

The Innovative Heritage of the Urban Industrial Mission in the Korean Religious Market: A Case Study of YDP-UIM*

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Abstract

This article first traces how the Yeongdeungpo Urban Industrial Mission (YDP-UIM) applied their innovative strategies to the Guro Industrial Complex (GIC) and the Korean society from the 1960s. This article explains the sociohistorical and theoretical implications of YDP-UIM under the supervision of the Presbyterian Church of Korea into the following three aspects. First, many democratic labor unions supported or led by YDP-UIM played a significant role historically in establishing the Korean Federation of Trade Unions. Second, credit unions introduced to the GIC by YDP-UIM saw unexpected success in protecting GIC industrial workers from falling prey to institutionalized usurers, and the National Credit Union Federation of Korea has grown today to become the world's third largest credit union federation. In-depth interviews with YDP-UIM's leading activists, however, repeatedly reveal that their practical innovation was the result of their self-reflective interaction with industrial workers alienated from religion itself as well from established society. Finally, these interviews point out how and why the positive relationship between religious innovation and free competition posited by religious market theorists should be revised, both theoretically and empirically, in the Korean context.

Keywords: YDP-UIM, Korean UIM, Guro Industrial Complex, religious innovation, religious competition, religious market theory, Presbyterian Church of Korea, unionism

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Introduction

Religion is still understood as a byproduct or dependent variable rather than an independent or determinant variable to explain historical changes in Korean society. In particular, it is very rare to find empirical research documenting certain innovative roles that religion played, or further, how religious innovation influenced Korean economic progress during the period of Korean modernization. Even main textbooks on the history of Korean Christianity have failed in making clear the social implications of such religious innovation, by reducing the heritage of Korean religious innovation simply to the growth and decline of church membership or the separation and integration of denominational organizations (I. Kim 2003; Min 1995; J. Park 2004; Yang 2008). While J. A. Schumpeter (1991) understands innovation as changes in the methods of production and industrial organization, opening up of new markets, or the application of new technology, etc., its meaning in the religious market involves not only changes in production factors in which religious firms invest to produce their religious services and create new religious demands and niche markets, but also how religion contributes to the humanistic progress of society. The real power of religious innovation in terms of the sociology of religion, as Max Weber exemplified in his classic work ([1922] 1993), can be revealed more clearly when we consider its impact on the qualitative change of society rather than the quantitative changes in religious organization, doctrine, or membership.

This article first attempts to show how religious innovation has contributed to a drastic change in the Guro Industrial Complex (GIC; or G-Valley today) since the 1960s, and further how the urban industrial mission (UIM) applied its innovations to social conditions at the local level. Although G-Valley, the only industrial complex within the city of Seoul, is well known for its industrial importance in Korea's economic development, there is little information about its social implications in terms of the sociology of religion. Through an empirical analysis of the social activities of UIM in G-Valley, this article will suggest how and why the pluralism thesis of religious market theory should be revised and complemented within the Korean context. The creative innovation of UIM on G-Valley will

be exemplified by means of analyzing the establishment of democratic trade unions (*minju nojo* 民主勞組) and credit unions (*sinyong johap* 信用組合), the most influential types of organizations in terms of the political and economic aspects of Korean society. Considering that it was very rare to find trans-denominational movements like UIM in Korea in the 1960s, the UIM was a particularly unique actor in the Korean religious market at that time. Among its most prominent members were Presbyterian, Methodist, Catholic, and Anglican activists. They would cooperate with each other in promoting missionary work, struggling together against governmental labor policy, and changing social attitudes of conservative members who had occupied the majority of their denominations. Both democratic trade unions and credit unions in Korea were a product of transdenominational cooperation by UIM.

