Asian—American Family and Culture: Relation of Dwelling in Bi—Cultural Youth Ministry

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While spending two summers within the Laotian and Cambodian population that surrounded New Life Community Church of the Nazarene in Long Beach, California, I came to realize that the nuances of life that comprised this Christian community was much different than those I had been accustomed within my own worldview. The cultural and religious factors enunciating my background while growing up in the Southern United States were much different than those who had come to the streets of Long Beach all the way from the lands of Laos and Cambodia. Looking back, I can now dwell upon the fact that there were many dynamics and relations that I had presumptuously overlooked while ministering during the summers of 2000 and 2001.

Being involved during those summer days and nights, I realized that I wanted to share a greater depth of doing sound theological youth ministry within the Asian American population. I want to bridge sociological factors while also retaining the perspective that my goal is to walk and guide youth as disciples for the Kingdom of God, and not merely to do work in social anthropology. This perspective pushed me while in Long Beach and still influences a great deal of my convictions as a young theologian.

Even though this composition is a reflection brought to print, the beginnings were found in my perplexity, confusion, and excitement that were evident in my time within the community. There were many instances when I struggled within the culture, those same struggles drove me to observe and

engage myself within the church's existence in order to comprehend how Asian Americans go about naming God's actions within the world and how they see the Triune God acting within their world. Taking measures to observe family, relationships, language, culture, economics, and generation gaps displayed to me the more I needed to learn how to engage youth ministry at a deeper level within this specific cultural arena. If we are going to do youth ministry cross culturally than we must realize that we have to know their world and that we must spend time learning and living in that world, while at the same time creating a realm of theological dwelling for both the youth ministry and minister.

Research Findings and Theological Development

Dunn and Moehler (1999) provide a springboard for research:

"We are commanded to incarnate the gospel into every generation. "Go into the world and make disciples" (Matthew 28:18-20). Today's "all the world" includes the postmodern adolescents who live, move, and have their being in God's presence, yet in spiritual ignorance beyond the walls of definitively modern local churches...If we are sincere in our desire to impacts today's diversity of youth cultures, we have to be willing to connect with the adolescents who are not likely to come into the doors of our churches. (p. 53)

With their admonition in mind, I will now outline the framework for my research. First, I will discuss the Asian-American family, and its economic makeup. In the second half of the research, I will then move onto the culture of youth including language and other important determinants that push the cultural makeup to the forefront. Thirdly, I will attempt to interweave the findings of both secondary sources in sociology and theology to address the pressing need of the Church to provide a theological perspective for doing cross–culturally youth ministry.

The Family and Its Makeup:

The relational conceptions within the Asian-American family provide a depth of filial opportunity that is very crucial for healthy development within the youth's social surroundings[1]. This of course is of vital importance when beginning to lay the foundation of youth ministry in Asian communities. When studying the dynamics of the family, Pang and Cheng (1998) note that there are three different kinds of Asian families living in America. Those classes of families are immigrant, immigrant-American and immigrant-descendant families (14).

Beginning with this framework provides a sociological determinant for processing the different levels of these families. The first group of families mentioned may require basic survival skills and the students in this particular strata may need bilingual education in order to survive in the classroom. The majority of the families within Asian culture are heavily influenced by an ethic of Confucianism, which stresses a high level of importance upon youth. Many Asians are even willing to give up their own comfort in order for the good of their children. Within the Confucian tradition, individuals sacrifice their own good for the harmony and closeness of the family. Obedience and love towards the family often establishes an unconditional basic trust that the child will fulfill their duties to education in order to strengthen the bond of trust given between parents and children (Spring 2000, 120). This level of reciprocity would explain why many of the parents are less involved in their education and they rely more heavily upon teachers for direction (Peng and Chang 1998, 15). This silent duty placed upon teachers and educators in essence places a heavy burden upon Asian Americans that have to live up to the "model minority" expectations given by both family and teachers (Breckinridge & Breckinridge 1995, 212). This in turn causes tension within both the immediate family, the community around them and within the ministry in which they participate.

