



WEEKLY COLUMN in TORONTO  
CANADA

Melvin University with Me



### **Different needs**

There are several countries that do and accept our Lay Pastors Ministries, but I would like to talk about why by taking four countries as an example.

First of all, there were too many people in one church [United States]. It was College Hill Presbyterian Church (CHPC) in Cincinnati, Ohio. Of course, there were small churches, too. When Pastor Melvin developed this ministry, the church had over 2,000 members. So personal, that is, one-on-one care was needed, but it was not possible with the traditional church system (a system of care by Senior pastor and deputy pastors). And it was true that most American churches, like other countries, focused only on evangelism for 30-40 years, so once they entered and settled in, they were less interested. Furthermore, at that time, when the Parachute movement blossomed, many institutions were created to help the church. So Pastor Melvin's PACE ministry was one of them, and it worked out well because they were satisfied with PACE ministry in many churches. And each church loved this ministry. Because it made the laity take them seriously, and it was a kind of lay movement.

[In Korea] the PACE ministry came in at the end of the 100 years of church history (1999). For the past 100 years or so, they have been doing many ministries, including evangelism. So they were looking for what their next step was and where it was. So when they tasted LPM/PACE, they immediately understood and accepted it. The reason why Korean churches used PACE for church growth was because it had been decreasing in number since the 1990s, and neither the laymen nor the pastors were any longer satisfied with the current church situation. And the lay people wanted to grow fully because they were half-developed, and PACE made them grow, and they were satisfied with this ministry.

[Nagarand] in India is a poor country that needs help from others, especially PACE, where the core concept is 'love with skin on.' And they had never heard of a laity ministry and lay pastors ministry in the past for almost 100 years. Their Christian history is almost the same as in Korea. So they never thought of the laity ministry and about the laity itself. They only did the so-called 3P: Presence, Prayer, and Pay. They focused only on the pastor's ministry and the church had jurisdiction over the local church. The church headquarters controls the local churches and pastors, so it has a strong hierarchy for 100 years, and it is also in an atmosphere that they are not free to plant the church. When they heard about the LPM (Lay Pastors Ministry) and the PACE ministry from me, they looked surprised, most of them thanked me, and they opened their eyes to the new paradigm and accepted it, believing that it was biblical. For them, it will really be the second Reformation, so the current PACE Seminary (founded in 2015 in Dimapul) is playing an important role in this movement and benefitting future Nagaland churches.

The other day [in Kenya], I talked to students about the laity ministry in the classroom as a special lecture. But I found it quite difficult. I found something worse than the laity of the Korean church, even though they were well-known seminarians. Of course, it wasn't their fault. It is believed that the Kenyan churches were not yet familiar with that, had not been dealt with in seminary for decades, and there were also no faculty members who could teach. The level of churches is also directly proportional to the country's economic level. In other words, the reality, or level, of the Kenyan church is mainly systematic education in the church. Rather than studying the Bible, it seems that people who pray a lot and serve earnestly are more comfortable with the idea that they can serve in ministries. Now that the government is concerned about the ministers of atheism, it is that the government will go to a seminary/theological university to receive a degree, get permission from the government, and the qualification for preaching. So, I am working to reorganize the pastors by establishing a policy to be properly ordained and ministered. Of course, it is true that there is also a backlash that "the government is too deeply involved in the church." Anyway, due to the reality of the churches, there was no time for pastors to seriously think about the laity. It was like the pastors of the Korean church a few decades ago. To put it harshly, the laity has been regarded as an object of use.

I asked the students the question, "Do you accept laity as partners in ministry?" but it was an atmosphere that they didn't understand what I was talking about. It was like a church in Korea in the 6th and 70s. When I was working in Korea, about 20 years ago, there were many pastors who were curious about the question, "Do you accept laity as partners of the ministry?" Now, I think all such problems have been solved. First of all, the level of laity has increased due to the change of time, and the other is that the idea that realistic pastoralism is impossible without laity has become an issue that touches the skin of individual pastors. That's why the book "Partners in Ministry" became famous in the United States. African churches are likely to take time. This is for the two reasons mentioned above. The level of laity should be raised, and pastors' consciousness about laity should change. Just as it took Korea two to 30 years, so will churches here in Kenya.