the Gospel” in the theology of Calvin. It contains three elements: 1) Bible believing, 2) Gospel faith, and 3) Sanctifying faith (namely Living faith). “Faith in the Gospel” starts with “Biblical faith”. And “Gospel faith” gives birth to “Sanctifying faith.” Here, drawing our particular attention is the fact that “Faith in the Gospel” must be an evangelical and biblical faith in parallel with living faith. Living faith is a faith believing God’s real presence with us and having assurance of God’s providence in our life and ministry. In this problem of having true faith, we cannot too much stress the fact that Christian community must have “Living faith” as much as “Faith in the Gospel.”

주제이: 복음신앙(Faith in the Gospel), 성경신앙(Bible Believing), 성화의 신앙(Sanctifying Faith), 삶 신앙(Living Faith), 구원의 신앙(Saving Faith).

Korean Missiology: A Survey of the
English dissertations and theses

by Kenneth Nehrbass

Introduction

In the past sixty years, Koreans have become a dominant force in the movement to bring the gospel of Jesus Christ to every tribe and nation. Korean involvement in the development of missiology as an academic discipline has become equally significant. Since 1983, around one hundred theses or dissertations have been published on Korean missiology (in the English language). This article describes what topics Koreans are focusing on as they study at graduate schools of mission. By surveying their published dissertations and theses, we can see what issues are of concern to Koreans as they begin their careers as professional missiologists, and perhaps we can also discover what matters they’ve neglected to study. We will also
be able to determine the extent to which non-Koreans are engaging in the topic of Korean missiology.

To survey the nearly one hundred graduate theses and dissertations, I will first look at the universities at which they have been completed. Then I will categorize the research into four broad themes: 1) Korean theologies of mission; 2) missions to Korea; 3) missions from Korea; and 4) Koreans in America. I will also point out some areas where research is notably missing, with the aim of encouraging budding Korean missiologists to explore these neglected areas as they consider a topic for future research.

Where Korean missiology is being published

Fuller School of World mission in Pasadena, Ca., has by far the most substantial body of Korean missiological contributions, with at least 37 theses or dissertations published in the ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Series. Koreans started studying missiology at Fuller earlier than any other institution in the USA (probably because Fuller has one of the oldest missiology programs). Combining three graduate schools at Biola in La Mirada, Ca., (Cook School of Intercultural Studies, Rosemead and Talbot) there are at least eight dissertations or theses specifically on the topic of missions. Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) in Jackson, MS., has seven; Asbury in Louisville, Ky., has six; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, Ca., have four; and Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, in Deerfield Ill., has three.

Koreans are increasingly studying missiology, and they are now attending institutions all over the United States. Of the nearly one hundred studies I mention here, 55 have been written since 2000. Around 28 schools are represented in this article. What is shocking, though, is that all the theses or dissertations have been done in the United States except for one from Canada (J.-G. Kim, 1983). Since Koreans are in diaspora all over the English speaking world, it would be best to see Korean missiology begin to come out of universities in Europe and Australia.

While all of these studies were written in North America, they are not all in English. It is encouraging to note that Fuller is allowing Korean texts (H.-M. Kim, 1985; Koh, 1986; Y. B. Park, 1985). Hopefully, other seminaries will become equipped to offer the same opportunity for Koreans to publish in the Korean language. Also, it is equally promising to discover that not all Korean missiology has been written by Koreans (see Tait, 2008; Underwood, 2000).

Since missions is an evangelical activity, most missiological studies (whether by Koreans or any other nationality) are being done at evangelical institutions. However, some “missional” studies have come out from more “ecumenical” institutions such as Claremont (D.-S. Kim, 1996; T.-S. Kim, 1996; C.-S. Lee, 1983; Oh, 2009) or even from secular schools such as the University of Illinois, Urbana Champaign (Underwood, 2000) and
the University of Southern California, Los Angeles (S. Kim, 2003). The broader the range of universities represented in Korean missiology, the richer the discipline will be, and the greater its scope of influence will be.

Korean theologies of mission

If a Korean graduate student wants his research to be highly specialized and useful to those working in the Korean context, he could limit his research topic to either reaching or equipping Koreans (these broad categories are mentioned in later sections of the article). But if he wants his or her research to be accessible to those outside of the Korean context, he may consider a broader topic related to the theology of mission in general, such as incarnational (holistic) missions (Jung, 2002). Also, Lee (1994) has written an ingenious theology of mission based on Abrahamic covenants, arguing for a covenant-oriented missiology, which is accessible to missionaries working in any field. Kim’s (1992) study on ecumenism and interreligious dialogue is equally relevant in any missionary context.