The second group of families consists of parents born in their homeland and their children who are born within the States. They still possess strong family ties but experience difficulty in language and acculturation. Those within this second class are Asian in North America but are Americans in Asia. They seem at times to be people who are marginalized between the two worlds. Therefore, many second generation Asian Americans are alien not only to the culture around them, but also to their parents as well (Lee 1995, 44). This tension is hard to balance within the day-to-day concerns of life, but even though parents and children experience different values, at the same time they both work together to preserve their heritage (Peng and Chang 1998, 15).

The last group within Asian American makeup belongs to those where both the parents and children are born inside America. Within this dynamic the families speak predominantly English within the home and are highly involved within the youth's educational and social life, therefore providing a depth of input into the child's development. Besides these determinants, the families that belong in this classification are well tuned to Western thought, lifestyle, and orientation. Lastly, many of these families move away from ethno-centric communities and generally move freely between communities and basic cultural orientations are practiced to a lesser degree (Peng & Chang 1998, 15).

One can see how involvement within these families presents a difficulty. Nonetheless, family ministry is of crucial importance when ministering to Asian populations. Communicating with both parent and student is of vital importance if one is to hold peace within the ministry. It would be of great consideration to promote family expectations within one's curriculum dealing specifically with parental authoritarianism and adolescent resistance (Breckinridge & Breckinridge 214, 1995). Each family is different and doing solid youth ministry within these families requires that you know how to effectively interact between both parent and adolescent.

This three–class system of families provides many bi-cultural contexts in which youth ministers must engage themselves. This is especially true if you are going to have a family based youth ministry. The youth come from very unique situations within these three family models. As Dunn and Moehler propose, we are ministering to the third generation of Asian Americans that are classified as an E-2 culture. They are geographically close to their parents but they are culturally distant (Dunn & Moehler 1999, 49). Many students attempt to distance themselves from other Asians, including older ones, in order to draw closer to the predominant culture so that they might succeed in America. At the same time many expect them to maintain connections to traditions and people from their native country (Lee 1996, 24-25). Even though this connotes a dual tension for the student, the realization is that many families within Asian cultures are closely connected. They are deeply connected within the family. Respect along with loyalty is very crucial with the family structure. Leonard notes that over seventy percent of children living in South Asian American families still live with both parents (1997, 149).

Though working within the families who live this close can bring about great benefits to the structure of the ministry, there are also existential concerns such as economic factors that play a great role when evaluating the situation of Asian youth. A recent study given of Asian poverty finds some very stimulating information. Within the study provided, Asian families within America are twice as likely to be living in poverty than families who are predominantly white. Moreover about 13% of Asians are below the poverty level as compared to 8% of Anglos. Furthermore, 18% of Asian children live in poverty as opposed to 8% percent of white children (Steiner 2000, 1-2). This is a staggering figure considering that Asian Americans represent 31% of the immigrant population (Crow et. al 2002, 57).

When observing the factors of economy, tension is elevated upon the cultural differences already evident within the family structure. Economic struggles create tension because youth are struggling in a world and culture that beckons youth to appear within a certain image and to retain that image in

order to appeal to their local community and to society at large. This can become difficult within the praxis of day-to-day existence due to the animosity felt between adolescent and parent. Many times students feel hopeless because their parents do not have the means to provide that image. These youth are attempting to balance the worlds into which they exist. It is a world where in 1998; teens were responsible for the spending of $630 billion dollars in this nation. This entails that students are responsible for 20 cents of every dollar spent in this nation. We must realize as youth ministers that this will affect the Asian students as well.

In a world where style replaces substance and where church for multiculturalism seems to fail, we have to establish and guide these youth into a realm of 'dwelling' into which their development is not grounded in a superficial image, but one where its realization is rooted in a Triune God that embraces every facet of their being[2]. The adolescent given within these situations needs ecclesiological space for the development of their whole being rooted in the narrative of God. This allows for the pastor to nurture the family and student within God's story to grow together through these struggles and therefore the church is the dwelling of youth. "Dwelling itself is always a staying with things" (Heidegger 2001, 149)[3].

