

CHAPTER 2: THE KOREAN-AMERICAN PASTOR IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide basic information about Korean immigrant churches in America in order to identify Korean churches and pastors and create a pastoral care approach for Korean-American pastors in the fourth chapter. Above all, it is necessary to examine the roots of Korean churches in America and the results of the examination are important background to understand current Korean-American churches and pastors.

Although their circumstances expose them to American culture, Korean immigrant churches and pastors maintain their Korean cultures such as Korean cultural heritage and religious tradition. In fact, the position of the Korean immigrant church in Korean society is very significant. This means that Christianity is influenced by the Korean immigrant society very much (Kwon, Kim, & Warner 2001:28). According to the statistics of sociologists who research Korean immigrant society, seventy percent of all Korean-Americans attend church and they participate in the church's several meetings at least once a week regularly (Chosun Daily Newspaper, p 4).

The examination of the Korean-American church's identification is also intended to help the understanding of Korean-American pastors' individual narratives concerning their pastoral contexts. From this work, the fundamental resources for a pastoral care approach for Korean-American pastors will emerge.

2.2 The history of Korean immigrant churches

The beginning of Korean immigration in the United States was early in the 19th century when sugar cane laborers arrived in Hawaii. However, the major influx began in the 1970s.

The influx of Korean immigration started with the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act in 1965. Immigration and Naturalization Service reports show that between 1965 and 1980 a total of 299,000 Koreans immigrated into the United States. The 1980 U.S. Census found 354,529 Koreans in this country (Yu & Yang 1982:1).

The history of Korean immigrant churches in America started with the establishment of four Korean churches: the Hawaii Methodist Church (established in November 1903), the San Francisco Korean Methodist Church (September 1904), the Hawaii Korean Anglican Church (February 1905), and the Los Angeles Presbyterian Church (September 1905) (Kim 1997:7). This shows that Korean immigrant churches were established in western America in 19th century intensively. This early date of immigration is because the west is a location close to Korea geographically. Especially, Korean immigrant churches in the Southern California region grew very rapidly: from 11 in 1965 to 233 in 1980 (Kim 1997:7). However, the rapid growth of Korean immigrant churches is demonstrated not only in the West but also in the East. For example, in New York's case, the number of Korean immigrant churches grew from 6 in 1971 to 72 in 1978 (Kim 1990:8). Therefore, Korean churches were built whenever Koreans settled down in Hawaii and on the mainland.

The history of Korean immigrant churches can be divided into four major periods: (1) the period of new beginning and growth, 1903 - 1918; (2) the period of nationalism, 1919 - 1945; (3) the period of frustration and decline, 1945 - 1967; and (4) the period of explosive growth of the church, 1968- present (Lee 1989:5).

2.2.1 The period of new beginning and growth

This period is a time when the early Korean church became the center of the Korean community for its social and religious needs. Many Korean immigrants arrived in Hawaii to accomplish their dreams. However, when they arrived in Hawaii, they felt like strangers and experienced many hostile responses from Americans. They also experienced the severity of racial discrimination and their work circumstances were very difficult. Furthermore, they had to work many hours of hard physical labours. In addition, the early Koreans lived separately in their plantations and their lives were ruptured (Choy 1979:97). While they were treated as strangers, the Korean church was the only place in which they could talk and sing in their own native language, Korean, and celebrate and preserve their Korean heritages (Kim 1971:41).

Furthermore, the Korean churches played a significant role in narrowing the difference between Korean culture and American culture. The early Korean churches were a contact point in order to advance to another world. The Korean churches also provided many social functions beyond religious functions; for example, the Korean churches opened English language classes and Korean language classes to remind their children who were born in America of Korean. The white Americans sometimes participated at the Korean Churches' meetings as volunteers in order to help Korean immigrants adjust to new life.

