

**THE NAZARENE OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKER:
EQUIPPING GOD'S MISSIONARY PEOPLE IN
THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

By

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to strategize how the Church of the Nazarene can equip and empower Filipino Christians for cross-cultural evangelism among Muslims in Asia and Eurasia regions. The current global mission strategy of the Church of the Nazarene is to go to where the church is not yet. This research explored the problem of how to incorporate Filipino Christians, who find employment opportunities in areas of the world where traditional mission strategies cannot go, into this mission strategy.

The research questions this study investigated include:

1. What biblical exemplars illustrate God using diaspora as a means to further His Kingdom?
2. What does the social science literature reveal about the cultural challenges of Overseas Filipino Workers?
3. What contextual issues, needs, values, and missional perspectives characterize Nazarene Overseas Filipino Workers?
4. What processes, methods, and strategies can the Church of the Nazarene Global Mission use to empower and facilitate Nazarene Overseas Filipino Workers for cross-cultural ministry?

This investigation compared and analyzed current discipleship materials available for Overseas Filipino Workers. The methodology of action research, along with surveys and focus groups with Overseas Filipino Workers, conducted by Nazarene Filipino

districts across Asia and Eurasia, produced findings on how they adjust to cross-cultural living and the relationship of their work to their faith. The study also examined the Church of the Nazarene's Global Mission model and policies to encounter ways in which these policies can be expanded to accommodate the Overseas Filipino Workers as cross-cultural evangelists. Other denominations' agencies were investigated to see what missional strategies they implement to accommodate Overseas Filipino Workers. This study is significant in that it brings to light the tremendous untapped missional potential of the Overseas Filipino Workers in the Church of the Nazarene. It will also create strategies for how the Church of the Nazarene can identify, validate, equip, and minister to the Overseas Filipino Workers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAN - Creative Access Nation

CON - Church of the Nazarene

CPM - Cyclical Process Model

EURONET - Filipino European Christian Ministry Network

FIN - Filipino International Network (FIN)

OFW - Overseas Filipino/a Worker

OFWs – Overseas Filipino/a Workers

NMI - Nazarene Mission International

UPG - Unreached People Group

WEF - World Evangelism Fund

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Over the past two thousand years, Christians have lived in diaspora, whether for environmental, economic, or political reasons, taking the gospel message with them and making disciples far away from their homeland. Currently, Overseas Filipino/a Workers (OFWs) make up one of the largest groups of Christians living in diaspora. The Philippines, considered a predominately Christian nation, has a majority Catholic population of 82 percent, while 11 percent are members of various Protestant churches (The World Factbook 2014).

For mostly economic reasons, OFWs work in developed countries in areas such as education, domestic work, construction, medicine, and many other vocations where they utilize their English skills and work ethic. Evangelical OFWs face many challenges as well as opportunities to share their faith in areas of the world where traditional missionaries have no access. The mission paradigm of cross-cultural ministry as a byproduct of economic diaspora brings many opportunities and challenges to Western mission organizations. Just as with any missionary commissioned and sent to minister cross-culturally, the Church of the Nazarene needs to recognize the sacrifice and effectiveness of OFWs, but also minister to their spiritual, emotional, and familial needs in order to empower and train them to maximize their effectiveness.

Christian OFWs face unique challenges as they work to support their families in their homeland yet also want to remain mindful of their greater life's purpose of proclaiming the gospel. Recently, Christian organizations like Filipino International Network (FIN) and the Filipino European Christian Ministry Network (EURONET) have begun to train OFWs to move beyond incidental evangelism to intentional, cross-cultural disciple-making. Additionally, many evangelical churches as well as the Catholic Church in the Philippines have begun to train OFWs before they go abroad in how to share their faith cross-culturally.

Background

I¹ have served in Asia as a missionary with the Church of the Nazarene for ten years, working as field strategy coordinator in the Asia Pacific Region. During this time, I observed hundreds of Nazarene Overseas Filipinos working in areas where many unreached people groups reside. My encounters left me deeply impressed with their love and devotion to Christ yet also concerned that they lacked understanding of their missional mandate as believers. When asked if they shared their faith with their employers or other nationals in the country of their employment, more often than not the replies would entail comments such as: "I'm not a missionary," "I don't understand their religion," "I don't know what to say," or "I don't want to lose my job."

Unintentionally, the missions program of the Church of the Nazarene has portrayed missionaries as primarily college-educated, theological professionals: fully funded Westerners who staff colleges, hospitals, and district offices to facilitate church

¹ I will refer to myself in the first person throughout the dissertation. I am an equal voice in this action research project.

growth. In doing so, the Church of the Nazarene falls behind other denominations in empowering their OFWs as a part of the Great Commission and as part of their potential strategy to reach Unreached People Groups (UPGs).

Purpose Statement

Currently the Church of the Nazarene's Global Mission strategy is to "Go Where the Church Is Not Yet." Nazarene OFWs find employment in creative access countries, making it imperative for the Church of the Nazarene to build relationships with Nazarene OFWs, help them recognize their role in the Great Commission, and equip them to carry it out. The purpose of this study is to develop a holistic training resource capable of equipping Nazarene OFWs in creative access areas to live missionally in the Asia and Eurasia Regions of the Nazarene Church.

Problem Statement

What training resources can be prepared to equip Nazarene Filipina Overseas Workers (OFWs) to live missionally in Muslim homes where they find employment?

Research Questions

1. What biblical exemplars illustrate God using diaspora as a means to further His Kingdom?
2. What does the social science literature reveal about the cultural challenges of OFWs?
3. What contextual issues, needs, values, and missional perspectives characterize Nazarene OFWs?

4. What processes, methods, and strategies can the Church of the Nazarene Global Mission use to empower and facilitate Nazarene OFWs for cross-cultural ministry?

Significance of the Study

As a missionary and educator, I desire that this study help Nazarene Global Mission in preparing disciples of Christ, already working in different vocations, for cross-cultural ministry. I desire to assist the Church of the Nazarene's Global Mission department in strategizing how to bring the gospel message to the Asia and Eurasia regions. This study will specifically focus on creative or restricted access countries—where the CON needs to implement a new paradigm in order to creatively enter, evangelize, disciple, and plant churches. This study will help create this new paradigm.

The Church of the Nazarene Global Mission seeks to incorporate mission strategies that reflect the biblical commission to all believers to go to the ends of the earth to make disciples, including those followers of Christ in economic diaspora. This study hopes to validate the ways in which Nazarene Overseas Filipino Workers can bless the communities where they work in order to further the purposes of God. It will bring to light the tremendous untapped missional potential of the OFWs in areas where the Church of the Nazarene has not been able to send traditional missionaries. It will also create strategies for how the Church of the Nazarene can identify, validate, equip, and minister to OFWs.

This study will give prominence to the potential of Christians living in economic diaspora in creative access areas as part of God's intentional plan to reach across cultural and religious barriers to bring the gospel message through relational evangelism.

Goals

The goals of this study include:

1. Having the Church of the Nazarene Global Missions come to an understanding of the importance of the OFW as missionaries and to validate them to reach the unreached around the world.
2. Creating a handbook for preparation and training that will assist OFWs to creatively evangelize their employers' families.

Limitations

The current globalized economy facilitates many people in economic diaspora, but this study is limited to Filipinos serving as contracted workers (OFWs) and not those who have migrated as its specific subject. This study will limit itself to published research regarding OFWs in the last fifteen years. It will also limit itself to the OFWs working in the Asia and Eurasia regions.²

This study examined the Abrahamic covenant in relationship to exilic Jews in diaspora. It also looked at the New Covenant given in Jesus Christ in relationship to the spread of Christianity through believers in diaspora under the Roman Empire. This study explained the current Church of the Nazarene resources and policies, specifically in relation to how it identifies, validates, and sends missionaries to minister to UPGs in Asia and Eurasia. It examined current trends in other denominations and mission sending agencies in the Philippines and researched and evaluated their cross-cultural training materials for OFWs. It did not research other Nazarenes outside of the Filipino

² As designated by the Church of the Nazarene.

nationality living in economic diaspora. This study did not include Filipinos who have migrated to other countries, but only those using visas for employment. It limited itself by using English in its surveys to Filipinos (the language of trade in the Philippines).

Definitions

Bagong Bayani—The Tagalog term for “new heroes,” a term used for OFWs by the Philippine government because of the economic stability they have provided for their country (Delfin 2014).

Church of the Nazarene (CON)—A Wesleyan-Holiness evangelical denomination beginning in the early part of the twentieth century in the United States.

Creative Access Nation (CAN)—Refers to a country that limits or forbids access to Christian missionaries, Christian proselytizing, or Christian religious practice.

Diaspora—“The phenomenon of dispersion from any ethnic group” (Pantoja, Tira, Wan 2004, xxxviii).

Diaspora Missiology—The term diaspora is a reference to “people living outside their place of origin,” and diaspora missiology is “a missiological framework for understanding and participating in God’s redemptive mission” (Lausanne Movement, 2014).

Economic Diaspora—A scattered population with a common origin working in other countries for financial gain.

Global Mission—Name for the missions division of the Church of the Nazarene.

Kairos moment—A divinely appointed time of opportunity.

Nazarene—Those who identify themselves as members of the evangelical denomination, the Church of the Nazarene.

Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW)—A Filipino national living and working in another country for the purpose of earning income and sending it back to the Philippines to support his or her family.

Unreached People Group (UPG)—A people group among whom there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group (Joshua Project 2016).

World Evangelism Fund (WEF)—A central fund collected from Nazarene churches globally that funds employed missionaries (excluding volunteers) in the Church of the Nazarene who receive a monthly paycheck based on a standard amount plus a cost-of-living adjustment, provides health care, a pension provision, and other benefits such as housing and travel costs. These funds are also used for administration, curriculum development and distribution, and cross-cultural ministry training (Nazarene Mission International 2016).

Assumptions

The research assumes that the Great Commission outlined in Matthew 28:19-20 binds all followers of Christ, and that all believers in Christ share in the mandate to take the gospel to all nations. The Church of the Nazarene does not currently focus on OFWs to take the gospel to UPGs. However, the research assumes that the Global Mission of the Church of the Nazarene and the Church of the Nazarene in the Philippines will welcome opportunities for participation in this action research project and aid in the research and development of resources. The OFWs will receive significant training in cross-cultural living and ministry so that they will be in a greater position to respond to the Great Commission.

Theoretical Framework

Economic diaspora as mission creates a new paradigm for evangelical Western-based mission sending agencies. Diaspora certainly cannot be considered a new phenomenon, but Christian academic missiology has recently addressed the utilization of this opportunity for intentional evangelism. The Evangelical Missiological Society's "Mission and Diaspora" conference in 2014 and Lausanne's Diaspora Forums in 2004 and 2015 have produced many journal articles and dissertations that have highlighted the challenges, needs, and potential strategies for the Church as it deals with Christians leaving their homeland for economic gain.

From a theological perspective, Sadiri Emmanuel Tira (2008, 48) and Enoch Wan (2007, 4) both have written about the biblical themes of "gathering" and "scattering" beginning with the expulsion of Adam and Eve (scattering) and culminating with the multitude standing before the throne in front of the Lamb (gathering) in Revelation 7:9. In between exist narratives of blessing through Israelites who were exiled and able to relationally and intentionally reveal their identities and achieve God's purposes (i.e., Joseph, Daniel, Esther, etc.). This shows the biblical understanding of covenant as a means of blessing to all nations, concentrating on particular Israelites who found themselves outside their homeland in accordance with the economic climate in which they were living. Looking to these Old Testament narratives as exemplars for diaspora missiology may seem strange to the American Church, but in the Filipino context it presents a workable model. It is important to note that economic diaspora does not equate to the New Testament missional strategy of "tentmaking." Tentmaking uses a vocation as a means to support missional activity. People searching for more lucrative employment to

better their families' situations create economic diaspora. If many of these people happen to be Christians, then a *Kairos* moment has begun where the Church should have a response, specifically in caring for their needs and equipping them for cross-cultural ministry.

Particularly, this study understands the potential of Nazarene Filipina domestic helpers to contribute in creating a training tool to respond to the *Kairos* moment of relational evangelism in the Muslim households where they serve. As participants in the New Covenant and commissioned as disciples of Christ (Matt. 28:19-20), these women inconspicuously but actively influence those under their care with a biblical worldview as they go through their everyday lives.

The Filipino culture facilitates, through their collective, high group dynamic, (Hofstede 2016) an economic system that puts their citizens in countries where proclaiming the gospel is restrictive or prohibited. Using action research as the embodiment of the collective voice from these women and moving toward a decolonial missiology, this study sought to leverage the economic diaspora for the furtherance of the Great Commission.

This action research understands the need to distribute power and treat the participants as experts of the study. Filipino Nazarene clergy and mission leaders were also encouraged to value all participants to have an equal voice at the table.

The study utilized focus groups, personal interviews, questionnaires and ongoing feedback to produce the training tool (handbook) to assist Nazarene OFWs in accomplishing the Great Commission.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Diaspora missiology is a relatively new area of missiological study. Much of the published research in the past ten years has come from missiologists looking for ways to create and engage the local church in evangelism strategies for immigrants moving into their communities. The unique distinction of the Filipino diaspora is that they come from a predominately Christian nation. This allows for a focus, not on evangelizing the Filipino, but on equipping and serving them as they work in areas for people who have no other access to the good news of Jesus Christ. This chapter examines the precedent literature that addresses diaspora missiology, specifically addressing the four research questions: (1) What biblical exemplars illustrate God using diaspora as a means to further His Kingdom? (2) What does the social science literature reveal about the cultural challenges of OFWs? (3) What contextual issues, needs, values, and missional perspectives are characteristic of Nazarene OFWs? (4) What processes, methods, and strategies can the Church of the Nazarene Global Mission use to empower and facilitate Nazarene OFWs for cross-cultural ministry?

Biblical Exemplars Illustrate God Using Diaspora as a Means to Further His Kingdom

Looking for mission strategies in the Old Testament can prove challenging. God does not give the Israelites a proselytizing mandate or command to convert the nations. However, threads of witness show where the Israelites demonstrated in all things the

covenant relationship between them and God. Living out this covenant relationship not only established their identity as a nation but also extended blessings to them and to the outsiders they influenced. In the Old Testament narrative, when nations took away individual Israelites from their people, examples follow of how their covenant with God extended blessings to these foreign peoples. In the same way, heirs of the New Covenant also extend the blessings of this covenant to those living around them. This study will investigate the Abrahamic covenant as a means of blessing all nations and how the heirs to the covenant living in exile blessed the people of the countries where they served.

Walter Brueggemann's commentary on the Old Testament gives a foundation as to how the Israelites defined covenant and how that extended to all nations. When looking for biblical exemplars to illustrate diaspora as a means to further the kingdom of God, one must first view diaspora in the biblical narrative. Beginning with the Abrahamic covenant, when God called a people to himself so all nations would be blessed through them, He began a strategy to reveal His holiness and to draw all nations on the earth to Him through His covenant people (Brueggemann 2003, 46). Brueggemann shows in broad terms the covenantal promise of God calling a people to himself through Abraham, which extends beyond geographical boundaries as well as kinship groupings (Brueggemann 2003, 46). This essential understanding clarifies diaspora missiology in that it extends to each Israelite, individually, whether taken into exile in Babylon or left behind as a remnant of a once strong nation. Paul Hyun Chui Kim (2013, 219) reaffirms Brueggemann's point of the covenant extending to all Israelites, even to the individual prisoner, Joseph. Kim gives insight into the life of Joseph as part of God's design. Though he was betrayed by family and became a prisoner, he was always integral to

God's plan. "The Joseph novella highlights God's mysterious but sovereign faithfulness. Readers have been informed that in those lowest moments of Joseph's life, 'Yhwh was with him'" (Kim 2013, 220).

John Davis connects the Old Testament's Abrahamic covenant to Pauline theology in his article, "Who are the Heirs of the Abrahamic Covenant?" He demonstrates that Paul believed Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all that Abraham was promised: "Christ as the quintessential seed of Abraham is both the guarantor and inheritor of the promises of the covenant" (Davis 2005, 161). In one's relationship with Christ a believer emulates the faith of Abraham and therefore receives all that the covenant promise entails for Abraham's descendants. Davis (2005, 152) continues Brueggemann's diaspora implications to Gentile believers who were heirs of the promises of the covenant. This gives a strong exegetical foundation for Christians receiving all that the Abrahamic covenant offers.

Sadiri Joy Tira's introduction in "Scattered: the Philippine Global Presence," (Pantoja, Tira and Wan 2004, 3) and Nancy F. Santos in her article "Exploring the Major Dispersion Terms and Realities" (2011, 38) both specifically address diaspora missiology. Tira explains the "gathering" and "scattering" of key figures in the Bible as God used them to further His Kingdom. He diagrams Noah, Lot, Jacob, the Israelites entering Canaan and the exilic remnant as examples of God's "scattering" blessing through the covenant relationship. He then shows through key New Testament figures and events that both "scattering" (persecution, Great Commission) and "gathering" (Pentecost, the eschaton) are purposeful events ordained by God. Santos explains that the

Old Testament relational accountability, exhibited in the narrative of Joseph, builds a theology for diaspora missiology (Santos 2011, 38).

More directly and explicitly than Brueggemann, Ted Rubesh writes in his article “Diaspora Distinctives: the Jewish Diaspora Experience in the Old Testament,” (2011, 57-62) about the origin of the concept of “diaspora” stemming from the Abrahamic covenant and becoming rooted in the identity of the Israelites. In order to understand the Jewish diaspora, Rubesh draws a thread from Abraham, the wandering Aramean, to the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt and bookended with the Babylonian captivity. The Abrahamic covenant formed their identity beginning with a man in diaspora. Diaspora formed an integral part of their identity from the beginning. With this understanding of identity, Rubesh compares the diaspora of the Hebrews in Egypt with the Babylonian exile, and how to be scattered into exile would be their greatest agony realized again (2011, 64). However, he points out that in these exilic moments they would see their greatest triumphs where God’s holiness and blessings overcome darkness and evil (i.e., Esther and Daniel).

In all three of the articles Santos, Tira and Rubesh each define biblical diaspora, give narratives that show God’s work through diaspora living, and show current application for those in economic diaspora as a means of God’s plan of scattering and gathering for His purposes.

F.A. Spina writes in *The Faith of the Outsider: Exclusion and Inclusion in the Biblical Story* from the perspective of the insider/outsider approach to God’s election of Israel. He states that God did not preserve the Israelites and condemn all other people (Spina 2005, 78). Israel was not chosen to keep all others outside of God’s love but rather

to eventually show God's plan of inclusion. Spina (2005, 78) shows even the outsider plays an important role by examining Old Testament narratives of non-Israelites used by God as part of the overall revelation of God's character. This work helps the established church understand God's creativeness in utilizing non-traditional methods in reaching all people groups.

Social Science Literature Reveals the Cultural Challenges of Overseas Filipino Workers

Much of what has been written in the last decade about the holistic challenges faced by OFWs addresses the female experience, both from the perspective of the OFW away from her family as well as what happens to her identity and faith while working away from her home culture. This study focused heavily on OFW women as domestic house workers, specifically in Muslim homes. Much of the literature comes from journal articles and studies that highlight the unique aspects of OFW life for these Filipinas.

Rhacel Salazar Parreñas's article, "Migrant Filipina Domestic Workers and the International Division of Reproductive Labor," (2000) shows the beginnings of the OFW domestic worker phenomenon spreading globally. She explains the socioeconomic and cultural cause of the migrant Filipino. The labor tasks are identical to mothering tasks: "When performed by mothers, we call this mothering ... when performed by hired hands, we call it unskilled" (Parreñas2000, 561). She examines the feminist view of the Filipina as domestic worker, looking at gender stratification both in the Philippines and in the receiving nations.

One of the most recent reports on OFWs working in the Middle East comes from the Center for Immigrant Advocacy. This committee report gives insight into the plight of both the professional and skilled laborer OFW's plight in Saudi Arabia. The quantitative

data given explains the struggle for the Filipina in legal issues, lack of awareness about advocacy groups, financial remittance problems, and the challenges of following Islamic law. The report seeks to detail the negative issues facing OFWs in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia falls on the conservative, restrictive end in women's rights. This committee report reiterates this fact for non-Muslim Filipinas and highlights the abuse and loss of power OFWs may face in the Saudi culture. Nicole Constable (1997, 539-558) examines the female experience of an OFW in her article, "Sexuality and Discipline among Filipina Domestic Workers in Hong Kong." She reveals how, not only in conservative Islamic countries, but in other places where they find employment, OFW domestic workers face difficulties because of the perceived threat of their sexuality to their employers.

Constable (1997, 541) states that domestic workers are perceived as posing a sexual threat both in Hong Kong and other regions of the world. She gives examples both in Asia and in Africa where women hiring domestic helpers give stringent instructions on how their domestic helper should look, act, and smell so as not to be a temptation for men. This article also explains the power dynamic between mother-child that may be threatened by a Filipina domestic worker and gives examples of instances where an OFW's employment was terminated because the ward of the domestic helper referred to her as "mommy." In some cases, the employer rotates OFWs, hiring new helpers routinely to ensure the children will not become emotionally attached.

Alvaro Nagpala Calara in his article, "The Impact of Social Integration of Filipino Workers in Madrid," looked at J. W. Berry's (1997, 10) Acculturation Model (assimilation, integration, separation, marginalization) as a way of gauging the health and mental well-being of an OFW. When OFWs find community among other OFWs, they

acculturate to their new environment to a level of contentment that increases their likelihood to stay. Marginalized OFWs who do not participate in an OFW community do not acculturate and therefore do not stay (Calara 2008, 2).

Andrea Soco emphasizes the positive changes to a Filipino domestic house worker in her self-image, attitudes, and values through the experience of living in another culture. In her article “Relationales of Identity: ‘Sameness’ and ‘Difference’ among Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers,” she uses the term “transcendent boundaries” to describe the fluid boundaries OFW women experience to help them cope with being marginalized as house workers (Soco 2011, 67-68). This is reiterated in Susan Brigham’s article, “Filipino Overseas Domestic Workers: Contradictions, Resistance, and Implications for Change.” She looked at twelve female Filipino domestic workers in Asia and Middle Eastern countries, focusing on the everyday experiences these women encounter and how they deal with cultural dilemmas (Brigham 2013, 101-124). Her study found that many OFWs feel empowered to address injustices outside of their own culture. Brigham believes that the empowerment comes from the affirmation from the Filipino collective culture that an OFW’s work should be viewed as sacrificial for her family and community (Brigham 2013, 120). She becomes an extension of her home culture in her place of employment. Additionally, Brigham highlights narratives of OFWs who felt proud of their sacrifice and would not stand for abuse or injustice on their behalf (Brigham 2013, 120).

Joany Margallo and Amelia O. Peligro agree with Soco and Brigham in their article, “Stress Factors and the Well-Being of Overseas Filipino Workers,” where they state that the high level of well-being among OFWs can be attributed to the Filipino’s

culture and personality. Initially, this seems like a generalization; but using the Filipino terms for “communal work,” “goal-oriented,” and “family solidarity” (among other terms), the authors look at the statistics in longevity, demand, and cultural acceptance of the OFW phenomenon (2014, 116). Margallo's and Peligro's study strengthened this research by showing that OFWs have a positive impact on the cultures where they work.

On the other end of life for an OFW, both Yu Xiaojiang in his article, “The Sociocultural Effects of Returnee Overseas Filipino Workers in the Philippines” and Gerado Lisbe Jr. in his dissertation, “Church-Based OFW Family Care Ministry: An Ethnographic Study on the Structure and Activities that Filipino Churches Create That Significantly Reduce OFW Family Dysfunction,” address the psychological and emotional issues of OFW families in the Philippines. Yu uses qualitative research showing the sociocultural changes OFWs experience upon returning to their homeland. Problems arise when trying to reconnect with children and re-enter communities, which then may cause loneliness and depression. One factor was the type of employment. Many OFWs who found work as entertainers experienced discrimination and prejudice, also felt by their children and spouses (Yu 2015, 47-58).

Lisbe (2014, 52) covers marital infidelity issues, gender roles, proxy caretakers, and financial implications unique to the OFW experience. Lisbe’s qualitative research shows the dynamics when the mother leaves, and the father is left to care for children. He explains that the father has not been culturally prepared to nurture, and often a proxy parent is called upon from the family collective. If the father goes abroad, the impact on the children holistically is not as severe, yet the bond between the child and father

fractures. Lisbe's research (2014, 53) implicitly indicates few advantages to OFWs and their families for such a lifestyle.

Contextual Issues, Needs, Values, and Missional Perspectives Characterize Nazarene Overseas Filipino Workers

To understand the spiritual experience, values, and needs specific to a Nazarene OFW, this study found it important to examine Filipino spiritual and cultural dynamics and how these relate to the Muslim families where they serve. This literature review reflects sources used also in contextual issues OFWs encounter when living in Islamic cultures. Some of the articles address the OFWs' own faith development, and others address the potential for personal influence and evangelism.

Enoch Wan and Sadiri Joy Tira (2009) write together in their article "The Filipino Experience in Diaspora Missions: A Case Study of Christian Communities in Contemporary Contexts" about the origins of the OFW phenomenon, its impact on the Philippines and on the global perception of Filipinos, and the potential impact on missiology. They outline the cultural factors as to why OFWs are so well-received in most countries as migrant workers: "characterized by 'The Three 'A's'—adaptable, acceptable, and accessible" (Wan and Tira 2009, 5). The authors give numerous examples of OFW churches that have sprung up in buses, courtyards, ships, and storefronts. They make the case to empower OFWs missionally as one would a tentmaker, and explain, hermeneutically, the missional strategy of economic diasporas. The new reality of twenty-first-century missions is a paradigm of global economic movement as a providential tool to reach the unreached. Tira and Wan (2009, 6) emphasize the Filipino International Network as a means of prayer support, missional training, and holistic care for the OFWs and their families as well. The article does not

give any methodologies of evangelism but explains the necessity of equipping OFWs for the spread of the gospel.

Athena Gorospe (2007), in her case study about OFWs in *Evangelical Review of Theology*, relates the opportunities of Christian OFWs where they find employment. Though this twelve-year-old case study gives dated statistics, Gorospe captures the unique OFW experience still relevant today. She covers familiar topics found in most OFW literature about financial incentive, family hardships, and the marginalization of the OFW both in the country of employment and in his or her home country. Gorospe (2007, 370), along with Wan and Tira (2009, 5) are among the few researchers that show the positive sides of economic diaspora for both the OFW and the global church. Gorospe (2007, 370-74) highlights that the Filipino migrant serves as provider, missionary, and pilgrim. As a pilgrim, the OFW has a distinct hospitable disposition that sets him or her apart from other migrants. Gorospe also explains that OFWs have a liminal experience that sets them apart from their countrymen by widening their worldview, which gives them a “plurality of vision.” If utilized, this expanding worldview can be a great resource to their home country. She also writes about the OFW as victim but gives no narratives or suggestions on how to avoid being victimized. Biblically, though, she encourages OFWs to find power in their own agency as children of God who champions the cause of the migrant with justice and righteousness (Gorospe 2007, 374).

In understanding, then, what abilities Wan and Tira (2009, 6) and Gorospe (2007, 377) call upon for OFWs to leverage for evangelism, the Filipino worldview comes into play. Rodney Henry in his book *Filipino Spirit World: A Challenge to the Church*, lays out the differences between the Western Christian worldview and the Filipino Christian

worldview, including the influence into the Filipino church of animistic beliefs, the impact of certain biblical narratives regarding demon possession that the Western Church ignores, and the syncretism of these beliefs into the Filipino Church (Henry 1986, 24-26). Melba Padilla Maggay (2013, 573) writes in her article: “A Religion of Guilt Encounters a Religion of Power: Missiological Implications and Consequences,” that Western missionaries who brought the gospel to the Philippines concentrated their theological message on redemption from sin and the assurance of salvation instead of eternity in hell. In the Filipino culture, a Western missionary asking, “Are you saved?” which comes from a guilt/innocence worldview, does not necessarily fit into the Filipino fear/power worldview of wanting to experience and have access to the power of God. From the vantage of a fear/power culture, Maggay (2013, 573) states that religious activity for Filipinos centers on power in and over the spirit world, which is facilitated by the Catholic Church for most people. She also explains that in the fear/power worldview, the way in which sin affects a society’s relationship with the Creator is more pronounced than an individual’s personal infractions of disobedience.

Relating the Filipino fear/power worldview to the Islamic worldview, Sarah Mullin (2005, 79) writes in her article, “Faith on Camelback: Reaching non-Arabic Speaking, Urban, Less-Educated Women, A Worldview Approach to Ministry Among Muslim Women,” that Muslim women practice their faith through disciplines. Mullin feels that these women do not understand the tenets of Islam and thus rely on the male members of their family as their authority of the faith. The women who Mullin worked with in the Middle East view God as a distant Creator who keeps track of sins, punishes disobedience, and forgives those that repent. He is a God of causation, where both good

and bad originate (Mullin 2005, 79). When needing to access power, they turn toward the spirit world. Similar to what Henry (1986, 21) wrote about regarding the Filipino understanding of the spirit world, Mullin (2005, 81) found that uneducated Muslim women are more likely to utilize superstitions and folk Islam for healing of the sick, warding off evil spirits, and garnering favor within their family systems.

Jonas Nakonz and Angela Wai Yan Shik (2009, 25) look at Filipino migrant workers' perceptions of their spiritual health in relation to loneliness and hardships in economic diaspora in their article, "And All Your Problems Are Gone: Religious Coping Strategies among Philippine Migrant Workers in Hong Kong." In answer to the belief of Maggay (2013, 573) and Henry that the fear/power worldview may not facilitate a strong evangelistic presence, this ethnography shows that many Christian Filipinos resort to a charismatic faith experience that empowers their spiritual lives while disempowering them as migrant workers (Henry 1986, 18-35). Each author views this as a positive result that enables Filipino migrant workers to endure being away from their families and to develop coping strategies that strengthen their faith and give deeper purpose to their circumstances.

