

Non-Korean Attendance of Ethnic Korean Churches in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area

By
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ABSTRACT

Korean evangelicalism and the role of second-generation ethnic Korean churches in the United States has been the focus of many rich scholarly works. The levels of diversity within ethnic Korean churches in the U.S. has also been discussed, but to a lesser degree. The aim of this study is to add to the discussion of ethnic diversity within second-generation Korean churches in the United States. In this work I attempt to answer the following question: What are the forces and circumstances that would motivate a non-Korean to choose a predominantly Korean church as a place of worship and spiritual engagement?

In order to answer this question, I conducted in-person interviews with a number of non-Korean members as well as some Korean leaders of two separate ethnic Korean church congregations in the Kansas City Metropolitan area. The interviews were conducted over the course of several months. The basis of this study has been formed by the responses that I received. It is a personal look at the motivations for ethnic Korean church attendance by non-Koreans.

Some of the possible forces that are examined here include “reverse mission”, maintenance of ethnicity, and leadership’s possible desire to create a more diverse church. In the end, however, the vast majority of respondents shared a feeling of family and belonging as the main contributor to their decision-making process.

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INTRODUCTION

Korean evangelicals hold a prominent place within the landscape of American Christianity. First of all, South Korea is one of the largest missionary-sending nations in the world; according to the book *The Next Christendom*, “some fourteen thousand South Koreans are on mission overseas, a figure second only to the United States (Jenkins 2011, 90).” Although not all Korean Christians in the U.S. are missionaries per se, “seventy-one percent of Koreans living in the United States identify themselves as Christians (Connor 2014, 3).” First-generation Korean immigrants as well as second-generation Korean Americans are active in various evangelical congregations and engage in a variety of evangelical practices throughout the United States. However, the makeup of many Korean churches in America remains decidedly homogenous, as in the majority of churches in the U.S. Even a cursory glance at an ethnic Korean church congregation on any given Sunday morning would seemingly support the findings of a plethora of studies that have examined this topic. (Alumkal 2008; Chong 1998; Cristerson and Emerson 2003; Ecklund 2008; Emerson and Kim 2003; Hurh and Kim 1990; R. Kim 2015; Kim S. 2010; Kim and Ma 2011; Min and Kim 2005; Warner 1998).

In many ways, however, immigrant congregations within the United States have become, to varying degrees, more diverse in recent years. Churches that are still made up of a majority of Korean and Korean American congregants are also seeing an increase in non-Korean members. This leads to my first question: What are the forces and circumstances that would motivate a non-Korean to choose a predominantly Korean church as a place of worship and spiritual engagement? Second, when we find non-Korean members in Korean churches, are we witnessing a phenomenon

of “reverse mission” in action (Kim 2015; Jenkins 2011)? In her book, *The Spirit Moves West*, Rebecca Kim describes “reverse mission” like this: “‘Reverse missions’ refers to churches in the global South, namely Africa, Asia, and Latin America, which were at the receiving end of Protestant and Catholic missions from the late fifteenth century to the late twentieth century, sending missionaries to the global North—Europe and North America (2015, 4).” In other words, “reverse mission,” a relatively recent concept, describes the trends of missionary movement over the last few decades from parts of the world that once only received missionaries to areas that had historically only sent missionaries. Developing countries in Africa and Latin America, as well as some developed countries in East Asia (particularly South Korea), have become very active in the realm of missions and evangelism throughout the world (Jenkins 2011).

According to existing literature, there certainly have been numerous and varied efforts made by first- and second-generation Korean ethnic churches to reach non-Korean groups. This might seem to suggest that Korean American Christians, even if they don’t identify themselves as or are “missionaries,” may be engaging in some types of “reverse missionizing” efforts. Indeed, America’s lack of religious fervor is one of the major reasons that some Korean missionaries originally came to the United States. The state of American Christianity and of America as a nation is considered by Korean missionaries to be in steady decline and therefore in desperate need of evangelizing (Kim 2015). Does the existence of non-Korean church members in my study point to a certain level of evangelical success on the part of ethnic Korean churches? Have these churches been making explicit attempts to attract non-Korean converts and, if so, how? What is it about Korean evangelical churches that would motivate a non-Korean to become a member? These are some of the questions I hope to answer as they pertain to two specific second-generation Korean churches in the Midwest.

Over the past few decades, there has been a sociological focus on the aspect of ethnic community building and maintenance to explain the primary function of a church that is comprised mostly of immigrant congregants. Ethnicity maintenance has been found to be a major factor in immigrants' decisions to join churches. "Homophily" is a term used by sociologists to describe the affinity for sameness in group identification (Christerson and Emerson 2003; Park 2014). Subscribers to this theory would almost certainly find non-Korean participation in a Korean church to be anomalous. While this sociological phenomenon holds true across multiple group situations, especially in regard to church attendance, homophily is clearly not applicable to all group situations, as we witness in regard to non-Korean attendees in this study. The principle of homophily can, however, make it quite difficult for those who are in the minority to truly feel comfortable operating within the group. One candid study conducted by Sharon Kim, for example, describes a church that smells too Korean because of the food that is served each Sunday and one member admitted that "It is difficult for non-Koreans to come in here and feel like they fit in (2010, 37)." I witnessed this firsthand while visiting the churches for this study. The meal that follows the Sunday morning meeting often includes traditional Korean soups and kimchi. And yet, we do find small groups of non-Koreans that have become regular members of ethnically Korean churches. Undeterred by the peculiar smells, sounds, and customs that they have encountered, these non-Korean congregants have made the decision to not only attend but to join and put down roots among a group that is different from themselves. What are the motivations that contribute to this ability to negotiate hindrances to ethnic church attendance?

One possible explanation for the attendance of non-Koreans in Korean churches is the effort that the churches expend in the realm of missionary outreach. Do the church leaders in this study consider themselves missionaries, and if so, what people group do they believe they have

been called to reach? In general, statistics showing the number of missionaries in a given location can be misleading. Robert Wuthnow, the author of *Boundless Faith*, points out that, "the 33,000 foreign missionaries said to be working in the United States could well describe nothing more than immigrant pastors ministering to immigrant congregations," and that, "its current scope should not be exaggerated (2009, 56)." Thus, in any study addressing this question, the target audience of the missionaries in question needs to be examined to ascertain its actual outreach goals and effectiveness. In other words, a church may aspire to reach Koreans, non-Koreans, or all non-Christians in general. In this study, to what extent are Korean ethnic churches successful in missionizing or converting non-Koreans? In this regard, we need to also note that first-generation and second-generation Korean Christians differ somewhat concerning how they are positioned in regard to missions. Rebecca Kim, in her book *The Spirit Moves West*, discusses the unique opportunity afforded to second-generation Korean Christians: "The idea is that second-generation Korean Americans, with their professional status and English-language skills, can be Christian leaders in the United States and abroad (2015, 49)." In this study, I aim to discover to what depth the second-generation leadership and congregants of the churches I investigate hold the same assumption, and to what extent this assumption affects the methods and practices of the second-generation churches in the realm of missions.

The research for this study was conducted with the assistance of two churches in Overland Park, Kansas. I will refer to the churches with the pseudonyms Apostle and Bethel for the remainder of this work. Interviews were held with the leaders and members of Apostle and Bethel churches. Both churches are comprised mostly of first-generation and second-generation Korean members. Apostle offers two separate services, one in Korean and one in English. The leadership at Apostle refers to the two parts of the church as the English Ministry (E.M.) and the Korean

Ministry (K.M.). Bethel only conducts one service and it is in Korean. Bethel has not created an entirely separate service for English speakers, but they do offer an English language Bible study on Sunday afternoons following the regular service. This project is focused upon the second-generation portions of the churches, their leaders, and non-Korean members. The leaders were asked about their thoughts on missions and about welcoming outsiders into their folds. The non-Korean members were asked about their initial contact, decision to join, and overall experience with the churches.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Korean Immigrant Churches in the United States

Korean Christianity as it is practiced within immigrant churches in the United States is marked by its success in maintaining Korean culture, its focus on missions work, and its evangelistic fervor. Many studies have found that ethnic Korean American churches operate importantly as a sort of social center for Korean immigrants and second-generation Korean Americans (Chong 1998; Min 1992; Tudor 2012). Sebastian C. H. Kim and Kirsteen Kim in *A History of Korean Christianity* report an interesting finding that “even those individuals who were not Christian in Korea tended to identify as Christian in diaspora (2015, 300).” In the U.S. context, about twenty-eight percent of Korean immigrants convert *after* they arrive in the U.S. (Kim and Kim 2015, 302). This phenomenon indeed suggests that ethnic Korean churches may be quite successful in meeting the multiple and varied social needs of an immigrant population, thus providing a key explanation for these post-immigration conversions to Christianity. The solidarity of a homogenous group can act like an anchor, a stabilizing force for many who dwell within societal margins as ethnic minorities. While many churches strive to transcend their own historically ethnic frameworks, homophily still plays a significant role in the formation and growth of immigrant congregations and ministries (Yoo and Chung 2008). Again, according to Min and Noh, “Homophily, or the preference for same-ness in group identification, is a truism in sociology (2014, 55).” The question remains: how do these churches that exist with such homogeneity become home to members of other ethnicities?

Korean American Evangelism

Korean Christianity is marked by a strong sense of evangelism. Korean Christians have been found to operate with a “sense of calling to repay the debt of the gospel by sharing what they had received with other nations and peoples (Kim and Kim 2015, 315).” This missional mindset is a prominent narrative throughout the literature. Rebecca Kim (2015) discusses the intensity with which Korean missionaries evangelize college students. Also, according to Jenkins, “Korean Christianity has a deep commitment to evangelism and mission work (2011, 90).” Evangelism and missions are priorities for first- and second-generation Korean Christians (Ecklund 2006). Furthermore, “Korean evangelicalism ... reflects an orientation that is largely conservative theologically and culturally, intensely devotional in terms of practices, and pervaded by a current of charismatic spirit and fervor (Chong 2008, 25).” Some central tenets of evangelicalism shared by Korean evangelicals also include the belief that the Bible is the infallible word of God, the belief that one should develop a personal relationship with Christ as savior, and the belief that evangelicals have a moral obligation to spread the Gospel and save as many souls as possible.

Elaine Howard Ecklund uses two models to discuss the impetus for evangelistic behavior among Korean American evangelicals: “communally negotiated” and “individually negotiated (2006, 52).” According to the communal model, there is a priority placed upon evangelistic activity such as community service. In these cases, the entire congregation is encouraged to come together to meet some need within the local community. This is the model used by the second-generation church in Ecklund’s study. The individually negotiated model, utilized by the multiethnic church in the study, is somewhat more passive, leaving the decision of engagement in general evangelistic endeavors up to each individual congregant. Each type of church group studied in Ecklund’s work

believes in the importance of evangelism, but those operating within the individually negotiated model do not place the same priority on working together to accomplish their evangelistic goals.

In both evangelistic models set forth by Ecklund, however, second-generation Korean American evangelicals are said to be, “trying to create identities that are different from those of their immigrant parents, identities that fully incorporate being a Korean and an American in the context of being a Christian. One way they do this is through being *distinctively* evangelical (2006, 14).” According to Ecklund, this involves a deliberate emphasis by Korean churchgoers on ministering to those who are least like themselves (2006, 14). Furthermore, some Korean members of Korean American evangelical congregations are often, “pushed by congregational leaders to develop an ethic of service to their community (Ecklund 2006, 53).” Ecklund later describes an “ethic of volunteering” in this way: “Being like Jesus takes many forms, including inviting others to church, helping those in the community one-on-one through small groups of volunteers that are sent from the church, or simply deciding that one’s motivations are currently not ‘right’ to be a volunteer (2006, 98-99).” Many of the respondents of this study seem to operate according to this set of ethics to one degree or another.

Globalization and Reverse Missions

The world continues to become more interconnected than ever before. The proliferation of the use of English as an international language, coupled with the growth of Christianity in the global South, seems to have led to the growth of a large number of ethnic Christian churches on U.S. soil. Therefore, churches everywhere now have a far greater chance to become influenced by churches that are ethnically dissimilar to their own. More specifically, the globalization of evangelicalism and the process of “reverse missions” might be key factors which lead to greater levels of diversity *within* ethnic church congregations, as these churches attempt to reach out to members outside of their ethnic group and draw in members of the larger society into the churches. Gerardo Marti in *A Mosaic of Believers* (2005, 22) posits, “The United States continues to become more diverse in every societal sphere, bringing a new challenge of integration to both civic and religious organizations.” A church’s response to this trend will decide whether or not they embrace or resist diversification.

