



Local Ministry in a Global Context

The past two hundred years have seen Americans, and American churches, increasingly drawn into significant relationships that span the globe both geographically and culturally.

Today communications and international travel are far easier than even a decade ago. As a result pastors, both as ministers to their congregations and as theologians, must engage directly with a people from other cultures. Sharing the gospel with people of other faiths, developing culturally sensitive worship for those from outside the U.S. cultural milieu, providing pastoral care for multi-ethnic families, and offering inter-religious community ministries are all posing challenges for pastors in our churches today. Moreover, pastors are preaching to congregations whose members are directly engaged in Christian mission. The Christian responsibility for the impact of American culture

and society on the world has become much more direct.

Perkins has developed its Global Theological Education to bring these realities into the Perkins curriculum and community life in a forceful and intentional way. We are also making resources available for congregations engaged in mission in a pluralistic cultural environment.

Already the Perkins community fo-



Robert Hunt, Director of Global Theological Education

Perkins Students Immerse Themselves in the Salvadoran Context

In March 2004 a group of Perkins Students accompanied Professor Hal Recinos to San Salvador. For 10 days they focused intently on understanding the reality of daily life and Christian ministry in the Salvadoran context. The

students came away with a new understanding of how Salvadorans are caught up in a global economy whose effects they cannot control, but which impacts their lives in many negative ways. They also



learned how Christians can be global partners in vital social ministries, learning, worship, and prayer.

Perkins' students with Salvadoran friends outside the house of Archbishop Oscar Romero

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cuses on the cultural plurality of American culture through its African-American and Latin-American programs. In several courses Perkins' students are exposed to and discuss the complexities of the social setting of ministry – and begin to learn basic skills of mission and ministry in cross-cultural and pluralistic contexts.

Now the Global Theological Education program will ensure that as many of our students as possible have an experience of immersion in

a cultural context with which they are not familiar. They will be challenged to learn from colleagues in other cultures. They will discover the way U.S. influence (politically, economically, and religiously) is experienced by persons outside the U.S. They will learn the ways in which Christians outside the U.S. theologize and minister in their local context and in the context of globalization. And they will appreciate how pastors working in the U.S. context should responsibly minister in light of their newfound understandings of globalization.

My personal experience of 20 years in missionary service outside the United States has shown me how deeply the preparation of pastors for ministry is influenced by the cultural context. The pluralistic nature of contemporary U.S. society should have no less an influence on theological education. We are looking forward to the opportunity this program will give our students to immerse themselves in a different culture, and thus take a first step into ministry in a pluralistic world.

Robert Hunt

From Our Students

From Taizé, France

I came home realizing how much we are missing out on God by hurrying through life and even through our worship services. While I love high energy, intense praise and worship styles, I believe that the Brothers of Taizé have discovered something that we are missing. We long for solitude, for communion with God, and just for the peace of being in God's presence. The need for that space and time is apparent in the decisions of thousands of young people who flock to Taizé every year in order to seek guidance and discover God.

Carrie Wright



Students at work in Taizé, ecumenical center for reconciliation and worship

From Mexico City, Mexico

In the course of the immersion experience I experienced a change within that reformed my reading and hearing of the biblical message. Living in Mexico for the two weeks provided a context different

from that of my North American experience. I have begun to understand the hope and strength that the scriptures provide to people who have little actual hope of political or social improvement. I believe that this kind of experience is essential for providing an openness for the pastor in ministry.

Jack Womak



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in a global context***