

Educational Ministries in Korean Churches amid the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the direction of future Christian ministry by examining the educational/pastoral ministries of Korean churches during the COVID-19 period. The study used the case study method, where pastors from four different churches were the primary sources of data. Although each church has its own unique ministry, special early morning prayer meetings, family worship services, family Vacation Bible Schools, Bible writing and reading programs, and on-line discipleship training programs were common. In addition, each church implemented special programs that reflected the characteristics and needs of the church, like a talk show, visible radio, surfing meeting, and book-making of Bible manuscripts. Based on these results, ministry programs reflecting the church's pastoral philosophy, strengthening community consciousness, restoring the spiritual function of the family, utilizing online teaching methods, and psychological support for the underprivileged are proposed. In addition, the recovery of Christian publicity and the help from denomination or specialized institutions to develop the programs and online materials were suggested. Through this study, the direction of educational/pastoral ministry in a time of COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 is proposed.

〈 **Keywords** 〉

COVID-19, Educational/Pastoral ministries, Korean churches, Case study

I. Introduction

The Coronavirus, hereafter shortened to COVID-19, which originated in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019, has rapidly spread around the world resulting in a pandemic. The virus has led to the third pandemic, along with Hong Kong flu and swine flu, since the establishment of the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is terrorizing mankind with its infectious power, spread speed, asymptomatic infections, mutations, and evolving strains. The current situation of having to adapt to changes caused by COVID-19 has been coined as the “New Normal” (Whang, 2020). The characteristics of the COVID-19 period are summarized as “un-contact,” “un-scaled,” and “un-real”(Lee NS, 2020). More specifically, the Chosun newspaper interviewed 24 global experts on “Worlds after COVID-19” and outlined ten phenomena that will change after COVID-19, namely, (1) de-globalization, (2) a huge government [control of COVID-19 at war level], (3) the world’s “Japaneseiza- tion” [Japanese long-term recession], (4) the Eurozone crisis, (5) unknown China status, (6) populism, (7) breakaway from the traditional office work setup, (8) end of handshake, (9) COVID- 19 Generation [those in the 20s suffering from long-term unemployment], and (10) respect towards the environment.

In addition to these social changes, COVID-19 has deeply affected individual life and caused a change in lifestyle. For example, the practice of social distance to prevent the spread of COVID-19 has brought about a shift from direct communica-

tion to indirect communication, a shift from offline market to online market, and an expansion of delivery culture(Kim & Park, 2020). Traditional education practices, such as classroom lessons, collective education, and teacher-led education, that were previously taken for granted collapsed instantly. Changes and alternatives to teaching methods have begun to emerge, including online classes, sharing knowledge and information through YouTube, and teaching about what to teach in face-to-face classes(Ham, 2020). In addition, the side effects of spending a lot of time at home such as increasing divorce rates due to marital conflict, child abuse, and educational polarization are emerging(Choi, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected religious practices, including the cancelling of collective religious services or pilgrimages, closing religious schools, and prohibiting group interactions during festivals(Editorial, 2020). These phenomena are the same in Korean churches where the implementation of existing face-to-face and contact activities in worship, church education, fellowship, pastoral visiting, and counseling is facing difficulties(Kim, 2020). The most apparent change is the shift from collective in-church worship to online worship(Kim & Park, 2020; Kwon, 2020; Lee, 2020, 29-30). The church's online home page, which has been almost abandoned, has been revitalized, and real-time online worship and online fellowship through Kakao Talk, YouTube, or Naver band have been made(Kim & Park, 2020).

