A Theological Exploration of *Salim* as an Approach to Pastoral Care and Counselling for Korean Immigrant Women in North America

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the situation of Korean immigrant women in North America, in terms of its religious, psychological, socio-economic and cultural aspects. I argue that a new approach to pastoral care and counselling is needed in order to address the unique hybridity and double-binding oppression that these women face. On the one hand, Korean women are oppressed by their patriarchal home culture, which they bring with them to North America, and on the other, they are obliged to conform to the dominating norms and values of North America, which can also function as oppressive forces.

To address these unique features, this thesis explores the pastoral theological meaning of *salim* as a potential solution. *Salim* is an indigenous Korean word, meaning enhancing, enlivening, and life-saving. In a narrow sense, *salim* refers to household work, such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children, work that is usually executed by women. This narrower meaning of *salim* as women’s household labour has had the effect of restricting women’s lives. Because *salim* has been regarded as insignificant, women have been devalued. By drawing upon
the tripartite method of feminist theology, this thesis unearthes the devalued meaning of *salim*, and retrieves its life-enlivening meaning, reconstructing it as an approach to pastoral care and counselling.

For the process of reconstruction, I converse with Emmanuel Lartey, and identify both the strengths and weaknesses in his pastoral theological methods. My ultimate hypothesis is that a reconstructed *salim* can serve as a healing, liberating and life-enhancing pastoral care and counselling model for Korean immigrant women in North America.
Acknowledgments

Certainly, theology is autobiographical. This thesis comes from both my personal and professional autobiography. It also manifests the biography of my community, meaning, this thesis is not a product of my own endeavours, but of my community’s – my family, my church, my school, my friends, my clients, and my neighbours. So, I give thanks to them, first and foremost, as participating in their joys and sorrows have encouraged me to write this thesis.

Twenty years have passed since I immigrated to Canada. It is all thanks to God’s grace that I have come to this point. At every step of my journey, I was able to feel that God was always guiding me. It would have been nice if my mother was still alive. During my doctoral study, both of my parents passed away in Korea. To my mother who spent all her life doing salim (살림), I dedicate this thesis. I also dedicate this thesis to all oppressed women, wishing it will empower them to live as confident individuals who are wonderfully and fearfully created in the image of God.

Countless gratitude to my co-advisors of this thesis. Dr. Namsoon Song, as a fellow Korean woman, has been a springboard for me to pursue my vocation. She encouraged me to never give up whenever I felt like I couldn’t finish my thesis. Dr. Pamela McCarroll has been a prophetic voice that has shined a light that has guided my journey throughout the doctoral study. I also give deep thanks to Dr. Joseph Schner who taught me how to integrate psychology with theology, always in the most graceful manner. My heartfelt thanks go to all faculties and staff of Knox College, who educated and supported me over the years. I also appreciate FTE (Forum for Theological Exploration) which supported me for my advancing scholarship and ministry.
I deliver my sincere thanks to my children, Christie and Immanuel, whom I am deeply proud of. Lastly, my dear husband, Rev. Tae-Kyum Park! This thesis is the fruit of your patience, gentleness, and empowerment.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

This thesis grows out of lived human experience as its methodological starting point. That being so, beginning this chapter, I will briefly illustrate my social location, in order that readers might understand the particular context for this thesis. I moved to Canada twenty years ago with my husband and two children, who were then four and five years old. I received a theological education and have since been trained as a pastoral counsellor and family therapist. I have been certified as a specialist in pastoral counselling by CASC (Canadian Association of Spiritual Care). I am a clinical fellow and an approved supervisor of AAMFT (American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy). I am also a licenced psychotherapist of CRPO (College of Registered Psychotherapist of Ontario). While I have counselled diverse people in terms of ethnicity, the majority have been Koreans living in the Greater Toronto Area. In particular, I have counselled many Korean immigrant women. I am also an ordained minister. In my church, I provide leadership in the area of pastoral care and counselling in a communal space as well as at an individual level. Outside of my church, I teach pastoral counselling and family therapy in colleges and training institutions, and I also practice psychotherapy.

In the course of providing pastoral care and counselling, I have recognized problems with and gaps in the dominant approaches to the life-situation of Korean immigrant women in North America. The problems and gaps basically come from limitations to the various approaches, which fail to address a unique hybrid feature of Korean immigrant women, i.e., that they are both Korean and North American. This unique hybrid feature contains a double-binding oppression.
On the one hand, women are oppressed by their patriarchal home culture, which they continue to carry even after emigrating to North America, as it is deeply embedded in their mind-set. On the other hand, the dominant norms and values of North America can be oppress forces for KIWNA\(^1\), as they are burdened to follow these norms and values. Otherwise, their psychology and behaviour are misinterpreted according to Western standards.

For example, one woman whom I counselled said, “I am really tired. I have to work at the store every day. When I am not working at the store, I am working at home. I have to grocery shop, prepare meals, clean the house, and do the laundry. Everyone around me is saying that I need time for myself. Well, they do not understand my situation. If I am not the one working, there is no one else who will do the work.”

\(^1\) Hereinafter, KIWNA is used as an abbreviation referring to Korean women who are living in Canada or in the United States. I exclude Mexico, as the life-situation of Korean women in Mexico needs to be dealt separately. I include both Korean women in the United States as well as in Canada in this thesis for a couple of reasons. First, not enough studies have been made researching only the Korean Canadian experiences as distinguished from the Korean American experiences. Most studies are largely based on the experiences of Korean immigrants in the United States and do not clarify the differences in experiences for Korean immigrants in Canada. Secondly, although I acknowledge that the experiences as immigrants living in these two countries may manifest differences in terms of their motivation to migrate and their sociocultural and economic experiences before and after their immigration, there are more similarities than differences on which this thesis focuses. Particularly, as this thesis focuses on the hybrid and largely double-bound experiences of Korean women both in Canada and the United States, I include both of these two groups as the focal point of my thesis.

In a literal and legal sense, KIWNA excludes those who have citizenship of Canada and the United States. However, KIWNA in this thesis represents Korean women living in North America who have immigrant experiences. In some cases, it also includes the second generation of Korean North American Women who are born in Canada and the United States, who share lots of cultural commonality with the first or 1.5 generation Korean immigrant women.
Another woman said, “I am a Christian. I know I should obey the church. But it is very hard. My minister wants me to be a chair on the Fellowship Committee next year. But I don’t think I can. I work every day in a factory and being a chair on the committee means that I should work even on Sundays, and sometimes Saturdays, to help prepare meals for the church congregation. It is hard to say no as an elected deacon and a wife of an elder of the church. What should I do?”

These examples are the typical manifestations of the life of Korean women living in North America. These examples show how their lives are double-bound by the socio-cultural and economic realities of Korea and North America. On one hand, they are bound by Korean culture which expects them to do house-work as a wife and as a mother. At the same time, they are bound by the reality of living in North America as wage earners, mostly in under-paid jobs, making the situation even worse.

The hybrid cultural phenomena do not only reside in first generation immigrants, but also in the second. One young second generation Korean Canadian woman sought counselling with me. She said, “I have seen a white, female therapist several times, but I felt like she did not understand my cultural situation. I have had a serious conflict with my mother. I do not understand why she gives everything to my brother, yet only looks to me for help. I am angry. I am sick and tired of her nagging. Is it okay if I do not see my mother until I am willing to do so? I came to you as I thought you as a Korean would understand my situation well.”

In order to help these people in pastoral care and counselling, intra-psychic or family-of-origin analysis is not good enough as there are gaps in understanding their issues. We need to assess their issues from socio-cultural and economic points of views as well. Particularly, we
need to pay attention to their hybrid and double-binding life situation. Thus, this thesis aims to
develop an appropriate approach which seriously takes into account the unique life-situations of
Korean immigrant women in North America.

1.1 Thesis Statement

This thesis explores a theological meaning of salim as a potential approach to pastoral
care and counselling for Korean immigrant women in North America, whose lives manifest
unique hybrid attributes with attendant double-binding oppression. Salim (살림) is an indigenous
Korean word meaning enhancing, enlivening, restoring, revitalizing, energizing, reviving, and
saving life from death. However, the meaning of salim has been devalued as an insignificant
household labour executed mostly by women. By unearthing the devalued meaning of salim and
retrieving its life-enlivening meaning, the thesis reconstructs salim as an approach to pastoral
care and counselling. For this process, I converse with Emmanuel Lartey and employ his pastoral
theological methods, finding similarities and also gaps in his approach when applied to the
context of KIWNA. The hypothesis is that the reconstructed meaning of salim can serve as a
pastoral care and counselling approach for the healing and liberation of KIWNA and for
promoting their participation in the life-enlivening meaning of salim.

1.2 Major Ideas and Resources

Many pastoral theologians and pastoral practitioners have searched the appropriate
theological methods and theories from intercultural and/or postcolonial perspectives. Among
these, I have wondered whether the pastoral theological methods of Emmanuel Lartey might
serve to construct an approach for pastoral care and counselling for KIWNA, based on a

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2 Emmanuel Lartey, David Augusburger, James Poling, Heesun Kim, Nancy Ramsey, Carrie
Doehring, Larry Graham, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, Stephen Pattison, etc.
culturally appropriate understanding. Lartey has contributed greatly to increasing awareness of
cultural differences and has developed an intercultural and postcolonial pastoral theological
method.

Lartey is from West Africa, was educated in Britain, and teaches in the United States. Based
on his experience of intercultural contexts, he endeavors to explore and develop a pastoral
theology which is contextually grounded. I find Lartey’s pastoral theological methods good tools
when searching for an appropriate approach for KIWNA, yet there are also gaps and limitations,
which I will present in the main body of the thesis.

Encouraged by Emmanuel Lartey’s pastoral theological methods in an intercultural world,
although finding some gaps in its application to the situation of KIWNA, I considered the
concept of salim and wondered if it could be constructed as an appropriate approach to pastoral
care and counselling for KIWNA. This insight first came from James Newton Poling and Hee
Sun Kim’s book, Korean Resources for Pastoral Theology: Dance of Han, Jeong, and Salim. In
this book, the two authors propose salim, together with han and jeong, as important resources for
pastoral theology in the West as well as in Korea. They maintain that in Korea the meaning of
salim has been devalued and that the retrieved meaning needs to be extended to the care of
congregations, to the ecological environment, as well as to the family. Poling and Kim propose

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3 James Newton Poling and Hee Sun Kim, Korean Resources for Pastoral Theology: Dance of
    Han, Jeong, and Salim (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012).

4 Ibid, 76.
that “salim could become a synonym for pastoral care of persons and worlds,” since the meaning of salim as “life-enlivening” resonates with the intention of pastoral care.⁵

The idea that salim might be a useful concept in pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women in North America basically comes from three insights. The first is that salim is deeply influenced by the philosophy of Donghak. Since 1980, a movement to retrieve the meaning of salim as that of “making things alive” has emerged in Korea, with the goal of improving the well-being of all creation. Scholars have found that salim is deeply rooted in the philosophy of Donghak.⁶ The founder of Donghak, Suun Je-U Choi, resisted the oppression of foreign imperial powers in order to protect the independence of the nation, and strived also to establish a new world. He thought that all humans embraced God in their souls and thus he dreamed of a new world where every human is treated equally.⁷ Influenced by the philosophy of Donghak, salim resists colonial and patriarchal powers and assists in liberation of the oppressed. Furthermore, the unique understanding of salim as reverence toward life and creation is also strongly emphasized in Donghak. Being intrinsically rooted in the philosophy of Donghak, salim has the potential to be developed as a liberative pastoral theological response to the patriarchal and colonial oppression in the lives of Korean immigrant women.

The second is that the philosophy of salim reflects Korean traditional epistemology of Dao which seeks the harmony and enhancement of diverse values. Salim can be a guiding principle for Korean immigrant women living in an intercultural world, grounded in Asian traditional

⁵ Ibid, 78.

⁶ For example, Kim Ji-Ha, Kyul Chung, Je-A Oh.

⁷ Kyung Ho Chung, “남북 평화통일을 향한 생명살림의 윤리, [The Ethics of Life Salim toward the peaceful reunification of Korea],” Theology and Ministry 21, no. 5 (2004): 103.
heritage and at the same time embracing new cultural values in North America. My hypothesis is that the concept of salim can serve as a creative transforming force in pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women in North America whose lives are exposed to the contrasting values of Korea and North America.

The third idea paradoxically comes from the fact that salim has often been used as a tool to confine women to the job of housekeeping as a means of degrading their worth. Salim traditionally refers to housekeeping work, usually executed by women, such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children, and the meaning of salim can be extended to “home-making” for the family. The women who are good at salim have been recognized and praised by being called “salim-ggoon” in Korean society, meaning excellent in salim and implying a good woman. Thanks to Korean women’s salim, families are fed and nurtured. However, the problem is that the meaning of salim has also been used as a tool to confine Korean women’s roles mainly to the domestic sphere and to devaluing women’s worth.

Overturning the negative usage of salim follows the methodology of feminist theologians who analyze “structures and ideologies that rank people as inferior or superior according to various traits of human nature.” The restrictions commonly associated with the concept of salim may cause increased suffering and conflict in Korean immigrant families, as most Korean immigrant women are expected to carry dual roles, both as wage earners and housekeepers. Yet further study of the word salim finds its meaning can reinforce the restoration of women’s worth.

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The *salim* movement can be seen in fields such as environmental studies, systematic or constructive theology, and feminist studies. There is some theological literature related to *salim*. However, other than a brief chapter by Hee Sun Kim and James Poing, there is hardly any evidence of an attempt to apply the concept of *salim* to pastoral theology in pastoral care and counselling. Engaging with the theological and pastoral theological literature, I want to explore *salim* as an approach of pastoral practice, one which is theologically grounded and theory-based.

The primary sources of this thesis are the literature of *salim* scholarship and the works of Emmanuel Lartey. These primary sources will be discussed together with secondary sources from the scholarship of liberative, intercultural, postcolonial, and eco-feminist theology, and particularly drawing upon Korean American scholarship in systematic and pastoral theology.

### 1.3 Research Methods

The research method of this thesis intersects with the five phases of Lartey’s liberative pastoral cycle as illustrated below.
Illustration 1: Lartey’s liberative pastoral cycle\(^9\)

The first phase focuses on the reality of lived experience, where living persons wrestle with real life issues in places such as hospitals, prisons, hospices, or counselling centres.\(^{10}\) My thesis focuses on the life-experience of Korean immigrant women in North America, whom I encounter through Korean communities in North America. Intersecting with the first phase of Lartey’s pastoral cycle, this first chapter generally locates the problems and gaps in the practice of pastoral care and counselling for KIWNA, as the dominant approaches fail to address these women’s particular lived experience.

At the second phase of situational analysis, Lartey’s model seeks to involve the perspectives of other necessary disciplines such as history, economics and politics along with social and psychological analyses in order to get a clearer understanding of the situation.\(^{11}\) This line of thinking is based on his conviction that “the God of all truth can be encountered in various disciplines and glimpsed through different perspectives.”\(^{12}\) In line with the second phase of Lartey’s pastoral cycle, the second chapter of this thesis attempts to make a situational analysis of the concrete experience of KIWNA multidimensionality, including their religious

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\(^{11}\) Ibid.

\(^{12}\) Lartey, “Practical Theology as a Theological Form,” 132.
mapping, psychological attributes, and socio-economic-cultural context, along with identifying their pastoral needs.

At the third phase of theological analysis, Lartey’s model seeks to research how the faith tradition and theological thought approach the issue raised.\footnote{Ibid., 133.} In the third chapter of this thesis, I explore Lartey’s theological methods, encompassing liberative, intercultural, and postcolonial pastoral praxis. I research how he responds with his faith tradition and theological thought to the pastoral situation of Africans and African Americans whom he encounters. In employing Lartey’s pastoral theological methods to the life-reality of KIWNA, I will present how his methods provide a good resource and insights when researching an appropriate pastoral care and counselling approach for this group. I will also present the gaps in and limitations to its application to Korean immigrant women in North America.

In the fourth phase, Lartey’s model interrogates the situation with critical consciousness and asks of the tradition of faith: “How adequate is my tradition’s formulation in responding to the concrete experience encountered?”\footnote{Lartey, \textit{In Living Colour}, 103.} Tapping into this, in the fourth chapter of this thesis, I examine how the Korean indigenous concept of \textit{salim} can respond to the situation of KIWNA. For the exploration of \textit{salim}, I use a tripartite method of feminist theology: “a hermeneutics of suspicion (critique and deconstruction of historical Christianity), a hermeneutics of retrieval (recovery of the lost history of women), and reconstruction (revision of Christian categories).”\footnote{Michelle A. Gonzalez, \textit{Created in God’s Image: An Introduction to Feminist Theological Anthropology} (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 88.}
At the fifth phase, Lartey’s model seeks to facilitate participants in exploring options for response. This fifth phase is final in Lartey’s pastoral cycle, but does not mean the cycle ends here; rather it means that participants return to the situation with new perspectives and changed attitudes. The fifth chapter of this thesis, corresponding to the final response phase of Lartey’s pastoral cycle, presents a salim approach as a response to the present situation of KIWNA along with a composite case study that I interpret through a salim approach.

1.4 Outline of Thesis

This thesis is composed of six chapters. The first chapter, intersecting with the first phase of Lartey’s pastoral cycle, establishes the methodology of the thesis beginning in experience. I briefly describe and locate the thesis in the lived experiences of Korean immigrant women in North America whom I encounter through my pastoral practices. Drawn from my own experiences, the thesis asks the question, “What is the appropriate approaches of pastoral care and counselling for KIWNA?” As I find problems and gaps of the dominant approaches failing to address these women’s particular lived experience, I delineate the areas which a new approach needs to address and I present how salim has much potential to be used as an appropriate approach for KIWNA. As well, I briefly outline why and how Emmanuel Lartey’s theological methods are helpful in developing salim as an appropriate intercultural approach for KIWNA.

Chapter two analyzes the present life-situation of Korean immigrant women in North America. First, I analyze their suffering and brokenness with regard to their religious mapping in terms of Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Christianity. I examine some central psychological characteristics for Koreans such as Han, Uri, Jeong, and Shame. I also look into socio-economic-cultural situations of Korean immigrant women in North America. I pay

particular attention to the double-binding oppressive elements in their life, as this thesis aims to assist in the healing and liberation of KIWNA.

Chapter three discusses Emmanuel Lartey’s theological methods, which arise primarily based on a liberative, intercultural, and postcolonial perspective. In his distinctive “intercultural” framework, Larkey deals with the issues of “global justice specifically including matters of race, gender, class, sexuality and economics.”\(^{17}\) For Larkey, postcolonial pastoral care means “helping persons fulfil the life-purpose and plan they chose and agreed to in the divine realm prior to their birth and entry onto this human plane of existence.”\(^{18}\) I will discuss how Larkey’s pastoral theological methods can assist the searching for an appropriate approach to the praxis of Korean immigrant women. I will also present the gaps and limitations in its application to the situation of this group.

In chapter four, _salim_ is explored, drawing on a tripartite method of feminist theology: a hermeneutics of suspicion, retrieval, and reconstruction. From a hermeneutics of suspicion, I examine the etymological and life-giving meaning of _salim_ and also traditional usage of _salim_ as a tool to confine Korean women rather than enliven them. For the retrieval of _salim_, I trace the roots of _salim_ and its relation to _Donghak_ and the historical development of the _salim_ movement. For the hermeneutics of reconstruction, I research _salim_ in its diverse theological stances, such as theology of life, theology of _yin_ and _yang_, theology of the cross, theology of ecology. For this research, I will be drawing upon authors who deal with _salim_ in their scholarly work from across

\(^{17}\) Emmanuel Lartey, _Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World_ (Peterborough, NH: Epworth Publishing), 124.

various disciplines, such as Kim Ji-Ha, Kiyul Chung, Mi-Rang Kang, James Poling, Hee Sun Kim, Jea S. Oh, Seonghee Kim, Kyung Ho Chung, Changwon Suh, Dong Min Jang, Jeung Pyo Lee, Jae-Soon Park, and Un-Hey Kim, and Chung Hyun Kyung. 

Chapter five engages in a reconstruction of *salim* as an approach of pastoral care and counselling, employing Emmanuel Lartey’s theological methods. It will explore *salim* as a liberative pastoral praxis, as life-enhancement resources in intercultural context, and *salim* as a postcolonial pastoral care and counselling approach. *Salim* will be explored as a transforming force of life not only for individuals but also for the global communities and the ecological world. This chapter will present a composite case study in which I employ a *salim* approach.

Chapter six presents the conclusion of this thesis. In conclusion, I summarize the research and explore the implications of the reconstructed meaning of *salim* as an approach to pastoral care and counselling. I define the contributions and limitations of this research, and I raise a question about how a *salim* approach might be adjusted to a different intercultural context. I also suggest the need for further research in order to develop a concrete model of a *salim* approach.

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19 In this thesis, I write some authors’ first name last and last name first, following the authors’ preferences. Those authors in this thesis are Kim Ji-Ha, Chung Hyun Kyung, Choi Hee An, and Kwok Pui-lan.
Chapter 2
The Religious, Psychological, Socio-Economic and Cultural Characteristics of Korean Immigrant Women in North America

This chapter analyzes the situated lives of Korean immigrant women in North America and examines their pastoral needs. The most important feature of these lives is that they are bounded by two socio-cultural forces: the Korean and North American norms. These two forces often manifest a double-binding oppression. On the one hand, Korean women are bound by oppressive Confucian patriarchy, and on the other, they are oppressed by the dominant values of North America. Many Asian American feminist theologians point out the double marginality and oppression of Asian American women due to their gender and race.¹

Rita Nakashima Brock, Japanese American theologian, bluntly states that because she is an Asian American woman, oppression through both race and gender are facts of her life.² Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Korean-Canadian/American theologian, claims that “Asian North American immigrant women already oppressed by their own cultures are now further subjugated by the dominant Western culture,” and calls for the re-examination of the double-binding oppression of their social, cultural, and religious place in society.³ In this chapter, I will analyze the situated lives of KIWINA in terms of their religious lives, psychological attributes, and socio-economic-

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¹ To name a few: Kwok Pui-Lan, Rita Nakashima Brock, Wonhee Anne Joh, Young Lee Hertig, and Grace Ji-Sun Kim.


cultural situation, with particular attention to the double-binding oppression manifested in each of these dimensions.

I discuss these three categories one by one, yet it is important to note that these aspects are deeply related to one another. For example, the reasons for attending Korean churches in North America are not just religious, but also psychological and cultural. The two researchers, Won Moo Hurh and Kwang Chung Kim, rightly point out,

Among the majority of Korean immigrants, the religious need (meaning), the social need (belonging) and the psychological need (comfort) for attending Korean church are inseparable from each other; they are functionally intertwined under the complex conditions of uprooting, existential marginality, and sociocultural adaptation for rerooting.\(^4\)

The uncertainty and changes to their lives in North America prompt immigrants to resort to religion for practical support, emotional comfort and social belonging.\(^5\) In reflecting on this, my discussion of these categories overlaps to a considerable degree.

### 2.1 Religious Characteristics of Korean Immigrant Women

The experiences of immigrant women’s lives influence their religiosity, and at the same time, religious beliefs and practices shape their everyday lives. Therefore, to understand the lives of Korean immigrant women, it is important to understand their religious characteristics. As Jonathan Tan maintains, religious practices are the foremost important forces for Asian American communities, because through religious practices they “define and shape their own

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\(^5\) Ibid.
transnational and hybridized identity” in North America. Many Korean-North American women carry their own religiosity with them when they emigrate from the home country. When they settle in a new land, their identity becomes hybridized.

Statistics show that Christianity is the major religion for Korean North Americans. In 2012, 61 percent of Korean-Americans surveyed identified themselves as Protestant, 10 percent as Catholic, 6 percent as Buddhist, and 23 percent as unaffiliated with any religion. The case in Canada reflects similar statistics to those in the United States. In 2001, 51 percent of people of Korean origin in Canada indicated their religious affiliation as Protestant, 24.5 percent as Catholic, 4 percent as Buddhist, and 20 percent as having no religious affiliation. These numbers contrast significantly with Koreans in South Korea. In 2005 in South Korea only 18 percent of the population reported as Protestant, 11 percent as Catholic, 23 percent as Buddhist, and 47 percent indicated no religious affiliation. As revealed in these statistics, Christianity is a dominant religion for Korean immigrants in North America. The statistics also clearly show that many Koreans affiliate with Christian churches after immigration.

While the major religion of Korean immigrants is Christianity, an analysis of the other major religions of Korea is also necessary, because other religions have substantially affected the


shaping of Christianity in Korea. Particularly since the Christianity of Korea was formed over a short time period, the analysis of how other religions have influenced Christianity in Korea is crucial. While the history of Christianity in Korea can only be traced back to around 200 years for Catholics and 130 years for Protestants, other religions in Korea have much longer histories: more than 4,000 years for Shamanism, 1,600 years for Buddhism, and 600 years for Confucianism. Therefore, while some people identify themselves as Christians, their ways of practicing their Christian faith manifest a good deal of other religious influences.

As shown in the statistics, many immigrants of Korean origin joined Christian churches after immigration. However, the ways of practicing their faith reflect their other religious roots in Korea. Greer Wenh-In Ng rightly states:

> Children born into East Asian American/Canadian Christian homes are also brought up in an ethos steeped in Confucian, Taoist, or Buddhist values and spirituality. While living religiously as Christians, they behave more like their forebears than they realize. They practice filial piety, respect elders and seniors, prize the communal over the individual, and are conscious of being in continuity with ancestors and the departed.¹⁰

Considering the multiple religious roots embedded in Christianity, it is very important to analyze how other religions influence Korean women in the church. I will focus particularly on the oppressive elements of each religion and show how these oppressive elements have affected Korean women in the church in North America. While the discussion of this section draws many authors, it draws heavily on the work of Choi Hee An in particular, as she has conducted extensive research and her work provides helpful resources to understand the way Korean women experience God in a multi-religious colonial context.

2.1.1 The Influence of Shamanism

Shamanism is the longest prevailing spiritual and religious tradition in Korea and has been deeply absorbed into Korean culture and religion. Embedded in Shamanism, many Koreans unconsciously acknowledge the presence of gods or spirits, whether they are religious or not, and no matter what religion they officially practice. When unwanted events occur, Koreans tend to think the gods and spirits are angry and that they need to make reconciliation with these gods or spirits. So, through rituals, they try to comfort, heal, and compensate the gods and spirits. According to Choi Hee An, Shamanistic gods play roles as protectors and benefactors, and these roles have both positive and negative influences on Korean women’s lives.\textsuperscript{11} From a positive aspect, Shamanism has benefitted many Korean women in that they can rely on these gods for healing, protection, and material gains. These women resort to shamanistic rituals for healing from sickness, solving of troubles in life, and liberation from oppression by people in power.

