STRATEGY

FOR MINISTRY

WITH THE HISPANIC-LATINO CONSTITUENCIES

IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U. S. A.)

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The Advisory Committee of Hispanic Ministries

and

The Office of Hispanic Congregational Enhancement

of the Racial Ethnic Ministries Area

of the National Ministries Division

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1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 – Historical Background
The background of the *Strategy for Ministry with the Hispanic Constituencies/with Spanish Speaking Groups in the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.)* is found in the first document approved by the 1984 General Assembly entitled "Hispanic Ministries in the Southwest: Directions for the Future."

In 1983, reunion took place between the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. and the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.. The reunion process between the two largest branches of North American Presbyterianism required the attention of the church. The work of Hispanic ministries was relegated to a lesser priority. Other projects, such as the Book of Common Worship, were also postponed and delayed. No follow up report on Hispanic ministries was made because the implementation did not take place.

In 1995, the Presbytery of the Pacific, reclaiming the previous action, moved at the 207th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) that a broad strategy be developed and implemented for ministry with Spanish-speaking groups in the U. S. A. and Puerto Rico. This motion was known as Proposal 95-70. Since then, the Office of Hispanic Congregational Enhancement, the National Presbyterian Hispanic Caucus, and the Advisory Committee of Hispanic Ministries have been working on this project.

In 1996, the Advisory Committee of Hispanic Ministries and the National Presbyterian Hispanic Caucus, presented a plan to the Office of National Ministries Division, to develop a general strategy for ministry with Spanish-speaking groups in the entire country. The plan included regional consultations and a national symposium for 1999, but the symposium was not possible until 2000. The Strategy Committee was created with representatives from the previously mentioned entities.

In 1997 and 1998, the Office of Hispanic Congregational Development and the Office of Racial Ethnic Ministries along with other General Assembly entities, were not able to obtain the necessary funds for the development of the project. Without this support, the basic process of having regional consultations and the symposium was not possible.

A new plan was then adopted. The Strategy Committee selected several writers. The writers were to prepare drafts for the topics which were envisioned to be included in the final document. These drafts were received and reviewed by the Strategy Committee, and then sent to the regional caucuses for input and suggestions. The drafts were also presented for input and suggestions at the First National Symposium on Hispanic Ministries. In addition, input was also received from meetings held separately by some synods.

All the material which was accumulated in this process was considered and served as the basis for this document. The material included reflections, analyses, and suggestions which are presented for your study. The Advisory Committee for Hispanic Ministries along with the Office of Hispanic Congregational Enhancement took upon themselves the most difficult and risk-filled task.. This task was to receive and study all the materials, create order from among all the input and suggestions, fill the void on some topics, edit the entire materials and create a coherent presentation to fit within the general strategy of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.).

In order to be more inclusive with Portuguese speaking groups, and other groups with Latin roots, the word Latino was added to the title.

The task was not easy. The quantity of the accumulated material made it necessary to select the best from among all the input. The task was accepted with "fear and trembling," but with confidence relying on the Lord's direction. In order to achieve uniformity and coherence in the document, the work encountered several obstacles. The obstacles included a variety of writing styles among the drafts, and differences in the theological focus within the diversity of the Reformed Tradition. The General Assembly has set the parameters for this type of document. This required that the document be reduced to ten percent of its original size. Another important aspect was that the statement be within the general strategy of our church. This meant that we examine carefully how we state what we wanted to say.

1.2 – The character of the final document
In the light of the historical background, the following characteristics of the document are to be taken into account, as the document is considered/studied:

This is a document for consultation. The General Assembly can utilize it in its planning for the development and promotion of ministries with the Hispanic-Latino constituencies in the U. S. A. and Puerto Rico. The significance of the document is that it serves the programmatic purposes of our church.

It is important to note that this is not a permanent nor a definitive document. This *Strategy* must be recreated by each new generation of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies.

First, the mobility of the Hispanic-Latino people and its various components must be taken into account. These include the rapidness by which moves take place, the changing and new geographic areas where people settle, and the changes in the composition of the nationalities in any given place. When these factors are taken into consideration, strategies that were assumed as valid, may be ineffective and inoperable in a given time and place.

