3-1-2012

A Strategy toward Fostering Interdependent Korean-American Congregations across Generations

Hyun Kook R. Kim

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This ministry focus paper entitled

A STRATEGY TO HELP THE FIRST AND SECOND GENERATION OF KOREAN-AMERICAN CHRISTIAN INTERDEPENDENTLY COEXIST

Written by

HYUN KOOK RYAN KIM

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:

[Signatures]

Date Received: March 1, 2012
A STRATEGY TOWARD FOSTERING INTERDEPENDENT KOREAN-AMERICAN CONGREGATIONS ACROSS GENERATIONS

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY
HYUN KOOK RYAN KIM
MARCH 2012
ABSTRACT

A Strategy toward Fostering Interdependent Korean-American Congregations across Generations
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2012

This project’s goal is to help the first generation (Korean Ministry, or KM) and the second generation (English Ministry, or EM) of Korean-American Christians in the denomination of the Korean-American Presbyterian Church, who are at a crossroad of choosing between staying together or parting ways, to consider interdependent coexistence as a viable option. The project is presented in three parts. The first section retraces the history of the immigrant Korean-American Church. It takes a close look at the past and the present and then looks towards the potential for a collaborative future.

The second section surveys the Old Testament and New Testament. It reveals a gathering God who brings his people together and provides resources for them to achieve the marks of a believing, loving, hoping, and patiently waiting community. This section will lay the groundwork for Korean-American Christians to emulate what God desires for the Church to be in Scripture.

The final section applies the above biblical marks to current Korean-American churches to make the necessary changes to become more like the Church God envisions. It uses Korean Central Presbyterian Church as a case study, where the first and the second generations of Korean Americans are striving to interdependently coexist. Then it presents how both the denomination and local churches can use the Bible as a mirror to find the goals and means to set forth denominational directives to boldly embrace change, courageously come to the table of dialogue through Appreciative Inquiry, and include the laity on a local level to project a possible future for Korean Ministry and English Ministry interdependently coexisting. Though the scope of this project was limited to the Korean-American Church, the greater hope is for the broader Church to overcome conflict and interdependently coexist.

Content Reader: Young Lee Hertig, PhD

Words: 290
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INTRODUCTION

Currently, there is an urgent matter that exists between the first and the second generations of Korean-American Christians that no longer can be ignored. After many failed attempts at resolving conflicts, pastors and leaders in many first- and second-generation congregations, particularly in the denomination of the Korean-American Presbyterian Church, are asking this question: “Can the first and the second generations of Korean-American Christians interdependently coexist?” Rather than looking for reasons to stay together and after having been hurt by the conflicts, many relationships between the two generations have been shattered and so continue to choose to part ways. Too many Korean-American Christians of the second generation have left and continue drifting away from the churches where they grew up and now are forming independent churches without the presence of the first generation.

Against this overwhelming tide, I want to say that it is possible for the first and the second generations of Korean-American Christians to stay together and to interdependently coexist. If the two generations within Korean-American churches—with all of their cultural, linguistic, and generational differences—can show that they can coexist, this union will give rise to the hope that the greater Church can unite and cross current relational barriers to coexist in harmony for the greater good of the Kingdom. The scope of this discussion will be limited to the Korean-American churches that have the two congregations under one roof: a Korean-speaking congregation and an English-speaking congregation.

The Korean-American Presbyterian Church (KAPC), a sister denomination to the biggest Presbyterian denomination in South Korea, recently celebrated its thirty-fifth
anniversary. Flamed by the immigration boom in the 1970s and 1980s, the number of Korean-American churches multiplied exponentially. According to the 2008 *Korean-American Presbyterian Church Bulletin*, the number of delegates has reached 1,050 pastors serving over five hundred local churches representing about forty-five thousand communicant members in total.¹ The sad reality is that the second generation of Korean-American Christians represents but a fraction of that total. Of the five hundred local churches within the KAPC, less than 2 percent of them are independent, second-generation, Korean-American churches. In addition, there are only a handful of first-generation, Korean-American churches with English Ministry (EM), which are separate congregations consisting of English-speaking members within the local church. Most of the EM grew from necessity, as the children of the first generation became a predominantly English-speaking population. As the English Ministry matured it attracted non-Korean, English-speaking adults as well as members who did not grow up in the Church.

Herein lies the dilemma. The children of the first-generation, Korean-American church members grew up and took on an identity of their own while their parents were preoccupied with establishing a place for the family in a new world. What once was a budding youth ministry grew up and became a congregation, before the Korean-speaking Church even realized what had happened. EM is no longer a nursing cub but a fully grown bear with a ferocious appetite for independence and newness. Though many Korean-American churches have been in denial, the clear disconnect between the first and the second generations of Korean-American Christians are floating to the surface.

Like an iceberg, seemingly harmless on the surface, these submerged jagged edges are tearing through the thin walls of the Korean Church and sinking its relationships. The resistance of the old generation against changes it sees in the new generation, along with the resistance of the new generation battling the old ways, is coming to a head. Without much dialogue and tooled efforts to resolve conflicts, both the first and the second generations of Korean-American Christians are bitterly parting ways. This “silent exodus,” quiet attrition of the English-speaking second generation of Korean-American Christians from the first-generation churches, is no longer silent.² Even those congregations who are still together simply seem to be bracing for inevitable departure. For this reason, it is urgent for the two generations to come together to find an amicable solution.

The details for the conflicts between the first and the second generations of Korean-American Christians are complex and will be addressed throughout this paper. However, the core essence of the discord can be articulated as an issue of relevance. Both contemporary EM and modern-day congregations oriented toward Korean Ministry (KM) are grappling with the question of how relevant KM will be to the future of EM and how relevant EM will be to the future of KM. Many demands are being made by both the first and the second generations concerning the future of their Church, and the debate over how relevant these demands are is at the core of the conflicts. In many cases, the misconstrued demands of each side are assumed to be irrelevant to the future and the ultimate good of the ministries. Rather than seeking a deeper understanding of the nature of the demands, reacting to the conflicts that arise from them takes center stage and insignificance, unimportance, or worthlessness are assumed as opposing sides dismiss

each other’s heartfelt needs—all of which lie at the source of these demands. In this way, this issue of relevance will determine whether the first and the second generations of Korean-American Christians can interdependently coexist.

The goal of this project is to backtrack and begin a dialogue that should have taken place before the two generations became estranged and started parting ways. There are many questions to be answered concerning the past, the present, and the future of the second-generation, English-speaking element within the Korean Church. Numerous misunderstandings and conflicts have passed without explanation or reconciliation between the two generations. It is the desire of this paper to see both sides turn their antagonistic energy and point it towards rebuilding and restoring broken relationships. In many families, especially when communication breaks down, the resulting conflicts and the displaced hostilities become the reasons for considering separation. Perpetuated frustrations from wanting to be heard assure the parties that staying together is not a good option. Much of what indeed is good about the relationship is overshadowed by the hurt inflicted by both sides.

As an EM pastor, I hear many second-generation, Korean-American Christians asking if the hurt they have to bear is worth the benefits of staying together with the first generation.\(^3\) There are benefits of staying together, though they have become shrouded by the pain of conflicts. The goal of backtracking is to shift the discussion of focusing on the conflicts and the resulting hurts to objectively measure the benefits of staying together and redefine the relevance. There also needs to be sincere reconciliation that brings about true

\(^3\) English Ministry congregants, interviews by author, San Francisco, CA, November 2010.
healing. Finally, both sides need to learn to conscientiously care for each other’s future development. In the economy of Christ, who says, “As I have loved you, so you must love one another” (Jn 13:34), the two generations cannot discover relevance without genuinely caring for each other. This will take great collaboration on the part of both parties, and the driving motivation is urgency. Unless there are compelling reasons for the two generations to stay together, it simply will be a matter of time before many in the first generation among Korean-American churches find themselves without EM congregations.

By examining the conflicts between the first and the second generations of Korean Americans in the Korean-American Presbyterian Church, this ministry focus paper will objectively diagnose the nature of its conflicts, identify the resulting symptoms, candidly project its future, and finally recommend biblical remedies towards interdependent coexistence. The limits of the context of discussion in this project mostly will be on the Korean-American Presbyterian churches, unless noted. Towards this endeavor, this project is divided into three major parts.

The first section will be dedicated to assessing the current state of the Korean-American Church by looking at its past and its present. Relationships within the Korean culture, informed by five hundred years of Confucian teachings of speaking without words, unchallenged reverential respect for those who are older, and avoiding shame at all costs have conditioned people to base their opinions and understandings on speculations and assumptions. It would be a rare thing to see first-generation Korean Americans admitting to the second generation and taking responsibility for the hurt that

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4 All Scripture is taken from Holy Bible: New International Version (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1995), unless otherwise noted.
they have caused. On a similar note, having grown up in Korean culture and due to reverence for those who are older, it would be rare to see the second generation revealing how hurt it feels by the first. To express the pain would be perceived as casting blame and giving rise to shame. It would be received as being disrespectful and ungrateful for the sacrifices that the first generation has made.

For this reason, Part One of this discussion will examine the unmentionable by looking honestly at what the first and the second generations generally experienced during the establishment of Korean-American churches. Chapter 1 will explore the beginning stages of immigrant homes and churches. Within the relatively short immigrant history of Korean Americans, tremendous drama and transformation have taken place. The high expectations and extreme drive towards success have pushed many emotional and spiritual needs to the wayside. It is amazing how much the two generations have achieved in such a brief time. However, the accomplishments and the successes of the two generations have come at a great cost. Many people now realize that the sacrifices made may not be worth the rewards. This chapter will show how the home and church settings have been brewing grounds for current conflicts experienced in the Korean-American Church.

Chapter 2 will examine the hidden pains that have become seeds and catalysts for conflicts within the Korean-American churches in the present time. There are painful memories that have been buried deep in the hearts of both generations that never have been expressed. There were so many things that needed to have been said, but due to cultural mandate they retreated and things needing to be said remained dormant for the sake of a semblance of peace. Koreans have a word for this: han. Han is internalized pain that stays
dormant in the heart. Within the Korean culture, this han hardly ever gets expressed objectively. There are incidents in the Korean Church that appear inexplicably random. During conflicts or afterwards, often those involved have difficulty articulating why they were so angry. In most cases, the parties overreact and the chance to trace back to the cause of the conflict is lost. They express themselves with misdirected anger, and sadly this way of communicating gets passed down from generation to generation. This chapter will help flesh out what lies at the heart of the conflicts and work towards conversing objectively about them. In building a safe environment for healthy dialogue between the generations, the final section in this chapter will project a realistic future of Korean-American Christians and their churches, if they stay on their current path. It will identify the barriers and hindrances that need to be eliminated in order to make the journey towards reconciliation and restoration. The wounds need to be dressed and prepared for healing. The bleeding must be stopped in order to rebuild. Only then can the two congregations objectively discuss their desire for a future together.

These two chapters will help demythologize this han by identifying its source, restore it to its proper place, and employ the emotion of anger to fight against division. The desire is to rebuild relationships that are not hindered by assumptions and misdirected anger. By showing where we came from to where we are while honestly looking at how we got here will help to rebuild broken relationships, especially in the areas of church.

Anger is a helpful emotion if it is directed correctly, and Scripture is a wonderful road map for getting us there. This leads to Part Two of the project. This second section will be dedicated to looking into Scripture to see where the Korean-American churches have
gone wrong while desiring a biblical healing through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In-depth reflection into Scripture will reveal much of the misguided negative energy being spent by the Church. The goal of this section is to discover God’s divine anger for the brokenness of the Church and together focus energy on seeing clearly where God is leading.

Chapter 3 will reveal how the ancient text, the Bible, is so plainly relevant to current culture. It will build a biblical theology by studying the progress of God’s redemptive work throughout Scripture. The intention of this chapter is to challenge Korean-American churches to reflect more of God’s Word in their desire to be more like Christ in their ministry.

Chapter 4 will continue to challenge Korean-American churches to remember the biblical mandate to maintain the peace and the purity of the Church. Throughout biblical history, in both the Old and New Testament, the people of God repeatedly have emphasized wrong things and have faced rejection from God. The mistakes of the old are not recorded so that the churches throughout history can repeat them; rather, they are recorded so that present generations may learn from their forefathers and avoid the same errors.

The final chapter in this section will apply the Gospel of Jesus Christ to restore Korean-American Christians and their churches, so that true repentance and forgiveness and healing can occur. Outside the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there can be no true biblical reconciliation. Through Jesus, irreconcilable differences find relevance, experience healing, and move towards interdependently coexisting with one another in an edifying way. Only when a church dies to Christ can it experience complete regeneration. The biblical reflection of this section will bring about hope that comes not from within but from God through Jesus Christ. It is a divine work done through the hands of those in the Body of
Christ. The inspiration of this section is to motivate Korean-American Christians to participate in God’s healing plan to realize fully that we are more than first- or second-generation Korean Americans; we are simply sinners redeemed in God’s Kingdom. Discovering this truth can make the desire to interdependently coexist more than a cultural or linguistic struggle but a biblical mandate. Our relevance to one another is the uniting power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Only then can we hope for greater impact in this world.

The third and last section of this project will be devoted to looking at a particular model of church within the KAPC. The wisdom gained through trial and error will be analyzed and reassessed here in developing a strategy for the future. It must be stated clearly from the beginning that the structure of the church presented is not to be repeated but rather the desires and the means in fulfilling that desire to interdependently coexist can be modeled. Chapter 6 is devoted to gathering wisdom to discern what is to be kept and thrown out within the first- and the second-generation congregations in order to grow a church together. There is so much to be learned from the first generation of Korean-American Christians. There are so many things that the English-speaking second generation of Korean-American churches is capable of doing. To help a local church shed the bad and build on the good is the goal.

Chapter 7 will continue this quest with hope, faith, and courage to realize the Korean-American Church God envisions. There are many first-generation KAPC pastors who desire harmony within the generations. This chapter will lay down practical paths in bringing the parties together for healthy dialogue in building a generational church that reflects the gifts of both the first and the second in harmony to interdependently coexist for
the greater good. This chapter will search for ways to uncover and identify such visionaries who are able to help both sides work together in rebuilding Korean-American churches.

The final chapter of this project is devoted to laying out a practical strategy that can guide Korean-American churches to become multigenerational and multicultural while interdependently coexisting for the glory of God. Great efforts are needed to raise serious commitment from the denomination as well as the laity. Many useful techniques and conflict-resolution strategies will be considered in this chapter to equip Korean-American Christians to move towards interdependent coexistence. The churches need to learn that there are many ways to reconcile. Being too dogmatic and having minds that refuse to be opened destroy the chances for healing and reconciling.

The goal of this project is for the greater Church to see and realize God’s potential in reflecting heaven on earth. Scripture reveals that the only thing that separates us from God in our relationship with Him is sin. Elimination of sin through Christ has restored harmony with God once again (2 Cor 5:19). Through the implementation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, relevance can be established among the generations to foster a desire for coexistence rather than separation. If we can visualize this in the mind, believe it in the heart, and live it through both hands and feet, we can interdependently coexist despite our differences. This is possible due to the one uniting agent that is Christ (Gal 3:27-29). He can help the Korean-American Church to see what unites us rather than what divides us, all for his own glory. The goal is to establish a safe environment in which an exchange of dialogue can begin, so that healing can take place.
PART ONE

THE PORTRAIT OF THE KOREAN-AMERICAN CHURCH
CHAPTER 1
THE KOREAN-AMERICAN CHURCH THEN

Knowing the full story is vital in understanding a part of any story. Without deeply understanding the Korean-American heritage and the development of the Korean-American Church, it will be extremely difficult to fully comprehend its current state. Broadly examining the Korean-American Church’s heritage offers a clearer context to see characters and events that have woven the fabric of its existence. Knowing the history properly helps to better grasp the past, to more deeply interpret the present, and to be better equipped to project the potential for the future.

Korean Americans now live in a time where heritage and traditions are disregarded. Here and now is what matters. Within the Korean-American Church, many are quickly abandoning traditions and trading them for novelty. This is especially true among the second generation of Korean-American Christians as they attempt to coexist with the first generation of Korean-American Christians, who are steeped in tradition and culture. In many Korean-American churches, the changes in EM are often too abrupt and pose threats to the first generation. The first generation interprets the changes as abandonment of Korean culture and heritage. If those in the second generation are not
sensitive to their heritage, which was established through much sacrifice from the first
generation, the misunderstandings will persist and the coming generations will miss out
on the richness of the diverse beauty in the Korean-American Church.

This chapter broadly but honestly will capture the history of the Korean-American immigrant church. It will explore the church environment in which second-generation Korean Americans received their nurturing or lack thereof. The majority of the children of the first generation of Korean-Americans experienced some level of physical and emotional neglect at church as well as at home. On the other hand, with strong work ethics, their parents generally provided well for their children. What the children lacked in attention, they gained in gifts. All the parents asked for was that in return the children would excel in academics. Within the typical immigrant family, busyness contributed to a breakdown of communication. Consequently, many children who grew up in this give-and-take dynamic enter Korean-American churches with cynical and bitter predispositions toward the first generation. Tracing their common history will shed light on the preconditions for the inevitable conflicts that followed and currently exist today. Korean Central Presbyterian Church in Northern California will be used as a case study to this end.

The sad reality among the second generation of Korean-American Christians is that they lack tradition and understanding of their past history. Some of what will be shared in this chapter will be autobiographical. My personal immigrant experience is not atypical. Our family came to the United States during the height of Korean immigration boom in the mid-seventies, and our experiences are very similar to other immigrant families.
History of the Korean-American Immigrant Church

The historical immigration of Korean Americans can be traced back as early as 1903, when 7,226 Korean immigrants arrived on sixty-five different ships to Hawaii.¹ It was not until the mid-seventies and the mid-eighties where the influx of Koreans saw great surge. For example, the number of Koreans entering the United States in 1965 was 2,165 while in 1973 the number rose to 22,930.² Most people entering the country during this time were working professionals with marketable skills. However, their English was not proficient. Many had to settle for jobs that did not require language skills and to take what was available.

When our family was preparing to immigrate to the United States, I recall my parents having to reduce our life into two suitcases per person and $200 for the travel. The cash limitation was in place so that the sponsoring party who invited the family would provide for them when they arrived. Their sacrifice was great, yet most immigrants did it to secure a better future for their children. I recall hearing repeatedly from many parents that the reason for immigrating to America was for the sake of their children.³ The first generation came to the United States in hopes of providing a better education.⁴ First-generation parents were indiscriminant about the type of work they took to provide for their family. For many the extreme struggles were nothing new, for they had endured the Korean

¹ Paul Taek-Yong Kim, Church Growth: Development of the Korean Churches in America (Seoul: Word of Life, 1985), 56.
² Ibid., 47.
⁴ Sang Hyun Lee and John V. Moore, Korean American Ministry (Louisville: General Assembly Council Presbyterian Church [USA], 1987), 29.
The survival work ethic of first-generation parents is difficult to duplicate, because theirs was forged due to extreme hardship and unimaginable violence.

It must be noted here that the immigrant conditions differ drastically between those who entered the country in the mid-seventies and those who came in the mid-eighties. These two periods, only a decade apart, represent the peak of immigration for Koreans. Those who immigrated in the mid-seventies paved a path for the next wave of immigrants. There were not many Koreans living in the United States at the time. Ironically, many of my elementary school classmates could not point out where the Korean peninsula was on the map even though the United States had participated in the Korean conflict just a few decades before.

Those who immigrated in the mid-eighties had a much easier time settling in. They had models and patterns to follow. For instance, when my family came to the United States, we had to be very creative in making Korean food with ingredients bought at American markets. By the time of the second surge of Korean immigrants in the mid-eighties, there were enough Korean markets to comparison shop and even to buy already made Korean foods. When South Korea hosted the 1988 Summer Olympics, it helped bring recognition to an obscure nation throughout the world. Though the difficulties faced by the latter immigrants were a bit easier, the motivation that brought them here to the United States and the sacrifices they made were very similar.

For most families, both parents were forced to work to make ends meet. Their fierce drive to succeed often knew no bounds. Many worked in jobs that required little or no language skills, which limited them to manual labor. In the seventies, the war in Vietnam
was coming to an end and there was great prejudice against Asians in general. I recall having to remind my schoolmates that not all Asians are “Vietcongs” or “Chinks” or “Gooks.” It was very common for Asian Americans living and growing up in the 1970s and the 1980s to be bombarded with such racial epithets. First-generation parents had to swallow much pride and suffer deeply to secure a life here in the United States. Men who held important positions in South Korea had to settle for menial labor or small businesses.

One of the elders at a church where I grew up was a principal of a large high school in South Korea; but in order to support the family, he took a job as a dishwasher at a restaurant. My mother who had been a housewife had to work at a nursing home as an overnight janitor. They were willing to do anything, as long as it afforded them a better future for their children. Despite their sufferings, they did all that they could to shield their children from being exposed to what they were experiencing. I do not recall ever hearing adults talking openly about how difficult life was for them. I only discovered recently from my father how blatantly prejudiced people were at his work during our early years in the United States. Nevertheless, there was always plenty of food on the table and clothes on our backs. Like me, most offspring of the first generation were oblivious of the extent of suffering their parents had to endure.

Swallowing their pain, the parents demanded little from their children except to study hard. Education was the only route to success. Better education for their children was the reason for giving up the life they knew in South Korea and making the move to the United States.

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6 P. T. Kim, *Church Growth*, 71.
the United States. Raising the bar high for their children, many parents spoke only of Ivy League universities in their homes. When parents gathered, they often focused their talk on their children and their accomplishments. I still recall dreading visiting other families and being compared to other children. In the eyes of the children, money and school were the only things that seemed to matter to parents. The success of their children was their sole aspiration. This is still the case for many second-generation Korean Americans. As I counsel college students on career choices, they wrestle with for whom they are making their choice. They struggle most with trying to live up to parental expectations.7

During the economic boom of the late seventies and eighties, being highly entrepreneurial, many Koreans started small businesses and devoted their lives to them. This was much better than the hardships they faced in working for someone else. The pressure to speak English was minimized, and they were their own boss. They invested long hours, some doing business in dangerous areas, and risked their lives to make money. Children hardly interacted with their parents, who were constantly working; and when they did get the chance to bond, the children were told to study harder. To ensure success, the parents invested as many of their resources as possible into their children.

A Korean-American owner of a Pennsylvanian tutoring center told me that in the late eighties, when he opened the center the first week he received over fifty applicants.8 Within a month, he had to turn students away. When the word about the center’s success spread, he had to expand. This person was a pioneer at the time; however, now there are

7 College students, interviews by author, Berkeley, CA, 2008-2011.
8 Park In, interview by author, Philadelphia, 1996.
several tutoring centers within blocks of one another, servicing Korean-American students. Extracurricular academics have been mainstreamed into the Korean-American culture.

Children were rewarded for their diligent performance. First-generation parents often took care of chores around the house, despite their busy schedules, so children could focus on studying. Sometimes foods were served at their desks so they would not have to waste time coming to the dinner table. In my house, every night after dinner, the whole entire family sat around a huge desk my father had built in the living room and everyone studied together. Whether or not someone had homework, everyone sat at the table from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. every school night. The children who were not able to handle this type of pressure rebelled and became objects of shame for their families. However, the majority excelled and went on to prestigious colleges, obtained highly paid jobs, and became very successful.

Growing up in this sheltered environment, the second generation of Korean Americans knew very little about the pain and suffering of their parents. Where the first generation sowed in tears, the children reaped fruit without much regard. In contrast, the second generation was too busy, too selfish, and too immature to care. They were too busy with school, tutoring, extracurricular activities, and even church on the weekends to have much leisure. Being the center of attention, many children became very spoiled and self-centered. For many parents, it was sufficient for their suffering to remain their own. They preferred that their children not know about their struggles, in order to focus on studying and pursuing a brighter future. Storing up the han for themselves, they only cared that their children were provided with everything they needed to succeed. What mattered most to
them in the end was for the sacrifices to yield great payoffs, with their children becoming successful and embodying the pride and joy of the family. In the eyes of the first generation, only then would the sacrifice of leaving the life they knew and suffering to rebuild a new life in a foreign land be worthwhile.

Defining the Korean-American Generations

In distinguishing the generations among Korean-American Christians, it is helpful here to define the terms “the first generation” and “the second generation” as well as the generation in between. These terms are important to define, because within Korean-American society these generational designations take on an array of underlying meanings which are accepted with common understanding. For example, for churches hiring a pastor these generational designations become critically important. It says a lot about what the church seeks and ensures the pastors applying to the position have the desired mindset.

“The first generation” refers to those who emigrated from Korea after the age of eighteen. Their primary language is Korean, and they tend not to assimilate into mainstream American culture. “The second generation” refers to the children of those Korean immigrants who were born in the United States or who arrived with their parents before the age of five. English is their primary language, and they relate more easily with American culture than their parents. Then there is “the 1.5 generation.” These Korean Americans came to the United States at a young age, between the ages of six and seventeen, and have experienced life in Korea as well as life in North America. Many of
them have fluency in both English and in Korean. They know both the Korean and the American culture well enough that they can easily bounce back and forth.  

Although the 1.5 generation of Korean Americans appear to be an ideal group to bridge the gap between the first and the second, they are known as “the lost generation.” After struggling with self-identity, many have abandoned their Korean-ness and have faded from the Korean community while not fully fitting into mainstream America. A more technical term for them is the “marginal man. . . . a person who is in between two cultures or societies without wholly belonging to either one.” Though currently there are many English-speaking congregations within Korean-American churches, they were not available for the 1.5 generation of Korean Americans when they were growing up. Unable to relate to the Korean Church, many abandoned Christianity. Recently, in many of Korean-American churches there has been an influx of 1.5-generation Korean Americans back into the Church, most after marrying first-generation Korean Americans. Sadly, feeling marginalized in the Korean-American Church by both Korean- and English-speaking congregations, they simply come and go without fully involving themselves. Due to their lack of involvement, they are the most ignored group in the Korean-American Church. If the Korean-American community can revive the 1.5 generation and involve them in this discussion, they may prove to be the most valuable resource in bridging the two generations towards interdependently coexisting.

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Formation of Korean Churches in the United States

The formation of Korean churches in the United States has a long-rooted history. Their sudden growth is a recent occurrence, but their history spans back over a century. One of the very first Korean churches in the United States is the Korean Methodist Church, established on October 8, 1905.\(^{12}\) It mostly was comprised of a handful of field workers who migrated to the mainland from Hawaii. It was not until the mid-seventies with the immigration boom that the Korean churches in the United States experienced rapid growth. In 1967 there were but thirty Korean churches in the entire country. Less than a decade later, in 1973, there were about two hundred. In December 1980, this number grew to 1,017 Korean congregations.\(^{13}\)

These churches tended to be located in major metropolitan cities throughout the United States. In 1974, when my family came to the United States, there were but a handful of known cities that provided opportunities for Korean immigrants. The Korean church we attended was about forty minutes outside the city of Philadelphia. A major pharmaceutical company and an automobile parts factory provided jobs for many Koreans there. As with many immigrants, they migrated to wherever the jobs were. The church I attended rented its facility from an old Baptist church, which considered the Korean church as its mission work and so charged very little rent. Whenever the American congregation was not using the facility, the Korean congregation would come in and use it fully. The Sunday services were in Korean, and very little to no English was spoken. The congregation grew, as many

\(^{12}\) P. T. Kim, *Church Growth*, 81. This church is located just a few minutes from where I live in San Francisco.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., 94-95.
flocked to the church. It became a social hub for many Korean Americans. A survey conducted in the 1980s revealed that nearly three-quarters of the Korean immigrant population in the United States identified themselves as Christians, mostly attending Protestant churches.\textsuperscript{14} My memories of Sundays at the church were jovial and lively. Many traveled far to attend these gatherings—some for spiritual feeding but many to find social, economic, and psychological assistance from the immigrant Korean-American Church.\textsuperscript{15} Church was where their common pain and suffering of being an immigrant in a new country found comfort, as they silently shared similar experiences.

Common struggles brought the Korean immigrants to church, but the cultural makeup kept them in it. Koreans generally are very communal and collectively conforming. They tend to have strong sense of nationalism and are loyal to the motherland and to one another. There is a word in Korean that embodies this concept, but it is difficult to translate: \textit{jung}. It means endearing affection that transcends love-hate emotions, as one becomes attached.\textsuperscript{16} It is very much like how people get attached to pets. A dog can chew and destroy everything in the house, but its owner will have a difficult time getting rid of it due to this love-hate relationship or \textit{jung}. Daily, the owner may yell about how much he hates the dog; yet, despite the havoc, when it dies he feels sad that it is gone. This is \textit{jung}, and Koreans have much of it. It is not uncommon for Koreans to abundantly express hospitality, loyalty, and commitment to people they have known only briefly.


\textsuperscript{15} S. H. Lee and Moore, \textit{Korean American Ministry}, 177.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Minjungseorim’s Essence Korean-English Dictionary}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., s.v. “jung.”
However, there is a deeper reason for such abundant affection among Koreans during this period of church growth. Many Korean Americans often worked in places where language and culture prevented them from openly sharing their *jung*. They found Korean-American churches to be the perfect place to openly exchange this. The intensity of this *jung* grew as the unspoken, common experience of sacrifice and suffering found its haven within the Body of Christ. For most Koreans, church became their social outlet and most important venue for community and organization. It was a place where many shared their kindred spirit as well as their struggles. They felt a strong sense of camaraderie, because they could fully relate to what everyone else was experiencing as a Korean newcomer to the United States. The early immigrants shared indiscriminantly, “happy to see fellow-countrymen in a strange land” attitudes with one another.  

Church also became an important place for many to regain their lost status. As mentioned, it was not uncommon for people who were once in prominent positions in Korea to be doing menial work here in America. Though they felt insignificant at work, when they walked through the doors of the church, they transformed into leaders, deacons, and elders. They held important positions and did meaningful work for their local church. They handled church finances and played a prominent role in planning for the future of a body of believers. At the church where I was raised, all the adults I knew were called *jipsanims*—the Korean word for “deacons.” Whether they were Christians or


not they were given a title of *jipsanim*. Though they may have felt insignificant in American society, they held a title of respect in the church and that was important.\(^{19}\)

The appointed *jipsanims* in the church tended to be men and women who were very active in community and society in Korea. It was not uncommon to have a *jipsanim* who was once a school teacher, a government official, or a CEO of a small company in their former lives. Their former prominence often would influence the church leaders to consider them for the position of *jipsanim*, regardless of a profession of faith. Growing up in a Korean-American church, it often was heard said, “So and so *jipsanim* used to be a so and so when he was in Korea,” thus giving legitimacy to their appointment. For most people they rose to the occasion and took their titles seriously, consequently becoming Christians along the way, as was the case for my father. They gave generously to the church and served it with great passion. Many churches prospered and began to own their own facilities, which gave rise to greater ownership and commitment and respect.

Church was a place where Koreans met their friends and formed lasting bonds. Social networks began to form during this growth period in the first generation of Korean-American congregations, as they came together in the churches to share similar values and customs.\(^{20}\) Korean communities became tighter and tighter as the Korean-American Church grew in greater numbers. For example, there is an annual Philadelphia-wide sporting event for the Korean-American community that began in the late seventies. Hundreds of Korean Americans participate in teams, and in most cases the teams represent various churches from the greater Philadelphia area. Churches soon became the most

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\(^{19}\) Ibid.

\(^{20}\) P. T. Kim, *Church Growth*, 92.
numerous and powerful social organization for the Korean community. With the sudden growth in Korean churches, the need arose for them to organize to promote uniformity.

Many Korean ethnic churches tended to be conservative in their doctrines and were drawn to Presbyterianism. Not being able to fit into already existing Anglo denominations like the Presbyterian Church (USA) due to the language barrier, the churches got together and formed their own denomination or a Korean branch within the existing denominations. In February 1978, a handful of churches with the help of a very conservative Presbyterian denomination in Korea birthed KAPC. What started as a few churches from the two coasts, East Coast and the West, is now one of the largest Korean-American denominations.

Not only was the Korean Church a social hub for first-generation adults, it also became a source of community for their children. The 1.5- and second-generation children of Korean immigrants also felt marginalized in their schools. There they encountered much prejudice, sometimes more severely than their parents because children tend to have less socialization than adults. In this way, they are more open and honest with what they really think. The children of immigrant parents felt marginalized, because they were always in the minority yet often forced to socialize and adapt to mainstream American culture in school. In addition, extreme pressures from their parents to excel in school often made them easy targets of ridicule from their peers. I recall having my books bumped from my hands. In those days, children called it “popping your books.” I also remember being taunted with the

21 S. H. Lee and Moore, Korean American Ministry, 179.


derogative of “Gook Geek”—which loosely translated means “Asian nerd”—while my classmates watched, laughing.

