

Article

Worship for People with Cognitive Challenges in the Pandemic Era: A Korean Presbyterian Perspective

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Abstract: During COVID-19, many people in the world experienced tremendous suffering. Because of its strong infection rate, people avoided gathering. In these circumstances, public worship, which is the heartbeat of the church, has declined. The decline in participation is especially true among one group of marginalized people: the people who are cognitively challenged. Traditionally, the Korean Church has not had much concern about the matter of public worship and the sacraments for those who are cognitively challenged, except for a few churches which have special departments for ministries to special populations. During the COVID-19 situation, these ministries have slowed, which means that those who benefited have had few opportunities to join worship services or participate in religious education. Going forward, there is a high possibility of another pandemic. Therefore, it is time to prepare for the future. Some churches have utilized online worship and Zoom meetings, showing that the cognitively challenged can effectively participate in online worship and religious education if family members can help them. Churches should invest in new platforms which harmonize onsite worship and online worship and expand resources to create new software for Christian education.

Keywords: cognitively challenged; COVID-19; online worship; participation; church education; Korean Church



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1. Introduction

The world is still groaning from the suffering caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the last year, many people have died, and many, despite having recovered, are battling the lasting side effects of the disease. The coronavirus strain, often referenced by its abbreviation, COVID-19, is one of the most highly infectious diseases in history. Health and government officials, in response to the contagious nature of the virus, sought a restricted social atmosphere in order to limit face-to-face contact. Due to health risks associate with meeting or working in groups, social distancing has been implemented according to government regulations in many countries across the globe (Harari 2020).

After many countries reported COVID-19 cases, trade among nations was disrupted, which resulted in a global economic recession. Even though each national government issued some form of aid to its citizens in the form of direct payments to people and financial support to businesses, the financial stability of ordinary people was diminished by shrinking job markets. Unemployment remains high, and it is challenging for those without work to find new jobs.

Churches throughout the world are also facing challenges. After the outbreak of COVID-19 in January 2020, many Korean Churches tried to congregate responsibly while cooperating with the Korean government's guidelines. Even though some churches had incidences of contagion, in general, Korean churches reduced their public gatherings according to social distancing policies.

Many churches chose to offer online worship as an alternative to in-person worship, while other churches recommended family worship while providing guidelines and manuals for in-home worship. These were thought to be "temporary measures," but as time goes on, these measures are still being used. Many pastors and congregations are feeling a

greater and greater loss because public worship has traditionally served as the heartbeat of the church. Over the last year in the Korean Church, scholars and laymen alike contemplated and debated such questions as: “Should believers worship together indoors?”, “Can online worship be an alternative to public worship?”, “Should Christians worship only on Sundays?”, “Is an online Eucharist valid?”, and “Is it a government responsibility to set restrictions for the number of participants who can safely gather in worship?”¹

Church leaders are responsibly and thoughtfully addressing the many social, theological, and health concerns that the global pandemic has thrust upon our congregations, but the best interests of members with cognitive disabilities are often overlooked. Traditionally, the Korean Church has not focused a great deal of concern on the matter of worship and sacrament for the cognitively challenged (Moon 2015, pp. 116–20). According to statistics, in the Korean Protestant Church, just about the 400 churches have a special department that focuses on issues concerning worship and the cognitively challenged.² The percentage of the population to report cognitive disabilities currently stands at about three percent of the whole population.³ Despite the statistics on the general population, it is difficult to know the exact percentage of Korean Church congregants with cognitively challenged and which of them regularly participate in worship.

Under the current conditions imposed by the social effects of the coronavirus, the communal worship practices and spiritual support for the cognitively challenged and their families has deteriorated. Some megachurches in Korea broadcast or share recorded video files of sermons for use by those that have mental handicaps, but almost all smaller churches, which compose the majority of the Korean Church, do not have the necessary additional resources to allow for broadcasting or media-sharing.