Furthermore, there are many other factors that come from the family that affect doing youth ministry within the Asian dynamic. Leonard gives us other examples from South Asian families that will affect youth's perspectives in American culture. Leonard notes that discipline, sexuality, retention of native culture, women's rights, and identity formation in light of American culture (1997, 146-150). These are just some of the determinants that can add to the difficulty of adjustment of youth development and the duty of this research is not to provide exhaustive measures into all these constituents.

As noted, matters are complicated even more when considering the barrier of language which one must overcome. Recently arrived families will have the greatest difficulty because parents generally do

not know the English language. A majority of this conflict will continue to last because a majority of first-generation immigrants will remain in a community of like persons where one can survive without English (Pang & Cheng 1998 14-17). The other two on the other hand possess a greater depth of communicative skills. The Immigrant-American families have a better chance at survival than the recently arrived families because they are learning more about the English language and the American culture that surrounds this linguistic. At the same time, those within this category see both sides of being Asian and living in a new country. In order to retain this marginality[4] parents may enroll their child into a language school within their ethnic communities (Cheng & Pang 1998, 15).

Lastly, American–families are the ones who speak primarily English and are deeply in cultured with Western patterns of life. These families act as great liaisons between their families and the families belonging to the first two groups (Cheng & Pang 1998, 17). It is also more effective to work with this family in relation to the needs of the student because the youth minister does not have to worry about communication barriers and at the same time they are familiar with the social congruents that are woven into the culture of the youth pastor. It is important that language becomes a major point of construction within the curriculum and communicative lines between youth, pastor and family, if not the effects can become long lasting. When entering college many Asians pursue occupations they perceive as having higher status while at the same time having ones which require little communicative language skills. Predominantly they are engaged in engineering, physical sciences, mathematics, and computer sciences (Spring 2000, 178). The pastor might inquire about the local ESL programs in order to get involved with bi-lingual education and see what is being done to bridge the worlds of current language along with their native tongue. If not, crucial communication can be lost, and a development of practical and doctrinal theology could become lost in the shuffle that will help to promote healthy growth.

It is important to once again note the family's involvement within its own ethnic community and this particular involvement always requires the child's participation as well. The family believes that if one is going to develop his or her proper identity, then they must be involved with social institutions and businesses that serve their particular community (Chang & Peng 1998, 17). The values proposed arise out of an ideology based within Confucianism that also regards the importance of reverence of nature, respect for elders, relationality between humans and the physical world, and the importance of the family and community (S. Lee January 9, 2003). Regarding this determinant, it is crucial to remember these concepts when developing youth ministry within this context because this can have both negative and positive effects on the youth ministry as a whole. Since many social institutions can be related to religious affiliations it is important for the youth minister to address the boundary lines between the youth and parents to what is biblically and doctrinally acceptable to be apart of the local faith community. Dunn and Moehler note that "Though we as Christians are not to embrace culture or cultural elements that contradict the character of God, God did send Jesus to die for all humanity while it (we) was steeped in sinful lifestyle" (1999, 49). The dialogue between culture and theology is of crucial significance within the contexts of this paradox. Even though this margin can become harmful to the student by blending the line between orthopraxis and orthodoxy, it can in the same measure reach out in a dynamic that draws the entire ministry in a creative community. The youth pastor can work within this ideological framework so that both the community and families can get youth involved within the larger world and to bring forth love and shed light upon their world engendering how faithfully to live within the Kingdom of God.

The Church together therefore provides this space of dwelling for Asian youth and the ministry at hand. The church of Asian youth within the dynamic of family ministry becomes another avenue of the church's historic salvific work through the working of the Spirit. The engendering of the Spirit provides the only avenue for effective communication between adolescent, parent and culture.

"The mission of the church must thus be identified with the mission of the Holy Spirit. This constitutes neither a reification of the Spirit nor an incorporation of the church into the deity as the fourth *hypostasis*. The church remains strictly separate from the Holy Spirit insofar as it perpetually receives what the Spirit creates in it and is thus *pathically*[5] determined by the Spirit's poiesis[6]. This eschatological salvific work of the Spirit takes place pathically in every historic concrete aspect of the church (Hutter 1997, 144-145).

