

Endowed Program in Cross-Cultural Ministry

Ministry in the 21st century cannot fail to appreciate the dynamic challenges of living and serving in a multi-cultural world. Even as we learn to communicate with persons with different cultural mores and values, effective ministers must also be able to represent the values and emphases of their faith tradition with integrity, as Christianity emphasizes proclamation and transformation, love and justice, even in the pluralistic world that is the 21st century. These are the realities that motivate this major gift proposal.

This proposal seeks \$1,500,000 to endow the Cross-Cultural Ministry Program at Earlham School of Religion. This endowment will accomplish these important objectives:

- Establish ESR Cross-Cultural Ministry office with a part- or full-time employee
- Without inflating tuition, allow ESR students various study abroad options to integrate their studies with cross-cultural immersion and ministry experiences
- Financially secure sites for students' travel experiences
- Create student stipends for the duration of students' cross-cultural field education

A donor who funds this endowment in full will have the option of naming the program.

Is Ministry Cross-Cultural by Nature?

A call to ministry is a call to a life-long engagement with the world as an empathizer. As Jesus entered and identified with the world to which he ministered, those who embrace their vocation of ministry identify with those for whom they care. The relationship between those practicing ministry and those ministered to, however, is made both complicated and fascinating by the fact that each party brings not only subjective experience to the relationship, but also his or her culture and sense of community. Cultural mores and values shape and color each one's contribution to moments of ministry. The encounter of differing cultural understandings can easily be the point at which cultures clash, miscommunication occurs, and acts of ministry go awry. Empathy and personal connections emerge at the intersection of good communication and accurate understanding.

The recognition that the cross-cultural dynamic is present in many ministry scenarios prompts Earlham School of Religion to propose a cross-cultural component for its curriculum, one that already emphasizes the importance of globalization issues in the classroom. As currently envisioned, a Cross-Cultural Ministry program would provide a cultural immersion experience for ESR students in cultures different from their own. These experiences will

- Provide opportunities for service, and learning through service as students offer acts of ministry in this cross-cultural setting.

- Enhance students' aptitude for ministry by acquainting them with issues that arise in multi-cultural situations and better equipping them with skills for ministry in such settings.
- Cultivating self-awareness, learning adaptability, and making cross-cultural connections through cultural immersion experiences encourages students to empathize with a wide-range of individuals and communities. Experiences of empathy and reflection prepare our students to minister effectively in a 21st Century, pluralistic, and multi-cultural society.

The Current Situation of ESR's Relationship to Cross-Cultural Travel Programs

The Association of Theological Schools, ESR's accrediting agency, includes the issue of globalization among its standards for theological education. In this case, globalization refers to giving curricular attention to cross-cultural issues, providing opportunities for cross-cultural experience, as well as composition of faculty and student body. ESR gives substantial attention to this issue in the classroom in the selection of diverse readings and viewpoints utilized in its courses. Occasionally, ESR offers a two-week travel seminar that provides an experiential element of cross-cultural education. However, one of the notable differences between the administration of Bethany Theological School and Earlham School of Religion is the presence of a study abroad office at Bethany. All Bethany students are required to complete a cross-cultural educational experience prior to graduation. ESR students are welcome to participate in Bethany's programs, although currently there is no accessible fund for aiding students who cannot afford the programs. ESR hopes also to contribute to this relationship of joint seminaries by providing similar resources for students of the community.

The Way We Envision a Cross-Cultural Ministry Program

ESR Faculty will design a Cross-Cultural Ministry program that allows students three main study abroad options: one year, one semester, or 2-week cross-cultural study programs at sites set up through faculty recommendations.

The two-week study abroad program would be conducted like an intensive course with a travel component. In effect, a faculty member leads a group of students on an excursion that studies a defined topic within a different setting. Such groups may journey to the Holy Land, follow the journeys of the Apostle Paul, or minister in an Appalachian setting with a group such as Appalachian Ministries Educational Resource Center. (AMERC.)

The semester and yearlong programs would involve a more extensive cultural immersion. ESR would arrange sites at which students would engage in ministry activities related to their call. For instance, Friends Theological College in Kenya has interest in hosting interns who would assist in the education of African leaders. Pastoral care students could spend a year in residence at the psychiatric hospital founded by Friends in England known as the Retreat. Friends United Meeting mission programs could utilize ESR interns. Not all sites necessarily will be at international locations. A student from a rural Midwest setting might choose to serve in an urban, northeastern location. An international student might spend a year in

ministry at the Quaker UN. And, with the presence of *ESR Access*, students who choose such an option would not automatically need to add an additional year to their degree program.

In particular, the options to travel and live elsewhere for an academic semester or year require significant financial support due to the duration of the stay and the cost of living demands. Using current full-time equivalent figures for ESR's student body and 3.5 years as the average length of time needed for completion of the degree, ESR should expect to support an average of twelve students annually in the this program. The endowment requested for this program would provide an average of \$5,600 per student. It is unlikely that all students would elect to be abroad for a semester or year. For those who choose the two-week travel seminar, less support will be needed. Using Bethany Theological Seminary's figure of \$1200 per student for two-week seminars, ESR will be able to support semester-long and yearlong programs at a higher level. Students involved in Field Ed abroad would be offered more substantial support for their travel expenses and cost of living during their year of practical ministry application.

As a means of strengthening the partnership affiliation and creating parity of opportunity for all students, ESR expects to model its own study abroad office on Bethany's example, while cultivating programs that are distinct and appropriate to ESR's mission and constituency.

