

International and Domestic Sources of Religious Movements:
Korean Missionaries in High-Risk Countries

by

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A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved April 2023 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2023

ABSTRACT

Why do some local religious organizations, particularly Christian foreign mission groups, send missionaries to culturally and politically risky states where they face personal high risks and political entanglements? I argue that local religious groups' goals and motivations are driven by their involvement in international religious networks, which is a key factor in dispatching missionaries to high-risk countries. These religious activities are driven by constituted identities and expected behaviors from the international networks. I utilized a qualitative analysis of documented sources from domestic and international religious networks and 37 semistructured interview records with South Korean Protestant missionaries and church leaders to probe international influence on local actors' motivations of religious activities. I also used quantitative data of the number of Korean missionaries collected from the Korea World Missions Association and the Korea Research Institute for Mission to assess several hypotheses describing the influence of global religious discourse on local actors' motivations and practices. I built a framework of an interaction pattern of local actors and international religious networks and depicted how the shared idea of reaching high-risk countries among global religious actors influenced national actors. The study findings indicate that motivations of religious actors risking their lives in high-risk countries are connected to the power of discourse of "unreached people groups" shaped among global actors, and such discourse is actively constructed by global, national, and local actors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartfelt thanks go first to my dissertation committee members—Dr. George M. Thomas, Dr. Carolyn Warner, Dr. Miki Kittilson, and Dr. Jason Bruner. They provided me with intellectual inspiration, guidance, and encouragement throughout my years at Arizona State University. I would like to express my gratitude to my dissertation advisor, Dr. George M. Thomas. He willingly spent many hours mentoring me through the dissertation process and encouraging me to pursue the topic of transnational religious movements for the past years. I would also like to thank Dr. Carolyn Warner, who provided me with the theoretical lens to analyze the relations of religion and politics in the first year of my doctoral program. Dr. Jason Bruner provided valuable feedback on global Christianity and foreign missions in general, and his expertise on Christianity was of great help to this dissertation. I also would like to thank Dr. Miki Kittilson for her guidance in enlightening my interests in the political decision-making process in her comparative politics class.

I want to thank my teachers in South Korea, especially Dr. Sang Keun Kim and Dr. Yeon Sik Choi at Yonsei University. They kindled my interest in religion and politics while I was studying the fields of political science and theology. Dr. Hyung Jin Park and Dr. Ah Young Kim at the Torch Trinity Graduate University both offered valuable suggestions and knowledge on my dissertation topic when I was collecting data on foreign mission activities in Korea. I particularly want to express my gratitude to all my interview respondents who shared their stories and hardships of mission activities in places where their identities should be kept confidential.

I am grateful for the funding support for this research from the School of Politics and Global Studies, the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict, the Graduate and Professional Student Association at the Arizona State University, and the Korean Methodist Church Foundation. I also received valuable comments at the 2021 and 2022 Society for the Scientific Study of Religion meetings and 2022 Midwest Political Science Association Meeting. I would also like to thank my friends and cohort members at Arizona State University: Chen Jiang, Alexandra Williams, and Cagla Kilic, and Peyman Asadzade, with whom I spent time studying and sharing life during my doctoral program. The same goes for my brothers and sisters at the Church of Cross-Chandler, and I am indebted to their support and generosity for the past years.

My parents have given me enormous support. My father, a Methodist pastor, has supported my decision to pursue a degree in the United States and nurtured my interests in religion and politics; my mother has been my spiritual source of encouragement throughout this period. The same goes to my brother, who showed me love although we have been away from each other for a long time. Finally, I would like to thank my husband, Yongkyu, for his spiritual, mental, and material support during this long process. His kind words and encouragement enabled me to accomplish this work.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Why do some local religious organizations, particularly Christian foreign mission groups, dispatch missionaries beyond their geographical boundaries where they face personal high risks and political entanglements? Christians have reached out to non-Christians in other cultural settings since the first century. Christian churches, particularly Protestant churches, have extended the scope of foreign missions from the 1800s due to the Second Great Awakening (Bosch 1991, 708) on both continents of North America and Europe, and William Carey began his mission in Serampore, India, which marks the modern era of Protestant foreign mission. The 1910 World Mission Conference in Edinburgh also manifested Christian churches' efforts to cooperate in mission works, largely with Western members, so there have been global efforts to pursue evangelization on a collective level. Although almost all missionaries were sent from Europe and Northern America until 1910, now foreign mission organizations tend to send missionaries to states that are geographically and culturally close, such that most Asian missionaries work in Asia and most Latin American missionaries work in Latin and Northern America (Johnson et al. 2009). However, missionaries also go to remote, culturally distinct, and even hostile locations, sometimes becoming involved in political conflicts. Sending Christian missionaries to culturally resistant countries can result in political turmoil, because religious beliefs are enshrined in cultural identity and often inseparable from social existence (Brubaker and Laitin 1998; Fearon and Laitin 2000, 2003; Hanciles 2014; Hechter 2000; Posner 2004; Varshney 2002). For instance, Indian

culture is deeply steeped in Hinduism and its religious language is heavily infiltrated by Hindu terms, connotations and concepts, so foreign religion is considered a threat to the culture and identity, causing tensions with social and political institutions.

An abduction case of South Korean Christian missionaries illustrates this tension. During a medical aid trip, 23 Korean church volunteers were taken hostage by the Taliban in July 2007 while passing through Ghanzni Province, Afghanistan. The trip was sponsored by one of Korea's Protestant churches, Saemmul Presbyterian Church. Volunteers were expected to do missionary activities and "go into all the world and preach the gospel to all," including Afghan people. Of the 23 hostages captured, two men—Bae Hyeong-gyu, a 42-year-old South Korean pastor of Saemmul Church, and Shim Seong-min, a 29-year-old South Korean man—were executed on July 25 and July 30, respectively (Faiez and Wallace 2007). After negotiation between the Taliban and the South Korean government, the Taliban announced that South Korea had paid more than \$20 million, and two women were released on August 13. The remaining 19 hostages were freed at the end of August. Some expressed relief when they were released, but criticism of the hostages and their missionary work in an Islamic country, which are often hostile to Christians, was intense in South Korea (Choe 2007; Kim 2007). What causes these foreign mission groups to drive actors to engage in religious activities that likely lead to personal risk and negative political outcomes?

This study provides insight regarding a central empirical puzzle of why South Korean Protestant foreign mission groups started to send missionaries beyond their geographical boundaries, especially to high-risk countries. To address this puzzle, my research consisted of two parts. The first examined which factors drove the growth of

Korean foreign mission movements. The second part investigated what drove these local religious actors to target high-risk countries specifically and if global transnational religious activities influenced local religious actors' motivations and practices in high-risk countries. Here, I elaborate on my theoretical and empirical response and the methodological approaches I used to examine the question.

I used two theoretical tools, institutional and cultural approaches, to accomplish this goal. First, I examined institutional literature that explored religious groups' organizational interests and motivations. This literature has focused primarily on groups' rational organizational interests in expanding the influence of organizations in and beyond their geographic boundaries (Berman 2009; Finke and Stark 1989; Gill 1998; Iannaccone 1992; Koesel 2014; Stark and Iannaccone 1994; Warner 2000). I utilized this approach to examine if domestic churches' institutional motivations to expand the number of believers contributed to the expansion of foreign mission movements. Second, I used a cultural approach (Beyer 1994, 2006; Thomas 2005; Wuthnow 1988, 2011) to understand the process of constituting the motivations of these groups to send missionaries overseas. This approach was useful to analyze the origin of motivations, goals, discourse, and the process of sharing and disseminating common purposes among these groups. I analyzed the process of building these religious norms and ideas in action and how and when the idea of sending missionaries to high-risk countries began.

I argue that local religious organizations' beliefs, identities, and goals are heavily influenced by not only domestic factors but also the diffusion of international religious discourse carried by international religious networks, which is a key factor in mobilizing missionaries to high-risk countries. Constituted identities and expected behaviors created

in international networks influenced national actors who participated the networks, and this drove national Christian actors to send their missionaries to high-risk countries such as Muslim ones. To assess religious groups' organizational interests in foreign missions, I conducted a quantitative comparison using original data of the number of pastors and seminary graduates of Protestant churches in South Korea. I assessed whether the oversupply of religious service providers exceeded the domestic need, leading to increased overseas activities and missionaries. Based on the relevant data, it turns out that an oversupply of religious service providers did not happen; thus, this does not explain the growth of foreign missions.

Religious discourse refers to ideas and practices that are learned and practiced in social institutions, and religious members implicitly or explicitly agree to shared rules governing their practices and are observable to insiders and outsiders alike (Wuthnow 2011). International religious discourse is referred as the ideas and practices that are created and shaped at the international religious networks. For example, the urge to spread the word of God among cross-Atlantic conservative evangelists created the term "unreached people" in the 1970s, facilitating heated discussions among church leaders and missionaries in major global conferences, particularly during the Lausanne Movement conferences, one of the largest global religious networks that mobilized 2,300 evangelical leaders from 150 countries to collaborate for world evangelization, with its first meeting in 1974. Ralph Winter, a missiologist and anthropologist, presented the idea of unreached people at the 1974 Lausanne Congress in Switzerland. A list of unreached peoples was created during the next 2 decades, and another meeting in Pattaya, Thailand, in 1980 worked on unveiling the list of unreached people groups from various sources

(Robert 2011). A new religious movement to accomplish the goal, the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, was initiated in the 1990s, boosting the dispatching of missionaries to reach these people groups. Religious discourse, as reflected in these collective efforts to create and disseminate certain ideas, has an independent causal effect, and decides strategies of action, and are “persistent ways of ordering action through time” (Swidler 1986, 273).

By foreign mission activity, I refer to religious activities conducted by Protestant evangelical missionaries who are sent across national borders to foreign cultures (different from their culture of origin) to proselytize nonbelievers and adherents of other religions. Before the postcolonial period, foreign missions meant Anglo-American Protestants crossing geographical borders and evangelizing in unreached territories (Robert 2011). But the target of evangelization by evangelicals was changed from geographic centers to nonstate targets of “unreached people,” and ethnicity and culture became the core categories of focus (Robert 2011). Furthermore, this pan-Christian movement has been global—these religious actors shared common ideas to plant evangelical churches in every people group, leading to the birth of the Lausanne Movement. This transnational religious network was created to preserve certain religious values, and the movement promoted solidarity among believers and spurred action beyond geographic boundary.

Christian foreign mission has been always risky—crossing geographical and cultural boundaries involves living in idiosyncratic and often hazardous settings, lacking material and spiritual sources, and even facing death due to illness and social threats. The use of imperial technology by Christian missions and its larger role in colonialism, such

as legal and physical protection by colonizers (Bosch 2011), was to reduce these “risks” posed on missionaries in the 18th and 19th centuries. But the birth of global religious movements in the 1970s, such as the Lausanne Movement, changed the landscape of foreign missions, because targeting unreached people groups meant that missionaries often needed to cross boundaries and enter high-risk countries, where people groups are located. In this sense, missionaries need to manage their risks when conducting foreign missions in the postcolonial period.

Here, I define high-risk countries as those that have been resistant to Christian proselytizing or evangelization, and conversion to Christianity often involves restrictions such as accusation, deportation, and pressure at both government and social levels. Various attempts to measure the degree of religious restrictions have been made. The Pew Research Center’s measurement of global restrictions on religion is widely used. The report uses the combined Government Restrictions Index and Social Hostilities Index. The former measures the degree to which national and local governments restrict religion through coercion and force limitations on public preaching, prohibiting worship or religious practices, and activities of foreign missionaries. The latter is based on 13 indicators of how private individuals and social groups infringe on religious beliefs and practices (Pew Research Center 2011b)—for example, crimes, malicious actors caused by religious hatred, or armed conflicts or violence. The median scores of the Government Restrictions Index are high in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia-Pacific regions (Pew Research Center 2019), and the scores of the Social Hostilities Index are also high in these regions. For example, in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iran, governmental and societal restrictions are high (Pew Research Center 2009), whereas Vietnam and China

have high government restrictions on religion but are in the moderate or low range of social hostilities (Pew Research Center 2009). A 2020 report mentioned that 19 countries, including Afghanistan, Algeria, China, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, are categorized as “very high” regarding government restrictions, and Egypt, India, Israel, and Somalia have “very high” social hostilities involving religion (Pew Research Center 2022).

The annual report of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom¹ is also widely used, and it provides a list of “countries of particular concern” under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. These are countries where the government engages in or tolerates “particularly severe” violations of religious freedom. Under this act, particularly severe violations of religious freedom mean “systematic, ongoing, [and] egregious violations ... including violations such as—(A) torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; (B) prolonged detention without charges; (C) causing the disappearance of persons by the abduction or clandestine detention of those persons; or (D) other flagrant denial of the right to life, liberty, or the security of persons” (U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom 2022, 2). These violations of freedom mean the report mainly lists countries with severe forms of government restrictions on religion, and they are mainly Muslim-majority and communist countries.²

¹ The commission is an independent, bipartisan U.S. government advisory body, separate from the U.S. Department of State, that monitors and reports on religious freedom abroad and makes policy recommendations to the president, secretary of state, and Congress (U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom 2022, 1).

² Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan were redesignated as countries of particular concern in 2022, and Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, Syria, and Vietnam were newly added (U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom 2022, 2).

Christian organizations, such as Voice of the Martyrs, Open Doors, and Christian Persecution, list numerous examples of religious persecution. The quantification of Christian persecution by contemporary Western Christians is also noteworthy in terms of defining high-risk countries, and the Center for the Study of Global Christianity, which has been tracking the annual number of Christians and world religious believers, argued that 1 million Christians were killed in martyrdom situations, with an average of approximately 100,000 Christian martyrs each year (Johnson and Zurlo 2014). But statistics on persecution and martyrdom need to be examined with caution because of how Christian suffering could be leveraged politically (Bruner 2021). This does not mean that all measurements of persecution by Christianity-focused groups are biased, and Bruner (2021) argued that Christian ideas of persecution and martyrdom have created global identities that transcend the doctrinal boundaries of particular Christian traditions and framed certain forms of suffering as particularly Christian. More contextualization of ethnic conflict, domestic policies, and other factors needs to be considered when quantifying the level of persecution. In this sense, high-risk countries are defined as countries with high levels of governmental and social repression of religious minorities, including Christians, and various sources of measuring religious repression and religious freedom commonly denote the regions such as the Middle East, North Africa, and some parts of Asia, including some highly populated countries such as India and China.

South Korea provides an important case in which to examine the relationship of global religious networks and local religious actors. The strength of foreign mission activities by Korean churches has been particularly noteworthy—South Korean Protestant mission groups are among the leading global actors of new evangelical

movements, which have experienced significant growth in the Global South (Jenkins 2006), from 73 missionaries in 1979 to 28,039 missionaries reported to work in 171 countries (Korea World Missions Association [KWMA] 2020). Also, South Korea was the only non-Western state (besides India, which sends missionaries within its borders cross-culturally) that was among the top 10 countries for sending missionaries and replaced the United Kingdom as the second largest after the United States in the 2000s (Moll 2005). Although global missionary work had been traditionally understood as unidirectional efforts in which Western Christian missionaries reach out to non-Christian people, new evangelical movements began in the Global South in the 20th century, changing the landscape of global Christianity. Korean churches are a key member of Christian churches in the Global South, alongside Nigeria, Ghana, and Brazil, and Korea hosts the fourth Lausanne Conference in 2024. Examining a non-Western case of whether the religious discourse shared on a global level influences local religious activities using a Korean case could strengthen the validity of this study.

I assessed the data with a mixed-methods approach to better uncover the causal mechanisms at work. I conducted a quantitative comparison of variables using original data regarding the number of pastors and seminary graduates from annual reports of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK), collected annually from 1987 to 2010. This data collection enabled testing if the institutional motivations of Korean churches worked as a major cause of the increase in foreign mission activities. I assess whether the oversupply of domestic religious service providers, or seminary graduates, exceeded the need of religious services in Korea, leading to increased overseas activities and missionaries. Then, I performed a detailed examination of archival records of mainline Protestant

denominations and parachurch organizations covering the 1960s to 2000s and identified distinctive themes of when and how domestic and international actors called attention to an idea and interest in missions.

I also used qualitative analysis to examine the processes linking the international discourse to missionaries' motivation and practices in high-risk countries. I used a thematic analysis to analyze archival records, reports, and news articles in Chapter 4 and found common themes in the data, condensed these themes, and drew inferences. To collect relevant themes regarding international discourse, I used documented sources of the Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOP) and records of the AD2000 & Beyond movement. LOPs are historically important documents generated from the Lausanne Movement, and the AD2000 & Beyond Movement online archives include records related to various initiatives, projects, and conferences. I investigated when and how international actors created and disseminated the call to send more missionaries to high-risk countries using these resources.

The investigation of local actors' responses to the influence of international discourse was also quantitative and qualitative. The number of Korean missionaries in high-risk countries between 2008 and 2017 was collected from KWMA reports to examine to what extent Korean actors have sent missionaries, particularly to countries where Christian proselytizing or evangelizing have been difficult. Also, the most vivid example of the interaction of Korean actors with the Lausanne meetings is Korea's hosting of the Global Consultation on World Evangelization (GCOWE) in 1995. Documented sources of this global meeting and case studies of two local churches that sent their missionaries to high-risk countries were also used.

Deep and informative responses of domestic actors were collected via interviews. Thirty-seven interviews, including 30 missionaries, five leaders of mission groups and churches, and two academics, were conducted between May and December 2022. A wide range of opinions and attitudes about international discourse and risk factors involving the state power was discussed.

The results show that a cultural source, a shared idea to target specific groups of people in high-risk countries, was a strong motivation for foreign missions via continuous interactions among domestic actors, national entities, and international networks. The idea of unreached people, “an ethno-linguistic group without an indigenous, self-propagating Christian church movement” (Winter 2009, 536), was heavily discussed in the context of global evangelical networks, first in the Lausanne Movement (1974, 1989, 2010) and the AD2000 & Beyond Movement. This concept was highly influential in encouraging global Christians to target these groups of people, in most cases in high-risk countries. These globalized values and ideology shared among international mission communities prompted Korean Protestant foreign mission organizations to target these groups in culturally high-risk countries. Korean church leaders participated in several Lausanne Movement from the first meeting in 1974, and Korean and American religious actors’ heavy interaction when adopting the term unreached people in the 1990s facilitated this process. The interviews with Korean missionaries corroborated that the term unreached people acted as a powerful motivator of Koreans’ religious activities in high-risk countries.

Organization of Dissertation

Chapter 2 presents an extended discussion of the theory of new institutionalism and culture theory. An institutional approach examining religious organizations' practices and discourse is first discussed, and the process of constituting religious norms and ideas is reviewed in detail using a cultural theory of religion and religious discourse. Then, the relevant literature of a world polity model and norm-diffusion model is discussed, explaining the norm-adopting process through the interactions of international organizations, national actors, governments. However, there have been few empirical studies of how religious norms are shared and disseminated, and I explain this gap in the literature and the significance of this study.

I also discuss the context of Korean transnational religious movements in domestic and global religious network settings and how local religious actors' motivations and practices are interconnected to discussions on a global level. Then, several hypotheses are provided regarding two empirical questions: First, what is driving Korean actors to actively participate foreign mission, and second, why do Korean Christians send their missionaries to high-risk countries in particular? Then, I discuss my research method, data sources, and justification for selecting South Korea as the empirical case of the study.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the first empirical puzzle, tracing what is driving local (Korean) religious organizations' interests in foreign missions. I present local sources of religious movements to assess whether institutional and cultural motivations caused the growth of Korean foreign missions. The results suggest that an oversupply of religious service providers did not happen and thus, was not related to the growth of foreign

missionaries. Yet a cultural source, the interaction of local religious actors and global religious networks, from the early 1960s greatly influenced their interest in foreign missions, and Korean's understanding of faith pertaining to Korea's historical records of persecution and resilience also worked as a strong motivation of foreign missions.

A second empirical puzzle of motivations of religious groups going to high-risk countries and their political entanglements is discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 4 examines the religious discourse shared and disseminated among international religious networks. I offer a detailed examination of records and publications of the international religious movements from the Lausanne Movement (1974, 1989, 2010) and the AD2000 and Beyond Movement. A discussion to mobilize world evangelists' focus on the discourse of unreached people was gaining interest, and the movement was highly influential in encouraging global Christians to target these groups, which were mostly in high-risk countries. The results show an evolutionary process of the development of the idea throughout the 1980s and 1990s: The urgency of foreign mission, social and political factors of target regions, and relocation of resources to restricted regions were the rationale for sending more religious actors to culturally risky states where many unreached people reside.

Chapter 5 analyzes the pattern of local actors' involvement in global religious network using the case of a global-level conference, the GCOWE in 1995. I assessed a hypothesis that the participation of Korean Protestant churches in global conferences was associated with the increase of missionaries in high-risk countries. I utilized data from the number of missionaries in high-risk countries and documented sources of two local churches that participated the unreached people movement. The results support that

Korean mission groups' involvement in global religious networks and sharing global religious discourse of unreached people, as discussed in Chapter 4, had an effect on the increase of missionaries in high-risk countries, such as the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, North India, and China.

This led to a qualitative analysis of the motivations of Korean missionaries who have been to and are in high-risk countries, reported in Chapter 6. Using interview results, I assessed the argument that ideas, beliefs, and discourse from the context of the international Protestant mission community influence Korean religious actors' mission activities and their involvement in conflicts across borders. The analysis shows that a globally shared discourse of unreached people worked as a powerful motivator of Korean missionaries in high-risk countries. Local religious actors, however, do not automatically accept international religious discourses and ideas, but rather they participate in a norm-creating process, suggesting a new definition of unreached people. The results also enumerate political tensions caused by religious activities in high-risk countries: Missionaries were aware of risk factors of their activities, and their dual identities as religious actors and other professions (to seek business or student visas in high-risk countries) are bound with the state's surveillance and potential persecutions. Finally, Chapter 7 restates the theoretical and empirical contribution of the study and summarizes the results.

The hypotheses presented throughout this dissertation were assessed based on collected data, considering that the process of constructing religious ideas and norms is culturally determined but also affected by religious groups' economic and organizational reasons. To understand the workings of religion and its affiliated actors, using both

approaches is not mutually exclusive, given various approaches allow us measure and confirm the richness of religious beliefs and practices. Tracing international and domestic sources of religious movements in this study contributed to these efforts.

Chapter 2

THEORY AND METHODS

As suggested in the introductory chapter, foreign mission organizations send out missionaries due to various motivations. In this chapter, I review two strands of literature to analyze motivations of foreign missions. First, I explore the institutionalism literature examining religious groups' interests and motivations, focusing on their rational organizational interests in expanding the influence of organizations in and beyond the geographic boundaries. Second, I use a cultural theory of religion to examine the origin of motivations, goals, discourse, and the process of sharing and disseminating common purposes among these groups.

I provide insight into a central empirical puzzle of why Christian foreign mission groups send missionaries to high-risk countries. I argue that local religious organizations' beliefs, identities, and goals are heavily influenced by not only domestic factors but also the diffusion of international religious discourse carried by international religious networks, which is a key factor in mobilizing missionaries to high-risk countries. These domestic and international religious activities are mainly driven by constituted identities and expected behaviors. I elaborate my theoretical response to this question and establish my methodological approach to examining the question.

The following sections first present definitions of key concepts to elaborate theoretical approaches and given questions. I then review the literature assessing the interests, motivations, and goals of religious groups and actors. Institutional theory is useful to understand religious groups' organizational decisions to send trained

missionaries to hazardous regions, whereas a cultural approach offers merits to analyze Christian foreign mission groups' process of constituting goals, values, and identities. I examine the relative merits of both institutional and cultural theory. I investigate a specific Christian community, Korean Protestant missionary groups, to evaluate the implications of my theoretical interpretations, and this is followed with a justification of why South Korea foreign mission groups is a good case study and present my criteria for selecting the cases for my quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Nature of Christian Foreign Missions

Previous studies in the field of religion and politics limited their empirical evidence to activities of national churches in a given geographical territory. Scholars have explored official statements, interviews with church leaders, and official political strategies of churches confined to a state. The central focus has been on a religion's role as a belief system (Casanova 2011; Hurd 2011; Philpott 2000; Shah and Philpott 2011; Warner and Walker 2011) or coordinated organization (Berman and Laitin 2008; Iannaccone 1992, 1994, 1998; Gill 2008; Gill and Lundsgaarde 2004; Koesel 2014; McCauley 2014; Sarkissian 2015; Warner 2000; Warner et al. 2015; Woodberry 2012), yet few studies have considered that religious activity is not restricted to individual states, no matter which organizational or cultural goals these religious groups aim to achieve. Some studies have expanded the scope of study using cross-national analysis (Gill and Lundsgaarde 2004; Gryzmala-Busse 2015; Norris and Inglehart 2004; Stark and Iannaccone 1994), but these issues involve the interaction of politics and religion in a

given territorial setting, rather than focusing its attention on global effects of religious activities beyond the border (McAlister 2018).

Nevertheless, more attention needs to be built around changing global patterns of religious activities. Christianity, particularly, has shown a regional change: It has been growing in Asia, Africa, and Latin America while decreasing its strength (in terms of number of believers and rate of growth) in Europe, North America, and Oceania (Johnson et al. 2013). But an even more important pattern of change is that these religious groups move around the world and have cumulative political, social, and cultural effects on foreign countries, because they bring in new political and social systems such as education, medicine, and cultural views.³ According to Woodberry (2012), societies where Protestant missionaries arrived earlier and were more prevalent ended up better off based on several indicators of human thriving: literacy, educational enrollment, infant mortality, life expectancy, economic development, corruption, and even political democracy (Winter et al. 2009). Thus, the legacy of religious groups' activities can be extended beyond the domestic setting. Dispatching Protestant missionaries to different cultures connotes further implications, attempting to gain new believers and spreading particular religious ideas to other cultural settings. Transnational religious activities, which I define as foreign mission activities, need to receive more attention—these religious activities pertain to political acts on foreign soil, as foreign missionaries interact with state and social actors in target countries and result in social and cultural changes.

³ This does not mean that the author denies imperial connotations of mission. Woodberry argued that, however, they are usually based on novels, movies, anecdotes, and subjective impression, so he attempted to offer an extensive examination of historical and statistical evidence about the average cumulative effect of missions (Woodberry 2012).

Theoretical Interpretations of Religion

Religion can be defined as an ideology or set of beliefs that connects an individual to a supernatural deity (Eliade 1959). People find sources of order from the deity. Geertz (1973, 90) interpreted religion as a “formulating conception of a general order of existence,” because humans have innate urges to interpret chaos and find order.⁴ Here, religion is considered a cultural system, and it “becomes a type of symbolic universe that transcends and orders reality wholistically” (Wuthnow 1987, 39). Religion shapes the identity, order, and norms of how a human understands the universe. On the other hand, Asad (2009) argued that other aspects of religion, practices, community, and institutional aspects should be included in the concept of religion because they also shape the workings of religion. Wuthnow (1987) had argued earlier that the study of religion and culture generally needs to consider practices. In this study, I conceptualized religion as cultural, as it is expressed in discourse and practices, and religious actors and institutions carry both organized and ideational interests.

Institutionalism focuses more on the aspect of organized forms of religion in which belief systems and rituals are systematically established, and it criticizes a cultural approach to religion. It does not mean that institutionalists deny the power of religious ideas that decide the way of interaction, but “religious beliefs are typically carried and promoted by organized religion and that these religious organizations have seemingly

⁴ Talal Asad criticized Geertz’ definition of religion as a cultural system, and argued it is more embodied in practice, discipline, and community compared to Protestantism (Lincoln 2003). Asad basically argued that the model of religion as culture emerged as the result of struggles among European countries (Asad 1983), so other aspects of religion, practices, community, and institutional aspects should be included in the concept of religion (Asad 2009). This way of defining religion leads us to think of the importance of religious institutions that regulate religious discourse, practices, and community, reproducing them over time and modifying them as necessary (Lincoln 2003).

secular interests, namely in organizational maintenance and expansion” (Warner and Walker 2011, 125). Here religion is considered as having independent organizational interests and competing with political and other social institutions. Institutionalists are critical of a culture theory because religious groups’ institutional interests can result in compromising or even changing beliefs (Kalyvas 1996).

