

# Growth of Christianity in the 20th Century: Korea

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Date: 04 March 2007

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[ 0 : 00 ] So this is a presentation I usually do towards the end of the course, having just focused on the explosion of Christianity in Africa, and then I focus on China, and then I focus on Korea, to give you a bit of a context for this talk this morning.

So it is, I'm talking about a story, I'm going to be looking at this in a fair amount of depth, a fair amount of cultural analysis, as well as spiritual analysis, so you may have to gird your loins to wade through this material with me, but I think it is very exciting.

So let's begin by opening prayer. Father, we thank you that you are the sovereign Lord of all history, that you orchestrate the rise of powers, the decline of powers, you orchestrate the putting of people into political office and taking them out, you orchestrate many things in order that your gospel might be proclaimed to all the nations.

And we thank you now as we turn to the nation of Korea and marvel at what you have done there in the last century and quarter. We pray your blessing in our thinking about this this morning, that your presence might be with us as we look at these facts and study the trends that are manifesting themselves in the global church.

We ask this in the name of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. Some of you may have read the book *The Next Christendom* by Philip Jenkins, an American historian, who argues that Korea is one of the great success stories of Christianity.

[ 1 : 53 ] Well, it has to keep in mind that in 1900, only about 1% of Korea was Christian. Christian missionaries really only entered Korea, Protestant missionaries, at least in the 1880s.

And yet today, South Korea is one of the strongest Christian nations in the world in terms of percentage. About 33% of South Korea is Christian today.

It has also become one of the most amazing success stories of the growth of Christianity in the global church.

Today, the Korean church, which South Korea, Korean Christians represent about one-third, as I suggested, about 16 million Christians in South Korea out of a population of 48 million.

So it's about 50% larger than Canada. But those 15 or 16 million Christians now send out almost as many missionaries as does the United States.

[ 2 : 55 ] For a Christian population of 16 million, it is sending out almost 11,000 full-time missionaries globally. And that is almost as many as the largest, which is the United States, which has a Christian population of arguably 200 million plus.

So Korea is not only an explosion of Christianity within itself, but it's also an explosion of missionary enthusiasm. Unparalleled, I think, in the history of Christianity.

I can't think of another nation that has sent out as many missionaries as quickly as Korea has. And what is fascinating about this is that most of those missionaries have... First, Korean cross-cultural missionaries were only sent out in about 1980.

So in the last 27 years, Korea has gone from a missionary-receiving nation to one of the two largest missionary-sending nations in the world. And we were talking with Don Curry, many of you will know, and him talking to me several years ago about Korean missionaries coming through Pakistan.

I said, what, Korean-speaking missionaries in Pakistan? I said, oh yes, they're very effective, and they're present all over Pakistan. In, I think it's Kurdistan, a nation to the north of Pakistan, you have the largest church in that country, I think, as Don said, about 350 people, is Korean-speaking.

[ 4 : 20 ] And you say, this is a Muslim republic, where they speak Kurdish, it's not Kurdistan, it's, I think it may be Tajikistan, one of those little republics in the north of Pakistan that used to be part of the Soviet Union.

And he said, well, the largest church there, is about 350, 400 people, and they're Korean-speaking. One of the amazing things that happened during the Cold War, between, not just between the West and China and Russia, but also the emerging conflict between China and Russia in the 1950s, the Russians became very anxious about Koreans living in Siberia, because they thought they might become a fifth column for China.

So what they did was they simply uprooted these Korean-speaking communities and moved them thousands of miles away to the West to get them away from the Chinese border and plunked them down here in the southern part of the Soviet Union.

And amongst them were a significant number of Christians. And now the largest Christian presence in that country is actually amongst the Korean-speaking people. There are large numbers of Korean-speaking people living in China, and there have been for a number of centuries.

And a number of these Korean-speaking Chinese are strongly Christian and are very much focused on the evangelization of North Korea, which, of course, is a country hermetically sealed to the rest of the world.

[ 5 : 45 ] I had a student in one of my classes last term who was working on a paper on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian from the 1930s, and he said he wanted to work on this.

And I said, well, there's not a lot written on Bonhoeffer. A number of the sources are only in German, so if you read German, this is a Korean student. If you read German, then you'd be able to do a lot more.

He said, what do you mean if I read German? I am German. I grew up speaking German. I went to German-speaking school in Cologne. Oh. So you're part of the Korean diaspora globally.

He said, yes, I am. And I was talking to him on Friday. He's with the American-Korean church and has just been accepted and appointed as pastor of a Korean-speaking church in Germany.

So the Korean factor in global Christianity is present everywhere. Korean Protestants now have, as I mentioned, almost 11,000 missionaries globally.

[ 6 : 49 ] Korea has become far more Christian than any other Asian nation in such a short time.

