

An Immigrant Theology for Korean Diaspora Church in the United States

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Introduction

From 2000 to 2005, this author was sent by the Korean Methodist Church to be a missionary in Singapore, and to establish a missionary training center in Singapore for cross cultural missionary candidates, who are mostly raised in the mono-cultural context of South Korea. He experienced and realized that Koreans who have been raised in a mono-cultural environment find it very difficult to understand another culture. They hold strongly to their heritage and traditions and resist what is unfamiliar in another culture. They easily consider other cultures wrong, or lower than their own, because they are different. In other words, Koreans have a strong ethnocentric tendency.

In Singapore, many Koreans are working in higher positions in the business world and organizations, as managers, directors, or executives, because they are higher degree holders. They have an arrogant mindset when they meet with people from poorer countries. However, they complain that Western people seem to look down upon Koreans. They feel that Westerners disregard them. As a result, they have come to have a marginal thinking toward Westerners and a conqueror mindset toward the poorer.

When he came to the United States in 2005 as an education pastor at a Korean Diaspora church in Maryland, he observed that most Koreans feel marginalized here because they are working in lower salary areas in American society such as the “3D” jobs (dirty, dangerous, and difficult). As Korean immigrants make more money, enough to afford to run a business, buy a big house and a nice car, and enjoy entertainment, they feel still marginalized because they are not being recognized and regarded by Americans, and they cannot play an important role in American society or communities.

Korean culture, especially the first generation of Koreans, values recognition and authority very highly. For Koreans, one of the goals in life is to gain honor, recognition, and authority. If they do not feel that they are being honored by younger people, or by people who are in the lower position in the organization, they become unpleasant with people.

This is one reason that Koreans seek to have an authoritative position, even in Korean immigrant churches, because they are not receiving recognition or respect from others in American society. Their thinking is based on a centrality mindset as Jung Young Lee points out in his book.¹

This author sees this as a crucial problem for Korean immigrants and for Korean Diaspora churches, especially in the United States. It is the reason that Korean Diaspora churches have served more sociocultural functions rather than missiological functions in order to ensure their survival in a foreign land. This issue is foundational for helping them have a sound, biblical, and missional understanding about their identity. At the same time, the author observed the missional significance and potential of the Korean Christians in Korean Diaspora churches in the United States. This paper will answer questions such as “How can Korean immigrant Christians overcome their marginality?” and “How can we help them transform their marginal identity into missionary identity?”

Background of the Problem

In this age of globalization, Koreans are one of the most “globalized” people groups, as well as one of the most widely dispersed in the twenty-first century. The Overseas Koreans Foundation, an affiliate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trades, reports the number of Koreans residing in foreign countries to be 7,044,716, with missionaries in 169 countries.

Year after year, the rate of Koreans moving to foreign countries continues to increase.

Table 1 shows the trend of Koreans moving over a period of thirty-seven years, with Koreans continually being dispersed all over the world. While this might be a trend of the times, it could also be a sign that God is moving Koreans for world mission as some leaders of Korean churches and mission organizations perceive.

Table 1. Report of Increase/Decrease of Koreans in Foreign Countries

Year	Total	Increase/Decrease	Rate	Year	Total	Increase/Decrease	Rate
2007	7,044,716	(+)406,378	6.12	1984	1,778,707	(+)45,118	2.6
200	6,638,33	(+)301,387	4.76	198	1,733,58	(+)48,209	2.9

¹ Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 1995), 30–31.

