

GA-1902

Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries

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2019 Report

I. Mission:

The *Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries'* (CPOHM) mission is threefold: to offer pastoral care to Hispanic ministers and congregations; to advice and counsel the different manifestations of our denomination about Hispanic Ministries; *and to be an advocate for Hispanic people, congregations and their issues.*

We, the Obra Hispana, belong to Jesus as one family, sharing our resources to grow together through our relationships. (revised identity statement, Dec. 2016)

II. Personnel

The CPOHM has two persons on staff: the National Pastor and an Administrative Assistant to assist, communicate, organize, and manage finances and programs for the CPOHM and Hispanic churches.

III. Members of the Pastoral Commission for Hispanic Ministries (2018-19)

The members of the Pastoral Commission for Hispanic Ministries are:

Samuel Ramirez

Moderator, National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship (PSW)

Joel Saucedo

Past Moderator (SW)

Evangelina Perez

Moderator Elect (SW)

Israel Martinez

*Vice-Moderator
Moderator, SC Convention*

Rossy Ricart

*Secretary
Moderator, MW Convention*

Aurelio Lopez

*Vice-Secretary
Moderator, AZ Convention*

Soriliz Rodriguez

National Hispanic & Bilingual Women's Ministry President

Pamela Lira

Young Adult Representative

Isuí Vazquez

Youth Representative

Selena Reyes

Moderator, SE Convention

Vilson Hurtado

Representative, SE Convention

Ruben Cruz

Representative, MW Convention

Karen Sarabia

Representative, AZ Convention

Delmy Amaya

Moderator, Pacific Convention

Pedro Valladares

Representative, Pacific Convention

Jose Cisneros

Moderator, SW Convention

Isis Villaroel

Representative, SW Convention

Myriam Martinez

Representative, NE Convention

Chaim Rodriguez

Representative, NE Convention

Bernice Rivera

Moderator, NW Convention

Vacant

Representative, NW Convention

Rodolfo Acosta

Moderator, Central Convention

Jorge Vela

Representative, Central Convention

Vacant

Representative, SC Convention

General Board Representatives

Bill Rose-Hiem

CRM- Regional Minister, GKC

Theresa Dulyea-Parker

CRM- Regional Minister, IL/WI

Jackie Bunch

General Board Representative, Ohio

Judith Allen Dalton

General Board Representative, SW

Rogelio Martinez

Representative of the Hispanic Board of Directors/Obra Hispana Rep to the General Board

Ex-Officio Members

Teresa Hord-Owens

*General Minister and President
CC(DOC) in USA and Canada*

Lori Tapia

*National Pastor
for Hispanic Ministries*

IV. Future Vision

For the Obra Hispana, 2018 represented a historical moment with the election of the first female, first Mexican-American to serve as National Pastor. In addition, there are several historical moments that are vital to mention in this report to the General Board.

1. For more than a decade there have been six formally recognized Hispanic Conventions that are designed to provide support, fellowship and capacity building for the congregations located within these boundaries. The expansion of Hispanic ministries had created areas where these boundaries hindered participation for many. A realignment of these geographical lines to increase connectivity was approved at the 2018 National Hispanic Assembly, increasing this number to nine. The new Conventions are recognized as the Northwest Convention (Oregon and Washington), the Central Convention (Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska) and the South-Central Convention (Alabama, Northwest Florida, Tennessee and Georgia). Congregations in these areas are encouraged to connect in the new geographical area, but also to remain connected in the former as possible.
2. A revision to the Constitution restructured the elected membership to include a young adult representative (19-29) and a youth representative (16-18) as members with voice and vote. Additionally, the President of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Women's Ministry was on the board in an unofficially named capacity as an at-large member and this revision placed this position as a formal (not at-large) member with voice and vote. These changes came into effect and were a positive contribution to the December 2018 annual board meeting.
3. To enhance the programming of the Obra Hispana, three new ad-hoc committees were developed at the December 2018 board meeting through of the CPOHM. Historically, Finance, Personnel and Assembly Program Planning, have been the recognized sub-committees and the inclusion of these additional committees will enhance and strengthen the ministry of the Obra Hispana at the local, regional and general levels. These committees will be referred to the 2020 Hispanic Assembly for formal inclusion in the constitution as standing committee. New committees are: 1) Education, 2) New Church, and 3) Marketing.

