

AZUSA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY STUDENT HANDBOOK 2007 – 2008

0 INTRODUCTION

Azusa Theological Seminary (referred to as Azusa) was founded in 1967 as a ministerial training school of the “De Broederschap van Pinkster Gemeenten” (The Brotherhood of Pentecostal Assemblies), which merged with the Full Gospel Assemblies in 2002. They are now called the “de Verenigde Pinkster- en Evangelie gemeenten (VPE)” (The United Pentecostal and Gospel Assemblies) in the Netherlands.

The Seminary serves all Pentecostal, Full Gospel and Evangelical Assemblies and other related churches or organisations. Azusa wants to offer adequate and qualified training for the whole movement. In September 1992, Azusa started a fulltime Bachelor Degree Program of four years, which was officially recognized by the Dutch Government in July 1993. EU students in the fulltime program are therefore entitled to request financial government support according to the European Union Court of Justice guidelines.

Because of this official recognition and after operating 30 years under the name of Central Pentecostal Bible School, the name was changed to “Azusa theologische hogeschool” (in English: Azusa Theological Seminary), beginning with the 1997/1998 school year. The name Azusa is derived from the 1906 revival in Los Angeles, California, USA. This revival is considered as the beginning of the worldwide Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement.

Since September 2002, the Seminary has been located at the main University building of the Vrije Universiteit (abbreviated as VU) in Amsterdam, although retaining its own independence and identity. For Azusa students who want to further their study at the VU, special arrangements have been made to continue for a Masters Degree. Additionally, there is a special Professorial Chair on Pentecostalism at the VU, as well as the international “Hollenweger Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements”.

1. ORGANISATION

The purpose of the Azusa is to train men and women for the ministry of pastor, evangelist, missionary or Christian worker.

Azusa trains students to have a professional ministerial attitude and competence for the above-mentioned ministries, discernment for the problems of church and society and an appreciation for the contributions other disciplines may have with respect to their fields of ministry. They should also be able and prepared to test new scholarly theories.

Together with this professional ministerial attitude, we want to promote further evangelical spirituality, characterized by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. The spiritual disciplines such as prayer and praise, reading the Scriptures and attending church services are considered essential sources to feed one’s spiritual life.

Organisation of the training program

The total duration of the full time Bachelor of Theology degree program is four years. It is sub-divided into a one-year propedeuse, followed by a three-year main phase. The academic year of education and examinations is from September to June. Classes are given in a modular system. At the end of each module, students are tested as part of the final examination process. A total of 240 study points should be acquired. One study point is equal to 28 hours of contact hours plus homework and exams. The basic program is the same for all students. During the main phase, a differentiation takes place according to the chosen specialization between Church and Mission.

Layout of the training program

The education and training program comprises

1. Theological studies
This includes: knowledge of the Bible, History of Israel, systematic theology, philosophy, and ethics.
2. Professional training
This includes: missionary subjects, practical theology, pedagogy, internships, Christian formation and a final thesis.

Survey of training years

First year	Theological training, basic program of professional training, orientational internship, Christian formation
Second year	Theological training, basic program of professional training, internship, Christian formation
Third year	Theological training, specialisation in professional training, internship, Christian formation
Fourth year	Theological training, specialisation in professional training, internship, Christian formation, final thesis

School Year

The school year comprises four teaching blocks of 8 weeks each. The first block is preceded by an introduction week (at the end of August). The holidays follow those of the secondary education calendar in the northern part of The Netherlands. Also, several thematic study days (focussed on specific subjects) and days for spiritual emphasis are held each year.

First Year (Propedeuse)

The program is subdivided into a first year (propedeuse) and the three-year main phase. The first year contains the principles of the training; this phase is the basis for the various specialisations during the main phase. The first year of training is meant as an orientation with respect to further studies.

At the end of this year, the student receives a proposal in writing on the continuation of study at our Seminary. A positive recommendation is to the effect that the student is considered as having a reasonable possibility to be trained during the main phase of the studies with positive results. If his abilities for the ministry chosen are considered inadequate, the Seminary has the right to refuse the student

admittance for further instruction with respect to the main phase and refer him to another form of education.

Minimum passing grades are required in the following areas: Bible knowledge, History of Israel, systematic theology, philosophy and ethics, missions, practical theology, pedagogy, internships and Christian formation.

The time limit for the competition of the propedeuse for full-time students is one year. The propedeuse must be completed with a positive result within a maximum of two years.

Language Training Courses

Language courses in Biblical Hebrew and New Testament Greek are offered. After three years, the student should have reached the level required for further university level studies. These courses are optional.

Two main streams

The education program at Azusa is registered with the government under the title “Godsdienst Pastoraal Werk” (Religious Pastoral Work) and has two main streams:

- Church: preaching, pastorate, church-growth, Christian social work and evangelisation
- Mission: intercultural communication and preaching.

The education program is recognized by the VPE as the official ministerial training for pastors, church workers and missionaries.

