Shalom and Sangsaeng: Transforming Discipleship in a Pandemic-Stricken World

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Abstract

This article examines the theme of the 15th Assembly of the IAMS in 2022, “Powers, Inequalities, and Vulnerabilities: Mission in a Wounded World”. It focuses on putting justice, equality, and liberation at the heart of the Christian mission as a way of transforming discipleship in a pandemic-stricken world. The biblical concept of shalom and the Korean concept of sangsaeng will be examined and discussed as relevant mission concepts in order to respond to the current challenges caused by the global pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a radical impact on every aspect of life. As lockdowns, social distancing measures to prevent the spread of infection have led to a new “non-contact” culture. Mission and evangelism, which presuppose face-to-face contact and communication, are going through a crisis. Even amid the crisis, however, the mission remains an essential calling of the church and all Christians. Therefore, this article examines transforming discipleship as a radical proposal to live out the mission concepts of shalom and sangsaeng in the context of the global pandemic.

Keywords

What Has Gone Wrong?

Bats are angry because they have lost their homes. Most of their dark, damp but safe homes are destroyed by the mammal who walks with only two legs. It is horrific because some of them believe that bats taste rather good. Bats have started to protect themselves by spreading out zoonotic pathogens. The Covid-19 pandemic is neither a natural nor an accidental disaster (Brown 13 April 2020). It is a human-made disaster owing to ecocide, the impoverishment of biodiversity, and the human invasion of the homes of wild animals.

Jae Chun Choe, a renowned evolutionary biologist, claims that we need to develop not only a medical vaccine but also an “ecological vaccine” (Choe 14 May 2020) that counters the reckless destruction of the ecosystem that has been long committed by humankind. Social distancing is not enough, but ecological distancing allowing for the resilience of creation is imperative. Biodiversity is the foundation of the natural beauty and life of all creatures. The World Council of Churches (WCC) Mission Statement, Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes (TTL), raises a sharp question:

God did not send the Son for the salvation of humanity alone or give us a partial salvation. Rather the gospel is the good news for every part of creation and every aspect of our life and society. It is, therefore, vital to recognize God’s mission in a cosmic sense, and to affirm all life, the whole oikoumene, as being interconnected in God’s web of life. As threats to the future of our planet are evident, what are their implications for our participation in God’s mission?

TTL, §4

It is also a socio-economic disaster due to neoliberal globalization. Covid-19 has been found in a single species of bat (Rhinolophus affinis) in China. An epidemic that broke out in a local marketplace in Wuhan became a global pandemic within weeks and led to the lockdown of almost all sectors of society, including business, travel, education, culture, art, sports, religion, and so on. Obviously, globalization contributed to the spread of the virus. The number of deaths was much higher in those countries where there was a radical cut of the medical budget and subsequent restructuring of the health care system due to their neoliberal policies.

Politics is not an exception. The rise of populist ultra-right-wing regimes – even fascists – everywhere is a political disaster. Dan Patrick, deputy governor of Texas, said, “Old people should volunteer to die to save the economy” (Levin 24 March 2020). Although he is not that young, those people who have
money and power may believe that the right to life depends on one’s position in the hierarchy, and that the privileged should have greater access to immortality. It is well known that when the number of those who tested positive became overwhelming, some governments in the EU no longer gave priority to patients over the age of seventy in intensive care units. TTL again challenges:

We are living in a world in which faith in mammon threatens the credibility of the gospel. Market ideology is spreading the propaganda that the global market will save the world through unlimited growth. This myth is a threat not only to economic life but also to the spiritual life of people, and not only to humanity but also to the whole creation. How can we proclaim the good news and values of God’s kingdom in the global market or win over the spirit of the market? What kind of missional action can the church take in the midst of economic and ecological injustice and crisis on a global scale?

TTL, §7

Systemic greed, sharp economic disparities, environmental destruction, war economies, supremacist ideologies, and exploitation of vulnerable people are some of the many problems that reveal the extent of moral decadence among the rich and powerful. But alongside these, a new awareness that the current trends will only be more detrimental for the future of life on earth, and a new resolve to search for alternatives, also seem increasingly prominent.