Each of these areas are in alignment with the five priorities set by the National Pastor and approved by the Board and Pastoral Commission in December 2018. The five priorities are: **1) Pastoral Care, 2) Education and Capacity Building, 3) Youth and Young Adult Leadership Development, 4) Development of Contextual Resources, and 5) Branding for Strengthened Identity.**

V. Theological Education

The CPOHM is committed to increased access to quality theological education, which is accessible, affordable and relevant to the multi-cultural needs of the Obra Hispana in all its expressions. The Obra Hispana continue to focus on strengthening our present programs, while continuing to find ways to expand through new and innovative partnerships and by utilizing the gifts of members of the Obra with more intentionality.

While there are additional streams to capacity building and theological education, three programs provide structured theological education opportunities:

Disciples Seminary Foundation:

Certificate of Ministry Studies Program (CMS) is an intensive, two year program offered in Claremont and San Diego, California, and in 2018 expanded to Portland, OR. Students are engaged in continuous learning, and weekend intensive courses which are all offered in Spanish. The program is recognized by the PSWR as a high level educational opportunity and partnership with CST provides pathways to seminary for graduates of this certificate program. The Certificate of Ministerial Studies ("CMS") is designed for adults who are interested in an introduction to the kind of studies found in seminary and is for recognized for completing the educational requirements for commissioned ministry, learning more about advanced theological education, enrichment for lay leaders, or any combination of reasons. CMS is a unique program focused on contextual learning for ministry today. Part of the richness of the CMS is that individuals bring their personal experiences and/or professional considerations to the program. An average of 60-70 students attend annually.

Diploma of Ministry Studies Program (DMS), implemented in 2018 to offer extended education beyond the CMS program, is designed for people who are interested in seminary level studies of the Bible, Theology, and Ministry and have already completed the Certificate of Ministry Studies Program (CMS). This program is ideal for

commissioned or licensed minister, or a lay leader who wants to learn more about the Bible, Theology and Ministry. All CMS graduates, and anyone who has completed college level study or other Biblical studies and want to continue their education in a program that offers seminary quality classes should consider this program.

Lexington Theological Seminary:

Certificate in Hispanic Ministries Program provides theological, biblical and ministerial training to men and women for leadership in Spanish speaking and bilingual Hispanic congregations. The program is co-sponsored by the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and courses in this program examine the 16 competencies as required by the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as submitted by the GCOM. To accommodate the heavy schedules of clergy and lay leaders already serving, students attend a week long intensive training, covering three courses, once a year for four years. Each course is offered in Spanish, and students who successfully complete all 12 courses will earn a Certificate in Hispanic Ministries or CEU credit. 2016 was the pilot of this program with 42 pastors and lay leaders from across the life of the Obra Hispana attending. In 2019, over 30 individuals will become the first graduating class, witnessing the desire of the Spanish speaking community to enhance ministry through theological education and yet, this reminds us of the scarcity of this valuable resource for the whole church. Evaluation of the four year pilot program are presently undergoing and the program will be adapted to a two year, continuous learning program in the fall of 2019.

LTS Certificate 2019 program dates: June 3-7

Courses: Church Administration, Christian Ethics, Diversity in a Global World

Southwest Hispanic Convention:

Continuing Education Summer Program provides access to continuing education and growth opportunities for pastors and lay leaders in an intensive, week-long summer program held in partnership with Brite Divinity School. This program is for recognized by the Southwest Region for completing the educational requirements for commissioned ministry and is designed to meet the 16 competencies, as well as providing opportunities for learning more about advanced theological education, enrichment for lay leaders, and capacity building for a vital church.

2018 program dates: June 17-21

Escuela de Formación Ministerial (School of Ministerial Formation)

This program is designed to expose pastors and lay leaders to quality theological education, ministry formation and faith development in a three year (2 semesters per year), three level program that equips students to meet the 16 competencies of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This Institute is registered with the State of Texas, and is recognized by the region and the convention. Each year an average of 25 new students begin the program.

CPOHM is determined to seek out help from our Disciples partners in mission, as we envision the future of theological education in new ways for the Obra Hispana and beyond. In collaboration with AETH (Association for Hispanic Theological Education) we are moving to have the above programs recognized and accredited in the near future.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Domingo Rodriguez Permanent Fund provides support for scholarships for students seeking an M.Div from an ATS Seminary. The increased access to certificate and other programs has directly impacted the number of students seeking formal seminary education. In 2017, 7 Latinx students were awarded scholarships, while in 2018 this number doubled with new students requesting support for the Spring 2019 semester.

