




Mission and Missiology as Vulnerability: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The spirituality of South Korean missionaries is currently in crisis. A survey conducted by the Korean Research Institute for Mission (KRIM) in 2015 revealed that 61.2% of participants acknowledged a lack of spirituality and expressed the need for further training in piety. Two fundamental causes contribute to this spiritual decline among Korean missionaries. Firstly, a deficiency in biblical principles of missional theology. It is argued that failure to derive missional theology directly from Scripture has weakened the spirituality of Korean missionaries. Secondly, the training curricula provided by Korean missionary-sending institutions, lack the necessary focus on spirituality. In response to this crisis, the authors carried out qualitative research to explore the question, "What is going on?"—the first of Osmer's four tasks in practical theology. The study identified five key themes that emerged from the naïve sketches and structured interviews with the participants, who comprised Korean missionaries and members of the Kosin Presbyterian Mission (KPM).

Keywords: Spirituality, Korean missionaries, missional, transformation, *Missio Dei*

Introduction

Korean missionaries are currently facing several challenges that lead to despair, despondency, and, ultimately, attrition. This paper employed Osmer's (2008) model to investigate the current situation. Specifically, qualitative research methods were used to explore Osmer's descriptive task, which asks, "What is going on?" . The study focused on Korean missionaries affiliated with the Kosin Presbyterian Mission (KPM), using structured interviews and naïve sketches for data collection and analysis. The presentation of the findings is divided into two sections. The first section outlines the research design, methodology, and outcomes. The second section discusses the spirituality of Korean missionaries and its subsequent transformation.

Methodology

Research design

This research employed Osmer's four tasks as its methodological framework, with a particular focus on the descriptive task, which involves "priestly listening" to discern "what is going on?" The study investigated the spirituality of Korean missionaries within the context of their cross-



cultural missions, missionaries who are sent to different cultures, different ethnic and different languages for God's kingdom. For example, South Korean missionaries who work in Myanmar are part of the cross-cultural missions using qualitative methods to explore their spiritual experiences and transformations.

Research method

This study utilized structured interviews and naïve sketches for qualitative data collection. These two open-ended methods were conducted in Korean, allowing the respondents to express their thoughts more freely. Each section included twenty participants, all of whom were Korean missionaries serving in various countries under the Kosin Presbyterian Church (KPM).

Data collection

The researcher requested the R&D Director of KPM to identify potential participants who are members of KPM. In terms of ethical consideration, informed consent will be sought from participants involved. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be guaranteed. Data protection and storage will be carefully considered. Participants will not be incentivized, and they are free to withdraw from the study at any time they wish to do so for whatever reason. It was essential for all participants to answer every question. The first group of twenty respondents completed an open-ended naïve sketch, which is visual writing such as qualities, characteristics and descriptions of certain themes or subjects in empirical research (qualitative), while the remaining twenty participated in a structured interview.

Result

The results are organized into themes and sub-themes, based on the analysis of the naïve sketch data and summaries from the structured interview data. In interpreting the naïve sketch data, verbatim quotes from the respondents and references to previous research literature are used to validate the findings.

Results from the data analysis of the naïve sketches

The naïve sketches were conducted using a single question: "What are your views/ideas/perspectives of missionaries' spirituality and its transformation (Rom 12:2)?"

Demographic information

Table 1: Gender

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	11	55%
Female	9	45%
Total	20	100%

Table 1 shows that there are 11 male participants, making up 55% of the total, and 9 female participants, accounting for 45%.



Table 2: Period of Ministry

Period of ministry	Frequency	%
1–5 years	1	5%
6–9 years	1	5%
10–19 years	4	20%
more than 20 years	14	70%
Total	20	100%

Table 2 displays the ministry periods of the participants. Out of the total number, 14 participants have served for over 20 years, while four participants have served between 10 and 19 years. Additionally, there is one participant in each of the two remaining groups, which represent ministry periods of 2–6 years and 1–5 years, respectively.

