

2019

A psalmic-theological homiletic for the Korean immigrant congregation

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Dissertation

**A PSALMIC-THEOLOGICAL HOMILETIC
FOR THE KOREAN IMMIGRANT CONGREGATION**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2019

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DEDICATION

My Parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to David Schnasa Jacobsen, my first reader who has been a passionate mentor, stalwart teacher, consistent advisor, and influential homiletician in the field of homiletics. I have always felt honored to be his student and to work with him for the past years. And his encouragement, constructive criticism, and commitment to my dissertation apparently have attached value to my work. I am also appreciative of Courtney T. Goto for being my second reader. Her profound insights on practical-theological development and critical advice on academic writing have been very helpful for refining the project. I am thankful to Dale P. Andrews who inspired me to practice a prophetic spirit through my preaching ministry and my pastoral passion for my congregation, the marginalized. He remains in my memory as a passionate teacher, brilliant professor, and warm-hearted Christian. My readers' tremendous help and academic guidance in all areas of my doctoral study will not be forgotten. There are no words to fully express my gratitude for their academic support. Additionally, I am indeed grateful to my dissertation committee members: Choi Hee An, Robert Allan Hill, and Rebecca Copeland for their thoughtful suggestions, comments, and encouragement.

I am thankful for my husband, Sunggu Yang, who is a great father for my little one. He has witnessed my struggles but cheered me on all along the way. I hope he knows how thankful I am for his spiritual and emotional encouragement in my academic and ministerial journey.

Finally, I would like to extend my most gracious thanks to my parents, Donggeun Jeong and Myeonghui Park. Without their unwavering support, love, sacrifice, and prayer from South Korea, I could not have finished this long academic journey in the United

States. Without my parents' confidence that their daughter has been called as a minister and eventually will glorify the kingdom of God through this academic work, I could not even have started or imagined finishing the PhD program. I dedicate this dissertation to them.

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ABSTRACT

This project challenges the practice of preaching shamanistic prosperity-focused messages to Korean immigrant churches in the United States in order to construct a more liberative theological foundation for sermons and eventually offer an alternative form of immigrant preaching: “a psalmic-theological homiletic.” A shamanistic-prosperity gospel reinforces a mostly success-oriented way of life, owing to its heavy emphasis on God’s promises about individuals’ material rewards. Such a prosperity gospel syncretizes shamanistic beliefs with the American Dream in that it implicitly advises believers to “make it” in the capitalist economy and uphold the prevailing values created by the dominant group. Accordingly, the project not only examines the prosperity gospel and its problematic syncretism with the American Dream ideology, this project also offers a more appropriate immigrant theology for preaching by reclaiming the priorities of God’s future in our lives and confirming God’s active identification with Korean immigrant congregations in the depth of their predicament as immigrants.

After offering a practical-theological construction, this project provides “a psalmic-theological homiletic,” critically adopting features from psalmic theology and its theological-rhetorical movement. My proposed homiletic relies on Claus Westermann

who argued that the Psalms are honest public speeches about a realistic faith that can be practiced in the midst of suffering. Along with a critical reading of Westermann's theoretical approach to the Psalms, my homiletic engages in dialogue with Eunjoo Mary Kim's sermon. As a result, a psalmic-theological homiletic has a four-fold rhetorical movement inspired by and intended for Korean immigrant contexts: (a) lament, (b) retelling the biblical story, (c) confessional doxology, and (d) vow of obedience. This project gives its attention to the theological significance of these four rhetorical steps from the perspective of marginalized people. Its theological-rhetorical strategy intends to transform the immigrant congregation's *habitus* of living in faith and to enhance their hope-filled life through communal anticipation of God's coming future.

The project concludes with homiletical-dialogical analyses of two Korean immigrant sermons. Examining their homiletical strengths and weaknesses, the analysis provides guidance for future Korean immigrant preaching to prompt a more faithful and transformative way of life for hearers.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Context of this Study and Statement of the Problem

This research begins with the conviction that the first-generation, Korean-immigrant congregational context in North America calls for an alternative homiletic to prosperity-oriented preaching. This common form of Korean immigrant preaching tends to reinforce a success-oriented lifestyle that can lead to a misunderstanding of God's grace owing to the prosperity gospel's heavy emphasis on health and wealth. What is missing in this homiletical practice is a focus on a more theocentric, hope-filled way of life in a communal anticipation of God's coming future from a shared life on the margins.¹ Thus, while acknowledging both the possibilities *and* limits of the diverse

¹ About the term, "way of life": a psalmic-theological homiletic will eventually accentuate a more faithful [life-giving] way of life for FGKIs supported by preaching ministry. Such a homiletical purpose corresponds with the very aim of practical theology. For instance, Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education and Christian Ministry* contend that the *telos* of practical theology is to mobilize Christians' faithful [life-giving] way of life in and for the world: "God in Christ promises abundant life for all creation. By the power of life Holy Spirit, the church receives this promise through faith and takes up a way of life that embodies Christ's abundant life in and for the world. The church's ministers are called to embrace this way of life and also to lead particular communities of faith to live it in their own situations...the importance of good pastors to shaping communities in and for life-giving ways of life...In its fullest expression, such a way of life makes transforming love of God for all the world. Further, it is God's own merciful and unbreakable participation in the life of the world through Jesus Christ that sustains this body and opens this way of life." Along with "way of life," the terms "faithful way of life" and *habitus* are interchangeable in this dissertation, the latter being linked with Edward Farley's conception of *habitus*: a disposition or orientation devoted to the practical but critical living out of faith in the coming kingdom of God. Therefore, *habitus* for this project specifically means Christians' particular way of living; namely, a theocentric way of life that seeks the kingdom of God, apart and liberated from a self-success centered way of life—common *habitus* of living among FGKIs (the concept of *habitus* will be discussed more on page 20). Thus, both way of life and *habitus* indicate not only Christians' life-giving way of life in light of the embodiment of Christ's abundant life in and for the world here and now, but also a theocentric lifestyle for the coming kingdom of God. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra, introduction to *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. Dorothy C. Bass and Craig Dykstra (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 1, 14, 21, 22; Edward Farley, *Theologia: The Fragmentation and Unity of Theological Education* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001), 35.

forms of current Korean immigrant preaching, this dissertation proposes an alternative homiletic specifically rooted in the theology of the psalms. Such a psalmic homiletic is designed to correspond more closely to the very practical-theological and spiritual needs that arise from first-generation Korean immigrants (henceforth, FGKIs)' particular life circumstances in the margins. This proposed psalmic-theological homiletic will therefore *critically* adopt key features from psalms of lament and their typical, fourfold theological-rhetorical movement (i.e., lament, retelling a story, confessional doxology, and obedient vow) as now core elements of a revised Korean-immigrant preaching practice.

In this dissertation, the primary subjects are FGKIs, especially those who have relatively low socio-economic status and struggle with the purpose of their lives as immigrants, particularly those whose material dreams have been shattered. FGKIs include legal permanent resident aliens, foreign students and workers, and also illegal aliens.² In reality, the ethnic church is composed of legal migrants, illegal immigrants, and short-term students and workers who live in North America for various lengths of time. For that reason, the FGKIs studied in this project include both legal and illegal immigrants. The general characteristics of the FGKIs' context can be briefly described in this way. The first is a life of uncertainty due to an unstable visa status, the second a shocking shift of social-cultural space from Asian to Western culture, the third a language barrier,

² In this project, I prefer the term 'immigrants' to 'migrants.' Migrants indicate permanent resident aliens; on the other hand, immigrants are a more expansive term that includes legal migrants, foreign students and workers, and illegal aliens. Because of the ethnic church's reality that composed of legal and illegal immigrants, I prefer 'immigrants.' Fair Federation for American Immigration Reform, accessed January 3, 2017, <http://www.fairus.org/facts/glossary#M>.

the fourth an existential experience of homelessness, and the fifth racial discrimination.³ These five characteristics are mostly found at the individual-communal level. At the spiritual level, as the sixth characteristic, there is a damaged faith due to the shattering of their personal American dream and a spiritual confusion about God's promised blessing in times of difficulty. These characteristics are discussed further in the following chapter as they constitute a key contextual background for Korean immigrant preaching.

With regard to the problem in my subjects' context, my primary homiletic concern is that shamanistic and prosperity-oriented preaching tends to aggravate both Koreans' spiritual confusion about God's promise *and* intensify a success-oriented lifestyle. For most FGKIs who come to North America, their American Dream is focused on such personal pursuits as financial well-being, better education, and greater career opportunities. A shamanistic, prosperity-oriented message of blessing (e.g., material prosperity, physical health, and a long life) ultimately sets up FGKIs to reinscribe in their own minds contemporary US social tendencies like consumerism, capitalism, materialism, and individualism—key components of the distorted ideology of the American Dream.⁴ Therefore, when they fail to achieve their American Dream—an inspiring but unattainable dream for most people—their faith-filled hopes are dashed.

³ Here, a sense of homelessness is a feeling that FGKIs do not belong to any country. Courtney T. Goto, "Asian-american Practical Theologies," in *Opening the Field of Practical Theology: An Introduction*, ed. Kathleen A. Cahalan and Gordon S. Mikoski (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 32.

⁴ Tae-Ju Moon, "The Korean American Dream and the Blessings of Hananim (God)," in *The Global God: Multicultural Evangelical Views of God*, ed. Aida Besancon Spence and William David Spence (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 238. Also, E. M. Kim notes that in Asian tradition, blessing results from the shamanistic-individual five blessings from heaven: "Wealth, success, health, longevity, and many children at home." Eunjoo Mary Kim, "Hermeneutics and Asian American Preaching," *Semeia* 90-91 (January 2002): 276.

Engraved on their hearts is a faith experience marred by a misconception of divine love as well as a broken promise of blessings. It is no wonder that when Korean immigrant church leaders preach this problematic theology, a Christian FGKI easily falls into despair. Next, given their excessive reliance on such prosperity-oriented messages combined with a belief in God's shamanistic blessings and the Dream ideology, Korean immigrant preachers tend to persuade Christian FGKIs to pursue a mostly materialistic way of life. Put differently, a shamanistic-prosperity focused message tends only to intensify FGKIs' disappointment both in God's apparent promises about material rewards *and* in a success-oriented way of life. This dissertation reflects upon this problematic theological expression for/in Korean immigrant preaching. Further, it suggests that such a problematic theology in and of preaching demands a correction for the sake of FGKIs' way of life, a recovery of their damaged faith, and a reclaiming of the priorities of God's future and hope for their lives.

I investigate preaching's impact on FGKIs' way of life because in Korean Christian liturgy preaching is regarded as "the pivotal, sacred moment of worship"; Korean congregations sense the presence of God at the preaching moment.⁵ Accordingly, they believe that preaching has the potential to influence hearers' way of life. For instance, Jung Young Lee states that "Preaching is more than merely a part of the worship service; it is, in fact, *a worship service*...[preaching] conveys the Word of God."⁶ Along with that, Sangyil Park writes that "Worship is a central part of the life of the Church and preaching is the heart of each worship service...Preaching plays a

⁵ Jung Young Lee, *Korean Preaching: An Interpretation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997), 41.

⁶ Ibid.

significant role in shaping the identity of Korean Protestants in terms of who they are as Christians and what they do [live] in Korean society.”⁷ In result, for the sake of FGKIs’ more faithful way of life, this dissertation will research theology and methodology of Korean immigrant preaching in depth.

As a homiletician, I have from my own experience come to doubt the faithfulness of prosperity gospel preaching enough to propose an alternative vision for immigrant preaching for FGKIs. As a Korean immigrant myself, and as an international student, I too have frequently encountered precisely such hardships. When that happened, any hope that the prosperity gospel might have promised seemed vacuous. Its theology became problematic to me because it is also devoid of any evidence of God’s grace in the midst of such want and suffering. Consequently, I have long harbored suspicions about the dominant notion that God will rain blessings on the chosen people, a notion that I have often heard reiterated from Korean pulpits. However, in my preaching ministry among Korean immigrant congregations, I have also heard many wonderful testimonies to God’s grace, many of those testimonies coming from people who have had similar experiences to mine and in many cases far worse ones. Thanks to my participation in this ministry among FGKIs, I have come to realize that my purpose for being in the United States is not to succeed for my sake; rather, God wants me to be faithful and serve the Kingdom from the edge. I have grasped that the evidence of God’s infinite grace lies not in wealth, health, and success. I have also recognized that my suffering is not just a personal issue nor is it a sign that God has abandoned me. Instead it is largely a kind of suffering typical for immigrants, particularly FGKIs who are discriminated against by the dominant society. My immigrant experience has opened my

⁷ Sangyil Park, *Korean Preaching, Han and Narrative* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 1.

eyes to others' suffering and at the same time has refocused my vision on God's future for the common good, not just for a few select individuals. Hence, I have realized that immigrant experience can be an invaluable opportunity to bring light to a new dimension of God's love at the margins, for FGKIs encounter God's grace at the very place of suffering. Therefore, I have tried to open myself to the edges of life where a new, lived practical theology could emerge and a new grace of the divine could be named. Put differently, my ministerial engagement with FGKI congregations and my own life in this land have led me to reconsider what God's compassion toward immigrants is, what faithful living looks like for them at the edges, and what the good news for them is beyond some shamanistic-prosperity promise. This is the story of how my search for an alternative way of preaching that proclaims the good news of God's graceful love for FGKIs has become the primary topic of my dissertation.⁸ A secondary

⁸ As mentioned, "preaching for FGKIs" as the main theme in this project stems from my own lived experience. Immigration/migration recently seems to have become an important topic of practical-theological inquiry yet care for the marginalized in society is always a legitimate *raison d'être* of practical theology. For example, the International Academy of Practical Theology held an international seminar on "Christian communities in the face of immigration" on 14 May 2018. Along with that, the central theme of the 2015 conference of the International Academy of Practical Theology was "Reforming: Space, body, and politics." About that topic, the website says that "There are many spaces that reform contexts, churches, and societies today. One obvious case among all of them is migration. This is a case of demanding space, giving up space and reclaiming new spaces. At the same time migration constructs spaces that reform religion, theology and churches. We look for papers on migration as well as other cases that deal with ways in which religion contributes, increases and decreases spatial identities, belongings and citizenship." We can see that practical theology has recently tried to explore practical-theological interpretation on immigration issue, reform ecclesiological practices toward immigrants and respond to international and political policy. Regarding my attitude toward my targeted subject, FGKIs, I will focus on how immigrants (including myself) can serve God's kingdom within the priorities of the divine future in this new land. I will work as an insider within the immigrant church using the Korean "mother tongue" (Dueck and Reimer) that is most heartfelt and culturally meaningful to understand the multilayered life experiences of FGKIs. Using their "mother tongue" empowers FGKIs and raises the status of the language as one of the ethnic languages used in this English-centered culture, and then honors their ordinary testimonies and meaning frameworks. Using their own language and their ordinary testimonies gives new meaning to their witness to the divine by validating their particularity of experience.

research issue of the project is about searching for God's compassion in the margins so as to enhance what Edward Farley calls a faithful *habitus* for God's coming future through the practice of preaching. In other words, my project pursues the preacher's claim about the abundance of God's love toward those who are vulnerable and pushed to the margins. Moreover, my proposed preaching is intentionally designed to facilitate the church's communal involvement in God's eschatological kingdom vision emerging from the margins which is precisely the opposite of worldly exclusion and bigotry against marginalized others.

Practical-theological Responses to the Problem

In Korean Christianity, the intertwining of the prosperity gospel with shamanistic blessing, and the excessively emphasis on believers' earthly blessing, "arose contextually out of the widespread poverty and physical suffering left by the Korean

Thus, I will try to listen to the "mother tongue" of the subject community to prevent myself from condescendingly examining the lived experiences of FGKIs via the misuse of the established *doxa* (Bourdieu)– "a sort of third other knowledge" or "a higher objectivity." That is, my homiletic will try to listen to congregations' actual voices, thus avoiding pre-reflexive intuitive knowledge and inherited definitions and assumptions enacted by Western theories or pre-established theologies. Yet, I admit that I cannot perfectly represent the FGKIs' lived experiences. However, as much as I can, I will try not to ignore their experiences and their practical wisdom, such as their witness to God's gracious reality in a new land. In chapter 4, for instance, one of my homiletical methods is the preacher seriously reflecting on FGKIs' witness to the divine presence in their daily lives. In this sense, I follow Goto's invitation that practical theologians attempt to make themselves the subject of the investigation to avoid overriding a specific ordinary reality of a given Christian community. Courtney T. Goto, "Experiencing Oppression: Ventriloquism and Epistemic Violence in Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology* (2017): 12-19; Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1977), 4; Jeremy F. Lane, *Pierre Bourdieu: A Critical Introduction* (London, UK: Pluto Press, 2000), 94; Cecile Deer, "Doxa," in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael James Grenfell (London, UK: Routledge, 2012), 115; Alvin Dueck and Kevin Reimer, *A Peaceable Psychology: Christian Therapy in a World of Many Cultures* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazon Press, 2009), 103; "IAPT Conference 2017- Reforming: Space, Body, and Politics," International Academy of Practical Theology, accessed August 13, 2018, <http://www.ia-practicaltheology.org/2017-oslo>; "Christian Communities in the Face of Immigration," International Academy of Practical Theology, accessed August 13, 2018, <http://www.ia-practicaltheology.org/christian-communities-in-the-face-of-immigration/>.

War (1950).”⁹ Out of this national hardship, Korean Christianity accepted the shamanistic concept of blessing to heal people to such a degree that this gospel functioned as good news for Koreans. Since prosperity gospel clearly worked for some believers who came to experience financial blessing, it still pervades Korean Christianity today. As noted above, the primary subjects here are FGKIs, especially those who struggle with relatively low socio-economic status and whose material dreams have been shattered. A shamanistic-prosperity gospel cannot be viable among them. In other words, a shamanistic-prosperity theology in Korean immigrant preaching only seems to reinforce FGKIs’ sense that God has abandoned them since material success is precisely a sign of being chosen by God in prosperity theology. Consequently, this form of prosperity theology in sermons keeps promoting a success-oriented way of life, instead of revitalizing poor Christians’ broken faith and joyfulness amid existential suffering. To address these problems, this project pursues a practical-theological reconstruction of a more appropriate theology for/in preaching for the sake of strengthening FGKIs’ faithful *habitus* and hope-filled lives. This theological reconstruction is my practical-theological response to the problematic theology and practice of prosperity preaching below.

As the first practical-theological response to the problematic practice of prosperity preaching, my homiletic in this project will take as a starting point a practical-theological focus on FGKIs’ laments. Unlike a prosperity gospel approach, that often denies human suffering and the reality of pain, my homiletic will begin with critical

⁹ Hwa Yung, “Mission and Evangelism: Evangelical and Pentecostal Theologies in Asia,” in *Christian Theology in Asia*, ed. Sebastian C. H. Kim (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 263.

attention to FGKIs' wounds.¹⁰ Following Mary McClintock Fulkerson's statement of "theology as response to a wound" in *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church*, this project will offer "the emerging articulation" of FGKIs' wounds as well as "an incipient impulse for change."¹¹ Pamela Cooper-White also explains, "suffering is the starting point for all pastoral and practical theology," my practical theology begins with FGKIs' lament-filled life experience.¹² Cooper-White introduces, in an article in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, her own practical-theological method concerning human suffering:

Therefore, the steps that I will take begin with the concreteness of human experience: (1) What is happening here? What is suffering? How do we make meaning of such pain (using both social-scientific and theological perspectives)? (2) Deepening our theological reflection, what are the theological problems raised by suffering? What might be understood in the presence of this suffering person about the nature of suffering and its relationship both to the problem of [social] evil and to what we can discern about God's activity in the midst of suffering? As Christian theologians, (where) do we find an answering cry of hope and redemption to the groans of suffering? (3) Turning more explicitly to praxis, what healing and liberative responses might grow out of these reflections? How might hope and redemption, love and justice, be conceived in this situation?¹³

As Cooper-White starts with theological reflection on human suffering and moves toward liberative practice by searching for God's activity in the midst of suffering, my practical-theological method will also begin with FGKIs' painful circumstances, and move to a discernment of alternative redemptive meanings from suffering as they seek

¹⁰ Luke A. Powery, *Dem Dry Bones: Preaching, Death, and Hope* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 7.

¹¹ Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15.

¹² Pamela Cooper-White, "Suffering," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 23.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 24.

to transform pain into new life.¹⁴ Such practical-theological response to FGKIs' wound echoes Fulkerson's statement: "It [a theological reading on the situation] remains to explore how a complex reality is not only full of ambiguity and complexity, but also traces of God's redemptive presence."¹⁵ Thus, a psalmic-theological homiletic eventually aims to demonstrate how FGKIs' witness to and testimony about an emergent reality (i.e., "God's redemptive presence") can be "a powerful articulation of the contours of God's grace," in the midst of FGKIs' oftentimes ambiguous life situations.¹⁶ Further, on the assumption that a shamanistic-prosperity gospel does not offer the actual and lived experience of hope in the midst of suffering, I will not only examine the unhealthy influence of the prosperity gospel but also explore Jürgen Moltmann's theology of God's active identification with FGKIs in the absolute depth of their predicament, an identification that reveals God's gracious compassion. It is grounded upon the church's conviction that God's compassionate presence and willingness to suffer with FGKIs is intrinsically intertwined with an eschatological-redemptive hope, that is, Christianity's hope against hope (Rom. 4:18). Indeed, Moltmann, in *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, remarks that the real task of faith and theology is "to make it possible for us to survive, to go on living, with this open wound [in this world]."¹⁷ This shows that Moltmann's theology is the outcome of his passionate involvement with human reality in history to "give hope for an alternative future to the

¹⁴ Ibid., 29.

¹⁵ Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 12.

¹⁶ Ibid., 6, 246.

¹⁷ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 49.

oppressed and suffering of our present time.”¹⁸ Even if Moltmann does not explicitly define himself as a practical theologian, his theology responds to humanity’s existential pain—the groans of suffering, just as practical theology focuses on “events in human life when those events cause suffering and call for theological construction and a pastoral response.”¹⁹ Yet even though I use Moltmann’s theological notion of God’s suffering with humanity, my theological image of Jesus Christ is not some conventional priestly image of a privileged, Caucasian male figure. Rather, like FGKIs who move from the East to West, my theological image of Jesus Christ will be as an immigrant who experienced social estrangement, first, due to his early life in the foreign land of Egypt; second, because of his living voluntarily at the edges of society where God’s life-giving power emerged; and third, through his association with societal outcasts. Thus, Jesus’s cry on the cross can be identified with FGKIs’ cry, failure, life disappointments, and their dire circumstances. In this respect, the project will interpret Jesus’s lament on the cross in association with FGKIs’ specific suffering, critically reading Moltmann’s theology of Jesus’s lament on the cross in a view of FGKIs’ marginality. Therefore, my theological image of an immigrant Jesus’s lament and suffering is in the end more in line with J. Y. Lee’s argument of Jesus as both the migratory God *and* the marginal person *par excellence*.²⁰ In *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*, J. Y. Lee, a systematic theologian who reshapes a contextual theology for Korean Americans,

¹⁸ Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia of Western Theology, accessed August 28, 2018, <http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/bce/moltmann.htm>.

¹⁹ Jeanne M. Hoeft, *Agency, Culture, and Human Personhood: Pastoral Theology and Intimate Partner Violence* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 19.

²⁰ Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 71-72.

highlights Jesus Christ as the very paradigm of creative marginality to help them overcome their negative experience of marginality—racism, loneliness and isolation—in light of their new marginal perspective.²¹ J. Y. Lee interprets Christian FGKIs’ suffering in theological and spiritual ways as a way of advocating for the meaningfulness of their immigration experience. In J. Y. Lee’s theological view, Jesus can be understood as a migratory God because of the migration of divinity from the Father to the Son.²² Because Jesus as the migratory God had a painful experience of displacement in his proclamation of the reign of God, FGKIs can more easily identify themselves with Jesus’s suffering. Jesus also chose to save the world from a position of marginality, and did so not with centralized power but with love and healing.²³ Such actions of Jesus from the margins are for me a theological foundation from which to contend that FGKIs must be liberated from worldly security and indwelt by a divine holiness that enables them to practice love toward others even in the context of their unpleasant life in the margins. J. Y. Lee’s contextual theology implicitly inspires FGKIs to practice Jesus Christ’s way of life—redemptive and embracing love in the margins. Alternatively stated, J. Y. Lee’s contextual theology directly connects to theological reflection on marginalized FGKIs’ suffering by pursuing a practical outcome—the practice of love in

²¹ Ibid., 97-98.

²² J. Y. Lee addresses, “What is interesting here is that Christ became an ordinary human being, took on what is considered the lowest kind of occupation—a servant. The incarnation, the transition from divine nature to human nature, was divine marginalization. However, when divinity takes on human form and lowly human occupation, it becomes the margin of marginality. Christ became the margin of marginality by giving up everything he had.” Ibid., 81.

²³ Ibid., 86, 90. J. Y. states that “As healer and reconciler, he [Jesus] pioneered the new marginality. Jesus was a homeless man. ‘Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head’ (Matt. 8:20, NRSV).’ It is easy for us to forget the homeless aspect of his life, because his healing and preaching are emphasized....The whole of Jesus’s teachings and life can be summed up in love.” Ibid., 87, 90.

the margins. In this way, my theological reflection on FGKIs' burdensome lived experience, which is my theological response to the needs of their particular suffering, will not be simply an abstract (immigration/contextual) theology, especially in Chapter 3. Instead, my reconstructive theological work for FGKIs as practical theology will eventually articulate a faithful way of life, and emancipatory practices through preaching ministry.²⁴

My second practical-theological response to the practice of prosperity preaching will concentrate on how immigrant preaching can prompt a theocentric way of life that replaces the self- and success-oriented *habitus* that prosperity preaching theology advances. As the general purpose of practical theology is to help believers' embodiment of Christ's abundant life in and for the world, my psalmic-theological homiletic intends to ultimately mobilize FGKIs' faithful way of life, not self-centered way of life through the ministry of preaching. In contrast to a self-centered *habitus* that a shamanistic-prosperity gospel promotes, I will underscore that theocentric preaching hones FGKIs' new daily practices in line with the God's eschatological future: that is, God's vision-centered *habitus*. On the presupposition that preaching can constitute a particular way of life, I think that God('s vision)-centered preaching can help to transform an individualistic, success-oriented way of life among FGKIs, formally or currently promoted by prosperity-centered preaching. As mentioned above, prosperity-centered preaching's problematic syncretizing of Eastern shamanistic blessings *and* the American

²⁴ My purpose of theological reflection on FGKIs' suffering in Chapter 3 corresponds to a purpose of practical theology: Joyce Ann Mercer states that "A definitive aspect of practical theology is its transformational impulse: practical theology is concerned not simply to describe reality and to make sense of it, but to seek transformation toward the love and justice of God for all people." Joyce Ann Mercer, "Economics, Class, and Classism," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2012), 436.

Dream has led to a lack of concern about God's salvation in various cultural and historical arenas (such as racial issues) among FGKIs. Because that kind of preaching regards individual material success as a sign of God's blessing, the prosperity message tends to obscure the truth of God's eschatological promise for a better communal future (that is, of all of creation living together in peace).²⁵ In turn, this tendency leads FGKIs to surrender themselves to a status quo that justifies society's exclusionary attitude toward ethnic minorities and privileging only individual success, thus creating oppressive socio-economic structures for many. Eventually such a prosperity message causes not only indifference to discipleship in the socio-political situation but also leads to a superficial understanding of God as the One who merely grants individual blessings like good health and material success. In short, shamanistic-prosperity preaching tends to build up a self-centered way of life and success-oriented daily practice. In contrast to such a self-centered *habitus*, I claim that theocentric preaching can help to hone FGKIs' new daily practices in accordance with God's eschatological future: that is, God's vision-centered *habitus*. As noted above, the end of practical theology is a way of life, embodied by practices that are faithful to what God reveals. Such a *habitus*, transformed from being profit- or self-centered to a theocentric way of life, aptly echoes Farley's practical theology of performing the gospel (the divine future being revealed in the sermon) and his conception of *habitus*: a disposition or orientation devoted to the practical but critical living out of faith in the coming kingdom of God.²⁶ This *habitus* as

²⁵ Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (London, UK: T&T Clark, 1995), 120; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 35, Kindle edition.

²⁶ Farley, *Theologia*, 35; John Swinton and Harriet Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London, UK: SCM Press, 2006), 27; John Swinton, "What is Practical

a particular form of a theocentric way of life reveals the kingdom of God in a tangible form, which is vital to continuing the church's missiological task.²⁷ Hence, I envision that through preaching FGKIs can have transformative experiences capable of shaping a new *habitus*, a life-orienting and holistic engagement in God's future in a collective or personal way. Ultimately, therefore, such theocentric preaching will help to plant a new way of life in the hearts of FGKIs dreaming of the divine future in the mode of eternal hope.

A Psalmic-Theological Homiletic: Contribution to Practical Theology

My proposed homiletic—a psalmic-theological homiletic—attempts to contribute to the practical-theological enterprise in four ways: with (a) a methodological revision of the practice of immigrant preaching; (b) critical reflection on the congregation's present context and articulation of a theology for/in preaching; and (c) emphasis on the church's embodiment of the proclaimed gospel for FGKIs' faithful way of life.

A psalmic-theological homiletic aims to reconstruct an immigrant preaching methodology. As noted above, a central task of this dissertation is to offer a psalmic-theological homiletic for the Korean immigrant church's lament-filled existential context. A psalmic-theological homiletic will be the outcome of homiletical

Theology?," in *Religious Study and Theology: An Introduction*, ed. Helen K. Bond, Seth D. Kunin, and Francesca Aran Murphy (New York: NYU Press, 2003), 407

²⁷ A. S. Park discusses Korean Americans' spiritual transformation from a self-centered (success-oriented) way of life toward a theocentric one. "Repentance is a Copernican revolution from a self-centered life (a geocentric worldview) to a God-centered life (a theocentric worldview)." Andrew S. Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 78.

reconstruction of the immigrant community's preaching in light of the theological significance of the lament psalms' rhetorical shape, assuming a deep connection between form and substance. Just as the New Homiletic has underlined the unity of sermon form and content in order to engender not only preaching's effectiveness but also its theological significance, I will first investigate the lament psalms' rhetorical "moves" and their theological perspectives, which I will adapt for immigrant preaching practice.²⁸

In critically adopting and revising the Psalm's rhetorical-theological features, my proposed homiletic will consist of four steps: (a) lament for suffering (in unjust situations), (b) retelling the story or remembrance of God's redemptive activity in the past, (c) confessional doxology as a celebration of God's impending reign in hopeful expectation, and (d) obedient vow as a form of faithful practice. I rely primarily on the work on the Psalms by German biblical scholar Claus Westermann. He claims that the Psalms undergo a rhythmic transition *from* desperate lament *to* shouts of exultation in confidence of God's future deliverance. Indeed, Westermann's theoretical approach to

²⁸ The New Homiletic refers to an important shift in homiletic theory and its turn to the hearer by appeal to an eventful experience of the gospel in preaching. This movement has been developed in the twentieth century in distinction to the traditional deductive preaching paradigm. This movement has been backed by homiletic scholars' struggle to create more effective ways to preach the gospel. One of the New Homiletic arguments is the unity of sermon form and content: form and content in the sermon cannot be separated. For example, Fred Craddock, a pillar of this homiletic movement, noted that "method [of sermon] is message: form and content are of a piece." Such claims oppose traditional preaching's view that the sermon is essentially only about content, while the form is something secondary or external. David Schnasa Jacobsen, introduction to *Homiletical Theology: Preaching as Doing Theology*, ed. David Schnasa Jacobsen (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 4; Fred Craddock, *As One Without Authority* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2001), 21; O. Wesley Allen Jr., Introduction to *The Renewed Homiletic*, ed. O. Wesley Allen Jr. (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 5; Gottfried Martens, "The Path from the Text to the Sermon: A German Preacher Takes Stock of Methods from America," in *Feasting in a Famine of the Word: Lutheran Preaching in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Mark W. Birkholz, Jacob Corzine and Jonathan Mumme (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016), 279.

the Psalms helps us to recognize that the Psalms are very honest public speeches about the realistic faith of suffering. His position on the Psalms, however, does not focus on a particular ethnic minority group or non-Western people's difficult experience of socio-cultural alienation, but on the people of God as a whole and humanity's universal suffering. I suggest that his biblical-theological interpretation of the Psalms' rhetoric provides us with an imaginative way of revising a current practice of preaching for FGKIs' lives and their situations of suffering. Hence, my theological interpretation of the Psalms' rhetorical plot and its theological hermeneutics will stem from FGKIs' existential experience of cultural-social marginality, trans-locality, ethnic discrimination, social alienation from mainstream society, and relative powerlessness in life. I suggest that the lamenting voices in the Psalms that describe the oppressor's unjust treatment, the outcast's experience of powerlessness and marginalization, and Israel's lament because of exile correspond closely to the situations of contemporary FGKIs. Furthermore, the Psalms' rhetoric, which moves toward faith in the midst of Israel's hardship reinvigorates an oppressed people's damaged faith in God's compassion while envisaging the coming righteous reign of God. In the Psalms, the voice lamenting present unjust treatment is transformed into praise as a hope-filled anticipation of God's righteousness and salvation. This dissertation project therefore regards ancient Israel's rhetoric in the Psalms as a rhetorical act of resistance to the systemic injustice that pervades the social structure. This endeavor both to re-read the Psalms with the FGKIs' context in mind *and* to adopt critically its rhetorical sequence for immigrant preaching can also assist other contemporary ethnic groups or minority groups to contextualize research on ancient biblical rhetoric and its theological impact.

Second, my proposed homiletic for contextual preaching will emerge from a practical-theological study that intentionally and directly engages FGKIs and their experience on the margins. Any practical theology should pay close attention to the present context and reflect critically on it. John S. McClure, for example, argues that an aim of contextual preaching is to respond dynamically to “the social and cultural location within which the preacher prepares and preaches sermons.”²⁹ Therefore, my practical-theological homiletic will carry out critical reflection on the congregation, concentrating on how to declare the Word of God in the immediate social-cultural life situation of the congregation. Here, one important aspect of my research is a focus on the preacher’s passionate engagement with the hearers’ lived experience to help construct a theology for/in preaching the gospel. This particular aspect indeed reflects the core of contextual preaching. Contextual preaching seeks a good fit between a particular people, an apt content, form, and style for a particular congregation, and faithfulness to the gospel.³⁰ Therefore, as contextual preaching, my proposed homiletic and its sermonic flow aims not only to examine the congregation’s context but also to proclaim an articulated gospel, a new emergent horizon of the gospel that fits FGKIs’ particular situation.

Third, my proposed psalmic-theological homiletic will emphasize the church’s embodiment of the proclaimed gospel in connection with the preacher’s critical, theological, and constructive work on the message. This means that my homiletic aims

²⁹ John S. McClure, *Preaching Words: 114 Key Terms in Homiletics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 17.

³⁰ Eunjo Mary Kim, *Preaching in an Age of Globalization* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 5.

to contribute to the Korean immigrant church's practice of the world of the gospel—a practical-theological enterprise. Farley, who advocates for a practical theology of redemptive ecclesial presence, believes that the church seeks redemptive transformation by performing the good news, the world of the gospel.³¹ For Farley, the church's redemptive presence is profoundly connected with the church's practice of the gospel, the reality of God. Accordingly, Farley says that “When the ecclesia is true to its calling and its distinctive reality, it practices good news of an ever-arriving, redemptive transformation of situation.”³² In line with Farley's proposal, my practical-theological homiletic aims to prompt the church to practice the truth of Christ in active anticipation of God's redemptive possibility, the vision yet to come, despite FGKIs' uncertain and ambivalent lives. In addition to practicing the gospel, the church serves to my mind as the primary locus for practical theology in that preaching takes place in the ritual setting of the community of faith. That said, preaching as ecclesial public speech also goes beyond the walls of the church through the church's embodiment of the gospel; that is, God's pathos-filled vision for the wider culture. Alternatively stated, preaching as practical theology has a ripple effect not only within the church community but also within the broader society. Ultimately, the practice of the gospel is grounded on the church's anticipatory faith in God. Embodiment of the divine truth is inherently

³¹ Edward Farley, *Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 27, 88. In a similar vein, John Swinton and Harriet Mowat characterize practical theology as performing the faith. They note that “practical theology takes seriously the idea of performing the faith and seeks to explore the nature and in particular the faithfulness of that performance. The idea of faithful performance is key for the model of practical theology....” Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 4.

³² Edward Farley, *Practicing Gospel: Unconventional Thoughts on the Church's Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), xiv.

transformative, but transformation in society may not always and immediately be evident since human effort alone cannot generate the full realization of God's reign. Ultimate transformation is always attributable to God. In this way, my homiletic will be a practical-theological activity in the sense that preaching aims to perform the proclaimed gospel in active anticipation of God's salvation for a better future.

Furthermore, practical theology is not merely an application of constructive theology but incorporates prophetic inspiration in religious praxis.³³ In the same manner, a psalmic-theological homiletic will aim at performing one of the church's vital roles—to engender a voice of prophetic inspiration and its action for the people who are marginalized and powerless in society. My homiletic does not simply apply established theories to the hearer's context. Rather, my homiletic intends to encourage the emergence of both prophetic vision *and* new practice, arising from FGKIs' marginalized experiences. This means that FGKIs' lamenting voice—the voice of the outsiders—that rises from their particular locus calls for prophetic vision and action in preaching. As a result, I will consider the hearers' marginalized locus as a constructive means to evoke prophetic messages and life-giving practices in opposition to the repressive social worldview that impacts FGKIs.

Cultivating such prophetic vision and practice through my proposed immigrant homiletic is indeed a critical form of prophetic preaching ministry. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale explains the hallmarks of prophetic preaching as including the preacher's declaration of God's hope and promise for a restored future and liberation, the

³³ Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, "Participatory Action Research," in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 214; Dale P. Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches: Bridging Black Theology and African American Folk Religion* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 122.

empowerment of hearers' practice for challenging the status quo, and an emphasis on God's heart and passion as the foundation of human practice for justice:

- (a) Prophetic preaching is rooted in the biblical witness: both in the testimony of the Hebrew prophets *and* [in the] words and deeds of the prophet Jesus of Nazareth.
- (b) Prophetic preaching is countercultural and challenges the status quo.
- (c) Prophetic preaching is concerned with the evils and shortcomings of the present social order.
- (d) Prophetic preaching requires the preacher to name both what is not of God in the world (criticizing) and the new reality God will bring to pass in the future (energizing).
- (e) Prophetic preaching offers hope of a new day to come and the promise of liberation to God's oppressed people.
- (f) Prophetic preaching incites courage in its hearers and empowers them to work to change the social order.
- (g) Prophetic proclamation requires of the preacher a heart that breaks with the things that break God's heart: a passion for justice in the world.³⁴

A psalmic-theological homiletic begins by reconstructing immigrant preaching's methodology, a methodology that is distinctively prophetic.

Other characteristics of a psalmic-theological homiletic and its sermonic-structural movement are as follows: The first sermonic step or movement is FGKIs' lament. Here the preacher explores FGKIs' lived experience stories or communal lamentable conditions. The preacher's voice also integrates God's suffering voice in the Spirit.³⁵ The rhetoric of lament as God's voice for marginalized FGKIs is a tool of

³⁴ Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 10.

³⁵ There are scholars who explore lamenting voices on the Psalms to build up their homiletical theories. Walter Brueggemann in *Cadences of Home: Preaching Among Exiles* proposes preaching to an American church that is now being marginalized and alienated in the postmodern American-imperialistic world. In a time of acute displacement and bewilderment in the church, he proposes four speech tasks: lamentation and complaint, assurance, doxologies of defiance, promises, and languages. For Brueggemann, exile as the metaphor of critical hermeneutics is not about geographical sense, but liturgical, cultural, sociological, and psychological exile of the American church. However, his theological development for the preaching proposal is derived from the exile of ancient Israel to Babylon through geographical transportation. For that reason, I think that his insights for preaching among exiled American churches are helpful for the contemporary FGKI congregation and their similarly exilic

theological critique of the people's worldly suffering and representatively embraces voices of voiceless and marginalized people as the voice of God's own grief. The rhetoric of lament includes criticizing the present social order and any cultural tendency that causes suffering for FGKIs. This concept is grounded in both the lament theology of the Psalms and Moltmann's theological notion of divine compassion toward humanity's unjust suffering in light of the prophetic facet of God's pathos. In mysterious and sympathetic union with the divine pathos, the world can listen to God's suffering voice and God's expressed compassion toward those who suffer. The preacher's voice in the Spirit accompanies that compassionate voice of God. Specifically, my proposed homiletic includes the preacher's lament about FGKIs' existential struggles with ongoing racial discrimination. The second sermonic movement is communal remembering (or retelling) of God's past normative redemptive history shown in the scripture. Such a retelling functions as a memory that inspires hope and strengthens FGKIs' weak faith in the face of the incongruity between God's promise and the community's existentially difficult reality. Remembering God's past redemptive action leads the church to anticipate the divine future with hope, expecting the promise of God's liberation rooted in the biblical witness. In the third movement, confessional doxology celebrates God's sovereignty and present lordship toward FGKIs who are

circumstances. Next, Sally Ann Brown, a preaching and worship professor, reclaims lament as the church's public practices in her article, "When Lament Shapes the Sermon." Brown's conception of lament for the church's voice is directly from her biblical research on the Psalms. And Luke A. Powery in *Spirit Speech: Lament and Celebration in Preaching* (2009) thinks of the preacher's lamenting voice in the Spirit as an important homiletical implication, although his homiletical conception of lament does not directly spring from the Psalms but from the African American spiritual. Walter Brueggemann, *Cadences of Home: Preaching Among Exiles* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997); Sally Ann Brown, "When Lament Shapes the Sermon," in *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square*, ed. Sally A. Brown and Patrick D. Miller (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005); Luke A. Powery, *Spirit Speech: Lament and Celebration in Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009).

longing for God's righteousness in eschatological hope. Through celebration, this movement of the sermon approximates God's future as an alternative vision in imaginative and creative words, analogous to prophetic preaching's counter-cultural claims. Finally, in the last sermonic movement, obedient vows are deliberately made to energize FGKIs in anticipation of the emancipatory and hopeful future of God. This last step helps to orient the community's way of life toward the ultimate prophetic value of God's reality by engendering a more distinctive pattern of life from the individual-centered way of life in the American Dream *toward* a transformative *habitus* as disciples.³⁶ This last phase relates to the church's mission of anticipating the kingdom of God at both individual and societal levels.

Outline of the Project as a Practical-theological Task

This project to some degree will follow Richard Osmer's practical-theological method and its four tasks: the empirical task (What is going on?), the interpretive task (Why is this going on?), the normative task (What ought to be going on?), and the pragmatic task (How might we respond?). I modify Osmer's four hermeneutical questions a bit so that they become: the descriptive-empirical task (chapter two), the deconstructive task (chapter three), the normative-constructive task (chapter three), and the pragmatic task (chapter four).³⁷

³⁶ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 379-81.

³⁷ My modified version is very similar to Osmer's four-fold practical-theological interpretation and its sequence. In chapter 3, I will interpret and evaluate the problematic theology in shamanistic-prosperity preaching as deconstructive work, and then propose my constructive/alternative theology for immigrant preaching as constructive work. These two practical-theological tasks—the deconstructive and the constructive—I associate with Osmer's second and third tasks. For that reason, I call these tasks deconstructive and normative-

As introduced earlier, chapter 1 will cover FGKI congregations' existential context, the emergent problematic practical-theological issue in the practice of preaching for them, and my practical-theological responses to this problematic preaching practice in order to propose my alternative vision for immigrant preaching.

Chapter 2 will carry out the descriptive-empirical task in response to this research question: "What is the context of lived experiences of marginalized FGKIs and what is the Korean ethnic church's specific function for them?" To answer this question, chapter 2 will lay out the lived experiences of FGKIs as informed by several theologians' interviews and life history/narrative research *and* sociologists' qualitative research on Korean immigrants' first-hand experiences. I will critically review their findings about FGKIs' life situations to obtain a more concrete awareness of their multilayered lived experiences. Through practical-theological reflection, I will begin to identify the emerging theological issues with respect to preaching. The context and situation of FGKIs described in this chapter will be a source for articulating the gospel, since my psalmic-theological homiletics is concerned with "the gospel [being] a mode of reflection in interaction with" the congregational specific situation and/or context.³⁸ The second chapter will also explore the ethnic church's common functions for FGKIs; i.e., the church as a place for settlement, preservation for native culture, fellowship, and security.

constructive, and address both in chapter 3. In particular, my development of immigrant theology for/in preaching in chapter 3 will delve into common Asian American practical-theological characteristics; for example, marginality, as Asians' distinctive living situation, having transformative capacity to both newly encounter God *and* practice the spirit of love. I will explore Asian American practical theology by interacting with a variety of works by Asian American theologians and practical theologians.

³⁸ Jacobsen, "The Unfinished Task of Homiletical Theology," 37.

In chapter 3, I will undertake the deconstructive and normative-constructive tasks in response to two questions: “What are the theological characteristics of the shamanistic-prosperity-oriented message that affects FGKIs’ *habitus* and faith?” and “What would be a more appropriate theology for/in preaching to emancipate FGKIs from a success-oriented *habitus* and to encourage them to be faithful agents for God’s future?” In that chapter, I will deconstruct contemporary Korean immigrant preaching through a critical and theological interpretation of sermon content, especially a problematic theology that often syncretizes shamanistic blessings and the ideology of the American Dream. After the deconstructive task, I will perform the constructive task by virtue of reinterpreting FGKIs’ spiritual experience from the margins and articulating an immigrant theology for/in preaching accordingly. Put differently, this chapter will rearticulate an immigrant theology for/in preaching by redefining their marginality as a new possibility or opportunity. In *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology*, J. Y. Lee’s Asian American theology will provide an overall framework for my theological understanding and immigrant theology for/in preaching in this chapter. For instance, in J. Y. Lee’s theology, marginality is a potentially transformative and creative life place. It directly accords with key features of Asian American practical theology as proposed by Courtney T. Goto. Among others, she notes that Asian American practical theology not only explores its distinctive living situation (c.f., marginality and translocality) but also reflects critically on ongoing practice to articulate constructive theological implications and alternative practices.³⁹ To this end, the chapter will undertake critical and constructive work as an instantiation of Asian American practical theology, sharing its

³⁹ Goto, “Asian American Practical Theologies,” 32-41.

common features and methods. This chapter's articulated theology will serve as the church's normative claim for a new *habitus* in correspondence with God's promised future. In addition, an immigrant theology for/in preaching will be associated with immigrant ecclesiology, and will undergird the immigrant church's functions for a redemptive-prophetic mission for a better future. To achieve the reconstructive task of building an appropriate theology for FGKIs, I will interact with Moltmann's eschatological notion of hope and relevant ideas of other Asian American theologians such as Fumitaka Matsuoka, J. Y. Lee, and Andrew S. Park.

The fourth chapter will undertake the pragmatic task of dealing theologically with the questions: "How could an alternative design for immigrant preaching serve to deepen immigrant Christians' faith by helping them rediscover the hopeful expectation of redemption even in their lament-filled marginality? and "How could immigrant preaching engender a new and transformative *habitus* that embodies a theocentric vision of the good life, rather than one centered on consumer prosperity?" In the central chapter, I will offer a strategic proposal for preaching, namely a psalmic-theological homiletic. This chapter will include my reading of the Psalms not only to draw attention to the fundamental and underlying hope upon which FGKIs can draw—namely Christ's compassion and righteousness—but also to cultivate their faithful engagement in the divine's imaginative future in light of enacting the gospel. A psalmic-theological homiletic is an alternative mode of eschatological and prophetic preaching in times of difficulty, recovering ancient Israel's prophetic, rhetorical tradition that aims toward faith.

In sketching out this new homiletic, the primary touchstones will be the German biblical scholar Westermann works on psalms of lament and A. S. Park's concept of transformation toward God's vision-oriented way of life in *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded*. J. Y. Lee's notion of action/practice-oriented preaching in *Korean Preaching: An Introduction* will especially supply a theological foundation for the last sermonic step of obedient vow as faithful practice. A. S. Park and J. Y. Lee's creative contextual Asian American theology will give direction for my proposal about immigrant preaching with respect to God's vision for a way of life and a practice-focused preaching that will support it. That said, A. S. Park and J. Y. Lee barely discuss how to preach to FGKIs using their theological insights or how to get results in hearers' lives from the contextual theology of their preaching. For this reason, in this chapter I will further develop a more fulsome homiletical strategy in dialogue with their contextual theology.

Chapter 5 will do homiletical analysis of two local Korean preachers' sermons—one by Rev. Seung Mok Choi and one by Rev. Hanyoh Kim—to shed light on how current Korean immigrant preaching already uses both immigrant theology *and* a homiletical methodology that corresponds to my proposed immigrant theology and preaching to some degree. It also aims to demonstrate the more unique features of a psalmic-theological homiletic that is potentially designed to provide future direction for a more collective-transformative local practice of preaching.

Chapter 6 will conclude by summarizing my argument about psalmic-theological preaching for the Korean immigrant church and its potential impact, as discussed throughout the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2. CURRENT FIRST-GENERATION KOREAN IMMIGRANTS' EXISTENTIAL STATUS AND KOREAN IMMIGRANT CHURCHES

Introduction

In Chapter two, I will explore contemporary FGKIs' common plights and Korean ethnic churches' functions. I will begin the descriptive-empirical task with investigating my targeted FGKIs' existential predicaments in this new land to point out emerging theological issues in relation to preaching and a theology of immigration, which I will discuss in greater length in a later chapter. Next, I will examine the unique functions of Korean immigrant churches in this minority ethnic group. Along the way, I will demonstrate the particular significance of preaching for Christian FGKIs for whom the re-discovery of God is the basis for new hope amid lament-filled situations. As for research methodology, in order to comprehend FGKIs' first-hand experience and Korean ethnic churches' unique roles for them, this chapter will critically adopt sociologists and theologians' qualitative research findings: for example, a) Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim's *Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation*,⁴⁰ b) Eunjoo Yoon, Dal Yob Lee, Young

⁴⁰ Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim's research targeted FGKIs in Los Angeles and Orange County in California. The 622 interviews were conducted in 1979 to gather qualitative and quantitative data. Among the total sample population, 281 (45.7 percent) were males and 334 (54.3 percent) were female, which roughly corresponded to the actual gender ratio of Korean adult residents in the Los Angeles area.⁴⁰ In addition, according to Hurh and Kim's research data on "length of residence and life satisfaction," put simply, relationship between the length of sojourn and the degree of adaptation (life satisfaction) may not be linear but rather *quasi curvilinear*. First of all, upon their arrival in the United States, some FGKIs may experience a set of elated feelings. However, most of immigrants confront a harsh reality soon after their arrival. The first one or two years of the initial adaptive stage may be called "exigency" characterized by problems of (1) the language barrier, (2) unemployment or underemployment, (3) social isolation, and (4) culture shock in general. Some may regret that they left their home for a strange land and yearn to return to their familiar milieu. In other words, the disjunction between one's high expectations and one's perceptions of the limited ability and opportunity one finds may lead to a condition of cognitive ambivalence and exigency. In the second stage, as time goes on, acculturation begins, and exigency is redressed through the

Ran and Sung-Kyung Yoo's "A Qualitative Investigation of Korean Immigrant Women's lives,"⁴¹ c) Gyunsoo Yoon and Amie Park M.'s "Narrative Identity Negotiation between Cultures: Storytelling by Korean Immigrant Career Women,"⁴² d) Eun-Kyoung Othelia Lee and Choi Hee An's "Faith-Based Community Support for

resolution phase. At this stage, some immigrants are now employed (even if underemployed), their English is improving, and their incomes are stable. Although some of their initial disillusionment may still linger, immigrants have now developed a taste for material affluence and their previous aspirations in the land of opportunity may be revitalized. In the third stage, revitalization and accentuation of aspiration for success may, however, lead to another crisis, if and when such process involves the shifting of immigrants' reference group—from the minority group (Koreans) to the dominant (white Americans). This crisis is characterized by feelings of relative deprivation, status inconsistency, perceptions of limited assimilation and social marginality. In the next stage, immigrants typically begin to discover an immutable barrier (race) that blocks their way toward structural assimilation and over which they have no control. This existential limbo may lead to the last stage—the immigrant's creating and joining a new ethnic community (the Korean American identity) or passive acceptance of their precarious place as the Korean minority in America (marginality acceptance). Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America: A Structural Analysis of Ethnic Confinement and Adhesive Adaptation* (Rutherford, NY: Fairleigh Dickson University Press, 1984), 32, 140-2.

⁴¹ Eunju Yoon, Dal Yob Lee, Young Ran and Sung-Kyung Yoo investigated 10 Korean immigrant women's lives in California, using the consensual qualitative research method to understand Korean immigrant women's lives in a foreign land. Eunju Yoon, Dal Yob Lee, Young Ran and Sung-Kyung Yoo, "A Qualitative Investigation of Korean Immigrant Women's Lives," *The Counseling Psychologist* 38, no. 4 (May 2010): 528-9.

⁴² Gyunsoo Yoon and Amie M. Park performed semi-structured interviews with four first-generation Korean women who were purposefully selected. As for research method, they collected and analyzed their narratives and life histories to provide thick descriptions of "their first-hand experience of identity formation in a foreign country as minority women." Gyunsoo, Yoon and Amie Park M. "Narrative Identity Negotiation between Cultures: Storytelling by Korean Immigrant Career Women," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 18, no. 3 (2012): 68.

Korean American Older Adults,⁴³ and e) Okyun Kwon's *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants*.⁴⁴

I. Current First-Generation Korean Immigrants' Lived Experiences⁴⁵

Failure in Material Blessing of the Shattered American Dream

At its core, the notion of the American Dream is the belief that with sufficient hard work and motivation, a person can accomplish his or her own dream of economic success and upward mobility.⁴⁶ In this ideology, the United States is perceived

⁴³ Eun-Kyoung Othelia Lee and Choi Hee An carried out interviews (informal conversational style) with 20 Korean immigrants in a way of a phenomenological approach for data collection and analysis regarding faith-based community's services for them. Eun-Kyoung Othelia Lee and Choi Hee An, "Faith-Based Community Support for Korean American Older Adults," *Social Work and Christianity* 40, no. 4 (Winter 2013): 446, 449.