Here, the Church becomes the building of dwelling gathered together by the Spirit to communicate and work together. The youth pastor will be able under this fabric to begin the dialogue between parents and youth. This requires parent meetings with possible translators and communicators to help bridge communication barriers that the youth pastor and parents might be feeling in regards to the lives of their children. It is vital that the pastor become engaged with the native language and the particulars of worship in order to communicate theological reflection and Christian education to the entire family[7]. Just like any other aspect or nuance of living within a local parish, the pastor must embrace each unique family and involve oneself within its way of life.

Being involved within the totality of the family structure is investing in a major congruent of Asian American culture. It is important when dealing with the family that you keep your own presuppositions about culture in check and let their culture be a guide when dealing with youth ministry in this specific context. An example of this is found within a story told by Jung Lee:

Usually to Caucasin-Americans, Asians are Asians. However, not being associated with the appropriate ethnic group still causes me pain. I offer an example: when I was the youth minister in a United Methodist Church in Toledo, Ohio, I was confronted by a ten-year-old boy in front of a shopping mall. Without hesitation he shouted, "Hey, Chinaman!" and pointed his finger at me in front of many people. I felt humiliated publicly by a youngster. I wondered how to respond. First, I feared that some people

from my church would see the incident. Then, I took courage and responded, kindly: "I am not Chinese. I am a Korean." The boy replied, "Korean! It doesn't matter. You are a Chinaman to me" (Lee 1995, 26).

This situation can arise within our mind frames if we do not let the Spirit working through the practices of the Church allow us to 'dwell' in a continuous dialogue of culture and Christ. Painful experiences like the one describe can prevent us from letting the culture teach us and becoming a guide to our philosophy of multicultural education. "While Jesus walked among humanity, he did much to impact the culture of his day. However, he did not try to change the culture as the primary focus of his message" (Dunn & Moehler 1999, 49). Our focus as youth ministers working in this setting is not to change all of life but to communicate the gospel to the students and their families so that they live and 'dwell' in the Christian community.

Before moving onto the study of culture and influence upon Asian youth, I want to emphasize the complexity to which dwelling together, as a cohesive ministry will lay the foundation for the next venture. The language permitted allows us to truly exist together as the family. "To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell" (Heideggar 2001, 145). We must hold onto this inhabitance if we are going to see the church as the family who cultivates. Heideggar proposes that the nature of structure and building has long become objectified as something that provides a service (bridge, railway stations, dams, market halls, etc.) but building and dwelling are linked because the former serves the latter and only within the latter can the first come into existence. The youth and families that are dwelling within the ministry should not become objectified, but the building is only given in life when the Spirit causes youth, pastor, and family to dwell in a preservation of peace in their Christian existence.[8]

"To free really means to spare. The sparing itself consists not only in the fact that we do not harm the one whom we spare (ie, youth and family). Real sparing is something positive and takes place when we leave something beforehand in its own nature, when we return it specifically to its being, when we "free" it in the real sense of the word into a preserve of peace" (Heideggar 2001, 147).

Without this philosophy of dwelling, the church becomes an objectified building and does not preserve the poetics of what the church's language is intended to speak. This is the space[9] given by the Church in order that the youth and families can create theological integrity to multicultural youth ministry because the space provided is one engendered by the spirit.

The Culture of Asian youth and its effects

Asian American youth face many dilemmas when it comes to living within the family and at the same time developing within American society. First, youth experience a great amount of pressure to do well in school. 72% of Koreans coming as immigrants to the states held professional or managerial level jobs in Korea, but many have difficulties finding jobs, but a majority of those start their own service businesses and work very hard to claim legitimacy. A majority of this arises for the fact that many hold as first priority educational opportunity for their children (Lee 1995, 25-26).

