

A Study on Biocentric 'Sangsaeng' Ministry in the Mission of the Triune God: Focusing on the Case of 'Ssangsaem Natural Church' in the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK)

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1. Introduction

The year 2025 marks the historic 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea. It addresses a pressing issue that we collectively face as humanity—and especially as the Church in Asia—the climate crisis. We must ask whether we can bequeath a healthy planet to the following generations. This concern demands a shift in our thinking, as the climate crisis is fundamentally an issue of climate justice. The deeper root cause of this crisis lies in the broken relationship humanity has historically maintained with the Earth, its ecosystems, and the created world. The actions of humankind have caused harm, and the vulnerable—both our neighbors and other creatures—bear the brunt of this damage. In other words, millions of the world's poorest people suffer the most direct consequences of climate change. God's created world and its order do not revolve around humans; rather, they are centered on God and the entirety of creation. In light of the first mandate given to humanity in Genesis 1:28, we must fulfill our responsibilities as stewards of the Earth and all living creatures. It is not enough to simply preserve nature and the environment; we must understand humanity's place within creation. Moreover, we are called to hope for the restoration of creation. (David 2021:9) Therefore, we must view God's creation not from an anthropocentric but from a life-centered perspective. This compels us to work in solidarity for the care and integrity of creation.

Why do we, as we approach the 1700th anniversary of the Nicaea Council, seek to reaffirm the significance of the Council and the Nicene Creed? Why, at the CCA Conference of Asian Theologians, which is part of the Ecumenical Mission, do we strive for the visible unity and life-centered solidarity of the Asian Church? Why, here and now, do we emphasize the value of caring for creation and preserving its integrity, to foster transformation? We believe the Asian Church can initiate efforts to address the climate crisis through ecological justice, working toward visible unity and life-centered solidarity. In doing so, the Asian Church will become an interconnected and sustainable entity. This is the appropriate ecumenical response of the Asian Church. The Asian Church is diverse in terms of religion, culture, history, language, environment, climate, and people. Nevertheless, we all confess the Nicene Creed weekly. The Nicene Creed is a crucial document that affirms the faith in the triune God. This confession of faith has manifested in various ways through the missional work of the Triune God, particularly in efforts to care for creation and preserve its integrity.

This study explores the missional significance of the Nicene Creed adopted at the Council of Nicaea and examines five key characteristics of transformational discipleship that align with the collaborative missional work of God. It then introduces Ssangsaem Natural Church, a representative "green church" of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK). It evaluates the church's ministry of mutual prosperity through transforming discipleship. Through its green ministry, Ssangsaem Natural Church seeks to cultivate mutual prosperity with God, nature, the local community, and the broader Korean Church. The final section will assess how this church's ministry aligns with the efforts of the Asian Church to participate in God's mission and life-centered solidarity. The study concludes by drawing connections between these efforts and proposing an ecumenical response from a missiological perspective.

2. The Nicene Creed (325) and Biocentric Solidarity

In 325 A.D., the Council of Nicaea was convened in Asia Minor. The central issue of the Council was the divinity of the Son, Jesus. The debate, which centered on whether Jesus was both fully divine

and fully human, was fiercely contested between Alexander of Alexandria and Arius. Arius, who denied Jesus' divinity and claimed He was merely human, was ultimately declared a heretic. (Kinzig 2024: 213, Olson 2017: 127-45) The Council concluded by affirming that Jesus is truly God and truly human. The core of the theological debate between Alexander and Arius centered on the nature and identity of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Logos, the Word who became incarnate. Arius sought to prove that the Son of God, also known as the Logos or the Word, was not of the same essence as the Father, but was the greatest of all creatures, created by the Father. In contrast, Bishop Alexander strongly believed in the eternal nature of the Son and firmly defended the divinity of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. (Olson 2017: 127) Additionally, the debate touched on the nature of the Trinity, with Arius and Athanasius representing opposing views at the Council of Nicaea. Arius claimed that if the Son were God, Christians would worship two Gods or believe in one divine person manifesting in three distinct forms. Athanasius, on the other hand, argued that God is one glorious and worshipful being, and the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, with the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father. Thus, Christians believe in one divine being who exists in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Olson 2017: 132-34)

