**Thoughts after Spending 6 Months Visiting Churches in Orange County**

What is church?

How do I decide a church?

Why did I move here, to California?

* 1. Mission trips to Mexico
* 2. Reaching out to all communities in Orange County
  + Being part of a church that is welcoming to everyone
  + Is this possible, reaching out to *all* communities?
    - This makes me think about how people go to church or how churches are established in communities
      * What is it mean to reach out to communities?
        + Reaching to *all* communities is just not possible

Reaching out to a community is possible

A community that can embrace groups of people

What is the group?

A group has a commonality

A commonality should be Christ Jesus

Church made up different layers and dimensions

* Culture
  + Top-down
    - Pastor’s teaching style/preaching method/pastor’s involvement with church members/pastor’s philosophy
  + Bottom-up
    - Ethnicity
    - Socio-economic status
    - Education background
* Theology/denomination
* Location
  + Where church is located in relation to surrounding neighborhoods
* Vision/mission statement
  + Church’s vision and mission statement

Communities in Orange County

* Patches of neighborhoods
  + Segregated communities patched into a single county
    - Communities go to churches where they live

Communities

* Are they fluid/dynamic or static
  + Among members, it is fluid and dynamic
  + Among leaders, however, they create, lead, forge, and establish communities

There are American churches, Korean-American churches, Hispanic churches

* Two primary reasons
  + California’s immigration
  + Orange County is a county made up of ethically segregated cities
* Side effect of ethnic churches
  + Bring in culture they learned from their experience
  + Perpetuate the culture within the church
    - Where church can become just a social community

**Church of Tomorrow in Orange County**

* Church made up of groups of people

Churches today

**Where am I Called to Serve?**

Dear Pastor Jason,

I want to sincerely thank you for reaching out to me after my graduation from school and welcoming me after I came back from Maryland.

After I finished school, I faced many uncertainties: one of which was church. Which church do I go to? Do I go back to Hana Church? I was not sure. So in December, I decided to give about 6 months thinking and exploring communities in Orange County and ask God whether He is calling me to Hana Church.

I must say, during the search, I frequently longed for Hana community. Thinking of people there, the pastors and the leaders, I felt a sense of excitement thinking about joining together to serve communities, local and abroad. Particularly I felt that there was an opportunity to serve there since I have established, existing relationship with people at Hana Church. No need to go through the get-to-know-each-other stage when you meet a new person.

However, I also felt that God was calling me to serve groups of people who typically do not have access to a church in their local communities. Who are these groups? I was on a search.

After visiting several churches here in Orange County, first I learned that many of them are either ethnically segregated, or socio-economically segregated, or a combination of both. They are Korean-American churches, or Asian-American churches, Caucasian churches, Hispanic churches, educated churches, wealthy Korean-American churches, etc. Obviously, there are many reasons for segregation of churches based on ethnicity or socio-economic status; I am not sharing this to make any negative inference about it. I think mainly it is a natural result of immigrants moving into Orange County, and due to cities in the County having different racial, ethnic, or socio-economic make up.

Second, I realized that typically churches that are ethnically or socio-economically skewed tend to have stronger communities than churches that are diverse. These diverse churches tend to be big and draw a very large crowd. When I attended these diverse churches, many of them put a lot of emphasis on appealing to attendees through modern, contemporary worship songs or “motivational” sermons but less emphasis on building intimate communities. Some of these pastors seemed more interested in establishing more campuses so that they can have their sermons heard through live Internet streaming rather than making disciples. Jesus shunned notoriety; some of the pastors seem to seek it.

When I saw the attendees at these diverse churches, I was reminded of this scripture: “The harvest is plentiful but laborers are few.” I have this feeling that these people are seeking something from heaven while missing out on intimate communities that ethnic churches have.

Recently, I found a church called Ambassador Church. Senior pastor of the church is Ray Chang; I have been attending there for about a month now. A reason why I have been going there is because of the mission of the church, which is making disciples of all nations. I have been thinking about it and the mission closely aligned with my thought.

After finding this church, I stand at crossroads. Who are the people God is calling me to serve? Do I serve Korean-American communities? Or the people whom I think they do not have a community yet in Orange County? I am leaning towards the latter.

But I asking God whether I am the right person; deep in my heart, I am not even sure how I can connect with them. I was born in South Korea; I am not a second generation Korean-American. I do not really know the “American” culture.

So I decided to make a prayer to God in the next two weeks that, for now, I plan to make a year commitment to Ambassador church and see where God leads me; I do not know anyone there and I do not necessarily feel comfortable being there; but I do believe in the mission of the church but I am not sure whether I am the right person. So I want to give a year commitment to the church instead of a full-commitment so that I can reassess my thoughts I pondered upon here at the crossroads.

I wanted to share my thoughts with you, with humility and sincerity; thank you for reading it. Please feel free to reach out to me anytime. I would always love to have a cup of coffee with you.

Yours truly,

August 2, 2019