Thus, many early Korean immigrants wanted to live near the Korean church and they attended the church on Sunday. Sunday was a very significant day for the Korean laborers and they had several fellowship meetings that became an integral part of the Korean churches (Yu 1988:80). Although the early Korean immigrants had to live in the circumstances of racial discrimination and hostile relation, they could feel comfort and encouragement within the boundary of Korean churches so

that they could restore the sense of their lives.

2.2.2 The period of nationalism

The darkest tragedy in the Korean history was that Korea was colonized by Japan. Korea was Japan's colony for 36 years from 1909 to 1945. The Korean immigrants were stateless people at the period of tragedy.

Due to the national tragedy and extreme labor in the Hawaii plantation, the early Korean immigrants tried to move to the mainland U.S. However, it was prohibited by law because Americans had a hostile mind about Orientals and they didn't want oriental immigrants to increase in the mainland (Choy 1979:99). Actually, the Korean and Japanese children could not attend the local school where white children attended (Choy 1979:107). After all, the lives of Korean immigrants in the United States were the lives of discrimination and resentment that they could not receive the basic human rights (Choy 1979:107). Their dream was to go back to their homeland if Japanese colonization ended.

Therefore, nationalism was a very important issue to Koreans. Because Korean churches were the center of Korean communities, it was natural that the Korean church was relative to the political and national movements. According to Yu (1988:87), some Korean churches were overwhelmed by political issues. Sometimes, the worship service included a sermon on political issues or an announcement of political movements (Yu 1988:88). Thus, nationalism became the important root that emphasized the Korean cultural heritage in a hostile foreign land.

The national affect of Korean churches was influenced by their behavior to Americans. Almost all Korean Christians preferred Korean ministers who were

ordained in Korea. They believed that Korean-ordained ministers could understand the Korean traditional mind. However, when we reviewed the Korean church history, there were very few trained ministers in Korea because the theological schools were not sufficient until 1919 (Kim & Patterson 1974:131). These situations added to the nationalism of Korean churches so that the Korean pastors' sermons were filled with national awakening and patriotism for Korea. However, the context of Korean churches at the time resulted in them experiencing marginality and having the mentality of a sojourner (Yu 1988:91).

Thus, the patriotism and nationalism for Korea and the other-worldly life orientation became an important part of the Korean church's basic identity and affected Korean immigrants' senses of value in this period (1911-1945).

2.2.3 The period of frustration and decline

At last, Korea became independent from Japanese domination. This was Koreans' as well as Korean-American immigrants' fervent desire. On the other hand, the Korean church, ironically, confronted the dark period. Although the ultimate goal of Koreans, the independence of Korea, was accomplished, the Korean churches in America were deserted (Yu 1988:93). According to Kim and Patterson (1974:134), only 9 churches remained in America including Hawaii in 1947.

Although there were some different views about main causes of the decadency of the Korean churches in Korean-American church history, it was necessary to explain by using the Korean immigrant population flow. Kim and Hurh state,

There were 12,000 Koreans in America, including Hawaii. Other researches show That between 1951 and 1964, a total 14,027 Koreans came to the U.S.. This was the post Korean War immigration which included mostly Korean wives of American servicemen (6,423), war orphans (5,348), and some other

professional immigrants. It is also estimated that approximately 6,000 Korean students came to the United States between 1945 and 1965 (Kim & Huhr 1980:29).

Therefore, the Korean population was not sufficient in order to maintain the church's composition and organization. This might have been the major cause of the collapse of Korean immigrant churches in America.

However, Choy explains another cause of the deterioration of the Korean church. This was that many Korean immigrants returned to Korea after the liberation of the nation. Because independence was the ultimate goal to Koreans, as soon as Korea recovered the freedom of nation, many Korean immigrants were to come back to their homeland (Choy 1979:181). However, when some Korean immigrants returned to Korea in 1945, they were a very small group. The majority of them could not return to Korea due to several reasons. The first reason was that the great number of the early Korean immigrants came from North Korea. However, as soon as Korea was liberated, the north of the country had to be under the communist rule. Therefore, they might not have gone back there.

