

ARTICLES

Missional Discipleship in Post-Pandemic Korea: The Case of Suwonsung Church¹

Bright Myeong-Seok Lee

Abstract

The decline in social trust in the Korean Protestant church is a significant social issue that requires attention and action. Despite being more involved in community service than other religions, trust in the church has fallen, and it is essential to understand why. This paper will examine the previous dominant method of discipleship training, which may have contributed to this decline. By using a case study of a Korean church, the study will analyze the effectiveness of the discipleship training and its impact on social trust. Then I will reflect on how the Korean church should respond to today's situation characterized by VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) and the pandemic. This paper will suggest a new approach called missional discipleship, which seeks to create a more engaging and inclusive environment that inspires the church to lead and participate in community service.

Keywords: Pandemic; Korean church; Reliability; Disciple(s); Discipleship training

Introduction

Besides the mega trends of digitization and climate change, South Korea is rapidly aging and the birthrate is falling at an alarming rate. The world encountered a pandemic in February 2020 that tremendously changed the way of life. Today's situation may be most aptly described by Yuval Noah Harari who said that humanity has

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technologically developed a canoe into a galley ship then into a steam ship to finally a space shuttle, yet no one knows the direction humanity is headed (Harari 2015: 415).

In an uncertain, unpredictable, and rapidly changing world there is even less time or capacity to respond. According to Doris Märtin, the acronym VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) best describes the first quarter of the twenty-first century (2021: 37).² Perhaps one reason why the Korean church cannot find a way out of this turbulence is that, as Märtin pointed out, we continue to be like an ostrich with our head in the sand rather than facing up to the new reality that requires an openness to adapt to change (2021: 111).

The ministry strategies that once worked can no longer guarantee the sustainability of the Korean church. It is time for the Korean church to sincerely ask if we have the will to transform ourselves to be able to face the new challenges of our age. In this study I will consider reasons why the Protestant church has lost public credibility despite being actively engaged in community service, indeed more than any other religious groups. For this purpose, I will analyze the phenomenon of discipleship training that once dominated the Korean Protestant church. Based on the analysis I will consider ways for the church to respond to the age of VUCA and pandemic and suggest missionary discipleship as a solution.

Definition and usage of the term “disciple”

According to *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* edited by Gerhard Kittel, the word “disciple” can be defined as a learner or a follower. To be a disciple means to personally draw close and follow after a teacher in all aspect of life (Kittel 1967: 44). The etymology of the word “disciple” and its application in different historical periods should be reviewed.

“Disciple” in the Old and New Testaments

The word “disciple” is not clearly defined in the Old and New Testament but is merely used to name a group of people. In Isa 8.16 the word *limud* (למד) appears once, and it comes from the word *lamad* (למד) which means to learn, train and experience. In the New Testament Gospels, Matthew calls the crowds who follow Jesus Christ the disciples (Mt. 10.1), while Luke calls the same people apostles (Lk. 6.13). This implies

2 VUCA is originally a military term to describe the unpredictable and constantly changing battleground situation, but now it is more often used to describe our complicated and uncertain reality that necessitates swift response.

that in the first-century church community the terms were used interchangeably. The term apostle (*apostolos*) comes from the Hebrew word *shaliach* (שליח) to indicate one who was sent from Jerusalem with a specific mission to the Jewish community dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. According to Robert M. Johnston, these Jewish apostles were generally supported with funding from the Jerusalem temple, and worked through Jewish networks (Johnston 2006: 2). For instance, Saul from Tarsus who appears in Acts 9.2 was one such apostle for Judaism until he was called to be God's disciple.

The development of the term "disciple" in the early church can be further deduced from the *Didache*.³ George Cantrell Allen states that the term "apostle" was first only applied to the twelve who had personal relationship with Jesus during his lifetime (Acts 1.21), but as time went by it also came to mean ones who had been sent with a mission, or missionaries (Allen 1903: 21). So, by the time the *Didache* was written, the focus shifted from the importance of direct encounter with Christ toward discerning the true apostles from the false missionaries who called themselves apostles (Allen 1903: 21). Johnston states that apostles are usually those who had been sent by an authority to carry out tasks on their behalf, while the term "disciple" was used specifically for those who were with Jesus Christ in person (Johnston 2006: 5).