There are other Asian nations where Christianity has been for a number of centuries, particularly in the Philippines, which, of course, was a Spanish colony from the 1600s on.

But unlike many Asian nations, Korea is, and this is a very important understanding, the makeup of Korea. Korea is monocultural. That is, it's a small and culturally homogeneous country with only one racial group speaking one language.

In contrast to many Asian nations where you have many different cultural groups, different languages and dialects. China, for instance, is itself very diverse.

Mandarin speaking, Cantonese speaking, and many different dialects, even within those languages, that tends to fragment China. Geographically, Korea is isolated.

It is on a peninsula. Let's see if I can get to the, here you see the map of, how many of you have been to Korea? One, two, three, four.

[ 8 : 01 ] I have been to Korea two or three times, having spent a total of about 12 hours in the airport in Seoul. I spent four hours there in May on the way, no, I think this was in July on the way to China.

But Korea, as you know, is this peninsula just off the, just below China here. You see China from the north, Japan to the west, to the east, to the east.

And this is very important for Korea because Korea is wedged between these two superpowers. and like various areas of Europe, one could think of, it is the playground of international conflict historically.

Japan being an important imperial power in Asia, and China, of course, having imperial aspirations at different times. It is divided. Here's the famous dividing line between North and South.

Of course, this division came following the Korean War in 1950 when North Korea, aided by China and Russia, essentially tried to conquer the whole of the peninsula and incorporate the southern part of the peninsula into communist North Korea.

[ 9 : 18 ] That was resisted, of course, by Canadian troops, among others. and the Korean War, which I'll talk about in a little while, is very, very important in understanding the makeup of Korea at the moment.

Politically, it's been overshadowed by these powerful neighbors, not only China and Japan, but also at times by Russia, which is swabbed over it. Korean people, as I mentioned, tend to be, are

monocultural and very much ethnocentric.

That is, they're focused on their own community. There's a very strong Indian mentality and a group-centeredness. Loyalties to the group are very strong, and the structure of Korean society is strongly hierarchical.

You'll see this both in society and very much in the church. Korean pastors, if you think the Pope is powerful, you ain't seen nothing yet.

And there is, this is a problem, not just in Korean cultures, but often in other Asian cultures as well, the role of the pastor. And I'll talk a little bit more about that. Another very interesting aspect of Korean culture is that it is a global culture.

[10:44] It is, unlike many other countries in Asia, it has a global diaspora. There are about a million Korean Americans, but there are also Korean ethnic communities located throughout Asia, Russia, China, even in Africa and South America.

And the fact that Koreans are spread around the world, and the fact that their missionaries go out in the first instance to these communities is very important in the global spread of Christianity.

As these communities mature and become more adapted to their own communities and reaching out to their own communities, they could well become major forces for the evangelization of those communities.

How many Korean-speaking churches do you think there are in the lower mainland? Frankie? The person who has been keeping track of this is David Lay.

David Lay, who you probably know as our rector's warden, is, I'll bow his horn a little bit, he is one of the world's leading urban geographers. He's an expert on immigration patterns, particularly from Hong Kong, but also from Korea to North America.

[11:55] About five years ago, he was overseeing a project looking at the growth of Korean-speaking churches in the Vancouver area. And they've grown from, I think, a seven or eight in 1990 to well over a hundred by 2000.

So I was asked a few weeks ago by a student, a regent, a Korean student from, well, he lives on the North Shore. He said, when you come to speak to the little Korean group that I started at UBC two years ago, I started a small Bible study group with five or six Korean-speaking students.

I went and spoke to the Month History of Christianity in Korea and spoke to 120 students. It's probably the largest Christian student group at UBC.

And they're actually Korean-speaking. The service was in Korean. Now, all the students can understand English. Some of them are as fluent as you and I in English. Others are not as strong in English.

Very often, they're studying the sciences. But there's a very strong Korean-Christian presence in universities. And there's not just there, but the same thing in the University of Toronto.

[13:03] Very strong Korean-Christian presence. And it may be the case that Korean-Christians are more likely to immigrate from Korea than non-Korean Christians.

Certainly, the Korean-Christian churches work as reinforcers of Korean ethnic identity in the countries they've gone to. Another important aspect about the background here is that Korea's history is unique.

And that although it was dominated and controlled before a significant period by a foreign power, the power, when you talk about Chinese history, one of the very important issues that Christian guys wrestled with was in the 19th century, China was carved out by the Western powers.

So you had an area of French domination, of British domination, of American domination. There was a scramble for power in China. And the weak Chinese empire was basically manipulated and controlled from behind by foreign powers.

The same thing happened in Korea, as we'll see, but very important here is that the key imperial powers operating in Korea were actually Asian powers, Asian imperial powers.

[14:13] That is, particularly Japan and, to a lesser extent, China. China, Korea is going to be dominated roughly from 1900 to 1945 by Japan.

