of comprehensive evangelicalism rather than the rigid Calvinistic doctrine, such as double predestination.

As seen above, the evaluation of the TAF's theological tendency has been divided into whether it is thoroughly Calvinistic or not. Can the TAF be classified among the Reformed confessions? In the following sections, an analysis of the structure and content of the TAF will answer this question.

4.3 Structural analysis of their TAF

4.3.1 The structure of their TAF

The composition of the TAF is as follows:

- Preamble
- Bibliology: Art. I Of the Scripture
- Theology Proper: Art. II Of the nature and attributes of God; Art. III Of the Trinity; Art. IV Of Creation; Art. V Of human creation⁴⁹
- Anthropology: Art. VI Of the fall of man, of sin, and of the punishment thereof
- Christology: Art. VII Of the Lord Jesus Christ
- Pneumatology: Art. VIII Of the Holy Spirit
- Soteriology: Art. IX Of God's decree and the order of salvation
- Ecclesiology: Art. X Of the sacraments, Art. XI Of duty of believer
- Eschatology: Art. XII Of the last day and Judgement
- Form of Acceptance

⁴⁹ 'Human creation' may be also included in the category of Anthropology. In the aspect of God who created man, it is included in Theology Proper, and in the aspect of man created by God, it is included in Anthropology.

4.3.2 Comparison with the WCF⁵⁰

The Westminster Confession of Faith			The Twelve Articles of Faith	
				Preamble
Bibliology	Chap. 1	Of the Holy Scripture	Art. I	Of the Scripture
Theology Proper	Chap. 2	Of God and of the holy Trinity	Art. II	Of the nature and attributes of God
			Art. III	Of the Trinity
	Chap. 3	Of God's eternal decree	X ⁵¹	
	Chap. 4	Of creation	Art. IV- V	Of Creation
	Chap. 5	Of providence		Of human creation
Anthropology	Chap. 6	Of the fall of man, of sin, and of the punishment thereof	Art. VI	Of the fall of man, of sin, and of the punishment thereof
	Chap. 7	Of God's covenant with man	X	
Christology	Chap. 8	Of Christ the Mediator	Art. VII	Of the Lord Jesus Christ
Pneumatology	X	X	Art. VIII	Of the Holy Spirit
Soteriology	Chap. 9	Of free-will	Art. VI (Anthropology)	Of the fall of man, of sin, and of the punishment thereof
	Chap. 10	Of effectual calling	X ⁵²	
	Chap. 11	Of justification	Art. IX	Of God's decree and the order of salvation
	Chap. 12	Of adoption	Art. IX	Of God's decree and the order of salvation
	Chap. 13	Of sanctification	Art. IX	Of God's decree and the order of salvation
	Chap. 14	Of saving faith	Art. IX	Of God's decree and the order of salvation
	Chap. 15	Of repentance unto life	Art. IX	Of God's decree and the order of salvation
	Chap. 16	Of good works	Art. IX	Of God's decree and the order of salvation
	Chap. 17	Of the perseverance of the saints	X	

⁵⁰ The systematic classification of the WCF and the TAF in this table is my own identification. The full text of the TAF is contained in the annexure 1 and will be analysed in each article in section 4.4.

⁵¹ In the context of Soteriology, Article IX contains the brief statement of God's election.

⁵² Article VIII of the Holy Spirit only deals with the contents of chapter 10 of the WCF "Of Effectual Calling", without mentioning "effectual calling" (cf. 4.4.6).

	Chap. 18	Of the assurance of grace and salvation	Art. IX	Of God's decree and the order of salvation
Ecclesiology	Chap. 19	Of the law of God	X	
	Chap. 20	Of Christian liberty, and liberty of conscience	X	
	Chap. 21	Of religious worship, and the Sabbath day	Art. XI	Of duty of believer
	Chap. 22	Of lawful oaths and vows	X	
	Chap. 23	Of the civil magistrate	X	
	Chap. 24	Of marriage and divorce	X	
	Chap. 25	Of the Church	X	
	Chap. 26	Of the communion of saints	Art. XI	Of duty of believer
	Chap. 27	Of the sacraments	Art. X	Of the sacraments
	Chap. 28	Of baptism		
	Chap. 29	Of the Lord's Supper		
	Chap. 30	Of Church censures	X	
	Chap. 31	Of synods and councils	X	
Eschatology	Chap. 32	Of the state of men after death, and of the resurrection of the dead	Art. XII	Of the last day and Judgement
	Chap. 33	Of the last judgement		
				Form of acceptance

4.3.3 Analysis

The TAF first states the Old and New Testament as the Word of God. It deals with the Trinity God and Creation in Theology Proper, followed by Anthropology, which deals with the fall of man, sin and punishment. Then it deals with Christology, which confesses the Lord Jesus Christ and his redeeming work, and with Soteriology, which states God's election and the order of salvation by the working of the Holy Spirit. Ecclesiology focuses on Sacramentology and the functioning of the church, and it is concluded with the Eschatology, which states the resurrection and the last judgement.

These are the important contents traditionally confessed by the Reformed churches, and the structure of the TAF is almost the same as that of the WCF. The TAF, however, differs in many instances from the WCF. While the WCF deals with about creation and providence based on the doctrine of God's eternal decree, there is no statement of God's decree in the TAF. Although the TAF states God's election in Article IX, which deals with Soteriology, there is no content of

“effectual calling” and the “perseverance of the saints”. Also, the TAF has no reference to the double predestination. In this respect, the doctrine of God’s decree or of predestination is not explicitly presented in the TAF. While it is difficult to say that the doctrine of predestination is the decisive doctrine that characterizes the Reformed, it is true that the Reformed has been more aware of the importance of the doctrine than others (Van Genderen *et al.*, 2008:209). The Reformed has believed the doctrine as the biblical truths revealing the total grace of salvation. The Belgic Confession (BC) deals with the doctrine in Article 16. This confession clearly states not only God’s election but also His reprobation. The Canons of Dordt (CD) contains the doctrine in a more elaborated form. The Heidelberg Catechism (HC) treats the doctrine very concisely (Q.54), but in a way that coincides with the other two confessions (BC, CD). Like this, the doctrine of predestination is a Reformed doctrine that is commonly confessed within the WCF and the Three Forms of Unity. Although there are some differences in emphasis or composition in dealing with the doctrine of predestination, the WCF and the Three Forms of Unity are precisely in agreement concerning the point of making sinners humble and comfort them by emphasizing that their redemption rests entirely on God’s sovereign grace and his faithfulness through that doctrine (Spijker, 2009:84-85; Van Genderen *et al.*, 2008:209). The doctrine of predestination is, however, not evident in the TAF.

Another doctrine that stands out in the WCF is the covenant idea. In the 17th century, ‘covenant theology’ became very popular within Calvinism. This meant taking the idea of the covenant as an organizing principle in theology (Lane, 2007:205). In this context, covenant theology was the architectonic principle of the WCF that was written in the 17th century⁵³ (Warfield, 1972:56). This covenant theology, however, was not formed and developed only in the 17th century. The covenant thought of Reformed theology had already been systematized by the Reformed scholars of the 16th century Reformed scholars⁵⁴, and furthermore it had been inherited from both the patristic and medieval (Muller, 2006:11-56). Of course, the covenant theology of the WCF reflects the doctrinal elaboration, which is different from the previous covenant thought. For example, the HC and the CD do not present the covenant thought as a framework for unambiguously presenting all the doctrines of faith, unlike the WCF. The HC specifically refers

⁵³ According to Geerhardus Vos (1980:239), “the WCF was the first Reformed Confession in which the doctrine of the covenant was not merely brought in from the side, but in placed in the foreground and had been able to permeate at almost every point”.