The Nicene Creed, formulated at the Council of Nicaea, is one of the most significant creeds in the history of early Eastern Christianity. (Kinzig 2024: 242) The creed reads as follows: (Kinzig 2024: 246-48)

**We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things, visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth.
Who, for us humans and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate, and was made human.
He suffered, and the third day He rose again, ascended into heaven, and will come to judge the living and the dead.
And in the Holy Spirit.
But those who say, "There was a time when He was not," and "He was not before He was made," and "He was made out of nothing," or "He is of another substance or essence," or "The Son of God is created, or changeable, or alterable" — they are condemned by the Catholic and Apostolic Church.**

Given this, which parts of the Nicene Creed are particularly relevant to this paper? Two sections stand out. The first is the confession of belief in "one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things, visible and invisible." This acknowledges God as the Creator of all things, both seen and unseen. The second significant part is the confession that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was "begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father." This affirms that Jesus, the Son of God, shares the same essence as the Father, was incarnate in human form, and never ceased to be God.

These confessions provide a theological foundation for "life-centered solidarity," particularly in the effort to care for creation and preserve the integrity of creation. (CCA 2024: 3) Specifically, the belief in God as "the Creator of all things, visible and invisible" calls us to move beyond an anthropocentric view of ecology toward a life-centered perspective. This implies recognizing the interconnectedness of all creation and committing to a life of mutual flourishing. (CCA 2024: 3) It is a shift from seeing the natural world as something to be exploited, to understanding it as sacred and intrinsically valuable—a web of life ordained by God. Psalm 24:1 reminds us, "The earth is the Lord's,

and everything in it." Human beings, as stewards of creation, are called to care for the earth, recognizing that everything on it, including the land, belongs to God and possesses intrinsic value. (CCA 2024: 3) The confession of God as the Creator points to the covenantal bond that unites God, humanity, and the rest of creation (Genesis 9; Exodus 19). God's promise to preserve creation and his commitment to never again destroy it reflect his deep relationship with creation, and his intent to make humanity and creation his treasured possession and a kingdom of priests.

3. Shalom and 'Sangsaeng' Ministry in the Transforming Discipleship

In this context, what is the significance of the Asian Church's collective profession of the Nicene Creed? In an era of climate crisis, the Asian Church must transition from an anthropocentric faith and lifestyle to an ecocentric one, emphasizing the necessity of solidarity in ecocentric living. The pastoral and missional endeavors of Asian churches should pursue *shalom* and must achieve interconnectedness that links ecological, social, and spiritual well-being. In short, the Asian Church is called to deeply recognize the interconnectedness of ecological, social, and spiritual well-being, and to demonstrate this care for creation and stewardship in concrete actions. This is why the Christian Conference of Asia's 15th General Assembly, held in Kottayam, India, from September 27 to October 5, 2023, focused extensively on the theme, "God, Renew Us in Your Spirit and Restore the Creation." (CCA 2023)

Asia, along with the rest of the world, has experienced the pain of the disruption of *shalom* during the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 to 2023. However, the four years of the pandemic not only heightened awareness of the ongoing crisis in creation but also provided an opportunity to contemplate alternatives to the continued threats posed by climate change and ecological destruction. What, then, does *shalom* and *sangsaeng* (mutual life-giving) ministry entail in God's mission? In the Bible, *shalom* refers to a state of wholeness, peace, and fullness that comes from belief in the one Creator God, encompassing all creation. The biblical vision and ministry pursuing this *shalom* can be described as the pursuit of "cosmic wholeness." This pursuit of cosmic wholeness is grounded in a vision of harmony among all living beings under God's sovereignty, symbolizing the ultimate restoration of creation. (CCA 2024: 3) However, this pursuit of cosmic wholeness presupposes that such wholeness has been fractured. The *shalom* that should encompass all creation has been disrupted, and Christians are called to work toward the restoration of *shalom* and present the eschatological hope of a new heaven and a new earth where justice and peace prevail throughout creation. The breakdown of *shalom* with creation, that is, the destruction of harmony and relationship with creation, has the potential to lead to large-scale human atrocities and environmental devastation. Therefore, any concept of mission as *shalom* must include not social and economic justice and ecological justice. In this sense, the Asian church must expand its understanding of God's image to go beyond anthropocentrism, incorporating a broader concept of justice. Thus, the mission as *shalom* has the goal of liberation and salvation for the entire universe. "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." (Keum 2013: 4)