Another way in which efforts to reach non-ethnic members may be successful is by the ethnic churches, in turn, gradually becoming more mainstream, a part and parcel of religious globalization. Globally circulating Christianity is “globalized” in the sense that it has already been transformed through the processes of syncretism and indigenization in the global South before the process of “reverse missionizing,” but may become further changed in the process of their “return” back to the global North and evolution there over time. Philip Jenkins in *The Next Christendom* (2011) indeed predicts that Korean churches in America will become more mainstream: “the example of European ethnic churches on American soil suggests that Korean Christian communities will become progressively less ethnically centered as time goes by (2011, 131).” Furthermore, as the younger generation of Korean Americans grows more active

within Korean ethnic churches, the use of English will become more necessary and will inevitably shift the churches toward the mainstream (2011, 131). If this proves to be true, it could be a significant factor in lowering the barrier to entry for non-Korean members into Korean churches. The closer a church moves toward the mainstream, the more likely it is that the costs of membership for minority members will decrease. If second-generation Korean churches begin to look and feel more like any other American evangelical church, then the costs involved for non-Korean attendance will diminish. A possible positive effect of this kind of shift is that evangelizing carried out by Korean American Christians may become more effective in the United States. According to Warner (2000, 283), “we are in the midst of a process of the de-Europeanization of American Christianity, not the de-Christianization of American society.” Countering the thesis of supposed weakening of Christianity, or of growing secularization, in the United States, immigration, ironically, may have brought a kind of revival in American Christianity both by the religious vitality of immigrant congregations and by the subsequent generation churches becoming more “mainstream” over time while possibly retaining certain ethnic features of the first-generation congregations.

As discussed in the current literature, one of the major ways that the Korean, and other, ethnic churches are becoming more “mainstream” is by trying to become less monoracial, as I discuss next. This is particularly true of second-generation Korean ethnic congregations, many of which are moving toward becoming more multicultural or multiracial, embracing diversity in leadership and congregational makeup. Although there are many second-generation churches that have no interest in becoming multiracial or multiethnic, there are many that are, “comfortable with the idea that many immigrants see themselves as missionaries, whether to their co-ethnics, their home countries, or the host society, you and me (Warner 1998).” Such

transformations, again, also signify the development of a kind of “globalized” Christianity that is increasingly becoming more visible among the younger generation.

Existing Discussion of Multiracial/Multiethnic Congregations

The active desire of church leadership to change the ethnic/racial makeup of a congregation is another possible explanation for non-Korean attendance of ethnic Korean churches. Alumkal writes about a Korean American congregation in New York that is, “influenced by the American evangelical subculture to reach individuals of all ethnicities and races (2008, 158).” Alumkal’s analysis employs a “culture frame” to help explain the following: “If a congregation’s ecology determines what type of racial/ethnic membership is possible, a congregation’s culture defines what type of membership is desirable (2008, 158).” Thus, the first question that I must pose in regard to the churches in my study is: have they become multiracial intentionally? Further, what does it take to be considered multiracial? Emerson and Kim define multiracial congregations as, “any congregation in which less than 80 percent of the members share the same racial background (2003, 217).” According to this definition, neither Apostle nor Bethel would qualify as multiracial. Many of the congregations throughout the literature simply do not meet the criteria to be labeled multiracial or even diverse. The ethnic/racial majority group comprises such a vast percentage of the population of these churches that the existence of members of any other ethnic group is both rare and intriguing. The cost of attending such a church as an outsider would seemingly become greater in correspondence with the lack of diversity within the congregation. Nonetheless, these ethnic/racial outliers exist. They have chosen to join themselves to groups that are not merely

ethnically and culturally different, but that oftentimes have different needs and goals than their own. Do we then have to look to the cultural aspects of these churches to find answers?

Second-generation members of ethnic churches are often faced with the decision to cling to the methods of first-generation leadership or forge their own unique path. The book, *United by Faith* (DeYoung et al. 2003), includes a discussion of this process as it pertains to uniraical Asian American churches:

Once the generation born in the United States comes of age, however, there is increasing evidence that Asians Americans become engaged in more racially and ethnically diverse congregations... or recruit a more diverse membership into their preexisting uniraical churches Confronted with the challenge of promoting Christian ideals by shunning ethnic exclusiveness, these congregations are actively seeking a diverse membership (122).

The churches I studied seem to be faced with these types of decisions, but the way they have dealt with them differs somewhat from those found in the literature.

Social networks also seem to have a direct effect on the formation and makeup of church groups. In *Multiraical Congregations*, Emerson and Kim (2003) discuss several possible factors that lead to diversity within multiraical church bodies. In their work, they describe the role social networks play in constructing racial/ethnic makeup of congregations: “The racial diversity of the visitors is limited by the degree of diversity within the members’ social networks (Emerson and Kim 2003, 219).” A Korean American congregant may only have close, social contact with other Korean Americans, thereby limiting the number of opportunities one might have to invite a non-Korean person to church. Some congregations have become instantly

multiracial as a result of the merging of two ethnically/racially dissimilar preexisting organizations (2003). However, Emerson and Kim stress that “the primary impetus for a congregation becoming multiracial comes from its mission – its theological, cultural, and/or symbolic orientation (2003, 220).” The belief that the Good News is something that is meant to be shared with every type of person in every corner of the world has led some uniethnic/monoracial churches to reevaluate their ethnic makeup as well as their cultural orientations, thereby paving the way for visitors from various other ethnic groups.

Racial/ethnic diversity of congregations can, however, also be shaped by social networks that are forged from personal and familial relationships between existing members and new recruits, such as through marriages, friendships, or other types of familial relationships. Such personal ties, as I will describe in this study, can serve as important reasons behind the new members’ attraction to churches that are ethnically different from themselves. A 2013 study of racial diversity states that “interracial couples and families, hoping to find religious communities that value ethno-cultural diversity, often intentionally search out racially diverse congregations (Perry 357).” This may also help to explain their willingness to remain faithful to their new church homes. The book, *United by Faith* (DeYoung et al. 2003 95), discusses a multiracial congregation that attracts interracial families, “as well as white families who have adopted children of different races.” In a classic study of religious conversion, Lofland and Stark (1965) argue that an “affective bond” that has been formed through a pre-existing relationship is a “necessary condition” in the process of conversion. Whether a subject is a white American male married to a Korean woman, a white American couple that has adopted Korean children, or simply a person who enjoys a friendship with a fellow student who happens to be

Korean, these relationships can all play a role in the decision-making process of new church seekers.

The specific way Korean church leaders approach reorganizing their church's ethnicity and racial makeup is another important matter to be considered. Sharon Kim's book, *A Faith of Our Own* (2010) includes an insightful observation of what she calls, "shifting ethnic boundaries" in second-generation Korean American churches. Her study, conducted in 22 churches in Los Angeles, includes a view of the diverging perspectives that exist regarding ethnic boundaries in the subject congregations. Her findings serve as a starting point for some of the discussions in this project and I have attempted to discover to which of these perspectives Apostle and Bethel most closely align. Kim asked the churches' leaders where they want the ethnic boundaries of their congregations to be drawn. She found that "Some desire to reach out primarily to fellow second-generation Korean Americans, others want to enlarge their target population to include non-Korean Asian Americans, and still others are determined that their churches become fully multiracial (Kim 2010, 20)." The first perspective exhibits the desire to remain ethnically particular or monoracial. The second thought is for the church to expand but only to include other Asian Americans which would be considered panethnic. The third and final perspective Kim discusses is a determination to become multiracial. Each subject church in this study will fall somewhere among these perspectives and their position will serve to inform the discussion of the impetus for non-Korean attendance levels.

Some Asian American church leaders have revealed other interesting perspectives on the issues of missions and the forming of multiethnic congregations (Jeung 2005). They are adherents to the basic tenets of evangelism but tend to apply them in a way specific to their own situations. These church leaders are said to, "have their own inner logics that translate into a

peculiar form of American religiosity that is engaged with this world, therapeutic, and market oriented (Jeung 2005, 64).” In this study, Jeung found that “Ministers ... assume that Asian Americans are homogeneous and that Asian Americans can evangelize other Asian Americans better than others ... Rejecting assimilation or a multiethnic congregation as the end goal, they argue that a spectrum of ethnic and panethnic churches is necessary to meet the market demands of religious consumers (2005, 75).” In other words, instead of apologizing for their seemingly exclusive monoethnic or panethnic makeup, they are content embracing a narrative of mission fulfillment without reaching beyond the Asian community. During the interviews with church leadership in my study, I attempt to ascertain whether the leaderships’ general vision is in favor of becoming multiracial, panethnic (Asian American), or content remaining largely uniethnic/monoracial.

Barriers to Diversity

As discussed, homophily may be a key barrier to true diversity within ethnic churches. According to Huhr and Kim’s 1984 book, *Korean Immigrants in America*: “Korean immigrants attend church primarily for religious reasons, secondly for psychological comfort, and thirdly for social needs... Korean immigrants appear to crave spiritual and ethnic fellowship (184).” The same could be said for any ethnic religious group. Much of the literature suggests that homophily could be the reason so few churches become truly multiethnic. We, as humans, tend to gravitate toward people that are like us. Korean immigrants in America are said to, “miss both the informal and formal aspects of the Korean society back home, and the ethnic church seems to provide a microcosm of both ... to be with a large group of Koreans without particular

obligation, threat, demand, or attachment – a ‘little Korea’ in America (Huhr and Kim 1984, 135).”

Therefore, an important matter to consider relates to the cost involved in attending a church that is outside one’s ethnicity. There is a risk that a member’s needs might not be fully appreciated or understood compared to those of the majority members: “To the degree that a congregation is a source of support, consolation, celebration, and strength, if persons do not feel integrated into the congregation, if their worth or troubles are devalued, they lose compared to what they could receive in uniethnic congregations (Christerson and Emerson 2003, 166).” However, we all share a basic human need to belong and church provides, “an affiliation and a network that responds (Tudor 2012, 64),” to that need. Minority members in large monoracial church settings, for various reasons, have chosen to pay the costs to, “venture across racial boundaries not just for enjoyment and novelty, but to gain meaning and belonging (Christerson and Emerson 2003, 167).” They seem to place more importance on the benefits of relationships they are able to form in these monoracial congregations than the costs they encounter. Christerson and Emerson, again, point out that, “relationships and a sense of belonging are key religious and social goods, and minority respondents find it difficult to obtain them (2003, 178).” Have these costs been reduced at Apostle and Bethel or is there a set of benefits that outweighs these costs for the non-Korean congregants of this study?

Korean ethnic churches must, “affirm and celebrate the dignity of their particular ethnicity (Kwon et al. 2001, 65-66).” While ethnic Korean churches tend to be uniethnic organizations, it is also important for them to acknowledge the necessity for some level of inclusivity (Kwon et al. 2001). “Ethnic particularity,” is seen by some as a strength of many Korean American churches but the authors of *Korean Americans and Their Religions* argue

that, “particularity must not be absolutized (Kwon et al. 2001, 68).” Particularity describes the first-generation Koreans’ propensity for homophily while second-generation Koreans feel a pull toward a more universalist approach that they believe is more aligned with a biblical perspective (S. Kim 2010). A tension is found between retaining ethnicity and welcoming diversity. Korean Immigrant churches have been criticized at times for their exclusive practices especially as they pertain to the areas of ethnicity and gender. This could prove to be a barrier to real growth for some of these organizations. The health and vibrancy of such churches may rely on their level of willingness to welcome others into their local flock.

What can minority members of uniethnic/monoracial Korean American congregations tell us about their experiences? What are their main motivations for attending a Korean ethnic church and staying put? Have they been sought out by their hosts through evangelism? Are they the result of successful missional efforts by Korean ethnic churches within their local community? While missionality may not be the primary impetus for the formation of Korean churches in the United States, my findings suggest that the devotion to evangelism that is engrained within Korean American Christian beliefs has nonetheless created a real sense of mission within many of these organizations that may override the tendency toward homophily. The interviews that form the heart of this project are meant to reveal not only the motivations of non-Korean membership for attending Korean churches but also to begin a discussion about how both the Korean-ethnic and non-Korean congregants in my study view themselves in the realm of missions.

METHODS

The Korean population in the Kansas City region in 2010 was three thousand, eight hundred fifty-six, according to a report from the University of Southern California's Program for Environmental & Regional Equity (2013). Approximately seventy-five percent of the region's Korean population was born in Korea and the largest groups of Koreans reside in Johnson and Jackson Counties which include Overland Park, Kansas and Kansas City, Missouri (Capps and Soto 2016). An internet search for Korean churches in the Kansas City metropolitan area shows eight different organizations. The two churches that were selected for this project will be referred to throughout the work as Apostle and Bethel. I have used pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. Both churches are located in Overland Park, Kansas. Their accessibility was considered with regards to language spoken in services and their proximity to myself and each other. The general missional outlooks according to the churches' websites were also considered during the selection process. Both Apostle and Bethel have English language ministries while the other churches were unclear on this point. Apostle has a full service in English for their second-generation Korean members as well as their non-Korean members. Apostle's English ministry has one-hundred-twenty members, twenty-six of which are non-Korean. The total membership of Apostle for both English and Korean ministries is two-hundred-seventy. Bethel's English offering is much smaller and consists of a Bible study that is attended by three to five white, non-Korean individuals and is led by a second-generation Korean church leader. The total membership of Bethel is seventy-three, nine of which are non-Korean. The existence of ministries that reach outside the Korean language suggests a certain level of outreach that suits the study of non-Korean attendance. Apostle is identified as a non-

denominational church while Bethel is a part of the Southern Baptist denomination. Two separate churches were chosen to keep the project manageable while still creating an opportunity to draw comparisons. The churches are not diverse enough to be called multiethnic, but each contains a small percentage of non-Korean congregants. The non-Korean congregants at Apostle typically attend the English Ministry service with mostly second-generation Koreans while the non-Korean congregants of Bethel attend the Korean service with first and second-generation Koreans in addition to attending the English Bible study following the regular Sunday service. I want to note here that, while denominational differences may exert influence on the cultural and ideological orientation of the churches in regard to evangelism, missionizing, and views on racial/ethnic diversity, I do not pursue this comparison in this paper as that is beyond the scope of what I can answer with these two churches.

