



WEEKLY COLUMN in TORONTO  
CANADA

Melvin University with Me



## Me and Rev. Melvin

I first got to know Rev. Melvin J. Steinbron through his first book. When I taught at a seminary in Korea in the 1990s, I was asked to teach with an English book, and used his book, *"Can The Pastor Do It Alone?"* (I have translated it into Korean later). At the same time, I thought Rev. Melvin was only the senior pastor at one local church in the United States, but later I learned that he was serving in the Lay Pastors Ministry for the entire United States and the other countries. I translated Rev. Melvin's materials and used them for Korean churches for the past 20 years.

In 2000, at an international conference in St. Louis, I met him in person. He looked like late 60s, and introduced me to all the participants. It was my first meeting with him, and a few years later I visited his home when I went to another conference. When I visited his home in Minneapolis, Minnesota his wife was sick in bed. Rev. Melvin and I talked about this ministry in his studying room basement, which was really helpful, and I was very encouraged there.

Since I was committed to this ministry, it was a really practical and precious time to talk to him. Since I officially began this ministry in 1999, I have spoken to him almost every day, every moment. And he first became my teacher and also mentor in terms of ministry. At that time, we communicated by fax. Because neither I nor him used e-mail.

So we used faxes easily, and I still keep about 200 pages of his fax letters.

In the beginning, we talked a lot about how to start this ministry, how to create a leadership group for LPM Korea, and materials. He allowed me to translate all of his materials. Two books, four manuals, three reequipping materials. In fact, he helped me a lot. Loved me, and invested his energy and time into me so that I could grow properly.

Idon't think there's anyone more like Rev. Melvin. He really helped, guided and taught me. He had only advised me twice in 20 years: 1) "You need to improve your English to do international ministry." 2) "You're not the type to make money, so don't cling too much to fundraising." Both were good advice for me. He was never in a hurry and always listened to me, was always there whenever I needed him, and could talk on his cell phone even when he wasn't home. I used to call him as soon as I finished PACE Training at local church seminars or pastors' group seminars, and he always enjoyed my reports and gave me valuable feedback. He was almost like my father.

Because of him, and through such close communication, my ministry could last a long time. Rev. Melvin died a few years ago (June 15, 2017, aged 97). Before he died, he had a few surgeries when he was 95 years old, so he couldn't reply to my email directly. He replied occasionally, and finally he said he read my emails, but couldn't reply. Even though I didn't receive his reply, I still emailed him every week until he died, as I have done for the past 20 years or so. We need this help around us to make any ministry successful, because without these help from other people we cannot succeed.

Rev. Melvin developed good materials. I've never found such material

from anyone else. I have introduced Dr. Melvin Steinbron and materials to Yale University Divinity School (YDS) and donated two books of Dr. Melvin to their library. It was because there were no books with theory and practice together. Because he started his ministry on his own and worked for a long time. He knew what it took for us to carry out our ministry. Finally, he wrote 25 letters to lay pastors and wrote lots of ideas on LPMI's Network News quarterly.

I got useful ideas and insights from 20 years of Network News, translated and edited them and used them for churches and schools for the last 25 years. They were really precious resources. I can say it has become the real blood and flesh of this ministry. Anyway, through him, I can make this ministry successful, and I'm trying to do it for others, but I found it hard for me to do the same style as him.