

*Mission Grant Story • February 2021***MAKING JESUS KNOWN IN THE UNITED STATES ETHNIC COMMUNITIES****Concordia Seminary, St. Louis — \$100,000**

Across the country, in both rural and urban areas, there are passionately devoted first-generation immigrants serving in full-time ministry positions, sharing the Gospel among their immigrant/ethnic communities. They are bringing the message of eternal salvation. The LCMS is embracing the rapidly increasing ethnic and cultural diversity of the United States by providing two unique seminary programs for these church workers.

The Center for Hispanic Studies (CHS) is an entrance level program providing lay people in the local Hispanic congregations with a foundational knowledge of Scripture and Lutheran theology and practice. The Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology (EIIT) offers a specialized program of preparation for men who want to serve as pastors and women who want to serve as deaconesses in immigrant and ethnic minority communities in North America. These pastors and deaconesses are reaching out to immigrant/ethnic groups who came from countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East. Both programs are distance education programs that last four years and lead to a certificate of ordination. CHS students share the Spanish language, whereas EIIT students are a multi-language group. Most of the students en-

rolled in CHS and EIIT have been very active in their congregations. They are engaged in helping the immigrants in their communities. They give spiritual care and also may help others find a job, a home, or get access to health care. Evangelism in the immigrant community is done through networks of personal relationships. The director of EIIT states, “A number of the EIIT students have come from war-torn countries. They realize that only by the grace of God they were not killed in these wars. This drives them to be more committed in their service to the Lord and in bringing the Gospel to more people.”

Many of the students live with strained financial circumstances, often working a second job while serving in their congregations. Even though they have these constraints, they are willing to go to great lengths in the service of Christ and His Gospel. Understanding the financial burden for these students, it is the policy of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, to provide or find 100 percent tuition funding for them. Congregations and districts are encouraged to help meet the students’ financial needs but many times fall short. This grant will help meet the education costs for these students.

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