Changing Understandings of Ethnic and Christian Identity in Korean Migrants to Aotearoa New Zealand

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Abstract

Koreans have migrated to New Zealand for approximately 30 years. The experience of migrants over this time has not been uniform and can be understood in terms of different immigrant generations: the first generation (born in Korea), the 1.5 generation (arriving in NZ during their school years), and the second generation (born in NZ, or immigrating as a pre-schooler).

This paper draws on interviews with 31 Korean migrants to New Zealand to explore their sense of personal, communal and Christian identity through a case study method (a qualitative approach) with abductive inference. While all generations share a Korean communal sense of identity (U-Ri), they have different understanding U-Ri in different ways. This paper's purpose is to explore the concept of U-Ri in Korean migrant situations within different generations and consider the relationship between this and Christian identity.

Briefly, the first generation participants describe U-Ri (Korean ethnic identity) as the same as Christian identity, so the gap between it and religious identity is less than for other generations. By contrast, the 1.5 generation perceives the U-Ri boundary not as Korean ethnicity but peer groups, generating some gaps between the two identities. The second generation shows a weak concept of U-Ri in relation to Korean ethnicity; as a result, the second generation tends to distinguish clearly between Korean ethnicity and Christianity. This result has potential implications for understanding and mitigating generation gaps in Korean immigrant churches. Also, this research as a practical theology helps listen to the marginal voices from Korean migrant Christians' spiritual experiences.

Introduction

This paper has two main purposes; one is the investigation and comparison of differences in the Korean identity across several immigrant generations in Aotearoa New Zealand, related to ethnicity and religiosity. The other is to identify the relevant factors that may cause these differences among the generations. For this purpose, I employ a case study of 31 Korean Christian immigrants. Data were collected via interview, and interpretivism was used to analyse them. Interpretivism focuses not only on social phenomena directly but also surrounding contexts; as a result, it seeks "interpretations/understandings of social phenomena that directly affect outcomes."[1] In addition to the exploration of migrant realities, this article seeks to establish the theory of interacting backgrounds: Korean identity, Pentecostalism and personal identity. This is followed by an attempt to define the concept of Korean identity, U-Ri (우리) meaning "we," "us," or "our." It therefore groups the interviews into four categories. The last section suggests the possible implications of the findings for Korean immigrant churches in New Zealand. The first Korean church was established in 1984 in Wellington, and the second and third Korean churches were built in 1988 in Auckland and Christchurch, respectively. So Korean immigrant churches in New Zealand have under 40 years of history.[2]

This article analyses Korean identity related to religious and ethnic factors, discussing how this identity changes in immigrant contexts. The paper also suggests practical implications for Korean immigrant churches in New Zealand.

1. Method

Methodologically, this paper is located in practical theology. Daniel Schipani explains several benefits of case studies in practical theology: "to unveil presuppositions and assumptions, to engage in interdisciplinary and integrating work, and to test and develop theological perspectives."[3] The last of these is considered especially valuable here, as this paper aims to find a fresh theological interpretation of Korean immigrant identity as relevant to ministry.

To conduct this study, the sample was broken up into cohorts of generations (1a, 1b, 1.5, and 2). The first cohort (1a) was the first generation who migrated before 2008; the second cohort (1b) was the first generation who migrated after 2009; the third cohort was the 1.5 generation, and the fourth cohort was the second generation. The reason for dividing the first generation

[1] Paul Furlong and David Marsh, "Chapter 9: A skin not a sweater: ontology and epistemology in political science," in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, ed. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 199.
[2] Nyujillaendŭ Haninsa P'yŏnch'an Wiwŏnhoe, *A History of Koreans in New Zealand* (Auckland: Nyujillaendŭ Haninsa Palgan Wiwŏnhoe, 2007), 95-100.
[3] Daniel S. Schipani, "Case Study Method," in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), 92.

into two groups (before 2008 and after 2009) is the emergence of the smartphone, influential considering the digital adaptability of Korean immigrants. In Korea, the iPhone was launched in 2009, and was quickly adopted by the Korean diaspora allowing for a larger scale of instantaneous communication with their relatives in Korea.[4]

This study has two main limitations: sampling size and language translation. To overcome these limitations, this paper uses purposeful sampling, which is "to be directed by a desire to include a range of variations of phenomena in the study."[5] The paper begins by explaining the methodology of abductive inference for a case study as abductive reasoning is suitable for practical theology. According to Swinton and Mowatt, practical theology focuses on interpreting religious and social aspects.[6] Abductive inference allows researchers to interpret phenomena by new explanations outside general explanations.[7] To bring a fresh perspective, this paper uses abductive inference to discover and test Korean immigrant theology in New Zealand. Korean immigrant theology means interpreting and understanding religious experiences in churches through Korean immigrants' perspectives and experiences. Abductive reasoning is different from deductive and inductive reasoning, and is a mixture of both these forms of inference; it can be used to discover new insights.[8] Importantly, Timmermans and Tavory warn of the danger of research without a hypothesis. They note,

> "researchers were admonished to generate new theory without being beholden to pre-existing theories, but they still required theoretical sensitivity based on a broad familiarity with existing theories to generate new theories."[9]

For this reason, I have used a case study and abductive inference to find and test new Korean immigrants' understanding of patterns of identity.

The originality of this paper is its contribution to the special edition theme, "Disentangling Australasian Pentecostalism from White Hegemony," which here is the application not for classical Pentecostalism based on the USA cultural backgrounds but for a localised Pentecostalism based on non-European-White backgrounds to form within Korean immigrant churches in Aotearoa New Zealand.[10]

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[4] Pyungho Kim, "The Apple iPhone Shock in Korea," *The Information Society* 27, no. 4 (2011): 262–263.
[5] Imelda T. Coyne, "Sampling in Qualitative Research: Purposeful and Theoretical Sampling – Merging or Clear Boundaries?," *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 26, no. 3 (1997): 624.
[6] John Swinton and Harriet Mowatt, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research* (London: SCM, 2006), 29.
[7] Douglas Walton, *Abductive Reasoning* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2014), 5.
[8] Brianna L. Kennedy, Robert Thornberg, and U. Flick, "Deduction, Induction, and Abduction," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection* (London: SAGE Publications, 2018), 52–53.
[9] Stefan Timmermans and Iddo Tavory, "Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis," *Sociological Theory* 30, no. 3 (2012): 170.
[10] The concept of classical and indigenous Pentecostalism are dealt with in the coming section, "Pentecostalism and Identity issue."

