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Nagaland India

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# Reflection

on the Lay Pastors Ministry (since 1999)

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

## Lay Ministry & Pastoral Care

What is the relation to Lay Ministry & pastoral care. I have found this is an interesting relationship. Actually this two is different because lay ministry is just lay ministry as you see, and also pastoral care is just pastoral care.

At theological schools, some has lay ministry curriculum, and other school has pastoral care curriculum, of course my precious schools in Canada had this two different section, but our Lay Pastors Ministry puts together this two different concept. Of course Dr. Melvin started from lay ministry (Ep. 4:11-12), then moved on the pastoral care, why? He found lay ministry in the church, then what kind of ministry, so he match it with pastoral care, because he found two goals of local church: 1. Evangelizing (Matt. 28:19-20); 2. Pastoral Care (John 21:15-17). Then there are many materials on the first goal (evangelizing) at every church, but he found really lack on pastoral care, so he tried to make, develop lay pastoral care ministry for the church, so as you see that he put together lay ministry plus pastoral care. Anyway, we need both, because lay ministry help us to change our mindset, such as paradigm, without this, for pastor and laypeople, our ministry won't be so effective.

And I found that he was right. Let's think of the prof. Paul Stevens of Regent College, Vancouver Canada, as we know he is the most theologian and practitioner in the lay ministry over the world. But we find he also talk about lay ministry with pastoral care, he doesn't say directly these but we found from his writings. If we see his book, *The Equipper's Guide to Every-Member Ministry* (1992), Chapter 3, "Lay Pastor and Caregivers," he mentioned three models of lay ministry: Stephen Ministry, Howard Stone's *The Caring Church*, and Melvin's Lay Pastors Ministry.





But coincidentally? Three of them are talk of pastoral care. I know them very well. Stephen Ministry is caring ministry for crisis, once people are in the crisis, Stephen minister visit and care for them, but when they become ok, Stephen minister took off their hands, but this ministry system and materials are very good and excellent, but the problem is too longer training, for instance one-week long training, and also too expensive to be trained, comparing to LPM, its very expensive, 200 dollars USD for completion, but LPM is not that expensive to be trained. Anyway, that is caring ministry. Howard Stone's *The Caring Church* also talk caring ministry in the church, and LPM/PACE, of course caring ministry, so as we look at, Paul Stevens, even he is specialist on the lay ministry, stressed on caring ministry, so lay ministry is mostly focused on the caring ministry as we found. Lay Ministry is not Pastoral Care, but as we see it, almost equal level.

So Melvin's approach and system which he developed is correct and good for the church. Of course he didn't take away another ministry, Evangelizing people out there, if we look at his second book, *Lay Driven Church*, we see that. There, he wrote two ministries, "striking a balanced between the Great Commission and the Great Charter (at Contents section), so he agreed church needs two ministries, but he developed the latter, because there are already a lot of materials of the former.

Also if you look at the Bible, there are many stories of Jesus' ministry was focused on the pastoral care, not evangelizing, furthermore I found Nagaland church need really pastoral care ministry. Two illustrations are there. In Korea, I have studied PACE with some of Naga students. One was a doctor of archaeology, and another was theology student. I have worked with them for International level.

**In Nagaland**, I have formally visited two churches. During I stayed in Nagaland me and Aloto were invited church to speak. The first church was medium-size, around 100 people attended which was a rural area, there we talked about Ephesian 4:11-12; and another church was in downtown, about 1,000 people attend, also we talked there with same scripture, but I stressed 'partners in ministry' at second church. After worship service I had chance to talk with Senior Pastor, he couldn't speak English well, so his son interpreted between his father and me. I asked pastor how was my preaching, he said it was very good and new to him, 'partners in ministry' and appreciated me gave them new concept. From both churches we, Aloto and me, got confidence Nagaland church need this ministry.