Table 3: Missionary classification

Classification	Frequency	%
Pastoral missionary	14	70%
Professional missionary	1	5%
Single women missionary	0	0%
Wife missionary	4	20%
Others	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Table 3 shows that the majority of participants are pastoral missionaries (70%) who have been ordained as pastors. This is followed by the professional missionary group (5%), which includes individuals who engage in mission work through their professions, such as medical doctors or architects. Lastly, single women missionaries represent a small minority, comprising 4% of the participants.

Emerged themes from the analysis of the naïve sketch data

Theme 1: Mission of God (Missio Dei)¹

- Discern God's will in decisive circumstances

¹ The meaning of missio Dei is that "As God the Father sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, the Son now sends the church" (John 20:21). The church participates in this mission by understanding the significance of the Son's sending.



One participant emphasized the importance of **“Discern[ing] God’s will in decisive circumstance[s]”** as a key aspect of missionaries’ spirituality. Julie Green and Sherwood Lingenfelter (2022), in their book *Teamwork Cross-Culturally*, discuss a complex challenge that was encountered while managing a multinational team translating the Bible. Despite their efforts to apply logical solutions, the problem only worsened, and the team struggled to discern God’s will in this critical situation. After overcoming the challenge, Green and Lingenfelter (2022) offer insights on how to discern God’s will in such situations, emphasizing that the answer lies in faith, which involves hearing the Holy Spirit’s voice, practicing meek leadership, forgiving others, submitting to Jesus Christ, becoming a learner, holding onto hope, and waiting for the Holy Spirit to persuade team members to change their minds, all while engaging in ministry (Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:48–50,86).

According to KPM, a key component of missionary spirituality is the ability to discern God’s will in critical situations. The enemy often waits for opportunities to sow discord and undermine the unity of the church (Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:61). True leadership, as demonstrated by Christ, combines authority with humility, contrasting sharply with the secular understanding of leadership (Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:78). Submissive leadership involves listening to God and acknowledging that one does not have all the answers.

- Ministry acknowledged by God

One of the participants indicated that the focus should not be on **“the success of ministry”** but on the **“ministry which is acknowledged by God”** (Galatians 1:10) and on **“obedience”** (Acts 4:3, 1 Samuel 15:22). This view highlights the importance of missionary spirituality in aligning with the true purpose of mission. The goal is not to satisfy human desires but to carry out missions that glorify God. Throughout mission history, particularly during the colonial era, missions often prioritized self-satisfaction (Sunquist, 2013: 54). Unfortunately, this trend continues in a postmodern context, where the distinction between the church and the secular world has blurred (Goheen & Sheridan, 2022: 164).

The church has increasingly integrated postmodern culture into its teachings without critically evaluating it through the lens of Scripture. As Jesus declared in John 18:36, “My kingdom is not of this world.” Newbigin (1989:220) argues that idolatry lies at the heart of worldly culture (cf. Goheen & Sheridan, 2022:148). Goheen refers to this as managerial ecclesiology, where the church adopts economic principles to cater to its “customers” (Goheen & Sheridan, 2022: 120). This approach often leads missionaries to focus on meeting human needs through effective ministry, primarily to satisfy the sponsoring church (Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:56).

Scripture, however, stands in opposition to the goal of achieving human satisfaction. Jesus declared, “I do not receive glory from the people” (Jn 5:41). The apostles, who followed Christ, shared this commitment: “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard,” declared James and Peter (Acts 4:19–20).

God is the missionary God (Ott et al., 2010:62)—the One who initiates, guides, and determines the outcome of the mission. In all these processes, Christ is in charge. God has the final say over the results (Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:63). God is not concerned with the quantity of converts but with the missionary’s obedience in carrying out His work (Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:64; Ott et al., 2010:84; Payne 2022:162). In this mission, God is exalted, and those who are converted worship Him (Goheen & Sheridan, 2022:273). This focus on divine obedience prevents the church from succumbing to a human-centered mission (Ott et al., 2010:84).



Theme 2: Relationship with God and fellow humans

- Right relationship with God

Four participants expressed the belief that the fundamental aspect of missionaries' spirituality is their 'relationship with God.' One participant specifically emphasized the importance of **"having [a] right relationship with God."** (Galatians 2:20). This principle is a central element of the spirituality embraced by Korean missionaries (KPM).

