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more than they do in other institutions (which are also segregated, although not as fully).

Perhaps the most important ingredients of American church segregation, besides religion itself, are area of residence and social status. Different kinds of people tend to live in different places. Just look at the campus churches at your college or university. They are full of students who live on or near campus. This constitutes a group of people very much alike on all kinds of characteristics, including, to begin with, age and level of education.

Few congregations serve broad areas of a city or county. With a few exceptions, congregations tend to reside in neighborhoods and be seen as neighborhood institutions. A congregation in the suburbs south of Chicago rarely attracts members from a northern suburb or from the city's core. Neighborhoods tend be collections of people who are economically or ethnically similar. Throughout history, immigrants, and hence ethnic groups, have tended to move into areas where people they know already reside, particularly relatives and friends from home towns. They get help and a sense of comfort. The already beaten path is the way to helpful information and to safety. It is also the way to relevant churches. For example, consider the fact that 44 percent of the people living in Palisades Park, New Jersey, are of Korean ancestry (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). This is no accident.

Indeed, Korean Americans (and their religious practices) provide an instructive illustration. There are a set of Protestant churches that conduct services in Korean or serve a primarily Korean American membership (see Chang 2006 for a history). Although some came to the United States earlier, particularly after the Korean War, most Korean immigrants arrived after the 1965 change in American immigration law, which repealed the previous massive discrimination against non-Europeans. There are therefore many first- and second-generation Korean Americans in the United States.

In Korea, about 25 percent of the population describes themselves as Protestant. In the United States, however, 75 percent of Korean Americans are Protestants. To some extent this difference might reflect a special attraction to America for Korean Protestants (as compared with Korean Buddhists). More interesting, however, is the fact that almost 40 percent of Korean Protestants in the United States were previously not religious, or of another religion! That is a lot of converts and is the first clue for understanding the role and attraction of the ethnic church.

For Korean immigrants, the Korean church is much more than a religious institution. It is the center of their community; a place they can speak Korean, eat Korean food, and share community and community values with others from a common culture. The church provides a kind of safe haven where immigrants and their children can negotiate the treacherous path from culture to culture. Were it really about religion, many or most Koreans could have attended established Protestant churches. They did not. The enormous number of Korean American converts to Christianity probably does not reflect some strong response to Christian doctrine. Instead, non-Christian Koreans clearly wanted, even needed, to associate themselves with the principal institutional center of their community, the various Protestant churches. Durkheim would have it no other way.

The centrality of non-English-speaking churches for immigrant communities is not new in the United States. Polish-speaking Catholic congregations in Chicago served the same function. Italian immigrants struggled to have an Italian Catholic service and community in a New York diocese whose priests were mostly Irish, but they eventually succeeded. As Germans, Swedes, Chinese, and many other ethnic groups immigrated to America; they did not fit very well into the established churches, even churches of their own denominations. German and Swedish Lutherans needed German- and Swedish-speaking versions of Lutheranism, where they could pray in the language they knew and mix comfortably with people from their own background. Thus, immigrants established thriving ethnic churches of their own. Today, many Catholic churches have special services for Spanish-speaking parishioners

In Savannah, Georgia, young Americans in a Korean American Methodist church learn Korean, keeping their connection to the ethnic community.

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