Among the many benefits of Korean Shamanism, according to Choi, is that it represents the voices of the oppressed people.\textsuperscript{12} Choi states that “Shamanistic rituals and storytelling provide women with a cathartic release from their oppressive reality and empower them to share their pain.”\textsuperscript{13} I summarize the claim of Choi that Korean Shamanism represents the voice of the oppressed in general and Korean women in particular as follows. For a long time in Korean history Shamanistic rituals were practiced by the poor and the uneducated, and particularly by

\begin{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 17.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
women. Usually these people had not been through the official education systems. Still, the influence of Shamanism on the leadership of Korean women is remarkable.

While other religions in Korea, such as Buddhism and Confucianism, limit the participation of Korean women in religious practices, Shamanism prioritizes women’s leadership. The majority of shamans in Korea are women. Korean women shamans are able to appeal to Korean women as they represent the oppressed voices of poor, low, uneducated, and marginalized people. That is why Shamanism has generally been regarded as a religion of women in Korea. When Korean women were prohibited from leadership in Buddhism and Confucianism, Shamanism provided an outlet for them to exercise their power and as a means of catharsis for their oppressed emotions. However, with the inauguration of Confucianism in the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910), Shamanistic rituals were discouraged and “Shamanism was treated as the religion of uneducated women and as little more than superstition.” After Christianity was brought to Korea in the nineteenth century, Shamanism was viewed as “no more than old-fashioned superstition and heresy.”

Against the positive aspects of Shamanism for women, its negative influence on Korean women can be found in the parallel between their relationship with gods and their relationship with people in authority. Choi argues that Korean women try “to please their gods—just as they

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16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 18.
do with men and others in power,” who are often oppressors and colonizers. The problem, according to Choi, is to get the benefit from the gods. Korean women in general have devoted their lives to the gods through submission and sacrifice, putting their lives in the hands of these gods just as they do with the oppressors. This parallel process causes Korean women to depend on someone in authority for protection and decision-making, thereby losing their own strength.

The influence of Shamanism prevails also among Korean women in the Christian church. First, it is easy for Korean women to accept the Jesus of the gospels, the one who drives away the demons and heals the sick, as they can see similar practices from Korean shamans. Chung Hyun Kyung goes further to state that “as the Korean shaman played roles as a healer, comforter, and counselor for Korean women, Jesus Christ healed and comforted women in his ministry.” The influence of Shamanist rituals can be noticed in many practices of Korean Christians and Christian Churches. In the fervent intercessory prayer and praise meeting of Korean churches, for example, the influence of charismatic Shamanistic rituals can be glimpsed. While Korean Christian women are still discouraged from participating in church leadership in decisive roles, they exercise leadership through charismatic and cathartic rituals, such as intensive prayer meetings and fervent praise nights.

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18 Choi Hee An, Korean Women and God, 15.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Chung Hyun Kyung, Struggle to be the Sun Again, 66.
22 Ibid.
Another influence of Shamanism on the Christian churches in Korea is its function of storytelling. As Choi Hee An claims, “Shamanistic rituals and storytelling provide women with a cathartic release from their oppressive reality and empower them to share their pain.” The nature of this storytelling through Shamanistic rituals manifests in two ways in Christian churches. One is indirectly through preachers, and the other is through small group sharing. In Shamanistic rituals, a shaman usually tells stories representing the sick, the ignored, or the oppressed, which helps with healing of people’s pains. As in the case of Shamanistic rituals, Korean women in the church identify themselves with the stories in the sermons, and through these stories experience comfort, healing, and the grace of God. It is not surprising to discover that famous preachers in Korea are often excellent story tellers. Another way of experiencing storytelling is through small group sharing. Most Korean churches run small group meetings such as Bible studies, cell meetings, and prayer groups. Through such small group activities in the church, Korean women have opportunities to tell stories, which helps them release their stress, pain, and suffering and thus gain strength.

It is an irony that while Shamanism influenced Korean women in the church substantially in the form of religious practices such as fervent, devout sacrifice, and rituals like storytelling, female leadership in Korean Christian churches is generally discouraged. Shamanism in Korea has not overcome the androcentric attitudes. While Korean women in the church devote their lives tremendously, they are expected to work only behind the scenes, and not take decisive roles in the church. In most Korean churches, women are still expected to be silent. Put briefly, while Shamanism in Korea has settled in the unconscious minds of Korean women, it has not helped them to overcome the oppressive social structures in Korean churches.

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2.1.2 The Influence of Buddhism

Buddhism was first introduced to the land of Korea by China around the fourth century, when the Three Kingdoms were ruling over the nation: Koguryo (37 BCE-668 CE), Paekche (18 BCE-660 CE), and Silla (57 BCE-668 CE). After the periods of United Silla (668 CE -892 CE), the Koryo government (918-1392), adopted Buddhism as the national religion. From the period of the Three Kingdoms, Buddhism was supported by governments and used by the ruling class to legitimate its ideologies and a military culture. The Koryo government and the Buddhist monks cooperated with one another for their mutual benefit. The government allowed and supported the building of Buddhist temples, and in compensation, the Buddhist monks had to pray for national protection, and during war serve as soldiers to protect both the temples and the nation.

Since Buddhism in Korea began as a religion of the ruling class, it struggled hard to attract the common people and thus had to embrace local cultic beliefs and Shamanistic practices. Buddhism in Korea was inevitably syncretized with Shamanism. For example, Buddhist monks were expected to perform shamans’ practices, such as exorcising demonic spirits, healing the sick, and bringing good fortune. As Choi states, “Buddhism was promoted not by its profound philosophy but by the shamanistic needs of common people, and particularly the needs of

24 According to Samguk Sagi (History of the Three Kingdoms), Buddhism was introduced into the Kingdom of Koguryo in 372 CE; into the Kingdom of Paekche in 384 CE; and into the Kingdom of Silla in 528 CE.


26 Ibid.

27 Ibid., 26.

28 Ibid., 24.
women."  

29 Even the images of Buddha overlapped with the shamanistic gods in Korea, and people often treated the two as identical.  

30 Buddhism in Korea was also similar to Shamanism in the ways people practiced Buddhism in everyday life. As they did with the gods in Shamanism, many women in Korea devoted themselves to Buddhism by participating in early morning services, the one hundred days of prayers and daily meditations, and by offerings to support Buddhist temples.  

31 With regard to gender equality, while Buddhism supports both male and female divinities, the image of Buddha is engraved as male, losing the female image of the Bodhisattva. Accordingly “Koreanized,” Buddhism adopted patriarchal and hierarchical structures. While Buddhism in Korea was led by male monks, it was mostly women who visited the temples and attended the rituals of Buddhism. Choi Hee An argues that, influenced by Buddhism, many Korean women regarded themselves as deserving pain and suffering because of their sins in the past lives.  

32 This notion is deeply embedded in Korean women’s minds in the church. Often this subconscious understanding facilitates Korean women to carry guilt and shame, a notion which also makes them feel inferior and wrong. These feelings of wrongfulness, inferiority, guilt, and shame often mislead Korean women into enduring oppression, rather than resisting it, keeping Korean women in the church devout in their faith. To shake off negative feelings, they also strive to accumulate virtues in this world, so that they can live better lives in the next life. By deepening their faith, Korean women in the church strive to cope with the hardships in their lives.


30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., 33.
lives. Because of their sense of inferiority and wrongfulness about themselves, many Korean women think it is biblically correct to be subject to male leadership in family and church.

It is not surprising to find that similar practices to Buddhism can be found in Korean Christian churches. Most Korean churches keep the tradition of early morning services and emphasise daily meditation just as Buddhists do. Lengthy prayers and sacrificial offerings to construct church buildings are not the least of the practices carried out by Korean Christians in order to be blessed, something which is also greatly influenced by “Koreanized” Buddhism.

As discussed above, the traditions and practices of both Shamanism and Buddhism in Korea have substantially influenced Korean women in the church. They have adopted rather than resisted the patriarchal oppression of both Shamanism and Buddhism. However, it is Confucianism which has had the most significant influence on patriarchal oppression, not only towards Korean women in general, but also towards Korean women in the church.

**2.1.3 The Influence of Confucianism**

Although it was a long time ago that Confucianism was adopted as a social, political, and economic philosophy by the Chosun dynasty (1392-1910), Confucian ethics still prevail in every part of the lives of contemporary Koreans. Since its adaptation into Korea, Confucianism has deeply influenced the Korean mind-set, and has become the foundation of national and familial rules of conduct. Confucian traditions are the parameters for Korean concepts of the proper roles

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34 Ibid.
of men and women in their families and societies. Confucianism is nowadays more of a
cultural and social norm for Koreans, going beyond religion.

According to Diane Hoffman, in the course of the modernization of Korea, while Korean
women seem to be “exceedingly active and aggressive in the almost absolute control they have
over family affairs, including finances,” in public spaces they accommodate the patriarchal
Confucian traditions. Accordingly, even after emigrating to North America or converting to
Christianity, the ghost of Confucian patriarchy does not easily disappear. It is therefore of
foremost importance to understand how Confucianism influences Korean women’s
understanding of self and family.

Confucius’ (551-479 BC) teaching aimed to educate people to be self-motivated and self-
controlled, so that they could contribute to a harmonious society. Under Confucianism,
Koreans have tried to create harmony in family and society, by observing the rules and norms of
Confucian teaching. In order to reach this harmonious society, Confucianism particularly stresses

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37 Diane M. Hoffman, “Blurred Genders: The Cultural Construction of Male and Female in South

38 Ja Hyun Kim Habroush, “Visions and Subversions: Patriarchy and Polygamy in Korean
Narratives,” in *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. Dorothy Y.

39 Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge
the Three Bonds and the Five Moral Rules in human relations.\textsuperscript{40} The Three Bonds are bonds of hierarchy through respect: a son must respect his own father, citizens must respect their King, and wives must respect their husbands.

The Five Moral Rules in human relationships are as follows: between father and son there should be affection; between ruler and minister there should be righteousness; between old and young there should be a proper order; between husband and wife there should be attention to their separate functions; between friends there should be faithfulness. These three bonds and five rules appear to stipulate good morals in relationships; however, a problem resides in the hierarchical concept behind the rules.\textsuperscript{41} The filial duty of Confucianism extends to rituals of worshipping ancestors after ancestors have passed away. Many Koreans have practiced religious rituals or accumulated good deeds to effect reconciliation between human beings and heaven, between descendants and ancestors, and between the living and the dead.

Confucianism is the foremost influential cause in shaping patriarchy to Koreans as its teaching aims at maintaining the patriarchal social order of family and country.\textsuperscript{42} In particular, Confucian ideology accords men the dominant position and thus helps to establish an extreme form of patriarchy. In traditional Korean society, the husband exercises authority over his wife and children. The wife is expected to obey her husband, devotedly serving him and his kin. According to Confucianism, it is a woman’s responsibility to make a succession for her husband’s family by bearing children. Yao states that Confucius has “put a woman and a morally

\textsuperscript{40} Yao, \textit{An Introduction to Confucianism}, 40.


\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
This hierarchical and patriarchal concept of Confucianism has been the most oppressive element for Korean women in the church in North America.

Korean Christian spirituality has been continually shaped by Confucian hierarchical and patriarchal ideology. Young-Gwan Kim, Korean theologian, rightly states that “Korean Christian theology cannot be understood correctly without a basic knowledge of Korean Confucianism.” Some scholars claim that Korean Christianity is basically a Confucian Christianity. Jung Ha Kim argues, “Confucianism has sunk such deep roots into Korean-American women’s souls and ethos that very few are able to make distinctions among being a Confucian, a Confucianized Christian, a Christianized Confucian or a Korean.” As Kim rightly points out, “the Christian ideology and hierarchical organization of the church reflect patriarchal status and privilege, even as women comprise the majority of its membership.” Heup-Young Kim, Korean theologian, notes that “more than ninety percent of self-identified church-going Korean Protestant Christians are virtually practical members of the Confucian ‘soft’ community who still hold to Confucian moral norms and practice traditional Confucian social customs.”

43 Yao, An Introduction to Confucianism, 183.


46 Ibid., 3

As Confucian ideology is deeply rooted in Korean Christianity, so the patriarchal anthropology of Confucianism facilitates Korean Christians to carry a patriarchal understanding of God. The understanding of human beings and the understanding of God are intertwined. Michelle Gonzalez explains: “The way we envision our God as Creator, Savior, and Trinity deeply affects how we understand ourselves as human beings. Consequently, the misinterpretation of the Christian tradition that has led to a patriarchal anthropology also has informed patriarchal understanding of the divine. The two feed off each other, especially in the context of the imago Dei.”48 Gonzalez puts it simply: “A patriarchal concept of God clearly informs a patriarchal anthropology.”49

Why the understanding of God as patriarch is important for this discussion is because it reflects a difficult obstacle for healing of many careseekers. When careseekers have experienced hurt from being oppressed, abused, or intimidated by a patriarchal figure in their relationships, they may transfer the same experience towards God. This then prevents them from transcending themselves to the faculty of the spiritual healing of God. Such a patriarchal image of God also confuses Korean women in the church into believing that disobedience to a patriarch or persons in higher positions is sin.

The patriarchal thinking of Confucianism has caused a lack of self-development and powerlessness in people of lower status in Korea. In addition, it is a Korean virtue to highly regard a person who is calm and reserved. This virtue renders Korean people silent in situations where it is necessary to express their opinions or emotions. This learned silence deters them from


49 Ibid., 145.
communicating with people outside of themselves. It also oppresses people, preventing them from locating their own thoughts and feelings. Young Ae Kim, a Korean pastoral theologian, claims that “silence blocks people from hearing their own voices so that they quash inner wisdom in deference to outside authority.”

As Confucianism puts an emphasis on harmony in society, individual fulfillment is suppressed. Korean American practical theologian, Boyoung Lee, argues that “overvaluing relatedness deprives Korean women of the power to know themselves and contributes to repressed feelings, diffused boundaries, low self-esteem, dependency on others, sacrificing their needs for others, feelings of shame, deprivation of the right to communicate, ambiguity about themselves and the world, and lack of centeredness.”

This issue of the patriarchal system does not remain inside Korea, but continues outside of Korea. When people emigrate to North America, they do not leave behind their values, but bring them along. Ironically, most Korean immigrants strive to keep their traditional values, including the patriarchal system, even more than those who are living in the home country. This is because the attempt to keep their traditions is a way of being connected to their cultural identity. A recent study in Canada indicates that “even after moving to and living in a society that is perceived to

50 Young Ae Kim, “Han: From Brokenness to Wholeness, A Theoretical Analysis of Korean Women’s Han and a Contextualized Healing Methodology,” Ph.D. Diss., School of Theology at Claremont, Claremont, CA (1991).

embrace equal treatment of women and men, Korean immigrant women still follow the patriarchal traditions of their home country.”

This is not because Korean immigrant women do not want equality in their relationships with their husbands, but it is difficult to challenge the traditional patriarchal relationship between husband and wife. This patriarchal relationship with husbands is affected neither by Korean immigrant women’s employment in terms of equality, nor by their responsibilities in the home. Therefore, for Korean immigrants in North America, the patriarchal mindset causes more conflicts than in Korea, since it collides with the egalitarian values of North America. As noted in the beginning of this section, Confucian ideology and culture are the greatest contributing factors to conflicts in Korean immigrant families and churches in North America.

In this section, I have discussed the influence of three major religions on Christianity in Korea: Shamanism, Buddhism and Confucianism, and have shown how these religions form Korean women in general and also in the church, even after they have emigrated to North America. A discussion of the characteristics of Korean women in the church in North America follows.


53 Ibid.

2.1.4 Korean Women in the Church in North America

Jung Ha Kim claims that the Korean-American church is the most successful institution in healing the pain of the Korean immigrants, as the church plays an important role in ensuring a sense of personal worth and group identity, especially for Korean immigrant women. As Grace Ji-Sun Kim puts it, for many Korean women, “Christianity has become everything.” Therefore, it is of foremost important to understand the characteristics of the Christianity of Korean immigrant women in North America. Korean Churches in North America manifest distinctive characteristics in their way of practicing faith. The distinctive characteristics are built by two forces: one is the influence of the Christianity of Korea, and the other is the contextual forces of immigrant churches in North America. The following discussion focuses on how these two forces interact with one another to form the distinctive features of Korean women in the Church.

Christianity in Korea is traced back to the late nineteenth century when Protestant missionaries from the West brought Christianity to Korea. Since its inception, Christianity in Korea has followed a unique path of development. First, Christianity was brought to Korea along with imperial and colonial ideologies. Colonial Christianity in Korea influenced the Korean mindset into perceiving Western culture as superior to Korean traditional culture. According to Choi Hee An, “The Korean people strongly believed that Christianity destroyed the spirits of the

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55 Kim, Bridge-Makers and Cross-Bearers, 14.

56 Grace Ji-Sun Kim, “What Forms us: Multiculturalism, the Other and Theology,” in Feminist Theology with a Canadian Accent: Canadian Perspectives on Contextual Theology, ed. Mary Beavis, et al. (Ottawa: Novalis, 2008), 92.

57 Choi Hee An, Korean Women and God, 41.
Korean people because it did not respect the Korean culture, people, society, or gods.”58 This colonial mindset became embedded in most Koreans and continued to reside in them even after they emigrated to North America.

Second, because of the influence of the early American missionaries, the majority of early Christians in Korea followed a conservative and fundamentalist theology.59 It is true that Christianity provided an opportunity for Korean women to come out of the home, otherwise most of them would have remained confined to the house. The first missionaries established schools and helped Korean women become educated in the public spaces. In attending church services, bible studies, and prayer meetings, they were able to participate in public meetings and take up roles therein.

As such, Christianity helped Korean women obtain freedom to leave the home. However, as the churches in Korea followed Korean traditional hierarchal and patriarchal values, Korean Christian women ended up as oppressed in the church as they were at home. Another reason for Korean Christianity becoming conservative is that “Korean readings are in line with the Confucian method of learning, resulting in more rigid acceptance of conservative interpretations of the Bible.”60 These conservative and patriarchal values have been grounded in the mindset of Korean Christians, and many Korean immigrant churches keep these conservative traditions and patriarchal values in their theologies and practices of faith.

58 Choi Hee An, Korean Women and God, 41.
59 Ibid., 42.
Third, many Korean Christians in North America have confused ideas about ethnic identity and Christian identity. To the extent that they want to keep the traditions of Korea, they tend to hold on to their conservative faith. This is why most Korean immigrant Christians tend to be more conservative than Christians in Korea. They want to retain the traditions and values of Korea held at the time of their emigration to North America. This tendency does not belong only to Korean women, but to most Asian immigrants. Many Asian immigrants keep their heritage just as it was when they left their home. It is because many first generation Asian immigrants lack attachment to North American society, and thus cling to their homeland culture and religion.

The conservativeness in Christianity is not only manifested among the first generations of Korean immigrants, but also among the second generations. Jerry Z. Park researched “ethnic insularity among 1.5 – and Second-generation Korean-American Protestants,” and claims, “The intersection of racial minority status and conservative Protestant status suggest a lack of integration or greater insularity.” Pastoral care and counselling needs to understand that many of the issues of Korean Christian women in North America are related to the confusion between their racial and religious identity.

Fourth, the majority of Korean churches in North America are evangelical churches that emphasize the certainty of salvation, and most Korean immigrants in North America are attracted

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62 Ibid., 93.
to evangelical churches in the midst of their uncertain immigrant lives. In evangelical churches, they can find the worth of their lives in their identity as Christians, rather than as members of a minority. According to Antony Alumkai, the culturally and racially “liminal” space may push them to seek the certainty of faith and accept more evangelical theology.64 What it means for Korean immigrant women to belong to the conservative and evangelical churches is that most of them maintain Confucian patriarchal values mixed with their evangelical faith. When they lose the Confucian patriarchal values, they tend to interpret this as meaning they are losing their faith in Christ also.

Fifth, other existing religious traditions, particularly Confucian ideologies, mixed with Buddhist and Shamanist culture, have greatly influenced the shape of Christian traditions in Korea. David Ng emphasizes the religious hybridity of Asians: “They tend to accept a variety of spiritual ideas, religious teachings, and moral practices that ‘make sense.’ Rather than limiting oneself to the strict boundaries of a specific religion, many Asians are open to ideas that seem useful and can be incorporated into one’s existing cluster of beliefs.”65 According to Ng, most Korean American Christians in fact carry a world-view of Taoism, behave according to Confucian social principles and rites, and observe basic Buddhist religious practices through their everyday living in various forms of cultures.66 For example, they observe various national holidays and festive days according to Shamanism, practice prayers in the same form as Buddhists, hold on to Confucian family relationships, and understand the order and rhythm of


66 Ibid., 28.
life according to the world view of Taoism. It is claimed that Korean Christians are committed to the Christian religion, but their social and ethical practices reflect Confucian ways.  

Sixth, as explored in this chapter, patriarchal values saturated all religions in Korea, so they also played a role in oppressing Korean women in the church. Christianity in Korea developed with a patriarchal ideology, which became a legitimate tool to oppress women’s lives with religious authority. When ideologies are merged into religious traditions and practices, it is hard to tell them apart. In the mindset of Korean women in the church in North America, the patriarchal ideologies reside deeply. While women want freedom, at the same time they are accustomed to patriarchal values and practices in family, social, and religious life. Choi Hee An rightly argues that “Korean Christian women have formed their ‘selves’; in the tension between these two contradictory characteristics of Koreanized Christianity, freedom and oppression, which have coexisted in Korea’s colonial religious history.”

These two opposite values are the sources of both strains and enhancements for Korean immigrant women. As HaeRan Shin argues, Korean immigrants’ conservative Christianity is a strain on Korean Christian immigrant women’s freedom, but at the same time, it encourages them to develop their devoutness in order to overcome the challenges they face in their immigrant lives. We can see how important it is for the task of pastoral care and counselling to deeply consider the distinctive religious characteristics of Korean immigrant women and to assist them in utilizing their religious resources as life-giving forces.

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67 Ng, ed., People on the Way, 30.
68 Choi Hee An, Korean Women and God, 44.
69 Shin, “Spatial Capability.”
2.2 The Psychological Characteristics of Korean Immigrant Women

Rita Nakashima Brock states the different Asian psychological attributes and confesses how she yearns to operate her Asian sensibilities:

Those Asian sensibilities, often in conflict with my American ones, tend to see oppositions as false polarities. In looking beyond false polarities and analytic, critical modes of thinking, I seek an intuitive, nonlinear whole. That whole involves a sensitive attunement to my own inner subjective world as the source of the compassionate healing of suffering.\(^{70}\)

When applying Western norms, her intuitive and nonlinear way of thinking is undervalued. Therefore, to assist in appropriate pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women, it is important to understand their psychological characteristics.

Exploring the Korean language has been helpfully used as a means of considering key elements of a Korean worldview. As Julia Kristeva would uphold, for immigrants the trauma of falling into a foreign language in which they cannot fully express themselves confines women to a complete silence.\(^{71}\) It discourages them from sharing their thoughts and mind and makes them incomprehensible to the outside world.\(^{72}\) In the Western world, an immigrant may be considered shy or lacking in self-development. In fact, in most cases, this can be the completely opposite case in her homeland. Likewise, it is crucial to consider a person’s situated living condition when assessing any psychological manifestation. This section discusses the representative psychological attributes of Korean immigrant women in comparison to the norms of North America in terms of the concepts of \textit{han}, \textit{uri}, \textit{jeong}, shame and a face-saving culture.

\(^{70}\) Brock, \textit{Journeys by Heart}, xvi.


\(^{72}\) Grace Ji-Sun Kim, \textit{Embracing the Other}, 78.
2.2.1 *Han*: the Representative Form of Brokenness for Korean Women

*Han* is a Korean indigenous word meaning a particular symptom of brokenness. While *han* is generally acknowledged to be a unique symptom of Koreans, it can be shared with other people who experience similar psychological brokenness accumulated over a period of time due to historical, social, cultural, economic and political oppression. *Han* has been explored at length by Korean systematic and pastoral theologians and is considered to reflect an important element of the Korean psychology and experience for many. Andrew Sung Park, who has written extensively about *han*, identifies *han* as “the collapsed anguish of the heart due to psychosomatic, social, economic, political, and cultural oppression and repression.”

Chung Hyun Kyung quotes a more somatic definition of *han* by Korean Minjung theologian Hyun Young Hak:

*Han* is a sense of unresolved resentment against injustice suffered, a sense of helplessness because of the overwhelming odds against, a feeling of total abandonment (“Why hast Thou forsaken Me”), a feeling of acute pain and sorrow in one’s guts and bowels making the whole body writhe and wiggle, and an obstinate urge to take “revenge” and to right the wrong all these constitute.

As Park and Chung describe, *han* resides in the depths of the soul as a result of repeated abuse. Park argues that *han* may even change brain structure and function in different ways. The problem is that abused people often blame themselves rather than their offenders for their

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74 Chung Hyun Kyung, *Struggle to be the Sun Again*, 42. (Originally from Hyun Young Hak, “Minjung: The Suffering Servant and Hope,” a lecture given at James Memorial Chapel, Union Theological Seminary, New York, April 13, 1982, p.2.)

It should be noted that *han* is also generated at a collective level by “patriarchal tyranny, racial discrimination, economic exploitation, ethnic cleansing, massacre, foreign occupation, state-sponsored terrorism, and unjust war.”

*Han* particularly represents the brokenness of Korean women. Chung Hyun Kyung argues that in the core experiences of Korean women in recent history there has been *han*. Chung claims that due to the interconnections of patriarchy, class oppression, and neo-Confucian gender roles, women are the most saturated with *han* within a *han*-filled world. Grace Ji-Sun Kim states the causes of *han* for Korean North American women as follows: “Korean North American women experience *han* due to the burdens of sexism and racism, which bring adversity and suffering.” Wonhee Anne Joh, a Korean American theologian, adds classism to the contributors of *han*. There appears to be no *han* in the second and third generation of Korean immigrants. However, as *han* resides in deep consciousness of the oppressed across generations and the causes of *han* are usually exercised as hidden forms, *han* is present throughout generations not only because it is transmitted over generations, but also because it continues to

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76 Park, *From Hurt to Healing*, 12.

77 Ibid., 15.

78 Chung Hyun Kyung, *Struggle to be the Sun Again*, 42.

79 Ibid.

80 Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *Embracing the Other*, 40.

occur due to the racial and cultural discrimination immigrants experience in North America. Unless the discrimination is stopped, han will not disappear.

The theological meaning of sin and redemption for Korean immigrant women who carry han in their deep souls needs to be interpreted differently than common Western ways of understanding these dynamics. Rita Nakashima Brock argues, “Sin is a sign of our broken-heartedness, of how damaged we are, not of how evil, willfully disobedient, and culpable we are.”82 Resonating with Brock’s interpretation of sin, many han-filled Korean women are in a state of sin, because their han represents their brokenness.

Park’s interpretation of sin for the offended resonates with the sin of the han-ridden people. According to Park, the sin of the offended should be interpreted differently from the sin of the offender.83 While sin for the offender manifests in exercising power over the weak, such as women, children, the poor, and people of lower status, sin for the offended accommodates the powerful or the oppressors in order to comply with their expectations, to avoid conflict with them, and to gain approval from them out of fear. Accordingly, pastoral care and counselling for the offended should assist them in promoting their strength to be able to sufficiently resist the offence, oppression, and injustice.