⁵⁴ According to Lyle Bierma (1996:61), covenant theology was systematized by the following Reformist scholars: Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531), Wolfgang Musculus (1497-1563), John Calvin (1509-1564), Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), Zacharias Ursinus (1534-1583), Caspar Olevianus (1536-1587), William Perkins (1558-1602), Dudley Fenner (1558-1587), Amandus Polanus (1561-1610), Robert Rollock (1555-1599), and so on.

to the covenant of God in relation to the doctrine of the sacrament (Q.74, 82)⁵⁵. The CD also did not make the elaborate doctrine of the covenant, but stated the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant as it appeared in the Scripture (Spijker, 2009:52). While the WCF contained a more sophisticated covenant theology reflecting the method of theology of the 17th century, the previous confessions were more directly based on the Scripture and avoided theological elaboration. Despite these differences, in its content, the covenant thought of the WCF is Protestant, gracious, and Calvinist (Clark & Beeke, 2005:4). The WCF links the fall of man (Chap. 6) and Jesus Christ and his redeeming work for a lost and fallen race (Chap. 8) on the covenant structure (Chap. 7), so that it emphasises God's condescension towards the miserable situation of the human condition and God's dominant and sovereign work in fulfilling that covenant (Kim, 2013:67-68; Sproul, 2006:214). The covenant thought, by contrast, does not appear clearly in the TAF⁵⁶.

In addition, the WCF does not deal with Pneumatology separately but includes it in the context of Soteriology, while the TAF assigns one article to the content to the Holy Spirit. This can be understood in the same context as the 1903 revision of the WCF in the PCUSA, which added a chapter on the Holy Spirit⁵⁷ (cf. 3.5.1). Furthermore, Ecclesiology does not appear clearly in the TAF. Unlike the WCF (Chap. 25), which clearly states what the church is, the TAF has little reference to it. Article XI, which deals with the church, is merely a statement of what individual Christians should do in a church. It also has no content on church government, in contrast to the WCF, which states clearly on the principles of the Presbyterian Church government. Where the WCF says a great deal about the Christian life in the world (Chap. 19-24), the TAF has little to say about it.

In conclusion, although the TAF follows almost the same structure as the WCF, some key contents emphasised in the WCF, such as the sovereign salvation work and free grace of the Triune God based on the eternal decree and the covenant, the nature of church, the principles of the Presbyterian Church government and worship and the life of the believer in this world do not feature clearly. In this sense, the TAF is not a strict Calvinistic confession, but a typical

⁵⁵ Although the term 'covenant' is directly mentioned only in the context of Sacraments, the term 'promise' is used instead of 'covenant' in the HC. Answer 66 of the HC states that Sacraments are signs and seals of the "promise of the gospel" instead of the "covenant". Therefore, believing in the promise of the gospel, the covenant, leads us to salvation (Q. 20, 21). In this regard, Answer 1 of the HC is the content of faith, the content of covenant (cf. Yoo & Kim, 2006:159-160).

⁵⁶ Article VI of the TAF just states that "all mankind descending by ordinary generation from Adam, the head of the race, sinned in him, and fell with him".

⁵⁷ The 1903 revision of the WCF in the PCUSA added a chapter on the work of the Holy Spirit as a result of the interest in the Revival movement and Mission in those days.

evangelical confession. This will become more apparent when examining the contents of the TAF.

4.4 Content analysis (theological analysis) of their TAF

4.4.1 Preamble

“The Presbyterian Church of Korea, adopting the following as its Confession of Faith, to be subscribed⁵⁸ by ministers, licentiates, elders **and deacons**, does not thereby reject the doctrinal standards of the parent churches, **which established the Church in Korea**, but, on the contrary, commends them – especially the Westminster Confession of Faith, and **the Larger and Shorter Catechisms** – as worthy exponents of the Word of God, and as systems of doctrine to be taught in our Churches and Seminaries; **and adopts as the catechism of the Church, the Westminster Shorter Catechism.**”⁵⁹

In the Preamble, a statement saying that adopting the TAF as the standard of faith of the PCK is “not to reject the doctrinal standards of the parent churches, which established the Church in Korea, but to commend them” – especially the WCF and the Westminster Larger, Shorter Catechisms (WLC, WSC). The original Preamble of the Presbyterian Church in India (PCI) refers to “the Welsh Calvinistic Confession of Faith”, and “the Canons of Dordt (CD)” along with the WCF, instead of the WLC and the WSC. The preamble of the PCK, therefore, gives the

⁵⁸ The church officers of the PCK were required to subscribe to the TAF of accepting it as their own faith. The Form of Acceptance of the TAF states that: “I receive and adopt the confession of faith of this church as based upon and in accord with the Words of God; and I declared it to be the confession of my faith (cf. Annexure 1).” In practice, however, it seems that this subscription was very cursory and loose. Because Charles Clark complained, in his article *“Joseon yesugyo jangrogyohoe singyeongron [An essay on the Confession of the Presbyterian Church of Korea]”*, written in 1919, that even the church officers do not know their confession too much as follows (Clark, 1919:282):

“Uri joseongyohoe bujokhan il hangajiga iteuni gyouwa jigwonggaji singyeongneul neomu alji mothangeotira. Moksadoen jado singyeongneul neomu gyeonghage yeogigo sindojungeneun bongyohoesingyeongneul dangchoe bojimothan ja maneunira [There is one thing that is lacking in the Korean Church, which is that they do not know too much about their confession of faith, from the members to the church officers. Pastors also consider their confession too light, and a lot of church members have never seen their confession at all].”

⁵⁹ The bold texts are the changes from its original Preamble of the Presbyterian Church in India (PCI).

The original Preamble of the PCI is as follows:

“The Presbyterian Church in India adopting the following as its Confession of Faith, to be subscribed by ministers, licentiates, and elders, does not thereby reject any of the doctrinal standards of the parent churches, but, on the contrary, it commends them, - especially the Westminster Confession of Faith, **the Welsh Calvinistic Confession of Faith, and the Confession and Canons of the Synod of Dort** - as worthy exponents of the Word of God, and as systems of doctrine to be taught in our Churches and seminaries (Hwang, 2011b:204)”.

impression that the Westminster standards along with the TAF are highly emphasised.⁶⁰ However, this was nothing more than a modification of the background of the TAF's adoption in the PCI to the background of the PCK.⁶¹ Rather, the preamble states the Westminster Standards to be only worthy exponents of the Word of God to be taught in the churches and seminaries, not as the public confession of the church. This shows a very passive relationship between the church and confessions. Heo Soon Gil (2001:22) criticised it as follows:

"Mulron sinanggobaekui naeyongeun seonggyeonggwaneun geu seonggyeoki dareuda. Seonggyeongeun jeoldae muohago sinanggwa saenghwale jeoldae gyubeomi doenda. Geureona sinanggobaekun ingani seonggyeongeurobuteo gajyeoon geotiyo, gyojeongeul yohaneun oryudo pohamdoel su itda. Geureotago sinanggobaekul "seonggyeongeul balchi haeseokhan chaeguroman boneun geoteun munjega itda. Ineun gyohoesareul ikkeuleo gasineun gyohoeui ju yesu geuriseudoui seobrijeok yeoksareul gangwahaneun iligo, jinannal juui gyohoege bada gobaekhae on yeoksajeok yusaneul deunghan haneun ili doeneun geotida. Geu gobaeknaeyongeseo oryuga balgyeondoegi jeoneneun geugeoteul geudaero gobaekhago, geudaero saneun geoti gyohoeui uimuida. Ileon chodae seongyosadeului sinanggobaegae daehan sogeugjeok jeobgeuneul bol ttae, hangukgyohoe chodae seongyosadeuli bosujeok bogeumjuuijadeulieoteumeun teulrimeobseuna gaehyeogjuui sinanggobaekul gwijunghi yeogigo jangrogyohoeui jeongchereul ttulyeothage haneundeneun maeu yakhaeteotda. [Of course, the content of confessions is different from the Scripture. the Scripture is absolutely infallible and the absolute norm for faith and life. But confessions of faith come from the Scripture, and errors that require modification may also be included. Nonetheless, it is a problem to regard the confessions just as an exponent of the Scripture. This is a neglect of the providential history of the Lord Jesus Christ of the church that leads church history and of the historical heritage that the church has confessed. It is the duty of the church to confess and live as it is until when errors are found in their confessions. In view of the passive approach of the early missionaries in Korea to confessions, it is certain that they were conservative

⁶⁰ In this context, Hwang (2006:211-212) criticised this change in the preamble to remove the diversity of Reformed theology and to reduce the Reformed theology of the PCK to the centre of Westminster standards.

⁶¹ The PCI was established by the union of Presbyterian missionaries from various countries with diverse Confessions, including the Welsh Calvinistic Confession of Faith. The PCK was established by the Presbyterian missionaries from America, Canada, and Australia with the Westminster standards (cf. 2.2.2; 2.3.2).

evangelicals, but they were very weak to appreciate the Reformed confession and in making the Presbyterian Church's identity clear.]”