Another reason was that it was never easy to return to the homeland. The early Korean immigrants' ages were too old to start and live a new life in Korea (Kim 1980:11). Furthermore, some of their children arrived in America at a young age or were born in America so that they were already Americanized (Yu 1988:96).

In addition, as pointed out in the previous section, the political issues such as nationalism and other-worldly life orientation could be the cause of the deterioration of the Korean church, because such issues never matched the original church's religious idea. Consequently, this period was the time when the Korean churches declined and only the few remaining churches had to struggle for survival.

2.2.4 The period of explosive growth of the church

Since the early Korean immigrants who had arrived in Hawaii, the United States in 1903, they established the first Korean church in the mainland of the United States. The number of current Korean churches in America reflected the explosive growth. There is a saying: “When the Chinese come to America, they open restaurant, and when the Japanese come to America, they build company, but when Koreans come, they establish churches” (Shim 1977:7). Although the Korean churches experienced the extreme suffering as the deterioration of church before 1968, due to the reform of the immigration law, the large influx of new Korean immigrants could come to the United States from 1970. As a result, the Korean churches increased rapidly and the number of Korean churches reached over 1,000 churches in 1981 and about 3,000 in 2002 (Chosun Daily newspaper, p 5).

According to Chosun Daily newspaper (p 5), the state of California, where the greatest number of Koreans live, has over 3,000 Korean churches, the state of Illinois has about 170 churches, and New York City has about 345 churches. Furthermore, it can't deny that the Korean community in America is called the Christian community, because the rate of Christian Korean immigrants is 70 percent of all Korean immigrants in America (Chosun Daily newspaper, p 5). Thus, it was certain that this period showed the highest remarkable growth throughout the entire Korean-American church history.

In fact, there were two reasons why the Korean immigrant churches increased rapidly at this time. First of all, the inner mind of Koreans is generally religious. Although other Asian ethnic people possess their special religion, the Koreans' religious mind includes the deep meaning that determines life's pattern (Yu 1988:100).

Another reason is that the several circumstances and conditions around them made their eyes concentrate on religious life, as mentioned earlier. Although many Korean immigrants can become independent economically and some can live affluently at the present, they still have to meet the language barriers, cultural gaps, and loneliness as an alien with racial discriminations. However, the Korean immigrant church plays a role that solves the several problems of the immigrant life. Furthermore, the Korean church provides the psychological stabilization to immigrants who suffered in the difficult circumstances and it also provides useful information to adjust or fix the new life in America. Thus, they indeed go to church to maintain their life in this land.

2.3 The characteristics of Korean immigrant churches

As mentioned in the fourth period of the Korean-American immigrant history, the greatest influx of Korean immigrants in America was during the two decades of the 1970s and 1980s. During this period, more than 34,000 Koreans came to the United States every year. However, in the late 1980s, the number of Korean immigrants began to decline gradually, and this decline accelerated in the 1990's (U.S. Dept. of Justice 1970:97).

Before identifying the characteristics of Korean immigrant churches, it is necessary to examine the reasons why many Koreans came and wanted to immigrate to the United States. There are three main motivations of Korean immigrants in America (California Department of Education 1992:15).

The first reason is for their children's education. In general, it is well known that many Korean parents' interest in education is very high. Many Korean parents think that their children's education is more valuable than any thing else. Many

Korean-American parents say that there are many educational opportunities, excellent educational systems and developed facilities in the United States. Korea is one of the countries that send many international students to study in the United States and many of these Korean students remain in the United States after finishing their studies.

The second reason is for the better economic life. Undeniably, America can be symbolized as rich or affluent. Many Korean-Americans immigrated to the United States in order to gain success economically and achieve their dreams for the economic improvement. However, large groups of Korean-Americans manage small businesses such as groceries, fruit markets, and clothing stores. In addition, they work at the lower level such as cleaners, dry cleaners and deliverers, although some Korean-Americans have the more professional occupations such as doctors, professors, and ITT engineers (Lee 1994:27).