This project was comprised of in-person interviews and participant observation. Interviews were chosen as the most direct way to extract data pertaining to a subject's experiences and their feelings resulting from those experiences. The interviews lasted between fifteen and thirty minutes and were conducted primarily in semi-private areas of the churches' properties. I used open-ended questions to allow for a semi-directed discussion and the emergence of ideas unbiased by previous scholarship and my own preconceptions. The interview questions were created in such a way as to facilitate a comfortable and conversational tone. The questions were open-ended enough to allow the interviewees to share freely while being structured enough to guide the interview and cover the questions that I wanted to cover.

I have attempted to model this project based on the methods put forth by Glaser and Strauss in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967). The central idea that I have adopted here is to allow the data to drive the formation of theory rather than use data to prove or disprove

existing theory. Only a few provisional hypotheses were formed to avoid any bias or directing of the interviewees on my part. The intimate and diverse answers were then allowed to create a picture of what was taking place. The interviews were recorded, transcribed with the help of an assistant, and then coded.

I used a demographic form to obtain information such as gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, and educational experience. I also attended several gatherings of each congregation to observe the behaviors of the subjects and the dynamics of interpersonal interaction. I attended regular Sunday morning services as well as various special gatherings such as holiday celebrations and post-service mealtimes. I took detailed notes of my observations. I then compared the subjects' answers to what I had witnessed during the observation phase of the project.

My primary contacts at the two churches were both second-generation Korean-Americans, one, the lead pastor of the English ministry at Apostle and the other, the leader of the English Bible study at Bethel. The two church leaders acted as gatekeepers and helped me recruit participants according to my desired specifications. They also helped organize interview schedules. Their assistance was indispensable, especially considering the narrow window of time that was available to complete the fieldwork. The interviewees would not likely have agreed to meet me without the encouragement of their leaders. I made myself available on Sundays for several weeks throughout November, December, and January of 2017-2018. The pastors chose dates that would work with the selected subjects.

Apostle has the largest Korean congregation in the Kansas City Metro area according to one of their young leaders. Indeed, the first sight a visitor to the fellowship hall is greeted with is a large map of the world with the church's various missional endeavors clearly marked.

The walls of the sanctuary are lined with banners announcing numerous upcoming events in Korean.

Bethel is a Baptist church that was planted under the auspices of the North American Mission Board, a Southern Baptist Convention organization. The church was formed as a response to the lack of Korean Baptist churches in the Kansas City area. The senior pastor, along with a group of other leaders, cooperated with the North American Mission Board and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to plant the church in Spring 2013. As part of this cooperation, the Korean church shares the use of a large American Baptist church building. Korean language signs advertising the church can be seen in and around the parking lot and building. As mentioned above, there is an English language Bible study available for non-Korean members and headphones are provided for live translation during the Korean language service.

Apostle was the first church that I contacted in preparation for this project. I began by sending an email to the pastor to explain my project and to ask for assistance. His response was gracious and open. My family was invited to attend a fall festival and we were able to meet several members of the church. We received a warm welcome from everyone we met and we established a rapport from the onset. The pastor then asked a group of non-Korean members and a few Korean members and church leaders if they were interested in taking part in this study. There were some non-Korean members that seemed reticent to speak with me at first, but the pastor vouched for me and his help made it possible to set up the interviews necessary for the success of this project. There were also some non-Korean members that did not speak with me, either because they were not personally approached by the pastor for participation, or because they simply chose not to take part.

Bethel was subsequently added to the project to provide more depth and an opportunity for comparison. My initial contact with Bethel occurred during a visit to an event being held by the non-Korean church that houses Bethel. I sought out the Korean pastor and found a small group in the Korean church office that also included the English Bible study leader. As I explained the basis of my project, I informed them of work that I had done at a Christian school in South Korea. The senior leader of Bethel mentioned that he knows the leaders of the school at which I taught. The connection proved helpful with the level of cooperation I received from everyone involved.

Every participant in this study was born in the United States. Fifteen individuals took part in the interviews for this project. The ages of the respondents ranged from twenty-two to forty-seven years and the median age was thirty-two. Nine of the interviews conducted involved members that are non-Korean while five were done with members and church leaders that are Korean American. The one remaining female participant is unique among this group. Her mother is Korean and her father is white. She has not learned the Korean language, yet she attends a Korean church and has almost exclusively Korean American friends who speak, or at least understand, Korean. Her experiences are viewed throughout this project from a non-Korean, outsider perspective.

Eleven participants in this project belong to Apostle. There, I interviewed two male Korean American leaders, aged thirty-five and forty-seven. I interviewed two male Korean American lay members, aged twenty-four and thirty-two. The remaining seven members from Apostle included a thirty-seven-year-old, male, non-Korean deacon, a twenty-seven-year-old, male, non-Korean worship leader, and two male, non-Korean lay members, aged thirty-four and thirty-eight. Rounding out the group from Apostle were two female, non-Korean lay

members, aged twenty-nine and thirty-four, and a twenty-four-year-old, female lay member who has a Korean mother and a non-Korean father. Four participants were members of Bethel. At Bethel, I interviewed one, thirty-two-year-old, male Korean American leader and two non-Korean male lay members, aged thirty-two and thirty-nine. The final respondent from Bethel was a twenty-two-year-old, female non-Korean seminary student. All non-Korean members were white.

The subjects were asked questions dealing with their initial contact with their current churches along with questions regarding their various experiences while attending these churches. The respondents' thoughts and opinions about mission work were also discussed. The intent of the questions was to spark discussions concerning motivation behind church selection and the ongoing decision to remain members of these specific places of worship. Why would a non-Korean, white, American individual attend an ethnically Korean church? Are the churches attempting to reach out to non-Korean community members?

Understanding the specific ways individual churches define evangelical terms is of crucial importance to this work because the evangelical mindset of a church can determine its degree of acceptance of outsiders. Similarly, the way each church views its position in American evangelicalism could help reveal the motives behind its approach to outreach. During the interview process, the participants' understanding of the term "evangelical" was discussed both with church leadership and church members. Church leaders were asked if they intentionally seek non-Korean converts. Conversely, non-Korean congregants were asked various questions concerning their initial contact with the church as well as the length of time of their attendance and their general experience throughout their time at each church. Non-Korean congregants were also asked about their plans for future attendance.

I compared my findings to those found in other studies concerning ethnicity, missionality, and church attendance. While the subject congregations may not be considered truly multiethnic or multiracial, I have compared the data collected with existing studies of Korean ethnic churches that are similar to mine – those with separate English ministries within a larger ethnically Korean congregation – and those considered truly multiethnic or multiracial. The scope of this study is not as far-reaching as others in this area, however, it is an attempt to augment the body of knowledge on related studies. Thus, while the sample size of this study is not large, the limited scope of this project allowed for a more intimate look at an area that has been passed over by some scholars.

FINDINGS

This section has been organized into categories based on the information gathered and the manner in which the data addresses the questions that are central to this research. Why would a non-Korean, white, American individual attend an ethnically Korean church? Are the churches attempting to reach out to non-Korean community members? The categories have been shaped not only by the questions posed to the subjects but the responses that were received during the interview process.

Motivations for Korean-ethnic church attendance by non-Korean congregants:

Family-Orientation and Intimate Fellowship

My first goal as I began each interview was to discover the way the subjects became aware of their respective churches and to find some of the reasons that shaped their decision-making processes. For example, if a respondent used an internet search, why were they searching for a church, and what search parameters did they use? If they had been invited to attend, who invited them and under what circumstances? Several respondents discovered their churches simply by performing an internet search for Korean churches in the Kansas City area. A priority was placed on churches that offered English language services. My main finding about the appeal of the Korean ethnic churches for these respondents was that ultimately, it was the family-orientedness of the churches and the intimate fellowship they provided the participants.

An interesting finding was that nearly all subjects demonstrated some sort of prior affinity for Korean culture. Some of these attractions began with the respondents' discovery of the Korean language while others began with chance meetings and becoming acquainted with Korean people. The respondents' searches were based accordingly. Esther, a white, twenty-nine-year-old, single woman that shared her fondness for, "Asian ministries" stated, "I just did an internet search for Korean churches, and this [church] was the first result with an English ministry." Others had previous knowledge of the church before becoming members.

Despite the prior affinity the participants said they had for Korean culture, only a small number of those interviewed actually began attending as the result of being invited. All of those were already practicing Christians. Rebecca is a twenty-two-year-old seminary student at Midwest Baptist Theological Seminary and attends Bethel and was one of the few members who did not have a great deal of prior interest in or personal connection to Korean culture. She was, however, invited to attend Bethel by a fellow seminary student that happened to be Korean. As we discussed the motivation behind her attendance, she shared this heartfelt story:

I had never thought about the Korean culture before coming here. And the seminary that I'm at has a huge Korean degree program so there's a lot of Koreans at our school, but even at that point I never really thought about it, but I came across the Korean language online, and I thought it sounded really pretty so I just started teaching myself without any knowledge of the culture or anything. And then my friend who's a member here, I asked her to help me and then she invited me to the church and started teaching me about the Korean culture, and I just fell in love with it. I was interested in the Korean culture, and I was learning the language, and I thought it was a great opportunity to immerse myself the best way possible in this country, in this

area, and once I visited, I loved the family atmosphere and just how loving the people are here. And that's what really kept me here. Probably the family atmosphere and just how much they love each other and they take it seriously. And I also love how they're just completely themselves with the Korean culture. They're not trying to Americanize the church at all. They're trying to stay true to themselves.

As it was for Rebecca, my data suggests that the non-Korean participants found these churches a welcoming, family-oriented environment that provided motivation for continued church attendance. Subjects from both churches shared similar opinions and anecdotal evidence of this. Their initial visits were viewed positively and any cultural or other barriers they may have faced were outweighed by the benefits they felt that they received. Fellowship and family atmosphere are common threads that ran throughout the interviews. These were mentioned multiple times by many of the respondents. James, a thirty-two-year-old, non-Korean member of Bethel, who found the church in an attempt to locate a place to learn the Korean language, explained the welcome he received on his first visit as well as his perception of the type of church family interaction he has witnessed during his attendance:

As soon as I got here, the congregation was just absolutely welcoming. They showered you with kindness. They didn't just invite you to their fellowship dinner, they insisted that you go. And that was the kind of hospitality that I hadn't seen in very many places, let alone, very many churches.

Daniel is a member of the United States military and is a thirty-nine-year-old, non-Korean member of Bethel. Daniel's wife is Korean and she found the church by conducting an internet search for Korean churches when they moved to the Kansas City Metro area. Daniel shared these reasons for remaining at Bethel:

Just the message that they put out, it seems to fit, really kind of hits us well and then they're just really inviting, they make you feel really welcome here and it seems more personable than most churches we've been to. From the first day, it's always been very friendly. And I know not all of them, even though they don't speak perfect English, they've never really had trouble, they've always tried to make me feel, even though I'm one of the few people here who don't really speak Korean, I always feel like they care; they make sure I know what's going on and help me out. They don't make me feel like an outsider even though I'm kind of outside the normal group. It's been good.

These responses stand in agreement with my own personal experiences during my initial visits to the subject churches. As mentioned earlier, I was welcomed into each church with warmth and cooperation. Each group invited me and my family to join them at special church events and meals. I was subsequently welcomed each time I returned to conduct interviews.

Although most non-Korean members did not begin to attend Korean ethnic churches by way of personal connections to Korean individuals despite prior general interests in Korean culture, some members from each church shared deeply personal motivations for their involvement in ethnic Korean churches. There were non-Korean members who married Korean spouses as well as a non-Korean family that had adopted children from South Korea. These are simple, yet profound reasons for the initial desire to become a part of ethnically Korean churches. Abigail is a thirty-four-year-old, non-Korean member of Bethel who has two adopted Korean children. When asked about her motivations for staying at Bethel, she said:

Initially, we sought out a Korean church because we have two Korean kids but we stayed and kept coming because it's a very welcoming church and we just felt like people were very friendly when we first came and we enjoyed the pastor's sermons so that is what kept us coming back after initially visiting. I like that it's small, so it's easy to meet people and get connected. I also like the fact that my Korean kids are around mentors and teachers who reflect them in ethnicity. So, those are probably the two things that I like the most.