Following the fall of humanity, the relationship between God and humanity was severed. The Almighty, being holy, cannot tolerate sin. However, His actions in reaching out to humanity are driven by His mercy and love (Ott et al., 2010:180). To reconcile with us, He sent prophets, leaders, and ultimately His one and only Son (2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2). According to John 1:12-13, anyone who believes in Jesus Christ has the right to become a child of God, restoring the relationship between humanity and God as it was in Eden (Pachau, 2022:63).

Through the atonement of Jesus Christ, believers gain knowledge of God (Kim, 2018:93). The Holy Spirit, through the Word, empowers believers to live as God's people (Lee, 2017:11). Living in the world as God's people means experiencing the kingdom life. This knowledge of God makes it possible to have a proper relationship with Him (Pratt et al., 2014:1).

- Relationship with humans

'Relationship with fellow human beings' also highlighted by the participants as an important aspect of Korean missionaries' spirituality. One participant expressed the significance of a **"relationship with [one's] partner, [a] Christ-centered partnership."**

According to Pachau (2022:63, 74), through Christ, not only are humanity and God reconciled, but also people are united in the body of Christ. Sin created barriers between people, but Ephesians 2:14 states that the wall of separation has been destroyed by the cross of Jesus (Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:9).

A right relationship with God is the foundation of a right relationship with a partner (Kim, 2015:258–259; Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:101). A healthy relationship with God is the cornerstone of a healthy relationship with others (Ott et al., 2010:97). Scripture outlines the ideal partner relationship, as seen in Matthew 22:39: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' A proper relationship with a partner cannot exist without a right relationship with God. Because of God's love, believers can have a proper relationship with others through their relationship with Him. God's love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Newbigin, 1965: 137). As Romans 5:5 says, "And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us". Through his love, we understand love and can love our neighbor as He loved us (1 John 3:16).

Sin leads to jealousy, comparison, and rivalry instead of cooperation (Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:24, 43–44). As a result, cross-cultural mission partnerships suffer. When a mission holds a position of power, it can be further corrupted by sin. Maintaining a healthy relationship with one's partner is essential for restoring one's initial love for God (Bosch, 1979:55; Buys & Jasen, 2015:249; Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:101). The Holy Spirit unites us as partners (Araujo, 2018; Lingenfelter & Green, 2022, 88: cf. Ephesians 4:3).

Theme 3: Missional anthropology

- Contextualization



One participant asserted that **“having faith in the Lord’s incarnation mission”** is a fundamental aspect of a missionary’s spirituality. Paul Hiebert portrays the humble model of the incarnated Christ (2009:184). Jesus, our perfect role-model, was fully God and fully human in His incarnation. He was equally at home as King of the universe on the throne in heaven and as an infant in a manger on earth. While we can never fully emulate Him, He provides us with a way to understand our role in building bridges between different worlds.

Jesus Christ, through humility rather than superiority, unites the two worlds. To spread the good news of God’s kingdom, Jesus, who was born in human form, lived among people and spoke like them (Hiebert, 1988:18; Ott et al., 2010:98). Even when they struggled to comprehend the meaning of the gospel, He did not resort to deism. The Son of God exemplifies contextualization in its purest form. Therefore, missionaries’ contextualization should be rooted not in human understanding but in the example of Jesus and the teachings of the Bible (Bavinck, 1960:81).

The humble contextualization that Jesus practiced should not be overlooked by missionaries undertaking cross-cultural work (Goheen & Sheridan, 2022:188; Terry & Payne, 2013: 138). According to Augustine, if Jesus had not become incarnate, Christians could neither know God nor be restored to God’s image and immortality (Augustine, 1963:155). Thus, to effectively spread the gospel, missionaries must humbly seek to understand the cultures of those they are trying to reach (Terry & Payne, 2013:148).

Missionaries should also preach in the local language and utilize the vernacular to ensure the gospel is understood (Pachua, 2022:151).

- Cultural syncretism

Two participants mentioned the issue of ‘cultural syncretism’ in relation to missionaries’ spirituality. One emphasized **“spirituality of the Lord according to the Scripture”**, while another warned of **“idolatrous temptation coming with [a] cultural mask.”** These assertions underscore that maintaining the Lord’s spirituality in opposition to cultural syncretism is a core aspect of a missionary’s spiritual life.

