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Religion in Diaspora:
The Transformation of Korean Immigrant Churches in Global Society

By Kyuhoon Cho

Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies of the University of
Ottawa in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the reasons why Christian churches have been at the centre of Korean immigrant communities in North America and the recent changes in the characteristics of Korean immigrant churches. The multi-functionality of Korean diasporic churches is a consequence of Korea's unique experience of Christianity, as a Western religion, in the process of Korean modernization during the 20th century. Christian churches in modern Korea have played an important role in supporting Koreans during the conflict and crisis of modern Korean history, crises ranging from the Japanese annexation of Korea and the Korean War, to dictatorship and radical industrialization. The benevolent acts and comforts of Christianity left positive impressions in a great many Koreans' minds. Furthermore, Christianity, in particular its charismatic form, was itself a great source of energy to overcome the modern tragedies and difficulties of immigrant life. These elements of Christianity have had significant impact on Korean immigration to North America so that many Korean immigrants have tended to meet other Korean immigrants around Korean immigrant churches, which offered varied services and roles to help the immigrants' lives in the new land. However, recently Korean immigrant churches have placed more of a focus on religious functions. Changes in Korean society since the 1990s, the rapid development of communication and information technologies, and the increased importance of second-generation Koreans have all become significant variables in transforming the lives of Korean immigrants. In the new social environment, in which local and global communication has become easier and possible, Korean ethnic churches try to maintain their influence on the general Korean immigrant communities by becoming a more differentiated religious centre.

Chapter I – Introduction

This thesis explores the transformation of Korean Christianity within the context of contemporary global society. The Korean Christian churches have played a significant social role in Korea since the introduction of Protestantism at the end of 19th century. In the modern Korean religious landscape, Christians have been one of the religious groups most actively responding to the transition of Korea from a traditional society to a modern nation-state.

Religions and worldviews in Korea changed rapidly throughout the 20th century. Korean immigrants often say that they emigrated out of Korea was because of the unmanageable speed of social change. Some Korean immigrants have even described contemporary Korean society as being so difficult that they felt compelled to become workaholics. From a larger point of view, various tensions and conflicts have been felt not only internally, but also externally between representatives of powerful forces having serious political and economic interests in the Korean Peninsula. Throughout the 20th century, both internal and external actors have played ‘tedious but dangerous’ games within this nation-state, located as it is, in a strategic region where sea-based powers (i.e. mainly the United States of America and Japan) and the land-based powers (i.e. China and Russia, the former Soviet Union) have encountered each other continuously during the 20th century.¹ This international ‘game’ of politics and economics has resulted in the process of Korean modernization² (Cumings, 1997; Wagner and al. 1990).

Just after the Liberation from Japanese annexation (1910-45), the number of Christian people in Korea was still very low in comparison with those of the traditional

¹ These powers were once known as the “free world” and the “communist block.”

² To grasp general modern history of Korea, see Bruce Cummings’ *Korea’s Place in the Sun: A Modern History* and Wagner and al.’s *Korea Old and New: A History*.

religions, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, etc.³ At the onset of the 1990s, however, this Western religion had become the most popular institutions in the Korea's religious market.

During this same period of time, a significant number of Koreans chose to immigrate to North America, known as the "land flowing with milk and honey" (Warner and Wittner eds., 1998). Approximately one million two hundred thousand Korean immigrants and their offspring now live in North America, in both Canada and the United States of America, with Korean ethnic churches playing a major role in the lives of Korean immigrant communities.⁴ Since the beginning of Korean immigration to North America, Korean ethnic churches have not only supported Korean immigrants in adjusting to this 'unfamiliar' land, but have also offered them a kind of 'safe' zone, ensuring political security, helping them maintain their own national and ethnic identity, offering various social positions and services, and magnifying economic benefits through mutual aid (Chai, 1998; Chong, 1998; Min, 1992).

Korean immigrants often talk about the Korean ethnic church, arguing that every immigrant and even overseas student ought to go to a Korean ethnic church at least once while in North America. Numerous academic articles and statistics describe the religious affiliation of Korean immigrants to Christianity (Chai, 1998; Chang and al. eds., 2000; Hurh and Kim, 1988 and 1990; Kim, 2002; Kwon, Ebaugh, and Hagan, 1997; Min, 1992

³ The member of Protestants in South Korea was about 100,000 after the Liberation. As of August 30th of 1946, the total population in South Korea was 19,190,877 (Kang, 1996: 176).

⁴ According to the U.S. Census Bureau's population census of 2000, there are 1,076,872 Korean Americans (Korean American Coalition, 2003). According to the Statistics Canada 2001 census, there are 101,715 Korean Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2001). However, Korean immigrants in North America often estimate the presence of two million Koreans in the U.S.A and two hundred thousand Koreans in Canada. It seems that these 'exaggerated' numbers reflect all sorts of Korean populations in North America, from Korean overseas students, to tourists, to representatives working at the U.S. and Canadian branch offices of Korean companies, as well as illegal residents.

and 1998; Min and Kim eds., 2002; Yoo, 2002). They note the extensive reliance of Korean immigrants on Korean ethnic churches, asking these questions: Why do the majority of Korean immigrants go to Korean ethnic churches? Why not other religions or mainstream Christian churches? Is there a relationship between the success of Christianity in Korea and the centrality of Korean ethnic churches in Korean immigrant communities in North America?

When one compares the religious situation in Korea with what is happening in other Asian nations, one immediately notices a surprising difference: Unlike what is found in India, China, and Japan where Christianity remains a Western religion in both the mother country as well as in diaspora, Korea has adopted Christianity as one of its own religions. Most Indians believe in Hinduism as their national religion wherever they go and live (Beyer, 1998c). Mainland Chinese have not adopted Christianity in any great percentage, and they continue to strongly display Confucian ethics in and around the Chinatowns of North America. The Japanese continue to show their sense of national culture and religion through Shintoism, in spite of adopting western life styles during the post-war era. Except for Filipinos, who have displayed a total devotion to Catholicism for the last 200 years under Spanish and American colonial rule, Koreans are the only Asians or Asian immigrants throughout Asia and North America to have built such loyalty to Christianity (Chung, 1991; Kang, 1997; Park, 2003; Ro, 1995). How has this unique religious phenomenon developed in Korean culture? What is the social significance of this religious choice? Why have so many Koreans in the last fifty years ‘suddenly’ chosen to believe in Christianity? In what ways do modern Korean concepts of

Christianity differ from Western ones? What are the consequences of this religious phenomenon? This thesis is an attempt to provide a partial answer to these questions.

A first approach to these questions is to examine their historical context. More precisely, the interrelations between national identity, religion, and modernization within globalization have fundamentally shaped the present religious landscape of Korea. The same interrelations are at work during Korean immigration to North America and may have influenced the peculiar position of Korean ethnic churches in immigrant communities throughout the history of Korean immigration to North America. Since the percentage of Christian people among Korean immigrants in North America is much higher than that in Korea (Min, 1992), this thesis tries to identify how early and recent Korean immigrants have understood Christianity, and what differences exist between the two immigrant groups, so as to determine if and how Christianity has played a role in Korean immigrant communities. The socio-political implications of Christian identity and activities for immigrant populations cannot be understood without reference to an intensifying process of globalization. How do all those processes affect Koreans?

To explore the above questions, which are closely interrelated, I propose a first hypothesis: Korean style modernization, deeply influenced by global political, economic, and Christian movements, predisposed many Koreans to develop a strong interest in specific forms of Christianity both in Korea and later in the diaspora. However, since the 1990s, both in Korea and more particularly abroad, Korean Christian churches have changed from being religious institutions providing a comprehensive group of activities to increasingly differentiated groups communicating more distinctly for the sake of religious cultural purposes. These groups formed as a result of religious concerns, vis à

vis the relative stabilization of the radical modernizing process in Korea, and the globalization of Korean society. The development of Christian Korean (ethnic or immigrant) churches will be examined in the next chapters first in terms of the characteristics of Korean society; then as a response to immigration and the 'second generation' in ethnic churches, and finally as a result of the impact of the ultra-rapid development of communication, information, and transportation technologies.

Chapter II - Method and Theory

The core question of this research addresses the changes which took place in the Christian churches in Korea, and the concomitant changes, if any, in Korean immigrant churches in North America.

The Disciplinary Framework: A Sociological Approach

The primary method that I will apply in this work is the historical-sociological approach, which relates to the social context in which religion develops and the social aspect of religious activities and teachings. This thesis is built in two parts. In the first part, it examines the Korean Christian churches in Korea, first in their historical dimensions to find out how they began and have changed into new forms (Chapter III). Then it analyses their contemporary sociological dimensions (Chapter IV).

The second part deals with North American Korean Christian ethnic churches in North America and their transformations, and it describes the various modes of participation of Korean Christian immigrants in their ethnic religious institutions (Chapter V). It then discusses the globalization process, which forms the background of the changes affecting Korea and Koreans and the ways in which these changes are understood by Korean immigrants.

The data for the first part of the research came from existing studies including statistical data on Korean history, Korean religions, and Korean Christianity. These data were reviewed in the light of a sociological theoretical context. To collect the primary data for the second part of the thesis, I did 20 in-depth interviews with Korean-Canadians who live in the Ottawa/Gatineau region in the provinces of Ontario and Québec in

Canada. Following ethics guidelines of the University of Ottawa, all interviewees will remain anonymous.

The Theoretical Context

During the post-war era, sociological theories concerning religion and religions went through several changes. Early in the 1960s and 1970s, analysis of religious phenomenon and estimates of religious demography placed an emphasis on a perceived secularization of society accompanied by the decline of religion. This perspective gained popularity among intellectual groups observing religions in Western society, and the so-called secularization theory together with its analyses and arguments flourished in scientific studies of religion (Berger, 1967 and Bruce, 1996). This theory of the place of religion in the pluralized modern world has been losing ground, however, as in the last two decades, different or even opposite arguments have been presented noting the resurgence of religions, the transformation of religions into diverse social forms, the re-entering of religions onto the public sphere, and the advent of new religious phenomena together with the rapid development of communication and information technologies. These sociological studies of religions revealed that rapid social change and more rapid developments of technologies in late modern society had stimulated and even promoted diversity of patterns and dynamics of contemporary religious phenomena rather than secularizing societies (Beckford, 1989; Beyer, 2003, 2002, 1998a, b, c, d, e, 1997a, b, 1995, and 1994; Casanova, 1994; Lyon, 2000).

Radical social changes in the modern era did not translate into the disappearance of religion. Instead, religious phenomena took on diverse forms. These social changes

forcibly affected Korean society. Extracted from their traditional life-structures, Koreans find them re-embedded into a new, unfamiliar world. In the middle of these changes, known as ‘modernization’ in Korean society, religions have also gone through processes of transformation (Giddens, 1990). These processes cannot be adequately described without historical references.

Various historical and social studies’ explanations of the characteristics of modern times have developed. For example, historian Eric Howbsbaum has called the 20th century the “age of extreme,” because it has been marked by a succession of extremely tragic events, which have been understood as evidence that the individual person was incapable of doing much, but could instead be treated as trivial (Howbsbaum, 1996). Similarly, but in a different context, sociologist Ulrich Beck describes today’s modern world as a “risk society.” According to him, modern citizens live in a world within which one can fall into crisis as a result of making even a small mistake or losing a little control. Furthermore, most inventions originally supposed to benefit people, can now be used to cause enormous calamities. Ostensibly created for the happiness of human being, many modern large scales inventions, such as mass transportation on land, ocean, and air, various kinds of energy from electrical to nuclear, but also including weapons, electronic devices, chemical materials, etc., can be changed from their original purpose and be turned against human survival; even as they contribute to progress, they create at the same time illness, catastrophes, or environmental crises (Beck, 1992).

Parsons’ theories on the notion of society in relation with the notion of differentiation (Parsons, 1971 and 1978) have provided a key argument to this thesis. The discourse of social differentiation in the modern world, as an attempt at describing the

nature of contemporary society, seems to focus more on the functional characteristics of modern society. The differentiation of the individual from (traditional) society, the differentiation of social groups from each other, and on a larger scale, the differentiation of social institutions such as state, market, or religion, all affect the process of modernization. Most countries, within their own borders and historical memories, have experienced in one form or another such differentiating social processes. In the Western world, this social 'development' began earlier than in other parts of world, the so-called Third World. Many Western nation-states are now composed of differentiated institutions within a strong system of checks and balances (Wallerstein, 1997: 37-48). The inner dynamics of each differentiated institution requires the resolution of conflicts between 'independent' polities and the regulation of power so as to satisfy the needs of each system. Those needs contribute to worldwide movements of imperialism, to diverse modern calamities, but also to the construction of institutions working toward better societal systems (Wallerstein, 1979 and Beckford, 1989). Frank Lechner (1990) discusses the notion of differentiation found in Parson and by combining Parson's perspective with Smelser's (1962) theories of collective behaviour, Lechner introduces the term "dedifferentiation" in talking about fundamentalist movements:

"Combining Parsons and Smelser thus gives at least the contours of fundamentalism as a form of dedifferentiation. ... Fundamentalism can then be seen as the mode of collective action that, given its emphasis on the highest controlling elements, is characterized by the domination of controlling over dynamizing subsystems – which leads to oversteering. In functional terms, fundamentalism can be seen as an attempt at sociocultural revitalization by restoring pattern maintenance as the primary value principle in terms of which life is to become meaningful again. Meaningful order is thus to be reconstructed by means of the dedifferentiation of all dimension of action in the direction of the pattern maintenance dimension." (Lechner, 1990: 95)

In my opinion, this concept of dedifferentiation can also be applied in other contexts as a notion complementary to that of the Parsonsian notion of differentiation. In contrast to the Western world, the history of Korea since the late 19th century shows that Korea has gone through the modernization process not because of inner needs or dynamics, but by the pull of external forces acting for their own imperialist economic and political needs and wants. Before the (Western) imperialist powers penetrated Korea in the 18th and 19th centuries, Korea had experienced an autogenous process of modernization. However, the country became an arena of competition between world imperialists before it could become powerful enough to compete with them in the 19th century. Moreover, the inner political and social confusion resulting from the end of the *Choseon* dynasty (1392-1910) obstructed Korea's efforts toward modernization. As a result, the final winner of the imperialist game among the World Powers (i.e. Russia, Japan, the U.S.A, China) was Japan, a non Western nation. It is within the Korea of the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, that one must search for the social, political, and economic aspects which form the context within which the rapid growth of Christianity in Korea can be understood. It is within this complex historical context that the processes of social and religious differentiation and dedifferentiation developed in Korean society during the 20th century.

In my opinion, the formation of Christian institutions in Korea cannot be understood as a differentiation process. Instead, Korean Christianity, particularly its 'fundamentalist' form, can be discussed as being on a dedifferentiating course at least until the 1990s. During the 1990s, the situation of the Christian churches in Korea changed in tandem with the pervasive transformations that were occurring within Korean

society. It is my central hypothesis that the Korean Christian churches of the Korean immigrants in North America changed in a parallel fashion. The question then is whether this change can be attributed to the activities of the Christian churches in Korea?

Chapter III – History of Korean Christianity

A. East Meets West in the End

It is essential to understand the process of Korea's modernization in order to explain the religious change in contemporary Korea. Furthermore, to understand Korean modernization, it is necessary to analyse it in relation to the process of globalization, especially since this region of East Asia has been located at a crossroad of a game beyond Korea's control between China, Russia, Japan, and the U.S.A. External forces have influenced Korea to a great extent, for example: Japanese colonization, the birth of the two Koreas, the Korean War, the Cold War and so forth (Cumings, 1997; Hobsbawm, 1994). While consideration of international effects on the nation-state is important, its own inner dynamics also should be examined, in order to construct a correct understanding of social and religious change in the region.

In modern Korea, Westerners have often been recognized as so wealthy, resourceful, and generous that they are considered as an 'ideal' type of modern human. However, in the early days of contact with Westerners, i.e. the 19th century, foreigners were actually considered 'barbarians' who did not respect Korea, rather who intended to invade it. So, this "hermit kingdom" at first denied any requests of amity and commerce coming from the Western world. But, at the beginning of the 20th century, the final winner of the imperialist competition to 'invade' Korea was not any of the Western countries, but Japan. This neighbouring Asian nation was also a country that Koreans had commonly seen as 'uncivilized' for hundred years. After the hardship of Japanese colonial rule, Korea was released from Japanese imperialism as a consequence of the

U.S.A.'s victory of the Pacific theatre of World War II (Cumings, 1997; Hanguk jonggyo yeonguhwo, 1998, Yoon, 1997).

This historical event was decisive enough to create a new positive understanding of the Western world and Westerners. Moreover, during and after Japanese rule because many Western Christian missionaries in Korea had become providers of humanitarian work and supporters of the independence movement for Koreans, Christianity had become a nexus for the creation of a new image of the mighty, benevolent, and helpful West (Cumings, 1997: 157-8; Hanguk jonggyo yeonguhwo, 1998; Park, 2000).

The radical and uneven modernization race in Korea began with the Opening of its ports at the end of the 19th century. Two hundred and eight separate old laws supporting the last feudal *Choseon* dynasty were officially abolished in July 1894 in the name of “*Kabo* reform” endorsed by the twenty sixth *Choseon* dynasty King, *Kojong* (Cumings, 1997: 120).

During the Japanese colonial era, Korean modernization served not to build a modern nation for Koreans and their future, but rather the mobilization of Koreans in order to win the Pacific War for imperial Japan. Along with its geographical convenience and its mountains with abundant natural resources, the northern part of the Korean Peninsula was developed as a heavy industrial area used to make a variety of war materials, whereas the southern part with its large well irrigated plains was used for agriculture and light industries for the production of rations (Cumings, 1997).