2. What is Korean Identity?

This paper aims to establish, test and analyse a hypothesis, exploring Korean identity through the concept of U-Ri and the relations between Pentecostals, identity and Korean immigrant churches. Through this exploration, I hypothesize that different Korean identities might arise among different immigrant generations in Korean immigrant churches in New Zealand.

This section explores Korean identity through the concept of U-Ri (우리) before a discussion of New Zealand's Pentecostals and Korean immigrant churches and offering the analysis of the interviews. Koreans tend to be concerned that U-Ri is one of the key concepts to understand Korean identity.[11] U-Ri is a unique expression compared with other Korean words, as its meaning includes the communal and personal, as well as religious and ethnic, senses. The below sections explore these four characteristics of U-Ri, which are invaluable for understanding Korean cultural identity.

2.1 Communal and personal sense of U-Ri

U-Ri can be translated as "we" or "us" in English; however, its meaning is not unified but complex. In other words, it connotes several possible meanings. According to Jung-Nam Kim, the essential meaning of U-Ri is its first-person plural pronoun as opposed to first-person singular pronoun.[12] The *Standard Korean Grand Dictionary* explains the meaning of U-Ri as "the first-person pronoun including speaker-self, listener and many others."[13] As a result, it is natural that U-Ri translates as "we" for first-person plural pronoun, against "I" in English. This meaning as a plural pronoun emphasises a communal, rather than a personal, sense. However, Kim asserts U-Ri's meaning as beyond the speaker and listener in a conversation because Koreans frequently use U-Ri to express unspecified groups or people not including the listener. He explains this phenomenon to strengthen one's relationships as compared with counterparts.[14] For example, I may introduce church members to non-Christians with a phrase like, "Our (U-Ri) church members are good characters, so try to come over." Indeed, U-Ri covers not only a speaker and a listener, but also broad communities. Communal meaning thus plays an essential role in understanding U-Ri.

However, while U-Ri connotes a communal sense, it also has different meanings and nuances that connote an individual or personal sense. A good example is when Koreans introduce their mother to their friends: they use "U-Ri mother" (우리 엄마) instead of "my mother" (내 엄마). Literally, "U-Ri mother" means "our mother," and this is the form Koreans prefer to use

[11] Hee-An Choi, *A Postcolonial Self: Korean Immigrant Theology and Church* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2015), 9-10.
[12] Jung-Nam Kim, "The Meaning and Usage of the Korean Pronoun U-Ri (우리)," *The Society Of Korean Semantics* 13 (2003): 261.
[13] "우리 (U-Ri)," *Standard Korean Grand Dictionary.*
[14] Kim, "The Meaning and Usage of the Korean Pronoun U-Ri (우리)," 262-264.

whenever they refer to or introduce someone. Kim explains, this expresses the sense of belonging over personal meanings.[15] In conversation, it is easy to use U-Ri like a modifier, so a statement can be understood without U-Ri. For instance, for "Christians are salt and light in the world," Koreans prefer to add "our" in front of "Christians." Therefore, "our (we) Christians are salt and light in the world" is a more natural way of expressing this concept in Korean. Indeed, "our Christian" means that I am a part of Christianity by emphasising the sense of belonging.

In summary, Koreans tend to translate U-Ri ("we" or "our") as rather than "I" or "my," even though it has a clearly personal meaning because Korean society is a relational-centred society regardless of cultural, socio-psychological and philosophical approaches.[16] U-Ri is thus not a simple plural pronoun. It has the singular pronoun's sense of personal values with a communal sense. These communal and personal aspects provide a good source to analyse Korean identity.

2.2. Religious and ethnic identities in U-Ri

Together with communal and personal characteristics, U-Ri also has other meanings; namely, religious identity and ethnic boundaries. These identities are connected with Shamanism and Confucianism, which are Korean traditional religions. While simplifying this relationship is problematic, I can explain that religious identity is connected with Confucianism, and ethnic identity is linked to Korean myths based on Shamanism. These features will now be explained.

First, within Confucianism, the ideal human being is the recovery of the original status between Heaven and human beings, so Chinese Neo-Confucianism and Korean Neo-Confucianism (Ju-Ja-Hak, 朱子學) call this ideal relationship between Heaven and human beings Chun-In-Hap-Il (天人合一) and Chun-In-Mu-Gan (天人無間), respectively.[17] Ki-Dong Lee, a renowned Confucian scholar in Korea, explains the nature of human beings as a being sharing some divine seeds in human nature to explain the concept of U-Ri. He asserts the reason for using the concept of U-Ri is that Koreans are concerned that we connect with others through our divine nature regardless of consciousness. He calls this divine seed Sun-Jeong (순정), which means "pure mind." Following his explanation, each human being can connect with others through Sun-Jeong, pure mind, as a divine seed, and therefore all human beings belong to the same family under the divine being. Sun-Jeong is a seed for recovering

[15] Kim, "The Meaning and Usage of the Korean Pronoun U-Ri (우리)," 265-273.
[16] Kim, "The Meaning and Usage of the Korean Pronoun U-Ri (우리)," 273.
[17] Yo-Han Bae, "The Divine-Human Relationship in Korean Religious Traditions: The Presence and Transformation of the Themes from the T'an Gun Myth in the Chosŏn Chujahak Tradition and Korean Protestant Christianity," PhD dissertation, Boston University, 2007, 72-134.

the original human beings' characteristics and a key of possibility to recover the ideal relationship between Heaven and human beings.

