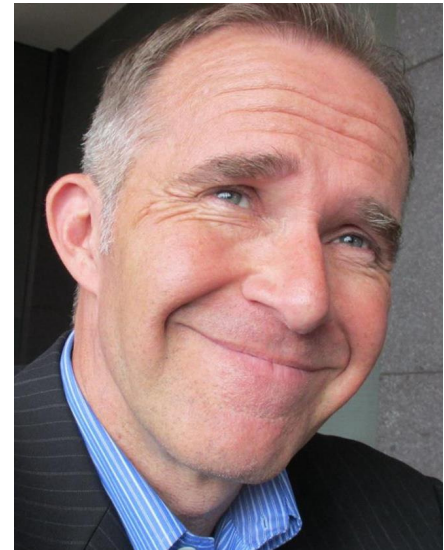


Paul Johnson serves at International Christian University in Tokyo

The presbytery's Committee on Ministry is considering the publication of a monthly contribution to EMerge — "Validated Minister Spotlight." The article will be a brief interview of one of the presbytery's validated ministers. The first installment is below, a question-and-answer interview with Paul Johnson of International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan.

How long have you been at Tokyo International Christian University and what is your role there?

I have been serving as University Minister at ICU (International Christian University) Tokyo, Japan, since 1996. Prior to that I served as an Associate Minister at Plymouth Congregation Church, Minneapolis. (1993-96).



What do you enjoy about this ministry?

ICU is a four-year liberal arts university located in the western suburbs of the metropolis area. The student body consists of around 3,000 undergraduate students, most of whom are Japanese. Of course, campus ministry/chaplaincy has many attractions. I preach, teach and attend to the pastoral care needs of the university church (Sunday congregation) and the campus community



(weekday congregation). Working with university students, I founded the annual labyrinth walk in the university chapel. I lead both domestic and international camps and retreats. In Japan I lead autumn retreats to Asian Rural Institute (ARI) Tochigi Prefecture. ARI is a farm-cooperative, teaching organic farming techniques and servant leadership skills to a host of overseas rural leaders. International work camps have been held in northern Thailand with partner university, Payap University, Chiang Mai, and more recently in Java with partner university, Petra Christian University, Surabaya, Indonesia.

I enjoy the ministry of mixing with students who are in the springtime of their lives. Serving in an academic environment is also stimulating for a host of reasons. Recently the university is expanding its master's level programs. These programs have attracted many mature (second-career) students from overseas. As an example, the university has a Rotary International Peace Center program that hosts graduate-level scholars for a two-year master's course. The Japanese government also provides generous scholarships for graduate students from overseas. Over the years, it has been a joy to see so many students bloom and grow into scholars, educators and Christian leaders.

Is there a way we can be praying for you?

The percentage of Christians in Japan is very low, around 1 percent of the population. But certainly Christian institutions of higher learning here have provided a platform for critical thinking including servant leadership/service to others that defy such small numbers. Pray for Japan and for academic institutions that strive to follow in the footsteps of Christ.