

Help for Korean pastors in cross-racial ministry

by [Thomas E. Kim](#) in the [March 23, 2022](#) issue



Participants in the first CRCC Madang program, held in San Diego in 2018, gather for a group photo. (File photo courtesy of CRCC Madang)

In 2015, Grace Pak was serving as president of the National Association of Korean-American United Methodist Pastors Serving Cross-Racial/Cultural Appointment. Pak was passionate in her efforts to help her community become effective and faithful pastors, and she knew there had to be a new way to facilitate that work.

“There were no learning opportunities, which were needed in the CRCC community even though there were plenty of experts who had gifts and talents in ministry,” Pak said.

So in October 2015, she called a meeting between her organization and the United Methodist Korean Clergywomen Association—and thus, CRCC Madang was born.

CRCC Madang provides practical training and continuing education from ministerial experts to enhance pastoral abilities and capabilities to serve churches in a cross-cultural appointment. It begins with a weeklong intensive spiritual formation at a retreat center, followed by three months of weekly online classes.

The classes are practical and apply to subjects such as funerals and weddings, online services, self-care, hospital visitation, preaching in English, small-group ministry, and retirement plans.

Since its official start in 2017, there have been 60 graduates of CRCC Madang. The graduates make up about 24.7 percent of the 243 Korean pastors serving a full-time, cross-racial appointment in the United Methodist Church as of 2020.

One of the program's first graduates, Heewon Kim, now serves three churches in the Northern Illinois Conference. He said the most significant lesson he gained came from HiRho Park, who was then on staff of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Kim recalls Park saying that there could be an appointment that seems unfair, but the keys to overcoming an unfair appointment are "to equip yourself with your pastoral skills and abilities rather than complaining about it."

"Her advice became a strong and realistic challenge for me," he said.

One of the most recent graduates of CRCC Madang is Miso Park, who is serving Bergen Highlands United Methodist Church in the Greater New Jersey Conference. Because her class was held during the pandemic, Park said she was able to see how practical CRCC Madang was, especially for those beginning their ministry.

For instance, the pastor teaching online worship attended one of her services and was able to provide feedback, which Park found helpful.

"Also, I learned there how to provide pastoral care to my parish and how to care for myself during these difficult times."

Even though it has been a successful program for the Korean pastors serving cross-racial/cultural appointments, CRCC has had to deal with financial issues.

Sungho Lee, a board member and the program's acting executive director, said that the goal at the very beginning was to build up sustainable financial resources to operate independently, even though the program received some help and support from the Korean Ministry Plan and the Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

To save operating expenses, organizers designed virtual classes even before the pandemic began. They registered as a nonprofit organization and organized the board to support CRCC Madang. Now, Lee said, they raise funds to operate it independently.

According to Lee, effectively serving in a cross-racial/cultural appointment is to answer God's calling.

"God called us to bring new spiritual wind to the United Methodist Church and America," Lee said. "CRCC Madang helps pastors work hard and diligently in their pastoral settings. . . . It is a place of training practically and solidly to enhance pastoral skills and abilities for Korean pastors who have been appointed to a cross-racial church." —United Methodist News Service