A Brief History of Korean Urban Industrial Mission (UIM)

The idea of industrial evangelism as the theological origin of UIM was motivated by the religious desire to evangelize the growing number of industrial workers at the turn of the last century. On the denominational level, its practice dates back to the Workingmen's Department of the Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA) in 1903 and the construction of the Labor Temple¹ in 1910 (Poethig 1995, 35). PCUSA (after 1958, the United Presbyterian Church in the USA) also established the Presbyterian Institute of Industrial Relations (PIIR) in 1945 to develop a training program for pastors, seminarians, and lay persons to study the nature of industrial society, and later the Institute of the Church in an Urban Industrial Society in 1967 to act as a clearinghouse for world-wide information and consultation on training facilities for urban

1. The Labor Temple would be "entirely unsectarian, where every man, if he has a message, may give it expression, and if it be good it will receive attention." On its opening day, Labor Temple was attended by 500 members of labor unions, Socialist, Anarchists, and persons who took interest in labor matters and sociologists (The New York City Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, "Labor Temple," accessed October 21, 2017, <http://www.nycago.org/Organs/NYC/html/LaborTemple.html>).

and industrial ministries (Poethig 1998, 344). Especially the 1956 Ecorse Project² in Detroit, which was later renamed the Presbyterian Industrial Project, is evaluated as the most innovative experiment for analyzing the relationship between a local parish and its surrounding industrial community and encouraging other industrial mission projects across the United States (Poethig 1995, 39–40). This tradition of American Presbyterian social gospel is in parallel with a theological self-reflection of the fact that their mission focused on the middle or upper classes rather than the working classes or Catholic immigrants from Europe (Gutman 1966; Urquhart 1963, 38). In this sense, it was not a simple byproduct of the ecumenical movement, like the establishment of World Council of Churches (WCC), but rather served as a part of its strong momentum.

While American Presbyterians' priority was the improvement of political and economic conditions for industrial workers from the beginning of the last century, even by the 1950s Korean Presbyterians had no serious interest in the issue, even if they had been seriously influenced by their American counterparts in various aspects. It was not until Henry D. Jones³ made three visits to Korea in 1957 that a few Protestant pastors and Catholic priests began to pay serious attention to industrial mission. At Jones' suggestion, in September 1957 the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK, Tonghap) formed the PCK-Industrial Evangelism Committee as an official organization under its General Assembly (YDP-UIM 1998, 39). John Ramsey, dispatched to Korea in 1959, held many seminars for laymen and pastors to study the nature of industrial society in terms of social gospel, making this *innovative* religious movement widespread on a national scale. As a staff of the United Steelworkers of America, the largest industrial labor

2. This project of social experimentation was conducted at the Ecorse Presbyterian Church of Detroit Presbytery, developed out of the Ministers-in-Industry program of PIIR designed by Marshal L. Scott (Poethig 2005).

3. He had served as director of the Dodge Community Center in Detroit in 1935 and moderator of the Detroit Presbytery, supporting and maintaining a good relationship with the United Auto Workers. The Board of Foreign Missions of PCUSA appointed him to serve in the Chinese industrial mission in 1947 and he then moved between Japan and other regions of the world from 1953 to 1965 (Poethig 1995, 41–42; 1998, 114).

union in North America, Ramsey had already played an important role in forging a close relationship between Presbyterian ministry and labor union leadership (K. Lee 1963, 35; Poethig 1995, 38; 2005, 6). Besides, a theological focus on *Missio Dei* encouraged by the establishment of the WCC had a serious impact on the social gospel of Korean churches (Chang 2009, 173–174). Thereafter, the Korean Catholic Church (KCC) established the Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (JOC) in 1958 for UIM, and the Korean Methodist Church (KMC) launched its own UIM in 1961. In Korea, Yeongdeungpo, the original district of G-Valley, and the city of Incheon remain the most vital and enduring locales for Korean UIM activists. The former was occupied by PCK and Anglican activists, whereas the latter became the cradle of Methodist UIM activists like George Ogle (S. Lee 2015).

With the rapid social changes caused by industrialization and urbanization from the 1960s, Korean UIM activists became more aware of structural problems in the labor market itself, as well as of the working conditions and economic hardships of uneducated factory workers. In particular, engagement in the labor movement became more important and essential for their missionary work when the GIC was constructed by the Korean government in 1967 as the sole base for exports in the city of Seoul. As the term UIM originally refers to the combination of an urban and industrial mission, Korean UIM activists had also focused on evangelizing both employers and employees within industrial areas in big cities like Seoul, Incheon, Daejeon, and Busan. However, their active engagement in the labor movement eventually compelled them to change the focus of their mission, from individual salvation to social justice, in order to protect and promote the political and economic interests of factory workers (Chang 2009, 209; Shin 1994, 201).