During the ‘age of imperialism’, it was a universal invading strategy of the West to place Christianity in the vanguard of ‘civilizing’ the ‘uncivilized,’ often offering several modern ‘blessings,’ such as provisions, ‘modern’ public education, western style

medical treatment, and so forth. During the tragedies of the Japanese colonization and the Korean War, Christian churches had become largely recognized as benevolent groups. This recognition in the first half of the century of Christianity as a ‘good neighbour’ became the foundation for the rapid growth of Korean churches in the latter part of the 20th century. As the result of the rapidity of church growth from the 1960s to the middle of 1990s, this foreign religion finally became Korea’s most popular religion, beating all other ‘traditional’ Korean religions. To newcomers to Seoul, the capital of South Korea, the night-time sight of countless red-neon crosses on the top of church buildings or commercial buildings from which Christian churches rent a space, must be an unforgettable experience (Cox, 1995; Hobsbawm, 1994; Kang, 1996).

Building a Modern Society

If, for the first half of the 20th century, after the fall of the *Choseon* dynasty, the modernization of Korea had been done mainly under the direction of Japanese colonialism, the native authoritarian governments led modernization during the era of the Cold War. The modernization of this nation-state has been at the forefront of state propaganda and ideology throughout the military dictatorship of the 1960, 70, 80s. Although varied and active opposition against military dictatorship existed, the majority of Korea’s populations accepted the state and the state’s decision such as “New Village Movement” as the best strategy for developing the nation. The idea of ‘modernization’ usually tended to be equated with the realization of economic development similar to that of Western advanced societies. However, the striving for modernization in Korea has been transformed since the end of the military dictatorship and the attainment of an

‘appropriate’ economic level, wherein the basic material necessities of modern life are met (ranging from constant sufficient goods to public education and national medical insurance). Currently, modernization in Korea extends consists in making it a more transparent, rational, and democratic country.

Modernizing the nation-state has been Korea’s most important enterprise of the 20th century. However, the direction of modernization has altered, depending on the rapidly changing political and economic situations in and around the Korean Peninsula. If building a modern state once meant winning the ‘independence of nation’ from the Japanese imperialists and not being ‘mobilized’ by them for their Pacific War during the colonial period; since the Liberation, it now means the economic development of material goods, the fight against unjustified regimes, and the realization of democratization.

B. Colonialism, the Birth of the Nation-State, Civil War, and Christian Churches

Korean ethnic churches play a comprehensive role at the centre of Korean immigrant communities in North America. Koreans’ positive attitude toward Christianity, which differs from that of their main East Asian neighbours, was developed within the specific flow of modern history experienced by Koreans. That is to say, Korea’s experience of modernity is different from its two neighbours China and Japan and its difference is chiefly caused by its geopolitical location, where continental forces and marine influences encounter each other.

Christianity in Colonialism

In order to understand how the role of ethnic Christian churches in Korean immigrant society developed, one must first understand how Koreans encountered Christianity and came to adopt Christianity, first in Korea, then in North America. More specifically, one must identify the relationship between Christianity and modernity in Korea. The modernization of Korea was proceeding at a moderate pace in the 18th and 19th centuries. However, the sudden penetration of Western imperialistic forces into Korea not only caused a discontinuity in the autogenous flow of history, but also drastically changed Korean lifestyle and worldview. Korea's eastern-centred worldview was seriously damaged, if not broken; and new, Western influenced, social institutions began to be built in the latter 19th century. The appearance of Westerners was often perceived as a world-crisis by many Koreans. New ideologies and religions that proclaimed the end of the world and/or its new beginning flourished in the age of empire. This social milieu became a fertile soil for the birth of new religious movements. One of the most representative of these is the *Donghak*⁵ movement. However, *Donghak* movement was severely suppressed as a 'social disorder' by the *Choseon* dynasty, in particular because of its principle of equality, which seemed to be influenced by modern Western thought. However, Japan's victory against China and the Western imperialist countries in the Korean Peninsula was a decisive event which changed Korea's negative perception of the West. The sense of crisis experienced by many Koreans and attributed by them to the penetration by Western powers in Asia changed to a great extent during

⁵ *Donghak* means the 'eastern learning' in opposition to the 'western learning' of Christianity and its civilization.

the colonization of Korea by Japanese imperialism from 1911 to 1945. According to Cumings:

This colonial experience was intense and bitter, and shaped postwar Korea deeply. It brought development and underdevelopment, agrarian growth and deepened tenancy, industrialization and extraordinary dislocation, political mobilization and deactivation; it spawned a monism and nationalism, armed resistance and treacherous collaboration; above all, it left deep fissures and conflicts that have gnawed at the Korean soul ever since. Japan held Korea tightly, watched it closely, and pursued an organized, architectonic colonialism in which the planner and administrator was the model, not the swashbuckling conqueror; the strong, highly centralized colonial state mimicked the role that the Japanese state had come to play in Japan – intervening in the economy, creating market, spawning new industries, suppressing dissent (Cumings, 1997: 148).

The Japanese annexation of Korea ended and Korea was liberated from the Japanese colonizers in August of 1945. With the end of World War II, America's victory in the Pacific War against Japan was warmly welcomed by most Koreans because the U.S. victory made Korean emancipation from Japanese domination possible. However, the joy of the moment did not last long as Koreans soon discovered that their country had been split into two along its thirty-eight parallel. The vacuum of power produced by the return of the Japanese occupants to Japan was soon filled by U.S. and Soviet troops that entered Korea with the intention of disarming Japanese colonialists. Giving as its official reason the disarming of the Japanese in post-liberation Korea, the United States Army Military Government in Korea (USAMGIK) proceeded to build a new 'democratic' Korean government in the southern part of the Peninsula below the 38th parallel.

Liberation and the Advance of Christianity into the Public Sphere

Christianity was first introduced to Korea by Western missionaries, in the case of Catholicism at the end of 18th century, and Protestantism at the end of 19th century.⁶ Since then, both Catholic and Protestant churches had been subjected to painful restrictions (Chung, 1991). In the early 19th century, tens of thousands of Korean converts and dozens of French priests were martyred. This was a direct result of Koreans' reaction to foreign 'predators.' For example:

A Korean Catholic named Hwang Sa-yong had been nabbed in 1801 carrying an infamous "silk letter" to the French bishop in Peking, asking that one hundred Western ships with tens of thousands of men be dispatched to help with the Vatican's work in Korea. When Koreans launched more bloody pogroms against native Catholics in the 1860, in which thousands died, (reportedly, eight thousand Korean converts were massacred) the link between missionaries and gunboats was just as clear: the French threatened to mount a punitive expedition (Cumings, 1997: 96).

The new image of the West, Westerners, and Western civilization, created principally by the U.S. defeat of Japan, was decisive enough to erase the previous image of the Western forces as invader, and also promoted a new representation of the Westerners as 'mighty and helpful' people. In the minds of Koreans, the 'real' invader who trespassed and used the country for the sake of its resources was not any Western country, but imperialist Japan.⁷ Furthermore, the Christian churches had been seriously

⁶ Although there were some accidental contacts with Western Christian seamen or merchants in Korea, John Ross and his brother-in-law, John McIntyre, both Scottish Presbyterian missionaries, were the first missionaries to lay the foundation for Protestantism in Korea. In 1876, McIntyre baptized his first Korean converts. In 1881 Ross baptized eighty-five Koreans in the northern valleys of Manchuria, and in 1884 several more. They translated the gospel of Luke into Korean in 1882 and then did the entire New Testament five years later (Kang, 1997: 12).

⁷ In fact, the image of Westerners as 'good' people was not entirely new in post-liberation Korea. To obtain permission for religious practices, Protestant churches first of all suggested to the *Choseon* dynasty that they build western medical and educational institutions in Korea in order to serve Koreans. This action won

repressed under the regulations and controls of the Japanese colonial government in Korea. In the sudden ideological space opened at the Liberation, Christianity was provided with the new opportunity to rid itself of onerous and enduring restrictions against its missionary work. Christianity quickly gained a new social place, with new expectations nurtured by both the Korean themselves and by the new Western presence (Martin, 2002: 161-1).

The Christian churches came to receive enormous assistance during and following the presence of U.S. troops in Korea. In this new politico-social circumstance, Christianity was asked to play an important role as a mediator between USAMGIK and Koreans in both general and special situations. For example, the churches played a decisive role in developing support for the U.S. military government's decision to institute trusteeship. Initially, the military government's decision for trusteeship in the southern part of the Peninsula had raised intense national objection, since it ignored national aspirations for the establishment of an independent nation-state following the defeat of Japanese colonialism. Moreover, the decision to limit the trusteeship administration to the southern part of the Peninsula was not acceptable to Koreans since it established a permanent division of the nation. At this critically historical juncture, the Christian churches were, if not the only one, than one of very few organizations to consistently uphold the actions of the United States Army Administration in Korea. Christianity was the most trustworthy and consistent societal force sustaining the rule of the U.S. military government in South Korea. As a result of these actions and as their reward, Christian institutions were able to obtain numerous and abundant resources from the U.S. military government. Furthermore,

them some favour. Yet, such social services were not widespread enough to cover Korea as a whole, as they remained limited both in locality and scale.

the full support of the U.S. military government for the Christian churches was a critical factor in transforming this 'foreign religion' with its limited national understanding into a critically influential societal force in Korea. Christian churches armed with various and extensive resources could then play a strong humanitarian role following the Liberation (Kang, 1996).

Once the Japanese colonial administration ended, Christianity began to actively participate in many social arenas, for example, modern education, modern medical treatment, and modern social welfare; it also promoted new roles for women, and assisted in the development of the press, modern art, and so forth (Kang, 1996: 208).

The Korean War had brought a more vigorous authoritarian state into existence. In this political-social situation, in which civil society was strictly controlled by an authoritarian regime empowered by troops and police power, Christianity was one of the very few civilian groups with sufficient and stable resources, these provided by the Western mother churches, mainly in the United States. This 'special' status of Christian churches as benevolent and wealthy institutions in the post-war period was very influential in shaping how Koreans in general understood the West, Westerners, and Western culture (Kang, 1996).

The process of building the first Korean government after the Liberation and the religious composition of high-ranking officials in the government is indicative of the degree to which Christian churches took a significant position at this critical time of building the modern nation-state. Even though Christianity had no national support or influence in Korea, being a relatively new religion or ideology for many Koreans, it and its members took a leading position in society and in the group of leaders of the new

nation-state. A majority of the members of cabinet in the First Republic were Christian adherents, including President Syngman Rhee and his running mate Yi Ki-pung. The statistics on Christian participation in the postwar government are astounding when one realizes that the Christian population was then less than 4 percent of the entire population. According to Rhodes and Campbell, in 1946, of fifty Koreans who were in official positions in the Korean government, 35 were professing Christians. Of the ninety members of the Korean Interim Legislative Assembly in 1946, the number of professing Christians was 21, including seven ordained ministers. In the first Korean Legislative Assembly, of 190 members (from August 1945), the number of Christians is reported to be 38, of whom thirteen were ordained Christian ministers. A vice-president of the Assembly was Elder Kim Tong Won, who for many years was a prominent Christian layman in the city of Pyeongyang [sic]. In Syngman Rhee's second term, the Rev. Ham Tai Young, a Presbyterian minister, became Vice President (Kang, 1997; Rhodes and Campbell, 1965). Kim Ku, who is considered the most respected political figure of all modern Korean history for his lifelong efforts and death for the independence and reunification of Korea, and other high political leaders, even publicly expressed the importance of Christianity in building a new country⁸ (Kang, 1996).

The reasons for such a success can be found in the perceived universality of the religious and ethical principles of Christianity, for instance, its principles of equality for all, and its peace-loving thought, and the appeal these principles had for a nation during

⁸ Kim Ku publicly showed his adherence to Christianity in his address at the welcoming meeting of high provisional government officers held in *Chungdong* Methodist church in Seoul on November 28th 1945, as follows: "The country with churches is a beautiful and strong country. Do not build the 10 police stations, but build one church ... My mother taught me with tears that 'you do not leave the Bible. Jesus will not leave you though your family could not be with you and console you' whenever she saw me in the Westgate prison, sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. Her words are always fresh in my mind. How do we build a strong country that would never perish? It should be done based on the Bible. So that we live well together as God's people" (Kang, 1996).

a very uncertain phase of nation building. Furthermore, Christianity provided, or at least strengthened, critical societal influences for Koreans who had begun to work toward building a modern nation-state building based on ‘modern pillars’ of freedom, equality, philanthropy, democracy, and market economy. The U.S. military government’s advance had been extremely impressive to Koreans as were many other novelties: its entirely different level and scale of technology, its administrative system, culture, power, and efficiency. This newly liberated modern space could also rouse cultural awkwardness and feelings of alienation. Within it, the Christian churches were the most benevolent institutions that Koreans could approach and could enter with ease.⁹

The Korean War (1950-3) was one in a series of critical historical events after the end of Japanese colonial governance, from the military administration of the USAMGIK; to the division into two separate national entities in the Northern and the Southern parts of the Korean Peninsula, which nearly destroyed Korea to such an extent that resuscitating this new country seemed almost impossible in the eyes of some Western observers. Post-war Korea, in the 1950s and 60s, had become one of the poorest countries in the world in terms of its per capita gross national product (Hobsbaum, 1996). Although many efforts to restore this nation-state were attempted by Syngman Rhee’s regime in the First Republic, they did not succeed in rebuilding the country to the satisfaction of its citizens. Instead, they generated much frustration among Korean people tired of the corruption and incompetence of the regime, a frustration that constantly blew up in the

⁹ My parents’ case is a good example. My father, who was born in 1943 in the *Chungcheong* province of South Korea and who lost his father at eight, told me that he could become what he was today because a friendly training minister in his Holiness Church guided and supported him with good advice and sometimes material help when he was an adolescent. In addition, he also expressed how much he remains thankful for the training minister and the Holiness Christian denomination even though he did not go to the church in middle age.

form of uprisings and demonstrations during the 1950s. Throughout this regime, severe social unrest dominated the nation, and this social atmosphere pushed not only many Koreans to emigrate to more stable and advanced Western countries; it also made prominent the fact that Christian churches and institutions were participating in and providing many social services.

C. Development of the State and Religion in the Cold War

To a large extent the Korean Peninsula's geographical location conditioned the degree of inner dynamics in the post-war era. The establishment of the *hyujeon-seon* or ceasefire line between the two Koreas played a major role in the division of the world during the Cold War. Japan, for instance, was ambiguously repositioned alongside the U.S.A. as a formal 'friend.' South Korea supported by the U.S.A. fulfilled her own mission for the 'free world' as the front line in East Asia along with Japan and Taiwan. Since the departure of the Japanese colonialists, Korea had struggled to seek her own position in the Cold War. This forced Koreans to engage in continuous and specific actions for the free world. Many civilians often disagreed with the acts of the military governments since they believed they did not represent the interests of the nation but those of the U.S.A. However, direct and indirect pressures on Korea resulting from the structure of the Cold War not only limited the general development of the nation-state, but also let the country receive many 'benefits' from the 'free world.' For example, the U.S.A. and Japan became Korea's most extensive and generous trading partners.

Christianity and the Cold War

During the Cold War era, Christian churches were almost universally defined as allied with the 'free world.' In Korea, they continued to be one of the most benevolent and resourceful voluntary institutions. Unlike other societal institutions, Christian churches in Korea established extensive influence across the boundaries of subsystems and ideologies. Even while the principal traditional religions, e.g. Confucianism and Buddhism, put most of their efforts into modernizing themselves or cleansing themselves of vestiges of Japanese imperialism, Christianity introduced the theology of prosperity. Consequently, it gained hundreds of thousands of converts every year in the 1970s and 80s. While civic groups were annoyed by the lack of resources or distressed by the dictatorship opposing their work toward democratization in Korea, the mother churches of Christianity, especially in the U.S.A, Canada, and Germany, supported their Korean offsprings, economically and politically. For any Korean drawn to the movement toward a national society, Christianity was an attractive proposition (Hangook jonggyo yeonguwho, 1998; Kang, 1996).

Furthermore, the Korean government itself had been generous to Christianity. This attitude had been strengthened by the international structure of Korean political economy. To a great extent, the internally authoritarian state of Korea had been externally subordinated to the advanced industrial countries, especially the U.S.A. A large portion of Korean society from politics and economy to popular culture, public education, medicine, as well as religion, had depended on varied and generous aid from the U.S.A. In order to have Korea complete an East Asian defence line with Japan and Taiwan, the U.S.A needed to keep it relatively stable both politically and economically.

Thus, the authoritarian state, lacking full governing legitimacy, attempted to get full diplomatic acknowledgement so as to remedy its lack of legitimacy. There too, Christian churches played a role at the diplomatic level when official lines of diplomacy between Korea and the U.S.A. were not working efficiently.¹⁰

Dictatorship and Christianity

Another historical influence on the state of modern Korea has been the political affiliations of its administrative personnel. Even though some representatives of the ruling group in South Korea have been respected as symbols of the Korean independence movement during the Japanese colonialist era, the real political nature of the majority of the members in the administration was in many cases contrary to this image of national independence fighter, as many could be better identified as pro-Japanese. To quickly stabilize Korean society, the United States Army Administration in Korea generally appointed experienced technocrats and bureaucrats to the same position that they once occupied during the former Japanese colonial regime. Unlike the relatively successful European purges of the ruling Nazi after World War II, it is estimated that Korea failed to cleanse its vestiges of Japanese imperialism. The matter of pro-Japanese factions has been a constant societal issue throughout post-Liberation Korean history. This ‘hidden’ nature of the ruling groups framed their political, social, cultural, and religious choices after the Liberation. Many choices made by them were not so much nationalist-oriented,

¹⁰ For this purpose, the KNCC (the National Committee of Churches in Korea), the Korean branch of WCC (the World Council of Church) has been used to apply its line with the NCC (the National Council of Church) to press the White House. When KNCC needs to press the Korean government for certain reasons, it asks NCC to lobby the White House to press the Blue House (Korean presidential residence) (Kang, 1996).

but rather, pro-United States, pro-Capitalist, and pro-Christian so as to secure and maintain the positions they once held under the Japanese colonial administration.

