

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR LATINO MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA



R-4 Hispanic/Latino Ministry

Adopted.

Whereas, the Hispanic/Latino community in The Diocese of Virginia is already a growing percentage of the population in the regions of the Diocese; and

Whereas, The Diocese of Virginia, having been involved in Hispanic/Latino ministries since the 1970s, has learned that The Episcopal Church has much to give, teach, receive, and learn in Christian fellowship with the Hispanic/Latino community; and

Whereas, The Diocese of Virginia and some the churches of the Diocese have already created and planted Hispanic/Latino worship groups and congregations in several regions within the Diocese; and

Whereas, a large percentage of the Hispanic/Latino community remains unchurched; and

Whereas, a special Joint Task Force of the Commission on Congregational Missions and the Commission on Church Planting is developing a plan for expansion of this work in The Diocese of Virginia; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the 213th Annual Council supports the work of the Hispanic/Latino Task Force in developing a Five Year Strategic Plan to be presented at the 214th Annual Council; and be it further

Resolved, that the 213th Annual Council directs the Hispanic/Latino Task Force to present its five year Strategic Plan to the Executive Board during the year 2008.

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR LATINO MINISTRY IN THE DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

- 1. Mission**
- 2. Vision**
- 3. Rationale**
 - a. Brief history of the Hispanic /Latino Ministry in our Diocese**
 - b. State demographics and growth projections**
- 4. Strategic plan**
- 5. Different Hispanic/Latino Ministry Models**
- 6. Acknowledgements**
- 7. Resources**

The Mission is to promote and support thriving and fully participating Hispanic/Latino congregations within the Diocese of Virginia

This mission will enable us to ensure that existing Latino/Hispanic congregations are strengthened and expanded and that we are able to take advantage of emerging opportunities to establish new congregations as God calls.

A Vision for Latino/ Hispanic Ministry in the Diocese of Virginia

“O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you; bring the nations into your fold: pour out your Spirit upon all flesh; and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.” (BCP. p. 100)

A vision for Latino Ministry is rooted in the nature of God as the One, Holy, and Undivided Trinity. The Triune God revealed as a community of persons, indivisible yet united by the divine nature, which is Love. Human beings, created in the Image of God, are therefore made for community and to be in communion with one another, with the created order, and with God. The Incarnation of the Son and his redeeming work in the ministry, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, has broken the barriers that once separated human beings from themselves, each other, and God. The Descent of the Holy Spirit empowers the formation of people in life-giving relationships with one another and with God through Christ.

The racial, ethnic, and cultural mosaic of the human race is a gift of God, a sacrament of the Holy Trinity, an outward sign that declares the glory of God. Though indeed “all have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God,” (Rom. 3:23), each part of the human family in its own way participates in the divine image. Therefore we are enriched in our understanding of God as we grow in knowledge and acceptance of our racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. The richness and variety of humanity are a blessing to be celebrated, a delight to be enjoyed, and a means of coming to a closer appreciation of God’s greatness and goodness.

The Church, in turn, is a sacrament of the Reign of God, called to be the first-fruits of God’s dream and vision of a reunited and reconciled humanity gathered around the heavenly throne. The Church is therefore called to reflect and live into God’s vision by gathering all people into its community so that the love of God in and through Christ may be proclaimed and received throughout the world.

A vision for Latino/Hispanic Ministry is therefore rooted in a faithful response to the very nature of God, the Church, and Christ’s teachings as expressed in Scripture.

Among the many Biblical passages that may be quoted are the following: John 17; Ephesians 2:14, 17-22; Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 26-27; and 2 Corinthians 5:16-20. These passages indicate the nature of the Church as the Body of Christ, in which there are no divisions.

Theologically, Latino/Hispanic Ministry has as its objective in all its mission efforts the bringing of people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. William Temple spoke of this mission as "...the presentation of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, in such ways that persons may be led to believe in him as Savior and follow him as Lord in the fellowship of the Church..." Trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior and following him as Lord calls all people to a relationship with God that is both personal and communal in nature. Latino Ministry is anchored in this conviction. The dream is to found, strengthen and empower faith communities that lead others to say: *See how they love one another.*

The Gospel of Matthew offers us a means by which this task may be accomplished: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." Mt. 28:19-20

This calls for a multifaceted vision which **incorporates** all people into the body of Christ through baptism, **equips** all people to participate in the life and mission of the Church, and **strengthens** and **nurtures** all people through sound theological understanding about the Christian Faith.