⁴⁴ For a comprehensive understanding of the processes involved in the role of religious beliefs on socioeconomic behavior of the two religious groups—Buddhist and Protestants—Okyun Kwon employed combined research methods such as document research, census data, and informal interviews with church and temple members, and lay leaders augmented the data collections. He performed interviews of 50 Buddhists and 59 Protestants, participant observations of two Korean congregations (one Buddhist and Protestant), and mail surveys of 114 religious readers (29 Buddhists and 85 Protestants). Okyun Kwon, *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants: Religious Beliefs and Socioeconomic Aspects of Life* (El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing LLC, 2003), 279.

⁴⁵ In *Singing the Lord's Song in a New Land: Korean American Practices of Faith*, the four co-authors organize the Korean immigrant church's history into four historical periods: (1) 1903–1950; (2) 1950–1968; (3) 1968–1988/1992; and (4) 1988/1992–present. In this dissertation, the focused immigrants are people who have come to the United States during the fourth period (1988/1992–present). Su Yon Park et al., *Singing the Lord's Song in a New Land: Korean American Practices of Faith* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 3.

⁴⁶ Carolina Bricks, *The American Dream, Background and Development* (Munich, Germany: Grin Publishing, 2016), 4–5; Shelley Sang-Hee Lee, "Korean Americans," in *Asian Americans vol. 3: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History*, ed. Xiaojian Zhao and Edward J.W. Park (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2013), 692. It is difficult to define the term "American Dream," because everyone understands something different by it. For some, the American Dream is the dream of fame and wealth. For others, it is the dream of freedom and equal rights. Many Korean American theologians (see, for example, S. H. Lee, Wonhee Anne Joh and Okyun Kwon) have implicitly or explicitly remarked that the central notion of the American Dream in immigrants' minds has to do with attainment of material

intrinsically as being a land of equal opportunity, regardless of an individual's personal background, ethnicity, gender, and class, provided that the individual works hard.⁴⁷ For instance, historian James Truslow Adam, in *The Epic of America*, remarks that “there has been also the American Dream, that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement...regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.”⁴⁸

Accordingly, some FGKIs who voluntarily immigrated have come with ambitions of financial success as the core of what they understood to be the American Dream. In general, FGKIs have been attracted by stories in the media, or by word of mouth, of some FGKIs' material success.⁴⁹ The American Dream has represented a largely individualistic ideology, meaning that for FGKIs, the Dream ideology has entailed the private pursuit of upward mobility, financial success, and ambition for their children's achievement of prestigious careers. With inflated hopes in the American Dream, some FGKIs have tried to emulate the most successful by working extremely

goods. That is why the definition of the American Dream for immigrants in this dissertation concentrates on economic success. Yet I believe that for FGKIs, their concept of the American Dream has been transformed into a new vision about commonwealth and justice because of their self-assessment of the Dream ideology through life experiences at the margins of the United States.

⁴⁷ Bricks, *The American Dream*, 4; Kwon, *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants*, 279.

⁴⁸ James Truslow Adam, *The Epic of America* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2012), 404.

⁴⁹ William A.V. Clark, *Immigrants and the American Dream: Remaking the Middle Class* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 25. Kyeyoung Park mentions that “Before emigrating, Koreans have preconceived ideas about America. They come with dreams and ideas about how American society works. Until recently, Koreans had a rosy picture of America as a free and equal society with a clean, safe environment where everybody is kind to each other.” Kyeyoung Park, *The Korean American Dream: Immigrants and Small Business in New York City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 39.

long hours in hopes of attaining the elusive goal of material success.⁵⁰ Although the Dream ideology has already proven elusive even to native-born Americans, some FGKIs have nonetheless pursued it aggressively.⁵¹ Without a doubt, some FGKIs have trumpeted their own success.⁵² Yet they have often found that hard work, a cornerstone of American success, could not by itself guarantee the attainment of the American Dream. FGKIs have recognized that many Americans, including whites and other people of color, struggle to find well-paying jobs. They have had to acknowledge that this new land could not guarantee that all immigrants can take part in American middle-class life, for instance, through home ownership and a stable income. Some FGKIs have undergone deprivation and disappointment due to an inconsistency between the immigrant's status in Korea and unattainable professional careers and lives of manual work in the US.⁵³ Their allegiance to the Dream ideology has tended to diminish in the face of struggles against discrimination, limited mobility, and other insurmountable barriers that prevented racial minorities from participating fully in the US economic system.⁵⁴ When the Dream ideology has no longer offered them hope and meaning, some FGKIs believers have looked to faith for more authentic meaning.

⁵⁰ Su Yon Park et al., *Singing the Lord's Song in a New Land*, 11.

⁵¹ Sarah J. Mahler, *American Dreaming: Immigrant Life on the Margins* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 233.

⁵² Nancy Abelman and John Lie, *Blue Dreams: Korean Americans and the Los Angeles Riots* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 121.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 128.

⁵⁴ Abelman and Lie, *Blue Dream*, 176. Without doubt, some FGKIs have achieved their American Dream economically, but here I concentrate more on poor immigrants that have needed more good news and new hope. As one well-educated FGKI reported: "We never expected to lose our profession, when we immigrated to this beautiful and wealthy country.

Formidable Painful Experiences of Transnational Movement

Usually, FGKIs are either permanent resident aliens who undergo the process of moving across borders (departing from a place of origin for another country) in order to take up permanent residence there, *or* those who live temporarily (such as foreign students or workers who are hired by companies in North America).⁵⁵ They have experienced the tension of translocality in a quite different social setting marked by ‘simultaneous embeddedness,’ *and* geographical displacement.⁵⁶ Notably, Fumitaka Matsuoka comments that Asian immigrants’ unique translocal experience in the United States can be highlighted by instability, uncertainty, ambiguity, insecurity, vulnerability and ruptured liminality.⁵⁷ He construes Asian American life as a translocal and ruptured liminal existence of “not being at home in one’s own home” due to societal and cultural dissonance within the predominant American norms, which tend to force other ethnic inhabitants to fit into a relatively homogeneous society.⁵⁸ Sang Hyun Lee expands further on this by defining Korean American’s liminal existence as living “in-between space, a social limbo created by a person’s leaving his or her social structure and not yet

Today, most of us had ourselves in a job which is inconsistent with our qualifications and experience. We are living on starvation wages.” Ablemann and Lie, *Blue Dreams*, 126.

⁵⁵ 40 Years Fair, accessed January 3, 2017, <http://www.fairus.org/facts/glossary#M>.

⁵⁶ Benjamin Etzold and Bishawjit Mallick, “Moving Beyond the Focus on Environmental Migration towards Recognizing the Normality of Translocal Lives: Insights from Bangladesh,” in *Migration, Risk Management and Climate Change: Evidence and Policy Response (Global Migration Issues)*, ed. Andrea Milan, Benjamin Schraven, Koko Warner and Noemi Cascone (New York: Springer Publishing, 2016), 107–8.

⁵⁷ Fumitaka Matsuoka, *Learning to Speak a New Tongue: Imagining a Way that Holds People Together. An Asian American Conversation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stocks, 2011), 11–12, 27, 31.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 5, 8, 11, 116.

having returned to that structure; or to a new one.”⁵⁹ In this existential limbo (a sense of existential in-betweenness or a sense of bicultural homelessness), FGKIs have tended to make the effort to solve these tensions by getting actively involved in ethnic minority Korean churches.⁶⁰

Racial Discrimination⁶¹

A majority of FGKIs have faced racial discrimination in the United States. Racism is not just prejudice or discrimination against ethnic minority groups. More specifically, racism entails “oppression as institutionalized, culturally normed, and social phenomena in which a dominant group benefits from directly or indirectly legislating reality for a minoritized group of people and in that process diminishing their agency.”⁶² In fact, racism justifies the privileged group’s participation in institutionalized behaviors and practices, that dominate minorities on the basis of physical characteristics and

⁵⁹ Sang Hyun Lee, “Claiming Our Liminal Spaces,” *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 27, no. 3 (2006): 193.

⁶⁰ J. H. Kim remarks that “Hence, the Korean-American church, like others, is an ethnic/racial institution functioning as an essential mediating device for its members. Its mission is to meet the particular needs of transplanted people with dual loyalties and address the pain of immigrants’ bicultural homelessness in this American wilderness.” David Yoo and Ruth H. Chung also comment that “Many [Korean Americans] expressed that they felt a sense of homelessness and alienation until they found and settled in a Korean American church.” Jung Ha Kim, *Bridge-Makers and Cross-Bearers: Korean-American Women and the Church* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 14; David Yoo and Ruth H. Chung, *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 164.

⁶¹ Andrew Yueking Lee notes that the Asian Americans who have lived on the edges of society have “a common sense of suffering and pain as a result of racism in American.” Andrew Yueking Lee, “Reading the Bible as an Asian American: Elements in Asian-American Biblical Interpretation,” in *Asian American Christianity: Reader*, ed. Viji Nakka-Cammauf and Timothy Tseng (Raleigh, NC: Lulu.com, 2009), 259.

⁶² Goto, “Experiencing Oppression,” 5.

cultural attributes.⁶³ For that reason, Matsuoka contends that the primary mechanism of American racism is that “the ethnic and cultural distinctiveness of those who fall outside the dominant group norm in this society is relativized and trivialized in order to maintain the legitimacy of the dominant cultural norm.”⁶⁴

In particular, from the perspective of immigrants, racism can be understood in relation to nativism and nationalism. Nativism is commonly defined as the favoring of native-born citizens over immigrants, as supported by the slogan, “America for Americans.”⁶⁵ Nativism regards different cultural traits of immigrants as ‘foreign’ or ‘un-American’ by dividing ‘insiders’ who belong to the nation from ‘outsiders’ who are in it but not of it.⁶⁶

Nativism presupposes that there are generally two groups in the United States: a norm-producing group who represents the dominant culture and the rest who are associated with “alien” cultures because they depart from the predominant norm.⁶⁷ Racial discrimination, together with nativism, intends to strengthen certain members’ well-being and survival by marginalizing other ethnic groups’ personhood, social status, worldviews, and cultural values.⁶⁸ Nativism is often disguised as patriotism and fueled by nationalism.⁶⁹ Indeed, nationalism can be regarded as political principles and

⁶³ Ibid.; Galindo and Vigil, “Are Anti-Immigrant Statements Racist or Nativist?,” 371.

⁶⁴ Matsuoka, *Out of Silence*, 86.

⁶⁵ Galindo and Vigil, “Are Anti-Immigrant Statements Racist or Nativist?,” 371.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 370.

⁶⁷ Matsuoka, *Out of Silence*, 86, 88.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 89.

⁶⁹ Galindo and Vigil, “Are Anti-Immigrant Statements Racist or Nativist?,” 371.

regulatory force, a stance that insists that the political and national unit should be congruent.⁷⁰ In order to promote defensive nation-building processes, nationalism advocates the practice of restrictive immigration policies that then reinforce the dominant group's (un)conscious embodiment of an unexamined practice vested in preserving power and privilege and shaped by institutionalized authority in society.⁷¹ Indeed, most Koreans have undergone difficulties as a result of restrictive political immigration policies. Since nativists and nationalists have advocated limiting the rights of immigration or foreign-born Americans, Asians have been portrayed as unequivocally foreign, no matter for how many generations they have lived here.⁷² Put differently, racism, interwoven with nativism and nationalism, has caused immigrants to experience the pain of exclusion and is thus a persistent source of communal racial despair. This is the nature of the ongoing and complex relationships and social structure that FGKIs typically encounter.

There is also in the US a widespread communal prejudice and judgment based on the ideology of white supremacy. Immigrant theory might have expected that recent immigrants from Asia and Latin America would follow the examples of European

⁷⁰ Barbara Ladd, preface to *Nationalism and the Color Line in George W. Cable, Mark Twain, and William Faulkner* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), x. Lisa Lowe contends that America has historically tried to exclude Asians from society: "The history of the nation's attempt to resolve the contradictions between its economic and political imperatives through laws that excluded Asians from citizenship—from 1790 until the 1940s—contributes to our general understanding of race as a contradictory site of struggle for cultural, economic, as well as political membership in the United States." Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 1996), ix.

⁷¹ Goto, "Experiencing Oppression," 8–9.

⁷² Linda Martin Alcoff, "Latino/as, Asian Americans, and the Black-White Binary," *The Journal of Ethics: Dordrecht* 7, no. 1 (2003): 7.

people who have successfully entered the American mainstream society including achieving socio-economic upward mobility through hard work.⁷³

FGKIs and other racialized minorities, however, had not have the same chances to enter the mainstream and experienced a relatively lower level of acceptance by the American public.⁷⁴ FGKIs as a non-white minority ethnic group have lived as perpetual outsiders due to widespread prejudices based on skin pigmentation. Chan Sucheng insists that “As immigrants, many of their struggles resemble those that European immigrants have faced, but as people of nonwhite origins bearing distinct physical differences, they have been perceived as perpetual foreigners.”⁷⁵ In this regard, David Rodeiger alludes to European immigrants’ unconscious disposition. European people who have been captured by a white-focused sociopolitical construct have been inclined to assimilate into an identity that conferred privilege and its norm by separating poor members from non-whites.⁷⁶

⁷³ Kwang Chung Kim, *Koreans in the Hood: Conflict with African Americans* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 53.

⁷⁴ Kim, *Koreans in the Hood*, 54.

⁷⁵ Chan Sucheng, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston, MA: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 187.

⁷⁶ In David Rodegier’s term, the white-focused sociopolitical construct implies the United States’ social construction of whiteness. This means that North America has been socially and politically constructed by a special attention to whiteness as the norm. It hints that American’s maintenance of white supremacy has caused economic, cultural, social, and racial disparities of power and potential between the dominant Anglo European Americans and other (nonwhite) ethnic groups. Research in the specialty area of whiteness studies has investigated the social, economic, and political significance of whiteness, which is closely connected to the persistent de-valuation of non-white people. Therefore, Rodegier says that European immigrants easily conform to white-focused norms and white supremacist values. And European immigrants because of their ingrained sense of the superiority of “whiteness” were blinded from seeing that their vision of an integrated society is in accordance with the role of whiteness as the norm which shares social privilege and marginalizes non-white immigrants and races. Teresa J. Guess, “The Social Construction of Whiteness: Racism by Intent, Racism by Consequence,” *Critical*

Along with white supremacy, Korean Americans as well as other Asians and people of color have been frequently alienated by a black/white binary in the US. The black/white binary continues to be the dominant framework for understanding race, and it has operated to govern racial classifications and racial politics in the United States.⁷⁷ This black/white racial paradigm has historically marginalized Koreans including other Asian minorities and people of color (non-white and non-black groups) in the public discourse on race and racism.⁷⁸ This binary has made other people of color exist in a vague and undefined reality and has thereby devalued their historical presence. For instance, this binary has positioned Koreans as either “near black” or “near white.”⁷⁹ Further, the binary has only aggravated Koreans’ racial discrimination and exclusion from the mainstream society. Such limited and exclusionary racial classification has not adequately represented diverse racial realities. Undoubtedly, Asian theologies have developed with reference to the topics of racial discrimination, white supremacy, and the black/white binary that has pervaded the dominant culture that is Asian immigrants’ daily reality.

Sociology 32, no. 4 (July 2006): 669; David Yoo and Timothy Tseng, “The Changing Face of America: How Do We Describe Our Altered Racial Landscape,” *Sojourners* 27 (March-April, 1998): 26-29; Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 8.

⁷⁷ Galindo and Vigil, “Are Anti-Immigrant Statements Racist or Nativist?”, 365; Alcott, “Latino/as, Asian Americans, and the Black-White Binary,” 7.

⁷⁸ Alcott, “Latino/as, Asian Americans, and the Black-White Binary,” 17; Khyati Y. Joshi and Jigna Deasi, *Asian Americans in Dixie: Race and Migration in the South* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 81.

⁷⁹ Alcott, “Latino/as, Asian Americans, and the Black-White Binary,” 8.

***First-generation Korean Immigrant Parents' Deferred American Dream*⁸⁰**

A great majority of Koreans came to the United States in search of not only economic success but also better education for their adolescent children. Pyong Gap Min, a sociologist, states that “without a doubt, better economic and educational opportunities in the United States served as major push-pull factors in Korean immigrants’ personal decisions for U.S. bound emigration.”⁸¹ In many cases, their teenagers studied hard and got into good universities, meeting parental expectations. This is because the adolescents realized how their parents sacrificed for the sake of their successful futures. Due to the parents’ high expectations in the academic arena, Korean American students have often distinguished themselves in school.⁸² For that reason, the public image of young Korean Americans has been that of the “model minority” and “science and math wizards.”⁸³ Moreover, FGKIs’ frequent experiences of racial

⁸⁰ According to Yoon, Lee, Ran and Yoo’s investigation, among ten participants, more than half of the participants reported “lacking cultural competency or a sense of belongingness in the mainstream society but expected their children to succeed and have voice in the mainstream society.” Yoon et al., “A Qualitative Investigation of Korean Immigrant Women’s Lives,” 540.

⁸¹ Pyong Gap Min, “The Immigration of Koreans to the United States: A Review of Forty-Five Year (1965-2009) Trends,” in *Koreans in North America: Their Experiences in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Pyong Gap Min (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 12.

⁸² Grace Sangok Kim, “Asian North American Immigrant Parents and Youth: Parenting and Growing Up in a Cultural Gap,” in *People on the Way: Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture, and Community*, ed. David Ng (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1996), 135.

⁸³ Ibid. Here, the myth of “model minority” has come from the public image of Asian North American students. They have often excelled academically and many of them got in to Ivy League colleges, although such stereotypical expectations have put them under undue pressure sometimes. In reality, some people have gone to Ivy League schools, but others have not. For Korean people, Confucianism accounts for their hard-working attitude since Confucianism has promoted an ethos of hard work, and has emphasized education and strong family ties. For example, Luciano Mangiafico observed these Koreans cultural markers: “Korean immigrants’ tenacity, distinct work ethic, commitment to education achievement, and entrepreneurial spirit.” Kim, “Asian North American Immigrant Parents and Youth: Parenting and Growing up in a

discrimination, difficulty in obtaining a professional job in the United States, and blocked upward mobility in the economic system, have driven them to push their children to more successful outcomes. Clearly, FGKI parents want their children to attain prestigious and well-paid careers. In general, FGKI parents do not want their children to run small businesses as they have.⁸⁴ For example, a survey of Korean business owners in New York City in the late 1980s reported that only 3.4 percent of Korean immigrant respondents wanted their children to become small business owners.⁸⁵ Therefore, some FGKI parents have taken great pride in their children's

Cultural Gap,” 135; Abelmann and Lie, *Blue Dreams*, 166; Luciano Mangiafico, *Contemporary American Immigrants: Patterns of Filipino, Korean, and Chinese Settlement in The United States* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1988), 108.

⁸⁴ Pyong Gap Min and Deborah Kim-Lu, “Korean Americans’ Intergenerational Transition in Their Occupational Adaptation: From Small Businesses to the Mainstream Economy,” in *Second-Generation Korean Experience in the United States and Canada*, ed. Pyong Gap Min and Samuel Noh (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014), 40.

⁸⁵ Ibid. Min and Kim-Lu mention that the 1.5 generation and native-born Korean Americans are highly represented in professional and managerial occupations. Hence, Kim calls the phenomenon “a radical intergenerational occupational shift from small business to professional and managerial occupations” in FGKIs’ families. Here are definitions of Korean Americans: “Korean Americans are those who were born in Korea and immigrated to the United States as adults. Many of this generation have minimal or very little English fluency unless they have had some schooling in the United States or have lived and worked in English-speaking communities for many years. Most identify themselves as Korean, rather than as Korean American, and have value systems based on their homeland culture. In larger metropolitan areas with a thriving Korean community, it is possible for a first-generation Korean to never learn fluent English despite having lived in the United States for many years because of easy access to all things Korean. Members of the 1.5 generation are those who were born in Korea, but immigrated to the United States as children. They have been educated primarily in the United States and are often fluent English speakers. Depending on how young they were when they immigrated and how much exposure and access they had to other Koreans and a larger Korean community while growing up, some may identify with both cultures while others may identify primarily with the dominant US culture. Second-generation Korean Americans are those who were born and raised in the United States. Many in this group identify mostly with the dominant US culture and its value system, especially if they have not had much access to a larger Korean community. They may see themselves mostly as American and may speak very little or no Korean. Of course, there is wide intragroup variability within these three major generational groups, and there are always exceptions to the rule, depending on factors such as age at immigration, years of education in the United States, and level of exposure to a larger Korean

successful academic performance and socioeconomic achievement. In this respect, FGKI parents' American Dream has often been postponed to the next generation. Without a doubt, such high parental ambitions for the children have often led to intergenerational conflict.

Highly Educated First-Generation Korean Immigrants

Recent FGKIs have been generally highly educated people. Slightly more than half of FGKIs have already received four-year college degrees, and most of them had white-collar occupations in South Korea prior to their immigration.⁸⁶ For that reason, the feeling of frustration can be intense when they realize that they are no longer in the dominant economic and social positions they held in South Korea. Because American companies mostly require American degrees, FGKIs need to obtain a further degree in America regardless of their academic experience in Korea—provided they want to get a job in the mainstream economy. In addition to those FGKIs who have received an undergraduate degree in Korea but do not have professional jobs in the US, there are some professionals who also hold professional positions in the US, such as medical personnel, exchange visitors, and employees of American branches of Korean firms. Most of these immigrants are bilingual people with a foreign equivalence degree, US baccalaureate and/or graduate degree, or technical education certificate. Before coming

community, among others.” Min and Kim-Lu, “Korean Americans’ Intergenerational Transition in Their Occupational Adaptation: From Small Businesses to the Mainstream Economy,” 43; Mi-Yeoung Jo and Lauren Kwon Dawson, “Neuropsychological Assessment of Korean Americans,” in *The Neuropsychology of Asian-Americans*, ed. Daryl E.M. Fujii (New York: Psychology Press, 2015), 133.

⁸⁶ Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America*, 58.

to the United States, they have been hired by American companies and this employer sponsors their legal immigration petition. In general, most of them live in the US as temporary (immigrant) residents.⁸⁷

Occupational Frustration: Self-Employment and Underemployment

For many FGKIs, jobs in the United States do not have the same status as their pre-immigration job, which is thus a form of underemployment.⁸⁸ In fact, despite having earned college degrees in Korea, once in, many FGKIs can attain only low-skilled, retail, and otherwise marginalized jobs in relatively unfavorable workplaces in which they are required to work extremely long hours just to survive.⁸⁹ For instance, some self-employed people work every Sunday or on certain Sundays. Small business owners or managers work extraordinarily long hours; 42.7 percent of male entrepreneurs work for nine to ten hours a day, and thirty percent work for eleven hours or more a day.⁹⁰ Naturally, some are frustrated and disappointed with their current occupational status in

⁸⁷ In the case of employment immigration (with temporary resident status), the immigration process itself takes two years to attain legal immigration status. Education and experience in Korea often cannot be substituted for a baccalaureate degree from a US institution. And their employers may or may not give a green card for permanent residence in the US. It indicates they might be able to stay until they are hired if their company does not help their green card application. Hanmaum Immigration Corp, accessed November 29, 2017, <http://www.han-maum.net/kwa-47038>; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed November 29, 2017, <https://www.uscis.gov/working-united-states/permanent-workers/employment-based-immigration-third-preference-eb-3>.

⁸⁸ Ivan Light, *Race, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship in Urban America* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 157.

⁸⁹ Kwang Chung Kim et al., "Korean American Religion in International Perspective," in *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, ed. Ho-Youn Kwon et al. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 13.

⁹⁰ Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America*, 111.

America. In order to overcome labor market barriers, many FGKIs start small business.⁹¹ In the *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World* the authors note that Koreans since the 1980s have had the highest rate of small business activity compared to other ethnic groups.⁹² Earlier sociological literature stressed cultural reasons for the high percentage of Koreans' self-employment in business: namely, hard work, family cooperation, and ethnic solidarity.⁹³ By contrast later sociologists have looked at more structural factors. Most of FGKIs' self-employment has actually been "by default an adaptation to limited opportunities for

⁹¹ Jenny Park, *Korean American Women: Stories of Acculturation and Changing Selves* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 38.

⁹² Melvin Ember, Carol R. Ember and Ian Skoggard, *Encyclopedia of Diasporas: Immigrant and Refugee Cultures Around the World, Vol. I: Overviews and Topics* (New York: Springer, 2005), 997. The book, *Encyclopedia of Diaspora*, reports that "Survey conducted in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and Atlanta confirm that about one-third of Korean immigrant households engage in a self-owned business, about one-fifth in professional work, and the rest in other salaried occupations. When taking into account both unpaid family workers and Korean employees working for Korean businesses, more than half of Korean-American workers participate in the Korean ethnic economy as either employers or employees." Additionally, Yoon, Lee, Ran and Yoo's research also show that among their ten participants, "2 participants were high school graduates, 7 had a bachelor's degree, and 1 had a master's degree in South Korea." After immigration, "7 people worked in small family businesses, including an ice cream store, a clothes store, a wholesale business (e.g., hats, plastic, etc.), a dry-cleaning store, and phone card sales; 1 participant had a professional occupation; 2 participants did not work." It indicates Korean immigrants' self-employment and underemployment. Furthermore, their research states that "The nature of discrimination ranged from discomfort with drawing attention because of the Asian appearance to difficulties with opening business relationships. The participants reported incidents such as being served later than Whites in restaurants or shopping centers, being yelled at because of communication difficulties, and the subordinates ignoring the participant's directions at work, saying, 'I didn't understand you.' A participant who runs a small wholesale business reported difficulties in opening business accounts because of her strong accent: '[In her business] sometimes they don't even return my calls. I feel that they're ignoring me because of my strong accent. They don't care about my competency as a business woman. They just ignore me. So I sometimes ask 1.5 generation Koreans who have proper accent to call and open accounts for me.'" Ember, Ember and Skoggard, *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*, 996-7; Yoon et al., "A Qualitative Investigation of Korean Immigrant Women's Lives," 542-3.

⁹³ Ibid., 997.

primary sector jobs in the U.S. labor market.”⁹⁴ That is to say, the reasons for some FGKIs’ self-employment include the language barrier, unfamiliarity with the Western life style, unstable visa status, a lower socioeconomic position in the United States, and limited relationships and restricted networks for gaining access to the mainstream job market.⁹⁵ On top of those factors, the difficulties of transferring their educational credentials and occupational skills to the American labor market have been obstacles to obtaining jobs as well.⁹⁶

Among the several reasons for high rates of self-employment and underemployment among FGKIs, poor English proficiency has been an undeniable factor.⁹⁷ Since fluent linguistic ability in English has long been a crucial element of employment in the American job market, FGKIs have not been especially attractive to

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America*, 101. Based on Yoon, Lee, Ran and Yoo’s research, most of their participants reported “English barriers as one of the biggest challenges. All participants experienced racism and developed coping strategies such as verbal confrontation...All participants reported experiencing racism/discrimination due to a lack of English skills or the Asian background.” Yoon, Lee, Ran and Yoo, “A Qualitative Investigation of Korean Immigrant Women’s Lives,” 542.

⁹⁶ Ember and Skoggard, *Encyclopedia of Diasporas*, 997. Yoon and Park state that all participants experienced frustration when they immigrated—that is, “social identity challenge.” For Koreans, “educational background and social status play a very important role in identity formation.” They state that even if all participants had higher educational background in their home country, they did not have a respectable job in the United States. For instance, for one of the participants her “nursing license from Korea was not recognized and her career was gone.” Another participant felt that she “had lost her identity as an elite and professional person” in a new land. Therefore, “although they had completed higher education in Korea, they sought further institutionalized learning, which offered a degree or license.” Also, Yoon and Park talk about immigrants’ common sphere of experience: “encountering cultural barriers.” Yoon and Park report that all participants “undergo cultural struggles and limitations that immigrants cannot help but experience.” It shows that Korean immigrants generally encounter cultural barriers to get a job in the mainstream society. Yoon and Park, “Narrative Identity Negotiation between Cultures: Storytelling by Korean Immigrant Career Women,” 72-5.

⁹⁷ Jamie Lew, *Asian Americans in Class: Charting the Achievement Gap Among Korean American Youth* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006), 29.

potential employers. As a matter of fact, an overwhelming majority of FGKIs note that language problems are indeed the central issue among the many diverse obstacles to getting a job in mainstream society.⁹⁸ They realize that poor language skill also engenders limited social assimilation and delays occupational mobility.⁹⁹ At times, some FGKIs have engaged in self-shaming and self-blaming for their lack of linguistic skill in the workplace. Sociologists Hurh and Kim claim that such self-blaming due to language difficulty would definitely reinforce the experience of discrimination that FGKIs have felt, deflate their judgment about the quality of their work, and thus lead to both lower contentment and lower income.¹⁰⁰ Under these circumstances, for many FGKIs, self-employment and running a small business have become means of achieving upward mobility. Unfortunately, in many cases their small businesses have experienced frequent economic highs and lows due to instability. Consequently, some FGKIs have faced an enormous loss of social status and financial problems when their small businesses have failed. Such situations demonstrate that FGKIs' high levels of education and high socioeconomic positions in Korea have frequently complicated their adjustment to the American work force in terms of inconsistent status in a new land due to diverse labor market barriers.

First-Generation Korean Immigrants' Affiliation with Christian Churches

⁹⁸ Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America*, 120.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 159.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 119–20.

Since the arrival of the very first wave of Korean immigrants, FGKIs have constructed church-centered communities.¹⁰¹ In the first period, although FGKIs arrived in the Hawaiian Island with great hope, their lives in the plantation camps differed greatly from what they had heard. Indeed, their hard work was rewarded with only very low pay.¹⁰² Among this group, many Christian FGKIs in particular reaffirmed their faith through religious practices and became more religious due to their difficult experiences of immigration.¹⁰³ They tried to reinterpret their situation through Scripture and find meaning for their immigration experience in spiritual instruction through preaching.¹⁰⁴ They tried to consider the new land as a place of new hope in God by viewing it in a more “future-oriented” rather than “backward-looking” way.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, although the number of FGKIs in the United States did not exceed 10,000 in the first wave of

¹⁰¹ Regarding the first period of Korean immigrant church history (1903-1950), Koreans faced the national disruptions of the Japanese colonial war (1910–1945) and the Korean War (1950–1953). During this period, Christian missionaries from the United States recruited new Korean Christian converts as workers for American sugar planters in Hawaii. In 1903, the first shipload of 101, almost all male, Korean labor immigrants arrived in Honolulu Hawaii to work for the Hawaiian plantations. From this time on, FGKIs eagerly began to build their ethnic churches. Korean laborers built the Hawaii Methodist Church in 1903 and the Hawaii Korean Anglican Church in 1905. One third of the 6000 male laborers moved onto the mainland (mostly to California). Some of them established the San Francisco Korean Methodist Church in 1903 and the Los Angeles Presbyterian Church in 1905. The Korean laborers’ church affiliation and their active participation in racial ethnic churches distinguished them from other Asian labor immigrants. In the first period of Korean immigration the pursuit of both economic benefit *and* religious experience were intertwined. Park et al., *Singing the Lord’s Song in a New Land*, 3-7; Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America*, 157; Lee, *Marginality*, 23; Kwon, *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants*, 93.

¹⁰² Most of the plantation workers worked for ten to eleven hours a day, six days a week in the first period of immigration (1903-1950). Kwon, *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants*, 97.

¹⁰³ Kwon, *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants*, 97.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 294.

immigration (in the 1930s), they nonetheless established thirty-nine ethnic Protestant churches.¹⁰⁶ Since then, Korean churches have emerged as one of the central institutions for Korean community life. Moreover, the ethnic church as a group is an essential component in helping FGKIs settle. In the initial stages of immigration, FGKIs generally experience a sense of homelessness and discontinuity between the old and the new countries. Ethnic church members have helped these newcomers settle and adjust to life in a new land because of the Christian bond of mutual trust and generosity. In terms of practicing hospitality, churches have helped new FGKIs' settle through their benevolent service of compassion.

To increase FGKIs' strong attachment to the ethnic church in the midst of their experiences of cultural dissonance in the wider society, the immigrant church has served as a key place to preserve Korean ethnicity and culture. Most FGKIs have tried to maintain some aspects of Korean traditional culture as well as their ethnic cultural network. While they have tried to participate in American culture and groups, they have simultaneously tended to keep significant aspects of Korean cultural life, historical heritage, and intimate networks to preserve a sense of collective identity.¹⁰⁷

Undoubtedly, FGKIs' reliance on the church has been furthered not only by spiritual/religious consolation but also by a deep attachment to their racial-ethnic group

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰⁷ Pyong Gap Min, *Preserving Ethnicity Through Religion in America: Korean Protestants and Generations* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 3. Further, J. David Greenstone alludes to immigrants' reasons for ethnic attachment as follows: "First, the strength of the individual's loyalty or subjective identification with an ethnic group. Second, the degree to which an individual conforms to a group's traditional customs, or if we somewhat redefine ethnicity, the individual's commitment to the group's traditional religious affiliation. Third, the extent to which an individual's friendship pattern is concentrated among members of one's own ethnic group..." J. David Greenstone, "Ethnicity, Class and Discontent: The Case of Polish Peasant Immigrants," *Ethnicity* 2, no. 1 (January 1975): 3-4.

and its culture. As a result, a specific marker of many Korean immigrants is that a great majority of FGKIs has been affiliated with Christian churches from the early history of immigration to the present.¹⁰⁸

II. Distinctive Functions of Korean Immigrant Churches

Historically, the Korean ethnic church has served FGKIs in diverse ways. Unlike second-generation Korean Americans, for FGKIs the ethnic church has been the sole institution in which, in addition to tending to the spiritual, they can enjoy socializing. In short, the immigrant ethnic church has been the single most important racial-ethnic religious and social organization for the majority of FGKIs. The following represents a second-generation Korean American's view of FGKIs' relationship to the church:

In America, there are only three facets in [the] lives of [Korean] immigrants; the work, the family, and the church. I mean, there is not any other socializing places or alternatives for them. Therefore, their church involvement naturally becomes the most important thing in people's lives.¹⁰⁹

This demonstrates the significance of the Korean ethnic church to FGKIs' daily life both in terms of faith and social life. Involvement in the ethnic church has been a way of life for FGKIs. Unlike the church in South Korea, the Korean immigrant church has performed many religious and social roles corresponding to the complicated and specific needs that arise from their parishioners' marginalized status. Here, I further investigate three particular functions of the Korean immigrant church.

¹⁰⁸ Based on the Pew Research Center's research, which was conducted in 2002, Filipino Americans and Korean Americans are overwhelmingly Christian (89% and 71%, respectively). Japanese Americans, by comparison, are more evenly split: 38% are Christian, 32% are unaffiliated, 25% are Buddhist, and 4% belong to other religions. Among Chinese Americans, 31% are Christian, 15% are Buddhist, and 52% are unaffiliated. Pew Research Center, accessed May 5, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2012/07/19/Asian-Americans-a-mosaic-of-faiths-religious-affiliation/>.

¹⁰⁹ Kim, *Bridge-Makers and Cross-Bearers*, 59–60.

A. First-Generation Korean Immigrants' Affiliation with the Ethnic Church and Ecclesiastical Activity

The percentage of Christians among FGKIs is exceptionally high. Among FGKIs, an absolute majority attends church weekly. Jung Ha Kim reports that over 75 percent of the Korean American population self-identify as Christians.¹¹⁰ R. Stephen Warner remarks that 78 percent of FGKIs worship at Sunday service every week.¹¹¹ Based on Kwang Chung Kim and Shin Kim's research in *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, between 60 and 65 percent of FGKIs self-identify as Protestants and 10 to 15 percent self-identify as Roman Catholics.¹¹² Nearly half of recent FGKIs were Christians prior to immigration.¹¹³ Close to half (44 percent) of FGKIs attend ethnic churches from the beginning and throughout their lives as immigrants.¹¹⁴ At the very least, it suggests that FGKIs are highly religious. For that reason, there is a common stereotype that all FGKIs are Christians.

In addition to worship attendance, their ecclesiastical activities include participation as Sunday school/youth group teachers, choir members, treasurers, church secretaries, and other (staff) positions such as elders, deacons, and exhorters.¹¹⁵ They are on the whole very active. Many are inclined to spend much of their energy and financial

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 14.

¹¹¹ Kwang Chung Kim and Shin Kim, "Ethnic Roles of Korean Immigrant Churches in the United States," in *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, ed. Ho-Young Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim and R. Stephen Warner (University Park, PA: The Penn State University Press, 2001), 82.

¹¹² Ibid., 72.

¹¹³ Ibid., 72-3.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 81.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 85.

contributions on their current church.¹¹⁶ An intense commitment to their in-group and general indifference to out-group and society can be characterized as a typical hallmark of Korean ethnic churches.¹¹⁷ Most FGKI congregations have a high in-group commitment even though that considerable commitment generally does not reach beyond the bounds of the church.¹¹⁸ This proclivity of FGKIs to internal ecclesiastical engagement can be interpreted as an intense involvement in the church engendered by both their faith and a social motivation that cannot be fulfilled in the otherwise external context of the host country.

B. Dominant Functions of the Contemporary Korean Immigrant Church¹¹⁹

The contemporary Korean ethnic church's typical roles have been as a place for 1) preservation of native culture, 2) fellowship and security, and 3) fulfillment of religious and spiritual needs.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 83.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Regardless of their high in-group commitment, some of Korean immigrant church pastors are eager to encourage them to help other racial minorities through the church's communal service. For example, in Chapter 5, Rev. Choi's sermon will show that some Korean immigrant churches attempt to help other racial groups.

¹¹⁹ Lee and Choi did qualitative research on "dominant functions of the contemporary Korean immigrant church." Based on their findings, the Korean church first serves "as the social center and a means of cultural identification for Korean immigrants in America and as the place that keeps Korean ethnic identity alive." Second, the ethnic church tries to fulfill Korean immigrant's deep spiritual needs. They write that "Their spiritual fellowship releases their anxiety and fear of living in America and provides comfort and relief as well as encouragement and hope to live in America." Third, the church as a religious institution provides comfort regarding suffering. Koreans "seek to find meaning in suffering and want to have comfort from God" by requesting pastoral counseling and worship services. Lee and Choi, "Faith-Based Community Support for Korean American Older Adults," 450-5.

Church as a Place for Preservation of Native Culture

Korean ethnic churches have operated as a vital means not only to help new FGKIs’ settlement but also to reinforce ethnic solidarity, preserve cultural and ethnic identity and celebration of Korean native culture. Generally speaking, voluntary immigrants who have relocated to a new culture and new society have been confronted with a sense of loss of their familiar culture and lifestyle. For example, while FGKIs are at their workplaces on weekdays, they occasionally encounter a sense of loss of Korean culture, ethnic characteristics, traditional food culture and language, instead of the mutual enrichment of American culture and other ethnic groups’ cultures.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Sociologists Hurh and Kim offer their qualitative research about Korean (first-generation) immigrants’ reasons for affiliation with the church. Their qualitative research background information is explained in footnote 41. It shows that the primary reason the immigrant attends church is for religious life, the second, for psychological comfort, and the third, for fellowship.

[Table 8.2. Ranked Reasons for Attending Church]

	Reasons	Religious	Psychological	Social (fellowship)	Other	Total
Male	First	118 (61.8%)	40 (20.9%)	17(8.9%)	16 (8.4%)	191 (100%)
	Second	84 (64.6%)	19 (14.6%)	18 (13.8%)	9 (6.9%)	132(100%)
	Third	65 (73.0%)	9 (10.1%)	12 (13.5%)	3 (3.4%)	89(100%)
	Fourth	33 (63.5%)	9 (17.3%)	7 (13.5%)	3 (5.7%)	61(100%)
Female	First	141 (60.5%)	60 (25.8%)	7 (3.0%)	25 (10.8%)	233(100%)
	Second	145 (83.3%)	13 (7.5%)	10 (5.8%)	5 (2.9%)	173(100%)
	Third	99 (72.8%)	25 (18.4%)	9 (6.6%)	3 (2.2%)	136(100%)
	Fourth	48 (60.8%)	15 (19.0%)	7 (8.9%)	9 (11.4%)	79(100%)

Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America*, 236.

¹²¹ Stan Inouye, “Biblical Foundations for Ethnic Ministry,” in *Asian American Christianity: Reader*, ed. Viji Nakka-Cammauf and Timothy Tseng (Castro Valley, CA: Pacific Asian American & Canadian Christian Education Project and the Institute for the Study of Asian American Christianity, 2009), 322. Mutual enhancement means elevating one another’s cultures and traditions to higher levels by way of mutual enrichment and mutual challenge. Mutual enrichment concerns the promulgation of each culture and tradition. Andrews Sung Park, “A Theology of Transmutation,” in *A Dream Unfinished: Theological Reflection on American from the Margin*, ed. Eleazer S. Fernandez and Fernando F. Segovia (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007), 157, 158. Additionally, the culture is a “total process of human activity” including

Furthermore, from Matsuoka's critical analysis of Asian Americans' existential status, Asian American's translocal racial identity and their cultural value orientation have tended to be dissonant with America's prevailing social and cultural milieu.¹²² Such dissonance has degenerated when America has tried to domesticate diverse inhabitants into a homogeneous society.¹²³ In this case, Asian Americans have felt that their culture and values have been underrepresented and discounted.¹²⁴ Due to emerging cultural tensions with dominant social norms, more and more FGKIs have resisted weakening any dimension of the Korean traditional cultural network. In such situations, FGKIs have wanted to reaffirm their ethnicity including racial-ethnic heritage and subjective identification with their ethnic group, the Korean ethnic church. Thus, we can confirm that FGKIs' ethnic attachment has often been a means to strengthen subjective identification with their Korean heritage, preserve Korean culture, and reinforce their initial social relationships with other Koreans.¹²⁵ This is why, for example, the church has been a place to celebrate the Korean traditional festivals such as the Korean New Year's Day and Mid-Autumn festival. Through these collective festival activities, they have been able to reclaim their sense of cultural identity and values within American culture.¹²⁶

languages, habits, beliefs, customs, social organizations, mores, and values. Lee, *Marginality*, 52.

¹²² Matsuoka, *Learning to Speak a New Tongue*, 5, 9.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 42.

¹²⁵ Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America*, 78.

¹²⁶ Ellen Tanouye, "Festivals: Celebrating Community, Story, and Identity," in *People on the Way: Asian North Americans Discovering Christ, Culture, and Community*, ed. David Ng (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1996), 178.

Church as a Place for Fellowship and Security

Korean immigrant churches have been the focal point for the preservation of native heritage as well as the center of community life because here FGKIs have been capable to socialize with other Koreans. FGKIs' intimate relationships at the church have been able to satisfy their socio-psychological needs for companionship, emotional support, and validation of their beliefs and opinions.¹²⁷ Amidst their hardships, uncertainties, and downward economic mobility in a hostile outside environment, they have received psychological comfort and emotional support from their peers within the church. For instance, they have shared painful experiences such as racial discrimination in society, uncertainty of visa status, and other difficult life situations. They have consolidated their intimate relationships through sharing their daily stories of isolating and uncomfortable experiences in a new country. Sometimes, unspoken understanding and mutual support have been available in the churches. In addition, creating intimate fellowship at and belonging to the Korean ethnic church have alleviated their stress and frustration and given them psychological solace amidst their feelings of insecurity and not belonging in the mainstream of American society.¹²⁸ Ethnic churches have functioned as a refuge for marginalized people from racial discrimination and frustration. In this regard, the churches have many times provided a sense of security and belonging through intimate relationship among FGKIs. However, ethnic churches' fellowship and security roles are also often connected with FGKIs' compensatory needs;

¹²⁷ Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America*, 87.

¹²⁸ Sharon A. Suh, *Being Buddhist in a Christian World: Gender and Community in a Korean American Temple* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2004), 97; Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America*, 86.

specifically, wanting to reclaim their pre-immigrant levels of social status and respect from others by taking a leadership position at their church.¹²⁹ To some degree, the recognition given them through a leadership position in their church often helps them to deal with a lesser social and job status in the US.¹³⁰ In the circumstances of FGKIs' uprooting and re-rooting as immigrants, the church helps to satisfy their psychological and social needs. As K. C. Kim and S. Kim put it, the ethnic roles of Korean immigrant churches are however "not a social function devoid of religious function, or vice versa, but rather an amalgamation for the two."¹³¹ For that reason, this project will now describe Korean immigrant churches' religious/spiritual function.

Church as a Place of Religious/Spiritual Function

¹²⁹ Rebecca Y. Kim, "Made in the U.S.A Second-Generation Korean American Campus Evangelicals," in *Asian American Youth: Culture, Identity and Ethnicity*, ed. Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou (New York: Routledge, 2004), 235, 243.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 243. Rebecca Y. Kim remarks about the religious and social reasons of FGKIs' strong affiliation with ethnic Korean churches: "The ethnic church helps Koreans regain the social status that they lost in the process of immigrating and adapting to a new land. Because of language limitations, cultural unfamiliarity, and other disadvantages, many contemporary Korean immigrants cannot maintain the professional, administrative, and managerial positions that they once had in Korea. In this situation, the ethnic church helps alleviate immigrants' status devaluation by giving them recognition and opportunities to take on leadership position within the church. Besides position as elders and deacons, there are various committees like the committee for education, fellowship, finance, and publication that members can lead. Members can be the directors of the choir, children's bible schools or language school. Multiple positions exist to satisfy members' need for social status and recognition. Although the broader U.S. public may not recognize and/or respect middle-class Korean immigrants' past social status and achievement as college graduates or professionals in Korea, fellow co-ethnics will." Kim and Kim, "Ethnic Roles of Korean Immigrant Churches in the United States," 73; Rebecca Y. Kim, "Evangelicals and Korean American Community Formation," in *Asian Americans: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History*, ed. Xiaojian Zhao, Edward J.W. Park (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2013), 367.

¹³¹ Kim and Kim, "Ethnic Roles of Korean Immigrant Churches in the United States," 74.

Korean immigrant churches have also played a role in enhancing their members' spiritual beliefs and faithful practices. Racial-ethnic churches perform worship services in a certain tongue for a particular race that has a distinct history, similar physical characteristics, and unique sociocultural experiences in the distinctive realities of the sociocultural margins of the US. In addition to Sunday morning worship services, the majority of Korean ethnic churches have provided weekly or even daily early dawn prayer meetings, mid-week worship services, as well as weekly district group Bible study meetings.¹³² Both the frequency *and* intensity of the gatherings have been designed to help Korean believers overcome the various challenges of their lives as immigrants and give guidance to their marginalized lives through spiritual resources.¹³³ Raymond Williams says with respect to the correlation of religion and immigration that “[in many cases] immigrants are religious [regardless of their ethnicity]—by all accounts more religious than they were before they left home—because religion is one of the important identity markers that helps them preserve individual self-awareness and cohesion in a group.”¹³⁴ Like other ethnic immigrants, FGKIs take part in religious activities more actively after immigration in order to overcome everyday suffering by enhancing and practicing the life of faith.¹³⁵ FGKIs in stressful times of transition have

¹³² Peter T. Cha, “Korean American Churches,” in *Asian Americans vol. 3: An Encyclopedia of Social, Cultural, Economic, and Political History*, ed. Xiaojian Zhao and Edward J.W. Park (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2013), 675.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 675–6.

¹³⁴ Raymond Williams, *Religions of Immigrants from India and Pakistan: New Threads in the American Tapestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), ii.

¹³⁵ Okyun Kwon, who does qualitative research about religiosity orientation of Buddhist and Protestant Korean Americans (mainly first-generation immigrants), refers that “After immigration, Koreans participate in religious activities more actively than they used to in their home country...This also seems to be true for first-generation immigrants, many of whom

preferred to find a religious community to surmount their subjective experiences of marginality through spiritual consolation. Put differently, their sociocultural marginality has often resulted in an intensified need not only for spiritual consolation but also spiritual hope for a more dignified life and meaning for their ongoing experience as immigrants in the United States. In this respect, J. H. Kim claims that due to their ecclesial activity Korean believers are often not ultimately defeated by their painful and disrespectful treatment from mainstream society.¹³⁶

Ultimately, many FGKIs have longed for religious explanations of their life in America and wanted to reclaim God's will and tangible assurance that their immigration has been worthwhile and meaningful.¹³⁷ The majority of FGKIs have viewed their lives

struggle for a new life and a new source of spirituality. Most practitioners search for personal sacredness, values, meanings, and rewards in their religiously constructed cosmology, which is symbolically linked to their believed-to-be supernatural power(s). Religious practitioners who maintain a high degree of religiosity are thus apt to think of everyday life in a uniquely religious way, searching for the meanings and values from what happens in their lives...Korean immigrants' high rates of religious participation and dramatic alteration of religious affiliation after immigration draws attention to the relationship between religion and immigration...Most of them, Protestants and Buddhists alike, stated that their spiritual experiences occurred when they had concentrated their minds on certain issues quite intensively. Most of them disclosed that they had sought solutions to their personal issues through their respective religious beliefs by concentrating their minds on the issues for quite a long time. They agreed that their mental concentration on important life issues brought forth the spirituality ever more intensively. According to them, the spiritual experience was preceded by their concern with certain issues. All respondents of both religious groups who had spiritual experiences brought unique stories that form a similar pattern...A differential aspect that the two religious groups show in their spiritual experience is that Buddhists rely more on their own personal mental power to reach their spiritual experiences, while Protestants rely more on external agencies or sources of higher symbolic power, such as Scripture, the cross, or images of God." Okyun Kwon, "The Religiosity and Socioeconomic Adjustment of Buddhist and Protestant Korean Americans," in *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*, ed. David Yoo and Ruth H. Chung (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 61-69.

¹³⁶ Kim, *Bridge-Makers and Cross-Bearers*, 99.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 87.

as pilgrims, foreigners, and sojourners due to a feeling of uprootedness.¹³⁸ Such uprooting and pilgrimage can potentially entail a deep religious experience. Consequently, both long-term Christians *and* those who were not Christians before their immigration have often attended church side by side. They do so in order to uncover the significant meaning of their subjective experience in their existential conditions. For example, according to Kwon’s research, Protestant pastors have struggled to offer spiritual meaning and theological interpretation about a congregation’s collective situation.¹³⁹ In my view, this could be a primary reason why there is such a high percentage of Korean Christians among immigrants. Hurh and Kim refer:

We came here, of course, for our own personal and very human reasons—for a better education, for financial well-being, for greater career opportunities and the like. We find ourselves in a wilderness, living as aliens and strangers. And the inescapable question arises from the depth of our being: What is the real meaning of our immigrant existence in America? What is the spiritual meaning of our alien status?¹⁴⁰

In this manner, FGKIs have yearned for a gospel message that helps them to re-discover the meaning of faith in marginality. The above statement begs the question: “What/how must the Korean immigrant church preach to help FGKIs’ live the life of faith where they are?”

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed FGKIs’ distinctive existential experience and the Korean ethnic church’s general roles for them. I have explored sociological and

¹³⁸ Soyoung Park, “The Intersection of Religion, Race, Gender, and Ethnicity in the Identity Formation of Korean American Evangelical Women,” in *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, ed. Ho-Youn Kwon et al. (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 197.

¹³⁹ Kwon, *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants*, 198.

¹⁴⁰ Hurh and Kim, *Korean Immigrants in America*, 134.

theological research by Asian-American scholars as part of the descriptive-empirical task of my practical-theological work. The point of this is to unpack FGKIs' context in a way that will be useful subsequently in formulating a more contextual homiletic. The next chapter will be concerned with the good news that unfolds theologically and meaningfully in light of the painful experience of FGKIs. It will criticize potential weak points of a prosperity preaching unduly focused on individual blessing precisely for the sake of poor FGKIs and those who are in need. In other words, the primary concern for the next chapter will be developing the meaning of faith amidst marginality—as a new possibility to exhibit God's love and the church's prophetic vision with respect to God's future.

CHAPTER 3. CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY: TOWARD A MORE FAITHFUL WAY OF LIFE FOR IMMIGRANTS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, this dissertation carried out the descriptive-empirical task of discovering the context of lived experiences of marginalized FGKIs and Korean ethnic churches' specific functions for their way of life. In my revision of Osmer's practical-theological method, Chapter 3 will undertake simultaneously Osmer's second interpretive and third normative practical-theological tasks by asking respectively "Why is this going on?" and "What ought to be going on?" In chapter 2 we described along the way how some elements of common life also played a positive role in sustaining FGKIs. Nonetheless, based on the premise that the individual-materialistic theological tendency of Korean immigrant homiletical praxis remains a problematic content for their way of life, this chapter will examine why this tendency has occurred (the interpretive task) and how it has affected FGKIs' daily way of life (the deconstructive task). In other words, by undertaking this practical interpretive-deconstructive theological task, this chapter will answer the question: "Why does the immigrant church sometimes convey a problematic theological message in sermons—a message that encourages a way of life oriented to individual success?" Therefore, in addition to the interpretive-deconstructive task, this chapter will also undertake Osmer's normative-constructive task and thus answer the question: "What more fitting constructive theology might sermons express in order to re-orient FGKIs' communal, hope-filled, faithful *habitus* in the direction of God's future?" This normative-constructive move naturally includes as well elements of the present Korean spiritual heritage (e.g., *Tong-sung-ki-do* or *wooriness*) already contribute positively to my proposed immigrant theology.

As noted earlier, the American Dream means the belief that with sufficient hard work and motivation, a person (a FGKI) can accomplish his or her own dream of economic success and upward mobility.¹⁴¹ Through this ideology, the United States is perceived as a land of equal opportunity, regardless of an individual's—particularly individual FGKIs'—personal background, ethnicity, gender and class, provided that the individual works hard.¹⁴²

Yet the work we are proposing here is ultimately deconstructive. If FGKIs believe the inspirational tales and success stories about the American Dream, if they believe and ascribe to its impressive ideology, then the Dream ideology becomes a potent force that strengthens the fabric of their everyday way of life and how they envision their future. Assuming that the Dream ideology promotes Christian FGKIs' an individualistic way of life that is success-oriented, I will need briefly to examine the ideology and premises of the American Dream in order to reveal the disparity between the ideological promise and the lived reality.