Pang and Cheng notes some important factors when it comes to the Asian education process. Since Buddhism lingers within the culture, it has many moral codes that come along with its ethos. One of these moral features includes hard work and education. So "Because their parents value hard work, they expect their children to emulate the same. Therefore good grades, are a way to show their appreciation for their parents' hard work and dedication for bringing them up" (1998, 47-48).

Adding to this predicament, the adolescent must think of the collective responsibility that he or she has when choosing a certain vocation or career that they are going to be involved with after high school. Accordingly, it is vital to show that this process of choosing vocation is directly affected by where those immigrants choose to live: the city! In Long Beach, California surrounding New Life Community Church of the Nazarene within three square miles there are 21, 438 Asians (www.nazarene.org, 2002). "The American-Asian population had a 141% from 1970 to 1980. The cities with the greatest population of Asian Americans are Chicago, Honolulu, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco" (Breckingridge & Breckinridge 158, 1995). Furthermore, more than half of all Asian Americans live in the above-mentioned cities and more than 90% are found in metropolitan areas (Breckingridge & Breckinridge 158, 1995). The inevitable process is that the economic struggles of the city add even more pressure to the students[10]. Within the neighborhood that I ministered within during 2000 and 2001, we saw many within the surrounding community that lived on a lower economic level and many of the older children lived at home working jobs in order to provide for the economic situation at home. In Asian culture, the parents and others come first in career decision and then the individual can think of his or her own life (Cheng & Pang 1998, 48).

As a result of these findings, once could see how an adolescent would have a great amount of stress placed upon them. It is vital to understand this pressure because as ministers must provide an avenue to communicate the healthy balance of school activity in Asian American youth. Too many times in youth ministry, adolescents can become too busy with educational production and its concerns, that they can become very distant to the ministry and praxis of the church and their involvement with.

Even though these youth can be seen as respected and diligent within the familial unit and possibly within their community, they can also be stressed out and tired from trying to work hard in school, being involved with church and trying to possess a social life with their peers. Lee found in her study that African-Americans and Caucasians within high school usually claimed that Asians within the

classroom garnished more than their share of academic accolades (1996, 99). The pressure to succeed seems to be exhausted at every realm that they turn. Therefore, the high expectations may lead to unhealthy warrants within their teenage years.

These determinants can produce a devastating effect on their holistic development within the church: emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Even though their parents may still be actively involved, they on the other hand are more concerned about the expectations received and fulfilling those requirements. Also, too many times the parents are so concerned with the cultural assumptions, that the kids become distant from their parents spirituality because many times it is concerned with morality and respect. Within this bi-cultural context, Dunn and Moehler state that "Adolescents have rejected the culture of their parents, a culture they perceive as lacking integrity and spirituality" (1999, 48). While we can assume that most Asian youth would say that their parents have integrity, they might still be stressed from the pressures of school and adapting to the American school system, therefore feeling as if their parents do not care about their Christian development. This effect can push those students farther from the life of the Church.

In relation to this aspect of education, it is important for the youth minister to be involved with the child and family to bring about a holistic understanding of educational and spiritual formation through biblical and doctrinal principles along with assessing the needs of the family. Those within this situation need a place where the church provides the salvific work that provides a deep theological reflection guiding through the Spirit that asks seriously to dialogue between their life experiences and the richness of the Christian tradition. Within the curriculum, one may want to provide avenues through the week for parents and students to join together to explore the heart of the matter. In conversation with the Christian heritage, family and students can arrive with new truths and meanings (Killeen & De Beer 2001, 69). This can include poems, reflection on the psalms, art, and other

avenues of exploration that can provide creative points of new meaning for both parents and students coming together in their bi–cultural context.[11]

The Church is the avenue for this frustration. The building (Church) is the place where youth and parents dwell together. The building is the place or location that allows the space for youth and parents to come together. That is why the Church must see itself as the building[12] of location where the joining of theological space happens. The youth minister must overcome the mind frame from youth who see every building as a mere building (especially within the city) and begin to perceive that place where 'dwelling' proceeds and where building and thinking come together to show that youth are wrapped in love and not in preconceived objectifications.