With the rapid spread of the COVID-19, some Christians had given Christian interpretations similar to ancient reactions such as: (1) a conspiracy theory that blames others, (2) the Christian conspiracy theory that believes that God knows what he is trying to say through this situation, (3) the view that COVID-19 is

a sign of the end, and (4) the view similar to the ancient pagan theory that interprets COVID-19 as the wrath of God, citing the Old Testament prophets. The COVID-19 situation can be seen as a spiritual opportunity. People are thinking about death rather than thinking about what kind of food everyone will buy at this point, which can then result in countless people returning to God. This is the opportunity to introduce Jesus to the friends and teach non-believers how to go to heaven through Him(Wright, 2020, 18-21). Ra(2020) expressed the need for a shift in the direction of restoring the church's identity and mission and reaching its purpose at a time when the church's function is affected and the existing ministry method has collapsed because of COVID-19. Cho(2020) also views COVID-19 as a crisis and opportunity in Korean church and Christian education. He saw that this is the right time to practice a paradigm shift in education in which churches, homes, schools, and all other contexts build organic relationships with each other, with education not just confined in the church. Mindful of the changes caused by the COVID-19, Lee DY(2020, 30) presented a new direction and outlook for the pastoral ministry. He posited that online worship is the trend, but the reaction to COVID-19 will only highlight Sunday collective public worship and strengthen the more traditional rituals, which cannot be replaced by online. Basically, there will be a combination of Sunday collective public worship and online worship. Detailed access, consultation and service to more vulnerable and marginalized saints will be needed, not traditional pastoral visiting. Family worship will be revived because churches have conducted online worship on a family basis. Above all, online churches will also appear.

Previous researchers emphasized the study of alternatives in

line with COVID-19 with these various possibilities and prospects. Churches are now forced to seek alternatives for the post-COVID-19 period, breaking away from the initial response of focusing on social distinctions such as non-face-to-face worship, as the pandemics continued for more than seven months(Yoo, 2020). In addition, Lee DY(2020, 33) and Jang(2020) argued that Korean churches and educational ministries should have a new paradigm to respond to the post-COVID-19 world. More specifically, Kim JJ(2020) stressed the need for discussions on how to shift from the church-oriented contact paradigm to a non-face-to-face paradigm. Reviewing previous research on church education or educational ministry related to COVID-19 showed that most of these research papers(Chae, 2020; Choi, 2020; Jang, 2020; Kim, 2020; Kim & Yoo, 2020; Lee, 2020; Oh, 2020; Yoo, 2020) are focused on literature research that deals with theories and author's arguments. Based on the suggestions of these scholars and the limitation of previous studies, the purpose of this study is to examine the methods of educational/pastoral ministries conducted during the COVID-19 period in Korean churches and suggest the direction of Christianity around the world, including Korean churches.

II. Methods

1. Participant Churches

The participant churches in this study were identified using the following criteria. First, this study was targeted outstanding churches for Christian education. The two churches are places where the researchers attended and worked. One of the

church's mission is to convey faith to the next generation, and it is well known for its excellent church education served by three ministers with doctoral degree in Christian education. The recently established church is dedicated to teaching the next generation, and one of the researchers knows its senior pastor and educational minister. One church was once introduced at a conference regarding COVID-19 and church ministry. Second, the participating church are of different sizes. Hence, churches of various sizes, ranging from 100 to 4,000 people, were selected.

Church of the Journey was established in May 2018 in Seoul and belongs to the Presbyterian denomination in Hapdong. At present, 70 adults and 30 children attend the services and 70% of the total attendees are young people in their 30s and 40s, with 20 children at the young children to elementary level.

On-sarang Church was founded in 1980. The church, which has about 400 members, is located in Seoul. Ten years ago, there were about 100 members, but the church has grown since the new pastor, who preaches a Bible-oriented sermon, started working and built a new temple. The church belongs to the Presbyterian denomination in Hapdong and ministers work in all departments from infancy to college years.

The Transgenerational Mission Church was founded in 2002 in Seoul and belongs to the Korean Presbyterian Church. There are 650 church members with 65% of adult members in their 30s and 40s and about 250 in the next generation from infants to adolescents. The church has a generation integrated worship service every week, which is rare in Korea.

