

EQUIPPING PRE-RETIREMENT KOREAN-AMERICAN CHRISTIAN NURSES FOR
POST-RETIREMENT SERVICE AS SENIOR MEDICAL MISSIONARIES

A professional project submitted to the Theological School of
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Doctor of Ministry

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ABSTRACT

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While many Christians desire to devote their time fully to missionary work, responsibilities prevent them from pursuing their goals right away. They often wonder when will be a perfect time to serve God without hindrance. In my opinion, the time period after retirement may be perfect, but at the same time, it may be the last chance for some of us to seek full-time missionary service.

It is my position that mature missionaries have several advantages over young missionaries and the Scripture is replete with information that assures senior adults' place in God's plan for the entire world. Most importantly, I hope that seniors would not choose to waste their lives both before and after retirement. Instead, I hope seniors will focus on a meaningful and useful life that is beyond fulfillment of a successful career.

This paper demonstrates my hope, that is, to challenge myself and other Korean-American Christian nurses to be used by God as missionaries in the future while continuing to work in the present time as nurses and also to help nurses ponder more deeply about the possibility of engaging in ministry in retirement.

I have limited the scope of the project to ten Korean-American Christian nurses in New Jersey.

I conducted individual pre and post interviews with the participants, two field work experiences, and four main teaching sessions. In keeping with the purpose of the

project, we asked several questions about how the project challenged the participants. Further, we used two parts of our notion of evaluation: observing change and discerning transformation. In addition, the LAC members and I utilized the functional approach for project evaluation.

I have evaluated my leadership by identifying benchmarks of progress as we move from one phase to the other, by assessing the nurse participants' end commitment to overseas missionary work, and by the outcome of what we learned.

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CHAPTER 1

Narrative of Concern and Opportunity

a. Concern

“I CANNOT DO THIS AT THE MOMENT. I HAVE A LOT ON MY PLATE RIGHT NOW WHICH MAKES IT MUCH TOUGHER TO JUMP INTO THIS.”

“THEN WHEN?”

My narrative of concern is to equip pre-retirement Korean-American Christian nurses for post-retirement service as senior medical missionaries. My narrative of concern deals with the importance of equipping, motivating, and challenging Korean-American Christian nurses before they retire to encourage them to aim towards becoming senior medical missionaries after retirement.

In my experience, many Christians desire to devote their time fully to missionary work but responsibilities prevent them from pursuing their goals right away. They often wonder when will be a perfect time to serve God without hindrance.

As a working nurse, I have encountered many stories from fellow workers about their wishes to go overseas as missionaries. This includes my own nursing manager and several of my colleagues. My nursing manager is currently involved in some ministries in her church and has short-term medical mission experience; she expressed to me that she wanted to go overseas for mission service with her husband after she retires.

Recently, one of my nurse colleagues also came to me with great disappointment saying,

Again, my request was turned down. I requested to get my shift changed so I could attend Sunday service. I really want to attend Sunday service and be involved in various church ministries in my church. However, being a nurse, I have no choice but to work on Sundays and it really makes me frustrated as a Christian. I feel guilty because I am not able to attend services and just work hard to make money for my family, at this time.

As someone who works evening shifts, I fully understood how she felt because I also had to sacrifice participation in church activities. However, my colleague did not give up her desire to serve God. She stated,

You know, I am praying and planning to go overseas for medical mission service after retirement. I really want to go now, but I can't. My two sons are in college, and I have to pay for their school fees and my husband is also against overseas missionary work. I will work hard and save some money; then when I reach retirement, I will use the retirement money to go to countries where God leads me to go and do missionary work. That will be amazing when I live wholeheartedly and work for the advancement of the gospel while engaging in medical missionary work. I am eagerly waiting for my retirement.

While my colleague seemed quite optimistic in her plans to become a medical missionary overseas after retirement, some other Korean-American Christian nurses think that going to the mission field after retirement serves no purpose. As a nurse, I have heard many complaints including:

We work too hard, and we need rest and enjoyment after retirement. We will just engage in some social work and church work in our area but going overseas for mission service will be too much for us. What kind of work can we even do there? We are too old for that. We can be a burden to other missionaries. We might become exhausted or sick if we continue to do hard work as we do now.

During my time as a nurse, I have received e-mails from medical missionaries with whom I worked with at *Good Samaritan Hospital* in Pakistan many years ago. Some comments I received by email are:

We really need nurses here; the numbers of Muslim patients are increasing day by day and we cannot do missionary work the way we intend and plan to. Even though we hire local nurses and medical staff, we desperately

need missionary nurses who are not only able to supervise the nursing staff and the matters in the hospital but also work together with the same mind for mission service in Pakistan.

When I hear two sides of the same coin from my nurse colleagues and the missionaries in Pakistan, I feel the need to challenge Korean-American Christian nurses to change their views and perhaps consider going overseas for missionary work before or after retirement. Some have the desire but are reluctant to get formal short or long-term mission training. There may be several reasons for this: indifference, not appreciating the importance of training, or not having confidence about being able to participate in overseas missionary work after retirement. This is understandable; these nurses work full time and do not have much time for elective training. However, I believe all of them need to have the confidence training might provide. Perhaps God has called them to become ambassadors of Christ for the countries wherein they live now and the countries to which they might go in the future.

b. Opportunity

YOU CAN DO IT AFTER RETIREMENT!

The time period after retirement may be perfect, but at the same time, it may be the last chance for some of us to seek full-time missionary service.

Working full time as an overseas missionary has been my dream and the ultimate goal of my life. However, my plan has been delayed for a long time and sometimes I think it could be close to impossible for me to reach that goal. Financial instability is one of the factors preventing me from going overseas for long-term work as a missionary. Ministry overseas, particularly work as a medical missionary in an undeveloped country, requires ongoing fund-raising. Fund-raising was the hardest part of the work I did when I

served as a missionary nurse in Pakistan from 1993 to 1996. Not long after I finished my missionary work in Pakistan and returned home, I began to seek a way to go back. Some years later, I had not been able to make it happen because I had neither the confidence to raise funds nor the chance to save funds for future missionary work. Eventually I decided to come to America to work as a Registered Nurse. I hoped that after some years I would be able to save enough money to embark on overseas missionary work. Today, I am still working as a nurse and still praying that God will open the way for me to go overseas for long-term work as a missionary again.

I believe that other Christians experience similar struggles. I see many other Christians who are interested in engaging overseas missionary work, but are held back by financial instabilities and obligations to their families. They continually stick to their jobs and work hard. For these Christians searching for a way to go overseas for mission service, I see one last opportunity: the period of post-retirement. I am sure that retirement is a later chapter of our lives in which God provides one more chance to serve without excuses.

Some think that only young people can be creative in ministry. However, it is obvious that God does not depend solely on younger people but loves calling people of all ages. God has always called seniors into Christian ministry and the purpose of God will never be thwarted by advanced age.

I believe that mature missionaries have several advantages over young missionaries. J. Herbert Kane, who is one of evangelicalism's leading missiologists, states that, "modern youth is restive, uncertain, confused, and sometimes frightened."¹

¹ J. Herbert Kane, *Life and Work on the Mission Field* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 18.

He holds that youth lack sufficient knowledge to empower them to make intelligent decisions about missionary work. He goes on to recount other problems young missionaries might have: lack of proper Bible training; inexperience in church or overseas ministry that creates difficulties in the field; attractive offers to remain at home as pastors; advanced education that might delay or prevent young missionaries from going to the mission field; the appeal of scholarly pursuits at home that might diminish zeal to go overseas for mission service.²

In addition to these disadvantages faced by younger missionaries, mature missionaries hold advantages of their own. The most obvious asset that seniors hold is financial stability. They are self-supporters in comparison to young missionaries.

In the stories we hear today about missionaries overseas, lack of money contributes to missionaries' giving up their work and returning home. Even before they travel to the mission field, some missionaries must raise funds in their homeland. And while they are serving as missionaries, some must engage in frequent deputation from church to church to meet with individual supporters. Many mission boards will not accept a candidate who has an outstanding debt.³

In addition, many young missionaries become concerned about the costs of their children's education in the mission field and so conclude that they must return home. Even if missionaries decide to leave the mission field, they report continuing to feel overwhelmed by worry about finding employment at home. Financial challenge is a significant reason that young missionaries return from the mission field within a short period of time.

² Ibid., 18-20.

³ Ibid., 14.

One article from a website grabbed my attention about missionaries' returning to their homelands because they were not able to endure financial obstacles. Greg Mudis, the executive director of *Assemblies of God World Mission* writes about a missionary who struggles with a financial crisis:

I received an emotion-riddled e-mail from a missionary: "Over the past 6 months we have struggled with incredible financial need. After arriving only 18 months ago, our work account is in the red. We can barely pay our utilities and rent. The exchange rate is 2 for 1. Right now the American dollar is worth 48 cents with no change in the foreseeable future. ... We've taken money from our personal finances the last 6 months just to survive. We cannot keep this up. Every month we go further in debt. We know God is faithful and that we are in His will, but we also know that we cannot continue to incur debt to do missions work. I do not believe God expects us to. We may need to return home."⁴

The missionary quoted by Mudis is an example of many who are facing financial crises. The nature of these financial crises might include budgeting, fund raising, the cost of living, inflation and devaluation of the dollar.

In contrast, senior missionaries carry a smaller financial burden because they have had years of opportunity to acquire the resources to support themselves. They are already in a position to have paid off their debts, including their home mortgages, and to have finished paying for their children's educational expenses. In addition, mature missionaries often have unearned income from pension and social security payments.

J. Herbert Kane states:

Money was not a big problem in the early church. When Jesus sent out the twelve, He warned them against taking money or extra clothing with them. They were expected to depend on the charity of their converts and the traditional hospitality of the Jewish community.⁵

⁴ Greg Mundis, "The Economic Crises Facing Missionaries," *Enrichment Journal*, 2015. Accessed October 1, 2015. http://enrichmentjournal.ag.org/200803/200803_086Economic.cfm

⁵ J. Herbert Kane, 63.

Furthermore, seniors are not automatically disqualified as missionaries due to their age. Tom Steffen and Lois McKinney Douglas, professors who served as missionaries for more than twenty years, explain that recently the selection of missionaries by mission agencies is in accord with the present trend of North American culture. The trend shows that the seniors act like younger people and secular organizations have taken note as businesses make every effort to draw seniors' attention in their competitive market.⁶

Even people with medical problems are not necessarily disqualified as missionaries. Steffen and McKinney Douglas advocate for missionary service by people with medical conditions:

People today are challenging the policies restricting participation of those with medical conditions. Granted that life may be much more difficult in some context. Granted that it may take longer to do things. Granted that the medical facilities may not be up the same standard as that enjoyed at home, but, it is being asked, who can identify with the medically challenged better than the medically challenged? Who can reach the medically challenged better than the medically challenged?⁷

Moreover, the old tradition of lengthy formal training to be eligible for missionary work overseas has changed. It has now become optional to have long-term formal education because churches and mission agencies are learning that developing character and ministry skills in actual mission fields produces more significant results than formal classroom training. Today's missionaries are able to get the necessary training on site during their participation in ministry.⁸

Hyun Mo Lee, a professor at *Baptist Theological Seminary* in Korea whose

⁶ Tom Steffen and Lois McKinney Douglas, *Encountering Missionary Life and Work: Preparing for Intercultural Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Backer Academic, 2008), 143-144.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 146.

ministry supports further education for missionaries, narrates that young missionaries tend to be less mature in dealing with relationships when conflicts occur. When missionaries first think about their ministry, they may assume their duties will consist of preaching, Bible study, counselling, evangelism and prayer. However, the reality in ministry may be somewhat different from what many people imagine. Young missionaries receive education in their twenties or thirties and then go to the mission field. Their passion in ministry even allows them to absorb a new language quickly and utilize it in their ministry. However, young missionaries occasionally have difficulty getting along with other missionaries and connecting with local people. They may be less prepared to face the negative side of teamwork because they lack life and work experience prior to their missionary assignment. Some missionaries confess that their difficulty in ministry stems from poor interpersonal relationship skills and some give up their work because conflict has arisen with their co-workers. In these relationship-related issues, senior missionaries are more likely to have mature communication skills developed through experiences in their work and social lives prior to going to the mission field.⁹

In addition, senior missionaries are likely to possess more sound and reliable spirituality than their young counterparts. Seniors who served for decades as elders and deacons are often known to have stronger and unshaken basic belief. Senior missionaries might have weaknesses in the process of adjusting to rapidly changing and adventurous ministries, but once seniors receive specific assignments, they perform with excellence and trustworthiness. While young missionaries are capable of handling heavier

⁹ Hyun Mo Lee, *Insengi Hubanjunen Senior Sungyosaro* [Second Half as Senior Missionary] (Seoul, Korea: Joy Mission Organization, 2007), 55.

workloads, they might exhaust themselves spiritually and physically. In contrast, senior missionaries may have less tendency to indulge in too much work, and are more likely to have the wisdom to prevent burn-out by sparing their energy and passion. They might go slowly but diligently, which is a more effective way to thrive in the long run.¹⁰

Another advantage of senior missionaries is that while some young missionaries are motivated by their sense of duty, some seniors seem to participate out of their interests and joy. Throughout their lives, many seniors have expected to engage in missionary work overseas, but now their wishes finally have come true. That is why they seem to enjoy missionary work overseas even more. Many senior missionaries confess that missionary work is full of excitement and they have no regrets. Those who enjoy their work are not easily frustrated or ready to give up because they experience gratefulness and fullness in God. On the other hand, there are not many young missionaries who say the same.¹¹

In spite of senior missionaries' multiple advantages, there are several difficulties that senior missionaries might encounter, some of which could be serious. We often wonder how many years senior missionaries will be able to work and some may doubt that seniors are capable of continuing missionary work for a long time. However, seniors also spend as many years in mission service as young missionaries. Nowadays, young long term missionaries stay in the mission field an average of seven years; this longevity is matched by senior missionaries.¹²

How about theological studies for senior missionaries? This problem can be

¹⁰ Hyun Mo Lee, 62.

¹¹ Ibid., 63.

¹² Ibid., 64-71.

solved with two methods. One of the methods is to participate in overseas missionary work that does not require specialized theological studies. The second method is to study only the necessary, basic theological studies. In comparison to young missionaries, seniors seem to be more vulnerable when learning a new language. However, it is very important to remember that senior missionaries are still capable of mastering a new language with a little bit of extra time. Senior missionaries may need to set a lesser goal when they study a new language. In some settings it would be sufficient for missionaries to complete a survival level of study in order to deliver messages without confusion. With simple communication ability, seniors can focus on ministries they manage well and compensate for their poor language ability with their professional and social experience. Leveraging their expertise and professional abilities, seniors may turn their weaknesses into powerful instruments to draw people.¹³

As Matthew 9:37 says, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.” The twenty-first century desperately needs senior missionaries in every corner of the world because there are simply too many people who are in need. World mission service cannot rely solely on young missionaries. It is an urgent call from Jesus for rapid and effective harvest work that could involve everybody in overseas mission service including seniors. As mentioned above, there are many additional advantages if more senior missionaries are brought in.

Moreover, it is not an exaggeration to say that there are mission fields that prefer senior missionaries. Also there are some areas in which senior missionaries demonstrate higher quality of work and achievement than younger missionaries.

¹³ Ibid., 67-70.

Therefore, I am convinced that age is not a proper excuse for refusing to go overseas for mission service. Hans Finzel, an author and trusted authority in the field of leadership, and Rick Hicks, also an author and previous president of *Operation Mobilization*, discuss Erikson's Eight Psychosocial Stages and note that different things are demanded of us at different stages of our lives. Just as there are specific expectations for young people, there are also distinct and unique expectations for seniors.¹⁴

¹⁴ Hans Finzel & Rick Hicks, *Launch Your Encore: Finding Adventure & Purpose Later in Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 28.

CHAPTER 2

Biblical and Theological Foundation

a. The Spiral of Moses' Call from Early Ages to Mature Ages

Some people say that the peak of fruitful life comes at young age and is followed by decline afterwards. But I believe life has its peaks and valleys at any age. The Scripture shows that God calls people to the ministry even in old age. Marjory Zoet Bankson, an artist and spiritual guide, narrates the story of Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3-4) and Moses' ongoing ministry in spite of his old age.

Bankson intuitively describes the spiral path of call by describing the three stages of Moses' call.¹ Moses' call to find his place, his identity in the story of God, was the first call.

Bankson states:

The first round of Moses's call was to discover his place in God's story, his identity. He needed to know whether he was an orphaned slave, a prince of Egypt, an escaped killer with hallucinations, or something more - one who was being called to lead his people out of Egypt.²

The second call was to comprehend his real vocation as a leader and search for its applications. Moses went from a prince of Egypt to a humble shepherd in a remote part of the Sinai Peninsula to begin his training program. His experience with the burning bush told him that he was qualified to deliver Israel (Acts 7:25). Actually, he needed decades of preparation. It was during this lengthy season as a shepherd in the wilderness

¹ Marjory Zoet Bankson, *Creative Aging: Rethinking Retirement and Non-Retirement in a Changing World*, 3rd ed. (Woodstock: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2015), 8.