Abigail's considerations began with her personal family and, once she received such a warm and friendly welcome, her choice to remain at Bethel was solidified.

Stephen, a non-Korean deacon at Apostle, met his Korean wife at a school in South Korea. Stephen understands the importance of culture and language for his wife and they have attended Korean churches in every city in which they have lived. Ten years ago, they spent a summer living in Houston, Texas and attended a Korean church there, so when they moved to the Kansas City area, they sought out a Korean church once again. In Stephen's words:

My wife, being Korean, is the reason we looked for a Korean church ... When we came here, we looked for one and then we just got along with the folks here which is why we stuck around. I guess, at this point, what I value most is the relationships.

Daniel, the non-Korean from Bethel who is married to a Korean woman, shared that they have, "almost always attended some kind of Korean service. It helps her understand better and the atmosphere seems more inviting and we always just seem to fit better." This response seems to suggest that Daniel and his wife have encountered some level of awkwardness or discomfort at non-Korean churches that could be based on their biracial

relationship and issues of language. Bethel has provided a church where Daniel and his family can feel at home.

This section serves as confirmation for the existing studies on religion that social connections and networks may be factors that are important as motivators for church attendance as religious factors. (Lofland and Stark 1965). As shown in the previous section, we also see that, once recruited to the churches, a sense of close fellowship and family-like belonging is central for continued attendance.

Prior Religious Experience

The religious background of the congregants was also examined in order to determine their levels of church-going experience. Eighty-seven percent of subjects had attended Christian churches much of their lives before arriving at their current churches, while all respondents had some sort of past church experience. The duration and denomination of previous church attendance differed somewhat among the various members, but growing up in church emerged as a common theme. Thomas is a thirty-eight-year-old, white member of Apostle that shared that he was, “baptized and confirmed in Roman Catholicism.” Abigail, a non-Korean member of Apostle answered, “I grew up, went to a Nazarene church all my childhood and then after we were married we went to different denominations but always Christian churches.” Abigail’s husband, Aaron responded, “I grew up in a Methodist church.” Daniel, the married military man from Bethel explained his previous church history this way, “I grew up Christian. Catholic, actually, but kind of fell out of it in college and the military. I met my wife and she, when we

started dating she was going to a Korean church where we lived in El Paso. I started going with her.”

Thomas, a thirty-eight-year-old, non-Korean member of Apostle had attended another popular Korean church in the Kansas City area since being invited to a youth group meeting when he was a teenager. In his early twenties, he moved to Apostle for, “more spiritual advancement.” He credited the Holy Spirit for his continued attendance, saying, “The Holy Spirit touches me here and I see the Holy Spirit flowing through both English ministry and Korean ministry.” He is now one of the longest attending members of the church.

The church’s belief system was brought up as an attraction for several respondents for its doctrinal validity and congruence with their own already held beliefs. The teaching of the Bible as truth and Jesus Christ as Savior along with the straightforward manner in which the message was presented was affirming for these particular subjects. They expressed a level of comfort with the pastors and the message that was being conveyed because it was in agreement with their existing convictions.

Every subject claimed at least a moderate level of past church experience. There are no new Christian converts within the scope of this study. This perhaps suggests a lack of effort on the part of the Korean ethnic churches to reach unchurched, white, non-Koreans, or if there is such an effort, it is largely unsuccessful. The former hypothesis, however, was confirmed in the discussions conducted with non-Korean members as well as Korean leadership concerning mission work and evangelistic tendencies. While there were a few different ethnicities mentioned regarding missionary endeavors by non-Korean members and Korean leaders alike, there was no focus whatsoever mentioned on evangelizing white, non-Koreans, churched or unchurched. However, the lack of effort made to draw in non-Korean members does not seem

to signify an unwelcoming attitude toward non-Koreans on the part of either church body. To the contrary, we have seen that the leading cause given by the non-Korean members for remaining with the church after their initial encounters was the warm welcome that had been received. Furthermore, as mentioned above, a feeling of family and community was experienced by many of the subjects.

Overcoming Barriers to Continued Ethnic Church Attendance:

Overcoming Cultural Barriers

“Overcoming cultural barriers” refers to the ability of the subjects to move beyond any difficulties they may face in attending a Korean church to the point that it becomes their home church. Discussions concerning the motivations for the subjects choosing to stay at their respective churches yielded multiple responses from each individual.

Bethany is a twenty-four-year-old woman whose mother is Korean and whose father is white. She was born in Missouri and is of German descent. Bethany attends Apostle and has been a member for most of her life. This is the way she described her beginnings at Apostle:

My mom is Korean. I kind of grew up here at Apostle... we left for a while and then we went to an American church for ten years, but my mom was really struggling spiritually, so she actually came back to Apostle and so she just brought us with her.

When Bethany was asked what made her stay at Apostle, she relayed her personal journey from her youth to the present:

The community. When we came back, I was youth group age. Personally, I was not a believer then but just came to church because my mom made me come and forced me to go to youth group and for a couple of years I hated it. Eventually, though, I started having an affection towards everybody here. I don't think I was friends with them, but I saw how they treated each other and how they were friends with each other, and I really respected that and I thought they genuinely had something special here. I stuck around because of that (and my mom made me). As I grew up and became a believer, now the reason I stay is because of the community here and the relationships I've built with people. I think it's very special.

During our interview, I asked Bethany, "You mentioned hanging out with mostly Koreans. Do you feel at all on the outside because maybe both their parents are Korean?" Her response was abrupt and direct:

Yeah, all the time. Again, I don't know if it's my own insecurity or if it actually is true. Especially since I don't speak Korean at all. Most of my friends speak it fluently or at least understand it very well and, at times, we'll all be talking and someone says something in Korean and then they're all suddenly speaking in Korean - and that really sucks. I hate it when they do that. And I've kind of talked to them about it a couple of times, but the attitude that is mostly perceived is that 'Well, why don't you just learn Korean?' and that's super frustrating. I'm just getting to the point where I'm just okay that I don't speak Korean.

The churches' Korean ethnicity was specifically cited by thirty-three percent of the respondents as a primary attraction for attending the church. On the other hand, when directly asked what some of the major difficulties were that the subjects had to contend with in

sustaining church membership, three subjects stated that language was the primary issue they faced. Daniel is the non-Korean military man who married a Korean woman. They attend Bethel so his wife can enjoy the benefits of a church made up of her own culture and language. Daniel has made some sacrifices on behalf of his wife. When asked about difficulties he has faced, he had this to say:

The language is the only thing. They try hard and they do a good job for the most part, but sometimes it's, a lot of their group messages are all in Korean, so sometimes I have to ask my wife, if she's there, 'Hey, what's going on? What are they saying?' Or my wife will just tell me or whatever. They definitely try hard, but their main language is Korean.

Daniel is the same gentleman whose motivation for remaining at Bethel included how much everyone attempts to make him feel like he belongs even though he is, "outside the normal group." Daniel's sense of being an outsider, it appears, was based almost entirely on the language barrier. Daniel, however, also feels a great sense of welcome through the efforts that everyone has made to make sure he understands what is going on so that he largely feels as if he belongs to the group.

James is another non-Korean member of Bethel who mentioned just one difficulty in attending an ethnically Korean church:

Mostly the language barrier when trying to communicate with people who are visiting from Korea and are not here for a very long period of time. I've only just now picked up a nightly routine of studying Korean and I haven't been able to communicate

fluently, I'm still not fluent, so when people are visiting, I've always had trouble communicating beyond just saying 'Hi' and introducing myself.

James's perspective on language places the burden upon himself rather than the church. He does not believe the church should cater to his needs, he is actively learning the Korean language so he can better communicate without making anyone else feel awkward.

A fourth member mentioned technical difficulties with the translation equipment that is used to accommodate English speakers. Six respondents claimed no difficulty whatsoever. Other responses ranged from cultural to logistical. For instance, the commute that is required of two of the congregants has made it difficult for them to attend every meeting. The difficulties that were shared were usually not enough to prevent the subjects from fully participating in most services. There was even a major trend among the participants of this study to move beyond mere attendance and into the realm of volunteerism as I discuss in the next section.

Nearly every person interviewed mentioned a family feel or the sense of community that they experienced. The overall feelings of acceptance and welcome seem to be the key mitigating factors concerning the costs involved with ethnic church membership. Even as difficulties were discussed, it was usually in tones that suggested the respondents were more than willing to overlook them and have had no trouble in overcoming what little hardships they have faced. A few respondents even became a bit defensive when I asked them if they had faced difficulties because of attending their current churches. These few respondents' answers were abrupt and it seemed as if they were defending their chosen church family as well as their personal choice to remain in attendance despite possible obstacles.

The subjects' responses remind me of an interesting point made in *United by Faith* (DeYoung et al. 2003, 166) that describes a process of assimilation of non-Korean members into an ethnic Korean church that was in the process of transitioning from being uniraical to multiraical. DeYoung et al. (2003) describe the following:

...the overall culture of the church was unmistakably Korean American. For example, fellowship events and dinners typically featured Korean cuisine, despite the large number of non-Koreans in attendance... in this case, non-Korean/non-Asian members must essentially assimilate into the largely Korean American culture of this congregation (166).

This observation raises a question in my mind as to whether the attendees of the churches in my study are undergoing a similar kind of active assimilation *into* the Korean culture, moving beyond merely tolerating Korean culture within the churches. If so, this assimilation appears to be worth the cost to non-Korean members that remain in ethnic Korean churches. DeYoung et al. (2003) add, "Those non-Koreans who join the church are sympathetic to the Korean Americans' cultural needs and see the Korean-dominated church culture as an opportunity to learn more about other races (166)."

Levels of Participation:

Frequency of Attendance and Church Involvement

Eighty percent of those interviewed make it a point to attend as many meetings as possible. They are there every week and are also involved with most extra gatherings that occur beyond the typical Sunday morning meeting. Thomas, the non-Korean member of Apostle, said that he is always at church on Sundays. Bethany, also of Apostle, claims to be at every service unless she is out of town. Daniel takes his family to Bethel most Sundays if he is not working, as well as attempting to attend extra events such as Bible readings and retreats. Aaron and Abigail attend Apostle regularly, as long as he does not have to work. Rebecca has been attending Bethel once a week for the last year and a half. The remaining subjects claim to only miss meetings due to circumstances such as work schedules or sickness. The devotion to what is oftentimes referred to as the “gathering of the saints” is strong within the sample group included in this research.

Acts of Service

The level of service displayed by each subject was ascertained by discussing the volunteerism that each has undertaken while also discovering in which capacities respondents may operate in an official manner. Four members hold some type of office such as deacon. Five of the subjects are teachers either by being assigned to a teaching position or by volunteering. Sixty-seven percent state that they volunteer in one fashion or another in areas such as worship team, vacation Bible school, and children’s ministry.

Aaron and Abigail are both non-Korean members of Apostle and are married with four children, (two biological and two adopted from South Korea). Aaron is in the military, and I asked him if he holds a position or volunteers at the church, and he told me “I don’t know that I technically hold a position, but I’ve been helping spearhead the safety and security ministry and getting emergency response plans and things set up for the church.” When I asked Abigail the same question, she responded in a similar fashion: “I don’t have a position, but I volunteer with children’s ministry. Like substitute teaching, helping with vacation Bible school, and the Christmas program, things like that.” Abigail described feeling overwhelmed when she first arrived at Apostle:

Because it is so small, I think, they just involve you in everything right off the bat, so it felt a little overwhelming to us coming from bigger churches that you’re just expected to join in right away so you can’t just show up on Sunday and hide in the back. So, that is one thing and then the children’s ministry, I think, is still growing to kind of catch up with the amount of kids they have and so, at times, it’s been a little tough with that lack of staffing with volunteers to meet the needs of all the kiddos in their classes.

Abigale seems to have been pulled upon to serve in the very places in which she already perceives the most need at Apostle.

The predominance of church volunteerism and acts of service discovered throughout the interview process speaks to a level of maturity and devotion on the parts of the participants. Nearly every subject either holds an official position within their church organization or volunteer on a regular basis. This suggests that they have moved beyond the level of merely receiving the benefits of membership and have become vested in the interests of their respective organizations. Rebecca from Bethel answered, “I do help with the children’s ministry a bit. I

do children's sermons in English once a month." Rebecca's fellow non-Korean members at Bethel showed a willingness to serve, but have found it difficult. Daniel, of Bethel, said this about whether or not he has engaged in any form of volunteerism:

Not yet. I try and would like to, with my wife in school and my hours, I work nights, so it's sometimes really hard to do stuff like that. I want to, though. I'd like to get more involved. We've done a few things to try to help out, but not enough. Not enough for me. I want to do more.

James is also a non-Korean member of Bethel. He shows a willingness to serve, but has had some difficulty doing so:

When they ask me to do something for the church I will do it, again, not being 100% fluent in Korean, I don't really volunteer unless I'm asked, and I'm always happy to do so. We had a pastor that became ordained by the Baptist church here, and he was an attendee, and I was asked to be an usher at the ordination service, so I happily volunteered.

