



PRINCETON SEMINARY SCHOLAR IN ECUMENICS AND MISSION TO BE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT SYNOD RACIAL-ETHNIC CONVOCATION

October 5-6, 2007

Stony Point Conference Center

Jesus Christ the Immigrant, and Other Immigrants in the Bible: Ministering to the Whole Church

Do you have any interest in the ministry of the church with and among immigrant peoples? If so, you will want to plan to attend this fall's Racial Ethnic Convocation at the Stony Point Center, October 5-6, 2007. The Dr. Luis N. Rivera-Pagan, Henry Winters Luce Emeritus Professor of Ecumenics and Mission at Princeton Theological Seminary, will be the keynote speaker. The theme of this year's convocation is "Jesus Christ the Immigrant & Other Immigrants in the Bible: Ministering to the Whole Church."



Dr. Luis N. Rivera-Pagan is the author of more than a dozen books, most written in Spanish, including the English language edition of *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1992) which reveals the heart of a thorough researcher, and the brilliance of a passionate thinker and gifted writer. One cannot walk away from having read *A Violent Evangelism* without having been affected, particularly by the way in which those who were both discoverers and con-

querors tended to homogenize and degrade the native peoples whom they encountered in what became known to Europeans as the New World. The world's continents, wrote Dr. Rivera-Pagan, separated until the late 15th century, became "conjoined in the birth of modernity and universal Christianity. The peoples and nations that inhabited those far away lands and territories were brought together by the force of European weapons and the strength of Christian faith." (p. 270-71). The "discovery and conquest also produced a collision of ideas and conceptual perspectives with no parallel in history." He notes how inappropriate it is to speak of "two cultures," for in doing so "the rich and complex diversity of the nations and indigenous peoples is devalued. The importance of the accomplishments and differences, the particular traditions, symbols, customs, languages, and institutions are obliterated." (p.15). Dr. Rivera-Pagan's work reminds us that just as the European culture began to dominate the New World, and tended to homogenize in thought and action the indigenous peoples whose land was expropriated, so in our current circumstances, the church may not adequately appreciate the particularity of cultural gifts and graces that come to the church through various immigrant peoples. With a focus on Jesus Christ as immigrant, and other immigrants in the Bible, presentations by Dr. Rivera-Pagan promise to bring increased enlightenment to our understanding and approach to ministry with and among those who, originating from different



places, come to call the United States home.

Dr. Rivera-Pagan holds an S.T.M., an M.A., and a Ph.D., all from Yale University. A native of Puerto Rico who is an American Baptist, Dr. Rivera-Pagan served as editor of the official report of the Ninth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Brazil, 2006). He teaches courses on Latin American theology, Third World liberation theologies, theological readings of world literature, and problems and issues in the 16th-century Christianization of the Americas. Major publications include *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1992) *Mito, Exilio y Demonios: Literatura y Teología en América Latina* (Publicaciones Puertorriqueñas, 1996) and *Essays from the Diaspora* (Centro Luterano de Formación Teológica, Publicaciones El Faro, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Centro Basilea de Investigación, 2002).

Regardless of race or ethnicity, of when your forebears immigrated to the United States, or whether your family has called this place home from time beyond record and memory, you are welcome at this consultation! In order to register, go to www.synodne.org.

**5811 Heritage Landing Drive
East Syracuse, NY 13057-9360**

Phone: 315-446-5990/800-585-5881

E-mail: synodoffice@synodne.org

Website: www.synodne.org

Presbyteries of: ALBANY * BOSTON * CAYUGA-SYRACUSE * EASTERN KOREAN * ELIZABETH * GENESEE VALLEY * GENEVA * HUDSON RIVER * LONG ISLAND * MONMOUTH * NEW BRUNSWICK * NEW YORK CITY * NEWARK * NEWTON * NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND * NORTHERN NEW YORK * PALISADES * SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND * SUSQUEHANNA VALLEY * UTICA * WEST JERSEY * WESTERN NEW YORK

MAINE CONSULTATION ON SHARED MINISTRY BRINGS RURAL AND URBAN CHURCH LEADERS TOGETHER



Co-sponsored by Mission at the Eastward and Auburn Theological Seminary, with support from the Synod of the Northeast, a Consultation on Shared Ministry brought nearly fifty people from the eastern United States to Farmington, Maine July 26-29, 2007 in order to learn how rural and urban environments shape shared congregational culture, ministry and cooperation. The consultation sought to identify similarities in shared ministries and viable cooperative models that have emerged in rural and urban settings.