Judasan Church was founded in 1992 in Hwaseong city, Gyeonggi-do. The number of church members is 4,000, with a thousand of which are Sunday school students. It is a church with a high interest and passion for education. The pastor

himself serves as the leader of the Next Generation Movement of the Presbyterian Church General Assembly. Information about the participant churches in this study is given in Table 1.

〈Table 1〉 Participant Church Information

	Church of the Journey	On-sarang Church	Transgenerational Mission Church	Judasan Church
Year of Establishment	2018	1980	2002	1992
Denomination	Presbyterian (Hapdong)	Presbyterian (Hapdong)	Korea Presbyterian Church	Presbyterian (Hapdong)
Location	Seoul	Seoul	Seoul	Gyeonggi
Size	100	400	650	4,000

2. Case Study

This study aims to examine how pastoral care is being conducted in Korean churches during the COVID-19 period and to present insights regarding the future direction of educational/pastoral ministries. To achieve this goal, the case study method was used for targeting churches of different sizes eager for educational ministries. The data from the churches where the researchers attended were collected by sharing the researchers' experiences, while the data from the other two churches were collected by interviewing the ministers.

Case study is a qualitative method that excels in exploring cases on one topic over time and collects in-depth data, including various sources of information, such as observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents, and reports, to report case descriptions, and case themes (Creswell, 2015, 125). Using this method, the researchers will have an overview of Korean churches against the backdrop of the COVID-19

pandemic.

III. Results

Four churches were surveyed in this study. Below are the information about each church's educational/pastoral ministries during the COVID-19 period.

1. Church of Journey

The minister for children of Church of Journey spoke to two children a week to check their situation and school life as the COVID-19 started. Prayer topics were shared, and the minister likewise added the children's prayer points to the family's worship sheet. There has been a program called the "Faithful Life Challenge" in which the minister has presented one mission a week for children. The mission included reciting a message, carrying out tasks related to the Sunday sermon, and producing a video about what the child likes the most in God's creation. Afterward, the minister has sent a gift through Kakao Talk to children who complete the mission.

The Vacation Bible School(VBS), like any other church, was conducted as a Family Bible School. The minister sent a sermon for children live on YouTube and asked parents and their children to take a photo of their Bible studies as proof of the activity. Elementary school students and higher studied the Book of Ruth through flip learning. Children read chapters 1-2 and 3-4, recorded words they do not know and their feeling, and answered a list of questions. Through Zoom, the minister

lectured about the Bible, and children shared what they learn in a small group. Also, because of COVID-19, it became burdensome to gather at the church. Hence, members devised various ways to continue the church services: Vacation Bible school was moved to an online platform, a sixth-grade teacher opened her house, and fifth- to sixth-grade students gathered together to read the Bible, eat, stay overnight, climb a mountain, and invite the minister to teach the Bible and socialize.

Although Church of Journey has relatively fewer members than other churches, it is a church with various programs for elementary-level children and family members. Parental support to children's ministry is evidently high in this church. The ministries by church of Journey are shown in Figure 1.



[Figure 1] Church of Journey Activities:
Online Worship and Bible Activity with Parents

2. On-sarang Church

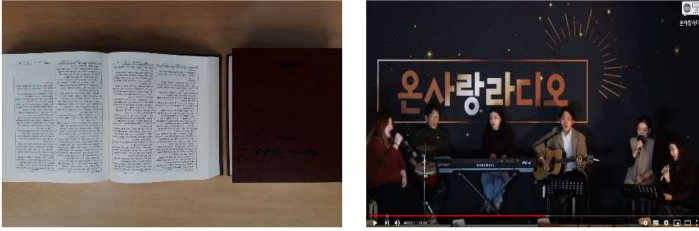
On-sarang Church conducted a Family Bible School from July 19 to August 15 focusing on the following activities. First, family worship was recommended. Once a week, each family

conducted a family service led by the head of the household and attended an online Friday prayer service. Second, the entire church members wrote a total of 66 volumes of the Bible together. Members who applied to Bible writing were assigned Bible texts, which they handwrote for a month. Through this activity, the church was able to produce large Bible manuscripts. All members above and including elementary level participated in the Bible manuscript. Young children who were unable to transcribe contributed to the Bible cover by coloring a picture representing the Bible's book.