5	8			3	9		
2003	6,336,951	(+)683,142	12.08	1982	1,685,380	(+)94,548	5.9
2001	5,653,809	(+)9,251	0.16	1981	1,590,832	(+)119,916	8.2
1999	5,644,558	(+)100,329	1.8	1980	1,341,709	(+)129,215	9.6
1997	5,544,229	(+)315,656	6.0	1979	1,341,709	(+)88,562	7.1
1995	5,228,573	(+)284,983	5.7	1978	1,253,139	(+)81,849	6.9
1992	4,943,590	(+)111,176	2.3	1977	1,171,290	(+)155,274	15.3
1991	4,832,414	(+)2,512,315	108.3	1976	1,016,016	(+)95,658	10.3
1990	2,320,099	(+)47,187	2.1	1975	920,358	(+)48,953	5.6
1989	2,272,912	(+)149,271	7.0	1974	871,405	(+)69,973	8.7
1988	2,123,641	(+)78,472	3.8	1973	801,432	(+)72,962	10.0
1987	2,045,169	(+)38,953	1.9	1972	728,470	(+)25,542	3.6
1986	2,006,216	(+)100,035	5.3	1971	702,928	(+)30,269	4.5
1985	1,905,181	(+)126,474	7.1				

Source: Data adapted from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trades, 「A diplomatic white paper」, each year. The Diaspora's role as an important tool for the mission of God is increasing. Missiologist Andrew Walls says: "People from the non-Western world will be the principal agents of Christian mission right across the world. Even in the Western world, they will have a significant place, for it may be that in some areas of the West at least, Christianity will increasingly be associated with immigrants."²

As the Korean Diaspora spreads throughout the world, the importance of their role is gaining more attention from Korean pastors and missionaries. Senior Korean missionary Min Young Jung, director of the Department of Korean Diaspora Engagement at Wycliffe Bible Translators, contends that the Korean Diaspora is the strategic resource for world mission because its members have overcome their culturally enclosed and exclusive-mindset, rigid way of thinking, and the old traditions due to their new circumstances.³

² Andrew Walls, "America's immigrants: principal agents of Christian mission." Unfinished 34, no. 4, 16.

³ Min Young Jung. Jun-ryak-juk Sun-kyo-ja-won Han-in Diaspora-ri Dong-won-ha-ra (Mobilize Korean Diaspora as the missional strategic resource). Presented

As a popular saying among the Korean Diaspora says, “Two or three Chinese get together, they start a restaurant. Two or three Japanese get together, they start a business. Two or three Koreans get together, they start a church.” For the past century the Korean Diaspora has formed a strong church-centered community. According to research by Kwang Chung Kim and Shin Kim concerning Korean immigrant church membership in the United States, seventy percent of Koreans in America are affiliated with Korean ethnic churches.⁴ Church involvement is a way of life for the Korean Diaspora in the United States. Although most Korean immigrants are involved in Korean churches, they are not enough to be called as Korean Diaspora because they go to church for their personal needs rather than religious or spiritual needs. Korean Diaspora churches have served more sociocultural functions rather than missiological functions to ensure their survival. One of the reasons many Korean immigrants go to church in the United States is to escape their marginal place in society, the pressure of language deficit, pursuit of ethnic identity, and a longing for recognition.⁵ Although Korean immigrants come to church to meet their unique needs, Korean pastors must try their best to help them transform their understanding of their identity from marginal to missionary.

The Need for a Korean Diaspora Theology

As Table 3 shows, overseas Korean missionaries who were sent by Korean churches (58 denominations and 196 mission organizations) number 17,697 in 168 countries.⁶ As South Korea is rising to first place, after the United States, in sending missionaries all over the world, interest in the Korean Diaspora is increasing among Korean Christian leaders, pastors, and missionaries. For example, a new united ministry called Korean Diaspora

in Baltimore Forum, 2004, 2.

⁴ Min Young Jung. Jun-ryak-juk Sun-kyo-ja-won Han-in Diaspora-rl Dong-won-ha-ra (Mobilize Korean Diaspora as the missional strategic resource). Presented in Baltimore Forum, 2004, 2.

⁵ Gil Soo Han, “Korean Christianity in multicultural Australia: is it dialogical or segregating Koreans?” *Studies in World Christianity* 10, no. 1. (2004): 115–118.

