

Strategic Plan for Hispanic Ministry in the Kansas East Conference

History – Persons speaking Spanish visited Kansas long before any who spoke English. And there have been Spanish-speaking residents in the bounds of what is now Kansas for most of the years since. United Methodist efforts to minister with those persons who lived within the bounds of the Kansas East Conference have occurred occasionally as in the former “Spanish Mission” in Emporia. But no work in this area had been done recently until the 1990’s when several Anglos began to recognize a growing Hispanic presence in our midst. Outreach began into Hispanic communities in Emporia, Kansas City, and Topeka.

Peaches Joles provided some of the first Hispanic leadership in this new generation of work in our Conference in 1999 as she began to talk with existing Anglo congregations in areas of growing Hispanic population in the Kansas City metropolitan area helping them think through the possibility of Hispanic ministry. Her more recent efforts have focused with Hispanics along Central Avenue in Kansas City. In August 1999, the Rev. Aurelio Diaz came to us from the Methodist Church of Mexico to serve as Associate Pastor of Central UMC in Kansas City. Then in 2001 groups in Emporia and Topeka began the process of asking that their efforts become approved sites for Hispanic ministry under the National Hispanic Plan of the General Board of Global Ministries and that the Board assign missionaries to each. On August 1, 2001 Hector and Sherry Sanchez arrived in Emporia and on January 1, 2002 the Rev. Samuel Castro arrived in Topeka. At about that same time Grace UMC in Olathe had begun exploring the possibilities for ministry with the Hispanic residents of their community and they, in partnership with Congregational Growth & Development, employed Sylvia Romero half-time to begin that work in November 2000. Additional efforts were made under the leadership of the Rev. Cynthia Weems at the Metropolitan Avenue UMC in Kansas City. In the summer of 2004, Sylvia Romero and Hector Sanchez attended licensing school and were licensed as local pastors.

As those early efforts developed a number of interested Anglo persons were gathered into a Conference Task Force to explore what might be accomplished in our efforts with our Hispanic neighbors. By 2002 work had progressed far enough, and Hispanic persons were now in leadership in several sites, that it was decided it was time to create a new Hispanic Committee for the Conference made up of Hispanic leaders in our various ministry sites and others interested in the work. The Rev. Samuel Castro was asked to serve as chairperson. As that group developed it became apparent that the placement of our committee under Social Issues seemed inappropriate. They saw the development of faith communities and congregations as the first order of business with social ministry to follow as a part of that ministry’s work. They requested, and Congregational Growth & Development (CG&D) concurred, that the committee be moved from under Social Issues to CG&D.

The work of the Puente De Fe ministry in Topeka started in 2002 under the leadership of GBGM Missionary Rev. Samuel Castro. During his tenure, Rev. Castro provided numerous social services for individuals and families. He developed in-home Bible studies, provided Christmas food and toys to several hundred families, created a Sewing group, offered GED classes, Computer Training, and Summer programs for Youth. He also provided worship activities for special times of the Christian year. Rev. Castro left at the end of 2004, having completed his three-year GBGM commitment. GBGM assigned the Rev. Javier Rios to succeed him beginning in late 2005.

Philosophy of the National Plan - The methodology of the National Plan for Hispanic Ministry is “See-Discern-Act.” The Hispanic Committee of the Kansas East Conference has focused its work in that fashion.

“See” – The committee has studied demographics that come from the 2000 Census and discovered that the Hispanic population in the bounds of the Kansas East Conference has doubled in the last 10 years.

Projections are for continued rapid growth in the future. They have examined where, in the Conference, those persons are located and have structured their priorities accordingly. Assisting local United Methodist congregations to “see” their new neighbors is also a significant component of our plan.

“Discern” – The committee has requested that each of our six existing ministry sites demonstrate their discernment of the needs of Hispanic persons in their area. Assisting local United Methodist congregations in other areas of the Conference to “discern” the needs of their Hispanic neighbors is, again, a significant component of our plan.

“Act” – Developing programs of ministry designed to meet the discerned needs of the people has been a major emphasis of the committee and the diversity of ministries at our various sites demonstrates the many and diverse needs we have discovered. Now, the committee believes, it is time for the Conference to “act” in adopting the following priorities that our efforts might not only be strengthened at our six existing sites but expanded into additional areas where the Hispanic population is growing.

Priorities for Hispanic ministry in the Kansas East Conference:

1. Leadership development. To do this we will:

- a. Encourage pastors to participate in the New Church Leadership Institute in Mt. Sequoyah, Arkansas. This training equips potential new church pastors with the knowledge and skills for successful new church starts.
- b. Offer “Module” training of the National Hispanic Plan on an annual basis partnering, where possible, with neighboring conferences.
- c. Recruit Hispanic persons to participate in the Conference’s Lay Speaking program, including the new Commissioned Lay Speaking program
- d. To pursue other leadership training possibilities for Hispanic lay people.

2. Maintain and strengthen fulltime ministry leading to the constituting of a Hispanic congregation at KC: Mision Nueva Vida and Emporia: LaEsperanza. We will do this by:

- a. Working to build support from local churches within each district to help provide financial resources necessary to maintain these ministries

3. Maintain and strengthen fulltime Hispanic ministry at Olathe: Mision Unidos en Cristo with the goal of establishing a worshipping congregation. We will do this through the creation of a funding package demonstrating partnership with Olathe: Grace, the Kansas City District, agencies of the Annual Conference, and the General Board of Global Ministries. Target date for weekly worship is August 2006.

4. Maintain and strengthen fulltime Hispanic ministry at Topeka: Puente de Fe with the goal of establishing a worshipping congregation.