It seems that the “survival of the fittest” is the only rule which is functional at the moment in the context of a pandemic-stricken world. For many people, the accumulation of wealth is the only way to protect lives and to satisfy the desire for power (Sung 2007:3). However, the people of faith do not believe that the power of God’s love is inferior to the power of money. The power of resurrection subjugates all the powers of death. How then can we witness to God’s mission in ways that our witness nurtures, protects, and enhances life? How does the pandemic challenge our cherished understandings of church, mission, ecumenism, and discipleship? What alternative visions and signposts does the gospel offer to a world that finds itself at a crossroads?

It is in this context, that we are preparing to meet in July 2022 at the 15th Assembly of the International Association for Mission Studies, a conference that had to be postponed twice. Although, the theme, “Powers, Inequalities, and Vulnerabilities: Mission in a Wounded World” was chosen prior to the outbreak of the pandemic, it is still relevant and prophetic. It is imperative that missiologists from all corners of the world should respond to the question: What is God’s mission in today’s wounded world? This article claims that
putting justice, equality, and liberation at the heart of Christian mission, and applying the concepts of shalom and sangsaeng is a way of transforming discipleship in the midst of a wounded creation and humanity.

2 Vulnerability in Mission

The Spirit of God has the power to rejuvenate and sustain the movement that goes from situations of death to new life in Christ. As Mary testified, in order to bring about this transformation, the God of justice lifts up the lowly and downtrodden, but at the same time scatters the proud and brings down the powerful from their thrones (Luke 1:46–47). Apostle Paul, in his struggle to reconcile Jews and Gentiles and other factions, declared that God’s power is made perfect in weakness (2 Cor 12:9; 1 Cor 2:3–5). The Holy Spirit’s transforming power is demonstrated in the humility and self-emptying, kenosis, of Jesus Christ (Phil 2:7). “In situations of oppression, discrimination and hurt, the cross of Christ is the power of God for salvation (1 Cor 11:8). The ministry of the Holy Spirit is self-emptying and cross-bearing in order that the saving power of God may be demonstrated” (Matthey 2008:85). The church is called to bear the cross of Jesus Christ by being with the suffering (Col 1:24).

In the light of the cross, we are called to repent of both our misuse of power and our use of the wrong kind of power in mission. Vulnerability in mission requires us to confront every theology and mission strategy that glorifies money, power, success, and greed (Jørgensen 2012:297). The Edinburgh 2010 Common Call, affirmed by the representatives of the global church including Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox, Pentecostal, and Protestant churches, invites us to a missionary metanoia:

Disturbed by the asymmetries and imbalances of power that divide and trouble us in church and world, we are called to repentance, to critical reflection on systems of power, and to accountable use of power structures. We are called to find practical ways to live as members of One Body in full awareness that God resists the proud, Christ welcomes and empowers the poor and afflicted, and the power of the Holy Spirit is manifested in our vulnerability.

Kim and Anderson 2011:1–2

Dorothee Sölle understood vulnerability as a window into heaven. “God makes Godself vulnerable; in Christ, God defines as nonviolent. The manly ideal of invulnerability is opposed.” She went on to say, “Christ is God’s wound in the
world” (Sölle 1990:xi). Indeed, a window of vulnerability is a missional perspective to participate in *missio Trinitatis* in the pandemic-stricken world. Vulnerability is a perspective from the margins to follow Jesus’ movement to reveal and actualize the Reign of God. In 1982, the WCC Central Committee approved the document, *Mission and Evangelism: An Ecumenical Affirmation*, which affirms the ecumenical practice of mission to be “Mission in Christ’s Way:”

> The self-emptying of the servant who lived among the people, sharing in their hopes and sufferings, giving his life on the cross for all humanity – this was Christ’s way of proclaiming the good news, and as disciples, we are summoned to follow the same way.

*WCC. Mission and Evangelism 1982 §4*

In Asian theology, Aloysius Pieris focused on the vulnerability of Christ and connected it with *Virage* or detachment, which is a Buddhist practice of voluntary poverty as a means of spiritual detoxing against the toxicity of mammon. Pieris claimed “Freedom from poverty” becomes an enslaving pursuit if it is not tempered by the Asian belief in the “freedom that comes from poverty” – that is freedom from mammon (Pieris 1980:73). In the context of global imperialism – especially in the form of the hegemonic power of globalization – this kenotic spirituality is a challenge both to the victims and perpetrators of systemic violence and injustice, because such spirituality demands them to give up their privileges and pleasures, and empty themselves. Vulnerability and resilience is a missionary pilgrimage of justice and peace towards liberation.