And the war between North and South Korea is really going to break and reinforce Western influence in Korea. If one looks at the numbers, I think I've got a number of numbers here to throw you.

I think I have them on your sheet. Here you see in absolute numbers the growth of the numbers of Christians in Korea between 1957 and the year 2000 from less than, well, from less than a million in

1957 to over 12 million.

And these are just Protestants. You have to add on about another three million Roman Catholics. Here you see the shift even between the ten years, or the six years between 1985 and 1981, falling no religion category, rise both in Buddhism, Protestantism, and Catholicism.

It is becoming less, particularly among the young people, less common for people not to have any religion and people who are either converting to Christianity or to Buddhism.

[15:42] Now, one of the most interesting things is that the Christians Christians, let me back up one step. Until 30 years ago, it was commonplace to say that Christianity does better in rural areas and not well in cities.

That was not true in the Roman Empire. That may have been true in the Middle Ages, but most places in the Middle Ages were rural, so if you're going to have growth, it makes sense that you're going to have it there.

What is quite remarkable about Korea, Singapore, and China, we don't have data on China the way we do on Korea and Singapore, but Christianity both in Korea and amongst the Chinese of Singapore go against this trend, at least this projected trend by some sociologists.

Korean Christians, as is the case with Chinese Christians in Singapore, tend to be more urban, better educated than the average population, and younger.

So in terms of the trends for the future, if your young people are a higher percentage of Christians, that would seem likely to carry on as they may move through when you get to people who are 55, they are more urban and better educated.

[17:09] Peter Berger, who was the doctoral supervisor or somebody who they were, Craig Gay, who you may recall. Craig did his doctorate with Peter Berger, who teaches at Boston University.

Berger oversaw a major research project a few years ago, and he did the Lang lectures at Regent about five years ago and I was talking to him about the study which he had just done.

He was actually studying business culture in Korea, Hong Kong, and Singapore and came up with some fascinating conclusions that have very significant implications for the church.

research. What he found is he studied Korean culture and then looked at business culture in China and both in Hong Kong and Singapore, is that in the Chinese context, the family is the company.

One of the implications of that is that Chinese companies tend to become only so big and then can't grow any bigger. And I've talked to friends like Edward Huyi, he says, oh yes, in Chinese culture you can only trust people within your family.

[18:23] So as big as the family can be is as big as the company can be. You can't get any bigger than that because you only will have people, key people in the company who are members of your extended family.

Japanese and Korean culture are just the opposite. In Japanese culture and Korean culture, culture, it is the company that becomes the family. Now think about that.

Think about the size of Japanese companies, Mitsubishi, Toyota. These enormous companies care for every aspect of their workers.

They are involved in their socialization, their education, their cradle-to-grave care provided by the company. It is the company that becomes your family. And so you see the same thing with the development of Korean corporations.

You get these massive Korean corporations that you simply don't see developing in the Chinese context. A very interesting crossover in terms of cultural dynamics and business organization.

[19:28] But it's the same thing in churches. What you see in Korea are massive churches because the church, in effect becomes the family. In the way that the company becomes the family.

So you get Young Lee Cho's church in Korea, which is probably the largest church in the history of Christianity. 200,000 members of one church. On Sunday morning they dominate the traffic patterns of Seoul by tens of thousands of people coming to this service and then leaving, then tens of thousands of coming to the next service and then leaving, then tens of thousands.

Jim, have you ever spoken in a Korean church in Korea? No. No. When Jim went to Formosa last year with our president, one of our alumni is pastoring a church there.

I think we were expecting a few hundred people to turn up to hear Jim. Was it 3,000? 4,000? No, it was 1,000. 1,000. But it always is fast. The Apocrypha is always expanding here.

But you get these mega churches. In 1994, over 10 churches in Korea had constituency over 10,000.

[ 20 : 47 ] Many more had between 5,000 and 10,000. And those numbers today are even much higher. Go on and some more statistics here.

Here you see the percentage of the population that are Protestant. This is the percentage of the population who have university education.

So the Christians, although they make up 18% of the population, have 26% of the university educated people. So you can see the same thing with the Catholics. About 6% of the population, about 10% with the university education.

So again, the Christians tend to be much better educated than the rest of the population, than either the, well certainly much more so than the Buddhists. The non-religious people are roughly the same.

And then again, the breakdowns. This is the percentage in this age group that are Protestant, the percentage Catholic. Notice as you go down, it's the percentages of Christians tend to be in the younger age groups.

[ 22 : 02 ] So the trend is the younger, better educated, more likely to be Christians. Also, the same is true in terms of here's the where the bulk of the Christians are.

Again, it's generally from the younger Protestantism is relatively younger, it's just the opposite of the Buddhists.

Buddhism tends to hang on amongst the older generations and also, as the next slide will show you, it tends to be stronger. This is the no religion category.