² *Ibid.*, 8.

that Moses came to know his God. Bankson believes that those years of herding sheep taught Moses to be a trusted shepherd of the Jewish people.³

The third call was to work out his gift of a distinguished relationship with God. The luxury of retirement did not belong to Moses. His call that started with the burning bush was to spiral throughout his life, increasing and shifting with the various situations he encountered. Each time, he had to brood over and pray his way through the same questions: “Who am I to God? “ What am I being called to do?” Whenever we encounter a new shift in our lives, we need to start a new round in the spiral of call “Who am I now? “What is my work at this time?” “What is my distinguished gift?” According to Bankson, this spiral path of call is a wake-up call that spurs us to consider our life matters more seriously.⁴

The question, “What is my unique gift” is related to charism, an archaic word that depicts the distinguished gift of who we are, the character of soul that is rooted deeply within us when we are born. The root of charism in Greek is the gift of God’s grace. Charism is given to people to be explored and developed for it is meant to be shared with the world. Bankson explains that charism was Moses’ relationship with God. He states:

That’s what made it possible for him to continue leading his ungrateful followers for forty years in the wilderness and continue to do it even when he knew that he would not enter the Promised Land. Without that charism, I suspect Moses would have turned into a bitter old man, defeated because his hopes were dashed in spite of his heroic faithfulness.... As he aged, Moses never did become the religious leader that his brother, Aron, was....In his third round of call, Moses let go of doing all the decision making and learned to walk with God.⁵

Moses was willing to overlook his own weaknesses and instead trust in God’s

³ Ibid., 8-9.

⁴ Ibid., 9.

⁵ Ibid., 16-17.

promise to deliver His people. The steps he made before, as a fearful man on the run, were now replaced by confident ones, willing to face the same peril when God on his side.

Roger E. Hedlund, a pastor who has spent more than three decades in India as a theological teacher and researcher, states that the gift, which is meant for service, is endowed by God since God is faithful and God always calls people with gifts to accomplish God's call. The call, the gift, and the service go together hand in hand because God has already prepared the service for which one is chosen.⁶ He states:

Likewise we may be certain that God never gives the gift without also the call! What is required is our submission, our consecration, our commitment to his service, whatever it may entail. The church is God's instrument to confirm an individual's call to service (Act 13:1-4).⁷

b. Seniors' Place in the Scripture

The Scripture is replete with information that assures senior adults' place in God's plan for the entire world. There are many references to the aged as having more worth, more wisdom and more understanding than younger men and women. Chul Hee Choi, a senior missionary from Korea, believes that God's plan toward all ages shows no favoritism; instead, seniors are to be respected and used mightily in the plan of God. In Psalm 92:12-15, it explains that as the cedar of Lebanon bears fruit and stays fresh in old age, the righteous will also flourish and proclaim in old age. This passage certainly suggests that there is a place of service for the elderly in the work of God. They are able to "bear fruit" and remain "fresh and flourishing" despite of their age.⁸

⁶ Roger E. Hedlund, *The Mission of the Church in the World: A Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1991), 249-250.

⁷ Roger E. Hedlund, 250.

⁸ Chul Hee Choi, *Inseng Imojak Senior Sunkyo* [Senior Mission] (Jong Ro, Seoul: Koramdeo, 2015), 58.

Dwight Hervey Small, a retired Christian sociologist, narrates the story of Caleb in Joshua 14-15 that demonstrates God's use of Caleb in his old age. He states:

Caleb was not an Abraham or a Moses, neither a David nor a Paul. He was just a man among men, ordinary in many respects yet living an extraordinary life. There's no record of fame. His life was extraordinary because of his relationship to God in whom he placed his utmost confidence – a relationship of unswerving faith and total obedience. But at 85 he wasn't through yet...Caleb lived through the 40 years of frustration and futility in the wilderness wanderings. In what possible way did he see it significant to follow God in this barren wilderness? Why not just resign himself that he, too, soon would die? "After all," he might have said, "I'm getting up in years. Shouldn't I just quietly back off? I'm well past retirement age now. This is a god time to call it quits. There's really nothing I need to do." ("Need to do?" What about *challenged* to do? *commanded* to do?) Caleb's best years were just ahead. By the anticipation of faith, he was already living in that land of God's promise.⁹

Joshua received his charge to lead the conquest of Canaan during the last thirty years of his life. He lived until he was 110 (Joshua 24:29). Jehoiada was eighty-three when he launched his plan to rescue Judah from evil Queen Athaliah (2 Chronicles 23: 1-10). Jehoshabeath was eighty when he asked for the hill country of Israel (Joshua 14:10-12). Jacob was over ninety when he was called Israel when wrestling with a man of God put Jacob's hip out of joint (Genesis 32:29-30). Daniel served God for over seventy years and he was well over eighty when he became one of three governors over the kingdom of Babylon (Daniel 6:1-3).

Simeon and Anna were two elderly people who bore witness to the Christ child when He was presented to the temple to be circumcised (Luke 2:25-38). Simeon found life's accomplishment near the close of life when he witnessed the salvation of God. Anna herself was at least eighty-four, and had been serving God with fasting and prayers

⁹ Dwight Hervey Small, *When Christians Retire: Finding New Purpose in Your Bonus Years* (Kansas, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 2000), 116-117.

night and day. Even though she was very old, Anna's glimpse of the baby Jesus renewed her energy to continue her mission.¹⁰ Zacharias and Elizabeth were both well advanced in years, yet he was serving in the temple and she gave birth to John in Luke chapter 1.

Hans Finzel and Rick Hicks believe that God's original view and plan never change and we are made, amazingly, for the mature season of our lives as much as for the season of our birth. In Psalm 139:13-14 we see: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...." The Scripture praises the old because gray hair shows crowning attainment. "Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained in the way of righteousness." (Proverbs 16: 31). Further, seniors are portrayed as the possessors of wisdom and understanding. "Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?" (Job 12:12). The role of seniors is to declare God's mighty power to their descendants:

Since my youth, God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds. Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, my God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your mighty acts to all who are to come." (Psalm 71: 17-18).¹¹

Seniors are not to be despised but respected. "Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the Lord." (Leviticus 19:32). The divine promise for seniors is certain: God will keep them until their lives are over. "Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you. I will sustain you and I will rescue you." (Isaiah 46:4).¹²

No doubt Abraham's story is one of the greatest stories about the forefathers of

¹⁰ Chul Hee Choi, 57-58.

¹¹ Hans Finzel and Rick Hicks, 143-144.

¹² Ibid., 145-146.

our faith. Particularly, his ministry in his old age is well narrated in the Scriptures and Judaism, Islam and Christianity share his story together. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he was called from his hometown, friends, family to travel to Canaan (Genesis 12:4). Abraham was 100 years old when God's promise was fulfilled. Dr. Erica Brown, a writer, educator, and scholar-in-residence for *The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and Agency* and other Jewish non-profits, depicts the old age of Abraham and Sarah as:

Old age is portrayed as a time of youthful activity for Abraham and Sarah. Abraham only began his journey to Canaan at 74, a good time for modern retirement (Gen. 12:4). From that point forward, he traveled, acquired wealth, dug wells, entertained important dignitaries and defended entire cities at an age that we have come to associate with golf, card playing and the large print Reader's Digest. Sarah and Abraham began parenting at well past nursing home age. In addition, both deaths are recorded in Genesis with ceremony and dignity and not the facing away of a once vibrant past.¹³

Paul boasts about his weakness in Christ in 2 Corinthians 12: 9-10. Being old could make a person seem deeply worthless and feeble-minded. When one is approaching old age, it could be easy to fall into an idle life filled with loss, crushed hopes and broken dreams. However, our faith proclaims that one whose power and authority is in Christ's hands never lives in this way. His or her weaknesses can turn into an opportunity to experience the might of God. Scripture tells us that God desires to use the people who understand their weaknesses and worthlessness so that no one may boast before God (1 Corinthians 1:27-28). As Chul Hee Choi notes, God does not judge according to the flesh or the age of human, for the Bible tells us that seniors will be used preciously by God.¹⁴

¹³ Erica Brown, "Aging Gracefully." *The Torah.com: A Historical and Contextual Approach*. Accessed July 7, 2016. <http://thetorah.com/abraham-aging-gracefully/>

¹⁴ Chul Hee Choi, 143-44.

All the people mentioned above are active elders. All these stories assure us that to our dying day we have a mission to accomplish for God.

c. Characteristics of Seniors and Senior Missions

New interest in the phenomenon of delayed aging and long life expediency emerged and in recent decades has changed the way we consider our lives. Richard L. Morgan, a retired Presbyterian pastor who was honored with the 2013 *Legacy Award*, notes that we live in a culture that praises youth and despises age. He describes:

We live in a culture that exalts youth and attempts to disguise age. A growing practice called antiaging medicine includes aesthetic surgery, restorative dentistry, and cosmetic dermatology. Face creams, face-lifts, and antiaging jeans that lift all the right places tout their ability to halt the march of aging. Billboards, television, Internet ads, and the persuasive ads in magazines all tend to focus on the worth of youth and the worthlessness of age. We are not far from what Shakespeare wrote, “Age, I do abhor thee; youth, I do adore thee. . . . On the other hand, a media blitz touts the “new old age,” which describes aging as a time of endless joy and fulfillment. For many of those who grow older and experience frailties and disabilities, in means putting on a happy face when bones may ache, minds fail, and hearts break with loss after loss. Our society’s obsession with youth drives the creation of the myth of the “new old age,” The new way of valuing older people highlights their youthfulness and praises them for looking young.”¹⁵

However, Richard L. Morgan states that though people try to slow down the process of aging but we must understand that our body’s wearing out is completely natural and not shameful. The Bible’s teaching about aging is not a disguise, denial or resistance, but an affirmation and welcome. Seniors have limitations in many ways due to their physical and mental problems, but they are not limited in their service of God. Paul talks about how our outer person is decaying day by day but our inner person is

¹⁵ Jane Marie Thibault and Richard L. Morgan, *Pilgrimage into the Last Third of Life: 7 Gateways to Spiritual Growth* (Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2012), 22-23

renewed simultaneously (2 Corinthians 4:16). He also affirms that long life is not sufficient and there is more than living longer. Paul claims that we are to live full, meaningful and untarnished life.¹⁶

The Rev. Dr. Richard Gentzler, who is director of the *Center on Aging & older Adult Ministries for the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship*, mentions that there are many seniors now who do not follow the stereotypical image of old people. He describes how people think about the stereotypical image of old people as: “when we hear the word “aging,” people likely develop images of gray hair, wrinkled skin, diminished lung capacity, stooped posture, cataracts, impaired hearing, and dementia.”¹⁷

However, Gentzler notes that aging is not really simple but very complex, for everyone ages at a different rate. There might be similarities among old people in physical and mental aging but there are also individual differences that must be recognized. He states:

This stereotypical image of aging does not hold true for all older adults. Aging is really more complex than that. Older adults age at different rates. A group of older adults that are the same chronological age may be very different from each other in external appearance, behavior, and health conditions. In fact, you may know an 85-year-old church member who may act and appear as young as, or younger than, another older adult who is 65. Recognize that while similarities exist, there are individual differences that must be respected and treated accordingly.¹⁸

Richard L. Morgan states that it is time for seniors to drop the mask they wear and get real. When people are young, in many cases, they often are dragged along to meet the expectations of others. Maturity is a time to walk away from the demands and

¹⁶Jane Marie Thibault and Richard L. Morgan, 23-24.

¹⁷ Richard H. Gentzler, Jr., *Aging and Ministry in the 21st Century: An Inquiry Approach* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2008), 29.

¹⁸ Richard H. Gentzler, Jr., 29.

expectations of family and embrace something different. This is the time that seniors may turn to the things for which they long. He confesses:

As I consider my earlier life, I realize that satisfying my father's expectations and pleasing others robbed me of being myself. I wore a mask...Deep down I wondered if I was anything at all. As the years passed, I became stuck in my role and finally pursued a road less traveled and became a counselor/writer. It took hard work to walk away from the demands of my family origin, but I knew I wasn't defrocked, only unsuited....In my later years I came to embrace the exciting freedom of being who I really was. I could drop the mask I wore, dismantle old roles to find a deeper, more authentic self.¹⁹

He goes on to say that when Paul encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, he threw off the mask of Pharisee, put on his true self and confessed that everything he had was a loss for the sake of Christ (Philippians 3:7).²⁰

In the second half of his life, Bob Buford founded an organization, *Halftime*, to inspire business and professional leaders to follow God's calling and move from success to significance. In his book *Halftime* Buford states that there is strong desire for people to seek significance in the second half of their lives. He describes it as:

One of the most common characteristics of a person who is nearing the end of the first half is that unquenchable desire to move from success to significance. After the first half of building a career and trying to become financially secure, we'd like to do something in the second half that is more meaningful-something that rises above perks and paychecks into the stratosphere of significance.²¹

Richard H. Gentzler, Jr. supports Bob Buford's statement that seniors have the chance to redefine the meaning, goal and purpose of their lives in their later years. He describes it as:

For many people the early years were spent trying to attain some kind of "success," measured differently perhaps for everyone. For some, success

¹⁹ Richard L. Morgan, 59.

²⁰ Richard L. Morgan, 60.

²¹ Bob Buford, *Halftime* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 83.

was “climbing the ladder” in one’s occupation and achieving the top spot. Success was owning a home in the “right” neighborhood, earning a college degree, raising children, or enjoying a long, satisfying relationship with one’s spouse...As we grow older, we begin to look at life differently. No longer are we consumed by attaining success...Our values begin to change. Instead of seeking success, instead of competing and being “egocentric,” we begin an inward journey...It is at this point in life when we move from a living life based on achieving or acquiring success to living a life based on finding meaning and spiritual maturity.²²

The exceptional qualifications and activities that seniors demonstrate are invaluable. Bill and Cindy Perry, themselves senior retirees and lifetime philanthropists, describe the evolution of seniors:

Because as we age, our life experiences qualify us to do certain activities better than younger people. Through trial and error, and having frequently observed a problem situation and multiple attempts to resolve it, elders have learned what works and what doesn’t. For example, in caregiving, elders have been involved or witnessed tragic times that require care and know what methods work and what method don’t. Now, as retirees, they see their family and friends having health and mental problems. Elders have the trust of the people needing care gained over decades and a strong desire to help people they love, and they’ll spend whatever time is needed to help those people; therefore, these elders are in the best possible position to give passionate care.²³

Pursuing success in young age can mature into faithful aging in older age. Richard

H. Gentzler, Jr. explains how seniors age faithfully:

To age faithfully is to see and know that all of life-at every age and stage-is a gift from a living, creator God....to trust the promise of God....to stand against the cultural prejudice about growing old....that we develop a new understanding of self-worth....to be part of a congregation that knows that spiritual growth is possible and relevant for older adults....to practice the spiritual disciplines.²⁴

The secular notion of denying aging is not the way to age faithfully. Instead,

²² Richard H. Gentzler, Jr., 56-57.

²³ Bill and Cindy Perry, *Rejoicing in Retirement* (EA Books Publishing: www.eabooksonline.com), 36.

²⁴ Richard H. Gentzler, Jr., 63-64.

Gentzler calls his readers to believe the Word of God that says, “The glory of youth is their strength, but the beauty of the age is their gray hair.” (Proverbs 20:29). Developing a new comprehending of self-worth is found in one’s being, not in the things one has or does. As the Psalmist sings, “I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.” (Psalm 37:25).²⁵

Good courage is a necessity for starting a second half life. Bankson states that for many, leaving work can be challenging and intimidating even though one deeply craves to leave. Quitting the primary identity one has had over many years of hard work is an incredibly difficult decision. It requires great courage to leave a familiar job and role and walk into unknown and unfamiliar territory.²⁶

In addition, Bill and Cindy Perry state that humans have the inborn desire to be remembered by their decedents after they are gone. It is meaningful to give something that can be remembered forever. How we will be remembered by our decedents should be a serious question to seniors. The story of a woman who poured out perfume on Jesus’ head in Mark 14:3-9 shares how people can value being remembered. They describe it as:

When a woman poured expensive perfume on Jesus’ head. Some people said that was a waste. But Jesus said her act honored him. She is remembered to this day for that act. That’s her legacy. Her story tells us three things about the Bible’s definition of a legacy. First, while you are to do things for the poor, there will always be poor people in need, so you must follow where God leads you. Second, using your valuable resources of time and money to honor God is an activity that Jesus says is your legacy. Third, if you do good things in life to honor God you will be remembered for those things.²⁷

Richard L. Morgan also advocates about the legacy that seniors leave before

²⁵ Ibid., 63-65.

²⁶ Majory Zoet Bankson, 32.

²⁷ Billy and Cindy Perry, 110.

heaven. He believes seniors who store their treasures in heaven by serving God to the end will leave the right Christian legacy for their families to remember. He states:

Jesus' compelling words about storing up "treasures in heaven" remind us that all we will take into the next world and all we will leave our family is our values, life lessons, and wisdom. This legacy extends far beyond our fiscal worth. Our legacy does not end the day we die. It becomes the crowning moment of the life we leave behind.²⁸

d. Seeking Meaningful Life after Retirement as Christians

Seeing from the lives of retirees today around us, retirement can be a dream or a disaster unless handled with caution and practical preparedness. Practically learning more about retirement before it occurs will spur us earlier and more boldly to explore what will be successful and meaningful when work is no longer an option. I believe we must not spend our working years striving solely for career goals and fulfillment without ever giving thoughts to the goals we will want to accomplish when our careers are finished.

Then, what is retirement?

Richard P. Johnson, who is the executive director of *the Association of Senior Adult Ministry* in St. Louise, states that there is considerable ambiguity about retirement; retirement is hard to define. However, Johnson explains his point of view about what retirement is supposed to be:

There is great hope inherent in retirement, however: hope for new life prospects, new life directions, new endeavors. Retirement is a commencement. Remember when you graduated from high school, you went through commencement exercises. In my younger years I truly thought that commencement meant that something was over. Years later I realized that the event I thought was the end was actually the hopeful beginning of something different. In a very real sense, retirement is like high-school graduation: certainly an end, but also a beginning of something much bigger than you can conceive.²⁹

²⁸ Jane Marie Thibault and Richard L. Morgan, 125.

