

Weekly Column  
Korean Newspaper



Melvin University  
and Me

## Lay Pastors Ministry and church growth

I was frequently asked by pastors how this ministry was related to the growth of the church. I was also contemplating several times how the church would grow through this ministry. Many people will ask this question, and I am well aware that this is a natural question for pastors because I have been asked very often.

1) Through this ministry, I learned that church growth is possible indirectly, not directly. 2) Church growth through this ministry takes time, not a short time of 2-3 weeks, for example, but a long time of 2-3 years. I've seen a lot of PACE churches. Some churches would do it for 3-4 years, and some churches would only do it for a few months. I mean, it's hard to determine success in at least a year.

It is thought that if the founding association does this ministry for at least a year, they will reap the fruits: first is individual maturity, and it gathers and moves towards church growth. This is true. As you can see, there is an order here. First it is personally mature, then it is the growth of the church as a result. So obviously there has to be this order, and time is needed to achieve visible fruits, I mean the growth of the church.

Here we need to understand what the original core concept of this ministry is. This ministry is a caring ministry, not a church growth strategy or program. If you miss out on these basic core concepts, you misunderstand that the final goal, the destination, that is, the church growth. However, I personally don't think caring itself is the final goal of this ministry. Even this core concept is

part of the ministry. I mean, what's the next step? Or what's it going toward? It's important to have these questions at some point. Anyway, as the national director of this ministry, I should have answered it.

There are three examples of this problem: First of all, it was written by Pastor Melvin. He wrote about what should be added to Faith ("FAITH PLUS"), that we should add some more qualitative aspects/character when we do the Lay Pastors Ministry/PACE. I think this is kind of a strategy. Through this addition to FAITH, it will mature and grow slowly, and finally, it moves to change among the church members, that is, organizational change, and church growth. Perhaps the strategy of Rev. Melvin? In particular, he wrote these elements in "Letters to the Lay Pastors." It is what is in II Peter 1:5-8, and says "So you should work harder and add virtue to your faith, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love."

The second is the Hallelujah Church. In fact, the church was already large enough to have 6,000 members. Although it matured enough through many ministries and programs, PACE indirectly affected the growth of the church as its culture and direction of ministry changed completely through PACE ministries. For example, they understood that a Christian should be a PACE minister, so the church culture finally moved that way.

The third is the example of Rev. Park of Rock Church in downtown Seoul. Pastor Park is one of our staff. He was very talented in preaching and was also interested in PACE ministries, so his church has been in PACE ministries for more than 10 years and is still trying to apply new strategies for PACE to his congregation. And he found PACE ministries to be very useful everywhere: Sunday school children, teenagers, even general organizations, companies, and prisons. His congregation eventually influenced the growth of the church because they fully understood what it meant.

I consulted the question, "How much have I grown myself through this ministry?" I have already received pastoral care training through CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education), so I am sure that I have matured a little and grown myself through that training. In some ways, CPE trained me well enough, but it was

only a part of my ministry journey compared to the PACE ministry. Here, the former (CPE) and the latter (PACE) are both trained and advanced care skills and concepts, but it can be said that Melvin's actual care system is an extension of care skills and also focuses on caring for the general public.