

Record of Service – Rev Dr John Kyoung-Soo Oh

I was born into a Christian family in South Korea in 1958. From my earliest years, faith was a natural and important part of my life. Through the faithful witness of my parents and church community, I learned to love God, respect the Scriptures, and value the life of the Church. These early faith experiences formed the spiritual foundation that would later shape my calling to ministry.

During my high school years in 1975, I experienced a deep personal call from Jesus Christ to become one of His disciples and servants. At that time, I sensed clearly that God was inviting me to dedicate my life to preaching the Gospel and serving the Church. This call gradually became stronger through prayer, worship, Bible study, and the encouragement of ministers and Christian mentors around me.

In response to this calling, I commenced theological training at Methodist Theological College, Mokwon University in Korea, where I studied from 1977 to 1982 as a Candidate for Ordination in the Korean Methodist Church. My years of theological formation were spiritually enriching and intellectually formative. During this period, I developed a deeper understanding of Christian theology, pastoral ministry, preaching, and mission. I also learned the importance of servant leadership, pastoral care, and the role of the Church in society.

Following the completion of my theological training, I served a local Methodist church for three years as a senior pastor. Through this early ministry experience, I gained practical pastoral skills and a deeper appreciation for the joys and responsibilities of congregational leadership. On 4 April 1985, I was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament in the Korean Methodist Church.

From 1982 to 1989, I served in four Methodist churches in Korea. These years provided opportunities to preach, teach, nurture congregations, and support families through both joyful and difficult times. Ministry in local churches taught me the importance of perseverance, compassion, prayer, and faithful pastoral presence. I remain grateful for the congregations and fellow ministers who shared in this journey.

In 1989, I moved to New Zealand with a vision to serve Korean migrants and to establish a faith community for Korean Christians living in Auckland. By God's grace, I planted the Auckland Korean Methodist Church, serving there from 1990 to 1997 as a Methodist Church in New Zealand. Church planting among migrants brought both challenges and blessings. Many Korean families were adapting to a new culture, language, and society, and the church became not only a spiritual home but also a place of community support, encouragement, and belonging. This ministry strengthened my understanding of cross-cultural mission and migrant ministry.

In 1997, I moved to Australia and planted the Sydney Sarang Uniting Church, where I served until 1999. Once again, I experienced the challenges and rewards of building a faith community among Korean migrants. Through worship, discipleship, pastoral care, and community outreach, the

congregation grew as a place where people could encounter God's grace and find hope in a new land.

From 2000 to 2015, I served at Adelaide Korean Uniting Church. These fifteen years became a significant chapter in my ministry journey. During this period, I was privileged to support the spiritual growth of the congregation, nurture younger generations, strengthen family ministry, and encourage the church's participation in the wider mission of the Uniting Church. One of the ongoing joys of ministry was witnessing individuals and families grow in faith and become active servants within the church and community.

From 2016 to 2018, I served Adelaide True Life Church, continuing my pastoral ministry among Korean Christians in South Australia. Then, from 2019 to 2024, I served at Hawthorn Uniting Church. Serving within the broader multicultural context of the Uniting Church deepened my appreciation of diversity within the body of Christ and strengthened my commitment to ecumenical fellowship and inclusive ministry.

Alongside pastoral ministry, I pursued further theological study and academic work. In 2005, I completed a PhD in Theology at Flinders University. My doctoral research focused on a comparative study of the understanding of salvation in the thought of Wang Yang-Ming and John Wesley. This academic journey deepened my theological reflection and enriched both my teaching and pastoral ministry.

Following the completion of my doctorate, I had the opportunity to lecture at Alphacrucis University College in Sydney and Mokwon University from 2005 to 2018. Teaching theology and ministry subjects to students preparing for Christian leadership was both a privilege and a joy. I valued the opportunity to encourage future pastors, missionaries, and Christian leaders in their spiritual and academic development.

Looking back over more than four decades of ministry, I give thanks to God for His faithfulness, grace, and guidance. Ministry has brought many blessings, opportunities, and challenges, but throughout every season, I have experienced God's sustaining presence. I am deeply grateful to all the congregations, colleagues, students, friends, and family members who have shared this journey with me.

As I enter retirement, I continue to trust in God's grace and mercy and remain deeply thankful to God for the privilege of serving Christ and His Church across Korea, New Zealand, and Australia. Looking back over the years, I recognise that every step of ministry has been sustained not by my own strength, but by the faithfulness and guidance of God. To God alone be the glory.

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