

## THE FIVE ASIAN/KOREAN AMERICAN PREACHER IMAGES

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In my recent book, I propose five socio-ecclesial codes as faith fundamentals of Asian/Korean American Protestant diasporas and showed how they orient the practice of preaching—the most significant ecclesial event in the Asian/Korean American community. This paper, the core content of which originally appears as an appendix in the book, introduces the preacher's image or self-identity that has developed in the Korean American church. What image or perception does the ecclesial constituency have of their preacher who performs the most significant event in the community every week? Or how does the preacher identify herself in that cultural community? These two questions are two sides of the same coin, answers for which will provide an important theological and spiritual glimpse into Korean American faith.

Below, I suggest five preacher images based on the five codes discussed in the book. But note that by five preacher images I do not mean that there exist five distinct, or completely separate, images of the Korean American preacher. Rather, I am delineating five intrinsic and interrelated homiletic characteristics of the Korean American preacher. It is also true that many preachers embody a combination of several images. Yet even in that case I observe that the preacher nonetheless carries within herself all five of the homiletic characteristics.

This paper largely consists of two parts. The first part provides the abstract of each chapter of the book, which will lay the contextual-theological foundation for the second part. Then, in the second part, I will discuss each of the five Korean American preacher images in turn.

### Part I. Abstracts of Introduction, Chapters, and Conclusion

#### Introduction

Korean Americans, alongside other Asian Americans, live in a liminal space of being Asian/Korean and American at the same time. As such, the Christian faith of Korean immigrants is uniquely formed and styled by their living in two cultures at the same time. Given the unique bicultural situation, this book proposes five socio-ecclesial codes as fundamentals of faith among Korean American Protestant diasporas living in North America: the Wilderness Pilgrimage code, the Diasporic Mission code, the Confucian Egalitarian code, the Buddhist Shamanistic code, and the Pentecostal Liberation code. Realizing that the practice of preaching is at the center of the Korean American ecclesial life, the book provides sermon examples that reflect the five codes with style variations.

#### Chapter 1: Key Socio-Ecclesial Themes Rising in the Asian American Community

Korean Americans is an inevitable part of the socio-ecclesial or practical theological situation of all other Asian Americans. This chapter thus discusses the socio-ecclesial situation of Asian Americans, out of which Korean American evangelical diasporas seek their unique cultural faith formation—the topics of the following chapters. For this discussion, I rely on three major Asian American scholarly figures (or groups) along with others: *Sang Hyun Lee and Jung Young Lee*, *Fumitaka Matsuoka*, and *Su Yon Pak, Hyun Kyung Chung, and Hee An Choi*.

## **Chapter 2: The Wilderness Pilgrimage code**

This chapter begins by outlining the views of Stanley Hauerwas who insists that a meaningful (Christian) story is the ontological foundation upon which a person or a community develops self-identity, moral virtues, socio-political institutions, and social ethics. The chapter then moves on to the key discussion of the Wilderness Pilgrimage code strongly backed by Sang Hyun Lee. Lee finds the Abraham story in the Hebrew Bible as *the* narrative upon and in mimicking which Korean American Christians have constructed their own version of the “pilgrimage-in-the-wilderness” story as the community’s ontological narrative ground. The chapter introduces three style variations of the given code: *the Allegorical-Typological Narrative style*, *the Eschatological-Symbolic Narrative style*, and *the Illustrative-Utilitarian Narrative style*.

## **Chapter 3: The Diasporic Mission code**

The Korean American church has recently developed social concerns toward the outer world beyond the in-church boundary. However, the Korean American church’s socio-political prophetic participation in the outer world (e.g., the anti-war campaign, HIV/AIDS protection movement, and the anti-immigration law protest) is visibly weak. Nevertheless, compared to its socio-political activism, the evangelical mission work toward both co-ethnic groups and other ethnic groups has been strong ever since the Korean American church’s conception in America. It is no wonder then that the Diasporic Mission code has been one of the most fundamental ingredients of Korean American faith. The chapter introduces three style variations of the code: *the Ironic Reverse style*, *the Internal Otherness style*, and *the Identification Partnership style*.

