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KOREAN MIGRANT FAMILIES IN CHRISTCHURCH: EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

MRS SUZANA CHANG, DR CAROLYN MORRIS AND DR RICHARD VOKES

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PART ONE

1.1 REPORT SUMMARY: KEY ARGUMENTS

The Families Commission *Statement of Intent* states that the "adjustment and settlement of refugee and migrant families" is one of the key issues facing New Zealand in the next five years (Families Commission 2005:15). The aim of this report is to document the experiences of new migrant families from South Korea to Christchurch, New Zealand. It explores factors such as the reasons why these families decided to leave Korea in the first place, their knowledge of New Zealand prior to arrival in the country and their experience of the migration process. However, its primary objective is to document the variety of ways in which Korean migrant families have tried to forge a new sense of home upon arrival in the host country. The report outlines a range of strategies employed by the families in pursuit of this feeling of 'being at home' in New Zealand (however 'home' might be defined). It also looks at the successes and failures of each of these strategies.

The report's key finding is that a majority of Korean migrant families leave Korea with a great sense of hope about their new life in New Zealand. In particular, at this stage most families harbour strong expectations as to the positive contributions they will be able to make to the host society. However, in a large number of cases, this initial optimism is soon tempered by the actual experience of living in New Zealand. In particular, many people describe a general sense of frustration experienced by new migrant families in relation to the difficulties of 'fitting into' the new society. In more than a few cases, interviewees related this general sense of frustration to their experiences of individual instances of harassment, discrimination and social exclusion. In this regard, it is not an exaggeration to say that a majority of those we spoke to in preparing this report had experienced some form of harassment, discrimination or social exclusion since their arrival in New Zealand. For some individuals, such occurrences were a regular part of daily life.

Despite this frustration, new migrant families continue to pursue a range of strategies aimed at forging a sense of 'feeling at home' in New Zealand. The second key finding of this report is that membership of Korean (and other) churches, and the practices of Christian life, are central to practically all of these strategies. Churches – and church-related groups – play a major role in advising and assisting new migrant families at all stages of the settlement process, from arrival at the airport in Christchurch, to finding accommodation, to making friends and business contacts, and so on. In addition, participation in Christian rituals, or engagement with one of the plethora of church-based social groups which exist in Christchurch, constitutes a primary mode of social activity for many Koreans living in the city. All this, despite the fact that the church played a far lesser role in many migrants' lives prior to their arrival in New Zealand. Based on the personal testimonies of Korean migrants living in Christchurch, the report documents how and why the church becomes so important in this way. It documents the very positive benefits this sort of church membership has for new Korean migrants, but also points out the (at times) heavy demands it makes on people. Not least here is the issue of time, given that a Korean individual who aims to fully participate in church life is likely to spend a very large part of his/her non-working life engaged in church and church-related activities. The report describes, in other words, how and why the church becomes so central in the lives of such a large proportion of Korean migrant families as part of the migration – and settlement – process, and documents the benefits and demands which result from this.

The "adjustment and settlement of refugee and migrant families" is indeed one of the key issues facing New Zealand in the next five years. The arrival, settlement and integration of refugee and new migrant families raise many issues and present a number of challenges. This report, based on new research among Korean migrants living in Christchurch, documents the particular range of issues and challenges which pertain to new migrant families from South Korea. However, its findings are of broader significance, in that it highlights experiences which may resonate with those of other refugee and new migrant families from other parts of the world who have also settled in New Zealand. Thus, the findings of this report will be of interest not only to Korean migrants, but to all new migrant families in New Zealand, as well as to the plethora of agencies and organisations that are involved in the migration and settlement process and to the wider public. After all, it is only through a partnership between new migrants, governmental and NGO agencies and the general public, that any of these issues can be addressed, or any of the challenges overcome. Specific recommendations for future action are included at the end of the report.

1.2 INTRODUCTION – PART A: KOREAN MIGRATION TO NEW ZEALAND

1.2.1 Introduction

The first group of migrants from East Asia to New Zealand were male labourers from China, who began arriving in the country from the 1840s onwards (McKinnon 1996). Initially invited by the Otago Provincial Government to work in the gold fields of the Central South Island, their arrival soon led to antagonism from 'British' immigrants, who perceived the Chinese as competitors for scarce employment opportunities.[1]

By the late 1870s, the British (and other European migrants) had brought sufficient political pressure to bear, and in 1881 the first of three Chinese Immigration Acts was passed by the New Zealand Legislative Council, to limit further immigration from East Asia. Although this and subsequent Acts referred specifically to immigrants from China, in practice, the law was applied to immigrants from all East Asian territories. One of the key provisions of the 1881 Act was the imposition of a heavy Poll Tax on 'Chinese' immigrants. The introduction of the Poll Tax – which was not formally repealed until 1944 – made New Zealand both more hostile and less desirable as a destination for potential East Asian emigrants.

Further Acts, including the Immigration Restriction Act 1899 and the Chinese Immigrants Amendment Act 1907, had a similar effect. The former required new migrants from East Asia to demonstrate proficiency in a European language as a prerequisite for entering the country. The latter required specific proficiency in English. In 1920 the Immigration Restriction Amendment Act reduced the emphasis on language tests, but introduced new criteria of 'suitability'. From 1920 onwards, this concept was applied at the sole discretion of the Minister of Customs (Nolan 2002).[2]

The result of all this was that from the 1880s onwards, immigration from East Asia dropped off sharply. By the late 1920s, East Asians accounted for less than 0.5 percent of the New Zealand population.

Discriminatory practices towards East Asian immigrants continued into the middle years of the 20th Century. This was despite a progressive liberalisation of New Zealand's immigration laws throughout the 1940s-70s. In 1945, the term 'race aliens' – a category which had previously been used to refer to practically all non-European immigrants – was dropped from all official discourse. In 1948, the concept of the New Zealand 'citizen' was extended, to allow non-'British' immigrants to apply for citizenship through registration.[3] Then, in 1961, an Immigration Amendment Act introduced a requirement for all immigrants, from all countries (except Australia), to apply for a permit of residence prior to entry into New Zealand. This practice was specifically designed to create a 'level playing field' for all potential immigrants, whatever their country of origin.

Finally, in 1977, a New Citizenship Act was put in place which removed any remaining legal distinction between those born in New Zealand and those born elsewhere. This was designed to remove all remaining legal impediments for the thousands of new migrants who had relocated to New Zealand during the 'boom years' of the early 1970s (most of whom had come from Europe and the Pacific Islands).

However, despite this progressive liberalisation of immigration and related laws, discriminatory practices against potential migrants from East Asia continued. In practice, East Asians – unlike their European counterparts, in particular – found it difficult to overcome a general perception of their being 'outsiders', to become citizens by registration, to secure permits of residence and so on. Thus, by the late 1970s, the numbers of people entering the country from East Asia remained negligible (especially when compared to the numbers of people entering New Zealand from Europe and the Pacific Islands).

The key shifts in the pattern of migration from East Asia to New Zealand occurred from the early 1990s onwards, following the major changes to New Zealand's immigration laws which occurred in the 1980s. These changes were begun in 1984, when the then Labour Government conducted a root and branch review of the country's immigration laws, with the aim of strengthening and extending the non-discriminatory trends of the previous two decades. In addition, they hoped to encourage new economic migrants, with a view to strengthening New Zealand's international economic competitiveness.[4]

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1 At that time, New Zealand formally recognised only two categories of immigrants, 'British' and 'Other'.
2 The concept of language testing for new migrants was formally repealed in 1974, although later partially re-introduced – albeit in a radically different form – in 1995.
3 Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, citizenship through registration was taken up by an increasing number of immigrants from the Pacific Islands.
4 This was seen as increasingly important in the context of the increasing favouritism Great Britain was then showing to its European trading partners over its former colonies.

The results of this review later informed the immigration White Paper of 1986, which stated its objectives as an attempt to "enrich the multi-cultural social fabric of New Zealand society through the selection of new settlers principally on the strength of their potential personal contribution to the future well-being of New Zealand" (McKinnon 1996:45). It aimed to inaugurate a future in which "the selection of new immigrants will be based on the criteria of personal merit without discrimination on grounds of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, sex or marital status, religion or ethical belief" (McKinnon 1996:46). The resulting legislation, the Immigration Act of 1987, extended these principles by defining three 'origin-neutral' categories of selection for potential new immigrants: 1) a business stream; 2) a family stream; and 3) a humanitarian stream. A later Act of 1991 added a fourth stream of 'general skills', and also defined the 'points system', which is still used to assess eligibility within each of the four categories.

Unlike previous immigration laws, all of these reforms favoured potential immigrants from East Asia, or at least did not discriminate against them. In particular, the new business stream enabled anyone with capital over NZ$100,000 to gain entry, a sum which was well within the means of many in China, Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests a concomitant general 'softening' of official attitudes towards applications from East Asia, possibly as a result of a general policy, adopted by successive New Zealand governments, to improve economic ties with various East Asian countries.[5] Either way, throughout the 1990s the number of new migrants entering from East Asia rose sharply. Between 1991 and 1994, more than 35,000 such applications were approved, accounting for 54.2 percent of all approvals during that period. Already by the early 1990s, new immigrants from East Asia had invested an estimated NZ$800 million into the country, established over 200 new businesses, created over 770 new jobs and created over NZ$13.4 million in new wages (Greif 1995). And by 2001, more than 240,000 new Asian migrants had settled in the country – two-thirds of them in Auckland – and thus accounted for just under 7 percent of the total population (Nolan 2002).

1.2.2 Migration from Korea to New Zealand

The first recorded Korean immigrants to New Zealand settled in the South Island – in the Canterbury and Otago regions in particular – from about the mid-1960s onwards. The majority of these early settlers arrived in the country as employees of various Korean shipping firms, and then stayed on. From the end of World War Two onwards, Korean shipping had become more and more influential in the Pacific economy, with the result that by the 1960s, an ever-increasing number of Korean ships were regularly visiting ports such as Lyttlelton. In addition to these maritime workers, a smaller number of Korean agriculturalists, mostly those involved in various kinds of fur farming, also settled in the country. However, the total number of immigrants, in both categories, was always very small.

It was not until the economic and social reforms of the 1980s that Koreans began to arrive in New Zealand in significant numbers. At that time, several hundred families arrived in the country as part of the 'new wave' of immigration from East Asia, as described above. A majority of the new Korean migrants came under stream four – 'general skills' – from 1991 onwards (Statistics New Zealand 2002). By the end of 1991, 930 Koreans were registered as living in the country. At first, most of these new migrants settled in the North Shore area of Auckland. Thus by 1992, 37 Korean-owned businesses were already registered in the area (Kim and Yoon 2002). However, as numbers increased, many new Korean migrants settled in other parts as well, in Christchurch, Waikato and Wellington in particular (although today, an estimated two-thirds of all Korean migrants continue to live in Auckland and its surrounds). By 1996, 12,657 Koreans were registered as living in New Zealand; by 2001, 19,023.

