

PROJECT

FOR THE CREATION OF A

CENTRAL PASTORAL OFFICE **FOR HISPANIC MINISTRIES**

CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)
IN THE UNITED STATES
AND CANADA

Revised according to what was approved
by the General Board in Chicago,
Illinois, on July 29, 1991

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Hallelujah! What we have referred to as a Proposal For the Creation of a Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries it is now a PROJECT approved by the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

Hallelujah! After numerous meetings, revisions and negotiations, the Task Force on Renewal/Structural Reform (in agreement with the Hispanic Caucus) finally recommended to the General Board at its meeting of July 17-30, 1991, the establishment of a Pastoral Commission which would implement the creation of the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries. In essence, the recommendation approved by the General Board is the same recommendation adopted in the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship's Fifth Assembly in July of 1990. There has been only one essential modification: The Office will be located directly under the General Board of the church and its Administrative Committee, instead of being a part of the Office of the General Minister and President; and its Board of Directors will be a Pastoral Commission for Hispanic Ministries of the General Board.

This project is described in its current version in the following pages.

Hispanic Caucus
November 1991

PREAMBLE

This document which we share contains much more than a simple project for an ecclesiastical restructuring. It is an offering of integrity and a song of hope which is born out of the being of Hispanic Ministries within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

As an offering of integrity, we share the testimony of a people who are sure that in order to serve God and to spread the Good News of Salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is possible to do it from a Hispanic idiosyncrasy, without having to separate or dislodge oneself from the ecclesiastical principles and politics of the Disciples of Christ. In other words, we reaffirm on these pages, not only our conviction that we are ONE as a Hispanic family, but our sincere desire and goal to be truly ONE with the whole Disciples Church and the Church of Christ universally.

As a song of hope, this document contains the joy of discovering the existence of new alternatives to guarantee the advancement of our Hispanic Ministries, and that those alternatives are feasible. It is possible that the sharing of these alternatives will raise questions, concerns and anxieties; nonetheless, it is the joy of being able to project towards these new horizons that inspires us in this hour, and not the shaking up that this project might have or produce for existing structures and procedures.

Despite the elements of newness that this project might appear to offer, the reality is that practically nothing of that which is stated here is new. In actuality this document contains the end result of concerns, recommendations and declarations which have been previously shared throughout the years in our area assemblies of our Hispanic conventions, ministerial retreats, workshops and seminars, strategy conferences, Hispanic encounters at our general assemblies, Hispanic Caucus meetings and meetings of the Black and Hispanic Concerns Committee (now the Committee on Racial Ethnic Inclusiveness and Empowerment -- CREIE), and in more recent years at the assembly programs of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship. Among the many examples that might be mentioned, we would like to share a comment made at the first Conference of (Disciples of Christ) Hispanic American Ministers, celebrated in Indianapolis, Indiana, April 6-10, 1970, where a clear recommendation came from the group, "that Hispanics be allowed to name their own representatives to the General Board and the Administrative Committee of the Church." Another very pertinent example can be found in the documents for the creation in 1981 of National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship, where it was clearly established that one of the basic purposes for this project was specifically to, "intensify and make effective the participation and contributions of Hispanics in the activities, projects and general programs of the church, through the development of

a vehicle of communication which would serve as the collective voice of the needs, problems, concerns and virtues of Hispanics in general."

We cannot deny that in our search for answers to these and many other concerns, there have been moments when it has seemed that our frustrations would get the best of us. It was precisely in one of those frustrating moments while attending the CREIE meeting in April, 1988, that the Hispanic Caucus indicated its concern with serious structural problems affecting Hispanic Ministries within our church which made impossible a total and genuine participation of the Hispanic constituency. The Caucus also declared its intention to discontinue participation in the CREIE meetings at the conclusion of that meeting, in order that it might be able to concentrate its energies to the analysis of this structural problem from a Hispanic perspective and make possible recommendations for its solution. In addition, the Caucus indicated its belief that this structural problem within our church was not only affecting negatively the internal life of the Hispanic constituency, but could also begin to deteriorate and weaken relationships between other ethnic groups within the church. For that reason, the Caucus expressed its sincere conviction that in order to achieve a real and constructive dialogue with our Asian and Black brothers and sisters, it was imperative for us to give ourselves totally to a serious reflection regarding our situation and projections as Hispanic Disciples.

It is, therefore, this document which begins the reflection and search. If it is true that there have been many frustrations that have brought us to this point, it is also true that there is much happiness in being able to share in this hour not another complaint, but this offering of integrity and song of hope: an offering and a song that could very well become good news of integrity and hope for all our church. **AND UPON THIS ROCK WE SHALL BUILD.**

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF EVENTS THAT SERVE AS A BACKGROUND FOR THIS PROJECT

At least since 1899 in the city of San Antonio, Texas there has existed what we know today as the Hispanic Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. This signifies that the development of Hispanic Ministries is a process that has been taking place for more than ninety years. Today we count fifty-two established Hispanic congregations and/or projects in the process of formation. These congregations are found in thirteen different states and ten regions of the church. The major concentration of Hispanic congregations are in the Northeast and Southeast regions. We also have work in California, Florida, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Washington, D.C., Ohio, and Kansas City.