The level of service displayed by the subject group along with a general willingness to serve in their home churches can also be found in their overall attitude toward missions. The clear majority of respondents conveyed either a current missional lifestyle or a desire to become more active in the realm of missions. The forms of mission discussed in this study include the donation of time and finances within organized opportunities, as well as the act of sharing one's faith within one's sphere of influence.

Missional Mindset and Recruitment:

The ideology of mission was discussed at length over the span of three questions. The first question called for subjects to share their thoughts on what makes a person a missionary. Answers ranged from those that believe that every Christian should be a missionary who is actively sharing the gospel with anyone and everyone, to those that believe missions are relegated to only a select few professional Christians. Sixty percent of the answers stated in some way that everyone is either called by God to be a missionary or has the ability to engage in missions, whether it be on the other side of the world or just among coworkers or members of the local community. Philip was born in Georgia to a Chinese mother and a Korean father. Philip is a forty-seven-year-old elder for the English Ministry at Apostle and summed up his definition of a missionary in this way: “A missionary is just someone who actively spreads the Word to non-believers. In my mind, that can mean here in the neighborhood, or it can mean globally somewhere else.” When asked if they consider themselves missionaries, forty-seven percent answered affirmatively. Twenty percent stated flatly that they do not consider themselves missionaries and the remaining thirty-three percent showed certain levels of aspiration to become active in missions at some point in the future. After some self-examination, Aaron, a thirty-four-year-old, white member of Apostle responded, “You know, initially, I’m like ‘No, I’m not a missionary’, but I think ultimately, when I look back to how I would describe it, it’s like ‘I guess maybe I am’.” This response represents the middle of the spectrum of received answers.

Rounding out the discussion of missions, the congregants were asked if there was one specific people group that they believe they are supposed to be reaching. While the majority believe that there is indeed a specific group they should be reaching, there was no consensus as

to what people group that would be. Answers were often more individual and personal than congregational. Rebecca, the young seminary student that attends Bethel, believes, “A missionary is someone that lives with the idea that every aspect or possibility that they’re in is a chance to share the gospel with people. It doesn’t have to be your occupation for you to be a missionary, in my opinion. It’s just your lifestyle.” And when asked which people group she felt called by God to reach, Rebecca responded without hesitation, “The Korean Church. It’s my goal.” She feels that she belongs in a Korean church to serve that church. Some pointed to the people groups that are currently being served by the churches. Stephen is a deacon at Apostle. He is a white, thirty-seven-year-old construction worker and is married to a Korean woman that he met while working as a teacher in South Korea. As we discussed Christianity in Korea and his own mindset on missions, he shared this assessment:

Especially when you get there and you see how Christianity is exploding, you don’t need missionaries from the U.S. going over there, you need them coming back over here. The two main groups that we are involved with, one is Freedom Fire we’re partnered with, and that is the inner-city, made up of almost all African and African American children. That’s just the makeup of that community there. The other partner is Honduras ministries. Currently, our mission focus is, there’s so much need in just those two spots unless you want to cover a global map of all the places that we touch ... both of those two I don’t think has anything to do with the people groups of where they ended up, it’s more of the network, somebody met somebody that worked at Freedom Fire, and the head of the Honduras ministry was introduced to our previous pastor, and we had a mission trip go down there and it’s just grown from there.

This response stands out due to its normalcy. These seem to be the types of missions that could be undertaken by any Christian church or organization, not necessarily a church that is comprised of nearly all Korean Americans. A similar response was given by a young Korean American leader of Apostle. Paul, the Korean American deacon, and teacher at Apostle had this to say:

Generally, our goal is to reach everyone we come into contact with at work, at home, our friends – and then, we also support outside missionaries in Japan, downtown Kansas City, Honduras, and Jordan. So, I think that’s kind of how we see missions. People we can reach here through our lives, and people who we obviously cannot reach and support them financially.

Even though the demographics of Apostle would suggest that reaching Korean Americans might be considered a top priority, this was not the case according to both a Korean American deacon and a non-Korean deacon. One participant from Apostle, Benjamin, however, had a different view when it came to missions. Benjamin is a twenty-seven-year-old, white male. He plays the guitar and leads worship for the English Ministry service at Apostle and his view of the church’s mission focuses on Korean ethnicity:

I think, I’ve been here four years and it’s become very clear that Apostle has a niche with just reaching Korean Americans or there’s a lot of exchange students that probably our ministries have fluxed or grown the most, college and young adult, so there’s a lot of people that are in transition into Kansas City from other places and they’re almost all Korean. It has been a good place for them to be kind of familiar with their environment and be discipled. For me personally, I don’t know if that’s a specific personal calling to, but that is definitely what I find that this church has done.

Overall, however, only twenty-seven percent of respondents believe that they should be reaching Koreans or Korean Americans, while nobody mentioned any coordinated effort to reach white, non-Korean individuals. One leader at Apostle even questioned whether it was even biblical to attempt to reach only one specific people group. His reaction was the most telling when it comes to the overall attitude and stance toward evangelism at either church. Nearly every participant stated the belief that we should all be sharing our faith with others, regardless of race or ethnicity. Philip, the elder at Apostle, shared a very specific vision that he has for the future of Korean Christianity in the Kansas City Metropolitan area:

I feel like God wanted me to help Apostle grow and thrive and so I've been very involved in that. So that's probably the group that I would say that I feel called to reach out to. I do have a vision ... my hope is that there will be an opportunity for (Korean churches in Kansas City) to be combined, to share resources, and to have a very strong community.

Interestingly, of the church leaders that I interviewed at Apostle, two of them pointed to the organized outreaches in which their church is currently involved. When we discussed outreach and missions, the focus was on a traditional view that included work in foreign locales like Honduras and inner-city missions. They spoke of donating time and finances wherever possible. Their views were based on the pragmatic actions that are currently being taken by Apostle to fulfill their idea of mission. This is not to say that these traditional missional endeavors are less important than bringing in new members to their churches in Kansas City, but the focus of Apostle's evangelistic work does not appear to be on expanding the size of the congregation.

The data suggests a group of believers that are devoted to the teachings of the Bible and to their churches. There is an apparent focus on family values and servanthood. The way in which the subjects have joined their respective organizations, with an eagerness to contribute, speaks to their personal belief systems. Their level of success in negotiating the obstacles that attending an ethnic congregation can present suggests a certain level of maturity and resilience. The acceptance that each subject has experienced seems to be another strong contributor to their success. It would seem that treating outsiders more like family on the part of the Korean ethnic churches has, in these cases, helped ease the effects of any possible marginalization, whether real or perceived.

CONCLUSION

Non-Korean members of ethnically Korean churches comprise an interesting group. Many of the subjects in this study seem to fit well within the existing literature on Korean American Evangelicalism and multiracial congregations in some respects but may also stand at odds to the literature in other ways. I have asked this group to share their motivations for becoming part of the Korean congregations that they now call home. Whether their responses seemed obvious or were indeed revelatory, they painted an intriguing picture of Korean American Christianity from fifteen distinct perspectives.

The discussion on reverse mission makes up a healthy portion of the current literature involving Korean churches and Korean Christians operating in the United States. *The Next Christendom* (Jenkins 2011), deals heavily with the number of South Korean missionaries that are being sent out from Korea to other parts of the world, including the United States. Rebecca Kim (2015) has also written extensively on the matter in works such as *The Spirit Moves West*. Her work centers on campus groups whose main purpose is to proselytize students within the United States' university system. The participants of this study, however, generally did not fit the profile of reverse missionaries. Even in the broadest sense of what reverse mission can be, these particular groups do not quite hit the mark. These are two churches that are making their way in a rather competitive religious environment by simply being themselves. They are not making any grand overtures to any specific people group but neither are they turning any groups away. Apostle and Bethel are ethnically Korean churches that have welcomed any souls who have cared to visit and/or remain as members. The two churches then are more in line with what Robert Wuthnow described in *Boundless Faith* (2009). He warned that numbers can be

deceiving and discussed how the tallies of foreign missionaries in the United States could just be, “immigrant pastors ministering to immigrant congregations.” In the case of this project, this seems to hold true. This truth only serves to make the motivations of the respondents even more interesting.

The makeup of each of these congregations suggests that homophily does play a large role among the congregants. In fact, the ethnicity maintenance undertaken by Apostle and Bethel seems to be a major factor in drawing many of the subjects of this project into their ministries. Whether it is because they have a Korean spouse, Korean children, or just an affinity for all things Korean, they are unequivocally drawn to take part in the church life of these two Korean churches. I find it fascinating that the very thing that tends to make it difficult for outsiders in these types of situations, the dominant ethnicity of the church, is what many of the respondents profess is a major motivation for attendance. An affinity for Korean people and Korean culture is shared by most of the participants in this study. This stands out to me as one of the most interesting findings of the entire project. Nearly every subject is drawn to the culture. They are Christians, but they were already Christians before they made their ways to these churches. They are unique Christians that hold a special place in their hearts for the Korean people.

Korean Christianity is still marked by a strong sense of evangelism as discussed by the likes of Rebecca Kim, Philip Jenkins, and Elaine Howard Ecklund. However, the ways that evangelism manifests itself within the two subject congregations do not seem to have a goal of multiethnicity or multiraciality in mind. Each church is content in reaching whomever they may reach. Ecklund’s individually negotiated model best describes the outreach endeavors found at Apostle and Bethel. Church leaders and congregants hold firm beliefs concerning outreach, but

the responsibility tends to fall to the individual as to whether or not they will engage in such activity. Outreach is certainly encouraged and many of the respondents are engaged in some sort of evangelistic endeavors. Ecklund (2006), also mentions an “ethic of volunteering,” that I found to be prevalent among the subjects, Korean and non-Korean alike. The subjects have also been captivated by a family-oriented style of biblical Christianity that transcends ethnicity. The way these two Korean communities live their religions is a strong motivating factor for church attendance.

Despite the respondents’ perceived feelings of welcome and family, the role of the social networks of the Korean members could possibly be limiting the diversity of the churches in my study. Many of the casual interactions I had while sharing meals after services at Apostle and Bethel lead me to believe that there is little cross-cultural social interaction taking place between Korean members and non-Korean members, at least beyond the church premises. For instance, Bethany, from Apostle, finds herself spending most of her time with only Koreans. Also, one group of Korean friends at Apostle all work at the same technology company together during the week and ate lunch together on Sunday with very little non-Korean interaction. Therefore, Emerson and Kim’s thought on social networks and diversity in *Multiracial Congregations* (2003), seems to hold true to some degree for the churches in this study. They state that “The racial diversity of the visitors is limited by the degree of diversity within the members’ social networks (219).” There appears to be a lack of diversity within the Korean members’ social networks that is reflected in the low levels of diversity found within the congregations.

The book *Multiracial Congregations* (2003) also discusses a reevaluation that some religious organizations have made with the purpose and desire of becoming more diverse. In the case of Apostle and Bethel, the data did not hint at any such reevaluation. In fact, I found

no evidence of concern from anyone involved in this project for increasing the diversity of their congregations. Rebecca, from Bethel, even mentioned that she appreciates how the church has stayed true to its Korean culture. She views them as more authentic because they are not attempting to diversify. In her words, “I also love how they’re just completely themselves with the Korean culture. They’re not trying to Americanize the church at all. They’re trying to stay true to themselves.” The non-Korean participation at the heart of this study exists even though the churches have not made attempts to diversify.

Sharon Kim’s work in *A Faith of Our Own* (2010), deals with “shifting ethnic boundaries” in second-generation Korean American churches. The three perspectives Kim has put forth show the different levels of ethnic boundaries that she has observed in her study of Korean American churches in Los Angeles. The churches either desire to remain monoethnic, expand beyond Koreans but only to include other Asian Americans, or expand into true multiethnicity. The two churches in my study fall somewhere near the first perspective. They are not particularly concerned with becoming any more multiracial than they currently are. I did find it interesting, however, that they have been found to be so welcoming and loving to non-Korean members. Indeed, this study has shown that social networks composed of a personal nature, such as interracial marriage and adoption, serves as one important motivation behind non-Korean members’ church attendance. On the whole, however, the churches appear content with their levels of diversity, but I believe they show a willingness and ability to take any future ethnic expansion as it comes.

Existing studies have pointed out that some Korean immigrant churches face difficulties when they attempt to serve both first-generation and second-generation congregants because the tensions that often arise between the generations may hinder the growth of the churches.

Sharon Kim (2010), specifically mentioned issues within English ministries that remain a part of immigrant churches. She observed that “the primary disadvantage of having an English ministry within a Korean immigrant church is that it limits the outreach potential and fosters evangelistic complacency within the membership.” At Apostle, I believe the data shows a group that has succeeded in a way that Kim did not find in her observations. Apostle has found a balance between their Korean Ministry and their English Ministry. The English Ministry operates with a level of autonomy that is not necessarily typical of this type of dual structure. According to the leaders at Apostle, the cooperation between the two ministries has grown and even flourished over the years. The English Ministry leadership is able to lead evangelistic endeavors with the full support of the Korean Ministry. With their robust emphasis on missions, it is no surprise that they have found a way to cooperate and succeed evangelistically in a way that some churches with a similar structure have not.

