



PACE International Seminary

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Nagaland India

Reflection

Lay Pastors Ministry / Rev. ByeongChea, Seo / President of PIS

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“Lay Pastors Ministry is the system of congregational care by laypeople” — Melvin J. Steinbron

What is the Lay Pastors Ministry?

This is the system of congregational care by lay people.

This concept was putted by Melvin’s Training Manual. At introduction part, it says like that. It means this is not the program but kind of a system. What is that mean? Once we say system, we may recall a few things, but easily we might think computer system. When we talk about computer, we know how it works. Once we push the start button, our computer is on. That is the **SYSTEM**. This ministry is just like that. What and who does, and when and how it works. Church ministry should be like that. Pastor alone, laypeople alone couldn’t do that. If we look at Bible it says we are one body, one church, also one God. Which means the leader has to think how his act, his talk effective to the lay people. If they have caring heart, it goes to them directly; if he has not those mindset laypeople know that.



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Lay people also need to know church is the system, which their act is effective to their peers directly. So the Bible says each one’s hands, eyes, so on. As we see computer, every single part of our body, that is, every single of our members are connected directly and indirectly. So Professor Paul Stevens stressed that to see the pastor as a system leader. In his book, The Equipper Pastor, he explained more in detail.



Lay Pastors Ministry is also the brand of this ministry. First they, LPMI USA, put the name, 'Lay Pastoral Care Ministry' which means this ministry is done by lay people and it is on the pastoral care, but later on they changed the name, Lay Pastors Ministry (called LPM), which means Lay Pastors are doing this Ministry, its core ministry is PACE; Prayer, Available, Contact, and Example. They focused on the person Lay Pastors. Why people is the most important to start and to do ministry. Job is less important, and person is more important. Jim Collins says if we are thinking to do something we have to collect the right people first. Of course it's not easy to get right people, but we know what that mean.



Why do we need people first in front door. Mostly churches think ministry or program first. Then they recruit people to slot it. In this case mostly failed, because that was not their choice but someone else's choice. So they do some but mostly became passive style. If they chose it they will put all of their energy there, but in case of someone's choice they don't think they have ownership.

Ownership in any ministry is very important. Today we call autonomy. Daniel H. Pink writing about this in his book, *Drive* (2009) in details. He mentioned there three type of motivations; *Carrot & Stick* (Motivation 1.0), *Empowerment* (2.0), and *Autonomy* (3.0). Of course he referred the early years people need Carrot & Stick for doing something, just before of postmodern-era people needed Empowerment, but now later 21centry people need autonomy. These approaches make a sense.

So other churches are growing because those people who left previous church come and joined to there. So almost every week many matured people who are trained very well and almost ready to do any ministry enroll. That is today's church. We pastors have to know the reality. We stay at fantasy world too long. They miss every people, even almost their church to close down.



And another problem is too long training course, curriculum today. Today's Christians not the baby anymore. They are grown up enough. They are just want to do something, but the church, exactly the pastor keep them in airplane shed too long. Laypeople are ready to fly out, but they still keep them inside. Two problems happen. Their energy is out of service, because in there they wings are died, so they couldn't fly ...I mean no energy to go out. In the moment to finish, no energy left. It was there and enormous energy mounted up, but too late to open the door.

This is the fatal mistake of today's pastor. I found some reasons why they do same mistake even they knew there is some problems. First, their curriculum, and second they don't know about what the motivation is enough. First, most churches have curriculum for three years-training course. Usually the curriculum made by denominational headquarter, or prominent big church developed and introduced. So local church, pastor believe the big pastor's or follow denominational policy. So even the church know it is not the best resources still they use that without other options. So what I say here they put them into airplane shed too long until they are almost died.



Today's people are changed a lot. In the early years they didn't know much about Bible and Ministry so they

needed three years-study program, but now they are matured enough to do ministry. So they need only paradigm shift to jump into a ministry, and in the other hand, today's period of training is getting shorter.



From three years to two years, then one year, then six months and then, even three months today. Only three months training course is good enough. So three years in the plane shed is really not wise. Even as you know PACE training take only 12 hours, and my case I am train them only straight two days or two nights. Why, they are almost ready to fly. Only open door and push them to fly in the air is two days are enough.

