

The United Church of Canada Overseas Personnel profile



Mary Collins

(Toronto Conference)

**Served The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
August 1998 to December 2009**

Mary Collins, on final home assignment from January through December 2010, has served partner churches in Japan and Korea over several periods of her career. Mary first served as United Church of Canada overseas personnel from 1967 to 1970 with the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan), teaching English at a church-related girls' school in the city of Shizuoka. On returning to Canada she studied at the Centre for Christian Studies, then located in Toronto, and after being commissioned a diaconal minister, held positions in Christian Education, administration and inner city work in Toronto for the next several years.

Nine years later she would return overseas, this time to South Korea, to work with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK). This would be her initial term lasting from 1970-1983. After returning for a regular UCC-required home assignment Mary was invited back to PROK for a second term. Although willing, her visa was denied by the Korean immigration authorities due to her active support of the Korean struggle for democracy and human rights. Unable to return to Korea, Mary then accepted an invitation to serve with the Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ), where she worked in the KCCJ General Assembly office in Tokyo from 1985 to 1988, doing the English-language work of the KCCJ in its relations with its overseas partners.

In 1998 returned to South Korea, where she would serve in her final term with PROK from 1998-2009. Grateful to have been able to serve again in Korea, Mary's focus in her home assignment will be sharing the story of the life and work of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK).

As **Overseas Personnel** with PROK, Mary actively supported the Korean struggle for human rights and democracy in that time of oppressive dictatorship government. Additionally, Mary worked in the PROK General Assembly office in Seoul, doing the English-language communication work of the PROK as it relates with its partner churches around the world. She also participated fully in the life and work of a local PROK congregation, and was involved in wider church circles as well.

The Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea: A central focus of the mission of the PROK is working for justice and peace: justice for all, particularly for those most vulnerable and those who are marginalized; gender justice; justice for the earth; reconciliation and reunification of the divided Korean people; peace for the Korean peninsula and the Northeast Asia region and wider world. Deeply committed to the international ecumenical movement, the PROK works in active solidarity with some 30 partner churches and organizations around the world. With 2,645 ministers including 200 women serving 1,593 local congregations and other ministries, and a membership of some 327,903, the PROK carries out a strong prophetic ministry in Korea and the world.

For more information, contact

- Mary Collins directly at marycol30@hotmail.com
- Patti Talbot – Program Coordinator, People in Partnership, Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit, United Church of Canada, 3250 Bloor St. W., Etobicoke, ON M8X 2Y4, Tel. (416) 231-7680, ext. 4018 or 4017. ptalbot@united-church.ca

The work of overseas personnel and their mission interpretation work in Canada is made possible through your gifts to the Mission and Service Fund of The United Church of Canada.