In addition, I will investigate a tendency of contemporary Korean immigrant preaching, namely its propensity, born of FGKIs' hope, to align the pragmatic Korean shamanistic-individual prosperity belief system with the Dream ideology. This chapter will show how this kind of theology is problematic for FGKIs' faithful way of life due to its narrow focus on God's blessing for individuals, its extremely materialistic vision for the future, and its obsession with what is a false Dream.

¹⁴¹ Carolina Bricks, *The American Dream, Background and Development* (Munich, Germany: GRIN Publishing, 2016), 4-5.

¹⁴² James Truslow Adam, *The Epic of America* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2012), 404; Lee, "Korean Americans," 692.

I will then formulate what I suggest is a more appropriate theology for/in immigrant preaching—one which invites FGKIs’ to a more faithful life with God. This immigrant theology includes: 1) a practice of self-emptying as the *telos* of the cross, 2) meaningful immigrant life in situations of relative deprivation, 3) biblical narrative as the primary resource for liberation, 4) a practice of holy insecurity, and 5) a shared eschatological vision beyond individual success. In order to construct an immigrant theology in preaching, Moltmann’s theological insights will serve as the primary conversation partner. His work advocates for Christ as both the central motivating factor in Christian life *and* the source of true hope for immigrants. Moltmann’s personal experience—encountering God’s loving presence as a prisoner and professing God’s promise for the transformative future during the Second World War—offers hopeful theological inspiration to often broken-hearted FGKIs.¹⁴³ His confession of God’s solidarity with the world, even in its suffering, could help fortify FGKIs’ testimony about God’s love on the margins.¹⁴⁴ My reading of Moltmann’s theology, however, will be done specifically in light of FGKIs’ context.

¹⁴³ Sunday Bobai Agang, *The Impact of Ethnic; Political; and Religious Violence on Northern Nigeria, and a Theological Reflection on Its Healing* (Cambridge: Langham, 2011), 138.

¹⁴⁴ Mark Douglas, *Confessing Christ in the Twenty-First Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 115. Furthermore, in an English prisoner of war camp, Moltmann read the New Testament and the Psalms for the first time and was taken by words of Jesus on the cross, a quotation from the twenty-second psalm: ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Ps. 22:2, NRSV).’ The words of lament in the Psalm echoed in his experience, despair and hopelessness. In the Psalms, he saw that the Bible dealt with human pain, humiliation, and despair, yet with an unconquerable spirit of hope. Scripture opened his eyes to the God who is with the broken-hearted. He described this as an experience of being found by God rather than of finding of God. God spoke to him with bloodied and parched lips in cries of pain and abandonment, bitter fruits of seemingly misplaced trust.” This experience drew him to a wide reading of Scripture and ultimately to the study of Christian theology. On the ground, his innovative volumes, *Theology of Hope* and *The Crucified God* emerged from his personal conversion with reading the Psalms (and the New Testament), become a main dialogue partner

Finally, I will develop a prophetic ecclesiology that encompasses FGKIs' theocentric way of life—that is, participation in the divine promise for a better communal future in relation to the immigrant churches' indispensable function as a refuge.¹⁴⁵ As such, for FGKIs, the church as an ethnic refuge can affirm Asian-ness as an aspect of the *Imago Dei* (image of God). Since my proposed vision of immigrant theology corresponds with psalmic-preaching's prophetic task—i.e., vowing to engage with a painful reality as an act of solidarity with both God and the community through celebration and proclamation—this endeavor will lay the groundwork for psalmic-theological preaching in the KFGI context.

I. Rethinking the Ideology of the American Dream as First-Generation Korean Immigrants' Abiding Belief

The shamanistic ideology of blessings has permeated FGKIs' consciousness because of a frequent shamanistic orientation within Korean Christianity itself. Shamanism primarily accentuates worldly blessings such as material wealth, good health, and longevity. Often within the Christian immigrant's mindset, this Asian shamanistic belief system aligns with the American Dream and national spirit to such a degree that the Dream ideology constitutes the controlling power and abiding hope for

for theological construction of immigrant theology and psalmic-theological homiletic as well. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), ix; Larry D. Hart, *Truth Aflame: Theology for the Church in Renewal* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 465; David Hohne, "Moltmann on Salvation," in *Jürgen Moltmann and Evangelical Theology: A Critical Engagement*, ed. Sung Wook Chung (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012), 154.

¹⁴⁵ The ways in which Korean ethnic immigrant churches function as places of refuge indicate Korean churches' traditional roles in the terms of pastoral care aspect, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2: (a) the church as a place for preservation of native culture, (b) the church for fellowship and security and (c) the church for religious and spiritual needs. Refer to p. 50-7.

Christian FGKIs' way of life. First-generation Korean preachers who share in the shamanistic belief system often unconsciously promote the idea of this-worldly material blessings in the pulpit. As mentioned earlier, this material blessing-oriented message leads to a spiritual crisis, especially for the poor, as a result of confusion about God's love (or God's goodness) in their lives.

To help expose the false promise of a prosperity-oriented message interwoven with the American Dream, I will briefly analyze some of its key characteristics: a) equal opportunity without any barriers for financial success; b) self-reliance as a result of success and failure; c) an emphasis on materialism and individualism; and d) its frequent entanglement with exclusion and classism.¹⁴⁶ The deconstructive work in this section will help reveal the extent to which the Dream ideology and Asian shamanistic belief actually deprive FGKIs' freedom by means of an illusion about the future that ultimately steals their hope. I will then argue that this shamanistic-prosperity message often causes

¹⁴⁶ Jennifer L. Hochschild, in her literature *Facing Up to the American Dream*, criticizes some flaws of the American Dream as follows. The Dream ideology firstly promises that everyone can participate equally and can always start over. Secondly, the ideology only gives great anticipation about success, not failure. Thirdly, the American Dream premises merely (narrow) success. Fourthly, achievement of the American Dream depends on individual's actions and traits. So to speak, success is totally under the control of individuals. James Kluegel and Eliot Smith briefly note three features of the American Dream: "First, that opportunity for economic advancement is widespread in America today; second, that individuals are personally responsible for their positions; and third, that the overall system of inequality is therefore equitable and fair." In short, the four characteristics of the Dream ideology that I will describe in this dissertation are the result of my readings on Hochschild and other scholars. Their points of view on the American Dream are similar to a large degree even as I give them a different emphasis. Furthermore, Joan Huber and William Form define the dominant [American Dream] ideology: "American culture contains a stable, widely held set of beliefs involving the availability of opportunity, individualistic explanations for achievement, and acceptance of unequal distributions of rewards." Jennifer L. Hochschild, *Facing Up to the American Dream: Race, Class and the Soul of the Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 26-37; James R. Kluegel and Eliot R. Smith, *Beliefs about Inequality: Americans' Views of What is and What Ought to Be* (London, UK: Routledge, 1987), 23; Joan Huber and William Form, *Income and Ideology: An Analysis of the American Political Formula* (New York: Free Press, 1973), 3.

life to be more painful for FGKIs who grieve their financial misfortunes, uncertain life status, and unique vulnerability.

A. Deconstructing the American Dream

The American Dream is something that ethnic minority churches need to reconsider critically. I will investigate the dominant tenets of the American Dream, emphasizing the discrepancy between the Dream's promise and reality. Further, my deconstructive work on the Dream ideology includes how it has played out in FGKIs' lives in relation to preaching practice.

Equal Opportunity without an Artificial Barrier

Heather Beth Johnson notes that the “achievement ideology” of the American Dream promises personal accomplishment and equal opportunity.¹⁴⁷ Prosperity for everyone through hard work, regardless of background or personal history, is a crucial component of the Dream's ideology. In other words, its promise presupposes equal opportunity without artificial barriers or prior restrictions. The ideology could serve as vitalizing energy for hope-filled living for some FGKIs who are instilled with the promise of unlimited equal opportunity for the sake of material achievement. They are however often conscious of the gap between the ideological claim and actual fact. For example, they quickly learn that not everyone gets an equal chance to realize the Dream. This is because, in reality, “American society has erected social barriers to some” (i.e.

¹⁴⁷ Johnson, *The American Dream and the Power of Wealth*, 180.

related to skin color, ethnicity, educational background and so forth).¹⁴⁸ As a result, a minority community's joyful expectations of the future ultimately only heighten feelings of frustration and deprivation when they become aware that ethnic minorities are excluded from some possible futures. Thus, Jeremy Reed points out that (not only Korean but also other ethnic) immigrants experience first-hand the contradiction of the Dream ideology's tenets of equality with their lived reality.¹⁴⁹

Socio-economic classism, which is pervasive in the U.S., demonstrates how the Dream ideology's premise of equal opportunity without an artificial barrier for anyone is not actually realized.¹⁵⁰ The reality of wealth inequality offers a stark contrast to the idealized pictures of the cherished American Dream since socio-economic classism itself hinders equal opportunity.¹⁵¹ By and large, economically wealthy people are assured continued access to material success with the ability to replenish their wealth and maintain an inequitable class structure that enhances their own social standing and

¹⁴⁸ Jennifer L. Hochschild, "What's Wrong with the American Dream?," *Iowa State University Department of Sociology*, <http://www.soc.iastate.edu/sapp/soc235ch05.html>.

¹⁴⁹ Jeremy Reed, "The American Dream and the Margins in Twentieth-Century Fiction" (PhD diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2009). Joseph Stiglitz, Noble Prize-winning economist, in his book, *The Price of Inequality*, talks about the causes and consequences of the high inequality in America that causes questions about the American Dream: "Wages of women, African Americans, and Hispanics are all markedly lower than those of white males." Joseph E. Stiglitz, *The Price of Inequality: How Today's Divided Society Endangers Our Future* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Publishing, 2013), 110.

¹⁵⁰ Socio-economic classism means "the institutional, cultural, and individual set of practices and beliefs that assign differential value to people according to their socioeconomic class." Economic power is "an indicator of a person's value and worldly success is admired." Maurianne Adams, Larissa E. Hopkins and Davey Shlasko, "Classism," in *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, ed. Maurianne Adams and Lee Anne Bell (London, UK: Routledge, 2016), 214.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

opportunities.¹⁵² Inherited wealth influences life opportunity, since its cumulative advantages leverage socio-economic power as it passes from one generation to the next.¹⁵³ In general, such classism helps create vast inequalities in wealth. In the United States, the gap between the upper middle class (to say nothing of the upper class) and the rest of society has grown astronomically since 1950s.¹⁵⁴ Barbara Jenson argues that the upper middle class, who makes up a relatively small percentage of the population (10-15%), has enjoyed life as winners of the American Dream.¹⁵⁵ And yet this relatively small percentage of upper middle class wealth has itself contributed to “joblessness and financial devastation for the rest of the population, working class.”¹⁵⁶ Jenson comments that “Not for a hundred years has the United States seen such extremes of wealth and poverty or the lavish flourishing of the upper class while the vast majority of citizens fall further and further away from the American Dream.”¹⁵⁷ Therefore, the reality of social stratification and structural inequality in the United States does not guarantee equal chances for all, in direct contradiction of the promises made by the American Dream. In particular, some FGKIs who have low socio-economic status, cannot compete with the inherited wealth and privilege of the rich and can hardly be said to have had equal

¹⁵² Johnson, *The American Dream and the Power of Wealth*, 180.

¹⁵³ Adams, Hopkins and Shlasko, “Classism,” 215.

¹⁵⁴ Barbara Jenson, *Reading Classes: On Culture and Classism in America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 48.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 50.

opportunity. These very circumstances should provoke suspicion of the Dream ideology's veracity in the minds of FGKIs.

*The Value of Self-Reliance*¹⁵⁸

Because the ideology of the American Dream rests on the belief that success results “from one’s actions and traits under one’s own control,” failure is the result of lack of volition, talent, or will.¹⁵⁹ Jennifer L. Hochschild defines self-reliance as dependence on one’s capabilities, judgment, and resources for success. Based on self-actualization, the ideology encourages people to strive for upward mobility by relying upon their own abilities. The virtue of self-reliance is understood as an individual attribute, which thus ignores social dynamics and tends to blame the oppressed for their lack of success.¹⁶⁰

Their own personal experience of failure is made more harsh by the premise of the American dream—the belief that success results from actions and traits under one’s control. Logically, it does not follow that if success results from individual volition then failure results from lack of volition...If one may claim responsibility for success, one must accept responsibility for failure. Americans who do everything they can and still fail may come to understand that effort and talent alone do not guarantee success. But they have hard time persuading others [of that]. After all, they are losers.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Hochschild, *Facing Up to the American Dream*, 18; Cyril Ghosh, *The Politics of the American Dream: Democratic Inclusion in Contemporary American Political Culture* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 137.

¹⁵⁹ Hochschild, *Facing Up to The American Dream*, 30.

¹⁶⁰ Mead Goedert, *The African American Urban Male's Journey to Success: Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Race, Gender, and Social Class* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2016), 23.

¹⁶¹ Hochschild, *Facing Up to The American Dream*, 30. Cyril Ghosh says further that, “Dream rhetoric seemed to be decidedly about self-reliance.” Ghosh, *The Politics of the American Dream*, 137.

Put differently, the Dream is based on the presupposition that individual ambition and effort determine one's success and failure. As a result, some FGKIs think that their failures come from their own individual faults, without any real appreciation of the socio-economic dimension of marginalized people's precarious economic status and frequent social exclusion.¹⁶² The problem with the Dream ideology is that it attributes failure to individuals and not to the premise of the Dream itself. As Mead Goedert puts it, "The notion of individualistic effort and achievement leads to self-blame instead of societal critique when the American Dream is not realized."¹⁶³ In this way, the Dream ideology prevents critique of itself. Johnson likewise contends that Americans predominantly think that "poverty results from the lack of a proper work ethic, laziness, socially deviant behaviors, or other such personal problems," instead of being the product of the poor's marginalized position within America's socio-economic system.¹⁶⁴ Consequently, being a powerless outcast, social straggler, or a suffering unfortunate ultimately is the individual's fault. As a result, the Dream ideology presupposes that any FGKI's personal failure in upward mobility is about self-blame and does not cause for any critical reflection on the structural barriers to the American Dream.

The American Dream: An Emphasis on Individualism and Materialism

¹⁶² William DiFazio, "Forgetting Poverty in Brooklyn and the United States," in *The World in Brooklyn: Gentrification, Immigration, and Ethnic Politics in a Global City*, ed. Judith DeSena and Timothy Shortell (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2012), 61.

¹⁶³ Goedert, *The African American Urban Male's Journey to Success*, 23.

¹⁶⁴ Heather Beth Johnson, *The American Dream and the Power of Wealth: Choosing Schools and Inheriting Inequality in the Land of Opportunity* (London, UK: Routledge, 2006), 79.

Consistent with dominant American culture, the prevailing belief system of the American Dream is deeply related to individualism and materialism. Put simply, the Dream propagates individual happiness based on an optimistic American ideology.¹⁶⁵ The Dream assumes that success entails competitiveness and one's individual victory over others. The Dream presupposes an economic order akin to laissez-faire capitalism, in which sovereign individuals compete with one another to achieve economic gains.¹⁶⁶ As a result, one's personal success inescapably entails others' failures so that the

¹⁶⁵ Hochschild, *Facing Up to the American Dream*, 16. FGKIs have not been able to escape from individualistic culture emerged from capitalism—an economic system based upon private ownership of profit. As a matter of fact, Confucian collectivism and its traditional codes of conduct that evolved over the centuries have led to the social system of South Korea. Confucianism has valued collectivism and harmony—“relatedness with others in harmony.” Also noted have been group loyalty, cooperation and unity, enthusiasm toward education, communalistic practices, familism, a work ethic and hierarchical authoritarianism, etc. The collectivistic culture in traditional Korea has been manifested in a variety of ways. For example, Korean people historically practiced collective sharing in the typically agrarian society. In the neighborhood community of traditional cluster village, they have practiced the mutual exchange of agricultural labors that has run counter individualism. Added, in the light of the expansive collectivism, Korean people had strong nationalistic sentiment, identifying each other as the common members of *Uri-nara* (our nation). However, in the modern era of international economic competition in global markets, individualism has been rapidly spreading in Korean society. With the influence of globalization, from 1960-1987, Korea successfully moved from a military government to a freely civilian government. This change in government has led to unprecedented economic growth and concomitant societal changes. Globalization has created opportunities for growth and efficiency gains by stimulating competition and rapid technological innovation. It has also produced extremely competitive social environment. Many Confucian values however have still survived in Korean society. Therefore, some scholars (Kim Kyong-Dong, 2017; Lee H.C & McNulty 2003; Jin Jing Yi 2002; Eunkyung Park 1998) agree that both ideologies—traditional collectivism and Western-style individualism—have existed in the contemporary Korean daily lives. Thereas Youn-ja Shim, Min-Sum Kim and Judith N. Martin, *Changing Korea: Understanding Culture and Communication* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 22-23, 47, 78-9, 130; Jin Jing Yi, “Commonalities and Differences between the Cultures of North and South Korea and the Unification of the Peninsula” in *Korea and Globalization: Politics, Economics and Culture*, ed. James B. Lewis and Amadu Sessay (New York: Routledge, 2002), 89; Jonghoe Yang, “Globalization and Value Change in Korea: With a Special Emphasis on the Impact of the Recent Economic Crisis and Neoliberal Reform on the Confucian Value System,” in *Korea Confronts Globalization*, ed. Yunshik Chang, Hyun-ho Seok and Donald Baker (London, UK: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2009), 196.

¹⁶⁶ Abelmann and Lie, *Blue Dreams*, 177.

ideology generates not only economic achievement but also deprivation. No matter how many dream the Dream, only a few can become iconic figures of success in the American landscape.¹⁶⁷ As such, the Dream nurtures only successful people, not all people. In this manner, the Dream's theory does not, unfortunately, make provision for failure. Success, as defined by the Dream, intensifies tendencies toward individual success and lures people to assume positions of centrality, thus justifying the enjoyment of the privilege that come with their resulting economic stability and power.

In addition to its individualism, the Dream also promotes a materialistic vision of a better life in the future. The American Dream pursues material abundance, acquisition, and production-centered values as the absolute standard of success for any visions for the future. This means for most people, including ethnic immigrants, that the most common definition of success is the attainment of high income, economic security, and upward mobility. This corresponds to the Dream's assumption that "success" is regarded absolutely as an economic achievement. However, in actuality, success is relative to each person's degree of subjective self-satisfaction.¹⁶⁸ Consequently, if FGKIs are captured by the Dream, their lives may be characterized by an affluent way of life that tends toward money, greed, and the glorification of material success.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 177.

¹⁶⁸ Hochschild, *Facing Up to the American Dream*, 16.

¹⁶⁹ Lois Tyson, *Psychological Politics of the American Dream: The Commodification of Subjectivity in Twentieth-Century American Literature* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1994), 5. As Graig Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass refer, faithful way of life in this dissertation is "abundant not in things but in love, justice, and mercy." Graig Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass, "A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices," in *Practicing Theology: Beliefs and Practices in Christian life* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 16.

The American Dream's Exclusiveness

Sandra L. Hanson and John Kenneth White assert that the American Dream is the product of a historically unique exceptionalism.¹⁷⁰ In other words, the dominant group's exclusivity in maintaining the privilege of a preferred race, gender, ethnicity, and language has only underscored the ideology of the American Dream—for example, the exclusion of women and other minorities. In *American Masculinities: A Historical Encyclopedia*, Erica Arthur notes that the concept of the American Dream has historically reinforced its whiteness and masculinity through white people (usually white men) occupying the places of power in the capitalist structure.¹⁷¹ In many cases, material

¹⁷⁰ Sandra L. Hanson and John Kenneth White, "Conclusion: The American Dream: Where Are We?" in *The American Dream in the 21st Century*, ed. Sandra L. Hanson and John Kenneth White (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2011), 142. Sandra L. Hanson and John Kenneth White correlate American cultural exceptionalism with the American Dream: "Seymour Martin Lipset, in his book *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword* (1996) argues that American culture is exceptional. Part of this [cultural] uniqueness is bound up with the American Dream." Hanson and White, *The American Dream in the 21st Century*, 80-1.

¹⁷¹ Erica Arthur, "American Dream," in *American Masculinities: A Historical Encyclopedia*, ed. Bret Carroll (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc., 2003), 25. Erica Arthur states that:

In the colonial period, the explicit formulation of the American Dream began in the eighteenth century. Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography, which established him as the colonial era's archetypal self-made man, led Max Weber to identify him as the personification of the capitalistic work ethic. Configured as a product of character and self-determination, the American Dream of wealth and success thus became a defining aspiration for white American men. In the nineteenth century, if Franklin embodied formulas by which economic success could be achieved, the market revolution, urbanization, and industrialization provided many Americans with the conditions necessary for its fulfillment and promoted the emergence of a middle class that associated manliness with character and the achievement of success. In Frederick Jackson Turner's view, the availability of land in the West provided men with a chance to succeed, while the practical experience of western life reinforced qualities of individualism, self-reliance, and perseverance, all considered essential to both success and manliness. In the twentieth century, continuing economic growth during the early twentieth century reinforced the association between masculinity and the American Dream. During the post-world War II era, the viability of economic prosperity as a stable basis for masculine identity was strengthened. The passage of the G. I. Bill in 1941 suggested that the federal government was obligated to provide veterans with the opportunity to attain the American Dream. However, the Great Depression of the 1930s

prosperity has been achieved by white men at the expense of persons of other genders and minorities—excluding nonwhite people in ways that “prevented most of them from achieving or even hoping for economic success.”¹⁷² A tragic example is that of Native Americans and African slaves who fell victim to the Puritans’ realization of their own hopes and the American Dream.¹⁷³ These examples show how the dominant group’s exclusivity is deeply related to their economic prosperity, even as that prosperity is seen as a desirable goal of the Dream. Jenson points out that in the United States, economic inequality is highly correlated to race because the mutual reinforcement of racism and classism manifest themselves in persistent racial disparities in wealth and income.¹⁷⁴ With the influx of diverse immigrants from multiple cultures, the heterogeneity of America has however come to challenge the Dream’s emphasis on one particular race, religion, and language.

Indeed, some people have already recognized the dysfunctions in adhering to the ideology of the Dream. For instance, E. M. Kim refers to a follower of the Dream as one grounded in “exclusive ethnocentrism, and sectarianism, but recognizes them as illusion

tested the belief that ambition, hard work, and competence contributed to economic success, as widespread unemployment and poverty appeared to discredit the American Dream and its ideal of American masculinity. Thus, this revitalized link between manliness and the American Dream was questioned in some circles. As the exclusive interrelationship between white masculinity and the American Dream eroded, some white men reacted adversely to their loss of entitlement, in many cases attempting to preserve that exclusivity. Although more elusive, unstable, and problematic, the American Dream, through the weight of its history and its enduring mythic appeal, continues to exert a powerful influence on what it means to be an American man. Arthur, “American Dream,” 25-7.

¹⁷² Ibid., 26.

¹⁷³ Tonya Flores, “American Dream, Dream on,” accessed March 22, 2015, <http://www2.bakersfieldcollege.edu/roughneck/1-1/Flores.pdf>.

¹⁷⁴ Jenson, *Reading Classes*, 112.

or false hopes.”¹⁷⁵ Such dysfunction leads the ethnic church to reflect theologically upon the future of the American Dream ideology. Perhaps nonwhite immigrants do not need to blindly follow the ideology of a Dream that has been measured only in terms of the economic vision of the privileged group. Instead, the Korean immigrant church needs to anticipate and vitalize different American dreams by reflecting on the contradictions of the existing Dream.

B. Immigrant Preaching and the Problem of Syncretizing the American Dream

As mentioned earlier, the immigrant preaching of the Korean ethnic church shows a propensity to combine shamanistic blessing and the American Dream’s promise of individualistic materialistic abundance.¹⁷⁶ Therefore, this notion of shamanistic-individual blessings continues to shape the future of immigrant preaching. It also tends to promote the Dream’s false hope in connection with Christian FGKIs’ pragmatic belief system and therefore shapes both their daily lives and their future.

The Asian tradition of shamanistic blessing regards “wealth, success, health, longevity, and many children at home” as the five blessings from heaven.¹⁷⁷ Tae-Ju Moon asserts that, “Although not recognized officially as a religion, shamanism remains

¹⁷⁵ Eunjoo Mary Kim, “A Korean American Perspectives: Singing a New Song in a Strange Land,” in *Preaching Justice: Ethnic and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Christiane Marie Smith (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2008), 104.

¹⁷⁶ In fact, a great number of first-generation preachers of the Korean church are not totally free of the concept of shamanistic blessing and its individualistic prosperity theology. Eunjoo Mary Kim, “Hermeneutics and Asian American Preaching,” *Semeia* 90-1 (January 2002): 276.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

the most prevalent form of religiosity in Korea.”¹⁷⁸ Moon elaborates that the combination of earthly blessings from God and shamanistic blessings is “a general impression of the long-ingrained habit of religious syncretism” as a pragmatic belief system in Korean religions.¹⁷⁹

In this shamanistic-prosperity gospel, God blesses the believer with tangible economic blessing and in a way consistent with the American Dream. Success is regarded as a way to reveal God’s grace to individuals but results in a distorted emphasis on materialistic salvation *here and now*. Many Christian FGKIs have been held captive by an understanding of God’s blessing as prosperity. In this way, the shamanistic, prosperity-oriented message of blessing ends up re-inscribing contemporary U.S. social tendencies, including consumerism, materialism, capitalism, and individualism.¹⁸⁰ Accordingly, if Christian FGKIs, whose life goal is to fulfill the American Dream, fail to actualize the Dream economically, they feel they fall short not only of the ethno-centric white American norms but also those of God’s blessings and grace. This feeling of failure is due to theological misconceptions in shamanistic-prosperity preaching about what constitutes God’s blessing.¹⁸¹ The corruption of the Dream typically triggers in

¹⁷⁸ Tae-Ju Moon, “The Korean American Dream and the Blessings of Hananim (God),” in *The Global God: Multicultural Evangelical Views of God*, ed. Aida Besancon Spence and William David Spence (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 239.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 238.

¹⁸⁰ Andrew E. Kim also argues that the concept of shamanism-induced wishes for material blessings, especially in times of difficulty, tends to create a distinctly plausible affinity to capitalism in South Korea. Andrew E. Kim, “Christianity, Shamanism, and Modernization in South Korea,” *Cross Currents* 50, no. 1/2 (Spring-Summer 2000): 116.

¹⁸¹ Fernandez asserts, “Indeed, falling short of the norm is rather like falling from grace: outside the norm is hell, a place where an encounter with God is perceived as impossible.” Eleazar S. Fernandez, “Exodus-Toward-Egypt: Philippine-American’s Struggle to Realize the

FGKIs an intense sense of disappointment, meaninglessness, regret, confusion about their decision to immigrate, and often a faith crisis. Put differently, a prosperity-oriented belief system (in preaching) inadvertently deepens FGKIs' crisis of faith in the moment of crisis itself. Thus, if the preacher promises God's miraculous blessing (meaning financial fortune) to each worshipper, in spite of the very real racial barriers to the attainment of such fortune, poor and disillusioned FGKIs might well feel that God has abandoned them.

To mitigate this sense of abandonment, Korean immigrant preaching should articulate new dimensions of God's blessings beyond the familiar shamanistic blessings of the prosperity gospel. Indeed, God's blessing is not meant only as economic abundance for individuals but also communal justice, peace, love, forgiveness, joy, and hope-filled faith. Theologian Peter Phan, for one, claims that "a distortive emphasis on materialistic aspects of salvation related to the American Dream is against Christian fidelity to God's vision of bringing about God's reign within the wider picture of the drama of Asian American daily living."¹⁸² The Dream, which is the primary driving force in the lives of many Christian FGKIs, might well hinder Christianity's task of bringing salvific reality to others in the twenty-first century. For this reason, Christian preaching should reaffirm that FGKIs' lives be rooted not in an individualistic, exclusive, materialistic dream but in faith in God, in the divine vision for God's reign. In other words, Christian preaching needs to present the alternative values of the gospel and an

Promised Land," in *A Dream Unfinished: Theological Reflection on America from the Margin* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007), 174-5.

¹⁸² Peter C. Phan, "The Dragon and The Eagle: Toward a Vietnamese American Theology," in *Asian-American Christianity: A Reader*, ed. Viji Nakka-Camauf and Timothy Tseng (Morrisville, NC: Lulu.com, 2009), 351.

alternative eschatological vision of fullness, rather than the American Dream, which is articulated and measured in predominantly economic terms.

II. Toward a More Appropriate Theology for/in Preaching

What appropriate theology for preaching to FGKIs could replace its syncretistic American Dream and its notions about prosperity? A deconstruction of the general features of the American Dream ideology would allow preachers to reformulate a theology more suited for preaching to future FGKIs. David Schnasa Jacobsen and Robert Allen Kelly remark that, “The relationship among the gospel, our context, and the current situation does involve preachers in an act of theological interpretation” to make a gospel word born in theological insight.¹⁸³ To my mind, a preacher in the FGKI context has no mandate to speak guarantees of success related to the Dream, but chiefly God-centered good news born of the preacher’s theological hermeneutic of context and its theological interpretation.¹⁸⁴ In this next part of the chapter, I will propose a theology for the practice of immigrant preaching, a theology definitively opposed to the Dream’s premise and Shamanistic-prosperity preaching, a theology in which the Christian gospel and Christ’s lordship become a more clearly articulated focus of hope for FGKIs.

A. Beyond Self-Fulfillment: A Self-Emptying Practice of Cruciform Theocentric Faith from the Margins

An immigrant theology pursues the self-emptying practice revealed in God’s self-emptying love in the cross. In fact, the Christian spirituality of the cross represents

¹⁸³ Jacobsen and Kelly, *Kairos Preaching*, 30, 41.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

the divine's own self-emptying love and life-giving action for all and does not seek to dominate others. By means of Jesus's self-emptying on the cross, all human flourishing is being restored. Self-emptying as the *telos* of the cross contrasts distinctively with the self-centered mindset of the Dream ideology. This is because the Dream is interwoven with the human desire for self-fulfillment which only helps the weak fall victim to materialistic competition. The Dream is about the self-fulfillment of one individual's wealth and safety, but a self-emptying practice is an alternative way of life. Put another way, the self-emptying and life-giving *telos* already undermine the American Dream's effort to maintain and reinforce privilege for oneself.

Most FGKIs leave everything in their homeland in the hope of personal enrichment and financial success in a new land. Among them are many FGKIs who face feelings of emptiness and financial difficulties, stemming from the dislocation of immigration and the failure to achieve upward mobility. However, their experience of emptiness can just as well stimulate a spiritual journey, a moving into the new territory of faith; that is, a self-emptying and self-giving love in the shadow of Christ's cross.

Regarding this self-emptying love, Moltmann states:

God's creative love is grounded in his humble, self-humiliating love. This self-restricting love is the beginning of that self-emptying of God which Philippians 2 sees as the divine mystery of the Messiah. Even in order to create heaven and earth, God emptied himself of his all-plenishing omnipotence and as Creator took upon himself the form of a servant.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: The Gifford Lectures, 1984-1985* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 88.

In Moltmann's view, Christ's self-surrendering/self-emptying on the cross displays God's love for the sake of and in solidarity with others.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, for FGKIs the cross becomes both a comfort to vulnerable and suffering believers, *and* also challenges those vulnerable to be empowered by imitation of Jesus's actions.

A self-emptying practice is also connected with discipleship in that an immigrant theology reinforces God's calling to be disciples. Discipleship associates with a certain way of life that is being liberated from the craving to live for dominance and false security. Charles L. Campbell expounds how Jesus refuses his temptation for using the way of worldly power in the wilderness, immediately after his baptism. Campbell remarks that:

“His [Jesus] ministry will be one of resistance to the principalities and powers of the world...First, Jesus refuses to use his power to secure his own survival. Second, the devil invites Jesus to use his power to establish a political empire grounded in the ways of the world- the ways of domination and violence...When Jesus tells his disciples to ‘take up your cross and follow me,’ he is calling the church to this way of nonviolent resistance...He is calling us not simply to bear the burdens of life...but to take up the way of resistance to the Domination system...discipleship continues to be cruciform rather than triumphant”¹⁸⁷

As Campbell puts it, the way of Jesus—discipleship—is *not* using one's capacity to dominate other people through complicity with the powers, nor it is seeking a triumphant victory over others for the sake of one's survival.¹⁸⁸ Jesus's way “challenges the idolatrous claims of the powers but also their reliance on violence to ensure their own survival and domination.”¹⁸⁹ In this way, Christian FGKIs are called to engage in

¹⁸⁶ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 18.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 46, 64, 66.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

the daily practices of resisting dominating others. Jesus's calling is to set free FGKIs from the idols of success or achievement and then to remain steadfast in the ways of discipleship.¹⁹⁰ Further, Jesus's calling—"taking up one's cross" or "being cruciform"—does not simply lead to suffering for its own sake.¹⁹¹ Rather, it is to bear suffering when we stand in solidarity with others, victims of classism or racism, and then resist ourselves the temptation to dominate others.¹⁹² Because Jesus does not explain the features of discipleship but calls on believers to decide whether they will pursue it, immigrant preaching about a self-emptying practice of discipleship calls hearers to determine their standing with God.

Furthermore, God's calling of FGKIs to be disciples indicates that their chaotic life on the margins offers the potential for them to experience liberation. In desperate times, and quite unexpectedly at the margins, FGKIs can recognize how Jesus chooses marginality to save the world, not with centralized power but with love and healing. Scripture itself portrays Jesus as the paradigmatic immigrant, "committed to the promotion of the Kingdom of God, marked by justice and love for all, by solidarity with other [im]migrants."¹⁹³ His perilous life is toward the cross just as his ministry is aligned with the marginalized, the poor, and the outsider.¹⁹⁴ Jesus's life inspires FGKIs to be

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 184; Choan-Seng Song, *Jesus and the Reign of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 15.

¹⁹¹ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 65; Jaeyeon Lucy Chung, *Korean Women, Self-Esteem, and Practical Theology: Transformative Care* (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 98.

¹⁹² Moltmann, *The Crucified God*., 64.

¹⁹³ Phan, "Embracing, Protecting, and Loving the Stranger," 102.

¹⁹⁴ Lee, *Marginality*, 86.

emancipated from the ambition to take hegemonic control of the world, and committed to serving the world by harmoniously co-existing with all deprived people.

As a rule, prosperity preaching tempts individuals to focus on self-centered practices in their daily lives, in so doing their eyes are drawn away from a self-emptying Christian spirituality of the cross of Christ. Thus, Jacobsen and Kelly state:

This self-giving that stands at the center of God's revelation in Jesus Christ implies that our task as theologians and preachers is to find the words and images that express the gospel so that it can be heard as good news spoken specifically to those who hear. Like Christ, the gospel points in the end not to itself, but to the God who so loves the world in profligate self-giving.¹⁹⁵

In this way, immigrant preaching takes on the task of articulating good news by focusing on God's self-giving love, not the self-fulfillment of the Dream. Such preaching furthermore helps inspire FGKIs to practice a sacrificial, love-centered way of life to and for the world. Immigrant preaching of the self-emptying cross of Christ simultaneously aims at prompting faithful discipleship, the following or imitation of Christ, now open to faithful praxis on the margins.

B. Meaningful Immigrant Life in Situations of Relative Deprivation

First, an immigrant theology for/in preaching plays a role in proffering meaning for immigrant life from the standpoint of the core of Christian belief and then helping FGKIs think theologically over their experiences in relation God. For many FGKIs, their transnational experience of moving from one place to another is not a pleasurable one, but an arduous journey in which suffering and tears are common.¹⁹⁶ Immigration entails

¹⁹⁵ Jacobsen and Kelly, *Kairos Preaching*, 38.

¹⁹⁶ Kwon, *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants*, 2.

painful experience, but also offers opportunity to search for meaning in the life in faith. For instance, some Christian FGKIs struggle with the shamanistic-prosperity gospel and its promise because such a message does not work for their lives. In these circumstances, preaching helps the congregation to find faithful meanings in their marginalized predicament and deepen their Christian faith in connection with Scripture and the proclaimed gospel. Ronald J. Allen insists that (theology in) preaching can help the congregation interpret their life from the perspective of the church's deepest conviction about God week in and week out.¹⁹⁷ He notes that (theology in) preaching helps "the congregation make sense of seemingly random experiences of threat, pain and chaos" by means of speaking of life "in ways that the community finds believable and that are confirmed in its experience" from the divine purpose for the world.¹⁹⁸ His argument connects with the fundamental purpose of religion—that is—religion provides orientation and meaning in the midst of a world that is often threatening and meaningless.¹⁹⁹ To be sure, some Korean pastors have attempted to help the congregation search for meaning and values from what happens in FGKIs' lives.²⁰⁰ According to Kwon's survey, Protestant preachers repeatedly emphasize the meanings of immigration in light of their pastoral reaction to the congregation's collective

¹⁹⁷ Donald J. Allen, *Preaching is Believing: The Sermon as Theological Reflection* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 27. Allen claims that "the preacher brings systematic theology directly into the pulpit." This is because he believes that systematic theology helps the sermon respond to the deepest existential human questions, offering a holistic interpretation of life from a Christian perspective. Allen, *Preaching is Believing*, 33, 26.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26. Regarding the purpose of religion, Allen quotes the cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz's explanation: "the fundamental purpose of religion is to offer a holistic interpretation that shows how the various pieces of life fit together in such a way as to allow the human community to feel that existence is purposeful and that life is not going to be overwhelmed by chaos." Allen, *Preaching is Believing*, 25-6.

situation.²⁰¹ He states that, by and large, Buddhist leaders emphasize humane ways of problem solving, while Protestant pastors support them theologically by offering religious/spiritual meanings for their members' lives as immigrants.²⁰² In this way, the pastoral theological aim of immigrant preaching consists in helping to strengthen FGKIs' spirituality and foster their new-found faith at the margins.

As far as discerning theological meaning in immigration, Christian pilgrimage offer preachers and hearers a compelling image for Christian FGKIs insofar as it provides spiritual meaningfulness about their experience.²⁰³ Here, pilgrimage denotes how Christian FGKIs take a spiritual journey toward God's promised future through a

²⁰¹ Kwon, *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants*, 198.

²⁰² Ibid. Kwon who interviewed 50 Buddhist and 59 Protestant leaders around New York city addresses that "For instance, in relation to the members' immigration life, the majority of Buddhist leaders emphasize in their sermon such themes as "be aware of the practitioner's means and capability" (26%), "try to use wisdom of both the East and West" (19%), "hold on to cultural identity and build a new one on it" (15%), "achievement and success- be a self-made man" (15%), "maintain mental security and tranquility" (11%), and "cause and effect- everything is dependent on what you think and do" (11%). Rather than bestowing religious meanings on their members' immigration life, Buddhist leaders mostly emphasize some moral and psychological form of survival methods, which are quite indirect but closely related to the essence of Buddhism. The majority of Protestant leaders, however, emphasize religious meanings applicable to members' immigration situation and theology-oriented survival methods in their sermons. Protestant leaders' preaching emphases are largely concentrated on such themes as "immigration is God's divine providence for the chosen people- an analogy with the new Canaan and the new calling" (32%), "obtain encouragement, challenge, vision, hope, and comfort under God's guidance" (26%), "look for help in God" (25%), and "achievement and success- be a self-made man" (7%)." Ibid., 198-9.

²⁰³ A theological image of pilgrimage for Christian FGKIs' faithful living is one of several images I propose in this dissertation. Instead of one-way advice about FGKIs' meaningful life, I believe that preachers can get the wisdom of some FGKIs' already-constructed theology (as a living faith) and their theological images for faithful immigrant life during the preaching preparation process. That is, preaching could facilitate the community's ongoing and holy dialogue about the faith [emerged at the margins] and nurture a meaningful conversation of convictions [about the faith]. David J. Lose, *Preaching at the Crossroads: How the World and—Our Preaching—Is Changing* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 43.

transformative encounter of God in light of an inward experience.²⁰⁴ In reality, many FGKIs at this early stage of immigration do not think of themselves as being on a pilgrimage. For some Christian FGKIs, their up-rootedness and insecurity, however, could help them to re-imagine their life-journey as a sacred pilgrimage toward God's promised future. Of course, S. H. Lee elucidates that many FGKIs come to the United States for much more mundane reasons—for a better education and a better financial future. Nonetheless, their marginality in that context eventually offers an opportunity to many to embark on a sacred pilgrimage to a God-promised goal: e.g. joining with other strangers at the margins.²⁰⁵ For example, FGKIs have been frequently inspired by Abraham and Sarah's story, a story founded on their obedience to God's promise.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ As for the definition of pilgrimage, Sherly A. Kujawa-Holbrook offers several possibilities: "There are many ways to describe pilgrimage. The word itself derives from the Latin *peregrinus*, meaning 'stranger' or 'foreigner.' On pilgrimage the traveler is a foreigner in several ways: a stranger to the companions she meets along the way, a stranger to places visited, and a stranger to the inward journey of meaning and transformation. On some level, pilgrimage always connotes a life-changing journey. For some, pilgrimage means to journey to place where holiness is apparent or where some kind of divine and human encounter took place. Some pilgrims are directed toward specific destinations—such as a dwelling place of a saint, or a holy place that evokes prayer and reflection, or the site of a significant life event. For others, the passage is symbolic of the journey of a soul to God and primarily an inward experience of alternative sacred geography. Still others describe pilgrimage as a threshold experience that points to a new reality or a process of inner transformation." In this paper, pilgrimage denotes that Christian FGKIs take spiritual journeys toward God's promised future through transformative encounters of God that include a spiritual experience of inner transformation. Sherly A. Kujawa-Holbrook, *Pilgrimage—The Sacred Art: Journey to the Center of the Heart* (Nashville, TN: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2013), 4-5.

²⁰⁵ Sang Hyun Lee, "Pilgrimage and Home in the Wilderness of Marginality: Symbols and Context in Asian American Theology," in *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, ed. Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim and R. Stephen Warner (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 61; Lee, "Pilgrimage and Home in the Wilderness of Marginality," 220.

²⁰⁶ In *Singing the Lord's Song in a New Land*, the four co-authors remark that some Korean pulpits spiritually identified FGKIs' lives with Abraham and Sarah's. This message was impliedly interwoven with the very ethos of FGKIs' belief of the Dream. They address that "Korean Americans experienced rapid population growth and exponential church growth from 1968 to 1988/1992. Reflecting the very ethos of the Korean American belief of the American

Consequently, many Christian FGKIs' identify themselves with Abraham who wanders by faith toward God's future. In particular, they identify with Abraham's experience of a nomadic life, in the metaphorical sense: leaving home, suffering hunger, living as a foreigner, experiencing vulnerability, insecurity and ambivalence. Though FGKIs' decision to come to the United States is not exactly the same as Abraham or Sarah's,²⁰⁷

dream during this time period, their faith communities also enthusiastically embraced a peculiar gospel of equating Korean Americans as 'God's chosen people.' It is thus no surprise that a prominent Korean American theologian's articulation of FGKIs as a faithful people obediently responding to God's call to pilgrimage God's promised land—the United States—swept Korean American faith communities during the same period. Korean Americans have not only become synonymous with a 'churched population' but also self-selected survivors as the 'chosen people' *en route* to religious pilgrimage in the US. Korean American success is now God's will, and every obedient subject of God will do his or her best to bring about God's will on earth." It shows that Korean pulpits implicitly or explicitly alluded that God promised about FGKIs' success in their promised land, that is, North America. In this way, Korean pulpits might focus primarily on Abraham and Sarah's departure for their (material) blessings. However, Asian American theologians, J. Y. Lee and S. H. Lee who reinterpret the biblical story from a marginal perspective, proffer that Korean pulpits better enable to concentrate on how Abraham and Sarah kept faith on their pilgrimage-like lives or in their marginalized life circumstance. For instance, in his volume, *Marginality*, J. Y. Lee notes that "The history of the people of Israel began with the scattering of people- the removal of Abram, Sarah, and their family to a strange land (Gen. 12:1-9). This call [God's call] made Abram and Sarah and their family marginal people...Like any immigrants, Abram and Sarah no doubt had feelings of repulsion and attraction for the new land, Canaan. They were in-between the two worlds. Certainly, immigration is a marginalizing experience. Abram and Sarah were marginal pioneers and the perfect symbol of sojourners. If Abram and Sarah's lives symbolized Israel's faith, then faith demands scattering to strange places and a marginal existence. God's scattering decentralizes and immigration marginalizes the central-group people, so they experience God in their midst." S. H. Lee also elucidates that "It is in this context of having problems of leaving home and really arriving in America that the image of the Abrahamic obedience to God's call has been invoked in the Asian American church. The challenge is to see the Asian immigrants' *de facto* uprootedness as an opportunity to embark on a sacred pilgrimage to some God-promised goal and, therefore, to believe that a life as strangers and exiles can be meaningful." Put another way, Asian American theologians' reading of the biblical story of Abraham and Sarah highlights faithful living in the margins as well as spiritual pilgrimage toward God's promised future, rather than (material) blessings. Park et al., *Singing the Lord's Song in a New Land*, 10; Lee, *Marginality*, 110-1; Lee, "Pilgrimage and Home in the Wilderness of Marginality," 81.

²⁰⁷ It means that most FGKIs' reason for immigration is receiving benefits from a certain country; while Abrahams' reason for leaving his homeland originated from God's calling to make him the father of nations. While FGKIs come to a certain country to benefit from the economy or its free society, Abraham responded and obedient to the divine command, left the land of his father, and did not know where he was going. The purpose of Abraham's journey was not economic benefit but came from God's plan to make him the father of nations.

they do indeed yearn for God’s guidance and vision in a similar way, particularly when they encounter unexpected predicaments and despair. As a result, an immigrant’s life often becomes faith on the move—meaning their physical mobility across territories prompts self-conscious reflection on their Christian faith. In holding onto their faith, they could be strengthened by preaching that affirms that suffering and despair will not be the final word in their immigrant lives. As S. H. Lee notes, “the exile’s life can be meaningful,” Christian immigrants’ lives can be theologically and spiritually meaningful if they interpret their lives as immigrants by witnessing to the divine presence in their daily lives and communally moving forward toward God’s promised goal.²⁰⁸ In this way, pilgrimage theology in preaching could be a means to give spiritual purpose and meaning to FGKIs.

Second, an immigrant theology for/in preaching accentuates FGKIs’ lived experiences of God’s self-revelation in a new land, thus helping them to construct their own meaningful story, their *testimony*. In the first experiences of immigrant life, displaced people immediately feel an acute absence of lineage or connection to family, along with a lack of congruity or memory with respect to the new physical place.²⁰⁹ As displaced persons, they feel the loss of comfortable belongingness and the rupture of

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ John Inge, *A Christian Theology of Place: Explorations in Practical, Pastoral, and Empirical Theology* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003), 83. Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh’s assertions are my basis for regarding immigrants as displaced or homeless in sociology-psychological terms. They argue that “Home is a place of enough satisfaction of peace...Home is a place of openhanded hospitality, which is suffused with welcome and protection not exclusion...Home is a place of belonging, of recognition and acceptance rather than disdain and rejection.” Thus, because of disorientation and estrangement, we can regard FGKIs as people who feel a sense of homelessness. Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2008), 59-65.

memory in a new place. But this same loss brought about by crossing cultural frontiers can empower one to become more vividly aware of the divine's self-disclosure, albeit sometimes through experiencing intense anguish. In other words, displaced people often feel God's gracious presence and unfailing care in a new land. Such encounters permit them to designate the new place as one of ongoing mystery, redemption, and grace rather than of exclusion and shame. By virtue of their encounter and reconnection with God within their existential predicament, FGKIs can experience the new land as a now storied place replete with meaningful insights that they themselves have constructed. Fulkerson notes that a new place can emerge by encountering the divine redemptive reality as a live, corporate, and bodied experience through the church's place-making practice²¹⁰ Such place-making practice can make a new place for constructive meaning, beyond the territory of meaning.²¹¹ Thus, even in the midst of FGKIs' relocated existence too often marked by fear and prejudice, they can still give testimony to God's redemptive reality as lived faith in their ordinary lives. Even with the experience of such ambiguity, their testimony can be "a powerful articulation of the contours of grace" in their everyday places.²¹² Accordingly, they could begin to see this new land as a place of grace, often linked with an emergent reality of God-with-us, even in an ontological status of uncertainty, ambivalence, and disruption.

²¹⁰ Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 26-7, 254.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid., 246.

Social theorist Eugene Victor Walker also notes that place is “a location of experience. It evokes and organizes memories, images, feelings, meanings.”²¹³

Therefore, from a theological viewpoint, FGKIs’ new encounter with God can create a valuable memory connected with a new place, North America. Meaningful, constructive testimonial stories related to a new place can be a means of communal witness through the church’s proclamation about what God has done for the marginalized in this new land. Such a declaration about God’s gracious actions in the sermon helps provide communal and redemptive meanings for FGKIs’ lives, and simultaneously empower them to make their daily lives meaningful with God in the new land.²¹⁴

Finally, a theological emphasis on God’s co-suffering with FGKIs in their hardship in a new land through the very practice of preaching helps to give redemptive meaning. Whenever FGKIs feel God’s seeming abandonment due to ongoing difficulty, the preacher could reassure them of God’s active suffering of passionate love, God’s solidarity with their suffering, and God’s identification with FGKIs in the depths of their predicament.²¹⁵ These notions echo Moltmann’s theological understanding of the divine

²¹³ Eugene Victor Walter, *Placeways: A Theory of the Human Environment* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 21.

²¹⁴ Graig Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass talk about the correlation between theological awareness of God (God’s redemptive action in our lives) and Christian practices: “Both theological anthropology and theological assessment of what God is doing in the world are relevant to a theological account of practices, and to the community’s ability to engage in authentically Christian practices. Christian practices thus involve a profound awareness, a deep knowing: they are activities imbued with the knowledge of God and creation. Indeed, we believe that it is precisely by participating in Christian practices that we truly come to know God and the world, including ourselves.” Therefore, I think that testimonial stories about God in sermon helps the church’s collective practice, attuned to the purposes of God for the life of the world. Dykstra and Bass, “A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices,” 24, 25.

²¹⁵ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 230, 395; Richard Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann* (Edinburgh, UK: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 1995), 57, 67.

pathos toward human suffering as exposed on the cross. In contrast to the conception of God as some heavenly being incapable of or indifferent to humans' unjust suffering, Moltmann contends that God is affected by human suffering, is very moved by injustice, and consequently weeps at suffering and injustice because God is love.²¹⁶ Hence, Moltmann interprets the cross as a unique event revealing God's love as suffering love. In other words, while Jesus the Son suffers and dies, seemingly abandoned by his Father, the Father himself is suffering and grieving over the death of the Son.²¹⁷ Accordingly, despite the suffering of human history, both through the church's witness to God's suffering love in its permanent abiding form *and* through a preacher's affirmation of the divine's companionship in our suffering, the fellow sufferer may well still be able to restore her tattered faith.²¹⁸ The church's conviction of such divine presence, even in this land that is filled with oppression and bigotry, needs to compel FGKIs to keep tracing God's redemptive reality as a new life orientation, and also embolden them to seek for new transforming (redemptive) possibilities that they can attribute to God.

C. The Biblical Narrative as Primary Resource for Liberation

The third theological proposal is that immigrant preaching incorporates liberation hermeneutics for the gospel in order to bring freedom and new life to hearers who are particularly captured by the American Dream story. Put differently, immigrant preachers' "strenuous effort to deepen the understanding of the text in the particular

²¹⁶ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 358.

²¹⁷ Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, 55.

²¹⁸ Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 378, 373; Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, 57, 67.

context of the congregation” attempts to bring hearers’ liberation.²¹⁹ My liberation hermeneutics for preaching accords closely with James H. Harris’ view of the double dimensions of liberation preaching in pursuit of transformation (or change) of individual and society:

Our beliefs and practices are too often shaped by television and technology, popular culture and popular religion, rather than by a deep sense of moral responsibility and biblical reflection. While liberation is the *sine qua non* of transformation, transformation itself requires a new consciousness and a new mentality...There is a need for a transformation of consciousness on the part of the preacher and the hearer of the gospel. The preacher’s task is to interpret scripture in order to restructure human consciousness...Accordingly, the ultimate goal of liberation preaching is to transform, that is, to bring about change in one’s condition by confronting the causes of that condition. Now, this transformation or change has two major dimensions. The first dimension can be described as individual change. Preaching that focuses on individual transformation and the collective transformation of individuals can certainly be liberationist. The second dimension of liberation preaching is the transformation of society or of systems that often appears to absorb and nullify individual effort.²²⁰

With respect to the individual dimension of liberation, the purpose of immigrant preaching is to invite hearers to rediscover the living truth of God’s infinite love revealed in the biblical narrative, not simply to reinforce the Dream ideology.²²¹ In the

²¹⁹ Kim, *Preaching the Presence of God*, 84.

²²⁰ James H. Harris, *Preaching Liberation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 9-10. For Harris, “liberation preaching is preaching that is transformational. This means that it is intended to effect change in the nature and structure of persons and society...Liberation is a precondition of transformation. This means that before one can actually change one’s life situation one needs to be free to do so. The process of transformation begins with a new understanding of consciousness which requires a mental and spiritual transformation.” Harris, *Preaching Liberation*, 8-9.