In his first letter to the church in Corinth, Paul tells them, "Be imitators of me [*Μιμηταί μου*], as I am of Christ" (1 Cor 11.2). The term "imitators of me" (*Μιμηταί μου*) almost reminds one of the image of children imitating their father (1 Cor 4.16).⁴ This means to go beyond cognitive response to Paul's teachings, to imitate Paul's character and even his behaviour. This also expects of the teacher an ethical and exemplary life which the disciples would want to imitate.⁵

"Disciple" in the early church and Roman Empire

In the culture of the Roman Empire, a disciple was primarily a student, or someone who learns from a great teacher. An example of this use is found in the writings of Dio Chrysostom (ad 40–120), the philosopher and historian who lived in today's Turkey. In his fifty-fifth Discourse, Chrysostom says even though one has not lived at the same time as a teacher, someone who wholly lives according to the teacher's teachings must be called a pupil or a disciple (Chrysostom 1962: 383) Chryso-

3 120 pages of handwritten Greek manuscript found in the Jerusalem monastery of Constantinople in 1873 by Philotheos Bryennios, Bishop of Nicomedia.

4 I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me. (1 Cor. 4.16)

5 For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. (1 Cor 4.15)

tom's understanding of discipleship is the extra-biblical evidence of the widespread perception of discipleship in the first century, as Christianity was growing.

Justin Martyr (ad 100–165), the church father tells of the interests of the earliest church members.

And on the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites [us] to the imitation of these noble things (Richardson 1953: 287).

Having the people “imitate the noble things” means to go beyond cognitive acceptance to imitate the actions of the teachers according to what has been written by the apostles and the prophets. This is in line with apostle Paul's exhortation to the churches he founded to imitate Christ and live as disciples of Christ (Acts 20.35; Gal. 4.12; 1 Cor. 11.1; Phil. 3.17–21).

Transforming discipleship

The Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, organized by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Arusha, Tanzania from 8 to 13 March 2018 brought to the forefront a new perspective on discipleship for churches worldwide. With its theme of “Called to Transforming Discipleship”, the conference highlighted a novel approach, urging churches to embrace the notion of “transforming discipleship” (Jukko and Keum 2019: 5–19). While the traditional understanding of discipleship is often limited to a relationship with Jesus, this conference emphasized the need for a proactive engagement in fulfilling Jesus' mission in the world (Ross 2020: 18–20). Thus, what Pope Francis has termed “missionary discipleship” is, in essence, the concept of transforming discipleship (Francis 2013: 96–98).

The Arusha Conference sounds the alarm that the relentless exploitation of God's creation to sustain our economic system is giving rise to circumstances of ecological degradation and insists that ecological concern consists of an essential part of discipleship of the churches worldwide (Jukko and Keum 2019: 9–11). The conference also emphasizes that “Mission from the Margins” involves validating the capacity of marginalized individuals, engaging in their battles and embracing their aspirations (2019: 11–12). This requires overcoming the tendency to marginalize, resisting and challenging the influences that promote exclusion in our respective contexts.

In this context, embracing transforming discipleship in the spirit of mission from the margins enables the church to re-evaluate our approaches to wielding power,

distributing leadership, and collaborating for mission. It provides an opportunity for us to reset the church's priorities and explore new avenues for fostering inclusivity and equity in our shared mission.

Discipleship training in the Korean church: the case of Suwonsung Church (PCK Tonghap)

As is widely known, the new ministry paradigm called discipleship training in Korean churches started with Rev. Oak Han-heum of SaRang Church in the 1970s (Hong 2022). Oak was inspired by Hans Küng's ecclesiology and apostleship of the laity during his study at Calvin Theological Seminary in the US (Park, E. 2013: 127). As he studied the training materials of the Korea Campus Crusade for Christ and the Korean Navigators, he recognized problems with the widely used doctrinal (catechistic) approach. Oak's main idea was to implement discipleship training that revolves around small groups of lay members rather than church leadership. His book *Called to Awaken the Laity* was translated into ten different languages. He led 85 sessions of lay leadership seminars and trained 18,500 ministers on discipleship training (Kim, M., 2010). Oak poured himself into discipleship training to the point of terminal illness. This discipleship training functioned as the rudder for a generation of the Korean church. Park Eung-gyu has this to say about the impact of Oak's discipleship training programme:

One contribution of Oak Han-heum was to effectively imprint on the Korean church the truth that all saints, whether clergy or lay, have inherited the apostleship, and are called to share the gospel passed down in the church and to make disciples of all nations (Park, E. 2013: 127).