## **Chapter 4: The Confucian Egalitarian code**

This chapter investigates how Confucianism, an inevitable socio-religious force among Koreans/Korean Americans, has fundamentally influenced the constructs of Korean American faith in deep theological relation with the other codes. Although there seems to be only one rigid form or style of Confucian practice in the Korean American church under the top patriarchal leadership of the male elder pastor, in reality there have been several recent style variations. The chapter presents two of them that are most widely accepted and practiced: *the “God the Father” style* and *the “Mother as Good Mentor” style*.

## **Chapter 5: The Buddhist Shamanistic code**

This chapter shows how certain religious aspects of Buddhism and Shamanism, as two most influential folk religions for Koreans, have been migrated or integrated into the Korean American Christianity, especially into preaching practice. Depending on how the people perceive and exercise those two folk religions, there are also several different code-styles appearing in the actual practice of the Buddhist Shamanistic code in their Christian faith and preaching activity as well. The chapter discusses in detail two major styles among others: *the Eco-Rhythmic Community style* and *the Buddhist Shamanistic Supernatural style*.

## **Chapter 6: The Pentecostal Liberation code**

Most Korean American churches are evangelical-Pentecostal and have set up “Spirit-led” churches across various denominations. Their Pentecostal characteristics most vividly appear in their communal worship services, through such practices as audible prayer, the Praise and Worship band, speaking in tongues, prayers for healing, the charismatic leadership and preaching

of the pastor, and etc. What is most intriguing is that 1) worship becomes a time and a place where all the other four codes discussed thus far appear in integration with the Pentecostal Liberation code. 2) Korean American Pentecostal spirituality takes on a strong flavor of (spiritual) liberation, given their socially oppressive *wilderness* situation in America. Three styles of the code are introduced: *the Pure Spiritual style, the Prosperity Living style, and the Liberal Subversion style.*

## Conclusion

Each code of the five discussed thus far cannot be fully understood or effectively utilized without the understanding of its intrinsic connection with other codes. Also, as shown, each code demonstrates its intrinsic merits and fallbacks. This concluding chapter therefore suggests considerate ways that the practice of each code supplements each other toward the holistic and integrative construct of Korean American diasporic faith. At the end, the author leaves a brief remark on the question, “What potential contributions does Korean American diasporic theology and pilgrim spirituality have for the good of other Asian American ethnic groups and also for that of North American Christianity in its broadest sense?”

## Part II. Five Preacher Images

### 1. The Fellow Pilgrim (The Wilderness Pilgrimage Code)

Thomas G. Long presents four preaching images that are most prominent in (Western) Christian circle: the herald, the pastor, the storyteller/poet, and the witness, the last being his own favorite.<sup>1</sup> Briefly defined, *the herald* (or *the prophet*) is the authority figure who receives directly from God and brings directly to the people the very Word of God, while *the pastor* is the one whose pastoral concerns over the people’s needs shapes the content of the sermon. *The storyteller/poet* is the preacher whose personal artistic or aesthetic telling of the biblical story stirs the people’s hearts and minds to an existential, revelatory experience. Last, *the witness* is the one who shares his or her own experiential testimony (what is seen and heard) about God’s Word and revelatory events with the people around her. In this case, the preacher is the one who first experiences the Word or the sacred event before testifying about it to others, which bestows upon the preacher a certain natural authority as the *firsthand* witness of God’s Word.

Whereas all four (or five) images of the preacher above can be helpful in discerning an apt image of the preacher in the Korean American context, none seems to be fully satisfactory. This is so because while they are all good at describing specific characteristics of the individual preacher, depending on the preacher’s own personality or spiritual formation, the images are not concerned with the preacher’s socio-ecclesial context. As we have seen in the book, in the Korean American church the socio-ecclesial environment and the resulting theological ideology is a major force that shapes the Christian faith in general and the preaching practice specifically.