Furthermore, this study explores the missiological significance of *sangsaeng* (mutual life-giving). The biblical terms for peace, *shalom*, harmony, and reconciliation have similar counterparts in East Asia, particularly in China and Korea. While the concept of peace in China may resemble the biblical understanding of *shalom*, it is often limited by its focus on social equality. In Korea, the concept of peace is also related to *shalom*, with reconciliation being central to its understanding due to the reality of the nation's division. (Keum 2022:193) Peace signifies a state of reconciliation and restored relationships—achieved when God, humanity, and creation are united or reconciled. This is the biblical ideal of reconciliation, and a newly reconciled community maintains this sense of peace. According to

Keum, the ultimate goal of achieving and maintaining this peace is *sangsaeng* (mutual life-giving). (Keum 2022: 194)

But what does *sangsaeng* mean? *Sangsaeng* is one of the core philosophical principles of Jeungsando, a new Messianic religious movement in Korea. (Flaherty 2004) This study aims to connect the concept of *sangsaeng* with the Christian idea of *shalom* and creation care. The term *sang* means "mutual" or "together," and *saeng* means "life." In Jeungsando, the term *cheonji gaebyuk* refers to a cosmic transformation in which heaven and earth open and change. It refers to the end of the Anthropocene, with the transition from summer to autumn in the cosmic cycle, a time of maturity, unity, and harmony, involving the transformation of nature, society, and individuals. (Keum 2022:194) Because the ruling principles of Early Heaven and Later Heaven differ, *sangsaeng* is necessary. In Early Heaven, the principle of *sanggeuk* (mutual conflict and competition) governs all life, leading to suffering and conflict among all beings. Therefore, Jeungsando teaches that liberation from this suffering, known as *haewon* (resolution of grievances), is necessary to achieve *sangsaeng* in the movement towards *cheonji gaebyuk*. The pre-Cosmic Year history is one of *han* (deep sorrow or resentment) caused by gender discrimination, racism, the caste system, social exclusion, economic inequality, political oppression, religious persecution, violence, and war. However, in Later Heaven, the principle of *sangsaeng* (mutual life-giving) will be fully realized among all beings in the universe. Thus, the purpose of *sangsaeng* is harmonious life and the great transformation of heaven and earth during *cheonji gaebyuk*. (Keum 2022: 194)

This study argues that the concept of *sangsaeng* in Jeungsando, which envisions reconciliation and liberation from *han* during cosmic transformation, shares similarities with the biblical spirit of *shalom*, reconciliation, and peace in Christianity. In a world where *shalom* has been broken—marked by conflict, division, war, gender discrimination, racism, the entrenchment of the caste system, social exclusion, economic inequality, political oppression, and religious persecution—*sangsaeng* speaks to the restoration of relationships among God, humanity, and all creation through transformation. This concept of mutual life-giving amidst the brokenness of *shalom* is worthy of consideration. Furthermore, describing the suffering, sorrow, and grief of the marginalized as *han* and calling for its resolution through cosmic transformation aligns with the researcher's proposal of *sangsaeng* ministry through transforming discipleship. However, while Jeungsando focuses on a cosmic, Messianic transformation, the concept of *sangsaeng* ministry emphasizes its realization in the relationships between God, individuals, church communities, local communities, nature, and the universal church. It argues that the concept of *sangsaeng* holds important implications for the Asian church. Specifically, the ministry of *sangsaeng* can be expanded to include mutual life-giving relationships with God, nature, the local community, and the universal church. Building on this exploration of the concept of *sangsaeng*, the following section introduces Ssangsaem Natural Church, and it examines its ministry in light of the five characteristics of transforming discipleship and the concept of *sangsaeng*.