The third reason is to reunite with family. According to Lee (Lee 1994:27), many Koreans who immigrate to the United States have their relatives who have already settled down in the United States. The relatives in America invite their relatives in Korea so that many Korean-Americans reunite and co-work in the United States. It is easy to see the extended families in Korean immigrant churches in America.

Given these background reasons, we will identify characteristics of Korean immigrant churches in terms of the following four points: (1) stability of membership, (2) in-group and out-group distinction, (3) gender and age composition of elders, (4) theological orientation and personal beliefs (Kwon, Kim, & Warner 2001:80).

2.3.1 Stability of Membership

The membership of Korean immigrant churches is less stable than that of other church groups such as African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian churches. Kwon, Kim, and Warner assert,

For example, 69 percent of African Americans, 60 percent of Hispanics, and 65 percent of Caucasians have been members of their current congregation for more than ten years. About one-third of them (36% of African Americans, 34% of Hispanics, and 30% of Caucasians) indicate being members of the same congregation for twenty-five years or more. In contrast, almost half of the Koreans have been members of their congregation for six years or less, and close to one-third for less than three years. Only 2 percent have been with their current congregation for twenty-five years or more. Furthermore, close to 40 percent indicate that they are “not sure” or that it is “not likely” that they will stay with their current congregation five years from now (2000:81).

This shows that the membership of Korean immigrant churches is rather fluid. As mentioned previously, the reasons are that the rate of movement is very frequent because of business and children’s education so it is difficult to stay long in one place. In addition, there is much conflict in the congregation so that many Korean immigrant churches have been separated due to conflicted relationships (Park 2000:161). Furthermore, some Korean immigrant churches are not able to satisfy the congregations’ spiritual needs properly. This may result in some complaints about church and the congregations not appreciating and respecting their pastors any more (Park 2000:162).

Thus, Korean-American immigrant churches include changeable elements. That is, Korean-Americans may leave their original churches to seek new Korean immigrant churches or pastors when they are not satisfied at their current churches or there are some changes in their economic situations. The fluid characteristic of church membership is one unavoidable characteristic that Korean immigrant

churches possess.

2.3.2 In-group commitment and out-group indifference

In spite of the unstable character of membership of Korean immigrant churches, many Koreans participate at the church's various activities very actively. In addition, Koreans contribute financially to their churches very much. In fact, the amount of regular giving is more markedly than other ethnic groups. Kwon, Kim, and Warner explain this fact as follows:

Four-fifths of Koreans (78%) report they attend their congregation's Sunday worship every week, compared with 34 percent of African Americans, 49 percent of Hispanics, and 28 percent of Caucasians. Also, the proportion of those who regard "attending church regularly" as an essential quality of a good Christian life is higher among Koreans (67%) than other ethnic groups (39% among African Americans, 52% among Hispanics, and 32% of Caucasians). Koreans also spend more time than others at their churches beyond Sunday worship services. More than half of Koreans (54%) spent six hours or more at church activities during the previous month of the survey. Among other ethnic respondents, the figure is about 40 percent: African Americans (36%), Hispanics (39%), and Caucasians (40%). The majority of Koreans (62%) contributed \$ 2,000 or more in regular giving to their current congregations in the previous year. Only 35 percent of African Americans, 26 percent of Hispanics, and 40 percent of Caucasians report giving that much. Moreover, more than a quarter (27%) of Koreans gave more than \$5,000. The corresponding rates are 8 percent for African Americans, 6 percent for Hispanics, and 11 percent for Caucasians (2000:82).

Therefore, the rate of participation in church activities and the amount of regular giving are more intensive than for other ethnic groups. These characteristics don't belong only to ordination groups such as elders or deacons. On the contrary, almost all church members participate and contribute to the church's work whether or not one has been ordained (Kwon, Kim & Warner 2000:82). On the other hand, the majority of African-Americans, Hispanics, and Caucasians participate in the

communities outside their churches. For example, they act as volunteers or provide financially in order to improve their communities. However, Koreans are not so interested in their communities. This is a problem that Korean immigrant churches should solve and complement in the future. Thus, there are unique characteristics in Korean immigrant churches. They are very active in their in-group commitment and indifferent to their out-groups (Kwon, Kim & Warner 2000:83).

