The migration phenomenon in East Asia:

Towards a theological response from

God's people as a host community


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**I declare that this dissertation is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a qualification at any tertiary education institution.**

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# Abstract

This dissertation works towards a theological response from the East Asian church to intra-regional migration. It provides an introduction to migration theory and the experiences of people on the move, as the basis of a theological reflection.

Migration is a significant part of modern life, and the Asian church has begun to respond and reach out to migrants. However, this concern for *the Other* (someone different and distinct from oneself) is patchy and lacks robust theological foundations.

Migration brings those in the host countries face to face with racial and social Others, who may face ill-treatment and exploitation, to which the church is sometimes perceived as indifferent.

The principal motifs employed in the work are Otherness and liminality. Through these, this research explores the commandments in the Pentateuch which require fair treatment of the alien in Israel. A similar approach is applied to Christ's life and teaching and the example of the early church in the New Testament. The same motifs of Otherness and liminality are used to examine the status of God's followers before Him and other nations.

The apparent tension in the Bible between social inclusivity and religious exclusivism towards aliens and religious Others is investigated by means of an *attractive vector* operating inside a *space of acceptance* to move non-believers towards faith in Yahweh. This space originates within the Godhead and extends out into the wider world.

The church draws on the Triune God by a process of *cascading*, through which various aspects of His nature and experience flow down from Him, to the church and thence through it into the broader society.

Finally, the work synthesises the findings from the scriptures into suggestions for a theological response from the church, as individuals and as a group within society, and gives some pointers towards concrete action within the transnational space.

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*"...He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands... so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us."* Acts 17:26-27

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## Introduction

## Introductory Comments

This chapter lays out some of the basic questions and issues which underlie this research, and briefly introduces some of the major concepts of the discussion. These core ideas will be developed and applied in greater depth in the main body of the work.

Migration has been described as 'one of the defining issues of the twenty-first century' (IOM, 2009). In addition, the International Organization for Migration claims that migration is 'an essential, inevitable and potentially beneficial component of the economic and social life of every country and region' (IOM, 2009). Any phenomenon which is described in such striking terms deserves the attention and response of the church. However, for Christians the most significant aspect of migration is not that it is hugely important or affects every country and region, but that it is fundamentally about people.

In the secular world much attention has already been paid to migration. In some countries migration is seen as a good thing, bringing in new people with skills and money. In other locations, so-called *Kleenex* workers - use once and throw away - are used (and abused) to carry out tasks which locals do not wish to do. Migrants may be associated with cultural renewal or ghetto-forming; they may be seen as people who quickly adopt the standards and life-style of the host country and culture, or perhaps as outsiders who endanger the status quo. For these reasons migration theory and policy has spawned a whole host of sub-disciplines such as voluntary and involuntary migration, international and domestic migration, human rights, migration law, protection for workers as well as companies, gender and family issues, acculturation and identity, racism, repatriation, and so on.

It is probably fair to say that this kind of detailed study in many countries and through many institutions has not yet been mirrored in the Christian community (Groody, 2009). This point will be enlarged upon a little later, but for the present it should be sufficient to say that migration is a complex phenomenon which merits urgent and comprehensive study by the church, theologians, and missiologists, and while there have been some encouraging moves by God's people, much remains to be done. This study constitutes a modest attempt to advance the study of migration from a theological perspective.

In a sense, migration *is* people, people on the move. For a whole host of reasons,

and with a whole variety of implications and consequences, people are moving as never before. Each of these people who travel across borders is made in God's image and precious to Him. Their very presence thus represents a challenge and an opportunity to churches and for mission endeavours. In addition, from a missiological perspective, migration is unique because it brings people of no belief or other belief directly into environments where Christians live and practise their faith. Migration thus undermines old dichotomies of home outreach and foreign missions; the arrival of strangers in the midst of our societies requires us to reapply the Great Commission (Mt 28:16-20) and Great Commandment (Mt 22:36-40) in new, old, and creative ways.

## Migration and Globalisation

Migration is seen as a relatively recent phenomenon, linked with globalisation. Although in many ways these two are modern trends, at least in terms of their present scope and influence, migration is as old as humanity and globalisation (or perhaps the globalising tendency) is also older than many would imagine.

People have been moving in large numbers for many thousands of years. We may consider the movements of Han people down into the region south of the Yangtze around the time of Confucius and the related displacement of Tai peoples into present day Thailand and Laos. We have the domination of Western Europe by the Celts and their later fragmentation by the Roman Empire. There have been similar ebbs and flows on every continent, and consequent mixings of language, culture, and ethnicity.

What is significant about the modern phenomenon of migration is its speed and scope. Migrants can travel around the globe in about 24 hours with modern transportation. Also, within a region such as East Asia flights are cheap and so is communication by phone or through computer. Gone is the gradual movement of people over years or decades and the gentle adaption and integration into local cultures. The ability of people to move rapidly means that they come with their cultures and languages intact and in many cases see no need to learn local languages or customs other than for survival or business. Modern migration may therefore involve cross-cultural tension or even clash. Because migrants move fast and often in significant numbers, groups of culturally and ethnically distinct people may suddenly appear in countries who may not appreciate them or their differentness.

Migration is often presented as a consequence of globalisation. As mentioned, globalisation is also a process which began long ago. The Roman Empire represents an early form of globalisation in that it made use of a single trade language and facilitated

exchange of goods across a very large area of territory. Gradually, various regions and cities became integrated under Roman authority and this facilitated people movements across a vast area. The Silk Road is another pre-modern incarnation of globalisation, connecting East and West together for trade and the interchange of ideas. Indian influence in various parts of South East Asia can be traced through the spread of Hinduism (in Bali) and Buddhism (throughout the region), by place names (such as *Singapore*, lit. *lion city*), and the adoption of Sanskrit as a language of religion and learning. Later came the genuinely global empires of the European powers in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Spanish and Portuguese had presences in both hemispheres, the French carved out large regions of South East Asia and Africa, and the British created an empire on which the sun never set. All were forerunners of the modern process of globalisation. They all involved the movement of goods and people, yet while goods moved both ways it was always easier for some people to move than others. Citizens of the empire moved very easily within and beyond their own territory, while indigenous peoples found it much more difficult to travel. Globalisation thus made some people more equal than others.

The world of the early 21st century is one of nation states and administrative regions. Where migration occurs from poorer to richer countries (as is often but not always the case), it is subject to immigration policies and nationality criteria which are set by host nations for their own purposes. Nations protect themselves with visas and immigration officials to control and restrict people flows. A citizen of a rich, democratic nation may travel around the world with comparative ease, perhaps needing a visa here and there, but for a person whose journey is motivated by perceived financial need or hardship of one form or another the situation can be very different. In a very real sense these people (who constitute the vast majority of migrants) do not enjoy the benefits of a globalising, interconnected world so easily. For them movement across borders is difficult and degrading and they may find themselves at the bottom of any social stratification in their destination country. In that sense, globalisation and migration have not changed a great deal over the years. These days a greater variety of people travel, and the governing criterion is wealth (and citizenship of a wealthy nation) rather than race. Yet migration is still by no means a level playing field and huge injustices remain.

### The Rise of East Asia in a Multipolar World

The end of the cold war in the late 1980s and early 1990s paved the way for a multipolar world. The simple split between American-backed capitalist democracy and

Soviet-controlled communism vanished and a much messier world began to emerge. As the Soviet bloc was disintegrating, the People's Republic of China began to implement tentative reforms and within twenty years has become an economic superpower. Japan's economy has suffered in the last decade but the country remains prosperous and a centre of innovation. Across the Straits of Tsushima, Korea has become a fully developed nation. Although neither are sovereign states, Hong Kong and Taiwan have performed well and attained developed status and modern life-styles.

At the same time, a stronger regional consciousness has begun to emerge in South East Asia and the broader region. In the 1950s many Asian colonies had roughly the same per capita income as African ones, but in the half-century since the colonial era many have shown rapid growth. Singapore has boomed, while Malaysia has shown impressive growth and Thailand has made huge strides. Elsewhere, the Philippines and Indonesia have not performed as well, while other members of ASEAN (the Association of South East Asian Nations) continue to recover from or cope with communist governments or corrupt regimes.

ASEAN is now a regional bloc interfaced with the rest of the world, particularly China, the EU, and the United States. While talk of customs and financial union is still seen as premature, the region does try to speak with one voice on some issues and now holds regular meetings with China, Japan, and Korean under the so-called ASEAN+3 framework. This includes some of the most dynamic economies in the world and combines a number of different worldviews and religious and political heritages, as well as two very different kinds of society. In the North of Asia the three large economic powerhouses are essentially ethnic monoliths, while many of the ASEAN nations are multiracial, multilingual, and multi-religious.

As certain of the ASEAN+3 nations have developed economically, they have begun to experience labour shortages which mean that intra-regional labour flows within the region. In Singapore many PRC nationals work in factories and the construction industry, there are Indonesians working in Korea and Japan, and Taiwan has huge numbers of Thai contract workers. Across the region, FDWs (foreign domestic workers) from Indonesia and the Philippines serve in the houses of the upper middle class. The migration profile of the ASEAN+3 region is quite distinct from of western countries; a much greater proportion of migrants are temporary and there are more complex cultural, racial, religious, and status issues than for migration to Europe or North America.

In parallel with the economic rise and increasingly powerful voice of Asian

nations there has been a coming of age of the church and a stronger interest in cross-cultural mission. In several countries in the region the church is strong, very localised (in terms of structures and leadership if not always in terms of theology), and has become an accepted part of society. As will be discussed further later, this study focuses on the church in countries and regions where it is free to exist, reach out, and send missionaries abroad. In Singapore and Korea church growth has been impressive and these countries now send workers into cross-cultural situations. One might also add Hong Kong to this list. In Malaysia and Taiwan the church is arguably not as powerful a force, but nonetheless has made its mark and has also begun to grasp the vision for cross-cultural work. The Japanese church remains relatively small, yet possesses some very fine leaders, evangelists, and missionaries. In Thailand church growth is now beginning to accelerate, yet most would still view this country as primarily a recipient of mission and a sender of migrants. The same might be said of Indonesia. The Philippines is something of an anomaly; it sends out vast numbers of migrant workers and would not be taken as a host country for migrants yet it has a strong and growing church. This study focuses on the following host territories for migrants in East Asia where the church is free to minister: Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. In this study 'East Asia' refers to a geographical region within which Confucian thought provides cultural and philosophical commonality.

### Changing Church and Changing Missions in East Asia

Related to the multipolar nature of our world and the removal of the tradition dichotomies of East vs. West is the reality that mission is from everywhere to everywhere. In the past mission consisted primarily of white people taking the gospel to East Asians, but now everything is changing and East Asians are ministering outside of their region (although numbers do remain relatively small) and increasingly within their region. Koreans minister in China, Singaporeans in Japan, Filipinos in the Middle East, and so on. This is part of the maturation of the church and the mission endeavour that accompanies it.

However, whereas ministry to foreigners (and especially students) is now well established in many western countries, it is less so in East Asia. My own observation and discussions with church leaders lead me to conclude that there is outreach to migrants in several countries in the region but it remains patchy and the general involvement of the church is lower than in the West. North America's ACMI (Association of Christian Ministries to Internationals) and the UK's Friends

International are vibrant ministries focusing primarily on students. While IFES does have a solid presence in many Asian countries, they themselves see the need for more outreach to foreign students around them (FES Singapore). However, whether in East or West, migrant ministry, including ISM (international student ministry) tends to be reactive, often theologically under-informed, and with some exceptions lacks a broad strategy and integration with other mission work.

In many parts of the Christian world outreach to migrants is slowly gaining acceptance as a viable and useful ministry, yet all too often it falls between two stools: it is not thought of as mission because many people see international travel of the missionary as an essential part of mission, but neither is it outreach because for many people outreach means local evangelism to one's own people rather than foreigners. This lack of understanding and support can be seen in the policy of churches and mission organisations, who have fallen into the traditional home-field dichotomy, and perhaps need help in apprehending the changes occurring in our world and the implications for the Great Commission.

## The Purpose of this Research

The various factors described above have led to the identification of a theological and missiological gap in missions thinking for Asia. This gap can be identified from a number of angles. First, migrant ministry is ongoing in the West, but the experience of the western church may not necessarily be easily ported to Asia. The nature of migration is different because of immigration law, job opportunities, and in some cases racial and social attitudes. In addition, although the church is vibrant in many parts of East Asia, cross-cultural mission is still relatively new and enthusiasm may well be more obvious than experience. Also, for reasons of language, culture, and demographics within nations, Christian faith is often quite tightly associated with specific people groups, making consideration and inclusion of foreigners a challenge for the church and the migrant. Also, migration brings large numbers of racial and social Others into the orbit of the church and a crucial factor then become the attitude of those in the host communities to these foreigners. These issues suggest that the church is in general not ready sociologically to reach out to migrants and that there is a need for more research and understanding in this area.

Although western Christians are more advanced in ministry to migrants, it is probably fair to say that a robust and multifaceted theology of ministry to migrants has yet to emerge and take its place in the evangelical world. A review of websites of Bible

and mission colleges in the West reveals that a theology of migrant ministry is conspicuous by its absence. There are almost no degree courses which specialise in or even offer electives in outreach to migrants. Such a gap is also clear from a perusal of current mission textbooks. Ralph Winter's (1999) *Perspectives*, Stan Guthrie's *Missions in the third millennium* (2004), WEF's *Global missiology for the 21st century* (Taylor, 2000), and even Chris Wright's magisterial *The mission of God* (Wright, 2006) do not address this area. Arthur Glasser's (2003) *Announcing the kingdom* mentions Diaspora, but only in terms of the original Jewish dispersion in the broader Mediterranean Sea area. Migration as ministry challenge and opportunity is also missing from Samuel Escobar's (2003a) *A time for mission*, and David Smith's (2002) powerful *Mission after Christendom*. Given that the engine of theological research and development is still primarily in the West, it is not surprising that this lack of theological treatment of migration is mirrored in East Asia's churches and seminaries.

In a recent review of otherwise excellent publications from Malaysia's National Evangelical Christian Fellowship (NECF) on issues facing the church there, no explicit mention of migrants or ministry to them was found (*Watchmen's Forum 3*, 2002). This is despite the large numbers of foreign workers and students in the country, and some encouraging and enterprising Christian ministry by individual churches. Again, it appears that this ministry has yet to appear on the church's theological and missiological radar screens. Thus, an investigation of migration from a theological perspective is long overdue.

Encouraging signs have come from Enoch Wan, who has been developing what he calls 'Diaspora Missiology' at Western Seminary, and from others in the Lausanne Movement. Wan's *Institute for Diaspora Studies* has taught several intensive courses in the US and the Philippines, focusing mainly on case studies of migrant peoples and ministry to them. If there is a weakness in their approach so far it is that their writings (sometimes in co-operation with others) have focused on migrants as Diaspora but have perhaps not spent enough time considering the obligation of the church as God's faith community. Similarly, Lausanne's Occasional Paper No. 55, *The new people next door*, constitutes a good start in this area but is very focused on student ministry in the West. There is a need for more breadth and depth; in fairness to these scholars, migrant ministry is in its infancy and the time for theological development is now.

A further difficulty is that because migrants often appear as needy and vulnerable (socially, emotionally, and financially) the question of the so-called social gospel is raised. For many conservative evangelicals social concern may be perceived

as liberal theology and a dilution of or departure from the orthodox spiritual gospel. Integral mission and social justice need to be strengthened in the East Asian evangelical scene. This dissertation will seek to explore some of these issues from the scripture.

I write as a broad, 'Bebbington evangelical' and in an attempt to serve my constituency better by advancing its theological reflection on migration. In this regard it is worth pointing that although the evangelical world has yet to develop a robust theology of migrant ministry, there have been significant efforts under the International Catholic Migration Commission and broader Protestant groupings such as the World Council of Churches. The ICMC has produced a wide range of publications discussing migration and seeking to empower the church. Indeed the Roman Catholic Scalabrini International Migration Institute (SIMI, 2009) of Rome once offered what it called a *Master in Migrazioni*, focusing on migration theory, social and psychology effects of migration, and government policy, as well as Old and New Testament teaching on aliens and strangers. Also, Jennifer Riggs (2008) makes a powerful case for ministry to migrants in her article for the WCC. In recent statements Pope Benedict has appealed to the church and the world to take care of migrants and has described migration as an opportunity rather than a problem.

The clear concern of Catholic and ecumenical Protestant for the stranger and the disadvantaged has something to say to evangelical Protestantism. By way of balance consider that in a fascinating DVD on the plight of Thai migrant workers in Taiwan produced by the Jesuit Kwangchi ministry (http://www.kcg.org.tw/) great emphasis was placed on the injustice such workers faced as well as the genuine efforts of the local Catholic church to help, but there does not seem to be any evangelistic or church planting emphasis. There is a need for a theology of migrant ministry in East Asia which is derived from the scriptures and addresses the situation on the ground, especially the attitudes and responsibility of Christians in the host societies to which migrants come. This is the goal of the current research.

## The Basic Approach of the Research

The research can be thought of as a theological reflection on the migration phenomenon in East Asia. It is thus to some extent an exercise in applied theology but is also a contribution to public theology, with the principal focus the responsibility of the church as a subgrouping or community within the host nation or society. Migrants come as outsiders to countries which receive them and theoretically the church has a crucial role in this hosting process. The research first looks at the general picture of migration in the

East Asian region, and as part of this explores the nature of the host society as well as the effects of migration on those who move. Consideration of the broader host society looks at attitudes of local people to outsiders, migrant Others in terms of race and social status.

Following an identification of issues and trends among migrants to particular nations, and a review of relevant theological literature, the focus moves to a biblically based investigation of God's commands to His people concerning migrants, the so-called *alien mandate*. This examination of biblical and theological ideas uses the two guiding concepts of Otherness and liminality, with the emphasis on the former. Three main aspects are considered in the research. First, the nature and character of God; second, the instructions given to Israel and their own experience as a distinct people group in the OT period; finally, the contribution of the New Testament in updating the understanding of God's people about their obligations in the light of the Christ-event. In these three areas careful attention is paid to the two-fold spiritual and social obligations of God's people to the outsider. As well as having a definite command to bring the redemptive message of the gospel to outsiders, the faith community also has a responsibility to care for migrants and uphold social justice as a direct manifestation of God's character. This process is carried out against the background of the review of migration in East Asia and for this context.

Within this general scope then, the research addresses two principal questions.
1. How might the Christian scriptures help churches in East Asia and the mission organisations associated with them minister to the increasing numbers of intra- regional East Asian migrants in ways appropriate to the local context?
2. What is the mandate from scripture to the church as a spiritual or religious group and part of the broader host society which receives migrants?

The attempt to find answers to these questions is based on certain presuppositions.
1. The church is the covenantal expansion of the people of Israel in the era of grace and thus inherits the OT obligations of God's people to sojourners or foreigners in their midst. The responsibility of the church to migrant people should thus be grounded in and consistent with God's prescriptions in the OT law and further informed by the life and ministry of Jesus and the growth of the early church. This includes the centripetal ministry of welcoming migrants to the faith community regardless of their race or status and explaining and demonstrating the gospel to them.
2. In East Asia migrants often have relatively low status in the host country. They lack

money and employment rights and may be discriminated against by local people and government agencies. The church's attitude to them must be informed by God's concern for the poor and the marginalised as detailed in both testaments. The church must stand for social justice, practical concern, and transformation.

3. The migration process has sociological, psychological, personal, and familial consequences for those on the move and these should be of concern to God's people as they 'love their neighbour as they love themselves'.

4. The circumstances of migrants within East Asia and the obligations of God's people suggest that community and belonging are important considerations in ministry. In addition, cultural factors in the region suggest that the concept of belonging and membership of a community can be refreshed by biblical teaching.

5. Many Christians remain trapped in an old paradigm which distinguishes clearly between home outreach and overseas mission and have yet to fully affirm cross-cultural ministry at home. Likewise there remains a separation between spiritual gospel and social concern which needs to be addressed from the Bible. Bringing these back together would inform ministry to migrants.

## The Scope of the Research

Exploring the migration phenomenon in East Asia and the church's response to it will require detailed knowledge of people flows in the region and the associated sociological issues. There is considerable variation in the nature of migration in East Asia and this needs to be understood.

This study focuses on migration to a small number of regions in East Asia. In this initial work towards a theological response of local churches to foreign migrants the choice of host societies was limited to those where the church is free to assemble and minister without government interference or restriction. In addition, the church needs to be established enough and migrant flows of sufficient sizes that ministry to them is a meaningful enterprise. Therefore, the host societies considered by this study are Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan.

It should be apparent from this list of host nations that the prevailing worldview in all of these societies (as far as the majority ethnic group in the church is concerned) is Confucian - the territories are either primarily Chinese or heavily influenced by Chinese mores and tradition. Furthermore, apart from Singapore and Malaysia all the territories have traditionally been dominated by one race or culture. Although the church in both ASEAN nations does contain ethnic Indians and Eurasians the vast majority of

believers are Chinese by race and culture.

## The Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation structure reflects the main elements of the research as described above. Following this introductory chapter comes an overview of migration and migration theory followed by an examination of the East Asian migration phenomenon in Chapter Two. This looks at migration as a process and an experience for individuals and groups. It examines the effect of migration on people and introduces the host societies to which migrants journey, including some fundamental ideas in Confucian thought. This chapter is a compilation and interpretation of the important parts of a vast body of secular research on migration.

To lay the foundations for theologically informed reflection the next chapter (Chapter Three) contains a review of academic literature pertaining to migration from various parts of the Christian church, a treatment of theological notions of Otherness based in Trinitarian and Jewish thought, and an introduction to liminality. The aim of the literature is to identify positive contributions and research which can be built upon, as well as noting where weaknesses or lacunae exist, particularly in my own evangelical constituency. The conclusion is drawn from the fundamental dynamic of ministry among migrant peoples - involving the attitude of the host committee and differences in income and power between host and migrant - that Otherness and liminality are appropriate theological motifs for working towards a theological response to migration. This marks a departure from current evangelical thinking, which focuses more on migrants as dispersed people by analogy with the Jewish Diaspora of the 1st century.

With these fundamentals in place the research moves in Chapter Four to a detailed review of the commandments given to the Israelites in the Pentateuch, the mandate that God gave His people to care for and reach out to the alien. This is done with respect to Otherness and liminality and emphasises the obligations of God's people to Others. A smaller section of the chapter looks at non-Israelite individuals who were accepted into the broader society to different degrees. In this part of the research an important component is the required behaviour of the faith community in spiritual and social domains. Consideration is given to the degree of belonging permitted to aliens as part of the broader society and in terms of religious affiliation.

This basic approach continues in Chapter Five, which looks at Otherness and ideas of reconciliation in the New Testament. There is a relatively clear division here between the gospels and Acts and the epistles because Jesus' ministry was primarily to

the Jews. However, this period is a bridge between old and new covenant ideas, and this is illustrated by brief case studies from the scriptures. Treatment of the epistles views Gentile believers as migrants into the (Jewish) community of faith and looks at their acceptance by the host society. Attention is also paid to the theme of God's people as aliens and strangers themselves, as exemplified by 1 Peter. The explicit function of Chapters Four and Five is to use Otherness and liminality to examine scriptural teaching to derive concepts and principles that may to ministry to migrants in East Asia today.

Chapter Six integrates the findings of the previous two chapters and draws broad theological conclusions. It then anchors these ideas in existing scholarship and provides pointers to theological and missiological application in the Asian context. The final chapter summarises the research, gives some practical implications for the church, and makes suggestions for further research in a relatively new area.

With these initial thoughts and the roadmap for the research in mind, it is now time to proceed to Chapter Two, the sociological and theoretical overview of migration in East Asia.

# Chapter 2
## Migration in East Asia

## Introduction

The focus of this research is migration in East Asia, specifically six territories in the ASEAN+3 region. The small amount of theological reflection that has been carried out so far usually concerns North America or Europe, yet many aspects of migration and its consequences are quite different in East Asia. In order to facilitate theological reflection with a regional focus, it is necessary to consider migration in East Asia in some depth.

To this end, I will provide a summary of migration as a global phenomenon, and an examination of migration theory and transnational spaces. The discussion will then shift to the migration experience in East Asia. Subsequently, there will follow a description of the host communities to which people migrate. Finally will come a presentation of the migration experience, including reference to a few case studies.

## Migration as a Global Phenomenon

Migration is global in two senses. Firstly, people may move to the other side of the globe, such as the thousands of mainland Chinese in Europe and North America, significant numbers of Somalis in the UK, Vietnamese people in Poland, and so on. Secondly, migration over shorter distances, between neighbouring countries or within regions, is happening all over the world.

The *World Migration Report 2008* gives a useful global overview. Unless otherwise acknowledged, facts in this section are derived from this report. At least 200 million people live and work in a country other than their own, a figure larger than the population of most nations, and these numbers merit our attention. Half of the 200 million are women, the majority of whom work as temporary labour in the Middle East and East Asia. Gender is a significant factor in migration (Castles & Miller, 2003, p.31).

Currently, Europe (including Central Asia) hosts more than 70 million migrants, North America 45 million, and Asia 25 million. The value of remittances sent home by migrant workers is around US$350 billion. In poorer countries, remittances play a significant role in the income of families and indeed the whole nation. In 2002, just under 10% of the Philippines GDP came from international remittances.

Migrant labour constitutes 3% of the global labour force. International migrants take on a wide range of employment opportunities, from the highly educated and experienced white-collar expat, down through skilled contract labour in construction and manufacturing, to semi-skilled and unskilled workers. In many countries highly

skilled labour can obtain work permits and even permanent residence with comparative ease. By contrast, highly restrictive rules require semi-skilled workers to leave the country on completion of fixed length contracts. Differences in immigration policy are reflected in the attitudes of the citizens of the host countries. In a country like Singapore the Western or East Asian expat is far better accepted than the uneducated Thai or Indian worker who builds the condominiums in which expats and wealthy locals enjoy their money and privileges. The *International Migration and Development Factsheet* (2000) states that more than 20 million migrants had university level education. Among such migrants living in OECD countries, 6 out all 10 originated in developing countries, bringing issues of brain drain, acculturation, and diaspora formation.

In the industrialised nations around half of all migrant workers work in manufacturing, construction, and the service sector. In some Gulf States, foreigners make up almost half the workforce. The figure for Singapore is around 40% (Ministry of Manpower figures). 75% of all migrants live in only 12% of the world's nations.

It is estimated that by 2030 around 40% of the global workforce will come from just two countries, India and China. There are currently around 35 million Mainland Chinese people working or studying abroad, and about 20 million Indians.

The number of south-to-south migrants is the same as the number of south-to-north migrants. This means that as well as considering mission to migrants as in terms of reaching people from Africa, Asia, and Latin America who live in Europe and North America, we must also grasp the strategic significance of migration outside of so-called Christendom. Mission these days is from everywhere to everywhere (in the words of the Lausanne movement) and the migration phenomenon in East Asia mirrors this.

## Migration in East Asia

### *Overview*

This section provides a general overview of migration in East Asia and in the six principal destination territories, as well as details about the size and nature of regional migrant populations. This is not meant to be exhaustive, and there are literally hundreds of papers and briefings on the Internet for those requiring more specific data.

The *IOM Situation Report* (2008) suggests that international migration within East Asia is governed primarily by economics and demographics, particularly because there are very large differences in wealth between countries in this region. One significant difference between migration to the West and migration in East Asia is the temporary nature of the latter. Jenina Chavez (2006) tells us that most intra-Asian

migrants are on temporary employment. Singapore, Korea, and Japan accept unskilled workers from the Philippines, Burma, Indonesia, and India. By contrast, Malaysia and Thailand send out some workers and receive others. Many countries are primarily sending nations because of their economic development and profile. Generally speaking, the more economically developed the country, the lower its rate of growth of working age population. In addition, people in the more educated nations are increasingly unwilling to do what they consider low status or dirty jobs. Many articles talk about the so-called 3-D jobs, 'dirty, dangerous, and demeaning', and Zha Daojiong's (2002) study of Mainland Chinese workers in Japan mentions '3-k jobs' (*kitanai* or *dirty*, *kiken* or *dangerous*, *kitsui* or *physically demanding*), which Japanese people are no longer willing to do.

In this study, the following were chosen as host territories for international migrants of all kinds: Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan. The migration profiles of each are broadly similar with slight local differences, and I will give a brief overview of migration facts and figures in each. The following categories of migrant are represented to varying degrees: highly skilled expatriates who move independently or through company transfer, skilled technicians, unskilled/semi-skilled labourers, female domestic workers, nurses and caregivers, students, and spouses from abroad. Most migrant workers would be classified as unskilled (Iguchi, 2004a).

The following summary is derived from Yasushi Iguchi (2004a). All six host territories allow temporary residence for working, and Hong Kong and Singapore permit direct permanent immigration from abroad. Alone in East Asia, Japan allows graduating students to stay on and seek employment. Japan, Korea, and Singapore offer trainee programmes for foreign workers to facilitate technology transfer, although in Korea this practice has been criticised as a mechanism to prevent labourers from enjoying full legal protection. Taiwan has special categories for caregivers to the old and infirm. Iguchi points out that the East Asian region is far behind Europe in the social integration of migrant workers; after all, most foreigners are not allowed to stay.

Rapid economic and social growth in some East Asian nations and the resulting regional income disparity have created opportunities at the low end of the employment market; more and more nationals look for well-paid, high status jobs, leaving the 3-D jobs for migrant workers. This creates a 'Kleenex approach to immigrants. You use them and then throw them away' (*How Asia tackles influx of foreign workers*, 2007).

Of the six territories, Singapore has the most comprehensive range of migration categories and issues, and will be described first as the prototypical migrant host nation.

*Singapore*

Migration is tightly controlled and policy is designed to combine economic development with social harmony for the nation. The island nation lacks natural resources and its strength is its hard-working and politically passive population. Singapore is now a developed country with a highly educated, mobile population; fertility rates are low and without immigration the country faces falling population. In the manufacturing and construction spheres, there are not enough unskilled workers to meet the demand. However, Singapore has the luxury of being able to specify the kinds of migrants it wishes to accept and the terms of that acceptance. The *IOM Situation Report* explains how highly skilled foreigners can bring their families to live in the country, effectively settling if they so choose, while manual and low skilled workers are far less welcome. This division is what Nicola Piper (2005, p.20) calls a 'bifurcated' labour system. Singapore's indigenous population is around 75% of Chinese, 15% Malay, and 9% Indian, ratios which the government seeks to maintain. Because birth rates have fallen dramatically among the Chinese and are still relatively high among the Malays, the government has been very accepting of educated Chinese migrants from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Malaysia.

The main types of migrant in the country are highly skilled expats, skilled technicians, semi-skilled labourers, and female domestic workers. There are increasing numbers of international students at secondary and tertiary level and the government has a target of 150,000 foreign students by 2012. A final category of legal migrant is the spouse from abroad; increasing numbers of Singapore men marry women from China, Vietnam, and India. Currently, around one in every seven households has a domestic helper. Although considered unskilled, female domestic workers (some of whom from the Philippines may be degree holders!) often work in the country for long periods if their employers renew their contracts. The same cannot be said of semi-skilled labourers who work in factories and on construction sites. One consequence of the bifurcated system is temporary or permanent family break-up in a migrant's home country. Indonesian and Filipina foreign domestic workers spend extended periods away from their children back home, while male contract labourers may be away from their families for two or three years.

If a semi-skilled worker's employment comes to an end he or she has one week to leave the country, whereas skilled workers are generally given one month. Unskilled migrants are not allowed to bring their families, apply for permanent residence, or

marry Singaporeans, although skilled workers are. A female domestic worker who becomes pregnant is returned to her home country almost immediately.

The situation of foreign workers vis-à-vis Singaporeans can be represented by two orthogonal axes, X and Y. The X-axis represents the degree of cultural or ethnic separation from the mainstream Singapore population, and the Y describes a gradation in status between unskilled short-term labourers and highly skilled expats, regardless of race. An interesting perturbation to the Y-axis appears when two migrants of the same ethnicity and status but different countries of origin are accorded different social status; Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese may be viewed differently because Taiwan is seen as a richer, freer, and more respectable country than China. There are also perceived differences in behaviour between Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese.

In her detailed exposé of the treatment of Indonesian domestic helpers in SE Asia, Dewi Anggraeni (2006) mentions the combined of the two degrees of separation. Because they come from a 'poorer country and have fewer skills' than the locals, maids from Indonesia are abused without any sense of guilt from their Singaporean employers (p.104). The two axes of separation exist not only in the island republic. The underlying pragmatic and exploitative attitudes are enshrined in principle and practice throughout the region. This two-dimensional element of separation of migrant from host society has direct resonances with Old Testament teaching on widows, orphans, and aliens.

In 2004 there were about 500,000 work permit holders in the country. Foreign domestic workers accounted for 140,000 of these. At the top end of the labour market, 70,000 employment passes have been issued to professionals, 'those with degrees, professional qualifications or specialist skills' (Yap, 2004). Yap Mui-teng summarises a number of surveys, concluding that a 'good chunk of imported labour comes from the Indian subcontinent, an even greater chunk from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and nearly 400,000 or about one in ten from Malaysia'. In the professional sector, almost half of the foreigners come from India, China, and Malaysia (p.497).

*Malaysia*

A study by Vijayakumari Kanapathy (2004) shows the complexity of migration in Malaysia. It is notoriously difficult to document and control as Peninsula Malaysia's border with Thailand is extremely porous, while Indonesians enter the country easily from Sumatra. Cultural and linguistic similarities can make it hard to distinguish Indonesians from Malays. In East Malaysia's Sabah, illegal immigration from Indonesia and the Philippines is an ongoing problem. Current estimates suggest that in the whole

country there may be more than 400,000 illegal workers in manufacturing and construction.

Kanapathy suggests that short-term contract labour is the most significant category. In West Malaysia out of a total of 1,200,000 legal foreign workers most are Indonesian (60%), another quarter are Bangladeshi, and the remainder come from the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Vietnam and India. About one third work in the manufacturing sector and another quarter are foreign domestic workers. Another fifth work in construction and on plantations. One fifth of the Malaysian workforce is foreign nationals.

The country has sought to reduce dependence on foreign workers and give more jobs to Malaysians. Unskilled foreign labour is in theory tightly controlled and visas are given for short, fixed terms. Malaysia has shown some intolerance toward foreign workers, often associating them with health problems and crime. The more positive side for the country is that they serve as a buffer; when the economy is doing well and there are vacancies, foreign workers are relatively welcome, but in times of economic difficulty they may be encouraged and even required to leave.

According to Sirat Morshidi, Malaysia now plays host to around 50,000 foreign students at the tertiary level, around 2% of the global total. Students come from Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Singapore 'and, overwhelmingly, China' (2008, p.86). Although foreign student numbers are capped at 5% in public universities, private institutions may have much higher percentages. At INTI International University College, 60% of international students are from China. The Malaysian government set a target of 100,000 overseas students by 2010.

*Hong Kong*

Hong Kong's immigrant population is also bifurcated (Chiu & Lui, 2004): a small portion of highly paid migrants comes from advanced countries such as the US and Japan, whilst a large portion of low-paid migrant labour is from Mainland China, the Philippines and Thailand (Lee et al., 2007).

According to Stephen Chiu (2004), Hong Kong gives visas for around 60,000 foreign domestic workers each year, and also welcomes around 16,000 foreign professionals. Among the quarter million foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong the majority are from the Philippines (63%), with 33% coming from Indonesia and just under 3% from Thailand. The increasing economic integration of Hong Kong with South China and the movement of manufacturing across the border have increased

unemployment, and there is no foreign contract labour in that sector. Where necessary, labour is brought in from China on a strictly short-term basis. There are very small numbers of foreign students in Hong Kong. Increasing numbers of Mainland Chinese live and work in Hong Kong, and Chiu tells us that Hong Kong is hoping to recruit more Chinese professionals.

*Taiwan*

Taiwan has large numbers of migrant labourers in its manufacturing and construction sectors and smaller amounts of foreign domestic workers and caregivers. The national drive to a more knowledge-based economy has also increased openness to foreign professionals (Lee, 2004). Numbers of international students are small.

The *Asian Migrant Yearbook* (2005) gives the following figures for foreign workers in Taiwan: Thailand, 98,322; Philippines, 95,703; Vietnam, 84,185, Indonesia, 49,094. Tsay Ching-lung (2002) claims that half of all registered migrant Thai workers in the world work in Taiwan. In 2006, a quarter of the Vietnamese workers in the country worked in factories, while most of the remainder were domestic helpers and caregivers (*Demand for Vietnamese labour, 2006*).

At the turn of the century, more than 12,000 Vietnamese women were going to Taiwan annually for marriage to locals (Van, 2008), but recently this has fallen to around 4000. The Asia cross-border marriage website gives figures for cross-cultural marriages in Taiwan. Up to March 2008, 2700 Taiwanese had married Japanese spouses, while Cambodian marriage partners totalled 4500, and there were 6200 marriages between Filipinos (gender not specified) and Taiwanese. The three highest figures were Thais at 8800, Indonesians at 27000, and Vietnamese, with a huge 80000. Usually, young Asian women from poorer nations marry older men for a better life (Kang, 2010).

*Korea*

In recent decades Korea has become an industrial powerhouse, and one of the most significant changes in labour policy in recent years was the 2003 acceptance of unskilled foreign workers (Park, 2004). If Korean companies can prove that they have searched unsuccessfully for one month for local workers, qualified companies can recruit foreigners allowed to remain in the country for up three years. Such workers are generally employed in the manufacturing and construction industries, with smaller numbers in the service (including private nursing) and agricultural sectors. Labour regulations explicitly forbid the entrance of family members, 'to dissuade foreign workers from permanently staying in Korea' (Park, 2004, p.484). Wages and working

conditions may be different from Koreans, although this is apparently due to differences in experience and qualifications rather than ethnicity. The Asian Migrant Yearbook (AMY) (2004) describes exploitation of the trainee category for foreign workers, and quotes the Joint Committee for Migrant Workers in Korea (JCMK) as resolving to 'present a petition to abolish the Trainee System' and 'mobilize and campaign against' it (p.200). Separate rules and categories exist for foreigners of Korean origin. Korea also has small numbers of professionals from abroad.

In the year 2002, the largest group of immigrants in the country were Mainland Chinese, with 85,000 people. There were 23,000 Taiwanese, 17,000 Indonesians, and similar numbers of Vietnamese and Filipinos. There were 12,000 workers from Japan (Park, 2004). Philips (2007) claims 27,000 Mongolians now work in the industrial sector. Other sources suggest a total of 400,000 foreign workers in April 2003.

More than 12,000 Vietnamese women go to Korea as brides every year (Lom, 2008). AMY (2005) lists the total numbers of foreign spouses up until that year as China, 71000; Japan, 42000; Philippines, 3700. In the period 1990-2005, 4.1% of marriages in Korea were intercultural, with four times as many foreign brides as foreign grooms (178,000 vs. 45,000). This brings issues of gender and acculturation.

AMY (2005) gives the number of Chinese students in Korea at 13,000.


*Japan*

Although Japan has had economic difficulties for more than a decade and has seen rising unemployment, the number of migrant workers and permanent residents in Japan is increasing (Iguchi, 2004b). Among Mainland Chinese alone, 70,000 have permanent resident status in Japan, and Zha (2002) mentions the growing concern of many Japanese at the increasing number in the country. There are already issues of crime, education, and employment for foreign youth. As long ago as 2003 Japan had more than 100,000 foreign students, while the target for 2025 is one million (Morshidi, 2008). The migrant categories showing highest growth in recent years are 'Temporary Visitor', 'College student', 'Pre-college-student', and 'Entertainer', the latter often a euphemism for sex worker. Japan appears to have no special category for unskilled foreign labour in the construction sector, while around 300,000 work in manufacturing. Many who enter the country as temporary visitors end up in various forms of illegal employment.

Japan operates a policy under which foreign workers come for vocational training. In 2002 almost 35,000 new trainees were accepted from China, around 60% of the total. Indonesia came next with 5000 and the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand

each sent around 3000 trainee workers. Japan accepted just under 60,000 foreign trainees in that year. Foreign trainees are found in manufacturing, agriculture, and nursing, but AMY (2005) argues that many suffer significant exploitation, and Zha (2002) explicitly links trainee workers with '3-k' jobs.

The numbers of foreign labourers show significant increases. In Iguchi's figures for 2004 there are 15.8% more workers from Northeast Asia, and 16.7% more from Southeast Asia. There have been large increases in the number of students (so-called college and pre-college students), many of whom are also eligible to work with certain restrictions (Iguchi, 2004b).

AMY (2005) suggests a total of almost 600,000 Koreans in Japan, although many have grown up in the country and would not be considered culturally distinct migrants. They suffer discrimination and citizenship is denied to them but they have the right to live and work in the country. In Japan there are now 520,000 Chinese migrants and 220,000 from the Philippines. There are a further 48,000 Thais, and 32000 migrant workers each from Vietnam and Indonesia. From Brazil and Peru have come 300,000 and 64,000 workers respectively, almost exclusively *nikkeijin*, ethnic Japanese born and raised in South America, whose status is different from other migrant labourers.

In 2007, Japan was host to around 120,000 foreign students, of whom 63,000 were undergraduates, 32,000 were postgraduate students, and 23,000 were enrolled in vocational schools. The Mainland Chinese were the largest group, totalling 72,000. Another 17,000 students came from South Korea, and 5000 from Taiwan (*Japan Today*, 2007).

A table giving numbers of migrants in each of the main categories is found in the appendix to this chapter. Note that statistics on migrants are difficult to find and verify, and show considerable variation.

*Major Sending Countries*

As early as 2003, Mainland China had already sent 2.45 million migrant workers abroad (Ma, 2004). Presumably this does not include students, academic exchange participants, and those already holding permanent residence in foreign countries. The sheer size of Mainland China and its population and the comparative ease with which Chinese citizens can travel abroad mean that Mainland Chinese immigration is highly significant. The bifurcation in receiving territories such as Hong Kong and Singapore is also found at the sending end (Ma, 2004). Mainland Chinese going for extended periods abroad tend to be split into two very obvious categories: one is the highly qualified student or

scholar, who may decide to live abroad for an indefinite period; the other is the unskilled or semi-skilled labourer who works in tough circumstances to make more money than he can in China.

According to Nguyen Xuan Nguyen (2004) most Vietnamese migrants are unskilled contract labourers from relatively poor rural areas who work in domestic service, construction and manufacturing. In 2004, Malaysia welcomed 40,000 workers from Vietnam, and Taiwan 27,000. Another 20,000 went to Korea and 10,000 to Japan.

The majority of Indonesians working abroad are female (Soeprobo, 2004), top destinations being Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. In 2003, 2600 domestic workers went to Hong Kong, while twice as many arrived in Korea. Malaysia accepted 37,000 Indonesian workers and Singapore around 30,000. Another thousand went to Taiwan. The author suggests that almost all Indonesian migrant workers are semi-skilled at best.

In 2003 around one quarter of Filipinos working overseas were in manufacturing, transport, or manual labour. Another quarter are described as entertainers, with just under 20% working as domestic helpers. In 2003, 56,000 Filipinos went to work in Hong Kong and 41,000 to Japan. 18,000 moved to Singapore and 5300 to Malaysia. 4500 Filipinos went to South Korea to work. The categories associated with these figures also support a degree of bifurcation in the sending nation.

Although seen as an industrialising nation, Thailand still sends a significant numbers of migrant workers abroad. In 2003 4800 Thai workers went to Japan and 4000 to Hong Kong. Singapore admitted 12,000 Thais and Malaysia 7300. Most significantly, in terms of potential challenges for the church, 70,000 Thai workers went to Taiwan.

The figures show that numbers of inter-regional migrants in East Asia are significant. In addition, the majority of workers in this region are semi-skilled and are employed on fixed-term contracts, upon completion of which they must return home. The situation in East Asia is thus qualitatively different from that in the West, where ministry to migrants is more established, but to a different kind of immigrant population.

Having sketched a general picture of the situation in the six territories, it is now time to look at relevant aspects of migration theory, to provide a conceptual basis for interaction with biblical principles in subsequent chapters.

**Migration Theory**

*Overview*

In their seminal work *The Age of Migration*, Stephen Castles and Mark Miller (2003) summarise recent developments in migration theory. Although much of their discussion is beyond the scope of this research, of importance to us are migration systems theory and transnational networks. I review their main points, supplementing with content from other writers.

Castles and Miller look first at the traditional 'push-pull' theory of migration, a 'neo-classical economic perspective' (p.22) which assumes that people move because of differences in income or population density. A gradient in one or more factors causes movement; people are pushed from more to less densely populated regions or pulled from poorer to richer areas. Although differences in income are a prime motive for migration (especially in East Asia), the push-pull model is flawed because it considers migrants as individuals making isolated, single issue decisions, neglecting factors such as family, existing contacts, preferred types of employment, former colonial or political links, cultural and linguistic factors, and so on. In addition, the empirical data do not support the simple scenario of a person living in an area of lowest wages looking for a host country where he can earn the highest salary possible. Importantly, Castles and Miller point out that migrants are often not the poorest or least educated and people move to rather than from areas of very high population density. Migration is heavily influenced by history, 'family and community dynamics' (2003, p.24) and restrictions imposed by destination countries. Clearly then, a simple push-pull explanation is not sufficient.

Castles and Miller also critique the 'historical-structural' approach to migration. According to this theory, which grew out of Marxist economic analysis, migrants are at the mercy of powerful forces of international capital. In contrast with the push-pull theory, the historical-structural view downplays the interests and decision-making of individuals and groups who choose to move. The historical-structural theory is similar to the push-pull theory in that is provides a partial, albeit simplistic explanation for certain phenomena. However, like its predecessor it does not take account of and integrate the complex issues observed in migration.

*Migration Systems Theory and Transnational Spaces*

Considering migration as a process, Castles and Miller introduce an interdisciplinary theory which interacts well with empirical data. The concept of migration systems theory and its later development into the idea of transnational spaces are both of great significance for this study. At the heart of this approach lie communities, relationships,

and networks, which function at both ends of a virtual migration space stretching between the countries of origin and destination.

This way of looking at migration argues that movements of people are normally based on pre-existing relationships between sending and receiving territories, which may exist for reasons of history, politics, culture or trade. As examples, Castles and Miller mention people flows from the Caribbean to former colonial powers, connections between France and North Africa, and the relationship between Germany and Turkey.

They also suggest that different structures function at different levels inside the migration process. So-called macro-structures operate between nation states in the areas of economics and policy. At the other end of the scale are the micro-structures, which facilitate migration primarily through relationships between individuals and families. They also provide a safety net for new arrivals and an element of home-from-home in the host country. One such a structure, 'village transnationalism' (Kitiarsa, 2006), will be discussed later. In Asia, the extended family often selects a young person to work abroad. In agricultural societies, the greater physical strength of men and the greater financial reliability of women, especially in the matter of sending remittances, mean that young women are often sent abroad. Finally, migration systems also include meso-structures, the middlemen and brokers who help meet the demand for semi-skilled labour.

Micro- and meso-structures are important because these lower level elements build and maintain links between people in the home and destination countries. Decent companies and reliable brokers are precious, and this kind of contact is passed on to prospective migrants. Kind and supportive countrymen in the destination country make the difference between success and failure for migrants. Even in regions with restrictive immigration policy, migrants may ultimately obtain resident status and then assist their newly-arrived compatriots in various ways. Ethno-social networks made possible by cheap telecommunications, budget airlines, and diaspora populations connect the home country with a target territory. The virtual extension of the home country pushing into the target nation like a finger pointing out from an open hand is termed a transnational space. Migrants are able as never before to stay in touch with their families and cultures; the Indian migrant workers I can see as I type this paragraph all have mobile phones with which they call home often, and if necessary some could possibly travel home. In addition, mobile phones allow migrants to stay in touch with each other across building sites, factories, universities, cities, and even countries.

In many East Asian cities small shops run by diaspora people sell foodstuffs and

other products from countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, and the Philippines, serving as *de facto* cultural outposts. Although these foci begin as commercial presences, they soon take on cultural and religious significance (Portes, 2008), becoming magnets for migrants. Those facing discrimination or feeling homesick value a physical space which is something like home. These migrant enclaves in Singapore, Hong Kong or Seoul are foci of the virtual extensions of Thailand or Indonesia, for example. They are known to locals and migrants alike. In Singapore the best Thai food is found at Golden Mile, Lucky Plaza is crowded with Filipinas every Sunday, and Little India is taken over by migrant workers from southern India at the weekend.

Castles and Miller are careful to point out that not every migrant is a transmigrant, someone who spends extended periods within the transnational space. In most cases a migrating individual either moves permanently (the case for highly skilled professionals in Asia) or has a relatively short time in a country. This brings to mind David Harvey's distinction between 'migrants in motion and immigrants in place' (2009, p.268); in East Asia the former are the more common. For the most part, people do not remain in this virtual cultural envelope in a foreign country, the exception being the circular migrant, who makes several circuits between his own country and the target nation. What is significant is that although the number of transmigrant individuals is still very small, the transnational space, dynamically constituted of individuals in constant flux, is here to stay. The analogy of a waterfall may be helpful; although the water is constantly moving from above the site of the waterfall, through space, and then on down the river, the shape of the waterfall is more or less fixed. Those entering the transnational space for the first time will have certain needs and face certain experiences; those working and living inside the space will face another set of issues; when their time comes to return home, migrants will undergo yet another process. The theological implications of these transnational spaces will be considered later.