Even though the vaccine has been developed and the outlook for 2021 looks better, the situation that the pandemic has created could linger or be repeated with a new virus at any time and, therefore, it is necessary to be pro-active. Now is the time to discuss and assess the spiritual needs and worship methods to best serve those parishioners that have cognitive challenges.

2. The Korean Presbyterian Church’s Theological Approaches to the Cognitively Challenged

It is necessary to study how Korean Presbyterian churches understand this kind of impairment theologically before arguing the matter of worship and sacrament for the cognitively challenged because theology and practice are closely intertwined.

There are various theological approaches to the cognitively challenged. Some understand it as God’s punishment related to human sin; some consider it as an opportunity for healing; others consider it as participation in the suffering of Christ. However, the character of Korean Presbyterian theology can be portrayed as indifference. It is very hard to find cognitively challenged people in the local church. This is reflected in the general lack of resources directed to encouraging and enabling participation of persons who are cognitively challenged. It is very hard to find a denominational document which addresses worship matters and sacraments for cognitively challenged, except two Presbyterian denominations (Tonghap and Kosin).

The Tonghap Church published the denominational document “Guidelines for Baptism of the Mentally Handicapped” in 2005. In their liturgical book, they added some guidelines and liturgy for the inclusion of cognitively challenged people (Korean Presbyterian Church (Tonghap) (2008)). In addition, they open the possibility of inclusion of those who are cognitively challenged in the eucharistic celebrations. Because they had a close relationship with the PCUSA (Presbyterian Church in the USA), they learned and borrowed their theological and practical stance from them.

In case of the Kosin Church, one of the most conservative Protestant churches in Korea, a denominational report on baptism and liturgy for cognitively challenged was written in 2019. They permitted the practice of baptism for the cognitively challenged but do not permit their participation in the Lord’s Supper, because they believe that baptism and the

Lord's Supper are distinct sacraments. Many believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper require the cognitive ability and faithful confession that the cognitively challenged cannot satisfy. This demonstrates a theological stance of many Korean Churches that diminishes the personhood of cognitively challenged people.

However, liturgical theologian Hwarang Moon's two books *Engraved upon the Heart* (Moon 2015) and *Mapping the Christian Worship* (Moon 2020) impacted the Korean people and enhanced their understanding about worship and sacraments for cognitively challenged people. Based on liturgical theology and religious education, he shows how liturgy impacts faith formation. According to him, it is very important for cognitively challenged people to participate in community worship and sacrament because they learn from participation and practice. While participating in liturgical celebration and sacrament, tacit knowledge is engraved upon the heart and the body (Polanyi and Prosch 1975). Even though they cannot articulate their faith logically, however, something happens in their brain (Polanyi 1967).

At the same time, such persons bring several gifts to other members of the church. Their participation makes real intergenerational worship possible. Each person learns from each other, and all congregants experience new and real friendships, despite differences in age, intelligence, or social status (Swinton 2000, p. 44). While worshipping together, people experience a nurturing of the spirituality and virtue of those who serve. Moreover, it completes the community. While having fellowship, the communal aspect of the church is visible and shows that faith is not merely a personal issue. Stanley Hauerwas says, "Mentally handicapped people are reminders that belief and faith are not individual matters, but faith names the stance of the church as a political body in relation to the world. We are not members of a church because we know what we believe, but we are members of a church because we need the whole church to believe for us (Hauerwas 1994, p. 184). Therefore, in public worship, the presence of the cognitively challenged are needed. By their presence, people can remember who we are and that we are not sufficient but for God's grace (Wadell 1994, pp. 62–63).

3. Analyzing the Current Situation

The following case studies are representative examples of attitudes and practices found among Korean Churches in their approach to worship with and for people with cognitive disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ Each case study represents a type or composite of like-minded congregations and is not intended to portray any one congregation.

