

SEMINARY STUDENTS BRIDGE WORD AND WORLD DURING CROSS-CULTURAL TRIPS



For Pittsburgh Theological Seminary student Anthony Richardson, immigration is an issue he

understands personally. A native of England, Tony came to the States five years ago and together with his parents now calls West Virginia home. Recently he traveled to the US-Mexican border during a cross-cultural trip through the Seminary's World Mission Initiative. This trip, one of several offered by the Seminary during this same time period, provided an opportunity to learn more about immigration issues and the Church's response. "I felt called to attend this trip because I know what it's like to be an immigrant," said Tony.

Through various organizations—including Frontera de Cristo, one of the six Presbyterian Border Ministries of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico and the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.—Tony worked with Mexican people returned from the States. "I met a man named Jorge who was just like me. He was my age, left the same number of family members, and paid the same amount of money to emigrate. But, I got to stay and he didn't." Impacted by this reality, Tony explained, "To serve God we need to know that these people are still our brothers and sisters."

As Tony was not alone in his efforts to supply food and housing to the returning Mexicans neither was the Presbyterian Church. Joined by Methodist and Catholic charities, the Church is providing micro-loans and fair trade cooperatives to farmers. "The people there helping don't care what groups they belong to, they are all part of a common goal."

Feeling newly reflective about his successful immigration, Tony said, "I had to get into an uncomfortable experience to be able to learn from it." He encourages church members to do the same. "Immigration doesn't have to be about taking a political stance. This is a social justice issue that invites the Church to respond."

Pittsburgh Seminary is committed to encouraging students to participate in meaningful cross cultural experiences. While Tony's group traveled to the border to learn about immigration and witness the pain of those caught up in this issue, another group of students traveled to Southeast Asia to build relationships in a community where until recently nobody had ever heard of Jesus Christ. Both experiences illustrate what Pittsburgh Theological Seminary considers core to its vision: to prepare "Mission-minded advocates who delight in both evangelism and social justice ministries, which are neither conservative nor liberal because Jesus never labeled them that way since both represent the Gospel as in the Luke-Acts tradition." This tradition is lived out at Pittsburgh Seminary as together we offer the cup of cold water, and living water, in Christ's name.

Read more from PTS student Sarah Ott who recorded daily thoughts in her [prayer journal](#).



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