

**Entrance into Pastoral Ministry Consultation
June 25-26, Richmond, VA**

*Sharing Models of Things That Are Working:
Supervised Pastoral Practices Rotation*

For many years, the three presbyteries in Puerto Rico have required inquirers and candidates to engage in supervised pastoral practices (SP) from the moment they begin studying in the seminary. With the CPM, a Minister of the Word and Sacrament, and /or a session in charge of supervising the seminarian, the inquirer or candidate begins a process of getting to know the work in the church, as well as other ministry settings regarding the church.

In the case of the Presbytery of San Juan, the first supervised pastoral practice occurs when the Presbytery enlists the person as an inquirer. This SP takes place in the inquirer's home church for a year. The practicum experience gives the session, the pastor, and the inquirer the chance, place, and time to explore that person's call. The CPM orients the pastor and the session about what should happen during this SP. Then, the pastor and/or the session assign tasks to the inquirer rotating in areas such as visitation, assisting the different age groups and church organizations, preparation of worship services, and preaching, among other tasks. Many times, the first SP consists of accompanying and assisting the pastor and/or the congregation to and through different settings and situations with the hope of broadening the inquirer's view as of what working in a church setting consists of. The pastor and/or the session meet periodically with the inquirer to talk and evaluate the experience. The CPM maintains communication through the liaison or through the CPM Chair.

The emphasis on each SP changes depending on the inquirer or candidate. Once the first year has passed, the seminarian is relocated to another SP setting depending on his or her needs and setting availability, in coordination with the pastor or session. The CPM orients the pastor and/or the session about what is needed from them in the pastoral practice. The time spent in each setting is determined every six months. Some seminarians might spend six months while others might spend a year. It all depends on the practicum experience and the needs. In some cases, seminarians that are deemed ready, usually in their last year of seminary, might have an SP in a church without a pastor or in a mission area. Depending on the case, some seminarians have an SP in a school or college setting, and others ask to have a practicum experience in churches located in another presbytery. During this time, again, the pastor and/or the session in charge of the SP meet periodically with the seminarian to talk and evaluate the experience, and the CPM maintains communication through the liaison or through the CPM Chair.

A record of these experiences is kept through a form that is filled by the seminarian, the pastor, and/or the session in charge of the practicum experience. The form is discussed with the seminarian and presented to the CPM in the Annual Consultation.

The CPM of the San Juan Presbytery has prepared a handout with guidelines for the pastor and/or session in charge of the SP, outlining what is expected from them and the tasks that the seminarian can or cannot perform according to the *Book of Order*.

The vast majority of our pastors and chaplains, if their preparation for ministry process took place in Puerto Rico, have been part of this model of supervised pastoral practices rotation. The rotations take place mainly in churches and mission areas since these have traditionally been the areas of need for the Church in Puerto Rico. The process has been modified throughout the years to improve the communication between the parts, have a closer supervision and guidance process, and to include other ministry settings.

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