4. The SSANGSAEM Natural Church in PCK: the Case of the ‘Sangsaeng’ Ministry in the perspective of the Transforming Discipleship

In this section, this study introduces Ssangsaem Nature Church, affiliated with the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK) and located in Boeun County, Chungcheongbuk-do, it analyzes its ministry from the standpoint of transforming discipleship, seeking points of contact that can be shared with other Asian churches as well. Ssangsaem Church held its inaugural service on July 12, 1992, in Ssangsaemgol, Mochung-dong, Cheongju, Chungcheongbuk-do, South Korea. Cheongju, situated in the southwestern part of Chungcheongbuk-do in central South Korea, is known as the "city of education" due to its strong emphasis on educational development. The name "Ssangsaemgol" means "a village with two springs." The church was founded as a social ministry for the poor in the area. The senior pastor, Young-Gi Baek,

began a small church for the urban poor, simultaneously running a "Salim Study Room" for local children. (Baek 2022: 27-39) In October 1995, the church relocated, providing a separate space for the study room and the library named "Neutinamu" (Zelkova tree). The study room was run for underprivileged children, while the library served as a space for the adults in the community. (Park 2024: 635-36) From its inception, Ssangsaem Church pursued a sangsaeng ministry with the local community, aligned with the needs of the poor and vulnerable.

By 1999, significant changes took place in Ssangsaemgol. As the area was designated for redevelopment, residents began moving elsewhere. Between this time and 2002, Ssangsaem Church embarked on a journey into the "wilderness," relocating from downtown Cheongju to the rural village of Nangseong in Boeun County. (Baek 2008: 61) Despite significant challenges, Pastor Baek and the congregation overcame them and began transitioning to a "nature church." In 2002, Ssangsaem Church relocated to Nangseong in Boeun County and changed its name to Ssangsaem Nature Church, setting three core directions: "spirituality," "nature," and "culture." These became the church's three pillars. (Baek 2022:100, Park 2024: 638)

Ssangsaem Nature Church began to expand its ministry of spirituality, nature, and culture, building a foundation of "sangsaeng" with the village through regular interaction with its residents. The church resolved not to separate its identity from the village but to exist with and for the village. To implement the three pillars of "spirituality," "nature," and "culture," Ssangsaem Nature Church established three committees: "the Faith and Spirituality Committee, the Life and Nature Committee, and the Culture and Society Committee." All church members are required to participate in one of these committees actively.

First, the Faith and Spirituality Committee is responsible for helping members grow and mature in their faith, while also discerning how the church can fulfill its missionary calling. This committee seeks to ensure that the church remains true to its identity and that faith does not remain merely an abstract doctrine but becomes a lived reality. The committee fosters holistic spirituality and life ministry, focusing on the fullness of life both now and in the afterlife. (Baek 2022: 103-110, 2024: 610, 619-21; Park 2024: 641-44)

Second, the Life and Nature Committee focuses on experiencing and sharing God's creation both within the church and in the wider world, emphasizing the importance of nature and ecology. Through education and programs, the committee promotes a life lived in harmony with the natural world. This reflects the theology of nature-based ministry, which highlights that the entirety of creation proclaims the glory of God and calls for a life of connection with nature. . (Baek 2022: 110-14, 2024: 620-21; Park 2024: 644-45)

Third, the Culture and Society Committee focuses on fostering a healthy and diverse cultural life within the church community, with a strong emphasis on community engagement. This committee promotes a communal form of ministry that not only builds a good and beautiful community within the church but also facilitates communication and solidarity with the wider society. The committee also considers how to understand, interpret, and respond to social issues from a faith-based perspective. It emphasizes the importance of building relationships and community life. . (Baek 2022: 114-120, 2024: 621; Park 2024: 645-47)

The success of these three committees, and the voluntary participation of the congregation, can be attributed to the consistent sharing and integration of the senior pastor's clear pastoral philosophy. Bo Kyoung Park explains this well from the perspective of missional leadership. (Park 2024: 628-635, 647-654) Ssangsaem Nature Church is a church that lives in harmony with and responds sensitively to the needs of the local community, witnessing the Gospel as a missional community. This missional posture cannot be separated from Pastor Baek Young-Gi's leadership. First, his leadership is based on implementing the core philosophy of missional ecclesiology within the local church, helping the

congregation consistently embody this philosophy. Second, his leadership is one of authenticity, openly revealing his own vulnerabilities and valuing the support and cooperation of the congregation. Third, Pastor Baek's leadership is horizontal and team-based, where, while his authority as a leader is acknowledged, spiritual leadership flows through equal relationships with the congregation. Fourth, his leadership is one of cultivation. Pastor Baek's 30 years of ministry have been a natural theological, pastoral, and communal journey of maturity for himself and his congregation. (Baek 2018: 112-14) His three guiding principles for ministry—being a church that transcends numbers and size, being a church that transcends individual recognition, and being a church that thirsts for life—have been woven into the congregation's life through the cultivation of a learning community. As a result, Ssangsaem Nature Church, which has grown into a community of spirituality, nature, and culture, has continued pursuing ministries of sangsaeng—with God, with creation, and with the local community.