²²¹ Lori J. Carrell argues that preachers need to aim to bring about individuals’ spiritual transformation with broad cultural impact, rather than informative sermons that merely convey the abstract doctrines. She believes that preaching as “public spoken words are expected to lead to personal and cultural change, enabling a closer connection of Christ-followers to God’s work in the world. Importantly, spiritual transformation includes but is not limited to individuals’ initial faith commitments and subsequent incremental alterations in way of life. Spiritual transformation gives rise to both personal and societal change.” Lori’s argument about spiritual transformation in light of subsequent incremental alternations in way of life relies on a scientist’s statement: “Eventually, they [scientists] came to an initial consensus, describing spiritual transformation as dramatic changes in world- and self-views, purposes, religious beliefs,

early experience of immigration, a great number of FGKIs' minds might be filled with the Dream narrative, specifically through a few heroic persons' stories of materialistic success. Such illusory but highly attractive narratives might become the primary driving force that governs their lives and gives them purpose. But when so many ultimately realize that the story of the inflated materialistic Dream in fact causes them to feel deprived and experience a faith crisis because of their financial problems, preachers could inspire them to appreciate that the biblical narrative of a hopeful future, rather than the Dream narrative, can better validate their lives as Christian FGKIs.

The biblical story repeated and expounded in the sermon aids the meaningfulness of their lives and helps facilitate their faith in God despite the ongoing marginalization they experience. Ideally, the practice of preaching helps reconnect spiritual journeys with the narrative of God. For example, preachers show how FGKIs' current chaotic

attitudes, and behavior. These changes are often linked to discrete experiences that can occur gradually or over relatively short periods of time.” Lori says that “the scientists’ definition of spiritual transformation broadens our understanding of spiritual transformation from belief change (which the listeners resist strongly in their sermon responses in every ear of the study) to include alterations in world- and self-view, purpose, attitudes, and behaviors.” For that reason, Lori contends that “preaching to incite transformative action that extends beyond personal application would then become a practical possibility.” Here, the point is that preaching can be one of the church’s ways (such as bible study, Christian education and pastoral counseling) to vitalize individuals’ spiritual formation, especially their change of belief system and way of life. I think that preaching could proffer spiritual direction of the congregation (c.f., from self-centered way of life toward God’s vision-centered way of life) although we cannot guarantee preaching’s immediate impact on individuals’ spiritual formation in a dramatic way. In addition, Kay L. Northcutt in *Desire for God: Preaching as Spiritual Direction* highlights the aim of preaching that contributes to the process of [spiritually] forming congregations toward the love and desire of God. Kay addresses that “preacher brings spiritual direction as a metaphor and hermeneutic for preaching, topics of spiritual direction are discovered woven throughout Scripture...Sermons become occasions that not only orient us to God and to biblical stories of God’s activity, but also to the curriculum, methods, and texts of spiritual formation-like finding and nurturing one’s vocation...Spiritual direction intentionally practices the fine art of shaping attentiveness both to God and to God’s needs in this world: to see our neighbors’ suffering and to respond.” Lori J. Carrell, *Preaching That Matters: Reflective Practices for Transforming Sermons* (Herndon, VA: Alaban, 2013), 50-2, 232; Kay L. Northcutt, *Desire for God: Preaching as Spiritual Direction* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 17, 19, 92.

experience aligns with the scriptural story of the people of God's exile, their experience of cross-territorial journey, and their effort to keep faith in dehumanizing conditions and the profoundly threatening environment of other countries. Immigrant preachers imaginatively retell the biblical immigrants' experiences of discrimination to empower contemporary FGKIs and remind them of God's unfailing grace in today's challenging situation. By re-incorporating imagery of the biblical immigrants' lives and God's unfailing care for them as they are recounting their own journey in faith, today's FGKIs can find new meaning in the midst of existential chaos.²²² Moltmann's theological appreciation—the result of his own wartime capture and imprisonment in a foreign land—of the divine's abiding love in our suffering and reconciliation with grief in love is only one instantiation of this.

Alternatively, the biblical story of Jesus's perilous journey and painful, lonely experience of displacement could offer an alternative motivation and purpose for living as FGKIs. Among certain Asian American and Latino/a theologians, Jesus is defined not only as the migrant *par excellence*, but also God as *Deus Migrator* [God the primordial (im)migrant], due to the migration of divinity from the Father—God's migratory action.²²³ On the one hand, the biblical narrative of the New Testament elucidates

²²² Eunjoo Mary Kim, *Women Preaching: Theology and Practice Through the Ages* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009), 8.

²²³ In regard to God's migratory action, Phan states that "God's creative act can be interpreted as God's migration out of what is divine into what is not, a movement that bears all the marks of human migration. In creating that which is other than God-self, God crosses the border between Absolute Spirit and finite matter, migrating from eternity to temporality, from omnipotence into weakness, from self-sufficiency (aseity) to utter dependence, from secure omniscience to fearful ignorance, from the total domination of the divine of the divine will over all things to the utter subjection of the same will to the uncontrollability of human freedom, from life to death. In that creative act, God experiences for the first time the precarious, marginalized, threatened, and endangered condition of the migrant...Not unlike the migrant, the incarnated

Jesus's immigrant life and his crossing of borders to engage in a prophetic and life-giving ministry of preaching the gospel to the poor, proclaiming freedom for the prisoner, recovering sight for the blind, healing extraordinary illness, releasing the oppressed, and announcing the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:18-19).²²⁴ When Jesus says, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head (Luke 9:58, NRSV)," he implies that he identifies himself as a human and homeless stranger, allying his concerns with those of the oppressed and outsiders. But, as Jesus, God the primordial (im)migrant, he stands on the boundary between divinity and humanity, as one who is both fully God and fully human.²²⁵ Jesus as the paradigmatic (im)migrant crosses the border of death into a new life by his resurrection

Logos is rooted both in his native country (divinity) and makes a new home as a stranger in the land of Israel (his Jewish humanity), acquiring thus a double identity and a double belonging (he is both divine and Jewish), so that he is no longer just divine and yet no just human." Peter C. Phan, "Embracing, Protecting, and Loving the Stranger," in *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions*, ed. Elaine Padilla and Peter C. Phan (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 99-100.

²²⁴ To begin, I paraphrase Luke 4:18-19. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Luke 4:18-19, NRSV)." Second, considering Jesus's [im]migrant living, right after the infant Jesus was born, he was marginalized due to King Herod's cruel massacre of infants (Matt. 2:16) before which Mary and Joseph, with the baby Jesus, escaped to Egypt until Herod died (Matt. 2:13-15). HyeRan Kim Cragg and EunYoung Choi mention that Jesus's family are refugees fleeing from the control and oppression of the Roman Empire. In addition to Jesus's crossing the border as a migrant, Jesus also metaphorically said that "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head (Luke 9:58, NRSV)." In my opinion, this implies that the human Jesus identified himself as a homeless stranger, but one who was concerned for the oppressed and outsiders. Kim Cragg and Choi, *The Encounters*, 104.

²²⁵ Peter C. Phan, "Introduction: An Asian American Theology, Believing and Thinking of the Boundaries," in *Journeys at the Margins: Toward a Autobiographical Theology in Asian-American Perspective* ed. Peter C. Phan and Lee Jung Young (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1999), xx.

and thus brings hope and freedom to places of despair, and is captured.²²⁶ In this way, his historical life can be identified with that of contemporary FGKIs and the (im)migrant Jesus's resurrection can offer them robust hope. In this way, biblical interpretation can correspond with the very purpose of liberation preaching: Catherine Gunsalus González and Justo L. González in their book *Liberation Preaching: The Pulpit and the Oppressed* note that "Liberation theology is that done from the perspective of the traditionally powerless as they experience the empowerment of the gospel, not only in an inner sense, but also in the sense that it compels and enables them to strive for justice...A preacher of liberation can seek to hear the word of the bible in a new and liberating way."²²⁷ That is, liberation hermeneutics from the particular perspective of immigrants intends to empower FGKIs by intersecting their life stories with Christian Scripture in a way that will yield fresh insight into the meaning of the biblical text.

On the other hand, the Dream and its prosperity-oriented message do not tend to recall and lift up Jesus's redemptive story but rely on stories of a few prosperous celebrities, whose triumphant tales are all too often used as sermon illustrations of the personal evidence of God's favor. The reason is that, from the standpoint of the prosperity gospel, a personal slump is simply another opportunity for material advancement based on the virtue of optimistic self-reliance. In such preaching the preacher temporarily soothes the despondent person's emotional disappointment and personal pain through the prosperity gospel and its uncensored hero tales which

²²⁶ Phan, "Embracing, Protecting, and Loving the Stranger," 102.

²²⁷ Catherine Gunsalus González and Justo L. González, *Liberation Preaching: The Pulpit and the Oppressed* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 13, 48.

articulate a language of aspiration.²²⁸ In this way, stories of success, rather than stories of the historical Jesus's marginalized life and his resurrection, are the hope and inspiration that moves persons forward into the unknown future.²²⁹ In prosperity preaching, the story of Jesus Christ consequently loses its redemptive power *and* does not expose the false promise of the idolatrous American Dream story. Yet, immigrant preaching is not about the guarantee of a solution—financial freedom—but about the invitation to FGKIs to have faithful hope, the hope Jesus offers by a word of radical grace.²³⁰

In connection with the social dimension of liberation, immigrant preaching also motivates FGKIs to participate in God's transforming adventure by sharing God's vision to help give rise to societal change. Put another way, preachers' interpretations of the biblical story imaginatively interweave the divine's ongoing redemptive story with God's gracious invitation to the immigrant church to follow God's promised future. Joel B. Green insists that the church's future coheres with the biblical dream that calls it to continue this particular narrative, the story of God, and not the hegemonic story.²³¹ Thus,

²²⁸ Silvanus Oluoch comments that "There are millions of disappointed hearts (poor/immigrants) out there somewhere for whom this gospel has not worked." Silvanus Oluoch, *Concerning Prosperity Gospel: A Glimpse into One of the Popular Gospels of Today* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris Corporation, 2011), 79.

²²⁹ As Jacobsen and Kelly say, articulating this gospel is "theocentric or God-centered, rather than anthropocentric, or human centered"; it does not focus on "what we human beings do (for success) but rather [on] what God is doing to redeem." Accordingly, immigrant preaching must stress God's salvific story in Jesus and God's power to set us free from captivity to the Dream's virtues of individualism, self-reliance and human achievement. Jacobsen and Kelly, *Kairos Preaching*, 15,17.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 15,17.

²³¹ Joel B. Green, "The (Re-) Turn to Narrative," in *Narrative Reading, Narrative Preaching: Reuniting New Testament Interpretation and Proclamation*, ed. Joel B. Green and Michael Pasquarello III (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Publishing, 2003), 33.

Korean immigrant preaching inspires FGKIs to fit into God's ongoing drama, a broader messianic vision. Such preaching intentionally integrates FGKIs' present chaotic experience into the wider story of God. In the process, such preaching helps to generate a new dream and communal journey toward God's ongoing redemptive history by juxtaposing the individual with the promised future. The church can then be empowered to struggle against a system that prevents the fulfillment of God's promised future.²³² Accordingly, through such preaching and the immigrant church's collective embodiment of God's vision and on-going story, believers themselves become sacred story-carriers and God's graceful vision-bearers in and for the world.

In contrast to a prosperity gospel integrated with materialistic desire, Korean immigrant preaching might expose the idolatrous story of the Dream with a comprehensive socio-analytical and theological reflection on its false reality. Such theological reflection on the Dream ideology in sermons could foster FGKIs' critical thinking on their faith in the American Dream and unlock the truth of the divine's abiding love in their suffering as well. If preachers do not expose the reasons for communal suffering, such as discrimination and an unjust economic system, believers might think that their failure of material fortune originates from God's disregard for them, (which is, in essence what the prosperity-shamanistic message would say), or otherwise blame themselves consistent with the Dream ideology's emphasis on self-reliance. Consequently, preaching practice needs clearly to uncover the false hope of the Dream and FGKIs' plight of discrimination, suffering, and unjust conditions and remind

²³² C. G. González and J. L. González, *Liberation Preaching*, 60.

them instead of how faith in God's presence can become a redemptive reality.²³³ Furthermore, such theological reflection on existing faith and practice helps hearers learn to think theologically over events and issues in accordance with the divine purpose for the world.²³⁴ Allen notes that preaching offers the opportunity to help the congregation refine their capacity to interpret their experience and the world theologically.²³⁵

The pastor is a teacher of theology who seeks for the congregation to become a community of theological reflection. When a congregation becomes such a body, the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers comes to life. All Christians become theologians. Indeed, lay participants may exhibit greater theological wisdom than clergy. A congregation that is a community of theological reflection will likely have a high degree of ownership of, and energy for, Christian faith, not to mention mission, in the congregation and beyond.²³⁶

Such preaching can help contribute to hearers' reflective theological vision and promote the very activity that preacher hopes to foster in the community of faith; as, for example, when church members do communal practices in collaboration with God's restorative and transformative vision for the world.²³⁷

D. A Practice of Holy Insecurity

Korean immigrant preaching needs to help to inspire hearers to pursue a spirituality of what Martin Buber calls, holy insecurity. For Buber, humanity inevitably experiences living in a mode of vulnerability—worldly insecurity because of the

²³³ Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 238.

²³⁴ Allen, *Preaching is Believing*, 33.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Kim, *Women Preaching*, 21.

inadequacy of the world.²³⁸ He says that worldly insecurity often leads persons to resort to God (a profound relationship with God) *or* gravitate toward despair.²³⁹ He eventually calls upon believers to exist without guarantees in virtue of not only embracing a life of insecurity but also living by faith.²⁴⁰ Such a way of life helps Christians to overcome a blind fear of life in the midst of fragility and ultimately to transform the insecurity of worldly life into holy insecurity. Matsouka also calls the Asian American's experience of liminality an experience of "holy insecurity," the gift of "courage to live in the midst of an unresolved and often ambiguous state of life."²⁴¹ As a result, my contextualized understanding of a spirituality of holy insecurity is to empower Christian FGKIs to spiritually transcend their fear of worldly insecurity by dwelling in God's holiness and unfathomable love even though they might be in an unresolved state of being, say because of life uncertainty. Put another way, holy insecurity is a transformative experience of a hallowed soul from the harrowing insecurity (and its attendant fearfulness) of worldly life into holy insecurity.²⁴² Holy insecurity is a contradictory state of being, one that is antithetical to the common human disposition to pursue long-term security—in the case of the Dream ideology: through possessions, personal security, and privacy.

²³⁸ Kenneth Paul Kramer, *Martin Buber's Spirituality: Haisdic Wisdom for Everyday Life* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2011), 104.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰ Donald Moore S. J. *Martin Buber: Prophet of Religious Secularism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966), 127.

²⁴¹ Matsuoka, *Out of Silence*, 62.

²⁴² Glenn, E. Tinder, *The Fabric of Hope: An Essay, Emory University Studies in Law and Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 141.

Admittedly, any place of insecurity is likely unpleasant and so is one in which people are understandably reluctant to find themselves.²⁴³ Yet, many FGKIs cannot help but experience personal insecurity as a result of various circumstances, including discrimination, financial crisis, forced marginalization, and unstable visa status. Amid the experience of vulnerability and life of insecurity, some Christian FGKIs already remember that they can have lasting security and a sense of belonging in God's holy, infinite, and unfathomable love. For them, displacement gives a chance to be more firmly rooted in God and find the longed-for security in the realm of faith. In short, the immigration experience often intensifies faith by *dealing* with insecurity.

For this reason, Korean immigrant preachers need to encourage hearers to free themselves from worldly fear of insecurity by inviting them to dwell in God's holiness and compassion. In Korean culture, for example, there is the concept of *anjong* (establishment, stability or security).²⁴⁴ As Kyeyoung Park puts, *anjong* has been developed "by Korean immigrants to make sense of the American [Dream] ideology of opportunity."²⁴⁵ Hence, when some FGKIs' *anjong* collapses, a preacher could invite FGKIs to live solely by faith. I believe that this spirituality of holy insecurity helps FGKIs feel freedom in God's protective love by reorienting their lives to God. In immigrant preaching, an invitation to a spirituality of holy insecurity—both rearranging their relationship to God *and* focusing on God's promise in the Ultimate Power—allows

²⁴³ Lee, *Marginality*, 31.

²⁴⁴ Kyeyoung Park, "Korean Americans," in *Multiculturalism in the United States: A Comparative Guide to Acculturation and Ethnicity*, ed. John D. Buenker and Loman A. Ratner (Westport, WA: Greenwood Press, 2005), 285.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 285.

hearers to not only experience freedom but also discover tremendous possibilities to conquer their despair of longstanding vulnerability.²⁴⁶ This is because, in the most fundamental way, faith—the unshakable gift of God—is the source of the courage not to be shaken by uncertain life conditions.²⁴⁷

E. An Eschatological Vision Beyond Individual Success

Immigrant preaching needs to reaffirm Christian eschatological hope and a messianic lordship over the world in order to animate the church's communal hope in the future of Christ. Christian eschatology is the doctrine of Christian hope.²⁴⁸ Christian hope originates from Christ's resurrection since God's promise is already fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. In other words, God's faithful fulfillment by raising Christ from the dead is the foundation of the Christian's eschatological expectation and hope.²⁴⁹ In this eschatological view, Israel's historical narrative is dominated by the hope kindled by Yahweh's promise; God's promises initiate history and are fulfilled.²⁵⁰ So, even though the future of Christ has not yet fully appeared, the contemporary believer can anticipate the Christ's victorious lordship through reliance on God's fulfillment revealed in Christ and the biblical story.

²⁴⁶ Matsuoka, *Out of Silence*, 79.

²⁴⁷ Sang Hyun Lee, *From a Liminal Place: An Asian American Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 117.

²⁴⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 16.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 85, 92.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 108-9.

Furthermore, Christian hope does not flee the often unpleasant reality of the world. Instead, the church anticipates the revelation of the risen Lord within history, just as the stories of Israelite history are “narrated within the horizon of the history of the working of God’s promises.”²⁵¹ Put differently, Christian FGKIs put hope in God’s redemptive action and faithfulness in history *here* and *now*, as the Israelites experienced God’s liberating deeds in their suffering-filled history.²⁵² Moltmann calls this experience a historic event. In a similar vein, Brueggemann contends:

The juxtaposition of hope and history articulates a central claim and a central problem of biblical faith... Obviously such a split which yields both a history-less hope *and* a hopeless history is a betrayal of biblical faith. It is precisely the wonder and burden of the biblical texts that hope is relentlessly historical and history is cunningly hope-filled.²⁵³

In this respect, eschatological hope cannot be detached from the realities of the historical process and divine salvation is linked with a historical event. The kingdom of God on earth appears as perfect peace, universal justice, total reconciliation, unbounded joyfulness and righteousness. Moreover, God’s history-making action is intertwined with human interaction. That is, eschatological hope for Christ’s lordship allows the whole church to make a dedicated journey, one undertaken with the purpose of realizing the kingdom of God and faithful involvement in its historical configuration.²⁵⁴

In light of the mission of faith in history, an eschatological vision within history reframes Christians’ present life as God’s partners in light, following in the footsteps of

²⁵¹ Ibid., 108.

²⁵² Kim, *Women Preaching*, 19.

²⁵³ Brueggemann, *Hope within History*, 1, 3.

²⁵⁴ Kondothra M. George, “Theology of Migration in the Orthodox Tradition,” in *Theology of Migration in the Abrahamic Religions*, ed. Elain Padilla and Peter C. Phan (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 68.

Jesus's service to the world. Through their existential struggle, FGKIs can live as prophetic agents for God's calling to reveal His/Her vision for the broken world and multiply the divine glory. Yet, the important thing is that the promised future is a divine gift, not the anxious accomplishment of humans. Only God is the subject of God's fulfillment in the historical future. God's redeeming historic event is ultimately beyond human power. Because human action is born of fragmentary ideas, it is fragile. The church's action for the divine future is heavily reliant upon divine grace.

Furthermore, eschatological hope has the power to call forth faith even in the struggle of human reality.²⁵⁵ Believers are often confronted with the conflict between yearning for the Lord's victorious future *and* today's experiential suffering. In fact, preaching contrasts that promised future with the present reality. This is because it is a yet unrealized future and Christians' lives are an ongoing struggle against the power of death. Given this discrepancy, Christians' faith becomes a project of actively seeking for the kingdom of God that involves a great struggle; namely, patiently waiting.²⁵⁶ Eschatological hope for the divine future in the state of historic flux will be the source of Christian FGKIs' endurance in faith since hope is about waiting for grace in the gap between death and resurrection.²⁵⁷ Moreover, active waiting in a suffering reality is not conformed to the dominant ideology and worldly power. On the other hand, eschatological hope encompasses Christians' creative imagination and expectation for a

²⁵⁵ Moltmann notes that "Faith binds man to Christ. Hope sets this faith open to the comprehensive future of Christ...Thus hope is therefore the inseparable companion of faith. In the Christian life, faith has the priority, but hope the primacy," Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 20.

²⁵⁶ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 18-19.

²⁵⁷ Lee, *From a Liminal Place*, 87.

transfigured order of reality that converges with the eschatological future.²⁵⁸ That is, Christians' creative imagination in an eschatological view includes transforming the world from what it is toward what we believe it ought to be.²⁵⁹ As a result, eschatological immigrant preaching must primarily proclaim God's future lordship in the ongoing story of God, announcing the coming of the messianic kingdom of God through this eschatological imagination. The preaching event is to praise Christ's victorious lordship in the not-yet realized present, not to dream of an individual achievement or material abundance. When the church listens to eschatological glorification of God, FGKIs can be both "confidently waiting for it and wholeheartedly seeking it."²⁶⁰

The preacher especially needs creative imagination to illustrate this contradictory reality and encourage Christians to bring forth the hoped-for transformation.

Brueggemann calls this creative imagination a new social imagination or an alternative mode of shaping life, one that corresponds with divine justice and freedom.²⁶¹ For him, the preacher's passionate social imagination in preaching is an act both of dangerous subversion *and* of concrete Christian hope in God from a position of vulnerability.²⁶² Such a proclaimed reconstructive reality with its glowing picture of the future king's

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 35.

²⁵⁹ Goto Courtney T. and Amy Levad, "Engaging Imagination: An Introduction to the Inaugural Issue of Practical Matters," *Practical Matters: A Journal of Religious Practices and Practical Theology*, April 1, 2009, <http://practicalmattersjournal.org/2009/04/01/engaging-imagination/>.

²⁶⁰ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 326.

²⁶¹ Brueggemann, *Hope within History*, 22.

²⁶² Ibid., 24. For Brueggemann, social imagination of preaching gets involved in "(1) critique of the dominant theology, (2) public embrace of pain as alternative to the dominant ideology and (3) release social imagination." Ibid., 27.

reign is not in accordance with the Dream ideology. The result is that it destabilizes the present mode of life and is ends up dismissed as a false dream. Relying on Christian eschatology, the preacher hopes that the proclaimed words will help push believers to redirect their hopes toward the open future of God. Hence, immigrant preaching aims for lives to be determined not by the individual victories of the Dream, but by a vision of the coming Lord. To that end, immigrant preaching attempts to “articulate a gospel that is theocentric, or God-centered.”²⁶³ In FGKIs’ lives, a new theocentric spirituality can spring up by glimpsing the decisive future of God. Immigrant preaching hopes that the divine future as eschatological hope will renew life directions and revitalize faith by putting immigrant lives in the future of Christ.

Eschatological preaching proclaims God’s redemptive power to create newness from nothingness. It declares God’s faithfulness by remembering God’s past deeds in Bible. In an eschatological view, such remembering is not just a private mental act; it is the church’s practice of communal remembering through preaching. Remembering God’s past faithfulness and redemptive action empowers FGKIs to enter into a history that is determined by the promised future. The experience of entering into God’s future means expecting God’s newness from nothingness through eschatological faith; that is, God is “the creator *ex nihilo* and raiser of the dead.”²⁶⁴

Second, eschatological preaching names God’s historic event as the divine in-breaking presence in FGKIs’ marginal place. It relies on the premise that God is present

²⁶³ Jacobsen and Kelly, *Kairos Preaching*, 18.

²⁶⁴ Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 31.

where people “wait upon the promises in hope and transformation.”²⁶⁵ The immigrant preacher manifests what we bear by grace now and what we yearn for in the future of Christ. Many FGKIs are living in tension; for example, in memory *and* hope, remembering the pain *and* tasting the glory of God’s future, lamenting the present hardship *and* anticipating God’s fulfillment of the promise, and criticizing the existing societal structure *and* moving toward a grace-filled future. Without such foretastes of the longed-for-but-not-yet, our lives are laden with pain and bitterness. Accordingly, the church humbly yearns for God’s mysterious and glorious nearness while immigrant preaching tries sensitively to discern God’s redeeming deeds which strengthen FGKIs’ faith in Christ.

Thirdly, the task of immigrant eschatological preaching is to offer FGKIs a hope-filled faith in the midst of their ongoing plight by speaking of God’s radical promise. Moltmann says that in the word of God, “the hidden future of God for the world is already present,” but “it is present in the form of promise and of awakened hope.”²⁶⁶ It indicates that God as the ultimate subject of preaching is speaking to us today, as Jacobsen and Kelly put it, “God’s gospel word remains God’s own living voice.”²⁶⁷ More important is that in humans’ uttering of words, the word of God can be spoken in the form of promise and hope. Thus, Jacobsen and Kelly insist that the gospel is “a matter of divine promise and always has an eschatological shape.”²⁶⁸ For instance, the

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 30.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 326.

²⁶⁷ Jacobsen and Kelly, *Kairos Preaching*, 18.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

immigrant preacher cannot guarantee or preach God's definite blessings on individuals' financial (or other existential) problems in an effort to relieve their inner struggles and depression. The word of God is not a quick solution to each and all of their situational problems. Instead, the church preaches God's unconditional grace and promise as an ultimate hope for Christian FGKIs. Therefore, immigrant preaching desires that FGKIs are sent out with hope for their daily reality, rather than with the all-too elusive Dream.

III. Prophetic Ecclesiocentric Preaching²⁶⁹

As noted earlier, Christian FGKIs' lives tend to be ecclesiocentric [church-centered] and have a highly intense in-group commitment compared to other ethnic minorities. Its potential negative aspects could be FGKIs' self-ghettoization, personalization of faith, and ecclesial escapism. Phan remarks that "Such a distortive emphasis on materialistic aspects of salvation in relevance to the American Dream for the immigrant is against Christian fidelity to God's radical vision of bringing about God's reign within the wider picture of the drama of Asian American daily living *here and now*."²⁷⁰ In this respect, personalizing faith in the prosperity gospel and the Dream's promise of individual financial abundance as the sign of divine favor, accentuate both the church's lack of concern about faith's wider social *and* public consequences for God's reign.

On these grounds, I think that the Korean immigrant church needs to intentionally reinforce the church's prophetic calling, i.e., Christians' fidelity to God's

²⁶⁹ Refer to p. 49-50.

²⁷⁰ Phan, "The Dragon and The Eagle," 351.

eschatological vision as God’s agents. Yet, we cannot ignore the ethnic church’s responsibility for the practical needs of FGKIs’ common suffering as well as the church’s refuge functions in terms of racial healing because the center discredits FGKIs’ pain—and even their existence.²⁷¹ Hence, I will once again address the positive (prophetic) possibilities of FGKIs’ ecclesiocentric way of life and the ethnic church’s traditional refuge roles—for example, the ethnic community of faith as a place for the preservation of native culture, fellowship, security, and spiritual restoration—in respect to the prophetic task.²⁷²

A. Reinterpretation of Refuge Functions of the Korean Church in Respect to the Prophetic Task

As discussed in the previous chapter, the ethnic immigrant church’s common roles are not only as a comfortable place for fellowship and a sense of security, but also as a place for the preservation of native culture for FGKIs who feel a sense of homelessness and isolation. I here will theologically develop such functions’ positive roles for FGKIs’ faithful living and the church’s potential for fulfilling the prophetic task.

First, in times of crisis or chaos, the ethnic church can effectively serve as a refuge for FGKIs.²⁷³ Tong-He Koh notes in particular that “Korean churches also offer a

²⁷¹ Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches*, 84.

²⁷² Refer to p. 50-8. I will not ignore the refuge functions of the ethnic church that have been elucidated. Building on that, I will add its prophetic task.

²⁷³ Historically, the church’s refuge function stems from its servant function even though the history of the church shows that it often and involuntarily exchanged its servant role for one of domination and support of the oppressors. Hans Schwarz quotes Gerhard Uhlhord’s notes about the servant function of the early church: “It was when misery became greater and greater

refuge from racism (or marginalization).”²⁷⁴ Displaced FGKIs are thus enabled to feel a sense of belonging in church and a full acceptance into God by virtue of the church’s genuine care for people’s wounds from experiences of deep alienation.²⁷⁵ Indeed, the church is for many a holy place in which God’s unconditional love and the healing power of the Spirit abound. Hence, we ought not discount FGKIs’ attachment to the church as a home that is the place of God’s loving concern and a place of restoration of human wholeness. In this respect, for FGKIs who feel that they are not completely at home anywhere, the church can become a home both for sharing suffering with fellow Koreans *and* for encountering God. This includes feeling utterly at home and finding redemption.²⁷⁶

Second, through the preaching ministry, the ethnic church can become a place for listening to and raising FGKIs’ lamentations and stories by interpreting their

in the perishing world, when the arm of the state was more and more paralyzed, when the authorities no longer offered assistance to the poor and the oppressed, nay, themselves took a part in oppressing and exhausting them, that the Church became on a grand scale of the refuge of all the oppressed and suffering.” In this respect, the positive role of refuge is that the Korean ethnic church is helping the vulnerable and powerless. Hans Schwarz, *The Christian Church: Biblical Origin, Historical Transformation, and Potential for the future* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 325.

²⁷⁴Tong-He Koh, “Religion as a Variable in Mental Health: A Case for Korean Americans,” in *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, ed. Ho-Youn kown, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 96.

²⁷⁵ Matsuoka, *Out of Silence*, 1.

²⁷⁶ S. H. Lee states that for Asian Americans who are marginalized and made homeless because of their ethnicity, the Korean immigrant churches have functioned a place to celebrate the dignity of their particular ethnicity and feel the church as the household of God. Lee, “Pilgrimage and Home in the Wilderness of Marginality,” 60.

suffering with fitting theological/spiritual language.²⁷⁷ Preaching functions as FGKIs' collective and representative voice for experiences of suffering and injustice in public. Certainly, preaching's willingness to embrace the laments of FGKIs helps form a subversive imagination for a better future, just as the history-making process in ancient Israel was done through marginal voices.²⁷⁸ Such voices in the church intend to encourage FGKIs not to "escape from the messiness of place" in which power imbalances and prejudice exist.²⁷⁹ Instead, through the church's articulation of God's redemptive grace, the community of faith can revitalize hearers so they can faithfully face the liberative concerns that caused their collective lament.²⁸⁰ Such a preacher helps evoke FGKIs' resistance against the very racism that still permeates their social lives.²⁸¹

²⁷⁷ Jeney Park-Hearn theologically reflects the Korean church's specific practice of lament—a pastor's representative prayer or communal prayer (so-called "Tong-sung-ki-do" that literally means "praying together out loud"). In her article, "Prayers of Lament: Making Space for Our Disenfranchised Grief," she addresses that the practice (prayer) of lament about grieved loss, injustice, death, oppression and other forms of calamity is the church's pastoral endeavor to connect with people's pain as well as seek God's healing. This is because, she notes, worldly plights make "the grieving individual into spiritual confusion and profound doubt about God's goodness and presence." Therefore, "prayers of lament are a response to the concrete reality of human struggle and when included in the broad life of faith along with prayers of thanksgiving, celebration, and joy deepen an engagement of faith amidst the wide spectrum of lived experience." Her point is that prayer of lament eventually intends to bring about celebration of God's compassion *and* reaffirmation of the church's faith in the midst of suffering and spiritual confusion. In particular, she proffers that the church's praxis of lament with disenfranchised grief in an appropriate moment calls the quest for justice and reconciliation. Park et al., *Singing the Lord's Song in a New Land*, 36; Jeney Park-Hearn, "Prayers of Lament: Making Space for Our Disenfranchised Grief," in *Christianity Next Winter 2017: Asian American Christianity & Dones and Nones*, ed. Young Lee Hertig (Los Angeles, CA: Innovative Space for Asian American Christianity, 2017), 86-9.

²⁷⁸ Brueggemann, *Hope within History*, 55.

²⁷⁹ Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 62.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, ii, xvii.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 222.

In such a way, the immigrant church's place of marginality becomes a site of salvific resistance to society's devaluation of people of color.

Third, the Korean immigrant church as an ethnic enclave can play a role as a central place of FGKIs' visible existence and for claiming Asianness as part of the *Imago Dei*.²⁸² According to Young Hoon Hwang, the *Imago Dei* means "human beings are like his/her God in that there is a dignity in every human being which is an engraved image of God." Alternatively stated, contrary to any claim to ethnic supremacy, a theological understanding of creation and the *Imago Dei* (image of God) implies that ethnic diversity is emblematic of the *Imago Dei* and incarnates the multifaceted splendor of God's wisdom.²⁸³ FGKIs can indeed honor their shared racial identity by preserving particular cultural values and celebrating their physical, God-given appearance. In this way, the community of faith points to God's mysterious healing by reinforcing Asians' human dignity precisely as God's creatures.²⁸⁴ Due to FGKIs' experience of racial and cultural dissonance in the dominant society, the ethnic church becomes the place where they can not only enjoy Asians' God-given ethnic physical and cultural particularities, but also resist American cultural discrimination which makes people of color feel that their skin and culture are less legitimate, by means of reclaiming the "Asianness" of God. This function of the church aligns with Dale P. Andrews' vision of a pastoral-prophetic dialectic for African American ecclesiology—an ecclesiology that underscores the

²⁸² Matsuoka, *Out of Silence*, 58.

²⁸³ Young Hoon Hwang, "The Eclectic Therapy for Korean Batterers," in *Asian American and Christian Ministry*, ed. Inn Sook Lee and Timothy D. Son (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publisher, 2009), 190.

²⁸⁴ James R. Nieman and Thomas G. Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew* (Minneapolis, MA: Fortress Press, 2001), 73.

church's religio-political practices to support the social construction of race in light of a practical-theological response to racism.²⁸⁵ Andrews notes that "The dialectic of pastoral and prophetic praxis within the church indicates the church does both ecclesial practices of refuge *and* prophetic claims of liberation and fostering social ethics; that is, 'pastoral meaning-making and prophetic justice-making.'"²⁸⁶ Similarly, God calls FGKIs who represent and restore the image of God to be active agents in the world's restoration. Thus, the Korean immigrant church cannot ignore its function as a refuge, a place for restoring the wholeness of FGKIs' ethnicity. In continuity with the refuge and prophetic functions of the church, immigrant preaching seeks not only God's restorative grace for FGKIs' wholeness from their relatively devalued social existence but also Christians' fidelity to God's eschatological vision as God's active agents. Daniel L. Lee rightly points out the danger for the Korean church of becoming "solely a refuge from oppressive racism," "a quietistic escape from the realities of American society, or a nationalistic escape to ethnocentricity."²⁸⁷ This is because the church as only a refuge is "ultimately a self-serving community that quickly becomes even more inwardly focused when aggravated by issues around culture and migration."²⁸⁸ With this criticism, he notes that the church is called to prophetic service.²⁸⁹ To prevent the church's ignorance

²⁸⁵ Dale P. Andrews, "Race and Racism," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. J. Miller-McLemore (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 407-8.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 407-8.

²⁸⁷ Daniel L. Lee, *Double Particularity: Karl Barth, Contextuality, and Asian American* (Minneapolis, MA: Fortress Press, 2017), 188.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

of God's calling, I believe that a dialectical practical theology for the Korean immigrant church is right to accentuate as part of that dialectic the church's orientation to prophetic service as a communal responsibility.

B. The Prophetic Immigrant Church as Part of an Eschatological Vision

In this section, I deal chiefly with the possibility of the prophetic immigrant church in light of its relation to God's shared eschatological future. Put another way, this section points to the Korean church's potential for the future through the ministry of preaching. The exploration of the church's prophetic vocation I will describe here stems from the conviction that the Korean immigrant church in North America is blessed with God's particular calling. As S. H. Lee points out, the Asian American church needs to encourage marginalized Asian people to be ready for moving toward a God-promised goal.²⁹⁰

²⁹⁰ In his article, "Pilgrimage and Home in the Wilderness of Marginality," S. H. Lee's one of topics is about "what are the important faith responses, both in word and deed, of the Asian American churches to their marginality?" In terms of the church's goal, he contends that Asian American church must encourage marginalized Asian people to be ready for moving toward a God-promised goal. Further, he comments that "Liminality and *communitas* have a prophetic function vis-à-vis the existing order of human life. Freed temporarily from the existing social hierarchy and statues and experiencing *communitas*, the participants in Korean American worship become capable of critiquing the status quo and of envision a new way of ordering life in the American society in general and in Korean American communities in particular...If these worship services provided the experiences of liminality and *communitas* and if a Christian prophetic concern about the society is effectively communicated, Korean American churches could have an enormous capacity to empower their members to be agents of social change." Lee, "Pilgrimage and Home in the Wilderness of Marginality," 60, 61; Sang Hyun Lee, Liminality and Worship in the Korean American Context," in *Religion and Spirituality in Korean America*, ed. David Yoo and Ruth H. Chung (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 107.

*The Korean Immigrant Church's Prophetic Vision and Voice*²⁹¹

²⁹¹ Tisdale talks about preaching on a social issue: “The preachers are called to help the congregation interpret social issues [for example, sexism, racism, classism, militarism and the ecological crisis] and Christian response from the perspective of the gospel...The church seeks for every social world to conform to the gospel, that is, to manifest relationships that are loving and just...The preacher wants to help the congregation understand the issue from the perspective of the gospel and determine how best to action in relationship to the issue...A strength of the sermon is that it helps the congregation envision practical steps that listeners can take to witness to God’s will for the church, and wider world, to become a community of openness, encouragement, and support and a community free of exploitation, fear, and abuse.” The point is that the primary purpose of [prophetic] preaching about social/political issues attempts to interpret some of the most urgent issues of our time from a Christian perspective and to take action related to the gospel. In her book, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*, Tisdale also mentions that “preaching as local theology not only offers congregations an alternative world in which to live here and now; it also offers them a world to live into.” In agreement with Tisdale’s opinion, my homiletic envisions the alternative world [prophetic vision] with preachers’ theological and biblical reflection on complex problems and questions in life; the purpose of preaching does not aim to create a unanimous verdict for certain social/political issues and actions within a church. My homiletic includes other prophetic homiletics based on the premise that each church’s interpretation on controversial and challenging life issues is diverse, relying on a preacher’s pastoral reflection or the church’s distinctive theology. Furthermore, my immigrant homiletic starts from the pastoral viewpoint on the congregation’s communal suffering. Campbell in *The Word before the Powers* notes that “When prophetic preaching seeks not to condemn individuals but to name the powers that hold people captive and to envision alternatives to the way of death, that preaching is deeply pastoral. Such preaching offers the most profound pastoral care for people who live in captivity to the powers of death. Similarly, in the midst of the powers, pastoral preaching will fundamentally seek to set people free—to offer them redemption—for newness of life, which will require a prophetic exposing and envisioning in relation to the principalities and powers. In this model of ethical preaching, the most profound prophetic work and the deepest pastoral work come together—for both the preacher and the congregation.” In my opinion, my homiletic proposal could be hard for all Korean immigrant preachers. Yet, Korean immigrant preachers who approach the congregation’s suffering within the larger framework of redemption in accordance with Campbell’s homiletic could apply my homiletic to their preaching ministry. Finally, Campbell says that “The ethical dimensions of preaching are thus much broader and deeper than the typical social-issue sermon. Rather, preaching seeks to free the community of faith to see and live in the world differently—to be a different kind of people. At the deepest level, every sermon has ethical dimensions, for preaching fundamentally involves the weekly formation of communities of resistance; it involves building up the church as people who can resist the powers and live free from bondage to death.” In line with Campbell’s statement, I think that immigrant preaching should go deeper than social-issue sermons to empower FGKIs to live in faith and in the world differently as divine agents. Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, “Preaching on a Social Issue,” in *Patterns of Preaching: A Sermon Sample*, ed. Ronald J. Allen (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1998), 200; Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art* (Minneapolis, MA: Fortress Press, 1997), 119; Campbell, *The Word before the Powers*, 92, 94.

The prophetic function of the ethnic immigrant church is to foster visions and voices that have the potential to change the wider society by empowering FGKIs through the practice of preaching.²⁹² E. M. Kim states that “Through the proclamation of the gospel, fellowship in faith, solidarity and loving service of those in need, and the planting of seeds of hope in God’s coming reign, the church has paradigmatic significance as a fragment of God’s anticipatory reign. Christian churches must remember that they are not closed circles of faith but are open to the wider world, where the ongoing activity of the Spirit of life is often found.”²⁹³ Some historic prophetic elements of Korean faith communities have been already demonstrated. For example, in Korean immigrant history, the first-wave Koreans (1903-1950) were involved in church activities to intensify their communal hope for a better future.²⁹⁴ They personally reevaluated their harsh immigrant situation, by means of religious instruction—preaching and biblical study—and in light of theologizing on experience.²⁹⁵ They prayed for hope, for better lives in a new land, and considered their immigration experience to

²⁹² Prophetic preaching calls for audacious transformation by and large. However, such preaching needs to take the long view in order to avoid becoming discouraged. On the truth that genuine transformation in preaching frequently takes place over time, Baraba Lundblad also refers that “There may be a rare life-changing sermon, but more often it is a lifetime of sermons inviting the listener into God’s alternative vision that leads to transformation.” Barbara K. Lundblad, *Transforming the Stone: Preaching Through Resistance to Change* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 121; Leonora Tubbs Tisdale, *Prophetic Preaching: A Pastoral Approach* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 60.

²⁹³ Eunjoo Mary Kim, *Preaching in an Age of Globalization* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 53-4.

²⁹⁴ Kwon, *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants*, 92.

²⁹⁵ Refer to p. 80-1.

be an invaluable opportunity to encounter God's providence.²⁹⁶ Believers and non-believers communally had discussions about national issues with a strong sense of ethnic solidarity—for example, the independence of their home country and destitution of their fellow Koreans—within the church. Through these discussions they called forth hope for a better communal future in sermons and prayers.²⁹⁷ Kwon states that the ethnic community of faith was particularly significant for the early FGKIs because the churches were presented as a symbol of hope [with a future-oriented vision rather than a backward-looking one].²⁹⁸ With the churches' eschatological perspectives, looking beyond the present situation and finding hope in the future, the early FGKIs both directly (acting as political leaders for the patriotic independence movement) *and*

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 93, 97. Early Korean ethnic immigrants turned into grass-roots political organization for the Korean independence movement. Many Protestant leaders and ethnic political leaders supported by Korean church became important political figures in Korea. More detail, Marn J. Cha notes that “Extraordinary political leaders served the early Korean immigrants. They included the pioneer Seo Jai-oil, independence fighter Syngman Rhee, the military-mined Park Young-man, and community organizer Ahn Chang-ho. Especially, Syngman Rhee, the founding president of the Republic Korea, came to American in 1904 and in only six and half years, earned bachelor's masters', and doctor of philosophy degrees. Rhee emerged as a formidable independence fighter bolstered by his academic credentials and his leadership position in the Korean Provisional Government in Shanghai, China, after Korea's demise. Much of Rhee's independence activity was waged in Hawaii and the United States. His leadership extended beyond politics to helping establish a Korean church in Hawaii and a Christian school for the young children of immigrants. Rhee believed that Koreans' chance for achieving independence would come when the changing world politics yielded an opportunity. Rhee's approach appealed to a significant segment of the Korean community.” Marn J. Cha, *Koreans in Central California, 1903-1957: A Study of Settlement and Transnational Politics* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 164. Additionally, Choon H. Do addresses that “Syngman Rhee was exiled to the United States...He became the first President when South Korea was founded in August 15, 1948. FGKIs in Hawaii donated money to establish Inha University in Incheon, Korea, in the hope to foster students who would contribute to the development of the nation's scientific and technological industries.” Choon H. Do, “A Short Story of Chemistry in South Korea,” in *Igniting the Chemical Ring of Fire: Historical Evolution of the Chemical Communities of the Pacific Rim*, ed. C. Rasmussen Seth (London, UK: World Scientific Publishing, 2018), 189.

²⁹⁷ Kwon, *Buddhist and Protestant Korean Immigrants*, 97.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 98, 294.

indirectly (sending large donations for the movement) participated in historical events through church activities. For that reason, Ai Ra Kim states that “the Korean church powerfully demonstrated its prophetic role during the Korean independence movement.”²⁹⁹ It is important to note how A. R. Kim also insists that the contemporary Korean immigrant church needs to revitalize such prophetic vigor and vision today.³⁰⁰

Another prophetic dimension in Korean Christianity can be found in its practice of *Tong-sung-ki-do* (henceforth, TSKD), which literally means “praying together out loud.”³⁰¹ I think that TSKD could be a key element of Korean Christianity’s heritage that positively affects FGKIs’ communal and hope-filled *habitus* in the direction of God’s vision. Indeed, as a distinctive feature of Korean American congregations’ spirituality, TSKD can be practiced both privately as individual prayer *and* collectively during the worship service.³⁰² A church leader offers a collective theme for TSKD, after which congregations pray together in the Holy Spirit. Historically, Korean Christians have used TSKD to release their pain and urgently ask God to liberate from their predicaments. This unique form of prayer practiced by FGKIs has not been unrelated to the historical context: for example, they prayed about Japanese colonization (1909-1945), the Korean War (1950-1953), political unrest during oppressive military

²⁹⁹ Ai Ra Kim, *Women Struggling for a New Life: The Role of Religion in the Cultural Passage from Korea to America* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), 184.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Park et al., *Singing the Lord’s Song in a New Land*, 36.

³⁰² Ibid.

dictatorship (1961-1992), and the division of South and North Korea since 1945.³⁰³ TSKD has thus historically functioned as an act of resistance, a way of breaking the imposed silence in the political context of being oppressed.³⁰⁴ They have prayed that God would intervene in their historical condition. For that reason, TSKD has played a role in faithful practice of both spiritual and political resistance and precisely as an indigenous faith practice of liberation.³⁰⁵ In the Spirit, Koreans have gained new strength to go on living with new hopes as TSKD has provided empowering and transforming power.³⁰⁶ This TSKD practice is intimately related to E. M. Kim's concept of "critical transcendence" in Asian American spirituality. Critical transcendence implies that Asian people have transcended "their suffering and hardship with a vision of a better society in the future."³⁰⁷ As Asians' spiritual power of resistance, critical transcendence has been embodied in the communal practice of prayer, TSKD. In fact, most Korean immigrant churches have practiced TSKD to cry out for not only personal sufferings—the heavy weight of the realities of immigrant life are experienced existentially—but also shared national issues even today.

Just as FGKIs' ecclesial spiritual practice shows a prophetic dimension in TSKD, the contemporary immigrant church's marginalized experience potentially offers space for constructing a critical view of society's epicenter of power and the possibility of

³⁰³ Ibid., 38. TSKD as a form of lament could draw its inspiration consciously or unconsciously from biblical laments. Park et al., *Singing the Lord's Song in a New Land*, 40.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 40.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 43.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 40.

³⁰⁷ Kim, *Preaching the Presence of God*, 53-4.

speaking with a prophetic voice about a more subversive vision grounded in the gospel. Just because FGKI preaching, according to my homiletic, starts with lamenting the church's collective hardship because of racism and classism, it does not mean that preaching should emphasize only affective and emotional dimensions without any reflective, critical view of the people's collective situation. Lament rhetoric in my homiletic is not merely an expression of FGKIs' emotion nor just a release of sad emotions. Rather, lament includes the theological view that develops FGKIs' critical-reflective thoughts about their collective suffering within the wider society.³⁰⁸ FGKIs' suffering can often provoke a fundamental existential question, "Why do I/we suffer?" Such questioning can mobilize them to reflect critically on their suffering and remember it collectively. They may then struggle with the authoritative power's rationalization of their collective suffering and even take the risk of destabilizing this central power in yearning for a new world.³⁰⁹ In a similar vein, Eleazar S. Fernandez contends that "Theology, with its metaphoric 'is' and 'is not' character, enables us to see through the pathos of the people not only the 'what is' but also the 'what might be' or the dreamed-

³⁰⁸ Lawrence O. Richards claims that "the central role given to biblical preaching in the conservative churches is educationally as well as theologically appropriate." And Rick Blackwood argues that "some contemporary pastors tone down the theological and cognitive content of their teaching [in sermons]. The problem with this approach is that it limits the theological growth of our audiences and thereby limits their relationship with God. Beyond that, it implies to the world that Christians lack the capacity to think, reason, and engage in mentally stimulating thoughts. Christianity then comes across as a simplistic, mindless, emotional, and nonintellectual faith." In this way, preaching could aim at stimulating theological views on God and the world. Preaching is, however, different from lecturing. Consequently, preaching, Christian education, bible study, counseling, and supportive fellowship all contribute to the same intention: the congregation's change of way of life including their thoughts, values, and actions. I think that education curriculum and bible study are vital as means of supplementing the preaching ministry. Rick Blackwood, *The Power of Multisensory Preaching and Teaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 85.

³⁰⁹ Madelaine Hron, *Translating Pain: Immigrant Suffering in Literature and Culture* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 52, 53.

for future.”³¹⁰ As a result, the immigrant church and its preaching are involved in an imaginative testimony of a broken, vulnerable people on their collective past (what was) and present suffering (what is) and prophetic vision (what might be).

Unlike the prosperity gospel, such immigrant preaching is involved in prophetic discernment about the center’s controlling power in constructive-imaginative ways. Preaching thus is instrumental in animating the people to live out the church’s communal imagination and redeemed voices in their everyday lives, emancipated from passive victimhood. Further, the immigrant church’s witness to God’s proleptic presence and eschatological knowledge of the coming reign of the Lord generates its own prophetic speech. The church’s belief in God’s promised future provides it with hope and courage to transform the present reality. A church replete with both eschatological faith about the divine future *and* hope inspired by the reality of God, is inspired to engage in the transformation of daily life and society. Therefore, prophetic preaching, which proclaims the gospel from the stance of the future of Christ, not only gives a critical view of the existing reality but also invites FGKIs to live into God’s history which is already impinging on the present. Christians, who bear hope from the kingdom of God, take up their divine calling to pursue creative discipleship in daily living.³¹¹ In

³¹⁰ Eleazar S. Fernandez, “A Filipino Perspective: Unfinished Dream in the Land of Dream,” in *Preaching Justice: Ethnic and Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Christine Marie Smith (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008), 64.

³¹¹ Due to human being’s tendency to both “fall short of God’s invitation” *and* lifelong learning to faithful life, preachers need to establish another ministerial plans [c.f., the bible study] to build up their new ways of life “in response to and in the light of God’s active presence for the life of the world.” Dykstra and Bass, “A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices,” 16, 18.

this respect, the prophetic church and its preaching are intrinsically related to eschatological hope.

Counter-Cultural Practice and Participation in God's Future

With reference to a first prophetic role, the ethnic church's prophetic insights ideally builds on the church's present embodiment of a counter-cultural practice and its decentering of the dominant group's capitalistic values of economic-political dominance, social exclusion, racial uniformity, and even the dominant national spirit of the American Dream. The ethnic church signifies a non-conformity to society's values and priorities and thus makes possible a disengagement from the Dream ideology. For example, the church's countercultural, value-laden practices include solidarity, intimacy, hospitality, radical inclusiveness, life-giving practice, and compassion for others' suffering. In this manner, FGKIs' prophetic insights in the eschatological horizon of history continue to awaken the church to embody a new way of being counter-cultural.

In the eschatological worldview, the church as a social alternative seeks not the church's effectiveness for itself, but faithfulness to God. It refuses submission to the powers-that-be, preferring revolutionary participation in the (eschatological) victory of Christ over those powers, and orienting itself to God's future and not some materialistic present.³¹² Consequently, believers' common life in the immigrant church must be liberated from its subordination to capital value and worldly power by its preaching praxis and by the culturally subversive practice of rejecting the dominant cultural values that contradict Christian eschatological way of life.

³¹² Stanely Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 47.

The immigrant church's eschatological hope in the resurrection of the crucified Christ corresponds to Moltmann's messianic missional ecclesiology. His ecclesiology claims that the church does not exist for itself but for the service of the kingdom of God within the unredeemed world; its very life direction is toward God's new future. God's reign is a sign of our hope that exists in spite of our existential tension between the future promise and the present suffering.³¹³ This is part of the church's mission to help marginalized people, a solidarity enabled through its participation in God's concern for and presence among the most hopeless, poor, and oppressed. This extends to the church's solidarity with the groaning creation. Moltmann says that "the true church is the fellowship of love...Love participates in the history of God's suffering...[W]herever the sighing of the Spirit [is] heard in the cry for freedom, there is the church."³¹⁴ Consequently, for Moltmann, the true church is marked by fellowship with the poor and people who are rejected by society. Shared suffering in the form of Jesus's solidarity with a god-forsaken world has a twofold action—both resistance to inhumanity *and* consolation.³¹⁵ Such a devotional fellowship with Christ's suffering demonstrates that the church experience is not only pain and grief, but also hope for God's redemption of the world. Such liberating experiences in the Spirit keep producing new obedience, a new attitude of resistance to the enslaved life.³¹⁶ Moltmann's ecclesiology presents a concrete image of the immigrant church's prophetic task—that of embracing the pain of

³¹³ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975), 164.

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 112-3.

others and of the groaning creation itself by participating in Christ's suffering. This I discuss more fully in the next chapter on lament as the first sermonic step. Embracing others' pain is the Korean immigrant church's prophetic form of discipleship in response to God's calling. Hence, the prophetic church, in its voluntarily fellowship with other oppressed groups, is called to live in the dialectic of pain *and* joyfulness, the cross *and* resurrection, present unjust treatment *and* hope-filled anticipation of God's righteousness, until Christ finally turns the world's suffering into joy.³¹⁷

Historically, Korea is a collective society with a "*woori* (we-ness)" culture because Koreans tend to "emphasize harmony as a high value within [a] community."³¹⁸ The notion of *woori* includes "united feelings or experiences that are shared among the members."³¹⁹ Within the notion of *woori*, individuals are not isolated from society [or groups] and are sometimes "sacrificed for group needs."³²⁰ Specifically, "*woori* represents the relationship of oneness in Korea."³²¹ Such consciousness of *woori* has provided Korea, as a nation, with the power to endure repeated national crisis by valuing togetherness in living history. To be sure, *woori* is criticized insofar as it also refers to

³¹⁷ Bauckham, *The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann*, 124.