In the Southwest Region we find that the first Hispanic congregations, missions, were initiated by the Anglo church. Primera Iglesia Cristiana in San Antonio, Texas was the first to be established in 1899. Later on there were other congregations initiated with the help of missionaries/pastors from the Disciples churches in Puerto Rico. Today there are twenty congregations or new church starts counted within the Southwest Hispanic Convention, this includes the congregations in California which are still part of the Southwest Hispanic Convention. The Southwest Hispanic Convention celebrated its thirty first assembly in August, 1989.

In the Northeast Region the initiation for a Hispanic Disciples congregation is born out of the vision of the Church in Puerto Rico. The mother church in New York City is La Hermosa Christian Church which in 1988 celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. La Hermosa served to start other Hispanic congregations in the New York City area. Today there are fourteen congregations and/or new church start projects included as part of the Northeast Hispanic Convention. The Convention celebrated its twenty seven assembly in April, 1989.

According to 1987 Census Office data, there were approximately 19.4 million Hispanics living in the continental United States. We consider these figures to be way below the actual numbers. However, according to these statistics there are: 6.5 million in California, 4.1 million in Texas, 2.1 million in New York and 1.4 million in Florida. In addition, the data also confirms that there has been a very significant growth in areas such as Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Illinois and New Jersey. All indications are that these figures will continue to grow in the next years/decade.

In the past decade, the Hispanic population has grown considerably to include many refugees and other immigrants coming primarily from Central and South American

countries where political and/or financial situations have forced our people to find refuge in the United States.

Right along side of these new immigrants, we find Hispanic communities which have existed in this country for many centuries. The problems that our people must face on a daily basis have grown and intensified as well. Among others we would mention the following: the high percentage of high school drop outs among Hispanic youth; the great number of Hispanic on the unemployment lines and who suffer from low wages due to their undocumented or unskilled classifications; the problems of drugs and alcohol abuse, and in more recent years the AIDS epidemic which is consuming large numbers of our people, especially among our youth; wife and child abuse which is on the increase; the new immigration laws and views, and all the problems that being undocumented or a refugee in this country implies; and the conditions of poverty in which 29% of our people lives. It is among these people where our church ministers with a total of fifty four Hispanic congregations/new church starts. The situation is alarming.

From the very beginning of Hispanic Ministries, there has never been a clear definition of what the church understands this ministry to be. Rev. Byron Spice, who was the first Director in this office under the United Christian Missionary Society, rendered some of the earliest attempts by the church to offer services and resources needed for Hispanic Ministries in the United States. In 1965 Rev. Domingo Rodríguez became the first Hispanic to become the Director of Program Services to Hispanic Congregations. This was in the Department of Evangelism and Membership of the Division of Homeland Ministries. From that time many conferences, retreats, meetings and other gatherings have been held to dialogue regarding Hispanic Ministries in the United States, its needs and concerns.

In 1973 the Rev. Lucas Torres replaces Rev. Domingo Rodríguez as the Director of Program Services to Hispanic Congregations. In 1975 a Conference on Strategy on Hispanic Ministries is called and celebrated at La Hermosa Christian Church in New York City. To this conference are invited the leadership, lay and clergy, from each of the then existing Hispanic congregations in the United States. Once again, there is dialogue, special presentations on the concerns and vision and needs for the future of Hispanic Ministries. The end results of that conference were a series of recommendations and projects which were shared immediately with then General Minister and President, Dr. Kenneth Teegarden.

In December, 1976, the General Minister and President named leaders from the Hispanic constituency to become part of a Hispanic Caucus which was to serve as a representative body for the Hispanic congregations in the United States. These leaders are invited to the city of Indianapolis to participate in the meeting of what up until that time had been known as the Black Concerns Committee of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The committee became the Black and Hispanic Concerns

Committee. For twelve years the Hispanic Caucus attempted to channel its concerns for Hispanic Ministries through the Black and Hispanic Concerns Committee.

In 1977, Rev. Lucas Torres resigned as Director of the Office of Program Services to Hispanic and Bilingual Congregations. Rev. David A. Vargas was named to that position. It is under the leadership of Vargas that plans are begun for the creation of what is known today as the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. The Fellowship celebrated its first assembly at Downey Avenue Christian Church in Indianapolis, Indiana during the last week of June, 1981. 350 delegates participated in that first assembly, which was representative through lay and clergy delegates from all the Hispanic congregations across the country at that time. Also attending were representatives of the general units of the church. It was at that assembly that the sense that we have the right to exist as Hispanic Ministries, and right to identify for ourselves who we are and where we need to be as Hispanics within the total ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. This sense of direction and identity is still prevalent within the Fellowship.

Adopting unanimously the theme of that first assembly, SOMOS UNO (We Are One), the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship is established. The Hispanic Caucus is also elected as the official executive/representative body of the new organization.

A delegation of the Asian American Disciples was received by the Black and Hispanic Concerns Committee for the first time in 1988. This initiated the name change of the committee to, the Committee on Racial Ethnic Inclusiveness and Empowerment (CREIE).