But this is what I've just been talking about here and so on. as I mentioned here about the rule of the Korean War.

Let's go and say something about the history.

[ 23 : 17 ] Roman Catholics were in Korea from the late 1700s, from 1784. the history of Catholic Christians in Korea is a heroic one.

There were waves of persecution of Catholics. One of the problems, of course, for any religion coming in from outside in a monocultural setting where religion is an important aspect of the cultural identity, the first Christians then are going to be very much targeted and persecuted.

And the Roman Catholic Christians in Korea certainly are going to take it on the chin. In 1801, there were some 300 Catholic martyrs. There were going to be waves of persecution throughout the 19th century.

New toleration. Again, you see this coming and going in terms of the Catholic work in China. China. But the record of Catholicism in China is one of tremendous parolism under tremendous pressure from a very resistant culture.

One of the problems for the Catholic Church was it was seen very much as being associated with France, with French imperialism. The priests who came in were associated with the Catholic bishop in Beijing.

[ 24 : 42 ] Beijing. And so this added a perceived threat that the Catholic presence in Korea was very much aligned with Western imperialism.

And this is going to be very difficult for the Roman Catholic presence in Korea. The last wave of persecution, major wave of persecution comes in the late 1860s.

Again, this is the context of an important political threat from the West. Protestant, the first Protestant missionary to come to Korea comes in the 1880s.

He was actually a Japanese Christian who had been converted and came representing of all people the National Bible Society of Scotland. It's got to be a story so long.

Quite remarkable. It's interesting. In the 1970s, one of the most important means of evangelization was really the support given by the British foreign Bible Society to translation work.

[ 26 : 05 ] The British foreign Bible Society was operating all over the world trying to translate the Bible into the major languages that missionaries were encountering. So this first contact of Protestant missionaries coming to Japan comes in the early 1780s with his entering Pusan, the city in Korea, where he distributed Bibles written in Chinese and Japanese, as well as portions of the gospel and through which tracks written in Korea.

But the support for this missionary endeavor, really the major impetus for foreign missionaries coming into, Protestant missionaries coming into Korea is going to be from the United States and particularly from American Presbyterians.

And Presbyterianism today is still one of the most important denomination among Protestants in Korea. The Presbyterian Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and the missionaries.

Horace Allen, whose name is probably not known to you but is certainly known to Korean Christians, was the first American Presbyterian missionary to Korea.

He was a medical doctor and arrived in the Korean capital in 1884. He arrives in a period of tremendous political uncertainty in the very year he arrives there's an attempted overthrow of the Korean government.

[ 27 : 46 ] Prince, Prince Min was left near death because he had been slashed by one of the rebels and Dr. Allen is called in to treat the prince and he's the heir parent of the throne and spends three months meticulously caring for the prince and manages to save his life.

again, this is a turning point. You have to appreciate that these missionaries are regarded as foreign intruders. Korea doesn't need anything from outside and yet at just the point where this missionary doctor arrives he has the honor of saving the prince's life which gives the missionaries royal favor and huge advantage here that the protestant missionaries have in that they by bringing in a sense the heavy guns as Andrew Walz called the missionary movement medical missionaries means they have a special entree into Korea and when Dr.

Allen petitions the monarchy to allow for the establishment of a western hospital this is granted in the following year in 1885. there will be a flood of other protestant missionaries in particularly Canadian missionaries Canadian Presbyterian Church is going to send in significant numbers there will be Angus missionaries over 70 years ago in the conference of Jim Packer and I think we're both at in Oxford one of the bishops who was there sort of like the global essentials gathering was a bishop from Korea it's really very orthodox and godly in spite of these advances there is a great field hostility towards foreigners particularly because of the tradition or the problems that the Roman Catholics had encountered in Korea and particularly because they are seen as representatives of the foreign powers in fact in 1888 the government sensing that the Catholic missionaries are siding with France and with Russia is going to prohibit the propagation of Catholicism in Korea rumors rumors are going to spread that the foreigners these foreign people are paying Korean gangsters to kidnap children to eat using their eyes for producing photographs all sorts of strange things these sorts of rumors are something the churches really since the first century had to deal with Satan loves to spread dreadful lies about Christians and very often in these sorts of contexts they're easy believed there's a great deal of hesitancy too about Western education but the missionaries commit themselves to education as well as to as to the development of hospitals and in spite of a certain degree of reluctance on the part of Koreans there will be many Koreans who will look to the Christians for schools in fact the Presbyterians are going to particularly good in a whole educational area are going to meet this demand and also develop an approach to missionary work known as the Nebius Method Nebius was a missionary who developed a means of employing national workers to carry out the work of evangelization and this method is going to be very very effective not in China where it was first at all but rather in Korea the use of natives to carry on and develop the work the next phase of Korean history is going to be important because between 1890 and 1910 there will be a remarkable expansion of Protestant missionary work context of this is the context of in the early 1890s