³¹⁸ Chul Woo Son, *The Motives of Self-Sacrifice in Korean American Culture, Family, and Marriage: From Filial Piety to Familial Integrity* (Eugene, OR: Wipe & Stock, 2014), 21.

³¹⁹ Min Han and Koyungjae Song, "Pbichim, a Culturally Patterned Form of Subjectified Communication: Using Grounded Theory," in *The Subjectified and Subjectifying Mind*, ed. Min Han and Carla Cunha, (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, INC., 2017), 240.

³²⁰ Eunsun Joo, "Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy in Korea: Cultural Background, Research Findings and Practice Status," in *Emerging Practice in Focusing-Oriented Psychotherapy: Innovative Theory and Application*, ed. Greg Madison (London, UK: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2014), 127.

³²¹ Han and Song, "Pbichim, a Culturally Patterned Form of Subjectified Communication," 240.

the “in-group [based on a family, the same geographical region, the same university and association, etc], which can tend to be closed and exclusionary.”³²² Originally, *woori*, indicates togetherness, not necessarily exclusiveness. Choi Hee An explains that *woori* as an element of Korean ethnic character indicates “a symbolic togetherness between earth and sky/heaven and between humanity and animals, the identity of the we as the Korean ethnic self (*woori*) manifests a togetherness between people and their living beings and even between living beings and spirits.”³²³ By acknowledging the tension of *woori* [togetherness and exclusion], Choi argues that the conception of *woori* needs to “extend its boundary and including others in open invitations” since “it is fixed but open.”³²⁴ That is, Christian FGKIs are called to practice an extended *woori* (we-ness) with greater warmth and inclusive kindness to others in light of the practice of God’s unrelenting and overwhelming love toward all. In addition, Korean culture highlights another unique emotion, *jeong*, as a positive energy that is associated with compassion for both the oppressor *and* oppressed.³²⁵ Traditionally, *jeong* demands loyalty and sacrifice between those who share it [in group], but also requires forgiveness. Jung Ja Joy Yu explains: “*Jeong* as compassion involves the recognition and clear seeing of suffering. *Jeong* as compassion involves feelings of kindness to people who are

³²² William B. Gudykunst, *Asian American Ethnicity and Communication* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc., 2001), 23.

³²³ Choi Hee An, *A Postcolonial Self: Korean Immigrant Theology and Church* (New York: State University of New York, 2015), 15.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

³²⁵ Jung Ja Joy Yu, *Breaking the Glass Box: A Korean Women’s Experiences of Conscientization and Spiritual Formation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 89.

suffering, and evokes in a person a desire to help the other.”³²⁶ In *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology*, Wonhee Anne Joh, who proposes an alternative postcolonial Christology, claims that “The cross, with its powerful love ethic, is the symbol of the inclusive relationalism [relationship] embodied by *jeong*. The way of the cross must be sustained by living with, in, and through the power of *jeong*.”³²⁷ In other words, the Korean ethnic church is called to practice a *jeong*-oriented hospitality toward others in light of an extended *woori* (we-ness), highlighting a practice of inclusiveness and embrace of others’ suffering. In this manner, *jeong*-oriented hospitality offers its own unique prophetic elements to enhance Christian FGKIs’ way of life in our broken world.

Conclusion

Through my earlier critique of Korean immigrant preaching praxis as being aligned with shamanistic notions of God’s blessing and the American Dream ideology, I have argued that Korean immigrant preaching must proclaim the marginalized Korean immigrant church’s unique calling to announce God’s messianic future and engage that future prophetically. As I am constructing it, my immigrant theology for/in preaching helps to carry forward FGKIs’ more faithful way of life—God’s vision-centered practices at the margins—in conversation with Moltmann and other Asian American theologians so as to embody contextually “a grateful human response to God’s presence and promises.”³²⁸ In contrast to the materialistic American Dream, an eschatological

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Wonhee Anne Joh, *Heart of the Cross: A Postcolonial Christology* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 2006), 74.

³²⁸ Dysktra and Bass, “A Theological Understanding of Christian Practices,” 16.

hope kindled by the future of God cannot be delayed or deferred to the next generation. Divinely inspired hope and vision keep infusing the present, as the kingdom of God, which is yet to come fully in glory, is already coming to FGKIs in the Spirit. The “already but not yet” nature of the kingdom of God allows vulnerable FGKIs who experience the failure of the Dream to celebrate the anticipation of the future of Christ *here and now*. Preaching from the standpoint of God’s promised future helps FGKIs identify the divine calling in their existing circumstances and to actualize creative discipleship *here and now*.

In this situation, a central task of immigrant preaching is to increase faith by offering a word of radical grace: God’s unconditional promise for the future, in the present often difficult reality.³²⁹ To this end, in the next chapter I will develop my own psalmic-theological homiletic for the sake of FGKIs’ faithful, hope-filled lives and prophetic practice. My proposal for immigrant preaching is meant to enliven people’s faith in the living God’s compassion for FGKIs, to celebrate God’s redemptive action by imaginatively glimpsing the divine’s righteous reign even in the current reality of suffering, and to foster a transformative way of life for FGKIs through participation in God’s salvific future.

³²⁹ Jacobsen and Kelly, *Kairos Preaching*, 17.

CHAPTER 4. A PSALMIC-THEOLOGICAL HOMILETIC AS A KOREAN IMMIGRANT PREACHING MODEL

Introduction

The previous chapter undertook the deconstructive task by critically reflecting on a problematic prosperity theology within Korean immigrant preaching. It next provided an alternative immigrant theology for/in preaching to aid in the constructive practical-theological task. To carry forward the task of practical-theological interpretation, this fourth chapter will offer a psalmic-theological homiletic as a basis for a revised practice of immigrant preaching and for the Korean ethnic church's better embodiment of preaching praxis in its way of life.

My proposed psalmic-theological homiletic consists of four constitutive steps, which I will develop more fully in this chapter: a) lament, b) retelling the story, c) confessional doxology and d) obedient vow.³³⁰ The proposed homiletic will rely on a sermonic structure devised from a theoretical investigation of the Psalms, using form-critical study and rhetorical criticism to bring to light the Psalms' structural-rhetorical movement for the sake of the contemporary FGKI church's public rhetoric.³³¹ This

³³⁰ My attempt to design a homiletical proposal relying on the Psalms' rhetoric is not novel. Donald Capps, a pastoral theologian, earlier proposed a grief counseling process that follows the form of the Psalms: "the conversation is addressed to God (address), the venturing of negative feelings (complaints), a sense of being upheld (confession of trust), and expression of specific needs and desires (petition), and experience of support and relief from suffering (words of assurance), and the commencement of hope (vow to praise)." Capps wrote: "I have wanted to show that the Psalm of lament can guide this [counseling] process, helping it to move from complaint through petition to assurance and praise." Donald Capps, *Biblical Approaches to Pastoral Counseling* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub., 2003), 88-89, 90.

³³¹ Paul Scott Wilson says that the preacher homiletically can use the biblical text as a fictive plot to tell the truth: "Yet another possibility may be recommended that uses the biblical text at hand as the source of the narrative plot...Fictive plot is a vehicle for truth. Said another way, fictive plot uses the best historical resources at hand to enliven the imagination of the congregation." Based on this suggestion, my thesis will be try to devise a theological-homiletical plot for FGKI congregation-focused preaching by critically using the Psalm's rhetorical form.

homiletic does not aim at uncritically rehearsing the Psalms' plot in a new context; nor does this proposal solely have to do with how to preach the Psalms. Instead, my psalmic-theological homiletic explores the Psalms' rhetorical movement in order to bring it into dialogue with a contextual immigrant theology of preaching for the sake of a more fitting, revised practice of immigrant preaching. Put differently, this project will approach the bible with the contextual particularity of FGKIs who struggle with keeping the faith in difficult circumstances. Paul Ballard remarks that the [practical-theological] mode "starts from a given situation and moves toward using the bible as a source [in and for practical theology]." ³³² In this dissertation, however, the bible is not merely a unidirectional resource to inform the church's praxis. Rather, I will approach the Psalms so as to improve the present-day practice of preaching, engaging with the emergent contextual needs of FGKIs. That is to say, my approach to the Psalms is not merely some practical application of the ancient rhetorical practice for Israel, but a reformulation of immigrant preaching for the contemporary marginalized FGKIs in dialogue with the Psalms' rhetorical shape.

In addition to tracing the Psalms' rhetoric, I will assess the theological significance of its four rhetorical steps on the assumption that form and substance are not separable, but reciprocal. Form and content belong together, as the New Homiletic proposed in its more literary and rhetorical approaches to preaching Biblical texts. In a nutshell, a psalmic-theological homiletic is the outcome of combining the sermonic-

Paul Scott Wilson, "Reading the Psalms for preaching: Fictive Plot," in *Performing the Psalms*, ed. Dave Bland and David Fleer (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 114-5.

³³² Paul Ballard, "The Use of Scripture," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 170.

rhetorical movement and the investigation of each of the four theological implications. In this way, I will be critically adapting psalmic rhetorical-theological features for the ministry of preaching in the FGKI context.

On one level the Psalms seem to support the prosperity gospel to some degree. Even so, I chose a psalmic-theological approach for immigrant homiletic for two reasons derived from the psalms' own *collective* perspective on blessing. First, my psalmic-theological homiletic interprets God's blessing or goodness as implying God's peace [shalom] for all—individuals and the community around them (to a large extent, the whole nation). By contrast, prosperity preachers in most cases regard God's blessing as only an individual's material abundance. The following passage offers good evidence in support of my interpretation: "May the LORD bless His [God's] people with peace!" (Ps. 29:11).³³³ Hence, my psalmic homiletic approaches peace [shalom] and prosperity in the Psalms in terms of an "interrelationship between the blessing of children and the good things of the world."³³⁴ Another example is found in the portrait of blessedness in Psalm 128:5-6 that could be interpreted as "a blessing on Jerusalem (city) and on the country of Israel."³³⁵ C. Hassell Bullock, Mark Strauss, and John Walton note:

we also should not ignore the connection between the present blessing of the family, living in peace and prosperity, and the transfer of the picture in the blessing pronounced over Jerusalem and Israel. Here we have three major social components of the world of the psalmist—the family, the city, and the

³³³ Robert D. Bell refers that "Psalm 72 continues this Messianic trend with God's blessing of peace: 'In his [God's] days may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more (Ps. 72:7).' It is through the Messiah that God will bless all people." Robert D. Bell, *Theological Themes of Psalms: The Theology of the Book of Psalms* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2018), 56.

³³⁴ C. Hassell Bullock, Mark Strauss, and John Walton, *Psalms: Psalms 73-150, Teach the Text Commentary Series* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2017), 408.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

country—and in this social order the family is foundational. Indeed, textually the psalmist establishes a link in verses 5-6 between the prosperity of Jerusalem (city) and the person who fears the Lord, since verses 5-6 are an extended description of that person (community).³³⁶

Enrich Zenger likewise states, “The well-being of individuals and the well-being of Jerusalem are closely related: the happiness of the individual culminates in his or her rejoicing in the well-being of Jerusalem, and Jerusalem’s prosperity is complete only when the individuals who love Jerusalem as their focal center are happy.”³³⁷ Thus, he emphasizes, our well-being is linked to the place where we live, the larger society.³³⁸ In addition, God’s blessing in Psalm 132, such as abundant prosperity that satisfies the poor with food and a joyful people, is not merely to be regarded as a realistic picture of the postexilic community, but “a messianic vision of the future age.”³³⁹ Aligned with that particular messianic perception of God’s blessing, my proposed homiletic approaches God’s blessing and human well-being from the perspective of the divine’s future reign and life-abundance for all in a wider society. Second, psalmic theology by and large claims that goodness in life often has to do not with “material prosperity and success but rather with the assurance of God’s presence in the midst of all the threats and dark valleys.”³⁴⁰ For instance, Psalm 73 illustrates the crisis of God’s goodness and accusation of God’s injustice because of the prosperity of the wicked. The psalmist

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Frank-Lothar Hossfel, Enrich Zenger, and Klaus Baltzer, *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101-150* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 403-4.

³³⁸ Bullock, Strauss and Walton, *Psalms: Psalms 73-150*, 409.

³³⁹ Ibid., 430.

³⁴⁰ Corin Mihaila, “The Theological and Canonical Place of Psalm 73,” *Faith and Mission* 18, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 56.

however concludes with “reinterpretation of what is means to say that God is good.”³⁴¹ It implies that religion often has nothing to do with “a method of achieving success and prosperity.”³⁴² Instead, religion is relevant to believers’ conviction that “what ultimately matters is the reality of God’s nearness to God’s people” in the Psalms.³⁴³

Moreover, my view of the Psalms’ rhetorical plot and their theological hermeneutics will be grounded on the reality of marginality—more precisely FGKIs’ existential experience in a marginal sector of society. Specifically, my homiletic will be designed for FGKIs, a marginalized people who undergo displacement, vulnerability, unjust treatment in the mainstream society, and experience the failure of the Dream ideology. As a result, FGKIs engage preaching from the standpoint of a struggling faith due to continuous hardships and misperception of what it truly means to be blessed by God. Along with a concern for FGKIs’ contextual sufferings, my homiletic will be devised for the sake of their faithful participation, as hearers and disciples, in God’s promise and to restore their impaired faith and broken hearts.

This project will therefore regard ancient Israel’s rhetoric in the Psalms as an act of resistance to injustice in a social structure as a way of reinvigorating oppressed people’s damaged faith in pursuit of envisaging the coming righteous reign of God. To be sure, there are some Korean preachers whose sermonic theologies and movements are already developing pieces consistent with my proposed homiletic. Their sermons seem to be designed to fulfill practical-theological and spiritual needs that arise from FGKIs’

³⁴¹ Ibid., 56.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid., 57.

particular life circumstances. Their practice of preaching corresponds to their own theological reflection on FGKIs' hardship and hope-filled vision, and not in accordance with the Dream ideology nor with shamanistic-prosperity theology. Among Korean immigrant preachers, I will choose E. M. Kim's sermon, "Could We Sing the Lord's Song?" to uncover her own positive homiletical contribution to elements of my psalmic-theological homiletic in this chapter. Throughout this chapter, I will conduct my homiletical-theoretical dialogue with E. M. Kim's practice of contextual preaching by analyzing her sermon: "Could We Sing the Lord's Song?" A critical analysis of her lived practice of preaching—her theory-laden practice—will demonstrate my proposed homiletic theory's practicality through preaching ministry. Further, theological-theoretical perspectives of her preaching praxis will bring about in-depth discussion with other homiletic theorists.

Finally, this content-oriented chapter will discuss: a) the preaching value of the Psalms; b) the rhetorical peculiarity of the Psalms; c) the practice of Korean immigrant preaching (that is, E. M. Kim's sermon) as a critical adaptation; and d) my proposal for a psalmic-theological homiletic.

I. The Preaching Value of the Psalms

A. Suppression of Lament

Don Saliers in his article, "Psalms in Our Lamentable World," criticizes the American church for having "largely avoided or simply neglected lamentation and complaint" by appeasing the congregation with the prosperity Gospel or 'ultra-bright' forms of Christian worship even while today's media "are saturated by news of human

carnage, enmity, and suffering.”³⁴⁴ In a similar vein, Luke Powery in *Dem Dry Bones: Preaching, Death, and Hope*, claims that the prosperity gospel and its pain-free religious experience do not engage in the valleys of life, making God’s people dismiss truthfully voicing their concerns of human agony before God.³⁴⁵ Their observations suggest that the American church is making little effort to connect with people’s real lives. This disconnect with the congregation’s agonies also demonstrates the church’s failure to utter faithful and prophetic words in public about people’s (unjust) social suffering. This neglect likewise implies that the contemporary church tends to downplay not only humbly addressing people’s predicament before God but also appealing to God’s gracious salvation and its possibilities.

In the case of the Korean immigrant church, the lament element and its prophetic dimension are already embedded in their spirituality, revealed in the communal practice of TSKD (a particular kind of prayer), as illustrated in the previous chapter. We cannot ignore the fact that some Korean immigrant preachers, however, tend to hesitate to use lament-form speech in sermons. Their preaching tends to avoid dealing with FGKIs’ collective suffering (c.f., FGKIs’ communal estrangement in this white-centered culture), which itself often results from overly personalized faith and other-worldly

³⁴⁴ Don Saliers, “Psalms in Our Lamentable World,” *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* 1, no.1 (2015): 103.

³⁴⁵ Luke A. Powery, *Dem Dry Bones: Preaching, Death, and Hope* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2012), 3, 5. In the book *Where Have All the Prophets Gone?*, Marvin McMickle points out three reasons of the demise of prophetic preaching: (a) an overzealous preoccupation with the place of praise in some churches and services of worship, (b) a false and narrow view of patriotism, and (c) a focus in preaching on personal enrichment themes or a prosperity gospel to the exclusion or detriment of the gospel’s broader social justice claims. In this manner, the demise of prophetic voice and the suppression of lament over human agony are derived from the very similar reasons. See Marvin A. McMickle, *Where Have All the Prophets Gone? Reclaiming Prophetic Preaching in America* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2006).

spirituality. On the one hand, an overly personalized spirituality minimizes theological reflection on social issues. For example, such spirituality regards communal suffering as an unfortunate private matter, not as a social or structural one. The personalization of faith is also often deeply interwoven into the individualistic success-oriented cultural virtues of the Dream ideology. On the other hand, the suppression of lament for communal suffering results from yet another aspect of Korean spiritual heritage as well, namely that salvation primarily signifies possessing the guarantee of heavenly paradise. Such spirituality tends to realize an otherworldly heaven and an individualistic mysticism that consequently downplays any messianic hope for social change in the current historical sphere.³⁴⁶ In short, this spirituality is largely devoid of Christian worldly engagement in the divinely-ordained work of hearing this fragmented world's cries and addressing its needs. For that reasons, this research will argue that a Korean immigrant homiletic has the opportunity to develop a rhetoric of lament to help hearers articulate their communal grief in anticipation of God's deliverance, but specifically in accordance with a Korean traditional spirituality (and Christians general) which aims to overcome their distress through TSKD and the critical transcendence of its unique spirituality.

B. Faith-Seeking Rhetoric

The primary reason for selecting the book of Psalms for developing this homiletic approach is that I am convinced that the psalmic rhetorical practice was intended to embolden Israel's faith in times of pain, since it encouraged people to

³⁴⁶ Ahn Byung-Mu, "Jesus and Ochlos in the Context of His Galilean Ministry," in *Asian Contextual Theology for the Third Millennium: Theology of Minjung in Forth-Eye Formation*, ed. Paul S. Chung (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007), 61.

realign their relationship with God. For that reason, the psalmic rhetorical sequence can also be a contextual, pragmatic tool to inspire FGKIs' injured faith and to arouse a new spiritual way of life. The Psalms' prevailing speech movement—from lament to praise—manifests the transition *from* the believer's alienation from God because of hardship *to* a profound gratitude capable of trusting in God again. In this respect, my homiletic accompanies the spiritual journey *from* lament, as an anguished articulation of disarray, *to* praise, as a new existential mode open to trust in God's promises. Accordingly, such a rhetorical flow and its (explicit and implicit) theological implications in the Psalms will help to devise a suitable homiletical sequence. I do so in the hope that dangerous but candid speech about FGKIs' predicaments (lament) will offer the potential to open space for a new vocation, a way of life oriented to the reality of God in the mode of praise.³⁴⁷

Such a movement obviously corresponds to one of my primary homiletical intentions: to intensify the hearers' faith and elicit a more faithful praxis. An example of this is found in James Nieman and Thomas G. Rogers work in *Preaching to Every Pew*. Nieman and Rogers argue that preaching for the displaced (immigrants) can benefit from

³⁴⁷ The preacher's public lament over hearers' predicaments is truthful but it could be simultaneously dangerous. On the whole, lament in proclamation entails a daring alternative worldview or re-imagining social order (c.f., political and economic issues) so that it leads the preacher's entering the zone of vulnerability in light of a risky self-exposure before the worldly power. It also brings about a renunciation of his/her privilege of the dominant institution's norms and practices by taking side with FGKIs. Further, the divine's message concerning the cries of the poor in lament rhetoric could prompt actions for changing the hurtful circumstances. Brueggemann says that "the Bible especially through the lens of its most vigorous interpreters, can be dangerous, subversive, and scandalous...The oddness and danger of the biblical God are evidenced around socioeconomic, political questions concerning the cry of the poor, the urge of justice, and the power and possibility of real social transformation." It implies that lament as truthful speech calls the church to follow God's surprising vision that does not fit our preferred notions (even though the church is oftentimes unwilling to practice God's message.) Walter Brueggemann, *The Word Militant: Preaching a Decentering Word* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2010), 2, 35.

the valuable model in the Psalm's two-part pattern of lament to praise. They contend that psalmic speech encompasses both a cry at injustice using vivid and bold expressions (lament) *as well as* gratitude for a trustworthy home—the reality of God (praise).³⁴⁸ As Nieman and Rogers' suggest, the Psalms offer the potential to revive immigrants' faith in a season of affliction by both crying out for divine justice and also boldly confessing and praising God's everlasting love.

With the Psalms' oral tradition in view, Brueggemann asserts that the Psalms' astonishing literary transition from lament to praise is the by-product of ancient Israel's spiritual experience of God's transformative presence in a liturgical setting.³⁴⁹ Likewise, Westermann suggests that the Psalms emerged from oral tradition in the context of Israel's worship:

The collection of the psalms presupposes an already long, rich, and varied life for them in oral tradition and in the context of worship. The Psalms were not first written and then sung, but vice versa: they were first sung and prayed for a long time before they were written down.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ James R. Nieman and Thomas G. Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 109.

³⁴⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *Spirituality of the Psalms* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 49.

³⁵⁰ Claus Westermann, *The Psalms: Structure, Content and Message*, trans. Ralph D. Gehrke (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), 12. Westermann, however, limits the Psalms (words of lament, doubt, praise, trust, joy) to the area of the temple or the time of established worship activity. In the same vein, Hermann Gunkel insists that not all of the Psalms, but only some of them, were used liturgically in the temple. By contrast, Sigmund Mowinckel claims that virtually all of the Psalms were composed for liturgical or cultic purposes. In this way, the hypothesis of near exclusive liturgical Psalmic usage is arguable. Nevertheless, these scholars agree with the Psalm as the oral tradition in a liturgical setting in general. Westermann, *The Psalms*, 16; C. Hassell Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 48.

This perspective implies that the Psalms as oral tradition were the transmitted product of ancient Israel's spiritual experience in a liturgical setting. Put another way, the Psalm's rhetoric represents Israel's speech event (preaching) in the Spirit.

Indeed, Westermann insists that the Psalms' rhetoric as a dramatic spiritual-theological event was the undisputed center of Israel's life of faith.³⁵¹ My research is to some degree the recovery of a traditional biblical oral tradition for the benefit of today's Korean immigrant preaching ministry. From my perspective, the Psalms as a long-established oral tradition can play a role in modeling current immigrant preaching. This study will deliberately inquire into the Psalms' unique literary movement as manifesting typical patterns of speech before God. Yet, the Psalms in the dissertation will not be treated as a passionless book of decorative and artistic pedantry; rather, they will be understood as a Spirit-filled rhetoric with profound theological implications for an immigrant homiletic.

II. Distinctive Rhetorical Shape of the Psalms³⁵²

In this section, I will briefly investigate the Psalms' structural rhetorical features to help formulate for my psalmic-theological homiletic the four main components of the sermonic movement. For research on psalmic rhetoric, I depend mainly on Westermann's work, especially his critical analysis of the (speech) form and structure of the Psalms. His analysis shows that the Psalms undergo a rhythmic transition *from*

³⁵¹ Westermann, *The Psalms*, 12.

³⁵² For this dissertation's purpose, I intend to offer a rhetorical-theological homiletic for FGKIs; so, I will not discuss all the Psalms. Therefore, my work is primarily focused on the lament psalms (for preaching as lament), the storytelling psalms (for preaching as retelling the story) and the praise psalms (for preaching as confessional doxology and obedient vow).

desperate lament *to* shouts of exultation in confidence of the divine's future deliverance of the faithful.³⁵³ The rhetorical-form of the Psalms also represents a mode of speech (i.e., preaching) more likely to help evoke the affirmative faith that I will describe here.³⁵⁴

Since rhetorical criticism tends to offer a way of thinking more pragmatically about today's practice of preaching, I will use Westermann's rhetorical analysis of the structural-literary form of the Psalms.³⁵⁵ The purpose of my investigation of the psalmic

³⁵³ The Psalmic literary structure and its basic form as the ground of designing the contemporary preaching practice for FGKIs are indebted to Westermann, a German Protestant Old Testament scholar. Brueggemann notes that his study on the Psalms relied on Hermann Gunkel and Westermann's form-critical categories: "I have largely followed the form analysis of Hermann Gunkel, refined in important ways by Westermann." Besides, Scott Ellington who explores the topic of lament in Scripture states that "Claus Westermann has provided a useful key to understanding the preponderance of lament psalms in Israel's prayers by calling our attention to the sense of movement." Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1985), 10; Scott A. Ellington, *Risking Truth: Reshaping the World through Prayers of Lament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2008), 62.

³⁵⁴ In the investigation on the lament psalms, Brueggemann argues that our speech modes of dealing with suffering (lament) have a specific rhetoric form. He says that "This suggests, applied to the lament form, that its regularized use intends to enable and require sufferers in the community to experience their suffering in a legitimate life-world...By the use of the form, the grief experience is made bearable and, it is hoped, meaningful. The form makes the experience formful just when it appeared to be formless and therefore deathly and destructive." Brueggemann, *The Psalms and The Life of Faith*, 84-97, 86.

³⁵⁵ A psalmic-theological homiletic is in accordance with the enterprises and purposes of both form *and* rhetorical criticism to a certain degree, with theological interpretation of the book of Psalms. My work is heavily dependent on Westermann's (oral) form criticism of the Psalms to design the practice of the contemporary preaching. Patricia K. Tull concedes that rhetorical criticism relies on form criticism. Furthermore, Duane F. Watson and Alan J. Hauser mention that "form criticism is viewed primarily as a useful preliminary which can help rhetorical critics understand larger units in their current form." In more detail: regarding form criticism, the German scholar Hermann Gunkel shaped form criticism as the discipline. It has four components: (a) It accents the oral provenance of the original genres in Israel (in which they made the tradition from oral to written form); (b) It explores literary types or genres. For example, in the book of Psalms, it contains a few main types, including hymns, individual lament, and communal lament, songs of thanksgiving, and royal psalms; (c) It believes that each biblical text belongs to a particular life setting in that form criticism tries to analyze the text by examining its speech structure, genres, and their social life situation. Along with form criticism,

oral form is to present a typical mode of rhetoric (i.e., that of the Psalms) that can be intentionally designed to revitalize FGKIs' agonized hearts by disclosing God's intrusive breakthrough through eyes of faith.

A. Two Dominant Tonalities as the Dominant Category

In Westermann's book, *The Psalms: Structure, Content, and Message*, he states that the book of Psalms has two dominant tonalities in its literary composition; lament and praise.³⁵⁶ Lament and praise oscillate, corresponding to the rhythm of grief and joy. To Westermann this signifies that lament arising from hardship has no meaning in and

James Muilenburg has advocated the methodology of rhetorical criticism. For Muilenburg, rhetorical criticism has not been the rejection of form criticism, but its supplementation, with the methodology of rhetorical criticism emphasizing Hebrew composition, such as discerning structural patterns, verbal sequences and stylistic devices that make a coherent whole, beyond form criticism. Rhetorical criticism, as a more applicable approach to the biblical interpretation for speech communication (e.g., preaching), has assumed that the ancient biblical texts' artistic/stylistic literary compositions were for persuasive public discourse. The narrators and poets of ancient Israel, in his view, were "dominated not only by the form and traditional modes of speech of the literary genres or types, but also by the techniques of narrative and poetic composition." Put differently, rhetorical criticism has had the premise that structural composition of the biblical texts is inherently rhetorical with communicative elements that manifest functions to teach, persuade, and inspire the original hearers so that the rhetorical techniques of the biblical text was not accidental but by design. So rhetorical criticism was concerned about the biblical text's structural features of composition, the ordering of the complete literary units as a rhetorical composition, i.e. repetitive style and concluding climatic shout, granting valuable insights into the field of rhetorical studies, as I will explore regarding the rhetorical movement of the Psalms. Patricia K. Tull, "Rhetorical Criticism and Beyond in Second Isaiah," in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Marvin Alan Sweeney and Ehud Ben Zvi (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 328; Duane F. Watson and Alan J. Hauser, *Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography with Notes on History and Method* (Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1994), 8; Phyllis Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism: Context, Method, and the Book of Jonah* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 21-23, 26; John H. Hayes and Carl R. Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginner's Handbook* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 106; James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," in *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88, no. 1 (March 1969): 8-10.

³⁵⁶ Westermann, *The Psalms*, 24.

of itself but that it must and can always resolve in praise.³⁵⁷ In fact, there is not a single Psalm of lament that ends in lamentation. The individual psalms move toward praise, just as the whole book of the Psalms moves *from* lament *to* praise.³⁵⁸ A noteworthy thing is that it progresses *from* lament *to* joyful response to God's redemptive actions in all its breadth and fullness since the psalmist (in the ancient liturgical setting) experienced God's transformative presence in his/her representative speech that had the power to forge joy through weeping and the use of tears to create laughter.³⁵⁹ In this way, lament goes beyond merely evoking weeping in despair, but moves further. Succinctly, in the Psalms, lament precedes and deepens praise in an expression of confidence in the divine's magnificent goodness.

B. Detailed Constituent Parts of the Psalmic Structure

Westermann explicates the component parts of the psalmic structure in detail, by subdividing the psalms of lament into laments of the people (the community lament

³⁵⁷ Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1981), 266.

³⁵⁸ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 266. In reference to the two tonalities of the whole book of Psalms, C. Hassell Bullock briefly notes that "Praise is the goal toward which the whole [Psalm] book moves. The doxologies that conclude each book, and especially the doxological aggregate at the end of the book, confirm this fact: Pss. 41:13; 72:18-19; 89:52; 106:48; and 146-50. They are the pediments that highlight the architecture of the book. Westermann shows that the two poles of the Psalter are lament and praise, with an inner force that moves both individual psalms *and* the book as a whole toward praise. Indeed, the lament of the individual and the lament of the people incorporate words of trust and a vow to praise the Lord, both belong in an integral way to the category of praise." Thus, even lament has an inner movement in the direction of praise. Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 124.

³⁵⁹ Westermann, *The Psalms*, 24; Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 75; Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 50; Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1986), 12; Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1907), 12; James L. Mays, *The Lord Reigns: A Theological Handbook of the Psalms* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 5.

psalms) *and* laments of the individual (the individual lament psalms). On the one hand, he assumes that the psalms of communal lament sprang from Israel's communal crises, such as enemy attacks, deportations, or national catastrophes, including drought, plagues of locusts or famine.³⁶⁰ On the other hand, the psalms of individual lament were about personal suffering and adversaries who caused personal grief.

With respect to the structure of the lament psalms, in *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, Westermann clearly identifies five component parts of the community lament:

- Address & Introductory petition
- Lament
- Confession of trust
- Petition
- Vow of Praise.³⁶¹

Next, he proposes that the individual lament has the following components:

- Address with an introductory cry for help and /or a turning to God
- Lament
- Confession of trust,
- Petition
- Assurance of being heard
- Double wish
- Vow of Praise
- Praise of God (only where the petition has been answered).³⁶²

In spite of some variations in the two types of lament psalms, Westermann proposes that the following component parts should be regarded as formal sequential determinatives which mark lament psalms: a) address (an introductory petition); b) lament; c) confession of trust (a turning to God); d) petition; and e) a vow of praise.³⁶³ Given that

³⁶⁰ Claus Westermann, *The Living Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 22.

³⁶¹ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 52.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 64.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 170, 265.

there are alterations in the rhetorical sequence, these differences shift the theological emphases of each psalm through slight variations of internal rhetorical structures.³⁶⁴ As such, each psalm's theological significance is reflected in the diversity of their internal sequences. In the following sections, I will select some of the (communal and individual) lament psalms to ground a basic rhetorical form or template for the practice of preaching to today's FGKIs.³⁶⁵

III. The Practice of Korean Immigrant Preaching as Critical Adaptation

Before developing further my proposal of psalmic-theological preaching, I will briefly analyze E. M. Kim's sermon. The purpose of sermonic analysis here is to attest that my homiletical theory is a critical adaptation of the Psalm's homiletical-theological implications in conversation with Korean immigrant preaching praxis. The reason for choosing the sermon is that first, E. M. Kim's sermon was composed in light of her (first-generation) Korean immigrant perspective and experiences.³⁶⁶ Put differently, she preached from a Korean immigrant standpoint even though this particular sermon was written for a broader, multicultural audience. To this limited degree, I believe that her sermon can apply to FGKIs' context as a helpful instantiation. Also, her sermon can be a

³⁶⁴ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 266.

³⁶⁵ According to Westermann, the book of Psalms includes psalms of praise, psalms of lament, eschatological songs of praise, songs of enthronement of Yahweh, etc. Of these, this project primarily focuses on the psalms of (individual and communal) lament as the basic speech form for the practice of preaching.

³⁶⁶ The sermon was presented at the Anna H. Shaw Center, Boston University in 2002 so that we can assume hearers were multi-cultural seminarians. Here are examples of E. M. Kim's immigrant perspectives in the sermon: "Along the rivers of North America, many of us feel that we are not quite at home in our homeland...God was weeping with those (exiles) who were on the margin of the kingdom and sang to them a song of promise...Only those who see the vision for a new world can sing again the Lord's song, even in a foreign land, even on the margins of society." *Ibid.*, 169-173.

proper homiletical-theological conversation partner. Next, the sermon most closely approximates a psalmic-theological homiletic compared to those from other current homileticians and Korean immigrant pastors. Thus, her sermon reflects many aspects of my proposed revision of FGKI preaching practice. For instance, E. M. Kim in her book, *Women Preaching: Theology and Practice Through the Ages*, asserts that “Preaching as the missionary work of God calls listeners out of their status quo and fills them with the passion and desire to take responsibility for transforming the world with a new vision.”³⁶⁷ Her statement resonates with the purpose of my immigrant preaching—that is, encouraging hearers to become liberated from a self-centered way of life and to take part in God’s vision through preaching ministry. I am convinced that her real practice of preaching will confirm my homiletical theory’s possibility throughout this chapter.

Here, I draw on E. M. Kim’s sermon, “Could We Sing the Lord’s Song?” to bring her practice into deeper dialogue with the four components proposed thus far: a) Understanding preaching as lament; b) Appreciating preaching as retelling the story; c) Comprehending preaching as confessional doxology; and d) Analyzing preaching for obedient vow.³⁶⁸

a) Understanding Preaching as Lament in E. M. Kim’s Sermon

³⁶⁷ Kim, *Women Preaching*, 46.

³⁶⁸ E. M. Kim is professor of homiletics and liturgies at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado. From among E.M. Kim’s sermons, I choose to discuss “Could We Sing the Lord’s Song?,” which appears in *Women Preaching: Theology and Practice Through the Ages*. Its texts are Psalm 137 and Revelation 21:1-4. The main purpose of this sermon seems to be inspiring marginalized groups to become conscious of God’s presence with them, to remember God’s promises, to listen to the voice of God, and to envision the new world even in their suffering reality, just as the ancient Israelites in exile sang the Lord’s song on the riverbanks, despite their oppressive life situation. Kim, *Women Preaching*, 169.

E. M. Kim’s sermon starts by describing the river as a place of lamentation where Jewish exiles and Babylonian captives weep. For her, this river metaphorically signifies the contemporary hearers’ marginalized or oppressed situation in which they themselves experience unjust treatment. At the same time, she also describes the river as being the place where Jewish exiles sing songs of joy, remembering the promise of God for the City of Zion:

During their long, exhausting journey into exile
and their oppressed lives as captives in a captor’s land,
they may not have had time to lament until they reached the waters of Babylon.

.....
But, now, being captive, their spirits are down.
They hang their harps on the willow, and lament by saying,
‘How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?’³⁶⁹

³⁶⁹ Ibid., 169. The main scriptures of E. M. Kim’s sermon are Psalm 137 and Revelation 21:1-4. In particular, Psalm 137 contains troubling verses, that is, vv. 7-9 (“Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites, the day of Jerusalem’s fall, how they said, ‘Tear it down! Tear it down! Down to its foundations!’ O daughter Babylon, you devastator! Happy shall they be who pay you back what you have done to us! Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!,” NRSV). As Irene Nowell states, “The blatant prayer for vengeance in Psalm 137 makes us very uncomfortable,” the verses are very difficult to proclaim to contemporary Christians as the gospel. For that reason, E. M. Kim seems to not talk about the psalmist’s prayer against Edom and Babylon (Ps. 137:7-9) in this sermon. These troubling passages raise “a question of vital importance to the integrity of our faith in the Bible—How are we to reconcile these words with the spirit of Christ, who taught His disciples to bless their enemies, and the doctrine of St. Paul, who said, ‘Bless and curse not?’” About this issue, Henry Van Dyke provides three ways to interpret these passages: “First is the theory that these passages of denunciation are not imprecations but predications: that they do not express the wish of the speaker, but merely his knowledge of what will occur in the future...Second is the theory that these imprecations are not the utterances of private individuals, but of the representatives of the nation, who are speaking not only on behalf of the chosen people, but also in the name of truth and religion...Third is the theory which regards these imprecations as the inspired expression of a just anger against the enemies of God, and defends them on the ground of righteous indignation. There is such a thing as righteous indignation, and the world would fare badly without it.” Next, Jerome F. D. Creach provides a helpful approach to violence in the Psalms: “First, the main aim of the prayers for vengeance is for God to arise as judge over the world (Ps. 94:1-3) to protect the innocent person or the helpless nation who suffers at hands of bloodthirsty enemies (Ps. 59:2-6). Thus, the request for ‘vengeance’ is a request for legal, or legally responsible, protection, not revenge (see the discussion of Nah. 1:2-11 above). Second, the petitions for vengeance in the Psalms are not prayers for the psalmist to be empowered to respond to enemies. The psalmist is powerless and so prays for God’s help apart from human agency (Ps. 11:1-2)...This violent rhetoric is consistent with the self-portrayal of kings in the ancient Near East and images that enhance that portrayal. As the book of Psalms progresses from beginning to end, however, it increasingly describes Israel’s king as a victim of violence

By depicting Jewish exiles' lamenting on the riverbank, she allows her hearers to identify their current lamentable surroundings with the Jewish exiles' situation. She shows that her contemporary marginalized people's lamentable condition is replete with racial prejudice, a sense of homelessness (especially, among immigrants), and American national suffering (including terror and broken relationships):

‘How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?’
Perhaps, many of us want to join their lamentations,
because of our similar experiences with captives.
Along the rivers of North America, many of us feel that
we are not quite at home in our homeland.

.....
But, we still hear weeping of victims of family violence, sexual harassment and rape,
racial prejudice and gender discrimination.

In addition,
I hear from my students that many experience rejection, abandonment, and condemnation
from their families and churches and at work because of their sexual orientation.

.....
Living in this world, who can sing the Lord’s song among us?
How can we sing the joyful songs of Zion?
We who gather together by the Charles River mourn in despair and hopelessness
like the Psalmist and his people wept by the rivers of Babylon.³⁷⁰

E. M. Kim uses the rhetoric of lament to express the marginalized people's hopeless situation in this advanced country, and parallels today's lament with that of their exiled forebears. Throughout the sermon, the language of lament names people's plight in society, and helps attend to the people's repressed voices by embracing suffering of

rather than a perpetrator of it...Scholars have noted a significant shift in pictures of the king in Psalms 90–150, and the link between the king and violence is one significant part of that shift...By the end of the Psalter the king has become one of the poor and needy and models dependence on God, not royal power expressed as violence.” Irene Nowell, *Sing a New Song: The Psalms in the Sunday Lectionary* (Collegeville, PA: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 70; Henry Van Dyke, *The Story of the Psalms* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1913), 182-4; Jerome F. D. Creah, “Violence in the Old Testament,” *Biblical Studies, Christianity, Judaism and Jewish Studies* (July 2016), <http://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-154>.

³⁷⁰ Kim, *Women Preaching*, 169-171.

diverse marginalized people. Her voice of lament implicitly associates her community with the church's active resistance to the mainstream society's injustice that only provides hardship to people, especially outsiders and foreigners.

b) Appreciating Preaching as Retelling the Story in E. M. Kim's Sermon

Of course, the sermon does more than go on lifting up the people's laments. E. M. Kim's sermon turns at this point, pivoting on the word "however" to remind hearers of God's compassionate presence and solidarity. She suggests that our place of suffering—metaphorically the river—can be a place of redemption not just because God listens to our voices on the riverbank and is with us in our suffering, but because we can also listen to the voice of God by our riverbank:

The riverbank of Babylon, however, was not only a place for weeping and lamenting.

It was also a place for hearing the voice of God.

When the captives are weeping the rivers of Babylon,
the Psalmist reminds them that they are not alone even in the captor's land.

Whenever Israel is exiled, the Lord is exiled with them:

when they were oppressed in Egypt, the Lord was with them.

When they are now exiled to Babylon, the Spirit of the Lord is exiled with them, even there.

God listens to their lament and says,

"Even if Israel forgets me and refuses to sing the joyful songs of Zion in a foreign land,
I do not forget my divine promise with Israel."

So, in the poem, God renews the promise by singing,

"If I forget you, O Jerusalem, Let my right hand wither!

Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you,

if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy!" (w. 5-6)

On the riverbanks of Babylon, God was weeping with those
who were on the margin of the king and sang to them a song of promise.

.....

He [John the Prophet] heard the voice of God, singing the vision for a new Jerusalem.³⁷¹

Recalling the biblical story and its new referent in particular contemporary human suffering is E. M. Kim's means for hearers to realize anew God's astonishing presence even amid their suffering. To remember is to name God's solidarity with human

³⁷¹ Ibid., 171.

suffering—that is, God’s redeeming power. Retelling the poem of God’s compassionate words toward the exiles attempts to provoke believers’ anticipation of God’s promise for people today.

c) Comprehending Preaching as Confessional Doxology in E. M. Kim’s Sermon

E. M. Kim’s theological naming of God’s pathos and compassion are grounded upon the faith community’s remembrance of God’s compassion-filled promise. Such communal remembrance of God’s love leads to praise. She spurs on hearers to remember God by their own river, their personal life place; “Remember, O Lord, against the Edomities” (Ps. 137:7-9, NRSV). The language of suffering because of destruction switches to the language of longing—yearning for the voice of God’s promise of a redemptive future. Although she does not explicitly proclaim God’s liberating actions to the exiles in Israel’s history, such a retelling of the poem of God’s promise allows contemporary believers as hearers to long for God’s possibility in their life situation. If we were to preach this written sermon, the part below could be proclaimed in a tone of doxology, as an anticipation of God’s new creation, alternative, world and righteous reign:

‘Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites....O daughter Babylon, you devastator!...
Happy shall they be who take your little ones and dash them against the rock!’ (w. 7-9)
When God is with us, and when we listen to God’s promise for the future,
we can dare to join the chorus on the day
when God finally overcomes the oppressive powers of this world
by dashing them against the rock.
When God is with us, we can dare to anticipate the day
when a new heaven and a new earth come down to us
where there is no more mourning, crying, or pain.³⁷²

³⁷² Ibid., 172.

In such a way, she leads the audience to listen to God's promise for the future by not only proclaiming God's righteousness, but also by glimpsing God's new creation by our particular rivers. Doxological speech of God's righteous governance (or God's present reign) vouchsafes visions in the night by offering a shared foretaste of divine glory along the way. In so doing, she tries to animate believers' participation in God's transformative work from this old world to a new one.

d) Analyzing Preaching for Obedient Vow in E. M. Kim's Sermon

In what follows, Kim remembers the people of God's faithful living in order to not only point out that marginality is the preferred place for God to transform the world but also invite their participation in God's ongoing labor to restore the world of suffering:

Our foresisters—
Mary Magdalene, Lydia, St. Nina,
Hildegard of Bingen, Julian of Norwich, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz,
Ann Hutchinson, Phoebe Palmer, Sojourner Truth,
Jarena Lee, Susan Anthony, Anna Howard Shaw,
.....
These women preachers sang the Lord's song
because they saw the vision of the New Jerusalem and held on to the promise of God.
Even in their severe suffering from the cruel patriarchal structure
and sexist cultures of their societies and churches,
they had faith that God was with them and at work in their margins
to transform the old world into a new one.³⁷³

Such a reminder accords with my perspective of immigrant theology: marginality is a potentially transformative and creative place for life thanks to God's possibility in the margins. Along with an invitation to join in God's transformative work, she again emboldens hearers to praise the Lord in the Spirit with an anticipation of God's eschatological future redemption by our river:

³⁷³ Ibid., 173.

The riverbanks, where they lamented the famine of justice and righteousness, love and mercy,
were also the celebrating places with the joyful song of Zion
because the Spirit of God was there, suffering and weeping with them,
and responding to them with the power of life.
My dear friends, are you still weeping, hanging up your harp on a tree?
Please wipe your tears and take down your harp.
And let's play and sing the Lord's song together, as our forefathers did, louder and louder,
until our singing echoes wherever the waters of our world reach. Amen!³⁷⁴

In the last lines relating to the vow, she does not explicitly state that “we have to do something!” Rather, she tenderly encourages hearers to engage in God’s transformative labor for a new creation. It at least comes close to coinciding with the purpose of psalmic-theological homiletic—faithful *habitus*—reorientation devoted to the practical but critical living out of faith in the coming kingdom of God. In my view, E. M. Kim’s sermon is closely linked with my perspective on immigrant theology for/in preaching. Immigrant preaching is for the church’s involvement in God’s salvific action in which all will be liberated and healed. I have argued, for example, that immigrant preaching plays a role in empowering the powerless to join in God’s in-breaking and redemptive action in history, albeit in their present experiential suffering at the margins. The good news of God’s future in E. M. Kim’s sermon could encourage FGKIs to embody their communal spiritual potentiality. As we have seen, TSKD encompasses the power for community members to transcend their hardships, such as racism and marginalization with a grand vision of God’s future, trusting in God’s engagement in the historical arena. Among the many sermons published in E. M. Kim’s books, this particular sermon is the most relevant to developing further my psalmic-theological homiletic. The sermon clearly shares several homiletical-theological common features: for example, sermonic movement *from* lamenting over communal suffering *toward* reclaiming and engaging in

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

God's "energizing vision of a new order to come."³⁷⁵ As a result, my proposed homiletic is already far more than a mere application of the book of Psalms' theological-rhetorical theory. Rather, it is with E. M. Kim's an invitation to critical adaption of the Psalms' homiletical implication in conversation with contemporary Korean preaching praxis.

IV. A Psalmic-Theological Homiletic³⁷⁶

In this section, I will therefore continue to investigate in more detail homiletical-theological perspectives on the Psalms in order to develop my own proposed FGKI psalmic-theological homiletic.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Tisdale, *Prophetic Preaching*, 13.

³⁷⁶ Before investigating the theological and homiletical implications of the Psalms, I want to explain my view on I-form speech in the Psalms since I identify the psalmist's rhetorical performance with preaching for homiletical development throughout this study. Indeed, I accept Hermann Gunkel and Sigmund Mowinckel's "collective I-theory" in I-form psalmic speech. According to both scholars (who perform form-critical analysis), there are I-form and We-form psalms. They claim that the psalmist spoke with the corporate voice of Israel or on Israel's behalf. This is because the individual psalmist in a liturgical setting could not be alone given one's participation in a certain community. The psalmist's individual self-identity could not be apart from the community of faith in light of one's corporate identity, as the preacher's self-identity is bound up with his/her engagement with the church. The presupposition is originally derived from Rudolph Smend's collective-I theory that indicates the individual psalmist's poetic personification of Israel's congregation. Furthermore, the I-form psalmist's life situation was intrinsically connected to the community of faith's communal historical, political, and social background. For that reason, the psalmist's experience and situation were not a single private one, but a social and communal one that represented the whole worship congregation. Hence, if the Psalms were used liturgically, they became the language of the people, not a single person's private speech. As a result, in I-form psalms, I define a psalmist as a representative personality who incorporated the whole community and performed on behalf of the community. Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 50; Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1986), 12; Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 12; Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 5.

³⁷⁷ The four-fold approach of a psalmic-theological homiletic follows from my proposed immigrant theology for/in preaching addressed in chapters 2 and 3 in four crucial ways. First, the rhetoric of lament is an expression of FGKIs' shared painful experience and thus corresponds to chapter 2's study of FGKIs' burdensome lived experience on the margins. Second, my homiletic turns to remembering of God's redemptive action and faithfulness in the biblical immigrants' history. It aims to invite hearers to rediscover the living truth of God's infinite love

A. Preaching as Lament

1. Lament in the Psalms and its Theological Perspectives

It is noteworthy that the Bible is one place where the Christian tradition did not manage to silence people's expression of lament. In this way, human cries of hurt about undeserved pain, extreme grief, and social isolation in exile were not ultimately lost. Scripture does not romantically pretend that a believer's life is always delightful. Indeed, it also sheds light on the idea that the tradition needs to continue to take people's plight seriously by honoring their suffering. In the scriptures, God responds to the torments of peoples' souls just as Jesus's scars signify the painful and even deathly dimension of human existential darkness. Here, before turning to the first step of my homiletic, I explore several theological features of lament in the Psalms.

Lament as Israel's Faithful Practice

Lament can be counted as a form of faith even if at first glance the human cry seems ostensibly to be a dreary, negative, profane, and disloyal action. Undeniably, Israel's lament was premised on its indestructible and intimate relationship with God. Israel in the Psalms poured out its broken heart to God in whom it was grounded. Such an expression of people's extremes of emotion was a movement toward God when their hearts were overwhelmed with anguish. Lament signifies that Israel endeavored to return

revealed in the biblical narrative and relates to my argument that the biblical narrative could play a role in liberating hearers from a few historic persons' stories of materialistic success, as discussed in chapter 2. Third, confessional doxology aims to bring about a practice of holy insecurity—that is, joyful dwelling in God's unfathomable love in the midst of life's uncertainty. In other words, its purpose is to invite hearers to praise God's goodness and faithfulness in the midst of life's injustice and unfairness, a key element of chapter 3. Last, the obedient vow intends to encourage a practice of self-emptying by reaffirming a key theological concern of chapter 3: eschatological hope and Christ's messianic lordship over the world.

to God in times of agony with restless cries for God's help. In other words, with their problematic expressions of pain, Israel's rhetoric of lament—a redirection toward Yahweh—was a way to keep alive their vibrant relationship with God, much as Psalm 69 (the individual lament) encouraged the oppressed to concentrate on God: "Let the oppressed see it and be glad; you who seek God, let your hearts revive" (Ps. 69:32).³⁷⁸ In this way, the ancient Israelites sought the divine's graceful intervention for the future through lament, even amidst their unrelieved predicament. As a result, their act of lament was not insulting to God. Instead, it once again undergirded Israel's relationship with God and promoted a yearning for YHWH's salvific future. In this way, through lament the psalmic community's faith was not eclipsed by life-threatening existential situations but redirected to God.

Practicing Lament on the Grounds of Irrepressible Certainty

The second reason to consider lament as a form of faith is Israel's fundamental conviction that God hears the human cry *and* intervenes in Israel's reality. Firstly, Israel had firm confidence in Yahweh's initial favor and benevolence, and knew these to be definitive aspects of Yahweh's character. Israel knew that God would attend to Israel's vocal supplication, supplication arising out of the multifarious forms of Israel's worldly suffering.³⁷⁹ The people of Israel were convinced that lament was the language of

³⁷⁸ Ellington, *Risking Truth*, 21.

³⁷⁹ Westermann, *The Psalms*, 70.

affliction and implored God through lamentation to move on behalf of their salvation.³⁸⁰

Patrick Miller likewise regards lament as trust in God:

“In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. (Psalms 22:4-5).” There is a stark equation; three times “trusted” and the fourth and parallel term “cried out.” The crying out for help in complaint, anger, questioning, and supplication is all an act of trust.³⁸¹

Israel’s confidence in God transformed lament into an anticipatory voice of grief

because lament provokes a future divine action.

Secondly, the practice of lament was embodied in Israel’s conviction of Yahweh’s future intervention in history.³⁸² Israel believed that God would not only show concern over its distress and aching emotions, but also that God would actively respond to their poignant cries of agony, decisively delivering them by bringing a newly ordered world. This stands in sharp contrast to the world’s ideology (c.f., nativism, racial discrimination, or classism) that despises powerless groups and elevates those in power

³⁸⁰ According to Westermann’s observation of the psalmic literary structure and form, psalmists expressed their certainty of being heard. The psalms started with petition (lament) but ended with the vow of praise or the certainty of being heard: for example, Pss. 141; 142; 55; 9:13-14; 61. He says that the psalmists in the lament psalms rejoiced because he/she believed that God heard or answered. For that reason, he says that “the report of God’s intervention is likewise in two parts: God heard (inclined to me) and God delivered.” Westermann brings an example of Hannah’s prayer at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:9-28 and 1 Sam. 2:1-10): “A person [Hannah] in great trouble came to the sanctuary and poured out her heart to God. In answer to her prayer she received—in this case from a priest—the assurance that God had heard her. And this assurance effected a change in the person who had lamented: she was convinced that God had hearkened to her. This example shows that an individual’s psalm of lament...” Additionally, he writes that “...there are psalms (e.g. Pss. 6 and 28) in which one can sense very directly activity which made the suppliants certain that they had been heard.” Ibid., 55-6, 80, 109.

³⁸¹ Patrick A. Miller, “Heaven’s Prisoners: The Lament as Christian Prayer,” in *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square*, ed. Sally A. Brown and Patrick A. Miller (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 19. Here is another example of Israel’s conviction of God listening, found in the refrain of the Psalms: “Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping” (Ps. 6:8, individual lament, NRSV).