Drawing from these definitions of religion, the approaches to understanding the dynamics of religion used by previous scholarship can be classified into two broad categories of explanation, viewing religion as institutions in new institutionalism theory (rational institutionalism)⁵ and as ideas (religious heritage and culture) in a constructivist theory (Warner and Walker 2011). I intend to use both theoretical approaches because religion as an organization has both secular and religious interests, and its practices and interests are shaped by its ideas and discourse as well. I discuss that only using an institutionalism approach suffers from theoretical problems. We lack a clear understanding of the processes of shaping religious motivations and goals of religious groups if we only understand religious dynamics confined to an institutional aspect. As religious organizations pursue ideational and organizational interests, using both approaches to understand dynamics of religion is not mutually exclusive.

⁵ Rational choice institutionalism, using rational choice theory, focuses on the role of institutions solving many collective action problems and assumes that actors have fixed preferences or tastes and behave instrumentally so as to maximize preferences (Hall and Taylor 1996). New institutionalism theory shares assumptions of the role of institutions with rational choice institutionalism, and the religious economic approach argues that preferences of religious actors are fixed and the functions of organizations lower transaction costs. The constructivist approach to religion can be classified as sociological institutionalism following the definition of Hall and Taylor (1996), because sociological institutionalism explains how institutions originate and change differently. Sociological institutionalists define institutions much more broadly and include symbols, cognitive scripts, moral templates, and more cultural parts (Hall and Taylor 1996). They define culture itself as “institutions,” and culture (religion) shapes the preferences of actors.

Developing an Institutional and Cultural Interpretation of Religion and Foreign Missions

Rational institutionalism theory has considered religion as an “attribute of individuals and communities as pursuing organized interest” (Warner and Walker 2011, 115). Institutionalists emphasize that religious organizations are constrained by the secular context in which they operate. Theologies need organizations, otherwise the theology cannot be disseminated, and Lincoln (2003) argued that religious institutions regulate religious discourse, practices, and community, reproducing them over time and modifying them as necessary. This line of approaches became prevalent in the 1990s because previous literature was more geared to descriptive case studies. More comparative, agency-focused approaches to religion were made to make sophisticated, puzzle-driven, and structured comparison to explore hypotheses (Bellin 2008).

Institutionalists focus on the socioeconomic conditions in which religious groups interact with other religious groups and state institutions. First, religious actors can be incentivized to maximize their profits (usually the number of believers) and maintain and supply religious resources based on their preferences (Berman 2009; Finke and Stark 1989; Gill 1998; Gill and Lundsgaarde 2004; Iannaccone 1992; Koesel 2014; Stark and Iannaccone 1994; Warner 2000). It is associated with a religious economic theory, focusing on socioeconomic conditions in which religious groups engage to compete with other religious groups and try to protect their market share, if that is their preference (Gill 1998). Here, the state’s regulation and conditions that create religious plurality are crucial. If we assume that religious plurality is maintained, religious groups would try to expand their market, and if their domestic religious market is saturated, they will export

potential religious providers overseas. Second, institutional features of relationship between religion and the state also set the condition of religious groups' activities (Blaydes and Chaney 2013; Gill 2008; Gill and Keshavarzian 1999; Gryzmala-Busse 2016a; Koesel 2014; Philpott 2007; Sarkissian 2015; Schonthal 2016; Wenger 2011). This is related to legal arrangements of religious authority and secular authority (Warner and Walker 2011), so it is normally understood as a church–state relation, or sacred and secular divisions. For instance, a state's religious policies on registration of worship or a ban on religious activities condition religious groups' scope of activities.

But religious groups' motivations and practices are also conditioned by their value choices (Mainwaring 1986), because religious organizations are carriers of not only organized interests, but also constituted identities and expected behaviors. A constructivist theory⁶ concentrates more on the independent effects of religion as a belief system, “the logic through which interests are rationalized and prioritized” (Ansari 2006, 259). To what extent are religious ideas important as causes of political outcomes (Thomas 2005)? Religion became more important among scholars as some scholars became disillusioned with a secularization theory due to events such as the Iranian Revolution and September 11 attacks (Thomas 2005). Religion came to be understood as

⁶ Constructivism in the field of international relations deals with the process of identity and interest formation, which scholars have argued has been the most crucial factor in determining anarchy and international order (Fox and Sandler 2004). Constructivists have asserted that self-help and power politics are constructed institutions, not essential features of anarchy, and states' interests are endogenous to interaction (Wendt 1992). Yet the Westphalian international system and the state are the creation of man, so the space for religion was not considered by constructivists in political science. Because according to postmodernism, “reality is not God-given or nature-given, but human imposed” (Vasquez 1998, 218), there is no single way of understanding or explaining the evolution of international relations (Fox and Sandler 2004).

challenging modernity, and scholars began to question the superiority of modernity represented by reason, science, and technology (Thomas 2005).

The birth of modern state system is crucial to understand the relationship of religion and modernity. After the Peace of Westphalia (in 1648) recognized the full territorial sovereignty of states and allowed European rulers to have the right to determine the states' religion—Protestantism or Catholicism—the modern state system seemed morally superior or otherwise better than other systems, including religion, so it seemed religion was marginalized. But modernity itself began to be understood as a distinct cultural process, being rooted in economic (capitalism), political-legal (nation-state, sovereignty) and civic spheres (Thomas 2007), shaping certain norms such as rational action and progress. If we assume that modernity and statehood are constituted as a specific cultural process, the state system is not morally superior to religion (Hurd 2004, 2006, 2009; Philpott 2000), because the modern state system is regarded as a specific sphere of a global history. From the historical perspective, we can understand modernity as the differentiation of the state, economy, and civic spheres, often labeled “secular,” and the religious sphere, often referred to as privatization. Religions engaging these state, economic, and civic spheres have been referred to (e.g., Casanova 2011) as deprivatization of the religious, noting that “religious traditions throughout the world are refusing to accept the marginal and privatized role” (Casanova 2011, 57). Thus, when we want to know under what conditions religion engages in secular spheres, we need to remind ourselves that religious spheres interact with secular spheres in the global cultural process.

This interaction of religious and secular spheres is global. For example, the idea to create pan-Islam gave birth to transnational actors and organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (Thomas 2005). The religious actors' urge to engage in secular spheres is the product of the modern global cultural process, and it shapes our understanding of sacred and secular authority on a global level (Beyer 1994, 2006). Here, global religious actors share common ideas to preserve certain religious values, promote solidarity among believers, and spur action to create transnational religious organizations beyond geographic boundary. The rise of other intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund represents how secular spheres also seek global cooperation to disseminate certain norms like international liberal economy and rationalism. These transnational actors and groups monitor, facilitate, or implement shared ideas in international relations (Thomas 2005). The sharing of these ideas and discourse comes through consultation and discussion as religious leaders gather in national or global conferences, and it influences local actors' preferences and goals.

In summary, using a constructivist approach to understand a religion's independent causal role and religious actors' motivations is necessary, along with considering the economic and organizational considerations of religious actors. This is because religious actors are motivated with rational material calculations and ideational interests. Thus, my dissertation attempted to consider both material and cultural factors on both levels of domestic and international settings.

Relevant Literature in International Relations and Missiology

As discussed, shared transnational ideas are transmitted to local participants of networks, influencing their actions and ideas. Connecting international dynamics to domestic politics is a common topic in the field of international politics, and the literature on the “second image reversed” has focused on how international factors cause domestic outcomes (Gourevitch 1978). In explaining how ideas generated from international organizations diffuse among local national actors, norm diffusion models suggest that the introduction of policy change is the results of a multistage “spiral model” through the interactions of international organizations, national actors, governments (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999), mainly after World War II human rights regime. However, religious issues are rarely discussed, and the framework of norm diffusion has been largely adopted by gender scholars to explain how rapidly gender equality was achieved globally (Hughes, Krook, and Paxton 2015; Paxton, Hughes, and Green 2006; Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997; Towns 2010), including same-sex and LGBT policy agendas (Kollman 2007). To complement existing work, I conducted the first empirical analysis of discourse of international religious networks using data from multiple sources generated by these networks.

Transnational sociologists suggest another strand of arguments regarding world polity accounts. The world polity of international organizations, transnational actors, and states generates new international norms that are shared and create consensus and conformity across the international system, thus affecting local states to adopt certain norms (Boli and Thomas 1997; Frank, Hironaka, and Schofer 2000; Meyer et al. 1997). However, empirical research on adopting religious norms also has been less attempted

here, and the current literature focuses more on aspects of the modern standards of the behavior of states, such as legal and policy reforms in education, human rights, or women's rights. More empirical analysis, especially in terms of transnational religious networks, is required to fill this gap in the literature.

Another strand of argument holds that these transnational dynamics of creating and sharing religious discourse are a power-ridden process, reflecting religious groups' geopolitical visions of defining unreached people groups as aiming, targeting, and pursuing specific groups of people to evangelize and reducing differences among target people to a matter of cultural barriers (Han 2016). It basically argues that religious groups' seemingly nonpolitical actions "amplify or reflect certain motivations and intentions" (Han 2016, 184) and takes a radical approach that the very act of religious actors' creating and sharing common ideas to preserve certain values and taking action plans to evangelize is a normative process. It seems that transnational efforts of religious actors are part of a power-knowledge system, so any interactions of religious and political spheres are already power-ridden. While showing a strong analytic approach toward the process of constituting religious discourse, Han's study (2016) assumes that the interaction of sharing and creating norms and ideas is unidirectional—the action of measuring and defining targets of mission is entirely a unilateral power-ridden process. However, constituting religious norms and religious visions is initiated by multiple actors from both global and local levels, and the interaction pattern is often challenged, especially by local actors, if the norm does not fit with local circumstances or cultural variants. Although my empirical evidence shows that globally shared discourse

influences local actors' motivations and practices, local actors also initiate a voluntary process of norm-making, redefining the meaning of transmitted ideas.

In the field of missiology, the study of Christian missions, a systemic approach overarching the mechanism of the interaction of international networks and local participants is lacking. A vast literature on the study of international mission networks exists (Kalu 2008; Koschorke 2016; Robert 1994, 2011; Stanley 2013a, 2013b), but the construction process of global discourse and dissemination of the idea are not systematically presented in the literature, such as three step processes presented in the world culture theory—the construction of identity and purpose, systemic maintenance of actors' identities, and legitimation of actors' identities. (Meyer et al. 1997). In most cases, international and local level interactions are chronologically and historically described, less theorized structurally. Previous studies can be categorized in two ways: first, those describing the process of constructing religious discourse in international networks and second, those on domestic religious actors' responses to global religious discourse. The literature includes reviews of historical changes of international religious movements (Ahn 2011; Coote 1990; Hunt 2011; Steuernagel 1991; Stott 1995) and the change of key concepts and ideas in foreign mission work (Bosch 1987; Coote 2000; Hong 2013; Matthey 2001; Robert 2011; Walls 1991). Ahn's (2011) study reviewed the historical background of the Lausanne Movement, and Hong's (2013) article described religious discourse created during three Lausanne conferences (1974, 1989, 2010), citing three primary documents: the Lausanne Covenant, the Manila Manifesto, and the Cape Town Commitment. These studies examined how the religious discourse was developed and transformed by transnational religious actors, using multiple historical documents

generated from conferences. But they still lack a systemic framework to explain the power of ideas and discourse shared among international actors and how those influenced local actors' motivations and involvement in transnational religious activities.

Park's (2014a) study is worth noting in this vein, because it focused on the change and diffusion of discourse on the domestic level. He discussed how the discourse of unreached people, an ethnolinguistic group without an indigenous Christian church movement, has been interpreted and changed and how ideas transformed into substantial movements across the world. It also described the responses of domestic actors and offered empirical evidence that the discourse of unreached people was vigorously adopted by domestic churches, Korean Protestant churches. He suggested that the GCOWE convened in 1995 in Seoul was the focal point of garnering interest in unreached people. The Unreached People Mission Alliance (UPMA) was established in 1993 and encouraged churches to adopt people groups (Park 2014a). But the study lacked empirical evidence of whether churches have carried out their plans, sending missionaries to reach these people groups. Also, as discussed, a systematic theory is needed to discuss the broad framework of the process of formation and diffusion of religious ideas. Thus, my dissertation offers a theoretical contribution because it built on the move toward cultural approaches coupled with the previous literature on the process of diffusion of globally transmitted ideas. It also offers empirical contributions to the field by providing quantitative and qualitative evidence of local responses to this global interaction.

Korean Foreign Missions in Domestic and Global Contexts

Although most Asian nations had become subjugated by Western powers and turned anti-Western during the colonial period, Korea was under the Japanese colonial rule during the early 20th century. Protestantism was introduced to Korea during the modernization period in the 1880s, along with the first arrival of American and British Presbyterian and Methodist missionaries on the Korean peninsula (Kang 1997; Paik 1971). Missionaries established dozens of modern schools and hospitals in Korea at the end of the 19th and early 20th century. Woodberry's (2012) explanation that conversionary Protestants heavily influenced the rise and spread of democracy in Korea is compelling in this sense, because first-generation Western missionaries translated the Bible into Korean and facilitated lay religious movements, leading to alterations of the class structure and sparking religious liberty issues in Korea (Woodberry 2012). During the Japanese colonial period, Protestants were advocates of anti-Japanese rule, and more than half of the religious arrestees were Protestants when the nation-wide Independence Movement began on March 1, 1919 (Lee 2019).

After Korea was liberated from the Japanese colonial regime in 1945 and the first democratic government was established in 1948, Protestantism had grown as a major religion in South Korea because it gained political favoritism from the government, which was backed by President Syngman Rhee, a Protestant elder. A dramatic growth of domestic churches happened, as the number of members of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) increased from 539,534 in 1965 to 2,699,410 in 2008, for example (Paik 1987). This coincided with the country's economic development and rapid urbanization

between the 1970s and 1990s.⁷ Another reason that Protestantism remained stable is that churches implicitly backed the authoritarian regime's anti-Communism and pro-Americanism during the 1970s and 1980s (Han 2009).

Protestantism is one of three major public religions in South Korea now, along with Catholicism and Buddhism, and more than 30% percent of the South Korean population identifies as Christian (including Catholicism). Major denominations in South Korea include the Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK); General Assembly of Presbyterian Church in Korea (GAPCK); Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea; Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea; and Korean Methodist Church (KMC). The Korean religious market is pluralistic, because the country's constitution officially supports the freedom of an individual or community to manifest religion or belief in public or private and separates religion and politics.⁸

⁷ As shown below, GDP per capita was \$158.2 in 1960 and reached \$29,742 in 2017. Source: World Bank, World Development Indicators.

<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&series=NY.GDP.PCAP.CD&country=KOR#>

⁸ Constitutional excerpts (clauses that reference religion) are as follows: Article 11 (1) All citizens are equal before the law, and there may be no discrimination in political, economic, social, or cultural life on account of sex, religion, or social status. (2) No privileged caste is recognized or ever established in any form. (3) The awarding of decorations or distinctions of honor in any form is effective only for recipients, and no privileges ensue therefrom; Article 19 [Conscience] All citizens enjoy the freedom of conscience.; Article 20 [Religion, Church] (1) All citizens enjoy the freedom of religion. (2) No state religion may be recognized, and church and state are to be separated. Source: Association of Religion Data Archives, socioeconomic status of the Republic of Korea, Source: https://thearda.com/world-religion/national-profiles?u=124c#S_2 (March 9, 2023).

Largest Religious Groups (South Korea)

(Source: Religious Characteristics of States, 2015)

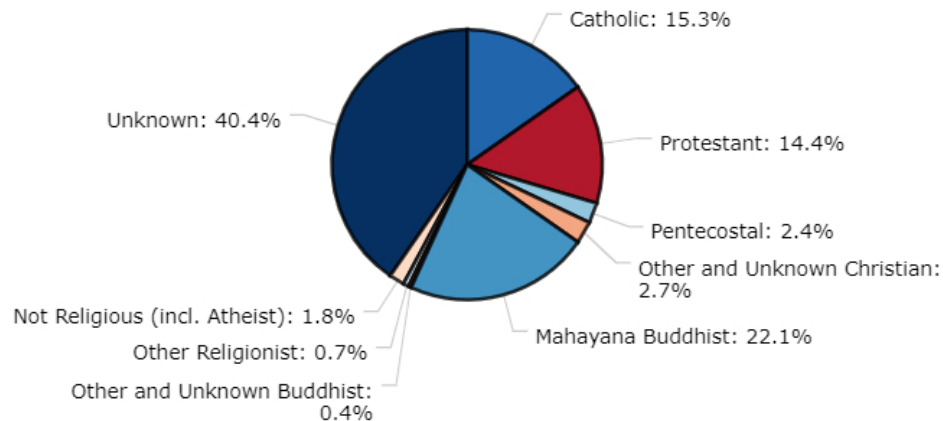


Figure 1: The Largest Religious Groups of Korea (Source: Association of Religion Data Archives)

The growth of foreign mission activities by Korean Protestant churches is breathtaking. Major Protestant denominations have increased the number of overseas missionaries tremendously since the 1970s, increasing from 73 in 1979 to 27,205 in 2016. Now, 28,039 missionaries are reported to work in 171 countries (KWMA 2020). Four periods can be identified to explain the growth of mission activities (Kim 2011). The first period involved initial foreign mission movements to Asian states from 1955 to 1970. A couple of missionaries were sent to Thailand in 1955, and female missionaries were dispatched to Pakistan in the 1960s. The second period was an expansion stage, with an increase in the number of mission groups, missionaries, and target states from 1971 to 1989. In this period, more than 30 missionaries went to Indonesia, Bangladesh, the

Philippines, Taiwan, and other states via six mission groups. By 1989, 1,178 missionaries were in 72 foreign states, enlarging the territorial scope to Africa and South America (Kim 2011).

The third period involved a dramatic quantitative increase of missionary movements from 1989 to 2000. More than 10,000 missionaries were sent to foreign states during this time. A major conditional factor was the removal of the travel ban; overseas travel was banned in Korea until 1990, and it was not possible to freely travel around the world without special permission from the government, except the limited purpose of diplomatic work, study abroad, or foreign trade, due to the restriction rule posed by authoritarian regime. The lift of the ban was facilitated by democratization in 1987 from authoritarian regimes, and Korean society's globalization and increased interaction with foreign societies was aided by the 1988 Seoul Olympic (Han 2017; Kim 2011; Moon 2008). The government had established diplomatic relations with only 16 states in the 1960s, but this grew to 114 states by the 1980s. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Korea made continuous diplomatic ties with former communist regimes starting in the 1990s, creating opportunities to dispatch missionaries to unexplored territories. Finally, the fourth period is a mature stage stretching from 2001 to the present. More than 20,000 missionaries went abroad, and the number doubled in a decade (from 2000 to 2011), further expanding the scope of missionary movements.

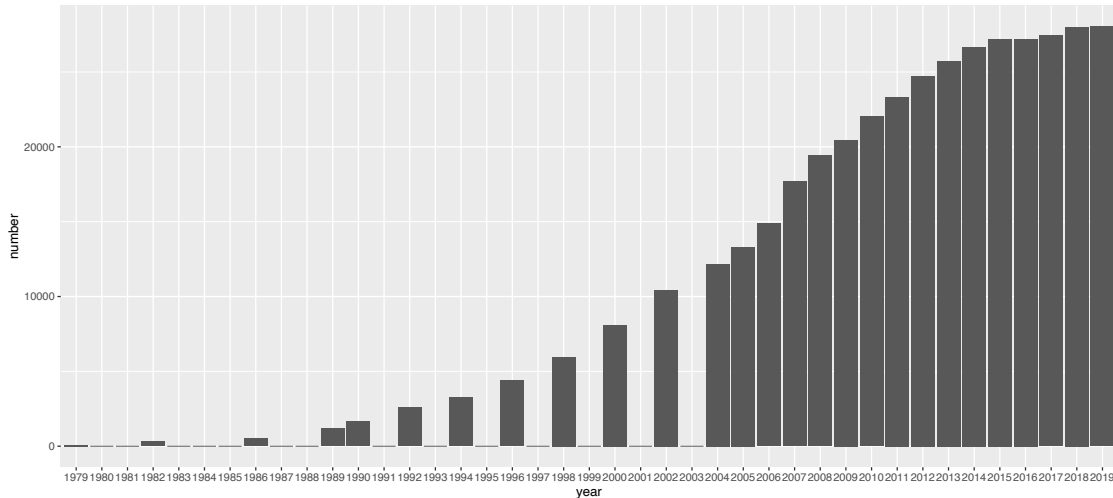


Figure 2: The Number of Korean Foreign Missionaries⁹

But the lifting of travel restrictions does not entirely explain a sudden increase of foreign mission activities, because sending a large number of trained missionaries demands resources and dedicated efforts by religious groups beforehand. Several factors can be suggested: It could have been caused by religious market saturation. The number of churchgoers has decreased since the 1990s, indicating a decline in religious demand. On the supply side, the oversupply of seminary graduates could have further saturated the market, leading to increased overseas activities and missionaries. Because religious service providers could not find jobs in the domestic market, seminary graduates, soon to be ordained pastors, turned their eyes outside to establish churches in the overseas religious market.

⁹ The dataset I utilized is from the KWMA and the Korea Research Institute for Mission (KRIM). KRIM has been collecting data on the number of Korean missionaries, mission organizations, and target countries from 1979, but data before 2004 were not collected annually. The KWMA dataset has collected extensive data from 2004, and it offers annual data on the number of missionaries per denomination and parachurch organization, target country, and target region in a nationally representative survey. The graph shows the number of missionaries before 2004 from KRIM sources (due to a lack of data, years with no data are marked as 0) and annual data after 2004 from KWMA sources. The number excludes the dual membership of missionaries who are affiliated with both parachurch organizations and denomination boards.

The second factor can be a cultural one from the domestic context. Protestantism was introduced to Korea by American missionaries in 1884, and the encounter between Western missionaries and Koreans produced a multiplicity of indigenous initiatives—for example, the merger of Protestantism and nationalism in the context of anti-colonialism during the Japanese colonial rule in early 20th century (Koschorke 2016). In the same vein, Korean churches’ indigenous efforts and interests to engage in foreign missions should be noted.¹⁰ Koreans’ efforts and interests in foreign missions could have facilitated churches’ zeal to participate foreign missions before the travel ban was lifted. Third, cultural factors could have originated from the international level: The influence of discourse of a growing significance of foreign mission shared among international religious actors could have pushed the growth of missions by Korean actors. These explanations will be assessed with collected data sources in the next chapter.

Korean churches have actively sent out missionaries. In total, 43 Protestant denominations sent out 12,699 missionaries and parachurch mission groups dispatched 16,446 missionaries worldwide (KWMA 2020). About 50% of Korean missionaries reside in Asian regions (KWMA 2020). This confirms that religious groups consider organizational interests, because it is rational to invest physical and human resources and expand the religious market in neighboring countries. Yet recently, the change of mission target states to culturally diverse and even politically hostile states happened. There are

¹⁰ Recognizing growing significance of Christians in the Global South, this approach to understanding indigenous forms of Christianity compared to colonial forms is argued by the Munich school of world Christianity (Koschorke 2016). The Munich school focuses on this comparative approach to diverse forms of Christianity, because Western Christians during the successive waves of missionary expansion have met older forms of Christianity in different regions outside Europe (Koschorke 2016). Locals could initiate their own versions of foreign missions. In the same vein, Hanciles (2004) argued that some non-Western missionary initiatives embody radically distinctive elements and that the Western movement that preceded it provided a fairly limited basis or framework for analysis of its dynamic and possible impact.

11,681 missionaries (about 40% of the total)¹¹ conducting foreign missions in high-risk countries where high levels of persecution exist (KWMA 2017). One of symbolic skirmishes between Korean missionaries and local Muslims was the 2007 hostage incident. In 2007, despite Islam's proscription against conversion, a group of Korean Protestant missionaries visited Afghanistan to convert Muslims to Christianity. Members of the Taliban kidnapped several of the missionaries, killing two. This led to a diplomatic crisis and exacerbated local religious conflicts.

However, the episode in Afghanistan does not entirely explain choices made by these mission groups if we only consider an institutional approach. Why do they go to such risky countries? Where and when did the idea of reaching out to Muslims and preaching the gospel originate? Why do they make seemingly irrational decisions to risk their lives in high-risk countries even though they can send missionaries to geographically close and politically safe states? I argue that we need to take insights from both institutional and cultural approaches seriously. An institutional approach could allow us to examine the socioeconomic conditions religious organizations face when deciding the scope of their resources and targets. A cultural approach is useful to understand the decisions and goals of these religious groups beyond calculating their material interests, and their ideas, goals, and decisions are interconnected with worldviews and discourse.

Certain religious norms of evangelization were widely circulated in the global context. There was a major global initiative to unite dispersed mission efforts via a

¹¹ As of 2017, KWMA reported 1,999 missionaries in the Middle East and North Africa, 1,571 in South and West Africa, 931 in India, and 3,934 in China (KWMA 2017). The numbers do not indicate whether missionaries are affiliated with denominational boards or parachurch organizations.

seminal conference of the Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, but foreign missions were largely a denominational affair prior to World War II (Robert 1994). Two major global mission movements since the 1950s can be named. First is the World Council of Churches (WCC), which spurred a drive to unite churches globally and in mission (Hunt 2011). But it was aligned with interests of Western governments in encouraging programs of social, economic, and political development as bulwarks against Communist influence in the Third World (Hunt 2011).

On the other hand, more theologically conservative evangelicals were increasingly disenchanted with developments in the WCC and how it began to emphasize social and political action over evangelism (Hunt 2011). These evangelicals asserted that evangelism should occur through individual conversion and church planting in every land and people unreached by the gospel. Main actors who participated the second movement included a Baptist evangelist, Billy Graham, and the Fuller Theological Seminary from the United States and John Stott from the United Kingdom, known as evangelical mission groups (Hunt 2011; Stanley 2013a). It led to the birth of the Lausanne Congress (1974), one of the most influential world conferences, and brought together religious leaders from 150 nations to discuss progress and methods of evangelizing the world.

Korean Protestant churches were actively involved in the Lausanne Movement from the beginning. Sixty-five representatives participated the first congress, and more than 100 participated in the second Lausanne congress, which was held in Manila in 1989.¹² Particularly, the idea of reaching out to high-risk countries originates from the

¹² Jong Yoon Lee, the president of Korean Lausanne Committee, and Jungkook Han, the secretary-general of the Korea World Missions Association, and professors from major seminaries participated in the conference (Shin 2010).

discourse of unreached people,¹³ ethno-linguistic groups without indigenous churches (Winter et al. 2009). This concept was first advocated by Ralph D. Winter in the first Lausanne Congress (1974). Since then, the vision of planting churches among unreached people groups flourished from the mid-1970s to the 1990s (Robert 2011). Most of these groups of people are in high-risk countries,¹⁴ and missionaries began to target these specific people, who are mostly Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. It is likely that Korean churches' active engagement in world evangelization movement and sharing the discourse of unreached people motivated their involvement in religious activities in high-risk countries.

I evaluated several hypotheses to examine domestic and international sources of foreign mission activities, focusing on patterns and developments in concepts, goals, and strategies. The first empirical puzzle that directed this dissertation was an effort to know what drives Korean churches to participate in foreign missions. The number of foreign missionaries was depressed before 1989 (the lift of the travel ban), so any variations in the number of missionaries were compressed before 1989. The timing of growth of foreign missions is important, as indicated by Hypothesis 1. First, I examined the economic interests of foreign mission groups using a religious economic theory. I hypothesized that Korean Protestant churches send out missionaries to geographically

¹³ According to the seminal article written by Ralph Winter and Bruce A. Koch, "Finishing the Task: The Unreached Peoples Challenge," a group of mission leaders came together in Chicago in 1983 for a meeting sponsored by the Lausanne Strategy Working Group and the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies. It was designed to help bring clarity and definition to the remaining missionary task. An unreached people group is defined a people group with no indigenous community of believing Christians able to evangelize this group (Winter et al. 2009).