The life of Christian economic immigrants and the opportunities for the diaspora to reach into areas of the world where the gospel may be unknown are found both in *Scattered: The Filipino Global Presence*, (Pantoja, Tira and Wan) and in Jervis David Payne's (2012) book, *Strangers Next Door: Immigration, Migration, and Mission*. *Scattered: The Filipino Global Presence* (2004, 31) recounts a time when economic globalization and Filipino outsourcing by the West impacted not just Western economies but also faith communities. Although this work compiles somewhat outdated statistics, it

provides narratives of the impact that Christian Filipinos have in the workplace and diaspora communities. Overall, it gives the Church valuable evidence to strategize, train, and mobilize Filipinos in whatever country and vocation they find themselves.

Payne writes from the perspective of receiving immigrants into cities across the U.S. He emphasizes the fact that Christians can be missional to unreached people groups in their communities. He shows that many immigrants come to the U.S. from creative access countries and that this migration is an ordained opportunity for all sides. He wants the Church to know it has a responsibility in the Great Commission and emphasizes the need to prepare church members both in theology and culture in order to empower them to reach the immigrant for Christ (Payne 2012, 150-54). This work shows diaspora as an opportunity for holistic care and relationship. Though Payne writes from the Western perspective, his concepts of influence and relationship as a means of God's grace and God's creativeness in cross-cultural ministry fill in the gaps of Pantoja's writing.

Finally, when looking to empower Nazarene OFWs for evangelism, Paul R. Stevens' book *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work and Ministry in Biblical Perspective*, emphasizes the importance of vocation as service to God. He looks at the understanding of priesthood and clergy in the biblical narrative but shows it is not separate from all other vocations (1999, 183). God calls all believers to serve equally. Hierarchy in ministry should not happen; therefore, the layperson is key in the outreach and development of the local church, much more so than the clergy. Stevens stresses that "every legitimate human occupation (paid or unpaid) is some dimension of God's own work" (1999, 119). Stevens helps the OFW understand that there is a responsibility of all believers to propagate the good news in whatever vocation they find themselves.

**Processes, Methods, and Strategies the Church of the Nazarene
Global Mission Can Use to Empower and Facilitate
Nazarene Overseas Filipino Workers
for Cross-Cultural Ministry**

Currently, the Church of the Nazarene does not have any published materials for diaspora missiology. Some materials have been written by local Nazarene churches in the Philippines. However, this researcher was unable to obtain them.

When training for evangelism to Muslims, Kevin Greeson's book, *The Camel: How Muslims Are Coming to Faith in Christ*, is the major source. Greeson provides strategies that emphasize relationship building and cultural awareness. He speaks about the type of Muslim person ready to receive the gospel and also gives a method of bridge-building between topics important to Muslims and answers found in the Christian Scriptures (2007, 135). Greeson also addresses how Muslims may perceive the Christian Messiah and how to understand Quranic passages regarding Jesus (2007, 131). For the Christian who is unfamiliar with Islam, his insights are profound. However, he does not seem to differentiate between Muslim men and women in the proper context in how to speak about Christianity. This book is highly touted in the CON and used in training for evangelism to Muslims. However, it does not take into account the OFW employee/Muslim employer cultural factors nor the female to female dynamic. Robert McCroskey, retired Nazarene missionary and educator, writes his book, *Understanding Your Muslim Neighbor: Moving from Fear to Love*, as a primer on the Islamic faith geared toward the American Church. He also gives practical answers to hypothetical questions evangelicals may face when seeking to evangelize Muslims (2017, 79-111). This is the only current work from a Nazarene academic on this issue. Like Greeson, McCroskey writes in general terms about speaking to Muslims about their beliefs and

looking for ways to approach topics to introduce Christianity. Also, like Greeson, he does not differentiate between status and gender, which are major factors to take into account between Filipino culture and Middle Eastern cultures.

Bruce Alder and David Ackerman (2019), both Nazarene professors, co-wrote a philosophy of theological education that includes Christian formational concepts for discipleship in their book, *The Emmaus Model: Discipleship, Theological Education and Transformation* (2019). Explaining the importance of relational evangelism, mentorship, and the sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's work in the discipleship process, they describe the "being," "doing," and "knowing" of the Christian theology student (Alder and Ackerman 2019, 25). Though the book's intention is to equip theological instructors, it also provides basic mentoring principles for the nurture of one's Christian faith, and relational methods of discipleship that work well between people in different classes. The Nazarene-published book, *The Power of One: Reflections on Christlike Living* (2011 Kindle: 261), was written as a global resource for the CON by the Board of General Superintendents. Jerry Porter, former General Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, was key in the development of this methodology for personal evangelism. With the motto "Each one win one," this study shows how to develop personal relationships first with Christ and then, in His power, boldly build relationships and present the good news to others with the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Church of the Nazarene 2011, 261-271). This method has been successful in Latin American countries where Porter served as a missionary. The Nazarene Church promoted this curriculum to all regions and people groups as a key to disciple making. Alder and Ackerman's (2019, 8) approach of nurture and guidance would prove a more suitable approach for Nazarene OFWs, as *The Power of One* does

not take into account the need for local theology but presupposes that both the Christian and the pre-believer will have some type of predisposition to the understanding of the sinfulness of human nature. Allder and Ackerman's approach (2019, 8) allows for the flow of questions and clarifications initiated by the disciple. One can admire Porter's intent of one-on-one personal evangelism, and it is worth emulating, but the methodology as a whole is insensitive to non-Western cultures.

The mission arm of the Church of the Nazarene has written very little concerning economic diaspora of any people group. The Church of the Nazarene has only now recognized the missional opportunities of UPGs moving into Western countries. While the Christian community rejoices in Christian OFWs' incidental influence as salt and light, and their successful evangelization efforts especially in creative access countries, they do present a challenge for the global Nazarene Church. There is nothing written about the OFW in Global Mission CON policy. Therefore, the church is currently evaluating this new mission paradigm.

Because of the economic nature of the primary purpose of an OFW living cross-culturally, the denomination outside the Philippines does not want to embrace the OFW as a "missionary" because of the emphasis on economic gain over family life, and because of their lack of accountability back to their churches. The Church of the Nazarene *Global Mission Handbook* (2012, 30) states, "Global Mission highly values family life and recognizes the strain put on family relationships by extensive absences. Therefore, a missionary will not be separated from his or her immediate family for more than 21 consecutive days without the written approval of the Regional Director." The handbook itself has a Western orientation and has not been contextualized for other

nationalities, let alone those who do not have a traditional missionary vocation. Also, the Church of the Nazarene feels that the OFW mobility causes difficulty in the investment of time and resources. The OFW community has no accountability structure in place for resources and no clear leadership to give guidance.

JoJo Manzano and Joy C. Solina (2007) wrote a handbook that would help the CON understand and facilitate the OFW. In *Worker to Witness: Becoming an OFW Tentmaker*, Manzano and Solina have created a non-denominational tool for training OFWs in Filipino churches before placement as tentmakers. The book covers the intentional placement in areas of the world where OFWs are welcome and have potential influence. Holistic care and personal spiritual growth are a large part of the handbook.

Conclusion

Though significant journal articles exist that contribute to the understanding of the unique needs of OFWs, and exciting new studies in diaspora missiology are available, the Nazarene denomination itself lacks culturally contextualized resources for non-traditional and non-Western cross-cultural ministry. The research of this dissertation and subsequent handbook from this study seeks to fill that gap.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This dissertation utilized action research, conducted in two phases. The first phase was document-driven exegesis, theological reflection and analysis. After this process, I proceeded to the second phase of the study—data gathering with participants. In the second phase, the research became participatory over a three-year span with various participants collaborating on a handbook for Nazarene OFWs to utilize for training in relational evangelism in Muslim household.

For RQ1, I used exegetical hermeneutics, integrative critical analysis, and theological reflection. RQ2 analyzed writings about the OFW phenomenon including recent journal articles, as well as interviews with Filipino academics, Christian OFWs, and regional and local Nazarene church leaders. In RQ3 and RQ4, over a 3-year span, I conducted personal interviews with OFWs who had served for at least 2 years in Muslim households, held three focus groups, and distributed questionnaires that focus on the experience of Nazarene OFWs. I interviewed Nazarene leaders in the Philippines, as well as Nazarene Asia Pacific regional leadership and asked for feedback from the Nazarene Eurasia regional leadership. Throughout the collection of data from the OFWs, I collaborated with these leaders on the results, getting their input for the content of the handbook.

Hermeneutical Methodology—RQ1

This study used exegetical research into the identity of the Israelites, the narrative of their diaspora, and God's response—specifically studying instances of slavery and the Babylonian exile. Moving into the New Testament, the study looked at the identity of Christians, their oppression under Roman dominance, and God's response—specifically studying Christians who migrated away from Israel into parts of Asia Minor. The exegetical research gives credibility and validation to the strategy of training the Nazarene OFW for relational evangelism.

Social Science Methodology—RQ2

A social science methodology was used both in addressing the second research question, and in addressing the content of interviews with scholars. The phenomenon of the contracted overseas Filipino worker is relatively new, and most research about the personal and community impact of this experience has been published in the last fifteen years. This study explored recent journal and newspaper articles that address social integration, economic influences, community and familial ramifications, and spiritual dynamics for OFWs in Islamic countries. Currently, several hundred publications address Filipino contracted workers and their families' needs, ranging from holistic care of children left in the Philippines, preparation and job placement, to reintegration after a contract has terminated. Additionally, support groups and networks exist that help Filipino contracted workers find legal, psychological and family resources. I also interviewed Filipina Christian anthropologist, Melba Maggay (2019), about the power values of Filipino culture, the disempowerment of an OFW, and the dysfunction of OFW families in the Philippines. This study concentrated on literature that addresses the

specific psychological and spiritual challenges of the OFW, particularly focusing on those in Islamic countries. The information gathered was used to construct questions for interviews with OFWs who served in Muslim households, and to collaborate with Global Mission and the Filipino Nazarene church to include holistic practices in training Nazarene OFWs.

Action Research Methodology—RQ3, RQ4

An action research methodology was used for research questions three and four. The research employed the following five steps in collaboration with the participants: (1) to diagnosis the problem; (2) to action plan; (3) to intervene (action taking); (4) to evaluate (assessment), and finally; (5) to reflect (learn) (Gilbert, Johnson, and Lewis 2014, 98). Through the Cyclical Process Model (CPM), questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups were conducted with OFWs who have returned to the Philippines, Hong Kong, and those still serving in creative access countries. These were then coded, analyzed, and assessed by select participants. Nazarene Global Mission leaders and Nazarene Filipino leaders were also interviewed and asked to assess the feedback from the OFWs. After reflection and analysis, I contacted the OFW participants for clarifications and feedback. I interviewed Nazarene leaders relating the OFW participants' answers to strategize on the content of the handbook. I connected again with available participants to ensure that the dialogical cycle continued, communicating developments and moving toward the writing and implementation of the handbook.

I traveled to Thailand, the Philippines, and Hong Kong to meet with the Asia Pacific Global Mission regional director, the Filipino field strategy coordinator, Filipino church leaders, and returning OFWs from Muslim countries. Skype, Facebook

Messenger, email, and personal meetings were utilized to ensure an ongoing gathering and sharing of information. Specifically, Appreciative Inquiry during this process created a dialogue that built trust between all parties and created space for analysis, collaboration and innovation.

In the focus groups and interviews with OFWs, I used storytelling and modeling to generate discussion, drawing on my own creative access experiences in sharing the gospel. I used the same stories with each focus group and interview to ensure consistency. In all three focus groups, I asked Elma Mago, a Nazarene Filipina pastor to OFW women, to attend strictly as an observer, and afterward asked her feedback on the general mood of the groups and the OFWs' sincerity in their participation.

Participants

This research looked primarily at the Nazarene OFW domestic workers but was not restricted to members of the Church of the Nazarene. OFW participants were all female, over twenty-one years of age, had been employed in Muslim households for at least two consecutive years (typical length of a contract), and exhibited a desire to be part of the action research model. Global Mission participants were leaders from Asia Pacific and Eurasia regional offices, field strategy coordinators, Nazarene scholars, and current pastors in the Philippines. All participants gave informed consent that ensured confidentiality and trust to help with dialogue process. Anonymity with questionnaires and interviews was promised. During focus groups, interviews, videoconferences, and evaluation of responses, openness and trust was requested.

All OFW participants spoke English fluently. All focus group and interviews were recorded and later transcribed by four Filipino office employees at Asia Pacific

Theological Seminary in Manila, Philippines. Though all spoke English, at times during the focus groups Tagalog words were used to express emotions or to ask for interpretation from the other participants. This was noted in the transcriptions. No personal names were used in the OFW recordings, but only their code designations. All OFW participants claimed a personal faith in Jesus Christ. Catholicism is noted in their backgrounds because of the strong cultural influence into their evangelical faith. Of the twenty OFW participants, eleven are currently Nazarene, seven are other evangelical, and two are Catholic. All currently attend evangelical churches.

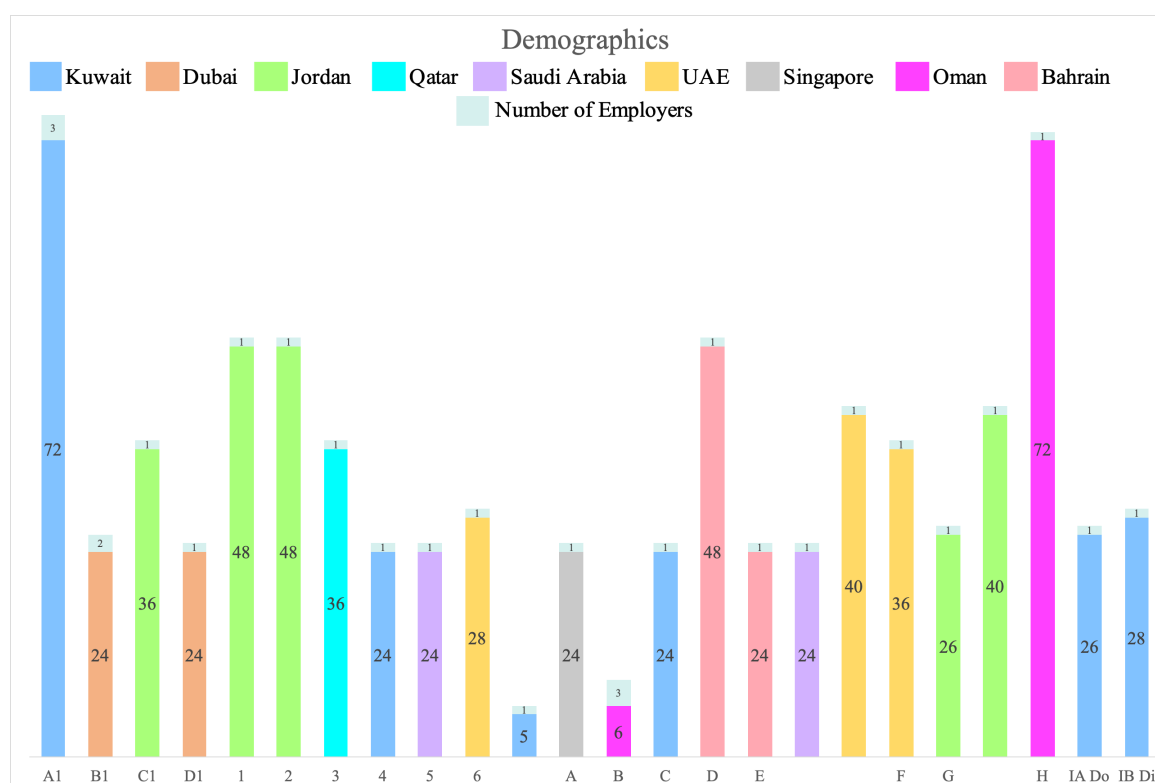


Figure 3.1. Demographics of the Participants

Figure 3.1. shows the OFW focus group participants. They are coded by alphabetical/numerical designations as follows: focus group 1 (participants A-H), focus

group 2 (participants 1-6), focus group 3 (participants A1-D1). Personal OFW interviews are designated as IA DO and IB DI. On the colored lines are the number of months of employment. Those lines with no coded letter or number designation belong to the participant to the left as multiple countries of employment.

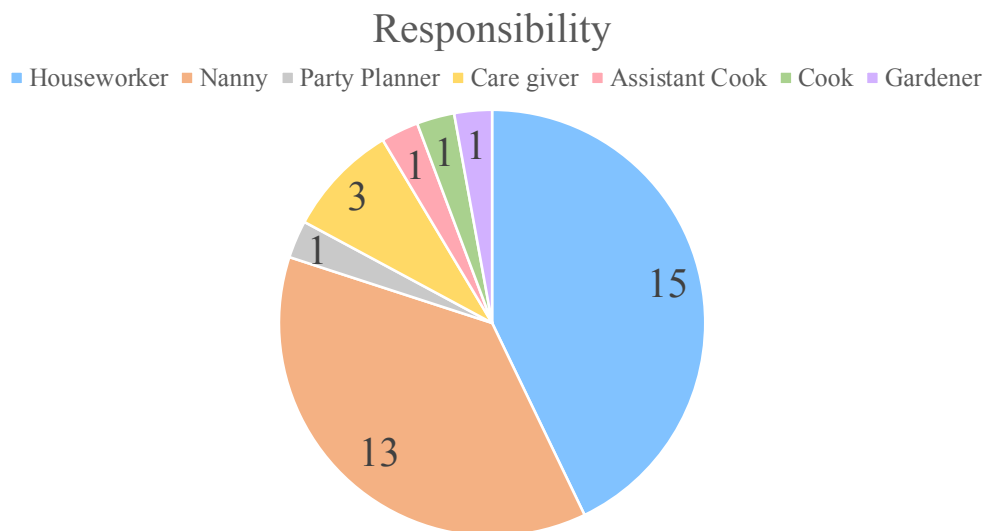


Figure 3.2. Responsibilities of the Participants on their Overseas Job

Figure 3.2. explains the type of employment. Houseworker, nanny and care giver are all viewed as different vocations. The chart reflects a few participants having multiple vocations.

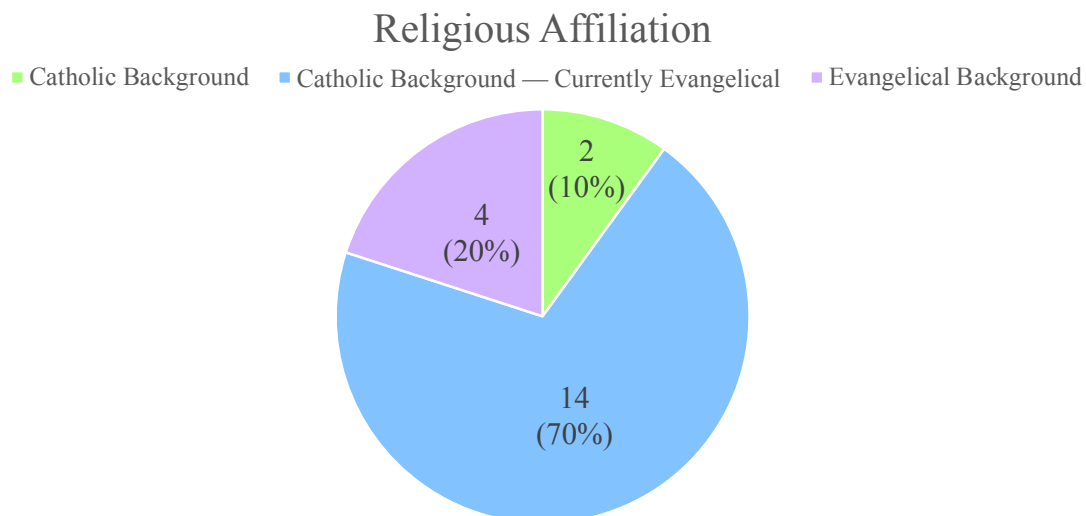


Figure 3.3. Religious Affiliations of the Participants

Figure 3.3. shows the significance of the influence of the Catholic faith on the participants. Also, out of the sixteen evangelical participants, eleven are members of the Church of the Nazarene.

Participants from the leadership of the Church of the Nazarene are as follows: Dr. Mark Louw, Asia Pacific Region Director; Rev. Dave Hane, Asia Pacific Region Personnel Coordinator; Dr. Bruce Alder, Asia Pacific Regional Education Coordinator; Dr. David Ackerman, Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary Professor; Rev. Stephen Gualberto, Philippines Field Strategy Coordinator; Rev. Jun Macas, Pastor of Harvest Church of the Nazarene Manila, and owner of an OFW placement agency; Rev. Jason Hallig, Pastor of International Nazarene Fellowship Manila; Rev. Jackson Natividad, Pastor of Rowenas Nazarene Church Manila; Rev. Jose Elmo Dialing, Philippine Field Compassionate Ministry Coordinator; Rev. Elsid Paragas, Pastor of Bulacan Nazarene Church; and Rev. Elma Mago, Pastor of International Nazarene Church, Hong Kong.

It was the hope of this researcher to have Nazarene leadership from the creative access countries where the OFWs find employment. The Eurasia Regional Director and Jordan Field Coordinator were both contacted and showed interest in using the handbook, but they were unaware of any Nazarene OFWs working in their areas of supervision and did not make themselves available for feedback and ongoing collaboration. One Nazarene Islamic scholar was interviewed and served as an important participant in the dialogical process; however, he requested to be known in the dissertation by the alias “Dr. Smith” because of his work in the Middle East and in creative access countries.

OFW Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

The research began with one-on-one interviews with two OFWs in Manila who had returned to visit family members or after their contracts in Muslim countries had expired. The interview questions centered specifically on the OFWs Christian faith, expressions of their faith, and general working conditions.³

In the focus groups, discussions were fluid, and I gave prompts and modeled examples to fuel conversation by sharing personal narratives and information gleaned through researching social science literature and exegesis. In all three focus groups, the narratives and information given as examples were uniform.

Action Research Explanation in Data Analysis

The benefit of action research as a research methodology is that it enables practitioners to collaborate and contribute to theory and knowledge that enhances practice. As a practicing Nazarene missionary, this researcher desires to strategize with

³ See Appendix E, “Interview Questions for Christian Overseas Filipino Workers.”

Nazarene leaders to look beyond traditional means of sending cross-cultural ministers to unreached people groups and creative access countries.

The process of this research began in conversations with Nazarene Filipina contracted workers at the International Nazarene Church in Hong Kong. These women related their past experiences working in Muslim homes in the Middle East as domestic helpers. As a Nazarene missionary, I sought to work with women in similar situations to equip and empower them for relational and lifestyle evangelism to the Muslim families they serve.

As a first step in the action research process, I traveled to the field office in Manila to interview the Filipino Nazarene leadership about the Nazarene OFW mission strategy. Initially the dialogue with the leadership centered on the feasibility and length of such training, but it was agreed that the writing of a handbook that focused on the relational aspects of evangelism connecting to the Muslim family could be used in further in-person training as well as a starting point for future growth in this area.

After these conversations, I networked with the Nazarene Philippine field office and the International Nazarene Church in Hong Kong to locate Nazarene and other evangelical OFWs to interview about their Christian experience when working in Muslim households. Through listening to their experiences, I hoped to gain a better understanding of the obstacles they face in sharing their faith, what strengths and weaknesses might exist in this strategy, and the current knowledge of these evangelical OFWs about Islam. After the first group of interviews, questionnaires, and focus groups, the qualitative data analysis program MAXQDA10 coded the results, and main themes emerged. These themes were then relayed back to a select group of participants who were asked for

clarification and additional comments. Of the original twenty OFW participants, eleven responded to a follow up questionnaire. After the data was summarized, it was given to five OFWs who consistently responded to subsequent inquiries for feedback and clarification. Their feedback was then relayed to different members of the Nazarene leadership.

Interviews were conducted with Filipino Nazarene leaders in hopes of their participation in the process of writing the handbook and utilizing it with the OFWs from their congregations. At a pastors' meeting on the Nazarene Metro Manila district, I distributed twenty-seven surveys. Participants returned a total of twenty-two surveys, with 17 pastors favorable to learning more about equipping the OFWs from their congregation for this type of evangelism. When contacted again, only four responded replied that they would be willing to collaborate with in the writing of the handbook. Thus, I worked with these four pastors in submitting different sections of the handbook using their feedback. Many in-person meetings between these pastors and myself produced Wesleyan theological and Filipino contextually appropriate material for the handbook.

A cyclical process over many months ensued with submitting parts of the handbook to the participating OFWs, the Filipino pastors and the Nazarene scholars and leaders for evaluation and feedback. I also included exegetical research and information from the social science literature in the writing process. Once the major themes from focus groups, interviews, and research emerged, these became the outline of the handbook.

In this collaboration and evaluation process, I found the participating OFWs, and Filipino pastors did not always write substantial evaluations. Many times, they would only affirm the content. I discovered that, culturally, it is difficult in the Philippines for someone to critique a friend or colleague. There were many subsequent communications asking for sincere evaluations. The OFWs were uniform in their evaluation that the handbook was too wordy and too long. The pastors were concerned that the OFWs would not know enough about the fundamentals of the Christian faith unless more theology was explained in simpler forms. All agreed that the stories in the handbook were the most effective means of communicating and would also be the part that the OFWs would remember, especially if they were not permitted to have the handbook with them at their place of employment.

After the handbook was complete, it was distributed to the five OFWs, Philippine Field Strategy Coordinator, Dr. Smith, and the collaborating Filipino pastors for future use.

Limitations of the Methodology

In general, this action research was limited by its dependence on all participants being fully engaged and available at all stages of the process. The difficulty in working with OFWs entailed coordinating travel schedules, limited access to technology, employer demands, and unseen variables that arise with OFWs coming and going from creative access countries. Limitations included the length of time span for the study. The beginning of the research collection was slow, and as with all institutions, leadership changes took place in regional and district offices. Some data was disregarded, as statistics changed over the course of the research.

Other limitations included the lack of statistical tracking of Nazarene OFWs. The Nazarene Filipino Church does not report to the denomination their members working in other countries as contracted workers. Thus, Nazarene leaders who oversee the Islamic creative access countries have no information about Nazarene OFWs working in their areas unless they are contacted by the OFWs, which has not happened. Also, the handbook had not yet been used in training or personally implemented at the time of the writing of the dissertation. It is difficult to assess if the handbook will be effective, initially, until a testimony can be given by an OFW to its accuracy and usefulness in relational evangelism.

As a non-Filipina, the limitations of my own worldview and understanding of the OFW experience factors into the action research methodology. Though I have worked as a nanny, and as a missionary in a creative access country, I do not know the experience, from a collective cultural lens, of leaving the immediate family in order to work (many without days off) so that those family members might have a better life.

Ethics

I employed informed consent, constantly assuring the participants that they could end the interview or end their participation at any point. I also asked Rev. Elma Mago to contact the OFW focus group participants after the groups met and ask if anyone would like their contributions taken out. Through email, all participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the study and have their previous input voided. None did so.

In the interviews and focus groups, I tried to make the atmosphere as light as possible. The OFW participants were told they could ask questions at any time. No gifts or incentives were given, but light snacks were served.

At the member check, I consulted with the research professor at Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, who also implements action research in transformational development among Filipino ministries to women and children.

As an American professor, I understood that my position in the Filipino culture would cause a power imbalance and reluctance to be transparent among the OFWs. I attempted to balance power by allowing for questions, asking them to teach me about their understanding of Islam, allowing any topic to be discussed, and sharing my own vulnerability through stories of being a nanny and being a creative access missionary. I continued to remain in contact with many of the OFW participants through social media after the focus groups as a means of showing my sincerity of emotional investment and to give prayer support and guidance.

I consulted a counselor for debriefing after I coded the data and assessed the OFW experience because the stories of abuse and family dysfunction posed a risk of causing a reluctance in writing the handbook.

Methods Summary

One of the criticisms or weaknesses of action research is the lack of neutrality and clearly defined methodology. Yet, it has many strengths. I enjoyed the collaboration and camaraderie that action research affords in using a “hands-on” approach to the work. Another strength was being able to use input from common workers, scholars, pastors and leaders, as well as my own background and life experiences as catalysts for a new

mission strategy. Also, action research enables all participants to develop a product together and not just expand the field of knowledge in a certain discipline, which is a key factor for choosing this research method.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The purpose of this action research study was to collaborate with CON Global Mission leaders and Christian OFW women to create a handbook for relational evangelism for OFWs who serve as domestic helpers in Muslim households. This was accomplished by first providing a biblical basis for empowering Nazarene OFWs for relational evangelism in the Muslim homes where they are employed; examining social, physical, psychological, and spiritual issues that these OFW women face both in their home life and places of employment; and collaborating with Christian OFWs and Nazarene mission leaders in the development of the handbook. This chapter presents the specific outcomes of this research process.

Implementation of the Findings

RQ1 findings were condensed into a brief biblical devotional and presented to the OFW participants at the beginning of the interviews and focus groups as part of the introduction and biblical basis to the project. This devotional comprises section one of the handbook. RQ2 findings were incorporated into the personal interview question numbers 6-9⁴ and focus group discussions regarding working conditions, skill training, family member care, and victimization. RQ3 findings were presented as themes to the Church of

⁴ See Appendix E, "Interview Questions for Christian Overseas Filipino Workers."

the Nazarene leaders and incorporated into sections of the handbook. RQ4 findings mainly comprise the content of the handbook.

RQ1: What Biblical Exemplars Illustrate God Using Economic Diaspora as a Means to Further His Kingdom?

Looking for mission strategies in the Old Testament can be a challenge. Diaspora missiologists⁵ recognize that an explicit proselytizing mandate does not exist, nor was the command given to the Israelites by God to convert the nations. There are, however, threads of witness that indicate the Israelites were to show in all things the covenant relationship between themselves and God. Living out this covenant relationship not only established their identity as a nation but also extended blessings to them and to outsiders influenced by them. In the Old Testament narrative, when individual Israelites were taken away from their people, there are examples of how their covenant with God extended blessings to those from other nations. When the Israelites were driven from their homeland into foreign exile, they maintained their covenantal identity. In the same way, heirs of the New Covenant also extend the blessings of this covenant to those living around them. In this section, I will explain the Abrahamic covenant as a vehicle to bless all nations.