Figure 1 illustrates this relationship between the divine being and human beings.[18] Lee asserts that the human mind is located between Heaven and the human body, so having a divine seed is like a pipe which connects these. So, to connect with Heaven is the foundation of U-Ri. In other words, the meaning of U-Ri might be interpreted as the community sharing the same root, which is related to God or Heaven, and connected with religious identity as a part of sharing the divine seeds in human beings.

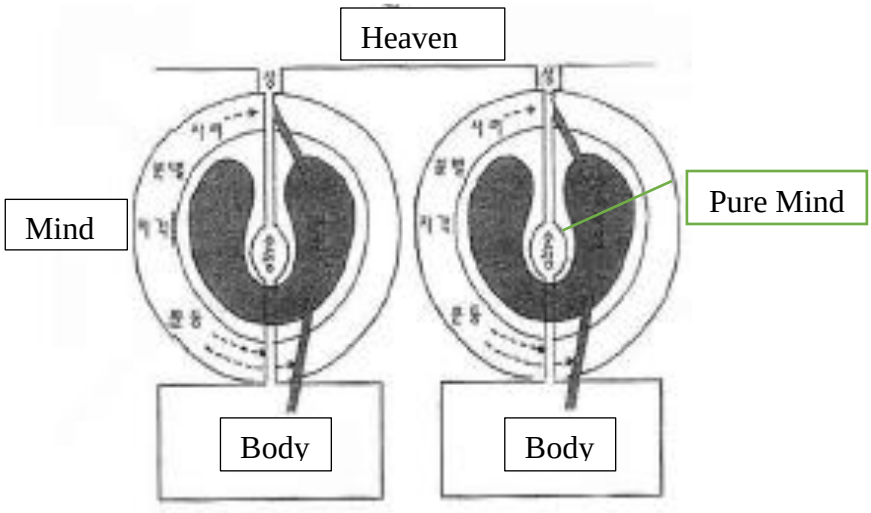

Figure 1: Lee's understanding of U-Ri

Second, the ethnic identity linked to Korean myths based on Shamanism will be explored. Yo-Han Bae and Sung-Deuk Ock explain the features of Korean Christianity as the interplay of several religions, such as Shamanism, Buddhism, and Confucianism.[19] Bae focuses on the Dan-Gun (단군) myth, which is the story of the founder of Korean ethnicity. Dan-Gun is a being between Heaven and earth because his father (Hwan-Ung) is a son of a heavenly divine and human being through incarnation from Heaven, and his mother (Ung-Nyo) is originally a bear but is incarnated as a human being.[20] In other words, Dan-Gun's father is a semi-god and semi-human and his mother is a semi-animal and semi-human, so Dan-Gun is a bridge between the heavenly world and the earthly world.[21] The Dan-Gun myth illustrates the

[18] Ki-dong Lee, *Gi-dog-gyo Wa Dong-yang Sa-sang* (Seoul: Dong-In SuWon, 1999), 49.
[19] Bae, "The Divine-Human Relationship in Korean Religious Traditions," 1.
[20] Bae, "The Divine-Human Relationship in Korean Religious Traditions," 24-25.
[21] Bae, "The Divine-Human Relationship in Korean Religious Traditions," 22-24. Bae translates the whole Dan-Gun myth to English in this dissertation.

beginning of Korean ethnicity; "Dan-Gun-Wang-Gom (단군왕검) established his capital at Pyong-Yang and called his kingdom Chosen."[22]

According to this myth, Koreans became descendants of Heaven, so Bae explains the meaning of U-Ri of Korean ethnicity as the descendants of Heaven.[23] As a result, U-Ri refers to a community as descendants of Heaven for following the Heavenly way or role. Bae defines the meaning of U-Ri in the Dan-Gun myth as "a human person as being both a heavenly being and a deeply social, relational being within a community."[24] The concept of descendants becomes part of the meaning of Korean ethnic boundary, U-Ri, through tied bloodlines. Indeed, the meaning of U-Ri in the Dan-Gun myth might be interpreted as human beings living on earth together with heavenly identity.

To sum up, Korean identity, based on the concept of U-Ri, has two boundaries beyond the communal and personal: these are its religious and ethnic boundaries. Figure 2 is a simplified concept of U-Ri. This paper focuses on religious and ethnic boundaries in Korean immigrants because religious and ethnic factors are not the main factors in Korean identity studies of U-Ri.

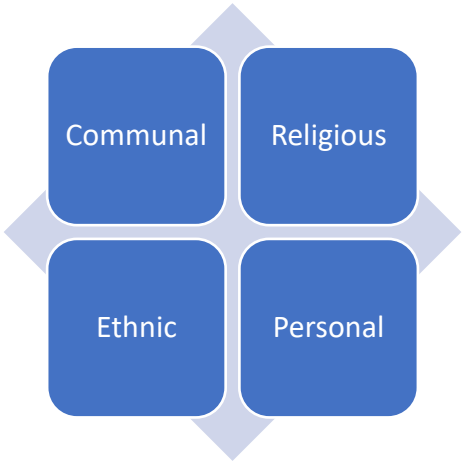

Figure 2. The concept of Korean identity, U-Ri.

3. Pentecostals, identity, and Immigrant church

The next section focuses on articulating the theoretical backgrounds behind this research: specifically, the relationship between Pentecostals and Korean identity, U-Ri, within migrant Korean churches. It explains why identity issues are essential in a Pentecostal study. The

[22] Bae, "The Divine-Human Relationship in Korean Religious Traditions," 23. Chosen (조선) is the order name of Korea.
[23] Bae, "The Divine-Human Relationship in Korean Religious Traditions," 56.
[24] Bae, "The Divine-Human Relationship in Korean Religious Traditions," 40.

second part explains the relationship between ethnic identity and Korean immigrants within New Zealand, and connects Pentecostal studies and immigrants' identity issues. Exploring these two theoretical backgrounds creates one hypothesis regarding identity in Korean churches.