As mentioned earlier, research also shows us that there can be a flip side to the success-oriented child of the Asian American culture. Wellner states that a "full 96% of Asians and Pacific Islanders live in metropolitan areas, twice the proportion of whites" (2000, 2). Since many within the Asian population reside within the inner city, they are also placed within the problems that come to the city, and these youth must face many things that come along with family and education. It is evident that many of these youth fall between the margins of societal cracks. Contributions such as English language development may not become fully developed even with the rise of ESL programs. Many times, Asian students are passed from grade to grade without the language skills for effective educational development (Pang & Cheng 1998, 89). Many from Asian countries arrive out of oral traditions and have little exposure to written materials in their own language (Spring 2000, 179). Moreover, without prior English training many Asians will lack success and will proceed to drop out of school and receive lower income jobs in society (Spring 2000, 178-179). This comes as no surprise considering that many of these immigrants settle in their own clusters and continue to exist without comprehensive communication with others in the city.

This is just one example faced by those within the urban plight. Many difficulties arise in these communities because they are dealing with inner city pressure as well as having to adapt to American culture. Many youth are vulnerable to delinquency because they feel that the search for money and security in a new society has insurmountable challenges. Many youth need a sense of identity and belonging, and during this process many maladjustments arise, this action in turn causes many deviant behaviors (Peng & Chang 1998, 90).

To culminate the problem of Asian youth in the inner city is the conflict between people of other ethnic and cultural backgrounds. There is one specific area that is noted about this problem. In East San Diego, an area that has high residential turnover from people of many backgrounds possesses one of San Diego's highest crime populations with verbal and physical contact between each other. Amongst this hostility comes the rise in gang affiliation, racial discrimination and crime (Peng & Chang 1998, 92). This is an example into which the world of many Asian youth experience. Not only do they enter into this inner city life, but the Church arrives as well.

At this marginal center, the family, Church and youth ministry come together to harbor a nurturing development of identity and possess a sense of communal identification. The entry level of youth ministry is very important into this situation. The ministry must be able to focus "on caring for the student who comes but is disinterested, bored, or disengaged. The key words in this level are: Christ-centered, winsome, quality, relevant, and relational"(Dean, Clark & Rahn 2001, 119). We must establish a quality relational and Triune-centered[13] ministry with those youth if we are going to harbor them from the dark world that surrounds them. This centeredness provides a linguistic for the Church to be named. A person is always apart of those ritualized and practiced functions of the Church. The language experienced and expressed by the Church and its members provides the avenue for these contexts of language to actualize themselves into an active faith. "A person is always a part of these activities; they constitute the horizon that can only be replaced by a new one but never transcended"

(Hutter 2000, 45)[14]. It is the youth who speak a fresh voice, but it is only out of the tradition given to them that this voice can be uttered into their urban contexts and within their family settings. Within this proponent, the minister must be able to listen to their voices and earn respect with those voices.

Contributing to this situation is the culture of schools and peer influence upon Asian American youth and their development. As briefly noted already, education for Asian youth and especially within the cultural phenomenon that pervades the public school system can present a lot of difficulties for Asian American youth. Stacy Lee notes that the model minority stereotype depicts Asian Americans as the academic superstars. But, she states, "despite the high proportion of Asian students, who are at the top of the academic rankings, a thorough examination of the rankings illustrates that not all Asian American students are successful" (1996, 56). Furthermore, in her study at a prestigious high school, she showed that 16% of Asian students were deselected from Academic High School and sent back to their neighborhood school (Lee 1996, 56). One Korean girl during the research had an interesting comment and it reads as follows: "They (whites) will have stereotypes, like we're smart…They are so wrong, not everyone is smart. They expect you to be this and that and when you're not…and sometimes you tend to be what they expect you to be and you just lose your identity" (Lee 1996, 59). The pressure from family and within the school culture can lead to confusion and a lost sense of identity. Moreover, many Asians have tremendous pressure placed upon them, pushing them to feel hopeless and discouraged. The challenges of this high school atmosphere, its culture, and its postmodern viewpoint can lead many Asian minorities to become lost in a bi-cultural context.

