



Letter from the President:

The beginning of the new Board of Directors of NCCHM has, understandably, had quite a rocky start—not to mention unexpected and a little shocking. At a critical juncture in the history of Hispanic ministry because of the restructuring of USCCB and the new perspectives opened to ministry by the August symposium in San Antonio, as well as because of the dire financial situation of NCCHM and the end of Melba's contract as Executive Director, we had problems filling the position of President of the organization. It has been a time of fear for the future and uncertainty about my capacity to do any of the tasks required, but also a time of grace. The grace comes from the members of the Board who have done everything in their power—even when they have ridiculous schedules full of professional, religious, and family obligations—to carry the organization through. It has come from Archbishop Gómez who committed his help and financial support to find an administrative assistant and we are now close to having one. It has come from Arturo Chávez, who has graciously given a domicile to NCCHM on the grounds of MACC. It has come from Alan Deck and Alejandro Aguilera, who are “acompañándonos” in this journey. And it has come from Domingo Rodríguez and Bishop Soto who give us their steadfast support and willingness to help in fundraising.

“In good times you can sit back and relax, but then you don't really own whatever you are involved in. In hard times, you fight and then become passionate about the cause. I imagine that is what is happening to me and to the organization. Faced with new challenges, we need to in a way, reinvent ourselves, recreate our organization with a new fire. And that, I suppose, brings life.”

“I guess we have learned the power of Providence in our lives. And so, we look at the future of NCCHM with trust ever stronger. We trust, particularly, that all the organizations get into the action of collaborating and working together for a fuller life of the Catholic church in all its diversity.”

A sort of improvised steering committee of Board members who live in Chicago (Jaime Bascuñán, Bill Lego, and Carmen Aguinaco), and therefore have more flexibility to meet, gathered on Easter week to give shape to a project to be organized by areas of work and to get some committees started for a more efficient work of NCCHM. Keeping the basic working structure of the Board of NCCHM, we propose to have the following committees composed by members of our organizations, with Board members acting as liaison:

- A steering committee to take advantage of the resources of three of the Board members living in Chicago.

- A Development committee to raise funds for our programs and operations. (Rey Malavé and Daniel Lizárraga)
- Organizational Services. (Bill Lego)
- Communications committee, to produce Puentes and revitalize the Web (Carmen Aguinaco and Dulce Jiménez)

Of course all these committees will be there to support and make possible the work and mission of NCCHM and an umbrella committee, that of Programs will ensure ongoing communication and feedback with the various committees. (Carmen and all Board members).

Member organizations will be contacted by liaison board members to organize the committees, which will then appoint a chair from among themselves.

Other news:

As had been agreed upon at the NCCHM Annual meeting in October 2007, NCCHM participated actively in the Lay Ecclesial Ministry Symposium held in Orlando in April of 2008. Jaime Bascuñán represented the organization. What follows is a brief report on the event. Please make sure to go into www.emergingmodels.org to get more detailed news and developments.

This past April the national Summit on Emerging models for Ministry was held in Orlando, Florida. Some 1,300 people, 55% lay and 45% ordained ministers, participated in a reflection on the results of the four-year study sponsored by the Lilly Foundation. The main goal of this project was to ascertain the excellence of pastoral leadership emerging in the United States. Through presentations by way of theological reflections, participants were divided into six groups of action so that practical applications for each area could be arrived at: Leadership in parishes with more than one site; parish coordinators and sacramental ministers; the next generation of pastoral ministers; implications for human resources; the impact of cultural diversity; parish roles, structures, and best practices.

Although there was a Hispanic presence, it did not represent proportionally the reality of the church in the US. 91% of the participants identified themselves as Caucasian. This evidences the need for our Hispanic leaders to take the initiative to enter into dialogue with the different national organizations that lead the reflection on pastoral ministry in the U.S. This experience suggests that we could really remain on the margins when these national events are convened. The reflections concluded that the future of pastoral leadership needs to include the majority of the Hispanic community. This implies that we need to better organize ourselves and find leaders with the capacity to be bridges with other cultures so that we could contribute what is characteristic of our culture and at the same time what is the nature of the church...

During the Summit, the initiative of the Intercultural Committee of NALM organized a dialogue among participants from different communities, so called, "of cultural diversity". Among the issues discussed were:

SUMMIT ORGANIZATION EXPERIENCE

- High expectations of something good happening
- The Spirit is working
- How we struggle to intentionally invite from diverse cultures
- Concerns regarding how participants were invited
- Web and brochure were not reflective of representation
- Music at liturgies were somewhat language diverse but not reflective of cultural diversity
- Strides are being made and the forum has grown
- Where are the young adults?