³⁸² Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 74.

even more. Hence, the psalmist's lament solicited God's intervention and articulated passionate yearnings for divine salvation in the arena of public life.³⁸³ In their lament, Israel longed for God to redress the painful situations in which they found themselves. For example, in Psalm 6, the psalmist verbalizes weeping to motivate God to immediately save him/her: "The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord accepts my prayer. All my enemies shall be ashamed and struck with terror; they shall turn back, and in a moment be put to shame" (Ps. 6:9-10, individual lament).³⁸⁴ It was not that lament was intended to manipulate God to particular ends. Rather, lament moved toward reverent doxology. As a result, relying on their confidence in God's intervention to

³⁸³ Ibid., 107. Like most other ethnic immigrants, FGKIs face the cultural violence of racialization, economic exploitation, and various types of social injustice (e.g., biased immigration laws). Under such oppressive power structures and white-dominance in the mainstream society, the prosperity gospel tends to lead them to relieve their socio-cultural suffering by means of achieving material abundance so as to liberate themselves from economic exploitation. From the prosperity gospel's perspective, it could be a way to enjoy a better life for individual FGKIs—but a very self-centered or individualistic way. A psalmic-theological homiletic seeks to envisage a better life in a *collective* way on the premise that individualistic material success does not guarantee true freedom from oppressive structures. Historically, Korean religious dispositions and practices—TSKD or critical transcendence—greatly helped Korean believers seek liberation and national freedom from colonial powers through communal resistance. The Korean church played a pivotal role in believers' communal embodiment of practical commitment to resist colonial powers (e.g., Japanese colonialism). Specifically, Korean Christian believers who were poor and powerless worked fearlessly for the national independence of Korea and searched for a better future supported by practices of critical transcendence and TSKD. By embracing practices of such a profoundly Korean spirituality, my proposed psalmic-homiletic intends to empower hearers to engage in communal praxis for God's future for the common good. To that end, this psalmic-homiletic includes the preacher's close examination of social and political powers that sustain the oppression of immigrants. Choi, *A Postcolonial Self*, 3, 59-60.

³⁸⁴ David A. Bosworth, "Weeping in the Psalms" in *Vetus Testamentum* 62, no. 1 (2013): 40-1. In actuality, there is more evidence that the people's lament evoked God's responsive actions: God's response to the cry of the violated one; Cain's crying from the ground (Gen. 4:10); God's deliverance of Israelites from Egyptian imperial oppression and its exploitative situation (Exod. 14); God's blessing to Hagar's distressful cry for her child in the wilderness (Gen. 21:16-17); Jesus's response to the Canaanite women's shouting despite the disciple's despising her crying (Matt. 15:24); and dead Abel's crying that initiated the divine response (Gen. 4:1-0).

alleviate humans' worldly distress, the people of Israel lamented with hopeful expectation, much as Jesus's cry of dereliction on the cross voiced his own anticipation of God's salvation (Ps. 22, individual lament).

Lament from the Depth of Actual Human Experience

In the Psalms, lament primarily arises from people's real life situation (*Sitz im Leben*), as Westermann remarks: "Psalms present an essential part of the people's total life, and it was from this life that they grew."³⁸⁵ Put another way, lament erupted from people's broken hearts as they faced devastating life events, not merely from a curiosity about rigid dogmatic ideas or from sophisticated arguments on the substance of religion. Hence, lament was a pain-filled and urgent cry from people in painful and even traumatic life situations. For instance, some laments arose from particular historical events in the life of Israel, such as national catastrophe or defeat in the fight against known enemies.³⁸⁶ Thus, laments expressed a great range of real life experiences of affliction. The psalmists vocalized concrete existential experiences and emotional desperation with candor when turmoil and uncertainty replaced their sense of security and peace.

Lament Arising from the Incongruity between God's Promise (and Nature) and Experienced Reality—A Theological and Existential Interrogation

In the book of Psalms, voices of lament were the outcome of Israel's deep perplexity whenever normative ideological belief-statements no longer corresponded to

³⁸⁵ *Sitz im Leben* means life situation. Westermann, *The Psalms*, 16, 24.

³⁸⁶ Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 37.

their social reality.³⁸⁷ Lament in the Psalms came from Israel's existential distress, that is, the clash between God's promise of inestimable compassion and fidelity *and* the reality of their lived experience. Therefore, we can surmise that Israel frequently experienced dissonance between what they believed *and* what they faced in their personal and socio-cultural context. Whenever their beliefs seemed to collide with experiences of injustice, the psalmist articulated this disparity between faith and experience. In this situation, lament functioned as a way to bring their interrogations to God and search for the truth. For instance, the psalmist encapsulated Israel's incongruous experiences with such rhetorical questions as "How long, O Lord?" (e.g., Ps.13:1; 80:4-12); "Why do you hide your face from me?" (e.g., Ps.27:9; 44:24; 102:2); "Will you forget me forever?" (e.g., Ps.13:1); "Will God spurn forever, and never again be favorable?" (e.g., Ps.77:7); "Has he [God] in anger shut up his compassion?" (e.g., Ps.77:9).³⁸⁸ I believe that such questions are a prominent feature of lament rhetoric in the Psalms.

Just as Westermann explicates interrogatory lament before God in the Psalms, so also LeRoy H. Aden and Robert G. Hughes pursue such ideas in greater detail from a pastoral-theological perspective. For instance, Aden and Hughes present how rhetorical interrogations in the psalms of lament were Israel's way of seeking for the truth amidst the tension between a traditional theism and their conflicting experiences in daily life:

³⁸⁷ Walter Brueggemann, *Israel's Praise: Doxology against Idolatry and Ideology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1988), 70.

³⁸⁸ Ellington, *Risking Truth*, 31; Westermann, *The Psalms*, 39-40.

How long?	Implies distresses of some duration.
Oh God, Why?	“Why?” is a universal question with bold across the face of suffering.
God, What Did I Do to Deserve This?	A great deal of human suffering can be traced to our failure to trust in God and to give our lives back to God in obedience.
Oh God, Where Are You?	Persons stricken with grief, pain, or injustice often feel abandoned. They feel that friends are not sufficiently attentive, or they may see that discomfort in the presence of suffering causes even loved ones to keep their distance. The feeling of the absence of God is a consequence of our grief, but it also complicates our grief. ³⁸⁹

In this respect, Israel’s lament, filled with forthright expressions of frustration and pain at their experience of God’s hiddenness, was their effort to invite their souls to look for a new appreciation of God. The significance of interrogatory lament is that Israel did not escape from their reality or from God. Rather, they were struggling with God to find the truth in faith in the midst their reality. In addition, lament that includes rhetorical theological questions was the means by which they articulated and reaffirmed God’s word of promise in real life social conflicts, especially in situations of injustice.³⁹⁰ Put another way, this interrogatory lament frequently engendered a new formulation of Israel’s faith in God, as Israel’s praise (which is a theological affirmation of faith) demonstrates later.

The Practice of Lament as Cry for Justice

³⁸⁹ LeRoy H. Aden and Robert G. Hughes, *Preaching God’s Compassion: Comforting Those Who Suffer* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), 13-15; Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 177. For reference, Carleen Mandolfo notes that the nearness of Yahweh (Oh, God! Where are you?) seems to be the central issue in Deuteronomy, as well as in the psalms of lament. Carleen Mandolfo, “Finding their Voices: Sanctioned Subversion in Psalms of Lament” in *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 24, no. 2 (May 2002): 42.

³⁹⁰ Mandolfo, “Finding their Voices,” 44.

Laments express Israel's experience of undeserved suffering and consequent plea for justice. In view of the inseparable connection between lament and justice in the Psalms, Brueggemann states that "in the daytime of public concern and in the nighttime of personal yearning is always justice."³⁹¹ It connotes that Israel's actual life was saturated with the issue of justice.³⁹² It also shows that Israel did not deny the unjust world nor doubt that Yahweh would intervene against an oppressive social situation.³⁹³ The fact that, on the whole, Israel's biblical lament does not include confession of their own sins reminds us that, as Kathleen D. Billman and Daniel L. Migliore note, "many of the lament psalms implicitly or explicitly reject the idea that all suffering is caused by sin," and instead recognize that it is often systemic, caused by the wicked within the social structure.³⁹⁴ Indeed, the psalmist typically protests the people's innocence before God, crying out for God's justice and for God's compassion while recognizing that worldly leaders were slow to give either. For example, Psalm 7 (individual lament) indicates that an innocent person was unjustly accused in seemingly insurmountable circumstances. With nowhere else to turn, that person cried out to God for justice.³⁹⁵ Other examples include Psalm 58 (community or so-called "prophetic lament"), in which the community, experiencing tribulation from the injustice of the ruling class, complained about unjust leaders and petitioned God to bring divine justice and

³⁹¹ Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 59.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 62.

³⁹⁴ Kathleen D. Billman and Daniel L. Migliore, *Rachel's Cry: Prayer of Lament and Rebirth of Hope* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007), 29.

³⁹⁵ Westermann, *The Psalms*, 63.

righteousness.³⁹⁶ Thus, the practice of lament among the Israelites served to support their innocence, while their pain-filled voices also showed communal zeal for God's justice in their social lives.

The Practice of Lament to Reaffirm Faith

Finally, the dynamic literary form of the Psalms shows that lament before God was far more than a statement about the people's ever-present suffering. Rather, lament was a faith performance, a performance that reaffirmed Israelite faith and, and when followed by praise, also a declaration of God's righteousness. Indeed, Leonard P. Mare states that "lament is never a sign of weakness and unbelief" but rather elicits the most eloquent statements of faith.³⁹⁷

2. Homiletical Approach: Immigrant Preaching as Lament

³⁹⁶ John Mark Hicks, "Preaching Community Laments: Responding to Disillusionment with God and Injustice in the World," in *Performing the Psalms*, ed. David Bland and David Fleeer (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 74-5. Hicks identifies Psalm 58 as communal zeal for justice. And he says that in the Psalm 58, "the lamenter complains about unjust leaders and their wickedness (vv.1-5), petitions for their removal (vv.6-9), and praises God for God's justice in advance (vv.10-11). When human leaders fail to administer justice in the world, the God who judges the earth will judge them; and the people of God appeal for divine action against unjust judges." Hick does not explain about why Psalm 58 is "cultic prophetic lament." However, Samuel L. Terrien notes that "the chief concern of the psalmist [in Ps. 58] was the protection of the poor and oppressed." In Ps. 58, "Yahweh is most attributed the virtue of justice or righteousness," and then the final proclamation of this psalm was "faith in the justice of God." For that reasons, he calls Psalm 58 prophetic lament. Samuel L. Terrien, *The Psalms: Stopic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 441.

³⁹⁷ Leonard P. Mare, "An Introduction to Risking Truth: Reshaping the World through Prayers of Lament," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 18, no. 2 (2009): 173.

In this section, I will explore the rhetoric of lament as the first step of a psalmic-theological homiletic by bringing theological implications of the Psalms' rhetorical movement into deeper dialogue with contemporary preaching practice.

Immigrant Preaching as Lament Arising from Marginality

First, we can understand preaching as articulating FGKIs' lament. Such preaching gives voice to those at the margins of society. Indeed, just as the biblical psalms of lament were a vehicle for the marginalized people of Israel to cry out to God, so preaching is and has long been one of the few ways that the marginalized can voice their suffering. Indeed, the Bible notes that God oftentimes particularly cherishes and honors the voice of the marginalized. The canonical process transmitted this comforting news to contemporary readers.³⁹⁸ In this way, the recital of marginalized people's laments and their embrace of pain became normative in Christianity and crucial for faith and history.³⁹⁹ For instance, God's deliverance was inaugurated by the desperate collective rhetorical lament of Egyptian slaves, who had no formal power.⁴⁰⁰ This oppressed people's lament evoked God's attentive listening, and then prompted God's redemptive action. Another example is that of Rachel in the wilderness, who refused other people's solace but cried to God in order to express her anger over her children's slaughter. Her lament was an act of resistance to outrageous suffering and injustice, and

³⁹⁸ Walter Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: Essays on Structure, Theme, and Text*, ed. Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992), 92.

³⁹⁹ Brueggemann, *Old Testament Theology: Essays on Structure*, 26.

⁴⁰⁰ Walter Brueggemann, *Abiding Astonishment: Psalms, Modernity, and the Making of History* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), 43.

it motivated God's favorable response, though her societal position was almost that of a nobody, an outsider, and a foreigner.⁴⁰¹ Such examples gave believers through the ages faith that God will hear and respond to the lament of immigrants who are almost nobodies in the dominant societal structure. It bears witness to a God who would hear and respond to FGKIs' fragile voice when society at large pays it no heed.

Likewise, a psalmic-theological homiletic tries to wrestle with human suffering so as to witness to the presence of a loving God in the darkness of life. It is in this respect clearly different from prosperity preaching which tends to accentuate winning and success, and in the process bypass human suffering. In a psalmic-theological homiletic, preachers narrate FGKIs' communal stories of language barriers, failures at material success, struggles with unstable visa status, and experiences of racial discrimination. In E. M. Kim's sermon, for instance, the preacher's voice laments each minority group's experience of racial discrimination and isolation. Such a practice of lament over contemporary collective suffering in sermons has also contextual-theological connection to the language (stories) of *minjung* in Korean Christianity. In *minjung* theology, the term *minjung* means people's collective spirit, a spirit that faces the community's suffering together and finds comfort in one another.⁴⁰² The lament-filled stories of *minjung* are themselves means to unmask the hidden suffering (*han*) of the *minjung* as well as the structure of the deeply oppressive society in which FGKIs find themselves.⁴⁰³ Such collective stories stem from Korean preachers' pastoral

⁴⁰¹ Ellington, *Risking Truth*, 182.

⁴⁰² Park, *Korean Preaching, Han, and Narrative*, 20.

⁴⁰³ Andrew Sung Park, "Minjung Theology: A Korean Contextual Theology," *The Indian Journal of Theology* 33, no 4 (1984): 9.

listening to believers' everyday struggles and experiences from the margins. In *minjung* theology, the languages (stories) of *minjung* entail suffering (*han*) as well as hope on the margins, so that such lament rhetoric encompasses both suffering *and* hope.⁴⁰⁴

Correspondingly, the preacher's rhetoric of lament in a narrative mode could be more than just sorrowful, but also include reflection on the community's lived experience.⁴⁰⁵

This is because the language of lament ultimately aims at reflecting on God's grace at the very place of suffering, and then locating shared hardship in the midst of God's infinite love; chiefly in the form of "a spirituality of holy insecurity" or even "critical transcendence."⁴⁰⁶ For instance, E. M. Kim's rhetoric of lament is designed to encourage hearers to perceive God's graceful presence in our suffering moment: "Whenever Israel is exiled, the Lord is exiled with them: when they were oppressed in Egypt, the Lord

⁴⁰⁴ Park, *Korean Preaching*, 20.

⁴⁰⁵ The rhetoric of lament in the sermon could be sad, reflective and humorous. Although I will inquire into the sermons of two Korean (immigrant) preachers in Chapter 5, Rev. Choi describes lament-filled stories with sad but humorous. He tells his personal story about embarrassing (and sad) experience as an immigrant in the United States with a deep sense of humility and a healthy sense of humor. Such humorous expression about suffering could help preachers to take themselves too seriously while they are doing that task. And Ronald J. Allen addresses about function of humor in the sermon: "Humor can help the people see the topic in a new but nonthreatening way. It can function as a tool for self-discovery by letting the congregation reevaluate its relationship to the topic in a relatively painless manner. It can provide moments of relief in the midst of considering a heavy topic." Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 109; Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 8.

⁴⁰⁶ Korean preachers cannot always expect that lament-rhetoric will bring about direct social movement. However, in the case of African-American lament rhetoric, the stories of marginalized people's hardship had historically enormous social impact. For example, Martin Luther King Jr. lamented over African-American suffering caused by intimidation and their underprivileged condition. King used the collective-lament form to highlight the discrepancy between the ideal of human liberty life based on the biblical promise and racial segregation. King as activist and minister realized his present was the time to cry in the wilderness.⁴⁰⁶ His lament helped to engender the civil right movement.

was with them.”⁴⁰⁷ Moreover, the preacher’s rhetoric of lament for (or on behalf of) vulnerable people is performed in the conviction that God’s ears are attuned to the cries of marginalized people, and that God will respond to these despairing souls. When believers listen to lament, they may have a visceral identification through similar tribulation; others might feel that preaching breaks open a specific space for empathy through sharing the story of FGKIs’ suffering. Some might even expect the immeasurable riches of God’s goodness in their ongoing predicaments through these lament-filled stories.

Integrating marginal voices in immigrant preaching gives even deeper public voice to invisible and discounted groups. Said another way, the immigrant church’s lament voices marginalized people’s silent pain. E. M. Kim’s sermon, for example, includes representative distressing experiences of diverse powerless groups that the dominant powers want to denigrate. FGKIs often struggle to negotiate the expectations of the new place and society in which they find themselves, particularly when they are reduced to a “voiceless existence” by that society. While the dominant power’s voice receives respect and protection from society, society often devalues and silences the powerless. The sheer volume of the dominant group’s monologue tends to overpower other voices from the margins. The church endangers the wellbeing of FGKIs if it colludes with the status quo in justifying their suffering and thereby silencing their voices. Yet there is one who advocates for the marginalized and silenced. The task of the church is to follow Jesus in attending to the cry of the powerless and voiceless and by doing so, work toward their cultural, societal, and political inclusion, or, to put it theologically, their wholistic salvation. Hence, immigrant preaching has a prophetic role.

⁴⁰⁷ Kim, *Women Preaching*, 171.

In its very sermonic practice it contradicts FGKIs' mute submission to the dominant society by giving public voice to the voiceless ones who live in the valley of the shadow of death.

The Dream ideology with its tenet of self-reliance tends to suppress the voices of the poor. Despite vivid awareness of exploitation by the rich and privileged, the American Dream oftentimes actually justifies losers' suffering. This is because the American Dream perpetuates that individual effort can determine one's success. In this hyper-capitalistic scheme, losers are merely defined as lazy and ineffective workers. Furthermore, from the perspective of the American Dream, poor people become the very silent groups who seem not to be associated with divine favor and thus only bring misfortune (or poverty) upon themselves. In a psalmic-theological homiletic, lament rhetoric however highly values their silent pain through the preacher's rhetoric of lament on behalf of (poor) FGKIs, for God does not differentiate among human beings based on categories of social-economic status.⁴⁰⁸

Immigrant Preaching as a Compassionate Lament

In the first instance, psalmic rhetoric in preaching intends a truthful retelling of people's lived experiences of despair in the absurdity of society. As noted, lament in the Psalms did not result from Israel's curiosity about dogma but from their lived suffering. Likewise, the lament rhetoric of immigrant preaching today ought to derive from the depths of people's actual experiences and their existential life settings (*Stiz im Leben*). In short, lament rhetoric intends truthfully to describe people's real-life situations and their

⁴⁰⁸ Andre Resner, *Just Preaching: Prophetic Voices for Economic Justice* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2003), 119.

pain-filled experiences of human brokenness, thus echoing Moltmann's notion that the church's "fellowship with Christ in the Spirit is the fellowship of Christ's suffering."⁴⁰⁹ If the church is ignorant of, or actively ignores, people's predicaments, if it does not tell the truth about suffering people's lives, it threatens to become an uncaring community, unable to express God's divine compassion toward hurting people. Paul Rural-Baglyos highlights this truth-telling aspect of lament:

Lament is essential to the discipline of truth-telling...Lament has to do precisely with saying what a thing is, telling the truth about things...Lamentation involves truth-telling about human experiences of mourning and despair, grieving and weeping, terror and torment—whether occasioned by the words and actions of other human beings or by occurrences within the natural world. Certainly such experiences are real in human lives; theologians of the cross must tell the truth about that reality, those experiences.⁴¹⁰

Yet preaching as lament does more than read a social reality that causes people's brokenness. It does more than address a stark reality and enumerate stories of suffering. It also interprets the reality of that suffering critically and theologically. This is the church's particular gift.

Of the many theologians and preachers that learned how to do this, I mention Korean *minjung* theologians in particular. Such theologians cherish people's stories as a legitimate source from which to construct contextual theology.⁴¹¹ A. S. Park describes how *minjung* theology imaginatively unpacks people's stories of suffering and their accumulated *han* and brings forth revolutionary liberation.⁴¹² *Minjung* theology exposes people's *han*-ridden hearts, and theologically unravels the oppressive social situation to

⁴⁰⁹ Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 59.

⁴¹⁰ Paul A. Baglyos, "Lament in the Liturgy of the Rural Church: An Appeal for Recovery," *Theology and Mission* 36, no. 4 (August 2009): 257.

⁴¹¹ Andrew Sung Park, "Minjung Theology: A Korean Contextual Theology," *The Indian Journal of Theology* 33, no.4 (Oct-Dec, 1984): 8.

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 4.

bring about spiritual and historical liberation. Immigrant preaching as lament likewise does not aimlessly complain about FGKIs' current hurtful reality but brings to it theological critique, purpose, and hope. Unlike prosperity preaching syncretized with the American Dream ideology implicitly advises believers to make it in the modern capitalist economy and uphold the prevailing values created by the dominant group, in my homiletic, lament includes critical reflection on the current reality that causes communal suffering.⁴¹³ For example, E. M. Kim's lament is not aimless complaining, but it embraces the contemporary society's erroneous action such as prejudice and discrimination.

Secondly, a preacher cannot perform lament rhetoric without compassion for the immigrant's distress. Lament speech is literally "a vocabulary of need [and a] rhetoric of affliction," and demands the preacher's vocative description of the congregation's deep pain and that pain's deep meaning.⁴¹⁴ Hence, without pastoral compassion, the preacher cannot publicly articulate and lament the immigrant's affliction. The preacher must participate in God's pathos—God's suffering over the whole creation or even God's own crucifixion.⁴¹⁵ For sympathy imbued with divine compassion evokes prophetic speech that reminds us how God weeps over our plight.⁴¹⁶ A preacher's lament conveys God's compassion imminently, vocatively, and pastorally.

⁴¹³ Ricardo Miguez, *American Dreams: Dialogues in U.S. Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 89.

⁴¹⁴ James Luther Mays, *Psalms: Interpretation, A Biblical Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 22.

⁴¹⁵ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 136; Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 65.

⁴¹⁶ Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 137.

Third, the immigrant's experience of incongruity—the collision between God's promise and the ever-present reality of suffering—evokes existential questions about God's righteousness, compassion, fidelity, and justice. Such ontological dissonance between what one believes about God and what one experiences leads the immigrant to approach God with lament-like questions in order to resolve this spiritual collision, questions such as, "How long?," "Oh, God, why?," "Where are you?," etc.⁴¹⁷ The preacher can bring such questions to the sermon in the rhetorical form of lament, sighs, and even more.

Sally A. Brown states that among three prominent features of the rhetoric of lament—(a) anguished complaint, (b) cries for justice, and (c) interrogation of God—it is interrogation of God that will be the guiding motif for theological interrogatory in the lament sermon.⁴¹⁸ Interrogatory lament in immigrant preaching is not about simply grumbling to God about one's hard situation or grieving over the loss of earthly goods. It is also about seeking for the truth—God's faithfulness, righteousness, and compassion.

⁴¹⁷ The six coauthors of *Listening to Listeners* introduce how to know and listen the congregation's thoughts and lived experiences. In this book, the coauthors invite the preacher into a mode of "pastoral attentiveness to the congregation: interviewing people in the congregation with regard to what engages them in preaching." They note that "Many preachers long to understand the dynamics of thought, feeling, and behavior at work in congregations. For example, some preachers organize 'feed-forward' groups of laypeople in the congregation to help prepare sermons that intersect with the actual experience of the congregation. Other preachers imagine particular individuals from the congregation with them in the study as the sermon is being prepared and ask, 'How would this sermon sound to Amy, Joan, Peter and Charles?' or They might know what the congregation think while 'encountering people in routine ministerial life—in committee meetings [or in bible study groups], in the hospital, carrying out mission projects and even in the parking lot.'" On those assumptions, the authors suggest how to develop pastoral knowledge of the congregation's value, practice, lived experience, life context, history, and feeling through interviewing. John S. McClure, Ronald J. Allen, Dale P. Andrews, L. Susan Bond, Dan P. Moseley and G. Lee Ramsey, Jr., introduction to *Listening to Listeners: Homiletical Case Studies* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004), 5-6. See *Listening to Listeners*, 1-20, 149-164.

⁴¹⁸ Brown, "When Lament Shapes the Sermon," 33.

So these must all be potential components of the sermon. Above all, public lament as theological interrogation should help FGKIs articulate a new confession of God's faithfulness in the midst of suffering. Such sermons reaffirm God's trustworthiness, evoke newness of faith, and deepen people's relationship with God, reminding hearers that our predicaments do not result from God's failure to love us, but from the fallenness of our world. For instance, E. M. Kim's preaching shows that her rhetoric of lament moves toward reaffirmation of God's trustworthiness toward the people of God: "God listens to their lament and says, 'Even if Israel forgets me and refuses to sing the joyful songs of Zion in a foreign land, I do not forget my divine promise with Israel.'"⁴¹⁹

Immigrant preaching as lament offers an adamant counter to prosperity preaching in that the interrogatory language of lament over hearers' existential (and unjust) hardship is often precisely missing in a prosperity message. This is because prosperity preaching cannot accept that faithful Christians are bound to suffer. Prosperity preaching does not develop an adaptive theology of suffering. The gospel of health and wealth merely assures obedient Christians that they will reap financial, physical and spiritual blessings.⁴²⁰ In point of fact, the prosperity gospel "arose contextually out of the widespread poverty and physical suffering" after the Korean War (1950-53) to alleviate hearers' pains.⁴²¹ Since God's promise in prosperity theology no longer gives Koreans a sense of certainty about God's love in their present social reality,

⁴¹⁹ Kim, *Women Preaching*, 171.

⁴²⁰ Margaret Davis, *Fear Not!: Is There Anything Too Hard for God?* (Aspect Books, 2011), 32.

⁴²¹ Sebastian C. H. Kim, *Christian Theology in Asia*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 263.

I believe some Korean preachers have already had to develop elements of their own theology to respond to the varying types of suffering in the immigrant experience. When believers are confronted with incongruities, such as the clash between God's promise in prosperity theology and their experienced failure of the Dream ideology, they have often experienced a propensity to search for the truth of God in a new life setting. Immigrant preachers sometimes struggle with discerning God's words for human suffering in order to reply theologically to believers' questions of God, which arise from their immigration experience.⁴²² For example, E. M. Kim's contextual approach to the proclamation of the gospel for today does not resolve suffering by appeasing the people with a prosperity gospel. Rather, she theologically undergirds God's presence in our suffering, God's pathos-filled solidarity with the marginalized, God's faithfulness to God's promises, and eschatological attention to human lives in this wounded world. In other words, her theological, questioning rhetoric in the sermon highlights the church's new and faithful confession of God's goodness in times of difficulty.

Immigrant Preaching as the Church's Vocational Lament

Theologically, the preacher's lament rhetoric potentially embodies the broader church's lament in an unredeemed world, a world that fails to bring salvation and new life to suffering people. Through the language of lament, the church mirrors God's lament over people's every conceivable form of suffering. From the standpoint of Moltmann, the church's fellowship with Christ's vicarious suffering is eschatologically grounded on the divine promise that the church will also join in the glory of Christ's

⁴²² Aden and Hughes, *Preaching God's Compassion*, 139.

resurrection life with an unequivocal joyfulness (Rom. 6:4-5; Phil. 3:10-12).⁴²³ Thus, the church fulfills its eschatological vocation by lamenting. Yet such a practice of lament allows us not only to listen to the divine's cry from Jesus's dereliction on the cross,⁴²⁴ but also to voice our compassion for those who are marginalized. The church's lament devotionally thus participates in Christ's lament for earthly misery until all tears are wiped away.

Next, preaching as lament mirrors the divine voice of the Spirit—God's deep sorrow over all fractured creatures' unceasing wailings and sighs. As Paul Ricoeur explains, human speech captures the mystery of the divine voice; that is, the voice of the whole body of the suffering Christ is incarnated in the church in light of "the continued incarnation of the Logos."⁴²⁵ Along with Ricoeur, Augustine of Hippo, argues that lament in the book of Psalms is "the voice of the whole Christ, head and body, the one voice of the Incarnate Word speaking to, with, and within the church."⁴²⁶ Both indicate that the preacher's lament over the innermost groans of human affliction becomes the

⁴²³ Moltmann notes: "But in being this [fellowship with Christ's suffering] it is also at the same time the fellowship of his resurrection through newness of life and participation through hope in his life in glory." Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 59.

⁴²⁴ Christine Smith, *Risking the Terror: Resurrection in This Life* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2005), 49. It corresponds with the conception that "in Jesus's cry we hear God's cry too, and the cries of all who suffer and have suffered throughout human history. As God did not abandon Jesus, so God does not abandon us, nor can we abandon one another." Sally A. Brown and Patrick A. Miller, introduction to *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), xvii-xviii.

⁴²⁵ Narelle Jane Melton, "Lessons of Lament: Reflections on the Correspondence Between the Lament Psalms and Early Australian Pentecostal Prayer," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20, no. 1 (2011): 79. In addition, the perception of "the continued incarnation of the Logos" is originated from Jürgen Moltmann. Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 73.

⁴²⁶ Hinze, "Ecclesial Impasse," 484. Besides, Brueggemann refers the Psalms are both addressed to God *and* a voice of the gospel due to its revelatory power. Brueggemann, *Spirituality of the Psalms*, 1-2.

cry of Christ himself. The preacher's voice united with Christ's tears in the Spirit has the potential to bear mysteriously the divine's unpredictable and prophetic voice. The church's belief and hope are that the preacher's lament provokes God's compassionate grace, much as it once did for the Israelites. The preacher's words proclaim the incarnate, compassionate voice of Christ to broken hearts and spirits. Preaching as lament intends to proclaim God's revelatory voice over people's unjust suffering in the world.⁴²⁷

The rhetoric of lament spoken by the immigrant church encourages FGKIs to look beyond themselves and their own suffering and embrace others' frustration and tears. For it is the church's task to draw attention to social and public suffering and injustice and to seek salvation for all, not simply for themselves. In this way it is associated contextually with the practice of *jeong* within an extended *woori* (we-ness), that is, a compassionate love toward those who are suffering. To look beyond themselves in this way requires a shift away from a success-oriented way of life, and a shift *toward* a God-centered way of life that practices selfless, life-giving action from the margins for the sake of all human flourishing. It is undoubtedly antithetical to the practice of self-fulfillment by dominating others, one of the cruel features of the American Dream. A. S. Park suggests that Korean Americans do this by replacing materialistic idols in their lives with the transformative God and caring for neighbors.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ "*Deus dixit*, the power of the Word of God or God's speech event" comes from Paul S. Chung's book. Paul S. Chung, introduction to *Asian Contextual Theology for the Third Millennium: Theology of Minjung in Fourth-Eye Formation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007), 13.

⁴²⁸ Andrew S. Park, *From Hurt to Healing: A Theology of the Wounded* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2004), 78.

Such new life involves the church's communal embodiment of existence-with-and-for-others, that is, compassionate attentiveness to other ethnic people's pain.⁴²⁹ It also prevents the focus of FGKIs' lament from becoming simply about their misfortunes (accusing God of not blessing them) or mere psychological catharsis (self-pity). Moreover, as David Jacobsen points out, "at the core of Christian proclamation is not a disappearance of scars, or an absence of tears, but rather their acknowledgement in the presence and purposes of God and wiping away of tears that have really been cried."⁴³⁰ Wounded FGKIs' embrace of worldly pain is theologically in conformity with the fact that Christ's terrified cry and his horrendous suffering display his all-embracing love.⁴³¹ It resonates with Moltmann's reminder that the church's purpose is to suffer in solidarity with others.⁴³² Immigrant preaching underscores that just as Jesus, the wounded healer, had inexpungible scars on his resurrected body, FGKIs' woundedness carries an all-embracing love into a new land.

Immigrant Preaching as an Anticipatory Lament for Salvation

Immigrant preaching as lament from the margins is also an anticipatory cry for salvation. In the laments of the Psalms, people cried out for God's deliverance from their

⁴²⁹ Douglas John Hall, *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), 254.

⁴³⁰ David Schnasa Jacobsen, "Promise and Cross: Homiletical Theology, the Vocative Word Extra Nos, and the Task of a Revisionist Eschatology," in *Homiletical Theology in Action: The Unfinished Theological Task of Preaching* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 123.

⁴³¹ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 94, 210.

⁴³² Courtney T. Goto, *The Grace of Play: Pedagogies for Leaning into God's New Creation* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 41, 43, 51. Courtney T. Goto approaches the community of faith's graceful practice with Moltmann's "being-there-with/for-others" praxis for a transformative liberating of the oppressed in cooperation with God's new creation, namely the Kingdom of God.

unjust suffering using vivid, imaginative, and shockingly bold expressions. Israel's lament was founded on an unswerving conviction that God intervenes to transform society's destructive forces (e.g., evil judges and leaders). Their lament was in this sense anticipatory; it expected God's response to their pain. Likewise, the language of lament embodies the preacher's expectation for God's restorative justice in the present injurious social condition. Such lament rhetoric hungers for God's not yet visible but nonetheless anticipated brighter future for all creation. Preaching as a lamenting voice thus performs the church's hope in a world of despair.⁴³³ Unless one can look for this brighter future, the preacher's lament is nothing more than language of hopelessness and fatalism. For instance, E. M. Kim's sermon leads hearers to look at God's promised future by our particular rivers—the place of suffering—in hope: “When God is with us, we can dare to anticipate the day when a new heaven and a new earth come down to us where there is no more mourning, crying, or pain.”⁴³⁴

In addition, anticipatory lament rhetoric includes the church's active waiting for God's promised future which exceeds our experience and knowledge. For Augustine, ecclesial lament is anchored in the hope of eschatology.⁴³⁵ Augustine, who does not disparage earthly grief, maintains that lament expresses a person's sighing or yearning for eschatological consummation with God.⁴³⁶ Consequently, Augustine defines lament

⁴³³ Walter Brueggemann, *Reality, Grief, Hope: Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014), 163.

⁴³⁴ Kim, *Women Preaching*, 172.

⁴³⁵ Stephen Lakkis, ““Have You Any Right to be Angry?”: Lament as a Metric of Socio-political and Theological Context,” in *Evoking Lament: A Theological Discussion*, ed. Eva Harasta and Brian Brock (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 186.

⁴³⁶ Lakkis, “Have You Any Right to be Angry?,” 186.

as the pain of awaiting the eschaton.⁴³⁷ Therefore, preaching as lament is a sorrowful but hopeful voice anchored in God's promise. It abides in the tension between the crucifixion and resurrection that pulls God's future into the present.⁴³⁸

Accordingly, immigrant preaching as lament envisions a new reality (what it should be). For example, in Psalm 22 (individual lament), the psalmist proclaims that the poor and the marginalized will eventually eat together at the Lord's meal outside of the Temple: "The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever! (Ps. 22:26)."⁴³⁹ As a result, the preacher as the representative lamenter has two tasks: being painfully aware of the present brokenness *and* eagerly envisaging a new life order in which God presides. Thus, preaching as lament constructs a theo-rhetorical vision of an alternative reality that encourages FGKIs' yearning for God's future of abundance and flourishing for all.⁴⁴⁰

Compared to a psalmic-theological homiletic, an approach to the preaching of prosperity theology by definition negates the church's expectation of God's restorative shalom in the present society. This is because prosperity preaching expects that all congregations are already able to obtain financial abundance and bodily health, limiting transformative salvation to individual redemption from the bondage of sickness and financial pressure by means of disregarding concerns for an unjust society. Moreover, prosperity theology uncritically endorses a vision and set of practices that coincide with

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 26.

⁴³⁹ André LaCocque and Paul Ricoeur, *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 197.

⁴⁴⁰ Jacobsen, "The Unfinished Task of Homiletical Theology," 50.

the principles of American capitalism (c.f., self-interest, high status and power).

Therefore, prosperity preaching intermixed with capitalistic principles would be hard-pressed to proclaim a truly countercultural worldview as revolutionary good news to any marginalized group.

B. Preaching as Retelling the Story

In my vision of psalmic-theological preaching for Christian FGKIs, the rhetoric of lament does not homiletically end with lament itself. Rather, it goes far beyond lament, for the suffering community is itself prone to look for hope in God by reinterpreting contextually the biblical story that contains God's character and salvific activity in human history. Here, this dissertation will proceed with an investigation of how the immigrant church can actually recount the biblical story in the context of their communal suffering.

1. Retelling the Story in the Psalms and its Theological Perspectives

Retelling the Story in the Lament and Praise Psalms

Especially when faced with trouble, the community of Israel frequently pondered divine fidelity in terms of God's past acts.⁴⁴¹ Such recollection assured the people that God's past goodness would continue in the present and into the future. Westermann enumerates the community of Israel's favorite stories found in the Psalms: that of the wandering Aramean (their ancestor Jacob's experience of being a stranger/immigrant in a foreign country); liberation from Pharaoh's regime of exploitative repression; deliverance from the Red Sea; God's guidance and preservation of the people during

⁴⁴¹ Brueggemann, *Reality, Grief, Hope*, 69; Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 20.

their desert sojourn; territorial expansion in the promised land; and victory over enemies who endangered their existence.⁴⁴²

In this context, Westermann particularly notes the community lament of Psalm 80. This interrogatory lament speech about Israel’s suffering energized the community to remember their history about and with Yahweh. Psalm 80 shows that the psalmist’s recounting of God’s past benevolent deeds of salvation was attached to Israel’s lament:

Psalms 80 (Community lament)	
vv.1-3	Address: “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou who...” Introductory call for help: “Give ear...Restore us!”
vv.4-6	Lament: “How long wilt thou be angry?...Thou dost make us the scorn of our neighbors...”
vv.8-11	Looking back at God’s earlier saving deeds- Exodus (in the image of the vinedresser and the vine)
vv.12-13	Continuation of the lament and petition, set in the imagery of vss. 8-11.
vv.14-15	Petition
vv.16-17	A twofold wish
v.18	A vow of praise
v.19	Repetition of the petition about God’s salvation in the future ⁴⁴³

Ps. 80:8-12 therefore recites (a) the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, (b) Israel’s settlement in the land of promise, and (c) the sequel: Israel in the promised land.⁴⁴⁴ The psalmist’s reporting of God’s salvific actions in the past reaches its climax in Israel’s renewed praise and confession of confidence in God’s future salvation.

Another example is Psalm 77 (individual lament). Psalm 77 recalls Israel’s question about God’s faithfulness in their unresolved present hurt (vv.1-10). The psalm then returns to recall the canonical story about God’s deliverance in the past and

⁴⁴² Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 219.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*, 215-6.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

concludes with a new confession of the credo (vv.11-20).⁴⁴⁵ In the case of individual lament psalms, Westermann states that the narrative account of remembering the normative story (“looking back at God’s earlier saving deeds”) has two parts: a review of the current crisis *and* the historical normative narrative of the rescue.⁴⁴⁶

The report of God’s story of deliverance was revised and reiterated for a practical purpose. Westermann notes that the recounting of the historical memory of God was not a remembering of historical facts, but of the theological meaning behind the story.⁴⁴⁷ Thus, recalling the historical story was not merely an enumeration of the facts of history but of the specific meanings that influenced the story’s content and story development.⁴⁴⁸ Westermann notes that even in such a recounting of the historical memory, “the manner of speaking never becomes stereotyped.”⁴⁴⁹ On each occasion, the story of what God had done was re-contextualized for the particular purpose or situation. It reassured people of God’s constant nature, specifically God’s grace, and anticipated God’s future action.

⁴⁴⁵ Brueggemann, *Israel’s Praise*, 137.

⁴⁴⁶ Westermann, *The Psalms*, 76.

⁴⁴⁷ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 236.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid. For example, Brueggemann shows how the psalmist recalls the same narrative historical credo for a different purpose. For instance, Psalm 105, 106, 136 roughly tell of the same standard drama of need and rescue. However, in Psalm 105 (Storytelling psalms in mood of praise), it was to prepare for glad obedience; in Psalm 106 (Storytelling psalms in penitential mood), it was to be aware of people’s failure and to voice a petition with a resolve to give thanks; in Psalm 136 (Storytelling psalms in the mood of praise), it was made to be inhabitants who have a deep fidelity. The comparison denotes that remembering the historical story was not used as a clichéd repertoire, but rather one re-narrates for a specific purpose, to fit a particular situation. Walter Brueggemann, “Psalms in Narrative Performance,” in *Performing the Psalms*, ed. David Bland and David Fler (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 16.

⁴⁴⁹ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 108.

Theological Meanings of Retelling the Story in the Psalms

Recounting the story of God's prior deeds in the Psalms (a) recaptures the sense of God's presence in times of need, (b) creates a hope-inspiring future, and (c) serves as performance of theocentric retelling.

First, recounting God's earlier deeds in the Psalms was a way for the people to cling to God's reality in desperate times. Remembering the historical story not only evoked a cognitive memory, but brought Israel into God's presence. Brueggemann elucidates that the power of reciting Israel's collective story in the Psalms was the rhetoric of abiding astonishment for the believer:

The rhetoric of God's mighty deeds is not congenial to our scientific, objectivist, positivistic control of life...It must be faced, because in our contemporary world there are many people for whom the rhetoric of abiding astonishment is indeed credible, and for whom the acts of God are not failed rhetoric.⁴⁵⁰

Thus, retelling the historical story pulled Israel into God's astonishing presence at a time when they needed to recall God's faithfulness and God's past deeds. By doing so, they once again placed God at the center of their lives. They reminded themselves of God's faithfulness in their past and now their present times of instability, vulnerability, frustration, and injustice.

Second, this communal remembrance inspired hope. By recalling their ancestors' deliverance from hardship, Israel expected that the same could happen to them now.⁴⁵¹ It intensified their recollection of YHWH's steadfast love, faithfulness, trustworthiness and justice, and stirred the people's yearning for God's future historic redemption.

⁴⁵⁰ Brueggemann, *Abiding Astonishment*, 51.

⁴⁵¹ According to Sigmund Mowinkel, 'the historical credo' is G. von Rad's term. Westermann calls it "representing the history," and Brueggemann calls it "the credo recital." Mowinkel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, 102.

Recounting the treasured past story was not directed toward the past as history, but toward the promised future. Recollection inspired hope.

Finally, in Israel's retelling of their normative memory, God is the central character. God is depicted as the only One, the main initiator and executor of Israel's liberating history, the one who liberates the oppressed, the captive, the poor, and the displaced.⁴⁵² Westermann notes that the psalmist does not intend to retell what has happened to him or her (the psalmist), but to testify to what God has done for the people.⁴⁵³

2. Homiletical Approach: Immigrant Preaching as Retelling the Story

Immigrant Preaching as Theocentric Remembrance

For Christian FGKIs, remembering the biblical God's action is the primary source of assurance for their witness of Christ which then offers hope for God's salvation in the present world.⁴⁵⁴ Alternatively stated, believers could confirm their encounter of God by means of theocentric remembrance. At the same time, Christian FGKIs could also yearn for God's salvific activity in a time of suffering through communal recalling of living images and metaphors for God; such as the liberating God

⁴⁵² Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 118.

⁴⁵³ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 109.

⁴⁵⁴ Lee, *Korean Preaching*, 55. In Korean Christianity, the Bible has been canonized and become the normative guide for the community of faith. Put differently, the Bible has been treated as the authoritative book (and the church's book) for preaching and pastoral ministry. Therefore, when preaching is not biblical, its authenticity seems lose for the Korean Christian community. On the ground, lots of Korean preachers interpret the contemporary congregation's suffering and experience with respect to God's action in the Bible. Lee, *Korean Preaching*, 55.

or the redeemer of the Hebrew slave immigrants. J. Y. Lee advocates for a blueprint of the future to which Korean American preaching refers:

It is important to take sermon topics from immigrant themes in scripture. The life of the Hebrew people was filled with the theme of immigration. The immigration of Abraham and Sarah to the land of Canaan, the immigration of their descendants into Egypt, living in the wilderness for forty years, immigrating to the promised land, and so on, are important stories of Hebraic history. By using scripture texts which relate immigration experiences, we can offer parallels to the history of Korean immigration in the United States.⁴⁵⁵

Remembering that God previously intervened in order to care for biblical immigrants could strengthen the expectation that God would actively involve God-self in the contemporary world of suffering, as well as FGKIs' lives. It is, of course, important to note that both J. Y. Lee *and* E. M. Kim re-contextualize the message of God's past salvation so as to empower hearers to anticipate God's redemptive intervention in the present world. Theocentric remembrance through a contextualization of the gospel in a concrete context represents an effective way of preaching insofar as it enhances hearers' receptivity to a message. For example, E. M. Kim reinterprets contemporary people's suffering by making connections with the Hebrew exile and God's liberation of those exiled. In so doing, E. M. Kim's sermon helps hearers anticipate God's future action for them.⁴⁵⁶

Furthermore, recounting God's salvific activity in the past could actually be reinterpreted within the contemporary church's witness to God's authentic presence in FGKIs' mundane world in order to embolden hearers to abide in God's reality amidst the present situation of suffering. The practice of theocentric remembrance of God's

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 119.

⁴⁵⁶ In a psalmic-theological homiletic, theo-remembrance pursues preaching rising from FGKIs' lived experiences (as immigrants in a new land), with an expectation of the preacher's "theological accountability in developing a context approach to the proclamation of the gospel." Kim, *Women Preaching*, 11.

salvation in history shares a thread of connection with FGKIs' indigenous belief of the High God; that is to say, the supreme being in heaven who is involved in human affairs.⁴⁵⁷ Therefore, Christian FGKIs have long hoped for a liberating and saving presence of God whenever they have been confronted with suffering in history. As E. M. Kim also states, "In other words, God's self-disclosures in creation, in the history of the people of Israel, and in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are not exclusive events of God's revelation but are parables through which we can discern God's continuing activity of grace in our daily lives."⁴⁵⁸ On that basis, some Korean preachers have tried to foster believers' awareness of the presence of God's salvation in human activity (and in our daily lives) by virtue of retelling God's previous redemptive activity. Through such theocentric remembrance, immigrant preaching itself attempts to encourage hearers to enter the reliable Christian story *and* to abide in the reality of God's wonder in our daily lives instead of the inflated materialistic Dream and its story.

Immigrant Preaching as Retelling the Story to Name Grace

Naming grief (through the rhetoric of lament) as well as grace (through retelling the story) could end up being a paradoxical proclamation of God's abiding presence in a wounded world.⁴⁵⁹ In this proclamation, retelling God's past deeds for the marginalized includes a declaration of God's faithful commitment to the people of God. Mary

⁴⁵⁷ Sung-wook Hong, *Naming God in Korea: The Case of Protestant Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009), 72.

⁴⁵⁸ Kim, *Women Preaching*, 19.

⁴⁵⁹ Christian Duquoc and Casiano Florestan, *Where is God?: A Cry of Human Distress* (London, UK: SCM Press, 1992), 74.

Catherine Hilbert calls such proclamations of God “at the edges.”⁴⁶⁰ Indeed, FGKIs’ capacity to feel God’s love and redeeming power could be compromised by their persistent unstable living conditions. In this situation, immigrant preaching needs to reassure people that God’s grace endures forever, even in their pain.⁴⁶¹ Such reassurance aims at restoring hearers’ faith, particularly for some FGKIs who cannot face daily life without enlisting God’s grace.⁴⁶²

Put another way, the church’s attentiveness to God’s gracious presence in history is to foster FGKIs’ confidence in God’s trustworthiness amidst existential uncertainty. For instance, E. M. Kim’s sermon names God’s present solidarity with the powerless to rekindle hope as a homiletic means of announcing the good news for marginalized people: she announces that “The riverbanks...were also the celebrating places with the joyful song of Zion because the Spirit of God was there, suffering and weeping with them, and responding to them with the power of life.”⁴⁶³ Moreover, the preacher’s articulation of God’s emergent reality in the middle of FGKIs’ vulnerable lives is linked with Fulkerson’s theological perspective. Fulkerson says that an adequate framework of practical theology would “explore how a complex reality is not only full of ambiguity and complexity, but also traces of God’s redemptive presence.”⁴⁶⁴ In other words,

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 47.

⁴⁶¹ Brueggemann, *Israel’s Praise*, 139.

⁴⁶² Kyeyoung Park, *The Korean American Dream: Immigrants and Small Business in New York City* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 189.

⁴⁶³ Kim, *Women Preaching*, 173.

⁴⁶⁴ Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 12.

preaching as practical theology involves reflection on both hearers' reality and God's loving presence in their lives.

Next, for Christian FGKIs, the theocentric story of the cross plays a particular role in naming the awesome truth that God is present even amidst our suffering. Christ's tears on the cross resonate with FGKIs' feeling of God's abandonment—a feeling of being rejected by the very One in whom they trust. At the same time, they also remind FGKIs that God has in fact not abandoned them but continued to participate in the suffering of all creation.⁴⁶⁵ It is a welcome message of grace. J. Y. Lee similarly contends that Korean Christianity has transcended its present suffering through the suffering of Christ.⁴⁶⁶ As J. Y. Lee puts it, “in the message of wounded suffering, both Christ *and* the Korean people, the text *and* the context, become one and incarnate in the church, which gives us meaning and hope.”⁴⁶⁷ It denotes that Korean Christians have overcome their suffering through closely identifying with the crucified Christ's unjust but redemptive suffering.⁴⁶⁸ Hence, for Christian FGKIs, the theocentric narrative of God's action—revealed through Christ's crucifixion and resurrection—would be a paradigmatic expression of hope since it represents hope for the fulfillment of God's promises.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁵ Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 118-9.

⁴⁶⁶ Lee, *Korean Preaching*, 78.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁶⁹ Sarah K. Pinnock, *Beyond Theodicy: Jewish and Christian Continental Thinkers Respond to the Holocaust* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002), 91.

In what follows, a retelling of the story frequently requires the preacher's theological work to indicate the place of divine grace amid human suffering. For instance, in a shamanistic-prosperity belief system, God's infinite grace is undeniably limited by an individual's success, wealth, or health. In order to correct such misapprehension of God's blessing, the preacher should theologically highlight God's love, the divine's holy presence and peace, as God's blessing. Preaching could illustrate God's unfailing care for the Hebrew immigrants as God's blessing by recounting the biblical story. As we can see, E. M. Kim's practice of preaching exposes her contextualizing work for the gospel through theological correlation between the current believers' situation *and* the biblical world of the exiles (captives of Babylon) to assure God's profound love for the powerless. In this way, the rhetorical step of retelling the story is both reformulated and proclaimed through the preacher's theological articulation, relevant to hearers' situation.

The purpose of such a preaching practice for FGKIs is to help them see this new land as a place of grace where God's good news is freshly spoken. Following the example of Jesus preaching—the good news to the poor (Matt. 5:3), psalmic-theological preaching seeks to shed light on God's abundant grace for the marginalized to help animate their own faithful confession of the divine compassion by means of the preacher's theological formulation in the sermon. By contrast, in prosperity theology, poor FGKIs seem to be those who are ultimately removed from God's blessing due to their lack of faith or hard work. Prosperity preaching is hard pressed to announce the gospel's radical good news for the poor and outcast since it is prone to value the status

of being wealthy at the expense of exploiting the poor. Thus, prosperity theology and its preaching has hardly been a reliable source of the gospel for poor and outcast FGKIs.

Immigrant Preaching as Retelling the Story for God's Future

The goal of retelling the divine's story is to not only evoke a new encounter with God's life-giving reality in the present situation of suffering, but also arouse expectation of God's promised future in hope. Remembering a theocentric story occurs not just to fix one to the past, but to look forward to God's salvific possibilities in the promised future. For God is faithful, not just in the past. Moltmann notes that the gospel of Christ must be understood as a "remembrance in the mode of hope."⁴⁷⁰ Moltmann insists that:

Memory is a pre-eminent characteristic of the people of Israel, for since Abraham's exodus Israel has existed historically par excellence and paradigmatically. Israel's religion is a historical religion. Consequently, Israel's faith is braced between the remembrance of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the hope for the coming of his kingdom. Israel's faith is remembered hope. By virtue of remembrance, people return to past events, in order to make sure of the promises for the future which were given there.⁴⁷¹

For Moltmann, the Christians' remembrance of God as an "anticipatory memory or a feast of expectation" because Christian hope for the future is grounded on the remembrance of the church's irreducible past.⁴⁷² Accordingly, for him, "the historical past is past future; historical present is present future" and "the presence of the past in remembrance, the presence of the future in hope."⁴⁷³ Hence, in my psalmic-theological homiletic, lament as the language of pain advances toward the immigrant's longing for

⁴⁷⁰ Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life*, 219.

⁴⁷¹ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 207.

⁴⁷² Moltmann, *Jesus Christ for Today's World*, 79.

⁴⁷³ Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ*, 240.

God's possibility in hope. Immigrant preaching expects the church's continuous remembering of God's history to embolden FGKIs to move forward on their journey toward the fulfillment of God's promise in hope.

C. Preaching as Confessional Doxology

Subsequent to remembering God's redemptive action in the biblical world, psalmic-theological preaching advances toward confessional doxology so as to intensify the core theological message of the sermon, what the church has heard from the biblical story in a rhetorical mode of celebration. Thus, this section will explore the theological and homiletic character of confessional doxology for the practice of immigrant preaching.

1. Confessional Praise in the Psalms and its Theological Perspectives

The central purpose of this section is to explore the third component—that is, praise and its confessional features for the preaching ministry. In the psalms of lament, lament flows into praise—which is expressed in the confession of trust, the vow of praise, or (declarative) praise of God. Here, I will only concentrate on the confession of trust and (declarative) praise of God to illustrate their praise-confessional characteristics.