3.1. Pentecostalism and Identity issue

According to Peter Althouse and Robby Waddell, Pentecostalism is "a migrating faith," which means social contexts influence Pentecostalism.[25] In other words, Pentecostalism does not represent an unchangeable characteristic but is changeable by interrelating with surrounding contexts. Therefore, Pentecostal scholars prefer to use the plural form, "Pentecostalisms," rather than the singular word, "Pentecostal," to express its diverse characteristics. Also, this plural expression opens the door to exploring the Pentecostalisms of different ethnicities.[26] The concept of U-Ri must not be ignored to understand Korean Pentecostalism in Korean churches regardless of location.

Each Pentecostal immigrant church has a specific geographical context or homelands as well as a host country. The contextual differences may be a source of conflict and tension in a host country.[27] Ironically, these cultural tensions between the homeland and host land play a pivotal role in identifying migrants' identity, as knowledge is generated from recognising cultural differences: what is different and what is the same between migrants' own cultures of origin and host cultures?

Several groups of Pentecostals are also noted by scholars globally,[28] and Pentecostal scholars are called indigenous Pentecostal which means localised Pentecostal.[29] Wonsuk Ma categorises Pentecostalism into three groups.[30] The first is "classical Pentecostals" based on denominations and primarily originating from North America and western Europe. This incorporates Pentecostalism's historic revival experiences, such as Azusa. Another group identified is "charismatic Pentecostals," focusing on spiritual experiences such as speaking in tongues, and this plays an essential role in the charismatic movement within other

[25] Peter Althouse, and Robby Waddell, "The Transformations of Pentecostalism: Migration, Globalization, and Ethnic Identity," *Pneuma* 39, no. 1-2 (2017): 1.
[26] Michael Wilkinson, ed., *Global Pentecostal Movements: Migration, Mission, and Public Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). This book is a helpful text to understand Pentecostals, and each chapter's contributors illustrate several Pentecostalisms related to different ethnics and nations.
[27] Althouse, and Waddell, "The Transformations of Pentecostalism," 1.
[28] Michael Wilkinson, "The 'Many Tongues' of Global Pentecostalism," in *Global Pentecostal Movements* ed. Michael Wilkinson (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 6.
[29] Allan Anderson, "Diversity in the definition of 'Pentecostal/Charismatic' and its ecumenical implications," *Mission Studies* 19, no. 1 (2002): 49; David Martin, "Issues affecting the study of Pentecostalism in Asia," in *Asian and Pentecostal* ed. Allan Anderson and Edmond Tang (Malaysia: Regnum, 2005): 24-28.
[30] Wonsuk Ma, "Asian Pentecostalism: a religion whose only limit is the sky," *Journal of Beliefs & Values* 25, no. 2 (2004): 192.

denominations, often emphasising miracles as evidence of belief. The third group is "indigenous or neo-charismatic" Pentecostals.[31] Ma proposes this group as linked to cultural experiences, as several missionaries were aware of existing Pentecostal perspectives before they arrived in new lands. In other words, indigenous religiosities or spiritualities in missional places are formed throughout the field's history and culture. As a result, Pentecostalism, especially "indigenous Pentecostals or neo-charismatics," directly connects with ethnic identity, and in this paper, "Pentecostal" refers to indigenous Pentecostal rather than its other meanings. However, I will use localised Pentecostal instead of indigenous Pentecostal to prevent confusion between Māori Pentecostal and Korean immigrant Pentecostal based on Korean Pentecostal in New Zealand.

The church in Korea has its own localised Pentecostal perspective. As previously mentioned, Korean Christianity developed parallel to traditional Korean religions (Shamanism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism) and Korean historical contexts.[32] Besides, the Great Revival Movement in Korea (1903-1907)[33] is the fruit of Koreans' spirituality based on traditional religious life. Sung-Deuk Oak explains Korean religions are valuable sources of "diverse and syncretic" and "congenial" relationships for Korean Christianity.[34] Thus, Ma provides an excellent point in connecting Korean ethnic identity and Korean Pentecostalism. Korean ethnic identity is linked inextricably to Korean traditional religions; and Korean Christianity forms Korean Pentecostalism. Therefore, Korean Pentecostals are never free from Korean ethnic identity, or the concept of U-Ri as outlined in this paper.

The reason why we need to explore Korean Pentecostals among Korean Christian history is clearly revealed in Sang-Yun Lee's doctoral thesis, "Contextual hope in Korean Pentecostalism's threefold blessing." He asserts the first Pentecostal missionary to Korea, Mary C. Ramsey, experienced Azusa Street revival, and arrived in 1928 as an independent missionary.[35] Indeed, before 1928, Korean churches had no connection with classical Pentecostal denominations, and the arrival of Mary C. Ramsey is generally considered the beginning of classical Pentecostalism in Korea, following Ma's categories. However, Lee also

[31] In New Zealand context, "indigenous or neo-charismatic" Pentecostal can interpret Māori Pentecostalism, however indigenous Pentecostals in this paper related to Korean Christianity and Korean immigrant churches are not Māori Pentecostals but Korean or Korean immigrant Pentecostals by localised in New Zealand context.
[32] Sung-Deuk Oak, *The Making of Korean Christianity: Protestant Encounters with Korean Religions, 1876–1915* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 12-32; Sang-Yun Lee, "Contextual hope in Korean Pentecostalism's Threefold Blessing," PhD diss., University of Birmingham, 2014, 30.
[33] Some call this movement "Pyung-Yang Great Revival Movement," but Oak explains this movement was started from Won-San on 1903, so he asserts that the Great Revival Movement was from 1903 to 1907. I agree with his opinion.
[34] Oak, *The Making of Korean Christianity,* 31.
[35] Lee, "Contextual hope in Korean Pentecostalism's Threefold Blessing," 79-80.

asserts the beginning of Pentecostalism in Korea should not be 1928 but 1903, the first year of the Great Revival Movement in Korea (1903 -1907).