General Objectives

- To have knowledge and insight into theological disciplines, Bible knowledge History of Israel, Systematic Courses, Missionary Disciplines, Practical Theology and Pedagogy, in so far as relevant to the training;
- Being able and prepared to read and evaluate scientifically church-historical and religious-sociological literature independently and to apply the knowledge thus required in personal opinions and action, especially in matters of pastoral ministry;
- To have knowledge and insight concerning the place and meaning of evangelisation, pastoral ministry and Christian social work. The various forms of pastoral care and Christian social work, especially from the point of view of evangelical organizations;
- Proficiency in pastoral conversations, recognizing vital questions and questions on religious matters and the ability to deal with questions of this nature in a responsible way;
- Knowledge and insight in matters of structural leadership and spiritual commitment to the church with respect to growth, evangelism and mission;
- Proficiency in the structural and spiritual compilation of a liturgy leading to praise and preaching in a church service, teaching the basic doctrines of the church.

Co-Operation

Apart from cooperating with the VU, Azusa is associated with the “Samenwerkende Theologische Hogescholen” (United Theological Universities of Professional Education) and the European Pentecostal Theological Association.

Further Information

Information on fees and living accommodations for students will be supplied on request. Details on Open Days and further relative data are supplied in the Azusa News Letter and on our website: www.azusa.nl

2 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Educational Program for all students comprises:

2.1 Theological Study

2.2 Professional training

2.1 Theological Study

The program on theological training comprises the following disciplines:

- Knowledge of the Bible: Old Testament and New Testament history and literature
- Systematic courses

2.1.1 Knowledge of the Bible and Jewish tradition

The Bible is the basic instrument of Christianity, with its roots in the Jewish tradition. Teachers on the subject Religion and spiritual workers are expected to be familiar with this book and know how to deal with it in accordance with the tradition of the church and know how interpret the Bible independently and responsibly.

From the point of view that the Bible is God's Word interpreted for human beings in their language, there is ample time to study the background, introduction and exegesis of the Old and the New Testament. The history of the people of Israel is also discussed in detail.

Hebrew (Optional)

By studying the basic principles of this Biblical language of the Old Testament, a better understanding of the Old Testament is the result aimed at. By studying texts, grammar, syntax and words, the student becomes familiar with the language, so that he knows how to deal with dictionaries, concordances, commentaries and other related professional literature.

Greek (Optional)

Studying the original language of the New Testament aims at a better understanding of the New Testament. By studying texts, grammar, syntax and vocabulary the student will acquire such knowledge of the language that he will be able to critically use dictionaries, commentaries, and other relevant literature.

2.1.2 Systematic subjects

2.1.2.1 Theology

This discipline is meant to clarify in a coherent way the basic structures of Christian faith and confession from a Biblical point of view. Attention is paid to the differences in doctrines of the various Christian churches. At the same time, the relationship of the Christian faith to other religions is considered.

2.1.2.2. Ethics

Faith is closely related to human behaviour and conduct. One's outlook on the world and man affect human actions and vice versa. To be able to contribute positively with respect to ethical questions the student will have to approach matters of this kind systematically.

2.1.2.3. Philosophy (Religion-philosophy)

Studying the areas where religion and philosophy meet and where they part is important to one's personal development and for the development of theological thinking.

2.2 Professional training

Professional training consists of: theory, sub-divided into a basic program and a specialisation program, internship, Christian formation and a final thesis.

Theory comprises the following subjects:

- Missionary theory, principles and practice
- Practical theology
- Pedagogy

2.2.1 Missionary sciences

Knowledge and insight into the history of Christian faith is of great importance for workers in this field because it enlarges their feeling of the historical value and the relativity of religious experiences and religious institutes. The courses on history are a means to acquire knowledge of and insight into the origin and development of Christianity, especially those aspects which are relevant to problems and questions of our time. Special attention is paid to the Pentecostal Movement and Charismatic renewal.

In an ever increasing multiform society (this also applies to religion) like ours, the future missionary, pastor, pastoral worker or should be well-informed on the religions and religious movements playing a role there in. Apart from Christianity attention is paid to Islam and modern religious movements among which the youth religions, as they are called, and religions in India, in so far as they affect the aforementioned religions. Comparative religions describe and arrange religions and religious movements systematically and in correct order. Each time it will duly explain one of the viewpoints from which these religious phenomena are approached.

In the basic program of missionary sciences, the following subjects are dealt with: church history, Pentecostalism, comparative religions, introduction to missiology and multicultural society and proclamation. In the specialisation program: missiology, mission and culture, cultural anthropology and courses on Islam.

2.2.2 Practical Theology

Correct communication and organisation from a well-balanced Christian character is the guiding principle in Practical Theology. Professional perspectives are pastor, pastoral or church worker or counsellor.

In the basic program of practical theology, the following subjects are dealt with: counselling, cell groups, methods of preaching, management skills, contextual counselling, Christian social work and liturgy.