Based on the Wilderness Pilgrimage premise and the sermons quoted in the book, I propose the *fellow pilgrim* as the first or primary image of the Korean American preacher. In the given ecclesial community, the preacher herself is on the Korean American diasporic pilgrim journey of God’s calling. Indeed, all individuals are specifically called, each with particular purposes. So with all these individuals called by God, the preacher cannot be the sole herald

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas G. Long, *The Witness of Preaching*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 19-51.

whose authority relies on special revelation. Further, since the people's pilgrim journey has a divine purpose, the people's needs cannot be the primary concern of the preacher as in the pastor image. And unlike the storyteller/poet or the witness, the preacher as the fellow pilgrim emphasizes the *collective storytelling* and *communal witness* of God's ongoing revelatory events within the community. In all of Long's four images of the preacher, the preacher is the one whose "firsthand" experience of God's Word is delivered "secondarily" to others. In the fellow pilgrim image, however, the preacher is the one who shares the communal stories of the God-called pilgrims, experienced together on the shared pilgrim journey in the same wilderness. The preacher's genuine authority does not rely on his or her own private experience of God's revelation, but primarily on her painful and sincere participation in the common people's everyday pilgrimage of faith. In E. Kim's sermon in the book, we saw how the preacher identified her pilgrim life with that of others:

My husband and I were in awe like the Israelites who were amazed when they first saw the manna in the wilderness, the layer of white flaky substance, covering the ground in great abundance. The manna from heaven, the divine gift! ... Feeling the divine presence through the snow, I whispered to God "Thank you! Thank you, Lord! You are with us even in this wilderness!"<sup>2</sup>

In this sermon, the preacher appears as a fellow pilgrim who knows exactly what it means and how it feels to live as a stranger in the wilderness and also who knows exactly how to interpret it from a faith perspective. The preacher shares the same joy, agony, hopes, and prayers with her own people who are on the same pilgrim journey. The only difference is her unique role as the preacher who is to proclaim the good news of God on behalf of all the other fellow pilgrims.

In sum, the Korean American preacher is the fellow pilgrim whose primary role is proclaiming the good news of God for the sake of all other fellow pilgrims. Of course, at times the pilgrim preacher takes the role of the authority figure, as I will discuss later when it comes to the Confucian Egalitarian code, and also often functions as the storyteller/poet of the Abrahamic story and the special witness of God's Word and revelatory events. Yet all these other roles lose their effect unless the preacher first *walks together* with her fellow pilgrims on the journey where God's revelation, guidance, protection, and blessings are so palpable. If the preacher is not a part of this journey, he or she is no longer a sermonic authority for the people.

## **2. The Missional Evangelist (The Diasporic Mission Code)**

From this code, the image of the Korean American preacher as the *missional evangelist* arises. Above all, the evangelist Korean preacher's biblical perspective is mostly fundamentalist with her overall theology presenting a strong imminent eschatology, the second coming of Christ. Because of this fundamentalist and eschatological character, the preacher's emphasis will often be on individual conversion and exclusive commitment to Christ whereas the social or prophetic dimension of the gospel takes a less important priority in her preaching. Yet, the preacher's life and message is also missional. The missionality of her life will often involve two things. First, as Alan Hirsch aptly points out, the missional preacher's way of reaching out to world is "incarnational."<sup>3</sup> Or in Al Tizon's term, this missional way of life is "inculturational."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> E. Kim, *Globalization*, 126.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), 133.