In this way, Oak's discipleship training had at its core the recognition of apostleship of the laity. Discipleship training brought fresh change into the stagnant Korean church structure, and there is little doubt that it was the new paradigm that grew the Korean church since the latter half of the 1980s. The pastor of Suwonsung Church, in Suwon in Gyeonggi Province, early on adapted this new discipleship training paradigm for his church.⁶

6 The rationale behind choosing Suwonsung Church's discipleship training as the case study originates from the author's first-hand participation in this training. This experience enabled the researcher to undertake pertinent research on the discipleship training methods implemented by Suwonsung Church.

The beginning of discipleship training in Suwonsung Church

In this section I will briefly examine the process of discipleship training in Suwonsung Church and its major characteristics to draw out lessons with which the Korean church may be revitalized in today's changed society.

Pastor An Gwang-soo of Suwonsung Church first began discipleship training in 1987 when the church was reaching its five-year anniversary. The first cohort of beginners class was conducted for five weeks from 9 June to 10 July, meeting twice a week for a total of ten sessions (*Suwonsung Church Bulletin* 1987). An says he was motivated to start the training based on his own experience of coming to Christ and attending church in his youth. He was frustrated that the church would not teach new believers the basics of Christianity and all he had to rely on was the pastor's sermons (An 2021). Based on An's own experience of asking and searching for answers about God, he wrote a manual accessible to any new believer. He says he was able to use this beginners' discipleship training class to answer questions new Christians may have about the basics of faith and strengthen their convictions.

He applied the insights he gathered from the beginners class to his sermons. A characteristic of his sermons is to proclaim the gospel message periodically. In his sermons the essential gospel message is preached at least once a month in ways that are easily understandable for new believers. This means his sermons are generally simple and clear (An 2016). These simple messages had an impact on new believers and other Christians who had not been rigorously trained. But these beginners classes focused on personal salvation and neglected the prophetic role churches should have fulfilled for the society in the 1980s and the 1990s. As Yim Hee-mo pointed out, Suwonsung Church's discipleship training was similar to that of other Korean churches at the time, in that it tended to focus on personal spiritual salvation. If the Korean society is to accept the Korean church as a true and trusted companion, discipleship training in the church should also be renewed and integrated to get past its preoccupation with dualistic spiritual salvation (Yim 2021).

Impact and limitations of discipleship training in a multifaith society

Being aware of the diverse religious landscape in Korean society and the challenge of sharing the gospel, An Gwang-soo began teaching about the existence of God. His approach was different from traditional catechistic discipleship training used in mission organizations and churches in Korea. In the following, he explains the impact of his beginners' discipleship training class.

The beginners' class became the foundation for our church. Once people became convicted of the existence of God and their own salvation, their spiritual life completely changed. You didn't need to tell them to come to church, they just did.... This is our church's greatest resource, our church's uniqueness and strength, our everything (An 2021).

The fundamental principle of discipleship training at Suwonsung Church was the self-discovery of the laity and their role. In the 1980s and 1990s, the baby boomers born in the 1950s and 1960s took over church leadership just as the Korean church grew thanks to various political and economic factors. Like SaRang Church, Suwonsung Church aimed to form faithful volunteers in the church through its discipleship training.

However, by the late 1990s, the training that emphasized the role of Christians within the church showed limitations in its missionary function. This structural limitation was similar to what the discipleship training program at SaRang Church had experienced. As a result, Suwonsung Church's discipleship training took a new direction in the 2000s.

When one person changes, the world changes

An shifted the focus of discipleship training from church growth to world mission, inspiring some people to the missionary calling overseas. An recounts a decisive incident one year when only two people signed up for the evening slot of the discipleship class. It was practically challenging for a senior pastor to devote evening hours regularly for three months just to train two people. But to make matters worse, one of them ended up withdrawing. He prayed whether to continue the training for only one person, and he heard a voice in his heart saying, "When one person changes, the world changes." He chose to obey the voice and trained the remaining person to the best of his ability (An 2021). This experience led An to recognize the value of each soul and shift the focus of his discipleship training toward world mission.⁷