From all the pressures of academics, the school and the life of peers creates a life that is a culture of its own. The life of "MTV" culture runs so deep among Asian youth 18 and younger that they comprise 29% of consumers in the Asian community (Wellner 2000, 2). Promotion of these qualities, mixed within educational issues, economic struggles, but they also have the pressure of school peers to look like those within Hollywood or like the model on the recent cover of Cosmopolitan.

The feelings of pressure among these youth and their frustration have also led to an increased measure of incarcerated youth in the Juvenile justice system. From 1984 to 1990 there was 243 % increase among Southeast Asian youth that were incarcerated (Peng & Chang 1998, 96). The delinquent youth increase in "numbers as they move from grade school to high school, peaking at the tenth-grade level and then falling off at the eleventh and twelfth grade. As they move into culture they realize how much that they can perpetrate illegally within the American society without being punished for their actions" (Peng & Chang 1998, 96). Furthermore, the age of delinquent activity changes with the youth as they learn to acculturate to the neighborhood and youth cultures (Peng & Chang 1998, 96).

Conclusion

Considering the research found we now ask: How are we to be the Church in a bi-cultural context? Dunn and Moehler state:

Postmodern youth cultures pulsate with lyrics, images, and experiences that cry out for a live relationship with a living God. The dressed in black disenfranchised suburban student, the urban youth angrily absorbing violent rap music, and the artistic social dropout reciting in the local coffeehouse all share a common bond of relational, spiritual angst. (Dunn & Moehler 1999, 50).

They must experience and know the life of the Triune God. When teens and Asians in particular experience through participation or dialog with the story of God[15] , the narrative speaks into their world and students will usually take home 80 to 90% of the lesson youth ministers are trying to when using the narrative approach. This relation is only bound once family, youth, and pastor are able to hear each other's voices through the guidance of the Holy Spirit so that the story may continually be spoken afresh and anew within the context of Christian praxis. "What is so lacking in the way that the

church normally hears its own decisive narrative is that Christians have forgotten, and make no effort to imagine, what the story is when freshly heard, without the benefit of hindsight and the drawback of familiarity" (Lewis 2001, 78).

It is our job working within the Christian community to communicate the Gospel in order that we may be faithful to the call of God's Kingdom. "In order to initiate understanding, the adult must enter a youth culture as an ethnographer-an "outsider" committed to the exegesis of the culture from the "insider" point of view" (Dunn & Moehler 1998, 50). Within this framework, we are able to bring the identity of the Godhead to their identity and their broken worlds are mended through the hearing and exploring of the scriptural narrative. It becomes nothing we do, but only through the Spirit acting within the church practices that living faith happens with the triad of Asian parents, youth, and pastor 'dwelling'.

This proposal is not extensive, but it does provide a beginning to the discussion to which the church as parish can become open for youth and family within the Asian structure to embody living theology. In relation to this constituent there might be a context into which the church gathers and explodes into this bi-cultural situation. "Experience is dependent on a cultural-linguistic matrix that makes the experience possible in the first place. Without these configurations there is no corresponding experience" (Hutter 2000, 48). The Church provides the healthy place for this expression of theological exploration for the families and adolescents who endure all factors mentioned throughout this research. This is where we see the Church responding to the call. Martin Heideggar expresses that what really makes a thing (the Church) are when that object continues to work in giving. The Church only lives in giving to the world beyond. The Church cannot remain stagnant, if it does it has become another place of matter that takes up space for scientific inquiry, but we must see that this object only becomes what it is when it gives (2001, 169). Our giving is love, love through the Spirit to bring

acceptance of God's love to Asian adolescents, their families, peers and Christian community. Only in this love are we able to truly 'dwell' together in loving relation.

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Notes

[1] For an interesting perspective upon the family's relationship and a deep theological relation to the Trinity in an Asian American viewpoint, see Jung Young Lee's book entitled, *The Trinity in Asian Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996). Here, the emphasizing of the familial image of the Trinity rooted in Asian patterns of family life provide a great insight into a much needed complement to Western European domination of Trinitarian thought. This should also provide a good theological foundation for interpreting the Asian family for bi-cultural youth ministry.