**When I was in Canada** I have been trained of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), so it was easy to adopt this ministry myself. CPE is a kind of training for senior class of seminary, mostly in the States and Canada. To me, when I was a M.Div student at McMaster Divinity College at Hamilton in Canada, school asked us to complete CPE course, so I have done at Wookstock, for Mentally Retarded People, and also later I did one more unit at Whityby, for Psychiatric Hospital. I have learned a lot from two CPE. As we know, CPE is for pastors, not lay people, but sometimes lay people come and are trained CPE. Anyway it is for future pastors, but our ministry is for pure lay people, yes it's good for church and pastors, but more focused on the lay people. Why? They, lay people, also need to grow just like pastors.



I tried to adapt CPE to our students while I was in Nagaland. It was more good to them, because our students learned the PACE ministry (12 Training Module) from me already, so they understood CPE more easily, so I found PACE+ CPE for students is really good.

**There are some uncomfortable** issue in this ministry. We call it "paradigm shift." To change our previous thought is not easy, because we used to have those habits last many years, so I heard some ministry says don't come over 50 years-old, I guess they think those old pastors are not easy to change their mindset, and also in some sense they don't want to change their style. The difficult in this ministry is giving the ownership of the ministry to the laypeople. First when it was given to laity they will make many mistakes so as we have to wait until they realized and learn, and mature through those mistakes. They will learn and growing. If pastor couldn't wait those period of time, laypeople never grown up and will stay at baby level forever. One pastor complained to me that his congregation, even leaders, just like elders and deacons, never grown up. He said he taught them, preached them last 20-30 years, but they are same yesterday, today and also tomorrow, he confessed. What is that? Why they are not growing. That's neither laypeople's problem, nor their responsibility. That's pastor himself. I know its pastor and the church. He never train them properly, and even he never gave the authority to laypeople to do something, so they couldn't grow. He wants grow his church but in some way he doesn't want to grow his church. Am I wrong? No. It's true. He complained about his congregation about not growing, but as you feel he has been made them just like that.

I understood why he couldn't make it. I got to know what it is. First of all they don't know what to do; and second, they are never trained to motivate and give freedom to the laypeople. As you know that if there is problem at church, that is pastor's problem; if there are pastor's problem, it is school's problem; if school's problems, that is professor's problem. I am sure I am right because I found those steps many years. In the end, professor didn't teach students about those things that will be happen to them very soon. So when they, pastors, realized they have some problems on this area it is already late. So they are taught about it.





**There are many names** of designation about Lay Pastors. Original name is Lay Pastor, but depend on their situation and theology, they call them differently. So our respected founder Dr. Melvin Steinbron has written on this issue at one of his thirteen monograph, "How we call them." At there, he understood there are many different names in the local church in the States, but he stressed even they put different name "the rose should be pour out same smell". For instance, in the States one of the LPM big churches is Frazer Memorial Church at Montgomery Alabama. They adopt this ministry many years ago but they are not call them Lay Pastor rather call them lay minister.

In Korea, there is one big LPM church, Hallelujah church. They adopt this PACE ministry many years ago, were doing very well, even they opened PACE Training Center in the church so produced more than 1,000 lay pastors. Senior pastor David Kim was quarreling with his wife for many years because of this calling issue. David Kim constantly insisted to call them 'lay pastor,' but his wife was uncomfortable all the time about this naming because many people saying this naming not proper to the laypeople, so told her many time, and she talk to her husband about it. But David Kim was not giving up to call them as "lay pastor" because as Melvin said, the naming is very important, it change people's mind and soul, and also their identity who they are. He understood the meaning of this ministry exactly.

Of course those two names are totally different as you know, but they call it slightly different from original name, in so doing, many other churches are followed their style. Of course there was no problem, because they knew exact meaning of PACE, and what it is, but it is a little harm to the other churches, and also there are already the name, lay minister, in the other section, so make them confused without useless. We have to be careful about how to call them. Of course I understand there are some risk of calling them as a lay pastor. Because people think pastor is those who are graduate seminary and ordained person.



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