Homeless support by Korean Protestant Church in Tokyo
Case Study of Tokyo Central Church

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ABSTRACT

There are about 4000 homeless people in Tokyo now. Though various groups support homeless people, Christian churches are playing an important role as well. Korean protestant churches have been especially eager to minister to the homeless.

This paper discusses the homeless ministry of the Tokyo Central Church, which is a Korean Protestant church. This church is known as one of the largest churches in Tokyo. Tokyo Central Church has been supporting homeless people since 2003. This church provides many services for homeless people such as giving meals and offering clothes, haircuts and showers. Presently about 300 homeless people attend worship services every Sunday and Wednesday.

Tokyo Central Church does not only do missionary work but also organizes volunteer groups of homeless people. The church offers homeless people an opportunity to play a useful role by doing various duties such as cooking, serving, cleaning, repairs, and painting.

Therefore, homeless people’s commitment to the church is higher than their commitment to any other churches, which do not offer them volunteer roles. The number of those who have been baptized, up to this point in time, is about 400. This is a very rare case in Japan.

Firstly, this paper focuses on the aims and purposes of the homeless ministries of Tokyo Central Church. Secondly, it focuses on the mechanisms that allow for the coexistence of homeless people and general believers.

Key Word: Korean Protestant church, homeless ministry, inclusion, exclusion