[2] The grounding of the Trinity as a base for theological reflection in multicultural youth ministry is discussed in greater detail in a research symposium composed in the Spring 2002 at Trevecca Nazarene University entitled A *Trinitarian Ontology in Multicultural Youth Ministry*.

[3] This notion of dwelling will be intrinsically related in a deeper theological manner in the third section of this research. The proposition will hopefully help us consider the task of leading youth away from the objectification of our society into a healthier holistic development.

[4] Here the term referenced is not one the definition usually posited as complete separation, but this notion of marginal existence is one where the two worlds of ethnic background and a new land are joined at a creative center where new land are joined at a creative center where new exploration is found for youth who can experience the mergence of both worlds in a creative theological venture. See Jung Young Lee's book Marginality(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995) for a deeper avenue of clarification.

[5] Here Hutter's argument allows the Church to provide an ecclesiastical setting to which one can undergo the disciplines of

the Church in order to hear the story of God and its implications upon Christian praxis. This, he argues, is where the language is created in order for the Church to practice poetic theological reflection. I believe this book offers an in depth resource to investigate ecclesiastical space for multicultural youth ministry because it offers a communal refection that is engendered in the Spirit and draws all to input within the doctrine of the Church; both youth and their families. See *Suffering Divine Things* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000). Here the term is relevant to the concept of ongoing action

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[7] This would of course be easier for one who is for instance Korean, ministering as a youth pastor to Koreans, but if one comes from a different culture and determinant (Anglo to Laotian) and is trying to discover the peculiar nuances of both youth and adult, one must engage in both worlds of worship and theological dialogue in order to become a new margin of creativity for the entire youth ministry.

[8] Here 'dwelling' takes upon a notion of cultivating a holistic pattern of life.

[9] It should be noted at this point that the concept of 'space' in dwelling for Asian youth and families is borrowed a great deal from Heideggar's conceptions of 'space'. He says that space receives its nature only from locations that draw boundaries for space to be created. It is the room that has been made only by location (2001, 152). This space we rename for this discussion between sociology and theology should be grounded in reference to the location of the Church rooted in the Spirit who creates theological dialogue for the dynamics of Asian family ideology and adolescent pressures. Here creative margins of ministry can be created.

[10] The affects of urban existence and its pressures placed upon the student, family, and church will be discussed in greater length later within the research.

[11] For an in-depth analysis where feelings and emotions can come in dialogue with Christian heritage, systematic theology and Church history see *The Art of Theological Reflection* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001). This is a much needed work that deals with the stagnation of the Protestant tradition that has forgotten the artistic expressions and regarded them as superfluous, but with the rise of post-modernity, those within the Protestant tradition have seen this as a healthy formative process for people, such as minorities, to provide modes of expression in dialogue with theology and Church tradition so that new images and theological exploration may continue to happen.

[12] Here I am once again using the concept of space as defined by Martin Heideggar and explained in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001).

[13] The concept of the Trinity gives a permanent placement to begin an ontological argument for relation in youth ministry. It is not so much as a model to begin upon, but participation within the Church's discipline that help to envision an inner city youth ministry that can provide a theological framework of salvation that is in and of itself relation.

[14] It is my belief that this portrayal of ecclesiology allows space for those (Asian youth) frustrated within stale dogma and stagnant doctrine that seems detached from their existence. Here with the guiding of the Spirit that is free, allows dialogue between minister and youth for those voices who feel like cannot be heard in corporate study and worship

[15] This research does not allow space or time to discuss and dialogue the full implications of a narrative approach to millennial youth and to bi-cultural contexts of youth ministry. I operate under the conviction that stories continue to speak and provide an open ended context into which Asians can experience both the joys and sorrows of Israel's continual migration in the First Testament to the continued context of Jesus life and to the beginnings of the first-century Church. For further readings see *Between Cross & Resurrection* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001) and *Worship-Centered Youth Ministry* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2000).

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