*Emerging Transnationalism in South-East Asia*

Abdul Rahman Embong's (2008) article on Malaysian-Thai cross-border communities sheds light on the nature of transnational spaces in East Asia. Communities straddling national borders are slightly different from virtual transnational spaces, but there are parallels which are instructive for our purposes.

He believes that 'neoliberal globalization' (p.118) has made borders in SE Asia more permeable, allowing labourers, students, and tourists to move between countries legally. Apart from physical movement, the internet is changing our perception of

relationships between individuals, communities, and nations. Indeed, physical and virtual mobility is creating a smeared or diffuse sense of identity as those on the move increasingly inhabit transnational spaces. He asks whether previous forms of community have given way to new cross-border groupings and identities. This reasoning can also be applied to migration phenomena involving much greater geographical separation. In the case of migration from Indonesia to Korea or Thailand to Taiwan, the existence of mature migration systems and the sheer numbers of migrants from country A working in country B suggest that new communities are being brought into existence. Where a migrant lives abroad for some years but remains in close proximity to his or her compatriots, individual identity and culture are maintained and transformed at the same time. Migrant communities may experience varying degrees of hybridity with and empathy from the host community.

A community is an 'aggregation of people' within a 'geographical area', who belong together on the basis of shared 'characteristics, norms, values and folkways, within a common identity and imaginings' (Embong, p.121). For his cross-border situation he notes also the existence of interpersonal interactions and autonomy, coupled with 'sharing and caring…and…a collective conscience' (p.121). There is much here which reminds us of true international migrants. The geographical distances involved might be as large as that between Jakarta and Seoul, but air travel shrinks these to a few hours. Migrants from the same country share characteristics and values when abroad, as well as dreams and aspirations. Migrants abroad are also part of social networks of their own people in the host country which are analogous to community structures in traditional settings at home.

Traditional cross-border communities become more heterogeneous as a result of globalisation and urbanisation, which deepens the need for sociocultural belonging. As these communities continue to cross national borders they become 'translocal…with… links and networks with [their] own original locality or space' (p.122). For Embong this phenomenon in small cross-border communities is mirrored in the urbanisation of traditional Malay communities in Kuala Lumpur and even in the evolving community that is ASEAN.

Embong compares political and cultural nationalism, the one constrained territorially and the other transcending national borders. In SE Asia political nationalism led to the foundation of modern nation states in the wake of colonialism; cultural nationalism on the other hand has never been a respecter of borders because of the complex ethnic and migration history of the region. Malay and related people bring

together what is modern Malaysia, much of Indonesia, southern Thailand, and Brunei. Although Roman Catholic, Filipinos are ethnically and culturally close to the Malays of neighbouring states. Thailand and Laos are essentially brother nations in language, culture and religion. Although not native to ASEAN, the Chinese are found throughout the region and link it with Greater China to the North. While globalisation may make nations into economic competitors, ancient roots and routes, the 'time-space compression and porosity of state borders' (p.124), and financial bottom-line factors all increase intra-regional connectivity and mobility.

The top-down perspective is that globalisation and economic forces promote integration and mobility, renewing and redefining communities in the region. However, the traditional ethno-cultural identities and communities of those who actually move are extended as never before. The difference between the top-down and bottom-up view is that those shaping policy in the region may favour integration as a means to stability and prosperity, while migrants and those who interact with them may see the extension and evolution of traditional communities in a less positive light. Embong's optimistic redefinition of the Other needs to be treated with caution. He comments that 'the 'Other' is not seen as the absolute 'other' but as 'one of us' (p.125) and speaks of the concern of Malays in Malaysia for their brothers in southern Thailand and their compassion for tsunami victims in Aceh. It appears that the idea of 'one of us' can be quite narrow in scope.

This narrowness is acknowledged in Embong's account of Indonesians in Malaysia. Despite the closeness of this Other many Malaysians associate Indonesian workers with crime and social problems, prompting periodic repatriations by the Malaysian government (p.132). This 'special relationship' between Malay and Indonesian may be more special in one direction than in another.

Selectiveness in looking at the Other is observed in the experience of Thai workers in Taiwan, who are part of a transnational Thai or Isan community stretching from Northeast Thailand into a deeply Chinese territory. While their Taiwanese hosts may feel to a greater or lesser extent members of a pan-East Asian Chinese community (linked by common language, origin, culture, and cuisine), the experience of most Thais in Taiwan would suggest that most Taiwanese people do not have a broader regional sense of Asian-ness, preferring to locate their identity in Chinese-ness. Some ethno-cultural communities are extending and morphing because of their migration experience, but it is those on the move who change, and host communities may remain as distinct from other ethnic groups as ever. Migrants may develop a broader, dynamic sense of

community which can extend beyond race, but those playing at home have no need of such breadth of feeling or vision and do not feel any obligation to understand or empathise with migrants.

Finally, a note about the two degrees or axes of separation. A simplistic view of mission might cast it primarily as a cross-cultural and linguistic challenge, compared with what is usually termed outreach within a culture. An assumption may be made that because we are dealing with foreigners there exists only horizontal or geographical distance. However, migration involves vertical or social, distance also, and this may be problematic for the outsider. First, cultures may emphasise social status differently within themselves, and secondly, such distinctions may be hard to discern from a long (horizontal) way away. These dual aspects, vertical and horizontal, are addressed quite specifically in many pertinent Old Testament passages and are also found in the teaching of the New Testament.

## A Cultural and Historical Sketch of the Host Nations

### Overview

So far, this chapter has given an overview of migration in East Asia and an introduction to migration theory. Because migration creates physical, cultural, and social distance (the latter two expressed as X- and Y-separation), it is important to consider not only the migration process but also the host territories for migrants and understand how the host societies view those culturally and socially different from themselves. When churches undertake mission to migrants the number of Christians in contact with foreigners would usually be greater than the number of traditional cross- cultural missionaries the church might send abroad. Those coming into a country may meet a large cross-section of church members, attend church events, and even visit church members' homes. Ministry to migrants is challenging because the church community is 'on display' while remaining to some extent a product of the broader cultural milieu. It is important to understand the attitudes and worldview of the host nations.

Three short anecdotes illustrate the point. A church in Singapore had begun an outreach programme to Mainland Chinese labourers, who unfortunately made the church toilets dirty every Sunday night. When this problem came to the attention of the church kindergarten superintendent she complained to the pastor that the outreach work be stopped as China workers were just not suitable for that church. A Singapore Indian church was reaching out to Hindu contract workers from Tamil Nadhu. When they came to church for the first time the Singaporean Indian Christians would not sit with

the contract labourers, who all ended up sitting on their own, ostracised by people of their own race (Stories shared at a ministry to migrants session at the Fellowship of Missional Organisations of Singapore's *You are the link* missions event, 17-18 July, 2009). S Gunawan (2012) tells of her own feelings of superiority and the prejudice in her church. She recounts an incident in which she met the pastor while at church with a domestic helper. The man shook hands enthusiastically with her and noticed the helper but did not even offer to shake her hand. She confesses that few Christians are willing to spend time with FDWs or contract labourers 'even in the church or among believers' (p.1). It would be unlikely for traditional missionaries in the field to harbour such attitudes and let them be seen. Doing mission at home has particular challenges of its own.

To provide background and a baseline for theological reflection, the following section summarises relevant cultural and historical information about the six host or destination territories. The ASEAN+3 region stretches from southern Indonesia to northern Japan and is very diverse, yet for our purposes can be split north and south. The northern societies (Korea, Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan) are effectively linguistically and culturally monolithic, although Japan and Taiwan have Ainu and Austronesian minorities respectively.

This is in marked contrast to the considerable diversity of many ASEAN nations in the South. The two Southeast Asian countries considered in this study, Singapore and Malaysia, contain similar ethnic groups, although their relative proportions vary either side of the Straits of Johor. Singapore is around 75% Chinese, 15 percent Malay, and 9% Indian (Tamil), the remainder consisting of Eurasians and other minorities. Malaysia, on the other hand, is around 60% Malay and 35% Chinese, the rest Indians and tribal groups. There is a long history of tolerance and cultural, linguistic, and culinary diversity along the Malay Peninsula. Having said this, it is important to note that the church in both countries is overwhelmingly Chinese; there are Indians among the Christians in both countries, although their numbers are very low, and there are still very few Malay Christians in both nations. It is safe to say that the church in all six territories is dominated by Chinese, Koreans, or Japanese.

The main philosophical paradigm shared by these three ethnic groups is Confucianism, which suggests that attitudes to migrants in the society and the church may be influenced by this worldview. Also, all three cultures have in the past and present demonstrated isolationism and ethnocentrism. At the same time, the six territories share experiences of migration, colonialism, and alienation (to differing

extents) which in theory at least, might suggest a relative openness and compassion towards migrants. The alienation experience of the six host territories can be thought of as having parallels with Israel's captivity in Egypt. Before looking at concepts in collectivism and Confucianism which might inform attitudes to outsiders, and race and status issues, I will review the recent history of the six territories as this relates to identity and belonging.

*The Recent History of the Six Territories as it Relates to Migration*

Singapore is an immigrant nation; many of the Chinese and Indians and even some of the Malay people are comparatively recent arrivals in the island. The vast majority of the dominant Chinese group are descendants of people who came to Singapore from South China in the last 100 years. The island was a British colony from 1819 until 1963, becoming independent of Malaysia in 1965, although it suffered ruthless Japanese rule during the Second World War. Singapore's traumatic breakaway from the two year-old Malaysian federation in 1965 relates to the island's desire to protect ethnic Chinese from political domination by the majority Malay population of what was Singapore and Malaya. It might be thought that Singapore's own immigration heritage and its dual experience of colonisation (British and Japanese) would bring empathy for the outsider, the Other, but such concern is not found in the literature.

Like Singapore, Malaysia was formerly a British colony and occupied by the Japanese during WW2. Since independence political power has been in the hands of the Malay majority, while business belongs very much to the Chinese. Successive Malaysian administrations have favoured the indigenous Malay people - the *bumiputeras* or sons of the soil - and discriminated against and alienated the large Chinese minority. Creeping islamicisation and the attendant pressure on the church make a predominantly Chinese church feel doubly exposed. It is not clear from the literature whether these pressures have resulted in greater openness to migrants among Malaysian Christians, but there is now a small but significant work among migrant labourers in Malaysia.

Hong Kong is overwhelmingly Chinese (around 96%), was colonised by the British (from 1842 until 1997) and invaded by the Japanese in the 1940s. In the early 1950s, after the communists came to power in China, huge numbers of people moved to Hong Kong from China's Guangdong Province and other places such as Shanghai. In the heritage of the Hong Kong people and its church there are double experiences of alienation, through colonisation and migration. Since the return of Hong Kong to China

in 1997 many local people, while rejoicing in their Chinese-ness, remain suspicious of a communist government which does not understand them and is culturally and linguistically rather distant. One might hope that migrants would find compassion in such a society.

Taiwan is another majority Chinese society, apart from the tribal Austronesians in the mountains. The island has been populated by two large waves of Chinese immigration from the Mainland. The first was the gradual movement of thousands from Fujian Province during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), while the second was the traumatic exile of the nationalist Kuomintang Party of Chiang Kai-shek as they lost the civil war to Mao's communists in 1949 and adopted the island as a safe haven. To this day a fault line lies between *wai sheng ren* (lit. *outside province person*, descended from refugees from China) and *ben sheng ren* (lit. *origin province person*) according to their pre-1949 location and dialect. The *wai sheng ren* speak primarily Mandarin, while many *ben sheng ren* speak Mandarin but prefer Taiwanese; under the decades-long martial law sustained by the Kuomintang, the Taiwanese language was discriminated against, and *ben sheng ren* were forced to speak Mandarin in public.

Foreign colonisation is also part of Taiwan's history. The Dutch and the Spanish ruled the island in the 16th and 17th centuries, and for the first half of the 20th it was a Japanese colony. This experience of oppression and vulnerability was followed almost immediately by years of tension between Taiwan and Mainland China and intimidation from the Mainland. The heritage of alienation and vulnerability is strong in the island and one wonders how this might affect attitudes to migrants among the general population and in the church. It is worth noting that some parts of the local Presbyterian Church support Taiwan independence.

Like Taiwan, Korea was dominated by Japan for the first half of the 20th century. The Japanese colonial rulers set out to eradicate Korean culture and turn the populace into Japanese people. This followed centuries of Chinese linguistic, cultural, and philosophical influence on the Korean peninsula. Many in South Korea are sympathetic to their oppressed cousins in the North, and some remember the North Korean and Chinese invasion of 1950, which pushed democratic forces right to the southern tip of South Korea. Again, there is a history of vulnerability and oppression at the hands of outsiders.

Finally, Japan is the country that has suffered the least at the hands of foreign powers or due to mass dislocation. The Japanese have lived in their own land for centuries and were never colonised. However, the nation was comprehensively defeated

by foreign forces in 1945 and suffered two nuclear attacks on its soil. After the war, the Americans occupied the country and rewrote the constitution, bringing huge social change and changing the status of the emperor.

Each nation has experienced dislocation of one kind or another, which may suggest a heightened concern for the migrant. On the other hand, this very experience of Otherness, coupled with nation building in the modern era, may also contribute to a more inward-looking, defensive attitude.

## The Underlying Worldview of the Six Host Nations

### Introduction

The six territories represent a significant geographical and cultural area within East Asia. There is variety in language and culture among the six, yet important for our purposes is the underlying commonality in basic worldview. Three of the six are majority Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwan essentially mono-cultural, and Singapore is 75% Chinese. Although Malaysia is only around 35% Chinese, most Christians are of that race. Korea and Japan are culturally distinct from each other and the Chinese, but both have borrowed extensively from China in language, philosophy, and culture.

The complex issues facing migrants have already been discussed and here I attempt to probe attitudes and beliefs in the host community which may lie behind them. It is important to understand the region's history and collectivist mentality and the interaction of these with practical Confucianism. Indifference and injustice towards those belonging to other races or social strata are by no means limited to East Asian cultures, yet their apparent legitimisation and institutionalisation by Confucian principles need to be explored and responded to theologically. Also, the relationships between collectivist thinking, the histories of the three cultures, and practical rather than theoretical Confucianism are complex, and it is difficult to identify chickens and eggs.

### Collectivism, Groups, and Boundaries

The characterisation of western cultures as individualist and Asian as collectivist is well known, and this has been researched by Hofstede, Trompenaars, Triandis, and Nisbett, among others. In this the research how Asian cultures view groups is important.

According to Iyengar et al. (2001), in Western culture the main boundary is between individuals, while East Asian cultures it is between in-group and out-group. In addition, the group boundaries formed by collectivists are sharper and less permeable than those formed by individualists. Also, the boundaries are defined by rules and

hierarchies and govern interpersonal relationships (Loh et al., 2010, p.5).

Speaking more generally about insiders and outsiders, David Reis (2003) introduces binarism (simple polar opposites) as a means of deciding who belongs and who does not. According to Jonathan Smith (as cited in Reis, 2003, p.41) the two most common types of binarisms are metonymical and topographical. The first selects a particular element in an outside culture and then uses this to separate outsiders from insiders, an inherently subjective matter which lends itself to racial or cultural stereotyping. The topographical model extends this into spatio-locational distinction between inside and outside, often associating the city with civilisation and rural areas with chaos. Interestingly enough, Singapore, Taiwan, and Japan are island territories, and Hong Kong and Korea are peninsulas who share borders with communist neighbours. Singaporeans often describe other countries in the region as chaotic or not well-managed, and domestic workers are seen as dangerous and potentially threatening to the Singaporean family, while one of their greatest challenges is the demanding urban lifestyle of the host community (*Made to work*, 2011, p.62).

Finally, Marilynn Brewer's comment that 'subtle racism' towards minority groups in the West is more an absence of positive sentiments towards them than overt hostility (1999, p.438) is echoed by the commonly observed indifference to the ethnically and socially invisible in East Asia.

*The Self and the Individual*

A closely related concept is that of the self. Tam Kwok-Kan (1995) claims that the self and its formation are different in Confucian and western thought. In Confucian cultures 'the realization of the role-self lies in the realization of one's role, which is culturally prescribed' (p.58). The self exists only in functional relationships with others, and Tam even argues that the Confucian virtue of humaneness (*ren*) comes primarily from a relationship between two people. Within the context of migration and especially low status foreign labour, the obvious concern is for people who do not fit into established relationship structures. Are they devalued or is their personhood undermined? Is someone outside or on the edge of a network of relationships somehow less a person? In a non-egalitarian relationship, is the dominant party less obliged to exercise humaneness? Cha Seong-Hwan's view is that such unbalanced obligations are a problem in Korea and are a direct result of Confucian thinking (2000).

*The Family as a Central Concept and Metaphor*

A determining factor in the East Asian worldview is the extended family. Ko Nai-Hua

(2004) describes the central role of the family and group in traditional Chinese thinking, using the metaphor of a body, in which each member has to work together for the good of the whole. There is an obligation not only deriving from obligations between superiors and inferiors but also to 'favor the intimate' (p.3). Such is the importance of loyalty to the family bloodline that in the case of tension between a man's wife and his parents, it is required that the man side with his parents rather than his wife. Kim Young-Joo (2007) reminds us that in the Korean context the family is the fundamental social unit rather than the individual. Referring to the Confucian roots of his own culture he quotes Liu Qingping's (2003) idea that consanguinitism can be a more important principal than individual rights or the common good. Cha (2000) critiques the inward-looking familism of the Korean Confucianists as anti-democratic and tolerant of cronyism, encouraging favours for people from the same college or organisation.

Yoshiharu Matsumoto's (1960) Japanese perspective is very similar: traditionally a man was to ensure the survival of his own family, and family interests always take precedence over those of individuals. His point that assessment of what is good or bad is made in respect of the effect on the family or clan echoes Liu's and even points in the direction of situationalised ethics. Indeed Liu believes that for Confucius (and Mencius) virtues such as 'propriety, truthfulness, justice, the empire, the people, or even humaneness itself' (2003, p.235) can theoretically all take second place to a higher principle of filial piety; 'one should place blood ties above the 'higher' ideals of humanity, even to the point of abandoning these higher ideals if their realization obstructs or endangers the practice of filial piety and brotherly duties' (2003, p.236).

Filial piety and ancestor worship dovetail such that a person derives his identity partly from the ancestors (Tamai & Lee, 2002). Ancestor worship preserves the unity and centrality of the family and explicitly connects the living to the dead. Blood ties require great loyalty and ethical decisions that favour family interests, and hence one wonders how families relate to peripheral people who do not belong.

*Exclusivism, Nationalism, and Racism*

Confucianism takes the extended family as the base level social unit, upon which all others are modelled, including the nation. An extended form of consanguinity and belonging operate at the national or ethnic level also; the Chinese word for *country* is *guo-jia*, literally *country-family*. Lily Kong and Elaine Goh (1995) write candidly about the inherent racism and ethnocentrism of Chinese societies, 'reflected in the nomenclature…*zhong guo* (*Middle Kingdom*); *tien* [sic] *xia* (*under heaven*); and *zhong*

*yuan* (*centre and source*). At the same time, descriptions of other peoples reveal extremely negative perceptions' (p.263). Miroslav Volf's (1996) quotation from Frank Dikoetter (1992) is revealing. The Chinese considered 'alien groups living outside the pale of Chinese society as distant savages hovering on the edge of bestiality' (p.4): certain northern minorities were associated with dogs and southern groups with reptiles. Vincent Shen (2012) comments on the reluctance of Chinese people to move away from the centre even though the principle of 'strangification' (in Chinese *wai tui*, lit. *outside push*), going beyond oneself and into the unknown, is part of Chinese philosophy. The contradiction between the fixation with the racial and cultural centre and the idea of strangification may speak of a gap between theory and practice, which is by no means restricted to Chinese thought.

Even in cosmopolitan and multi-racial Singapore, racist attitudes remain among the Chinese. Selvaraj Velayutham (2007) writes with frankness about overt racism in schools, the unwillingness of (some) Chinese to sit next to Indians on buses, and descriptions of his people as dirty and smelly. This is echoed by a scene recently witnessed on the island's ultramodern mass rapid transit system. During rush hour a young migrant labourer from India stood up to give his seat to an elderly Chinese woman. The woman accepted the offer of the seat but before sitting down took out a small packet of tissues and carefully wiped the seat. The young man turned away and looked out of the window (Griffiths, personal communication, March 2011).

Such attitudes extend to domestic workers, who usually live in the family home. 'Incidents from the banning of foreign maids from dining in social clubs such as the Cricket Club, swimming in condominium pools and even restricting them to only using condominium lifts marked *For maids and dogs*' are 'symptomatic of the deep-seated discomfort with, and perhaps fear of, the 'migrant other'' (Yeoh, 2003, p.12). Brenda Yeoh believes that the city state's multicultural ideal includes locals and lighter skinned foreigners, but not the vast numbers of migrant labourers.

In the Hong Kong context, Nicole Constable (1996) describes prejudice against Filipina domestic workers and in favour of the traditional Chinese amahs of the past. Many Hong Kong Chinese believe that foreign workers are inferior because they are not Chinese, and 'history…is evoked and distorted in contemporary discourse to create an impression of a rigid, categorical distinction between foreign domestic workers and Chinese domestic workers of the past' (p.449). Martin Jacques (2003) details racism in Hong Kong's 'open society' and traces it back to a centuries-old belief in the superiority of the Chinese race.

Turning to Taiwan, Patrick Cowsill (2009, p.91) uses the notion of aversive racism, the maintenance of distance between 'the in-group and out-groups', to explain racist attitudes there. Such polarisation is partly due to attitudes of resistance during the Japanese occupation but has subsumed the island's Austronesian groups under one mountain people group herded into remote areas. Lan Pei-Chia (2003) specifically mentions social boundaries and a dichotomisation between 'us and them' as Taiwanese employers and Filipina domestic helpers 'negotiate class and ethnic distinctions' (p.525). She uses the terms *personalism* and *asymmetry* to describe a working relationship which may sometimes give the impression of being familial but in fact is characterised by difference in status. Indeed, 'migrant domestic workers are the perfect example of the intimate Other - they are recruited by host countries as desired servants and yet rejected citizens; they are termed 'part of the family' by their employers while being excluded from the substance of family lives' (p.525).

This tension is explored by two contradictory articles in the same issue of *Dissent* magazine. In the first, Hong Kong-based American Daniel Bell (2008) maintains that although FDWs in the territory are known to prefer western employers because the latter show respect, a small minority of Chinese employers treat their helpers better, as family. Bell also mentions close friendships between employer and maid in Singapore. The American goes on to argue that although Chinese families do have very clear boundaries, Confucian ethics might extend the admittedly narrow but flexible concept of family to Others, such as FDWs. At work, traditional affectionate Confucian terms of address between senior and junior could include FDWs. While western people see everything in utilitarian terms, Chinese are much more relational.

The response of Confucian feminist Chan Sin-Yee (2008) is striking. She takes an opposing position, claiming that Confucianism does not guarantee individual rights. Further, the family is a strongly protected group which does not easily admit outsiders. She also argues that differences in 'education, class, and power' are insurmountable, and that most FDWs come from countries regarded as barbaric by the Chinese. Chan believes that Confucianism has been contaminated with sexism and racism and thus advocates the eradication of the Hong Kong domestic helper system.

Referring to Japan, Takeyuki Tsuda's (1998) complex analysis of *nikkeijin* (ethnic Japanese born and brought up in Latin America) reveals a strong tendency for the Japanese to bind ethnicity and culture together. Among educated people he found open and forthright prejudice against *nikkeijin* because their lack of Japanese-ness was disappointing. One interviewee reasoned that although *nikkeijin* would not be as good

as true Japanese (those brought up in Japan), they would be better than Brazilians because of their Japanese ethnicity. The same paper mentions the continued treatment of the long-established Korean minority in Japan as outcasts.

Tsuda refers to Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney's 'binary opposition of 'inside' and 'outside' in which the 'inside' is associated with purity and the 'outside' with impurity' (1984, ch.2). This in-out schema places foreigners 'outside' family or group boundaries. There is an ambivalence towards the outside because although it represents contamination, limited contact with it can produce certain benefits, such as foreign ideas or labour. Tsuda finds people grudgingly accepting of foreigners living in Japan but intolerant of inter-marriage between Japanese and foreigners and very disturbed at the suggestion that it could happen in their family! Finally, he mentions the fear of dark-skinned foreigners and the drop in users of bathhouses after they began to admit foreigners.

Similar attitudes exist among Koreans, although Scott Aubrey (2009) attributes some of these to the history of aggression from China and Japan. All three countries approach relationships through the same schemas and see the nation-state as an extension and enlargement of the family. There are also commonalities between the three national histories.

In the past Korea was known as the *Hermit Kingdom* (Kleiner, 2001). Until the second half of the 19th century the nation resisted contact with the West and at various periods in the past was either a formal vassal state of China or positioned itself such that the Chinese would provide protection against the hostile interests of Japan. To this day Koreans are known for their relative ethnocentrism.

Conrad Totman (1980) outlines the *sakoku* or closed country policy (effective 1635) of the Tokugawa period in Japan. The Tokugawa shoguns wished to keep the country closed to foreign influences for reasons similar to those discussed by Tsuda in the modern context. Totman talks of 'a society whose boundaries were delineated' and 'Japanese ethnic distinctiveness' (p.5).

Finally, the resistance of China to foreigners is well known. Frederic Wakeman (1966) describes early trade contacts between East and West and the refusal of the Chinese to admit western businessmen. In the mid-1840s British merchants were allowed temporary residence only at certain treaty ports. Although the history is complex, anti-foreign feeling among the Chinese may also have been a reaction to the subjugation of the nation at the hands of the Manchu Qing emperors beginning in 1644 (Spence, 1990). However, Chinese isolationism has much older and deeper roots; Brian

Simpson (1997) sees its earliest physical manifestation in the building of the Great Wall and Jacques Gernet (1985) explores the official isolationism of the later Ming period.

*Confucianism: Theory and Reality*

The dominant worldview and value system of the Chinese has always been Confucianism, although Buddhism, Daoism, and folk religions are also influential. Korea and Japan have derived significant parts of their culture and religion from the Chinese; both nations adopted and adapted Confucianism, and many commentators consider the Koreans more Confucian than the Chinese themselves.

Confucianism is best considered a moral or ethical code for human relationships, rather than a religion. Indeed, Confucius professed himself agnostic about spiritual matters, accepting the existence of a higher being but claiming that difficulties with human relationships meant that these merited more attention than interactions between mankind and the spiritual realm.

For Confucius and his followers, order and harmony in society were vital, and the essence of Confucianism is correct understanding and practice in interpersonal relationships, with the individual part of a network radiating out into the broader society. In Confucian thinking belonging and responsibility are tightly linked, particularly in the area of relationships between unequal partners and within families. King (1991) suggests that all other group relationships are modelled on the family, and Karl-Heinz Pohl describes the family as the 'vital nucleus of society' (1999, p.7), with each individual defined by his or her system of interlocking relationships. Alan Chan (2010) talks about the foundational notion of *xiao* (*filial piety*) in terms of 'the structure of family relations in the Confucian frame' (p.338) and emphasises the requirement for obedience by those lower in the social structure.

Chen C-Chao and Chen Xiao-Ping (2008) argue that for Chinese people 'social morality makes sense only in terms of these personal connections' (p.1). Moral or right behaviour works through meaningful connections rather than as an abstract principle and is therefore affected by the depth and nature of the relationship between people. This is a classic feature of shame-oriented societies (Wiher, 2003). Chen and Chen further refine their assertion, contrasting closer and more distant kinds of *guanxi* (*connection* or *relationship*) in terms of depths of emotion and obligation involved. Close relationships involve feelings and responsibilities, while those considered more peripheral do not. According to Chen and Chen, Confucian culture has at its centre introspective small groups, and the strength of relationship between members may

dictate decisions or courses of action with negative consequences for people outside of the group; this they call 'negative externality'. This rather critical perspective helps balance the more idealistic one of Pohl (1999), who talks of interconnectivity, harmony, and complementarity in Confucian relationships.

Because Confucian mores centre on hierarchy and obligation, and family and other close relationships, the position of those without a close connection to a member of the host community could be precarious. This is directly relevant to the 2 degrees of separation between the migrants and members of the host community. The first, corresponding to the X-axis, results from being a stranger, as those from a different country and ethnic group have no relationship. Horizontal distance between migrant and host positions the former at the periphery at best, without mutuality or familial belonging. As Anggraeni found in her study of Indonesian Domestic Workers, 'they are not part of us' (p.104) and so no guilt is felt when IDWs are mistreated.

In addition, the hierarchical nature of Confucian thinking and social organisation reinforces distance in the Y-direction. In theory, Confucianism emphasises bidirectional responsibility; ruler and ruled both have obligations to each other. Practically, this has defaulted to an unbalanced system in which those at the lower end of a relationship have obligations to those above them, while downward responsibility is emphasised far less. This has consequences for poorer workers doing 3D jobs, foreign brides or students. The diminished responsibility for those beyond the pale is in marked contrast to the 'absolutes on which to combat injustice' of the biblical worldview (Schaeffer, 1982, p.152).

The 'five relationships' is a general framework for the management of relationships in Confucian society. Chan Wing-Tsit summarises the relationships as between 'ruler and minister,…father and son,…husband and wife,…elder and younger brothers, and those…between friends' (1963. p.105). Chan believes that all five involve a moral and mutual element, although each dyad does include an inherent superior-inferior distinction (p.277), the exception being that between friends. The concept of family and obligations is informative in two respects. Firstly, family belonging and loyalty may push the foreigner out. Second, the five relationships establish stratified obligations and hierarchy.

The hierarchical division and social stratification inherent in the five relationships are reinforced by the Confucian 'rectification of names'. Chan translates the relevant section of the Analects for us: 'Let the ruler be a ruler, the minister be a minister, the father be a father, and the son be a son' (Chan, 1967, p.35). The idea is

that society works best when each person remains in and fulfils his or her role, which acts to restrict social mobility and disenfranchise outsiders.

Having explored the underlying worldview and heritage of the host countries, it is time to learn about the experiences of migrants.

## The Migration Experience

Having looked at East Asian migration facts and figures and considered the nature of the host communities, I now investigate the migration experience. First, I look at the macro experience, processes and changes undergone by those living and working in a society and culture which is not their own. After this I turn to the micro experience, of specific kinds of migrants in the region, illustrated by reference to case studies.

### The 'Macro' Experience of Migration

People migrating in East Asia encounter issues of racism and intolerance as well as identity and belonging, and these need to be understood as part of any theological and missiological response to the phenomenon of migration.

Discussing migration and identity in the UK, Kenneth Bledin talks in terms of a 'profound disturbance of…individual, social, and cultural identities' (2003, p.97). Migrants hope to belong to a society which is not welcoming and may build a new identity instead of existing in a state of crisis in the host country. In the East Asian context, government policies exclude settling down and residence and therefore most migrants have no expectation of belonging to the host country. Under these circumstances, belonging to some entity in the transnational space is important because Asians locate their identity by group membership and distinctions between groups are clearer than in the West.

Bledin's emigrants leave behind all that is familiar to make a new life in the host country. In East Asia I hedge this absolutist sense of schism with a more nuanced adaptation to a temporary belonging in the transnational space. The cultural and status separation encountered in the host country and the knowledge that their time there is limited will serve to fix migrants in the transnational space, which provides a sense of identity and hopefully some support from fellow travellers. Such attachment to the transnational space may reduce the sense of openness to new things often associated with migrants.

This sense of identification and its consequences are explored in detail by Pattana Kitiarsa (2006). He describes as 'transnationalism from below' (p.3) or 'village transnationalism' the transborder identities of Thai workers in Singapore, whose

transnational space effectively replicates their Isan (NE Thailand) lives in the city-state.

Kitiarsa says his countrymen in Singapore are excluded by reason of language (they speak neither English nor Mandarin) and by lack of rights or voice. They experience marginalisation and prejudice in Singapore and will never be accepted, thus creating 'one of many localized realities in a specific transnational setting' (p.5) as they transplant rural NE Thailand into urban Singapore.

The transplantation is temporally and spatially constrained, only occurring at weekends and in places adopted by Thai workers and business people. It involves drunkenness, fun, Thai food, Thai newspapers, and even occasional Buddhist merit-making ceremonies which include giving money to build schools or temples in the home village. To Kitiarsa, the whole enterprise takes place as if those involved were actually in Thailand.

As well as marginalisation and exclusion, migration has consequences for health. Manuel Carballo and Mourtala Mboup draw attention to the challenge of 'biomedical and bio-psychosocial dimensions of migration' (2005, p.1).

The process of moving from one country to another causes huge pressures on people. Migrants experience anxiety about their own situation and worry about loved ones, especially when the aim is to earn higher salaries and provide for the future of dependants back home. Migrant workers suffer significant amounts of abuse and maltreatment, with the added pressure of sexual abuse or intimidation for women. Seda Sengun asks, 'What happens in the psyche of the person who migrates?' (2001, p.65).

Carballo and Mboup mention problems of self-esteem, loneliness, development of ulcers, and even suicide among migrants. There can also be alcohol and drug abuse, as well as casual sexual and emotional encounters (Kitiarsa, 2006; Carballo & Mboup, 2005). The biblical theme of wholeness or *shalom* comes to mind; what is *shalom* for migrant workers and through what channels might it be mediated?

As well as mental or emotional stress, physical health is an issue. Migrants in East Asia are usually engaged in 3D jobs or work very long hours in domestic service. Safety standards are not only lax but also rarely applied to 'Kleenex' workers, who are simply not as important as locals. There is a large body of literature and *YouTube* videos describing industrial accidents and employer abuse of FDWs, which will be referred to presently. Physical well-being is also affected by STDs, infection due to overcrowded accommodation, and illness due to bad hygiene, poor diet, overwork, and sleep deprivation (Carballo & Mboup, 2005; Kitiarsa, 2006; *Swept under the rug*, 2006).

Whether emotional or physical, the medical issues mentioned here merit a

kingdom response from God's community. The nature of the response is important: does the community of faith simply reach out and provide assistance at arm's length, so to speak - or does it reach out to reach in and attempt to embrace migrants as part of itself?

The rest of this section discusses some miscellaneous aspects of the migrant experience. The large numbers of factory workers, domestic helpers, and 'brides to order' on the move within East Asia mean that gender is an important factor in migration. Castles and Miller talk of the 'feminization of migration' (2003, p.67) while Jorgen Carling discusses 'gender specific economic niches' (2005, p.2). The construction industry in East Asia employs only male migrant workers, while the domestic helper is a female role. Men and women work as contract labourers in factories, according to the type of work and policies of the host nation. Although the general nature of this study justifies my two X and Y-axes of separation, I was reminded by my children that a focus on gender issues would require a Z-axis also.

When large numbers of men go abroad, especially in groups, there is a greater likelihood of alcohol and drug abuse, and involvement with prostitutes in the host country. Women abroad may face abuse and exploitation, unwanted pregnancies, and the heartbreak of caring for someone else's child rather than their own. Birgit Poniatowski and Carolina Jimenez (2005) describe the 'double discrimination' (p.4) endured by FDWs, based on their foreignness and their status. Domestic work is still 'regarded as menial' (p.5) with implications for the status and treatment of FDWs, who are effectively 'invisible' (p.8).

Migration affects not only the migrant but also the (extended) family left behind. A migrant worker in a host country often means an absent parent in the home country. The consequences of an absent father can be serious for the family left at home. Children may grow up without male presence and role models. Women's burdens become even heavier as they take on the role of father as well as mother. Where women leave a family, the children grow up motherless or with a domestic helper or relative as caregiver. The needs of families in richer nations such as Singapore or Taiwan may cause family fragmentation in a chain, as woman leaves a poorer country to work as a FDW, requiring another woman to move from her home (partially or completely) to look after the children of the one who has gone abroad (Carling, 2005).

Stephanie Grant (2005) suggests that while international law guarantees the human and legal rights of migrant workers, there is in fact a huge discrepancy between what international agreements specify and the situation on building sites and in private

homes across the world. Serious human rights violations are not uncommon. Migrants in East Asia are often relatively unskilled and uneducated, and unused to defending their cause and demanding their rights. They are especially vulnerable because they are not citizens of the countries in which they work, often have problems with language and culture, and have no idea of their rights or how the legal system works. They may also have to deal with discrimination and intimidation (Grant 2005).

Migrants' rights may reflect the bifurcated nature of migration in the region. Grant reminds us that skilled professionals know their rights and know how to fight for their interests, while blue-collar workers are effectively ignorant. She describes a continuum ranging from 'integration and equality' through to 'marginalisation and exclusion'. Foreignness and status consistently work against poorer East Asians, although westerners and rich East Asians have few problems.

Given the large numbers of FDWs in the region, it is disturbing that in many countries domestic service is not covered by employment law and often undertaken without the protection of contracts. Grant tells us that while some FDWs are treated almost like family members, the situation of others approaches 'virtual slavery and forced labour' (2005, p.11).

Having looked at the broad, 'macro experience', it is now time to look briefly at the micro experience of migrants in East Asia.


*The 'Micro' Experience of Migration*

We have learnt about the bifurcation of migration, as well as the notions of '3D' - *dirty*, *demanding*, and *dangerous* - and 'Kleenex'. This section will look at specific experiences of migrants in East Asia and details from testimonies and cases studies to complement the broad brush-strokes of the previous section. Zha (2002) mentions the unjustified and simplistic association of migrant workers with criminal activity in Japan, and Kitiarsa (2006) describes the negative presentations of Thai workers in the Singapore media. Hong Xoan-Nguyen-Thi & Graeme Hugo (2005) detail prejudice experienced by Vietnamese brides in Taiwan. It is appropriate now to look at experiences of some of the main migration types in East Asia.

FOREIGN DOMESTIC WORKERS

The literature on FDWs is vast, and for the current study I only highlight certain trends and issues. Because FDWs usually work and live in a private house it is almost impossible to monitor their lives, treatment at the hands of employers, and living

conditions (Poniatowski & Jimenez, 2005). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the experiences of FDWs show great variety, from being treated very well to enduring conditions of modern slavery. Poniatowski and Jimenez describe how an FDW may take over some of the wife's role in a well-to-do household, functioning sometimes as a 'transnational mother' (2005, p.6) to her employer's children, while unable to care for her own in the Philippines or Indonesia.

Apart from emotional stress, in Singapore '28% of the maids have *no* days off' and exist in a 'pattern of dominance and subservience' (Carling, 2005, p.12, italics his), a 'legally enforced paternalistic relationship between employer and foreign domestic worker' (*Made to work*, 2011, p.23). In their report *Swept under the rug,* Human Rights Watch suggest that psychological abuse is almost universal for FDWs around the world. In addition, they suffer food deprivation, sexual abuse at the hands of male employers, and enforced isolation from their compatriots. Many FDWs lose money to employers and maid agencies, particularly when needing medical care or changing employers for reasons beyond their control, such as abuse.

Physical violence is relatively common, as is forced confinement and denial of access to telephones. HRW document the case of one Indonesian FDW who lost 14kg while working in Singapore, and who was fed by a friendly neighbour. Many FDWs have no place to sleep, often getting a few hours' rest on the floor, under a table, and even on stairs. Anggraeni's (2006) detailed interviews with IDWs reveal widespread excessive working hours, serious sexual abuse and rape, psychological abuse and living in an atmosphere of fear.

Unfortunately, abuse of domestic helpers has also been found among the Christian community. One irate blog records the case of a group of Christians having a long and expensive meal at a restaurant at which the blogger was a waiter. He claims that the domestic helper was not given any food all night, not even a glass of water, and had to look after a child for the whole evening. When he offered the girl a glass of water she seemed afraid to take it. There are anecdotal stories of church people eating at food courts (in Singapore) and then asking the maid to scoop together all the leftovers and take them as her meal, and of Muslim girls being forced to look after employers' children at church on Sundays instead of being given a day off. Even Bible college students have defended employers who grant domestic helpers only one day off per month; when confronted with God's requirement for one day off per week even for donkeys they argue that this is a different situation and those in favour of a weekly Sabbath 'do not understand'.

In response, Michael Loh (a member of a Methodist church in Singapore) has written a short but powerful article entitled *Maid abuse: One Christian's response*. Writing as a Christian to other Christians, Loh summarises FDWs' circumstances in Singapore. He quotes a comment he once overheard: 'Oh, Indonesian maids? They are relatively low-maintenance types. One fried egg and a plate of rice would make them happy'. Quoting from Hebrews 13:1-2, he asks his fellow believers, 'Would you let an angel eat only instant noodle? Would you shout at an angel? Would you exclude an angel from celebrations at home?' (Loh, 2002).

He asks fellow believers to treat their 'home helpers' well, discouraging the use of the term 'maid' among church members. He asks them to be realistic in their expectations, because the domestic worker is in a foreign culture and has needs of her own. He urges fellow church members not to force their helpers to fulfil the roles of parents and tutors as well as domestic factotums. His exhortation to fellow Christians is heartening:

> Accept the maid as someone who is now a part of your family life - ask about her family; every so often, ask to find out if everything's all right. Remember significant dates in her life such as her birthday, wedding anniversary, etc. Celebrating your own birthday? Include her in the celebration. Check if she needs help sending stuff home. Small gestures go a long way and are edifying.

He says it is easy to read his article but then carry on with life as before, and concludes with a challenge and reminder: 'Some may think that our being kind may be misinterpreted by others that we are weaklings'. It is encouraging to hear this almost lone voice among the evangelical community; what is sad is that such forthright reminders of basic humanity are needed among well-read, educated, cosmopolitan Christians in a country where the church has existed for more than a century. The practical and theological issues raised by Loh's short article relate to Confucian concepts of belonging and the responsibility of Christians to Others. They also confirm that mission at home (as opposed to the sending out of cross-cultural workers) involves a much broader section of church people. Indeed, Loh claims: 'Nothing is a more powerful evangelical tool than the way you live your life. At home, your maid sees you as you are, warts and all. How Christian are you at home? Are you, who enjoy God's generosity and blessings, magnanimous and kind - and above all, human and humane?'

In many countries FDWs are unable to seek (legal) help when faced with injustice, as they need their employer's permission to leave the house or contact an often-unsympathetic maid agency. If they appeal against an unfair or abusive employer

their contract may be terminated, and they may lose a great deal of money. Furthermore, the authorities often discourage FDWs from taking abusive employers to court and legal systems and police side with the employer. The FDW is advised to forget about unfair treatment and either change employer or return to her own country. The detailed testimonies of FDWs can be read in the HRW Special Report.

By contrast, a recent Straits Times feature on FDWs in Singapore has a completely different focus: 'There are a [sic] few things that unite Singaporeans more than problems with maids. Start talking about one maid and before you know it, everyone within earshot will chime in with horror stories, each one more scary than the last' (*Maid to Order: A day with Alex Neo, 2010*). The author goes on to describe Mr Neo's sterling efforts to transform rural girls from the Philippines into bringers of domestic bliss who meet their employer's every need. There is no acknowledgment of the girls' humanity or needs, or that any maid has ever been ill-treated in the country. Neo comments that some employers do not like the FDW to know much about Singapore; it is better to keep them focused on their work inside the house. The commodification and dehumanisation are disturbing, as is the contrast with HRW's report and blogs such as www.maidinsingapore.net.

The vulnerability of the non-citizen is very evident in the case of FDWs, and we are reminded of the OT prescriptions about foreigners in ancient Israel.


CONTRACT LABOURERS

Foreign contract labourers are important to many economies in the region. Workers from China, Thailand, India, Indonesia and other countries usually secure two or three year contracts to earn higher salaries and send money home.

Contract labourers typically find employment through brokers, who connect sources of labour in poorer countries with construction projects or factories in richer ones. The initial costs for a migrant labourer can be high, including flights, fees, bonds, and insurance, and it is common for almost half of a foreign worker's time in a richer country to be spent paying off his debt.

Similar to FDWs, foreign labourers often work in difficult conditions and for long hours without overtime pay, some even seven days per week. A recent traffic accident in Singapore highlighted the apparent difference in the value of a migrant worker's life and that of a local or a highly-skilled expatriate. Questions were asked why those driving in cars are required to wear seatbelts, while foreign labourers often ride in the back of lorries at high speed without any safety measures at all (*Foreign lives*

*not worth much?, 2010*).

Foreign workers are often billeted in converted containers at the construction site where they work. These usually have basic furniture and an air-conditioning unit fixed onto the outside, and are often overcrowded and unhygienic. Facilities for washing, showering, laundering, and cooking are often inadequate. It is common to see workers' clothes hanging to dry on semi-constructed buildings. A collection of *YouTube* videos portrays such poor living conditions.

In an article in Malaysia's New Straits Times (Lourdes, 2008), a Malaysian trade union leader claimed that foreign workers are treated like slaves, with only verbal work agreements and no idea of their rights, their passports held by the employer. If a foreign worker registers a complaint against his Malaysian company, the company usually cancels his employment pass immediately and the worker becomes an illegal. His only recourse is to pay a fine to the immigration department while his case is investigated.

In an article about Thai contract labourer for the Pou Chen Corporation, a Taiwanese footwear manufacturer, Junya Yimprasert (2000) claims that Thai men each paid 85000 baht up-front to recruitment agencies, while their monthly salary in Taiwan was under 16000 baht. They slept 12 to a room on six-bunk beds in a space 2.5 by 8 metres, in a facility 'like a military camp'. At work production supervisors frequently shouted at them and threatened to deduct their salary or send them back home. They were allowed to use the toilet twice a day, when there was someone to replace them. Many suffered health problems due to chemical adhesives and had to buy their own personal protection equipment.

Amnesty International's report on Korea contains similar harrowing stories, including one of a Chinese man who froze to death on the street as he struggled to make ends meet because his salary was not paid. In another case, Thai workers were exposed to harmful n-hexane in a badly ventilated room while Koreans in the same facility did not work with the chemical (*South Korea: Migrant workers are also human beings, 2006*).

FOREIGN BRIDES

Women who marry men from richer East Asian nations and move to those countries often experience alienation, prejudice, and loss of culture and self-esteem. In addition, the literature suggests that their life after marriage may be very different from the picture originally painted. Vietnamese government websites recount the experiences of women who married Koreans or Taiwanese, showing that moving abroad may involve

working hard in rural areas, looking after children, and sometimes functioning more as housekeepers or caregivers than wives and companions.

Many of these marriages are arranged through brokers, who help rich men choose a bride in a country like Vietnam, where the young women have little understanding of life in the husband's country and very often cannot even communicate with him.

The foreign bride phenomenon is different from the others as it is supposedly a one-way emigration from the girl's home country, with no legal frameworks other than marriage and immigration law. Yet the young women can be trapped in a very small transnational space and thus be vulnerable and lonely, with huge emotional needs. Divorce and the return of the young women to their home country are increasingly common.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students in the region face similar challenges to other types of migrants. It is extremely difficult to find research about international students in East Asia. However, Kim's (2007) summary of issues faced by Korean students in the United States contains much that fits with the situation in the ASEAN+3 region.

International students in East Asia usually undertake tertiary education in a foreign language such as English, Chinese, or Korean. Kim also mentions cultural differences between students and lecturers or research supervisors, as well as adjustments needed to deal with the foreign culture of educational institutions. David Pyvis and Anne Chapman (2005) discuss culture shock in terms of multi-dimensional identities which students need to negotiate in a new academic environment, such as being a student, belonging to a community, studying a particular discipline, and so on. This creation of a new identity occurs in the shadow of the severing of relationships at home.

In addition, international students need to relate to a new group as friends, colleagues, and possibly competitors, and perhaps deal with issues of food, accommodation, part-time work, and so on.

## Advocacy for Migrants in East Asia

The summary of migration policy and the lives of migrants in East Asia shows that people on the move experience considerable dislocation and danger, and have great personal, professional, legal, and emotional, spiritual needs. Their status as Other and

the various difficulties they face have led Chavez to argue 'there is a need for a widespread education and information campaign, in host countries and at the regional level, on the economic and social value of migrant workers to remove antagonism towards them' (2007, p.373). She argues that ASEAN is only interested in highly skilled migration and that the bifurcated labour and migration policy means that the organisation has nothing to say about the huge numbers of unskilled labour on the move, despite the ASEAN Vision 2020 of developing 'a community of caring societies' (p.365).

Given the official apathy toward the majority low-end migrants, who *does* care and advocate for migrants in East Asia? Piper (2005) suggests that migrant NGOs are linked with women's organisations, religious groupings, trade unions and workers' movements, and civil rights people. These may be focused on one particular ethnic group or have a wider scope. She describes the composition of such NGOs: '1) local citizens campaigning on behalf of non-citizens; 2) activists following their compatriot migrant workers to the destination country and campaigning on their behalf from there; 3) migrants campaigning for their interests and challenging the government in both countries of origin and destination; and 4) migrant workers or their compatriot activists campaigning on behalf of all migrants of various nationalities' (2005, p.106). Apichai Shipper's Japanese categories are slightly broader, and appropriate for all six territories: Christian and other religious groups, trade unions, women groups, lawyers, doctors, and concerned citizens' groups (2006, p.3).

Migrant organisations are strong in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea, where they are legally permitted to exist and carry out their activities, but much weaker and lower key in Singapore and Malaysia. Keiko Yamanaka (2007) comments that NGOs working among migrants in Korea are well-resourced and vocal, and have secured court rulings in favour of migrants. Their Japanese equivalents are equally enthusiastic but more modest in size and funding, and have influence at local government level only. By contrast, Singapore NGOs, including those concerned for migrants, need to operate very carefully and avoid any political activity in the emerging civil society (Kivinen, 2010). Malaysia's Tenaganita exists to defend human rights and explicitly those of migrants and has an impressive website, full of articles and information.