²⁹ Richard P. Johnson, *Creating a Successful Retirement: Finding Peace and Purpose* (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1999), x.

Richard H. Genzler, Jr. regards retirement not as an end, but as a process.

According to Genzler, viewing retirement as an act taken at a single leap is absolutely incorrect.³⁰ He describes it as:

Retirement means for many “freedom from the demands of work.” It may mean more control over one’s personal time and provide time for new opportunities to learn, give, and grow. But we also need to know that retirement, as an expected part of the lifecycle, came into being only in the 20th century. Two hundred years ago, people did not retire, at least not in the modern sense of the word. People worked until they “wore out” and died....One hundred years ago, people at best two years of retirement. They worked long and hard and when they could no longer work... Today, however, as a result of advances in medicine, scientific discoveries and new technologies, better health and nutrition, job safety, and a host of other variables, people are living longer and healthier than ever before....People today can have as much as 20 to 30 years or more in the retirement years....A new norm of retirement could expand the whole idea of a “second career.”³¹

R. Jack Hansen and Jerry P. Haas conducted seminars and wrote for a range of organizations that serve retirees. These two authors stated in their book, *Retirement as Spiritual Pilgrimage*, that old age ought never to be considered an obstacle, but as a new beginning for the spiritual journey. This journey is a great adventure to a new identity and purpose and in a sense, retirement may be considered as part of the faith journey. They describe retirement as:

Abram’s story suggests that life with God involves making a journey, which may or may not involve geographical relocation. The Bible is full of stories about people responding to a call from God and venturing forth on faith into a new identity and purpose. From this perspective, retirement may be viewed as part of the faith journey. This journey can sometimes seem like dying, as we leave the old and familiar and enter something new. Yet our faith proclaims that such dying is never the end of the story. And when we die to ourselves, Christ raises us up to new life. In times of transition, we may be tempted to wallow in our grief or push back those feelings entirely. When we name our losses and offer them to Christ, we open ourselves to new growth and possibilities. Think back to the major

³⁰ Richard H. Genzler, Jr., 41.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

transitions in your life and see if this isn't so.³²

Jules Z. Willing, a founding member of *Duke University Institute for Learning in Retirement*, explains in his book, *The Reality of Retirement*, that though there are many things spoken and written about retirement, the inner experience, how retirement feels, is not always addressed properly. He states:

Too much about retirement is unspoken, and each of us who conceals secret feelings and private fears becomes a participant in what amounts to a conspiracy of silence....what is not said is how retirement feels: the inner experience....The unanswered question is not so much what happens to you when you retire as what happens *in* you when you retire.³³

Jules Z Willing says that retirement can mean the entire loss of authority and so it may generate a vibrant and constant anxiety.³⁴ He summarizes the problem as we face it at retirement:

As retirement nears, you are able for the first time to know the whole story of your career, for its last stage is almost completed. You have spent all your working life creating your personal history, your eyes fixed on the future consequences of your acts and decisions. There has always been a next stage in your career: the next job assignment, pay adjustment, promotion, or job change. Now for the first time you have reached the place where your work history stops; there is no next stage. For the first time, you measure the entire distance from where you started a lifetime ago to the farthest place you have reached.³⁵

As Jules Z Willing states, retirement is our final stage and is something we have to consider seriously while we are on earth before we get to heaven.

Though there are realistic difficulties and problems at retirement, Jules Z. Willing says that there may be a positive aspect of retirement; it may lead us to measure

³² R. Jack Hansen and Jerry P. Haas, *Retirement as Spiritual Pilgrimage: Stories, Scripture, and Practice for the Journey* (Middletown, DE: Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 15.

³³ Jules Z. Willing, *The Reality of Retirement*. ed. Revised and Updated by Cory Willing (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: Lively Mind Books, 1989), 1.

³⁴ Jules Z. Willing, 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 13-14.

achievement differently than we would have before retirement. He confesses his realization that he could no longer fail in retirement:

A different observation about achievement was made to me this way: “One of the ways retirement impacted on me was when I suddenly realized *I could no longer fail*. All during my working life, and my school life before, failure was always a possibility-not imminent, perhaps, but certainly possible.³⁶

On the other hand, Willing found permanent security in retirement. He confesses the reason why:

“But when I retired on an assured pension, I realized I actually had found permanent security. My welfare was no longer dependent on what I did or what I was, on my judgment, my reputation, or my ability, on who liked me and who didn’t. I was beyond employability, and no one would ever again have the power to fire me.”³⁷

John Piper, theologian, teacher and founder of *Desiring God.org* and chancellor of *Bethlehem College and Seminary*, warns about wasting life and states how to avoid wasting life. He states that “the opposite of wasting your life is living life by a single God-exalting, soul-satisfying passion. The well-lived life must be God-exalting and soul-satisfying because that is why God created us (Isaiah 43:7; Psalm 90:14).”³⁸

Emily Brandon, who is staff writer for *US News*, shares information from the *American Time Use Survey* data for 2014 about what retirees are doing all day in their leisure time.

Retirees enjoy more leisure time than any other group. People between ages 65 and 74 have nearly seven hours of leisure time each day, and it jumps to over eight hours among those ages 75 and older, the most of any age group, according to the 2014 results of the American Time Use Survey

³⁶ Ibid., 101.

³⁷ Ibid., 101-102.

³⁸ John Piper, *Don’t Waste Your Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003), 43.

conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistic.³⁹

Furthermore, let's see how a small group of rich retirees spend their own leisure time. Jean Folger, who is a technical analyst and system researcher with *PowerZone Trading*, shows the lists of luxurious retirement locations that retirees enjoy:

However, there is a small group of retirees interested in extravagance-opulent homes and gardens, spas and pampering, world-class golf courses, fine dining, and all the other amenities that go along with luxury retirement communities. Here is a look at five of the more luxurious retirement locations, from pristine waterfront communities to spectacular mountainside properties and a unique, private community-at-sea.⁴⁰

Though a small number of retirees are fascinated in a luxury retirement plan, the world outside lures retirees to plan more for themselves. These references indicate that most retirees hardly spend their time for others' sake, but mainly use the time for their enjoyments or helping those who are very close to them.

Richard P. Johnson warns retirees who pursue only a leisure lifestyle because he believes retirees living a leisure lifestyle might be blinded by their ease to the main purpose of living. He explains why:

There seems no question that leisure commands a more central focus in the lives of retirees. Some retirees even believe that retirement and leisure are synonymous... we must be careful not to raise it so high that it occupies *the* central focus of our life. For when and if leisure does become the primary goal around which our whole life revolves, we are inadvertently doing damage to our very souls. As retirees we certainly can pursue a *leisurely* lifestyle, but beware of pursuing a *leisure* lifestyle.⁴¹

I believe that enjoying a leisure life is one way to live through the post retirement

³⁹ Emily Brandon, "10 ways Retirees Spend Their Newfound Free Time." *U.S News & World Report: Money*, 2015. Accessed July 1, 2016. [http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/planning-to-
retire/2015/06/26/10-ways-retirees-spend-their-newfound-free-time](http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/planning-to-retire/2015/06/26/10-ways-retirees-spend-their-newfound-free-time)

⁴⁰ Jean Folger, "Top Luxury Retirement Locations." *Investopedia*, 2011. Accessed July 8, 2016. <http://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0811/top-5-luxury-retirement-locations.aspx>

⁴¹ Richard P. Johnson, 78.

phase. However, as Christians, my view is that searching for ways of serving others actively and purposefully is a far better and meaningful way to spend years of the retirement life.

Theologian John Piper believes seniors are meant to finish life to the glory of Christ and this means intensely refuting the typical American dream of retirement. Piper states that "... finishing life to the glory of Christ means using whatever strength and eyesight and hearing and mobility and resources we have left to treasure Christ and in the joy to serve people."⁴² Paul boldly asserts in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." My hope is for Paul's confession to be our confession at the end of our lives. Working for God is not limited to young people whose strength and energy seem endless. God has plans and strategies for seniors to develop their ministries as well.

Here is the example of a meaningful retirement by Richard L. Morgan. He confesses:

I can honestly say that I had the best time of life between the ages of sixty-two and eight-two. I did not experience the years after retirement as a time of withdrawal from the world. Nor did I feel shelved by a society obsessed with youth. On the contrary, those years provided new adventures and challenges I never would have dreamed of. Being older came as a gift, a joy and a blessing for exceeding my younger years. And this is not to deny the realities of frailty and disability that I have suffered.⁴³

Thus, it is significant for the church to know how valuable these senior retirees are and to maximize their ministry in Christian service. Richard P. Johnson states that "For the church, retirees represent a ministerial potential of unlimited proportion."⁴⁴ It is

⁴² John Piper, 9.

⁴³ Jane Marie Thibault and Richard L. Morgan, 23

⁴⁴ Richard P. Johnson, xi.

common that thirty and even forty percent of congregations are retirees in today's church and the retirees' power is present widely and tremendously.⁴⁵

Furthermore, Richard H. Gentzler, Jr. is not hesitant to say that seniors hold the future of the church in this twenty-first century since seniors occupy our pews, maintain financial stability, and partake in training and all the opportunities of the various services. Gentzler goes on to say that they are the ones who serve in leadership positions. He narrates about older adults' place in the church:

Older adults provide leadership in our congregations. They are often our bishops, pastors, and lay volunteers in our churches. They teach in our Sunday schools, serve as lay leaders and lay speakers, make church policy and often control the church budget. They are passing on the traditions and values of the Christian faith by preaching the word, teaching the Scriptures, and sharing their stories with others. They are demonstrating Christ's love as mentors, teachers, and leaders.⁴⁶

I do not mean to say that the church is dying because the members of the church are mainly old people who, in the near future, might move from their homes to community living settings. I do not believe that the concept of old age should lead to negativity and obsolescence. Instead, I see old age as hope for the church. There should be no prejudice and discrimination against senior citizens.

My view is that Christians never retire from Christ's service, but only change the address of their work place. Retirees and those approaching retirement are in the enviable position of being able to give extraordinary service to the Lord. They have developed effective leadership capabilities by experiencing both failures and successes as their capabilities were tested over many decades. They are in positions to give back to people who are in need from blessings they have received over a lifetime.

⁴⁵ Ibid., xii.

⁴⁶ Richard H. Gentzler, 11.

e. Toward a Theology of Overseas Medical Mission Service

Medical or nursing missionary service overseas presents a great alternative for post-retirement service. Chinese-born American Methodist Bishop and missionary Walter R. Lambuth, in his book *Medical Mission* about his observations made in China in 1915, validates and advocates medical missionary service overseas. He states:

The field of medical missions is a challenge to noble and unsparring endeavor. The life of the medical missionary when devoted to the extension of the Kingdom of God, has, in a special manner, the divine approval. The ministry of mercy was so wrought into the life of Jesus Christ and his disciples that we must conclude it to be an integral part of the divine purpose and programs. Of all the agencies and methods employed by the Church, in her endeavor to evangelize the world, there is none more Christlike than this. Following His example, it at once puts itself in sympathetic touch with the body and carries restorative power to the soul.⁴⁷

Mary Elizabeth O'Brien, who is professor of nursing at *The Catholic University of America*, states that medical missionary service overseas can be viewed as a great adventure into the world's desperate need. The Gospels are all about care-giving. Jesus is known as the Great Physician, and the Gospels give story after story about Jesus making the blind see, the crippled walk, and the sick healthy. There is no doubt that Jesus was not only a healer of the soul but of physical sickness.⁴⁸ Jesus' ministry of seeking to heal the sick can be found in Matthew 4:23-24:

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

⁴⁷ Walter R. Lambuth, *Medical Missions: The Twofold Task* (Nashville: Board of Missions Methodist Episcopal Church South, 1920), 163.

⁴⁸ Mary Elizabeth O'Brien, *The Nurse's Calling: A Christian Spirituality of Caring for the Sick* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2001), 34-35.

Jesus and his disciples spent their lives caring for others. The story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 describes a Samaritan who took action to care for a man who was robbed. Just comforting with smooth talk didn't do any good for this man. He was in need of immediate physical care.⁴⁹ Phillip Eichman, a biology professor who makes short-term medical trips to Guatemala, explains that the Gospel of Luke repeatedly describes Jesus as the healer of the physical body as the means of evangelism. Eichman asserts that, as a physician and medical missionary, Luke provides a theological framework for the spread of the gospel through medical missionary service. He explains:

Mission programs often emphasize evangelism, which seeks to reach the spiritual needs of individuals primarily through teaching. This is, of course, a part of the Great Commission-to go and "make disciples of all nations." The approach of medical missions, or perhaps a more descriptive term, medical evangelism, is broader, seeking to reach both the spiritual and physical needs of those who served.⁵⁰

I believe physical healing is always accompanied by spiritual restoration toward God who is our Redeemer. The story in Luke 17: 11-19 of ten lives healed from leprosy is a good example of how Jesus connected physical healing with spiritual healing. Through his physical recovery, one leper realized that faith was important in physical healing. He realized that faith did not come from within, but as a gift from God.

Judith Allen Shelly and Arlene B. Miller are registered nurses and distinguished leaders in nursing who demonstrate that healing and the message of the Gospel always go hand in hand. They assert:

"Throughout the Gospels, physical healing was intimately linked with the proclamation of the gospel. Jesus sent his followers out with instructions to heal the sick and to tell them, "The kingdom of God has come near to

⁴⁹Ibid., 35.

⁵⁰ Phillip Eichman, "Medical Missions among the Churches of Christ". 2ed. *Ohio Valley College Home Page*, 2001, Accessed 13, October, 2015. <http://ovc.edu/missions/medical/medbook1.htm>

you” (Lk 10:9).⁵¹

When Jesus taught in the synagogue in Nazareth, he presented his core mission by reading from Isaiah 61:1:

The spirit of the sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and releases from darkness for the prisoners.⁵²

Shelly and Miller validate nurses’ position among the medical profession. Among the medical staff, nurses are regarded as the personnel who give the most intimate care.

They advocate the significance of the role of nurses as follows:

What can nurses offer in the way of spiritual care? In what respect is nursing a Christian ministry? Probably more than any profession, nursing deals with giving hope to the hopeless. Although other professionals, such as physicians and clergy, also offer hope, it is the nurse who stands with the sick person for extended periods of time offering care and support when medical science can no longer offer a cure.⁵³

However, Shelly and Miller are concerned that nurses’ motivation to enter the field today seems to be more financial gain than intrinsic value. Shelly and Miller wonder if this may lead to disrespect and uncaring attitudes in the workplace.⁵⁴ They urge nursing to return to its original vocation, which is rooted in the church and Christian faith. They articulate:

Nursing cannot work toward the goal of health without including the clear proclamation of the gospel, as well as providing physical care with a servant attitude. Nursing as a vocation, or *calling*, from God, must return to its roots in the church and Christian faith in order to work toward the goal of true health. Furthermore, if we hope to maintain a strong Christian worldview in nursing, our faith must be nurtured in a Christian community and informed by a clear theology. True nursing cannot be divorced from

⁵¹ Judith Allen Shelly and Arlene B. Miller, *Called to Care: A Christian World View for Nursing*, 2ed (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006), 24.

⁵² Judith Allen Shelly and Arlene B. Miller, 24.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 262.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

the Christian story.⁵⁵

As noted above, senior missionaries participating in overseas medical mission service hold many advantages. Though these advantages may be apparent, and while some nurses dream of going to mission fields after retirement, many hesitate to receive actual pre-mission training. They do not have full confidence that their mental and physical health after retirement will permit them to do missionary work. Mission fields do sometimes create tremendous health challenges for people of any age. Health is the biggest challenge for seniors and so health issues may present obstacles that prevent them from working in the mission field. As seniors have less energy and strength than youth, if senior medical missionaries are under constant stress from hard work, they may burn out and return home early.

There is a strong tradition in Christian circles that missionaries must suffer, do hard work, live in poor and dangerous places, and perhaps even risk their own lives. Thus, missionary service is considered praiseworthy and respectable because it signifies sacrifice for the gospel. Hence, when people think of overseas missionary work, they sometimes assume that authentic missionaries are those who are able to overcome and withstand difficulties. As a result, many people experience discouragement of their genuine desire to take their gifts and careers overseas for mission service.

What people don't know, however, is that there are plenty of mission fields that do not need men and women to risk their lives or have amazing resumes. There are so many ministry openings with less hardship or persecution that could be carried out by ordinary people. Why not adjust the mission expectations for seniors to offer lighter and

⁵⁵ Ibid., 24-25.

more enjoyable experiences like the ones back home? It would be wonderful to change the concept and methodology of traditional missionary work to focus not mainly on young missionaries but also on senior missionaries as well.

Billy and Cindy Perry state that in the book of Numbers, when the Levites are called to retire from their roles in the temple at age fifty, they are assigned to light duties (Numbers 8:25). Billy and Cindy Perry advocate the role of aging this way:

“You know as well as I do that God has planted a process in each person to slow them down over time, and that process is called aging. In the book of Numbers, God tells Moses that the Levites are to retire from the temple at age fifty and then only do light duties. I could reference many parts of the Bible, but they all tell me older people can’t maintain the pace of life that younger people can. Ecclesiastes 9 says the fastest runner doesn’t always win the race. Isn’t it rewarding to know that the slower retiree can still win the race? And remember that Ecclesiastes also says you should be happy in whatever you do.”⁵⁶

Ecclesiastes 3 explains to us the meaninglessness of hard work. Particularly in verse 22, the author states, “...what does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days, his work is pain and grief; even at night, his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless.” The text implies that betterment of happiness and satisfaction by eating, drinking and doing good is the proper instruction for us to think about our ministry. The Psalms (Psalm 32:11; 118:24; 97:12) are good examples where we find songs and joy in the service of God. Rejoicing in God is our best ministry that God allows us to do while God is the one who does the work.