Lee argues that the Great Revival Movement (1903-1907) should be understood as a Pentecostal movement despite having no records related to glossolalia, which is remarkable evidence of spiritual movement, providing a number of reasons. First, for this movement (1903-1907), several miracles like healings were generated by Korean church leaders.[36] Second, at this time, Korean Christians experienced repentance through weeping and praying.[37] So the report to the Edinburgh Conference of 1910 introduced the Great Revival Movement as "genuine Pentecost."[38] The report noted that "one of the most conspicuous features of mission history in Korea has been the Korean Revival, which has been a genuine Pentecost."[39] This report also explains characteristics of the Great Revival Movement, such as that "fifty thousand Korean Christians passed through its refining fires and to-day, through that experience, the Korean church knows the terrible character of sins, the power of Christ to save, the efficacy of prayer, and the immanence of God."[40]

In other words, "indigenous" Korean Pentecostalism incorporates Korean-style spiritual movements or activities. So localised Korean Pentecostals, whose distinctives are different when compared with Western Christian cultures, are present in every Korean church, including the Korean diaspora. For instance, many Korean churches have morning prayer meetings on weekdays and prefer Tong-Sung (통성) prayer, which is loudly praying together. Morning prayer meetings and Tong-Sung prayers are linked to the Great Revival Movement based on indigenous Pentecostalism.[41] Therefore, studying Korean identity is a stepping stone to explore Korean-style Pentecostalism in New Zealand. The next section explores the relationship between Korean migrant situations and ethnic identity.

3.2. Migrant experiences and identity issues

This section deals with the status of identity issues among migrant experiences. Gordon Summer (Sting) illustrates the experience of immigrants in his song, *Englishman in New York*.

> "I don't drink coffee, I take tea, my dear.
> I like my toast done on one side.
> And you can hear it in my accent when I talk.

[36] Lee, "Contextual hope in Korean Pentecostalism's Threefold Blessing," 48.
[37] Lee, "Contextual hope in Korean Pentecostalism's Threefold Blessing," 47.
[38] Lee, "Contextual hope in Korean Pentecostalism's Threefold Blessing," 48; "Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World," World Missionary Conference 1910 Report of Commission I, Edinburgh etc.: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910, 77.
[39] "Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World," 77.
[40] "Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World," 77.
[41] Oak, *The Making of Korean Christianity,* 271-304.

I'm an Englishman in New York.
Oh, I'm an alien, I'm a legal alien."[42]

Even though English people and New Yorkers have similar skin colours, language and western cultural backgrounds, the Englishman confesses, "I am an alien, a legal alien." Similarly, one interviewee, Sun-Hee Kim, felt alienated in a school, so she illustrated her differing emotions between the school and Korean church environment as being "nobody" versus being "somebody."[43]

Koreans in New Zealand or other western societies can often feel more strongly alienated because of their different skin colour, food, clothing, languages, and other cultural features. These hardships can be summarised into two expressions from the literature: "marginalisation" and "identity issues." Significantly, Korean American theologians deal with these marginal and identity issues in various books and articles. Hee-An Choi asserts that marginalisation is one of the difficulties faced by Korean immigrants.[44] Jung-Yong Lee titled his book *Marginality* and proposes an immigrant theology based on his migrant experiences. He illustrates the life of Korean immigrants as if a yellow dandelion tried to take root in a backyard occupied by green grasses.[45] He notes that immigrants face various obstacles, and these barriers generate their disconnection from the main communities in a host country, even as they make efforts to settle into their host country. "The grass, seeing that had happened to the dandelion, said: 'We told you so last fall. You do not belong here. Go away!'"[46]

Similarly, Grace Ji-Sun Kim describes her experience of living in the West in a question often asked by others, "Do you speak English?" which generates identity confusion. This question triggers her to identify her status as a foreigner in a host land even though she has lived her whole life there.[47] Similarly to those living in the United States, Korean immigrant children in New Zealand have different appearances compared with Europeans, so "Can you speak English?" is often a general question asked of them, regardless of their English-speaking ability or amount of years living in a host land. This identity confusion leads to immigrants' lives being divided into two life groups: Korean culture (especially in their family), and the host country's culture (often related to school life). Kim illustrates her identity crisis: "I wasn't accepted into the dominant white culture and felt like a cultural misfit. I tried my best to fit

[42] Sting, "Englishman in New York," Track 3, *… Nothing Like the Sun*, Air Studio, 1887.
[43] Sun-Hee Kim, interview with author.
[44] Choi, *A Postcolonial Self*, 65-114.
[45] Jung-Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), 10–13.
[46] Lee, *Marginality,* 11.
[47] Grace Ji-Sun Kim, ed., *Here I Am: Faith Stories of Korean American Clergywomen* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2015), 51.

in but couldn't. I straddled two cultures and didn't fit in either of them."[48] So, she confesses, it was hard to identify her identity in her youthful period.[49] As a result of these tensions, the immigrant 1.5 and second generations suffer confusion between their ethnic identity and the host country's identity. Another interviewee, Chul-Su Park, explains their identity crisis during primary school as "I hated being Korean. I really hated Korean [identity]. All the contexts around me included white people and Māori people, so I extremely hated people judging me, whether they like me or not, by my different skin colour."[50] Park struggles to find their own identity somewhere between Korean and Kiwi.

According to Mary Yu Danico, identity is formed from several factors such as family, language, education, peer groups, cultural experiences, and others.[51] Different experiences influence the formation of ethnic identity in different immigrant generations, even though they are from the same ethnic group. Korean immigrant parents and their children in New Zealand therefore face different issues.[52] For example, the first generation usually has abundant experiences of Korean culture through extended family, educational experiences in Korean school, and peer groups. As they used to live in Korea, they developed their ethnic identity as "Korean." However, the second generation, born in New Zealand, has few memories related to Korea relevant for developing a Korean ethnic identity as compared with the first generation. Therefore, generation gaps in Korean immigrant churches are linked to understanding Korean ethnic identity within the different migrant experiences. In the case of the second generation, Korean church experiences in New Zealand are one of the unique sources for migrants trying to create their Korean identity, however the first generation might use Korean church experiences as a means to enculturate their children into Korean Christianity, as they experienced it.

