

## Asian Migrant Churches in Europe

Author: Sung Hoon Kim, Asian Diaspora Initiative, Wycliffe International.

### Introduction

There are 8.2 million Asian Diaspora in Europe, making up 27% of total migrants in Europe.

- 111,000 Koreans, 116,000 Japanese, 1.7 million Chinese, 3.2 million South Asian, 3 million Turkish in Europe
- Among Korean immigrants, about 53,000 are in Germany, 45,000 in the UK and 13,000 in France
- About 1 million Chinese students and 123,000 Japanese students are in Europe.

The workshop focuses on Korean Diaspora. Among characteristics of Korean Migrant Churches are:

- 1<sup>st</sup> generation-led church (schism with next generations)
- Inward focused-no evangelistic or missional vision (lack of Kingdom mind)
- Culturally isolated (ghettoised)
- Denominational division or independent
- Most churches are relatively small and at survival stage
- High proportion of members are students
- Stick to strong Korean church tradition (dawn prayer meeting and house visiting etc.)

The challenges facing Korean churches could be divided into those relating to ministry:

Paradigm shift (church growth to Kingdom extension) for church leadership, extensive education unity and networking.

Partnership development and involvement in mission. With regards to education, Korean churches face the challenges of training 2<sup>nd</sup> generation leadership, issue of identity (Korean with European heritage), systematic education of lay people, relationship between generations in the church, and family matters (divorce, conflict with children). Korean churches are active in mission. There are challenges such as overcoming language and cultural barriers, cooperation with local churches, concept of business as mission, cross cultural adaptation and developing good mission resources.

Generational gap is a serious issue facing Asian Diaspora. The first generation are born in Asian country of origin and immigrated during adulthood. Therefore, they speak Asian languages and their worldviews tend to be strongly Asian and monocultural, with hierarchical leadership styles. Generation 1.5 are those who were born in an Asian country and immigrated as teenagers. As they grow up in the West, their worldviews draws from both Asian and Western values and speaks both Asian and European languages. The third group could be called, Generation 2.0, who are born in the West, with broader worldviews and could be multilingual. They are most comfortable in the Western host cultures. Naturally, the above three groups face intergenerational conflicts arising from differing worldviews, such as marriage, family expectations, respect on elders, etc.

Despite the above challenges, the following case studies illustrate the developments among Korean Migrant Churches in Europe.

- Korean Churches Together in Europe (KCTE) was formed at John Knox Centre in Geneva, June, 2001. A theological committee was formed and seeks to promote partnership between Korean churches with local (Western) churches.
- Korean Mission London Conference (KMLC). The 1<sup>st</sup> conference were held in May, 2004 with over 1500 participants. Subsequent conferences were held in 2005, 2006, and 2007. The purpose of the conference is to promote unity, challenge for world mission, sharing mission resources, and developing mission strategy.
- London Mission School was started to conduct follow-up program of mission conference. It provides mission orientation about Biblical, historical, cultural and strategic perspectives for mission candidates.
- Eurovision Forum. The 1<sup>st</sup> forum was held among Korean church leaderships at Darmstadt in April 2007 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> forum was held at Hamburg in April 2008. The forum would be an advocate for world mission among Korean migrant churches. It's goals are: ministry, education, mission and partnership with local churches.
- Wycliffe UK organised a leadership consultation in June 2005, attended by about 50 church leaders. It offers the Perspectives on World Christian Movements study program designed by USCWM. Wycliffe Europe may offer this program to Korean church leaders in Europe

Other Korean partnerships worldwide such as Baltimore Forum (Korean Diaspora church leadership), KODIMNET (Korean Diaspora Missions Network) and KOSTE (Korean students in Europe) were highlighted.

Among strategies discussed at the workshop are:

- Research for migrant churches in Europe
- Assist church planting for Asian ethnic groups by platform churches like Korean and Chinese churches.
- Strengthen local partnership among mission agencies and denominations.
- Cooperate with KDI, KODIMNET, Eurovision forum in strategic plan

The following are Action Plans:

- Opening Diaspora Student Mission conference in connection with action groups in Europe
- Planning a Mission Training Program for young candidates (especially Asian youth) and church leadership
- Establish an institute for Asian Diasporas.

---

Please Note: The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of Redcliffe College.

If you would like to respond to this article, please use the 'Voice your comments' form on the [Encounters](http://www.redcliffe.org/encounters) website ([www.redcliffe.org/encounters](http://www.redcliffe.org/encounters)). You may prefer to email your response to [mission@redcliffe.org](mailto:mission@redcliffe.org), in which case please remember to include your full name, your organisation/role and whether you would like your comments posted on the [Encounters](http://www.redcliffe.org/encounters) discussion board.