However, during the second half of the 1990s, the rate of immigration from Korea began to slow significantly. This resulted from the reintroduction, by the New Zealand Government, of an English language test for all new migrants, and from the onset of the Asian economic crisis of 1997. Nevertheless, this slowdown notwithstanding, over the course of barely a decade, the size of the total Korean population of New Zealand had increased by almost 2,000 percent. This makes the Korean population the fastest growing ethnic group in New Zealand over the period. Further, it makes the Korean community in New Zealand somewhat unique, as a distinctively 'new' ethnic group. Today, 94 percent of all Koreans in the country were not born in New Zealand, and 87 percent have lived here for less than a decade. These unique characteristics confer the Korean community with both a range of advantages and a number of specific challenges, as compared with other ethnic groups in New Zealand.

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5 However, it is important to note that this general 'softening' of attitudes was largely restricted to officialdom, and did not extend to general public opinion. Tracking surveys conducted since 1994 by Asia:NZ suggest that in terms of public attitudes towards immigrants, the most negative attitudes have consistently been saved for immigrants from East Asia (see: www.asianz.org.nz/research/research-trackingstudy.php). We would like to thank Rebecca Foley for alerting us to the existence of these important surveys.

1.2.3 Koreans living in New Zealand: The challenges

In terms of challenges facing Koreans living in New Zealand, one of the biggest is that of English proficiency. As late as 2001, as many as 26.3 percent of all Koreans who responded to the census of that year claimed that they did not speak English (Statistics New Zealand 2002a). In addition, and partly as a result of the language barrier – although there are other key factors as well – the new Korean community has experienced very high levels of both unemployment and under-employment in their new home. Despite increasing numbers of Korean-owned businesses – by 1997, more than 630 Korean companies had been registered – the Korean ethnic group had one of the highest rates of unemployment in New Zealand (at 57 percent), and the second lowest level of personal median income, at just $5,300 p.a. (Statistics New Zealand 2002b).[6] This was lower than the median income of even the Somali community (most of whom had arrived in New Zealand on humanitarian grounds).

In addition, for those who could find work, under-employment remained a problem. Having arrived in New Zealand on the 'general skills' stream, most of the new migrants were drawn from the Korean 'middle classes', who had held senior positions – managerial, executive and the like – prior to their departure from Korea. However, in their new home in New Zealand, partly as a result of the language barrier, few were able to secure comparable posts. Instead, they were more likely to find themselves working for small-scale businesses – groceries, restaurants, travel agencies and the like – which existed largely to serve the Korean community itself. Thus, for many of the new migrants who had, on arrival, been able to purchase property in relatively affluent suburbs with the capital they had brought with them from Korea, security of income continued to pose a significant problem.

In addition, another major challenge facing new Korean migrants was that of integration into New Zealand society. Despite an overwhelming desire by new migrants to develop friendships and contacts with other New Zealanders, more than half of new Korean migrants reported that even after 18 months in the country, they had yet to make any friends or acquaintances outside of their own ethnic group (New Zealand Immigration Service 2004). In addition, after the same length of time in the country, Koreans were the least likely of any new migrant group in the country to have taken up membership of any social or sporting organisation. The causes and implications of this general degree of social exclusion will be examined at length below.

1.2.4 Koreans living in New Zealand: The role of the church

In 2001, more than half of all Korean immigrants in New Zealand claimed to be regular churchgoers, while an even bigger percentage identified themselves as Christian.[7] Of these, a majority identified themselves as Presbyterian (or Baptist, or in some other way Protestant), while a minority identified themselves as Catholic (New Zealand Immigration Service 2004). In practice, such identifications may have been somewhat fluid, as individuals tend to attend services of various denominations (see below). Nevertheless, it is clear that the church is central to the experience of new Korean migrants living in New Zealand. The centrality of church membership to new migrants' social life can be seen as both a response to, and a cause of, the community's general lack of integration into wider New Zealand society. These claims are examined at length below.

Most Koreans in Christchurch attend one – or more – of the city's dozen or so Korean churches, with a lesser number attending one of the city's many 'Kiwi' churches. Throughout this report, 'Korean churches' are defined as those which are run by and for Koreans, where services are conducted mostly in Korean and where the Ministers and Pastors are from Korea. The largest of these churches in Christchurch is the Korean Presbyterian Church, followed by the Korean Catholic Church. Other sizeable churches include the Korean Methodist Church and the Korean Full Gospel Church. However, there are also many other Korean churches of varying size. In addition, Christchurch hosts at least one Korean Buddhist temple. For purposes of this report, all other churches in Christchurch – ie all those which are *not* run by Koreans, which hold their services in English, whose ministers are not Korean, etc – are referred to as 'Kiwi' churches. This follows Korean people's own use of the phrase 'Kiwi churches' as a term used to differentiate specifically Korean churches from all other types of congregation.

6 Statistics New Zealand's figures exclude those who had enrolled in full-time education.

7 These figures are not surprising in the context of the global Korean Diaspora. While only 21 percent of all Koreans are Christian, most international migrants are members of the Korean 'middle classes', among whom Christianity is far more widespread (Min 1991).

1.3 INTRODUCTION – PART B: MIGRANCY AND CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Korean community is far from unusual in emphasising church membership and the Christian life in this way, as an integral part of the migration experience. Although the whole subject remains somewhat understudied, a range of academic literature has begun to hint at the key role played by churches in the migration process and post-migration settlement, for a whole range of immigrant communities (in both New Zealand and elsewhere). For example, the central role of the church in both facilitating home-building in New Zealand and in maintaining ties to the home country has been documented for a range of Pacific Island communities (Anae 1998).

In particular, much of this literature has made much of the distinction between 'mainline' churches and Pentecostal-charismatic churches. Mainline refers here to those churches which were started by, or derive from, European churches (the Church of New Zealand and the Catholic Church are the two main examples of mainline churches in New Zealand). Pentecostal-charismatic churches, on the other hand, are those which derive not from Europe, but from the worldwide Pentecostal Movement, which began within US Methodism in the second half of the 19th century. Although the Pentecostal movement today includes a huge number of different types of churches, they all share a core set of doctrines, key amongst which is the idea of the 'conversion experience' (being 'born again') through receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

A number of commentators have seen the distinction between mainline and Pentecostal-charismatic churches as significant for understanding the new migrant context because of the different ways in which the two types of church construct notions of 'community' and belonging (Robbins 2004). For example, mainline churches are more likely to encourage different ethnic groups to operate as distinct branches, and to hold services in their own languages. However, because these distinctive branches are part of wider congregations, these same churches will also provide extended opportunities for new migrants to develop relationships with other members of the host society (Lidgard, Ho, Chen and Bedford 1998:36). In contrast, new Pentecostal-charismatic churches, because of their more 'global' pretensions (if not actual reach), tend to de-emphasise individual ethnic and national identities in favour of more cosmopolitan visions (Meyer 2004). Thus, almost all of their services are conducted solely in English. This helps to improve new migrants' language skills, and may therefore aid their ability to interact with the host society. However, for various reasons these churches also tend to provide more limited opportunities for their congregations to develop lasting relationships with members of the host society.

This is a particular issue for women at home, who may not have any opportunity for improving their English (it being assumed that children will speak mostly English at school, and men will use it as the primary language in the workplace, but that the native language will be spoken in the home). Yet at the same time, these same churches may also provide more extensive opportunities for social contact – women's groups, other lay associations, church bazaars, etc – which are more likely to be attended by women. Pentecostal-charismatic churches, on the other hand, may facilitate the development of better English language skills, but provide their congregations, and especially their female members, with fewer opportunities to use them (Hunt 2002).

Furthermore, the way in which different churches think about 'the family' *per se* may further shape the experiences of new migrant families. For example, mainline churches tend to emphasise the nuclear family as the basic unit of society. On the other hand, Pentecostal-charismatic churches, because of their emphasis upon global linkages, are generally less committed to this concept. Pentecostal-charismatic churches instead tend to highlight extended family ties, especially where these trace 'back home'. The emphasis on the nuclear family may help these family units to become more economically self-sufficient more quickly upon arrival in the new country. However, it may also foster a more acute sense of dislocation and isolation among the migrant family. The emphasis on extended family ties may open important sources of financial assistance in the short term, but end up creating economic drains on new migrant families in the longer term (although such ties may be an important source of income for the family 'back home'). The recognition of ties back home may help reduce the sense of dislocation for new migrants, but may also constitute a continual reminder of 'back home', which could be detrimental to achieving a sense of belonging in the longer term (Martin 1990).

In addition, mainline churches tend to reinforce traditional concepts of hierarchies within the nuclear family, especially those between husband and wife and parents and children. On the other hand, Pentecostal-charismatic churches, which emphasise a notion of all being 'equal in the Spirit', tend to undermine such ideas. In addition, in many cases Pentecostal-charismatic churches further promote

the equality of women (vis-à-vis men) by encouraging them to take up official positions in the churches, more of which are open to women than in mainline churches (Robbins 2004).

However, in the context of this wider literature, the Korean community in Christchurch would appear to occupy something of an anomalous position. On the one hand, our interview data certainly did support the overall argument that church becomes more important for people's lives in the migration context. Despite some (important) exceptions, many of those we interviewed described church membership as a key part of their social lives. Significantly, this was the case for even those who had not regularly attended church prior to leaving South Korea. Yet, on the other hand, the mainline/Pentecostal-charismatic divide did not emerge as significant in the narratives we recorded. Instead, people spoke primarily of differences between 'Korean' churches, *be these mainline or Pentecostal-charismatic in nature*, and 'Kiwi' churches (mainline and Pentecostal-charismatic) in terms of the impacts a church had had on their family's experience of moving to, and settling in, New Zealand. The reasons for this alternative set of categories, and the implications of it, will be explored in the next section of the report.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The substantial part of this report, contained in Part Two below, is based on research conducted in Christchurch between March and April 2006.

Over this research period, the three primary researchers on the report, Richard Vokes, Carolyn Morris and Suzana Chang, interviewed a total of 36 Korean immigrants to New Zealand. This number included 12 men and 24 women. In age, they ranged between 24 and 68 years, and had arrived in the country at different times, ranging between one and 23 years. As such, these migrants constituted part of the 'new wave' of migration from East Asia outlined above.

These interviewees were recruited to the study through a number of routes, primary among these being a number of adverts placed in local Korean media, in Korean. These adverts outlined the aims of the study, and asked potential participants to contact either Dr Richard Vokes or Dr Carolyn Morris directly. A copy of one of these adverts – and its translation – is included in Appendix 1. In addition, in both the *Korean Review* newspaper, and in *Christchurch Korea* magazine, these adverts were accompanied by full-page, feature-length pieces on the project (based on interviews with the project's researchers). The very good response we received to the adverts was almost certainly aided by the publication of these accompanying articles. In addition, a smaller number of interviewees were recruited by word-of-mouth, either from amongst the University of Canterbury's student base, or through an earlier interviewee.

Further, a number of announcements about the project were made at several Korean churches in Christchurch, usually during the 'announcements' period at the end of the Sunday service. Whilst we thank the individual churches for making these announcements, we are uncertain as to the general impact they had on people's decision to participate in the study. For only one interviewee was this support of a church central to his decision to participate. Apart from this one individual, no other interviewee claimed to have heard about the project through church attendance, or to have taken part in it because of church support. On the other hand, a majority of interviewees stated that they had first heard about the study through one of the media sources outlined above.