The Goals of a Cross-Cultural Ministry Program:

- To familiarize students with differing value systems and styles of communication: In essence, a Cross-Cultural Ministry Program sets students in a community outside of his or her comfort zone and teaches him or her adaptability as a key skill in terms of communicating with and living among others.
- To provide an opportunity for ministry and outreach to every student: While it is true that participants have much to learn for themselves in these settings, they also have something to share. In effect, service to others is an important feature of these cross-cultural experiences.
- To extend the seminary as a resource: to share ESR's strength and leadership position in its understanding of, modeling of, and application of ministry that grows out of a Quaker spirituality.
- To instigate cross-cultural relations within the Society of Friends by providing internships at other Friends institutions.

Broadening the Classroom, The Case for Studying Abroad

Traveling as a *student* makes clear to one's hosts and host institutions that the main goal of one's travel is to be a listener, a student of the culture. Listening does not preclude action, but as an action in itself helps us connect in a peaceable manner. Traveling is in its own right a transformational experience: opening a student physically and mentally as he or she recognizes the differences and ultimately the similarities that make meaningful our connections. As a student or intern, one's responsibility is to come to a culture with questions and diplomacy.

ESR believes for these reasons that travel is crucial in preparing persons for effective ministry in the 21st century. And at this point in time ESR is able to support student cross-cultural

endeavors programmatically. The following four points lead ESR's administration and faculty to believe that there is a niche for an ESR Cross-Cultural Ministry as a program.

1) Off campus programs, like the distance learning program, redraw the boundaries of our educational community, thus providing our students opportunities to interact with many teachers and meetings during their studies and formal field education. With options available through *ESR Access*, ESR's distributed education program, students traveling off-campus for a full semester can undertake coursework and remain in contact with ESR faculty and peers during their time abroad. *ESR Access* makes the travel experience more attractive to students as they are less likely to feel that they are "missing a semester" of credits or completely disconnected from their seminary community.

2) Programs designed by faculty will encourage students who are less likely to engage in a travel experience or who are anxious about traveling alone. Group travel allows professors and students to come to know and serve one another in a different setting, an experience that oftentimes results in fresh understandings of personal and professional relationships.

3) Students may also have the option to design an independent program of study abroad. This requires a student to write a proposal, plan a specialized self-directed curriculum and itinerary, and seek out mentors.

4) The Masters of Arts in Religion degree requires students to achieve reading competency in a research language. Language coursework for ESR students is not offered at ESR, and therefore demands extracurricular time. Students with a language requirement may prefer to gain competency through language immersion made possible by travel abroad.

The emerging picture is clear: a commitment to cross-cultural ministry opens a myriad of possibilities to students that help them synthesize their academic coursework and personal experiences. It carries the added, and not inconsequential, bonus of strengthening the network of Friends around the world.

Opportunities for Ministries of Service

Learning is the primary purpose of cross-cultural studies. These opportunities will better equip ESR students for service in a diverse world. However, the learning and sharing is bi-directional. ESR students have gifts of ministry to offer now. The sharing of those gifts will contribute to God's work in that time and place. Perhaps it is pastoral care offered to families at African hospitals, or religious education strategies shared with Friends in other countries. ESR students have gifts of ministry to be shared in the midst of these learning processes. As a consequence, the cross-cultural study program can be mutually beneficial: gently shaping the students' understanding of ministry; providing valuable opportunities for service; and humbly contributing to the life and faith of the host community.

Now is the Ideal Time for Cross-Cultural Ministry Programming at ESR

ESR has fostered the education of nearly five decades of students who now offer ministry in various capacities. Some of our alumni are eager to share their sites and connections with

our current students. In addition, the wider network of Friends organizations creates an extended family capable of offering rich contexts for additional learning. Forty-five years into the life of ESR, we are ready to travel the paths of these natural connections. An immediate result would be the strengthening of the wider network of Friends as well as the internal community of ESR. Just as our constituency and connections have matured, so too have the core programs at ESR, and it seems that a unifying component to the education students receive at this seminary is an opportunity to engage with other landscapes and people under the auspices of a nurturing community.

In addition to the in-house impetus to help our students fund travel experiences for the sake of cross-cultural training, the American Theological Schools (ATS), one of ESR's accrediting organizations, recognizes that our students are likely to work with diverse neighborhoods and populations. Globalization has long been a priority for ATS, and member schools are expected to address this issue in adequate ways. As ministers, our students bear the responsibility to be equipped for dealing with situations that arise in multi-cultural settings. As the community that our students have come to for engaged learning, ESR is responsible for helping them find the means to gain the proper experience for ministry.

Queries for Consideration

These queries are provided to help you prayerfully consider whether this major gift proposal is a priority for you as you act as a steward of your resources.

- What qualities do we desire today among our emerging leaders?
- What is involved in ministering in and to a multi-cultural community?
- Can you envision the value of cross-cultural ministry among Friends Meetings and Churches as an aid in the unification of The Society of Friends without muting distinctions those branches have worked to articulate?
- Do you have the means to help Earlham School of Religion build an endowment to support the pastoral ministry program at ESR?
- What level of gift are you able to make to manifest this vision for ESR's Cross-Cultural Ministry Program?
 - * Full funding of \$1,500,000 by gift, pledge, or irrevocable estate gift?
 - * Partial, but major gift of \$100,000 to \$1,000,000 by gift, pledge, or irrevocable estate gift?
- Supporting gift of \$10,000 to \$99,000 by gift or pledge?

Contact Jay Marshall, Dean, at Earlham School of Religion to discuss your interest in this project.

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