2.3.3 Older male domination of eldership

Another characteristic in Korean immigrant churches is that being ordained as an elder apparently means to contribute to their churches. The proportion of elders in each Korean immigrant church is about 15% of Koreans. However, 47 percent of African-Americans, 43 percent of Hispanics, and 65 percent of Caucasians have been ordained as elders (Kwon, Kim & Warner 2000:83). On the other hand, although the proportion of elders is few, to be ordained as an elder requires many qualifications. In general, Korean Christians think that the elder should be more distinguished than a lay person spiritually, financially, and socially. In addition, the elder is a much higher status position than a lay person and a male is more dominant than a female. Kwon, Kim, and Warner (2000:83) describe the statements of Korean immigrant churches in the following way:

Over 90 percent (92%) of Korean elders are males, whereas only 8 percent are females. Another way to look at this point is that only 2.3 percent of female memberships are. By contrast, 57 percent of Caucasian, 39 percent of Hispanic, and 30 percent of African American females have been ordained as elders. Among males, 73 percent of Caucasians and over 45 percent of Hispanics and African Americans have been ordained as elders. Another glimpse of male domination can be found in the fact that over 90 percent of female elders had college education or more, whereas among male elders the figure is 74 percent. In addition, the position of elder in Korean churches is reserved only to older. The youngest age of male elders is 25 years old, while

that of female elder is 38 years of age. Furthermore, elders in Korean immigrant churches are expected to make greater financial contributions to, and to participate more in activities at their local congregations. In 1996 Korean elders made regular offering of about \$3,000 on individual basis and \$ 5,200 by household. Rather, elders spend more hours attending events and give more volunteer time at their current congregation.

Thus, it is certain that the role of elder in Korean immigrant churches is very important and elders really contribute much to their local churches.

Nevertheless, it is also true that there is some negative affect in Korean immigrant churches. For example, elders have a lower English proficiency, because they are older and first-generation immigrants (Lee 1994:36). Furthermore, their thinking is more Korean than American. This may be the origin of conflicts between the first generations and the second generations within churches. In fact, elders participate in their local church's Sunday school as teachers. In addition, in order to be ordained as an elder, because financial prestige and social position beyond the spiritual role should be required, people may think of the position of elder as a strong sense of hierarchy. After all, the exceeded participation of elders in the church management may result in conflict between pastors and elders so that churches may separate (Kim & Hurh 1990:24).

2.3.4 Conservative theological orientation and personal beliefs

In general, when comparing Korean-American Christians' theological orientation and personal beliefs to other ethnic groups, Korean-American Christians have different inclinations. For one, Korean-American Christians are more conservative than other ethnic groups. According to the study of Kwon, Kim, and Warner, for example,

Slightly less than half of Koreans (44%) self-identify as "conservatives" on

theological issues, a third (33%) as “moderates,” and about a quarter (23%) as “liberals.” For the proportion who label themselves as a liberal, there is no difference among three groups. But only one-fifth of African Americans (22%) perceive themselves as conservatives, and the majority (53%) consider themselves moderates. Among Hispanics, 47 percent claim to be conservatives, and nearly a half (46%) claim to be moderates. Corresponding figures for Caucasians are 40 percent conservatives, 44 percent moderates, and 16 percent liberals (2000:85).

Therefore, conservative Christians are the major group of Korean-American Christians.

What are the important elements that are confessed as conservative? These are to believe and confess heaven as true, the existence of the Devil, the birth of Jesus from the Virgin, and the advent of Jesus in the future (Kwon, Kim & Warner 2000:86). However, the most important element is that the Bible is God’s Word and is inspired by the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, according to Kwon, Kim, and Warner, about one-tenth of African-Americans and Caucasians have a perspective like Korean-American conservatives on the Bible, whereas one-fourth of Koreans believe the inspiration of the Bible (Kwon, Kim & Warner 2000:86). The conservative theological orientation is found especially at a church’s core position such as elders and deacons. There are more conservative elders and deacons than conservative lay members (Kwon, Kim & Warner 2000:87). Therefore, Korean immigrant churches maintain quite a conservative theological characteristic and pursue the policies of the church under such a theological orientation.