EMERGING MODELS OF LEADERSHIP – CODE OF EXCELLENCE

- Who decided on the code?
- Friendship/relationship must be emphasized
- Again, who was invited?

OTHER COMMENTS-SUGGESTIONS-INSIGHTS

- Must create safe environment
- What was the lens use for the presentations/sessions
- Multicultural v/s Intercultural dialogue
- How dependent are we on leadership? Who is in the process of decision making?
- Offices of Black Catholics and Hispanic Offices are collapsing nationally, how is that reflective in this Summit?
- Who has input? Who is brought to the table?
- Ministry with v/s ministry for/to
- Need more awareness how Culture is connected to faith
- Invisibility of many of diverse backgrounds or tokenism – who has “power”?
- It seems that persons from intercultural networks are collaborative, others are not.
- Many National Organizations of persons from diverse backgrounds were not invited/or are not being invited and involved in the process.

Last June, Carmen Aguinaco and Rey Malavé were received by the Subcommittee on Hispanic Affairs of the USCCB during their annual summer meeting. We had what we considered a fruitful dialogue on ways in which NCCHM could cooperate and follow the priority lines of the Bishops. The Bishops were quite appreciative of our efforts and encouraged our continued action. The following is what we presented:

NCCHM Directions for action in the next three years, based on the agreements arrived at during the San Antonio Symposium

NCCHM endeavors will be organized in three specific areas:

- Formation: Leadership and faith formation and Lay ecclesial ministry from a Latino perspective
- Intercultural dialogue
- Immigration and human dignity

1. Leadership and faith formation

- A.** The Aparecida document provides clear directions for a wholistic formation that not only sees to the development of the individual person, but to the formation of a missionary leadership that empowers people for mission at the pastoral, social, ecclesial, and family levels.

To this end we propose, during the rest of the year 2008, to work in close collaboration with the Federation of Pastoral Institutes and La Red in identifying and designing effective models for action and learning.

As an immediate step NCCHM will collaborate closely with member organizations, Boston College and Barry University in the celebration of a Symposium on the future of Hispanic ministry to be held in June of 2009 in Boston.

B. Lay ecclesial ministry from a Latino perspective

The Bishops' document *Co-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* is a signpost for the future of ecclesial ministry. It is our assessment that we need to engage in deep reflection and dialogue on the implications and ways of appropriating this vision in the Hispanic community. For this purpose, we will convene a Colloquium to be sponsored by various NCCHM member organizations on a Latino Perspective of *Co-Workers in the Vineyard* to be held in June of 2009 in Chicago.

For the years 2008-2009 we propose to work in close collaboration with the NALM's newly constituted Hispanic Forum and FIP.

2. Diversity: Intercultural dialogue

We believe that we could provide an effective ministry to the church in the United States only if we engage in dialogue with members of other cultural and ethnic groups.

We propose to extend an invitation to events, convened or co-sponsored by NCCHM, like *Raíces y Alas* to other groups and organizations within the US church. By creating relationships, we believe we could envision mission with an intercultural perspective which appreciates, values, and embraces all cultures within the church.

As a way of fostering fluent communications between the Bishops and the Hispanic leadership, we will continue collaboration with the USCCB Office for Diversity for mutual information, communication, consultation, and support in our respective work.

3. Dignity of life

We commit to advocacy and networking to support the Bishops on their stand on immigration issues.

NCCHM proposes to use our communication channels to disseminate, form, educate, and dialogue on these issues and to create a forum for advocacy on these issues. In addition, we intend to create a forum for advocacy on these issues.

Raíces y Alas 2010

Part of the journey of growth, formation, and discipleship, is to have a break and reflect on what we have learned along the way and to assess how we have responded to the needs of the Hispanic community as well as to set directions for the future. At the same time, we will celebrate our accomplishments and regain hope for the work ahead.

In this way, NCCHM sees itself as a convening body for the different Hispanic ministry organizations at the national to come together for evaluation, reflection, setting directions for the future and celebration.

In brief

- The Symposium materials are almost ready in a bilingual format and will soon be printed and distributed.
- Continuing the commitments agreed upon at the NCCHM Annual meeting, we are in conversation with Boston College and Barry University on the convocation of a Symposium on the future of Hispanic ministry, which will be held in 2009. More details to follow.
- The new NCCHM case brochure is completed now and will soon be used in fund raising efforts. If you are interested in receiving one, please let us know.