Despite their struggles at school and the pressure at home, when Korean-American children followed their first-generation parents to church, they found other children very much like themselves playing freely, uninhibited by prejudice or pressure to excel. Although extracurricular activities were discouraged for fear of distracting children from their studies, the parents did not mind their children going to church on the weekends because it served many purposes. They saw church as a place that provided moral and religious guidance. Korean Church was also a wonderful place to teach and emphasize the importance of Korean culture and language.

As attention shifted from the adult ministry to addressing the needs of children, this uninhibited freedom did not last too long. Soon Korean-language schools and tutoring programs sprang up in these churches to provide structured teachings in the church. Children often were ostracized by first-generation adults for not being able to speak Korean. The 1.5 and the second generation of Korean-Americans children constantly were reminded that they were Koreans. For parents, children speaking the language of the motherland became important as the cornerstone in maintaining their Korean identity. First-generation parents believed that their children had much to gain by attending church on the weekends. Church also afforded the adults safe babysitting, so they did not have to leave children at home while they gathered for their meetings. In most cases, once they got

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24 Ten married couples from Korean Central Presbyterian Church, interviews by author, Daly City, CA, 2009. These interviewees, who grew up in the Korean-American Church, revealed similar experiences of being allowed to participate in church during the weekends while not being allowed to attend weekend school activities such as sporting events or dances.
to church, the children and their parents hardly ever crossed paths all day; and, for most Koreans at the time, going to church was an all-day affair.

A typical Sunday service at the time would begin around noon, because many Korean-American churches borrowed their facilities from an American church and they would have to wait until their worship was done. The worship liturgy mirrored the Presbyterian churches in Korea and imported Korean bibles and hymnals. The children were forced to sit alongside their parents as the entire service was conducted in Korean. After the worship service, there usually would be Korean food served at the church. This tradition is still carried on by most Korean-American churches, as most churches serve lunch to their congregation. After meetings and activities, the evening worship service would take place. Very much like earlier worship, the evening worship shared the similar liturgy just with a different sermon. The day usually would end with further gatherings at different homes for the parents to fellowship before going home for the evening. The children often tagged along with their parents. At Korean Central Presbyterian Church, when a deacon took a survey among the second generation of Korean young adults asking for their fondest memories of church when they were young, an overwhelming number shared that their fondest memory was being carried to bed by their fathers after coming home from church on Sundays.

In time, many parents recognized the need for structured programs for their children at church. Though there was a severe shortage of English-speaking pastors, there were plenty of Korean-speaking seminarians from South Korea. Typically, they served as youth pastors in many Korean-American churches. They were hired not just to teach the
children biblical content but also to reinforce what was being demanded of them in their homes. It was common to see Korean churches turning into tutoring centers and language schools on the weekends and during the summer vacation months. Church was not only a place where children went to learn about Scripture but was also a place where they could improve their grades in school, learn to speak better Korean—and sadly, to have their progress measured in comparison with other children. The same pressure to excel in school now became enforced at home and somehow encroached into the church as well.

The message they received from the Church was sometimes indistinguishable from the message they heard in their homes. In this way, the message they received about Christ became muddled. In the end, what children often heard were these unspoken messages: “To succeed in life is to be a better Christian” and “To be a better Christian means becoming a better Korean.”

For the parents, the Korean-American Church transmuted itself into a place where they could reclaim their Korean identity through sustaining the Korean culture and heritage in a friendly and welcoming environment. However, for their children it became a very confusing place with many mixed messages. While a place for their parents to discover relevance, it forced the lives of their children to become polarized. Church became a place where the parents held on to their Korean heritage, while for the children it meant pressure to become Koreanized in church while becoming Americanized at school among peers.

Church became a popular experience for parents to expose Korean culture to their children, but for many children church became a chore. This is where the relevance for Church began to part ways between the first and the second generations of Korean Americans.


Notions of Love and Success

What is most tragic about the Korean-American experience is that the concept of love and success became confused for the children of first-generation Korean Americans. The first generation expressed love through sacrifice and material provisions. In turn, they measure the success and gratefulness of their children through material acquisition and scholarly or professional accomplishments. Unfortunately, the second generation perceives this love through sacrifice and material provision as neglect and evaluates success by how many of their parents’ expectations they have met. The intention and perception of love and success hardly cross paths between the two generations. Love expressed in this way, though given with good intentions, is not received as delivered; and, “success” hardly ever amounted to the internal satisfaction it was expected to bring.

During the most formative years in the lives of their children, many first-generation parents had to spend most of their time at work or at their businesses. Many Koreans work an average of ten to fourteen hours per day, including weekends.25 I had a friend whose parents owned a twenty-four-hour donut shop. The father worked the night shift, and the mother worked the day shift. She would leave home before the children arose in the morning, and he would leave home when they returned home from tutoring after school. The only time when the whole entire family spent time together was on their drive to church. The parents would get help on Sundays, so they could attend church. I often heard my friend say, “My parents only know donuts and church.”26 Though not strictly typical, this was not an uncommon scene in many Korean-American homes.


Parents labored diligently for their children, and in return their children were expected to perform well at school. Hard work became a mutually necessary expression of love within the family. Unfortunately, this expression of love, in comparison to what they were exposed to with their non-Korean friends, did not translate well for the children. The sacrifice made by parents, working endless hours for the sake of their family, gave away the valuable time their children needed for emotional, social, and educational support. For many children, their friends and television filled these roles.\textsuperscript{27}

Spending the majority of their time alone with their peers, the children quickly became Americanized while the parents remained staunchly Korean. In the workplace assimilating into American society often was not necessary for the parents, but for their children it was a requirement. Many Korean-American children gave up their Korean culture and language in order to become more like their peers at school—or, at the very least, to avoid teasing and prejudice. Caught between two very different worlds, many children of first-generation Korean immigrants developed an identity crisis, being not fully Korean and not fully American. Forced to live very different lives at home and at school, the children were conditioned to turn on and off their Korean tendencies or their American tendencies. With the absence of parents and less exposure to Korean culture, it was inevitable for them to gravitate towards becoming more American. Unfortunately, forced by guilt, pressured by parents, and endorsed by churches to hold fast to their Korean roots, many children grew up perplexed about their identity. Depending on the level of tolerance and experience, some eventually abandoned all aspects of their Korean heritage to become

\textsuperscript{27} S. H. Lee and Moore, \textit{Korean American Ministry}, 177.
more American or completely rejected the American culture and remain very Korean. However, for most, having navigated safely between the two cultures has resulted securely in a dual identity.\textsuperscript{28} This dynamic is particularly true for those of the 1.5 generation.

Identity crisis was a major struggle when I was growing up. At school, there was a great demand that I act American and speak English. At home and at church, there was a great demand to be Korean and to speak Korean. Language, so closely tied to culture, was critical for communication between parents and children; but, at the same time, since English was necessary to succeed in school, some parents discouraged speaking Korean.

This caused great confusion for the children. Fanned by the fear of facing greater prejudice at school, Korean-American children tried hard to shed their Korean heritage and culture. This inner conflict often expressed itself in frustration against the parents for not being American enough. The children frequently felt ashamed of their parents for not being able to speak English. Children even would look down at their parents for their broken English.\textsuperscript{29} Communication began to break down between the parents and their children. To avoid open conflicts, both sides retreated into their respective concepts of hard work and words became minimal. Once when a friend’s father drove us to the movie theater, he heard us speaking English and told us to speak Korean. No one spoke the whole rest of the way.

For many Korean-American children, growing up exposed to the American expressions of love—hugs and kisses and saying, “I love you”—they perceived and equated their parents’ lack of demonstrative affection as a lack of direct love for them.

\textsuperscript{28} Carnes and Yang, \textit{Asian American Religions}, 202.

\textsuperscript{29} B. Kim and S. H. Lee, \textit{The Korean Immigrant in America}, 89.
While recently speaking with my parents, I asked them why they are able to articulate and express their affection for me now but had been unable to do so when I was growing up. Their answer was that they simply did not know how. They did not receive it, but they never questioned the love from their own parents. They held a mutual definition of love with their parents and showed it through hard work.

When I was serving as a youth pastor at a Korean church, I recall having to deal with students who were thoroughly convinced that their parents hated them. They could not handle the overwhelming feeling of being a disappointment to their parents. In shock and dismay, I heard student after student saying, “I hate my parents!” and “The only time my parents talk to me is when I do badly in school.” Somehow parental sacrifice in the name of love missed its mark along the way, and the message got crossed. Their desire for the success of their children was misinterpreted as being unreasonable and unloving. The second generation determined the parents’ absence and lack of communication as lack of true interest in their lives and viewed it as forcibly living vicariously through them, trying to make up for all the things they could not achieve in the new land. Though their desires were expressed in love for their children, children saw it as loveless and selfish ambition.

The traditional stereotypes of Asian parents are true for Koreans, especially when it comes to grades. Due to their tenacious desire for their children to do well, the children of Asian-American immigrants have earned the titles of “whiz kids” and “model minority”

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30 Won Yun and Young Won Kim, interviews by author, July 2010.

31 Summer Youth Retreat at Korean Mission Church in Lansdale, PA, 1995.
for their academic achievements.\textsuperscript{32} Though not every Asian-American child from an immigrant home excels in school, these stereotypes do clearly reflect the stress the parents put on their children to do well among their peers. While teachers would encouragingly write “Much improvement” when students improved their grades from “C” to “B,” Korean children heard from their parents such discouraging remarks as “Why not an ‘A’?” Having raised two teenage daughters in high school, I find myself repeating the same things and in retrospect realize that the message may have gotten lost. Though expressed in love, it often is not received or perceived as love. Rather, it is perceived as something that the parents want for themselves and not in the interest of their children. This only adds to broken communication, leading to broken relationships.

To further complicate the matter, the meaning of success is misinterpreted. Koreans typically are strictly moral people. Ingrained with five hundred years of Confucian teachings passed down from generation to generation ensures that Koreans pursue morality through cultivating self and then leading to affecting others.\textsuperscript{33} Built into this moral way of living, Confucian ideology has instilled into Korean culture a fundamental and unchangeable social structure among family members: between elders and children, husbands and wives, kings and subjects; or in a spiritual context, between those in authority and those who are being ruled, and even between the divines and its subjects.\textsuperscript{34} Unlike the western view of earning respect and honor, it is assumed by the older from the younger generation within the Korean

\textsuperscript{32} Jamie Lew, \textit{Asian Americans in Class} (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 2.

\textsuperscript{33} B. Kim and S. H. Lee, \textit{The Korean Immigrant in America}, 89.

\textsuperscript{34} Martina Deuchler, \textit{The Confucian Transformation of Korea} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1992), 110.
The core traditional Confucian values include filial piety, respect for parents, family-centeredness, emphasis on education, and strong ethics. For this reason, children are taught from very early on to be good people. They are to pursue goodness, because goodness is rewarded by success. In all of the teachings they receive from home and from church, Koreans point to becoming good people. If one does not steal, lie, or hurt others, then it is thought that life will go well. Typically, these were great lessons to be had, but the moralistic interpretation of these teachings made for many the reward of success to be the object rather than the objective of becoming good-natured and emotionally healthy people.

Essentially, children saw in their parents in living out their quest for success how these moral lessons have trickled down to money. For many of the 1.5 and the second generations of Korean Americans, success often translates to money. For many ambitious Korean Americans, the importance of money trumped even the Christian faith. Young Lee Hertig tells of a family who compromised their Christian faith to marry into a wealthy family, knowing they were Buddhists. This misguided perception is prevalent among second-generation Korean Americans concerning success. Seeing their parents fighting about money and even sacrificing their family to accumulate as much as possible, they often associate success with money. Many parents did not know how to take vacations. Though they lived in mansion-like homes, they worked too hard to enjoy them. Adding the sense of guilt experienced by children, the first generation would tell their offspring that it

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was all done for them. Misinterpreted expression of love and misunderstanding of success only complicate relational matters, as the gap between the generations has widened.

I am currently doing ministry among well-accomplished, second-generation Korean-American Christians. The church is located at the heart of the high-tech industry, near San Francisco in California. Most employed church members work for leading companies in the fields of engineering, biotech, and finance. They have gone to prestigious schools, have done very well, and are working in highly sought jobs with skyrocketing pay. However, most are discontent with where they are in life. Though their parents pushed for success, being immigrants they did not have the capacity to model what true success looks like. They modeled the steps to success, hard work and sacrifice, yet they were unable to articulate the reasons for success and to enjoy it. Perceiving the formula for success to be hard work and sacrifice resulting in money, the second generation of Korean Americans often experiences great regret and confusion about where they are in life now that they possess it.

Though they are the pride and joy for their parents, I find many successful Christians at my church feeling discontented with their lives. More and more working members change fields of work or return to school for more education. One deacon in Korean Central Presbyterian Church recently went from being a computer programmer to entering dentistry at the age of thirty-three. When asked what brought on the change, he simply said, “I wanted to find out what else was out there for me. And if that doesn’t work out, I can always come back to programming.”

They are surrounded by gadgets and

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other trophies of their success yet do not feel fulfilled. They lack meaning and fulfillment in their success, and many are lost.

**Formula for Conflict**

The children of the first generation of Korean immigrants did exactly as told by their parents. Although they have achieved what their parents were not able to do in the United States, reach the American dream, many have a hard time finding contentment in their own achievements and as a result often grumble about their place in life. Unable to understand this, their parents cannot quite grasp why the second generation is so unappreciative of all the hard work poured out for their sake. Frustrated by their rebuke, the children ask, “When did we ask for these things?” Though the first generation’s intentions were good, their actions are perceived as an irrelevant sacrifice and have engendered a harsh predisposition by the second generation. The second generation no longer wants to feel guilty for the sacrifices made, and the first generation feels betrayed by the rejection of the second. This dynamic has engendered much conflict.

One way this conflict has manifested is how the second generation claims sole entitlement for its success, refusing to see how it was achieved on the backs of the first generation. It may be the 1.5-ness in me that sees the plight of both sides. For the sake of love and success, parents have sacrificed much for their children; and in light of this, parents view the discontentment their children as a lack of gratitude. Though many in the first generation are willing to dismiss the disgruntled attitudes of their children all in the name of *jung*, their children cannot move beyond their emotions and remain stuck. For the first generation, it is enough to be family; so, they prefer to forget what took place in the
past to enjoy the moment. However, those of the second generation want answers for why they did not feel love growing up; and for them, no amount of success can fill that void.

In Korean-American churches, this kind of misunderstanding occurs at a corporate level. Korean Central Presbyterian Church (KCPC) in San Francisco exemplifies well this case in point. A service committee comes out on Saturdays and early Sunday mornings to prepare food for the Korean- and English-speaking congregations. That meal is prepared for over seven hundred members, and this ministry has been done for over thirty years. One particular Sunday, food was left out over night and became spoiled. They discovered the problem, after several EM members complained. The following Sunday, many EM members began to grumble about the quality of food served at church. They further expressed that they will think twice about eating at church. If EM members had seen the tears of the service committee when they discovered that the food had spoiled and that they had accidentally served it to the EM, they may not have questioned the service committee’s quality of motives or diligence.

The EM members were not wrong in noting problems with the food; but due to shame, the service committee did not bother to explain what happened. To take one incident after thirty-seven years of faithful service and to complain in such a public way seemed offensive to me and a few of the leaders in EM who knew. This incident offers a small glimpse into the massive misunderstanding in perception of love between the two generations. If the KM servers had been able to bridge through communication, thus revealing their essential heart, the EM members may have been able to recognize and
receive their care and thank them for their provision. The needs of both sides could have been honored in a culturally satisfying way. Sadly, this is not what happened.

The broken relationships and the breakdown in communication between the two generations did not occur overnight for the Korean-American Church. During the intense and rapid growth of the Korean-American Church, there was little explanation given about the good intentions and the sacrifices made by first-generation parents. The second generation was left to interpret these actions on their own and through their Americanized paradigm. Due to obedience, duty, and respect, the children instinctively have followed their parents’ lead and worked hard to reach their expectations. They have grown up and are much older now, yet they are not satisfied with the results as their parents have hoped. Context of how things have developed between the two generations is important in deciphering their broken relationship. Understanding how the heritage of the Korean-American Church developed is vital in reestablishing relations between the two generations. The wounds are there, and they run deep. It took many years to develop. However, to ignore the past and to argue about the snapshots of current brokenness is to stand alone toppling the past sacrifices made by both sides.

The relationship between the English Ministry and the Korean Ministry in the Korean-American Church is volatile at best.\textsuperscript{38} This took years in making. In Chapter 2, the resulting symptoms rising from this shared past will be examined contextually. As mentioned above, the cyclical patterns of the past continue to perpetuate. The silent exodus coming from the silent battles has come to a head and needs to be addressed.

\textsuperscript{38} Peter Cha, Paul Kim, and Dilan Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” in \textit{Growing Healthy Asian American Churches}, eds. Peter Cha, Steve Kang, and Helen Lee (Downers Grove, IL; InterVarsity Press, 2006), 147.
CHAPTER 2
THE KOREAN-AMERICAN CHURCH HERE AND NOW

The English Ministry within the Korean Church grew due to the need to bring the Word of God to the younger, English-speaking 1.5 and second generations. This accommodation was a temporary solution with no long-term vision for the future generation. The first generation in the Korean-American Church was not prepared for the day the EM would grow older and seek independence, and this lack of foresight and planning is what now plagues the Korean-American Church and currently causes conflicts between the two generations.

By the mid-1980s, due to the increasing language barrier, many Korean-American churches began separate worship services for the Youth Group (YG), conducted in English. Initially, creative methods were employed to keep the services together. Everything from having the manuscript of the sermon translated in English to doing side-by-side and simultaneous translations. Some churches went high tech and brought in translator kits with headphones. With the advent of overhead equipment, sermons were projected on screens. Some churches, in frustration, even demanded that the non-English speaking members learn Korean. However, in the end, the leadership of these churches had to find alternatives, because this unreasonable demand to learn Korean became a
tremendous distraction to worship. Additionally, the number of second-generation attendees was dwindling as they searched for less intimidating, more comfortable English-speaking churches or skipped out on church all together. Something needed to be done to accommodate and stop the fading of the next generation in Korean-American churches.

Since the growth spurt of the mid-seventies and the late-eighties, the Korean-American churches have come a long way. However, the demographics, the general makeup of its members, and the church structure have remained constant for the most part. Currently, in most Korean-American churches, there are Korean-American Christians of the first generation who dominate numerically and culturally. Korean is the primary language spoken, and the theological heritage inherited from South Korea some thirty years ago is well preserved there. The church polity is established and maintained by the first generation. Simply put, they rule the church. They make up the Korean Ministry.

Then there are the children of the first generation, often referred to as the Children’s Ministry (CM) and the YG. They make up the Christian Education Ministry of the church, and it remains under the oversight of the KM. Due to compartmentalization in the church, the KM traditionally is reserved for adults and for the Korean-speaking congregation; the CM and the YG worship exist separately, and their worship is mostly conducted in English. In order to accommodate all, the Korean churches began hiring English-speaking pastors. This move has helped to alleviate the struggles of many families who had difficulties bringing their children to church. Consequently, the children became more eager and excited to attend church. This became the genesis for the development of the EM in the Korean-American Church.
As many Korean-American Christians of the 1.5 and second generations outgrew the YG, they were too comfortable worshiping in English to transition into the KM where only Korean was spoken. At the same time, they now were too old to participate in the YG worship. In the beginning, many English-speaking young adults began serving the YG. They became Sunday school teachers, deacons, and directors in the YG and CM—namely, assisting the education pastors. When more and more college students returned home after graduating, the need became apparent to begin an EM where worship would be led in English. Despite KM efforts to create English-speaking services for those young adults, the younger generation felt they were being treated as second-class citizens in the Korean Church.¹ Many of these young adults had been involved in campus during their college years and had received the call or tasted the excitement of leadership in the Body of Christ. However, upon returning home, the transition back into the Korean Ministry was difficult. Rather than setting up an independent EM, Korean many churches tried to incorporate these young adults into the YG. Those who could bear this transition stuck it out, but many members either returned to the KM or left the church.

In this way, the majority of current EMs in the KAPC denomination have evolved from YG to G-YG, or “glorified” Youth Group. This is a critical point in understanding the perception of current EM by both the first and the second generations of Christians in the Korean Church. The identity of EM always trickles back to CM and YG, because from here they developed into EM. Many EMs lack an autonomous identity and carry the baggage of once having been a subordinate ministry in the church. Though they have

¹ S. Kim, A Faith of Our Own, 26.
grown in size and are much older now, the first generation still desires to keep order and hierarchical relations fixed to emphasize obedience and submission from the younger to the older KM.² EM does not possess the essential authority to dictate its direction, nor is it given room to assume more mature responsibilities within the broader church.

Peter Cha, Paul Kim, and Dihan Lee attribute this dynamic to “multigenerational households.” In their chapter co-written for Growing Healthy Asian American Churches, they provide a story which illustrates this point well. An idealistic second-generation EM pastor upon arrival at a Korean church is told by the senior pastor, “Your only job at this church is to follow my directions and to train your young leaders to obey their elders.”³ Not much has changed since the inception of the Korean-American Church for the younger generation of Korean-American Christians. Only now, the second generation has outgrown it. They lead research teams, technical departments, and whole companies. They are mothers and fathers with children of their own. The nature of current relationship between the EM and the KM has not caught up to the second generation’s maturation. For the KM, their relationship with the EM still is strongly tied to the natal development of the EM that was birthed from necessity.

“Church like Family, Family like Church”

Within the Korean-American churches, the concept of family is applied strongly. For many years the KM’s motto at KCPC, the church I currently serve, had been “Church

² Cha, P. Kim, and D. Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” 147.
³ Ibid., 146.
like family, Family like church.”

Growing up in a Korean-American church, everyone older was considered an uncle or an aunt. The elderly of the church were seen as grandparents, while the pastor filled the role of a father. Though this intimacy slowly dissipates, as many people take their membership lightly and shift from church to church, the outward expressions of being a family remain. In the first generation within a Korean-American church, the “father-son” concept is applied intrusively to the KM-EM relationship. The KM comfortably views the members of EM like their children.

The first generation assumes this perceived familial relationship in the church, even though members are not necessarily related. For the KM, it is an umbrella concept that covers all relational areas between the KM and the EM. Many assumptions and demands flow from this. Applying this familial concept to church, intimacy is assumed; and honor, respect, and obedience are expected. This concept is rooted in a loving endearment for the second generation, comprehensively reflecting the nature of the “father-son” relationship in Korean culture. For the first generation, semblance of this relational concept in its proper form (honor, respect, and obedience)—regardless of what lies at the heart—is most important. Outwardly bowing, serving, and showing respect is to recognize this relational bond between the KM and EM. Sadly, this is not a concept the second generation readily understands or accepts. For them, this relationship cannot be assumed but needs to be built and defined and earned. Honor, respect, and obedience are given once intimacy is established. Conflicts arise because the KM and the EM cannot agree on the nature of this “father-son” relationship.

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This “father-son” relationship worked for some time in the local church, when many children of the KM stayed together with their parents. Unfortunately, many of their children have left the church where they grew up. They have moved on to other second-generation, independent, Korean-American churches or even non-Korean churches. Sadly, many no longer attend church. Helen Lee, writing for Christianity Today, has labeled this younger generation leaving their childhood church as the “Silent Exodus.”\(^5\) Hertig, in her book called *Cultural Tug of War*, in particular tells of a heart-wrenching story of a man having to leave his childhood church due to the inability to overcome conflicts with the first generation. These silent wanderers are in search of a church that nurtures them as a generation.\(^6\)

At KCPC, there are over three hundred adult members in the Korean congregation.\(^7\) Many have young adult children who live near them yet do not attend church or who attend other churches in the area. Currently, at KCPC, the children of Korean congregants attending EM make up less than 3 percent of the EM congregation.\(^8\) Of that number, only two members actively serve in ministry. Many have left the church in bitterness or in apathy. Of those that have left their home churches, only a small number return to the church or to other thriving EMs. This is where this “father-son” dynamic breaks down in many Korean-American churches. Where the KM members may perceive this familial concept literally, the EM members often will not reciprocate because they have not grown up in that particular church.

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\(^6\) Hertig, *Cultural Tug of War*, 106.

\(^7\) Korean Central Presbyterian Church, *Korean Ministry Sunday Bulletin* (San Francisco, CA: Korean Central Presbyterian Church, February 5, 2012) records 304 members in attendance.

\(^8\) Tommy Lee, *Internal Census* (San Francisco, CA: Korean Central Presbyterian Church, 2009).
With limited contact and relationships not established, the EM congregation has a difficult time accepting this “father-son” concept from the KM. To make matters worse, unbeknownst to the KM, the members of EM have constructed a whole new identity for themselves, very different from the KM and even from the mainstream Church in the United States.9

This undefined and misunderstood familial concept causes conflict between the KM and EM in many Korean-American churches today. The members in the KM do not accept the reality that not all the members of the EM are their children. This view also reminds EM of the past battles fought at home and in the churches where they grew up trying to gain independence. The search for autonomy and independence is one of the reasons why those of the 1.5 and second generations seek churches where they did not grow up. Since they intentionally have tried to escape this familial dynamic in which they feel pressured, EM members are very sensitive and do not perceive these “father-son” dynamics as stemming from a heart of love for them; instead, they perceive it as disrespect or harm. The undefined assumptions have gone on for too long, and past wounds are only reinforced.

**Common Ground and Not-So-Common Ground**

While the Gospel needs to penetrate broken hearts and reconcile both sides, a sound ministry strategy must get to the core where the pains have been generated. Only then can the seeds of conflict that exist between the two generations in the Korean-American Church today finally surface for healing. This involves understanding the common and not-so-common ground of desired intimacy and marginalization among the generations.

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9 S. Kim, *A Faith of Our Own*, 12. The EM identity differs from mainstream Christianity in the United States in that it borrows from the two cultures, Korean and American, to create a distinct identity.
Christians in both the KM and EM desire intimacy but feel pushed to the rim of relevance. For example, in an effort to connect, the KM has terms of endearment for those in the EM. They refer to the younger generation as *ah-ye-dul* or *hak-sangs* (“kids” or “students” in Korean). In Korean-American churches, the KM members often will refer to the EM members as *ah-ye-dul* or *hak-sangs*, because they apply their assumed intimacy to the relationship. There is no ill motive in using these terms but simply to reflect their care for them. Within the Korean-American church context, the KM members have watched their children go from diapers to briefcases. They are terms of endearment used by the KM, who embrace the concept of the Body of Christ as the family of God and view the EM as their own children.

Tragically, this harmless reference takes on a whole new identity as it is heard by the EM members. KCPC has members who have attended since they were students in college and, though they are now in their forties, many members in the KM will pat their backs and say, “What a good *hak-sang*.” I once witnessed a KM member squeezing the cheeks of a thirty-something EM young adult while saying in Korean, “You are such a good *hak-sang*.” Horror filled the young man’s face. The first-generation member did not view the gesture as inappropriate or demeaning but rather meant it as an expression of affection. As a grown professional, the EM member felt insulted and disrespected. He argued that he never would have done that to a random KM member. Apparently very upset, he claimed to have lost all respect for the KM. Surprised by his reaction, the KM member appeared equally offended. Loving affection born of assumed intimacy was acrimoniously rejected by the EM member for two apparent reasons. First, he was
offended for the simple reason that they are not related by blood and have no established relationship. Second, and more subtle, was that though the KM member may have meant well, this gesture questioned his maturity and threatened his independence. He felt that the KM member still viewed him as a *hak-sang* (a student) or as an *ah-ye* (a kid),\(^{10}\) essentially someone who is not capable of providing and helping in a quality manner.

Members of EM feel marginalized because they view such gestures and terms as degrading. They experience these interactions as questioning their maturity and ability. They also feel it threatens their sense of independence. Though this is an unusual example, it shows how a minor event can be blown out of proportion and cause irreparable damage between the two ministries when their perceived assumptions are askew. With the relationship so volatile, the discussion of common and not-so-common grounds between the two ministries hardly ever is discussed. Right now the hostility is too high between the two ministries to unravel such miscommunications of intention and result in a healing way. There needs to be a clear path of reconciliation that publicly defines the true nature of relationship between the two generations.

**Similarities between KM and EM**

Overshadowed by mutual hostility stemming from unhealthy encounters between the KM and the EM, several essential similarities are ignored. Both the KM and the EM cherish and revere conservative theology that the Korean-American Church has preserved throughout its history. They also share in the likeminded principles undergirding worship

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\(^{10}\) EM member and KM member, interviewed by author, San Francisco, CA, 2008. The EM interviewee is an engineer in his mid-thirties. The KM member is a pastor in his mid-forties.
liturgy. Particularly in the KAPC, both the KM and EM appreciate the Presbyterian system of governance. Finally, a simple but extremely essential similarity that often is ignored is that both the KM and EM desire to inhabit the same church. The following observations and analysis will be limited mostly to the denomination of the KAPC and more specifically to KCPC, the church which I serve in San Francisco.

Within the denomination of the KAPC, one uncompromising similarity for both the KM and EM is the unifying conviction for conservative theology, holding to traditional doctrinal confessions. This comes from the conservative Korean church traditions brought over from Korea by the first generation of Korean-American Christians and flows from the deep reverence for God and for his Word. Strong emphasis and efforts are poured out to ground every area of theology in the Word of God. Most EMs within the KAPC prominently display the twelve articles of faith in their statements of faith on their websites. These mirror the statements of faith found on the KAPC denominational website. Though the degree of emphasis of these statements of faith may vary from church to church in the KAPC, its members appreciate and hold to them wholeheartedly and that is an integral reason why they attend. During a baptismal interview at KCPC, a group of college students were asked why they decided to attend the church. To the delight of KM elders and pastors, everyone agreed that it was KCPC’s conservative theological

11 R. Kim, God’s New Whiz Kids? 11.


stands. Members of KM and EM are similar in their desire for and commitment to the conservative theology throughout most of the Korean-American Church.

A second area of common ground involves the likeminded principles of worship liturgy. In the KAPC the KM and the EM worship liturgies differ in their expressions, yet in content and in principle their theology remains very similar. Most EMs in the KAPC have adapted to reflect a more contemporary worship style and environment. The types of music, worship liturgy, and form of attire have been closely policed by the church leadership in the past but now have relaxed tremendously. Just thirty short years ago, I recall wearing a suit and tie while lugging a dictionary-sized Korean-English Bible and a hymnal to church. We sang only solemn hymns accompanied by soft piano and organ, with the choir director inconspicuously tucked to the side conducting the congregation. Throughout the years, different instruments have snuck their way into worship. Now, the praise team of the EM at KCPC preeminently resembles a rock band with a full-blown ensemble of synthesized instruments wearing the latest Abercrombie & Fitch. The church still has elders, who were conditioned under the very conservative Presbyterianism of the past Korea and who feel very uneasy worshipping with the EM. However, despite the way worship appears, there can be found genuine sincerity and reverence both in KM and in EM worship. All the essential elements of the KM worship liturgy—the reading of God’s Word, praising God through songs and hymns, confessions, prayers, offering, preaching of God’s Word, and communion—similarly can be found in the EM worship liturgy. Specifically at KCPC, though the styles vary, the similar elements of the worship liturgy make attending each other’s worship a relatable experience.
Another thing both the KM and the EM share is the preference for the Presbyterian system of governance. The reason for this stems from the first similarity of conservative theology. Since the Presbyterian system of governance most resembles the model found in the Bible—a system of teachers, deacons, and elders (Eph 4:11; 1 Tim 3:2-12)—members of KM and EM in the KAPC feel comfortable being in a Presbyterian church. For the KM, this preference is shaped by the Confucian emphasis on hierarchy of leadership, which easily assimilates the Presbyterian model of governance. The session, made up of a committee of elders and the senior pastor, governs the ministries while a board of deacons manages the distribution of funds in the church with the oversight of the session.\(^{14}\) Though the EM is fairly young within the denomination of the KAPC, in many churches—specifically KCPC—the EM structure of governance mirrors that of the KM. This is logical, since the KM system of governance is the model with which they are most familiar.