Second, new contexts arise with changing circumstances. These changes are brought about because of the richness in the ethnic-cultural diversity of the people, because of their living in this country and because changes occur rapidly. Fifty years ago, the Hispanic-Latino constituencies were limited to border areas and to the international sources. Today, the presence of Spanish-speaking groups may be found as far away as Alaska.

These are some of the reasons why this document must not be considered permanent. By the time the *Strategy* is received by the congregations, the people may already be experiencing a variety of new conditions. The most that one can expect for this document is that it can be used for study and for consultation.

Therefore, this is an open document. It can be used to motivate decision-making for strategies at the local and regional levels. The document is meant to be inclusive. Scripture teaches that there is only One who lasts: "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*" Hebrews 13:8.
He is the only permanent guide providing direction for the task of writing this document.

1.3 – Content of the final document

The *Strategy* begins with the theological statement about the nature and mission of the church. Also included in this section are important elements of Reformed Theology and important information about the cultural identity of the Hispanic-Latino constituency. The foundations of this work are the Word of God, the Book of Order and the Book of Confessions. These basic Presbyterian documents provide the context necessary for a coherent and substantial reflection anchored in the Reformed faith.

The different sections include the ministries which require our focus and implementation. The *Strategy* addresses evangelism; New Church Development and redevelopment of congregations; spiritual formation; Christian education; congregational activities; discipleship; vocation and leadership; wholistic stewardship; mission thrusts; mission funding; and ministries in the following: community outreach, women, men, young adults, older adults, children and persons with different capabilities; Reformed worship and its elements; ecumenical dialogue; dialogue with other religions; the pastoral call; the priesthood of all believers; and the communication and proclamation of the Gospel.

1.4 – The *Strategy* in the context of the general program of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.)

The church establishes the processes for the development of policies and programs which fulfill the needs and expectations of its constituencies. The Book of Order states, "*The Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) shall give full expression of the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life. Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition, as well as different marital conditions (married, single, widowed, or divorced) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the church.*" (G-4.0403)

Because the church provides the space and the procedures for the participation of all its members, the *Strategy* can take its place within the general program of the denomination. The programmatic guidelines of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are found in the six fundamental principles of the "*The Great Ends of the Church.*" (G-1.0200) These principles are significant in the history of North American Presbyterianism. They were incorporated in the constitution of the United Presbyterian Church of North America in 1910 after a long process which had begun in 1904. Since then they have been ratified in the several stages of the denomination and are current today. *The Great Ends of the Church* constitute a significant legacy that the church contributes to the Christian tradition of the nation.

These principles can be affirmed again in this document. *The Strategy for Ministry with the Hispanic-Latino Constituencies*, is a way to implement *The Great Ends of the Church.* To give meaning to the *Strategy* it is necessary to take into account the historic declaration of Presbyterianism. The Book of Order states, "*The Church is called to be a sign in and for the world of the new reality which God has made available to people in Jesus Christ." (*G- 3.0200a**)** The Hispanic-Latino contituencies have the right to enjoy the new reality in Christ, and to ask the church to be the sign in the new reality.

For these reasons the *Strategy* is developed within *The Great Ends of the Church* (G.1.0200) The first is *the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind.* In this section are found the strategies for evangelism and the development of congregations among the Hispanic-Latino constituencies.

The second addresses *the shelter, nurture and the spiritual fellowship of the children of God.* In this section are found the strategies for Christian Education, spirituality in the Reformed context, and wholistic stewardship. The third is *the maintenance of divine worship.* In this section are found the strategies for Reformed worship and suggestions for liturgical elements. The fourth is the *preservation of the truth.* In this section are found the strategies for the principles of the Christian identity in the Reformed context. The fifth is *the promotion of social righteousness.* In this section are found the strategies for the various ministries which are designed to give testimony for God's justice in the world. The various ministries include the work with women, men, youth and young adults, older adults, children, couples, singles, widowed, and divorced persons. The fifth is *the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world.* In this section are found the strategies for mission, mission funding, effective communication of the Gospel, and developing discipleship among the Hispanic-Latino constituencies in the U. S. A. and Puerto Rico.