2.2.2 Uri (We) Identity

In order to help Korean immigrant women, it is important to understand how their identities have been formed. All cultures have their own understanding of what it means to be

82 Brock, Journeys by Heart, 7.

83 Andrew Sung Park, The Wounded Heart of God.
human. For Koreans, the word human is “inn-gahn,” which is derived from the Chinese jen-chien. Inn means person and gahn means between.\textsuperscript{84} The Chinese letter, inn (人), looks like two-sticks standing and depending on each other. Interestingly, the lengths of the two sticks are not the same. However, they need each other in order to stand. Inn (人) implies the relation of human beings who need each other for standing and completing the other. Likewise, in the mindset of Koreans, the singular word, human, by itself contains an interdependent and relational aspect.

This relational and interdependent attribute of the human lays the foundation for the understanding of self, family, and society for Koreans. In contrast to the meaning of self in the West, self for Koreans implies a relational part of a whole, rather than a separate entity. Accordingly, the concept of boundary between individuals in Korea feels blurred and permeable. This characteristic is quite opposite that of Western families and societies. As D. W. Augsburger claims, in the West, individuals “tend to have clearly defined ego boundaries, and carry out transactions with the outside world on their own initiative and in pursuit of their own interests, since each person is encouraged to think, speak, and act individually.”\textsuperscript{85} For Koreans, clearly defined ego boundaries are often interpreted as negative attributes such as “selfishness” and “badness,” because it is thought these characteristics violate the common interests of “we.”

For many Koreans, the self can exist only within a communal space called uri, which can be translated into “we or our.” Uri can be used as a possessive pronoun as well as the first person plural noun. Uri, meaning “we-ness,” is an expression of Korean collectivism, which is essential


in understanding the Korean self and Korean relation-making. It is therefore important to properly understand *uri* in the Korean language. Korean people often use *uri* to indicate “my” in English. For example, *uri* parents mean my parents; *uri* home means my home; *uri* children mean my children; even *uri* wife means not our wife but my wife. What is important here is the fact that *uri* includes the communal concept, although it indicates only “my.” For example, *uri* mother in Korean denotes my mother. However, the words *uri* mother open up our eyes to see the communal space where she, I, and you are connected. *Uri* mother implies our communal mother as well as my own mother. Likewise, for Koreans, “I” is always defined in relation to communal “we.” The well-being of individuals for Koreans is substantially intertwined with the well-being of groups such as family, church, workplace, and nation.

### 2.2.3 Jeong and Permeable Boundaries

The concept of *uri* in Korean relates to a particular affection called *jeong*, because *jeong* develops in the space of *uri*, or “we-ness.” *Jeong* can be translated as love, affection or compassion, but it does not mean exactly the same as these words. Lartey describes *jeong* as “a feeling of intimacy, amiability and endearment.” *Jeong* develops by living together or by staying close. Many Korean couples say that they are living together not because of love but because of *jeong*. Here, there are two kinds of *jeong*: *gowun jeong* (liking affectivity) and *miun Jeong* (disliking affectivity).

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Therefore, *jeong* develops whether one likes or dislikes the other, just by spending time together closely. This *jeong* may play an influential role in decision-making for Koreans. Because of *jeong*, it is difficult for Koreans to leave their families, friends, or jobs. Because of *jeong*, Koreans share their food with friends, colleagues, and neighbours. It is not rare to see merchants in Korea giving customers a little bit more produce than the measurement in the market, because of *jeong*. Oftentimes, *jeong* may prompt people to advocate for a certain political party. As Soo-Young Kwon states, “*jeong* is what makes Korean people feel connected and enlivened.”

According to Insook Lee, *jeong*-based relationality of Koreans is often understood from the Western perspective as a manifestation of a weak personality resulting from the lack of sense of self and self-assertiveness. However, it has been claimed that *jeong* can be used as a positive source in pastoral care. Insook Lee argues that *jeong* can be a space of reaching out to the other in the “warmness” of “profound humanity.” Yohan Ka also asserts that “providing *jeong* and facilitating *jeong*-dynamics are revitalizing Korea’s traditional care and support system in a group of families, friends, relatives, and communities.”

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90 For reference, see Insook Lee, 2011; Yohan Ka, 2010; Wonhee Anne Joh, 2004; Andrew Sung Park, 1993.

91 Inn Sook Lee, “Korean American Women’s Relationality.”

a healing source: “In jeong, we heal the wounded, the rejected, the discouraged, the discriminated-against, using our own wounds of being discriminated-against and rejected as a medium of healing.”

It is Wonhee Anne Joh who digs into the concept of jeong from a discourse of Korean American feminist theology. What is particular to Joh is her insightful discourse which links jeong to the cross. She proposes that “the power of the cross also points simultaneously to the possibility of a radical form of love that can be linked with the Korean concept of jeong.” Joh states: “Jeong saturates daily living and all forms of relationships. As a concept, jeong encompasses but is not limited to notions of compassion, affection, solidarity, relationality, vulnerability, and forgiveness.” As stated by several theologians, claiming jeong as the source of strength might be a step toward searching for the cultural identity of Korean immigrants, rather than becoming discouraged by the values of the Western culture.

For Korean people jeong may negate the value of personal boundaries. Hellena Moon, a Korean American pastoral theologian, tells how she was the object of prejudice and stereotyping in her CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) in America. In the emergency room she provided a patient with a blanket. This action was interpreted by her supervisor as taking care of the

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93 Andrew Sung Park, The Wounded Heart of God, 25.


95 Ibid.
patient’s physical needs by being subservient. According to the Western concept, this incident apparently crossed the boundary of her role as a spiritual care-giver. However, in terms of the concepts of Korean culture, this was an act of *jeong*. For Koreans the norms of *jeong* excel over boundaries.

If she had not offered a blanket in such a situation in Korea, she would have been seen as having no *jeong*. Instead, she would have been thought cold and even criticized for “not being humane.” In Korea, the boundary is more permeable than in the West, and giving *jeong* is respected more than maintaining boundaries in relationships. In Korea, maintaining a boundary can be interpreted as having lack of *jeong*. For Koreans, the word boundary itself sounds negative, cold, or blocking of relationships. As action out of *jeong* is highly respected in Korea, so the value of *jeong* may negate the value of maintaining boundaries.

### 2.2.4 Shame and the Face-saving Culture

The last but not least common psychological feature of Korean immigrant women is shame and the face-saving culture. Shame is a critical concept in understanding Korean relationality. Zuk-Nae Lee argues that “the whole society shows a psychopathological tendency, unaware of its basis in shame.” The cause of shame is deeply associated with collectivist Korean culture, as many Koreans are conscious of how others perceive them. The distinction between shame and guilt which is made by Mia Silfver-Kualampi is helpful in understanding why Koreans in general

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manifest shame-proneness: “Shame-proneness has traditionally been associated with collectivistic cultures in which the sense of self is especially dependent on how others perceive the self, whereas guilt-proneness has been as typical of individualistic cultures where personal standards of behaviour are emphasized.”

Considering this distinction, since Korean culture is more collectivist than individualist, Koreans in general are subject to shame more easily.

The shame-proneness of Koreans may be intensified when they emigrate to North America. This is because most immigrants experience severe downward mobility in their social status in North America. Most Korean immigrants in North America are from middle-class backgrounds with white-collar or professional jobs, but they do not get jobs matching their previous majors and careers.

This phenomenon is more of an issue for Korean immigrant men than Korean immigrant women, because in Korea most immigrant men used to hold occupations, whereas most Korean women did not. When Korean immigrants experience downward mobility in their status, they feel doubly marginalized: marginalized from both Korean and American society, because they fail to meet the social standards of either Korea or America. Jacob Hee Cheol Lee claims that this failure leads them to lose a sense of belonging to their home country, by failing to meet the


norms of Korean culture. They may not feel they belong to Canadian or American society either, when they feel they have failed in the dominating North American culture.

The reason why shame is a critical concept for Koreans is because it is interconnected with “face-saving,” on both personal and collective levels. The ultimate value in the face-saving culture lies in the preservation of honour in the family. In Confucianism, individuals are expected to play specific roles according to their relationships in family, as father, wife, son, daughter, and so on. If one fails to perform this role, it means one has lost one’s face (chae-myun) which is very shameful for oneself and one’s family. In Confucian culture, the individual is nothing but a means for the welfare of the family, thus face-saving means saving face for the family, and shame means a shame for the family more than for its members.

In the church, this face-saving, chae-myun-based culture manifests a particular characteristic. In order to maintain face, Korean Christians are often attracted to shoulder certain responsibilities. Chae-myun-consciousness becomes a major cause of competition over leadership positions, such as elderships in a church. Immigrant churches can be places for earning ecclesiastical status for immigrant men, which can in turn become a major cause of church divisions. When people cannot achieve status in a church, they feel shamed and so move on to find another place where they might save face.

Shame is rarely dealt with because of “shame-consciousness.” Koreans feel shamed when they disclose their personal lives to others and thus rarely seek professional help to solve their


problems, because it is hard for them to expose their weakness. It is a unique phenomenon of Koreans that while they are truly interested in counselling, they are hesitant to engage in counselling relationships. In particular, most Korean men think it is shameful to seek counselling. So they do not support their wives going to counsellors to talk about their marital or family conflicts either. In immigrant societies in particular, it is even harder for Korean women in the church to seek counselling help, because of their fear that their stories will spread over the small Korean communities.

For Korean immigrant women, shame has delicate, tricky, and double-edged characteristics. According to Angella Son, “Korean immigrant women are at a risk of being subject to shame due to their increased independence, which conflicts with the traditional submissive role of women.”102 As Pyung Gap Min points out, a major clash between Korean women’s active economic role and their husbands’ traditional patriarchal attitudes occurs in many Korean immigrant families as the wife develops an egalitarian attitude, while the husband still maintains the patriarchal values.103 A wife’s new employment can provide her with a greater sense of competence and self-confidence, yet can also cause shame for the woman since she now fails to play the traditional submissive role. This shamefulness is more acute for Korean immigrants in the church than for those who do not belong to the church. This is because, as


Kelly Chong posits, “compared to non-church-goers, the church members display a considerably higher degree of attachment to these Korean values and standards of morality.”

This chapter has discussed representative psychological features of Korean immigrant women in North America concerning *han*, *uri*, *jeong*, and shame. As noted, there are tremendous oppressive elements present in these psychological features. To provide appropriate assistance in pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women, it is important to consider these particular qualities. These oppressive elements in the psychological attributes of Korean immigrant women are interrelated with their social, economic, and cultural conditions, the subject of the next section.

2.3 Social, Economic, and Cultural Conditions of Korean Immigrant Women

2.3.1 Economic Conditions

Researchers found that, overall, employment was a major challenge in the lives of immigrant women, and language capability was a major deterrent to their employment. There are many other restraints in the employment of immigrant women, such as racial discrimination, and a lack of recognition of their education and the work credentials gained in their home country. Grace Ji-Sun Kim argues that racism has “appeared covertly in the form of variations

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in wages and employment opportunities based on racial criteria.”\textsuperscript{107} While unequal employment is considered a major hindrance in immigrants’ economic lives, for Kim the more problematic cause of economic suffering is that “immigrants are not given an equal share of the land base and the economy.”\textsuperscript{108} In following Kim’s argument, unless an equal share of the land base and the economy is given, the economic disadvantages of immigrants will remain perpetual.

The issue of underemployment does not affect the life of KIWNA economically only, but also socio-culturally, psychologically, and religiously. Arlene McLaren and Isabel Dyck researched the lives of immigrant women residing in western Canada, including Korean immigrant women, in relation to perceived challenges after immigrating to Canada, and reported that their employment problems included underemployment, downward socio-economic mobility, and status incongruence.\textsuperscript{109} Underemployment severely affects the lives of Korean immigrant women. Because of low incomes, they do not have other choices but to work long hours and sometimes navigate several jobs at once. The fact that KIWNA have jobs outside home does not exempt them from working as mothers and wives also. These dual roles at home and in the workplace are major stressors for KIWNA. However, few of them give up their dual roles. Instead they try to settle down in Canadian society, while at the same time maintaining Korean culture.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{107} Grace Ji-Sun Kim, “What Forms Us,” 83.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{110} Choi et al., “The Experience of Korean Immigrant Women,” 293.
2.3.2 Double-Binding Social Situation

Reflecting on the stresses KIWNAs experience, it is apparent that they are under the influence of colonialism in addition to patriarchal oppression. Colonialism, in the words of Choi Hee An, is “a physical, psychological, and even spiritual exercise of a nation’s sovereign power beyond its borders, involving physical, geographical dominion; psychological oppression; and spiritual manipulation.” While colonization seems to have disappeared, it is in fact reinforced in invisible ways. Choi argues that even though visible colonization is limited after the independence of the colonized countries, “the descendants of colonizers create persistent sociocultural, religious, and even linguistic structures to portray the formerly colonized as inferiors.” For Choi, “immigrant experiences in America are a result of direct colonial influences.” It seems that most Asian immigrants settle down well in North America. However, according to Marianne Noh, both American and Canadian governments discriminate against Asians, but they hide it by portraying Asians as model minorities successfully integrating into mainstream culture. In Canada and America Korean immigrants experience colonial oppression through hidden discrimination.


112 An, A Postcolonial Self, 2.

113 Ibid.

There is an intricate relationship between colonialism and patriarchy, thus postcolonial feminists stress that “the analysis of one without the other is incomplete.”\textsuperscript{115} Noting two oppressive forces, patriarchy and colonialism, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza rightly coined the word “kyriarchy,” which is a more comprehensive term than patriarchy. Kyriarchy refers to a situation where an individual is oppressed and privileged over others and the subordination of one person or group to another is internalized and institutionalized.\textsuperscript{116} When kyriarchy is internalized and institutionalized, its oppressive structure is hard to recognize. Kyriarchy includes all genders and classes who exercise power to dominate the subordinate.\textsuperscript{117} Kwok Pui Lan points out that the presence of foreign kyriarchy in a colonial situation intersects with the local kyriarchy and requires a more complicated analysis.\textsuperscript{118} For Korean immigrant women in North America, foreign kyriarchy may mean colonialism, and local kyriarchy may mean patriarchy. Reflecting on Fiorenza’s coined term, it is important to locate how this kyriarchy is hidden, embedded, internalized, and institutionalized in the life of KIWNAs.

\subsection*{2.3.3 Cultural Hybridity}

Failing to notice this oppressive structure in cultures may lead to promoting the oppression rather than enhancing the life of the careseeker. As A. G Johnson claims, cultural differences do not simply manifest cultural diversity, but may serve as the tools of systemic

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{116} See Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, \textit{But She Said: Feminist Practice of Biblical Interpretation} (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992).
\item \textsuperscript{117} Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, \textit{Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet} (New York: Continuum, 1994), 14.
\item \textsuperscript{118} Kwok, \textit{Postcolonial Imagination and Feminist Theology}, 55.
\end{itemize}
oppression, as they give privilege to the members of the dominant culture and thus create a disadvantage for the members of minority group.\textsuperscript{119} According to Grace Ji-Sun Kim, “The dominant cultures manipulate the minoritized for their own personal gain and benefit.”\textsuperscript{120} Kim argues, “Asian cultural expressions and their experiences, being so different from the European, are denied validity.”\textsuperscript{121} For example, Korean immigrants are usually evaluated as shy, passive, and reserved. They restrain themselves from expressing their opinions or feelings, because according to traditional Korean culture, older people or people of higher status are supposed to speak and younger or lower-status people are supposed to keep silent. When the norms of North America are the standards of evaluation, the result is a colonizing of people and of culture.

Rethinking the situation of Korean immigrant women in North America from a postcolonial perspective will contribute to enriching the pastoral practice of care and counselling, which has been misled by cultural arrogance and ignorance. Insook Lee claims that “the postcolonial hermeneutic is a useful tool to reconstruct the agency of people who are marginalized from the center of power relations.”\textsuperscript{122} From the postcolonial perspective, the

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\item Grace Ji-Sun Kim, “What Forms Us,” 82.
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geographical situation of Korean immigrants automatically entails hybridity, which necessitates use of a postcolonial theory for Korean American theology.

Acknowledging hybridity validates the characteristics of Korean Americans, without oppressing or nullifying any element in either Korea or America. Korean immigrant women in North America manifest multiple hybrid identities as Koreans, Americans, women, Christians, wives, mothers, teachers, employees, etc. Grace Ji-Sun Kim argues that multiculturalism is often understood as a “struggle to keep cultural identity intact in a hybrid environment.” Kim asserts that Asian Canadian women living in diasporas keep interacting with other cultures, so it is difficult to distinguish some cultures from others. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, these hybrid identities are becoming even more intensified. The recent Korean immigrants to North America no longer break from their homeland. Thanks to the development of the high-speed telecommunication and frequent visits to Korea, they are keeping in touch with the culture of their homeland almost simultaneously. In other words, they are living in two different worlds at the same time.

Compared to the immigrants of earlier years, recent immigrants are ready to choose the land they want to stay in for the sake of their interest and gain. It is increasingly the case that people are acquiring two citizenships, both of the home country and the new

\[ \text{123} \text{ Bhabha claims there is a space “in-between the designations of identity” and that “this interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.” Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 2004), 4.} \]

\[ \text{124} \text{ Grace Ji-Sun Kim, “What Forms us,” } 83. \]

\[ \text{125} \text{ Ibid.} \]

\[ \text{126} \text{ Jonathan Y. Tan, Introducing Asian American Theologies, 75.} \]
country. Considering this trend, it is more appropriate to call it migration rather than immigration or emigration. Like geese, people migrate for their own purposes and interests. It is a common phenomenon that only mothers and children emigrate to Canada or United States and fathers stay in their home countries to work to support the family. Many such mothers go back home when their children enter university. Such a people are called geese families in Korean immigrant communities in North America.

With respect to this recent phenomenon of migration, Jonathan Tan rightly states:

The border-crossing experience is no longer a unidirectional, once-and-for-all decision. Instead, despite their permanent abode in the United States, Asian American Christians continue to engage in multiple back-and-forth border crossings, negotiating boundaries, relativizing their marginalization, always striving to create a transnational safe space and shape an identity for themselves.127

As John Joon-Young Huh points out, “In one sense, Asian Americans are “both Asian and American”; in another sense, Asian Americans are in the ambivalent space of ‘neither Asian nor American.’”128 He calls this “both and” and “neither nor” cultural identity of Asian Americans the “third identity.” The third identity is a space “that is not bound by a binary mindset or dualistic and hierarchal constructions.”129

According to Homi Bhabha, “Third Space” questions establish “categorizations of culture and identity and opens up the possibilities of renegotiating power and creating new

127 Ibid.


129 Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Embracing the Other, 57.
Creating third spaces, KIWNA identify with both Koreans and North Americans, neither solely with their own ethnic community nor with the mainstream society, and appropriate the dominant discourses in their own ways. Huh encourages the unique strengths and advantages of this third identity: “Asian Americans may develop and maintain unique strengths from dealing with the conflicting norms and values of two cultures that make up the self.”

Huh’s idea resonates with the value of the ambivalence of the postcolonial self. Korean immigrant women usually experience ambivalence in their thoughts, cultures, and even religiosity. This does not mean they lack operating self-agency as Westerners would describe it. Instead, postcolonial hermeneutics views ambivalence itself as power and resources for hybrid people. We need a new model which validates the hybrid, ambivalent, and third identity of KIWNA and makes use of it as a strength.

2.4 Conclusion

In chapter two, I engaged in the analysis of the lives of Korean immigrant women in North America with regard to their religious mapping, presenting psychological characteristics, and socio-economic-cultural situations. I paid particular attention to the double-binding oppressive elements of patriarchy and colonialism that are deeply embedded in their lives.

First, this chapter discussed the religious mapping of KIWNA in terms of Shamanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and their influences on Korean women in the Christian church. While Christianity is apparently a major religion for KIWNA, the analysis showed that other traditional religions substantially influence their way of practicing the Christian faith. There are several

130 Ibid.
131 Ibid.
positive ways these religions have influenced the practice of Christianity in Korea. However, it is crucial to address the fact that oppressive patriarchal values have also been transmitted to Christianity in Korea through every religion. Out of them all, Confucian patriarchy is the most deeply embedded oppressive element in the mindset of every Korean Christian.

Second, this chapter discussed the psychological attributes of KIWNA such as the Korean indigenous concepts of han, uri, and jeong, shame and the face-saving culture. I argued that to provide appropriate assistance in pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women, it is critical to consider these particular psychological features of KIWNA. Failing to understand these features may wrongly divert the practice of pastoral care and counselling to this group.

Third, I examined how a new form of colonialism prevailed in the social, economic, and cultural conditions of Korean immigrant women. Employing a postcolonial lens, I paid attention to the hybrid and ambivalent nature as well as the third identity of KIWNA.

The implication of this analysis of Korean immigrant women in North America is that in order to appropriately address and engage in pastoral care and counselling with KINWA we need an approach to care that accurately interprets and responds to the various dimensions of their lives which affect their sense of well-being.
Chapter 3
Pastoral Theological Methods of Emmanuel Lartey

This chapter focuses on the pastoral theological methods of Emmanuel Lartey and how these methods can be utilized for pastoral practice with KIWNA. From among the many pastoral theologians and practitioners who have developed theological methods and theories from intercultural and/or postcolonial perspectives, I have chosen Emmanuel Lartey as my main conversational partner for this thesis as I find his work provides a useful resource for developing an appropriate approach to pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women in North America. Emmanuel Lartey is from West Africa, was educated in Britain, and teaches in the United States. Based on his experience of intercultural contexts, he endeavors to explore and develop a pastoral theology that is contextually grounded. Lartey has contributed greatly to increasing awareness of cultural differences, and has developed an intercultural and postcolonial pastoral theological method. Lartey’s methods are relevant to the pastoral care of KIWNA for many reasons, and this entire chapter discusses these. The initial motivation for choosing Lartey, however, is because he pays particular attention to power differentials and oppression in knowledge and culture, which is important in the pastoral care and counselling of Korean immigrant women in North America.

For the last few decades, pastoral care and counselling in Korea has been introduced unreflectively from the West.¹ Practitioners have transplanted most of their approaches from

theories of psychology and psychoanalysis that were developed in the West. According to Steve Sangkown Shim, a Korean pastoral theologian, “the field of pastoral counselling in Korea tends to copy American theories and methodologies without criticism or cultural adaptation.” Shim urges that the time is ripe to replace the dominant Western textbooks and literature used in pastoral theology and care and counselling in Korea with appropriate approaches that reflect instead Korean culture and personality.

The reason for the unreflective copying of Western theories is because of a lack of critical discernment about the power dynamics in culture. According to Edward Said, culture is always carried by its power. Unless one is aware of the power dynamics in culture, culture is usually transplanted from the powerful to the weak, which is itself a form of colonization. Bonnie Miller-McLemore makes a strong claim: “Gender, feminist, and black studies all verify the knowledge of the underprivileged, the outcast, the underclass, and the silenced. If knowledge depends upon power, then power must be given to the silenced.”

Mindful of the power differentials and oppression in the life of KIWNA, in the pages that follow, I thus discuss Lartey’s pastoral theological methods in relation to liberation as pastoral praxis; intercultural pastoral care and counselling; postcolonializing pastoral theology; and I also identify the gaps and limitations of his method when applied to KIWNA. While Emmanuel Lartey is my main conversation partner, I also engage with the literature of authors Lartey or

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2 Shim, “Cultural Landscapes of Pastoral Counseling in Asia,” 84.
3 Ibid.
others refer to. In some cases, I draw on the literature of these other authors in order to discuss topics related to Lartey’s pastoral theological methods.

3.1 Pastoral Theological Methods of Emmanuel Lartey

According to Lartey, Friedrich Schleiermacher pictured “theology as a tree, with philosophical theology as its roots, historical theology as its trunk and practical theology including pastoral theology as ‘crown’ or fruits.”6 Lartey then criticizes the way Schleiermacher places theologies in hierarchical sequence, since in his view, Schleiermacher “appears to have led the belief and practice of practical theology as a derived, technical application of principles and theories derived from the ‘pure’ disciplines of philosophy and history.”7 For Lartey, pastoral theology is not simply derived from the more academic disciplines, but is itself a theological discipline.8 Lartey claims that pastoral theology has “validity and utility in its own right,” while “it is inextricably linked with other theological disciplines through dialogue and interaction.”9

This assertion comes from his understanding that pastoral theology with its own methods “contributes to the study and discussion of the nature of God, humanity and community and the inter-relationships between and among these.”10 Stephen Burns supports Lartey’s assertion that pastoral theology has its own rights and processes, when he states, “Strikingly, Emmanuel Y. Larrey, among others, has argued that pastoral theology, quite in contrast to systematic theology,

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6 Lartey, Pastoral Theology, 78.

7 Ibid., 79.

8 Ibid., 96, 100.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 96.
should be defiantly unsystematic in its hermeneutical processes.”\textsuperscript{11} Burns’ comment is correct, since Lar­tey himself claims that pastoral theology is “tentative,” “provisional,” “poetic,” “apophatic,” “elusive,” and “enigmatic.”\textsuperscript{12}

In agreement with many others, Lar­tey contends, “Pastoral theologians affirm that we learn about God through practice and action; that significant and substantial knowledge about the nature and activity of God is gained through practice and action.”\textsuperscript{13} Lar­tey’s insistence on pastoral theology as a theological discipline on its own, with emphasis on practice and action, is a good basis for advancing the discussion in this thesis, which is itself directed toward both practice-based theology and theology-grounded practice.

In his striving to develop a practice-based theology and theology-grounded practice, Lar­tey encourages the “development of more appropriate forms of care for persons-in-context as a result of the reflections on the divine nature.”\textsuperscript{14} He explains the purpose of pastoral theology in an intercultural world as enabling “pastoral practitioners of different faith traditions to hone their reflective and expressive skills and thus to engage more fully in theologically informed practice as well as theology that is influenced, grounded and shaped by practice.”\textsuperscript{15} This statement manifests Lar­tey’s two intentions for pastoral theology: to value different cultures and faiths, and to further the dialogue between theology and practice.


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{13} Lar­tey, \textit{Pastoral Theology}, 99.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 91.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 7.
These pastoral theological methods of Larney basically resonate with David Tracy’s revised critical correlational method, which is the most common method in the field of pastoral theology. According to Bonnie Miller-McLemore, “Gerkin and the distinguished pastoral theologian Seward Hiltner and others have found the ‘correlational’ approach of Paul Tillich and the ‘revised critical correlational’ method of David Tracy helpful models for understanding the task of pastoral theology as an interdisciplinary endeavor.”

Miller-McLemore points out that Tillich held the position that “the questions raised by human existence…must be correlated with the answers of the Christian tradition.” Revising Tillich’s one-directional relation between the human situation and Christian message, Tracy asserts that both the human situation and theology are mutually correlated interacting questions and answers that go in both directions.