⁶ Research Team of Korea World Mission Association, “The Report of the Sending of Missionaries 2007,” (Report, the 6th Korean World Mission Association, Chicago, IL, July 25, 2008).

Ministry(KODIM) was launched at Palm Springs, California on November 5, 2003⁷ by Korean immigrant church pastors who have serious concerns about the future role of the Korean Diaspora. InKorea, the Korean Diaspora Network was formed on August 11, 2004, to mobilize the Korean Diaspora all over the world for world mission by mobilizing Korean immigrant churches and Korean young adults.⁸

Some Korean church leaders are preparing Korean Christians to be ready for world mission with questions like “What is God’s will increating such a huge change, both for Korean individuals and for the nation?”⁹ To fulfill the unfinished task, Korean missionaries, pastors, and people who are interested in world mission through Korean Diaspora get together every four years at Wheaton College, Illinois, presided over by the Korea World Missions Association(KWMA). The vision of KWMA is to “achieve there maining mission task through reciprocal cooperative and unified efforts.”¹⁰

Continent	12 Zones	Countries	Mission Org.	Missionaries	Rate
Asia	South Asia	5	89	983	5%
	Northeast Asia	7	152	5,034	27%
	Southeast Asia	11	129	2,999	16%
	Central Asia	10	99	1,578	8%
	Subtotal	33	469	10,594	57%
Europe	Eastern Europe	17	60	941	5%
	Eastern Eurasia	24	72	920	5%
	Subtotal	41	132	1,861	10%
America	Latin America	17	59	744	4%
	North America	6	91	2,215	12%
	Subtotal	23	150	2,959	16%
Africa/ Middle East	Southeast Africa	20	61	754	4%
	West Central Africa	21	43	329	2%
	North Africa/ East iddle	19	56	649	3%

⁷ Kodim.net, “About Us”, Korean Diaspora Ministry, <http://kodim.net/content/AboutUs.asp>(accessedMay 14,2009).

⁸ Mission Korea, “History,” KODIMNET, http://www.missionkorea.or.kr/builder/introduce/history.asp?wbd_code=kodimv(accessedMay 14,2009).

⁹ Sinyil Kim, “Korean Immigrants and Their Mission: Exploring the Missional Identity of Korean Immigrant Churches in North America” D.Miss diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2008.

¹⁰ <http://www.kwma.org>, “Vision and Purpose,” Korean World Mission Association, <http://www.kwma.org/>(accessedDecember 13,2008).

	Subtotal	60	160	1,732	9%
Oceania/ Pacific	South Pacific	11	58	665	4%
	Subtotal	11	58	665	4%
Others	Non-resident Missionary		14	122	0.7%
	Sabbatical		15	258	1.4%
	Korean Headquarters		34	434	2.3%
	Subtotal		63	814	4%
Total		168	1,032	18,625	100%

Table 3. The Statistics of Korean Missionaries in the World

Missional Potential and Significance of Korean Diaspora

As Min Young Jung mentioned earlier concerning the potential and significance of Korean Diaspora, the Korean Diaspora has been blessed in many ways. First, they have experienced cultural issues such as assimilation and acculturation by crossing over cultural borders. Koreans raised in a mono-cultural environment are not familiar with other cultures so they do not know how to deal with another culture, how to understand it, or how to communicate with people in another culture. This is one reason that Korean overseas missionaries keep copying and repeating the Western patterns of doing mission. However, Korean immigrants are the people who have crossed over cultural boundaries and survived in a strange land. Korean immigrants are the people who experienced the same difficulties as overseas missionaries. They not only know how to overcome difficulties in a new land but also how to survive there. In addition, many of them are bilingual and have enough financial resources, and seem to have gone through cross-cultural training and to be ready for world mission. However, one big obstacle for them is their preconception of their identity as marginal. Helping them to change their understanding of their identity is a big task in doing theology in a Korean immigrant context.