Another vital similarity that is not as visible in many Korean-American churches is that both KM and EM members desire to be at the same church. Even EM members, who have left their childhood Korean church in frustration, often will search out Korean-American churches for the comfort of being with other Asians.\(^ {15}\) At KCPC, I interviewed KM members in their mid-forties and mid-fifties regarding what they thought about having the EM at church. A deacon in the KM at Korean Central said, “That was the reason why I chose this church. It shows we have a future.”\(^ {16}\) The overwhelming response


\(^ {15}\) S. Kim, A Faith of Our Own, 55.

\(^ {16}\) “Mr. Im,” interview by author, San Francisco, CA, October 2010.
was positive. Both the KM and EM members have made a conscious choice to be at a Korean-American church. Though the leaders of KM and EM may feel the tension caused by conflicts, at the congregational level, the idea of having a multigenerational church is very appealing. Interviewing the KM first regarding this topic was a targeted choice due to the hierarchical nature of the Korean American Church. It is much easier to help the older generation understand about the younger EM in the long run. Once a positive understanding concerning the EM can be established among the KM, it is easier to express such understanding to the EM as an encouragement for them to interdependently coexist with the KM. If the demands and dissatisfactions of the EM—such as those that can be obtained through interviewing—are forced upon the KM, this can be seen as being disrespectful.

Despite current tensions, one area of ministry collaboration between the KM and EM in a Korean-American church is Christian Education. This is because the supply of teachers comes mostly from the EM.\textsuperscript{17} Both the teachers of the EM and the parents of the KM feel blessed to be attending the same church.\textsuperscript{18}

Cha, P. Kim, and D. Lee share a moving story of a multigenerational mission team comprised of older KM members and younger EM members. Upon returning from their trip, together they shared their testimony at a unified worship about the two-week trip. Encouraged by how this collaboration between the generations has brought about deep mutual healing, the church made it an annual event to send a multigenerational mission

\textsuperscript{17} S. Kim, \textit{A Faith of Our Own}, 36.

team comprised of both KM and EM members. The authors emphasize how relationship was forged through shared experience, which allowed the members in the KM and the EM to enjoy one another in the same church.\(^{19}\) Even among second-generation pastors ministering to an independent EM congregation without the KM, they often share how they miss worshiping with the KM and hunger for a multigenerational setting.\(^{20}\)

At KCPC, there are non-Korean and non-Asian members attending Sunday worship services. Although they are in the minority, they often share how inspired they are to see the KM and the EM working together under the same roof and worshiping the same God.\(^{21}\) For most lay members in the EM, ethnicity is not a major factor if they are already active in a Korean church. Whether they were attracted by a community of friends or by biblical teachings or style of worship, they are attending because they made a conscious choice to be there. They determined on their own that the differences are bearable and the benefits of attending outweigh being bothered by the cultural and ethnic differences. It is only when those things are highlighted or demanded by the KM from the EM that they react.

For the KM, their choice to attend a Korean-American church is more direct. They have clear expectations, and the church enthusiastically makes every effort to meet these expectations. They come to experience a common language and the homogeneous makeup of their congregation. There is very little accommodation made for non-Korean-speaking members in the KM. Though there may be ulterior motive to preserve the “Koreanness” in the KM leadership, as far as lay KM members are concerned, they continue to come

\(^{19}\) Cha, P. Kim, and D. Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” 157-159.

\(^{20}\) S. Kim, A Faith of Our Own, 40.

\(^{21}\) Elder Joseph Kim and Deacon James Lee, interviews by author, Daly City, CA, December 31, 2011.
because they feel comfortable worshiping in a language they can understand and be present in a sanctuary filled with other Koreans. First-generation Koreans living in the United States still maintain a close tie to Korea. They watch Korean television programs and read Korean newspapers. Their spiritual, social, and cultural needs are bountifully met in the Korean-speaking church context; and, they feel very secure being there. Due to this innate security, the KM members are perfectly comfortable having an English-speaking congregation in the church to accommodate English-speaking members, but they typically do not welcome or accept an invitation to join the EM for worship.

Though there are many barriers and difficulties, which will be discussed later, both the KM and EM continue to make the conscious choice to be together under the same roof. Members on both sides attend Korean-American churches because they enjoy being there. Within the KAPC, EM and KM members attend regularly and become involved in the church for its conservative theological commitments and teachings. These similarities need to be acknowledged and celebrated, instead of being ignored. The common passion for conservative theology, likeminded worship liturgy, system of governance, and the collective desire of members of KM and EM to inhabit the same church are positive relatable similarities that can serve to encourage those in the Korean-American Church.

Differences between the KM and the EM

Just as there are similarities between the KM and the EM, there are differences that need to be acknowledged and celebrated in the Korean-American Church if a solution to the friction is to be found. Though there is a near endless list of differences between the KM and the EM, this portion of the discussion will highlight both the highly visible and less
visible differences to help shed light on the needs of both sides. The most visible differences include language, cultural identity, and stage in life. The less visible differences are more complex and range in the more varying and complicated differences of preference, priorities, and life context. These differences bear on how those in the KM and EM flesh out their faith in Christ in distinct ways through their perception of and involvement with church.

The most visible difference between the KM and EM is language. The first letters of the acronyms “KM” and “EM” reflect this. Those embracing Korean Ministry live their faith and do ministry predominantly in Korean. The English Ministry ministers most exclusively in English. This is not a matter of preference but simply of practicality. The emergence of English-speaking congregations is relatively recent. Even among the progressive Korean-American churches, the EMs are only about two decades old. One of the largest EMs in America is Young-Nak Church in Los Angeles. Their ministry only began in 1989.\textsuperscript{22} KCPC, where I am currently the EM pastor, began its EM in October 1992. In the KM there is very little need to speak English. With the option of having an English-speaking congregation, those who do not speak Korean and were attending Korean-American churches have moved to the EM in their church; or if there is no EM there, they often change churches in order to join an English-speaking congregation. People naturally want to worship in a language they can understand.

The second concrete difference between the KM and EM is cultural identity. Sharon Kim in her book, \textit{A Faith of Our Own}, makes a strong case for the second

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{22} Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner, \textit{Korean Americans and Their Religions} (University Park, PA; Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 48.}
generation of Korean Americans having a unique culture of their own. She points out that they have adapted a culture, which takes from their Korean heritage along with what they have gleaned from the American culture, to create a distinctive hybrid.23 This is true in the case of EM at KCPC. Their cultural identity is far more complex than just the language they speak or the types of food they like to eat. They can jump from being Korean to being fully American effortlessly. They can gobble down a hotdog and eat a spicy bowl of Korean soup and rice in one sitting. Rather than rejecting everything “Korean,” they pick and choose what to integrate into their own cultural identity.

As for the KM, church is where the Korean culture is safely preserved and perpetuated with good intentions of passing it on to the next generation.24 When KM members come to a Korean church, they are released from the burden of having to speak English or having to deal with an unfamiliar culture. They can speak Korean freely, be in an environment exclusively filled with Koreans, and worship and fellowship in a language and culture that are familiar and feel like home. Where the EM’s cultural identity is a mix of that which is Korean and American, for the KM their cultural identity is almost exclusively Korean. One area of contention at KCPC is that the members of EM do not bow to the older, first-generation KM. Instead of bowing, the EM members often will greet the KM with a “hello” or walk by without acknowledging. Being a Korean American of the 1.5 generation, I am constantly bowing to greet KM members while saying “hello” to EM

23 S. Kim, A Faith of Our Own, 13.

24 Ibid., 22-25.
members. What seems natural to the EM is viewed as disrespectful to the KM. Deferential bowing is culturally expected in the KM and usually considered a non-negotiable.\footnote{Ibid., 1.}

Another visible difference between the KM and the EM is the generational age gap, which reflects distinct stages in life. The members of EM are much younger than the KM. Since they are much older, the KM members tend to be more settled in life and stable. In contrast, most EM members are starting out in life and tend to be more transient. At KCPC, the church thins out in attendance during major holidays. Only recently with the growing number of families with children in the EM are more staying around. When the EM was much younger, it was not uncommon to have but a handful of people attending worship during Christmas and New Year. This difference in stage of life plays into interesting dynamics between the KM and the EM in a Korean-American church.

This difference in stage of life between the KM and the EM bleeds into more complex differences, like preferences and priorities. Everything from the way members dress, the types of cars they drive, the style of music, and even down to gadgets and usage of new technology differ tremendously between the KM and EM. At Korean Central, EM members communicate predominantly through emails and texting while the KM members still prefer phone calls or speaking in person. EM members will read the Bible from their smart phone, while KM members still carry their Bibles and hymnals. Most men in KM wear a suit and a tie to services, while EM members feel comfortable coming to church in jeans and casual summer wear. While career choices and considering a future spouse are at the top of importance for the EM members, most KM members are more established and
settled in their marriages and other relationships. This means KM members tend to be older and more settled in the Bay Area while the EM members tend to be younger and more transient. For the younger EM couples with young children, children’s programs at church are important while adult ministry and elderly care are more important for the KM.

Some of the differences mentioned in this discussion are not exclusive to the Korean-American Church. However, due to the visible divide between the KM and the EM, two separate congregations under one roof, the differences tend to become magnified and a source for conflict. It is vitally important for both the KM and the EM to accept and acknowledge their differences in order to collectively put an end to the KM-EM bitterness and friction.

**A Denominational Perspective: Hiding Behind Acronyms**

Currently in the denomination of the Korean-American Presbyterian Church, KM or EM is not an officially acknowledged designation for the ministries in a church. There is no mention of it in the bylaws of the denomination. There also is no official designation for an EM pastor in the KAPC. Officially, he is just an assistant pastor under the authority of the senior pastor. These designations, though not officially acknowledged by the denomination, are not arbitrary but represent real congregants in the KAPC throughout the country. Though the formation of an English-speaking congregation in the KAPC occurred due to necessity and the designation of EM temporarily given, time has determined its present path and has given it a more permanent place in the denomination.

As the EM evolves into simply more than an English-speaking congregation, its identity and its future need clearer direction. Rather than hiding behind acronyms like “KM” and “EM,” which are descriptive designations used only in a Korean-American church, the
KAPC needs to officially acknowledge them as legitimate independent churches with mature congregants who need proper recognition with the power to determine their own future. Currently in the KAPC, the EMs are a governed ministry of the KM with minimal representation. This is the frustration shared by many EMs in a Korean-American church. The goal of this section is to expose the existing EM congregations and the lack of vision for their future in the KAPC in hopes of opening up productive dialogues within the denomination and the particular churches that have the KM and the EM within its walls. An honest look at the present state of EMs and their relationship to KMs will help both sides work together towards interdependently coexisting as healthy and mature churches.

Within the KAPC, due to the unofficial designation of “KM” and “EM,” there is no way of determining which churches house the two congregations or its respective sizes. The churches that belong to the KAPC are required every year to submit a report containing the size of their church and their financial status. When the report is submitted, the EM numbers are incorporated into the KM without properly identifying who they are. Also, included in the report is the name of the senior pastor of the church and the number of elders overseeing members. Since the EM pastors have no proper designation other than being an assistant pastor, there is no way of determining if there is an EM pastor or not at the reported church. According to the bylaws of the KAPC, one elder is assigned to oversee twenty-five baptized members of the church. It is often the case that a single elder from the KM is sent to the EM to oversee the entire EM congregation. This is the

26 Ibid., 34.

case at the church I currently serve. At KCPC, there are over 250 members in the EM. Of fifteen active elders in the KM, only one is sent to the EM to be its liaison. Simply by looking at the report, it is not clear who the KM or the EM elders are. Due to this denominational dynamic, those in the EM who are functional lay leaders and providing elder-like guidance are invisible in the eyes of the KAPC.

In 2003, with the support of many first-generation pastors, the KAPC formed a provisional presbytery,\textsuperscript{28} The North American Presbytery (NAP), to accommodate the ordained English-speaking pastors in the denomination. During the gathering of the denominational General Assembly, many first-generation pastors raised their voices to show concern and support for the EM’s future in the KAPC and the motion was unanimously passed. However, since the number of EM pastors in the KAPC was so small, rather than having a regional presbytery which is the norm, the NAP covers the entire North American continent. What began as a small presbytery consisting of five EM pastors in 2003, eight years later, in 2011, there are twenty-nine members. Among them more than two-thirds are EM pastors serving in first-generation, Korean-American churches. Unfortunately, their EM congregations are not recognized by the NAP because they are not seen as a church. These EM members are subsumed into the KM congregation at their church and are sent into the KM presbytery. They are not recorded in the membership log of the NAP. Incidentally, of the seventeen pastors the NAP has ordained, eight of them have left the KAPC in frustration.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{28} Presbytery is a governing body of ordained pastors overseeing a KAPC region.

\textsuperscript{29} North AmericanPresbytery Executive Committee, \textit{Annals of NAP} (Hartford, CT: North American Presbytery, Fall 2011).
The temporary designations of “KM” and “EM” have become fixed in the KAPC. Non-prescribed titles such as “EM pastor” now have become permanent. For many EMs in the KAPC without the power to cast their own vision for the future, the ministries have become stagnant.\(^{30}\) Without clear boundaries and without clear directives from the denomination, many EMs are struggling to move forward. In frustration many EM pastors are opting to plant their own independent churches without the KM. This is not a bad thing in itself, but in this process the already existing EM congregations of those churches are being hurt. S. Kim in her research revealed that prior to 1992 there were four independent second-generation churches in Los Angeles. Since 1992, the number has grown to fifty-six.\(^{31}\)

Currently in the NAP of the KAPC, there are eighteen EMs: nine independent second-generation churches and nine KM/EM coexisting churches. These churches cover all of North America, including Canada. Second-generation independent churches emerged because they felt their needs were ignored by the first generation.\(^{32}\) The KAPC needs to officially and denominationally acknowledge the EM congregation as a church or abolish the designation of EM along with the designation of EM pastors to encourage them to go independent and form their own churches without the KM. Either of these options present a formidable challenge for the KAPC, but things cannot stay in this limbo state too much longer. No longer can the KAPC hide behind the acronyms and hope that the EM will continue to persist in its current state. For a denomination that has been serving Korean-American Christians for nearly four decades, the speculated small number of English-

\(^{30}\) S. Kim, *A Faith of Our Own*, 34.

\(^{31}\) Ibid., 49.

\(^{32}\) Ibid., 37.
speaking ministries that are struggling to interdependently coexist within the KAPC is alarming. In light of this concern, I conducted a survey to explore the issue more deeply.

Survey of KAPC

There are approximately five hundred local Korean-American churches throughout North America in the KAPC. In order to obtain the number of EMs coexisting with the KM, I sent out a survey to every senior pastor of the churches listed in the KAPC directory. Questions were asked to describe the makeup of the KM and the EM, if there was one, and also to invite expressed perceptions of EM. The survey was addressed to the senior pastors of the church, because the designation of EM pastors is not specified in the KAPC directory. Of the five hundred surveys sent, only fifty-six pastors responded. On a side note, over sixty letters came back stamped, “Return to Sender.” Though the addresses were taken from KAPC’s most current directory, it was sad to think that many of those churches in the denomination have folded and are no longer in existence.

In the survey, simple questions were asked with clear directions. The survey was deliberately concise to encourage participation. A stamped, self-addressed envelope also was included. The purpose of the survey was twofold. First was to quantify the number of EMs in the KAPC. Second was to identify the makeup of those EMs in the KAPC. Of the over five hundred Korean-American churches within the KAPC with their communicant (baptized) membership of forty-five thousand believers, the survey sought to clarify how many were KM members and how many were EM members. The size of the entire church,

33 See Appendix for survey.
the KM plus the EM, was asked. If the church had an EM, the survey asked for its membership number. To establish the second purpose—to identify the EM—the senior pastors were asked to share the current status of attendees for the EM. Request also was made for the name of the EM, if different from the KM, and the EM pastor’s information. Finally, to probe the aspirations and the vision senior pastors may have for their EM, their views on the identity of the EM were asked. Essentially, the survey examined if the EM was a department in the church, dependent or independent congregation, or a separate church altogether from the KM. A space was left for comments. Table 1 shows the results:

Table 1. KAPC Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of KM</th>
<th>EM (Y/WLH/DPH)</th>
<th>Size of EM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-100 KM / 10-50 EM</td>
<td>29 / 8 / 1 / 0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-200 KM / 50-100 EM</td>
<td>10 / 6 / 3 / 1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200-500 KM / 100-150 EM</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-1000+ KM / 150-200 EM</td>
<td>6 / 6 / 0 / 0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1000+ KM / 200+ EM</td>
<td>4 / 4 / 0 / 0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the results were alarming. It confirmed the frightful reality that there is only a small number of EMs in the KAPC. Of the fifty-six churches who responded, thirty churches reported to have EMs. There were fifteen churches showing interest in having an EM in their church, but eleven churches had no plans to start an EM. The majority of churches that had no plans to start an EM tended to be very small. The sizes of the ministries in KM and in EM reveal much about the makeup and the available resources in
the church. For example, of the twenty-nine churches that have ten to one hundred members in the KM, less than a third has EMs. Of the eight churches that have EMs, seven of them reported having between ten and fifty members. Only one church reported having between fifty and one hundred members in the EM. My experiences of having served as an EM pastor in Korean-American churches for the past seventeen years tell me that the eleven churches looking to have EM and the ten churches that do not have EM are simply due to lack of support and resources. They either do not have the funds to hire an EM pastor or there is not the necessary mass or interest to start an EM at these churches. The small number of members in the eight EMs also reveals their age range. They are most likely youth groups and/or children of KM along with young adult teachers helping the pastor. These have separate worship services in English.

The survey also revealed that the larger the church, the more likelihood of an EM existing. The majority of KMs with over two hundred members have EMs. They have both interested members and the resources to start and maintain an EM. Though not reflected in Table 1, when asked in the survey, twenty-nine pastors see the KM and the EM working together while eleven of them see the EM as a department of the KM. Seven very progressive pastors see their KM/EM relationship as being independent. Interestingly, none of the pastors who saw the KM and EM being independent have EM in their churches. Though they desire to have EMs in their churches, it has not been realized yet within their midst.

One notable survey came from a pastor of a church with one to two hundred KM members and ten to fifty EM members. Though the pastor had checked, “Working together with KM” in the way he views the KM/EM relationship, in the comment section...
he expressed his discontent with the EM. He believes that the Korean churches in America do not need to have EMs. He apparently believes that all Korean members in the EM should learn to speak Korean. His logic behind this view was that the EM members speak English all the time when they are at “school”; therefore, they should learn to speak Korean at church. The mentioning of “school” causes me to believe that the EM he is looking at in his church is made up of youth, most likely the children of KM.

The survey confirmed the fear about there being a small number of EMs in the KAPC. Along with this confirmation, the survey also revealed two sad realities: first, the failed desire for EM in many churches; second, the disingenuous interest towards EM in the KAPC. The numbers show that many KM churches see the importance of having an EM. Of the fifty-six churches that responded, forty-five churches either have or desire to have an EM. There appears to be a vision for the existence of EM in the KAPC. However, the sad reality is that not too many are succeeding. In Korean-American churches the next generations are growing up very fast. It will be interesting to send out the same survey in five years to see if the numbers of EM are growing or shrinking in the KAPC. Given the current status of EMs, it is difficult to see improvements in the numbers.

The second realization was that the zeal and the enthusiasm for the EM in the KAPC currently seem to be mere lip service. Prior to sending out the survey, I made personal appeals to the leaders of the General Assembly (moderators of over twenty presbyteries) to help assess the state of the EMs in the KAPC. I asked them to encourage the churches in their presbytery to participate in the survey. I was commended for my efforts yet of the twenty-three presbytery moderators, only three sent back their survey. As
an EM pastor, with a significant EM congregation, I cannot help but reevaluate my future and the future of my ministry in this denomination. I once was asked about my commitment to the KAPC. I replied that the measure of my commitment to the KAPC was my commitment to my church. However, the result of the survey causes me to question the commitment of the KAPC to EM congregations. My initial thought was that many pastors were too busy to reply to the survey and that there were hidden troves of EMs scattered throughout the KAPC. After emails and phone calls to get the surveys returned, the results reveal a superficiality or artificiality in their concern for the EMs in the KAPC.

Unfortunately, after serving two terms as moderator of the NAP and having visited with KAPC leaders throughout North America during my time in office, I cannot ignore the sober realization that only a few healthy EMs are left in the denomination. As remnants, there is much responsibility weighing on the shoulders of EM leaders. We cannot wait for the denominational leaders to act; rather, we must carve a path forward if the EMs are to have a future in the KAPC. There no longer exists the question of whether or not the KAPC should have EMs, because the denomination already has them. Rather, the question that should be asked is how and in what way the denomination can proceed to incorporate them.

**Coming of Age**

While the discussion within the KAPC concerning the EM has dragged on for over a decade, the members in the EM have matured. The tide has turned. In the past the EM looked for guidance from the KM. Now, the EM has come of age and wants to have a say in mapping out its own future. EM members and their pastors quickly are losing hope of working and coexisting with the KM. S. Kim shares a common sentiment shared by many
EM pastors: “We younger pastors are fully capable of making decisions but we’re never allowed to do so. They [the first generation] basically expect us to go along with whatever decisions they make. If we object in any way, we’re seen as disrespectful and rebellious.”

She also shares similar debate taking place between the first- and second-generation pastors at a conference on Korean-American ministry held at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena. At the conference, one second-generation pastor expressed, “The main issue is control. We are wasting our time and energy on issues of control. In the meantime, our English-speaking generations are leaving the church and are becoming a large unreached group of people.” Such cries no longer can be ignored. EM members who have come of age are leaving the first-generation-led, Korean-American churches by the droves.

In the past ten years at KCPC, the church where I currently serve, we have observed the median age of the congregation rise from the mid-twenties to mid-thirties. EM members are getting older. For many EM members, their desired future is dissipating as the first-generation KM leaders still struggle desperately with how to include the EM into the broader context of the Korean-American Church. The generation they have worked so hard to nurture and to raise up now has grown up and has children of their own. Not wanting to make the same mistakes of emphasizing culture over religion, the second-generation members in the EM now ask very serious and difficult questions concerning their future and the future of their children.

In most KAPC churches, Children’s Ministry and Youth Group have not evolved much. They remain compartmentalized, while the greatest emphasis remains on ministry to

35 Ibid.,
adults. The Christian Education Department in a typical Korean-American church still works around the needs of the parents rather than the needs of the children. Many EM parents have to accommodate the KM schedule, staying at church hours after their worship is finished to wait for their children to finish as well. The Sunday school teacher, mostly EM volunteers, come early in the morning for their EM worship and stay well into the afternoon until the KM is finished with their adult programs to start the children’s program. In most KAPC churches, the KM is still in control of Christian Education and EM parents and teacher have very little say in making changes. EM parents will not spend hours on end waiting for their children, nor will they let their children wait on them. They may have spent long Sundays when they were growing up, but they are not willing to go through that with their children.

Family demographics in the church also have changed. In the past, they were mono-ethnic and mostly Korean immigrants. The same cannot be said of many EM parents today. There are more and more interracial and intercultural marriages among those attending EM in Korean churches. Cultural emphasis of learning Korean language and customs do not appeal to the EM anymore. They have come of age, now hold the responsibility of being parents themselves, and no longer can be considered hak-sangs or ah-ye-dul. They are old enough to make decisions to establish a future for themselves as well as for their children.

As EM members grow older, the potential for conflict with the KM naturally rises. It is no longer a defiant child throwing a tantrum or a selfish toddler making an unreasonable demand. EM members are demanding a greater role in determining their own future and the future of their children. Temporary provisions made many years ago do not apply to a generation of established EM adults. Changes need to happen sooner rather than later.
Many conflicts in the KM/EM relationship are due to unmet expectations. There is great danger in having assumed expectations. Often they go unmet and lead to demands and manipulations. Rather than entering into the KM/EM relationship with eager anticipation of working together, there are assumed expectations on both sides. A common example among KAPC churches is in the way authority is viewed. The KM understands an unconditional submission to the hierarchy in the church. When a directive comes from the session, very little is questioned and to raise a question is seen as a form of rebellion. Having been raised and educated in the United States, EM members have been trained to ask questions to obtain clarification. Leadership understands that questions usually are posed as part of people’s process in accepting and embracing a congregational decision. On the other hand, to avoid conflicts, the KM accepts directives as commands and not as issues to be discussed. While the KM demands obedience without objection, the EM demands explanations.

Much energy and effort are exhausted in jockeying for position rather than a command being carried out. When this cycle is repeated over and over again for many years, it becomes a seed for unhealthy relational habits. Over time unresolved expectations and unresolved demands have caused KM and EM to have unhealthy relationships where manipulation and distrust run rampant. To harbor bitterness or distrust destroys a foundation and any plans of a future together.

Despite many differences and shared struggles, the KM and the EM cohabiting churches in the KAPC have made the conscious decision to stay together. Temporary provisions made long ago were sufficient for some time but are no longer acceptable or

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healthy for the future of the Korean-American Church. The Korean-American Church has endured much. In and through these struggles, they have produced many strong churches in the United States which can look towards the future.

**Looking Towards the Future**

The difficult homework that is left for the KM and the EM in the KAPC churches is to jointly find ways to move forward through the bitterness, misunderstanding, divergent notions of love and success, and constant conflict. When the first generation of Korean immigrants started planting churches, it was with great conviction and intention to preserve and to pass on the Korean culture and heritage through them to the next generation of Korean Americans. There are some Korean-American pastors of the 1.5 and second generations who still think in this way. Unfortunately, the very Church that the first generation has fought so hard to preserve and to pass on is not necessarily the Church the second generation is hoping to inherit. What the KM desires to leave for the EM and what the EM is looking for differs by far.

To avoid risking shame and to save face, conflicts often are ignored. If these continue to remain unresolved between the KM and EM, their relationship will become more strained and estranged. Churches frequently split before trying to work through conflicts. However, if they can find a way to air and refute these false assumptions, they can be defused and trust can be restored.

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Rather than focusing on building relationship with the senior pastor or the KM leaders, EM leaders fear that their concerns or struggles will fall on deaf ears so they stay silent or grumble inside. Often the language barrier and the cultural differences are too real and too difficult to cross. However, with face time and perseverance, it is possible to build deep and meaningful relationships. If these frustrations stay secret, they will continue to fester in the heart. This will increase animosity towards the KM and widen the breadth of assumed fears. Rather than fighting for the ministry, EM pastors often end up fighting with KM leadership and leave in despair. Their shared passion for congregational health needs to be clearly seen in order for doors to open toward health.

Due to this pioneering era of the Korean-American Church, within the KAPC there is a tremendous lack of existing models where the needs of the second-generation EMs are met by the KM. Most EM pastors feel overworked, underpaid, with see very little fruit to bear. Often the conflicts are a distraction to their already busy ministry. While lay EM members of a church have very little occasion to clash with KM members, its leaders—mainly EM deacons and KM elders—often do not see eye to eye on core values and current issues. Since the KM is focused on imposing its agenda of holding on to power within the Church in an effort to preserve cultural identity, many EMs feel dejected and have taken the option of leaving the first generation of Korean-American churches, even when it may not have been their first choice to do so.39 This typically being the case, the KAPC currently has no good working church models where KM and EM harmoniously interdependently coexist. There are some churches in which KM and EM independently coexist, where the EM is left

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to grow on its own. These churches tend to be much bigger, and the KM memberships outnumber the EM by quite a bit. Sadly, in most KAPC churches, the KM/EM relationship is volatile at best. Better models are needed, not to create a template but to give hope.

At KCPC in San Francisco, the KM and the EM are trying desperately to build the two ministries on common issues rather than fight over the differences. We realize the importance of our modeling capacity for other KAPC churches. Uniquely at KCPC, the numeric disparity between the KM and EM is minimal. There are about 350 members in the KM (including their English-speaking children in the children and youth ministry) versus 250 in the EM.\textsuperscript{40} We have learned that the interdependence does not have to be comprehensive at all levels. The KM and the EM do not have to share everything and depend on each other in everything. We also have learned that the efforts of staying together have brought the two ministries much closer in many ways. Both the KM and the EM are learning to appreciate the many differences as diversity in the church and are building bridges in order to work together. These fine discoveries of mutual acknowledgement and celebration have engendered collaborations that help to move the church towards interdependently coexisting, but the KM and the EM both agree that we are walking into uncharted ground. Good working models of KM and EM interdependently coexisting are very difficult to find in the KAPC, because only aspects of it exist few and far between.

The proponents of independent, second-generation EM churches claim that independence develops ownership in the church.\textsuperscript{41} While this is true, to abandon the

\textsuperscript{40} Korean Central Presbyterian Church, \textit{Korean Ministry Sunday Bulletin}.

many KAPC churches where the KM and the EM coexist for the sake of ownership is premature. Ownership is developed through discipleship; it is not granted automatically. Only once members realize they are an integral part of the church can ownership develop. If believers are thrown into ownership without discipleship, eventually the novelty will wear off; ownership will burn out as difficulties wear down the members (cf. Mt 13:1-9). Rather than quickly abandoning the KM to form independent EM churches in the KAPC, both the KM and the EM need to seriously consider the consequences of parting ways and what effects that may have on the future generation of the KAPC churches.

Given the current environment, there are perceived benefits for the EM to leave the KM and plant independent English-speaking churches. It certainly is an easier path. Although EM churches are needed, it does not need to be at the expense of KAPC churches with EM and KM already coexisting. There are many mutual blessings found in serving one another despite the differences and difficulties. Many despairing EMs in the KAPC are on the verge of deciding whether to stay and continue their fight with the KM or to leave and plant independent EMs, in the KAPC or in other denominations. Ultimately, both KM and EM are responsible to God for the future of the Korean-American Church. Members of the EM still need the KM to nurture them to grow without skipping a generation in order to leave a healthy legacy for today’s children. This is a legacy worth fighting for. As it will be discussed in the next section, God in the Scriptures gathers his people to himself to continue his legacy throughout biblical history.
PART TWO

REFLECTIONS ON THE BIBLE
CHAPTER 3

BIBLE AS MIRROR

This chapter will establish how God in the Bible promised to gather his people to himself for his own honor, fulfilled this through Jesus Christ, and now preserves this promise through the workings of the Holy Spirit through the Church. From Genesis to Revelation, God reveals himself as the gathering God, giving full provision and instructions in establishing his Kingdom. He is ever present, and this is well documented in his Word (cf. Gn 6:1-8; Ex 13:26-31; 20:3-17; 1 Sm 16:12-13; 2 Chr 7:14; Ps 23; Is 40:1-2; Mt 16:16-19; 28:18-20; Eph 5:25-27; Rev 7:90).

It is vital for all generations of the KAPC to give heed to what God says concerning the Church, to reclaim his purpose and his promises for his people. Consequently, this chapter will explore the Old and the New Testament of God’s Word concerning his people. Using the Bible as a mirror, this chapter will identify the necessary marks of a local church in order for it to honor God. The mirrored reflections from the Old Testament will reveal people who are set apart from the rest of the world as God provides for them future promises, the law, remnants, and hope for a redeemer to come. The marks found in his people in response to his provisions in the Old Testament are a believing community, a
loving community, a hoping community, and a community that patiently waits for a Savior to come. The New Testament reflections will reveal how God provides the Gospel that heals for his gathered people to believe and to preach. God also provides the Holy Spirit to lead them into worship and to hope in realizing the glorious future for the Church as the Savior returns. In response to these provisions, the New Testament Church mirrored the marks from the Old Testament community of being the believing people of God, a loving and hopeful community, and a church that patiently waits for the return of its Savior.

Encountering this gathering God in the Bible—who faithfully provides for his people, giving them true hope needed for realizing their future—can give rise to the needed faith in KAPC churches to look to God rather than to others with expectations only he can fulfill. Ultimately, the KAPC churches and its members in the KM and the EM will have to realize that they are people brought together by God, to be set apart from the world, only to honor him who is Lord and Savior. Although his people may stray, God never veers from this course. His faithful provisions are given to bring his people back on course to realize the promises he gave his followers so long ago.

**Biblical Marks of God’s Gathered Community: Old Testament**

The gathering God of the Old Testament provided for his people means to gather and to stay together. Though their propensity was to scatter due to their sin against God, he faithfully gave them his provisions. This section closely examines the provisions of covenant promise, the Law of Moses, the remnant, redeemer, and grace. The Old Testament passages reviewed will reveal God’s desire for a believing community, a loving
community, a hoping community, and a community that waits patiently for the coming Savior. Ultimately, these are the marks God desires for the Church to see and emulate.