1.5 – How to use this document

The *Strategy* is a document for consultation. This document can serve to motivate. This document can be used by the organizations, churches, and governing bodies in the analysis, reflection, and decision making in their planning. The *Strategy* does not address specific situations nor particular problems. Many congregations may find themselves in diverse, localized situations which are not addressed in the document. It is recommended that the document be used as a study guide. The document may be adapted to particular situations by local churches, in seminars, panels and retreats.

The *Strategy* is a valuable tool for leadership training and development. The topics are broad and provide a wider vision of the context of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies. The Hispanic-Latino leadership needs to see the vision for mission of the entire church. The interconnectionalism of the polity and governance among the governing bodies, the representative style of leadership, the Reformed theology, and the justice of and sovereignty of God are the important principles to consider when using this document. The *Strategy* can be a valuable tool in seminaries, and in training of lay and commissioned personnel.

The *Strategy* is a work in progress. This is not a permanent nor definitive document. The document is a statement of the current historical context of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies. The current situations will change in the future. It is imperative that new proposals and statements begin to be formulated now to enrich this document.

The *Strategy* is a product of a long process, beginning with the historical background. It was challenging and difficult to eventually establish a successful direction. In the future the use the document may be a point of departure. To the generations of the future, this generation provides this document as a legacy, the *Strategy for Ministry With the Hispanic-Latino Constituencies.*

2 – THEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

2.1 – Christ is the church's foundation

The word church does not appear in the Old Testament. In its place are found the concepts of *the people of God and community.* In the New Testament the church appears as a divine-human concept and universal in character. This universality is affirmed in overcoming the limitations of the Greek culture. The church overcame its prejudices including social, cultural, religious, racial-ethnic, nationality and gender prejudices to project its universality. This was, in effect, Christ's command "*…and you will be my witnesses…to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8)* Paul emphasizes this concept in his letter to the Galatians: "*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is not longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28)* From its beginnings the church was an inclusive and universal entity.

The existence of the church is due to God's kindness and grace. (Ephesians 1:1-11) The Book of Order states "*Christ calls the Church into Being, giving it all that is necessary for its mission to the world, for its building up, and for its service to God. Christ is present with the Church in both Spirit and Word. It belongs to Christ alone to rule, to teach, to call, and to use the Church as he wills, exercising his authority by the ministry to women and men for the establishment and extension of his Kingdom.."* *(G-1.0100b).* Christ himself declares the inclusiveness and universality of the church and declares its existence through his sacrifice on the cross. "*In affirming with the earliest Christians that Jesus is Lord, the Church confesses that he is its hope and that the Church, as Christ's body, is bound to his authority and thus free to live in the lively, joyous reality of the grace of God"*. (G-1.0100d). The Westminster Confession states "*The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children; and is the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God…"*(6.141).

2.2 – The mission of the church

The mission of the church is to live in the world and be an authentic witness to the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 5:13-16). The Brief Statement of Faith states that "*In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unnmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom and peace."* (65-71). The testimony of the church in the world as a witness to the Kingdom of God is translated as serving the oppressed, the needy, and the rejected. (Isaiah 58: 6-7; Amos 5: 21-24).

The mission of the church is characterized by being "*joy and gladness*." (Psalm 51:8). The Brief Statement of Faith, already cited, continues "*In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, 'Come, Lord Jesus!'"* (72-76). Witnessing to the world in this joyful mission is the responsibility of the church of Christ and the reason for its being.

There are millions of people in the world who do not know the Gospel. This is the unavoidable challenge to the church. All obstacles must be overcome including geographic, cultural, economic, sociological and ethnic obstacles in obedience to the Lord's command to preach the word to all the people of all the nations. (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47). *"The Church is called to undertake this mission even at the risk of losing its life, trusting in God alone as the author and giver of life, sharing the gospel, and doing those deeds in the world that point beyond themselves to the new reality in Christ."* (G-3.0400).