<Case 1>

Church Type A is a mid-sized church of under 200 congregants. Due to the coronavirus pandemic and in accordance with the Korean Government's policy on social distancing, Church A abruptly organized an online worship for Sunday's public worship. However, they were very busy producing and broadcasting online worship only for Sunday public worship. Because of a lack of labor force and resources, the church does not have any additional resources for preparing the online worship for Sunday school, senior citizens, or those who are cognitively challenged. Sometimes, social distancing protocols were alleviated according to the lower severity of the infection rates, and Church A had a chance to offer onsite worship; however, because of a higher risk of infection for those with disabilities and those over the age of 65, some members were not able to participate in-person. Church A did not have the capacity to provide any additional meetings to meet the needs of high risky populations, such as those with cognitive disabilities. The result is that those persons with cognitive challenges and their families must look for services elsewhere, or wait for the end of COVID-19 in order to be included once again in the worshipping life of Church A.

<Case 2>

Church Type B has a designated minister who is responsible for programs to support congregants who have mental handicaps and their families or caregivers. Even though the number of these special-needs members makes up a small percentage of the total church membership, Church B has managed a fruitful program for many years. When COVID-19 disrupted the usual programming, Church B began to broadcast sermons online that were especially designed to engage their mentally handicapped worshippers. They created this type of service to include family members, so everyone could join online worship from home, including the family members with disabilities. The response to this programming from the families that benefitted from this inclusiveness was positive. Parents and family members reported that their children acknowledged the pastor in the monitor and engaged with the worship similar to their previous experience in the church. With the help of parents or family aids, Church B also started a small group meeting for this group via Zoom on weekdays.

<Case 3>

Church Type C, like Type A, responded to the pandemic with online resources that helped to meet the needs for a majority of the worshipping community. They were not as fortunate as Type B in having a designated staff person responsible for ministering to people with disabilities, but they did not want to ignore the special needs of their members with disabilities. In consideration of the pandemic and the prohibition of gatherings, Church Type C sought to work alongside family members to create resources that would be spiritually enriching for those with disabilities. This approach involved curating a virtual library of shared resources from several different sources. The use of shared resources required that parents or other caregivers be willing to take on the role of a minister for their children with disabilities. Each week volunteers from the church sent links to a curated list of movie clips, picture resources, and/or Sunday School curricula produced by pastors. It was also useful to consult with the "Korea Research Center for Disability ministry" on weekdays. Parents or other relatives would then assume the role of pastor or teacher for their kids using these shared resources. Realizing that parents may be challenged by the responsibility of teaching their kids, the pastors committed to regularly checking in with each parent and answered questions that came up week to week.

There are various other circumstances and solutions than the ones described in the three imagined scenarios listed above; however, these three case studies are representative of the most common responses to the ministry needs of people with cognitive disabilities in the Korean Churches during the pandemic. It is very shocking to learn how few resources are available for the cognitively challenged and their families in the Korean Church during the pandemic, even though they experienced great revival and growth in the world of Christianity prior to the lockdown. This shows that the Korean Church has not adequately concerned itself with the most vulnerable and alienated members of society (Moon 2014).

It is very rare to find a church that has a special department or full-time staff person to provide services for the cognitively challenged in the Korean Church. The pandemic exacerbated an already bad situation, so the cognitively challenged and their families experienced a very difficult time. Because of the danger of infection, all church members severely restricted the level of activity outside of their homes and they developed a tendency to remain at home. Before the coronavirus, churchgoers could experience their social and religious community via weekly participation in worship and church life; however, the loss of that regular communion with people deprived many of a reason for being and drained much of the vibrancy of daily life (Zizioulas 2004, p. 18).⁵

Owing to circumstances beyond their control, online worship became an attractive substitution for in person worship. In the Korean Protestant Church, there are serious pros and cons on each side of the argument for online worship. However, in the case of worship for the mentally handicapped, there needs to be greater thoughtfulness in how online worship can be a satisfactory opportunity for inclusion (Grcevich 2020). Based on

the three case studies above, let us further consider the theological and practical issues in this matter.