Han Guk-il calls An's ministry approach "authentic passion" and "authentic leadership". He believes such an approach is necessary for the church to overcome its tendency towards local-church-centrism and to respond to the world's disappoint-

⁷ This was the experience of this author as I underwent the discipleship training of Suwonsung Church. The training had a profound impact on my spiritual journey, ultimately resulting in my acceptance of Jesus, theological training and two decades of missionary work in Africa. This experience has been the subject of two separate publications (Kim Do-il 2018: 296–303 and Han Guk-il 2019: 279).

ment with its lack of integrity. According to Han, An's leadership style exemplifies the "missionary infrastructure" and "social capital" necessary for the Korean church to become a missional church (Han 2019: 380).

Weeping with those who weep (Rom. 12.5)

By 2009 Suwonsung Church's discipleship training took yet another turn. The church adopted a social service missionary system to financially support civil society professionals and activists responding to social issues of the time (PCK World 2009; Park, J. 2017). Most recipients have been Christian civil society organization workers struggling to make ends meet while working for social causes. The church supports their living expenses as a way to participate in social service mission (An 2016: 221). This resolve to carry out the mission even when there is no immediately visible impact, and the resolve to work for justice and righteousness, shows that the church's discipleship training had reached a new level.

There was also another incident that led to the greatest change in the church's discipleship training. That was the Sewol Ferry shipwreck on 16 April 2014. The ferry embarked from Incheon to Jeju Island, many of its passengers being Danwon High School students from the city of Ansan. The ship sank in the waters near Jindo drowning 304 passengers. At the suggestion of Nam Gi-up who was a deacon and a social service missionary of Suwonsung Church, some church members visited the families of the deceased, then invited them to church to let the whole church hear the stories directly. Some more conservative church members at first interpreted this event as the pastor taking a political stance. But An persuaded even these churches members saying that obeying the command to "weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12.15) and wiping the tears of those who have lost their children is a new mission the church must conduct for society.

The Korean church has for a long time tried to speak to society but it has rather neglected listening to society instead. This was one of the reasons why the church has lost its credibility in the eyes of the world. Now after the Covid-19 pandemic the Korean church needs a new kind of ministers. Unlike the previous generation's ministers who tried to cast grand visions for the direction of the church and charismatically lead the church at its helm, the world today needs ministers to listen calmly and put their discipleship into action out in the world (Roxburgh 2006: 144). The case of Suwonsung Church shows that the world today calls for obedient and incarnational discipleship that listens to forgotten stories and empathizes with others' suffering.

Proposal: Discipleship training from the perspective of the Kingdom of God

The usual kind of discipleship training in the Korean church had a rather narrow soteriology and church-centered bias against the world. This discipleship training focused on gathering the world into the church rather than sending disciples out to the world. The church consequently experienced amazing growth, but it also neglected the command to be salt and light of the world. The church-centric discipleship training also neglected the Kingdom of God that is wider than the visible church. The church closed its eyes to the world and did not tend to what it should have. As a result, the church lost its social credibility.

These same limitations were found in the discipleship training by Suwonsung Church. But to overcome the limitations they listened to the demands of the society and sought to practice incarnational discipleship, and these efforts took them to a new level. Based on this case I now want to propose some new principles of discipleship training for the Korean church as it works to recover its social credibility.

Sola Scriptura and Solo Scriptura

Much of discipleship training in the Korean church has focused on Bible study. Suwonsung Church's discipleship training in the 1980s and 1990s also had this emphasis. The Korean church inherited the reformed church tradition of *sola scriptura* which privileges the Word of God as the sole authority for Christian behaviour. However, throughout church history scriptural interpretation has often relied too much on certain authorities, leading to negative consequences.

Kevin J. Vanhoozer has pointed out the problem of scripture-centrism and the danger of confusing *sola scriptura* with *solo scriptura*. The *solo scriptura* approach risks getting trapped in church traditions or neglecting the need to read scripture as a church community (Vanhoozer 2019: 178). Stanley Hauerwas argues that North American Christians have been taught to interpret the Bible for themselves without undergoing spiritual and moral transformation. Hauerwas goes so far as to say, "No task is more important than for the Church to take the Bible out of the hands of individual Christians in North America" (Hauerwas 1993: 15). He also argues that "each person in the Church" should not have "the right to interpret the Scripture" (Hauerwas 1993: 16), meaning that scripture interpretation should not serve personal whims, but rather the church community should be the agent of interpretation. In the same vein, discipleship training in the Korean church must go beyond the simple intellectual exercise of reading and interpreting the Bible.

