

Proposed Comprehensive Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministries For the North Alabama Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church 2011 ~ 2016

Mission

“The mission of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.” (From The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church-2008, p. 87)

Vision

To start and maintain a sustainable ministry and thriving Christian community of Latinos within the Northern Alabama Conference of the UMC.

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Challenging Local Churches for Hispanic Ministries Growth

Awareness

Demographics and Necessity of Action

See *appendix 2* for patterns of population growth, statistics & projection of growth for the North Alabama Conference (NAC) constituency

Present Reality - How the NAC currently addressing need – What is)

At the end of 2010, there are fifteen viable Hispanic congregations/ministries within the North Alabama Conference. They are:

1. *Athens First UMC (Athens)*
2. *Ministerio Hispano Betania (Athens)*
3. *Carpenter UMC (Anniston)*
4. *Collinsville First UMC (Collinsville)*
5. *Cullman First UMC (Cullman)*
6. *El Puente Centro Multicultural Metodista (Albertville)*
7. *Iglesia Cristiana Emanuel (Florence)*
8. *Isom's Chapel UMC (Athens)*
9. *Riverchase UMC (Birmingham)*
10. *The Opportunity Center (Athens)*
11. *Upper Sand Mountain Parish (Sylvania)*
12. *McDonnell Chapel UMC (Huntsville)*
13. *Pleasant Hill UMC (Pleasant Hill)*
14. *Alabaster Hispanic Outreach Ministry (Alabaster)*
15. *Vernon FUMC (Vernon)*
16. *Morning Star (Bessemer)*

This obviously does not suffice to meet the critical need for expansion of viable Hispanic ministry throughout the geographical boundaries of the conference as the above listed churches are primarily concentrated in one area of the conference. Many districts within the conference have little or no Hispanic ministries begun. While numerous existing churches have expressed interest in starting Hispanic ministry, there is currently no viable strategic plan to assist and equip churches to fulfill this objective.

Potential Reality (introduction of strategic plan – What can and should be)

The purpose of this strategic plan is:

1. To set forth objectives and goals to more effectively minister to the growing Hispanic population within the North Alabama Conference;
2. To create a demographic mapping of Hispanic populations to further identify areas of concentration for the potential development of Hispanic ministries;
3. To encourage, invite and support existing UM churches to develop Hispanic ministries within the areas of greatest population concentration;

4. To provide resources and training to assure successful results;
5. To create a ten-year plan towards expansion of Hispanic ministry within the NAL Conference;
6. To assist in the maintenance and strengthening of existing Hispanic churches and ministries.

It is to be noted that all procedures and action of this plan will be supervised and guided by the Conference Director of Ethnic Ministries and the Bishop of the North Alabama Conference.

Identify

Viability - Assess and evaluate the viability of our current ministries

1. Recognition of current Hispanic leadership and networking of same will be established as *“the Fellowship of Hispanic Pastors.”*
2. The establishment of this fellowship will provide pastors (both Hispanic and any others involved or interested in Hispanic ministries) the opportunity to gather for conferencing, connecting, sharing of resources, and encouragement as well as strengthening the overall vision and effectiveness of the strategic plan for successful expansion of Hispanic ministries within the conference.
3. This fellowship will not only provide avenues for training and equipping of future leadership of Hispanic churches but will also utilize the pastoral leadership in the furtherance of the strategic plan.
4. A task force will be organized through this fellowship to assist with steps outlined in Site Visit and Analysis below.

Potential - “Target mapping” for strategic forecasting of new Hispanic ministries – invitation to existing churches)

1. Demographics will be periodically researched to reveal areas of greatest concentration of the Hispanic population within the NAC.
2. Existing UM churches shown to be located within those areas will be encouraged and guided to begin Hispanic ministry.
3. The “invitational process” will occur over a five year period with the objective to have one to two Hispanic churches within a five year period (2011 to 2016) and potentially to have a Hispanic church in each district of the NAC within a ten-year period (2011 to 2021)
4. One must take into account, however, the economically driven migratory patterns and oftentimes invisibility of the Hispanic population.
5. Demographics often misrepresent real and actual numbers. For purposes of Hispanic church growth and expansion, demographics will serve as the resource for determination and mapping.
6. It will also be noted that churches expressing interest in starting Hispanic ministries will be encouraged and assisted to do so if sufficiency of need is researched and presented (see **Site Visit and Analysis** below).

