



Logo of the ACT Club

Photo courtesy of the ACT Club.

ACT, ACT Club, and ACT Association

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Kyung Sang Sohn obtained secondary education from the Adventist Education Institute, graduated from Seoul National University, and received a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Kangwon National University. A dentist by profession, he likes astronomical observation and exploration of the natural world, so he established a museum of nature exploration in 1999 and served as the museum director. He was the director of ACT Club from 2002 to 2009.

ACT (Adventist Collegians with Tidings) is a college student missionary organization for campus ministry in Korea. Although it is administered as an independent organization, it is supervised by the department of youth ministry of the Korean Union Conference (KUC). The central organization is Korea ACT, which has five regional ACTs. Each regional ACT is supervised by its local conference. The ACT Club is an organization to support ACT, which consists of graduates and sponsors of Korea ACT. Korea ACT, ACT Club, and the directors of conferences and the union conference formed an organization called ACT Association.

Organization

SDA Collegians Council (1967-1981). ACT originated in early 1967 when Adventist college students attending non-Adventist universities and colleges in Seoul started to hold a gathering called the SDA Collegians Council.¹ At the time, the SDA College Board consisted of a small number of university and college students, but many people became Seventh-day Adventists and leaders within the Church.² The initial meeting had little or no pastoral support, so its members themselves were responsible for raising and financing their activities. Nine chairmen were elected after the first, Keun Il Chung, who had to keep their flags silent for years to come due to various difficult circumstances in the 10th session of 1976.

SDA Collegians Missionary Society (1982-1989). In the 1980s, Adventist university and college students restored the SDA Student Council, which had been suspended in 1982, and at the same time raised a new flag called the SDA Collegians Missionary Society, which added the concept of evangelism. The reorganization assembly elected the 11th Chairman, Sang Woo Park, and its executives.³ The SDA Collegians Missionary Society held regular meetings at the G.I. Center inside the Korean Union Conference headquarters, where more than 100 people gathered. In 1985 the first National SDA University Students' Camp Meeting was held under the auspices of the youth department, which encouraged and provided great vision to the shrinking campus gatherings and members of the nation.⁴ However, due to the lack of a philosophy on the direction of long-term plans and activities, the absence of dedicated personnel, and financial difficulties, the power of the members of the activity was exhausted, and the number of active members decreased.

The most notable historical event of this period is the birth of the English abbreviated name ACT (Adventist Collegians with Tidings). The name was created by adding *Tidings*, which represents *good news* in Romans 10:15, to the words *Adventist Collegians* at the end of 1987. Thus, the SDA Collegian Missionary Society was able to have a new name that was biblical and dynamic. It is noteworthy that ACT drew up its first long-term development plan for the College Student Mission Church during this period.⁵

History

ACT Organization (1989-1990). By 1989 ACT had begun to recover again, and the biggest turning point was at the National Council of University and College Student Executives in February 1989. The council decided to organize the SDA Collegians Missionary Society in five regions nationwide and to use the official name ACT in English. This meant that the SDA Collegians Missionary Society which had been almost self-sufficient, would become an official organization within the Korean Adventist Church. ACT passed the resolutions of the council of the KUC, and its existence was known in the Far Eastern Division and was also introduced in the *College and University Dialogue*, published by AMiCUS at the General Conference.⁶

In July 1989, ACT in Seoul had been separated into East ACT and West ACT, after having been together for 20 years, according to their conferences. Accordingly, East ACT continued to meet at the G.I. Center (chairman: Joo Chul Shin), and West ACT (chairman: Choong Jae Lee) met in the meeting room of the West Central Korean Conference.⁷ In December of that year, additional ACT groups were organized in Chuncheon and Wonju, Busan and Daegu. On August 15, 1991, all of the ACT groups gathered to organize the Korea ACT.

Establishment of ACT Churches (1991-1992). The idea to establish ACT churches had been discussed since the late 1980s. Their establishment was first carried out in the East Central Korean Conference (ECKC) region of Seoul in consideration of the support from the ECKC as well as its relations with local churches. As a result, a special church consisting of university and college students was created for the first time by holding a worship service for the establishment of an East ACT church on June 2, 1991.⁸

The start of the East ACT Church had ripple effects on other conferences, leading to the creation of other ACT churches, such as West ACT Church. However, due to difficulties in managing the church and its relationship with the surrounding churches, only two ACT churches in Seoul, East ACT Church and West ACT Church, are currently operating. The founding of the ACT Church means that the Church has come to express a distinct method of operation in campus missionary work. It differs from campus missionary groups of other denominations, which have a loose relationship with existing denominations and have almost independent operations and finances.