Abrahamic Covenant and the Meaning of the Blessing

The promise God gave Abraham in Genesis 12 is a promise of a blessing that extends into the creation of a nation that would reveal the holiness and glory of God to the world: “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your

⁵ Such as Enoch Wan and Ted Rubesh in *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology and Practice*.

name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:2-3).⁶

This dissertation will not completely dissect the Abrahamic covenant but will focus on the aspect of the covenant of blessing that extends to each citizen of Israel as full participants in the covenant through their patriarch, Abraham. This blessing promised by God passes through Abraham and his descendants to the world. Christopher J. H. Wright (2006, 206) defines blessing as something God initiated in creation: “Blessing is initially and strongly connected with creation and all the good gifts that God longs for people to enjoy in his world—abundance, fruitfulness and fertility, long life, peace and rest.” When looking at the meaning of this blessing in the context of the Abrahamic covenant, Nahum Sarna (1989, 89) in *the JPS Torah Commentary*, explains that the Hebrew understanding of this blessing to mean “All the families of the earth/ Shall bless themselves by you ... God’s promises to Abram would then proceed in three stages from the particular to the universal: a blessing on Abram personally, a blessing (or curse) on those with whom he interacts, a blessing on the entire human race.”

The blessing is not a self-serving blessing for Abraham and his descendants in order to stand out as a nation. In *Recovering the Full Mission of God*, Dean Flemming (2013, 25) points out that before God gave the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12, there creation and humanity needed restoration. “So ‘blessing’ in Gen 12:1-3 must also include God’s purposes for redeeming people, and ultimately, renewing all of creation. It is a reverse of the curse that followed Adam and Eve’s sin” (Flemming 2013, 25). Therefore,

⁶ All Scripture citations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version.

the plan of the covenant was for the chosen nation of Israel to become a conduit of God's blessings. This is implied each time the Abrahamic covenant is addressed in the Old Testament (Exod. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Jer. 7:23; 24:7). The texts reinforce the idea that all nations will be blessed because of Israel's existence (Gen. 12:2).⁷ When the Israelites lived out the covenant in front of other nations, the impression and influence on surrounding peoples was intended to show the holiness of the living God. Stevens emphasizes the sacredness of the Hebrew covenant life and how it, in turn, would bless other nations: "Covenant life embraced not merely cultic activity but the whole of life from birth to death, permitting no dichotomy of sacred and secular. This truth, said the prophets, would one day become apparent ... ultimately the blessings to the nations was a covenant obligation laid on the people as a whole" (Stevens 1999, 36). Brueggemann (2003, 46) also emphasizes the fact that when Israel flourished, it created a source of security for other nations as well: "Israel's life in the world is itself a means and source of well-being for other nations. From this beginning point, the other nations are always on the horizon of Israel as they are upon the horizon of the God of Israel."

The Individual Israelite as the Conduit of the Blessing

The existence and purpose of Israel as a nation was to point to their God, but this purpose applied also to each individual citizen. The Old Testament narratives of Joseph, Daniel, and Naaman's slave girl function as representations of how each Israelite can personally live out the covenant, and thereby be a conduit of God's blessing, particularly to the Gentiles whom they served. For "the purpose of God's covenant is not merely to

⁷ A more likely translation of the verb is a passive: "shall be blessed through—because of—you" (Sarna 1989, 89).

bless Abraham's family in a hostile world. Instead, he intends to bless the whole world through these people" (Messenger 2014).

The Forgotten Joseph as Manager of the Blessing

The Joseph narrative is an example of a Hebrew outside the confines of his community who understood his identity as an heir of the Abrahamic covenant. This narrative shows the interaction between God and the Hebrew individual based on the covenant (Gen. 39:2; 50:20). As William Messenger notes:

The book of Genesis traces the partial fulfillment of these promises through the chosen lines of Abraham's descendants, Isaac, Jacob and Jacob's sons. Among them all, it is in Joseph that God most directly fulfills his promise to bless the nations through the people of Abraham. Indeed, people from 'all the world' were sustained by the food system that Joseph managed. (Messenger 2014)

This narrative also points to the fact that though God did not rescue Joseph from slavery, Joseph did become a source of blessing to his Egyptian master. Joseph did not play a passive part in the narrative simply as a Hebrew slave who bears a mark of his people or carries on a tradition. He knew his God. He had knowledge of the holiness of God as referenced in Genesis 39:9 when Joseph refused Potiphar's wife on the grounds that it would be sin against God.

Joseph must have understood his place in Egyptian culture and used diplomacy and wisdom to maneuver through a culture where the Pharaoh was akin to deity. The narrative implies that Joseph's relationship with Pharaoh was one of trust, as Pharaoh gave Joseph his signet ring and made him his second-in-command (Gen. 41:42-43). Joseph, aware of the environment around him, used culturally appropriate respect and sensitivity toward Pharaoh without losing his identity and relationship with Yahweh, thereby not diminishing the impact of the covenant blessing.

Before Pharaoh, Joseph did not use the covenant name of God exclusive to his own people. Instead, he consistently referred to God with the more general term, *'elōhîm*. In so doing, Joseph avoided making any unnecessary offense, a point supported by the fact that Pharaoh credited God with revealing to Joseph the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams (Gen. 41:39). (Messenger 2014)

Though there is an absence of the word "covenant" in the Joseph story, all that was happening was a result of the Abrahamic covenant. The covenant between Abraham and God is given to Joseph as an individual. "God's word to Abraham was bearing fruit: 'I will bless those who bless you ... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'" (Messenger 2014). Joseph was the blessing of God to the nations (the Egyptians) and as an instrument to continue the covenant (Gen. 45:7-8). Joseph was aware of this part of his identity. He saw himself as an instrument of God, and when revealing himself to his brothers he could look past their evil actions and declare that it was all meant for good: "The Joseph novella highlights God's mysterious but sovereign faithfulness. Readers have been informed that in those lowest moments of Joseph's life, 'Yhwh was with him' (39:3; 21, 23; cf 21:20; 48:21). The narrator highlights that it is God who gave the promise to Abraham and Sarah that continues to unfold to their descendants (12:2-3)" (Kim 2013, 237). Throughout the story of Joseph, the theme of the promise of the covenant is portrayed through the blessing that Joseph becomes to Potiphar and to Pharaoh. What was meant for evil, Joseph was able to relate it back to good, stemming from what he knew of the God of his father and the covenant made to his great grandfather. All that the covenant encompassed was placed on Joseph.

The Unshakable Daniel as Prophet of Blessing

This chapter will not examine the entire book of Daniel but will focus on the first two chapters of the Book of Daniel that narrate his initial induction, training, and

placement in King Nebuchadnezzar's service. Many similarities exist between the Joseph and Daniel narratives. Both were taken as slaves away from their Jewish homeland. Both were given prophetic dreams and interpreted dreams for the benefit of foreign kings. Both were gifted in leadership. Where Joseph adapted to life in Egypt to the point of being unrecognized by his brothers, however, Daniel's understanding of his individual identity as an Israelite gave him courage to stand up against the Babylonian culture, maintain his identity, and bring the message of blessing to King Nebuchadnezzar.

The Daniel narrative does not rely on a genealogy table that shows Daniel's tie to the Abrahamic covenant through lineage, nor does it end with him being released from captivity and continuing the promises of this covenant. In fact, it interrupts the covenant of Genesis 12 in that the nation of Israel has been torn apart through their disobedience and failure to keep this covenant, and Daniel plays the role of a casualty. Taken as an exilic slave into the Babylonian king's service, there is something in Daniel's character that compels him to continually adhere to his Jewish faith. "Daniel's great strength and the firmness of his resolve arose from this adherence to Torah" (Anderson 1984, 15). Though given an honorable vocation for an exiled person (accompanied by privileges such as education and eating from the king's own larder), Daniel quickly asserts himself (leading the other three Israelites with him) and asks for dietary exemptions based on his own religious law (Dan. 1:8-16). The ten-day testing period that Daniel asks the guard to allow them was not only to set them apart from the Babylonian culture but was a testimony to the power of their relationship with God. As Ronald Wallace (1979, 40) notes, "They remain inner strangers to the life and culture in which they are outwardly and fully involved. They never sacrifice their inward conviction that they belong body

and soul to a kingdom other than that of Babylon.” Daniel is proved victorious through this testing, and he and the other three Israelites are found by the King to be upstanding—ten times more superior in wisdom and understanding—than the Babylonian magicians and enchanters (Dan. 1:22).

Nebuchadnezzar’s dream in Daniel 2 is quite similar to Pharaoh’s dream (found in Gen. 41), in that neither king knew the meaning of their dreams, and no one from their own courts could interpret them. Both were greatly troubled. Both Joseph and Daniel pointed to their God as the means for interpretation and thus brought relief. Joseph was summoned, but Daniel came forward, as it appears, in an effort to keep the King from having all the wise men executed. He also came forward in confidence that his God was going to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar a prophetic message. Though his three companions joined with Daniel in prayer before approaching Arioch, the King’s executioner, to say that God had revealed both Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and the interpretation, it was Daniel who went forward. He was confident in what he had received from God. Daniel states rather emphatically that the interpretation of the dream is not from his own intelligence but given as a gift from his God in heaven (Dan. 2:47). The interpretation in Daniel 2:47 reveals a prophetic message about the future of Babylon as well as a blessing to King Nebuchadnezzar, whereupon the King proclaims, “Surely your God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able to reveal this mystery.” Though the dream prophesies the eventual downfall of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar receives it as a blessing. “As Daniel pointed upwards and into the future to the glory that was yet to be seen, Nebuchadnezzar was enabled to lift up his eyes. He, too, was given a vision and foretaste of something more glorious, solid and lasting than

the glory, might and business of the throne of Babylon which he had occupied so easily” (Wallace 1979, 60). He recognizes that the sheer act of such a precise interpretation was from a power beyond his comprehension. Nebuchadnezzar responds by honoring Daniel and his three companions with wealth and responsibility (Dan. 2:48-49).

Daniel’s understanding of his own role in the Abrahamic covenant is implied, not in the receiving of the blessing of land or family, but in the glorification of his God even while being held captive in a foreign land. This is evident in the prayer of praise in Daniel 2:20-23:

²⁰ and said: “Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.

²¹ He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.

²² He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.

²³ I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king.”

Daniel finds assurance in the fact that God granted him the interpretation of the King’s dream, and he understood that gift to be a sign that God continues to act on behalf of His people. As Patrick Miller notes,

It has been observed that the doxology to the God of Heaven begins with Daniel blessing the name of God (v. 20), but by the time one gets to the end of it, the deity is addressed as “the God of my fathers” (v. 23). The deity who is at once transcendent (the God of Heaven) and willing to be present (the name of God) is, for Daniel, none other than the God of his ancestors, a God who deigns to relate to a particular people. (Bowen and Strawn 2003, 363)

Daniel as an exiled Israelite was able to live counter culturally to the Babylonians and demonstrated through his actions and words that his God was the source of all power.

In so doing, he blessed not only the other exiles but also the royal household where he served.

The Little Slave Girl as an Agent of the Blessing

Using the example of a slave, Joseph, promoted to second-in-command to save Egypt and Canaan from starvation, may seem a unique and dramatic case of how an individual heir of the Abrahamic covenant served as a conduit of blessing to the nations. Using the example of Daniel, a religious zealot and intellectual forced into the Babylonian king's service and given a prophecy that moves a mighty king to fall prostrate at his feet, may also prove too extreme to make the argument that the Abrahamic covenant extended to each individual heir.

One small, seemingly trivial narrative of a little Israelite slave girl, however, reveals that even the unnamed have the power to serve as conduits of what they know of their God. The Almighty empowered her to bring blessing that led to the healing and faith of Naaman, an Aramean (Syrian) general. What little is known about the Israelite slave girl taken as plunder during an Aramean raid is only stated in two verses found in 2 Kings 5:2-3: "Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, 'If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.'" The narrative only reveals that she was "little" and contrasts this with the powerful general Naaman. Spina writes in *The Faith of the Outsider*,

There is something of a redundancy in the way this girl is described, which perhaps is meant to underscore her low status, at least with respect to the household of Naaman: she is a 'young woman' or 'little girl' (na'aruh), which may indicate both age (low to middle teens perhaps) and her position as a servant. However, not only is she called a 'young woman/little girl'; the noun is further

modified with the adjective ‘little.’ Thus, she is a ‘little little girl.’ (Spina 2005, 78)

The slave girl acknowledges her identity by offering up hope. Though she does not use specific language that would signify her Hebrew identity, she does show both compassion for her master’s plight and knowledge of where he would find healing through the prophet of her people: “If only my master would see the prophet of my people” (2 Kgs. 5:3).

If the slave girl is so young and little, how does she know of the prophet of her people, Elisha? It is supposed that she heard grand stories of Elisha in her home as a child, for as a slave in another country, she certainly would not hear positive stories of her people. She believed the stories, and, identifying herself as a believer, passed on to her mistress the news of the healing power of Elisha the prophet. “Yet despite her lowly status, this little Israelite girl deigns to offer advice to her mistress, or at least expresses the hope that her husband (“my master,” as the little girl says) would be healed of his bad skin condition, if only he were with the prophet in Samaria (2 Kgs. 5:3). Regardless of any fear or loathing she might have toward her captors, she volunteers information that she thinks will result in Naaman’s cure” (Spina 2005, 8). Whether Naaman was desperate and willing to go to any length to be healed, or whether he saw something in this slave girl that gave him hope is unclear. The fact that he went to the King of Aram, however, and asked permission to go to the enemy for healing may speak to the slave girl’s character.

An adversarial history existed between Aram and Israel, as outlined in the battles chronicled in 1 Kings. Chapter 20 tells of battles where the Lord delivered Israel from the attacks of the Aramean Army. The Arameans believed that the local gods of the Israelites

only protected them in the hills, but if the Israelites could be lured onto the plains, the Aramean gods would ensure victory (1 Kgs. 20:23-25). In one battle King Ahab did not heed the words of the prophet of Israel and spared the life of the Aramean king, Ben-Hadad. Chapter 22 tells of the death of the Israelite King Ahab, killed by a random Aramean arrow as punishment for his disobedience in chapter 20.

It is not stated that Naaman fought at either of these battles, but as general of the Aramean Army he was at least familiar with this history, and possibly even knew of Israel's explanation for King Ahab's death. Regardless, it is clear that it was the little slave girl's words that prompted this man to seek relief through her people. As Esther Menn points out,

Naaman reports the little girl's words to the king of Aram, and this king in turn sends Naaman to the Israelite king in Samaria with rich payments and a document demanding healing for the commander. When the king of Israel despairs because of his inability to comply with such an impossible request, which he takes as a provocation to further battle, the prophet Elisha comes forward to remedy the situation. (Menn 2008, 341)

The narrative continues with the result that Naaman is healed and gives glory to the God of Israel: "Look, I now know that there is no God on earth except in Israel" (2 Kgs. 5:15b). "By the captivity of this little maid, one Syrian family at least, and that one of the most considerable in the Syrian empire, is brought to the knowledge of the true God" (Clark 2015, 1). The no-name slave girl was a conduit of blessing, bringing an enemy general into proclaiming not only his enemy's god is greater than his own, but also that this God is the only true God!

The Exiled Israelites as Upholders of the Blessing

In the narratives of Joseph, Daniel, and Naaman's slave girl, captivity and slavery in the context of the Old Testament, though egregious, provided a means of economic

growth. Taking the exiled Israelites into Babylonian and Persian lands was not just a power maneuver on the part of the Assyrian and Babylonian kings; these were largely economic moves. Relocation of the people and the seizing of assets fortified these conquering kingdoms and expanded the diversity and talents of the labor force and trade avenues. As Rubesh writes, “There can be little doubt that the artisans and craftsmen brought over from Jerusalem were well employed in Babylon’s many building projects” (Rubesh 2011, 77).

The exiles faced the need to both maintain their Abrahamic covenantal identity and acculturate into their Babylonian and Assyrian communities. According to Rubesh (2011, 77), “In many areas of public life the Jewish diaspora community, while retaining its Jewish identity, became Jewish Babylonians, contributing positively to the life and shalom of the city as Jeremiah had challenged them to do.” Though the exiles never let go of their Jewish identity, the result of their transgressions against the covenant gave them a renewed faith and diligence to keep God’s covenant even as an exiled people. Using the passage in Isaiah 40, Charles Scobie explains that the exiles were not to form an isolated community in their exile:

Isaiah’s emphasis on Israel’s blessing alongside the nations’ subjugation is just another manifestation of the divinely established dialectic in Israel’s relationship with the nations. It is as God’s chosen people that Israel serves as His agent of blessing upon the nations. The redemptive meeting between Yahweh and the nations depends on the existence of Israel in the midst of the nations. By living for Yahweh the chosen nation lives for the world. “Isaiah’s emphasis on Israel’s blessing alongside the nations’ subjugation is just another manifestation of the divinely established dialectic in Israel’s relationship with the nations. It is as God’s chosen people that Israel serves as His agent of blessing upon the nations. The redemptive meeting between Yahweh and the nations depends on the existence of Israel in the midst of the nations. By living for Yahweh, the chosen nation lives for the world. (Scobie 1992, 61)

“Heirs of the Promise” as Blessing

The Apostle Paul wanted Gentile believers rest assured that just as Joseph, Daniel, Naaman’s slave girl, and the exiles were all descendants of Abraham and, therefore, heirs to the blessings of the covenant, they too had legitimate claim to this covenant. Paul states that Abraham was given the covenant (Rom. 4:11-13) because of his faith; therefore, believers are justified to God through faith in Christ and are made heirs to the promises given to Abraham (v. 13). Paul emphasizes to these Gentile believers that all participated in the full extent of the covenant because the covenant came to completion in the coming of Jesus Christ. In Galatians, Paul explains that the justification of the Gentiles was foreseen in Scripture and announced to Abraham when God said, “All nations will be blessed through you” (Gal. 3:7-9). Later in the same chapter he emphasizes that all converts are part of the Abrahamic covenant. “If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Gal. 3:29)

In his paper, “Who are the Heirs of the Abrahamic covenant?” John Davis demonstrates that Paul believed Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all that Abraham was promised:

Christ as the quintessential seed of Abraham is both the guarantor and inheritor of the promises of the covenant. Relationship with Christ, established by emulating the faith of Abraham, guarantees one’s participation in the promises of the covenant. It is neither the keeping of the law nor physical descendants from Abraham that constitutes one as a child of Abraham, but rather faith in Jesus Christ. (Davis 2005, 61)

Paul feels that the blessing culminates in the salvation of anyone who believes in Christ and receives the Holy Spirit. As Galatians 3:14 states, “He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” It is now in the receiving and leading of the Holy Spirit that the testimony of “sonship” is given, and not by lineage (Rom. 8:14-

15). “The blessing, the promise and the inheritance all consist in the one gift: the Spirit” (Gal. 3:14). In Romans 8:9b Paul insists that “if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.” As George Lyons (2012, 234) notes, “The gift of the Spirit is universally given to the sons and daughters of Abraham in the new age Christ inaugurated.” The Holy Spirit now gives any person who is justified through faith in Christ the ability to call upon the God of Abraham as “Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15b).

Christians participate in all the promises of the Abrahamic covenant and are a continuation of God’s work in the blessing of all nations. As individual Christians live out the covenant relationship between themselves and Christ, they serve as conduits of blessing. As stated earlier, the Abrahamic blessing includes God’s purposes for redeeming people and renewing creation. Therefore, individual believers are given opportunities to be part of this blessing as proclaimers of praise and witnesses to a new life in Christ (1 Pet. 2:9-10).

The Christian in Economic Diaspora as a Conduit of Blessing

Christians who live in economic diaspora have great potential to bring the presence of the Holy Spirit into the same type of places as Joseph’s Egypt, Daniel’s Babylon, and the slave girl’s Syrian home. As described in the Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 55, “The New People Next Door” at their 2004 Forum, “Diaspora followers of Christ can help to develop new forms of cultural expression, with a fusion of different cultures, which will enable people of all backgrounds to draw near to God and follow Christ” (The New People Next Door 2004, 10). Economic diaspora Christians face unique challenges as they work to support their families back in the home country but also want to remain mindful of their greater life’s purpose of proclaiming the gospel.

Just as Joseph understood the divine purpose for his living and serving in Egypt (Gen. 50:20) from his relationship with God through his lineage to Abraham, one can deduce that a Spirit-filled believer of Christ carries the divine purpose of the covenant wherever they live and serve. Baptism into the new life of fellowship and eternity with Christ also brings the promises of the covenant that nations will be blessed. The believer is the conduit of this blessing as a witness and participant as God redeems creation through Christ. Christians living in economic diaspora are the seed of Abraham and heirs to all that the covenant holds. They serve as the conduit of blessing, and nations will be blessed through their relationship with Jesus Christ.

RQ2: What Does the Social Science Literature Reveal about the Cultural Challenges of Overseas Filipina Workers?

In any vocation where one works away from his or her homeland for long periods of time, certain familial, cultural and psychosocial issues come into play. For a female Christian OFW working in a Muslim home, these issues impact her ability to work and her physical well-being, as well as relationships with her children and community. The cultural acceptance of a mother being away from her children and a wife away from her husband in order to financially care for them needs to be examined in order for the action research to be understood by those outside of the Philippine culture.

Statistics and Cause of the Current Phenomenon of Overseas Filipino Workers

According to the Commission on Filipinos Overseas (2014), in September 2012 there were 10.4 million OFWs working in 182 countries. In 2014 the population of the Philippines reached over the 100 million mark with the current estimate of 800,000 Filipinos applying annually through agencies to be placed in overseas employment

(Worldometers 2016). These jobs are crucial for the Philippine economy, as each year OFWs send 165 billion pesos or 3.7 billion dollars back to their families (National Statistics Office Philippines 2012). OFWs who return to the Philippines are hailed as *bagong bayani* (new heroes) by their communities and the government. The sacrifices that OFWs make by being away from their families and working in restrictive anti-Christian countries such as Saudi Arabia (which has more OFWs than any other nation) are celebrated (Phil Star Global 2010). Although the unemployment rate currently in the Philippines is at 6.1 percent (Trading Economics 2016), the average monthly income is 8,780 pesos (\$175.00 U.S.) (Trading Economics 2016). The Philippine economy is dependent on the OFWs sending their earnings back to their families for education and livelihood.

Age and Gender Factors

Statistically, there are slightly more female OFWs (53.6 percent) than males (46.4 percent) (Philippine Statistics Authority 2017). While current statistics vary, there are anywhere between 600,000 to two million OFW female domestic workers (Philippine Commission on Women 2014). A great majority of these are young, uneducated Filipina women easily finding employment through recruitment agencies throughout the Philippines. The Philippines Overseas Employment Administration shows that there are over 3,500 of these agencies registered with the Philippines Department of Labor and Employment (Philippine Overseas Employment Administration 2016). With advertisements that boast of the excitement of living abroad coupled with comparatively large salaries, many young women have registered with these placement agencies and have been placed in homes across the globe. Statistically, a greater percentage of these

women are between the ages of fifteen and thirty-four, which may suggest that they put off education or marriage until more earnings are secured (Philippine Commission on Women 2014).

Cultural Factors

According to Glicerio Maniquis Manzano Jr's (2008, 56) dissertation on training programs for Filipino intercultural ministry workers, Filipinos are characterized as flexible, resilient and adaptable. Because Filipino culture is a mixture of Eastern and Western cultures brought about from years of colonization by Spaniards and Americans and also Malay and Chinese migration, Manzano believes that Filipino character is not tied to the geography but to social structures. As more and more Filipinos work away from their homeland, their identity remains tied to their family or group (Manzano Jr. 2008, 56).

Issues of Identity

In normal employment, even in the healthiest employer/employee relationships, the OFW domestic employee will face self-identity issues unique to this occupation. In Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, Filipino culture rates as more collective than individualistic.⁸ If an OFW domestic employee looks to a group or community for validation and purpose, then this would figure into their identity as an employee in their guest culture. In her article, "Rationalities of Identity: 'Sameness' and 'Difference' among Filipino Migrant Domestic Workers," Soco (2011, 69) analyzes this cultural dynamic and how it affects the OFW. "The migrants' social relations—their actual interactions and the kinds of relationships formed abroad—influence their self-

⁸ See Hofstede's Country Comparison Scale in Figure 4. Philippines rates 34 on individualistic.

perceptions and self-image, attitudes, values, and learning, a great deal.”

Soco (2011, 69) states that Filipinas living as OFW domestic employees are generally lower class and may easily identify as subservient in a working relationship. The migrant domestic workers’ responses to being abroad are framed by the context of their subject positions as female, Filipino, from provincial communities and a generally lower-class upbringing, and working in varied domestic conditions in the spaces of abroad (Soco 2011, 78). The OFW female domestic employee will naturally be challenged with her self-identity when it is viewed through the cultural lenses in the country of her employment. A particular challenge lies in the fact that most domestic employees are “live-ins” and work within a foreign family dynamic. They need to be able to maneuver and strategize to keep an identity that would allow them to have healthy relationships and find purpose in the community of their employment. Soco (2011, 69) found that Filipinos as domestic employees are in demand more in Hong Kong and Singapore because of the stereotypes that they are more educated, diligent, able to adapt, and able to broaden themselves in new environments, as opposed to Indonesian or Burmese employees. This “othering,” as Soco (2011, 73) describes, gives the OFW a stronger sense of identity, especially in a collective cultural dimension where an identity is drawn from the view of the collective. One factor Soco found in her research was the OFW domestic employee’s understanding of self in light of their employer. They found ways to “other” themselves that put them on the same social status in their own minds. “To equalize social positions or to resist being looked down on, domestic workers compare the social and cultural traits of their employers to those of their own, as Filipinos, so that they become their employers’ equal on certain things” (2011, 76). For

example, many Filipinos speak English fluently. This is one of the major reasons they are hired in Hong Kong and in Middle Eastern countries. Many of their employers do not speak English but want their children to be fluent. This sets the OFW domestic employee apart and allows them to have a stronger identity.

Another aspect of the OFW domestic employee's identity is found in the advocacy groups mentioned earlier. Because of the sheer number of OFWs around the world, these advocacy groups lend a strong identity, whereas other domestic employees from other countries do not have such structured, empowered groups to act on their behalf. Most OFW advocacy organizations have come into being since the 1990s. Before this time, many OFWs sought help from church groups in the countries of their employment. This is still a major practice among Protestant OFWs working closely with churches in their areas. In a collectivist culture, shame is not associated with asking for aid. If the family or community's well-being comes before the individual, then the family and community need to take responsibility for the individual's needs. An OFW domestic employee's identity does not suffer when he or she turns to the church or advocacy groups for aid. On the contrary, the asset of having such a community gives that worker a stronger self-identity.

One factor as to why so many Filipinos would willingly seek employment in areas of the world where they would need to leave their families for years at a time may be found in Hofstede's (Hofstede 2016) study of cultural dimensions. The Philippine culture is a collective culture (See Figure 4.1.), in that the group needs are more valued than the individual. This cultural dimension easily facilitates a person who sees the allure of a job that pays double to triple what can be earned in their home country and thus will make

sacrifices to leave their family and move to a foreign country in efforts to give their children and/or parents a better life. Other cultural dimensions may factor into this as well. In 2012, Saudi Arabia was the most preferred destination for OFWs with 20.6 percent of all OFWs who worked abroad that year (Hofstede 2016). Figure 4.1. shows how similar Saudi Arabian cultural dimensions are to the Philippines. Though Saudi Arabia reports as 100 percent Islamic and the Philippines is a predominately Christian country, it may be surprising to see the extent to which these two cultures are similar. According to the Committee on Overseas Workers Affairs (COWA) (Philippine Commission on Women 2014), there are 1.1 million Filipinos employed as contracted workers in Saudi Arabia.

This dissertation will not define and dissect each dimension but will highlight similarities. As seen in Figure 4, both countries are primarily hierarchical, masculine cultures that value family honor and respect for tradition. Filipinos score lower in uncertainty avoidance, which shows greater flexibility with regard to the unknown and could be an explanation for such a large number of Filipinos willing to take the risk and live abroad.

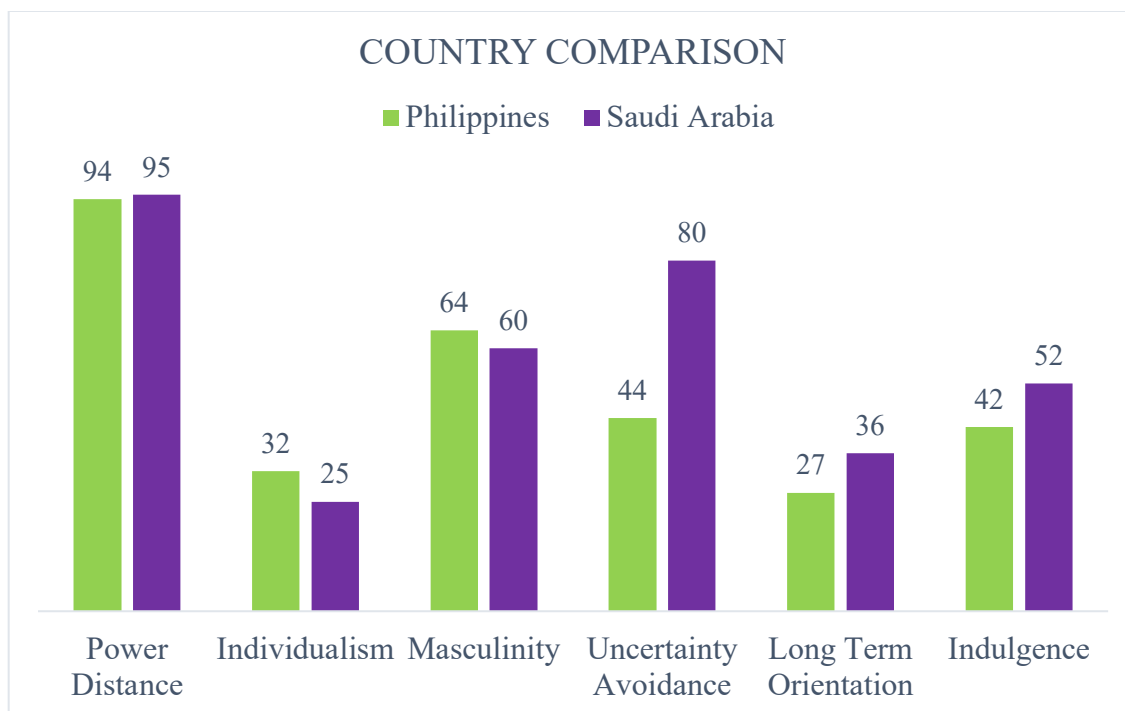


Figure 4.1. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions (Hofstede 2016)

Avoid ending the section with the Figure. Add a sentence or two (short paragraph) to conclude this section and transition to the next, helping the reader keep a sense of the overall purpose and structure of the larger section you're in here.