In the annual meeting of CREIE, April 1988, the Hispanic Caucus began an evaluation process of what had been accomplished in the last twelve years, including its participation in CREIE, which was understood to be the forum by which Hispanics (and other ethnic constituency) could surface concerns, needs, suggestions and projects to the general church that could facilitate the work of the church in the area of Hispanic Ministries. One of the results of this evaluation by the Caucus, was to identify a high level of frustration brought upon by the inability of the said group to effectively implement the proposed programs and resolve the problems surfaced in these meetings.

It is in the meeting of April, 1988 that the Hispanic Caucus is able to clearly identify the root of the problem: the present structures of the church are not pertinent in understanding and responding to the United States Hispanic Disciple's perspective and dynamics. At that point the Hispanic Caucus declares a moratorium in its participation as member of the CREIE, until such time as it is able to study and develop a clear definition of its own identity as Hispanic Ministry, in order that it could bring some recommendations to the general church relating to the function and destiny of

Hispanic Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Among some of the issues that the Caucus was able to identify in analyzing the situation are the economical crisis of the general church, including the reduction of personnel and budgets (not only in the Division of Homeland Ministries, but throughout the church), which affect seriously the limited projections, services and resources presently rendered to Hispanic Ministries.

The present structures of the church, in which Hispanics were not afforded the opportunity to participate in the design and establishment, is part of the problem that affects Hispanic Ministries at the present time. For example, the Office of Hispanic Ministries is simply one of six offices in the Department of Evangelism, which is one of five departments in the Division of Homeland Ministries, which is one of eleven general units of the church, which are responsible to the general assembly through the administrative committee and the general board. In other words, our church does not have in place a structure which can satisfactorily understand, direct and serve the needs and priorities of the Obra Hispana.

It is this reality which moves the Hispanic Caucus to respond in a positive spirit of unity. After much prayer and study, we offer this document, an offering of our work of many years. It calls for the creation of our own Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada.

THE PROJECT

I. Principles and Experiences Which have resulted in the Writing of This Project

A. **WE BELIEVE IN THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH** - The expression "Somos Uno" (We Are One) speaks of the goal for unity and growth which served as inspiration in the creation of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada. The origins and the development of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship represent the results of a historical process whose roots reach back to the days when for the first time in the U.S. (possibly San Antonio, TX in 1899), groups of Hispanics began to organize a congregational nuclei for the purpose of Bible study and worship within the context of our denomination. The search for unity has always been an essential factor in this historical process and the achievement of this unity has been the seal which has guaranteed the survival of Hispanic congregational nuclei within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) since the first decades of this century.

B. **WE ARE AN ECCLESIASTICAL EXPRESSION WHICH AT A NATIONAL LEVEL EXISTS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A COMMON SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND POLITICAL REALITY** - As a Hispanic ecclesiastical expression (which from this point on will be referred to as the "Obra Hispana") within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada, we find ourselves to be in solidarity with the rest of the Hispanic Third World which lives in this country. A Hispanic Third World which consists of:

- Our brothers and sisters who live in poverty.
- Those who work for salaries below the minimum wage.
- Those who live here in our country without the documentation the law demands.
- Those who lack adequate education and political power.
- Those who live against their will in ghettos without access to decision making structures nor to those persons who control power.
- Those who live under cultural, spiritual or religious oppression.

In many instances the characteristics and sufferings of this Hispanic Third World are detectable in the relationship between the Obra Hispana and the rest of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada. In other words, this Hispanic Third World is not only around us, it is also manifested within our daily walk as a church. It is manifested in:

- The Disciples Church of the poor, the undocumented, the exploited, the unemployed, the refugees;
- The Disciples Church that consists of newly arrived immigrants and of second and third generations, who may be English dominant, but, who have not lost their Hispanic ethnic identity and cultural heritage;
- The Disciples Church that worships in storefronts and deteriorated sanctuaries which no insurance company will insure;
- The Disciples Church with meager pastoral salaries which are well below the national average yet with pastors who carry excessive work responsibilities without transportation stipends, secretarial support and other basic services;
- The Disciples Church whose existence in some instances depends on economic support from regions and general units; a relationship which at times is best described as a condescending one, similar to the style the government demonstrates toward welfare recipients;
- The Disciples Church whose leaders are permitted to lead and whose structures are allowed to function only when these affirm the values of the dominant white Anglo-Saxon structure or whose leaders and structures are intentionally or unintentionally neutralized, destabilized or replaced in order to force changes in attitudes or processes;
- The Disciples Church whose history, nature, needs and mission are not reflected in the liturgical and educational resources of its denomination and which encounters theological positions which reflect the characteristics of the dominant church and have no relevance for Hispanic reality;
- The Disciples Church whose participation in decisionmaking which affects the whole church, is still very limited, or still merely symbolic, as the sin of tokenism has not yet been overcome;
- The Disciples Church who must live among the oppression of a cultural Roman Catholicism and a cultural Anglo-Saxon Protestantism.

In spite of this reality, the Obra Hispana has always affirmed its unity with the totality of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada. In the establishment of new congregations, as new conventions (formerly referred to as "Juntas") were created and in the formation of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship, the Obra Hispana has not only affirmed the unity of our ethnic component within the total life of the Church, it has also sought to intensify and make more effective the participation and contribution of Hispanics in the general tasks of our denomination. We have always believed that the unity of the Church of Jesus Christ is achieved via inclusiveness, incorporation and integration. Nevertheless, we understand that unity is never genuine if it results in the disintegration of our ethnic integrity and our own unique manner of understanding and living the Christian faith as Disciples.