The core values of On-sarang Church's Family Bible School are "oneness" and "community consciousness." This was shown in the entire church's initiative to make a large Bible writing script. Members then reflected and shared activities with the same words of Nehemiah at every meeting of the church during the Family Bible School period. Each family members sang the same praises when the Family Bible School video was recorded.

The church hosted a live-streamed radio program on Thanksgiving afternoon. The congregation sang praises together remotely led by the praise team, and watched recorded thanksgiving prayers of congregants, ranging from 3-year-olds to the elder. The program also included real-time telephone conversations with the young deacon who had been hospitalized for seven weeks, an interview with the senior pastor, and sharing gifts through quizzes. Eighty-eight church members joined the program via YouTube and some shared their opinions by posting comments.

The ministries by On-sarang Church are shown in Figure 2.



[Figure 2] On-sarang Church Activities:
Bible Transcription and Visible Radio

3. Transgenerational Mission Church

The ministers of the Transgenerational Mission Church confirmed the following pastoral philosophy when the COVID-19 occurred: (1) from religion to life, (2) from church-centered to family-centered, (3) from church members to disciplines, (4) from isolation to participation in the world, (5) from pastor dependent faith to self-reliant faith, (6) from conservatism of structure to conservatism of nature, (7) from childhood education to lifelong education, (8) from teaching to equipping, (9) from segmentation to integration, and (10) from individualized church to church with public spirit.

Transgenerational Mission Church is characterized by generation integrated worship which has been implemented since 2011. The first worship service at 9 o'clock is the youth-centered generation integrated worship service, and the second worship service at 11 o'clock is the children-centered one. The whole congregation listens to the sermon with the same Bible text and theme. Given the outbreak of COVID-19, ministers of each department made videos for sermons and related activities, sent them to the students or parents, and asked them to send the proof shots of worship and activities to communicate with

them. Using the photos received from each family, the children ministers made a video of “I miss you, my friend!” and made it possible to see each other through the video. Excitement for the video was increased by drawing lots to decide which children will receive a gift. The ministers and teachers attempted to connect with the children by sending gifts or by telephone calls.

Due to severe COVID-19 infection, the Vacation Bible School was conducted as an online Bible school. In the VBS Sunday worship services, videos were shown and plays were performed. In a survey conducted after the Vacation Bible School, many parents answered that they can talk, pray, and work with their children because the whole congregation listen to the same message. Parents also responded that the play helped organize God’s words and aroused children’s interest. However, inability to gather as a community, poor concentration in home activities, and difficulties in children’s participation until the end of online services were presented as limitations. Parent education also emerged as a more important topic than before. It seems desirable to conduct a survey to parents after the Vacation Bible School during the COVID-19 period. The ministries by Transgenerational Mission Church are shown in Figure 3.



[Figure 3] Transgenerational Mission Church Activities:
“I Miss You, My Friend!” and Play during VBS Worship

4. Judasan Church

Judasen Church held a 21-day special morning prayer meeting from March 16 to April 5, 2020, judging that the first thing to do in the COVID-19 situation was prayer. The church also developed and implemented the “SPARK-3 Movement,” which stands for Scripture, Prayer, Action, Reformation, and the Kingdom of God. The church has conducted Scripture reading, prayers, praise, and evangelism thrice a day.

In particular, after the Wednesday prayer meeting, the talk show was held with the theme of “The Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.” Every Wednesday evening, under the title “Christian Wisdom in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution,” the church members paid attention to the changing trends in modern society and shared what mission the church should undertake. In addition, Sunday school students from elementary to college participated in the talk show as panels as they decided to grow into a “Christian First Mover” with visions for the future.