As the church's diverse ministries of sangsaeng continued, Ssangsaem Nature Church began to gain wider recognition throughout the Korean church after being designated a "Green Church" in 2009. This award, jointly judged and awarded by the Life and Culture Committee of the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCCK) and the Korean Christian Environmental Movement, is given annually to churches that exemplify environmental stewardship. (Baek 2022: 128-30) Being selected as a Green Church marked a turning point for Ssangsaem Nature Church, allowing it to extend its influence beyond the local community. This recognition also led to greater interest in the Green Church movement within Korean Christianity, with more and more churches becoming involved in environmental efforts, climate justice initiatives, and ecological activities aimed at preserving creation. Additionally, general assemblies, presbyteries, and environmental and ecological mission groups have increasingly held climate crisis-related seminars and grassroots environmental education programs, often visiting Ssangsaem Nature Church for ecological retreats. International churches and ecumenical partner denominations have also visited Ssangsaem Nature Church, further extending its reach beyond the local and national level to become a church that contributes to the wider Christian community through sangsaeng ministries.

In 2022, Ssangsaem Nature Church celebrated its 30th anniversary, declaring it the "Year of the Green Exodus" and organizing a variety of commemorative events. This theme was chosen not only to mark a new era but also to recognize the urgency of the climate crisis and the dangerous state of the ecological environment, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. (Lee 2020) To mark its 30th anniversary, Ssangsaem Nature Church also published *The Story of Ssangsaem Nature Church* and organized special anniversary lectures from April to October, focusing on spirituality, nature, and culture. (Baek 2022: 182-84, Park 2024: 641)

Finally, this study summarizes the 30 years of Ssangsaem Nature Church's sangsaeng ministry through the lens of transforming discipleship. Using the five key characteristics of transforming discipleship, we can evaluate Ssangsaem Nature Church's ministry from a missional theological perspective. As outlined earlier, the five characteristics of transformational discipleship are as follows:

This study identifies five key characteristics of transforming discipleship: living as a missionary disciple who proclaims reconciliation, standing in solidarity with the weak in Christ, witnessing the Gospel of love and justice, resisting the power of death while singing the hope of life, and engaging in citizenship in public life. (Hong 2022: 155-56)

First, Ssangsaem Nature Church's 30-year sangsaeng ministry is an example of transforming discipleship, centered on living as a missionary disciple who proclaims reconciliation. One representative practice is the preparation of the "1 Proclamation, 1 Connection, 1 Compassion" practice card. Each year, every member writes down their commitments on the card: "1 Proclamation" refers to standing firm in faith and spirituality before God, making concrete efforts to pursue reconciliation with God, and bringing about God's shalom in daily life. "1 Connection" signifies reflecting on one's life in

nature, making specific commitments to reconcile with creation and protect it over the years. "1 Compassion" involves reconciling with neighbors and brothers, determining how to live responsibly toward them, and committing to these actions for a year. (Park 2024: 643) Through its holistic pastoral philosophy of spirituality, nature, and culture, Ssangsaem Nature Church seeks to shape its members into missionary disciples who proclaim reconciliation with God.