In the middle of social disorder after the resignation of President Syngman Rhee, General Park Jung Hee came into power by military coup d'état in 1960. Soon after becoming the official leader, he began to push forward new policies for economic development under his absolute authority: for example, the five year economic development project, the New Village Movement, and so on. The lack of governing legitimacy, which originally limited Park Jung Hee's regime, was instrumental in allowing a narrow focus on economic growth, because success in economic development seemed to be the best way to overcome or wipe out all opposition and disagreements that the dictatorship then faced. Moreover, most Koreans eagerly hoped to realize some sort of political and societal stability for their country. They felt 'exhausted' by having undergone forced modernization including being colonized by Japan, disrupted by the Korean War, and by the coup d'états.

For the majority of South Koreans, a vigorous industrialization accompanied by intense anticommunism soon became the major governing ideology during the Cold War. This strong drive for economic growth and its anticommunist ideology were backed by public opinion. As global industrial capitalism spread, the rapid industrialization of Korea, particularly in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, appeared to be a suitable response to the international demands for labour (Yoon, 1997). Christianity again was a strong supporter of general state measures. Once again the state answered this support of Christianity by offering it practically the 'red carpet treatment.'

During the Park Jung Hee regime, some social forces that were not opposed to his regime could secure their own social space. However, groups that were believed to be opposed to the dictatorial government, for example, civic groups or labour unions, were so consistently suppressed in a variety of ways that they often had to go underground or become 'illegitimate.' Generally speaking, any social activity in the secular civic society, which worked toward democratization or disagreed with the Park Jung Hee regime was greatly reduced during his dictatorship. Compared to secular voluntary groups, however, religious groups could secure relatively more room for social activity under the name of religious activity. The economic development of the authoritarian state seriously depended greatly on aid and loans from the U.S.A. and other Western countries. The Christian churches, under the harsh control of the authoritarian state, but connected with their mother churches in the U.S.A., still had more freedom for social activism than other religious and social organizations. There too, the U.S.A. showed itself to be extremely involved in South Korea in terms of two issues in particular: offering South Korea continuous international aid and loans, and demanding a 'front line' political and military stand against the communist block. Korean Christian churches, which were closely tied to their Western mother churches, did therefore occupy a special societal position in relation with the state (Kang, 1996; Kang, 1997).

Development of Religion and Economy

Starting in 1960 and for about the most 30 years, during the so-called developmental dictatorship with its socially, politically, and economically controlled climate, Christian churches in South Korea displayed a phenomenal growth. During this

period, many Koreans from various social and economic backgrounds converted to Christianity, especially fundamentalist and/or Pentecostal Christianity. As a result, this Western religion, which had attracted only a small portion of intellectuals or leading groups prior to the Liberation became the most popular religion in the 1990s.

This rapid change in the Korean religious landscape can best be explained in connection with the rapid industrialization of the nation, and the accompanying social phenomena (Hangook jonggyo yeonguhwo, 1998; Martin, 2000; 161). The state-led radical industrialization changed this agrarian society at its roots. The rapid and extensive urbanization of Korea shook the foundations of the traditional worldview and life style on which Koreans had depended for several hundred years. This radical transformation changed the composition of the society to a large extent. Those persons who could foresee the coming direction of the social changes became wealthy, but others who did not care or did not know how to take advantage of the radical and varied changes often lost what they had. Unfortunately, most people were in this last category. The resulting sense of relative deprivation was one of the principle causes cited by Koreans for joining Christian churches. This was especially true for new urban residents who had just come from their rural hometowns, as they frequently felt deep cultural shock, which only increased with the sense of economic deprivation. Christian churches in the mega cities became ‘spiritual’ refuges for urban residents suffering from cultural uprooting.

A principle characteristic of such industrialization and urbanization is that it is almost always accompanied by a Westernization of the affected society (Yoon, 1997; Hangook jonggyo yeonguhwo, 1998). Models of assistance, new ideas and strategies for changing a ‘poor traditional’ society into a ‘rich and modern’ society are imported chiefly

from the West. Until the 1980s, Korea was not well known on the world stage except as the theatre of the Korean War: then this country, described as a 'hermit' country, suddenly became one of East Asia's "tiger" countries together with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. In the same period, Christian churches were frequently perceived by Koreans as acting publicly as links with the West and the opportunities it offered. For example, religious ministers during religious services repeated stories of traveling to the U.S.A. in response to the wishes of their congregations.

Koreans are not alone in their experience of being uprooted from their old social systems. The social differentiation processes observed in modern times are not limited to the developing nation-state of Korea. People in the West have also experienced this same process. Large parts of the West's advanced industrial society have gone through similar experiences and these processes have deeply influenced human social behaviours in the West and in the East. However, in the West this modernization process proceeded over a longer period of time and at a relatively steady pace. Nevertheless, the West still went through many social upheavals, revolutions, and wars, during its industrialization. Not so in Korea, where industrialization took place very rapidly. While the capitalist world-economy in the West developed over several centuries, its changes were imposed on Korea within a few decades. Thus, the global political economy forced many Koreans to consider westernization as a necessary part of the modernizing process of their nation. In the West, modernization generally took place following internal needs and according to the dynamic forces of each region. The modernization of Korea, positioned as it is on the semi-periphery of the world capitalist system, was achieved not by following inner Korean or East Asian political, economic, and cultural needs and dynamics, but much

more according to the greater and more intense trans-national dynamics orchestrated by the Western advanced countries, especially the U.S.A. This global political-economic system with its own cultural and religious strategy has been a fundamental force in the shaping of Korean modernization (Howbsbaum, 1996; Wallerstein, 1979 and 1995; Yoon, 1997).

In the increasingly global world of the period that followed the Korean War, Koreans groped for a 'modern' worldview that could satisfy three prerequisites. Firstly, they wanted to keep their own cultural identity; secondly, they wanted to be capable of interpreting the increasingly powerful 'global society'; and finally they wanted this worldview to offer them a source of strength, even spiritual strength, allowing them to survive in this unfamiliar world. For many Koreans, Christianity, among several old and new religions and worldviews, was considered the most convenient, persuasive, and 'energetic' belief system, meeting all the above requirements. Furthermore, Christian churches in contemporary Korea responded positively to various secondary effects of state-led radical industrialization, in particular the rapid urbanization.

Thus, Christianity took its place in Korea beside and above traditional religions. In contrast to the recruitment success of Christianity in Korea and in Korean communities in diaspora, Christianity did not gain a large membership in the two other neighbouring East Asian nations, China and Japan. Korea's case for Christian affiliation is clearly distinct.

The radical post-war development of Christianity in Korea can be seen clearly as a consequence of the process of 'Korean style modernization.' The political and social situation of South Korea as the 'front line country' against the 'communist block' during

the Cold War maximized uneasiness in Korean's minds, already shaken by Japanese colonization and the Korean War. During the 1960, 70, 80s, when industrialization and urbanization were rapidly proceeding, Christianity became widely understood as an effective tool to embed Koreans, now feeling relatively deprived, into the unfamiliar modern world. This understanding of Christianity facilitated the differentiation of Christian churches in Korea.

Christianity in Korea and its diaspora has been a political, societal, and economic link for many modern Koreans. Sometimes it seems to display a power of its own. Especially in the 1940 and 50s, just after the end of Japanese colonial rule, membership in Christianity became a 'must' for many members of the Korean elites. During the industrialization era of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s which followed, Christianity became a popular religion for those many Koreans who were devoting themselves to rebuilding the nation-state and who felt lost in this same game of development and growth. Therefore, for the elites and the masses in Korea, Christianity became one of the best cultural strategies available to integrate oneself into the modern world.

Chapter IV – Korean Christianity: Its Characteristics

A. Traditional Aspects

The push to modernize Korea is ongoing and continues to force Koreans to become aware of the rapidly changing global society. At the same time, the Christian churches, once a minor religious group compared to traditional religions, have managed to position themselves politically and economically together with the forces associated with Korean success. The same cannot be said for Christian churches in China and Japan. Furthermore, in Korea, the association between Christianity and the successful access to modernity has also been explicitly developed and presented within the teachings of the churches.

Indeed, Christianity has brought to Koreans a reliable worldview that can conveniently be used to interpret the ‘unknown’ modern world; it also offers its followers a community alive with an energy or passion that has kept many Koreans going during the rapid transformation of Korean society and culture. The success of Christian churches is demonstrated by the chart below, which shows the distribution of religious affiliation in Korea.

- Religious affiliation in Korea -

Religion	Members in 1995	Census % in 1995	Members in 1985	Census % in 1985
Buddhism	10,321,012	23.17%	8,059,624	19.94
Protestantism	8,760,336	19.66%	6,489,282	16.05
Catholicism	2,950,730	6.62%	1,865,397	4.62
Confucianism	210,927	0.47%	483,366	1.20
Cheondo-gyo	28,184	0.06%	26,818	0.07
Won Buddhism	86,823	0.20%	92,302	0.23
Daejong-gyo	7,603	0.02%	11,030	0.03
Other religions	232,209	0.52%	175,477	0.43
Total Christian	11,711,066	26.28%	8,354,679	20.67%

Total population	44,553,710	100.00 %	40,419,652	100.00 %
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- Source: Korea National Statistical Office (1995)

Surprisingly, the success of Christianity may, in part, be its adaptation to Korea's traditional religious environment. Even if religious leaders of the Korean Christian churches would deny any possibility of 'native effects' on the growth of Christian churches, traditional religious elements of nationalism, Confucianism, and Shamanism are present and these elements are important factors in the growth of the Christian churches (Cox, 1994; Marine, 2002).

Nationalism and Korea as God's Elect Nation

Throughout its 5,000 year history, Korea developed its own sense of nationalism, resulting from contact and competition with its two neighbours, China and Japan. But, since the 19th century, it has encountered an entirely different international situation to which Korea has adapted by reorienting its nationalism to include its position within the global world. The initial encounter with the West provoked a rebirth of nationalist sentiments in Korea; but its subsequent invasion by Japan was a momentous event, changing Koreans' understanding of the West and of Christianity. In many Koreans' minds, the significant involvement of Korean Christianity in the Korean independence movement during the colonial era carved out a new positive perspective on the West. Today, Korean Christianity creates a new nationalism for God's elect; as it states God will help Koreans retake and rebuild their country in the changed world. This radical re-interpretation of Christianity was built on a Korean understanding of Korean identity (Par, 2002).

The ravages of the Korean War were not enough to dampen this nationalism as some foreign visitors expected. At the time, Christian churches were among the few civil institutions with enough human and material resources to actively participate in the rebuilding of the country, in part because of the aid they received from their mother churches in the West. During the age of developmental dictatorship, the churches continued to teach that Korea was God's elect nation and that God must use Koreans for his own future goals. This kind of religious nationalism and associated teachings was reinforced by regular and special religious meetings.¹¹ Some of the religious leaders even argued that God had selected Jewish people in the old days, but chose Koreans in the new days to realize "his nation and justice." Thus, Jesus the Christ for Korean Christians was becoming not only a universal godhead, but also a national saviour. This religious nationalism helped the social integration of Korea during the era of industrialization (Kang, 1996; Kang, 1997).

When Korea reached a certain economic level in the 1980s, this idea of Koreans as God's elects developed into a passion for foreign missionary work. Thus, this Asian nation rapidly became a leading actor in the missionary work of a Western religion. When the Cold War officially ended in the early of 1990s, Korean churches accelerated their efforts to send missionaries to any place in the world asking for their help. The 1990s marked the first decade of global mission in the history of Korean Christianity. With God as their universal principle reworked into a national theology, Korean

¹¹ The dawn prayer meeting is the most Korean of Christian worships that show Korean religious passion and traditional ways of belief. Before going to work or sending their children to school, many Korean Christians go to their churches for prayer around 4 or 5 am. From the matter of nation to very personal matters, they pray in a more casual form of service than the day service a Sunday morning service (Cox, 1995).

missionaries spread to Africa, Latin America, North America, Russia, and even the Middle East (Omenyo and Choi, 2002).

Church for Jesus or Church for Confucius

This religious nationalism was often practiced within a strong hierarchical and patriarchal structure and a social consciousness rooted in Korean traditional values. This ‘conservative’ attitude appears to have originated in Confucianism, which flourished in the *Choseon* dynasty as a ‘state ideology.’ It is still present, and the dense hierarchal or patriarchal orientations governing general human relationships and the decision-making processes in Korean Christian churches have often been criticized by liberal theologians and younger generations of Christians educated to practice democratic participation in their social life.

Nevertheless, the strong hierarchical and patriarchal features of Korean Christian churches seem to be a response to the same features in Korean society. In the age of industrialization, this hierarchal and patriarchal social structure and atmosphere played a pivotal role in pulling together different parts of the nation for the achievement of rapid economic growth. In fact, one of the crucial reasons why a majority of Koreans supported the so-called ‘developmental dictatorship’ practiced by the Park Jung Hee regime was their ‘tolerance’ for his patriarchal governing behaviours, although a lot of *Minjungs* (which means ‘grass root’ people), students, and liberal intellectuals were constantly resisting what they perceived as an unjustified attitude. There might have been the belief that even though there were many problems and unpleasant orders issuing from the dictatorial regime, it was still better to listen to and follow the direction of the state leader

in order to preserve the stability and development of the society at all levels of family, community, region, and nation. A nation with a strong collective memory of patriarchy and hierarchy founded in so-called neo-Confucianism has tended to accept the idea of the nation-state as an enlarged family or community and the leader of the nation-state continues to be represented as a kind of father.

The ‘Confucian structure’ of Korean Christian churches has become a critical issue which Korean Christian churches must overcome in order to reach their next stage of success and development. Indeed, the Confucian influence in the Christian church has now become a matter of general interest within the agenda of church reformation. Among other issues, the ongoing limitations imposed on female leadership in Korean Christian churches and Korean society are widely criticized. The Confucian mindset is also seen as limiting creativity in actions and thoughts. Thus, since the 1990s, new success and further development of the Christian churches, but also of Korean society in general, are seen by Korean Christians as depending on a new ‘unlimited spirituality’ (Chung, 1991).

Shamanic Factors in Korean Christianity

Interestingly, this discourse on the new spirituality is often associated with the quest for a primitive ‘energy’ or in Korean terms for “*Shin-baram*” (the divine wind) associated with enthusiasm, mental concentration, or intent and spiritual power. This notion is rooted in ancient Korean religious practice and cosmology, and its quest seems to be a further departure from the Confucian approach to Christianity.

Shamanic factors in Korean charismatic Christianity are also surfacing; much attention is paid to such factors because it seems that the rapid growth of Korean church

depends to a great extent on these elements. Korean Shamanism is at once a religion and a cosmology that has developed in unique ways compared to what is called Shamanism elsewhere (Yamashita, 1996). For today's Koreans, the most representative characteristics of Shamanism are materialism, that is, a preoccupation with pragmatic results and the actual life of the participants, spiritualism, that is, a belief in the existence of spirit, and femininity that is a preponderant role for women ritualists. All of these Shamanic aspects are found in Korean charismatic Christian churches. *Yoido* Full Gospel Church, the "largest single Christian congregation on earth" (Cox, 1995: 219) provides one of the most obvious examples of the presence of Shamanic aspects.¹² To this, one must add the ecstatic component inherent to most Shamanic traditions. According to Cox:

To a visitor schooled in comparative religion, the worship at the *Yoido* Full Gospel Church bears a striking resemblance to what is ordinarily known as Shamanism, but when one points this out to Korean Pentecostal ministers they firmly deny there is any similarity. They open well-thumbed Bibles to the passage in 2 Corinthians in which Paul describes his ecstatic experience of being caught up into the third heaven, and of hearing words so secret that human lips cannot repeat them. If the Apostle himself could have such visions in a trancelike state, they argue, why shouldn't we? They also point out that the New Testament is full of demon possession and exorcisms. They recall the Garasene demoniac and the description of Mary Magdalene as one from whom Jesus expelled seven demons. It is hard to refute these biblical arguments. But something sounds out of focus, and as their explanations continue, the Koreans do little to reassure their western brethren that they are operating within the usual parameters of Pentecostal practice. The sources of these illnesses, some pastors explain, are dead relatives and ancestor who never accepted Christ and

¹² Harvey Cox mentions the 'syncretistic' characteristic of Korean charismatic Christianity and its significance for studying religion, "[P]entecostalism in Korea seems able to incorporate many of the characteristics of Shamanism and also to prepare people remarkably well for modern political and economic survival. South Korea is a kind of litmus test. Its religious culture – Buddhism and Confucianism overlaying folk Shamanism – is similar to many other Asian countries. Its emerging democratic polity and guided market economy are also similar. Consequently, if we can understand the Pentecostal phenomenon in Korea, we may get some important hints about its prospects in China and the rest of Asia, and possibly its global prospect as well" (Cox, 1995: 219).

are therefore angry and troubled. They return to afflict the living, so they have to be sent packing. Hence the commands to “get out, shoo!” (Cox, 1995: 224)

Three characteristics of Korean Pentecostalism illustrate the mix of Christianity and Shamanism. First, Korean Pentecostalism has a solid theology of prosperity, with an added emphasis on spiritual experience. Second, even though male clergymen occupy important positions at the top of the hierarchical structure of these churches, many female ritualists participate very actively in religious practice; particularly curing diseases. An acceptance of this-world orientation and the flexibility of such ‘Shamanic’ Christianity makes it possible to invoke a blessing on individual adherents. Korean Christian churches with Shamanic characteristics can more effectively console individual modern Koreans who have had to experience sudden changes in a confusing world.