Following a response being received from an advert, or a name being forwarded to us by word-of-mouth, we did not discriminate as to who could participate in the study. We did not select on the grounds of age, gender, religion or any other criteria. Instead, we endeavoured to interview all those who had expressed an interest, on a 'first-come, first-served' basis. The only occasions on which this approach broke down was when we were unable to contact a potential interviewee, or when he or she was unavailable for interview (because of illness, etc). In addition, at the end of the research cycle, we were left with a list of names of interviewees we were unable to contact due to pressures of time. A full list of all the interviews conducted for the project is included in Appendix 2.

The content of the media adverts explained that the research was primarily academic in nature and would not have any direct bearing on governmental policy decision-making. This was reiterated to all interviewees at the beginning of each interview session. In addition, it was explained that we did not have a formal list of interview questions, but instead hoped for them to 'tell us their stories'; to share their general experiences of the migration and settlement process. Each interview explored all aspects of the migration experience, from the initial decision to move to New Zealand, through the physical

move itself, to the processes of 'home-building' in New Zealand. In all of the interviews, we tried to not guide the conversation through our own questioning, but to instead allow the discussion to evolve according to what the interviewees themselves wanted to talk about. However, across all of the interviews a remarkably uniform set of general themes emerged, and as a result, over the course of all of the interviews, we were able to ask ever more 'informed' types of questions on these themes. In particular, in most – although by no means all – of the interviews, church activities, and the Christian life, emerged as one key area for discussion.

We also explained to each interviewee at the beginning of the session that he or she was under no obligation to answer any question he/she felt uncomfortable with. No inducements were offered to any interviewee to take part in the study, although we did give each interviewee an unannounced gift of one cinema ticket, to thank them for their participation and their time.

Many of the interviews were conducted solely in English, while a few were conducted in Korean or in a mixture of Korean and English. In the latter case, Mrs Suzana Chang – the only Korean speaker among the project researchers – acted as translator for other researchers present. The interviews were conducted in a range of venues, including in people's homes and workplaces, in restaurants and in university meeting rooms. Most were conducted with one person at a time, although some included two people (usually a husband and wife, or else two close friends). We interviewed a number of church ministers and elders, but none of these individuals was present when we interviewed a member of their congregation. Most of the interviews were between one and two hours in length, and all were recorded on a digital recording device for later transcription.

Finally, the interview data were supplemented by a range of documentary research, and by a limited amount of ethnography. In relation to the latter, the primary researchers attempted, throughout the duration of the research period, to participate in, and observe, as wide a range of activities involving the Korean community in Christchurch as possible. This included attendance at a number of 'Korean days' and other cultural events which were held in and around the city in early 2006.

PART TWO: THE EXPERIENCES OF KOREANS IN CHRISTCHURCH

2.1 INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This part of the report details the results of the discussions we had with Korean migrants in Christchurch about their decision to leave Korea and move to another country, and about their experiences of living in Christchurch. There is, as would be expected, a considerable degree of difference between people. Nevertheless, a common set of themes did also emerge. These are explored at length below.

Note: In this part of the report, the words of participants are quoted directly, are italicised and placed in quotation marks.

2.2 THE MIGRATION DECISION

The decision to leave Korea and migrate to another country was the outcome of a number of push and pull factors – the stress of life in Korea in terms of the education system, work regimes and gendered family roles, and the promise of a more relaxed life in a Western country, with the additional benefits that accrue to those with an English education. The family is central to the migration decision. This is not necessarily to do with the immediate improvement of the economic fortunes of the family, given that only the already successful are able to migrate to countries such as New Zealand. Rather, it is much more to do with the future of the family, understood largely as the future of the children.

2.2.1 Children's education

Many of the people we talked to said that their *"main"* or *"number one"* reason for leaving Korea was for their children's education. In Korea, educational achievement is the key to economic success and social status, and as a result the education system is highly competitive. Several interviewees speculated that this is because in Korea a very large population is sharing a relatively small country that lacks natural resources. If children are not well-educated, one woman explained, *"they won't be recognised or admitted by others"*. School is therefore very stressful in Korea; another participant used the word *"horrific"* to describe it. Children are under a lot of pressure to perform for the whole family. Primary and high school students must take extra classes after school, sometimes to advance what they learn there, and sometimes to learn new skills like music, art or English – a child could work until 12 o'clock every night. As a result, one mother told us, students never get time to do their own things. There is also intense pressure surrounding getting into university. As one woman said, a Korean has to be not just an academic success but *"perfect as a human being"*.

In New Zealand, by comparison, there is more chance for *"non-perfect"* children to succeed. There is a wider range of access to education, especially to the *"top schools"* and to university. One family migrated because their son was not good at study in Korea – the teacher told the mother that her son was behind the other students. However, the family believed in their son's potential and migrated to New Zealand to give him a better chance. Another family came to New Zealand because their oldest boy was struggling with a learning disability and they felt that he could not survive in Korea's competitive conditions. They moved to New Zealand because they wanted a more relaxed and tolerant environment for him. Once he was at school in New Zealand, an educational psychologist assessed the boy, and his teachers recognised his problem and gave him more individual care. The school maintains a close relationship with the parents so that their son gets the help with learning he needs. The mother said that those things could not happen in Korea, and she is very impressed and grateful. This family also feels that an education in New Zealand is better for their second son. Since he is both sensitive and very competitive, he would find the Korean educational environment very stressful.

Some children also find the New Zealand education system easier to cope with. Two mothers told us that their children like school in New Zealand because, unlike in Korea, the children do not frequently argue and fight, and the teachers are not aggressive and easily angered.

Participants said that in Korea one has to be a businessman or a lawyer in order to be seen as successful. One woman stated that because Korea lacks natural resources, most people have to study,

whether they have an aptitude for it or not. In New Zealand, by contrast, *"there are many choices to be happy"*. There is more freedom of choice, as there is more than one definition of success. One man told us that his son is studying to be a chef, and his daughter is studying to be a nurse. He believes that if they had chosen these careers in Korea, Koreans *"might think second-grade or something like that. But not here. Not here." "Here,"* he said, *"I can let them decide."*

Coming to New Zealand is not always a way to escape this environment – it can also be a strategy for getting ahead in it. A Western, English-language education has cosmopolitan value in Korea: English is a *"phenomenon"* in Korea. If migrants go back, a Western education can help them acquire the best jobs and therefore status. As a result, educating one's children abroad is very popular: several participants told us that they had come to New Zealand precisely for this reason. This is also the motivation for women to bring their children to study in New Zealand while their husbands stay behind in Korea. One woman told us that some families sold everything they had to pay for their children to get a foreign education: *"They firmly believe they have to do that for their children's future because if you are just reasonably well-educated you can't really succeed. That's the environment of Korean education."*

This last point highlights the fact that for a number of migrants to New Zealand, the move is seen as a temporary, rather than a permanent one. This issue is discussed at greater length in the section on 'future plans' below.

2.2.2 Changing ideas of family, gender and work

Korea has historically and traditionally been patrilocal, but increasingly daughters-in-law do not want to live with their husband's parents. This is particularly so when women are highly educated themselves, and is part of a broader shift in Korean society towards an emphasis on the nuclear family. Many educated women desire to move away from a tradition of *"women at home with mother-in-law"*, to instead be *"modern mothers"*, autonomous, and, potentially, in paid employment themselves. We were told that the main responsibility of Korean women was to create educational opportunities for their children and that if they worked or continued with their education after their children were born, they were subject to criticism. One woman's parents brought her and her sister to New Zealand when she was 12 because they did not like the way women were treated in Korea and knew New Zealand was a liberal country. Another woman said that nowadays there is a joke going around that oldest and only sons cannot get married, because women do not want to take care of their parents-in-law. She said that to her parents-in-law, only she makes mistakes, never her husband. However, she also said that she felt guilty that she was not still in Korea, as she is their only daughter-in-law and therefore responsible for their welfare.

It is not only in-law relationships that are undergoing change. There are also strains on nuclear family life, caused by the exigencies of the Korean work regime. One woman told us that it was her dream for 10 years to migrate to New Zealand because life in Korea was straining her family relationships. Her husband was always working, while she was stuck at home with two children *"without going out, without friends or without relationship with anybody because I have to do all things by myself"*.

Professional men – a category which applied to many of the men we spoke to in this study – are expected to work extremely long hours in Korea and therefore get to spend very little time with their families. One man explained that in Korea he had to get to work by six in the morning because his boss always arrived at half-past six. The pressure this long working day creates is further exacerbated by the expectation that men should take part in extra work activities, such as group drinking. One woman described how men would go to the bar at the same time every day and drink for hours. They had to do this in order to establish and cement business and work relationships. This made her very unhappy. Furthermore, she worried about the impact of this work regime on her husband's health. His job was very stressful and competitive, which had *"made his friends die by cancer"*. She explained, *"What I thought was: I really want to keep my family. So I needed my husband, and I thought that this country, New Zealand, could be the best country for the family."* The family moved to New Zealand and established a business, and now, she said, *"I can stay with my husband all day long."*

Men, too, told us that the pressures of work were a motivating factor in deciding to migrate. One man told us that in Korea he would work very hard all day, sometimes until 10 at night, and did not have much time for his family. When he heard about the relaxed lifestyle in New Zealand from his sister-in-law, who had already migrated, he thought it was a good chance for his family. Another woman told us that when she was living in Korea she felt *"so sorry"* for her husband and children. Her husband was *"just a workaholic"* and had worked for 20 years without holidays, whilst her children had to study very

hard and did not have time to spend enjoyably with their parents. Furthermore, if they had stayed in Korea, her son would have had to go into the army. She said, *"because of the environment they couldn't meet. So at the time I thought we had to get together before we separate."*

One man stated that he would not go back to Korea because the lifestyle there was *"too hard, too rushed"*, and a woman noted that in New Zealand a person would never commit suicide over considerations of career, or money (as is common, she thought, in Korea). She said that in Korea people can get angry over small things, but New Zealanders do not have such competitive personalities. However, some people found it hard to adjust to the more relaxed lifestyle: one man who owns a business found it frustrating that orders he placed did not arrive instantaneously like they did in Korea, and another man moved back to Korea after a year because he was bored.

These issues were sometimes framed in a religious idiom: one interviewee said that a truly *"Christian family"* would spend time together by all going to church together, and they weren't able to do this because the husband was out drinking with his work colleagues. This was regarded as un-Christian behaviour in itself, and the decision to migrate was motivated by the desire to have a Christian family life.

The decision to emigrate is, therefore, connected with the desire for a better life and a better future, and is part of the reshaping of work, family and gender roles within a tension between Korean tradition and modernity.

2.2.3 Choosing New Zealand

One of the things we asked people about was why they had decided to migrate to New Zealand rather than elsewhere. Some people had chosen New Zealand specifically for its uncrowded, natural image and relaxed way of life. For others, New Zealand was one possible destination out of several (particularly Australia, the United States and Canada), with factors such as the exchange rate and the particularities of immigration policies proving decisive. Prior knowledge of New Zealand was important for people in choosing to come here, and many had heard about it from relatives, friends, workmates and members of their church congregations.