Praise Forms in the Lament Psalms: Confession of Trust and Declarative Praise of God

Israel's lament usually turned into trust in the almighty God and in God's presence in their lives.⁴⁷⁴ In many cases, the psalmist's cry for God's help specifically

⁴⁷⁴ In Psalms 123 and 126 (community laments), Israel's lament also is changed into confession of trust in God's deliverance. Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 168.

turns into a person's or community's confession of trust in God and an anticipation of the divine's future gracious activity, all this in a mode of praise.⁴⁷⁵ C. Hassell Bullock insists that the vow to praise and confession of trust belong to the category of praise in an integral way.⁴⁷⁶ Understood like this, most of the lament psalms resolve into praise, as Westermann claims. Confession of trust, in the mode of praise, is undeniably the eloquent language of faith and often revitalizes the hearer's hope. I illustrate this movement with Psalm 13:

Psalms 13 (Individual Lament)	
Lament (description of helplessness and anguish)	How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?...(vv.1-2)
A Plea for Help	Consider and answer me, O Lord my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, (v.3)
Confession of Confidence	But I trusted in your steadfast love; (v.5a)
(Declarative) Praise the Lord	My heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me. (vv.5b-6) ¹

It is significant that the declaration of trust arose from the people's ongoing troubles once they put their trust in God, specifically as an anticipation of God's future salvation. This is, in fact, one of the Psalm's key theological tenets. Psalm 4 (individual lament), for instance, announces that the psalmist lies down to sleep even if the enemy is surrounding him/her.⁴⁷⁷ In this way, the Psalms frequently exhibit a uniquely expansive tone of trust in the mode of praise.

⁴⁷⁵ Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 56.

⁴⁷⁶ Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 124, 149.

⁴⁷⁷ "I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety (Ps. 4:8, individual lament, NRSV)."

Second, in some lament psalms, lament is turned into declarative praise of God. We see this, for example, in Psalms 6, 13 and 22 (individual laments).⁴⁷⁸ We recall that Westermann subdivides praise in the Psalms into the rubrics of declarative and descriptive praise. Declarative praise involves generic language like “Praise the Lord” without the long narrative details, while descriptive praise recounts in detail what God has done by using storytelling elements (cf., Ps. 136).⁴⁷⁹ Compared to descriptive praise, declarative praise is a much simpler form of praise. It typically lasts only for a single sentence, and is composed of a shout of praise (e.g., Praise the Lord) and an announcement of what God has done (as the reason for praise).⁴⁸⁰ Such declarative praise in the lament psalms came from the ancient Israelites’ “looking back into the distant past, when God—once long ago—did such great things” for the people of God.⁴⁸¹ Westermann notes that while God was “referred to His/Her earlier saving actions,” God was being “praised for these actions” in anticipation of God’s intervention in their “present desperate situation.”⁴⁸² For that reason, lament is changed into declarative praise. It is the inner transition in the structure of the lament psalms which exhibits the structural polarity of two tonalities—that is, lament and praise.⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁸ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 68-9. Such declarative praise form exists in many individual laments psalms; for instance, Pss. 13:5; 3:7; 10:17; 6:8; 56:13; 31:17; 28:6; 31:21; 22:24, 31 etc. Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 102.

⁴⁷⁹ Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 48-9; Westermann, *The Psalms*, 26. I already explored Psalm 136 (the descriptive and storytelling psalm) in the previous section, preaching as retelling the story.

⁴⁸⁰ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 87-8; 107.

⁴⁸¹ Westermann, *The Praise of God in the Psalms*, 56-7.

⁴⁸² *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁸³ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 267.

Confessional Declaration in the Form of Declarative Praise

From the viewpoint of Westermann, declarative praise is defined as confessional praise because it involves the psalmist's (or the community's) specific witness and experience of God's marvelous redemption from the threats of its foes in the present situation (God has intervened; God has saved).⁴⁸⁴ Interestingly, Westermann identifies the form of the word, "I will praise" with "I will confess."⁴⁸⁵ It suggests that Israel's truthful living confession occurs in a declarative praise form as one compound sentence.⁴⁸⁶ Put differently, declarative praise confesses God's specific deeds as the psalmist's theological expression. Such a condensed and confession-like formulation exists in many forms and in many places—for example, at the end of the lament Psalms, or before the descriptive (storytelling) praise, etc.⁴⁸⁷ Based on this premise, we can conclude that praise in Israel's worship declared theological themes about God through strenuous and imaginative speech.

Theological Meanings of Confessional Praise in the Psalms

First of all, praise in the Psalms can be theologically characterized as praise out of the depths. Of particular importance is that the exuberant praise for God's bestowal of grace and Israel's anticipation of God's future intervention occurred regardless of the

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid., 31, 83, 107.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 107.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 107. As a theocentric testimony of witness, Westermann states that "it is not about the statement of fact, but always as a confession." Ibid.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 114. Even though Westermann divides praise into declarative and descriptive praise, they have a close relationship to each other. For example, declarative praise is changed into descriptive praise in Pss. 18:27; 138:6; 107:33-41; 118:22-23. Ibid., 117.

people's ongoing uncertainty and unrelieved affliction. In this vein, James Luther Mays comments that "praise [in the Psalms] remembers the morning while it is yet night."⁴⁸⁸ As a result, we can say that ardent songs in the Psalms were from the depths of the assailed life, grounded in the recognition of God's goodness in a life of suffering.

Westermann's interesting form analysis is as follows. In the (individual) lament psalms, the "waw (but)" adversative conjunction unleashes an internal transition from lament to fulsome praise speech. According to Westermann, frequently these "waw (but)" clauses substantiate the fact that "waw (but)" designates a transition from lament to other modes of speech such as a vow or praise, confession of trust, and assurance of God's intervention.⁴⁸⁹ For instance, "waw (but)" intimately precedes praise of God, all confessions of trust, and vow of praise; cf., "But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God'" (Ps. 31:14, individual lament).⁴⁹⁰ Such internal transition using "waw (but)" shows that their praise came from their confidence of God's favor and benevolence in spite of the people's current situation. Therefore, Israel's praise and its inherent faith in God's nearness in the midst of suffering could not be defeated by death. In the Spirit, such utterance was inalienable praise.

In addition to the adversative conjunction, praise was signaled by "the fresh dramatic emergence of YHWH" in the liturgical setting—God's incarnational presence

⁴⁸⁸ James Luther Mays, *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*, ed. Patrick D. Miller and Gene M. Tucker (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 26.

⁴⁸⁹ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 72,73.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 74. Westermann gives individual lament psalms, containing a *waw* adversative as follow: Pss. 6:3; 38:13; 70:5; 26:11; 69:13; 55:16; 22:19; 59:5; 22:3; 102:12; 13:5; 31:14; 86:15; 3:3; 55:23; 59:8; 109:28; 64:7; 38:17b; 52:8; 73:23; 27:6; 27:13; 35:9; 71:14; 109:28; 54:4. *Ibid.*, 70-1.

in the liturgical moment.⁴⁹¹ It suggests that the internal transition from lament to praise was not only a literary phenomenon, but also a dramatic spiritual event as the community of faith encounters God's intervening presence. Hence, Brueggemann remarks that "the intervention of God in some way permits the move from plea to praise...In a sense, doxology and praise are best understood only in response to God's salvific intervention, which in turn is evoked by the lament."⁴⁹² Therefore, the spiritual transition from distress to praise originated from Israel's encounter with God's abiding and transforming presence. As it were, God's presence engendered the language of joy, and Israel's transforming experience of God prompted their exultation.

Next, Israel's praise echoed God's goodness. It reflected their gratitude and buoyant confidence in God's future redemption by recalling their history. Recounting that memory did not end with deliverance, but evoked Israel's spontaneous reactions of joy. God's trustworthiness and compassion elicited the psalmist's joy and grateful elation.⁴⁹³

Finally, in the Psalms praise tells of God's inmost nature (God's faithfulness and steadfast love), shown in the divine's mighty actions. Since the Psalms testifies who God is in a confessional formula (in light of some theocentric aspect), Mays defines praise as confessional speech as follows:⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹¹ Brueggemann, "Psalms in Narrative Performance," 28.

⁴⁹² Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 99.

⁴⁹³ Bullock, *Encountering the Book of Psalms*, 152.

⁴⁹⁴ Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 63.

Psalmic praise is confessional. Praise as doxology declares that God praise as confession says who God is. The hymns of the Psalter were Israel's confession of faith. In them the people of God said—and say—who it is they trust and obey.

From Mays' viewpoint, Israel declared a confession of faith with the literary form of the creed and the form of praise.⁴⁹⁵ Hence, Mays insists that “psalmic praise is passionately and perfectly theology.”⁴⁹⁶ In addition to Mays, Westermann notes that praise is embedded in theological statements about God.⁴⁹⁷ For that reason, praise in a confessional mode can be regarded as a pious utterance of Israel's living faith and truth-claims with rich theological texture. As a result, the confessional form of praise had kerygmatic marks because it encompassed substantive and living theological components in buoyant praise.

Next, praise in the Psalms can be characterized as an eschatologically oriented confession. For instance, under the title of “prayer for justice,” Psalm 9 (individual lament psalm) combines lament over unjust treatment and praise proclaiming God's just rule over the nations.⁴⁹⁸ Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland remark that it is an example of the prophetic spirit in individual lament psalms and confessional praise in an

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁷ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 135.

⁴⁹⁸ In Psalm 9, individual praise (vv.1-2), lament because of the wicked (vv.3-6), hope in God's just rule (vv.7-10), communal praise and individual prayer (vv.11-14), judgment of the wicked (vv.15-18), and hope in God's just rule (vv.19-20). Samuel Terrien calls Psalm 9 a “prayer for justice” in *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary*. Another example is Psalm 10 (an individual lament psalm) which includes composed lament (v.1), the rule of the wicked (vv.2-11), prayer for deliverance (vv.12-15), the rule of God (v.16), and resolution (vv.17-18). Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008), 143, 153; Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 116.

eschatological dimension when Psalm 9 praises the Lord in a sense of confidence in the divine's just rule on earth. The Psalm also expresses hope in the acts of God on behalf of God's people.⁴⁹⁹ Lament changes to praise, and fear becomes victorious joy.⁵⁰⁰ In eschatological terms, Israel's declarative confession, "The LORD reigns forever! (Ps. 9:7a)" anticipates God's sovereignty which is bound to the messianic vision. Praise in the Psalm is an eschatological act of hope that, although it promised something not yet visible, nevertheless expresses certain and settled hope.⁵⁰¹

Furthermore, such hope brings about eschatological-effectiveness now but also is to be awaited.⁵⁰² This is because eschatological hope invites people to live under God's rule by aligning their lives and practices with God's liberating justice. Brevard S. Childs notes the eschatological orientation, saying:

One explains it, the final form of the Psalter is highly eschatological in nature. The perspective of Israel's worship in the Psalter is eschatologically oriented...When the New Testament heard in the Psalms eschatological notes, its writers were standing in the context of the Jewish canon in which the community of faith worshiped and waited.⁵⁰³

⁴⁹⁹ Longman III and Garland, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms*, 143.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Brueggemann, *Cadences of Home*, 52.

⁵⁰² J. Clinton McCann Jr., *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalm as Torah* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1993), 48. Regarding a holistic reading of the Psalms, Longman III and Garland observe that, "Brevard Childs sees such a reinterpretation in the ancient psalms of Israel, and James Luther Mays has advanced an eschatological interpretation of the three Torah psalms. M.A. Vincent questions the validity of the eschatological interpretation, as he interprets the language of trust and waiting as encouraging an unspecified hope in God's justice." Longman III and Garland, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms*, 37.

⁵⁰³ Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1979), 518. Moreover, Longman III and Garland note that praise in the Psalms reflects a person's longing for God's salvific actions in the human historical realm. They comment that "the act of God in the past filled his/her children with longing for a renewal of God's acts, thus intertwining history and eschatology. Israel praised God's acts in the past-creation, the exodus, conquest, restoration from the exile, and so on. Israel praised the perfections of the Lord, his/her kingship, revelation, and covenant. But they longed for the

Finally, God's sovereignty over all creation is a theological echo of Israel's questioning lament about the public structures of injustice.

2. Homiletical Approach: Immigrant Preaching as Confessional Doxology

Immigrant Preaching as Confessional Doxology

Over time, the rhetoric of lament in the face of a harsh reality moves toward a new realization of the presence of God in times of difficulty. This then leads FGKIs' confession about God's compassion into the mode of praise. Lament in a sermon has an inherently doxological nature through the juxtaposition of lament and celebration. In this manner, immigrant preaching seeks to declare a living confessional faith due to God's unfailing love on the edges. In doing so, preaching is not merely replicating traditional doctrinal knowledge; rather, through the preacher's voice it is making a living and vigorous faith-declaration about the immigrant's specific present circumstances. Such confessional preaching does not deliver universal truth, but imparts truth from the immigrant's particular place on the margins.

A confessional voice in preaching intends to encourage FGKIs to live by faith.⁵⁰⁴ Indeed, Christian FGKIs tend to search for God who comes to broken and vulnerable people, and eventually make the experience of immigration meaningful by reconnecting with God's self-revelation. In doing so, they construct their own meaningful story—that is, their testimony about an emergent reality, God-with-us even in their existential

fullness of redemption, especially when distressed. Any token of God's goodness in fulfilling God's promise occasioned a greater hope of eschatological fulfillment. Hence, praise bridged the two horizons of the past and the future." Longman III and Garland, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms*, 24-5.

⁵⁰⁴ Brueggemann, *Cadences of Home*, 44.

predicament. Consequently, for FGKIs, the confessional proclamation of the church (c.f., the living God's compassion toward Korean immigrants) plays a role in bolstering their faith.

Because confessional doxology in psalmic-theological preaching aims at empowering both the rich *and* the poor to praise an emergent reality—God-with-us in their daily places—it stands in opposition to the disposition of prosperity gospel. Prosperity preaching might well tell a few prosperous people's testimonies about how God has loved them in sermon illustrations, just as the American Dream articulates heroic tales in motivational speeches to strengthen their privatized longings for material success. Such a prosperity-oriented message might end up preventing the poor or the marginalized from praising God's character and actions until they receive their material-blessing. For that reason, immigrant preaching seeks to allow all believers (rich and poor Korean immigrants) to celebrate God's goodness as their testimonies.

David J. Lose refers to the inextricable relationship of faith and confession praxis in preaching: "In fact, faith finds its full actualization only in its articulation...Confession is dependent on faith in that it springs from faith...Faith is dependent on confession—for it is the word of faith confessed that leads to belief."⁵⁰⁵ Authentic faith creates confessional voices, and confessional rhetorical practice helps strengthen ecclesial faith.

For example, the preacher's linguistic confession as a core theological message, e.g., "God is with us!" or "The living God will bring a new history!" points to a resurrection that belies the world's insistence on the demise of God in FGKIs' marginalized place. In a similar vein, Thomas G. Long comments on the significance of

⁵⁰⁵ David J. Lose, *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 74.

confession in preaching as follows:

Faithful preaching is not story time [recalling the historical story]; it is instead the spoken word at the epicenter of a community of courageous testimony... The power in Christian preaching comes not only from narration but also from declaration (Christ has been raised from the dead), explanation (If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most be pitied), invitation (Be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord), confession (By the grace of God, I am what I am), and even accusation (O death, where is your victory?).⁵⁰⁶

This implies that our preaching ministry is more than reiterating the normative historical record of God; it is the preacher's declaration of God's uncompromising saving power in order to revivify FGKIs' damaged faith and inspires them to embody resilient hope. The preacher's eschatological affirmation of the truth of God in the present-tense is meant to evoke a restorative future hope in FGKIs' hearts, and liberate them from today's captivity and despair.⁵⁰⁷

Confessional preaching intensifies the core theological message in a doxological

⁵⁰⁶ Thomas G. Long, *Preaching from Memory to Hope* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 18, 26.

⁵⁰⁷ Jennifer Lord explains about preaching in the present tense as homiletical practice. "Preachers proclaim the present tense truth and claim God's deeds (past, present, future) on us today as 'Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing (Luke 4:21, NRSV).' Preaching in the present tense, preaching today, neither locates God's actions solely in the past or in the future but announces these past actions and future promises in a matter that has a contemporary claim on us: now, in the present. Thus, preaching in the present tense and in a form is proclamation an action done by God presently to us/in our midst. For instance, at Christmas we sing, "Christ is born today." We know we do not literally mean the today of this year in the twenty-first century but, symbolically speaking (which is another form of truth-telling), we do mean this: Christ is born *today*. Our liturgies use the same sense of today at Christ's passion and resurrection: Christ dies *today*; Jesus Christ is risen *today*. Liturgists speak of this conflation of time in particular ways: the past and future become present by our ritual actions. This folding in of the past is *anamnesis* (Greek, remembrance) and is the way that our actions make a past event a present true claim on us. In the same fashion God's promised future is already breaking in upon us now; it is *prolepsis* (Greek, to take beforehand). It is the foretaste of all that is to be. While we live between 'the already and the not yet' (the already of the full revelation of God through Jesus Christ and the not yet of the consummation of all things), the not yet breaks into our midst. God's *kairos* has taken up *chromos* and these things are possible: *today* these things are true in our midst." Jennifer Lord, "Preaching for Liturgical-Missional Congregations," in *Liturgical-Missional: Perspectives on a Reformed Ecclesiology*, ed. Neal D. Presa (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 88-89.

tone. Confessional speech as a mode of traditional Christian testimony does not accentuate the preacher's personal story but rather what the church has witnessed and heard from both the biblical text and reality.⁵⁰⁸ As Jacobsen puts it, "the confession part refers to a core sense of the gospel, not as a fixed entity"; confessional proclamation is celebrative reinforcement of living theological point in each sermon, suitable for the congregational local situation.⁵⁰⁹ Also, it is the preacher's grateful and even ecstatic public reinforcement of the central claim of the gospel.⁵¹⁰

Through remembrance and affirmation of God's actions and character, preaching evolves into doxological proclamation. For example, celebrative affirmation of God's solidarity with FGKIs' groaning rejuvenates their dampened spiritual energy, for their wounded hearts realize that only God offers reliable hope in their desperate situations. In this way, it makes sense for lament rhetoric to culminate with the preacher's affirmative faith statement. The language of desperate sorrow is replaced by extravagant praise that is rooted not in human capacities or optimism, but in the only One, God. God is the determinative object of believers' unrestrained delight. God's trustworthiness is why it makes sense for FGKIs to praise 'in spite of' their current desperate reality. That is why we call their praise a subversive and paradoxical truth: it is best revealed in dark times.

⁵⁰⁸ Anna Carter Florence, *Preaching as Testimony* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), iii.

⁵⁰⁹ David Schnasa Jacobsen, "What is Homiletical Theology?: An Invitation to Constructive Theological Dialogue in North American Homiletics," in *Homiletical Theology: Doing Theology*, ed. David Schnasa Jacobsen (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 37.

⁵¹⁰ Henry Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2008), 41.

Notably, for FGKIs, doxological speech of God's righteous governance in the future vouchsafed visions in the night by offering a shared foretaste of divine glory along the way.⁵¹¹ For instance, E. M. Kim's practice of preaching shows that Christian hope originates not from individual anticipation of personal success to avoid marginality but a communal better future in the broader vista of God's restorative justice and peace. In its sermonic flow, E. M. Kim's preaching moves from the outsiders' weeping over suffering *toward* yearning for God's future in the foreign land, by the riverbank of Babylon: she proclaims that "When God is with us, we can dare to anticipate the day when a new heaven and a new earth come down to us"⁵¹² Such doxological speech of God's future intends to embolden FGKIs to change their attention *from* the materialistic present (inflated by the American Dream) *toward* enjoyment of the eschatological event whose fullness yet lies in the future.⁵¹³

Furthermore, Frank Thomas defines celebration as "the culmination of the sermonic design, where a moment is created in which the remembrance of a redemptive past and/or the conviction of a liberated future transforms the events immediately experienced."⁵¹⁴ Celebration in preaching springs from the remembrance of a redemptive past and the conviction of a liberated future. The immigrant church's

⁵¹¹ Hall, *Thinking the Faith*, 178. In Psalm 51 (individual lament), the psalmist's lament changes to revering praise of God: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit" (Ps. 51:12, NRSV).

⁵¹² Kim, *Women Preaching*, 172.

⁵¹³ George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), 409.

⁵¹⁴ Frank A. Thomas, *They Like to Never Quit Praisin' God: The Role of Celebration in Preaching* (Cleveland, OH: United Church, 1997), 31.

declaration of God's future reminds us that despite marginalized FGKIs' worldly trials, their confident faith in God will be justified. The church's hope-filled speech allows them to be joyful even in pain. A. S. Park also remarks that praise in times of trouble is like Easter joy—the rapturous joy of resurrection, in which people are reminded of Christ's resurrected power over death.⁵¹⁵

Preaching's doxological affirmation hopes that FGKIs experience a mysterious depth of praise in the Spirit, a liberating joyfulness in spite of their ongoing hardship. For immigrant preaching, praise-form speech in no way indicates an escape from present reality; rather it exhibits a deep understanding of the signs of God's marvelous presence alongside their suffering. The ethnic church recognizes God's presence in FGKIs' existential reality in a time of difficulty. Its joyful preaching rhetoric is a sign of its faith and hope, not an escape from reality. Such preaching encourages praise as a mode of existence that is not reducible to marginalized circumstances. This is because in a psalmic-theological homiletic, such confession about God's future seeks to inspire FGKIs to transform their life *from* subordination to capitalist values and worldly power (relevant to the Dream ideology) *to* celebration of the eschatological victory of Christ over those powers in their lives and in the world. Also, E. M. Kim leads hearers to celebrate God's eschatological victory in joyful rhetoric by orienting them to God's new future in their existential reality: "Please wipe your tears and take down your harp. And let's play and sing the Lord's song together, as our forefathers did, louder and louder, until our singing echoes wherever the waters of our world reach. Amen!"⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵ Park, *From Hurt to Healing*, 154.

⁵¹⁶ Kim, *Women Preaching*, 173.

Immigrant Preaching as Confession of God's Present Reign

Certainly, preaching proclaims God's future. But it also proclaims Christ's presence among FGKIs' here and now. That the Psalms proclaim "the Lord reigns!" is a reassurance of God's present sovereignty regardless of one's present pain. The preacher summons a new song to testify to the present in-breaking of God that foreshadows the messianic future redemption. This is what Teresa Stricklen Eisenlohr means when she writes: "the *basileia* of God is among us even now in part through Christ, for we experience its first fruits as appetizers of the feast of God's full reign coming."⁵¹⁷

The preacher needs to perform a salvific-pneumatic interpretation of the historical-existential reality to read signs of the times through deliberate attention to God's daily wonder. Namely, it requires the preacher's proximity to existence-in-the-presence-of-God precisely where the power of death seemingly prevailed.⁵¹⁸ In other words, contextual preaching needs to bear witness to God—announcing newness as the emerging truth on the presupposition that God reveals Him/Herself in living history. The preacher's effort to see signs of God's already-present kingdom represents an attempt to confess a new contextualized exposition of the truth of God.

Through biblical study, pastoral care, and table fellowship, Korean pastors can listen to the lived experiences within the local community of faith that inform and shape the sermon. As mentioned in Chapter 3, FGKIs' experience of geographical dislocation can frequently fortify their witness to God's love on the edges, because they are moving

⁵¹⁷ Teresa Stricklen Eisenlohr, "The Way and the Way of Homiletic Theology," in *Homiletical Theology: Preaching as Doing Theology*, ed. David Schnasa Jacobsen (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2015), 166.

⁵¹⁸ Douglas John Hall, *Professing the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 148.

into a new territory of faith in God. Social isolation, rejection, and crisis give them a particular testimony about God's grace and faithfulness.⁵¹⁹ Therefore, the preacher often hears FGKIs' lived theologies as the outcomes of hearers' struggle with finding new spiritual meanings from their lived experience.⁵²⁰ This is because some faithful Christian FGKIs have already transformed their place of marginalized suffering into a redemptive, grace-filled place.⁵²¹ This corresponds with the psalmists' testimonies about a coherent understanding of God's love in their current situation, and carries a tone of deep faith in God's presence by recalling the historical credo (God's promise as the objective basis of their confidence) in the middle of any threatening environment. Childs comments that "The Psalter is much more than an expression of human struggle. It is a strong and enduring testimony to Israel's ongoing life with God which continued to be nourished

⁵¹⁹ Nieman and Rogers, *Preaching to Every Pew*, 92.

⁵²⁰ Indeed, the congregation as community is affected by the sermon, and the congregation also affects the sermon and the preacher as well. McClure, Allen, Andrews, Bond, Moseley, and Ramsey, "Introduction" in *Listening to Listeners*, 8. Moreover, FGKI could share their faith and personal testimonies through fellowship (meal fellowship after the service and group-fellowship bible study meeting). Through fellowship meeting, FGKI who have similar cultural background and hardship in the United States, enable to share their stories about suffering as well as their testimonies how God reveals Him/Herself in their lives and how they overcome hardship in the Spirit. For example, Antony W. Alumkal shows how a Korean ethnic church member feels about the church's fellowship: "There are a lot of benefits to going to a Korean fellowship because it gives you...I guess the same way my parents felt, like that comfort and bonding and being able to relate with other people who have similar struggles. In that sense, it's kind of an added bonus, knowing that other people are going through the same challenges as you." It reveals how Christian FGKI in the same community of faith can identify their alienation with one another and in consequence share their sufferings as well as testimonies. Antony W. Alumkal, "Being Korean, Being Christian: Particularism and Universalism in a Second-Generation Congregation," in *Korean Americans and Their Religions: Pilgrims and Missionaries from a Different Shore*, ed. Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim and R. Stephen Warner (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 185.

⁵²¹ Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 38, 209, 222. For that reason, FGKIs' praise must occur here and now. My point is that their experience of redemptive joyfulness does not need to be postponed until the next generation possibly attains the American Dream.

by his divine presence and left its kerygmatic marks throughout its long history.”⁵²²

Moreover, marginalized FGKIs’ testimonies about their gritty experience of God may well be able to rekindle others’ faded faith. If confessional speech in the sermon includes some FGKIs’ new experience of God amidst their failure in material success or health, other hearers could be challenged to search for God’s compassion in their lives. Such revelatory witness authentically articulates the ethnic church’s theology. Indeed, the ethnic church’s confession before the world is not “the same as loudly shrieking out propaganda” or merely giving consent to specific dogma.⁵²³ Instead, it comes out of a life of discipleship. It is the faithful *habitus* of immigrant disciples that I address in the next step: the vow of praise.

D. Preaching for Obedient Vow

After lament, retelling the story and confessional doxology, homiletical rhetoric intentionally intensifies Christian FGKIs’ spiritual commitment to the word of God. Put differently, a psalmic-theological homiletic intends to encourage FGKIs’ to seek a new life, embodied by practices that are faithful to what God reveals in preaching. Such a new way of life is linked with Farley’s practical theology of “performing the gospel (embodiment of the divine future being revealed in the sermon)” and his conception of *habitus*: a disposition or orientation devoted to the practical but critical living out of

⁵²² Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 194.

⁵²³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *A Year with Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Daily Meditations from His Letter, Writings, and Sermons* (New York: Harper Collins, 2005), 195.

faith in the coming kingdom of God.⁵²⁴ This *habitus* as a particular form of a God-centered way of life reveals the kingdom of God in tangible form, which is vital to continuing the church’s missiological task. Hence, in psalmic-theological preaching, a homiletic rhetoric that intends to evoke obedient vow seeks to build up FGKIs’ new *habitus*, transforming *from* a self-centered way of life *toward* a God-centered way of life and holistic engagement in God’s future by means of the preaching ministry.⁵²⁵ Here, this part will inquire into homiletical-theological insights of preaching for obedient vow for the sake of FGKIs’ new *habitus*.

1. The Vow of Praise in the Psalms and Its Theological Perspectives⁵²⁶

In the Psalms, Israel’s lament, recounting Yahweh’s glorious deeds, and praising the Lord, eventually turn into Israel’s vow of praise, namely, Israel’s pledge of faithfulness. The vow as a spiritual act arose out of the worshipper’s certainty of the Lord’s unfailing love and salvation. Vows as voluntary climactic expressions are often articulated resolutions made before God. They were commonplace in Israel’s language and practices of faith. Some examples of vows in the Psalms include the following:

Ps. 22 (Individual Lament)	
Address and introductory cry for help	My God, why?
Lament	Why hast thou...Thou dost lay me in the dust of death (vv.1-2)
Confession of trust	Yet thou art holy...In thee our fathers trusted...

⁵²⁴ Farley, *Theologia*, 35; Swinton and Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 27; Swinton, “What is Practical Theology?,” 407.

⁵²⁵ Park, *From Hurt to Healing*, 78.

⁵²⁶ According to C. Hassell Bullock, a vow of praise belongs in an integral way to the category of praise. Bullock, *Encountering the Book of the Psalms*, 124.

	Upon thee was I cast from y birth...(vv.3-5, 9-10)
Petition	Be not far off (vv.11,19-21)
Motifs	There is none to help
Vow of praise	I will tell of thy name to my brethren (v.23)
Praise of God	For he has not despised...He has wrought it...(vv.24, 31) ⁵²⁷

Here, Israel's vows or promises are that they will continuously praise God's righteousness in their daily lives, regardless of what difficulties might lie ahead. They promise to tell of and glorify God's name and redemptive action in the world, and to remain faithful to God. Here are some examples:

“As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness” (Ps. 17:15).

“I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you” (Ps. 22:22).

“My foot stands on level ground; in the great congregation I will bless the Lord” (Ps. 26:12).

“My vows to you I must perform, O God; I will render thank offerings to you. For you have delivered my soul from death, and my feet from falling, so that I may walk before God in the light of life” (Ps. 56:12-13).⁵²⁸

The vow of praise performed in worship goes hand in hand with carrying out vows in their daily lives.

At first, the theological meaning of a vow was nothing less than the worshipper's public pledge to remain faithful in everyday life.⁵²⁹ The fact that vows sometimes appear at the end of psalms suggests that they marked a new beginning in the worshipper's life.⁵³⁰ It seems that vows in psalmic rhetoric emboldened Israel's trust in and praise of Yahweh, and that encouraged them to take that trust from the liturgical setting into their

⁵²⁷ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 58, 68, 103.

⁵²⁸ Pss. 17; 22; 26; 56 are all individual psalms of lament.

⁵²⁹ Westermann comments that there is no real difference at all between “to promise” and “to vow.” Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 77.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.

everyday lives. In other words, the rhetoric of the Psalms moved toward a vow—as a decisive and public proclamation of one’s intention in the future. Childs remarks that, “It is difficult to overestimate the role of the Psalter in shaping the moral life of the church.”⁵³¹ Vows had the power to shape Israel’s life and to make the truth of God’s message permeate Israel’s whole life.

Voluntary vows in the moment of liturgical joy were Israel’s deliberate pledge of commitment of their lives to the divine. For instance, Mays argues that vows of praise in the Psalms were “a form of commitment and a dedication of life.”⁵³² Thus, vows were a decisive statement of commitment made to God. They were not only isolated acts of praise in the (present-moment) worship as a response to God but also pledges of long-term commitment to God’s will in Israel’s future life. Vows played a role in initiating Israel’s submission to the divine’s vision. They expressed future obedience. Therefore, Westermann states that “originally the vow of praise and the pledge of sacrifice were interrelated.”⁵³³ In light of that, a vow’s own original meaning was bound up with sacrifice; a vow was a pledge that Israel’s life belonged to God as much the food in the sacrifice is for God.⁵³⁴ In this respect, the Psalms were intensely practical in helping to renew Israel’s life.

⁵³¹ Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments*, 710.

⁵³² Mays, *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms*, 25. Mays in *The Lord Reigns*, states that “The hymns as Israel’s confession of faith are the liturgical obedience to the First Commandment. The Psalms says a yes to Adonai that is a no to other gods... The praise of psalms as confession is the liturgy for the mission.” Mays, *The Lord Reigns*, 67.

⁵³³ Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 221. For example, in Psalm 66:13-16, the psalmist was about to offer a sacrifice to God in the holy place, in performance of a vow: “I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows, those that my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble” (Ps. 66:13-14, individual song of thanksgiving, NRSV). Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, 221.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 77.

2. Homiletical Approach: Immigrant Preaching for Obedient Vow

Immigrant Preaching for a New Habitus

Generally speaking, preaching's purpose is to invoke a new *habitus*: a disposition or orientation devoted to the practical but critical living out of faith in the coming kingdom of God.⁵³⁵ Thus, a psalmic-theological homiletic also pursues the enhancement of FGKIs' faithful *habitus* for God's future, that is a God-centered way of life that replaces the self- and success-oriented *habitus* that prosperity preaching and its theology advances. Indeed, believers' authentic assent to the certainty of truth in the sermon allows them to align their lives at every level with what authenticates the truth.

Christian history has shown that faith manifests not only as confessional speech, but also as daily deeds. Hence, faithful language about God in a liturgical setting is expected to invoke new fidelity in a congregation's life. Henry Mitchell, who underscores faithful behavior as the central sermonic objective, asserts that "the preacher's goal is to be used of God to move hearers' supporting core beliefs and entire life-style closer and closer to the new person in Christ."⁵³⁶ Put differently, preaching aims to create alternative patterns of living that transforms old habits. Proper appropriation of the Psalms and their function in an immigrant homiletic is not only for the purpose of consoling desperate people through lament, but also to evoke a theocentric spirituality and a faithful, habitual orientation. Furthermore, Fulkerson's statement that "discipleship is demanding and full-time" rightly implies that the immigrant church should strive for faithful praxis in everyday life—that is, in private

⁵³⁵ Farley, *Theologia*, 35; Swinton and Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 27; Swinton, "What is Practical Theology?," 407.

⁵³⁶ Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching*, 19.

and public contexts—by ordering their lives in godly ways.⁵³⁷ For instance, E. M. Kim’s practice of preaching invites hearers to keep a faithful *habitus* for the sake of the divine’s transformative future by naming God’s righteousness in this unredeemed world.

For some FGKIs who are daily enticed by the elusive American Dream, preaching needs to stimulate a radical reorientation of life toward God in the Spirit. Reorientation of life implies transformation *from* a self-centered way of life *to* a theocentric one by relativizing earthly security and power. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Dream ideology is based on people’s rapacious greed for social-economic monopoly through possession of territories and goods, unjust economic stratification, and a self-serving value system at the expense of other socioeconomically fragile groups. If FGKIs devote their greatest energies to chasing the American Dream, inevitably the Dream’s values will order their behaviors and aspirations. Given these circumstances, the ethnic church needs to seek FGKIs’ liberation from their servitude to this illusion. Here, preaching ministry is expected to function as offering an alternative vision by inspiring believers to dedicate themselves to the divine future.⁵³⁸

Immigrant Preaching for a Life Obedient to God’s Promise and God’s Labor

A psalmic-theological preaching is designed to orient FGKIs’ devotional life to the divine’s future activity. Put another way, the purpose of the sermonic vow language is to inspire believers to passionately surrender themselves to God’s vision in terms of uncompromising obedience to God’s promise. Hence, preaching purposefully invites

⁵³⁷ Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption*, 184.

⁵³⁸ Jacobsen, “The Unfinished Task of Homiletical Theology,” 113.

believers to respond to God's call by partaking in God's creative labor. Such participation includes holding the grand imperative vision of God before the congregations' eyes, the vision of God's promised future of justice, mercy, and peace, as well as engaging more directly in efforts to attain justice for all.⁵³⁹ Mitchell also comments that preaching should prompt trust in and obedience to God.⁵⁴⁰

In her sermon, "Could We Sing the Lord's Song?" displays homiletically how to help empower hearers to commit to the divine future in their given situation. She challenges FGKIs' human propensity to remain in a place of comfort and ease by compelling hearers to live in a new social order—the promised eschatological kingdom of God. Put differently, she tries to encourage those left powerless on society's margins to take part in God's new order. She proclaims that "God was with them and at work in their margins to transform the old world into a new one."⁵⁴¹ Her theology of preaching praxis is thus the opposite of the practice of shamanistic-prosperity preaching which has a tendency to promote a self-centered way of life and accentuate a personalized faith. In this respect, a psalmic-theological homiletic accommodates to critical obedient to the word of God (God's promise) and God's way of life.

In fact, such homiletic emphasis on the church's engagement of God's labor to heal the world of suffering is antithetical to prosperity preaching which aims for self-fulfillment. This is because a psalmic-theological homiletic approaches human suffering—particularly that of poor and marginalized people—by underlining God's solidarity with FGKIs' groaning as the good news *and* God's call to discipleship in

⁵³⁹ Hall, *Professing the Faith*, 14.

⁵⁴⁰ Mitchell, *Celebration and Experience in Preaching*, 19, 54.

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

terms of faithful *habitus*. Consequently, the sermonic flow from lament to vow designs preaching not to end with lament. Nor is the sermon designed to inculcate a transient sense of well-being or temporary belief. Instead, it intends to arouse FGKIs' substantive decision, commitment to God's eschatological vision with resilient hope. Of course, hearers' vow is expected to be a life-long engagement in the depths of human existence for all creation's abundant life.⁵⁴²

Action-Oriented Immigrant Preaching Through Imaginative Persuasive

As stated above, immigrant preaching cannot but help to reconstruct an alternative reality because lamenting from the margins envisages a better future in the broader vista of God's justice and promises. In Korean Christianity, such a feature of immigrant preaching corresponds to the character of *minjung* theology that emerged to pursue liberation from unjust social orders. To liberate the people's unjust experience in Korea, *minjung* theology frequently projects an alternative community in which justice, shalom and *koinonia* are realized.⁵⁴³ The projected vision for the messianic kingdom of Jesus in *minjung* theology does not take sides with those people who claim the kingdom for the powerful and rich and in doing so, dominate the *minjung* and alienate the powerless.⁵⁴⁴ To bring about people's commitment to God homiletically, preaching

⁵⁴² E.S. Gestenberger and Wolfgang Schrage, *Suffering* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1981), 166.

⁵⁴³ D. Premana Niles, "The Word of God and the People of Asia," in *Understanding the Word: Essays in Honor of Bernhard W. Anderson*, ed. James T. Butler, Edgar W. Conrad and Ben C. Ollenburger (Thousand Oaks, CA: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1985), 294.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

evocatively illustrates a reconstructive imagining of God's reign.⁵⁴⁵ In spite of the preacher's frailties, the envisioned reality of God and the God's future becomes a source of critical hope for hearers when they are reminded of that reality and future regularly.

According to Andrews, through sermons a future expectation "invokes responsibility for the future. Likewise, a future hope sustains and empowers us in living in the present."⁵⁴⁶ Eschatological preaching is not about predicting the future; it primarily animates hearers to see the present in the light of hope.⁵⁴⁷ Preaching's constructive-imaginative language, centered on a subversive alternative world, intends to arouse a future commitment to hope. Such hope invigorates FGKIs' passionate, concerned, and obedient living for the coming future of God in the midst of residing between the reality of injustice and God's righteous reign—a hope that aims to uphold the people's confidence in God's faithfulness in the promised future.⁵⁴⁸

Such homiletical emphasis accords with J. Y. Lee's insistence: J. Y. Lee suggests that a blueprint of the future of Korean American preaching could be an action-oriented preaching. He states, "interpreting biblical texts on the basis of praxis means to divert the shamanistic mentality that seeks an inner satisfaction, and to turn toward an action-oriented life that emphasizes service to the world."⁵⁴⁹ According to him, future Korean

⁵⁴⁵ Anna Carter Florence, "The Preaching Imagination," in *Teaching Preaching as a Christian Practice: A New Approach to Homiletical Pedagogy*, ed. Thomas G. Long and Lenora Tubbs Tisdale (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 118, 119.

⁵⁴⁶ Andrews, *Practical Theology for Black Churches*, 48.

⁵⁴⁷ Long, *Preaching from Memory to Hope*, 129.

⁵⁴⁸ Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 62.

⁵⁴⁹ Lee, *Korean Preaching*, 126.

preaching must focus on Christian commitment to God's future for transforming an unjust society into a just one.⁵⁵⁰ He calls such a homiletical transition: transforming the self-directed approach to human suffering *into* a service-directed approach like the practice of *jeong*, as noted earlier.⁵⁵¹

Of course, FGKIs are already living in God's new land, given that the whole world belongs to God. Therefore, the church's pastoral task is to encourage them to remain faithful to God in their current living place and to live "into a grace-filled world of possibilities."⁵⁵² Thus, my concern for immigrant preaching is to highlight how preaching is designed to assure people of God's love, rekindle their faithful hope, prompt them to seek a joyful existence, and empower faithfulness in a new land, regardless of their social status. Through the preacher's creative imagination, the alternative world presented in a sermon is "an eschatological capacity that fosters hope and clarity about what humanity needs to do to usher in the not-yet" of the kingdom of God, and deepens FGKIs' capacity for creative living between today's lamentable world and God's promise.⁵⁵³

Conclusion

This chapter has explored a psalmic-theological homiletic that consists of four constitutive steps: a) preaching as lament, b) preaching as retelling the story, c) preaching as confessional doxology and d) preaching for obedient vow. I have assessed

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵⁵² Goto, *The Grace of Playing*, 57.

⁵⁵³ Ibid., 32.

the theological significance of these four rhetorical steps from the perspective of the margins, particularly the experience of FGKIs. Along with expressing concern for FGKIs' contextual sufferings, a psalmic-theological preaching attempts to reinvigorate damaged faith in yearning for the coming reign of God and ultimately to build up for faithful *habitus*. Throughout the chapter, I have tried to demonstrate how E. M. Kim's sermon, "Could We Sing the Lord's Song?" homiletically supports my proposed preaching for FGKIs, emphasizing her positive contribution to my homiletic. In the following chapter, I will investigate Korean immigrant sermons, specifically those by Rev. Seung Mok Choi and Rev. Hanyoh Kim. Both sermons will demonstrate how my homiletical theory can revise extant Korean immigrant preaching.

CHAPTER 5. HOMILETICAL ANALYSIS OF KOREAN IMMIGRANT SERMONS

This chapter will analyze two Korean immigrant sermons—one by Rev. Seung Mok Choi’s and another from Rev. Hanyoh Kim—by comparing their actual practices of preaching for the local FGKIs to a psalmic-theological homiletic. My sermonic analysis will emphasize how preachers proclaim the gospel to respond to their own local hearers’ contextual woundedness from a Christian perspective. As stated earlier, a psalmic-theological homiletic from the perspective of practical theology attempts to give liberative response to hearers’ groans of suffering at the frustrated margins. Alternatively stated, my psalmic-theological homiletic begins with FGKIs’ painful circumstances and moves to a discernment of alternative redemptive meanings from suffering in order to empower them to transform pain into new life. With such a practical-theological *telos*, my homiletic flow intentionally moves from lament to vow. This chapter compares two sermons: a) Rev. Choi’s “Immigrants’ Suffering and Sadness” and b) Rev. Kim’s “Immigrant Family’s Suffering.” Both sermons were directly intended for FGKIs who undergo diverse suffering in their daily lives: financial difficulty, language barriers, racial discrimination, and family trouble.

In fact, some Korean immigrant preachers (Rev. Choi and Rev. Kim among them) proclaim the gospel in a way that echoes my proposed homiletic to some degree. To be sure, there are some significant differences still between their sermons and my homiletic. For example, Rev. Choi and Rev. Kim theologially reinterpret in a similar fashion the real suffering of their hearers from a biblical perspective to find the liberating word of God in the mist of their ongoing chaotic situation. With a theological interpretation of a

reality worthy of lament, Rev. Choi urges FGKIs to invite the congregation to participate in the church's missional tasks, embracing others' pain, while Rev. Kim encourages FGKIs to encounter God's loving presence in their vulnerable life conditions. As for differences with my psalmic-theological homiletic, both Rev. Choi and Kim's sermons have a different sermonic flow which corresponds to each preacher's own homiletical emphasis. For instance, Rev. Choi's sermonic structure has a) the obedient vow as introduction, b) lament of FGKIs' suffering, c) retelling the biblical story, and d) the obedient vow as a conclusion. In the case of Rev. Kim's preaching, its homiletical movement is a) introduction, b) retelling the story, c) lament of the contemporary FGKIs' plight, d) solving the contemporary FGKIs' problem, e) retelling the story to proclaim the good news, and f) a confessional doxology with the conclusion.

In this chapter, I will analyze their sermons through the lens of my four homiletic steps: a) lament, b) retelling the story, c) confessional doxology, and d) obedient vow. As a result, the sermonic analysis in this chapter will shed light on their homiletical contributions to a psalmic-theological homiletic because my homiletic stems from my critical-theological conversation with the existing practice of Korean immigrant preaching including their local/contextual theologies for FGKIs. This chapter will then illuminate the more unique features of my proposed homiletic that is potentially designed to provide future direction for a more collective-transformative local practice of preaching. In other words, both sermons offer room to reflect on further homiletical-theological development that will better serve the specific context of FGKIs. I believe that the extant Korean immigrant preaching could be more profitably revised on the basis of critical dialogue with a psalmic-theological homiletic.

A. Rev. Seung Mok Choi's Sermon

Rev. Choi, a senior pastor in the Korean Methodist Church of Palm Springs (CA), preached about FGKIs' suffering and a new vision of their life as Christian immigrants in the United States under the title, "Immigrants' Suffering and Sadness." The main scripture for his sermon is Matthew 11:29-30. The purpose of the sermon is to enliven FGKIs' damaged faith, spirit and life by proclaiming divine grace and the word of God, and to further urge them to take part in the church's missional tasks, including serving other ethnic minorities, doing overseas missionary work, and helping others in need.

Rev. Choi's sermon was chosen because, first, the sermon explicitly copes with FGKIs' collective suffering and the primary hearers are FGKIs. These two things allow me to compare the existing preaching practice of the Korean ethnic church to my proposed homiletic, underlining how to respond to FGKIs' communal hardship in theological and pastoral ways. Second, his theological comprehension of FGKIs' plight and homiletical development offer significant areas of similarity to and difference from my proposal. For example, his sermon implicitly displays that FGKIs' suffering is not the result of God's punishment, but of contemporary society's prejudice and racism. His theological approach is distinct from some Korean preachers' inclination to regard FGKIs' hardship as God's spiritual testing or as punishment for our personal sin. Third, his sermon movement encompasses similarities and differences to my proposed homiletical steps. Finally, Rev. Choi's sermon includes Korean Christianity's specific heritage (discussed earlier) and thereby allows me to reaffirm positive Korean-Christian elements for the future of immigrant preaching.

a) Obedient Vow as Introduction⁵⁵⁴

It is important to note that his sermon does not start with lament over FGKIs' specific life situation. In the introduction of the sermon, Rev. Choi envisions the church helping other immigrants (namely, Hispanic families and their kids) through the church's school ministry, affiliated with the Dove's Landing School. That is, his sermon begins with the church's communal praxis. As FGKIs who experience hardship in the United States, his church members, as Rev. Choi asserts, must embody God's compassion toward other immigrants through the school ministry. Structurally, at the beginning and end of the sermon, he suggests that the divine vision can help other ethnic groups and other poor countries not only to heal their brokenness but also to help the congregation's own posture of Christ-like sympathy for others' suffering. In terms of sermonic content, the introduction function as the homiletical vow step, encouraging believers to engage actively in God's alternative future:

Our church has started with a school ministry. It means that "Dove's Landing School" has become our affiliate. Last week, I had to preach to the school's parents at a PTA meeting. I saw that there were many Hispanic parents who hardly speak English...Thus, one of our youth group members translated English into Spanish during the sermon. I could feel that the Hispanic parents were getting comfortable with our school. The moment reminded me of a dream that God gave me. Some years ago, I dreamed that my wife, the elder, and myself went to the minority neighbors below our church building. At that time, it seemed to me that God said, "If you serve them, I will bless you." Since then, I have dreamed that our church is serving Hispanic groups and other ethnic minorities as well. We should know that we are all immigrants in this land. Indeed, all people in America are immigrants except Native Americans, that is, Indians. All people here are [immigrants, whether] from Asia or Europe, such as England, France, Germany, etc. We have to help each other for a better life.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁴ These subtitles come from my analysis from the perspective of a psalmic-theological homiletic.

⁵⁵⁵ Rev. Seung Mok Choi delivered this sermon on 5 October 2014 at Korean Methodist Church of Palm Springs. Seung Mok Choi, "Immigrants' Suffering and Sadness," *Korean Methodist Church of Palm Springs*, October 5, 2014, <http://www.pspkmc.com>.

His sermon begins with proclaiming the church's missionary work that is rooted in God's passionate vision by means of suggesting faithful life within a God-given wider vision. That is, he urges church members to participate in responsible and faithful actions for a better future for the world, God's creation. Unlike my homiletical proposal, he starts with God's calling toward the church, and then encourages hearers to engage in the ecclesiological mission. If this part plays a role in the primary homiletic of introduction, it introduces the central idea of the sermon—that is, the ethnic church's faithful commitment to God's calling through engaging the church's mission. In addition, it theologically functions as obedient vow for God's eschatological vision, proposing future praxis—seen from the view of my proposed homiletical perspective.

b) Lament of FGKIs' Communal Plight

Rev. Choi's sermon turns directly to FGKIs' common suffering: things like bankruptcy, disappointment in their children, experiences of betrayal by their relatives and close friends, and racial discrimination.⁵⁵⁶ He recounts some stories of FGKIs' suffering due to cultural differences, loneliness in society, language difficulties, and racial prejudice; for example, the elder's hate crime story and his own experience in a different culture. Unlike FGKIs' hardship—mainly focused on racism or prejudice in my

⁵⁵⁶ I assume that disappointment with the children in the sermon means that children cannot rise to the level of their parents' expectations, perhaps including not being accepted to Ivy-league schools or not securing prestigious jobs. Or, Korean immigrant parents might feel the conflict of a cultural gap with their younger Americanized generation. Younger American generation tends to "question and challenge the traditional beliefs and values of their parents including the absolute authority of the father, rigidly defined gender roles, and the lack of their parents' respect for the American way of life." Ailee Moon and Young I. Song, "Ethnic Identities Reflection in Value Orientation of Two Generations of Korean American Women," in *Korean American Women: From Tradition to Modern Feminism*, ed. Young In Song and Ailee Moon (Westport, WA: Praeger, 1998), 140.

homiletical proposal—his sermon involves diverse forms of suffering due to his knowledge of the congregation’s real-life situations and pain-filled experience of human brokenness:

In our church’s after school program, we have a wonderful Hispanic teacher, Joseph Pin. He is very smart and a wonderful person. In Mexico, his father was a lawyer. However, his family decided to move to the United States. This is because the income from working in a hotel [in the U.S.] is much better than working as a lawyer in Mexico. Yes, immigrants come to America because they are desperate. However, living here as an immigrant is also not easy. We experience bankruptcy although we invest our whole fortune for a better life in a new land. We get betrayed by our relatives and close friends. Our kids are disappointed in us. We undergo social alienation and racial discrimination in mainstream society.

I’ve heard of a church member’s experience about a fender-bender accident. He was a legal resident and graduated one of IVY league university in South Korea. Since it has been just a couple of months to come to the United States for him, his felt a language barrier. One day, he drove to the market. Suddenly, the car behind him reversed toward him. It hit his car. Therefore, he got out of the car and said, “Why did you reverse? You hit me!” Embarrassingly, the white man shouted, “If you call the police, I will say that you hit me! Be quiet! Just go back to your country.” The white man threatened him in this way and then he ran away. I saw that he felt aggrieved at the white American man.

In 2004, I came to the United States. In that year, I got almost shot to death when I was caught by the police for speeding. It was the first-time experience about a speed ticket in America. In fact, whenever we get caught for speeding in South Korea, we get off the car and talk with the police. One day, it was around midnight. I had to drive 2 hours in the forest. It was really dark and tiring. So, I was speeding up. A police car came after me. I realized that I got caught for speeding. After pulling over, I got out of my car and walked down to the police. As soon as the police saw I walked to him, he returned to the car and hid himself behind the door. I thought; “Why is he hiding?” I was curious. The police kept shouting. I could not hear that. To listen to what he said, I took a step toward him.

The police shouted more loudly. At that time, I suddenly realized that he held a gun on me (because I could not see it was really dark.) Long story short, I knew that we must sit in the car when we get caught by the police. It is one example of culture shock I experienced.⁵⁵⁷

I believe that his knowledge of individuals in the congregation brings about effective preaching by way of “empathic imagination” (putting oneself in the place of the

⁵⁵⁷ Choi, “Immigrants’ Suffering and Sadness.” I translated Rev. Choi’s sermon from Korean into English.

parishioners).⁵⁵⁸ Further, the enumeration of stories about FGKIs' predicaments can be linked with the methodology of *minjung* theology (even though the preacher does not seem to adopt *minjung* theology's methodology in the sermon explicitly). For David Kwang-sung Suh, in *minjung* theology, the simple story is the tool of the people to communicate their suffering (*han*) in order to shape a new society.⁵⁵⁹ The stories of individuals represent the common social experiences of the community to which they belong.⁵⁶⁰ In the sermon, telling stories of FGKIs' lived experience plays a role in forming a bond of sympathy as outsiders. Along with that, the rhetoric of lament as a truthful retelling of people's lived experiences of despair in the absurdity of society explodes their suppressed feeling of distress in the preaching event. We can assume that Rev. Choi's vocative description of the congregations' hardship is pastoral compassion toward them. One interesting point is that his sermonic tone in the form of a lament story does not merely sound sad. Rather, it sounds like he transcends sadness using humor; for example, his personal story about the traffic signal violation.⁵⁶¹ From the

⁵⁵⁸ Richard L. Eslinger, *The Web of Preaching: New Options in Homiletical Method* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 26. Eslinger notes that "What is also considered is the powerful relationship that exists between pastors and congregation. Put together, the knowledge accumulated through this process will enable the pastor "to preach with a power and effectiveness unavailable to the guest speaker..." Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Chang-Hee Son, *Han of Minjung Theology and Han of Han Philosophy: In the Paradigm of Process Philosophy and Metaphysics of Relatedness* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000), 51.

⁵⁶⁰ Park, *Korean Preaching, Han and Narrative*, 20. The church's website introduces that Rev. Choi has lived in the United States over 10 years as an immigrant. He shares the stories of FGKIs' distress by which he has met other believers for the past years.