Third is the presence of “*Shin-baram*” often understood in relation to Korean Shamanism as a kind of inner spiritual enthusiasm that allows people to work even in very extreme conditions. In extreme poverty, under harsh dictatorship, or in dangerous slum areas in North America’s metropolises, this divine ‘wind’ allows Koreans to keep on going. Korean churches use this “*Shin-baram*” to recruit new members and also to give established members the energy necessary to keep their lives going.

B. Link with Prosperity

New Korean Immigrants from New Korean Society

The traditional features of Korean Christianity have been preserved even after the radical social and political changes that swept through Korea during the post-war era. The close relationship between the Korean Christian churches and Korean society was

modified but not weakened. Consequently, the situation of Korean Christian churches today cannot be understood without an examination of the birth of the new modern Korean society.

A coup within the Korean military was executed on December 12, 1979 by a group of close friends within the 1955 graduating class of the Korean Military Academy. Chief among them was Roh Tae Woo and Major General Chun Doo Hwan, chief of the defence security command and a long time acolyte and loyalist of the dictator Park Chung Hee. A year later, in February 1981, Mr. Chun had himself inaugurated president of South Korea. When the 7 years governing period of his dictatorial regime was ending in the spring of 1987, the main opposition movement, the June Resistance, forced the government to replace the military dictatorship. As a result of the June 1987 events, Rho Tae Woo, the representative of the ruling party, announced direct presidential elections for December 1987, with an open campaign without threats of repression, amnesties for political prisoners, guarantees of basic rights, and a revision or abolishment of the then current press law. This was a great breakthrough for the development of Korean democratization (Cumings, 1997).

In the 1990s, more advances in political, social, economic, and technological areas were quickly achieved, and since the middle of 1980s and following this radical development of democracy and economy, Korea has been called one of the Asian tigers or mini-dragon countries. Boosted by these advances, the Seoul Olympic games of 1988 were an expression of the growing self-confidence of Koreans. The radically changed social situation of Korea greatly influenced the religious landscape, especially Christianity.

This new social confidence can be observed through the development of a growing discourse on Asian values. In fact, this discourse on Asian values has been not only Korean, but is also strongly expressed by Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore as well as by Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia as part of a growing Asian solidarity against the Western world order. Even though both positive and negative dimensions of Asian values regarding the success and crisis of Asian economy are identified, it is interesting to note that all the concerned actors, i.e. political leaders, economists, and scholars, have identified native cultural elements as an important variable in the evolution of political-economic matters. The increasing Korean discourse on Asian values in Korea illustrates contemporary Koreans' will to follow their own way of life and development (Arrighi, 1998; Jun, 2003; König, 2000; Mun, 2003; Shin, 2003).

Recent Korean immigrants to North America have this nationalistic confidence re-enforced by economic success and the awareness of belonging to a distinct Asian native religious culture. With a great sense of pride developed from Korea's rapid advances in economy, politics, technologies, and culture, they criticize North America's incomprehensible racism, lack of development in daily communication technologies¹³, a much slower process of business, and social security issues. Furthermore, using the know-how they acquired in a rapidly developing society, they are creating positive networks amongst themselves and they penetrate successfully into established Canadian society.

¹³ International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has announced that Korea, once a undeveloped country in the communications field, is currently foremost in supplying the super high-speed Internet and in the integration of this infrastructure into other areas, e.g. e-Government, e-Education, e-Health, e-Commerce (Hangook chogosok internet bogeub seogyeo mobeom, 2003). Another example is that the common cellular phones that Canadians use today are those that Koreans used 2-3 years ago. Very recent Korean immigrants and students have often expressed to me their surprise at the 'less development' of daily communication and information appliances in Canada.

Confident and strongly independent, new Korean immigrants prefer to do their own 'business' by following their own plans. Thus, many of them perceive no reason for making contact with a religious group, i.e. Korean ethnic churches. Rather, recent liberal Korean immigrants tend to recognize Korean immigrant churches as relatively conservative groups controlled by older local Korean immigrants.

Many reformed-minded new Korean immigrants often experience a certain generational gap with former arrivals. From their perspective, old Korean immigrants show little confidence in their communications with Euro-Canadians and Americans. Moreover, they insist on forcing new Korean immigrants to follow strict traditional Korean manners that are often ignored in today's Korea. Older Korean immigrants still perceive contemporary Korea based on their last experience of the underdeveloped Korea. Some even perceive their mother country from a relatively westernized point of view. As a feature of the generational gap which exists between recent and established immigrants, Korean ethnic churches are recognized as a conservative group in the eyes of young Korean immigrants.

For many Korean immigrants today, immigration is not the ultimate decision that might risk everything. Rather, it is a voluntary choice for a life with more freedom, cultural diversity, economic success, well being, and so forth, a choice that they can cancel anytime if they choose to go back to their mother country. In fact, some Korean immigrants have begun to return to Korea since the last 1980s.¹⁴

To a great extent new Korean immigrants tend to communicate in a direct and democratic way. And since the 1990s Korean society has achieved much of its economy

¹⁴ The year 1988 was the first year the "return migration" of Korean American families to South Korea took place in significant numbers (Kim, 2002: 200).

and political development. This development has not only allowed Koreans more possibilities of immigration to Western developed countries, but also profoundly transformed the Korean worldview. From this changed perspective, Korean immigrant churches can be less attractive as locus of communication. Instead, new Korean immigrants often look for specialized institutions for specific aims. Thus, the centrality of Korean ethnic churches in Korean immigrant society is no longer unquestioned. In fact, the hierarchical and patriarchal structure of Korean immigrant churches can be a target of criticism from new Korean immigrants who are having difficulties in communication due to the churches' conservative structure.¹⁵

Liberal Protestantism as a New Supporter of Spirituality

For three decades after the Korean War, Christianity grew very quickly. Between 1985 and 1995, the number of Christians increased by 1,271,054 (3.61%) for Protestantism and 1,085,333 (2%) for Catholicism, so that the total increase of membership in Christian churches reached 2,356,387 (5.61%) by 1995. This demographic change engendered many arguments. Scholars and the first-line clergy of Korean Christianity have often insisted that the growth of Korean Christianity stopped after the middle of the 1990s (Gwak, 2004; Korean Society, 1997). This argument may

¹⁵ My argument for this section is based on my close observation of Korean ethnic churches and many unofficial interviews over various church issues in the state of New York in the U.S.A and the province of Ontario in Canada. I also encountered similar stories from other 'liberal minded' (East) Asian friends over their ethnic churches, for example Chinese or Taiwanese. This section tries to show *an* interesting distinction of the entire religious communities. The general interactions in Korean immigrant churches seem civil and routine. Furthermore, bridging the generational or cultural gap between liberal and conservative Korean immigrants, new and old immigrants, and Korea and Canada or the U.S.A, has been one of Korean ethnic churches' roles, because the principle purpose of immigration is almost always the success of immigrants and their offspring. However, it should be mentioned that Hollywood and the mass media have depicted various conflicts regarding Korean immigrants in the unbalanced way, particular their relationships with their neighbours. Jennifer Lee uncovers a different story that normal relationship between black, Jewish, and Korean merchants in the U.S.A is social order, routine, and civility (Lee, 2002).

have been exaggerated in order to compel Christian institutions to work harder to further the rapid growth of Korean Christianity. On the other hand, it could be an expression of the realization by Christian leaders, that the unique growth of Korean Christianity had slowed down, and that interest had waned since the 1990s. Why did the growth of Korean Christianity slow down? Or, why is it thought that growth has slowed down? What strategies were available to Korean churches to further growth? What vision do Korean Christians have for their churches in the 21st century?

Progressive Christianity in Korea has been a principle civilian supporter of social development and democratization since its introduction. *Minjung* theology (People's theology), the Korean version of Liberation theology has been a positive ideology supporting the socio-political commitment of Christianity to a so-called "structural liberation." In fact, during the late 1980s and 1990s, the foundation of Korean democracy was much indebted to progressive Christian circles. Beyond 'political democratization,' Korean society today continues to look forward to 'life-democratization.' But, since the collapse of the Eastern European block and the establishment of the Kim Young Sam government (r. 1992-8) after 30 years of military regimes, the progressive Christian circles seem to have lost, to some extent, their former orientation that had strongly united its members and the momentum that it once had. Instead, new trends have challenged progressive Christianity. New words have begun to appear in religious circles, such as 'life', 'environment', 'culture', and 'spirituality.'

However, a new tension has developed within progressive Christian circles as some become concerned that the new discourses on spirituality, environment, culture, and other issues may result in the undermining of the old but still crucial political issues, for

example, the continuing division of the Korean Peninsula, and the weak Korean democracy. Such politically decisive issues still constitute a significant part of the identity of progressive Christianity. Criticism is therefore levied against the environmental, the cultural, and especially the spiritual movements by labour activists or grass-root *Minjung* activists who are arguing that these movements are good for Western society, but that it is too early to endorse them for Korean society. Even though this kind of agenda-setting conflict continues in the progressive churches, the discourse on spirituality and related issues has become more popular, and its discourse is rapidly gaining a larger place in general Korean society (Kang, 1997).

As they grow uneasy, radical Christian thinkers and activists, even those in progressive Christianity and its own educational institutions, are attempting to communicate directly with the general public. A representative case is Chung Hyun Kyung, a Korean eco-feminist theologian. Confessing to her loneliness in Korean liberal Christian institutions, she actively meets the masses in and out of Christianity and religion in general. Both Christians and non-Christians are tired of the one-sided authority of fundamentalist Christian churches with their charismatic fever. They are also opposed to the cold-hearted atmosphere of the progressive church; they meet and share all their personal stories and deep feelings together with the feeling of liberation, a feeling that they could not get from the traditional religions, so-called neo-liberalism, or even their family and friends who are steeped within capitalistic life patterns. The new radical spiritual leaders of the Christian churches spread their message directly to the general public through all possible devices from academic meetings, books, magazines, and interviews with media, to plays, public television lectures, performances, and music

concerts, as well as demonstrations (Lee, M, 2002). These elements of the message are not only backed by academic strictness and creative logic, but are also often quite personal and extremely frank. These spiritual leaders argue that they will make all lives not only the objects of salvation, but also the subjects of a global community beyond all differences of sex, race, ideology, class, culture, and even religion. In some senses, such a 'neo-millennarian type' of spirituality seems to constitute the last strategy of the most radical thinkers among the progressive Korean Christians. This strategy would thus bring Korean Christianity out of its life crisis to renew its growth and progress as well as its popularity.

Even after over 100 years of Protestantism and 200 years of Catholicism, some scholars are not sure whether Korean Christianity is truly 'indigenised' or 'contextualized' in to Korean culture because some concepts and doctrines remain too western to be in harmony with Korean traditional symbols, order and value¹⁶ even if almost one forth of the entire Korean population now identifies itself as Christian (Korean Society, 1997). Moreover, since the mid 1990s, urgent voices from the church leadership warning of the stagnation of church growth are being heard. Reactions to this warning of religious decline fall largely into two categories: one which argues for reformation or renewal of the conservative Korean churches and the other, which is louder, which espouses an extension of missionary zeal and strategies "to the end of the

¹⁶ For example, the strict objection against idolatry of 'fundamentalist' Christian churches has conflicted with Confucian rituals for forefathers and the public exhibition of statues of *Dangun*, the mythic founding father of the Korean nation. Conservative Christianity in Korea has asked its believers to hold *Chudo-yebae* (memorial service) in the 'Christian style' for their forefathers instead of performing *Jesa* (ancestor worship rite) in Confucian style. The case of the statue of *Dangun* is extreme. Extremist Christians have beheaded very many statues of *Dangun* built in public institutions, especially elementary schools.

world.”¹⁷ In both cases, though, a unique vision of Christianity emerges, rooted in Korean history, values, and society. This becomes most obvious when one examines a trend affecting all religions in Korea, the increasingly presence of the notion of ‘spirituality.’

Dialectic of Spirituality

In the present religious ethos of Korea, the term spirituality is becoming a more and more omnipotent word. It is being used in conjunction with many other terms, for example, women, ecology, life, peace, change, liberation, festival, mind, body, comprehensiveness, goddess, creativity, balance, Korean native energy, *Shin-baram* (the Devine Wind), and so on. The users of ‘spirituality’ believe that they have to move into the ‘here and now’ towards ‘life and salvation’ through the barriers of nationality and religion. ‘Spirituality’ becomes an indispensable word to express one’s way out of difficulty in realizing one’s life goal and one’s salvation. From this perspective, spirituality is not limited to other worldly matters. An example of the emphasis on this world and this life is provided by the country’s reaction to the Korean soccer team win in 2002. When the Korean national soccer team became one of the final four of the KoreaJapan WorldCup for the first time in Asian soccer history in June of 2002, 7 million Koreans took to the streets and cheered for their team. Male and female, old and young wearing red (the nick name of the Korean national team and its supporters is “Red Devils”) shouted *Dae-han-min-gook* meaning the ‘great republic of Korea.’ The spiritual-, eco-activists did not criticize this as a madness of sports nationalism. Instead,

¹⁷ As Protestant fundamentalist missionaries were urgently sent to all of the world from the U.S., Canada, Australia, etc at the turn of the last century, Korean churches are now sending their missionaries to almost every corner of the world, including Africa, Latin America, central Asia, China, Russia, and even the United States and Canada, the homes of many of their ‘mother’ churches.

they extolled people, saying “this is the biggest festival of our nation,” “the young overcome a discontinuity of the Internet Age,” “this is the evidence that there is communalism still alive among the young in this age of individualism,” and so on. Moreover, the activists encouraged the young and the general population to go forward to a bigger “festival of life” by overcoming today’s brokenness (Lee, G., 2002; Lee, M., 2002). In Korean society, spirituality has become a core concept of ‘positive strategies’ (Marin, 2002: 160-2; Vinson, 2003). It is not surprising then to encounter it more and more in religious dialogue between Christianity and traditional Korean religions.

For their part, fundamentalist Christian churches feel keenly that their missionary strategies of fundamentalist or Pentecostal style are no longer working as well as they did before. In particular, they are concerned that they need to attract the young who are relatively highly educated and have access to all kinds of ideas through using the Internet and traveling abroad.¹⁸ The ‘hot’ revivalism that consoled an older generation during the age of industrialization is often gloomy, rustic, and noisy for the polished urban tastes of the younger generation. To the new generation, the most attractive services have a ‘cultured’ appearance, with their quality music ensemble and audio-visual material. Fundamentalist churches now seem to see moving toward making the most effective use of cultural devices for feeling the ‘Holy Spirit’ as naturally as possible, rather than using slogans, declarations, and the logic of sin as before.¹⁹ Yet, then, too there is a yearning

¹⁸ Overseas travel became possible at the end of the 1980s as a result of Korean democratization.

¹⁹ In *Gangnam*, the representative middle class residential district of Seoul, are several ‘famous’ mega churches, each of which has tens of thousands of adherents. These are the *Somang* Presbyterian church, the *Choonghyun* Presbyterian church, and the *Gwanglim* Methodist church the largest Methodist church in the world.

Every time I attended one of these churches, I felt a feeling of luxurious and cultural sophistication. Such churches cater to their members with many extra services such as ‘user-friendly’ parking and refined donation envelop boxes. These make the churches into clean, neat places for tired minds and bodies in a developing metropolis. Many other churches are taking notice and adopting these practices.

toward spirituality. Although Korean Christianity is split into many factions, ‘spirituality’ serves as a central concept around which unity can grow and peace develop between churches and their various denominations in order to realize common goals.

C. Dedifferentiation of Religion

Today, Korea is an urbanized, industrialized, and therefore modernized state. To many Koreans, the West is where others enjoy freedom, prosperity, security, and equal opportunities for receiving education and medical treatment. Missionaries, American G.I.’s, entrepreneurs, Hollywood movies and their ‘stars’ have often served as models of the West for Koreans. To emulate the West, Koreans have worked hard, becoming one of the Asian tiger countries in the 1990s. Through this process of modernization, social sectors constituting society have become specialized and differentiated to a great extent.

Under the names of modernization, democratization, reformation, etc, Korea pushed forward social differentiation. This process operates by creating new guides or new orders for interactions between different individuals, different institutions, and even humans and nature. New laws or rules are continually instituted for ‘fair game’ between differentiated institutions in the new capitalist society. New social problems such as the environment or intellectual property issues reinforce this differentiation process. Even the authoritarian power of the state has tended toward limiting itself to constitutional rule, a major change from its previous unlimited power over the citizens and organizations of the nation. In so doing, it has divided itself into various inner portions in accordance to the function of each corresponding governmental agency (Parsons, 1971 and Luhmann, 1984).

