

BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz receives \$21,000 from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation to focus on graduate theological education in 2015

December 4, 2014 – Charlotte, NC – The BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz (BPFNA) has received a \$21,000 grant from the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation to support a 2015 gathering of Baptist seminarians from Canada, the US, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Cuba as part of BPFNA's annual Summer Conference. The 2015 conference will be held from July 6-11 at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, VA.

During the week, the students will come together for intensive and experiential education with the purpose of enabling them to return to their schools and communities inspired and able to serve as progressive religious leaders and agents of social change. They will have opportunities to engage with each other and other conference attendees in ways that will expand their thinking, ignite their imaginations, and provide concrete support for the work they are already doing. The students will gather as a group each day to process what they are hearing, learning, and experiencing in order to imagine how they can begin to bring these ideas to life in their own neighborhoods, communities, schools, and churches.

This project will build upon and strengthen BPFNA's existing relationships with specific seminaries and seminarians within Mexico (San Cristobal, Mexico City, and Mexicali); Cuba (Matanzas); and Puerto Rico (San Juan) as well as numerous seminaries and seminarians within the US and Canada.

“This has been a dream of ours for quite some time,” said LeDayne McLeese Polaski, program coordinator for the BPFNA. “Yet something we have continually struggled with is being able to provide enough financial support for students who would like to participate in our Summer Conference. We know from past experience that simply being a part of this event can be a transforming experience for students, however, we also know that the majority of them rely on financial assistance in order to attend. We are deeply grateful to the Carpenter Foundation for this grant and for providing us with the opportunity to include more students and equip them to be effective leaders committed to nonviolent social change.”

For more on the Carpenter Foundation visit <http://erlbcarpenterfoundation.org/>.

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The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America (BPFNA) gathers, equips and mobilizes Baptists to build a culture of peace rooted in justice. We celebrate and support the peacemaking work done by Baptist churches in Canada, the United States, Puerto Rico and Mexico by raising the visibility of these efforts through our publications and website; by bringing peacemakers together in regional and international gatherings; and by providing resources - including printed and audio-visual resources, speakers and trainings. The BPFNA also actively connects with peacemakers from other traditions, faith-based and secular, to build alliances and work together toward our common goal of a more just and peaceful world.