Culture encompasses more than just social customs; it is also infused with a religious worldview (Goheen & Sheridan, 2022:130). It is not a neutral construct. Idolatrous practices are deeply embedded within culture, extending beyond political and economic structures (Goheen & Sheridan, 2022:148; Newbigin, 1989:220). Jesus noted that the world despises Him because He is not part of it. He called His followers out of the world, and as a result, the world despises them as well (Jn 15:19–20). This animosity is rooted in the fact that the world’s cultures are founded on idolatry, however, it is not true taking into consideration other cultures.

Jesus responded to the world’s idolatry by refusing to partake in its normative pleasures. For example, after fasting for forty days, He resisted the devil’s temptation (Matthew 4:1–11). Moreover, on the cross, He rejected the earthly glory that underpins idolatry, even though He had the power to come down from the cross (Mark 15:30). Missionaries who lack a spirituality grounded in the cross lose the ability to transform the world (Bosch, 1980:224; Goheen & Sheridan, 2022:267; Hiebert, 2009:184; Sunquist, 2013:24; Terry & Payne, 2013:139). Christianity would not have been able to win pagans over if Jesus had become like one of their gods. It is through His cross-centered spirituality that new communities are formed, and the reign of God is ushered in on earth. The church must remain holy and offer prophetic critique to the world (Hiebert, 2009:184).



Theme 4: Suffering

Naïve sketches indicate that 'suffering' is a core aspect of the transformative spirituality of Korean missionaries. Two participants mentioned "**renewal by suffering**" and described "**uncomfortableness (lacking funds, material, etc.) [as a] blessing**" in relation to spiritual transformation. Therefore, suffering is an important element in the spiritual development of Korean missionaries.

Koyama (1974:129) suggests that "The missionaries' missionary quality will be nurtured in his life-participation in the apostolic existence of reviled-bless-persecuted-endure-slandered-conciliate." Missionary spirituality is shaped through the process of becoming a missionary and participating in *missio Christi*—following the cruciform path of Jesus Christ in mission—rather than being a finished product (John 20:21). According to Bosch (1980:72), Jesus "became a true missionary in his suffering and death, not in Jesus' successful preaching to masses, neither in the sometimes overwhelmingly positive reaction to his miracles, but in his suffering and death he became true missionary."

Second Corinthians indicate that Paul's spirituality was deepened through his suffering. His thorn in the flesh kept him from arrogance and made him vigilant in his spiritual warfare (Bosch, 1979:78; cf. 2 Corinthians 12:7).

Jonathan Edwards also comments about trial connect to true religion (Edwards, 2001:21-22). According to 1 Peter 1:6-9, He explains the three benefits of true religion. Firstly, it discriminates against true religion. Secondly, trial makes believers' faith honor and glory. Thirdly, purify and increase the true religion.

Theme 5: Transformation of missionaries' spirituality

- The Word of God (Scripture)

The participants regarded 'Scripture' as the fundamental source of spiritual transformation for Korean missionaries. This sentiment was captured in one participant's statement: "**The Bible is the transforming power of missionaries spirituality.**" Goheen and Sheridan (2022:271) argue that "Scripture's authority is found in the cosmic story it tells, centered in the person of Jesus Christ." This suggests that the entire Bible bears witness to Jesus Christ, who is the truth (John 5:39).

Based on this truth, the Holy Spirit works (Coe 2011:30; cf. John 14:17). Believers develop a proper relationship with the Holy Spirit through Scripture. The Holy Spirit forms and transforms believers through the Logos (Word), engaging with them on a daily basis (van der Walt, 2010:68). As van der Walt (2010:67) notes, "The Holy Spirit speaks through the Word and so recreates and renews one's whole life."