[ 32 : 17 ] Japan and China had their eyes on Korea Japan regards Korea as its sphere of influence the Chinese try to get involved the Russians then begin to get involved and in 1894 1895 there's actually a war the Russian Japanese war and the Russians are trounced by Japan and Japan begins to exercise its control of Korea more and more in the early 1900s 1905 Korea there's a great deal of resistance on the part of Koreans to the Japanese troops who are there and this rebellion is crushed by the Japanese and Japan beginning of 1905 seeks to incorporate Korea as simply part of Japan Koreans are told that they have to adopt Japanese names there's a deliberate attempt to incorporate Korea into the Japanese empire this is done with the collusion of the

United States Teddy Roosevelt who had just seized the Philippines for America in the war between Spain and the United States the Spanish American War of 1898 has seized the Philippines as part of a new American empire many of us don't recall this but America for a time sought to get into the direct imperial game by seizing the Philippines and so in 1905 American government says okay we will recognize the rights of Japan to dominate Korea in exchange for your recognizing our right to control the Philippines this is done over the very strong protests of American missionaries but this

does happen the United States is one of the more shameful aspects of how the United States operates between

World War I and it's something that we in the West are unaware of what happens in this period is really quite interesting and it has to broaden one scope back over it historians in the last 10 years have begun to recognize that in the period between 1900 and 1910 you have a series of very important movements of renewal beginning in different parts of the world that will reshape global Christianity in the 20th century and there's not been much historical work done on these movements but the story is now beginning to pay attention most obvious of course is 1906 the outbreak of Pentecostalism in Los Angeles the Azusa Street Revival tremendous attention given to that in the global Pentecostal movement today that over focus on

Azusa Street I think has to be balanced by recalling that in 1904 1905 there was something called the Welsh Revival tremendous awareness of the work of the Holy Spirit in Welsh mining villages tremendous response to the preaching of the gospel for a time in Wales also in 1904 in India it was the work of Kanita Raw I never heard of her but she is a major figure in Christianity convert from Hinduism she begins to see in her ministry near Bombay quite a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit in North China in 1907 1908 the Hingwa Revival reports of what's happening in Wales reach missionaries in northern China and there is quite a remarkable revival that sets the background of the growth of the independent underground church in

China after 1949 there's also the very same time in northeast India way if you think of the map of India and then Bangladesh which is to the right side which would be the east north of Bangladesh there's an arm of India that comes out tucked in between Bangladesh and China the Indian provinces of Assam Mizoram Nagaland these areas are tribal areas and in this very same period 1906 1907 you see a tremendous turning to Christianity in this area these areas today are 98 99% Christian they're being isolated from the rest of India because of political concerns there's a strong separatism in that area of India but again a very important explosion of Christianity in an area of the world that is largely sort of off the radar screen of Western Christians and the same thing happens in

[ 37 : 36 ] Korea in 1907 Pyong Pyong revival of 1907 is just now being studied by Christians and one of the best scholars I've read on this is an Indian historian who teaches at Presbyterian school in Texas of all places Arun Jones who notes that Pyongyang revival of 1907 is regarded by Korean Christians as really the explosion of the place where Christianity begins to explode in Korea as one Korean has said to missionaries some of you go back to John Calvin and some of you to John Wesley but we can go back no further than 1907 when we really first knew the Lord Jesus Christ and this revival is a fascinating period in which a number of the pre-Christian elements of Korean religion begin to merge with

Christianity you can call it syncretism if you like I don't think it's so much syncretism as more acculturation and Arun Jones is very strong in discerning some of these influences particularly the traditional role of the shaman or we might call medicine man but the person responsible for religion in traditional Korean culture this if you what Jones has done is studied the roles that this person plays and then showed how these roles become central to the the Korean understanding of what a pastor is to do a pastor has one of the things that is quite characteristic of this is an emphasis upon tears in worship and the 1907 revival is often referred to as a revival of tears people praying loudly expressing themselves very if you ever been to an early morning

Korean Koreans love to get up about 5 in the morning and pray for an hour everybody praying aloud at the same time so it is rather overwhelming if you are not used to this in fact when I went to UBC the meeting I was at there everybody there was a time of prayer and we have prayers of the people well this was prayers of the people this is everybody at the top of their voice praying together you couldn't make out what anybody was saying but everybody just expressing from their heart the lungs of their heart to God in public prayer and this again is a characteristic that is carried over from pre-Christian Korean religion into Christianity and again the role of the pastor here the pastor in Korean churches is sort of Mr. Fix-it man he is responsible for all areas of the life of the community and again there are certain characteristics carried over from pre-Christian time in Korea that come to the fore you see the emergence of very strong