The core of these arguments is the same; the preacher's life and message should always be open to and even *identifiable*<sup>5</sup> with the newness of the new cultural people. Their argument rings very true when it comes to the missional preacher who has to confront the people who bring their own valued cultures and life styles which are different from that of the preacher. This kind of confrontation often happens in all the “reverse,” “internal,” and “partnership” styles of mission, as I discussed earlier in the book. For the reverse mission the preacher has to deal with the widely diverse American culture, while for the internal mission the preacher has to confront her own ethnic people struggling in that seemingly-chaotic diverse American culture (i.e., the bicultural life of Korean Americans). Last, for the partnership mission, the preacher has to actually cooperate with people from a variety of cultures. Obviously, the key to success for all three types of mission work will be the preacher's incarnational involvement or identification with the given multi-cultural circumstance toward the right understanding of the mission field and better evangelical communication with its subjects. Second, in a related sense and to borrow Turner's Latin terminology (and S. Lee's usage of it), the missional preacher's ideal for society will be that of the *communitas* seeker. For Turner, *communitas* is a community of “a generic bond underlying or transcending all particular cultural definitions and normative ordering of social ties.”<sup>6</sup> In this ideal community, people will “confront one another not as role players but as ‘human totals,’ integral beings who recognizably share the same humanity.”<sup>7</sup> The missional preacher's ideal is almost identifiable with the one described by Turner. While the preacher has the primary emphasis on the individual conversion of all subjects of mission and their exclusive commitment to Christ, her ultimate vision is far beyond the individualization or privatization of Christian faith. The church where all peoples harvested through both inward and outward missions come together will have to become the *communitas* church where peoples from all ethnic groups share the “generic bond” that transcends all particular cultural definitions and biases. This should be the eventual establishment of the eschatological vision that the missional preacher dreams of through the Great Commission for *all nations*—all of them ultimately being the same children of God.

In sum, the Korean American preacher who practices the Diasporic Mission code will present herself as the missional evangelist who eagerly tries to comprehend the multi-cultural mission field and faithfully sow the evangelistic seeds in it. Her ultimate vision will be that of the Kingdom, or more specifically “Kin-dom”<sup>8</sup> of God, where the people from all cultures and nations achieve the true *communitas* toward the end of their shared diasporic pilgrim journey.

### 3. The Familial Shepherd (The Confucian Egalitarian Code)

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<sup>4</sup> Al Tizon, *Missional Preaching: Engage, Embrace, Transform* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012), 40.

<sup>5</sup> Secular rhetorician, Kenneth Burke acknowledges identification as one of primary elements in persuasive communication. Robert Wess, *Kenneth Burke: Rhetoric, Subjectivity, Postmodernism* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 224.

<sup>6</sup> Victor W. Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors; Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974), 68.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

<sup>8</sup> Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz proposes the concept of “Kin-dom” of God in place of the “Kingdom” concept in order to emphasize the mutual relationships in the Kingdom of God, instead of patriarchal-hierarchical relationships often associated with the kingdom image. The missional preacher's egalitarian vision of *communitas* among all ethnic groups is indeed close to the concept of Kin-dom in many respects. For a further discussion on the concept of Kin-dom, see Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, “Kin-dom of God: A Mujerista Proposal,” in *Our Own Voices – Latino/a Renditions of Theology*, ed. Benjamin Valentin (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 171-190.

E. Kim observes that in the traditional Confucian church context (i.e., the God the Father style) “many [Korean] American preachers regard themselves as heralds of God who are sent by God from above. The congregation is expected to accept the words from the preacher’s instructions humbly.”<sup>9</sup> But Kim argues that the “friend” image is emerging as more appropriate for the more egalitarian Asian/Korean American congregation today (i.e., the Mother as Good Mentor style). While these two images Kim proposes are applicable in different contexts to some extent, they not do full justice to the image-making of the Korean American preacher arising from the Confucian Egalitarian code. First, the herald image of the preacher “sent from above” cannot fully reflect the actual *relational dynamic* between the preacher and the congregation. As noted before, in the Pilgrimage code the preacher is a fellow pilgrim walking and wandering alongside his or her own people. Wandering with her own people and experiencing the same hardships in the foreign land, the preacher sometimes laughs with the people and at other times weeps with them. It is clear that this pastoring preacher is not “from above,” but rather *from the midst of us*. At the same time, the friend image, which has no culturally granted authority, does not seem to mind at all the still lingering Confucian morality in the Korean American church. A key Confucian moral lesson that still permeates the Korean mind is great respect for the elderly, especially for those who teach and guide with the wisdom of age. In the Korean/Korean American context, out of a sense of respect people would not regard their teachers and elders as friends (i.e., in actual daily dialogue, they would never call their teachers or community elders “friends”). Thus, a struggle remains in that neither the herald nor the friend image really matches the preacher’s pastoral role or cultural honor.