Birth of ACT Club (1994). With the establishment of ACT churches, revitalization of campus ministry was required. In particular, budgets and manpower were needed for campus ministry. In 1994, the ACT Club (chairman: Hyun Joon Shin, and general secretary: Yoon Sik Byun) was formed to support campus ministry. The ACT Club held a regular meeting on the second Sabbath of each month and began to actively sponsor ACT ministry.⁹

True Campus Mission (1995-present). Other campus missionary groups try to maintain themselves by finding and educating university graduates to devote themselves to university campuses. They are referred to as *Helpers* (CCC, IVF, JOY) or *Shepherds* (UBF) and they serve on campus for a year or two after graduation.¹⁰ The concept of ACT Helper was first proposed officially in 1989, but was not implemented due to lack of financial support and low awareness. There were cases in which Busan ACT had its own Helper, albeit temporarily. Since then, ACT members have been praying constantly and God has responded. By support from former chairman Kyung Sang Sohn in October 1994 and the ACT Club, a group of graduating members formed at that time. This led to the creation of the first Helpers (Chang Up Lee, Jung Ho Lee, Joo Han Lee, Byung Young Noh, and Sang Hoon Ji).¹¹

The appointment of Helpers means that the development of campus missionary work in the true sense has begun. The Helpers took on the role of campus missionary by working in the field or producing and promoting newsletters. Their activities led to greater growth of ACT in each region. Although there were difficulties in

working with pastors who had no experience on campus, the number of pastors who understood and helped ACT increased as many ACT people chose to study theology after their campus career.

Vision of World Mission (1995-present). In late December 1994, Korea ACT's short-term overseas missionary work began with the first mission trip led by Joong Kyung Sung and 20 ACT members under the leadership of the youth ministry department of KUC, going to Uzbekistan in the former Soviet Union.¹² Until then, mission trips had been organized dozens of times and carried out active volunteer work, but the work was limited to locations within Korea. Since then, ACT has embarked on missions across the border. With the expansion of overseas mission trips, which have been promoted every year, ACT is currently engaged in short-term mission trips overseas by conference or division. ACT has also done volunteer work all over the world from Japan to Peru, in accordance with local needs. It has filled people's needs with activities such as summer Bible schools, medical service, and Korean cultural experience, and has spread the three angels' messages.¹³

In 2018, for overseas missionary work, ACT-based missionaries were sent to another country within the Northern Asia-Pacific Division under the name PCM missionary. It has been doing its best to help other countries share and develop the experience and know-how of campus missionary work in Korea. In addition, beginning in 2019 a European ACT Camp Meeting was held for students studying in Europe and ACT plans to conduct the camp meeting every year.

Launching the ACT Association (2009-present). On June 1, 2003, the Board of Directors was organized by holding a general meeting (chairman: Chang Joon Oh). This was followed by the formal launch of the ACT Association through the ACT Association Organizing Committee (chairman: Dae Geuk Nam) on November 22, 2009.¹⁴ The ACT Association, in consultation with the KUC, created a position in the youth department which has exclusive responsibility for managing the missionary work for college students. It also sponsors the activities of pastors dedicated to ACT within the five conferences, and it cooperated in the establishment of the Vision Center in 2015, paving the way for ACT service to be professionally conducted. This is a meaningful event which shows that ACT has grown from a position where it needed assistance from the Church and to a position where it helps the Church.¹⁵

In 2017 the ACT Association (CEO: Yoon Sik Byun, chairman: Kyung Soo Sohn) held a commemorative worship service at the Vision Center, with some 500 senior ACT members gathered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its foundation; they later moved to the W Hotel to celebrate the past and to declare a vision for the future. Thinking about its future, ACT declared its support for professional missionary work and missionary training, soul salvation, and social service with the church.¹⁶

Role and Mission

ACT began as a group of a few university students, but it is now not only a missionary group for campus, but it is a leading group of university students affecting the Korean SDA Church. Many of ACT's former members have

become leaders of the SDA Church, and new leaders are still being created on campus.

Currently, ACT consists of two divisions. One is Korea ACT, which is made up of university students in Korea and is active on campus; and the other is ACT Association, a support group for Adventist students attending a non-Adventist university (ACT). Korea ACT focuses on campus meetings and campus evangelism. Since 1985, the Korea ACT has been holding annual National SDA University Students' Camp Meeting, Leadership Training in summer and winter, and volunteer services at home and abroad. It has also created a *Textbook for Small Group Meetings* for university students' campus activities and youth activities in local churches.