Abrahamic Covenant Promise: The Mark of a Believing Community

The concept of covenant in the Old Testament is an ancient one, stretching back as far as five millennia. The covenant God made with Abraham in Genesis was a royal grant type of covenant, where the granting was unconditional. It is a favor granted from the greater to the lesser, in this case from God to Abraham. In receiving God’s covenant promise, Abraham was not required to contribute anything towards realizing this covenant fulfilled other than to believe in the one who gave it. In Genesis 15:6 Abraham heard the unconditional promises: “Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” The covenant made to Abraham by God was permanent and incapable of violation, because it is God who will keep the promise unconditionally. In Genesis 12:2 God promises, “I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.” This promise of blessings came at a great cost to God. If God is a gathering God, it presumes a previous scattering.

In Genesis 11:4, men said to one another, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.” It is ironic that the very thing they feared, due to their wicked self-reliance rather than relying on God, caused God to anger

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2 Ibid., 179.

3 Ibid., 182.
and scatter them in wrath. However, in his scattering, God’s intention was not to destroy his people but to discipline and eventually gather them unto himself again. Immediately following God’s scattering of his people at the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, God initiated his plan to gather for himself a community belonging to him. This started with one man and his wife, Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 12. In commanding Abraham to separate himself from his family and from the land where he grew up, desiring to gather them to himself, God made promises to Abraham. In Genesis 12 God gave to Abraham a four-fold promise: promise of offspring (Gn 12:2), promise of land (Gn 12:7), promise of personal blessings (Gn 12:2), and promise of blessings for the nations (Gn 12:3).\footnote{Willem Vangemeren, \textit{The Progress of Redemption} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1988), 104.}

Though Abraham and Sarah had no children of their own, God emphatically made it clear that he would keep his promises and make a great nation through them. God alone was going to do it. In his journey to this promise, Abraham was plagued by doubts (cf. Gn 12:10-20; 15:2; 16:1-4), but that had no bearing in God’s promises being fulfilled.

Along the journey, after Abraham had left his home and his family, God came to visit him again to confer the covenant promise. God said in Genesis 15:1, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” To this Abraham responded, “O Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” (Gn 15:2). Reverent frustration is clearly evident as Abraham sarcastically claims, given his childless status, that he will be forced to leave all of his inheritance to his slave. There on the spot, God renewed his covenant with him. In following the Ancient Near Eastern custom, God orders Abraham to prepare
an ominous arena for this to take place. He orders Abraham to gather a list of animals for himself: a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon (Gn 15:9). All but the turtledove and pigeon are to be cut in half and put on a stake, each halves facing one another in a row. The tradition is for both parties making the covenant to walk between the cut animals, symbolizing that if the covenant is broken they will be like the torn animals. Then a surprising thing happened. After assuring Abraham the inabilities of his descendents to keep this covenant, God alone walks through them.

God’s promise to multiply and to gather his people as a nation belonging to him through Abraham and his descendents was to be God’s work alone. God prophesies in Genesis 15:13-16 of the great trials his descendants will face. After four hundred years of slavery, God will revisit Israel to remind them of the promises he made to their forefather Abraham. Due to the sins of Abraham’s descendents, who ultimately are not held responsible for breaking the promise, God will have to become like the animals in the covenant he made with Abraham. God even tears up his own son like the animals Abraham slaughtered to honor the promise he himself made and fulfilled (Gn 15:9-10; Jn 19:16-37). The only mark God required of them was to be a promise-believing community (cf. Gn 15:6; Mk 1:14-15; Acts 2:38-39).

Law of Moses: The Mark of a Loving Community

The second reflective mark found in the Old Testament is a loving community. When God gathered the Israelites from Egypt after four hundred years of slavery, they

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needed to break from forced obedience to become lovingly obedient. Coming out of slavery, Israel had to make the transition from coping with cruel taskmasters to loving a gracious and caring master. To assist them in making this transition, God gave them the Law of Moses, the Ten Commandments. Just as they were about to take possession of the Promised Land, God summarized the Law and commanded the Israelites, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Dt 6:5).

God gave the Law to them in love, to draw his people to himself and not to repel them. They needed to see their loving God coming to gather his people to fulfill the promises he had made with Abraham to make them his great nation.

To a nation that had lived under four hundred years of slavery, God set before them a new set of parameters to engage in a loving relationship with him again. These, the Ten Commandments, were not provisional restrictions but were set to be eternal principles for loving God and one another. God was expressing who he was and what he desired through these moral imperatives.6 During their time in the wilderness after the Great Exodus, God called Moses up into his mountain and gave him the Ten Commandments to give to his people. God established the following for his people:

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days

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you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. (Ex 20:2-17)

Essentially, this encompasses the Ten Commandments and can be categorized into two groupings. The first through fourth commandments address people’s healthy approach towards God, ending with laws concerning the Sabbath. The latter six, starting with the law concerning father and mother, address their healthy approach towards one another.

In this same vein, Jesus—through whom the Church was established (Mt 16:18; Eph 2:20)—emphasized this in his ministry and claimed that he did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it. When questioned about the Law of Moses, he summarized all of it with this statement: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets” (Mt 22:37-40). The intention of the Law is summed up clearly by Jesus when he summarized them to express love for God and love for his people. God’s desire in giving Israel his Law was not to destroy them through it but to show compassion for people who lacked practical directives in loving God and loving one another. God loved his people and blessed them, despite their sins, due to the promise he made to Abraham back in Genesis.
The giving of the Law, the Ten Commandments, was motivated by love so that his people would know how to engage with him and how to engage with one another. Despite their wrongs against God (Ex 32:1-6; 1 Sm 8:7-9; Hos 1:2-11), he will turn from his anger time and time again by relenting and loving them again in order to form them into a loving community. God showed his great anger when the people made an idol of a golden calf for themselves and worshiped it in the desert (Ex 32:1-6) and he told Moses that though he would give them what he promised but he would not go with them into the Promised Land. When Moses pleaded with God, the Lord said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest” (Ex 33:14). After the Israelites entered into the Promised Land, they did not follow God’s command to destroy everything and everyone in the land. In fear of the kings in the region, they asked for a king. Hearing their demand God lamented saying:

Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do. (1 Sm 8:7-9)

Though the idea of abandoning God for an earthly king was detestable to him, he allowed them to have a king on the throne with a stern warning that kings would not be able to provide as he had. Ultimately, God would have to send them a rightful King to rule his people in love, which eventually came through Jesus Christ as King of kings (Rev 17:14).

God displayed his loving heart in the Book of Nehemiah. After hearing Nehemiah’s repentance on behalf of his people, God gathered back his community to rebuild the fallen wall of Jerusalem that had been torn down for many years (Neh 1:3). Through grace, God allowed Nehemiah and the Israelites who had returned from the exile
to rebuild the wall; and after they had finished, the love of God fell on them as Nehemiah encouraged them, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh 8:10). This shows that the God of the Bible gathers his people to himself to form a loving community. Only through this second mark of love is the third mark able to be clearly reflected.

Remnant, Redeemer, and Grace: A Mark of the Hopeful, Expectant Community

Building from the Abrahamic covenant and God’s desire to form a loving community is the third reflective mark expressed in the Old Testament. In response to God’s provision of preserving a remnant where a redeemer is promised to come and show grace, God desires to build a hopeful and expectant community. For this reason, the goal of this section is to illustrate the hope among the remnants God has preserved for himself in gathering his people to be a promise-believing, loving community that hopes in a redeemer who will show them grace in the Old Testament. After his refining work, God scattered the Israelites into exile due to their sins. Those who remained after the purging are called “the remnant of God” (2 Chr 36:20; Dn 1:2), and God promised in the Book of Isaiah that he would bring them back to himself (Is 10:20-22).

The Book of Isaiah is riddled with remnant language. After thirty-nine chapters of pending doom for a wayward nation, God turns from his wrath to comfort his people. Isaiah 40:1-2 states: “Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord hand double for all her sins.” God’s desire in punishing Israel for sinning against him was to discipline them so that they would learn their lesson and return to him. In the Old Testament, God preserves and works through redemption and gives grace to those who continue to believe him. Isaiah 10:20-22 reads: “In that day the remnant of Israel, the survivors of the house of Jacob, will no longer rely on him who struck them down but will truly rely on the Lord, the Holy One of Israel. A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God. Though your people, O Israel, be like the sand by the sea, only a remnant will return.” There is the promise of relief, but God himself would have to provide a redeemer for them. He would have to come and deliver them personally. Only when “the remnants of Israel and Judah go through the purifying fires of war and exile” will God bring them back to their Promised Land to redeem them.7 Isaiah 49:6-7 captures this well. Reflecting God’s voice, the prophet writes:

“It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.” This is what the Lord says—the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation, to the servant of rulers: “Kings will see you and rise up, princes will see and bow down, because of the Lord, who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you.”

There are other Old Testament texts filled with this Gospel of grace. In darkness, the prophets continue to trust in his enduring mercies. The weeping prophet Jeremiah writes in Lamentations: “Remember my affliction and my wanderings. . . . I call to mind and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. The Lord is my

7 Vangemeren, The Progress of Redemption, 260.
portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him” (Lam 3:19-24). For the remnant, such
struggles point to God as the redeemer who will come to rescue his people and gather
them to himself. Not only do the remnants cling to his promises but God himself makes it
very clear that he will not abandon his people. The dramatic tales of Hosea depict the
Israelites as an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness (Hos 1:2, 4, 6-9). However,
upon the eleventh chapter of Hosea, after harsh rebuke and pending judgment God
expresses the following:

How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can
I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboim? My heart recoils
within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my burning
anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy
One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath. (Hos 11:8-9)

In the midst of treachery and deceit among his people, God laments over them. Though
the story of Hosea uses real people as an allegory to depict God’s broken heart as a result
of Israel’s adulterous dealing with him, his love is not allegorical but is real. He will not
allow passion and bitterness to dictate his actions. The prophesied outcome for their
wickedness will happen to Israel as they will go into exile, but God will preserve for
himself a remnant to rescue and bring back to redeem and to give grace to his people again.

Since his relenting heart to preserve and to redeem his people is known to Israel,
they can hope in a redeemer who will come to their rescue. Psalm 42 is believed to have
been written by a temple singer during his exile. This psalm is a good example of a
hopeful remnant waiting on the Lord. The Psalmist sings, “As the deer pants for streams

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8 Leon J. Wood, Hosea, Vol. 7 of The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein
(Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), 214.

9 Derek Kidner, Psalms 1-72 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 165.
of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’” (Ps 42:1-3). Even in desperate times in the history of Israel in the Old Testament, rather than utterly destroying them for their sins, God provided for them a remnant. In their life under extreme slavery, the gathered hearts of those remaining looked towards God and became a hopeful and expectant community. God came to them, redeemed them, and showed them grace. In response to his divine provisions, his community hoped in him.

Among the rubbles of ruins and pending curse upon the land, God’s remnant prophet Habakkuk cried out, “O Lord, I have heard the report of you, and your work, O Lord, do I fear. In the midst of the years make it known; in wrath remember mercy” (Hb 3:2). Though the nation of Israel is utterly broken and scattered, he is confident that “the world will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hb 2:14). Habakkuk’s hope is in the Savior who will come to rescue his people, the hoping community of remnants who are left. He patiently waits on the Lord rather than acting on his own. He is willing to wait to see the famous God come and rescue them, as he has done in the past. While waiting, his hope turns into worship. His expectation is that in the end the whole world will know the glory of the Lord (Hb 2:14, 3:2). A hopeful community is one that waits patiently on the coming redeemer through worship.

There is in the Old Testament a clear picture of the redeemer who will arrive. In Isaiah 6, the prophet was commissioned by God to go and speak of the pending distress that would come upon Israel due to sin. However, immediately following this promise of
destruction, in Isaiah 7:14 he says, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel (God with us).” After a few more chapters of the details of how God will bring his wrath through Assyria (Is 8:4), is this promise: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Is 9:6). It is God who plants this seed of covenant promise for the coming Savior, Immanuel. He himself will come as someone who comes alongside to bring loving harmony to his believing community. In him is power and authority to restore broken relationships to reign in peace. To this promise of the coming Savior, the believing remnant community lovingly places their hope and rests in him.

The God of the Bible is a gathering God. This gathering God gives to his community provisions of covenant promises, the Law, and remnants that wait on the coming redeemer. In response to his provisions, God desires for his people to be a believing community, a loving community, a hopeful and expectant community, and a community that waits patiently for the coming Savior. These are the marks of Old Testament community of God, which also are mirrored in the New Testament as God continues to gather his people.

**Biblical Marks of the Church: New Testament**

Just as in the Old Testament, the New Testament bears the same truth about the God of the Bible as the gathering God through Jesus and his work on earth. In gathering them, God gave proper provisions to the New Testament community. The goal of this section is to illustrate how the Old Testament marks for community are also present in the New Testament community. In gathering his people to himself, God provided to the
New Testament community the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. In response to these provisions, God desired to instill the same dynamic: a believing, loving, hopeful community that waits patiently for the return of its Savior, Jesus Christ.

**Gospel: A Mark of the Believing Community**

The greatest provision God gave to his people is the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. By coming and dying on the cross for the sins of the world (Jn 1:29), Jesus fulfilled the promise God made to Abraham in the Old Testament (Gn 12:12). Fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant of making a great nation for himself, God gave to Jesus the great task of seeking all who were lost (Lk 19:10), breaking all boundaries and barriers (cf. Eph 1:10; 2:14). The promise of Habakkuk was this: “The world will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” (Hb 2:14). The way God did this was through the Gospel (Acts 3:18-19). In giving this provision, God’s desire for the Church is for it to become the believing Body of Christ (Jn 14:1; Rom 3:22; 10:9; Eph 1:13).

Jesus came into this world to seek those who are lost so that he could gather them into his believing community. While traveling through Jericho, Jesus encountered a chief tax collector named Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10). Since Zacchaeus was short, he climbed a sycamore tree to glimpse Jesus as he passed by. Aware of the disapproving grumbles of the onlookers, Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this [Zacchaeus’] house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Lk 19:9-10). The word “lost” here carries the meaning of one who is perishing.10 So for

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Zacchaeus and for his family, this was great news. When the Messiah came to visit in the flesh through Jesus, God showed his desire to save them from their sin. When Zacchaeus expressed hunger to connect with Jesus into his heart, salvation came to his house. He now is not alone but an important part of God’s community. For Zacchaeus—though societally exiled and excluded by his fellow Jews from Abraham’s covenant promise—since he believed in Jesus, he is now part of this covenant community. To become a Gospel-believing community means to hunger and seek after the Lord Jesus Christ in belief as the Savior who has come to fulfill the promise made in the Old Testament.

In Matthew 5, speaking to his disciples at the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1-7:27), Jesus said to them, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law of the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Mt 5:17). As mentioned earlier, they were not able to keep the loving directive (the Law of Moses) God gave to his people in the wilderness during the Great Exodus. Just as God had promised Abraham in the covenant he made with him in Genesis 15, Jesus came to fulfill that promise by being slaughtered like the animals (Gn 15:10; Mk 15:21-39; 1 Pt 2:24). The good news of the Gospel is salvation for sinners (Eph 1:3-14). However, the horrifying news of the Gospel is that the Son of God, who came to live a perfect life by fulfilling the Law, obeying perfectly all that it demanded, had to be sacrificed as the animals cut in half when the covenant was made with Abraham, so that the promises made to him could be realized by his spiritual descendants—those who believe in God’s promises. Jesus is the Messiah who came to fulfill God’s promise by coming and living the perfect life human beings could not (Heb 4:15). Though he was sinless, he died the sinner’s death on the cross on behalf of humanity (2 Cor 5:21). This is
the Gospel provision God has given to his people as he gathers sinners to himself: restored, never-ending relationship with the one who fills all needs and brings all peace, harmony, joy. To believe in this is to become spiritual descendents of Abraham, thus becoming a believing community that God desires for his people.

When the apostles and other disciples of Jesus took hold of this good news of the Gospel, they began to preach it among the people (Acts 2:14-40; 7:2-53). Knowing Jesus’ heart and desire, the believing community went out into the world seeking others who were lost and perishing. The activities of the apostles’ mission work throughout the world are recorded throughout the Book of Acts. The early Church exploded into the scene as faithful preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ was believed in and shared. With the provision of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the early Church became a Gospel-believing community.

Gospel: A Mark of the Loving Community

The second clear mark of the early Church in the New Testament was the visible healing the Gospel brought to its members. As God gathered his people through the Gospel in the New Testament, his desire for the Church was for it to be a loving community where its members experienced physical, spiritual, and relational healings. Echoing what Jesus had taught him about loving one another (Jn 13:34), John in his letter to the churches wrote: “And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us” (1 Jn 3:23). For the disciples of Jesus, having received the Gospel firsthand, they watched as Jesus brought the loving healing to those who were suffering in body (Jn 9:6-7; Lk 8:43-44), in spirit (Jn 3:1-21; 4:4-26), and relationally (Mt 9:9-13; Jn 21:15-19).
This model of loving healing was carried on by the believing community that received the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the Early Church. Luke records in Acts 2:42-47:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The Christians in Jerusalem shared all that they had to provide not only for physical needs through extravagant giving and selling all that they had (Acts 2:45) but also for that which was spiritual as they worshiped, prayed, and broke bread together. They lovingly shared in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as they observed the Lord’s Supper (Acts 2:42, 46-47), as Jesus had commanded them to do (Luke 22:19-20).

The stronger cared for the weaker, as everyone held everything in common (Acts 2:44), and there was relational healing in the Church as a result. In particular, this is shown through how they ate “together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying” life in the Lord. This relational healing provided safety and a sense of family (cf. Neh 8:9-12). To this safe haven, God added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47). God is a loving gatherer who provides for his people. He supplied the community of the New Testament Church with the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and, in response, they became the believing and loving Church who invited God to extend healing through them to others. To see this continue, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit (Jn 14:16-17, 26).
A Mark of the Worshipping and Hopeful Community

The third mark of the Church found in the New Testament that mirrors God’s intent in the Old Testament is to become a hopeful community expressing worship. Jesus, prior to promising to send the Holy Spirit, said to his disciples the night before he was crucified on the cross, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (Jn 14:1-3). Knowing that he would be leaving his disciples soon, Jesus desired for them to become a hoping community until the day of his return. However, he was not going to abandon them on their own but promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide them and watch over them:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. . . . But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. (Jn 14:16-17, 26)

The role of the Holy Spirit was to make real God’s presence in the lives of Jesus’ followers after he left to live in heaven. He promised that the Holy Spirit would dwell in their hearts and that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, would remind them of all Jesus had taught them. With the help of the Holy Spirit, they would become a Gospel-believing community transformed into a loving community that hoped together for Jesus’ return.

To this hoping community, Jesus also gave a command. Just before he was taken up into heaven, Jesus said to his disciples, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). The command was for them to share the hope they had received with “the other sheep,” who were still lost without a shepherd, so that they could all be together (Jn 10:16). As the gathering God, Jesus desires for his people to stay together until the time of his return. The Holy Spirit is to be the guide in gathering his people under one great shepherd, who is Jesus. In hoping for the return of the Jesus, his people are given a mission to continue the work of gathering God’s people until he returns.

In the last book of the Bible, Revelations, there is a preview of what is to come when Jesus returns. Revelations 7:9-12 states:

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen!

It is a great scene of unified worship amidst diversity. The great assembly will be made up of every nation of the world. The worship will be in every language. All will stand before the Lamb, who is Christ Jesus, and all will worship him there. This is the purpose of God’s gathering his people together. The ultimate purpose is so that his Son, Jesus Christ, who fulfilled his promise perfectly, would be worshipped.

John Piper, in Let the Nations Be Glad, begins with this bold statement: “Missions exists because worship doesn’t.”¹¹ He said this to emphasize the lack of true worship of God around the world and why the Church has to do missions work to bring about

¹¹ John Piper, Let the Nations Be Glad (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 17.
worship. It is for the worship of the one who faithfully gathers his people. Piper summarizes the call of God for the biblical marker of worship to be present:

Mission is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. . . . The Great Commission is first to “delight yourself in the Lord” (Ps. 37:4) and then to declare, “Let the nations be glad and sing for joy” (Ps. 67:4). In this way, God will be glorified from beginning to end, and worship will empower the missionary enterprise until the coming of the Lord. 12

Worship flows from a Gospel-believing community that loves God and his people. As they share in this love, they experience tremendous healing physically, spiritually, and relationally as diverse human beings with diverging cultures and philosophies come together for a singular purpose: to glorify Christ. As the Holy Spirit reminds the gathered community of all that Jesus has said, this community waits patiently for the return of Jesus, the great redeemer. For the believing, loving, hopeful, and worshipping community, this waiting is not idle. There is a mission to be fulfilled: to be Jesus’ witnesses till the day of his return (Acts 1:4-8). As the Church waits in hope, it looks forward to the ultimate worship while worshiping here on earth. Worship on earth is the physical manifestation of that heavenly hope believers have in Christ.

**Theological Conclusion**

The Old and the New Testament mirrors for the modern-day Church the marks that it ought to possess. The God of the Bible is a gathering God who actively searches out his people for himself. In this gathering, he provides all the necessary means for his people to find community and gather in faith, love, hope, and expectancy to patiently await the return of Jesus. The Church’s overflowing response is to do this in worship.

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12 Ibid., 43.
In the KAPC, too much emphasis has been put on the Korean-American Church taking upon itself marks that are not part of God’s desire. Rather than gathering people to Jesus and the worship of him, focus often turns to culture, language, ethnic and generational identities, and the like—all of which continues to divide this portion of the broader Body of Christ. The different cultures, languages, and ethnic and generational identities can become idols, if they usurp the object of a believer’s worship. God establishes that these differences are merely gifts to be expressed beautifully in celebratory worship, just as it is shown in Revelation 7:9-12.

Consequently, both the KM and the EM first must believe in a gathering God and embrace their identity as the promise-believing, Gospel-believing Body of Christ who exists to love, heal, and walk in hope according to the Spirit. Having received clear instructions on how to love God and love one another through the fulfillment of the Law in Christ, believing the Gospel, this is the way to become the true Korean-American Church. God has preserved the remnants of KM and EM through the KAPC, and has given the Holy Spirit in human hearts to know that Jesus’ promise of his return is true. The work of living and applying the Gospel to daily life is done patiently in worship. If the Korean-American Church earnestly seeks to possess these marks, in time KAPC congregations will begin to see the beauty God sees in their gathering in unity and existing together amidst diversity.
CHAPTER 4
GOAL AND MEANS FOR THE CHURCH

By looking at God’s character in the Old and the New Testament, this chapter will explore how God preserves the purity and the peace of the Church. Then it will examine how God works in and through the Church in its cultural context. Finally, it will reflect on how when failure occurs it is not due to God but rather due to people.

Although God’s people have wavered throughout history, his ultimate goal for the Church has not changed. Throughout Scripture, God has two battle fronts in view: fighting to preserve its purity and protecting its peace. God fights for his people to preserve right theology, how to love him and to love his people, and he fights ultimately to keep his people in relationship. God gathers his people together to share in the faith, love, and hope while waiting for the glorious new day of Jesus to come. To this community God blesses and adds to their number those who are being saved (Acts 2:47). Unfortunately, it is God’s people who lose sight of what God is doing when failing to preserve the purity and the peace.

Defending the Purity and the Peace of the Church

This section studies the purity of the Church, the doctrines believed and held by the church, and God’s preservation of it as well as the peace in the Church and God’s
prevailing heart for unity. God takes seriously both of these concepts. They are equally important and mutually dependent.

God in the Old Testament warned the Israelites to maintain their purity, as they were about to possess the Promised Land. God commanded Israel:

Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, promised you. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Dt 6:3-9)

Though the land they were entering into was a promised blessing fulfilled, attached to the promise was a stern warning against forfeiting faith in God or disobeying his commands. The above passage makes it clear that God takes the purity of his assembled people very seriously. Toward the preservation of this purity in his community, God sternly cautioned them not to forget his commandments. He ordered the Law to be taught to their children and to the children of their children (Dt 6:2). Those who followed God were to use every minute of their waking hours to contemplate him and his commandments.

Ostensibly, this warning appears to protect them from the people or the gods living in the Promised Land. Later it becomes clear against what God was protecting them. Moses warns them saying, “Fear the Lord your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name. Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you; for the Lord your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land” (Dt 6:13-15). God was warning his own people from himself. Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid in their book, God is a Warrior, points out that
the God who is for Israel will become their enemy in their disobedience.\textsuperscript{1} Although this is not a permanent arrangement, it aptly expresses God’s divine fury against all attack on the purity of his community. God makes clear to his people in his Word the necessity for them to be faithful in their relationship with him. God points out that the consequence of not obeying his commandments is monumentally detrimental to his people physically (cf. 2 Kg 5:27), spiritually (cf. Jgs 2:17), and relationally (cf. 1 Sm 18:5-9).

Incidentally, when an infraction against God’s command happens—in other words, an attack on their preservation of the purity of God’s truth—it severs the peace in the community. During the conquest of the Promised Land, a man named Achan disobeyed God’s command not to take anything from the land; he brought things back for himself and hid them in his tent. The whole account is recorded in Joshua 7. After Achan’s sin, the Israelites went out to fight against the people of Ai, and they were slaughtered. As a result, the hearts of the people melted and were in fear (Joshua 7:5). Joshua asked God what to do, and God revealed that someone had disobeyed his command. He told Joshua to seek him out and burn him and his household. Achan is discovered; and all that belongs to him, along with his family, was stoned and burned. Through one man’s act, the entire community’s peace is disturbed. Essentially, a break in the purity within God’s community has a direct result on the unity of that same community.

During Jesus’ ministry in the New Testament, his animosity toward the Pharisees was clearly visible to everyone, especially to the Pharisees. Jesus publically rebuked them, for they were misleading his people with false doctrine concerning God. Jesus publically scolded them in Matthew 23:

\textsuperscript{1} Tremper Longman III and Daniel G. Reid, \textit{God Is a Warrior} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 60.
The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. . . . The greatest among you will be your servant. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.” (Mt 23:2-3, 11-14)

Though Jesus ordered the crowd and his disciples to obey their teachings, he attacked their hypocritical practices. Rather than serving God, they were exposed for doing them unto man. Rather than pointing people to God and to Christ, they drew attention for themselves and yearned to be honored. Jesus said that their actions shut the doors of heaven to men and they themselves do not enter. Jesus was gravely serious about preserving integrity, which is one’s purity of intent of the heart in relation to one’s action.

The KM and the EM in KAPC churches need to realize this serious concern God has for the preservation of the purity and the truth of Jesus Christ in the Church. God’s stern warning against the Israelites was not simply to remember the commandments but also to obey them, because to obey God’s commandments expresses love to him (Dt 11:1). God commanded them to love him with all their might to preserve the purity of his truth (Dt 6:5-9). Anything that detracts from preserving this purity of the Gospel in the Church is detestable to God (Gal 5:19-21). He will not be pleased.

Just as God is serious about preserving the purity in the community he gathers for himself, he is equally earnest about peace prevailing in this community and uniting his people under the banner of his love. God’s wrath against disobedience was clearly given in Deuteronomy 6:15. He warned them that he would destroy them from the face of the Promised Land, if they did not follow his commandments. Against this wrath, God possesses yet another characteristic that is so important for the preservation of the peace
in his community: his patient and loving mercy. In Exodus, Moses needed encouragement from God, when he said Moses could not accompany the Israelites into the Promised Land. Moses hungered to see God and his glory (Ex 33:18). As God passed in front of Moses, he heard God saying:

The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation. (Ex 34:6-7)

For the sake of peace in his community, as a gathering God, he is extremely patient and loving. Though feared for his wrath, God demonstrates pure love for his people. His true power is not displayed in exerting his wrath but is displayed in his relenting grace. God zealously guards against any attack on the purity of his community. Equally, God passionately guards against any attack that threatens the peace and the unity of his community. God is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. His desire and plan were to bless Abraham and his descendents. Since God is a gathering God who will go to any end to fulfill his promises, his gracious character ensures the safeguarding of peace within his community. The tumultuous violent history in Israel was not to be blamed on God.

Since he is slow to anger and abounding in love, in order to preserve the peace for his community, God relents despite the wickedness his people display. God at times tests and disciplines his people in the Bible, but it is always in hopes of his people returning to him to be united under his love (cf. Is 40:1-11). God promised Solomon this when his people face disaster and hardship due to their sin. He said, “If my people, who are called by

2 This will be discussed in more detail later in this same chapter.
my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chr 7:14). This is good news for his people, who maybe living under the fear of God’s wrath. For the sake of peace in his community, the gathering God of the Bible is quick to show his gracious and loving character to his people.

In the New Testament, Jesus displayed to what extent this gracious and loving God will go to preserve peace in his community. Sinners have no chance before God, who is a consuming fire. To sin against God is to provoke his wrath. It is this sin that Jesus came to reconcile. In the Book of Isaiah, the Israelites are reminded why they were separated from God. Isaiah wrote: “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear” (Is 59:2). Being in sin, God had to remove Israel from his presence. When he hides his face, his people are without God. This was for their protection and not God’s. Moses warned Israel saying, “Be careful not to forget the covenant of the Lord your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the Lord your God has forbidden. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Dt 4:23-24).

To preserve the peace in his community, Jesus came to die for sinners, to reconcile them to God. When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he recognized who he was and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29). Isaiah prophesied about him saying, “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Is 53:5). Echoing Isaiah, Peter also testified, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds
you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls” (1 Pt 2:24-25). God shows how preserving the peace in the Church is as important as preserving its purity. He does this to the extent of putting his own son on the cross for the sins of his people. Through this, God illustrates how important relationship, purity, and peace are for those who follow him.

The battle is fierce against this desire God has for the Church, but the promise of Jesus was that the gates of Hades would not prevail but his peace (Mt 16:18). Believers can have peace with God through due to the work of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1). Since Christ followers have peace with him, they now can enjoy peace with one another with the help of the Holy Spirit.

**Culture versus God: The Use of Culture to Grow the Church**

From the onset, I wish to clarify that the focus and intent of this part of the discussion is not to argue the place of culture in theology. Too many battle lines have been drawn, where culture is set against theology. In preserving the purity and the peace of the Church, and God’s passionate defense of them, culture needs to be properly understood by his people. The focus here is to see how God uses culture to grow the Church. Culture is one of the vital means that God provides to the Church to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ into the world.

Throughout biblical history, God used his people to have influence within the culture they lived. An example of this is found in the life of Joseph, as he was forced to adapt many times in different cultures (Gn 37, 39-50). Joseph, son of Jacob, was taken from his land and sold as a slave in Egypt. There he lived most of his adult life, assimilating to its culture and flourishing in it. The repeated refrain found in the Bible that
set Joseph apart was this “And the Lord was with Joseph” (Gn 39:2-3, 21, 23). Joseph used all that was afforded him, whether he was a servant in Potiphar’s house (Gn 39:1), held captive in an Egyptian prison (Gn 39:20), or sitting on the throne as Pharaoh’s right-hand man (Gn 41:41). Joseph used whatever cultural means God provided in his immediate context in order to stay faithful and live his belief in God with integrity, purity, and peace. Consequently, Joseph became a witness to Pharaoh, who proclaimed, “Can we find anyone like this man [Joseph], one in whom is the spirit of God? Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you” (Gn 41:38-39). Later on, when Joseph’s brothers came to visit him, he had changed so much they did not even recognize him (Gn 42:8). As far as they could tell, he was an Egyptian sitting in a very high place. As in the case of Joseph, God comes to visit his people in the culture in which they live and seeks to bless them and mold their characters within it. Essentially, God works through them in their culture to make himself known to his people, so they might become instruments of healing, reconciliation, and peace for others.

When Jesus came into this world, Israel was a very different place from the Old Testament era, before the Roman conquest. Nevertheless, in that context, he delivered the good news of the Gospel (Mt 4:17), even using the gruesome Roman torture of the crucifix to have it symbolize Christianity forever. God appears to his people in their context and culture to transform their lives so that they can have influence, to become the salt and the light within whatever culture wherever they live (Mt 5:13-16). Jesus often received rebuke for eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners. When confronted, he said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Mk 2:17). Jesus jumped into their world and culture, interacted
with it, and ultimately transformed it. He came into a world full of broken people, yet in love he embraced them and healed them of their sins and sicknesses. He fed the hungry and comforted those who were oppressed (Mt 9:35-37).

