



J-Term 2015
Mexico Immersion Program
January 5 – 20, 2015

Course: Mexico Immersion Program

Facilitators: Dr. Troy Troftgruben (Wartburg Seminary))
with Pastor Kim Erno, Ms. Ariadna Mendez Hernandez, and
Ms. Susana Juarez Toriz (CREAR)

Location: Mexico City and Cuernavaca, Morelos

Description:

“So far from God and so close to the United States” is a common saying in Mexico that expresses the Mexican perspective of the historical, political and economic relationship that binds that U.S. and Mexico not only by geographic proximity but also through the presence within the U.S. of Mexican descendants and more recent immigrants. This relationship presents challenges and opportunities to us as a people of faith particularly as Lutherans who claim our roots as an immigrant church. While in Mexico we will explore the historical relationship between the U.S. and Mexico; experience the rich cultural heritage of Mexico; investigate the current socioeconomic and political context especially as this relates to immigration; engage in theological dialog with proponents of liberation theology and indigenous spirituality; and consider how our pastoral ministries in the U.S. might serve Latino immigrant communities.

Methodology:

We follow the methodology of liberation theology that moves through a process of *ver-pensar-actuar* (*see-think-act*). We believe that in the learning process all of us are students and all of us are teachers. Thus our methodology is one of mutuality and respect that promotes social change to create a more just and sustainable world for all. As “sowers” of the good news of God’s reign we find inspiration among the Latin American peoples who organize for justice and dignity drawing upon their rich histories of resistance and spiritual traditions.

Activities:

1. Presentations on Mexican history, global economics from a Christian ethical perspective, food sovereignty as a basic human right, and liberation theology as a methodology for faith based community organizing.
2. Site visits to the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the historic center of Mexico City, the ancient city of Xochicalco that features the pyramid of Quetzalcoatl (plumed serpent of life) , and the Cathedral of Cuernavaca that expresses the liberation theology legacy of Bishop Don Sergio Mendez Arceo
3. Homestays with families active within the Christian Base Community movement
4. Local worship experiences to include the Mariachi mass
5. Learning the cultural significance of corn through tortilla making with an indigenous community and a ceremony in honor of the “children of corn”
6. Visits within a marginalized community with families impacted by immigration to the U.S.

7. Dialog with activists inspired by their spirituality to defend human rights and cultural traditions
8. Service activity with a faith based community project that promotes sustainable living
9. Biblical reflections to process our experiences from a faith perspective

Requirements:

1. Full participation in all activities, talks, site visits, etc.
2. Cultural sensitivity particularly as we enter the sacred space of communities and family homes
3. Keeping a daily journal to recount and reflect on the experience
4. Openness to experiential learning especially when moved beyond our “comfort zone”

Readings:

“Reliving Our Histories: Racial and Cultural Revelations of God” by Elsa Tamez in New Visions for the Americas: Religious Engagement and Social Transformation ed. David Batstone

The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics by Ched Myers

(www.chedmyers.org/catalog/sabbath-economics)

The Annexation of Mexico from the Aztecs to the IMF by John Ross

Cost:

The program fee is \$1845 per student and faculty member. This includes full room and board (for 15 night), all in-country transportation, entrance fees, translation, and program expenses. The group is responsible for making its own flight arrangements and airfare payments.