¹⁴ The bulk of individuals who live in unreached groups are Muslim, ethno-religious, Hindu, and Buddhist blocs. According to Winter, there were 8,000 unreached people groups as of 2002, and Muslims constituted 3,300, followed by Hinduism (2,400), ethnic religions (1,200), Buddhism (700), other religions (300), and nonreligious (100) (Winter et al. 2009, 541).

close countries such as nearby Asian countries when their domestic religious market is saturated, caused by the oversupply of seminary graduates. Another possibility is that cultural factors could have influenced churches' goal of sending more missionaries. Interest in missions also could come from the international level because Korean churches have been affected by the interaction with international religious networks before the lift of the travel ban. A growing interest in foreign mission activities could have been driven by churches' involvement in global evangelical networks and the discourse of urgency to reach nonbelievers and other believers. Also, Korean churches' indigenous understanding of faith and any cultural and historical variants that are associated with foreign missions were examined with H1c.

H1a: As the religious market became saturated, South Korean Protestant churches sent more foreign missionaries.

H1b: South Korean churches' interest in missions resulted from their participation in international networks before the lift of the travel ban.

H1c: South Korean churches' interest in missions resulted from their indigenous cultural and historical backgrounds before the lift of the travel ban.

The second empirical puzzle of the dissertation involved the mission strategies of Korean churches and why they send missionaries to high-risk countries. To locate a local religious understanding in a larger context, I first examined several documented resources to analyze global religious discourse. I explored the global change of religious discourse and birth of new ideas of reaching unreached peoples, such as Muslim groups. Following

the analysis of globally shared ideas, I assessed the hypothesis that Koreans would send missionaries to high-risk countries as they started to be involved in international networks and shared the idea of the urgency to reach unreached people groups in high-risk countries. I also assessed whether qualitative records (interview records) of Korean missionaries and leaders of mission groups revealed this globally shared religious discourse of unreached people.

H2a: The increase in sending Korean Protestant missionaries to high-risk countries is driven by Korean mission groups' involvement in global religious networks and shared global religious discourse of unreached people.

H2b: The surge of ideas and motivations of Korean Protestant missionaries related to reaching high-risk countries is caused by a shared global religious discourse of unreached people.

Thus, I hypothesized that Korean Protestant missionaries' entanglements in political conflicts, as in the instance of the Afghanistan kidnapping incident, originated from a shared religious discourse carried by global religious networks, although these missionaries or mission organizations did not primarily intend to be engaged in political conflicts.

Research Design and Methods

The testing of H1a, H1b, and H1c is discussed in Chapter 3, analyzing what drives Korean churches to participate in foreign missions. I first examined domestic

sources to analyze a pattern of change in foreign mission activities using quantitative data. I assessed a hypothesis that the growth of Korean foreign missions was caused by the saturation of domestic religious market (H1a). To measure the dependent variable of H1a, the number of missionaries, the dataset I utilized is from the KWMA and the Korea Research Institute for Mission (KRIM). KRIM has been collecting data on the number of Korean missionaries, mission groups, and target countries from 1979, but the data before 2004 were not annually collected. The KWMA has collected extensive data from 2004, and it offers annual data on the number of missionaries, target countries, and regions in a nationally representative survey. I used data before 2004 from KRIM sources (due to a lack of other data)¹⁵ and annual data after 2004 from KWMA sources.

As for the independent variable, the gap between supply and demand of religious services was used. First, data on the demand, or number of pastorates, were collected from annual reports of the PCK.¹⁶ The number of communicants of the PCK denomination is about 30% of Protestants believers in South Korea,¹⁷ and the data collected from the PCK records are the only available data that could be used to H1a. Collecting more data from other denominations would improve the estimates, but most churches' data were not publicly available. Second, data on the supply, the number of graduates of theological seminaries, were collected from the academic affairs office of a seminary affiliated with the PCK. The number of missionaries before the travel ban

¹⁵ KRIM sources have data from 1979, 1986, 1990, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2003, and 2004. Source: <https://krim.org/2019-korean-mission-statistics/>

¹⁶ The record of the PCK's first general assembly starts from 1912. Some reports of the general assemblies of major denominations have been digitized starting from the 1st General Assembly, which dates to the 1910s, and some of the reports can be accessed via photographic editions.

¹⁷ The GPACK has the largest number of communicants (2,565,766), and the PCK is the second largest denomination. The third largest is the KMC (1,289,311), followed by the Kosin denomination with 423,245. Source: <https://www.newsjoy.or.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=225422>

(1989) was seriously restricted, and H1a examined the pattern only after the lifting of the travel ban in 1989 to see whether the market saturation boosted a sudden increase in foreign missions.

Next, I examined cultural factors that could have encouraged the interest in missions. Increasing availability of textual materials serves as an important reminder of the value of triangulating information from multiple sources (Wuthnow 2011), so I utilized qualitative thematic analysis of official documents, manuals, and reports of international and local religious networks. First, to test whether Korean churches were influenced by the international discourse on foreign missions (H1b), I examined when Korean churches started to make heavy contact with international mission networks. Data were collected by reviewing major decisions of foreign missions from the annual reports of the general assemblies of mainline denominations between 1970 and 2010. Early participation in international mission networks by Korean churches started in 1975, when three representatives from the PCK participated in the fifth WCC General Assembly in 1975.¹⁸ Also, many parachurch organizations in Korea were established with the aid of international mission groups,¹⁹ so their participation patterns were also examined.

I examined domestic sources to assess cultural factors that could have pushed the growth of foreign mission activities (H1c). Sources included periodicals and annual reports from the mainline denominational boards of Korean churches. I identified major

¹⁸ The Committee for World Mission Cooperation was established in 1977 in the PCK, and records show that PCK made an agreement with the Presbyterian Church in America on foreign missions.

¹⁹ International parachurch organizations such as InterVarsity (1956, the year when Korean office was established), the Navigator (1956), and Cru (formerly known as Campus Crusade for Christ, 1958) supported the establishment of foreign mission offices in South Korea from the 1950s (Park 2014b). Some indigenous organizations, including JOY (1958), were also created by Korean actors, but they were supported in terms of organization and material sources by Western missionaries in the beginning.

decisions related to foreign missions of two denominations, PCK and KMC, starting from 1970 to 2010, referring to their annual general assembly reports. Also, two major periodicals published by the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, *The Christian Thought* (1957-) and *The Christian World* (1933-), were used. These monthly journals were examined every 5 years from 1970. If we confirm when churches began to actively discuss the idea of foreign mission and show any “Korean” cultural variants of the urgency to evangelize foreign lands, this signifies that Korean churches’ interests in foreign missions started to gain momentum before the lifting of the travel ban.

To examine the global level discourse to evaluate H2a, two main sources were used, as discussed in Chapter 4: the Lausanne Movement (1974, 1989, 2010) and AD2000 and Beyond Movement. The concept of unreached people was preached by Ralph Winter at the first Lausanne Congress, but more concrete efforts to set specific goals of reaching unreached people groups took some time, until the second meeting in 1989. Meanwhile, a shared idea to target high-risk countries can be traced back to early discussions of unreached groups in several follow-up meetings after the first Lausanne meeting. I analyzed historically important documents from the Lausanne Movement, or the Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs), and investigated when and how international actors created and disseminated the call to send more missionaries to high-risk countries, the so-called unreached people regions.

It was only during the 1990s that a reasonably complete listing of the world’s peoples and languages was developed (Johnstone and Mandryk 2001) to strategically evangelize unreached people via the AD2000 and Beyond Movement. The discourse of unreached people was examined using the Manila 1989 documents of the second

Lausanne meeting and selected official papers (opening address, themed papers, closing addresses), because these documents extensively deal with the meaning of evangelization and discussion on the strategic definitions of unreached people groups. The second source of discourse of unreached people groups was the AD2000 and Beyond Movement. It was launched in 1989 and proved to be the most global and focused movement for world evangelization (Johnstone and Mandryk 2001).²⁰ The discourse was examined using several documents on AD2000 and Beyond Movement online source and documents generated during the GCOWE (1995), which was specifically convened to expedite the AD2000 and Beyond Movement.

The dependent variable of H2a, the number of missionaries in high-risk countries such as Muslim ones, was collected from the same source, the KWMA and KRIM. Nationwide collection of data began in 2008, including target regions and demographic information on missionaries and mission groups. Thus, data on the number of missionaries in high-risk countries were collected from 2008 to 2017, and this empirical evidence was supplemented with case studies of Korean churches that participated the unreached people movement and sent missionaries, discussed in Chapter 5. In this chapter, evaluation of the hypothesis that the increase of Korean missionaries in high-risk countries was driven by their involvement in global religious networks and discourse is discussed.

²⁰ Key players of this movement included Thomas Wang and Luis Bush. Wang, a Chinese, served as the international director of the Lausanne Committee; he would soon become chairman of the AD2000 Movement. Another actor was the AD2000 international director, Bush, who served as a pastor in El Salvador and director of Partners International before taking up the leadership of AD2000 (Coote 2000).

Qualitative examination of the adoption of these religious norms, regarding H2b, was conducted via interviews with Korean missionaries and leaders of churches and mission groups that had and are serving in high-risk countries, as shown in Chapter 6. I conducted semistructured interviews to analyze the mechanisms of how global religious discourse motivates local religious actors. I paid particular attention to their words and stories regarding key religious discourse such as the idea of unreached people. Thirty-seven interviews were conducted between May and December 2022. The interviewees were recruited via nonrandom purposeful and snowball sampling, and respondents were selected from missionaries who were oriented to serve in high-risk countries to assess whether Korean missionaries were influenced by the global religious discourse to go to high-risk countries. Recruitment and access to interviewees occurred through contacts with denominational boards, parachurch organizations, and faculties of seminaries and the researcher's personal networks by email or phone call. I also included leaders in mission organizations and denominations as well as academics to probe the overarching context of Christian missions. The target countries and identities of missionaries were kept confidential due to the highly restrictive conditions of the target countries.

Case Selection: South Korea

Here, I justify the selection of South Korea as the empirical setting for the study. Global missionary works had been traditionally understood as unidirectional efforts across a binary division of the world into Christian and non-Christian until Western missionaries first gathered in Edinburgh for the World Missionary Conference in 1910 (Johnson and Ross 2009). Although current missionary efforts account for diverse

sources of force everywhere, dominant religious discourse on a global level such as unreached people, the “10/40 window,” and the Lausanne Movement was predominantly initiated by Western religious actors. Empirically, the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Italy still remain as the largest foreign missionary-sending nations, so norm-making and practice-making actors are still Western-centered (Johnson and Ross 2009). South Korea is an active non-Western state among the top 10 countries that send out the most missionaries and replaced the United Kingdom as the second largest one after the United States in the 2000s. Examining a non-Western case of whether the religious discourse shared on a global level influences local religious activities would strengthen the validity of the study hypotheses and findings.

Furthermore, South Korea offers a data-rich opportunity to examine the influence of global religious discourse on the local level. South Korean Protestant mission groups are among the leading global actors of new evangelical movements and have shown major growth in the Global South (Jenkins 2006), amounting to 28,039 missionaries reported to work in 171 countries (KWMA 2020). South Korean mission groups’ involvement in global networks has been extensive: Key religious leaders have actively participated since the second Lausanne movement, some of them leading the meetings as the secretary of general affairs of the East Asia Regional Committee of the Lausanne Movement (Choi 2013) and chair of the Asia Regional Committee during the second Lausanne meeting. Also, the discourse of unreached people was vigorously adopted by domestic Korean Protestant churches. During the GCOWE in 1995, Korean churches committed to dispatching 100,000 young missionaries to unreached people, diffusing a global discourse of unreached people on the domestic level (Park 2014a). The records of

experiences of Korean Protestant mission groups provided a rich and deep knowledge on the process of diffusion of the global religious discourse.

Conclusion

The chapter suggested that current literature linking religious motivations and domestic and international sources falls in two broad categories: institutional and cultural approaches to religion. The institutional approach highlights that religious organizations have rational interests to sustain in the domestic religious market but is inadequate to understand religious groups' mission activities and their supposed irrational decisions to send trained missionaries to high-risk countries. In using a cultural approach to religion, a more in-depth understanding of the processes of shaping religious motivations and goals of religious groups is possible. I also highlighted that relevant literature of a norm-diffusion model and world polity model offer little empirical evidence of the effects of transnational religious networks on local religious and political actors.

I offered theoretical and empirical contributions to the field as I conceptualized a systematic mechanism of interactions of domestic and international religious actors and offered empirical evidence of local responses to this interaction. Drawing from the cultural approaches to religion and global cultural process of involving the interaction of religious and political spheres, independent effects of idea carried by transnational religious networks were examined using a case of South Korean Protestant churches' foreign mission movements.

Korea generally makes an interesting case to assess the relationship of the influence of globally shared ideas and local responses because of its active records of

involvement in transnational religious networks and sheer number of missionaries sent by these churches. At the same time, its proven history as a non-Western country that has a spectacular record of growth of domestic churches and foreign missions makes Korea a legitimate case to assess the study hypotheses. Quantitative analysis was used to assess the results of the response of local religious actors, whereas qualitative analysis was used to assess the discourse reflected in domestic and international sources and the causal mechanism of these interactions.

The next chapter addresses the first empirical question of the motivations and interests of Korean religious actors in foreign missions. Chapter 4 then assesses the globally shared discourse generated in the Lausanne Movement and AD2000 and Beyond Movement. Chapters 5 and 6 presents the general relationship of interactions of local and international religious actors and how Korean actors responded to the call of interest in foreign missions in high-risk countries. Chapter 7 discusses the conclusions of the study.

THE GROWTH OF GLOBAL RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH KOREA

The previous chapter presented theoretical approaches and methodology to analyze the interactions of local and international religious actors. This chapter provides insights regarding the first empirical puzzle of why domestic religious groups started to show interest in foreign missions and send missionaries beyond their geographical boundaries. I used two theoretical tools, institutional and cultural approaches, to accomplish this goal. Existing literature examining factors of Korean churches' growth of foreign missions point to historical factors and sociopolitical interests forged by a Korea–U.S. relation. To address the gap in the literature, I examined religious groups' rational organizational interests in expanding their influence in and beyond their geographic boundaries. I also looked into the origin of motivations, goals, discourse, and the process of sharing and disseminating common purposes among these groups. I used a cultural approach, analyzing the process of building these religious norms and ideas in action and how and when the idea of sending missionaries began.

I analyzed quantitative and qualitative data to assess whether organizational and cultural motivations drove Korean churches to enthusiastically send missionaries overseas. Although the number of foreign missionaries was restricted due to the travel ban until 1989, the results highlight that religious groups' organizational interests, sending overabundant seminary graduates to foreign lands due to a lack of domestic jobs, was not strongly linked to growth of foreign missions after the lifting of the travel ban. Instead, domestic actors' interactions with international religious networks, discussed

beginning in the 1960s, greatly influenced their interest in foreign missions, especially regarding early institutionalization of training and sending missionaries. Korean actors' understanding of faith pertaining to historical records of persecution and resilience and a self-perception as a missionary-sending country also worked as a strong motivation for foreign missions.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the context of growth in Korean mission movements. I then present hypotheses derived from the context and outline the measurement of variables. I follow with a discussion of the results of the quantitative analysis, then I present qualitative analysis of cultural sources of domestic and international interest in foreign mission before the lifting of the travel ban.

The Korean Context: Sheer Growth of Foreign Missions

As explained before, the growth of foreign mission movements of Korean Protestant churches has been breathtaking. The domestic expansion of churches fostered external expansion of church movements. Particularly, revival movements in the 1970s contributed to the numerical expansion of churches. This included the crusade led by Billy Graham in 1973 that drew more than 3 million Koreans (The Billy Graham Library 2013), Explo'74 sponsored by Korea Campus Crusade for Christ (Plowman 1974), and a national evangelism meeting in 1977. These events gathered numerous believers and fostered the growth and vitality of Korean churches. Along with these revival movements, each denomination board set the goal of church growth: The PCK set a goal of gathering 1.5 million communicants in 5 years in 1970, the GAPCK sought to

establish 10,000 churches in a decade in 1975, and the KMC pursued a goal of reaching 1 million communicants and 5,000 churches in 1975 (Holiness Church 2007).

The previous literature suggested that historical and sociopolitical factors boosted the growth of Korean churches and foreign missions. Timothy S. Lee (2009) made a succinct argument that an intensely practical and devotional bent such as the Daybreak Prayer Devotional has characterized Korean evangelicalism, and this led to relentless proselytization efforts. He also suggested that Protestantism interacted sympathetically with Korean nationalism during the Japanese colonial period and South Korean anticommunism in the 1950s (Lee 2009). Korea's indigenous cultural factors also have been discussed, and Kim (2015) argued that Koreans' evangelical zeal and conservatism coupled with dogged hard work and sacrifice come from the hardships of history as a people who had been invaded by stronger foreign powers and suffered through wars, poverty, and political turmoil.

Much of the literature has mainly focused on the description of sociopolitical interests forged between Korea and the United States in the 1970–80s. Noting that Korea's national strength and wealth contributed to its "burden" to spread the faith (Han 2009), scholars have argued that ideological affinity with anti-Communism during the Cold War and a strong anti-Communism stance of the Protestant military leaders of Korea was supported by both Korean and U.S. political leaders, paving the way to grow as a discernable social and political force (Kim 2016). In this vein, Han's (2009) doctoral dissertation asserted that a military and geopolitical alliance between South Korea and the United States has had a profound effect on Korean Protestantism, and that a sense of indebtedness to American generosity heavily influences the content and form of

contemporary Korean missions. Similarly, Helen Kim (2022) described the mega-size crusades of Explo '72 and '74 led by Joon Gon Kim and Billy Graham as part of a “religious Cold War,” protecting both the United States and Korea from leftist notions of freedom and revolution that threatened stability in the 1960s and 1970s. Though these religious figures primarily intended to work for religious rationales, their work had political effects beyond what they imagined.

Although the historical and ideological affinities of the two countries offer a convincing narrative to explain the growth of foreign missions and domestic churches, the literature has two limitations: First, it lacks any discussion of the organizational interests of Korean churches and empirical evidence of whether the growth of churches was associated with the numerical growth of missionaries. Any attempt to collect verifiable sources regarding this growth could not be found in the previous literature, possibly due to the difficulties of collecting data. Religious groups set their strategic stances regarding political authorities and religious regulations, so their organizational interest in expanding the number of believers in and beyond the domestic setting should be considered. Second, the influence of transnational religious networks on domestic settings is not limited to U.S.–Korea relations. It seems that the current literature on Korean Christianity and foreign mission only focused on this bilateral relationship because the main audience of discussion is in the United States. However, interactions of Korean churches and international religious networks encompass more diverse actors and initiatives of global actors, so delving into other forms of global interactions that might have prompted the expansion of growth of foreign mission of Korean actors is needed.

A major institutional change that boosted early growth of the number of missionaries was the lifting of a travel ban on January 1, 1989. But the lifting of travel restrictions does not entirely explain this increase in foreign missionaries, because sending trained missionaries overseas demands resources and dedicated efforts by religious organizations. Several institutional and long-term factors are implicated. First, the growth could be caused by an oversupply of religious service providers. The number of seminary graduates increased steadily, yet job openings for ordained pastors were stagnant and religious service providers could not find jobs in the domestic religious market. So, seminary graduates, soon to be ordained pastors, turned their eyes to the overseas religious market, leading to increased foreign missionaries.

In fact, the annual number of seminary graduates steadily increased from 460 in 1987 to 793 in 2010 in the PCK denomination. Furthermore, the White Report published by the KMC (2007) mentioned that “The KMC had a good old day that a great demand of pastorates happened between 1976 and 1985” (105), so the denomination board established several seminaries to produce pastors to meet the needs. But the oversupply of resources became problematic in the 1980s, because affiliated seminaries began to overproduce pastors beyond the need.²¹ The White Report suggested that “the churches need to consider expanding the opportunity to send them as foreign missionaries” (KMC White Report 2007, 107) to even out the oversupply of religious service providers.

²¹ A newly established seminary produced 1,799 graduates between 1980 and 1985, more than the double the number produced by the existing two seminaries in the KMC denomination (KMC White Paper 2007). *The Christian World*, an affiliated Christian journal of the KMC, mentioned that “the denomination should take responsibilities of a hundred of seminary graduates as the number of pastorates per each church is limited” (The Christian World 1985, 15).

A second potential factor could be cultural, and shared ideas arising from the interactions of Korean churches with international religious networks could have facilitated more foreign mission activities by Korean actors. The idea of the growing significance of foreign missions could have motivated Korean actors due to their early interactions with transnational global networks before 1989. When global religious actors began to discuss and share certain ideas or the need to reach foreign soil to preach the gospel, local religious actors could have conformed to shared rules governing their practices, driving their goals, motivations, and forms of interaction.

A third factor could be the cultural variants of Korean Christianity. Korean churches' distinct understanding of Christianity and their duty to preach the gospel could have contributed to the growth of foreign missions. Koreans' autonomous religious discourse, drawn from unique historical records of Korea, could have facilitated churches' zeal to participate in foreign missions before the travel ban was lifted, enabling them to respond quickly.

Hypotheses

First, I hypothesize that Korean Protestant churches sent missionaries when their domestic religious market became saturated, caused by the oversupply of seminary graduates. The number of foreign missionaries (dependent variable) was depressed before 1989 (due to the travel ban), so any variations in missionaries are compressed before 1989.

H1a: As the religious market became saturated, South Korean Protestant churches sent more foreign missionaries.

Here, I define domestic religious market as a system in which the demand for religious services, job openings for pastors in the church (new positions and openings caused by retirements), and the supply of religious service providers (number of graduates affiliated with a Protestant denomination) decide the equilibrium of religious services. I assumed that the market is free from any intervention by the government or other authorities. The increase in congregants and churches of each denomination would also affect the demand for pastors. But a more accurate measure of the demand for services is job openings per year, so the annual number of pastors of new positions was chosen to measure the demand side of religious services.

Some could argue that a domestic religious market for seminary graduates, or potential pastors, is not saturated, because the number of missionaries sent by denominational boards (who are usually ordained pastors) is less than the number of missionaries sent by parachurch organizations (usually laymen missionaries). Due to the shortage of data, the most recent data on the percentage of missionaries who are ordained pastors and layman missionaries could not be collected, but a 2009 KWMA report showed that 67% of the total missionaries were ordained pastors and 33% were layman missionaries. It showed that a fair number of missionaries sent by parachurch organizations were also ordained pastors. Thus, it can be argued that the oversupply of seminary graduate students was correlated with the increase of foreign missionaries.

H1b and H1c evaluated whether the interest in missions and sending more foreign missionaries were caused by the interactions with international networks or Korean churches' indigenous understanding of faith and any cultural and historical variants.

H1b: South Korean churches' interest in missions resulted from their participation in international networks before the lift of travel ban.

H1c: South Korean churches' interest in missions resulted from their indigenous cultural and historical backgrounds before the lift of the travel ban.

Data and Variables

The period under investigation was roughly 1960 to 2010. This timeframe encompasses the significant development of indigenous churches and foreign mission movements and the growth of socioeconomic status in Korean society. To test the first hypothesis of oversupply of religious services, I collected statistical data from the annual reports of the PCK, collected annually.²² The analysis included the dependent variable of the number of missionaries sent by the PCK each year. As discussed, the number was depressed before the lifting of the travel ban in 1989, so any changes related to the number of missionaries would need to be tested after 1989.

²² The PCK gathers very detailed information on the status of foreign missionaries each year, including the type of mission activities (trainee, short-term, long-term), geographic region, country, names, date of sending, funding churches, and so on. The report often includes pseudonyms for the missionaries to protect their identities in the field (usually the Middle East region). It is possible that PCK records have missing data on the number of missionaries, pastors, or local churches because local presbyteries (a body of local congregations) could miscalculate or omit the numbers (PCK 1995). But these data can be collected only through official records of the denomination, and I assumed the records show the most accurate results for the annual status of the denomination.

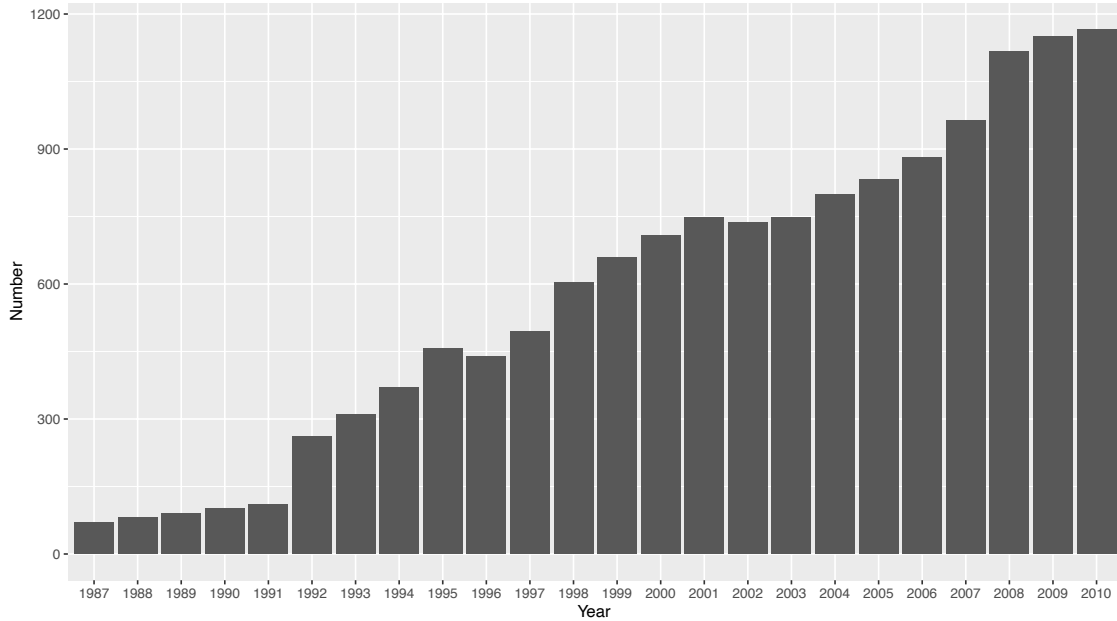


Figure 3: The Number of Foreign Missionaries (PCK)

I define oversupply as a gap between the supply of seminary graduates with a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) and the demand for pastors each year. To measure the gap, I collected data from a research report titled *A Study on Planning Supply and Demand of Pastorates of the PCK* (Park and Lee 2016) covering 1987 to 2016. The authors reported the number of seminary graduates with an M.Div. degree²³ from seven affiliated seminaries of the PCK each year. The number of graduates who received the degree per year allowed me to measure the supply of seminary graduates who were to be ordained. The demand was the sum of new pastors and retired pastors each year, and I collected the data from the annual reports of the PCK. The association between variables was examined via a graph comparison showing how supply and demand of religious services

²³ Protestant seminaries in Korea offer undergraduate degrees in theology in most cases, yet graduates should have an M.Div. degree to be ordained pastors, so I collected data on the number of students who earned the graduate-level degree to measure the supply of religious services.

corresponded to the change in number of missionaries. Including more data from other churches to measure the variables would improve the estimates (Babbie 2015), yet the number of pastors is only available from each denomination's board office and not publicly available from denominations except the PCK. Thus, the variables collected from the PCK records were the only available data that could be used to test H1a. Considering that about 70% of all missionaries are ordained pastors, using the case of PCK allowed me to speculate about whether the domestic religious market oversupplied religious service providers.

The next two hypotheses were evaluated using qualitative thematic analysis drawing from official documents, manuals, and reports of international and local religious networks. Thematic analysis emphasizes the content of a text and allows a researcher to find "meaning" from the text to develop a theory (Riessman 2005), so I searched for common themes in the data, condensed these themes, and drew conclusions. Increasing availability of textual materials serves as an important reminder of the value of triangulating information from multiple sources (Wuthnow 2011). To assess whether Korean churches were influenced by their interactions with international networks regarding foreign missions (H1b), first, the Korean churches' interactions with the Lausanne Movement were analyzed. I assessed when and how Korean churches started to interact with international mission networks. Second, the interactions of two national entities, Korean and other national churches, were analyzed, such as when foreign mission boards of Korean church denominations began to make contact with other national churches. Data were collected from the annual reports of the general assemblies

of two denominations, the PCK and KMC, between 1960 and 2010 and reports published by a parachurch group, Joy Mission Network, an indigenous mission group in Korea.