Then what other image of the preacher is more appropriate in the Confucian egalitarian context? The *familial shepherd* image seems to do more justice to the preacher’s role. Above all, the shepherd image in the history of Christian spirituality is associated with the pastoral notions of “healing, sustaining, and guiding.”<sup>10</sup> Further, the shepherd is often “perceived to possess all wisdom, knowledge, and skill.”<sup>11</sup> Last, but probably most importantly, “the shepherd knows the flock [well] and is known by the flock.”<sup>12</sup> These three general and genuine characteristics of the shepherd image aptly match the Confucian egalitarian preacher’s culturally expected roles and granted authority. As indicated, the Confucian preacher is a hybrid figure who is both *with us/the people* and *with authority*. The Confucian shepherd preacher will be “with us” in her love for her fellow pilgrim people and willing to sacrifice for their welfare.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the shepherd preacher will exert proper authority as the one imbued with life wisdom, knowledge for wilderness survival, and good skills for long pilgrim journeying.

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<sup>9</sup> E. Kim, *Preaching the Presence*, 20.

<sup>10</sup> W. B. Oglesby, Jr., “Shepherd/Shepherding,” in *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, eds. Rodney J. Hunter and Nancy J. Ramsay (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 1164; for further biblical and theological discussions on this subject, see Wayne Baxter, *Israel’s Only Shepherd: Matthew’s Shepherd Motif and His Social Setting* (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2012), 97-113; Seward Hiltner, *The Christian Shepherd: Some Aspects of Pastoral Care* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959); Jonathan Gan, *The Metaphor of Shepherd in the Hebrew Bible: A Historical-Literary Reading* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2007), 89-100; Samuel J. Rogal, “The Lord Is My Shepherd” (Psalm 23): *How Poets, Mystics, and Hymnodists Have Delved into its Deeper Meanings* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 45-140; and Joel Willits, *Matthew’s Messianic Shepherd-King in Search of “the Lost Sheep of the House of Israel”* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007).

<sup>11</sup> Oglesby, Jr., “Shepherd/Shepherding,” 1164.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., and also see Calvin Miller, *Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 35-38. For Miller, being a shepherd is one of the intrinsic characteristics of the preacher.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

On top of all these acceptable associations between the shepherd image and the Confucian egalitarian preacher, the shepherd image aligns well with the fundamental Confucian conception of the church as the household of God. This church, as Korean Americans know it, is kindly guided and cared for by the paternal and/or maternal authority figure, namely the *familial* shepherd. In this cultural applicability and gender-inclusiveness, the shepherd image seems to be particularly fitting for both the God the Father style and the Mother as Good Mentor style.

#### 4. The Informed Guide and Christian Shaman (The Buddhist Shamanistic Code)

Two interrelated images of the preacher arise from this code, thanks to the two distinct, yet interlocked, styles of the code. The first preacher image is the informed “guide”<sup>14</sup> who facilitates the eco-rhythmic meditative faith in the minds of individuals and within the ecclesial community. Just like any good Buddhist monk, the guide-preacher with their advanced knowledge, wisdom, and relation with the Divine will want to serve others and the community seeking the same advancement through meditative practice each and every day. Thus, every single morning at dawn, the guiding preacher comes to the altar place *alongside* the people for deep meditation and fresh enlightenment. The meditative preacher’s role is guiding, rather than imposing or admonishing, which further means that the preacher kindly mediates “the dialogical process”<sup>15</sup> between enlightenment seekers and the Divine by her ushering message and prayerful presence. By the preacher’s kind guidance, the seekers *themselves* attain a close relationship with God of strength, love, care, and protection that will greatly help their uneasy everyday pilgrim journey in the foreign land.