Culture is relative in that its attitudes, symbols, and artifacts make up the meaning by which people live; and within this context, God is perceived and understood. The culture may change, the period in which these cultures exist may change, the location in which these cultures exist may change but the message of God does not (Lk 21:33).

For Christians, God’s command to “fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gn 1:28) has been renewed. William A. Dyrness aptly states, “Just as the Fall distorted our attempt to build a world of meaning, so salvation must have the result of renewing its impact on culture, so forgiveness and the new creation will impact wider cultural values.” Christians, redeemed by the blood of Christ, retain the call from God to redeem the world for God’s glory as it was intended at the beginning. God desires for Christians to have a transforming presence in their culture (Mt 5:13-16).

An over-adjustment Christians can make when reading passages such as “do not love the world or the things in the world” (1 Jn 2:15) is to reject being human. When people accept Jesus as their personal Savior, the consequent discipleship must take place within the “flesh and blood of our culture.” Cultural markers like language, custom, and foods are not bad in themselves. When people become Christians, God does not mutate

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4 Ibid., 8.

5 Ibid., 22.
them into super human beings above and beyond culture, to live outside the universe; rather, in the newness of heart, with his original purpose of subduing the world in hand, he sends redeemed people back into the broken world to shed light on it and to give it a new meaning (1 Pt 2:12, 3:15-17). This is the application of Gospel renewal.

Just as the Gospel renewal gives clear purpose for human lives, the Gospel also will give renewed purpose for the collective human expression of culture and for the world. This is the way Christians can become salt and the light in the world (1 Cor 10:31). They point all things to God and honor and glorify him through art, music, and even language (cf. 2 Cor 10:5; Eph 5:15, 19). The passage in 1 John 2:15 does not instruct believers to refuse to live in the culture but rather refers to the heart allegiance of the believer. Its ultimate meaning cautions against idolatry, to love the creation and not the creator. It is speaking to those who put the things of this world above God and above Jesus. God uses culture to expand his Kingdom on earth (1 Cor 9:19-23). As Christians living in the world, the Church is called a city on a hill that cannot be hidden (Mt 5:14), having influence in redeeming it all for God’s glory.

In a classical passage in Jeremiah, God said to his people exiled in Babylon:

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: “Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them,” declares the Lord. This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for
“you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (Jer 29:4-11)

God commanded the Israelites living in exile to persist in living in that culture and prosper. He wanted them to live as a light in their present context. His desire was not that they stop living because they were in a different culture but to live and flourish in it while having a clear identity that they belong to him. It was not Nebuchadnezzar who was in control or only the Babylonian culture that was to prosper. Rather, it was God who was in control and he was claiming for himself what already belonged to his people. Though the land was not their own and they were living in exile in a completely different culture, God was telling them to use it until he brings them home. In this way, God uses culture to expand his Kingdom here on earth. In the process, God and his people transform culture, pointing to him.

This usage of culture in expanding God’s Kingdom can be seen through Paul’s ministry in the Early Church. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul clearly used his diverse cultural background, being both Jewish and a Roman citizen, to his advantage in spreading the Gospel. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote:

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. (1 Cor 9:19-22)

Being a Roman citizen allowed him to understand a Gentile culture and become an “apostle to the Gentiles” (Rom 11:13). God has put people on earth. Believers are to be in the world but not of it (Jn 17:15-18). Having been brought out of darkness, Jesus commanded his disciples to become the light of the world (Mt 5:14). Peter encouraged Christians living in a
culture different from the one in which they grew up to live good lives among them so that they could serve as God’s witnesses (1 Pt 2:11-12). Christians are not to abhor culture but to embrace it and use it to expand God’s Kingdom here on earth. Rather than hating those who are different and hating the world in which they live, as in Jeremiah’s passage above, Christians are called to embrace it and go after those who are lost in it. As Jesus prayed for his disciples in John 17:18, “As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world,” Jesus sends Christians into the world to transform it and gather his people. To hate those who are different is not living the Gospel way.

Jesus commanded his disciples, “Love your enemies” (Mt 5:44). Deeper reflection on the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1-7:27) reveals that Jesus was describing himself as he expressed how Kingdom people ought to live. Rather than hating his enemies—that is, despising and rejecting all who have sinned against God, which includes everyone born into this world—he prayed for them and loved them without end. The extent of his love caused him to become human. As he lunged into the world of human beings, he made a conscious choice to leave heaven behind and enter into their world. He breathed the air they breathed, ate the food they ate, and drank the water they drank. He experienced hunger (Mt 4:2), thirst (Jn 19:28), joy (Lk 10:21), pain (Mt 27:46), and sorrow (Jn 11:35). He was immersed in the culture of his time. He lived a perfect life; and, though he had no sin, he became sin for the sinners and paid the price on the cross (2 Cor 5:21). Being the only one who was able to love his enemies and having done so, he was able to command his followers to love their enemies as well and pray for them (Mt 5:44; 9:38).
In this way, applying the Gospel of Jesus Christ transcends culture and has the power to transform it. The Gospel Jesus left for the Church allows for Christians to redeem culture and use it to reach the unreachable. Today’s believer lives in a Youtube generation, where much is posted online. Despite sinful content found here, Christians have redeemed it and flooded it with videos of Christian music and inspiring sermon clips.

Culture and the development of culture seek greater meanings in life. Dyrness concludes his book by saying, “Culture is partially a conversation among members of a society about what is important.” However, a given culture can take people only so far. They cannot fully express what is truly important in life. Cultural artifacts and symbols only point back to themselves; and although helping a group identify itself, many times it is difficult to find true meaning in culture. It is here the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ transcends culture and is able to speak to different cultures in ways that can transform it. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, expressed and lived out in culture that gives it clear meaning and reveals the truth about God’s love and mercy. Culture can serve as a means to get there but is not an end in itself. Followers of Christ are to take all thoughts captive and make them obedient to Christ (2 Cor 10:5); yet, they are to do this with gentleness and respect, setting apart Christ as Lord and remaining ever prepared to give the reason for the hope they have (1 Pt 3:15-16). Culture can help Christians in expressing that hope.

In this way, Christians are able to use culture as a means to win those who are in the world and not reject it to fight against it.

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The Korean-American Church Experience, Not Unique

Resulting from many cultural conflicts between the KM and the EM in KAPC churches, many EM congregations still coexisting with the KM are now considering leaving in bitterness. As they lose sight of the true battle that needs to be fought together within the church, preserving the purity and the peace of the Body of Christ, they are battling each other on cultural issues that drain energy, discourage members, and divide God’s Church; but, their experience is not unique. The Old Testament community failed miserably at preserving purity and faith in God, which further led to disturbing peace. God’s community was plagued with battles against syncretism as they mismatched their worship of God with the worship of foreign gods. Since they did not obey God’s command to utterly destroy everything that lived in the Promised Land (Dt 20:16-18), they were tempted and followed after other gods destroying the purity and the peace of God’s community. During the New Testament era, the Church was embittered by a cultural war between the Judaizers and the Gentile Christians. In both cases, preserving the purity and the peace in the community was threatened and they received severe rebuke from God (Acts 5:1-11; Rev 3:16).

Past history is given to today’s Church through God’s Word. This is so the contemporary Body of Christ can avoid repeating mistakes and stand as a unified yet diverse representative of God in preserving purity and peace in physical body, spirit, soul, and relationships. There are clear lessons in the Bible that can help current KMs and EMs in the KAPC to coexist and stand together to face the many attacks against the Church.

Looking at God’s communities in the Bible throughout history, the sad reality is that much of their opposition and persecutions came not from God’s enemies but from
their own people. For example, in Judges 19, the author records a gruesome rape and murder of a concubine of a Levite while traveling through Gibeah in Benjamin. Upset, the Levite cut the woman in pieces and sent them to the different families of Israel (Jgs 19:29). As a result, the other tribes of Israel rose up against tribe of Benjamin and twenty-five thousand Benjamites were killed (Jgs 20:46). Likewise, in 2 Chronicles 36:15, God sent messengers and prophets to Jerusalem out of pity to warn them of their wicked ways; but rather than listening, they scoffed and mocked them until God’s anger burned and he sent the Babylonians to attacked them (Jgs 36:17). Being attacked by their enemies and being sent off to exile were direct results of their failure in preserving the purity of their faith. Jeremiah and Ezekiel gives examples of broken communities that have failed to preserve the purity and the peace in their community and the resulting consequences that tore them apart and away from God. They spoke against the false prophets who delivered false hope of peace when there was none with God (Jer 8:11; Ez 13:10). It is important for the Church of today not to repeat the fatal mistakes of old and in faith take steps toward working together in realizing God’s desire.

In the Old Testament, during the time of kings, Israel reaped what the early fathers had failed to obey when they came into the Promised Land. They had not been faithful in preserving the purity, the true worshiping of God, and were sent into exile as the result, fatally wounding the peace and unity in the community (1 Kg 11:33; 2 Chr 24:18; Jer 22:9). God knew that religious syncretism would occur between worshiping Israel’s God and the gods of the land, if Israel did not destroy everything as he
commanded. They would become indifferent to God’s laws, intermarry with Canaanites in the land, and worship their gods.\textsuperscript{9} God had commanded Israel:

However, in the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. Completely destroy them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the Lord your God has commanded you. Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the Lord your God. (Dt 20:16-18)

Since the people entering Canaan failed to obey God’s warning, it led to years of Israel’s defilement before God. He provided judges to protect and rule over them (Jgs 2:16). Later when the people of Israel requested to have kings, just like the other nations rather than having God rule over them (1 Sm 8:19-20), God reluctantly gave them kings (Jgs 8:22). He explained to Samuel that in requesting a king, they were rejecting God as their king.

Israel enjoyed years of peace and prosperity under King David and his son Solomon. However, after the death of Solomon, the kingdom was divided into Israel to the north and Judah to the south (1 Kgs 11 and 12). Israel was plagued with one bad king one after another (1 Kg 16:25, 30; 24:19; 2 Chr 33:22; 36:5). The last king of Israel was Hoshea. He too was an evil king in the eyes of God (2 Kgs 17:2). During his reign, the Assyrians attacked and sent Israel into exile (2 Kgs 17:6). In the very next verse, 2 Kings 7:7-8 states: “All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods and followed the practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced.” The extent of their wickedness floods this chapter and their history, as they made idols

\textsuperscript{9} Vangemeren, \textit{The Progress of Redemption}, 182.
and worshiped foreign gods. In 2 Kings 17:17 the author writes: “They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sorcery and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, provoking him to anger.” The priests and the prophet at the time could not do enough to protect them from themselves. When their wickedness became intolerable to God, to stop them from harming themselves God sent the Assyrians to attack Israel and take them into exile (2 Kgs 17:23). God used foreign kings and armies to drive them from his sight due to their wickedness.

It is clear from this tragic event in Israel’s past that failure to preserve the purity in God’s community has a frightening effect on its peace and its ability to stay united to God and to his people. It reverses God’s desire to gather his people to himself. The failure to preserve the purity can be highly offensive to God and clearly visible as seen above or it can be subtle and less obvious, as will be shown in the following example of a New Testament church. Regardless, the resulting consequence is the same. The failure to preserve the purity is detrimental and causes division in the community of God. This jeopardizes the true marks of God’s people. When the true marks of the God’s people are jeopardized, they cease to reflect his image and God will not be honored by the Church.

If the Old Testament community was plagued by blatant disobedience to God’s command that destroyed their purity and their peace, the young Church in the New Testament was embattled by less visible attacks. The purity, the truth concerning the Gospel of Jesus Christ, needed to be defended with all vigor in the early Church.

Fueled by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the early Church experienced tremendous growth at its inception (Acts 2:41, 47). Despite its earlier growth, as the Church progressed, it became riddled with inner conflicts that arose from cultural differences. At
the time of great conversions in Jerusalem, there were many people from different
regions and cultures. Luke gives a detailed account in Acts:

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a
sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole
house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that
separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy
Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there
were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When
they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one
heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Are not all
these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in
his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia,
Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the
parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to
Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our
own tongues!” (Act 2:1-11)

This diverse collection of people made up the early Church. The Gospel crossed cultural and
linguistic barriers and transformed people of many nations that day. Over time, when
cultures clashed, there arose tremendous stress among the factions and conflicts arose. In
particular, when the Gospel spread beyond the Jewish culture, there was great discord
within the Body of Christ. Paul’s letter to the Galatians is dedicated to those who were
captured up in this conflict. One of the issues that threatened the purity and the peace at
Galatia was concerning circumcision (Gal 5:1-12).

The group that was causing the problems among Gentile believers was the Judaizers.
These were Jewish Christians who persuaded Gentiles to observe Jewish religious
customs. At the church in Galatia, these men demanded that the Greek Christians be
circumcised in order to complete the initiation into the Christian faith (6:12-13). This
became such an issue that in the beginning of his ministry Paul even circumcised Timothy,

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who was only a half-Jew through his mother (Acts 16:1-3). Paul did this for the sake of Jews who were living in the region where he was taking him to do missions. The purpose for circumcising was not to follow Jewish law or tradition but to allow Timothy to be accepted into the community so he could share the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:1-3).

The Judaizers at Galatia were inducing already converted Gentile Christians to observe the Law and proclaiming that, if they did not circumcise, they were not true Christians. Knowing that this was not the Gospel he had presented to them originally, Paul wrote about these Judaizers: “As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!” (Gal 5:12). Paul was emphasizing that circumcision had no effect on their salvation. Paul argued for the Gentile Christians to say that the Gospel of Jesus Christ did not demand circumcision from them in order for them to be true Christians. Christians now were freed from the Law through the cross of Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the obligations of the Law (Gal 5:1, 13). His clear message of the Gospel was that ultimately salvation comes through faith and not by works (Gal 2:16).

Paul became irate against those who were raising cultural demands above the Gospel of Jesus Christ, threatening the purity of the Church. He warned the Galatians to be careful, because to lose the purity of the Gospel message also would lead to losing peace in their church. He wrote: “If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other” (Gal 5:15). Not preserving the purity of the Church eventually leads to its loss of peace as well. In Galatia, cultural conditions were placed on them by the Judaizers that the Gospel had not required. While perhaps done on the part of the Judiazers from a perspective of seeking to preserve the purity of their church, the essential purity of the Gospel was being attacked. As a result, the Galatians
began to sway in their faith and became confused about their identity. To this Paul wrote:

“You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal 3:26-29). Paul wanted to make clear to the Gentile Christians that, as long as they believed in Christ, no other conditions were to be placed upon them. This meant they were free to be who they were culturally, as long as they maintained the essential doctrine of Jesus Christ. Things became so escalated that Paul felt the need to appeal to a higher court, which led to the meeting of the First Council of the Church in Jerusalem (Acts 15).

Paul and Barnabas, after debating with many Judaizers, brought the matter before the council of apostles and religious leaders in Jerusalem. They reported the strict rules of cultural conformity that were being placed upon the Gentile Christians. The leaders debated much on these issues; and compelled by Paul’s appeal, Peter stood up among them and passionately preached the following:

Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are. (Act 15:7-11)

Peter affirmed the Gospel message that had been preached to the Gentiles that no other conditions were placed upon Gentiles other than to believe in Jesus Christ. The evidence of their true conversion was God giving them the Holy Spirit just as he had given it to them.
Further hearing the reports of God’s amazing work among the Gentiles, the council—led by Jesus’ half brother, James—agreed not to require Gentile Christians to keep the Jewish traditions (Acts 15:13-21). A letter was drafted to the church at Antioch detailing the decisions of the council and was sent along with representatives from the Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15:23-29). Luke records that the Church rejoiced much and was encouraged and strengthened (Acts 15:31). These extraneous cultural demands could have been devastating to the Church, but the Holy Spirit intervened to reconcile what was then a serious matter in order for the house churches to continue co-existing as one Body of Christ. They were able to preserve the purity, thus ensuring the peace and unity in the Church.

These events that transpired in the early Church resemble much of what is taking place in the KAPC churches today. For this reason, they need to pay close attention and learn from the past. Although the conflicts arising between the KM and the EM are not as theologically charged and bifurcated, they are similar in its result of dividing the Korean-American Church. The pressure to conform to cultural standards and norms and the unreasonable demands placed on Christians on both sides have caused confusion and division. The arguments that place culture above the Gospel have Christians contemplating if one is better than the other. It is inevitable that when cultures collide, there will be conflicts. As seen in events that led to the Jerusalem Council, there was much havoc caused due to the cultural differences between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Though the controversy surrounding the demands of the Judaizers had soteriological implications and ramifications, thus making the debate urgent and intense, the resulting settlement was towards preserving the purity and the peace of the Church. Both sides gathered for free discussion to determine present ministry and to ensure the future of the overall Church.
For the Korean-American Church in the KAPC, the conflicts and arguments are not about salvation but about preference. However, the end result of dividing the Church and hurting its members is analogous. For the sake of convenience or preference, it is not too much to ask for forbearance (Phil 2:4); however, to forthrightly demand changes in each other’s preferences leads to conflicts and division, thus causing a lack of true biblical marks of being God’s community. In this way, an attack on the purity of a church can lead to attack on the peace of that church.

**Theological Conclusion**

The Church’s actions today serve as a testimony to the next generation. There are no barriers big enough to stop God’s plan of gathering his people and having them work side by side to join him in his fight to preserve the purity and the peace of the Church for the sake of God’s own glory. Scripture reveals there is hope for the Church, if it is willing to lift its gaze to God to see what he is fighting for rather than focusing on that which is worldly (Heb 12:1-2). Just as the early Church learned to acknowledge and celebrate diversity, so can today’s Church be transformed in its perspectives of what truly constitutes purity, peace, and culture.

The KM and the EM in KAPC churches need to see their God preserving the purity and the peace of the Church throughout his biblical history and become encouraged and inspired to follow suit. Culture is to be used and not enforced to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those living in it, to be transformed through the message of Jesus Christ so as to gain influence in the context of where people are so that God may be known. Within KAPC churches, both KM and EM are fighting the battle of preserving the purity and peace of the
church on various cultural fronts; but the battle lines cannot be drawn at the level of cultural
differences, such as the church becoming more Korean or more American. The Gospel of
Jesus Christ and keeping the peace in a church is the battle line, and different cultures are
simply means God has provided for the Church to help it grow and to fight the good fight.

As Christians live out faith in their given culture, culture can be used in expressing
their faith. Cultural distinctions like preference of music or languages should not diminish the
Gospel expression for either the KM or EM. Cultural differences only point to preferences
that can change between groups. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is an uncompromising truth that
cannot change but can transform a culture to love God and his people. To see cultural
diversity as God’s gift and accept those differences in a church means coming together and
learning to coexist. Only then can diverse members of the Body of Christ join hands to fight
to preserve the purity and the peace of God’s Church. To this end, God uses diversity to grow
his people through the transforming power of the Gospel. Following his lead, the KM and the
EM in KAPC churches must learn to use the many different cultures God has given them in
growing together towards interdependent coexistence that honors God. As they jointly stand
together with God on the frontlines of preserving the purity and the peace of their church,
they soon will realize they are united and are interdependently coexisting.

The KM and EM in KAPC churches need to become a believing community that
applies the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus, especially in light of what constitutes
purity, peace, and culture. In this hope they can patiently wait and even endure through great
sufferings together for that radiant Church to be realized in the KAPC. To this end, they can
stand alongside each other, both the KM and the EM, preserving the purity and the peace of
the Church. Chapter 5 discusses how the KM and the EM can begin this journey.
CHAPTER 5
APPLYING THE GOSPEL TO THE KOREAN-AMERICAN CHURCH

This chapter will explore how the Gospel works to resolve conflicts within the Church. The discussions in this chapter will be critical in starting the dialogue between the KM and the EM in KAPC churches. God desires peace and unity in the Church; but, unless there is a change in heart, led by the Spirit in and through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, reconciliation is unattainable. Once both sides humble themselves and agree to disagree on non-biblical issues, repent for the wrongs committed, forgive the wrongs received, and accept and commit to each other with a view toward interdependent coexistence, healing cannot begin to take place. Essentially, this is the pinnacle of the paper as the great ascent begins towards the future. Finally, this chapter will reveal the hidden beauty of conflict resolution as an entire church becomes involved in restoring broken relationships. From the beginning of the Bible to the very end, the goal is to restore relationships that have been broken by sin.

It was established in Chapter 3 that the true marks of a biblical church stem from its response to God’s provision as he gathers his people for himself. As the church receives and bears these marks, the presence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ becomes more
evident. The way a church experiences this Gospel presence on both an individual and corporate level is through humility, repentance, forgiveness, and acceptance. This is how God radically applies the Gospel to the Church. As church members continually experience this genuine Gospel presence in their midst, the experience repeatedly takes them back to realizing their biblical marks. This is how the Body of Christ perseveres in peace as it preserves the purity and the truth of the Gospel.

**Humility**

A clear evidence of the radical Gospel presence in a church is the experience of humility among its members. The road to conflict resolution begins with humility. Conflict begins as sides take position to express what they want. When the sides realize that the desires of the other are in opposition to what they want, conflicts inevitably develop. ¹ Philippians 2:1-4 encapsulates this well and reads:

> If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Here Paul reminds Christians about being united in Christ and what humility means. Rather than taking a side, he says to begin with humility, which means considering others first. He exhorts the Christians in the church at Philippi. Rather than pinning their needs over against the needs of one another, all must consider the needs of others (Phil 2:4).

For Christians, the Gospel is the standard for measuring a person’s humility. The chronicler explained that the process of revival coming from God begins with this: “If my

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people who are called by my name humble themselves . . . ” This call for humility comes with God’s amazing prize: “Then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chr 7:14). If the Church is to experience restoration and revival, it needs to start with humility. In his book, Humility, C. J. Mahaney defines humility in this way: “Humility is honestly assessing ourselves in light of God’s holiness and our sinfulness.”

Humility acknowledges God as supreme and holy. As Christians mature in faith, God’s apparent holiness grows. As this realization grows in the heart, they begin to see how unholy they are due to sin. As this humble realization takes root in the person’s heart, they begin to see others as equals before the eyes of God rather than thinking themselves better.

Essentially, God becomes the supreme standard for humility. The pride that wedges in between is what causes human beings to contend for that supremacy. Foolish pride is to raise oneself to the level of the divine, raising one’s heart against him. When this prideful contention extends to others in a church, the experience of humility escapes and is forfeited. In this way, the Philippians passage mentioned above becomes null and void, as judgments against one another run rampant and compassion for others fades. On the other hand, if true humility develops in a person’s heart, considering others and their needs as more important takes center stage; and, reconciliation and restoration in broken relationships within a church can begin to experience healing. In this way, members of a church personally can experience the Gospel taking effect.

Unless the spirit of humility becomes the mixing agent in a conflictive situation, pride will take over and the spirit of judgment will run rampant in the Church. If the two

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2 C. J. Mahaney, Humility (Colorado Springs, CO; Multnomah Books, 2005), 22.
3 Ibid., 31.
generations humble themselves and see one another as gifts from God (Eph 4:11-13), who is infinitely wiser and holier with clear intent to bless the Church (Is 55:8), there can be restoration and healing (2 Chr 7:14). Gospel application begins with humility as individual members in the church take up the responsibility of recognizing personal brokenness and sinfulness and call out to God together to receive healing (Jas 5:16).

The Body of Christ needs to be open to receive correction and even to lovingly give correction where needed. Humility seeks help for it is the way of the wise, preventing arrogance that leads to self delusion. When a group isolates itself in pride, and self raises its importance above others, its members become closed to correction. This was seen clearly at work in the Pharisees (cf. Mt 9:11; 21:45-46; 23:13; Lk 11:39). The opposite of humility is arrogance. Where humility considers others more important, arrogance discounts others while elevating itself.

At my orientation when I entered Westminster Seminary, George Fuller, at the time the chair of the Practical Theology Department, said to the students, “Envision a pyramid. In the world, the objective is to get to the tip. Now flip the pyramid on its head. Your objective as a pastor of a church is to still get to that tip. Humble yourselves.” Serving in a Korean-American church context, this means for the KM and the EM to mutually consider each other more important than themselves. Abandoning pride and arrogance, in humility, both the KM and the EM need to work hard in understanding one another and agree to disagree on non-biblical issues that are not essential in realizing the true biblical marks of a church. Issues like raising the importance of one language over another, praying and

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4 Ibid., 128.
5 George Fuller, “Orientation” (speech delivered to incoming MDiv students at Westminster Theological Seminary, Glenside, PA, September 1994).
worshiping in a certain way, or how one ought to dress for church should not lead to judgment about which expression is better or holier. It is important for both sides to lovingly acknowledge that different ways of honoring God, whether they are the “Korean” way or the “American” way, are diverse gifts from God and not points of contention. Many KM and EM leaders in KAPC churches need to develop this heart of humility that comes from utter reliance on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Presence of humility in the Church radiantly and radically displays evidence of applying the Gospel of Jesus. Godly humility that stems from the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a radical force against the grain of pride that comes more naturally to the human fallen condition within us all. A deep experience of humility is the first step in moving towards realizing the true marks of the Church.

**Repentance**

Another evidence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ radically being applied to the Church is the outpouring of repentance. Repentance is genuine, mournful recognition of the wrong committed to God and the resulting pain caused to others as the result of sin (Ps 51:3-5; Col 3:13). This twofold repentance has to be visible in order for true reconciliation to take place between God and among his people in the Church (Mt 5:23-24). Genuine repentance involves the act of turning away from sin in humble reliance on the Gospel to be reconciled to God and receive his blessing of spiritual renewal with him and with his people.

One aspect of repentance that often is neglected is recompense and resolution. Recompense and resolution are not a price to be paid in repentance but the fruits that result from humbly relying on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Recompense and resolution in the context of repentance that is brought on by the Gospel carry no hint of penalty or fine
that is left for sinners to pay. The full price has been paid by Christ on the cross, as the
grace that follows has been lavished on sinners (Eph 1:6-8). However, repentance does
involve so much more than simply saying, “I’m sorry.” Recompense and resolution are
direct results of grace, receiving that which we do not deserve, through sole reliance on
the finished work of Jesus Christ.

The Westminster Confession of Faith says this about repentance:

As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for
the pardon thereof, upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy: so
he that scandalizeth his brother, or the Church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a
private or public confession and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to
those that are offended; who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to
receive him.6

This confession states that repentance begins with confessing the sin, then mourning and
forsaking of that sin, and ultimately seeking resolution with those who have been affected
by that sin. Repentance is more than making right what has been wrong between the
sinner and God. The goal of repentance is divine healing that recognizes the forgiving
power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is more than receiving a fresh new start. Rather,
sinners are called to lay down all the burdens that come as result of sinning against God
and against his commands such as guilt (Heb 10:22), shame (1 John 2:28), hatred (1 Jn
4:20), bitterness (Acts 8:23), unforgiving heart (Mt 6:15), thoughts of vengeance (Rom
12:19), and everything else that weighs down the heart. Paul says for believers to “have
been crucified with Christ” (Gal 2:20) and adds that he no longer is weighed down by
these burdens, where the Law convicts. He is free from this weight, because he fully
inhabits his identity in Jesus, who through his death has paid for it all.

6 The Westminster Confession of Faith (Lawrenceville, GA: Published by the Committee for
Christian Education & Publications PCA Bookstore, 1990), 48-49.
Repentance is an active participation of all who are involved in a particular sin to seek forgiveness and restoration through God’s grace and mercy working in Christ’s followers. Paul said it is God’s kindness that leads to repentance and not through exercising judgment upon others (Rom 2:4). Repentance comes from recognizing that sins can be forgiven, due to the kindness of God and the hope is that there is reconciliation.

Genuine repentance often is neglected, because it is both painful and costly. Repentance involves hearts being broken before God in humble reliance while desperately seeking restoration to take place everywhere sin has affected. In David’s psalm of repentance, there is great agony for the sin he has committed, which has affected all areas of his life (Ps 51). Nevertheless, David takes full responsibility for his sins and cries, “For I know my transgression, and my sins are always before me” (Ps 51:3). He knows he is guilty and cannot hide from his sins or from God. He further pleads, “Create in me a new heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Ps 51:10).

Here David is not simply asking God to fix him but to give him a new heart, for it is utterly broken. David continues to laments saying, “Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me” (Ps 51:12). This shows that he is worn out by the weight of his sins and joy has escaped him. As he mourns, David desires for God to restore his joy. Repentance is the process of becoming nothing in hopes that God will raise one as a new creation. In Psalm 51:13-14, David says, “Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. Save me from blood guilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.” David knows that his sins have had consequences, affecting his people. As their king, he has set a bad example; but if God were to restore him, he is promising to overcome his shame and be God’s witness to tell
them not to take the excruciating path he took. Reconciliation needs to happen both with God as well as his people.

Too often, repentance comes as a soft solution in a church. Especially in the Korean-American context, often believers feel that they have squared things with God and need not plan an active role in the reconciliation and restoration of others. H. Lee asserts that Asian Americans coming from cultures that emphasize “false humility,” “face-saving,” and a “shame-based” system have difficulties overcoming conflicts.\(^7\) False humility poses as phony modesty in order to appear humble.\(^8\) Face-saving is what results from not wanting to be shamed.\(^9\) To confront someone or impose something that brings shame is to be avoided at all cost in an Asian culture.\(^10\) Given these propensities that make Korean Americans very passive, in a Korean-American church context, it is very difficult to move beyond these cultural tendencies to engage on the deeper level of reconciliatory communication.

Repentance for personal sins is done in private. Even receiving reconciliation from God can be a very private thing. In the Korean-American context, this important Scripture from James often is overlooked: “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” For these reasons, the task of authentic reconciliation with others is very difficult among Korean Americans, more so in the KM than in the EM, because to point out a visible flaw or error to someone inflicts immediate shame. So, more often than not,\(^7\) H. Lee, “Healthy Households I,” 65-67.
\(^8\) Ibid., 63.
\(^9\) Ibid., 65.
\(^10\) Ibid., 67.
true reconciliation from genuine repentance rarely takes place among God’s people in the Korean-American Church. For the KM to go to the members of EM and ask for forgiveness for an offense is a colossal labor. Since the same cultural root is shared, this is also true for EM members.

However, Scripture clearly points out that cultural norms and traditions do not release members of the Body of Christ from obeying God’s Word. Paul writes: “Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience” (Col 3:11-12). This means that regardless who one is and despite one’s cultural makeup, everyone is required to live as God desires. Additionally, in 1 Timothy 4:12 Paul wrote: “Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” In a culture where young people are easily dismissed, Paul reminds Timothy of his obligation as a Christian to live properly before God and to own and exercise the leadership that God has given to him.

Consequently, the KM and the EM in the KAPC churches cannot ignore God’s call to genuine repentance. Members of the Body of Christ experience the Gospel through genuine repentance that seeks to reconcile both with God and with his people. If the desire is genuine, the KM and EM of KAPC churches can poise themselves to receive spiritual renewal. Though it may be difficult, given their cultural makeup, both sides need to rely on the transcending power of the Holy Spirit and take that terrifying first step towards lovingly reconciling not only with God but also with one another. Much healing
is needed in both KM and EM congregations through repentance. In order for this to take place, forgiveness must occur both from God and among his people.

Forgiveness

The most radical expression of the Gospel of Jesus Christ applied to the church is forgiveness. Reconciliation cannot take place fully without forgiveness. God promised his people if they humble themselves and call out to him in repentance and turn from their wicked ways, he would forgive (2 Chr 7:14). He said, “I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin.” While the purpose of repentance is to restore and reconcile, there is grace in forgiveness. Recounting sins is done for the purpose of healing and reconciliation. Grace is to know that though the accounting seems endless, God desires to forgive all of them.

In the Bible, when God expresses his anger against Israel, it is not without warrant. David prayed in Psalm 51:3-5, “For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” God is always angry at specific sins that humans commit (1 Sm 12:9). When Jesus died on the cross for humanity’s sins, he died for specific transgressions. All transgressions are completely and specifically known to him; and as people trace back particular sins they have committed, repentance becomes more genuine and the need for forgiveness ever more dire. To this desperate sinful broken world, Scripture reveals that sins are forgiven through Jesus Christ in accordance with the riches of God’s grace (Eph 1:7). This is a general statement with specific consequence. His forgiveness means full awareness of all that has been
done (Ps 69:5). Nevertheless, God made a conscious decision to forgive by nailing them all to the cross. With that established, it is vital for the Church to practice forgiveness among its members.

