

Book Review

Chang Seop Kang, *Conversion of Chinese Students in Korea To Evangelical Christianity: Factors, Process, and Types*

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Kang, Chang Seop (2022). *Conversion of Chinese Students in Korea to Evangelical Christianity: Factors, Process, and Types*. Evangelical Missiological Society Monograph Series, eds., Anthony Casey et al. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 242 pp., \$29 paperback/e-book, \$44 hardcover, ISBN: 9781666703528/42/35.

This study by Chang Seop Kang stands out for two reasons. First is the clearly focused subject matter: characteristics of conversions to evangelical Christianity of Chinese students in South Korea. I dare say that most if not all readers of this review will not have run across an English-language analysis devoted to that specific subject. Second is the research method used, namely that of grounded theory. This field-centric, qualitative, and inductive approach freed Kang from limiting his research results to comparisons with any preconceived notion or thesis about how or why the conversions occurred. Kang notes that his “preconceptions were shattered” by the data-driven message “that most students had undergone conversion by personally experiencing God” rather than primarily through intellectual struggles related to “atheism and evolutionism” (xii).

The book is Kang’s published PhD dissertation completed at Torch Trinity Graduate University in Seoul. Among the book’s five sections (which include an introduction and conclusion, both concise) are one each on research methodology and literature review—both of which thankfully shed light on the study’s importance and uniqueness. Also thankfully, the study’s longest section is on the actual research findings, a readable presentation and analysis that concludes with a 14-page explanation of the “selective coding” (or “theoretical coding”) that yielded the theory or paradigm of conversion for Chinese Christian students in Korea (192-205). An impressive six-page bibliography covers a wide range of disciplines and topics for further reference (221-226).

The conclusion carefully summarizes the study’s process, ten key findings, and aforementioned conversion theory, namely that experiencing God was central. An enlightening sub-section on comparisons with previous studies on Chinese conversions in North America (as well as in China) follows. Practical implications for others ministering to Chinese international students are also offered, as well as suggested further research on conversion.

Kang’s three decades of mission service among Chinese diasporas around the world has served him well in compiling this focused study on Chinese students who have come to faith in Christ while in Korea. His intercultural makeup, as well as his trilingual (Chinese, Korean, and English) capabilities, undergird the research and inductive approach he has taken. The North American Evangelical Missiological Society Monograph Series editors have served the mission studies community well in choosing Kang’s study for publication. Churches around the world can be better equipped through Kang’s study to serve nearby Chinese diaspora communities. Everyone exposed to *Conversion of Chinese Students in Korea to Evangelical Christianity* should gain a deeper appreciation for the significance within the Christian movement of the worldwide Chinese diaspora.