Site Visit and Analysis - Strategic planning at local church level

As mentioned previously, many existing UM churches have expressed interest in starting Hispanic ministry. By focusing on strategic mapping and expressed interest, a task force will be organized to perform site visits to these churches and areas to analyze the following:

1. Existing Hispanic ministries/churches within geographical area for determination of need
2. Potentiality of facilities, resources, and leadership for implementation of Hispanic ministry
3. Willingness to identify and create relationships of community stakeholders for additional support
4. Assist to create an individualized yet viable plan for successful development of Hispanic ministry with the existing church (on or off site)
5. Recruit pastoral leadership if necessary for new Hispanic church planting

Cooperative Parish Formations - Strategic unification of local churches to address need more effectively.

1. With the assistance of strategic mapping and the identification of concentrated areas of Hispanic population, existing UM churches within the specified geographical area will be approached and invited by the task force to form a “cooperative parish.”
2. The “cooperative parish” would provide additional strength and support towards more successful results in developing Hispanic ministries and congregations.

Equip

Community Development Practices

(Local churches working with community stakeholders to more effectively meet needs and provide effective ministry)

1. It is imperative that UM churches be encouraged to utilize the community development approach when considering the implementation of Hispanic ministries.
2. It is through this approach that actual need is realized and existing resources are identified.
3. A conference representative will be made available to direct individualized or cooperative trainings as recommended by Jim Griffith regarding new church planting for the purpose of equipping pastors and laity for this endeavor.

Cross Cultural Training - Ministry practices unique to Hispanic population

1. The term “Hispanic” is utilized to identify a diverse array of persons from many Latino countries.
2. Each country and its persons have their own customs, traditions, and spiritual belief systems.

3. One cannot arbitrarily believe that “one size fits all” when planning and implementing Hispanic ministries due to this factor.
4. One should recognize the primary country of origin to first begin to plan, assess, and implement Hispanic ministry.
5. A conference representative will be made available to direct individualized or cooperative cross cultural trainings to assist in furthering the understanding of the various Hispanic cultures.

Accountability - Quarterly conferencing & assessment of development

1. The Hispanic Ministry Task Force will be given the responsibility of directing quarterly conferences and ongoing communication with the Hispanic leadership and new Hispanic ministries.
2. This will serve to strengthen the United Methodist connection with the ministries and provide avenues of both accountability and encouragement to the endeavor.
3. This task force will then report on a quarterly basis to the Conference Director of Ethnic Ministries to address potential needs, resources, and highlights of the Hispanic ministries.

Resources (trainings, conferences, internships, helps)

1. Jim Griffith – “Boot Camp” training approach to new church planting.
2. Lydia Patterson Institute – located in El Paso, Texas, this United Methodist institution trains high school youth as lay leaders and seeks churches for summer internship placement. These youth can assist in many facets of ministry at the local church level – and can assist in building a connection to the local Hispanic population.
3. HYLEA (Hispanic Youth Leadership Academy) – this 3-year United Methodist summer academy trains youth in United Methodist polity, structure, and ministry. Many have graduated from this academy and are attending college but seeking places of internship within the local United Methodist church. Many of the graduates of this academy have the potential, capacity, and desire to become future pastors of the United Methodist Church and assist in filling the critical shortage of bilingual Hispanic pastors of the future.
4. NAL Conference – “Fellowship of Hispanic Pastors,” “Hispanic Ministry Task Force,” the Conference Director of Ethnic Ministries, the Cabinet, the General Board of Global Missions
5. Governmental Agencies – Every endeavor should be taken as a ministry to assist and guide persons towards the ultimate goal of legal residency of the United States. Agencies and ministries will be identified and recruited to work towards this realization. The process of legalization is quite often misunderstood and misrepresented to the Hispanic population. The United Methodist Church of the NAL Conference should have a strong presence and participation in providing resources and guidance in the legalization process for persons, regardless of their country of origin, now residing in the United States.
6. Non-Profits – identification, recognition, and compilation of resources available to meet various needs of the Hispanic population

7. Other – other United Methodist conferences, specialty trainings, conferences, seminars

Educate

(Helping local churches understand culture & Christian responsibility)

1. Legitimate steps should be taken by the conference and pastors to educate and encourage congregations to extend “radical” hospitality to their Hispanic brothers and sisters.
2. UM Churches must realize the critical need and forecasted growth of the Hispanic population in our conference and our nation.
3. Materials and resources will be made available to District Superintendents and local church pastors for educational purposes towards becoming more global and accepting Christians within this conference and in the world.