Lamin Sanneh argues that Christianity is the only world religion that has spread in languages and cultures different from those of its founder (Sanneh 2003: 98). Sanneh emphasizes Christianity's translatability and mentions the linguistic translatability of scripture and consequent changes to the power structure of the church. Sanneh's argument for Christianity's translatability is rooted in his own context of the African church that emerged from centuries of Western colonialism in which African culture, language and religion were deemed inferior to those of the West. The church has subsequently worked to recover its own identity, and language is a critical element in one's sense of identity. When Sanneh as an African theologian writes of the scripture communicating its depths of meaning in his own language, and not just in a European language, this has more powerful impact. The process of Christianity spreading from Western Europe to Africa was a process of exploitation and destruction. Translation of the scripture into African languages was thus a momentous event. For discipleship training in the Korean church, scripture interpretation must be understood from the perspective of the receiver, not just the sharer.

Therefore, for a church to produce proper interpretations, it cannot be sectarian. The Bible also reveals its full meaning when communities of different languages and cultural experiences read it together (Wright 2017: 117–206). This is the path that the Korean church must take in its discipleship training.

Sanctity and discipleship as stewards of creation

What made discipleship training trend in the Korean church in the 1980s was the principle of apostleship of the laity. Suwonsung Church's discipleship training was also in this paradigm. This new perspective leveled the relationship between the clergy and the laity and called all believers to discipleship. But today the society has changed and there are new expectations for the church.

Constant connection to digital media is engendering problems especially after the Covid-19 pandemic. Preoccupied with digital media, people have no time to enjoy true rest, and the fall-outs are evident. Eun-Ah Cho observes, "The youth are too busy to take stock of themselves. They live disassembled lives." In a such of temporal scarcity the youth ultimately fail to find their true identity from within and fall into depression (Cho 2022: 23–25). This situation can be remedied by recovering our sanctity.

The restoration of sanctity should be a core focus of Suwonsung Church's discipleship training, as well as for Korean churches in general, in light of the challenges posed by digital media and changing societal expectations in the post-pandemic era. In this regard, the term proposed at the Arusha Conference, "Christ-connected-

ness”, which emphasizes living our entire lives in close connection with Jesus Christ, is particularly relevant for churches in the digital age (Bevans 2018: 374).

As Miroslav Volf emphasizes, embracing our sanctity requires making space for others and inviting them in (Volf 1996: 129). This inclusive approach to sanctity recognizes that “Discipleship is not primarily a matter of personal or corporate performance or even the living out of the implications of doctrine, but something more deep-seated in desire and identity that is to do with the human longing for holiness” (Cherry and Hayes 2021: 331). It is through this deep-seated desire for holiness and connection with God that disciples are called to serve as stewards of creation and adopt a “discipleship as gardening” approach towards caring for their most vulnerable neighbours in nature, as we have learned from the lessons of the pandemic (Ewell 2021).

Ethics and social participation

To be set apart from society while fulfilling its function, a Christian must remember to participate in society. Therefore, recovering the Christian sense of ethical and public responsibility is critical. Ethical standards that are agreed upon by the entire society, not just shared among Christians, should be implemented. The church is responsible for approaching the world in a language they can understand and doing good works so that people outside the church may know its good intentions.

Along with social inequalities, the sociopolitical divide between the conservative far-right and the progressive far-left is detrimental to society. These divisions cause the public commons to shrink, putting socially marginalized groups in precarious positions. The Korean church has remained too long in the private realm and has not been free of the persistent tendency long tendency in the Korean society to distinguish insiders and outsiders. Political partisanship has also seeped into churches to contaminate preaching from pulpits, and Christians have defended the powerful for their financial gain while neglecting the powerless in distress.

Since 2009, Suwonsung Church has been operating the social missionary system as the basis for nurturing new disciples. In the twenty-first century, we cannot return to the pre-Christendom era when Christians were a social minority, as Alan Kreider, the Mennonite historian of the early church, pointed out. However, we must seriously examine how the early church functioned in society as the true disciples of Christ (Kreider 2015: 22).