4.4.2 Bibliology

“Art. I. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and duty.”

Like the WCF, the TAF begins with the Scripture. Unlike the WCF, however, its content is very short and simple.⁶² The WCF sets forth the doctrine of the Scripture exquisitely and excellently, such as the limitations of natural revelation and the need for the Scripture as a special revelation, and its authority, divine inspiration and sufficiency as an infallible rule of faith and practice. Benjamin Warfield (1972:57) highly appreciated the chapter 1 of the Scripture as the finest single chapter in any protestant confession. Phillip Schaff (1931a:568) also said that “no other Protestant symbol has such a clear, judicious, concise and exhaustive statement in reference to the doctrine of the Scripture as the WCF”. The TAF, in contrast, simply states the Scripture as the only infallible rule of faith and practice. In particular, although the TAF says the Scripture as the infallible rule of faith and duty, it does not include the statement of the divine inspiration of the Scripture. The teaching of the inspiration of the Scripture is necessary to demonstrate the truth of the Scripture not only against the liberalism, which undermines the authority of the Scripture but also against mysticism, which overemphasises the spiritual gifts (Kim, Y.G., 2005:206). Moreover, the absence of divine inspiration may give a wider interpretation of the meaning of “infallible” in Article I. Indeed, Hwang (2006:216; 2008:125-126) argued that the statement of Article I merely means that the Scripture is the only rule of faith and duty to be taught without mistakes and falsehoods, and that it did not intend to confess of the inerrancy of the Scripture based on its inspiration. Likewise, it cannot be denied that Article I leaves room for interpretation in any way, although it cannot be said that the doctrine of the Scripture of the TAF is contradictory to the WCF's. Consequently, it is not enough, like the TAF, to state the doctrine of the Scripture in a simple sentence in the times and environments in which the negative views about the Scripture have prevailed (Kim, Y.G., 2005:206).

⁶² Article I is similar to Answer 3 of the WLC: “The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience” (Westminster Assembly, 2018:180).

4.4.3 Theology Proper

4.4.3.1 Nature and attributes of God and the holy Trinity

“Art. II. There is but one God, and He alone is to be worshipped. He is a Spirit, self-existent, omnipresent yet distinct from all other spirits and from material things: infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and love.”

“Art. III. In the Godhead, there are three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.”

Article II says God’s nature and attributes. At its beginning, it emphasises that there is only one God to be worshipped, unlike the WCF, which enumerates the nature and attributes of God, and then declares at the end of Chapter 2.2⁶³ that God deserves to be worshipped by all creatures as its deductive conclusion. Hwang (2008:126-127) noted that this emphasis was indispensable for the situation in India and Korea, which worshipped many gods and idols. The second half of Article II, which states God’s attributes, is almost identical to Question 4 of the WSC⁶⁴, but adds “love” as an attribute of God. Article III, which states to the Trinity, is also very similar to Question 6 of the WSC.⁶⁵

When comparing the doctrine of God in the TAF to that in the WCF, the greatest difference is that there is no content regarding God’s eternal decree or predestination in the TAF. The WCF deals with God’s decree in Chapter 3 after dealing with the nature and attributes of God and the Trinity in Chapter 2. And then it states the creation and providence of God as the display of God’s decree in Chapters 4 and 5. It is a characteristic of the WCF to deal with the doctrine of God’s decree or predestination in the doctrine of God. Robert Sproul (2006:32) pointed out that “the most distinctive characteristic of Reformed theology, which sets it apart from all other theologies, is the Reformed doctrine of God, because the Reformed theology, more than any other theology, consistently applies its understanding of God to every other doctrine in its theological system, making it altogether *theocentric* (God-centred) from start to finish”. In this

⁶³ “To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience, he is pleased to require of them” (WCF, 2.2) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:14).

⁶⁴ “God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth” (WSC, Q.4) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:422).

⁶⁵ “There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory” (WSC, Q.6) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:423).

respect, every other doctrine of the WCF is based on God's eternal decree and, as a result, the whole confession is thoroughly God-centred and stresses the sovereignty of God for his glory. The TAF, on the other hand, avoided the statement of God's decree or predestination in the doctrine of God, so that it opened up the possibility of accepting Arminian theology, which emphasises human responsibility for believing and obeying⁶⁶ (cf. 4.4.7).

4.4.3.2 Creation

“Art. IV. All things visible and invisible were created by God by the word of His power, and are so preserved and governed by Him that, while He is in no way the author of sin, He worketh all things according to the counsel of His will, and they serve the fulfilment of His wise and good and holy purpose.”

“Art. V. God created man, male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures. All men have the same origin and are brethren.”

Article IV states God's creation and providence, a very brief summary of Chapter 4 and 5 of the WCF. The statement, “He is in no way the author of sin”, reflects Chapter 5.4 of the WCF,⁶⁷ and the statement, “He worketh all things according to the counsel of His will, and they serve the fulfilment of His wise and good and holy purpose”, reflects Chapter 5.1 of the WCF.⁶⁸ Incidentally, the TAF makes a very brief mention of God's providence with the content of creation, while the WCF deals with the doctrine of providence in detail by allocating one chapter to it. The WCF proposes creation and providence as the execution of God's decree. In particular, the contents of providence in the WCF are closely linked to the decree of God. In Chapter 5.1, it states that God governs and upholds all creatures according to his infallible foreknowledge and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, and Chapter 5.2 explains the way God's purpose is accomplished. Chapter 5.3 and 5.4 seek to resolve the misunderstanding arising from the discussion in Chapter 5.2, and Chapter 5.5 to 5.7 explain how God deals with his children and those who are not his children, which is linked to the doctrine of “double predestination” of Chapter 3. However, since the TAF excludes God's decree in the doctrine of

⁶⁶ One of the main motivations for the adoption of the TAF in the PCK was that it was not difficult for the Methodist Church to adopt the TAF in contrast to the difficulty of accepting the WCF (cf. 2.3.4.4.2).

⁶⁷ “... yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who, being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin” (WCF, 5.4) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:28).

⁶⁸ “... according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy” (WCF, 5.1) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:25).

God, it also excludes as much as possible the contents related to God's decree in the confession of Providence.

The TAF allocates one article to the confession of human creation. The preceding part of Article V quotes Question 10 of the WSC as it is.⁶⁹ What is noticeable in Article V is the statement, "All men have the same origin and are brethren." This is a unique confessional declaration of the TAF. Hwang (2008:127-128) commented that this statement reflects the intentions of Western missionaries against the inequality in India's caste system, and was a necessary confession in the situation in India at the time. He also noted in another article (Hwang, 2011b:209) that "the equality of all people is closely related to the abolishment of the Calvinistic distinction between the reprobate and the elect, and both these notions in the TAF would have been very helpful in an Asian mission field, where all people are invited to be the elect".

4.4.4 Anthropology

"Art. VI. Our first parents, being free to choose between good and evil, and being tempted, sinned against God; and all mankind descending by ordinary generation from Adam, the head of the race, sinned in him, and fell with him. To their original guilt and corruption, those capable of so doing have added actual transgressions. All justly deserve His wrath and punishment in this present life and in that which is to come."

Article VI deals with the cause of Adam's sin, original guilt, the actual transgressions of his descendants and the consequences thereof, based on the WCF (Chap. 6), the WSC (Q. 13, 16, 18, 19), and the WLC (Q. 21, 22, 25, 27). However, there are some important differences when comparing it with the WCF. Firstly, the TAF does not explain specifically what sin and corruption are. The WCF defines sin as a transgression of the righteous law (6.6), and states that the result of sin and corruption is a falling from communion with God (6.2). The TAF, however, deals fairly superficially with the matter of sin and corruption by not explicitly presenting the concept of sin and corruption (Hwang, 2008:128), nor is there a statement of total depravity. Chapter 6.4 of the WCF says very clearly about the total depravity of human beings.⁷⁰ The doctrine of total depravity is one of the key concepts of Reformed theology. Sproul (2006:186) said that if he

⁶⁹ "God created man, male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures" (WSC, Q.10) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:424).