To sum up the theoretical approach, Korean churches are based on Pentecostal experiences despite being located within different denominations such as Presbyterian, Methodist, Anglican, and others, and Korean Pentecostal experiences are closely connected to strengthening Korean ethnic identity, U-Ri. That is, church experiences are meaningful in developing or maintaining the ethnic identity of Korean immigrants. This paper explores the changes in understanding Korean ethnic identity, U-Ri, in New Zealand Korean churches within the different generational groups.

[48] Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan M. Shaw, *Intersectional theology: An introductory guide* (Fortress Press, 2018), 23.
[49] Kim and Shaw, *Intersectional theology, 23.*
[50] Chul-Su Park, interview with author.
[51] Mary Yu Danico, *The 1.5 Generation: Becoming Korean American in Hawaii* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 3.
[52] Generally, immigrant parents belong the first generation and immigrant children are called the 1.5 and second generations.

4. Hypothesis and Analysis

In the earlier sections, I explored Korean identity through the concept of U-Ri and then outlined the relationship Pentecostals have with ethnic identity particularly relevant to within Korean immigrant churches in New Zealand. Here I suggest one hypothesis: Korean identity, mainly focusing on religious and ethnic factors, is an active process of modification by different immigrant generations in Korean immigrant churches in New Zealand. This hypothesis will be explored in the analysis section.

This section also explores the changing patterns of understanding Korean identity, focusing on the religious and ethnic aspects. For this study, I interviewed 31 Christians, of varying gender and age, in the two oldest Korean churches in Auckland (on the North Island) and Christchurch (on the South Island) in New Zealand.[53] Interviews were categorised into four cohorts: the first generation who migrated before 2008; the second cohort was the first generation who migrated after 2009; the third cohort was the 1.5 generation (born in Korea and migrated from 5 to 17), and the fourth cohort was the second generation (born in New Zealand or migrated under 4).[54] Interview questions related to their experiences as migrants, and I also asked all the participants what a sense of belonging in their Christian faith is. Figure 3 shows each cohort's number of respondents.

	The first cohort	*The second cohort*	*The third cohort*	*The fourth cohort*
Details	The first generation moving New Zealand before 2008	The first generation moving to New Zealand after 2009	The 1.5 generation who migrated from 5 to 17 years old	The second generation who were born in New Zealand or migrated under 4 years old
Numbers	9	6	8	8

Figure 3: Description of each cohort

4.1. Religious aspect

All cohorts tend to prefer relational words to emphasise their relationship with God when they explain a sense of belonging. All participants, regardless of generation, use "God" or

[53] The reason for choosing the two oldest churches is the recruit of the 1.5 and second generations over 18 years old, efficiently, because Korean immigrant churches in New Zealand have a short historical background of about 30 years. Also, two churches belong to the same denomination.
[54] The reason for divide the first generation into two groups is the launching iPhone in 2009 in Korea, as the smart phones is one of the turning points to migrants' life journey.

"Jesus" to explain their sense of religious belonging. In other words, Korean Christians identify a sense of belonging through not only church memberships but also their relationship with God. Secular theorists have a tendency to pay attention to only church memberships or church-going for numerical and visible evidence, however, Korean interviewees emphasise this more theological invisible belonging as found within their relationship with God as well as their visible belonging as demonstrated in institutional memberships. This can be linked to a character of U-Ri connected to both "a heavenly being and a social being."[55]

While participants' religious identity consists of both the religious and ethnic, after analysis the first generation and the 1.5 and second generations show different strength points. The first generation moving prior to 2008 (the first cohort) tends to use the phrase "we are selected" and "children of God," whereas the first generation moving after 2009 (the second cohort) were more likely to use the phrase "a child of God" to emphasise their relationship between God and human beings. Indeed, in this way the first generation prefers more singular or personal relational words for religious identity.

In contrast, immigrant children (1.5 and second generations) use both concepts, "selected" and "a child," less frequently. They tend to use "church," which is a more impersonal word for illustrating a sense of belonging. "Church" also represents an institutional belonging. In other words, the 1.5 and second generations express their belonging by focusing on church membership rather than any direct relationship with God. Here, one factor may be their enculturation in Western schools. Cultural studies scholars assert that East Asian perspectives are relational-centred perspectives versus Western perspectives, which are rational or logical.[56] Therefore, 1.5 and second generations are more likely influenced by Western perspectives via western educational systems than the first generations, who were educated in Korea. Therefore, it is not unexpected that, in the case of 1.5 and second generations, the usage of impersonal words is about double that of the first generations. The below table shows the usage of God and church in interviews.

	The first cohort	*The second cohort*	*The third cohort*	*The fourth cohort*
God	43	31	19	17
Church	25	25	44	45

Figure 4. The usage of God and Church

[55] Bae, "The Divine-Human Relationship in Korean Religious Traditions," 40.
[56] Richard Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently ... and Why* (New York: The Free Press, 2003).

Furthermore, while the first generation and the 1.5 and second generations have different (personal or impersonal) preferred words related to religious identity, the total usage of both words is similar. In other words, religiosity is maintained as an essential status in creating or maintaining Korean identity across the different immigrant generations. Depending on the generation, however, the religious factors reveal different emphases. The first generation tends to understand a sense of belonging through a relationship with God, whereas the 1.5 and second generations tend to understand it through more institutional relationships rather than articulating a direct relationship with God.

