



Toward academic, theological and pastoral excellence

Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico

Office of the President

THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR NEW IMMIGRANT LEADERS IN THE USA

This program focuses on theological education for new immigrants in the Presbyterian Church (USA) that may enable presbyteries to commission lay pastors and recognize minister's previous ordination according to the academic work of each student.

*In partnership with
the New Immigrants Congregational Support (NICS)
Office of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*

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THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR NEW IMMIGRANT LEADERS IN THE USA

New waves of immigrants from Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and East Europe are coming to this nation as immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers, students, and religious workers. In the case of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the blessing of having new Presbyterians from abroad creates the need to provide different welcoming resources. One of those is a program of reformed theological formation with and for the new communities of faith under a Presbyterian perspective.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The Presbyterian Church (USA) office of **New Immigrants Congregational Support (NICS)** and the **Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico (ESPR)**, both in mission partnership, are continuing for a second period their dynamic, diverse, and flexible reformed theological program for new immigrant Presbyterian leaders. The ESPR is a theological institution related to our denomination through the General Assembly's Committee on Theological Education. This second project will run as a two years program to be assessed for further extension as an inter-denominational and international program.

The purpose of the program is to provide theological preparation for new immigrant leaders in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in the following categories:

1. Commissioned Lay Pastors, or in the process to become one;
2. Ministers from another denomination seeking recognition of their ordination;
3. Lay leaders in their communities of faith in need of theological formation.

Presbyteries and/or congregations are intended to assume two responsibilities. One is to nominate the candidates, covering only their travel expenses to the sessions' site, and the other is to indicate their representative to give follow up as mentor to the student. For this second program, we have 15 participants from different nationalities and Presbyteries. They will start their 2010-12 classes hoping to better serve their constituencies according to the Presbyterian polity, Reformed theology, and contextual intercultural ministry. Participants are receiving full academic scholarships from the General Assembly Mission Council office of NICS.

The whole program will be implemented in the USA, in English. Spanish, Portuguese, and other foreign languages would be used as a resource, according to the student registration. The areas of instruction will be centered in Biblical Interpretation; Reformed Theology and Sacraments, Presbyterian Polity, Worship, Homiletics, Pastoral Care, Teaching, and Contextual Reality for Immigrant Ministries in the USA, all according to the requirements presented in the Book of Order for such commission. Professors will be selected among the different theological institutions related to the denomination.

This is a two-year program designed to offer two intensive courses per semester. Next group session will start by Fall 2010. Classes will meet two times per semester, for

Rules of Discipline). It also will include the structure and function of the governing bodies of the church.

- **Preaching.** This course approaches preaching within the context of Reformed traditions of worship. It explores various aspects of the sermon such as: preparation; styles of preaching as well as the creative use of the lectionary in the sermon.
- **Worship.** The various aspects of Reformed Worship. It is based on main Presbyterian resources, including the Directory for Worship and The Book of Common Worship. It gives special attention to planning and leading services such as funerals and weddings, among others.
- **Pastoral Care.** This course is an introduction to Pastoral Care ministry. It gives special attention to both the needs of the care-receiver and the needs of the caregiver.
- **Teaching and Christian Education.** Introduction to various issues of the church's educational ministry, including learning theories and pedagogical methodologies. Students will be exposed to Presbyterian resources currently available for the enhancement of their ministry.
- **Contextual Ministry.** This course introduces participants to the importance and value of understanding the social and theological context in which the new immigrant ministers will work. It will give special attention to issues such as: urban and rural ministries and racial/ethnic concerns in the congregational setting. A review of the PC (USA) ministries with new immigrants also will be presented.

GRADING:

Courses will be graded pass/fail with a designation of "honors" for top students. Students must pass all eight courses to graduate. Students receiving honors in at least five of the eight courses will graduate with honors. Professors will determine the final grade (pass/fail).

METHODOLOGY:

Educational methodology and procedures will be coordinated by the Academic Dean of the Evangelical Seminary together with professors and the coordinator of this project. Students will provide the necessary input regarding their culture and history. Mentors may be appointed according to the needs of students. They will have some responsibilities as follows:

- 1) Pray with the student;
- 2) Review lectures and readings with students
- 3) Encourage the student's participation in the ministry of the church
- 4) Motivate students to pursue higher levels of academic work
- 5) Communicate to the Dean and the faculty about the student's performance

RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSION:

The interested candidates must communicate with the GAMC office of New Immigrants Congregational Support with the endorsement of their Presbytery. Once a group of students is formed, the office of NICS will communicate to the Academic Dean

of the Evangelical Seminary about the feasibility of forming a regional group in the USA. Along with their Presbytery's' approval, students need to provide their academic records including any formal theological training.

GRADUATION:

The Evangelical Seminary will issue a "Diploma" for all students who have completed the 72 hours of academic program requirements.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Interested candidates must receive the endorsement of their Presbyteries or congregations and communicate with the General Assembly Mission Council office of New Immigrants Congregational Support at 1-800/728-7228, ext. 5135.

Email: angel.suarez@pcusa.org

For academic information, please contact the Academic Dean of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico, Rev. Dr. José Irizarry. 787-763-6700 ext. 225.

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