The independent variable of H1c, the discourse of interest in foreign missions and any Korean cultural variants, was analyzed from sources such as annual reports of two mainline denominational boards, the PCK and KMC. Two major periodicals, published by the Presbyterian and Methodist churches, *The Christian Thought* (1957-) and *The Christian World* (1933-), were also utilized to assess the internal discourse of foreign mission before the lifting of the travel ban. These primary sources were supplemented by secondary materials from other denominations of the Baptist Church and the Holiness Church of Korea, both major Protestant denominations in Korea. I identified major decisions and themes related to foreign missions and when and why denominations started to be interested in foreign missions.

Quantitative Analysis: Supply and Demand of Religious Services

Table 1: The Supply and Demand²⁴ of Religious Services and its Gap²⁵

Year	Seminary Graduates (M.Div.; Supply)	New Pastorates	Retired Pastors	Pastorates (Demand)	Gap (Supply–Demand)
1987	460	277	73	350	
1988	457	183	84	267	193
1989	477	445	103	548	-91
1990	543	376	110	486	-9
1991	575	345	139	484	59
1992	542	295	129	424	151

²⁴ Demand is the sum of new and retired pastors that new seminary graduates can fill as job positions.

²⁵ The gap between supply and demand was calculated as the difference in the previous year’s graduates and current year’s pastorates, because graduates are expected to be ordained in the following year. Source: Park and Lee (2016) and the annual reports of the PCK.

1993	610	377	120	497	45
1994	644	532	157	689	-79
1995	548	539	156	695	-51
1996	739	375	167	542	6
1997	612	394	193	587	152
1998	497	595	192	787	-175
1999	721	516	210	726	-229
2000	436	403	224	627	94
2001	656	605	251	856	-420
2002	635	544	267	811	-155
2003	875	390	290	680	-45
2004	817	415	317	732	143
2005	862	610	362	972	-155
2006	823	663	423	1086	-224
2007	824	631	472	1103	-280
2008	815	1033	516	1549	-725
2009	829	426	640	1066	-251
2010	793	684	621	1305	-476

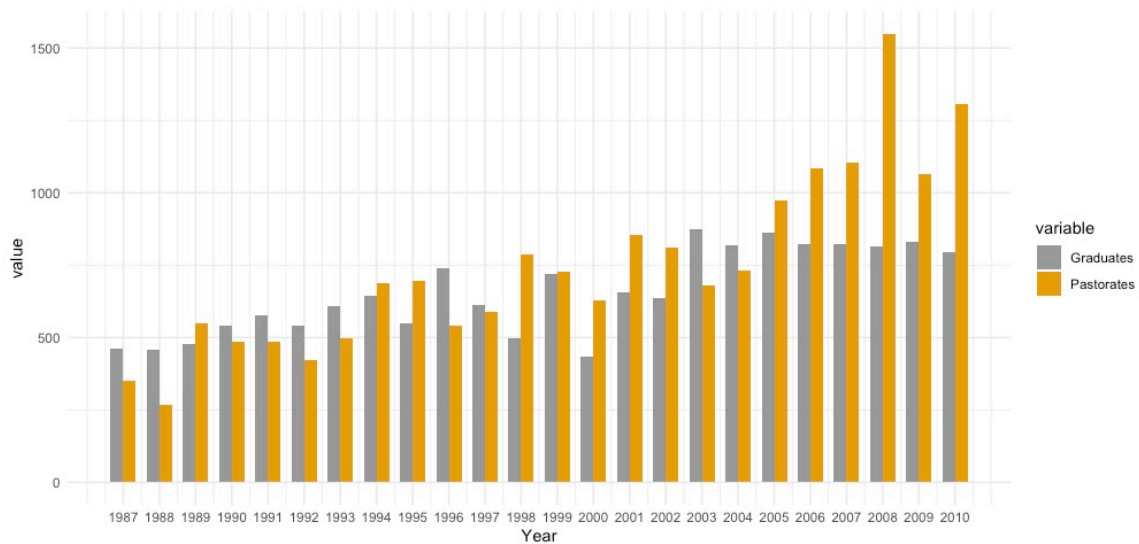


Figure 4: The Difference between the Number of Seminary Graduates (Supply) and Pastorates (Demand)

Table 1 and Figure 4 show the supply and demand of religious services of PCK churches from 1987 to 2010. Table 1 presents the number of seminary graduates with an

M.Div. in all seven seminaries affiliated with the PCK and the number of pastorates (new and retired pastors) per year. Both numbers have increased steadily during the observed years (see Figure 4). The number of seminary graduates shows a pattern of general increase, starting from 460 graduates in 1987 to 793 in 2010, and the number of both new and retired pastors also increased, with some fluctuations. The Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary, the largest affiliated seminary of the PCK, was the only one granting M.Div. degree until 1990, and the denomination decided to allow other six affiliated seminaries to produce M.Div. degrees after the 101st General Assembly in 1990 (PCK 2016), so the number of graduates started to increase a bit more after 1990.

I compared these numbers to measure whether there has been an oversupply of seminary graduates, especially before the lifting of the travel ban in 1989. A gap between supply and demand was calculated as the difference in the previous year's graduates and current year's pastorates. For example, the gap in 1988 reflects the difference between the number of graduates in 1987 and the number of pastorates in 1988, because graduates are expected to be ordained in the following year. Table 1 shows an oversupply of seminary graduates in 1988 but an undersupply in 1989 and 1990. It can be inferred that the oversupply in 1988 could have influenced the increase in foreign missionaries in the following years because the demand for religious services did not meet the supply, but the gap actually shows a pattern of decrease in the following years, meaning an undersupply of religious services, especially after 1989, in the PCK sample. The current data do not necessarily prove an oversupply before the lifting of the travel ban in 1989. In fact, it can be inferred that the PCK's decision to increase M.Div. graduates is a response to the undersupply of graduates in 1989 and 1990, resulting a brief oversupply in 1991,

1992, and 1993. After 1998, it shows a constant pattern of undersupply of religious service providers except for 2000 and 2004. Again, these data do not necessarily reflect the general landscape of supply and demand of religious services of Korean churches, but they allow speculation that at least in the sample of PCK churches, the oversupply of religious services did not happen and thus, it was not correlated with the increase in missionaries of the PCK, as shown in Figure 3. Thus, alternative explanations for the sudden increase in missionaries after the lifting of the travel ban are needed, which directed attention to the power of ideas and interest in missions.

Interaction with International Religious Networks

Although Korean churches' expansion of foreign mission movements is attributable to their strength and wealth, as several scholars have asserted (Han 2017; Moon 2008), early records of the interaction between domestic parachurch groups and international networks show that Korean Christians had a close relationship with the United States, as previous literature discussed (Han 2009; Kim 2016; Lee 2009). Domestic parachurch groups were not systematically organized in the 1970s and lacked human and material sources to send missionaries overseas, so they were supported by international mission networks at the beginning of the process, mainly with the help of American missionaries. For example, the Joy Mission network began from a small group of college students who wished to learn English in 1958. Sang Kwon Sim, one of the founders of the group, recalled:

At that time, I thought that more Christians need to be leaderships of South Korea to better evangelize the whole society and being fluent in English was one of the assets needed for leadership. (Joy Mission 2019, 23)

In the beginning of the group between 1958 and 1964, Margie Farley, an American missionary, and other several missionaries volunteered as advisors. A document (Joy Mission 2019) shows that the initial process of establishment was aided by a continuous interaction with missionaries involved in an international mission group, the Evangelical Alliance Mission, and Margie Farley was one missionary sent by this network (Joy Mission 2021). Moreover, American missionaries were advisors of the group, including Marlin L. Nelson of the World Vision International and David Royal Brougham of the Evangelical Alliance Mission, in the 1960s (Joy Mission 2021). The document asserts that “these advisors and missionaries affiliated with the Evangelical Alliance Mission continued to offer help to the group” (Joy Mission 2019, 33).

Although these early records support the previous literature’s analysis of an intense level of interactions between Korean and U.S. religious actors and how these Christian college students felt a sense of indebtedness to American missionaries for their volunteer work and generosity (Joy Mission 2019), their interaction with Korean mission groups was not unidirectional. The Joy Mission network utilized other sources of global networks—it sent its first foreign missionary in 1975 as a part of Christian missions on MV Logos Hope, a ship operated by an international mission network, Operation Mobilization, as a global Christian training and outreach movement (Joy Mission 2019). Korean mission groups were not systematically organized to send overseas missionaries,

so they got supported with systems of training, networks, programs of international mission groups.

In fact, domestic actors' interactions with international religious networks triggered and influenced Korean churches' interest in foreign missions. Korean actors began to participate in global conferences from the 1970s, and globally shared ideas to preserve certain religious values were discussed and disseminated in these national or global conferences, influencing local actors' preferences and goals. The idea of reaching unreached regions by Christians gained momentum with the birth of a world-level conference, the Lausanne Movement, in 1974. The Lausanne Movement was intended to be a facilitator of a world evangelization movement (Cho 2013), and Koreans who participated in the first meetings initiated a discussion of the urgency of spread the faith throughout the world. The Korea Lausanne Committee was officially established in 1989 per the request of the international Lausanne office (Park 2020), yet the idea goes back to 1974, when three key figures of Korean churches who attended the 1974 meeting shared the same hotel room at the conference and discussed the need to establish a unified evangelical network in Korea (Cho 2013), creating the Korean Committee for World Evangelization in the same year. Cho Chong-nam, a key player of early participation of Korean churches in the Lausanne Movement, recalled:

The Lausanne Movement fostered the participation of the third world countries, regions that used to be targets of mission, in regard to transnational mission works, and it asserted that the role of third world churches such as Korean churches is crucial to evangelize 2.7 million non-believers. (Cho 2013, 30)

Those who participated the first meeting “were heavily influenced by the Lausanne meeting and felt that an overarching organization which represent South Korea in the international evangelical networks is needed” (Cho 2013, 63), leading to the establishment of the Korean Committee for World Evangelization, which was an interdenominational committee, but mostly led by Korean conservative evangelicals (Kim 2000). The name of the committee was later changed to the Korean Evangelical Fellowship, a main organization representing Korean evangelical networks that had a close relationship with the Lausanne Movement until a more concerted efforts to disseminate the Lausanne Movement domestically were made by establishing the Korea Lausanne Committee (Choi 2013).

Korean church leaders’ participation in the second Lausanne meeting in Manila (1989) also fostered the idea of more engagement in foreign mission activities by Korean churches. Cho was a key Korean figure who participated in the first Lausanne meeting: He served as a deputy chair, vice chair, and committee members of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (The Billy Graham Center 2021) starting in 1974 and as chairman of the Asia Committee for World Evangelization from 1987 (Cho 2013). He also led 65 Korean participants in the first Lausanne meeting in 1974 (Cho 2013) and 100 participants in second meeting in the Philippines (Cho 2013). Overall, Korean actors were exposed to discourse regarding the need to engage in world-level evangelical efforts, and this led to their active involvement in foreign missions for the next decades, coupled with the material growth of Korean churches.

In summary, domestic actors’ interactions with international religious networks, beginning in the 1960s, fostered their interest in foreign missions, as exemplified by their

involvement in the Lausanne Movement. Korean parachurch groups were initially influenced by American missionaries and religious groups, especially regarding early institutionalization of mission work, but the interactions were not unidirectional or solely instructed by American missionaries.

Korean Churches' Interaction with Other National Churches

Protestant denominations were also main actors in foreign mission movements. Interactions at the denominational level started a bit later in the 1980s, because Korean churches were not systematically organized to conduct foreign missions and their foremost goal was domestic evangelization. Kim (2007) argued that the main actors pushing the early growth of foreign mission were parachurch groups, not denominations, because college student-based groups in the campus expanded in the 1970s and 1980s, mobilizing resources of workers. Korean churches' interactions with other national church entities, such as English, Canadian, and Australian churches, began in the 1980s and became more diverse in the 1990s.

Archival records show a gradual change of the meaning of the word *mission*, from a church's responsibility to evangelize Koreans to indigenous people in foreign lands. This outward vision was reinforced by a growth of material and institutional bases of Korean churches between 1970 and 1990s, turning their eyes to nonbelievers on foreign soil. The KMC established a division of foreign missions, separate from a division of domestic evangelism in 1983 (KMC 1983, 1986). The PCK also instituted a bureau of world missions in 1990 (PCK 1990). As Korean churches were internally equipped with material and human resources to export missionaries overseas, they began to transform

their relationship with U.S. churches in the 1970s, and the head office of the United Methodist Church (UMC) in the United States decided to reduce subsidiaries offered to Korean churches (KMC 1970). In an annual announcement published by the KMC in 1975, the Bishop of the KMC said:

We are thankful that UMC has offered spiritual, theological, and financial help since the start of the foreign mission, and we honor that many missionaries contributed to each field ... and [Korean churches] have been the beneficiary of the UMC's financial help, but now it's time to be financially independent and transform itself as a self-mission church. (The Christian World 1975, 3)

This shows that Korean churches began to transform their relationship with American churches from a benefactor into equal partnerships (The Christian Thought 1970), starting in the 1970s.

In this sense, more diverse sources of international exchange of churches emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, and this spurred Korean churches' motivations and involvement in foreign mission. Any interactions with local believers in foreign lands created a need to establish either a formal or informal relationship with churches in other nations to cooperate in terms of foreign missions. For example, Korean churches exchanged missionaries with English Methodist churches (KMC 1980), receiving short-term missionary John Richardson and his family, who taught in an affiliated seminary (KMC 1980; The Christian Journal 1980) in Korea. These indigenous efforts to create an equal relationship with other national church entities coincided with the "missionary moratorium" called in the early 1970s. John Gatu, the Kenyan general secretary of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, called for a moratorium on the sending of Western

missionaries to promote independent church leadership of non-Western churches, many of which remained dependent on external aid (Stanley 2013b). He raised the issue again at the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism conference in Bangkok in 1973. So, Korean churches' international networking can be understood in the global context of finding more active roles of churches in former colonies.

Korean churches' independent cooperation and relationship with other national church entities fostered more involvement in foreign missions. The KMC built 100 churches in Indonesia (KMC 1990) and provided tuition for seminary students in Cambodia. This was the result of a cooperative project with the churches from Switzerland, the United States, and Singapore (KMC 2000). More engagement with other national churches in terms of sponsoring religious education in target countries proves that the scope of interaction had become diverse and worldwide. Another example involving the PCK shows that Presbyterian churches shared human and financial resources with Canadian churches to facilitate mission works in Japan (PCK 1980). It established a cooperative agreement with Presbyterian churches in the United States, Canada, Australia, Scotland (PCK 1980), and Taiwan (PCK 1990) and joined an international network, the Council for World Mission, "to cooperate with churches and institutions world-side and share human, financial, and spiritual sources" (PCK 1985, 371). The diversification of interactions with church denominations of other countries was partly caused by the globalization of societies during the 1980s, the hosting of the Olympics (1988), and the lifting of the travel ban (1989), boosting the growth of diplomatic relations and transnational movement of people (Park 2014b).

Domestic Interest in Foreign Missions before 1989

The interest in foreign missions and idea of preaching the word of God to the end of the world was shared since the 1960s by Korean churches. I sought to identify and understand the changes and development of interest in foreign missions. In the 1960 annual report of the KMC, the idea of sending foreign missionaries was gaining momentum in churches, and it sent its first missionaries to Malaysia and Bolivia in 1965 (KMC 1965). Following this, Korean missionaries' testimonies began to be recorded in annual reports from 1970. The PCK sent missionaries to Taiwan, Japan, and Indonesia in the 1970s (PCK 1975). Presbyterian churches noted that it is their duty to send Korea missionaries as they celebrated the 90th year of missions by foreign missionaries in Korea (PCK 1975).

Thus, are any Korean cultural variants associated with the duty of transnational religious activities in foreign lands? The main themes accrued from the documents fall along three dimensions: (a) historical records of persecution and resilience, (b) sense of indebtedness and boosted national images of Korea, and (c) duty to Asian regions as a geographical neighbor. These themes reflect a particular and indigenous trail to conduct foreign missions throughout various sources of annual reports and journal articles published by Korean churches.

Transmitted faith was not about substitution, the replacement of something old by something new, but about transformation, the turning of the existing to a new account (Walls 2015, 28). Koreans' understanding of faith created a distinct form of missions, expressed as their duty to transmit a Korean understanding of faith. One account of the role of Korean churches holds that Korean churches have a distinctive record of

overcoming hardships posed by colonial powers and resiliently survived. One missionary who reached out to Muslims in Malaysia reported: “Korean churches have a living history of preserving our faith and saving the nation in spite of persecutions by other religions, family, and the government ... these are exemplary records of mission and evangelism” (KMC 1990, 426). The duty of Korean churches as leading actors of foreign missions also emerged because Korea was not a colonizing power and Korean Christianity did not embody a historical attachment of Christianity and colonialism. It was argued that “in the past, Western Christian powers politically and economically exploited [colonies], so they [third-world countries] ask for Korean churches’ help with spiritual salvation because we overcame similar exploitations they experienced” (The Christian World 1990, 6).

Several concurring quotes noted that a sense of indebtedness, owing to Western churches, drove Korean churches to transform themselves from a missionary-receiving country to a missionary-sending country. The 1970 minutes of the KMC reported, “We have received many missionaries and financial help for the last 80 years. Now it is time to pay out debt as a more mature member of churches” (KMC 1970, 160).

Although admitting Korean churches were heavily dependent on foreign missionaries’ leadership and aid after the end of Korean War (The Christian Thought 1970), the KMC continuously stressed that achieving financial, spiritual, and theological independence from Western churches (KMC 1975) was crucial, and “the church could transform into a leading actor, achieving a mandate of mission” (The Christian World 1975, 3). This shows that churches attempted to transform into more equal partners of other national churches, with literal mentions that “Korean churches should participate in

foreign mission with the U.S. churches as equal partners” (The Christian World 1990, 30), implying an elevated self-perception of Korean churches as a key actor in global mission networks.

Korean Protestants acknowledged that these religious efforts are often accompanied by the social and cultural power of Korea and positive images of Koreans in the local society of target countries (PCK 1985). For instance, medical aid teams visited Bolivia for the purpose of evangelism and visited government officials and key figures (PCK 1985), spurring a positive image of Koreans in Bolivian society. Hosting the Summer Olympics in 1988 was also a turning point to boost the international reputation of Korea and expand foreign missions (The Holiness Church 2007). Additionally, Methodist churches issued a letter showing a sense of boosted national pride of Korean churches, because English Methodist churches decided to send missionaries to “learn from Korean churches that have developed as an internationally acknowledged actor” (The Christian World 1980, 14) and became a “[missionary] sending country” in the 1980s.

Documents also consistently show an interest in foreign missions as a duty to neighboring countries in Asia. Reports of the KMC explained that foreign missions in the Southeast Asia region were a duty of Korean churches (KMC 1985), especially with the Philippines as a missionary outpost. The document asserted that “mission in Southeast Asia is Korean churches’ mandate, and the Philippines is the outpost of the region, so it is very crucial to pay a continuous attention by the churches” (KMC 1985, 117). Another reason that Korean churches need to pay special attention to Asian regions was that “Asia is expected to be more liberalized [after the fall of the Eastern bloc], and it is a Koreans’

historical burden to evangelize Asia” (The Christian Journal 1990, 9). The churches stressed the need for more interest in mission due to a geographical and cultural affinity and the need to reach nonbelievers in Asia continent (The Christian Journal 1990). Setting a mutual agreement with local churches in Asian countries was a common practice. For example, the KMC (1990) set an agreement with Methodist churches of Indonesia to build 100 local churches in 5 years (KMC 1990).

The Holiness Church was also interested in foreign mission activities in Asia: “While evangelizing Asia, [the church] establish[ed] a mission center to achieve a stated goal” (Holiness Church 2007, 818); it built eight churches in India in 1977. The Bureau of Foreign Missions of the Holiness Church was established in 1978, “as a duty to do mission in East Asia and the world” (Holiness Church 2007, 818). Leaders also stated that Korean churches need to fulfill God’s commission in Asia, which has two thirds of the world population but less than 3% of Christians (Holiness Church 2007). To summarize, the idea of delivering their indigenous understanding of faith and early zeal to conduct missions in neighboring countries encouraged Korean churches to engage in foreign missions before the lifting of the travel ban.

Conclusion

I utilized both new institutional and cultural approaches to identify how a domestic religious market responded to the supply of religious services and when and how religious motivations to reach foreign soil began to emerge at domestic and international levels. The tipping point of substantial growth in Korean foreign missionaries was the removal of the travel ban in 1989, yet this increase in activities

required more explanation because this growth demanded resources and efforts beforehand. Considering the sample of Presbyterian churches, a comparison of the number of seminary graduates and the number of pastorates did not indicate an oversupply of religious service providers, thus not showing strong evidence for an oversupply thesis. Korean churches showed an early zeal for foreign missions, because they had an understanding of faith pertaining to Korea's historical records of persecution by colonial powers and resilience overcoming hardships and a boosted self-perception as a missionary-sending country. But the process did not entirely originate from domestic efforts: Continuous interactions among parachurch organizations, denominational boards, and international mission networks influenced and shaped the idea of and need for collaboration, especially regarding institutionalization of the process of sending missionaries.

Early records clearly show that Korean churches received institutional and material resources from Western and international networks in terms of training, sending, and managing missionaries, but more equal partnerships with international and other national religious entities began to emerge, especially after 1990. Recall the numerous cooperative agreements Korean churches developed with denominations or churches in other nations. Given the physical growth of Korean churches, these results indicate that Korean churches have developed more equal partnerships with other national churches and active roles in international mission networks, often creating norms of missions; for example, through involvement in the Lausanne Movement and hosting the fourth global meeting in 2024 (The Lausanne Movement 2022).

What I tried to uncover here is the mechanism that links internal and external sources to the growth in foreign mission activities. I illuminated that cultural sources of interest in foreign missions were significant. But the discourse alone was not sufficient to explain the sheer growth of foreign missions. Among other things, the material growth of domestic churches and economic and social growth in Korea on the international stage also played a key role, transforming Korea into a sending country after the centennial of Christian missions in Korea.

The findings highlight that the interactions of domestic and international actors greatly influenced the early discussion of churches' duty regarding transnational religious activities and encouraging motivations of local actors. Christians' missions are primarily geared toward saving souls, but their activities often involve political ramifications, especially when public conversion is discouraged or prohibited in other cultural settings, which leads to a second empirical puzzle. The second project was to unpack the mechanisms of why local religious groups send missionaries to culturally risky countries, such as Muslim countries, despite their personal risks and political entanglements. To fully explore the mechanisms of how this occurs, it is necessary to examine primary sources of international religious networks and how and why global actors initiated and shared the urgency to reach high-risk countries. Accordingly, I examined the discourse generated from one of the largest global evangelical networks, the Lausanne Movement, as discussed in Chapter 4. I conducted qualitative analysis of the themes and discourse of why international mission networks show interest in missions in high-risk countries and how these factors influenced domestic actors.

Chapter 4

INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS, RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE, AND MISSIONARIES IN HIGH-RISK COUNTRIES

The previous chapter presented an analysis of the growth of transnational religious movements of Korean Protestant churches. The results highlight that the interactions of domestic and international actors greatly influenced and encouraged the motivations and urgency of foreign missions by local actors. Chapter 4 discusses a more specific empirical puzzle: why local religious groups send missionaries to culturally risky countries, such as Muslim countries, despite their personal risks and political entanglements such as the abduction case of Korean missionaries in Afghanistan in 2007. Because global religious actors share common ideas to preserve certain religious values across the world, we need to look into specific themes and discourse shared among international religious networks and see whether this has driven local religious actors' actions and motivations. The exploration described in this chapter involved analyzing meta themes, themes, and meaning from the primary sources of international religious networks, mainly the Lausanne Movement (1974, 1989, 2010) and the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, both of which were initiated to spur transnational evangelization efforts among Protestant evangelicals.

I analyzed LOPs, which are historically important documents generated from the Lausanne Movement, and I investigated when and how international actors created and disseminated a call to send more missionaries to high-risk countries, where most of unreached people groups reside. I also examined records and publications of the second

Lausanne meeting in Manila in 1989 and the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, covering a period between 1989 and 2000. At the second meeting in 1989, a more specific target of missions was discussed and planned. The AD2000 and Beyond Movement in the 1990s was specifically geared to mobilize world evangelists' focus on the discourse of unreached people, and the movement was highly influential in encouraging global Christians to target these groups, which were mostly in high-risk countries. I examined how and when this idea and related terms were discussed and used, changes in the discourse, actors involved in the movement, and the rationale of sending missionaries to these countries. The results show an evolutionary process of the development of the idea throughout the 1980s and 1990s: The urgency of foreign missions, social and political factors of target regions, and relocation of resources to restricted regions were the rationale for sending more religious actors to culturally risky states where many unreached people reside.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the general landscape of global foreign mission, especially regarding unreached people groups. I then present the analysis of LOPs written in the 1980s and the documents created during the second Lausanne meeting in Manila in 1989. This analysis revealed that how the discourse of urgency to reach nonbelievers and a more institutionalized plan to reach unreached people groups gradually gained momentum. I follow with a qualitative analysis of AD2000 and Beyond Movement documents, presenting more specific discourse of why, how, and when the ideas of Christians approaching nonbelievers in high-risk countries were discussed. The consequences and responses of local actors regarding this early discussion of discourse to reach unreached people groups are discussed in Chapter 5 and 6.

The Landscape of International Religious Networks

The growth of international religious networks increased with the globalization of communication and travel in the 1950s. Rapid expansion of transport and communication contributed to the ease of travel and cooperation of the world, and economic relations were further developed after several global level networks were created, such as NAFTA, OECD, and the European Union. The Cold War also catalyzed the globalization of religious networks. American missionaries were sent to West Germany and Europe, and extensive relief work was carried out by religion-based nonprofit networks such as World Vision (Stanley 2013a). Along with the globalized world environment, the spiritual movement also spread around the world—English countries were the key figures to claim evangelism, and the international character of evangelical networks was mainly forged across the North Atlantic between North America and Europe (Stanley 2013a; Wuthnow 2009). It is against this background that the expansion of international networks of foreign mission occurred.

Several international religious networks were created after the 1950s, and the WCC represented both a drive toward church unity and the unity of the churches in mission work. But the rise of Communism after World War II encouraged Western governments to take a competitive stance, so the WCC was more aligned with the interests of Western governments in encouraging programs of social, economic, and political developments in third-world countries (Hunt 2011). A group of international conservative evangelicals was hesitant regarding this social activism. They were unsatisfied with how organization began to emphasize social and political action over evangelism and conversion to Christ, and some even thought that the gospel was

syncretized in the theology of the WCC (Hunt 2011). In the face of this crisis, a new entrepreneurial global network with the purpose of establishing churches and conversion was created, and the first meeting of the International Congress on World Evangelization, the Lausanne Movement, was held in 1974 in Lausanne, Switzerland. Key players of the movement were John Stott, James Packer, and the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship from Britain, Billy Graham, mainstream Protestant churches, and representatives affiliated with Baptist, independent, and nondenominational churches of the United States, and they led the initial stage of the network formation.

A challenge to the traditional meaning of missions—that Western missionaries cross the sea to evangelize unreached territories—emerged. Instead of unoccupied geographic regions as the primary target of missions, unreached people groups, or ethnolinguistic groups without an indigenous, self-propagating Christian church movement (Winter et al. 2009, 536), became a new target (Robert 2011). Peter Wagner and Ralph Winter were the key leading figures who preached this concept, arguing that global religious actors should focus on these ethnolinguistic groups. Despite John Stott and British evangelicals being more concerned about addressing social problems, Ralph and Roberta Winter, the research division of World Vision, Global Mapping International, and other advocates of world evangelization discussed the concept of unreached people groups, and it energized a generation from the mid-1970s to the 1990s (Robert 2011).