The Korean immigrant who has gone through the “cross-cultural training” is able to communicate in English and Korean. Second-generation Korean immigrants especially have been mostly raised in a church-centered Korean community before graduating from high school. They have a great potential for world mission because they are bilingual and bicultural. They have lived in natural missionary training settings such as Christian family,

church family, and family of God. They are blessed in order to be God's instrument to fulfill His dream for the world. The crucial issue is how to train them as missionaries in home and church. Therefore, an immigrant theology is needed for the Korean Diaspora church in order not to lose the gifts God has given to them.

A big trend among Korean churches is a rapid increase of mission activities and programs because of the influence of descriptions of Korean Christianity such as "the second largest missionary sending country" and "the country where the world's largest church is located." Korean Christian leaders motivate Korean Christians and churches in various ways to participate in mission. There is a common sense that the Korean church must do mission in order to be used greatly by God. So, many Korean pastors and Christians have concluded that their churches must do mission in some way. The missionary movement among Korean churches is continually increasing.

Theological Method

The author begins doing a theology with his personal experience and observations. He moved to Singapore in 2000 because he was sent as a missionary to Singapore. While living there as a missionary, he encountered and experienced the real-life aspects of Korean immigrants. Since he was twenty-six years old when he went into the new country, he was a typical first-generation immigrant. After experiencing a kind of Korean immigrant status in Singapore for six years, he moved to the United States for another ministry with a Korean Diaspora church. He realized a crucial problem of Koreans' identity through two different experiences. Now he is a foreigner living in America as a Korean and studying about Korean immigrants and churches in the United States.

This research comes out of his special context where he has ministered and experienced "being marginal" in Singapore and in the United States. He has come to read the Bible through an immigrant's, pilgrim's, and missionary's eye and has faced the need of an appropriate theology for his particular context.

For this reason, this author uses his unique immigrant experiences, the cultures he encounters, and the Scriptures as his theological materials for reflection, expecting social change. Therefore, his theological method can initially be considered as the Synthetic model. At the same time, his method can be sorted as the Praxis model because he

develops his theology in a way that is both truly relevant to a Korean immigrant community context and also focuses on the identity of Christians within a context, particularly as that context is understood in terms of social change.

A Missional Theology for the Korean Immigrant

The author will do a theology about the concept of marginality as a way of seeing based on the biblical perspective in this paper. As Jung Young Lee developed the concept of marginality well in his book *Marginality: the Key to Multicultural Theology*, a new understanding of marginality is a key for Korean immigrants to reconceptualize their identity in the United States.

Lee delineates the concept of marginality very well in a parable of the life of a lonely dandelion, a yellow flower at the far corner of the front yard of the house.¹¹ This author totally sympathized with his description because he so experienced that most Korean immigrants really live like a dandelion in the United States. When they come to the United States, they live at the corner of the society socially and emotionally. After flying to the United States, they often encounter situations that make them move again, to another region or country. Their life can be called a “moving” life, like a traveler or wanderer.

However, the Bible in various places describes God as the Sender. At the beginning, in Genesis 1, God revealed Himself as the Sender when he told Adam to be fruitful and multiply. He sent Adam and his descendants into the world. His goal was for humanity, as bearers of His image, to go into the world and reflect His character all over the planet.¹² The sending continued in Genesis 12:1–3 with Abraham. Abraham and all his descendants were blessed to be a blessing in order for all the nations of the earth to be blessed (Genesis 12:1–3). God’s sending continues with His prophets, like Samuel and Isaiah, who speak the Word of God to His people. When God asked a question “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” Isaiah answered, “Here I am. Send me,” in Isaiah 6:8. Bosch describes mission: “God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the

¹¹ Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*(????), 10–13.

¹² Ed Stetzer, *Sent: Living the Missional Nature of the Church* (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 2008), 15.