One of the strongest pieces of data found throughout this project is the sense of welcome that is felt by non-Korean members of the participant churches. This agrees with much of what Christerson and Emerson discuss in their work on the costs of diversity; however, my data shows a general level of success in overcoming these costs. In *The Costs of Diversity*, Christerson and Emerson (2003) state, “relationships and a sense of belonging are key religious and social goods, and minority respondents find it difficult to obtain them.” The subjects of my project seem to have succeeded in obtaining these social goods. This is a testament to the churches’ abilities to create a sense of belonging for non-Korean members. The family feeling experienced by many of the respondents has been the leading aide in overcoming the real costs of diversity involved in their church participation.

In the end, this project shows a group of non-Korean church members that are content with their place in their respective congregations. They are drawn to Korean culture and have made their decisions to remain members based on the feelings of welcome and the level of benefits they receive through their membership. The subject churches are not trying to be more than warm, welcoming, Christian houses of worship and outreach. Their outreach is based on who they may serve rather than how they may shape their congregations. Their concern is not with the demographics of their services, but with the services that they can offer the world around them. The non-Korean members are attracted to the love that emanates from the leadership and from the families that make up the subject congregations. Aside from the obvious draw of Korean ethnicity that attracted most of the respondents in the first place, there is a genuine quality to the basic Christianity that is practiced at Apostle and Bethel.

This work would benefit from future research such as more in-depth interviews with the head pastors of the churches. More focus could be given to the influence of the Korean leadership on the diversity of these congregations. This might also help further the understanding of the subjects' responses and the meanings behind them. Another aspect of this study that could be examined further is the possible extent of the affects that region has had on the findings. Compared to other regions of the United States, the Korean population of the Kansas City area is rather low. How would the findings be different if the study were expanded to include other areas of the U.S. with larger Korean populations? Are these churches at an earlier stage in their development compared to other regions? These are some of the issues that could be examined with more time and further investigation.

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APPENDICES

Interview Questions

1. How did you hear about this church?
2. Is this your first churchgoing experience?
3. How frequently do you attend services/extra services?
4. What are some of the reasons you have chosen this as your church?
5. What do you like most about attending this church?
6. Have you encountered any difficulties in attending this church?
7. Do you volunteer with this church in any capacity...if so, in what manner?
8. Describe your idea of what a missionary is.
9. Do you consider yourself a missionary?
10. Is there one specific people group that you feel you have been called by God to reach?

Interview Responses

Interview #1

1. Primarily, internet searches looking for Korean churches in the greater Kansas City area.
2. No, I grew up in a Methodist church.
3. Well, between services and extra services probably four or five times a month, depending on my work schedule since I work some weekends.
4. We chose KMC because we were looking for a church when we moved here just in general, but then we started looking at Korean churches and KMC finding churches that our two adopted children could be better reflected and have shared experiences with people that look more like them and may have, share some cultural identities with.

(You adopted two children from South Korea)?

Yes, we've got two children from South Korea: 7 and 2. Adopted at 22 months and 18 months.

5. We're a military family so we've church shopped or visited lots of churches over the years and one of the things that stood out about this church in particular was how friendly people were and welcoming and I think most churches like to think they are and many are, but it was very clear on our first Sunday and subsequent Sundays how friendly this church community was and I'm sure part of is, in other churches, especially much larger churches we could just kinda slide in and out without really being noticed but this is a small enough church that we stood out on our first Sunday so people were very interactive and welcoming.

6. Not that are associated with this church, it's more, we live at Ft. Leavenworth, and it's almost an hour drive each way and there are other options closer, but again we felt called to come to this one, so that's our biggest challenge, is just the commute.

7. Fairly recently, I don't know that I technically hold a position, but I've been helping spearhead the safety and security ministry and getting emergency response plans and things set up for the church.

8. I think, to me a missionary is someone who goes out into the community and shares their love for Christ, their experiences, and tries to be that light unto the world. I don't think you have to go outside of the country, you just have to go outside of your home.

9. You know, initially I'm like no, I'm not a missionary, but I think ultimately when I look back to how I would describe it, it's like I guess maybe I am.

10. No, I don't think I see or feel called to any particular group as far as my outreach or mission.

Interview #2

1. Actually we just did a Google search for Korean Churches in the area and then looking for one that had English speaking services.

2. No, I grew up, went to a Nazarene church all my childhood and then after we were married we went to different denominations but always Christian churches.

3. Almost every Sunday, unless we're sick or out of town, regularly.

4. Initially we sought out a Korean church because we have two Korean kids but we stayed and kept coming because it's very welcoming church and we just felt like people were very friendly when we first came and we enjoyed the pastor's sermons so that is what kept us coming back after initially visiting.

5. I like that it's small, so it's easy to meet people and get connected, and then I also like the fact that my Korean kids are around mentors and teachers who reflect them in ethnicity so those are probably the two things that I like the most.

6. Yes, probably because it is so small it, I think, they just involve you in everything right off the bat, so it felt a little overwhelming to us coming from bigger churches that you're just expected to join in right away so there's not like a, you can't just show up on Sunday and hide in the back. So, that is one thing and then the children's ministry I think is still growing to kind of catch up with the amount of kids they have and so at times it's been a little tough with that just like I think with lack of staffing with volunteers sort of to meet the needs of all the kiddos in their classes.

7. I don't have a position, but I volunteer with children's ministry, like substitute teaching, help with vacation bible school, and Christmas program, things like that.

8. A missionary, I think, would be someone whose job it is to spread the gospel in other places, like that's their primary job they do for a living.

9. No, I don't consider myself a missionary.

10. Not specifically, I would just say I think I'm more gifted in working with children so that's where I tend to volunteer and be more present is in children's ministry

Interview #3

1. Google, it was the first hit. (Did you look for anything, what was the search)? Geographic based on zip code, I looked up Korean churches. (Did you look for English service necessarily)? No, this one was less than a mile from where we were staying.

2. No. (grew up Christian).

3. I come weekly.

4. First, it was closest to the apartment where I was living, that's how it started, that was why we came here, but my wife, being Korean, is the reason we looked for a Korean church and she had come, we had just moved, this was in 2008, and so we lived in Houston for a summer and went to a Korean church there and when we came here we looked for one and then we just got along with the folks here which is why we stuck around.

(Where did you guys meet)?

5. I guess at this point is the relationships, what I value the most.

6. No.

7. Yes, I'm a deacon. I guess where I volunteer most is Freedom Fire, it's an urban ministry in Kansas City. KMC is the longest tenured partner, we go back twelve plus maybe fifteen years. That ministry is, I don't think there's anything better in the metro for what they do and all the reaches that they've got.

8. I guess somebody who's trying to bring people to Christianity. Location doesn't matter. There's a guy who goes to this church, he works at UPS sorting and he loves that job because

they have such a high turnover rate that he gets to share his testimony to a lot of people. He's kind of the person that I look at as... ideally what a missionary should be.

9. Not when I compare myself to someone like Grant, no. His career is a missionary and he has a job at UPS. My career is my job and helping Freedom Fire is an activity. Even though the thing we get involved with, we as a church host the second Friday of the month at one of their locations where we bring food and that's their outreach program where they just go through the project and they literally walk around with a bullhorn and say, "Freedom Fire is starting." And all these kids show up and most of 'em are from African Muslim countries, a lot of kids from Somalia. That is a missionary activity and they talk about Jesus and give lessons about Jesus that sort of thing. And so, for like Kevin, that's his job that's his career that's his focus. For me it's like second Friday of the month, so I do a difference between the two.

(Discussing Christianity in Korea): Especially when you get there and you see how Christianity is exploding, you don't need missionaries from the U.S. going over there, you need them coming back over here.

10. The two main groups that we are involved with, one is Freedom Fire we're partnered with and that is the inner-city, made up of almost all African and African American children. That's just the make-up of that community there. The other partner is Honduras ministries. Currently our mission focus is, there's so much need in just those two spots, unless you want to cover a global map of all the places that we touch...both of those two I don't think has anything to do with the people groups of where they ended up, it's more of the network, somebody met somebody that worked at Freedom Fire, and the head of the Honduras ministry was introduced to our previous pastor and we had a mission trip go down there and it's just grown from there.

Interview #4

1. Through Google, I was looking for a home church when I moved out here about two years ago. (from California). Searched for Korean church. English speaking ministry was my focus because I'm more comfortable with English. I can understand Korean, but my Korean speaking level is like probably close to elementary school level, so it is not natural to me when I'm talking to Koreans.

2. No, grew up in church.

3. Every week.

4. They had a good men's ministry, or just in general meeting together outside of church, I just felt this was the right place, that God has me here.

5. There's a lot of genuine God-fearing people.

6. Nothing out of the normal.

7. Not official position, but I volunteer, I teach 5th and 6th grade bible study.

8. A missionary is anyone who spreads the gospel to others and teaches God's word. In essence, every Christian should be a missionary if they are following God's calling to spread the good news and so I don't think there's any distinction but in a cultural and social context, a missionary is typically one who goes outside of their home country and spreads the gospel whether it be in a country that accepts Christianity under the law or under their legislation or whether it be a country that is either against Christianity outspokenly or sometimes it can be even subtly. There are countries that say they are free to worship, but in essence, they're actually not.

9. Yes.

10. I like working with children that don't have parental figures in their life or people who have lost a parent. (Through Freedom Fire). It's not limited to those but I guess that's where my heart is. My mom lost her parents very young and my dad didn't really have a father, I mean he had a physical father, but he wasn't a very good example. There was alcohol involved and his mom pretty much raised him. I got introduced to Freedom Fire through our head pastor. And I visited for a couple of times to see what it was about and it's just a local outreach ministry that tries to minister to kids that may not have the opportunity to hear the gospel otherwise and also just to love the kids and show them that there's hope. A lot of them come from broken families or a very poor setting or they're actually refugees, there's kind of a living area that's close to the community center that Freedom Fire works out of and there are a lot of Islamic refugees that have moved here and are living here. Our church goes once a month, usually the second Friday of the month. I try to go every Friday, as often as I can... There's no obligation for me to go because I'm not officially associated with them, but I go because I was previously tutoring one of the students there so I kind of felt that it would be nice to keep following up. Not just, being consistent was important to these kids because they've probably had very little consistency in people who have been mentors to them in their life, people would just see them for a little bit and then go. Definitely, being consistent is important. More important than normally when you have a support system for children that have both parents who are able to take care of them and raise them.

Interview #5

1. Well, I went to a previous Korean church called *Church and I moved here for more spiritual advancement pretty much. We had friends in school who went to Mission Church and this is before we were here in this current building, this was when the church actually was in Merriam. I'm sorry, Roland Park.

2. No, I was baptized and confirmed in Roman Catholicism. And then at 16 I was invited to a youth group, actually earlier than that, maybe 13 or 14, at Korean Antioch Church of the Nazarene. 6-7 years.

3. I'm always here on Sunday.

4. It's really not about my choosing, it's about uncompromised trust. It's more about what God's will is. When God says it's time for me to pick up and go, it's time for me to pick up and go. And throughout the 15 years I've been here there have been many times when God said, "Stay. Stay. Stay." So, I stayed. And I might take a week off to pray about it, but my spirit's still present, I guess.

5. Seonglyeong, The Spirit, The Holy Spirit. Many congregations where obviously the Holy Spirit goes to, but the Holy Spirit touches me here and I see the Holy Spirit flowing through both English ministry and Korean ministry. Here at KMC, when people think about missions they think about it's outward but I think the real mission's right here, (taps chest), right in front of us. Because every week it's a struggle to communicate, to be together, to cooperate, between the EM and the KM and ultimately what it boils down to is the Holy Spirit and us submitting ourselves to God's will. Sorry, that's probably more of an answer than you wanted. It's not easy sometimes, but we're not called to do things necessarily that are easy. And the path's narrow, right? So, it's

supposed to be narrow. Can I extrapolate just a little bit? It's not about, what I think and my personal conviction, it's not about what we see, okay, it's about what God sees and what He's doing through His spirit. So, that may have been a situation where maybe you didn't see it and sometimes I haven't seen here too, that's not what's important, what's important is God's still doing, in the midst of all of that, like when I left my first Korean church, I might not have seen it, but the Spirit's still moving there, they're wonderful believers there, brothers and sisters that I still keep contact with, it's just, the Lord said, "Move." So, I moved. It's really about how we submit ourselves than what we think or feel or see. It's about, what are we convicted to? Where do we place that conviction?

6. What's the relevance? Hardship, suffering, that's one of the noble truths in life. You're going to have endure certain hardships in life. So, I can go to the supermarket, I can drive in my car and there's a hardship. Someone brakes quickly, or...