The church also hosted an online and offline event involving all the members. On Easter Sunday, when church members were unable to attend church due to widespread COVID-19 infection, they worshiped at home online in the morning and gathered in the parking lot of a nearby highway rest area using their vehicles in the afternoon. Each household parked their vehicles at the rest area as a short service comprised of only a five-minute message that was broadcasted live YouTube. When members returned to their houses, they shared rice cakes prepared by the church and checked each other’s safety. In May, when they were unable to gather in the chapel, the church abruptly invited its members to take a walk on the

mountain behind the church at 2 p.m. on Sunday. The members enjoyed a walk and treasure hunt, and had fellowship with others while walking along the trail. The event was shared with the church members who were unable to attend through YouTube live streaming.

Every education department's services have been recorded and uploaded to YouTube and the existing first service was extended to the second service, especially in the case of the elementary department to maintain social distance. The elementary department was also organizing an intact cell meeting, which divided 200 students into 27 cells. For middle and high school students, the department has used YouTube's real-time streaming on Sunday afternoon to study the Bible together. Students participating in the Spark 3 movement have been provided with a commentary equivalent to the Bible's text to read, and those who volunteer also have conducted separate student training through Google Meet.

The department for young adults held an online music broadcast on Sunday afternoon, a praise and prayer program organized and conducted by executives. The program, which was conducted for young people who felt a spiritual downturn due to the COVID-19 incident, was deemed effective in encouraging them to participate in the Spark 3 movement and seek spiritual guidance by sharing their daily grace. The ministries by Judasan Church are shown in Figure 4.



[Figure 4] Judasan Church Activities:
Talk Show and Meeting during Mountain Climbing

The different ministries performed by the participant churches during the COVID-19 period are presented in Table 2.

〈Table 2〉 Educational/Pastoral Ministries of
Participant Churches during COVID-19

Church	Programs	Description
Church of Journey	Family worship	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Launched because of the members' demanding specific guidelines regarding the role of the parents as spiritual leaders 2) Converted to family worship after two months of prayer meeting at 9 o'clock 3) Prayer points shared by all members 4) Provides family worship sequence papers that reflect the development and needs of children
	Faithful life challenge	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The mission is provided by the minister every week. 2) Video clips are produced and loaded to prove the mission.
	Vacation (Family) Bible School	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Young children: uploading the sermon live on YouTube and studying the Bible with parents 2) Elementary students: studying the Book of Ruth by flipped-learning method 3) Overnight VBS: VBS for 5th and 6th grade children at the teacher's house
On-Sarang Church	Vacation (Family) Bible School	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Family worship led by the head of the household and an online Friday prayer meeting with the whole family 2) Sixty-six volumes of the Bible written together as a manuscript

Church	Programs	Description	
		3) Online activities by each department 4) Sending Bible study materials to each family by post mail or pickup	
	Visible radio	1) Thanksgiving day program 2) Singing praise, sharing thaksgiving prayers, real-time telephone conversation, interveiwing the senior pastor, sharing gifts	
Transgenerational Mission Church	Generation integrated worship	1) Has been conducted before COVID-19 2) Children's and adult's sermons with same Bible passage	
	On-line worship & fellowship	1) The worship service of the department recorded and uploaded on YouTube 2) Submitting photos of Bible study at home 3) Video clips, "I miss you, my friend!" were shared every week.	
	Vacation (Family)	1) Special worship with watching a video clip and play	
	Bible School	2) Conducting a parent evaluation	
	SPARK 3 Movement	Practicing scripture reading, prayers, praise, and evangelism every day	
Judasan Church	Morning prayer meeting	Special prayer meeting for 21 days	
	Talk show	Talk show regarding "The Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution" with all generation	
	Surprising events	1) Parking lot meeting on Easter afternoon 2) Walking in the mountain behind the church	
	Sunday School		1) The worship service of each department recorded and uploaded on YouTube. 2) Elementary level: The existing first service was extended to the second service.
			3) Middle & high school department: using YouTube's real-time streaming for Bible study 4) Young adult department: online music broadcasting

IV. Discussion

COVID-19 has made different organizations and groups experience various forms of closure and disconnection. This trend affected Korean churches that are presently experiencing

difficulties in conducting their existing face-to-face and contact activities, such as worship, church education, friendship, atrium, and counseling(Kim, 2020). In this situation, the post-COVID era requires a new missionary church paradigm. Based on the results of this study, which centered on the trends and demands of the times, this chapter discusses the issues grounded on prior researchers' arguments and suggests the future direction of the church's teaching ministry.