Leadership

Recruit Local Pastors

1. Consistently seek to recruit Hispanic or bilingual local pastors to strengthen the critical need for expansion of Hispanic ministries within the conference.
2. Current local Hispanic ministry pastors should consistently seek to identify and nurture leadership from among their laity for recommendation as local pastors.
3. Every Hispanic ministry/congregation should ultimately be encouraged to work towards the goal of a future church plant or replication in another area.

Identify Young Leadership

1. There is a young generation of Hispanics emerging that are bilingual and could ultimately assist the conference in “closing the gap” regarding future pastoral leadership of the Hispanic population in the NAC of the United Methodist Church.
2. Every effort will be made to recruit, identify, nurture, and disciple Hispanic youth towards pastoral and/or lay ministry within the United Methodist Church.
3. Information regarding youth leadership development trainings, seminars, schools, summer academies will be recognized and disbursed to not only the Hispanic congregations but all NAL churches as well.

Regional Hispanic Ministry Coordinators

1. For additional assistance in quarterly conferencing and accountability, it is recommended that regional Hispanic Ministry Coordinators be identified from the “Fellowship of Hispanic Pastors” and trained for this purpose.
2. These regional Hispanic ministry coordinators will be directly responsible to the Conference Director of Ethnic Ministries.

The recommended structure is as follows:



Education of Identified Leadership

The education of local church leadership will be encouraged and required as deemed appropriate for the individual seeking or continuing pastoral leadership in a Hispanic congregation/ministry.

1. Seminary
2. Course of Study – Perkins Theological Seminary provides a Hispanic Course of Study
3. UM Colleges & Universities

Equipping Local Churches for Hispanic Ministries Growth 2011-2016

First Year (2011)

Identify Areas in each District where *the harvest* is more ready to start new Hispanic congregations

1. Prepare sample plan and benchmarks for Hispanic new church starts (See *appendix 1*)
2. Equip local churches in setting up operations interfacing with the needs of their communities.
3. Equip local churches to interface with nonprofit agencies help assist with social needs and community advocacy.
4. Host the Consulate Mobile Unit 3 to assist Latinos seeking consular services like Passport Renewal/Application and Matricular ID.
5. Researching and applying for community and advocacy grants from foundations and other sources to additionally support our work.
6. Planning **MERCADO** program through PHUMC that allow Latino artisans, entrepreneurs, and cooks to sell their wares to the “Anglo” community at large (marketing heavily to the UMC churches in the area).
7. Challenging local church to plan for programs such as:
 - a. Begin ESL Classes taught by Laity.
 - b. Host health screening clinics from Cahaba Valley Health Care
 - c. Begin offering Spanish Classes for English speaking clergy and laity who want to open up to the Latino population
 - d. Organize short-term classes taught by area UMC lay volunteers
 - a. Basic Finance and Banking
 - b. Disciple or Bible Study
8. Create ministry support group composed of Latino lay leaders from local churches, clergy, and area lay volunteers.
9. Encourage churches to Sponsor at least one area unity service and fiesta that brings together Latino and traditional churches for joint worship and fellowship.
10. Start one Latino Congregation and 10 Hispanic ministries

Second Year (2012)

1. Set up operations for Hispanic Ministries
 - a. Continue to recruit Hispanic church leaders
 - b. Interface with area churches to build bridges and garner support.
 - c. Interface with community stakeholders like non-profits, government (mayors/counsels/police) to get buy-in and support.
 - d. Utilize Latino media to advertise and promote our mission and activities.
 - e. Start to develop materials/collateral needed by Circuits for worship, promotion, meetings.
 - f. Begin researching and applying for community and advocacy grants from foundations and other sources to additionally support our work.

2. Start one Latino Congregation and ten Hispanic ministry groups
 - a. Begin with 2 worshipping communities in Alabaster/ /Montevallo/Chelsea area
 - b. Begin with 2 worshipping communities in the northern Jefferson County possibly using East Lake UMC as base and Pinson area
 - c. Fund on-going training at least 2 times per year for HMD, Circuit Preachers, and 1 time per year for lay leaders.
3. Establish at least one “Circuit Ministry Center”
 - e. Begin ESL Classes taught by Laity from area congregations
 - f. Host branches of non-profits like HICA! that offer services and help to the Latino population with issues such as domestic violence, basic information and referral, and immigration and legal issues.
 - g. Host health screening clinics from Cahaba Valley Health Care
 - h. Begin offering Spanish Classes for English speaking clergy and laity who want to open up to the Latino population
 - i. Organize short-term classes taught by area UMC lay volunteers
 - a. Basic Finance and Banking
 - b. Disciple or Bible Study
4. Create ministry support group composed of Latino lay leaders from the circuit, circuit minister, area clergy, and area lay volunteers. The group could meet at different churches once per month or more often to exchange ideas, build relationships and plan joint social/spiritual events between traditional churches and Latino churches.
5. Sponsor at least one area unity service and fiesta that brings together Latino and traditional churches for joint worship and fellowship.
6. Work to integrate Latino Youth with existing area Youth ministries
 - j. Most Latino Youth speak English better than or as well as Spanish
 - k. Most Latino Youth attend area schools