The second Lausanne meeting in Manila in 1989 was more geared to a strategic definition of unreached people groups. The meeting was largely overwhelmed by a rationalized understanding of the target of missions. When Ralph Winter spoke about cross-cultural evangelism, he noted that “there are still 2.4 billion people beyond the

range of present efforts of any existing church or mission” (Bush 1993, paras. 28). Billy Graham picked up on Ralph’s concern when he said, “It is not enough that we witness to our near neighbors, we must cross cultural and linguistic barriers with the Gospel” (Bush 1993, paras. 28). So, efforts to measure and distinguish the people group based on ethnolinguistic lines were made, and 12,000 was announced as the remaining number of people groups (or “mini-peoples”) to be reached, with a population of about 1.8 billion (Coote 2000).

To facilitate the movement to reach unreached people groups, another conference was convened in Singapore, 1989, the GCOWE, to consider marking the end of the century as a goal for completing world evangelization. David B. Barrett of the United States and Patrick Johnstone from England were two primary collectors of global data. Other key players include Thomas Wang, who served as international director of the Lausanne Committee, became a chairman of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement. The movement was created to encourage cooperation and establish a Christian community in unreached people groups by 2000. The AD2000 international director, Luis Bush, identified a very specific target of regions, the “10/40 window.” This referred to the rectangular area of North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia between 10 and 40 degrees north latitude, where 95% of the world’s least evangelized poor are found (AD2000 & Beyond, n.d.). These are regions dominated by Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist people where approaches by Christians have been difficult for ages due to cultural and religious disaffinities and political legacies of imperialism; several global initiatives in the late 20th century encouraged the Christian world’s attention on this most gospel-needy part of the globe.

The idea of gospel in the Lausanne documents is basically understood as “Christian faith,” belief systems that accompany Christian doctrines and practices, and it is differentiated from cultural traits such as ethnic, historical, and linguistic aspects. All missionaries will bring their cultural understanding along with the gospel. The Lausanne actors acknowledge the fact that their gospel could be normative—having a particular cultural connotation in the gospel—so “they [missionaries] must work hard to discover how to remove as much of their cultural overhang as possible so that the gospel can enter a culture with relevance and purity” (LOP 35A, 26). The gospel has been discouraged in former colonial states because Christian faith is largely of different ethnic origins from the majority population, considered to be the religion of former colonial masters and tied to capitalist features of the West (LOP 32). The documents show that the gospel could be separated from cultural traits but also inseparable from cultural identity, and this is why it is hard to infiltrate other cultural settings with the gospel, which should be contextualized in such a way to communicate with local people (LOP 1).

The Lausanne Movement: Interests in High-Risk Countries

The 10/40 window includes roughly two thirds of the world population, and it is predominantly Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist. Many governments officially and unofficially prohibit or restrict Christian missionary work, such as Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. These are high-risk regions because conversion to Christianity often entails accusation, family pressure, and even death, and persecution of Christians by the government in these areas has been high. According to the archives of the AD2000 and Beyond movement, the Arabian Peninsula, North India, North Africa (Maghreb), and

East Africa (Horn of Africa) are the main target regions where most unreached people groups reside (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.), and countries in these cultural blocs are Muslim- and Hindu-majority states, which can be considered high-risk countries.²⁶

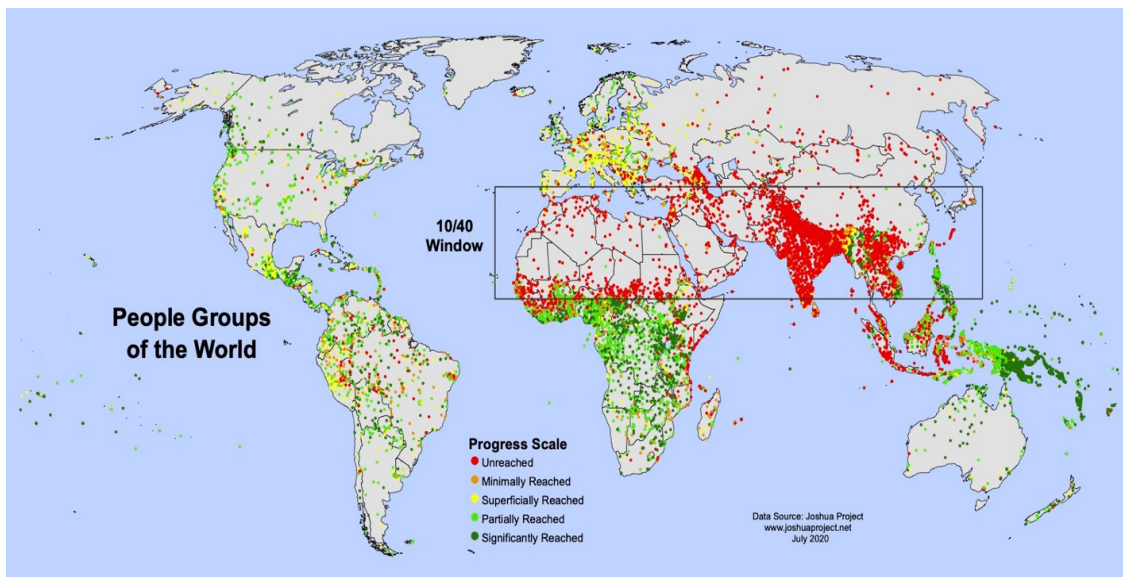


Figure 5: The Unreached People Groups and the 10/40 Window (Source: The Joshua Project)

The shared idea to target high-risk countries can be traced back to early discussions of unreached groups in several follow-up meetings after the first Lausanne meeting. LOPs discussed Muslim, Chinese, Hindus, and Buddhists after the first Lausanne Conference in 1974, and the analysis shows that the urgency and strategy to reach unreached groups was actively discussed during the 1980s, resulting a more strategic formation of the term in the second Lausanne meeting in Manila in 1989.

²⁶ The documents accrued from the Joshua Project include the expanded list of countries in 10/40 window. Source: https://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/10_40_window.

In fact, the first discussion of the need to reach Muslims emerged in the Glen Eyrie Report (1978). A week-long consultation was convened at Glen Eyrie, Colorado, to explore the responsibilities of North American Christians toward the Muslim World, and it was a part of a continuum that began with the first Lausanne meeting. “Of particular interest to many of the participants was the large bloc of unreached Muslims” (LOP 4, 2). Participants of the meeting posed the question of why the Muslim world is not better evangelized and questioned the miniscule existence of Protestant missionaries in this region (LOP 4). Citing the limitations of religious freedom of Christians in Muslim world, the paper argued that “they have been denied the right to erect or acquire buildings for public worship, religious education, and social activity. And these restrictions are contrary to Islamic law” (LOP 4, 16). The report even referred to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and asked Muslim leaders to “promote justice and freedom” of thought, conscience, and religion (LOP 4, 16).

Yet an even more vivid illustration of the need and strategy of reaching unreached people groups in high-risk countries was discussed in papers whose titles started with “Christian Witness to the” and ended “Chinese People” (1980), “Muslims” (1980), “Hindus” (1980), and “Buddhists” (1980), which were documented from the mini-consultations held in Pattaya, Thailand, in June 1980. First, the urgency to reach China was debated: “The Chinese constitute the largest single segment of the human race ... and yet, throughout their long history, the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has been almost a total stranger to them” (LOP 6, 3) and “reaching the Chinese people on the mainland of China is, perhaps, one of the most difficult and challenging tasks in world evangelization” (LOP 6, 3) because of the socialist system under which

Chinese people live. As these leaders recognized China as a major yet hard-to-reach region to evangelize, they illustrated several risk factors related to evangelizing the Chinese. For the Chinese, the Christian church was more aligned with Western cultural influence (LOP 6),²⁷ so cultural dislike was one factor making it difficult to evangelize in China. Second, indirect and personal contacts were encouraged because the Chinese government clearly stated that missionaries were not welcome (LOP 6). “It does not seem prudent to develop formal organizational contacts with either the house churches or with the government recognized churches. Christian contacts should rather be conducted on a personal level between individual believers” (LOP 6, 21). Thus, indirect strategies were recommended such as sending Christian businessmen, scientists, engineers, and other experts to work in China (LOP 6). The analysis shows that global religious actors were particularly interested in China’s inland evangelization and acknowledged risk factors that Christian missionaries should be concerned about.

The largest number of unreached groups are in Muslim regions. According to “The Christian Witness to the Muslims” (1980) report, the central issue of the mission network was as follows: “What we need to do is to look for new ways of measuring potential receptivity all over the Islamic world” (LOP 13, 12). The network had been failing to reach Muslims. Interestingly, the paper asserted a need to approach on not an individual basis, but rather a family or group level. Citing an anecdote of a missionary who had been approaching individual Muslims and failing, “approaching families and groups in the society often made group decisions about important matters involving rites

²⁷ “Even then, this Church was more identified with Western cultural influence than with any spontaneous acceptance by the Chinese themselves” (LOP 6, 4).

of passage and religious practices” (LOP 13, 5), and it proved to be more successful. The paper confirmed the effectiveness of the strategy based on a people group, “a sufficiently large sociological grouping of individuals who perceive themselves to have a common affinity for one another” (LOP 13, 7), arguing this should be the basic approach by Christians. This ethnic group- and family-centered approach was stressed throughout the paper.

Regarding Hindus and Buddhists, “the number of Christians in India is less than 3% of the population” (LOP 14, 3), and Buddhists comprised one of the largest blocks of unreached people in 1980, with more than 1 billion people including mainland China and 400 million other Asians (LOP 15). The hindrance to evangelization of Hindus and Buddhists was similar. Christianity was considered a threat to their cultural solidarity for both religious groups—Christianity appeared to be a foreign (Western) religion and was seen as a threat to Indian culture and identity, and Christians were even considered unpatriotic (LOP 14). The same was true for Buddhists—the church failed to break through the social solidarity of Buddhist communities (LOP 15) because the culture is deeply steeped in Buddhism and the religious language is heavily infiltrated by Buddhist terms, connotations, and concepts (LOP 15). Also, changing the religion would be accompanied with adopting a foreign system of forms and expressions, hindering conversion and still posing a problem for Christian missiologists and evangelists today.

To summarize, the LOPs show how global religious actors constructed risk factors and described hindrances to evangelization in the most unevangelized regions, and reaching these regions (China, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist regions) was aligned with the persecution of and danger to both missionaries and converts. However, this

became the rationale for more efforts to send missionaries to these countries because it had been hardly possible for Christians to preach the gospel. This constellation of ideas in the 1980s came into shape in more concrete terms in the second Lausanne meeting, so I turned to the Manila Manifesto and selected official documents to examine how the idea of reaching unreached people in high-risk regions was disseminated to national participants of the Lausanne meeting.

The Manila Manifesto and Official Documents in 1989

The second meeting of Lausanne Movement was convened in Manila in July 1989, bringing together more than 4,000 participants representing about 170 nations. The highlight of the official declaration of the meeting was the Manila Manifesto,²⁸ enumerating 21 affirmations as a continuing commitment to the first Lausanne meeting and setting actors, targets, and subjects of evangelization. Among them, the 19th section sets a particular goal and deadline of reaching unreached people groups.

We affirm that world evangelization is urgent and that the reaching of unreached peoples is possible. So, we resolve during the last decade of the twentieth century to give ourselves to these tasks with fresh determination. (The Lausanne Movement 1989, para. 19)

Then it outlines action plans of Christian evangelicals—number, rationale, and methods. In the section titled “The Challenge of AD2000 and Beyond,” the manifesto mentioned that “there are now about 12,000 such unreached people groups within the 2,000 larger peoples” (The Lausanne Movement 1989, para. 86), which perceive

²⁸ <https://lausanne.org/content/manila-1989-documents>

themselves to have an affinity of culture and language. The rationale was that only 3% of all missionaries were engaged in these regions, whereas the remaining 97% were working in already evangelized regions, urging that “a strategic redeployment of personnel will be necessary” (The Lausanne Movement 1989, para. 86). Methods to reach these groups of people were to send “tent-makers” engaged as businessmen, university lecturers, technical specialists, and language teachers and witness an essential component of the Christian gospel (The Lausanne Movement 1989). So basically, the document set out a more rationalized approach for world evangelists to empirically measure, target, and materialize certain groups of people in specific regions in a more scientific way.

Several other related documents of the second meeting and selected official papers, titled “The Evangelism in Challenging Settings I: The Church in Challenging Situations,” called for more aggressive sending of missionaries to high-risk countries and enunciated potential persecution and political pressure on them. Persecution was limited to smaller areas, cities, or provinces in the early days of church, but more organized and globalized persecution began when “the atheistic revolution,” the rise of communism and “the Islamic revolution,” happened in Iran in 1979 (Andrew 1989). God calls for more active participation in these regions such as Albania, Mongolia, and North Korea, because “God is eager to penetrate these three hostile fortresses of the Enemy. He awaits servants who are indeed willing to give their lives for this cause” (Andrew 1989, 133), a very strong call for participation in foreign missions in high-risk countries, risking missionaries’ lives and asking them to endure suffering.

The political and social risks were well anticipated in the document. Citing the verse from the Bible that “if they persecuted me, they would persecute you also” (John

15:20), the document expected clashes with religions and ideologies in high-risk countries when the gospel is preached (Andrew 1989).

There will be a terrific resistance. The opposition is often translated into political pressure on the sending counties, and there definitely will be a greatly accelerated pace of persecution. (Andrew 1989, 135)

The persecution or political pressures could be on both missionaries and converts, but finishing the task required dedication and risks, so missionaries needed to focus their efforts and redeploy in these regions. A more rationalized target in these regions became unreached people groups. The speech of the chairman of the second Lausanne meeting confirmed that the term unreached people gained momentum in 1989. Leighton Ford, chairman of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, contended that “the concept of two and one-half billion unreached people was new to many of us. Now, that idea has gripped missions around the world and churches have been planted among hundreds of unreached people groups in the last fifteen years” (The Lausanne Movement 1989, 49). A new and more concerted international movement, the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, initiated thanks to continuous efforts to build a coherent agenda of action for Protestant evangelicals during the 1980s.

Shared Discourse at the AD2000 and Beyond Movement

Globalized values and ideology shared in the AD2000 and Beyond movement were measured using thematic analysis, drawing from records and publications produced from the AD2000 and Beyond movement’s online archives (<http://www.ad2000.org/>). I sought common themes in the data, condensed these themes, and drew inferences.

Although the international office of the AD2000 and Beyond movement has officially closed, records related to various initiatives, projects, and conferences have been kept for reference. Several documents including an overview of the movement, regions of unreached groups, strategies to expedite the process, and national initiatives were analyzed. I examined how and when the global discourse of unreached people was discussed and used, narratives of how international actors discussed the discourse, changes in the discourse, actors involved in the movement, and the rationale of sending missionaries to high-risk countries.

Multiple Dimensions of Reaching Unreached People Groups

Although Christian believers perceive that mission work is the ultimate purpose of churches, documents generated from the AD2000 and Beyond movement suggest more concrete reasons for sending Christian missionaries to unreached people groups in high-risk countries. I sought to identify and understand the development of the rationale for conducting more religious activities in these countries. The main themes from the documents fall along three dimensions: urgency of mission work, political and social factors, and relocation of resources.

First, Christian international networks agreed that the unfinished task of world evangelization was urgent due to the small number of Christians in the target areas. For example, North India²⁹ was set as a core target by the AD2000 and Beyond Movement because it had the fewest Christians in the nation (AD2000 & Beyond, n.d.), about 0.5%

²⁹ North India includes Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Jammu Kashmir, Punjab, Himachel Pradesh, and Haryana (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.).

of North India's population in 1991. These regions were viewed as having been resistant to Christianity, and offering a valid opportunity for every person to experience the truth and saving power of Jesus Christ (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.) was seen as crucial. Also, in that view, Christian missionaries needed to get to unreached people groups because these countries were restricted. According to AD2000 and Beyond documents:

Does your church want to send prayer journey teams, research teams, or church planting teams? Many countries restrict missionaries from entering their borders (for example, India, China, or Yemen), but may allow Christians to enter as business professionals (i.e. tentmaking missionaries). One of the major reasons peoples are unreached is because they are inaccessible to traditional ways of presenting the gospel. (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.)³⁰

Because these countries had been hardly approachable to Christians, this became the rationale for more efforts to send missionaries and not reveal a Christian identity in these regions. This involved the issuance of government restrictions on religious minorities in Muslim- or Hindu-majority countries because this "tent-making" ministry³¹ was officially forbidden or restricted and could result in persecution of Christian missionaries. International Christian networks' call to "guarantee freedom of thought and conscience, and freedom to practice and propagate religion" (Lausanne Covenant 1975, para. 14) can be attributed to this reason.

³⁰ Direct quotes from the AD2000 and Beyond Movements online archives are from several webpages, so pages cannot be accrued from the sources. Please refer to documented webpages sources in the reference section.

³¹ Tent-making ministry refers to a self-help ministry instead of receiving financial support from a church, using professional skills on their own. It comes from the apostle Paul supporting himself by making tents (Act 18:3) while spreading the gospel.

Another dimension of unreached people groups was the social and political importance of these regions. People groups in Saudi Arabia, for instance, were the main targets of missions because “the two holiest cities in the Islamic world—Mecca and Medina—are in Saudi Arabia, the largest nation on the Peninsula” (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). The Arabian Peninsula is highly populated, containing about 20% of the world’s population, so it became a major target of evangelization. Likewise, North India is a high-profile target because it is a major population center and contains the center of political power, New Delhi (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). If the evangelization of people groups in these regions could be successfully initiated, the word of God could be disseminated more effectively.

An organizational factor of churches and mission groups was suggested as another factor of targeting unreached people groups—redeploying resources to regions the gospel has not reached. Churches have material, human, and spiritual resources to complete the task, yet the resources need to be relocated to “eliminate duplication of efforts” (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). The documents acknowledged that most of the population has access to the gospel through a “full or portion of Scripture in their own language, literature translation, radio transmission, audio recordings, and film” (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). Therefore, global mission networks need to relocate current resources to target the neediest regions. Efforts to streamline resources have been made possible with more data on who is working in the field and where, such as the Joshua Project,³²

³² Joshua Project 2000 was a global cooperative strategy that identified 1,739 people groups most needing a church-planting effort. It aimed to bring together workers to research these people, produce prayer profiles, enlist prayer teams, and mobilize church-planting teams. The goal of the project was to prioritize establishing a pioneer church-planting movement with every ethnolinguistic group of more than 10,000 individuals by December 31, 2000 (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.), which remains ongoing.

and language and cultural training of missionaries. Researching the needs and reporting on the status of religious work have gained momentum since the 1990s, so assigning resources to the neediest target could be achieved. The more research on unreached people groups, the more efficiently can resources be assigned.

The Development of the Discourse of Unreached People Groups

It is argued that William Carey's (1761–1834) mission in India catalyzed the modern history of Protestant foreign missions (Bosch 1991). But more institutionalized and concerted plans, which utilized science and technology to measure the exact number of unreached people groups in need of missionaries, started with the second Lausanne Conference in Manila, as previously discussed. Church leaders realized that more than 2,000 evangelization plans by Christian organizations and denominations focused on the year 2000 at the beginning of 1990. "The AD2000 and Beyond movement first gained attention at the international mission conference Lausanne II in Manila in 1989" (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.).

The second Lausanne Movement began listing specific names of unreached groups with the call to "Proclaim Christ Until He Comes." Why did it start to be discussed during the second conference in 1989, and not the first conference in 1974? Ralph Winter, the first advocate of the term, explained that "a consensus" on the definition of the term and further development took place between 1974 and 1989. The Unreached Peoples Meeting of March 1982, sponsored by the Lausanne Movement, took place in Chicago for 2 days "to focus specifically upon the necessary definitions for a strategy to reach unreached peoples" (Winter 1989, para. 9). Further refinement of terms

took nearly a decade, as examined with the LOPs, and a plan of action to reach unreached people began once the second Lausanne conference launched in 1989.

The findings from the records also highlighted that 2000 was a significant year for Christian leaders:

Now the year 2000 has become for many a challenging milestone. Can we commit ourselves to evangelize the world during the last decade of this millennium? There is nothing magical about the date, yet should we not do our best to reach this goal? (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.)

Another passage stated that “this perception of AD2000 as a magnetic target has grown over the past twenty years” (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). Facing the end of the millennium, church leaders set a grand plan to finalize world evangelization: (a) the second Lausanne Movement, which set up global initiatives and the launch of the AD2000 and Beyond movement in 1989; (b) the GCOWE ‘95 to evaluate the process in 1995; and (c) the Joshua Project 2000, a 5-year final thrust to accomplish the goal by 2000. Due to these efforts, the idea of unreached people was globally diffused in the 1990s, and regional actors, including Korean religious actors, began to send missionaries to high-risk countries after 2000. Once the discourse of targeting unreached people gained consensus, religious actors began to modernize mission strategies with more coherent plans, data-driven principles, and resources after 1989.

Strategies of Reaching Unreached People Groups

The main themes regarding the targets, principles, and strategies to reach unreached people groups in high-risk countries were (a) targeting ethnolinguistic units,

(b) the role of Global South churches, and (c) participation of indigenous churches.

Documents consistently show that global religious actors defined targets based on ethnolinguistic groups, not the political sense of a nation-state.

It is not a political or geographical unit, but a people or tribe, defined by culture and language. God wants all ethne disciplined. We focus on reaching ethne because they are God's focus and He commissioned us to reach them. (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.)

A consistent focus arose on the need to reach cultures that had no witness in their own language. According to reports, Westerners, representing traditional missionary-sending countries, were aware that unreached people had very different cultural and political systems, so the gospel should be understandable to them (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). A geographical unit was not the target of mission work, as in the instance of targeting the community of 400,000 Iranians in Los Angeles due to language and cultural differences (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). However, most unreached people reside in remote geographic regions, so the targets and strategies to train missionaries (language and literature translation) were geared to reach ethno-based groups in remote areas. One missionary who worked in Sierra Leone mentioned that "while it was true that we were serving in Sierra Leone, in reality we were working in three distinct mission fields among the Yalunka, Euranko and Thomne peoples in Sierra Leone" (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.), encouraging a redefinition of the goal of mission work. This new effort to target ethnolinguistic groups represents a shift of the nation-state dimension to nonstate centers of religious goals (Robert 2011).

Another interesting theme to note is that international religious network actors highlighted the role of Global South churches. This is mainly due to the huge growth of nontraditional churches: “The explosive growth of the Two Thirds World church in this century has positioned the church around the world for a major evangelistic thrust in the nineties” (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). A call for more participation by third-world countries was also exemplified by the role of South Korea. Korea underwent amazing growth in Christianity and became a main player in foreign mission work, and it “took up the largest share of any country on earth and were the first to financially support and commit to the primary global thrust flowing out of GCOWE ‘95-Joshua Project 2000” (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). As Korea hosted the largest conference at the end of the 20th century and demonstrated its material and human resources, international networks requested more voluntary participation of Global South churches.

Although the AD2000 and Beyond movement disseminated and activated interest in unreached people groups, international networks required action at the local level. A recurring theme of focusing national initiatives set by each country can be found throughout the documents.

National AD2000 Initiatives are the best expressions of the practical outworking of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement. As of 1999, most countries of the world have some kind of National AD2000 Initiative. The aim of these initiatives is to see the body of Christ in every nation mobilized and working in coordinated efforts toward the completion of the unfinished task of evangelization in their own country. (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.)

A strategy designed to achieve world evangelization was church planting initiated by indigenous churches in countries where targeted unreached people reside. For instance, 80 Christian leaders set an initiative to establish a church-planting movement to reach unreached tribes in Sudan (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.), where 91% of the population is Muslim (Pew Research Center 2012). Other examples include target groups being identified by Indian churches and parachurch organizations to expedite domestic evangelization. The India Missions Association, in partnership with Gospel for Asia, published a book of unreached groups in India using language groups and PIN (ZIP) codes (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). International networks called on churches in third-world countries become “a missionary church”³³ and voluntarily reach unreached people with the help of international networks. Part of the reason for this request by global leaders was that indigenous churches are more approachable for unreached groups, because they live in same geographic areas, use same or similar languages, and share a common historical background. It enables them to be effective resources to reach the goal of world evangelization.

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter explored the discourse carried by international religious networks and analyzed when and how international actors shared and disseminated the call to send more missionaries to high-risk countries. Following the genealogy of the idea of unreached people, several themes were found in the LOPs, records of the second

³³ “The gathering sprang from the stunning realization that it is time for Sudan to become a missionary church” (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.).

Lausanne meeting in Manila, 1989, and the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, covering the period between 1980 and 2000. Defining high-risk countries as those where persecution of Christians is severe, early records of the Lausanne Movement in the 1980s set the target regions of unreached groups, primarily ethnolinguistic groups, which were mostly located in high-risk states. The documents highlighted the hindrances to evangelization and risk factors in the most unevangelized regions and how reaching these regions (China, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist regions) was aligned with persecution and danger for both missionaries and converts. At the second meeting in 1989, a more rationalized and scientific approach emerged to empirically measure and target certain groups of people in specific regions. Additionally, the document called for more aggressive forms of engagement in religious activities in high-risk countries.

More substantial rationales and strategies to send missionaries to unreached people groups in high-risk countries were documented in the AD2000 and Beyond Movement. A shared global urgency of reaching these unreached groups, the social and political importance of these regions, and relocating existing resources to restricted regions were discussed. Global religious networks set the specific target of reaching ethnic- and linguistic-based groups to finish the task, and the strategy to expedite the process was a bottom-up approach requiring national actors' initiatives and the participation of unorthodox actors, Global South churches. Taken together, I illuminated a package of cultural sources of a shared vision and strategy to send missionaries to unreached peoples in high-risk countries and a call for more active participation of local actors by international networks on the issue.

The findings highlight other issues as well. First, setting the goal of ethnolinguistic units challenges the traditional understanding of nation-state units as a primary goal of mission work. Targets of religious actors became nonstate-centric because the gospel should be understandable to these groups. Current events also fostered the change: The end of World War II triggered a rise in nationalism in postcolonial countries and migration of ethnic-based groups, thereby urging religious actors to shift the targets of evangelism. The unit of ethne can be interpreted as a nation, and a nation becomes a state (nation-state) as a political unit, or several nations can comprise the state (multiethnic state). In any case, reaching unreached people in a nation-state or multiethnic state involves facing the religious jurisdiction of the state in which the targeted unreached people group is located. Conflicts are less common in states where religious freedom is guaranteed, and Christian missionaries dispatched to highly restrictive states (Muslim- or Hindu-majority countries) inevitably face government restrictions. Thus, unreached people groups overlap with the boundary of a political unit, and overseas religious activities that target these regions are political and global.

Another implication of the analysis is that religion is strongly affected by a rationalized approach accompanied in globalization (Thomas 2007). The institutionalization of mission strategy, particularly after 1989, was confirmed with the theme of redeploying material, human, and spiritual resources by global religious actors throughout archival documents. This demonstrates that religion engages modern secular spheres on a global level and religion takes the form of instrumental rationality in reaching the goals of foreign mission. The secular sphere is rooted in the assumption that actors can manipulate nature and convert it into commodities (Thomas 2007), and the

religious sphere of global foreign mission activities has been rationalized as redistributing existing material and human resources to maximize results, researching, and organizing goals and strategies with the use of science and technology (Thomas 2007). For instance, records demonstrated that a very detailed process of selecting, registering, researching, and sustaining the adoption of each unreached people group by churches was planned (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). The idea pioneered in 1974 in the first Lausanne Congress was followed with the development of rational strategies and programs that were implemented in practice.

Also of note, although religious activities do not always result in conflicts, the nonpolitical intentions of sending missionaries to high-risk countries precisely risk a political crisis. Religious distinctiveness generated by moving of people relates to efforts to emphasize the otherness of new immigrants (Hanciles 2014)—in this case, Christian missionaries. Christian beliefs are distinguished from cultural traits of ethnic, linguistic, and historical characteristics of a particular group. But simultaneously, religious beliefs are enshrined in cultural identity and therefore, inseparable from social existence (Hanciles 2014), resulting in conflicts among religious groups. Chapter 6 delves more into political tensions caused by sending Christian missionaries to high-risk countries, through analysis of interview records of Korean missionaries.