Among faith-based organisations, web searches and reviews of literature suggest that the Catholic Church leads the way in responding to migration. Sites such as http://www.cathnewsasia.com, http://www.ucanews.com, and http://www.asianews.it

contain news about migrant issues in Asia, while the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (founded in 1970) is one of eleven councils established by the Vatican, with representation in Asia. The International Catholic Migration Commission (www.icmc.net) is 20 years older and has seven representative offices around the world including a presence in Jakarta. Other Catholic presences in the Philippines, Taiwan, and elsewhere reach out to and show concern for migrants. The Scalabrini Migration Center in the Philippines (www.smc.org.ph) is a dedicated academic and research centre.

The Hong Kong based Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants is a (principally Protestant) church-related organisation which fights for migrant rights but from its publications seems to have little concern for spiritual needs and transformation. This group works with a variety of trade union, religious, and secular groups as an advocate and voice for migrant labour.

Although the last few years have an increase in church-based evangelism to foreign labourers as well as services and fellowships for FDWs in Singapore and Malaysia, there is still no sense of coordination of or theological rationale for the ministry. Conversations with those involved in this kind of ministry and anecdotal evidence suggest that in the main, evangelical protestant churches engage in evangelistic activities which fail to take account of cultural factors which separate, for example, Singapore Chinese from Mainlanders. In addition, there appears to be little consideration of the fact that those who hear the gospel in Singapore (for example) will return to China or India. Much gospel work neglects context and is thus unable to prepare people for the return home.

In addition, many evangelical churches see their task as simply the proclamation of the spiritual gospel and there is very little holistic care or workers' rights advocacy. Too often the gospel is presented to foreign labourers and domestic helpers as a series of propositions, which seem to lack application in the lives of the local people who benefit from their services. We are reminded of Walter Brueggemann's (1982) two kinds of shalom, one for the haves and another for the have-nots. An integrated approach is needed in mission to migrants, which takes seriously their needs as well as the nature of migration. Across the region there is a clear reflection of the classic (American) liberal-fundamentalist divide; some Christian groups minister to the body and advocate social justice without any mention of personal and community spiritual transformation while others engage in relatively blunt presentations of a context-free Bible message about 'God, Jesus, and sin' (concepts often totally alien to migrant

workers from China, Thailand, and India, and misunderstood by those from Indonesia and the Philippines!). These messages *seem* to have little immediate usefulness for those who hear them and no practical manifestation of social justice. One very obvious exception to this is Singapore's Healthserve (www.healthserve.org.sg) which seems to minister in a rounded and holistic way. A representative but not exhaustive summary of NGOs working with migrants in East Asia is found in the appendix to this chapter.

Finally, the difference in income, status, and even living conditions between migrants and locals is such that they live in two worlds. How do NGOs relate to migrants? Do they view them as outsiders, recipients of external help handed to them across twin chasms of race/ethnicity and status or are they drawing people in to a community?

Many migrants come from close-knit communities where relationships and belonging are very important and come into host societies which claim to value community. The church in a host country has a dual status. As a community of grace it is by definition a grouping of those who do not (deserve to) belong yet it is also part of the broader national society, to which migrants appear as outsiders. This tension is central to any theological and missiological response to migration in East Asia.

### Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented a sociological overview of the migration process in East Asia in the context of migration as a global phenomenon.

Following on from facts and figures which describe the migration phenomenon the chapter has introduced salient elements of migration theory, particularly migration systems and the transnational space, both of which have implications for migrants and ministry to them.

As well as looking at the migrants and their experience, it is important to understand the host or destination country to which migrants come in order to make sense of how they are received by the host community. Finally, the issue of advocacy has been addressed in brief.

This sociological sketch of the migration phenomenon will provide an essential basis for the theological reflection and conclusions which drive the rest of the research. Before this process can begin, it is necessary to review theological writing pertaining to migration and related issues. This is done in the next chapter.

# Appendix: Numbers of Migrants and Migrant Advocacy in East Asia

This chapter appendix contains two tables, one giving numbers of migrants, and the other summarising the NGOs working on their behalf.

Table 1: Numbers of migrants by origin, territory, and category in thousands.

| | Hong Kong | Singapore | Malaysia | Korea | Taiwan | Japan |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **FDW** | Tot: 274[1]<br>PH: 132[1]<br>ID: 13.4[1]<br>TH: 4.5[22] | Tot: 210. Majority from ID & PH. Also Sri Lankan, Burmese, India, Thai, B'ladesh. [21] | Tot: 300[7]<br>CB: 25[8]<br>ID: >50[9] | Negligible | Tot: 200[29]. From PH, ID. | Tot: 3[30]. From ID, PH, TH. Not employed by general public. |
| **Contract labour** | N/A | Tot: ?<br>CN:>200[26]<br>B'd'sh: 48[28] | Tot: ?<br>ID: 1500<br>Nepal: 170<br>IN: 130[27]<br>Burma: >60[27] | Tot: ?<br>CN: 43<br>VN: 19<br>ID: 18<br>PH: 15[23] | Tot: 220[25]<br>ID: 140<br>PH: 70<br>TH: 60<br>VN: 80[29] | Tot: 560<br>CN: 250<br>KR: 26<br>PH: 49[24] |
| **Foreign brides** | Complete figures not available. CN:39% of total [20] | Figures not available. Many from CN, VN, MY, ID, TH. | Tot: 9<br>VN: 2.7<br>CN: 2.3<br>ID: 1.3 [18] | Tot: 30[3]<br>CN: 21[3]<br>VN: 6[3]<br>JP: 1[3]<br>PH: 1[3] | Tot: 385<br>CN: 240<br>VN: 80<br>HK: 11<br>ID: 26<br>PH: 6[19] | Tot: ?<br>CN: 10.5[4]<br>PH: 7.8[4]<br>KR: 5.5[4] |
| **Students** | Tot: 14.5[2]<br>CN: 8.6[2] | Tot: 92[15]<br>CN: 30%[14] | Tot: 700[16]<br>CN: 10[17]<br>ID: 10[17]<br>TH: 1.5 | Tot: 78<br>CN: 45[13] | Tot: 55. 14 language students[12] | Tot: ?<br>CN: 88<br>KR: 18<br>TW: 4.5<br>VN: 4<br>MY: 2.5[11] |
| **Misc** | | | | | 10 Caregivers | |

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4   As source 3 but 2002 figures.
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7   *They deceived us at every step: Abuse of Cambodian domestic workers migrating to Malaysia*. New York: Human Rights Watch, 2011(2009 figures).
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28 *Temporary migration of Bangladeshi workers in Singapore*: *desirability and reality.* Khadimul, unpublished paper from Asia Journalism Fellowship, Singapore.

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30 *The right to unite*: A handbook on domestic worker rights across Asia*. APWLD: 2010.

Table 2: Summary of migrant-focused NGOs in East Asia

| Organisation | Location | Type | Main activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants | Hong Kong, Korea | Church related | Advocacy, advancing migrant rights, research, publishing |
| Coordination of Action Research on AIDS and Mobility | Asia | Secular | Research, advocacy, coalition building, capacity building, publications, campaigns |
| Asian People's Friendship Society | Japan | Secular | Assistance, advocacy, research, human rights, cultural exchange |
| December 18 | Global | Secular | Research, campaigning, monitoring, publishing |
| Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics | Singapore | Secular | Research and education, helpdesk, social integration, humanitarian assistance |
| Hope Workers' Center/Hsinchu Catholic Diocese Migrants & Immigrants Service Center | Taiwan | Catholic | Social work, migrant rights education, advocacy, religious support for Catholics |
| Sungram Migrant Workers House | Korea | Protestant | Human rights, assistance, counselling, shelter, educational activities, Korean classes, family issues, computer education, and faith-related help |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan | Japan | Secular, church links | Advocacy, lobbying, research, publishing, negotiations with government, information, sharing, networking |
| Tenaganita | Malaysia | Secular | Research, publicity, campaigning, lobbying the government |
| Stella Maris International Service Center | Taiwan | Catholic | Assistance, skills training, rights, language classes |
| Center for Migrant Advocacy - Philippines | Philippines | Secular | Defending migrant Filipinos, advocacy, information, networking, capability-building, and direct assistance, research |
| Caritas (Women and migrants) | Global | Catholic | Advocacy, assistance, campaigning |
| Migrants Rights International | Global | Secular, church links | Advocacy, networking |
| Migrant Workers' Center | Singapore | Trade union | Migrant rights, assistance, social integration |
| Korea Support Center for Foreign Workers | Korea | Secular | Fair treatment, immigration assistance, insurance, training, Korean language & IT courses |
| Seoul-Gyeonggi-Incheon Migrants Trade Union | Korea | Trade union | Networking, advocacy |
| Transient Workers Count Too | Singapore | Secular | Advocacy, research, direct assistance, food, information |
| Outreach to Foreign Workers Network | Malaysia | Protestant | Evangelism, networking, Christian leadership training, linking with churches in home countries, English teaching, computers, medical services, evangelism through football |
| Healthserve | Singapore | Secular, church links | Medical services, assistance, food, language and art classes, sports, outings |

# Chapter 3
## Literature Review

### Introduction

Although migration is by no means a new phenomenon, in recent years globalisation and rapid economic development, particularly in East Asia and the Middle East, have brought it to new prominence. However, Christian ministry to people on the move is relatively new as a formal endeavour in its own right and its significance and potential have still to be recognised by many churches and mission organisations. In addition, migration is a complex amalgam of migrants and motivations and origins and destinations. For these reasons and probably many others, comparatively few studies of this kind of ministry exist, and an even smaller amount of relevant theological reflection.

That said, a very small number of books and papers have been written which are relevant (directly or indirectly) to the issue of the church's response to the migration phenomenon in East Asia. I place the literature review here, after looking at migration sociologically, in order to evaluate the existing attempts to look at migration theologically and missiologically in the light of that sociological sketch. It will be seen that although existing material does provide a foundation for the current research, certain themes need further development and application into the regional context.

Various church groupings have written theologically on migration and my broad categories *evangelical*, *ecumenical*, and *Roman Catholic* reflect this. In addition, I include useful elements from Orthodox and Jewish writers and an introduction to liminality and communitas. The principal aim of the chapter is to review existing literature to identify strengths and weaknesses and explore concepts which can help form an analytical framework to apply to passages and ideas from the Bible.

### Evangelical Writings on Migration

#### Missiology's Mission and Migration

The American Society of Missiology devoted the entire January 2003 issue of their journal to migration. This was before Enoch Wan announced the new discipline of *Diaspora missiology* for the evangelical church but may be considered part of the process which led to its establishment. Wan himself has an article on Chinese Diaspora missiology in the same issue.

In his brief editorial Terry Muck identifies migration as an issue for the world and an opportunity for mission (Muck, 2003). This is followed by Christine Pohl, who

identifies two motifs from Christian scripture which I believe are relevant to the East Asian context. The first is the obligation for God's people to show hospitality to the stranger, and the second is the status of the community of YHWH faith as strangers and aliens themselves (Pohl, 2003).

Hospitality is an attitude which seeks to build rather than destroy, and Pohl's 'deadly ethnic tensions and vast socioeconomic differences' (2003, p.9) remind us of the dual separations of ethnicity and status, which have particular currency in East Asia. Hospitality acknowledges those whom societies normally ignore and challenges traditional categories as we interact with the Other.

Pohl wisely asks how the gospel actually is 'good news' to migrants and I am reminded of Brueggemann's (1976) two different perspectives on shalom, one for the haves and another for the have-nots. While a spiritual encounter with the living God is the ultimate source and means of shalom, the haves and the have-nots have very different starting points. Pohl argues that Christian people should minister to all manner of migrants and that the good news includes advocacy and social concern. She complains that concern for migrants is effectively absent from the Christian radar screen and Christian ethics.

Next she critiques institutionalised ideas of church, contrasting these with the early church's attractive mixture of outreach, worship, and hospitality. In an age of fragmentation people are actively looking to belong, and thus Christians must form 'communities of hospitality' (2003, p.12) which manifest the kingdom. She rejects the traditional dichotomy of outreach (within one's own culture) and mission (across cultures and beyond borders) and appears to embrace an approach which is these summarised by the word *missional*. A continuum understanding of mission is especially relevant for ministry to migrants because it is cross-cultural even though it is done by ordinary Christians in the host community. Pohl believes that the experience of migrants' lives in the transnational space is liminal, and for those separated from all that is familiar hospitality may speak volumes about belonging and faith.

Finally, she warns us that the offering of hospitality can become a power exercise in which hosts dictate terms and patronise or even marginalise the very guests whom they have invited. More positively, when guests are allowed to take part in or take over meal preparation, conventional categories are deconstructed and all are blessed because God is present in an unusual way. Later in the same volume host Christians are invited to consider a 'theology of receiving' (Stromberg, 2003, p.47).

The next article comes from Samuel Escobar, who also talks about sensitivity

and advocacy, and as a non-European urges the church (in Europe) to speak against anti-migrant sentiment. A Peruvian reminds the church of the 'ethical treasure that is part of the Western and European heritage' (2003b, p.19) and which can defend the poor and the downtrodden, particularly the migrant. While we may struggle to be quite as positive as Escobar about European culture, the testimonies of migrant workers in East Asia do suggest that his ethical treasure is lacking in this region. Catholic bishops have urged Spanish society to welcome migrants and in the United States they have reminded Americans that theirs is an immigrant church, invoking a 'corporate memory'.

Next Escobar provides a brief cameo in which a Bolivian lady in Germany shares the gospel with a Spanish immigrant through hospitality in her home. Like Pohl, he blurs distinctions between home and church and celebrates the empowering of the ordinary Christian as a missionary. This Bolivian Priscilla is operating cross-culturally at a faith interface and geographical location is irrelevant. Finally, he questions the church growth movement's 'homogeneous unit principle': for migrant ministry to grow successfully churches must welcome many different kinds of Others.

The Hispanic theme continues in the final article, by Daniel Rodriguez (2003). He draws from Latino Theology, which opposes oppressive structures, exploitation, and marginalisation, yet must maintain a soteriological agenda and focus. For him, the metaphor of the spiritual house in 1 Peter 2 provides a sense of belonging and security in the context of aliens and strangers.

These brief articles present the obligation of hospitality that lies at the heart of Christian faith and also introduce the idea of relating to the Other. The clear distinction between insiders and outsiders which was revealed in Chapter Two suggests that Otherness is a crucial idea for a theological response to migration in East Asia.

Elsewhere in the evangelical camp, Enoch Wan and Sadiri Tira have begun to explore and define what they call 'Diaspora missiology', which although apparently global in scope has its origins in the movement of East Asians to North America. It is to their work that I now turn, reviewing it and thinking how it might inform theological reflection on intra-regional migration in East Asia.


*The* Diaspora Missiology *of Wan, Tira, and Medeiros*

Enoch Wan of Western Seminary and the Lausanne Diaspora Leadership Team was the first to think through and publish a short article on 'Diaspora Missiology' in 2007. In his modest but informative piece he looks at Diaspora as a phenomenon, reflects on this theologically, and then seeks application into mission. The work of Wan and his friends

constitutes the most coherent attempt to produce a theology and missiology of ministry to migrants. I will examine and critique each of his main sections in turn.

Wan begins with the notion of *Diaspora*, the Greek term referring to the settled dispersion of the Jewish people during the Babylonian exile, a status which continues into the NT period and beyond. For him, dispersal or scattering is the central motif. While migrants *are* dispersed, two points need to be addressed. The first is the use of the term *Diaspora* for today's worldwide people movements. *Diaspora* has become something of a buzzword in secular and Christian circles over the last few years, and indeed OMF (originally the China Inland Mission and later the Overseas Missionary Fellowship) has recently adopted the term *Diaspora Ministries* for its work among East Asians in the West. Wan uses the term to refer to 'people on the move or being moved' in a broad sense. However, scholarly literature uses the word more narrowly, to refer to communities who have put down roots in a foreign country but remain culturally distinct and maintain strong community links to the homeland. The restrictions on settlement in East Asia mean that Diasporas may not actually form as they have done in the West (Jewish, Chinese, Indian, for example) and that dynamically changing transnational spaces are more common. Migrants and Diasporas are not the same and the latter has connotations of settlement which may be less appropriate for East Asia. There may need to be different types of ministry to genuine Diasporas and short and medium term migrants.

The second point is that Wan's use of *diaspora* to describe the scattering of 'Jews in the OT & Christians in the NT' (p.3) identifies the Diaspora as believers in YHWH. The Diaspora in the Bible are what we might call 'faith bearers' and did play an important role in the expansion of the church, as the Book of Acts shows, yet in East Asia we must consider non-Christian migrant peoples, whether Diasporas or shorter-term residents.

In his analysis of migration Wan employs a traditional 'push-pull' model, but migration systems and transnational spaces are more elegant, affirming push-pull where appropriate but with awareness of the connectedness of home and host nation. The transnational space is almost a virtual community which preserves elements of life in the home country. This is related to Kitiarsa's (2006) 'village transnationalism'. Migration systems and transnational spaces have missiological implications as links between migrants' home and host countries can be developed, especially in East Asia where distances are relatively small.

From his foundational idea of dispersal, Wan develops very broad notions of

God-oriented scattering and gathering. Scattering includes the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden and the exile of Israel from the land - away from God, while his (NT) gathering includes the Baptist's announcing of the kingdom, Jesus' calling of the little children to His side, and the calling of the elect - towards God.

The background of the current research suggests that two refinements are in order. First, although Wan's *God*-oriented 'absolute scattering' and 'absolute gathering' (my terms) are theologically sound, if the East Asian church is to respond positively we must consider where migrants (non-Christians especially) are scattered from, and where they are gathered to, as well as what kind of situations they migrate into and their experiences and the attitudes they face in the host country. This is why the previous chapter looked at the types of migration as well as the nature and attitude of the host communities. Effective ministry needs to be responsive and contextualised; hence we must also consider *people*-oriented 'relative scattering and gathering' which takes account of the reception of the migrant into the broader community and ultimately the community of YHWH faith. Thus, Otherness must be a central element of this research.

Secondly, in the light of the discussion in Chapter Two a theological treatment of migration should not begin with the concept of Diaspora, important as this is. Wan may be focusing more on the N American context in which migration is assumed to be one-way and acculturation expected. In addition, there exist large Diaspora communities into which new migrants can settle. In effect, he is dealing with a different migration system. Because migration concerns attitudes to and relationships with those different from ourselves, I take as central notions Otherness and the willingness of the community to receive the Other - particularly where race and status are factors. The refinement of theological centre from dispersal to Otherness in my study resonates with the OT teaching on the alien (the Other relative to the host community). Furthermore, cross-cultural mission involves Otherness, regardless of geographical location.

Finally, although Wan juxtaposes Diaspora missiology and what he calls 'traditional missiology' (p.6) to show the qualitative differences between the two and to advance the cause of Diaspora ministry, it may be more helpful to think in terms of a continuum. In some cases, traditional home-field distinctions have been damaging to the cause of mission to migrants. I will attempt to show that scripture actually suggests an integration of centrifugal and centripetal mission.

A book chapter with similar content appears in Wan and Tira's *Missions Practice in the 21st Century*. It is an expansion of Wan's earlier paper, co-written with 'Joy' Tira of FIN, and the focus remains the 'Diaspora' concept.

A third publication associated with Wan, but this time written together with Medeiros is the draft position paper on ''Diasporas' and God's mission', discussed at the Lausanne Diasporas Leadership Team consultation in Seoul in late 2009. An interesting new element is the potential of Diaspora people as partners in mission, which may have implications for ministry in the transnational space. Under the slogan 'missions to the Diasporas' they promote partnership between local churches and Diaspora Christians (in the US), while their 'missions through the Diasporas' (p.12) concerns returnee ministry, in which Diaspora Christians can be bridges to the home country.

Wan's helpful ideas of scattering and gathering, as well as reality of life in the transnational space, suggest similarities with the nomadic lifestyle even though East Asian migrants often live and work in highly industrialised and urbanised societies. I now review Phillips' nomad theology for a context quite different from that for which it was originally written.

*David Phillips'* Nomad theology

In East Asia few migrants settle in the host nation, usually returning home after completing fixed term contracts, although some may serve more than one term. Domestic helpers are more likely to stay in the host nation for longer periods. Generally speaking, the short-term and sometimes circular nature of the migration suggests that nomad theology may have applicability in our context.

David Phillips (2000a) urges us to read the Bible through the eyes of travelling pastoral herders because there are lessons for Christians as well as the nomads whom they may try to reach. Nomadic peoples' inherent vulnerability means they attach importance to relationships rather than to material things and prioritise needs over desires. For the nomad, life is a journey to be experienced and a means as well as a goal. This basic orientation resonates with the simple lifestyle and modest expectations of the foreigner working on contract in East Asia.

In migrant ministry the 'missionaries' are members of the church within the host nation. God leads and provides for those under His care and thus the missionary should demonstrate a God 'nomadic in his transcendence and his immanence' (Phillips, 2000a, p.25) as he is called on to adopt nomadic attitudes himself.

Phillips looks at the OT patriarchs as nomads and describes Israel as 'permanent spiritual nomads' following a God who did not belong to any specific location or people. For him, the pastoral and nomadic lifestyle is an expression of faith, and he sees this in the NT too, most clearly in the 'aliens and strangers' addressed by Peter in his first

letter. Those who know Christ should also see themselves as nomads or migrants, a radical change in mindset for the settled believer in a host nation and a challenge for well-meaning, wealthy Christians reaching out to poor, disenfranchised migrants.

The third part of Phillips' nomadic theology (2000b) pictures Jesus as a nomad, a migrant role model for His missionary followers. Jesus' itinerant lifestyle, dynamic trust in His Father, and lack of material possessions should speak to Christians and could speak to migrants. Phillips sees in Jesus a commitment to travelling as part of a community; the life of rootlessness and vulnerability is lived together and this is seen as migrants gather in East Asia's cities when they have free time.

It can be seen that evangelical writing on migration is still at its infancy and needs more development and depth. Also, there is little which addresses East Asia and the particular situation and the needs of the church here.

## Ecumenical Writings on Migration

*CCME/Nova Research Centre's* Mapping Migration

Darrell Jackson and Alessia Passarelli's (2008) report is a wide-ranging examination of migration in Europe and the church's response. It is a joint effort by the WCC's Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe and Redcliffe College's Nova Research Centre.

They discuss the identity of migrants - strangers - in contemporary Europe, anchoring this with comments from Zygmunt Bauman: 'there are friends and enemies. And there are strangers' (1990, p.143). Jackson and Passarelli suggest that strangers disturb the neat separation into insider and outsider, or between friend and foe, and modernity forces a choice between assimilation and exclusion (p.10). In the six territories I consider in East Asia the default option is exclusion; most migrants are seen and not heard, providing services almost magically without inclusion or even humanity.

In their 'theological approaches to migration' (p.21) the authors argue that there is no direct correlation between the alien in ancient Israel and the migrant in modern Europe, and it seems that the same is true for East Asia. However, the experience of the alien in Israel 'offers revealing insights into the manner in which God expected his people to relate to the 'Other'' (p.21) and this obligation persists into the NT period and remains valid for the church today. In addition, the use of the Other places the emphasis on the ethno-cultural and status-based differences between ancient Israelite and alien, which does seem similar to the East Asian experience.

Finally, Jackson and Passarelli report a correlation between reported church

attendance and expressed concern for migrants' living conditions from the European Values Survey. In Europe at least, some Christians have internalised the notion of caring for the Other.

*The CCME's* Theological Reflections on Migration

The WCC's theological reader, edited by Benz Schär and Ralf Geisler (2008), claims that migration is not addressed by most theologians, and churches that do minister to migrants have very little theological underpinning for their efforts. This is despite the fact that migration connects with all of the major themes of the Bible and runs through the scripture like a 'red thread' (p.4). Further, the biblical view of humanity's basic problem resonates strongly with the modern migration experience. They link migration and theology 'back to the heart of the very concept of God' (p.4). This is an important statement for the current research. Migration is part of life in the European context and migrants can expect or aspire to becoming part of the community. Chapter Two has shown that this is usually not the case for East Asian migrants, as not only is the theological rationale for migrant ministry not strong enough, but also migrants are viewed as a resource, in utilitarian terms.

This connection is made in Jean-Marc Ela's (2008) discussion of *un Dieu metis* (*a crossbreed God*) in the same volume. In Europe, locations involved in migration (embassies, airports, detention centres, the so-called windows of the West) are theological places where God is present at the ordeal of the migrant. We may go further and argue that He inhabits the whole transnational space, marked as it is by alienation, anomie, and 'the fleeting, temporary and ephemeral' (Auge, 2008, p.63). God's meeting with the stranger is central to the biblical story (Ela, p.6).

Ela talks of the anxiety of the stranger, and how God met His people when they faced servitude, humiliation, and shame. Relating to the alien is ingrained in the Israelite religious consciousness and they were forbidden to oppress the alien within their community because they themselves had been aliens in Egypt (Ex 23:22). This Israelite 'corporate memory' (my term) is significant, or should be, for Christians in the host nations of East Asia because each has its own history of migration or foreign domination. Ela argues that God is not neutral and stands on the side of the weak and the destitute (p.7). Justice for the alien is part of the logic of the God of the poor and our treatment of the alien must be informed by the Exodus event. Clearly then, the Exodus memory is not only for the Jews; it should inform the self-understanding of Christians and point forward to the eschaton.

Ela also addresses the superficially paradoxical attitude of the Israelites to aliens. Beyond the clear distinction between Jew and pagan there is an agenda of social, cultic, and salvific inclusion. In the book of Isaiah God calls Egypt and Assyria His people, and Israel must go beyond her corporate memory of suffering and welcome the Other, even the former oppressor. Rejection and exclusion of migrants is simply unacceptable.

Under the heading *Of/from the crossbreed God* ('Du Dieu metis', p.7) Ela proposes that Trinitarian faith helps us embrace diversity by realising that we find our identity not in rejecting the Other but in integrating difference under the aegis of a God of love; indeed a true concept of self requires accepting and meeting the Other (p.8). The original French *du* is ambiguous: Ela seems to be talking about a crossbreed God (*du = about the*) and asking us to derive our identity *from* Him (*du = from the*).

Similar Trinitarian ideas appeal to Jean-Pierre Cavalie, who connects the essential internal unity of God with the unity of humanity. The dream of a unity and blessed humanity is inseparable from (triune) monotheism. Cavalie's second link between Trinity and humanity is the creation of humanity in God's image. This is the foundation of our rights as human beings, and the fulfilment of our individual human potential is a promise of the Kingdom. For this reason, any form of discrimination (on the basis of race, gender, or social status) is a heresy because it is a slur on human dignity and also on the dignity of the God in whose image people are created. Cavalie sets this within a framework constructed by the two greatest commandments, to love God and to love one's neighbour (Mt 22).

Cavalie discusses the neighbour in the Parable of the Good Samaritan and asks if the one who is a stranger to us is in effect our image. The alien is a person who is different from me, yet at the deepest level is actually the same as me. Factors which separate (such as skin colour and custom, and here there are resonances with the X- and Y-separation of migrants) are only superficial and the deeper similarity is more important. When we meet the Other, we must see him or her as similar to ourselves while recognising the differences.

Following this, Cavalie describes Christians as strangers (to the current order) as we look to an eschatological future. Yet we who are called to become strangers are reminded that there should no longer be any strangers among us. Galatians 3:26-28 and Ephesians 2:18-19 are fundamental in emphasising equality and reconciliation and rejecting discrimination. As soon as we elevate ourselves above another we fall into evil; those who see themselves as little gods actually end up as demons (p.14).

The application of Trinitarian ideas is continued by Athanasios Papathanasiou.

Humanity is made in the image of God but the Son is the archetypal image of God and through Him we have the 'possibility of…becoming what the Son is: a citizen of the Holy Trinity' (p.32). Papathanasiou sees a tension between what we are not and what we are called to be, which Paul resolves in terms of adoption (Eph 1:5) rather than sonship 'by nature'. In this ongoing process we only achieve full humanity by being in relation with God and each other, a dynamic requiring us to be rooted in love and different from the world. We are to celebrate uniqueness and diversity and move towards 'true openness to those who represent the not-I' (p.33). The relationship between *I* and *not-I* is derived from the love relationship between God and human beings, although the two natures manifest total Otherness to each other.

Thus Otherness is not a threat to our identity, but in fact central to it, and the essential element for a healthy sense of Otherness and identity is love. If we define Otherness in terms of hatred or violence or exploitation then our relationships become something like that which exists between the devil and humanity. Exploitation based on desire or greed is dehumanising for perpetrator and victim alike and violates our citizenship of the Trinity.

The final contribution in the CCME Reader is that of Heinrich Bedford-Strohm. He believes that rather than top-down teaching the correct response to migration is an ethics of 'self-critique' (2008, p.38). He asks whether our view of foreigners *is* different from that of the broader society. Our convictions about the value of the individual are drawn directly from the creation story and we must not withhold the 'gift of creatorial grace' from those created in God's image.

The Hebrew insistence on the rights of the alien is a consequence of God's desire for people to enjoy shalom in a world marred by both societal and individual sin, claims Bedford-Strohm. He quotes Martin Luther's *homo incurvatus in se ipsum* (*man curved in on himself*), relating our separation from God and separation from each other. He warns us about *communio incurvata in se ipsam* ('a community curved in upon itself', p.39). Rather than caving in to the inward turning which results from sin we are to seek the higher ground and define ourselves by the reality of love. The issue of inward curvature has consequences for cultures which operate relatively impermeable group boundaries and binary distinctions between in and out status, such as those with Confucian influences.

Bedford-Strohm is blunt: self-imposed isolation or curving inward are not options for Christians. Love, *agape*, is essentially 'openness to the Other' (p.41), the foundation of which is Jesus' dual commandment to love God with every fibre of our

being and love those around us as if they were ourselves (Mt 22:36-40). Thus, we not only need to see the Other as ourselves but also see ourselves as the Other. The practical outworking of this perspective is found in Matthew 25, where having made Himself the stranger (v.35) Jesus then juxtaposes insider and outsider in v.40. For Jesus and James (in the second half of James 2) the locking together of faith and ethics means that the community of YHWH faith should curve outward. An 'ethics of empathy' (p.41) means that we should feel *for* the Other because we have felt *like* the Other.

Having established an absolute sense of the Other and our obligation to him or her, Bedford-Strohm then considers graded Otherness. This is relevant for practical Confucianism, which embraces binary, in-or-out, modes of belonging and responsibility. This is not to say that only Confucianism has such clear boundaries; such problems exist in every culture. But Confucianism has structures and practices which seem to legitimise such rigid categories, and these have interacted with cultural and historical factors to produce exclusivism. It is natural to be more concerned about one's own family members than people on the other side of the world, yet the author claims that the Bible requires us to show concern for those with whom we do not have special relations. This is why the Parable of the Good Samaritan is used to answer the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' Indeed, Bedford-Strohm suggests that our concern for those close to us should expand rather than narrow the scope of our concern for others, and if a man acts as a father within his own sphere, the resulting empathy constitutes the ethical and emotional power for engagement with strangers and aliens. One apparently far away can be treated as a near Other. However, the ordeals of migrants described in the previous chapter might suggest something of a gap between theory and practice. However, the theological underpinnings provided by the CCME reader constitute helpful pointers for my research in the East Asian context.

*The WCC's* Theological Reflection on Migration

The final WCC article is by Riggs (2008), who reflects on US immigration. In the light of David Phillips' nomadic theology her criticism of Christians is powerful: 'a settled state of being is often taken as normative. Therefore, migrants are seen as problematic' (p.3).

She also explores our status as God's image bearers and our obligation to see others as such. Looking for and finding abnormality in the Other detracts from our own humanity.

Finally, Riggs reminds her readers of their own 'migrant roots' (p.3). With what

seems like an intentional lack of clarity she appeals to the corporate religious memory of Israel as an oppressed minority, the immigrant heritage of most Americans, and the status of God's people as aliens and strangers (1 Peter). This multilevel memory applies in East Asia also, as in their own different ways the six territories have stories of oppression by outsiders, migration, and Christian identity.

## Roman Catholic Perspectives

There is much in Catholic writing that deals with the themes of oppression and advocacy. It is noteworthy that the Church has been concerned for migrants for a long time already, although migration and the ministry that emerges in response to it have changed over the years.

### The Vatican and European Catholics

The first official statements about ministry to migrants came in *Ethnografia Studia* in 1914, advocating care for Catholic immigrants to countries such as the United States. Following large-scale population movements in Europe during and after World War II, the Vatican's *Exsul Familia* (1952) became the *magna charta* [sic] of the Church's teaching on migration (*Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, 2004).

*Exsul Familia* begins with the escape of Jesus and his parents to Egypt and states that this is the reason that the Holy Family can identify with migrants. Jesus is described as the firstborn among many brothers in the migrant experience, echoing His status as firstborn in Colossians 1 and head of the redeemed in Romans 5.

Ten years later, migration was again addressed during the Second Vatican Council. *Gaudium et Spes* required that 'everyone must consider his every neighbor without exception as another self' (*Gaudium et Spes*, article 27), including migrants. The decree *Ad Gentes* also refers to ministry to migrants. In each case the exact nature of the church's work among migrants is a little hard to determine, as are the theological underpinnings for that work.

Such is not the case in the work of William O'Neill and William Spohn (1998), in what they describe as a 'note on moral theology' in the Jesuit *Theological Studies*. They begin by quoting the requirement to be concerned for the alien in Leviticus 19, and in contrast with modern notions of member/stranger and citizen/foreigner advocate the terms ''near and distant neighbors' (established by the *ordo caritatis,* the right ordering of loves)' (p.98).

They assert that even the most distant of neighbours has certain immutable rights by virtue of being human. The story of the Good Samaritan shows that those to

whom we are willing to be neighbourly is a central issue; in consequence the most important interaction is not within the story but between the 'reader and the Samaritan' (p.103).

The next significant publication from the Vatican was the 2004 *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* (The love of Christ towards migrants). The document repeats some familiar content, but while there is much about the church showing assistance to and concern for migrants discussion of the redemptive message of the gospel is harder to find, with only one suggestion that concern for their well-being may open the door to sharing the gospel.

Something similar is seen in publications from Caritas Europa. Their position paper *Integration: A process involving all* argues passionately that concern be shown to those on the move but does not mention the name of Christ. Indeed, the paper quotes Paul Knitter's statement that the building of the Kingdom is far too great a task for one religion to undertake on its own. The emphasis on justice is to be admired and adopted, but must surely stand alongside the redemptive kingdom encounter with Christ.

*Asian Catholic viewpoints from* Faith on the Move

*Faith on the move: Toward a theology of migration in Asia* (2008), a compilation of conference papers, is arguably the first theologically informed treatment of migration in East Asia by any part of the church.

The introduction, written by co-editor Fabbio Baggio, Director of the Scalabrini Migration Center in Manila, sets the scene admirably. Discussing the responsibility of Christians to others, Baggio reminds us that early church fathers such as Clement of Rome, John Chrysostom, and Ambrose of Milan all mention the Christian duty of hospitality. The Roman Catholic Final Council of Baltimore in 1884 endorsed the duty of hospitality, explicitly linking it with Deuteronomy 10:19 and Matthew 25:35. He claims that all ancient religions contain a requirement to extend hospitality. Interaction with the Other for his or her benefit is a religious universal.

Returning to the responsibility that Christians have towards migrants Baggio reminds us of liberation theologian Gutierrez' linking of migration with God's 'option for the poor and marginalised' (2008, p.xi). The theme of the poor and marginalised is then developed into two 'paths of reflection'. First, migration is 'an image of the existential exodus of human beings' and secondly, migration provides 'a special place for encounter with the 'Other''. Human beings are fundamentally estranged from God, whether they are migrants or not, and all human existence is inherently transient, which

calls for a 'theology of alienness' (p.xii).

Baggio claims that in every foreigner we meet God the 'totally other' is 'mystically present'. The more different a person is from us, the more he or she 'mediates the totally other' (p.xii). Also, although we may fear difference when we meet outsiders our interaction with them confirms our own identity, and thus relating to foreigners and migrants on a practical and spiritual level is part of a process of spiritual maturity for Christians.

The relational and theocentric element is picked up by Felipe Muncada (2008), for whom 'a theology of migration should start with the Blessed Trinity' (p.42). The Trinity models a sharing of love within and beyond the persons and the incarnation is a tangible manifestation of this. At the incarnation, God has 'migrated in Christ' and now we face the 'call to oneness with God' (p.42). Following on from this Muncada laments the lack of welcome for Filipino Catholics from the church in Japan; foreign Christians from a poor country feel like outsiders and some Filipinos even lost their faith as a result.

Moving from Japan to Taiwan, Lou Aldrich reflects on the 'semi-slave condition' of unofficial migrants on the island (2008, p.49) before powerfully linking Israel's ancient obligation to aliens with a somewhat idealised application of Confucian ethics. Israel has a duty to the alien because of their time in Egypt and also because that is what God requires. Aldrich's words for today's church are uncompromising: 'to love the alien is to love Him [Jesus]' and he even warns against 'the rejection of salvation implicit in refusing care to the alien' (p.60). Aldrich quotes Catholic Social Teaching to remind us that workers are not just service providers but spiritual beings and are affected by the individual and corporate sin of human beings. However, there is no mention of the responsibility of Christians to pass on the spiritual heart of the gospel message.

Fair treatment of others is 'consistent with the Confucian concept of 'do not treat others as you would not like to be treated'' (p.60). It is important to be fair to Confucian ethics, especially in the light of the rather critical examination of some aspects of Confucian cultures in the previous chapter. Confucianism does espouse bidirectional, mutual benefit for both parties across differences in status, and just as Confucianists have failed to meet the ethical requirements of their worldviews, so have Jews and Christians. Biblical and Confucian ethics do overlap, yet while Aldrich's affirmation of the Confucian system is meaningful along the Y-axis (differences in social status), there is no explicit consideration of those of a different race or culture (my X-axis).

In her discussion of the cultural rights of migrants Agnes Brazal quotes Catherine La Cugna: 'the identity and unique reality of a person emerges entirely in relation to another person' (1993, p.87). We must welcome outsiders, those who do not belong, because God himself is a 'community of friends' (Brazal, 2008, p.84). The relationality and diversity we inherit from God require that we face outward and bring people inward, sharing our *loob* (*inner self* in Tagalog) with others.

These Asian Catholic theologians have done much to anchor our responsibility to migrants and sketch a theological trajectory for ministry to them in the nature and character of the Triune God. Before moving on from the Catholics to look more deeply at Trinitarian ideas it remains to look at a recent paper by the American scholar and missionary Daniel Groody.

## *Groody's* Crossing the Divide

Groody's 'foundations of a theology of migration and refugees' (2009) emerge from his own work among Mexican migrants and extensive interdisciplinary research. He is concerned that theology has so far made almost no contribution to this general field. Although Catholics have written a lot about the care of migrants, migration has yet to become the object of theological study.

He proposes four fundamentals of a theology of migration, *imago Dei*, *verbum Dei*, *missio Dei*, and *visio Dei* (p.642), each of which requires Christians to break through human barriers. Beginning with the image of God Groody first objects to labels such as 'migrant' or 'refugee' because they emphasise 'political status rather than...human identity', creating 'asymmetrical relationships' and even 'new forms of psychological colonization' (p.643). Labels are usually imposed on outsiders by insiders and there is no more convenient basis for such labelling than race and status. We have learnt of the colonial past of several countries in East Asia and wonder if those previously colonised have become the new colonisers.

By making the image of God the basis for the value of human beings Groody seeks to reduce the dehumanising effect of labels, contrasting 'inner identity' with 'imposed external identity' (p.644). The Trinitarian image brings the potential for relationship as well as bestowing intrinsic value; humans are able to join in the life of God. Groody notes the similarity between the Catholic and Orthodox positions and the difference from the reformed Protestant one.

The concept of the *imago Dei* forms the basis of much Catholic Social Teaching, and because migration in East Asia is largely driven by economics Groody asks three

searching questions: 'What does the economy do *for* people? What does it do *to* people? How do people *participate* in it?' (p.646). In short, how much does a country's economy contribute to the dignity of human beings, particularly the marginalised? Migrant labour in East Asia is seen purely in economic terms whether at the national or household level.

From *imago Dei*, Groody next considers *verbum Dei*, beginning with the openness to the Father which we see in Christ and which should also mark our own lives. Willingness to engage the Other must affect our relationships with people both inside and outside of the church. It is derived from a God who is not afraid of 'downward mobility' (p.649) and undertakes Karl Barth's 'act of extravagance [and] far journey' (2004, p.159). This movement of God to us makes possible our movement to Him (Groody, 2009, p.649). As the first migrant, God becomes Other and breaks through barriers for the Other, action based purely in His grace.

The sense of paradox continues when Goody reminds us that whereas human migration seeks improvement divine migration moves downwards. He paraphrases Karl Barth: Christ's journey is not away from but towards 'alienation, difference, and otherness' (Groody, 2009, p.650) and is an offence to our sinful human values and categories. The ideas from Groody and Barth suggest that God undergoes some form of liminality, a concept introduced later in this Chapter.

Christ's migration is part of the *missio Dei*, whose scope encompasses every aspect of every person and is ultimately about bringing back the *imago Dei* through the cross of the *verbum Dei*. Hence the church has a role in confronting all influences which corrupt God's image in people. For Groody a significant part of this effort belongs at the individual level as Christians challenge borders and categories and engage in reconciliation.

He mentions Jesus' table fellowship (p.657), the interactions with people beyond the pale of social or religious acceptability. These invitations to the marginalised marked the establishment of an eschatological community of the Exodus and caused great consternation to the respectable. Robert Karris' comment that 'Jesus got himself crucified by what he ate' (1985, p.47) has implications for middle-class Christians in East Asia.

Groody next pulls back for a broader perspective. Making space for the Other enriches the host as well as the guest. This is the lead-in to his last element, the *visio Dei*, which says that as well as seeing God we must see from His perspective, and here he borrows from Meister Eckhart. Our attitudes and actions in the here and now must be

determined by our heavenly citizenship, and the church must connect with people on the wrong side of the lines. The kingdom of God changes everything.

Jesus' challenge to human values, the inversion of the first and the last, must be embraced individually and collectively. Groody insists that Christians need a 'cognitive migration' (p.662). He uses a clever play on words to make the point. The Hebrew word for Egypt, *mitsrayim*, means literally *straits*, or *narrow place* or *narrow confinement*. In Exodus 20 the word is taken as Egypt, while in Psalms 116 and 118 and Lamentations 1 the word is translated as *snare*, *distress*, and *confinement* respectively. To Groody this means that the Exodus involves not only physical liberation but also liberation from a narrow way of looking at the world. Goody notes that it proved easier to extract Israel from physical captivity than to remove the narrow thinking from their minds. Something similar exists for us today, as we need to have the darkness removed from our hearts after we have moved from darkness and light. He claims that the mercy passage of Matthew 25:31-46 is crucial in this regard and we must look at people's actual situations rather than the labels attached to them.

He ends with the story of a liturgy being celebrated by a group divided by the Mexican-US border. Along the middle of the worshipping throng is a physical fence and border guards ensure that no one crosses. Yet the joint worship represents the overcoming and rejection of human categories in light of the kingdom of God. This kingdom unity has tremendous implications for the church's response to migration in East Asia, where the barriers are not physical but attitudinal.

Having reviewed migration-specific literature it is now time to look at more diverse writings which will help in building a broader and richer theological framework. The comments on the nature of the Trinity by Groody and the Filipino theologians prepare us for the majestic exploration of similar ideas by the Greek Orthodox theologian John Zizioulas.

## Orthodoxy: Zizioulas' *Communion and Otherness*

The issue of Otherness has been raised in several of the articles reviewed above. Muncada also makes the powerful statement that 'a theology of migration must start with the blessed Trinity' (2008, p.42). The ability and responsibility of the church to relate to the Other is based in faith in a God who relates to the Other, within and without Himself. The Eastern Orthodox theologian Zizioulas is heir to and developer of a rich Trinitarian heritage and it is to his *Communion and Otherness* that I now turn.

In the foreword to Zizioulas, Rowan Williams describes God as complex and

enjoying absolute freedom 'to be completely for and in the Other' (Zizioulas, 2007, p.xi). From this comes a Christian ethics which respects and rejoices in the Other from within the community of faith empowered by the Spirit. This has to be where any theology of migration has its genesis in agreement with Muncada. Thus an Anglican writing the foreword to a theological treatise by an Orthodox scholar is in agreement with a Roman Catholic.

In the wake of this foreword Zizioulas states the problem of the Other in the locus of western culture. His words are worth quoting at length:

> In our culture protection from the other is a fundamental necessity. We feel more and more threatened by the presence of the other. We are forced and even encouraged to consider the other as our enemy before we can treat him or her as our friend. Communion with the other is not spontaneous; it is built upon fences which protect us from the dangers implicit in the other's presence. We accept the other only in so far as he or she does not threaten our privacy or in so far as he or she is useful for our individual happiness (Zizioulas, 2007, p.1).

These words arise from Zizioulas' observation of western societies yet are relevant to other cultural contexts.

Indeed, his points have added significance for the migration phenomenon in East Asia. My previous sociological sketch of migration has shown a dual separation - Otherness - of race and status (my so-called X- and Y-axes) which meshes with traditional Confucian concepts of belonging rooted in the (extended) family and clear separation between generations as well as between superior and inferior. Otherness which leads to exclusion, marginalisation, and oppression I describe as *toxic*. In all societies but especially in Confucian East Asia, social and official norms govern the status and acceptability of migrants. Domestic helpers are to be seen and not heard, providing services to a usually high-status family while themselves remaining locked into very low status. They are physically within the family circle yet are only tolerated because of their instrumentality and may even be considered a threat. Migrant labourers are not dissimilar; they provide beautiful homes and public services for the citizens of the host nation, yet are often viewed with contempt and even fear.

Concerning utilitarian views of the Other, Zizioulas claims that our (sinful) self-affirmation only comes through our rejection of the Other. The basis for our reaching out to the Other is the healthy affirmation of our personhood flowing from a correct relationship with our Creator. The fear of the Other is in reality a fear of Otherness; we can only truly accept other people in so far as they are willing or able to be like us. Zizioulas summarises: 'difference itself is a threat' (p.2). In East Asia the status and

work given to migrant labourers preclude any move towards the host side, and the attitudes of many in the host community are less than welcoming.

To promote recognition and acceptance of the Other, Zizioulas introduces St Maximus' *difference* and *division*. Difference is the healthy acknowledgement of Otherness while division is negative and isolating. Difference accepts the Other without requiring him or her to come over to our side, but division defaults to an impoverished form of 'peaceful co-existence' (p.2). This has poignant relevance for migrants in East Asia.

Turning to the church, Zizioulas claims that the only model for communion and Otherness is the Trinity. If individuals within the church are to relate properly to each other and to the outside world they must reflect the inner relationships of the triune God. The Orthodox theologian tells us that the concept of the Trinity does not derive from unity but actually helps formulate it. Rather than substance as the guarantor it is the monarchia of the Father that sustains the unity of the Trinity. In this view the Otherness that exists between the three members of the Trinity is an essential condition for their unity: unity exists because of Otherness. This is clearly a healthy otherness of accepting *difference* rather than an otherness in which unity exists in spite of and in the face of *division.* The relationships between the members of the Godhead are supremely important. No one can experience difference without relationship. In isolation there is no difference as there is no reference point.

The implications for life within the Christian community are profound. As Other to the Father Jesus submitted to His will and we must do the same. Jesus' experience of *kenosis* at the incarnation is a model for us as we relate to God, to other Christians, and to those outside the church. In this 'kenotic approach to the other' (p.6) communion depends simply on a person's Otherness and not on any attributes. We relate to Others because they are there and cannot discriminate because of our perception of their worthiness. While Zizioulas discusses this in general terms, the phenomenon of migration, or rather the migrant as a person, makes the ideas much more specific: we must accept those often judged unacceptable by human categorisations.

Rather than degrees of acceptability (in our case of race and status) we now have the simple polarity of *I and thou*. This repudiates humanity's obsession with boundaries (drawn of course by *ego*) and focuses us on a centre Other to ourselves, God Himself. I am reminded of Bonhoeffer's discussion of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis 3. Because the tree is at the centre of the garden the 'human being's limit is at the center of human existence, not on the margin' (1997, p.86). The centre is

the boundary and we should not continually push to the limits and delineate human relationships and degrees of Otherness. This results in our falling into the trap of - with apologies to George Orwell - *all human beings are Other, but some are more Other than others*. A view of self which faces God at the centre allows us to welcome others.

Zizioulas invites us to look upon Others not in terms of their past or present but rather in terms of their future. If we adopt an eschatological perspective on Otherness then 'every 'other' is in the Spirit a potential saint' (p.6), in accordance with the church's inherently missional nature. Our value and being come from God and our primary arena for healthy relationships is the church yet as far as possible we must treat non-Christian Others as we treat brothers and sisters in the Lord. Firstly, non-Christians are also human Others to us and this Otherness is more fundamental than the *difference* (or more often *division*) between believer and non-believer, and secondly, our respectful and courteous treatment of those around us may be part of their journey to faith.

