

## Site Report: Korea

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**Introduction:** The US Military presence in Korea is located at a number of bases on the peninsula. Many of the troops are stationed in and around Seoul. Seoul is the major economic and cultural center in Korea. It is also a major financial center. Seoul is located approximately 50 km from the North Korean border. There are about 23 million people living in the metro area which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest metro area in the world. US forces number around 28,000. Major US commands include United States Forces Korea, 8<sup>th</sup> US Army, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, 19<sup>th</sup> Sustainment Command, Far East Corps of Engineers, Special Operations Command, Osan Air Base, and Pusan Air Base. When civilians and dependents are included in the number of Americans in Korea the number swells to between 30,000 to 40,000 Americans in need of a good, solid reformed presence.

**Need:** The American military community is in need of a strong Presbyterian and Reformed Church. The church will target the military communities in particular. However, due to the bases close proximity to Seoul the church could easily become international in scope. These soldiers are well educated and highly motivated professionals. Spiritually, the communities are served by chaplains from the Air Force and Army. Therefore, our military members find themselves in a highly pluralistic environment. I have not been able to locate off post churches but it has been my experience that one generally finds a few Baptist Churches, a Calvary Chapel and Pentecostal churches near bases overseas. A Presbyterian and Reformed Church with our rich theological heritage can best serve the community.

**Project Description:** A Church planter is need to establish a Presbyterian and Reformed witness in Korea. It should be planted in Seoul. This outreach could possibly involve other plants in outlying areas in the future. The primary effort of the church planter would be to establish a P&R witness to the Americans. Secondly, an outreach to the metro Seoul area could be initiated to reach the English speakers in the area. This will be a pioneering effort. Funding for this work will be initially borne by the sending presbytery that adopts this location. Churches outside the geographical bounds of the sending presbytery could also partner in this effort to expand the Kingdom. The Church planter could also participate in the raising of funds for this effort. Our experience, though somewhat limited by only two church plants thus far, indicates that the work could in a reasonably short period of time become self-supporting. The Church planter must be a self-starter. He must be willing to work hard in his vocation. He should be a good expositor of the Word of God and he should have a burden to reach the lost with the good news of Christ. He should also be a disciple maker. A man strong in the faith and yet tender in heart is much needed for the ministry. A familiarity with the military culture would be helpful, but not necessary. A brief training period could be provided for the Church planter to help him understand the military culture. He should also understand that the military is a highly mobile society. It moves soldiers and their family members around quite often. This presents both challenges and opportunities. Challenges in terms

of continuity in the body, but it also presents opportunities. Over a period of time the pastor will literally impact thousands of people for the cause of Christ. Additionally, the church planter must be prepared to live and work in an environment where there are few like-minded, if any, pastors around him.

**Conclusion:** The military community is a wonderful community that could benefit greatly from a doctrine of grace ministry. In addition to the opportunities for a life-changing ministry to US Military personnel and American civilians the church planter would be able to impact an international community. He will also be able to avail himself and his family of the rich Korean culture and explore the wonderful sites of this beautiful country. It would be a rich experience for a P&R pastor and his family.