### 3 The Power of Love

In the context of the rise of the pandemic, racism, and fascism, one of the key goals of mission and evangelism should be to reflect on how we understand and give expression to the power of God’s love to defeat the politics of hatred and the culture of fear. Are we presenting God’s love as good only for another world because some of us do not want to risk losing the benefits and privileges that various forms of structurally embedded injustice bestow on us? If so, are we not limiting the power of God’s love by seeking to witness in ways that are safe and comfortable, limiting it to the realm of the purely personal, granted to or accessed on certain terms and conditions, and limiting it as one that numbs and soothes rather than as one that heals and transforms? The power of God’s love is not inferior to the powers of death. “The power of the Risen Lord subjugates the powers of death, even as the rest of the world embraces or remains
indifferent to the powers of death in God’s beloved world. How then can we witness to God’s love in ways that our witness confronts and transforms the systems and empires that deny God’s gift of life?” (Keum 2018:84–85).

It is time to ask a question of the mission and ecumenical movement: Are we true disciples of the gospel? It is discipleship that will prove decisive the credibility and relevance of mission in the context of Covid-19. Do we believe that the power of love can transform the world of hatred and injustice? At the end of the day, it is love that saves us all. “After this pandemic, we can’t go back to our indifferences” (Beavans and Sedmak 2021:191). Pope Francis reminds us that love alone changes the human heart and love is the answer (Fratelli Tutti 2020). Likewise, there is no fear in love (1 John 4:18). Love is the way to combat the politics of fear and the culture of hatred through the expression of love in action, which is nothing but justice.

4 Rediscovering Mission as Shalom

In his very last works, Duncan Forrester lamented the end of equality in the ethical and missiological discussions of today. He claims, “Equality is a matter of faith” (Forrester 2010:25). In order to believe in human equality as imago Dei, it is necessary to believe in God of justice. Faith in human equality is an entrance into discussing mission as justice and peace. The peace-making mission of Christians as a community is undergirded theologically by the confession of Christ’s Lordship, which refuses to let the rulers of the present world sacralize its oppressive and divisive structures. Therefore, our mission of equality and justice is intrinsically linked to the mission of cultivating and preserving peace among the peoples and nations of the world. For this reason, Christians can promote peace by helping the people of the world to make conscious choices, by helping them to develop deliberate policies of peace and justice, and by building communities of reconciliation and healing.

As Forrester questioned equality, I would like to challenge our “strange silence” with the concept of “mission as shalom” in the midst of the current cosmic crises. No matter how our different schools understand the mission, the missiological discourse of shalom has to be revisited as a vision of the new world in the post-pandemic context.1 Shalom is neither a Christian socialist nor a liberal ecumenical discourse, but a biblical vision of mission. What John

Davis claimed based on Johannes Hoekendijk’s missiology in 1967 is truly missional and relevant in today’s context: “The goal of mission is the establishment of shalom, we are required to enter into partnership with God in history to renew society” (Davis 1967:15). Shalom is God’s grace to restore the imago Dei and liberate God’s people towards salvation.

The concept of imago Dei is developed as the theology of Jubilee in the Old Testament (Lev 25:8–10). The “Jubilee year” is the fiftieth year following the completion of forty-nine years, a cycle of seven sabbatical years. The Jubilee year is a “year of liberation”. The proclamation of the Jubilee year is an act of God’s people, which reveals their unshaken trust in God’s sovereignty over history and their faithfulness in keeping God’s covenant. Jubilee is the time when the people return to God, repent of their shortcomings, recover their righteousness, and rejoice in hope.

The Jubilee is a time during which the covenant community of unity and peace is restored through the establishment of shalom based upon God’s justice. This is seen in the liberation of the enslaved through the overcoming of all social and economic conflicts resulting from internal or external repression and absolutist power: debt is forgiven, purchased land is restored to its original tillers, and seized homes are returned to their original inhabitants (Lev 25:1–55). Shalom is the vision of Jubilee established through the realization of social, economic, and ecological justice.

As it was not possible for the Law of Jubilee to be realized in history, God decided to become incarnate in the world, in order that the Son should provide a model of how to live out shalom. Jesus proclaimed the Jubilee as his mission: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Luke 4:18–19). Jubilee is not simply a utopian dream in heaven, it is indicative of a historical vision that the Reign of God is entering into this world from the eschaton. Affirming life in all its fullness is Jesus Christ’s ultimate concern and mission (John 10:10).