Vulnerability to Mistreatment, Crime, and Sexual Abuse

“Mummy can we keep this one?” read the advertisement displayed in subway stations across Singapore (Hane 2016). The poster depicted a young girl holding the hand of a Filipina nanny. The ad was used for an agency that placed domestic workers from the Philippines in homes to care for children, elderly, and to do basic household chores. This message conveys the true status and attitudes toward foreign domestic workers in viewing and treating them as possessions rather than people.

According to the report “An Analysis of the Situation of Filipino Domestic Workers” by Nicole J. Sayres the Philippine Overseas Labor and Office (POLO), states

that in almost every country where Filipina domestic workers are placed, there are documented cases of abuse toward the OFW by their employer or their sending agency (Sayres 2004, 15). Many of the formal reports to POLO specifically document abuses from Singapore, Hong Kong, and Saudi Arabia.

Many OFWs surrender their passports to employment placement agencies until they can pay back the placement fee. These fees are anywhere from one to two months' salary depending on the agency (Overseas Filipino Worker Guide 2015). Unfortunately, there are cases documented where the OFW is not paid and therefore cannot get the passport returned and remains unable to leave their employer or the country of employment.

A report by Walden Bellow on "The Condition of Overseas Filipino Workers in Saudi Arabia" by the Committee on Overseas Workers' Affairs (COWA) documents (from interviews of OFWs) all statistics of abuse received in Saudi Arabia (2011). The percentages of abuse reported to POLO are shown in Table 4.1. below. The report also explains that the instances of sexual harassment and rape are much higher, but either are categorized under "Maltreatment" and "Court Cases," or go unreported as the consequences and cultural stigma for these have more of a bearing on the individual than other abuses (Bellow 2011, 20). The following report in Table 4.1. shows that there are many detailed narratives of abuse:

Table 4.1. Reasons for Distress of OFWs (January 10, 2011)

Reason for Distress	Percent
Personal/health problems/other	27%
Unpaid salary	26%
Maltreatment and verbal abuse	15%
Overwork	14%
Contract substitution	5%
Mother/child repatriation	5%
Court/police cases	4%
Sexual harassment and rape	4%

Referring to Table 4.1., Bello shows specific examples in his research of the abuse many OFWs have endured.

Beatings by the Madame were common, with hot irons sometimes flung at the worker. In some cases, violence was sparked by the worker's not being able to understand a command given in Arabic. Another common theme in the accounts was being kept under lock and key at the house of the employer. Overwork was a common complaint with working hours reaching up to 20 to 22 hours per day, with no day off. Overwork was also a consequence of having to take care of several children, in some cases up to five or six. Overwork also resulted from being lent to relatives of the employer. Several workers also recounted getting sick but being forced to keep working and being denied hospital treatment. Several workers complained of not being given enough to eat, with a few cases bordering on forced starvation. One worker told a member of the mission that, as punishment for a mistake, she was forced by her employer to eat the excreta of the child she was taking care of. Non-payment of wages for up to months on end, despite promises, was a constant complaint. In a few cases, workers had not been paid at the time they ran away. (Bello 2011, 9)

There are scores of narratives about the abuse of the OFW that this dissertation does not have room to cover. Yet to convey how widespread and common abuse is, here are a few examples personally told to this writer:

- Recently a Nazarene missionary in Singapore shared a story in which their colleague opened their bedroom drapes and found a note dangling on a string from the window above asking for help. The note was from an OFW domestic worker who had been locked in her room for days as punishment for asking to be paid (Hane 2016).

- A Nazarene missionary to Hong Kong received a call from an area hospital where an OFW domestic helper had been admitted for severe burns all over her body from a clothes iron. This domestic employee was reluctant to report the abuse from her employer as she had nowhere else to live and no funds available to return to the Philippines (Williams 2016).

- A Nazarene missionary's neighbor in Taiwan employed an OFW domestic employee. This employee confided to the missionary that her employer took her passport upon arrival and wouldn't return it to her. She had not been paid in over a year, but the employer repeatedly promised payment and begged her not to run away. She came to the missionary asking if they would be willing to speak to her employer on her behalf and try to get any money and her passport back. After the initial contact, the family suddenly moved away, and the missionary was unable to see the OFW employee again or find out what happened to her (Park 2004).

The Philippine government has been working with non-profit Filipino organizations that advocate for OFWs such as Humanitarian Organization for Migration Economics (HOME), the Ople Center, and OFW SOS to name a few. The government has also established the Filipino Workers' Resource Center (FWRC) where OFWs can find advocacy in Filipino embassies around the world. The Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO) documents each case and in extreme circumstances rescues OFWs from

abusive employers. For example, there is one such case in Saudi Arabia where an employer raped an OFW domestic employee repeatedly. The OFW employee was not permitted to leave the residence but was able to contact POLO and report the abuse. When POLO arrived with the local police, the employee was in the midst of being raped. The police did not want to forcibly enter the residence, as the employer was an officer in the Saudi Navy. Finally, the employee told the employer she would not report him, as the crime of rape in Saudi Arabia by a married man is punishable by death. Yet, going against the pressure from this family and even the police, this woman did in fact report the crime, and the Saudi Naval official is currently in jail awaiting trial (Bello 2011, 12).

Many countries that allow and facilitate OFW employment work with POLO and have laws in place to protect migrant workers. In Singapore, their laws require sanitary living conditions, work site safety standards implemented, standard wages, and limited working hours. They also have websites and phone numbers for workers to report errant practices (Ministry of Manpower 2014). Taiwan, Hong Kong, and many Middle Eastern countries have similar laws, but in shame-based cultures (countries where honor and shame are the prominent worldview) these laws are more difficult to enforce. For example, in Singapore there are laws that require all domestic employees one day off each week, but there is little enforcement. One advocacy group paid for a public service commercial showing how much more foreign nannies knew about the employer's children than the employer (#giveadayoff 2015). The message of the commercial was for the parents to spend at least one day a week with their children (under the guise of getting to know the children better) and give the nanny the day off. There was a huge backlash against this public service announcement as this shamed the parents who employ nannies

as well as caused a shadow over the Singaporean government in that it does not enforce its own laws. Whereas in a guilt/innocence culture, this type of public service awareness might have sparked outrage against employers who do not abide by the law, in Singapore the outrage was against the ones shaming the parents. The advocacy's website has since been removed.

Advocacy from the Philippines

Social media has aided in bringing to light many stories of abuse faced by OFWs. In the Philippines many narratives from OFWs of abuse are highlighted in local newspapers and magazines. In the past ten years many periodicals that are geared toward OFWs have articles educating people on how to protect against abuse, find the right placement agency, give contact information of advocacy groups in various countries and also give advice on how Filipino family members can cope when their parents are working abroad. For example, Filipino activist Susan Ople is the director of the Ople Center, which advocates for the rights of OFWs both in the Philippines and in the countries where they serve. She writes for a weekly magazine and has her own radio program addressing OFWs and their families (U.S. State Department 2013). Also, the OFW Family Club advocates for OFWs and their families by lobbying the Philippine Congress for protection abroad and better rights for OFW family members (Bartolome 2019).

Reports of abuse have not deterred Filipinos looking for employment abroad. Placement agencies promise safe working conditions and high paying jobs. As one Filipino said to this writer, "Crime and abuse happen everywhere, even in the Philippines.

These stories don't keep us from wanting to take care of our families" (Participant IB DO 2019).

RQ 3. What Contextual Issues, Needs, Values, and Missional Perspectives Characterize Nazarene Overseas Filipina Workers and Also Characterize the National People Where They Serve?

Rationale and Explanation of Themes in Interviews and Focus Groups

Before conducting interviews and focus groups with OFW participants, I, acting as one of the participants in the formation of the project, accessed the purpose of the handbook and discussed its strategic use in evangelism with Dr. Mark Louw, Nazarene Asia Pacific Regional Coordinator, and Dr. Vern Ward, Nazarene Global Mission director. Based on these discussions, I compiled the list of questions that centered on themes relevant to the current evangelism strategy ("To go where the Church is not yet") of the Church of the Nazarene Global Mission department as pertains to OFWs working in Muslim homes.

The nature of focus groups is to allow for individual input while listening to the collective voice of the discussion. The two individual interviews and eighteen focus group OFW participants in this action research project were asked questions that centered on the personal faith and working experience of the OFW.

Each participant was initially asked for the details of their employment in a Muslim household.

1. Please share about your background, where you served and/or currently serve as an OFW, your duties, and a little about your family in the Philippines.
2. The questions and discussion then turned toward themes related to faith.

3. Please tell us a story of when you mentioned prayer during your employment to the people you worked for (including children).
4. Please tell us about a time someone asked you about your beliefs. How did you respond? Has anyone told you about their beliefs in a personal way (other than the Islamic traditions that need to be followed according to your employment)? How did you respond?
5. Please give us all an example of when you were able to demonstrate your Christian faith without talking. What did it feel like? Was it met with acceptance?
6. Please tell us about a time someone asked you about your beliefs or told you about their beliefs in a personal way (other than the Islamic traditions that need to be followed according to your employment).
7. Please tells us about how you were influenced by the people you worked for (i.e., did their religious practices influence how you prayed or did the way they raise their children influence how you raise your children?)
8. Please let us talk about how we can use simple or non-traditional ways to share the message of Jesus Christ with our employers. What are some of your ideas? What do you already know about Islam that might help you share about Jesus? How do you feel about using the word “Allah” when talking about your God?

Transcripts from the OFW focus groups and interviews for this project were entered into the MAXQDA2020 mapping software. Because the focus groups and interviews were in the context of action research, and the purpose was to explore views,

need, and engagement with topics for a planned handbook, the themes that emerged were the same themes explored in the questions listed above: knowledge of Islam, depth of personal faith, basic tenets, and the sharing of Christianity, prayer, power dynamics, family, abuse, money, and home church.. Lively discussion and lengthy replies were classified as “high response” themes, and these were generally given more extensive treatment in the handbook. Lack of discussion and minimal replies were classified as “low response” themes and given minimal treatment in the handbook. The phrase, “mixed response” classified themes discussed in one focus group or in interviews but not in others. A Catholic faith background, currently evangelical or attending evangelical church, and interested in learning how to share faith all were “high response” replies. Personal practices of faith in their work environment such as Bible reading and prayer and prayer for the employer and their family back in the Philippines were also “high response.” Sharing the Christian faith as part of the Christian identity, creativity in sharing one’s faith story and knowledge of Islam showed “low response.” As some of the women in the focus groups had just completed a workshop entitled, “Evangelism Explosion” about sharing one’s faith with other OFWs, thus, knowledge of sharing faith showed a “mixed response.” Also, previous experience in sharing their faith in their employment (with other workers or with their employer) showed a “mixed response.” The theme of abuse and victimization scored a “high response.” Though this topic does not surface in the handbook, it was an important issue for the Nazarene leaders to be made aware in order to understand the complete context of the OFW.

Considering the results of the interviews and focus groups with regard to the above themes, the following research findings also help to understand the unique context of the Nazarene OFW when developing a handbook for relational evangelism.

The Church of the Nazarene and the OFW Domestic Helper

Before discussing the specific contextual issues, needs, values and missional perspectives of the Nazarene OFW, a brief explanation of the lack of reliable statistics and the relationship between the local Filipino Nazarene Church and the Nazarene OFW is warranted. In an interview with Rev. Jose Elmo Dialing, the OFW Philippine Field Compassion Ministry Coordinator, he states that there are roughly 30,000 members of the Church of the Nazarene in the Philippines (Dialing 2017). As reflected in the total population of the Philippines, he estimates that 10 percent of the members at any given time are working as OFWs. There are no statistics kept in the local churches as to where their OFW members work or in what capacities. Even when surveys were given to Nazarene Metro Manila pastors, many wrote that they knew of OFW members in their congregations but were unsure of their current employment situations or areas. Rev. Dialing states that most of these OFWs are thought to be unskilled, high school educated, and fluent in English. He estimates that the percentage of males and females are approximately equal. There are four registered Nazarene OFW churches outside of the Philippines: Japan service workers, Dubai oil field and construction workers, Hong Kong domestic helpers, and Persian Gulf seafarers. However, he believes that many OFWs organize themselves into Bible studies or weekly prayer meetings if they are able to find like-minded co-workers.

Rev. Dialing is working to put OFW resource tables in each local Nazarene church to help OFW family members access government programs for financial training, family counseling, and crisis care. He said that the local church wants to minister to the OFW family members in their congregations, but little attention has been paid to OFWs, especially regarding their spiritual formation. When an OFW is away from the Philippines, their relationship with their local church may become strained as the local church looks to them for financial support. In an interview with Rev. Stephen Gualberto, the Philippine Field Strategy Coordinator, he believes this has caused an obstacle for the OFW to reach out to their home church when they need spiritual guidance. The OFW becomes a financial resource for the church instead of a member in need of discipleship. One of the Nazarene OFWs commented that she avoids visiting her local church when she returns to visit her family because on a previous visit the pastor took her around the building and showed her all the things that needed to be repaired and how much money was needed. She felt he did not care about how difficult it was for her to be away from her parents or how hard she had worked (Participant IB DO 2017). When asked if she felt that her home church was praying for her, she said she knows some of the members, who minister to her children and pick them up every Sunday for church are, but doesn't know if the pastor has special prayer for her or other OFWs in her church.

The Filipino Worldview as it Influences Their Faith

Before introducing the specific context of the Nazarene OFW, the influence and implications of the Filipina worldview needs to be addressed. This study will not cover the extensive history of the Philippines, but through examining key influences, will seek

to understand the formation of its current worldview and how this influences the spiritual life and understanding of the Nazarene OFW.

The country of the Philippines is an archipelago composed of over 7,000 islands. Malay, Asian and Austronesian people groups comprise its population (Oxford Biographies 2014). Before Spanish colonization in 1571, the archipelago did not have any unified government. Local chieftains governed over independent islands and gave allegiances to trading partners around China, Japan, and outer Micronesian islands. Religious practices were mostly animistic but were also influenced by Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism (OMF Folk Christianity 2016).

After Spain colonized and unified the islands, it established an *encomienda* system in which conquistadores, friars, and native nobles were given large portions of land in exchange for their service to the King of Spain. Landowners, known as *encomenderos*, were given authority to collect tributes from the common people and in return would provide protection for their subjects as well as exercise coercive power in the taking of local men to provide soldiers for the Spanish King's military endeavors (Abinales 2005, 56). For the next 300 years, this feudal system dominated the culture of the Philippines and influenced its understanding of hierarchical power. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, providential government systems replaced *encomenderos* (Abinales and Amaroso 2005, 56). However, the underlying cultural impact of being governed by a distant monarch whose constant power was experienced daily by Filipinos no doubt contributed to a fear/power worldview (Muller 2000, 41).

After the Spanish American War, over 300 years of Spanish colonization ended, and the United States purchased the Philippines, along with Puerto Rico and Cuba, at the

Treaty of Paris for twenty million dollars. American colonization sought to give full rights to colonizers and did not end the Spanish feudal systems (Lewis 2010). In fact, it appears that the United States found the strong hierarchical culture a benefit in the transition of power: “Through the system of land registration that favored the upper Filipino classes, tenancy became more widespread during the U.S. occupation. A native elite, including physicians trained in the United States, was groomed to manage the economic and political systems in the country” (Lewis 2010). This hierarchal influence shaped the economic culture. It is a mixture of Western economic aspirations and Asian collective cultural dynamics. It is not uncommon for a young Filipina to leave her family while she is studying in High School and live with cousins, aunts, or an older sibling in order to serve as a caretaker of children or provide extra help in domestic duties. These arrangements last for a few years, and typically the young woman is not compensated for her work other than her daily living needs.

In Rolland Muller’s (Muller 2000, 41-45) book, *Honor and Shame: Unlocking the Door*, honor/shame, guilt/innocence and fear/power describe the three dynamics or foundations of any culture with one being the most dominant and foundational of the cultural worldview. Because Filipino culture is predominantly a culture with a fear/power worldview, when dealing with economics and politics people need to know others’ status so they can access the power of those with a higher status (Muller 2000, 43). The leveraging of the embedded power systems found in the Filipino culture can be seen in its religious institutions. Anyone speaking on God’s behalf or about God is seen as a person of power—this includes priests, pastors, missionaries, mediums or babaylans (spirit leaders). When asked in the focus groups if the OFWs saw themselves as missionaries (or

cross-cultural evangelists), the majority replied no because they were not formally sent by the Church. They may also not want to step into this position of power since it has not been modeled for them in their context as domestic helpers.

The Influence of Catholicism and the Nazarene OFW

Spanish colonial conversion to Catholicism, whether through coercive, hegemonic, or persuasive power, gave opportunities for the people of these islands to syncretize animistic belief systems with the Catholic practice of veneration of saints. This created a folk Catholicism. “The mix of Folk Catholicism is evident in daily Filipino life. In Catholic areas, the local spirits of animistic belief have been largely replaced with local patron saints. A crucifix or cross is believed to ward off evil spirits in the same way as an amulet” (OMF Folk Christianity 2016). Filipino history gives many narratives of the practice of carrying amulets (known as *anting-anting*) in order to harness the power of the saints for political leverage or victory in battles. Because many current evangelical OFWs are from Catholic backgrounds (see Figure 3.3.), the folk Catholicism influence trickles into the practice of their faith. Though not Catholic, one of the participants of the study kept the rosary that her employment agency gave to all those being placed as domestic helpers. She said she felt it would guard her against bad dreams and bad luck (FG Participant 2). Others felt their Bibles would protect them: “I work all the time and did not have time to read it, but I kept it by my bed so that I would know that I lay close to God’s words at night and I felt safe” (Participant IB DO).

Suffering, Salvation, and the Nazarene OFW

Western missionaries who brought the gospel to the Philippines concentrated their theological message on redemption from sin and the assurance of salvation instead of

eternity in hell. In the Filipino culture, a Western missionary asking, “Are you saved?” from a guilt/innocence worldview does not necessarily answer the Filipino fear/power worldview of wanting to experience and have access to the power of God. In the article “A Religion of Guilt Encounters a Religion of Power: Missiological Implications and Consequences,” Melba Padilla Maggay (2013, 573) writes, “To us, what counts most is access to the center of power that rules our lives and the universe. Religious activity is focused on ways of opening oneself to the strength and curative potency of beneficial powers, whether they be in nature or in the spirit world.” For example, certain practices found in the Filipino Catholic churches, especially during Holy Week—self-flagellation, reenacting the crucifixion to the point of using wooden stakes, and severe physical forms of penance—are interpreted by Protestants as extreme ways to gain favor and forgiveness from God. However, in the Filipino mind, these practices increase one’s religious power. As Melba Padilla Maggay explains, “Performed within a very social context, in full view of community in its season of faith and ritual, these pageants of suffering and passion are perhaps representative acts of communal catharsis, a people’s attempt to connect with the mystical life force or identify with the mysterious power of divine suffering” (Maggay 2013, 580).

The fear/power worldview also carries over to the understanding of sin. In the Genesis 3 narrative of Adam and Eve, prior to sin entering into humanity’s relationship with God, fear does not exist. Contextualizing this narrative through the lens of a fear/power worldview, in Genesis 3:10, Adam’s reason for hiding from God stemmed from fear, not guilt: “He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden and I was afraid because I

was naked; so I hid.” In the Filipino fear/power context, sins are offenses against societal and cosmic power:

Speculation that the nation had been judged by God through the 1991 earthquake, for example, shows up the ready connection Filipinos make between the wrath of God or *gaba*, God’s curse, and wrongdoing, which issues in dislocations of nature. Such sensitivity to cosmic disorder is our own version of ‘sin,’ a violation that arouses God’s disfavor and results in disturbances in the order of things. (Maggay 2013, 670)

In the fear/power worldview, the way in which sin affects a society’s relationship with the Creator is more pronounced than an individual’s personal infractions of disobedience: “Filipinos make no sharp distinction between the natural and the supernatural, the sacred and the secular, public and private realms” (Maggay 2013, 713).

When examining how the gospel is contextualized in the Philippine culture, the hope of Filipino Christians rests in Christ’s victorious power over death, in which He tramples evil and redeems creation to the right order. “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Col. 2:15). For the Filipino, Christ’s sacrifice and victory over death is not confined to a personal, internal experience where He redeems a person’s heart and mind. Rather, it is a demonstration of power over all natural and supernatural worlds. “The Filipino sees her *katawan* [body] as her *katawo-an* or *katauhan* [civilization, humanity] and finds difficulty with a religion relegated to the confines of private conscience and having little to do with issues of public consequence” (Maggay 2013, 725). When sharing about Christ’s sacrifice, the focal point centers on His unmatched power.

Though the Philippines were colonized and evangelized predominately by Western powers, Filipinos have developed and maintained a worldview based on

fear/power. These cultural values and worldview impact their understanding of the nature of God as well as their relationship to each other and the outside world.

Empowerment and the Nazarene OFW

In an interview with Dr. Melba Padilla Maggay (2019), Christian Filipina anthropologist and professor, I asked about the fear/power worldview and the need to empower the OFW for relational evangelism among the Muslim households where they serve. Dr. Maggay believes that OFWs surrender their power, including much of their Christian witness, when they become employees in these homes. She acknowledges the fact that the Filipino economy strongly depends on the OFW remittance dollars and, therefore, the phenomenon will continue. Yet, she believes that the OFW surrenders their power both to their family left in the Philippines and in their place of employment. She stated that 90 percent of OFW families in the Philippines are dysfunctional. When asked to define dysfunction, she said the children and youth lack supervision and guidance especially when the mother leaves and they are raised by a 'proxy' mother. They have resources for education and daily life but are not given invested supervision or unconditional love. When asked if an OFW would still be a powerful witness of God's redemptive love in a Muslim home, she believes in the possibility but feels it needs to be directed back to their families (Maggay 2019).

When the topic of power was discussed in the interviews and focus groups for this study, the women were animated in their discussion. In all three focus groups, they did not agree with Dr. Maggay in that they surrender their power in the place of their employment or their families back in the Philippines. Stories of how they were able to maneuver around the confines of their contracts, how they bargained for better conditions

or how they took back their power by escaping abuse were common in each group. When asked about the hierarchy of their positions in light of empowerment, they uniformly admitted that they were viewed as servants. However, they did not equate the employment as a servant to the loss of power. One participant summed up the discussion by saying, “We know we have made so many sacrifices to be here so we have power in our pride of taking care of our families” (FG Participant F). The statement reveals their feeling of having power both in their choices to work as servants and in their family dynamic back in the Philippines.

Employment Placement in Muslim Homes and Orientation to Islam

The Philippine government highly recommends that OFWs use legitimate placement agencies instead of “direct hires,” as agencies are more likely to follow visa requirements, find stable employment, and guarantee financial wages for the OFW (Macas 2017). In the interviews and focus groups for this study, all OFW participants stated that they used a placement agency for their initial employment. Some stated that after they completed their first contract, they found subsequent employment and signed a new contract without using an agency, avoiding the large placement fees.

Placement agencies for Islamic households provide an orientation and training for the OFW. Typically, the training consists of skills in domestic work and food preparation for a Muslim home. The orientation section gives instruction about OFW personal rights while employed, fiscal obligations to the Philippine government, resources for advocacy and crisis care, resources for holistic family care, a brief overview of the requirements in following Muslim beliefs about dress, and guidelines about practicing Christianity. Typically, the agency offers these seminars as a condition of employment, and they last

anywhere from a weekend to two weeks (Macas 2017). The women in the focus groups related that their training and orientation focused mostly on the skills they needed in the home. They were not given any in-depth instruction into the basic tenets of Islam.

Because the Philippine population is prominently Catholic, 80 percent of the OFWs in the study were from Catholic backgrounds before becoming evangelical (see Figure 3.3.). Even though 90 percent of the participants are now evangelical, many said that their employers assumed they were Catholic and asked if they wanted to use their rosaries. One of the participants who had worked in Dubai stated that when she was in her orientation with her sending agency, all those in attendance received a rosary to bring with them and instructions on how to not display it or keep it on their person while working (FG Participant D).

The Reality of the Abuse

One cannot write about the context and values of a Nazarene OFW without addressing the issues of abuse. As referenced earlier in this chapter, both physical and mental abuse for OFWs unfortunately is quite common. Of the twenty OFW participants, nine gave personal narratives of some type of abuse in at least one home where they were employed. One OFW told of how she had to escape one household because the security guard had made arrangements with her employer to rape her: “I knew when the employer and family left for a trip and I was left behind alone that the guard was going to try to rape me. He had already told me he would give me a mobile phone if I would let him ... do that to me. When my employer left, I saw him at the gate. I went in the house and put on three shirts and another trouser and then took the garbage with me. I told him I was

going to bring the garbage to the side of the house but when I left the gate, I dropped it and ran and ran” (FG Participant D).

Another participant was abused by the mother of the household. “She yell at me. She never speak, just yell. She would tell me that I could do nothing. She wake me at 1:00 AM to work and then make me work until late night. I could not keep my contract with her. I had to leave. The father beg me to stay but I did not care about the money anymore” (FG Participant B).⁹ One participant related the story of how she decided to insert power over the abusive situation:

My boss, my employer has no children, but they have a niece at home study at college. But first that I know that the husband has bad behavior. For how many months when I was in the kitchen. He would come in with me. And he want to touch my butt here. When the madam and niece go to a party that is the time the husband want to rape me. But thanks God I’m not scared I just stick him out like that [holds her arm and hits] like that. I am just thankful that I just I didn’t find a knife to kill him. So, I just pray to God please allow me to not to be a murderer, to kill this man. So, I just I’m so very ... I’m the kind of person who is so very ... silent person. So, I just say to my boss if you meet me again and you will abuse me, I will kill. You can be sure of that. I don’t fear anymore. I’m here to work. because mostly in other countries they look down on us. I said If madam will come back but at that time, he want to abuse me it is already one year and 8 months at the time so and I said but I think the madam already knows that he has bad intention for me. At that time she called me. 4 months of my salary she deducted because what? She think we have a relationship with the husband. but no. And I talked to her husband. If you don’t want to see me in the Philippines I will tell exactly to your wife. So, you choose. You will go to jail or I will kill you or I will speak to your wife. So, I told him just think, think, but I just think that please God guide me. (FG Participant G).

Other tales of abuse were wages held back, false accusation of abusing a child, extreme work hours, and confiscating mobile phones so OFWs could not contact their family members. The consensus of each focus group was that abuse will happen. Yet the resignation to this fact did not take away from their desire to continue to work in these

⁹ Participants’ grammar will not be changed in quotes.

situations. In one personal interview with a Nazarene OFW, when conversing about abuse, she said,

Like it's not really very professional ... and I think they do it with everyone. To see who would give in to them. Because they know if it's a Filipina, like okay I can catch this person. One day I mean every day he would come to me and make some punches on my breast like that; but he started just a little, yeah something like that, playfully doing it. And then one day I realize he is punching at my chest like that and so I gave him the warning. 'You know the next time you're gonna do that to me. I'm gonna punch you on your tummy' I said. So, the next day I prepare myself, I said if he does that I'm going to give him a punch. I was very brave at that time, the next day he came and he was like crying, I gave him a real punch on his tummy and he never did it again. Yeah so sometimes you really need to be like you know where you stand. You have to give respect to yourself. So that they would respect you. Because once you allow them to touch you once, they will do it again and again. (Participant IB DO)

Add sentence after quote to avoid ending with a quotation, to finish the section, and to transition to the next section.

The Practice of Christian Faith of the Nazarene OFW

In this study I chose to interview those who identified as Christians, and therefore assume that all participants confess a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Those that were Nazarene participants all had a relationship with a Nazarene church in the Philippines. Each person had a different explanation of how they practiced their faith in their respective workplaces. Those who served in Kuwait, Jordan, Oman, and Singapore said they were free to bring their Bibles, Christian symbols, and music if they kept them in their rooms for their own personal use. Those who worked in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Dubai, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia said they were prohibited to have these things, but one participant said that if it was on her mobile phone, then her employers never asked her about it. Others agreed that now that they have their smart phones, it is easier to download music and devotionals. When asked about their personal devotional time, the

discussion in the focus groups centered on the time constraints of work, leaving no time to read Christian books or have private devotions. In their living quarters, most shared their bedroom with another household employee or with the children and elderly they care for. Thus, finding a place alone also seemed to be an issue. However, there were others who said they could have a designated quiet time of study and prayer each day.

When asked if the OFW experience caused them to grow closer in their relationship with the Lord, their responses seemed to reflect extremes on both sides. One remarked that she felt like a robot and turned off her emotions, even those that had to do with God. She said there was no time. If her employer saw that her light was on in her room, she would knock and begin to tell her all the things she needed to begin to do. So, she said that her Christian faith was mostly practiced before she went to bed each night when she would pray for her family in the Philippines and listen to Christian music on her phone (FG Participant 3). One Nazarene participant said she had run away from God and His calling on her life. It was through her OFW experience and the women she worked with that she was brought back to a relationship with God. When she returned to the Philippines, she enrolled in Bible college to become a Nazarene pastor. One participant said in a personal interview,

I think I would say my faith has grown a little more practical because before that ... you know we had that childish faith, like the Lord will provide. ... I'll just go and let the Lord do what He wills like that. But when I went abroad one thing that I learned is that, Yes you have the faith. But you really need to work hard. Because how did they come up like that [her employer]? I mean how did they come in that level of economic maturity, is because they worked hard. So I also have that kind of I know that the Lord will provide but also I have to work hard. (Participant IB DO)

Prayer

Prayer was an important aspect of the OFW participants' faith. When asked about prayer life, each focus group discussion began with stories of how they prayed constantly for their family members back in the Philippines. Trusting in God's providential care over their children, husbands, and extended family as well as their immediate context was the common focus of their prayers. When asked if they prayed for their employer, the answers were mixed. Some laughed and said they prayed their employer would be nice and give more money. I asked the nannies in the groups if they prayed for the children they cared for and, if so, what was the content of the prayers. One participant who served in Dubai and cared for four children said she prayed daily for the children. She even had the children pray with her. She said their mother respected her for it, as it showed love and concern for the children (FG Participant B). In a personal interview, one participant told of how she was not allowed a Bible or any Christian symbols, but she drew a picture of praying hands and tacked it next to her bed. Each night the picture helped her focus and pray for her family and for her own life away from them. She said she would pray for her employer because they treated her so well and made her feel like one of the family (Participant IA DI). One member of a focus group spoke about the issue of prayer as witness: "I used to tell the kids, 'Yes, we pray before we go to sleep. We pray so that tomorrow we will have our strength to carry on the whole day. And you should pray also.' And then the kids say 'yes, yes, Jesus is there. Yes, we pray but in our kind of prayer. In the Muslim culture'" (FG Participant C1).