Following this Zizioulas claims that 'respect for otherness is becoming a central ethical principle in civilized societies' (p.14). He asks if Otherness is simply desirable or in fact essential for our societies, but we have seen that in the East Asian context Otherness between citizens is viewed very differently from that between citizen and non-citizen. Many nations in the South of East Asia have enjoyed diversity for a very long time, and Singapore has made interracial and inter-religious harmony part of the national philosophy. But there is a glaring mismatch of difference and division. *Difference* between citizens (of different races and religions) is applauded and safeguarded yet a fundamental *division* exists between citizens and short-term migrants. The bifurcated migration policies of many East Asian nations reflect a secondary *division* between acceptable Others (usually Caucasian or rich Asian) and unacceptable Others. An expatriate may marry a citizen but short-term migrant labourers are forbidden from doing so. This raises the question of the church's role in constructing Zizioulas' 'civilized' society and has implications for public theology.

It is part of the task of this dissertation to develop and apply ideas of the Trinity and Otherness from the CCME reader, the Asian Catholic scholars, and Zizioulas for the East Asian situation.

Having moved some distance from protestant evangelicalism it is logical and appropriate to travel a little further and benefit from the insights of two Jewish scholars.

**Two Modern Jewish Philosophers: Buber and Levinas**

Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas were two modern Jewish philosophers separated by World War Two and by their adopted homelands. Buber was a German Jew writing before the war, while the Lithuanian Levinas took up residence in Paris and wrote in the light of the Holocaust.

## *Martin Buber's* I and Thou

Buber's classic *I and thou* (original German edition, *Ich und Du*, 1923) provides a useful framework for certain aspects of relationships between people. He states that *I* can never exist alone and must always be in a relationship of some kind. He classifies relationships into two types: the *I-thou* and the *I-it* . One is from *I* to a grammatical second person and the other from *I* to a grammatical third person. In one case we speak to a person and look him or her in the eye, while in the other we refer to a person or entity almost obliquely. We can picture this as three orthogonal axes, expressed by the thumb and first two fingers, in which the *I-thou* points *to* someone (along the first finger), while *I-it* points *at* someone or something (along the second finger). For good measure, the third person pronoun *it* (rather than *he* or *she*) devalues the Other in the *I-it* relation. Similar ideas are expressed by Barth (1960) in his discussion on the 'basic form of humanity'. Buber says that the *I-thou* relation involves the whole person of *I* whereas the *I-it* does not. He describes three spheres of relation, nature, people, and spiritual things, reminding us that we can communicate albeit in different ways to each of the three spheres in terms of *I-thou*.

In addition, 'in each thou we address the eternal Thou' (p.6). Each interaction we have with another as a (grammatical) second person is relational and ultimately connects with God; indeed 'the extended lines of relations meet in the eternal Thou' (p.75). Wright reminds us that central to *I and thou* is the connection between 'spiritual life and...interpersonal relations' (2007, p.106). One question is whether Buber considers the *eternal Thou* as passive, an entity which we merely perceive or nod to as we look upon a non-eternal *thou*. More than just mental assent is required; as we look upon any *thou* and thence into the face of the eternal *Thou* we will be convicted of our iniquity, generally and specifically with regard to our relationship with the *thou*. Seeing beyond and through *thou* and into the face of the eternal *Thou* must be a transformational, ethical experience.

Choosing to address a person as *thou* recognises his or her humanity and highlights that person for the period of the conversation. It involves a commitment from the *I*; indeed we only become *I* to the extent that we can say *thou*. The degree to which

we are willing to accord humanity to others is the degree to which we can claim humanity for ourselves.

Therefore, if we look on the Other only in terms of instrumentality or pragmatism we cannot truly accord them *thou* status and our own being is also affected. To analyse or objectify the other person is also to impose a boundedness which robs the relationship of its existential freshness and limitlessness. True *I-thou* relationships exist without the interference of systems, expectations, or a priori assumptions. The relevance to separation of people by race and status is obvious. Buber comments further that between the *I* and the *thou* there must be a mutuality of love, with the *I* taking responsibility for the *thou*.

We are urged to preserve relationships as *I-thou* and avoid slipping into the more utilitarian *I-it*. For Buber, *I-thou* moments are odd, exhilarating, liberating, and take us beyond our normal ways of behaving. In short, true moments of *I-thouness* are liminal, 'betwixt and between' (Turner, 1969).

It is argued that the *I* of the *I-thou* and the *I* of the *I-it* are distinct. The *I* of the *I-thou* is personal and exists in and for relationships, while the *I* of the *I-it* emphasises differentiation and division. One is concerned with connectedness while the other seeks quite the opposite. Further, connectedness has something of the divine in it while individuality is ultimately about making use of someone. Our use of *I-thou* or *I-it* is a matter of attitude and choice. Sometimes we desire personhood and relationship and at other times it suits us to differentiate and maximise division. What may be toxic about the combination of migration in East Asia and the dominant worldview of those in power is that it is easy to emphasise personhood 'with people like us' and difference from Others, those hired to carry out household tasks, build condominiums, or work in factories.

Physical, emotional, and especially sexual abuse of migrant workers confronts us with a dynamic intermediate state between *thou* and *it*. Just as in cases of the rape of black slaves by white plantation owners in the US or the rape of Jewish women by Nazi officials, a female migrant worker (Other) is *thou* or human enough to be sexually attractive to an unscrupulous employer or supervisor. Yet at the same time, she is different enough, or *it* enough, to be exploited and denied her rights. The subjective view and desires of the powerful are decisive.

Exploitation or commodification of female domestic helpers is not unknown in Christian circles. A Christian may pray to God as part of an *I-eternal Thou* relationship but persists in or acquiesces to exploitative, utilitarian practices which downgrade a

migrant *thou* to an *it*. The two greatest commandments are helpful here. Loving God with our whole being emphasises the relationship between *I* and the *eternal Thou*, reducing the influence of the fall and setting the *I* in the close relationship with God for which it was created. Then the commandment to love one's neighbour as oneself entails relating to *each and every* Other as *thou* and never as *it*. From Buber's reasoning I derive the union of the two commandments, as *I-thou* relationships ultimately point to and reflect *I-eternal Thou*.

Finally, Buber gives an interesting perspective on community, describing it as a circle. Each peripheral *I* must have a relation with the *eternal Thou* and the relation is represented by a radius. True community (a perfect circle) can only exist when all the *I*s are joined to the Centre (the *eternal Thou*) by radii of equal length. Emphasising certain peripheral members (of the community) without considering their relation to the Centre is doomed to failure. If some members are more equal than others, then the radii are of unequal lengths and the circle is distorted and no longer represents true community (Wright, 2007).

Buber provides a useful framework for looking at relations between *I* and *thou*. However, he does not consider the issue of *We -thou* or the relation of the inside group to a notional outside individual, both important in an East Asian or Confucian context. Also, some claim that his view of the *I* and *thou* relationship is too symmetrical and does not consider power inequalities. Further, some critics argue that his treatment of the *I-thou* polarity needs great focus on ethics. We now attend to some of these considerations in the work of his fellow Jew Emmanuel Levinas.

### *Emmanuel Levinas' The Other, Ethics, and the Face*

While Buber has contributed one great work relevant to our theme Levinas has several, written over a relatively long period of time. In much of his work can be seen his reflections on the experience of the Holocaust.

In his early writing Levinas begins by describing the Other in almost existential terms: 'the Other is what I am not' (1987, p.83). Immediately though, an asymmetry is introduced which has biblical roots. It is argued that while *I* might be rich and powerful the Other may be weak and poor, or a widow or orphan. The alien is not mentioned specifically yet is part of the Old Testament group (widow, orphan, and alien) who need protection. Although the Other is defined in terms of *non-I*, rather than see this person as a threat Levinas chooses to view him or her as 'kin or someone who could be' (Morgan, 2007, p.33).

Levinas expends very little time on what might be called the ontology of the Other, preferring to focus on ethical considerations. The very presence of the Other brings an ethical demand or imposition and thus I rephrase Luther's original to reflect this new orientation: *homo excurvatus ad alterum* (*man curved outward to the Other).* Levinas says our personal, ordinary lives are interrupted by an obligation to every person around us caused by their existence (Morgan, 2007). Responsibility comes before understanding, and an ethic of hospitality is expressed in *Totality and Infinity* (Levinas, 1969). Levinas argues that 'to recognise the other is to recognise a hunger. To recognise the other is to give' (1969, p.73). Levinas adds a mild critique of Buber; where Buber's *I-thou* appears limited by a fundamental reciprocity of relationship, Levinas' concept of the relationship between *I* and the Other has a status differential at its centre. In fairness to Buber, his differentiation between *I-thou* and *I-it*, centred on the *I*, does seem to allow for a subjective non-reciprocity, and Tamra Wright (2007) argues that asymmetry is part of Buber's scheme. Furthermore, the very fact that the view from *I* to *thou* extends beyond the *thou* to the *eternal Thou* must have an ethical element if the *eternal Thou* is an ethical being. Levinas' claim that we commune with God through our relationship with the other is reminiscent of Buber's logic.

Levinas powerfully encapsulates both the asymmetry and responsibility inherent in our relationship with the Other through the metaphor of the *face*. This concept not only personalises and humanises the Other, it also contains a plea or appeal. The face is a 'plea of the weak to the powerful over poor to the rich' (Morgan, 2007, p.66), an ethical demand from one human to another. To the concept of the *face* Levinas adds that of *height*. Because the understanding of the Other as the face is primarily ethical and derived ultimately from God, Richard Cohen believes that height is 'a moral force encountered in the other's face as the subject's obligation to and responsibility for that other person' (1994, p.183). This is effectively to invert the status differential; where the eye might be tempted to look down on the Other, an ethics which is rooted ultimately in God challenges us to view others as better than ourselves (Phil 2:3). The height of the face means that a call is made to which we have to respond (Peperzak, 1997) and in *Totality and Infinity* Levinas expands the concept of election to include our election by the Other.

Returning to the marginalised, Morgan (2007) may be right in claiming that Levinas sees them as representative of all humanity; the vulnerable are the most Other in our society. To this we can add Bernhard Waldenfels' provocative comment that Levinas' use of the word proximity 'reminds us of the biblical neighbour who has more

to do with the stranger's than with the friend's face. Proximity does not coincide with affinity' (2002, p.75). One question which Levinas does not seem to address is the possible effect of distance on the face. If distance is the opposite of proximity, can the appeal or power of the face be reduced when it is far away (conceptually, relationally, or socially) from the *I*? At some point does the face no longer function as a face? Can the ethical height of the face be compromised by distance? These are very pertinent questions for Christians within a Confucian framework.

## Miroslav Volf's *Exclusion and Embrace*

Writing against the background of ethnic strife in the former Yugoslavia Volf claims that we must 'place identity and otherness at the center of theological reflection on social realities' (1996, p.17). Although migration in East Asia does not create obvious ethnic tension and there is no balkanisation inherent in migrant labour his assertion rings very true for our context and research.

Discussing identity, Volf reminds us of the importance of the recognition we receive from those around us. The way that people treat us can result in a form of individual or social imprisonment and dehumanisation. As a consequence, we must pay attention to the kind of people we are in order to promote harmonious relationships and we have a behavioural and ethical responsibility to others. Theologians should shape people into those who bring about societies which manifest truth and justice (p.21). Such a task is especially important where moral responsibility is moved away from the individual and made part of the state or bureaucracy. This is of particular relevance for East Asia, where abuse of migrants is sometimes justified or excused by reference to legal frameworks and socio-cultural institutions which are simply unjust. Volf wants more from Christian people.

Like Levinas, Volf believes that our relation to the Other is an ethical issue, although unlike the Lithuanian Jew the Croatian Christian appeals to the cross as the basis. According to Juergen Moltmann (1992) Jesus enters into the suffering of the vulnerable in an act of solidarity. Our response must be Volf's drama of embrace (p. 29), through which we adjust our identity to make space for Others on the basis of shared humanity alone. There can be no truth or justice unless there is embrace, and I am reminded of the uncompromising link between truth and love in 1 Corinthians 13 and the letters of John.

Volf's agenda has practical consequences, and he reminds us that Christians often so identify with the mainstream culture that they are unable and in some cases

even unwilling to stand against it. His call for us to be counter-cultural has relevance for middle-class Christians in East Asia, who may be part of exploitative systems, captivated by a materialistic and success oriented mentality, and ignorant of the degree to which Confucian familism and hierarchy affect their relations with ethnic others. Volf also warns us against simple acceptance of the unjust status quo. There will always be victims of muggings on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho but if we go and help there will be one less lying there.

Christian commitment 'entails rearrangement of a whole network of allegiances' (p.40) and a shift from the ephemeral false gods of ancient tradition and modern culture towards the self-giving and transforming God. Unlike Abraham, whose new faith orientation required several different forms of departure and cutting of relationships, we are called to depart *within* our cultures, especially as we receive migrants. Migration is about the racial and social Other coming into our community and it is essential that Christians transform their culture's attitude toward the Other by departing from it while remaining part of it.

We do this because of an eschatological commitment to God and His purposes, which entails a Spirit-created crack allowing Others of all kinds to enter. The resulting 'space in us to receive the other' is a ''catholic personality', a personal microcosm of the eschatological new creation' (p.51). The catholic personality is also part of a catholic community; the *us and them* mentality must give way to a more inclusive attitude. Yet at the same time, we are not simply to absorb the Other and boundaries of identity are part of human existence. The tension between total individualistic fragmentation and a nightmarish sameness is a natural consequence of our finite person being created in the image of a God who is one and also three. This balance of separating and binding then continues on into our human experience (Volf, 1996; Plantinga, 1995).

Volf turns next to exclusion. When we come across people who may disturb our neat 'happy ending' (p.59) we need to justify their exclusion. He then quotes at some length from the thought of Michel Foucault (1998) to show how our identity is formed by the exclusion of Others. Volf is not opposed to boundaries, as we need them to make sense of our world, yet he argues for 'nonexclusionary boundaries that map nonexclusionary identities' (p.64). Volf argues his points about inclusion and exclusion with great clarity, but his analysis does not seem to cover what appears to be a utilitarian *indifference* to the needs and feelings of migrant workers in East Asia. The dehumanisation of the distant Other under materialistic Confucianism makes issues of boundaries and identity irrelevant; many migrants are effectively robots.

# Liminality and Communitas

Another part of the analytical framework is liminality and communitas. The term liminality is derived from the Latin word *limen*, meaning *a threshold*. The concept of liminality originated with Arnold van Gennep in 1909 in his analysis of religious rites of passage. His analysis of these rights revealed three distinct phases. The first was breaking away from so-called normal life; the second was a threshold or *limen* experience in which those involved in rituals were cut off from their usual existence but had not yet reached the stability of a new status; the third phase was a return to everyday life with some kind of new status as a result of the rite. It thus refers to a notion of 'in between-ness' (van Gennep, 1960, p.192)

In modern scholarship the concept of liminality is principally associated with the work of Victor Turner, who broadened its usage into anthropology and sociology. Turner applies the idea to those in experiences of transition, who are neither one thing nor the other and who function as outsiders (Turner, 1967). Such people are described with the now classic phrase 'betwixt and between' (Turner, 1969, p.95). Communitas is the social milieu - Charles La Shure's (2005) 'antistructure' - created when people interact in the liminal situation, spontaneously, freely, and liberated from externally imposed and recognised societal status norms (Turner, 1979). For Tuan Yi-Fu (1986) communitas is the bond between strangers or pilgrims thrown together by liminal circumstances; it offers excitement but also intimacy (Balduk, 2008).

In recent years, liminality has become a more complex idea applied to a very wide range of disciplines. The literature is increasingly unclear about whether liminality and the 'betwixt and between' experience refer to something static or dynamic. Turner's original idea derived from a rite of passage from one state to another is now seen as rather narrow, and has now been supplemented by the idea of a (semi-) permanent in-between status.

This broader understanding is explicitly linked to the migration experience by Yoka van Dyk, whose notion of 'a state of being in between here and there, in-between places and in-between cultures' (2005, p.9) summarises and borrows from Homi Bhabha (1994). The complexity of our modern world with its variety of notions of identity and belonging means that we have to see liminality not only as a transitional state between origin and destination, but also as a condition of (semi-) permanent in-betweenness which may or may not have a notional endpoint. The original liminal experience was well-defined and established by social and religious convention.

However, modern liminal states may be open-ended, ill-defined, and quite often imposed on those undergoing them. Such experiences may have an endpoint such as citizenship or cultural assimilation, but even here progress may be so slow as to be almost glacial. In addition, in the case of 'coerced liminality' (Lee, 2010, p.33) a person is passive in one way or another, someone to whom liminality happens. Such is the experience of female migrants to South Africa, whose lives are suspended 'between an often romanticised past and an imagined future' (Kihato, 2009, p.19).

The nature of migration in East Asia is complex and although the main paradigm would seem to be one of non-acceptance and denial of long-term residence, migrants relate to the broader society on a number of different levels. In some cases it is difficult to make simple, black and white distinctions between acceptance and non-acceptance, or even static or dynamic liminal experiences. Even Turner's original sense of transition is found to be inadequate as it is essentially one-dimensional. The reality is that the migration experience can be examined from several different viewpoints. There is a subjective notion of feeling at home in the new location, which may cause strain with a sense of attachment to the person's home. This may relate to culture shock and attendant coping strategies, and the migrant's perception of his or her work or vocation. There is also the matter of identity, as a person asks the question, 'Who am I, a person from location X, working in country Y, with status Z?' Further, there are objective factors of acceptance by the host environment (nationally, ethnically, individually and as a member of a group).

A Thai construction worker on a fixed contract in Taiwan may experience a semi-permanent liminal state in which his sense of belonging or acceptance is virtually zero and has no potential to change while he is in the country. On the other hand, a Filipina domestic helper may remain with the same Singapore family for years and build strong relationships with its members, particularly children who grow up partially under her care. In addition, longer term residence, facility in English, and partial integration into a vibrant Diaspora Filipino community may all contribute to a more dynamic liminal experience. Subjectively or individually there is a movement from new migrant who has been ripped out of existing relationships in the home country to a member of a diasporic community which is to some extent part of and assimilated to mainstream, pluralistic Singapore or Hong Kong. For this reason, a broad and flexible concept of liminality is applied to the realities of migration in East Asia.

The different kinds of migration experience have caused some to distinguish between liminals and marginals (La Shure, 2005). He retains the idea of *liminal* for

those within a trajectory of movement, whereas his *marginals* remain in limbo, interstitial people who have 'temporarily fallen through the cracks'. This is echoed by Lee, who uses *marginality* to refer to exclusion and *liminality* to highlight its 'potentially creative aspect' (2010, p.x). Marginalisation in the liminal space results in dehumanisation (p.5), more akin to Buber's *I-it* than *I-thou*. The experience of the migrant mirrors the view of all cultures which 'divides the world into a here and there, we and they' (Alsop, 2002, p.16). As interstitials, migrants are invisible, the victims of attitudes which cast them as Other (Kihato, 2009, p.139). Otherness and liminality are thus clearly linked.

Lee Sang-Hyun's description of the Asian American experience places the immigrant in the liminal space, but I wish to argue that in the interaction between host and migrant both parties can and should consider themselves liminal. *I* and *thou* both enter and meet in the liminal space: we meet the Other there. Host and migrant both experience liminality and Otherness, yet the migrant is far more *betwixt and between* than the host - return to *Animal Farm* again. It is as if one party stands fully in a circle, naked and vulnerable, while the other, fully clothed and self-confident, places just one foot into the same circle. In the case of maids the liminal space is restrictive whereas for employers the same space is facilitative. This phenomenon I call *differential liminality*. It will be seen in the study of Old Testament that a similar situation obtained in ancient Israel. The nation itself was liminal (for a number of reasons), and yet when Israel and alien met the game was played was on Israel's terms.

Finally, and this is where there are implications for the church, liminality and communitas can also bring liberation (Kihato, 2009) from old structures and modes of thought and openness to the new and exciting (Lee, 2010). Again, such liminal liberation should also be enjoyed by the host as well as the migrant. Liminal openness is an essential characteristic of faith in Yahweh.

**Concluding Remarks**

A wide range of books and articles has been reviewed in the light of the sociological portrait of migration presented in Chapter Two. It is clear that a response to migration in East Asia which is biblically and theologically robust needs to draw on the wisdom of various parts of the church and indeed our Jewish friends. I have identified Otherness, liminality, and communitas as significant new lenses through which to look at the Bible. The insights from the literature review will facilitate interaction with Old Testament teaching on migrants (specifically resident aliens, *pace* Groody!) in Chapter Five, and

the process will continue with the New Testament in Chapter Six in a manner consistent with a view of the Old Testament as the theological and typological forerunner of the New.

**Chapter 4**
**Migration and the Ancient Faith Community**

**Introduction**

In the previous chapter were presented a review of pertinent literature and an introduction to the concepts of Otherness and liminality, which I have chosen as the two main lenses through which to examine the scriptures in working towards a theological response to migration in East Asia. Otherness and liminality are related but separate concepts, and I propose to join them together like a pair of binoculars, to continue the optical metaphor. That said, Otherness remains by far the more important of the two.

The primary aim of this chapter is to look at the injunctions relating to the alien which were given to Israel by God in the Pentateuch - these I call the 'alien mandate'. The commands are identified and explained, but in addition their paradigmatic and theological significance for migration in East Asia is investigated. The results of both of these exercises will be fed forward into the subsequent NT and integration chapters, consistent with a biblical theology approach; thus the ideas emerging from this OT chapter will have value on their own terms, as well as serving as the basis for examining the NT. This process will also demonstrate that ministry to migrants is indeed mission. A subsidiary goal of the chapter is to discuss very briefly some aliens who made their home in Israel. Finally, some verses from the rest of the OT (beyond the Pentateuch) which refer to aliens are examined.

The chapter begins by looking at the community of faith as an expanding envelope, the edges of which allow interactions between host community and inward moving migrant. This is followed with a consideration of community, Otherness, and liminality as these relate to God. Next I look at the lives of three Israelite leaders from the twin viewpoints of Otherness and liminality. The idea is that Israel as a community of faith experiences Otherness and liminality just as her God and her founding fathers also did - to have faith is to embrace these two conditions. A subsequent section on Israel's experience of Egypt and Exodus continues this line of thought, but demonstrates that Otherness is subjective and involves a choice for good or evil.

The final two sections before the detailed analysis of commands constituting the 'alien mandate' concern Israel's role as a missional entity and the identity of the alien referred to in the Pentateuch. Following the discussion of the Pentateuchal material about the alien comes a brief review of aliens within Israel and post-Pentateuchal references to aliens, before a short conclusion.

**An Expanding Envelope of Community and Mission**

As we look at migration, the position in this research is that we need to understand the

fundamental distinction between the host community and those who come into it. That is to say, we must think in terms of the community of faith and the Other, where the latter is the outsider due to faith or race or other factors. The distinction between those who belong and those who do not is fundamental to this treatment of migration. This is a conclusion suggested by the profile of migration in East Asia in Chapter Two and the literature review in Chapter Three. As we look at those at the centre and those at the periphery (those classed as Other), it may be convenient to consider an expanding, triangular structure originating from a singularity. This triangular model bears some similarity to Chris Wright's (1995, p.27ff) representation (see fig 1) of covenant promises. Wright shows how promises beginning with God are first manifest through the people of Israel and then expanded to the church. When discussing God's promise about the land Wright begins with God at the top of a triangle. Under the old covenant, the people of Israel sit at the bottom left corner and the physical land of Israel is at the bottom right. Then, to represent the new covenant, Wright adds a larger triangle with the same apex, as God is the origin of promises under both covenants. In this larger triangle, the whole of mankind is at the bottom left (an expanded form of the people of Israel) and the whole earth at the bottom right, an extension of the physical land of Israel. The paradigmatic relationship between the two covenants is shown by means of two triangles (p.34). They are reproduced here for clarity:
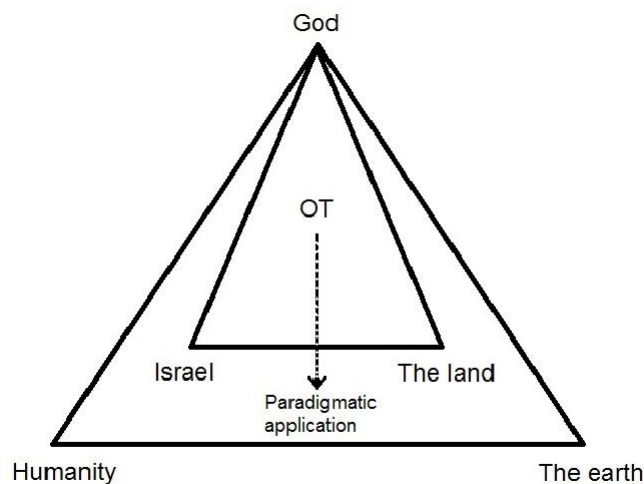


Fig 1. Wright's paradigmatic relationship between the covenants.

I propose a second, analogous triangular model for thinking about the alien. God is at the top of the triangle of the faith community because it originally grew from Him and at the moment of creation it was a singularity: God and God alone. Later, under the old covenant, Israel projects out from Him, reaching out into the world but distinct from it (see fig 2). Later still, extending further outwards from Israel is the new community of faith since the coming of Christ. Here, the usefulness of the triangle is not Wright's two distinct corners but the big-bang expansion from a point. For the moment only I leave aside the important matter of God as a triune community in Himself.

If the triangles represent the growing community of faith then the space around them represents people outside it. For the current research the boundaries of the triangles are significant as interfaces between *faith and no-faith* or *faith and other-faith*. At these interfaces transmission of faith and implementation of biblical social concern and justice can occur. These regions are spaces of Otherness and liminality for both faith bearer and faith recipient.
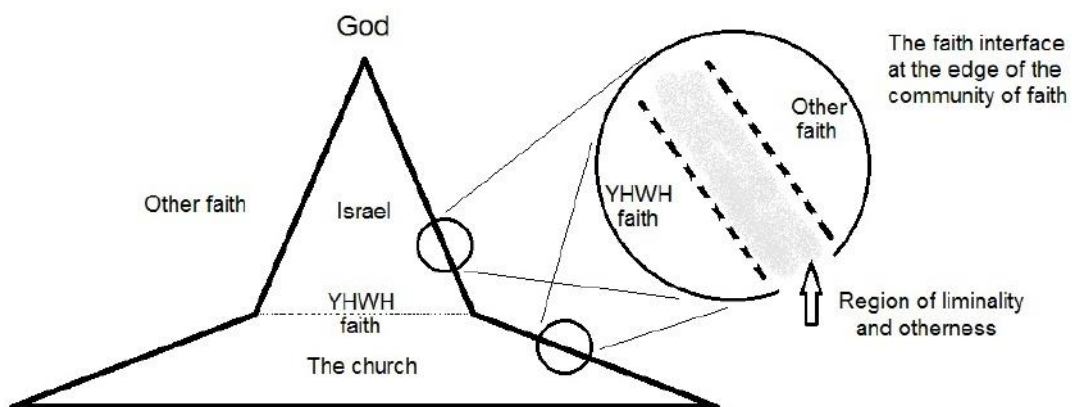


Fig 2. The expanding community and the faith interface.

In both Testaments the attitude of the community of YHWH faith (this term is used to refer to those who believe in the God of the Bible in both Testaments) to the Other involve the two related factors of spiritual dependence on God and the social justice which such faith entails. I propose a missional triangle with God at the apex and spiritual redemption at one lower corner and social justice at the other (see fig 3, below). Both lower corners are important and as mission proceeds should move outwards at the same rate to promote biblical shalom. And as any geometry student knows, if one corner moves faster or further than the other the triangle will be distorted.

Fig 3. The balance between spiritual redemption and social justice.

## God

It is important to lay an OT foundation for the work by exploring the nature of God and His relationship to His image bearers. Therefore, it is necessary to look at attributes and experience of God relevant to migration.
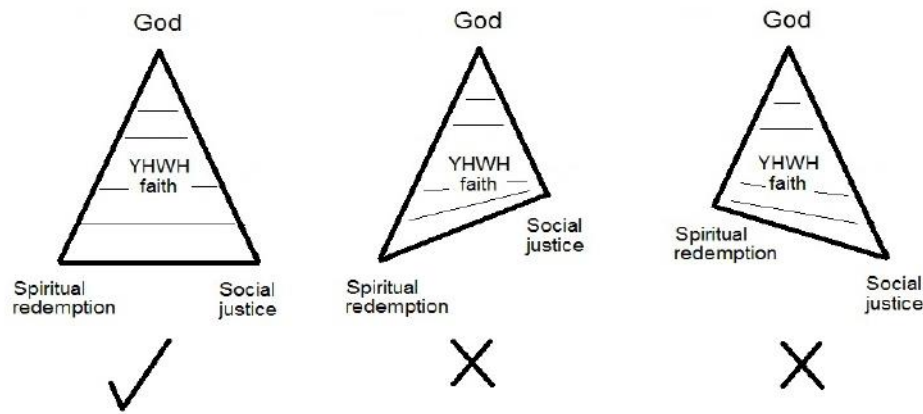
God is the origin of humanity and provides the pattern for much of the experience of Israel and the alien. Our notions of Otherness and (to a lesser extent) liminality, community and belonging are derivative and second order, and can be traced back to Him. His rejection and isolation at the hands of those He created is also relevant to our own experience.

### God and the Other: The Genesis of Community

The beginning of the Bible proclaims that God is distinct from that which He created. I conclude that the creation of the very first particle of matter or energy marks the first time that anything has existed apart from God and He must now relate to the Other, as He is no longer the only entity that exists.

For the first time in history (whatever that means in this context) God is confronted with the Other. Then incrementally and in accordance with His plan the complexity of the Others increases (from inorganic, through organic, plants, lower animals, to higher animals), reaching a climax in mankind. The repeated 'Let there be…' is replaced by the singular and personal 'Let us make…', which includes the remarkable 'in our image'. Inside a physical being trapped in space and time is implanted something which can relate to a God who is infinite Spirit, and as He goes beyond Himself into that space with human language and later by theophany and other forms of revelation, God's condescension is for Him a pseudo-liminal experience. The implanting of the image is also the beginning of a community which has the potential to place faith in the Creator. The triune God is the original faith bearer, the first to bring out to humanity the message of trust in, dependence on, and relationship with Himself.

His human creatures are to respond and then be faith bearers also, displaying and passing it on to those around them.

With the creation of the first man and first woman the faith community grows from a divine singularity to a triangle, albeit a very small one. Adam and Eve are dependent on God for life, both spiritual and physical, and His care for them even after the Fall reflects the two corners of the missional triangle. God's creation plan explicitly involves creating and relating to the Other, and then enlarging faith and belonging beyond Himself.

At this point it will be instructive to look at the nature of the Trinity. God has always been Trinitarian even if that was not clearly revealed in the OT! So far we have laid a foundation for the research in terms of a community of faith, which should manifest and advocate spiritual faith and social justice in tandem. This community begins with the singularity which is God, as He alone existed before the creation. Yet we know that viewing God as a singularity brings only a partial understanding. We talk of God as a single entity and rightly so, but we know that beyond the OT event horizon (to borrow an idea from black holes) lies the complexity of God's triune nature, which we can only understand partially.

God is the beginning of our faith and the One from whom we take it and pass it on to others. We are to live in relationship with Him and proclaim this relationship to others; this basic *modus operandi* is common to both covenants. However, God desires and generates community between Himself and His people because He is a community within Himself. Within the Godhead lies another, perfect form of community which is the wellspring of faith, belonging, and reaching out to the Other.

At the creation God the triune entity encounters the distant or created Other for the first time. Yet within Himself there has always been Otherness, as each Person exists in a perfect balance of unity and plurality. Indeed, Zizioulas (2007) claims that Otherness within the Godhead is a condition of its unity while Stanley Grenz (2001) employs Moltmann's idea of separation-in-unity (Moltmann, 1974). Colin Gunton discusses the thought of John Macmurry and concludes that love 'must be directed towards another' and that ultimately it will seek to share with a third party (1997, p.91). The triune perichoresis contains perfect management of Otherness and the *I-thou* relationship as each member is curved outwardly to the Other in holy love. Each member of the Godhead relates to two near Others in love and without difference of opinion, separation, or discrimination, and this is God's motivation and pattern for His relations with His image-bearers and between them. Although Lee (2010) mentions liminality within the Godhead, this is difficult as the concept has as its basis finiteness and a degree of passivity or patience, in the sense of the agent-patient distinction in linguistics. In this research it is claimed that there is some discontinuity between God's

own internal experience and the pattern for His creatures, particularly concerning liminality.

In God's creation of and reaching out to men and women we see that He wishes to create community. Men and women are distinct individuals who only find true meaning and identity in community, an echo of the unity and diversity within the Godhead. The individual existence and personality of human beings is recognised, but this is together with the vital element of existing with Others.

*God as Other: Rejection and Marginalisation*

If we are to take seriously the idea of a community of faith expanding from God Himself, into Israel under the old covenant and then out into all humanity under the new, then we must also consider the experience of being Other. Israel and the church are commanded to show concern for the Other, not only because this is right in the sight of God but also because God's people are to share His experience of Otherness.

The God who is distinct from the creation relates to it and above all to humanity across an ontological, spiritual, and moral divide. Tracing God's experience of being Other, on the periphery, will feed into the experience of the patriarchs, Israel as a nation, the Lord Jesus, and the church. God's experience is a pattern for that of His people.

God's placing of Adam and Eve inside Eden has the result that inside this space exist other minds and wills in addition to His own, which like Him make choices, such as naming the animals and ultimately taking the forbidden fruit. God's love for us exposes Him to the danger of rejection while He remains omnipotent, omnipresent and completely self-sufficient. Yet it seems that by involving Himself in this new situation God is undergoing at least some form of relational liminality, although it taxes our minds to imagine what that means for an infinite Existence. Interestingly enough, although Lee (2010) argues for liminality within the Trinity - which I fail to see - he does not appear to associate the concept with the God-man relationship. Yet I believe that some sort of relational liminality is present in scripture and I hear echoes of Moltmann's divine self-limitation (1985). At the Fall the first man and woman rejected their 'creatureliness' (Bonhoeffer, 1997, p.120) and sought to place themselves at the centre of their existence. God was pushed to the periphery and marginalised relationally. He moved from a near to a distant Other; henceforth the relationship between God and humanity is characterised by tension between acceptance and rejection (Stahl, 1995).

After the Fall God's interaction with Israel continues to be liminal, the overlap of the 'divine and human realms' (Stahl, 1995, p. 87). Ela (2008) talks about the 'cross-breed God' whose appearance as a guest in Genesis 18 reminds us of the people that we would rather not see. We see this at Sinai, through God's choice of a mountain for His encounter with the nation through Moses. The motif continues throughout God's

interaction with His people. The tabernacle, the temple (a condescension of the infinite to the finite), the incarnation, the transfiguration, and the post-resurrection appearances of Christ are all betwixt and between experiences for God as well as Israel. The scriptures suggest that the liminal experiences are different for God and Israel, as one party is infinite, loving, and sinless, while the other is finite, fickle, and sinful.

The dismissive attitude of God's people continues through Israel's history. Leviticus 26:43 speaks of the Israelites rejecting His laws and abhorring His decrees. Their complaint that they would have been better off remaining in Egypt is considered rejection of the Lord (Num 11:20). Towards the end of Deuteronomy God warns Moses that Israel will enter the promised land and then turn to other gods, rejecting Him (Deut 31:20). Later, the nation demands a king (1 Sam 8) to be like its neighbours, and God explains to Samuel that this is nothing more or less than a rejection of Yahweh as king. We might consider this request for a king to be a repudiation of the liminal status which God envisaged for His people in order for them to be a channel of witness and blessing, to bring the peoples of the world to know Him. There was supposed to be something almost precarious about Israel's status, summarised by God's reminder in Deuteronomy 7:7 that there was nothing special about them. Israel's time in Egypt and in the wilderness had been liminal; the cloud and pillar of fire and the tabernacle were all mobile signs of God's presence. Even the materials used to build the Tabernacle came partly from Egypt. All of these factors speak of liminality and the need for faith on Israel's part.

This desire to be like other nations is only the prelude to a spiral of idolatrous practice in which Israel and Judah repeatedly seek after the Baals and other Canaanite gods, rejecting God and His law. Note also that in David's heartrending reflection on adultery and murder in the Bathsheba incident he describes his actions as sin against God only (Ps 51:4). This man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14) had betrayed and treated Him with contempt.

Whether from kings or ordinary people Israel's betrayal deepens and eventually results in the Assyrian invasion of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC and the Babylonian deportation of the southerners around 586 BC. God's people had rejected Him religiously, morally, socially, and politically, and had brought about complete alienation between themselves and God.

God's pain as Other is found in Hosea 11. His statement of love for Israel in v.1 is followed immediately by a lament in v.2: *The more I called Israel, the further they went from me*. God is no stranger to estrangement and negative Otherness; it is an occupational certainty rather than hazard. Brueggemann (1977) agrees: God Himself is an exile when the glory departs from the temple in Ezekiel 10.

This combination of personal and national rejection is by no means restricted to

the OT, and to grasp more fully God's experience of being Other, marginalised and ignored, we will look at Jesus' experience in the NT. Isaiah's prophecy in the Suffering Servant song of Isaiah 52-53 is stark. People are appalled at His appearance (52:14), unbelieving of His message (53:1), and despise and reject Him (53:3).

God's experience of Otherness includes rejection and marginalisation; this is significant as it shows His empathy with people at the periphery. Equally noteworthy is how God has worked to embed this sense of empathy for the Other in His covenant people and their social and religious ethics. Before looking at God's commands to Israel for the treatment of aliens and migrants we will look briefly at Abraham, Joseph, and Moses as aliens whose lives demonstrate Otherness and liminality, as well as faith.

**Three Old Testament Aliens: Abraham, Joseph, and Moses**

Abraham, Joseph, and Moses are spiritual ancestors for Jew and Christian alike. Abraham is a significant figure in any consideration of aliens because of his role as father of the nation and exemplar of faith. That the father of Israel became an alien in obedience to God has implications for those who claim to be his spiritual descendants. Joseph is likewise a hero of faith and saviour of the nation during famine. Moses is the human architect of the Exodus and the recipient of the Law at Sinai. All three spent time in foreign countries and lived lives marked by Otherness and liminality.

*Abraham*

The circumstances of Abraham's first interaction with God are not recorded, yet at the beginning of Genesis 12 we see a restatement of something that God must have said earlier. He is to leave his country, people, and father's household for an unknown destination, breaking ties with his familial and cultural community. He is to throw himself on the mercy of God as he inaugurates a new community of faith and experience Otherness and liminality which would ultimately benefit those who would come after him.

There is further displacement when famine forces Abraham to move from Canaan to Egypt. In the second half of Genesis 12 he places himself under the care and authority of a sponsor (Pharaoh), a common element in the migration experience. During this time Abraham gains wealth, effectively as part of another's household, and thus we see graded inclusion, a continuum between near and distant Otherness. Abraham experiences Otherness and liminality again in allowing Lot to choose the best land and then in his interaction with Canaanite kings and the mysterious Melchizedek. There is an intimate connection between his faith and his willingness to live at the margins.

In Genesis 15 and 17 God establishes the covenant of circumcision with Abraham. In Genesis 17 God explicitly refers to Abraham as an alien (Gen 17:8) and

empowers him with promises of land and descendants. Note that as God sets up the covenant relationship with Abraham He also makes provision for the inclusion of those outside of Abraham's own bloodline (vv.12-13). A spiritual or religious arrangement has consequences for the community of Abraham's household, including foreigners who might not immediately acknowledge the God of the covenant. Here then is an early statement of a tension which I will explore in this chapter, that between religious and social belonging. This is central to any theology of migration in East Asia: how do Christians in the broader host society relate to religious, ethnic, and status Others who live in that society? Note also Abraham's own liminal status; he is a migrant in Canaan who also functions as a host in terms of religion and employment for foreigners within his household.

The father of faith for Jew and Christian (Rom 4:11) was an alien and an Other for almost all of his life, as celebrated in Hebrews 11. Compassion for the alien is thus part of Judaeo-Christian faith.

*Joseph*

Joseph's life as Other begins while he is still at home (Gen 37). His father's bias towards him has already caused a marginalisation which became more serious after Joseph's grandiose dreams about his future status. Marginalisation becomes expulsion when his brothers sell him to a group of Ishmaelites, who take him to Egypt. As a slave in a foreign land Joseph is an ethnic and status Other whose life is marked by on-going coerced liminality. His status as betwixt and between was imposed upon him and to the best of his knowledge there was no likelihood of closure to this semi-permanent state.

Joseph's time as a slave in Potiphar's service foreshadows the status of aliens within the community of Israel because he is part of a household. Also, there are different degrees of inclusion and Otherness. He is an alien in someone else's country and community, and he also lives and works in the household of the Other. There is a degree of acceptance and trust for the alien, if only on a functional basis. We also know from Genesis 39 that although he remained Other to Potiphar Joseph was promoted and given responsibility for the logistics of the household.

Inclusion of a different kind becomes the cause of Joseph's undoing. In her desire for a sexual relationship with Joseph, Potiphar's wife appears accepting of the alien. However, her acceptance is very selective and she takes advantage of the liminal space which she enters while remaining in control. We see here an example of differential liminality. When Joseph rejects her advances, in her frustration she falls back on racial and social categories which emphasise Otherness and exclusion: *That Hebrew slave…came…to make sport of me* (Gen 39:17). Otherness, it appears, is multifaceted and seems to interact with the desires of those in power. We are reminded

of the sexual harassment of domestic helpers in East Asia, maltreatment of female slaves on plantations in the United States, and the utilitarian concept of 'comfort women' for the Japanese army in WW2.

After the accusation of attempted rape or molestation we see the vulnerability and marginalisation of the migrant as Joseph is thrown into jail apparently without trial. He is powerless, at the mercy of the host community and their laws as his liminal roller-coaster ride continues. This mirrors the contemporary experience of migrants - Others who live liminal lives - who often face unfair treatment because of their status, race, or gender. At the this point I am reminded of God's command to treat aliens and Israelites equally before the law.

After successfully interpreting the dreams of his fellow prisoners, Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker, Joseph is later called to provide the same service for Pharaoh himself. As a result he finds himself grand vizier, in a new client-patron relationship with the king of Egypt. Joseph's life shows successive degrees of functional inclusion: from foreign slave, to interpreter of dreams, and ultimately prime minister. On a personal level Joseph is given an Egyptian woman as his wife, the daughter of the priest of On. His Otherness is multifaceted. He is a foreigner but works at the centre of government; he was a slave but is now the most powerful man in the land; he has faith in YHWH, but his father-in-law is an Egyptian priest. Apparently, it is the right of the powerful to decide what types of Otherness to ignore and how much inclusion to practise. The right to choose lies with those who have most power in the liminal space.

*Moses*

Moses' life is marked by Otherness and liminality. By the time of Exodus 1 the coming to power of a new pharaoh has caused Israel to move from the status of near Other to distant Other to toxic Other in the mind of the Egyptians. In Exodus 2 there is a genocide order in operation against Israel, and the circumstances of Moses' birth are liminal. He is concealed in a papyrus basket and adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, yet he is wet-nursed by his own mother. At an early age the child of Hebrew slaves becomes an Egyptian prince.

The adult Moses is truly betwixt and between. In Exodus 2:11-15 he feels Hebrew enough to be outraged at seeing an Egyptian beating a Hebrew slave, but his feeling of identity is not shared by a Hebrew who saw him kill the Egyptian. In addition he is a prince while those around him are slaves. There is a two-fold alienation, by race and by class. After Moses flees to Midian and marries a non-Hebrew woman, his first son is called Gershom, the Hebrew root *ger* signifying Moses status as an alien.

The physical circumstances of Moses' subsequent defining experiences with God are also betwixt and between. In the middle of the desert he comes across an other-

worldly burning bush which is not consumed; God hides him in the cleft of a rock and lets him see His back; he talks with God in the tent of meeting and emerges with a radiant face. Moses' life and mission as leader of the Israelites and mediator between God and his people confirm his Otherness. Moses' unique role is epitomised by the switching of responsibility for Israel between God and him. In Exodus 3:8 God says that He has come to rescue them and bring them out of Egypt. Yet in vv.10-12 Moses is to bring the people out of Egypt. Later, at the beginning of Exodus 33, God talks of Israel as the people that Moses brought up out of Egypt. Then in Exodus 33:13 Moses tells the Lord that Israel is God's people, but in Exodus 34:10 God tells him that Israel is Moses' people. Moses is caught in a state of dual Otherness and liminality.

He is Other vis-à-vis God and nation, Israelite and Egyptian. Moses' life ends in liminality as he is not able to enter the Promised Land and dies betwixt and between.


Abraham, Moses, and Joseph are heroic figures in Jewish history and their time as migrants is a vital part of their identities. Their stories contain important lessons about Otherness and liminality and the migrant experience under the protection of God. As examples for Jew and Christian alike it is noteworthy that their faith under such conditions is praised in Hebrews 11. The stories of the nation of Israel and its heroic figures suggest that Otherness and liminality are normative for YHWH and those who follow Him.

### Egypt and Exodus: *I, Thou, Eternal Thou*

The end of the nation's time in Egypt and the Exodus which brought it to a close are very important motifs in the history of Israel as well as for the treatment of aliens by the faith community.

Joseph's rise to power is the means by which the Jacob clan becomes the nation of Israel as migrants in an alien land. Israel's liminal dependence on a patron is made all the more obvious when it comes to an end. Israel the nation becomes Other to Egypt, and Otherness is seen between communities rather than between individuals and the host community.

Jacob's descendants live as a distinct nation in Goshen. As an ethnic community in exile Israel becomes a diaspora. While living and indeed prospering in a foreign land they retain distinct culture, language, and religious affiliation. Joseph's desire to bury his father in Canaan (Gen 50:4-13) is a classic diaspora-like attachment to the mother country. Pharaoh's original approval of this mass influx of foreigners is commendable, but even here acceptance of the Other is explicitly selective. In Genesis 46:35 there is a very modern-sounding functional or vocational separation. The Israelites are allowed to be shepherds because the Egyptians do not like that sort of work. This resonates with

the situation in contemporary East Asia where migrant workers are welcome because they are willing to work in 3D jobs.

Despite the prosperity and growth of Israel as a separate people group within Egypt their status is liminal and vulnerable. They exist in a state of semi-permanence with no idea of how long they will be in Egypt and on what terms, at the same time understanding that assimilation is not an option. As if to emphasise the liminality and instability of Israel's situation, in Exodus 1:8 a new king looks at the diasporic Israelite community and views them as a potential threat (Ex 1:9-10). This king emphasises Otherness and decides to 'deal with them shrewdly' (Ex 1:10), bringing bitterness and hard labour.

The experience of the migrant nation leading up to the Exodus epitomises racism and oppression of a systematic form and vast scope not seen again until the *Shoah* under the Third Reich. Just as Israel's heroes Abraham, Joseph, and Moses understood Otherness and liminal status, so now does the whole nation. The story of Israel's suffering in Egypt is part of the heritage of the seed of Abraham, including Christians.

The injunctions for how Israel should treat aliens in its midst are often linked to the nation's suffering at the hand of the Egyptians. A communal memory brings a specific compassionate ethical focus to the community of faith. In Exodus 22:21, 23:9; Leviticus 19:34; Deuteronomy 10:19, 16:11, 24:17-18, and 24:21-22 specific commands requiring fair treatment and inclusion of the Other are followed by the reminder that Israel were aliens in Egypt.

By the time of the restatement of the Law in Deuteronomy no Israelite would have a personal memory of the suffering in Egypt. Egypt as a place of derivation and pain had already become part of the national memory. Desmond Alexander believes that the exodus represented an 'ongoing activity' for Israel and not just something from the past (2008, p.86), and was to be real and meaningful to those who were not even born at the time. For Nanette Stahl (1995) this memory of the past is the basis for action in the present. I would argue that the same applies for the suffering in Egypt. If the exodus is the positive liberation from oppression and torture at the hands of an oppressive Other, then it is essential that followers of Yahweh remember the negative imagery too, and make this just as much part of their communal memory. Because this communal heritage was used to remember God's mercy and justify Israel's fair and inclusive treatment of aliens, we must look at verses describing the time in Egypt. In other words, Egypt is presented as the justification for decent treatment of aliens and so it is important to see how the experience is represented in the scriptures.

The concept most commonly employed is slavery, found in Exodus 6:2-7, 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6, 5:15, 6:12, 6:21, 7:8, 8:14, 13:5, 13:10, 15:15, 16:12, 24:18, 24:22;

Leviticus 26:13. Added to this are abuse and unreasonable demands (Ex 2:11-12, 5:10-18) and suffering and misery (Ex 2:23, Ex 3:17, Neh 9:9). Egypt lifted up a club against Israel (Isa 10:24). The forced labour endured by the Israelites (Ex 1:11-14, Deut 26:5-6) is seen as racial hatred or attempted genocide in Exodus 1:8-10, 1:15-22. Egypt is pictured as an iron- smelting furnace (Deut 4:20, 1 Kings 8:51, Jer 11:4).

Israel saw Egypt as a place of intense suffering, unfair, racist treatment, and even potential national extinction. In this nightmare of permanent betwixt and betweenness Israel is the ultimate distant Other, commodified by their masters into an *I-it* relationship. God was determined that this strong imagery would ensure that Israel would never treat aliens as they had been treated. His frequent reminder, *I am the Lord*, should help Israel to look at the *thou* of the *I-thou* relationship to see the *eternal Thou* behind each person.