4. Is Online Worship a Crisis or an Opportunity for the Mentally Handicapped?

During the last year, one of the hot issues within the Korean Church was the debate around online worship. Dominating the media and Christian newspaper headlines were questions such as: “Is online worship a legitimate form of worship?”, “Is online worship as meaningful to participants as in-person worship?”, and “Is it ethical to use online worship?” Some commentators asserted, “Online worship can weaken the sense of community in the church.” Before the outbreak of the coronavirus, many Christians were concerned that the Korean Church faced a troubling upward trend in the number of unchurched people in the country. A new trend, however, is as equally bothersome, revealing a consumer-centered worship that allows for believers to pick and choose the church that offers their favorite worship style (Moon et al. 2020).

The pandemic situation opened people’s eyes on this: physical spaces and cyber space all belong to God (Berger 2018, p. 44). While participating in online worship, people experience communion with God and spiritual growth (Foley 2021). If online worship is not an impediment to the real presence of God, then spiritual communion is also possible, in that people worship online “without denying the legitimacy or necessity of the church’s liturgical celebrations” (Mitchell 2009, p. 463).

In the case of persons with cognitive disabilities, the move to online worship may offer some potential advantages. Prior to the pandemic, the Korean Church had limited programming for those with cognitive disabilities, and there were few congregations equipped to invite members who are cognitively challenged to participate in weekday worship and/or educational programs. The mentally handicapped and their families must wait until Sunday to experience a religious meeting—and that was only after a long search for a church that offers a special worship service to meet their loved one’s needs. Some families attempted to replicate the worship experience in their homes, but most found it over-challenging. Even though there are several Christian TV channels in Korea, there have been no programs geared toward persons who are mentally handicapped. Historically, there have been few media outlets or publishers to offer resources that assist families in Christian education or worship experiences that engage those family members with cognitively challenged. The growth of online opportunities for worship and Christian education that has emerged during the pandemic has opened up many more possibilities for people of all ages and abilities to participate in church. People have come to realize that the mentally handicapped can worship at home with the assistance of parents or family members, without needing to wait until Sunday. It has also opened people’s eyes to the various worship and educational resources that an online platform can offer.

In those instances where church members have higher cognitive function, the minister or teacher can meet with them via Zoom or a social media platform without the need for assistance or with only limited help from a family member. For those with more serious cognitive impairments, weekday meetings are possible only when parents or family members are available to participate—requiring their greater time and attention. Zoom meetings hold great potential for offering fellowship during weekdays.⁶ A platform has arrived that makes possible an everyday quiet time meeting, if only the church can make it available.

Now the fourth industrial revolution is occurring even in the coronavirus era—with the development of virtual reality, augmented reality, and wearable technology. In the future, the church can provide more vivid religious education for mentally handicapped people. A new age that virtually replicates a physical worship space has come.⁷

What seemed like a loss when in-person worship for the mentally handicapped was reduced, may turn out to be a blessing! If churches with a forward way of thinking can develop an online worship platform and educational software, they can create a great opportunity for the mentally handicapped, especially in the areas of worship and education.

It is important, therefore, to evaluate whether online worship has a positive impact on cognitively challenged people. Church leaders may ask these questions:

“What worship activities can those who are cognitively challenged meaningfully engage in an online environment?”, “Can they understand the message and concentrate on the speaker?”, “Can they show proper response to the contents of worship?”, and “Can online worship be spiritually, emotionally, and socially nourishing for them?”

I want to introduce the story of the Seomoon Church, located in Seoul.⁸ Seomoon Church has a special department for the cognitively challenged. After the outbreak of the coronavirus in Seoul, worship could not take place in the church, so they started an online worship during that time. The church broadcasted an online worship, and the parents or family members of the cognitively challenged facilitated the at-home worship process. For example, they would turn on the computer or connect the TV monitor. Parents reported their observations of how their children with disabilities participated and responded to the online worship.

In cases of mild cognitive challenges, the children participated in worship via the online platform in ways that closely resemble their participation during any other form of Sunday worship. They clearly illustrated how the online worship mimicked in-person worship with their minister in the monitor leading the same Sunday worship. Participants showed proper responses to the messages and order of worship during online worship.