2.3 – The Reformed identity

In its confessions, the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) expresses the faith of the Reformed tradition. Central to this tradition is the affirmation of the majesty, holiness, and providence of God who creates, sustains, rules, and redeems the world in the freedom of sovereign righteousness and love. Related to this central affirmation of God's sovereignty are other great themes of the Reformed tradition: (1) The election of the people of God for service as well as for salvation; (2) Covenant life marked by a disciplined concern for order in the church according to the Word of God; (3) A faithful stewardship that shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of the gifts of God's creation; (4) The recognition of the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny, which calls the people of God to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God." (G-2.0500) We are called to organize and offer an effective program for the formation and doctrinal instruction which affirms the Reformed identity of the congregation. It is necessary to know the fundamentals of the denominational identity to be Presbyterian.

In today's world, there is a tendency to set aside denominational identity. In previous decades this tendency brought about interdenominational unions; today this tendency produces independent churches. We belong to a denomination which is first Christian, and also part of the Reformed Tradition. The richness of our theological and doctrinal heritage provides the necessary guides to be faithful to God in this historical context. The Book of Order states, *"Yet the church, in obedience to Jesus Christ, is open to the reform of its standards of doctrine as well as of governance. The church affirms 'Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda,' that is, 'The church reformed , always reforming,' according to the Word of God and the call of the Spirit."* (G-2.0200).

2.4 – The cultural identity

The Hispanic-Latino constituencies comprise a focus of attention in the implementation of the mission of the church in the U. S. A. and Puerto Rico. According to the latest data from the 2000 Census, The Hispanic-Latino group is the fastest growing in the United States, and at the same time is the largest amongst the minority groups. The Hispanic-Latino presence is evident in the large metropolitan areas, and is the significant majority in cities and counties across the country.

The word Hispano/a as a noun is the term used by the U. S. Census to classify the people from Latin America. Its use as a statistic classification ignores the cultural significance. The term is utilized to provide identity and cultural meaning in the U. S., for recent immigrants as well as for the descendents of Hispanic-Latinos born in the U. S.. Many of the latter have lost their native language, or speak less fluently, yet identify themselves as Hispanic-Latino culturally.

The people of Portuguese ancestry and language are not Hispanic even though the census classifies them as Hispanic. The Portuguese culture is similar to the Hispanic culture. In order to be inclusive, the word Hispanic-Latino is used in the *Strategy.*

The Hispanic-Latino constituencies in the U. S. A. are represented by a variety of cultural and nationality differences. Hispanic-Latinos are not the only ones in this country; there are many cultures from different continents.   The interaction among groups is producing something new, and yet to be classified adequately. There are many mixtures, in some instances groups identify themselves as chicanos, tex-mex, newyoricans, Mexican American or Cuban Americans. The same phenomenon has affected other groups giving rise to the Bostonians, Italian Americans, etc.. The Hispanic-Latino identity is in a state of flux and is a work in progress.

For the Hispanic-Latino constituencies, particular national origins or nationalities continue to provide a sense of pride and is part of the diaspora regardless of the reason for their presence in this country or the length of time in this country. There is unity among all the groups in the struggle for the common cause. For example, the use of the native language. The Hispanic-Latino constituencies in the U. S. society continue to value their language, be it Spanish or Portuguese. This holds true regardless the level of fluency or its mixture with English or with each other. It may Spanish-English, or Portuguese-English or even Portuguese-Spanish-English.

According to the 2000 Census, Spanish is without a doubt the second language most used in the U. S. A.. Spanish is spoken by three times more people than French, German, Italian, or Chinese combined in the U. S. A.. Among the reasons for the continued use and conservation of Spanish and Portuguese are the psychological, the practical and the presence.   The psychological factor provides defense against discrimination accompanied with the pride felt for the language, the cultural identity and traditions of one far from home. Being bilingual in Spanish and English or Portuguese and English provides a professional advantage for those who aspire to work in the international context in business, communication, media and other careers. Finally, there is the increasing presence and use of Spanish and Portuguese, especially in the communication and television media. At least four national chains provide services and access to everyone in this country. These include options for news, soap operas, live audience and commercials which are all produced by and for the Spanish-Portuguese speakers. It is an international market.