We believe this can happen most effectively through a "Biblical Covenant" understanding of God and all of God's people that is based on **reconciliation**. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, [that person] is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation..." (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

Such a ministry of reconciliation implies mutual enrichment because such a mission does not seek to "make others like us," but rather is in search of the fulfillment of our baptismal vows in which we commit to seek and serve Christ in **all** persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves and recognizing that by virtue of that baptism, people of every tongue and nation are established as "fellow heirs, members of the **same** body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel..." (Ephesians 3:6)

Therefore, the vision for Hispanic/Latino ministry in the Diocese of Virginia must be one that directs itself **intentionally** to bringing all people to Christ, through the vehicle of the Church, by establishing faith communities through which the riches of Christ's grace incorporate, transform and empower Latino Christian communities to love God and to love neighbor.

A Brief History of Latino/Hispanic Ministry in the Diocese of Virginia

The Diocese of Virginia's interest in Hispanic ministry dates to the fall of 1975, when St. George's Church in Arlington first began to offer public worship in the Spanish language. Diocesan financial support began in 1978 with significant increases in support in 1980, 1985, and 1988. The initial Spanish language service has matured into the San José mission congregation with a peak Sunday attendance of 200 people. Spanish ministry has expanded geographically as well, with Spanish worship also celebrated at St. Mark's Church in Alexandria (San Marcos founded in August of 1988), St. John's, Arlington (Cristo Rey, begun at Grace Church, Alexandria, moved to Virginia Seminary's Key Chapel in August 1989; moved to St. John's in January 1994), and Grace Church, Alexandria (site of Cristo Rey from founding in April 1982 until August 1989, Spanish-language service resumed in December 1993). The latest expansion has been Santa María, our first free standing congregation, which was formed in April 2004.

SUBSTANTIAL LATINO/HISPANIC POPULATION GROWTH IN VIRGINIA

In 1990, 65 residents of Galax City, Virginia claimed Hispanic origin. In 2000 the number was 757, a growth rate of 1,065%. In fact, if it hadn't been for its Hispanic residents, Galax City would have lost population. This is just one dramatic example of the way growth in the Hispanic population reported in the 2000 Census has changed the face of Virginia in the last decade.

Of course Galax is a small place. Its Hispanic population isn't very big either, and small changes in small numbers can yield big percentages. But even some much larger areas—some of the largest, in fact—boast equally enormous percentages. In Fairfax County, the Hispanic population grew by 106 percent. For Henrico County the growth rate was 174 percent, and in rapidly growing Loudoun County, the rate was 368%.

Statewide figures probably tell the story best. Though the total percentage of Hispanics in Virginia grew by only 2 percentage points—from 3 percent in 1990 to 5 percent in 2000—this represents a gain of over 889,000 people, and an increase of 106% in the total Hispanic population. The increase of slightly over 169,000 Hispanic people represents 19% of the state's total gain of 889,318 people.

In general, people of Hispanic origin are concentrated in counties rather than cities. But before jumping to the conclusion that "counties" means "rural," it might be well to notice that almost a third of the state's total Hispanic population lives in Fairfax County, hardly a rural area. No other single locality comes close to this figure, and even among MSAs (Metropolitan Statistical Area), only the Norfolk and Richmond metro areas have more than 1% of the total. Virtually every locality in Virginia reported some growth in the Hispanic population.*

* www3.ccps.virginia.edu/demographics/Analysis/topics/hispanic/analysis-hispanicgrowth.html

Strategic Long Range Plan for Latino/Hispanic Ministry in The Diocese of Virginia

- **Ministry of Incorporation**
This aspect of ministry will happen through Evangelism and Proclamation
- **Ministry of Education**
This will be facilitated through Discipleship and Leadership Development
- **Ministry of Nurture and Strength**
This aspect of Hispanic Ministry will call us to a deeper commitment to Pastoral care and Outreach

In order to respond to each of these aspects of ministry we have set the following goals and strategic plans for the next five years:

