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**“Creating Bilingual Worship Services in Korean and English"**

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*“Come, Let Us Worship," The Korean-English Presbyterian Hymnal & Service Book[[1]](#endnote-1)* was published in U. S. with a specific intention to provide a bilingual worship resource for the Korean churches. The hymnal comes in both a Methodist and a Presbyterian version. The two editions share the main body of 334 hymns, but each has its own worship resource guide particular to the denomination.

This study reflects the desires of the hymnal committee, which attempted to make the book singer friendly, whether the individual worshipper prefers English or Korean. From page to page, it is all bilingual and the songs matched so closely in the two languages that Korean and English language worshippers could even pause for breath at the same time in a song.

The new bilingual hymnal has several categories of songs. There is what might be called old favorites of the Christian tradition, such as "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty." Another group consists of songs composed by Koreans, then translated into English. Contemporary English-language songs rendered into Korean form an additional category. The hymnal also includes songs from cultures outside the Korean or English-speaking church, hymns adapted, for example, from Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

**Why Bilingual Worship Resource?**

The hymnal, *CLUW(2001)* is made for the Korean-American churches, where Korean speaking congregations, English speaking younger generations, and non-Korean congregations share the same facility. When someone attempts to combine efforts to have a joint worship, then questions arise as to the selection of appropriate hymns and as to who does what, when, and how for the joint efforts of worship in two conflicting cultures and languages.

Both English speaking second generation and Korean speaking first generation are not familiar with the worship that uses written texts for the liturgy. It seems there is no apparent common ground to begin within this cross-cultural experience of praying together. The hymnal is created in the hope of establishing an agreed text that can be used simultaneously to provide a meeting point and a starting point for the new liturgical development.

The word 'common' in the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Book of Common Worship* are translated in Korean as a 'communal' sense. The biggest challenge is in drawing the living water from the deep 'common' well of shared life of the two language congregations. The key to the success of having a satisfying bilingual worship is in recognizing and accepting the diversity in the 'comm(on)-unity.' When it happens, the worship becomes truly an act of public service, the '*leitourgia*.'

The purpose in editing the book in joint effort with the United Methodist Church was to make the text truly 'bilingual.' The task is much more complex than the making of a worship book in a common language. However, every worship book contains composite diverse materials within unity in its essence. This means that all worship books are cross-cultural in their very nature by embracing different cultural expressions.

The personal quest in writing thesis on the bilingual character in worship all began when the writer first read Henry E. Horn's *Worship in Crisis* about 10 years ago. He says,

Worship is to develop the Christian as one who lives in two worlds at once, the one always informing the other. The Christian is to be a truly modern [person] but also one who lives in the world of the Bible. [One] is therefore bilingual with all of the ambiguities and insights that such bilingual character provides. The current and crucial question before the church today is: Can we restore the bilingual character of the Christian layperson in our day?[[2]](#endnote-2)

According to Horn, no one is exempted from the challenge of being a bicultural Christian; simultaneously living in the cultures of the world and living in the sacred life of God's reign. Worship is the place where these two forces merge, confront, and shape.

The characteristic of embracing a diverse worship experience is nothing new to us. The church has always experienced some form of two or more competing cultures in common worship. There are always two or more opposing polarities in any given community. Worship is a composition of different languages, cultures, theologies, and complex fabrications of life itself. An underling polarity in any given worship is in an expression of *form and freedom.*

The form and freedom in worship represent wholly different worlds of worship orientation. The current *Directory for Worship* in the Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.) states, "The church has always experienced a tension between form and freedom in worship."[[3]](#endnote-3) The dynamics of the form and freedom is like an inseparable relationship between fire and fireplace that needs each other for safety and consistency. We are to accept this tension over form and freedom as part of the worship. By accepting it, we would want that tension to add strength and even fun to worshipping together.

A United Methodist, Paul Hoon, who taught at Union Theological Seminary in New York City during the 50's and 60's describes an alternative term for liturgical language as 'forms':

. . . In one sense 'language' and 'forms' are identical. Yet 'language' may be superior to 'forms' partly because it enables us to transcend the tedious controversy over so-called formal and informal (or free) worship, which so often plagues the liturgical conversation.[[4]](#endnote-4)

Hoon sees the inseparable relationship of form and freedom as one entity, which is described as the 'language.' He further develops the bilingual nature of the worship into the dichotomy of sacred and secular action, "Liturgical action must be viewed as having reality only as it includes both cultic action and worldly (or ethical) action."[[5]](#endnote-5)