Some of the reasons which call the church's attention regarding the Hispanic-Latino constituencies are the following: The Hispanic-Latino's socio-economic conditions are among the worst in the nation. Statistical evidence shows that they are among the poorest, the least educated and have one of the highest unemployment rates. Because of the tenacious adherence to Spanish or Portuguese, this places them in discriminatory circumstances and they are victims of abuse in much of their daily life.

The U. S. A. cannot ignore that the Third World is within its borders and it requires attention and response to its conditions. It is imperative that the church develop mission programs with the Hispanic-Latino constituencies in close cooperation at all levels of the church. The success of the mission programs will depend on how open the church is to make available all its resources which include counsel, cooperation, experience, funds, spiritual fellowship, etc. in response to the Lord's call. Ministry with the Hispanic-Latino constituencies is unavoidable for the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.).

This ministry calls the church to respect the Hispanic-Latino cultural values as they are incorporated in the life of the church. The presence and membership of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies in the church will enrich the church's mission as it is called to serve the increasing diversity of the country.

2.5 – Our cultural identity in the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.)
The theology and the Reformed Tradition are the features which unite us. We are united under the sovereignty of God, by the grace of Jesus Christ, and by the presence of the Holy Spirit. We are united by the supreme authority of the Scripture, by the practice of worship, by the Sacraments and by the sense of the mission of the church. At the same time we are divided by the distrust, by paternalistic stances, both subtle and open, imposed by a false sense of superiority resulting in an unacceptable practice of discrimination. Is it possible to be part of the church based on our beliefs while simultaneously alienated by it because of the maltreatment? This query requires two proposals. The Hispanic-Latino constituencies must find solutions among themselves and at the same time challenge the church to reconsider its behaviors towards minority groups, among which are the Hispanic-Latino constituencies. It is a paradox that while being part of the church at the same time feeling alienated by it. There is much that unites us; it is important to provide remedies for the large part that separates us.

The 2000 Census reports that there are nearly 35 million Hispanic-Latinos in the U. S. A.. Compared to this figure, the Hispanic-Latino membership in the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) is one one thousandth of the Hispanic-Latino population in the country.

The disquieting finding from denominational studies is that the membership in Spanish language churches in not increasing. A major effort must be made to address this situation. The findings from the research conducted by the General Assembly shows that 55% of the Hispanic-Latino groups worship in congregations of less than 150 members, only 5% worship in congregations of more than 500 members. Regular attendance is high in churches where the worship is conducted in either Spanish or Portuguese, estimated at 83%. Estimated attendance where worship is conducted in English is 23%, and 11% attend worship in the bilingual context.

Priority must be given to the lack of contact between the local congregation and the denominational structure and its programs. This is a double problem because of the absence of bilingual staff among the denominational positions and in the governance, hierarchical structure. This vacuum is seen by many as discriminatory.

It is difficult to lend credibility to the term Hispanic-Latino Presbyterian when the denomination demonstrates a lack of recognition of its presence. Among the many issues which prohibit the integration of Hispanic-Latino is the lack of a seminary education. There is a scarcity of Hispanic-Latino professors and students. The lack of funds constrains the vocational formation. In addition to the lack of denominational orientation and education, what is most evident is the absence of the Hispanic-Latino presence and voice when denominational events are planned. This takes away the learning experience and denies Hispanic-Latinos their presence, participation, and representation.

Given these circumstances, it is difficult for Hispanic-Latinos to learn and adopt the Presbyterian identity with any enthusiasm. Nevertheless, it is the *Strategy's* goal that Hispanic-Latinos increase their presence in the variety of programs and organizations of the denomination.

Hispanic-Latinos expect that the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.), in spite of all the aforementioned obstacles, will recognize their full-fledged membership in the present and in the future, as the church achieves its full representation of American society. The Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) has more than one hundred years of relationships with Hispanic-Latinos , both within the nation's borders and in the rest of the world. What is urgently needed is that the denomination avoid turning its back and rejecting part of its own history.