Third Year (2013)

1. Start one Latino Congregation and ten Hispanic ministry groups
2. Expand circuit ministries to include social advocacy support of Latinos and Latino issues by teaching and supporting lay Latino leaders to identify and organize.
3. Fund on-going training at least 2 times per year for HMD, Circuit Preachers, and 1 time per year for lay leaders.
4. Document and “institutionalize” the creation of circuits to create a “Operations Manual” for the creation of new circuits
5. Develop Web Site for support of Circuits
 - b. Distribute curriculum
 - c. Blog groups for leadership support
 - d. Distribute on-line newsletters about Latino issues and tactics for better ministry and social support

Forth to Sixth Year (2014 - 2016)

1. Start three Latino Congregation and thirty Hispanic ministry groups
2. Train Anglo and Latino Laity and up and coming clergy to become circuit ministers
3. Offer a training to help area churches integrate the Latino people and cultures into their own congregations
4. Have a full-time Hispanic Ministries Staff by 2015
 - a. Hispanic Ministry Director
 - i. Salary and Benefits
 - ii. Office – Either at the Conference HQ or local congregation.
 - iii. Phone
 - iv. Mileage/Travel
 - b. Administrative support
 - i. Computer/equipment, etc
 - ii. Clerical support – later can be bilingual staff
5. Establish District Ministry Centers
 - a. Used for community outreach programs
 - i. Legal Clinics
 - ii. Healthcare screenings
 - iii. Community Meetings
 - iv. Finance and Banking Classes
 - v. English Classes for Latinos
 - vi. Spanish Classes for Clergy and Laity in area
 - vii. Recreation Ministries
 - viii. Community Meeting Room
 - ix. Place where English speaking laity can come volunteer
6. Lay Leadership
 - a. Develop lay leadership at each congregation to help with basic administration and congregational care
 - b. Fund leadership training for lay leadership
7. Support Community Organizations
 - a. Monetarily support non-profits that will aid our community
 - b. Invite non-profits to use our facilities to do on-site programs that meet the needs of our Latino congregants