As said, the guiding preacher is the meditative guide for the whole journeying community and the individuals within it. The preacher, thus, encourages the eco-rhythmic prayer life of the entire community in and outside of the church context. For the inner meditative life of the community, the preacher holds seasonal dawn meetings or revival nights, while for its outer life the preacher organizes small cell groups for monthly house prayer meetings; through this practice, individual secular households become small churches, literally and metaphorically.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Decades ago, Gerkin suggested the pastor model of “interpretive guide,” which was adopted later by Richard R. Osmer. For Gerkin and Osmer, the guide-pastor will collaborate with her people in pioneering a new territory of life and faith, providing her own advanced wisdom, knowledge, and judgment based on prior experiences. As implied, there is strict hierarchical relation between the pastor and her congregation in exploring this new journey in faith. As a close collaborator, the pastor will “attend carefully to the resources of the fellow travelers and the particular journey they hope to take” together, and guide those resources to be fully utilized for the whole group’s sake, including herself. Although Gerkin and Osmer adopt this guide image particularly for the pastoral care context and use the term “pastor,” not “preacher,” still their argument is very much applicable to our subject. Indeed, the Buddhist monk-like preacher will function as the interpretive guide for the enlightenment seekers, pastorally interpreting the people’s (broken) situations, preparing the spiritual place and time, and helping them use their spiritual resources for their own encounters with the Divine. Last, the guide-preacher would never be an onlooker during the people’s faith journey, but an active fellow participant in it. Charles V. Gerkin, *An Introduction to Pastoral Care* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997); Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 18-20.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>16</sup> The household as the church is not a unique concept to the Korean American church. Much of the idea has been borrowed from American writers’ publications and adapted for the Korean church context. The followings are just a few of them. Richard S. Ascough, *What Are They Saying about the Formation of Pauline Churches?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998); Robert Banks, Julia Banks, and Robert J. Banks, *The Church Comes Home* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998); Vincent P. Branick, *The House Church in the Writings of Paul* (Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier, 1989); Y. Choi with Harold Hostetler, *Successful Home Cell Groups* (South Plainfield, NJ: Bridge Publishing, 1981); Roger W. Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in*

The preacher as the eco-rhythmic meditative guide has something beyond spiritual concern for the believing individuals and ecclesial community, because, as explored above, “eco-rhythm” itself entails the harmonious life of the whole community with all others surrounding it, believers or not. The good guiding preacher will make sure, therefore, that the people’s meditative life and individual relationships with God extend to embracing the whole world, especially the poor and marginalized around them, into their prayerful lives. As J. Lee sees it, in the Buddhist tradition, the meditative prayerful life eventually will lead to one’s compassionate love, and even sacrifice, for others.<sup>17</sup> The preacher will be a good ever-present helper and guide, always ready to counsel and escort her own people seeking that holistic and praxis-oriented prayerful life on their continued pilgrim journey in the daily meditative wilderness.

The second image of the preacher arising from the same code is the preacher as the *Christian shaman* or *mystic*. Calvin Miller defines the mystical or shamanic preacher as the one who “[walks] with one foot on the solid path of humanity and the other in the real world of the spiritual.” He further elaborates:

Mystics believe all things are possible. Even if they have never moved a mountain, they are convinced that it can be done. They just haven’t found the right moment when they were hand in hand with the Almighty who has called them to get the job done. ... Homiletical mystics are positive thinkers. All good things are possible, most of them are probable. This positivism pervades their sermons. The good dreams that God had in mind for the congregation get the pulpit time. ... No wonder Theodore Roszak said that the effective minister has for a role model the shaman, for it is through the life of this exotic person that the people of a primitive community can sense strange powers at play.<sup>18</sup>

As Miller helps us understand, the shamanic or mystical Korean American preacher will mediate between the supernatural Divine and her people, mainly for the latter’s earthly sake. In this active mediation, the preacher’s spiritual function will not simply be guiding (as seen above), but imploring or “conjuring,” as traditional African American folk religion would describe it.<sup>19</sup> The practice of conjuring is two-fold: the shamanic preacher conjures (or implores) the people to carry out their own spiritual activity as a kind of “charm” (e.g., a forty-day special prayer event) and then conjures (or beseeches) God to perform magical (spiritual) blessings upon the praying people. As Miller acknowledges, the preacher will be positive about the result of this magical conjuring practice. When the hopeful result is not gained, there should be no despair. For as Miller also says, the “unhappy” result would only mean that the shaman-preacher has not yet found “the right moment when [she is] hand in hand with the Almighty who has called [her] to get the job done.”<sup>20</sup>

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*Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004); and Larry Kreider and Floyd McClung, *Starting a House Church* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> J. Lee, *Korean Preaching*, 32.

