

KOREANS IN NORTH AMERICA: IN BRIEF

POPULATION DISTRI- BUTION

The nation's third-largest Asian group is Korean-American. Korean immigration to North America began in the 1890s and has increased greatly since the 1970s. They come seeking the traditional benefits of North American society.

California has the largest U.S. Korean population, close to a million. However, Korean-Americans congregate in metropolitan areas across North America, often around military bases.

LANGUAGE/CULTURAL DISTINCTIVES

Linked by one native language and Konglish—Korean-English—and rooted in more than 4,000 years of history, Koreans exhibit strong ties to family and traditions. Though eager to learn the skills necessary for North American society, they are reluctant to give up their native customs and language.

RELIGIOUS BACK- GROUND

Religion is important in the Korean culture. Since the 1970s, Christianity has become the dominant religion in Korea, being embraced by about 25 percent of the population. About 75 percent of the Koreans in North America are affiliated with a church.

CHURCH PLANTING CHALLENGES

Southern Baptist witness and ministry to Koreans

in North America have grown dramatically. A new Korean church begins every month. Currently, Southern Baptists have close to 700 Korean-speaking churches. This number is expected to increase to 1,000 by 2005.

Southern Baptists face a dynamic, coast-to-coast challenge to reach out to Korean-born and American-born people of Korean heritage. You can help:

- Pray for those working with Korean-Americans.
- Give to support mission outreach.
- Become involved in missions to Korean Americans.

For more information contact:

Jaime Prieto
Asian Church Planting
North American Mission
Board
(770) 410-6228
E-mail: jprieto@namb.net



National Missionary:
Dan Moon (909) 789-1942
E-mail: dmoon@namb.net



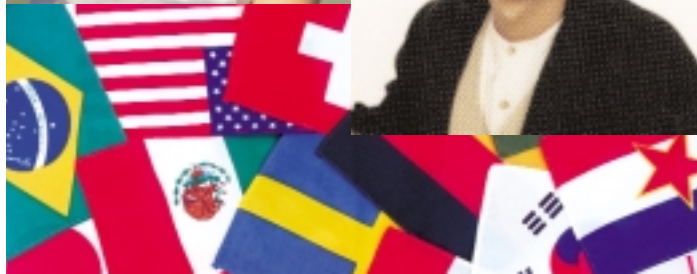
4200 North Point Pkwy.
Alpharetta, GA 30022-4176

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Working with Koreans

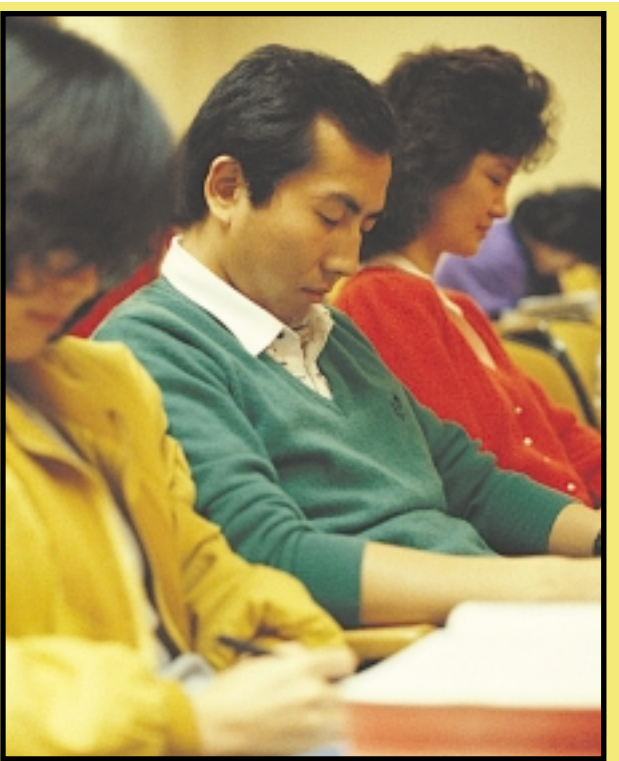




Southern Baptists are blessed and challenged by the receptivity of Korean people, one of the fastest-growing ethnic populations in North America. Vigorous efforts by Korean church planters have borne much fruit. Approximately 700 Southern Baptist U.S. Korean congregations use both the English and Korean languages. The Asian Church Planting office of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) prayerfully anticipates increasing that number to 1,000 within the next four years.

Most Korean churches are mission-minded. They send out mission teams across North America and throughout the world, even to China and the former Soviet Union. Many larger Korean churches sponsor mission works for other ethnic groups and provide space for them to meet in their buildings.

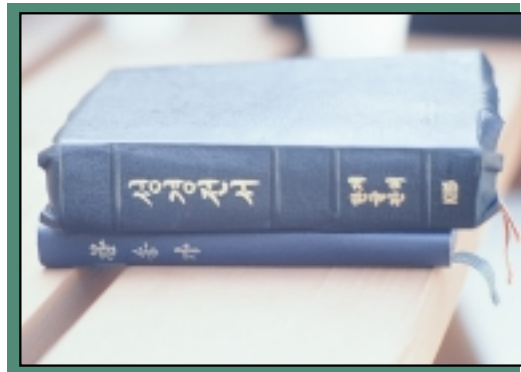
Buddhism and Confucianism are the traditional religions of Korea, with some remnants of shamanism and animism. Christianity slowly began to take root in the 1880s. However, it wasn't until the 1950s that Christianity spread explosively in Korean hearts. Today, there are about 20 million Christians in Korea.



Since 1970, close to 1.5 million Koreans have come to North America. Although the majority immigrated directly from South Korea, many also came by way of South America and Europe. Koreans can be found in most mid-sized or larger cities. If Koreans live in your community, be neighborly. You can witness to them after you have become friends.

First-generation immigrants take pride in their language and culture, and wish to maintain their Korean identity. Consequently, communication in English is often a problem. This varies among individuals according to their linguistic talents and educational backgrounds. However, a smile and offers of assistance, such as opening doors, are expressions of friendship. Be especially respectful of the elderly. Be helpful to the children.

Invite Koreans of all ages to your church, and help them find a Korean church where the gospel is



preached. Baptist Koreans are almost sure to start a church where there are more than 10 families. About 75 percent of Koreans in North America are church affiliated.

Where there is no Korean church, but there are several interested families, a local Baptist church or association may wish to begin a mission. Churches that want to sponsor a Korean mission should plan to lead the group as soon as possible to govern its own affairs, multiply itself through ministry and witness, and participate in the evangelization of the world.

There is a growing challenge to start more churches for the English-speaking "new generation" Koreans.