C. **WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE STRUCTURES WITHIN WHICH WE EXIST, ARE NOT RELEVANT TO WHAT WE, AS HISPANICS, PERCEIVE IS OUR NATURE AND MISSION AS PART OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST -**

Constitutionally the "Obra Hispana" is an integral part of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada. It is also frequently assumed that Hispanic congregations are guaranteed inclusiveness within the totality of our church simply because they are located within our geographical jurisdiction and the administrative context of one of our regions. The historical background, linguistic idiosyncrasy and marked socio-economic differences of Hispanics, when compared to the general membership of our church as well as the faith experience which characterizes the religiosity of hispanics, speak of a very different reality.

Without a doubt, the intent of The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada is truly to describe a church which transcends "all barriers within the human family such as race and culture" yet that description continues to be only an ideal to be achieved. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada manifests itself before the world as a church with an inclusive character; yet its inner-life reflects the standards of a white majority with Anglo-Saxon cultural values and which relates to other cultural and racial expressions with an air of superiority.

It would be unjust to assert that the prevalence of white Anglo-Saxon cultural values is the result of a premeditated plan; but it would also be unjust to excuse this dominant majority of its responsibility to work to make our Church one which is truly inclusive in word and deed.

When we examine the reality of our inner-life as a church and our ecclesiastical structures, we discover a unity which does not produce leadership and processes which affirm consistently a total commitment with the marginalized in our society, but which instead perpetuates the dominance of a white majority at general, regional and congregational levels. When we look to our inner-life as a Church, we notice that, before the world, we are principally a white, English-speaking community molded by Anglo-Saxon values, within which the presence of ethnic/cultural minorities is an opportunity to include an exotic ingredient and not necessarily a challenge to seek an ecclesiastical unity and a racial unity which guarantees that we truly represent "all the inhabited world."

In a society which includes more than twenty million Hispanics (approximately 8% of the population), the most evident characteristics of our ecclesiastical structures and image reveal that our congregations are 87% white, that all of our regional ministers are white and that all of our general unit presidents are white. Further evidence of this ecclesiastical image can be found by carefully analyzing other structural and programmatic aspects within our regional and general manifestations which involve the formation of committees and the design and implementation of programs and events which supposedly have been created for the whole Church. A detailed analysis at this point would serve basically to corroborate the dominance of one race and cultural tradition within the life and witness of a church which is supposedly pluralistic, but would not identify the root causes of the problem. Furthermore, we are aware that an effort to produce indicators that suggest the possible existence of racism within the Church would only serve to unnecessarily terrify, when in reality that is not the purpose of this project. On the contrary, it is necessary to acknowledge that within our Church there has always been a restlessness and efforts to guarantee, that we be truly an inclusive faith community in spite of our ethnic and cultural differences. Some of these efforts have originated within "La Obra Hispana," such as the creation of the Hispanic Conventions and Juntas, the Hispanic Caucus and the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship. Other efforts have been put forth jointly by Hispanics and other racial/ethnic constituencies within the regional and general structures of our church and even including efforts originated by the dominant white majority within our Church. Examples of these efforts include the creation at regional and general levels of positions related specifically to racial/ethnic minorities, the establishment of participation quotas for different events and committees, the frequent resolutions and statements of solidarity with minority issues and the

creation of task forces such as the Committee on Racial-Ethnic Inclusiveness and Empowerment (CREIE) and its predecessor.

So it has not been the lack of good intentions and efforts which has militated against our being today a truly inclusive church which lives out in its daily life Christian Unity and equality. What militates against a genuine inclusiveness within our church is the abyss which exists between our resolutions/statements and our daily walk, between what we want to be and what we really are, between our ecclesiastical ideal and what our structures will allow and facilitate.

D. WE AFFIRM THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT A NEW STRUCTURAL "WINESKIN" FOR THE NEW "WINE" OF A TRULY INCLUSIVE CHURCH

- By virtue of the freedom granted us by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we perceive as feasible the possibility of a creative alternative which will lead us toward the restructuring of our Church at the general level, in such a way that, as Hispanics, we will be able to achieve a complete consolidation of our internal peace and integrity as part of the Body of Christ, always within the Disciple ecclesiastical expression and the Universal Church. In the freedom of Christ and moving forward along the creative path, we are sure that we can explore and discover new structural designs for the new day in our Church: new ways, new horizons of genuine inclusiveness. It must be clear, however, that this new structural alternative cannot be along the same paths we have walked upon up to now. Neither can this new path become a place where Hispanics and Whites struggle against each other, or where men struggle against women or Blacks against Hispanics. This new path should be the sign of the new way of genuine reconciliation with God through Christ Jesus our Lord. This pilgrimage down the road of reconciliation must be one in which we march hand-in-hand with those who, from other ethnic backgrounds, seek the paths and the goal of inclusiveness.