The ministry of Puente De Fe in Topeka came to a virtual halt with the departure of Rev. Samuel Castro at the end of 2004. Throughout 2005, the Board of Directors of Fellowship Inc. and Puente De Fe worked on establishing financial and administrative support in the Topeka District. Under new missionary Rev. Javier Rios, whose work will commence as of January 2006, it is anticipated that the following will take place:

- a) Build upon existing relationship with Fellowship, Inc. and with the board of directors which oversees both extension ministries
- b) Assume leadership for existing programming, including ESL classes, Camp Chippewa sponsorships, and Christmas family adoptions, among others
- c) Implement evangelism activities in the East Topeka community and other locations where there is a concentration of Hispanic residents
- d) Develop bible studies and worship activities.

5. **To support the development of an Hispanic ministry and worshiping congregation beginning with the Maple Ridge Apartments Community Center with St. Mark's, in Overland Park.** We will continue this ministry by providing a food pantry and clothing bank for the residents. A childrens after school program is provided once a week during the school year. This was expanded to a monthly movie at St. Mark's during the summer months. Many of the children attended our Vacation Bible School. A volunteer leads a weekly ESL class. There will be a Christmas Fiesta held at St. Mark's with the ladies from Maple Ridge cooking and St. Mark's providing groceries. Due to the lack of Spanish speaking ministers in our area, we are advertising in a Spanish newspaper for a Director of Hispanic Ministries to lead a Bible study and eventually a worshiping congregation.

6. **By December 2006 we would offer the "Pentecost Journey," an exploration of the variety in Hispanic culture, helping non-Hispanic discover who their new neighbors are to the following churches:**
 - a. KCK
 1. 66102 – Wesley UMC
 2. 66103 – around the old Rosedale UMC
 3. 66104 – University UMC and/or Trinity UMC
 4. 66105 – Central UMC
 5. 66106 – Metropolitan Ave. UMC

Shawnee Mission

 1. 66203 and 66216 – Shawnee UMC
 2. 66212 – Valley View UMC
 3. Old Mission UMC
 4. Asbury UMC
 5. Bristol Hill UMC
 6. Roeland Park UMC

Lawrence
Leavenworth
Manhattan
Junction City/Ft. Riley
Topeka

With support from the District Superintendent, create a mission & justice study group representing Topeka area churches which agree to participate in a Pentecost Journey exploration. (Potential participants might include, but not be limited to: Topeka First, Countryside, Highland Park, Grace, Shawnee Heights, Tecumseh, Crestview, Lowman, Oakland, Susanna Wesley, University.)

 - b. In 2007 those churches responding positively and want to take the next step, we will provide "Partners in the Mighty Works of God."

 - c. In 2007 Conference year, assist non-Hispanic congregations in areas of new, but small, Hispanic population prepare themselves for the potential for Hispanic ministry in the future. To do this we will offer these same curriculums to Anglo churches in the following communities where Hispanic population is just beginning to grow to significant numbers using existing District Resource Staff to facilitate.
 1. Atchison
 2. Bonner Springs
 3. Chanute
 4. Coffeyville

5. Independence
6. Lansing
7. Ottawa
8. Parsons
9. Pittsburg

d. In 2008 those churches who respond positively and want to take the next step, we will provide “Partners in the Mighty Works of God..”

The Conference Hispanic Committee, working with Congregational Growth & Development will monitor this work and bring further recommendations to the Conference as their plan for ministry exploration unfolds. They will work to build necessary partnerships for the support of this ministry. Currently that partnership includes

- 1) The General Board of Global Ministries – through its support of our two Hispanic missionaries, the Rev. Hector Sanchez at Emporia LaEsperanza; and the Rev. Javier Rios at Topeka Puente De Fe.
- 2) Congregational Growth & Development – through its continuing support of work at KC: Mision Nueva Vida, Emporia: LaEsperanza, Olathe: Unidos en Cristo, and Overland Park: St. Mark’s along with funding of the Hispanic Committee itself. \$85,500 for these ministries is found in the 2007 budget of Congregational Growth and Development.
- 3) Conference Board of Global Ministries – through its salary support of the work at Emporia: LaEsperanza and Topeka: Puente de Fe enabling the appointment of GBGM missionaries
- 4) The Flint Hills, Kansas City, and Topeka DCOM’s in financial support of programs at sites in their bounds
- 5) Local churches in each of those districts who have entered into partner relationships with each of our existing sites for ongoing support
- 6) Local churches where these ministries take place (or who helped give birth to them) who provide such things as ministry space, parsonage, office support, and significant financial resources, all of which demonstrates their ongoing commitment.

Hispanic populations over 1000 in a zip code or community

	2000 Census	District Totals	1990 Census
Flint Hills District		12597	
Junction City	1345		1274
Ft. Riley	1853		1270
Manhattan	1829		1059
Emporia	<u>6104</u>		1989
	11131		
Kansas City District		47056	
Leavenworth	1854		1806
Olathe	5317		1145
Kansas City	25511		10705
Shawnee Mission	<u>12289</u>		4128 Shawnee, Lenexa, Overland Park, Merriam
	44971		
Five Rivers District		5446	
Lawrence	<u>2991</u>		1941
	2991		
Parsons District		3939	
None	<u>0</u>		
	0		
Topeka District		<u>13826</u>	
Topeka	<u>12134</u>		6930
	<u>12134</u>		
	71227	82864	

Next tier communities with developing Hispanic population

Atchison	302	270
Bonner Springs	543	171
Chanute	389	313
Coffeyville	502	253
Independence	455	315
Lansing	361	167
Ottawa	551	376
Parsons	581	421
Pittsburg	827	208