Family chain migration was particularly common. One woman's mother followed her to New Zealand when she was pregnant for the third time, to help her with the children. Later, her sister came to visit them for a month and also decided to stay. In another example, a man said that his wife's younger sister's family followed them to New Zealand. In another case a family was followed to New Zealand by the woman's parents, following which her sister and brother-in-law also came. One man came to New Zealand specifically because his father asked him to. His brother had already migrated to Christchurch and his parents had visited them several times. Whilst here, his father made many friends and decided he wanted to stay. Under the terms of the immigration policy of the time, he could only gain residence if half of his children lived in New Zealand. He had three children and so asked his son to migrate so he could as well. *"I finally gave up and applied,"* said the son. He was followed a year later by his parents and then by his sister and her son. His brother had moved to New Zealand in the first place because his wife had family here. Another woman's mother came to visit her and decided she liked it and wanted to migrate. She was followed by her own elderly mother, who found herself without family and lonely in Korea.

After the general decision to migrate had been made, these ties were most important to the decision to come to New Zealand specifically. In general, people did not obtain information about New Zealand through official channels. Instead, perceptions of the country were shaped by hearsay knowledge from relatives or other close contacts who had either been to New Zealand on holiday, or had migrated here already. For example, one woman had a friend living in New Zealand who advised her and her husband to settle in Christchurch because there were fewer Koreans there than in Auckland. Another family had a distant relative living in New Zealand, and when the relative visited Korea they discussed the possibility of migrating.

Such hearsay contacts have become more important over time, as more people know people who are already here. The key elements of the discourse about New Zealand are that it is clean and green, not overcrowded and very rural: *"There is nature here."* In particular, the availability of leisure time is emphasised. Work is not as stressful as in Korea, so there is more time for relaxation. In short, the main image of New Zealand which percolates through these networks is of a place which is the *"opposite of Korea"*. New Zealand is the opposite of a Korea which is understood as urban, over-crowded, polluted and stressful.

For many interviewees, golf emerged as a key idiom through which the benefits of New Zealand vis-à-vis Korea were expressed. In New Zealand golf is cheap and accessible, whilst in Korea it is very expensive. One man said that the price of two games of golf in Korea is the same as an annual club fee in New Zealand. Furthermore, there are many more golf courses here. One businessman said that in Korea, he did sometimes play golf. However, this was always through his work networks. His company would pay, but the game would be for business purposes and would therefore be stressful, he told us. In New Zealand, by contrast, Koreans can personally afford the fees and therefore can play for leisure: *"Here [golf] is for fun."*

2.3 LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND

All of the Korean migrants we spoke to looked forward to becoming part of New Zealand society prior to leaving Korea. They expected a better life, one which was different from their lives back in Korea. They hoped and expected to meet Kiwis, to make friends with New Zealanders. They expected that by virtue of having met the rigorous immigration criteria, by virtue of their being financially secure – often in fact bringing considerable amounts of money into New Zealand – by virtue of their respect for the value of education, and for other reasons besides, they would be welcomed into New Zealand, and would be able to participate fully in New Zealand society.

However, many people found that this was not the case. Instead of being made welcome and being valued for their potential contribution, people experienced differing degrees of rejection by mainstream society. As a result, many fell back on other Koreans, in both economic and social terms. In this way the 'Korean community' is as much a product of exclusion by the mainstream as it is the outcome of a community-building project by migrants themselves. And central to the organisation and practice of this Korean 'community' – whether or not specific individuals choose to participate in this community – are the local Korean churches in Christchurch.

2.3.1 Getting settled

2.3.1.i Arrival in New Zealand

Upon arrival in Christchurch, Koreans are confronted with a range of practical problems. These include finding somewhere to live, finding a job, finding a school for the children and so on. Assistance is available from a variety of sources, from family and friends already in New Zealand, from paid migration agents, but above all, from one of the many Korean churches.

For most migrants, migration agents and churches played a greater role than other forms of social networks. As one woman said about going to Auckland to investigate the possibility of migrating: *"I didn't know what I'm supposed to do so I visited the Korean church there. So I met a lady who is like an angel, she helped me a lot."* Some people made contact with churches in New Zealand before they left Korea. In other cases, people who were already here activated their church networks to assist newly arrived relatives.

Many migrants talk of having being met at the airport by church representatives, or having been visited by them at the motels where they were staying. People told us that the churches seemed to know when a new Korean family arrived in Christchurch. In some cases, this was because the church in New Zealand was informed by an affiliate church in Korea that a member of that congregation was about to come. In one case, a young man's friends informed the pastor of a local church that he had arrived. In another example, a woman was visited at her motel by unannounced church members who offered assistance. She told us that the only way these church members can have known she was there was if the motel owners had informed them that someone from Korea had checked in.

Churches offered the same practical services as migration agents, but with the added bonus, people said, that they were free of charge. One woman pointed out that churches allowed new migrants to ask for help in Korean rather than in English. A church elder explained that church representatives feel responsible for looking after new families and always try to go the 'extra mile' for them, often simply because they came to their church. Churches find immigrants the cheapest motels and give them information on the best schools and areas to live in. Later, they help them to rent houses, buy cars and enrol their children at schools. Often, they help them with the basic things which seem simple but are extremely difficult for those who do not speak English: getting the power turned on, the phone connected, opening a bank account and so on. One man explained that without this practical help, new immigrants tended to waste time and money. One woman, who did not join a Korean church, had to get the telephone connected herself and was almost reduced to tears because she and the operator could not understand each other.

2.3.1.ii The church and social life

Church also provided a ready-made social network, which provided practical, economic and emotional support for new migrants. Church elders provide encouragement and advice about settling into New Zealand. One elder said that he told new immigrants to let go of their old, Korean aspirations and start anew. For example, he told people that although working in businesses such as dairies was not desirable in Korea, it was a perfectly respectable occupation here.

Congregations provide social life outside of services, and churches organise many activities. There are weekly Bible meetings, men's, women's and youth groups to join and frequent lunches to attend. For example, the Korean Presbyterian Church cooks a Korean lunch every Sunday, which is especially welcome to Korean students without their families who cannot get homemade Korean food anywhere else.

As a result of all of this support, one man explained, the church is *"the centre of the world"* for new migrants. In the words of one man: *"Because a lot of Korean people go to church, those so-called new migrants will try to go to church as well. Because they feel relieved there."* One woman said: *"Some people, you know, they just come to church to make friends, and you know, just to get information about New Zealand. It didn't mean they were … Christian from Korea."*

These new migrants then felt obliged to attend the church that had provided them with so much assistance. For example, one woman and her husband told us that they felt they should go to the church of the pastor who had first visited them, and so ruled out attending any other church. Another family met some Koreans by chance straight after they arrived in Christchurch, who asked them if they went to church. When they said no, the Koreans, who were from a church, gave them their number and told them they could arrange schooling and accommodation for them. Because of this, the woman said, they *"felt a bit of pressure on Sunday morning"*.

From the churches' point of view, offering aid to new migrants helps to gain new members for their congregations, and therefore helps them to grow. One woman told us that even those who had not been Christians back in Korea were frequently *"touched by God"* upon arrival in Christchurch.

The support systems offered by churches play an especially important role for young Koreans studying in New Zealand without their parents. The pastor of one church told us that he acts as a sort of *"pseudo-guardian"* for such students. He establishes relationships with them, and they can then ring him up for help with their school, relationship or religious problems. Pastors can also be substitute father figures for teenage children from dispersed families, where fathers remained in Korea.

2.3.1.iii Choosing a church

With so many churches available in Christchurch, there was a variety of strategies for choosing which one to attend. Some people went to the New Zealand branch of the church they attended in Korea. Others went to the church that their friends or relatives in Christchurch were attending. Others selected their church on the basis of practical factors such as proximity, and so on. Several people reported that they had attended a variety of churches before deciding which one to join. Others told us that they changed denomination on arrival in New Zealand. They said that this did not matter much, as basically there was only one God and what path you chose to him was not that important.

Most Korean migrants chose to join Korean churches because the congregations were all Korean, the Ministers were Korean, and services were conducted in the Korean language. They joined Korean churches because this was where they felt most at home. For many, the church provided a haven of Korean-ness in an unfamiliar society.

2.3.1.iv Korean churches in Christchurch

Korean churches provide a range of benefits beyond the spiritual, and many of the Koreans we interviewed acknowledged this. Churches provide important social networks. One man said that some migrants do not necessarily base their choice of church on questions of spirituality or theology, so much as on the feeling of community they get from being a member of a certain church.

Many churches have basketball and soccer teams, which play against other churches or ethnic groups. Youth groups go on tramping trips, and church members teach young Koreans born in New Zealand to play traditional Korean games. Some churches have 'cell' groups, whereby the Pastor matches up a few families. These smaller groups then meet weekly at one another's houses to discuss the week's sermons and in this way get to know each other well. One woman told us that the Pastor's

wife at her church cares for everybody; if someone is emotionally or physically hurt she constantly calls and visits them to make sure they are all right.

However, there was also some criticism of people who attended church for primarily non-religious reasons from those more committed. One man said he felt that people with only a *"beginner's faith"*, whose relationship with other people in the congregation was more important than a one-to-one relationship with God, had very selfish attitudes and would have no problem with changing churches if they did not get on with someone or if the church was not offering what they wanted.

2.3.1.v The church and economic life

Church networks also provide potentially significant economic benefits. People talked about gaining jobs through church networks and gaining customers and clients for their businesses, as well as being a source of business opportunities. One woman told us that she had been rung up *"out of the blue"* and offered a job. She later found out that this person had been at her mother's church and the people there had recommended her. Another man met the owner of a Korean company who gave him a job at church.

One woman told us that she felt some Koreans changed religions mainly so they could gain business contacts through churches. One of her customers had converted more than once to facilitate such contacts. She had been a Buddhist in Korea, before becoming a Christian upon arriving in New Zealand, to later become a Catholic. She had subsequently moved to Australia, where she had apparently changed religion again. When one woman was asked if her brother went to church, she responded: *"He better, if he wants to get Korean clients!"* This woman also claimed that her brother had not attended church prior to securing his present job. Another woman noted that if a Korean wanted to run a business, the first thing he or she would need to do would be to go to a church in order to connect with more people. Another explained that business owners looking for employees felt more comfortable finding them amongst their own congregations, as this would ensure them to be *"faithful and trustworthy"*. One man said that church was a good place to find cheap products and source materials and supplies for your business. Many people join larger, well-established churches when they first arrive, as they are able to provide more of this kind of support.

2.3.1.vi Churches and social status

Churches also provide a site for the potential acquisition of status within the New Zealand Korean 'community'. Pastors and church elders are held in high esteem. One woman noted that Korean migrants are all university graduates, and had significant social status in Korea. However, in New Zealand they might not even have jobs, and so *"feel so little"*. She claimed that this is why so many Koreans go to church, in order to gain social, as well as spiritual, comfort.