When a group of UIM activists comprising the PCK, KMC, and the Anglican Church of Korea (ACK) established a transdenominational association for the Yeongdeungpo Urban Industrial Mission (YDP-UIM) in 1969 (YDP-UIM 1998, 119–120), the GIC had already become the holy land of democratic labor movements competing with the existing company-dominated unions. Due to this transdenominational cooperation within UIM, its activists were able to educate, train, organize, and support GIC fac-

tory workers since the 1970s more efficiently and systematically, recruiting young UIM activists with much more theologically progressive attitudes toward social justice. Organizationally, the YDP-UIM belonged to the General Assembly of the PCK, one of the most conservative denominations in Korea, distancing itself from the *minjung* theology of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PCRK; also known as Gi-Jang after its Korean acronym). Though they were an extremely minor group within the PCK, their progressive ideas continued to remind conservative PCK members of social duty, theological flexibility, and the further contemporary roles of Korean Protestantism (S. Jang 2005, 117).

In addition to the labor movement, UIM activists were also the pioneers of Korean unionism, which tried to promote the economic interests of GIC workers. Among such efforts, the credit union of UIM produced the most innovative and successful results since its introduction in 1960 by Mary Gabriella Mulherin, a Maryknoll nun, and Jang Dae-ik, a Korean Catholic Priest, based on the influence of the Antigonish Movement of St. Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia, Canada. In 1969, Cho Ji-song of YDP-UIM also established a credit union to help GIC workers escape the bondage of exploitative usury. By 2015, the National Credit Union Federation of Korea had 5,710,000 members, 911 local credit unions, and 1,663 branches nationwide, making it the third largest credit union federation in the world.⁴ The credit union system is also now considered one of the most important institutions in terms of increasing the stock of social capital, something that the commercial banking system can never provide (Joo 2011; K. Park 1990; Sohn 2013). While Korean Methodists like George E. Ogle and Kyung Rak Kim were engaged in Incheon-UIM at the individual level (Kwon 2005, 208), the YDP-UIM as an official organization of PCK played an essential role in recognizing and promoting labor unions in the political sphere and credit unions in the economic sphere. This will be explained in more detail below.

4. Sinhyeop (National Credit Union Federation of Korea), accessed November 18, 2017, <http://www.cu.co.kr/>.

Innovative Unionism of YDP-UIM

There is little research available on the relationship between UIM and the labor union movement during the period of modernization in Korea. Taken as a whole, their arguments can be classified into two types of discourse: one is to what extent UIM contributed to the development of the labor union movement (Cho 1976; K. Lee 1963; S. Lee 2015; Yim 2010), and another is on the negative or positive aspects of UIM in relation to the labor union movement (Choi 1997; W. Kim 2004; Kwon 2005; Yoo 2005). As in other debates, the evaluation of UIM based on these significantly different and often contradictory discourses is difficult in terms of finding a consistent agreement among scholars.

Despite this difficulty, this study endeavors to provide a new evaluation of UIM by means of analyzing the relationship between UIM and the labor union movement in terms of religious market theory. If UIM is considered a supplier of the religious niche market and GIC workers as demanders with their specific religious needs, it is important to determine why UIM became the most successful supplier in the GIC niche market, what specific conditions the niche market faced at that time, and what GIC workers wanted from UIM. In order to focus on these basic questions, our analysis of UIM should be limited in time and space to GIC.