I dream of a way that senior missionaries might shed the yoke of heavy work that could drain them too soon. Jesus states, “my yoke is easy and my burden is light,” (Matthew 11:30) but Christians put Jesus’ yoke heavily on their shoulders. The traditional

⁵⁶ Bill and Cindy Perry, 43.

day job of forty hours per week provides vacation, sick days, and holidays. There are reasons for restricting the hours of work for the workers. People need to take off from their work lives and have pleasure during their off days to revitalize themselves to continue work without mental and physical stress. In his book *The Well-Played Life*, futurist theologian Leonard Sweet writes, “The older we get, the more we need *allowance* and *permission* to play, and the more we need *instruction* on how to play.”⁵⁷ Sweet goes on to say that:

God did not put us here to sacrifice at the altars of a deranged marketism, to earn/turn in taxes/ and burn, to pour out our lives on assignments into which we cannot pour out our hearts. God did not put us here to work like beavers. God put us here to play like otters.⁵⁸

As stated above, there is a plethora of senior forefathers who are called and greatly used by God. Once God calls, there is no matter of ages, hesitation and failure, but only obedience, confirmation and accomplishment exist. In this postmodern era, I believe seniors must not waste time only on attempting to delay the aging process by seeking for all sorts of products and skills that media offers, but accept and welcome aging and have positive identity as children of God. As children of God, seniors can continue to work while having wrinkles, degenerative joint pains and medications. The way of working for God for seniors are somewhat different from the ways of young people who pour out their energy into realistic life goal accomplishments. Seniors need to take time, slow down and enjoy whatever they do in order to remain healthy seniors.

In regard to retirement as Christians, senior Christians do not retire from serving God. I believe the mature years are a perfect time to begin again in the service of God

⁵⁷ Leonard Sweet, *The Well-Played Life: Why pleasing God doesn't Have to Be Such Hard Work* (Bonita Springs: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 2014), 12-13.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

and others who need help. In my view, senior Christians are not to fall foolishly into the pitfalls of the American dream as other retirees seek. My search is for something meaningful beyond worldly retirement plans.

Medical profession retirees can serve in the medical field that has a long mission history around the world. Medical mission work is in great demand in this twenty-first century in every corner and restricted area of the world. Among medical personnel, nurse missionaries may lead as the first care persons for mentally, physically, and spiritually sick people. From the point of Christian view, being a nurse is a calling from God in a sense that calling must be utilized for the glory of Christ in God.

CHAPTER 3

Project Design and Methodology

a. Laurie Green's Spiral and My Project

Inspired by the experience of Moses' own life spiral, noted above, the LAC members and I used the theological spiral outlined in a liberation theologian and former Anglican Bishop of Bradwell (England) Laurie Green's *Let's Do Theology* as a guide to deepening our theological engagement as we explored and reflected on the experience of the participants. Laurie Green states;

Theology from the roots up, which actually derives from the context in which it is set and incarnated...is the stuff of the model I propose...it resonates...with the felt experiences of the...people, and leads them to new awareness and to new exciting possibilities.¹

The process involved several steps within the spiral: EXPERIENCE, EXPLORATION, REFLECTION, RESPONSE; these steps then open to a NEW EXPERIENCE. At the time, project participants were not yet aware of what they were going to do after retirement and were not sure of whether they would be involved in medical missionary work overseas. Through reading two books, discussing the books in a group, attending group teaching sessions, and participating in two opportunities for field work, they explored their options to participate in medical missionary work overseas now or in the future (EXPERIENCE). Then, the LAC members and I reflected on this EXPERIENCE by collecting their narratives, observing their attitudes and behaviors and

¹ Laurie Green. *Let's Do Theology: Resources for Contextual Theology* (London: Mowbray, 2009), ix.

listening kenotically to their conversation (REFLECTION). As a result of this project, I expected that some of the participants might renew dreams and hopes for their retirement (RESPONSE). Ultimately, they might articulate about specific plans to get ongoing mission training (NEW EXPERIENCE). The LAC members and I might draw out potential abilities not yet in participants' awareness and reassure them they would be used by God faithfully after retirement.

b. Purpose of the Project

As a registered nurse, I have worked for more than ten years at the *Bergen Regional Medical Center* in New Jersey and have participated in medical missionary service overseas. For this project I hoped to explore challenges that post-retirement Korean-American Christian nurses must face in order to become senior medical missionaries. I was motivated to take on this study for several reasons.

First, I am a registered nurse; second, about eighteen years ago, I worked as a member of a Korean medical mission team for three years at *Good Samaritan Hospital* in Pakistan. The entire three years was a memorable learning experience and taught me to really appreciate the missionary lifestyle. Lastly, through my work experience, I found that many Korean-American Christian nurses are interested in participating in medical missionary service overseas, but have only a vague idea about the practical training involved. Conducting this research project, I would like Korean-American Christian nurses including myself to be empowered to keep our eyes fixed on becoming actual missionaries in the near future and after retirement.

As time does not wait for anyone, I thought it might be useful for people to learn pre-retirement the qualifications they might need to go overseas for mission service. I

believed that if the LAC and I gave them opportunities to learn about missionary work and theology that are needed in the mission field, this study would be a worthy investment for their future missionary work overseas. While young missionary candidates have time to develop these assets for missionary work, senior missionary candidates don't have as much time for preparation unless they receive training during pre-retirement.

Ever since I was young, I thought that I had a calling to go to a mission field. I made a decision at a young age to give my youth for the work of God. However, after three years of service in Pakistan, I reconsidered and told myself I wasn't ready to go on to a mission field as a middle-aged woman. I will be fifty years old next year and it hit me that half of my life has already gone away. I prayed that God would use my remaining time for the sake of the reign of Christ.

And so, as I prepared for the Doctor of Ministry project at Drew, considering that I wanted to challenge myself and other Korean-American Christian nurses to be used by God as missionaries in the future while working as nurses, the LAC and I conducted this research project. Furthermore, considering that I would like to help nurses ponder more deeply about the possibility of engaging in ministry in retirement - the second half of their lives - we hoped to equip them properly to become effective senior missionaries before they embark on medical missionary service overseas.

c. Scope of the Project

We limited the scope of the project were to ten Korean-American Christian nurses in New Jersey. I chose nurses who are over forty years old since they have lived nearly half of their lives and are able to now consider their retirement more seriously than

younger people.

The Advisory Committee of clergy and lay leaders participated to discern learnings, assist in the running of the project and evaluate project progress.

d. Characteristics of project participants: Korean-American Christian nurses in the Korean Unit at Bergen Regional Medical Center in New Jersey

For my research project, nurse participants were in their forties, fifties and sixties. Nurses in their forties and fifties belong to midlife adulthood and those in their late fifties through early seventies belong to mature adulthood.

Editor, John Roberto, in his book *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation* summarizes one of characteristics of midlife adults as:

Midlife adults are reflecting on “What are we spending and being spent for? What commands and receives our best time and energy? What causes, dreams, goals, or institutions are pouring out our life for... What are our most scared hopes, our most compelling goals, and purposes in life?”²

John Roberto also depicts one of characteristic of mature adults as:

Mature adults seek to be in service to others that is mission driven and can make a difference. They want to do to do things that give their lives purpose, meaning, and fulfillment. They want to know their contributions truly matter... mature adults seek spiritual growth in a time of significant life transitions and in a time when they are searching for meaning and purpose in life as they enter the second half of life and evaluating the things that really provide lasting fulfillment.³

Charles Handy is a visiting professor at the *London Business School* and consultant to a wide variety of organizations. He, in his book *The Age of Unreason*, also backs up John Roberto’s descriptions of mature adults:

The Third Age. As more and more middle-aged people discover that there is life beyond retirement, with real work to do, their values often shift. Having proved themselves in their work they now want to improve the lot

² John Roberto, ed., *The Seasons of Adults Faith Formation* (CT: LifelongFaith Associates, 2015), 146.

³ *Ibid.*, 147.

of others-by helping in education, in voluntary organizations, in sports, and community associations. Helping others becomes a way of giving new meaning to themselves.⁴

As these two notions of life stages show, the participants yearn deeply for spiritual fulfillment in their lives that can be practical and achievable. They do not want to waste their remaining lives by craving worldly pleasure. This makes training very important. Ultimately, this training is necessary to allow them to feel they can make useful contributions in the future.

After I selected ten Korean-American Christians nurses as the participants in my project, I pondered what kind of pre-qualifications they possessed in order to draw more comprehensive outcomes of the project. Although they were not yet missionaries, I believed they had qualifications superior to those of younger missionaries in certain areas.

As I was reminiscing about my overseas medical mission service as a young nurse missionary to Pakistan at the age of twenty-seven, I began to wonder about the differences between the qualifications for medical missionary work of senior Korean-American Christian nurses and younger missionaries in their twenties or thirties. As mentioned above, some young missionaries seem to have shortcomings, immaturity and struggles in various areas compared to senior missionaries, even though each young individual missionary has great qualifications and experiences. I, as a young missionary, have gone through similar experiences that many other young missionaries had as mentioned above.

⁴ Charles Handy, *The Age of Unreason* (Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press, 1990), 226.

I want to explain here why Korean-American Christian nurses have outstanding qualifications to become future senior missionaries from my experience as a young missionary. I would like share my journey as a medical missionary for three years in Pakistan at the age of twenty-seven. While I was in a six-month evangelical training course conducted by *Campus Crusade for Christ*, I heard that the organization was recruiting the second medical team to go work at *Good Samaritan Hospital* in Pakistan. I thought it was a calling from God to serve God as a medical missionary and I decided to join the team. I expected to receive more mission training prior to Pakistan since I considered myself an immature medical missionary. At that time, I had only one year of evangelical training and I couldn't speak English at all, which was a common language among the missionaries and many Pakistanis. What's more I had never been exposed to foreign culture except for a two-week mission trip in Taiwan, four weeks in the Philippines, and a week medical mission trip to Pakistan. Despite my lack of training and broken English, our team was sent to Pakistan for medical work one year after I signed to go. During the missionary work, our goal was to establish a hospital for the local Muslim patients. Every day was a struggle both physically and mentally for many of us but in spite of the hardships, we were able to accomplish our objective successfully. However, personally, I struggled a lot for my professional work as a nurse and there were times that I really doubted my calling as a medical missionary for Pakistan.

Except for two married missionary couples, our group stayed together as a team. I had to study both English and Urdu after finishing our daily medical work, which required a lot of energy and strength. Then I cooked for the team in turn and together, we visited various places in Pakistan. Frequent meetings for prayers and discussion did not

allow me to have sufficient personal ministry beyond medical work. I desired to have my own time for prayer, reading the Bible, having fellowship with my personal friends and most importantly, engaging in church ministry. For the team's sake however, I was not able to get my own downtime. I was very busy doing a variety of things, but I felt I was not doing what I actually wanted.

On top of that, I also had problems in interpersonal relationships due to my immaturity. Though I did not realize at that time, when I looked back, sometimes, I have great regret about what I did with both other missionaries and the locals and think I could have handled things differently.

Furthermore, I did not have much authority to suggest or speak out about my opinions regarding my personal and medical ministry. I just followed the goals and rules the team had set and endured all the conditions given to me whether I liked it or not.

Financial difficulty was also an issue I had to face every month. I did not have much time to raise funds before going to Pakistan. I hardly had any vacations during three years because my minimum expenses for living were barely met. I had to ask my missionary friend to lend me some money to go Singapore for a week of mental, spiritual and physical rest when I felt burnt out from the tough daily work routine. The workload each day in the hospital was heavy and tedious. I was dispensing medication to the patients in hot weather without a proper cooling system.

In addition, the culture shock was huge since I hardly had a chance to meet any foreigners beforehand. As a woman, it was stressful to live and work in an Islamic country where the women hardly walk outside without their male family's company and hardly work outside their homes. Once I went outside, many men on the streets, shops,

and the hospital stared at me with curious eyes. I was exposed to the public every day wherever I went.

Overall, I was unsatisfied with my personal ministry, though as a medical team we successfully and satisfactorily accomplished the project for the hospital. As the outcome of our hard work, the same medical mission service continues to have a huge influence on people in Pakistan. The service eventually expanded to a larger Christian hospital with several ancillary facilities.

Thoughts would run through my mind: “What if I received pre-missionary training with sufficient time and effective methods, what if I had less workload in the hospital and more free time for my personal ministry and what if I raised sufficient funds or had some financial stability before going to Pakistan, I would have not struggled as much and I could have lived and worked in Pakistan for a longer period of time.”

Therefore, as senior missionaries have some advantages over young missionaries in certain categories, I assumed that a Korean-American Christian nurses training program for future missionaries would be promising.

Evidently, between 1965 and the present, large numbers of Korean educated nurses have emigrated to the United States. Every emigration story told by the nurses was unique and touching. Many of the Korean-American Christian nurses emigrating to America were already Christians before they chose to come to America. They adjusted well to this diverse culture and society despite huge obstacles and challenges. They are now prominent members of Korean churches and are recognized as hard and trustworthy workers in the work place. Furthermore, mastering English for work was one of the difficult tasks they had to face. They had to pass English tests to apply for work permits

in the United States. Some people, when they immigrated to the United States, were not nurses but later on they studied in the United States and became nurses. They worked hard and diligently for their family and sent their children to prominent schools and they saved financial assets for future retirement. During their immigration and settlement, they successfully developed distinguished qualities to live and work as missionaries.

Through their lifetime, though they did not deliberately plan to get formal missionary training, they had already obtained many qualifications to become missionaries without realizing it. Therefore, once they receive additional training on top of the qualifications they already possessed, I was sure that they would become outstanding senior missionaries after retirement.

Sartia D. Gallagher, an assistant professor of religion at *George Fox University* writes that Abraham was identified as an immigrant and a stranger in the land. God commanded him to leave his country including his people and family to go to the land of God for he would be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3). God's promises were faithfully fulfilled just as God had promised. God said to Abraham that despite of all of the hardships he might have to endure, ultimately he would thrive. During his trip, Abraham faced enormous challenges including culture shocks, language barriers, family problems, work discrimination, and so on.⁵ As Abraham was called by God and brought to a foreign land, the Korean-American Christian nurses who immigrated to America share similar stories in their lives, where in the end, they were able to settle and multiply.

⁵ Sartia D. Gallagher, "Abraham on the Move," in *God's People on the Move: Biblical and Global Perspectives on Migration and Mission*, ed. Vanthanh Nguyen and John M. Prior (Pickwick Publications, 2014), 4.

e. Methodology

Action Steps and TimeLine

September 15- October 5, 2015: Recruiting the Lay Advisory Committee

Recruitment of persons to serve on the Lay Advisory Committee (LAC) began September of 2015. I chose six LAC members whom I know to be active in ministry in a variety of professional positions in churches and other arenas. They are described below.

Nisar Gill: a pastor and student of Doctor of Ministry at Drew, NJ

Rev. Song: a pastor in a Korean church and visiting pastor in Korean unit at Bergen Regional Medical Center, NJ

Lee Young: a deacon and nursing manager at Bergen Regional Medical Center, NJ

Heo JinSook: a pianist, deacon in a Korean church and ward clerk at Bergen Regional Medical Center, NJ

Kim HoJin: an elder, senior missionary and founder of Korean Unit at Bergen Regional Medical Center, NJ

Kim HeeJung: a nurse and executive secretary in a Korean NGO in Korea

October 10 2015

The LAC members and I met and designed pre and post interview questionnaires.

Phase 1: Recruiting the participants and conducting pre-interviews

December 21-30 2015

The LAC members and I recruited ten Korean-American Christian nurse candidates over forty years old in New Jersey to participate in the project. I informed them about details of the research, and the members and I also recruited speakers for each

session who had experience teaching in senior missions and medical missions. The members and I designed the teaching curriculum and prepared everything to fit the participant's needs.

January 1, 2016 – The first field work (Serving Korean traditional food on New Year's Day

Date and time of the field work: 10 a.m to 2 p.m, January 1, 2016

Field work location: Korean unit at Bergen Regional Medical Center, Paramus, NJ

Participants of the field work: seven nurses (Kim M, Lee J, Joung Y, Kim S, Park Y, Kang K, Noh S)

Most of the participants did not want to reveal their names in the project, so I used their initials.

Those seven nurses and I started the project by serving Korean traditional food for lunch on New Year's Day. Participants and I cooked and served a Korean traditional meal for the Korean elderly patients at *Bergen Regional Medical Center*. LAC members, other nurses, and hospital workers also donated money for food preparation.

It was the first official gathering for the project. Because Koreans celebrate January 1st as a national holiday festival, we decided to move the work to lunch time to allow all participants to spend their holiday with their families afterwards. Two LAC members, two nurse participants and other hospital workers did some grocery shopping on December 31, 2015 and prepared the necessary ingredients to cook. On January 1, 2016, in addition to the seven participants, some of the participants' family members

volunteered to help. Elderly patient's family members also helped with serving food. Around eighty patients were served that day.

After finishing serving food, the participants, LAC members and I met in the conference room and discussed how this event went; there was both positive and negative feedback, and some personal opinions from this experience. Also we discussed how this event could be improved for next year.