The Roman Catholic scholar Anscar J. Chupungco, a Chinese living and working in both the Philippines and in Rome, has wrestled all his life with cultural relevancy in liturgical theology. Chupungco deals particularly with the translation of liturgical texts, "The liturgy uses a variety of texts, both biblical and extra-biblical."[[6]](#endnote-6)

In speaking of the use of two languages in the Holy Scriptures, the sacred texts provide the basis of prayer and liturgy written in two dominant languages: Hebrew of the Semitic family and Indo-European Greek for the Hellenistic family. The Biblical text provides a memory and interpretation of the story of the salvation of God's people. The story is often accompanied by symbols of action and participation of the people. And the Biblical symbols illustrate human experience as diversely described:

fasting and feasting,

rejoicing and wailing,

marching and resting,

dancing and keeping silence,

purification and dedication,

circumcision and anointing,

burnt offerings and sin offerings,

doing justice and mercy,

and making music and singing to the Lord.[[7]](#endnote-7)

Just like the symbols representing opposite modes of human expression, the antiphonal singing of Hebrew tradition is also two-fold. Antiphonal is a sound against another sound usually in chanting or shouting. The leader sings against the choir or the entire group of people. The choir sings against another choir or the entire group. The congregation can be divided into two groups, one singing against the other. The structure of Psalms also reflects the antiphonal singing practice of the Israelites in their temple liturgy.

Common prayer in New Testament is taught by Jesus in Matthew 18:19, "Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." I am extending and substituting the term ‘two individuals' with ‘two cultures,' ‘two languages,' perhaps ‘two contrasting theologies,' agree on earth about anything you pray for.... The Matthew verse marks the beginning of the cross-cultural prayer for the Christians taught by Jesus.

The early church of the New Testament period had its worship in the private homes of believers. The bilingual nature of a Jewish culture within the Hellenistic culture is demonstrated by the use of the following liturgical words as found in the Bible: M*aranatha, Abba, Halleluia, Hosanna, Amen, Kurios, Soter*, etc.

'Maranatha' is an Aramaic word which means, 'Our Lord, come!' or 'Our Lord has come,' which may have been a foreign word to the Hellenistic Corinthians. 'Maranatha' is considered as the oldest fragment of the Christian prayer.[[8]](#endnote-8) It is not just a word, but it is a holy word. 'Abba' was also introduced to the Palestinian Jews as the Aramaic vocabulary. In the New Testament, the communities were divided into Greek and Aramaic speaking churches. Paul speaks in the middle as a bilingual person to bridge the gap between the two cultural differences. 'Amen' 'Hosanna,' and 'Alleluia' are the Jewish synagogue language, which the early church also freely used in their worship. The Jewish roots are traced from the Psalms as the prayer of the church. The Psalms are the memorial of God's deeds expressed in thanksgiving, praise, and supplications for God's work in salvation history. And many of the psalms speak in two opposite modes of expression, sometimes in the same prayer, lamentation and thanksgiving.

In the bicultural dynamics of Jerusalem and Antioch, which best represent the polarity among the New Testament communities, food that was offered to idols and the issues of circumcision were among the matters which created the tensions between them. Preaching of the Word and Breaking of the Bread is also a twofold pattern of the liturgy, which presents a polarity. Chupungco says, "Every liturgy is anamnesis of the Paschal mystery and a Pentecostal epiclesis."[[9]](#endnote-9)

Christian Liturgy is not a mono-cultural statement. It began with the human drama experiencing tremendous tension of betrayal and solidarity between the disciples and Jesus at the Last Supper. Lord, have mercy! The marriage between Greek 'Kyrie' and Hebrew 'Amen' is the classic example of the bilingual fragments that continued in the history of Christian worship.

In the Greco-Roman culture, the philosophy of Logos was in direct confrontation with the Roman legal mentality, which propagated practical concerns. Northern African writers such as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine began to use liturgical words like plebs, sacramentum, ordo, and institutio.[[10]](#endnote-10)According to Chupungco, the very first bilingual liturgy was attempted by Pope Victor I(189-198), an African by birth, who introduced Greek for the prayer formularies and Latin for the readings.

It was toward the year 250 when the Latin Bible made its appearance in the city. By the second half of the third century, when the number of migrations from the oriental part of the empire dropped, Latin gained ascendancy. The Roman Church then adopted a bilingual liturgy: Greek for the Eucharistic Prayer, at least until the appearance of the Roman canon in the fourth century, and Latin for the biblical readings.[[11]](#endnote-11)

And during the seventh century because of a new wave of migration from the East, the Roman liturgy became bilingual once more at least for the readings and some rites of Catechumenate.[[12]](#endnote-12)

For every bilingual resource, there is bilingual leader and 'bi-polar' communities. Beginning with the Apostle Paul, the church leaders demonstrated their ability to be bilingual and cross-cultural. Some were born with it and others had to struggle even to risk their life in martyrdom. The list continues on; however, it is not my intention to exhaust readers at this time.