Hispanic ministries recognized the need to equip and prepare quality Latino and Latina ministers, not only for Spanish speaking and bilingual Hispanic context congregational ministry, but for the whole Church.

VI. The CPOHM & the Church-at-Large

Over the past several years, the rapidly changing climate of society has created a need to focus on advocacy, education and awareness beyond what the “norm” was for the Hispanic community of faith. Dialogue around politics, the ins and outs of our legislative systems, immigration reform, racism and more, were not the focus of most sermons and teachings. The need to engage and support has led the work of CPOHM into new and diverse

relationship and partnership throughout the Church. Difficult circumstances related to the ongoing immigration crisis, violence and hate crimes, increased mental health issues, and more, has led CPOHM to increased advocacy and outreach. Below are some ways CPOHM has furthered the priorities our Church:

1. **Pro-Reconciliation:** The National Pastor is part of the *Reconciliation Commission*. Collaboration with the Reconciliation Ministry, bilingual and bi-cultural (Spanish/English) individuals have been trained as anti-racism trainers/facilitators, increasing the opportunity for the Spanish speaking community to engage in rich and in-depth discussion around racism and create systemic change through increased awareness. This will additionally facilitate anti-racism training requirement for Spanish speaking clergy who are within regions that are unable to provide this resource. The number of Latinx clergy and lay leaders who have been exposed to training has more than doubled over the past two years and this is expected to continue. Anti-racism training has been an integral component to the #laObraNOW Young Adult Leadership Experiences held in 2018, and will continue moving forward.
2. **New Church:** CPOHM supports the growing number of Hispanic new congregations and networking with *New Church Ministries*, supporting leadership academy and other efforts. Formal relationship with the College of Regional Ministers continues to foster a spirit of collaboration when working with new church development. The CPOHM emphasizes the importance of partnership in supporting new church starts into relationship with the *convención*, region and *Obra Hispana*. Over the past two years, at least 4 new church starts have launched, with 7 more actively engaged in the pre-process.
3. **Transforming congregations:** The different educational ventures of the CPOHM seek to empower and transform our existing congregations, particularly by helping our ministers to be better pastoral leaders. Increased access to training and resources in Spanish will continue to enhance the life of the church.
4. **Forming and reforming leadership:** CPOHM continues its emphasis on leadership development. CPOHM also organizes and resources ministerial retreats, workshops and assemblies for Latino and Latina ministers. Many of these workshops and seminars take place during Hispanic Convention Assemblies and others during pastoral visits from the National Pastor where some Hispanic churches gather for a Saturday Workshop. Additionally, support to local congregations who are experiencing difficulties continues the rise, and is a sign of the effects of a changing climate in which we live. Training and resourcing remains in high demand in the areas of immigration, healthy boundaries/ethics, leadership development and church administration.
5. **Ecumenical:** The National Pastor is engaged in the ecumenical work of Christian Churches Together, with a leadership role in the Hispanic Network of CCT. These are Executive Hispanic leaders from the Historical Protestant, Evangelical, Catholic, Charismatic, Pentecostal churches, and Independent leaders who gather to discuss issues of unity, immigration, younger generations, poverty and more. Additionally, through Advocacy efforts on poverty, equality and immigration, increased ecumenical participation with other entities.

VII. Financial Statements

CPOHM finances are managed by the OGMP's Treasury Services and has been positive and has fostered increased understanding of the fiscal position of the CPOHM. Year-end 2018 financial statements demonstrate an increase in giving from the local congregation, individual and others. The *Obra Hispana* continues to experience growth relationally and this in turn is reflected financially. We continue to invest for future viability of the *Obra Hispana* and hold funds with both Christian Church Foundation and Church Extension.

VIII. Conclusion

CPOHM is committed to serve the growing Hispanic Disciples constituency. Our strengthened identity has fostered enhanced connection and this has energized Hispanic ministry at the local, regional and general level. Strengthened relationship in and among the Hispanic community, and across the expressions has enabled the CPOHM to better serve our Church.

Recommended Action

The General Board receives this report from the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries and forwards it to the 2019 General Assembly for consideration and discussion.