YHWH the *eternal Thou* stands at infinity relative to us, and if we could look back at humanity from His position then our distinctions of race, class, or anything else would be as nothing. Two people whose mutual Otherness seems to create or justify a huge distance between them will find that such a separation tends towards zero when viewed from God's infinite perspective. The gulf between humanity and God is a great leveller. This argument stands in creative tension with that of Frank Cruesemann, who claims that it was God's proximity which destroyed the distinctions between people (1996, p.309)! My analogy is based in trigonometry, whereas his seems to rely on the closeness of different sized objects. More theologically, perhaps the solution to the paradox is that it is God's ontological and sacred difference from us which emphasises our mutual human similarity and His love for the Other which brings us together.

The Exodus was God's mighty act of deliverance for His people out of both physical and spiritual bondage as slaves to a foreign nation. It was 'not merely a past event but a reality that required practical response in the present' (Wright, 2010, p.97). In addition it is a pattern and precursor of a larger and greater Exodus wrought on the cross at Calvary.

From both the suffering in Egypt and the 'already and not yet' nature of the Exodus (from our 21st century Christian perspective) we can draw out some useful paradigms for relations between God, Israel, and the alien, which also apply to us, along the lines of the earlier triangle models.

In the Pentateuch, God makes repeated mention of the Israelites' suffering in Egypt and commands that Israel should not inflict similar treatment on aliens within its borders. Here I detect a negative *Egypt paradigm* of Pharaoh > Israel > Alien. God commands that Israel should not do to the alien what Pharaoh did to them. This is contrasted with the positive *Exodus paradigm*, God > Israel > Alien, which requires Israel to extend the same Exodus to the alien as God extended to them - similar to J.

David Pleins' 'theology of obligation' (2001, p.52). God's requirement is not only that Israel should not do the negative things that Egypt did but that she act positively towards the undeserving. This reminds us of David Bernat's observation that as a vulnerable party 'the foreigner is to the Israelite as the Israelite is to God' (2009, p.47). I claim that both covenants specify how people of faith are to relate to the Other. God relates to Israel as Other, and Israel must relate to the alien as Other. What I call *cascading Otherness* (God to Israel, Israel to the alien) is to be redemptive and just; it must be *I-thou* rather than *I-it*. Furthermore, in a wonderful circularity, as the Israelite looks at the *thou* alien he must see behind him the *eternal Thou* of the Exodus. In the era of the new covenant Israel is expanded to the church (international and multi-ethnic), and the alien is likewise a broader category.

Furthermore, in His grace and mercy God chose and liberated Israel while they were still in Egypt and were in reality a mixed group (Okoye, 2006) ethnically and even in terms of faith in Him. The Exodus event produced communitas within the group. The requirement for the socio-cultural community that was Israel was that they too should liberate and tolerate the aliens, an equally disparate group. The mercy and tolerance that Israel was to extend to the aliens in their midst would also require an understanding of *multiple Othernesses*.

Although Buber's and Levinas' concepts of the Other are foundational and helpful it is necessary to broaden them in two ways. Firstly, we must look at Otherness as multifaceted and not one-dimensional. Rather than the *multiple Others* (i.e. a plural number of individuals) advocated by Shen (2012) in his generous critique of Levinas and others, we must talk about the *multiple Othernesses* manifest by a single person. In the relation between any two people Otherness must take into account a whole range of different factors, principal among which for this research are race and status, my two axes of separation. The second refinement concerns distance from *ego* at the centre; any consideration of ethnicity and status brings us face to face with near and distant Others. Near Others are 'people like us' with whom it is easier to feel comfortable, while distant Others have less in common with us. When a person's distance from us (in any of the dimensions hinted at above) becomes excessive (in our opinion) then the Otherness becomes toxic and damaging to him or her and the result is indifference, commodification, and even exploitation.

The OT law has instructions for the treatment of aliens within Israel. Before looking at these injunctions in depth, as well as some cases of aliens within Israel, it remains to consider God's broader purpose for His people after the entry to Canaan. The next section considers Israel's missionary purpose within its own borders.

**The Mission of Israel: Being before Going?**

One of the main ideas emphasised by this work is that of a host faith community into which migrants, Others, can be drawn. It is necessary therefore to look briefly at the question of mission in the Old Testament. The church's relative uncertainty about whether ministry to migrants is mission has already been mentioned, along with the suggestion that it is, as a combination of centripetal and centrifugal approaches.

Johannes Blauw (1962) comments that one result of the Tower of Babel incident was the alienation of people from each other. It is against this background of increasing Otherness that the call of Abraham occurs. God chooses a particular people group to be the focus of His redemptive effort to all nations. For Theodorus Vriezen, Israel has a commission to witness to God and be the means of the nations coming to know Him (1953). In Blauw's view rather than being the object of election Israel is the subject. She is a recipient of God's grace but also a channel of the same. Election, ethics, and mission form a 'missional logic' (Wright, 2010, p.93).

In thinking about whether Israel had a missionary mandate to go out, Blauw coins the terms *centripetal* and *centrifugal* (p.34) because he believes that there is no OT version of the Great Commission (see also Bosch, 1991). He looks forward to the eschatological ingathering of the nations as described in the major prophets and the Psalms, but it is my contention that apart from such great acts of God in history Gentiles within or on the edges of the Israelite community could also respond to the character of God as seen in the lives of His ordinary people (Timmer, 2011) in what we might call centripetal micro-mission. This non-eschatological incorporation (Scobie, 1992) could happen in the lives of Gentiles in the here and now. It is useful to consider the gradual assimilation of small numbers of Gentile aliens into the community of faith as the beginning of a process which expands spectacularly in the New Testament; there is thus a sense of development and increase in the concept of mission.

Related to this is what I have elsewhere called the 'faith interface'. Rather than thinking of mission in the traditional sense of taking the Christian faith across barriers of culture in a land which is home to the recipient and foreign to the missionary, I focus on the transmission of faith in YHWH across an interface which connects with no-faith or other-faith. The analogy is like the surface of a body of water or the division between oil and water. The location of the point of interchange of faith is irrelevant; what is crucial is that the interchange occurs.

Centripetal mission thus exists in its own right but also stands as the precursor to the task of Acts 1:8, a position affirmed by Wright (2000, 2010). This more nuanced view is in contrast to that of Walter Kaiser (1996), who attempts to place OT and NT on an equal missiological footing, resulting in a rather flat view of the testaments and little sense of broadening of the scope of the mission of God. For us this means that a theological response to migration which involves a conscious effort by Christians in the

host nations can be seen as true cross-cultural mission and part of a larger, multifarious effort of God.

The categories of centripetal and centrifugal mission and historical and eschatological ingathering are also affirmed by George Peters, for whom 'Israel and the temple…draw people to themselves and the Lord' (1972, p.52). For him the nation as well as its religious centre acts to attract people not only to the Lord in religious faith and allegiance but also to His people. There is thus potential assimilation (Timmer, 2011) and belonging, a reduction in Otherness and an eventual escape from a liminal status for the alien.

This incarnational aspect of centripetal mission is emphasised by Wright (2000); Israel's main responsibility was *to be* rather than *to go*. Going (centrifugal) is not ruled out, but at that time in salvation-history the primary mode was centripetal. This behavioural mode of witness was primary for the majority of ancient Israel, who did not have a priestly role (Timmer, 2011).

Finally, and importantly for a theology of how a host community responds to (small) numbers of migrants, I propose that centripetal and centrifugal should be seen as two ends of a continuum. Daniel Timmer (2011) voices dissatisfaction with a simple dichotomisation of centripetal and centrifugal, as does the later David Bosch (2006). Mission of either kind must function by establishing communities of faith and attracting people to them. The question of the sequence of belief and belonging will be taken up in Chapter Six but the lesson from the OT is that an ethical community is a critical mass to which the vulnerable and needy can be attracted (see Wright, 2010). Mission workers must build such communities at home or on the field (if we stay with the traditional home-field distinction). The dynamics of a response to Otherness and liminality mean that all mission must involve going out (we can think of Acts 1:8 and even Matthew 28 in terms of faith interface and non-geographical categories such as race and status) as well as bringing people in, by taking care of the whole person. This is consistent with Wright's claim that 'there are many barrier-crossing episodes in the...OT' (2000, n.p.).

Before considering the nature and aims of (primarily) centripetal mission through the specific commands given to the Israelites, it remains to consider the principal object of Israel's ethical barrier-crossing, the alien who made his home inside the nation.

## Who is the Alien?

The aim of this research is to derive a theological and missiological response to migration in East Asia and to base such a response upon biblical commands and teaching in both testaments. As demonstrated in Chapter Two migration in East Asia has its own distinct profile and character, and it is unwise to attempt simplistic transfer

from the world of the scriptures to today's Asian realities. It is beneficial to review briefly the terms used for *alien* or *sojourner* in the Old Testament and the categories associated with them.

Christina van Houten (1991) identifies three words used to refer to foreigners in the Hebrew scriptures: *ger*, *toshab*, and *nekar*. Among these three, *ger* is the most important for our purposes and also the most commonly occurring. The verses examined later in this chapter all contain the word *ger* in the original Hebrew text and are consistent with her list. The *ger* is a foreigner or alien (the term used in the NIV) who lives within the nation of Israel, '*the sojourner* or *the stranger who sojourns* among you' (King James). *Nekar* is a foreigner or outsider, *toshab* a hired worker. Georges Moucarry (1988, p.17) is in broad agreement, although he claims there is some overlap between *ger* and *toshab*. To the word *nekar* he also adds *nokri* as well as positing a fourth group, the *zur*, who is a foreigner in his own land. For him the distinction between aliens living in Israel and those living outside the nation is of supreme importance; the word *ger* is derived from a root *gr*, meaning to stay or to reside. Such is also the view of David Baker, who uses the word *resident alien* (2009, p.178). The following summary is helpful:

> *Ger* in the Hebrew Bible refers to people who are no longer directly related to their original social setting and who have therefore entered into dependent relationships with various groups or officials in a new social setting. The *ger* was of another tribe, city, district, or country who was without customary social protection or privilege and of necessity had to place himself under the jurisdiction of someone else.
>
> (Van Houten, 1991, p.20)

For our purposes it is noteworthy that the *ger* lives inside the nation of Israel for an extended period and is dependent upon a sponsor or employer of some kind. Originally the *ger* would have been attached to a household - the basic unit of production in an agricultural society, although this may have changed with growing urbanisation and diversification of the economy. That the alien is in some way dependent upon a social entity inside Israel does facilitate comparison with migrants of various kinds in East Asia.

### The Alien Mandate in the OT Law through the Lenses of Otherness and Liminality

In looking at the various injunctions concerning aliens in the Pentateuch it is impossible to consider all of the complex historical and redactional issues. Furthermore, because I am exploring the implications of OT teaching about the alien for the church in Asia and placing them together with NT ideas, it is necessary to view the various commands as a given, flat whole. This is consistent with the position of Baker (2009). Therefore the

sequence of the texts will follow a pseudo-canonical order of the Passover, the Decalogue, the Book of the Covenant, the Holiness Code, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Where a similar theme occurs in different settings it will be discussed only once. Thus, the Passover section covers Numbers 9:14 as well as Exodus 12:43-49.

The commands about the alien are given to Israel as a host community. They receive instruction from God along with His blessing and must pass that blessing on to the alien. This is a further example of cascading, as instruction and fairness pour down from God to Israel and then on down to the alien. In the eyes of God there is a solemn responsibility for Israel to act ethically and missionally towards the alien.

*The Passover: Exodus 12:43-49 (Num 9:14)*

After the first Passover, God lays down the requirements for those wishing to take part in the festival. Circumcision as a mark of the covenant already existed within Israel, but here the Passover and circumcision are linked (Bernat, 2009). If an alien wishes to celebrate the Passover he must be circumcised. Then he may take part as if he were native-born.

Verses 48-49 make it quite clear that the native-born and alien are equal with regard to the Passover (as does Numbers 9:14); only circumcised males were allowed to eat of it. However, the fact that all Israelite males were circumcised brings a clear distinction between Israelite and alien. With regard to the issue of Passover and covenant an uncircumcised alien had a very different status from a circumcised Israelite.

According to van Houten, v.48 is extremely important because there is a possibility of the alien changing from an outsider to an insider (1991, p.132). Indeed, as we shall discover later, this process of circumcision is analogous to baptism (van Houten, 1991; Hegg 1990).

The important question for us is why circumcision is so important for the alien with regard to the Passover. This is interesting in light of the fact that male Israelites were circumcised at the age of eight days, whereas here we are talking about adult circumcision. James Miller (2010) tells us that at the time of Ishmael's birth Abraham had not been circumcised, but when Isaac was conceived he had been. He also claims that circumcision is very closely linked to reproduction and the dedication of children to the Lord. The Israelite nation is seen as the physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham. At any point in time, a natural born Israelite could look back to his ancestor Abraham and forward to his descendants, the community of faith.

Tim Hegg also points out that circumcision 'upon the organ of procreation' (1990, p.4) is a sign to Abraham that his descendants would come not through human means (the solution involving Hagar) but by divine intervention. Thus for an alien, one born outside of the community of faith, to become part of Israel is by analogy

something divine and not the result of natural procreation.

Hegg reminds us that circumcision is the means of acknowledging the covenant and to refuse it is to be cut off from the people. He also claims that there is a difference between individual appropriation of the covenant and the national understanding of the same. What God has promised unconditionally to the people as a whole must still be accepted by individuals, which is of great significance to the alien and his status vis-a-vis the community of faith.

We know that circumcision was carried out on male children at the age of eight days. An infant boy is incapable of procreation and thus only 'an Israelite *in potentia*' (Bernat, 2009, p.41). His inability to bring about the promised seed is symbolic of all of Israel (Hegg, p.11). As the alien undergoes circumcision he acknowledges his foreign, human limitations, and is thus an adult Israelite *in potentia* himself and on behalf of his descendants.

The reason that circumcision is so important for the alien is that by this means he joins himself to the community of faith physically and spiritually. He is accepting God's provision and relying on God for something which he could not do for himself. We are reminded of the wild olives of Romans 11.

Looking forward, the theological significance of circumcision is that the promise made by God to his people can only truly be gained by faith and not through works (Hegg). Hegg points out that for the members of the community of faith eventually to bring the promised seed of God they needed faith to be part of the process. My tentative suggestion is that it is as if every child born to the Israelites was conceived from sperm that had passed through a circumcised organ, a sacred channel dedicated to God. For the alien to join the community of faith rather than being part merely of a cultural entity, he would have to be circumcised, so that his descendants also would pass through this sacred channel. Note however, that Bernat argues that the function of the penis has no significance for the meaning of circumcision.

Here we see what appears to be a clear distinction between the broader cultural community and the community of faith, and according to Bernat circumcision also delineates social status (2009, p.76). We shall see that in many ways the prescriptions regarding the alien in the Pentateuch were remarkably inclusive, except for those concerning Passover and circumcision. There seem to be two forms of belonging here, one sociocultural and the other religious. My contention is that these two forms of belonging, which we can equate with two experiences of Otherness, create a liminal situation. To the Israelite the uncircumcised alien is a socially near Other and religiously distant Other and there is no question that exclusion does occur and that it is required by YHWH Himself. Throughout the OT God rejects all notions of other gods and syncretistic tendencies in Israel. However, in theory at least, once an alien has

undergone circumcision he is near Other in both social and religious terms.

An alien faced with the question of circumcision and the Passover would find himself in a liminal space more like semi-permanent liminality than the earlier understanding of Turner. That is to say, it is not part of a simple process or ritual through which each person has to go, under circumstances and within timescales prescribed by others. As far as we can tell, whether or not to undergo circumcision and be eligible to take part in Passover was a matter for the alien himself to decide (Bernat, 2009, p.44).

It seems that the liminal space created by social inclusion and religious exclusion would create a pressure gradient, an unbalanced force. At the human level an alien's choice to join in the Passover marks a willingness to move 'closer to the Israelite' (Bernat, p.68). God desires to bless all people and chose Israel for that purpose (Gen 12:3), and the tension between exclusion and inclusion must be placed within that overall redemption scope of His action in Israel and beyond. An alien who understood the religious principles which governed both the social inclusion and the religious exclusion and pointed him to the God of the Israelites would presumably feel the effect of these unbalanced forces, designed to draw him in to that God. The result would be a dynamic rather than static state, a kind of religious osmosis, as the alien is drawn to the host community and the God who stands behind it.

*The Sabbath in the Decalogue: Exodus 20:10 (also Deut 5:14, Ex 23:12)*
In both records of the Decalogue, Israel is commanded to extend Sabbath rest to the alien. She is to grant Exodus to the Other as Exodus has been granted to her. The mention of the alien at the end of a list of family members and animals clearly betrays his low status. He is described as living within Israel's gates or towns, depending on the translation, but either way he is a dependent part of a larger administrative unit. For convenience I include Exodus 23:12 here, although it is part of the Book of the Covenant.

In the Exodus 20 version the command is bracketed by statements of the holiness of the Sabbath, while the Deuteronomy command is followed by a reminder of the suffering in Egypt. Furthermore, while the Exodus 20 passage mentions God's rest after creation, the Deuteronomy and Exodus 23 passages focus on rest for all, which has the potential to lower barriers and promote communitas. Taken together, the three slightly different passages thus integrate religious and ethical concerns. Horizontal concern for the Other by the community of faith promotes the vertical relation between God and the alien. For the alien, Sabbath rest 'was the beginning of…his complete cultic integration into the people of Israel' (van Houten, p.58). This resonates with the idea of a migrant moving into the host community in East Asia. Her point that Israel

was not to force the vulnerable alien to work on the Sabbath is also remarkably appropriate for East Asia today.

*Fair treatment in the Book of the Covenant: Exodus 20:22-23:33 (Lev 19, Deut 1&10)*
Although there are only three explicit references to the alien in the Book of the Covenant, they are significant because the whole code regulates the civil society against the background of the Israelites' relationship with God (van Houten, 1991). Pleins makes the point that justice for the poor (including the alien) was a central element of faith in YHWH, and remained so into the time of the prophets. The three passages of interest to us are Exodus 22:21, Exodus 23:9, and Exodus 23:12. The last one has already been covered and the first two can be examined together.

The injunctions regarding aliens were given to the people (Baker, 2009) as covenant requirements of Israel's divine Other. Also, because no specific sanction is associated with failure to observe the laws, the sense is of moral obligation (van Houten, 1991).

Exodus 22:21 contains the two verbs *mistreat* and *oppress*, while Exodus 23:9 has *oppress* only. Both verses mention Egypt, reminding the Israelites of their time as distant Others in the eyes of their oppressors and their dreadful enforced liminality, which all too often only came to end at death. Baker and van Houten agree that *mistreat* refers to exportation of the weak by the powerful while *oppress* usually concerns interracial injustice; thus the two primary facets of Otherness of concern to us are covered.

The immediate context of Exodus 23:9 appears to be the legal system, and the alien is entitled to the same justice as the Israelite. It is not necessary to belong religiously or ethnically in order to be treated fairly. Insider and outsider are equal and Otherness and liminality do not work against a person. The content and context of Leviticus 19:33-34 suggest they are essentially the same as the Exodus verses and so will not be covered in the section on Leviticus. Deuteronomy 1:16 specifies similar fairness in judging cases, regardless of race ('between one of them [a brother Israelite] and an alien') and status ('small and great alike'). A similar integrity in legal process is required by Deuteronomy 10:18-19 also.

According to van Houten the general inclusivity of the Book of the Covenant is not simply a matter of hospitality. She believes that the laws therein are designed to move the alien from the status of outsider to insider, becoming 'equal members of the Israelite community' (p.67), a process which looks ultimately to religious allegiance to YHWH. Again, it is clear that there are parallels for ministry to migrants in East Asia.

*Leviticus 17-26 - The Holiness Code*

In the Holiness Code, commands concerning the alien often mention other vulnerable members of the community, such as widows and orphans. The sense is of social justice for all irrespective of Otherness. God's holiness is manifest in tangible form through social justice (Pleins, 2001, p.65), an idea which is relevant for migration in today's East Asia, even if it remains somewhat peripheral to the agenda of the church.

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT: LEVITICUS 16:29

Leviticus 16:29 specifies a special Sabbath on the Day of Atonement, as described in the whole of Leviticus 16. The alien and the native-born are to stop work. However, the instructions are given to the Israelites, and the alien is described as 'living among you' (Lev 16:29b). A difficulty comes when vv.33 and 34 are compared. The former talks about atonement being made for 'all the people of the community' while the latter mentions the 'sins of the Israelites'. So is the alien covered or not?

It is impossible to be sure. In v.15 an offering is made for the people, v.21 talks about the Israelites, and v.24 mentions the people again. However, the alien is part of the people on a day-to-day basis while not having any religious affiliation. In addition, in this great ceremony the community as a whole is passive and the cleansing of sin is done for them by the High Priest. Here, Baker's insight is helpful: aliens 'are bound by the prohibitive commandments, but not the performative ones' (2009, p.186). The alien does not have to do anything to have his sins cleansed as part of a national event, but neither does the native-born; they are equal in their passivity, liminality, and potential communitas.

Joe Sprinkle (2006) reminds us that the Yom Kippur ritual of Leviticus 16 follows the purity laws of Leviticus 11-15. In addition, he shows that the whole physical land of Israel was to be a sacred space, in which the alien was welcome as long as his actions did not affect the purity of the land.

The numbers of aliens were probably relatively small and most of them were dependants of Israelite households. Also, Yom Kippur was national in scope rather than focused on the individual. This, along with the required purity of the land, brings me to agree cautiously with van Houten that the alien's sins are atoned for.

CORRECT SACRIFICE: LEVITICUS 17 (LEV 22:18, NUM 15:14-16)

In Leviticus 17 and 22 Israel is given strict warnings about the correct way to sacrifice animals to the Lord. While Leviticus 17 contains a ban on what might be called private sacrifices outside of the camp, possibly to avoid syncretism with existing pagan practices, in Leviticus 22 the quality of the animal is the primary focus. One of the restrictions mentioned several times in Leviticus 17 is that of eating blood (vv.10, 12 13).

In Leviticus 17:8-9, aliens as well as Israelites must bring their sacrifices to the

Tent of Meeting; to do otherwise means being cut off from the people. Leviticus 22:18 and Numbers 15:13-14 distinguish between Israelite and alien yet confirm that the latter can offer sacrifices. However, the first mentions of sacrificial offerings in Leviticus 17 (v.3) and Numbers 15 concern Israelites only; the native-born is prioritised over the alien. This may be an instance of Baker's prohibitive versus performative distinction, or perhaps aliens were less likely to offer sacrifice.

The second interesting matter in Leviticus 17 is the threat of being cut off from the people, occurring in vv.4, 9, 10, and 14. God setting His face against (v.10) a person sounds like a terrifying increase in Otherness. Given that this sanction is also applied to the alien the question is who are the people from whom the alien is cut off? Israel is the majority, the host community among whom the alien lives, and the people in relationship with Yahweh as near Others. The alien is the one furthest away from YHWH and who exists in a liminal situation with regard to God and Israel. The text suggests that by not taking account of prohibitive commands the alien risks further Otherness and increased liminality from the covenant people and their God. Finally, the Numbers 15 passage comes after the debacle of the spies sent into Canaan and the rebellion that followed. One wonders if faithful aliens are being contrasted with faithless Israelites and a simple identification of faith with race thus challenged. The invitation to native-born and alien to sacrifice is another example of grace cascading down from God to His dependent Others. I conclude that the alien is the object of an attractive religious dynamic in which he is exposed to the grace of YHWH and the benefits of faith in Him. Indeed, Ela (2008) talks of going beyond Jew and Gentile and promoting salvific inclusion.

PURITY OF PEOPLE AND LAND: LEVITICUS 18:26, 20:2

Leviticus 18:26 comes toward the end of a long section of rules governing sexual conduct. God requires the Israelites to be different from the people of Egypt whence they have come, and from Canaan where they are going. They are to be distant Others to both of these cultures and set apart - liminal - in near Otherness to God, who reminds them, 'I am the Lord'. Leviticus 20:2 is found at the head of a similar list of ordinances concerning sexual and moral purity and prohibiting the adoption of Canaanite religious practices.

The alien is required to follow the same rules of morality as the broader society whether or not he has faith in YHWH. But although this appears to be a matter of horizontal relationships, for the Israelite morality is inseparable from the character and plan of God. The alien is once more in a liminal state. He does not have faith in YHWH but belongs to a society which does (at the national level and probably rather more patchily at the personal one) and is expected to conform to Yahwistic standards of

morality - in opposition to those of the peoples behind and ahead of Israel with whom he quite probably has cultural affinity.

These passages connect to the previous two (regarding Yom Kippur and animal sacrifice to YHWH) in that they mention both the purity of the land and the threat of being cut off from the people. If the people endanger the purity of the land they risk the very serious sanction of being vomited out of the land. Once again, the alien is part of the community to enough of an extent that he must do nothing to damage the purity of the community and its effect on the land, which is a holiness issue. Pleins considers these limitations on the alien as 'bordering on antipathy' (2001, p.67), and we sense exclusion again. One wonders if people expected aliens to be lax in their morality. In Leviticus 20:2 the whole community is accountable. From this I conclude that the liminal space combines social acceptance (inclusion) and religious or moral challenge (exclusion), and generates a vector drawing the alien towards faith.

## GLEANING AND HARVESTING: LEVITICUS 19:9-10, 23:22; DEUT 24:19-21

These verses require land-owning Israelites to leave some of their harvest for the vulnerable, specifically those without land, the means of self-support in an agricultural society. This is a clear obligation on the part of the host community. Whether it is leaving the corners of the field unreaped, or allowing olives and grapes to remain on the trees and vines, the alien, widow, and orphan are to be provided for. This group of people represent ethnic and status-based Otherness and exist in a liminal space.

Van Houten (1991) argues that this is generosity rather than justice. Paradigmatically it is Exodus rather than merely *not*-Egypt, authenticated by the familiar 'I am the Lord'. In addition, in Leviticus 23 the instructions about reaping are preceded by those about first fruits. God reminds Israel that He has given the land to them and they must acknowledge that with offerings to Him. As tenant Israel (Lev 25:23) itself is liminal and so must empathise with those who are even more liminal. Again, we see the cascading of positive Otherness and blessing from God to Israel to alien.

Baker notes that the amount of field to be left unharvested is not specified and indeed that there was much discussion among the rabbis on this issue (1991, p.235). This has implications for churches in host communities today. How much generosity to exercise is a matter of our heart towards the alien and our response to the grace of God.

## BLASPHEMY: LEVITICUS 24:16

Whether the alien has faith or not he must respect the rules of the society and cannot blaspheme Israel's God (Baker's prohibitive aspect of the law). The alien is liminal and cannot insult the name of someone else's God, but the deeper sense is that this is the God who stands behind the material blessing and social justice that is prescribed for all,

including the alien. This attitude toward the alien is again considered as negative by Pleins (1991, p.67).

## KILLING: LEVITICUS 24:22

The alien is to conform to the same law as the Israelite concerning the killing of animals and the murder of people. The idea may have been to force the alien to adopt Israel's *lex talionis*, limiting revenge and making punishment consistent with the harm inflicted on the animal or human being.

### *Numbers*

## UNINTENTIONAL SIN: NUMBERS 15:22-31

This section of Numbers 15 shows complete equality between Israelite and alien with regard to the issue of sin. Once discovered, unintentional sin at the communal level can be atoned for (v.26), and the aliens, a minority within the community, forgiven. Verse 29 concerns unintentional sin by an individual, which if committed by an alien might attract more attention or condemnation than the same offence committed by an Israelite. Nevertheless, forgiveness is available in both cases. In the case of intentional sin the same dire warnings are given to alien and native-born. Here social belonging and religious responsibility are linked together, even for those who have not committed themselves to YHWH.

## THE ASHES OF THE HEIFER: NUMBERS 19:10

The alien is involved in a religious ceremony even though the focus of the activity is the Israelites. We can only speculate as to how many aliens were willing or encouraged to take part in such obvious religious activity, but this raises the question of involvement before profession of faith, belonging before believing.

## CITIES OF REFUGE: NUMBERS 35:15

The Lord is speaking to the Israelites, but the provision includes aliens and others among the Israelites. If an alien in Israel were to kill someone by accident, his victim would most probably be an Israelite, yet despite this racial or status-based fault lines do not appear in this law. Under normal circumstances the life of an alien would be far more liminal than that of an Israelite, yet we might argue that the City of Refuge is a great leveller. Any person taking refuge there would enter the same enforced and semi-permanent liminal situation, as he or she would need to wait until the high priest died before being able to return home. Note that the Numbers 35 passage is the only one to mention the alien explicitly although the Cities of Refuge also appear in Deuteronomy 4 and 19.

Van Houten says that Deuteronomy contains more laws about aliens than any other part of the Bible and that these cover the broadest range of issues (1991, p.68). For this reason we gain the most complete picture of the alien mandate from the last book of the Pentateuch. The Deuteronomic laws are given in homiletic form and aim to shape the individual and the community while encouraging application in real life.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study, van Houten claims that over a period of time Israel would become more urbanised and that the basic unit of social responsibility changed from extended family (agricultural business) to small town, with aliens depending first on the 'paterfamilias' (1991, p.73) and then on town elders. In the modern East Asian context both are significant; a domestic helper is very much dependent upon her paterfamilias (or perhaps materfamilias?) while contract labour has a broader and more robust system of accountability.

DIETARY LAWS: DEUTERONOMY 14:21a (LEV 17:15)

Deuteronomy 14:21 is the primary focus of this section, although Leviticus 17:15 contains similar reasoning. The whole of Deuteronomy 14 (and Lev 11) concerns food laws, while Leviticus 17 seems to cover correct practice in sacrifice. The Deuteronomy passage is noteworthy because it begins and ends with statements about Israel belonging to God, and refers to the alien at the end of the discussion of the dietary laws.

A full exploration of the dietary laws for the Israelites is well beyond the requirements and scope of this research. Therefore, in order to understand the comments in Deuteronomy 14:21 about the alien a summary of the theology behind the laws for Israel will be sufficient. Note that the dietary laws themselves as given either in Deuteronomy or Leviticus are for the Israelites only and the alien is not mentioned in the main section which sets out the laws. For this reason there may be a parallel with the issue of circumcision.

Gordon Wenham's (1991) investigation of the rationale behind the food laws argues that they are shaped neither by hygiene considerations nor fear of pagan associations with some animals. He is not convinced by simple 'symbolic interpretations' (p.8) or by the theory that only carnivorous animals were forbidden. For him the heart of the matter is the principle of separation and boundaries (he acknowledges his debt to Mary Douglas in his paper). Wenham states that the clean-unclean food distinction mirrors that between Israel and the Gentiles. Further, just as among the clean animals a sub-category was acceptable for sacrifice, so among the Israelites a select group served as priests. This is similar to Sprinkle's system of priest, ordinary Israelite, and non-Israelite, which echoes the division of space into tabernacle, land of Israel, and the rest of the world (2000, p.651).

On this basis the dietary laws are similar to circumcision in that they define a

strict cleavage between Israelite as follower of YHWH (circumcised and observant of the food laws) and Gentiles (including aliens within Israel). Thus, Deuteronomy 14:21a makes sense. If an Israelite finds an animal dead, he is not allowed to eat it himself but he is allowed to give it to an alien or sell it to a foreigner. Because the fundamental separation is according to the food laws the Israelite may not eat, but the alien can. The Israelite is part of 'a people holy to the Lord' (v.21a). What a person eats reflects the side of the sacred-profane division to which he or she belongs, as does a man's circumcision status. The second distinction, between alien and foreigner, stems from the alien's dependent life within Israel. He cannot sustain himself as he has no land, but the Israelite community has an obligation to him. The foreigner, a temporary visitor to Israel, probably has his own source of livelihood and is owed nothing by the nation.

The suggestion is that the alien is in a liminal space defined by the differential principles of inclusion and exclusion which these verses exhibit. According to purely religious rules, the alien is excluded from Israel and can eat what is forbidden to the follower of YHWH. At the same time a follower of the Lord who finds a dead animal can give (rather than sell) it to the alien, demonstrating inclusive social concern. However, the broad alien mandate of the Pentateuch (combining the demands of a holy God and the social concern which He requires) shows that this is not a simple in-group/out-group (Weber, 1952, p.343) division. In addition, Leviticus 17:15 dictates that if an Israelite or an alien were to eat an animal found dead that person would be ceremonially unclean - a socio-religious marker. One sense that the floor of the liminal space is inclined such that the alien is gently tipped towards the faith from which he is currently excluded. Changing the metaphor, the Israelite 'food law/circumcision' group does have a boundary, but it is porous.


TITHING: DEUTERONOMY 26:10-13 (DEUT 14:29)

Deuteronomy 26 gives guidelines on offering firstfruits and tithes, the preamble to which contains a reminder of the nation's time in Egypt and the Exodus wrought by God on their behalf. After the firstfruits are presented to the Lord, the ordinary people, Levites, and aliens are to rejoice because of the good things God has provided for the whole household (v.11). Part of the third year tithe, 'the sacred portion', is given so that the alien (among others) can eat and 'be satisfied' (vv.12-13). The version in Deuteronomy 14:28-29 includes God's blessing of the Israelite benefactors as well as vulnerable people eating and being satisfied.

For the Israelites to rejoice before the Lord (a cultic action, claims van Houten) and remember how He has delivered and blessed them require a response of generosity to Others. Here again we see the Exodus paradigm, cascading down from God to the Israelites and on down to the alien. God has given to the Israelites, but they must

exercise stewardship and responsibility to the Other. From vv.10-11 it looks as if aliens rejoice alongside their sponsors (on whom they are dependent) and together with Levites. This is liminal moment, in which the alien is rejoicing over someone else's God, not only with ordinary members of the faith community but also some of its religious leaders. This temporary blurring of the categories of people described above (priest, Israelite, non-Israelite) has a religious as well as social function, and one wonders at the effect on both alien and Israelite as they experience differential liminality and the resultant communitas. The alien is elevated, a hint of what might be, and this evokes something of the liberating disorder of Paul's exhortation to Philemon.

What the Israelites refer to as a 'sacred portion' (the three-year tithe of Deuteronomy 26:12) is meant for the alien, among others. We would understand a sacred portion as an offering to God, but it is given to people, some of whom are not of the covenant. The Israelite is the means of passing on divine, material blessing to the alien. Here again there is liminality and generosity. One wonders what response this would entail in the heart of Israelite giver and alien recipient, particularly when placed in juxtaposition with the binary category defined by circumcision and the food laws.

Finally, Deuteronomy 26:12 and Deuteronomy 14:29 use the word 'satisfied'. This speaks of abundance and generosity rather than subsistence and 'going through the motions'. Again, this concept has its origin in the shalom envisaged by God for His people. Brueggemann is helpful here as he distinguishes between shalom for the 'haves' and 'have-nots' (1976, p.27ff), and this resonates with Baker's future-oriented tendency 'towards 'prosperity theology'' and past-focus 'concerns of 'liberation theology'' (2009, p.237). Shalom may look a little different depending on where you stand and what your needs are, and the text seems to suggest that merely surviving is insufficient for the alien when some of those around him are thriving. God's Exodus heart for the alien communicated to and through His people is the antithesis of Egypt, where Pharaoh and the Egyptians did not share with Israel.

FEASTS: DEUTERONOMY 16
This section is placed after the discussion of tithing because I wish to apply some of the same principles to it. The first two-thirds of Deuteronomy 16 concern the three major festivals of the Israelites and v.16 summarises them with the command that all men must attend and bring a gift for the Lord. The three are the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Passover), the Festival of Weeks, and the Festival of Tabernacles. Passover is related to the Exodus while the other two are harvest festivals.

From the description in Deuteronomy 16, the Festivals of Weeks and Tabernacles are very similar, involving the coming together in communitas of a mixed company including the alien and other vulnerable people, all remembering the harvest

and the goodness of God, and celebrating before Him. The issues of liminality and the alien celebrating before the Lord are similar to those for tithing. What is not specific in Deuteronomy 16 but clear from elsewhere in the Pentateuch is the fault line between the festivals: the alien is a welcome participant at the festivals of Weeks and Tabernacles but is excluded from Passover. The theology of circumcision and by association the dietary laws allow him to attend the harvest festivals but not the one which remembers the national story and heritage. Van Houten summarises, 'it is not appropriate to invite those who do not share a common history' (1991, p.90). One kind of festival is inclusive and celebratory while the other concerns identity and nationhood.

I conclude that the difference in inclusion regarding festivals is itself a generator of liminality; the alien would need to reason or be told what the difference was between the two types of festivals. Yet behind them is the same God and the same people, whose principles and character advocate shalom and fair treatment of the alien. Theoretically at least this constitutes an *attractive vector* which moves the alien nearer to God.

GENERAL FAIRNESS: DEUTERONOMY 24:14-18, 27:19

This theme is related to the earlier ideas of Deuteronomy 24:14-18, which are reminders for the powerful about how they should treat the vulnerable, including the alien. Apart from the now familiar equality of the alien and the native-born and the reminder of the Egypt experience, what is novel about this section is that the alien may 'cry to the Lord against you [the powerful Israelite]' (v.15) even though he is not a brother Israelite. Deuteronomy 27:19 makes the same basic point as Deuteronomy 24:17 except that here an offender will be cursed, a strong sanction indeed. There is also a requirement for the nation to make a public commitment to treat aliens fairly, backed up by divine justice. According to van Houten, Deuteronomy spells out the obligations of the rich to the less fortunate, a message relevant today in a region where the gap between rich and poor (of which host and migrant are respective subsets) is still large.

THE PUBLIC DECLARATIONS

Under this heading I place the two verses Deuteronomy 29:11 and 31:12, the former part of the renewal of the covenant and the latter part of the reading of the law prior to the entry to Canaan.

The presence of the alien at the renewal of the covenant (Deut 29) is unexpected and potentially problematic. However there are two ways of looking at the matter which may resolve the complication. The first is that this covenant renewal functions at the national rather than individual level; it is thus a communal or corporate statement of relationship by a majority group of which the alien was a small and dependent part. The second view is that the alien here is part of a specific group and thus not a general sojourner in Israel. Joshua 9 records the 'Gibeonite deception' and its consequences for

the Gibeonites. In the second half of the chapter this tribe was admitted to the community of Israel to undertake the chopping of wood and carrying of water, the exact words used in Deuteronomy 29:11.

In Deuteronomy 31:12 the law is given a public reading as the nation prepares to enter Canaan so that Israel may fear the Lord and do as He says. The presence of the alien means that he is accepted as part of the social community and hears details of the nation's responsibility to him as well as his responsibility to the nation and their God. There is a linking of fearing God and carrying out His commands, which involve social concern, including that towards the alien. Faith and humanitarian action are connected, for the Israelite and the alien. There are, or should be, implications of covenantal renewal and public reading of God's word for the church today also.

Having used the notions of Otherness and liminality to look in detail at the commands given to Israel for their interaction with the alien, it remains to look very briefly at some examples of aliens responding to the Israelites and their God, and a few mentions of aliens beyond the Pentateuch before moving to the conclusion of this chapter.

### Aliens within Israel: Some Thumbnail Sketches

The focus of this chapter has been God's Pentateuchal injunctions to Israel for the care of the alien. It is worth noting that at least to some extent the open-heartedness required was in evidence in Israel. I include a brief review of some of the more well-known aliens in the OT and follow this with verses pertaining to the alien in the rest of the OT. This balance is important because Israel did appear more ethnocentric after the exile (in the book of Nehemiah, for example) and was relatively indifferent to non-Jews at the time of Christ.

#### Three Well-known Gentile Believers

RAHAB: JOSHUA 2:1-21; 6:15-25; HEBREWS 11:31; JAMES 2:25

The account of Rahab the prostitute is sketchy. Her situation exhibits dual Otherness, separation by race and status, yet it is clear that this Gentile placed her faith in YHWH and pledged her allegiance to His people. She appears in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:5 and is commended in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25 for living out her faith. A Jewish tradition says that she married Joshua and some of her descendants were priests.

RUTH: RUTH 1:1-18; 2:1-3; 2:4-13

The story of Ruth is perhaps the most complete account of the integration of an alien into Israel. The daughter-in-law of an Israelite couple decides to follow her mother-in-

law Naomi on her journey back to Israel after the death of the older lady's husband and two sons, one of whom was Ruth's husband. The details are not given but something in the life of the family seemed to have attracted Ruth to the Israelites and their God. At the moment of decision Orpah (the other widowed daughter-in-law) decides to remain in Moab and not to move to Israel. However, Ruth insists on remaining with her mother-in-law, proclaiming that Naomi's Israelite people will be her people and that Naomi's God will also be her God (Ruth 1:16). It is noteworthy that the original pledge of loyalty happens in Moab as Ruth commits to the Israelite family - this is centripetal mission, into a community, happening 'on the field' so to speak. This mode of mission will be examined in the next chapter.

On arrival in Israel Ruth goes to the fields to glean, apparently in accordance with the gleaning laws previously discussed. Boaz' treatment of her is also in line with the requirements of his faith and goes beyond them. He allows her to glean but also gives her protection and water (2:9) and asks his men to pull out extra sheaves for her (2:16).

Unfortunately for us, as the story unfolds it is no longer a perfect example of an Israelite landowner extending Exodus to an alien. The story is complicated by Boaz' position as kinsman-redeemer and ultimately distorted by his romantic interest in Ruth! Nonetheless the account of Ruth shows the Otherness and liminality of the alien with regard to the Israelite, first outside and then within Israel. It also records the choice of Israelites to reduce Ruth's Otherness and negative liminality. This is noteworthy, given that there is a rabbinic tradition that says the sons died before their time as punishment for leaving Judah and for marrying non-Jews!

NAAMAN: 2 KINGS 5; LUKE 4:24-30

Naaman is a special case as he benefitted from God's mercy and expressed faith in Him but did not remain in the community. His gratitude was genuine and he wanted to offer gifts to Elisha (2 Kings 5:15). Such was Naaman's faith that he took Israelite soil back home with him so that he could kneel in worship to YHWH. In this man's case he overcame ethnic differences and his own pride to submit himself to the Israelites and their God. Naaman's faith is singled out for praise by Jesus Himself in Luke 4:27.

*Other Gentiles in Israel*

This section gives a brief summary of Gentiles who lived and worked among the Israelites. The precise allegiance or race of some of these people is hard to determine and the list must be taken as suggestive rather than definitive.

While Israel was still in the wilderness, Moses persuaded his brother-in-law Hobab to function as the 'eyes' of the Israelites (Num 10:31) and promised him a place in the nation (v.32) although he wished to go back to his own people.

After Israel had taken Canaan and adopted Saul as its first king Doeg the Edomite was Saul's head shepherd. That he was 'detained before the LORD' might indicate that he had joined the religious community of Israel (1 Sam 21:7).

Uriah (2 Sam 11:2-3) and Ahimelech (1 Sam 26:6) were both military men and described as Hittites. Uriah was significant in that he was a military commander for King David. At the time when David first saw Bathsheba, she had 'purified herself from her uncleanness' (2 Sam 11:4) and was thus observing Israelite laws. Ittai the Gittite (2 Sam 15:14-22; 18:1-12) was a military commander under David and remained faithful to him.

During the Absalom crisis, Hushai the Arkite functioned as some kind of advisor or trusted counsellor (2 Sam 15:32-37; 2 Sam 15-17; 1 Chr 27:33) and the man chosen as a messenger to take the news of Absalom's death to his father was a Cushite (2 Sam 18:20-23).

Finally, another Cushite, Ebed-Melech, served as an official in the court of King Zedekiah and even spoke on behalf of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 38:6-12; 39:16).

*References to the Alien beyond the Pentateuch*

Although this chapter emphasises the prescriptive mandate for Israel to take care of and extend Exodus to the alien, non-Pentateuchal references show that care for the alien remained an obligation for God's people.

In Joshua 8:33 aliens are present among the community at the renewal of the covenant at Mt Ebal in a situation similar to that in Deuteronomy 29:11. Aliens are part of the group tasked with preparing stones for the temple in 1 Chronicles 22:2; non-believing labour is used to build the house of God. After Hezekiah purified the temple and restarted Passover celebrations, aliens from Israel and Judah took part (2 Chr 30:25). The qualifications for taking part were not as strict as before, as some of the Israelites had not consecrated themselves and were not ceremonially clean (2 Chr 30:17-19).

Psalm 94 complains about oppression by the proud and wicked, making specific mention of the alien in v.6. Then in a psalm of praise on behalf of the disadvantaged and vulnerable God is described as watching over the alien and sustaining the fatherless and the widow (Ps 146:9). Interestingly enough, the description of God in Psalm 146 evokes Isaiah 61 and hence Luke 4.

Jeremiah calls on the people to return to the ways of God and urges them no longer to oppress alien, orphan, and widow (Jer 7:6 and Jer 22:3). Oppression of the alien is also condemned by Ezekiel, Zechariah, and Malachi (Eze 22:7, 22:29; Zech 7:10; Mal 3:5). Ezekiel also requires Israel to give land to the aliens that have settled in the nation (Eze 47:22-23).

## Summary and Concluding Thoughts

The Otherness within the Godhead and the Otherness and liminality experienced by God in dealing with all humanity and Israel in particular have been shown to be normative for His followers. The lives of the patriarchs and the history of Israel have caused Otherness and liminality to become an implicit part of their heritage.

The suffering in Egypt and the redemptive Exodus brought about on Israel's behalf were both used by God to shape Israel's attitude to the aliens who lived among them. The concern required of Israel for the alien represents a combination of humanitarian concern and witness to a missional God. The positive take on Otherness and liminality inherent in the alien mandate acts to attract the alien to Israel and its God by an osmotic process or attractive vector.

God is the source of blessing and positive Otherness, as well as Exodus, and these factors are meant to cascade down from Him to Israel and thence on to the alien. There is no question that the Law in the Pentateuch was given to Israel first as God's people, but they had the responsibility to reach out beyond ethnic and social barriers to the alien and the less fortunate.

Israel did form a group, by faith and apparently of race, yet the injunctions of the alien mandate show that the boundaries of the group were relatively porous, which represents a challenge to less graded Confucian concepts of group membership among Christian believers in East Asia.

The different findings of this chapter have direct and paradigmatic relevance for the church in East Asia today and the task of the next chapter is to build on these results and integrate them with relevant parts of the New Testament.

## Chapter 5
## Migration and the Expanding Faith Community

### Introduction

The previous chapter examined the commands God gave to Israel concerning aliens in their midst, using Otherness as a primary tool and liminality as a secondary. In addition the idea of a community of faith which attracted outsiders was explored.

This chapter follows a similar approach, although the NT lacks explicit commands about aliens. However, the teaching and life of Christ and the rest of the NT say much about race and status which is applicable to aliens. In addition, OT Israel was liminal, and this extends to the church as part of the kingdom of God. Finally, in the early church Gentile Christians effectively migrated into a host community which was Jewish. Various patterns derived by the application of Otherness and liminality to OT scripture, such as host and migrant, the attractive vector, cascading, and centrifugal and centripetal mission continue from the OT consistently with biblical theology.

As in the OT chapter I look first at God's Otherness and liminality, but this time in the person of Christ, before examining relevant passages of scripture in pseudo-canonical order. As before, the cascading principle is that as God experiences Otherness and liminality, His people must do the same and have a welcoming heart for the Other, while preserving an attractive tension between exclusion and inclusion.

### Jesus the Other

Jesus' life and experience on earth are marked by multiple Othernesses, with regard to Israel and the Gentiles, and even as a human being. His status and experiences are consistent with those of Israel and in many ways normative for His church.

#### *The Genealogy in Matthew's Gospel*

Matthew traces Jesus' roots down to Joseph, connecting Him back with Abraham the wandering alien and bearer of the multi-ethnic promise and commission of God in Genesis 12. In a gospel written for Jewish readers the inclusion of three Gentile women (Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba) represents the bridging of racial and social Otherness, as the first was a prostitute, the second a poor migrant, and the third an adulteress. The blood of these three migrant Others flowed in the veins of the Messiah.

#### *The Magi in Matthew and the Shepherds in Luke*

The infant Christ is visited by scholars of astronomy and astrology from central Asia or perhaps Babylon (Morris, 1992). The brief incident raises many questions: Who were they, how did they know about Jesus, and what did they expect to find? We do know

that these Gentiles present the new-born King with gifts as an act of worship (Mt 2:11). Like Naaman, they enter the Jewish community of faith temporarily and acknowledge the King of the Jews as theirs. God's provision of the guiding star and the warning to them in a dream are proof of His hand in and approval of the inclusion of aliens.

Luke's shepherds are a mirror image. Although Jewish, they were marginalised (Morris, 1997) and did 3D jobs - difficult, dirty, and dangerous. The presence of the two different groups is an affirmation of the Other, whether racial outsider or social outcast.

### *Jesus' Early Life*

Jesus' birth is marked by Otherness and liminality. The unmarried Mary is informed of her pregnancy by an angel, and Joseph is discouraged from divorcing her in a dream which connects his son with OT prophecy. Jesus was born in betwixt and between circumstances, in a stable to parents displaced by the census of a foreign power. He was later taken to Egypt to escape the murderous intentions of Herod before returning to Israel, but to the town of Nazareth. The town of His birth is *small among the clans of Judah* (Mic 5:2) and He grew up in a town viewed with contempt (Jn    1:46). Lee proposes that because of its distance from Jerusalem and mixed population Galilee itself was liminal (2010, p.46).