3. - THE GREAT ENDS OF THE CHURCH

3.1 - The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind

This calls for evangelism. This activity by the church is the joyful and grateful response, by the individual and the collective, to the call that God issues to the church to fulfill the Great Commandment made by Christ in Matthew 29: 19-20. Evangelism is all that activity that has as its purpose the proclamation of the Good News for the salvation of humankind. The Reformed theology interprets evangelism whereby the individual relates vertically to God and horizontally integrates into the church. The Book of Order defines the scope of evangelism in this manner: *"God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit: a. to announce the good news that in Christ Jesus the world is reconciled to God, b. to tell all nations and peoples of Christ's call to repentance, faith, and obedience, c. to proclaim in deed and word that Jesus gave himself to set people free, d. to offer in Christ's name fullness of life now and forever, e. to call people everywhere to believe in and follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, f. to invite them into the community of faith to worship and serve the triune God." (W-7.2001).*

3.1.1 - The priority of evangelism among the Hispanic-Latino communities

The Hispanic-Latino population in the U. S. A. is increasing at a phenomenal rate. The church must proclaim the good news of Christ by all the available means and media among the Hispanic-Latino constituencies. This means that numeric growth is important, and simultaneously the development of discipleship in the proclamation of the good news. This requires that all believers be trained and equipped to evangelize, to use the appropriate means and media and to include them in the total ministry of the church. The goal is that all the members of the church be both evangelists and missionaries in their own area.

The society in which we live encourages competition as a method to achieve personal development and success, as well as for the group/team. This competitive nature often causes cruel and painful harm in family and personal relationships. This calls for the program of evangelism to promote reconciliation with God and with one another. (II Corinthians 5: 18-20) One's faithfulness is difficult in a society where the highest success is measured in material worth. This calls for the proclamation of the life in Christ which enables responsible participation in the society in which one lives. (James 3: 14-17).

In today's world, discrimination, segregation and racism are common practices. Hispanic-Latinos and all minorities are subjected to these problems. This means that we educate all our congregations so that everyone who is reached in our communities by evangelistic efforts be received wholeheartedly. Everyone is to be made welcome in our churches. Our communities must be supportive of all who are frustrated in the face of injustice and rejection, and receive them in human compassion and solidarity as fellow human beings. The evangelistic strategy of our churches should be to create communities of faith which strengthen the Christian experience through love and the proclamation of the Gospel.

3.1.2 - Models for evangelism
The model for evangelism is open to the creativity of each group. There is no finished nor fixed method, only the creative and promising approaches within the rich and abundant situations in which the congregation finds itself. The models offered in the *Strategy* are presented to respond to the needs of the churches. The models are effective only if they fill the needs of the group. All the models have their advantages and disadvantages depending on how the models are utilized. It may be that one or more models will be used, or variations of some to create another one. It is important before any model is selected, that the congregation analyze the community and the target population in which it intends to work so that the most appropriate model is selected.

3.1.2.1 - Personal invitation - The purpose of this method is to motivate and to provide the skills so that everyone in the local church may invite their family members, friends, neighbors and others with whom they are in contact to come to church and to participate in its activities. It is important to create a favorable and welcoming atmosphere for the use of this model. One could plan "A Friends' Day" so that every member would bring at least one other person on that Sunday, or day of the week or day of the month. Special activities could be planned for that day. This model may be used throughout the year.

3.1.2.2 - Personal visit - Evangelism by visitation is to make personal contacts in the community. Visits may be made to homes, hospitals, schools, rehabilitation centers, homes for the elderly and other public places. This model requires that every member present the good news. When this model is consistent it can bring the desired result, which is the commitment to Christ and to the church. It is important that the church be welcoming and receptive and that members support one an other in the use of this model.

3.1.2.3 - Community outreach - This model represents all activity outside the walls of the church building. It can be in the form of worship services in homes, in sections of the community (barrios), in homes or groups of homes, or in other groups. The format of the activity will vary depending on the group's needs including worship, prayer or Bible study. The groups will be led by members of the congregation who will be trained with the leadership skills for these activities.