⁷⁰ "From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to an evil, do proceed all actual transgressions" (WCF, 6.4) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:35).

were to choose one statement in the entire confession that crystallises the characteristics of historic Reformation theology, it would be Chapter 6.4. The TAF, however, does not explicitly state the scope and extent of original sin as a total depravity. Secondly, the TAF does not deal with God's covenant with man. Covenant thought is a core of Reformed theology as a concept of expressing the relationship between God and man. Reformed theology, which understands the history of human salvation as the history of a covenant, has been taught by adopting the condensed teaching in the covenant thought as one of the core doctrines (Kim, 2013:41). The central principle of the theological system of the WCF is the covenant thought, which affects almost every subject in the confession (Vos, 1980:239; Warfield, 1972:56). The WCF deals with the covenant (Chap. 7) between the fall of man (Chap. 6) and the Mediator Christ (Chap. 8). The WCF thus presents man as a covenant being from his very creation and as a covenant breaker in his fall. At the same time, God's redemption of man in Christ is also presented covenantally. Jesus Christ is the mediator of the covenant of grace sent by God. In the TAF, however, this covenant thought is not evident. It only states that "all mankind descending by ordinary generation from Adam, the head of the race, sinned in him, and fell with him". The TAF, therefore, does not reveal covenantal God's act for redemption.

4.4.5 Christology

“Art. VII. To save men from the guilt, corruption and penalty of sin, and to give them eternal life, God, in His infinite love sent into the world His eternal and only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone God has become incarnate, and through whom alone men can be saved. The eternal Son became true man, and so was and continueth to be true God and true man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin. For sinful men, He perfectly obeyed the law of God, and offered Himself a true and perfect sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice and reconcile men to God. He died on the Cross, was buried, and rose again from the dead on the third day. He ascended to the right hand of God, where He maketh intercession for His people, and whence He shall come again to raise the dead, and to judge the world.”

Article VII collectively reflects the WCF (Chap. 8.1), the WSC (Q. 21, 22, 25, 27, 28) and the WLC (Q. 36, 37, 44, 46, 51). Nonetheless, there are many aspects of its content that are significantly different from the WCF. Firstly, the TAF states only that Jesus came to save men from the guilt, corruption and penalty of sin, and to give them eternal life, while the WCF emphasises that **in God's eternal purpose** Jesus became the Mediator between God and

men.⁷¹ Secondly, the TAF subtly divests the Calvinistic doctrine of the “limited” or “particular atonement” of the WCF. The WCF clearly declares that the coming of Christ is not for everyone but for the chosen people of God through statements like “God did, from all eternity, give a people to be Jesus’ seed, and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified” (Chap. 8.1) and “the Lord Jesus purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father has given to him” (Chap. 8.5). The TAF, however, clearly avoids the content of the “limited atonement”. For instance, the statement, “The eternal Son became true man, and so was and continueth to be true God and true man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever” of Article VII, which describes the nature of Christ, is a quote from Question 21 of the WSC: “The only Redeemer of God’s elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man, two distinct natures, and one person forever” (Schaff, 1931b:680). In quoting this sentence from the WSC, the TAF removed the phrase “the only Redeemer of God’s elect”. Also, Article VII just declares that “Jesus Christ perfectly obeyed the law of God, and offered Himself a true and perfect sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and reconcile men to God”, while the WCF (Chap. 8.5) states clearly that His obedience was for all those whom the Father has given to Him. The TAF thus carefully changes the Calvinist logic of “limited atonement” in the WCF to the atonement of Christ for all people, not only the elect (Hwang, 2011b:207). Finally, the WCF (Chap. 8.1) describes the ministry of Christ as a threefold function (prophet, priest and king), but the TAF does not mention it. In addition, the WCF refers to Christ’s descent into hell with the phrase, “Christ remained under the power of death”,⁷² while the TAF omits it. Hwang (2008:129) presumes that this played a decisive role in removing the clause of “Christ’s descent into hell” in the Korean translation of the Apostles’ Creed.⁷³

4.4.6 Pneumatology

“Art. VIII. The Holy Spirit, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, maketh men partakers of salvation, convincing them of their sin and misery, enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ, renewing their wills, persuading and enabling

⁷¹ “It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only-begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man ...” (WCF, 8.1) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:44).

⁷² “... he was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it; endured most grievous torments immediately in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption ...” (WCF, 8.4) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:47).

⁷³ The clause of “Christ’s descent into hell” is absent in the Apostles’ Creed currently used by most Korean Protestant Churches. It is unclear why the clause was omitted at first in Korean church history.

them to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to them in the Gospel, and working in them all the fruits of righteousness.”

The TAF deals separately with the content of the Holy Spirit in Article VIII. It was a reflection of the growing interest in the work of the Holy Spirit at the time when it was drawn up and of the criticism that the WCF does not adequately deal with pneumatology (Robertson, 2005:57). The PCUSA, in this context, also added a chapter on the Holy Spirit in the 1903 revision of the WCF. In the Reformed theology, however, pneumatology has been understood generally in the context of soteriology because the harmony and balance of the Trinity can be destroyed when the Holy Spirit is separated from the Trinity and the emphasis is on the independent work of salvation (Sin, 2015). In this regard, the WCF did not deal with pneumatology separately, but included it in the context of soteriology in Chapters 9-18.

The statement that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son reflects Chapter 2.3 of the WCF,⁷⁴ and the statement that “the Holy Spirit makes men partakers of salvation, convincing them of their sin and misery, enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ, renewing their wills, persuading and enabling them to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to them in the Gospel, and working in them all the fruits of righteousness” is based on Chapter 10.1 of the WCF⁷⁵ and, in particular, Question 31 of the WSC.⁷⁶ The heading of Chapter 10 of the WCF is “Of effectual calling”, and Question 31 of the WSC is “What is effectual calling?” The TAF, however, does not refer to “effectual calling,” but merely states its content. As Hwang (2008:130-131) pointed out, this is not a coincidence. In order to deal with the “effectual calling”, God’s decree must be a premise. The TAF, however, avoids the doctrine of God’s decree (or predestination) so that it is unable to refer to the “effectual calling”. In addition, Chapter 10.1 of the WCF states that “all those whom God has predestined to life, and those only, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his Word and Spirit”. That is, only those who are predestined to salvation by God, not all general men, are actually called, receive faith and are saved. The TAF, however, does not explicitly present the partakers of salvation by

⁷⁴ “... the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son” (WCF, 2.3) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:16).

⁷⁵ “... by his Word and Spirit, ... enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace” (WCF, 10.1) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:56).

⁷⁶ “Effectual calling is the work of God’s spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel” (WSC, Q.31) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:435).

the work of the Holy Spirit as predestined by God, but merely refer to it as “men” (Hwang, 2008:131).

4.4.7 Soteriology

“**Art. IX.** While God chose a people in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blemish before Him in love, having foreordained them unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on them in the Beloved: He maketh a full and free offer of salvation to all men, and commandeth them to repent of their sins, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Saviour, and to live a humble and holy life after His example and in obedience to God’s revealed will. Those who believe in Christ and obey Him are saved, the chief benefits which they receive being justification, adoption into the number of the sons of God, sanctification through the indwelling of the Spirit and eternal glory. Believers may also in this life enjoy assurance of their salvation. In His gracious work, the Holy Spirit useth the means of grace, especially the word, sacraments and prayer.”

Article IX is the most characteristic and abstruse part of the whole confession. On the one hand, it reveals Calvinistic characteristic by confessing God’s election and foreordination, but on the other hand it emphasises the individual’s wilful beliefs and deeds. The phrase “While God chose a people in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blemish before Him in love, having foreordained them unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on them in the Beloved” quotes Ephesians 1:4-6⁷⁷ and reflects Chapter 3.5 of the WCF.⁷⁸ Nevertheless it is difficult to assess that the TAF is professing a strict Calvinistic predestination because “double predestination” is not confessed in the entire confession and such strong Calvinistic words as “effectual calling” and “perseverance of saints” vanished altogether in the *ordo salutis* (the order of salvation) in Article IX. The TAF implies rather a universal salvation and stresses acts of obedience in salvation in Article IX, for example, “He maketh a full and free offer of salvation to **all men**, and commandeth them to repent of their

⁷⁷ “For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.”