Son sending the Spirit was expanded to include yet another ‘movement.’ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world.” God is a sending/missionary God who has called His people in order to send them back to the world for His mission, *missio Dei*. Here we as Christians, especially Korean immigrant Christians, must acknowledge that God keeps sending His people, including Korean immigrant Christians, to another place where He has a new plan through them. This is the reason for calling them the Korean “Diaspora,” because God has dispersed them all over the world. Korean Diaspora Christians must acknowledge that their life is not designed for settlement or establishment but for constant moving toward a new place where there is not the life of Jesus Christ. They must keep moving, not because of their marginal status but because God keeps sending them for His mission for the world.

In addition, a new place where they need to move is not another marginal place or the place where they need to settle down, but another mission field where they are called to be missionaries. The key issue is their awareness: whether they recognize the place as a mission field or a place for settling down. Mission fields are not places far away from home geographically, or places without electricity, running water, or civilized culture, but places, souls, or communities where there is not the life of Jesus Christ who lived, died, resurrected, and will come back. In a traditional way of understanding mission, mission is considered an exotic task, and church members think that mission is not for them but for mission specialists who were trained especially for mission. In this conventional understanding, mission must take place in a remote area, far from the home church, by people who have a special calling and special training. However, this is a misunderstanding of the missionary calling. All Christians are called to be the people of God and missionaries at the same time, because God called His people in order to send them back into the world as His missionaries in the world through various training in life. The key issue is not whether God has called them as missionaries, but a matter of awareness. The people of God need to view their environment and the context around them as a mission field, because every Christian is surrounded by unsaved people, unrestored creations who do not confess Jesus Christ as Savior. If someone is a Christian, he or she is already called as a descendant of God’s people to be a missionary. But the person cannot recognize this fact if he or she is not trained or educated in this orientation.

Many Christians think that God has called His people in order to give them blessings. But he has called his people not only to bless them but to make them a blessing for all the nations in the world. Christians' identity must be based on John 20:21, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." Many traditional churches have emphasized mission based on obedience to the Great Commandment given in Matthew 28:19–20. This author, however, wants to suggest John 20:21 as the foundation for Christians' identity, the intrinsic nature of God that is supposed to be in the center of His people.

Looking at the movements of Korean immigrant Christians in the United States and in the world, this writer concludes that they need to identify themselves as the people of God, called as missionaries to fulfill the mission of God, because they build church-centered communities wherever they go in the world. This is a blessing and heritage that is given to Korean Christianity. In their book *Who Needs Theology: An Invitation to the Study of God*, Grenz and Olson argue that "Everyone is a Theologian."¹³ Korean pastors must teach this fact to Korean immigrants who think of themselves as marginal people only. As Grenz and Olson developed this concept, "None who reflects on life's ultimate questions can escape theology. And anyone who reflects on life's ultimate questions—including questions about God and our relationship with God—is a theologian."¹⁴

Many Korean Christians have a misconception that a theologian is "an awesome creature who thinks deep and disturbing thoughts that very few people can understand."¹⁵ As a result, Korean Christians think that lay people must learn from a pastor's sermons or teachings and not try to study or even think deeply about Christian issues with their own knowledge. They believe they should not try to think logically or theologically on their own, but rather try to receive and apply the message from their pastors' teachings, and Korean pastors have unconsciously encouraged this attitude. As a result, Korean Christians do not take the initiative to think and discuss issues from a biblical perspective based on the text, the Word of God. Rather they talk about issues from their own experiences based on the lessons from their senior pastor. This is a weakness of Korean Christians in doing

¹³ Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *Who Needs Theology? An Invitation to the Study of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 12.

¹⁴ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵ Ibid.

theology. This is one of the important issues to take into account in training Korean Christians as theologians and missionaries.

Korean churches must emphasize that every Christian is a missionary and theologian; and their work place is their real mission field, where they are called to communicate the gospel to people who are not followers of Jesus Christ. Korean Christian leaders must work on this shift of thinking among Korean Christians in order for them not to consider Christianity as a spiritual vending machine that gives them blessings.