Furthermore, there are three main views when we examine Korean-American Christians’ personal beliefs. The three views are that a good Christian should study the Bible regularly, spend much time in prayer, and attend church regularly (Kim & Hurh 1980:23). Almost all conservatives in Korean immigrant churches think of the above views as the essentials of faith. Thus, although there are some limitations, many church activities such as the Bible study group, the spiritual revival, cell

meetings, and various prayer meetings enforce or progress within churches in order to improve Korean-American Christians' faith.

2.4 The roles of Korean-American pastors in the United States

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the position of Korean immigrant churches in Korean immigrant society in America is very meaningful. This means that Korean immigrant churches have numerous functions and roles beyond simply religious functions and roles. Since the beginning of Korean-American immigrant history in 1903 when the first Korean immigrants got on board the S.S Gaelic and arrived in Honolulu, Hawaii on January 13, 1903. The Korean-American immigrant history has its centennial year in 2003. In Chosun Daily Newspaper on Jan 22, 2003, there is an announcement about the Korean Centennial made by U.S. President George W. Bush. According to his announcement to celebrate the Korean Centennial, Korean-Americans are one of the largest Asian American immigrant groups. Furthermore, Korean-Americans play a significant role in American society and contribute to American economic and political developments (Chosun Daily Newspaper, p 6).

In fact, it is undeniable that Korean immigrant churches were very useful supporters in order for Korean immigrant communities to take root in American society. Therefore, in order for Korean immigrant communities to be effectively capable of the responsibilities effectively as one of the major Asian American immigrant groups, Korean immigrant churches' responsibility is required. Moreover, Korean-American pastors' roles are especially important. In addition, the role of Korean-American pastors is requested more in order to meet the demand of the current times of Korean immigrant communities. Thus, it is necessary that Korean-American pastors' roles are clarified before interviewing them. There are

some roles of Korean-American pastors in both Korean immigrant churches and Korean-American communities.

2.4.1 Role as a religious leader

The role as a religious leader is essential and important to Korean-American pastors. Once, this meant that Korean-American pastors had a responsibility to guide and teach Korean-American Christians spiritually. When Korean-American immigrants settled down in one place, they established Korean immigrant churches and received their spiritual teaching from Korean-American pastors. Because their main language was Korean, Korean pastors are adequate for Korean immigrant Christians to minister in Korean immigrant churches. Every Korean immigrant church has a Sunday morning service. According to Lee,

The Sunday service is a time and place in which Korean Americans are sustained, encouraged, and empowered through worship experience. Even though some people come to the Sunday morning worship with motivations other than worshipping God, the Sunday morning service has been the most important part of life for Korean American church members.(1994:35)

Korean-American Pastors as religious leaders manage various services such as Sunday service, Wednesday service, Friday prayer meeting, and Saturday dawn prayer meeting in Korean. Their sermons, songs and prayers in Korean are easy to understand to Korean parishes. Although a few Korean immigrants attend American churches, most Korean immigrants attend their Korean immigrant churches regularly on Sunday or they attend several other Korean churches' meetings or activities. In addition, Korean-American pastors always pray for their congregations in order that their congregations live in spiritual development and faithful balance.

Because the role as a religious leader of Korean-American pastors is very significant, Korean-American pastors' spiritual vision or purpose is very influential to Korean immigrant Christians' faithful structure or necessary pattern. Therefore, Korean-American pastors try to develop their Korean immigrant parishes' faith. However, it is not easy to obtain various pastoral information because of language limitations and the lack of co-operation within Korean immigrant churches.