Suwonsung Church's social service missionary system attempts to recover the sense of ethical responsibility of the early church community. By participating in social issues, churches can fulfill their prophetic calling and function as missional church.

Hospitality and empathy

Since the latter part of the twentieth century, Robert D. Putnam and others have warned that American society is disintegrating (Putnam 2000: 15–25). Putnam observes that Christians in the US have been building social trust by engaging in more social services and charities than non-Christians, thereby accumulating more social capital (CEMK 2020: 85). Similarly, Sanneh notes that Peter's apostolic calling began when he broke down ethnic and national barriers. Sanneh states, "Peter's insistence that true religion cannot be restricted to mere institutional adherence signals a radical shift to the idea of God as boundary-free truth, of God as one who is without partiality" (Sanneh 2008: 4).

The Korean church must now rediscover God's acceptance and hospitality in the gospel rather than engaging in political strife and social division. As those who have been accepted and forgiven by God, we must make space for others. To this end, we must embody two things: embracing uncertainty and vulnerability and practicing self-denial. These two aspects must work together, like wagon wheels. The early church demonstrated this in words and loving action (Brady 1938: 68). In the third century, Cyprian, an early church leader in Carthage, encouraged Christians to develop embodied habits that he referred to as "patience" (Kreider 2015: 224). Discipleship training should instill patient love as described in 1 Corinthians 13 so that it becomes a natural expression of Christian life.

Another challenge facing the Korean church is its inability to relate to society. More people are floating between the church and the world today because the church's messages and interests do not address society's challenges. Suwonsung Church's discipleship training demonstrates that to be a true disciple of Christ, a church must empathize with those in despair outside the church and raise society's capacity for empathy. According to Yim Hee-mo, this is precisely what it means to follow, imitate and obey Jesus Christ in incarnational discipleship, and this is what every Korean church must strive for. This is what it means to be a radical evangelical (Yim 2021: 248).

Conclusion

The case of Suwonsung Church provides valuable insights into the challenges facing the Korean church and churches worldwide in the post-pandemic world. Traditional forms of discipleship training are no longer sufficient, and new approaches must

be adopted. Scripture interpretation must move beyond intellectual exercises and embrace the translatability of scripture. It should be grounded in the church community and read collectively by diverse communities with different contexts and cultural experiences to uncover its full meaning.

In light of the challenges posed by the rapidly changing digital media landscape and evolving societal expectations in this era, there is a pressing need for Korean churches to refocus their attention on the restoration of sanctity in their discipleship training. A more inclusive approach to holiness is crucial as it recognizes that authentic discipleship is rooted in innate human desire for deeper connection with Christ (Bevans 2018: 374) and requires openness to others and a willingness to create space for them.

As responsible stewards of creation, disciples must adopt the “discipleship as gardening” mindset, which entails a compassionate approach to caring for the vulnerable members of society, both human and non-human. Through this approach, the church can embody the incarnational discipleship of Jesus Christ and carry out its mission to uplift and empower marginalized and underserved individuals.

Society expects the church to practise true discipleship, which entails following the example of Jesus Christ’s incarnational discipleship. This involves reaching out to the sick at Bethany and responding to the requests of the diseased trapped around the pool of Bethesda. The Sewol Ferry tragedy subsequently catalysed Suwonsung Church’s social missionary services. In the current societal climate, the church must assume a larger role beyond its existing religious institution and expand its public outreach. This responsibility, however, is not exclusive to Suwonsung Church, but rather demands a collective effort from the broader Korean church community.

The church should prioritize individuals and society suffering social inequalities and unjust structures. To achieve this, the concept of discipleship and the practical implementation of its principles should transcend the traditional confines of the church and actively engage with those beyond its physical boundaries. Missional discipleship is a critical element of a missional church’s work to uplift and empower the marginalized and the underserved. This type of discipleship aligns with the genuine discipleship that society expects of the church.

About the author

Bright Myeong-Seok Lee teaches at ACTS University in Korea. He previously served as an ecumenical coworker in Ghana, West Africa for two decades and is now the

General Secretary of IAMS (International Association of Mission Studies) and a steering committee member of AMRIConnect (Alliance of Mission Researchers and Institutions). Additionally, he is the Co-President of the Korea IAMS Fellowship, which supports young Korean scholars in enhancing their international scholarly activities. Contact: brightlee@acts.ac.kr

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