Sharing about Faith

The worldview of fear/power influences the OFW's willingness to speak about her personal faith. Nine of the women in the focus groups had completed an Evangelism Explosion course at the Nazarene church where two of the focus groups were held. This course teaches a method of evangelism that is part relational and part methodological. Many OFWs in Hong Kong have come to faith because of Christian OFWs using this method. When asked about sharing faith, this was the context for many of them. There was a general reluctance, overall, to speak openly about one's faith with Muslims because of fear of being terminated as an employee and the fear of not knowing enough about the Bible.

As one focus group discussed these fears, stories of subtlety and implicit evangelism were told almost ashamedly. One OFW serving in Qatar told of how she thought she had safely hidden her Bible but discovered that her employer's family knew about her faith and asked to borrow her Bible:

The family knows that I have a Bible, and there is this grandson because his grandmother is half, half Muslim, half Christian. In his mind, where I follow? Muslim or Christian? And then one time, he remembered my Bible. He asks can I borrow your Bible. I said why? Why he knows? I don't know that he knows that I have a Bible. And then I said, yeah ... why do you want to borrow my Bible? He said, I want to clarify something because there is some question in my mind I need to know. (FG Participant 3)

As the women laughed, they began to open up about how they actually had been trying to both hide their faith and share their faith at the same time. The overall general lack of knowledge about Islam and questions that had been asked of them by Muslim work colleagues about Christianity were valid reasons for their unwillingness to openly speak about faith. Of the twenty participants, nineteen said they knew nothing about Islam before the orientation received from their sending agency.

The Context of the Islamic Home: Female to Female Boundaries and Transparency

In Saudi Arabia, parts of the UAE, and Jordan, women are restricted in their activities in the community. According to a 2016 study on gender in Saudi Arabia, “The National Development Plans of Saudi Arabia emphasizes that women’s jobs should be isolated from men’s jobs. Therefore, the government keeps this segregation in mind when designing buildings for schools, universities, and government agencies” (Bajnaid and Elyas 2017, 6). Even with the OFWs scattered into their respective employment, they still bear witness (Tira and Wan 2009, 8).

Because women spend much time together, opportunities for woman-to-woman relational witness abound. There is simply an intimacy of one woman inviting another woman to live in their home, care for elderly parents and children, and prepare meals appropriate to religious beliefs. A Nazarene OFW who worked for a Muslim family in Kuwait for four years spoke of how much she enjoyed living and working for this family: “The family was very good to me. They treated me as part of the family. If I get sick, they bring me to the doctor. They were very concern about me and my family. They were very protective, made sure that I was safe during my day off. In return I did my very best to be a very good helper for them” (Participant IA DI). This not only shows the hospitality of the culture but a deeper level of trust and acceptance of the OFW. In *Revisioning the Women’s Missionary Movement*, Dana Robert quotes Mrs. Moses Smith from the 1910 Ecumenical Conference, who states: “In all the Orient, and largely in all uncivilized lands, only a woman can break the Bread of Life to woman. Logically, it follows that the agency through which this can be done is the most far-reaching and certain force the Church has for the redemption of the human race” (Robert 1993, 111).

In addition, research regarding the holistic needs that female OFWs face working away from their families and communities mirrors what Muslim women also see as their felt needs: “Women are mainly concerned with how social problems touch their families. ... the women focus on their daily life and family relationships. Women return to the bottom line: How does this affect my family” (Amal 2000, 13). With these shared felt needs and advantages in gender and cultural values, there awaits a great opportunity for the female OFW as she bears the message of redemption and hope among her employers and Muslim members of the household where she serves them. Because the OFW domestic helper’s duties directly relate to family life, she has the rare occasion to see what influences a Muslim woman’s worldview in a way an outsider could not understand. Mullin writes in her article, “Reaching non-Arabic Speaking, Urban, Less-Educated Muslim Women” about the things that can shape a woman’s outlook: “Polygamy, arranged marriages, high divorce rates, male absences, and household responsibilities all shape women’s views of reality in a unique way” (Mullin 2005, 79). Though the OFWs in this study may not face these specific issues, their reality has been shaped by familial responsibilities (i.e., moving to a distant country to provide for their families) and can empathetically share in the struggles of the Muslim family they serve.

It can be deduced that Filipino women work well and are sought after for domestic employment in the Middle East because of the close similarities in cultural dimensions. These dimensions, as well as kindred familial concerns, offer great possibilities for a Christian OFW to share the gospel in the context of her employment.

Implicit Witness in the Islamic Context

Whereas the foundational worldview of most Middle Eastern nations is honor/shame (Muller 2000, 54), women in these cultures may have more in common with their OFW domestic helper's fear/power worldview:

While Muslim imams may be called upon to recite portions of the Qur'an over a sick family member or employed to curse a person's enemies, I have been told that women may be more involved in the spirit world than the officials. They can also seek relief or 'guidance' from dubious practitioners whose main clientele are superstitious or otherwise affected people. Looking at the culture, thus, we could say that religious power and authority resides both with the Muslim imams and with the women. (Mullin 2005, 81)

This was articulated when one of the participants relayed a story of being called upon to pray next to an elderly woman who had been given the wrong medicine while in the hospital. The OFW said that caring for the woman was part of her employment, and when she was suffering, she called for her and asked her to pray: "She was shouting in their language. I think she knows she was going to die at that time. So, she clutched me there very tight and she asked me to pray for her. It is so sad. But even the last moment of her life she asked for prayer. And I was there to witness it" (FG Participant H).

Because many Middle Eastern Muslim women do not attend the daily prayers at the Mosque, those who are uneducated gain much of their understanding of the Qur'an transmitted implicitly in daily interaction in community life and through their husbands, sons, and brothers (Mullin 2005, 81). Though an OFW understands her place as a servant in a hierarchical culture, the advantage of being personally knowledgeable about her Christian faith through her own reading and understanding of Scripture would be a powerful witness to a Muslim woman. One of the participants shared that her employer remarked how lucky she was to be able to know that Allah listens to her prayers because she was so peaceful about her family in the Philippines. The OFW had told her that her

child had been ill, and the people of her church prayed for healing. Her child recovered fully.

Yet, it also may be puzzling to a Muslim wife and mother, whose household's daily life is constantly touched by the practices of Islam, that her OFW employee does not seem to have any daily concrete practices of her Christian faith. The Muslim woman knows that Islam is embodied in her. Her belief system manifests itself in its practice. "The average Muslim is concerned less with belief than with practice" (Colby 2000, 65). Evidence of this can be found in Islamic renewal movements where the emphasis lies on going back to fundamental ways of practice so that the self-embodies Islam. "Islam as an embodied religion has as its point of departure the practices that are lived out in the body. Whether belief follows from these is of secondary importance" (Colby 2000, 65). A Nazarene OFW, though confident in her relationship and understanding of the power and authority of Jesus Christ, would benefit in her witness of her faith by being mindful to seek areas in her life where she could overtly "practice" this relationship.

In this regard, the Catholic Church, perhaps not intentionally for this evangelistic purpose, has many churches for OFWs in Middle Eastern countries where allowed. They provide daily Mass, confessionals, OFW community functions and counseling. In Bahrain for example, Catholic OFWs are permitted to display statues of saints and crucifixes as a practice of their beliefs. From the Muslim perspective that focuses on praxis over apologetics, this makes complete sense, whereas the Nazarene OFW does not have such practices from which to draw. There may be an evangelical church she can attend, but the symbols found in Catholicism (including clergy collars and robes) cannot be pointed to as evidence of practice. She has been encouraged to understand her faith as

relationship, not piety. She may have time daily for personal prayer and Bible study but would not indicate that this practice embodies her faith. She walks the line of wanting to show how her relationship with Jesus transforms her character but needing to find ways that this can be practiced and understood by her employers. This also works to her advantage.

One source of empowerment would be to use Charles Kraft's (2005, 170) understanding of goals. A Christian being able to articulate the goal of one's purpose in sharing their faith aids in their understanding of how to contextualize the message. However, they may believe that the goal of evangelism is to convert and disciple Muslims to express their Christian faith in ways that look just like the OFWs. Kraft explains that the goal should be for cultural appropriateness "where an expression of Christianity is both culturally authentic and genuinely Christian" (Kraft 2005, 170). Kraft explains that the Christian must consider what has meaning in the receptors' minds and the appropriate biblical response to these meanings: "The ideals presented in Scripture are, therefore, important goals for a people to understand and to express in life. Things like righteousness, truthfulness, kindness, compassion, humility, love and the rest of the fruits of the Spirit. ... all expressed in ways appropriate to the culture" (Kraft 2005, 171). For example, humility expressed in an OFW's relationship with Christ would not have the same cultural meaning in Bahrain. "Each society will have its own definitions of righteousness, love and all the rest of the visible behaviors" (Kraft 2005, 171).

The benefit for the OFW in contemplating the goal of appropriate Christianity liberates them from the felt burden of needing to change meanings in their employer's culture. Kraft believes that one can use already established forms of another religion to

demonstrate the truth of the gospel. Just as Jewish believers in the first century used synagogues as appropriate forms to worship Christ, the OFW might look for ways to express the truth of the gospel in existing Muslim forms and practices.

The Pressure from the Employer to Convert

Islam and Christianity have an important element in common: they are both proselytizing religions. As the Nazarene OFW intentionally and diligently works to share her faith in Christ, some of the women related stories about pressure from her employer to accept the teachings of Islam. Financial benefits, marriage proposals, and greater freedom were all offered as incentives for conversion. One of the participants shares that even though she is married, and her husband is the Philippines, the employer still exerted great pressure on her to convert.

My madam say I can make a conversion. But I say no. They say you can come back. But I say no because the youngest son want to marry me. I said no I came here for work. They say, no you can convert to Muslim. I said no. So, they gave me like a charm and said you are a remembrance for us. So, they want to take my daughter to go in there. He said marry me. I said no. He said no its okay if you have husband in the Philippines. He give me all that I want. So, only that. So, I had to leave. (FG Participant F)

Another participant shared that each day she was told to recite Arabic words that her employer was teaching her. When they took her to Mecca for their pilgrimage, the mother had her recite the words in the Mosque and then told her she was now a Muslim.¹⁰ Eight women shared incidences when their employer asked them to consider converting. Yet, others shared how their employers respected their Christian faith and allowed for time for church attendance or Bible studies. One Nazarene OFW served in a large household in

¹⁰ Focus group participant E most likely had unintentionally recited the Shahada.

Oman. She said that many of the foreign staff were Christians, and they had their own Bible study. The employers did not mind that they had this time of prayer and study.

RQ 4. What Processes, Methods, and Strategies Can the Church of the Nazarene Global Mission Use to Empower and facilitate Nazarene Overseas Filipino Workers for Cross-Cultural Ministry?

Brief Description of the Church of the Nazarene

The Church of the Nazarene (CON) was founded in 1908 as the result of several holiness denominations from different areas of the United States and Scotland merging to form one large Wesleyan denomination.¹¹ The CON exists in 162 world areas (out of 243 total world areas) with more than 2.5 million members (Church of the Nazarene 2018). From the time of its founding throughout the 20th century, the CON was governed from the west with all General Superintendents from America. At the 2009 General Assembly (held every four years), the assembly elected its first non-American General Superintendent.¹² Currently there are six General Superintendents; three are from non-Western countries. The 2018 member statistics show that 76 percent of Nazarenes are from outside the U.S. and Canada. This is an increase of 34 percent since 1991 (Church of the Nazarene 2018).

The current mission statement of the denomination is “To Make Christlike Disciples in the Nations” (Global Mission Church of the Nazarene 2018). The

¹¹ The seven denominations were: the Central Evangelical Holiness Association (New England), the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America (Middle Atlantic States), New Testament Church of Christ (South), Independent Holiness Church (Southwest), the Church of the Nazarene (West Coast), the Pentecostal Church of Scotland, and the Pentecostal Mission (Southeast). Several mergers occurred regionally before regional churches, in turn, united together in 1907 and 1908.

¹² Elected from Cape Verde.

denomination divides the world into six regions: USA/Canada, Asia Pacific, Mesoamerica, South America, Eurasia and Africa. Each region is divided into several fields, and each field has organized districts that oversee the local churches. Global Mission is the centralized mission agency working with all six regions to strategize on implementing the mission statement in the different regions. The Global Mission director works with each regional director in the responsibilities of evangelism, education, and compassion. The Global Mission director also casts a missional vision for the global church. Currently this vision is to “Go where the church is not yet” (Global Mission Church of the Nazarene 2018).

Each region sets its own mission strategies in the context of its world area and with input from the field strategy coordinators. Placement of missionaries in strategic areas on different regions happens through the centralized Global Mission office in Lenexa, Kansas, and currently has deployed people from fifty-nine different countries. Missionaries are categorized into two groups: sponsored and global commissioned (Global Mission Church of the Nazarene 2018). Sponsored missionaries need to raise their own funds for salary, travel, health care and retirement. These are full-time missionaries but may only be involved in mission-field ministries for a specific time range or a specific ministry. Global commissioned missionaries, typically viewed as career or long-term missionaries, are funded through the World Evangelism Fund.¹³ The CON does not have an organized “business as mission” or “tentmaking” cross-cultural

¹³ The World Evangelism Fund is a centralized fund collected from each local Nazarene church. These funds provide for missionaries, the administration of the district and global church, and specific global programs. Each church is asked to give 5.5 percent of its tithes and offerings annually.

ministry organization. Though these types of missional endeavors exist, they are done individually by Nazarenes and not connected with the Global Mission office.

The CON Global Mission recognizes that the areas of the world where “the church is not yet” include hidden or bypassed people groups in areas otherwise considered reached with the gospel and in creative access countries where the spread of the gospel has been prohibited, resulting large population groups being unengaged. One of the largest areas is found on the Eurasia region in Middle Eastern countries. As the result of either governmental regulations or cultural barriers, the CON-sponsored and global commissioned missionaries often find themselves unable to find a viable inroad or an employment platform to bring the gospel into these areas. Knowing that there are Nazarenes from other countries living in these areas and working legitimate jobs, it is prudent that Global Mission welcomes and works with these Nazarene members in continuing the mission of making Christlike disciples in the nations. As mentioned in this study, a significant number of Nazarene Filipinos work in the Middle East. Also mentioned earlier in the study, there are two organized Nazarene churches for Filipino workers on the Eurasia region.

Unfortunately, because there are no strong statistics from local Nazarene churches in the Philippines about their members working in these areas, it is difficult to connect and build a network or to train and resource these workers. It is an area that needs attention from Global Mission and can grow to include the Nazarene Filipina domestic helpers in the homes of Muslim families on the Eurasia region. This topic has been brought to the attention of Dr. Verne Ward, current Global Mission Director; Dr. Mark Louw, Asia Pacific Regional Director; Rev. Arthur Snijders, Eurasia Regional Director;

Rev. Khalil Halaseh, Middle East Field Director; Rev. Stephen G., Philippines Field Director, as well as many local Filipino Nazarene pastors.

Initial Reservations

When looking specifically at the Nazarene Filipina contracted worker, denominational leaders had some initial reservations. When first approached about the possibility of equipping these women for relational evangelism, they expressed concern for the lifestyle of an OFW. Knowing these contracted workers leave behind spouses and children for economic growth, it was not looked upon as a favorable mission strategy. Rev. Dave Hane, Asia Pacific regional personnel director stated: “Do we really want to endorse a way of life that separates mothers from their children and wives from their husbands for long periods of time?” (Hane 2016). From a Western cultural perspective, validating such a person as a strategically equipped cross-cultural minister does not seem like a viable option. The Nazarene Global Missionary handbook states, “Global Mission highly values family life and recognizes the strain put on family relationships by extensive absences. Therefore, a missionary will not be separated from his or her immediate family for more than twenty-one consecutive days without the written approval of the Regional Director. For absences in excess of thirty-five days, the Global Mission Director must also give approval” (Nazarene Global Missionary Handbook 2012). It might seem hypocritical for the Global Mission office to have this policy yet utilize Nazarene OFWs in their ministry strategies. However, as the denomination becomes more global in the training and sending of non-Western missionaries, they have begun to encounter the issue of their policies being Western-centric.

The Local Nazarene Filipino Church and the Acknowledgment
of an OFW as Cross-Cultural Evangelist

Dr. Jason Hallig, adjunct professor of Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary and pastor of the Taytay International Nazarene Fellowship Church, believes that Nazarene missionaries who came to the Philippines over the last century have been guilty of a disservice to the local Nazarene Filipinos. They did this by not only causing financial dependencies, but by modeling cross-cultural ministry as only for westerners and only for those who have been through Western theological education. He reiterates the common saying: we have only seen the mission model of “the west to the rest.”¹⁴ It is understandable that the local Nazarene church would not see its own members living in these strategic areas for evangelism as part of the Nazarene mission. Of the 737 Nazarene Missionaries from fifty-nine countries, currently there are only five Filipinos serving with Global Mission as sponsored (3) and global commissioned (2) missionaries (Church of the Nazarene Mission 2018).

When addressing the Metro Manila district pastors’ meeting about the opportunity to equip their women who serve as OFWs, the mood in the room was unfavorable to the idea. When given the explanation of the current mission strategy in these Muslim countries and the obstacles that traditional missionaries face, however, the idea of these OFWs taking on this responsibility was met with pride and enthusiasm. Of the twenty-two responses, seventeen were favorable to allowing themselves or leaders from their church to be trained in the Islamic religion to help OFWs in their congregations who serve in Islamic countries. Also, when asked if they believed that Christian OFWs can be

¹⁴ "A Call for All Believers," INF, February 9, 2020 Taytay, Philippines.

effective in evangelizing in Muslim countries where they work, two answered it might be too risky; fourteen answered yes, but with more training; and one answered that they strongly believe in workplace evangelism. These numbers, if indicative of the other Filipino pastors on other districts, give hope that they would impart to their congregation the vision of OFWs as cross-cultural evangelists, especially those to Muslim countries. Unfortunately, when asked if they would be willing to help create a guide for this type of evangelism, only four responded to a secondary email and participated in the collaboration of the handbook.

The four pastors along with the Field Strategy coordinator and Rev. Elma Mago, pastor of the International Church of the Nazarene in Hong Kong (a female OFW congregation), collaborated on the writing of the contract between the local church and the OFW found in the last section of the handbook. This contract would serve as an agreement similar to the Global Mission Missionary Handbook and would only be used with Nazarene OFWs. The clause about empowerment as the agent of the church in all things related to evangelism (understood by Wesleyans as the “means of grace”) was a major topic of deliberation. Rev. Elma Mago was apprehensive at first but found the concept liberating and empowering when considering the women in her congregation. Rev. Jun Macas also was cautious as the level of spiritual maturity in some of the women caused concern when empowering for this type of evangelism. He suggested a strong mentoring relationship between the local church and the OFW willing to be trained. This became part of the handbook.

Field Strategy Coordinator, Stephen Gualberto whose father was an OFW for many years, felt that there needed to be a strong statement to the local church about not

asking for finances, except accepting the OFS's tithe if they do not attend a church regularly in the country of their employment. He felt this issue was a major barrier between the female OFW and her church. He shared that one of the two Nazarene Global Commissioned Filipina missionaries in the beginning had difficulty with her family and local church in helping them understand that she cannot send money home each month. They didn't see her as a missionary but as an OFW. It had not been modeled to them before.

A New Vision

Dr. Mark Louw, a Nazarene missionary from South Africa and current Asia Pacific Regional Director, has caught the vision of helping not only Nazarene OFW domestic helpers, but all Nazarenes who find themselves in economic diaspora by both empowering them through biblical statements of affirmation and commitment for future resources in training. Dr. Louw was interviewed multiple times about empowering these women. He said, "We want to redeem the decision and economic pressure that forced them into the OFW decision and the sacrifice. Until the overall economy of the Philippines increases there is no other alternative way of support. Many are doing it for the education of their family" (Louw 2020). He asked to submit a statement for the handbook so that the women would know that the Church of the Nazarene is committed to them and believes in the *kairos* movement of the OFW phenomenon. Dr. Louw's statement is as follows:

We're a missional church committed to the mission of God, thereby believing that all have been sent to share God's love of the world. John 20:20.

We believe in the Priesthood of all believers, thereby believing that we are to be active Ambassadors of the Kingdom of God wherever we may find ourselves.
1 Peter 2: 9-10

It is, therefore, within the norm to expect that our beloved friends and families who have gained employment overseas consider themselves to be active sent members of local Nazarene churches, serving the Lord through in a bi-vocational sense as Christlike Disciples in the Nations. It is my hope and prayer that all who leave friends and family behind for a season of their lives, will find deep and eternal meaning to their employment while abroad, and would take solace in that their time away from family is having eternal reward through the lives that they are personally impacting and to those to whom they are witnessing. May God use this wave of overseas workers to accomplish his purposes and see many come to Christ. (Louw email December 2019)

Dr. Louw also suggested that we look at “kingdom principles” and move past “Western principles” when communicating the Great Commission in global and district assemblies, as well as at theological conferences.

Currently, Global Mission is moving away from centralizing the sending of missionaries and a new emphasis is being placed on the local churches’ involvement in the placement of new missionaries. He believes there needs to be a formal commissioning of OFWs in their local churches and a commitment to the unique needs of these OFWs and their families. “Wouldn’t it be cool if we valued them and pampered them? To give them a higher sense of calling? How does the church help them justify the sacrifice of leaving their families? God desires to redeem this time. Not just through them pouring maternal love to someone else’s children but pouring spiritual blessing to the family” (Louw 2020). He suggested several ideas to help Nazarene OFWs feel supported by the denomination. One suggestion was for the local church’s NMI (Nazarene Mission International) council to commit to prayer support and also LINKS support (similar to member care by providing birthday packages and holistic care for missionaries) as they do with sponsored and commissioned missionaries. He also hopes that a database with OFWs’ personal and family information could be kept in order to maintain a network of

support from the regional office and the field office. This information could be shared with the Eurasia region and Middle Eastern field coordinator.

Dr. Louw believes that a perception of an overwhelming burden has been placed on the idea of sharing the gospel in Muslim areas. He believes it is not as difficult as what has been communicated. “You don’t have to have the burden to save people. Jesus is the one who saves. We can be just a light shining in the dark sky. It might draw someone or be a light unto the path. You become the Word they read first. More people would buy into this opportunity if they didn’t feel it was only their burden” (Louw 2020). The church in the Philippines, possibly because of the influence of the Catholic Church, has a very strong clergy/laity division. Dr. Louw feels that this hampers the lay person from learning how to share their faith as well as believing that they would be used by the Holy Spirit to answer questions about the Bible or the Christian life. “We need to ask our OFWs, are you living your faith visibly enough that if an individual had a vision of Jesus in a dream, you would be the person they would go to? Do they see you praying? Are you praying over a meal because everyone is watching, like Nicodemus in the night! Prayer is not prohibited, and it is not a burden!” (Louw 2020) He suggests that praying be done by kneeling in these contexts as it communicates humility. He also affirmed the consensus of the Filipino pastors in emphasizing a mentorship between the local church and the OFW.

In regards to the Nazarene Eurasia regional response, when asked about the Nazarene OFWs working on the Eurasia region and Middle Eastern field, both Rev. Arthur Snijders, Eurasia Regional Director, and Rev. Khalil Halaseh, Middle Eastern Field Strategy Coordinator, answered that they were unaware of any Nazarene OFWs in their areas other than the two OFW Nazarene congregations (Dubai and the Persian Gulf)

and were not aware of any Nazarene domestic helpers. This makes sense since these women are not connected to the global church and typically cannot attend traditional services as they work seven days a week. When asked if they believed that an OFW domestic helper would be a strategic person to share the gospel in a Muslim home, Rev. Snijders felt he didn't know enough about the OFW experience nor the Philippines to contribute but was optimistic that proper training and a handbook would be of great value (Snijders email December 2019). Rev. Halaseh, who serves in Jordan, responded similarly. Though the country of Jordan does have three Nazarene churches, Rev. Halaseh did not know of any Filipinas who had attended or any Filipino pastors from the Philippines who had inquired about the church in his country (Halaseh email December 2019).

Existing Nazarene Resources for Nazarene OFW Domestic Helpers

Although the general Church of the Nazarene recommends the use of the book *The Power of One* (Church of the Nazarene 2011 Kindle) as a resource in relational evangelism, the relationship of an OFW domestic helper to her employer does not have the same cultural dynamics assumed in the methodology of *The Power of One*. Despite the basic hermeneutic that all believers are witnesses to the good news and have the ability to influence the lives of those in our communities, this book does not take into account the Asian and Middle Eastern hierarchical dynamics and how this would affect the opportunity and presentation of the gospel. In other words, it is too direct and explicit. The authors' efforts to make a global methodology for relational evangelism are commendable, but the book does not escape the Western lens of guilt/innocence in the presentation. Nazarene Missionary Grant Zweigle's book, *Worship, Wonder and Way:*

Reimagining Evangelism as Missional Practice, (2015) shows how Jesus nurtured close relationships with His disciples and builds on this model. It is similar to parts of Robert E. Coleman's (1993) *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. Zweigle (2015, 98) uses many stories and examples for each point that help someone without a higher educational background understand, like the Nazarene OFW, but the majority of these examples are from the West. He also shows how worship music can be a relational tool in evangelism which, actually, could be useful for an OFW.

The book, *The Camel: How Muslims are Coming to Faith in Christ*, by Kevin Greeson (2007), though not by a Nazarene author, has been distributed by Nazarene regional directors to missionaries who work in Muslim contexts. When discussing with Dr. Smith about using this book as a resource for Nazarene OFWs, he expressed belief in its strength in understanding Islam and uses the book as one of the resources in training missionaries in Muslim countries. As it was evaluated for the handbook by some of the OFW participants, some of the women wondered if it would be too direct, cumbersome, and masculine in viewpoint. It might miss some of the subtle differences in sharing the gospel with women or children.

The Emmaus Model: Discipleship, Theological Education, and Transformation, by Nazarene professors Bruce G. Allder and David A. Ackerman (2019, 51) highlights the importance of mentoring as a means of discipleship. It is written for theological education institutions, but its explanation of the relational approach to learning in any context where the Bible is being taught is very insightful and can be easily adapted for relational evangelism and mentoring. Sections on the Holy Spirit's action into the

learning process as well as the section on mentoring as being *with* the learner on their journey, were adapted for the handbook.

The Content of the Handbook

The focus group and interview participants expressed concern about their knowledge of Islam and their anxieties about not knowing enough about the Bible to share their Christian faith. So, the four participating Nazarene pastors and three Nazarene scholars I interviewed suggested that the handbook contain sections on the fundamentals of Islam, bridges of conversation to speak about the Christian faith, and Wesleyan core beliefs that explain the “means of grace.” As a participant in the project, I wrote from my exegetical research, the biblical foundation section on economic diaspora as a vehicle of the Great Commission. Dr. David Ackerman, Nazarene professor and scholar collaborated on the understanding of prevenient grace and relational evangelism. Dr. Bruce Alder, Nazarene professor and president of Nazarene Bible College in Brisbane, also contributed on relational evangelism through his book, *The Emmaus Model*, and a personal interview. Dr. Smith,¹⁵ a Nazarene scholar in Islam, collaborated with the section on Islam. Dr. Jason Hallig, Nazarene professor and pastor reviewed the content and contributed to the section on mentorship and discipleship.

Dr. Ackerman emphasized prevenient grace as a place to begin in motivating and equipping Nazarene OFWs. Knowing that God has already begun to work in the hearts of the employer’s family where the OFW serves will be of comfort and motivation. He defines prevenient grace as follows: “In each person’s heart there is a place of peace,

¹⁵ Alias because of his leadership in creative access countries.

which very well may be suppressed, but God has been working. When we live out the Gospel in lifestyle evangelism, we give the Gospel bit by bit until they say, ‘ah ha!’ Now I get it” (Ackerman 2019). Since God has begun this work, the OFW comes alongside and asks themselves four questions: What need is this person feeling? What difference does Jesus make with that need? How can I introduce the Jesus difference? What faith story do I have that shows the difference Jesus can make with this need? Dr. Ackerman feels this approach is suitable for any context and for any follower of Christ to ask. He hopes that Global Mission would look at this model in the future, especially in non-Western countries. In the interview, Dr. Ackerman quoted Dr. David Finch from the Christian Missionary Alliance, speaking to the CON evangelism models:

There’s a cultural pushback against evangelism in [the] American church. Under Christendom it had become coercive. It was about explaining, convincing, persuading, imposing. But this is not evangelism in the new post Christendom cultures of the West. Evangelism is—go be present to people, systems and places. Recognize God’s work in people’s lives and in social spaces among those who can’t see Him yet (prevenient grace). Point to His work. Describe His Lordship. Ask, can you see it? Are you interested? And invite people in to making Him Lord of their lives and circumstances. Let (allow) the miracles to begin in Jesus name (under His authority).¹⁶

Dr. Bruce Allder discussed relational evangelism as “being, knowing and doing” (Allder 2020). All learning needs to be transformational. The Nazarene OFW can be intentional in engaging the learner by her lifestyle. As the Holy Spirit facilitates the encounter, the OFW looks to the Bible for answers and to her mentor (or church) for guidance knowing that the mission of God encapsulates her lifestyle (Allder 2020).

Dr. Smith was interviewed several times for this study. He expressed concern that this handbook would give a false sense of security to someone who wanted to share about

¹⁶ Taken from Dr. David Finch’s blog on his Facebook page, January 11, 2020.