In some cases in the Roman Empire, the notion of shalom was translated as pax Romana. While the biblical notion of shalom implies a radical and ontological transformation of both humanity and creation towards the cosmic peace of God, pax Romana focused on the human socio-political order established by the power and oppression without conflict or resistance. This understanding of pax dominated Christendom for a long time. It has remained the same in our hierarchical understanding of the value of life, for example, the ideology of white supremacy. It has influenced the pyramidal order of creatures which places humans at the top above all the creatures on the planet and
justifies unlimited human exploitation against creation. The current pandemic is a catastrophic result of this heretical understanding of life which does not believe in the equality of the imago Dei. It is evident that the brokenness of shalom – relationship and harmony – with creation can cause the genocide of humanity as well as the ecocide of creation.

Pope Paul IV (1972) interpreted shalom as a transformative action, “If you want peace, work for justice.” Here we should include not only social and economic justice but also ecological justice in the concept of mission as shalom. It is necessary to expand the concept of justice in imago Dei beyond the anthropocentric approach (Rom 8:19). I attempted to articulate this as a cosmic dimension of mission with a pneumatological focus in TTL. Mission as shalom aims for the liberation and salvation of the whole cosmos: “We believe in the Triune God who is the creator, redeemer, and sustainer of all life. God created the whole oikoumene in God’s image and constantly works in the world to affirm and safeguard life” (TTL, §1). The shalom fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ is called “good news” by the apostles. In short, shalom is the dream of the Bible and the core of God’s mission (Isa 2:2–5, 9:5–6; Ezek 37:26; Rev 21).

5 Shalom, Sangsaeng, and Ubuntu

In East Asia, the Chinese words, hépíng (和平), or píng’ān (平安) are popular words that mean peace and are also a translation of shalom. Píng (平) means the scales of justice. Hé (和) is a compound of mǐ (米), which means rice, and kǒu (口), means mouth. Literally, hépíng (peace) means ‘eating rice equally’. Here, we find that the notion of equality has been emphasized in the Chinese conception of peace, which is similar to the biblical concept of shalom. However, there is also a limited understanding of peace, mainly focused on social equality.

In the Korean concept, peace is relational as shalom. Hwahae (和解), or reconciliation, is at the center of the Korean understanding of shalom, due to our painful history of division. It also says that there is no peace without reconciliation. Peace, in the concept of hwahae, means to be reconciled and to be restored in a relationship. In other words, the peace that has been destroyed by division should be re-established, or a relationship should be renewed. The biblical vision of reconciliation is “to be reunified” or “to be one again” with God, people, and creation. The underlying notion is that of beginning anew, unconditionally, even eschatologically. Hwahae as reconciliation has the sense of maintaining peace in renewed and reconciled community.
The aim of hwahae is sangsaeng (相生). Sangsaeng means “mutual life-giving” and is one of the key philosophical principles of Jeungsando, a Korean new messianic religious movement (Flarherty 2004). Sang (相) means “mutual” or “together” and saeng (生) means “life.” Before understanding sangsaeng further, it is significant to understand cheonji gaebyeok (天地開闢), which means “heaven and earth opens and transforms” in the Cosmic Year. The meaning of sangsaeng can be understood more profoundly in the context of the Cosmic Year, just as shalom is understood in the context of the Jubilee Year. According to Jeungsando, humanity is now living near the end of the Cosmic Summer. The Cosmic Autumn will be a time of maturity, unity, and harmony. For this to happen, the Autumn gaebyeok must take place on three levels: the transformation of nature, the transformation of society, and the transformation of each human being.

Sangsaeng is necessary because governing principles in Early Heaven and Later Heaven are different. In Early Heaven, the principle of sanggeuk (相克), or mutual competition and rivalry, governs all lives. Therefore, all lives in the world are suffering and in conflict with each other. In the movement towards cheonji gaebyeok, haewon (解寃), or liberation from bitterness and grief, is necessary to achieve sangsaeng. Without haewon there is no reconciliation and liberation. The history before the Cosmic Year is the history of han of the minjung, due to gender discrimination, racism, casteism, social alienation, economic inequality, political oppression, religious persecution, violence, and war. However, in Later Heaven, the principle of sangsaeng, mutual life-giving, will prevail in all lives in the cosmos. In the context of the Cosmic Year, the position of the earth’s axis demonstrates the concurrent relationship between yin and yang. Therefore, the aim of sangsaeng is not merely a harmonious life, but cheonji gaebyeok, the grand transformation of heaven and earth in the Cosmic Year.