We understand that the exploration of this new path will be in vain if we intend to use "old maps," "demagnetized compasses" or "worn and tattered schemes and patterns." The search of genuine inclusiveness within our Church requires the exploration of new systems, new structures, using "new maps" and "new compasses." It would be

worthless to want to see as concrete reality the dream and hope of Hispanics to be truly an integral part, first-class members, of our beloved Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), if our procedures, systems, designs and the attitudes of the other ethnic constituencies within our Church remain the same or simply respond to old schemes. In other words, to walk together as a reconciled people along paths which leads us toward unexplored systems and designs, requires all of us, Hispanics and the rest of our Church, from the so-called regional manifestations to the general levels of our ecclesiastical structure, submission to the "acetylene torch from on High" in order for God to melt us all and pour us into His new molds; in order for God to make us new creatures, so that **EVERYTHING** in our unexplored, of the invisible yet palpable, means to receive continually from HE who loved us first, a new wine, not for us to pour it into the old vessels of prejudice which we have dragged with us for decades or the vessels dragged along by the rest of our Church since the days of the great plantation owners, but to pour this new wine in a new vessel anointed with the blood shed on the cross at Calvary. We should not attempt to pour this new wine of a truly inclusive Church in the old wineskins of our worn-out designs and present structural systems, for we know that these old wineskins will not hold this new wine that God offers at this moment, they will burst and the new wine will be lost. With all the love and loyalty we feel for our Church, as Hispanics, we recognize and sincerely admonish that we should not try to repair this "church of the old garment" with a patch of unshrunk cloth which would result in a worse tear (Matt. 9:16-17). At this moment in which we stand at the crossroad and obediently respond to those signs which point toward the path of innovation and reconciliation which will guarantee a truly inclusive faith community, we need a new Church with a new garment, with new wineskins, with new structures and with new attitudes.

II. GOAL

To affirm our right to exist as the "Obra Hispana" (Hispanic Ministry/Work/Congregations/People...) within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ in the U.S. and Canada by stimulating and achieving the necessary structural changes which will guarantee that our church will truly be a trustworthy entity, capable of responding faithfully to God's claim that the Church be in solidarity with the marginalized; an agent of justice; peace; reconciliation and a sacred refuge.

III. OBJECTIVES

- A. To promote and facilitate a constructive dialogue between the different components of the "Obra Hispana" (congregations, conventions, Hispanic Caucus and the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship) concerning the nature, mission and relevance of the "Obra Hispana" within the context of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada.
- B. To design and implement at a general level of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada, a new institutional structure and a new work style in order to render pastoral services and technical/programmatic assistance to the "Obra Hispana," responding adequately to the needs, aspirations and priorities of the "Obra Hispana" as well as helping to assure equal rights, access to resources and participation of Hispanics in all areas within our Disciples of Christ denominational context.
- C. To design a work program with projections towards the year 2000, in which opportunities will be provided for Hispanic congregations and their members to respond freely and with self-determination in the realization of a ministry and testimony that will include and serve not only the Hispanic community, but also the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in general.

IV. STRATEGIES

- A. To establish a Pastoral Commission for the "Obra Hispana" of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada, consisting of the following: All the members of the Hispanic Caucus of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship; two representatives from the Conference of Regional Ministers and Moderators; and two representatives from the General Board of our Church. Amongst other responsibilities, the commission shall:
 - 1. Establish the mission and policy for a Central Pastoral Office of the Obra Hispana of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada.
 - 2. Assume responsibility for designing and approving a work program for the Obra Hispana which will be in harmony with the priorities and projections of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada as a whole; that is to say, in consultation and

dialogue with general units, regions and other organizations of the church;

3. Name the National Pastor of the **Obra Hispana**;
 4. Dismiss personnel when necessary;
 5. Evaluate annually the work of the Central Pastoral Office and submit reports to the Administrative Committee of the General Board of our Church;
 6. Be moderated by the president of the Hispanic Caucus and the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada.
- B. To establish a Central Pastoral Office of the **Obra Hispana** of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada with offices located in the international headquarters of the Church in Indianapolis. The format of the Central Pastoral Office will include the following:
1. A staff consisting of:
 - a. **A National Pastor** for the **Obra Hispana** who will have the following qualifications and responsibilities. The National Pastor shall:
 - (1) Be an ordained minister with an awareness of the needs and priorities of the Hispanics in the United States and Canada in general and of the Hispanic ecclesiastical expression within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in particular;
 - (2) Provide the Pastoral Commission with the "raw material" necessary for the design of the work program for the **Obra Hispana**;
 - (3) Implement the work program designed and approved by the Pastoral Commission, submitting annual progress reports;
 - (4) Be the official representative of the **Obra Hispana** before the rest of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada;

- (5) Be the official representative of the **Obra Hispana** before the ecumenical organizations;
- (6) Supervise the work of the Central Pastoral Office of the **Obra Hispana**;
- (7) Be in constant communication with the president of the Pastoral Commission;
- (8) Administer progress of congregational development, stewardship, ministerial leadership, Christian education and social action (i.e. scholarships, evangelism, curriculum, establishment and recognition of new congregations) in direct cooperation with regional offices and the program for new congregations establishment of the Division of Homeland Ministries and the Board of Church Extension;
- (9) Shall be responsible for the development, training and accreditation of leaders, ordained and/or licensed ministers and/or lay pastors, in cooperation with regional commissions on the ministry and institutions of higher education;
- (10) Be the liaison between the **Obra Hispana** and all the general units of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada, particularly in the coordination of programs and the use of resources;
- (11) Appoint an Associate National Pastor and an Administrative Assistant with the ratification of the Pastoral Commission and the Hispanic Conventions;
- (12) Appoint Program Coordinators for each Convention in consultation with the Hispanic Conventions and the particular Regions involved;
- (13) Be a member with voice and vote of the Council of Ministers of the Church.