However, in certain historical conditions, some institutions try to enlarge their influence by counter-differentiating behaviours. A good example is the *Chaebols*, the ‘Korean style’ conglomerate, which core of ownership, possession, and management of huge corporations belongs to a ‘family’ or relative. *Chaebols* in today’s Korea have become symbols of corruption as a result of endless criticism from the general public and civic groups. Originally developed as a risk reducing strategy within the quite unpredictable social condition of modern Korea, its dedifferentiated and old-fashion structure of profit making is now understood as a major obstacle to renewed national development. Consequently, it is undergoing a process of restructuring or differentiation under public supervision. As the case of this ‘economic community’ shows, the differentiating process of state and market, together with many other social institutions, have proceeded under the name of modernization, specialization, or reformation in post-war Korea, resulting in multiple stories and crises.

The Korean Christian churches are another example of the success of this dedifferentiation strategy, specifically, their intimate relations with the state, their diverse and generous external aid from their Western ‘mother churches’ all during the Korean War, the religious hunger during the rapid social changes created by the processes of industrialization and urbanization, and ‘Confucian’ decision-making and human-relation structures that centre around male clergy. The success of Korean Christianity has been largely based on all of these and all of social realities, either produced by inner demands of religious ardour and Korean society, or by external demands of secular passion and U.S.A. led international relations during the Cold War have added more social importance and influence to the Christian churches. This said, the growth of the Christian

churches is not differentiation of the religious from other social polities, as one often sees in Western society. Rather, it is a penetration of this Western religion into multiple dimensions of Asian society through social, political, and economic means. Under the guise of religion, the Christian churches have found it relatively easy to gain whatever they need for fulfilment of their sacred and secular agenda. Unlike other social institutions, the domain of their social activity has been rapidly increasing during the post-war era (Cha, 2000, Hanguk jonggyo yeonguhwo, 1998; Kang, 1996; Park, 2000; Ro, 1995; Yoo, 2002; Yoon, 1997).

Located at the semi-periphery of capitalist world-economy, on the front line of the Cold War, rural Korean Christian churches with their 'evangelical' passion for the country have positively united with other resourceful institutions, to make the best use of all possible means of success. While state and market, the two principle axes of society have been conditioned and differentiated from 'traditional' structure to 'modern', from 'comprehensive' role to 'differentiated', the Christian churches have become empowered in all three social areas of politics, economy, and culture. In short, Korean society has allowed the Christian churches to maximize their influences on multiple social sectors where other principle modern institutions have differentiated from the pressure of various and elaborate 'modern' regulations.

The transition of Korea from traditional society to modern state has been accompanied by a radical process of differentiation of its people that forms different groups and social classes. Many Koreans, who had previously lived in an undifferentiated traditional society began to feel deprived. The Korean Christian churches, growing in the context of differentiation, positioned themselves by using various strategies and

ideologies, from Confucian ethics and Shamanic values, to positive thinking, adding these to the Christianity originally transmitted from the West. In so doing, Christianity made itself popular and accessible to various segments of society. The Korean social structure, subordinated as it is to the Western core countries of the capitalist world-economy, has allowed this exception of social dedifferentiation for Korean Christian churches (Wallerstein, 1979). Thus, in some sense, the more Korea has differentiated, the more the Korean Christian churches have dedifferentiated (Lechner, 1990; Yoon 1997).

After a rapid increase in membership during the 1970s and 80s, the Korean churches experienced a slowing down of church growth for Protestant churches in the 1990s. Some recent statistics on Protestant church adherents in Korea even reveal a decrease in their members.²⁰ This change can be examined in relation with the changes of Korean society in the 1990s. In the next chapter, the characteristics of new religious flow in Korean migrant churches in North America and the causes of them are described (Gwak, 2004; Korea Society, 1997).

Korea's strong will to modernize is supported by its adopting of Western advanced society and culture as significant models for modernization. What is more, the meaning of modernization is often understood as the imitation of the Western style of life. This is the result of Korea's modern experience. Many Korean children of the 20th century grew up encountering the 'world's strongest' U.S. troops beside nationally scattered military bases in Korea, meeting Western missionaries visiting their churches, watching Hollywood movies and American soap operas through Channel 2 of AFKN²¹,

²⁰ In 1989, the ratio of church growth in Protestantism in Korea was 9%, but in 1990 it decreased to 5.8%, in 1991 3.9%, in 1992 0.6%, in 1993 -4% (Ro, 1995: 4).

²¹ AFKN is the abbreviation of American Forces Korea Network, the last name of AFN Korea, which has offered radio and television broadcasting services since 1950 for about 60,000 U.S. troops, their families

and so on. Therefore, if any Koreans had economic or vocational resources or external support good enough to support immigration to the advanced Western world, most representatively the U.S.A or Canada known as the “heaven on earth,” they would have no hesitation to come to the “land of promise.”²²

and other Americans visiting in Korea since 1950. In fact, however, the television and radio shows of AFN Korea can be watched and listened by anybody everywhere in South Korea. From the 1950s to 80s, AFKN had provided a singular means for Koreans to learn English and encounter with American culture. Many programs televised by Channel 2 are popular American TV shows from American football games to famous soap opera. Before cable TV was popularized in the 1990s, AFKN had been the unrivalled source for experiencing Western culture and access information about the real political situation of Korea during the military dictatorship that strongly controlled press institutions (“AFN Korea Gaeyo,” 2004; “AFN Korea Yeonhyeok,” 2004; “AFN Korea Yaksa,” 2004).

²² The first Korean immigrants to Canada were Chunsan Yoo (42, public servant), Gwaksu Na (40, merchant), and Youngsoo An (30, merchant) who settled in Montreal in 1898, but no exact information is left about their lives in Canada. Dr. Tai-yun Whang (1914-99,) who practiced medicine in Blind River, Ontario for 20 years from 1958 to 78, is known as the first official Korean immigrant, but William Soh (1917- , a.k.a. Jong-wook Soh), who had married a Japanese-Canadian co-ed while studying in China, immigrated to Canada in May of 1953 . Thus, it is not sure who is the real “No.1 official Korean immigrant” because Jong-wook Soh acquired his permanent residency status through marriage (Guisso and Yoo eds., 2001; Yoo, 2000).

As for the beginning of immigration to the U.S.A., even though some Koreans traveled to the U.S.A. as early as 1888, the first Korean labour immigrants landed in Honolulu, Hawaii on the 13th of January 1903. These were 101 Koreans: 55 men, 21 women, and 25 children. During the first three years to 1905, 7,226 Koreans came to work on Hawaiian sugar plantation (Choy, 1979; Kim, 1971).

Chapter V – The Role of Korean Ethnic Churches

A. Traditional Role of Korean Immigrant Churches

Immigration to the West has, since the beginning of the 20th century, been seen by a significant number of Koreans as one of the best strategies for becoming a ‘modern human’ who enjoys freedom, prosperity, and security. Along with the hope and expectation of a novel, developed, and secure base of livelihood, however, the practice of immigration is often accompanied by a great sense of uneasiness vis à vis the ‘unknown’ world, because it also means giving up all one’s rights or resources from material, to human and institutional in the home country. During the same century, Christianity has rapidly spread its social influence, playing an important role in bringing ‘modern changes’ to Korea. This imported religion has been recognized by a majority of Korean immigrants and prospective immigrants as one of the most attractive social-safety devices for immigration since the beginning of Korean migration to North America. Korean ethnic churches in North America have provided a great framework for many Korean immigrants to understand Western society and culture. In fact, Korean immigrant churches have sustained a comprehensive function that offers not only religious service, but also a vast range of non-religious resources for immigrant life in general.²³

According to Pyong Gap Min, a leading scholar of Asian religions in America, Korean ethnic churches have served four major social functions: 1) providing fellowship for Korean immigrants; 2) maintaining Korean cultural traditions; 3) providing social services for church members and the Korean community as a whole; and 4) providing social status and positions for Korean adult immigrants. He says, “ethnic churches

²³ The role of religious negotiator or incubator for global migration is not solely Korean immigrant churches’ phenomenon. Other churches such as the Chinese immigrant churches, the Ghanaian Pentecostal churches also play similar roles (Dijk, 1997, Yang, 2002).

became the most important ethnic organization for Korean immigrants” (Min, 1992; 1371). It is known that over 70 percent of Korean immigrants periodically attend their ethnic Christian churches²⁴ (Hurh and Kim, 1990; Min, 1989, 1992). This is also true for the older generation of Canadian Korean immigrants.

I acknowledge the Korean sense of value. Although the condition of foreign society is different from that of Korean society, I have kept living Korean woman’s life. And, I won all the difficulties by my religious belief. I gained the power from my religion for both being Korean woman and working in the Western society.

- Female Korean pharmacist in her late fifties

Religion was not very helpful for understanding Canadians and Canadian culture. Frankly speaking, we can’t go to Canadian churches. First, language is not same. Second, sense of difference is felt. Although we believe in God, there is a discrimination that they don’t know. When going to Canadian churches, I don’t feel that they like we are coming. Chiefly white people have power at every corner of Canadian society so that there is a discrimination that I can feel. It is barely possible to be assimilated to this. I know the superficial Canadian society, but can’t gauge the depth of this society. I can’t know these people.

- Female semi- retired Korean in her sixties

²⁴ Religious affiliation of Korean immigrants in Canada in 2001, 1991, and 1981 censuses:

Religion	Members in 2001	Census % in 2001	Members in 1991	Census % in 1991	Members in 1981	Census % in 1981
Buddhism	3,875	3.81%	1,060	2.31%	495	2.19%
Conservative Protestant	8,840	8.69%	4,730	10.31%	2,180	9.66%
Liberal Protestant	21,215	20.86%	14,910	32.49%	10,690	47.36%
No Religion	21,630	20.28%	7,315	15.94%	3,955	17.52%
Other Christian	21,485	21.12%	6,580	14.34%	345	1.53%
Roman Catholic	24,950	24.53%	11,170	24.34%	4,765	21.11%
Total Christian	76,485	75.20%	37,390	81.48%	17,980	79.66%
Total Immigrant	101,715	100.00%	45,885	100.00%	22,570	100.00%

• These statistics are collected by the government of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001). I could not find national statistics on religious affiliation gathered by the government of the U.S.A. However, many samplings and various academic articles on the religious affiliation of Korean-Americans have consistently displayed similar number as the Canadian statistics (Choy, 1979; Hurh and Kim, 1988; Kim, 1971; Kwon , Ebaugh, and Hagan, 1997; Min, 1992).

Many studies on the religious participation of Korean immigrants in North America have affirmed the centrality and social significance of Korean ethnic churches for the general Korean immigrant population. These studies reveal what religious and societal needs Korean immigrants have and how they fulfill them through the Korean ethnic churches (Most representatively, Chong, 1998; Choy, 1979; Hurh and Kim, 1990; Min, 1992, 1999; Min and Kim eds., 2002; Shin and Park, 1988; Warner and Wittner eds., 1998). These studies describe well the various functions of Korean ethnic churches, however, they seem to lack a fundamental analysis of how and why such religious features were formulated.

The most characteristic feature of Korean ethnic churches is ‘comprehensiveness.’ Situated at the centre of Korean immigrant communities in Canada and in the U.S.A, Korean immigrant churches have offered Korean immigrants almost ‘everything possible’ necessary for life, from religion and immigrating, to diverse social services. The comprehensive nature of the services provided by Korean immigrant church should be analysed from the point of view of a modern Korean Christian’s understanding of Christianity, because many Korean immigrants continue to believe in Christianity in the same way as the majority of Korean Christians in Korea. Moreover, Korean immigrant Christians continue to live within their traditional culture and worldview, even though they strive to integrate North American culture. This is even more true for those who do not speak English fluently.

We don’t have many chances to meet Canadians, because our English is not very good. When meeting them at work, I use simple English. My English is not good enough to discuss on religious story and we just don’t talk about religion.

If one asked what religion from Christianity to Buddhism they believe, they would face you strangely and then would say “none of your business.” I don’t talk about religion.

- Male Retired Korean in his late sixties

During the post-war period, many Christians in Korea believe in a dedifferentiated Christianity. Since the Korean War, Korean society, as it is located at the semi-periphery of capitalist world-economy, has become rapidly differentiated through internal and external demands. Under the guise of modernization, the society as a whole strove through each sector of the nation-society, for instance educational, economic, political, military, cultural so on, to identify its own function and practicing it. However, Christianity, among other religions in Korea, has been counter-differentiated, expanding its influence into many societal spheres. Such a process of dedifferentiation of Christianity has resulted in a growth in membership for Korean Christianity, causing it to suffer internal changes. The dedifferentiation of Christianity and the various changes that this process has created are inevitable consequences of the modernization of Korea.

Christianity in Korea has become politically powerful, commodified, materialized, ‘Confucian’, and even ‘Shamanic.’ Many ‘world-class’ mega churches are in South Korea from *Yoido Full gospel church*, the largest protestant church, to *Gwagrim Methodist church*, the largest Methodist, and to *Choonghyun Presbyterian church*, the largest Presbyterian. A Korean immigrant said of a story he heard on a Canadian radio show:

Canadians often don’t know Korea well and even misunderstand. In my opinion, Korea is the country that Christianity has most well developed in the world. About one year ago, I got to hear from radio show of CFRA²⁵ a Korean experienced story that an anchor talked about. He said that he was very surprised

²⁵ CFRA is an Ottawa-based radio station that broadcasts on the frequency modulation of 580 kilohertz.

by the size of churches and amazed by Koreans' passion toward the churches and the population to attend every Sunday service when visiting Seoul. He said that he thought the States or Canada were the most countries that Christianity is well developed, but after visiting there, it was not true. Korea is the place the churches are extremely well developed. Canadians, who don't know the situation well, think just like Christianity is their own religion, but Korea or other Asian countries have some primitive religions or other religions based on Buddhism or Confucianism.

- Male Professional Korean in his middle thirties

All this is not well known in Canada. Korean immigrants, however, are very much aware of the strength of their Christian churches. The 'atmosphere' of these Korean mega churches often charismatic, and their structure of organization is patriarchal and hierarchical. These churches have enormous influence in politics, and may even own companies from the funeral industry to information-knowledge, and the press. Every year the churches present a solid quantitative goal for the increase of membership through missionization. People are frequently encouraged to donate more offerings to the congregations in order to express their appreciation for God's blessings and to gain more heavenly blessings. In short, Christianity in Korea has instituted multi-dimensional methods for realizing rapid growth. After all, Christianity, whether Protestant or Catholic has become the largest religion in size of membership. These characteristics of Korean Christianity have to a great extent been transmitted to Koreans in North American immigrant churches.

Korean ethnic churches have developed their own ethos and formed structures for services and administration different from those of North American 'mainstream' churches. Like Christian churches in Korea, Korean ethnic churches in the U.S.A and in Canada are 'Confucian' in the sense that members of the congregations tend to prefer to communicate within a hierarchical settings, most often as deacon or elder of their

churches. They are also 'Shamanic' in the passion of their worshiping, for example, the everyday *Saebyeok gidohwo* (dawn prayer meeting), the 'hot' atmosphere of services, of cell group meeting, and other prayer meetings, the high frequency of various services, etc.

The reason to choose Korean church [not Canadian'] is to keep Korean identity. Even though Canadian church is also the same religion, it was the greater pleasure when I praised God in Korean language. If I went to Canadian church, my faith might be changed from being hot to being calm. I will be left as Korean in the end, even though my children are different from me. The Korean church visiting is helpful for life.

- Male Korean in his middle fifties doing business on his own

Christian belief is good for Korean identity, because Korean people through history have had a lot of *Han* (which means the feeling of sorrow and regret). We are stifling our emotions very much. We need to express them somewhere. In case of Christian, one throws out all one's emotions when praying or attending revival services. It helps for my Korean identity very much. But, Koreans, who have lived here for a long time, don't have that kind of belief, but have cold belief.

- Female Korean teacher in her middle forties

The entrepreneurial spirit is also an important factor in the rapid growth of Korean churches in Korean immigrant society. A large number of theological graduates start new churches in order to make a living, often splitting existing congregations. And they do not hesitate to express their political orientation in defence of their religious beliefs, for example on the issues of same-sex marriages. These characteristics of Korean immigrant churches are similar to those of Korean churches in Korea. All these characteristics of Korean churches in Korea and North America are consequences of the dedifferentiation of Korean Christianity in the differentiating modern Korean society (Chang and al. eds. 2000; Hurh and Kim, 1998; Warner and Wittner, eds. 1998).

The frequent hierarchical and patriarchal structure of Korean immigrant churches is strongly related to the general Confucian value of human relation in Korean society. Neo-Confucianism, as the state ideology of the *Choseon* dynasty, and its governing philosophy, locates male rulers and male sages at the top of the hierarchical societal system. In contemporary Korea, long after the end of the *Choseon* dynasty, this patriarchal structure still occupies an essential position in both public and private relationships. Even though Canadian Korean immigrants know well that they now live in a different country, they find more ease and comfort in the Confucian order of human relations. The Western pattern of human relations is acceptable at work, but immigrants prefer their traditional human relationships when at home or in home-like places, such as the church or other religious settings.

I think that Korean identity is good for my Christian belief. I see ancestor worship rites as good things. In Catholic churches, these have been all approved. The fundamental thought that Koreans have is Confucianism. The thought of loyalty and filial piety, that is, the core of Confucianism is fundamentally in accord with the thought of Christianity. I also think Buddhism is also in line with Christianity.

- Female Korean college student in her late twenties

Religion is important for my children. Born here in Canada, my children found similarities between the second-generation children by going to Korean ethnic churches and through God. In Canada is no class of morality in school, but I think it is good that Korean offspring learn it in Korean ethnic churches.