Without forgiveness, a church cannot apply the Gospel in power; and without the Gospel, that church cannot contain the biblical marks. It cannot be a believing community because it shows it does not believe in forgiveness by not practicing it. It cannot be a loving community because forgiveness is an expression of unconditional love. It cannot be a hoping community, because there is no hope without the freedom from burdens that forgiveness provides. It makes no sense to wait, for without forgiveness it is simply prolonging the inevitable doom.

Jesus said in the prayer he taught his disciples, “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Mt 6:12); and then in Matthew 6:14-15, he explains what he meant: “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Jesus is telling his disciples that if they cannot forgive others when they wrong them, then there is no hope of receiving the amazing forgiveness from God. Jesus wanted his disciples to know for certain that God’s extravagant forgiveness for monumental sins gives people no excuses to not forgive those who cause them pain. The radical application of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is to know that one has been forgiven much; therefore, one needs to forgive others in order to not enter into hypocrisy.

Paul tells the church in Colossians 3:12-14 how to embody this in practicality, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive
whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

Paul is saying that the grace of God given to believers in forgiveness swells in us causing compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Paul sets no limits to the extent of applying this heart of forgiveness to others. “Whatever grievances” one might have against one another, they are called to forgive as they have been forgiven. The goal of repentance is reconciliation and restoration. The grace received in repentance is forgiveness. As shown earlier, spiritual renewal takes place when repentance happens; and in this renewal, as God forgives his people and heals their land, so must God’s people forgive one another.

The spirit of forgiveness needs to spread throughout KAPC churches so that spiritual renewal can take place. The KM and EM need to come together to honestly and openly discuss whatever grievances they may have with one another, no matter how difficult this is to do culturally. This is not an option to be weighed but is God’s loving command in his ministry of reconciliation to bring true genuine healing to his Church. Only when both sides humble themselves, together turning to God and seeking forgiveness, can they turn and forgive one another. Christians sometimes can think that spiritual renewal and grace are received only after members in the body carryout this command. However, the very acts of repenting together and the giving and receiving forgiveness are moments of experiential grace. Therefore, when this is not taking place in a church, the Body of Christ is being choked of grace. The spirit of forgiveness, whatever the grievances are, needs to spread throughout KAPC churches in order that grace may abound. Only when this genuine repentance leads to genuine forgiveness will there be true reconciliation and restoration, as members begin to accept one another in love.
Acceptance

Nancy Sugikawa and Steve Wong say, “Tolerance is taking the path of least resistance. Grace-based ministry seeks to know God’s path toward holiness in any given situation.” The danger of tolerance is that it only can take the relationship to the point of compromise. Through compromising, as long as the sides can tolerate one another, they are content in leaving one another alone. However, grace-based ministry desires to go farther than that. It desires a loving relationship of mutual acceptance. Both sides work together to live in the fruit of holiness, attaining the biblical marks of the Church. Jesus did not die on the cross for human sins so that people merely can tolerate one another. He died so that they could love one another (1 Jn 3:16). Therefore, the next necessary step towards reconciliation and restoration is not tolerance but acceptance.

To truly accept people as they are takes tremendous love and grace. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is one of acceptance. He takes sinners as they are, but he loves them too much to leave them in that condition (Rom 5:8; 1 Pt 1:2). Through a process called “sanctification,” Jesus applies his Gospel to his people to build them up for true acceptance. The Greek word for “sanctification” means holiness. Therefore, to become sanctified means to “make holy.” The Gospel does not take people partially through the process and abandon them. God promises to finish the good work he starts (Phil 2:6).

This Gospel of acceptance and not tolerance is illustrated beautifully in Jesus’ encounter with a Samaritan woman at the well in John 4. John 4:4 states: “Now he had to go through Samaria.” The significance of this verse is that it shows great intent on Jesus’ part.

12 Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, s.v. “Sanctification.”
Samaria was a hostile territory for the Jews and often was avoided in travel. When Jesus and his disciple came to a town called Sychar, they stopped at the well to rest. Jesus sent away the disciples to get something to eat (Jn 4:8). Meanwhile, he met a woman at a well. She was a Samaritan woman with much to hide. Not wanting to meet anyone, she came to the well when no one normally goes, at noon when the sun was at its highest point (Jn 4:6). A deep theological discussion begins when Jesus simply asked her for some water. She wanted to know how a Jew like Jesus could ask a Samaritan person, let alone a woman, for a drink when Jews and Samaritans do not associate with one another (Jn 4:9). To this, Jesus offered her “living water” that she could drink only once and never thirst again (Jn 4:10, 13).

When she asked for this water, strangely Jesus asked her to go and get her husband. Jesus could have tolerated her and could have left the conversation short to quickly get a drink and leave the Samaritan woman at the well to do her business, but Jesus loved her more than that. When she tells him that she does not have a husband, Jesus pierces her heart and says, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband” (Jn 4:17-18). Jesus was reaching her heart and revealing his intimate knowledge of her and why she had to come to the well when no one was there. After a few more impersonal theological comments, perhaps wanting to distance herself from Jesus, she said, “I know that the Messiah is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” To which Jesus replied, “I who speak to you am he” (Jn 4:25-26). Leaving her water jar at the well, the woman runs into town witnessing to the people saying, “Come, see a man who told

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me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (Jn 4:29). As the result of her witness, many other Samaritans became believers (Jn 4:41).

Jesus, in this passage, had many opportunities to leave the woman. He could have tolerated her a bit and gotten the drink he needed; but at the risk of offending his tradition and culture, he sat and spoke with her. He did not judge or condemn her but showed acceptance by staying with her to the end. Even when his disciples returned from food gathering to join them, Jesus did not reject or avoid her but kept talking with her, causing the disciples to wonder. This acceptance was not ambiguous or confusing. She knew that she was being fully exposed, yet she also knew that he had forgiven her and more importantly accepted her. That is why she was able to go boldly to the people she had been avoiding to be his witness. Jesus modeled his vital ministry of acceptance to the disciples. It is no accident that they came just as she experienced acceptance by Jesus. As ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, they too needed to learn the ministry of acceptance.

Not just the woman at the well, but Jesus’ disciples witnessed as many Samaritans, enemies of the Jews, coming to know the Lord and being accepted into his Kingdom.

The Philippians passage (Phil 2:1-4) that was looked at in the “Humility” section of this chapter reminds Christians to consider other more important than themselves, particularly in the Church. In Philippians 2:2-3, Paul wrote: “If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion . . . ” Being united in Christ, believers possess the heart and mind of Christ. Together, the Church and its members apply the Gospel of Jesus Christ within the Body of Christ. As they experience humility, repentance, and forgiveness, and as the radical application of the Gospel takes root in the
church, its members lovingly accept one another and do not simply tolerate. Paul articulated this desire for the Church beautifully in Romans 15:5-9. He wrote:

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God’s truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy.

The great chasm between the Jews and the Gentiles needed to be filled with the Gospel. Paul knew that for this to happen, the Church needed to be united in Christ. Knowing that God is a gathering God who desires the world for himself, Paul commands the Roman church to accept one another as Christ has accepted them and join hearts in praising the gathering God. This acceptance speaks loudly in any church and among its members of their commitment to unity and solidarity in praising God together.

There is much tolerating going on between the KM and EM in KAPC churches. What the sides do not see is that toleration is the roadblock to acceptance. Each side should not change, whether through demand or compromise, in order to become more tolerable to the other. The goal of this radical Gospel application is not to tolerate but to lovingly accept each other as who they are and work together towards joyful coexistence. The KM and EM need to experience Gospel transformation. As the Gospel is applied, KAPC churches will experience humility, repentance, forgiveness, and acceptance. This is the route towards reconciliation and restoration.

**Commitment to One Another**

Radically applying the Gospel to the Church vitally fuels its members committing to one another. As members of a church actually experience the Gospel working firsthand,
they will commit to one another in Christ. The KM and EM in KAPC churches witnessed some of that in the very beginning of their ministries, as many sacrifices were made to build the Korean-American Church. Members’ commitment to one another is linked closely to their commitment and desire to see the Gospel lived out in their midst. This can clearly be seen in the Acts 2 church. Luke records the Gospel in action at the early Church:

Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Act 2:41-47)

There was tremendous passion found in those days for the community among its members. Act 2:43 states that everyone, including themselves, was filled with awe at what was going on. Their commitment to one another can be categorized into three areas: commitment to discipleship, commitment to fellowship, and commitment to worship.

First, committing to one another, they committed to discipleship. Act 2:46 says that they gathered everyday at the temple courts, as they came together to learn from the apostles’ teaching. There was a tremendous hunger for knowledge. They wanted to learn more about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Members of the early Church dedicated themselves to discipleship by sharing together all areas of life, leadership, and sacrifice.

Second, committing to one another, they were committed to loving fellowship. The above passage shows that no one had to force the people to come together to share what they had. They willingly sold their possessions and distributed them. The breaking
of bread signifies sharing in the Lord’s Supper.\textsuperscript{14} In their fellowship, they remembered Jesus and what he did for them on the cross and did it in remembrance of him. The Christians in the early Church were not afraid of gathering in public places and sharing their joy and faith. People were selling their homes and their possessions and using the proceeds so that no one had need. Having received the Gospel through Jesus Christ, they were now applying it in their lives in practical everyday matters and relationships.

Third, committing to one another, they were committed to worship. They were praising (Act 2:47), praying (Acts 2:42), and listening to sermons (Acts 2:42). It was the Lord who added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47). God had no reservations in sending more people to a Church like this, where members spent time together and jointly committed to discipleship, fellowship, worship. The way they committed to one another was through the Gospel grace that had been freely given to them in Jesus Christ. Freely he gave of himself for the Church, and the new Christians simply were following his lead.

Commitment to one another is simply the promise to commit to Christ and to the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, always endeavoring to be led by the Spirit. The Church cannot earn its place of glory but only by grace, grace of the Gospel of Jesus Christ being poured out on the Church. Paul promised the Ephesian church, “Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” (Eph 5:25-27). He reminds

the Church that it is Jesus who does this. Therefore, the call is not for the church to beautify itself but to rely on Jesus who has already done it by dying on the cross for it. In this way, the Church is to be committed to Christ as its members commit to one another that they become one flesh. Paul continued in the promise saying, “After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.” For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh” (Gn 5:29-31). Quoting from Genesis 2:24, Paul likened the Body of Christ to the joining of husband and wife where the husband (Jesus) cares for his bride (the Church), which happens as members unite with one another and unite to Jesus to become one. This is how God envisions his Church to be, committing to one another as they commit together to Jesus. Only when this commitment is made between the KM and the EM can there be progress towards interdependent coexistence that honors and please God. Committing to one another in this way is to trust in the promises God has given to the Church in Jesus Christ and his Word.
PART THREE

TOWARDS RECONCILIATION AND RESOLUTION
CHAPTER 6
KOREAN CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AS A MODEL

There is an urgent need for working models of churches where the KM and EM interdependently coexist in the denomination of KAPC. This chapter employs Korean Central Presbyterian Church as a model church in the KAPC where the EM desires to interdependently coexist with the KM. The chapter is divided into two major sections. The first section examines KCPC’s positive traits—more specifically, ways in which the KM and EM currently coexist well and interdependently under the same roof. The second section will look at negative traits—in other words, areas of growth that are needed. The goal of this chapter is to use KCPC as a model for other KAPC churches that have the KM and EM coexisting together to give rise to the hope of desiring interdependence, securing a model church for future generations to pursue.

Presently, there are only a handful of churches in the KAPC that have both the KM and the EM coexisting as one church. KCPC is examined as a model church not in the sense that perfection has been achieved but rather because it is on the front cusp of desperately trying to stay together interdependently with the KM under the same roof.
Though KCPC was mentioned back in Chapter 2, some brief information is helpful in understanding its present situation. The EM of KCPC in San Francisco (Daly City)\(^1\) will celebrate its twentieth anniversary in October 2012. The KM, on the other hand, celebrated its fortieth anniversary in May 2011. Midway through its history, the KM met the needs of a large influx of college students from the University of California at Berkeley by forming an EM. KCPC is centrally located in the Bay Area in Northern California and rests just a few minutes south of San Francisco and about thirty minutes west to Oakland and Berkeley. A major interstate highway makes traveling swift and easy from the San Jose area, which is south of the church.

The actual church building sits on top of a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The KM and the EM currently worship in the same building, which has a large sanctuary that can seat up to 400 people and a fellowship hall that has tables and chairs to accommodate about 250 people for meals. The current average attendance for the KM is 350, and for the EM it is 250. To accommodate the large numbers, the EM worships at 9:30 a.m. and the KM worships at 11:30 a.m. The two ministries have experienced many struggles together yet have made a conscious choice to interdependently coexist. The next two sections will show how this was possible by looking at what it has done successfully and also by looking at what it could have avoided.

**Positive Traits**

This section will focus on the positive traits both in the KM and in the EM at KCPC that have contributed to developing a common desire to interdependently coexist.

\(^1\) KCPC was started in San Francisco but has moved to an adjacent area called Daly City.
These endearing and enduring traits have helped KCPC to continue to hope for a future together. They are not comprehensive but are highlighted to show how they help to preserve the marks of becoming a believing, loving, hoping, and patiently waiting church that honors God.

The Positive Traits of the KM at KCPC

This section will examine the positive traits of the KM at KCPC. It will follow the structure of looking at the biblical marks of the church by examining how the KM has done well in being a believing, loving, hoping, and patiently waiting church together with the EM. The story of KCPC’s KM is very typical of Korean-immigrant churches in North America. This is my second position serving as an EM pastor at a Korean-American church in the KAPC. My previous church was older than KCPC but shares a very similar history. One area that is common among the majority of KAPC churches is a conservative Presbyterian theology and polity. KAPC churches tend to be very conservative in their beliefs, governing structure, and worship.

KCPC is an active member of the KAPC. Following the directives of the denomination, the KM at KCPC has done well in preserving its conservative theology, maintaining a Presbyterian structure, and expressing them in and through worship. Members of KCPC are mostly Calvinists, following closely the teachings of John Calvin, and are Reformed, following the teachings that flowed from the Reformation. The KM’s commitment to conservative Presbyterian theology is a shared commitment in the EM.

Another area where the KM does well is in preserving the hierarchical Presbyterian structure. The church is ruled by its elders, known as the session. As
overseers of the church, they look after everything from worship details to building management. The sacrifice of these men and their families are widely respected by the rest of the church. KCPC ministries are well managed by the session as they oversee the church. Under the session is the board of deacons. They are responsible for collecting and distributing finances in the church. This structure is closely monitored and enforced by the session. Raised in a culture with strong Confucian values of social hierarchy and respect of authority, those who are older easily embrace the Presbyterian model of governance as a good fit for the KM. ²

For the KM at KCPC, their conservative theology and structure are strongly expressed in their worship. Worship is led by the senior pastor, congregational prayer is given by an elder, and the offerings are collected by the deacons. KM worship at KCPC is passionate, and the KM congregation genuinely appears to be blessed every Sunday. During worship, when the congregation is called to corporately pray together, the sanctuary fills with the rushing sounds of clamors and cries which the KM calls tongsongkido (union prayer) that shows the KM’s emphasis on the collective over the individual. ³ There is a strong sense of unity in corporately coming together as a believing community in worship. Rather than focusing on personal reflections during worship, the corporate participation and gathering is a significant moment of worship for KM members. The KM at KCPC is faithful in its practice. There is deep corporate conformity and unity found in the KM worship. What attracted many of the initial EM members to

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³ S. Kim, A Faith of Our Own, 85.
KCPC was the recognition of being part of a passionate, believing community that desires to persevere together to preserve its conservative Presbyterian beliefs.

Another area that KM does well is how it is known in the Bay Area to be a very loving community. Every Sunday, hot Korean soup and rice with *kimchi* (spicy pickled Korean cabbage) are served. The service committee that oversees the preparation of food at KCPC is exclusively made up of KM members. Every Sunday they serve over seven hundred meals. KCPC has done this from its inception and has no plans to stop. Recently, an influx of Korean exchange students started attending KCPC. The KM has embraced them as it did with the EM in the past and has created a separate worship time for them and regularly holds events at the church for them to dine and fellowship together. The loving spirit of KCPC is well known in the Bay Area.

Another very important ministry in the KM that shows its loving spirit is its scholarship committee. Just as many college students started attending KCPC, a handful of people in the KM felt compelled to start a scholarship fund. Many have given generously and sacrificially to this fund throughout the years, and now the KM awards over $30,000 in scholarships to students in the church, mostly EM members and some in the community. Just this past year, KCPC gave four scholarships to local high school students. In this way, KCPC is a loving community that welcomes and takes good care of those who come seeking a church.

Finally, the KM at KCPC does well in the area of hoping and waiting patiently for the future it envisions. This is shown in congregants’ ability to persevere. KCPC has been plagued with natural disasters and monumental hardships throughout its history. In 1989,
the Bay Area was struck by the Loma Prieta earthquake which destroyed the church building in which everyone worshipped. Then in 1998, due to El Niño eroding the California sea coast, the church site was in threat of being washed into the Pacific. Forced from the land until repair work was finished, the church wondered throughout San Francisco for over seven years. The church building the congregations currently occupy is less than ten years old. Through all these adversities the church never wavered in hopes of God providing a place of worship for both the KM and the EM.

Though it would have been much easier without the EM, the KM’s commitment to keep the two ministries together came from congregants’ enduring hope that the KM would preserve the church for its future generation through the EM. The KM sacrificed much in patiently waiting and hoping for a new building in which to worship. No strangers to overcoming extreme struggles, the first generation of Korean Americans are natural survivors. There are many aspects of their tenacity and perseverance that are not repeated in the second generation. When the church had to survive on a shoe-string budget many elders and generous members second-mortgaged their homes and businesses to keep the ministries going. Though the strain was evidently visible, the KM displayed tremendous faith rather than dissent. Prayer meetings were filled with weeping servants who lifted all burdens to God rather than taking it out on the congregation. Their hope in restoration never wavered, as each man and woman of God stood to hold their ground. Rather than demanding help from the EM, they turned their misery into opportunities to unite and to encourage the EM to endure with them. The KM did all that they could to shelter the EM from experiencing hardship to ease their struggles in enduring together.
There are members in the KM who hold to the enduring hope of interdependently coexisting and are willing to wait patiently to see this dream realized. Their hope is expressed in their dedication to preserving this believing, loving, hoping, and patiently waiting church for the sake of both generations. As long as this desire exists, the hope of harmoniously coexisting can be realized by focusing on these biblical marks.

The Positive Traits of the EM at KCPC

This section will follow the format of the previous section to show how the EM at KCPC is doing well in the areas of being a believing, loving, hoping, and patiently waiting community in relation to the KM. Coming of age, the EM at KCPC has matured much. The EM at KCPC is dedicated to preserving the Reformed faith that the KM values. There is a strong commitment in the EM to teach and to learn the Bible together. To achieve this goal, there are over thirty small group leaders in the EM who actually digest complex theological topics and teach them to their small groups. There is a training program for the leaders called “The Berean Meeting.” This was modeled after the Bereans found in the Bible, who they dedicated themselves to searching the Scriptures to match the teachings of the apostles (Acts 17:11). There are seminary-trained pastors who run the classes to ensure proper teaching. These small groups meet weekly as they study the Scripture thoroughly in hopes of training members to study the Bible on their own. The vision for this ministry is “to equip God’s people,” also modeling from the Bible (Eph 4:12). The EM takes this program and applies it to also teaching the KM children and youth. The majority of the staff is made up of EM volunteers. Korean Central’s EM has an established a reputation of taking theology seriously. Just as in the
KM, the EM at KCPC strives to become a believing community that desires to preserve its conservative heritage. This has become the pride and joy for the KM at KCPC.

Respecting the Presbyterian structure in the KM, the EM members of KCPC are submissive to the KM hierarchy and try their best not to undermine it. Under my lead as the head pastor of the EM, there currently are three ordained deacons who oversee fifteen appointed deacons in the EM. To oversee the EM, an elder from the session is appointed every year. Occasionally, frustrations arise due to lack of representation in the session; but for the most part, the EM leadership has been faithful in observing the Presbyterian model of governance in the church, and conflicts have been kept at a minimum. Unfortunately, this has not stopped EM leaders from becoming complacent and sometimes vociferous towards the appointed elder from the session, who is more than gracious to listen. Also, understanding the Presbyterian model and being a bilingual Korean American of the 1.5 generation, I have been able to mediate in most situations to help communicate issues before they get out of hand. In general, the EM follows the structure laid out by the church and by the Presbyterian belief system.

In the areas of worship, just like the KM, the EM has passionate and genuine worship experiences that inspire the congregation. Though the EM has fewer worship gatherings, limited to just one Sunday morning worship, much goes into preparing and implementing Gospel-driven worship. If the KM is marked by reverence in its worship, EM is marked by its sincerity. Not too much is given to appearance, as members of EM come dressed casually to worship. However, they openly clap during songs, raising their arms in praise, and interact authentically with one another through worship while
maintaining a heart of worship that is passionate and inspiring. Despite casual appearance, the EM’s dedication to solid biblical teachings and emphasis on the healing power of the Gospel reflect very much the KM’s message. In this way, the EM is also a believing community that desires to preserve faith in the unique EM way.

Though it was slow in developing, the EM has taken on the loving qualities of the KM here at KCPC. There are more servants up and coming in the EM who are willing to work side by side in serving the whole community at KCPC. Though the food is prepared for the most part by the KM, EM members actively help in serving and cleaning up after meals. As this takes place every Sunday, it is visibly encouraging to both KM and EM members to see people lovingly working together side by side. This has become a model for the KM/EM relationship, and the leaders of EM have adopted it to apply to working side by side in many different ministries of the church. Every year the entire church comes together to organize two events, where this cooperative model is applied: mission bazaar and scholarship bazaar. Both sides actively participate in preparing food, gathering sellable goods, and running the bazaar to raise money for missions and scholarships. Many plans are in the works to encourage more of these events that will provide collaborative venues where the KM and the EM can interact and grow in their love for each other.

The EM at KCPC consists of three major groups. One is college ministry, and the others are post-college working adults and married couples. Just as the KM has shown much love for the EM early on in ministry, the older members of EM are taking good care of the younger generations in the EM. The working adults lovingly provide many resources to the college group, and the college group lovingly serves in the Children’s Education
Department at the church. Recently, KCPC’s EM has been blessed with a third generation of Korean-American children. The EM is gracious and loving in incorporating them into EM worship, and many of its members take active part in running the Sunday school for them. The children worship with their parents in the EM, and we sing children’s praise songs together with them while emphasizing how much they are loved by the EM congregation. The desire is to pass on to the next generation the biblical mark of a loving church. The loving spirit that was learned from the KM now reaps fruit among the EM, as congregants have embraced it and are genuinely loving and serving one another. Though there is much room for improvement, as the EM grows in number and needs, slowly it is taking ownership in loving the church and its members, both in the KM and in EM.

Finally, there is a great sense of anxiety growing in the EM as congregants consider the future. After many years of coexisting with the KM, the EM at KCPC is asking what benefits there are in staying together. Though it is difficult, many leaders in the EM have embraced the desire to interdependently coexist with the KM at KCPC. This is evidently clear in the EM’s desire to be more effective in reaching out to the community surrounding the church. Realizing that the EM is better equipped for this, members of the EM have reached out to existing organizations in the local community and have invited the KM to participate in supporting these groups. Recently, the EM initiated a toy drive for a local orphanage and the amount of monetary gifts and the toys brought in by the KM encouraged both the KM and the EM congregations to see the benefits of working together. Annually, the KM and the EM come together for a joint worship to celebrate KCPC’s anniversary. As the KM and the EM work together to organize and implement the
activities of the day, the joint collaboration has proven effective and it gives rise to the hope that the multiple generations at KCPC can interdependently coexist.

As mentioned above, the EM has experienced a boom in the number of children being born into the ministry. When my family first arrived at KCPC, our two girls and two other babies were the only children in the EM. Now, there are over forty children, ranging from infants to middle school students attending EM worship. This is forcing EM parents to consider what sort of church we want for our children. We are realizing that our hope is for them to desire to worship together with us as a family. The EM members are beginning to see more clearly the desires the KM had originally when they lovingly started the EM with great hope twenty years ago. Though the EM ministry was funded solely by the KM when the EM began, the EM has grown to become financially independent. Due to a shortage in funds, the EM at KCPC a short while ago was not able to dream about its future. However, with God’s tremendous blessings, the EM is now able to support itself and also to support its future desire of providing for the children of both the EM and the KM. This will mean great undertaking from both sides. Many EM members are seriously considering and planning for their future as they consider what KCPC might look like in twenty years. Those who have endured together the many difficulties and have decided to stay at KCPC are hoping for a multigenerational church that will house the children, the parents, and grandparents beneath one roof.

As the KM and the EM at KCPC work together to take on the true biblical marks of the church—to be a believing, loving, hoping, and patiently waiting community—to realize a future of multiple generations interdependently coexisting, and as it applies the
Gospel radically to many Korean Central ministries, there is a deep desire and hope to serve as a model for other KAPC churches. There are many churches in the KAPC who feel at a loss not having working models of KM and EM interdependently coexisting. Observing the possibility of both sides serving together to do good works within the context of KM and EM coexisting at KCPC can serve as a valuable resource in hoping for their future as they also strive together in the true biblical marks through application of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their church.

Both the KM and the EM at KCPC realize they have not fully reached the fullness of these biblical marks. However, together the sides strive to include each other in future projects like developing a joint Christian Education to serve both ministries. Prayer requests are shared between the ministries, and many major issues concerning both are announced to both congregations. When members get baptized, they are interviewed collectively to make it clear to the new members that they are joining a church and not just the KM or EM. Once a year, the whole congregation gathers for an anniversary celebration to remind KCPC members of its different ministries. All these present emphases of togetherness is done for the sake of our future. There is definitely a familial feel to the church when events and ministries are shared, but this is not without struggles.

**Negative Traits**

This section will look at the negative traits of the KM and the EM. Essentially, these are areas where the KM and the EM need to grow in order to interdependently coexist with greater success as KCPC. Much care has to be given in discussing these traits, not to cast judgment but to objectively see how these traits affect their relationship.
More specifically, this section will examine how these negative traits hinder the establishment of the full of biblical marks as God’s Church at KCPC. It already has been established that both the KM and EM at KCPC possess certain marks of the biblical church as it strives to be a believing, loving, hoping, and patiently waiting community in hopes of achieving interdependent coexistence. The negative traits mentioned here do not negate the already existing marks, but they do hinder the ministries from seeing clearly how good those marks really are and how they function as the future of the church.

None of these issues are irreconcilable. The weak areas are nowhere near becoming serious enough for the EM and the KM to part ways. They simply are issues that need to be discussed openly to improve on the mutual desires to interdependently coexist. The negative traits, found within the KM and the EM, are only negative if they pull the ministries apart. If these negative traits can be viewed as opportunities for future improvement, dialoguing about the issues can be a tremendous tool in realizing God’s vision of harmony and unity here at KCPC. Such an approach can help to achieve the purity and the peace of the church, to help members assist and encourage one another to grow into the church God desires. As the KM and EM together focus on realizing the true marks of the church to be their end goal, applying the Gospel radically to the church to find healing in Christ, KCPC will move closer to becoming a better working model for KAPC churches to observe and follow in its hope of KM and EM interdependently coexisting.

The Negative Traits of the KM at KCPC

KCPC is not immune to the stereotypical KM perception of the EM being too young. The KM at KCPC still views the EM as being its children. This point is pervasive,
as it applies to various marks of the church. The KM, being overly protective and
sheltering, assumes the EM to be too young to have a mature faith of its own, so KM
members impose their expression of faith on the EM. For too many years at KCPC, rather
than allowing the EM to develop a faith expression of its own, the KM wanted the EM to
mirror its expression of faith without putting emphasis on the content of that faith. Rather
than being concerned with what they believe, the KM has been more concerned with how
the EM expresses faith. Overall, this has caused many distractions in KCPC and has kept
it from the fullness of becoming a truth-believing church.

Here are some clarifying examples. At KCPC there has been too much emphasis
on how members of EM dress for worship. I once was asked by a KM leader to direct the
EM congregation to dress better for church. He specifically requested dress shirt and
slacks for men and a modest dress or blouse and skirt for the women. Another area of
contention the KM has for EM members is their belief that the EM has an irreverent
approach to worship. The casual singing and the loud music with clapping and dancing is
so contrary to KM worship that it appears disrespectful to them. In the areas of prayer,
since there are no visible prayer meetings in the EM being held at church, it is assumed
that EM members do not pray. Within the KM’s realm of understanding, a personal daily
prayer life is not considered valid. At KCPC, the KM holds two times a year a week of
early-morning prayer worships, during the first week of January and the first week of
July. The worship is held entirely in Korean language and the time of worship is 6:00 a.m.
Since no EM members attend the worship, they are seen as being less spiritual.

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If all of these personal views being held were simply expressed by few individuals in the KM, they readily could be dismissed by the EM. However, this discontent in the areas of dress, worship expression, and prayer activity arrive as corrective directives from the KM leadership. This forces EM members to revert back to how they were treated as children in the church. The mark of being a believing church is focused on essential theology, the defining directive of that being the Gospel of Jesus Christ and not so much on a preferential expression of that faith. The church is called to conform to Christ rather than to cultural conformity. The KM demands non-essential, non-biblical mandates of faith from the EM. In pursuit of unity in a purity of faith, KCPC must rely solely on becoming a Bible-believing, Jesus-directed, Holy-Spirit-empowered community in order to apply the Gospel in effective ways for growth and foundation in the future. Emphasis on anything else is a distraction.

As seen in Part Two of this discussion, the early Church wrestled with such cultural distractions and it vowed to return to the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be most vital. The KM’s demands for conformity to Korean ways cloud the emphasis to mean this: to be KM is to be better Christians. The EM knows that this is not true. As covered in the previous section, the EM values the essence of KM’s faith in the Bible and in Jesus Christ. It values Reformed and conservative views. This demand to conform to Korean ways in order to express that theology deemphasizes the Gospel of Jesus Christ being central to faith and it must stop.

The second area where the KM needs to grow comes from a similar perspective of the EM being children and is in the area of being a loving church. Along with viewing the
EM as being too young, a lack of communication is a negative trait that plays a major role in the disruption of peace in the church. Often in the KM, the various committees and session meet to discuss matters that affect both the KM and the EM. Viewing the EM as children gives rise to the perception that mutual discussion is not needed. Since such communication culturally and linguistically is difficult for first-generation Koreans, the KM excludes the EM from important discussions that affect the entire church; and, a valuable perspective and contribution are lost as a result. When the decisions finally come down to the EM, it is either too late or too firmly embedded to have any say. The members of EM and its leaders consider this very unloving. When I was first hired as the EM pastor, none of the EM leaders or its members knew I was even a candidate. They thought I came to interview and not to start as their pastor. Though it took time for them to warm up to me, they felt very offended and unloved when it happened. This resulted in EM’s further difficulty to trust KCPC leadership and has taken much time to heal.

In this way, though the KM leadership may have meant well, a lack of communication expressed itself as a lack of love. Language barriers exacerbate the situation as both sides seek to avoid each other. Though I am often the mediator between the KM and EM, when decisions appear out of nowhere, I have a difficult time softening the blow. Many large and even small decisions are made in the KM with very little regards for the EM. Even though some decisions are small and seem insignificant, they are perceived as unloving and contribute to the tremendous and unnecessary drain on the KM/EM relationship at KCPC. The mark of a loving church that KCPC does show becomes diminished as the distraction of unnecessary miscommunication continues to
grow and to feed what appears to be disdain for EM. As the parent congregation, the KM must take the initiative to work better at communicating to the EM their desires and hopes, which at their source are based on love.

Finally, closely related to the previous section, the KM needs to stop making decisions for the future of EM without involving the EM. Desires cannot be realized together, if they are not hoped together. Whether it is to build a new addition to the building or revamping the Children’s Education Department, if something affects the future of both KM and EM, the KM needs to involve the EM in its discussion. Most recently, an ad-hoc committee was created at KCPC to discuss the future of the EM to consist of four KM elders and four EM deacons. This was in response to decisions being made without consulting the ministry that profoundly affected the future of that ministry. Hoping together and waiting patiently while working out the conflicts and struggles in the church is the true mark of a biblical church. Korean Central’s KM needs to do a better job of communicating the future vision it has for the EM, if KCPC is to solidify its bond as believers dream together for a future where the KM and the EM interdependently coexist.