However, most Korean theologies of mission do focus on specifically Korean topics, such as what led to the modern missions movement in Korea (Cho, 2002), or Jang’s (2000) comparison of attitudes toward mission from students at RTS and Chongshin University and Theological Seminary in Seoul.

Missions to Korea

Before Korea was a sending country, it was a mission field. So it is appropriate to look first at theses that have been written about the mission to Korea. The broad category of “missions to Korea” can be further atomized into historical studies and contextual studies.

History of American missions to Korea

Studying the history of missions in Korea is an excellent missiological pursuit, since we can learn from the past. Cha (2011) has given a broad history of American missions in Korea. Lee’s (1983) study shows how the cross-cultural process affected church growth. There is a study on the Student Volunteer Movement’s effect on Korea (Song, 1995). Also notable are histories of expatriate women missionaries to Korea (K. H. L. Ahn, 2004; Yoon, 2008) and specifically women from the Methodist Episcopal South (M.-S. Im, 2008). There have been studies on denominational missionary work, such as the US Presbyterian mission in Korea (Underwood, 2000), Canada’s Korean mission (Tait, 2008), a history of Korean Baptist missions (H. Y. Ahn, 2002), and the Southern Baptist Convention’s mission to Korea (S. J. Kim, 1995). The cooperation of various denominations was examined in Byun’s (2003) dissertation on comity agreements in Korea. There have also been historical studies on para-church missions such as the Methodist medical mission to Korea (Shim, 2006).
Church planting in Korea

Since WWII, the task of reaching Koreans was taken up by Koreans themselves. There is an increasing body of literature on the theology and praxis of church planting in Korea (see D. Choi, 2006; K.-Y. Han, 1987); and with Seoul’s emergence as a “world class city,” there has been a focus on urban church planting (Koh, 1986). Also, a prescription for effective strategies for foreign missionaries in Korea is especially valuable to expatriates interested in Korean missionology (Y. S. Park, 2002).

Korean contextual theology

Korea is rapidly becoming evangelized, but there are still millions of agnostics, Buddhists, animists and shamanists. There have been missiological contributions on Korean churches reaching the non-believers at home (B. S. Kim, 1998; H. M. Kim, 2007; M.-I. Lee, 1995). Some studies focus specifically on reaching Koreans entrenched in animism (N. H. Jang, 1993) or shamanism (K.-Y. Han, 1987; Y. J. Park, 1984). An “ecumenical” study theorizes about merging Easter philosophy with Wesleyan theology (O. Kwon, 2006). Another study discusses an indigenous Korean hymnody (E. J. Kim, 2010).

There have been several attempts at addressing specific elements of Korean theology, such as minjung (Chong, 1995; S.-B. Lee, 1993; S. S. Lee, 2009; Y. J. Park, 1984). Kim (2006) has a clever contextual study, comparing jeong (Korean for hospitality, love) to agape (Greek for love), as a missionary method. American missionaries have also engaged in the discussion of contextualization in Korea, as described in Oak’s study (2002).

There have been more practical-oriented studies, such as mobilizing the Korean church for missions (Gang, 2000), getting Koreans to be missions-minded (S.-U. Kim, 2007; G. P. Lee, 2010; Kyoung Jun Park, 2010), and involving Koreans in missions through Short Term Missions (Y. Choi, 2009; J.-D. Kim, 2002; Sinyil Kim, 2008; K. W. Lee, 2007; Whang, 2004) or through lay ministry (S. Y. Lee, 2002).

Reaching North Korea

Jesus said, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). As Korea’s closest neighbor (with a similar language and culture), North Korea is South Korea’s “Judea.” Kim (1999) has given a history of missionary efforts to North Korea. An overall missiological strategy has been suggested for North Korea (H. Y. Han, 2001), and another study focuses on how to reach North Koreans in light of the idolization of Kim Il (Ha, 2008). One missiological strategy for reaching North Koreans includes reaching refugees in South Korea (Kwak, 2009), just as North Americans are reaching out to refugees from more than a hundred different nations in urban cities in the USA and Canada.
Missions from Korea

When we think of missiology as a discipline, we typically think of case studies from the field. One overall survey of Koreans in missions comes from the University of California at Berkeley (J. H. J. Han, 2009); another study focuses on Koreans reaching Unreached People Groups (Hyungjo Kim, 1997). There have been more than fifteen case studies from specific fields which I discuss below.