- 1.5-generation male Korean computer engineer in his forties

The minister of a Korean ethnic church is usually a very respected person, considered someone who 'deserves' to be held in the utmost respect by members of the church. Any breach of respectability is more costly for the clergy of a Korean church than

it seems to be for Western ministers in the mainstream Western churches. Within a hierarchical church system centred on the chief minister of the congregation, other lay leaders such as elders and deacons are ordered in a sequence of age and sex. As a consequence, diverse complaints against this 'Confucian' church structure have been made. Some examples are: the relative difficulty in attaining the position of female minister or high female lay leaders, and the lack of respect of older members towards younger members (Shin and Park, 1988). These 'non-democratic' ways of ministering are now the subject of criticism in and out of Korean ethnic churches. For instance, one of my informants spoke in the following terms about the difficulties of communication:

"Birds of feather flock together." Even though we are same Catholic believers, the rich meet other rich and the poor meet other poor, especially in the place like Toronto. Depending on the kind of business, the business people meet other business people, the professors meet other professors, and the accountants meet other accountants. Can one make friends with persons whom are met in church? No, one cannot. Once in a while, I can call up, but don't share my confidence or trouble with them. I haven't met any one I can do that with in church.

- Male Korean engineer in his late thirties

Nevertheless, the importance of private relations in the 'Confucian' sense persists. Private relationships built on this model function mainly in official situations. Moreover, the Confucian order of human relations is one of the very reasons for attending Korean ethnic churches. The Confucian order gives members of the congregation various 'positions,' very significant positions, that many highly educated Korean immigrants once enjoyed in Korea but do not now have in diaphora because of their lack of English language skills and common knowledge of Western society. Korean ethnic churches offer many positions, from elders and deacons, to Sunday bible school teachers, to Sunday

Hangul (Korean) school teachers, to choir membership, to diverse serving positions that are frequently and periodically receive compliments from the congregational leadership and from individual members at large (Hurh and Kim 1990; Kwon, Ebaugh, and Hagan, 1997; Yoo, 1999).

From two points of view, this process of ‘serving and being complimented’ is significant for Korean immigrants living in diaspora. First, is that this experience of serving through non-profit work and being complimented by others in the native ‘Confucian’ manner is crucial for the maintenance of good mental health. Immigrating is an uprooting of immigrants out of a life way that their forefathers had enjoyed for several hundred years. The new home with its different culture and value system can easily and seriously threaten an immigrant’s mental health. Korean immigrants who experience cultural stress, shock, or mental depression are helped by the great frequency of gatherings in Korean ethnic churches and the process of ‘serving and being complimented’ (Hurh and Kim, 1988).

Secondly, the relationships created by such a process as ‘serving and being complimented’ for religious behaviours are considered more valuable than secular relations. Thus, the relationships produced within the sacred process can provide a stable foundation for further communications in the secular world. Korean immigrants often make use of Korean ethnic churches for their various purposes, taking advantage of what they perceive as trustworthy relationships. That said, this religiously differentiated relation makes this immigrant religion dedifferentiated from as parts of the other social lives of the Korean immigrants. In North America, Korean immigrant churches form totally comprehensive institutions catering to almost all aspects of the Korean

immigrants' lives. In other words, the churches are the centres of Korean immigrant communities and lives.

Korean ethnic churches contain aspects of Shamanism. Shamanism in Korea has been a religion for the 'grass-roots' people. It is a religion when people can be pragmatic and worship for the well-being of their children and relatives and other everyday affairs. There is no exclusive sutra or a dogmatic belief in Korean Shamanism, but Korean people can beg Shamanic gods for anything at any time; any place can be turned into a sacred space even temporarily, such as the kitchen or the outdoor spring, in the early morning. Korean Shamanism is characterized by its extreme convenience, female ritualist and trance states and enthusiastic participation for all those present. Similar features are also found in Korean churches both in Korea and diaspora. Many Korean immigrants pray for various secular matters, for example the entrance of their children into prestigious universities, economic success, the welfare of relatives in mother country, illness, etc. Enthusiastic participation is encouraged. Some of the members even attend dawn prayer meetings everyday for months or years. The matter of the female ritualists is settled by some woman taking on the role of Christian healers. The role of women is also notable in terms of the ratio of female attendance and their leadership even in difficult prayer meetings (Yamashita, 1996).

B. New Role in Global Society

The Growth of the Second Generation

The 1990s is a significant decade in the history of Korean immigration to North America. Since the end of the 1980s, “return migration” of Korean immigrants with a number of Korean Americans going back to Korea (Min and Kim eds., 2002: 200). The year 1988 was a very special year for all Koreans at home and abroad, because the World Olympic Games were held in Korea. Hosting the Olympic Games was a historic opportunity for Koreans to display all the world its new realities of nationhood, counting the memories of the Korean War and the notorious tension between South and North Korea. The images come of Korea on television screens during the 1988 Olympic Games were never about vestiges of war or political repression, but about economic boom, industrial progress, happiness, etc. In the eyes of Korean immigrants, the modern Korea shown on the television screen clearly displayed the success story of an Asian mini-dragon country. New Korea seemed filled with economic miracles and political stability, yet never touched by the abomination of racism (Min and Kim eds., 2002; “Neuleonaneun Yeokimin.. Yaksokui ddangeun eobsseotdda,” 2003).

In 1992, as a result of the continuous resistance against military dictatorship, Koreans elected a first civilian president Kim Young Sam after the cessation of military government. Thus, a long military governance, in place since the beginning of 1960 was finished, and reforms had finally begun. One of Kim Young Sam’s reforms was to cleanse the powerful military inner circle, that is, *Hanahoe* (Club of one mind). Such serious reforms soon became known to the public. Korean immigrants were greatly impressed by the speed and depth of Korean democratization.

On a contrary note, four years after the Seoul Olympic games, the Los Angeles riots (from April 29 to May 2 in 1992) brought home another reality. The riots damaged much of “Korea-town” in L.A. The final estimate of damage caused to Korean owned businesses amounted to \$346,962,394 US. Many Korean immigrants, often with the support of their entire family, had worked hard to realize their dreams in the new land. Thousands of Korean Americans now suddenly lost their means of livelihood. Korean Americans called this event *Sa-I-Gu*, which means 4-2-9. The *Sa-I-Gu* or L.A. uprising brought about a comprehensive reassessment by Korean Americans of their political, economic, and social position. *Sa-I-Gu* had social and political repercussions, it made Koreans re-access their standing in U.S. society and brought into focus the limitations of their North American dreams. When they compared their social position in the U.S.A with the political and cultural progress of the new industrial Korea, they had to reassess their immigrant’s life. Especially, they came to realize that Korean community leaders did not live up to their expected roles during this Korean calamity (Min and Kim eds., 2002: 200-6).

The Korean-speaking first generation had a long experience of leadership within the Korean immigrant communities. They had a clear notion of their identity and concrete ties with their native tradition and culture. Korean Canadian or American born in North America learned from their parents to consider the Korean nation as being their first locus of reference before the “Asian race” identity proposed by the U.S.A. Yet, following the drastic events of *Sa-I-Gu*, first generation Korean immigrants could not publicly well express their Korean viewpoint on the event, because of their lack of English-speaking ability. Instead, the English-speaking generation that is the second or third generation

Korean Americans were able to express themselves to the mass media on the event of *Sa-I-Gu*. The L.A. riot underscored the limitations of the political ability of the first-generation of Korean immigrants. Their voice was loudly heard only among Koreans. But, outside of the Korean communities, this first generation could not fully express its voice, especially in matters concerning their relations with other 'race' or ethnic groups.

The second- or third-generation Korean Canadians or Americans are now attaining positions of leadership in Korean immigrant communities. Their fluency in English, which is now their first language and their in-depth knowledge of the mainstream society acquired through education in the North American systems, allows them to efficiently express what Korean immigrant communities need to know and have, and to find the means to inform the mainstream society, including the mass media, of the real situations encountered by Korean immigrant communities; they know how to draw attention from and organize co-operation with other minority groups. This ability to communicate across cultural boundaries displayed by the second-generation Korean Canadians or Americans is a crucial social tool often lacking among first-generation Korean immigrants. Thus, the role of second-generation Koreans within Korean immigrant communities has become essential; as communicators with the outside world and as public-opinion leaders, it is their role now to make visible the position of the Korean immigrant communities whenever it becomes a public or national issue. This reinforced role and leadership of second-generation Koreans in Korean ethnic churches is getting more noticeable (Chai, 1998; Chong, 1998; Min and Kim eds., 2002).

In the U.S.A, second-generation Koreans differ from first-generation Koreans in their handling of ethnic identity. First-generation Koreans usually recognizes themselves

as members of a unique ethnic group that has never been assimilated to any other ethnic group, even though North Americans are generally confused as to the particularities of Korea as a nation and a culture amongst other Asian cultures. Yet, in the U.S.A, English-speaking generations often see their ethnicities and ethnic identities from the perspective of racial categories, which lump together all people and societies seen as belonging to what is called the “Asian race.” That is, the English-speaking generations are exposed to a racial identity that plays an important role in forming their pan-Asian community consciousness (Min and Kim eds., 2002: 205). Koreans belonging to the English-speaking generations still recognize the differences of culture between Koreans, Chinese and, Japanese, but these ethnic differences are less important for pursuing religious missions or resolving political problems. This is because as far as religion and politics are concerned, Asia is treated as an undifferentiated unit.

Though racial identity is articulated by the mainstream society, it is also chosen as positive by Korean of English-speaking generations in the U.S.A. It may be that the mainstream mass media are an important factor in these choices. Indeed, North Americans often do not care to articulate the subtle differences between ethnic groups.²⁶ Thus, the many black and Asian ethnic groups from different regions of different continents are often treated as simply ‘black’ and ‘Asian/yellow.’ This typical handling of Asian cultures and societies by mainstream mass media affects the young English-speaking Koreans especially who have many more contacts with the various kinds of English language mass media than their Korean-speaking parent’s generation (Min and Kim eds., 2002). Furthermore, to assent to the practice of ‘racial’ consciousness is

²⁶ A good example is the once famous U.S. TV series M*A*S*H. The background of M*A*S*H is the Korean War, but many Koreans in this TV series wore clothes or hats more appropriate to South Asians. Even the animals, such as black cows with sharp horns, are often not those of Korea, but of South Asia.

politically very efficient. If Korean immigrants were to argue for national superiority, their actions would directly provoke other Asian immigrant groups, for example the Chinese or Japanese, to build their own nationalistic agenda. Such a process of nationalism-building in the North American context is not seen by Korean immigrants as a very helpful means of strengthening the marginal position of Asian immigrants. On the other hand, to adopt a 'racial' identity instead of an ethnic one is a position which is perceived as natural and instrumental to building a greater Asian cooperation. Unlike the first-generation Koreans who have a strong ethnic identity, second-generation or English-speaking Koreans are more open to the semi-official 'racial' identity, particularly in the U.S.A. Thus, unlike many first-generation Korean immigrants who go to church to communicate with other Koreans in Korean, the English-speaking generation seeks to find its own reasons to attend Korean ethnic churches.

Diverging from the U.S.A., Canada's history has led to cultural policies that encourage cultural diversity rather than 'racial' cohabitation. Even though Canada is subjected to American mass media and cultural industries spreading the views of the U.S.A. on race, racism, ethnic culture, and Christian and non-Christian religions, I did not find any evidence that Korean immigrants in Canada want to be called (East) Asian rather than Korean. Korean immigrants in Canada have a solid awareness of their ethnic identity as members of the Korean nation neighbouring ethnic groups of Chinese or Japanese, and unlikely to become just part of a homogeneous group of (East) Asians.²⁷

In Canada, judging by the results of the interviews conducted for this research, members of the English-speaking generation attend Korean ethnic church mostly for

²⁷ I appreciate Professors Peter F. Beyer and Marie-Françoise Guédon for comments on the different racial and ethnic consciousness between Canada and the U.S.A.

religious reasons, unlike their forebears who come for religious belief and for the social amenities provided by these churches. Second-generation Koreans are more interested in keeping their religious identity in Christian churches than in participating in the traditional roles of their parents' form of ethnic identity (Kim, 2003).

Living in Canada, I don't think that religion is helpful to keep my Korean identity. I think I should not look for Korean identity from religion. What I felt when going to the Western churches is that these Western people just do same thing as we do. Being in Vancouver, I thought that I could keep my Korean identity by going to Korean churches and talking with Koreans in Korean language. Since being here [Ottawa], religion has nothing to do with keeping my Korean identity.

- Second-generation female Korean college student

Thus, second-generation Koreans today affiliate less with Korean ethnic churches than do their Korean-speaking parent generations. However, the proven importance of and the leadership exercised by the English-speaking generation within Korean immigrant communities evidenced by various incidents has increased the attraction of Korean ethnic churches. In this context, Korean ethnic churches have been turning their efforts towards attracting more second and third or English-speaking generations (Chai, 1998).

The existing shape formation of Korean ethnic churches are still very much Korean in style in that, generally, Korean immigrants still use their ethnic churches as multi-purpose centres of communication. Many first-generation Korean immigrants continue to feel comfortable in Korean ethnic churches that offer the expected varied social services and respected roles.

When coming to Canada for the first time, I had a dream to be an economist. I came here with that dream. When my dream didn't realize, I wasn't discouraged. Religion was helpful very much when I was jaded. But, I didn't come here with strong religious belief, but it was very useful of overcoming pains of immigrant life.

- Female retired Korean in her sixties

Within the changing Korean social landscape, Korean ethnic churches are still at the centre of North American Korean immigrant communities as over seventy percent of Korean immigrants in Canada and the U.S.A. identify themselves officially as Christians. Korean ethnic churches remain one of the best places for meeting other Korean immigrants as they play a role in various kinds of communications at both the sacred and secular levels. By offering various kinds of services and roles to the general Korean immigrant population, leaders of Korean ethnic churches continue to enjoy superior and comprehensive social positions in Korean immigrant communities to the extent that the social services and roles tend to be considered essential to their 'mission.' Thus, a failure in sharing services and roles with other co-believers in congregation often results in serious consequences, such as the splitting of the congregation into two (Shin and Park, 1998).

But, for the second-generation Koreans involved in constructing the future of the Korean communities at large, church enterprises management and finance are less and less seen as essential (Kwon, Ebaugh, and Hagan. 1997). In the interviews, a relatively large proportion of informants even mentioned that Korean identity and religious identity were separate issues.

Korean identity isn't good for my Christian belief. I don't think that Korean identity is the same as the Christian belief of the Westerners. I don't think I will be a better Christian because I am Korean. I do believe it differently.

- Retired male Korean immigrant in her middle sixties

I have not linked the direction of my life to religion. When I saw the lives of some religious people, I didn't like the idea of living those lives, because now not only in Canada, but also in Korea, the world is becoming a village, which means that we have to live with other peoples. Korean Christians or even non-Christian Koreans sometimes exclude others. If I had to believe in a religion that way, I would rather not believe in it. We have to understand, include, or help people from other religion or anyone different. Now, some Koreans, especially older Koreans, believe in religion the exclusive way. I don't think that the original teaching of Christianity was that way.

- Professional female Korean in her late fifties

Hence, the growing leadership and importance of the English-speaking Koreans within the Korean communities is a crucial variable in the transformation of Korean ethnic churches; they are now identified as groups that are religiously differentiated unlike the previous dedifferentiated churches acted as multi-purpose charitable organization.

Influx of New Korean Immigrants

The 1990s was a decade very different from the previous ones, in that new kind of developments were achieved in both the Korean society and the Korean immigrant communities of North America. The new social developments were accompanied by political, economic, and technological processes which had a great impact on the Korean ethnic churches in the diaspora. More concretely, the great advance in Korean democracy and the extensive growth of a Korean economy, even after the Asian financial crises of 1997-9, coincided with a growing questioning by the new immigrants. These new immigrants are coming from a Korean society, which is very different from that which

was left behind by the earlier Korean immigrants. The rapidly increasing individualism in the Korean society, the swift development of communication and information technologies and the popularization of long-distance transportation in Korean ethnographic circumstance, among other factors have greatly modified the locus of the Korean immigrant churches for the immigrant population. Those developments are often characterized by transition from 'material' preoccupation to 'post-material' aspirations (Inglehart, 1997).

The new Korean immigrants not only have aims and expectations different from those of their seniors, but are also more able to easily use new information, communication, and transportation technologies to facilitate both their immigration and their lives in the new countries. The social or meeting spaces preferred by many new immigrants today never force them to convert to certain religious belief, but rather ask them to communicate with each other in 'efficient' way for the purpose of communicating. These new loci of communication for welfare of immigrants' lives are becoming more and more popular. In this new social circumstance, the Korean ethnic churches are having more and more difficulty to maintain their exclusive positions as centres for the entire Korean immigrant society. For instance, even Buddhism is an acceptable, even attractive, proposition to some Korean immigrants:

From a Buddhist point of view, many persons here do Zen or yoga. It could be thought that the Westerners act too imprudently or too openly. For instance, the Christian viewpoint is totally against same sex marriage, but from a Buddhist perspective based on transmigrationism, a lesbian might have male in previous life so that a female would have a marked male character. In Christianity homosexuality is absolutely prohibited because God forbids it. However, the position of Buddhism is receptive to everything, while it regards mind as fundamental. Thus, Buddhism accepts same sex marriage. In Buddhism, one sees it as it is. It is exactly the same as what the [Korean] monk *Seongcheol* said

“Mountain is mountain, water is water.” Buddhism doesn’t deny nor oppose. Rather, it is tolerant toward reality as it is.