b. **An Associate National Pastor** for the **Obra Hispana** who will have the following qualifications and responsibilities. The Associate National Pastor shall:

- (1) Be an ordained minister with an awareness of the needs and priorities of Hispanics in the U.S. and Canada in general and of the Hispanic ecclesiastical expression within the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in particular;
- (2) Assist the National Pastor, handling the tasks assigned by her or him;
- (3) Be the principal liaison between the Central Pastoral Office and the Hispanic Conventions, via the program coordinators in each of the five conventions. For congregations which are not yet affiliated with a Convention, the Associate National Pastor shall serve as direct liaison for local program implementation and coordination.
- (4) Supervise the work of the Program Coordinators in harmony with the Administrative Boards of the Conventions.

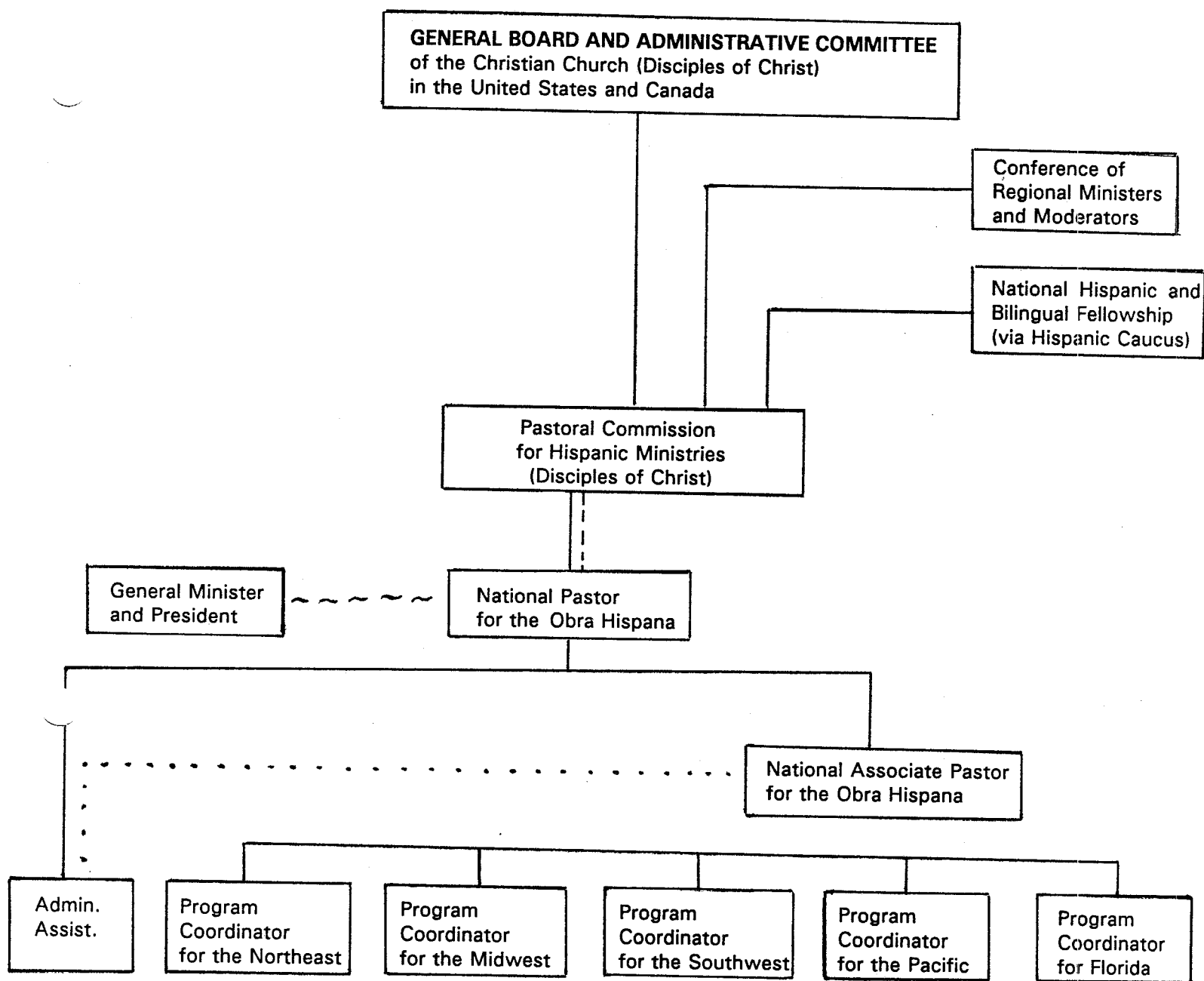
c. **One Program Coordinator for each Convention** (Deployed staff) The Program Coordinators shall:

- (1) Be laypersons or ordained ministers with an awareness of the needs and priorities of Hispanics and (of the Hispanic Disciple ecclesiastical expression) in the particular geographic area of the Convention she or he is called to serve;
- (2) Interpret for their Convention the work program of the Central Pastoral Office of the **Obra Hispana**, assuring its implementation, and perform, when possible, other tasks assigned by their Convention;
- (3) In his or her daily tasks, function under the supervision of the Associate National Pastor and the Administrative Board of his or her Convention;
- (4) Be appointed initially on a part-time basis.

d. **One Administrative Assistant** who shall:

- (1) Be a layperson or an ordained minister who will serve as secretary to the National Pastor and the Associate National Pastor;
- (2) Coordinate clerical work, establish and maintain a general file, do the bookkeeping and keep the minutes of the meetings.

