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Title: **“Mission Church or Extension of Home Diocese: Challenges Facing Korean Catholics in the Diaspora”**

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Abstract:

This paper focuses on the missionary activities to Korean Catholics in diaspora. Since many communities are temporarily staffed by religious from Korea, they suffer an identity crisis as they are often ministered to as an extension of the clergy's home diocese. Thus, Korean religious fail to see themselves as missionaries as well as the different socio-cultural development of those in diaspora. Today, these mission churches are evolving into a distinct group and can no longer be seen just as an extension of the homeland.

The Council of Jerusalem in the Acts of the Apostles provides some insights to this unique situation. Although Gentiles were not forced to convert to Judaism, they were asked not to scandalize their Jewish counterparts. Likewise, an awareness of Korean religious as missionaries along with differences found in diaspora is needed rather than forcing mission churches to imitate communities of their departed homeland. Through this awareness, both sides would recognize the cultural essentials needed, yet at the same time develop different strategies of meeting the spiritual needs as mission churches.

Reconciliation is needed as both sides have been hurt through clergy scandals as well as the misunderstanding of the immigrant context. Missionaries have often returned to their homeland with bitter feelings rather than fond memories of being abroad. Diaspora communities have often been treated like stepchildren. Therefore, reconciliation requires an acknowledgement of the service of Korean missionaries as well as the contributions, especially financially, of diaspora communities in building up the Catholic Church of Korea.

Transformation occurs on many levels as religious undergo conversion by understanding their missionary roles. Diaspora communities are also transformed when they no longer see themselves strictly as migrants but a people developing their own prayer language and customs. Finally, transformation and conversion are evident with the cultivation of their own clergy and religious and no longer are dependent on personnels from their homeland.