In times of crisis and change like the COVID-19, checking the pastoral philosophy is the first step toward change. The current COVID-19 period requires mobile platforms and contents to solidify the church's educational ministry mission. However, this task should align with the church's philosophy vis-à-vis online ministry(Whang, 2020). Transgenerational Mission Church presented 10 pastoral directions while Judasan Church held a special morning prayer meeting for three weeks to acknowledge that prayer is the most important ministry. The church also started the SPARK 3 movement as soon as the crisis struck. The Educational Ministry Research Team(2020) presents the following five questions to design a new educational, pastoral paradigm in the post-COVID era: (1) What was the most precious value? (2) Why stick to such values? (3) Who was the main body of Christian education? (4) How was the educational method? (5) How was the time and place of the educational ministry decided? As a diagnosis of the church ministry, these questions reflect the pastoral philosophy of the church. New changes need to begin with diagnosis and reflection of the previous situation, and the direction of the ministry should be determined by checking the philosophy of ministry.

Through COVID-19, Korean churches realized the importance of community and oneness and carried out related activities. In

the era of 21st century globalization, the Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies achieved by humans boasted super-intelligence, hyper-connectivity, and super-convergence. But due to COVID-19, the global network among people had to be blocked or cut off for health reasons. Until the present, people's lives have been engaged in contact-based communication through face-to-face contact and touch, including greetings, dialogue, handshakes, and hugs. God's created world is also intimately interconnected, including humans, societies, the nature, the virtual world, and God. For this reason, Christian education should pursue educational methods that help heal and restore the divided world through realizing God's truth(Kim, 2020).

The participant churches showed a variety of activities that promote unity. These include On-sarang Church members' making a large Bible by transcribing the Bible and Judasan Church members' reading and studying the same Bible text as part of the SPARK 3 movement. Transgenerational Mission Church members have attended generation-integrated worship services and listened to sermons about the same text. Unity is one of the life forces rooted in human biological characteristics, leading people to connect with others or want alliances. The power of unity leads to the pursuit of "oneness" in churches and other groups(Richardson, 2012, 97-98). By applying the principles of unity and community, education in the new media age should maintain direct and personal relationships to overcome the new media's indirectness. As a means of connection, it is advisable to communicate by actively utilizing telephone, mail, e-mail, SNS, and pastoral invitation(Kim, 2020).

One of the most distinctive features of the COVID-19 period is the union of families. This phenomenon is more pronounced in the Korean setting where families leave early in the morning

and return home late at night, making it difficult for families to get together. One of the positive functions of the COVID-19 period is the revival of the family's role as a spiritual incubator. The parents involved in this study participated in Christian education by engaging in family worship and accomplishing their church tasks. In this regard, parents' spiritual maturity and parent education should be emphasized more than before, and the church should help parents to assume the primary role in their children's spiritual growth. Churches and professional Christian education organizations will have to make various efforts, including online parental education, family-bonding activities, and home activity sheets(The Educational Ministry Research Team, 2020). Taking advantage of the COVID-19 period as an opportunity, the biblical delegation of parents with primary responsibility for their children's spiritual formation should be implemented.

