



THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ

**Michael Wilkinson, Trinity Western University**

**Project Report:**

Title: *Asian Christians in Vancouver* (2012-2013)

1. Project Goals;
  - a. The purpose of this project is to begin to map the incidence of Asian Christianity, Protestant, Catholic, and other forms, in Vancouver. Methodologically, I will employ an exploratory case study approach. The purpose of an exploratory case study is to uncover data that will lead to determining the best approach for designing a research project. Preliminary data collection will focus on mapping Christian congregations with a majority of participants who are Asian i.e. Chinese, South Asian, East Indian, Filipino, or Korean. Case studies also rely upon multiple sources of data such as secondary sources like Census Canada reports, denominational reports, Internet searches, and participant observation to identify such congregations. There are two primary objectives for this project. First, I will identify the location, ethnicity, when the congregation started, and the size of Asian Christian congregations in Vancouver from the five largest ethnic groups. Second, I will develop a database to systematically record this data. The data can be used to make some basic observations about the social location of each group, general history, and size of each congregation. This data will provide an important map for identifying Asian Christians in Vancouver. Furthermore, it will establish a baseline for detailed congregational studies of specific churches in the future.
  
2. Researchers and Students Involved;
  - a. During the project I employed three student researchers. In the fall semester of 2012 I met with the first student, Tyler Harper, who agreed to begin working on a per hour basis since he was not sure how much time he could give to the project. I also hired Heesun Nam who agreed to begin on an hourly rate. The plan was to begin searching websites and asking churches for the names of Asian congregations. We decided to move systematically through each of the cities of Metro Vancouver (Surrey, Langley, Delta, Richmond, Burnaby, West Vancouver, North Vancouver, Maple Ridge, etc). Tyler set up and maintained the data base while searching for churches. Heesun was to focus on searching for churches. However, by Christmas Heesun became ill and was unable to complete her work. She was able to deliver a list of Korean churches that Tyler input



## THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ

into the data base. In January Tyler and I talked about how we would complete the project since he was not able to give as much time. I then hired Alethea Cook. Alethea was an excellent researcher and completed the search while Tyler input data. However, there were concerns about the quality of data from the work of Heesun. Alethea spent the summer cleaning the data in the file. She also did site visits and an extensive literature review for the project. I was able to locate free software that allowed us to map the data with the details of each congregation. Alethea is putting the data into the software. Most of the time was focused on collecting of data and I have not had time to analyze it or write about the findings. I intend to analyze the data and make a presentation of the findings at a conference in the next year ultimately writing a paper or research report type of paper on the findings.

3. Rationale;
  - a. Religious and cultural diversity is not uniform across Canada. Regional differences are related to immigration patterns, which have implications for understanding diversity. Vancouver, for example, is part of the Pacific Rim and experiences high levels of migration from across Asia. In 2006 Census Canada reported the total population for Vancouver (CMA) to be 2,097,965 million people. The largest ethnic groups from Asia included Chinese (402,000), South Asian (208,535), East Indian (181,895), Filipino (83,765), and Korean (46,035). Together these five groups account for 922,230 people or 44% of the population of Vancouver. While we do not have 2011 Census figures for religion, in 2001 the population of British Columbia was 3.8 million people with 2.1 million or 55% identifying with some form of Christianity. Among the Chinese, 86,575 people identified with Christianity, accounting for the largest religious group for the Chinese. Some research has examined the non-Christian aspects of the Chinese, but very little research has explored the incidence of Asian Christianity. Furthermore, Christianity in Asia continues to grow while developing a unique local identity.
4. Methods;
  - a. The methods used included:
    - i. primary data collection on basic information about Asian congregations in Vancouver
    - ii. literature review on Asian Christianity in Canada, new immigrant congregations
    - iii. site visits of selected congregations
5. Ethics, permissions (include any delays);
  - a. Ethics permission was granted by the TWU REB dated September 27, 2012



THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ

6. Summary of Activities;
  - a. October-December – initial team meetings, began systematic collection of data on congregations
  - b. January-Feb – team meetings, ongoing data collection
  - c. March-April – team meetings, hire new student researcher, complete data collection
  - d. May-July – clean data, literature review, site visits – Cantonese, Punjabi, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese
7. Provisional Findings;
  - a. Observations from 5 different congregations
  - b. Data base with identification details on 270 Asian congregations
  - c. Map with location of 270 Asian Congregations
  - d. Bibliography of research on Asian Christianity in Canada
8. Outputs;
  - a. Data base of Asian congregations in Vancouver
  - b. Literature review
  - c. Summaries of select number of congregations
9. Finances

<b>Breakdown of Expenses</b>				
<b>Student Funding*</b>				
	Amount	Name	Dates	Project
Student Stipends				
Student Assistantship	9,000	Tyler Harper; Heesun Nam; Alethea Cook	October 2012 – August 2013	Includes benefits
<b>Research Funding</b>				
	Amount	Project	Dates	Specifics**
Funding for Research Costs				
Funding for Research Travel	500			Mileage paid for travel to sites



THE RELIGION AND DIVERSITY PROJECT/RELIGION ET DIVERSITÉ

Funding for Administrative/Supply Costs Related to Research				