2.3.1.vii Koreans and 'Kiwi' churches

However, a small number of those we spoke to had deliberately chosen not to attend a Korean church, but to instead attend (what they called) a *"Kiwi"* church. They did this because they wanted to participate in and become integrated into New Zealand society and culture, and saw joining a Kiwi church as one way of meeting Kiwis. Joining a Korean church, by contrast, would tie them into the Korean community. One woman, who came to New Zealand as a teenager, did not like her local Korean church because the Pastor and congregation were always focused on talking about Korea. She felt that her *"ability is a bit chained or narrowed down because [I'm] living in the Korean community … once [I'm] out of it, [I] can explore world, bigger world."*

Another woman, who said that she does not have time to attend any church because of the pressures of running a business, told us that if she had time she would want to go to a Kiwi church. She said: *"If I want to get to know Korean people I can, but I'm hesitating."* She wanted to first get to know New Zealanders and learn more about their culture: *"I cannot become a Kiwi but I want to understand the Kiwi people properly,"* she said. She feels that if she only socialised with Koreans, she would not be improving herself, and that it would mitigate against her becoming part of New Zealand society.

People were welcomed by these churches, in that they were often the only Koreans. One woman told us that her Kiwi church group is *"just like a family"*. She is heavily involved with this church and does a lot of morning tea duty because the other women are getting too elderly to perform such tasks. Attendance at a Kiwi church is perceived by those who attend them as a sign of success – that their English is good enough, and that they are socially skilled enough to operate in Kiwi society.

One key reason that some people prefer to attend a Kiwi church is a perception that Korean churches reproduce the social hierarchies and pressures of the Korea they are trying to leave behind. One woman said she went to a Korean church at first, but soon discovered that *"I wasn't the right person*

to stay in Korean church, like I wasn't the right person to stay in Korea." Another woman told us that she had originally planned to go to a Kiwi church, because *"I came to New Zealand which is another country, I want to learn more another country rather than Korean culture."* Kiwi churches were reported as being less hierarchical, less demanding in terms of time and money and requiring less conformity. One woman who attends a Korean church said that Korean churches expected much more of their congregation than Kiwi churches did. When she went to a Kiwi church, they merely told her about the Bible study group, rather than expecting her to attend meetings as her own Korean church does. Korean churches also expect members to do church work: *"If I volunteer to do this work, then they add on another work. If you show your willingness, they just expect you to do more and more,"* she said.

One man told us that Korean churches are more hierarchical than Kiwi ones. He believes that everybody is equal as the sons and daughters of God and that Pastors are not more important, or closer to God. Instead, he mused that they simply have different gifts than other people, such as preaching. He therefore disliked the hierarchical system in large churches in Korea. He explained: *"In Korean society, naturally, they have levels. Even church they come in."* He thought that some of this system had simply been transported into the Korean churches in New Zealand. For example, Korean Pastors wear gowns, which mark them off as different to the rest of the congregation, and convey authority. This is in contrast to the Kiwi Presbyterian Church in which the congregation and Pastor cannot be differentiated by their clothes. The interviewee said that Kiwi Pastors *"acted very humbly".* Because of this, he said, his wife *"feels free"* in Kiwi churches.

Another family, who go to both a Korean and a Kiwi church, felt that Kiwi services are run more freely than are Korean ones. In Kiwi services, one can praise and share as one wants, whereas Korean services have a form that must be followed. Even evangelical Korean church services are quite highly structured, we were told. One woman explained that in Korean churches Christianity is mixed up with traditional Korean culture as influenced by Confucianism. She said that in Korean churches people are judged by how much time they spend in the church, how much they can be seen to be praying and how much work they do for the church. If you do not spend a lot of time worshipping and helping, you are seen to be not a good Christian. For example, the women spend Sundays making elaborate time-consuming meals and then cleaning up afterwards. This woman and her family go to a Kiwi church, where there is a café instead.

According to this same interviewee, in Korean cell groups the hostess must provide food. In Kiwi cell groups, by comparison, people bring food if they want, and stay to help the hostess clean up if they have time, but no one is ever forced to do either. The interviewee told us that it is the same with Koreans who are not religious; if she invited them for a meal, she would have to make many time-consuming dishes or it would look like she was not respecting them as guests. In contrast, she has noticed that Kiwis only make a few things when they have people around for dinner. Furthermore, she felt that the Korean church forced her to join a cell group, and then forced her to open up about her life. When she did, they would say things like *"No, that's not right, you should do it this way."* In the Kiwi cell groups by contrast, they would *"just wait for me to open my heart by free will".* In this way, a friendship could grow naturally, and she was a willing participant in everything that happened. She said *"I feel much free, and I feel freedom… I want to be willing next time. Because without freedom I could be rebellious. 'No, I don't want to do this, this time.' I was always like that."* She said that in Korean churches people have to do all the right things to look good, but they might just be pretending and feel rebellious deep inside.

The same interviewee also told us that there was competition amongst the Korean churches and each wanted to become bigger, so Pastors would give sermons telling the congregation that if they gave the church 10 percent of their income God would bless them. If you did not, He would not. How much money families donated was a matter of public knowledge. Even families on tight budgets would comply because they were made to feel guilty if they did not. This woman said that individuals are respected in the West, but that if one is different in Korea, one is looked at strangely. This is why she did not want to live there and chose not to go to a Korean church.

Others reported that Korean churches are hotbeds of gossip. As the Korean community is small in Christchurch everyone knows everyone else's business. One man said that in these small societies people sometimes hurt each other, because *"we know too well".* One woman reported that since they had come to New Zealand her husband had changed, and had begun to acquire *"a Kiwi mind".* As a result, *"he feels more hard with Korean society"* and has less tolerance with the fact that people are so interested in other people's private lives.

Some people told us that they had initially tried a Kiwi church, but that their lack of English proficiency meant they could not understand the service or communicate with other members of the church. As a result, they had ended up at Korean churches again. Some Koreans feel uncomfortable in Kiwi churches because they do not fully understand either the language or the culture. One woman tried a Kiwi church and liked the music and atmosphere, but stopped going because her lack of English made her feel isolated.

2.3.1.viii Koreans and church non-attendance
A third category is those people who chose not to attend any church at all. In many ways their aims and experiences parallel those of Koreans who attend Kiwi churches. Their aim is to not become too involved in the Korean community. In part, this strategy reflects a perception concerning the social constraints such involvement would bring. In part, it reflects a desire to become more integrated into wider New Zealand society.

One woman who came to New Zealand in her teens stopped going to church in her last years of high school. She said that because the community was so small, rumours spread very quickly, especially if they were bad ones. She was disturbed that people she did not know seemed to know her: once at a dinner she was introduced to a man who seemed to know everything about her, whereas she did not know who he was.

Another woman who also does not belong to a church, said that once when two business partners had a falling out and separated, the congregation talked about their broken hearts and criticised their behaviour: *"I thought, oh, that's terrible, separation itself might be difficult for themselves, but how could other people criticise their business and their situation if they don't know very well about that."* She said that those things happened all the time: *"I heard a lot of different but actually same stories."* Today, she tries to stay away from the Korean community as far as possible, because it is so closed. She recently went to a church event to support her friends and was disturbed because at the event she recognised many people whom she knew in business and education contexts: *"It's a kind of invasion into your privacy. I just want to know them in a proper place."* She said she did not want to hear them discussing her own affairs amongst themselves.

Another woman told us that she had decided before she left Korea that she would not join a Korean church because she would then be unable to develop her English. She said: *"I don't want to be stranger in New Zealand society. I'd like to get into the New Zealand society. If I stay in little Korean society, I will be always the little society. They are only strangers. They never mix into the main society."*

2.3.1.ix Conclusion
Church, then, plays an important role in settling in New Zealand for a majority of Korean migrants. While Korean churches provide considerable practical assistance to migrants, and are a site of homeliness and security in a new and unfamiliar environment, participation also means potential separation from wider society, which can lead to a predominantly 'Korean life' in New Zealand. Korean church networks make it easier for migrants to make a living and to develop social networks, but participation in Korean churches also results in individuals being less likely to develop their own networks in the wider society. Participation in Kiwi churches means that people are more integrated into New Zealand society, which is what many claim to have left Korea for in the first place. Those who don't attend any church are also potentially more integrated into wider society. However, it is also the case that this group can end up being very socially isolated, with no social support at all.

2.3.2 Work
Like everyone else, Koreans need to make a living in New Zealand. One man told us that there are four economic categories of Korean migrants. At the top are the very wealthy people who maintain businesses in Korea as well as investing in New Zealand. These people do not actually work on a day-to-day basis in the companies they own. The next category could be referred to as small-business migrants. These people entered New Zealand as business migrants, but are less wealthy than the above group, and so are likely to also work in the businesses they own here. These people are generally more likely to have been professionals rather than business owners in Korea. The third category is education migrants. These are professional people who entered New Zealand under the general skills system. A few, perhaps, have managed to gain employment in the field they are trained in, but many have not. They either work in established Korean businesses or establish small businesses themselves. The fourth category is that of workers brought in especially to work in specific Korean businesses, particularly Korean restaurants. These people are sponsored by Korean business owners. All of the people interviewed for this project fell into the second and third categories, as outlined above.

2.3.2.i Employment opportunities

Korean small businesses tend to cater to the Korean community (restaurants, bakeries, Korean food supply shops, gift shops, gardeners, travel agencies, etc), or are the kinds of businesses that commonly attract new migrants (dairies, fish and chip shops, photo processing shops, etc). Generally, they are retail businesses rather than professional businesses. These businesses also employ other Koreans. In many cases, but not all, these businesses have nothing to do with the jobs that people held in Korea. Koreans who migrate under the general skills system have high educational qualifications and considerable professional work experience. There are engineers, computer programmers, pilots and architects. Though they qualify to come to New Zealand in part because of their professional qualifications, they find that it is well nigh impossible to find jobs in New Zealand in their fields. One woman told us that she thought 70 percent of Koreans in Christchurch did not have jobs. One professionally trained librarian applied for many positions, from research librarian to shelving assistant, but got none of them. She was sometimes told that she was too highly qualified. Another woman said she would not recommend Christchurch to any Koreans because, even though it is a really good place to live, it is too hard to get a job here as a Korean.

In part, this lack of employment opportunities reflects Christchurch's small size and general lack of industry. One man assumed that every country had a car industry but found that this was not the case in New Zealand. Another, who could not find a job in computer engineering, attributed this to the fact that New Zealand is not very advanced in this field.

However, it is not just a matter of the availability of work in particular fields. Kiwi companies, people say, do not want to employ Koreans. Some Koreans say this is because their English is not good enough, and that is why they cannot get jobs. They expect that when their English improves, so will their job prospects. One man has been unable to find a teaching job, although he has a Masters degree and has applied to many high schools. He explained that he finds it hard to convey the abstract concepts of his subject in English. He plans to attend the College of Education and to improve his English, and he believes he will then be able to teach in New Zealand. One woman has been unable to gain registration as a nurse in New Zealand because of high English language requirements. To become a registered nurse in New Zealand immigrants need a score of 7.0 in each of four areas (writing, reading, speaking, listening) whereas in the US one only needs an average of 6.5 across the board. She pointed out that if an immigrant made a language mistake in an accident and emergency environment it could be very serious, and she would not want to do that. She knows that if she meets the English requirements she will be able to gain registration. In the meantime has been able to find a job as a nurse aide in a rest home. She said that she had problems at work because of her English at first, and so tried to make it up to the colleagues who had to help and explain things for her by doing all the jobs nobody else wanted to do. Now her English has improved and she has no difficulty. One man said many people start studying again in order to gain New Zealand qualifications that will be much better recognised.