4.2. Ethnic aspect

Ethnic factors were also found to have a close relationship with a sense of belonging, which is consistent with the findings of scholars who explain the roles of Korean churches in Korean immigrant societies in sustaining Korean ethnicity, U-Ri, and Christianity.[57] For example, Butcher and Wieland characterise Korean churches in New Zealand as "God and golf": God represents the religious side and golf is the social side, including Korean ethnic activities.[58] At this point, the religious functions can be linked to religious identity in Korean immigrant churches, and the social functions play a pivotal role in forming or maintaining ethnic identity in churches. In-Chul Choi notes that "the identity of Korean church is interesting because [church members] gather with believing God and a church play a role in the [Korean] community."[59]

Even though Korean churches stress the importance of holding Korean ethnicity and Christianity together regardless of the different generations, ethnic boundaries (U-Ri) were not the same across the whole cohort. In other words, the Korean churches' role of socialising tends to have different patterns in each cohort. So the first generation, regardless of year of migration, more frequently uses ethnic words such as Korea and Korean, compared with the 1.5 and second generation. The first generation uses ethnic words for a sense of belonging more than twice that of the 1.5 and second generations. Figure 5 reveals the usage of words related to ethnic and peer groups.

[57] Andrew Butcher and George Wieland, "God and Golf: Koreans in New Zealand," *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 15, no. 2 (2013): 57–77. Other research efforts have partially studied Korean immigrant churches' roles in New Zealand. See Hyeeun Kim, "Parenting Experiences of 1.5 Generation Kiwi Parents," PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2014; Bon-Giu Koo, "Koreans between Korea and New Zealand: International Migration to a Transnational Social Field," PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2010; Hyearan Yun, "Korean Youth of the 1.5 Generation in New Zealand Talk about their Parents' Expectations and Attitudes," MA thesis, University of Canterbury; 2015; and Carina Meares, Elsie Ho, Robin Peace, and Paul Spoonley, "Kimchi Networks: Korean Employers and Employees in Auckland," *Integration of Immigrants Programme Research Report*, 2010.

[58] Butcher and Wieland, "God and Golf," 58.

[59] In-Chul Choi, interview with author.

	The first cohort	*The second cohort*	*The third cohort*	*The fourth cohort*
Korea/Korean	13	13	6	6
Peer group	7	1	5	11

Figure 5. The usage of ethnic words and a peer group

A possible interpretation from the interviews is that the first generation tends to rely, in their immigrant life journeys, on other Koreans to help mitigate hardships such as loneliness, alienation, the language barrier, and marginalisation. A diaspora environment, like a Korean immigrant church, is an appropriate place to stimulate a sense of belonging for the first generation. However, immigrant children rely on alternative groups for a sense of belonging and peer groups, because the 1.5 and second generations have a lower English language barrier than the first generation, and especially since many second generation immigrants identify that their first language is not Korean but English. Immigrant children can more easily make friends with white or Māori New Zealanders, so their social boundaries might be broader than those of the first generation as well as not being limited to Korean churches.

Furthermore, this is directly connected with identity issues, which is one of the most significant migrant hardships. According to migrant studies, the identity problem impacts immigrant children more deeply than their parents.[60] The first generation tends to have a clear ethnic identity, "I am a Korean," but some members of the 1.5 and second generations suffer from ethnic identity confusion, between a Korean and a Kiwi identity (European and Māori based identity).[61] This phenomenon is found in several interviews. First generation immigrants generally identified their peer groups as other Koreans, whereas 1.5 generation tends to divide their friendship groups into two, one group that consists of their Korean friends, and the other group with their English-speaking friends. In contrast, the second generation sees fewer differences between their Korean and English-speaking friends, so they use just "friends" more often than "Korean friends." Thus, Korean migrant identity is initially based on the same ethnic group but slowly develops into multi-ethnic friendships regardless of similar language usage across different generations.

[60] Eunice Hong, "Struggles of Korean Second-Generation Leaders: Leaving the Immigrant Church," *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 45, no. 3 (2021): 260-264; Allen Bartley, "1.5 generation Asian migrants and intergenerational transnationalism: Thoughts and challenges from New Zealand," *National Identities* 12, no. 4 (2010): 386-387.

[61] It is possible that Kiwi identity is based on national identity and Korean is based on genetic identity, however, someone calls Korean Kiwi to Kowi and Japanese Kiwi to Jowi and others for emphasising ethnic differences in New Zealand society. So even Kiwi means not only national but also genetic identities. Kim, "Parenting Experiences of 1.5 Generation Kiwi Parents," 4-5.

4.3. The relationship between religious and ethnic aspects

To compare each cohort's views regarding the religious and ethnic factors related to Korean identity, U-Ri, I needed one standard to compare the different patterns across the several cohorts. Therefore, I decided to use the first cohort's understanding of religious and ethnic factors as a standard.

For the first generation migrants since 2009, Korean ethnic and religious aspects have the same value in the Korean immigrant church, so the first cohort interviewees tend not to distinguish between the Korean community and their church. The Korean church plays an essential role in offering an information and heritage centre for Korean immigrants to maintain their Korean identity. In 2013, the proportion of Christians among Korean immigrants in New Zealand was about 70%.[62] Thus, it might be hard to find differences between religious identity and ethnic factors in the first cohort's understanding.

Next, for those who migrated before the radical changes in technology, smartphones, and internet social media and have been exposed to these in New Zealand since 2008, the second cohort reveals the tendency to divide its attention between their religious community and social community. Before the development of the internet and social media, the Korean church in New Zealand was a unique place to share migrant and educational information, but currently, several types of social media provide an alternative to the Korean churches' roles. Indeed, the religious aspect in the second cohort does not represent the whole Korean community, like the first cohort, but rather a Korean church boundary.

In immigrant (1.5 generation) children, the ethnic boundaries in U-Ri are narrower than those of the first generation's cohorts, while the religious side does not change significantly. Notably, the 1.5 and second generations prefer a communal boundary to peer groups instead of ethnic groups. However, between the 1.5 and second generations, the understanding of peer groups is slightly different. The 1.5 generation tends to divide its relationships into two peer groups, the Korean church peer group and the school peer group, but the second generation does not distinguish between different peer groups in the same way. For the second generation, Korean ethnicity is not essential for socialising, like it was for the other generations. Indeed, for immigrant children, Korean ethnic identity has decreased, and the second generation tends to have an unclear ethnic boundary compared with that of the 1.5 generation.