Second, Ssangsaem Nature Church's ministry of coexistence reflects transformational discipleship's call to stand in solidarity with the weak in Christ. In interviews with members featured in *The Story of Ssangsaem Nature Church* published for the church's 30th anniversary, one member reflects, "Ssangsaem has always stood with the pain of the times, and you can sense in the faith confessions of its members a youthful spirit, a commitment to justice, and a desire to stand with the poor." Another member comments, "Mission is about deciding with whom to be a neighbor, and if Ssangsaem's mission in Mochung-dong was to serve the poor children of the neighborhood, its mission in Nangseong is to care for the suffering earth through environmental mission. Standing with the most vulnerable and caring for them is both justice and peace." (Baek 2022: 191-92) Thus, Ssangsaem Nature Church's faith confession involves acknowledging God in the lives of the poor and the pain of creation, confessing the God of life and salvation. Their faith confession is to "listen to the groaning of the world without turning away, quietly but firmly being a neighbor to the suffering, and through these acts, restoring heavenly faith and becoming truly human in relationships of love and sharing." (Baek 2022: 192)

Third, Ssangsaem Nature Church's ministry of coexistence reflects the characteristics of transforming discipleship by proclaiming and embodying the Gospel of love and justice. This is seen in the missional leadership of Pastor Young-Gi Baek. Having grown as a true disciple of Jesus' Gospel, Pastor Baek has served Ssangsaem Church for 30 years with the heart of Jesus, ministering to the church community as if serving Jesus Christ Himself. He also deeply recognized the church's responsibility to the village, participating in the life of the village with a sense of public duty and love for the local community. (Baek 2024: 602-5, 2022: 83-90) In Ssangsaemgol, the church identified and responded to the needs of the poor, and even after relocating to Nangseong, the church demonstrated its commitment to the community by signing a written pledge stating, "Ssangsaem Nature Church will not do anything that harms the village, and if the villagers do not want us here, we will leave." (Baek 2022: 84) Through this act, the church showed its willingness to invest time, resources, and wholehearted effort into spreading the Gospel and engaging in mission, expressing love for the village and an eagerness to work together.

Fourth, Ssangsaem Nature Church's ministry of coexistence demonstrates transformational discipleship by resisting the forces of death and creating life through the power of the Holy Spirit. Despite the challenges that came with societal changes, Ssangsaem Church transitioned into a nature church, entering the living creation of God where the vitality of life breathes. In its new form as a nature church, it professed a faith in creation and ecological stewardship. Through the establishment of the Faith and Spirituality Committee, the Life and Nature Committee, and the Culture and Society Committee, the church practiced holistic life ministry in partnership with the Holy Spirit, fostering voluntary dedication among its members. As a result, in 2009, the church was recognized as a "Green Church," establishing an ecologically harmonious and natural space both inside and outside the church. (Baek 2024: 609-11) Additionally, the church established the Ecological Library Spring Snow, which fosters Jesus' disciples by following the logic of life and the Kingdom of God. The church also developed various ecological and cultural programs to continuously share God's grace and providence. Furthermore, in 2022, Ssangsaem Nature Church marked its 30th anniversary by declaring it the "Year of the Green Exodus," committing to practicing green grace and working towards caring for and coexisting with the creation made by the Triune God. Just as Jesus' primary concern was life, and His ministry was centered on the preservation and fostering of life, Ssangsaem Nature Church has shaped

its ministry around preserving and nurturing life. In this way, Ssangsaem Nature Church seeks to be a church that thirsts for life and takes on various life-giving ministries.

Lastly, Ssangsaem Nature Church's ministry of sangsaeng also exemplifies transforming discipleship by practicing citizenship in public life. As noted earlier, Ssangsaem Church was founded alongside a study room and community library. After relocating to the Nangseong region, the study room ministry evolved into Dandelion School, which then developed into Danbi, an educational and cultural cooperative operating as a social cooperative, offering rural village schooling and alternative education. Although there were plans to discontinue the community library, the church decided to maintain it, driven by the logic of life and a commitment to living as citizens of God's Kingdom. The church converted the library into a specialized library focused on ecology, nature, and the environment. Despite being located in a small rural village, the church envisioned the library as the heart of a sustainable, self-reliant community, where people of all ages and generations could live together in harmony. The church also operated Sarangbang Café and a local food market, embodying public values and public-mindedness, with a desire to live alongside the local community in a meaningful way. Through the Culture and Society Committee, the church engages with the community, both in terms of the cultural and social life of the region and the events happening outside the church. The church thoughtfully considers how to understand, interpret, and respond to social issues from a faith-based perspective, emphasizing that such acts of citizenship are rooted in life-centered thinking and interconnectedness. Through the practice of citizenship, Ssangsaem Nature Church carries out its ministry of sangsaeng.