Building upon Tracy’s revised correlational method, Larney develops a method for his own practice of pastoral care. The distinctiveness of Larney’s method is that he “privileges situated, contextual experience and the analysis of that experience in its multi-layered and multi-factored reality.” Larney particularly focuses on “the experiences of victims, survivors and those who have overcome the appalling injustices, indignities and inhumanity inflicted by humans upon fellow humans.” Larney’s method of emphasizing a multi-layered analysis of the experiences of the oppressed is critically helpful in advancing the analysis in this thesis of the

17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Larney, Pastoral Theology, 89.
20 Ibid., 101.
multi-layered oppressive elements found in the life-situations of Korean immigrant women in North America.

3.2 Liberation as Pastoral Praxis

3.2.1 The Relationship between Pastoral Care and Liberation Theology

For Lartey, liberation is the most challenging theme in the theory and practice of pastoral care in many parts of the so-called “Third World.” Accordingly, Lartey’s pastoral theological method is essentially based on liberation as pastoral praxis. While the term “praxis” means “a critical and dialectical relationship” between action and reflection, what Lartey emphasizes is theologians’ commitment to action. In his words, “the theologian first commits himself or herself to being in a particular place and engaging with others in work which aims at liberating the oppressed.” His approach to pastoral care and counselling is thus primarily based on his commitment to the liberation of the marginalized. Quoting Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, Lartey emphasizes the commitment of the theologian to the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed as follows: “Rather than introducing a new theological method, liberation theology is a new way of being a theologian. Theology is always a second step; the first is the “faith that makes its power felt through love” (Gal 5:6). Theology (not the theologian) comes afterward; liberating practice first.”

21 Lartey, In Living Colour, 85.

22 Ibid., 94.

23 Ibid., 86.

24 Ibid., 87. Original Citation from Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, Introducing Liberation Theology (Tunbridge Wells, UK: Burns & Oates, 1987), 22.
Agreeing with the standpoint of liberation theology, Lartey delineates how pastoral care relates to liberation theology across three areas that I will discuss in the pages that follow: the starting place of concrete experience and social analysis, hermeneutical analysis and process, and the pastoral praxis of liberation.25

3.2.2 Concrete Experience and Social Analysis

Whereas pastoral caregivers and pastoral counsellors tend to see the issues of human beings more from the personal level, liberation theologians focus upon the social and political systems which cause problems for people.26 The common ground between liberation theology and pastoral care is found in actual life situations. As Lartey maintains, both perspectives are needed in order to participate empathically in the lives of those who suffer, and to assist them to liberate themselves in their own way.27 For Lartey, liberation theology and pastoral care are two sides of the same coin, as individual problems have psycho-social and/or political ramifications.28

Lartey’s understanding, which values both liberation theology and pastoral care at personal and political levels, echoes the feminist maxim that “the personal is political.”

26 Ibid., 95.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
Elaine Graham asserts that the saying “the personal is political” is most true when applied to Christian pastoral care. Graham puts it,

Women’s personal circumstances and pastoral needs are not simply individual problems but occur within a social context of health and illness, reflect the influence of cultural norms and the dynamics of family life on dominant expectations of the giving and receiving of care, and reveal the impact of structural and institutional trends in public policy and socio-economic change.

Pastoral care for women therefore needs to promote social and political change as well as individual care. As Lorde claims, individual transformation is insufficient, because “the relationships of domination abided among people embedded in language itself, organizational procedures, and social structures.” In a similar way, political transformation is not sufficient either, because every person is embedded in and habituated to the practices of domination.

To illustrate how “the political becomes personal,” and how the “personal” has political ramifications, Lartey introduces a Korean American theologian, Chung Hyun Kyung, citing her depiction of han, which is helpful in understanding the actual situation of Koreans:

*Han* is the most prevalent feeling among Korean people, who have been violated throughout their history by the surrounding powerful countries. This

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30 Ibid.


32 Ibid.
feeling arises from a sense of impasse. Often Korean people, especially the poor and women have not had any access to public channels through which they can challenge the injustices done to them. They have long been silenced by physical and psychological intimidation and actual bodily violence by the oppressor. When there is no place where they can express their true selves, their true feelings, the oppressed become “stuck” inside. This unexpressed anger and resentment stemming from social powerlessness forms a “lump” in the body.33

This description points to the social, economic, and political realities that press upon people, creating unjust structures. It also manifests how these realities can cause physical and psychological ailments in a person’s body. Quoting the Boff brothers, Lartey points to “the interconnectedness of multiple oppressions experienced by particular people: ‘the poor are additionally oppressed when, besides being poor, they are also black, indigenous, women or old.’”34 He urges pastoral caregivers to analyze “patriarchy, capitalism, militarism, sexism, racism, classism, religio-cultural ideologies and other structures,” to see if these are exacerbating the suffering of persons.35

What Lartey suggests resonates deeply with the situation of KIWNA, as these women experience multiple oppressions based on gender and race. Their brokenness and suffering are not only due to individual issues, but also stem from the social system and culture. Following Lartey’s suggestion, pastoral care for KIWNA therefore needs an analysis, not only from an individual psychological perspective, but also from a social and political perspective, and should seek not only an individual therapeutic effect, but also socio-political transformation.

33 Lartey, In Living Colour, 95. (Original citation comes from Chung Hyun Kyung, Struggle to Be the Sun Again, 42.)

34 Ibid., 91.

35 Ibid., 98.
3.2.3 Hermeneutical Analysis

For Lartey, both liberation theology and pastoral care use a hermeneutical tool which takes human reality with utter seriousness when interpreting the Bible or providing pastoral care. In his book *In Living Colour*, Lartey explains hermeneutical analysis by introducing the accomplishments of many liberation theologians from the third world, such as those from Latin America, Africa, and Asia. For example, Lartey presents the *hermeneutical circle* of Uruguayan theologian, Juan Luis Segundo:

> The continuing change in our interpretation of the bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal. . . . And the circular nature of this interpretation stems from the fact that each new reality obliges us to interpret the word of God afresh, to change reality accordingly, and then to go back and reinterpret the word of God again, and so on. 36

Lartey also supports the “dialogical imagination” of Kwok Pui-Lan, who suggests interpreting biblical truth from an Asian woman’s perspective, as an alternative method that is “different from the culturally imperialistic way of the missionary church.” 37 Kwok advocates using through dialogical imagination “Asian myths, legends and stories in biblical reflection,” and also using “the social biography of the people as a hermeneutical key to understand both our reality and the message of the Bible.” 38

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37 Ibid., 99.

Lartey particularly endorses Korean liberation theologian, Chung Hyun Kyung’s assertion that “Asian women theologians should realize that we are the text, and the Bible and tradition of the Christian church are the context of our theology.”39 For Lartey, identifying people with the text is an important insight, similar to that which Charles Gerkin argued in his book, *The Living Human Document: Re-visioning Pastoral Counselling in a Hermeneutical Mode*.40 Lartey rightly compares the reading of the human situation as a text by liberation theologians and as a living document by pastoral caregivers.41

The term “Living Human Document” was coined by Anton Boisen, the pioneer of the Clinical Pastoral Education movement. Boisen argues that “practical theologians need to pay particular attention to human beings as ‘living human documents’ as well as attending to the written documents of faith like Scripture.”42 Charles Gerkin expanded the meaning of “living human document” in pastoral care and counselling. Pam Couture and Rodney Hunter claim that Gerkin developed a new method of pastoral counselling “as a retelling of the human story in ways that expand social horizons and liberate persons from oppressive forms of consciousness and destructive patterns of interpersonal

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40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

Comparing liberation theology and pastoral care, Lartey attempts to find the commonality of liberation theology and pastoral care in terms of the way both provide a hermeneutical key to a human text. To put it in a nutshell: for Lartey, regarding human experience as a text offers an alternative hermeneutical tool for both liberation theology and pastoral care.

### 3.2.4 Pastoral Praxis of Liberation

Both liberation theology and pastoral care share the pastoral praxis of liberation. The goal of liberation theology is not to develop and produce statements of theory, but to mobilize action, reflection and the return to action. Lartey’s ultimate quest in examining the reflective procedures of liberation theology is to “appropriate methodologies and theoretical frames that will enable more serious engagement between theory and practice, theology and pastoral care.” In order to achieve liberation, liberation theologians and pastoral practitioners have their own foci. According to Lartey, liberation theologians seek more radical social transformation through drastic change in oppressive systems, whereas pastoral practitioners approach liberation as a slow individual process of healing self-defeating and dysfunctional thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. For Lartey, both views

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44 Lartey, *In Living Colour*, 93.

45 Ibid., 94

46 Ibid., 101.
have their limitations, therefore calling for dialogue, and a willingness to change one set of views in light of the views of the other. 47

For his dialogical approach to liberation, Lartey proposes a social therapy cycle. Here he supports Dennis McCann, who warns us to avoid the “two demons” of “excessive spiritualization” and “ politicization.” 48 Avoiding McCann’s two demons, Lartey proposes a social therapy cycle which seeks insights from pastoral care and counselling and from liberation theology. 49 Following McCann’s ideas about the social therapy cycle, Lartey advocates self-criticism in all Christian social action.

His social therapy cycle runs through five steps: recognition, identification, befriending, working together in groups, and acting together. 50 I describe these five steps as follows: In the first step of recognition, Lartey emphasizes the self-awareness of the carer or liberationist in the personal and communal support they provide in initiating social action. The second step of the cycle is to identify people and the issues they are going to be involved with in the community. The third phase of befriending requires the willingness of workers to be vulnerable, and to be known by others, and the risk to their very selves by being in solidarity with others. In the fourth stage of working together in groups, Lartey encourages people to operate with cultural sensitivity and appropriateness, provide

47 Lartey, In Living Colour, 101


49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.
therapeutic support, and make sure that minority voices are represented. The final phase of symbolic collective action involves marches, protests and demonstrations. In this final phase, groups are valuable resources of support and therapy for individuals. Lartey’s social therapy cycle is an attempt to bring pastoral care and social action close together in an intercultural world.\(^5\)

In this section, I have discussed Emmanuel Lartey’s pastoral theological method of pastoral praxis as liberation. I have discussed how pastoral theology and pastoral practice can be in dialogue while seeking liberation. I have also introduced Lartey’s social therapy cycle. How, then, does Lartey’s theology of pastoral praxis as liberation resonate with pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women in North America? First of all, pastoral caregivers and pastoral counsellors should pay attention to the oppression inherent in the lives of KIWNA. Failure to do so will result in lack of understanding of the deeper causes of their suffering and brokenness.

Lartey’s social therapy cycle is helpful for the care of KIWNA in assisting with their liberation from oppression by patriarchy and colonialism, since liberation needs to be approached not only as individual therapy, but also as a form of social action. As the major causes of oppression come from the socio-economic-cultural system, without paying attention to this system, the appropriate evaluation and care will fail. For care and counselling to be liberative, Emmanuel Lartey uses a distinctive framework he calls “intercultural,” which I discuss in the following section.

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3.3 Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World

3.3.1 Culture in an Intercultural World

Lartey explains the benefits of a dialogue between pastoral caregivers and liberation theologians within an intercultural framework. In Lartey’s understanding, the dialogue will result in “deep psycho-social, sharp socio-economic and nuanced political analyses of the specific contexts out of which human suffering emerges.”52 In his distinctive “intercultural” framework, Lartey deals with the issues of “global justice specifically including matters of race, gender, class, sexuality and economics.”53 Lartey asserts that “one needs to realize that there are real differences between the theories and practices of effective pastoral care and counselling in different parts of the globe, reflecting the very real contextual differences that exist.”54

The self of human persons in Asian culture is formulated differently from the self in the Western understanding of anthropology. For example, Insook Lee, an Asian American pastoral theologian, indicates that Korean women’s characteristics of being quiet, dependent, and submissive are standard learned behaviours in the process of socialization, rather than something intrinsic to race and ethnicity.55 Although this observation may be correct, the problem is that this evaluation is part of the barometer of Western male-centered values. Most counselling theories based on Western cultures promote self-assertive, independent, and autonomous personalities. As a means of opposing such developments, Lartey’s strategy is to give diverse

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52 Lartey, In Living Colour, 98.

53 Lartey, Pastoral Theology, 124.

54 Ibid., 48.

people from different backgrounds a chance to express their own views. He accordingly opposes any form of reductionism and stereotyping of cultures and instead values diversity most highly.

Based on this premise, the distinctiveness of Lartey’s liberative theological method is in his emphasis on intercultural value. In order to discuss further Lartey’s understanding of “intercultural value,” I examine first what Lartey means by “culture.” For Lartey, culture is “the way in which social groups develop distinct patterns of life and give ‘expressive form’ to their social and material life experience.” Lartey’s understanding of the term “culture” plays a critical role in defining pastoral care and counselling in an intercultural world. African American pastoral theologian, Mpyana Fulgence Nyengele, follows Lartey’s definition of culture in his research into African women’s theology, gender relations and family systems theory. Nyengele adapts Lartey’s description of culture as follows: “It includes the ideas, value, norms, forms of social relationships, understandings of optimal personhood or personality dysfunction, and ways in which patterns of life in a group are structured, experienced, understood, and interpreted.”

In this understanding of culture, Lartey emphasizes the need to pay attention to distinctive expressive forms based on different human experiences.

Lartey asserts that “all forms of counselling are inseparable from cultural assumptions and biases, and different cultural systems appropriately find expression in different therapeutic


approaches.”\[^{58}\] Larney’s understanding of culture in pastoral care and counselling resonates with the frequently quoted statements of C.S. Song: “Theology is culturally and historically not neutral. A neutral theology is in fact a homeless theology. It does not belong anywhere. But theology really begins in earnest when it identifies its home and discovers its belonging.”\[^{59}\] In line with Song’s theological understanding of culture, I interpret Larney’s understanding of culture in pastoral care and counselling in the same way C.S. Song depicts it: pastoral care and counselling is culturally and historically not neutral. Pastoral care and counselling begin in earnest when it identifies its home and discovers its belonging.

Larney deplores the clear attempt to universalize Eurocentric culture in accordance with Western expansionism, and says that even now this continues in indefinable ways.\[^{60}\] Lydia Johnson confirms Larney’s position, citing him as follows: “The forms of pastoral care and counselling that have been practiced in the twentieth century reflect the dominant social, cultural, theological, and psychological theories of the West.”\[^{61}\] Larney’s emphasis on intercultural value arises from his realization that “dominant or powerful groups may deliberately or unwittingly seek to impose their culture and perspective upon all others or else control and select what is to

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\[^{60}\] Larney, *In Living Colour*, 10

be allowed expression.”\textsuperscript{62} For this reason, it is important to explore Lartey’s understanding of interculturality, which I discuss in the following section.

### 3.3.2 Interculturality

For Lartey, interculturality is a creative approach to pastoral care and counselling and a response to pluralism in present-day society.\textsuperscript{63} His understanding of interculturality affirms three basic principles: contextuality, multiple perspectives and authentic participation. I summarize these three principles below.

The principle of contextuality means that every belief and behaviour must be understood correctly in terms of the given context.\textsuperscript{64} This principle avoids the interpretation of the situation from the caregivers or others’ privileged positions. Instead, this principle encourages caregivers to wear the shoes of careseekers in their analyses of the issues and situations of careseekers. Through the principle of multiple perspectives, Lartey asserts that we need to give equal attention to different perspectives, and through dialogue arrive at a more appropriate approach to a particular situation.\textsuperscript{65} Lartey writes that “the principle of authentic participation...affirms the right of participation in certain issues on their own terms.”\textsuperscript{66}

Here “on their own terms” means that careseekers should feel accepted and safe in expressing their concerns and feelings using their own forms of expression, such as their native

\textsuperscript{62} Lartey, \textit{In Living Colour}, 10.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 11.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
verbal or non-verbal languages, facial and bodily expressions, and religious liturgies or spiritual forms of expression. Johnson introduces Lartey’s intercultural approach, which affirms three fundamental principles, as being “culturally aware and culturally nuanced.” Based on these three principles, what Lartey means by interculturality is not just understanding cultural difference on a cognitive level, but also feeling it. As he puts it: “Indeed it calls for an awareness of meaning within a different set of values and beliefs together with an ability to ‘think and feel’ the difference.”

Through his understanding of interculturality, Lartey affirms the famous tripartite understanding of the human person presented by Kluckholn and Murray: “Like all others, like some others, and like no other.” Kluckholn and Murray characterize a human person in such a way as to recognize that human beings have universal characteristics in common; we have shared community cultural areas such as values, beliefs, customs, and basic life assumptions. Yet each individual also has a uniqueness which other people cannot follow in the same way. From this tripartite understanding of the human person, Lartey emphasizes exploring these three dimensions, giving each equal attention without over-emphasizing one over the others.

Lartey argues that multicultural or cross-cultural counselling has focused mainly on the cultural differences of non-Western people, usually measured by Western people. For Lartey,

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67 Johnson, Drinking From The Same Well, 13.

68 Lartey, In Living Colour, 12.


70 Lartey, In Living Colour, 12.

71 Ibid.
multi-cultural counselling, much like cross-cultural counselling, based on the concept of “like some others,” also “fails to avoid stereotyping, reductionism, individualising, placing groups in hierarchical order and perpetuating myths that, when imbibed, can induce self-hatred within the sub-dominant groups.”

To overcome the shortcomings of cross-cultural or multi-cultural counselling, which over-emphasizes the cultural aspects, Lartey suggests interculturality.

Interculturality, for Lartey, is “living in the intersection of the three spheres—being centred in the intersection of the universal, the cultural and the individual within living, colourful persons.” Lartey transforms Kluckholn and Murray’s tripartite view of human beings into an approach suitable for intercultural pastoral counsellors living in three spheres:

The pastoral counsellor who wishes to work in an inter-cultural manner has to attend carefully to the common humanity shared by all people….Attention will need to be paid to differences and similarities that arise out of cultural factors…questions will be faced as to what each person experiences uniquely.

In advancing the concept of interculturality, Lartey is deeply influenced by Emmanuel Levinas, the Jewish phenomenologist born in Lithuania. In particular, Levinas’ work with the “Same” (or Self) and “Other” illuminated Lartey’s pastoral work in a multicultural world. In opposing Western thought, which he understands as a history of incorporating others into sameness, Levinas claims that the Other should be respected and protected for being different

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73 Lartey, In Living Colour, 13.

74 Lartey, “Pastoral Counselling in Multi-Cultural Contexts,” 28.

75 Lartey, Pastoral Theology, 130.
from the self (or the same). As distinct from Object Relations Theory, which is premised on the thinking that the Other can be understood, Levinas places the Other in mystery. In harmony with Levinas, Larney offers a critique of pastoral counselling that follows Object Relations Theory, as “it is based on processes of internalization in which the ‘Other’ is understood, subsumed, accessed and responded to through internal objects.”

Larney argues that internalization of the other in my image is “violence to the Other,” because it distorts his or her true image at my pleasure. The question then remains how the self can relate to the Other in pastoral care. Larney’s method, in following Levinas’ conceptual structure, is to keep the attitude of unknowing toward the other and frame the Other as a mystery, but a mystery to be embraced in relationship. In this process, Larney urges that the Other is allowed complete freedom “to define themselves and speak for themselves on their own terms.” Building on Larney’s assertion, Bonnie Miller-McLemore goes on to claim, “Those within the web who have not yet spoken must speak for themselves.” For Larney, pastoral care and counselling is like “travelling alongside the Other,” assisting them to define themselves and speak for themselves as a way of pursuing the true selfhood of all of us.

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76 Larney, Pastoral Theology, 131.

77 Ibid., 134. Originally cited from Emmanuel Levinas, Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence, trans. Alphoso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 75.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid., 133.

80 Ibid., 138.


82 Larney, Pastoral Theology, 138.
3.3.3 Interpathy

For Lartey, the reason why living in the intersection is possible is because interpathy rests upon “the premise of human universality” which is “an essential aspect of an intercultural vision.” For Lartey, interpathy can function in connecting with “otherness,” as “it seeks not only to recognize and respect another in their otherness but also to attempt to share that otherness in as much as one is able to.” Interpathy is an idea developed by David Augsburger, and reflects what needs to happen when empathy crosses cultural boundaries.

Interpathy is an intentional cognitive envisioning and affective experiencing of another’s thoughts and feelings, even though the thoughts rise from another process of knowing, the values grow from another frame of moral reasoning, and the feelings spring from another basis of assumptions.

While Lartey regards interpathic listening as “a radical and serious attempt in crosscultural boundaries,” and attempts to incorporate this into an intercultural world, he also points out a limitation of the concept of interpathy. Commenting on the work of David Augsberger, one of the pioneers of cross-cultural pastoral counselling, Lartey argues that there is a fundamental problem with this model, as “it encourages a ‘them’ and ‘us’ mentality” by allocating “we (invariably the dominant, white European/American) who cross over to them (the ‘rest’) and then return.” Lartey’s argument is based on his understanding of Augsberger’s

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84 Ibid.

85 Ibid., 65.


88 Lartey, “Pastoral Counselling in Multi-Cultural Contexts,” 23.
model as crossing over into another culture and then returning to one’s own without change, which is problematic for him. In returning “to their own,” what Lartey looks for is a change in the thoughts and feelings of pastoral caregivers as a result of their active interaction with pastoral careseekers in counselling relationships.

While I agree with Lartey’s emphasis on the sharing of ideas and feelings in counselling processes, his criticism hardly convinces that Augsburger’s intention in defining interpathy means a “return to their own” without any change in a person’s thoughts and feelings. As Lartey quotes, Augsburger states that in intercultural pastoral care and counselling, “I [the culturally different person] take a foreign perspective, base my thought on a foreign assumption, and allow myself to feel the resultant feelings and their cognitive and emotive consequences in my personality as I inhabit, insofar as I am capable of inhabiting, a foreign context.”

Augsberger himself writes as follows:

The intercultural person is not culture-free (a hypothetical and undesirable state). Rather, the person is culturally aware. Awareness of one’s own culture can free one to disconnect identity from cultural externals and to live on the boundary, crossing over and coming back with increasing freedom. Disidentification of the self from old cultural identifications leads to rediscovery of the self in at least three contexts – one’s own culture, a second culture, and in that unique third culture that always forms on the boundary between the two. This third-culture perspective enables the intercultural person to make communication easier, interpret cultural conflict, and function with acceptable competence without any inappropriate switching or confusing of behaviour.

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In the above two quotes, Augsburger is indicating a “return to their own” with changed views and affects. Augsburger’s definition of interpathy also indicates his intention to support sharing ideas and feelings, which leads to a change in the position of both caregivers and careseekers through the therapeutic processes. While Lartey’s criticism of Augsburger hardly convinces, Lartey’s emphasis on changed positions is nevertheless critical in intercultural pastoral practices.

Intercultural pastoral care with interpathy necessitates pastoral caregivers’ willingness to change through their interaction with careseekers. Eunjoo Mary Kim, a Korean American theologian, advocates an interpathic approach in homiletics, also. Kim defines the capacity of interpathy nicely: “We become interpathic when we open ourselves to the otherness of the Other and are willing to change ourselves by the impact of otherness. This capacity involves two abilities: the ability to see as others see, and the ability to see ourselves as others see us.” Kim asserts that the interpathic approach to preaching can be applied to reading both the text and context. Kim posits, “In order to interpathically understand Others who are different in their individual or group identities and social locations, the preacher needs to stand in their shoes.” In line with Kim’s assertion, interpathic caring of KIWNA also requires pastoral caregivers to stand in the shoes of KIWNA.

In her essay “Navigating Racial Difference as a White Pastoral Theologian,” Nancy Ramsay appeals for urgent change to classroom and clinical settings in order to avoid the sin of

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92 Ibid., 73.
What Ramsay urges is the need to be aware of internalized racism which, for example, assists in applying pastoral theology that is adequate for European Americans to other ethnic groups without critical analysis. Ramsey argues for the need to change theological education in a decentered way.\textsuperscript{94}

Brian Grant also emphasizes the importance of therapists being willing to be changed by the impact of a client, which leads into the client’s reality, whether for suffering or delight.\textsuperscript{95} For Grant, such liberating events are sacred encounters that cannot occur without the therapist being open to experiencing the client’s deepest joy or horror.\textsuperscript{96} For Lartey, participating in the client’s reality is an act of standing alongside God in solidarity with them. This is the solidarity which Lartey urges pastoral theologians to adopt. For Lartey, “pastoral theologians are summoned by the God of all creation to the task of caring. As human beings, no human experience is totally foreign to any one of us.”\textsuperscript{97}

In harmony with Lartey’s emphasis on change on both sides in pastoral care and counselling relationships, Carrie Doehring defines “intercultural” as follows:

I use the term intercultural to describe pastoral and spiritual care as a cocreative process of intermingling stories and lives. This generative process changes care seekers and caregivers, as well as their relationships, families, communities,


\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{95} Brian Grant, \textit{A Theology for Pastoral Psychotherapy: God’s Play in Sacred Spaces} (New York: Haworth Press, 2001), 197.

\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{97} Lartey, \textit{Pastoral Theology}, 71.
cultures and even, as I believe, God….The preposition, “inter” in the term intercultural conveys the intermingling effects of change that move back and forth across relational webs, when caregivers respect care seekers and care seekers in turn trust caregivers.98

Doehring states, “[Lartey’s] intercultural approach has challenged American pastoral theologians like me to acknowledge the ways they have universalized their approaches to pastoral care and their understandings of pastoral theology, without recognizing how culturally-derived these pastoral practices and theologies are.”99

Based on her experience as a minister in Jamaica and the United States, and as a teacher and practitioner of pastoral care and counselling in South Africa, Fiji, and New Zealand, Lydia Johnson agrees with Lartey’s intercultural approach to pastoral care and counselling. Johnson writes, as Emmanuel Lartey confirms, “a Eurocentric paradigm is clearly inadequate and even counter-productive in the multicultural world in which we now encounter culturally-different ‘others’ as a matter of course.”100 Johnson claims that “we are called to work toward the development and articulation of a culturally aware and culturally nuanced approach to pastoral care and counseling.”101

In order to work with careseekers from culturally-nuanced positions, it is important to notice how power plays a role in pastoral relationships. Lartey encourages developing interpathic


100 Johnson, Drinking From The Same Well, 13.

101 Ibid.
listening skills which will enable pastoral caregivers to enter into the real life experiences of oppression that exist in all communities in the world in their struggle to recover their humanity.\textsuperscript{102} Because of the reality of power imbalance, Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore points out that an interpathic attitude is more necessary for dominant groups than it is for minorities in the immigrant society of North America, because the minority group has already been sufficiently “interpathic” with the dominant culture for a long time.\textsuperscript{103} As Miller-McLemore articulates it, “interpathy into the foreign beliefs of another culture necessarily implies envisioning distorted thoughts and feelings of repulsion, violence, fear, hatred.”\textsuperscript{104}

We should therefore discern the role of power when practicing interpathic care. Failure to address the reality of a power differential will mean that intercultural pastoral counselling can fall into the habit of universalizing human attributes according to the norms of the dominant groups. Lartey asserts that “pastoral counselling that emphasizes collective harmonious relationships and family wellbeing is better suited to Chinese persons than overly individualistic approaches.”\textsuperscript{105} As in the case of Chinese, it is a mistake for pastoral counselling to simply seek to assist with the individual well-being of Koreans. Pastoral counselling for Koreans needs to include understanding their deeply-rooted values in terms of group cohesiveness. This we-consciousness is related to the controlled expression of thoughts and feelings for the sake of others. Lartey states, “Chinese ‘reserve’ is not to be interpreted as an absence of feeling. Rather,

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\textsuperscript{102} Lartey, \textit{In Living Colour}, 96.