Changes in online, non-face-to-face education, and non-contact culture due to COVID-19 have become the "new normal" (Ra, 2020; Yoo, 2020). Various changes in society, economy, and culture are actually not new changes that the virus has made, but changes that have already taken place with the Fourth Industrial Revolution and technology development. Under these circumstances, it is encouraging that the church has begun to use the so-called "All Line," which includes online and offline for worship and education(Yoo, 2020). Experts(Hwang, 2020; Jang, 2020; Yoo, 2020) propose church education through online-offline links. According to Rev. Hwang, a former Webinar presenter, churches worldwide have enjoyed the advantages of online communication and sharing beyond time and place. It is difficult to bring a friend out, but it is possible to share an online worship service with a friend through YouTube and tag the sermon's highlight to make it appear on the friend's timeline.

In the post-COVID era, evangelism is possible by showing more people the church's worship services(Hwang, 2020). Even if face-to-face worship and gatherings are restored in the post-COVID-19 era, online ministry should be continuously active. This needs to be utilized to equip the next generation living in the era of the Fourth Revolution. Strengthening online ministry can weaken the importance of church communities and meetings; therefore, future research and attention are required in this field.

The COVID-19 period is the time when various changes are attempted in the church, and the church should consider no one to be left out during these times and provide them with a psychological touch on difficulties and changes. When the church pursues a big change in the new direction of the future, two aspects need to be considered. One is the institutional aspect of designing a desirable ministry model, and the other is the emotional aspect of changing the organization members' belief system, attitudes, and patterns of behavior for the direction the organization is going for(Bae, Yang & Ryu, 2013, 279-280). Based on that principle, the part to be considered in the process of church change due to COVID-19 is the attention of those unable to adapt to the change. The virus causes a severe digital divide in changing environments. In general, older people who do not use or enjoy the media are more likely to become media minorities. They face a crisis in their religious life due to their lack of media skills and the confusion caused by changes in the traditional way of religious life. Therefore, to prevent the isolation of senior adults in the COVID-19 situation, it is necessary to remind them that the church environment is expanding from offline to online and retrain accordingly(Kim & Park, 2020). Another group to consider is singles without family.

They are likely to be left out as most church activities have turned into family-oriented setups. Another target is children in small churches. The rich-get-richer and the poor-get-poorer phenomenon still appears in church schools, so children of large churches are provided with quality content, but children of small churches are sometimes neglected(Kim, 2020). Such difficulties should be resolved through the sharing of information or materials held by denominations or large churches.

During the COVID-19 period, the Korean church should reflect on its lack of public spirit and use this time as an opportunity to restore it. It was the heretical group Sincheonji triggered the first coronary infection in Korea. The group, which once had a congregation of up to 300,000 followers (Kook-min Newspaper, 07 September 20), produced 473 COVID-19 confirmed cases(Yeong-nam Newspaper, 23 September 20), sparking antipathy against Christianity across the nation. Rev. Jeon, Kwang-hoon, who began the second wave in Korea, is under arrest after attending and encouraging his church members to participate in the Liberation Day rally on August 15. The Seoul Metropolitan Government has decided to seek 4.62 billion won in damages from Rev. Jeon, judging that COVID-19 has been transferred across the country due to violations of the infectious disease control act, including aiding and abetting epidemiological investigations, obstruction, and submitting false data(Kyung-hyang Newspaper, 18 September 20; Seoul Newspaper, 18 September 20). These two incidents led the Korean church to be criticized and lose trust.

Lee(2020, 234) analyzes that the reason why Korean Christianity has become an irrational group that is at odds with the society about COVID-19 is the lack of “public church spirit,” “community spirit,” and “publicity spirit.” He predicts that unless these three

are restored, there will be no future for Korean churches. The church, a missionary community, should educate its members to practice biblical public values, such as emptiness, sharing, service, and engagement, in everyday life(Jang, 2020). The common regret of analyzing the cases of the four churches is that there was no service to communities outside the church and to needy neighbors. Although the Transgenerational Mission Church proposed individualized church to church with public spirit as one of the pastoral philosophies, most Korean churches are still individual church-centered and have a weak perception and practice of public spirit.