January 18- February 5, 2016

I conducted individual pre-interviews with the participants, in order to gather initial narratives. In Mary Clark Moschella's book, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice*, the author explains, "qualitative interviewing is one of the hallmark methods in ethnographic research."⁶ Sarah J. Tracy in her book, *Qualitative Research Methods*, states that "Qualitative interviews provide opportunities for mutual discovery, understanding, reflection, and explanation via a path that is organic, adaptive, and oftentimes energizing."⁷

In addition, I used the Ethnographic Research Method in *Narrative Research in Ministry* by Carl Savage and William Presnell whereby "using this method, the researcher becomes a 'participant observer' joining the faith community as a *kenotic*, or empty listener method."⁸ This method "involves 'being there' with people as they practice their religion."⁹ This method helped me to really observe and learn more about

⁶ Mary Clark Moschella, *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2008), 66.

⁷ Sarah J. Tracy, *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 132.

⁸ Carl Savage and William Presnell, *Narrative Research in Ministry: A Postmodern Research Approach for Faith Communities* (Louisville: Wayne E. Oats Institute, 2008), 108.

⁹ Mary Clark Moschella, 70.

project participants' practices while working together with them as nurses, in church services and in casual meetings, inside and outside of their homes.

I asked several questions in the pre-interview. The initial content of the pre-interview was about getting to know their personal life story in Korea, their spiritual journey, their dreams and goals, reasons for immigrating to America, and their motivations to become nurses. Then the content transitioned to their personal life stories in America, their work experience as nurses, their struggles, church involvement and spiritual activities. Most importantly, I asked about their retirement plans and asked whether they have an interest and possibility of working as medical missionaries after retirement.

The places for interviews were in cafés, participants' houses, my house, in cars, and in Korean unit at the hospital. The length of an interview was different for each member but it usually took more than three hours.

After the pre-interviews, I gave the participants' information to the LAC members and speakers in order for them to prepare and teach according to the participant's needs.

After the interviews, I distributed two books to the participants for use in our book discussion sessions. The first book was *Senior Mission* by Choi Chul Hee. The book, which was in Korean, provided insight and knowledge about overseas missions and senior missions. The second book was, *Mission Ventured: Dynamic Stories Challenging World* by Vivienne Stacy, which is translated into Korean. I prayed that, by reading about these eight women missionaries' lives and missions, this book would challenge the participants to have a vision of becoming missionaries. Then, we discussed their feelings, thoughts, and ideas about these two books when we met in the book discussion session.

Phase 2: The Main Teaching Sessions from February 8 to April 1

The LAC and I carried out the main teaching sessions during this period. We conducted the curriculum as noted below once every two weeks for several hours. Originally we planned to have two hour session for each session, but all of the sessions ended up lasting three to four hours. Because we had not, as yet, confirmed the schedules, it was hard to decide the exact date and time of each session. This was because some of the nurses whom we recruited at the *Bergen Regional Medical Center* in NJ, (where I also work) were unsure about their shift schedules during the project time. Due to our different work schedules, we carried out the sessions in small groups and sometimes on a one-to-one basis according to availability. The participants gathered together to share meals one hour before sessions or after sessions. After each session, we briefly shared about what we learned and felt during each session and stayed longer if we wanted to stay for extra fellowship. Because we work at the same work place, there were many common interests and problems related to our work and we discussed those matters as well. We also shared our individual stories and concerns. Though we used to get together for fellowship before the project, we did not have sufficient time to really talk to another. But after we began the project, we were able to talk a lot about our lives until very late during each session.

There was prayers combined with singing for fifteen minutes during each meeting. Originally I planned to conduct the book discussion sessions for twenty-five minutes after each session. However, the book sessions were held only two times and ended up lasting ten minutes in two sessions due to long teaching and question and answer times.

We recorded the teaching modules for those who were not able to attend the sessions. I also conducted supplementary teachings for those who were not able to attend the sessions individually or in small groups according to the nurses' availability. We used Korean as the main language since all the participants and speakers were Koreans. We translated the Korean into English in the pre-interview and post-interview phases.

Before each session, I sent information about each country and the locations where ministry took place to the participants in order for them to be more acquainted with them. It facilitated both the speakers and the participants to interact with each other more comfortably and deeply during the sessions.

Schedule of Teaching Sessions:

February 8-19

Date and time of the main teaching session: 5 p.m to 10 p.m, February 9, 2016.

Location of the session: One of the participant's home (Kim S) in Paramus, NJ; the same participant opened her house and prepared the food.

The topic of the session: God's mission- The biblical foundation and history of missionary work overseas.

Participants of the session: Six nurses (Huh S, Lee J, Kim S, Park Y, Kang K, Noh S)

Speaker of the session: Park SeungGil is a Korean itinerant missionary and retiree from his business. He does leadership training in several countries such as Vietnam, Myanmar, Pakistan, North Korea and South Korea. He is also deeply involved in senior missionary project, and leads senior missionary program in New Jersey.

He delivered the message about the biblical foundation and history of missionary work overseas for one hour and showed the film about his missionary work in various countries. Though he is not involved in medical mission service, he showed the reality of the medical services which are in very poor condition and how this condition could only get better through medical aid from other developed countries.

He and his wife delivered their testimonies about how God led them to become itinerant senior missionaries after their retirement. He emphasized his conviction that we ought not to waste time seeking for worldly pleasures and acting for personal family matters only. He challenged the participants to actually look forward to receiving an opportunity to serve God since the nurses have exceptional skills that God bestowed for the purpose of serving others and God. He also stressed that life is short and time is fleeting and we should do something worth leaving behind and dying for: serving God as missionaries at retirement. He also told us about the importance of daily personal devotion time together with our husbands and wives. These two senior missionaries prioritize their devotion time over anything else as a couple and this time of devotion motivates them to continue to do missionary work without becoming weary. Their teaching lasted for two hours. There was time for question and answer and the missionary couple answered our questions sincerely and practically. Then we shared each other's interests and curiosities about the teachings we had learned and shared personal stories with each other until late in the evening. Then there was book discussion time for ten minutes. I recorded this session and sent it to the participants and LAC members who did not attend this session to watch before we met them. I met with each member individually and met as small groups with additional teachings from February 10 to 19.

February 22-March 4

Date and time of main teaching session: 5 p.m to 10 p.m, February 25, 2016.

Topic of the session: God's missionary - The person God uses and the person to be prepared for the mission service.

Location of the session: One of the participant's home (Bae J) in Upper Saddle River, NJ. She opened her house and prepared the food.

Participants of the session: Six nurses (Bae J, Huh S, Lee J, Park Y, Kang K, Noh S)

Speaker of the session: Huh OkJa, a Korean-American nurse missionary, chose an early retirement and served for four years in a Korean Christian hospital in Ethiopia. The hospital is well established and well-organized with many staff members funded by a mega Korean church. Huh had to come back to New Jersey for her husband's medical treatment and she was not able to go back in order to take care of her ill husband for several years until eventually he passed away. While she was showing the film about her husband and her medical work back in Ethiopia, she cried a lot due to her husband who recently passed away only a few months before. We were able to sympathize with her since she immigrated to America as a nurse just like us. She served God as a senior missionary but was left alone, and now she is essentially seeking God's comfort and direction for her remaining life. Huh stated that she chose an early retirement because she felt like she was being too selfish if she chose a full retirement and worked as a missionary for a short period of time only. Since she believed that full retirement leaves only a little bit of time to work for God, she chose an early retirement thinking that she could work few more years for the purpose of serving God.

The speaker shared how nurse missionaries work in the hospital and illustrated how some nurse missionaries do not want their responsibilities to be limited to nursing and so constantly look for opportunities for other missionary work. She said that once the nurses volunteered to come to this hospital to work as nurses there were not many additional opportunities to work in other areas inside the hospital. Working hours were very long, mostly over eight hours each day for five days, sometimes six days of the week. After hearing the speaker's message, there was a heated discussion among the participants about medical ministry, nurse missionary work and other choices of ministry. The speaker motivated the participants to become involved in short-term medical service first and then pray for the possibility for long-term medical ministry after retirement. The positive aspect of working in this hospital is that the lodging, Korean food and some allowances are provided by a Korean church who established this hospital. On top of that, Ethiopia is considered a safe country as compared to other countries where there are instabilities and dangers due to religious and political realities.

There was a ten minutes book discussion session and fellowship over the dessert and coffee which continued until 10 p.m.

March 11 – The second field work ('Soup Kitchen')

Location of the second fieldwork: Homeless facility at Hackensack, NJ

Participants of the second fieldwork: Two nurses (Joung Y, Kang K)

Two participants and I joined a Soup Kitchen for homeless families at Hackensack, New Jersey. Originally, we planned April 10th for this field work, but due to sudden schedule adjustments, only two participants were able to attend. So I asked several church members to help prepare and distribute the food. These two participants

also participated in the New Year's Day fieldwork. Both before and after serving the food, we prayed together. After serving was complete, we went to a restaurant and shared about what we learned from it and how it could be improved for the next time if an opportunity arises.

March 7- 18

Date and time of the main teaching session: 5 p.m to 8 p.m, March 22, 2016.

Location of the session: One of the participant's church at Paramus, NJ

Participants of the session: five nurses (Lee J, Park S, Huh S, Kim S, Joung Y)

Topic of the session - God's calling individuals as senior missionaries in the twenty-first century - The calling and qualifications of a senior missionary and the cases in the mission field.

Speaker of the session: Hong HyngGi, a Korean missionary in Zambia and does church ministry.

After singing and praying, the speaker delivered a message about how this twenty-first century would urgently needs senior missionaries. He explained that the requirements and qualifications for today's mission field are quite different from before. He mentioned that there are many senior missionaries in Zambia and presented the examples of the various ministries that senior missionaries currently engage in. Furthermore, he educated us on how these senior missionaries came to Zambia and how their work has impacted the mission field. It was very practical and inspiring to know that many senior missionaries are working in the mission field where their previous professional occupations are effectively utilized. He also showed his film that mainly focused on church ministry for the locals in Zambia.

March 21-April 1

Date and time of the main teaching session: 3:30 p.m to 5 p.m, April 28, 2016.

Location of the session: The conference room in the Korean Unit at *Bergen Regional Medical Center*, Paramus, NJ.

Participants of the session: seven nurses (Lee J, Park S, Huh S, Kim S, Joung Y, Noh S, Bae J)

Topic of the session- The significance of a senior nurse missionary in the mission field and the medical mission.

Speaker of the session: There were two speakers. The first speaker, Lee Young, is my nursing manager and one of my LAC members. I was the second speaker.

Originally, I planned to invite a nurse missionary whose husband was a theological professor in a seminary in Pakistan. They came to the United States and currently live in New York. However, I was unable to invite them to the session due to their busy schedule. So I hurriedly, looked for a speaker and at the same time, I knew that my nursing manager was going to go Guatemala to spend a week of a short-term medical service. Before she went to Guatemala, I asked her to interview the missionary who was retired and went to Guatemala for missionary work. I gave her interview questionnaires in order to get full and accurate information about him and his ministry. After she came back, she presented her short-term medical mission trip experience and other missionaries' work by showing a documentary film and notes. Then she read senior missionary's testimony and the questionnaires I gave her to fill. The nursing manager is the one who wanted to go overseas for mission service after retirement and who gave me insights for my research project title.

I presented my missionary work that was done eighteen years ago and the current medical work at *Good Samaritan Hospital* in Pakistan. I showed the documentary film and the interviews with the medical missionaries. There was a huge contrast between the past medical work which consisted of a small medical group with a small outpatient clinic and current medical work with a huge hospital with many medical missionaries including local workers. Visiting with medical service in the neighborhood around the hospital with a proper medical van is more useful for the locals who are not able to come to the hospital. This system is also useful and for people who live further away and require a visiting medical service system. In addition, several sponsors had donated some pieces of advanced medical equipment. I heard from my missionary friends that hospital work has a great impact on the Muslims who live near the hospital and the medical services are well known among people in that region despite several temporary closings of the hospital for safety from possible terrorist attacks. I presented the opportunity for short-term medical service, intermittent medical service and a long-term medical service. There are also computer classes and factory work inside the hospital compound so that the Muslims and Christians are able to get a job after they completed training. These various ministry fields gave more choices for the participants for their future ministry with their family members.

Phase 3 : Final Evaluation

April 18-29

The LAC and I conducted individual post-interviews with the participants. We analyzed and compared/contrasted both pre-interviews and post-interviews in order to

draw conclusions about how my project ultimately affected their lives and assess their interest in serving as senior medical missionaries after retirement.

I asked several questions in the post-interview and project evaluation phases. Unlike pre-interview questions which consisted of one LAC member and I writing down what participants were saying at the spot, instead, in the post-interview, I asked the participants to take the interview questionnaires to their homes and answer the questions in order to give them more time to think over and write down what they had learned from this project. When they were done, one LAC member and I collected the questionnaires and read them through and we interviewed them again individually. The main contents of the post-interview questionnaires were the changes in their view of their own spirituality, new discovery, knowledge and insights about themselves, retirement plans and overseas missionary service. Mostly importantly, the post-interview questions explored their specific plans of jumping into mission training and preparations for overseas missionary service as senior medical missionaries after retirement.

CHAPTER 4

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

In keeping with the purpose of the project, we asked: Has the project challenged the participants' views of post-retirement service? Have we created circumstances and settings in which the nurses might ponder the second half of their lives and how their retirements might be enriched by missionary service? Did project outcomes include changes in the knowledge, experience or skill sets of the participants?

Furthermore, the LAC and I used two parts to our notion of evaluation which were observing change and discerning transformation as outlined by Carl Savage and Bill Presnell in *Narrative Research in Ministry*:

We see a form of evaluation that consists of two distinct parts. One part is observing change. This first part is fairly straight forward; you compare the state of the context prior to a new ministry intervention and afterward. In a sense, this part of evaluation is only a measurement process. Has there been change in activity, habits, stories told, etc.? The second part is discerning transformation. The definition of transformation is "a marked change, as in appearance or character, usually for the better. The latter part of this definition is critical in this understanding of the purpose of evaluation-discerning transformation toward a preferred future.¹

In addition, the LAC members and I utilized the functional approach for project evaluation. Carl Savage and Bill Presnell in *Narrative Research in Ministry* define the functionalist approach as:

How the combining narratives of the context fit together pre-and post-project. This perspective seeks to discern how parts of a context might fit together differently now. It builds on the sense that if one component

¹ Carl Savage and William Presnell, 124.

system is changed, that change affects the whole. While this perspective can be used in a deterministic way, it also allows for the researcher to discern ‘unintended’ consequences that many have emerged by the programmed initiatives.²

I believed that the functional approach could serve as a productive resource evaluation of this project. Through the collection of narratives throughout the duration of the project, I hoped the LAC members and I would be able to evaluate how the combining narratives of the context fit together before and after the project. It was also helpful to see how the nurses reacted to the pre-project field work (Korean lunch at the hospital) and then compared that to their reaction to the post project field work (Soup Kitchen). Through observing the participants’ conversations during each sessions and fellowships and comparing pre-interviews and post-interviews, I hoped the LAC members and I would be able to reach to the project’s effects for evaluation.

The evaluation phase also led me to see and evaluate positive and negative effects of the project initiatives on these ten participants. I had not seen these effects before the project as a researcher/participant/evaluator. As we saw earlier:

The second part is discerning transformation. The definition of transformation is “a marked change, as in appearance or character, usually for the better. *The latter part of this definition is critical in this understanding of the purpose of evaluation-discerning transformation toward a preferred future.*”³

The LAC and I also listened to see if indeed transformation had occurred in the narratives we gathered from our participants. Savage and Presnell indicate that transformation is “usually for the better”, but results may vary. For example, a good indicator might be to see how they interact with the first ministerial activity and then,

² Ibid., 128.

³ Ibid., 124. Emphasis mine.

after their interaction with the books and discussion, how they respond to the second ministry opportunity. Certainly, their intellectual understanding of ministry will probably change, but will their desire to engage in ministry have been transformed? That remains to be seen. We were aware the project would yield results, not necessarily success or failure.

a. Impact of the Project upon the Ten Korean-American Nurse Participants

By the end of the project, all purposes that we intended were fully achieved based on final evaluations. This project was able to challenge the participants' points of view towards post-retirement service and to build an environment which started to convince some of the nurses to give serious thoughts about enriching the second half of their lives by engaging in missionary services overseas. Furthermore, the project resulted in changes in the knowledge, experience and skill sets of the participants.

The ultimate goal of the project was to observe whether this study had any sort of positive impact on participants. One of the key methods that was used to identify any transformation among participants was to compare the pre-interview with post-interview documentation.

One LAC member and I initiated the project by gathering narratives through individual interviews. Conducting pre-interviews was a great opportunity for us to get to know each person more in depth. Participants decided to open up and started to talk about anything that was related to the topic. They spoke about their general backgrounds, daily lives, financial situations, current spiritual levels, stories of their family members and even their childhood memories. Although we all work at a same hospital as nurses and had numerous conversations with another, we actually never had a chance to share each

other's unspoken story. During pre-interviews, many participants mentioned how this was the first time they had an opportunity to speak about themselves to another person. One of my intentions from the project was to offer these participants an opportunity to re-think about themselves, to discover new things about themselves and eventually to rekindle their first love for God.