5. Concluding Remarks: A missiological evaluation

As discussed above, the ministry of sangsaeng at Ssangsaem Nature Church, from the perspective of transforming discipleship, can be summarized as follows: a ministry of missionary discipleship that proclaims reconciliation, a ministry of solidarity with the poor and weak in Christ, a ministry that witnesses to the Gospel of love and justice, a ministry that unites with the Holy Spirit to resist the forces of death and create the hope of life, and a ministry that practices citizenship.

How, then, can Ssangsaem Nature Church's ministry of sangsaeng, as presented in this study, offer points of connection for Asian churches today as they seek to participate in God's mission and engage in life-centered solidarity work as an ecumenical response?

First, the ministry of creation care is not only a concern for the Korean church but also one that Asian churches must responsibly address. This is because Asian churches, which confess the Nicene Creed as their statement of faith, are also God's co-workers tasked with caring for creation.

Second, Ssangsaem Nature Church's ministry of sangsaeng, from the perspective of transforming discipleship, is a holistic and multifaceted ministry. Similarly, Asian churches, as communities of transforming disciples called to be true disciples of the Gospel in this era, can engage in holistic ministries of sangsaeng through solidarity and cooperation with God, neighbors, nature, and the universal church.

Third, it is worth noting that Ssangsaem Nature Church's ministry of sangsaeng, which is carried out primarily by laypeople through the three committees, is not led solely by clergy or ministry leaders but is driven by the congregation. The spirituality, nature, and culture ministries, led by the congregation, embody a "circular table community where there is no center, no one is excluded, and all exist equally before God." Hidden within these ministries is the vision of shalom that builds the Kingdom of God.

This is a crucial understanding for Asian churches engaged in life-centered ministries and ecumenical solidarity in God's mission.

Fourth, attention should be paid to the pastoral philosophy and missional leadership of Pastor Baek of Ssangsaem Nature Church. His pastoral principles of "a church that transcends numbers and size, a church that goes beyond personal recognition, and a church that thirsts for life," combined with a pastoral sensitivity that values small things, reflect a leadership of purity and humility modeled after Christ. His leadership fosters voluntary commitment and service from the congregation through a learning community, working as a team with the members. This thirst for life and missional leadership has been consistently maintained since the church's founding. (Han 2022: 301)

Thus, as Asian churches today seek to engage in life-centered solidarity ministry from the perspective of God's mission, Ssangsaem Nature Church's ministry of sangsaeng—with God, the local community, nature, and the universal church—serves as a valuable ecumenical theological response. The ministry of sangsaeng, carried out by both the pastor and congregation, offers the joy of discovering the hidden shalom of God's Kingdom in a circular table community where no one is excluded, and all exist equally before God.

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■ Abstract

Asian churches collectively profess the Nicene Creed. In the era of the climate crisis, Asian churches must transition from an anthropocentric faith and lifestyle to an ecocentric one, emphasizing the necessity of solidarity in ecocentric living. The pastoral and missionary endeavors of Asian churches should pursue shalom and must achieve interconnectedness that links ecological, social, and spiritual well-being. This paper argues that for Asian churches to achieve visible unity and biocentric solidarity, they must profess faith in the Triune God. Specifically, Asian churches should engage in life-centered "Sangsaeng"(synergistic) ministry to fulfill God's mission. Such ministry manifests as missional churches fostering reconciliation, solidarity with the vulnerable, proclaiming the gospel of love and justice, resisting the forces of death and creating hope that fosters life in union with the Holy Spirit and embodying citizenship. As an example of such ministry, this paper introduces the Ssangsaem Natural Church of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK). The ssangsaem Natural Church continuously seeks "Sangsaeng" with the Triune God, nature, the local community, and the broader Korean church. In conclusion, this paper demonstrates how Asian churches can achieve biocentric solidarity and visible unity by introducing the "Sangsaeng" ministry of spirituality, nature, and culture by Ssangsaem Natural Church, and its role as a leading Green Church in Korea's ecological movement.

Keywords: biocentric solidarity, sangsaeng ministry, mission of God, ssangsaem natural church, transforming discipleship, the Council of Nicaea, Asian churches, nature, culture, spirituality