### *The Word made flesh*

The incarnation constitutes a unique experience of Otherness and liminality for Jesus. John 1:1 reminds us of Otherness within the Godhead, and Jesus embodied Otherness within Himself as One who was fully God and fully man.

In vv.3-4 the supremacy of Christ is presented, and His taking of human form in humble circumstances is a statement of His willingness to embrace Otherness and vulnerability, as celebrated in Phil 2.

At the incarnation 'God has migrated in Christ' (Muncada, 2008, p.42), and thus I believe that Jesus experiences liminality, as God did in the Garden of Eden. It is relative rather than absolute, subjective and relational, and by choice. Jesus pitches His (migrant) tent among us (v.14), and the stretching (Gk *skenoo*) of the fabric over the poles links to His glory (Heb *shekinah*), a cross-linguistic play on words highlighted by Howard Peskett and Vinoth Ramachandra, (2003, p.72). He willingly exposes Himself to marginalisation and rejection at the hands of those He had created (vv.10-11). This pattern for Christ's time on earth is a continuation of God's experience in the OT. Negative Otherness and some liminality lie at the heart of His time on earth, yet He extends positive Otherness and liminality to those who follow Him (vv.12-13).

### *Jesus' Experience of Otherness and Liminality*

During the temptation (Lk 4) Jesus' human endurance is stretched by 40 days of fasting in the wilderness. The imagery points us back into the OT and the life of Moses and the nation of Israel (Schnackenburg, 2002), and there is continuity between God and His servants, individual and nation. The Son is led into the wilderness like a finger of God into hostile territory, an intense microcosm of the incarnation, with the same attendant sense of liminal vulnerability and danger.

Jesus' Otherness and liminality continue into His public ministry. Because a person's identity was tied to his or her family, Jesus' going out from the family placed Him and later His followers into a liminal situation (Moxnes, 2003). He had no fixed abode and had to rely on the kindness of others. Indeed, He contrasts Himself with foxes and birds who have holes and nests to go to (Mt 8:20).

As Jesus was rejected because of what He taught and did, He moved from being a near to distant Other. After He delivers a man of demons local residents ask Him to leave the Gerasene region (Mk   5:14). His comparison of His flesh with manna causes many to turn away (Jn   6:67). This rejection and marginalisation accelerate as the tension with the religious and political establishment becomes palpable, and even the acclamation of the triumphal entry turns to the shrieks of 'Crucify Him' before Pilate, the racial and social Other to the Jews (Mt 27:22). In His last hours He suffers the 'hard betrayal' of Judas' treachery (Jn   18:5) and the 'soft betrayal' of Peter's denial (Lk 22). In a spiritual agony beyond the understanding of His creatures Jesus cries out, '*My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?*' (Mk   15:34, Psalm 22:1) words which from our limited human perspective suggest a state of toxic Otherness, as He 'experienced full alienation from God' (Witherington, 2001, p.399).

## Relevant Teaching in the Gospels

The next section examines elements of Jesus' teaching relevant to migration in East Asia. As for the equivalent section of the OT chapter the twin lenses of Otherness and liminality will be applied to the text in pseudo-canonical order. Jesus' interactions with several Jewish and Gentile individuals are discussed in later sections.

### *Jesus' First Public Sermon: Luke 4*

Jesus' sermon in Luke 4 quotes from Isaiah 61 and 58 to announce deliverance from physical and economic as well as spiritual oppression. It is the proclamation of a new Exodus, which has specific application to the question of Otherness.

Briefly, Michael Goheen (2005) notes that Bosch derives three principal foci of Luke's gospel from this passage: mission to Gentiles, concern for the poor, and not taking revenge. The first two relate directly to Otherness, race and status. Robert Willoughby's (1995) exploration of the connection between Luke 4 and jubilee and use

of Exodus 23:9 to join the Exodus theme with the treatment of aliens integrate the teaching of both Testaments.

For Philip Esler (1996) Naaman's inclusion (v.27) shows that a Gentile came to faith in YHWH without becoming a Jew; he did not migrate into a Jewish host community. Also, the mention of the poor would have been revolutionary for readers from socially highly stratified Graeco-Roman societies (p.181). Finally, in vv.26-27 we find a widow as well as a general, which for Esler demonstrates the socially inclusive nature of the gospel and the kingdom. He extends the same reasoning to the mixed company of poor and powerful at the wedding banquet of Luke 14 (p.186). All of these can inform the East Asian church as it considers how to respond to migrants.

*The Kingdom of God*

According to Alister McGrath (1999) the centre of Christ's teaching is the kingdom of God, which is *already and not yet*. He prefers *kingship* to *kingdom* because of the latter's possible territorial associations.

FF Bruce (1997) fills in some of the OT background to the kingdom, drawing on the imagery of Daniel 7 but tempering the grandeur of that Son of Man with the servant nature of Christ. Vaughan Roberts (2003) emphasises continuity between Old and New Testaments in relation to the kingdom and agrees with Graeme Goldsworthy that it is the central idea of scripture. To the latter's succinct definition of 'God's people in God's place under God's rule' (2001, p.54) Roberts adds 'and blessing' (p.21). In the NT God's OT rule of His people is fulfilled in and refocused on the life and work of the Son through whom the kingdom is within us or in our midst (Lk 17:21).

When John the Baptist came as herald for Christ he announced the kingdom and linked it back to Isa 40 to suggest a new order and salvation for all. Similar themes emerge in Jesus' use of Isa 9 in His preaching in Matthew 4. Later, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pulls together kingdom, righteousness, laws, grace, and discipleship, affirming and building on OT ideas. Note that the kingdom theme serves as an *inclusio* for the Beatitudes (vv.3 & 10). It belongs in the here and now to the poor in spirit and those persecuted for righteousness. For Rudolf Schnackenburg (2002) the poor in spirit are those who recognise their wretchedness before God, although he acknowledges Luke's greater emphasis on physical rather than spiritual hunger. He also extends the general sense of spiritual poverty, abandonment, or vulnerability right through the Beatitudes and connects this with God's OT promises to the weak.

Certain aspects of the kingdom concept are especially relevant to this research. The call to repentance among Jews as part of the announcement of the kingdom is an explicit refutation of simplistic correspondence between race and religion (Koestenberger & O'Brien, 2001). In His dealings with Gentiles Jesus echoes this, as

does Paul, the apostle to the non-Jews. Indeed, the OT confirms that God's plan was to attract Gentiles into the community of faith. Second, the kingdom described in the NT is not an edifice of power and politics but a gentle, bottom up, activity and community of God as shown by the parables in Matthew 13. Next, the growing kingdom challenges human categories of race and status, and as the church falls victim to Jewish exclusion it begins to constitute a distinct grouping. Finally, the *already and not yet* tension of the kingdom brings dynamic liminal instability and Otherness to those within.

The followers of Christ experience a liminality similar to but more extreme than the Israelites as they commit to an ill-defined organism, a form of communitas, and place their faith in a person rather than in a religious system. They are not to seek power or authority but to go beyond human categories and identify with the poor. The Israelites were to accept aliens from a position of relative strength, as hosts, whereas the early church is to attract outsiders from a weak position as they became outsiders themselves. The community of faith has broadened and increased, and so have their Otherness (internally, within the group, and externally with regard to society) and liminality. This perception of the church is conducive to a meaningful ministry among migrants.

The righteous are persecuted because of their allegiance to Christ and their similarity to the prophets (vv.11-12), both of which are associated with justice for and reconciliation with the poor and the disadvantaged including racial and social Others. The spirit of the kingdom requires those inside it to remember their own journey of redemption and pass on the spiritual and material Exodus of Christ to those around them by a process of cascading.


TWO KINGDOM OF GOD PARABLES IN MT 13: MUSTARD SEED AND YEAST

The two parables are related, with subtle differences between them. The kingdom will grow from small beginnings but eventually contain many people. The mustard seed (vv.31-32) represents growth while the yeast (v.33) suggests diffusion of the kingdom throughout society. For Stuart Murray (2004) the two metaphors portray the kingdom as subversive and different from the later top-down institutionalism and cultural captivity of the church. Brian Vickers (2004) thinks of the growth and function of the kingdom as low-key and almost imperceptible to outsiders. It is to become strong and welcoming, reaching out to attract people, and there are parallels with the inclusive-exclusive tension towards aliens in the OT. Both Schnackenburg (2002) and Halvor Moxnes (2003) remind us that *birds of the air* is a euphemism for the Gentiles.

In addition Moxnes proposes that the two parables together represent juxtapositions of great and small (v.32), purity and impurity (v.33), and an 'overturning of conventions' (2003, p.113) such that the liminality of the kingdom would make sense

to people who followed Jesus. I belief that a synthesis of the two parables in the context of migration points to advocacy on behalf of migrants undertaken by Christians in small and gentle ways.

If the kingdom of God is the continuation and expansion of God's rule in the OT, pointing to and anticipating the full consummation of God's reign on earth, then logically the church has an obligation to do more than was required of the Israelites in the OT. This includes greater compassion for the Other and willingness to enter into liminal situations as well as a more outward facing and expansionist mentality. As the kingdom goes out, it must attract people in.

*The Challenge to Human Notions of Status*

In His teaching Jesus often challenges concepts of status and acceptability. In Matthew 19:16-30 after the rich young man leaves because of his unwillingness to put away his money the disciples are shocked by Jesus' comment that it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God. Their frustration in v.25 betrays the common understanding that the rich were more spiritually acceptable than the poor. In response Jesus promises to remember the disciples' sacrifices and that 'many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first' (v.30). In speaking thus He is stating that status does not matter and traditional ideas of acceptability are invalid.

The parable of the vineyard workers is similar. The owner pays each worker the same amount of money for the work he has done even though they were hired in several batches throughout the day. Also, the sum given to each is the highest possible rather than the minimum - those hired last receive the same as those who worked all day. At payment time normal conventions are suspended and the (subjectively) anticipated difference in wages has not materialised; the hired workers find themselves in a liminal space. Those who came later enjoy more money than they expected while those who came earlier do not enjoy more than they were originally promised. There is a highest common denominator effect similar to that which operates in Paul's letter to Philemon, as the lowly are promoted but not at the expense of the better-off. Jesus finishes the story with the comment 'the last will be first, and the first will be last' (Mt 20:16). The so-called last and first are human categories of difference and distance, but as we have seen, when we look either from or to the position of the *eternal Thou* human differences become negligibly small.

This main idea continues when Jesus talks about seats of honour during the meal at the Pharisee's house in Luke 14, warning that those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted. In vv.12-14 Jesus pushes for this teaching to be applied as He instructs His listeners to invite the poor and marginalised. Here is explicit teaching to extend hospitality to the needy, based on the

heavenly deconstruction of human notions of status.

The discussion moves next into the Parable of the Great Wedding Banquet (Lk 14:15-24, and Mt 22:1-14). Those of 'acceptable' status are less open to God while those considered unworthy may be more receptive. A familiar inversion is seen again as those originally invited get nothing (Lk 14:24). Race may also be a factor, as the people on the street corners (v.9) symbolise Gentiles (Schnackenburg, 2002).

Accepted notions of status or worthiness are deconstructed at the same time as Jesus commands His listeners to be open to the outsider or the Other. Brendan Byrne places God's 'super-abundant hospitality' (2000, p.124) in opposition to human notions of class and respectability. An understanding of the kingdom of God and the grace within brings people into a liminal state of neo-equality where we must pay attention to 'people not like us'. I believe that this is the ethical demand of Levinas' *face*.

Finally, belonging to the kingdom of God has consequences for relationships (Mt 22:34). Jesus' two commandments for His followers, one vertical and the other horizontal, reduce the Otherness of Others. Because of the presence and demand of God we are to love our neighbours as ourselves and aim to reduce Otherness to a minimum. According to Cavalie (2008), the two commandments of Christ make discrimination of any kind heresy. The Christian is to shrink X- and Y-separation; the infinity of the *eternal Thou* brings qualitative identity between *I* and *thou*.

The presence of the neighbour leads us naturally to the Good Samaritan.

*The Parable of the Good Samaritan: Luke 10:25*

In a dialogue with Jesus an *expert in the law* agrees that the previously mentioned two great commandments are the key to eternal life, yet seeks to place limits by asking who his neighbour is. We cannot know what was in the man's mind but race and status are obvious candidates for the limitation of neighbourliness.

To make His point Jesus constructs a story about a priest, a Levite, and a Samaritan, stereotypical insiders and outsider. Not only were Samaritans racially mixed but they also followed a faith abhorrent to Jews. In another reversal of status and expectation, professional religious people fail to follow the commandments, especially as these relate to the needy. It is the Samaritan, the Other, who assesses the scene and responds with humanity across the very barriers that existed in the mind of Jesus' interlocutor and the religious leaders in the story.

The Samaritan knows that to the priest and the Levite, and quite possibly the victim and the innkeeper, he is a distant Other. Byrne (2000) even wonders if the injured man might be surprised when the Samaritan cares for him instead of taking advantage. The Samaritan acts to reduce Otherness by helping the injured man on the basis of a shared humanity - at the deepest level, the Other or alien is the same as me

(Cavalie, 2008). The injured man is a *face*, presenting itself in a time of need. The deconstruction of human exclusiveness is found in the 'when he saw him, he took pity on him' of v.33. The Samaritan, of whom nothing would be expected and to whom nothing would be given, moves himself into a liminal space (Turner, 1969) as he crosses boundaries established by Jews. He is an outsider entering their world, yet he comes from a position of relative strength because circumstances have made the Jew the weaker party. Communitas emerges as the Samaritan gives first aid to the victim and takes him to the inn, as the unusual circumstances of human need and humane response have thrown strangers together. As the Samaritan undertakes to take care of any further expenses on his return, commitment and trust develop between him, the injured man, and the innkeeper.

The exchange comes to a climax with the definition of *neighbour* as one who meets the needs of others and Others and enters liminal spaces by crossing established barriers. The story is directly relevant to migration and in it there are harsh warnings for the church. Insiders, religious, racial, and social failed in their duty, and the one who showed mercy and compassion was himself an outsider, an Other. Those hearing the story are forced to bring together the two diametrically opposed concepts of 'Samaritan' and 'good', tearing down their own neat categories and prejudice (Byrne, 2000, p.101). If one from outside encounters the faith community and shows mercy those inside the faith community have an even stronger obligation. The conclusion is similar to that of Byrne, who suggest that the notion of 'neighbour' is now no longer something that I use of those around me but is now an identity and function which I adopt for myself. Enrique Dussel agrees: 'the Christian does not begin with the self but with the Other' (1978, p.53). When the church sees Others in need we cannot simply 'pass by on the other side' (vv.31-32), individually or as a body.

*Ministering to the Least: Matthew 25:31-46*

The story of the sheep and goats challenges Jesus' followers to live out their faith in obedience to His commands. Jesus links faith and works in a manner echoed by James in his epistle. Jesus' description of people who need food, drink, clothing, company, and medical attention would resonate with many migrants. Groody (2009) agrees, while acknowledging the on-going scholarly debate about the identity of *the least* of v.40. Jesus requires His followers to meet the needs of the vulnerable Other.

As Jesus interacts with the righteous and the unrighteous both groups ask, 'When did we *see* you hungry…?' (vv.37, 44). In His response to similar questions from the two different groups Jesus does not mention either of them *seeing* anything, but refers instead to what they did or did not *do*. We must go beyond what we see through the matrix of human social and racial standards and take Jesus as our ultimate

focus

The challenge comes from Jesus' equation of concern for the needy with concern for Himself. As a person ministers to (or neglects!) the lowly and disenfranchised, behind that person stands the *eternal Thou* in whose image both provider and recipient are made. In Levinasian terms, the *face* of the needy is ultimately the *face* of God. Again, neat categorisations of status or race are confounded and we are to be neighbours to those in need.

We see a form of cascading, as well as the Egypt and Exodus paradigms. In v.40 what we do for the lowest we actually do for the King while in v.45 our neglect of the lowest is also neglect of Christ. The contrast between *the least* and *the King* is no coincidence. We have the choice to exercise Egypt or Exodus towards Others, the low and the vulnerable, and what we do cascades up to God Himself.

A little exploration of *the least* mentioned in vv.40 and 45 may be helpful. Craig Blomberg (1992) informs us that the majority view throughout church history has been that *the least* refers to the disciples and that this is how Matthew uses the word throughout his gospel. That said, he does concede that the minority view which traditionally saw *the least* as referring to any needy people is becoming dominant today.

A different argument is that of John Nolland (2005), who compares v.40 with v.45, concluding that *the least* in v.40 refers to followers of Christ while the omission of *brothers* in v.45 means that the king appreciates help for the needy whether they are disciples or not. The service to *the least* of v.45 is considered as rendered to the king even if it is not to followers of Christ.

Such a perspective is not shared by Donald Hagner (1995), for whom the omission of *brothers* in v.45 is purely a matter of linguistic convenience. For him both v.40 and v.45 refer to Jesus' followers. However, he takes care to mention Proverbs 19:17 and Deuteronomy 15:9, which suggests that he accepts a broad connection between taking care of the poor and service to God even if this particular section of Matthew 25 has a narrower focus in his opinion.

Schnackenburg (2002) is adamant that *the least* of v.40 includes non-Christians as well as Christians, based on Jesus sharing of humanity with men and women. He also mentions the Jewish tradition in the Midrash of Tannaim, that those who give food to the poor are effectively giving it to God.

At the end of the day it may be preferable to see this passage as prioritising the needs of the Christian community while not dismissing the obligation to unbelievers. To narrow down the scope to followers of Christ only would go against the inclusivist fair-treatment agenda of the Pentateuch, the spirit of the Beatitudes and the salt and light passages (Mt 5:13-16), Jesus' own actions in feeding the 5000 and 4000, and the spirit and actions of the emerging church of Acts and the Epistles. These all imply that a

person does not have to be a follower of YHWH to receive mercy at the hands of those who are. This is another incidence of the attractive vector.

<p style="text-align:center">*The Upper Room Teaching: John 13-17*</p>

Jesus' final time with the whole group of disciples contains much that is relevant to this research.

In a radical reinterpretation of status reminiscent of Philippians 2:6-11 Jesus the leader and teacher washes His disciples' feet, to demonstrate that having the gospel and bringing it to others involves serving them (13:1-17). Royce Gruenler connects Jesus' concern for the Other here with the 'characteristic motif' of the Trinity and the church that is to be formed in its image (1986, p.90). Jesus' action brings humiliation and shame and is a precursor to the cross (Newbigin, 1987 p.167). Lesslie Newbigin understands Peter's objection to having his feet washed as a desire to keep social norms intact. He was unhappy at Jesus' undermining of social hierarchies. According to Don Carson (1991), the race factor is also implicitly present, as in some Jewish circles washing of the feet was something only undertaken by Gentile slaves. Jesus' instruction that the disciples should wash each other's feet is a similarly unwelcome disturbance of social order and accepted hierarchies. Migration involves hierarchies and power structures, and thus Newbigin's warning against 'projecting…our human conceptions of power and authority' (p.170) onto God is appropriate.

Jesus' requirement for His followers to love one another (13:34-35) attracts a clarification from Carson (1991). Some detect a rather inward-looking love among the disciples here, of a lower standard than the love for our enemies of the Sermon on the Mount, but Carson argues that the difference is primarily a matter of focus: John's gospel also records that God loves the world (Jn  3:16) and sends Jesus' followers out into it (Jn  20:21).

It seems that the fullness and abundance of the intra-Trinitarian love is such that it flows out beyond the scope of the Godhead. Then by analogy with and in dependence on the triune God that is the source of our love, the sense of new life and redemptive communitas that comes with faith in Christ should cause the disciples to love each other with a love that overflows to those around them. This cascading outflow of love is seen in the early church in passages such as Acts 2:42-47 and similar, a bridging of Otherness beginning with those who declare their allegiance to the *eternal Thou*.

In 14:10-12 Jesus reveals that His word and work derive from the Father and that He and the Father are mutually indwelling (14:10). This is the Father's acceptance and empowerment of the Son, which extend beyond the Trinity to include Christians (14:12). A person who believes in Jesus will do the work that He has been doing, which is actually that of the Father. We are to do some of what the Father does, including

accepting and loving the Other, subject to the limitations of our fallen, human nature. The 'emerging community …is…to image the divine Community in its plurality and oneness' (Gruenler, 1986, p.126)

Jesus explores further the connection between finite man and infinite God. The third party in the divine dance will live inside believers (14:17), and they will live because Christ lives (14:19). Then in the following verse Jesus points to a remarkable partnership between Creator and created: Jesus is in the Father, and in Christians, and they are also in Jesus. Also, Father and Son will make their home with those who love Jesus and obey his teaching (14:23). Christians will to some extent share in the divine life, an experience and process known to the Orthodox Church as theosis, 'the adoption into God of his own human handiwork' (Steenberg, 2009, p.129). The unity of the believers is not only a reflection of the unity of the Godhead; it is also our participation in it (Newbigin, 1987, p.234).

Moltmann develops this a little further, asking us to understand the Trinity as Spaces as well as Persons, as they make space for each other. There is giving and receiving of Otherness within the Trinity (2008, p.374), complementary notions of *ek-stasis* (lit. *outward standing*) and *kenosis* within the Godhead. As the divine Persons go out to and for each other, they also make space for each other, the resulting perichoresis promoting unity in diversity. This is similar to Muncada's (2008) Trinitarian love within and beyond the Persons. The Japanese theologian Nozomu Miyahira's attempt to conceptualise the Trinity in terms of Japanese culture and inter-personal relations produces a similar idea of 'three betweennesses, one concord' (1997).

The breadth of Moltmann's view emerges from his description of 'the triune God…[as] not only the three-personal God but much more the threefold divine Space for the indwelling of all creatures' (p.375). The notion of space is precious indeed, as migrants seem to exist in constrained spaces of law, race, status, time, and location. Yet the divine Space concept needs to be approached in the same way as that of God's openness above. This Space is created by and creates Otherness, but it welcomes the created Other with perfect love. What I call the *space of acceptance* extends from God out into the created order and is connected to and dependent on God, and our acceptance is founded on the redemptive plan of God and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. People move from outside to inside this space of acceptance by faith in Christ. Gruenler brings helpful clarity to the matter. Access to his 'glory sphere' - congruent with Moltmann's divine Spaces - is restricted to 'believers' (1986, p.130).

Moltmann talks about the openness of God, saying that all can enter and find 'freedom and living space within' (p.375). As it stands on paper his assertion that the Triunity is not closed or exclusive is somewhat problematic, as the whole scripture confronts us with human sin and rebellion against God. The openness of the Trinity is

caused by abundant love, he claims. However, as we consider Otherness and God's redemptive heart, a little nuancing is required. We must consider the openness of God and the Trinity as a place of freedom and shalom in creative tension with God's holiness and our sinfulness. The OT and NT have demonstrated exclusivity but also a strong attractive force of the self-giving, infinite love-nature of God Himself, as Moltmann has argued so persuasively.

As people move into the space of acceptance, it grows - in human terms at least - and those within it extend it to those still outside. Entering the space of acceptance means liminality for us and a limited experiential liminality for God as the Infinite accepts finite perturbations due to the entrance of outsiders. We join a second-level perichoretic community of human beings interacting with God and each other. Moltmann is quick to reject any notion of our human nature dissolving into the divine but by way of balance adds 'nor do we stand as aliens and foreigners forever outside the door' (p.376). The picture painted in Chapter Two has shown how appropriate the door is for a theology of migration in Asia, literally and in a socio-theological sense. To illustrate inclusion Moltmann tells us that the presence of the Virgin Mary in icons depicting the Trinity is not a statement about a Quaternity (p.376) but in fact a symbol of 'redeemed humankind in God' (p.376).

Finally, Moltmann looks at our lives in eschatological perspective. Our being 'in Christ' means that the space we are in is a 'moving room'. This means that the space is going somewhere, to perfection, restoration, and consummation. The *already and not yet* kingdom challenges simplistic and static ideas of belonging and the attendant human categories, and the moving eschatological space does the same. I suggest that our obligation to enter liminal spaces with Others and accept them in the name of Christ emerges not only from a historical sense of gratitude at what Christ has done *for* us but also in an eschatological expectation of what Christ will do *with* us.

A present and future orientation is found in the vine and branches metaphor of John 15. As branches in the Christ vine, Christians are to bear the fruit of 'love and obedience', 'the life of Jesus reproduced in the midst of the world' (Newbigin, 1987, p.197-8), which in this research includes accepting and reaching out to the migrant Other. The vine and the branches speak of Exodus. Those who were previously distant Others from God and who have been brought into close relationship and communion with Him cannot impose toxic Otherness on those around them. The Other has indeed been brought near. We see this not only in Jesus' command that Christians should love each other as He has loved them (15:12) but also in His replacing of *servants* with *friends*.

The liminal state of Christians is apparent from the first part of John 17. Jesus will leave, but the disciples will stay; the Jesus movement of the previous three years

will not go on as they imagined. In 17:14-15 the disciples do not belong to this world but must remain in it and will be protected by God Himself. True disciples must exhibit liminality and engender communitas (McVann, 1988). Their message and values are different from the world, and this in-between status brings to mind Israel in the OT. The liminality of the church increases as she is rejected by the Jews and becomes a mixed Jew-Gentile community in Acts.

There is another cascading, this time of sending (17:18). The Father sent the Son and now He sends the disciples. The mission of the Father, uniquely and definitively embodied in the Son, is now extended through the witness of the disciples. The church is to be a body which will grow, and again we conclude that the resolution of Otherness applies outwards from the body of Christ, otherwise it would not have grown in the first place and there would be no new disciples. The church is expected to engage the distant Other, just as Israel had obligations to the alien in the OT period.

Because the church is expected to grow and embrace all manner of people, Jesus prays for unity among the disciples, including those yet to believe (17:20-21). Jesus' prayer thus assumes an embracing, Otherness-reducing attitude from believer to non-believer, across the boundary between in- and out-group. Among the Christians should obtain a unity similar to that between Father and Son (17:22), embrace and acceptance of the Other without discrimination of any kind. But the end of Jesus' prayer is not just two distinct levels of unity, one divine and the other human. In 17:21 and 23 the united Christians are also to be in the united Trinity as a witness to the world. For Lee this human unity is a 'temporal repetition' of the divine unity (2010, p.71). As Christians they draw on the resources of the divine life, the resulting unity and mutual acceptance proving that Jesus has come from the Father (17:23). Unity cannot exist if there is discrimination due to Otherness, and a healthy attitude to Otherness should not only mark relationships between Christians but also commend the gospel to the outside world. The conclusion is that while unity and healthy Otherness within the body of Christ are primary and derived from the divine life, embrace of the Other must also operate from believer to nonbeliever.

*Peter Reinstated: John 21:15-19*

We can only guess at Peter's feeling when the Risen Lord appeared on the shore, but he must have felt vulnerable and marginal. Jesus acts to reduce his Otherness and reaffirm him as part of the group but insists that Peter's expressed love for Him must manifest as care for the church. Jesus has acted radically to restore Peter and rescue him from a distant Otherness of his own making. Similar to the teaching of the upper room discourse, our service for Christ involves the reduction of Otherness, the bringing near of those yet to belong. Love lies at the heart of Jesus's conversation with Peter, as it did

in John 13-17. Love accepts and affirms the Other

## Jesus and Four Individual Others

In four vignettes Jesus interacts with four different kinds of Otherness. The last snapshot is about the Samaritan woman and forms a bridge between Jesus' dealings with Jews and with Gentiles.

### *The Sinful Woman: Luke 7:36*

In this episode Jesus is in a vulnerable position as He goes to have dinner with a Pharisee, and the dynamic is further complicated by the arrival of the sinful woman. Between Jesus and the woman exist several kinds of Otherness: both are Jews, yet she is a woman and of dubious reputation and social status. In terms of social and religious acceptability, Jesus and the Pharisee are closer. The woman is a distant Other.

The woman's very presence at the event and her subsequent behaviour take her out of her comfort zone and move her and Jesus into a liminal space as He accepts the attentions of a sinful woman. However, as the drama unfolds the Otherness between Jesus and the Pharisee is increased, while that between the Lord and the woman is reduced. This differential Otherness is described by Jesus in His story about the two people who owe different amounts of money. Most important is not the degree of Otherness but the willingness to reduce it. There are parallels with Jesus' handling of the woman caught in adultery in John 8.

### *Zacchaeus: Luke 19*

Although Jewish, tax collectors were servants of the Romans and usually exploited those who paid taxes to them. Because of his profession and abuse of it Zacchaeus was marginalised, yet his desire for acceptance is seen in his climbing a tree to see Jesus.

Jesus reaches out to Zacchaeus and invites Himself to his house. Boundaries are crossed and Otherness is reduced as 'Jesus brings him in from the margins to the center' (Byrne, 2000, p.151). Although Lee (2010) claims that it is Jesus' liminality that allows Him to cross boundaries, I believe that His love for the Father and fallen humanity is a better principal motivator.

Just as Jesus's actions towards the sinful woman in Luke 7 move Him away from the Pharisee and closer to her, so here He comes closer to Zacchaeus and distances Himself from the crowd. In v.7 the resulting complaint is that Jesus has gone to be the guest of a sinner, as Zacchaeus exchanges hospitality with Jesus (Byrne, p.150). In v.9 Jesus describes how an outsider has migrated into the community of faith. Just as in the Luke 7 story, the bearer of faith has to be willing to enter a liminal state with the recipient and become vulnerable. The result of both parties entering into a liminal space is 'redemptive communitas' (Lee, 2010, p.71). Zacchaeus 's resulting new allegiance is

made clear as he proclaims his restorative action.

## Nicodemus: John 3

Nicodemus the Pharisee is sympathetic to Jesus. As an educated man and member of the Jewish ruling council he is (humanly speaking) of a higher status than Christ.

While certain OT figures met God in a liminal location on a mountain, the liminal space here is created by Nicodemus' choice to come at night, and he moves Jesus into a liminal phase of a drama (Arbuckle, 2010). There are interesting inversions of status as the important official seeks an audience with the carpenter, and the teacher is taught by the itinerant country preacher. This difference is blurred when Nicodemus calls Jesus *Rabbi*. As he instructs Nicodemus about matters that he should actually know Jesus emphasises Otherness. He distinguishes between flesh and spirit and contrasts reliance on religious knowledge with the work of the Spirit. Newbigin (1987) describes Nicodemus as someone who is part of the system against which Jesus had begun to speak and asserts that there is a split between insider and outsider. In addition, Newbigin pictures Nicodemus as trapped in a flatland mentality (p.41). He needs the new birth that comes from above and brings entry to the liminal kingdom. The Pharisee is caught between exclusion and invitation, and we are reminded of the attractive force thus created.

## The Samaritan Woman: John 4

In the interaction with the Samaritan woman both Jesus and the woman are in a liminal space. He is a Jew and has entered Samaritan territory, usually avoided by Jews. She is at home but excluded from her natural in-group as shown by her presence at the well at noon. The combination of Otherness and liminality is found in v.9. The two people are separated by race and religion, social status, and even gender. Jesus bridges all of these barriers (Nelavala, 2007) yet in doing so moves the 'semi-pagan peasant' (Newbigin, 1987, p.49) Samaritan woman over to his side.

The Samaritan woman is an alien entering the community of faith, in a manner perhaps akin to Naaman. Her being a Samaritan, a woman, and a person with a complex history does not prevent Jesus transmitting the message of redemption to her, which she subsequently shares with her people. The result is the taking of Messianic faith across boundaries and the bringing of Others into a community of faith whose racial and theological roots were Jewish. Jesus dedicated two days of instruction to these people who were previously outside the ethnic and religious community. Mission occurs by Jesus reaching out to bring people into the community of faith, and Surekha Nelavala (2007) reminds us of the responsibility of the privileged.

For Carson (1991) John's placing of the encounters with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman in such close proximity is to facilitate comparison of the two. Despite

their different backgrounds, race, status, religion, gender, education, and (assumed) moral standing, both are in need of the message of Christ, and this undermines human categories of race and status while pointing forward to a community of faith which transcends them. Indeed, I would suggest that only in the communitas created by entry to the kingdom could individuals as different as Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman share belonging and identity. As these two interactions of Jesus with others show, the boundary between the in- and out-group of faith is clear, but porous.

Jesus combines loving inclusiveness with an insistence that faith in God is essential, echoing the inclusive-exclusive tension of the OT and anticipating the teaching of the epistles. Lee believes it was Jesus' own liminality that enabled Him to cross boundaries and refers specifically to the encounter with Zacchaeus and the Samaritan woman (2010, p.69), yet surely it was His secure relationship of Otherness with His Father and self-giving love for fallen humanity that caused Jesus to enter the liminal space in the first place. Liminality is the result of a choice made at the incarnation. Lee claims that Jesus and the tax collector found themselves in a liminal space - which was 'a means of grace' and 'redemptive communitas' (p.71). I add the refinement that they experienced differential liminality.

It is now time to look at Jesus' conversations with Gentiles, as ethnic and religious Others.

## Jesus and the Gentiles: Thumbnail Sketches

The small number of contacts between Jesus and Gentiles are illustrative of a transition to a broader and more inclusive understanding of the YHWH faith community. As we have seen in the OT, this kind of breadth was always part of the redemptive plan. From the following sketches I will tease out some implications of Jesus' contact with Gentiles for a theological response to migration.

### *The Centurion: Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10*

In the Lukan account the centurion approaches Jesus through Jewish elders, who confirm that he 'loves our nation and has built our synagogue' (Lk 7:5). Despite the centurion's identification with the Jews and his real faith, the Lord still views him as a Gentile and thus the proclamation that He has not seen such great faith among Israel is significant (Koestenberger & O'Brien, 2001). Schnackenburg (2002) believes that Jesus' mention of people from the East and the West (Mt 8:11) hints at the imminent racial reconciliation that the gospel will facilitate.

The centurion has negotiated Otherness and liminality and has effectively migrated into the (Jewish) community of faith. Now he undergoes a second migration as he places his faith in Jesus. This alien and stranger in Israel's midst has forged a new

belonging based on faith, a transformation made possible not only by the saving grace of Jesus and his own believing response but also the acceptance of the synagogue community. In this and other incidents involving Gentiles we see migration into and acceptance by Jewish communities, first of Judaism and later of Christian faith. Migration into host communities represents a combination of centrifugal and centripetal mission, as the Book of Acts and the epistles confirm.

*The Syro-Phoenician Woman: Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30*

In this encounter Jesus is in Gentile territory and apparently not about to engage in public ministry (Mk 7:24-25). Mark describes the woman as a Greek, while Matthew refers to her as a Canaanite.

This meeting of Jesus and Gentile woman is unusual in that she is proactive and insistent despite His attempts to keep His presence a secret and the indifference of the disciples. This female Naaman acts to reduce her Otherness and establish a liminal space in which faith can be transmitted. As she crosses boundaries and seeks the blessings of the Yahweh faith community the Gentile addresses Jesus as *Lord, and Son of David* (Mt 15:22); Matthew records her words to show that she has moved in the direction of Judaism (Schnackenburg, 2002).

At first glance Jesus' statement in Matthew 15:24 is exclusivist and discouraging: 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel', as is His response to her request for help in v.26. Israel are sheep and children, whereas Gentiles are dogs. The effect is to emphasise Otherness and increase distance between Jew and Gentile, and it appears that the liminal space she has tried to establish is being destroyed or at least strained by Jesus' intransigence. Yet the tension between the apparent exclusion she faces and the general inclusiveness of God summarised in Genesis 12:3 and Matthew 28 is another manifestation of the attractive vector already described. The woman is conscious of being Other, an alien, yet desires what belongs to those inside the community of YHWH faith. As she hears, 'You are not', she responds with, 'Yes, but I intend to be'. In the light of my focus on the *woman's* actions, Ben Witherington's comment that *Jesus* is 'crossing a variety of boundaries' (2001, p.231) provides a complementary perspective. It is also no coincidence that Mark records Jesus' teaching on clean and unclean immediately before the encounter with the Syro-Phoenician woman, which for Volf (1996) is a reworking of binary categories and in- and out-groups.

The woman challenges the categories of belonging, arguing that a person of lower ethno-religious status can be part of the faith community (observations also made by Witherington, 2001). A second look from the perspective of community and belonging may prove instructive. In v.24 Jesus talks about the lost sheep of *Israel*, and we remember the Baptist's command to Israel to repent. Israel and Gentiles are both

learning that a simple identification of race and religion, or ethnicity and belonging, is no longer valid, at the same time as the primacy of the Jew is being upheld (Koestenberger & O'Brien, 2001) in terms reminiscent of Paul's 'first for the Jew, then for the Gentile' (Rom 1:16).

The implications are clear. A person could be Jewish ethnically and by religious affiliation without actually having faith in Yahweh. Conversely, a non-Jew could exercise faith, although at that time this involves some kind of move into a Jewish host community. As we shall see, this requires tolerance and love on both sides, and is a promise to Gentiles and an instruction to Jews (Schnackenburg, 2002, p.151).

*The Samaritan Leper: Luke 17:11-19*

The ten lepers at the border between Galilee and Samaria live in a liminal space, geographically and because of their illness. Jesus thus deals with the social and ethnic Other.

That Jesus required the healed lepers to fulfil the Law suggests that the majority were Jews. Yet it is a Samaritan who returns and expresses thanks in a dramatic way. One who was doubly outside the community 'came back' (v.15) and 'returned' (v.18) to Jesus. A foreigner is migrating into the community of faith as explicitly stated by Christ in v.19: 'Your faith has made you well'.

These three brief accounts show non-Jews exercising faith across boundaries, and migrating into the community of faith by trusting Jesus. As modern day migrants enter a national host community, and migrant and host Christian both enter the liminal space, albeit differentially, the twin Othernesses of race and status can be negotiated with at least the possibility of the outsider attaching him or herself to a community of YHWH faith.

Christ's teaching and relationships build on God's instructions to and plan for Israel and the nation's own experiences in Egypt and the Promised Land. His status as the God-man means that He links together Creator and created, and Israel and the Gentile-including kingdom. He draws from His perfect relationship of Otherness with His Father to model and empower the church to manage Otherness well and attract outsiders into the kingdom, at the heart of which is the Trinity itself. In the Book of Acts we now look at the gradual inclusion of Gentiles into the church against the background of reconciliation wrought by Christ on the cross.

**Acts**

Having looked at Jesus' teaching about and His interactions with people of Otherness, we now move onto the Book of Acts to see how the early church responded to Gentiles and brought them into an essentially Jewish community of Christian faith. Therefore,

this section will consider briefly the Jewish Diaspora in the eastern Mediterranean and the so-called faith interface, and then focus on Luke's narrative of the early church.

*The Jewish Diaspora and 'Islands of Faith'*

A significant factor in the expansion of the early church was the presence of Jewish communities all over the eastern Mediterranean.

Blauw (1962) believes that the Jewish diaspora engaged in proselytism among Gentiles in the inter-testamental period, although its significance has been overstated. Andreas Koestenberger and Peter O'Brien (2001) are more cautious, suggesting that the Jews sought primarily to maintain their identity and that the extension of their religion to a small number of Gentiles was a side effect. They concede that Jewish morality and lifestyle may have attracted Gentiles, which resonates with my attractive vector.

The relationship between Judaism and Christianity is unique, at least from a Christian perspective, and 1st century diaspora Jews were simultaneously faith-bearers and faith-recipients as they encountered the gospel. They were islands of faith in a Gentile sea, and Blauw claims that Christianity would not have grown quickly among Gentiles without large numbers of converts to Judaism.

At its birth the church was a Jewish entity and Acts begins with the proclamation of the gospel to Jewish people in Jewish terms. His address in Acts 2 and that of Steven later establish the Christian faith as the fulfilment and logical extension of OT prophecy and practice. To be Christian was to be Jewish, as Jesus the Messiah is the fulfilment of OT prophecy and teaching.

As the church encountered the persecution which scattered Jewish Christians to places such as Antioch (Acts 11) the gospel was communicated to Gentiles by 'men from Cyprus and Cyrene' (11:20). Later, Paul and others frequently began their ministry at the synagogue, and the embryonic church communities were mixtures of Jew and non-Jew. This is important. Firstly, those from Cyprus and Cyrene were bicultural Diaspora Jews who had grown up in a Gentile environment and were arguably more open-minded than their cousins from the Holy Land (Koestenberger & O'Brien, 2001). Secondly, synagogues in the Gentile world were islands of Judaism in a Gentile sea, to which had become attached Gentile God-fearers and proselytes. Later, Jews and Gentiles alike became Christians around these nuclei. Boundaries were crossed and new identities forged at the faith interface.

*The Faith Interface in Acts*

At inception the church was a Jewish entity, the extension and fulfilment of God's promises to and commission for the Jewish people. Jesus' primary responsibility was to the Jews, and yet He did communicate God's redemption to those outside the mainstream, Gentile and Samaritan. At the beginning of Acts the apostles' focus is still

Jewish people, although Jesus proclaims an expansion in scope in Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8. As Jews came to faith in Christ they were to become a new community of faith which would welcome the outsider. They were redeemed for redemptive living (Wright, 2010) and chosen to bless (Peskett & Ramachandra, 2003), responsibilities especially significant for today's host communities into which foreigners migrate.

Gentiles who became Christians crossed an interface of faith and culture and joined the covenant community. The missiological function of the early church is thus a precursor of modern outreach to migrants as well as a development and refocusing of the OT mandate to care for the alien. At the beginning of the church, mission is centripetal, attracting Others inward. Later, Paul and his colleagues go out (centrifugally), but still draw people inward across an interface of faith/no-faith or faith/other-faith. Important for modern ministry to migrants is that geographical location is irrelevant. Cross-cultural ministry occurs as people move towards the host community. For this reason, ministry to migrants can and should be seen as true cross- cultural mission even though missionaries have not been 'sent out' in the traditional sense.

*The Expanding Community of Acts*

CONCENTRIC CIRCLES: ACTS 1:8
As well as geographical regions, the fourfold delineation in this verse can also represent the crossing of ethnic boundaries and increasing distance from the centre of the church. As the church reached out and grew, Christians would encounter an ever broader range of race and status. Koestenberger and O'Brien (2001) ask us to consider theological as well ethnic stages in Acts 1:8, and I believe that this involves Otherness.

The apostles were to witness for Jesus, and therefore their message of the kingdom would include reconciliation between God and people and between people, and the deconstruction of human racial and social categories. The coming of the Holy Spirit would remind them of Jesus' teaching and empower them to build the new, inclusive community.

THE ATTRACTIVE CHURCH: ACTS 2:42-47, 4:32-35
The Christians still considered themselves Jews, although their ideas were rejected by the authorities, resulting in a liminal status with reference both to Judaism and Rome.

Against this background the believers' remarkable combination of teaching and fellowship, communion and prayer is important. The believers shared communitas - Robert Elkington (2011) believes that this was the result of the persecution experience which made the church liminal, yet I wish to add that the freshness and power of the gospel are also factors bringing positive liminality. The first part of Acts 2 describes people becoming interested in the gospel, and this would have been a varied and

complex group, united by their new faith. The devotion to the teaching of the apostles and fellowship suggest that they had begun to manage Otherness and were becoming a community of near Others (v.44).

The willingness to embrace the Other is demonstrated in their selling of property and possessions to provide for the needy (2:45). It is hard to determine whether *anyone* refers to believers or non-believers. But the breath of this term and the openness of the Christians' hearts suggest that *anyone* is literally anyone. They met openly in the temple courts and had more private celebrations in their homes (2:44), maintaining and nurturing the centre while reaching out to the periphery, another example of exclusivity and inclusivity.

Arthur Glasser connects the spirit of this church, the future-oriented news of the kingdom, and ancient Israel's concern for the needy. This was 'a magnetic fellowship…that expressed itself in outward acts' (2003, p.265), and the attractive force meant that 'the Lord added to the number daily those who were being saved' (2:47b). This church had received Exodus from God and was now passing it on to Others.

THE SCATTERING OF THE CHURCH: ACTS 8:1
By Acts 8 the church's liminality has evolved into marginalisation. In Acts 5 the apostles were arrested by the Jewish authorities, and in Acts 6 Stephen is the first martyr of the church.

As the persecution of the church gathers strength two important elements are added to the picture. The first is Saul, a Jewish alien born in Gentile Tarsus, whose life of Otherness and liminality would assist greatly the expansion of the church beyond ethnic boundaries. The second is the scattering of the (Jewish) Christian community into Judea and Samaria.

In Acts 8:4 the scattered Christians preached the word wherever they went. Philip preaches the gospel in a city in Samaria and later shares his faith with an Ethiopian eunuch. Philip's modus operandi is to speak to people who recognised the Torah about its fulfilment in Christ; he is a nucleus around which a Christian community could form. The same could be said of Peter and John in 8:14ff. Although Jews despised Samaritans, Peter seems more willing to relate to Samaritans and share the gospel with them than to Gentiles. There are different degrees of Otherness in his mind and the shared religious and racial heritage may have made contact with Samaritan easier than with Gentile. Nevertheless, we are seeing the continuing breakdown of a simplistic connection between faith and ethnicity. In a very modest way the scattered Jewish Christians were becoming attractive islands of faith.

As Samaritans came into the church the original community would perhaps sense the beginning of a shift in the church's cultural identity. This was only the prelude

to the radical expansion which would bring in Gentiles. A similar challenge exists for many churches in East Asia, in situations where migrants might join a church in the host community. There are parallels with Paul's comment about Gentile wild olive shoots sharing in the 'nourishing sap from the olive root', the Jewish olive root supporting the Gentiles and not the other way around (Rom 11:17-18). This general principle of the church welcoming the Other, supporting him or her in the life of faith and resolving the question of belonging, has relevance for ministry in which Others might be welcomed into churches in the host society.

THE INCLUSION OF THE GENTILES: ACTS 10

There are similarities between this episode and that involving Jesus and the centurion in Matthew 8. The Centurion here is a Gentile God-fearer who is approached first by God and instructed to make contact with Peter. The next day Peter is given a vision in which he is shown that he can eat all kinds of animals. If we take the Jewish dietary laws as a symbol of the separation of Jew and Gentile, then this vision undoes that separation. Jew and Gentile are placed on an equal footing before God.

Shortly after, Peter and Cornelius meet for the first time and Peter shares the message of his vision. He accepts that the Gentiles are a group of believers in their own right, of whom Cornelius is a representative (according to Koestenberger & O'Brien, 2001), and can no longer be thought of as distant Others. At the end of this incident in v.44 the Holy Spirit comes down on all who have heard the message, and as Gentiles are moved from Otherness to brotherness, Jew and Gentile alike are brought into a new communitas.

The prime mover behind the coming together of Jew and Gentile is God Himself, who pushes both into a liminal space. While Murray (2004) concludes that both Peter and the centurion were equally changed I would add that there is differential liminality. As a Jew 'playing at home' Peter has to adapt to a new situation. The centurion arguably moves further than Peter in that he enters a new community, while Peter's attitudinal changes as host are probably greater. Again, there are implications for a theological response to migration in East Asia.

A gradual transition is occurring under the sovereignty of God, as the Jewish church adds a small number of Samaritans before the radical expansion to include Gentiles. When Peter explains his actions in the first half of Acts 11, the circumcised believers accept his explanation when they grasp that this is of God. The baptism with the Spirit is a gift to Gentile as well as Jew, and the distant Other is brought near. To see the acceptance of the Other, against whom we may have prejudice, as inspired by and conforming to the will of God, is very powerful indeed.

The persecution of the new Jewish Christian church had been at the hands of

fellow Jews. It is thus regrettable that in Acts 11:2-3 Peter is criticised for going to the house of uncircumcised men. It seems that human categories can be hard to change.

JEWS REACHING OUT TO GENTILES: ACTS 11

As the scattering of Jewish Christians took some of them well into Gentile territory, it is noteworthy that Jews from Cyprus and Cyrene began to share the gospel with Gentiles in Antioch (v.20). They had been brought up in Gentile regions and were not only familiar with Gentile culture but also with being Other themselves.

Diaspora Jewish Christians went out centrifugally from Jerusalem but actually added to the church by ministering centripetally, attracting ethnic Others to the Jewish Christian faith. The openness of the Jewish Christians met with the approval of the mother church in Jerusalem, who sent workers to support the effort, as they were willing to embrace the Other in accordance with what they discerned as the will of God.

WELCOMING THE GENTILES: ACTS 15

The council at Jerusalem had to deal with the controversy caused by Jewish Christians requiring Gentiles to be circumcised and discussed the issue of the identity and belonging of Gentile Christians. The council's letter to the Gentile believers reflects a church Jewish in leadership and culture as the Jewish apostles and elders (v.23) describe themselves as brothers to the Gentile believers and exercise authority over them. It is clear at this point who is host and who is migrant. However, the commands from the culturally Jewish church to the new Gentile additions are minimal, requiring them to avoid food sacrificed to idols, blood, the meat of strangled animals, and sexual immorality. These Gentiles in a culturally Jewish church were given considerable freedom to retain their own culture, indicating increasing cultural diversity as more Gentiles joined, and acceptance of the Other, whose ethnicity, behaviour, values, and other social mores could be quite different from those of the Jew. There is no explicit command to the Jewish Christians but the council must have been paving the way for greater openness to Gentiles and the consequences of this for the church, while remaining exclusive on the vital question of faith in Christ. Again we see a constructive tension between exclusivism and inclusivism.