**Korean Hymns and Its Culture**

According to Paul Tillich, Religion is the body of culture and culture is the expression of the religion.[[13]](#endnote-13) The church and culture are inter-related in unbreakable relationship. Church music is a cultural art form, which represents the particular culture the church belongs to. The Korean praise was first sung in 1888 in translated text. The first hymnbook was printed in 1892 by G. H. Jones and L.G. Rothweiler with 24 translated texts of the western hymns. One of the leading Presbyterian Missionary in Korea, Horace Underwood, has published hymnbook of 117 songs with 4 parts staff in 1894. The hymnbook contained English and American gospel songs in majority. But it had 7 original score written by Koreans. Translated text from other language, English in this case, was somewhat unfitting to the people in Korea. Long time missionary, James S. Gale made a report, "Koreans love to sing the western hymns, but whether they sing from their heart in song language is a questionable expectation."[[14]](#endnote-14)

Many attempts were made to include cultural praises in printed hymnals, but they were not greatly favored by both missionaries and Korean Christians. Today's Korean hymnal published in 1983 contains that 80% of total 558 hymns are British-American hymns translated into Korean text. The number of the gospel hymn is 260 in the hymnal. Korean original hymns are only 17 of them. Jang Bok Chung notes that the 19th Century Korean society was in great confusion, the Christianity in Korea was first received during this uneasy period, and it did not have much time nor opportunity to wear the Korean authentic culture.[[15]](#endnote-15) The church music in Korea is in a critical cross road between western music and Korean traditional music. Korean traditional musicians have tried to introduce the authentic Korean instruments in worship. However, the response is not overwhelming. The church people immediately associated them with singing girls and drinking house entertainments. Furthermore, the authentic instruments have close association with shamanistic rituals and animism. Therefore, the church refused the traditional music because of the associations of the instruments.

The conflict between eastern and western culture is a serious reality. The Korean churches are now facing the reality that the church is not to be under shadow of any cultural influences, rather it needs to embrace all culture to provide an opportunity to share the good news, which God has given. The praise to God is an event that is above any cultural diversity and conflicts. The Korean churches have given a high priority to praise in the churches.

The prophetic community might ponder what the preconditions of doxology are and what happens when doxologies that address this One are replaced by television jingles that find us singing consumerism ideology to ourselves and to each other. In that world there may be no prophet and surely no freedom. In that world where jingles replace doxology, God is not free and the people know no justice or compassion.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Music of praise in Korean churches is facing a challenge of commercial music. A prophet makes the hope that comes from singing happen again.[[17]](#endnote-17) Churches in Korea face the challenge of revitalizing the prophetic church that grows in worship and music. However, there are many impediments to the growth of the church as a singing church. The majority of Korean Christians worshipers are "onlookers" rather than "participants." They go to church to receive the grace of blessing rather than to give their praise to God, the Creator. Professor Han, Wan Sang claims that Korean Christianity, although so Western in its liturgy and appearances, is obviously quite shamanistic in its belief and behavior.[[18]](#endnote-18) The songs are not exceptions. They need to change; they must give God their praise and share with others rather than only receive the blessings for themselves. The churches are eager to teach the Bible and to hold prayer meetings, but they do not give much thought to giving praise. People are in need of creative and diverse songs for worship.

**Introducing *Come Let Us Worship (2001)***

*CLUW* is a bilingual worship resource, which the major part is consisted with hymns in bilingual characters. The work was produced as a part of the denominational sensitivity toward the growth of racial-ethnic minority churches, in this case, the Korean-Americans. The denominational hymnals often attempt to cover their authentic denominational theology. The Reformed Theology reflected in *CLUW(2001)* has recovered the lost tradition of singing biblical theology in metrical psalms. *CLUW(2001)* has faithfully followed Calvin's view of music in the following basic points:

1. Music is for the people, so it must be simple.

2. Music is for God, so it must be modest.

3. Simplicity and Modesty are attained by music of the

unaccompanied voice.[[19]](#endnote-19)

These principles are consistent with the committee's original intent for this new hymnal as stated in the preface (p. vi):

1. The committee was to create a collection that would reflect the variety of new texts and tunes.

2. The committee was to create a collection for use by the average worshiper in a Korean church.

3. The hymnal was to help bridge the differences between first and second generation Korean-Americans.

Indeed, the selections of *CLUW(2001)* shows its music and text being simple and modest, and the hymnal committee even followed to provide the unison lines for many hymns and the lectionary based selected Psalter unaccompanied. And where the Methodist hymnal has responsive readings, the Presbyterian edition has a Psalter, setting portions of the Psalms to music.