Through Scripture, the Holy Spirit empowers and transforms believers to become missionaries to other nations (Bartholomew, 2023:187; Goheen & Sheridan, 2022:271). The Old Testament prepared and transformed the Israelites to become a blessing to the nations (Bartholomew, 2023:187), and the New Testament similarly prepared the church for global missionary work. Throughout Scripture, the Holy Spirit continues to work in the spiritual transformation of missionaries, enabling them to become a blessing to all ethnic groups.



- Prayer

'Prayer' is a fundamental dimension of the transformative spirituality of Korean missionaries. The participants mentioned **"prayer"** and **"praying in secret,"** highlighting its role as a powerful force in their spiritual transformation.

According to Nienkirchen (2011:167), "The ultimate purpose of a life of prayer, energized and renewed continually by both inflamed and quiescent psychological rhythms, is the hollowing of life and the cultivation of holiness – a transfiguration of the payer's desires, motives, and behaviours in accordance with the perfection of divine character and will be incarnated in Jesus Christ." Nienkirchen asserts that *imago Christi*, or becoming more like Christ, is the primary goal of prayer. Jesus prayed to align His actions with God's will through the gospel, and prayer was central to carrying out His messianic mission (Nienkirchen, 2011:167). Through prayer, the Holy Spirit empowers believers to follow Jesus Christ's commandments (Plueddemann, 2000:902).

The Bible plays an integral role in prayer, serving as its foundation. Believers pray in accordance with God's Word, and Jesus teaches His disciples the Lord's Prayer for this reason. In each of the three sections of the Lord's Prayer, believers are instructed to ask for "hollow be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Calvin, 2006: 903–907). Through this prayer, the Holy Spirit transforms the believer's life.

- Recovery of worship communities

The 'recovery of worship communities' emerged as a sub-theme from the naïve sketch. One participant reiterated the importance of **"the recovery of worship communities"** in transforming the spirituality of Korean missionaries. This underscores the importance of worship communities in the spiritual transformation of missionaries.

According to Newbigin, the church serves as a sign and foretaste of God's coming kingdom (Goheen & Sheridan, 2022:176–180). Congregational life is composed of Scripture-based sacraments (communion and baptism), acts of worship, prayer, praise, fellowship, and service. Through baptism, congregations experience Christ's death and resurrection, and by preaching Christ's death in communion, they identify with Scripture rather than the external world (Brown, 2011:49). When a believer is grafted into the body of Christ, their sins are forgiven daily by the grace of Christ. Hence, if they have a contrite heart and strive not to commit sin, and then, they are sanctified daily by the work of the Holy Spirit (Calvin, 2006:1035). Believers respond to God's grace through prayer and praise, and they receive grace through worship (Edwards, 2001:43-45). This process leads to spiritual maturity, making believers more like Christ (Ephesians 4:13). Calvin argues that to equip the saints, God appointed apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers (Calvin, 2006:1012; cf. Ephesians 4:11-12). The church provides believers with the spiritual energy needed to live in the world. The transformation into kingdom people reflects a new identity and ethic. This energy enables believers to live as salt and light in their public lives, as taught in Matthew 5:14–16, and this is made possible through the worship community alone (Newbigin, 1989:227).

- Communication

One participant contended that 'communication' is an important method for transforming the spirituality of Korean missionaries, particularly noting **"communication with [a] partner."** According to Lingenfelter and Green (2022:168), getting to know a mission partner through conversation can facilitate transformation among teammates and strengthen their commitment to the mission. Blackwell advises, "Don't assume you know; know you know" (cited by



Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:167). She led Ghana SIM International, a global church planting mission, and faced challenges with her teammates, who preferred to remain silent and not participate during meetings. After reflecting on John 10, she realized she didn't truly know them, so she met with each teammate one-on-one to build a deeper understanding (Lingenfelter & Green, 2022:70). Her selfless efforts transformed her teammates, motivating them to fully engage in the mission. Thus, communication enables a deeper understanding of teammates, helping them to join God in His work.