- Female Korean computer programmer in her middle forties

Even older Korean immigrants find it possible to explain religious behaviour outside of the Christian churches:

Religion is very important at this stage of my immigrant life. I have lived here for 40 years. The present is the time when I have to search some conclusion and then go to the next stage of life. For this purpose, I need a framework to define the purpose so that the framework is important. Religion has to play a role to indicate the way I should follow now on. It doesn’t mean that I’ll go to the Buddhist temple or to churches, but religion is helpful for me to decide in myself how I’ll make my life in the future.

- Female Korean public servant in her late fifties

Still others can reflect on religious values and principles in their new countries, and draw parallels, these relativizing religion in general:

Canada is no longer Christian country. As Korean society follows Confucianism as ethics, but not as religion, Christianity in Canada played its role. Canada is estranged from Christianity.

- Male Korean public servant in his early forties

The quality of life in Canada hasn’t been better than in Korea. It is good to be in Canada for the clean natural environment and plenty of time being with my family. But, the quality is never better. In Korea, I could talk with my friends about many social issues from politics to economy. Here I don’t talk much.

- Male Korean chef in his middle forties

In this context, Korean ethnic churches have been proceeding toward becoming a differentiated group that communicates distinctly for the sake of religious and cultural

matters. They have been focussing more and more on religious cultural strategies rather than on offering varied secular services and assistance to the daily life of immigrants. That is, in order to survive in an increasingly competitive religious market in this changing social and religious circumstances, the strategy of the Korean ethnic churches has been to adopt more 'religious', 'creative', or 'specific' ways rather than pursuing comprehensive, inclusive, or general socio-cultural goals. This transformation has lead Korean immigrant churches to define themselves, no longer as common places to provide 'anything for anybody,' but rather as specific religious groups offering 'particular help for the right persons' (Beyer 2003, 2002, 1998a).

Individual Korean ethnic churches are becoming distinct from each other. Many Korean immigrants choose their churches based simply on the distance between their home and church, or because of the introduction of a friend, or other mundane reasons. However, many recent Korean immigrants, who already enjoyed in better circumstances in Korea than previous Korean immigrants, chose their religious affiliation more carefully so as to maintain the good quality of their life. Some Korean ethnic churches are preferred by the self-employed; some others by professionals or doctors, by Pentecostals, by intellectuals, by second generation, etc. Korean immigrants tend to choose their ethnic churches very carefully, taking into account the religious style and characteristics of the respective churches, and taking also into consideration their potential role and position in these immigrant churches (Chong, 1998).

The relative lack of homogeneity among recent Korean immigrants is sometimes criticized by older Korean immigrants. The older Korean immigrants, typically represented as pioneers coming to Canada or the U.S.A equipped with only a strong will

and ‘\$300,’ express their difficulty in understanding what they consider the extravagant tendencies of younger Korean immigrants. Once landed in North America, the new Korean immigrants, with their greater monetary resources soon buy brand-new car, and houses in middle-class neighbourhoods, both enviable commodities that older Korean immigrants could only purchase after waiting for several decades and working long hours. In the eyes of the older Korean immigrants, some of the recent Korean immigrants do not even work. Some older Korean immigrants may stereotype new Korean immigrants as being golf fanatics, traveling between North America and Korea for no valid reason, and constantly going to the Casino, while they themselves never had time for golf or to the Casino and had to save for a long time before they could travel to Korea or anywhere else unless or until they had an important reason to go, such as family or business related reasons. It seems that a reason for immigration for new Korean immigrants is the opportunity for a better quality of life or even ‘just more fun,’ whereas for older Korean immigrants it was a momentous decision forced upon them by the need to get out of an unpredictably and ‘chaotic’ society.

The following quote is an example of the new way of thinking among the recent Korean immigrants:

Today, the Korean culture is just same as the Western culture. There is a strong tendency in the older Korean generations to think that current Korean culture is not good. There is too much laissez-faire in Korea, but I don’t have a sense of distance with that. From some point of view, I’m actually a New Generation, too. I don’t think this is bad, but I do think the culture reflects the time. As time passes on, this will be nothing special. For now, I walk around very comfortably. At home, I’m often in torn jeans. My mom at first asked me questions like “Why do you wear that kind of thing, though there are plenty of flawless jeans”. I answered her “It’s okay if I feel comfortable.” There is that much difference. The reason why seniors feel displeased when seeing that is because they didn’t do those things so that they cannot see how it can be good.

- Male Korean taxi driver in his early thirties

For Korean immigrants with the 'new spirit' of immigration, going to church is increasingly supposed to provide help on religious and cultural matters rather than to get information or to come in to contact with other immigrants.

New Korean ethnic churches equipped with a definite religious orientation and with the necessary financial powers are now playing a greater role at the global level. Famous Korean revivalists, gospel singers, or world-famous Korean Christian musicians are constantly invited to Korean immigrant churches to lead special religious services or to provide distinct cultural events. Through these global religious-cultural communication media, the guest speaker or performers transmit the uniqueness of Korean nation and the exclusive mission of contemporary Korean Christians in today's world.

Within this discussion on the uniqueness of Korean Christians and their mission, Western society is no longer a standard model of development, but is frequently relativized as just one instance of religious belief and development. Moreover, the Western style of life, civilization, and capitalism are seriously criticized. Conservative Korean immigrant churches may emphasize 'moral and sexual corruption' as the main theme, whereas for the progressive churches, the ongoing 'imperialistic' actions of the U.S.A and history of invasion from West can be the principle targets.

When I once came to Canada, I found that my area of study was very advanced. There were plenty of things to learn. But, I think that the phenomenon of moral retrogression has been appeared at a radical speed in Canada. For example, the rate of divorce and abortion and the use of drug have greatly increased. While the technologies and studies have been improved in the West, the human moral culture has gotten worse.

- Male retired Korean scientist in his late seventies

When I see the political and economic issues, I always think of those from my religious perspective. For instance, from the religious standard, the marriage between homosexuals is unconditionally wrong. The politicians drove this society into the direction of “Sodom and Gomorrah” driven by the demonstration of people.

- Female Korean health researcher in her middle thirties

Technology is more developed in the West (than in the East), but not culture. Korea not only once benefited from Christianity, but was also occupied by it. Christianity was used to obliterate Korea’s own culture.

- Male Korean chef in his middle forties

There are strong points and weak points in the Western culture. There are strong points and weak points in individualism. Individualism helps the individual develop himself, but doesn’t help people develop ties with others. This is the weakness of the West. In the Korean culture, the concept of “we” is very important. However, Korean people use all their energy toward building relations between individuals and maintaining the hierarchical relationships. I think it is good to bind up the strong points of the West and Korean culture together.

- Female Korean pharmacist in her late fifties

The global scale of religious prospects is being actively nurtured in the Korean immigrant churches by the practicing of an international level of communication. These religious cultural practices naturally raise some nostalgia for the mother country. At the same time, however, these prospects effectively work raise the sense that Korean immigrants remain part of the mother country even while living in a new immigrant; they allow the Korean diaspora to search for on a specific way of life that would not be Euro-Canadian, Euro-American, nor even Korean, but rather the Korean immigrants’ own. In

the continual desire to be assimilated into the mainline Caucasian society in North America while maintaining a traditional Korean culture, a new formation of identity occurs, which seriously considers all personal stories, all local Korean communities, and national identities as meaningful. This new identity is encouraged by an increasing understanding of and familiarity with global society. In this context, Korean ethnic churches have become a pivotal polity in the production of an identity for Korean immigrants as they emphasize at the same time regional characters, ethnic particularities and global prospect as well as ties with Korea (Beyer, 1998c). This new role of the Korean ethnic churches in North America must therefore be seen in terms of the fundamental changes of Korean society both in Korea and the Korean diaspora.

Immigrant life and Development of Communication Technologies

Korea's visibility today is due to its developing Communication and Information Technologies (CITs) and its high rate of supply. According to International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Korea is the leading country in this regard rising from a low level of access to Information and Communication Technology to one of the highest in the world. The rate of Internet users per 100 inhabitants in Korea was 51.1% in 2001, whereas the rate in most other advanced countries was lower. For example, in the case of Switzerland it was 30.8% in the same year. It is also reported that there are over 25,500 PC *bangs* (Online game rooms) in South Korea so that many Koreans are able to access the Internet at their convenience even when they are out of the office or home (Kelly, 2002).

This enormous popularity of Communication and Information Technologies, especially the Internet, has greatly influenced the common ways of communication not only in Korea, but also in the Korean diaspora. Internet communications are characterized by convenience and anonymity (Slevin, 2000). This means that through the Internet, contemporary Koreans can freely express their points of view on any issues ranging from politics, to religion and to entertainment, and can exchange a lot of information for various purposes. The Internet has become a significant locus to hold actual meetings. This is especially the case for cyber clubs, which offer services so the users can overcome the limitations of anonymity and briefness (Porter, 1997). Thus, the Internet has become a very important instrument not only for gaining information, but also for strengthening the Korean language and ethnic identity especially for Korean immigrants. Compared to older Korean immigrants, the new Korean immigrants and second-generation Koreans have a greater access to the community at large; they keep their ethnic and religious identities through the positive application of this new communication and information technologies, long-distance transportation facilities, and access to Korean mass media.

Through the Internet, Korean immigrants also exchanged information about immigrant life. Before arriving in their new home, they often check out Internet club sites for Korean immigrants. This simple behaviour often allow them not only to gain in-depth information about prospective job and living arrangements, but also on various issues ranging from security, to education, and to the best businesses, and it allows them to create actual contacts and relations for future use.

A large amount of information can be gleaned by observing the traffic on Korean immigrant websites or cyber clubs. There were about 1640 Koreans living in the Ottawa-

Gatineau region, according to the demographic statistics released by the government of Canada in 2001. There is a local Internet club site for Korean immigrants, named *Ottawa-sarang*, which means “the love of Ottawa” (“Ottawa Sarang,” 2003). As of December 2003, about 700 Koreans were registered in the Internet club, which serves as a multi-purpose meeting place. For instance, when Korean immigrants want to travel to neighbouring cities like Montreal or Toronto, they often post on the homepage a message about their traveling plans indicating time and place of departure. People with or without their own cars can support each other by sharing the car or paying some gas charges to make the trip more economical and interesting. This type of casual meeting is more frequent among young Koreans or recent immigrants who do not know many Korean people in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. This is just one example of the many and varied kinds of communication throughout the Internet club. To buy certain Korean materials, to find someone, to listen to music, or to do almost anything, Korean immigrants come to the website and leave messages with specific requests or offerings on the message board. There are few specific regulations for participating in this cyber club except that each communicator should understand *Hangeul*, i.e. Korean language. This convenience and immediateness of Internet communication is greatly appreciated by many Korean immigrants who need some help, information, or just communication itself to beguile the tedious hours of immigrant life. Second-generation Koreans or recent and young Korean immigrants tend to use this Internet site more than do senior or first-generation Korean immigrants who are not familiar with this type of communication.

The Internet is not the only new device of communication among Korean immigrants. In fact, today Korean immigrants have countless tools for communication

that let them practice their indigenous culture and identity, and to learn the culture of their new land. Before coming to North America, young Korean immigrants have already been exposed to popular North American culture. Having watched popular teen soap operas or “The Wonderful World of Disney” on television in Korea as children, and now renting Korean-language videos at Korean corner stores almost anywhere in North America, Korean immigrants, especially young Korean immigrants, live today in a new immigrant world quite different from the immigrant world of just decades ago. Before coming to North America, they already enjoyed part of North American culture and learned some of its cultural features. In North America, various cultural commodities used to enjoy and identify old and new Korean culture are broadly available. This globalization of culture and mass media has a significant influence on both one’s understanding of Western culture and one’s maintaining of a Korean identity.

Together with the rapid development and widespread use of communication and information technologies and of cultural mass media, the widespread popularity of long-distance transportation has also a significant effect on the lives of Korean immigrants. That is, this newly affordable mobility has greatly helped Korean immigrants and their second-generation children to maintain and develop ties with their relatives and friends in Korea. Extremely reduced price for international telephone calls, resulting from tough competition between communication servicing companies, has allowed immigrants in North America to talk to their close Korean friends and relatives in Korea or somewhere in the world weekly if not daily. Multiple ways to collect air mileage and to reduce air ticket prices have made it more possible to send English-speaking children to their parents’ home land during the summer vacations. Adult English speakers’ ability can

lower the expenses of an international trip if they find English teaching positions, perhaps with the help of their Korean relatives.

All in all, this powerful and universal affordability of new communication and transportation technologies means that today, Korean immigrants and their second- or third- generations are much less dependent on Korean ethnic churches than before. Yet, Korean immigrant churches are still at the centre of entire Korean migrant communities, as many Korean immigrants continue to enjoy the multiple services, positions, and roles that Korean ethnic churches offer to them. However, because these developments also offer Korean immigrants diverse means to maintain their native culture, Korean ethnic churches have begun to look for roles that no other social institution is able to offer. If Korean ethnic churches fail to furnish unique experiences or functions which may or may not be religious then, that would be mean the end of their existence.

Chapter VI – Korean Religion in Globalization Process

From the very beginning of their immigration to North America, the majority of Korean immigrants communicated with each other through the Korean ethnic churches (Kim, 1971; Yoo, 2000). While trying to adapt to their new life under the inclusive care of Christianity, Korean immigrants in Canada have found means to strengthen their national identity. The Korean immigrant churches still provide what, Pyong Gap Min clearly identified (Min, 1992): Korean immigrant churches in North America provide fellowship for Korean immigrants in a milieu where their ethnic heritage is maintained and where they receive social services, status, and positions as church members and members of the Korean community as a whole. The attendance rate of over 70 percent of Korean immigrants at their ethnic churches in Canada and the U.S.A. demonstrates that the social functions of the Korean ethnic churches have responded successfully so far to the needs of Korean immigrants in their lives.

However, now the Christian churches in Korean immigrant communities have become only one among many places where one can meet other Korean immigrants. Many alternative places have become available to respond to the various secular needs of immigrant life. Most recently, virtual groups, supported by the new communication and information technologies, have become increasingly important in Korean immigrant community life.

Such cyber groups offer a much greater convenience for entry and departure, immediate response to requests, large membership base, economical and efficient management, and trans-nationality, all characteristics which many religious institutions can not offer to the same extent while demanding of their members a definite amount of

service time and religious devotion. In short, many non-religious functions previously offered by the Korean ethnic churches can now be easily obtained through other means, which have no requirements of religious belief or practice.

The emerging global society, in which the boundaries between regions, nation-states, and continents are becoming more and more permeable, as a result of innovations in communication, information, and transformation technologies, has altered the modality of Korean immigrants' lives. This development modifies the needs of the immigrant resulting in the ethnic churches in Korean immigrant communities encountering new demands. The 'traditional' understandings of the role of Christianity in Korean immigrant communities are no longer sufficient to account for the position of Christian churches in recent Korean immigrant communities and in the global context.

Specifically, the recent developments and popularization of communication, information, and transportation technologies have increasingly blurred the traditional boundaries between the heartland and diaspora. Social scientists have to rethink the roles of religion in diaspora communities from the angle of a dynamic 'global whole.'

Considering the role of Christianity in Korean immigrant communities in Canada, seeing the globe as a single social unit where people and institutions are actively involved is necessary in today's circumstances (Robertson, 1998). This is also other since the nation-state of Korea has had remarkably positive results in reconstructing itself to fit into this global context and that Korea has succeeded in fostering the radical development of its communication technologies to a degree unprecedented in the world. Korea now exhibits a rate of urbanization which is more than that of the U.S.A. and the country also leads the world in the number of high speed Internet sets in use (Kelly, 2003). In short,

this nation-state by itself shows a very high degree of globalization in the sense that many Koreans find it relatively easy to communicate with and access other people and parts of the globe, and to participate in the rapid development of economy and technology. Thus, the usual reasons given by third world inhabitants for immigrating to advanced industrial countries like Canada and the U.S.A. do not apply to modern Korean immigrants. Today's Koreans who wish to immigrate to Canada or other 'advanced' countries, do so for many other reasons, for example, the military tension caused by the regional Cold War situation, the search for a better education for not only themselves but also their offspring, better social welfare, more opportunities, and so forth.

Consequently, the traditional roles of the Korean Christian churches in the immigration process and the adjustment to the new diaspora environment are being diluted. This is because Koreans are already quite aware of the culture and social organization in the West through many already existing social ties, mass media, Internet search, or so forth. Therefore, the 'comprehensive' roles of the Korean ethnic church are now less attractive for recent immigrant Koreans. Korean ethnic churches have to find new functions or to select and strengthen some of the traditional ones that might recent Korean immigrants armed as they are with skilled knowledge, new information technologies and a curiosity for a new global world.

To revitalize themselves in the new setting of global immigration, Korean ethnic churches have, it seems, focussed their efforts on becoming cultural centres. As such they are now promoting their own religious identity, a polished framework within which to help immigrants learn about the nature of Western society and culture, and to achieve an authentic new life (Beyer, 2002, 1998a, 1994). Korean immigrants will tend to (re)make

choices depending on their own understanding of Canadian society with it changing social agenda. In the current context, Korean ethnic churches in Canada focus on roles for immigrants that foster religious involvement and cultural identity: fellowship, the maintenance of Korean cultural traditions, and the provision of social position within the Korean community.

As the world becomes more intensively globalized world, one will most probably see an acceleration of global migration. This phenomenon will automatically raise the question of identity: where one really comes from, where one should finally go back to, and in what form one has to live with whom together. Thus, Korean immigrant churches more and more will have to become distinct religious-cultural centres, with an abundant supply of symbols and meanings, offering and exporting their own authenticity and cultural commodities for Koreans who are attempting to build their identity. It is also very possible that the newly developed forms of Korean Christianity will compete with not only other Korean churches, but also other ethnic- or national-churches and major Canadian Christian denominations. This because of the new global world, reconstructed as it is by radical communication, information, and transformation technologies and influenced by the growing support of multiculturalism which provide people all over the globe with the experience of the effects of immigration 'at home' (Beyer, 1998c).

