Phillip Kim
Nyack Alliance Theological Seminary
CD 702 Working With People
Dr. Martin Sanders and Michelle Park

LE 6: Interview with Irreligious Person Paper

I interviewed Eric, who lives in my neighborhood and who I play basketball with regularly. Eric is 25 years old and was born in South Korea. He immigrated to the United States six years ago when he was 19 years old. I contacted him to play basketball in the morning and to grab breakfast afterwards. While we were playing basketball, I asked him what he's been up to and he said that he finished college and is looking to apply to an accelerated nursing program. I told him that my sister is also in nursing school at Alliance University and that I'm currently in the seminary program at Alliance Theological Seminary.

After we played basketball, we went to a nearby deli and got breakfast sandwiches. I knew before that Eric didn't go to church, so I asked him if he ever was religious. He said that in his early years in Korea, he used to attend a Catholic church with his family, but stopped attending after his confirmation. He said that his family was never really into church and they all stopped going at one point. He shared that he actually thought about attending church when he came to the states because a lot of his friends went to church and he felt that the church was a place where you can meet a lot of other Koreans and be part of a community. I also talked about the history of the Korean American church and how the 1st generation immigrants mostly went to a Korean church to find community because they needed a place where they felt at home and were able to speak their mother language. I asked him why he doesn't go to church and he said that in his current life stage he's busy trying to apply to school and also working at the same time. He said Sundays are his only days to sleep in or do other things that he wants to do. He also shared that he doesn't want to go to church because he feels that church members try to suck you

in and get you heavily involved. Eric mentioned that he understands church to be a place where you get close and share about your life, but he feels that because of his lifestyle, people will start judging him. I agreed with Eric and said that the sad truth is that one of the biggest reasons people don't want to go to church is because of the Christians who judge them. Toward the end of our conversation he also shared that he recently started dating a girl that goes to church. I jokingly responded that if he wants to spend more time with her that he's going to have to start going to church with her. After breakfast I took him home and told him that I'll hit him up to play basketball again soon.

Some reflections I had after the interview was that I felt bad that Eric thought that way of the church but I also completely understand why he thinks that way. I'm not sure what happened to him in the past or what his past experiences were with other church members, but I want to continue to simply be a brother to him. From that conversation, I believe Eric isn't looking for a Christian to try to get him to go to church and participate in all the church programs, but what he really wants and desires is deep friendships and community. I've known Eric for a couple of years now and I noticed that he has a tough time fitting in. As someone who immigrated to the states at a later age, he has a tough time trying to adjust to the American culture and make deeper and more meaningful relationships. There were a lot more questions I would have loved to ask about God and church but I didn't think that it would be beneficial at that point. I plan to continue to develop the relationship I have with Eric and naturally share Jesus with him not by trying to get him to come to church but by loving and continuing to care for him in a way that Jesus would. I believe that is how Eric would like me to speak and represent God to him.