Appendix 1

Benchmarks for new Hispanic/Latino Congregations

Period	Steps	Goals
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pray • Establish networks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiate contact with people ○ Allow people to initiate contact with you • Find a place to stay • Identify Hispanic Population centers. • Meet with local Hispanic leadership (clergy & laity). • Meet with “regional” Hispanic leaders • Develop a plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To pray for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Affirmation of God’s Call ○ Confirmation of God’s leadership ○ God’s provision of partner churches ○ God’s provision of effective mentoring ○ High energy and vitality level (physical stamina) and willingness to work long and hard. ○ Coping effectively with ambiguity. ○ Coping effectively with constant and abrupt change. ○ Doing whatever is necessary whenever necessary. ○ Experiencing setbacks without defeat. ○ Riding the ups and downs (i.e. attendance). ○ Expecting the unexpected. ○ Unwavering desire to do well and a commitment to excellence. ○ Rebounding from loss, disappointments and failure. • Getting settled and ready for the work God has called you to do. • Guidance to a health new Hispanic/ Latino church development • Develop relationships with the unchurched community
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify an area for your ministry. • Collect, study and analyze both demographic and ethnographic data. • Establish Networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the areas of Hispanic/Latino concentration. “God prepares you for a place, and God prepares a place for you” (Ron Sylvia). • Develop relationships with the unchurched community
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a preliminary prospectus • Identify Partner Churches • Establish networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To start listing the people you are meeting in your networks. • Identify churches (Anglo, African-American, Hispanic) that are willing to partner with you in ministry • Develop relationships with the unchurched community
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a community survey • Develop a community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the day-to-day life of the target people group/community • Discover and learn more about the community needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> profile • Establish networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the culture of the community. • Identifying and assessing community needs. • Responding to community needs on a priority basis. • Determining successes and failures of other attempts to respond to the community. • Not confusing what the community needs with what the church wants to offer. • Acquiring and understanding of the character and pulse of the community. • Develop relationships with the unchurched community
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the type of church needed • Formulate a purpose statement, core values and vision • Establish networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapting the philosophy of ministry to the character of the community. • Develop relationships with the unchurched community
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify adequate and well-located facilities/meeting place (<i>St. James in St. Thomas.</i>) • Train Core Group • Start the church • Attend the Church Planting Boot-Camp in Atlanta on 11/17-19/09. • Update the strategy plan with consideration of your Boot-Camp experiences • Establish networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be ready for your first organized worship meeting bearing in mind; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Your limited resources ○ Small membership and leadership base • The Boot camp will help you; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Understand common mistakes made by new church starters. ○ How to fundraise for your new church start. ○ Methods of recruiting and networking. ○ Preparing to launch – putting a launch team together. ○ Connecting people to the new faith community. ○ How to start with great impact-first impressions ○ Knowing the right time to launch. ○ Why you need coaching and mentoring. • Develop relationships with the unchurched community
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower and prepare the group for discipleship and reaching out • Establish networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Releasing and equipping people to do the task of ministry. • Discerning of spiritual gifts in others. • Matching the gifts of people with ministry needs and opportunities. • Delegating effectively in areas of personal limitation. • Avoiding personal overload by delegating effectively. • Not prematurely assigning ministry positions before people are equipped. • Not placing unwarranted restrictions on other's spiritual giftedness.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishing the goal of quickly becoming a financially self-supporting church Develop relationships with the unchurched community
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build Group Cohesiveness Start planning for launching Establish networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing a nucleus group or groups as a foundation. Quickly incorporating newcomers into a network of relationships. Engaging others in meaningful church activity. Monitoring the morale of people. Utilizing groups effectively. Dealing with conflict assertively, constructively and tactfully. Develop relationships with the unchurched community.
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mobilize and Multiply Continue planning for launching Establish networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop small groups that are attractive to unreached people Move people toward a healthy commitment Develop relationships with the unchurched community.
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipping members to be a missional church Continue planning for launching Establish networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking the church to the people – their loved ones and friends; acquaintances in the marketplace, in the neighborhood and in the world Develop relationships with the unchurched community
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Ministry Map LAUNCH Establish networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the process by which people can become involved in various ministries Show potential ministry dead ends. Identify things missing in your strategic plan. Help people see where they are and where they are going. Show a practical and workable plan for new members. Develop relationships with the unchurched community
May	Evaluation- assessing how well you are doing in order to help yourself do it better	<p>For accountability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the project worked? How has money been spent? Should the project continue? <p>For learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the project's strengths and weaknesses? What are the implementation problems? Why have things worked, or not?

Appendix 2¹

Demographic Trends

	1990	2000	2010	2015
Population	2,428,477	2,667,210	2,882,939	2,994,055
Population change		238,733	215,729	111,116
Percent change		9.83%	8.09%	3.85%
Household	918,706	1,053,842	1,135,248	1,176,982
Households change		135,136	81,406	41,734
Percent change		14.71%	7.72%	3.68%
Population/Household (PH)	2.64	2.53	2.54	2.54
PH change		-0.11	0.01	0
Percent change		-4.17%	0.40%	0.00%
Family households (FH)	676,260	743,448	803,168	834,418
FH change		67,188	59,720	31,250
Percent change		9.94%	8.03%	3.89%
Non-Family Households (NFH)	243,322	34,755	41,512	45,200
NFH change		-208,567	6,757	3,688
Percent change		-85.72%	19.44%	8.88%
Average age	36.01	37.12	38.75	39.61
Average age change		1.11	1.63	0.86
Percent change		3.08%	4.39%	2.22%

Racial/Ethnic Trends

	2000	2010	2015	2000%	2010%	2015%
Asian (Non-Hisp)	17,109	27,298	37,141	0.6%	0.9%	1.2%
African-American (Non-Hips)	549,856	627,313	629,345	20.6%	21.8%	21.0%
White (Non-Hisp)	2,008,030	2,084,486	2,114,182	75.3%	72.3%	70.6%
Hispanic/Latino	50,025	99,527	156,881	1.9%	3.5%	5.2%
Pac Is/Am Ind (Non-Hisp)	42,190	44,315	56,507	1.6%	1.5%	1.9%
Totals	2,667,210	2,882,939	2,994,056	100%	100%	100%

Population/Households Forecast

	2010	2015	2020
Population	2,882,939	2,994,055	3,110,387
Percent change		3.85%	3.89%
Household	1,135,248	1,176,982	1,221,739
Percent change		3.68%	3.80%

¹ Prepared for North Alabama Conference of the UMC by *MissionInsite* on 10/12/2010