

Autobiographical Statement

Kukjin An

I believe that a church is the real hope in the world. Though there are lots of organizations which can help those in need, I believe that a church can do the task in a unique way because of the love of Jesus Christ, who confirms unconditional love through the crucifixion and the resurrection. Instead of shining the light of hope to the world, however, I had several disappointing experiences from some churches and church leaders, who made conflicts and troubles in the society. Through the experiences, I thought that it was not about fundamental limitation of the church but about its deterioration by members, and the church can be restored and it must be.

Then, I began to study Religious Studies as a Master degree, because I thought an academic approach from the Religious Studies instead of theology can give a new motivation: an external perspective for a matter can shed light on analyzing and solving the issues. However, what I found was that a real change in a church can come from its inside not from the outside. While hoping to find a way of change, I studied Master of Divinity at Candler School of Theology. I wanted to study at an abroad seminary, rather than a Korean seminary. Because my country, Republic of Korea has been deeply influenced by Confucianism, which emphasizes hierarchical structure and prefers conserving tradition to bring changes. While studying at Candler, I could have an opportunity to serve as a seminary intern at a Korean immigrant church, which is a Presbyterian church (U.S.A.). Through the experiences, I hoped to serve for immigrants at an immigrant church: Though I could not make a whole change for Korean churches, I might be small ignition of the change in a small church where I will live with other members. After graduation, while searching to pursue the goal, I found my current church and began to serve as the Sunday School Director at a Korean immigrant church from 2015. And I became an inquirer in 2017.

Since 2015, God lead me in His special intensive course, I believe. Though I began my spiritual journey for my calling through serving Sunday schools kids, God gave more chances to serve other congregations such as kids, youth, and young adult group in 2016. Also, I had to preach once or twice per week at early morning worship service, and to lecture bible study for women during a weekday. They have been very busy and tough days. However, the harder challenge comes, the deeper grace covers me. While confronting different congregations in one time, I could not but seeking God more and more. Without poured grace, I could not serve all of them, and God gave the grace. Furthermore, since I am serving at an immigrant church, I could recognize a real challenge that immigrant churches have struggled. There are a huge but invisible gap between generations: due to language and cultural gap, almost 80% of youth leave a church after becoming a university student, statistically.

My sense of calling was initially to restore church so that it can shine the light of hope to the world, instead of making conflicts and troubles in the society. I still believe this is what I called for. However, through God's customized intensive disciples for me, I want to do an additional work – making a bridge between generations. I do not have any particular plan for the bridge, but I believe that God will lead me in His perfect and graceful way.

Autobiographical Statement

Though I studied at a Methodist seminary, God gave me chances to serve in Presbyterian Churches (U.S.A.). I was grown up in Presbyterian family, and I thought that I knew it well. However, while studying polity and the Reformed worship in 2017, I found more precious meanings to be a Presbyterian. When I wrote my inquirer application, I wrote that I appreciate the tradition of Presbyterian because it had a good ruling system by elders. Yes, the governing system of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a good way to prevent some errors that church had made. However, what I love as a Presbyterian is that we are on the tradition of believers: we have Confessions that many predecessors of faith had confessed together, and we are following its traditions which are not tied but reformed continuously. Everyone does not accept the changes, but through the continuous struggle for the change, I believe we, Presbyterians are making next step to go further for the glory of God as well as the light of hope in the world.

I hope that I could continue this journey as a candidate, and in someday as a minister of Word and Sacrament for what God calls me.

Statement of Faith

Kukjin An

I believe in God the Father who created the world and who governs all through His love and grace. God created the world good and made human beings like the image of God to live as one community. Though human beings disobeyed and rebelled against God, God still loves us and confirms His love by sending His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, while we were still sinners.

I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. Therefore, He was a man in the world like us, but the innocent one. I believe in the love of Christ, who came for us and redeemed our sins through the crucifixion and resurrection: Jesus Christ completed God's plan of redemption in His humble obedience to God, and His love for all children of God. I believe in the coming of Jesus, who ascended into heaven, and has been with God.

I believe in the Holy Spirit who is the one whom Jesus promised as an advocate and a counselor. With the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit, we, church are called to live a mission: Go, Make disciples, Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and Teach them to obey what Jesus commanded.

I believe in the authority of the Scripture. The Scripture of both Testaments is the true Word of God. All Scriptures is inspired by God, and God reveals Himself through the Word of God.

I believe in the Sacraments, which are visible, holy signs and seals of God. Christ instituted two Sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Through the Sacraments, God seals believers as people of the covenant, and we, as those who are incorporated into Christ, can live with the promise of the gospel.

I believe in Trinity, the unity of Three Persons of the Godhead – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. I confess that I cannot exist without Trinity: God the Father created me and gave a life in this world with His plan of love. God the Son, Jesus Christ saved me from sins and opened the way to God through His crucifixion and resurrection. God the Holy Spirit dwells in me and guides me to a life that God is pleased.