Hymnal is a book of practical theology. A hymnologist, Robin Leaver states that except the British Catholics and *The Worshipbook (1972),* which is in an alphabetical order, most major hymnals of the past two hundred years have arranged their hymns within a specific theological structure, reflecting the confessional stance of the denominational concerns.[[20]](#endnote-20) However, *CLUW(2001)* has combined a structure according to the church year as well as the topical sequence to biblical structure. The first main part of the hymnal section is headed "God, the Creator," followed by "Exodus and Salvation" and Deuteronomic "Word and Teaching."

One may have guessed that the order of the hymnal contents may follow the canonical order. Indeed, the last section of the Old Testament is the "Prophecy and Justice" which is tailed by a section on "Advent," which begins the mark on the "Christian Year (reflecting the four Gospels)." Then, after, "The Sacraments" and "Thanksgiving" come topical hymns in "Church (reflecting the book of Acts)" and "Christian Life (the Epistles)." And the last section is called "New Heaven and a New Earth" dealing with the John's Revelation in context of the service of Death and Resurrection.

Hymns are used as worship resource. Hymns are collected in the context within the service of worship. Therefore, for first time in the history of Korean Hymnal making, it begins with section on the service book for the Lord's Day including communion and optional baptismal order. "Morning and Evening Prayers" are followed and the service book section concludes with "Calendar and Lectionary."

*CLUW(2001)* has come a long way and modified a lot from its predecessors: *The Presbyterian Hymnal (1990), United Methodist Hymnal (1989), and Korean "Tongil" Hymnal (1983).[[21]](#endnote-21)* A glance at the list of committee members in the preface shows a joint effort between United Methodists and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). And the committee members represent all experiences of both lay and ordained, men and women, and various geographical theological backgrounds of the two denominations. As the committee was reviewing the recently published hymnbooks in all the denominations, they discovered a variety of texts and musical settings. As Melva Costen, a chairperson of the 1990 *TPH* committee, indicates, "In addition to hymns and songs included, we examined the format, indexes, size, weight, use (and non-use) of inclusive language, service music, and amount of racial ethnic materials included."[[22]](#endnote-22) From this data the committee was able to stretch to include global, contemporary, and authentic Korean expressions that would enhance the usability of this new hymnal.

Even though it is limited in its numerical contents, due to the fact that every single pages need to be duplicated for the bilingual commitment, *CLUW(2001)*, indeed, turned out much better in every aspects comparing to its predecessors. The primary difference from the other hymnals is deeply rooted in the group dynamic of the committee. The result is not only reflected in the printed material but also the church need to accept openly for what is available. However, *CLUW(2001)* committee has learned early that encouraging input facilitates ownership by the church of a hymnal that is to be theirs. Every hymnal committee needs to be in touch with its people who will be using them.

*CLUW(2001)* has continued the tradition with specific liturgical sections of hymns grouped under "Morning and Opening Hymns," "The Sacraments," and "service music." These short refrains, which are widely used in Taize chants, are included for intentionally family oriented home services for morning and evening prayers. The "Psalms and Canticles" reflects and chosen from the 3 year-cycle Lectionary texts. It includes an extensive selection of psalms for responsive reading, together with optional sung responses, largely in traditional Korean musical modalities.

The contemporary concerns in wider theological perspectives are reflected more than ever before, e.g. social responsibility, ethnic diversity, the world-wide church, ecology, and changing forms of hymnic and liturgical language. *CLUW(2001)* truly reflects the diversity of the church and it responds with a prophetic voice, which the format itself speaks for a 'simultaneous' bi-lingual rather than alternate, sequential, or translated. The simultaneous approach may be perceived as a "chaos approach" encouraging expression of pain caused by conflict and change into the new, creative or faithful choice, described as a leadership style proposed by Alban Institute.[[23]](#endnote-23)

This hymnal, in fact, is the first Korean hymnbook, which uses inclusive language translations. As James Sydnor indicates T*he Lutheran Book of Worship (1978)* as the first major denominational hymnal using inclusive language,[[24]](#endnote-24) this resource will provide the Korean church as the first book or collection with the sensitivity toward the issues that arise around the inclusive language.