A. Ministry of incorporation

1. Make available materials to help train persons from the Hispanic congregations to do evangelism in their communities
2. Offer mentoring to congregations in the Diocese who are interested in developing Hispanic/Latino ministry in which the following will be addressed:
 - specific liturgies used in Hispanic/Latino Congregations
Quinceañeras (Celebration of a young woman's 15th birthday)
Primera Comunión (First Communion)
Las Posadas (Christmas Pilgrimage)
Día de Los Muertos (All Souls Celebration)
Día de Los Magos (Epiphany Celebration)
 - music used in Spanish language Services
3. Work with the Episcopal Church's Hispanic Network to develop, disseminate, and/or implement resource manuals in Spanish for
 - Sunday School Techniques
 - Bible Study Methods
 - Sermon Aids
 - Stewardship
4. Intentional Recruitment of persons interested in an ordained vocation in Hispanic Ministry

B. Education

1. Provide materials to help education of lay people in the governance of the church
2. Provide resources for the Christian formation of congregations in areas of Baptism preparation, Confirmation preparation, 1st communion classes, and general Christian formation.

C. Ministry of pastoral care (nurture and strength)

1. Strengthen and support (morally, economically, and spiritually) the current existing Hispanic/Latino congregations
2. Work toward the development of 2 new Hispanic/Latino congregations within the next five years.
3. Serve as facilitators to any congregation in the Diocese who wants to start Hispanic/Latino ministry. If the need arises provide workshops on specific liturgies used in Hispanic congregations.
4. Work with ecumenical organizations on issues that affect the Latino population.

Different Models for Hispanic/ Latino Ministry

There is no one way to engage in ministry with the Latino population in Virginia. Throughout the United States there are various models and a great deal has to do with finances, opportunities, demographics, leadership availability, passion, and openness to the Hispanic/ Latino in the areas. Below are listed some of the most common models.

MODEL #1

This model follows the American pattern of one fulltime priest, a building, and a vestry. Usually the goals and objectives for the congregation have been developed by the diocese or the organization that financially supports it. Its main objective is to become a parish and it is mandated by the general canons of the Church. Its programs follow the same guidelines as any other English-speaking congregation in the United States. Often the membership is lower and middle class, and most of the time a vicar or rector is also the founder of the congregation.

This model can be found throughout the Church in the United States and in our diocese at Santa María in Falls Church.

Different Models for Hispanic/ Latino Ministry (cont'd)

MODEL #2

In this model the Hispanic congregation shares the same building with an English-speaking congregation. Within this model there are basically two sub-models:

a) The Hispanic congregation pays rent for the use of the building(s). There are no ties with the English-speaking congregation and the two congregations almost never gather together to conduct joint programs. The level of conflict in this situation is often very high and centers around issues such as use of space, maintenance of space used, altar guilds, and even use of flowers! The time allocated to the Hispanic congregation on Sunday is also often not the best time to attract and increase the attendance. Another issue is that there is almost no time allocated for the development of programs during the week. Successful examples in the Diocese of Virginia include Cristo Rey in Arlington and San Marcos in Alexandria.

b) In the second sub-model, the Hispanic congregation is 'nested' within and fully attached to the English-speaking congregation. Hispanic members are elected to the vestry. It is customary that the churches selected by the diocese to develop these Hispanic ministries are parishes or missions with a diminishing older and English-speaking congregation; the buildings are often in disrepair; financially in trouble; and spiritually malnourished. This type of congregation is unable to give the spiritual support and nurture needed for a new congregation since they, themselves, are in such desperate need for revival. This model is almost always explosive because the Hispanic congregation tends to grow faster and is dynamic and enthusiastic which brings the desire in its members to control their own destiny and make their own decisions with regard to programs and the future of their ministry. The intention of the diocese when initiating Hispanic ministry under these circumstances is not always altruistic or moved by the desire of ministering to the Hispanics in the community, but rather to keep the Episcopal Church present in that part of the city. This model can particularly be found in the urban centers of the East and Northeast.

MODEL #3

In this model, the Hispanic congregation starts in its own building, either an abandoned church or a storefront. More than in any other model, this one is totally dependent on the financial assistance of the diocese or a sponsoring organization. Oftentimes the diocese doesn't have a clear purpose for this ministry, except that the area is now predominantly Hispanic. There is a lack of strategy, goals and objectives, support or supervision, and almost no financial accountability. Some of its most outstanding characteristics are the following:

a) Average attendance is 20-30 on a good Sunday and the priest is the person who does everything. Sometimes there is a family on whom the priest depends for everything.

b) Stewardship is unknown and avoided under the pretext that the people are very poor. Variations of this model can be found in Northern California.

