



International internship offers new perspective

After five years of studying for a law degree, you'd think that you'd need some time off.

Not Jordan Grimmer, who spent the summer in South Korea as part of the Church's Global Mission internship programme.

Jordan had seven weeks off between his final exam at Otago University and starting his first job as a judge's clerk at the Auckland High Court.

"I wanted to do something useful with my time off, to learn about the world and the Church's role in it," says Jordan (23).

The Rev Phil King, the Presbyterian Church's Global Mission coordinator, put him in touch with the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) who helped facilitate the visit.

Jordan, who has attended church since he was a teenager in Tauranga, spent most of his time in Seoul where he worked alongside churches actively involved in important social justice ministries.

One church he worked with helped migrants from all over Asia.

"Many of these people are in extremely vulnerable positions. Some are workers who've been exploited, others are homeless and most don't have any visible means of support. The PROK works closely with these migrants via its Global Sarang programme. [Sarang means 'love' in Korean]."

This includes a hospital that offers free medical care, a school for migrant children, a feeding kitchen and night shelter.

Jordan's involvement was mainly with the school where he taught English, although he also spent many hours making the Korean side dish kimchi (fermented vegetables) which was distributed to needy migrants.

He also spent time in Jeonju, where he connected with the Rev Kang Sil Lee, who he met when the Korean minister undertook a three-month sabbatical in Dunedin last year.

"It was great to see Kang Sil and to find out how she lives."

A highlight of his trip was visiting a Buddhist monk. "Kang Sil took me trekking through the mountains to have morning tea with the monk. It was interesting to hear about his life and I was honoured to have such an experience."

Another highlight was seeing firsthand how deeply the PROK is involved in the democratic struggle in Korea, particularly around issues such as the reunification of North and South Korea.

"A lot of ministers were out protesting, fearlessly risking their reputations and even possibly facing arrest to support and advance these issues for human rights."

Reflecting on his experiences, Jordan says the trip changed him in many ways.

"I have a new perspective on the importance of the church being active in social and public issues, especially in relation



Jordan Grimmer and friend making the popular Korean side dish kimchi [fermented vegetables] for distribution to migrants in need.

to minorities and migrants and with important issues such as reunification. I'm so glad I was able to educate myself on these issues so that I'm able to tell Kiwis about what's going on over there."

His experiences also reinforced the importance of ministry and mission work, and Jordan says he would definitely recommend it to others.

"If you want to have your faith challenged and your eyes opened, both to the needs of the world and to the church's capacity to help, then I would definitely recommend it."

Jordan would love to return to Korea one day but for now is focusing on engaging with issues in New Zealand.

"I'm developing really good legal skills which I hope to use to help others with social justice issues. My degree was also in theology so at some stage I'd like to explore that side of it but for now, my focus is on the law."

Rev Phil King believes there is great value in having the Church's young people undertake such internships.

"As a Church we need to invest in our young people, to develop the gifts and skills that they have and what they bring to society's future," says Phil. "Fortunately, we have some very strong links with our international church partners which gives our young people the opportunity to participate in a range of experiences in a country very different from their own."

Phil says anyone interested in undertaking an internship should contact him.

"We can talk about where you want to go and I can help customise a programme to suit you. These kinds of experiences are incredibly valuable, not only for the young person but also for the host church."

Sharon Stephenson [Spanz](#)