First, it is noteworthy that UIM in GIC (or YDP-UIM since 1969) was the only religious group that prevented GIC factory workers from belonging to conservative and pro-regime megachurches or megatemples. Educational services on labor rights, class interests, capitalistic contradictions, and gender equality supplied by UIM meant more than a simple religious blessing or salvation provided by the established religious organizations. Admitting that most of the GIC workers were uneducated young people from the country's undeveloped rural areas, they recognized that the matter of understanding class or social identity for these workers would be much more appealing than constructing a religious identity that was disinterested in their secular misery. Whereas megachurches outside GIC preached how to live better, UIM in GIC taught how to survive. This strategy of UIM that was customized for factory workers proved very successful in credit

unions as well as democratic trade unions. Through unionism movements like credit (1974), housing (1974), and consuming (1976) cooperative unions, UIM activists encouraged union members to experience a sense of class solidarity, to equally participate in the decision-making process, and to build a network of economic cooperation. A female activist reminisced on those times as follows:

This movement provided great benefits to the members, and through my participation in the movement I felt the blessing and love of God given to them. When I actually took charge of the UIM credit union, I witnessed a living model of true believers from the devotional life of pastors and missionaries participating in the union, and further historical evidence that God's justice came true on the labor front. (YDP-UIM 1998, 462–463)

Although this unionism of UIM was frequently criticized as a disguised way of accommodating factory workers in the structural contradictions of secular society (Choi 1997; Kim 1996), it continued to justify young factory workers' struggle against the established authorities, religiously and morally. Both the labor and credit unions designed by UIM provided not only a material foundation, but also a mental ethos that propped up workers' protests against the established powers. Whether they were religious or not, many workers in the GIC were in need of the various benefits that derived from UIM union membership. These creative and customized services of UIM prevented megachurches from entering and growing within the GIC niche market, a case true even today.

Second, it seems that these innovative services of UIM were caused by social interaction rather than a theology of growth and competition. While almost all church leaders have drastically competed with each other to increase their church memberships, UIM was interested only in a fair redistribution of political and economic benefits. According to religious market theory, religious competition and pluralism tend to make religious innovations available to the growth of religious organizations in different religious marketplaces, such as North America, Latin America, and China (Chesnut 2003, 13–14; Iannaccone 1995; Lang, Chan, and Ragvald 2005, 157; Stark and Finke 2000, 257; Stark and Smith 2012). However, many of

the innovations of UIM are not significantly related to religious competition within the GIC because the area had and has only a few religious facilities, such as churches, temples, and any shrines. While mainstream pastors have focused on the rapid growth of their church memberships, major UIM activists like Cho Ji-song and Jin Bang-ju actually objected to establishing a church within YDP-UIM when In Myung-Jin began church services for GIC workers (In 2013a; 2013b, 145–167). To build a church was not considered the real mission of UIM. Cho Ji-song and Jin Bang-ju, former and current general secretaries of YDP-UIM, had this to say about the issue:

However progressive a church may be, it is not an appropriate place to operate the urban industrial mission program. A trade union is a church for workers. Without any contribution to the development of the trade union, UIM has no reason to exist anymore.⁵ (Chang 2009, 199–200)

We are not followers of the non-church movement, and rather admit the importance of church community. But I think that to practice biblical instructions does not mean to construct Christianity as a religion. For us to practice as the bible teaches is more important.⁶

Cho and Jin regarded industrial society as a secular space that seriously alienates and oppresses human beings (YDP-UIM 1998, 426). Perhaps it is theologically natural that Christians would feel compelled to help the alienated and oppressed to survive in this cold industrial society. In short, for them, sharing the secular hardships with workers is more important than building them a church. In fact, to work in factory for more than one year became a requirement for UIM staff members and pastors.

Third, GIC workers had to pay a very high price for participation in the labor union movement, more so than in the credit union movement. Participants in labor unions were always monitored or investigated by the police, and often fired by their employers. In particular, Protestant union members belonging to conservative churches underwent a serious psychological conflict on how to accept the materialistic attitude of labor unions