⁵⁶¹ In his praxis of preaching, his humorous speech tone in lament reminds us about Koreans' spiritual experience of critical transcendence. Koreans traditionally experienced freedom, watching the Korean mask dance that danced and made fun of the ruling class of the old Korean society. "In the laughter of mask dances, the performers and the audience experience critical transcendence of the injustices of the world...The experience of critical transcendence

perspective of a psalmic-theological homiletic, Rev. Choi's rhetorical performance of the lament step is not only compassionate lament toward the congregation, but also lament as voices from marginality in a particularly pastoral way. What differs from my homiletic, is that his lament does not explicitly include the preacher's expectation throughout the whole sermon of God's restorative justice in the present injurious social condition. To put another way, Rev. Choi does not eventually bring about his homiletical imagination of a new life order in which God presides throughout the whole sermon. Rather, his sermon unpacks the present brokenness—such as racial discrimination and prejudice against Korean immigrants—but it does not envisage a better future in terms of the church's vocational call to restoration. My proposed homiletic, however, is concerned not only with the sermonic illustration of human suffering but also with the prophetic imagination of envisioning a different future—motivating hopeful action amidst challenges in terms of the spiritual experience of critical transcendence.

c) Retelling the Biblical Story in light of Contextualization

In a fashion similar to my own homiletical movement, Rev. Choi's sermon moves toward the biblical world. In his sermon, retelling the story functions as a theocentric recounting to encourage FGKIs to encounter God's reality in desperate times, emphasizing God's prior deeds of redemption in the biblical world. He takes hearers to the biblical world, specifically to biblical figures who are immigrants—such as Abraham,

leads the present history and transforming the world of oppression.” And humor in the sermon could allow hearers to see the topic in a new but nonthreatening way in the midst of considering a heavy topic. Son, *Han of Minjung Theology and Han of Han Philosophy*, 54; Ronald J. Allen, *Preaching the Topical Sermon* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 109.

the father of our faith—who risks their lives in foreign lands. He shows how dangerous the immigrant experience was for Abraham and his family. He says that they experienced cultural clashes, threats from established residents, and barriers erected by residents, just as we often experience. Regarding the sermonic structure, the stories of the current FGKIs' suffering and the biblical stories are very often intertwined with each other so as to facilitate identifying their lives with those of biblical immigrants. He obviously contextualizes the gospel in an emergent context by connecting the message of the text to FGKIs' everyday life. Put another way, he approaches the biblical story from the perspective of immigration to help the Bible function anew as good news for FGKIs:

In the scripture, there are lots of biblical immigrants and stories of their hardships as immigrants in a strange land. According to the Bible, our father in the faith, Abraham, was also an immigrant. He was not an Israelite. He was a person who lived in Ur of the Chaldeans, now Iraq. In biblical times, an immigrant's life was very fearful, vulnerable, and unsafe. In ancient times, the world was a tribal society. If unknown tribes entered a certain tribal society, it was considered trespassing. As a matter of fact, ancient society could be divided into two societies; c.f., agrarian and pastoral societies. As you know, our church has helped the Indian community; they have two kinds of tribes, the (agrarian) Hopi tribe and (pastoral) Navajo tribe. Similarly, during the ancient biblical times, there were two different tribes. If a pastoral tribe were to come into an agrarian tribal area with sheep, the agrarian tribe would not welcome their arrival because their animals would eat the grass.

The scripture mentions that Abraham, who is the father of our faith, went to a place by faith even though he did not know where he was going (Heb. 11:8). For Abraham, immigration meant risking their lives. They also suffered language barriers, cultural differences, and discrimination from the residents, much as we undergo here. For instance, Abraham came close to losing his wife. They were deprived of Isaac's wells and their father's wells by the Philistines several times.⁵⁶²

One reason Rev. Choi talks about the biblical immigrants' stories is to highlight that our predicament as immigrants is overcome by seeking God's grace, just as the biblical

⁵⁶² Choi, "Immigrants' Suffering and Sadness."

figures did. For that reason, he chooses Matthew 11:28-30 as the main scripture.⁵⁶³ By seeking God's grace, he wants hearers' brokenness to be healed by the divine's embracing love. He eventually wants them to encourage them to transcend their suffering by participating in the church's mission. To some degree, this could connect to the liberating practices of Korean spirituality—in this case, by spiritually transcending their current suffering through envisaging a better future. By recounting God's grace toward biblical figures, the sermon communicates that God did not abandon the biblical immigrants but instead listened to their prayer in times of difficulty. He points out, furthermore, that God was present in their unstable lives and finally saved them. Retelling the story embodies a paradoxical proclamation of God's abiding presence in the contemporary hearers' wounded hearts, and declares God's faithful commitment to the people of God. This hardly seems irrelevant to Moltmann's theology of God's identification with immigrants in the absolute depth of their predicament, thus revealing the divine's gracious compassion toward them. Moreover, the sermon implies that God will heal our broken hearts when we trust in God, and that God will save us from our multilayered difficulties when we remember what God has done in biblical immigrants' lives. Therefore, by retelling the story, a story that incorporates theological and biblical insights into current FGKIs' unique experiences, he encourages the congregation to seek God's redemptive grace through prayer:

I say to you again. Abraham, Isaac and Joseph were immigrants like us. The apostles Paul, Silas, and Timothy were immigrants too. They experienced hardship as immigrants as well. One important thing is that they prayed whenever they faced

⁵⁶³ Matthew 11:28-30 is that "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light (NRSV)."

predicaments. They prayed to God. And in prayer, they encountered God in their unsafe and vulnerable life condition.⁵⁶⁴

In this manner, the sermon evokes FGKIs' anticipation of God's salvific possibilities in their present situation of suffering. Finally, his emphasis on encountering God in FGKIs' vulnerable life conditions is relevant to my immigrant theology: place-making practices that determine this new land as a place of grace, linked with an emergent reality, God-with-us even in FGKIs' ontological status of uncertainty.

d) Obedient Vow as Conclusion

Next, the sermon moves to how hearers could be healed by engaging in the church's mission and its communal practices. Such engagement gives believers a new *habitus*, just as my proposed homiletic aims to build up a more faithful *habitus* in the vow step. Rev. Choi suggests that hearers ought to faithfully practice God's mission by sharing their broken hearts in a fellowship meeting, serving each other, helping the poor in Uganda, practicing intercessory prayer (TSKD) for the oppressed in North Korea, and/or embracing other (ethnic) immigrants. His preaching urges TSKD, an indigenous faith practice of liberation, for the oppressed in North Korea, hoping that God will intervene in North Koreans' hardship. One important thing to note is that his encouragement stems not from a moral imperative, but from a voluntary submission to the ecclesiological mission. The preacher stresses how his church members experience God's grace in God's revelatory word in worship before he invites hearers to participate in the church's mission. He emphasizes that hearers as the children of God dwelling in God's love have a vocation to embody this love for those suffering. It also represents

⁵⁶⁴ Choi, "Immigrants' Suffering and Sadness."

Korean spirituality and its practice—*jeong*-oriented hospitality—a powerful compassion that involves feelings of kindness to people who are suffering and forgiveness to the oppressor. Instead of saying that God will bless our wish to attain the American Dream, he illustrates what a faithful way of life is, giving concrete examples of what a vision of the divine’s future looks like, a future that he urges his hearers to pursue. He exposes how the church communally embodies the realm of God:

Theologically, a characteristic of Matthew in the New Testament emphasizes the church and its roles for the kingdom of God. What does the church mean? The church is the kingdom of God. We experience the kingdom of God in the church through three things: *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*. *Kerygma* is the gospel as Jesus proclaims; *koinonia* indicates fellowship like that found in Jesus’ feeding ministry; and lastly *diakonia* means missionary work, serving tables as well as the distribution of financial resources. This is what the church has to do on earth for the kingdom of God...

As a matter of fact, we do missionary work communally through the church’s activity. *Koinonia*, which stems from divine love, helps the church become mature. The practice of missionary work makes the church healthier. Some elders said to me that they want to pray for North Korea. Along with that, our church has planned to help the poor in the Republic of Uganda. I hope that our church will be a church that does missionary work, helps others including other minority groups, and shares our financial resources. When we embody the divine love, the Spirit heals us. Also, whenever we help others in need, we can pray that the divine grace we already experience in this new land will work in others’ lives as well.

In this way, I envision that our church will have the power of the gospel (*kerygma*), encourage each other (*koinonia*), and help the poor and other minorities (*diakonia*) for the kingdom of God. Through such ecclesial practices, I believe that we experience God’s love and healing power even in our uneasy immigrant life. And I hope that our church will be filled with a wonderful testimony to God’s reality through our communal practices. Amen.⁵⁶⁵

In my view, Rev. Choi’s sermon moves from lament rhetoric about FGKIs’ vulnerable life condition, to remembrance of God’s abiding compassion for the biblical immigrants and God’s presence with them even in a foreign land, and finally to a proposal for communal faith practices in which the congregation can participate in the church missional work. His sermon does not explicitly contain the doxological step because,

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid.

after retelling the biblical story, he moves directly toward what God wants FGKIs to do in the new land—that is, discipleship (embracing others’ pain). He finishes the sermon with the step of obedient vow, but without any step involving confessional doxology. Indeed, in my homiletical proposal, confessional doxology is the subsequent step to retelling the story. In my homiletic, the step of confessional doxology attempts to re-affirm the truth, revealed by recounting the biblical story; for example, proclamation of God’s compassion in praise mode as a vigorous faith-declaration. It also resuscitates FGKIs’ damaged faith through the truth and inspires them to embody resilient hope. However, a homiletical element of confessional doxology does not explicitly appear in the body of his sermon, marking a difference from a psalmic-theological sermonic step. In sum, the homiletical difference is that my homiletic is intentionally designed to empower FGKIs’ joyful praise about a subversive truth (e.g., God’s solidarity with FGKIs’ groaning) before addressing the future communal practice; while Rev. Choi’s sermon directly undergirds the church’s collective participation after retelling the biblical story without the moment of hearers’ extravagant praise or his celebrative affirmation of the truth in doxological tone. As Cleophus J. LaRue puts it, “praise (celebration and emotional rejoicing) and action are binary in nature and interact with each other on the basis of a right understanding of the work of the Spirit.”⁵⁶⁶ Doxological praise, in my homiletic, is purposely structured to evoke further action in the Spirit as it relates to the obedient vow step. In other words, my homiletic intentionally reinforces celebrative proclamation as a necessary rhetorical step, to invite hearers to voluntarily enact the sermon’s revealed truth in daily living.

⁵⁶⁶ Cleophus J. LaRue, *Rethinking Celebration: From Rhetoric to Praise in African American Preaching* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2016), 71.

In regard to Rev. Choi's homiletical contribution to a psalmic-theological homiletic, firstly, he displays how to interpret the Bible from the perspective of immigration. He interprets the Bible from the marginalized position of hearers so that the message is more appropriate to believers' context. For the future of Korean-American preaching, J. Y. Lee states that Korean preachers can take sermon topics from immigrant themes in Scripture to deliver more meaningful and proper gospel to Koreans in the United States.⁵⁶⁷ In accordance with Lee's suggestion, Rev. Choi emphasizes the liberating God of history to the Hebrew immigrants and makes it relevant to contemporary believers. Through retelling God's past intervention in biblical immigrant's lives, Rev. Choi allows hearers to actively anticipate God's involvement in the world. Further, through theocentric remembrance, his preaching enables believers to enter the Christian story and God's promise instead of the inflated materialistic story of the American Dream. In so doing, by retelling God's redemptive action-centered story, he invites FGKIs to reorient themselves toward a spiritual journey with God instead of chasing a vision motivated by the Dream ideology.

Second, Rev. Choi performs sermonical lament in story form with pastoral compassion for the congregation's distress. With great sympathy, and imbued with divine compassion, his lament speech conveys God's love in the Spirit. He passionately engages with the congregation's suffering based on his own personal, embarrassing experiences as one of immigrants. His rhetoric of lament narrates the stories of suffering derived from the depths of people's actual experiences and their existential life settings so that these stories contain their painful reality. His language of suffering is, however,

⁵⁶⁷ Lee, *Korean Preaching*, 119.

not merely a complaint about their context but rather a homiletical invitation for hearers to hear the word of God in the midst of their suffering. Moreover, Rev. Choi's lament gives voices to an invisible group; namely, FGKIs who have been alienated from mainstream society. Furthermore, the story of lament does not end with lament itself. In terms of homiletical flow, the sermon moves toward the church's witness about the existence of a loving God in the midst of their hardship. It intends to allow hearers to acknowledge the immeasurable riches of God's goodness in their current lives. The individual's specific lament shifts to the church's communal lament over a profoundly unredeemed world, accentuating the church's participation in God's eschatological work.⁵⁶⁸ In so doing, his practice of preaching presents how to speak faithful words based on his theological perspective of pastoral care (by giving the good news of God's solidarity), and his ecclesiological work of the local congregation (by stressing the need to embrace others' broken heart in terms of participation in God's mission).

Third, Rev. Choi's sermon presents how an immigrant preacher performs his/her own theological contextualization for the congregation. Prosperity gospel preaching approaches human suffering with the promise of material blessing to heal broken hearts. His theology in the sermon, however, displays that God's blessing is not simply materialistic abundance, but God's presence amidst our suffering and God's solidarity with the broken. To prevent the misconception of God's blessing in shamanistic-prosperity theology, his preaching primarily proclaims God's unfailing care and God's holy presence in the biblical immigrants to console them. Along with this, he makes an

⁵⁶⁸ As noted above, from the standpoint of Moltmann, the church's fellowship with Christ's vicarious suffering is eschatologically grounded on the divine promise that the church will also join in the glory of Christ's resurrection life with unequivocal joyfulness (Rom. 6; Phil. 3). Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*, 59.

effort to reinvigorate their damaged faith by delivering the good news (God's solidarity or God's unfailing care). He underscores God's calling to discipleship—faithful *habitus*, that is, the church's communal participation in God's labor to heal the broken world. He does not lead FGKIs to adopt the self-centered mindset of the Dream ideology, but rather the self-emptying practice of discipleship represented by the cross. As a result, his sermon displays how local pastors can deliver the gospel formulated by his/her theological reflection on hearers' context.

As for the differences between Rev. Choi's sermon and my homiletical proposal, the stories in Rev. Choi's sermon mainly focus on FGKIs' collective suffering, not their testimonial statements about God's emergent reality or God's unfailing love on the edges. I have argued that immigrant preaching could usefully demonstrate FGKIs' experiences of God's redemptive action (as a lived faith) in the confessional doxological step. Put another way, a constructive testimonial story (as an illustration) about what God has done for the contemporary FGKIs' lives (not the biblical immigrants) could be a dynamic word that empowers them to celebrate God in the anticipation of the future divine's redemption. When he recounts the story, Rev Choi emphasizes how God helped the biblical immigrant figures. That said, it would be stronger still if he reinforced God's salvific actions in the contemporary FGKIs' lives in the mode of doxology. The church's new testimony about the living God's action for their daily lives (in light of the homiletical step of confessional doxology) could more effectively evoke FGKIs' redemptive joyfulness. Indeed, I wish to insist that lament in a sermon has an inherently doxological nature in terms of sermonic juxtaposition of lament and celebration. To manifest such a doxological nature of lament and celebration, my homiletic stresses that

the preacher needs to perform a salvific-pneumatic interpretation of the historical-existential reality to read signs of the times through deliberate attention to God's daily wonder in the present. However, Rev. Choi's sermon seems not to relate God's daily wonder to the contemporary congregant's lives. In short, Rev. Choi's sermon does not explicitly involve a declaration of a living confessional faith (in light of confessional doxology) as a way of manifesting God's love toward the contemporary congregation. His sermonic style runs the risk of losing confessional doxology's homiletical sense of possibility—that is, a celebrative moment in preaching could not only strengthen hearers' confident faith in God's compassionate presence alongside their hardship, but also bring about FGKIs' rapturous joy despite their ongoing hardships. In addition, Rev. Choi's encouragement of the church's communal/missionary practice without such a celebrative moment could lead FGKIs to feel that practice is a mandatory action disconnected from their personal and joyful vow before God. Yet, my homiletic pursues poor FGKIs' voluntary vow in joyfulness since living for Christ daily—discipleship—has to do with their spontaneous decision before God. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun also states that “Celebration can enlarge our capacity to enjoy and serve God.”⁵⁶⁹ I feel this is significantly different from Rev. Choi's preaching. If Rev. Choi preforms confessional doxology in preaching, his invitation—participation in the church's missionary works in the conclusion—would more effectively affect hearers' lives; it becomes not only the pastor's vocation but the vocation of all the hearers as they rejoice in the vision of God from the margins and further serve God's future.

⁵⁶⁹ Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us* (Downers Groves, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2015), 29.

Beyond that, his sermon also struggles to interpret FGKIs' common suffering within a larger socio-political reality and prejudice toward immigrants that demands justice and redress. For that reason, the sermon does not involve a theological imagining of God's vision for a creation that is good and just. In other words, it does not explicitly include the church's yearning for new (redemptive) possibilities to transform this hurtful reality of being into a redemptive one. Alternatively, Rev Choi's sermon tends to emphasize—without much critical reflection on society—the church's missional tasks based on his pastoral vision that he received in his own dream. Unlike his sermon, a psalmic-theological homiletic aims at fostering the congregation's capability for critical-theological thinking on their suffering from a Christian perspective in wider society. Such critical-theological rationality prevents misunderstanding of God's love by acknowledging the real connection between their personal suffering *and* social/cultural issues; that is, their hardship is not the outcome of abandonment by God. In comparison with Rev. Choi's sermon, my homiletic accentuates God's vision that could give rise to societal change.⁵⁷⁰ For that reason, in my homiletic, the church could also receive strength to struggle against a system that prevents the fulfillment of God's promised future to seek salvation for all. Hence, his sermon could be more persuasive if he would

⁵⁷⁰ A psalmic-theological homiletic is more closely tied to J. Y. Lee's proposal: He proposes that "The shamanistic approach emphasizes ecstatic experience, as a means of resolving unresolved anger and resentment for innocent victims, for members of an ethnic minority struggling to live in an unjust and racist society. A more realistic solution for this innocent suffering is not to escape into the temporary experience of ecstasy but to work to restore justice. The trance or ecstatic state is merely a temporary solution to the suffering created by injustice. True, lasting justice is not possible without action. That is why Korean preaching must focus more on our responsibility for transforming an unjust society into a just one." His point is that preaching needs a more critical view of an unjust society. Lee, *Korean Preaching*, 126.

bring God's future in an imaginative way with a critical-theological view on their suffering in wider society.

B. Rev. Hanyoh Kim's Sermon

Rev. Kim Hanyoh is senior pastor of Bethel Church (www.bkc.org). Bethel Church is one of the biggest Korean immigrant churches in western America with around 15,000 congregants. He preached the sermon, "Immigrant Family's Suffering" in Sunday worship service (Feb. 15, 2015). The main scripture for the sermon is Ruth 1:1-6. The sermon attempts to embolden FGKIs to encounter anew God's loving presence in the United States, by telling the ancient story of Naomi's family, a biblical immigrant family. His sermon moves back and forth between the ancient and the contemporary world. Although Rev. Kim's sermonic form does not outwardly resemble my proposed homiletic owing to his moving back and forth between two worlds, his sermon does actually include the homiletical elements of lament, retelling the story, and confessional doxology.

a) Introduction: The Reason for Immigration

Rev. Kim narrates why a Korean family immigrated to New Zealand in 1999. In the story, Sundeok Kim left South Korean because of the traumatic loss of her first son. Sundeok's story reminds hearers of their own reasons for leaving the homeland; at the same time, it intentionally allows hearers to know the reason for Naomi family's immigration. Overall, this story plays a role in introducing the sermonic—"immigration." In other words, the introduction orients hearers to the topic of the sermon:

Three years ago, I read a newspaper story about Sundeok Kim, a member of the Korean hockey national team in the 1988 Olympic Games (in Seoul). She unfortunately lost her

first son, a 6-year-old, because of a preschool fire accident in 1999. As you might remember, this accident caused serious damage and casualties due to teachers' carelessness and selfishness. When the preschool building was burning, all the teachers escaped but left behind all the preschoolers. Many preschoolers would die in that fire. Sundeok Kim's first son was one of them. It aroused great anger in the whole country. Kim's family decided to immigrate to New Zealand in order ease their deep agony and to forget such a traumatic memory. They decided to live as immigrants in New Zealand. Likewise, we are living here as immigrants. We left South Korea like Kim's family. We had certain reasons to leave our homeland, although our reasons are not generally as serious as Kim's. Today's Scripture also starts with a story of an immigrant family. The family left their homeland, Bethlehem in Judah, because of a famine. Bethlehem means "house of bread." Ironically, they left Bethlehem and immigrated to the country of Moab because there was no bread in Bethlehem, "house of bread."⁵⁷¹

In this respect, the introduction orients hearers' awareness of the topic by pairing the story of the contemporary immigrant (Kim's) family to the story of a biblical immigrant (Naomi's) family. While my psalmic-theological homiletic does not discuss the introduction; Rev. Choi and Rev. Kim begin their sermons telling a story that focuses on a topic.

b) Retelling the Story (1): Immigration in the Biblical World

After introducing the sermon's topic—immigration—Rev. Kim explicates the theological meaning of biblical immigration in correlation with God's providence. In other words, the Israelites' geographical movement was conducted for God's future/redemptive action to save other nations. For example, God brought Abraham from Ur of the Chaldeans to offer salvation to other nations:

In the biblical world, reasons for immigration varied from our reasons for immigration. Our general reason for immigration is to fulfill the American Dream. God chose Abraham, and then brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans. God led Abraham's family toward Canaan. It was God's redemptive action for saving other nations through Abraham. Abraham's immigration was part of God's salvific plan. In the Old Testament, there is a deep correlation between God's people and land; no land without the people of

⁵⁷¹ Hanyo Kim, "Immigrant Family's Suffering," February 12, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXcQIeW-VF8&t=2390s>. I translated Rev. Hanyoh Kim's sermon from Korean into English.

God and no people of God without land. God brought Abraham and God's people to Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey. Joseph's family went to Egypt when the famine had spread over Israel. Eventually, the Israelites multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous. Therefore, Egypt was filled with them. When God liberated the Israelites from Egyptian slavery through Moses, God had a specific reason—that is, God wanted to bring them to Canaan. God promised the Israelites Canaan. The Israelites took Canaan under Joshua's leadership, and then Joshua distributed Canaan, the land of promise, to them according to their tribal division. Canaan became the land of promise that God fulfilled. I think that the Israelites generally could not give up the land that their ancestors inherited. I mean that they really did not want to leave their land relevant to God's promise. However, in today's Scripture, Naomi family left the land. Why? ⁵⁷²

We presume that the reasons for a theological explanation of biblical immigration in correlation with the land and God's providence are: a) the preacher wants to allow hearers to be conscious of biblical immigration's theological background; and b) he wants to reinforce the ultimate reason for Naomi family's immigration, leaving their land in Bethlehem. Unlike as in a psalmic-theological homiletic, retelling the biblical story—Naomi family's lamentable situation—comes prior to the contemporary FGKIs' lament in Rev. Kim's preaching. As his promise of the topic—immigration—in the introduction, his storytelling about the Biblical family is derived from his perspective of immigration:

Elimelech, his wife, Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Kilion, immigrated to Moab to find something to eat. Moab was located on the opposite side of the Dead Sea. When they looked at the land of Moab, it looked more fertile and comparatively better, especially in their years of famine. Compared to their homeland, the land of Moab kept producing a good crop of wheat.

Israel's wheat crop had been good. Wheat is good, so that bread is very delicious. I visited Israel before. In Israel, there were lots of bakeries in the street. They baked bread in a fire bowl. If you paid 50 cents, you could get pizza-sized flat bread. I enjoyed the bread with honey and peanut butter. For me, the bread was very tasty. But imagine! In every bakery of Bethlehem during the time the Book of Ruth narrates, there was no bread. Elimelech and Naomi immigrated to Moab to get bread. But Elimelech died in Moab. Naomi lost her husband in a new land. The Bible does not say why Elimelech died there. And even more traumatic, Naomi's two sons died as well. Two sons died without offspring. Within ten years of living in Moab as an immigrant, she lost everything.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

When Naomi lost her husband, she might have survived thanks to her two sons. But when she lost her two sons, she lost everything; she had no hope. In Israel, the land is traditionally inherited from ancestors. In many cases, they lose the land unless they have a son. Therefore, we can assume Naomi's entire extended family did not immigrate to Moab. They still had land in Bethlehem. I imagine that they decided to go back to their home country after the situation in Bethlehem was better. After ten years in Moab, Naomi lost everything. Without sons, she could not keep the land. She lost hope. She felt the futility of life. Her life was nothingness. She fell into despair. Her immigration dream, like our American Dream, was shattered. Just like our hard work frequently passes into nothingness in this land, Naomi's life turned to be nothingness.⁵⁷³

Rev. Kim elucidates Naomi's suffering as an immigrant in Moab. For example, Naomi lost her husband and two sons in a foreign land, the place where her family immigrated to survive famine. He continuously reminds hearers of Naomi's great misfortune, unexpectedly met in Moab, by point out that the loss of her husband and two sons implied the loss of property—namely, the land. Naomi's experience of nothingness in a foreign land reminds the contemporary FGKIs of their similar situation; e.g., loss of property or divorce. As a psalmic-theological homiletic pursues contextually re-interpreting the biblical story in the second rhetorical step of retelling the story, Rev. Kim also re-contextualizes Naomi's life-story in the context of the contemporary FGKIs' specific woundedness. Re-contextualization of the biblical story, especially in a view of immigration, is similar to my proposed homiletic. I believe that Rev. Kim's recounting of the ancient story from the perspective of immigration relevant to FGKIs' lived experience enhances the effectiveness of his preaching by evoking hearers' identification with the biblical character. By heightening FGKIs' effective identification with Naomi's plight in a foreign land, Rev. Kim moves toward telling about the contemporary hearers' lamentable situation. As noted above, in Rev. Kim's sermonic flow, retelling the story precedes lament.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

c) Lament of the Contemporary FGKIs' Suffering

After retelling Naomi's suffering, Rev. Kim laments contemporary FGKIs' plight in the United States: e.g., family trouble, financial difficulty, worries about children, and divorce, etc:

We came here in great hope of the American Dream. We determined that "I will be successful in America. Although I failed in South Korea before, my future in America will be much better. I will raise my children well here." We have worked very hard day and night since immigration. Unfortunately, my children are now scattered. Although we tried to raise them in faith, they don't have faith. We don't know whether our children go to church or not. We lost our health. We lost husbands. We divorced. We think, "If we had not immigrated, we would not have divorced." With regret we ask, "Why did I immigrate?"

We went bankrupt when we thought we were stable financially. We were confronted with the L.A. riot when we eventually purchased our dream house in America. We experienced economic loss, or we ended up with huge debts owing to an economic bubble, when we thought our life was peaceful. Continuously experiencing such tragic events, we frequently thought, "Why did I immigrate? What am I doing here?"

When I watched the movie, *International Market*,⁵⁷⁴ I did shed a tear. In fact, I wanted to make a film telling about our immigrants' stories like *International Market*. I have my own stories as an immigrant. As I remember, I solved a big problem with my broken English. Whenever I recall what I went through as an immigrant, I want to cry. How painful is our immigrant's life! I wish we could say that our life as immigrants is successful. But I know that successful immigration—financial stability, health of all family members, and faithful/successful children—happened for only a few.⁵⁷⁵

Despite his different sermon sequence, Rev. Kim's sermon noticeably includes the practice of lament of a psalmic-theological homiletic. His lament rhetoric gives voice to FGKIs at the margins of society so that his lament can be characterized as the voices

⁵⁷⁴ *International Markets: Ode to My Father* (2014) is a Korean movie. It describes how much a Korean family (parents and four children) suffers from the Korean War (1950s). During the War, this happy family becomes refugees all of a sudden and separated: the father and the youngest daughter *and* the rest of them. The eldest son takes the rest of the family to his father's place. And the eldest son sacrifices his whole life to protect the family: he goes to Germany as a mineworker to earn the money for the family. This story's main purpose is to illustrate how our (grand-)fathers who experienced the Japanese colonial era and at the same time the Korean War sacrificed themselves for our families.

⁵⁷⁵ Kim, "Immigrant Family's Suffering."

arising from their marginality. In other words, his lament derives from the depths of FGKIs' pain-filled experiences of human brokenness and their unique existential life setting. Along with that, his rhetorical practice of lament is performed with pastoral compassion for FGKIs' distress. Even though Rev. Kim does not directly enumerate FGKIs' stories of lived-experiences to the same degree as Rev. Choi's preaching does, I think that Rev. Kim, a Korean immigrant, is very sympathetic in his engagement with the congregation's reality of suffering and is keenly aware of the meaning of their deep pain. He gives compassionate pastoral attention to their wounds. In my view, he seems to have a good knowledge of FGKIs' feelings of frustration, their feelings of emptiness and the stress of financial difficulties which stem from the dislocation of immigration and the failure to achieve upward mobility.

d) Solving the Contemporary FGKIs' Problem, Suffering

After maximizing hearers' problematic suffering in the previous lament step, Rev. Kim seeks to solve the problem of their living. Alternatively, this part aims to respond to the hearers' question: "So what? What should we do?" He attempts to provide a faithful solution from not only the published book, *Shattered Dreams* but also the Bible (2 Corinthians 8:9) in order to say that "our suffering can be an opportunity to meet God and experience genuine transformation." Encountering God in hard times is the main focus of the sermon:

I like Larry Crabb's book, *Shattered Dreams*. He says that "What he [God] is doing while we suffer is leading us into the depths of our being, into the center of our soul where we feel our strongest passions. It is there we discover our desire for God. Through the pain of shattered lower dreams, we wake up to the realization that we want an encounter with God more than we want the blessings of life. And that brings a

revolution in our lives. We can welcome our suffering now as an opportunity to meet God and experience genuine transformation”⁵⁷⁶

Many times, we delude ourselves into thinking that blessings from God (for example, wealth, health, children and husband) are holding our life together. We delude ourselves in thinking that these things sustain our life. When a husband who seems to be loyal to marriage betrays his wife, when our children do not listen to us, or when we lose money we are relying on, we are absolutely left alone. At that time, what should we do? Crabb says that it is the time to really encounter God. It is the time to realize that what is holding our life is not the blessing, but God. We realize that God is holding our life.

As 2 Corinthians 8:9 says, “For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich,” we can be rich through not the blessings, but our Lord. A splendid resume does not guarantee value of existence nor prove our identity. Instead of that, by the grace of God, we are what we are (1 Cor. 15:6). The time when we are suffering is the right moment when we can realize the truth: Our deepest desire is encountering God. Through the pain of shattered dreams, we realize God is the One whom we want to encounter. Encountering God is the primary thing we must to do in hard times.⁵⁷⁷

This particular rhetorical step is not part of my vision for psalmic-theological preaching.

Still, this rhetorical progression does echo my immigrant theology in three significant ways. First, Rev. Kim does not approach FGKIs’ depth of predicament with the prosperity gospel. In Chapter 3, I addressed that the prosperity gospel is not really helpful among poor FGKIs since it could only aggravate their sense that God has abandoned them due to its heavy emphasis on wealth and health. Just as my vision for immigrant preaching pursues a more theocentric gospel instead of the prosperity gospel, so Rev. Kim proclaims a God-centered message. That is, FGKIs encounter God’s grace amidst their hardships, uncertainties, and downward economic mobility in a hostile outside environment.

Second, Rev. Kim’s sermonic emphasis on encountering God is directly connected to my immigrant theology. In Chapter 3, I referenced FGKIs’ experience of

⁵⁷⁶ Larry Crabb, *Shattered Dreams* (Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press, 2001), 4.

⁵⁷⁷ Kim, “Immigrant Family’s Suffering.”

emptiness and suffering that positively enables them to stimulate a new spiritual journey at the edges.⁵⁷⁸ In a similar way, Rev. Kim encourages hearers to move into the new territory of faith by freshly encountering God's grace in the middle of hearers' vulnerable lives. Further, I believe that his pastoral encouragement of FGKIs' new encounter with God has the possibility to re-shape this new land as a distinctive and grace-filled place in which they find their new identity in God's compassion toward them in the midst of their suffering.⁵⁷⁹

Third, I argued about the importance of a spirituality of holy insecurity as one of my immigrant theological priorities for/in preaching in Chapter 3.⁵⁸⁰ Put differently, I noted that immigrant preaching needs to empower FGKIs to spiritually transcend their fear of worldly insecurity, ambivalence, and disruption by dwelling in God's unfathomable love. In a similar way, Rev. Kim also inspires hearers to free themselves from worldly fear of insecurity by inviting them to encounter God and dwell in God's compassion in terms of a spiritual intensification of their relationship with God through their plight. In sum, Rev. Kim's pastoral theology embraces three aspects of my immigrant theology for/in preaching regardless of the difference of homiletical methodology between Rev. Kim's sermon and my proposed homiletic.

⁵⁷⁸ It is connected to the first point of my immigrant theology in Chapter 3, "Beyond Self-Fulfillment: A Self-Emptying Practice of Cruciform Theocentric Faith from the Margin," Refer to p. 76-9.

⁵⁷⁹ It is related to the second point of my immigrant theology in Chapter 3, "Meaningful Immigrant Life in Situations of Relative Deprivation," Refer to p. 79-86.

⁵⁸⁰ It is linked with the fourth point of my immigrant theology in Chapter 3, "A Practice of Holy Insecurity," Refer to p. 95-8.

e) Retelling the Biblical Story to Proclaim the Good News For Contemporary FGKIs (2)

Rev. Kim retells the Naomi story—the biblical story—to proclaim the good news: God listens to our cry and God re-visits our lament-filled life. Further, Rev. Kim announces that FGKIs can be rich through Jesus Christ, the bread of life, even with the aching emptiness in our hearts and our feelings of nothingness.⁵⁸¹

Finally, a beam of hope shone down onto Naomi's life. Here is Ruth 1:6: "Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had considered his people and given them food." Scripture says that God listens to our crying and comes to us. According to the original Hebrew text, "the Lord had come to the aid of God's people" means "God had revisited to the aid of God's people." God's coming and God's revisiting us are the Christian's hope. I hope that we encounter God through suffering, that we have a spiritual chance to meet God again and newly through suffering.

Jesus Christ died on the cross to be the bread of life for us. If the Lord comes to us, there is no more (spiritual) famine in our life. If the Lord goes with us, we can be rich through the bread of life, Christ. If we walk with the Lord, we can find the reason for living and realize who we are in spite of having nothing or in spite of huge difficulties confronting us. This is because the Lord is the reason for our living so that we can restart from nothingness. This is because we can confess the Lord is everything for us.⁵⁸²

Rev. Kim illustrated how ancient (Naomi's) story allows FGKIs to realize how their current chaotic experience aligns with Naomi's immigration experience—famine and traumatic suffering, the loss of family members in Moab—in the previous step of retelling the story. Here, the second retelling of the biblical story homiletically functions both as a) the church's theocentric remembrance of God's salvific action in the past *and* as b) the church's naming God's grace in times of difficulty.⁵⁸³ As I argued, such

⁵⁸¹ A feeling of nothingness suggests they feel they don't have anything, or they have experienced the loss of things such as financial stability, life-security, and a peaceful marriage even if they immigrate to the United States for personal enrichment and better living.

⁵⁸² Kim, "Immigrant Family's Suffering."

⁵⁸³ Retelling the story as theocentric remembrance and one as naming God's grace are on p. 174-180 in Chapter 4.

theocentric remembrance of God's redemptive actions in ancient history could, first, be the primary source of hope for God's salvific action in the present world. In other words, his retelling about God's redemptive activity, such as God's attentive listening to people's crying and re-visiting the biblical characters' lives, could empower contemporary FGKIs to anticipate the Divine's salvation in their own lives. Second, naming God's grace facilitates FGKIs' confidence in God's loving presence in the margins: that is, naming God's paradoxical presence in our wounds. In this way, Rev. Kim inspires hearers to live with the bread of life—the Lord—by faith. In sum, his sermon associates with a psalmic-theological homiletic's elements: retelling the story as theocentric remembrance *and* retelling the story as naming God's grace.

f) Confessional Doxology with Conclusion

Through an illustration of an interview with a famous Korean mountaineer, Rev. Kim tries to evoke the church's confession: "I am going with Jesus Christ in a new land...I am rich in Christ, the bread of life, in spite of my ongoing existential predicaments. Christ makes my joy complete...Since my life is full of God's unfailing love, I can overcome any plights." His vigorous faith-declaration plays a role in the church's collective confession:

Do you know Um Hong-gil? He is a famous mountaineer. He climbed 16 of the summits in the Himalayas. Unfortunately, he lost his ten co-workers during a climb in the Himalayas. After the tragic incident, people thought that he would not climb again. However, he tried to climb the Himalayas again. Many people wondered why he wanted to climb the same mountain where he lost his co-workers. He replied: "For me, the mountain is the irreplaceable longing and goal. Without mountains, I cannot exist. I am content with mountains. My life is satisfied with mountains." I cannot fully understand his life. However, the mountain for him is Jesus Christ for me. Among us, there might be ones who regret meeting Jesus. Some might think that I got behind because of Jesus, like the disciples who were in the same boat with Jesus. When the disciples were met by a violent storm, they might have thought, "What damage to my life! I should have not taken the same boat with Jesus!" Likewise, we might be confused about why bad things happen in our life although we believe in God and we are in the same boat with Jesus.

The mountaineer made a confession: “Even if I lost my ten colleagues, I cannot help but climb the mountain. This is because I can only exist thanks to the mountain.” I hope that our Christians make a confession: “I cannot help but go with Jesus Christ in a new land. I cannot live without the Lord. I am rich in Christ, the bread of life in spite of my ongoing hardship. The Lord is the driving-force in my immigrant life. Christ makes my joy complete. From the fullness of God’s grace I have received all, grace upon grace (John 1:16). I am filled to the measure of all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19). Since my life is full of God’s unfailing love, I can overcome any plights.” I believe they are our confession today.⁵⁸⁴

Rev. Kim’s sermon echoes the rhetorical step of confessional doxology in a psalmic-theological homiletic. First, as a psalmic-theological homiletic, immigrant preaching needs to declare a confessional faith to evoke FGKIs’ praise about God from the margins. Rev. Kim proclaims a living, faithful declaration in a praise mode: “My life becomes rich through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, in spite of...” He hopes to embolden hearers’ spirits to rejoice in God, not in blessings. Second, like my proposed homiletic, his confessional declaration intends to intensify the core theological message in a doxological tone: “I can overcome any plights by encountering God.” In a confessional mode, he recapitulates the principal topic of the sermon: encountering God in a new land. Third, I believe that his confessional doxology aims at both reviving poor FGKIs’ damaged faith *and* empowering broken immigrant families. Throughout the sermon, he explicitly addresses concerns about FGKIs who are especially struggling with financial issues *and* who are suffering from broken marriages. His pastoral and sermonic concern is in accordance with my psalmic-theological homiletic. My vision for immigrant preaching particularly aims at revitalizing poor/marginalized Christians’ broken faith and joyfulness amid existential suffering through the good news. These represent substantial similarities to my proposed vision for preaching.

⁵⁸⁴ Kim, “Immigrant Family’s Suffering.”

The preacher concludes the sermon by inviting FGKIs to encounter and experience God's compassion. He hopes to emphasize to hearers the truth of God's love, to empower their faithfulness in this new land, and to prompt them to seek a joyful existence regardless of their lower social status and their ongoing hardships:

Immigration is not easy. Sometimes it is filled with suffering. While we tried to settle down in the United States, our immigrant family faced diverse plights. Because of cultural differences and the language barrier, we still struggle. Many times we feel the generation gap with our loved children. Some immigrant families are broken. We are divorced. In such darkness, what do we need to do as Christians? We must encounter God again and anew in this land. We can overcome any difficulties by experiencing God's unfailing love. This is today's message to our brokenness.⁵⁸⁵

Rev. Kim's contribution to a psalmic-theological homiletic comes first through his retelling of the biblical story from the viewpoint of immigration; in this he shows how to deliver the good news in a way that fits FGKIs' existential experience at society's margins. For instance, Rev. Kim's imaginative reincorporation of the biblical immigrant's life stems from his passionate engagement with FGKIs' lived experiences of physical displacement, cultural dissonance, existential uncertainty, and financial difficulty. Consequently, his contextual preaching could be a good example of immigrant preaching, especially owing to his way of recounting the biblical world from the perspective of hearers' chaotic experience.

Second, Rev. Kim's immigrant theology revealed in the sermon largely corresponds to my proposed immigrant theology as noted earlier; e.g., encounter with God in the midst of ongoing predicaments, confidence in God's attention to human crying, and a spiritual practice of holy insecurity—transcending worldly fear (insecurity) by dwelling in God's unfathomable love amid life's uncertainties. His sermon displays that some Korean immigrant preachers have already formulated their own immigrant

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

theology for the sake of their local congregations. In fact, Rev. Kim's sermon is the outcome of his own immigrant theology, articulated from his experience of immigration and hardship from the margins.

Third, Rev. Kim attempts to proclaim the good news for the poor and the marginalized. In other words, the sermon exhibits his deep care for poor FGKIs and divorced persons after their decision to immigrate. In his genuine care for their wounds, he proclaims the good news, not to resolve suffering by appeasing them with a prosperity gospel, but rather, by trying to provide spiritual direction. He encourages them to encounter God, to rejoice not only in the blessings but God, and to embark on a new spiritual journey with God in the midst of an ambiguous state of life. That is, he intends to revitalize their agonized hearts by centering them in God's compassion.

Rev. Kim's sermon and my homiletical proposal differ, first, in the rhetorical step of obedient vow, which is missing in his sermon. As noted earlier, Rev. Kim's sermon form does include my proposed homiletical elements of a) lament, b) retelling the story, and c) confessional doxology, albeit in a different sequence. In my proposed homiletic, obedient vow is intentionally designed to engender a new faithful *habitus*, a God-centered way of life, instead of an individually centered way of life. The absence of the obedient vow step in Rev. Kim's sermon runs the risk of seeking an inner (spiritual) satisfaction without proposing a faithful way of life such as critical obedience to the word of God or God's vision-centered practices at the margins. In contrast with Rev. Kim's sermon, my proposed homiletic pursues praxis-oriented preaching so as to animate FGKIs' faithful and holistic engagement in God's hopeful future in both collective and personal ways.

Next, Rev. Kim does not offer any comprehensive socio-analytical and theological reflection on FGKIs' lament-filled reality in a wider society with the result that their suffering is described in mostly personal terms. In the concluding part of Rev. Kim's sermon, for example, hearers' plights are primarily linked to only the personal aspect. By contrast, a psalmic-theological homiletic accompanies theological and critical reflection on hearers' contextual suffering from the mainstream society. The rhetoric of lament in a psalmic-theological homiletic includes criticizing the present social order and any cultural tendency that causes collective suffering for FGKIs. If the present culture and social order keeps hurting them, the preacher should help them envisage an alternative vision of the society in imaginative and creative ways to eventually liberate them. For that reason, a psalmic-theological homiletic embraces a marginalized people's yearning for a better future in the broader vista of God's justice and compassion. Further, such longing for God's future of abundance and flourishing for all calls FGKIs to participate in God's labor, a remaking of our present cultural/social reality. Apparently, an alternative vision rooted in God's future could be the resilient hope of Christian FGKIs. In short, compared to my homiletical proposal, Rev. Kim's sermon is missing the rhetorical step of obedient vow *and* theological-critical reflection on FGKIs' contextual suffering in a wider society. Hence, I think that Rev. Kim's sermon could extract a new faithful way of life if he would accent an obedient vow step including theological-critical thinking on their contextual plight.

In conclusion, I believe this chapter has identified the existing preaching practice of Korean immigrant churches that originated from FGKIs' particular contextual situation as a valuable dialogue partner in designing my psalmic-theological homiletic.

Particularly, both pastors' rhetoric of FGKIs' pain-filled experience as outsiders, their biblical interpretation in a view of immigration and marginality, and their local theologies (e.g., pastoral emphasis on communal practice of embracing others and encountering God on the edges, etc.) are significant sermonic contributions to my proposed homiletic.

Notwithstanding their positive merits to my psalmic-theological homiletic, their current preaching practice needs further development as follows. Both preachers' current view of immigration life is still individualistic and ahistorical even though they make an endeavor not to approach FGKIs' suffering with the prosperity gospel. For instance, in the case of Rev. Kim's sermon, success for the immigrant is still measured by wealth. He implicitly states that many Christian immigrants' lives in California have failed because of their economic misfortune—namely, financial loss. He attempts to urge hearers to overcome their individual (financial) difficulty by virtue of a personal-spiritual encounter with God. Although he does not claim prosperity gospel in the sermon, such criteria for life-success and happiness could influence hearers' lives in a way that drives them to engage with certain practices of the American Dream ideology in their daily living. As noted above, Rev. Kim's sermon—including Rev. Choi's—lacks the historical-social framework that is needed to understand the racial discrimination they face and their collective suffering.

To prevent such tendencies, my psalmic-theological homiletic proposes that preachers need to interpret FGKIs' existential suffering in light of both social-historical (critique of current circumstances) *and* theological perspectives, and then eventually

anticipate the communal hopeful future—“a vision of what the future should be like.”⁵⁸⁶ Accordingly, my proposed homiletic does not pursue individual escape from difficulty, but accentuates communal-theocentric practices such as *jeong*-oriented hospitality or embracing others’ pain. Confessional doxology in my psalmic-theological homiletic, which Rev. Choi is missing, can play an important role in illustrating a theocentric-transformative vision for all. Obedient vow, which Rev. Kim is missing, could concretely indicate what kind of subsequent action in faith is needed in hearers’ lives since his sermon seems to be indifferent to performing the gospel (c.f., practical but critical living out of faith in the coming kingdom of God).⁵⁸⁷ In this way, I think, the psalmic-theological homiletic as a revised/designed practice for future Korean immigrant preaching can serve FGKIs’ more faithful-liberative way of life, rather than an individualistic-materialistic way of life related to the shamanistic-prosperity gospel and the ideology of the American Dream.

⁵⁸⁶ Luis G. Pedraja, “Eschatology and Hope,” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Latino/a Theology*, ed. Orlando O. Espin (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 237.

⁵⁸⁷ Swinton and Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 27.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

Outcomes of the Research

Local pastors and practical theologians frequently agonize over how to offer “a range of interpretations of God’s good news” to people who are in their own intense and unbearable suffering.⁵⁸⁸ It is not easy to alleviate the insurmountable pain and experience of powerlessness many people face. Such people seem to reject the comfort of a local pastor, spiritual mentor, or even God—as Rachel refused to be consoled: “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more” (Matt. 2:18). From time to time, they also ask, “How could God have let this happen?” or “Why doesn’t God do something to secure our well-being?”⁵⁸⁹ Such questions are related to the matter of theodicy—dissonance between the fairness of divine care for people *and* existential suffering. Some might deny God’s ongoing existence in their lives. And others confess that they almost lose their ability to trust in God since their lament-filled surroundings infect their relationship to the world and to God as well. They seem to be able to eventually feel comfort when they find God’s blessings, such as material success or achievement of their own dreams. But local pastors cannot ignore “the reality, depth and breadth of human suffering is to be theologically and existentially dishonest.”⁵⁹⁰ To console those who confront unbearable suffering in their own lives, the pastor’s theological reflection on human suffering from a Christian perspective serves as an

⁵⁸⁸ O. Wesley Allen Jr., *Preaching and the Human Condition: Loving, God, Self & Others* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2016), 41.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

important ministerial duty. Therefore, as a practical theologian and homiletician, I set out in this dissertation to explore how the practice of preaching could contribute to leading people to verbalize appreciation of God's goodness in their marginalized place; how preaching could help those whose painful experiences drain their hope to confess God's lovingly nature; and how preaching praxis could assist those who feel discouraged by life's circumstances to experience the joy of reconciliation with God and eternal joys at God's "right hand forever through Jesus Christ" (Ps.16:11) in spite of their existential tension between the future promise and the present suffering.

With such practical-theological concerns, I started to provide a full description of their situation to better understand FGKIs' distinctive life situations and their first-hand experiences (particularly, collective wounds in reality). I believed that preaching for Korean immigrants had its theological accountability in developing a contextual knowledge to local congregations.⁵⁹¹ Contextual knowledge to the particular congregational gathering of hearers was the pivotal step to construe and proclaim "theology within and on behalf of a local community of faith."⁵⁹² Next, I researched the prosperity gospel that aligned itself with both shamanism-induced wishes for material blessing *and* certain aspects of the American Dream ideology in deconstructive way. From my viewpoint, the prosperity message and its promise for God's material blessings hardly became the good news to poor/marginalized people at the edges. Put differently, such a gospel of wealth made difficult an interpretation of daily life and the alleviation of everyday suffering in the dominant society. They could not taste the goodness of God in their darkest days.

⁵⁹¹ Kim, *Women Preaching*, 11.

⁵⁹² Tisdale, *Preaching as Local Theology and Folk Art*, 38.

After my deconstructive work on the gospel of wealth (that is, the prosperity message) for FGKIs, this project turned to both Christianity's traditional rhetoric in the book of Psalms *and* contemporary local Korean immigrant pastors' preaching praxis. Engaging the rhetoric of ancient Israel revealed: a) how ancient people did lament their vulnerability and difficulty before God, and b) how their faithful rhetoric eventually cultivated confidence in God's redemptive co-suffering and then allowed the Israelites to praise God's goodness in the midst of ongoing suffering. In my project, God's attentive listening to people's crying and God's present solidarity with the powerless was the good news for FGKIs. Based on research on ancient rhetoric, a psalmic-theological homiletic attempted to respond to their groans of suffering, to revitalize their broken faith, to help them become confident in God's trustworthiness and goodness, and to impel them to praise God in a matrix of hope again.

Next, in-depth conversation with the existing Korean sermons served to shed light on a psalmic-theological homiletic's advantages. For example, my homiletical theory accentuated transformative *habitus* as hearers' faithful practice in anticipation of God's new salvific possibility in history compared to other Korean immigrant preaching praxis. Alternatively stated, my proposed homiletic underscored encouraging hearers to align themselves with the proclaimed divine truth of following the church's practice of enacting God's purpose. Indeed, at the corporate level, FGKIs' suffering included their sense of displacement *and* frustration with the cultural, economic, and social alienation in the dominant society. Accordingly, I was convinced that immigrant preaching needed to challenge our absurd reality through the church's embodiment of truth and resistance

against a world of injustice and pain.⁵⁹³ In this way, my practical-theological research question—how to proclaim the good news to FGKIs (especially, relatively poor people who are living in personal/communal hardships) to revitalize their broken faith—led me to intensify the church’s communal hope for a better future in the broader vista of God’s restorative justice and peace. At the same time, my writing led me to imagine that FGKIs’ broken hearts would filled with all peace and joy, listening to God’s good news in God’s enriching presence.

Further Vision

When I was a young preacher, I often preached a prosperity message. In the majority of cases, hearers’ instant feedback provided a feel-good response. One day, a church member personally reached out to me and asked, “Why is my life still financially hard although I’ve prayed for it for a long time?” I could not help but promise God’s blessing (e.g., material promise) again to console her. As I look back, my sermon was very shallow and lacked theological depth about the height and depth of human experiences; for example, some hearers live in overwhelming joy thanks to satisfying life circumstances, but others live in unrelieved anguish. Nowadays, I cannot dare to preach prosperity gospel to my immigrant congregation who searches for the truth amidst the tension between a traditional theism and their conflicting experiences in daily life.

Gennifer Benajmin Brooks states, “the purpose of preaching is to bring the Word of God and specifically offer the good news of God’s love for and continued relation

⁵⁹³ Goto, *The Grace of Playing*, 52-3.

with humanity.”⁵⁹⁴ It implies that every preacher has a sacred duty to proclaim the good news—calming God’s unstinting love—to the people of God who are in need of the redemptive grace of God.⁵⁹⁵ Some FGKIs especially might groan in anguish and face the loss of their faith and joyfulness in God because of how uncertain and fragile their lives seem compared to others. One of the tasks of the immigrant ethnic churches is to reinvigorate their faith and recover their praise of God by glimpsing God’s unfailing love in their ever-present situations of suffering. I certainly do not think that one-time (psalmic-theological) preaching will banish all suffering around us or make racial discrimination disappear, because spirituality is in progress. Therefore, by virtue of the church’s pathos-filled preaching about hearers’ afflictions and their intentional faithful practices, I hope that FGKIs will be led to see the extreme frontier of God’s graceful presence in the margins of their own lives.

Along with that, Brook also asserts that the good news involves proclaiming God’s transforming presence that alone can enable hearers “to fulfill their commitment as disciples of Jesus Christ.”⁵⁹⁶ In other words, preaching the gospel aims to shape Christian discipleship since “God is present not only to comfort their hurts but also to transform their circumstances.”⁵⁹⁷ In agreement with Brook’s statement, I think that immigrant preaching should not only celebrate God’s sanctifying grace even in a troubled reality, correlating the message with life situations today, but should also shape

⁵⁹⁴ Gennifer Benajmin Brooks, *Good News Preaching: Offering the Gospel in Every Sermon* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2009), 5.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, xvi.

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, x.

faithful Christian living—that is, discipleship. On the journey toward God’s future, I envisage that immigrant believers will be collectively invited to join in God’s dawning righteousness and praise through thick and thin. Luz Beatriz Arellano, a Latin Catholic Feminist theologian, says that:

Resurrection is already present in crucifixion. The road toward the building of the kingdom by way of the rise of the new society entails pain, death, and suffering, but it also means the hope of greater life, justice, peace and love incarnate in history. Both aspects, crucifixion and resurrection, are part of the process of passing from death to life through the body of Christ (Rom. 7:4).⁵⁹⁸

I am convinced that our Christian journeys on the way to the Kingdom of God entail pain and suffering in many ways, but I am also sure that exuberant joyfulness in the Spirit will be part of our reality. Consequently, in spite of the immigrant’s vulnerable life condition that seems to be overly dependent on the American government’s political whims, I hope that my proposed homiletic will enable Korean immigrant believers to perform their faithful practice as the faithful *habitus* of the divine’s co-suffering pathos in the places and times in which they live.

⁵⁹⁸ Luz Beatriz Arellano, “Women’s Experience of God in Emerging Spirituality,” in *With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology*, ed. Virginia Fabella M.M. and Mercy Amba Oduyoye (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 146.

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