Korean leadership here again this is happening throughout the world one of the most perceptive comments I've heard Brian Stanley make Brian teaches at mission historian at Cambridge University what you see in this period is really quite amazing you have a shift of leadership from

missionary leadership and this is happening in Africa in parts of Asia and Latin America a shift from missionary leadership to indigenous leadership and very often the leadership the indigenous leadership is while they're respectful of the missionaries they want to do Christianity on their own they want to have a Korean led or an African led or an African expressed form of Christianity they will take all the tools that the missionaries have given them the translation of the Bible into the vernacular hymns catechetical material teaching material use all that but use it and express it in a way that strictly reflects their own culture and that I think has been the great secret behind the explosion of

Protestant Christians and Christianity in the 20th century this revival in 1907 is going to occur just before the Japanese really come down hard in their treatment of Korea the Korean churches in fact are to be prepared to enter a new era when from 1910 Korea the whole of Korea is annexed by Japan and incorporated into Japan the Japanese the Japanese administrative policy towards the churches was seemingly friendly probably because the government recognizes that Christian support for Japanese rule is essential if it is going to operate smoothly but fairly quickly it develops into an open policy of oppression and hostility new government seems to recognize that [ 42 : 52 ] Korean churches were an organization which was capable of resisting its rule the Japanese also assumed that these Christian missionaries from the west would be agents of the powers that had sent them so American missionaries represent American interests what really gets the Japanese upset is that the independence movement that is Korean nationalism that comes to the poor in the 1910s is disproportionately Protestant many of the Korean nationalists are from Protestant backgrounds there's conspiracy trial that the Japanese government creates in 1911 in which the Japanese claimed that there was an attempt to assassinate the governor general the Japanese governor general of

Korea 124 Koreans are arrested in a charge of being involved in the independence movement most of them are acquitted but the fact that 98 of the 124 were Christians impressed both the Koreans and the Japanese one one of the remarkable things here is that you have a situation where you have a foreign imperial power trying to subjugate the Koreans but the people who stand up against the Japanese are overwhelmingly Christian so what you're beginning to see is an alliance in the minds of the people of Christian Korean and anti-Japanese that is against the imperial power and what is particularly important here is the imperial power is not a western power the resentment is not towards the

Christian west as imperial power resentment is directly against the Korean government in 1919 there is an independent movement that comes forward is the declaration of independence signed by 33 people almost half of them are Christians again although Christians represent a very small percentage of population just over 1% almost half the people signing this document are Christians again the Japanese are aware of this and they are going to do everything they can to make life difficult for the Christians they start promoting Shinto worship in Japan SRA in Korea and will expel foreign missionaries try to force the Korean

Christians into this form of Japanese Buddhism by 1941 missionaries who remain as was the outbreak of the United States are all arrested by the Japanese and incarcerated missionaries flatly refusing to allow the teachers in their schools or their students to pinch the rituals and willing to accept harassment and pressure by the government again helps to cement this feeling that the Christians are for us Koreans of course 1945 the end of World War II brings about a new situation for the first time in 35 years Korea is no longer the rule director from Japan the celebration of liberation however short lived because the

United States and the Russians carve up Korea the Americans dominating South Korea North Korea is dominated by the Russians of course who were fought alongside the Western powers in World War II and then this eventually results in this war when North Korea beginning in the early 1950s the Russians and the Chinese seek to dominate the whole of Korea in 1950 as the war breaks out many Christians in the North and there are large numbers of Christians in the North many of them begin to flee to the South so you get a concentration now of the Christians in South Korea given the political situation it's interesting that the current dictator of North Korea Kim Jo Gil the son of Kim Il-Jean his grandmother was a

[ 48 : 08 ] Christian probably where the family other the very fact that he and his father were educated probably came from the fact that the grandmother was a developed Christian and assisted on their education in fact I think it was his father built a church one of the very few

churches in North Korea on the site where his mother used to go to pray every day in the sense honoring his mother her devotion although certainly not sharing it themselves with the outbreak of the Korean war you have a mass killing of Christians by the communists flight of Christians to South Korea and then aid from the west pouring into South Korea particularly the United States Americans opened their wallets and not only American government but private agencies operate very strongly in Korea beginning in the 1950s and this is going to be setting the stage for the remarkable growth of

Christianity over the next 30 years in Korea again I've outlined in your handout some of the factors here Christian support for democracy and government reform again a high percentage of Korean politicians come from the Christian community Korean Christians as we mentioned become very focused on cross cultural missions sending out missionaries to Japan of all places Taiwan to Bolivia Pakistan and to these various immigrant communities they also get involved in translation and publishing ventures the Bible is going to be re-translated into Korea in the 1970s they effectively use the media to the Christian broadcasting system in 1954 establishing stations in all major cities over South Korea broadcasting Christian music and dramas church related news and these radio stations become a major means of evangelism focus as well as a great deal of focus upon the evangelization of the

Korean army taking very seriously responsibility for people who express interest to provide ongoing teaching for people programs of industrial chaplaincy as well as army chaplaincy established in the 1950s within factories and mines industrial chaplaincy were established to spread Christianity amongst the workers often a worker evangelist would be hired and placed to work along the workers in their setting one of the characteristics we've mentioned is this strong group cultural identity here you see the full gospel church in Seoul associated with the assemblies of God 837,000 members a little larger than the church role of St.