Christianity to a Muslim. He strongly encourages the Philippine field and the Asia Pacific region to hold annual training sessions for their OFWs in relational evangelism (Dr. Smith 2019). The handbook can be part of the training but should not stand in place of it. “Unless they are properly trained, they go woefully unprepared” (Dr. Smith 2019). The training, he feels, needs to be extensive and initially be at least one weekend with annual refresher weekend sessions. Dr. Smith lived in Jordan and understands the context of the Muslim family. He believes the Nazarene OFW’s potential for evangelism cannot be overestimated: “Your light and joy will terrify the darkness” (Dr. Smith 2019). Yet, proper training is essential. Dr. Smith believes an OFW domestic helper already reflects humility and submission. He cautions that in all conversations about Islam, it is necessary to maintain a respectful attitude and not be confrontational. “You don’t want to aggressively convince them that they are wrong but become attractive and hungry to who you are as opposed to feeling shame or attacked” (Dr. Smith 2019).

One advantage of a Nazarene female OFW is that women are more relational than men. When an OFW speaks about her prayer life, she can speak about it in terms of her relationship with God: “God and I were talking about ...” or also, “In my heart I heard God say ...”. Dr. Smith believes that the OFW can speak openly about her prayer life. Asking her employer “Where do you pray” is a point of entry into a deeper conversation about God’s will and the purpose of prayer (Dr. Smith 2019).

Dr. Smith talked about the importance of entry points. A Nazarene OFW would need to know, before she begins speaking about Jesus, what Islam teaches and what the Qur’an says about Him. He believes that unless the OFW knows the differences, she will be caught in a conversation that acknowledges that Jesus existed but not know how to

speaking about His divinity. Dr. Smith feels that proper training would benefit the OFW in how to speak thoughtfully and compassionately with respect to the Qur'an while showing the truth of the Gospel has not been corrupted. This method, he recommends, would let the employer tell the OFW about Jesus in the Qur'an and then allow the OFW to counter with what the New Testament says while pointing out bridges; that Muhamad is dead, but all Muslims believe that Jesus will return and will defeat the antichrist, live out his natural life and be buried with Muhamad, and that Jesus ascended into heaven but was not crucified. "In the context of their honor/shame worldview, there was no way God would allow Jesus, His prophet, to be so humiliated" (Dr. Smith 2019). He recommends always speaking about the love of God, who loves humanity so much that He took human form, and emphasizing this love is constant in spite of our shame.

When asked about the practical, lifestyle behavior a Nazarene OFW should follow, Dr. Smith recommends that the handbook emphasize modesty in dress and restraint with any males they encounter: "They expect Christians to be prostitutes because of Western media and clothing styles. Do not go out with other guys on your day off and avoid the appearance of what might be interpreted as flirting with any males" (Smith 2019). He also recommends posting or writing out requests and answers to any prayers as a way of showing one's prayer life and content of the prayers that they would otherwise never hear. In this way, it will allow them to catch glimpses of your personal relationship with God. As a Christian woman, a Nazarene OFW may reveal her hope of eternity with God because in God's eyes there is no greater value between a male or female. Yet, no Muslim would ever say that they know they will be going to paradise after their death. If she has the opportunity, an OFW might hang pictures of heavenly scenes in her room to

begin an entry point of conversation about her hope in eternity with God. In Islam, Dr. Smith says women cannot attain the highest levels of paradise (but might be able to visit these levels just to serve men and then return back down to her level).

Because part of the duty of a Muslim is to convert others, Dr. Smith believes OFWs will face constant pressure to convert. Islam believes that Allah has preordained every action on the earth including man's thoughts and actions. He recommends saying "Allah has not allowed me to choose a different path." Or "Allah has shown me in the Gospel that Jesus is the way." Dr. Smith cautions to be sure not to say that Muhamad is wrong but to emphasize the positive and reveal the similarities between the Bible and Qur'an so that there will be the opportunity to examine the Gospel. Knowing that Filipina domestic helpers want to please in all situations related to their employment, Dr. Smith feels it is prudent to warn these women that they should not pretend to be Muslim or to agree with all that their employer says about Christianity in order to be compliant. This will negate any Christian witness they might have had with their employer.

Finally, Dr. Smith believes that the greatest danger to a Nazarene OFW's witness of her faith lies in the way she understands the Bible. He adamantly believes, "If an OFW doesn't believe that the Bible is the very breath of God, then they need to keep their mouth closed" (Dr. Smith 2019). The way she treats her Bible shows what she believes about it. It should be put in a place of safekeeping, not dog-eared or worn out, and needs to have no writings on the inside. He was not sure how a Muslim would feel about a Bible app, but if that is the only way to have a Bible, then he does not feel it would be wrong. If the OFW is allowed to have a physical Bible, that is the best option for lifestyle evangelism.

The explanation of the tenets of Islam in the handbook came from a book written by retired Nazarene missionary, Robert McCroskey (2017), *Understanding Your Muslim Neighbor: Moving from Fear to Love*. McCroskey explains Islam to the layperson in an understandable and memorable style. The OFW participants who read the first draft of the handbook recommended a question/answer format on the Islam section. I adapted in the handbook some of McCroskey's explanations of Islam to this type of format and to the context of a Nazarene OFW. McCroskey was interviewed for this study but felt he did not have enough experience working in the Philippine culture to understand the lifestyle of an OFW and to comment on their effectiveness in a Muslim home. His insights into the fear/power aspects of the Islamic faith were helpful in explaining how a Muslim feels about his or her relationship with Allah. For a Christian to emphasize the father/child relationship between God and the believer is attractive to a Muslim. It is a longing we all carry as part of the *imago Dei*.

Rev. Jun Macas, Dr. Jason Hallig and Rev. Elma Mago believe in the need for an ongoing mentorship between the Nazarene OFW and her local church. Dr. Hallig collaborated in the handbook on the aspects of character, spirit, and ministry formation. He knows the time commitment this would have for both the designated mentor and the OFW. He suggests that the mentor provide the OFW with a weekly study they can work through together. Though in some OFW work contexts this would not be possible, where allowed it would require them both to be in weekly contact. Rev. Mago believes that the matriarchal culture of the Philippines facilitates a willingness for both women and men to look toward female leaders for spiritual direction. She suggests that the OFW find a trusted woman, preferably someone who has served as an OFW in the past, as a mentor.

Other Denominations and the OFW

Due to the majority faith in the Philippines, it is not surprising that the Catholic Church has been proactive both in caring for the holistic needs of the OFW family and equipping the OFW for living out their faith in their work context. The Catholic Church, though not as evangelistic in practice as Protestant denominations, has empowered the Catholic OFW to plant seeds of the gospel across the world. Pope Francis recognized their sacrifice on behalf of their families and country in his visit to the Philippines, stating, “The real contribution of Filipinos of the diaspora to the life and welfare of the societies in which they live is oft neglected” (GMA News 2019). In 2019, the Vatican put out an official statement acknowledging the strategic work of evangelization of the OFWs. Cardinal Fernando Filoni, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples stated, “OFWs are missionaries of their faith among the peoples they live and work with” (Lagarde 2019). Online resources and newsletters with columns for Q&A about sharing one’s beliefs are available for the Catholic OFW.

Other denominations may have such resources, but they are not distributed widely. For example, Baptist churches in the Philippines have many ministries to the OFWs and their families, but they are locally led and distributed. Facebook pages for OFWs from local ministries are abundant. The Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches (PCEC) has helped facilitate training in some of the larger Filipino churches for OFW evangelism. For example, Greenhills Christian Fellowship is a large independent Baptist movement in the Philippines with congregations all over the world. They regularly facilitate training and conferences through the PCEC for OFWs and their

families. In 2018 they held the “On the Move: OFW Missions Conference and Diaspora Summit” (Philippine Council of Evangelical Churches 2018).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

As the participant researcher, I am eager to show the potential of a curriculum that a group of people living in an intimate relationship with the Lord and working in countries where people are without the hope of Christ can utilize. The key may well be preparation and training for OFWS and validation from their leaders. This research hopes to ignite creative and critical thinking and generate platforms for dialogue so a Filipina domestic worker serving in a home in a Middle Eastern, Muslim country can reach out to her employer in a way that would glorify God, provide a portal of grace into a lonely heart, and allow the transformation of the Holy Spirit to work in their relationship.

Summary

This study collaborated with Nazarene leaders and Christian female OFWs who had worked or currently work in Muslim homes, to develop a handbook for relational evangelism. It began with a biblical foundation of diaspora missiology and examined the unique experiences of female OFWs through social science literature. Focus groups and personal interviews were held wherein these women shared the struggles of working so far from their families, the importance of their relationship with God, their heartbreaking stories of abuse, and their willingness to learn how to share the message of the gospel implicitly and strategically.

When I began this project, I hoped my denomination would seize the opportunity of involving Nazarene OFWs in the mission strategy of “going to where the church is not yet.” The denominational leadership conscientiously wants to be responsible to the OFW in her safety and situation. As the cultural dynamics of the OFW phenomenon were examined, it became clear that this long-distance type of employment brings much-needed financial stability to the Philippines. OFWs have become the new heroes of their culture but also serve as a source of Christian influence to the areas of the world where they serve. Nazarene Church leaders now recognize this potential but also recognize the challenges of equipping people for cross-cultural ministry who work far from their families and home churches in a prime, strategic location; who have an economic stake; and who have limited theological education in their own faith combined with limited understanding of the Islamic faith of their employers. Nazarene Filipino pastors, scholars, and denomination leaders deliberated over what content to include in the handbook, wanting to be sure that if this was the only book an OFW would read they would see empowerment through biblical narratives for their witness, strategies in speaking to a Muslim about the Christian faith, the basic tenets of Islam, Wesleyan theological principles, and support from their local church. The handbook attempted to do justice to all of these areas. OFW collaborators wanted the handbook to be conversational, simplistic, and brief, with sound bites and easy-to-remember facts. The end product tried to accommodate all participants’ feedback.

Recommendations

Dr. Smith’s suggestion that each Nazarene OFW working in a Muslim country attend special training for relational evangelism in a Muslim context would be the ideal.

The difficulty lies in organizing a time between contract endings and home visits for an OFW to attend such a training. This type of meeting would necessitate a central location in the Philippines and the denomination covering the expenses for the attendees. Funding and timing logistics make this type of in-person training unfeasible. I recommend creation of an online course or video series geared specifically to a Nazarene OFW domestic worker available to all local Filipino churches to promote to their members. The online training has the potential to evolve into holistic care for the OFW and her family. The handbook can be adapted as a workbook for the series.

As this project was moving forward with feedback from collaborating participants, many excellent recommendations were contributed, but not all were suitable to be included in this project. Those recommendations are as follows:

- As Dr. Mark Louw suggested, the district should gather data from their respective churches on OFW members and create a regional database where designations of world areas can be assessed and OFWs resourced according to their context. This database can be shared with the Eurasia region, allowing for Nazarene field leaders and churches to know about fellow Filipina Nazarenes in their areas.

- Each year every Nazarene district holds an NMI convention to encourage the local churches to continue to support the mission work throughout the world in prayer, the World Evangelism Fund and promoting missionaries to come speak in the local churches. One suggestion was to have an OFW working in a Muslim home come and speak at each district NIM convention in the Philippines about the opportunities and challenges of sharing their faith cross-culturally through the work and lifestyle. In this

way OFWs will feel validated and encouraged while the Filipino Church will have a clearer vision of the life and ministry of their OFW members.

- Each Nazarene missionary distributes prayer cards with their photo and special requests for their ministries. The cards are distributed at NMI conventions and whenever the missionary is on home assignment. One suggestion was to make special prayer cards for OFWs in Muslim countries to distribute in each of their districts as a reminder to pray for their influence and spiritual health.

- One Sunday per year, promote a special service for OFWs and their family members. This special OFW Sunday would need to be promoted across the Philippines with special greetings brought by the General Superintendents and regional leaders. Though many OFWs do not work in Muslim countries, still, significant numbers of them do and need to find encouragement to see a greater purpose beyond economic advantage.

- In their feedback about the handbook, OFW women responded to personal stories more than to the sections with theological content or information about Islam. A precursor to the handbook could be creating a resource entailing a compilation of stories from Christian OFWs as they personally share their own experiences of struggles and of victories.

- It may be difficult to assess, but after distributing the handbook to OFWs, efforts should be made by CON Global Mission to contact them upon their return to the Philippines for debriefing and evaluation about the effectiveness of the material in the handbook. Subsequent interviews might bring to light further materials needed, additional ideas, unforeseen obstacles, and unexpected successes.

- The stories of abuse the women faced were heart-wrenching. It is my strong recommendation that the CON Global Mission and/or Nazarene Compassionate Ministries support and fund a counseling program for OFWs who have faced mental and physical abuse.

Conclusion

I feel optimistic about the Philippine Nazarene Church utilizing the handbook for further development and education for their OFW members. I also feel optimistic that CON Global Mission will continue to explore the OFW's potential in cross-cultural ministry to Muslim families. Research served the purpose of creating dialogue between the denominational leadership, the Philippine field, local Filipino churches, and the OFWs. Rev. Dialing is currently working to place an OFW resource table in each local church for OFW families. There is potential to include workshops at district conferences for pastors and leaders to receive training in relational evangelism to Muslims to help them study about Islam and make them better mentors for OFWs. Rev. Mago is retiring and returning the Philippines later this year. She will bring decades of experience in mentoring OFWs to the field office, and I feel confident the Holy Spirit will use her wisdom to influence new Nazarene leaders. I have had the honor of walking beside these amazing church leaders and OFWs who love the Lord with all their hearts and who earnestly desire to be part of His redemptive work.

APPENDIX A

Ethical Guidelines

1. Before research that involves human subjects is conducted, **IRB approval** must first be obtained. The researcher will provide accurate information about their research protocol and when it has been approved the researcher ensures that the research is conducted in accordance with the approved protocol.
2. **Plagiarism**: Researchers do not present the work of other authors as their own work.
3. When research **involves other persons**, the researcher will ensure that participants are protected from harm, either in the process of conducting the research or in the manner in which the research findings are made known to the public.
4. **Voluntary participation**: all persons who participate in the research must do so voluntarily.
5. **Informed consent**: researchers must be able to produce a signed and dated form that indicates that the participants in their research have been appropriately informed.
 - a. The content of the informed consent document should contain
 - i. The purpose of the research
 - ii. Their right to withdraw from participation, at any time during the research, without any penalty or loss incurred by the individual
 - iii. The estimated time that would be involved in the research
 - iv. Any potential risk or adverse effect that could result in their participation
 - v. A guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality including how the records will be kept confidential and/or disposed of and if there are any limits of confidentiality
 - vi. The prospective research benefits
 - vii. That any questions about the research that they may have will be answered at the conclusion of the process
 - viii. Whom to contact if they have questions about the research or their rights as participants

- ix. An offer to provide a summary of the findings
 - b. Informed consent for using audio and visual recordings is dealt with in the APA Ethical Principles (Standard 8.03).
 - c. Under certain conditions the IRB can dispense with the requirement to obtain informed consent (see APA Standard 8.05; Neuman 2006, 138).
6. **Anonymity** in data collection: it should always remain impossible for someone (including the researcher) to connect specific data to a subject involved in the research.
7. **Confidentiality**: information obtained from subjects must always be kept secure and unavailable to any person. This includes both persons who are involved in the research and those who are not, even when they are the ones who gave permission for the research to be conducted (such as parents or legal guardians).
8. **Deception in Research**: although it may be necessary to use deceptive techniques in order to obtain some scientific data from participants, it must be acknowledged that deception is unethical. If the value of the potential knowledge outweighs the deception in the research the IRB could consider approval for the research. In any case where deception is utilized researchers will debrief their subjects about the nature of the deception at the earliest possible opportunity and provide them with the option to withdraw their data from the study (see Dunn, 2009 pages 53 to 59 for an extended discussion on this subject).
9. **Honest reporting**: researchers do not fabricate data and will report their findings even when these are negative or do not support their hypothesis. Researchers will avoid false or deceptive statements based on their data. Researchers cannot allow vested interests (their employer, a research funder, or an organization they belong to) to distort, suppress or alter the findings of their research to protect their interests. Researchers will honestly and fairly report any technical limitations, shortcomings or failures encountered in their research.

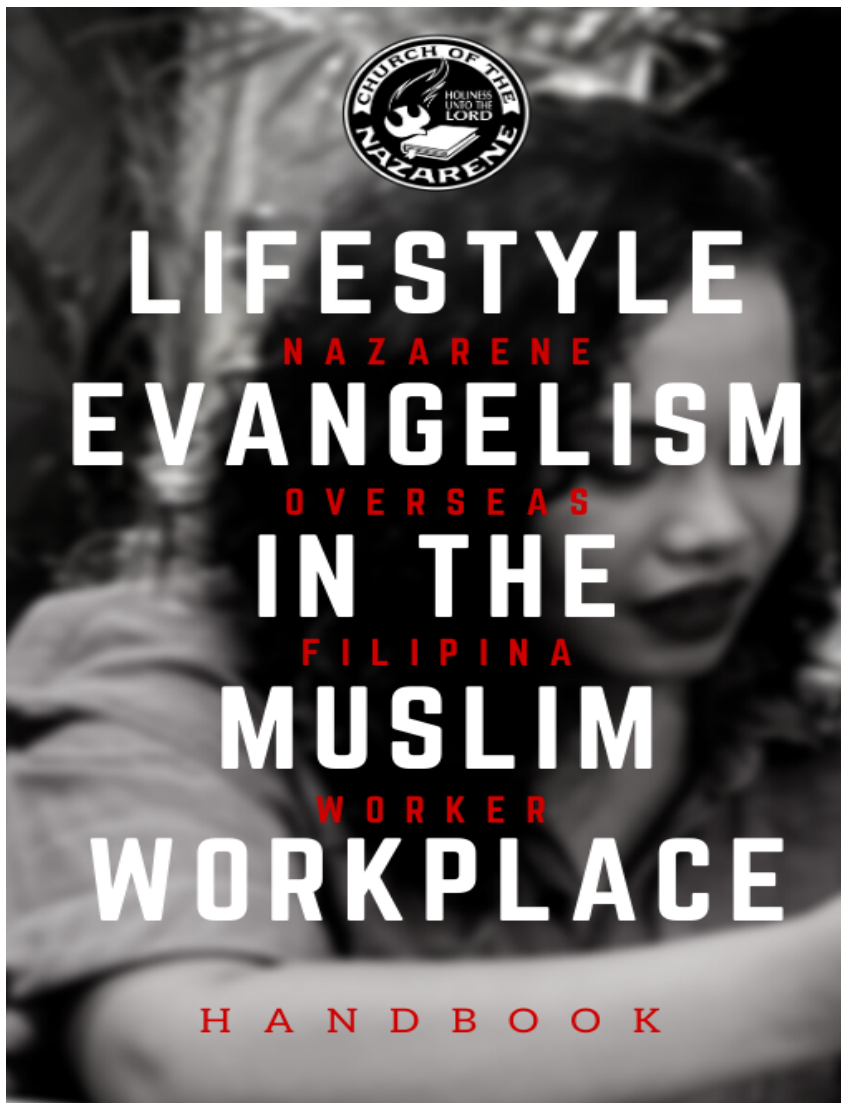
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Date

APPENDIX B

OFW Handbook

CHURCH OF  THE NAZARENE
H A N D B O O K



Introduction to Handbook

← *“God can use all people for His mission in whatever their profession or location in life. Every occupation is an opportunity God uses to reach humanity.”*

Dr. Bruce Allder, President, Australia Nazarene Bible College →

Why did you decide to leave your family and travel to a distant country? Why did you choose this line of work? It is most likely because you love your family and want to care for them! But did you ever consider that God would use you to share the love of Jesus through your job as a domestic helper? This handbook is written to show that God gives each believer power to shine his light in every area of the world including where they work! We are all missionaries because we are all called to be part of His mission. As an OFW serving in a Muslim household, you are part of KAIROS movement of the Holy Spirit. KAIROS in Greek means “a God-ordained time in human history” in the Christian understanding. How else can one explain why so many Filipina Christian women are finding employment caring for Muslim families in parts of the world where traditional missionaries are forbidden? God is reconciling creation to himself through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each follower of Jesus Christ is an ambassador of this message of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18). As an ambassador of reconciliation, you have a unique part of the mission of God each day as you diligently earn funds for your family in the Philippines. Each chapter of the handbook hopefully will give guidance and help you think strategically and creatively as to how you can show your faith in Jesus as a Nazarene OFW serving in a Muslim household.

As you begin to work through this handbook, be encouraged by the words of Dr.

Mark Louw, Asia Pacific Nazarene Regional Director:

We're a missional church committed to the mission of God, thereby believing that all have been sent to share God's love of the world (John 20:20). We believe in the priesthood of all believers, thereby believing that we are to be active ambassadors of the kingdom of God wherever we may find ourselves (1 Pet. 2: 9-10). It is, therefore, within the norm to expect that our beloved friends and families who have gained employment overseas consider themselves to be active sent members of local Nazarene churches, serving the Lord through in a bi-vocational sense as Christlike disciples in the nations. It is my hope and prayer that all who leave friends and family behind for a season of their lives will find deep and eternal meaning to their employment while abroad and would take solace in that their time away from family is having eternal reward through the lives that they are personally impacting and to those to whom they are witnessing. May God use this wave of overseas workers to accomplish His purposes and see many come to Christ. (Louw 2019)

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Section 1: Conduits of Blessing - What does the Bible have to say about lifestyle evangelism for someone like an OFW?

Section 2: The power of the personal witness - How to be a witness of the gospel creatively and implicitly while fulfilling your employment contract.

Section 3: Understanding Islam: Looking for areas to build conversational bridges with respect.

Section 4: The greatest conversation: Prayer changes everything!

Section 5: Being discipled as you are empowered to disciple others.

Section 6: Local church covenant! They believe in you!

Section One: Conduits of Blessing

In Genesis 12:2-3, God made a covenant with Abraham. God would be the God of Abraham and His descendants and they would be God's people. He would bless them with His name and make them into a great nation. The covenant also promised that through Abraham, all people on earth will be blessed. The plan of the covenant was for the chosen nation of Israel to become a conduit of God's blessings. This is implied each time the Abrahamic covenant is addressed in the Old Testament (Exod. 6:7; Lev. 26:12, Jer. 7:23; 24:7), where each text reinforces the idea that all nations will be blessed because of Israel's existence (Gen. 12:2). When the Israelites lived out the covenant in front of other nations, the impression and influence on surrounding peoples was intended to show the holiness of the living God.

“
Each believer is a conduit
of God's blessing.
”

The Old Testament shows how this covenant of blessing passed from the nomad Abraham to the sons of Jacob. It strengthened the resolve of Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness. It inspired prophets to advise the kings of Judah and Israel not to forget their God. And as the Israelites were taken captive, the covenant was so embedded in their identity that those that they worked under or slaved for were blessed because of the presence of the covenant-holders in their communities. Joseph, sold as a slave, blessed all of Egypt because of the covenant. Daniel, taken as an exile into Babylon to serve in the royal palace, blessed the kings of Babylon with his prophetic voice and strong allegiance to the covenant. Even the Assyrian general's little Israelite slave girl, taken in a raid and

made to serve in a foreign home as a domestic servant, blessed the family she served by knowing where the power to heal her master lay. She was a blessing to Naaman because she belonged to the covenant. Abraham was not the goal of the covenant, and neither was the nation of Israel. The goal of the covenant was for creation to know the Creator and to know Him as Holy God. The Egyptians, under Joseph's leadership, knew his God. The Babylonian kings, under the influence of Daniel's self-discipline and faith, knew his God. The Assyrian general, under the little slave girl's direction, knew her God.

As believers in Christ, we are heirs of this covenant. "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:29). Each of us share in the covenant God made with Abraham. Because of our new identity in Christ, all the promises God gave Abraham belong now to all of us. "I will be your God, and you will be my people" (Gen. 17:7-8).

Each believer is a conduit of God's blessing. We are His holy people, His royal priesthood, His special possession (1 Pet. 2:9). Whether we are advising political leaders or living in foreign homes as domestic helpers, each follower of Christ blesses those around them because of the covenant. In an introductory level textbook used to train missionaries, the author plainly states that "God's universal intent is now to be manifest through an individual and the people who come through that individual" (Moreau 2004, 31). In the Old Testament, the covenant came through Abraham and his descendants. Now, in the new covenant, Jesus is the individual through whom the blessing is given, and each follower is a conduit of that blessing.

Grace and the Policewoman



My friend Grace¹⁷ worked in an orphanage in a country where sharing about the Christian faith publicly is prohibited. She and her husband were attending a secret Bible study, training others how to teach the Bible, when the police broke in and arrested them all. Grace was the only female in the group. When the police took them to the jail, they put Grace in a separate section away from the men. She was assigned a special policewoman who would watch her and bring her food. As the days passed, Grace would



And the God of all grace,
who called you to his
eternal glory in Christ,
after you have suffered a
little while, will himself
restore you and make you
strong, firm and steadfast.

1 Peter 5:10



sit on her chair and pray quietly. She had a calm expression on her face that bothered the policewoman. One time while she sat praying, she had a smile on her face. The policewoman yelled at her that she should not be smiling and told her that she should understand that the situation was very serious, and consequences she faced were dire. But Grace told the policewoman

that she couldn't help but smile. She said that God blessed her so much, and God blesses all the people in her life. Grace told the policewoman that now that they knew each other, God was going to bless her through Grace. This caught the policewoman off guard. Grace told me that the mood of the policewoman changed immediately. She sat across from Grace and asked about her family. Over the next few days, Grace opened up and shared about her faith and her ministry at the orphanage. The policewoman told Grace that she wanted to help the children at the orphanage. After a week Grace was finally released

¹⁷ Names have been changed for all missionaries in creative access countries and OFWs who have worked in Muslim homes mentioned in this handbook.

from jail, and she made sure that she kept in contact with the policewoman. The policewoman began helping bring supplies to the orphanage. New IDs were issued for the children which made it easier for them to attend the nearby schools. As the policewoman worked with Grace, they became very close friends. Through Grace the policewoman now knew the love of God. Grace had confidence in the covenant. She knew that no matter what the circumstance, God would bless those in her life because she is a conduit of His blessings.

Not only Heirs, but Vessels



In the early days of the Church, Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire due in large part to the extensive Roman road system, which made it easier for Roman armies to move throughout the empire, quashing uprisings quickly. The roads also were crucial to the trade industry. Christians spread throughout Asia Minor in the first centuries partially because of persecution, but also because of economics. Christians mobilized and brought the message of God's reconciliation with them. Some were missionaries intentionally, choosing strategic locations where they would bring the message of reconciliation through Christ to both Jews and Gentiles. More were people relocating to find safer areas to live or better economic conditions. While in Thessaloniki, the Apostle Paul used tentmaking as a means to support his primary vocation of missionary (Acts 18:3). We now refer to "tentmakers" as cross-cultural missionaries who use their trade or skill to find employment so they can earn support or have an acceptable vocation for immigration. Also, many other believers looking for better living opportunities brought the message of the gospel with them as they resettled into foreign cities. Living among non-Christians, these believers had a powerful witness of their faith.

After the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, God's blessing now dwelt within the believer. Each new area a believer moved to, he or she brought the Holy Spirit into that place. Jesus told His disciples in John 14:17 that when they received the Holy Spirit, He would be a helper and would live with them and be in them.

Years ago, I lived across the highway from one of the largest Buddhist temples in Taipei. It is a huge structure built into the side of a mountain with different levels where worshippers walk through and see statues of different gods. In some rooms there are statues of demons torturing people. In other rooms there are areas to burn ghost money to ward off evil spirits. Many people visit the temple seeking out fortune tellers or to offer "bai bai" (prayers to ancestors for luck). They even have temple prostitutes that dance for the gods on flatbed trucks just outside the temple. To get to the beach by the river from my apartment, I could walk down the stairs into the temple and go out the main entrance, but I hated walking through that dark place. My roommate, Priscilla, would walk down the stairs and through each level every time she wanted to go down to the river. I asked her why she did not avoid walking through and just go the long way around. She reminded me that she was a temple of the Holy Spirit. She brought the presence and power of the Holy Spirit into the false temple full of false hope and empty power. She said each time she walked through, the Holy Spirit prompted her to pray for the people sitting at the fortune teller's table or using the joss sticks to make decisions about their future. She helped me understand the literalness of God's covenant to each believer.

“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit,
Ephesians 5:18”

Just as the nations around the Israelites came to know the Holy God of Israel because of the Abrahamic covenant, so too those who you work for and care for will come to know your God.

It does not matter what the vocation may be or what faith your employer may have. As a Christian and as a vessel of the Holy Spirit, you join with early Christians in being a conduit of God's blessings to the people around you. The power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you will be evident and will help you as your life tells the story of God's reconciliation through Jesus.

Section Two - The Power of the Personal Witness

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”
(Acts 1:8)

The Holy Spirit’s power and the personal witness of each follower of Christ were all that were needed to spread Christianity across the Roman Empire in the first centuries of the Church. Christianity expanded in spite of persecution and the scattering of believers across the earth. Each Nazarene OFW is equipped with the same power of the Holy Spirit and the same witness of personal salvation that fueled the growth of the Early Church. Each believer is part of the body of Christ, the Church. The church as witness comes to life for the OFW, especially serving in Islamic countries. As difficult and prohibitive as proclaiming the gospel openly might be, the promise made by Jesus in Acts 1:8 was not intended to be limited to those followers who may have the formal calling of “missionary” or those who do not face persecution. The power we each receive from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in our lives is not meant just for our own benefit. As we read in Section 1, we are heirs of Abraham, conduits of God’s blessings and part of the New Covenant for all people of the earth to know the Holy God of Israel. We are vessels of the Holy Spirit and witnesses to the new covenant.

“
God is at work
drawing people to
Himself.
”

The term “witness” can be intimidating as it seems formal and public, like when people are asked in a church service to give a “witness” of their faith in Christ. However, witness also means something implicit in the life of a follower of Christ. For example, if I

say that I believe that God will take care of my needs but then gamble with my money by playing the lottery in hopes of getting more money quickly, then my “witness” implicitly shows that I believe in the power of luck and the lottery more than God’s power providing for my needs. As a Nazarene OFW in a Muslim home, the Holy Spirit’s power will be evident to all with whom you interact when you are intentional about your implicit witness. God is already at work! He has equipped you to be His witness!