- Mentor

A 'mentor' is an important aspect of transforming the spirituality of Korean missionaries. One participant specifically mentioned the role of a "**mentor**" in the context of spiritual transformation. Therefore, mentorship is a crucial factor in the spiritual development of missionaries. Freeks and Lotter (2014:194; Pue, 2008:19; Reese & Loane 2012:21) explain that "mentors help people to learn how to mature in depth in their Christian life and spiritual guide." Tucker defines mentoring as being "about relationships" but also "about unleashing people's potential and to allow these people to be the best they can be" (cited in Freeks, 2011: 53). Jesus served as a mentor to His disciples, teaching them, leading by example, and developing a close relationship with them. Through Jesus Christ's mentorship, the disciples' spirituality was transformed, enabling them to become apostles (Freek, 2011:53). Their entire lives underwent a spiritual metamorphosis through their relationship with Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Similarly, Paul mentored Onesimus, Titus, and Timothy (Freek, 2021:5).

- Reading books that transform spirituality

The naïve sketches further revealed that 'reading books' that transform spirituality for example, [A spirituality of the road] David Bosch 1979, [The religious affections] Jonathan Edwards 2010 is one of the factors that contribute to the transformation of Korean missionaries' spirituality. One participant emphasized "**book[s] that are helpful for spirituality**" in relation to the transformation of missionaries' spirituality. Therefore, books that inspire spirituality among missionaries play a significant role in their spiritual transformation.

A survey conducted by Ku (2017:356) suggests that reading missionaries' biographies is one way to combat spiritual fatigue. The mission history provides evidence of this claim. For instance, the biography of Jonathan Edwards on David Brainerd, titled *The Life and Diary of the Rev. David Brainerd* in the year 1800, served as an inspiration for missionary work on both sides of the Atlantic. Brainerd's mission to Native American tribes in Pennsylvania and New Jersey had a profound impact. For Brainerd mission, he fought against exploitation of native Americans (Ott *et al.*, 2010:168), and he awakened Indians because he proclaimed the true gospel instead of transmitting his own cultural superiority (Wendt, 2018:96).

Summary and interpretation of the results from the naïve sketches

The naïve sketches from the participants are crucial to the central theoretical arguments of this paper. Five main themes emerged from these sketches as driving factors:

1. **Theme 1: *Missio Dei***: This is one of the fundamental aspects of Korean missionaries' spirituality. Four sub-themes emerged within this theme: (i) Discerning God's will in decisive circumstances, and (ii) Ministry acknowledged by God. The participants highlighted the core spiritual perspectives of biblical and theological mission concepts, reflecting the essence, scope, purpose, and motive of mission.
2. **Theme 2: Relationship with God and Partner**: This theme is critical to missionaries' spirituality, with two sub-themes: (i) Right Relationship with God, and (ii) Right



Relationship with Man. The participants emphasized the essence of missionary spirituality, particularly the importance of church unity. Without unity, the mission would fail. A good relationship with both God and others stems from God’s love, and this unity, empowered by love, strengthens the mission endeavor (John 13; 17).

3. **Theme 3: Missional Anthropology:** Participants demonstrated the meaning of missionaries’ spirituality in relation to contextualization. They expressed a balanced view, emphasizing the importance of following Jesus Christ’s incarnational mission. While Jesus preached and ministered within Jewish culture, He also critiqued aspects of the culture that were contrary to God’s will.
4. **Theme 4: Suffering:** Suffering is a fundamental aspect of Korean missionaries’ spirituality. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, missionaries do not remain in suffering but instead grow and bounce back through spirituality.
5. **Theme 5: Transformation of Missionaries’ Spirituality:** Participants identified several factors that contribute to the transformation of missionaries’ spirituality, including meditating on the Bible, prayer, sacraments, mentorship, reading spiritually enriching books, and the church community. These factors help move missionaries from the theory of mission to practical application in their ministry.

In conclusion, the participants offered valuable insights into various aspects of missionaries’ spirituality and its transformation within the context of their practical ministry. The findings from the naïve sketches contribute to a deeper understanding and explanation of the spiritual journey and growth experienced by missionaries.

Results from the data analysis of the structured interviews

The second part of the qualitative research involved structured interviews. These interviews consisted of 7 open-ended questions, with 20 participants (members of KPM) taking part in the research.

Demographic data

Table 4: Gender

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	10	50%
Female	10	50%
Total	20	100%

Table 4 shows that the participants are evenly divided between male and female, with each group comprising 50% of the total. There are 10 male participants (50%) and 10 female participants (50%).