3.1.2.4 - **Distribution of literature** - This model is the distribution of the appropriate literature to be used at home, in group homes, and other public places. There is much literature available which does not adhere to the Reformed Tradition; therefore careful analysis must be given to its selection. A team could be organized to study the material beforehand to determine the adequacy in its content and interpretation. The team could write and prepare its own materials to respond to the specific needs of the community or target group with whom it will be used.

3.1.2.5 - Campaigns - This model utilizes public worship services with the objective to present the Gospel to attract large numbers of people to Christ. The services may be in the church sanctuary, in public auditoriums, in stadiums or in any public arena which is suitable. The services may be sponsored by the local church, with the cooperation of other local churches or with the cooperation of several denominations.

3.1.2.6 - Small groups (cells) - This model utilizes small groups (cells) organized in the home of a church member. The groups may be formed with people from a common work place who would be invited to the home. The group process could be similar to discipleship orientation. This model requires that the group leader be trained with the appropriate skills for working with small groups.

3.1.2.7 - Side Door - This model is to prepare programs to work with and attract the entire family. This activity requires that the leader and other members of the group be trained to work with all members of the family including adults, youth and children. New families who may move into the neighborhood are one target group who might be approached by special teams from the church.

3.1.2.8 - Home Grown Worship Celebrations - This model utilizes the organizing of informal groups around special topics or common activities of the group with the purpose of meeting specific spiritual needs. The meetings of the group would be in places and times that are common to the group, sometimes at a restaurant or café around a meal time. The meetings would be in an atmosphere in which the group is comfortable and to which other friends could be invited. This model is effective with youth and young adults.

3.1.3 - Organizing new churches
The immediate objective of evangelism is to integrate the believer(s) into a community of faith, the church. The church is described in the Theological Statement of the *Strategy* and its characteristics are included in the section of the Reformed Tradition. To these should be added an interesting concept. In the New Testament the word church is used to refer to meetings or assemblies of the believers. The church was not seen as an institution but rather as an association of like-minded persons. It can then be said that the church is every place where believers are gathered to worship or for Bible study.

3.1.4 - Preparing for a New Church Development project
The New Church Development project follows an already established process. The proper attention must be given to the several stages to insure success for the process. The first stage is to investigate the characteristics of the community and the target group of people; this is called a feasibility study. The second stage is the selection of the appropriate leader. The third stage is to consider which church model might be used.

3.1.4.1 - Feasibility study: The first step in the feasibility study for a New Church Development is to carry out a demographic study to identify where a new church might be organized. Because the target group is Hispanic-Latino, the study would identify where the group is concentrated, would analyze the economic situation, the socio-educational level(s), and the specific local needs of the target group. The different sources of information would include the school population figures, census information, and city and municipal government statistics and services. The information could be gathered by a local church team, by a team from several local churches or by a presbytery team. The teams are formed by people who specialize in compiling and interpreting the data.   Some of the important pieces of information are to what extent other churches are already serving the area, regardless of the denomination; what community, social and religious services are already being provided; and what percentage of the population is being reached.

It is important to determine if another church of the Reformed Tradition, or Presbyterian, is already in place, and if the possibility for cooperation exists, and what type of cooperation, such as leadership sharing or financial support. When all the information is gathered and interpreted, the study could suggest whether it is feasible to organize an Hispanic-Latino congregation and what the membership potential might be.

It is important to determine what buildings are available to start a new congregation. For an Hispanic-Latino constituency, the building would provide the psychological affirmation of security and identity. Should a building not be available, contacts could be made with an existing congregation to provide a meeting place - nesting. If the existing congregation is Presbyterian, the contacts would be made by the regional Presbytery staff or committee.

Another important part of the first step is the availability of funds to provide an adequate budget. The process for the quest for funds and creating a budget for a New Church Development is already in place in the appropriate governing body, be it the presbytery or the synod. It is important at this initial stage, in addition to the governing body staff, that the leadership or representation from the Hispanic-Latino constituency be included. The success of the project will be determined to a large extent by the degree of participation of the people who will ultimately establish their place of meeting, their annual budget, and the management of the funds and program.