Remember that God’s grace goes before you. As Nazarenes we believe in prevenient grace. This simply means that God is at work drawing people to himself. He prepares our minds and hearts to understand that He exists and that we are in need of Him. When you came to faith in Jesus, it was a work of God’s prevenient grace. Your witness will be confirmed in the mind and heart of your employer and their family their need for God’s grace in their life. The description of prevenient grace by Nazarene theologian and missionary, David Ackerman, helps us. “In each person’s heart there is a place of peace—which very well may be suppressed—but God has been working. When we live out the Gospel in lifestyle evangelism, we give the Gospel bit by bit until they say ‘ah ha!’ Now I get it” (Ackerman, 2019)!

“
In the same way, let
your light shine before
others, that they may
see your good
deeds and glorify your
Father in heaven.
Matthew 5:16
”

Also, remember that the confidence you have in your relationship with God is attractive to those who feel hopeless or hungry for a deeper understanding of God. Every believer can be confident about God’s love for them though you are still learning obedience and dependency on God (Rom. 8:28-29).

“Why do you need candles?”



One of the first lessons missionaries learn is that the people you minister to will read your life in ways that make sense to them. When I worked in Asia as a missionary, a young man would come to my apartment each morning and tutor me in the local language. He was not a Christian but would help me translate my Bible lessons. After tutoring me for several months, we became good friends and spoke freely about the cultural differences between us. One day he said he would like to ask me a personal question. He said he noticed that I had a lot of candles around my apartment, but I wasn't married, and did not have a boyfriend. I waited for him to ask me a question, but that was all he said. Then it occurred to me that in his culture candles were only used for worship at the temple and on their ancestor shelves. The only time he had seen the candles I used was in American movies and TV shows for romantic stories. If I was a Christian and not married nor had a boyfriend, why did I need these candles? It did not make sense unless my actions were not following what the Bible said. My implicit witness was in jeopardy. Because we had a good relationship, though, I could explain that I used the candles because they smelled good and made my apartment feel homier for me.

Spark Questions



Listen to the way your life makes sense to your employer's family. Encourage questions from the children you care for so you can explain the meanings of the things you have or what you do. People do not typically ask questions when they think they already know the answers. For example, if you have a cross or religious statue in your room, it is unlikely that your employer's family will ask you about them since they already believe these are things Christians use to pray to or relate to how we worship

God. Of course, Nazarenes do not pray to statues or crosses but may have them as symbols of their faith. Choose what symbols you have carefully in hopes that they may serve as bridges to explain your faith or give a “witness” about the hope you have in Christ.

Be creative! Leverage holidays such as Christmas and Easter to spark interest in your faith. Many Nazarene OFWs play Christmas music in their Muslim homes around the Christmas holiday. Some can even put up decorations in their room. One Nazarene OFW was asked to move the Christmas tree out of her room and put it into the courtyard for all the family to see. This could serve as a “witness” if she can explain the meaning of the evergreen tree as a symbol of God’s active love in the life of a believer. One suggestion is to have a prayer jar. Each time you feel an answer to a prayer, put a token in the jar. (Tokens can be anything from beans to colored paper squares. Use whatever you have!) When asked about the jar and its contents, explain that these tokens remind you of God’s faithfulness in your life and His personal interest in your concerns.

The Bible and Witness



Dr. Smith,¹⁸ a Nazarene Islamic scholar and professor, suggests that the way you treat your Bible is critical to your witness. Since the Qur’an is seen as the literal words from Allah, the Holy Bible should be seen as the vehicle of the sacred truth of God. It should be placed in a special place and treated with respect. It would not make sense to a Muslim to treat a sacred text of God as one would treat any other book. As a Christian, it is expected that you would have your Bible with you (if permitted). Though Bible apps

¹⁸ Not his real name. Alias used.

on smart phones may prove more convenient, Dr. Smith suggests that having a physical Bible with you adds to the weight of your witness. One OFW told the story of how the grandson of her employer saw her Bible in her room and asked to borrow it for one month. When he returned it to her, he commented on how lucky she is to know the God she serves.

It may be surprising, but, when surveyed, some of the items Filipina workers in Muslim countries wished they had brought with them were Christmas and birthday cards with Bible verses, Christian music, Christian movies and videos like “VeggieTales” for children.

Woman to Woman - A Special Opportunity for Witness



An amazing opportunity of witness for the OFW in more traditional Islamic homes lies between the female employer, her children and the Nazarene OFW. Segregation for women in traditional Islamic countries restricts the activities for women so they are isolated from men in public places like schools, jobs, hospitals, and government buildings. Because women spend much time together, opportunities for woman-to-woman witness abound. There is simply an intimacy of one woman inviting another woman to live in her home, care for the elderly parents and children, and prepare meals appropriate to religious beliefs. Jenny, a Nazarene OFW who worked for a Muslim family in Kuwait from 2010 to 2014, spoke of how much she enjoyed living and working for this family: “The family was very good to me. The mother treated me as part of the family. If I get sick, they bring me to the doctor. They were very concern about me and

“

In order for your witness to make sense to your female employer, daily practices of your faith should be visible.

”

my family. They were very protective, made sure that I was safe during my day off. In return I did my very best to be a very good helper for them.” This not only shows the hospitality of the culture but a deeper level of trust and acceptance of the OFW.

Women are mainly concerned with how social problems touch their families, relationships, and the daily care of their families. With these shared felt needs and advantages in gender and cultural values, there awaits a great opportunity for you, as a Christian, to live the witness of redemption and hope among your employer and Muslim members of the household where you serve. Because a domestic helper’s duties directly relate to family life, you have the rare occasion of influence in a way an outsider could not understand. In other words, you have the power to treat the family you serve the same way you would influence your family in the Philippines by taking care of their needs, protecting them, disciplining and encouraging them and loving them. This is a profound witness of your faith.

Sarah Mullin served as a missionary to Muslim women and writes in her article, “Reaching non-Arabic Speaking, Urban, Less-Educated Muslim Women,” She writes, “Polygamy, arranged marriages, high divorce rates, male absences, and household responsibilities all shape women’s views of reality in a unique way” (Mullin 2005, 79). Though you may not face these specific issues, your reality has also been shaped by your responsibilities (i.e., moving to a distant country to provide for your family), and you can empathetically share in the struggles of the Muslim family you serve as a witness of God’s love for them.

Because many Middle Eastern Muslim women do not attend the daily prayers at the Mosque, much of their understanding of the Qur’an is transmitted implicitly in daily

interactions in community life and through their husbands, sons and brothers, especially if they are uneducated. Though, as an OFW, you understand your place as a servant in a hierarchical culture, the advantage of being personally knowledgeable about your Christian faith through your own reading and understanding of Scripture would be a powerful witness to a Muslim woman.

On the other hand, it may seem puzzling to a Muslim wife and mother, whose household's daily life is constantly touched by the practices of Islam, that her Christian OFW employee does not seem to have any daily concrete practices of her Christian faith. In order for your witness to make sense to your female employer, daily practices of your faith should be visible. As a Christian, though you feel confident in your relationship and understanding of the power and authority of Jesus Christ, it can benefit the witness of your faith to be mindful in seeking areas of your life where you could overtly "practice" this relationship.

Section Three: Information about Islam and Areas to Build Bridges of Conversation

Please first understand that one cannot truly comprehend any religion by reading a few pages about its basic beliefs. Dr. Smith is a Nazarene scholar on the Islamic faith and strongly suggests that a Nazarene OFW working in a Muslim household read as much as possible and attend an orientation to Islam from one of the regional offices. With the help of Dr. Smith, and also Dr. Robert McCrowsky, a Nazarene professor who has served in a Muslim country teaching Muslim-born believers about the Bible for over twenty years, this section describes the basic tenets of the Islamic faith and key topics that may help with discussions and questions. The information is meant to help you understand the context when your employer speaks about faith, God, Jesus and Christianity.

What should a Nazarene OFW know about Islam?



First, the word “Islam” means peace. It comes from the root word *salam* but also means submission or surrender. The word “Muslim” means one who submits or surrenders to the law of Allah (Dr. Smith 2019).

Islam began with Muhammad who was born in 570 CE in the Arabian city of Mecca. (Muhammad’s name means “praiseworthy.”) Mecca was a city of Jews, Christians, and other animistic-polytheistic faiths. Many of these faiths influenced the way Muhammad thought about a Creator, petitions of prayer, power, sin, and discipline. His parents died while he was still a small child, and he was raised by various relatives who had differing faiths. As an adult, Muhammad often went to a cave on Mount Hira to be alone and meditate. Muslims believe that Muhammad was visited by the angel Gabriel and given revelations about God. The Arabic word for “God” is Allah. It is the same

word used in the Arabic world for the God of the Bible. These revelations became the Qur'an. Muhammad is viewed by Muslims as a great prophet. He is called "the Seal of the Prophets." Muslims believe that Muhammad was the last and final prophet sent by Allah and emphasize the finality and supremacy of Muhammad's prophethood (McCroskey 2017, 20).

The Qur'an is a book that compiles the revelations of the angel Gabriel to Muhammad about Allah, given in several stages over a period of twenty-three years. This book is the foundation of Islamic belief. The central theme of the Qur'an is that Allah is the only god and all of humankind should submit to Allah (McCroskey 2017, 20).

How are the Qur'an and the Holy Bible different?



Muslims believe the Qur'an holds the exact words spoken by Gabriel, not merely ideas expressed by Muhammad. It is divided into thirty almost equally sized parts. Each part is called *Juzaa*. Each *Juzaa* is subdivided into two almost equally sized subparts called *Hezb*. A chapter is called a *Surat*. Muhammad believed that the Jewish and Christian faiths had been corrupted and that the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures (the Torah and the Bible) were tainted and could not be trusted. (McCroskey 2017, 44) As with the Bible, the Qur'an is translated into many languages. The original Arabic is viewed as the most reliable, even though many of the words are from ancient Arabic, no longer used. This creates some differences in interpretation that Muslim scholars continue to debate. (This is very similar to Christian theologians).

Muslims believe that the Qur'an carries the exact words from Allah. Therefore, the book needs to be cherished, with no markings or folds. Other books are not set on top of it and it isn't handled carelessly (Dr. Smith 2019).

Because Muhammad believed that the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures were tainted and not the exact words from God, Muslims reject the Holy Bible. Though many of the people in the Old Testament are also written about in the Qur'an, they differ in many aspects. For example, the story of Abraham found in the Old Testament is central to the identity of God's relationship with humankind in Judaism and Christianity. In the Qur'an, Abraham is a righteous prophet who understood that there is only one true Allah. Abraham's youth is mentioned, saying that he was righteous when he smashed the idols of his father. In addition, in the Qur'an Abraham is asked by Allah to sacrifice his son but it doesn't say it was Isaac. Many Muslims interpret it to mean that it was Abraham's son Ishmael and believe that Muhammad is a direct descendent of Ishmael. Another example is the difference between the Qur'an and the Bible in describing the role of Moses. Moses is an important prophet in the Qur'an. As in the Old Testament, he receives the Torah (the Law) from Allah. However, in the Qur'an, Muhammad meets Moses when he ascends into the seven heavens. Muslims believe that the life of Moses and the life of Muhammad are very similar (McCroskey 2017, 75).

What does the Qur'an say about Jesus?



The Qur'an uses the Arabic word *Isa* to speak about the Jesus of the New Testament. The Qur'an honors Isa as a prophet and also honors His virgin birth, but Isa is never referred to as the Son of Allah in the Qur'an. Muslims reject the Father-Son relationship between Isa and Allah, as this implies that Mary had sexual intercourse with Allah. They also reject the Christian belief that Isa has both a divine and human nature (both God and man). Muslims believe that Isa led a sinless life, performed miracles, and even spoke as an infant declaring himself to be a prophet of Allah. His name is revered

and, each time it is said, it should be followed with the phrase “and peace be upon him.” Islam believes that Isa was hated but was faithful to Allah. He was not crucified but ascended into heaven similar to the way that Elijah did in the Old Testament (McCroskey 2017, 72). In the Qur’an Isa also foretells of Muhammad’s coming as a prophet. Here is one of the main sections of the Qur’an that speaks about Isa:

IV, 154-157.—Because of their unbelief and their speaking great slander against Mary, and their saying, “Verily we have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, God’s apostle.” But they did not kill him, and they did not crucify him, but one was made to appear to them like him. And verily those who disagreed about him are in doubt regarding him; they have no knowledge of him but the following of opinion, and they did not really kill him. On the contrary, God raised him to Himself; and God is mighty and wise. And there shall not be any of the people of the Book who will not believe in him before his death; and on the Day of Resurrection he will be a witness against them. (The Qur’an IV, 154-157)

According to Islam, what is the purpose of our lives?



Muhammad taught that the ultimate human virtue is submission. Each person on earth should live in total submission to Allah’s will. Muslims believe that everything that happens to each of us is because of the will of Allah. It is important to have an attitude of submission. You may hear people say in English or in Arabic, “Whatever Allah wills” in both good and bad circumstances. Submission to Allah through the teachings of the Qur’an is the essential role of a faithful Muslim (Dr. Smith, 2019).

How does a Muslim practice a life of submission?



Muslims practice the **Five Pillars of Faith** to show their submission to Allah’s will. If we examine these pillars, we find similar practices in our Christian faith and may create bridges to communicate the hope we have found in Jesus Christ.

The first pillar is called the *Shahada*. It is the confession of faith each Muslim must recite: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger.” This statement of submission to Allah has the same value to a Muslim as Christians confessing “Jesus is Lord” as our core faith in Jesus Christ. As a household employee, you may be asked to recite *Shahada*. Some employers are quite diligent in wanting their employees to recite this statement to show that even though you may hold a Christian faith, ultimately you understand that the Islamic faith is the truth (McCroskey 2017, 52-59).

“
Jesus is Lord
”

A Cautionary Story about the Shahada:

†

Mary served as a domestic helper in Saudi Arabia. Her employer often spoke to Mary about the teachings in the Qur’an. As with many OFWs, Mary was quiet and never contradicted her employer. Her employer began to teach her different sayings in Arabic from the Qur’an. She did not understand exactly what the words meant but thought it was okay to recite them because her employer told her the words praised Allah. Her employer and all of the family traveled to Mecca and brought Mary along to care for the children. When they entered the Mosque in the holy city, the wife of the employer took Mary into the cleansing room and then into the area where women pray and told her to recite the phrases she had learned. Mary knelt down and prayed but told me that she never said the words out loud but told her employer she had. After they returned back to their home, the employer told Mary she was now a Muslim.

The phrase Mary had learned was the *Shahada*. There may be times when it seems that the most respectful, peaceful course of action is to recite this phrase, but it is also important to understand that this goes against the witness of your Christian faith. Dr.

Smith suggests using a different phrase to ease the pressure from the employer and also maintain the open relationship and dialogue about faith. Because Muslims believe that every breath taken is predetermined by Allah's will, even those that do not believe are still acting out of Allah's will. When asked to learn and recite the *Shahada*, it is acceptable to use the phrase, "Allah has not shown me the path to Muhammad yet," as it does not directly challenge or offend your employer. The phrase also begins to build a bridge between the two faiths. Dr. Smith cautions not to say that Muhammad is wrong. He says to keep the emphasis on the positive, speaking about the similar, so that the bridge of conversation will eventually move to the gospel story. As Christians, we believe that Isa (Jesus) is the way, the truth, and the life. Knowing that Muslims believe in Isa, you may also pray about when to share that Allah has shown you in the gospel that Isa is the way.

* *Conversation Bridge idea*: Dr. Smith suggests allowing the Muslim to tell you about Isa in the Qur'an and then tell them what the New Testament says while pointing out bridges that Muhammad is dead, but all Muslims believe that Isa will return and will defeat the antichrist, and live out his natural life and be buried with Muhamad. Muslims believe that Isa ascended into heaven but wasn't crucified because there was no way Allah would allow His prophet to be so humiliated. You, as a Christian, can emphasize God's love for us in that He took on a human form and died such a shameful death to take away the shame of our sins and rose from the dead, so we have the assurance of eternal life.

The Second Pillar of Islam is called *Salat*. Salat are the obligatory prayers offered five times a day. The prayers ideally are to be said in community at a mosque before dawn, at noon, in late afternoon, at sunset and after dark (McCroskey 2017, 54).

Typically, a bell sounds from the mosque, calling men to come and pray, but prayers can be said in any location. It is important that one washes the hands and face with water (or sand if water is unavailable) to be cleansed before praying (McCroskey 2017, 54). The word “mosque” means place of prostration. To pray, Muslims must remove their shoes and be prostrate, kneeling while bowing the face all the way to the ground with arms in front. Women wash themselves and pray in a separate section in the mosque. When you pray (see section 8), please think about the way Muslims prepare for prayer. As Christians, we know that God hears us always and wants us to come to Him like children coming to their daddy for help. Muslims do not have this understanding of Allah. Being respectful of their prayer time, their cleansing rituals and their prayer posture, while showing the freedom of the personal relationship you have with God as you pray, will build a bridge.

The Third Pillar is *Zakat*, the concept of charitable giving. Just as Christians submit to God and give part of their income to the church (tithe), Muslims are encouraged to show submission by giving 2.5 percent of their net income each year (McCroskey 2017, 57). Though it is voluntary in most countries, in some Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, it is collected by the government. A way to show your personal relationship with God and trust in His provisions for you and your family is to make your employer aware that you also give to charities through your church.

The Fourth Pillar is *Sawm*, the annual fast. Except for those who are ill or who work in extreme laborious jobs, all faithful Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan. The fast begins with the first sighting of the sun at dawn of the beginning of the month of

Ramadan. During daylight hours, one must refrain from eating. When dusk comes, the community comes together to break the fast (McCroskey 2017, 58). In the Christian faith, we do not have the same required spiritual discipline of fasting to show submission to God. We do have the period of Lent between Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, during which some Christians choose to fast. Nazarenes are encouraged to use the time of Lent to meditate and reflect on Jesus's life, death and resurrection. Just as Jesus fasted for forty days before He began His ministry, the Lenten season calls Christians to set aside these days to grow closer to Christ. Celebrating Lent either by fasting or by extra giving as a demonstration of your belief in Christ will serve as a bridge to your employer.

The Fifth Pillar is *Hajj*, the pilgrimage that all Muslims should try to make to Mecca (Muhammad's birthplace) once in their life. You may be asked to go with your employer to Mecca. Showing respect for their prophet, Muhammad, by honoring this important pilgrimage will build trust and authenticity (McCroskey 2017, 59).

Is the Allah of the Qur'an Different from the God of the Holy Bible?



Dr. Robert McCrowsky (2017, 64) writes that the character of Allah in the Qur'an mirrors the character of God in the Bible. Christians and Muslims agree that God is the Creator of all things and is greater than creation. Both believe He has a will or plan for humanity. Furthermore, both faiths believe we can know God through His revealed Word and through humanity's ability to sense right and wrong (conscience). For a Muslim, the attribute of a loving God is unknowable and unimportant. It is more important to know Allah's will. The most important characteristic of Allah for a Muslim is that Allah has a will, and it is the duty of humanity to submit to that will.

For Christians, the most important characteristic of God is His love for His creation. This love implies a very personal, relational God. The Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) relationship is a relationship of love. (St. Augustine’s definition of the Trinity helps us understand: God the Father is like the lover, God the Son is like the beloved, God the Spirit is like the love that binds the lover and the beloved together.)

Do Muslims Believe in Original Sin?



In the Christian faith, we believe that humanity is born in the image of God, but through Adam, sin was brought into the nature of humanity as well. A Christian, then, would say that humanity’s nature is good but also depraved. Because of Adam, we are all born with “original sin” in us. Since it is part of our nature, we need to be saved from it outside of ourselves. In Islam, Adam and Eve didn’t so much sin as make a mistake. They thought they were doing good, but they were wrong and repented. God forgave them and there was no punishment. Humans are not born with “original sin.” Everyone is born pure, and their nature is to do good. Sin happens when people forget to do good and do not submit to Allah’s will. It is a person’s own responsibility to realize his or her forgetfulness, repent, and submit to Allah’s will again (McCroskey 2017, 77). There is no need for a savior. Salvation will come through submission, recognized on judgment day by Allah.

Christians know that even when we try to do good, we fail. Even the Apostle Paul writes in Romans 7:18 that he has the desire to do what is good but cannot carry it out. Our hope does not come from knowing God’s Law, since we are incapable of keeping it, but rather in the grace and forgiveness we receive in Jesus Christ.

* *Conversation bridge idea:* When an incident happens when a member of the family is hurt by someone's words or actions, a conversation bridge about the assurance of Isa's love and forgiveness for you when you have hurt someone gives you courage to ask for forgiveness and also helps you forgive others when they have harmed you.

Do Muslims Believe There will be a Final Day of Judgment? Who will go to Heaven?



Muslims believe that after they die, they stay in the grave until the day of judgment, called *Yawm al-din* in Arabic. On judgment day, Allah will review each person's actions on earth. He will weigh the good and bad actions and determine the fate of an individual. If that person's actions have mostly been good, then they will ascend to paradise for eternity (Dr. Smith 2019). Paradise is similar to the Christian understanding of Heaven where there is no sorrow or suffering. Those whose actions have been against the will of Allah will descend to hell for eternity where there is great suffering. They will not know their fate until judgment day.

As Nazarene Christians, we believe that God does not judge us on our good and bad works, but rather on our faith in Jesus Christ. Since He paid the price for our sins, we have assurance that we live now in communion with God that will continue for all of eternity. Good works are the result of the communion we live in each day. We want to show God's love and be instruments of His grace to others.

Why is it so Important to Follow the Religious Laws of Islam?



In Islam, ideally there is no separation of civic and religious law. In some of the Islamic countries where you are employed, to break the law means you have broken not

just the law of the government but also Allah's commands (Dr. Smith 2019). The penalties, therefore, may seem quite extreme. As a Christian, be sure to follow the laws of the country where you serve as far as it aligns with your relationship with Christ. Be respectful of the law, even minor rules, to reveal your understanding of following obedience.

**I have worked for a Sunni family and now I work for a Shi'ite family.
What is the difference between Sunnis and Shi'ite Muslims?**



The two main sects of Islam are Sunnis and Shi'ites. The division was caused when there was a struggle for power after Muhammad's death. Sunnis believe that Abu Bakr, the father of Muhammad's wife was the rightful successor, but Shi'ites (or Shias) believed that Muhammad divinely ordained his cousin and son-in-law Ali. By population, there are more Sunnis today than Shi'ites. They are found in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Shi'ites are mostly located in Middle Eastern countries. Doctrinally, they are the same. They both believe in Muhammad, the Qur'an and the Five Pillars of Islam. Where they differ is in the understanding and application of Islamic law. It is more a political division than a doctrinal one but, as stated earlier, there is no separation between civic and religious law in Islam (McCroskey 2017, 35).

Some other helpful vocabulary about Islam:



The **Hadith** is a supplementary book to the Qur'an that contains sayings and stories about Muhammad. It is a revered book with moral guidance for the Muslim but does not have the same sacredness as the Qur'an. If your employer quotes from the Hadith, it is a good opportunity to speak about morality and the moral codes of Christianity as well (McCroskey 2017, 45).

Imams are spiritual teachers who instruct Muslim communities about the teachings of Muhammad. They are encouraged to live normal lives with the people of their communities. They have similar duties to Christian ministers like presiding over marriages and leading prayers (Dr. Smith 2019).

The belief in **jinn** (genies) and spirits is part of the mystical side of Islam. In Islamic theology, jinn are said to be creatures with free will, made from smokeless fire by Allah as humans were made of clay. They are believed to have roamed the earth before the creation of humankind. They are neither good nor evil. They are not angels in the way Christians understand the concept of angels. Many superstitions surround the powers of jinn. Similar to animistic beliefs, some Muslims try to ward off the power of jinn through amulets and curses (Dr. Smith 2019).

Halal is the term for dietary laws in Islam. The word actually means “permissible.” All faithful Muslims must follow Halal in accordance with Islamic law. You will be given serious instructions by your employer about preparation of foods and the keeping of the house according to halal. A way to show your respect for the family is to follow these instructions and also to eat the foods of the household (Dr. Smith 2019).

**Is it possible to show respect for my Muslim
employer but also okay to say “no?”**



Filipinas do not want to contradict their employer or make the family where they serve feel uncomfortable. This is a very admirable quality as it shows submission and harmony. As an OFW, you would not want to jeopardize your employment or disrespect the family’s faith. There may be times when you will need to say no to practices that might affect the witness of your relationship with Christ. It is difficult to anticipate what

these practices might be or when they might occur. Some OFWs have stated that the only times they had to take a stand for their Christian faith was when they were asked to convert to Islam or asked to do something immoral sexually (which goes against the Islamic faith as well).

Dr. Smith also cautions that when speaking about Islam to your employer, other helpers, friends or even family members in the Philippines, it is important not to criticize the Muslim faith by saying negative things about Muslims. As a demonstration of your relationship with Jesus Christ, being respectful and patient will encourage the people around you to believe that you are sincere and genuinely care about their spiritual development.

How do I then share my Christian faith with my employer?



Fouad Elias Accad wrote about building bridges between Christians and Muslims without being offensive or argumentative. He gives seven principles to use with your employer and their family once you have developed a foundation of trust with them. Using these seven talking points will help you show the doctrine of the Christian belief.

1. God has a purpose for our lives.
2. Sin separates us from God.
3. We can't save ourselves.
4. The Cross is the bridge to life.
5. God's provision is a person, Christ the Lord.
6. Accepting Christ and making Him ours.
7. What to expect when we accept God's gift. (Accad 1997)

These may seem simplistic, but God can use the testimony of your experience in receiving salvation through Jesus Christ to show the hope you have and the love you experience each day in your relationship with your Heavenly Father.

Section Four: The Greatest Conversation: Prayer Changes Everything!

Christians often speak about the power of prayer. Prayer to a Christian is not just submission to God but opening up communication and sharing every part of our lives with our Creator and Savior. As a follower of Christ, prayer is the lifeline to the source of your power. As an OFW, many times you may feel powerless, as if you surrender daily control of your life to your employer. From the time you awake, most of the activities of your day are to serve other people. The women I interviewed for this handbook all spoke about the importance of prayer in their lives. Many told stories about how their employers were touched by the prayers they would pray for the children or for the sick in the household where they serve. If each of us, as followers of Jesus Christ, are conduits of God's power, then this power connection is through prayer. Dr. Mark Louw, the regional director of Asia Pacific, recommends that not only do we live our lives in constant prayer, but that we let others see that we are praying (Louw 2019). When people around us know that we spend time in prayer, then they will come to us when they are needing intercession in their lives. One of my brothers is an atheist. He had an accident with a saw and cut off his finger and thumb. In the hospital, before his surgery, I told him I was praying for him. Instead of rejecting my prayer, he was very grateful because he realized he was powerless and had hope in power outside of human efforts.

“
When people around us know that we spend time in prayer, then they will come to us when they are needing intercession in their lives.”

Valerie worked in a large household in Oman. The grandmother of the house became ill. When taken to the hospital, the nurse accidentally gave the grandmother the

wrong medication. Valerie was in the hospital room taking care of the grandmother.

Valerie said,

I think she knows she was going to die at that time. So, she clutched me there (on her arm) very tight, and she asked me to pray for her. It is so sad. But even the last moment of her life she asked for prayer. And I was there to witness it. So, from that night I felt to myself the Lord, what is it exactly you want me to do? Why did she ask me? It is so scary. You see a person dying. From then on, I started to think the difference between the Muslim and the Christian. Now I know. We have an intimate relationship with God. We can ask him every time everything. But you know even when you are in a bad situation. You still have that prayer in the condition to yourself you can ask God anytime and people you can also help other people to be close to him.

Deanne served in Kuwait for four years as a houseworker. She loved to draw and drew a picture of praying hands to put next to her bedside table. It helped her remember not only to pray, but as she focused on the picture, she thought about God's hands caring for her family back home and His caring hands watching over her as she worked. She thought about the children she was watching over and each day asked God to use her hands to care for them.

Prayers for your employer and their family are vehicles for God to show His genuine love and grace. Knowing that Muslims are diligent in their prayers and respect prayer time can be an entry point to God's work in their lives. While Angela lived in a Muslim home as a nanny, she shared her bedroom with one of the employer's children. She tells a wonderful story of how she used her prayer life as a bridge to speak about her relationship with Christ:

Every night I kneel down and pray. And the little girl observed me. One night we are praying together, and we are like that (shows hands in praying position) and I said thank you Jesus. 'Who is Jesus?' Jesus is the creator of all humans. 'Oh, can I see him?' No, we cannot see him, but we can feel him. 'But how?' Because the kids always asking like this when you pray, we can feel him. And at that night we are kneeling down together like that and then suddenly my boss he opened the door and I can't stop because we are in the middle of praying. I think he respect

us at that time because they are Muslim, but they let me to pray with their daughter. So, I just pray like that I ask God that he let us have a connection through praying and then after that he came to our room again. So, I think that because my sir is very strict it seems like he never stopped me from praying with her like that.

We, as Christians, can show God's love in the way that we pray for the employers.

Writing out prayers in a prayer journal, and when the time is right, revealing the prayer to your employer will show that God has been at work in their life. In some households you might be able to display prayers. Dr. Smith suggests that the Lord's Prayer and the prayer of St. Francis are good choices to hang up in your room. The Lord's Prayer reveals our God as Father, provider, redeemer and also our need to both submit and forgive. The prayer of St. Francis speaks about being an instrument of God's peace. It is the prayer of a servant.

The Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 where there is injury, pardon;
 where there is doubt, faith;
 where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light;
 where there is sadness, joy;
 O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
 to be understood as to understand;
 to be loved as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive;
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Kabagis - a true prayer partner!



Knowing that your home church, friends, and family are praying for you is another way that the practice of prayer empowers an OFW for her witness to her employer. Many people in your life may be praying for you. Pastor Jackson Natividad, pastor of the River of Life Church of the Nazarene in Manila, recommends that each of our Nazarene OFWs has a “Kabagis” who will pray earnestly each day for your influence through your employment, your well-being and for your family in the Philippines. As Pastor Natividad explains, Kabagis in Ilokano (“Kapatid” in Tagalog) means an adopted sister or brother in the faith who is linked into you like two vines grafted together. If separated, the vines do not draw the nutrients necessary to survive. As Jesus spoke about in John 15:1-4, when we believe in Christ, we are grafted into Him as He is the True Vine. But we are not alone. Other believers are branches in the vine too! When we pray for each other, we share in the intimacy of our relationship with Christ in each other’s lives and the joy when the branches bear fruit! Find a Kabagis who will diligently pray for you each day, share in your successful influence, and carry your burdens when you feel overwhelmed and lonely.