2. Adopt the following organizational chart:
(Please, see next page)



Symbols

- Direct/permanent relationship for supervision and the fulfillment of duties
- Permanent relationship for the establishment of the Central Pastoral Office, appointment and dismissal of staff, application of programming, issuing directives and evaluation

~ ~ ~ In consultation/coordination with...

..... Direct/temporary relationship for supervision and the fulfillment of duties, especially during the absence of the direct/permanent relationship.

- C. To establish clear definitions and adequate procedures which will facilitate the development and effective functioning of the Central Pastoral Office, including the following:

1. Good Communication

- a. Maintain an ongoing dialogue with the President of the Pastoral Commission, the General Minister and President, and other members of the General Cabinet of our Church.
- b. Share progress reports every six months with the Administrative Boards of the Hispanic Conventions.
- c. Hold at least one annual meeting with the entire staff of the Central Pastoral Office for evaluation, orientation and the establishment of future work strategies.
- d. Carry out visits to the congregations and conventions by the National Pastor and the Associate National Pastor.
- e. As part of the implementation of the new project, emphasize continuously the relevance, commitment and responsibility of the **Obra Hispana** to the totality of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada, affirming this bond by placing the Central Pastoral Office under the supervision of a Pastoral Commission with representation from the General Board, the Conference of Regional Ministers and Moderators, and the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship.

2. A Common Budget

- a. Design and implement a budget which will be administered by the Central Pastoral Office with funds designated for:
 - (1) Salaries, other staff-related expenses and the administration of the Central Pastoral Office.
 - (2) Evangelism programs, development of educational materials, congregational development, new church establishment and social ministries.
 - (3) Scholarship program.
- b. Assure the participation and economic collaboration of each of the Hispanic Disciple congregations in the U.S. and Canada (via the Conventions), general units of our Church, the Finance Commission of our Church, including the designation of annual budget allotments to be channeled through a common fund and administered by the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries.

3. Affirm the integrity of the Church

- a. The work of the Central Pastoral Office for Hispanic Ministries shall be guided by the policies and directives established by the Pastoral Commission, assuming that by its nature, it will integrate not only Hispanic priorities, but also the priorities of the totality of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

4. Constant Evaluation

- a. The Pastoral Commission will evaluate the performance of the Central Pastoral Office every year and submit a report to the General Board of the Church.
- b. The Pastoral Commission will base its evaluation on the reports of the National Pastor in order to determine to what extent the policies and directives established by the Commission have been implemented.

5. Willingness to make changes

- a. The design and implementation of a Central Pastoral Office will, without a doubt, require structural changes, in several ways, of the general manifestation of our Church; but it will also require vital changes within the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship and the Hispanic Conventions. Amongst other changes related to the Hispanic structures, the creation of this new office will especially require amendments to the constitutions and by-laws of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship and the Hispanic Conventions.

V. SEQUENCE OF KEY ACTIVITIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS PROJECT

ACTIVITY	DATES
A. Revision and preliminary adoption of the proposal by the Hispanic Caucus of the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada.	May 18-21, 1989
B. Distribution of the proposal to all congregations of the Obra Hispana for study, analysis and response.	June 15, 1989

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| C. | First dialogue of the Hispanic Caucus with the General Minister and President, other members of the General Cabinet and/or the General Board of our Church, for the purpose of sharing the proposal, analyzing it, receiving suggestions, comments and other reactions. | August 2, 1989 |
| D. | Reception, revision and initial endorsement of the proposal by the Hispanic and/or Bilingual Juntas and Conventions in the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest and the congregations of Florida and California at regularly scheduled meetings or at extraordinary assemblies called specifically for this purpose. | October 31, 1989 |
| E. | Second revision of the proposal by the Hispanic Caucus, recommendations and/or comments submitted by the three conventions will be considered. | Nov. 29-Dec. 2, 1989 |
| F. | Second dialogue with the General Minister and President, the president and other members of the Cabinet for new analysis of the project once the Hispanic Caucus has incorporated the recommendations etc. coming from the three Hispanic Conventions and to assure the consideration of any final suggestions offered. | Jan. 8-9, 1990 |
| G. | Revision and final adoption of the proposal by the Hispanic Caucus in order to submit it to the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship. | April 4-7, 1990 |
| H. | Final adoption of the proposal by the National Hispanic and Bilingual Fellowship at an extraordinary assembly. | July 10-14, 1990 |
| I. | Initiation of first phase of the three year fund raising campaign for the establishment of the Central Pastoral Office. | July 13, 1990 |
| J. | Initial reception of the proposal by the General Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada) and reference | July 21-24, 1990 |

to the Task Force on Renewal/Structural Reform.