While publicity should be restored at the church and denomination level, the focus should be on the formation of wholeheartedness, especially character, at a personal level. In the age of highly developed innovation, the recovery of entire humanity is paramount(Oh, 2020). Kang(2020) argued that the first thing to think about in this challenging time is distinguishing between areas that should change in education and areas that should not change. Amid the whirlwind of change accelerated by the coronavirus, what one must uphold is the inherent human ability to lead and govern changes in society, including human dignity, correct values, the happiness of individuals and communities, creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. As wholeheartedness, character, dignity, and good values, which are emphasized in general education, are strengthened in Christian education, the ability of Christianity and the gospel will be restored.

Finally, specialized institutions should assist church ministries, especially in education. Since the core of education in the un-contact era is not the system but the content, there should be a group that continually studies and discusses(Ra, 2020).

Experts count on the role of the denomination's General Assembly(Cho, 2020; Ra, 2020; Yoo, 2020). The General Assembly will be able to serve small churches that are difficult to develop programs and textbooks on their own by developing materials that meet the needs of the times. It is highly desirable that some materials are provided free of charge by the denomination or the specialized educational institution. Cho(2020) suggested that the cooperation of education experts and large churches leads to a structure of religious education that connects denominations, churches, and families organically. Just as the government provided online education courses for students who could not take classes at school, the General Assembly of denomination could distribute online materials for Christian education based on paper book contents.

In this study, the four churches of different sizes and history were investigated and analyzed on what kind of ministries they performed during the COVID-19 period. However, three out of four churches participated in this study belong to the Presbyterian Hap-dong denomination, which may have limitations that reflect the Presbyterian churches' characteristics. Therefore, follow-up research is expected to introduce the ministry of churches belonging to various denominations. Nevertheless, this study is meaningful in that it carried out a timely investigation about each church's ministries within one year of COVID-19's occurrence and proposed the principle of ministry.

V. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic is both a crisis and an opportunity for Korean churches and Christian education. Due to the virus, the online system, which had never been implemented before, was actively introduced, inviting the younger generation leaving the church and the church-centered faith was transformed into a family-oriented one.

The conclusion suggests linking 5Ps, namely, purpose, program, people, process, and product of healthy ministry design proposed by Bae, Yang, and Ryu(2013, 107) with this study. This study also discussed the planning of programs based on the distinct pastoral philosophy and the needs of the times, the preparation of the whole-hearted church members, and the process of being together with families, not unilaterally led by the church. Hopefully, applying these principles helps not only to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to transform the church's constitution and process into a biblical and healthy one.

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한글 초록

코로나 시기 한국교회의 교육목회에 관한 사례연구

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본 연구는 교육사역에서 모델이 되는 교회를 규모별로 선택하여 코로나 시기에 실시한 사역을 조사함으로써 미래 교회사역의 방향을 규명하는 것을 목적으로 한다. 연구방법은 4개 교회 목회자의 사역 경험이 자료의 주된 출처가 된 사례연구를 활용했다. 교회마다 독특한 사역이 실행되었지만, 새벽 특별기도회, 가족예배, 가족 단위 별 여름성경학교, 성경쓰기 또는 읽기 프로그램, 온라인 제자훈련 프로그램 등이 일반적이었다. 이 밖에도 각 교회에서는 토크쇼, 번개팅, 보이는 라디오, 전 교인의 성경 필사본 제작 등 교회의 특징 및 필요 그리고 코로나 시기의 특성을 반영한 특별 프로그램을 실시하였다. 이러한 결과를 바탕으로 교회의 목회철학을 반영한 목회 프로그램 실시, 공동체 의식 강화, 가족의 영적 기능 회복, 온라인 교수법 활용, 소외계층에 대한 심리적 지원 등이 교육목회 방향으로 제시되었다. 이 외에도 기독교의 공공성 회복과 교단이나 전문기관의 도움을 받아 시대의 요구를 반영한 프로그램과 온라인 자료를 개발할 수 있는 방안이 제시되었다.

〈 주제어 〉

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