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2 “Western philosophy and science have historically viewed time as merely linear, but Jeung San Do’s cosmology recognizes that time is actually cyclical and that the universe evolves in accordance with a cycle analogous to earth’s year: the cosmic year. Each cosmic year encompasses 129,600 calendar years and contains four cosmic seasons: cosmic spring, cosmic summer, cosmic autumn, cosmic winter. The first two seasons of a cosmic year, cosmic spring and cosmic summer, combine to comprise the era of the Early Heaven. The cosmic year’s second two seasons, cosmic autumn and cosmic winter, comprise the Later Heaven.” Jeungsando, https://www.jeungsando.org/?page_id=2062, accessed on October 4, 2021.

Samuel Kobia, former WCC General Secretary, insisted on developing stronger links between Asian and African theologians. Afro-Asian solidarity and cooperation is an important contribution to the search for a new paradigm of mission and ecumenism in the 21st century:

*Ubuntu* stands for the African anthropology and cosmo-vision of life in community ... *sangsaeng* recalls the ancient Korean concept of a sharing community and economy that allows all to flourish together. When *ubuntu* and *sangsaeng* meet together, justice and peace kiss each other, and the biblical vision of life in God’s *shalom* shines in the light of two congenial cultures of this world and speaks to people of Africa and Asia – but not only to them!

KOBIA 2007

Desmond Tutu describes *ubuntu* as follows: “It is the essence of being human. It speaks of the fact that my humanity is caught up and is inextricably bound up in yours. I am human because I belong. It speaks about wholeness, it speaks about compassion” (Tutu 2004:26). He insists that a person with *ubuntu* is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share with others, even willing to be vulnerable as they belong in a greater whole. When others are humiliated and oppressed, they know that they are diminished too. “The quality of *ubuntu* gives people resilience, enabling them to survive and emerge still human despite all efforts to dehumanize them” (Tutu 2004:26).

In a world where bats cannot live, humanity cannot survive too! Therefore, bats and humanity are in the relationship of *sangsaeng*, living together. The African wisdom, “I am because you are”, does apply to bats too. As people of mission, we can neither close our eyes to reality nor should we despair. We can still believe in the power and the promise of *shalom*, *sansaeng*, and *ubuntu* as an alternative to hatred, violence, and divisions. Kosuke Koyama said:

Koyama 1984:44

We are groaning in the midst of life-destroying systems of greedy economies, ecocide, and the threats of empires. According to K.C. Abraham, the renewal of society and the earth is inseparable and ecological crisis is a justice issue (Abraham 1992). The global crises we are facing today demand a new
epistemology that affirms co-existence with the creation and spirituality of ecological *kenosis*. Seong-Won Park claims, “The convergence of *ubuntu* and *sangsaeng* highlights the conviviality and relationality of all God’s creation” (Park 2008:156). The cosmic vision of *shalom*, *sangsaeng*, and *ubuntu* teaches us that living beings in the cosmos are interrelated and interdependent. Humanity cannot be saved alone while the rest of the created world perishes. These biblical, Asian, and African concepts of life have provided an alternative way of theological exploration.

6 Transforming Discipleship

In March 2018, the WCC CWME convened the 14th World Mission Conference since Edinburgh 1910, in Arusha, Tanzania. The theme of the conference was “Moving in the Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship” (Jukko and Keum 2018). According to Steve Bevans, a CWME commissioner, the phrase “transforming discipleship” carries three profoundly different and yet closely related meanings:

First, the very idea of discipleship needs to be transformed. Discipleship is often understood merely in the sense of being in a loving, friendly relationship with Jesus. While this is a profound truth, the discipleship that we intend to emphasize is one that is not only a relationship but involves active engagement in continuing Jesus’ mission in the world. Second, we are called to be disciples constantly open to being transformed, individually and communally, in our following of Jesus. Discipleship commits us to embark on a spiritual journey that will constantly challenge us and shape us into people who reflect the Lord Jesus in our actions, words, and attitudes. Third, we are called to be disciples who are ourselves bringing about transformation, and as such, we are privileged to join in the mission of the Triune God, working together towards life, living out the values of the kingdom of God, and engaging in mission from the margins (Bevans 2018).