Furthermore, a religious factor maintains its importance in Korean identity across all the generations, although the first generation tends to understand their relationship with God as

[62] "Korean Ethnic Group," in the 2018 census ethnic group summaries, https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-ethnic-group-summaries/korean (June 18, 2021).

a father and a child. So, this understanding might open a door for Korean immigrants to build up a strong relationship with other church members, as they might both equally identify as children of God. In other words, Korean church members might belong to one family under the name of God and Koreans. This understanding is closely linked to the understanding of the Korean church as a Korean society among the first cohort.

A religious factor in the 1.5 and second generation focuses on institutional belonging. This means that an identity based on institutions might transfer to other groups through changing membership. The identities of these generations are more flexible, unlike ethnicity and family. The flexibility might be a trigger to reduce Korean ethnic influences. As a result, the importance of the religious factor has not changed but the understanding of religious factor has transferred and has impacted the understanding of the ethnic factor.

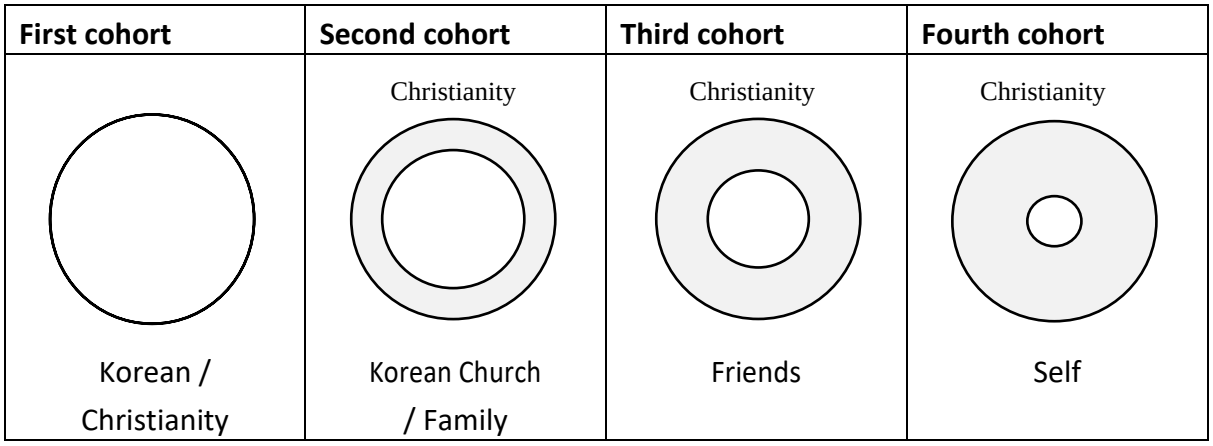

Figure 6. The change of religious and ethnic boundaries[63]

Figure 6 shows religious and ethnic identity in Korean immigrant generations, with the grey areas representing the gaps between each communal element and Christianity.

5. Conclusion

5.1. A Korean identity, not the Korean identity

In the past, scholars simplified Korean identity as communal-centred U-Ri, but recently, especially in immigrant theology, Korean identity has been recognised to be not the one identity, but several identities based on Koreans sharing elements of a common identity. Hee-An Choi explains the process in her book, *A Postcolonial Self: Korean immigrant theology and church*. She notes that "Korean ethnic self starts with unification between the 'I' and others and this unification is called to U-Ri (Woori)."[64] This description has no

[63] Hyeong-Kyoon Kim, "Circular not linear: The interplay between the religious dimensions of believing, belonging and behaving in Korean Christian immigrants to Aotearoa New Zealand," PhD thesis, University of Otago, 2021, 258.
[64] Choi, *A Postcolonial Self,* 9.

problem in Korea; however, this ethnic identity generates some conflict in Korean immigrant contexts.[65] In the western context, Korean immigrants learned to separate their individual selves from U-Ri, so their identity is not the unification of "I" and others, but a person as a part of U-Ri.[66] Also, Choi asserts that Korean immigrant identity might interchange I and we "with others," such as local people and other migrants.

As in Choi's perspective, Korean immigrants in New Zealand have different identities related to their ethnic and religious boundaries. However, via interviews it was shown that each generation within Korean immigrant churches in New Zealand has its own identity based on the concept of U-Ri. Across these generations the ethnic factor especially clearly shifts from a Korean-centred identity to a non-Korean-centred but multi-ethnic New Zealander identity. For the first generation, the Korean community is essential to forming the boundary for group social activities, and first generation migrants especially see Korean churches as socialising places for sharing information and meeting Korean friends, regardless of religion. The 1.5 and second generations tend not to limit their ethnic identity to only Korean churches in New Zealand, but include English-based institutions.

5.2. Implications

This section concerns the possible implications for Korean churches in New Zealand (and may have some application in other countries). In the past, Korean immigrant churches put their efforts into maintaining their Korean identity in the host country to overcome migrant hardships, such as marginality and identity issues. These efforts bore abundant fruit, with about 70% of the Korean population in New Zealand identifying as Christian. However, currently, the importance of ethnic identity and therefore the necessity of the Korean churches has shrunk with succeeding generations, especially in the 1.5 and second generations.

Therefore, I suggest New Zealand's Korean churches change their policy from emphasising the Korean element to a multi-ethnic Christian element, beyond ethnicity. This is seen in some existing cases. For example, several Korean churches in Auckland have educational programmes such as after-school programs, but generally, these focus on Korean children, not all local children. In attempting to minister to 1.5 and 2nd generation Koreans, Korean churches should try to open church boundaries towards their local communities, perhaps minimising their Korean element, while still focusing on their Christian identity. In other words, the meaning of U-Ri can extend from an ethnic boundary to Christianity boundary, so

[65] It is because Korean and other Asian and African societies tend to be oriented to a communal sense rather than an individual sense, but the western social context focuses on an individual sense.
[66] Choi, *A Postcolonial Self,* 6-7.

U-Ri church is not only a part of Korean churches but also a part of New Zealand churches or the world churches.

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