5. Cho Ji-song, interview by author, November 23–24, 2007.

6. Jin Bang-ju, interview by author, Seoul, September 11, 2015.

(YDP-UIM 1998, 519). UIM was not sufficiently prepared to answer such internal conflicts theologically. However, the credit union movement provided both non-religious and religious members with a new alternative free from Marxist materialism. It became UIM's new strategical approach to protest the exploitation of cold capitalism. As the UIM credit union enjoyed rapid membership growth and large net benefits within only a few years of its establishment, the military regime cancelled its sanction in 1979. Nonetheless, the innovative strategies of UIM, like the credit unions, compensated for certain negative aspects of UIM, such as their deep engagement in radical labor unions, and hence UIM became the most influential social group in the GIC with 33 outfits out of the total possible 212 democratic labor unions in 1984 across the nation (Yoo 2005, 327). The fact that UIM was considered a religious symbol of democratic protest during the period of military regimes was confirmed again by the appointment of In Myung-Jin as spokesman for the 1987 National Movement Headquarter for Recovering the Democratic Constitution (Minju heonbeop jaengchwi gungmin undong bonbu), which led to the collapse of the military regime and the establishment of the Korean Federation of Trade Unions (KFTU, Minju nochong) in the 1990s. This is one of the most meaningful events triggering the qualitative progress of the Korean democratic movement because the KFTU was an independent organization established and controlled by workers themselves, whereas the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU, Hanguk nochong) has, since its establishment in 1960, always functioned as a government-patronized and employer-oriented organization.

Finally, the beginning of Korean credit unions was led by a Catholic nun, Mary Gabriella Mulherinin in Busan and a Catholic priest, Jang Dae-ik, in Seoul in 1960. The social experiment of Catholic credit unions was introduced to save urban workers and rural farmers from the bondage of usury in the 1960s, when they were actually excluded from the normal bank loan system. A few UIM activists actively participated in training programs for the Catholic credit unions and then learned how to operate one within their environment. The GIC was comprised mostly of uneducated factory workers, who became the main prey of usury as they incurred more than a 120% annual interest rate on their loans, even if the law then limited

the maximum annual interest rate to 25% (Yoon 2011, 128). Against this usury, UIM credit unions started their own loan services in 1969 with a 24% annual interest rate (YDP-UIM 1998, 125). As a result, UIM credit unions succeeded in expelling most usurers from the GIC by 1979, when they were forced to withdraw due to the government cancellation of their establishment. Nevertheless, the unexpected success of UIM credit unions resulted in the rapid expansion of the credit union system across the country from the 1970s. By 2015, the National Credit Union Federation of Korea (NCUFK) had grown into a gigantic financial institution with 5.71 million members, 911 credit unions, and 1,663 branches nationwide.⁷

From a cross-cultural perspective, the unionism movement of UIM in Korea, including YDP-UIM, has had much more of an impact on society as a whole than in any other country. Although it was influenced mainly by American Presbyterian churches, the Korean UIM has operated and recruited transdenominationally because it could not obtain any help and social support from the established trade unions. While both American and British industrial mission activists and French and German worker-priests prioritized the individual salvation of the working class alienated from the established church (Addy 1993; Atkinson 2015; Elwyn 1996; Johnston and McFarland 2010; Poethig 1995, 2005), Korean partners had to fight against an authoritative, military, or dictatorial regimes to annihilate a structural contradiction in society as well. Especially, the matter of industrial mission for the Church of Scotland with the Presbyterian tradition was more of a “showing-the-flag” exercise than a mission in the sense of saving workers’ souls (Johnston and McFarland 2010). The Sheffield Industrial Mission under the Church of England, founded in Britain in 1944 and closed in 1966, failed to turn over the secular religiosity of the regional workers, whereas the YDP-UIM continued to develop many new agendas, like protecting cross-border Asian workers in GIC, establishing an international training center, and operating agri-environmental unions.

An important feature of the YDP-UIM is that it was an official organization of PCK, whereas UIM activists of KMC, KCC, and ACK engaged in

7. Sinhyeop, accessed October 22, 2017, <http://www.cu.co.kr/CPSI040100.jsp>.

their efforts individually. This organizational support of PCK enabled YDP-UIM to work more efficiently and systematically than any other UIM activists. The KMC, KCC, and ACK had no organizational or systematical training program such as the YDP-UIM of PCK provided for their UIM activists and factory workers. For this reason, YDP-UIM became the most successful and influential religious organization in a relatively wide area surrounding the GIC until at least the 1970s, while KCC activists were well known for their rural missionary work across the nation. Korean Catholicism has seldom been influenced by the worker-priest movement, a French Catholic version of industrial mission. Rather, it seems that the YDP-UIM shares a theological attitude with the French worker-priest movement in that it requires its new pastors to have about two or three years of experience in the workplace. More empirical studies are needed on why and how their regional preference occurred in Korea.