In a world in which injustice seems almost insuperable, where hatred and racism seem to thrive, where the suffering caused by Covid-19 is so widespread and terrifying in a pandemic-stricken world, our discipleship is costly. It calls us to put a theology of the cross into practice. Deenabandhu Manchala argues that one of the distinct ways in which churches have made a positive difference in history is when they have understood themselves as movements of people. It was churches’ ability to read the signs of the times, and to understand the
purpose of their being in history, that made them constantly reform as life-affirming communities (Deenabandhu 2017).

The incarnation of Jesus took place among the people at the margins. At the time of the birth of Jesus, people who gathered around him were people outside of the power structure. They were people with neither political power nor religious authority: women, children, and the poor, such as shepherds. The birth of Jesus was astonishing and threatening news for the rulers. They never expected that God would be revealed among the marginalized. God chose the ‘margin’ – the people on the underside of history – to inaugurate the Reign of God. Therefore, TTL proposes the concept of ‘mission from the margins’ as a new direction of mission:

Mission from the margins seeks to counteract injustices in life, church, and mission. It seeks to be an alternative missional movement against the perception that mission can only be done by the powerful to the powerless, by the rich to the poor, or by the privileged to the marginalized. Such approaches can contribute to oppression and marginalization.

However, living on the margins can provide its own lessons. People on the margins have agency and can often see what, from the center, is out of view. People on the margins, living in vulnerable positions, often know what exclusionary forces are threatening their survival and can best discern the urgency of their struggles (TTL, §38).

TTL emphasized that marginalized people have God-given gifts that are underutilized because of disempowerment, and denial of access to opportunities and justice. Through struggles in and for life, marginalized people are reservoirs of active hope and collective resistance with the faith in the promised reign of God (TTL, §38). The purpose of the mission here is not simply to move people from the margins to the center but to challenge those systems and people who remain at the center by keeping people on the margins (Nalunnakkal 2016:87).

According to the Gospel of John, the Jewish leaders tried to kill Jesus for the first time after Jesus had healed a person who had been waiting for thirty-eight

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years beside the pool of Bethesda. They said, “He has broken the Sabbath” (John 5:1–18). It is the same concept of the Sabbath, which was the theological backbone of the Jubilee and shalom. However, the Pharisees interpreted it to control the marginalized people and to secure their religious power. They had no concerns about political oppression and the hardness of ordinary people’s lives as long as they could maintain their ecclesiastical power through the control of the Jewish doctrines and temple. They did not care what happened outside the temple: they even betrayed their people and joined hands with the Roman Empire to maintain power (Keum 2019:33).

However, the system of Bethesda, which allows the one who can run first to take everything, must be broken. The structure that prohibits the suffering people from taking hands and walking together into “the stirring water of life” must be transformed. Bethesda, which can be translated as “the house of mercy”, although ironically has no mercy at all, must be demolished even on the Sabbath day. The religion which teaches a distorted truth in the healing power of drain water must be reformed. Just before his encounter with the paralytic in Bethesda, when Jesus saw that the priests took excessive profits by selling sacrifices in the temple, he said, “Demolish this temple!” (John 2:19). Jesus begins to build up the Cross, a new temple, the community of hope, with the people who have been waiting for the good news for thirty-eight years.

This is an urgent challenge to the global church, mission agencies, evangelical movements, and ecumenical institutions to transform their power structures in order to bring about the transformation of the world. We ourselves need a transformation from within, as although we talk about World Christianity, western Christianity is still predominant everywhere.

Over two thousand mission representatives from every part of the world and from many different ecclesial traditions came together in Arusha in March 2018 and explored what it would mean to think of the missionary calling in terms of transforming discipleship. The highlight of the World Mission Conference was the unanimous approval by the participants of the twelve summons of the Arusha Call to Discipleship as their statement of affirmation of what it means to be missionary disciples. Kenneth Ross claims that what is needed today is not some small improvement but a radical game-changer. He evaluates that the recent ecumenical thinking of transforming discipleship could be such a game-changer (Ross 2020). The Arusha Call to Discipleship provides signposts and directions for the renewal of mission in our time. It is a calling to confront a false God where the economy is given a place of supremacy and human and creation’s life is understood primarily in terms of economic utility. Given the growing inequality and injustice of today’s world, it seems no one dares to confront the false god of money and the market. To be authentic
disciples of Jesus Christ today, it is our calling to be critically involved in relation to the mighty power of the global economy and to proclaim that Babylon is falling down.