In the case of those with moderate to severe disabilities, they danced and mimicked the motions, and listened to the sermon during the preaching time. When their parents first saw their children’s jumping or dancing, they misunderstood those responses as disinterest in worship; however, as time progressed, they came to interpret these actions as a personal response of praise and worship. Through the parents’ reports and observations, it is clear that, if parents and family members help, the cognitively challenged can not only worship, but also engage in various educational activities in the home.

However, in cases of profound cognitive challenges, the situation was different. It was difficult to determine these participants’ responses to online worship. For example, they did not seem to notice the appearance of their pastors or teachers when they appeared online. Family members reported that it was hard to determine what their loved ones were feeling or taking away from the experience. However, the worship time with their families was not a totally meaningless time. Even though they could not express their thoughts, their family members could gain an understanding of their religious thoughts and a lightness of their inner mind.⁹

When we analyze the ratio of the cognitively challenged population, mild handicaps account for about 85% of the population (Tylenda et al. 2007, p. 31). Those in the moderate range comprise about 10% of those considered handicapped, and those in the severe range make up 3%, while the percentage of people that fall within the most profound range is 2%. Therefore, online worship itself can offer the opportunity for worship and educational experiences for a vast majority of those that are counted among the cognitively challenged population, with the caveat that many will still require some level of assistance.

4.1. Evaluation of the Theological Position of Conservative Korean Churches against Online Worship

Many scholars in the Korean Presbyterian Church, especially conservative scholars, express a negative stance on the practice of online worship. They insist that online worship is a temporary and expedient remedy to an unavoidable pandemic situation, and it should be abandoned after the threat of the coronavirus and its variants dissipate.¹⁰ This stance is based on the concern that online worship will destroy the communal aspects of church and the importance of public worship will fade (Kim 2020). This narrow definition of worship, however, fails to recognize the large number of people with disabilities who may actually have a greater benefit from online worship than what is possible in person.

Online worship has clear benefits for people with mild cognitive disabilities and for the families who provide their day-to-day care. That is to say, online worship can provide help for worship, education and community for the cognitively challenged.

The Korean Church needs to hear and accept this challenge: “Why has the Korean Church failed to acknowledge the cognitively challenged as full members, and why has the Church permitted public worship and church life to ignore their needs until now?” Even though some churches have offered separate worship for these members, they failed to make accommodations or provide optimal conditions for full participation in public worship of the church.

Even though the pandemic made the world challenging, it has added new perspectives on the matter of education and worship for the cognitively challenged. Online worship, rather than dividing cognitively challenged people from the church community, has introduced greater opportunities for learning and for becoming accustomed to the atmosphere of worship, including singing hymns and songs.¹¹

While participating in online worship, the cognitively challenged can join the online public worship with their family. Until now, most of these members worshipped in a segregated or isolated manner, participating in their own worship; however, during the pandemic, they were able to experience intergenerational and inter-ability worship in which whole congregations could join. In the perspective of average people, online worship for the mentally handicapped may be considered less active participation and difficult to assess the engagement with the contents and meaning of worship. However, people do not know what happens in the minds and brains of others. If the Holy Spirit works, in any situation, faith can be grown in their hearts.¹²

Online worship, even though church members are spatially divided, by the simultaneity of time, can give an opportunity of feeling oneness among the congregation (Berger 2018, pp. 37–41). This can express the real sense of community visibly. Christians are scattered all over the world, but the power of the Holy Spirit creates a union of one church. While joining the online worship, all participants receive the same message, and sing the same hymns. By the work of the triune God and omnipresent, believers can experience the oneness in the simultaneity

People can experience liminality not only in the real site, but also in the cyber space (Madge and O’Connort 2005). In other words, Christ is really present not only in on-site worship, but also in online worship (Thompson 2020). This transcends ethnicity, gender, social status, and intelligence: among them, the cognitively challenged join that group confidently as members.¹³

Therefore, online worship for the cognitively challenged is not an area of service for the weak and segregated but can be a visible confessional act for building the essence of the church and a sense of oneness.