<sup>18</sup> Miller, *Preaching*, 34-35.

<sup>19</sup> Yvonne Patricia Chireau, *Black Magic Religion and the African American Conjuring Tradition* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 11-14. Through her intense field research and literature review Chireau discovers out that the superstitious magical tradition of black folk religion or the so-called conjuring practice has been deeply incorporated with black Christianity and its faith practice especially by the clergy group. Conjuring is practiced basically for the *earthly good* of lay people by the conjurers, with special magical items or performances.

<sup>20</sup> Miller, *Preaching*, 34.



E. Kim worries that this second image and function of the preacher might bring about a hierarchical relationship between the preacher and the lay people, the former being considered a unique person of mystical power and authority.<sup>21</sup> While her concern is legitimate to some extent, an allergic response to this image is not necessary. For fundamentally the shamanic preacher's role is as the blessing-*mediator*, not the blessing-*bestower*. The preacher commissioned by God is only there to help, implore, conjure, and beseech for the sake of the people's faithful pilgrim life in the foreign land. Besides, the preacher herself is among the people as a *fellow-pilgrim* who walks the same path and weeps and laughs with the others on the way to the new and blissful reality. Just like the guide-preacher, the shamanic preacher ultimately exists for the good of the pilgrim community of which she is a crucial part and in which she is gratefully nurtured and supported as the preaching mouth. In this sense, the shamanic preacher has existed in the Korean American community as the friendly communal conjure performer, not as the mysterious "wizard of Oz" with exclusive magical power.

## 5. The Charismatic Midwife and Avant-garde Protestor (The Pentecostal Liberation Code)

Pentecostals in general understand the activity of preaching as "an invocation of the Spirit" for the sake of the listeners. "As an act of epiclesis, [preaching] summons the Spirit to be present and to perform whatever is claimed for God."<sup>22</sup> In this particular perception of preaching, the Pentecostal preacher has become the utmost *charismatic midwife* of the people's spiritual/Spiritual life, particularly in the Korean American context, as we discuss below.<sup>23</sup> A midwife is literally defined as "a person who assists women in childbirth," but the term figuratively means "a person who or thing which helps to bring something into being."<sup>24</sup> The midwife herself does not create anything new, but she is the witness, helper, encourager, and fellow celebrator of the new thing or reality that is brought about by the people she assists.<sup>25</sup> The Korean Pentecostal preacher functioning as the charismatic midwife assists her fellow pilgrims

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<sup>21</sup> E. Kim, *Preaching the Presence*, 32-33.

<sup>22</sup> William C. Turner, "Pentecostal Preaching," in *Concise Encyclopedia of Preaching*, eds. William H. Willimon and Richard Lischer (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 371.

<sup>23</sup> I choose the term "charismatic" over "Pentecostal" since the former includes both genuinely Pentecostal and mainline Pentecostal (which is technically called charismatic) preachers. Many Korean/Korean American preachers do not belong to the Pentecostal denominations nor necessarily consider themselves Pentecostal, even while being highly Pentecostal in their theology and ministerial practices.

<sup>24</sup> Oxford English Dictionary Online, "Midwife," <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/118259?rskey=gguUhk&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid> (accessed June 5, 2014).