2.3.2.ii Unemployment and discrimination

Others, however, say that Korean unemployment is the result of anti-Asian feeling, discrimination and racism. Several longer-term migrants pointed out that it is also very difficult for their children to find jobs here, even though they have attended New Zealand schools, gained New Zealand qualifications and speak fluent English.

As a result of their inability to obtain employment in New Zealand companies, people either obtain unskilled work such as taxi driving or factory work or fall back on the Korean community and take up relatively unskilled jobs in Korean businesses. We were told stories of doctors working as taxi drivers and a veterinarian working in retail. One woman said she thought that men who could not find jobs in their fields, and were not familiar with physical labour, often chose to just do nothing, especially if they were older and had enough money to live on. One woman, who has been unable to gain a job as a maths teacher even after achieving top marks in New Zealand teaching and maths qualifications – and despite the fact that New Zealand is said to be lacking maths teachers – said: *"Finally I dropped the idea of getting a job in New Zealand society. Instead I've just decided to – changed my mind to live off other Koreans."* Others have also developed businesses which specifically cater to Koreans. One professional man now gardens for Koreans; Koreans are not used to having gardens and so do not know how to look after them whereas Kiwis know how to do their own gardening. One man told us that over 90 percent of Korean businesses cater to Koreans. Another woman noted that the Korean community is *"quite dependant"* upon international students, Korean tourists and new migrant families, and immigration is a significant business in itself. Families can also take in Korean students as home-stays to gain extra income.

For many Korean men, migration to New Zealand has resulted in a decline in social status, as they have lost the status that went with their previous occupation. What they have done is to trade their status for the future status of their children. One woman said that the social status that comes with running a business like a dairy is quite low compared with what most male migrants were used to in Korea. Another said that having to get a new job in New Zealand felt like downgrading to Korean men, but they chose to give up their career in order to gain a good education for their children and the chance to live in *"this beautiful environment".*

2.3.2.iii A Korean 'enclave culture'?
In some ways, therefore, it can be argued that Korean migrants form an economic (and social) enclave. In response to a question about how difficult it must be for a Korean with no English to live in Christchurch, one woman replied: *"It's easy. It's not very difficult. Because Korean shops is everywhere, Korean people everywhere. If I don't get involved in Kiwi society, we need only little English to buy some ingredients from the supermarket, that's all."* She said most Korean immigrants live Korean lives here just like they did in Korea.

2.3.3 Making friends

2.3.3.i Making friends with Koreans
Koreans easily met other Koreans, through work, through church and, of course, through existing family and friends. *"It's so easy, you go to church and you meet everybody,"* said one person we spoke to. Women also said they would see other Koreans at the shops and strike up a conversation. One man, who had been an officer in the Korean Army during compulsory service, had joined a branch of the Korean Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) in Christchurch and met many people that way. There are other such Korean organisations in the city. One woman got to know her sons' tutors, while others made Korean friends at ESOL classes and while attending university. There seem to be enough Koreans in Christchurch now for most people to develop a friendship network with like-minded people.

2.3.3.ii Making friends with Kiwis
All of the Koreans we met wanted to know more Kiwis and were disappointed that they had not achieved this. *"I wanted to know exactly [how] New Zealand people live, you know?"* said one person, and another explained that he had told his children that it was up to them as new migrants to try to understand Kiwi culture.

Many made purposeful efforts to meet Kiwis. They joined Kiwi churches and squash, tennis, golf and fishing clubs, volunteered at their children's schools, public libraries and Age Concern, and went to night classes. *"I tr[ied] everywhere,"* one woman said. The most common groups of Kiwis most Korean migrants got to know were their neighbours and the mothers of their children's school friends. One man gave all his new neighbours a small gift and a card introducing his family on each of the three times he has moved within Christchurch, and reported that the neighbours were very friendly and patient with his wife while she was learning English. Another said that his family was lucky to get an *"amazing"* landlord who *"feels like family".* Whenever one woman needed help or was wondering what something was, she would knock on her neighbour's door. They were supportive and helpful and she was able to learn English expressions off them. Another neighbour is *"fabulous"*, she said, and invited her and her sister to a women's craft group that meets at her church every fortnight.

Almost all of the informants with children who attended primary school in New Zealand said they had made friends with the parents of their children's school friends. Many Korean children did not seem to have trouble making Kiwi friends. One woman said that children wanted to play with her daughter because she was the only Asian in the class, whilst another's son has many friends to come around to his house to play video games. Mothers are sometimes invited to play-dates along with their children: *"My daughter and friend they play together and my daughter's friend's mother and I, you know, play together."* These Kiwi mothers were very nice and taught her basic Kiwi customs like baking and making tea and coffee. One woman reported that since her son started school, *"I feel I'm so much involved in Kiwi society."* Before this, the only community she had had contact with was the Korean church. She and a number of other women said they volunteered as teacher's aides in their children's classes. One woman, who does not have children, agreed that she would probably have met more Kiwis if she had had them *"but my circumstances effectively blocked that avenue".* Another woman told us that while her daughter was at the playcentre – at which parents have to stay with their children – it had been easy to meet Kiwi mothers. However, once her daughter had started school, *"no more Kiwi friends".*

One church elder described the huge efforts his church was making to try to integrate Koreans into New Zealand society. The elder's church was translating its services into English so that Kiwis could

attend alongside Koreans, the church was planning to open up their Community Centre to New Zealanders as well as Koreans, and a basketball court was being built on church grounds that was to be for the residents of the area as well as members of the congregation.

2.3.3.iii Feelings of rejection

However, most people also experienced some form of rejection. One woman told us that she *"rather thought nice people would come to me to try to make friends with me but that didn't really happen".* She was frustrated at the time, but *"now I've sort of given up"*. Another took Spanish and Japanese night classes, thinking that the Kiwis who took them would be interested in other cultures and thus would be interested in knowing her rather than judging her. However, when she introduced herself by her English name, a Kiwi woman said *"You can't be called [that], you're Asian."* She dropped the classes.

Kiwis are polite and friendly enough people in general, we were told, but they do not want to become close to Korean people and get to know them well. As one girl told us, the Kiwis at her high school were kind and friendly in class, but they never met up much outside of school. One woman said it was easy enough to meet Kiwis, but *"I want to get to know [people] heart-to-heart".* She finds this very hard because of the language barrier and because of the cultural difference, and therefore feels lonely. Others said it is hard to make Kiwi friends because New Zealanders already have their families and friends here. It is much easier to become friends with Koreans or migrants from other countries, because they, too, might be feeling a bit lonely. One woman said that she feels *"isolation and alienation"* from the wider community. She loves Christchurch but sometimes does not *"know very well about its people and what is going on here"*. As people have not been able to make Kiwi friends, they have been forced back onto the Korean community for social life and support.

2.3.4 Harassment

Almost all of the people we spoke to have experienced some form of harassment since arriving in Christchurch. Experiences ranged from having eggs thrown at them or at their cars, to having stones thrown at them, to being verbally abused.

Verbal abuse of the 'go-back-where-you-came-from' variety is very common. One woman told us about the constant racial harassment she endured. She would go for a walk every day, and every couple of days she would be harassed: *"They used their middle finger and used the f-word and … like Asian bitch, like that, those kind of things. Always are horrid, whenever I walk."* This makes her feel *"miserable and frustrated"*. One day a group of teenagers threw stones at her, one of them hitting her calf. She could not stand it anymore, so she turned back towards them and they ran away from her, into a house. She knocked and asked to see their parents, but they just *"yelled at me again the f-word, a lot of f-words"*. She asked one of the boys why he had thrown a stone at her, and he replied, *"It's f***ing funny."* She pointed out that she could die, and he said, *"Yeah, you can, but it's f***ing funny."* She went home, but, she said, she could not stand it any more and so she went back to the house. This time the owner of the house came to the door. He had been on holiday and the boys had been friends of his daughter's. The daughter denied everything. She did not call the police, because many Korean women had told her that the police pretended to listen to their stories and then did nothing about them.

Another woman was driving home after picking her sons up from the swimming pool, when someone threw an egg at her car. At first, she thought it might not be racism because it was dark, but she went back the next morning and discovered that there was a lamppost where the car was hit. Since the egg had hit the back window where her son had been sitting, rather than her window, she believes that the person had paused to see who was in the car first, and had only thrown the egg once it became clear she was Asian. She said her first response was *"wow, this finally happened to me. I was a bit excited,"* but then she got scared, especially because her husband is in Korea and she is the only one here to look after her children. One of her friends had been walking down the street in the middle of the day when a car stopped and someone inside opened the door and threw water all over her. She was so shocked she fell down and cried, and a Kiwi woman helped her.

When one man worked at a dairy, teenagers would throw eggs and stones through the front door. He found this very stressful, and it was one of the reasons he eventually sold the dairy and got a job in a Korean company. Another family who also runs a dairy is often harassed by children. For example, a boy around nine years old swore at her daughter and told her to go back to her country. She also mentioned that they can see people shoplifting, but cannot follow them. They call the police instead, but they do not do anything. This is one of the reasons they, too, want to get out of the business.

It is mostly young people who harass Koreans, but not always. Once a middle-aged man in a business suit, and driving a Falcon car, had signalled to a Korean woman in the street. The woman reported that because the Ford Falcon is a very nice car, she had thought that he was going to ask her for directions (or something of the sort). As it transpired, he actually wanted to tell her that she was the ugliest person he had ever seen. She also did not go to the police, even though her husband had wanted her to, because *"he didn't do anything harm – the outer scratch – there is no outer scratch, but, inside me, scratched a lot. I know I'm not a beauty. I know I'm ugly, but, I don't want to be convinced by him."*

In another incident, a taxi driver crashed into a woman's car and denied everything, refusing to pay to have it fixed. When a Kiwi friend went to talk to him, the taxi driver told him that since she was Asian and would be going back to her country soon anyway he did not need to pay.

In another incident, a woman forgot to do a task at work and a colleague asked her *"What did you learn in Korea?"* She said she felt shocked and ashamed and cried all day.

2.3.4.i Responses to harassment

Koreans respond to this sort of harassment in different ways. One woman said that she did not care when she was harassed. Another said that young people shout at her from cars, but she does not understand what they are saying anyway. And two mothers discussed whether they should explain the concept of racism to their children or not.

