

Critical Assessment of Conservative Churches' Mission Policy for North Korean Defectors:
From an Approach of Christian Theology of Memory, Justice, and Reconciliation.

Hoon Song Ph.D.

(Soongshil Univeristy, Centre for Christian Leadership for Unification of Korea)

Since the division of Korea, a strong statist nationalism and anti-communism overwhelmed South Korean society as well as South Korean conservative Christian churches. They desire to Christianise the North and South to provide a common spiritual and moral basis on which North Koreans could change the Northern regime from within; its goal was for the South to peacefully absorb the North. They call this methodology the unification through evangelisation, *Bokeum Tongil* and have been working to promote missions to humanitarian works for North Koreans.

Hence, for the conservative churches, North Korean defectors who escaped North Korea became key targets for *Bokeum Tongil*. With the growing number of North Korean defectors, mega churches (most of them are religiously and politically conservative) have launched various projects to support North Korean defectors. In spite of the efforts of those churches, many North Korean defectors once involved those church programmes and education, have left churches and express a strongly negative attitude toward those churches.

This study is a critical assessment of the mission policies toward North Korean defectors of South Korean conservative Christian churches to lead a discussion of how Christian theology of memory, justice and reconciliation would be a constructive approach toward the reconciliation and the unification of two Koreas in a broader scale.