

Weekly Column
Korean Newspaper



Melvin University
and Me

Theory and Practice in the ministry

Pastor Melvin wrote two books. The first book was written after 10 years of practice. In the next 10 years, he wrote the second book, which he theorized. In other words, he wrote it according to necessity after 20 years. So, practice first and then theorize. Technically, the first book is for laypeople and the second is for pastors.

However, the pastor must look at the first and second book to lead this ministry. Pastor Melvin said that each book is beneficial alone, like two paintings on the wall, but there is synergy when looking at the two books together.

As I was working in the ministry for Korea, I am writing a second column now on the Newspaper because I think I have gained more confidence as the two books were complemented, and the practical and theoretical aspects were clearly explored.

As soon as the LPM Korea Institute started in the 2000s, the Christian Newspaper contacted me and sent a reporter saying they would interview us about our ministry. For two years, I wrote on the Newspaper theoretical aspect of the laity ministry itself throughout the country. At that time, through a two-year column, our ministry was known throughout the country, which greatly helped in the development and spread of the ministry. In addition, the newspaper reporter was a part-time student, a student at Yonsei University, and served as a staff member at our Institute for several years. I am even more grateful that he was doing well in our ministry, and moved to the States for studying and now became the senior pastor at wonderful New York.

Now, more than 20 years later, I am writing another column in the current Christian Daily Newspaper. I only wrote theoretically at that time, but now that I am writing in the ministry after 20 years, I write a column about practice. In other words, the theory first came to practice. In other words, I think it has gone through the stages of practice, theory, and practice. Practice is necessary, and theory is also necessary for any ministry. Pastor Melvin practiced first and then theorized based on it. Conversely, I practiced the theory first and then the practice. In any way, I can't say that this was better than that. It may be ordered according to the situation or according to the person's preference. What is clear, however, is that the two things, theory and practice, must be firmly established.

It is true that pastors prefer practice first, then move to theory because they are busy with the ministry itself. And that is something everyone agrees with. However, the problem is that if the theory is not supported, it is difficult to have confidence in the ministry, and in that case, it is easy to shorten the ministry. From my personal experience, 80% of practice and 20% of theory would be good for lay people. However, the opposite may be true for a pastor. Since it is the lay people who actually do the ministry, we should put weight on practice. However, it is only when the theory is established that directs the ministry, it can be explained, and the legitimacy of the ministry can be emphasized.