7. One of my spiritual giftings is hospitality. I'm a professional chef, so I think over the years they have come to trust me and come to respect me. With Asian people it takes more time, obviously to develop relationships, close relationships, and also that trust. And um, so, they've trusted me with food activities and things like that. And enough to leave me to do it, just me to do it. Certain duties and aspects and so forth. It's a wonderful ministry, it brings people together. I've also been on the English ministry choir before, and also, I used to attend more regularly the Korean service and ministry so I was invited when we created a young adult, unmarried group, college age kind of group, I was the only American there. The only CAUCasian to be there. That was very interesting. There's a lot of challenges, in particular Asian people are always concerned if they're speaking in their own language, how much you're going to be able to understand. They want to make sure that you understand everything that's going on. That can actually slow down

the process for them. My point in mentioning that was about duty. Asian culture's about dutifulness, so the way I responded was, it's my duty to learn your language and that's why I'm here, I'm at a Korean church, I'm learning Korean obviously, I'm learning about your culture. We're sharing our common faith in Jesus Christ, but don't feel like you have to slow down, I can ask later, I can take notes, I can do all those things later. That's on me. Actually, I wouldn't be dutiful if I didn't see it that way.

8. A missionary is anyone who has a mission and goes out to complete that mission. A Christian missionary obviously is one who goes out to share the gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ. Do I consider myself a missionary? In everything that I do, whether I'm at work sharing the gospel with a coworker, or just maybe not even slappin' them over the head with a bible or a verse, but just in correct thought, correct speech, correct action.

9. Nihonjin, Japanese. From a very, very early age. And there's even subgroups within the Japanese people, in the Japanese populace. In particular, young and old and within the medium of the traditional Koryu or Japanese martial arts. Because you have old teaching young, and it's a great field where God wants to send people to preach and bring that message because there's all types of tradition, esoteric things going on, spiritual powers and principalities that are wrestling in people's hearts and God wants to break through that and say, "I'm here." And martial arts is about protection, it's not about starting fights, it's about stopping. The actual character for martial arts means to stop a spear, not to pick up a spear. And when we really think about it, it's about correct action, righteousness, the character for righteousness means the Lamb that was slain by our hands with the spear. In Japanese they say Gi or Giri, righteousness or dutifulness, obligation. It's kind of a hard word to really translate in Korean, Chinese, or Japanese, but if you say it, it's a powerful word. Especially Japanese people, be like Whoa!

Interview #6 and #7

1. I was invited by the worship leader, we were both musicians and knew each other outside of church, and he invited me to come play bass for them.

I literally just did a Google search for Korean churches when I first moved here.

2. No. No.

3. Weekly. Weekly.

4. Pastor reached out and received a lot of pastoral care, primary reason.

I agree with the sentiment about the pastor, I really had a lot of respect for pastor Evan when I first came and that's a big factor for me and the other was I really felt like the community was very welcoming.

5. I think there's a lot of attention to community with them, eating meals afterward together, not just going into a sermon then running off and doing your own lives afterward.

My biggest reason was definitely the community more than anything when I started, 'cause I just moved here and even though I went to KU, it was still new area and a new community for me where I didn't know a lot of people at the time and so, that was part of it and then I think also just in terms of faith and like what I would be able to learn and get out of this church I think it

was a very big contrast to what I had been used to, but I felt like it was a good thing especially for that timing.

6. No. I, not huge difficulties, it's a little bit (of a) different experience for me being non-Korean but also theologically it's a different background than I'm from so just learning how to mesh cultures a little bit in both of those and I would say the more difficult one was the theological background. (from a more Pentecostal more conservative).

7. Yes, worship team, youth teacher, help out with the young adult small group as well.

I help out with the young adult small group and I do the A.V. for the services.

8. Someone who gives specific attention to kind of building a new life in a new community in order to present the gospel to a people group.

Uh, yeah, if were talking about short and long-term missionaries, it's people who are very intentional about reaching people and sharing the gospel whether that's through actions or through words.

9. That's a deep question. Uh, yes with an asterisk. I feel like in the workplace, I do try to be intentional with actions but it is admittedly hard to be very vocal about faith, it's almost like your willing to talk about you're a Christian, you go to church but it's hard for me to be like hey, you need to know Jesus.

Not until hearing this question. I think I've separated the idea, I know calling to go out into the world but I never really considered that as a missionary, just a Christian.

10. I think, I've been here four years and it's become very clear that KMC has a niche with just reaching Korean Americans or there's a lot of exchange students that probably our ministries have fluxed or grown the most, college and young adult, so there's a lot of people that are in transition into Kansas City from other places and they're almost all Korean. It has been a good place for them to be kind of familiar with their environment and be disciplined. For me personally, I don't know if that's a specific personal calling to, but that is definitely what I find at this church has done.

My first thought is that I honestly, I feel like I haven't been influenced by this church, I do agree with Jonny's sentiments about reaching the people, kind of like holding onto them in a sense, those that come here, people like me (KA), but I think that kind of culture or mindset has been ingrained because I grew up in a Korean church and so it was always just kind of assumed that if there's Korean people you reach out to them and everyone else you kinda almost neglect because it's like awkwardness, language, whatever the reason, I don't think there's a people group that I've been called to.

Interview #8

1. I grew up in Kansas. I went to high school here so this church - I've known about for years and years and year. This church has its own standalone English ministry component. That's the reason we came here; we've known about it for a long time.

2. No, I've been born into it, grew up Christian, my dad's a pastor, became a pastor when I was in high school, so no.

4. I think there's just basic things for any church now to consider - orthodoxy, doctrinal faithfulness, people's lives reflecting what they believe - without that I wouldn't even consider any church. Beyond that there's - you know we did go to a non-Korean at church first - but we came here because there's people kind of in our life situation, and we found more fellowship and went with that. People here are very open and inviting to us and we've created friendships on top of a solid foundation of beliefs. So that's what really attracted us to this church.

7. I am a deacon and I am also a teacher for young adults and I occasionally teach a theology class as well, so those are my main positions here.

8. When I think of the term missionary, I think of someone who shares the gospel of Jesus Christ outside of their home; they travel to that location for that specific purpose, and it doesn't have to be far away - for instance we support downtown missions in the Kansas City area. Those people didn't want to live there per se, but the reason they moved there and set up their lives there was

for a specific purpose so that's what I feel a missionary is. So, they actually moved there? Yeah, so they don't just remote it, they actually moved there.

10. Our church? Yes. I think that's - I mean, generally our goal is to reach everyone we come into contact with at work, at home, our friends - and then, we also support outside missionaries in Japan, downtown Kansas City, Honduras, and Jordan. So, I think that's kind of how we see missions. People we can reach here through our lives, and people who we obviously cannot reach and support them financially or whatever.

Interview #9

1. I came from Georgia to Kansas City, and my parents' friends were attenders of the church, and they were the only people I knew in Kansas City so they invited me to come to Kansas Mission Church in 1993.

2. I'd gone to church as a child and in college, but I really don't think I was a true believer until I started coming to Kansas Mission Church.

3. Every week. I'm one of the elders, so I'm very involved; it's very rare that I miss a Sunday and there's usually other events going on through the week.

4. I'm an elder for the English Ministry and I also help with the treasury for the finance department and then I'm also a small group leader.

5. I like that one – the Pastor - is really preaching the Word that is not a watered-down message. So, I think that the message is very important. The second reason why I like this church is that it is a very family type environment - so there's people of all ages, there are lots of children. It's like a family. It's people that I see not just on Sundays but people I see all through the week. And I do like the ethnic orientation of the church. Even though I don't speak the Korean language because my mom is Chinese and my dad is Korean and I was born in Georgia so the only language I speak is English, I feel like it's a very family focused church and that's important to me.

8. A missionary is just someone who actively spreads the word to non-believers. In my mind that can mean here in the neighborhood, or it can mean globally somewhere else.

10. Not necessarily a specific group of people, but I do feel like there are multiple Korean churches in Kansas City - I think there are over 15 Korean churches- Kansas Mission Church is the largest, I think there are maybe only 2 or 3 others that have an English ministry, so I think we are unique in that. And I've always felt like God has put me at this church. I've actually tried to move away from Kansas City 3 times, and for some reason God has always moved me back here. I've always felt like He wanted me to help Kansas Mission Church grow and thrive so I've been very involved in that. So that's probably the group that I would say that I feel called to reach. The other thing is - I do have a vision - there's a lot of pride in the 1st generation of Koreans, and that has led to a lot of church splitting; and so my hope is that once that generation gets older - and maybe even passes away - that there was an opportunity for churches to be

combined, to share resources and to have a very strong community. And we've actually started to see some of that in the youth retreats. There's a joint Korean youth focus and during the winter break the last 2 years, we've had a retreat where there's been between 100 and 150 kids who come to that retreat, and typically when we did it as a single church there was maybe 40 to 50 kids. And now churches from Nebraska and other areas in the midwest are sending their kids to that event.

Interview #10

1. My mom is Korean, I kind of grew up here, at KMC and I don't know if there was a church split or something cause I was really young, but we left KMC for awhile and then we went to an American church for 10 years, but my mom was really struggling spiritually, so she actually came back to KMC and so she just brought us with here.

My dad is from Missouri and his family is from Germany; so he's white.

3. I come to pretty much every single service unless I'm out of town.

4. The community. When we came back I was youth group age. Personally, I was not a believer then but just came to church because my mom made me come and forced me to go to youth group and for a couple of years I hated it. Eventually though, I started having an affection towards everybody here; I don't think I was friends with them, but I saw how they treated each other and how they were friends with each other and I really respected that and I thought they genuinely had something special here - I stuck around because of that (and my mom made me).

As I grew up and became a believer, now the reason I stay is because of the community here and the relationships I've built with people. I think it's very special.

5. I really appreciate the authenticity of everybody here, because I feel like here more than anywhere else, there is a genuine concern for each other's spiritual state. And even though we're all kind of awkward here - I don't know if you noticed me talking to my friend earlier, but I was telling her how sad I was that as groups we're not very good at interacting and encouraging each other spiritually, but one-on-one we're pretty good at encouraging each other like a good brother and sister. I also feel like this church is very solid - our doctrine is really good, and the teachers and leaders, our elders, our deacons. They are all very strong Christian men and I think they are great leaders. They are very knowledgeable and have strong beliefs and I love learning from them. I feel like I grow a lot here.

6. Yes. Like I said earlier, I feel like we're all awkward with each other, and at times I feel like I'm not loved, which I know is not true. I know that's my own self-esteem issues. But the way that we express love to each other is not very prominent. Which is sad, because I know I'm loved, but it's just not expressed.

7. I teach middle school girls Sunday school. I've been doing that for about 6 years. I usually volunteer for things like VBS also.

8. The first thing that I think of when I think of a missionary is someone that goes to different countries to share the gospel. But what I've come to know is that missionary is pretty much anyone that shares the gospel of Jesus Christ.

9. Yeah, I guess. That's kind of convicting. Sometimes I'm quiet when I know I should speak up, but I know that it is a calling that I'm supposed to be a missionary.

10. I don't think so, honestly. I think that's something I haven't really processed very much in myself - like what is my comfort zone with people and what type of people. Cause right now I hang out with mostly Koreans. I don't know, I don't know if there's like a challenge from God for that. I should pray on that. As of right now I don't really feel like that's a conviction.

You mentioned hanging out with mostly Koreans. Do you feel at all on the outside because maybe both their parents are Korean or anything like that?

Yeah, all the time. Again, I don't know if it's my own insecurity or if it actually is true.

Especially since I don't speak Korean at all. Most of my friends speak it fluently or at least understand it very well, and at times we'll all be talking and someone says something in Korean and then they're all suddenly speaking in Korean - and that really sucks. I hate it when they do that. And I've kind of talked to them about it a couple of times, but the attitude that is mostly perceived is that "Well, why don't you just learn Korean?" and that's super frustrating. I'm just getting to the point where I'm just okay that I don't speak Korean.

Interview #11

1. One of the members here invited me and she had been helping me learn Korean and invited me to experience a Korean church. At the school that we both attend, Midwest Baptist Theological Seminary.

2. I grew up going to church.

3. Once a week. I've been attending this church for over a year, about a year and a half.

4. I was interested in the Korean culture and I was learning the language and I thought it was a great opportunity to immerse myself the best way possible in this country, in this area, and once I visited, I loved the family atmosphere and just how loving the people are here. And that's what really kept me here.

5. Probably the family atmosphere and just how much they love each other and they take it seriously. And I also love how they're just completely themselves with the Korean culture. They're not trying to Americanize the church at all. They're trying to stay true to themselves.

6. Sometimes there's like technology difficulties with the translation, but like that happens once in a blue moon, otherwise I haven't really had any difficulties at all.

7. I do help with the children's ministry a bit. I do children's sermons in English once a month.

8. A missionary is someone that lives with the idea that every aspect or possibility that they're in is a chance to share the gospel with people. It doesn't have to be your occupation for you to be a missionary, in my opinion. It's just your lifestyle.