\textsuperscript{103} Miller-McLemore, “The Living Human Web,” 19.


\textsuperscript{105} Lartey, \textit{Pastoral Theology}, 60.
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it is the expression of ideals and values that are highly cherished.”¹⁰⁶ This depiction of Chinese personality largely manifests in traditional Korean culture, which asks that individual voices be subdued for the sake of collective gains.

Another example is face-saving as one of the cultural psychological attributes common to Korean culture. Lartey’s intercultural awareness helps with understanding this face-saving consciousness of Korean immigrants. Lartey notes that Philippino “Hiya (shame, embarrassment, losing face, having a sense of propriety) is a pervasive cultural dynamic that is one of the determinants of valued social behavior” and thus “pastoral counsellors have often to help clients ‘save face’.”¹⁰⁷ As in the case of Philippino Hiya, pastoral caregivers should understand how important face-saving is when working with people of Korean ethnicity.

In this section, I have discussed the pastoral theological methods of Emmanuel Lartey in an intercultural world. Based on his engagement in interculturality and interpathy, I have emphasized that pastoral caregivers should be aware of power differentials in pastoral relationships. Being cognizant of these power differentials, as Lartey states, results in “a healthy respect for the otherness of others [which] is a contextual and core value and discipline of pastoral theology.”¹⁰⁸ The question in an intercultural world is then how different or opposing values can be respected. For example, as Lartey notes, both Western and Asian models have strengths and weaknesses: “Western models of pastoral care and counselling tend to emphasize

¹⁰⁶ Lartey, Pastoral Theology, 60.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 58.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 71.
the individual and reason (insight), and promote selfhood,” while “Asian conceptual systems tend to emphasize cosmic unity, communitarianism and group cohesion.”

For Lartey, intercultural pastoral theology is living in the tension of opposing positions and ambiguity. He states “the global task of the pastoral theologian is to maintain these tensions in creative and imaginative ways, recognizing that truth lies not at one extreme pole in opposition to the other, but rather in maintaining the contributions of seemingly divergent poles.” The postcolonializing pastoral theology of Emmanuel Lartey, which I discuss in the next section, may provide an alternative means of balancing these tensions peacefully.

### 3.4 Postcolonializing Pastoral Theology

#### 3.4.1 Postcolonialism and Pastoral Theology

Although colonialism historically dominated the world during a particular period of time, the activities of colonialism have been operating since the beginning of human history. Anything which limits, oppresses, binds, exploits, or despises human life and self-agency is a form of colonialism. Sugirtharajah, who proactively introduced the term “postcolonial” to theological circles, claims that “colonialism is not simply a system of economic and military control, but a systematic cultural penetration and domination.” In order to resist “historical, political, and economic domination,” he suggests tackling the continual damaging legacy of “psychological, intellectual and cultural colonization.”

Kwok Pui-lan, who writes extensively on postcolonial

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109 Lartey, Pastoral Theology, 72.

110 Ibid., 126.

theology, states that “doing postcolonial theology involves cultivating a habit of decolonizing the mind, resurrecting suppressed theological knowledge, and taking part in social praxis to context empire and change the world.”112 Sugirtharajah and Kwok’s understanding of postcolonial theology aims to awaken those in theological circles to the knowledge, practices, and culture that are based on a colonial and imperial mindset.

Melinda A. McGarrah Sharp claims to have learned postcolonialism not from books but from living in “a small Afro-Surinamese village with descendants of escaped slaves of Dutch colonizers in the Amazon rainforest of Suriname, South America.”113 Based on her lived experience, McGarrah Sharp explains how a postcolonial awakening affects pastoral theology and vice versa. Noting that “pastoral theology moves in more intercultural and communal directions from a solely intra-psychic focus to a contextual and intercultural understanding of suffering and healing,” McGarrah claims that a postcolonial commitment to disruption and the disruptive aims of pastoral theology should inform one another.114 By informing one another, “both pastoral theology and postcolonial theory aim to reveal and restore embodied connections between selves and others.”115

For McGarrah Sharp, “postcolonialism” is not a term with a fixed definition to be mastered, but “a posture of listening in the midst of tension and challenge” from a position of

112 Kwok and Burns, Postcolonial Practice of Ministry, 220.


114 Ibid., 4.

115 Ibid., 34.
Pastoral theology also maintains a posture of “changing, revising, rereading,” attitudes that are also characteristics of postcolonial practices of ministry. McGarrah Sharp’s understanding of pastoral theology and postcolonial theory resonates with Emmanuel Lartey’s pastoral theological engagement in postcolonial commitment. Lartey suggests ten perspectives that may help pastoral theologians engaging in postcolonial commitment, which are summarized as follows:

1. Pastoral theology needs to be tentative, as it only occurs within limited human knowledge and experience.
2. Our knowledge of God is provisional, so we need to depend on the Holy Spirit continually.
3. In pastoral encounters, poetic language is often more powerful than doctrinal statements.
4. “The being of God is encountered deeply in the otherness of those who most differ from ourselves.”
5. Pastoral theologians experience the fact that “God typically chooses to be weak, vulnerable and silent in the world, rather than display great and visible power and might.”
6. Theology continues to “desire God’s elusive love.”
7. “Theologians examine and explore the nature of humanity precisely because in the human we believe we catch glimpses of the divine Creator.”
8. “The task of the theologian includes finding aesthetically, philosophically and pragmatically appropriate ways of embracing mystery.”
9. “God is relational and is to be encountered within the relational matrices of our human life.”
10. God can be known through plurality and diversity in the global community.

### 3.4.2 Postcolonializing Activities of God

In line with these theological and pastoral theological engagements with postcolonial commitments, Lartey identifies the characteristics of God’s as postcolonializing.

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117 Ibid., 35.

118 Ibid., 103-119.
“Postcolonializing” is the term which Lartey innovatively formulated, along with “postcolonial,” in order to give a more active voice to the decolonizing acts and activities of the divine.

As a verb “postcolonializing” articulates the nature, acts and activities of communities, leaders or people who seek to establish communities of faith or else who produce or provide regularly or occasionally rituals or ceremonies that, reflecting the decolonizing nature of the divine, are plural in form, diverse in character and which subvert and overturn the hegemonic conditions established through colonialism creating forms of spiritual engagement that more truly reflect categories of thought and life that emanate from an African, rather than a European, way of being and thinking.119

This description of postcolonializing reveals Lartey’s strong desire to develop his own theological method, one which departs from the “internalized authoritarian epistemology” of European origin, and which he understands characterizes most African theologians, African churches, and scholars of African religion.120 Lartey deplores the fact that “present-day churches across the globe, steeped in the dualistic, adversarial, and conquest mentality of western missionary Christianity likewise seem particularly unprepared to deal with diversity in a way in keeping with the love ethic of their Christian faith,” or in any other way than through “conversion, persuasion, conquest, or suppression.”121

In this vein of thought, Lartey considers it important to depart from a colonial theological method that is based on European hegemony, and to use methods reflecting African traditional culture and spirituality. Lartey asserts that most Christians have been limited in seeing the divine

119 Lartey, Postcolonializing God, xiii.

120 Ibid., xii.

mystery exclusively in European terms.\textsuperscript{122} Understanding God only in terms of Western culture will lead to failure in understanding people from different cultures, and will eventually promote Euro-Americans as the standard of human persons. For Lartey, “Western scholars and Christian apologists seeking to interpret African beliefs in western categories is simply erroneous.”\textsuperscript{123} Lartey accuses European Christianity of “misinterpreting, misappropriating and mischaracterizing much of African life and thought,” by labelling African religious life “as ‘evil’, ‘demonic’, ‘dangerous’ or else unsavoury, barbaric or unenlightened.”\textsuperscript{124}

Lartey claims that there is full evidence that practitioners of African indigenous religions challenged the colonial system in resistance to European hegemony. He writes:

“Postcolonializing activity sponsored, promulgated and engaged in by religious personages is evidently a long and established African tradition.”\textsuperscript{125} He claims that this postcolonializing activity diminished after independence, because “the hegemonic discourses of European Christianity seem to have succeeded in placing icy hands on the innovativeness of African religious leaders.”\textsuperscript{126}

Lartey’s use of postcolonialism as a form of criticism is in agreement with Edward Said, who saw criticism “as life-enhancing and constitutively opposed to every form of tyranny, domination, and abuse, its social goals are non-coercive knowledge produced in the interests of

\textsuperscript{122} Lartey, “Borrowed Clothes,” 124.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 108.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., xii.

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., xxii.

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
human freedom.”\textsuperscript{127} Deploring situations where African scholars borrow European colonial methods for their theological discourse, Lartey strives to revive postcolonializing methods.\textsuperscript{128} Lartey claims that God has been active throughout human history in these postcolonializing activities, and pastoral theology should thus promote God, who will “decolonize, diversify and promote counter-hegemonic social conditions.”\textsuperscript{129}

In order to depart from European colonial influences in Black Christianity, Lartey endeavours to look for aspects of African religious heritage and proactively bring these into pastoral practices. According to Lartey, it is a misinterpretation to hold that “the gods of Africa gave way to the God of Christianity” in Black Christianity.\textsuperscript{130} He argues that in fact Christianity provides mostly the external form, while African rituals comprise the inner life of the African Church.\textsuperscript{131} For Lartey, the Pentecostal and charismatic style of worship is an expression of African spiritual elements, which made Black Christianity acceptable to the Western sphere.\textsuperscript{132} Lartey therefore argues that in order to understand Black Christianity and Black spirituality, it is necessary to understand traditional African religious, sociocultural, and medical ritual practices.\textsuperscript{133}


\textsuperscript{128} Lartey, \textit{Postcolonializing God}, x.

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., xiii.

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 21.

\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 20.

\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 34.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 25.
To employ African traditional religious rituals is Lartey’s effort to find God’s postcolonializing activities, which are manifested in both the Old and New Testaments. Concerning the narrative of the Tower of Babel recorded in Genesis 11:1-9, Lartey asserts that what the Shemites sought through having one language was “to control, dominate and conquer all, even the heavenly realm.”

In the narrative of Babel, God’s purpose is to embrace the diversity of all creation, including many different voices, and a variety of cultures. Lartey claims that diversified language is “symbolic of God’s counter-hegemonic and pluralizing activity.”

Turning to the New Testament, Lartey explores how Jesus interacted with persons of other faiths in four biblical periscopes: a Roman centurion (Matt. 8:5-13); the Syro-Phoenician woman (Matt. 15:21-8); the Samaritan leper (Luke 17:11-19) and the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-7). Jesus engaged in postcolonializing discourses through these four encounters with people from other religious traditions, Lartey claims. Doctrine was not the starting point for Jesus’ encounter in these discourses, Lartey emphasizes, and there is no evidence in the biblical texts that these persons of other faiths, whom Jesus commended, were converted to Christianity, which indicates that Jesus acknowledges their religious traditions.

Another diversifying characteristic of God in the New Testament, Lartey explains, is manifest on the day of Pentecost

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135 Ibid.
136 Ibid., 4.
137 Ibid., 5.
138 Ibid., 10.
139 Ibid., 11.
in Acts 2:1-42. Larney argues that diverse languages and cultures are God’s intention for humanity. He states: “At Pentecost, God postcolonializes subverting dominant hegemonic discourses and affirms the diversity and plurality of creation.”

### 3.4.3 Postcolonializing Consciousness in Pastoral Care

In urging postcolonializing awareness, the most critical point Larney makes about pastoral care is the power imbalance between Western and other approaches. He writes, “In my experience of actual practice, the western ways inevitably prove dominant, with the other ways being seen as exotic at best, unprofessional at worst.” Larney claims that in most cases, to be civilized, people in Africa had to be absorbed into the Western frame of the Self while the African frame of the Self means “a community of selves in community with others.” To counterbalance Western-dominating practices, he urges a postcolonializing consciousness that pays particular attention to indigenous culture. For example, in the context of Sub-Saharan Africa, Larney identifies seven different needs which ministries need to respond to from a postcolonializing perspective:

1. The need for empathic and interpathic listening and appropriate responses to people.
2. Communiotherapy and fostering of community.
3. Empowering individuals and groups to challenge and change unjust social, economic, and political structures.
4. Affirming heterogeneity and encouraging each person or group to speak for themselves.
5. Encouraging the principle of dynamism rather than exclusively focusing on archaeological matters.
6. Collaborating with and engaging in interdisciplinary work with people whose expertise may be ecological, cultural, economic, political, medical or sociological.

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141 Ibid., 118.

142 Larney, *Pastoral Theology*, 147.
7. Developing, espousing, and utilizing indigenous models of ministry and care that address our existence in this era.\(^{143}\)

Lartey introduces the following examples of models that address particular indigenous needs: “Ubuntu (South Africa); Just Therapy (developed by family therapists in Aotearoa/New Zealand drawing upon Maori culture); Palaver-process therapy (utilized by pastoral care givers and conflict resolution practitioners in the Democratic Republic of Congo and other central African countries); [and] Soul processing (developed by African Mystic Bro. Ishmael Tetteh, Ghana).”\(^{144}\) In giving examples of these models of pastoral ministry, Lartey is pointing to a proactive use of indigenous spiritual resources.

Lartey’s postcolonializing pastoral care manifests three facets, which I discuss here in terms of how they resonate with the pastoral situation of KIWNA. First, Lartey’s postcolonializing pastoral care places indigenous spirituality at the center. In the African context, indigenizing pastoral methodology regards spirituality not psychology as the center of personality. Lartey finds that postcolonializing pastoral care for Africans and the African diaspora looks for ways to challenge “the psychological reductionism of westernized approaches to pastoral care and counselling.”\(^{145}\) The purpose of pastoral care for Lartey is to help people find ways to fulfil their life-purposes and plans by discerning and utilizing their spirituality in order to contribute to the well-being of the human community.\(^{146}\)

\(^{143}\) Lartey, “Borrowed Clothes,” 28.

\(^{144}\) Ibid. For details of these approaches and models, see page 32.

\(^{145}\) Lartey, Postcolonializing God, 120.

\(^{146}\) Ibid.
As is the case with Lar, spirituality is important in the pastoral care of KIWA. The majority of KIWA engage in religious and spiritual practices, which provide important resources for meaning making in their immigrant lives. When they experience brokenness and suffering as immigrant women, religious and spiritual participation helps them find healing and overcome their hardships. Furthermore, religion and spirituality offer an outlet for distress in immigrant lives.

Secondly, postcolonializing pastoral care means community building for Lar. Lar points out that the down side of pastoral care, as imposed by the westernizing colonial social agents, is the loss of community, and instead places great emphasis on the communal values of the human person which traditional African morals uphold. He asserts that individual therapy should promote the growth of a person as a social and communal participant seeking healthy community building. For Lar, “The aim of postcolonializing pastoral care is the cultivation of communal spaces in which all people can be safe, nurtured and empowered to grow.”

The importance of community, as Lar emphasizes, also resonates with the needs of KIWA, since for most KIWA, the community, particularly the church, is everything. The goal of pastoral care and counselling for KIWA should thus include methods for cultivating community as a place of safety, healing, and growing.

147 Lar, Postcolonializing God, 120.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid., 121.
Thirdly, postcolonializing pastoral care does not merely aim at the personal transformation of individuals, but rather aims at transforming cultures. Building healthy communities necessitates transforming cultures. For Larney, it is the job of the institutional chaplain “to create wholesome communal activities and spaces for the rejuvenation and spiritual recreation of all within the institution.” He claims that it is the most crucial time for the institutional chaplain to be called upon “when the culture of their institution militates against the well-being of particular groups within the institution, when a culture of disrespect, abuse, bullying or ignoring of the rights, needs and concerns of any persons associated with the institution creeps into play.”

As Larney upholds, transforming culture is one of the most important tasks of pastoral care and counseling for KIWNA. Whether through individual pastoral care and counseling or through group activities, pastoral practitioners are to facilitate the transformation of cultures as a way of promoting healing, acceptance, and compassion.

As discussed so far, Emmanuel Larney’s pastoral theological methods enhance pastoral theological perspectives and practices in ways that can liberate and empower those who are in intercultural spaces, particularly those living under oppressive social, economic, political, and cultural conditions. Yet there are gaps and limitations when these methods are applied to the situation of Korean immigrant women in North America, which I discuss in the remainder of this chapter.

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150 Larney, Postcolonializing God, 122.

151 Ibid., 123.

152 Ibid.
3.5 Gaps in Lartey’s method applied to Korean Immigrant Women in North America

The problem with Lartey’s theological method is his failing to discuss the presence of oppressive elements in indigenous religions and culture. This failing is probably because his focus is to advocate indigenous culture. He implies that most African indigenous religions and cultures are good, and should be employed proactively in the practice of pastoral ministry. As he repeatedly acknowledges, his theological motif is to leave Euro-centric epistemology and theology, and so he advocates instead for the inclusion of indigenous religious and cultural practice into pastoral care and counselling. Yet indigenous religious, spiritual, and/or cultural practices may themselves contain oppressive elements for certain groups of people, such as children and women. Like any other cultures, African indigenous cultures may have elements that oppress rather than enhance the lives of some African people.

Mpyana Fulgence Nyengele, African-American pastoral theologian, researched the problems in gender relations and oppression in African traditional culture. He wanted to find “a pastoral theological response to African women’s expressions of their experiences of pain, oppression, and marginalization in marriage, family, church, and societal life.” Nyengele objects to “the idea held by many African men that African cultural traditions and practices do not cause or represent any problems in gender relations, and that African women are not oppressed.” Nyengele argues that patriarchal values have been reinforced in the church more than in secular institutions. He continues to claim that African traditional values should be

154 Ibid., 2.
155 Ibid., 21.
examined when considering African women’s experiences of oppression in family, church, and society in Africa, in order to promote justice in these relationships. Because Larney advocates the use of indigenous cultural resources in pastoral ministry, he may as a result pay less attention to their oppressive elements.

The second limitation of Larney’s pastoral theological method is related to the first problem. Because Larney scarcely examines the presence of oppressive elements in indigenous culture, the application of his method has limitations in serving the double-binding situation of KIWNA. As examined in chapter two of this thesis, indigenous Korean religions and culture have played a role in oppressing as well as enhancing the lives of Korean women. Even after emigrating to North America, most Korean immigrant women carry the oppressive religious and cultural traditions with them. This being so, they live under the double-binding oppressive reality of two cultures: patriarchy and colonialism. For Korean immigrant women, the oppressive forces of patriarchy from the home culture, as analyzed in the first chapter of this thesis, are no less heavy than the colonial influences of North America. In order to facilitate healing and liberation in pastoral care and counselling for KIWNA, it is necessary to examine how their home culture, as well as North American culture, might oppress rather than enhance their lives.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the pastoral theological methods of Emmanuel Larney and how they resonate with the situation of KIWNA. I also defined the gap and limitation of his methods when applied to KIWNA. Encouraged by the pastoral theological methods of Emmanuel Larney, in spite of their limitations, I have wondered how a Korean indigenous

\[\text{Nyengele, African Women’s Theology, 21.}\]
philosophy of *salim* might be developed as an appropriate approach to care for Korean immigrant women in North America. In the next chapter, I explore the theological meaning of *salim* and how it can respond to the situation of KIWNA.
Chapter 4
Hermeneutics of Salim

In this chapter, I engage with a hermeneutics of salim, following the process of a hermeneutics of suspicion, retrieval, and reconstruction.¹ With the hermeneutics of suspicion, I deconstruct traditional views of salim. In this step, I critically examine how traditional views of salim have been an oppressive force for women, thereby unearthing the oppressed, misinterpreted, and confined value of salim. The goal at this stage is to identify and undermine oppressive influences of salim on Korean women.

At the stage of the hermeneutics of retrieval, I search for the alternative wisdom of salim. First, I examine the etymology of salim as meaning “life-giving,” and examine the traditional use of salim as an oppressive tool. I trace the roots of salim in its relation to Donghak and discuss the historical development of the concept.

At the stage of the hermeneutics of reconstruction, I discuss the influence of salim in theological circles, an influence which prompted the development of a theology of salim. I research salim from diverse theological stances, such as salim and the theology of Life, salim and theology of yin and yang, salim and the theology of the Cross, and salim and Ecological Theology.

¹ For an exploration of salim, I use a tripartite method of feminist ecology: “a hermeneutics of suspicion (critique and deconstruction of historical Christianity), a hermeneutics of retrieval (recovery of the lost history of women), and reconstruction (revision of Christian categories),” as in Michelle A. Gonzalez, Created in God’s Image: An Introduction to Feminist Theological Anthropology (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 88.
My hypothesis is that the concept of salim can serve as a creative transforming force in pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women in North America, women whose lives are conflicted as a result of the contrasting values of Korea and North America.

4.1 The Importance of Salim Hermeneutics

The term “hermeneutics” comes from the Greek word ἑρμηνεύω (hermeneuō, “translate, interpret”). Generally, hermeneutics refers to the theory and methodology of interpretation. The word gained currency especially in relation to the interpretation of biblical texts, but has since been broadened to general practices of interpretation. In hermeneutics, Hermes, the messenger of the gods in Greek mythology, is important, since interpretation depends on who the “hermes” is and how the hermes interprets something. Accordingly, the interpretation of salim also depends on who the hermes is.

The purpose of salim hermeneutics resonates with the intention of cultural, contextual, and feminist hermeneutics. Many scholars consider cultural context an important factor in doing theology. A Christian African American, Karen Montagno, states: “Knowing your roots, your community of people, and where you come from was critical to being whole, knowing who you were and where you were going.”2 Here, according to Montagno, knowing one’s roots is necessary not only for careseekers, but also for caregivers, since caregivers from an oppressed culture can apply their own struggles with oppression to their pastoral practices.3 Montagno suggests that the strategy then, is “to become aware of dysfunctional old patterns of racism and


3 Ibid.
internalized oppression and strategize new options for interrupting all oppression." Without being aware of the internalized oppression, one may simply apply Western theories and methods to pastoral practices, which may themselves become forms of oppression.

Without understanding the particular brokenness of each human situation, pastoral caregiving falls short in assisting careseekers to know God properly. Knowledge of God emerges more from the culture, religiosity, and life styles of human beings, than from the values of Christian doctrine as formulated from a Western mindset. Cultural hermeneutics is needed in order for pastoral theology to be appropriate to a given context.

In her book, *Introducing Feminist Cultural Hermeneutics*, Musimbi Kanyoro explains and analyzes the cultural context of African women and applies cultural hermeneutics to the reading of the biblical text. According to Kanyoro, cultural hermeneutics “refers to the analysis and interpretation of how culture conditions people’s understanding of reality at a particular time and location.” For Kanyoro, “the culture of the reader in Africa has more influence on the way the biblical text is understood and used in communities than the historical culture of the text.”

Kanyoro asserts that “cultural hermeneutics is a necessary tool for those who teach homiletics and pastoral work in seminaries and other clergy institutions, and it is a prerequisite to African women’s liberation theology.” Similar to Kanyoro, Mi-Rang Kang, a Korean woman theologian, urges the use of contextual hermeneutics to narrow the contextual gap between

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6 Ibid., 19.

7 Ibid.
Western hermeneutics and its Korean application. Kang emphasizes the importance of considering the contextual situation when interpreting the biblical text.

*Salim* hermeneutics is an attempt to direct pastoral theology to the cultural context of Korean immigrant women in North America. This thesis proposes that *salim* hermeneutics can guide pastoral theologians and practitioners in seeking the liberation of Korean immigrant women in particular, and anyone oppressed in an intercultural context in general. Seonghee Kim discusses *salim* hermeneutics. She states, “*Salim* hermeneutics is “driven by the desire to improve life and give freedom to human beings.” In harmony with Seonghee Kim, the intention behind researching *salim* hermeneutics is not only to enhance the life of Korean immigrant women, but also the lives of others in an intercultural context.

The reason for researching *salim* to this particular end is because the meaning of *salim* has been distorted, leading to a diminishment in the lives of Korean women. This diminishment contradicts the original meaning of *salim* as life-enhancing. The restrictions commonly associated with the concept of *salim* can increase suffering and conflict in Korean immigrant families, since most Korean immigrant women are expected to perform dual roles, both as wage earners and housekeepers. Overturning this usage follows the methodology of feminist

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theologians who analyze “structures and ideologies that rank people as inferior or superior according to various traits of human nature.”

To engage in salim hermeneutics, I use a tripartite method of feminist theology: “a hermeneutics of suspicion (critique and deconstruction of historical Christianity); a hermeneutics of retrieval (recovery of the lost history of women), and reconstruction (revision of Christian categories).” Michelle Gonzalez explains this tripartite method as follows: “Feminist theology engages in at least three interrelated tasks: it critically analyzes inherited oppressions, searches for alternative wisdom and suppressed history, and risks new interpretations of the tradition in conversation with women’s lives.” In the pages to follow, I begin this hermeneutical exploration researching the etymological meaning of salim.

4.2 Hermeneutics of Suspicion of Salim

4.2.1 The Etymology of Salim

Salim is a noun originating from the Korean verb “salida,” which means enhancing, enlivening, restoring, refreshing, revitalizing, energizing, reviving, vitalizing, and saving life from death. Salim, therefore, is simply the opposite of the word jugim (killing). The literal meaning of salim is “restoring the dead to life.” It is interesting to note that Koreans say, “Saram Salyeo” when they are at risk of death. Saram means “a person” in the Korean language and Salyeo is an imperative form of salim as a noun. Put together, “saram salyeo” means “Help me (a


11 Michelle A. Gonzalez, Created in God’s Image, 88.

12 Ibid.

13 Seong Hee Kim, Mark, Women and Empire: a Korean Postcolonial Perspective (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 31.
person)” or “Save me (a person).” Following this line of reasoning, the meaning of *salim* extends to making someone or something alive, flourishing, healed, and taking it further, applies to salvation and resurrection. For example, Koreans use *salim* or *salida* when a doctor heals a patient or when a person is rescued from a fire or car accident. *Salim* or *salida* are also used for whatever has life such as vegetables, flowers, or animals.

Traditionally *salim* refers to household work in a narrow sense, usually executed by women, such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of children, and thus the meaning of *salim* can be extended to “home-making” for the family. The women who are good at *salim* have traditionally been recognized and praised with the title “*salim-ggoon*” in Korean society, which means “excellent in house-keeping, or home-making” and implies a good woman. Thanks to Korean women’s good skills in *salim*, families are fed and nurtured.