Different Models for Hispanic/ Latino Ministry (cont'd)

MODEL #4

This model is an adaptation of the Latin American “comunidades de base.” Usually this is a diocesan program. Comunidades of 5 to 6 families are established and lay leadership is trained to head each “comunidad” as a catechist to conduct Bible studies, visitations, etc. This model usually has between 8 to 10 “comunidades” located in the periphery of the city. The members of those “comunidades” may get together each Sunday to celebrate the Holy Eucharist. This model has the characteristic that it can survive without any financial support from the diocese, except for the priest, since the gathering place of the “comunidad” is the home of one of the families. The advantage of this model is that the lay leadership develops very strongly and with a deep sense of commitment.

In this model as much as in any other the goals and strategies should be clearly defined well before the establishment of any “comunidad.” The diocese should be ready to have the right answer when they start requesting a priest of their own, a building of their own, etc. Variants of this model can be found in California.

MODEL #5

This model is an adaptation of model #4. A priest initiates Bible studies, forums, and the Sunday Eucharist in a home or apartment at the invitation of a particular family who in turn invites the neighbors to attend. Basically the priest serves as the “evangelist in residence.” The attendance soon outgrows the space, forcing the diocese to rent or purchase an apartment that is then remodeled for the use of the community. It would be important for this model, as with the previous one, that the diocese have goals and objectives as well as a strategy in place and clearly defined before the community is developed. When there is no previous planning the original enthusiasm and dedication of the congregation soon ends up in much frustration. This model can especially be found in Chicago and in the Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church in Madrid, Spain.

MODEL #6

This is a relatively new model. It involves an affluent parish who sponsors the development of a Hispanic congregation within itself. Using its own financial resources, the parish nurtures a Hispanic congregation by providing it with a Spanish speaking priest who is a full time or part time staff member of the parish.

There are two advantages to this model:

1. The Hispanic mission does not have to struggle for lack of financial support.
2. It receives nurture from a spiritually vigorous mother congregation.

Examples of this model are St. John’s Episcopal Church in Washington, D.C. and Grace Church in Alexandria.

Different Models for Hispanic/ Latino Ministry (cont'd)

MODEL #7

This last group is more of a combination of various attempts to find the 'right fit' for the situation which presents itself to a diocese, including generation of immigrants (first, second, or third); economics; class; country of origin; and even educational levels.

In this group can be found full fledged parishes, official diocesan missions, 'nesting' congregations (a Hispanic mission within an English-speaking congregation), preaching stations; storefront missions; and even parochial missions (Hispanic missions sponsored by a parish). The challenges are not any different than many of those already presented, but the diocese does have an intentional long-range plan and attempts to respond with sensitivity to the best of its ability. The development of these congregations is under the supervision of an appointed Officer for Hispanic Ministry in the diocese.

This model can mostly be found in the southwestern part of the country - Diocese of Texas and Diocese of Los Angeles--as well as in San José in Arlington in our diocese.

*** *Hispanic Ministry Opportunity for Mission*, Episcopal Church Center

Acknowledgements

Throughout the United States different dioceses have worked toward implementing strategic plans for Latino/Hispanic Ministry. A great deal of time, energy and hard work went into the various plans. We have benefited by this effort. We would especially like to acknowledge and thank the contributors to the strategic plans in the dioceses of Arizona and Los Angeles; these were the springboards from which we launched the Diocese of Virginia's Strategic Plan for Latino/Hispanic Ministry. We also used data from the University of Virginia's Center for Public Service study on the growth of the Hispanic population in the state and the Episcopal Church Center's booklet on Hispanic *Ministry Opportunity for Mission*. The task force would also like to thank Bishop David Jones for his support and guidance as well as the administrative support of Tyler Fox.

Resources

The Episcopal Church Center Latino Ministry Web site has Bible studies, Lectionary resources, homilies and much more. www.episcopalchurch.org

Forward Movement Publication has many resources in Spanish
www.forwardmovement.org/spanish.cfm

Cokesbury has different materials in Spanish including Christian Education Materials

Augsburg Press has different materials including stewardship materials

Oregon Catholic Press- they produce *Flor y Canto*, the most widely used hymnal in Spanish. They also have CDs.

Presented to the 214th Annual Council of the Diocese of Virginia

R-4 Hispanic/Latino Ministry

**Submitted by
Hispanic/Latino Task Force**

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LATINO TASK FORCE

Proposed Budget

2009

\$1,000	To prepare Powerpoint presentation & occasional equipment rental
500	Booth at Council and copying materials to hand out
1,500	Education for congregations Material, mailing costs, travel, etc.
\$3,000	Total