In this light, Korean immigrant churches are not only a limited home for the immigrants. While focussing on their religious function, they are now encouraging their members to participate in the international religious mission of the Korean Christian churches. The Korean immigrant churches already assume a globalization of their own. As a religio-cultural centre, they help Korean immigrants make decisions on the

‘complicated’ issues, for example, the heresy debate, second-generation education, objections against same-sex marriages, and so forth (Kim, 2003). They also expose their members to the world at large and the international community by engaging in the uniquely Korean missionary task of spreading the Christian message throughout the world.

The Korean case of the role of religion in the North American immigrant’s life displays one instance of how immigrant communities will negotiate with other cultures, values, ideas, and religions in order to find a place for themselves. But, in a newly reconstructed world that facilitates global movement and communication, the place that is created is now of a different nature, compared with the past, because the new globality lets immigrants live life as in their home country. It also allows the churches that used to be centres for the community to become open to the world at large and thereby to join the general process of Korean diaspora.

Chapter VII – Conclusion

The primary question of this thesis has been how the development of modern Korean society and more especially Korean Christianity has influenced the role of the Christian religion in the Korean diaspora of North America. The centrality of Korean ethnic churches in Korean immigrant communities has been explained as a natural consequence of Korean modernization. That is, it resulted from a dedifferentiation process that has absorbed multiple dissatisfactions, hopes, and energies released through a previous radical process of differentiation and modernization in Korea. Immigration to the West has often been understood as an exodus to a new promised land, and the Korean diasporic churches, in the same way as the Christian churches in Korea, have been acknowledged as institutions that offer many and varied services and aids to their adherents.

Belief in Christianity combined with traditional religious-cultural elements, and immigration to advanced post-industrial societies like Canada and the U.S.A. has generally been considered by Koreans as a most attractive strategy to adopt to become a ‘modern being’ or ‘gainer’ in the post-war era. In other words, Christianity and immigration are chosen by many Koreans in order for them to accomplish their own personal modern reconstructions within the global context that has replaced a traditional life way with its comparatively marginal social position. Thus, it logically follows that Korean Christians were more likely than Koreans of other religious affiliations to immigrate to North America. After immigrating to Canada, the majority of the Koreans who did not identify themselves as Christian in Korea tended nevertheless to gravitate toward the Christian churches.

Throughout its recent history, Christianity in Korea has played a role quite successfully in both preserving the continuity of tradition (especially Confucian and Shamanic) within a theology of orthodoxy and propagating innovations in a society that was to a large extent colonized by Western military powers, technologies, knowledge, and cultures. The degree of 'colonization' is well demonstrated by the superior appeal of Christianity in Korea's contemporary religious market. During the age of Korean industrialization and the dictatorship of the military regimes, Christianity in Korea grew at a rate closely corresponding to the rapid growth of the economy. Concomitant with this ethos of economic growth, the relative deprivation or frustration and societal uneasiness provoked by radical social changes were important factors.

Furthermore, Korean Christianity adopted characteristics of both Confucianism and Shamanism. Elements of Confucian ethics and behavioural norms are very much in evidence in the interactions between lay persons, between members of the clergy and between clergy and laity, as well as during rituals. Shamanistic behaviours have also found their way into the rituals. Even in fundamentalist churches that have shown enormous growth in population, it is to a large extent encouraged that services, especially in the mega Pentecostal churches, be held with a kind of Shamanistic fervour toward God the 'father.' This is an atmosphere very different from one stressing 'social gospel' or harmony and 'dialogue' with other denominational churches or religions. This indigenization of Christianity into a Korean religio-cultural product is one cause for its rapid growth. Through the popularity of Christianity in Korea, many Koreans, Korean Christians in particular, have been exposed to a new understanding of the West. For some, their understanding serves to present the West as a sort of 'Earthly Paradise.' This

positive understanding of the West transforms easily into a desire to immigrate to the West.

Koreans have a positive impression of the dominant standing of the Korean churches, specifically those Koreans who intend to immigrate to Western countries. Christian churches serve as attractive resources and institutions for both the immigration process especially in the early days of Korean immigration and immigrant life in the new country. This is reflected in the high degree of identification as Korean Christian of immigrants to Canada.

North American Korean ethnic churches have for a long time been the pillars of Korean immigrant society. Moreover, the particular cultural needs of Korean immigrants have accelerated their dependency on Korean ethnic churches, which in turn provides assistance with needs such as finding a home, identifying a social position or status, participating in fellowship, maintaining Korean identity, and so on. In Korean immigrant society, Korean churches have not been differentiated from other dimensions of Korean immigrants' lives. Rather, Korean churches have exhibited all the inclusive influences at the centre of the individual and the communal (Kim, J., 2002; Min, 1999, 1992). This conglomerate characteristic of Korean migrant churches seems to differentiate them from Western Christian churches.

Since the 1990s, a new situation has rapidly arisen together with the revolutionary development of new information technologies. Since immigrants now have many and varied ways of maintaining cultural ties and identities, through mass media and communication technologies, the immigrant churches have had to find new roles that they can offer and for which they would have no competition, such as ritual life and

devotion. They have had to adapt in order for Korean immigrants to continue to regard them as significant in their lives. Pyong Gap Min, one of the most important sociologists of the Korean ethnic church phenomenon in the U.S.A, argues that through Korean immigrants' efforts to preserve their Korean subculture and to identity as Koreans through their Christian churches, they have significantly "Koreanized" Christianity (Min, 1992; 1391).

The many studies of Korean immigrant Christianity, including that of Min, have emphasized the significance of Korean churches in Korean communities in North America and the number of functions they provide. However, it has been rarely asked if and how much the recent development of Korean society has affected the amount and type of religious affiliation of recent Korean immigrants to North America or how the radical development of technologies in communications, information, and transformation fields are affecting the lives and choices of the Korean immigrants.

It would seem that Korean ethnic churches have recently changed their mandates. Instead of offering a comprehensive source of services, corresponding to everything Korean immigrants might require for their everyday life in an unfamiliar land, they are now becoming religiously differentiated cultural centres, which concentrate on (re)producing a distinct culture, education, and religious identity for particular immigrants. This transition in the role of the Korean ethnic churches from 'emphasis on generality' to 'stress on peculiarity' corresponds closely to an accelerating globalization phenomenon which is related specifically to the recent radical development of communication and information technologies and the democratization and economic

development of Korean society, which both are intimately related to the process of globalization (Beyer, 1998a and c).

According to Robertson (1992), globalization is a process by which the world is becoming a single social unit. The great popularity of long-distance transportation technologies has allowed people to travel without great difficulties to a variety of distinct places in the world. Many of them have been able to move their work or their domestic life from one place to another. After this move, the immigrant can still communicate with the people left behind, this with the special assistance and easy of communication and transportation technologies. Both the Internet and moderate telephone prices, which facilitate communication with distant family, relatives, and friends, and the ongoing popularization of long-distance transportation are now important factors in the maintaining of social and cultural ties and identity.

Recently, Korea has become a representative example of the effects on the entire country of radical developments in the communication and information technologies. It is now the country within which the so-called 'super speed' Internet is most developed in the world. The Internet now acts as a significant source of much cultural variety and development. Inside the country, Koreans are experiencing the effects of migration in that they now live a contemporary form of life, very different from their traditional one. Nevertheless, an important issue remains: to immigrate to another country with a different form of culture so as to benefit from its enormous modern development.

Globalization has really to do with the movement of goods, services, and ideas throughout the world and from one country to another. But in the case of Korean immigrants and their Christianity, it may have even more to do with the ever increasing

ability to move one's country wherever one goes, and to find oneself at home in one's distinctness and community while living somewhere else.

The Christian churches in Korea have responded to this situation by adopting the new communication and information technologies for themselves. The great missionary works are largely organized through the new information technologies and their resulting network – religious rituals are amplified through the same technologies. Christian community members are bound by the same means. Korean Christian ethnic churches are going through the similar transformation as Korean Christianity in Korea. But, they are not copying the churches in Korea or following their institutions. Their transformation occurs faster, and the changes are bigger as they accelerate their religious distinctiveness. It appears therefore that other factors are at work; more specifically the global program in the communication system, and the growing political significance of second-generation Koreans in Korean immigrant communities which have allowed Korean immigrants to build social ties with other immigrants while maintaining their ties with their home country of Korea, making obsolete the network of social services presently offered by the ethnic churches. In turn, the Korean ethnic churches are emphasizing their religious significance, and adapting their content to an increasingly diversified population, contributing thereby to the differentiation of the Korean Christian immigrant communities, and at the same time to the reinforcement of the Korean character of the Christian Korean and global mission work.

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RECRUITMENT TEXT

Title of the research project: The Role of Religion in Korean Immigration to Canada

The general purpose of this research is to identify the relation between religious identity and emigration/immigration. Specifically the research is to examine Korean immigrants' understanding of Christianity, the role of Christianity in the decision to emigrate from Korea to Canada, the role and position of Christian churches in Korean communities in Canada, and the relation between Korean national identity and Christian belief in Canada. The purpose of this questionnaire is to help select the participants for the research in light of such a series of characteristics as age, sex, religion, period of immigration, occupation, and place of birth, in order to produce the balanced sample. The individuals selected among the respondents to this questionnaire will be invited to participate in an interview about their religion and emigration/immigration. These interviews will be tape-recorded.

1. Name: (한글) _____ (English) _____

2. Age: I am _____ years old.

3. Sex: Male ____ / Female ____

4. Were you born in Canada? Yes ____ / No ____

5. If you checked "No" in the question 4, when did you come to Canada?

The year I came to Canada was 19_____, when I was _____ years old.

6. What is your occupation? _____

7. What is your religion?

a) Christianity (기독교) _____

b) Buddhism (불교) _____

c) Shamanism (무교) _____

c) Confucianism (유교) _____

d) Others (기타) _____

8. If you checked "a) Christianity (기독교)" in the question 6, I specifically believe in

a) Protestantism (개신교) _____

b) Catholicism (천주교) _____

9. Which language do you prefer for the interview?

a) 한글 _____

b) English _____

c) Doesn't matter _____

10. What time is the best to contact you? _____

11. What is your telephone number? _____

12. What is your address? _____

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title: The Role of Religion in Korean Immigration to Canada

Researcher:

CHO, Kyuhoon MA Graduate Student
Department of Classics & Religious Studies
University of Ottawa
E-mail: kcho044@uottawa.ca

Supervisor:

BEYER, Peter F. Ph.D., Associate Professor,
Department of Classics & Religious Studies
University of Ottawa

This research project is conducted by Mr. Kyuhoon Cho of the Department of Classics and Religious Studies at the University of Ottawa. The project is under the supervision of Professor Peter F. Beyer. The purpose of the research is to identify the role that religion has played in the decision to emigrate to Canada and in the life of participants in Canada.

My participation will consist essentially of attending one session of about one to one and half an hour(s) during which I will respond to questions posed by the researcher. A second interview may be requested in order to clarify certain points. The researcher will record the interview on tape or take notes of our conversation. The sessions have been scheduled for *(Date and time of sessions)*. I understand that the contents of my responses will be used only for the academic purpose of the researcher's thesis project and that my confidentiality will be respected in that my name or other identifying features will not be used in any publication of the results of this research. All records of my interview will be kept secure in a restricted area to which only the researcher and supervisor will have access.

I understand that since this activity deals with personal information, it may at times make me uncomfortable. I have received assurance from the researcher that every effort will be made to minimize any potential discomfort in this regard.

I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, before or during an interview, refuse to participate and refuse to answer questions.

I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. Anonymity will be assured in the following manner: that all the records and information will be kept in a restricted place accessible only to the researcher and the research supervisor, and that my name, my specific status, and any other identifying detail will not be made public. Mr. Kyuhoon Cho will be responsible for assuring this.

Any information about my rights as a research participant may be addressed to **Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 160, (613) 562-5387** or ethics@uottawa.ca.

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which I may keep.

If I have any questions about the conduct of the research project, I may contact the researcher or his supervisor.

The Researcher: CHO, Kyuhoon
Address: Department of Classics and Religious Studies
University of Ottawa
70 Laurier Avenue East
Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Telephone: (613) 233-5209

The Supervisor: Dr. BEYER, Peter F.
Address: Department of Classics and Religious Studies
University of Ottawa
70 Laurier Avenue East
Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5
Telephone: (613) 562-5800 ext.1178

Researcher's signature: _____

Date: _____

Research Subject's signature: _____

Date: _____

Questionnaire – The Role of Religion in Korean Immigration

Please circle the appropriate response, or write in your answer where requested.

1. Meaning of religion

1) What is your religion?

- (1) Protestantism (2) Catholicism
(3) Other (Please specify) _____

2) How meaningful is your religion to you?

- (1) Very important (2) Somewhat important
(3) Not very important (4) Not at all important

3) How often do you go to your church/parish/temple?

- (1) Several times a week (2) Once a week
(3) Two or three times a month (3) Once a month
(4) Several times a year

4) How much are you involved in the activity of your church/parish/temple?

- (1) Very much (2) More or less (3) Not very much (4) Not at all

4) How much is your religious belief and activity related with your everyday life?

- (1) Very much (2) More or less
(3) Not very much (4) Not at all

5) Do all your family members also believe in the religion you believe?

- (1) Yes (2) No, but partly (3) Not at all

2. Reasons of emigration

1) Why did you decide to emigrate from Korea?

- (1) To study (2) Political Reason (3) Economic Reason
(4) To join my family (5) To experience a new country (6) For my job
(7) Other (Please specify): _____

2) When did you emigrate from Korea? _____

3) Why have you decided to live in the Ottawa/Gatineau region?

- (1) To study (2) Political Reason (3) Economic Reason
(4) To join my family (5) To experience a new country (6) For my job
(7) Other (Please specify): _____

4) Are you still satisfied with the decision to emigrate from Korea?

- (1) Yes (2) No

5) Is the quality of your life better in Canada than in Korea?

- (1) Yes (3) No

3. Reasons of choosing Canada

1) Why did you choose to immigrate to Canada? (Why not the U.S., Australia, or other country?)

- (1) To study (2) Political Reason (3) Economic Reason
(4) To join my family (5) To experience a new country (6) For my job
(7) Other (Please specify): _____

2) How did you think of Canadian society and culture before immigrating to Canada?

- (1) Very good (2) Somewhat good
(3) Acceptable (4) Not good

3) What did you think of religion(s) in Canada before immigrating to Canada?

- (1) Christianity (2) Multi-religious

4) Did you know that Christianity is the “dominant” religion in Canada before immigrating to Canada?

- (1) Yes (2) No

5) What did you think of Christianity in Canada before immigrating to Canada?

- (1) Conservative (2) Liberal (3) Something other

4. Relationship between religious identity and immigration

- 1) When did you begin to believe in Christianity?
(1) Since born in Christian family (2) When I was _____ years old.
- 2) Was it before or after emigrating from Korea?
(1) Before (2) After
- 3) Were you favourably or unfavourably disposed to Western countries and culture before emigrating from Korea?
(1) Favourable (2) Unfavourably
- 4) As a Christian, had your religious identity affected your favourable or unfavourable attitude to the Western countries and culture?
(1) Yes, it did. (2) No, it did not.
- 5) As a Christian, how had you understood Canada before emigrating from Korea?
(1) Very good for me (2) Somewhat good for me
(3) Not very good for me (4) Against me
- 6) Did your religion affect the decision to emigrate from Korea to Canada?
(1) Yes (2) No
- 7) Did you change your religion to Christianity during the preparing process of immigration to Canada?
(1) Yes (2) No
- 8) Did you think that being Christian would help you to live in Canada before emigrating from Korea?
(1) Yes, I did. (2) No, I did not.
- 9) Do you think that being Christian would help you to live in Canada?
(1) Yes, it does. (2) Not really (3) No, it does not.
- 10) Did your religious identity affect your decision to immigrate to Canada?
(1) Yes, it did. (2) No, it did not.

5. Role of religion in Korean immigrant's life

- 1) Is your religion a significant part of your life in Canada?
(1) Yes, it is. (2) Not really (3) No, it did not.
- 2) Has your religion been helpful for your immigrant life in Canada?
(1) Yes, it does. (2) Not really (3) No, it does not.
- 3) Has your religion been helpful for understanding Canadians, Canadian society, and Canadian culture?
(1) Yes, it does. (2) Not really (3) No, it does not.
- 4) Has your religion been helpful for keeping your Korean identity in Canada?
(1) Yes, it does. (2) Not really (3) No, it does not.
- 5) Has your religion been helpful for meeting Koreans and making Korean friends in Canada?
(1) Yes, it does. (2) Not really (3) No, it does not.
- 6) Has your religion been helpful for meeting Canadians and making Canadian friends in Canada?
(1) Yes, it does. (2) Not really (3) No, it does not.
- 7) Has your religion been helpful especially for your economic life?
(1) Yes, it does. (2) Not really (3) No, it does not.
- 8) Has your religion been helpful especially for your political security?
(1) Yes, it does. (2) Not really (3) No, it does not.
- 9) Is your Korean identity good for your Christian belief?
(1) Yes, it does. (2) Not really (3) No, it does not.
- 10) Is your Christian belief good for your Korean identity?
(1) Yes, it does. (2) Not really (3) No, it does not.