Korean missions in specific foreign contexts

Case studies have been published on Korean missionary efforts on both sides of the Pacific: the Philippines (Baik, 1998; Huh, 2002; J. M. Lee, 2001; K.-S. Park, 1996); Brazil (Chi, 2008; Hwang, 1990, 1993); Thailand (Y.-K. Lee, 1993; Shin, 2008); Japan (H. Y. Kim, 2001); Indonesia (Sung, 1997); Mainland China (Jeong, 1991); Manchuria (H. S. Park, 2008); Kazakhstan (W. Choi, 2008); Central Asia (J. H. S. Park, 2002); and Asia at large (S. S. Kang, 1998; Ko, 1992). What is noticeably lacking is a body of studies on Korean missionary efforts in other parts of the world such as Africa, Europe, Melanesia and Polynesia.

Korean mission agencies strategies for mission agencies

Korea’s emergence as a missionary-sending nation has meant the birth of Korean mission agencies. Some recent missiological studies include mobilizing Korean mission agencies (Ju, 1989), the internationalization of Korean mission agencies (Hansung Kim, 2011), and “missional” structures in a post modern world (D. Choi, 2006). Partnership as strategy for Korean mission agencies has also been studied (B. L. Kwon, 1997), as has stewardship among missionary leaders (I. J. Kang, 1994). There have been at least three studies on the missionary movement of the Presbyterian church in Korea (Chung, 1989; Ju, 1989; T. K. Park, 1991).

Korean missionary preparation and effectiveness

Korean missiologists are also studying how to equip Koreans for missions (H. K. Choi, 2000). Specific topics include: helping mono-cultural Koreans acculturate (E. W. Choi, 2011), the impact of short term trips (Hong, 2011), missionary stress and attachment styles (E. Y. Kim, 2009), nationalism in Korea (Shin Kim, 2008), holistic missions (D.-S. Kim, 1996), discipleship as a missionary method (P. Y. Im, 1992), cross-cultural leadership succession (Shin, 2008), training Koreans for “power-encounters” (K. H. Lee, 1994), Korean women as missionaries (B. Park, 1999), and Korean women as missionary wives (Lim, 2000).

Koreans in the USA

Another broad category of Korean missiology includes Koreans in the United States. Some studies relate to
Korean-American congregations, such as Keum’s (2011) dissertation on the negative perception of Anglos regarding Korean-American churches, and Kim’s dissertation (2003) on second generation Korean-American churches. Specific Korean-American missiology includes a study on mobilizing the Koran-American churches for missions (S. S. Han, 1995; Kwang Ja Park, 1992), or the Nevius method (which was developed in Korea) as a model for church growth among Korean-American churches (K. Park, 1993).

**Conclusion**

Korean contributions to missiology have been extensive, covering the history of missions, theology of mission, missionary preparation, and missiological strategies. It is fair to say that Korean missiology has “come of age” as the literature has moved from missions to Korea to missions from Korea.

But the greatest indication that Korean missiology has a worldwide influence is seen when Koreans publish on topics beyond Korea. Of the missiological sub-disciplines, the one that seems to have been least noticed by Korean graduate students is anthropology. Specifically, future studies could include missions it relates to semiotics and ritual, ethics, the logical process in animism, kinship and exchange.

This article has focused specifically on dissertations and theses that have been published on Korean missiology. There have been hundreds of other studies completed at theological institutions which relate to Korean and Korean-American issues, such as: effective church planting (church growth and renewal), cell groups, the psychological issues related to raising 1.5 generation Korean-American families, the effects of WWII or modernization on Korea, ethnomusicology and worship styles. In other words, Koreans are making contributions in nearly every discipline of Christian scholarship.

It is my hope that this article can be a useful resource for Koreans who are studying missiology. For those who are considering a topic that I specifically mentioned here, perhaps it will point them to related studies that have already been published. And for those who are still wondering what topic to pursue, I hope to encourage them to look into one of the more neglected topics, so that the influence of Korean missiology can expand far beyond Korea and Korean-Americans.


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