All participants expressed their experience with the pre-interview similarly by saying that it was essentially a great healing session for them as they were able to have full conversations about their entire lives including some of the stories that they had heretofore, never shared. In addition, they all said this was also their first time being asked to share about their faith stories. While one LAC member and I were hearing each participant's feedback, it was interesting to see how diverse their experiences were. One participant said that this was simply like a time when she was giving her testimony. Another person mentioned that this allowed her to feel much better about herself after she got to realize her original purpose of living in America again. Even though all participants were satisfied in the end, there were some participants who were either worried or scared about opening up at first. One participant was trying to avoid answering back with genuine answers by redirecting the conversation towards the overview of her life. But once we made her feel more comfortable and slowly evoked her deeper feelings, she finally poured out all her true stories including certain stories that did not exactly match the word "happiness." Most of the participants sincerely appreciated this session for giving them courage to talk about themselves freely. The pre-interview questions the LAC members and I generated not only encouraged them to ponder about their current spiritual status, but also guided them to take action towards the work of God.

While proceeding with the project, I noticed how quickly and easily these nurses built strong bonds with one another. Whenever participants had time to talk at work, most of the topics were regarding their personal interests, problems, gossips and money. At the end of the day, it was a workplace and was not the best location to manifest about spiritual levels or personal matters. However, after we officially launched the project, I was able to witness that the main topics were gradually shifting. This was a touching experience especially for me. The atmosphere at work was becoming more intimate, and this led to fewer conversations about materialistic subjects and more people feeling comfortable enough to have more discussions related to anything about their faith or overseas missionary work. Overall, my project positively influenced the participants and contributed to minor but actually crucial changes at work. Furthermore, participants eagerly came up with ideas such as creating annual short-term overseas mission trips or funding other mission teams. Starting from changing the usual conversation topics at work, they successfully demonstrated their enthusiasm and full support for this project.

One afternoon during our break time at work, some of the nurses suggested that they should immediately start supporting other nurses who are planning to make short-term mission trips. As they all agreed upon that idea, they took the initiative by contributing their collected money to the nursing manager who already decided to go to Guatemala for such a mission trip. Even after the project ended, they did not stop and continuously showed their support to other people who were going on either short-term or long-term overseas mission trips. In order to increase the donation amount, participants reached out to other nurses for donations. Fortunately, many people understood the good cause and helped out the participants by donating money.

Another good outcome from the project was transformation of participant's thoughts on mission trip experience presentations. The only place where participants are exposed to any type of presentation about short or long-term mission trips is at their Churches. But after they viewed the Guatemala presentation from the nursing manager and my presentation during our last session, they realized that these stories were just as inspirational as the ones they see at Church. Thus, they felt the need to conduct sessions that presented the mission trip experience to other non-participant nurses. These positive changes in our Korean unit are definitely some of the desired results of the project.

Prior to the project, other participants and I all thought that we were aware of each other's spiritual level and knew who were devoted Christians or not. But just like the adage: "*don't judge a book by the cover*", some participants whom we all believed were not really devoted Christians, actually turned out to be very passionate Christians. For example, there was one occasion when one of the participants (Huh S), a sixty-two year old Catholic Christian, surprised me by asking multiple questions about medical missionary work overseas and showed a lot interest in work of God during one of the sessions. Then she stated that she always felt the spiritual hunger inside but never had a chance to express that side of herself to people at work. However, since she got to truly express her thoughts on medical missionary work overseas, she became more involved with it. Her opinion towards overseas medical work for the poor was positive and she was willing to carry this out either here in America or in other foreign countries. As the project was proceeding, I was able to see her thoughts heading towards a path that I thought would be both meaningful and satisfying. In her pre-interview, she said she would like only to spend her retirement influencing her grandchildren in terms of

becoming devoted Catholic Christians. But in her post-interview, she mentioned that she felt ashamed of only thinking about her grandchildren and decided pay closer attention to other people who are in need. Furthermore, she wanted to set a great example of being a devoted Catholic Christian to her grandchildren by serving others, allowing her to fulfill her wishes. Then she quickly came up with bunch of ideas about how she is planning to help others. Her realistic plans were getting involved in church volunteer work, donating funds, and going on short-term medical mission trips. She specifically wanted to go on a short-mission trip with her grandchildren to help them experience directly how there are too many people in need around the world. Instantly, she began carrying her plans out by regularly donating money to a Catholic world missionary service team. When she was asked about longer-term missionary service overseas after retirement, she answered she cannot make any promises at the moment but at the same time, she said that she is praying to actually allow it to happen because she understood how this experience could be special.

Five participants (Suh E, Kim S, Huh S, Lee J, Noh S) desired to keep this group going even after the project ended because they wanted to be alert continuously to overseas missionary work. In addition, they suggested great ideas about what kind of ministry the group should focus on. They were not able to come up with a final conclusion of their future plans, but they felt obligated in a positive way to help others as nurses.

After missionary speakers finished their presentations during main teaching sessions, participants seemed to be interested in the countries (Myanmar, Ethiopia, Zambia, Guatemala and Pakistan) where the speakers had completed their missionary

work. Before each missionary gave their individual presentations, I gathered information about these five countries: their population, religion, language, economy, politics and culture. I hoped to educate the participants so they would understand the presentations better. All five countries shared at least one common aspect, which was lack of medical support. Most of the participants were glad that they had the opportunity to learn about these countries because it guided them to look closer and pray for those who are in need. One nurse (Noh S) said that this experience cleared her mind and showed her the right path in terms of choosing her work as a missionary and the location she would like to serve. She said that she is very much interested in medical ministry at a Korean hospital in Ethiopia.

Each fellowship session was definitely valuable and memorable. Participants devoted a lot of their time and energy preparing for various events that we planned. They got ready for field work, prepared a traditional Korean dish for Korean elderly patients at *Bergen Regional Medical Center* in New Year's, and held the Soup Kitchen for homeless families at Hackensack, New Jersey. They confessed that this was one of the most beautiful fellowship experiences they ever had with their co-workers. This was a perfect opportunity for participants to get closer with another even more as they worked hard with one purpose together.

Two of our participants hosted some of the sessions at their homes, where it was warm and cozy. Both of their houses served as great locations for a small group of participants to sit down and focus on learning from the speakers. Having these sessions at their homes turned out to be a good decision, not only because their husbands prepared food for the group but also because the husbands also were able to listen to the speaker.

Through these sessions, I was able to spot improvements in their relationships as husband and wives. These two participants stated that their husbands actually encouraged them to continue to be involved with the project. They told me that they offered their homes for the meetings since they wanted to bring up their retirement plans, with their husbands more easily, a notion which was similar to the goal of the project.

Nine out of ten participants (Bae J, Huh S, Lee J, Park Y, Kang K, Noh S, Joung Y, Kim S, Suh E) confessed that their views on their own spirituality changed. In post-interviews, they opened up about how they felt closer to God now in comparison to the time of the pre-interview and as their relationship with God was becoming deeper, they realized they needed to pray to God for divine guidance. They also told me that they developed a strong confidence in God that God already has a wonderful plan for now and for the future after retirement. One participant (Kim S) started to have family devotion time together after having been inspired by the itinerant missionary couple. Two other participants (Park Y, Noh S) stated that they have not started devotion time with their family members yet but they wish to start soon with their families although their husbands and children do not seem to be interested.

Nine of the participants (Bae J, Huh S, Lee J, Park Y, Kang K, Noh S, Joung Y, Kim S, Suh E) said that they were very much challenged by the book called, "*Senior Mission*," written by a senior missionary, Choi ChulHee. They acknowledged the fact that the twenty-first century needs help from senior missionaries, including themselves. Some members offered to buy the book and planned to donate it to people who might benefit from reading it. On the other hand, all participants agreed that the content of the

second book was boring and not inspiring. Due to poor ratings of the second book, three of the participants did not finish reading it.

Meeting with three different missionary speakers with diverse teaching material as a small group was a rare experience for most of the participants. Some even pointed out that it was their first time ever speaking with missionaries. In the past, they had encountered mission deputations at their churches but they were not often put in situations where they actually spoke with the missionaries. Through this project, participants were able to spend a good amount of time with the missionaries, sharing meals with them, listening to their lives as missionaries and their accomplishments and had the opportunity to ask multiple questions. Based on the questions they asked, I realized that a lot of the participants were also interested in the missionary's lives outside of the missionary work itself. They were curious about other family members' lives, how they educate their children and how they deal with financial situations.

Since four people of the group were Catholics who have never been to a Protestant Church previously, they had a lot of questions about Protestant beliefs and doctrines. Both sides began sharing their beliefs and compared the differences between the two. They particularly compared the priest's and nun's ministry in the mission field with pastors and missionaries in the mission field. It was a fun and great experience to gather together to discuss the differences.

In pre-interviews, all participants stated that they were not aware of their hidden qualifications as a missionary. They responded by saying they were not worthy of becoming missionaries and believed that only people who possess excellent qualifications could go overseas for missionary service. However, nine of the participants informed us

that inspirational messages from the books they read and teachings from the missionary speakers convinced them that they have acquired excellent qualifications over time, particularly for the medical mission field. Those nine people said that it was God's plan for them to become nurses whether they wanted to or not. These participants have one thing in common: they were able to overcome all kind of difficulties and successfully settle in the United States of America as nurses, deacons and elders. Discovering new and hidden talents through this project was quite amazing.

However, one participant (Kim M), in post-interview, she thought that she was not worthy of becoming a senior missionary but she emphasized that she will partake more in Catholic volunteer services as much as she can. During the project, though she agreed to participate in the project, she was not able to participate in most of the teaching sessions due to her family matters. She watched the recorded teaching session videos.

As I made efforts continuously to fill the participants with courage and confidence about themselves, I was hoping I could direct them to search for a new vision of their retirement plans. Nine participants understood through teachings from missionary speakers that senior missionaries hold many advantages over young missionaries. Then there was a time when they initiated a discussion about becoming senior missionaries after retirement. Having conversations about the benefits of working as senior missionaries, and imaging what they will do realistically, improved their awareness of why senior missionaries are better in certain aspects. But they also did not forget to talk about the disadvantages that senior missionaries have over young missionaries.

In the middle of the project, I suggested that all participants imagine themselves as senior missionaries after retirement and thoroughly brainstorm about what kind of

concerns they might have. This exercise motivated them to think more specifically about how they will prepare in order to prevent any potential problems. Furthermore, my suggestion led the participants to have open conversations about difficulties or conflicts of which they thought. There were many concerns that came up, such as the possibility of being assigned to inappropriate responsibilities, not having set vacation dates, not possessing enough strength to endure discomfort, having to work for extended hours, having doubts on local housing, not knowing how much money is needed and a lot more.

Most participants were especially worried about the poor living conditions and were concerned that the area might not be safe. On top of that, they were also concerned about how long-term mission trips in poor countries could possibly ruin their health. As discussion continued, there was a rising debate between some of the participants on how workload should be distributed among senior and young missionaries. Five people agreed that considering their age, seniors should have less work than young missionaries but the other two believed that seniors who are capable of going on overseas medical mission service should be healthy enough to handle the same amount of work.

Key reasons participants were reluctant to go overseas for missionary service were that they feared the possibility of having to go through a traumatic experience, like a terrorist attack and they were very against staying in horrible living environment. All of them expressed the same fear and they absolutely did not want to end their lives while doing missionary work in a foreign country. Although they still mentioned fear towards dangerous countries or cities during their post-interviews, learning about existence of the safe destinations for missionary work and their decent living conditions helped them to have positive feelings about going overseas for mission service. If senior missionaries

decide to go overseas for missionary work, they have a choice to select a country and its living conditions. In addition, if one falls ill while on a missionary work, he or she could easily return to the United States for treatment. Educating the participants with this information helped ease participants' fears and boosted their confidence about participating in missionary service overseas.

They particularly liked the overseas medical missionary work and practical advice given by missionary Huh OkJa. She told them that before going to Ethiopia, the expenses for supplementary medical insurance in America were paid monthly and later when she returned, it covered most of the bills for her medical treatments. As she left for Ethiopia with her husband, she took care of her house by renting it out to another family and as a result, she was able to keep her house and make extra money for her family. By listening to each step that Huh OkJa took to go to Ethiopia, participants familiarized themselves with an actual process that it takes to go overseas for missionary service. In terms of staying away from medical missionary work and revitalizing her energy occasionally, she said she used to travel with her husband near Ethiopia without worrying about money. This opportunity in general contributed to guiding the participants to go overseas for medical mission service without thinking about all sorts of concern. Two participants spoke about how it will be great to go overseas for safe missionary work to certain areas where at least the basic structure of a hospital is set up so they could work just as they do now as nurses in America.

While conducting post-interviews, seven people (Bae J, Huh S, Lee J, Park Y, Kang K, Noh S, Kim S) said that their final decision to go overseas for missionary work really depends on their husbands' opinion although they are determined to go themselves.

If for some reason their husbands disagree with their going overseas, then they felt that they would not be able to go. They also mentioned that even persuading their husbands to move to the U.S in the first place was hard. Thus, they knew asking to go overseas for missionary service after retirement together could be much tougher. But some participants did not back down and said it is their responsibility to convince their husbands to get involved in missionary work from now on. Five of the participants wondered what kind of missionary work their husbands could engage in the medical field and suggested that they could have other tasks in which they could perform well.

One nurse (Noh S) told a story about the first time she talked to her husband and sons about her interest, held for a long time, in going overseas for medical missionary work after retirement. Unfortunately, her family was against it and directly told her not to go. On a positive note, the project motivated her to bring up her true wishes and dreams to her family even though she knew already what they would say. Otherwise, she would not have expressed her feelings about missionary work overseas to her husband and sons at all. She told them about characteristics of senior missionary work to educate them properly. Then she assured them that missionaries are not required to go to dangerous cities and people do not have to risk their lives every time. She also told them that they could go to a country near America and thus be able to go back and forth more easily. She does not expect her family members to change their minds abruptly and understands that it will take a good amount of time for them to agree with her idea. Hoping that God will open the door to use them for the spread of Christianity, she said that she will pray harder than ever. She believes that eventually, God will prepare their hearts by the time she reaches retirement age.

Another person (Park Y), who was a teacher in Korea before being a nurse in America, expressed her frustrations about her husband's lukewarm spiritual life and wondered if her husband will ever take his faith seriously. She is willing to follow her husband to go overseas for mission service if her husband shows any kind of interest. But at the moment, she said that she will just have to pray for her husband. She always wished to work for missionaries' kids in the U.S and she is praying that one day she could buy a mission center to make it happen. She said:

I know I am reaching for the stars and understand that this dream might not even be achievable at all with my capabilities, I still do not want to settle for something else. I honestly do not know why I have this kind of wishes and dreams. If I could go overseas for missionary service after retirement, I would like to engage in ministry for missionaries' kids in one of the Asian countries. But this is assuming that my husband was ready for missionary work too. I really wanted to spend the second chapter of my life as itinerant missionary couples do. Particularly, their emphasis on organizing daily family devotion time together really touched my heart but at the same time got me sad a little bit since our family do not live like that. I deeply agreed with their opinion on how having daily devotion time could lead to a successful missionary life. I will start by conducting a daily devotion time alone and later on I will ask my husband to join me.

Eight of the participants (Bae J, Huh S, Lee J, Park Y, Kang K, Joung Y, Kim S, Suh E) told me that their retirement plans are becoming solidified with help from this project. Prior to the project, they either had no plans for their retirement or had only vague ideas that changed constantly. But after being involved with the project, they stated that they wish to plan for serving God and others by going overseas for missionary work after they retire. They said that they would do short- term missionary trips from now on. This project gifted them with an ability to visualize and construct specific retirement plans step by step with excitement and enthusiasm.

One participant (Kim M) said that although she learned about the importance and worthiness of serving God and those who are in need, she is still hesitant about going on a short-term mission trip. But she promised that she will pray and give full support to missionaries from U.S.

During pre-interviews, three people said they did not give any serious thoughts to life after retirement until this project began. One participant (Kang K), a forty-four years old Catholic Christian nurse, thought it was too early for her to prepare for retirement and believed that thinking about life after retirement only applies for people who are approaching retirement age. She said:

To me, retirement is still too far way for me to think about the plan now. I am very busy all the time and sometimes even feel overwhelmed from my current responsibilities and obligations. There are way too many things I encounter in a daily basis, and right now my imminent task is to send my son to a good college in few years. When we are talking about retirement, I think of my oldest sister as her time is approaching. She recently sold her big house to move into a smaller house for her retirement. I also see her traveling here and there occasionally and participate in church work. So far, that is basically the only thing I can think about for retirement life. From the bottom of my heart, as a Catholic Christian, I want to at least spend rest of my life doing something meaningful after I retire but I just do not know what and how I am going to do it yet.

During her post-interview, she answered the question about how this project changed her view of retirement. She narrated in this way:

After I attended most of the sessions, I realized that retirement is actually not much far way. I counted the years left before retiring and it was a little bit less than 25 years. I want to get old with dignity and do not want to become a useless human being with no purpose in life. This project demonstrated many aspects of senior medical mission after retirement and I totally agreed that this project changed my view on seniors, and gave me another option on what I can do in the future, that is serving the poor in overseas. Contributing in medical service in a poor country can be one of the meaningful life after retirement and I may not go overseas for mission service for full or long time but I want to do a short term mission service regularly, a few times a year and I am very much interested in children

health care education. When I see children in poor countries, my heart aches so much that I really want to help them. So I am convinced that I will help them a lot after retirement. Now, I will start by donating some money to help children in overseas and I will look for any opportunity to be involved in Catholic overseas mission services which I never were interested in.