<sup>25</sup> Karen R. Hanson aesthetically, yet also theologically and historically, explores the image of midwife as a core valuation of the Christian pastorate, specifically of the chaplaincy in her case. Especially, from the biblical point of view, she realizes that God actively takes a midwife role in the Exodus story who "delivered [Israelites] out of bondage into a land flowing with milk and honey. The passage of deliverance is a channel through the waters of the Red Sea, through which God births the people into new life." For Hanson, the Christian pastor takes the same role of the midwife who assists the people in suffering or affliction to be delivered, healed, or transformed in the presence of God. In this respect, the midwife image is the best fit for the Korean American Pentecostal preacher who eagerly assists her people in their endeavor to be free from the secular spirit permeating the church and to be liberated out of the racial, socio-economic, and political bondage in the foreign land. Karen R. Hanson, "The Midwife," in *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings*, ed. Robert C. Dykstra (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 200-208. L. Juliana M. Claassens also carefully articulates the midwife image of God in the Old Testament that she hopes can change the existing conception of worship and preaching in light of the critical notion of God's delivering presence, especially among the muted and marginalized (women) in the community. L. Juliana M. Claassens, *Mourner, Mother, Midwife: Reimagining God's Delivering Presence in the Old Testament* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), esp., chap. 4.

to transform themselves, and potentially their social environment, into something dramatically new, as if bringing something unknown into being, in the immediate presence of the Holy Spirit. Obviously, the charismatic midwife does not produce that transformation, but witnesses and facilitates the Spirit achieving it in and through human beings and human history.

This midwife image of the preacher can apply equally to all the three code styles discussed in the book. Adopting the Pure Spirituality style, the charismatic midwife preacher can assist the listeners in tasting the mystical “born-again” experience, “baptism in the Holy Spirit,” and “sanctification”<sup>26</sup> at the existential level in the face of overwhelming American secularism, while the preacher practicing the Prosperous Living style can encourage the broken and marginalized to envision and readily encounter the good God whose rich blessings will eventually conquer the suffering of the world. Last, but not least, the midwife preacher by taking the Liberative style can advise her people to recognize and utilize the Spirit God’s historical subversive power over unjust ecclesial and social realities; the newborn realities will come alive once the Spirit touches upon the old corrupt ones. The charismatic midwife preacher in this respect offers or executes the collective invocation of the delivering and transformative Spirit, standing before and with her fellow Korean American congregants over various situations of their lives in the new land.

A related Pentecostal preacher image strongly embedded in the charismatic midwife image above is the preacher as the *avant-garde* protestor. Once again, the Oxford Dictionary defines the term *avant-garde* as “the foremost part of an army” or “the pioneers or innovators.”<sup>27</sup> In all the three styles of the Pentecostal code, the charismatic midwife preacher is the one who *first* sees the causes and results of spiritual or social predicaments, suffering, oppression, and even “evils” among the people, and then who immediately warns her people of that evil abnormality. Going a step further, the Pentecostal preacher will encourage her fellow believers to join the fundamental spiritual and social protest against that abnormality for the experience and establishment of an utterly different reality. The Korean Pentecostal preacher is called upon by the ecclesial community for that sacred purpose of passionately serving them as the first spiritual/Spiritual responder to imminent spiritual warfare, thus genuinely being the *avant-garde* protestor.

Ideally, therefore, the Korean Pentecostal preacher will be the spiritual figure of the charismatic midwife who takes the important role of the *avant-garde* protestor. This Korean Pentecostal preacher will move around all the three styles of the code and adopt each in accordance with each particular congregation’s unique spiritual or social situation. Obviously, operating by integrating all three styles as if they were one would be ideal. Yet the preacher will sooner or later find a certain style to better fit a particular ecclesial context. Thus, as old wisdom goes, the preacher had better be open to any (Pentecostal) possibilities of the local context, known and unknown, in order to best serve the people in each unique context.

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<sup>26</sup> Each of these terms has particularly nuanced meanings apart from the mainline theological understanding of them. See Duffield and Cleave, *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, 142-144, 236-245, and 304-325. Also, Frank D. Macchia, “Baptism in the Holy Spirit,” 53-56; Benny C. Aker, “Born Again,” 67-72; and Vison Synan, “Sanctification,” 422-425, all found in *Encyclopedia*.

<sup>27</sup> Oxford English Dictionary Online, “*Avant-garde*,”  
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/13610?redirectedFrom=avant-garde#eid> (accessed June 5, 2014).