Three Shifts toward a Missional Theology for the Korean Immigrant

This paper proposes three shifts for Korean immigrants to define their missionary identity: a missional understanding of the Bible, the Gospel, and the Church. Traditional Korean churches have been taught the Korean understanding about the Bible, the Gospel, and the Church. This section suggests shifting from a Christendom to a Missional understanding of these topics.

First, *a Shift to Missional Understanding of the Bible*: The Christendom-mode understanding of the Bible sees it as a how-to book on making Christians successful in their Christian life, not only in the church, but also in society. The conventional church extracts principles from the Bible that can be applied to the places they belong to, such as school, home, company, or business place. The important rule for this way of interpreting Scripture is applicability or acceptability that makes Christians successful. Many Christendom Christians have come to think of the Bible as a how-to book with the goal of making Christians successful in their lives on earth.

A characteristic of this way of interpreting the Bible is the production of as many principles as possible. This is the scientific way of studying the Bible. Science keeps producing new theories or principles, along with different ways of combining existing principles. This way of treating the Bible is largely based on the modern scientific method influenced by the Enlightenment. The sad thing is that many Christian leaders and pastors are using this method.

Christian leaders and pastors must have “the biblical vision of how things are.”¹⁶

Although the church is a part of society’s culture, we must not lose the vision to understand and acknowledge how things are based on the interpretation of the Bible.

Karkkainen summarizes Newbigin’s argument well:

Newbigin’s own proposal for the church to accomplish its mission in contemporary Western culture goes against the tendency to adapt to the culture . . . Rather than trying to explain Christian faith in light of modern scientific rationality, modern culture should be analyzed from a specifically Christian standpoint. The church is called to challenge the prevailing thought forms and its questionable philosophical foundation.¹⁷

Even though the Christian plausibility structure has degraded into private values by the impact of the West, Christians must keep working on the transformation of their plausibility structure based on the modern scientific method into a new plausibility structure based on the revelation of God in the Bible. The Bible is not a how-to book to make Christians successful in Christian life, but the story of God on a mission for the world. In order to make this shift in understanding the Bible, the church must keep crossing over the boundaries of the church and engage in more missionary encounters in order to be a living hermeneutic of the Bible in the culture. The church as a visible congregation is the best hermeneutic of the Bible on earth for the world.

Second, *a Shift to Missional Understanding of the Gospel*: The Gospel has been understood in the Christendom era as the entrance ticket for salvation in the kingdom of heaven when we die. Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ as personal savior can be saved and go to heaven after he/she dies on earth. In the Christendom period, the church has emphasized the expansion of Christianity and simplified the gospel so that it can be

¹⁶ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Other Side of 1984: Questions for the Churches*, 63.

¹⁷ Veli-Matti Karkkainen, *An Introduction to Ecclesiology: Ecumenical, Historical and Global Perspectives* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 157–158.

accepted easily and fulfill the dream of God, which is “God wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1Ti 2:4). Student movement and campus ministries especially have contributed a lot in this area. Here is also the impact of the Enlightenment and Western European culture in the expansion of Christianity in this period. The story of the gospel became a simple product with simple steps for people to easily understand, accept, and get an entrance ticket to the kingdom of heaven. For instance, one campus ministry named the simplified gospel “Four Spiritual Laws.” It definitely seems the product of the modern scientific culture of Western Europe.

As a result, Christians came to have a great hope in the afterlife. The gospel and Christian life on earth focused on the afterlife. The concern of being Christian relates to the afterlife. In life on earth, science became a god that can explain everything and satisfy people, and the heavenly God became the one we meet after life on earth. The Christendom church has emphasized the kingdom of heaven after life when people live as Christians on earth. The church has become an enclave where people are satisfied with the message that they will be in heaven with God after death. They become more satisfied and feel more comfortable with being inside the church. They turn inward, become more and more satisfied, and find it hard to move outside of the walls of the church building.