While I am discussing *salim* as a Korean indigenous word, it is interesting to note that the same pronunciation of *salim* is used for a male baby’s name in the African, Arabic, English, and Swahili languages, and its origin is Arabic, meaning “safe” or “peace.” There is no reference showing how *salim* in Korean and in Arabic relate to each other. However, coincidentally, *salim* in both languages points to the same goal of a life enlivened, safe, and at peace. Hence without *salim*, there is no life-growth, nurturing or flourishing, either in general or family life. The meaning of *salim* can be extended to a dimension beyond one’s household; neighbour-*salim*, nation-*salim*, creation-*salim*, and so on.
4.2.2 The Traditional Use of Salim as a Tool of Oppression

While etymologically, salim means life-enhancing, the narrower meaning of salim as women’s household labour has had the effect of restricting the wholeness of women’s lives. In a patriarchal society, salim is regarded as insignificant work, compared to men’s work outside the home. I introduce one typical example from Mi-Rang Kang of how salim damages the value of women. In her book Kang tries to enhance the identity of women through biblical interpretation:

Just two women among our participants lived with their mother-in-law. They felt Salim as food preparation as a heavy burden. However, the working women in the group now share their role in food preparation with their husbands. But the first share of Salim still belongs to women. In the case of working women, their mothers help them with Salim. Other housewives additionally felt that Salim exhausts them. They tried to enjoy their homemaking and housekeeping, but in the evening they would ask themselves “What did I do for the whole day, today?” Most housewives in our group have university educations and would like to work in their special fields. But Salim, including baby care, is interrupting their self-realisation.¹⁴

The problem is that because salim was considered low and unimportant, so too were women. This is a serious issue even for families today. While gender roles have shifted greatly, many Korean families still follow traditional gender roles, stereotyping salim as minor, undervalued, and low-level work mandated only to women. This perspective fails to recognize the important value of women who perform salim to run a household. This conception of salim has wronged Korean women tremendously, degrading their self-worth. Korean women have been evaluated according to their ability to perform salim as household work. If women did a good job in salim, they were highly praised as good women, otherwise they were criticized and shamed. Many Korean women have cried out for liberation from salim, as it has confined and shackled their lives.

¹⁴ Mi-Rang Kang, Interpretative Identity and Hermenuetical Community, 171.
The meaning of salim can be extended to “home-making” for the family and Mi-Rang Kang suggests that Korean women are able to recognize the significance of salim as “home-making,” which goes beyond cleaning, cooking, and taking care of children. Kang’s assertion may help Korean women regard their salim as important work in order that their lives might be valued. However, even the meaning of salim as home-making can serve as a tool for confining women’s roles mostly to the inside of the house, and discouraging their participation outside of the house in the community and society. A retrieved understanding of salim is needed, not only for the sake of women, but also for men. Just as salim has been understood as women’s work, men have been expected to work outside the home as the major breadwinners to support their families. While sharing of household work by both husband and wife has become more acceptable than before, most Korean men don’t think salim is their responsibility. This means they are not supposed to do salim; they are just helping their wives. When Korean men lose their jobs outside the home and do salim instead, most feel ashamed, because they think they have failed the social expectations for men in Korea to be breadwinners. This is why even though some men are more interested in and talented at house-salim than women, they are not able to choose not to work outside of the house. In the same way, Korean women who perform an excellent job outside of the home, mostly still carry a responsibility for salim at home; otherwise they feel they have failed the social norms for women in Korean society.

The gender stereotypical understanding of salim may further diminish the lives of both Korean immigrant women and men in North America. The narrow, traditional, and gender-stereotypical understanding of salim is the cause of much conflict and unrest in immigrant families. The economic reality of immigrant lives often demands women work outside of the

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15 Kang, Interpretative Identity, 171.
home in order to contribute financially. This does not exempt them from also working inside of
the home, however. In most Korean immigrant families, women do household work as well as
work outside the home, which causes physical tiredness and emotional unrest. Yet many Korean
immigrant women continue to live with this unrealistic life-style, because, firstly, they are
accustomed to performing a dual function—both at home and outside. Secondly, they are misled
by false guilt and shame. When they are not doing salim well, they may feel guilty and ashamed.
This guilt and shame pushes them to work at house-salim, even when they are exhausted.
Because of tiredness, their complaints increase and the blame cast on other family members can
increase family conflicts.

For instance, Suzy, a Korean immigrant woman, got a job and started to gain recognition
in her company. She became increasingly busy and spent more time working outside. Her
husband Danny did not yet have a job and spent most of his time at home. Danny did not want to
do any housework because he thought it was shameful for a man. When Suzy came home after
work, she felt exhausted. Her husband and two children were waiting for her to cook dinner for
them. Suzy grew angry towards her husband, and the argument became serious as time went by.
Suzy thought Danny did not love her. Danny felt angry too, as he thought his wife did not respect
him. He was ashamed at not fulfilling cultural expectations as the head of the family, because he
was unable to bring money home. Danny felt powerless and worthless, while Suzy felt torn
trying to meet the expectations of both home and work. This is a typical example of how salim
has been distorted in its meaning, becoming a source of conflict, particularly in Korean
immigrant families. It is thus utterly crucial to retrieve the original meaning of salim and
reconstruct it in order to enhance the life of Korean immigration families.
4.3 Hermeneutics of Retrieval for the Recovery of Salim

4.3.1 Donghak and Salim

In recent decades, a movement to retrieve the meaning of salim as “giving life” has emerged in Korea, in fields such as environmental studies, theology, and feminist studies. The salim movement was not started by any particular figure, but is already practiced as an ecological movement by ordinary Korean people, engaging in activities such as planting and nurturing trees on mountains, protecting fish in rivers, recycling for protecting creation. In the 1980s, Kim Ji-Ha was deeply inspired by the concept, recognizing salim as a new paradigm for the future of the world and as a new consciousness. Since then, the salim movement has been welcomed and propelled, particularly by “salimists,” and has spread throughout the whole nation with the goal of improving the well-being of all creation.

Kim Ji-Ha was deeply influenced by the life philosophy of Donghak, and recognized that the roots of the salim movement are to be found in Donghak. Donghak, literally meaning “Eastern Learning” was found in 1860 by Suun Je-U Choi (1824-1864), who sought to resist the oppression of foreign imperial powers in order to protect the independence of the nation. According to Kyung Ho Chung, Su-Un was particularly concerned about the dignity of the oppressed and strived to effect the radical achievement of the equality of all human beings.

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16 A salimist is a coined word salim with the ending of “ist”. The original meaning of salimist is salimggon – who is good at salim. In this sentence, salimist refers to a person who advocates and enacts the vision of an eco-feminist.


18 Kyung Ho Chung, “남북 평화통일을 향한 생명살림의 윤리 [The Ethics of Life Salim toward the peaceful reunification of Korea],” Theology and Ministry 21, no. 5 (2004): 103.

19 Ibid., 28.
The philosophy of Donghak religious movement was influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, and by Christianity to some degree. Particularly, under Japanese colony, the liberation stories of the Bible inspired Korean people, who identified their own history in the one of Israel in Egypt. In this sense, in spite of being open towards Seohak, or Western learning, Suun Je-U Choi was opposed to its influences in terms of cultural impact, theological standpoint, and particularly its colonial aggressiveness.

On the relationship of salim to Donghak, Kim Ji-Ha writes, “The Donghak movement was the collective praxis of salim which resisted against the complex and all-pervasive killing, degradation, demolition of life [jugim] by the feudal government and the Japanese imperialism.” He believes the salim movement embraced the decolonizing desire from the beginning, as it was rooted in Donghak, a movement against colonizing power.

The fact that salim is rooted in the philosophy of Donghak provides the possibility for salim to be developed as a liberative pastoral theological response to the patriarchal and colonial oppression in the life-situation of Korean immigrant women. Influenced by the philosophy of Donghak, Kim Ji-Ha asserts that women are the leaders of a new culture. He makes the claim that women’s ability with salim to enliven life through social motherhood should be extended

20 Oh, A Postcolonial Theology of Life, 11.


22 Ibid., 27.


and deepened to build a holy living world, a cosmos, and that it should be expressed in living politics. Kim Ji-Ha considers kitchen work the most precious worship in the world, and accordingly, the kitchen worker is the most precious priest, because kitchen work is composed of water and fire, as is the case with worship. Kitchen work, therefore, is from the beginning the work of enlivening people’s lives, which is synonymous with “salim.” Identifying rice as heaven, Kim Ji-Ha indicates cooking is an act of a sacred worship in the following poem:

Rice is heaven  
As you cannot possess heaven by yourself  
Rice is to be shared

Rice is heaven  
As you see the stars in heaven together  
Rice is to be shared by everybody

When rice goes into a mouth  
Heaven is worshipped in the mind  
Rice is heaven

Ah, ah, rice is  
To be shared by everybody.

Kim’s effort to identify rice with heaven and thus suggest cooking is a sacred act of worship appears to validate women’s work and vindicate women as leaders in the world. However, his assertion may fall into essentializing women in the role of kitchen work. By characterizing kitchen work as the most precious work of a priest, Kim effectively confines women to kitchen work, which in many cases oppresses women’s lives more than it enhances

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
them. Instead, the meaning of salim needs to be retrieved in order to enhance the lives of Korean women.

By defining salim as the antonym of jugim (killing), Kyung Ho Chung extends the meaning of salim from housekeeping to mutual respect, reverence for life, and mutual enhancement.29 This line of thought comes from valuing Suun Je-U choi, the founder of Donghak, who respected and loved life and explained well the metaphysics of life.30 Kyung Bae Min, a Korean theologian and church historian, explains how Donghak influenced the society and the church in Korea.31 According to Min, Donghak emphasizes the love and harmony of a husband and a wife, with women and men being equal, since both of them embrace the God who is within them.32 In 1894, the Donghak revolutionary movement allowed the liberation of slaves and the second marriage of widows, which represented an improvement in the status of women.33

Donghak also played an important role in enhancing the lives of Koreans in the nineteenth century, by embracing new values at a time when diverse religious and cultural forces were colliding in the society. According to Kiyul Chung, Donghak manifests “Korea’s socio-political and religious “inter-religious,” “inter-cultural,” “inter-ideological,” and “inter-
While Donghak began as a reform movement and a revival of Confucian teachings, it gradually embraced other religions, such as Buddhism and Taoism, as well as Christianity. Kiyul Chung’s depiction of Donghak, and of salim as it is rooted in Donghak, reveals both are open to embracing new cultural and religious values for the sake of making things alive and enhancing the lives of others.

4.3.2 Salim Hermeneutics as a Postcolonial feminist Reading of the Bible

Seong Hee Kim researched methods of biblical interpretation from the perspective of Korean women and proposed salim hermeneutics as a postcolonial feminist reading of the Bible. For salim hermeneutics, Kim borrows a postcolonial feminist critique which targets and discusses “two things at the same time: sexism and colonialism (imperialism).” In salim hermeneutics, Kim criticizes the androcentric view of the Bible and rejects any hierarchical and imperialist interpretations. Using salim hermeneutics, Kim examines distorted relationships and seeks reconciliation between God and human beings; humans and humans; and humans and nature. While salim hermeneutics is proposed for Korean women in the first instance, Kim

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35 Ibid.


37 Seong Hee Kim, “Our (Neither) Mother and (Nor) Father in Heaven), 68.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.
nevertheless seeks to expand the strategy to other oppressed groups. What Kim seeks in salim hermeneutics is a path that will allow people to live together, and not take advantage of others.  

4.3.3 Salim and Pastoral Care

James Newton Poling and Hee Sun Kim propose salim, together with han and jeong, as important resources for pastoral theology in the West as well as in Korea. They maintain that in Korea the meaning of salim has been devalued and that the retrieved meaning needs to be extended to the care of congregations, to the ecological environment, and to the family. Poling and Kim claim that “our ministry as human beings is to practice salim, peacemaking, care giving, and life giving. Salim is the work of the Holy Spirit which we are called to join. When we are empowered by the Holy Spirit, we will be able to feel the jeong and han of our lives and practice salim for ourselves, others, and God.” For Poling and Kim, “salim could become a synonym for pastoral care of persons and worlds,” since the meaning of salim as “life-enlivening” resonates with the intention of pastoral care. Compared to the history of the development of salim, which goes back to the philosophy of Donghak advanced more than a century ago, the introduction of salim into theological circle is quite recent. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the importance of life became manifest in theological discourse and many theologians

40 Kim, “Our Neither Mother,” 68.

41 Poling and Kim, *Korean Resources for Pastoral Theology.*

42 Ibid., 76.

43 Ibid., 92.

44 Ibid, 78.
advocated a paradigm shift in theology to a “Theology of Life” and supported salim through their theological discourses.

**4.3.4 Salim and Eco-feminism**

One of the strongest advocates of the salim movement is Chung Hyun Kyung, a Korean American woman theologian. Calling herself a “salimist,” Chung’s schema can be compared to “the household of God” of Letty Russell. In Russell’s household of God, all people are included, with the household extending in particular to the poor and marginalized. By extending the house of God even further, Chung aspires to include all of life and not just human beings. While the literal meaning of salim is confined to the household work of family, the retrieved meaning of salim extends to the care of the household of God. Feminist theologians do not want to duplicate the same attitude of salim in the family household, however. Salim as household work has forced women to meet social and familial expectation. The traditional meaning of salim has oppressed, diminished, and mal-nourished the lives of women. Hence, salimists, as eco-feminists, want to retrieve the meaning of salim to enhance the life of all living creation and not just women.

The theological hermeneutics of eco-feminism drives Chung to put her energy into developing the concept of a “salimist.” A Salimist is a person who does salim—makes things

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45 Poling and Kim, *Korean Resources for Pastoral Theology*, 236.


47 At the Congress of Asian Theologians, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, August 2001, Chung proposed the concept of salimist for the eco-feminists of Korea for the first time (See Kim, YoonSun. 비루한 일상의 종교적 승화로 예술가 되기 – 그녀와 나의 갈지만 다른 이야기들 – 결국은 아름다움이 우리를
alive. For a long time, *salim* has just meant the labour of housekeeping, which is repetitive and tiring.\textsuperscript{48} *Salim* was able to make families alive, but it was a shackle around the lives of women. Objecting to the traditional usage of *salim*, Chung strives to liberate women from being housekeepers to become *salimists*. *Salimists* aspire to elevate *salim* above its personal and familial status to one that is global and cosmological.\textsuperscript{49} Chung asserts that the culture of *salim* is approaching us, and is grounded in wisdom to acknowledge and celebrate the differences between us, justice and care, sharing and love, and mercy and creativity.\textsuperscript{50} What she aspires to do is bring about a new social structure through *salim*.

4. 4 Hermeneutics of Reconstruction: Theology of Salim

4.4.1 Salim and Theology of Life

The *Salim* Movement can be understood as a parallel to the “Theology of Life” that the World Council of Churches (WCC) advocates.\textsuperscript{51} The theology of *salim* and the theology of life share a common element which is a directedness towards life, yet the theology of *salim* has particular characteristics which deviate from the theology of life. The theology of *salim* considers seriously the life of the oppressed, while the theology of life is more interested in ecological issues. In its focus on the preservation of creation the theology of life can downplay

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 327.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 330.

\textsuperscript{50} Chung Hyun Kyung, 미래에서 온 편지 (*Miraeso On Pyeonji: Goddess-spell According to Hyun Kyung*) (Seoul: Yeolimwon, 2001), 9.

\textsuperscript{51} Changwon Suh, 살림의 신학 (*Theology of Salim*) (Handul, Seoul: 2001), 164.
the liberation of the oppressed. Since my thesis seeks to respond to the oppressed condition of Korean immigrant women, I have chosen “salim” as a key word, rather than the more general concept of “life.” In what follows, I discuss how salim and the theology of life are related.

Several Korean theologians indicate that Minjung theology is now shifting towards a theology of life. For example, renowned Korean Minjung theologian, Byung Mu Ahn, emphasizes life in his Minjung theology and extends the meaning of salim to the work of enlivening communities, societies, and nations as well as families.52 Ahn identifies the gospel of Jesus with “salim,” because the followers of Jesus were enlivened, witnessing Jesus risen from the dead.53 For Ahn, participating in the resurrection of Jesus means participating in the salim movement.54

Dongmin Jang, a Korean historical theologian, analyses how historically the shift has been made from Minjung theology to life theology.55 According to Jang, Minjung theology is a fusion of the liberation movement of Minjung and the cultural and religious movement of Minjung. Jang posits that the liberation movement has emphasized the struggle between classes and is scientific and rational, whereas the cultural movement of Minjung is oriented in a more existential, mystic, and spiritual direction.56 These two contrasting traditions have been incorporated into one by Minjung theologians. After democratization, the element of class

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
56 Ibid., 210
struggle diminished in Korea and a spiritual drought led to an interest in spirituality. According to Jang, these two opposite elements have been amalgamated into one and called “Korean Life Theology.”

Jae-Soon Park, a Korean theologian, advocates the necessity of a paradigm shift from a theology of death, which is driven by doctrine, ideology, prejudice and greed, to a theology of salim, which is motivated by life, words, the spirit, and action. He suggests a theology of salim as an alternative, being deeply rooted in a Korean way of life that enhances the lives of others. What Park insists is that we should not seek to damage the level of unknowing—the mystery—i.e., that which cannot be completely comprehended with human reason. Instead we need to maintain a position of unknowing in order to understand and protect life. He suggests that in order to turn to salim, a paradigm shift should be made from the theory-based academic tradition of the West to the body-focused way of study of the East. He claims that we need to read the Bible with “body,” which means letting go of all abstractions and theories, social systems, and privileges, and reading it as the actual incidents surrounding the lives of the oppressed. Park claims that it is particularly important for Korean women to respect the feelings, emotions and

58 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 195.
63 Ibid., 185.
culture of their bodies, as they have lived their entire lives within their bodies, rather than with theories.  

Korean theologian, Changwon Suh, also argues for the necessity of a shift from the discourse of liberation to the discourse of life. Suh posits that the attitude of salim is needed for the discourse of theology, since salim enlivens family, community, society and the world. Suh proposes the church as a community of salim, founded on accountability, mobility, and solidarity. For Suh, the envisioning of salim church is an endeavour to confront the world, participate in the suffering and hope of the world, and share in both its adventure and frustration. Suh maintains that “East Asian thinking is cosmos directed rather than human-centered, holistic rather than analytic, and organic and of yin and yang rather than dualistic.” Suh believes that this East Asian way of thinking can lead to a deep insight into ecological and spiritual issues, overcoming the dysfunctional elements of traditional theology which are human centered and dualistic. This cosmos-directed, holistic, and organic-oriented thinking of salim resonates with the philosophy of Taoism, which I discuss in what follows.

64 Park, 모름의 인식론과 살림의 신학, 74.
65 Changwon Suh, Theology of Salim, 5.
66 Ibid., 165.
67 Ibid., 180.
68 Ibid., 225.
69 Ibid.
4.4.2 Salim and Theology of Yin and Yang

The philosophy of salim reflects the Korean traditional epistemology of Taoist thinking, which seeks the harmony and enhancement of diverse values. In relation to the values of Taoism, salim can be seen as a guiding principle in an intercultural world, grounded in the traditional heritage while at the same time embracing new cultural values. Korean theologian, Un Hey Kim, defines the concept of salim in relation to Taoism as the deep connection between nature and human beings, with the human being part of nature and following the constant flux of life. She asserts that, according to the salimist concept, this flux depends on the life-giving and life-nurturing roles which women are able to fulfil.

Therefore, as Kim posits, “the Earth and the land are often symbolized as the mother or the women’s womb, which is the metaphor of creation and product as we can particularly see it in Taoism.” For Kim, “some Western epistemologies, based on hierarchical dualism, suggest the image of the female often connected with a negative concept such as body, feelings, myth, spontaneity, darkness, weakness, death, etc.” This is an understanding that supports “a hierarchical social structure and the ideology of gender control.” Kim asserts that, unlike western epistemologies, “there are several female images in Taoism, such as giving birth, nurturing, softness, darkness, etc.” which do not contain the negativity of domination.

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71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid., 50.
oppression, or exploitation. Instead, Taoism supports the image of the mother as nurturing and devoted, which Kim considers very positive leadership in contemporary society.

The epistemology of Taoism is best represented by the concept of yin and yang. Yin is commonly understood as feminine energy and yang as masculine. However, contrary to this common understanding, yin is not a possession of only women. Women and men have both yang and yin. That is how yin and yang maintain balance in an individual and in the ecological system. The ultimate goal of the presence of yin and yang is to make the world harmonious, a place where people are not opposed to one another. A yang-dominated world becomes a place of conquest, subjugation, occupying, oppression, and exploitation.

Young Lee Hertig, a Korean American pastoral theologian, advocates an Asian-American alternative to feminism with Yinist feminism. Hertig asserts that “Yinist feminism diffuses false sets of dichotomy deriving from the dualistic paradigm: male against female, human being against nature, God apart from human being, this world apart from the other world.” According to Hertig, “This yin is holistic, dynamic, synthesizing, and complementary with yang, the male energy.” Hertig asserts that “this female energy is comprehensive because it encompasses gender, ecology, nature, health, and God.” For Hertig, yinist feminism corresponds to eco-feminism, but is more comprehensive, since yinist feminism “encompasses contextual and

Kim, Women Leadership, 50.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.
epistemological particularity and yet shares universality in the cosmological pattern.”79 Yinist feminism is more appropriate to the context of Korean women than eco-feminism as it validates the embedded understanding of yin in their mindset. Hertig’s interpretation of yin energy as a resource for the cosmological and ecological relationship is echoed in the vision of Isaiah:

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder’s den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11:6-9)

Isaiah envisions a world where all relationships are in harmony in order to enhance life for others. This is the world that salim envisions also. For Un Hey Kim, the purpose of life is to make relationship alive.80 For the relationship to be alive, Kim employs the concept of salim to propose Korean women’s leadership in family, church, and society in Korea, where “male violence against women and the abuse of children are still increasingly found.”81 Kim claims that in Korea, “families are criticised for having confined wives to the private domestic sphere where they are subservient to the needs and demands of husbands and children.”82 Most conservative Korean Christians consider the view of a male-dominated family as biblical. Kim asserts that “the patriarchal culture and the corresponding structure deeply and systematically affect the constitution not only of beliefs and ideas but also of emotions, the subconscious and unconscious


82 Ibid.
dimension of both men and women which allow affirming male domination and women’s oppression. “To find a new model of family leadership, Un Hey Kim explores the Korean concept of salim and the feminine values of Taoism. Kim asserts that the concept of salim and the principles of Taoism can heal and empower all suffering, wounded, and broken families, churches, and societies.”

The feminine image of salim opposes androcentric theology for being dominating, patriarchal, and from above. The image of salim is caring, nurturing, and from below. However, these feminine images do not issue from subservience towards the dominating system of power. They come instead from self-confidence and self-affirmation, inviting both males and females into the circle of salim as life-enhancing. Identifying salim as household work only belonging to women comes from the sort of dichotomous thinking that splits the world into factions opposing one another. These divisions promote sinning in both men and women, since the dichotomous thinking confines the lives of both men and women to stereotyped gender roles, and thus they fail to flourish. A salim paradigm based on yin seeks a world of life-giving and flourishing for both men and women.

Salim, based on yin-feminist spirituality, directs a truly egalitarian vision of God and human relations. James Poling explored how Korean culture might contribute to pastoral theology in America, and indicated that salim can promote an egalitarian vision. He states, “Salim has been adopted by scholars and activists who are interested in feminist movement of

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84 Ibid., 51.
gender equality.” This egalitarian vision of salim resonates with the life-situation of Korean immigrants in North America, as it assists them in adapting to the more egalitarian North American values and to the busy lifestyles that demand sharing of salim, the housework, between men and women. The egalitarian vision of salim can therefore assist immigrants’ lives to flourish for both men and women.

4.4.3 Salim and Theology of the Cross

In this section, I explore salim from the perspective of a theology of the Cross, in order to clarify what salim intends. Salim, as a pastoral approach, is intended to assist in the liberation of Korean immigrant women in North America. This is not to promote a theology of Glory, but a theology of the Cross.

Jeungpyo Lee, a renowned Korean theologian, emphasizes the importance of salim in his theological discourse. For Lee, there are two kinds of theologies: one is the theology of death, and the other is the theology of salim. In his theology, salim does not seek the glory of resurrection without the Cross; conversely, one reaches salim through the Cross by dying to self. Here, the concept, “dying to self” needs to be defined.

From the perspective of salim, dying to self does not support sacrifice which is forced upon a person for the sake of others’. Most Korean women have lived sacrificial lives for the sake of their families, churches, and country. However, praise for the sacrificial life can be a tool

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87 Ibid.
to oppress Korean women, something which is neither life-enlivening for others or for themselves. Instead, in the theology of salim, dying to self means being aware of one’s privilege and letting go of it, in order to follow the divine call to be open to others. In this sense, the theology of salim resonates with the theology of Cross.

In the section to follow, I relate Pamela McCarroll’s discussion of the theology of the Cross to salim. McCarroll raises a question about whether the theology of liberation is rooted in human mastery and power over evil systems, and proposes instead a theology of the Cross to open up new possibilities of liberation based on the human relationship with God.88 While salim intends liberation of the oppressed, it does not support using power over, but asks instead for interpathic care of the oppressed. (I discussed interpathic care in chapter 3, in dialogue with Emmanuel Lartey’s intercultural pastoral theology.) Interpathic care resonates with McCarroll’s view that to truly love means “one consents to the being of the other.”89

Echoing McCarroll’s position, in order to truly love the other, salim asks for a letting go of one’s attachments to particular ways of thought so as to be open to otherness, yet without trying to master otherness. These attachments might include dominant theological stances, epistemologies, theories and approaches, and cultural norms. As McCarroll states, when one is not open to the other or does not appreciate the different beauty of the other, there is a danger of falling into the pit of utilitarian purposing of the other at one’s discretion.90 This is the opposite


89 Ibid., 57.

90 This notion is developed based on the insight of Pamela McCarroll, Waiting at the Foot of the Cross, 57: “Over and against modern paradigms of knowing that presuppose distance and a certain
of what *salim* is seeking. The theology of *salim* endeavours to appreciate the beauty of others through their lens. McCarroll asserts that we receive the gospel most fully in accordance with our context and, as it is “the deepest and truest part of ourselves,” we express our faith in the concrete time and place of our life.\(^91\) In line with this, the theology of *salim* corresponds to the inmost, authentic aspects of Korean immigrant women in the church in North America in the twenty-first century, and expresses their faith in their lived experience.

In order to appreciate the authenticity of people in a certain context, we need to be radically open to otherness and to recognizing the implicit God-given beauty in otherness. When we are open to recognize the beauty and mystery of the other, we often experience humility.\(^92\) Unless open to learning from others, human beings fall into sin by being arrogant, oppressive, and taking advantage of and colonizing the weak, the young, the poor, and the strangers.\(^93\) In echoing McCarroll’s theology of the cross, *salim* defuses the impulse to master others by universalizing and essentializing. *Salim* requests we abandon our own prejudices, world views, and agendas, which have become embedded in us throughout our long journey of life—socio-culturally, politically, economically, and religiously—through our limited life situations. *Salim* is an invitation to let go and open ourselves in order to follow the divine calling to enlivening life, which actually enlivens us as well as others. In this sense, *salim* resonates with the theology of the Cross.

\(^91\) McCarroll, *Waiting at the Foot of the Cross*, 71.

\(^92\) Ibid., 89. McCarroll contends this in “Theology of the Cross and Contextuality” in her book *Waiting at the Foot of the Cross*.