Table 5: Period of ministry

Period of ministry	Frequency	%
1–5 years	0	0



6–9 years	0	0
10–19 years	9	45
more than 20 years	11	50
Total	20	100.0

Table 5 shows the distribution of participants based on their ministry period. Eleven participants have served for more than 20 years, while nine participants have served for 10–19 years. Notably, there are no participants with 1–5 years or 6–9 years of ministry experience.

Table 6: Missionary classification

Classification	Frequency	%
Pastoral missionary	10	50
Professional missionary	3	15
Single women missionary	1	5
Wife missionary	6	30
Others	0	0
Total		

Table 6 shows that the majority of participants are pastoral missionaries (50%), who have been ordained as pastors. This is followed by the professional missionary group (15%), which includes missionaries who engage in missions through their professions (e.g., medical doctors, architects). Lastly, single women missionaries represent a minority within the missionary classifications (5%).

Discussion and presentation of the structured interview questions

Question 1: *What are your views/ideas/perspectives of missionaries' spirituality?*

The majority of participants expressed that missionaries' spirituality is centered around developing a right relationship with God, which is made possible through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and by God's Word. Korean missionaries seek to discern God's will through prayer and studying Scripture, allowing the Holy Spirit to transform them into Christlike beings. They emphasized that without a deep understanding of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, the process of spiritual renewal and rebirth in a missionary's life cannot fully take place. Therefore, the central aspect of their spirituality is meditating on the Word and prayer.

Question 2: *What are your views/ideas/perspectives of transforming missionaries' spirituality (Romans 12:2)?*



The participants widely viewed the spiritual transformation of missionaries as a process of sanctification. They strongly believe that sanctification is achieved through a deep knowledge of God, gained through the Bible, and the active work of the Holy Spirit. Repentance is seen as the journey of turning away from the missionaries' own will and aligning with God's will. One participant noted that the Bible is the foundation of spirituality, and that spiritual transformation involves changing one's understanding and interpretation of Scripture. This transformation is shaped by the interactions between God and humanity. Consequently, the participant suggests that a positive relationship with both God and others enhances spiritual transformation.

Question 3: How does missionaries' spirituality affect the context of cross-cultural mission?

The participants provided three examples of how missionaries' spirituality can influence cross-cultural missions.

First, spirituality impacts missionaries' ability to avoid syncretism. Without a foundation in prophetic criticism, missionaries risk becoming syncretistic, blending biblical truths with elements of the local culture in ways that dilute the gospel. Missionaries' spirituality equips them to critique native cultures by applying biblical standards, ensuring that their message remains faithful to Scripture.

Second, spirituality influences the ability to contextualize effectively. A deep spiritual life enables missionaries to appreciate and understand different cultures, shaping both the message and the messenger's approach to cultural contextualization. This spirituality fosters unity between missionaries and indigenous people in Christ, while also challenging any sense of cultural superiority on the part of the missionaries.

Third, spirituality is reflected in both words and deeds. The actions of the missionary often have a greater impact on the indigenous people than their words alone. The spirituality of missionaries becomes evident through the deeds of the indigenous people they influence for example, archetype of Jesus Christ, and through his words and deeds, Jesus influenced his followers. Another example is through Joseph's word and deeds, and that Potiphar knew YAWEH was with Joseph (Genesis 39:3).

Question 4: What hinders the transformation of a missionary's spirituality?

The participants identified five factors that hinder the transformation of a missionary's spirituality.

First, a lack of a close relationship with God, often due to neglecting worship, prayer, and Bible reading.

Second, the loss of holiness and distinctiveness in the world, where a failure to maintain a unique spiritual identity can impair missionaries' efforts to transform their spirituality. For example, an excessive focus on financial well-being, greed, and the pursuit of material prosperity can lead to despair when faced with the constancy of indigenous people.

Third, family-related issues, such as conflicts with spouses and children, can be a significant impediment.

Fourth, health problems arising from the strain of multiple ministries can lead to exhaustion and physical decline.