9. I do not. I think I'm in preparation. I'm just like a student at a seminary learning and I'm here learning about the Korean culture and learning about the bible as well. I don't really see myself as living that lifestyle right now.

10. The Korean Church. It's my goal.

Can you talk any more about what drew you to want to learn Korean?

I had never thought about the Korean culture before coming here. And the seminary that I'm at has a huge, has a Korean degree program so there's a lot of Koreans at our school, but even at that point I never really thought about it, but I came across the Korean language online and I thought it sounded really pretty so I just started teaching myself without any knowledge of the culture or anything. And then my friend who's a member here, I asked her to help me and then she invited me to the church and started teaching me about the Korean culture and I just fell in love with it.

Interview #12

1. My wife actually found it. She's Korean, so whenever we move to a new area we kind of, we've almost always attended some kind of Korean service. It helps her understand better and the atmosphere seems more inviting and we always just seem to fit in better.

2. I grew up Christian, Catholic actually, but kind of fell out of it in college and the military, I met my wife and she, when we started dating she was going to a Korean church where we lived in El Paso, I started going with her and it's been...

How did you meet? She was going to school and I was in the military. We just met through her cousin and she introduced us and her cousin was dating a soldier.

3. We come most Sundays if I'm not working or drilling. We try to come every Sunday and try to do some of the other stuff, they have a bible reading on Saturdays and they've had other events like retreats and stuff that we try to go to.

4. Just the message that they put out, it seems to fit, really kind of hits us well and then they're just really inviting, they make you feel really welcome here and it seems more personable than most churches we've been to.

5. From the first day it's always been very friendly. And I know not all of them, even though they don't speak perfect English, they've never really had trouble, they've always tried to make me feel, even though I'm one of the few people here who don't really speak Korean, I always feel like they care, they make sure I know what's going on and help me out. They don't make me feel like an outsider even though I'm kind of outside the normal group. It's been good.

6. The language is the only thing, they try hard and they do a good job for the most part, but sometimes it's, a lot of their group chats or a lot of their group messages are all in Korean so sometimes I have to ask my wife, if she's there, hey what's going on? What are they saying? Or my wife will just tell me or whatever. They definitely try hard and they do a good job for the most part, but their main language is Korean, so... but otherwise no, not really, that's why we came here, we tried it out once because my wife wanted to try and never stopped, so.

7. Not yet, I try and would like to with my wife and school and my hours, I work nights so it's sometimes really hard to do stuff like that. I want to, though. I'd like to get more involved.

We've done a few things to try to help out but not enough. Not enough for me, I want to do more.

8. I would say it's somebody who takes the Word of God to people who don't have it available to them. It could be really anywhere. You don't have to go to a foreign country to do it. There's a lot places right here in the United States that need it. Some areas that just don't have ready access to the bible or to good services or things like that. It's just spreading God's Word to people who maybe haven't heard it or have heard it and didn't understand it.

9. Uh, yeah, maybe. I think that's one of my steps that I need to move onto. I try to develop my family and the kid and make sure my children have a good Christian background, but I really need to develop my missionary skills to go to people that, I think it's one of those things where once you start doing it you kind of break that barrier where you think, oh, I can't really do this, why should I, it's something you really have to push yourself to do and I just haven't taken that step yet.

10. No, not really. I've been over to the Middle East and I can see the benefits to that because there's a lot of misconceptions over there about Christianity and Christ and their beliefs. I think it might be dangerous but it would be very beneficial and it would be very, that's just like the places that I think really need. But I know there's a lot of places around here, they just don't have, so I don't have a specific place, but there are a lot of opportunities in the world that need help.

Interview #13

1. I was actually wanting to learn how to speak Korean, I had spent two weeks in Korea visiting my brother who was an English teacher at the time and I enjoyed Korea and Korean culture so much that I decided to, eventually I want to go back, but I want to know how to speak the language, I want to learn how to communicate with people, so, I heard that some churches a few years ago were giving out free lessons. That wasn't the case with this church, but I was welcomed by the pastor to attend and I've been a regular member here ever since that first service I attended. That was three years ago.

2. No, I've been going to church my whole life. My parents are Nazarenes. I also attend an English-speaking church on Wednesday nights.

3. Before I started working a night job, I would try to make to as many services as I could. I would try to make to my English-speaking church as well as this one. But right now, I only attend this one in the afternoon and my English-speaking church on Wednesday nights.

4. As soon as I got here, the congregation was just absolutely welcoming. They showered you with kindness, they didn't just invite you to their fellowship dinner, they insisted that you go. And that was the kind of hospitality that I hadn't seen in very many places. Let alone, very many churches.

5. The people, it's a very small community but everyone cares about everyone here and if somebody misses a service, the pastor will text you and ask you if everything's okay. Even though I don't feel that's needed, I do appreciate the sentiment a lot.

6. Yeah, mostly the language barrier when trying to communicate with people who are visiting from Korea and are not here for a very long period of time. I've only just now picked up a nightly routine of studying Korean and I haven't been able to communicate fluently, I'm still not fluent, so when people are visiting, I've always had trouble communicating beyond just saying Hi and introducing myself.

7. When they ask me to do something for the church I will do it, again, not being 100% fluent in Korean, I don't really volunteer unless I'm asked and I'm always happy to do so. We had a pastor that became ordained by the Baptist church here and he was an attendee and I was asked to be an usher at the ordination service, so I happily volunteered. I sometimes ask if there are any plans for community outreach which there hasn't been yet, but I think they're planning on it.

8. Obviously when everybody thinks of a missionary, they think of a professional missionary who goes to the poorest countries in the world and comes back with stories about how their service made an impact, but I think my perception of that has changed over the years 'cause that becomes a philosophical question when you ask, What is missionary work? A lot of that does begin within your own community. You don't have to be a professional in order to do it. My sister-in-law who went on a year-long mission trip a few years ago traveled through various countries, technically she's a missionary but, also my grandma used to volunteer at soup kitchens during the holidays so that was a form of missionary work to me.

9. I try to be. I try to be. I've never really been good at communicating my faith to those who were non-believers but I've gotten much better at it. I briefly worked a pest control job about a year ago and while I was training, two of my managers just asked me a little bit about my personal life and I told them I was a Christian and when you tell people you're a Christian sometimes there comes that Hollywood stereotype of oh this guy is going to jam Jesus down my

throat, isn't he? So, whether I had to or not I emphasized like I am a Christian and I have my certain beliefs about morality but I don't force it down other people's throats. But that opened up another conversation of why I believe what I believe and I was able to share that with them.

10. I'm not sure. I've built various communities around myself. I'm a big comic book nerd so I have a bunch of friends centered around that, but on the other hand, I've got the Korean church here and I'm a sports fanatic and I have a small internet forum that I frequently talk on that's centered around political debate and philosophy, so, I think God has simply called me to reach out to just anyone around me that I've built a community with. Whether it's comic books or people I'm learning a foreign language from or even sports.

Interview #14

1. I did an internet search and this was the first result that had an English ministry.

2. I had been going to a progressive church in Wichita, but it wasn't a good fit. I got saved when I was thirteen years old. I have been a Christian for sixteen years.

3. Weekly. I attend every extra thing, if possible.

4. My first visit made Kansas City feel like home. I went from being and feeling alone to feeling like I had a place. I've always been interested in Asian ministries.

5. It feels like a family. I feel like I'm on the same spiritual path as my fellow members. The pastor preaches the Bible. The way he preaches causes self-reflection. I feel we're walking in unity.

6. Not a single one, I'm happy to say! I wasn't tackled, so to speak. Everyone was friendly and nice without being in your face.

7. I help watch kids, put up decorations, activities, holiday events. I pretty much fill any need I can.

8. A missionary is someone who takes the Good News of Jesus Christ with those who have not yet heard it, whether on our soil or foreign soil.

9. I have a heart for missionary work but I'm not actively involved currently.

10. Asian ministries and children. College age youth are more fun to talk to and connect with.

Interview #15

1. Before I came to Kansas City, I started researching for a church that my family could attend and I knew of this church once I got to Kansas City about two and half or three years ago, but we didn't attend this church until the middle of last year, the summer of last year, and then we became members and I became part of the church staff.

2. No, I went to a church in Korea when I was living there so when I went to high school I got saved and went to a church there and then ever since then I've been going to a lot of different churches because of college, military, moving around with my family, and so we've been exposed to a lot of different church backgrounds.

Born in Flushing, New York. Lived until 10. Moved to Korea for eight years.

3. We attend all of our services here so we come here obviously on Sundays for the main church service we have monthly Saturday morning service like the first Saturday of the month we'll have a morning service so we attend that and Friday nights we have twice a month so we attend that and I also help out preaching in one of those services too.

4. I was actually serving at another Korean church, a different denomination, and then it was my first exposure to that denomination, and serving there for about a year then we felt called to leave the church and start exploring another church and not knowing where we would land we went to a lot of American churches like white churches and then my wife and I talked and we said well let's just check out one more Korean church in this city and then we, obviously I'm a southern Baptist background so hey why don't we just visit this church? Then we came and the two previous churches we had attended, one was more like, the whole service was geared toward the adults and so like your children would have children's service on their own so they would be separated from you immediately as you go into the main service and so you wouldn't be with your children for two to three hours. So, I felt like well I want to go to a church that's perhaps more family oriented so we ended up going to a house church in Kansas City and I had never been exposed to a house church and having all the services done in somebody's house was another different experience and maybe it was a cultural difference perhaps and I just, they were good people but my wife and I just felt like maybe we should just check out a Korean church one more time because that's our background then we came to this church and then the way the services is held having the entire family worship together and having the children listen to a children's message before they get sent to their own group and the adults remain with the college and youth kids as well, just all of us doing worship together just felt unique and perhaps right for us like the good middle ground that we were looking for. And then later the pastor approached

and just expectation potential for me in this church so we just felt like we need to be part of a church where we could call it a home church. So, we decided to come to this church.

5. I would say actually treating a church service as a whole family, it's one church where the children see that church is for all of us, not just for the adults, not just for the children, not just for the youth, but all of us. So, the families are sitting together in the pew, they're worshipping together, the kids are witnessing and experiencing with their family and so I think that's very, very important. Even starting at an early age being disciplined as well and seeing it from their parents that we're not brushed aside. A lot of the Korean American churches have separate youth services, especially in America you have Korean immigrant churches and then you have these kids who grew up speaking English pretty much their whole lives so it's their always excluded from the main service so you hire youth pastors and English-speaking pastors and EM pastors to hold your own service and I served in a context like that and I just saw the huge separation between the parents and their children and then the parents expecting the youth pastor, the EM pastor taking care of the children's spiritual life and I disagreed with that but here it's different where the family is responsible for their children but the church is here to support them and help them by feeding them God's word, teaching them God's word and discipling them even if we disciple them separately at least we meet together during the main service. And I think that is what I was looking for and I agreed with and that I wanted to be a part of.

6. Not really, I would just say just because maybe distance-wise, it's thirty minutes south from where we live. We do meet frequently throughout the week and because everyone is so spread out, some live in Olathe or downtown or even on the other side of Missouri and we live up north of Kansas City so it's hard to have some kind of fellowship with people like inviting them over

to my place or us having to come all the way here to have some kind of meeting is a little inconvenient, but that's pretty much it, I would say.

7. Because English is my primary language, and Korean is my secondary, the church has me as their English educational pastor. And so my main position is to teach on Sundays, Adult Sunday Bible studies, Sunday School, and then I get to preach once a month whether that's in Korean or in English, and then I just support our associate pastors whether it's children's ministry or college youth ministry.

8. I would say obviously all are somehow called to be a missionary to some extent and that is always putting God above everything else and having the evangelistic heart. You don't have to verbally tell others the gospel itself like if you are a very shy person or if you don't have that calling, but I think in your lives, in your demeanor, whether it's at your workplace or at school as a student, as parents, you have to have that in your life. I am a Christian, this is who I am, this is how I differ from this world but I'm not gonna leave this world because that's not what we're called to do, we're called to be in this difficult, dark world and we have to be that light, one of those lights and hopefully as people truly love Jesus Christ they get to not only show it but also to present it and teach it so parents are missionaries to their children, the fathers are the spiritual leaders of the household so he's a missionary for his spouse and his children and then in the workplace a leader is a missionary to those who are under him or to your coworkers, having that attitude of a missionary I think is very key to everyone.

9. Yes, absolutely.

10. I would say, personally my wife and I would love to go back to Japan. We got to live in Japan for about a year and a half because of my work and just the lostness in that country, it's a

great country, they have a great culture, great tradition, it's lively in a sense but also a lot of their faces are masked with fakeness and also a lot of false gospels coming into that people group so we do have a desire to go to Japan if God is willing to send us there but I would say even South Asia, Southeast Asia, I guess Asia in general is where we would love to go and to serve if possible. We just feel like we could perhaps connect with them more closely and understand their culture more quickly and understand how we should present the gospel to them based on their culture and their tradition.