George mentioned what a church business meeting would be like someone described as a gigantic building shaped like a huge baseball stadium the lighting is very bright and everything about the place is shall we say rather over the top the service felt like a baseball game this is right in the heart of Seoul similar to Manhattan this is the cause endless tragedy on Sunday morning here you see the inside of it you really wouldn't want to have an altar call David Martin who some of you may know is a little bit of a lecture in region actually is an minister by sociology and religion speaks of a literal spiritual enterprise culture in which the chief pastor executive provides many secular roles in social worker employment exchange official kind of store manager and a broker and educator and a fixer so again to understand the model here

I think you have to pre-Christian Korean religion to understand the pastor model here and Ruth Jones is particularly strong on understanding this the denominations I think I have some of you related denominations maybe I don't know Catholic missions and talked about all these things I mentioned the Presbyterians are the largest Protestant denomination in Korea Pentecostals very strong Salvation Army relatively small Anglican Presidents Methodists quite strong I mentioned them being there in the 1880s on factors contributing to its growth Christianity in Korea has become the option of the poor but they don't remain poor very long one of remarkable things sociologists looking at the growth of Christianity in different countries talk about social lift that is somebody is converted at one particular level society they stop breaking they start working hard they start saving their money they value education and what happens their children become better educated than their parents their grandchildren much better educated what you see is the impact of

[ 53 : 44 ] Christianity is it creates social lifts so the people from poor backgrounds become middle class and then often very wealthy particularly when you add the social networking of a strong religious community mutual aid the Quakers or the Post-Brethren are very good examples of how this has happened over the years but I think Korean Christianity as well we mentioned that Christianity is aligned with anti-imperial forces pro-democracy of Korean nationalism certainly the tremendous relief of efforts in the 1950s groups like World Vision and others are very involved in the 1950s and this wins over many Koreans who are very hostile towards Christianity at least makes them appreciative of the efforts of the Christians even though they may not convert they may become less fiercely opposed to Christianity so if their child or grandchild becomes a Christian there is less strong reaction there is certainly a response part of this is that people tend to question their religious identity when the old religion isn't working anymore they tend to question their identity when they move from one place to another will we continue with our old religion or does our new

location mean that we need to think of new options this is certainly part of the industrialization of the Korean context as we see more people are likely to be Christians than the highly industrialized urban center in Korea the church there provides an identity that is no longer available in the urban setting the traditional forms of social networking break them down as you move from the urban to the rural to the urban areas churches have been very involved in labor and democratic movements and then what we just talked about the congruence of Christianity and Greek and folk culture particularly some of these pre-Christian patterns of how Korea operates and what you end up with is a very vibrant but also a religious culture that does tend to fragment and the Koreans are well I guess

Presbyterians have a pretty good record of fragmenting but the Koreans even probably adding the sort of emperor complex in this tends to be one of the ongoing problems is that Korean Christianity tends to keep on splitting and you've got a multitude of denominations and some very powerful personalities in terms of the pastoral leadership but that's a very fast overview of something that I could spend much longer on much more depth but perhaps questions would be the way to go here and I don't know that I'm going to be able to answer your questions very well but I certainly will try how many major Korean searches downtown I'm looking at the next federal election I don't know you have to ask David David Lay he would know where they are and where they're really large I think they're probably the patterns because so much of the Korean immigration to British Columbia has occurred in the last 15 years I would expect that most of the Korean churches are in the more outlying areas Surrey Richmond relatively few here in Vancouver proper I think there is a Korean congregation that meets the Anglican Church in the West End Catholic I think it is I wanted to ask you about the denominational aspect of this you talked about how important certain denominations were at the beginning but what we're noticing I think in North America is less allegiance to denominations and people seeking out a church that feeds them as it were that isn't necessarily what we were born into is that kind of thing also happening in the East no