With regard to getting mission training, in post-interviews, four participants (Lee J, Noh S, Kim S, Joung Y) desired to enter a mission training program while still working as nurses. They demonstrated their passion towards medical missionary service overseas and said they will attend short-term mission training as frequently as possible. One participant (Noh S) who had sought to go overseas for missionary work after retirement previously, explained in her post-interview that though she received discipleship training for three months a few years back, her eagerness and vision were gradually fading away as time passed by. However, she said this project was a good reminder that alerted her not to lose her vision towards missionary work overseas in the future and to actively search for mission service training once again. Some LAC members, Noh S and I actually gathered to discuss which mission organization would be a good fit and scheduled the mission service training for her. Another nurse (Joung Y) opened up about her interest in getting proper mission service training by one of the Korean mission organizations. But she was not able to pursue her interest herself, therefore, the other participants and I met up to help her find both online and offline training program in America. She decided to join the mission service training that we found soon after the project ends. She requested sincere prayers from other participants to give her the strength to not be shaken by any circumstances and to move forward with her decision. A third nurse participant (Lee J) said she is going to join online theological studies after she completes her studies for a Masters of Herbal Medicine degree next year. In her pre-interview, she answered that she

did not think about her retirement life in detail yet, but she wished to serve God by helping the poor. Her wishes seemed to be vague but she was sure she did not want to waste her life chasing after worldly pleasure anymore. During the project, she discussed her retirement plans with her husband and her two daughters. Her family told her they needed time to pray about it and if God guides them to do missionary work overseas, they will happily accept it. Lastly, she pointed out that God must have a separate plan for her since God moved her heart to study for a Masters of Herbal Medicine degree at a mature age.

In terms of being seniors, all participants had a negative point of view towards aging and believed that aging was an ugly part of life that often leads to sickness and feeling worthless. They said their thoughts were significantly affected by their workplace since they deal with elderly patients who are both mentally and physically sick every day. However, during our post-interviews with all members, it seemed as if their point of view has changed a bit. They understood that aging is a natural process and it could turn out to be beautiful and graceful if they set their mind to it. Instead they recognized how real ugliness is shown from the people who waste away time meaninglessly. All participants said that they thought deeply on aging beautifully in all aspects. They often get to see many elderly patients who are just extending their lives because their children want them to live longer whether they suffer or not. Not a single participant wanted to live in that manner. They do not want to become a burden to their families but want to be remembered as wise wives, heartwarming mothers, and devoted Christians when their time is up. On the other hand, they also get to see other elderly people who always stay involved with any type of work such as leading Bible studies, visiting sick people and

raising their grandchildren well. These participants desire to age beautifully by following their example of doing God's work. But there are some participants who also value outer beauty just as much as inner beauty. They try to stay beautiful on the outside by working out regularly and receiving a wide range of cosmetic treatments.

Prior to the project, one participant (Joung Y) was often concerned about her aging skin and used to talk about getting a facial lift done to look younger all the time. In her pre-interview, she said that she used to care and think about missionary work overseas back when she was young, but all the stress she got from her nursing work and several family problems had blinded her first love towards God slowly. Soon after she drifted apart from God, she started to be occupied by her appearance and other secular thoughts. During her post-interview, she confessed that she has to do something to get away from anything that led her to be occupied with secular pursuits. She said that she is ready to accept the nature of aging and wishes to age gracefully by seeking the work of God. She stated that learning about aging faithfully changed her mind in a positive way and she appreciated that this project rekindled her forgotten commitment to God.

Comparing the results from the two field experiences (serving Korean traditional food on New Year's Day for the Korean elderly patients at *Bergen Regional Medical Center* and working in a Soup Kitchen for homeless families at Hackensack, New Jersey), I could assess how participants were transformed through these project activities. Two of the participants who did not ponder upon their retirement plans before the project showed major changes. One person (Kang K), a Catholic believer, and the other (Joung Y), a Protestant believer, shared mutual feelings about helping others. When they participated in the first fieldwork, they were not fully aware of senior missionary work

overseas and retirement plans. But attending the project teaching sessions made them feel like they became more useful as persons. Both felt this satisfaction even more after the second fieldwork was finished. Although the project offered only two days of fieldwork, both participants said they felt they were getting closer to God through serving others and wanted to be part of the project consistently. They all agreed that the satisfaction they got from the work of God was quite different from the satisfaction they felt at work. They stated that they will continue to help others who are in need in America as of right now and will expand their vision to serve others overseas after they retire.

When ten participants were asked to identify the definition of a nurse, eight participants defined the word nurse as a calling from God to do the divine will. One participant (Bae J) chose nursing as a mature adult because she could not resist her desire to work in the medical field. She said, through this project, that nursing is not a just a profession, but also an official calling from God to help others. She believes that there is a reason she was guided by God to become a nurse and one day God will definitely show her what she really has to do. Though she was worried about her health conditions and inability to work in poor environments, she said she will not give up going overseas for medical mission service. As long as her health remains stable, she wants to follow God's calling and do whatever it takes. In order to perform the work of God for a long period of time, she preferred going to a place where she would be able to adjust to the environment and stay healthy.

This project started with an assumption that senior missionaries have a major advantage over younger missionaries due to their freedom from financial burdens in most cases. Most of the seniors worked hard in their professional lives, have regular pensions

and social security, and also were able to save a good amount of money. However, one of the participants (Kim S), who became a nurse only five years ago, articulated that she was an exemption from this assumption. She said that many nurses who are going to retire have financial stability, which would allow them go overseas for missionary work without concern about financial shortages. However, she disagreed with the assumption that most seniors are free from financial burdens. She is going through financial instability herself due to her husband's business setbacks that occurred a few years ago. At that point, her wishful thoughts about post-retirement life were suddenly destroyed. She had to sell her beautiful home in a nice neighborhood and move to a small apartment in a different town where she never lived before. She was originally just a housewife but had to become the person who brings food to the table due to her husband's long period of unemployment. But a positive outcome she witnessed from this suffering is a transformation in her husband's heart. Her husband started to have a vision for mission service overseas and received a senior mission program last year. He was in Tanzania for a short-term mission trip and wishes to go back again when he is able. When her husband asked her to join the senior mission program, she strongly refused because she was still deeply resentful with her husband for all the difficult situations she had to go through to pay the bills. During her first few years as a nurse, she was constantly upset and always stressed about what had happened to her life. In her post-interview, she confessed that she was arrogant to her husband but now she accepted that it was her time to take care of him. She realized that God allowed this circumstance to show her a new chapter in life and through this project she finally decided to receive senior mission training. When she invited the participants to cook in her home for the project, she said her husband was very

surprised and touched by the fact that everyone was passionate about senior missionary work. During the project, she said she got to discuss their future with her husband and decided to receive the senior mission training that her husband had taken. Also, this couple started to have a devotion time together and decided to put the rest of their lives in God's hand.

b. Impact of Project upon the Researcher, LAC members, and Others

Impact upon the Researcher

In examining my leadership style at an earlier stage of the project, I acknowledged I initially doubted my capability to begin the project and did not believe that I had enough confidence in my leadership skills to carry this project out.

While I was planning this project, I feared that some of my co-workers were going to refuse to participate because I hardly ever ask my co-workers to do something for me. I was concerned that if some of them did not participate, it might affect our relationships. In addition, I was worried about people dropping out in the middle of the project. When I made decided to launch my project with co-workers, there were several concerns in my head. During the project, people could have different opinions and might start arguing with each other to a point where their relationships could be damaged. The majority of the participants and Lay Advisory Members are people who work in the Korean unit in my hospital. Therefore, their influence in the Korean unit is significant whether positive or not. It was the first time ever that a research project was conducted in our Korean building with ten nurse participants.

In each meeting, I sensed that some participants were reluctant to attend the meetings even though we had agreed on the meetings previously. I was stressing out about how I might have put too much burden on my co-workers as I continuously

encouraged them to participate. Fortunately, they kept their word and attended the meetings we had unless they faced emergencies. Participants happened to know my struggles from this project and came to encourage me by telling me that they put their private work aside to prioritize my project. I am still thankful for their commitment to my project.

The impact of my leadership skills upon the Local Advisory Committee was also worth noting. Some of the committee members expressed great admiration for the intentions behind the project idea. Also, I was able to recognize the capabilities of the committee members that could potentially enhance the implementation of the project. Their insights were timely and their aptitude for processing information afforded me enough breathing room to focus on other aspects of the project.

Taking full charge of the project was a tough challenge to my shy introverted personality. Knowing that I am not the charismatic leader type of person, leading the committee members and all the participants towards my ultimate goal was not an easy task. To carry out the project more smoothly, I realized that it was beneficial for me to go outside my character to be more outgoing and outspoken. By pushing myself to improve my weaker attributes, I can say that I acted more like a real facilitator for the project. Since I was a nurse just like the other participants, I understood their needs and frustrations as a co-worker and a friend. I realized sharing common experiences could open up peoples' feelings so many people in the group came to tell me freely about their deeper concerns. These actions motivated me to become a trustworthy leader on whom they could rely. After I found out that people could approach me easily, I was glad to be

able to serve them with comfort and trust while guiding them to engage deeper in the project under my direction.

As facilitator of the project, as the project progressed, my role evolved. I took on the tasks of equipping, motivating, and providing information to the participants and LAC members for their successful engagement with the project. Keeping the project moving while maintaining a positive attitude throughout was my core responsibility to keep others motivated.

Members of the Advisory Committee graciously shared their evaluative comments with me regarding my performance on the project. They noted that I set my objective clearly about my hopes for the project. The LAC's evaluation of the process mentioned that it was well structured to be carried out effectively. In their evaluation of the candidate, they noticed that I was able to articulate a clear purpose for the Doctor of Ministry project since they knew that this is an area in which I was very much interested. The LAC was unanimous in its opinion that the project had benefited the participants.

One of the personal benefits from this project was that I was able to meet many sincere Christians. When I chose the title of my project, I sought to find a way to get sufficient information about senior missionary work overseas. I read several books, articles, journals and went through various websites that described overseas senior mission service after retirement. While I was searching for websites, I found a *Korean Senior Mission Organization* in New Jersey with the aim to train and equip seniors to become missionaries. When I attended the training program which was held at a Korean church, I happened to know one of the leaders, Jeon HoJin, who later agreed to become one of my Advisory Committee members. Coincidentally, he is the founder of the Korean

unit at *Bergen Regional Medical Center* where I work. Even though I often saw him in the Korean unit, I was not sure what exactly he was doing for God. Through him, I was able to get a missionary speaker for my first educational session. On one occasion, I looked back on how this project started and proceeded to that point. Realizing how well things were going, I thanked God for all the people who helped my project out. I am planning to show my research project to the *Korean Senior Mission Organization* so that they might use it in their future training of seniors contemplating medical missionary service overseas.

The most positive outcome from the project for me was that my concept about seniors changed drastically. Senior missionary service overseas was not much of a concern for me before I selected the title for the original project prospectus title. Quite honestly, I had underestimated seniors' ability for the mission field and I now realize that I was wrong to judge them that way.

I think my incorrect impression, partial knowledge, and prejudices about seniors came from my limited experience with interaction with seniors in Korea and in my workplace in America. To me, seniors looked very fragile, unhealthy and without the capabilities to do something great. When I saw a nurse who used talk about going to China to teach nursing after retirement, I admit that I doubted her ability to teach nursing in China and thought her passion was not one hundred percent true because she was not taking any initiatives at that moment. I thought to myself, what can she possibly teach and how long could she last? After all, she will be too old to teach!

However, from the moment I decided on the title for my research project, my eyes were opened wide to observe real seniors who were active, passionate and fit, both

mentally and physically. Through reading books and articles from websites, I became aware that there are variety of mission organizations for seniors and found out how many seniors are working as missionaries around the world. Their passion and experiences can be used mightily by God for those who need attention. As I worked more with seniors, I was often surprised by their energy fueled by God. Witnessing as their passion gave them strength was truly a blessing and ended up proving me wrong when my research showed that serving is not limited by age.

My attitude towards people who wish to go overseas for missionary work after retirement has changed tremendously. Instead of having negative thoughts, I praised their commitment and handed them a book called *Senior Mission* that I had used for my project. I bought many copies of the book by Choi ChulHee to give to anyone who is interested in senior missionary work.

Researching the advantages of senior missionaries was a blessing experience for me because I became confident in my ability to pursue future mission service as a senior missionary again. I am not going to be a young missionary anymore but will be a senior missionary by the time I choose to go overseas for missionary service in a few years. Therefore, I am sure that God gave me this topic, in part, so that I, too, would be well equipped as a future senior missionary.

In terms of making retirement plans, even I had not thought about it too much. I hoped and prayed that God would open the way to go overseas for mission service in few years. From my preparation work for the project, I was able to learn a lot about precious and practical ways of spending my own retirement life.

Furthermore, this project gave me an opportunity to reflect on my medical mission service eighteen years ago and to pour out the complaints that I had during that service. Before the project, I did not have a chance to talk about my negative experience to others except a few including my previous supporters. I did not want to give them a negative impression of me since I had, in fact, successfully completed three years of medical mission service in Pakistan. These negative experiences were always in the back of my mind and became a hindrance to me when considering my next overseas missionary work because I was afraid I might go through the same struggles again. However, during this research project I realized that my experience was not only a negative event preventing me from returning to overseas mission service. My negative experience was also an authentic reality that I had to face. It was an experience that awakened me to making choices according to my interests, capability, creativity and financial range. That is why I am very grateful that I spent those three years for missionary work that inspired me to begin my project in first place.

Impact upon LAC members

The LAC members stressed that they learned invaluable lessons by assisting with this project. The topic was very interesting and attractive enough that they also wanted to learn more about specific teachings.

Six Advisory Committee members are actively involved in church and other organizations' ministries. Asking for their time was not an easy process. That being said, meeting them all at the same time was quite impossible to achieve. It was best to meet them individually or in smaller groups. First, I approached them and gave details about the project, followed by an explanation of what I needed from each of the members. In

the meeting, after presenting my project idea, I was able to get their feedback on what each would be able to contribute to the project, and established their respective areas of involvement. To elaborate, one LAC member who is from Korea and has experience with utilizing questionnaires suggested that critically targeted questionnaires could enable participants to unfold their life stories during the interviews. Another member who is a nurse manager at work was willing to make the effort to adjust the work schedule in order to optimize participation. Finally, my husband, who gave undivided support, provided rides to meeting locations, delivered food, recorded modules and kept financial data. Overall, the project ran smoothly despite some absences from LAC members. Apart than meetings, calls, text and e-mails were exchanged throughout the project for sharing and resolving difficulties.

Nisar Gill, my husband and a Drew Dmin student, noted that this project challenged him in various ways. First, he was hesitant to start the research project and was not sure what areas could be covered. When he saw my leadership of the project, he became more confident that he might be able to carry out his own project responsibilities. He also confessed that the concepts of seniors, senior missionary work and retirement were new to him before this project. He even asked what kind of missionary work senior can do? The word retirement was too far from his experience and he thought retirement was irrelevant before he was involved in the project.

His observations of participants were positive. He was utterly impressed by the nurse participants' faithfulness in attending each session and their transformation during and after the project. He said:

I was so amazed that the nurse participants did not fail to attend the sessions in spite of their busy schedule. On top of that, they even opened

and prepared food though the researcher never asked them to do. When I watched them listening to the speakers' teachings, they looked so eager to learn. As a researcher's husband, even I was very worried that participants might give up participating in the middle of the project, but there nothing for me worry about. Everyone tried to come. It was so amazing.

During the fellowship time, I had several chances to talk with two participants' husbands. They were also glad that they are attending the sessions and we talked about our lives and then began talking about seniors, senior missionary work and retirement. They were older than me and I noticed that two were seriously thinking about their retirement and planning on how to spend their retirement time. One husband wished to spend their time with a little bit of playing golf, travelling, but because he knew that he attended the session and knew about the purpose of the project, he stated that he wants to spend his time in helping the poor here or in other countries after retirement. The other person said that he wished to have sufficient money to go overseas for missionary work, but due to his unemployment, he said he had to find work to make money. He felt frustrated that he could not go overseas for missionary service now. When I heard him saying, I felt sympathized with him because my wife and I cannot go overseas for mission service either due to financial instability. I encouraged him that God would allow him to make good money so that he and I would be going to the mission field soon.

The other LAC member (Lee Y), a nursing manager, said that she had learned invaluable lessons from this project. She narrated her experience as one of the LAC members and how this project yielded positive fruit for many people. This is her honest evaluative comment on how she felt about the project. She said:

Before I agreed to become one of her LAC members, nurse Son (the researcher) asked me to become a participant for her project. She mentioned that I had a great influence on her in selecting the title of her research project when she was struggling to figure out the right one. I used to tell her that I desire to go overseas for medical service after retirement from this hospital. However, when she asked me to participate as one of the participants, I had no choices but to say no. I was so busy with church work and I simply did not have time spend for her project which I did not think importantly of. I thought her project was being completed just to get a degree for herself. I finally agreed to become one of LAC members because I thought that LAC members do not need to spend a lot of time for the project and I just wanted to help her out. Since I was a nursing manager, she came to me and requested to adjust the work schedule for her and other nurses if possible, so that everyone could make it to most of

the meetings during the project period. I told her I will do my best to rearrange their work schedule within my abilities. My other task was to encourage the participants who were reluctant to attend each meeting diligently. On New Year's Day serving the food for elderly patients was very touching experience and I started to be more curious about her project and started to have some expectations that something good outcome might occur. One thing I was so surprised was that ten nurse participants agreed to participate and they continued to attend the project. I told nurse Son that how other nurses agreed to participate in her project and it was incredible how she could draw people towards her like this. And even she persuaded me in a way that I participated in most of her Action Phase of the Project as a Committee member and finally I ended up leading the fourth teaching session which I never planned previously. It was because her leadership that the nurses participated in the project faithfully.

