

**Latino Lay Leadership Development  
Initiative**

**For**

**The Metropolitan Chicago Synod**

**Of the**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in  
America.**

**Presented by**

**Jaime Dubón**

**January 2010**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Jesus sent his disciples and us to make disciples and to teach them to obey everything he had commanded them (Matt 28:19-20).

On the other hand the Metro Chicago Synod is in need for more leadership to be able to respond not only to the existing Hispanic congregations/ministries but also the growing demand and opportunity for new ministries. If we want to be serious about reaching out to the rapidly growing Hispanic population in Chicago area we need an intentional plan for leadership development.

Finally, the Latino Outreach Strategy (in progress) states that “the ELCA and the metropolitan Chicago Synod are committed to reaching out to all people with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And there are congregations in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod that are Latino/Hispanic and Anglo congregations that are transitioning to bilingual ministries.”

In order to be able to address this challenging reality, the MCS in proposing to develop and implement a Leadership Training Program which will focus on training lay Latinos and Anglos to deepen their commitment within their own congregations or in new ones.

## DIAGNOSE

A survey was sent out to ten Hispanic Pastors and their respective congregations to find out the level of leadership in each congregation and the need for lay leadership training (see attachment 1).

It was also communicated to the pastors, verbally in a meeting and through an email, that I needed to visit the Hispanic congregations in order to talk to the pastors and leaders, and that I would be available to receive invitations from them. Only two pastors invited me, so I visited St Stephen Martyr Lutheran Church in Carpentersville on Nov 18, and Trinity Lutheran Church in Humboldt Park on Dec 13.

Out of the ten surveys that were sent out, I got six replies from pastors with congregations and one from a pastor without congregation.

Behold some of the outcomes:

- 1) First communion program and Bible studies seem to be the most important ministries in the Hispanic Lutheran congregations, in addition to worship and music, since the six congregations that responded have these ministries. Other ministries like confirmation and membership class are also significant since five out six congregations are implementing them.
- 2) There is already certain degree of leadership development within the Hispanic congregations, which is evidenced by some ministries like first communion and music that are led by lay leaders in most of the congregations.
- 3) However, despite the fact that there is already certain level of leadership, all the Hispanic congregations confirmed that a lay Latino leadership training program is needed.

- 4) Some of the areas of training that the pastors identified are: Bible, Church history and Lutheranism (6); worship and outreach (5); ELCA's structure (2), ecclesiastical administration (1), counseling (1), Christian education (1), youth and family (1).
- 5) The education methodology they prefer is a combination of traditional classroom and workshop style. Only one pastor listed the online education as an option.
- 6) Finally, some of the recommendations they gave are:
  - a) Define a curriculum that takes into consideration some already existing programs and past experiences.
  - b) "Have teachers that will go to particular areas where churches can send their leaders to get the training instead of having all in Chicago."
  - c) "To be very attentive about the timing of the program. Many of our Hispanic members work and can't take off during the day to attend a workshop. Evenings would be nice and at our own congregation. People have a hard time traveling far."
  - d) "That we consider developing a special fund to provide some salary for deacons and deaconesses that will assist in the development of our ministries."
  - e) "We need more Hispanic pastors and more help from the synod encouraging alternative ways for studies (like classes in Spanish). There also needs to be more funds dedicated to Hispanic Ministry, too many churches are closing!"
  - f) To engage the pastors in the program.

## **DESIGN**

The following program takes into considerations the recommendations of the pastors and the some Hispanic Lutheran congregations in the Metropolitan Chicago Synod.

It is also in concordance with the Latino lay leadership program that the ELCA-EOCM is designing in order to be implemented throughout the country.

### **Lay Leadership Training School**

#### **Purpose**

The Lay Leadership Training School (LTS) is an official organism of the Metropolitan Chicago Synod (MCS) that trains, equips and certifies leaders from our own congregations. It exists to help lay people to deepen their Christian identity and participation in the mission of the whole church, and to provide training for lay leaders so that they become committed disciples within their own congregations or other ministries of this Synod.

#### **Curriculum**

LTS has a curriculum of two years, which consists of twelve courses, six per academic year. The curriculum is based on the traditional areas of Bible and Theology, Church History and Pastoral, but it also includes Lutheran identity and current challenging issues. Each course can be implemented in one-day session (8 hours) or in 3 sessions (3 hours each). The frequency of meetings will depend on the modality adopted. All of the courses are introductory in nature. Some reading can give students a solid background to the topic.

The leaders are identified by their own pastors and congregations and introduced to the school. Once the training program is completed and the requirements fulfilled, the students are officially certified by the MCS to serve the people of God in this Synod, as Catechist, Evangelist (lay pastor) and Liturgical Assistant.

This program will be targeting not only lay leaders from the Hispanic Lutheran Congregations but also leaders from Anglo congregations who are interested in doing Latino outreach.

<b>First semester (Sep-Dec)</b>	<b>Second semester (Jan-May)</b>	<b>Third semester (Sep-Dec)</b>	<b>Fourth semester (Jan-May)</b>
Mission and Discipleship	Church history and Reformation	Preaching	Stewardship: Time, Treasury and Talents
Introduction to Bible	Lutheran Identity: Confessions	Christian Education	Ecclesiastical Administration and Organization
Old and New Testament	Liturgy, Liturgical Calendar and Music	Pastoral Care	Mission and Evangelism (Social Justice)

**Accreditation**

After completing this educational program the students will have the opportunity to continue their theological education at a higher level (Seminary), getting academic credits for what there have already studied. In order to do this the coordination committee will have to meet with LSTC to review possible previous agreements or to sing a new academical covenant.

**Administration**

The LTS will be under the leadership of a committee appointed by the bishop, and will consist of at least three members. The DEM should be part of this committee. A committee chairperson will be also appointed by the bishop for a two year renewable appointment. A coordinator for the LTS will be hired and will be in charge of coordinating, recruiting and implementing the program.

**Teachers**

Hispanic Pastors, trained lay people, seminary professors or any other capable person can serve as teachers of this school. They will be invited to serve as such by the coordination committee.

**Location**

The location of the LTS will be the church where the coordinator belongs to. But the classes are going to be offered in two locations: Chicago and a place in the western suburbs. The students from Chicago and its surrounding may meet at the Synod office or at any designated congregation, while students from the congregations in the western suburbs may meet at a congregation in their own area. When implementing a workshop everybody may meet at one location only.

**Schedule**

This proposal can be implemented in September of 2010. In the meantime, a promotional and recruitment plan should be implemented. As the Latino Strategy Task Force is going to be visiting the different Conferences of our Synod, the occasion can be taken to promote the school and the Pastors and congregations.

**Cost**

In order to implement this proposal it will be necessary to have an operational budget which will cover materials, logistics, the coordinator, teachers, etc. The coordination committee will be in charge of determining this budget. Some payment will be also expected from the students.

**Final consideration**

In order to implement this Lay Leadership Development Initiative we need God's wisdom, the Synod determinations, the Latino Pastors commitment, and the interest of the congregations. In this sense, it is important the participations and involvement of everyone. Once the proposal is enriched and accepted the Coordination Committee should be appointed immediately so that it designs and implements the promotional and recruitment plan.

# Attachments

1. Survey and answers