

Weekly Column
Korean Newspaper



Melvin University
and Me

Monthly meeting of pastors, *ministerium*

The monthly or bi-monthly gathering of pastors, that is, the meeting of pastors, is termed [ministerium.] This originated from Ephesians 4:11-12, and is a key concept of the lay ministry. In the 1970s, Lutheran theologian Oscar Feucht wrote the book "Everybody a minister," which means that "anyone whoever hold Christ in their heart is a minister." He also emphasized, "those who hold the Gospel in their hearts also have own ministry."

At that time, only the pastor was considered a real minister, so it shocked to lay people, especially to the pastors. While I was also talking with pastors, they said that they liked everything, but it was still uncomfortable to accept laypeople as partners in ministry. It was an era in which the idea that laypeople were still one step below, inferior, was dominant. Anyway, Oscar Feucht emphasized the new term MINISTERIUM in that concept. In other words, the church is called "ministerium," a group of pastors and whole congregation. In other words, all the laypeople gathered on Sunday should look around the whole people and shout, "We are all ministry team with the pastor, "ministerium."

This eventually played a major role in developing the concept of 'partners in ministry'. For example, Dr. James Gallow, who was a pastor at the Skyline Methodist Church in San Diego, became famous for writing a book called "Partners in ministry" which was from his Ph.D. dissertation at Drew University in New Jersey. Because he wrote the dissertation as a study by John Wesley, and then he made and published a book based on it. In the book, he emphasized that pastors and laypeople should be co-workers in ministry.

That's why it gave the whole of the United States a fresh concept of partnerships in ministry.

For example, there is the Frazer Methodist Church in Alabama, USA, and Sunday schools are known to gather the most. It is said that there are 6,000 church members and 4-5,000 children at Sunday school. John Mathison, the church's pastor, was named the "best pastor of the year" a few years ago. (The Church of America seems to select and present "The Pastors of the Year" in every year.) I've been to a few conferences within the church itself, and every year, their major theme was "Everyone in the Ministry," which is the concept of partnerships in ministry.

The idea of a partners in ministry is a very good one. A church in Gangnam, downtown Seoul, is famous for its "discipleship-making," which is well known to Korean churches and even Asian churches. However, I heard that from a while ago, they put up the slogan, "A partners in ministry." Although they became a disciple, but it seems that they were eventually upgraded to a "Partners in Ministry."

More than 20 years ago, a conference of lay ministry was held at Hallelujah Church in Bundang, and the main speaker were Pastor Ok Han-heum and Pastor Kim Sang-bok. Pastor Ok Han-heum wrote a book called "Called to Awaken Laity" and Pastor Kim Sang-bok was running the "Lay Ministry Academy." In the end, the direction of the speeches were that both of them had to accept [the layman as the partners in ministry]. The lay people, who had been known only as consumers physically, and showed the possibility of becoming ministers and partners with the pastor in serving of the Lord. Since then, the Korean church has grown with many changes in the position and role of laymen, so I am grateful, and I remind myself once again that both pastors and laymen become a good team, ministerium, in ministry together.