⁷⁸ “Those of mankind that are predestined unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, ...; and all to the praise of his glorious grace” (WCF, 3.5) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:19).

sins, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Saviour, and to live a humble and holy life after His example and in obedience to God's revealed will. **Those who believe in Christ and obey Him are saved.**" In this regard, Hwang (2011b:207) claimed that "(in the phrase) the TAF try very hard to include some Calvinistic, predestinarian ideas, but these are overshadowed by the strong universalistic Arminian ones that followed". It would be too much to assume, however, that the TAF teaches Arminianism with this phrase because the Reformed also emphasizes believers' acts of obedience, although it is not a condition of salvation but an appreciation of salvation. Nonetheless, it is undeniable that the TAF offers a wide range of interpretations in relation to Soteriology that can be accepted even to the Arminians. That's why a Methodist missionary could say that accepting the WCF was very difficult for the Methodist Church, but adopting the TAF was not (cf. 2.3.3.2).

4.4.8 Ecclesiology

4.4.8.1 Sacramentology

"Art. X. The sacraments instituted by Christ are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the washing with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and is the sign and seal of our union to Christ, of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, and of our engagement to be the Lord's. It is administered to those who profess their faith in Christ, and to their children. The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and of the cup as a memorial of Christ's death and is a sign and seal of the benefits thereof to believers. It is to be observed by His people till He comes, in token of their faith in Him and His sacrifice, of their appropriation of its benefits, of their future engagement to serve Him, and of their communion with Him and with one another. The benefits of the Sacraments are not from any virtue in them or in him who doth administer them, but only from the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them."

Article X collectively reflects the WCF, the WSC and the WLC. The first statement, "The sacraments instituted by Christ are Baptism and the Lord's Supper", is based on Chapter 27.4 of the WCF,⁷⁹ Question 93 of the WSC,⁸⁰ and Question 164 of the WLC.⁸¹ The statements on

⁷⁹ "There be only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord in the gospel, that is to say, Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord; ..." (WCF, 27.4) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:147)..

⁸⁰ "The sacraments of the New Testament are, baptism, and the Lord's Supper" (WSC, Q.93) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:463)..

⁸¹ "Under the New Testament Christ hath instituted in His Church only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper" (WLC, Q.164) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:375).

baptism are mainly based on Question 94 and 95 of the WSC,⁸² and the content of the Lord's Supper reflects Chapter 29.1 of the WCF,⁸³ Question 96 of the WSC,⁸⁴ and Question 168 of the WLC.⁸⁵ The last statement on the benefits of the sacraments reflects Chapter 27.3 of the WCF,⁸⁶ Question 91 of the WSC,⁸⁷ and Question 161 of the WLC.⁸⁸ One of the great differences between the TAF and the WCF is that the TAF does not deal with the sacraments in relation to God's covenant. The WCF defines the sacraments as "the signs and seals of the **covenant of grace** (WCF, 27.1)". Sacraments represent Christ and his benefits, and to confirm the interest in him, and strengthen and promote faith and all other graces to those in the covenant of grace. Thus, the sacraments are primarily means of God's grace. At the same time, the sacraments are the means by which God's covenant people solemnly serve God according to the covenant. Thus, the sacraments show the fellowship of God and his people in the covenant of grace (Yoo, 2015:156). This covenant relationship, however, is not apparent in the TAF. The TAF does not use the words "covenant of grace"; nevertheless, similar to the WCF, it defines baptism as the sign and seal of the union with Christ, of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, and of

⁸² "Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's" (WSC, Q.94) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:463).

"Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church, are to be baptized" (WSC, Q.95) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:464).

⁸³ "... for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of himself in his death; the sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto him; and, to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other, as members of his mystical body" (WCF, 29.1) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:152).

⁸⁴ "The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace" (WSC, Q.96) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:464).

⁸⁵ "... and they that worthily communicate feed upon His body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with Him confirmed; testify and renew their thankfulness, and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship each with other, as members of the same mystical body" (WLC, Q.168) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:379-380).

⁸⁶ "The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that doth administer it: but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers" (WCF, 27.3) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:146).

⁸⁷ "The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them; but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them" (WSC, Q.91) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:462).

⁸⁸ "The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Ghost, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted" (WLC, Q.161) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:372).

engagement to be the Lord's; and the Lord's supper as the sign and seal of the benefits thereof (the partaking of the bread and of the cup as a memorial of Christ's death) to believers.

In terms of the Lord's Supper, Hwang (2008:133) claimed that the TAF presents the "memorialism"⁸⁹ rather than the "spiritual presence"⁹⁰ reflected in the WCF⁹¹ (WCF, 29.7). However, in contrast to the memorialism, which denies Christ's real presence, saying that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are merely symbolic representations of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, the TAF describes the Lord's Supper as the communion of Christ's people with Christ and with one another, as does the WCF (WCF, 29.1). The TAF also stresses that the benefits of the sacraments are from the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in them. It is not in memorialism, but in the spiritual presence of Christ that the working of the Holy Spirit takes an important place (Kim, 2015:192-193). Therefore, it can be said that the TAF reflects the spiritual presence of Christ rather than memorialism.

4.4.8.2 The duty of believers

"Art. XI. It is the duty of all believers to unite in Church fellowship, to observe the sacraments and other ordinances of Christ, to obey His laws, to continue in prayer, to keep holy the Lord's Day, to meet together for His worship, to wait upon the preaching of His word, to give as God may prosper them, to manifest a Christ-like spirit among themselves and towards all men, to labour for the extension of Christ's kingdom throughout the world, and to wait for His glorious appearing."

Article XI, which states believers' duty, reflects Chapter 21 (of religious worship and the Sabbath day) and Chapter 26 (of the communion of the saints) of the WCF. This article, along with Article X, deals with the ecclesiology of the TAF. What is unusual is that there is no content of what the church is in the TAF. While the WCF explicitly states what the church is in Chapter 25 and, based on it, deal with the communion of the saints in Chapter 26 and the sacraments in Chapter 27-29, the TAF deals with the sacraments in Article X and the duty of believers in Article XI,

⁸⁹ In this viewpoint, the elements of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are "purely symbolic representations of the body and blood of Jesus". Ulrich Zwingli rejected the idea that the sacraments are means of grace and instead contended that they are merely signs and pledges of the believer's faith (Fesko, 2014:329).

⁹⁰ This point of view holds that "Christ's body and blood do not come corporally (physically) to be the elements, but that the Spirit truly unites things separated in space (Calvin, 1977:1370)". In other words, Christ's presence here is not thought of in terms of a bodily but a spiritual presence (Van Genderen *et al.*, 2008:810).

⁹¹ "... the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses" (WCF, 29.7) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:156-157).

without the statement of what the church is. Kim Yeong Jae (2005:206) criticised that this is largely wrong in terms of content and composition and that this scanty ecclesiology of the TAF may have been the cause of the devastating church splits of the PCK.⁹² Hwang (2011b:208) pointed out that “the ecclesiology of the TAF is overly focused on the individual Christian’s duties, as if a church were simply a voluntary society in which individualistic persons meet their needs”. Another feature of Article XI is that it focuses primarily on church-centred life, but little on the Christian life in the world. It just states that “(the duty of believers is) to manifest a Christ-like spirit among themselves and towards all men, to labour for the extension of Christ’s kingdom throughout the world”. This is in contrast with the WCF, which deals specifically with the Christian life in the Chapter 19-24. Yong Hwang Gyu (2013:163) commented that this would not be unrelated to the fact that the Korean Presbyterian churches, especially the conservative churches, have not specifically taught the believer’s daily life but rather emphasised the church-centred, especially Sunday-centred, faith. Finally, no assertion of the principles of Presbyterian Church government (including church censures) is confirmed in the TAF. This may be the limit given by the union of several churches (denominations) in India at the time (Min, 1982:291).

4.4.9 Eschatology

“Art XII. At the last day, the dead shall be raised, and all shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall receive according to the deeds done in the present life, whether good or bad. Those who have believed in Christ and obeyed Him shall be openly acquitted and received into glory; but the unbelieving and wicked, being condemned, shall suffer the punishment due to their sins.”

Article XII states at the last day the resurrection and judgment of the righteous and the wicked, reflecting Chapter 33 of the WCF,⁹³ Question 38 of the WSC.⁹⁴ The TAF, in contrast with the WCF, in dealing with the state of man after death in Chapter 32, omits references to it and refers only to the blessings that the righteous receive at the time of the last judgment and the

⁹² At present, the number of Presbyterian Churches (Denominations) in Korea is estimated to be about 200.