\(^93\) Ibid., 192.
4.4.4 *Salim* and Theology of Ecology

*Salim* is not intended only for the benefit of Korean immigrant women. It aspires to cross racial, ethnic, cultural, and national boundaries, and extend to the life-enhancement of the whole of creation. The important fact about *salim* is that it enhances life, not only for the oppressed, but also for the oppressors. The lives of oppressors have also been denied wholeness. The oppressors may have achieved mastery and prosperity by exercising privileged power over others economically, politically, and socio-culturally, yet their wholeness has been distorted by this, because human lives are relational and interlocked with one another. When one person oppresses another, neither the oppressor nor the oppressed can be whole. In the introduction of this chapter, I defined the meaning of *salim* in relation to salvation. I stated that the literal meaning of *salim* is “restoring the dead to life.” I indicated that “*Saram Salim,*” in Korean means “to save a person.” In this sense, *salim* denotes a salvific work of Jesus. What Jesus did through his life was *salim*—to make us alive, whole, and resurrected.

*Salim* as saving a person is interlocked with the saving of the whole creation, as human wholeness relies on other parts of creation, such as animals, plants, land, air, water, and other planets. For example, the cutting of trees may lead to the loss of the ecological integrity of nature. *Salim* indicates life-enhancement for environmentalists who want to preserve “the total ecology for humans, animals, and the earth.” The extended meaning of *salim* to the whole creation resonates with Romans 8:19-22:

19 For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. 20 For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be

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liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. \(^{22}\) We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.

Just as the author of Romans anticipates the salvation of the whole creation, so does the theology of *salim*. In this sense, *salim* is a synonym for salvation, not only of human persons, but of the whole creation, which is the salvific work of Jesus. Therefore, whoever does *salim* participates in the salvific work of Jesus. By doing *salim*, Korean women participate in the salvific and redemptive work of Jesus.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have examined the possibility of utilizing the concept of *salim* as a relevant approach to pastoral care and counselling for KIWNA. I have maintained that *salim* hermeneutics are driven by the desire to liberate and heal Korean immigrant women, whose brokenness and sufferings are caused by the new form of patriarchal and colonial oppression. To that end, I used the tripartite feminist method of a hermeneutics of suspicion, retrieval, and reconstruction. For a hermeneutics of suspicion, I contended the traditional view of *salim* as restricted to household work has been used to confine women’s roles and degrade women’s worth. I argued that the narrow, traditional, and gender-stereotyped understanding of *salim* is the cause of much conflict and unrest in immigrant families. This is why the deconstruction of *salim* is needed in order to retrieve its life-giving meaning.

For a hermeneutics of retrieval, I presented the historical development of the *salim* movement in Korea. In particular, I explored how *salim* was rooted in the philosophy of *Donghak*. I retrieved the etymological meaning of *salim* as life-enlivening and discussed the retrieved life-giving attributes of *salim* with its feminine energy and egalitarian values. I
described how a theology of salim resonates with and also deviates from the theology of life. I explored salim with respect to the epistemology of Taoism. I also discussed salim’s sacrificial character and humble spirit in relation to the theology of the Cross.

By retrieving the meaning of salim in this chapter, I show how salim extends to making someone or something alive, flourishing, healed, and further, to the salvation of human persons and the whole creation, which are all the salvific ministry of Jesus. In the next chapter, I will discuss how this retrieved meaning of salim can be reconstructed to serve as an approach to pastoral care and counselling. The discussion will be in dialogue with Emmanuel Lartey’s pastoral theological methods.
Chapter 5

Reconstructing *Salim* for Pastoral Care and Counselling

This chapter attempts to reconstruct *salim* as an approach to pastoral care and counselling in dialogue with Emmanuel Lartey’s pastoral theological methods, with a composite case study as an example to follow. Lartey does not mention *salim* explicitly, yet his pastoral theological methods provide considerable resources for constructing *salim* as an approach to pastoral care and counselling. In the process of reconstructing *salim*, I draw upon postcolonial thinking, since this resonates with the reconstructed meaning of *salim* as an appropriate approach for Korean immigrant women in North America.

Postcolonial theorists argue that colonial logic and viewpoints still prevail in multiple sociocultural segments as well as in politics. They analyze the after-effects and the remaining forms of colonialism and imperialism. R. J. Sugirtharaja notes that the task of postcolonialism is “an active interrogation of the hegemonic systems of thought, textual codes, and symbolic practices which the West constructed in its domination of colonial subjects.”¹ In other words, for Sugirtharaja, “postcolonialism is concerned with the question of cultural and discursive domination.”² Basing my discussion in postcolonial thinking, I explore how a reconstructed *salim* responds to cultural domination.

² Ibid.
Many practical or pastoral theologians employ postcolonial perspectives in their theological discourses and practices. For example, Sarah Travis uses a postcolonial perspective when investigating oppressive elements in homiletic theory and practice. Travis is interested in examining how “social histories have been shaped and continue to be shaped culturally, psychologically, and economically by the reality of colonialism/imperialism and the concomitant interplay of power related to gender, race, and class.”³ She desires “to recognize and interrupt colonizing discourses and to uncover embedded colonial/imperial assumptions that guide daily life.”⁴ In chapter two of this thesis, I investigated the oppressive realities in the lives of KIWNA from a postcolonial perspective. In this chapter, I use postcolonial thinking in dialogue with Emmanuel Lartey’s pastoral theological methods, in order to reconstruct salim as a pastoral approach.

In the pages that follow, I use the term “salim approach” as a way of representing salim as an approach to pastoral care and counselling, reconstructed in a way that is appropriate for the life-situation of KIWNA. The discussion of a salim approach is threefold: a salim approach for liberation and empowerment; a salim approach as a creative response to the hybridity of KIWNA; and a salim approach in a communal space that includes the ecological world.


⁴ Ibid.
5.1 Salim Approach for Liberation and Empowerment

5.1.1 Salim Approach and the Use of Religious Heritage on One’s Own Terms

Emmanuel Lartey’s emphasis on liberation and empowerment in pastoral care resonates with the philosophy of salim. A salim approach is directed towards liberating KIWNA, whose lives are oppressed under patriarchy and colonialism. While promoting liberation in pastoral care in an intercultural world, Lartey emphasizes the importance of different expressive forms of culture and encourages seeking appropriate therapeutic approaches that are adequate to different cultural values. He argues as follows:

In the rapidly changing social, economic, cultural and political climate evident in different parts of the world, it is imperative that care is understood not in a paternalistic, doing-good-to-needy-others fashion but rather in a variety of ways, including empowerment, facilitating, support, nurture and liberation with and for persons and communities.5

Lartey strongly advocates the use of a people’s own traditional religious and spiritual heritage in pastoral practices as a means of healing and liberation. He notes that with the help of “linguistic and political criticism, indigenous practitioners of healing are increasingly being encouraged to have an impact with the halls of power in the practice of pastoral care and counselling in several places in the world.”6 This aspect of reclaiming and empowering a people’s cultural and religious identity in their theological engagement resonates with the formation and intention of a salim approach, for salim is rooted in the traditional Korean cultural and religious background, which intends to make use of in healing and liberating pastoral practices.

5 Lartey, Pastoral Theology, 29.

6 Ibid., 46.
Lartey emphasizes the importance of letting the marginalized “define themselves and speak for themselves on their own terms” as part of assisting the voices of the marginalized so that they might be heard.⁷ A salim approach resonates with Lartey’s assertion by assisting the silenced or the underprivileged define and speak for themselves in their own terms. This enables them to discover their power to break free from oppression and use this power for claiming their autonomy. For Lartey, defining experience in one’s indigenous language is critical, as he believes that doing so generates the power to liberate.⁸ Speaking one’s mother tongue matters critically in terms of power. Language has power, not only psychologically, but also politically. Using one’s language is to own one’s power. A salim approach based on this premise encourages people to express themselves in their native language.

As well as encouraging careseekers to use their native language to express their concerns, Lartey advises counsellors to make use of cultural and religious traditions in their pastoral practices. In terms of its general premises, a salim approach supports this notion, yet discernment is also needed to examine the traditions themselves. Many Korean cultural and religious traditions are oppressive for Korean women rather than life-enhancing. A salim approach will analyze those aspects of each culture which oppress, confine, and devalue human dignity. For example, a salim approach will analyze the life-situation of KIWNNA to see how their brokenness and suffering are caused by traditional religious and cultural norms. Lartey’s emphasis on using traditional religious and cultural resources thus fails to include the need for analyzing the patriarchal religious and cultural system, a system which presents a fundamental barrier for

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Korean women. A salim approach, by contrast, differentiates between upholding cultural uniqueness and discouraging the oppressive elements in each culture.

5.1.2 Salim Approach as Force for Mutual-Enhancement

A salim approach is in tune with the concerns of a feminist perspective that points to the conflict between feminism and multiculturalism. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore and Melinda McGarragh Sharp, maintain that pastoral theologians and counsellors who have attended to cultural differences in their theories and practices have found limitations to multiculturalism.9 They assert that pastoral theology needs to challenge “the exploitation of women and children by dominant voices inside cultures,” even though it is based in traditional culture.10 At the same time, pastoral theology should “avoid hegemonic, colonialist assertion of norms from outside.”11 In line with this assertion, on the one hand the salim approach challenges the oppressiveness of the Korean religious and cultural heritage, and on the other, it avoids imposing the dominant norms of North America.

How can a salim approach resolve this conflict of upholding the uniqueness of the home culture of KIWNA while simultaneously challenging its patriarchal oppressiveness? By the same token, how can a salim approach avoid imposing the dominant norms of North America, while making use of these in a way that promotes individual well-being? In his book, Pastoral


10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.
Theology in an Intercultural World, Lartey introduces the enhancement model of Andrew Sung Park, which helps pastoral theologians and practitioners find a creative way of engaging in an intercultural world.12

Through his enhancement model, Park seeks to improve the customs and traditions of each culture and its social systems by challenging that culture’s shortcomings as well as affirming its different beauty.13 This model thus reinforces the value of each racial and ethnic culture, since those who affirm their own culture often end up appreciating the unique beauty of their own tradition more. This beauty is not solely rooted in each culture, however, but is transformed when cultures interact with other cultures.14

Park’s enhancement model is “not a naive sentimental celebration,” according to Lartey, but is instead “transformation through internal and mutual critique of the social and internal sin and han of each group.”15 Park seeks not “unity in diversity and diversity in unity,” but “unity in mutual enhancement and diversity in mutual enhancement.”16 Park insists that each culture needs to challenge its own shortcomings in order to “to heighten the strengths, beauty, and value of racial and ethnic groups by helping one another in growth.”17 In this way, Park aspires to a world where “each group finds its identity not only in the roots of its culture (the past), but also in the

12 Lartey, Pastoral Theology, 146-149.


14 Ibid., 17.

15 Lartey, Pastoral Theology, 147.


17 Ibid., 16.
cultivation of its potential (the future) and its involvement in the inter-ethnic efforts of social transformation (the present)."¹⁸ In line with the enhancement model, a salim approach will challenge the practices of injustice in each culture, including an indigenous culture characterized by patriarchy such as Korean traditional culture. It will also challenge discrimination, racism, prejudice, and stereotyping in Western culture.

The anthropology based on Western culture can either liberate or oppress those from the non-Western world. For example, the emphasis on the voice of the individual found in Western culture may well enhance the well-being of oppressed people, a development which may otherwise have been discouraged in their home country in the interests of collective gains. However, individual-oriented valuations can hinder appreciation and respect for the inherent value of people from collectivist cultures. It is thus necessary to appreciate and respect the cultural aspects of the personhood of such people, rather than deny them.

For example, it is important to understand that Korean women’s relationality is based in collectivism. This is not to advocate collectivism, but rather to understand and acknowledge the nature of the personhood of Korean women, and not judge it from an individualistic perspective. At the same time, pastoral practitioners need to understand how the dominant culture in North America marginalizes Korean women. Paradoxically, practitioners need to assist with the sort of individual achievement North American culture supports in general. In order that their work be life-giving, pastoral practitioners should assist careseekers with their individual fulfillment, even though this practice is based on an individualistic ideology.

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A salim approach seeks to generate life-enhancement through challenging and affirming each culture. A given culture may explicitly or implicitly endorse its current power systems, which limit or oppress the enhancement of human life. Per F. Gjerde asserts that “culture is intrinsically a political and historical construct,” so it is important to know “what frames culture, including the structure of power.” Gjerde claims that “cultural violence can be used to legitimize theories about race superiority for example, and as such, lead to direct violence.” In immigrant societies, the dominant culture may assist the status quo of marginalization, which prevents the fulfillment of selfhood. A white-centered culture will oppress the potential of non-white people, and a male-centered culture will deter the fulfillment of women’s lives. Patriarchy often assists the dominant power system through its support of economic exploitation, religious traditions, racism, cultural oppression, and the sexual subjugation of women. For the sake of the life-enhancement of Korean immigrant women in North America, a salim approach needs to challenge the oppressive elements in the dominating culture as well as those in the home culture.

After emigrating to North America, KIWNA have been marginalized from mainstream culture, economy, and politics. The norms of North American culture have been prioritized voluntarily as well as forcefully. Here, “voluntarily” indicates a survival mechanism of immigrants, rather than their willing and joyful adaptation to a new culture. They have voluntarily adopted North American culture in order to settle down in a new land as quickly as possible. What they have failed to do, is change the contextual structure in which they live. Instead, many try to change themselves by learning and adopting a new culture simply in order to


20 Ibid., 145.
survive. A salim approach seeks to change the contextual structure instead of accommodating it, especially when it oppresses the lives of KIWNA.

A way of healing the brokenness of Korean immigrants in North America might be to assist them in reflecting on ways their organizing system of faith either enhances or interferes with their wholeness. Another means of healing might be to assist them in using their cultural heritage and traditional anthropology as resources that can be potentially life-giving. Indiscriminate use of one’s cultural heritage and traditional anthropology can negate the life-giving dimension, however. An example of a system manifesting this sort of negation would be the traditional patriarchal system of Korea. There can be no justification for retaining the traditional heritage of Korea if it includes the life-negating system of patriarchy. Pastoral practitioners need to understand the patriarchal culture experienced by Korean women; they need to examine its oppressive characteristics and challenge it in order to promote life-enhancement. My point in sum is that we should critically examine tradition and culture in order to retrieve its life-giving resources, while simultaneously disregarding its life-negating elements.

5.1.3 Salim Approach and Discriminating Empathy

The term discriminating empathy means an expression of empathy characterized by informed knowledge of a particular situation operating at a deep level. This is a reaction against uninformed pastoral caregiving characterized by indiscriminate empathy. The limit of empathy, according to Bonnie Miller-McLemore, and as has been suggested by pastoral caregivers for a long time, is “not too little empathy but too much indiscriminate empathy by an uninformed pastoral caregiver.”21 Miller-McLemore continues by claiming that “when those involved in

pastoral care do not know how to recognize the realities of violence toward women, they foster further damage and violence."\(^{22}\) She states, “All pastoral caregivers must sharpen their sensitivity to the stress that women experience as wage earners and homemakers.”\(^{23}\) Her assertion rightly resonates with the life-situation of KIWNA, as most occupy dual roles as wage earners and homemakers.

There is need for further discriminating empathy in relation to the reality of KIWNA, however, since most work at underpaid jobs compared to white middle-class women. Also, the homemaking work of most KIWNA is taken for granted as mandatory, and is not generally recognized as valuable. In this sense, the distress that KIWNA experience as wage earners and homemakers requires a more discriminating empathy than that which is suitable for white middle-class women. Most KIWNA do not have the social or political power to articulate the reality of their situation.

Maisha Handy urges religious educators to pay attention to the task of reinterpreting and retelling history in ways that incorporate the voices and contributions of those women who have been unheard and marginalized.\(^{24}\) Tapping into Handy’s notion, salim as an approach to pastoral care and counselling, urges pastoral caregivers to employ pastoral practices that allow the voices of marginalized women to be heard. A salim approach urges pastoral caregivers to hear the voices of KIWNA with discriminating empathy, and to engage in informed practices that come


\(^{23}\) Ibid.

from analyzing the various dimension of their life situations: e.g., the economic, cultural, and socio-political.

Without the assistance that comes from proper knowledge and discriminating empathy, the voices of the marginalized are often forgotten or misinterpreted. For example, the behaviour of Korean-American women is often misinterpreted as simply submissiveness. Jung Ha Kim, Korean American theologian, cautions:

Keenly aware of various limitations of women’s traditional roles as daughters, wives, and mothers, most Korean-American women seem to choose to submit themselves (both intentionally and unintentionally) to male leadership. Looking at it from an insider’s perspective, however, it appears to be otherwise. What appears to be subjugation to male relatives and public leaders obscures women’s conscious efforts to maneuver various authorities.25

In line with the arguments of Kim, Handy, and Miller-McLemore, the story of KIWNA should thus be reinterpreted with proper knowledge and discriminating empathy. The standard for evaluating people needs to be changed from an outsiders’ point of view to the point of view of the insiders. A salim approach promotes the retelling and reinterpretation of the stories of the marginalized, not by outsiders, but by insiders. This method of caregiving ensures that the voices of the marginalized are heard.

So far, I have discussed the reconstruction of salim as an approach to pastoral care and counselling for the liberation and empowerment of KIWNA, whose lives are in a largely double-bound situation with North American colonial forces and the patriarchal home culture. In the

next section, I focus on a unique attribute of KIWNA—hybridity—and discuss salim as a creative response to this attribute.

### 5.2 Salim Approach as a Creative Response to Hybridity

#### 5.2.1 Salim Approach as a Source of Power in the Third Space

Lartey’s postcolonial pastoral theological method supports the postcolonial concept of hybridity, which a salim approach also directs us to. In support of hybridity, Lartey repudiates “either-or” logic, as it “privileges one pole to the exclusion, suppression or annihilation of the other.”

For Lartey, the global task of pastoral theology today is to maintain the tension between the divergent poles in creative and constructive ways. His thesis is about “how to live respectfully with difference and ambiguity.”

This statement of Lartey’s resonates with Jung Young Lee’s theological method of liberation. Lee emphasizes that the goal for marginal people is “more than liberation from central-group people, rather it is a harmonious coexistence of all people in a genuinely pluralistic society.” Living together harmoniously means acknowledging and validating the creation of the “third culture.” Here the third culture does not have to have a clear form; it is often ambiguous and ambivalent, and can be ambidextrous.

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26 Lartey, *Pastoral Theology*, 126.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., 127.

The postcolonial concept of hybridity can similarly be employed in pastoral practices to bring healing and liberation. According to Kwok Pui-lan, a leading scholar in postcolonial theology, the concept of hybridity undergirds Gadamer’s “fusion of horizons,” in which “two different historical worlds or horizons can be fruitfully brought together.”

Hybridity is a necessary concomitant of pastoral care and counselling in the immigration context, since immigrants are naturally subject to the conditions of hybridity. In the immigration context, a salim approach challenges the unitary and autonomous self, and seeks to use hybridity as a source of transformation. Many scholars have strived to incorporate a definition of hybridity as a powerful tool for understanding human anthropology. In particular, Homi Bhabha has developed the concept of hybridity to challenge the unified notion of colonial power and binary perceptions of oppression and domination.

Bhabha criticizes Edward Said for his concept of hybridity, as he believes Said makes it impossible for the colonized to resist colonial power. Bhabha proposes a new image of the colonized by employing the concept of ambivalence. The response of the colonized is ambivalence for Bhabha: “half acquiescent, half oppositional, and always untrustworthy.” Hybridity is not a term designed to “resolve the tension between two cultures [or two religions or two ontological poles]”; instead it continues to be in a state of change or transition, because cultures are continuously being interwoven.

Most Korean immigrant women feel ambivalent about their identity, since they seem to be neither Korean nor American. Acknowledging hybridity can be a healing process for Korean


32 Ibid., 114.
Americans, because neither element, be it the Korean or the American, is oppressed or nullified. Hybridity is found in an ambiguous space. Accepting the ambiguity of hybridity can be healing and empowering for Korean Americans, because it authenticates who they are and who they are becoming, as they are being formed over two continents. Wonhee Anne Joh, a Korean American theologian, claims: “Postcolonial theory is critical for doing theology for Korean immigrants because deconstructing the white and colonial constructs of Christ to present Christ as hybrid creates the space and authority for those who have been marginalized to construct their interpretation of Christology.”

Joh believes it is important to acknowledge the hybrid features of Korean immigrants in North America, because “hybridity itself is in fact the source of power in its ambiguity.” In line with this thinking, a salim approach responds to the hybrid characteristics of KIWNA and utilizes hybridity as a transforming source.

The importance of hybridity is that it creates a “third space.” Bhabha argues that in this third space, “the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew.” Creating a third space is like making a Korean dish bibimbap (a rice bowl with mixed vegetables). To make a bibimbap, we put different kinds of vegetables and meat in a bowl on top of steamed rice. We can still taste each ingredient unless we mix them together with chilli paste and sesame oil. When we mix all the ingredients, a new taste is created that goes beyond the taste of each ingredient. Validating hybridity and ambivalence means appreciating the third taste that goes beyond the

34 Ibid., 53.
35 Homi K. Bhabha ed., *Nation and Narration* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 211.
36 Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 37.
taste of each culture. Appreciating the third taste challenges us to be aware of those prejudices and stubbornness in matters of taste that have prevented us from appreciating the beauty of the third taste. When we are able to appreciate the third taste, the ambiguity and ambivalence are transformed into enhancing power. Using a salim approach to pastoral care and counselling means appreciating the third and true beauty of people in an intercultural context, and assisting them to appreciate their third identity as Korean Americans or Korean Canadians, rather than have them considering themselves half Asian and half American or Canadian.

Through the third identity, Jung Young Lee advocates creating a new marginality. In *Marginality*, Lee proposes “a new marginality of love, which is willing to suffer re-demptively by accepting others unconditionally.” Jonathan Tan supports Lee’s advocacy of a new marginality of love in a pluralistic society, stating that it has “no center and therefore no basis for discrimination, to replace the old marginality of power and control, where the center oppresses the margin.” Jesus’ life is the archetype of this new marginality of love, living as he did in the third space of hybridity “in-between” and “in-both” worlds between heaven and earth, between Judea and Samaria, and between oppressors and oppressed.

The concepts of hybridity, ambivalence, and the “third space” of postcolonial thinking are relevant for the pastoral care and counselling of KIWNA. In the third space of an intercultural world, a salim approach will seek to create a new way to enhance the life of all living things, thereby rejecting domination and oppression.

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37 Jung Young Lee, *Marginality*, 73.

5.2.2 Salim Approach and Teum

This postcolonial concept of the third space is not new in Korean epistemology. According to Jea Oh, the notion of the third space echoes the Korean concept of teum ($	ext{틈}$).\(^{39}\) Oh states that “teum, a Korean term, signifies an intriguing hybrid space of spatio-temporality: it means a ‘chance’ and an ‘opportunity’ in terms of time as well as a new space from cracking or a space between two things.”\(^{40}\) For Oh, “the best way to describe the Korean notion of teum in English is to refer to it as a state of in-betweenness.”\(^{41}\) Kim Ji-Ha writes in his poem “Teum” that “All new things always come out of teum.”\(^{42}\) In support of Kim Ji-Ha’s attribution of salim to the philosophy of Donghak, Jea Oh writes, “teum is the place and moment of regenerating, thus becoming salim.”\(^{43}\) Hence a salim approach to pastoral care and counselling for KIWNA will search for teum in the lives of women and recognize the life-enhancing potential of this in-between moment.

Thus far I have discussed the reconstruction of salim as an approach, mostly at an individual level. At the same time, salim directs us to the communal space Emmanuel Lartey considers with utter seriousness. In the following section, I thus discuss the reconstruction of salim at the communal space.

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\(^{40}\) Ibid., 82.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 87.

\(^{42}\) Kim Ji-Ha, 틈 [Teum] (Seoul: Sol, 1995).

\(^{43}\) Oh, *A Postcolonial Theology of Life*, 93.
5.3 *Salim* Approach for a Communal Space

5.3.1 *Salim* Approach and the Care of Community

Lartey simply states that God is communal, and that a central motivation of pastoral care is that it be “communal relational” care. He criticizes individual therapy for “the loss of community and the socially and relationally integrated persons that traditional African morals upheld.” Lartey asserts that “[t]he aim of postcolonializing pastoral care is the cultivation of communal spaces in which all people can be safe, nurtured and empowered to grow.” In support of Emmanuel Lartey’s advocacy of community in pastoral theology, a *salim* approach also seeks to promote the wellbeing of a community, along with the wellbeing of individuals.

In recent decades, many pastoral theologians have emphasized the importance of community in pastoral care and counselling. Bonnie Miller-McLemore states “the focus on care narrowly defined as counseling has shifted to a focus on care understood as part of a wide cultural, social, and religious context.” According to Richard Coble, going beyond individual therapy in pastoral care toward attention to the wider community has been a feature since the 1980s, and has become even more prominent since the 1990s. The limitations of individual therapy are deeply related to a dependency on a medical model. Coble states the problems with

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45 Lartey, *Postcolonializing God*, 120.

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.


the medical model nicely as follows: “[T]he medical model individualizes issues, such as widespread depression, which actually reflect wider social dysfunctions. Isolated, fragmented, and depressed individuals and communities are, in reality, the result of the commodification of human activity and systemic economic disparity.”

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To address the shortfalls in individualized care, Miller-McLemore emphasizes that care in a congregational setting is executed not only through a pastor’s one-to-one counselling, but also through a congregational network.51 Brian Grant also advocates the importance of community in pastoral psychotherapy, asserting that pastoral psychotherapy needs “to overcome the twin evils of individualism and collectivism.”52 Grant claims that pastoral psychotherapists, though in most cases working in a one-on-one setting and relating to the exploration of an individual’s life, need to examine how that individual is “constituted by and contextualized within a sequence of communities, and how that person can contribute to yet more.”53

Along with Lartey, Miller-McLemore, Coble, and Grant, a salim approach also advocates a holistic analysis of the issues of KIWNA, an analysis which takes into account the communal perspective in addition to intrapsychic or family systems’ perspectives. For most KIWNA, systemic economic disparity is one of the major contributors to their distress. A salim approach thus critically examines how communities affect individuals and vice versa. It also seeks to assist

51 Miller-McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice*, 34.
52 Brian Grant, *A Theology for Pastoral Psychotherapy*, 200.
53 Ibid.
Korean immigrant women in North America contribute to their communities and to cultivate a community as a place of healing and solidarity.

5.3.2 Salim as a Narrative Pastoral Approach for a Healing Community

Christie Cozad Neuger emphasizes the importance of community in pastoral care and counselling for women, stating that “the support and challenge of healing communities” is the most important matter for women.54 She contends that counselling is otherwise often “too fragile” or “too thin” when people go back to the dominant culture of their families and communities.55 For Neuger, the church is a natural partner in facilitating this kind of healing community.56 Neuger posits that Christianity has a strong tradition of solidarity, which “breaks the bonds of isolated individuality and forgetfulness—the bondage of sin.”57 Neuger asserts that it is the pastoral counsellor’s task “to work for justice and liberation to participate in these communities of solidarity.”58 In line with Neuger’s recommendation, a salim approach seeks ways of cultivating communities of solidarity.

