

"I truly understand that God shows no partiality."

(Acts 10:34)

Beginnings

Multiculturalism has been a reality at Princeton Theological Seminary since the Seminary's beginning in 1812, with students of diverse races and ethnicities and students from abroad represented in the early student bodies.

Today, approximately 210 Asian, African American, Hispanic, Native American, and international students represent more than one-fourth of the Seminary's student body. The commitment to understanding and affirming multicultural perspectives has grown over the years, most recently through documents on racial justice and diversity presented in 1998 and 2005 after much study and discussion in the Seminary community. In July 2007, the Seminary initiated the new Office of Multicultural Relations. Its goal is to "build bridges within the institution" of Princeton Seminary, said the Reverend Victor Aloyo Jr., director of the new office.

Aloyo describes American culture as a "unique myriad," whose character is not "one size fits all." He explains that in the United States, a country built on diversity with many contrasting religious ideas, lifestyle practices, and perspectives, there is a "need to be aware of what it means to be unique"—to be an unparalleled and exceptional individual. Aloyo hopes to bring this awareness to Princeton Seminary through the Office of Multicultural Relations to further the commitment of the Seminary's mission statement to "embrace a rich racial and ethnic diversity," and "equip [students] for leadership worldwide in congregations and the larger church."



Current students and alumni/ae

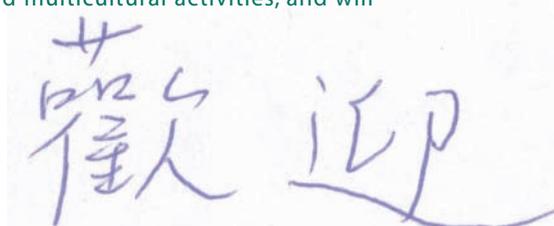
From the Seminary's beginning to the turn of the twenty-first century, there have been students from many cultural perspectives in each graduating class. The Seminary's alumni/ae mirror the diversity of the student body, with approximately 460 African American, 90 Hispanic, 570 Asian/Pacific Islander, and 12 American Indian/Native American alumni/ae. The Seminary also has more than 900 international alumni/ae throughout the world, spanning from our neighbors in Ontario, to Africa, Argentina, Brazil, and Iceland. They also reach to the vast continent of Asia, and across the world to Australia.

Vision statement

The vision of the Office of Multicultural Relations in Princeton Seminary's Department of Student Life is to provide direction and leadership for the assessment and improvement of Seminary-wide efforts to create and sustain a more diverse and inclusive community of learners. The office will collaborate with other departments and student organizations to recognize and value difference, encourage and support positive interactions among diverse populations, maximize the benefits of a multicultural perspective, and build bridges of reconciliation through dialogue. The office will advise the Seminary leadership on the policies, programs, practices, and resources needed to achieve excellence, equity, and effectiveness in the research, teaching and learning, and outreach activities of the Seminary, and will assist Seminary committees, departments, and administrative offices in proactive leadership in reconciling racial/ethnic and cultural discord.

Goals

Within Princeton Seminary's remarkably diverse population, multicultural issues are to be met with the intention of raising the consciousness of seminarians through effective communication and interaction, emphasizing respect and advocacy during their time in this community. This will prepare them for ministry in communities in the U.S. and abroad that are becoming more diverse and complex. Princeton Seminary will be a channel to provide cross-cultural ministry preparation and multicultural activities, and will embody a commitment to dialogue.



The Office of Multicultural Relations is committed to diversifying students' interactions with multifaceted cultures through programs that will help them develop the sensitivity and compassion necessary to be responsive to and respect all individuals they encounter in their ministry. We are committed to bridging the differences among all of our students, so they recognize their shared identity in the Seminary community and in the body of Christ. Allowing both vulnerability and honesty is essential in cross-cultural interaction, and these qualities will be encouraged for students of all cultures as they explore their commonalities and differences. Students will learn tools for more effective dialogue with their present and future colleagues through programs in racial and ethnic studies, and global intercultural experiences.

The Princeton Seminary community is a microcosm of the church as a whole. Students' attitudes and interactions developed through the initiatives of the Office of Multicultural Relations will find their way into the larger church through our graduates' ministries. By instilling respectful attitudes through intentional exposure to racial and ethnic voices and concerns at every level of the institution, and by valuing the perspectives on life and ministry that are formed in many cultures, the Office of Multicultural Relations enables students to model these attitudes and perspectives for the church.

Future initiatives

The developing Office of Multicultural Relations is considering many ideas for deepening learning about the diverse cultures and lifestyles in the PTS community and around the world. These could include discussion boards and forums on the web site, and providing cultural resources online. We might develop multicultural living areas on and off campus, and create groups where students can safely and honestly participate in confession, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation to strengthen and unify the Seminary's community of faith. We can develop worship experiences that reflect the ways diverse cultures preach, pray, sing, and address God. We can envision greater depth in cross-cultural exchange programs throughout the global South.

These initiatives will be a collaborative effort within the institution. Issues of diversity and multiculturalism permeate every element of the Seminary community, and the deeper challenge is to help people see themselves in relation to one another as they understand faith, discern their call to ministry, and engage a dynamic curriculum.

For more information about our developing initiatives, we invite you to visit our web site at https://our.ptsem.edu/ics/campus_life/multicultural_relations/.





Office of Multicultural Relations at Princeton Theological Seminary



One Faith, Many Faces

Early multicultural and international PTS graduates

John Ross (Class of 1816)—Born in Dublin, Ireland, Ross was the first international student at Princeton Seminary. Ross was seized and forced into British naval service several times during a voyage from Dublin, Ireland, to Liverpool, England. He escaped and reached America by ship, later served as a pastor of Beulah Presbyterian Church in Richmond, Indiana, and became a pioneer of the Presbyterian Church in Indiana. His passion for ministry lasted into his ninety-third year.

Jonathan Gibbs—Gibbs studied at Princeton Seminary from 1853–1854. He became the pastor of the First African Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, and one of the Seminary's early African American students connected with the abolition movement.

Emanuel Nathaniel Pires (Class of 1866)—An early Hispanic graduate, Pires was one of the first Protestant missionaries in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In 1890, while on leave of absence as the supply pastor for the Second Portuguese Church of Springfield, Illinois, he founded two churches for the Portuguese living on the Hawaiian Islands.

Matthew Anderson (Class of 1877)—An African American graduate, Anderson founded and was pastor of Berean Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

Toyohiko Kagawa (Class of 1915)—Born in Kobe, Japan, he dedicated his life to helping the poor, and set up the Japan Farmers' Union.



Interaction

By visiting www.ptsem.edu, you can submit ideas about multiculturalism, communicate with others here, and share your concerns with faculty, students, and alumni/ae. We look forward to continuing the conversation about multiculturalism with you. The effectiveness of this new initiative relies on your participation, engagement, and enthusiasm. Join us as we explore with intentionality what it means to be human and members of the body of Christ—many and yet one.

You can reach the Office of Multicultural Relations at multicultural@ptsem.edu.

About the director

The Reverend Victor Aloyo Jr., who earned his M.Div. at Princeton Seminary in 1989, revitalized Redeemer Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York, and created a multicultural congregation that holds services in Korean, Spanish, Hindi-Punjabi, and English, and includes members from thirty-two countries. Currently he serves two multi-ethnic Presbyterian congregations in Plainfield, New Jersey.



Welcome



Herzlich Willkommen!
Ni Na Abonu Akwaaba