In spite of the absence of such pastoral information, new trials occur in Korean immigrant churches in order to develop and renew them spiritually. For example, the Saddleback church movement and Willow Creek's new church movement are practical models that current Korean-American pastors examine and follow. Although there are some elements of a different nature to apply to Korean immigrant churches, the above contemporary American churches' movements, such attempts of Korean-American pastors, provide Korean-American immigrant churches fresh ideas and vision of ministry.

However, the problem of leadership is one of the urgent tasks that Korean-American pastors should solve. Due to the absence of spiritual leadership, several conflicts between parishes and pastors and between pastors and other pastors can happen. Such conflicts should be solved at the area where each respects the other (Ministry & Theology 2000:166).

Korean-American immigrant churches have conflicts and inner problems. In addition, they require more wide range functions beyond the original function of the church. Furthermore, Korean-American immigrants regard as a significant symbol to possess a faith, and they are devoted to their faith life. Therefore, the position as a religious and spiritual leader is very important. The responsibility that Korean-American pastors should guide their congregations rightly is the biggest mission that God entrusts to Korean-American pastors.

2.4.2 Role as a pastoral care-giver

Clebsch and Jaekle define pastoral care as “the ministry of the cure of souls, or pastoral care, consisting of helping acts, done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns” (Clebsch & Jaekle 1975:4).

As mentioned earlier, Korean-Americans experience language barriers, cultural gaps, and loneliness as aliens. Sometimes, they experience racial discrimination. Therefore, they may be in need psychologically and spiritually and they may request their pastors’ pastoral care in order to overcome their emotional and spiritual anxieties. In this respect, Korean-American immigrant churches have played a role of the support of center for them (Lee 1994:52). In fact, whenever urgent crises happen to Korean-American immigrants, they seek the assistance of Korean-American pastors. Korean-American pastors sometimes introduce to all church members each individual difficulty to make such difficulties manageable.

In addition, due to their social restrictions and lack of confidence, Korean-American immigrants may experience low self-esteem and loneliness (Lee 1994:56). Thus, they need some places or persons in order to manage their stresses. Korean-American immigrant churches and pastors provide these functions properly. Korean-American immigrants can counsel with their Korean pastors freely in Korean. Furthermore, there are some family problems in Korean immigrant families (Kim 1997:199). For example, many Korean immigrant families experience the generation gap, the lack of communication between family members, marital conflicts, and divorces (Lee 1994:44). In order to solve and reconcile their family problems, the role of Korean-American pastors as pastoral caregivers is very important. If they meet American counselors to counsel their problems, they

are not able to express their problems freely. Furthermore, Korean-American immigrant churches provide various activities for expressing and solving Korean-American immigrants' stresses. They can express their emotions as much as they like through their involvement in church activities.

However, while being responsible as a pastoral caregiver, Korean-American pastors are exposed to numerous stresses. Lee states (1994:53), "The stress of Korean-American parishioners from the American society is parallel to the stress of Korean-American pastors from Korean-American parishioners." It is true that most Korean-American pastors have experienced spiritual depression or psychological burnout (Jeong 1999:12). Thus, in order to prevent or minimize such things, pastoral care for Korean-American pastors is the necessary real solution.

2.4.3 Role as a social supporter

The role of Korean-American pastors as a social supporter is one of the important roles as a religious leader because Korean-American immigrants need Korean-American pastors' assistance while living in the United States as an alien. Illsoo Kim informs us of the social function of Korean-American immigrant churches.

Almost all routine community activities are centered in churches. This is because they are the only place where Korean immigrants can meet regularly. In the absence of effective community organizations that might meet the secular needs of all segments of the Korean population, Christian churches have emerged as a basic grass-roots community organization. In their non-religious roles, churches act as brokers between Korean immigrants and the dominant institutions of the larger society. (1981:191)

Many Korean-American immigrants want to solve or prepare their numerous immigrant works such as fixation in new environment, children's education, obtaining U.S. citizenship, and even seeking a job or business through Korean

immigrant churches or pastors. For example, when some persons consider immigrating to the United States, they first request some information about the immigrant life in the United States from Korean churches in America, even though the professional immigrant agencies provide such services. Once they make a decision for immigration and arrive in the United States, the Korean pastor who is requested goes to the airport to pick up them. And then the Korean pastor helps the Korean immigrants so that they can adjust in a new environment. For instance, when their children are admitted to an American school, Korean pastors do for the children's parents all necessary things for admission due to the language problem.