Meanwhile, I participated in two other teaching sessions. We cooked food and shared meals together before sessions started. Then we had a time of singing and prayer. Afterwards, we sat and watched the presentation by the missionaries from Zambia and Ethiopia. When I saw these participants being involved with such enthusiasm, I was fascinated and amazed. They fastened their eyes on watching the recorded mission videos. I was impressed when the participants even asked many questions to the speakers. Their questions were more related to practical curiosity such as missionary's private life, the necessity of medical work in that area and possible ministry opportunity for the nurses. They specifically asked about their responsibilities in that area if they go on a short term mission trip, and what they have to prepare. They also asked about the estimation of monthly living expenses. We felt an obligation to go on the trip and help the people who are in need and spread the gospel.

Before this project, I never expected that some of these participants were going to be so eager to know about overseas mission service. If I have missed these meetings, I would not have noticed their spiritual life. I knew that the participants attend the church or Catholic church every week and we talked about our personal life and work life in the work place, we hardly brought up a conversation about spiritual life and our future desires. I told Son that her project was an inspiring work that could possibly train and equip the nurses for overseas medical mission service and help them prepare their retirement life for the Lord. During the project period, when the nurses took breaks for lunch or dinner, we often talked about our spiritual yearnings and struggles, short term mission trips, long term missionary work, medical mission service and retirement life.

The project was not only for herself, but also for the participants who desire to have spiritual growth. As a nursing manager, I noticed that this

kind of project should continue for the nurses. It really challenged my view of missionary work overseas after retirement. Before the project, I thought that my husband and I will go overseas for medical service but I did not think that my co-workers can also become senior missionaries. I saw a possibility of us to go overseas together as a medical team after retirement. We have been working for many years together and we know each other very well including our family members. I believe that going together could be a great way to encourage one another to not give up.

I could say that the project met its goal to make us to see ourselves and show a way of serving God after retirement. This project allowed participants to open up their views from just having work and family in their minds to caring more about the church, people in need overseas, and the possibility of their involvement in overseas mission service now and after retirement. It awakened them from their spiritual ignorance and indifferences.

One of the LAC members (Jeon H), a senior missionary, asked me to share a copy of my research project for use in senior mission service training held regularly in New Jersey. At the beginning of the project, he was glad to know that I was planning to conduct a project related to senior mission service overseas. He and I discussed a lot about senior mission service overseas, he invited me to the senior mission training session which was held for a few months every year, and he recommended the book *Senior Mission* which had great impact on the project participants. When I asked him to find the speaker for the main teaching session, he found the itinerant missionary couple who had great influence on participants. An example of the couples' impact came when several participants began to have family devotion time. He confessed:

Though I could not engage in the project due to my heavy missionary work, in here and in North Korea, I was able to introduce a faithful senior missionary, which benefited greatly in the first teaching session. When I first started Korean Unit in Bergen Regional Medical Center 12 years ago, my vision and prayer at the time were to be working with Christian nurses with sincere passion for the elderly patients. It truly was a blessing to know that God answered my prayers and brought such amazing talents into the workplace. Moreover, nurse Son, with the resources around her, began to train and equip the nurses to become medical missionaries after

retirement. My ultimate goal is to turn Korean unit into a place where it can also be a mission training center. I was happy to see that my goals were parallel to her research and I saw it as a forward leap to the vision.

My personal senior mission service is for North Korea. I pray that God would call people to work for overseas and challenge their comfort zone. When I was approached with her research project about senior mission service overseas, I was genuinely curious to see the process as well as the result of the project involving nurses. With the skill sets in their professions, they have great talent and heart as an asset to God in the mission field.

Impact upon Others

This project particularly focused on the transformation of the participants.

However, I saw a patient, for whom participants and I provide care, who was also transformed by this project. She was very much interested in my project and curious to know about what I was doing with the other nurses. When she asked me about my project, I explained it to her and gave her the two books which were used for the project. After she read the books, she stated that she had lived a worldly-seeking life until now, but from now on, she wants to live for God. She mentioned that she became more convinced that she would be still used by God and then we spent so much time talking about meaningful life after retirement. She was helping other patients as much as possible by praying and planning to seek voluntary work in New Jersey, possibly a short-term overseas mission trip after discharge from the hospital.

This project affected positively not only patients but also nurses who did not participate in the project. This is a comment from the nurse who was invited but did not participate in the project:

I wish I would have participated in the project because I could clearly see the transformations happening from the nurse participants. I want to join the program if this kind of the project are held here again. I wanted to get some medical mission training but so far I could not find a good mission

association that suits my needs and time. This project was well organized, and suited to specifically to train the Christian nurses because though there are some kind of mission training in the churches, I hardly saw the specific mission program focused on the nurses.

The New Years' project was very rewarding to see the elderly patients being happy about traditional Korean food instead of hospital meals. Bringing familiar food and culture seemed also to bring positive energy. Most importantly, committed nurses who participated showed humble hearts and love for God, and thanked God for the opportunity.

One comment from an elderly patient:

Thank you so much for serving the Korean traditional food for us. We always saw you busy with giving meds and taking care of the patients. However, it was truly a happy time to see the nurses cook, and serve the food though the nurses must have been very busy to celebrate the New Year's festival with their family members and relatives. We all enjoyed the food and we really felt that we were loved by the nurses on that day.

One elderly patient's daughter who came from Korea to visit her mom for New Year stated that she always felt guilty that she cannot take care of her mom. She lived in Korea and worried about whether her mom would be treated well in this facility. However, after she saw the nurses prepare and serve the food to her elderly mom, her guilty feeling was reduced. She said that she now knows that her mom is in good hands.

Interestingly, two participants' husbands acknowledged that they also obtained knowledge about seniors, senior mission service overseas and retirement. One of the two had received senior mission training a few years back, but this project gave more detailed knowledge about seniors and challenged him to seek for an opportunity to go overseas for missionary work. He thanked me for including his wife as a participant to learn about senior missionary work overseas. During the project, he said he and his wife talked about

retirement a lot more than ever. They decided to have family devotion time together and will pray about going to the mission field after retirement.

c. Identification of Missing or Weak Components

One of the downsides of the project was that some participants complained the meetings were too long. The meetings lasted four to five hours even though my prospectus has stated the meetings were supposed to last only two hours. So I tried to make sure that we finished the meetings within that span of time, but usually they ended up being longer than two hours. Though participants complained about the long meetings, they looked like they enjoyed the sessions and each other's company since they remained afterward to continue their conversations.

I tried to manage a short time for book discussion. However, due to speakers' long lectures, most of the time, we were not able to have book discussions. There was a little disappointment with the selection of the books for reading. The participants stated that they all were impressed by reading *Senior Mission*. However, they stated that *Mission Ventured* was boring and less inspiring. I expected *Mission Venture* to give the participants vision and hope for overseas missionary service since this book is the story of the life and ministry of eight female missionaries.

Some suggested that watching a senior mission documentary film or a biographical senior missionary DVD would have been helpful for them. Before the project, I also thought senior mission documentary films would be helpful and although I tried, was unable to obtain them.

Another weak point of this project was that meeting with the LAC members was not easy. Some of them missed multiple meetings and teaching sessions. Only two out of

six LAC members assisted with the project actively. For example, some LAC members were not in the United States due to their ministry involvement in other countries during the project. One committee member who is now in Korea had hoped to visit America during the project. However, she was not able to come back to America for the project. Instead she helped me design the pre-interview and post-interview questionnaires. I still feel that if they had assisted in the project actively, the results might have been more positive and outstanding.

If I had designed more evocative questionnaires, we might have produced more significant interview results. When I carried out pre-and post-interviews as scheduled in the prospectus, I realized that some of the questions were general and repetitive. I felt the participants found it difficult to answer some of the questions, which seemed to be unclear. So I had to elaborate about the meaning of the questions before the participants were able to give extensive answers.

Due to the nurses' different work schedules, I had to carry out the sessions in small groups and sometimes on a one to one basis according to availability. I recorded the teaching modules for those who were not able to attend the sessions. However, the participants stated that watching the videos was not as inspiring as listening face to face. It was quite difficult to truly communicate the message when individuals had to resort to viewing video footage.

Due to our work schedules, participants were not able to attend as a whole. The nursing manager tried to adjust work schedules, but she could not give the participants the same day off from work due to a shortage of staff in the Korean unit. Finally, some

participants were reluctant to come to the meetings for various reasons, but I still tried to motivate them to come to sessions as much as I could.

d. Summary and Conclusions about the Project

We initiated the project with multiple questions: Has the project challenged the participants' view of post-retirement services? Have we created a proper environment that could guide the nurses to understand how their retirements might be enriched by missionary services overseas? Have we encouraged participants to give deep consideration to spending the second half of their lives in missionary service overseas? Did project results include transformation of the participants' knowledge, experience and skills? In order to achieve that optimal goal of the project, we raised and worked through these questions continuously to see whether this project was heading in the desired direction. After thoroughly reviewing the variety of project evaluations, my opinion is that all purposes of the project were satisfied. I can say with confidence that all participants, LAC members, myself and anyone who was involved definitely experienced new or changed points of view.

The original motive of this project was transformation. My hope was to rescue participants' lives from worldly pleasures and to direct their hearts into God's work after retirement. I also hoped the project period would be a time for participants to find their talents and gifts as nurses and to learn how to apply those talents and gifts for the Lord.

All the Korean-American Christian nurse participants had unique and exceptional qualifications and were in a position where post-retirement missionary service overseas might be desired strongly. After experiencing this project, some of the nurses who previously did not have any concrete retirement plans were awakened to live for God. A

few nurses who simply planned to spend their retirement lives seeking for comfort decided to reconsider and chose after all to dedicate part of their retired lives to serving God as medical missionaries. Their desires and plans that originated from worldly pleasure switched over to having the priority of God's pleasure instead. Other nurses had vague ideas about overseas missionary work and at the same time, hesitated to go overseas for missionary service. These nurses became more convinced that they could pursue missionary service training prior to retirement in order to follow their clear vision. Some nurses already wanted to devote their lives to overseas missionary work, yet, due to current circumstances, had almost given up on their dreams. These nurses were encouraged once again to not lose hope. As project participants made suggestions and actively helped them to search through tough reality for ways to become long-term medical missionaries, they became more enthusiastic about participating in events related to overseas mission service while still working as nurses.

Post-interviews indicated that participants gained new and detailed knowledge about seniors and senior missionary service overseas after retirement. As a result, participants were able to set fear aside and had more confidence about becoming senior missionaries. Retirement is no longer a vague, unprepared and fearful stage of life for them. Now it is a well-informed, well-prepared and cheerful new chapter of their lives.

In addition, project methodology, which was carried out according to the prospectus, was relevant to project results. Pre-interviews, post-interviews, two field experiences and four teaching sessions were designed to achieve the ultimate goal of the project.

A key component that led to transformation through the project was the non-restrictive elements of the narrative research model. Utilizing the skills of kenotic listening, we were able to make assessments relative to the participants' understandings with limited prejudice and preferences.

Furthermore, when I look back, choosing Korean-American Christian nurses as my participant group was unique and practical. There are many places where seniors can be trained as senior missionaries, but training a group of professionals before retirement was an invaluable advantage. What is more is that these nurse participants had huge advantages over those seniors who do not have specific professional skills. The nurses were already equipped with abilities that could be used in the mission field immediately.

Although there were multiple conflicts, difficulties and obstacles throughout the process, overall I could say that quality and the effectiveness of this project was reasonably sound.

APPENDIX

Pre-Interview Questionnaire

1. Could you please tell me about yourself (For example, your name, age, your family, your church, your working place, your preferences, your personality and your hobby, etc.)

2. Can you tell me about your life story in Korea before immigrating to America? Please include your testimony as a Christian.

3. What made you immigrate to America? Why did you decide to come to America? (For example, your motivation, purpose, goal and circumstances, etc.).

4. What made you become a nurse? Describe your motivation to become a nurse and anyone, or thing that may have influenced you to become one.

5. Can you describe your life story in America as a nurse, wife, and mother?

6. In what ways do you think you improved in terms of skills in America compared to Korea? Korea has a mono culture, race and language and America has a diverse culture, race and language. (For example, though I did not speak English well in Korea, my English improved a lot in America).

7. Do you think that God has brought you to America to be more equipped to serve Him? If so, in what areas do you think God is molding you to serve Him?

8. What activities are you currently involved in the church or in any organization in America?

9. Please share your thoughts and feelings on working as a nurse and not having the time to attend the church or engage in spiritual activities. Are you frustrated? Have you ever regretted that you became as nurse?

10. If your current circumstances improved, do you think you would be more actively engaged in church activities or voluntary services? And in these services, what areas would you want to give your time, energy, and money in the present and in the near future?

11. Do you think that you are living the life that you ultimately wanted to live as a Christian in the present? If so, please explain why and describe in what areas you are satisfied with in your life. If not, explain why you are not and in what ways you want to improve and change your life.

12. You are more than forty years old, and you have thought about your retirement. After retirement (it could be early retirement or full retirement), you have sufficient time, financial assets, and are free from supporting your children's education; in what areas do you think you would want to spend your time, energy and money? What kind of life would you want to live after retirement? Please describe your ideal future – your wishes, desires, and dreams.

13. Do you know anyone in the church involved in an overseas mission who works as a medical missionary? If so, what do you think about the persons' life? If not, there are various ways to know more about missionaries, documentaries about missionaries, joining short-term missions, etc. Would you be interested in learning more about missionaries?

14. Have you ever thought about spending your remaining life, particularly after retirement, as a missionary? If so, how would you prepare for the trip? Do you pray that God would open the door for you to go on overseas mission? Are you receiving any

mission training at this time? Do you want to get training, but do not know what kind of training you need to get?

15. Now, suppose you want to go an overseas mission as a medical missionary, but you are unable to do so. What do you think is preventing you from going on an overseas mission? Please explain. (For example, it could be financial reasons, family matters, health issues, and unclear about mission field and mission organizations).

16. After retirement, suppose you are going to be a senior medical missionary. What kind of mission activities do you think you can do in the mission field?

17. Are you afraid or concerned about going on a mission field in the present or in the future? If so, please explain why?

18. Do you think that the workload of the senior medical missionary should be less than the workload of the younger missionary? For example, the duration and responsibilities of the mission work should be less for the seniors than it is for the younger missionaries?

19. Overseas mission is considered difficult, burdensome, and it may even risk our lives. Despite all this, would you change your mind if the senior missionaries were provided more options to go to the countryside where there is no persecution, more flexible work time, and less burdensome responsibilities?

20. What do you think about the occupation 'nurse'? Why do you think some Christians call it the vocation or a calling from God?

21. What kind of expectations do you have from this training?

Post –Interview Questions

1. As a result of your participation in this project, has there been any change in your view of your own spirituality? (For example, do you sense that you are closer to God, or do you feel that God has a specific and wonderful plan for your life, etc.). Please explain.

2. Is there anything new that you have learned, either about yourself or other participants?

3. Did this project give you time to think about your past, present and future? During project, did you feel comfortable to freely express your feelings, frustrations and hopes? Has the project reminded you of your past dreams and hopes that were not fulfilled by rekindling your dreams and hopes again in God?

4. Did your participation in this project have an impact on your knowledge or provide any inspiration and new insight about yourself, overseas mission, medical mission, missionaries and senior medical missionaries? Please explain.

5. Did this project give you a chance to think seriously about your retirement? If so, please explain. If not, please explain.

6. Did this project help you to consider to go on overseas mission after retirement? If so, in what ways has this project helped you?

7. What materials used in this project had the biggest impact on you? (For example, education sessions, two books about senior mission and missionaries, pre-interview time, gathering and fellowship itself, and meeting with the speakers, etc.).

8. Did the project change your previous retirement wishes, dreams, and plan? If so, how? If not, why?

9. Are you now more convinced that God brought you to America to equip you to serve God in the mission field in the future? If so, please explain.

10. Do you think that you have become more confident about yourself and are well equipped to be a medical missionary after joining this project? Or do you feel more frustrated about yourself and feel you are not well equipped to be a medical missionary? Please explain.

11. Do you think that you are able to join short-term medical mission trips to learn more about medical missions and to participate in the medical aid for the needy in developing countries?

12. As a result of your participation in this project, do you take serious consideration in participating at least a part of your life in senior medical work after retirement? If so, how long do you want to participate in the mission field?

13. During participation, did you feel that you needed to pray to seek God's guidance in your life to be used as a vessel for God, particularly as a senior medical missionary? If so, how do you specifically spend time to pray to God?

14. Do you think you should be more involved in mission from now on? If so, explain in what areas you would want to be involved in? (For example, reading the missionaries' prayer letters, assisting the missionaries, prayer support, financial support, item supply support, etc.).

15. During the project, did you feel you needed more mission training and considered setting aside time for mission training while working as a nurse? If so, explain specifically how you would plan to get training?

16. If you want to serve God as a missionary through this project, what kind of mission work do you have in mind?

17. Did this project affect your view of the senior? If so, please explain.

18. Did this project affect your view of senior missions? If so, please explain.

19. Despite the different shifts of work, you all managed to give your precious for this project. How did you feel about participating in this project? Do you think it was worthwhile?

20. After participating in the project, are you able to more clearly identify your own definition about the 'nurse.' How has it changed and what do you want to call it? For example, a profession, occupation, or vocation and calling from God?

21. We are all Korean-American Christian nurses. Do you think that this kind of training sessions should be formed for the Korean-American Christian nurses more often? If so, do you have any ideas or opinions to help share the training programs? Do you have any suggestions to improve the programs?

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