TOWARDS GENUINE CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH: ACTS 17

By Acts 17 there has emerged a pattern of inclusion of Gentile as well as Jew in local church bodies. In Thessalonica some Jews believed, and so did many God-fearing Greeks. Women of high status are also mentioned. In Berea quite a few Jews and Greeks became believers in Christ. After the famous address of Paul in Athens several Gentiles became Christians. In these different geographical settings we see complex combinations of Jew and Gentile, male and female converts and explicit mention of

people of high social status. The gospel is able to remove barriers of race and status, as well as gender; the challenge to reduce Otherness and increase diversity within the church is clear. At the same time, the pressure due to Jewish persecution would contribute to a sense of liminality and create communitas within the local church groups. The realities described in Acts 17 have different implications for the church in East Asia today.

The Book of Acts tracks a gradual transition from Jewish Christian church to a mixed community of faith. It follows a trajectory of ethnic and social expansion taught and modelled by Jesus and based on principles seen in the OT. The expansion of the church described in Acts raised issues which were addressed in the epistles and it is to these that I now turn.

## The Epistles and Revelation

In this section I review elements of the epistles relating to Otherness (primarily) and liminality (secondarily) to determine how these expand and apply the requirements of the OT for the treatment of aliens. This is set against the background of the new covenant, the coming of Christ, and the expansion of the kingdom to include Gentiles. The section ends with two powerful images from Revelation.

### *Romans: Radiating Reconciliation*

The letter to the Romans covers a large amount of theological territory, yet reconciliation is a central theme. After Paul presents his arguments, the last third of the letter contains the consequences of the doctrine for human relationships. Space does not allow as robust a treatment of Romans as might be hoped, and this section benefits from the thought of Romanian scholar Corneliu Constanineanu (2010). His work is especially useful for this research because of its intentional treatment of inter-personal reconciliation in the letter, which is anchored in his understanding of reconciliation and ethnic minorities in the Romanian-Hungarian context.

He believes that previous Pauline scholarship has focused on reconciliation between God and man, overlooking what we might call the horizontal dimension. However, the social dimension is very important and indeed the vertical and horizontal aspects of reconciliation through the cross cannot be separated. Constanineanu summarises Volf's (1999) critique of misconceptions about reconciliation in the church. The first is a narrow, pietistic individualism which considers only the soul while the other seeks socio-political liberation as the answer to society's challenges.

Constantineanu's analysis of Rom 5-8 leads him to conclude that peace with God entails peace with our Christian brother and sister, 'the other'. 'Christ's work of reconciliation is also the paradigm for [our] life' because we are participants in the

'ongoing story of God's reconciliation of the world in Christ' (p.142). Here we discern the cascading of sending from John 17 and the Christian's role in drawing people into the space of acceptance. The relationship of the Christian with Christ requires a new way of living (6:4), which includes reconciliation, operative inside the community and also 'towards outsiders' (p.143).

With Rom 12-15 as background, Constantineanu concludes that the gospel mandates and facilitates the creation of community, part of which is reconciliation and mutual edification. Paul embraces diversity and stresses love and respect for the Other. The outward direction of reconciliation is emphasised by Romans 12:1-2, in which the new identity in Christ brings a new way of interacting with the world beyond the church. Indeed, Romans 12:3-8 was meant as an example to non-believers and vv.14-21 confirm that the Other refers to everyone. Further, Romans 13:1-7 means that the reconciling way of life must influence even those who oppose the gospel.

Constantineanu returns to Romans 5 and draws on Christ's manifestation of His love towards people who were sinners and His enemies to encourage love towards the Other. He builds on the reconciliation between Jew and Gentile in Christ to claim that Christians must 'live in harmony with and service to all' (p.183). All human divisions must be conquered, he says. Finally, he describes Romanian churches which have accepted Roma (Gypsy) people into their midst, their embrace of the Other derived from a fuller grasp of Pauline theology. For these Christians 'ethnicity lost its enchantment' (p.196), and their churches are growing fast precisely because those outside see reconciliation and are attracted to the community. He concludes with an insightful quote from Al Zub, based in the Romanian context: 'We discover ourselves through others, we live under the watching of *the other*' (1996, p.414). These are lessons which can inform the East Asian church's response to migrants.

*The Epistles to the Corinthians*

The Corinthian church is infamous for its division, and in 1 Corinthians 1:10 Paul appeals to them to be united and avoid factions associated with one leader or another. Within the church it appears that there is already toxic Otherness, based primarily on social status (Blue, 1991). Kwon Oh-Young (2009) finds parallels between snobbish attitudes in Corinth and Korean-Confucian Christianity and draws attention to the marginalisation of the uneducated in his own culture. He claims that the racist attitudes of Koreans are analogous to their view of social class and uses an extended discussion of 1 Corinthians to challenge unhealthy attitudes to status and race among Korean Christians.

There were a number of binary divisions or in and out groups in Corinth (Blue, 1991), and Paul juxtaposes the foolish and the wise, the weak and the strong, and the lowly and the boastful (1:26-31). He attacks distinctions between the foolish and the

wise in 3:18. In 4:6-10 he further undermines the proud, again juxtaposing wisdom and foolishness and strength and weakness, as well as honour and dishonour. To those who are concerned about status Paul describes himself and his colleagues as the scum of the earth (4:13).

As in other letters Paul gives instructions for the management of Otherness. He deals with incest in ch. 5, lawsuits between believers and sexual immorality in ch. 6, and marriage issues in ch. 7. He makes an important comment about status in the second half of that chapter. He states bluntly that circumcision and uncircumcision are nothing (7:19) and deconstructs the distinction between slave and freedman in relation to the gospel (7:21).

In ch. 8 Paul urges those with stronger consciences to take care of those who are weaker. Inherent in Paul's teaching is a concern for the vulnerable, whether Christian or not. He continues his treatment of binary categories, free/slave, Jew/Gentile, weak/strong in 9:19-23, arguing that racial and social categories mean nothing to him (Bruce, 1977). He shares his own willingness to move from side of a human division to another to undermine that category for the gospel. Paul is an evangelist, and his gospel denial of the value of human distinctions is part of his witness to non-believers. He applies similar reasoning in 10:23-33, displaying obvious concern for those outside the church.

The abuse of the Lord's Supper is the apostle's theme in ch. 11. It is ironic indeed that in an event designed to look away from self and toward the *eternal Thou* who deconstructs our human divisions, the Corinthians also demonstrated factionalism. Bradley Blue (1991) believes that boundaries were particularly evident at mealtimes and suggests that some people were trying to show God's approval (11:19). The gulf that was evident between those with much and those with little during the celebration of Holy Communion represented the humiliation of the poor (11:21-22). Otherness has become distant and toxic, hence Paul's warning in 11:29 about taking part without considering the body of Christ. The body is supposed to be a place of acceptance, into which Others are brought and diversity celebrated. The mutuality of the unity within the body creates a shared or distributed *catholic personality*, which 'even takes us beyond the boundaries of the church' (Volf, 1996, p.130).

Paul's final area of division concerns spiritual gifts. The Corinthians had become proud of the spiritual gifts and had clear preferences among them. Just as toxic Otherness had crept into Holy Communion, so it also influenced the use of the spiritual gifts. Paul's body metaphor of 12:12ff expresses his passion for unity, and unity in diversity is how Otherness should function within the body of Christ. For Bruce Hansen (2010) the body metaphor removes all exclusion based on human categories. This is the reason for the famous *love chapter* of 1 Corinthians 13. As described in 13:4-5, love

overcomes the binary distinctions which were so caustic in Corinth. Love cannot embrace human groupings which place people 'out there', and must overcome Otherness. Indirectly, Paul also accepts the liminality of the Christian, reminding us in 13:8-13 that the *status quo* will not last for ever. He uses the metaphor of human maturation to compare our partial understanding now with the future completeness. True love works for the good of the Other and brings him or her near, recognising difference but forbidding division and discrimination. This recognition and acceptance are a reflection of the internal life of the Trinity, as we have learnt from Zizioulas and his examination of the thought of St Maximus. Such uncompromising logic has yet to be applied to the matter of attitudes of host Christians in this region.

In 14:22-25 Paul gives careful consideration to the needs and reactions of non-believers. It seems that non-Christians could take part in some church activities, including worship, and observe the life and practice of the Corinthian Christians. Paul's careful work to deconstruct human categories must be understood with this witnessing motivation in mind.

The second letter to the Corinthians confirms the one binary categorisation which Paul accepts and indeed insists upon, that which separates believer and unbeliever (6:14ff). Paul the missionary evangelist has spoken eloquently about his indifference to human categories and his desire to bring the gospel to Jew and Gentile alike. Yet here, just as in the OT, there is a fundamental schism, and Paul's language seems almost aggressively exclusivist. But as we know from the rest of Paul's thought, this clear boundary is porous and can be crossed by faith in Christ. Hansen (2010) and Jerome Neyrey (1990) see baptism as the gate-keeping mechanism (and there are parallels with circumcision in the OT), and the latter argues that the movement of new believers into the community of faith brings liminality, while Christian Strecker (1999) talks about communitas. Teresa Reeve (2007) believes that both authors view liminality as an on-going state for Christians. These viewpoints suggest that local churches would benefit from the inclusion of migrants and the attendant diversity and communitas.

*Galatians*

In Galatians 1:13-14 Paul speaks frankly about his background and previous attitudes, recounting his enthusiasm for Judaism and opposition to the church. In vv.15-16 his change in perception is due to God's action, and Paul not only ceases to see the church as Other but also embraces the Christian faith as the fulfilment of Judaism. In the light of the gospel the racially exclusive attitudes of his ancestors and their tradition are inappropriate. The apostle also compares his original enthusiasm for Judaism with is new zeal to reach the Gentiles. Paul is a man for whom everything has changed. There still remain clear boundaries between those who belong to God and those who do not,

but it is faith and not race that is crucial.

He maintains that Jew and Gentile are different (2:15), yet the gospel defuses negative or distant forms of Otherness and brings reconciliation. In Paul's mind the Christian faith has at its centre the Jewish people and their religious tradition, but only as preparatory for the gospel. The Gentiles are peripheral yet welcome to migrate into a community of faith which has been growing since the time of Abraham (3:9). The head of this community, the *paterfamilias*, is God Himself, and it is He who includes Gentiles by a process of adoption (Burke, 2006). The blessing originally given to Abraham is now available to the Gentiles also, through Christ (3:14).

Galatians 3:28 is Paul's classic statement of Otherness bridged and reduced by the gospel. His refutation of the binary categories of Jew/Gentile, slave/free, and male/female is not a denial of basic human differences in races, status, and gender, but a statement that they have no relevance for salvation. In the church, 'bodily inscribed differences are brought together, not removed' (Volf, 1996, p.48), and Ela (2008) talks of integrating differences. Paul avoids the two extremes of complete indifference to the Other and the mentality which seeks to dominate vulnerable Others, choosing instead a powerful creative tension which can inform the church's response to migration.

The same verses portray the church as liminal, as all believers are betwixt and between. Jewish Christians are now distinct from fellow Jews who do not recognise the Messiah. Gentile believers have moved arguably further, away from their pagan backgrounds and practices, yet Jews who became Christians and joined churches also underwent a religious migration of their own. Not only this, but all who belong to Christ are descendants and heirs of Abraham (3:29). The Christian is one who looks backward and forward. Those with no racial or cultural ties to Abraham are now his seed and there is an eschatological dimension as all look forward to what Christ still has for them.

In this new liminal space there is also communitas. Old distinctions have been broken down and a new entity created which has no place for in- and out-groups. Verses 26-29 let us see this mixed crew from the perspective of the *eternal Thou*. As we look into the Levinasian *face* of each near Other, each brother or sister in Christ, we know that behind that person stands the *eternal Thou*. We can never commodify the (migrant) other person as *it*. At the same time, freedom from established human categorisations must not lead to chaos but help us serve each other humbly in love (5:13).

Loving your neighbour as yourself (5:14) and serving one another stand against a utilitarian view of the Other. Hence Paul sets up a fundamental opposition between the acts of the flesh (5:19ff) and the fruit of the Spirit (5:22ff). The acts of the flesh centre on the self and manifest as the exploitation of Others while the fruit of the Spirit involves embracing and loving the Other, a going beyond the self. This teaching is

echoed to some extent in the second half of Ephesians 4 with the added requirement of cascading forgiveness and the Exodus paradigm in Ephesians 4:32. A similar section of Colossians (3:8-14) combines the refutation of binary categories of race and status with the need for forgiveness. The new identity means granting Exodus to the Other, including those who are different.

*Ephesians*

One of this letter's great motifs is being 'in Christ'. Our being chosen, receiving grace, and having hope, all *in Him*, speak of a liminal dependence on Christ, the *eternal Thou*. Also, the seal of the Holy Spirit points to the future (1:13-14).

In Ephesians 2 we again read of the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile, but the background is the Gentiles' previous separation from Christ and exclusion *from Israel* (2:12), their complete Otherness with regard to the promises of God. Those who were far away have been brought near (2:13), and the sense (in 2:19 as well) is of the inward migration of the Gentile into a community of Christian faith with a Jewish centre.

The liminality of the church is stressed in 2:14 when we read that Christ, a third party, is the one who removed the inter-racial barrier. Although some were far away and others near (Gentile and Jew respectively), both needed to hear the preaching of peace (2:17). Both have moved, becoming members of God's new household, a betwixt and between organism that belongs to neither, although its foundation is the (Jewish) apostles and prophets. The early church grew by and negotiated the results of centripetal ministry which drew in new members without consideration of racial or social factors.

Ephesians 4 requires Christians of all backgrounds to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Within the church the famous words 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all' (4:5-6) deconstruct human categories and invalidate any reliance on them, as the focus is placed on the God who has wrought peace.

Finally, after a section analogous to the comparison of acts of the flesh and fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, Paul gives what the NIV calls 'instructions for Christian households' in Ephesians 5:21-6:9. In Galatians 3:28 he argued that human categories such as gender, race, and status have no significance for the question of salvation (vv.26-27 and v.29 of Galatians 3 show that the context is soteriological). However, distinctions between people remain, and thus Paul provides guidelines for the management of Otherness within the family in the light of the new identity in Christ. He does not deny gender as he tells husbands and wives (5:22ff) how to relate to each other, or status in his advice to children and parents (6:1ff). Finally he brings freshness into the master-servant relationship (6:5ff), and both are to treat each other with respect

because the common reference point is the *eternal Thou*. The servant is to do his work as unto the Lord - seeing God behind his master, and the master is told that he and his servant have a common master in heaven (there is similar reasoning in Col 4:1). Distant Others have been brought near within the existing social order, and there is no room for selfishness and exploitation. This letter has direct paradigmatic relevance for churches as they encounter migrants.

*Philippians*

Paul addresses race and status by appealing to the example of Christ and his own journey of faith. Paul's sublime teaching in the first half of Phil 2 again emphasises unity, asking Christians to value others above themselves (2:3). In 2:4 he urges his readers to look away from the self and towards the Other, the precedent and exemplar being Christ Himself. Christ underwent multiple self-emptyings, first, taking on the nature of a man and then the status of a servant. The emptying continues with His ignominious death on the cross. There is no clearer example of humility and denial of status than this: from God to man, to servant, to death.

After deconstructing status, Paul attacks racial superiority or exclusiveness by talking about himself in Phil 3. He is proud of and grateful to God for his Jewish heritage (consider Rom 3:1-2), but his candour in 3:7 is striking: all of the perceived advantages of being Jewish are nothing compared to being Christian.

Strecker (1999) claims that Phil 3 presents Paul's ongoing liminality. He has put aside that which he originally treasured and stretches onward and upward for that of which he has yet to take hold (3:7ff). He is truly a man betwixt and between, looking back with gratitude into the church's Jewish heritage and forward into its eschatological hope. In this creative tension he practises contentment, whatever his circumstances (3:12).

The theological logic which reduces racial and social Otherness is uncompromising and the dual examples of Christ and Paul can speak radically and transformationally to the church in East Asia.

*Titus*

In a small section of the letter Paul lays down guidelines for behaviour in the church. In 2:9 Titus is to teach slaves to obey their masters and work with integrity. They are not to steal, but to be trustworthy, 'so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our saviour attractive' (2:10). This refers explicitly to witness to the non-believing community, as might the appeal to younger men to behave themselves as a witness to critics. In most of what we have looked at so far, the commands related to Otherness focus primary on the church, although the portrait in Acts 2 and 4 is one of Christians

involved with non-believers. The letter to Titus makes explicit the requirement to embrace the Other, including non-Christians.

The exhortation to slaves to make the teaching about Christ attractive by their behaviour comes because 'the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men' (2:11). Correct behaviour across human barriers is a witness to those outside the church.

Many of Paul's letters stress the need for moral and ethical behaviour among Christians and seem perhaps rather inward-looking. However, the letter to Titus highlights the evangelistic aspect of Paul's requirement for good behaviour among Christians. After all, Paul writes not only as a pastor and discipler but also as an evangelist, and the need for wholesome testimony to non-believers is never far from his mind. We are reminded of the fact that in ministry to migrants, the mission force is comprised of 'ordinary' church members who may live and work in close proximity to migrants and have natural opportunities to commend the gospel to them by their actions and attitudes.

*Philemon*

In this short letter Paul addresses changes in Otherness resulting from faith in Christ. There are three different status levels in the letter: first, Paul the apostle; second, Philemon the ordinary member of church and society; third, Onesimus the runaway slave and possible thief.

Paul begins by affirming Philemon but from v.8 begins to set a trap constituted by the status-challenging logic of the gospel. Onesimus the runaway slave has become a Christian, resulting in a dual identity (v.10). As a slave he is a social inferior, and he is also a lawbreaker, but now he is a brother as well (v.16). His Otherness has become complex.

Paul enters into a liminal space with an escaped slave, reducing Onesimus' Otherness by calling him his son (v.10) and his very heart (v.12). The apostle's play on words (Onesimus means *useful*) brings the slave from the use*less* into the use*ful* group (v.11). Paul claims that the slave has become useful to himself and to Philemon, even though the owner has not seem him since he ran away, possibly after stealing from him.

In v.12 Paul informs Philemon that he is sending Onesimus back. But before musing on the probable state of affairs after the slave's return Paul states how much Onesimus means to him. Paul is Philemon's superior in the faith (v.19b) and in age, and it would have been an honour for Philemon to serve him, yet in v.13 Paul has effectively given this honour to Onesimus! Philemon's social categories and indeed his sense of righteous indignation are challenged by Paul's personal and gospel logic. The runaway slave can take the place of the upright churchman in assisting the Apostle Paul.

Paul shows respect to Philemon as he asks him to consider the request, but the case he makes is so strong that Philemon has nowhere to turn. The logic of grace continues in v.16 with the idea that the slave can return a brother, and the suggestion that Onesimus can be dearer to Philemon than even to Paul.

The final push and ultimate deconstruction of social categories come in v.17. The three levels of status with which the letter began, apostle-believer-slave, are now concertinaed into one: 'Welcome him as you would welcome me' (v.17). The request is for a highest common denominator, the promotion of slave to apostle. Paul moves the slave to a higher status than his owner, as Onesimus leapfrogs from the lowest to the highest status in Philemon's mind. Paul is collapsing three different levels of status into one, the highest. We are reminded of Levinas' appeal of the *face* from a *height*, to which Philemon (and his contemporary East Asian counterparts) can choose to make an appropriate response. Paradoxically, our upward mobility in Christ is derived directly from God's 'downward mobility' (Groody, 2009, p.649) in the Same.

*Hebrews*

The heroes of ch. 11 exercised faith in a liminal space, as the beginning and end of the chapter tell us. The ancients were commended for being sure of what they had not yet seen (11:1) and did not receive what they had been promised (11:39). This celebration of faith thus links together the Israel of the past with believers in Christ, and points us forward to the aliens and strangers of 1 Peter. We recall the need for the church to be less settled and adopt a more nomadic self-perception, particularly as Christians relate to migrants.

*James*

In 1:9-10 James places the rich and poor in juxtaposition, just as Jesus does in the Gospels, and in ch. 2 he prohibits discrimination based on social status. To discriminate is to dishonour the poor (2:6), and there are parallels with 1 Corinthians 11:22. When James introduces the example of the two differently dressed men in 2:2 there is no suggestion that they are Christian. The new worldview of the kingdom of God is to operate not only among Christians, but must also affect society as Christians interact with all people.

The structure of vv.8-9 places loving our neighbour as ourselves in opposition to showing favouritism. The first is keeping the law, second a sin of partiality. In James' view excluding a social Other based on status is unacceptable.

James then goes further by insisting that faith must manifest as deeds (2:17) and it is not enough merely to say nice things to people in need. These uncompromising words require action on behalf of Others, and speak directly into migration in East Asia.

*1 Peter*

This epistle has been called a summary of how to live as a Christian among non-Christians (Volf, 1994). In Peter's salutation, the description of God's elect as exiles, scattered people (1:1) chosen by Him (1:2), is an odd combination of liminality and security, because it is their very election that has exiled and scattered them. Also, the Christian possesses a living hope and an inheritance kept in heaven (1:3-4). The elements described in vv.1-4 mean that the Christian is a betwixt and between person, according to Phillips (various) a nomad, and we are reminded of Hebrews 11, although Volf (1994) prefers to draw our alien-ness (liminality) less from the history of Israel and more from Christ.

The famous words of 2:9-10 portray Christians as dependent on and responsible to God. They are liminal in that they are a priesthood, mediators between God and people. Regardless of ethnic origin and status, they have become a special nation belonging to God. The noun phrases in v.9 are reminiscent of ancient Israel, and it is no accident that the mixed Jewish-Gentile church is likened to the exclusivist Israelites.

In both testaments the boundary between member and non-member of the faith community is clear yet porous. Peter emphasises the point thus: previously they had not been a people, but now they are, and previously they had not received mercy, but now they have. In 2:10 there is a connection with the book of Hosea; the name of his second child meant *Not loved*, and that of the third meant *Not my people*. The promise of God to Israel given through the prophet is now appropriated by Peter for all who follow Christ regardless of race or status.

In 2:11 Peter again describes his readers as foreigners and exiles, liminal people Other to mainstream society, who are to bear witness to it (2:12). Faith and attendant good deeds locate a person within the in-group and are meant to expand its size.

The section 2:11-22 concerns Christian witness to society. Foreigners and exiles glorify God through good deeds in front of non-believers, and Koestenberger and O'Brien (2001) link this back to the Exodus and the command for Israel to witness for God. Those who have received Exodus (Deterding, 1981) must now pass it on to others, and God's people must do good so that outsiders have nothing to criticise (2:15). Next comes an exhortation to live as free people, but responsibly, even though the gospel has released people from categories such as race and status. Peter urges his readers to show those outside an 'alternative way of life in the present social setting' (Volf, 1994, p.20) and proper respect to everyone (2:17). A Christian response to migration entails a degree of counter-cultural attitude and behaviour, and the novelty and difficulty of this should be not under-estimated in societies which emphasise conformity.

As in other epistles, there is instruction concerning the management of Otherness, within the body of Christ and as a witness to the unbelieving (end of ch. 2

and beginning of ch. 3 of 1 Peter). Correct behaviour towards the Other goes beyond the boundaries of the faith community. Slaves are to do as their masters say, whether they are unpleasant or kind. A person of lower social status is asked to submit *willingly*, as part of his witness for Christ. Finally, Peter urges love, hospitality, and mutual service (4:8-10), a high standard of inclusiveness and acceptance within the Christian community that can witness to those outside. Richard Gamble (2007) gives an excellent summary of the good works of Christians into the unbelieving community, contrasting Christian *caritas*, which expected nothing in return, with Roman *liberalis*, which was based on reciprocity. Tim Chester (2004) agrees, his quotes from Tertullian's *Apology*, Irenaeus' *Against heresies*, and Basil the Great all picturing a community which took care of its own needs and reached out to non-believers with practical kindness and concern in the spirit of Galatians 6:10. *Caritas* has much to contribute to Christian attitudes to migrants, because in most cases their very presence in the six territories is based on strictly transactional principles and they live as outsiders to communities which usually relate to them in a spirit of *liberalis*.

The church must see itself not only as a community to which aliens and strangers can be attracted but also as liminal aliens and strangers themselves. This dual identity is a means through which Christians remain within society as an ethical presence, attracting outsiders by a force of spiritual gravitation. This not only has parallels with the role of ancient Israel vis-à-vis the alien but also reminds us of Jesus' statement that His disciples are to remain in the world while not belonging to it (Jn 17:15-16).

*The Epistles of John*

For John, proof that the love of God is in a person is found in his or her practical kindness to those in need. Such values make the Christian Other to the world (1 Jn 1:13). John tells us how love cascades down from Christ to believers and then must also flow out to other believers (3:16). The same Exodus reasoning is found in 4:7-12. To claim to love God but hate a brother or sister is to be a liar. We are to be like a bamboo, soaking in some of the love of God poured into us but also channelling that love to others. John makes similar exhortations about love in his second and third epistles. His praise of Gaius in the third epistle is particularly moving, as the latter extends hospitality and generosity to Christians whom he does not even know. The only category of any importance is that of the brother and sister in Christ.

*Revelation*

The final book in the Bible describes the reconciliation between God and humanity and between human beings because of Christ, the incarnate *eternal Thou*. Revelation 7:9-10 provides a picture of the on-going redemptive action of God, which draws in people

from every tongue and tribe, the consummation of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3. Their clothing and their palm branches speak of peace and reconciliation, and their focus is the author of salvation, the *eternal Thou* who transcends race and status.

While the focus on the eternal Thou remains unchanged, the scope of reconciliation is broadened in Revelation 21, where we read about the New Jerusalem. At the centre of the city is Christ, and it is full of His glory. We read in 21:24 that the 'nations will walk by its [the city's] light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it', and in 21:26 that 'the glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it'. It seems as if cultures and even certain human institutions are preserved, and human distinctions also continue to exist. Yet these are all exposed to the splendour and holiness of God's glory and thus purified and made acceptable to Him. Further, kings will come in homage to the Lamb, bringing their splendour to Him. The New Jerusalem, whose doors are never closed (21:25), is thus the means and focus of welcoming and purifying cultures, as well as the humbling of kings. According to William Hendriksen (1982) the open doors remind us that anyone can enter at any time, and the New Jerusalem is now as well as future. There is space for the Other in the city, individuals and even whole cultures, and God's grace is sufficient for all.

Thus the Bible concludes as it begins, human beings relating to God through divine mercy and love, which makes redundant all man-made categories and distinctions, but on terms set by the *eternal Thou*.

### Summary and Concluding Thoughts

Otherness and liminality have been used to examine a large selection of NT material to draw out principles for how host Christians might relate to migrant (racial and social) Others in East Asia. This process has developed and built upon the findings from the OT chapter, consistent with the biblical theological view of the relationship between the old and new covenants.

The survey of NT material has applied shown that the church inherits the liminal status of ancient Israel, as well as its responsibility to show Exodus to those at its periphery and beyond. The kingdom community draws its life from the Triune God and generates an attractive vector towards the outside world. The love of God and His own perfect management of Otherness within the Godhead are brought to the followers of Christ as a community by the incarnate Son. The cross means that all human distinctions of race, status, and gender are not extinguished but become meaningless for salvation. At the same time, the only category which preserves any meaning is whether or not a person has faith in God through Christ. The result should be a community of faith which takes from God and models it to the surrounding world, by its witness and

kindness attracting people to join. This modelling of healthy Otherness and reconciliation between races and social groups is relevant for ministry by hosts to migrants.

The next and penultimate chapter of the dissertation brings together the various incremental themes which have emerged from the study of the OT and the NT and synthesises them into implications for the church in East Asia, theological and missiological.

# Chapter 6
## Towards a Response to Migration in East Asia

### Introduction

The previous two chapters sought to derive principles for ministry to migrants from the Old and New Testaments respectively by viewing them through the twin lenses of Otherness and liminality. This chapter now synthesises ideas emerging from that process and anchors them within the scope of related scholarship. It then applies them into a theological and missiological response to migration in the East Asian region.

### Synthesis and Summary of OT and NT Themes

This section summarises and synthesises the discoveries of the previous two chapters to point towards a response to migration by the East Asian church. Following this, these principles will be related to and informed by some ideas from relevant literature. As the research has so far examined themes emerging from both Testaments, the emphasis has been on the responsibility to migrants of the community of YHWH faith. This term refers to people who believe in the God of the Bible.

In the OT period, (resident) aliens were Others on the periphery of mainstream Israelite society, separated from the (host) community of faith by race, social status (the X- and Y-separation described in Chapter Two), and ultimately absence of faith in Israel's God. God's requirements to Israel in the Pentateuch concerning the alien combine social and ethical inclusiveness on the one hand, and religious exclusivism on the other, with a conceptual boundary of community membership constituted by circumcision and the celebration of Passover. This inclusivist-exclusivist tension functions as an attractive vector or force. Israelite society was to be welcoming and just in its dealings with Gentile aliens, granting them a high degree of access to mainstream Israelite society, and even letting them take part in certain religious ceremonies. This is the OT version of the space of acceptance. However the access was limited; in order to enjoy all the benefits and privileges of the Israelites, the alien had to take a step of faith and pledge himself to their God through circumcision.

If the new covenant is the extension, broadening, and fulfilment of God's original covenant with Israel, then we should find paradigmatic similarity between the responsibility of the Israelites towards aliens and those of the church to outsiders - Others, especially of different race or status. The portions of the New Testament examined in the previous chapter demonstrate such a relationship.

### *Otherness and Liminality*

In both Testaments God Himself is the pattern for His followers, as individuals and as a

group. In that He is the centre of the community and the means by which it grows and attracts Others, He is its origin. The triune Godhead is itself a community which recognises and celebrates diversity alongside unity. The members of the Trinity relate to each other as very near Others, in perfect harmony and love. There is no exclusion such that one member becomes a distant or toxic Other, and neither is there a controlling or conforming mentality which forces the Other to become a pale shadow of the self. This is consistent with Zizioulas' (2007) use of difference and division. The triune God avoids the two common toxicities of human treatment of Others: paralysing total control and exploitative indifference.

God models and manages Otherness within Himself and towards his creatures in a way that finite, sinful humanity cannot, yet He is the standard for Christian believers, as the upper room discourse of John 13-17 has shown.

Another element in this research has been liminality. Liminality is experienced by God as well as men and women, although in very different ways. In addition, God's experiences of liminality are far more nuanced than those of human beings, this a consequence of His infiniteness and our finiteness.

Paradoxically, it seems that *God's* experience and management of Otherness are normative for us, while true liminality is a *human* condition. Liminality speaks of finiteness and a person's being the passive recipient of others' actions, and thus there are two implications: first, the infinite God of scripture does not experience liminality within Himself, and second, when He deigns to enter a liminal state to relate to mankind, it is restricted in scope and degree. This view is different from that of Lee (2009), for whom intra-Trinitarian relationships are inherently liminal. In His condescension in communicating with us, at and beyond the incarnation, God's liminality is partial and voluntary.

Nevertheless, because God undergoes Otherness and liminality (most obviously in Christ), these become part of the life of His people, individually and as a community. The ancient Israelites were a liminal nation, different from those around them, their national identity formed on the move in the wilderness. Unlike other nations, they did not have a king, and they were tenants rather than owners in the land of Canaan. Their identity was bound together with their relationship with a God who was unlike the gods of their neighbours, and they preserved a corporate memory of their time of toxic Otherness and suffering in Egypt and held on to promise of guidance, protection, and destiny.

The early church was a liminal subgrouping within Judaism. They had followed a leader who had spent time in the wilderness and then undertook a three-year itinerant ministry. He was betwixt and between, in His place of origin, lack of formal theological training, relationship to the governing religious and colonial authorities, and even

through his betrayal by two of his close followers. He proclaimed a kingdom rooted in the past but belonging to the present and the future, located in people's hearts as well as in some diffuse way in the world. Phillips' (various) description of God, Israel, and the Christian as nomadic resonates and meshes with the notion that Otherness and liminality are part of the lives of those who follow YHWH.

*The Kingdom of God.*

Goldsworthy's idea of 'God's people in God's place under God's rule' (2001, p.54) unites both Testaments, and the Kingdom theme is broadened and deepened in the NT, through the life, work, and death of Christ. In the OT God is the warrior king who acts on behalf of the vulnerable Other in Egypt, and then as liberator of His people He requires that they treat Others within the new nation with grace and mercy. In the NT the King comes down to earth and extends the kingdom outwards to the Gentiles and inwards to place moral and ethical obligations to the Other within the hearts of His followers. John the Baptist and Jesus Himself both connect His kingdom ministry with themes of deliverance, grace, and justice in the Old Testament, especially those in Isaiah.

In addition, the general timbre of Christ's ministry and His explicit teaching in the kingdom parables of Matthew 13 combine dependence on divine power with humility and relationality. The kingdom of God is a liminal space, which welcomes and challenges the Other.

*Cascading*

The broad idea that God's experience is paradigmatic for Christians and that together with Him we build a community which resembles Him, I place under the umbrella notion of 'cascading'. Cascading is important in any theological and missiological response to migration, and there are several different aspects of it. Simply put, the idea is that certain aspects of God's nature (Otherness, community), character (love, mercy, justice), experience (rejection by His people and liminality), and action (care for the lost and disadvantaged) cascade down from Him, outward and downward to the community of YHWH faith, and then further down into and towards the wider world. It is as if the Godhead is the primary source and from Him through Christ come blessing and obligation to Israel and later the church. The community of faith is to be a pipe rather than a bucket, and pass on good things from God to the world that He cares for. The church takes on this Otherness and liminality as a community which draws from God at its centre and shares life with those around it.

The original sense of *missio* is God the Father sending the Son to the world. Christians are sent to the Other by the Son, and the attitude which they are to have draws on the example and love of the Son, who draws on and manifests the Father. This

most fundamental form of cascading is similar to ideas found in Zizioulas (2007).

The triune God is a community within Himself, and Jesus facilitates the extension of that community into our human existence. Around Himself He forms the community of the church, and our efforts to preach the gospel and make disciples help the extension to more people. The church is to model wholesome relationships and the management of Otherness to a needy world. Community cascades from the Godhead down into the followers of Christ and out into the broader world.

A further aspect of cascading is that of love and justice, from the Father to the world. Egypt and Exodus are two powerful motifs in the corporate memory of the Israelites. Egypt is the nation's toxic Otherness and suffering at the hands of a racist Pharaoh and his political order; Exodus is God's dramatic move to deliver His people and set them free. Exodus is the antithesis of Egypt. The constant reminder of the nation's terrible sojourn in Egypt to Israelites who were born after the Exodus invokes the obligation to treat fairly aliens who come into Israel. There is ethical cascading here; Israel is to grant grace, deliverance, and justice to aliens, just as God did to His people. The opposite would be to treat the aliens cruelly and shamefully, as Pharaoh did to Israel. Exodus is the cascading of grace and hope, whereas Egypt is the cascading of cruelty and despair. Israel could choose Egypt or Exodus in their dealings with aliens, and by extension the same choice and responsibility is given to the church in their relations with Others, particularly migrants.

Although the idea of liminality within the Godhead is problematic (*contra* Lee, 2009), God undergoes liminality with regard to people. Then, the nation of Israel is liminal, a people unlike any other. Later, liminality reappears in concentrated form in the life and experience of Christ. Subsequently, the NT church enters a liminal state of persecution from both Jews and Romans. The liminality of the church vis-à-vis human society and the world order is evident in the New Testament epistles, especially 1 Peter. Liminality cascades down from God to the community of faith.

Related to this is the so-called *space of acceptance* for people with faith in Christ. This space has its origin in God's ontology and perichoresis, and we enter it as Others and liminal people by means of the cross. Paradoxically, it is the fullness of (each member of) the Trinity which creates space for sinful human beings, whose very emptiness creates problems in relating to Others.

We enter the space of acceptance and share in the life of God as beneficiaries of differential liminality, as God's liminality is a matter of choice, based on His love. The space of acceptance and differential liminality are patterns for the church's interaction with Others, such as migrants. The space of acceptance that God extends to Christians is to be extended to Others in turn. As God is host to us and we are migrants to Him, so by a process of cascading, we ourselves become hosts and welcome those who migrate

into our space.

God is the owner of the space of acceptance, just as He was the owner of the land in ancient Israel. The space is not ours, and those inside have no right to impose conditions such as race or social standing on those outside who wish to enter. We remember Bedford-Strohm's (2008) strong distinction between inward and outward curving communities. It has been said that the Christian is one beggar showing others where bread can be found; by analogy Christians are homeless people showing Others where space can be found, and Fabio Baggio (2008) reminds us that all humanity is estranged from God. Just as God accepts Christians in our finiteness and sinfulness, so we also accept Others. From the perspective of the *eternal Thou*, the only difference between Christian and non-Christian concerns the crucial distinction of faith in Christ.

As we consider the cascaded obligation to provide the human part of the space of acceptance which helps Others into the divine space of acceptance, we face a challenge. Our acceptance by God is based on the sacrifice of Christ, and our sinful nature brings perturbations into the space of acceptance, which God damps out by means of His love and infinity. When we seek to accept Others into our space, we do not have the divine love and infinity needed to cope with their perturbations, and look to the example of Christ and draw on the resources of the Holy Spirit. As hosts, Christians are to be willing to enter the liminal space with the Other, although as those 'playing at home', they are less vulnerable and liminal than migrants.

The space of acceptance and sharing in the divine life helps remove a false dichotomy between centripetal and centrifugal mission. Mission is understood as the Father sending the Son and the Son sending His church out into the world. Yet the purpose of mission is to manifest the Christian community and attract people to join; the *going out* is meant to facilitate the *coming in*. The aim is to bring redemptive message and practice which invites people to become part of the local incarnation of a new humanity, in which toxic Otherness is transformed into healthy acceptance. Hence, central to mission is the establishment of a faith interface, a membrane across which faith in God can be transmitted and people can move by osmosis. It is of no consequence whether cross-cultural mission takes place in the country of the target people or in the home nation of the so-called missionary; gospel ministry among migrants is true cross-cultural mission.

Communitas refers to the kind of interpersonal relationships which emerge during periods of liminality, when the usual social categories and distinctions break down and people interact on a more egalitarian basis, exemplified perhaps by the unity among initially disparate survivors in the classic 'American disaster movie'. In the Christian context repentance and conversion function as great levellers, and in the communitas that should emerge through faith in God and entry to the space of

acceptance there is room for the Other as host and migrant see themselves as equal before God.

Lee (2009) talks about two sides of liminality, one marked by liberation and opportunity, and the other associated with marginalisation and exploitation. Although the migrant experience within East Asia tends more to the latter, people on the move may be more open to new ideas, including religious faith. The entrance of Christian hosts into the liminal space may facilitate the formation or deepening of faith in the migrant, and we note the damaging effect of indifference mentioned in Muncada's (2008, p.45) account from Japan. However, this may be a challenge for Christians in the host community, who in many cases are comfortable and well off and have no need to relate to migrants except on a purely utilitarian basis.

*The Attractive Vector*

Many of the themes explored so far are overlapping or at least mutually reinforcing. The love of God, Otherness, liminality, and the space of acceptance come together to advocate relational and accepting attitudes and approaches to migrants by Christians in the host community, in effect the attractive vector. The community of YHWH faith has the task of maintaining and projecting moral and ethical standards based on God's nature and command; what at first glance looks like an exclusive or defensive position actually seeks to welcome and protect the alien.

The biblical texts provide two interrelated reasons to treat migrant Others with love and respect. First, the command of God is that His image bearers should be treated with respect. The second is missional in that the modelling of biblical values commends the faith to non-believers. The promise of Genesis 12:3, the missional heart of God, and the provision for Gentiles to become full members of the community of faith demonstrate these factors in the OT, and they are strengthened and made central in the NT.

The implication of the synthesis above is that the Bible obliges Christians to extend the same welcome and acceptance to migrant Others as they would grant to fellow believers. In other words, we are asked to treat non-believers as if they were believers. If the love and acceptance that we enjoy is ours only in a derivative sense, cascading down to us from God, then any assumption that those outside the community of faith merit inferior treatment or grudging acceptance would be problematic.

This claim requires a certain amount of comment and nuance. First of all, the scriptures describe a bond between believers in Christ which is not shared with nonbelievers; there *is* something distinctive about being a Christian. The sharing of possessions in Acts 2 and 4 begins with the household of God, and one of the first organisational decisions of the early church was the appointment of deacons to

coordinate logistics inside the church (Acts 6). Secondly, fair treatment, respect, and acceptance for non-believers are narrower and less multidimensional than the richness of fellowship which Christians are supposed to enjoy. Indeed, as a migrant Other begins to understand the depth and scope of fellowship between Christians, and sees how this is different from the genuine friendship of Christians to outsiders, then he or she will perceive the attractive vector. The welcome and acceptance of non-believers by Christians operates in tension with the faith/non-faith distinction, which raises the thorny issue of *belonging and believing*, of which more presently.

*The Challenge to Christians from a Confucian Heritage in Conformist Societies*
The discussion of Otherness, differential liminality of host and migrant, and what Lee (2009) calls *redemptive communitas* has implications for Christians from a Confucian heritage who live in a region where some national immigration policies tolerate the exploitation of migrants. As previously stated, this is not to single out Confucianism; it is simply a consequence of reflecting theologically on sociological phenomena in this region. Migration literature also details exploitation and unfair treatment in Europe and North America.

However, the fusion of traditional attitudes to race among Chinese, Japanese, and Korean people with Confucian familism and the notion of the country as extended family has resulted in some exclusivist and dismissive attitudes to foreigners in the three cultures, particularly those of darker skin colour or from poorer countries. Also, Confucian notions of hierarchy tend to work against those in lower status or service jobs. Many migrants in Asia experience a toxic nexus of racial and status attitudes locked into a rigid and exclusivist framework of belonging.

The Bible cuts across all of this, redefining attitudes to race and status, and Christian faith brings a new sense of family and belonging. The promise of Genesis 12:3 and its fulfilment in Revelation 7:9 collide with some simplistic binary distinctions associated with aspects of popular Confucian thinking. That the Bible presents God's people as Other and liminal is also a challenge to the host Christian. The message is uncompromising; Christians are to go the extra mile and reach out to those around them. The fact that the host is settled and comfortable and the migrant unstable and vulnerable merely strengthens the responsibility of the former to act in a Christ-like way. The host is commanded to enter the liminal space with the migrant, and Phillips (2000a) asks us to see ourselves as nomads.

There seems to be a disconnect between the recent national heritage of Christians in the region and their relative slowness to adopt biblical principles derived from the analogous experience of the Israelites, a problem in the US context flagged up by Riggs (2008). The corporate memory of Israel in Egypt advocates fair treatment of

aliens, and the six territories have each had their own Egypt experience of colonisation, displacement, or occupation by foreign powers. Many citizens' forefathers migrated from foreign countries, and within living memory there are stories of struggle, discrimination, vulnerability, and exploitation. One of the central features of Singapore's 2011 National Day Parade was a theatrical re-enactment of the arrival by boat of thousands of Chinese and Indian immigrants, with performers dressed in old-fashioned ethnic costumes carrying suitcases and boxes splashing through shallow water. Yet, recently there was a mild furore at a government plan to locate a foreign workers' hostel near a residential neighbourhood, with much talk in the media about the undesirability and danger of foreign labourers. I heard two old men complaining about the hostel plan on the same day as I read in a locally produced history textbook about the discriminatory policies of the 19th century colonial government of dividing the old Singapore town into separate residential zones for Europeans, Chinese, Indians, and Malay people! Eventually the government located the hostel far away from residential areas. But scripture requires Christians in the region to look back to their spiritual heritage in the Exodus and the future promise of the second Exodus in Christ and embrace their own Otherness and liminality.

The political cultures of the six territories are still emerging and show considerable diversity, yet the Bible suggests that Christians influence the civil society, as well as showing respect to the migrant Other as envisaged above. Followers of Christ have a biblical mandate to be countercultural and transformational, humbly but biblically dissatisfied with the *status quo*. The summary of advocacy for migrants in Chapter Two revealed substantial involvement by Catholic and secular organisations, but the conspicuous absence of protestant and evangelical groups, with the exception of Malaysia's O2F (Outreach to Foreign Workers Network).

**Anchoring a Response to Migration within Existing Scholarship**

At this point it is appropriate to pause and anchor these principles for a theological and missiological response to migration within broader scholarship. This is because study of the OT and NT scriptures from the dual perspectives of Otherness and liminality marks a departure from previous theological reflection on migration. This section will briefly review areas of theological discussion congruent with what I have discovered and from which extension and application can be made.

*Moltmann's* Theology of Hope

Moltmann's view is that the church has the responsibility of bringing humanity and society into an eschatological consummation of justice and righteousness. A new community based on the promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 nullifies all of the human dichotomies addressed in the NT letters. The eschatological hope points us

forward but cannot remain future only; it must move the church to present action, proclamation and transformation going hand in hand. He argues for a kingdom mindset which changes not only individuals but also relationships and institutions.

<p style="text-align:center;">*Schluter and Ashcroft's* Jubilee Manifesto</p>

The *Jubilee Manifesto* is a large and complex work promoting a relational approach to faith in society. John Ashcroft and Michael Schluter (2005) talk not only about relationships between individuals but also between individuals and groups and between groups. Quoting Hinde (as cited in Ashcroft & Schluter, 2005) they suggest that dyadic relationships always occur against a background of complex factors including other relationships and social norms. The scriptural principles concerning Otherness challenge cultural norms in all nations, but especially those of Confucian societies, for reasons outlined in Chapter Two.

Graham Cole (2005) talks about relationships and identity, employing diachronic and synchronic perspectives. A person's identity and sense of belonging are inextricably bound up with relationships past and present. A migrant will have undergone rupture of some relationships and the formation of new ones with people in the transnational space. Certain policies and attitudes in the host nations make it difficult for outsiders to form relationships with local people, and their short stay may also make it difficult for them to form friendships with fellow travellers. Closeness to fellow migrants may remind people of closer and deeper relationships with those back home, which are now impoverished or even dysfunctional.

Looking diachronically may remind migrants of difficult situations from which they have escaped or produce feelings of nostalgia and regret about which they can do nothing. Synchronic relationships between countrymen inside the liminal state may be utilitarian, while those between host and migrant may be exploitative. In this mix, the Bible asks Christians to be proactive in reaching out to the Other.

Cole is suspicious of the use of 'the doctrine of the Trinity [as] a social programme for today' (p.41) and comments that Paul's desire to see 'an other-centred humility' in the letter to the Philippians causes him to talk about the Son and not the Trinity. Likewise, when he talks about Christ's washing of his disciples' feet in John 13, Cole says that Christ is our example and not the internal life of the Godhead. His focus on Christ as the pattern for our behaviour is very helpful, yet there is no dichotomy between the Trinity and the Son if we adopt the idea of cascading. The love and perichoresis inside the Godhead are the means and motivation for the incarnation, and intra-Trinitarian spaces make it possible for Christ to make space for us. Love, space, and service cascade down from within the Godhead to the incarnate Son, to the redeemed people of God in the church, and out into the world. An integrated view of

the Trinity and the incarnate Son combines the insights of Moltmann and Zizioulas to view the Son as the unique focus and projection of the Trinitarian life into human society. Indeed, Papathanasiou talks about Christians 'becoming…citizens of the Holy Trinity' through Jesus (2008, p.32). Cole does agree with Moltmann on the significance of the kingdom of God and believes that this motif connects Old and New Testament together in a powerful and applicable way.

Jeremy Ive's (2005) overview of relationships in the Christian tradition is more positive about the use of relational aspects of the Trinity than Cole. He briefly interacts with Orthodox ideas before moving on to Catholic Social Teaching, whose 'cornerstone is the dignity and social reality of the human being' (p.55). He also quotes from Buber and Levinas, and his respectful critique of the former has implications for Otherness in societies which are more communal than individualistic. Ive claims that so-called personalists distinguish too clearly between the personal and the public, and that Buber's *I-thou* assumes too limited a relational dyad. I propose that in all cultures, but especially those with strong group identities, well-defined group boundaries, and binary distinctions of race and class, there are four possible combinations of the singular (*I, thou*) and plural (*we, you*) parties at the end of the relationship. In addition to the classic *I-thou* we must consider *I-you* and *we-thou* and *we-you* (The possibility that a strong Trinitarian view of the *I-eternal Thou* may also involve an *I-eternal You* is an interesting idea beyond the scope of this research!). That is to say, how do groups of hosts relate to groups of migrants, and how do single individuals interact with groups? Further, what kind of groups are relevant in the migration context? Finally, where policy and cultural attitudes create a power dynamic biased in favour of the host society, the *we* element to the left of the dash is significant.

Finally, Ashcroft's discussion of relational dynamics unpacks the concept of shalom with help from Nicholas Wolterstorff: 'Shalom at its highest is enjoyment in one's relationships' (1983, p.69). If shalom cascades down from God to church to outsider then migrant Others can be expected to enjoy relationships in the host society, with other migrants as well as their hosts.

Like Ive, Ashcroft wishes to see shalom not only in individual lives but also throughout the community. Christians cannot enjoy shalom or Exodus while denying it to Others around them. He believes that modern societies place too great an emphasis on autonomy, which I understand as the placing of the self at the centre, resulting in the commodification of the Other. In the migration context of the six territories, autonomy or freedom for members of the host society may result in the loss of such for migrants. Relationality is the antidote to such exploitation because, as Ashcroft claims, '*really* valuing relationships…sets different priorities' (p.121).

*Brueggemann on Shalom:* Living Toward a Vision

Under *shalom*, Brueggemann brings together biblical concepts such as love, blessing, salvation, and justice. Israel was to draw people into herself in accordance with God's will (1976, p.15), and now the church carries on this vision.