In the specialisation program, the following subjects are dealt with: church growth, strategic church management, preaching, pastoral ministry and psychiatry. Additional courses are possible, so that the student may reach their full potential.

2.2.3 Pedagogy

Studying the pedagogical and social sciences helps the graduate to better understand the world in which he is functioning and to make it easier to understand the people he is working with.

Secularization, the presence of an increasing number of ethnic and cultural minorities, and the increase of pluralism in Christianity and church make it essential to evaluate the purpose and aspects of religious instruction at school, at home and in the church. Knowledge of the different phases of life and the development of human beings will be of help to the pastoral worker or teacher in his work.

The basic program of pedagogy deals with: communication (both verbal and in writing), psychology, sociology, religious pedagogy and coaching. Optional courses are: adolescence psychology, psychology of religion.

2.2.4 Internship

Internship comprises:

- orientation with respect to professional practice (propedeuse)
- training in the specific skills required for the chosen specialisation
- internships under the supervision of an internship coordinator
- regular evaluation of the internship experiences under the leadership of the internship coordinator and field supervisor.
- a written report of the learning process.

As a rule an internship in a second or following year, can only start after all theoretical subjects of the preceding year or years have been concluded with satisfactory results.

For the internship of the final year of training, the rule applies that this can only be started after the final thesis is in its final phase.

2.2.5 Christian Formation

Christian formation is not primarily concerned with knowing and doing, but with being.

Being a person is especially revealed in situations in which one takes responsibility; in situations where choices have to be made; in situations where spiritual dimensions of personal and professional life are manifest.

In a continual process, we build towards the Christian formation and the equipment of the student as a person and as member of a community. This formation is affected by means of joint orientation, evaluation and reflection dialogue, mentor conferences, spiritual emphasis and thematic study days, chapel services and liturgical activities and in investing in the community life of the Seminary and University.

2.2.6 The Final Thesis

The Final Thesis forms the conclusion of the training and should be an independent study, though under supervision, containing a specific theme relevant to the chosen professional training. The Final Thesis can only be started upon when all study points for the first three years have been achieved. The Final Thesis precedes the Final Internship.

Information on pursuing a Masters degree at the VU will be added later.

3. ADMITTANCE

Requests for admittance should be submitted in writing on an Application Form to the Seminary. A decision on admittance will be made by the Admissions Committee.

To be admitted the following is considered:

1. comply with the legal requirements for admittance;
2. motivation for choosing this training;
3. fit within the identity of the Seminary: i.e. comply with the statement of faith and purposes of the Seminary

The items 2 and 3 are tested by means of the application form and an interview. For item 1, a certificate of a VWO, HAVO or MBO certificate or certificates of equivalent schools are required. Students who want to be admitted who are 21 years old or older and do not meet the above-mentioned requirements may be admitted after a special examination consisting of:

- a test in the English language;
- a discussion with the Academic Dean

Students who have studied elsewhere at the University level may be exempted for certain subjects.

Requests for study grants by EU students should be made to: "Informatie Beheer Groep Groningen." The item education should be filled in with: Godsdienst Pastoraal Werk, Isat Code 35146. The Azusa Code is 27WE.

Students applying for admittance into the English program must have a minimum score of 450 on the paper based TOEFL and 125 on the computer based exam. We also accept students with an equated score of 60 on the Michigan Proficiency Exam. We will evaluate scores from other standardized English exams on a case-by-case basis.

4. EXAMINATION

All subjects are offered in one teaching unit and tested at the end as part of the final examination. The Internships and Christian formation are concluded each year with an evaluation. There is no comprehensive final examination. There are, however, examinations in the form of assessment discussions after the propedeuse and after the main phase of the program.

A total of 240 study points is required for the Bachelor of Theology. To be provided with the Certificate for the Propedeuse or the Final Diploma it is essential that all examinations have been concluded with satisfactory results (full marks) and that there is no financial debt to the Seminary.

Examination for the Propedeuse

The First Year is concluded with an exam in the form of a Final Dialogue. The student shall write a short evaluation report about his experiences in the courses concerned, his personal development and his motivation for his choice of specialisation. This report shall be submitted together with his registration form to the student administration not later than two weeks prior to the Final Dialogue.

Graduation takes place on the condition that:

- a) The student has acquired the required study points and
- b) Has met all financial obligations to the Seminary.

The Final Dialogues are held on one of the appointed days which are announced at the beginning of the school year. The Final Dialogues shall be officially applied for by means of the registration form available at the student administration. In case there are many requests for registration, the examinations will be spread over the appointed days.

Examination / Final Dialogue Main Phase

An application and registration for the Final Dialogue (Graduation) of the Main Phase shall be submitted not less than four weeks before the Final Dialogue and on the following conditions:

- a) The required number of study points is achieved;
- b) The final thesis is submitted to the Secretary of the Board of Examination, after the previous consent in writing of the Thesis supervisor
- c) The Final Internship Report with enclosures has been submitted to the Internship Coordinator and
- d) The student has complied with all financial obligations to the Seminary.