⁹³ “In which day, not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds; and to receive according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil” (WCF, 33.1) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:165).

“For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fullness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord: but the wicked, who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (WCF, 33.2) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:166).

⁹⁴ “At the resurrection, believers being raised up in the glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgement, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity” (WSC, Q.38) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:439)..

punishment of the wicked. There is also some difference between the TAF and the WCF concerning the content of the last judgment. The WCF states in Chapter 33.2 that the purpose of the last judgment is for the manifestation God's glory by fulfilling His decree.⁹⁵ On the day of the last judgment, God will manifest "the glory of His mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect, and the glory of His justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient (WCF, 33.2)". Therefore, for the godly in their adversity, the day of the last judgment is a great consolation and awakens them to prepare for the coming of the Lord Jesus (WCF, 33.3). The TAF, however, does not see the last judgment as the fulfilment of God's decree for the manifestation God's glory, but merely states that all will receive according to the deeds done in the present life, whether good or bad. Therefore, the TAF emphasises the individual responsibility to believe and obey in the present life.

4.5 Summary

The structure of the TAF is similar to that of the WCF, and reflects much of the Westminster standards in its content. There are, however, also many differences between them. While the WCF clearly emphasises the features of Reformed theology such as the sovereignty and grace of God in salvation based on God's decree and covenant, the TAF omits the content of God's decree (or predestination) and covenant. Even though the TAF refers to God's election and foreordination in Article IX, which deals with Soteriology, it also stresses an individual person's willingness to accept Jesus Christ as his or her Saviour. Therefore, as in other Reformed confessions, thorough God's sovereignty and grace in salvation evident in the WCF is not as clear in the TAF so that it gives other denominations (non-Calvinistic Churches) room for various interpretations. Furthermore, the TAF has no statement of what the church is, and there is no manifestation of Presbyterian Church government.

In conclusion, the TAF cannot be regarded as a strict Reformed confession. Although the TAF reflects the WCF, it deliberately dilutes the strict Calvinistic colour of the WCF in light of the circumstances of the mission field. The TAF therefore can be classified as an evangelical confession with an ecumenical character, which can easily be shared by non-Calvinistic Churches (denominations).

⁹⁵ "The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of his justice in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient." (WCF, 33.2) (Westminster Assembly, 2018:166).

CHAPTER 5

AN EVALUATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN KOREA'S ADOPTION OF THEIR TWELVE ARTICLES OF FAITH IN 1907

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, the structure and contents of the TAF, especially in comparison with the WCF, were analysed to understand the theological tendency of the TAF. The structure of the TAF is similar to that of the WCF, but the rigid Calvinistic contents emphasised in the WCF, such as the sovereign salvation work and free grace of the Triune God based on the eternal decree (or predestination) and the covenant, were omitted or diluted.

In this chapter, the adoption of the TAF in the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) in 1907 is evaluated from a Reformed perspective. For the sake of the evaluation, two main motivations for the adoption of the TAF in 1907 are re-stated according to Section 2.3 of this dissertation. After that, the two motivations are each evaluated based on the Reformed view on confessions of faith and on their revision or replacement including the adoption of confessions in a mission field discussed in Chapter 3, and of the analysis of the TAF in Chapter 4.

5.2 Evaluation of the PCK's adoption of their TAF in 1907 from a Reformed perspective

The PCK did not start from the outset as a confessional Presbyterian Church based on a thorough Reformed faith. As seen in the Chapter 2, the early missionaries who came to Korea were typical evangelicals influenced by the revivalism and missionary movements that occurred in America in the late 19th century. They transplanted the 19th century American evangelical Presbyterian Church, characterised by revivalism and puritan pietism, into the PCK. The adoption of their TAF clearly revealed it. Although the home Churches of the early Presbyterian missionaries had the WCF as their standard of faith, the missionaries adopted the TAF of the PCI instead of the WCF as the standard of faith for the PCK. They did this with two main considerations in mind. First, they regarded it as the most suitable for the circumstances of the PCK at the time. They thought that the WCF, written in the West a long time before, was not suitable for the PCK because they regarded the PCK as an infant Church in a mission field belonging to the culture of the East. On the other hand the TAF was considered to be the best for the PCK because it was a contemporary confession drawn up in the Presbyterian Church in India (PCI), which was in a non-Western mission field like the PCK. Second, they adopted the TAF with the union of Churches in mind. They hoped to build one native Church in Korea, and they regarded the TAF as the best option for that because it was a typical evangelical

confession written for the union of several Presbyterian Churches in India. In the following sections, these two motivations are evaluated from a Reformed perspective based on Chapters 3 and 4.

5.2.1 Evaluation of the adoption of their TAF in 1907 in terms of first motivation

In the Reformed tradition, Reformed confessions are recognised as having binding authority. It is not because the confessions have an intrinsic authority, nor just because the church authorises them, but because it is convinced that the confessions are based wholly on God's Word. The confessions were drawn up at a particular time and place and reflect the particular context so that the events surrounding the time when the confessions were written must be understood. The confessions, nonetheless, have catholicity and transcendental significance, not limited to times and places, because they are the repetition or reproduction of the Scripture content. The confessions assure each other as the faithful articulation of the same gospel. The confessions, as the *norma normata*, of course, are never placed beside or above the Scripture, but are always subjected to the test of God's revealed Word. The confessions are therefore open to revision or replacement. In the case of young churches in mission fields, it is possible to adopt a new confession of faith stated the apostolic faith in other thought-forms than those affirmations of the confessions of the old churches.

However, the most important criterion for a confessional revision or replacement is the Scripture. The Reformed churches, therefore, have rejected the contextualistic modern mind that asserts to revise the confessions in accordance with the times and circumstances, or to make a new confession for each generation or for the church in a mission field on the grounds that the old confessions are outdated and outmoded, regarding the confessions just as expressions of the religious psychology of the individual or the particular religious community. In the Reformed tradition, confessional revision or replacement should be a development in the direction of fullness of doctrinal statement to reveal the truth of the Scripture more clearly and abundantly.

From the above principle, therefore, it needs to be evaluated whether the adoption of the TAF was a confessional revision or replacement in the direction of more clearly revealing the Biblical truth. As analysed in Chapter 4, the TAF has a similar structure to the WCF, and reflects much of the Westminster Standards in its content, but it deliberately diluted the strict Calvinistic colour of the WCF. While the WCF clearly emphasises the features of reformed theology such as the sovereignty and grace of God in salvation based on God's decree and covenant, the TAF omits the doctrine of God's decree (or predestination) and covenant. The TAF has no confession of what the church is, and shows no manifestation of Presbyterian Church government. Therefore, the adoption of the TAF was not for a clearer and more precise definition, for an even higher

and more finished construction, and for developing the structure of the old Reformed theology along its own essential and formative lines, but, on the contrary, resulted in weakening them. In this respect, the adoption of the TAF reflected the influence of the contextualistic modern mind.

5.2.2 Evaluation of the adoption of their TAF in 1907 in terms of second motivation

The church of Christ is essentially one. So the church must be one, and its unity must be revealed to the world. The foundation of the true church unity is only Christ, the gospel of Christ, and the faith and the knowledge of the son of God, and it is summarised in the Reformed confessions. In this respect, the confessions are regarded in the Reformed tradition as bonds of unity in which they may hold each other to account, and at the same time, as barriers against false teachings that break true unity. The Reformers in the 16th and 17th century wished but to repeat what God in His Word had dictated through their confessions of faith. Their confessions neither will nor can be anything else but a joyful response and a faithful echo to the Word of their God. Some Reformed doctrines in the confessions, such as predestination, justification and covenant theology, therefore were not a manifestation of their denominational distinctiveness, but of the universal truths of the Scripture. The Reformed doctrines have been confessed in detail in the process of advancing to an ever clearer understanding of the truth. In this respect, the Reformed church has rejected modern ecumenicism. The spirit of modern ecumenicism tends to reduce the gospel to the simplest principles for the bonds of each denomination and to emphasise God's impartial love for all mankind. So it requires a revised or newly written confession that can be a bond between the various denominations, by reducing and consolidating doctrines so that everyone can accept them. The Reformed church, however, regarded faithfulness to the Reformed confessions not as contributing to a barren orthodoxy or harming the unity of the church but rather forming unity in truth. At the same time, the Reformed church has pursued true unity in diversity by professing the same faith in various confessions of faith and by learning from each other, without seeking the simplification or unification of the confessions. In the confessional revision or replacement, therefore, the Reformed church has sought the unity and bond of faith by confirming a similar conviction to fellow churches before this new stage of symbolic development can be entered upon. In the case of the adoption of a new confession of faith for a young church in the mission field, it should be premised the confirmation that the same faith expressed in the new form has also been confessed in the confession of the mother church.

