

## **REPORT OF THE COUNCIL FOR HISPANIC MINISTRIES**

To the General Synod Council (GSC) of the Reformed Church in America, peace and greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Council for Hispanic Ministries submits the following as our report to GSC for the year of 2020.

The Council for Hispanic Ministries has continued to express the collective vision and voice of our constituents, as well as advocate for the rights of our people, all while ensuring that we speak up and work together on positive strategies to resolve issues that separate us all as God's people. Looking at the reality of the Hispanic population growth in America, we have been focusing on the care and growth of our current churches, as well as continuing our church planting work we have envisioned. These efforts have been at the forefront of our various work this past year and we take joy in them.

### **45th Annual Hispanic Assembly**

The Council for Hispanic Ministries held its 45th annual meeting in Miami, Florida, on August 22–24, 2019. It was a great meeting where we worshiped, celebrated, and had an opportunity to fellowship with old and new Hispanic pastors and leaders. The focus for our assembly was “The Communities of Our Churches.” We also continued to work on our vision of seeing 50 Hispanic churches planted by 2021, which was the vision of Rev. Eddy Alemán in his previous role as director for Hispanic Ministries. We are working with Church Multiplication and Hispanic Ministries to do so. We are excited to report that we are now in the process of surpassing our goal of 50 Hispanic churches by 2021! In the coming year, we will be working on strengthening and supporting all the church plants that are currently in their early years or envisioned to come to be. We praise the Lord for his great work so far and for what he has yet to do!

### **Support and Training**

Support to help pastors and church plants in Florida had begun before the assembly, and support conversations for the Texas area started in September 2019. In Florida, 12 pastors have been examined and will be commissioned as part of the Classis de las Naciones (Classis of the Nations) when it is formed, and 10 still are being prepared. Strategic planning began with Rev. Tim Vink and Rev. Dale Assink for the new training programs for commissioned pastors in Dallas, Texas, under approval of the Classis of Central Plains. The first training modules took place in November with the help of Jim Lankheet and the programs that have been created for the training of Hispanic leaders, with training continuing in January. We look toward some great collaboration, and ultimately great success, toward the raising of Hispanic leaders and churches, not just in Texas, but in other states and within other classes as well. The kingdom of God is expanding, and the gospel will be shared with many as we respond to the need for Hispanic leaders and churches in the RCA.

### **Latin America**

The Hispanic Council, along with Global Mission, Church Multiplication, and the Iglesia Reformada Dominicana (IRD; Dominican Reformed Church) are working to form and organize the cooperative works between the agencies of the RCA and IRD and officially appoint the missionary to achieve the objectives set forward by this collaboration. These objectives include the provision of assessments for pastors and leaders within the IRD. Currently, 17 churches in the IRD and the leaders within them are being trained for this work and for the preparation of

more leaders that can teach Reformed theology to the future congregations that will be part of the IRD.

The formation of a task force for multiplication guiding coalitions has created the initial path for international church planting. We are currently connected with 30 churches in Venezuela through various pastors and leaders in the U.S. These churches in Venezuela are looking to grow, raise leaders, and expand the gospel in a country that needs it greatly right now.

The director for Hispanic Ministries, Rev. Andres Serrano, connected with Compassion International and traveled to Nicaragua to learn how Compassion International combines church planting and child development. Compassion International's goals are to teach children at an early age and as they grow, while training and preparing pastors and leaders for this work within their own communities. As part of this trip, Andres was able to connect with the pastors of two churches that were planted in 2000 by Iglesia La Senda del Amor in Toronto, Canada. There is a great need for the gospel in Nicaragua, as well as many other parts of Latin America, and we will continue to look for the doors the Holy Spirit may open for the opportunity to share the gospel!

### **Fifth Annual Hispanic Summit**

In collaboration with Church Multiplication, the RCA Hispanic Church Planting Summit took place in Orlando, Florida, on March 5, 2020. The meeting was a great success. This year, the summit helped to gather more than 90 leaders, which included church planters, parent church leaders, next generation Hispanic leaders, and classis and regional synod leaders. The focus was in providing helpful tools for church planters in the process of building up their ministries and for future planters and their supporting churches and/or entities to have the best foundations for their future plants. Immediate feedback shared with us is of new callings for some current seminary students to plant and for some existing churches to reach out to the Hispanic communities around them. We will continue to support the students and churches as they respond to God's call.

### **Concluding Comments**

We are thankful for the work and support of the general secretary, the office of Global Mission, the office of Church Multiplication, the coordinator for Hispanic Ministries, and the General Synod Council for the work done for the Hispanic people of the Reformed Church in America and beyond. We look forward to seeing the fruits that will come to fruition this fall, as well as what new things that our 46th Hispanic Assembly will bring with coming together with the other councils of the RCA, as we look toward our future. We know we are not where we want to be, but we are going in the right direction. We believe that Transformed & Transforming is giving us focus for ministry effectiveness. With much love, many prayers, and hope for the future, we submit this report to you and pray for God's blessings and for the anointing of the Holy Spirit to be with us as we continue this journey of transformation to live and love like Jesus.

Respectfully submitted,  
The executive committee of the Council for Hispanic Ministries