Furthermore, in order to install the telephone service or electric service, Korean pastors also submit for Korean immigrants an application for installment. Moreover, when Korean immigrants are sick, Korean pastors accompany them to receive correct consultations from doctors through the Korean pastors' translation. In addition, if legal problems happen, Korean immigrants request the legal advice from Korean pastors.

In relation to obtaining U.S. citizenship, Korean pastors introduce the necessary immigration agencies or prepare several documents to be used to apply for U.S. citizenship. All these things are because Korean-American pastors have various skills and knowledge needed to live in the United States (Kim 1997:202). In addition, while living in America and when unexpected events may happen, Korean pastors are such persons whom Korean immigrants meet and seek help from easily. Thus, it is certain that Korean-American pastors' assistance is very necessary.

On the other hand, Korean pastors' tasks, including religious roles and social roles, sometimes bring them heavy burdens. Indeed, it is true that it is difficult to balance the relationship between religious roles and social roles of Korean-American pastors (Kim 1981:91). This may be a reason that causes burnout in the pastoral context. In addition, Korean-American pastors may sometimes be confused about

their self-identities. They doubt whether they are real pastors who receive calling from God or simple social helpers. After all, their agonies bring confusion to their pastoral identity and calling. Therefore, it is very necessary to clarify their pastoral task and to restore their pastoral awakening.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has treated the general background of Korean-American immigrant churches. This chapter has focused especially on the characteristics of Korean-American immigrant churches and the roles of Korean-American pastors. Before examining the general background of Korean-American immigrant churches, the brief Korean immigrant churches' history has been mentioned.

The history of Korean immigrant churches is divided into four major periods: the period of new beginning and growth, 1903 – 1918, the period of nationalism, 1919 – 1945, the period of frustration and decline, 1945 – 1967, and the period of explosive growth of the church, 1968- present.

Four main characteristics of Korean immigrant churches are explained as stability of membership, in-group commitment and out-group indifference, older male domination of eldership, and conservative theological orientation and personal beliefs. In addition, Korean-American pastors must do for more pastoral works beyond a simple religious leader due to the special characters as an immigrant church. In order to manage the pastoral tasks, the roles as pastoral caregiver and social supporter are also required of Korean-American pastors.

My intention through this chapter was to examine the current situation of Korean-American immigrant churches and identify the position of Korean-American

pastors. Through this basic work, it will be helpful for the reader to understand Korean-American pastors' sufferings and hopes with which I will deal in the next chapter on their pastoral narratives.

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will describe narratives of each participant's interview. Their narratives are introduced by the description of their family background information, educational information, special reasons or motivations for why they believed in Jesus Christ, their calling to the ministry, immigration background, and descriptors of the experiences of Korean-American ministry. Above all, the narratives describe the four Korean-American pastors' pastoral sufferings in relation to the ministry that they experienced in the past, the reflections that they are experiencing in the present, and their hopes for the future. These are necessary contextual resources for the thematic interpretation, although each participant may differ in the recording of their narratives.

We can obtain many elements and various layers through individual life stories. As Dele proposed (1999:66), an individual life story is the process of their life in order to describe their narrative effectively because a person's life story may be dynamic and multidimensional like general stories that are created by the mouth. This means that each story is affected by the given context in which the narrative happens. Furthermore, the narrative is one of the important tools utilized to understand each person's life context. Therefore, in order to establish the appropriate approach of pastoral care for helping Korean-American pastors, it is necessary to examine those truths: At what stage of their ministry is the narrative being told? What is the feeling of the narrators? Are the narrator and listener similar in cultural background?