Some people questioned whether the motivations for this sort of harassment were primarily racial. These interviewees argued that everyone gets harassed, and that young people will always pick on you about something. This perspective was generally held by the younger Koreans we spoke to. One young woman said that bullies would bully anyone, and that other Koreans simply feel like they are being discriminated against because their English is not very good. They might think *"'Oh, well, they don't understand me, that's why they're ignoring me' kind of stuff, but in truth maybe that's not the reason."* Another interviewee agreed that if someone harassed a Korean it was not necessarily because the Korean was Asian, but rather because the offender himself was a *"bad guy"*. She said: *"In Korea if you meet a bad person you just say, 'What's wrong with him? Forget it.' But in New Zealand, in New Zealand it's racism."* This interviewee went on to say that assuming such incidents were racist was racist in itself. Another said that people who tended to differentiate between races themselves would take such incidents as racism more readily. One man said that his wife had been shouted at from cars many times, but not because she is Korean. He believes they would do it to a Kiwi woman too, and that such young people would pick on any weak person. A woman said that if someone said something to her in the mall she would just think *"alright, he's a bit funny",* whereas some of her Korean friends would get very offended. She thinks that this might be because *"they feel like a stranger all the time, wherever they go"*. Another interviewee said that she felt she got funny looks whilst out shopping, but noted that perhaps those giving such looks did not intend to be racist, but were instead simply surprised to see someone who was not a New Zealander.

2.3.4.ii Harassment and anti-Asian feeling

Many interviewees regarded such harassment as an expression of anti-Asian sentiment. Most accounted for this in terms of individual ignorance by people of *"low education"* and *"low class"*. They see anti-Asian harassment as an individual, rather than a societal, attitude. As one woman said, such incidents are a result of *"an individual personality problem"*, adding that most Kiwis were very friendly. She said there are bad people and good people everywhere. Another said, *"You always get that negative feeling coming from lower class. You get that everywhere."* One man, too, suggested that maybe the people who yell at him when he is driving are not well educated. A woman at a supermarket once swore at another woman, called her ugly and told her to go home. When the Korean woman confronted her, telling her she had no right to say that, the woman and her son ran back to her car. The Korean woman followed, opened the car door, said *"Say that to me again, you fat woman"*. and slammed the door. When asked why she thought the woman had acted that way, she responded by saying that she looked very poor, and uneducated.

However, others have come to regard New Zealand as a racist society. One woman told us that she thought people in Christchurch are very conservative. Many Kiwis living here have never been overseas or tried foreign food. She feels that New Zealand should open up more, because in some ways it is quite backwards. One man said that New Zealanders had to learn both to accept, and to respect, other cultures, which they do not do at present. Another woman said that her sister cannot recommend Christchurch to students coming into New Zealand because *"they have racism"*. She says

of the majority of Kiwi high school students: *"They don't see us as a human being. They just see us as, ah, coloured, or ugly one."* A younger woman told us that she felt New Zealand teenagers were envious of the money Korean students had to spend, and did not like them *"making noises"* (speaking Korean) in their country. Another woman said that most people are very good, but that she and her family are sometimes treated like invaders. She thinks Kiwis should open their minds and get to know Koreans. She said that when she meets people, she does not care about their skin colour, she just sees the person. She was also told by a neighbour that Kiwis are jealous of Koreans' wealth.

2.3.4.iii Anti-Asian sentiment and the politics of blame

Some Koreans blamed other Koreans for anti-Asian sentiment. They said that these others did not learn English and did not try to fit into Kiwi society, and therefore brought discrimination on themselves (and thereby onto the rest of the community as well). One man felt that Koreans were not a respected ethnic minority in Christchurch yet because *"we haven't done anything, we haven't proved ourselves, we haven't integrated"*. He feels that because many Koreans come for the lifestyle and spend a lot of time golfing or fishing, they have portrayed themselves to New Zealanders as a laid-back people who do not have to work. He thinks that perhaps Koreans need to be more industrious and productive so that they can change the image Kiwis have of them. He himself is doing his best to change the image of Koreans by donating to both the Korean and New Zealand communities.

Another young man said that he also thought Asian people were responsible for their own harassment. He believes they should make a bit more of an effort to follow the rules and customs of New Zealand, things they might not completely understand because Asians have a very different style of thinking. He said that some Asians completely ignored some rules, such as driving laws. When Koreans cook Asian food, the smell might be offensive to Kiwis. However, he added that if Asians are rude, people assume it is because they are Asian and that all Asians will act that way. For example, if Chinese students eat and talk during lectures, it is because they are Chinese, whereas if a Kiwi does the same thing it is put down to him being a rude person. That, he said, is *"why we have to be extra careful"*.

Some Koreans blame themselves individually for the harassment they experience. They say it is their fault that their English is not good enough, and they expect that when their English improves, they will have better encounters. One woman did report that she has experienced much less harassment since her English has improved, and since she has learnt to recognise what sort of situations to avoid. Her past experiences of harassment have become *"like a faded memory"*. However, other migrants whose English has improved have not found there to be a corresponding improvement in how they are treated, and so have developed 'racist society accounts' of their experiences. A few said that the harassment they experienced was a lesson from God. They said that Korean society was very racist, and so they were learning a divinely-ordained lesson in humility.

2.3.4.iv Conclusion

As a result of discrimination and harassment, many Koreans have only been able to find social support amongst other Koreans. Korean people migrated to Christchurch with the expectation of being welcomed and being able to become Korean New Zealanders. They all wanted to get to know Kiwis and to become part of New Zealand society. However, the general feeling is that they have been rebuffed by mainstream New Zealand, in terms of social rejection, labour market discrimination and anti-Asian harassment. This makes Christchurch not a very homely place for many people. Several interviewees said that they would tell other Koreans not to come here.

As a result of this, for many Koreans the Korean churches provide the only economic, social and personal support available. The literature highlights that churches often provide a secure space from which migrants can venture out into wider society. However, in the case of Koreans in Christchurch, because wider society is perceived as generally unwelcoming, the churches play an even greater role, constituting the only community many Korean people have. This situation presents particular problems for Koreans who do not want to go to church, for either religious or social reasons, as it makes it much more difficult for them to meet other Koreans. One young woman who does not go to church said that young Koreans tend to be grouped by religion, and that she cannot really have close friendships with Christians because she cannot get into their community. Individuals such as this face potentially significant social isolation.

2.4 FUTURE PLANS

Some of the people we interviewed plan to leave New Zealand, whilst others plan to stay. Indeed, some were adamant that they wanted to stay here and not return to Korea – *"I say 'I can't,' not 'I don't',"* said one woman. When another was asked if she would return to Korea, she responded, *"No way"*. One man said that the relaxed atmosphere of New Zealand was a much better lifestyle for him, and he tells his children not to try to go back to Seoul within 10 years. Another said that he wanted to stay to make a home for himself, and also to try and pave the way for other Koreans. He wants not only to help other Koreans to settle but also to help them become viewed by Kiwis as a worthy community that adds value to New Zealand society. Through his church he tries to teach young people that because the New Zealand Government has given them an education, it is their duty to come back and use it for the good of the community. One young woman said that she would live in New Zealand but she might travel first. However, others did plan to leave. In at least one case, this was because New Zealand society was found to be lacking. One woman was seriously considering leaving the country, even though she has a Kiwi husband, and said that she had been pushed that way by her belief that men were treated badly here. However, she mentioned that she was finding it harder to make the decision to leave than it was to make the decision to come, because she has since become older and her confidence is not what it used to be.

Of those who plan to leave, most do not intend to go back to Korea. They instead think they will go to Australia or the US, particularly after their children have finished their high school education. In Korea, American university qualifications are considered to be the best and automatically open the door to many good jobs. Therefore, many families try to get their children into American (or failing that, British or Canadian) universities, and sometimes they follow them to their new country. In fact, according to one woman, having New Zealand citizenship makes it much easier to get into the US as a migrant, so some people come to New Zealand to gain this and to learn English as part of a larger plan to go there. One man said that some Koreans who cannot get a job and are unhappy in Christchurch wait until their children have finished their education and then leave.

Although it seems to be rare, some people have heard of other families returning to Korea because they have found it too hard to survive in New Zealand. One woman said she might return, as she was in New Zealand on a guardian visa whilst her son was studying, and was having difficulty gaining residency due to health check requirements. She said that if New Zealand and Christchurch did not want her, then she did not want to stay. Another said she would like to return to Korea after her son finished high school, but she would have to persuade her Kiwi husband. She said Korea was a horrible country with its pollution and traffic, but her family and friends are there. One father said he thought his daughter would like to stay in New Zealand but it depended on whether she was employable at the end of her studies. If she was just going to be doing a menial job with a degree, he would rather she went home to Korea. A young woman said New Zealand was good in terms of education but did not really provide jobs. Her siblings all either went back to Korea or migrated to other countries to find jobs after they graduated. Another said that 80 percent of her friends had left New Zealand for Australia, Canada or Korea, mainly because it is hard to get a job here. However, they say they want to return to New Zealand when they have children or decide to settle down.

However, it seems many Koreans felt that they could not return to Korea, as this would mean a loss of face. One woman said that she believes many Koreans were unhappy in New Zealand but were stuck. It had been their dream to immigrate and they gave up everything – their families, their jobs – to do so. It was now too hard for them to return, both for economic reasons and because they had said goodbye to their families and found it impossible to go back, thus announcing their failure. One man said that he and his wife regret moving to New Zealand. The cold weather is not good for her health and he cannot get a good job in his profession. He feels that his life might have been more successful had he stayed in Korea. However, he says he is now too old to go home – because of Korea's large population it is hard to get jobs and Korean companies are likely to hire younger people rather than him.

Those who have been back for visits generally report that they don't really fit in there any longer. As one woman said: *"In New Zealand … I am probably a stranger forever, but if I go back to Korea, I already stranger in Korea as well".* Furthermore, Korea is even more crowded, busy and polluted than when many left. When one woman visited home for the first time in three-and-a-half years she found it had changed a lot. It had always been busy, but now it was *"more busy – busier, busier, busier"*. She also felt the people were even less emotionally peaceful than they had been when she left.

PART THREE: CONCLUSIONS

The Koreans we spoke to moved to New Zealand in search of a better, less stressful life for their family, and a better future for their children, whether this was seen in terms of gaining a Western education that would allow them greater success in Korea, give them the capital necessary to migrate beyond New Zealand to other Western nations or to have the chance to be someone different than allowed in Korea. They wanted to escape from what they see as negative aspects of Korean society – crowdedness, pollution, social competition and undesirable work regimes. They came to New Zealand with the hope and intent of becoming Korean New Zealanders, integrated into New Zealand society. Several people in fact told us that they chose Christchurch as a place to settle because of what, for Christians, the name of the city signified.

However, for many, this dream has not been fully realised. While most enjoy and appreciate the more relaxed life in New Zealand, many have experienced exclusion and rejection by mainstream society. In general they have been unable to gain employment in the professional fields in which they have been trained, and many men have been forced to take unskilled jobs, many in Korean-owned businesses. Many have also experienced social exclusion and have been unable to make Kiwi friends. People are disappointed by this state of affairs. Almost all report incidents of harassment, which are interpreted and made sense of in various ways by different people. Many seem loath to assert that their experiences are racially-based, instead locating them in individual personalities.

However, what this all means is that the church, already an important part of many people's lives in Korea, has become the central institution of the Korean community in Christchurch. From the moment new migrants arrive in the country, churches step in to provide them with a range of practical help, including help and advice on finding a home, finding business premises and so on. Later, they provide a place in which to make contacts and friends, a role which is especially important in a context of social exclusion. However, churches also make strong demands of people, not least in terms of the time they require people to devote to them. The type of church people choose to attend makes a significant difference here. In this regard, the results of our study show that whilst a few Korean migrants do attend Kiwi churches, for a majority, it is primarily within specifically Korean churches that they are able to achieve a sense of self-value, a sense of social and community support and, ultimately, a feeling of 'being at home' in New Zealand.

