

Pioneer Mission Movement (PMM)

MINHO JOO

Minho Joo, Ph.D. in missiology (Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies, Philippines), B.A., Sahmyook University, Korea) was born in Korea. Joo taught in Mountain View College in Philippines for two years, served as the 1000 Missionary Movement director for five years, and trained Korean pastors in Adventist Training Center in Korea for two years. Later, he served as an assistant to the president of Northern Asia-Pacific Division, Public Affair and Religious Liberty director, Adventist Mission director, and Pioneer Mission Movement coordinator.

The Pioneer Mission Movement (PMM) is a Global Mission project of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) of the Seventh-day Adventist Church for the purpose of planting new churches in its territories.¹ NSD is the largest division in the world in terms of population as well as in the number of non-Christians. About 1.6 billion people, around one fifth of the world population, reside in the NSD territories. Only 3 percent are Christians, and the other 97 percent are Buddhists, Shintoists, Muslims, Shamans, and atheists, presenting a special challenge to the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.² To meet it, leadership proposed and put the PMM into action in 2002. On February 2, 2002, NSD officers (President P. D. Chun, Secretary Stanley Ng, Treasurer Martin Moores, and NSD Global Mission Coordinator Jairyong Lee) met to discuss church-planting ideas in their territory. During the meeting, Jairyong Lee presented “The First Seven-year Church Planting Project,” a concept later approved by the NSD executive committee at the NSD midyear committee held in Hong Kong, May 15, 2002. The committee also named the initiative the “Pioneer Mission Movement.”³ The NSD executive committee established the Pioneer Mission Movement Management Committee on June 5, 2002. It appointed P D Chun, NSD president, as its chairperson and Jairyong Lee as its secretary. Lee would also act as the division PMM coordinator. Each union president, in the role of union-level PMM coordinators, became its members.⁴

The original PMM project sought to plant new churches by recruiting and sending 100 pastors during the seven-year period from 2003 to 2010, to other countries within the NSD territories. There they would do cross-cultural missionary work. The PMM pastors would go to unentered cities, mainly in NSD territories where no Seventh-day Adventist church yet existed.⁵ NSD planned to establish 100 new churches throughout the division within the seven-year period by assigning the PMM pastors according to the following allocation: 25 places in Hong Kong/Macau and Taiwan, 30 in China, 25 in Japan, 10 in Korea, and 10 in Mongolia.⁶ According to the PMM manual, applicants should have a minimum of two years of successful pastoral work in the local church/institution (02-014).⁷ The PMM pastors would serve for six years, spending the first year in language study and church planting for the next five years. Language learning is crucial to understanding the local culture and being able to communicate with people in their own environment. Remuneration-wise, PMM pastors received a salary determined by the mid-point scale between their audited wage factor in the base union conference/mission and the host union conference/mission.⁸

Once chosen, PMM pastors and their families would attend a dedication service usually held during the time of NSD year-end committee meetings. At the dedication service they would learn the mission field they would then serve in. If unions and divisions outside the NSD territories had urgent requests for help, the PMM management committee would consider them and make a decision accordingly.

The first *PMM News Letter* was published in June 2003 and annually thereafter. But in more recent years it has been published twice a year. The newsletter circulated widely within the division to promote the PMM project and to solicit subscribers' support and prayers.

The first group of five PMM missionaries, Pastors KeunShik Im, KwangSung Kim, KiRim Ko, JinHwan Lee, and JongSoo Park,⁹ together with their families, went to Japan in 2003 and planted three new churches in 2004. By the end of 2018 23 PMM families served in Japan and planted seven churches and baptized 261 new members. During 2005-2019, 22 PMM pastors planted 37 churches and reaped 965 baptisms in China.¹⁰

From 2003 to the end of June 2019, 126 PMM families went to 23 countries: Japan, Taiwan, Mongolia, China, Korea, Macau, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Congo, Uganda, Philippines, Russia, Tanzania, Indonesia, India, Kosovo, Turkey, North Cyprus, Peru, Armenia, Pakistan, and Vietnam. They planted 278 churches and obtained 28,627 baptisms. PMM missionaries usually committed to serving in the foreign fields for six years. While some will return to their homelands, new recruits continue to join the program, ensuring that there will always be a group of active PMM missionaries. For example, the report in June 2019 indicated that 40 PMM missionary families served in 18 countries at that point of time.¹¹ Therefore the Northern Asia-Pacific Division's PMM is truly a dynamic mission program that continues to expand the boundary of the global community of Adventist believers.

SOURCES

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NOTES

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2. Northern Asia-Pacific Division, “Pioneer Mission Movement,” accessed October 5, 2019, http://www.nsdadventist.org/ministries/ministries.html?DP_DAPT=21&dis=no.
3. Jairyong Lee, email message to author, October 8, 2019. See also the NSD Executive Committee minutes SN 02-109 – “Pioneer Mission Movement.”
4. Ibid. “Members of PMM Management Committee,” the NSD Executive Committee minutes JL 02-116 – Appointment of Northern Asia-Pacific Division Pioneer Mission Movement Committees.
5. Official website of the Seventh-day Adventist world church, “Northern Asia-Pacific Division,” accessed October 14, 2019, <https://www.adventist.org/en/>
6. Jairyong Lee, “The First Seven-year Church Planting Project: One Hundred Church Planting Missionary Pastors for NSD Global Evangelism (2003-2010),” 2002, 4.
7. Northern Asia-Pacific Division, *Pioneer Mission Movement Manual*, “Qualifications of PMM Missionary – Pastor (02-001),” 10.
8. Ibid., “PMM Remuneration Policy in general (EXCOM 04-023).”
9. Jairyong Lee, “The First Seven-year Church Planting Project,” p. 27 and also PMM Management Committee minutes JL 02-021 – “Appointment of Missionaries,” October 23, 2002.
10. Minhoo Joo, “Report on Pioneer Mission Movement,” China Ministries Convention, May 7-9, 2019.
11. Ibid.

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