From this principle, therefore, one can conclude that the adoption of the TAF in 1907 reflected the influence of ecumenicism, not the Reformed position, in confessional revision and replacement. The early missionaries hoped to achieve visible church unity beyond denominations in Korea, and furthermore in Asia, with a simple confession of faith that diluted

the Calvinistic colour. In terms of the catholicity of the church the adoption of the TAF has weakened the bond between the PCK and the historical Reformed Presbyterian Church in “qualitative aspect (in the unity of the true faith)”, and has restricted the PCK to Korea and Asia in “quantitative aspect (in all times and places)”. Eventually, the early missionaries perceived the PCK only as a non-Western infant Church in Korea, not a complete universal church.

5.3 Summary

In this chapter the adoption of the TAF by the PCK was evaluated from the Reformed perspective on confessions of faith. The first Presbytery meeting of the PCK in 1907 adopted the TAF, which was the doctrinal standard of the PCI, as their standard of faith, although the home Churches of the early missionaries had the WCF as their standard of faith. The adoption of the TAF reflected the influence of modern minds (contextualism and ecumenicism). In the Reformed tradition, confessional revision or replacement has been advancement in the direction of greater precision and fullness of doctrinal statement and a manifestation of the universality of the Church in the unity of the true faith. The adoption of the TAF, however, was motivated by the facts that the missionaries regarded the PCK only as a non-Western infant church and they hoped for an ecumenical coalition. For these purposes, the missionaries regarded the TAF as the most suitable confession for the PCK, because the TAF had been drawn up in the PCI in a non-Western mission field like the PCK. In addition, strict Reformed doctrines, which would interfere in the ecumenical union of churches, were omitted from or diluted in the TAF. From the Reformed perspective, therefore, the adoption of the TAF was neither a development in the direction of greater precision and fullness of doctrinal statement, but rather retrogression, nor a manifestation of the universality of the Church in the unity of the true faith, but rather a weakening of the bond between the PCK and the historical Reformed Presbyterian Church. In conclusion, the PCK did not firmly establish from the outset the identity of a confessional Presbyterian Church based on a thorough Reformed faith (even though the PCK received a conservative view of the Scripture and Puritanical pietism in practice as a precious heritage from the missionaries). It is also difficult to say that this has nothing to do with the present state of the PCK, which in many ways represents a lack of identity as a Presbyterian Church.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study dealt with the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK) and her adoption of the Twelve Articles of Faith (TAF) in 1907 as seen from a Reformed perspective. The Korean Protestant Churches have achieved great growth despite their short history. These Churches, which received the gospel from foreign missionaries about 100 years ago, have now sent many Korean missionaries to various countries of the world.⁹⁶ The PCK in particular has grown into the largest Protestant denomination in Korea and has been very influential. Now, however, the Protestant Churches in general have come to a decline. The number of church members is gradually diminishing, and various problems related to the corruption in churches, some Christians (especially pastors) are causing a negative perception of Christianity in Korean society. The present condition of the PCK is not different.

A lot of problems of the PCK are closely related to the uncertain identity of the Presbyterian Church, which results from the inability to bring the actual ministry to accord with their confessions of faith (see 1.3). In terms of their confessions, the fragile identity of the PCK is not being manifest in the present only. This has been a problem throughout the history of the PCK. The first presbytery meeting of the PCK in 1907 adopted the TAF as their doctrinal standard. After the PCK divided into four Churches (*Kosin*, *Kijang*, *Hapdong* and *Tonghap*), most of them (*Kosin*, *Hapdong* and *Tonghap*) adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith (WCF) as their doctrinal standard in the 1960s and 1970s. This means that the PCK (and the divided Presbyterian Churches) possessed a basic characteristic of the Reformed Presbyterian Church namely that it expresses its identity through its confession of faith. In practice, nonetheless, the PCK has not used the confessions (TAF, WCF) properly. The PCK did not pay much attention to establish herself as a confessional Presbyterian Church based on a thorough Reformed faith from the outset. In this context, it was necessary to examine and evaluate the adoption of the TAF in order to ascertain what viewpoints the PCK received from the missionaries in terms of confessions.

The purpose of this study was, therefore, to investigate the background and motivations of the PCK's adoption of the TAF in 1907, and to illuminate the theological tendency of the TAF in light of the Reformed tradition's view on confessions of faith in order to evaluate whether the 1970 adoption can be justified.

⁹⁶ According to numbers compiled by Korea World Missions Association (KWMA), South Korea sent out 27 436 missionaries in 2017 (KWMA, 2018:33).

The central theoretical argument of this study is that the PCK's adoption of the TAF in 1907 in fact goes against the Reformed perspective in terms of confessions of faith, and the following questions were answered, in this order, throughout the study:

- (a) What were the background of and motivations for the PCK's adoption of their TAF in 1907?
- (b) What is the Reformed perspective on confessions of faith?
- (c) What is the theological nature of the TAF?
- (d) How should the PCK's adoption of their TAF be evaluated?

In this chapter, the research findings are summarised and recommendations for further research are made.

6.1 Summary of main findings

Chapter 1 introduced the current state of the PCK. As shown in the background and problem statement, the PCK has not had a clear identity as a Reformed Presbyterian Church because they have had little interest in their confessions (TAF, WCF) and have not used their confessions properly. When an independent Korean Presbyterian Church was established in 1907, the TAF was adopted as their standard of faith. After the 1960s, most of the Presbyterian Churches that separated from the PCK adopted the WCF as their doctrinal standard. Currently, most of the Presbyterian Churches in Korea still have the WCF as their confession of faith. However, the confessions (TAF, WCF) in the PCK have been treated as a mere formality and have not been functioning as a practical guide for ministry and church life. The research aim, therefore, was to evaluate the justification of the adoption of the TAF in view of the weak status of confessions of faith in the PCK. The specific objectives and methodology of the study were also outlined.

Chapter 2 investigated the historical background and motivations of the PCK's adoption of the TAF in 1907. The first Presbytery meeting of the PCK, which was established in 1907 adopted the TAF, which was the confession of the Presbyterian Church in India (PCI). In the early days of the formation and development of the PCK, the influence of the missionaries was absolute, and that of American missionaries were overwhelming. Most of the missionaries were strongly influenced by the American evangelical revivalism of that era, which freely crossed the fences of denominations within the framework of conservatism, rather than adhering to the Reformed faith of the Presbyterian Church and valuing the Presbyterian identity. Filled partly with this evangelical spirit, they adopted the TAF as a doctrinal standard of the PCK. They had been mindful of the circumstances of the PCK and the union of the churches in adopting the TAF.

They, for understandable reasons, regarded the PCK as an infant church in a mission field and hoped to establish one native church in Korea. In this respect, they regarded the TAF of the PCI as the most suitable confession for the PCK. In viewing the PCK merely as an infant church, they however disregarded the universal nature of the PCK.

Chapter 3 examined the Reformed perspective on confessions of faith. Reformed churches believe that the Reformed confessions faithfully represent the teachings of the Scripture. In the Reformed tradition, thus, the confessions are acknowledged as a means to glorify God as the churches' amen to the Word of God, to reveal their distinct identity and to unite in the truth. Reformed churches also attribute authority to the confessions. However, they have never placed them beside or above the Scripture but regard them as being wholly subordinate to the Scripture. The confessions therefore are always open to revision or replacement. This should however be approached carefully, and only in a proper orderly and inclusive way. Therefore, demands for the confessional revision or replacement based on modern minds (contextualism, tolerance and ecumenicism) have mostly been rejected. In the Reformed tradition, confessional revision or replacement should be a development in the direction of greater precision and fullness of the doctrinal statement to reveal the truth of the Scripture more clearly and abundantly, and express a true unity in the truth by presenting the Biblical truths (Reformed doctrines) more clearly and without diminishing or eliminating them. This should be also applied equally in adopting a confession of faith of the young church in the mission field.