Religious Competition and Cooperation

Religious market theorists argue that both religious pluralism and competition can increase religious membership and enhance the level of religious commitment, other conditions being equal (Stark and Finke 2000, 218–258). It is theoretically reasonable to state that the pluralism effect based on competition produced certain positive results in terms of the quantitative and qualitative growth of religious groups and individuals in the Korean religious market. But this does not mean that pluralism is a sufficient or even necessary condition for the creative innovations of those religions that enjoyed a high level of growth, because the matter of innovation is not always related to organizational growth or individual religiousness.

The case of YDP-UIM serves as a good example for reconsidering the meaning of innovation in ways that are different from what religious market theory has imagined. The differences can be summarized in several aspects.

First, the innovations of UIM were voluntary, not squeezed by pluralistic competition. Its voluntary innovations proved more creative than any

of the other innovations by big churches and temples, who were squeezed by market forces, at least within the GIC. Through new strategies like unionism, it succeeded in constructing a liberal niche market for GIC, which is highly differentiated from the existing religious market.

Second, the innovations of UIM resulted from transdenominational cooperation influenced by Ecumenicalism (In 2013b, 49–53), not from free competition between denominations, religious and secular institutions, or niche markets. Under the surveillance and persecution of military regimes, UIM activists did not hesitate in uniting, dividing, or rearranging their organizations, focusing on a collective response to political and economic oppression. For these individuals, who were united by the common goal of improving the life conditions of factory workers, trans- or interdenominational cooperation and federation proved a much better strategy than individual competition based on theological, ritual, and organizational differences.

Third, from the beginning UIM pursued not a growth-oriented, but a distribution-oriented evangelism. During the period of Korea's rapid industrialization and urbanization in the 1960s and 1970s, its interest in the matter of distribution itself was religiously innovative. Considering that most of the UIM activists did not rely on any radical theology like *minjung* theology or liberation theology, their distribution-oriented religiousness should be understood as a result of social interaction with factory workers rather than as a speculative creation or invention. Through a process of social interaction, UIM activists transformed the ultimate goal of their evangelism from individual salvation to the removal of sociostructural contradictions.

Fourth, the decline of UIM came with the rapid growth of democratic labor unions in the 1980s when factory workers began to clash with UIM activists over many social issues. The YDP-UIM had to compete with the surrounding secular labor unions to seize hegemony over the labor movement. Secular labor unions had matured enough to overcome the political or ideological limitations of UIM and hence frequently came into conflict with UIM activists, mainly over how labor unions should exist in Korean society (W. Kim 2004, 71–78; Michelson 2009, 172). The conflict between YDP-UIM and the Wopung Labor Union in 1982 is a representative ex-

ample, and then YDP-UIM was seriously repressed by both the General Assembly of PCK and the country's military regimes because of its close relationship with radical labor unionists (In 2013b, 151; W. Kim 2004, 88; Kwon 2005, 206). After a series of nationwide strikes and rallies in 1987, independent or nongovernment affiliated trade unions increased rapidly, pressing for higher demands. Since the establishment of the Association of Democratic Trade Unions in 1990 and KFTU in 1995, the political importance of UIM in the Korean labor union movement was gone entirely, leaving YDP-UIM as the only active UIM in post-industrial Korean society.

Given that the YDP-UIM is a religious organization in itself, its withdrawal from both labor and credit unions does not mean that it abandoned innovative missionary work and unionism in the GIC, where a number of small-sized or medium-sized IT companies gather collectively. Under the recently changed industrial environment of Guro Digital Complex (GDC or G-Valley)—the new name of the GIC—it now focuses on ecological unionism and evangelical mission for foreign workers as well as IT workers, founding its own church in financial support of the PCK (Michelson 2009, 173). Although its social role in the GDC is not as important as before, it still makes various new strategic or experimental efforts to adapt itself to a new industrial environment wherein high-income and individualistic employees of IT companies do not need labor unions or collectivism, coexisting with low-income foreign workers of the GIC. The Galilee Church, founded in 1986 by Rev. In Myung-Jin, one of the leading YDP-UIM activists, continues to develop various innovative missionary projects ranging from planting trees in Mongolia to sharing its building with foreign workers of the GDC from Indonesia, Mongolia, Pakistan, and China. Besides, its leaders operate the church in a very democratic manner that cannot be expected for the general churches of the PCK.