Shalom has its origin in God and works for the benefit of people, but always in community. It is the opposite of division and hostility (p.16). Brueggemann believes that one aspect of Jesus' ministry was to bring together the excluded and those responsible for that exclusion, which for migration means the reduction of Otherness and separation by race or status, and entry into liminal space. Negatively, shalom is the opposite of selfishness, and its absence brings inequality and exclusive attitudes. Brueggemann is uncompromising: unless we are in communities that are caring and inclusive, a true understanding of shalom remains elusive.

He describes shalom as scandalous and in his discussion of Galatians 3 claims that Paul finds human distinctions 'unreal and uninteresting' (p.24). Jesus our shalom (Eph 2:14), brings everyone together, as God is 'against estrangement and fragmentation' (p.44). Brueggemann questions our acceptance of the pigeonholing of people by race and status, and believes that the unity of the early church spoke powerfully to the pluralistic and fragmented society of the day.

His presentation of shalom as 'the end of coercion…[and]…fragmentation' (p.50) resonates with my Trinity-inspired conclusion that healthy Otherness involves neither total control nor indifference.

He compares the *status quo* and kings on the one hand with *newness* (p.123) and prophets on the other. Kings are concerned with power while prophets look to the future and expect change; one wonders at the proportions of kings and prophets in the church in the migrant-receiving nations of East Asia. Shalom means that the church has to take risks and be serious about its prophetic role, as individual piety and action are not enough.

Finally, Brueggemann challenges the church to adopt the towel and the basin, the 'tools of the [shalom] trade' (p.135) and 'position the other as master' (p.136). His plea that the church raise those who have been lowered and include those who have been excluded makes reference to Zacchaeus and the challenge to Peter of the vision in Acts 10. I also sense resonances with Paul's argument in Philemon.

*Liberation Theology*

As a theological movement focused on the emancipation of the poor and disadvantaged, liberation theology (LT) has relevance for migration in East Asia, although this needs a little qualification. The socio-political contexts and systems of this region are different from those in Latin America, as are the status and role of the church. Also, classical LT advocates the empowerment of the masses to liberate themselves from oppressive

forces in their own countries, while the focus on migrants here means that LT would encourage Christians to act on behalf of foreign Others. It is perhaps ironic that some Christians here might benefit from or even be part of structures which exploit vulnerable foreigners and hence feel a conflict between their religious and social identities when compelled by the scriptures to identify with Others on the 'wrong side' of human divisions.

The Catholic scholars Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff (1989) root LT in the idea of compassion, which I believe reduces Otherness. The central tenet that the face of Christ is in the poor resonates with Levinas' *face* and Buber's *eternal Thou* who stands behind every *thou*. This is similar to Baggio's belief in the mystical presence of the God who is 'totally other' whenever we meet a foreigner (2008, p.xii). Liberation theologians also argue that personal concern for the poor is not enough and Christians must also critique systems which perpetuate poverty. However, where LT talks about radically changing the social system, the political and economic realities of the six territories and the surrounding home countries of migrants suggest something more modest, and indeed the kingdom parables of Matthew 13 advocate a bottom-up approach. Transformation should begin with attitudes and behaviour in the home and the church, and any public advocacy in the civil society must be gentle and winsome. Indeed, Melba Maggay (1994) cautions against playing politics; by holding to its beliefs and acting with pure motives the church can win people over and make a difference. The liberation of the oppressed would restore the credibility which the gospel had in the early church (Boff & Boff, p.8).

Describing God's tenderness towards the oppressed, Boff & Boff talk about the popular LT motif of the deliverance from Egypt, which Gustavo Gutierrez claims 'impregnates the pages of the Bible' (1973, pp.159). J. Andrew Kirk's belief that the Exodus is 'a constant call to live out a totally new present in the light of the past' (1979, p.100) brings to mind my contrasting pair of Exodus and Egypt. By contrast, Paul Davies (2006) notes the importance of the Exodus for Catholic liberation theologians, but presents the Protestant Jose Bonino's complementary focus on the Trinity, the kingdom of God, and the church (p.56). The effect of the kingdom of God on the world combines the efforts of God and human beings, and Bonino sees these as the internal intensive *koinonia* of the church and the extensive *diakonia* beyond its own walls (Davies, p.132). Liberation theologians see strong continuity between the testaments, and the 'transposition [of] the Old Testament themes on to a new plane' (p.153) with the NT 'fulfil[ling]' and 're-interpret[ing]' (Kirk, 1979) the Old, which is close to my own synthesis for migration in East Asia.

Turning to the Trinity, Boff and Boff echo the idea that the nature of God is the blueprint for human relationships and communities. The Trinity is the antithesis of

division, and the kingdom of God is a new order in society which reflects unity and acceptance. According to Davies, Bonino believes that 'unity is not singularity but rather full communication' (p.152) agreeing with Volf that our human differences are not removed but are 'integrated…into the new humanity' (Bonino as cited in Davies, p.133). He also talks about believers participating in the perichoretic life of the Godhead, which then cascades (my term) out into the created order, in such a way that their influence goes not only into individual relationships but also the structures of society.

This very short review suggests congruence between my gleanings and LT, and that a response to migration in East Asia could benefit from a theology derived from a totally different context.

*Catholic Social Teaching*

Jennifer Reed-Bouley and Ken Reed-Bouley (2007) explore Catholic Social Teaching (CST) in the context of theological education for Catholics, bringing together reflection and praxis. They link CST and biblical notions of social justice, joining the dignity of human beings with compassion and justice for the poor, to result in acts of charity and efforts to change social structures. The recognition that the root of human dignity is the *imago Dei* should result in the reduction of Otherness.

They connect OT commands to take care of the marginalised (widows, orphans, and aliens) with Jesus' concern for the vulnerable, under the 'preferential option for the poor' (p.8). They understand *the least* of Matthew 25 as those at the margins of society and reiterate traditional Christian concern about poor labourers *and* exploitative structures by quoting from the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931). This echoes Philip Booth's (2007) assertion that in the Roman world the church's emphasis on compassion and respect for human labour set it apart from other groups. This remains just as important today, and we are reminded of the Boffs' comments on the credibility of the gospel.

Reed-Bouley and Reed-Bouley present the *look, judge, act* or *see, judge, act* framework of CST (from the 1961 encyclical *Mater et Magistra*) which urges the application of the unchanging gospel to real world issues in the local context.

We can now briefly consider some of the guiding principles of CST, as drawn from Centacare Brisbane's (2006) summary of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. The first principle is that of human dignity. Because we bear God's image, respect is due to people regardless of race or status and cannot be lost; the *eternal Thou* stands behind each human being, and the *face* brings an ethical appeal to love our neighbours as ourselves. The third principle, of association, means celebrating diversity in unity and living as social beings by analogy with the Trinity; Otherness

must be reduced and never become divisive or toxic. Fourth comes active rather than passive participation and the obligation to help shape a humane society. This leads to the next principle, advocacy for the poor and weak. The sixth principle is solidarity, being neighbours to each other and working for the common good. These two principles require Christians to look beyond themselves, to the good of all, including guests in the broader society. The eighth principle is that of subsidiarity, the use of the right amount of resources in a given situation, neither too much nor too little. The penultimate principle is equality between people and equal opportunities. The tenth and last principle is that of the common good; all should flourish together and no one should be left behind. These principles can speak into how Christians in East Asia are to relate to migrant Others in their midst.

The two Catholic perspectives, liberation theology and Catholic Social Teaching provide a similar fusion of compassion and justice, applied into specific situations. Together they could inspire the church as it responds to migration in East Asia.

*Belonging and Believing*

As the church reaches out to migrant Others, the question of belonging and believing becomes important. At this point it may be helpful to include a brief review of relevant ideas.

Ulf Hedetoft (2002) provides four key parameters (p.2) of belonging, which build one on top of the other. The first is *sources of belonging*, and most important is 'place', strongly linked with human relationships and concrete entities. Next come *feelings of belonging*, derived from positive interactions with sources of belonging, acceptance by a community, and the joining of networks. Following *feelings* are *ascriptions/constructions of belonging*, affiliation to larger institutions or entities. *Ascription* draws boundaries between insider and outsider and identifies Others. Finally, *fluidities of belonging* takes account of globalisation, transnational spaces, and multiple identities.

Hedetoft asserts that *home* is primarily affective rather than cognitive; most significant is where we *feel* we belong. Feelings of belonging or longing may relate to more than one situation or location at the same time. Some migrants in East Asia aspire to belong to the host country but must return to their own, while others experience no such longing and view their time in the host country purely pragmatically. Communities can be based on faith as well as ethnicity or culture, and thus Hedetoft's ideas mesh with the following explorations of belonging within the church.

According to Steve Timmis and Tim Chester (2002), contemporary western people are not necessarily looking for an integrated view of the world but are seeking 'identity and belonging' (p.76). The witness of the Christian community through its

ordinary life is crucial, and mission is not only about one person with another but also a whole Christian community living out and commending the gospel to unbelievers, and here there are similarities with the analysis of the NT in Chapter Four. Again this raises the issue of going beyond Buber's individual *I-thou*.

Timmis and Chester recall from their own church planting experience that many people are 'attracted by the Christian community before the Christian message' (p.77) and therefore value a group distinct from the broader society which cares for and includes outsiders. By way of balance, they insist that conversion is a necessary step to full belonging.

They also claim that people are more likely to respond to the gospel if they feel they belong and that faith gradually develops within the context of belonging. They confess that this dynamic of belonging - to some extent - before believing can make life and ideas of church membership complicated, but ask us to treat people as church members before they actually are. This is consistent with Hedetoft's ascription and fluidity of belonging. In addition, they urge Christians to let non-believers help out at church. Their thinking evokes the attractive vector derived from both parts of the scriptures.

Believing and belonging are addressed more theoretically by Jack Niewold (2008). Discussing the organisation and function of the church, he claims that *bounded set* organisations tend to produce homogeneous groups with distinct boundaries between insider and outsider, and that those inside try to maintain the boundary to preserve the group identity. People can move through the boundary, but only in accordance with fairly rigid procedures.

By contrast, *centred sets* conceptualise a person's identity in terms of his or her distance from the centre, defined by a vision or set of beliefs. Centred set churches usually have 'firm core beliefs but a low threshold for those wishing to belong' (p.47). The idea is to come and see. Members of such sets are in relationship with the centre and other members. A centred set notion of church sees conversion as a gradual movement from the periphery to the centre, through the building of relationships which gradually move a person towards the centre, which is Christ Himself. The sources of belonging are relationships which reduce Otherness, and there is ascription by the self and the group members. Groody (2009) warns us of the danger of externally imposed identities which deny belonging, where people in power label migrants such that become political problems rather than people, ignoring their spiritual status and needs and forcing them into 'asymmetrical relationships…[of]…exploitation' (p.643).

The two kinds of sets come together in Alan Roxburgh's (1998) missional church, composed of a bounded set leadership group and a larger centred set ordinary membership. Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch (2003) discuss something similar using

metaphors of *sinking wells* and *fences* for centred and bounded set churches respectively. A watering hole well in the Australian outback allows cattle to come and go as they please without wandering far from the water, whereas a fence acts to shut in and shut out.

Michael Nausner believes that boundary experiences, similar to my liminal states, promote the development of faith, and identifies 'cultural encounter' (2007, p.5) as a significant kind. These encounters are significant in globalised, pluralistic settings such as migration. Although my research concerns primarily the needs of the migrant and the obligations of the host Christian, it is noteworthy that Nausner's 'Christian formation' (p.6) happens at the boundaries of Christian communities, and Christian distinctiveness emerges especially through cultural interactions there (Tanner as cited in Nausner, 2007).

Thus, Christian community develops in a 'space where different people can have a sense of belonging' (p.6). Space and belonging evoke the attractive vector and the space of acceptance, cascading down from God to His people and out into the world. However, if Christian character is formed at the boundaries as Others enter the space, then the interaction of the believer and unbeliever may also benefit the Christian. As Christian hosts interact with non-Christian migrant Others, they can be enriched, individually and as a community, a view shared by Groody (2009) and Baggio (2008).

Nausner goes further, quoting from Emmanuel Lartey (2006) that instead of being *multicultural*, churches must be *intercultural*. His exhortation that we become so connected and interactive that the church no longer contains 'distinct cultural spheres' echoes John Stott's provocative statement 'that a homogeneous church is a defective church, which must work penitently and perseveringly towards heterogeneity' (1994, p.397). Such a view not only meshes with the idea of reducing Otherness derived in Chapter Five, but also points towards practical ministry.

As a faithful Methodist, Nausner goes on to stress experience and reflection in the process of Christian formation, which resonates with Catholic social teaching. As host Christians interact with migrant Others the integration of biblical knowledge and Christian experience results in actions which benefit both host and migrant.

Finally, Christians in the host community and migrants need to meet at the (fuzzy) boundary and enter the same space in a state of differential liminality. A shared Christian experience means that host and migrant alike can develop a faith which looks outward from the church into the world.

### Towards a Theological Response

The situation of resident aliens and their relationship with the OT host community are analogous to those of migrants in East Asia. Those coming into ancient Israel from

outside were vulnerable and often dependent on an extended family business, while today's migrants are sponsored by an employer, spouse, or educational institution. Just as in ancient Israel, migration in modern East Asia is often associated with economic disparity between migrants and hosts.

The expansion of the covenant through the Christ event and the subsequent teaching of the New Testament provide a much wider locus of embrace for foreigners and Others. God's people are not only to show kindness to those on the periphery of the community of faith but now also have the commission to expand it and draw in Others.

While the history and traditional practices of mission have been dominated by centrifugal, outward movement of missionaries to unbelieving societies, this does not invalidate centripetal, inward attraction of unbelieving people to Christian communities. Ministry to migrants means that it is now unbelievers rather than missionaries who are on the move, and the direction of movement is into societies with established churches rather than out to so-called non-Christian lands. It has already been shown that the growth of the early church combined centripetal and centrifugal mission. Because of trends in migration in East Asia the church is perhaps facing a partial return to an earlier mode of mission, inasmuch as inward migration shows parallels with situations in the scripture.

As the people of God located in a certain slice of human history, the church looks backward as well as forward. In the OT the constant reminders of Israel's time in Egypt maintain the significance of an event for those who actually took no part in it. The Exodus was a corporate memory, a theological reminder of what God had done for His people. This memory of deliverance is also relevant for Christians as an event in itself as well as a precursor of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. The OT people of God and the Christian church also look forward, to the full confirmation of the kingdom of God at the return of Christ. The understanding of where we have come from and the vision of where we are going to can inform host Christians' attitudes to migrants. The six territories' heritage of displacement and occupation, and their current prosperity and aspirations suggest that a bringing together of theological and sociological themes could lead to greater compassion and embracing of migrants.

*Biblically Informed Confucian Attitudes?*

The principal findings of the OT and NT chapters may also challenge the mentality of Christians in the host societies, particularly their Confucian heritage and often utilitarian view of migrant labour. At the same time, Aldrich's (2008) positive view of Confucian ethics provides balance.

The Confucian worldview espouses strong group identity and hierarchical attitudes. Family is a central idea, and companies and even nation-states are understood

as expansions of it. A tightly knit, interdependent community with strong leadership and a sense of history relating back to the ancestors, the family requires loyalty from and provides support to its members. However, this inward focus may mean that those outside the family are effectively beyond any boundaries of care or respect, unless there is an existing relationship of some kind. Further, the emphasis on and preservation of ocial status means that those at the lower end of the social economic scale and those who perform menial or 3D tasks are treated with less respect than those higher up the ladder. The Other is truly an outsider.

Biblical teaching affirms Confucian concepts of the family but expands their scope; the scriptures describe Christians as brothers (and by implication sisters also) regardless of blood ties, race, and status. Family persists, but the multiple cascadings from the Godhead to the community of faith mean its care now extends to those who do and might belong to Christ. Here I am reminded of the exchange in *Dissent* magazine (Bell, 2008; Chan, 2008) between the idealistic westerner and the Hong Kong Chinese on the question of how inclusive the Confucian family concept is or can be.

The Confucian family has well-defined boundaries which are porous enough to allow new members to join, by marriage for example. If the family is now redefined with the triune God at the centre, with Christ and His people as the means of access, then boundaries and porosity are maintained. However, non-members need to be able to see family life and interact with members such that they wish to cross the boundary and join.

This broader understanding provides a framework in which members of other races can cross the boundary and become part of the family of Christian faith in Confucian cultures. This does not deny racial differences, but makes them irrelevant to the question of salvation and belonging. Indeed the spirit of the scriptures requires that we are to glory in and celebrate the diversity found inside the family. Otherness and separation along the X-axis are reduced.

The renewed concept of the family also speaks to the question of status. If all belong, regardless of their income or the kind of job they do, then there can be no discrimination or exclusion based on social standing. The rich and poor, the educated and the unskilled, all belong together in the family of faith, and that belonging should also have positive consequences for migrants in terms of occupational and educational opportunities, as well as economic ones. We can subsume these under the concept of shalom and development of the image of God in each person. The separation of people along the Y-axis is reduced also. It is worth pointing out that the traditional Chinese *wu-lun* (the five relationships between father and son, ruler and subject, husband and wife, elder and younger, and friends) involve an obligation of care from the superior to the subordinate. In addition, Buddhism also teaches the ten duties of kings to those beneath

them (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1991). In a region where status remains important, the gospel can resonate with and extend traditional viewpoints.

Hansen (2010) notes that Paul uses family terms as well as household language to refer to believers and congregations. Believers are siblings with common (divine) parenthood, and the household metaphor emphasises the roles, responsibilities, and inheritance of Christian believers. He claims that this is very powerful because siblings worked together within households and in some cases connected different households with each other. Furthermore, the metaphor would have been meaningful because at the time of the Pauline Epistles churches met in members' households.

In Colossians 3 Paul advocates attitudes and behaviours that would not have been seen outside or beyond the family boundary in the ancient world. The mutual concern and affection among Christians would not normally have been seen among those not related to each other. Paul is intentionally portraying the church as a family and relationships between members as those between siblings by an 'adaptation of contemporary norms' (Hansen, p.185).

The adaptation of and challenge to ancient social norms brought by Paul's notions of family and household can be just as revolutionary for those with Confucian heritage. Paul's teaching stretched the people of his day and can do the same for Christians in East Asia. For a culture of tight family bonds to extend these and include those of different race and status is nothing new for followers of Christ.

If Christians from a Confucian heritage bring these biblical principles into their idea of family and belonging then Otherness is reduced and a new communitas results, a redemptive communitas of hosts stepping into the liminal space with migrants and treating them with respect and love as family members *in potentia*. This would be a new way for Christians in the host community to deal with migrant people, many of whom are to all intents and purposes invisible.

*Advocacy and Empathy*

This approach, together with an understanding that host Christians themselves are liminal because of their past and future, would make every interaction between host and migrant a matter of *I-thou* rather than *I-it*. A model of family with the *eternal Thou* at the centre helps Christians to see Him standing behind every migrant with whom they interact, mystically present in every Other (Baggio, 2008). Every migrant is a Levinasian *face* and an expectant observer, bringing an ethical demand and responsibility to the host Christian.

The numbers and types of migrants vary across the six territories. However in the southern part of East Asia domestic helpers are part of everyday life for middle-class families, where most Christians are to be found. In Singapore, it is impossible to

go to church and not come across significant numbers of domestic workers. Likewise, contract labourers are very obvious in many parts of the region. Migration is an issue in the media. This means that if the church is to respond to the society of which it is part, individual congregations and church groups must give explicit teaching on migration which speaks to the Confucian heritage. If Christians are to be salt and light then the educational process has to begin inside the church, changing attitudes one family at a time, including children. In countries where children routinely encounter domestic helpers and migrant workers it is necessary that their Christian identity includes healthy attitudes to Others.

Individual Christians, families, and churches can aim towards treating migrants with dignity. We have seen in Chapter Two how migration can affect self-esteem, and mental and physical health. We also saw how many migrants work or live in substandard conditions, and here we are reminded of Groody's (2009) idea about restoring the *imago Dei*, which is not only a matter of surviving, but also thriving. The fullness of the *imago Dei* in each person connects with freedom, self-determination, and providing for the future of those they love. This echoes Deuteronomy 14:28-29, in which the alien is to enjoy the kindness of the host community, eating until he is satisfied. There is a largesse and shalom in these verses which values the alien as a person.

Related to this is advocacy, and LT encourages Christians to challenge attitudes and systems which oppress. Many churches in East Asia have large numbers of white-collar members with influence in business, civil service, and even government circles, who can bring biblical attitudes to the Other into real life situations. In East Asia liberation theology requires Christians not to liberate and empower themselves but to grant Exodus to migrant Others in their midst. Likewise, Catholic Social Teaching asks Christians to look to the common good and to take care of the weak because all are created in God's image. In addition, it suggests a process of observation, assessment, and response. Christians in East Asia could open their eyes to the exploitation and oppression that goes on around them, not in far-off countries but in their own neighbourhoods and in some cases their own houses, and then make assessments according to biblical principles, which would then lead them to respond in action of one kind or another. Although the response may vary with the size and maturity of the civil society, the value of CST is its emphasis on application.

If Christians take seriously the circumstances of migrants and develop awareness of their needs and the issues, the church's ministry to them will improve. Domestic helpers, contract labour, construction workers, students, foreign brides, and study mothers (who accompany their foreign children studying in the six territories, especially Singapore) all face different pressures and have different needs. As well as

finding ways to meet their spiritual needs, churches would also be able to offer appropriate emotional, material, legal and other assistance. In addition, this could reduce stereotyping and promote relationships between hosts and migrants, making space for them in church and at home, through various communal activities. This extension of the *space of acceptance* within God allows migrants to experience the attractive vector and be challenged about faith.

If they are willing to enter the liminal spaces with migrants, Christians in the host country can learn to extend acceptance and material generosity to them. Such is the implication of Groody's (2009) ideas of table fellowship and making space for the Other. Many migrants come from relatively poor countries in East Asia and a domestic helper in Singapore may be paid around S$300 per month, around one eighth of the salary of a fresh graduate in the country. While there are stories of abuse of domestic helpers by employers, there are also records of domestic helpers stealing, abusing children in their care, and in other ways treating their employers or employers' families inappropriately. In some cases this is taking revenge for unfair treatment while in others it is the result of temptation or jealousy. It may be difficult to imagine contract labourers or domestic helpers having Christian fellowship with professionals and business people, but the example is Christ and His establishment of new communities through table fellowship (Groody, 2009). Such can be expected in the communitas created by the gospel, and healthy relationships and Otherness may reduce some of the tensions created by income differentials and even encourage employers to pay their domestic helpers or contract labourers more and look to empower them and develop their potential.

**Towards a Missiological Response**

It would be problematic to produce separate theological and missiological responses to migration. The discussion so far has been primarily theological and sociological, but these two perspectives come together as a rationale for practical ministry. Such ministry can be separated into two overlapping areas, that to migrants in the host countries, and its extension into the transnational space, to returnees and those yet to migrate. The choice of the proposition *to* reflects the reality that most migrants in East Asia are not Christian. However, ministry by churches in the host community should not remain as *to* migrants, but hopefully should also become ministry *with* and *through* migrants. We must remain mindful of the transnational space, as few migrants settle in the host country. In addition, the holistic idea of ministry from scripture suggests that all ministry should be *for* people.

Whether ministry to migrants occurs in the host country or in the home country, it will involve the extension of the kingdom of God and the space of acceptance from the church and out into a group of people who are quite different from the mainstream

host society. Multiple faith interfaces will be established, across which faith can be transferred from host to migrant, across gulfs of language and culture, as well as race and status.

*Response of Host Nation Churches to Migrants in the Host Nations*

Many migrants in East Asia come from countries where the church cannot minister freely or where there could be consequences for those who become Christians. Socialist countries like China and Vietnam outlaw unregistered churches and place restrictions on government-approved church bodies. Indonesia and Thailand do have religious freedom but local religions such as Islam or Buddhism are strong and it can be challenging for a person to return as a Christian.

In addition, many on the move are not well educated and speak relatively poor English. Educational level and lack of facility in the host country lingua franca may make communication with church people difficult. There are of course exceptions; mainland Chinese labourers have little problem communicating with Mandarin speaking Christians in Singapore, although their worldviews are very different. A not insignificant number of Filipino domestic helpers in the region speak good English, and some even have tertiary educational qualifications.

That said, the general picture would be of a migrant coming to a host country with little or no fluency in the language used in the church, very little knowledge if any of the Christian message, and in most cases no familiarity with Christian worship, church, or Bible study. In addition, while this research focuses on the obligation for Christians to be proactive in reducing Otherness, migrants may hold prejudicial views towards the host community. Volf (1996) points out the need for self-examination on the part of victims as well as perpetrators.

Ethnic fellowships already exist in the six countries, for example groups of Filipinos or Indonesians meeting on the premises of local churches. The host churches may defray some of their expenses, send people to help out with logistics, and even employ ethnic pastors to run them. In what I call remote access or remote control ministry, a committed church in Seoul may support a Mongolian fellowship, and a mainly Chinese church in Singapore may sponsor a meeting for Indonesian domestic helpers. But this state of affairs maintains a silo effect in which the two groups have practically no interaction with each other. The gospel is proclaimed and lives are changed, but distant Otherness remains, and these meetings are not even multicultural, let alone intercultural, as Lartey (2006) would like. In a rather detached way the host community meets the needs of a group of migrants or perhaps their own perception of those needs, but in a way which requires no transformation of the hosts.

A number of Singapore churches now work among Mainland Chinese labourers,

laying on coaches to bring large numbers of them to the church for a gospel programme, a simple meal, and sometimes some training in English or guitar. However, the underlying assumption is that what works for Singaporeans will help lonely men who are far from home and have no idea about the Christian message. The felt needs of contract workers from China and primarily middle-class Singaporeans are very different, suggesting that ministry by local churches may need to be precisely targeted and contextualised.

These factors highlight a fundamental issue for those reaching migrants. Because most will be in the host country for a limited period and they are different from local people, migrants remain in a state of village transnationalism (Kitiarsa, 2008). The implication is that what might be criticised as a detached or simplistic approach may seem to be the best option, and so dedicated ethnic fellowships seem to be at least partly justified.

However, this does not address the question of Otherness and the reconciliation brought by the gospel. Nor does it bring about changes in attitude in migrants or host Christians. Another problem would be the lack of mature Christian role models from whom migrants could learn about the influence of Christianity on the individual, marriage and family, business and so on. Also, many domestic helpers do speak English and spend time in close contact with local people, and, depending on their jobs, contract workers may also gain fluency in the local lingua franca. The same is true for students and foreign brides.

This research concludes that ministry to migrants in the host countries needs to take account of their identity in the transnational space, in a state of village transnationalism, while at the same time trying to reduce Otherness with regard to Christians in the host community. Also, the resources in the host community can be used to benefit migrants. Village transnationalism transfers and to some extent preserves for example life in rural Thailand within the urban environment of Singapore, and thus ministry needs considerable understanding of the circumstances and challenges of migrants' home situations.

*Response of Host Nation Churches to Migrants in the Broader Transnational Space*
That migrants exist in a transnational space means that ministry among them must utilise their language and culture, as discussed above. However, as we saw in Chapter Two, apart from cheap telecommunications and air travel, another element in the transnational space is short-term or even circular migration. Models of ministry to migrants in the West have often assumed settlement or gradual acculturation, either to the mainstream host society or ethnic diaspora communities in that society (Wan, various), but the distinctive feature of migration in East Asia is that it is usually time-

limited, with migrants returning home after a few years.

Transnational spaces and migration systems that link migrants at home with specific opportunities (particular sectors of industries or companies) in host societies result in a particular set of circumstances for Christian work among them. Migrants may come to the host countries with little knowledge or interest in the gospel, yet if exposed to the Christian message they may take some knowledge of it back to their home communities. If a migrant does come to faith then he or she needs to survive as a Christian in a possibly unwelcoming or even hostile environment back home. Those who make good progress in their faith could theoretically constitute a low-key and culturally savvy missionary force to their own home countries, requiring neither visa nor culture/language training.

Migrants who are converted while abroad will become relatively Other to their original host societies. On their return home they will come out of the transnational space, but the transnational space may still be partly within them. Their formative experience of the faith will have taken place in a foreign country, influenced to some extent by foreign and probably western Christianity. Thus, whether migrants expect to remain for the medium term (unlikely, except for domestic helpers) or return home after a short contract, their Christian understanding and praxis must be contextualised and relevant to the transnational space. If a Thai labourer becomes a Christian in Taiwan, then part of his Christian experience in that foreign country needs to prepare him for Christian life and witness in the transnational space in which he lives in Taiwan but also among fellow Thais in Thailand when he returns. Ministry to migrants in the transnational space implemented with a view to their eventual return may benefit from the *Three Self* principles of Venn and Anderson. The kindness of well-equipped local churches may help ethnic fellowships, but in order to maintain a flourishing and transformational Christian presence on their return migrant Christians need to be equipped to establish churches that are self-governing, self-propagating, and self-financing. We can also add the fourth self, self-theologising (Song, 2006), because migrant fellowships in the transnational space need to be able to deal with issues facing returnees and the broader society in the home country.

Some brief practical implications of this research for ministry among migrants in the host countries and in the broader transnational space will be summarised in the next chapter.

## Conclusion

This chapter has pulled together biblical principles and sought to apply them in the East Asian context, theologically and missiologically. It has looked for resonance with existing scholarship and practice and has built on these with certain practical

suggestions.

It is now time to move to the final chapter, which will provide an overall conclusion to and reflection on the research, make some suggestions for practical ministry, and introduce some possible directions for further work.

**Chapter 7**

**Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions**

**Introduction**

As described in the introductory chapter this research is essentially a theological reflection on the migration in East Asia. This means that the work contains a sociological portrait of migration, followed by identification and application of biblical and theological principles, and suggestions for theological and missiological responses by the church.

**Conclusions from this Research**

Although migration is a relatively new subject for theologians and missiologists to reflect upon, there already exist some resources in the church which can help as it considers how to respond to the phenomenon.

In keeping with its overall function as a theological reflection the research began with an overview of migration in East Asia. It presented a brief introduction to migration systems theory and the transnational space, and an overview of sociological aspects of migration in East Asia including portraits of the countries to which people move. The experiences of migrants in East Asia were also described, along with what may be considered the dominant underlying worldview of Christians in the region, Confucianism.

The review of the nature of migration suggested that in the Asian context there are fault lines between people of the host culture and incoming migrants, based on race, status, and gender. Government policies and attitudes of many in the host countries serve to create a rather utilitarian, *us-and-them* mentality between host and migrant. It was also discovered that the gulf between the host and migrant has led to exploitation and abuse, and that the church is knowingly or unknowingly part of this exploitative system. The primary implication was that race and status should lie at the heart of any theological reflection on migration.

The literature review examined theological scholarship on migration from different parts of the Christian church, roughly categorised as evangelical, (Protestant) ecumenical, and Roman Catholic. It was discovered that there is considerable need and scope for further development of a theology of migration based on what has been written so far. At the same time, it was found that Protestant writing had yet to engage with the East Asian situation, and thus this work represents a new initiative.

A small amount of writing has already addressed migration directly, but this is almost exclusively European and North American, the notable exception being a small volume which explores migration in Asia from a Catholic perspective. The small

amount of evangelical writing on migration originates in a context in which the assumption is that migrants will acculturate and settle, but this is not the case for most migrants in East Asia. The conclusion was drawn that theological scholarship has so far paid inadequate attention to migration.

The contributions from ecumenical Protestants and Roman Catholics, together with the sociological study of migration led to the identification of Otherness and liminality as two lenses with which to explore biblical content and theological ideas. Otherness was adopted as the primary motif for the theological reflection, with liminality functioning in a secondary capacity. Therefore, the scope of the literature review was broadened to include Eastern Orthodox ideas of Otherness and thinking on the Trinity, as well as contributions from the Jewish philosophers Buber and Levinas and the thought of Miroslav Volf. Consideration of the nature and experience of both temporary migrants in East Asia and followers of YHWH in the Bible required a review of writing on liminality.

One of the concepts derived from the teaching of Buber was that of the *eternal Thou*, which lies behind the *thou* of every interaction between *I* and *thou*. This notion encourages us to think of Others as if they were God Himself and reduces the Otherness between finite human beings when compared with the eternal God. The idea also unites the commands to love God with one's whole being and love one's neighbour as oneself. It makes the treatment of another person as an *it* impossible. Levinas' idea of the face (of the Other) presents an ethical demand and rejects any dehumanisation of the Other.

The two lenses of Otherness and liminality were applied to the Old and New Testaments, primarily to prescriptive commands from God to His people. The Pentateuch contains the alien mandate, explicit instructions for how the Israelites were to relate to aliens residing in the community. The New Testament does not have these specific guidelines but gives broad principles for how the church should relate to racial and social Others.

The experience of Israel in Egypt was one of suffering and deprivation and is mentioned repeatedly in the Pentateuch specifically in connection with the fair treatment of aliens. The remembrance of Egypt functioned as a corporate memory for those in the community of faith. The church in East Asia has its own corporate memory in that most Christian people trace their recent ancestry to foreign countries and are citizens of territories previously colonised or occupied by foreign powers. East Asian Christians have a dual corporate memory, one as the theological descendants of Israel, the other derived from their recent national history.

The research process in both chapters produced the general idea of *cascading*. The principle is that certain characteristics and experiences of the Godhead flow out and down to Israel and the church and then out into the wider world, particularly to non-

believers who stand at the periphery of the community of YHWH faith and may even enter its orbit. The idea of cascading is that followers of Christ should model and draw on God's own experience and management of Otherness and His pseudo-liminality in relating to those who are racially and socially Other.

In both Testaments there was encountered an apparent tension between exclusivist and inclusivist attitudes from God's people towards Others. Simply put, God seems to require a high level of inclusion in terms of fair play and justice for aliens at the periphery of the community. However, other parts of God's instructions to His people suggest is a definite boundary between believer and non-believer. Study of the relevant passages, together with an understanding of the overall purposes of God for humankind, gave rise to what I have called the *attractive vector*. This describes the prescriptive or idealistic effect whereby a faith community extends welcome and blessing to those who are not part of that community, partly because this reflects the moral heart of God and partly to attract them by showing them kindness and a high moral standard. This is an integration of spiritual and social concern which reflects biblical shalom. However, the scriptures do insist on a conversion experience of one kind or another and a declaration of faith in order for a person to be a full member of the community. The NT suggests that differences or divisions caused by race and status have no significance for entry to the community of faith and full membership of it, including acceptance by Christians. The gospel reduces both kinds of Otherness.

Many churches and mission societies are beginning to show interest in ministering to migrants, and this has raised the question of whether such ministry is actually mission. For many, who hold to a traditional home/field distinction, ministry among migrant people can fall through the cracks. Because such ministry happens in the same country as the church it is often considered not to be mission, and has lacked support and commitment. On the other hand, although the ministry happens at home, so to speak, it is truly cross-cultural and involves serving people with a variety of needs. For this reason, in the study of the Old and New Testament passages the concepts of centripetal and centrifugal mission were explored, especially as these relate to the early expansion of the church, by which Gentile believers effectively migrated into a Jewish church. The conclusion drawn is that ministry among migrant people is truly cross-cultural mission but functions by combining centripetal and centrifugal approaches.

The concept of the *space of acceptance* is a development of Moltmann's thinking about spaces as well as persons within the Trinity. These spaces allow interaction not only between the three persons of The Trinity but also make it possible for human beings to take part in the divine life. This space of acceptance extends from the Godhead out into the church and thence into the wider world. Christians, who live inside this space, have the responsibility to attract others into it and make it accessible

to them. Belonging can be thought of in terms of centred sets and this is held in tension with the distinction between faith and no faith.

The Christian looks back to the deliverance from Egypt at the Exodus and forward to the final consummation of God's kingdom at the return of Christ. Because of their status as Other and liminal with regard to mainstream society, Christians can view themselves as fellow travellers with migrants.

The emphasis on fair treatment of aliens in the OT and the requirements to treat one's neighbour as oneself in the NT come together to suggest that Christian believers should treat non-believers as believers: kindness, fair treatment, and acceptance are to be extended to them. This principal meshes with the witness of the early church in Acts 2 and 4 and the general operation of the attractive vector.

The theological ideas which emerged in this research could be used to extend very positive Confucian ideas of family and responsibility to all members or potential members of a Christian Confucian family based on the church.

## Implications for a Missiological Response

This section contains brief practical implications of the missiological response outlined in the previous chapter.

### *Ministry to Migrants in the Host Nations*

Some basic principles for ministry to migrant people in the host countries were outlined in the previous chapter. This brief section contains some implications for practical ministry.

The themes explored in this research suggest a continuum approach for ministry among migrants. Cultural and linguistic differences require that gospel ministry be contextualised for the migrants' situations and needs. Indonesians need to read the Bible in Bahasa Indonesia and many would approach it from an Islamic perspective. Vietnamese and Chinese would need to use their own languages and interact with Christians who understand ancestor worship, Confucianism, and socialist concepts of religion. Among mono-cultural groups of migrants, informal fellowships emphasising their culture and food may be very effective. However, because the migrants live in someone else's country and reconciliation and the reduction of Otherness lie at the centre of the gospel, meaningful exchange between migrants and host Christians is important. Therefore, some kind of church-based interaction between migrants and the host society seems desirable.

Local churches could hold occasional services in which locals and migrants worship together using songs from both cultures, simplified forms of the lingua franca, and/or interpretation. Short sharings and testimonies from both groups could be mutually encouraging and challenging as people meet in the liminal space.

Alternatively, small groups of host Christians could visit ethnic fellowships. The details would vary a little, based on the background of the migrants and the profile of the church. However, the Bible gives host Christians the obligation to reach out and reduce Otherness.

Centripetal mission and the biblical requirement to reduce Otherness as a prelude to and result of conversion to Christ suggest that host Christians get involved in ethnic fellowships. However, local Christians may be used to highly organised and well-timed worship and may need to avoid the temptation to take over or make things 'more efficient'. As people of higher status and income, for them to show a genuine servant spirit towards the migrants would do much for the credibility of the gospel. Genuine worship with migrant Others would build relationships with God and between people of different race and status.

The affirmation of migrant Others could promote advocacy and practical help for them while reducing the tendency to ignore or commodify them. Local Christians could begin to see them as people with their own stories, needs, and aspirations, and it would be difficult to remain indifferent to the plight of migrants when one has been together with them in church. Depending on their skills and interest, migrant Others could also help in church meetings, in some cases belonging before believing.

Migrant workers often form single gender ethnic groups in the host country. Domestic helpers are female, construction workers male. Students and personnel in the service sector (e.g. shop assistants, bus drivers, and hairdressers) come in both genders, although there are gender biases in some of these professions. The vast majority of foreign spouses are female. Individual men or women often represent a family back home with its own challenges and struggles. Other young men and women need guidance in the area of relationships. Ministry among migrant people therefore needs sensitivity and wisdom in dealing with a wide range of gender and family issues.

The traditional model of missionary going abroad to preach the gospel in a foreign country involves full-time ministers who have undergone specialised training in Christian doctrine and the language and culture of the so-called target people. The more centripetal nature of migrant ministry means that host country Christians involved often have full-time secular jobs and lack specialised missionary training and therefore may work with migrants in the same way as with their own countrymen. In addition, differences in income, status, and work, and living circumstances mean that ministry among migrants is demanding and difficult. Churches need to be serious about appropriate training, networking with other like-minded players, and making use of missionaries with experience in the migrants' home countries.

*Ministry to Migrants at the Home End of the Transnational Space*

Having looked at practical ministry to migrants in their host countries, it now remains to

consider the extension and follow-up to such ministry among those who have returned to their home nations.

The transnational space is the virtual connection between a migrant's home and host countries. It links the two together, and constitutes an extension of the migrant's home culture into the host country. However, the transnational space can also be thought of as an extension of the Christian community in the host countries back into the migrants' home nations. Just as the transnational space is an invasion of migrants' culture into the host nations, so it can also work as an invasion of the church community from the host nation back into the migrants' home. As discussed above, this extension of the faith community in the host country is carried out primarily by migrants who have become Christians and who have benefitted from teaching and practical kindness of others, contextualised to their needs. Cascading continues from Christians in the host nations through to the home countries, through the work of migrant believers and host nation Christians also.

One consequence is that the placement and use of personnel in ministry to migrants should take account of the transnational space and migration systems. A variation on missionary sending could see Christians from the host society visit frequently or even take up residence at the other end of the transnational space. That is to say, Christians from Korea could work in Indonesia with the specific aim of reaching migrants in the transnational space, assisting returnees and getting to know those about to migrate, and making connections for them at the Korean end. Indonesian Christians could also be stationed at both ends of the transnational space, working in partnership with Korean colleagues and bringing consistency of personnel as well as practical and spiritual care at both ends of the transnational space. These Christian presences dedicated to the needs of migrants could be constituted by professionals, business people, or students, as well as full-time missionaries. A group of European Christians already serves in one Asian country with the specific task of welcoming returnees back into the country, and this is a partial precedent for a similar intra-regional ministry in East Asia.

The flow of migrants within the transnational space also has implications for short-term missions, already popular in East Asia. Rather than have groups of relatively uninformed Christians going to different destinations every year, churches could direct some of their short-term mission effort into the transnational space. Small groups from host country churches could connect with people in a migrant home country, relating to returnees and building friendships with those about to migrate, and challenging stereotypical attitudes on both sides. Where churches do exist in the migrants' home communities, relationships could be built and cooperation and bilateral visits encouraged.

*Empowering Those in the Transnational Space:* Aidha *and* Ciputra

A final implication of the theology of Otherness and relationships, coupled with insights from LT and CST is that the church can help improve migrants' skills and increase opportunities for them as they return home. The six territories attract migrants because they are economically successful and 'have something to offer'. Many in the church are highly qualified and work in business, education, and government. This means that there is potential for skills transfer, micro-credit, and the establishment of SMEs by migrants when they return to their countries. This kind of empowering for sustainable gospel communities can be thought of as part of Groody's (2009) restoration of the *imago Dei*.

The Aidha micro-business school is a not-for-profit training organisation for domestic helpers in Singapore and is now expanding to the Middle East. It takes advantage of Singapore as a global hub and magnet for talented people to equip promising domestic helpers with weekend training and savings schemes. If these women set up businesses, they can sustain themselves and employ others, ending the poverty trap which forces women from poorer nations to work as domestic helpers and potentially sustaining a gospel community which reaches out to Others.

A similar idea lies behind training programs offered by Indonesia's University of Ciputra Entrepreneurship Centre. Training has been run in Hong Kong and is due to start in Singapore very soon. The difference between Aidha and Ciputra is that Aidha is open to domestic helpers of any nationality and the training is conducted in English, whereas Ciputra uses the Indonesian language and in Hong Kong works in collaboration with the Indonesian consulate. Furthermore, the motivation for the Ciputra training is partly Christian while Aidha is a purely secular organisation.

The emphasis on empowerment and escaping from poverty is congruent with the broader Christian message, yet during a recent church consultation concerning entrepreneurship training for Indonesian domestic workers in Singapore it was commented that too many churches minister to Indonesian helpers purely by offering worship and Bible study. The idea of churches expanding their help to include business training was seen as very positive by those present (Widjaja, personal communication, 31 October 2011).

Aidha and Ciputra are models that could be complemented by local and more obviously Christian endeavours which aim to establish self-sustaining kingdom presences in migrants' home countries to provide income and bless others spiritually and materially (Widjaja, 2011). The idea of Christian workers specifically dedicated to migrant ministry at both ends of the transnational space dovetails with this kind of entrepreneurship training and implementation. Micro-credit, mentoring schemes, and

training in the Christian faith could all be integrated into the model. There is clearly potential for expansion to include contract labourers and a broader range of nationalities and languages and to run similar programmes in all of the six territories. Many of the resources for such programmes already exist in churches in the region; it is simply a matter of harnessing them for the so far insignificant Other. All of this is dependent upon a generous spirit which is happy to invest in those who will ultimately leave. Indeed, one objection to migrant ministry from some Malaysian churches was that they saw no point in spending time and money on people who would go home and thus not become part of those churches. A broader, kingdom perspective is thus important.

A possible extension or spin-off from this kind of thinking would see returning migrants and host Christians establishing recruitment companies specifically for domestic workers and contract labourers. Christian companies could charge lower fees for recruitment of personnel, provide better training for migrant labour on arrival in the host nations, and offer much improved and ethical care for migrant labourers while they are abroad. This general ethos of care for the Other could also integrate Christian themes or evangelistic efforts as appropriate.

## Suggestions for Future Work

This research has looked at migration in East Asia as a sociological phenomenon and has worked towards a theological and missiological response from the church in the region. During the research process it became clear that little has been written on migration from a theological perspective and almost nothing at all about the East Asian context. Furthermore, evangelicals have only really just begun to scratch the surface of a huge research area, and there is a lot more to be done.

This study was structured as a theological reflection, focused through the twin lenses of otherness and liminality. In addition, the study considered legal migration and the response of churches in six territories which are net receivers of migration and where the church is free to minister. This suggests that there may be other angles from which to look at migration. Furthermore, a broader range of migration types and a different group of focus territories could be the subject of future research.

Reflection on the current research and its limitations suggests several broad avenues of further research.

### *Broader Scope*

Although this research looked at questions of race and status, as has already been mentioned, gender is a very important factor in contemporary migration. Further research could look at sociological and theological perspectives on gender as they relate to migration.

This research focused on legal, international migration. More research needs to

be done on the theology of and attitudes of Christians towards illegal and domestic (non-international) migrants. This would overlap with theologies of urbanisation and globalisation.

For reasons of space and focus it was impossible to look at the small number of important precedents for Christian ministry to migrants in East Asia in the past, in territories such as colonial Malaya and Singapore, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, and Korea. Further study could supplement the current research by looking at historical factors and theological viewpoints relating to previous intra-Asian migration.

A useful extension and reference point could also be detailed study of similar kinds of migration around the world and the response of the local church.

### More In-Depth Consideration of the Host Societies

In looking at Confucian thought as an underlying value system for East Asian Christians, a finer mesh would look at differences in attitudes between the three Confucian cultures instead of subsuming them under the broad umbrella of Confucianism as in this research. Reference could also be made to other local belief systems such as Buddhism, Chinese folk religions, and so on. Across the region, there have been different flavours of nation building and even attendant nationalism. All of these merit further consideration and theological analysis as they relate to attitudes towards migrant Others.

There should also be more detailed assessment of the different attitudes and policies found in the relatively culturally monolithic North of East Asia and the more ethnically and religiously diverse South. In addition, the northern part of the region appears more democratic and has a greater emphasis on human rights than the South, and this affects the church.

Further research is also needed to understand the perception of the church (by insiders and outsiders) as a community which follows what is a 'foreign' or 'western religion' in the eyes of many Asians. Issues of post-colonial identity, church as a threatened minority in contexts such as Malaysia, or church as a very small grouping in Japan all merit further study.

In thinking about advocacy and the public presence of the church further study of attitudes to political engagement and public theology would be helpful.

Naturally, certain of these potential research agendas would benefit from empirical research of attitudes obtained by interviewing and surveying Christians.

### Identity and Belonging as Theological Notions

More work needs to be done on the question of identity ascription by migrants and host communities. Empirical evidence could be gathered to discuss and evaluate attitudes regarding the question of identity. While most migrants to not remain in the territories considered, small numbers do, for various reasons. It would be interesting to look at

identity and belonging and the difference in perception between those who must leave and those who can stay.

A useful theoretical construct which could be meshed together with biblical ideas is Ricoeur's dual concepts of the self, *ipse* and *idem*. Further work on Confucian ideas of identity and belonging could also consider these concepts and integrate them.

*Further Theological and Biblical Enquiry*

This research took as its explicit focus prescriptive commands or instructions directly or indirectly relevant to the response of the community of faith to aliens. Future study could look at the complex attitudes to foreigners which developed during and after the exile to Babylon. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah and the thought of the Pharisees would provide useful material for such an effort.

It would be advantageous to look more closely at the kingdom of God as it relates to Others and migrants. There is a need to look at the connection between the Trinity and the kingdom as well as that between the space of acceptance and the kingdom.

Mention was made of sharing in the divine life, and this merits much more study as it relates to Otherness and migration. Another interesting avenue of research would look at mystical theology and theosis in some depth. Related to this is the idea of the *imago Dei*.

A final theological element would be an examination of other religions and their attitude to Otherness.

*Power Dynamics between Host and Migrant*

Further research could explore some of Foucault's ideas on power as they relate to the theology of migration, Otherness, and liminality.

**Concluding Remarks**

This research constitutes a first attempt to produce a theological and missiological response to migration in East Asia. The form of migration and nature of the host societies in Asia are different from those in North America and Europe, where more research has been done on migration trends and theological interactions with them. Inasmuch as this work looks at East Asia, it serves to complement and build on existing work.

The work has also examined biblical teaching about migrants and the obligation of the community of faith to them. This was carried out by using the two concepts of Otherness and liminality and the resulting ideas summarised and applied to popular Confucian ideas which underlie the worldview of many Christians in the region. Finally,

theological support was derived for minister to migrant peoples as true cross- cultural mission, particularly by analogy to the expansion process of the early church.

In the course of the research it was found that there is much more to be done, and further research could pursue one of any number of areas. It is to be hoped that this research agenda will develop and deepen and ultimately be of use to the church and of benefit to migrant peoples themselves.

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