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.
John 15:4”

When I lived in a creative access country, I was not physically close to many of my co-missionaries who worked in other cities. We sincerely cared for one another and wanted to spend time praying for each other, but, for security reasons, it was not convenient or feasible to spend time on the phone or internet in prayer. We came up with a way each week for all of us to be praying at the same time for our concerns and influence. Every Monday morning at 7:00 AM we would sign on to our Skype accounts

and 'ping' each other. That 'ping' noise on the computer signaled us to begin to pray for each other for thirty minutes. At 7:30 AM we would all sign off. Though we could not verbally speak our prayers, the comfort and love I felt from these friends sustained me and encouraged me to continue the responsibilities God had planned for me. As you think about your Kabagis, in your own context, you might have a similar method of signaling a prayer time together. As Muslims hear the bell from the local mosque signaling them to prayer, using an alarm on your phone, clock or computer to begin your prayer time with your Kabagis may also be a witness to your employer of your prayer life and support system in your faith.

Section Five: Being disciplined as you are empowered to disciple others

“Can I really grow in my faith when I cannot go anywhere to worship because I work so much?”

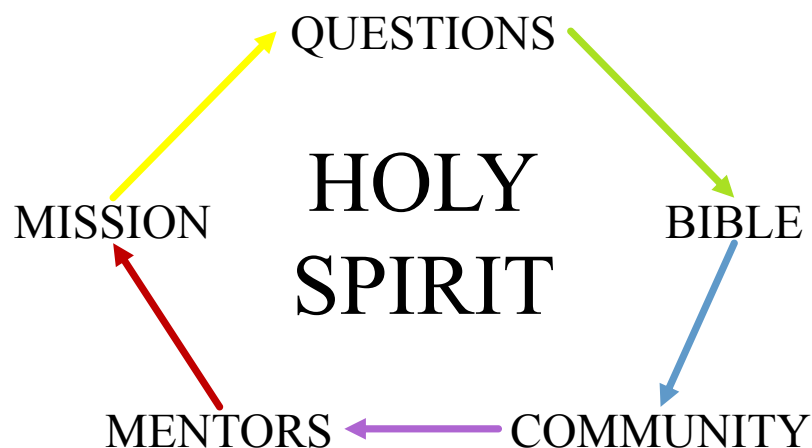
“What if my work schedule does not provide me with any time for my own personal Bible study?”

“What if I am asked questions about Christianity and I do not know the answers?”

“I’m not a pastor, so how can I disciple a new Christian?”

Can you relate to these questions asked by other OFWs? These questions are also asked by Christians all over the world who have tight work schedules or feel inadequate to share their faith with non-believers, let alone Muslims.

As impossible as it may seem to find time to grow in your faith, it is the will of God that you do so! He wants each believer to be disciplined (John 15:4). The Church of the Nazarene believes that each Christian lives in a dynamic relationship with Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and lived out in holiness within community.



The Emmaus Model (Allder and Ackerman 2019, 28)

Dr. Ackerman and Dr. Alder, Nazarene theological professors, write in their book, *The Emmaus Model*,

As missional people, focused on the mission of becoming like Christ, we must go into the world with the hope of the gospel. Rather than feeling intimidated by the huge task before us, we can approach the mission with conviction that comes from knowing the Good News....All believers can be trained to be disciple makers because God has given them gifts and what they need for the mission. (Alder and Ackerman 2015, 15)

May their encouragement echo the Holy Spirit's voice and help you draw your courage and confidence from God who continues to equip you to be a witness of the Good News..

The Key to Discipleship: Finding the Right Mentor



Discipleship is relational. Dr. Ackerman and Dr. Alder write that we have been created by a relational God to be relational beings (Alder and Ackerman 2015, 18).

Being a disciple starts as we enter into a relationship with God, with God's Church, and with God's world. We cannot be an effective disciple of Christ in isolation. Even though our faith is personal, it is also communal because we are all members of the body of Christ. Discipleship is continuous and has no stopping place.

Before a follower of Christ is able to make disciples, that person must first be sure he or she is disciplined. All Christians, no matter how long they have been believers in Jesus, are in a constant state of transformation into the image of Christ. We do not stumble into Christian maturity. It is intentional. In the Church of the Nazarene, we follow the teachings of John Wesley, an eighteenth-century English theologian, who believed that we grow in our faith through "means of grace." These "means of grace" include the daily study of God's word, prayer, fasting, fellowship with other believers,

and the observance of the Lord's Supper. All of us need to be disciplined as we practice our faith through the "means of grace." It may not be easy to find a group of believers to meet with or even to find time in your schedule for such a meeting. If you can find a Bible study or worship service in the community where you work, then it is crucial to your spiritual formation to attend whenever your work schedule permits. Many OFWs find places they can study the Bible with other Filipinos in their work communities. Nazarene OFW churches have formed in Hong Kong, on sea freighters and even in Muslim countries where they find places to meet for Bible studies and fellowship. Valerie, who served in Oman, met Friday afternoons during Ramadan with other Christian employees in her community to study the Bible together. She said this Bible study renewed her lapsing faith and restored her love for God's Word.

Though it may seem impossible to be in community with other believers, we live in an age of social media where OFWs have ways to communicate with friends and families across the world. This also helps people stay connected to the local church in the Philippines. The Filipino Nazarene pastors interviewed for this handbook strongly recommend that each OFW be mentored by a strong believer either from their local church in the Philippines or by a pastor in the country where they are serving. Dr. Jason Hallig, pastor of the International Nazarene Fellowship at Asia Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, believes that we all need a mentor to mold us as disciples of Christ in three main areas: spiritual formation, character formation, and ministry formation. Dr. Ackerman and Dr. Allder (Allder and Ackerman 2015, 19) write that each of us needs to be disciplined so that we grow in our walk with God in "being," "doing" and "knowing." If you already have a mentor who you trust to guide you in your Christian

walk, then you are blessed! If you do not, then you may be able to find the right match through your local pastor.

Here are a few guidelines to look for in a spiritual mentor:

- Someone who has been a Christian longer than you.
- Someone who regularly studies and understands Scripture as well as the importance of relational evangelism in your context.
- Someone who is regularly available to counsel.
- Someone who understands your unique working context and the importance of being sensitive to security issues.

You may also view it as important to find a mentor with a similar background. If you are a wife and/or mother living away from your husband and children, then finding a mentor who understands these family dynamics would be important. Your mentor does not have to be female, but it might be a better option, if possible, as you will want to be transparent in the challenges of your own character formation. In the interviews of OFWs for this handbook, many relayed stories of physical or mental abuse. Having a mentor to affirm, encourage, and guide you during such times will allow the Holy Spirit to use this mentor as a vessel of love and empowerment.

Michelle, an OFW who served as a domestic helper in Hong Kong, found a mentor at the Nazarene OFW church. Michelle said she had “run away” from God and her strict religious upbringing and found work as an OFW. Because of loneliness and the need for an OFW community, she began attending the Nazarene OFW church and found a strong mentor in Rev. Elma Mago. Michelle said Rev. Mago was able to disciple her according to her special circumstances and situation. She said, “It was like, as my question arise, she will answer like, I ask why the altar needs to be covered after service, she explained about Old Testament holiness. I ask why there is orderliness in the way she ask me to clean the church. I ask how she became a pastor, how to say no to sin. I asked a

lot of questions and she answers them one by one patiently.” As Michelle grew in her faith, her mentor patiently guided her into a stronger, deeper reliance on Christ. Today Michelle is co-pastoring a Nazarene church with her husband in Manila and working to support other OFWs in their faith.

You are the right mentor for someone!



As you are being mentored, it is not surprising that you will be used by God to mentor other new believers. In your context, perhaps your employer or members of the household or staff will look to you to guide them in their Christian faith. Being a mentor, though a great responsibility, does not have to be intimidating. We are not doing it alone! As we rely more and more on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our counsel as mentors becomes infused with the power of God.

Start with the grand story, The Holy Bible



One general method to guide a new believer in understanding scripture is to talk about the Bible as the “grand story.” This quote from pastoral theologian, C. Gerkin, helps when describing the purpose of the Bible, “The Bible is the story of God. The story of the world is first and foremost the story of God’s activity in creating, sustaining, and redeeming the world to fulfill God’s purposes for it. ... Most important, the Bible contains the story of God’s discloser and redemptive activity in the coming of Jesus.” (Gerkin 1997, 85)

A simple outline of the grand story might be helpful when introducing the Bible as a whole.

- The Pattern of the Kingdom (Genesis 1-2)
- The Perished Kingdom (Genesis 3-9)

- The Promised Kingdom Abraham (Genesis 15)
- The Partial Kingdom Moses - David (Exodus - 1 Samuel)
- The Partial Kingdom David (2 Samuel - Ecclesiastes)
- The Prophesied Kingdom (Isaiah - Malachi)
- The Present Kingdom (Matthew - John)
- The proclaimed Kingdom (Acts - Jude)
- The Perfected Kingdom (Revelation)

A new believer needs to be guided by Scripture. As their mentor, ask them to begin reading the Bible every day and then bringing their questions to you. When a person believes in Christ, they can feel lost as to where to begin reading in the Bible. Many begin in Genesis since that is the first book. The Church of the Nazarene recommends that a new believer begin reading the Gospel of John. A Muslim-background believer will need to understand the incarnation of Christ. The Gospel of John begins by explaining that Jesus was fully God and fully man. Be sure to introduce the entire Bible as the inspired Word of God containing all things necessary for our salvation. Explain that, though the Old Testament was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, Christians still spend time studying it as if it were written to each believer, claiming the promises and gaining wisdom in understanding the holiness of God and the need for Christ's sacrifice. In cultures where Christianity is restricted or forbidden, reading from the Psalms will strengthen faith especially when a person faces hardship and persecution.

As each question is raised, do not forget that you have resources to turn to that can help answer these questions. Do not feel you need to answer every question immediately; explain to your disciple that you, too, are being discipled and can ask your mentor to help you search for the answers. Spend time in prayer asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit when you are unsure.

New Christian believers from Muslim backgrounds will face circumstances that most new Christians in non-Muslim countries will never encounter. Muslim-background believers potentially face rejection from their own families and communities along with confusion on the practices of Christianity in relation to their home culture. It is good to be familiar with cultural issues so that you can give proper counsel as to what is “cultural” and what is “biblical.”

One cultural concept that Filipinos and many Muslim cultures share is the understanding of God’s almighty power. In the Muslim faith, viewing hardships as Allah’s displeasure and punishment, and then prosperity as Allah’s favor sometimes carries over into the Christian faith. A new believer needs the assurance of God’s almighty love beyond current sufferings. As with Filipino culture, many Middle Eastern cultures view present circumstances as signs of God’s favor or punishment. If a Muslim-background believer suddenly faces hardship or persecution, they may interpret it to mean that God is punishing them for changing their faith. Assuring the new believer that God’s very nature is loving and does not seek evil for His children remains crucial. His thoughts are good toward us and for our benefit. It is important to reassure anyone you disciple that in the Bible several Scriptures point to God’s companionship and faithfulness despite our current sufferings (Josh. 1:9; Ps. 27:1; Isa. 41:10; Matt. 5:10; 6:29; 28:20; Rom. 8:18-31; 38-39; Phil. 3:8-10). It is important to live your life as a witness of these verses. In an interview, Dr. Melba Maggay, Filipina anthropologist and theologian, said that the devastating 1991 earthquake in the Philippines was interpreted by many Filipino Christians as God’s disfavor with the country (Maggay 2013). This is not correct theology. This concept of God’s wrath does not bear witness to His

unconditional love, patience, and mercy. As you grow in your understanding of the love of God, be sure to emphasize that God's favor ultimately lies in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He paid all of our debts. We live in a world where original sin has tainted both humanity's nature and creation. The consequences cause all of us, believer or non-believer, to fall victim. Yet, we do not despair! Nothing will take away the assurance of God's faithfulness, love, and gift of eternal life.

It can be appropriate to share our own experiences when our circumstances were not what we would have chosen but God used them for our own spiritual and character formation. Earlier, I shared about my atheist brother cutting off his finger and thumb in an accident. My mother interpreted this accident as God's anger against her. When I was a child, before my mother was a strong believer, she used a large statue of Buddha as a decoration in our living room since she wanted a Chinese motif. Years and years later, my brother found a Buddha statue that looked just like the one we had in our home as children and bought it for my mother because of nostalgia. My mother, now feeling embarrassed that she ever owned such a statue but not wanting to hurt my brother's feelings, accepted the gift but hid it on the floor of her closet. When my brother had the accident, my mother confided in me that God was punishing her for accepting the statue from my brother without explaining to him that she didn't believe in such things. Again, this concept of God's wrath does not bear witness to His unconditional love, patience, and mercy. (My brother cut his finger and thumb off because he was careless and did not put the safety guard on the machine first before he used it. As I wrote earlier, God used the accident as a way to reach out to my brother and show him his limits and need of God's power.)

Don't forget about the “means of grace”

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Even as you practice the “means of grace” of Scripture reading, prayer, fasting, fellowship, and the Lord’s Supper, you will also need to teach these to the believer you are discipling. If at all possible, be sure that the new believer attends worship services and formal Bible studies in the community where you work. If this is not possible for the believer (due to prohibitions or simply that the believer may not feel ready to make their new faith public), passing along Bible studies, Christian music, spiritual formation books, podcasts, and anything that has personally encouraged your own walk with Christ to your disciple provides them with opportunities to grow in their faith. It may also prove helpful familiarize yourself with resources geared toward Muslim born believers such as Middle East Media (<https://www.mem.org/new-believers>).

Muslims know the disciplines of prayer and fasting, but as Christians, our prayers are conversational and very personal. We come to our Creator, in prayer, as a small child comes to his or her daddy. We share our concerns, hopes and dreams, frustrations, and failures. Our fasting as Christians is different than Muslim fasting. During Ramadan, Muslims fast to celebrate the giving of the Qur’an to Muhamad. At other times, they fast to show their submission to Allah in hopes of earning his favor on the day of judgement. Christians fast as a way to show their longing for time with Christ, now and when He comes again. Fasting for a Christian is more about the intention to provide a dedicated time and space in one’s life for mediation and listening to God. Acts 13:1-3 tells us that it was through prayer and fasting that the church in Antioch felt the Holy Spirit’s call to set apart Barnabas and Paul to be sent out apart from the rest of the church. As Muslims in your community fast, encourage your disciple that you both will use that time to fast as a

way to listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, meditate on God's Word and draw closer to Christ. Culturally, a new believer might also ask questions about fasting or abstaining from certain foods and alcohol. The Apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:31-33, helps us understand that nothing we eat or drink makes us clean or unclean. However, he cautions that culturally, it is important to not cause someone to get distracted or hung up on these issues. In other words, a new believer can still follow the dietary customs of their Muslim culture and be a Christian.

The Lord's Supper, typically practiced within the context of a group of believers, remains an important sacrament in the life of a Christian. Many Nazarene OFWs I interviewed came from Catholic families and grew up in the Catholic Church. The belief about the Lord's Supper differs between Protestant and Catholic churches. In Catholicism, only priests and Eucharistic ministers can perform the sacrament. Catholics believe that the bread and wine transform into the actual flesh and blood of Jesus and need to be treated extremely reverently. Nazarenes, as well as most Protestants, believe that we celebrate the sacrament as a remembrance of Christ's sacrifice for us and also celebrate in it the promise of His return. The bread and the wine symbolize His body and blood given for our salvation.

When you explain the Lord's Supper to a new believer, it is helpful to explain the story of Moses and the Hebrews escaping from Egypt. You can review the story in Exodus, particularly chapter 12, which explains the Passover. God told the Hebrews to kill a lamb, take its blood and spread around the entry way of their front doors. When the destroyer came that night, He passed over the homes of the Hebrews, sparing their firstborn from death. The destroyer entered all the homes that did not have the lamb's

blood around their doorframes. The Hebrews fled that night away from Egypt, escaping slavery.

Jews celebrate the Passover as a remembrance of when God saved them from being slaves. When Jesus and His disciples were celebrating the Passover as Jews, Jesus used the opportunity to show that He is the true Passover lamb. He wanted His disciples to know that His upcoming crucifixion would serve as the means to rescue all people enslaved to sin. When Christians now celebrate the Lord's Supper, we understand that when Jesus said, "This is my body broken for you. This is my blood shed for you," He was speaking about His death. We celebrate the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of the death of Christ as Jews celebrate the remembrance of the Passover. Yet, Christians are not only remembering something that happened thousands of years ago with Jesus and his disciples; we are remembering something personal that happened to each one of us. The salvation that came from Jesus' sacrifice applies to every believer. When we celebrate this sacrament, we are celebrating our own salvation. This is why the Lord's Supper has no meaning for those who do not have a relationship with Jesus. The sacrament provides a way for us to proclaim our faith and also our hope in His Second Coming each time we practice it.

Of course, Christians celebrate this sacrament with their brothers and sisters in Christ in worship services. Most churches, including the Church of the Nazarene, make sure the sacrament is practiced with reverence and sincerity. This is why pastors are typically the only ones who perform the sacrament. If there are no churches, should we still practice the sacrament? If there are no pastors to perform it, should we just skip over it? Historically, even when governments outlawed Christianity and Christians were

persecuted and imprisoned, believers still found ways to perform the sacrament. Even today, in creative access countries that have secret meetings, they find ways to practice the Lord's Supper. As an OFW discipling a new believer, please remain sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit regarding whether or not to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Prayerfully seek wisdom from your mentor and stay obedient to her or his advice. The Lord's Supper affirms our faith and acknowledges our place in the body of Christ. If you feel led, the Church of the Nazarene empowers you to lead the sacrament if there are no pastors available. Using Scripture (Matt. 26:17-27; 1 Cor. 11:23-26) and food items you may find (crackers and grape juice work great), as a believer you can lead a new believer through the sacrament.

It is difficult for many OFW domestic helpers to find other Christians to have times of fellowship. It is even more difficult for a new believer to find other Muslim born believers to have times of fellowship. Fellowship with other believers strengthens our faith, encourages us to work together in service for God, and helps us feel the love of Christ through the love and care of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. As an employee, fellowship between you and your employer may feel awkward, but Christians actually feel a hunger to be together. According to the leading of the Holy Spirit, try to find a place where the new believer can meet other believers in a secure way. Culture may prevent you from meeting together because of class differences, but you may hear of groups that your disciple might be able to join. One OFW shared the story of how her employer would come into her room at night so they could listen to Christian music together. It was a small thing, but to the new believer, it was an important time of fellowship.

What about Baptism?



The sacrament of baptism shows a new believer's community that they are now a new creation in Christ. The old life is gone, and they now have a new identity as a follower of Christ. It is most often done in a worship service or gathering among other believers. Some new believers will not want to be baptized right away as they know they will face immediate consequences from their family, community and/or government. It is important to let them make the decision. If they want to be baptized, as with the Lord's Supper, try to find a group of believers to perform the sacrament. If you cannot, or if it is prohibited, you have the authority and empowerment from the Nazarene Church to baptize a new believer under the guidance and advice of your mentor. Baptisms are symbolic sacraments that one can perform with a little water or in an entire body of water. The place is not important. (We know that in the Book of Acts, Jesus's disciple, Philip, used a trench on the side of the road to baptize the Ethiopian eunuch.) The testimony of the new believer is important, though. A believer should articulate faith that Jesus is the Son of God; His sacrifice cleansed them from their sins, and their life is different now as they walk each day in a personal relationship with Him. As the baptism is performed, the Trinity relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is proclaimed over the believer as Jesus said in Matthew 28:19. ("I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.")

Section Six: Your local church believes in you!

Nazarene leaders in the Asia Pacific Regional office and pastors and professors in the Philippines deliberated over the content of this handbook and felt it essential to include a covenant between you, as a representative of the body of Christ in the Muslim household where you serve, and your local church in the Philippines. This covenant's purpose is to empower you as an instrument of the Great Commission to make disciples. Please read over the covenant carefully. One of the barriers between OFWs connecting with their local church has been over the issue of finances. This covenant will seek to take that barrier away by agreeing that your local church will not ask you for finances other than your being faithful to give your tithe. In this way, it is the hope of the church that you will be able to find advocates, prayer warriors, and mentors in your church who will equip you, advise you, and empower you for this important work.

Local Church/OFW Covenant:



As the senior pastor and representative of the _____ Church of the Nazarene, we commit to our OFW member employed in a Muslim country ...

1. to be prayer advocate(s) and represent her each week at the altar, praying for both her and her family's well-being and emotional health for the coming week; for her lifestyle to be a holy witness to Christ's continued transformation in her; and for her sensitivity to the leading of the Holy Spirit in sharing her Christian faith with her employer and community in the country where she serves (Gal. 6:2; Col. 1:9-13).
2. to communicate regularly with our congregation the missional opportunity and burden she faces, recognizing that she is a vessel of the Holy Spirit working in an area of the world where traditional missionaries are prohibited. She is our missionary sent from our church for such a time as this (Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 4:7; Esth. 4:14).
3. to empower her, as the Holy Spirit leads, to disciple new believers in the study of God's Word (and administering the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper when necessary), trusting in her understanding of the culture to use the relational model (knowing her purpose, using her talents, focusing on the context of the Muslim family, keeping an evangelistic perspective, confident in God's power within her and His guidance through His Spirit) (Jn. 15:2,8; Heb. 7:23-28; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:13-16).
4. to create an atmosphere of transparency and open communication whereby she feels welcome to share the unique issues of life as an OFW in her context. We will seek to remove barriers that may cause her to be reluctant to contact us frequently by refraining from openly soliciting funds or viewing her in capacities other than a beloved member of our congregation and empowered missionary where she is employed (Rom. 12:4-5; Col. 1:24; Jas. 5:16).
5. to provide a spiritual mentor in order for ongoing personal accountability, mental health support and personal Bible study; to equip her with resources and biblical training when possible, for the development of her own faith and ability to disciple others (Heb. 13:21; 2 Tim. 3:17; Jas. 1:5).

OFW



As a member of the _____ Church of the Nazarene employed as a domestic helper in a Muslim country, I commit to my home church ...

1. to be invested in my home congregation through regular prayer for my pastor and fellow members as they continue the work of the church in my home community (Heb. 13:17-18; 1 Cor. 15:58).
2. to continue to joyfully support my home church's ministries through the regular giving of my tithe and any other resources I feel led by God to give (Ps. 24:1; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 6:19-24)
3. to rely on my spiritual mentor and pastor for regular and continued discipleship, instruction, and to submit myself with transparency to discipline and guidance for any sin problems in my life (Matt. 18:15-20; Jas. 5:16).
4. to be a faithful follower of Jesus and witness of his redemption in my life as I represent my home church in God's plan of reconciliation to the world. I will seek to be a missionary in the "being, doing and telling" of the Good News. I will make living the Gospel message my priority in my workplace by showing in my attitude and work ethic the spirit of Christ, in humility and sacrifice (Phil. 2:5-11; Mk. 10:45).

Concluding Thoughts



You are important to the work of the kingdom of God. As Esther was placed in King Xerxes's household as an instrument of God to save her people, you are working in a household where God is at work in the lives of those you serve. You are an instrument of His grace "for such a time as this." As God gives us the honor in sharing in the responsibility to make disciples, we also have the privilege in sharing in the joy of helping a person grasp the love of God and surrender his or her life to Him.

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APPENDIX C

Clergy Survey

You are being asked to participate as a volunteer in this brief survey conducted by Prof. Eileen Ruger, assistant professor of Intercultural Studies at APNTS. This questionnaire is designed primarily to gather data that can be used in the research of Nazarene OFWs employed in Muslim countries. Your participation is totally voluntary, and you will not be identified by name as I work with the results of this survey. You can be assured of total confidentiality.

If you have any questions, please contact me: eruger@apnts.edu.ph

Please answer the following questions about yourself:

What is your gender? Male Female

How old are you? (tick one of the choices at the right.)

- Under 25 years of age
- 25–34 years of age
- 35–44 years of age
- 45–54 years of age
- 55–64 years of age
- 65–74 years of age
- 75 years of age or older

What is your Church involvement position? (tick only one of the choices at right)	<input type="checkbox"/> Pastor/Minister/ <input type="checkbox"/> Lay Member
What is your highest educational qualification- accomplishment? (tick one of the choices at right)	<input type="checkbox"/> High school graduation
	<input type="checkbox"/> Trade/technical/vocational training
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional degree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate degree

Number of members of your church _____

Please estimate of how many families in your congregation that have an immediate family member serving as an OFW in a Muslim country _____

Please estimate how many Nazarene OFWs you know that are female and serve as houseworkers _____

Please list any resources that help OFWs and their families that you use (agency information, holistic care, evangelism resources, etc.)

Are these resources displayed in the church or on the church website? _____

Please circle the best answer that applies to your situation:

1. Knowledge of Islam
 - A) Studied formally
 - B) Somewhat knowledgeable and have read about the faith
 - C) Personally, know practicing Muslims and a little about their faith
 - D) Know very little or nothing about Islam

2. Willingness for you or leaders in your church to be trained in the Islam religion to help OFWs who serve in Islamic countries in your community.
 - A) Very Interested
 - B) Interested but need more information
 - C) Somewhat interested
 - D) Not Interested

3. Belief that Christian OFWs can be effective in evangelizing in Muslim countries where they work.
 - A) Strongly believe in workplace evangelism for OFWs
 - B) Believe but not without the proper training
 - C) Tentatively believe but it may be too risky
 - D) Do not believe it is the best strategy as they are there for employment not evangelism.

4. Willingness to help create a guide for Nazarene OFWs to relationally share their Christian faith with Muslims.
 - A) Very Interested
 - B) Interested but need more information
 - C) Somewhat interested
 - D) Not Interested

5. Willingness to create a prayer support network for Nazarene OFWs employed in Muslim countries.
 - A) Very Interested
 - B) Interested but need more information
 - C) Somewhat interested
 - D) Not Interested

What are some of your own ideas for either helping train and/or support Nazarene OFWs employed in Muslim countries?

If you would like to be contacted about the answers in your survey, please provide your name and contact information:

APPENDIX D

Notes for Focus Groups

Setting: Chairs in a small circle with no more than 8 participants in each group.

Actors: Filipina woman who have served as contracted workers in Muslim countries.

Acts and Activities: Snacks and Conversation

Events: After church service, women group lunch and discussion

Place: ICN Hong Kong, EV Church Hong Kong

Time: 12:00 Saturday and 12:00 Sunday, 3:00 PM Sunday

Purpose: Gain realistic picture of OFWs life and influence on families they serve

Emotion: Hopefully festive and transparent

Objects: Word Association Cards, Bible verses,

Limitations and Assumptions: English is used for discussion with intermittent non-English words that need to be translated.

Closing of discussion: Communicate gratefulness for participation, assurance of confidentiality, ask for willingness to be part of the next phase of research (questionnaire), collect personal contact information if willing, end in prayer.

Introduction of researcher and background of study. “Thank you all for your willingness to help our church create a guide for OFWs to creatively share their faith with other women in Islamic countries.”

Prompts for discussion:

Understanding of influence:

- Example of positive influence
- Example of negative influence

Word association exercise:

Possible words: faith, love, share, evangelize, disciple, responsibility, priority, talents.

Questions:

1. General introduction. Please share about your background, where you served and/or currently serve as an OFW, your duties and a little about your family in the Philippines.
2. Please tell us a story of when you mentioned prayer during your employment to the people you worked for (including children).
3. A. "Please tell us about a time someone asked you about your beliefs. How did you respond? B. Has anybody told you about their beliefs in a personal way (other than the Islamic traditions that need to be followed according to your employment). How did you respond?"
4. Please give us all an example of when you were able to demonstrate your Christian faith without talking. What did it feel like? Was it met with acceptance?
5. Please tell us about a time someone asked you about your beliefs or told you about their beliefs in a personal way (other than the Islamic traditions that need to be followed according to your employment).

6. Please tell us about how you were influenced by the people you worked for (i.e., did their religious practices influence how you prayed or did the way they raise their children influence how you raise your children?).

7. Please let us talk about how we can use simple or non-traditional ways to share the message of Jesus Christ with our employers. What are some of your ideas? What do you already know about Islam that might help you share about Jesus? How do you feel about using the word “Allah” when talking about your God?

APPENDIX E

Interview questions for Christian Overseas Filipino Workers

1. What country are you working in and how long have you been there?
2. How long is your current contract, and how long do you have before it ends?
3. If your employer wishes, will you renew your contract or seek a new contract elsewhere in the same city?
4. How often do you go back to the Philippines?
5. Describe your family: (Spouse, children, parents). If you have children, who cares for them?
6. Are you able to attend some type of church service and/or Bible study on a regular basis? Please describe the gathering including who the leader is and the type of people who attend (ex: other Filipinos workers, nationals, other migrant workers from other countries).

7. Describe your work schedule. How many days or half days off a week are you allowed? How many hours a day do you work?
8. Describe your living conditions. Do you live in the same location where you work? Do you have your own room, or do you share? If you share, is your roommate a fellow worker or part of the employer's household?
9. Describe the availability of the Internet and how often you use it. Is the Internet reliable? Do you share a computer with other workers or do you have your own?
10. In the country where you serve, what are the main religions that they practice? Describe how your employer practices their faith.
11. Describe how you personally practice your faith in your day-to-day living. (prayer times, Bible reading, listening to Christian radio, reading books).
12. Describe any cross-cultural training or orientation you have received before coming to your current city. Was it offered by the agency that placed you? If you received training or orientation was it helpful? Were you given instruction about religious practices? Were you given instruction about how to practice your own faith?
13. Describe your job. What are the major tasks and people you work with? (ex: taking care of children, elderly, pets, housework, etc.)

14. Describe any experiences you had with sharing your faith with your employer including any questions or comments your employer made about your faith.

15. Lickert Scale (1 agree the least and 10 strongly agree)

I feel that the church in the Philippines supports me and prays for me. _____

I feel that the time away from my family is worth the economic security I can give them.

I feel I am free to practice my faith in Christ where I work. _____

I have a desire to share my faith with fellow Filipinos here. _____

I have a desire to share my faith with the nationals in this country. _____

I have a burden to share my faith with fellow Filipinos here. _____

I have a burden to share my faith with the nationals in this country. _____

I am concerned about my children in the Philippines. _____

I am concerned about my spouse in the Philippines. _____

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