Fifth, a lack of opportunities to observe and learn from other missionaries can limit spiritual growth.

Question 5: Does neglecting the Bible hinder the transformation of a missionary's spirituality? If so, how does it affect your ministry?

Most of the participants argued that neglecting the Bible eliminates opportunities for repentance and, consequently, removes God's authority from missionary work. Missionaries recognize their sinfulness through Scripture, which leads them to repentance and aligns their mission with God's will. Without the Bible, mission work risks becoming a purely human endeavor, lacking divine guidance. Human sinfulness is incapable of converting a native receiver of the gospel to genuine faith. True transformation of an indigenous pagan population into believers of the gospel occurs only through the power of the Holy Spirit. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit if it is not connected to the vine, a missionary's work cannot be fruitful unless it is deeply rooted in the Word.

Question 6: What causes the transformation of a missionary's spirituality?

The participants identified several factors that contribute to the transformation of a missionary's spirituality.

First, dedicating time to piety, including prayer and Scripture meditation, was highlighted as a key factor.

Second, having a proper interpretation of mission as found in the Bible was considered crucial. Third, a deep understanding of Jesus Christ, who is seen as the ultimate missionary role model and "God the missionary," was highlighted as a major driver of spiritual transformation.

Fourth, the sharing of love and grace within the faith community was recognized as playing a significant role in fostering spiritual growth and transformation.

Question 7: How do you discipline yourself to transform your spirituality?

The participants shared various practices that have helped them in their spiritual transformation.

First, they emphasized the importance of maintaining a quiet relationship with God. This involves developing a close connection with Him through prayer and Bible study, with the goal of knowing Him better and aligning their spiritual practices with His will.

Second, they recommended disciplines such as reading Christian books and watching Christian lectures on platforms like YouTube.

Third, they highlighted the importance of having a positive relationship with a mentor. Meeting with a mentor and receiving their guidance was considered crucial for spiritual growth.

Fourth, preaching—particularly the preparation of sermons—was suggested as a valuable discipline for transforming a missionary's spirituality.

Finally, participating in worship and fellowship within a faith community regularly was suggested as an essential discipline for spiritual growth.

Summary of the results from the structured interviews



The structured interviews were designed to explore the themes identified in the naïve sketches, providing additional insight into the spirituality of missionaries and its transformation. The interviews highlighted two very significant aspects.

First, the results reveal the fundamental spiritual practices of missionaries. These disciplines—such as prayer, worship, sacraments, Bible reading, and reading spiritual books—place a strong emphasis on spiritual well-being.

Second, the interviews underscore the importance of the theological perspective of mission. The four biblical principles of missional perspectives are closely related to and reinforced by these spiritual disciplines. These broad and significant aspects of missionaries' spiritual traditions are deeply rooted in the biblical foundations of missional theology, anthropology, history, and strategy. These spiritual practices not only bring the four missional perspectives to life but also actualize them in the missionaries' lives and work.

Conclusion

This study's qualitative investigation provided a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the spiritual transformation experienced by Korean missionaries. The paper was divided into two sections. The first section outlined the study's design, guided by Osmer's descriptive task, which asked, "What's going on?" The second section presented the results of the structured interviews and naïve sketches. These naïve sketches revealed five themes representing the participants' perspectives on the spirituality and transformation of Korean missionaries. By examining these sketches, the study drew on abundant scriptural sources to explore the spiritual growth of missionaries, rooted in their cross-cultural mission journeys with Christ. Their personal experiences offered valuable insights into the biblical foundations of the four missional perspectives and the crucial disciplines for transforming missionary spirituality. The four missional perspectives and spiritual disciplines were found to be mutually reinforcing, with spiritual disciplines developing and making the missional perspectives practicable for missionaries. Thus, the spirituality of missionaries emerged as the foundation of the four missional perspectives.

The results of the structured interviews aligned with these findings. The four missional perspectives were shaped by the participants' spiritual disciplines, particularly through their interpretation, analysis, and meditation of the Bible. Throughout their extensive tenure in cross-cultural mission ministry, these missionaries underwent a spiritual transformation that not only provided the fundamental elements of the four missional perspectives but also guided their practical application.

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