I don't think so I was quite surprised I was at a conference recently where I learned to my surprise that half of Americans worshiped in mega churches which I had no idea that mega churches were that big I mean you know of Willow Creek and some of these huge mega churches but half of Americans who worship on a Sunday morning worshiped in mega churches that was real surprising half of Americans worship now in non-denominational churches and even denominational churches in America don't want they don't want anybody to know they actually belong to a denomination they'll have such and such community church and then three point affiliated with they're afraid that will put people off I'm not going to be welcome there because I'm not Anglican or I'm not Presbyterian so such and such community church I don't see that I think the Korean pattern is much more a strong allegiance to a local church and denomination partly because of the role the Korean churches play in social identity and ethnic identity so with my Korean friends there tends to be as I see it quite a strong commitment to Presbyterianism or to Presbyterianism one friend Korean friend is Baptist but it is I think much more loyal in terms of denomination now the longer the North American Koreans are here probably the less as they move away from the Korean connection but it is very strong in her relationship the church my sister goes to a Minnesota the Wooddale church in Eden Prairie I think it is on the outskirts of Minneapolis would not describe themselves as a megachurch they only have about 6500 members and it is small print Baptist and the rest is community but they always hire pastors and they plant them church every two years from the BCG or is it BGC Baptist General Conference yeah BGC so there is that kind of continuity sort of at the leadership level but but that is in very very tiny print at the bottom of

[ 60 : 18 ] BORIS you know most of these megachurch when the church gets so big it starts becoming virtually a denomination done to itself and that's just the nature of these megachurches so they tend to be and there's something healthy about that and something unhealthy about it Bill and then take it yeah big meetings obviously are sort of charismatic jamborilles what you describe what about the grounding work developing theology and so forth like that is that going on in this church as well that's a good question the large megachurches in Korea are very strong cell groups and at least Yogi Cho's church is I know so the Sunday morning jamboree as you put it is only the tip of the iceberg they have a very structured discipleship program they plug people into small groups so there is a great deal of follow up you can't mount you know the support of 11,000

cross-cultural missionaries worldwide without a strong structure and these churches generally have it they are very dedicated very hard working very networked again it's very hard for westerners to appreciate the strong in-group mentality here so this is something that we with our much more focus on individualism and individual initiative we haven't lived and we brought up in that society we find it very hard to understand but that's so much part of it much much more so than say for my

Korean my Chinese friends who don't have that same even in China you do see some large churches but nothing on the scale that you see in Korea so do they take the extreme Pentecostal view no tongues no salvation do they oh you will find all sorts of varieties on that score one of the things that serves a lot of people with a number of these major not only in Korea but also in Africa in other parts of Asia is the emphasis upon prosperity gospel you know if you join us you God will bless you and you become wealthy and you do get some who will teach that if you're not healed then that's a result of lack of faith etc but that sort of immaturity you know you don't find many Christians who have been

Christians for 20 years who believe that because they know people who have been healed and people who haven't been healed and you know you can't walk the path discipleship very long without going through suffering and if you don't see suffering as part of God's way of bringing you to the conformity of Christ you're going to get pretty discouraged and drop out so I tend to be fairly I think it's bad theology I think a lot of people will grow out of it into a much more mature perspective but whenever you see ever in the history of the church you see the explosion of the church you see explosion of these problems cults and misemphasis God is patient with us he hasn't given up on the church I was wondering the fairly recent announcement by North Korea that they have been down their arms do you think there will be in the near future reuniting the patient

God only knows the Korean Christians have been praying for that for 50 years the Korean Christians are just waiting the whole churches and organizations all right on the edge as soon as North Korea is open they want to flood in with workers and they are very anxious to see because there are not a families who have not seen their other family for 50 odd years so there's a whole generation of people grown up in Christian churches and the South were desperate and they're doing a lot to try to reach into North Korea but it's very difficult they did shake on it didn't they the leadership council are there good seminaries in Korea yes there are a number of very good seminaries in Korea a lot of their best students come to North America for training in fact a lot of American seminaries would have closed their doors hadn't been

Korean students in the last 15-20 years unfortunately a number of them come to very liberal seminaries in America hopefully they don't understand enough of the English to be taught to understand what they fed to them but there are good seminaries in Korea Bill do you want to we've got one more question from here do we have time for yes a number you think a very exciting picture of the church in Korea as of now I'm wondering if there is a conscious planning of the development of the post-Christian culture or whether in fact there's some way of avoiding the West experience yeah that's a good point a number of scholars think that Christianity has crested in Korea that the sort of plateaued I'm not sure I mean just from a purely demographic point of view if the young people are higher percentage

[ 66 : 13 ] Christians as they work their way through you probably will see an increasing percentage of the population becoming Christian there was some study recently that argued that Protestant churches were actually declining in Korea but that I think has been debunked by other research but there is a problem of second and third generation Christians now people having inherited a faith in their parents they no longer fully embrace so that is the problem of nominalism is there as it is everywhere at all times in the history of the church you can see it in the second century you can see it in the 21st century but again Korean Christians are very sharp very well educated and they see these problems and want to address them some of the very best students I've had a region I've been Korean students I had a couple years ago he was an oral surgeon his wife was a dentist and he'd become a Christian when he was doing an engineering degree in Korea

I think in his mid-20s and his aim is eventually to be able to go to North Korea to the gospel very very sharp very dedicated tremendous hope for the leadership of the Korean Christians are going to be able to offer the church the church thank you Tom to theton