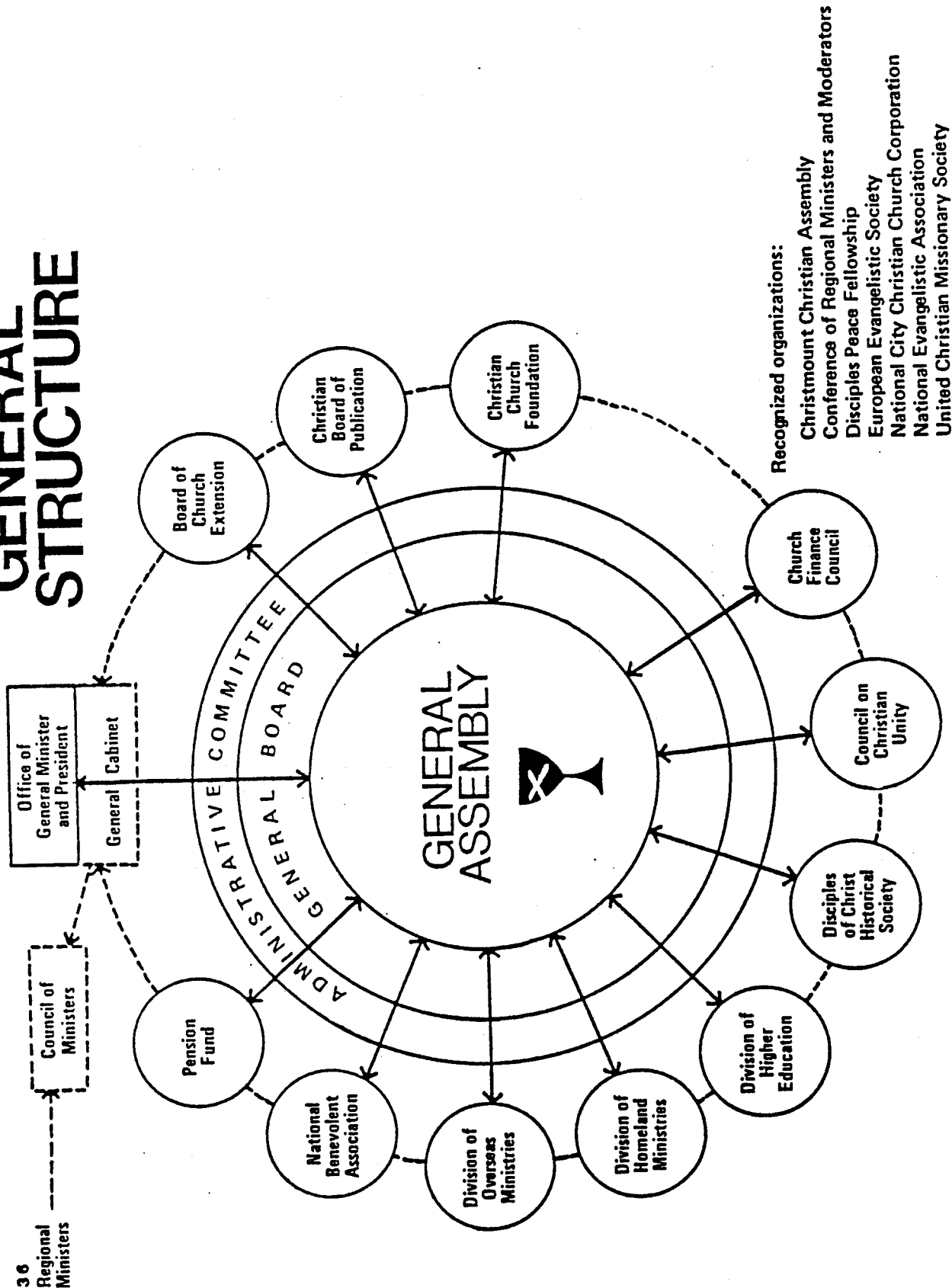
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| K. | Consideration of the Project by the Task Force on Renewal/Structural Reform in dialogue with the Hispanic Caucus. | Between July '90 & August '91 |
| L. | Agreement between the Hispanic Caucus and Task Force on Renewal/Structural Reform about the proposal to be submitted to the General Board. | July 18-20, 1991 |
| M. | Final approval of the Proposal by the General Board. | July 27-30, 1991 |
| N. | Negotiations and agreements between the Hispanic Caucus (functioning as the Pastoral Commission temporarily) and the Commission on Finance, and other general units about the financing of the Central Pastoral Office. | Between August '91 & April '92 |
| O. | Selection of the first National Pastor for Hispanic Ministries. | By April 1992 |
| P. | Design and implementation of a work program projecting toward the year 2000. | October 1992 |
| Q. | Ratification of the naming of the National Pastor and initiation of the new central structure for the Hispanic Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the U.S. and Canada. | July 15, 1992 |

Appendices

Flow charts for:

- Division of Homeland Ministries**
- General Church**

GENERAL STRUCTURE



CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

DIVISION OF HOMELAND MINISTRIES