The analysis of this chapter demonstrated that international actors created and shared the discourse of reaching unreached people groups in high-risk countries. To fully explore the mechanisms of how local actors, Korean missionaries, interacted with international religious networks and how they responded, it is necessary to examine the posited causal mechanisms of the relationship with empirical examples and an in-depth

analysis of relevant data. Accordingly, I investigated the case of a global evangelical conference, the GCOWE in 1995, hosted by Korean actors to examine a pattern of local and international interactions, as discussed in Chapter 5. Here, Korean actors were exposed to and affected by the discourse generated from the Lausanne Movement and AD2000 and Beyond Movement. Engagement in global networks fostered heightened contributions to foreign missions and sending missionaries to high-risk countries by Korean actors. Chapter 6 explores local actors' responses to the dissemination of global ideas of unreached people and the urgency of sending missionaries to high-risk countries.

INTERACTIONS OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS NETWORKS: THE UNREACHED PEOPLE MOVEMENT

The previous chapter presented an analysis of international religious discourse using various documented sources of global religious networks. The analysis illustrated an evolutionary pattern of creating and sharing religious ideas of unreached people among global religious actors. In this chapter, I evaluate the argument that sharing global religious discourse of unreached people drove the motivations of Korean missionary organizations and led to local religious actors' growth of mission activities in high-risk countries. The pattern of local actors' involvement in global religious network was analyzed using the case of a global-level conference, the GCOWE in 1995, catalyzing the interest in unreached people groups by Korean churches. Was the participation of Korean Protestant churches in global conferences associated with the increase of missionaries in high-risk countries? I evaluated this hypothesis with quantitative data using the number of missionaries in high-risk countries collected from the national surveys of the KWMA reports ranging from 2008 to 2017 and documented sources of the case of two churches, the Onnuri Church and the Saennuri Church, which participated the unreached people movement and sent their missionaries to high-risk countries. The results support that Korean mission groups' involvement in global religious networks and sharing global religious discourse of unreached people, as discussed in Chapter 4, drove motivations of Korean missionaries and had an effect on the increase of missionaries in high-risk countries, such as the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, North India, and China.

In this chapter, I start with a review of a hypothesis to assess whether the involvement in global religious networks influenced a growing interest in foreign mission in high-risk countries, leading to the increase of mission activities there. I then present the analysis of the documents generated from the GCOWE in 1995 and how Korean churches interacted with global religious actors and set their national agendas in this conference. It is followed with a discussion of the empirical cases of two churches that participated the unreached people movement. The hosting of the '95 conference by Korean actors signifies that they actively adopted the globally shared idea of unreached people while attempting to suggest a new model of foreign missions to other national participants. Last, a quantitative examination of the number of Korean missionaries in high-risk countries is presented with a discussion of methodology and data.

Hypothesis

The urgency to target unreached people groups was shared and disseminated among global actors, as I examined in Chapter 4, and thus, I explored how Korean religious actors' participation in international networks influenced their motivation to seek out unreached people groups in high-risk countries.

H2a: The increase in sending Korean Protestant missionaries to high-risk countries is driven by Korean mission groups' involvement in global religious networks and shared global religious discourse of unreached people.

Korean mission groups' participation in global religious networks was examined using the documented sources of the GCOWE in 1995. This conference was intended to facilitate the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, and Korean churches hosted this conference in Seoul from May 17 to 26, 1995. I analyzed documents generated from this 10-day event because they vividly show the interaction of Korean religious actors and global actors, how the idea of unreached people was discussed and disseminated among Korean actors, and even the presentation of a new model of missions to other participants. I also conducted case studies of local Korean churches that participated the unreached people groups movements and sent missionaries to these countries. I looked into the cases of two congregations, the Onnuri Church and the Saennuri Church—one is a mega church, and the other is a medium-size local church in Korea. I used their internal documents to confirm that they mentioned that their church was engaged in the unreached people movement in the 1990s and researched, targeted, and adopted certain people groups and sent missionaries. This supports my hypothesis that sharing global religious discourse of unreached people resulted in sending missionaries to unreached people groups in high-risk states.

The period under investigation regarding the pattern of sending missionaries to high-risk countries was roughly 1989 to 2017. Although global actors began to discuss a shared idea of unreached people in the 1980s, it took some time for Korean churches to adopt and disseminate the ideas and engage in foreign mission activities. So, looking into a pattern of mission activities after the 1990s would be significant. Due to the lack of data on the number of missionaries sent to high-risk countries, which were collected after 2008, a quantitative examination of the number of missionaries in high-risk countries is

presented as supporting evidence for the argument. Although these data were collected from the 2000s, the results show the increase of missionaries in high-risk countries, supporting the thesis that Korean churches' involvement in global religious networks and shared global religious discourse highly influenced Korean religious actors' motivations and practices.

Interaction of National and International Religious Networks

Korean churches and mission groups' involvement in global networks has been extensive—as previously mentioned, early participation began when 65 Korean representatives participated in the first Lausanne meeting in 1974, and more than 100 representatives were involved in the second meeting in 1989 (Cho 1990). Key religious leaders have participated since the second meeting, some of them leading meetings as the secretary of general affairs of the East Asia Regional Committee (Choi 2013) and chair of the Asia Regional Committee. It is highly plausible that Korean national actors were exposed to and affected by the discourse generated from the Lausanne Movement. The most vivid example of the interaction of Korean actors with the Lausanne meetings, however, is Korea's hosting of the GCOWE in 1995. The discourse of unreached people was vigorously adopted by domestic Korean Protestant churches. Korean churches committed to dispatching 100,000 young missionaries to unreached people, diffusing a global discourse of unreached people on the domestic level during the GCOWE meeting (Park 2014a). Here, I analyze a process of interaction of local and international actors and the response of local actors after the GCOWE, illustrating examples of Korean churches sending missionaries to unreached people groups, mostly in high-risk countries.

Global Consultation on World Evangelization in 1995

The GCOWE '95 played a key role in disseminating understanding and urgency to reach unreached people groups across Korean churches and foreign mission workers, but the idea was first introduced in the Christian journal *Mission World* in 1990 (Moon 1991) in Korea. Dr. Steve Sang-Cheol Moon, who was trained in the Korean American Center for World Mission in Pasadena, California, introduced a training program for evangelizing unreached people groups in 1993 to Korean churches (Holzman 1991).³⁴ The center was based in the U.S. Center for the World Mission, which advocated a focus on the idea of the unreached people group. Due to these efforts, the term was adopted by Korean actors—a parachurch group (InterCP) and a denomination (GAPCK) began to offer seminars on unreached people, and missiology classes focused on unreached people were set up by doctoral graduates who finished their degree at U.S. seminaries (Han 2017). These movements laid the groundwork for Koreans' national initiatives, the start of the Unreached People Mission Alliance (UPMA) in 1993³⁵ and Korea's hosting of the GCOWE in 1995. Korean churches invited several international religious actors as speakers in the conference to facilitate the movement, and Luis Bush and several key figures of the unreached people movement took the lead of disseminating the ideas throughout Korea.

The “Global Consultation on World Evangelization: A Mid-Decadal Global Strategy Meeting on World Evangelization” was convened in May 1995 in the Torch Center for World Mission in Seoul. To fulfill the goals of reaching unreached people

³⁴ Semistructured interview with Jungkook Han, a key figure who led the movement to disseminate the idea of the unreached people in Korea. The interview was conducted on June 24, 2022.

³⁵ <http://upma21.com/main/>

groups by 2000, a mid-decade meeting was hosted by Korea to present the clear status of the goal and a specific action plan (GCOWE 1995, n.d.). Nearly 4,000 Christian leaders representing 186 countries gathered to attend the meeting; two thirds of the participants came from Africa, Latin America, and Asia, and most of the consultation funding came from those nations. The primary focus of the meeting was the 10/40 window, because “people in these regions suffer from oppression, poverty, spiritual ignorance, early deaths, and infant mortality” (GCOWE 1995, n.d.).³⁶ The conveners called on the participants to “have a commitment to the overall goal of establishing a mission-minded church planting movement within every unreached people group and to network with Christian leaders who share the same vision” (GCOWE 1995, n.d.). The participant handbook included a very detailed guide to discuss the status of their national resources, short- and long-term plans, and action plans and asked the participants to carefully design strategies to be involved in mission work (GCOWE Handbook 1995).

The documents stressed that global networks of the GCOWE take the form of national initiatives and partnerships among leaders representing many countries of the world, thereby representing the interaction of national and international religious actors on common goals. Rick Wood, the editor of the journal *Mission Frontiers* at the U.S. Center for World Mission, noted that national initiatives were set by national Christian leaders to develop their own goals, informed by the global process (Wood 1992). So, national leaders developed and implemented goals tailored to their political and economic realities. For example, Korean churches set its initiatives, and the Korean AD2000 Executive Committee set June 25, 1994, as the date to mobilize 2 million Christians to

³⁶ Direct quotes from the GCOWE '95 online archives are from several webpages.

pray for world change. Hosting the '95 GCOWE meeting was one national initiative set by Koreans to mobilize Korean churches and galvanize interest in unreached people groups (Bush 1993).

But the sharing of the vision came through “consultation as Christian leaders gather in national or regional consultations” (Wood 1992, para. 19), so the formation process of national initiatives did not occur in isolation from global networks. The document contended that global initiatives led by interest groups concentrated on each topic of world evangelization, such as prayer meetings, mobilization, and targets. For instance, each global network of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement typically included in its leadership one person from the West and one from a second- or third-world country. This global interaction of local pastors, denominational leaders, Christian organizational leaders, and representatives from national church entities shows that the agenda-setting and norm-sharing process happened on both domestic and international levels.

Regarding setting targets of missions, it is apparent that the meeting was geared to reaching unreached people groups in high-risk countries. John Robb, a coordinator of the meeting's Unreached People Network, acknowledged that “Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism each have their spiritual headquarters here” (GCOWE 1995, n.d.) and “Jesus' command to ‘make disciples of all nations’ does not simply refer to political countries, but rather to the ethnic people groups within them” (GCOWE 1995, n.d.). Particularly, the meeting's documents show that participants categorized people groups into 12 “affinity blocks”: Arabs, Sahalian Africans, Cushitic peoples of East Africa, Iranians, Turkics, Tibeto-Burmese, Indians, Malays, East Asians, Southeast Asians, and dispersed Jews (GCOWE 1995, n.d.). This targeting of people groups instead of geographic regions

was mainly due to missiologists' rethinking of nonwestern indigenous Christianity in the postcolonial world. Donald McGavran, a missiologist and founding dean of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary, argued that the Western missionaries' model was outdated and moved beyond colonial structures of using heavy material and institutional resources. Instead, he advised taking the conversion of peoples in their own social groups as a new pattern, focusing on the growth of indigenous churches (Robert 2011) and targeting ethnic units as an effective way to evangelize (McGavran 2005). This categorization of target regions directed a more scrupulous targeting by Korean missionaries, and it influenced the UPMA to develop national initiatives to send missionaries to high-risk countries, as discussed in the next section. This interaction of national and international networks of religious actors and the adoption of the term illustrates how the international discourse affected local religious actors' motivations of their decisions and why they chose to reach unreached people groups in high-risk countries.



Figure 6: GCOWE, Seoul, South Korea (Source: Torch Center for World Missions)

Sending Missionaries to High-Risk Countries: Onnuri and Saennuri Churches

Korean churches responded to the call of international actors and began sending missionaries to unreached people regions. Joon-Gon Kim, chair of the GCOWE Preparation Committee of Korea and Korean director of the Campus Crusade for Christ, pledged that Korea would prepare and initiate evangelization of unreached groups. In his writing “A Call to Country-Wide Initiatives,” he asserted: “We plan to recruit and send 100,000 student missionaries as short-term or long-term traditional or tentmaker missionaries” (GCOWE 1995, n.d.), drawing from the huge success of the church-planting movement of the Explo ‘74 domestically. It seems that Korean churches were influenced by the legacy of the student volunteer movement in the late 19th century in the United States, which sought college students as missionary workers and spurred a dramatic surge in the number of missionaries. Mobilizing 100,000 student missionaries was not ultimately achieved, but Korean churches were adamant about organizing and uniting student mission organizations into an overarching national network, *The Mission Korea*, and planned to nurture student workers and send them to countries with unreached people. Hosting an international meeting as a former missionary-receiving country likely gave Koreans the confidence to lead foreign mission works, and Kim mentioned: “We hope that all involved in GCOWE ‘95 will find in our model some aspects which you could use to help your churches to spread the Gospel” (GCOWE 1995, n.d.).

This spurred Korean local churches to choose an unreached people group and send their missionaries to that group. One megachurch in Korea, the Onnuri Church, illustrates this process. The church is an evangelical megachurch in Korea that rapidly expanded the number of communicants from the 1980s, and now it has an average of

more than 80,000 people in attendance at its worship services. The church sponsored the venue of the GCOWE '95, provided human and material resources, and “adopted” 15 unreached people groups in the 1990s, sending missionaries to these regions. These unreached people groups included several Muslim ethnic tribes in high-risk countries where public proselytization of the gospel was discouraged. An internal document of the church shows that the process of adoption of the people group and dispatching of missionaries were influenced by the international discourse regarding sending missionaries to these regions (Onnuri Church 2013).

The church’s vision of foreign mission was geared to unreached people when we began to cooperate with UPMA in 1996 and became known to the status of the unreached people and world mission. (Onnuri Church 2013, para. 1)

The plan solidified as young adults were trained in mission investigation and the unreached people movement was disseminated in the church (Onnuri Church 2013). The document also stated that the church planned to dispatch 2,000 missionaries to selected unreached people groups in the 10/40 window (Onnuri Church 2013). The 15 unreached people groups to which the church sent missionaries included the Hani tribe in China (sending year: 1999), Azerbaijani in Azerbaijan (2005), Iban in Malaysia (2004), Buriat in Mongol (2004), Uzbek in Uzbekistan (1999), Vedda in Sri Lanka (1997), Turk (1997) and Kurd (2000) in Turkey, Uyghur in China (1999), Tarahumara (2002), Mixe (1999) in Mexico, Intha in Myanmar (1999), Lampung in Indonesia (2000), Swahili in Kenya (1994), and Karakalpak in Uzbekistan (2002; Tyrannus International Mission, n.d.). Again, public teaching of the Christian gospel is prohibited or discouraged in most of

these countries, so dispatching missionaries there involved the risk of political and social pressure.

Another case shows that even a small local church participated the movement and sent missionaries to high-risk countries. The Saennuri Church, with an average of 280 people in attendance in its worship services, pledged in 1996 to adopt a Khmer group in Cambodia. The church decided to adopt the Khmer people because “it was the least evangelized and impoverished group in the 10/40 window, and it is predominantly Buddhist, lacking indigenous efforts and workers, and Christians were massively persecuted by the Khmer Rouge regime in 1975” (Kim 2010, 63). The church coordinated with the denomination’s foreign mission board and UPMA when selecting the people group (Kim 2010), trained potential missionaries, and raised funds. The worship service program (see Figure 7) to send missionaries and adopt the Khmer people illustrates that the international discourse had a far-reaching influence on local religious actors in Korea.

파송선교사



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대한예수교장로회 총회

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- 파송후원교회 : 반송제일교회



- 일시 : 1997년 3월16일 (주일) 오후4:30
- 장소 : 반송제일교회당

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기도제목 : 기도! 기도! 기도해 주세요

- 선교사와 크메르족의 사랑의 진이 무너지고 복음의 땅이 황폐 떨리고 복음이 부흥하도록,
- 파송되는 선교사들이 성령충만하여 열적 대결에서 승리하도록
- 선교사들이 선교지의 영혼과 문화를 뜨겁게 사랑하며, 선교지 통용어를 잘 습득하도록
- 선교사 및 가족들의 건강과 원지에 잘 적응하며 선교에 필요한 은사가 넘치도록
- 우리 반송제일교회에 선교를 위한 기도와 헌신의 불길이 뜨겁게 일어나도록

반송제일교회는 97년도 표어를 "새를 부리는 고대"로 정하고 3대 목표를 세워
 ①말씀순례 선교헌신 ②기도할성 성령충만 ③기쁨으로 성전확장을 목표로 이루어가고 있습니다.
 회장: 문재수 장로 부회장: 최광영 아람회 장수영 두재우 이영훈 수모: 송무: 김성희 김사
 시가: 김성열 김사 부처기: 박주호 김사 회계: 전순애 김사 무회계: 김옥자 김사
 협동총무: 김은호 김홍주 김순영 장영우 김희남 김태환 김민구 강순교 임희자 박영자 임순남
 이재연 신의복 김은선 박희주

Figure 7: The Worship Service Program to Send Missionaries to the Khmer People in Cambodia (Source: Kim 2010)

Korean actors even redefined target regions that were initially discussed and disseminated by international networks, the Lausanne meetings, and the GCOWE '95. The UPMA set a revised strategy to expedite the task of reaching unreached people, focusing more on people groups in cities and specializing mission works in 12 areas. This area was called the “Frontiers Missions Area,” where ethnolinguistic and religious-cultural distinctions were considered: North Africa (Maghreb), Levant (Middle East), Turk, Arabia, Persia, Central Asia, West Asia, Inland and Outland China, Hindu, Indochina, and East and Southern Asia regions (UPMA; see Figure 8). Again, these are predominantly Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist areas. Although the idea of urgency to reach

unreached people groups and setting a specific goal of reaching these regions were informed by global processes in the 1980 and 1990s, national religious leaders took the initiative and set their own goals focused on these regions, reconstructing target regions and orienting Korean churches' missionizing efforts to particularly high-risk countries from the 1990s. The abduction case of Korean missionaries in Afghanistan in 2007 and its political implications need to be understood in this context.

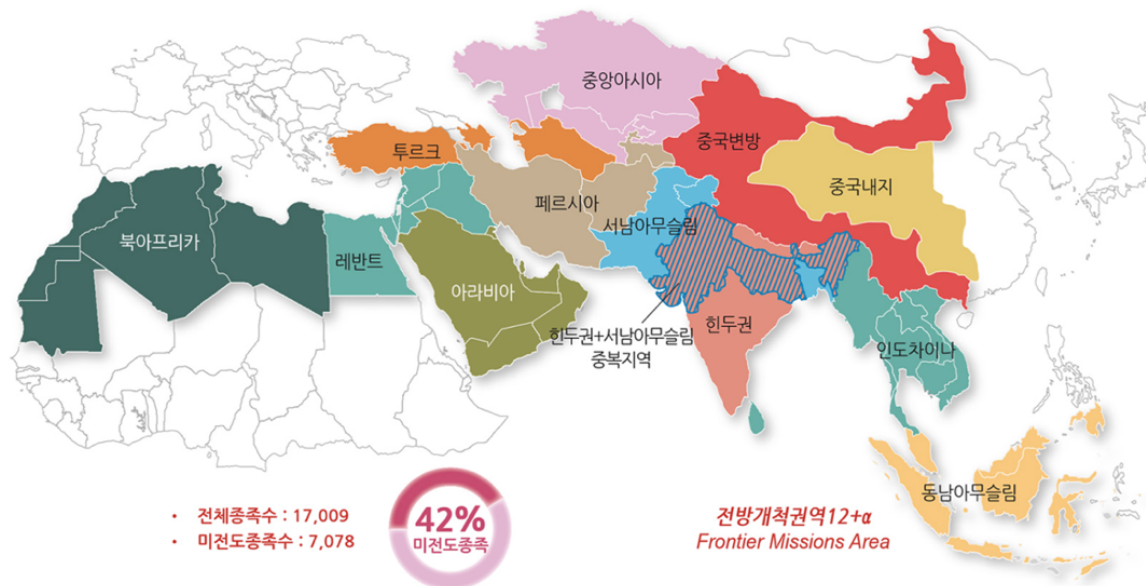


Figure 8: Frontier Missions Area Redefined by Korean Religious Actors (Source: UPMA)

Methodology and Data

I assessed the hypothesis that Koreans would send missionaries to high-risk countries, particularly in the 2000s, as they started to be involved in international networks and shared the idea of the urgency to reach unreached people groups in high-risk countries. For the dependent variable, the measurement of the variable was the

number of Korean missionaries in high-risk countries, collected from KWMA reports. The KWMA started to collect data on the number of missionaries using a national survey in 2008, so the data only cover the period after 2008. Korean churches started to send foreign missionaries in the 1960s (KMC 1960, 1965), but nationwide collection of data began in 2008, including target regions and demographic information of missionaries and mission groups. Data for 2010 and 2011 are missing. The target countries collected in the survey included geographic regions resistant to the Christian gospel: North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, North India, and China. A change in the number of missionaries sent to these countries would indicate whether local religious actors paid special attention to high-risk countries and sent missionaries there. The independent variable, the analysis of global religious discourse, was discussed in Chapter 4 using documents of the Lausanne Movement and the AD2000 and Beyond Movement. Participation in global religious networks by Korean actors was assessed using the case of the GCOWE '95 and two church cases studies.

As previously discussed, high-risk countries are countries in geographic regions that have been resistant to Christian proselytizing or evangelizing. Measuring the number of missionaries on a country basis could enable more detailed examination, but the KWMA data only offer the number of missionaries based on large geographical regions (continent) and some highly populous countries, which include the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, North India, and China. These regions encompass nearly 3 billion people, including most of the world's Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. I included China due to its serious crackdown on religion and restrictive policies on religious minorities, including Christians, in recent years. Religious activities of foreign missionaries are

allowed but highly restricted in China. Specific regulations apply for foreigners, which have been effective since 2000 with the “Implementation Instructions on Rules for Religious Activities for Foreigners.” These instructions provide guidelines for how relations between foreigners and the Chinese should occur in the religious sphere. For example, “visiting foreigners possessing a religious minister identity may preach or give sermons at legally registered religious activity centres” (State Administration 2000), but all relevant religious activities, including religious publications, spreading religious materials, and hiring teachers, are only allowed with the permission of the authority. Most importantly, it does not allow foreigners to convert Chinese citizens or ordain Chinese citizens as religious ministers. This highly restricts the religious activities of foreign Christian missionaries, culminating to the level of preventing any activities. Most missionaries living in China hide their religious identities, but due to the nation’s restrictive nature, a high number of Korean missionaries were deported recently, and one source estimated that more than 1,000 South Korean missionaries were deported between 2013 and 2017 (Lau 2018).

Growth of Mission Activities of Koreans in High-Risk Countries

The results of a quantitative examination of the number of missionaries in high-risk countries indicate that Korean churches expanded their foreign mission activities in these regions. Data for 2010 and 2011 are missing. The total number of missionaries sent by Korean churches and the number of missionaries sent to high-risk countries are shown in Figure 9 (see Appendix A). The number of missionaries sent to high-risk countries was already high in 2008 and mildly increased between 2008 and 2017, from 8,329 in 2008 to

11,681 in 2017, although it is not sure whether the number increased in 2010 and 2011. The total number of missionaries plateaued after 2015, and the number in high-risk countries also show a similar pattern (see Figure 9). Although the number of missionaries before 2008 is unclear, there was already a very high number of missionaries sent to high-risk countries.

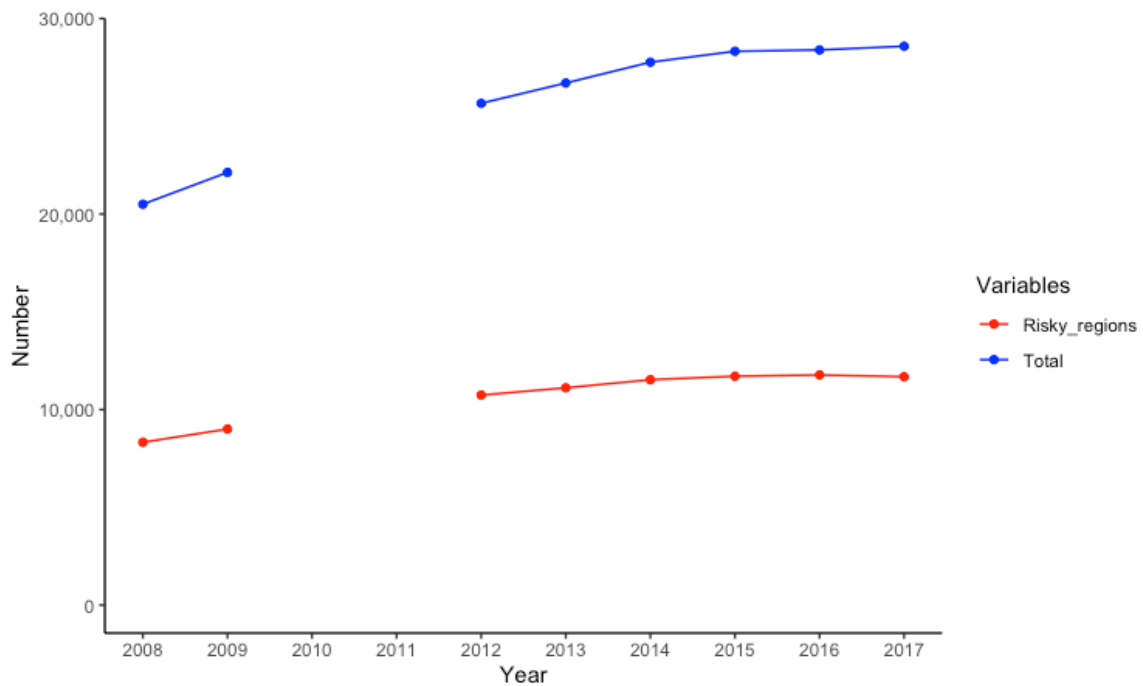


Figure 9: Korean Missionaries Overall and in High-Risk Regions (Middle East, North Africa, India, and China; Source: KWMA reports)

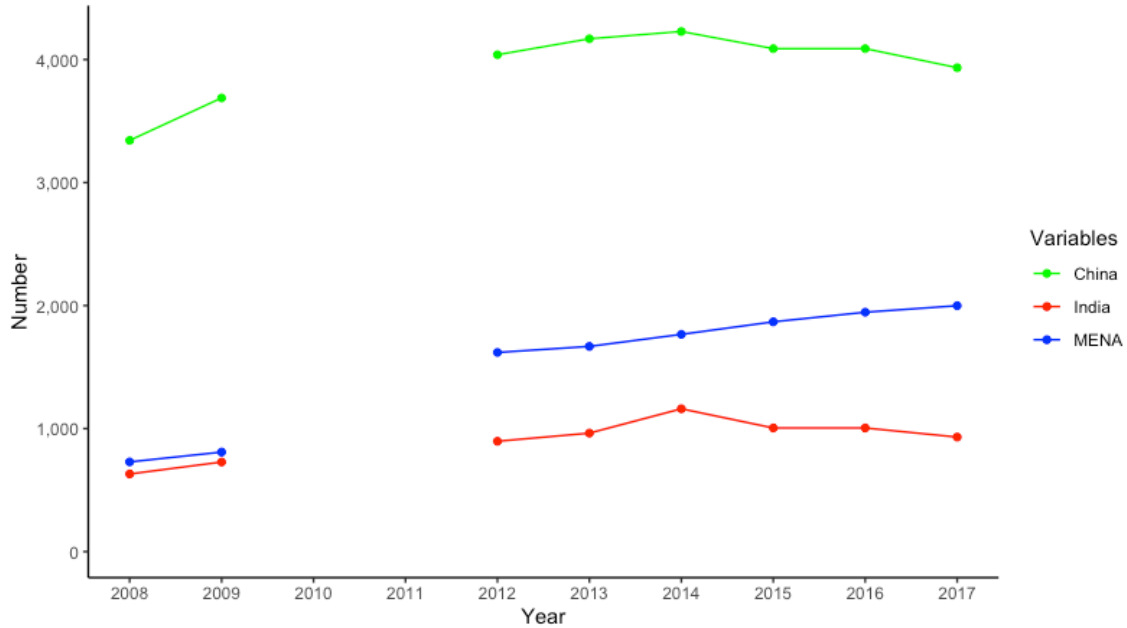


Figure 10: Korean Missionaries in the Middle East and North Africa, India, and China
(Source: KWMA reports)

As shown by detailed data in Figure 10, many Korean Protestant missionaries have been sent to China (3,243 in 2008 and 3,934 in 2017),³⁷ likely due to its geographical proximity, but this started to decrease in 2014, possibly due to China’s recently initiated highly restrictive religious policies. The number steadily increased from 631 in 2008 to 931 missionaries in 2014, then dropped in India. Missionaries in the Middle East and North Africa, the core of unreached regions, increased in 2012, reaching 1,619, but this trend is unclear because of missing data from 2010 and 2011. But it is likely that the number mildly increased during this period. The KWMA reports do not indicate the name of countries in this region, making it difficult to confirm the degree of

³⁷ China and India are recorded as “country X in Northeast Asia,” and “country I in South Asia” in some reports (KWMA 2014, 2016) to protect the identity of missionaries.

government restrictions or persecution regarding Christians, including missionaries, in each country. Overall, the graphs confirm that transnational mission activities in high-risk countries by Korean religious actors expanded during this period, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, where the Muslim presence is dominant. We can infer that Korean churches were influenced by a globally shared urgency to reach unreached people groups in the 1990s, especially due to the hosting of the GCOWE '95 conference, and it led them to send more missionaries to high-risk countries in the 2000s.