In short, the significance of innovation in the religious market is closely related to the matter of moral and humanitarian progress, because every human being expects of a religious innovation something more than simply economic efficiency and benefit. Thus, the word *innovation* in religious terms does not equate to a brilliant idea or creative technology, much less a product of competition between religious firms. Indeed, there was no reli-

gious competition between different UIMs within the GIC, where the YDP-UIM alone existed. Considering that UIM activists were divided by region and their numbers were too small, it is not a reasonable inference to argue a causal relationship between the innovative missionary work of UIM and the numerically rapid growth of Korean Protestantism over the last several decades. As mentioned earlier, UIM activists themselves had no interest in the numerical growth of their denomination or in converting factory workers. The innovation of UIM derived from a voluntary and transdenominational cooperation for realizing a distribution-oriented social justice, which is very suitable for promoting the moral development of all capitalistic societies. Especially, it seems that their cooperation was very critical in resisting the political oppression of military regimes, protecting the human rights of factory workers, spreading new strategic methods of unionism imported from the West, and the like.

For UIM activists, the growth of church membership without an accompanying moral progress is not an innovation, but simply a byproduct of the selfish greed inherent in human nature. Through the continuous process of social interaction, they came to project the existential alienation of their religious self onto GIC workers' life struggles, and hence desperately sought an innovative way to reduce the existential gap between the religious and the social self. In the same way that numerous trials and errors often produce a scientific innovation, it is not until the religious self overcomes the moral helplessness of the social self that a religious innovation can occur. According to Han (1979, 22), that is the only way for Jesus to be able to change this world, just as exemplified by UIM.

Conclusion

The case of UIM may be considered very specific to Korea in a sense. When religious market theory supposes that other conditions are equal, it seems to overlook the theoretical and contextual importance of other conditions. In fact, different conditions make a religious phenomenon more *Korean*, more *American*, and more *global*. A scientific study of religion nec-

essarily entails the analytic consideration of other conditions, whether they are equal or not.

This study has endeavored to explain certain examples of religious innovation in ways that differ from what religious market theory has imagined. Although YDP-UIM activists were a minor group within the PCK, many democratic labor unions and credit unions supported or established by them played a crucial role in the qualitative development of Korean society. Escaping from the ideology of growth and competition that dominated all aspects of Korean society from the 1960s, they devoted themselves to the improvement of the religiously unjustifiable conditions that GIC factory workers then faced. Thus, their innovation is the product of a religious self-reflection and conscience to protect factory workers from being slaves to Korean capitalism. As Martí (2017) exemplified in the study of Emerging Church Movement, the real power of religious innovation lies in deconstructing and reframing a conventional way of religious belief and practice, but not in witty and “effective marketing” argued by Stark and Finke (2000, 33). In this sense, YDP-UIM activists had their religious identity interact with and be rebuilt by the dark side of industrial society, while mainstream Presbyterians in Korea would look at only the bright side of that industrialization.

Based on the heritage and past achievements of UIM, some scholars see the future of UIM as being in ecological theology, foreign workers, or rural missions (Hwang 2008, 119–120; Y. Jang 2008, 29). As a result of Korea’s declining manufacturing industry, the GIC has now been replaced with Guro Digital Complex, also known as G-Valley, an area crowded with IT workers who do not need their own trade or credit unions (Nodongsa Yeonguso 2013). The city of Seoul has devised a grand plan to transform G-Valley into the Korean version of Silicon Valley (Ahn et al. 2014, 513). Whatever the new social conditions may be, however, the innovative heritage of UIM will remain an important religious foundation in making the relationship between religion and social change more dynamic and complex.

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