Horace T. Allen, who also worked with the author in editing process of the book often commented that only by working across linguistic limitations does one become truly "fluent." I truly credit his many invaluable works toward making this resource. One of his contributions is the adoption of the following principles in making the Presbyterian edition listed on the *Introduction* on page 3 of the hymnal:

1. To print the liturgical texts on facing pages, Korean and English, in parallel columns.

2. To print these texts in what have come to be known as "sense lines" rather than "run-on lines," left to right margins. This allows the unison or responsive portions to be said simultaneously, and provides the texts being spoken by a leader of worship with an immediate, printed translation across the page. All that is required of the congregation is that the two linguistic groups pay attention to the pace and phrasing of each other (perhaps a novel interpretation of St. Paul's injunction to "wait for one another" - 1 Cor. 11:33).

The resource requires a lot of doing improvisation and interpretation for making it work for the communities. It will help people make choices and affirm the presence of the Holy Spirit in symbol shaping and immersing in imaginations.

**Critical Reflection**

Due to the fact that this study is first in its kind, I am regretful to inform that there is no published material, which presents an adequate review of the resource. The lack of responses does not mean the lack of interest. It proves that utilizing a 'bilingual' character of the worship is certainly a difficult task to begin with. It presents not only unresolved tension, but also the confusion and time consuming effort to bring opposite polarities of the split culture and the languages it represents.

As the British hymnologist who immigrated to U.S. in 1970's, Erick Routley believes that there is always a creative tension and polarity in trajectory and conversation. And human life, when lived authentically and creatively, is a balance between the ecstatic and the discipline elements. Routley's theory of church music is built upon the foundation of the creative tension and polarity in human nature. For example, the hymns of the church can be both "delightful" and "dangerous." "The church music can stunt the growth and frustrate the pilgrimage of Christian souls; but they can also nourish and fortify?[[25]](#endnote-25) Routley does not give us easy solutions to complex issues, but he gives us the right question and some directions to move forward for embracing diversity as God's people come to worship.

The introduction of the *CLUW(2001)* presents the following critical questions that need to be answered by those who claim to use the resource in truly bilingual setting:

\* How to maintain a creative balance between two languages that there is no unnecessary dominance?

\* What are the 'dangerous' as well as 'delightful' experiences as the result of being bilingual in worship?

\* What about those who neither belongs to the represented language groups? How will they find a meaning in these unfamiliar grounds?

\* Making the worship resources is rather an easy task to accomplish comparing to having people actually use them frequently. What are the educational and circulation plans for the available resources?

\* What images and metaphors are being developed as the result of using diverse materials and languages in worship? Any conflicts?

\* Any creative approach to the redundancy of repeating twice each time? How to manage the time elements?

\* Do we have authentic expressions of each tradition?

\* What is the emerging liturgy out of the two opposing traditions?

**Conclusion**

Music is neither the problem nor the answer to any basic Christian dilemma: it is, rather, a metaphor - as is the whole of Christian liturgy - for how we are to be with each other and before God. By all means, the hymnal is not a complete collection. It's just the beginning! The hymnal presents a good balance between old favorites and excellent new hymns. This bilingual hymn and worship resources have truly expanded the church's imagery and vocabulary for God. However, it may have been just the beginning. The Korean churches, perhaps, need to be stretched even more for deepening their relationship with God. The worship life needs to come alive either in liturgical understanding or spiritual renewal. *CLUW(2001)* will quench the thirstiness for the change, but the Korean Presbyterians still has a long way to go in its journey toward God.

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1. **Notes**

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2. Henry E. Horn, *Worship in Crisis*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972, p. 85. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
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4. Paul Hoon, *Integrity of Worship: Ecumenical and Pastoral Studies in Liturgical Theology*, Abingdon Press, 1971, p. 216 [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid., p. 111. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
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19. One of the four foundations for the reform of the Church by Calvin was congregational singing.  Garside argues that the point of origin in Calvin's theology of music flows form the Article of 1537.  see Charles Garside, Jr. *The Origins of Calvin's Theology of Music: 1536-1543*, The American Philosophical Society: Philadelphia, 1979, p.8. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
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21. Huh, Paul J. "The Korean Church," *Reformed Liturgy & Music,* Vo.XXXI, No.2, 1997, p. 143.  A column for racial-ethnic viewpoint expressed on the issue of making Korean Worship book and a brief sketch of the Korean "Tongil" Hymnal (1983) is discussed. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Melva Wilson Costen, "Why This New Hymnal?" *RL&M*, 24:2, p.61. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Gilbert R. Rendle, *Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders*, Alban Institute, 1998. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. James Rawlings Sydnor, "Why a New Hymnal," *Reformed Liturgy & Music,* 24:2, p.58. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Erick Routley, *Christian Hymns Observed*, 1982, p. 1 and 107. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)