Conclusion

Probing why Korean churches have sent their missionaries to high-risk states required a contextual analysis of local religious actors' interaction with international religious networks. The hosting of the GCOWE '95 was a vivid case to examine the interaction of Korean churches and global religious actors regarding setting a more meticulous and rationalized target to reach unreached people groups in high-risk countries. Although the conference called for unilateral engagement in evangelization of unreached people groups by all participants representing 186 countries, it particularly spurred the motivations and actions of Korean churches. Korean churches set their own initiatives to "finish the task" and Christianize all remaining unreached people groups because they were the main actors in this movement. But national agendas were not created or conducted in isolation from global networks, and key issues areas of religious agendas were discussed in international networks involving various actors from both domestic and international levels.

Indeed, active participants of this global network, Korean churches, responded to the call of international actors to conduct more religious work with unreached people groups in high-risk countries. Thanks to the initial interaction of Korean and American religious actors and introducing the term unreached people in early 1990s, the idea was disseminated across Korean peninsula. The hosting of the GCOWE and establishment of UPMA in 1993 catalyzed the movement. The outcome is well illustrated by the cases of two churches' sending their missionaries to 15 ethnic groups in Muslim-, Hindu-, and Buddhist-majority countries. The pattern of the number of missionaries sent to high-risk countries confirms that Korean churches responded to the call of the international networks—the number of Korean missionaries in the Middle East, North Africa, India, and China expanded from 8,329 in 2008 to 11,681 in 2017 (KWMA reports).

However, local religious actors do not automatically accept international religious discourse and ideas; rather, they develop a more critical view of transmitted ideas and discourse and participate in a norm-creating process. The sharing of a global vision comes through consultation and discussion as religious leaders gather in national or global conferences, and most take the form of partnerships between different Christian leaders representing many countries of the world. Analyzing the local understanding of transmitted religious discourse in more depth is needed in this sense, because national religious actors develop their own understanding of ideas and contribute to redefining the meaning of global religious discourse. For example, interviews with Korean missionaries show that some missionaries were hesitant to accept the idea of unreached people because it would undermine the urgency of reaching other regions besides unreached people groups; some even criticized the idea as farfetched—not reflecting genuine

experiences of missionaries in the field because it misses a changing landscape of religious movements, caused by the movement of people, migration, and urbanization.

Thus, I conducted a qualitative analysis of the response of local religious actors to the discourse of unreached people and motivations to go to high-risk countries, as discussed in Chapter 6. Based on 37 semistructured interviews, I assessed the argument that ideas, beliefs, and discourse from international religious networks influenced Korean religious actors' mission activities. Several themes and ideas are analyzed and presented using quotes from interview transcriptions, particularly religious actors' positive or critical responses to the international discourse of unreached people and what risk factors they considered when going to high-risk countries.

Chapter 6

KOREAN MISSIONARIES IN HIGH-RISK COUNTRIES: INTERVIEW

ANALYSIS

The previous chapter examined whether Korean religious actors' engagement in global religious networks and sharing the global religious discourse of unreached people drove them to reach out to these groups of people in high-risk countries. To strengthen the contention of my dissertation, I conducted a qualitative analysis of whether Korean missionaries who have been or are in high-risk countries were motivated by this religious discourse. The discourse they use when talking about their motivations, purposes, and activities in high-risk should reveal whether they were influenced by international discourse and expected risks of their religious activities in high-risk countries.

Little empirical research has been done to explore factors that affect the motivations of missionaries and political ramifications of their activities. I conducted 37 interviews with Korean missionaries, leaders of mission groups and churches, and academics in 2022. These interviews allowed me to examine the influence of the global religious discourse and risk factors of their activities in Muslim-, Hindu-, and Buddhist-majority countries, often hiding their religious identities to avoid government monitoring.

This chapter provides several themes of missionaries' motivations and consequences of their activities in high-risk countries. I first discuss the methodology of interviews and hypothesis, whether the surge of ideas and motivations of Korean missionaries to visit high-risk countries was caused by a shared global religious discourse of unreached people. Delving more into their motivations, the analyses show that the

globally shared discourse was a powerful motivator urging Korean actors to go to high-risk countries. Personal motivations of a religious calling and institutional motivation of relocating mission workers also drove religious actors. The results also highlight that Korean religious actors did not passively accept the influence of the international discourse but also constructed the discourse. Korean religious actors developed a more critical view of transmitted ideas and discourse and participated in the process of redefining the understanding of unreached people.

The results also enumerate political tensions caused by religious activities in high-risk countries: Missionaries were aware of the risks of their activities in these regions, and their dual identities as religious actors and other professionals (seeking business or student visas in high-risk countries) were bound up with the state's surveillance and potential persecution. Additionally, threats to the security of missionaries were associated with historical legacies of Christian mission's enmeshed relationship with Western imperialism and communal resistance to foreign religion and culture.

Methodology of Interviews

As discussed in Chapter 5, I defined high-risk countries as countries in geographic regions that have been resistant to Christian proselytizing or evangelizing, including the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, North India, China, and Muslim- or Buddhist-majority countries in Asia. Quantitative records show that the number of Korean missionaries increased in high-risk regions during the last decade: The number of Korean missionaries in the Middle East, North Africa, India, and China expanded from 8,329 missionaries in 2008 to 11,681 in 2017 (KWMA reports). But the numbers do not tell the entire story:

Qualitative analysis of testimonies, stories, narratives, and experiences of Korean missionaries who serve or served in high-risk countries offered very rich and diverse information. Interview questions were devised to assess whether missionaries who were sent to high-risk countries were influenced by the international religious discourse, particularly the idea of getting to unreached people groups. I assessed interview results to evaluate Hypothesis 2b, examining whether missionaries' description of their motivations and practices of mission work reflected that they were influenced and motivated by the discourse of unreached people.

H2b: The surge of ideas and motivations of Korean Protestant missionaries related to reaching high-risk countries is caused by a shared global religious discourse of unreached people.

Between May and December 2022, I conducted 37 in-depth interviews with 30 missionaries, five leaders of mission groups and churches, and two academics. I was responsible for recruiting all interviewees. Potential participants were informed that the interviews would be anonymous and any identifying information would not be used, given the nature of mission work in culturally hostile countries. The recruitment of interviewees was done by snowball sampling and referrals through the interviewer's personal networks in local Korean churches. Half of the interviews took place online via Zoom, and in-person meetings took place at a local café or in a private room at a local public library in Korea during July 2022. All participants consented the interview

verbally. The interviews averaged 60 minutes each and were digitally recorded and transcribed. Interviews were conducted in Korean and translated to English.

I expanded the sampling to recruit missionaries who worked in low-risk countries such as Spain, Costa Rica, Brazil, Hong Kong, and Japan. Although all participants in the study were asked about influence of the international religious discourse and motivations for their mission work, not all were conducting missions in high-risk states where persecution levels are high. Because I pursued exploratory qualitative work linking individuals' motivations and the influence of religious discourse, I included missionaries in low-risk states. I also included those in leadership in mission organizations and the denomination alongside academics to probe the overarching context of Christian missions. Some interviewees had participated the Lausanne meetings or acted as key players in unreached people movements, so the interviews offered very rich information.

Although an interview guide was used to structure the conversation, flexibility in the interview was permitted and encouraged. Interview questions were organized around three sets of questions regarding missionaries' motivations, the influence of religious discourse, and risk factors of missions in high-risk countries. The questions I utilized in this analysis included but were not limited to: Have you heard of the concept of "unreached people?"³⁸ Have these concepts influenced you to become a missionary and how you approach missions? Can you tell me why you were interested to go to [Country A]? How did you approach people in a place where proselytization is publicly prohibited? Did you experience any social threats, political threats, or economic burdens?

³⁸ This question was asked after asking about missionaries' motivations for mission work to avoid priming interviewees with prior knowledge of the idea.

For the qualitative analysis of interview transcriptions, thematic analysis was used. Thematic analysis emphasizes the content of a text and allows the researcher to find meta-themes, themes, and meaning in the text to develop a theory (Riessman 2005), so I identified common themes in the data, condensed these themes, and drew inferences. The process of finding initial themes began at the onset of the data collection, transcription, and translation process. I used ATLAS.ti to code the interview transcriptions, categorize codes, and find themes, meta-themes, and patterns that emerged from the data. The analysis process included reading interview transcriptions, writing and reviewing summary notes, organizing emerging and common themes, and comparing initial findings. Participants were assigned identifiers (e.g., M1, L1 for missionaries and leaders, respectively), and identifying information has been removed from the descriptions. The professions and target countries of the interviewees are shown in Table 2. High-risk countries are recorded as a Muslim- or Buddhist-majority country or communist country to preserve the anonymity of the interviewees.

Table 2: Participants' Characteristics

Profession	Identifier	Serving Country
Missionary	M1	Communist country and Spain
Missionary and leader	M2	Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M3	Buddhist-majority country
Missionary	M4	Muslim-majority country
Missionary and leader	M5	Costa Rica
Missionary	M6	Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M7	Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M8	Communist country
Missionary	M9	Communist country
Missionary	M10	Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M11	Buddhist-majority country
Missionary	M12	Brazil, Amazon

Missionary	M13	Japan
Missionary	M14	Buddhist-majority country
Missionary	M15	Hong Kong
Missionary	M16	Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M17	Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M18	Georgia
Missionary	M19	Buddhist-majority country
Missionary	M20	Buddhist-majority country
Missionary	M21	Communist country
Missionary	M22	Middle East and North Africa Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M23	Middle East and North Africa Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M24	Communist country
Missionary	M25	Middle East and North Africa Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M26	Middle East Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M27	Asian Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M28	Asian Buddhist-majority country
Missionary	M29	North Africa Muslim-majority country
Missionary	M30	Communist country
Leader	L1	Communist country
Leader	L2	Conflict zones
Leader	L3	Muslim-majority countries
Leader	L4	Muslim-majority country
Leader	L5	everywhere
Academic	A1	none
Academic	A2	none

Emerging Themes

The themes, descriptions, and examples that I developed regarding factors that influenced the motivations of missionaries in high-risk countries are shown in Table 3. The connections that the interviewees made between their motivations and the international religious discourse fell along three dimensions, a) reactions to global religious discourse, b) institutional motivations, and c) political tensions caused by religious actors. The first dimension discusses the first two themes in Table 3, and connects the influence of global religious discourse, particularly unreached people, to the

growth of religious activities in high-risk countries and Korean actors’ counterreaction to these transmitted ideas. The second dimension concerns institutional factors—the need to relocate workers in less-reached regions that happen to be culturally and religiously risky states, which is the third theme. The first and second dimensions deal with themes of missionaries’ motivations. The last dimension is about political tensions caused by Christian missionaries’ activities in high-risk countries, which includes fourth and last theme. Respondents often declined to talk about the dangers or difficulties they encountered because public proselytization was discouraged or prohibited. I discuss risk factors of religious activities and considers missionaries’ dual identities in high-risk countries and their engagement with state power, often involving direct or indirect persecution. The rationale of persecution is mainly due to historical legacies of Christianity’s ties to Western political powers. I identified five themes associated with these dimensions: global religious discourse as a motivator of foreign mission, redefining the meaning of global religious discourse, the need to relocate workers in high-risk countries, missionaries’ dual identities and engagement with the state power, and communal resistance and anti-Westernism in high-risk countries.

Table 3: Emerging Themes

Theme	Description	Example
Global religious discourse as powerful motivator	The powerful global religious discourse on “unreached people” and sending missionaries to high-risk countries	M18: Yes, the wording itself had a clear influence on me. Because, the definition of unreached people has a clear-cut meaning, a group of people in need of outside efforts to preach the gospel ... a group without Christian communities.

		<p>L3: I think the people group methodology and idea greatly influenced us early on, especially in the '80s and the '90s.</p> <p>M21: Yes, missionaries of my group were interested in unreached people group, and they were sent to there, and I think this approach [to unreached people groups] was the spirit of the age.</p>
Redefining the meaning of global religious discourse	Counter-reaction to global religious discourse, a critical understanding of transmitted ideas by Korean actors	<p>M4: If one argues that Islam is a group of peoples that we must reach, and the only group we need to reach, it assumes that the rest regions need less attention, but it is erroneous...and I am strongly against this error.</p>
The need to relocate workers in high-risk countries	The need to send missionaries where lacks Christian workers	<p>M21: [My group] has a history of mission in East Asia for 150 or 160 years, and no one has been serving in [Country A]³⁹ until I was sent in 1996. We were on the field for 7 years alone.</p> <p>M4: My group was very open to Muslim mission because the number of missionaries sent to this region was far short.</p>
Dual identities and the engagement with the state power	Hiding Christian identities and risk factors of governments' persecution	<p>L3: But for the vast majority of the countries you work in, you cannot get a visa to be a missionary. So, you have to have some other profession.</p> <p>M20: The government—for example, last year, we had difficulties when extending a visa—most politicians here are Buddhists. So often, they intentionally complicate the extension process.</p>

³⁹ The name of certain countries is hidden for security reasons.

Communal Resistance and Anti-Westernism	Rationale to persecute missionaries and local converts due to Christianity's ties to Western political powers	M9: Catholicism was introduced when [Country B] colonized the country, so people perceived Christianity as a Western religion, and when another colonizer invaded, Christianity was again a foreign religion ... and many intelligence agents were disguised as missionaries during the war, this also has lingering effects.
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Diffusion of Global Religious Discourse

Interviewees generally expressed that globally shared ideas in international religious networks such as the Lausanne Movement strongly affected Korean churches. M2 was a senior missionary in a Muslim-majority country and personally participated in the second Lausanne meeting in Manila in 1989. He said that “the term unreached people was gaining interest at that time when I participated in the second Lausanne meeting, and a new movement of the AD2000 and Beyond began to assert a need to preach the gospel to remaining unreached people groups.” Some were indirectly affected as they were informed of the Lausanne Movement when they were trained in mission organizations. For example, M6 talked about his training experience and said, “when the group introduces the term unreached people, they first start with the Lausanne meeting. It was discussed that Ralph Winter first coined the term, and then when Christians are less than about 3 or 5 percent of the total population, it is called unreached people.”

Most missionaries cited that the diffusion of global ideas was Western-based and mainly catalyzed by the interaction of Korean and U.S. religious actors, as previous literature suggested (Han 1995; Kim 2016, 2022). M1, who served in a communist country, remembered when he was first exposed to the idea. He recalled the interaction

with international religious networks and that recent doctoral graduates with a degree of missiology began to teach in Korea, which drove Korean churches' interests in unreached people regions. M5 mentioned that the idea of unreached people came from "the U.S., not Korea," and M23 repeated that "the missiology was transported from the West." The initial diffusion of the global discourse was even aided by the key global actor, Ralph Winter. M2 said that "the Center for World Mission in the U.S. was a crucial hub of the movements, and the center reserved a space for the Korean Center for World Mission in the William Carey University, Pasadena, California. Korean foreign mission movements got huge support from Dr. Winter."

The diffusion of global religious ideas reached local Korean churches, and the term unreached people was used as rhetoric to mobilize missionaries, catalyzing their collective action.

When I heard it [the unreached people], I thought it as a revival of mission. It was sensational and researching [a people group] from that perspective was surprising to me ... Missionaries' interests were more focused on [unreached people] since then and it was very influential. ... At that time, it played a huge role in mobilizing missionaries. (M11)

Some participants recalled hearing about unreached people through their local church attendances. M13 mentioned:

There were young adult groups who were zealous about disseminating the idea. They invited seminar speakers, and they were so focused on the unreached people, so I first heard about it in the church. The church was not that interested, but the young adults were very motivated.

M20 mentioned that leaders in his church were affiliated with parachurch groups such as the Campus Crusade for Christ and Youth with a Mission, which actively advocated the term. His first short-term mission trip occurred with the help of the Campus Crusade for Christ in his first college year.

Others pointed to different sources of when they first heard about the idea. Two international documents translated from English to Korean were popularized after the 1990s, *The Operation World* and *The Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*. When asked about the source of unreached people, M15, who served Muslim people, said:

I heard [unreached people] a long time ago, when I was single. ... [I'm] not sure if it was high school or when I was at college. I got a regular update of *The Operation World*. A small report for praying was sent to me, and I read it many times. That's when I was in college.

The Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, edited by Ralph Winter, has been a popular book used for training missionaries and one of the most widely used mission curricula today. It is now a large-scale international training program operating out of the U.S. Center for World Mission (Han 2016). M19 served in a Buddhist-majority country in Asia, and he recalled his first encounter with the book when he was a junior pastor at a local church, and his colleague pastor was “trained with the book” and became a missionary.

When participants were asked whether the term unreached people influenced their motivation to become missionaries, some agreed that the wording influenced their motivation to go to unreached people groups, which are mostly in high-risk countries.

M18 focused on an ethnic group in a communist country, and when asked whether the term unreached people motivated him, he expressed, “Yes, the wording itself had a clear influence on me. Because, the definition of unreached people has a clear-cut meaning, a group of people in need of outside efforts to preach the gospel ... a group without Christian communities.” For some respondents, the mission group with which they were affiliated had a focus on an unreached people group. L3, who was in the leadership of an international mission group that specializes in Muslim people groups, mentioned, “Yeah, I think the people group methodology and idea greatly influenced us early on, especially in the ‘80s and the ‘90s.” In the same vein, M21 noted that his mission group changed its targets, from a traditional approach of crossing the border to reaching small people groups, and many missionaries were sent to unreached people regions. “They were sent because they were interested in unreached people.”

This mobilization of missionaries resulted in coordinated efforts to advance their shared interests to preach the gospel on foreign soil, and it inevitably intersected with politics. Participants acknowledged that reaching unreached people groups involves sending missionaries to risky countries. Missionaries did not target high-risk countries per se, but most unreached people groups happen to be in high-risk states, so they were aware of the risks of possible persecution, oppression, and deportation from these countries. In other words, the participants recognized that their religious decisions often are bound with political decisions and government restrictions. L2 was in a leadership position of a group that specializes in missions in conflict zones, and his comments speak to the intersection of mission activities and their political ramifications.

So, our activities are limited with the change of political circumstances, regardless of our decision. ... When we foreigners are not allowed to enter a target country, we have a living and work bases there, and now we are unexpectedly forbidden to go. So, our mission is suspended [or not] based on political and diplomatic relations among governments, so we even think which presidents are helpful to our mission.

He went on to explain a missionary's deportation case in a communist country. He mentioned that "political conflicts directly influence missionaries' activities on the field." I also interviewed M21, the person this leader mentioned; he founded several orphanages in this country during a 30-year period. The government found out that "Christians are running the facilities and many nongovernmental organizations are managed by Christian mission groups," so the government "kicked him out of the country all of a sudden."

In this way, the analysis shows that the diffusion of global religious ideas of unreached people resulted in local missionaries' political engagement in foreign soils. Missionaries were mobilized based on their religious identities to preach the gospel and go to risky states, but their work eventually comes into contention with the state in the form of direct or indirect surveillance or persecutions.

Redefining a Meaning of Global Religious Discourse

Although most missionaries agreed that the idea of reaching unreached people groups gained great attention and motivated Korean missionaries to serve groups of people in culturally risky countries in the 1990s, not all missionaries agreed that this

positively directed their motivations and practices. Some missionaries were critical of the ideas of unreached people and the 10/40 window, describing these terms as arbitrary and inconsistent and stating that the process of naming and categorizing people groups is based on an estimate number of people in a given country.

Missiologists in the U.S. attempt to make multiple statistical datasets, but if you closely look into it, you find errors. The 10/40 window and the number of people groups is more like an estimate. ... For example, if we assume that a percentage of people who have not engaged with the gospel is 10 or 20 percent [in a given country], this percentage is multiplied by the number of whole populations, and that's how the number of unreached peoples is defined. (M12)

In this vein, Judy Han (2016) asserted that this attempt to quantify targets of evangelization is a “pseudo-scientific approach,” because the idea of an ethnolinguistic people group is taken for granted as an anthropological and scientific fact despite potential errors reflected in the process of quantifying a population.

M2 recalled his experiences of recognizing some inconsistency in the term unreached people. M2 invited U.S. missiologist David Hesselgrave to Korea as a guest speaker and recalled his dialogue with Dr. Hesselgrave. “At that time, Dr. Hesselgrave said that Ralph Winter had made too detailed distinction of people groups and the number of people groups. I realized that the number of people groups could vary depending on how to define people groups.”

Admittedly, missionaries agreed that the idea of unreached people was very influential at that time, but Korean religious actors did not automatically accept the designated conception of the global religious discourse. Another reason that some Korean

actors were critical of the people group distinction was that it deemphasized or downplayed people in other areas, because unreached people groups are mostly in Muslim regions. M4 argued that unreached people places too much focus on Muslims:

If one argues that Islam is a group of peoples that we must reach, and the only group we need to reach, it assumes that the rest of regions need less attention, but it is erroneous ... and I am strongly against this error.

Sometimes, the ethnic-majority groups in some countries were not Christianized, such as the Han in China or Kinh in Vietnam, but the unreached people terminology missed genuine targets of evangelism, according to missionaries. M23 had served in Southern India for a decade, and he said the idea of unreached people was too subjective, citing his experiences of meeting Muslims in Southern India.

When asked if India is an Islamic region, North India is included. But South India has also Muslims, and they are very traditional Muslims, because Islam was introduced by Arabians on the sea route. What I mean by being subjective—everyone asks why is Islam in India significant? But India was an Islam country 200 years ago.

Thus, Korean missionaries asserted that the concept of unreached people had a normative connotation because it deemphasized the significance of other targets of evangelization.

These interviewees mentioned that their understanding of unreached people has changed, even redefining the target of evangelization. M1 preferred to say “the ends of the Earth” instead of “unreached people”:

I prefer the word “the ends of the Earth” from Acts 1:8. ... The idea of the 10/40 window is also significant, but I think a more biblical concept of the mission is the ends of the Earth. The ends of the Earth could be your neighbor, and everywhere the gospel has not reached. Of course, targeting the 10/40 window and Muslim regions must continue before the second coming of the Christ, but setting a specific region of target limits our purpose.

At the same time, interviewees noted that globalization has changed the landscape of modern evangelization, so reaching unreached people groups in cities is more preferred by missionaries. L3 mentioned:

More and more, we’re finding that it’s rarer to find a people group that has no context or no contact with the gospel. Again, the internet and all of those things—people are exposed to it. The high refugee populations; many Muslims have gotten out of their countries and now live in the West, and there’s much easier access to the gospel. ... So, we still hold on to the terms unengaged and unreached, but I think many of our methodologies are guided more by urbanization.

Several other interviewees shared the same sentiment that their mission targets have changed to engaging refugees or small people groups in big cities. This highlights that a global norm-adoption process is dependent on the change of social and political environments such as urbanization and migration of peoples.

Relocation of Missionaries in High-Risk Countries

The second dimension of themes relates to institutional motivations of foreign mission works. Participants consistently cited their motivations for working in high-risk countries as not only influenced by international discourse, but also because their affiliated mission groups' institutional factors related to sending missionaries to regions with few Christian workers, because Christians have been traditionally prohibited or discouraged in Muslim- or Buddhist-majority countries. This also became a powerful motivator to send missionaries to high-risk states. When asked why they decided to go to a particular country, one participant explained that their mission groups had a special focus on regions lacking Christian workers, which was the case for M21, who had been expelled from a communist country:

[My group] has a history of mission in East Asia for 150 or 160 years, and no one has been serving in [County A] until I was sent in 1996. We [his family] were on the field for seven years alone. ... Other missionaries began to come to [Country A], and the regional committee was not existent until then.

Several respondents noted that the relocation of Christian workers was geared to Muslim regions, particularly. M4 currently served in a Muslim-majority country and said that "my group was very open to Muslim mission" because "the number of missionaries sent to this region was far short." M7 worked in another Muslim-majority country and shared a similar comment: "[My group] basically supports missionaries to work in regions where they want to serve, yet the group has a special interest in an Islam region. About Islam ... it is the priority of the group's mission, where another religion is predominant." M15 was a woman missionary who married a Muslim man, and her

husband became Christian after the marriage. She said her husband saw “an opportunity” for a Christian mission in Hong Kong.

When my husband visited Hong Kong, he met lots of Muslims there ... and he convinced our denomination’s foreign mission board of the need to send missionaries to Hong Kong, and the board approved the decision to send us there.

Most missionaries in high-risk countries did not intentionally seek political actions or engage with foreign governments. But interestingly, some interviewees mentioned that they intentionally sought high-risk regions where Christians and missionaries had been severely persecuted for ages. Individual missionaries were motivated because “Christians and the gospel are restricted.” L2 also served as a missionary in conflict zones and mentioned:

When I first went to a conflict zone, I thought, “Where would it be the most difficult region where the Christian gospel is hard to reach?” So, it was not just that I chose geographically remote places, but I chose where the most severe form of spiritual battle happens, like in [Country C].

L2 mentioned that the organization focuses on reaching regions where any conflicts happen. This could include “Tibet, Pakistan, Afghanistan, in the middle of the U.S., and Ukraine ... including conflict zones and regions where racial and social justice issues are dire.” This means that missionaries often define the targets of evangelism based on not only religious needs but also political and social issues. This sentiment was shared by M6, who was in a Muslim-majority country. He declared that he was motivated to go to an Islam region because he saw a news story that missionaries who managed a Christian press in Turkey were killed when he was a college student. He said he began to

pay attention to Turkey and prayed “because of what happened and the persecution of missionaries there.” Several other missionaries shared the same sentiment, that they were motivated to serve the neediest and hardly approachable regions, and this drove Korean Christians to go to risky states. In fact, this suggests that some missionaries not only recognized the risk factors of their religious actions but also envisioned political actions.

Missionaries’ Dual Identities and Engagement with the State Power

The last dimension of themes discusses political tensions caused by religious actors. Most missionaries had dual identities in countries where Christian proselytization is discouraged, having other professions as businessmen, scientists, engineers, technicians, and doctors. In their private lives, they gained personal contacts with people as missionaries, preached the gospel, and avoided the government’s surveillance. L3 mentioned:

It’s not a mission of just speaking. In other words, every country we work in ... well, there are a couple of exceptions. But for the vast majority of the countries you work in, you cannot get a visa to be a missionary. So, you have to have some other profession. So, you use your profession, whether it’s medical or architectural or engineering. ... And so, every one of our [missionaries] is involved in something that’s contributing or helping the local economy or the local culture.

Working as a Christian missionary in high-risk countries inevitably means getting a student or business visa to enter and stay in these countries legally. Getting a religious visa is rarely possible in most risky states. So, participants were aware of legal factors

when choosing their target countries, which often constrained their choices. M10 said, “for the first thing, we need to see whether missionaries can get visas when considering target countries.” The safety and possibility of long-term work among missionaries was crucial. M23, who served in a Muslim-majority country in the Middle East, recalled:

When choosing a target state, the safety of mission work was important to me. Safety means doing mission work for a long term, and Korean missionaries are legally prohibited to enter Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. And Beirut ... Lebanon is in national bankruptcy, and many missionaries are in Egypt, but they kick out missionaries after 4 years, and [Country D] deports foreigners when they do not change their visas to business ones after 6 years.