The KM at KCPC has to do a better job of preparing the future leaders of the church in the EM. Rather than fighting over non-essentials, like expressions of faith rather than essence of faith, the KM needs to involve the EM in dealing with the serious and mature matters of the church. Leaders are mentored and discipled; they are not simply placed in position when the time comes. The EM leaders need to be given opportunities to fail rather than being sheltered and protected all the time. In order not to be children in leadership, they need the space to experience the consequences of their
own decisions. When the KM interrupts this dynamic through overprotection or holding on to leadership and responsibility it feels it can do better, this stunts the growth of EM adults to step up and take responsibility as they are being left behind in making decisions. Growing up is a progression and does not happen instantaneously due to physical age. The KM needs to empower the EM to participate and even make mistakes, so EM members can mature. Too busy treating the EM like children, sadly the KM also misses out on the wonderful opportunity of seeing the next generation come of age—in essence, the fruit of the KM’s hard work over the years. Also, taking a chance on the EM just may give new leadership a chance to succeed. If the KM sees the EM leadership bear fruit, this will increase trust. Despite this difficult dynamic, it is not too late as they both join hearts and minds to dream together a future where both the KM and EM stand arm in arm as mature Christians, interdependently coexisting under one roof to honor God.

The Negative Traits of the EM at KCPC

While the mistakes of the KM are sheltering the EM to a fault of stunting the next generation’s maturity, the mistakes of the EM are marked by apathy and passive attitudes. Not having been properly prepared to endure hardships and to face difficulties, the EM leaders at KCPC are getting tired and ready to resign. They have not passed through the fires of sacrifice to develop perseverance in the same way as the KM. Not willing to fight for ownership, EM leaders simply wait for something to happen to them rather than taking charge. Though their hope and desire is to interdependently coexist with the KM, tired of butting heads they are not sure how to move forward. Rather than seeking and forging paths on its own, the EM sits waiting for the KM to direct so it can either choose
to obey or to react. The EM has become inhibited and coy in its approach to ministry, and this is affecting all areas of the church.

In the area of becoming a truth-believing community, the EM has resolved to become ingrown in its faith. EM leaders and members complain much about the KM’s cultural demands and use them as excuses not to bring others to the church. Certain areas of faith, like evangelism and missions, have become cold in the EM. Once during a joint meeting of KM and EM leaders, one EM deacon asked if the name “Korean Central Presbyterian Church” could be changed and was rejected firmly by a KM elder. Rather than pressing or explaining further as to why, mainly the difficulties in bringing non-Koreans to church due to the name, EM leaders chose to avoid further conflict as the goal; so, the topic did not come up again for a very long time. Recently, in my discussion with a member of the session, I brought up the topic once again and he said, “I thought you guys didn’t want it bad enough. I just assumed it was not that important to the EM.”

Internally, the EM leaders can talk passionately among themselves concerning important theological issues that matter to the beliefs in the EM; but when it comes to fighting for it with the KM leaders, they become passive and would rather not deal with the KM. The EM leaders and members are very reluctant to approach the KM on issues and only wait until a situation becomes unbearable. An example of this is the passive response of the EM as many cultural demands are put on the EM by the KM. Rather than discussing the issues, fearing confrontations and conflicts, the EM leaders avoid or simply ignore the demands. When asked again by the KM, by then it is too late and

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5 Session member, interview by author, San Francisco, CA, November 21, 2011.
conflict rises to a heightened level—thus leading to further avoidance. The EM needs to become more assertive, bold, and passionate about what it believes to be true. Always remembering to speak the truth in love, EM members need to embrace maturity and stop acting like children by avoiding difficulties and rejecting suffering. They need to express boldly and objectively to the KM what the EM collectively believes. If Korean Central’s KM were to see the EM being willing to sacrifice for what it believes, the KM just might begin respecting the EM as entering its adult phase of ministry. For the KM, maturity is inextricably linked with sacrifice.

EM members need to learn to confront the KM with firm conviction and belief regarding all the things they say behind their backs. This lack of honesty comes across as a “yes” not really meaning “yes” and a “no” not existing at all (cf. Jas 5:12; Mt 5:37) and appears as passive-aggressive and apathetic to the KM. Ultimately, this avoidance and not caring has direct implications in the way EM members treat those in the KM. I have had to rebuke EM leaders many times for cynically undermining the KM’s good intentions. While speaking openly to one another about the KM, EM leaders will avoid and grumble behind their backs. It is highly contagious and unloving, trickles throughout the EM ministry, and hinders growth.

Where it affects the EM the most is in its reluctance to sit down together with the KM to objectively discuss and hope for the future of KCPC. Being passive and apathetic, the EM has grown impatient with the KM and avoids discussing difficult issues with the KM as grown mature adults. Despite how they feel about being perceived as children, to react this way only affirms the fallacy to the KM that the EM is not ready to take on
mature issues concerning the future of the church. I have learned through experience that through persistence and lovingly explaining the EM concerns, the KM members are not as unreasonable as they seem. It takes great patience and perseverance in communicating with the KM. This is exactly the area of growth where the EM can learn to embrace sacrifice for its own spiritual growth and edification and for the sake of the church realizing the hope of interdependently coexisting.

Closing Thoughts

I have learned through experience at KCPC to distinguish between what is essential and what is peripheral in establishing a healthy church in the context of KM and EM striving to interdependently coexist and minister together. My job as mediator between the two ministries is to highlight the things we do well in both KM and EM while working through conflictive issues. The peripheral cannot negate the essential. The intentions of the KM and EM at KCPC are not evil and destructive. They are simply misunderstood. With proper communication and mature discussions, these can be overcome.

It is vital for KMs and EMs not to be overcome by the peripheral, such as cultural demands or passive responses to them and the emotions that result from these dynamics. These are distractions and interruptions to the mutually held dream of interdependently coexisting. Since KCPC is far from its goal, efforts need to be more deliberate and intentional and thoroughly explained. It is hard work, but it is good work if the two sides are together in striving towards realizing the true biblical marks of the church: to become a believing, loving, hoping, and patiently community that seeks to apply the Gospel of Jesus Christ to take them into their preferred future.
CHAPTER 7
NOT TOO LATE FOR TRUE INTERDEPENDENCE

The problem in the KAPC between the KM and EM has been an erroneous precept of independence. Both the KM and EM limit their thinking by assuming independence only can be achieved through physical separation. So much focus has been put on conflicts and potential conflicts, there is very little consideration given to the benefits or potential benefits of staying together. This chapter seeks to look beyond any reactive fights for independence and to exhort believers in the Korean-American Church to have hope in God and to model their individual and communal lives after him.

Rather than pessimistically approaching the ongoing KM/EM conflict, the need is to recognize the potential for harmony in interdependent coexistence. In this hope, both parties involved will have to put aside their differences and come together to discuss difficult matters. They must commit to long, arduous dialogues to ensure total disclosure. If coexistence is desired, many critical changes must be considered and implemented. Boldness, courage, and faith come from setting one’s sights on God as the Church realizes the fulfillment of his promise through Christ. Establishing a multigenerational, coexisting church is the vision for a healthy future of the Korean-American Church. To this end, God
has provided many resources in the KAPC that the KM and EM have not tapped successfully. To negatively think it is too late only blinds the vision from being seen. This chapter will highlight and emphasize the resources that are available for those churches wishing to interdependently coexist into the future as a unified Korean-American Church.

**Hidden Hopes: Visionaries**

My genuine desire is for the members of the EM, who have chosen to stay with the KM to want to interdependently coexist together. There are innumerable benefits to be had if the two ministries can accept each other and join hands in honoring God through the work of the ministries. It is clear that God has moved the first generation of Korean Americans to plant many churches throughout North America. Whatever their intentions, as Christians, it is important to believe God meant it for good. The apostle Paul ensures this perspective by saying, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Rom 8:28). In his goodness, God has blessed Korean-American churches to produce many godly Korean-American Christians of the 1.5 and second generations. Chapter 2 discussed how many EM members are in the Korean-American Church, because they have made a conscious decision to be there. No one coerced or dragged them through the doors. They walked in on their own, hoping to find a community in which to relate with others and personally grow. In light of what many frustrated EM pastors and members who reject the possibility of staying with the KM as an option, I want to say that the conflicts between the KM and the EM have not yet reached that critical point. To leave and separate is too deterministic. Once the EM leaves, it will be very difficult to return.
In my recent visit to a church that has broken ties with its KM and has moved out to become an independent church, I asked one of its members what he thought about the decision. Having had time to reflect, he questioned the decision and thought perhaps they were too rash in leaving. He reflected that while they were with the KM, due to the many conflicts it seemed urgent to leave the KM and become independent; however, now that they are independent, the many struggles and conflicts they are currently wrestling through do not appear to be too different from the ones they faced when they were together with the KM.\(^1\) It was a tremendous disappointment for him as he considered whether they should have stuck it out with the KM. There are many members, both in the KM and the EM, who feel both the tension to function independently as competent adults yet desire to be together in unity and harmony as is the custom of the Korean-American family. In such a volatile situation, to consider leaving without having fully exhausted all options is dangerous. While a time to leave eventually may come, that time is definitely not now. Rather, it is more important to see what God wants to do in both the KM and the EM through its current relationship. It could be that the friction felt now is one way God is strengthening both sides to confront the future, much in the way “iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another” (Pr 27:17).

The 1.5 Generation

There are visionaries who thoughtfully have considered what it means for the generations to stay together in the local church. Within many KMs in KAPC, there are those of the 1.5 generation who have returned to the church. For whatever reasons, they

\(^1\) O. Lee, interview by author, Los Angeles, October 31, 2011.
choose to be in the KM but are powerful advocates of the EM. Many of them are my age, fast approaching fifty, and feel too old to be in the EM yet a bit too young to be in the KM. The church needs to tap into them as a resource for they will one day be the leaders of the KM. They can serve to advocate and support the EM’s independence yet assist this group in staying harmoniously together with the KM. The united vision of desiring a multigenerational church where KM and EM interdependently coexist can be discussed among these visionaries of the church. Being multicultural, the 1.5 generation of Korean-American Christians have the necessary capacity to understand the needs of both KM and EM. For this reason, those in the 1.5 generation need to partner with KM and EM leaders and conscientiously play the intermediaries. Every congregation in the KAPC has these members. The Korean-American Church is not tapping into their giftedness, because current leaders are not seeking to transition the Korean-American Church into the future.

At KCPC, when I approach these members of the 1.5 generation in the KM and ask for their opinions on matters of KM/EM relations, their eyes light up. They welcome the invitation to converse. I am always encouraged to hear that many have thought deeply about the matter but have had neither the opportunity nor the forum in which to share and engage in this healing ministry of restoration and reconciliation. It is vital to include them.

In many KAPC churches, there are KM senior pastors who genuinely yearn for the EM to be in their church. The survey presented in Part One makes it abundantly evident that the desire is there. The question of how to share and develop this vision is where this project intersects the issue. Presently, many senior pastors simply do not know how to face the ensuing concerns and discussions about the future in a way that includes
the 1.5 generation. Not only do these unique members, who have one leg in the KM and one leg in the EM, need to be included from the inception but their unique perspective needs to be present through every step in the process. Communication is critical. In this way, transparency and inclusion is the key. If EM pastors were to take the initiative and time to develop a trusting and caring relationship with their senior pastors, they would discover valuable advocates in achieving common goals for the church. Along with the senior pastor, the EM pastors must reach out to the elders of the church. It is the responsibility of EM pastors to foster good relations with them and encourage the leaders in the EM to do the same. While EM pastors may see first-generation members of the church as a hopeless cause for communication, a relationship with 1.5-generation leaders may seem more achievable, as both have experienced similar treatment at the hands of the KM. Solidarity can develop, which breeds trust and an avenue for healthy exhortation.

The EM and its pastors and leaders need to stop being isolationists in addressing matters of the church. In this way, they only mirror the mistakes of the KM leadership who neglect the need to openly discuss the future of the church. The discussion of independence or interdependence is not to be done alone. It is a church matter and not exclusively an EM or KM matter. There are visionaries and advocates in the local church who are cheering for the EM to succeed. It is important also to include them in the discussion to share what they are cheering for and ultimately what they are hoping for, as they are a primary resource in helping to bond the two sides together or to help achieve an amicable release for both to go their separate ways. Members of the 1.5 generation who are still present in the Korean-American Church understand cultural dynamics and
personal sacrifice within them. They are God’s gift and a valuable resource to help the Korean-American Church into this first step of building up the Body of Christ.

Ministry Partners: First-Generation Leaders in the Denomination

It is a mistake for the EM pastors and leaders to think that they are alone in their struggles in the KAPC. God has provided many progressive-thinking, first-generation pastors who are eagerly sympathetic to the needs of the EM in the KAPC. For significant changes to occur in the local churches, policies eventually need to be amended at the denominational level. The pastors who are wrestling with the issues of KM and EM relations need to speak up in the denomination. The NAP, the presbytery of EM pastors, needs to be more proactive in expressing the overriding concerns of EMs. These leaders need to link arms together to address the many urgent issues concerning the future of the second-generation EM churches.

With the visionary first-generation KM pastors, the KAPC denomination was able to form an NAP in hopes of developing unity between the KM and the EM. The hope was that the NAP would figure out what is best for the many EMs in the KAPC. The mistake has been to have this discussion take place exclusively within the NAP. This passive approach was not the intention of the first-generation visionaries of the KAPC at the time.

Ten years later, KAPC now has lost its grip on the NAP as many NAP members now are hoping to become pastors of independent second-generation churches. The discussions concerning the KM and the EM relationship have to be revived, and the original visionaries need to be invited back to share their visions and hopes they had in organizing the NAP. NAP members seem to be waiting for the directives to come from
the denomination rather than involving themselves in the process. I fear that the same broken dynamics that plague many local churches exists among the leaders in the KAPC.

Whether the initiative comes from the denomination of the KAPC or from the EM pastors of the NAP, many concerns of the EM need to come to the fore and be addressed. The fear of it being too late cannot discourage the needed discussions to take place. The status quo is dangerous as many EMs are considering leaving the KM and going independent or its pastors leaving the EMs to plant new independent churches. I know of conscientious KM pastors who deeply care for the future of EMs in the KAPC and who are willing to be the first to step forward to risk change. Sadly, as in the local church, there is currently no forum to discuss this openly and productively. Tapping into the ministry partners present in the first generation is possible but requires that either the KAPC or the NAP accommodate this need for a forum to give voice to the concerns of the EM and the future generations of Korean-American Christians.

**Courage to Gather Together and Persevere**

Ten years ago, the issues concerning the KM and the EM relations were not as urgent and complex. When the NAP was first formed, there were only five EM pastors in attendance. Many delegates of EM pastors were missing and still are missing in the discussion. What was once a minor concern now has become a major issue that no one wants to tackle. What was left to EM pastors to address, they passively ignored; and now, the issues have become too complicated to be addressed in the General Assembly of the KAPC. The reason for the silence concerning the future of EM in the KAPC is not because the issue is unimportant but because it is so important and the task seems too daunting;
rather being addressed, it is being ignored. However, the really frightening prospect is that it only will become more complicated as time passes. Since KM/EM issues have been ignored for so long, there is great fear in even gathering to discuss them.

It is going to take great courage to come together for the sole purpose of exploring the future of EMs in the KAPC. Old wounds will have to be opened up in the spirit of reconciliation so that there can be genuine repentance and forgiveness. This is necessary to regain the trust, love, and respect that have been lost in KM/EM struggles. It is not too late to start dreaming together about the possible future of KM and EM interdependently coexisting under one roof. It is not too late to learn from the past by sharing the burdens and projecting a positive image for the future. It is not too late for the EM pastors who currently struggle for independence to go back to their EMs to share honestly with their congregation the issues at hand so that their concerns can be heard.

The EM pastors will need the support of their church to start a journey together with their congregation to encourage continual discussions concerning the future. Too many EM pastors choose to wrestle on their own about these matters rather than share the burden throughout the ministry. Sharing the burden does not mean being complacent, judgmental, or gossipy; rather, it means gathering in the spirit of building up the Body of Christ, so there can be a future for many EMs in the KAPC. The task at hand may seem monumental, yet gathering courage to come to the table together and embracing perseverance to work through the fears and pains of securing the future will help lay to rest many false assumptions that have kept many EMs and their pastors from asking meaningful questions about their future in the KAPC.


**Boldness to Change**

The first step to change is to sense the urgency. This heightened sense brings about bold actions toward change. John P. Kotter in his book, *Leading Change*, provides an eight-stage process of creating change. In order to effectively bring about change, Kotter says that the first thing a leader has to do is establish a sense of urgency, and one way to do this is to create a crisis. Roger Fisher and William Ury in *Getting to Yes* say the greatest barrier against this change is feared assumptions. This dynamic is present in the Korean-American context. Many of the feared assumptions among the KAPC’s English Ministry pastors arise from past encounters and struggles with the KM. The tension caused by the urgency of growing and maturing the EM against the resistance of the KM not relinquishing control and not empowering its leaders have burned out many pastors. Jumping from EM to EM, in search of the ideal setting for realizing their vision, yet running into the same issues time and time again has jaded their hopes. Rather than perpetuating these disappointing new starts in hopes of quick relief, the change has to occur from deep within.

Resistance will be met wherever they go. History has proven that ministry is hard. From the beginning of time, as God desired to gather his people for his assembly, there have been oppositions and struggles. At the time of Exodus, in frustration Moses cried out to the Lord, “What am I to do with these people?” (Ex 17:4). Though God provided for them time and time again, Israelites constantly wanted to be back in Egypt where they were once slaves. God’s vision to gather his people swims against the immaturity of his people, who often

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3 Ibid., 43-44.
desire to abandon the hard road into God’s Promised Land. Given the choice, people often opt for what is familiar simply because it seems easier. Giving up and going one’s own way is in human nature. To conclude that it is too late for the KM and EM to stay together is to take this seemingly easy path. However, as seen earlier in those EMs who have left and still have similar problems, a premature exit may not be the most fruit-bearing option.

It is not too late to realize the hope of KM/EM harmoniously coexisting together in one church. The many ill perceptions of KM and EM can be dismantled, if given effort and time. It is worth the fight to see changes occur within KM/EM relationships to realize God’s vision for multigenerational congregations interdependently coexisting. To part ways due to cultural differences or fear of losing identity is too hasty. The fights have been fought on the wrong fronts. Demands for change have been unreasonably imposed. Changes must occur from within their hearts first, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ can do that. As pioneers moving into uncharted territories of doing multigenerational church, the first and the second generations of Korean-American Christians need to desire change from the status quo and boldly embrace change, even though they do not have God’s sovereign perspective to see how this might happen.

As EM pastors consider their current positions in the Korean-American churches, their decision to stay or go should not be determined by how difficult the battle is or the severity of resistance to change. If there is certainty that God still is working in the church and that this work is not finished, then they are called to stand their ground and fight for unity rather than to break away. If change is dependent on the urgency or unbearable circumstances, then they must fight and pray for courage to face persecution
before abandoning their mission as leaders. Commitment to change is to commit to suffering while enduring to wait on the Lord to see that change realized.

The Gospel of Jesus compels the EM pastors to do this. To bring about change in humanity, Jesus endured the most excruciating pain of rejection from God. If the measure of suffering for realizing the hopes and dreams of the multigenerational future for the churches of KAPC depends on being rejected by people yet received by God, that suffering is immeasurably smaller than what the Savior had to endure on the cross. Essentially, he is the model for EM leadership. Jesus understood that change can be painful and its prospect can be frightening—as seen in his fervent prayer at Gethsemane, in the face of weak flesh but a prevailing spirit (cf. Mt 14:32-38)—but if the change means realizing God’s desire for the church, its leaders must stand and fight for restoration and edification. This resolve and conviction must come from faith that hopes in God rather than in men. It is not too late to see transformation, if God is doing the changing. This is a radical call that only can be attained by looking to Christ. Paul David Tripp in his book, Instrument in the Redeemer’s Hands, says that deciding to become an instrument of change means to go back to seeing Jesus who came into this world with an agenda and a calling to change hearts. As an agent of change, he says the Christ follower’s call is to point to Christ and “put flesh and blood on who Christ is and what he came to do.”

In most KM/EM relations, the biggest struggle is over control. The KM says to the EM, “It is too soon to take over the reins of ministry.” Meanwhile, the EM screams, “It is too late. We want control now.” This debate has come up numerous times at KCPC. Every

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time it does surface, I asked the EM leaders, “What will you do with this control? What is it that they are doing that is preventing the EM from fulfilling its dreams?” The surprising answer to these questions is not that the KM is preventing the EM from doing things; rather, the EM often feels violated, as KM suggests things to be done a certain way. EM leaders at KCPC slowly are discovering that, in the end, things often are done the way the EM had hoped. They just did not like being told how to do it. Having a heart of hostility, rather than convincing the KM that the EM is capable of handling things, battle over control ensues and both KM and EM are unable to celebrate their accomplishments. Now at KCPC, when the KM leaders give suggestions, EM leaders have learned to say, “Thank you,” and proceed as planned or make changes if the suggestions make sense. In this way, the battle is no longer about having control but about achieving God’s will for the church. Even in failure, there is no blame placed because consideration has been given to both sides. In the end, there is harmony and celebration.

There has to be a bold change of heart both in the KM and EM in KAPC churches. If the battle front is over control, the fight will perpetuate. God never rewards the Church for fighting for control; rather, humility is what he desires to sow into the human heart (2 Kgs 22:19; Is 2:11; Lk 14:11; Phil 2:8). If hearts can boldly embrace humility and change from being against one another to being for one another, the Korean-American Church will realize its full potential and the gifts that God has given it to reflect his desire and hope. Battles fought on mistaken fronts only cause division and pain. However, if the KM and the EM can unite and fight from a unified front, laboring to realize the multigenerational interdependent coexisting church, then the fruits of this battle will result in building a
loving Church that can endure for many generations to come. What is sown today in the Korean-American Church will be spiritual food for future generations.

**Faith to Hope**

Leading a predawn prayer meeting one Saturday morning at KCPC, I asked one of the KM deaconesses to pray for the EM. In her heartfelt prayer, she asked for faith and desire for God’s glory to be seen in and through the EM. Then she proceeded to say something that really moved me. She prayed, “God, we want to work together so we can leave the next generation a peaceful and loving church for them to come and worship in.”

Being a multigenerational church means retaining the faith and dedication of the former generation and passing it on to the next. God commanded the Israelites to remember his Word and to teach them to generations to come (Dt 6:7). After major events like crossing over Jordan River into the Promised Land, God ordered them to pile stones so that the future generations would recall what God had done for them (Jo 4:9). These serve as testimonies of God’s faithfulness and his everlasting love for his people.

When I was visiting my parents, at their church I witnessed something that assured me of God’s desire for this interdependent coexistence. On Sundays, my parents take their grandchildren to church with them. Their routine is set, as they escort them into the children’s sanctuary and leave them while they go to the KM worship. As we made our way back to pick them up after worship, I saw my nephew and niece run to their grandparents in a big embrace. Then they proceeded to show them all the things they had learned in their Sunday school. There followed more hugs and talk of Jesus and his love.

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6 Deaconess Cho, predawn prayer meeting at KCPC, San Francisco, CA, July 2002.
I thought to myself, “How wonderful it is for them to have grandparents who love them so much that they desire for them to know Christ. When they grow up, they will remember going to church with their grandparents and learning about Jesus.”

Inspired by this, I returned to my church, KCPC, and focused all efforts to bring the KM and the EM together to begin a dialogue. Rather than presenting KM and EM positions, which has not worked before and only led to further conflicts, the leadership of the church has formed an ad-hoc committee that will objectively hold discussions concerning the future of the church. The committee consists of four KM elders and four ordained EM deacons. In the past, the discussion only occurred in the session among KM elders. Occasionally, I was invited to present the EM’s case. However, this time the EM leaders thanked the KM elders for their loving sacrifices and respectfully requested to meet about a joint future together. Both the KM and the EM leaders were given three books to read: Hertig’s *Cultural Tug of War*; Cha, Kang, and H. Lee’s edited source entitled *Growing Healthy Asian American Churches,*” and S. Kim’s *Faith of Our Own.* The intended goal was for both sides to be informed about our past and our present to lay down the hostility in loving understanding of one another and start the process of dreaming together for a future. The books have been well received. Though the first meeting has not taken place yet, the leaders of KM and EM already are talking in friendly terms discussing things they have not talked about before concerning the hardships and struggles they have faced together. They agree that the formation of their committee is monumental for KCPC, given nearly two decades of silence. Both the KM and the EM realize the importance of this meeting, and they are praying hard in preparation.
The hope of the KM and EM in the KAPC interdependently coexisting today will have a profound effect on the generations to come. If the KM and EM can come together to overcome this hurdle of coexisting in harmony, there will be a testimony to be told. If things proceed as they are now, if the two sides cannot reconcile and EMs continue to decide to leave Korean-American churches in bitterness, this will mar their future testimony; their legacy will be disunity and disharmony. This is what the Korean-American children of today will remember and inherit in the Korean-American Church of tomorrow. The desire to stay or leave cannot and should not be shortsighted. Even the decision to separate an EM from a KM should be made mutually with blessings from both sides after having resolved many outstanding issues. Regardless the ultimate decision, a better approach for making such decisions has to take place for the sake of future generations.

There needs to be a deeper consideration in both the KM and EM in KAPC churches regarding the legacy they desire to leave for the future generation. I am not proposing that all Korean Americans have to stay at the church where they grew up; however, I am advocating the importance of a legacy of faith and unity that needs to be passed on from generation to generation. Certainly, the churches in the KAPC will look very different in fifty or even one hundred years. The KM and the EM in the KAPC must consider seriously the choices that now stand before them. Whatever the decision, it will have a big impact in the legacy they leave behind. It either will be the legacy of peace and unity, under one roof or not, or the legacy of spirit of division that cannot withstand the pressure of diversity in the church. There needs to flow faith that comes from God to hope for the future. The KM and the EM in KAPC churches need to work not just side by
side but inextricably together in developing a legacy that seeks the Lord and his desire for peace and harmony versus division and dissention. Rather than fighting against each other, they need to build a united front and fight together to preserve God’s Church for his glory. To have the generations joining hands to realize a multigenerational congregation interdependently coexisting in honor of God and his glory is a hope worth fighting for—even if an EM ultimately leaves, it will be a mutual KM/EM decision in which both sides can bless each other in their respective futures. It is a legacy worthy to be passed down to the future generations. They will see that the Gospel of Jesus Christ prevailed in the Korean-American Church rather than culture or language—or worse, a prideful struggle for power.
CHAPTER 8
ROAD TO RECOVERY: GOD’S WAY

Paul McCartney of The Beatles wrote a song called The Long and Winding Road that goes like this:

The long and winding road
That leads to your door
Will never disappear
I’ve seen that road before.
It always leads me here,
Leads me to your door. . . .

Crying for the day.
Why leave me standing here,
Let me know the way.†

What lies ahead for the KM and the EM of KAPC is this “long and winding road,” full of rough terrain and a journey full of tears. Having coasted downhill in silence for so long, it will take tremendous boldness, courage, strength, and faith to get back to realizing the Church God desires. Rather than rushing to find quick solutions, we must first remember the Word spoken by God to his people, Israel: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord” (Is 55:8). God’s way of restoration always leads

to joy and celebration. When God rebuilt the fallen walls of his city through Nehemiah, revival returned to Israel. Nehemiah proclaimed to God’s people, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh 8:10). When God’s strength is discovered in reconciliation, there is much joy and celebration to be found.

This chapter will present a road to recovery according to God’s way of restoring his Church and apply it to the KM and EM in the KAPC churches, as they seek together his pathway to revival. Luke reports what happened in the early Church when revival came to them: “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching,” “fellowship,” “breaking of bread,” “prayers,” “generous hearts,” “praising God,” holding “all things in common,” and daily increase in number (Acts 2:42-47). It is clear that God is at the center of revival. He brings it to the Church, and he restores it to the fullest. His timing and methods cannot be bottled; they are prayed for and waited upon. In his time and way, Christians in the KAPC must patiently wait on God and pray for his restoration to come and revive the Church. This involves bold risk to engage in honest dialogues, denominational directives to support talks, a challenge to the laity, and institutional structures that encourage multigenerational patience.

**Dialogues**

Dialogues need to start simultaneously on two fronts. It needs to happen at a denominational level and also in the particular churches that have both KM and EM. At the denominational level, KM and EM pastors need to come together to start the discussion. Relationships among pastors tend to be superficial and even harbor competitive feelings. Before meaningful dialogue can take place between the first and the second generations of
Korean-American pastors, they need to take time to get to know one another. This can be done through shared testimonies between the KM and the EM pastors concerning their struggles. Given the gravity of the issues concerning the future of KAPC, dialogue cannot start from superficial relationships. Before any dialogue begins, there has to be camaraderie established among the pastors to know that they are all on the same side. Beginning the dialogue in the currently contentious environment, the talks would gravitate towards blaming and hurtful accusations. Factions would develop and the groups would take positions of “us against them.” Such battle of positioning would lead to further divisions and endanger relationships. Establishing a safe and comforting environment is necessary to break the tension that everyone senses and fears. This can be accomplished by focusing on shared concerns rather than focusing on solutions early on in the discussion, which causes sides to take a position rather than working together.

It is just as important to have similar dialogues to begin simultaneously in the local churches. The leaders of KM and EM need to come together to share their stories and their burdens. They also need to be made aware that similar discussions concerning future generations are going on at the denominational level. What is important in initiating dialogue in the local church is to give opportunities to remember and to celebrate the many shared victories and experiences that historically have strengthened their church. In this way, Mark Lau Branson in *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations* advocates the

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3 Heitler, *From Conflict to Resolution*, 25.
Appreciative Inquiry model for churches.\(^4\) The goal is to establish an atmosphere of hope and aspiration. Rather than becoming task-oriented, dialoguing affords the group to dream together the possibilities for a better future.\(^5\) This method will be discussed in detail later in this chapter; but for now, it is important to mention how personal testimonies celebrating the positive gifts and past victories can be a valuable asset to KM/EM discussions moving forward.

Recently, at the General Assembly of the KAPC, three representatives from the NAP gave a stirring testimony of their experience as EM pastors serving in the KAPC.\(^6\) Rather than pointing fingers or faulting any sides, the testimonies focused on how much the EMs have matured and how they have received much encouragement from the first generation of Korean-American pastors.

In essence, they acknowledged the legacy of the past and how it has helped to provide a foundation for the present and potential future. The presentation also focused on much potential both KM and EM have to offer to KAPC churches. Moving stories of struggles they have overcome in their churches provided a foundation for the necessary dialogues to take place among both the KM and EM pastors in the denomination. This also needs to happen in the local churches; but if this process of Appreciative Inquiry can begin at the denominational level first, it will trickle down to the local church as KM and EM pastors take it back to their churches.


\(^5\) Ibid., 23.

Conflict-Resolution Strategies

Many conflicts that have arisen in KAPC churches need to be resolved. The conflicts between the two generations mostly persist between the leaders of the KM and the EM. Often the congregation is unaware of the struggles that go on at the top. As shepherds and pastors, our role is to protect the flock at all cost. Jesus said that a good shepherd will go as far as laying down his life for the sheep (cf. Jn 10:11). Currently, in the KAPC, many EM pastors are considering departing from their roles as EM pastors in hopes of planting their own churches. Though the idea is exciting—and the EM congregation may support it—if there is no consent or blessing from the leadership, mainly the KM, the split will end up hurting the flock both in the KM and EM. Paul repeatedly told the Church to practice the spirit of unity in keeping the peace (Rom 15:5; Eph 4:3). He reminds the Body of Christ that God has given the Church the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18). Part of protecting the sheep is to focus on the ministry of reconciliation. EM pastors cannot preach forgiveness and reconciliation among congregants and not engage in it at a leadership level without embracing hypocrisy. Conflicts need to be resolved among the leaders, and reconciliation must be seen by the congregation. Otherwise, the conflict between the leaders of the KM and the EM inevitably will hurt the flock by leading them down a path towards bitterness.