One way of cultivating a community of solidarity is to use a narrative approach, which constitutes a woman-friendly method of pastoral care and counselling. In particular, Neuger suggests a narrative pastoral approach for a healing community. Sharing stories is a method of narrative counselling theory that considers community an important space. Sharing narratives has


55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., 235.

57 Ibid., 239.

58 Ibid.
generally been the most effective, if not the only outlet for most Korean women for a long time. Korean women have coped with their suffering from oppression in family and society by sharing their stories in groups, mostly in settings of working together, such as when preparing food, cleaning clothes, or walking to the well to get water. The context of Korean women who use the community for healing in solidarity reflects the importance of pastoral leadership in providing communal contexts for care.

Through sharing their stories, Korean women have been able to release their stress and find healing in their lives. By telling and listening to one another’s stories, their own personal struggles become shared struggles, through which they participate in healing and strengthening one another. A narrative approach to counselling resonates with a salim approach as it helps people feel empowered and heard. Encouraging use of narrative counselling, a salim approach seeks to build a healthy supportive community, thus providing a healing space for individuals.

Because a salim approach also takes account of both community and individuals, it is in continuity with other therapeutic modalities, as well as with a narrative approach. For example, a salim approach may employ the methods of intrapsychic analysis to examine symptoms such as fear, anxiety, depression, anger, etc. This modality through a salim approach invites careseekers in to explore defense mechanisms, such as denial, avoidance, projection, sublimation, somatization, etc. Such intrapsychic analysis helps careseekers self assess alongside caregivers and begin to address emergent issues. It can also help measure how careseekers improve in terms of healing and growth.

A salim approach is also resonant with the tools of family of origin and family systems theory. This theoretical modality explores a person’s distress within family dynamics, such as
conflict, triangle, cut-off, etc. It considers the dynamics of the roles of a careseeker, such as persecutor, victim, rescuer, distancer, pursuer, caretaker, scapegoat, etc. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, family systems theory honours the social construction of identity and includes the communal or collectivist aspects of being. That being so, a family systems perspective that integrates social construction theory, for instance a narrative approach, can help in analyzing the symptoms of KIUNA in an immigrant context. The roles and dynamics of each family member living as an immigrant in North America could well be different compared to those found in Korea.

A salim approach resonates with pastoral counselling modalities that explore the embedded images of God and how these relate to human life. Pastoral care and counselling based in salim ultimately seeks to help “distressed persons discover anew and cherish the divine image within themselves and others, to experience life in all its fullness.”\(^{59}\) As Amistead posits, “the person’s image of God says something profound about the core of the self.”\(^{60}\) Many persons unconsciously relate to God as their parent, or as the figure who will fulfill all their needs. In pastoral care and counselling relationships, the roles of pastoral caregivers or counsellors affect the God image of careseekers, as they often seek the sort of care they would expect from God.\(^{61}\) Being cognizant of this, a salim approach pays attention to changes in the image of God held by careseekers through their healing processes.


\(^{61}\) Ibid., xiv.
5.3.3 Salim Approach to Reinforce a Postcolonial Self

Based on an analysis of the lives of Korean immigrant women in North America—lives which are mostly double-bound by the two major forces of individualism and collectivism—a salim approach promotes a self that enhances the lives of KIWNA, in both communal and individual spaces.

For this reason, the communal-relational self which Emmanuel Lartey advocates may in fact be misleading, and could even result in the subjugation of individual voices of KIWNA. In most cases, the individual selves of KIWNA are oppressed by patriarchal norms at home for the sake of collective gains, gains which in fact only serve the interests of the patriarchs. In addition, most KIWNA are discouraged from developing their individual selves by the discriminatory practices of the dominant power in North America.

Noticing the possible subjugation of the individual self within the concept of a communal-relational being, a salim approach instead seeks a self that reflects equal importance placed on the individual self and the communal-relational self. Korean American theologian, Choi Hee An, has coined a term for the conjoined individual and communal self, which she calls a “postcolonial self,” or “I and We with Others.”62 In “I and We,” Choi reinforces the Korean communal identity that has been brought from home, along with the individual identity that has been developed in North America. Furthermore, in “Others,” Choi urges intentional effort by Korean immigrants to go beyond the ethnic, national and transnational boundaries normally maintained by Korean immigrants.63

62 Choi Hee An, A Postcolonial Self, 7.

63 Ibid., 131.
The concept of a postcolonial self—“I and we with others”—resonates with a *salim* approach that seeks life-enlivenment of Korean immigrant women as an individual being as well as an communal being. Deviating from the communal-relational self, a *salim* approach seeks an individual-communal being that resonates with the postcolonial self, i.e., “I and we with others.” Thus, along with promoting a postcolonial self, a *salim* approach seeks to enhance the individual selves of KIWNA, as well as advocating communal-relational selves that include others from outside the ethnic boundary.

### 5.3.4 *Salim* Approach and the Care of the Ecological World

The communal aspect of *salim* can be extended nationwide, and thus goes beyond the church community. Kyung Ho Chung, a Korean theologian, extends the communal concept of *salim* to the peaceful unification of Korea.⁶⁴ For Chung, the division of the Korean peninsula is due to a politics, culture, and economy based on life-*jugim* (killing).⁶⁵ This being so, he contends that the unification of Korea would represent the life-*salim* (enlivening) of politics, economy, society, and culture.⁶⁶ Chung extends the ethics of *salim* still further to the recovery of nature and the cosmos. He asserts that people are the priests of life-*salim* (enlivening) and that people should endeavour to recover nature and the cosmos, which are today crying from being broken and torn apart.⁶⁷

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⁶⁴ Kyung Ho Chung, “The Ethics of Life.”
⁶⁵ Ibid., 101.
⁶⁶ Ibid.
⁶⁷ Ibid., 116.
Just as Chung applies *salim* to the care of nature and the cosmos, Lartey also extends the communal scope of care to the care of nature. According to Lartey, “African notions of God as communal unity lead us to an understanding of nature and humanity as essentially communal.”

For Lartey, “Pastoral care aims not merely at the personal transformation of individuals, but rather at changing the total ecology of the world, the nature of relations between and amongst people.” A reconstructed *salim* approach supports Lartey’s understanding of the care of the total ecology of the world.

In the same way, a *salim* approach also supports the position of ecofeminist theology. According to Korean theologian, Un Hey Kim, ecofeminist theology sees “a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women.” Kim contends that from the point of view of ecofeminist theology, today’s ecological crisis is a result not of human-centered, but male-centered thinking in the western world. According to Kim, ecological scholars claim “we must rethink all feminine, maternal, and feminist principles to transform the oppressive culture and exploitive structure of patriarchal

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71 Ibid, 421.
system in order to find more appropriate mode of relationship humanity—nature and man and women to ecological crisis.”

Kim asserts, as most ecofeminists claim, that since Western culture brings more ecological destruction than Eastern culture, Eastern principles are needed as an alternate paradigm based on the difference represented by women. In following Kim’s assertion, salim can be seen as an Eastern principle for the care of the ecological world.

Keun-Joo Christine Pae, in support of the feminist critique, points out the similarity “between exploitation of mother earth and that of women,” and maintains that “human liberation is intrinsically connected to that of all living creatures.” Pae claims that Korean feminist theologians suggest a “salimist theology” in order to include the salvation of all living beings. For Pae, Korean ecofeminists are salimist. In a similar vein, and perceiving the urgency of ecological problems, Jea Oh suggests salim as a means of redeeming the planet. According to Oh, salim is a way of decolonizing nonhuman nature, which redeems humans as part of the complexity of life.

73 Ibid., 444.
75 Ibid., 63.
76 Oh, A Postcolonial Theology of Life, 158.
77 Ibid.
5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have engaged in reconstructing salim as an approach to pastoral care and counselling in dialogue with Emmanuel Lartey’s pastoral theological methods, drawing on postcolonial thinking. The discussion of a salim approach has been threefold: Firstly, I have presented this salim approach as a liberative and empowering source for Korean immigrant women in North America. For the sake of liberation and empowerment, a salim approach advocates people using their religious and cultural heritage on their own terms to express their stories. I have pointed out the importance of the need to analyze the oppressiveness in cultures and the need to use discriminating empathy in pastoral care when drawing on cultural heritage. In response to this need, a salim approach seeks mutual enhancement, not only through the mutual adaptation of the strengths of each culture, but also through reciprocally challenging each culture’s shortcomings.

Secondly, I have presented a salim approach as a creative response for those with hybrid identities. Rejecting an either-or-logic, a salim approach finds the ambivalent and the ambiguous space of KIWNA to be a source of healing and empowering for them. I have presented the way that a salim approach searches for teum—the third space—in the lives of Korean immigrant women in North America, and how it recognizes the life-enhancing resource of this in-betweenness.

Thirdly, I have presented a salim approach that emphasizes the importance of community. For the sake of cultivating a community as a place of healing and solidarity, a salim approach finds a narrative counselling approach to be a useful tool, since it helps people reframe the meaning of their narratives. By sharing and hearing narratives, a salim approach can assist people in shaping a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives as individuals in the community.
Cognizant of the importance of both individuals and community, a salim approach promotes the postcolonial self, the self of “I and we with others.” I have also presented a salim approach as a life-enhancing resource for the total ecological world. In the next I present a case study based on the salim approach I have reconstructed here.

5.5 A Case Study

5.5.1 Capacity of counselling

I met Mira (pseudonym), a fifty-five-year-old Korean woman living in Toronto, right after she was discharged from the psychiatric unit where she had been for two weeks. I met her in my role as a pastoral counsellor and a family therapist. She was referred to me by a member of her church. She was on sleeping pills and anti-depressants after being diagnosed with major depression by a psychiatrist. This was her second hospitalization for depression in fifteen years.

5.5.2 Presenting Problems and Assessment

Her symptoms clearly represented major depression, as she had anxiety, negative thought patterns, lack of energy, lack of sleep or oversleeping, loss of appetite, etc. The most prominent issues were depression and anger. In her own words, “I sleep for a long time and it is hard to wake up in the morning. I am forgetful. It is hard for me to concentrate on something. I cannot do my salim (household work). I don’t have any appetite and I cannot digest foods anyway.”

5.5.3 History

Mira was born in Korea as the first daughter of wealthy parents and has three younger brothers. Because her mother was able to give birth to three sons after her, she was favoured by her family and relatives. She was particularly the apple of her father’s eye, but she married a man her father did not approve of. In her words, “I married him because my virginity was taken by him. I should have listened to my father. I regret that I married him.”
Since moving to Canada twenty-years ago, Mira and her husband have run a convenience store. While her husband spent increasing amounts of time away, Mira would work long hours at the store. She was also busy with salim at home, cooking, cleaning, and taking care of three children. When she did not cook, her husband would become furious and violent. Mira tried to please her husband out of fear and worked extremely hard both at home and at the store. Salim, the household work, and her store work, left her feeling exhausted and choked. Salim was oppressing and confining her life. Economic pressure was also a major factor as she was working to support her family.

Mira felt abused, betrayed, and taken advantage of by her husband. She said that she had brought a lot of money to her marriage, but that her husband had misused it on inappropriate relationships. Mira thus felt resentful towards her husband. She also felt powerless, because she depended on her husband due to her lack of English skills. She did not know about banking or how to deal with documentation written in English. Her husband handled everything to do with banking, taxes, and any other official or legal documents. Thus, while she felt she was being taken advantage of, she could not claim her voice since she was dependent on her husband.

Her relationship with members of her church also distressed her. In her free time, Mira had been heavily involved in church activities, and in charge of many programmes there. Recently, Mira was close to another woman, Youngja (a pseudonym), whom Mira considered a spiritual mentor. Mira depended on Youngja a great deal, both emotionally and spiritually. Once she started feeling that Youngja and other women at church were bullying her, Mira grew angry towards those women at the church and avoided encountering them. She was also suspicious that her minister was on Youngja’s side. Church life became meaningless for her. She said, “I am uncomfortable with what the Bible says. I cannot pray to God. I feel guilty, though because I
know that is not what God wants.” This statement indicates that her distress was deeply connected to the spiritual dimension.

5.5.4 Duration of counselling: Three years.

Mira came to counselling once every week or two for six months – 18 sessions in total. After that she was invited to follow up with me for further appointments, and she did so on several occasions – 29 sessions in total over the 2.5 years following the initial six-month period. After the termination of counselling, she still sometimes comes for counselling a few times a year. In her own words: “for support, checking-in, and maintenance.”

5.5.5 Goals of counselling

When I asked Mira how the counselling could help her, she answered, “I want to become an independent woman. I want to divorce, but I am afraid of it and I don’t have money to live separately from my husband.” Based on her wishes, we set the initial goal of counselling “To become an independent woman.”

5.5.6 Therapeutic Plans and Approach

The initial therapeutic plans were mostly based on intrapsychic and family systems theories. From an individualistic point of view, Mira had barely developed her self-identity. She frequently said, “My sickness is dependency. Why can’t I leave my husband whom I hate? Why am I feeling sometimes inferior and sometimes superior? Is it because my self-esteem is low?” I invited her to develop a genogram and learn aspects of the theory herself. In terms of her family of origin, she identified herself as a strong pleaser and a rescuer. She also identified her patterns of pleasing others and her feelings of betrayal. I assisted Mira in identifying the needs that lay beneath her tendency to accommodate people. Based on Bowen’s theory, I assisted her in
differentiating herself in relationship with others. These approaches helped her in the process of achieving her goal of “becoming an independent woman” to some degree.

5.5.7 Turning Point

The sessions reached a turning point, when I realized that she was living a very isolated life. It seemed that she had lost her community. I started to reflect on my approach and strived to look at other dimensions that I had missed. I started to make a further assessment in light of the social, economic, religious, and cultural aspects of her life. This further assessment told me that her brokenness and suffering were caused to a greater degree by her hybrid life-situation as a Korean immigrant in North America. I did not share this observation with her directly, using professional jargon, as I was mindful that by so doing so I might categorize her and thus disempower her. This observation nevertheless helped me understand her brokenness and suffering from her standpoint further, and it also facilitated a counselling process that reflected this assessment.

From Mira’s standpoint, she was living her life according to the expectations of the society to which she belonged. Rather than pursuing individual achievements, she prioritized doing what was required of her by her family, her church, and the society. From the perspective of Confucian ideology, she was an obedient wife and a sacrificial mother for her family. From the point of view of her church, she was a devout member. She was also a hard-working Canadian citizen.

Her somatic symptoms closely echoed the typical symptoms of han-ridden oppressed Korean women. She frequently expressed it thus: “It is like a big rock is pressing upon my heart. I sometimes feel my chest is terribly aching and being torn apart. I feel terribly angry towards my
husband. He is really oppressing me. It’s like I am running the track of anger without stopping. It is not a regular anger. I wish I could tear my husband into pieces.”

The blurred boundary in her life, assessed in terms of Western values, is in fact the expression of jeong—a Korean virtue meaning benevolence, kindness, or generosity with affection. In general, for Koreans the boundaries based on jeong are permeable. From a Western perspective, her jeong-based relationality could be perceived as a manifestation of a lack of self-assertiveness. In fact, this was simply her way of relating to her family, friends, and neighbours. In contrast to the meaning of self that holds in the West, self for Mira melted into the concept of uri, meaning we-ness. In this way, the two different worldviews collided in her.

The added assessment also helped me to see that her issues were deeply connected to her spirituality. The image Mira expressed of God was that of the patriarchal father to whom she was subordinate. The teaching of her church pushed her to work harder, and this she interpreted as a way of taking up the cross. When she thought, she was not pleasing God, she felt guilty and ashamed. She was Christian, but the Confucian patriarchy was deeply embedded in her belief system. Mira was thus a victim of the patriarchal system that oppressed her and prevented her from developing her identity as a child of God.

Her image of God influenced her relationships with other people. Mira oppressed herself and accommodated others, particularly those in leadership positions. To obtain love and attention, she overspent her money, time, and energy on them. Then, when she failed to obtain their love and recognition, she felt taken advantage of and/or abused. Just as she accommodated people, so too she tried to accommodate the patriarchal God, but eventually felt taken advantage of by God also. Just as she had obeyed her father, she obeyed her husband. Mira made efforts to
please her husband, the patriarch, to the point of abusing herself physically, emotionally, and financially. In her narrative, “I regret that I cooked so much food for my husband. But if I didn’t cook for him, he got furious and did not give any money. So, because I needed money, I cooked, cleaned the house, and washed the clothes.”

Her goal, “to become an independent woman” in fact manifested her need for liberation and empowerment. To become independent, she wanted to be liberated from salim, household work. She was stuck in the thought that she should cook to satisfy her husband and to receive money from him. Yet she did not have the power to pursue the liberation. Ironically, salim, which means life-enlivening in Korean, was confining her life.

5.5.8 Counselling Processes

The counselling sessions thus started to focus on empowering her. A narrative approach was critically helpful in her feeling empowered. Recognizing her ambivalent space, I helped her tell her stories in her own way, which in turn helped her with liberation from the oppression, and empowered her to be independent. I noticed that when her voice was heard, she felt empowered. When she was empowered, she was able to face the fear of the powerful patriarchal figures around her and resist the tendency to accommodate them. She frequently asked me, “I did a good job, right?”

What she needed was an interpathic listener to understand her distress and stand on her side. My presence as an interpathic listener affected her image of God. She described it thus: “When I come to you for counselling it is like coming to a mother. I talk to a mother and the mother listens to me.” She kept saying, “Mother! Thank you for nurturing and growing me.” It was evident that my presence affected her image of God greatly. One day Mira showed me a picture she had drawn and explained what it meant. In the picture, she had depicted herself as a
little sheep being held by Jesus. In that session, Mira wept much in sorrow and joy; sorrow over her old wounded and rejected self, and joy for her newly-discovered self, a loving child of God. In the arms of Jesus, she felt loved and safe, Mira said. The session was effective in that her image of God and of herself had shifted. The image that she had of God had changed from that of a tyrant and a patriarch to a safe and loving mother-like father. The image of herself had shifted from a wounded and abandoned sheep to a loving little sheep in the arms of Jesus. In the following session, Mira said she had put the picture on her mirror so that she could be reminded of it continually.

As the sessions went further, the goals of the counselling were adjusted. She described her goals as threefold: to put a healthy and realistic boundary around her work of salim at home and at work; to have harmonious relationships in and with her church; and to take English classes and do volunteer work in her community. Through the pastoral counselling, Mira was able to go on an inward journey that allowed her to reconnect with herself in a healthier way. While there were up and down days, her feeling of drifting away, of being abandoned, taken advantage of, and betrayed scarcely bothered her. The experience Mira had of being accepted and heard by me helped her feel worthy in an ontological sense. She said, “I feel I don’t have to please people so as to obtain their love. I can cook now, not because of fear.”

The trusting relationship developed through the pastoral counselling relationship helped Mira build a trusting relationship with God. She said, “I talk to you about everything as I talk to God.” Later on, Mira was able to pray to God once again, but in a very different way. In her words, “I pray to God, calling Abba, father, and say ‘I come to you Abba. You know me. You know about me…’ I report everything to God with honest feeling.” When I asked her how God
responded to her prayer, she answered, “God just listens, and I feel embraced. Sometimes I feel God is heart-aching by listening to my story.”

I endeavoured to assist her life in the communal space. Mira has joined a small group in her church, an English class, and does other volunteer activities in the community. She has started to visit the sick and the elderly in her community. Involvement with her community reflects how she is doing in terms of healing and growing, not only for herself but also for her neighbours. She is still struggling in her relationships with her husband, church people, and others, but she manages these relationships in a way that is considerably healthier than before.

5.5.9 Reflection from a salim approach

This case, as with many others, challenged me to adjust my embedded theology and approach, and to develop an approach appropriate to the life-situation of KIWNA. Noticing the reality that most KIWNA were bound by two opposing norms—the patriarchal Korean tradition and ever dominant Western norm—I strived to develop a life-enhancing model. To provide informed pastoral counselling, I made a multi-layered analysis of her life-situation, including her religious practice, socio-economic cultural influences, as well as psychological manifestations. From a lens of salim, I was able to address her han-ful, jeong-filled, and uri-oriented life, which helped me understand her psycho-spiritual-somatic symptoms.

My adjusted therapeutic plan focused on assisting Mira to make use of her hybrid attributes as resources to enhance her life, and at the same time liberate her from the double-binding oppressive elements of both Korea and North America. I assisted her to acknowledge that she possessed good attributes from her embedded home culture, such as jeong and uri. At the same time, I assisted her in becoming liberated from the patriarchal oppression of her home
culture. I assisted her in claiming her voice to increase her self-esteem, while at the same time being in harmony with others.

In this case, pastoral counselling employing the philosophy of salim achieved its purpose, not only in solving present symptoms and issues, but also in redirecting Mira’s life. A salim approach helped Mira to assert her individual voice, and at the same time be in harmonious relationships with others, including the community she was involved with. I was able to see the journey she took from being a depleted and dependent self, along the path to becoming independent, and moving towards becoming interdependent and interconnected, the so-called postcolonial self, “I and we, with others,” which a salim approach intends.

A salim approach also helped Mira in her journey of evolving her conceptions of herself and of God. Assisting her to tell her narratives in her own terms, along with interpathic listening, helped her feel a worthy and loved person, and also helped her expand her image of God to that of an embracing and empowering mother-like God. She said, “It is like I am coming to a mother and reporting what I did last week. It is strange. By just coming and talking to you, I feel I get empowered.” I wondered if this was because the energy of salim—life-enlivening—was transmitted through our conversations.

My heart remains with jeong and uri for the time of journeying with Mira from self-contempt to self-respect, from dependency to independence, from mistrust to trust, from depression to hope, and from life-diminishment to life-enlivening salim.
Chapter 6
Conclusion

In this thesis I conduct a theological exploration of salim as an approach to pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women in North America. The lives of these women manifest the features of hybridity and double-binding oppression. To address the life-reality of KIWNA, I made a multi-layered analysis of the oppressive elements in their lives, including their religious mapping, psychological manifestations, and socio-economic-cultural situations.

To develop an appropriate pastoral approach, I incorporated Emmanuel Larney’s pastoral theological methods, drawing upon his theology of liberative pastoral praxis in an intercultural world. For the reconstruction of salim, this study also used the tripartite method of feminist theology: a hermeneutics of suspicion, a hermeneutics of retrieval, and a final phase of reconstruction. After unearthing the devalued meaning of salim and then retrieving its life-enlivening force, I suggested salim be reconstructed as an appropriate approach to pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women in North America.

In this final chapter, I explore the implications of this reconstructed meaning of salim. I discuss its implications as a pastoral theological method, a therapeutic approach, and a spiritual practice at both individual and communal levels. I also consider the ecological implications of salim as a call to care for God’s whole creation. Finally, I summarize the contributions and limitations of this thesis and suggest areas for further research.
6.1 The Implications of *Salim* as an Approach to Pastoral Care and Counselling

First, *salim* offers a pastoral theological method from a postcolonial perspective that can be employed in particular in intercultural pastoral care and counselling. A *salim* approach incorporates a theological method that aims to liberate people from oppression. When practising pastoral care and counselling for the afflicted in an intercultural world, *salim* promotes life-enhancement, healing, and liberation. In such an intercultural world, *salim* also validates cultural distinctiveness. A *salim* approach challenges the prejudices that are associated with our pre-knowledge, assumptions, and categorization of cultures. In fact, *salim* plays in the space between cultures.

For its employment as a pastoral theological method, *salim* follows the discourse of many Asian feminist theologians who “are less constrained by traditional theological categories that have been developed by male theologians” and “are more open to a creative weaving of theological insights that seek to synthesize what they view as the ideals of traditional Asian cultural spiritual heritages with the Christian gospel’s call to liberation and justice.”¹ As Grace Ji-Sun Kim argues, “the female aspect of the divine has been ignored or neglected throughout church history.”² Drawing upon feminist theological method, a *salim* approach as a pastoral theological method endeavours to retrieve the lost female attributes of the divine and the degraded meaning of women’s work.

Secondly, *salim* can offer a therapeutic process that facilitates the oppressed being heard, validated, liberated, and empowered. The possibility of *salim* being life-enhancing is barred

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when people continue to dominate, control, oppress, and exploit others. *Salim* encourages people to hear unheard, oppressed and wounded voices, and to recover depleted selves. It is therapeutic for an intercultural world because it validates the hybrid attributes which used to be ignored and mocked. In order to assist with healing and liberation for those who are characterized by hybridity, it is essential to know where a person comes from, since a person’s origin precedes further integration of their identity. Without this process, people are simply assimilated into the dominant culture, and lose their identities. A *salim* approach appreciates the unique and often different beauty of others, which is hidden until we open our hearts and become ready to correct our vision through them. In order for *salim* to be life-enhancing, we need to practice seeing others as they wish to see themselves.

Thirdly, *salim* can be a spiritual practice, which needs to be practiced on a day-to-day basis. *Salim* as a spiritual exercise requires the letting go of embedded power over others, power which is derived from privileged gender, race, language, or culture. *Salim* negates the utilitarian view of the other as one’s possession and a means for one’s purposes. A spiritual practice of *salim* encourages us to appreciate how the presence of God is manifested in the hybrid space between cultures, as well as in different cultures, and also how people relate to God in different ways. Drawing on an indigenous religious and cultural tradition, this study presents ways pastoral care and counselling can promote the care of global communities as well as individual care.

Fourthly, *salim* signifies an urgent call to tend to the care of God’s whole creation in response to today’s ecological crises. While this thesis researches *salim* mainly as an alternative approach to pastoral care and counselling, the basic premise accords with envisioning *salim* for the benefit of the whole of creation. The life-situation of the human being is intrinsically related
to the whole of creation. Theologically, the meaning of salim includes the salvation of all living things as well as of human beings. Salim calls for the solidarity of Korean salimist ecofeminists in caring for the total ecological world.

6.2 Contributions, Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research

The specific contribution of this thesis is to pastoral care and counselling for Korean immigrant women in North America. In a broader sense, this thesis provides insight for healing and liberation of those human persons whose voices go unheard in the uniquely oppressive structure of an intercultural context. Yet, the approach needs further modification, which will come from listening to the stories of human reality, because the context of pastoral care and counselling are continuously changing.

This thesis also contributes to theological education by encouraging creative engagement in the tension between theological theories and pastoral practices. It aspires to an active dialogue between these two disciplines, enhancing the development of practice-based theology and theology-based practice. In particular, this thesis presents a way that an intercultural pastoral theological method, appropriate to a unique context, can also be applied beyond its original soil. Ultimately, this thesis contributes to the church in terms of its advocacy of care for global communities and world ecology, as well as for individuals.

While the thesis focuses on a theological exploration of salim as an approach to pastoral care and counselling, it does not present specific procedures of salim. Further research needs to be done with regard to developing a concrete model of pastoral care and counselling using a salim approach. I also raise the question: “How might a salim approach be adjusted for a different intercultural context?”
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