

## Nurses Christian Fellowship Missionary Nurse Survey Results

The purpose of the survey was to assist NCF in planning the program, resources, activities and advocacy for missionary nursing. 106 nurses responded to the survey of which 78 had experience in missions.

The majority of nurses who responded to the survey were staff nurses with more than thirty years of experience taking anywhere from one to thirteen short term mission trips. They worked predominantly in Mexico, Central America and Southeast Asia. Most of the mission trips were self funded by the participants with a much smaller number receiving financial support from their churches, family and friends. There were a number of nurses who responded to the survey who had no experience in missions but were interested in missions nevertheless.

Most nurses received some cultural orientation prior to going on their mission trip. Many saw the need for further preparation in language, culture, knowledge of prominent diseases seen in the area where they served, as well as some orientation in how to deliver nursing care in resource limited environments. One significant suggestion was, "Be prepared to give spiritual care, be able to pray with patients, share the gospel and be focused on the vision of missions in light of eternity."

Nursing activities on mission trips reflected nursing as a whole, from out-patient clinics, where nurses were involved in triage and primary assessments, to community health education and assisting in surgery and labor and delivery. These activities were predominantly in the area of the expertise of nurses participating in them.

Local healthcare authorities and or providers were involved in about one third of the mission activities. Most nurses responding to the survey said they were not required to obtain nursing credentials in the country of their service.

Very few of the study respondents were aware of the Christian Short-term Healthcare Best Practices Movement.

Career missionary nurses were a missed demographic among the survey population, most likely because they were on their fields of service. However those career missionaries responding to the survey reflected differences in financial support, preparation for service and ministry activity from the majority of respondents with short-term mission experience. While most career missionaries today have short-term mission experience, this survey seems to indicate that short-term healthcare mission experience does not necessarily lead to long-term career mission commitment.

Some implications for NCF Missions that can be derived from the survey are as follows:

1. There is a need for NCF missions to encourage new graduates and younger nurses to consider how God might be leading them in career mission endeavors.
2. Few nurse educators responded to the survey; yet missions sending organizations and colleges of nursing in developing countries commonly request nurse educators as personnel for whom they have a need. NCF missions needs to explore ways that academic nursing can become more involved in missions.
3. Access to healthcare needs to be a part of any nursing assessment in any community where missionary nurses are serving. Including input from local healthcare providers, whether professionally educated, community health personnel, or traditional healthcare providers, should be a part of healthcare missions activities. NCF needs to make this a part of its missionary nurse education efforts.
4. Many of the survey participants did not obtain professional credentials in their host country. It is unclear whether the countries do not require nurses to be credentialed or whether this is an oversight on the part of the organization with whom they were affiliated. NCF needs to create awareness about respecting the governance of nursing practice in host countries. NCF should encourage missionary nurses to take responsibility for legalizing their professional status in the host country.
5. While the Best Practices in Health Missions is still in its infancy, NCF should reference the website, <http://csthmbestpractices.org/index.html>, and create awareness of the World Health Organization standards related to nursing and global health.