4.2. Preparing the Upcoming Pandemic Situation

Finally, in 2021, the coronavirus vaccine became available throughout the world. With additional medicine being produced, it has shed a ray of hope. However, mutations of the coronavirus have been observed throughout the world, so no one can anticipate precisely when this disease will be perfectly controlled. Disease experts predict that even though the COVID-19 virus will be controlled with treatments and vaccines, at any time, a new worldwide pandemic can happen (Stieg 2021). While considering the COVID-19 pandemic, the church should prepare for the possibility of a future pandemic and prepare for alternative ideas for worship accessibility for the cognitively challenged. It is necessary to consider the following things.

First, ecumenical cooperation is necessary. In case of the Korean Presbyterian Church, because of denominational splits, there are many denominations (Ha 2016, pp. 1–8). Even though each denomination has an educational committee and has an educational curriculum, their energy and financial ability are dispersed, so they cannot invest efficiently in online platforms and software. These are money-consuming processes. Therefore,

Korean Churches should cooperate in seeking solutions for this large project. Until now, only the Korea Research Center for Disability Ministry has struggled to seek solutions for accommodating the cognitively challenged.¹⁴ However, currently, this institute is suffering from financial problems. Therefore, instead of investing in only one denomination, it would be better if the Korea Research Center for Disability Ministry could share their resources and be supported by more denominations. It is not easy, however, to unify the Korean Presbyterian denominations. For now, considering the situation of the Korean Presbyterian Church, using the existing Korea Research Center for Disability Ministry would be easiest and most efficient.

Second, in the case of online worship for the cognitively challenged, it is more efficient that their minister appears on screen rather than other preachers come up. In other words, even though a megachurch's online worship may be more accessible for the cognitively challenged, their weekly preacher will be more helpful. Each church needs to set up an online platform and prepare broadcast facilities and resources. If we think from the perspective of the cognitively challenged, when we see and hear their acquaintances in the monitor, they could think, "Ah . . . this is worship" or "I get to worship . . ." If they see unknown people, because of a lack of an existing relationship, they may have greater trouble understanding the message.

Third, churches should consider their education curriculums for the cognitively challenged, because of their average accelerating aging (Lee 2018). Since 2000, Korean society has come to have concerns about the cognitively challenged and improved institutional infrastructure for the handicapped. However, contrary to this trend in Korean society, the ministry for the handicapped in the church has shrunk. When Korean society did not have concerns about the welfare of the handicapped, the church held an important role and non-Christian parents sought the church to provide educational services for their children. However, the situation has changed: it is very hard to evangelize the new believer, and the cognitively challenged in the church have been aging. However, the worship and education programs in churches stay at the Sunday School level. However, in the situation brought about by the pandemic, the Korean Church should renew the curriculum for the cognitively challenged.

Fourth, online worship is most helpful for the mild and moderate (and, perhaps, severe) mental handicap range, but in the case of the profound handicap range, online worship is not an ideal approach. Eventually, in-person worship and physical gathering is very necessary. When this is possible, the church should match their cognitively challenged members with a small group and support fellowship with other believers. In addition, preparing an institutional policy for the cognitively challenged members' worship and learning in the church congregation is more appropriate because the cognitively challenged can learn through fellowship with other people and in the community.¹⁵

5. Conclusions

From 2020 until now, the entire world has suffered as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. In churches, this was observed through the loss of public worship, which is the heartbeat of the spiritual life of believers. Throughout the world, the fourth industrial revolution is ongoing, and public education has changed. The development of online education foresaw the change of the existing educational system, and it will affect the worship and educational practices of churches throughout the world.

During the pandemic, the religious life of the cognitively challenged has atrophied. As a result of indifference in the church, people with handicaps have endured a disproportionately difficult time. However, as I showed in this article, online worship and the appearance of online educational programs provide an opportunity for a course correction so that churches can better meet the spiritual and educational needs of all members.

