

## INTRODUCTION

The Latin American Doctoral Program (**PRODOLA**) is an educational project leading to an academic doctorate in theology (Ph.D.) in Latin America. The program involves a multi-denominational community of Latin American professors working together in a Post Graduate School of Theology, organizationally linked to the Evangelical University of the Americas (**UNELA**) in Costa Rica and functions under the auspices of the Latin American Christian Ministries, Inc. (**LACM**) in Glendora, California.

## PROGRAM HISTORY

At the beginning of 2000, Professors Pablo Deiros, Ph.D., and Charles Van Engen, Ph.D., shared their concerns regarding the need to provide additional theological and missiological formation for those serving as faculty in Bible schools and seminaries throughout Latin America. As a result of this initial conversation, in consultation with other colleagues and through much prayer, Latin American Christian Ministries, Inc. was born. This non-profit organization would be the initiator of, and foundational support for, the program.

In March of 2001, **LACM** convened 35 Latin American Protestant professors in Miami, Florida. They came from twelve countries and represented twenty-three denominations, mission agencies and theological institutions. Together they prayed, dialogued and dreamed over how an advanced theological education program might be created. It was there that the vision for a doctoral program was formed to which they gave the name **PROGRAMA DOCTORAL LATINOAMERICANO (PRODOLA): Latin American Doctoral Program**.

As a result of the Miami Consultation, an administrative council was named, consisting of nine professors who represent the continent. Since May of 2001, the Administrative Council has met regularly in order to develop the infrastructure for **PRODOLA**, to formulate the program of study and to extend the networks of personal, institutional and financial cooperation.

## THE NEED

We are experiencing an extraordinary *kairos* moment in the development of the Church around the world. The growth and the maturity of the Church and its impact on Latin America requires that its leaders articulate the faith with relevance, diffuse their ideas, reflect upon the new challenges, and help the People of God to respond to them. In addition, it is necessary to formulate new strategies in order to penetrate with the Gospel the academic and cultural centers of information, opinion and socioeconomic and political realities. A generation of leadership is arising in Latin America that has the necessary background to carry out academic studies at a Ph.D. level. However, every day it is more difficult and costly for these persons to do doctoral studies outside the

context of Latin America. The Latin American Doctoral Program (**PRODOLA**) seeks to respond to this need.

### PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The Church of Jesus Christ has the fundamental responsibility for the development of Christian leaders. The Church must train those called to this leadership and follow in a manner that seeks to be clearly faithful to the biblical models. As educators and Christian mentors we are at the service of the churches and mission agencies to help them fulfill their responsibility in the formation of leaders at the highest level, striving so that the theoretical content of the Christian faith may be in tune with the church's practice in ministry. Thus, we cooperate together in forming the kind of leaders that the Church needs, persons who possess a biblical pastoral vision and demonstrate a high level of expertise in the fulfillment of its mission.

The pastoral vision of **PRODOLA** is anchored in an integrated understanding of the Gospel and in a clear commitment to Kingdom values. Emphasis is given both to the content of the faith as well as to its practice, giving special emphasis to pastoral praxis in the Latin American context.

Within this frame of reference, the relationship between teachers and students is characterized by collegiality, teaching by example, and participation in collaborative efforts, in an environment of mutual accountability and discipline. Both teachers and their disciples are active agents in the formative process in the construction of knowledge. It is hoped that both will experience substantive changes as a result of their life together; that is to say, that both will work for the integration of content with daily life. This means that the program aspires to that type of learning that gives priority to the formation of persons over and above the creation of programs and activities. These are the fundamental factors that will guide evaluation throughout the entire educational process.

### THE VISION

The vision of **PRODOLA** is a Church equipped to participate in the mission of God in the redemption and transformation of Latin America.

### THE MISSION

The Mission of **PRODOLA** is to offer contextual theological education at a Ph.D. level with a creative methodology in order to equip the leaders of the Church.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. Form teachers who are dedicated to the mission of the Church so that the body of Christ might be built up (Eph. 4:12).
2. Accompany each student in the development of his/her abilities and spiritual gifts.
3. Motivate each student to disciple other leaders that the Church needs.
4. Promote theological and biblical maturity in each student in order that he/she might articulate the Christian faith and practice.
5. Train the student in order that his/her ministry might be extended through the production and publication of materials.
6. Prepare each student for reflection upon, and the development of, ecclesial and missiological strategies.
7. Stimulate the student to be a creator of initiatives that will impact with the Gospel the various segments of society.
8. Equip the student to the mobilize the Church for cross-cultural missions.

## **THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION**

**PRODOLA** adopts the Lausanne Covenant as its theological foundation.