

I had interviewed Pastor Hank Kim and visited the building in which Hana missions operates from which is 10 Marshall St, Paterson, in New Jersey. Although it is not an official church, it is much more proactive than an average church in terms of serving the impoverished with soup kitchens and a thrift store to help their low standards of living. For Hana Missions the church model is that of a servant model. They are focused on social transformation of the environment of the impoverished in Paterson around Marshall Street.

Hanna Missions started when Pastor Hank Kim was a youth pastor and he took high school students to deliver gifts to children whose parents were inmates at a prison. He had stated that their living conditions were poverty stricken. He had asked himself, "How can children live in such a terrible environment and what is God's plan about this?" He had then stated how that incident had guided him to form Hana Missions, even though he had many opportunities to serve elsewhere in missions such in foreign countries. He had said it was a "problem of humanity, society, and spirituality." This experience of seeing the impoverished living conditions firsthand prompted him to "study about the social environment and he realized that not all human beings are born in the same environment and that everyone has different starting points in life. He discovered that African Americans and Latinos tended to have worse living conditions than their white counterparts in that region of Paterson.

The type of ministry Hana missions provides to the community is local missions which involve a soup kitchen from Monday to Saturday for breakfast and they serve a Sunday dinner. They additionally have after school programs in which the volunteers help poor children with their homework and help tutor them. This is because the first step to get out of poverty is to educate the next generation in order to give them better job opportunities in their future. In addition, they have an alcohol and drug rehabilitation program in which volunteers, some of

whom are trained professionals help struggling addicts to resist substance abuse in their lives, in order to improve their lives physiologically and mentally. Last but not least, they have a thrift store which helps the needy to purchase clothing and other appliances at cheap prices as mentioned previously.

The philosophy and theology of the church is that we are all united in Christ as the children of God regardless of race or socioeconomic status. Hana in Korean means “one,” implying one unified Body of Christ. That is why they help the impoverished with food and with proper education to their children, not so that they can become believers, but simply to love them. They do not choose to give help conditionally but instead show the impoverished unconditional love for them by exemplifying Christ in their lives. However, Pastor Hank Kim warned that in terms of suffering “there is no easy way to follow Christ, and unless we have eyes fixed on the cross, we will eventually be stopped and be derailed. Whatever we do, they will always be suffering.” Thus, it is important to have realistically reachable goals and not have grand plans which can not be reached. This is pivotal so that volunteers and missionaries learn their own limitations and learn how to take missions one step at a time and not rush into things with lofty expectations of their definition of a success in missionary work.

In pertinence to the teaching and training of their volunteers to the poor, Pastor Hanks Kim stated that they get college students twice a year. They come to serve the food to the homeless and work with the children. He asserted “I am not really teaching a theory; I am more of a doer; I show them how to serve.” Because Hana Missions is not a church by a strict sense, they focus more on field work than biblical theology. Nonetheless, there is some form of Bible study with a number of volunteers who come early as well as body worship, praise, and prayer. Pastor Hank Kim also gives out a short ten-minute sermon to his volunteers and the poor to

remind them and guide them to Jesus. Hana Missions has the greatest number of volunteers during summer vacation in which young church members from different churches come. Pastor Hank Kim states that if enough volunteers come, they would do a vacation bible school which is like a summer school program that emphasizes the Bible and Christ to the children. It was unfortunate to discover that the coronavirus pandemic had hindered Hana Missions as they had discontinued the vacation bible school for now due to less volunteers showing up to help. Pastor Hank Kim believes the practical social work such as serving the homeless with food develops one's own leadership in the community. This means that although not every volunteer can become leaders in the organization, they can lead by exemplifying Christ within the local community. Moreover, he believes that discipleship is formed by consistent prayer, meditation, bible study, as well as serving the local community in any way possible.

As a final word, Pastor Hank Kim stated that "When I started as a missionary, I had a grandiose and perfect plan for an establishment of a missionary institution for the recovery of the fruit of ministry. However, that dream had faded away. The reality is sometimes I get into a dead-end of sorts. Unless we lean on the Lord and listen to his voice and ask for guidance, we will be stuck emotionally and spiritually. After all these years, I had learned that it was not myself but God who had made a difference in the world."

In my opinion, it is good that Hana Missions is focusing on local missions and practical work with realistic goals. Although in recent years, the number of volunteers has been lessening, it does not stop Hana Missions from doing the best they can do with all they have. Hana Missions believes in the unification of all people through social work, unconditional love, and gradual evangelization through these altruistic acts.