For the future of ministry for the cognitively challenged, many denominations in the Korean Church should cooperate with each other. It is necessary to help each church equip the online broadcasting systems and share the various software platforms developed

for this purpose. For example, there exists a church-union association in South Korea. Each denomination's delegates periodically meet and seek to collaborate. They can share fundraising and proceed in making the educational software.

Above all, the most important thing is to provide the educational resources and guidelines for family members of the cognitively challenged. The development of online systems will only be effectively applied when church and family can successfully cooperate.

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Notes

- 1 These questions are similarly addressed in congregations across the USA and in churches of other countries. Regarding this, see (Foley 2021; Cones 2021).
- 2 http://kmindmall.com/contents/item.view.new.php?it_id=15504644887018 (accessed on 4 March 2021). For the purposes of this article, any reference to "cognitive disabilities," is referencing those persons who might also be described with the terms "mental retardation", "intellectual disability", and "learning disability". Some people misunderstand the difference between intellectual disability and mental disability or illness: the two main characteristics of intellectual disability are limitation of intellect and lack of adaptive behavior. Because "retarded" and "disabled" convey negative images or stereotypes, this paper prefers to use the term "cognitively challenged" to reflect respect for human life and the full personhood of all who live with such challenges.
- 3 American Psychiatric Association (2000, pp. 43–44) notes that "Among mentally handicapped persons, about 10 percent fall within the moderate range, 3 percent in the severe range, and only 2 percent in the profound range."
- 4 For convenience, I will use Type A, Type B, Type C for naming the description of each of these three hypothetical worship settings.
- 5 Miroslav Volf says, "Just as others, neither can a Christian exist as a Christian before entering into relation with other Christians" (Volf 1998, p. 178).
- 6 Of course, Zoom meetings are not enough for deep fellowship. However, if VR and wearable machine would be developed such as that depicted in the movie Kingsman, fellowship among the cognitively challenged can be more enhanced.
- 7 Regarding virtual reality and augmented reality's potential for special education, see Anderson (2019).
- 8 http://www.seomoon.org/new_home/ (accessed on 11 March 2021).
- 9 Even though profound range mentally handicapped has religious potential and spiritual ability. See Nouwen (1997, pp. 49–50).
- 10 <https://www.christiandaily.co.kr/news/91801> (accessed on 13 March 2021).
- 11 Participation and experience can give great learning opportunity for cognitively challenged. See, for example, Webb-Mitchell (2008, pp. 20–22); and Yong (2007, p. 208). While livestreaming the worship feeds people's spiritualities, it enhance the sense of approachness to the worship (Foley 2021, vol. 12, p. 245).
- 12 Loder (1998, p. 232) says, "The Divine Spirit dramatically and powerfully penetrates and permeates the whole person so that he is consumed by the Divine presence. Regardless of what point in one's life span such a realization may occur, the totality of the life span from birth to death is brought under the power and purposes of God."
- 13 Liturgical participation is very important for the process of faith formation. Even though mentally handicapped people have a weak cognitive ability, religious understanding cannot be evaluated by oral articulation and logic. Pivarnik (2012, p. 5) says, "Participation in the sacramental-liturgical experience is meant to lead the participant into ever-greater union with the divine. Liturgical participation in the liturgical worship is not merely liturgical celebration, but is centered on the transformation of the human person through grace in the medium of the church in order to bring the individual back to his or her Creator, the source of being."
- 14 <http://www.kmind.net> (accessed on 17 March 2021).
- 15 Mentally handicapped people can learn by the help of their community. So, belonging to community is very important. See, Vygotsky (1978, p. 86). See also Swinton and Mowat (2006, pp. 239–40). People with severe disabilities can also learn religious concepts. Fulkerson (2007, p. 41) says, "Individuals with severe disabilities communicate (life infants) at the pre-symbolic(perlocutionary) level and can communicate with other people."

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