Of course there are another reason to do three years. This is not proper reason but still work. They, church want to keep them in their church, not going to other churches so they say three-years are correct, also says Jesus trained three years, but this is not wise strategy. Laypeople is not anymore laity in the past ten years, or twenty years ago. They live today, right now and here. We pastors have to think of the real issue and reality.

There were some mistake that didn't work this ministry in the church. I have trained laypeople at one church which actually I was belong to. While I was there as an associate pastor, and because I have just translated Dr. Melvin's the first book, *Can The Pastor Do It Alone?*, Our senior pastor told me to train the laypeople, so it announced in public, then around 19 people were gathered at training session. It was very first experience for my ministry journey aftermath. I train them, and developed the system of Lay Pastors Ministry, and they, lay pastor, mobilized to care for their peers as the textbook has taught, then what happened was that they mobilized but mobilized too much, too high, I mean the church never mobilized before, so it was really new experience to them and the pastor himself. He, the pastor, was a little uncomfortable and afraid their mobilization. Another thing we made



mistake was that when we finished training, it should be Commissioning Service there, and have to give them certificate of being a lay pastor in public on Sunday or any occasion, it should be really in public event, by the way, our senior pastor has decided no Commissioning Service, and also foolish to give them privately, call them individually at his office so give them. What an interesting scene, isn't it!

I understand why he did just like that. Probably he worries those who are not trained and not being lay pastors, maybe those people feel some disappointment because they are not selected. It means the pastor was thinking, understanding this is not the ministry by gifted people, and also probably this is one of those ready-made-programs, so he didn't think of it seriously. So those lay pastors couldn't their ministry properly because they are not appointed in public, in the end they couldn't that ministry in public, so it didn't work and close down very soon.

The people there are still regretting that it closed down too early, and they believed God gave the moment to them to change, to promote the church, but they missed the opportunity, so no more opportunity came to them since then. God gives us it sometimes, not every time, so when it comes to us, we shouldn't miss it.

Another mistake happened at other church. I have trained so they are motivated and ready to take action, jump into ministry, but pastor is not ready to commission them, he said, "after went to prayer mountain for commission, he will do that, he promised just like that. One month later I called him to know commissioned them, he said still praying for that, another one month pasted by, I called, he is still praying, in the end they never commissioned them. They are ready, but no door opened properly and on time, so they missed its opportunity.

I have found meaning of this ministry like this: First, every believer is a minister. This is derived the meaning of Ephesians 4:11-12, the main scripture and also core concept of the Lay Pastors Ministry. In 1970s, Lutheran theological Oscar Feucht has written the book, "Everyone A Minister" which was shocked to the people, especially to pastors because people, both pastors and laypeople had been thought that only Pastor are minister. But Oscar thought those who has Christ in mind, they are all ministers and he make new terminology, MINISTERIUM which is originally means monthly gathering of Pastors. Second, the concept of Partners in Ministry. Dr. James Garlow, was the pastor of Skyline Methodist Church at San Diego has written the book, "Partners in Ministry." This book was came from his Ph.D dissertation at Drew University. He stressed in the book that we, pastors and laypeople should be partners in ministry.

One church at Kangnam, downtown in Seoul had been focused on the 'discipleship-making.' This ministry paradigm was famous in Korean churches and also to the Asian churches. But now they have been upgraded and changed to the 'church of partners in ministry.' Because this is more proper long-term direction of their church. Third, the pastor grow and also laypeople grow.

Third, the pastor grow and also laypeople grow. Of course they have been grow. However, without the proper paradigm and ministry direction their growth were minimal. But through Lay Pastors Ministry, the both laypeople and pastors have been growth. Fourth, the church health. This is directly related to the church culture. If the church is good, the church will grow. Because good culture accommodates everything. Lay Pastors Ministry is pursuing a health and good church-oriented. Culture is related to the commitment. Finally, team ministry. Team ministry here is not refer to pastors and pastoral staffs, but laypeople and laypeople, people to people. They have to have the team spirit, and so partners in ministry with their senior pastor and team concept among laypeople. That is not only YOU and ME, but 'WE' concept has to be there.



attracted my attention, so bought, read, and also translated into Korean. The content was that the dialogue between old pastor and young pastor. Young pastor has struggled about his church ministry, so old pastor, I guess experienced pastor advised him from Ephesians, to equip the saints for the work of ministry.