ACT Association consists of seniors who have experienced ACT activities and it is sponsoring all the activities mentioned above so they proceed smoothly. In addition, it has provided a meeting room (gathering space) for university students' worship and life in each region. Among other things, it has given great support to building a Children and Youth Vision Center in the KUC headquarters. The building has a campus missionary training center on the fifth floor, an office on the second floor, and a church on the first floor, and it has been a strong supporter of ACT's missionary work.¹⁷

List of Chairmen of ACT and Directors of ACT Club

Chairmen of ACT: Geun Young Jeong (1967); Min Whan Jeong (1968); Sang Soon Ban (1969); Soo Jong Oh (1970); Gye Taek Myung (1971); Geun Hee Jeong (1972); Young Hoon Kim (1973); Jae Hee Lee (1975); Soo Ho Oh (1975); Yoon Sik Byun (1976); Sang Woo Park (1982); Dong Soo Kim (1982); Seong Min Choi (1983); Kyung Sang Sohn (1984); Gwi Ju Song (1985, 1987); Kyung Soo Sohn (1986); Hyung Cheol Bae (1988); Jeong Ho Lee (1989).

Chairmen of Korea ACT: Cheon Kyung Kim (1992); Hee Joong Kim (1993); Jung Kyung Seong (1994); Kyung Seop Park (1995); Seung Il Kim (1996); Seong Woon Choi (1997); Chi Ho Lim (1998); Jang Won Cho (1999); Seong Hye Jin (2000); Haeng Nam Lim (2001); Cheol Ryung Lee (2002); Jae Young Shim (2003); Ji Bum Park (2004); Jin Seon Park (2005); Ji Eun Kim (2006); Hyun Soo Cho (2007); Joo Young Park (2008); Myung Joon Song (2009); Moo Hyun Kim (2010); Seong Kyul Seo (2011); Gi Byul Lee (2012); Seon Min Kim (2013); Da Yoon Kim (2014); Soon Oh Kwon (2015); Seong Seo Jeong (2016); Eun Byul Oh (2017).

Directors of ACT Club: Yoon Sik Byun (1996-2001); Kyung Sang Sohn (2002-2009); Wan Sung Park (2010-2012); Choong Jae Lee (2013-2016); Kyung Soo Sohn (2017-2020); Young Il Cho (2021-present).

Chairmen of ACT Association: Dae Geuk Nam (2009-2012); Joon Hwan Choi (2013-2016); Yoon Sik Byun (2017-present).

SOURCES

Church Compass, March 1967; January 2018.

Kim, Young Cheol. *A History of Korean Christian Youth Student Movement, 1897-1987*. Seoul: IVP, 1993.

Korean Adventist News Center, Nov. 13, 2017.

Lee, Choong Jae. *A History of ACT 50 Years*. Seoul: ACT Association, 2017.

Minutes of the General Session of KUC. Seoul: Korean Union Conference, 1987; 1995.

NOTES

1. On February 12, 1967, twenty-five Adventist students from ten universities in Seoul gathered in the conference room of the Korean Union Mission to discuss the organization of the SDA Collegians Council in Seoul under the leadership of Youth directors (*Church Compass*, March 1967, 36).
2. Former Sahmyook University presidents Dae Geuk Nam and Ki Kon Kim participated in ACT, and Jun Hwan Choi, former vice-president, became an Adventist through ACT.
3. Chung Jae Lee, 12.
4. "Report of Department of Youth Ministry Department," Minutes of the 28th General Session of KUC (Seoul: Korean Union Conference, 1987), 1-4.
5. Chung Jae Lee, 18.
6. "Report of Department of Youth Ministry Department," Minutes of the 30th General Session of KUC (Seoul: Korean Union Conference, 1995), 137.
7. Choong Jae Lee, 19.
8. *Ibid.*, 25.
9. *Ibid.*, 37.
10. The following book is studied by various student missionary groups. Young Cheol Kim, *A History of Korean Christian Youth Student Movement, 1897-1987* (Seoul: IVP, 1993).
11. Choong Jae Lee, 39.
12. *Ibid.*, 37.
13. *Ibid.*

14. Ibid., 172.

15. *Church Compass*, January 2018.

16. Bum Tae, Kim, "ACT Association's 50th anniversary," *Korean Adventist News Center*, November 13, 2017.

<https://www.adventist.or.kr/app/view.php?id=News&no=8325&category=1>.

17. Choong Jae Lee, 172.

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