PART FOUR: IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study has been to collect individuals' personal testimonies of the migration experience. The results of our study point to a number of areas in which social and institutional support for new migrants from Korea – or elsewhere – could be strengthened and improved. Particular implications of our findings include:

1. Support for new migrant families at national level
    - More effort is needed to support new migrant families, irrespective of their country of origin, or mode of arrival in New Zealand.
        a. Greater effort should be made to identify the specific problems migrants face when moving to New Zealand, and to provide support for these problems.
        b. The current 'one-size-fits-all' approach to new migrants should be replaced with a more flexible model, one which recognises the specific needs of individual migrants arriving from different countries of origin.
        In the case of new migrants from Korea, the issue of English-language aptitudes has emerged as a central concern during the settlement period. For migrants arriving from other countries, the problems faced will be different.
        c. More effort should be placed into the provision of post-arrival support services, services which are particularly crucial during the first few days of arrival in the country. Specifically, we recommend the introduction of a new migrant telephone helpline, which could provide practical advice and support during the initial settlement period. Crucially, the helpline must have multi-lingual capabilities, allowing people to communicate in their own languages.
    - This effort will require a multi-agency approach, as the types of problems new migrants face are complex, and not easily addressed by any one government agency.
    - Greater value should be placed on the positive contribution new migrants can make to the socio-political, economic and cultural life of New Zealand.

2. Support for new migrant families at local level (city councils, local agencies etc)
    - Greater effort should be made to provide new migrants with support services.
    Some of these services would be generic to all new migrants; for example, the provision of seminars to explain to people their civil and legal rights in New Zealand (especially apropos of harassment and racist abuse). These types of seminars could be set up by the local council, but could also include the police, the Human Rights Commission and so on.
    Other services could be targeted to specific new migrant communities. For example, given the importance of churches within the Korean community, in that case support could be specifically targeted at church-based initiatives (such as church-based sports teams, etc).
    - Far greater effort should be made in providing new migrants with access to help and support for gaining long-term, meaningful employment.
    - Continuing emphasis should be placed on the current programme of civic cultural activities such as 'link-up days'. All of the authors noted the success of the 'Korean days' they attended in the Christchurch Cathedral Square, and recognised the important role these events play in introducing elements of Korean culture to the wider New Zealand society.

PART FIVE: DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

As with any small-scale study, the current project has been limited in scope. It has provided important insights into the experience of migrating from South Korea to New Zealand, and into the processes of settling in the host country. At the same time, in some areas it has left questions unanswered, whilst in others it has raised more questions than it has answered. All of these areas would provide the basis for further research. Specifically, future research could usefully look at some of the following areas:

> The extent to which the people we spoke to here are representative of all new Korean migrants living in Christchurch, and/or New Zealand as a whole. A longer and more in-depth study would enable the findings of this report to be tested against a statistically representative sample drawn from the Korean community as a whole. This type of study would also enable greater attention to be paid to the different migration experiences of different categories of Korean migrants – young people, the elderly, etc.

> The reasons why institutions and organisations such as churches and sports organisations become so important for new migrants. The present study has shown that churches are central to the new Korean migrant experience. However, further work could be done to explore exactly why people place such importance on churches, and what demands are made of them in return. Similarly, several interviewees spoke of the importance of their memberships to sports organisations (especially golf clubs). Further research could look more broadly at the reasons why sport emerges as central in the social lives of so many new migrants.

> The reasons why many Koreans fail to gain meaningful employment in New Zealand. This report has explored some of the challenges facing new Korean migrants when trying to find meaningful, long-term employment. However, more work needs to be done in this area if economic justice is to be achieved for all Koreans. A further study could look more carefully at areas such as employees' preparations for job applications, the application process itself, as well as employers' expectations and perceptions of Korean applicants and so on.

> The reasons why many Koreans ultimately decide not to stay in New Zealand. Several of the interviewees for this report spoke of friends and relatives who had left New Zealand, either to return to Korea or to move on to a third country such as Australia or the US. It would be interesting to track down some of these people, to find out their experiences of living in New Zealand, why they decided to leave, whether they have subsequently continued to maintain links with the Korean community in New Zealand and so on.

> The extent to which the 'Korean experience' is symptomatic of the migration experience for all new migrants to New Zealand. In this regard, it would be interesting to compare the range of 'push-pull factors' identified here with those which operate among people coming from other countries as well. In addition, it would be interesting to compare the Korean stories of under-employment, social exclusion and harassment, with the experiences of other groups of new migrants.

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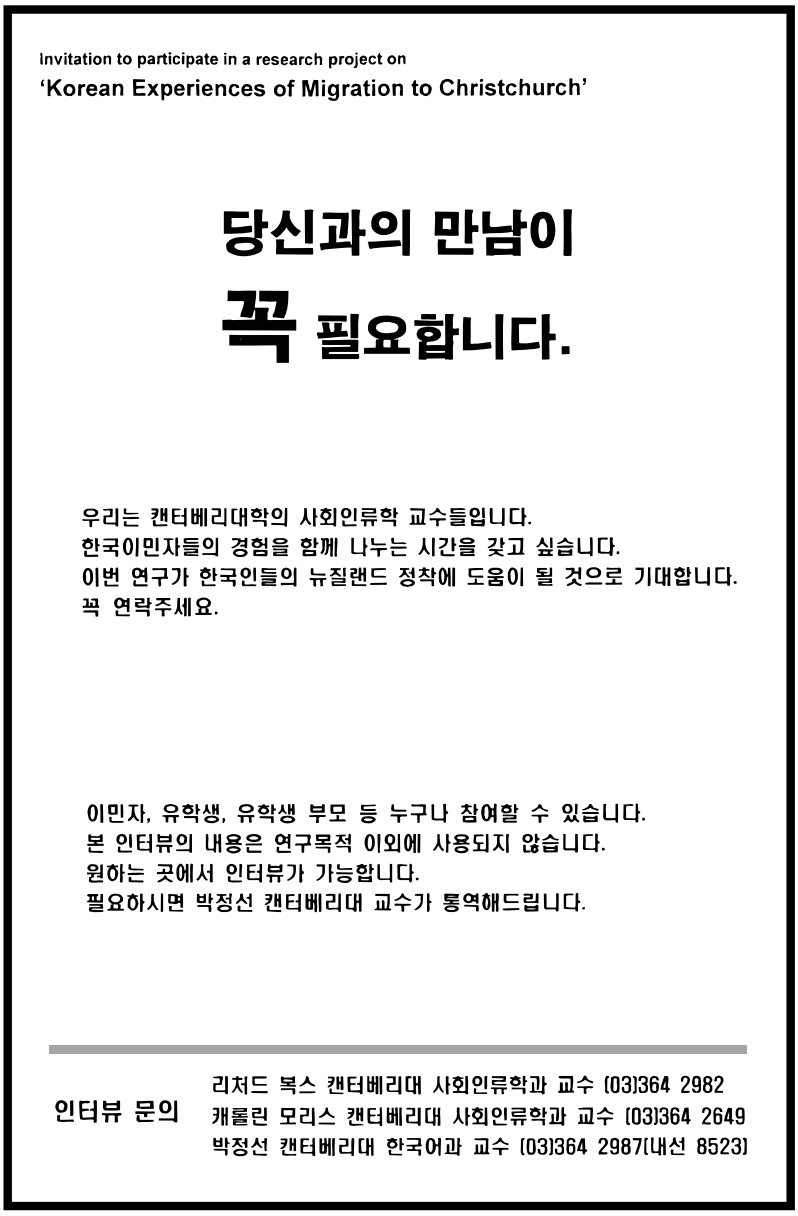
APPENDIX 1: NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS



Invitation to participate in a research project on
'Korean Experiences of Migration to Christchurch'

당신과의 만남이
꼭 필요합니다.

우리는 캔터베리대학의 사회인류학 교수들입니다.
한국이민자들의 경험을 함께 나누는 시간을 갖고 싶습니다.
이번 연구가 한국인들의 뉴질랜드 정착에 도움이 될 것으로 기대합니다.
꼭 연락주세요.

이민자, 유학생, 유학생 부모 등 누구나 참여할 수 있습니다.
본 인터뷰의 내용은 연구목적 이외에 사용되지 않습니다.
원하는 곳에서 인터뷰가 가능합니다.
필요하시면 박정선 캔터베리대 교수가 통역해드립니다.

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English version of the advertisement

To the Korean Community of Christchurch:

We are two social scientists at the University of Canterbury, in the School of Sociology and Anthropology. We have recently been asked by the Families Commission to conduct a small piece of research looking at the experience of new migrants to New Zealand.

As part of this research, we are keen to make contact with Koreans who have arrived in the country in the last 10 years, to learn more about their experiences of settling in New Zealand. We would like to make contact with Koreans of both sexes, of all ages and of all backgrounds. We would stress that this is a purely academic piece of research. No individual cases will be discussed in the final report. If you would like to take part in this research, please contact us at the addresses below. Many thanks in advance for your help with this work.

Yours sincerely,
Dr Carolyn Morris and Dr Richard Vokes

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEWEE LIST

Interviewee	Date of Interview	Language of Interview	Length of Residence	Gender	Age
1	6-3-2006	English & Korean	9 years	M	49
2	6-3-2006	English & Korean	13 years	F	early 40s
3	7-3-2006	English	4 years	M	38
4	8-3-2006	English	4 years	F	44
5	10-3-2006	English & Korean	10 years	M	47
6	10-3-2006	English & Korean	10 years	F	mid 40s
7	10-3-2006	English & Korean	3 years	M	53
8	11-3-2006	English	5 years	F	43
9	11-3-2006	English	23 years	M	51
10	13-3-2006	English	13 years	F	47
11	14-3-2006	English	3 years	F	35
12	16-3-2006	English & Korean	13 years	F	28
13	16-3-2006	English & Korean	4 years	F	32
14	22-3-2006	Korean	8 years	F	55
15	22-3-2006	Korean	9 years	F	41
16	23-3-2006	English	6 years	M	58
17	24-3-2006	English	3 years	F	38
18	25-3-2006	English	13 years	F	24
19	25-3-2006	English	10 years	F	24
20	27-3-2006	Korean	5 years	F	68
21	27-3-2006	English	14 years	F	38
22	29-3-2006	English	3 years	M	33
23	29-3-2006	English & Korean	3 years	M	64
24	30-3-2006	English	12 years	F	24
25	2-4-2006	English	12 years	M	46
26	2-4-2006	English	12 years	F	41
27	3-4-2006	English	9 years	M	45
28	4-4-2006	English & Korean	1 year	F	24
29	4-4-2006	English & Korean	3 years	F	late teens
30	4-4-2006	English & Korean	3 years	M	early 50s
31	4-4-2006	English & Korean	3 years	F	early 50s
32	5-4-2006	English	5 years	F	30
33	10-4-2006	English	3 years	F	40
34	10-4-2006	English	3 years	M	mid 40s
35	12-4-2006	English	9 years	F	33
36	26-4-2006	English	3 years	F	51

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