Even though they obtained visas, missionaries faced potential oppression of their religious activities, so they dealt with the risks by using dual identities for their safety. Nevertheless, this approach became especially consequential when considering the state’s engagement with Christian missionaries on its soil. Various forms of direct and indirect oppression of missionaries happen in risky states. First, some countries allow a limited number of religious visas—but governments in risky states deny or impede the visa renewal process of missionaries. When asked about difficulties they experienced when conducting Christian mission work, M20, who served in a Buddhist-majority country, shared:

The government—for example, last year, we had difficulties when extending a visa—most politicians here are Buddhists. So often, they intentionally complicate the extension process. Now the intelligence bureau here, like the FBI, inspects all religious visas and missionary visas. It takes 3 months to get a new visa. ... It

goes through the department of Christian affairs and then ... it is complicated, right? The religious affairs bureau. Then it goes through the intelligence bureau and then the immigration office. It takes 3 months now, and it used to be 2 to 3 weeks beforehand.

M22 served in a Muslim-majority country and did not have a religious visa. He described how government officials interrogated him and his wife. He said that state officials review foreigners they suspect of being missionaries when renewing visas, and they were “summoned and interrogated by government officials asking questions, which presumably intended to deport us.” Other respondents laid out a similar argument that the denial of a visa extension means deportation by the government, although they were not informed of any specific rationale for the deportation.

Another respondent, M9, worked in a communist country and had run educational services for a long time. He noted that the state’s surveillance of their religious activities is surreptitious, such as sending government officials to school events to oversee and track potential religious activities. He recalled a certain holiday event:

The most striking example was a Christmas event. The celebration of Christmas is often not easy in rural areas. Now it is better. At that time, when foreigners hold such an event in a rural orphanage, police officials oversee the program. They say it is for the safety of the participants, and two or three officials keep watching us. They always say, “We are officials from the cultural affairs,” but they are undercover cops. They even prohibited us decorating a Christmas tree because it was “religious.”

M4, who was in a Muslim-majority country, shared a similar experience. He said that he helped local schools with programs and had a small celebration event. The principal of the school introduced an uninvited person and said, “He is the leader of the young adult group.” But the person turned out to be an observer sent by a local mosque.

Other respondents shared experiences of direct persecution. This could be in the form of direct expulsion or regulating a place of worship. L3 described state oppression, noting he and his wife were accused of giving a car to people for converting, which was not true. He described “false witnesses, witnesses that were trumped up against us when we went to court.” Another missionary, M10, shared that government officials in a Muslim-majority country restrict Christian worship because churches “do not have a worship authority.” The right to worship requires the consent of a village, but it seldom happens. Similarly, another respondent, M4, noted that building a place of worship is technically possible, but it is practically impossible:

We can establish a church legally, but the articles of law forbid the establishment. It says religious worships are only allowed in religious sites by only to those who acquire a religion license. But the state does not issue a license when applying. Also, the conditions of getting the permission for religious sites are really strict: 200 locals need to consent, but Christians in a Muslim-majority country are few, so practically, we cannot establish a church building.

In other words, the freedom of worship or religion is legally protected, but governments in risky states constrict Christian missionaries’ activities by restricting the registration of sites and worship.

Communal Resistance and Anti-Westernism

Against the background of potential conflicts of Christian missionaries and governments in high-risk countries, the political legacies of Christian missions' ties to Western political powers impose restrictions on Christians, including missionaries and local converts. Particularly, Christianity is considered imperialistic—it embodies not only Christian doctrine but also Western cultural habits for Muslim societies. L3 said that Christianity is considered the same as America:

Now this is where it gets a little bit nuanced, because if a Muslim goes to his family and says, "I've become Christian," well, the way the family interprets Christian is probably not the way I or maybe you would interpret Christianity. For many, Christianity is imperialistic. There's a lot of political overtones to it. When many older Muslims look at America, they think everyone in America's Christian. So, our music, our movies, it's all Christian. And so, when a Muslim says, "I've become a Christian," they sometimes interpret that as, "I've basically become an atheist, I don't pray, I don't fast. I watch movies of—" you know, et cetera. It's not good news.

Societies with colonial experiences in the past are wary of Christian missionaries' activities on their soil due to historical legacies of an enmeshed relationship with Western imperialism. Korean missionaries in high-risk countries were aware of these political tensions, as M9 noted:

In one sense, I think it goes with the historical suffering [of this country]. Catholicism was introduced when [Country B] colonized the country, so people perceived Christianity as a Western religion, and when another colonizer invaded,

Christianity was again a foreign religion. So, people are very cautious about this, and many intelligence agents were disguised as missionaries during the war; this also has lingering effects as well.

In addition to political disaffinity among countries due to historical legacies, Christianity is seen as a threat to their common culture and identity, because of the prevailing thought that their religious and cultural traits such as Hinduism or Islam define them. M28, who served in a Buddhist-majority country, mentioned this sentiment, “If people have strong attachment to their indigenous culture and nation, people are very hostile to foreign religion.” This self-identification intensified with the majority religion’s cooperative relationship with politics. M28 continued: “The government has a cooperative relationship with Buddhism. Governments are engaged in co-optation of the majority religion’s leaders, and highly esteemed monks instill religious beliefs to stabilize the public and the government cater to the needs of religious leaders.” The same sentiment was shared by M4 regarding a Muslim-majority country where governments use religion to stabilize the public and the majority religion, Islam, enjoys an official and unofficial protected status in return.

But the liberal international norm of religious freedom has challenged the governments’ practices of persecution of Christians in recent years. For example, Article 2 of the constitution of Afghanistan proclaims that all religions “are free to exercise their faith and perform their religious rites within the limits of the provisions of law,” yet Article 3 explains that “no law can be contrary to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam.” International communities require that religious freedom be respected, but conversion to Christianity is strongly prohibited in some places. In this case, the

governments often use a tactic to elicit communal resistance to Christianity to avoid international pressure regarding religious freedom, as noted by M22. Officially, the governments do not engage in persecution of Christians, but they intentionally foment public anger against Christians and let local religious communities engage in oppression of religious minorities including Christians, M22 said. The governments do not officially repress or engage with Christians, because either they have close ties to Western governments or have adopted a constitutional and legal guarantee of religious freedom.⁴⁰ M22 told me a story of a Jordanian writer, Nahid Hattar, charged with insulting God after he published a satirical cartoon on his Facebook page. He was shot by a local imam who had been upset by the cartoon while he was standing trial.⁴¹

Because the government has support of the western allies, when they acknowledge that religious persecutions happened at the level of government, this would incite confrontation with the West. So, the government officially makes a claim that they do make every effort to appease Islam extremists ... but I'm confident that the government intentionally incited against this man and induced honor killing. (M22)

M22's stories are supported with empirical evidence that religious restrictions at the governmental and social level do happen and violent persecution is pervasive (Grimm and Finke 2011). Grimm and Finke used the Association of Religion Data Archives data and documented that the highest rates and most severe levels of persecution are found in

⁴⁰ The coding of the International Religious Freedom report shows that 83% of the countries with a population of more than 2 million offer promises of religious freedom in their constitutions (Grimm and Finke 2011, 28).

⁴¹ BBC News, 2016. "Jordan writer in blasphemy case Nahid Hattar killed," (accessed December 27, 2022) <https://bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-37465656>

the Middle East and South Asia among countries of 2 million or more people (Grimm and Finke 2011). Of 123 countries where religious persecution is reported, 36 had more than 1,000 people physically abused or displaced (Grimm and Finke 2011). The analysis also confirmed that persecution is much higher in areas that are Muslim majority (Grimm and Finke 2011, 21), although other internal conflicts between their government and Islamic parties could work as a contributing factor to conflicts. Particularly, governments employ a subtle way to use social forces that support the majority religion, and the established or dominant religions frequently deny the religious freedom of others. Data on social restrictions on religious freedom show that 75% of the countries with established or existing religions try to shut out new religions (Grimm and Finke 2011). In this way, persecution of local Christians often involve social support when governments in high-risk countries face legal contradictions involving religious freedom.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this chapter, I carried out an empirical analysis on the role of religious discourse in shaping the motivations of missionaries by identifying how South Korean missionaries respond to the influence of global religious discourse on their activities and risk factors of religious activities in high-risk countries. I used content analysis to identify and describe how and why the discourse of unreached people drove local missionaries to go to risky states and whether other factors, including institutional and personal motivations, influenced their decisions. Representing a wide range of opinions and attitudes about the term unreached people and risk factors, interviewees showed that the

term unreached people acted as a powerful motivator of their activities in high-risk states. I present four key findings here.

First, most participants confirmed the hypothesis that the globally shared discourse of unreached people and a desire to finish the task of preaching the gospel contributed to Korean missionaries' motivations and mission work in high-risk countries. Several mentioned the sources of ideas, such as the Lausanne Movement or interactions of Koreans and U.S.-led, mostly Western-based mission circles. Although some interviewees participated in global-level conferences, participants often cited their experiences of being exposed to the idea at their local churches and international documents that were highly popularized among Korean actors.

Second, conforming to global religious discourse does not mean that Korean missionaries unilaterally accept transmitted ideas—some thought that these terms are arbitrary and inconsistent and were critical of the idea because it deemphasizes or downplays the significance of other regions. They even redefined the understanding of globally shared ideas, expanding a spatial scope of the terminology. Thus, the process of sharing and disseminating global religious discourse included a bottom-up process, and local actors participated in constructing the religious discourse.

Third, some participants cited other institutional motivations as inspiring them to go to risky states, noting that their decisions were often directed by the affiliated mission groups' request to go to places lacking Christian workers. Muslim countries were prioritized by mission groups because of a serious lack of Christian workers. Although institutional factors of relocating workers affected missionaries, they also considered legal factors such as the possibility of getting a visa to stay for longer periods. Another

interesting result was that some missionaries intentionally sought high-risk regions where Christians and missionaries have been severely persecuted for ages.

Last, missionaries make religious claims based on their religious identities and go to high-risk states, but this ultimately intersects with the political boundary—state power in the form of surveillance and restrictions on religious activities. They expected potential oppression of their religious activities, so they used dual identities for their safety.

Nevertheless, the state conducted direct or indirect scrutiny of Christian missionaries, such as denying or impeding a visa renewal process, surveilling and monitoring Christian religious activities, or restricting the registration of sites and worship services. Against the background of persecution of both missionaries and local converts, historical legacies of Christian missions' enmeshed relationship with Western imperialism and the states' preferential treatment of the majority religion to gain legitimacy worked as a deciding factor to impose restrictions on missionaries' activities.

My work here confirms that religious actors often create tensions with local political actors, even though they do not intend to get involved in political conflicts on foreign soil. Here, I examined the mechanisms of the globally shared discourse and political and religious tensions caused by missionaries. Further analysis identifying the mechanism of political tensions that Christian missionaries engender in culturally risky states with the dynamics of conflicts is needed. Not everyone in countries culturally hostile to proselytizing would share that their motivations are driven by the global religious discourse, and many varied motivations affect decisions to serve in high-risk states. Nevertheless, this global understanding of the urgency to preach the gospel

encouraged the coordinated actions of religious actors, which required them to go forth to risky states to convert other believers.

CONCLUSION

The scope and intensity of religious activities are global—a zeal to preach the word of God is geared to not only internal audiences but also external non-Christians in other cultural settings. Religious beliefs are enmeshed with the cultural identities and social existence of believers. They often cause clashes among different religious believers because distinct religious beliefs and practices are considered threats to their cultural solidarity—for example, in their terms, language, connotations, and concepts.

However, we lack a well-specified theory and empirical explanation regarding how global religious actors' extensive engagement in transnational religious activities in foreign countries could cause political tensions. Previous theoretical approaches on global norm-adoption process have not explained how global religious organizations disseminated certain religious ideas and spurred action by local religious communities.

This chapter first restates the primary argument of the dissertation. Religious local actors' motivations and practices, particularly Korean Protestant believers, in culturally risky countries were caused by the influence of the international discourse of unreached people groups and their participation in global religious networks. During the discussion, I restate the need for a cultural approach to religion and highlight the rationale of using this approach to trace a process of constructing and disseminating religious discourse in the international community. I further discuss the main arguments of a world polity theory and how my research contributes to addressing the gap in the literature, stressing

the power of local actors in the construction process of global identity and discourse. Finally, I conclude by discussing the broad implications of this research.

Restatement of Argument

This study began from an empirical puzzle regarding why some local religious groups become interested in foreign missions and send missionaries to high-risk countries, even though they can send them to politically and culturally safe countries. I have examined domestic and international factors to answer this question. I have examined which factors drove the growth of Korean foreign mission movements and their interests and motivations related to going to high-risk countries.

I used an institutional approach of assessing religious groups' organizational interests to examine whether the religious domestic market of Korea overproduced religious service providers and sent them overseas. Previous literature focused on sociohistorical relations between Korea and the United States in the 1970 and 1980s as building anti-communism and conservative Protestant ideological affinities. But it is plausible that the oversupply of pastors in domestic churches would prompt them to find alternative jobs as foreign missionaries, leading to the increase of foreign missionaries. The results of my analysis comparing the gap in supply and demand of religious service providers, based on PCK data, did not provide evidence that the Korean religious market became saturated, even after the lifting of the travel ban. Thus, this institutional explanation did not explain the growth of foreign mission movements among Korean churches.

The primary theoretical argument of this dissertation relates to a constructive process of building ideas and discourse shared among religious actors and efforts to disseminate ideas and promote actions. In this vein, I conceptualized religion as cultural, because it is expressed in discourse and practices, and actors' preferences are socially constructed. This does not mean that religious actors and institutions do not carry rational and organized interests—they carry both organized and ideational interests. Yet a cultural approach to religion has the capacity to explain the process of constructing identities and motivations for mission activities in high-risk countries. It turns out that by delving deeper into the interaction of Korean religious actors and global religious networks from the 1960s, we see that international networks triggered Korean actors' interests and motivations in foreign missions. Although the number of foreign missionaries sent overseas was suppressed due to the travel ban, this local–global interaction of ideas and discourse among religious actors influenced them to share the urgency of foreign mission and prepare themselves to engage in transnational religious movements after the ban was lifted.

The second part of dissertation examined factors related to the growth of mission activities in high-risk countries. Previous literature focused on a spiral model and world polity model explained how the political discourse is disseminated among global actors, leading to conformity with the global discourse among local actors. Another strand of a critical approach to transnational interactions assumes that any interactions of religious and political spheres are already power-ridden, considering that interactions involving ideas are often unidirectional.

Although these approaches explain the process of constituting an international discourse and local actors' responses, they have theoretical and empirical limitations. First, they do not account for the role of local actors during the process of sharing discourse. Although the global discourse led to conformity among local missionaries, prompting them to seek unreached people groups in high-risk states, Korean actors also redefined the meaning of global religious discourse. The understanding of the global discourse was often challenged by local actors if the norm did not fit with local circumstances or cultural variants, suggesting a new understanding of religious discourse. Second, empirical analysis of the international religious discourse was not attempted in the previous literature. Thus, this study made theoretical and empirical contributions by offering an empirical examination of global religious networks' discourse and local actors' voluntary process of norm-making.

I developed an overarching framework for the interaction of international and domestic levels, linking the globally shared discourse and its influence on local religious actors and subsequent political ramifications. The first Lausanne Conference in 1974 initiated a discussion of the need to expedite foreign missions and conceptualized the idea of unreached people among conservative evangelicals. Most unreached people groups are Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist—so reaching adherents of other religions was the primary goal for those who attended the first conference. More concrete action plans to reach unreached people groups were developed during the second conference in Manila in 1989, and a more concrete target was made, focusing on 12,000 unreached people groups and redeploying resources and personnel to these groups, because only 3% of all missionaries were engaged in these regions while the remaining 97% were working in

already evangelized regions (The Lausanne Movement 1989). The documents called for more aggressive sending of missionaries to high-risk countries and enumerated potential persecution and political pressure on them, because most people groups are in high-risk countries that discourage or forbid proselytization.

A new and more concerted international effort, the AD2000 and Beyond Movement, began in the 1990s, and a mid-decade conference evaluating the progress of movements was hosted by Korean churches, the GCOWE '95. The concept of unreached people was highly popular among Korean churches at this time, and Korean churches set their own initiatives to target unreached people groups. Two case studies of churches that sent their missionaries to China, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, and several high-risk countries confirmed the growth of foreign mission activities in high-risk countries, and it was caused by Korean religious actors' hosting of a global conference, participation in global religious networks, and sharing of the religious discourse of unreached people.

A qualitative examination of the influence of international discourse on local actors and its political implications confirmed that local missionaries were strongly influenced by the urgency to reach unreached people groups in high-risk countries. But as previously mentioned, local actors were often critical of transmitted ideas because they considered the concept of unreached people to have a normative connotation, deemphasizing the significance of other targets of evangelization. They redefined the targets of mission using their understanding of a biblical concept. Other actors asserted that a new understanding of unreached people is needed due to political and social changes such as conflict-driven refugees, migration, urbanization, and globalization.

The consequences of these local religious actors' activities were intertwined with the state power in target countries. Potential risks of losing their lives, deportation, and persecution were expected, so they dealt with these risks by obtaining student and business visas and having dual identities as missionaries and other professionals. The analysis of interview data showed that persecution of Christians was direct or indirect, such as complicating a visa renewal process, surveillance, and deportation. In fact, missionaries take advantage of the legal protections of business and student visas to enter a target country—but it provides the state with a means to justify deporting missionaries if they are deemed to violate the purpose of the immigration laws that provide business or student visas. But this is more of a superficial cause, and it needs to be understood against the background of sociohistorical factors of anti-Westernism and majority religions' close ties to political systems.

A Genealogy of International Discourse and its Rethinking

The idea of unreached people was first discussed during the first Lausanne meeting in 1974, and more concerted efforts to define, target, and access these groups were heavily discussed in the second meeting in 1989. Since then, a global discussion of ideas influenced local religious actors who participated this global religious network—prompting Korean actors to send religious actors to these groups of people in high-risk countries. I utilized a cultural approach to religion and a theoretical approach of world polity theory to explain the influence of religion as a discourse shared among global religious networks and disseminated by global actors, leading to conformity with norms among local participants. The Lausanne Movement in 1974, 1989, and 2010 and

transnational movements of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement in the 1990s were key carriers of this international religious discourse, dispersing the idea of the urgency to finish these tasks.

According to explanatory models suggested by Meyer et al. (1997), global culture (and international networks or organizations) authorizes and influences domestic actors' preferences through three processes: the construction of identity and purpose, systemic maintenance of actors' identities, and legitimation of actors' identities. In this vein, global religious networks' influence on local actors' identities could be explained by three processes. First, national religious actors from 150 countries gathered for the first Lausanne meeting and set the declaration to "define the necessity, responsibilities, and goals of spreading the Gospel" (The Lausanne Movement 1974, para. 2) to expedite world evangelization. Hundreds of organizations that participated in the conference adopted the Lausanne Covenant, a statement with 15 sections calling for the unity of Christian churches for evangelization as their statement of faith. It defined goals, policies, and the identity of global evangelists and "has provided a central forum for the identity recognition" (Meyer et al. 1997, 158). Second, global religious networks helped national entities establish and pursue their goals. More concrete plans to reach unreached people groups were developed after the second Lausanne meeting in 1989, and the global structure of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement provided help with the provision of national initiatives to achieve the purpose of world evangelization. For example, the AD2000 regional directors were selected in North America, North Asia, Eastern Europe, Caribbean, the Arab world, and other regions, and they actively encouraged national participants to mobilize and work by establishing "National AD2000 Initiatives" to

complete tasks of evangelism and church planting among unreached people groups (AD2000 and Beyond, n.d.). Third, this led to the legitimation of local actors and practices (Meyer et al. 1997). As explained in Chapter 5, as Korean churches adopted the initiatives of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement embodying the discourse of unreached peoples, it institutionalized the identity and leading roles of Korean churches in global religious movements. It also connected the global discourse to local actors, encouraging Korean churches to send missionaries to unreached people groups in high-risk countries.

In essence, national religious actors' ideas, goals, and strategies were culturally constructed—as modern states adopted similar educational and legal systems, health policies, and environmental laws because of rationalized world culture—and here I examined this tenet in the case of international religious networks. Figure 11 presents the mechanism of this interaction, and the world polity theory predicts that global religious networks produce and expand a shared religious discourse and encourage local actors to adopt similar ideas and practices.

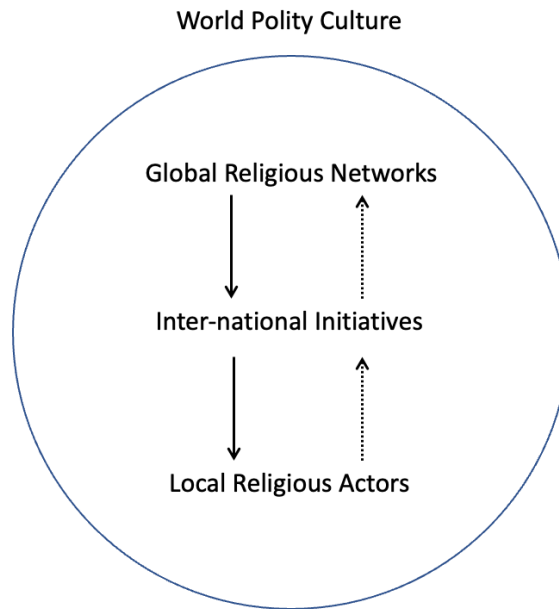


Figure 11: Interactions of Global, National, and Local Religious Actors

However, it comes down to the power of actors, which could complement the arguments of a world polity model. A qualitative examination of Korean missionaries' motivations for going to high-risk countries confirmed that local actors' identities are not always constructed exogenously—they redefined the discourse of unreached people. Admittedly, international religious organizations, national actors, and individuals contribute to the content and structure of world culture (Meyer et al. 1997), but this actor-initiated part of constructing discourse has been less discussed in the previous literature. Korean religious actors challenged globally shared ideas of unreached people because it deemphasizes or downplays other targets of evangelization in other areas. Thus, an alternative understanding was suggested, and Korean religious actors offered their own definition of the target as reaching the “ends of the Earth,” broadening the understanding

of discourse during the interviews. My empirical evidence supports a reversed arrow in Figure 11 from local religious actors to international initiatives such that local actors participate in a process of constructing identity and purpose, suggesting a new understanding of transmitted ideas. But more research on how national level actors introduce global models and the process they appeal to the authority of international networks (Alasuutari 2015) (the upper bottom-up arrow) is needed for the future research. After all, do Korean religious actors suggest an independent model of foreign mission and contribute to the change of international discourse? The hosting of the fourth Lausanne meeting in 2024 in Seoul and Incheon⁴² is noteworthy in this sense, and it will be a significant case to examine if Korean Protestant churches' model of foreign missions influences the process of constructing identity, structure, and behavior in global religious networks.

Another way of rethinking the model is that power could be associated with the process of local actors' conformity to world culture. Global cultural and associational properties were significant factors, because Korean missionaries confirmed that the global religious discourse influenced their motivations, so they were prompted to dedicate their lives to get to unreached people groups. But some missionaries also raised an issue that the idea of unreached people is too subjective, arbitrary, and inconsistent, because it is based on an estimated number of people in a given country, and often they mentioned that the discourse itself is "Western." This implies that missionaries are critical of the transmission of ideas, first, because enumerating and quantifying specific targets of people reveals that "what is measurable is ultimately controllable" (Han 2016,

⁴² <https://lausanne.org/gatherings/seoul-2024>

192) and involves a power-ridden process. Second, the conceptualization of terms of unreached people and initial structuring process of international religious networks were mainly initiated and supported by Western actors, implying that Western hegemony could be elicited by conforming to the religious discourse. Particularly, Korean Protestant churches have had close ties with U.S. Protestant missionaries since the late 19th century, and missionaries acknowledged that that diffusion of global ideas was Western-based and mainly catalyzed by the interaction of Korean and U.S. religious actors during the Cold War era. Local actors' criticism and challenging of these ideas indicate that Western hegemony and power could be elicited in the process of global networks' impact on local actors.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Investigation

The main argument of this study is that globally shared ideas among transnational religious networks constructed and propagated local actors' identities, goals, and strategies. Through the avenue of several transnational religious networks and participation by local actors, the global discourse played a powerful role in structuring local actors' motivations and practices, leading to their involvement in high-risk countries despite the risk of political incidents. Accordingly, the dissertation points to promising avenues to understand the intersection of religion and politics caused by transnational religious movements.

As examined in Chapter 6, the presence of Christian foreign missionaries caused political tensions, and their presence is considered as a threat to some states. Future research could investigate and analyze why these religious actors are viewed as threats by

these states, and whether the states' perception of threats is driven by Christian doctrine or foreign cultural habits attached to religious values. Also, more research on whether political consequences, such as the abduction case or internal conflicts, are caused by the presence or growth of foreign missions in high-risk countries will contribute to the literature, revealing more direct political ramifications of religious activities.

I also utilized an institutional approach to assess whether organizational interests of Korean religious actors prompted the growth of foreign missions, which was not supported with a quantitative examination of data. Domestic data did not offer strong evidence supporting the hypothesis that organizational interests play a key role in prompting religious actors' activities, but transnational organizations also face the restraints of resources, time, and cost when determining the targets of evangelization. As discussed in Chapter 6, religious networks' decision to relocate Christian workers to high-risk countries reflected that they were incentivized to maintain and supply resources based on their rational preferences. Additional research is required to determine conditions under which religious organizations become more or less likely to exert their organizational and economic interests when sending their missionaries to foreign soil.

Another implication of the research is that religious spheres are influenced by functional rationality. Modernity was regarded as a basis for norms of rational action and progress, and religious spheres have competed with modern secular spheres through history (Casanova 2011). However, global religious networks have institutionalized their goals and strategies of evangelization, redeploying material, human, and spiritual resources through the use of science and technology to maximize results (Thomas 2007). Thus, it is apt to argue that "religious movements intensify isomorphism more than they

resist it” (Meyer et al. 1997, 84), because global religious movements have been deeply engaged in developing rational strategies and programs, strongly affected by a rationalized approach embodied in global modernity. Further research demonstrating how religious actors are associated with global modernity and the extent to which religious movements are influenced by functional rationality could reveal this aspect.

The world polity model offers an excellent tool for explaining the association of global, national, and local actors’ construction of similar identities, structures, and behavior. However, under what conditions do local actors not conform to world culture? This study has demonstrated a case of Korean religious groups and how they were autonomously involved in the world cultural process and adopted the global discourse—becoming main actors of the Lausanne Movement. Although the process of conforming to world culture was active in Korea, some national actors who participated in the Lausanne Movement were critical of the discourse generated at this level. The main criticism related to the lack of focus on social concerns and human suffering, strongly argued by Latin American scholars such as Rene Padilla (2011). This implies that some national actors are less enthusiastic about conforming to the global discourse, possibly because discussions at the global level do not apply to their idiosyncratic political, social, and cultural backgrounds. A comparative study of the dynamics of global religious movements in different cultural settings could address this gap in the literature, explaining diversity and resistance to homogenization.

Transnational religious movements, as with any other international efforts to connect global actors in the field of economy, security, and science, have grown as key actors in the international community. I presented theoretical and empirical examinations

of macro-level influences of world culture and a shared global religious discourse that could drive local actors' motivations and practices. The results of this dissertation demonstrate that seemingly irrational choices of religious actors risking their lives in high-risk countries are connected to the power of the discourse shaped among global actors, and my analysis specified that such discourse is actively constructed by global, national, and local actors.

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APPENDIX A
NUMBER OF KOREAN MISSIONARIES OVERALL AND IN HIGH-RISK
COUNTRIES

Appendix Table 1: Number of Korean Missionaries Overall and in High-Risk Countries

Year	Middle East and North Africa	South and West Africa	India	China	High-Risk Countries	Overall
2008	729	1,178	631	3,343	5,881	20,503
2009	809	1,246	728	3,688	6,471	22,130
2010	-	-	-	-	-	-
2011	-	-	-	-	-	-
2012	1,619	1,345	897	4,039	7,900	25,665
2013	1,668	1,386	963	4,169	8,186	26,703
2014	1,766	1,499	1,161	4,228	8,654	27,767
2015	1,868	1,548	1,005	4,089	8,510	28,326
2016	1,946	1,567	1,005	4,089	8,607	28,395
2017	1,999	1,571	931	3,934	8,435	28,584