For effective resolution of conflicts and paving the way to reconciliation, there has to be some ground rules set for the protection of all parties and in order to begin the process of healing. First, in order to reach conflict resolution one must abandon posturing for position. In the Church when conflicts arise, there is no winner or loser in the end. As the
Body of Christ, the Bible reminds Christians that if one part is wounded, the whole body hurts (1 Cor 12:26). The goal is not to win but to reach reconciliation for the purpose of maintaining and promoting unity. Positioning only will cause the sides to lose sight of what the real concerns are. Fisher and Ury write: “The basic problem in a negotiation lies not in conflicting positions, but in the conflict between each side’s needs, desires, concerns, and fears.” Posturing for power and position only hurts the discussion and prevents healing the real issues. In the Presbyterian model of governance, the session is the ruling body and the church is to come under its authority. This is the arena in which honest discussion, healing of core issues, and corporate conflict resolution are meant to take place. Within this structure, conflicts seldom reach resolution when posturing takes place. Christians must first practice humility and abandon taking positions in an effort to understand one another. As discussed in Chapter 6, before facing conflicts, in humility the parties must consider the needs of others to be more important than their own (Phil 2:3-4)

Second, in resolving conflicts, one must be careful in objectively identifying the problem rather than perceiving personal attacks. Very often, in discussing issues between the KM and the EM, the focus remains on how hurt or offended one is concerning the tone of the discussion rather than on the actual issues. Here, Fisher and Ury also provide very helpful advice in avoiding this danger. They state that people will hold their position even when they know it might not serve them well in the end simply to not appear as backing down. To deal with this psychological barrier, they suggest “putting yourself in

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7 Fisher and Ury, Getting to Yes, 40.
8 Book of Order, sect. 8, art. 1 – art. 6.

Before furthering personal attacks, they say to try to understand where they are coming from. They also point out that “face-saving,” though it is often misinterpreted as being derogatory, is helpful in reaching reconciliation. They say, “Face-saving involves reconciling an agreement with principle and with the self-image of the negotiators.”

This means that the parties involved focus on the points that are being made by the person rather than expressing how one feels about them. The goal of “face-saving” is not to release the parties from shame but to legitimize their stands by returning the discussion to the issues and coming to an agreement. When emotions go unchecked and things are taken personally, it is difficult to stay objective. Both the KM and the EM need to learn to differentiate between issues being discussed rather than being overcome by emotions and reacting against how what is being makes them feel. At the same time, much caution is needed in addressing one another. There has to be respect for the distinct cultures and rules of engagement and boundaries need to be kept. Parties cannot lose sight of the fact that Christians are called to love one another (Jn 13:34). Above all, this is the most important parameter for safe discussion.

Finally, in entering discussions to resolve conflicts, both sides need to broaden their options. This eliminates the danger of thinking there is but one correct way to resolving a certain conflict. Being open-minded and seeing different possibilities once again involves humility. If the objective is to find resolution, it matters very little who came up with what or whose idea was rejected. There is nothing more frustrating than

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9 Fisher and Ury, Getting to Yes, 23.

10 Ibid., 29.

11 Ibid., 65.
arguing with someone who suffers from tunnel vision. Fisher and Ury suggest multiplying options by looking specifically and broadly.\textsuperscript{12} Though the hierarchical structure in the Korean-American churches leaves little room for creativity or objections to an idea, both sides need to consider that there may be multiple options in resolving conflicts.

In addressing conflicts in a Korean-American church, often empathy is greatly lacking. Empathy is an aspect of love and helps to preserve peace and unity. For this reason, Paul said, “Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited” (Rom 12:15-16). In many of the meetings at KCPC, whether it be between KM and EM or just among EM leaders, we are good at expressing how something makes us feel while paying very little attention to how others are feeling.

As both the KM and the EM come together in hopes of resolving conflicts, they must boldly risk letting down their guards and come to the table of discussion with perseverance, knowing that they are fighting against the conflict and not each other. Rather than posturing to take a position, they need to first establish that they are on the same side trying to resolve a conflict and not to fix one another’s cultural idiosyncrasies. Also, both sides need to not take things personally but stay focused and objective on the issues rather than on the person presenting ideas. Finally, with open-minded humility, both sides need to take into consideration the options presented rather than proceeding with personal agendas. In this way, empathetically both the KM and EM can lovingly achieve reconciliation as they resolve conflicts together.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 66.
There is an interpersonal conflict management tool—first developed by R. R. Blake and J. S. Mouton in 1965, refined by Kenneth W. Thomas in 1976, and then further honed by Ralph H. Kilmann—that is useful in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of conflict resolution styles.\(^{13}\) This tool is called the Thomas-Kilmann instrument and identifies five different styles one uses to manage conflicts: avoiding, accommodating, forcing, compromise, and collaboration or problem solving.\(^{14}\) Recognizing the different styles helps to understand that conflict in itself is not evil; rather, the emphasis is placed on how to manage through the strengths and the weakness of these different styles. Through answering a series of survey questions, the results show the individual’s preferred conflict management style by their strengths. For example, if the score is high on avoiding and low on forcing, it shows that the person prefers to avoid conflict rather than confront. I have used this tool for myself, and it proved to be very helpful. It shows what one’s strength is and where one’s weakness lies in managing conflicts. It was helpful in understanding how I must appear to others when confronting conflicts. The ideal is to raise the “collaboration or problem solving” style and to reduce the “avoiding.”\(^{15}\)

Utilizing this tool to understand how the sides react and manage conflicts will be helpful in charting through the difficult task of reaching reconciliation. Making this resource available to KAPC pastors and church leaders will help them to better understand themselves and one another in dealing with conflict. Often, in the midst of


\(^{15}\) Avruch, Black, and Scimecca, *Conflict Resolution*, 85-87.
conflict, people are not aware of how they are managing or reacting to others. As pastors, if we encourage congregants to resolve conflicts among themselves and live in harmony, it is hypocritical if we do not practice what we preach. Before dreaming about the future of KMs and EMs in KAPC churches, leaders first must address the many conflicts and patiently and lovingly resolve them. As the spirit of reconciliation spreads throughout the KAPC churches, the KM and EM will experience mutual healing through the power of applying the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Appreciative Inquiry

In coming together to discuss and dream together about the future for KAPC churches, having reconciled, there must be a positive starting point. In approaching this way, healthy and edifying questions need to be raised. Here, Appreciative Inquiry is very helpful. Branson’s *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations* is a valuable resource for the current context of the Korean-American churches. In it Branson describes his experience of applying the Appreciative Inquiry methods to help a multigenerational Japanese-American church.\(^{16}\)

Branson defines Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in the following way: “[It is] the art of helping systems create images of their most desired future. Based on the belief that a human system will show a heliotropic tendency to move toward positive images, AI is focused on the generative and creative images that can be held up, valued, and used as a basis for moving toward the future.”\(^{17}\) AI uses remembering past successes and positive experiences to draw positive images of the future. Branson lays out the difference between


\(^{17}\) Ibid., 37-38.
the conventional problem-solving approach versus the Appreciative Inquiry method. Where the conventional method starts with felt need, the AI approach begins with the “best and most valuable narrative and qualities of an organization.”\textsuperscript{18} The idea is that starting with felt needs focuses on the negative traits, whereas focusing on what presented the best in the church will help people to focus on the positive.

It is important to begin the discussions in this way to assure that the groups are not simply venting but actually realizing that there is hope, and together the KM and the EM can work towards how to stay together and create a future that allows them to interdependently coexist. Finding reasons to stay together is redeeming. Both sides have so much to offer to each other. Working together to discover the pathway to recovery will ensure future collaborations in working through difficult issues that will arise between the KM and the EM in the KAPC churches. Branson points out the process of shaping these inquiries using the Appreciative Inquiries Model: “1) Choose the positive as the focus of inquiry; 2) inquire into the stories of life-giving forces; 3) locate themes that appear in the stories and select topics for further inquiry; 4) create shared images for a preferred future; and 5) find innovative ways to create that future.”\textsuperscript{19}

When a church focuses on the victories of the past, it remembers its power, ability, and sufficiency in Christ (cf. 2 Cor 12:9) and gains hope for the future. Shaping and asking questions concerning the past and dreaming together about the future in this positive way also can generate further reconciliation and repentance for not having

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 23.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 67.
recognized them in the past, due to simply focusing on conflicts. There is an old hymn that says, “When upon life’s billows you are tempest-tossed, when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.”²⁰ For too long, the KMs and the EMs in the KAPC churches have focused on how they have offended or hurt one another. Not everything in the KAPC is bad. There are many wonderful qualities about the denomination and its churches that become shrouded by the negativities. God has worked miraculously through the first generation of Korean-American Christians in establishing many healthy churches. When the denomination and local churches begin focusing on the wonderful traits and sacrifices of the first generation and start pointing them out to one another, the following generations can aspire also to leave a hopeful legacy for the future. They need to be talked out and shared among the churches.

To dream a greater future for the church is to look eagerly to the goodness of God. To hope for a better future is to revisit the hopes of the past in faith and celebrate all that God has done for the church. The four main processes for AI are to initiate, inquire, imagine, and innovate. By starting to voice the positive things in the history of the Korean-American Church and inquire about them to hear the stories, both the first and the second generations can start imagining the preferred future and use the creative nature God has given to realize it.²¹ The first generation will have the opportunity to experience the respect it hungers, while the second generation will have the chance to see and understand the

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reasons behind such sacrifice: a parental love for those who were to come after them. This is a better place to begin than bitterness and insufferable circumstances. Planting independent churches in the KAPC due to frustration may be a valid response, but it cannot be the only one. Desiring for the EM to interdependently coexist with the first generation in the Korean-American Church is not to preserve or to perpetuate a culture but to thankfully inherit the legacy of faith and pass it along to future generations in hopes of realizing a multigenerational church that appreciates all that God has done.

**Denominational Directives**

Dialogues concerning the future of the KM and the EM in the KAPC churches need to begin at the local church as well as denominational level. The Korean culture is very hierarchical, so it is very difficult to initiate things from bottom up. Things get done much faster and more effectively, when directives come from the top. Four directives need to come down from the General Assembly of the KAPC denomination: forming a new committee to look into KM/EM issues, redefining the parameters of EM, promoting the formation of an independent EM session in the local EM congregation, and ordaining more EM pastors. Given the urgency and the gravity of the fragile KM/EM relationships in KAPC churches, these directives need to be issued quickly. The NAP, presbytery for the EM pastors, along with a handful of visionary KM pastors who are advocates of the EM in the KAPC need to unite in pleading with the General Assembly to address this matter.

Denominational directives need to initiate the formation of a committee to study the current state of KM/EM relationships in KAPC churches in order to bring the discussion to the forefront. It is important for the committee to consist of both KM and
A few years ago, a suggestion was made by the Youth Education committee of the KAPC to form a forum for the EM pastors to gather and discuss their future in the KAPC. The suggestion also stipulated that the meeting would be overseen by a KM pastor from the Youth Education committee. Incensed by this suggestion, the moderator of the NAP went into the meeting and threatened to take them up on charges for looking down at the NAP as haksangs rather than acknowledging them as fully matured and ordained pastors leading legitimate congregations. Immediately the proposal was dismissed, and it has not come up since. This illustration shows the importance of the new committee being formed to be made up of an equal number of KM and EM pastors and that it needs to be more than a subcommittee of an existing committee. Whether an ad-hoc committee or a permanent committee is formed, both the KM and EM need to be involved from the very beginning. This process needs to be initiated and spearheaded by the denomination in order to achieve broader support.

Another area where a denominational directive is necessary is clarification of the EM parameters. The title “EM” does not exist in the bylaws of the KAPC. KAPC first needs to recognize the EM as an independent congregation from the KM. Then it needs to make clear whether EM is a separate congregation or subsumed into the KM. Currently, though an EM may have a separate budget, a distinct set of deacons, its own pastor(s), and even its own elders in some cases, the EM congregation still is subsumed under the KM without a designation or full representation at higher levels of decision-making leadership.

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22 This incident took place at North America Presbytery, “EM Forum Proposal” (debated at the 32th General Assembly, Korean-American Presbyterian Church at Los Angeles, May 20-23, 2008. The proposal was suggested by the Reverend D. Kwon and refuted by the Reverend J. Lee.
The prevailing KM fear is that upon receiving “independence,” EMs will leave KMs and form their own independent churches; but, the reality is that this already is taking place. The reason for leaving was not that they had the independence; rather, it was more due to frustration of being restrained in this ambiguous and subsumed existence, which does not allow for growth and freedom. Two implications arise from this current status. First, being in this subsumed state perpetuates EM dependence on the KM at the denominational level. It is difficult to raise and address the needs of the EM congregation at the presbytery or the denominational level if there is no clear recognition of EM congregations within the KAPC.

On a local level, the EM congregation is forced to battle within the church to be heard; and when that fails, there is nowhere to take matters further because the EM is not recognized as a separate cultural group with a distinctive congregational identity in the KAPC. Currently, in the vein of a benign dictatorship, the EM has to trust in good faith and solely depend on the KM to present their needs in the KM presbyteries or at the General Assembly of the KAPC. Unfortunately, this is not happening.

Second, without clear parameters, the unseen glass ceiling remains and the permeated sense of being disenfranchised perpetuates among the EM leaders. This undesignated state does not provide protection for the EM pastors, thus not providing protection for the EM congregation. Passionate for their flock, much like KM pastors, EM pastors often feel the need to lead their congregants into what they perceive as freedom from oppression. For example, without advance notice to the EM congregation, an EM pastor can be removed by the KM leadership simply because he is viewed as an associate pastor. For a senior pastor position, it has to pass through the congregation, then through the presbytery before an
installed pastor of a church is removed. This dynamic prevents EM pastors from risking to raise crucial issues for the benefit of mutual coexistence. Also, since EM is technically a “ministry” and not a “congregation,” it has no power to set policies or ministry direction in a KAPC church. All is determined by the session, which is made up of KM elders and the KM senior pastor. For these reasons, the KAPC needs to issue directives on identifying EM, give it a clear designation, and then clarify parameters for its existence in relation to the KM.

Equally vital is for the KAPC denomination to allow the formation of EM sessions in the KAPC churches. Currently, most EMs are represented in the session by one or more KM elders sent by the KM session to oversee EM. Since the Presbyterian bylaw only supports one session to rule over a church, there is no room to designate an EM session. When the EM is recognized as a congregation and is considered to be a church, then it can form its own session made up of EM elders. It is for this reason that many EM pastors see exit as a viable solution for congregational growth of an English Ministry. Under the current model, though elders can be ordained in the EM, they are subsumed into the KM session. Even at KCPC, there have been numerous candidates to be elected as elders in the EM; however, due to the prospect of being subsumed into the KM session, all have declined. Currently, in many of the EMs in the KAPC, an elder from the KM is assigned to represent them. Often these representatives do not attend the EM worships or meetings but simply are put in place to deliver messages from the session to the EM leadership. Due to the cultural and linguistic differences, KM elders are not able to function as shepherds and overseers for the EM members. In The Shepherd Leader, Timothy Z. Witmer points out the necessity of elders serving as shepherds, following Jesus as the model. Shepherds need to
be part of the congregation they serve. They cannot serve as leaders who are removed from the congregation but only as they are closely connected to the flock.23 There needs to be a denominational directive to allow the creation of an EM session in KAPC churches.

As KAPC churches give clear designation to the EM and allow EM sessions to be formed, the denomination will see great increase in EM pastors being ordained in the KAPC; and there needs to be more EM pastors being ordained in the KAPC, as they are the future of the Korean-American Church. As these pastors step by step are given more and more authority, they will be able to follow the lead of the few KM/EM interdependently coexisting models. This will help KAPC churches begin the healthy dialogue towards a future together.

### Challenging the Laity

This dialogue concerning the future of KM/EM coexisting has to be discussed not only among KAPC leaders, it needs to happen among the laity as well. Both the KM and the EM pastors need to challenge their congregations to honestly recognize their present context and dream together how to use one another’s gifts to build up the church and be mutually encouraging. Rather than having the KM and the EM congregations filter through the frustrations of their respective ministries, the leadership needs to involve the laity to share the mutual needs and find ways to interdependently coexist. If the leaders of the KM and the EM have decided to interdependently coexist, they must be deliberate in fleshing it out practically and intentionally to their lay members.

For example, for joint KM/EM events, such as unified worship, the leaders need to prepare the congregation to explain clearly the intention for doing it. They also must

encourage their congregations to reach out and give assistance where it is needed. Forming a preparation committee made up of KM/EM members will encourage such discussions. At KCPC, both the KM and the EM regularly give announcements concerning the other ministry, eliciting prayer. The laity needs to be aware that leaders are working towards interdependently coexisting. However, before this takes place, it must be thoroughly agreed upon by the leaders that interdependent coexistence is indeed what the KM and EM are mutually pursuing. Disingenuous pursuit only will hurt the ministry greater in the end.

Many EM pastors ignore or try desperately to escape their current context to the point of anesthetizing the presence of the KM in their church. Congregants need to be challenged to accept who they are and where they are and from that point positively discuss ways to live out the Gospel. Being Korean or any ethnicity for that matter is not something to be denied but embraced. Only from embracing our identity as Christ followers in a given time and place can the Body of Christ make a difference. Not understanding or embracing identity or context can cause an internal cultural war and emphasize how they are not giving way to making accommodations that might not be real or fruitful to their church.

For example, I visited an independent church that was predominantly second generation and Korean American. The pastor shared with me that their desire is to become thoroughly multiethnic; and, to that end, they got rid of everything Korean in their church. 24 “All except yourselves,” I joked with him. The EM pastors need to honestly challenge congregants to accept their context and strive from there to become an excellent, Gospel-believing, and Gospel-living church. Becoming multiethnic or multigenerational

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24 This took place in August 2010 with the lead pastor at a non-denominational independent church that was made up of predominantly second-generation Korean Americans including the pastor, in Pennsylvania.
are fruits of being a Gospel-driven church but not the goal. Challenging congregants to see beyond themselves does not mean they need to deny who they are or where they are. There is no shame in being Korean or in being a Korean-American church. However, there is great shame in a church that does not reflect the Gospel and lacks love. Both KM and EM pastors need to challenge their congregations to accept their context and from there rise to share a vision to interdependently coexist, mirroring the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Patience for Multigenerational Church**

One hope that is totally reliant on time is that of becoming a multigenerational church in the EM. In order to realize this dream for the future, it will take great patience stemming from trust that occurs over time and into the future through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Currently in KAPC churches, with both the KM and the EM, they can collectively show this multigenerational church; however, it cannot be produced exclusively in the EM. It is rare to see multiple generations present in the KAPC EMs. I am the eldest in my EM congregation at KCPC, and it will be a while before my daughters grow up and get married and start having families of their own. It will take another decade or so before KAPC churches begin to see third and fourth generations of Korean Americans in KAPC churches. Given the current struggles between the KM and EM, it will be foolish to assume things naturally will grow better in time. Issues of division only will widen the gap between the generations, if an intentional solution is not put in place to address the generational stress that is happening in the Korean-American Church.

This patiently waiting for the multigenerational church to be realized is not a passive endeavor. In the meantime, both the KM and the EM need to put aside the
differences and work patiently in resolving conflicts. Rather than looking back at past
hurts and struggles, both sides need to reflect on the gifts God has provided to each
ministry and in great hopes of interdependently coexisting dream together towards the
future of KAPC churches that will house KM and EM together. Unreasonable cultural
demands and apathetic responses only will continue to quench such dreams and verify the
reasons for the EM leaving the KM. The EM needs to realize that if it does not learn to
resolve conflict now, it will be unable to resolve any conflict it may have with future
generations. The lack of communication and love will be passed down through the
Church, until those on opposing sides boldly take a stand to embrace honest, courageous
discussion and change through the transformational faith in Christ. Time passes in its
uncontrollable torrents; and as it moves, it leaves in its tracks memories. Though time
passes, memories live on from generation to generation. Both the KM and the EM are
equally responsible for the memories they will leave behind.

It will be a tremendous witness and an inspiring testimony for future generations,
who undoubtedly will face similar battles, to see the gaps between generations and
observe how the first and the second generations of Korean-American Christians
patiently resolved to stay together and to work through the difficulties rather than
abandoning each other prematurely. With such a foundation, future generations will be
able to see clearly that it was the Gospel of Jesus Christ that drove this desire. To this end,
both the KM and the EM need to bring their focus back to the Gospel.

Corporately, KM and EM pastors and leaders and lay members need to see the
importance of possessing the mark of the true church: to be a believing, loving, hoping,
and patiently waiting church. They also must know that this only can be endured by 
experiencing the Gospel of Jesus Christ as they humble themselves, repent together for 
the sins of hurting one another, forgive one another as Christ has forgiven them, and 
accept one another as gifts from God. In this way, as they commit to one another and to 
Christ, in the end Christ will be magnified as the sole supplier of grace that kept the 
Church together. The closing charge of the chapter entitled “Multigenerational 
Households” in Growing Healthy Asian American Churches reads:

The Asian immigrant church calls for much work and effort. Furthermore, putting 
in work does not necessarily guarantee its success; it can be a risky endeavor. 
However, this project is too critical, both theologically and sociologically, to be 
neglected by the Asian immigrant church. It is our sincere prayer and hope that 
many emerging pastors and lay leaders will take this challenge seriously and 
prayerfully, willing to be used by God’s Spirit to transform many of our churches 
into healthy, multigenerational households of God.25

The KM and the EM in KAPC churches are faced with the very difficult task of preserving 
the purity, peace, and unity of the church. The easier path would be to part ways now and 
start over with the second generation of Korean Americans independent from the first. 
However, the more difficult and more fruitful path—indeed, the biblical path— is to 
patiently work together to engage in a collective discussion towards a mutually agreed 
solution. At the moment, this means laboring through increased communication among 
multiple generations interdependently coexisting while relying solely on the Gospel of the 
Jesus Christ. This will bring much glory to God, whatever the road in the longer term might 
be.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this project has been to develop a strategy to help the first (KM) and the second (EM) generation of Korean-American Christians to interdependently coexist as one church. Although this project has limited itself to look more specifically at the relationship between the KM and the EM in the KAPC context, the hope is for this strategy to expand to other Asian-American churches struggling with similar issues to gain wisdom to apply the Gospel of Jesus Christ in receiving healing and reconciliation to dream together for a more harmonious coexistence as the Church. Even greater a hope is for the Church in general to be encouraged to know that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has the power to break down all walls of hostility (Eph 2:14) that may exist.

The chasm between the KM and EM in the KAPC is wide and the issues are complex. The goal of this project has not been to come up with a one magic pill that will resolve the gap. The many conflicts the KM and the EM have shared took years to develop. Unbeknownst to the KM’s first generation of pastors, there are fresh memories of great pains and bitterness that EM pastors harbor in their hearts. The prospect of going back to them and rehashing old wounds or for the EM pastors starting up the battle is a daunting prospect. There is a sense of urgency as many EM pastors consider parting ways with the first-generation KM to plant their own independent churches. Though they may choose to stay within the same denomination where they can continue to interact with the KM’s first-generation pastors, their congregation will sever ties with the KM, perhaps never to interact with them again. Both sides need to consider deeply if this is what they truly desire for their congregations and if it is the legacy they want to leave behind for their future generations.
Throughout the project, many stories of how the deep wounds have developed between the KM and the EM in the KAPC churches have been alluded to indirectly or shared explicitly. The scars go deep on both sides. Horror stories of unreasonable cultural demands by the KM and hasty, bitter departures of the EM flood the halls of many Korean-American churches. Even at the KAPC General Assembly, pastors both in the KM and in the EM exchange such stories; and every time tales are passed around, they become more exaggerated. This is how Korean-American cultural legends are born. Buried in these legends, it is difficult to consider KM and EM staying together to consider interdependent coexistence.

However, what I find more tragic in the KAPC’s KM/EM relationship is that very little or nothing is being said or done about what is currently happening as a result. Even if they mutually agree to part ways, the Bible makes it very clear that Christians are required to reconcile among themselves (2 Cor 5:18). Sins need to be repented (Jas 5:16), peace needs to occur between parties (Mk 9:50), and restoration of fellowship needs to be reestablished (Rom 12:16). No matter how irreconcilable situations appear, how extreme the offense is perceived in the eyes of people, the Church—as the Body of Christ—cannot disregard the offenses it commits. God says, “If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chr 7:14). Justified or not, when one part hurts, the whole body suffers (1 Cor 12:26). This is the nature of being part of God’s household. Reconciliation has to come. The KM and the EM must find ways to interdependently coexist during this time of transition. I have no doubt we will visit this issue once again when the EM dominates the Church and the KM feels endangered.
Though this may be far off, the KM and EM must consider deeply the future ramifications of their hasty decisions. What they do today will leave a profound legacy for the future.

Except for specifying denominational directives, I have deliberately stayed away from mapping out what is needed to establish restoration and what steps must be taken to interdependently coexist. That task is homework for the local KM and EM to work out together in their particular ministry context. Stating the ideal in a situation where the divided parties have no regard for each other is irrelevant and sounds like a bunch of infuriating religious platitudes. The EM and the KM in the KAPC are nowhere near agreeing on how they want their futures to look. Just to bring them to the same table to talk about the difficult issues concerning EM and KM will be a monumental task. The leaders in the KM and EM will have to come to agreement to sit together to express honestly and fully the current nature of their relationship and reconcile first before they can start dreaming together for the future.

The hope for the future only can begin as both sides, both KM and EM, agree to begin a dialogue. The goal of this dialogue is to resolve the existing conflicts by reconciling and using the various tools mentioned in this project in order to apply the Gospel in humble repentance with eager hearts to forgive and to accept the differences as gifts to the Church. This will take active participation of all members, locally and denominationally, from clergy to laity, from first to the second and especially the 1.5 generation Korean Americans, to secure a future for the KAPC churches. This process has been applied at KCPC and the church has realized incremental but real changes in the
attitudes and the hopes both the KM and the EM share together. It will be a long process, but it has to begin with a dialogue.

The urgency is imminent and felt fears are being realized already. As many KMs and EMs part ways, the long-term effects on the congregations will be devastating for the future of KAPC. The predominant discussion in the NAP, the presbytery for EM pastors, is planting independent English-speaking churches in the KAPC. Making the same mistake that KM has made, the NAP gives very little regard to the first-generation congregations; and even in this narrower leadership context, there are no tangible prospects of future KM/EM relations.

The intimacy of “household” or the “familial” perspective between the KM and the EM in the Church is not shared by the EM as much as it is in the KM. In all the conversations I have had with KM members, they all agree that they have worked so hard to leave a better future for the EM in order to leave the EM a healthy church in which to worship and through which to minister. Though their vision does not extend too far beyond the church walls, they are hoping that the EM will carry the Gospel mission farther and with greater fervency than the first generation. The EMs are leaving the KM to form for themselves, in most cases, mono-generational independent churches. In the churches that are losing their EMs, the KM is forming yet another EM. Ultimately, this will lead it to revisit the inevitable end of having them depart the same way in the future. This cycle cannot continue. Progressing down this path will force both the KM and the EM to entrench themselves deeper into their differences and not see the potential
possibilities. The tensions between the KM and the EM are bound to increase.\(^1\) For this reason alone, there is an urgent priority for the KAPC to get the KM and the EM to the table and start the process of reconciliation. They need to jointly start reflecting why the Church was first started. They need to start dreaming and expounding on where they want to go together to achieve God’s vision for them.\(^2\)

To this end, God has provided many resources, all coming in the form of grace. They flow from the Gospel of Jesus Christ as it is radically applied to the Church. As the KM and the EM strive together to establish the Body of Christ God desires—a place where both congregations can find a believing, loving, hoping, and patiently waiting community—they will experience the profound healing power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As the KM and the EM in KAPC churches tap into the “incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:7), God has promised to apply the same power he used in raising Christ from the dead in reviving us (Eph 1:18-20). For the KM and the EM in the KAPC churches, this is truly the time where the Spirit intercedes for them in groaning that is too deep for words because what they are experiencing is so painful (Rom 8:26). However, God also promised that he would provide a way out (1 Cor 10:13). In the end, both the KM and the EM will discover together that his grace is indeed sufficient (2 Cor 12:9). As the Gospel of Jesus Christ is applied to the current situation between the KM and the EM in KAPC churches, they will

\(^1\) Cha, P. Kim, and D. Lee, “Multigenerational Households,” 147.

\(^2\) Ken Uyeda Fong, Pursuing the Pearl (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1999), 178.
experience its healing power. Together, having received healing, they can dream together for a pleasant future of interdependently coexisting in love.

Applying the highlighted principles of conflict resolution and engaging in Appreciative Inquiry to map a direction for the future are invaluable tools to bring to the table as dialogues begin between the KM and the EM in KAPC churches. This requires bold and courageous steps to be taken by both KM and EM leaders and lay members. God faithfully has provided visionaries and able leaders both to the KM and the EM in the KAPC. They only need to come together to join hands as they work together to find the best solutions to honor God and provide a safe and loving haven for God’s people, both in the KM and EM.

The necessary directives that the local churches and presbyteries can implement must come from the General Assembly of the KAPC. Along with bold and courageous steps, divine patience will be needed. Over two thousand years ago, Jesus promised his Church that he would return to take us home to the house he is preparing for us (John 14:2-3). The struggles between the KM and EM have been occurring for only less than two decades, yet every year the intensity increases. To know that God is slow to anger and abounding in love (Ex 34:6) is to engage in his divine patience and persevere in resolving conflicts, embracing interdependent coexistence while sharing patient hope in whatever work God seeks to do. This is the biblical path of KM and EM in today’s KAPC churches. If the KM and the EM can agree in humility that God is the master of their fate and captain of their soul, then both sides will stand in unity fighting against all forces that are trying to disturb his unity in the Church. The desire and hope of the Church have to be
that God be in control. Only when God is sovereign can believers cling to the promises God has given to them: “I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chr 7:14). More prayer and thoughtful considerations and resulting discussions have to take place before discerning God’s will for the KAPC and the future of its KM and EM relationship. When Christ followers know that God is in control, they can overcome the distractions and temptation in order to begin the exciting prospect of discovering how the first and the second generations of Korean-American Christians can interdependently coexist. The possibilities are endless, as God heals to bring his revival to the KAPC.

Nevertheless, the strategy towards fostering interdependent Korean-American congregations across generations does not begin with fixing what is wrong with the current state of the KM and EM. It starts with reconciling the past and together understanding the cause of conflicts so as not to dichotomize the two sides, which inevitably would lead to taking positions towards further irreconcilable demands. Only when the two sides lovingly agree to come to the table and hope together for the future God desires for Korean-American churches in the KAPC can they begin to discover ways to interdependently coexist. With this common desire, both the KM and the EM can patiently develop ways to foster interdependency across the generations within the Korean-American Church, giving rise to hope for the broader Church coexisting in harmony.
APPENDIX

SURVEY

August 1, 2008
To the Senior Pastor of a Korean American Presbyterian Church (KAPC):
Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. My name is Ryan Kim and I am an ordained minister in the KAPC and an active member of the 북미주 노회. I am currently in the process of completing my Doctor of Ministry degree at Fuller Theological Seminary in California. I am conducting a general survey to help assess the makeup of our English Ministries in our denomination in order to better understand our context. It will be greatly appreciated if you could take a moment to complete the survey and return it back in the self-addressed envelope as soon as possible. Your participation will greatly help in correctly projecting our future. Thank you and God bless you and your ministry.
In Christ,
Rev. Ryan Kim

Survey Questions — Name of the Church (Optional):

☐ The size of your congregation (Korean Ministry + English Ministry) is __ 10-100 __ 100-200 __ 200-500 __ 500-1000 __ 1000+

☐ You currently __ have __ would like to have __ don’t plan to have an EM (English Ministry).
☐ If you have an EM, the size of your EM is
   __ 10-50 __ 50-100 __ 100-150 __ 150-200 __ 200+
☐ By EM, you mean
  __ Youth +Adults __ College Group only __ College + Adults __ Adults only
☐ Does your EM have a different name? __ Yes __ No Name (optional): ____________________________

☐ You currently __ have __ are looking for __ will eventually hire __ don’t plan to hire an EM pastor.

If you have an EM pastor (s), please provide his (their) contact information. (Optional)

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
(Name, address, phone #, email)

☐ Ordained in the KAPC __ Not ordained (Jundosa) __ Other: ____________________________ (Specify)
☐ Which best describes your current EM?

☐ Department of KM __ Working together with KM __ Independent of KM __ Separate Church
Comments:

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

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Oatman, Jr., Johnson. Count Your Blessings. 1897. Reprint, Bible Study Charts.


