

Weekly Column  
Korean Newspaper



Melvin University  
and Me

## Getting out of the tunnel

Melvin University now seems to have escaped the tunnel. After the opening ceremony two years ago, I had a hard time, as if I were trapped in a tunnel. Before the opening ceremony, it took almost a year to build only what the government basically asked for.

So the opening ceremony was held on August 14, 2021. After the opening ceremony, someone told me that there is only a rosy road left. At the opening ceremony, the Kenya Ministry of Education also gave a congratulatory speech and many people celebrated and ate and enjoyed themselves. I personally thought I had done my job since I built and even finished the opening ceremony. I thought to myself that Rev. Melvin (although he has passed away) has helped me for 20 years, setting up a university and helping me with it. Furthermore, I couldn't imagine what would happen in the future, but I was only happy looking forward to it.

However, two or three days after the opening ceremony, the reality approaches, and now that I think about it, I think I have just begun to enter a dark tunnel. First, although the school opened, it does not immediately allow recruitment of four-year B.A. new students. They give permission step by step while running the school. That's why the BA course of four years was allowed this spring after going through two three-month short courses, and one year diploma course. So the last two years have been a real death tunnel after the opening ceremony.

Perhaps students looked down on the school because of the three-month, six-month, and one-year courses, so they don't pay tuition at all. Therefore, it was difficult because all employees couldn't get staff salaries, faculty salaries, and

even dormitory rent had to be arrived from Korea. I thought it would be done once the school opened, but it was more difficult. And this difficulty was really real stuff. We have to give them three things every month with external help. So in the end, we reduced one cost by eliminating rental dormitories. When the dormitory was removed, almost all the students went back home, leaving only about 10 students attending nearby.

For the school itself, it faced two questions and realistic homework. The students are so poor that they can't pay because they don't have money! Or just pay. They can't? Or they don't? Local professors said, "They can't pay because I don't have money." Should the school give 100% free? Should students be taught completely free, and give them a degree? There was a process of thinking a lot.

I already had a little experience planting and running a seminary in Nagaland, India, so I recognized at that time that students "do not pay," although they may be able to pay. So we, Melvin University, decided not to do that, so from now on, Melvin University decided to make it a strong policy that students who cannot pay tuition will be sent back to home. Professors have also come to realize that students do not pay tuition fees, so they can't receive their salaries on time. So now professors themselves are indirectly encouraging students to pay tuition. Students also became aware of "how difficult it would be for that professor to teach us if we don't pay tuition."

After going through these courses over the past two years, students are now clearly aware of it, so they have overcome a crisis by paying tuition fees in installments. In other words, the second semester began early this September and many students are entering, especially those who paid and pay all their tuition fees, so it is progressing now. That's why I feel like I've gotten out of the tunnel now. Of course there will be another tunnel aftermath, but in this way the first tunnel came out and personally I felt grateful.