Chapter 4 analysed the theological nature of the TAF by comparing its structure and content with mainly the WCF. The TAF has a similar structure to the WCF, and reflects much of the Westminster Standards in its content. There are, however, also many differences between them. While the WCF clearly emphasises key features of Reformed theology such as the sovereignty and grace of God in salvation based on God's decree (or predestination) and covenant, these matters are omitted or diluted in the TAF. The TAF rather stresses an individual person's willingness to accept Jesus Christ as his or her Saviour. The TAF therefore gave other denominations (non-Calvinistic Churches) room for various interpretations. In addition, the TAF has no content regarding what the church is, and there is also no manifestation of Presbyterian Church government. From this, the inevitable conclusion is that the TAF cannot be regarded as a strict Reformed confession, and could even be classified as an evangelical confession with an ecumenical character, which can easily be shared by non-Calvinistic Churches (denominations).

Chapter 5 evaluated the PCK's adoption of the TAF in 1907 from a Reformed perspective in light of the previous chapters. In particular, the two main motivations for the adoption of the TAF were evaluated. The first motivation was the consideration of the circumstances of the PCK at the time. The evaluations show that the adoption of the TAF had been influenced by the

contextualistic modern mind because it was not a development in the direction of greater precision and fullness of doctrinal statement (or not expressing the same faith, in a new form, that has been confessed in the confession of the mother church). The adoption could even be regarded as a form of retrogression. The second motivation was the union of the churches in Korea. It reflects the influence of modern ecumenicism because it did not pursue a true unity by establishing Biblical truth firmly, but only seeking the visible unity of the churches by eliminating and diluting the Reformed confession. In conclusion, by adopting the TAF on these grounds, the PCK did not gain a confessional basis on which it should stand. The result is that it does not have a clear identity as a Reformed Presbyterian Church. Therefore, the PCK's adoption of the TAF in 1907 cannot be justified from the Reformed perspective.

6.2 Final conclusions and suggestions

The aim of the study was to evaluate the justification of the PCK's adoption of their TAF in 1907 from a Reformed perspective. This study is noteworthy in the following respects:

Firstly, the study provides a perspective that recognises the PCK as a universal church, not just an infant church in a mission field. In this regard, it may be suggested that the history of the PCK should be re-examined from the perspective that recognises the PCK as a universal church or a historical Reformed Presbyterian Church, beyond the missional viewpoint centring on the expansion of the church or the national historical view centred on the contexts in Korea.

Secondly, the study has contributed to rediscovering the meaning and value of confessions of faith as a precious heritage of faith in the Reformed tradition. With reference to the PCK, it may be necessary to discuss the study and application of practical methods (such as catechism instruction, catechism preaching and confessional subscription) for establishing a church based on confessions of faith in the Reformed tradition.

Thirdly, the study has contributed to disclosing what the aim of missionary activities of Reformed churches (including the Presbyterian Church) in a mission field should be. That should not be just to plant a national church or cosmopolitan church, but to plant a universal Reformed church on the mission field, confessing the same faith. To do this, the Reformed confessions and government (sometimes expressed in a new form) should be transmitted and established in the mission field. In connection with this, it can be suggested that the aim of missionary activities of the PCK in a mission field should be to build a Reformed Presbyterian Church confessing the same faith beyond just preaching the gospel or building a church building.

6.3 Recommendation for further research

The study was restricted to address only the starting point of the PCK regarding their confession. Recommendations for future research could therefore include an examination of the position and role of their confessions (TAF, WCF) in the entire history of the PCK. In particular, it needs to investigate the mindset of the adoption of the WCF in each Presbyterian Church that separated from the PCK, and how it influenced the formation and development of each Church's identity. In addition, researching and evaluating the PCK's adoption of the TAF from a Reformed ecclesiology perspective would be a worthwhile task. This is because the ecclesiology of early missionaries who recognized the PCK as just an infant Church in the mission field had an influence on the PCK's adoption of the TAF.

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ANNEXURE 1: THE ORIGINAL TEXT OF THE 'CONFESSION OF FAITH OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN INDIA'

Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in India⁹⁷

Preamble

The Presbyterian Church in India adopting the following as its Confession of Faith, to be subscribed by ministers, licentiates, and elders, does not thereby reject any of the doctrinal standards of the parent churches, but, on the contrary, it commends them, - especially the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Welsh Calvinistic Confession of Faith, and the Confession and Canons of the Synod of Dort - as worthy exponents of the Word of God, and as systems of doctrine to be taught in our Churches and seminaries.

Art. I. The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and duty.

Art. II. There is but one God, and He alone is to be worshipped. He is a Spirit, self-existent, omnipresent yet distinct from all other spirits and from material things: infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, truth, and love.

Art. III. In the Godhead, there are three Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Art. IV. All things visible and invisible were created by God by the word of His power, and are so preserved and governed by Him that, while He is in no way the author of sin, He worketh all things according to the counsel of His will, and they serve the fulfillment of His wise and good and holy purpose.

Art. V. God created man, male and female, after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness, with dominion over the creatures. All men have the same origin and are brethren.

Art. VI. Our first parents, being free to choose between good and evil, and being tempted, sinned against God; and all mankind descending by ordinary generation from Adam, the head of the race, sinned in him, and fell with him. To their original guilt and corruption, those capable of so doing have added actual transgressions. All justly deserve His wrath and punishment in this present life and in that which is to come.

⁹⁷ The text is quoted from: Hwang, 2011:204-205.

Art. VII. To save men from the guilt, corruption and penalty of sin, and to give them eternal life, God, in His infinite love sent into the world His eternal and only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone God has become incarnate, and through whom alone men can be saved. The eternal Son became true man, and so was and continueth to be true God and true man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, yet without sin. For sinful men, He perfectly obeyed the law of God, and offered Himself a true and perfect sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice and reconcile men to God. He died on the Cross, was buried, and rose again from the dead on the third day. He ascended to the right hand of God, where He maketh intercession for His people, and whence He shall come again to raise the dead, and to judge the world.

Art. VIII. The Holy Spirit, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, maketh men partakers of salvation, convincing them of their sin and misery, enlightening their minds in the knowledge of Christ, renewing their wills, persuading and enabling them to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to them in the Gospel, and working in them all the fruits of righteousness.

Art. IX. While God chose a people in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blemish before Him in love, having foreordained them unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on them in the Beloved: He maketh a full and free offer of salvation to all men, and commandeth them to repent of their sins, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as their Saviour, and to live a humble and holy life after His example and in obedience to God's revealed will. Those who believe in Christ and obey Him are saved, the chief benefits which they receive being justification, adoption into the number of the sons of God, sanctification through the indwelling of the Spirit and eternal glory. Believers may also in this life enjoy assurance of their salvation. In His gracious work, the Holy Spirit useth the means of grace, especially the word, sacraments and prayer.

Art. X. The sacraments instituted by Christ are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the washing with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and is the sign and seal of our union to Christ, of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, and of our engagement to be the Lord's. It is administered to those who profess their faith in Christ, and to their children. The Lord's Supper is the partaking of the bread and of the cup as a memorial of Christ's death and is a sign and seal of the benefits thereof to believers. It is to be observed by His people till He comes, in token of their faith in Him and His sacrifice, of their appropriation of its benefits, of their future engagement to serve Him, and of their communion with Him and with one another. The benefits of the Sacraments are not from any virtue in them or in him who doth

administer them, but only from the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

Art. XI. It is the duty of all believers to unite in Church fellowship, to observe the sacraments and other ordinances of Christ, to obey His laws, to continue in prayer, to keep holy the Lord's Day, to meet together for His worship, to wait upon the preaching of His word, to give as God may prosper them, to manifest a Christ-like spirit among themselves and towards all men, to labour for the extension of Christ's kingdom throughout the world, and to wait for His glorious appearing.

Art XII. At the last day, the dead shall be raised, and all shall appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall receive according to the deeds done in the present life, whether good or bad. Those who have believed in Christ and obeyed Him shall be openly acquitted and received into glory; but the unbelieving and wicked, being condemned, shall suffer the punishment due to their sins.

Form of Acceptance

I receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church as based upon and in accord with the Words of God; and I declared it to be the Confession of my faith.