In order to do so, transforming discipleship, as a faith-driven movement towards justice and life, requires a shift of location – in hermeneutical as well as in geographical terms: from the board rooms to the streets, and from dogma to life. Life and lives matter, therefore Transforming Discipleship is a calling towards a celebration of life in its fullness with people in their specific contexts and communities. Covid-19 is, an opportunity to nurture transformative mission and ecumenism at the level of people and communities that are outside the temple like the community beside the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem. In this mission, we can no longer be mere spectators of these situations of injustice, these acts of violence, and destruction. We need to discern and radically engage with this world.

The current world is broken. The world is yearning for transforming discipleship that reconciles the broken and troubled world. Christian disciples have a crucial role to play in making the church the “light of the world”. We should “go in peace” to the world after our worship, as though embarking on a pilgrimage. Mission as “liturgy after the liturgy”, to use the Orthodox expression, means the bold and prophetic proclamation of shalom in a broken world towards cheonji gaebyeok, or “new heavens and a new earth.”

7 Concluding Remarks: Dare to Hope

Allan Boesak says that hope teaches us the language of life in which we articulate our deepest longings for a life of human flourishing that can lift us out of the depths of despair, empowering us to find the liberating and hope-giving God (Boesak 2014:25). Hope is both fragile and resilient. It is fragile when it is rooted in our vulnerabilities, but it is resilient when rooted in God’s mission of vulnerability. Isaiah 53:2 reminds us of the suffering servant who “grew up like a tender shoot, and like a root out of the dry ground.” Immanuel “God with us” empowers us in the place of weakness, provides fellowship in the place of isolation, courage in the place of fear, and life in the place of death. Jürgen Moltmann said that where Jesus is there is life in all its fullness (Moltamnn 1978:19). Indeed, there is life before death in God’s mission. This message of hope of life is more contagious than Covid. Therefore, we dare to hope.

The Holy Spirit is creating renewed hope among people at the margins. Our mission is to reveal this God-created hope from the margins to the world. Therefore, our mission as transforming disciples is to proclaim the hope of
shalom. God has given a special calling to disciples of Jesus to go into the divided and wounded world for its transformation. In the midst of agony, despair, and cries of life in this pandemic-stricken world, it is our mission as transforming disciples is to seek alternative values, ways of life, and communities, to reveal shalom in God's kingdom on earth by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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Resumen
Este artículo examina el tema de la 15ª Asamblea de la IAMS del 2022, “Poderes, desigualdades y vulnerabilidades: La misión en un mundo herido”. Se centra en situar la justicia, la igualdad y la liberación en el centro de la misión cristiana como forma de transformar el discipulado en un mundo golpeado por la pandemia. El concepto bíblico de shalom y el concepto coreano de sangsaeng serán examinados y tratados como conceptos de misión relevantes para responder a los retos actuales causados por la pandemia mundial. La pandemia de Covid-19 ha tenido un impacto radical en todos los aspectos de la vida. Los encierros y las medidas de distanciamiento social para prevenir la propagación de la infección han llevado a una nueva cultura de “no contacto”. La misión y la evangelización, que presuponen el contacto y una comunicación cara a cara, están atravesando una crisis. Sin embargo, incluso en medio de la crisis, la misión sigue siendo un llamado esencial para la iglesia y para todos los cristianos. Por lo tanto, este artículo examina el discipulado transformador como una propuesta radical para vivir los conceptos de misión de shalom y sangsaeng en el contexto de la pandemia mundial.

摘要
本文探讨了2022年第15届IAMS大会的主题:“权力、不平等和脆弱性:受伤世界中的使命”。它侧重于将正义、平等和解放置于基督教使命的核心，以此作为在疫情肆虐的世界中转化门徒训练的一种方式。以圣经中的shalom概念和韩国的sangsaeng概念作为相关的使命概念进行审查和讨论，以应对当前全球疫情带来的挑战。Covid-19疫情对生活的方方面面都产生了根本性的影响。随着封锁，防止感染传播的社会疏离措施导致了一种新的“非接触”文化。以面对面的接触和沟通为前提的宣教和传福音正在经历一场危机。然而，即使在危机中，宣教仍然是教会和所有基督徒的重要呼召。因此，本文将转化门徒训练作为一项激进的提议，以在全球疫情的背景下活出“平安”和“生生”的宣教概念。