Teams brought together for the consultation were represented by leaders from *Presbyterians Renewing in Spirit and Mission (PRISM)* --(an urban shared ministry in Elizabeth Presbytery, NJ), *Emergency Shelter Partnership* (an ecumenical ministry that began with outreach to the homeless in Brewster, NY), *Ministries in the North Country (MINC)* -- (a cooperative ministry among more than a dozen congregations in Northern New York), *For Faith Parish* (five Presbyterian congregations Sullivan County, Hudson River Pres-

bytery) and *Mission at the Eastward (MATE)* -- (eight congregations and five community outreach ministries in Southern Maine, Northern New England Presbytery). Representatives from other cooperative ministries from New Jersey, New York State and South Carolina also attended.

Through mutual conversations it became understood that many cooperative parishes, whether rural or urban, gained traction as a result of a crisis among churches or in the communities. In many cases congregations had lost critical mass and needed a new sense of mission to which God was calling them; in consultation with neighboring churches they discovered a new missional life to which they were called.

Although lack of critical mass and resulting financial hardship were often issues, money is not at the heart of any lack of authentic shared ministry. Some congregations may have significant endowments to assist their ministries, but have lost the sense of focus that gives passion to their work. Participants discovered that God can do new things with congregations with a shared vision. In one case the community's civic leaders brought together spiritual leaders to ask what gifts

they could bring to help with a serious community problem; the result was inspired energy across denominational lines to serve the homeless.

In most cases, viable ministries grew from the ground up. Participants did not find their passion for ministry through a hierarchical church body such as a presbytery or synod illuminating the way. In fact, representatives from the *For Faith Parish* in Sullivan County, NY found a new enthusiasm and community voice in their work after a presbytery design had failed; elders surveyed their future and began a new conversation. Still, it was noted that sometimes it is beneficial for a more inclusive governing body to offer some prophetic leadership, to plant seeds, to offer suggestions, and to facilitate conversations. Congregation leaders welcomed collaborative partners. It could be said that nothing is lost when something good emerges from the ashes of failure when God is in the midst of the resurrection, when church leaders take responsibility for any new direction in the life of their churches.

For more information about the consultation, go to www.synodne.org.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OF THE SYNOD OF THE NORTHEAST



The Presbyterian Women in the Synod of the Northeast are women in the congregations within the bounds of the Synod—New England, New Jersey & New York. Their Moderator is Sandra Grillo

from the Presbytery of Newark.

They recently submitted a Statement of Support for the United Nations to reaffirm the historic declarations of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (1991 and 1958) regarding social witness as integral to Christian Life. Action was taken on

August 18th, by the Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women to adopt the statement. To read the statement, go to www.synodne.org/mediagallery/album.php?id=72&page=1

Visit their website at www.pwsne.org/ for more information on Presbyterian Women.

WORLD MISSION '07: A CELEBRATION OF GRACE OCTOBER 2-6, 2007

In October 2007, PC(USA) will send out 30 Presbyterian Church (USA) missionaries to share their stories in every corner of the United States. They are asking 120 presbyteries (136 have already committed, exceeding their goal) to participate in this effort to



educate the church about how God is at work in the world and how we as a denomination participate in God's mission.

To learn more about the

challenge, go to pcusa.org/missionchallenge07/

To read the list of committed presbyteries, go to www.pcusa.org/missionchallenge07/committed-list.htm

MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES RECEIVES \$30,000.00 EDUCATION GRANT

The Trustees of the John Merck Fund approved a grant of \$30,000.00 to the Massachusetts Council of Churches for their project titled *Healthy Kids, Healthy Churches, Healthy Communities: Moving from Educa-*

tion to Action.

For information on the project, visit the Council's website at www.masscouncilofchurches.org/2pg%20curriculum%20flyer.pdf