It should be understood that the gospel of the kingdom has the two aspects of present and future. The message of Jesus Christ indicates the present and future kingdom. The kingdom as present reality is found in the power of Jesus to heal, exorcise, and feed the multitudes (Matthew 4:23; 12:28; Luke 11:20). On the other hand, the kingdom as future reality is found in Matthew 13:40–43 and Luke 14:15, and so on. If the church focuses too much on the present aspect of the gospel, it can slip into the risk of religious humanitarianism, which is well known as Protestant Liberalism. On the other hand, if the church focuses too much on the future aspect of the gospel, it can slip into the risk of Fundamentalism, which is well known as classical Dispensational theology. However, the missional church balances the two aspects of the gospel, present and future, in what is called *balanced eschatology*. “It understands salvation as a reality that is ‘already—but-not-yet.’ It touches all of life – private and public; individual and corporate; local,

national, and international.”¹⁸ This is what Jesus taught us to pray in “your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is heaven”(Matthew6:10).

Lesslie Newbigin emphasizes the importance of the active expression of the gospel in Christians’ private and public lives. The church must teach and emphasize the balance of the two aspects of the gospel so that Christians are able to embody the gospel in their socio-political contexts in fresh and distinctive ways. One of the strengths of the missional church is the reexamination of the gospel in a specific time and place for fruitful communication of the gospel.

Third, *a Shift to Missional Understanding of the Church*: The most important understanding in *missional* is missional understanding of the church. What is the church? The term, *church*, comes from *ekklesia*, a Greek word “derived from *ek* and *kaleo* and (speaks of) the assembly of free citizens in the Greek city-states who through a herald were ‘called out’ of their homes to the marketplace. In ordinary usage the word denoted ‘the people as assembled,’ ‘the public meeting.’”¹⁹ They built the wall so for the church, had worship services there, and called it the house of God. They thought they were a chosen people blessed by God from the world. They met together and used the sacraments as away of remembering what Jesus told His disciples and celebrating their privilege as the people of God. This practice remains in the Christendom-mode church in our present culture.

However, what is God’s original purpose for calling us as the church out of the world? Newbigin insists that “it is not meant to call men and women out of the world into a safe religious enclave but to call them out in order to send them back as agents of God’s kingship.”²⁰ God called and chose His people, not in order to bring them in to the safe zone, but to lead them in to the wild zone. He wants them to be the witnesses and agents

¹⁸ David G. Dunbar, “Hearing the Gospel Again for the First Time,” *Missional Journal* 1, no. 10 (Nov 2007), in “Biblical Seminary,”

<http://www.biblical.deu/pages/resources/missional-journal.html>(accessed May14,2009).

¹⁹ *Evangelical Dictionary of World Mission*, s.v. “Mission.” 636.

²⁰ Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*, 124.

of the kingdom of God. He wants His people to focus on special responsibilities for the world rather than their privilege of calling for themselves. Johannes Blauw insists that “Israel is not so much the *object* of divine election as *subject* in the service asked for by God on the ground of election. Therefore election is not primarily a privilege but a responsibility”²¹ The church must act based on the reason God called us as His people out of the world rather than based on special privilege. In addition, the church must change the special privilege of the chosen people into the special privilege of serving others for the world.

Conclusion

In this age of world Christianity and the diaspora as Andrew Walls sees, especially in the special season of increasing interest in mission among Korean Diaspora churches in the United States, the need of a contextual theology for Korean immigrants for world evangelization prevails among them. Most Korean Diaspora churches keep the Christendom understanding about the Bible, the Gospel, and the Church with an unbiblical understanding of their identity in the United States. More Korean Diaspora scholars must be raised up in order for Korean Diaspora Christians to have a biblical and missiological understanding of themselves to be able to live their immigrant lives as missionaries in their own contexts. Although this paper is a very beginning step of doing a contextual theology for Korean immigrants, it can challenge some Korean Diaspora Christian leaders in the United States.

²¹ Johannes Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church: A survey of the Biblical Theology of Mission* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2002), 22–23.

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