

Update from Korea

From Catherine Christie, former Chair of CRCN, reporting from Korea ...

Yesterday a young minister came to the office. He is head of the Rural Minister's Association and was in town for the day involved in a Rural Ministry course at Hanshin seminary. He is one of a team of three rural pastors who come in once a week for this course. He invited me to attend with him. This was the final course of the term. I was thrilled, and want to share some things with you.

There were about 36 students in the course (only 8 women). As it was the closing session, they were taking questions from the class, and then went around for each person's evaluation. One of the questions from one of the women students was why was there was no women's perspective. Very interesting. The response was that there are no women pastors really involved in the Rural Ministry Association. Quite different from Canada.

The Presbyterian Church has just passed a regulation that students ordained have to spend a two-year pastorate in a rural. The questioner asked for their comments. One for, one against.

But it was in the going around the group for comments that I found most exciting. One student said he had lived as a pastor's kid for a number of years in a rural area, but he did not know what rural ministry was until this course. One said he is a city kid, but now he is looking forward to rural ministry after ordination. (A convert!) A number of people mentioned the personalities of the three who had been instructors during the course, and later, in my invited comments, I said that this was true of my experience in Canada too, that rural presbyteries are mostly 'communities of people' while urban presbyteries are much more competitive.

One of the students said he would like to see the class have the opportunity to go out to a rural area as part of the course, and the professor in charge said they are planning that for the future.