3.1.4.2 – Selection of the leader. This is an important step because of the nature of relationships and expectations among the Hispanic-Latino constituencies. The pastor has unusual influence in the work of the church and on the lives of people. The success of the project depends on taking into consideration these factors when the selection of the leader takes place. While recognizing that there is a shortage of candidates, there are many people who have the preparation and vocation, and can be encouraged to place their talents in service to God in the creation of new congregations.

Our denomination also has working agreements with other churches to include pastors from other denominations who are in good standing in their own denomination. When considering candidates from churches with whom there are no agreements and are not from a Reformed tradition, care should be given to their credentials and good standing from those denominations. Appropriate education and training should be required and given so that they will acquire our identity, vision and professional behavior.

When governing bodies are considering candidates for these calls, it is advisable that they consult the National Presbyterian Hispanic Caucus, the Advisory Committee of the Hispanic Congregational Enhancement office, or the Association of Presbyterian Hispanic Administrators, or the Committee of the Church for Portuguese Language. Another source for information are the Hispanic-Latino national organizations of women, men, youth, chaplains or other similar groups. In order to avoid legal problems, the consultation process would include the release for information from the candidate in consideration. The Office for Hispanic Congregational Enhancement would be in a position to facilitate the inquiry and advise the governing body which entity might best serve them in the process.

It is imperative that the established denominational process be followed to select the best possible candidate for the position. Being Spanish or Portuguese fluent or being Hispanic-Latino does not guarantee a viable candidacy. Appropriate care and sensitivity in the interview process should be given in order to adequately match the candidate and the project.

3.1.4.3 – The selection of the church model. In the selection of the church model, all of the previously mentioned factors need to be taken into consideration as the choice and decision are made to select the most appropriate church model. Included in the decision are the following factors: The project plan will have specific goals, short term, medium term and long range. The project plan will have an ongoing evaluation process with designed steps to make changes as needed. The project plan will show that adequate financial and equipment resources are in place, and that the appropriate human resources are available and assigned for the organization of the new church.

3.1.5 – Church models
The development of new churches may take different styles responding to a variety of situations and providing alternatives. It is the responsibility of those involved in the selection process to select the most appropriate model, or a combination, to best address the situation.

3.1.5.1 – Fellowships. This model is simply an informal group which has formed on its own initiative, or is organized by a church, for Bible study, prayer, worship or Christian service opportunities. This type of group does not require formal denominational structure, nor will it have in itself the potential for a New Church Development effort. The group over time can be oriented into a formal group if the potential arises.

3.1.5.2 – New Church Development (NCD). – This model results from the process approved by a presbytery, synod or the General Assembly to organize a new church. It is a result of previous studies, it follows the denominational guidelines and it is a response to a formal evangelistic effort. The effort may take the form of different models or emphasis whose main goal is to be self-supporting in the expected term of five years.

An important concern is that this denominational model with time lines does not fit many of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies, nor does it address their needs. It is important for the denomination and its General Assembly entities to consult with the Hispanic-Latino target groups and to be sensitive to their situation and needs. This consultative and flexible effort will avoid the loss of financial resources, disappointment with human resources and the failure of an otherwise possible success.

The NCD may be housed in several arrangements, guaranteeing its identity and independence in order to achieve its status as a church. The space could be a separate, rented site. It could be a rented space in a local church which would recognize the separate existence of both groups utilizing the same facilities. Steps would be taken to avoid the risks of paternalistic control by the host church, to avoid conflicts over schedules in the use of the same space, and to avoid misunderstandings caused by the lack of sensitivity to the cultural nuances of each group. One of the long-term concerns in this type of arrangement is the length of time it may take for the organizing group to achieve the financial independence to acquire its own facility. This concern may lead to frustration among both groups and negatively impact the relationship.

3.1.5.3 – Multicultural-bilingual church. - This church model consists of one single congregation in which are included a variety of ministries, one of which is the Hispanic-Latino group. In the multicultural church everyone is represented under one governing body (session) and the several groups each have a representative. In this model, each language/cultural group has its separate worship services. Over time union bilingual/bicultural worship services are more frequent with the use of both languages. This model may not be effective with first-generation immigrants because the mastery of English may be less than adequate for a fulfilling experience. The governing body should be constituted with fair and adequate representation so that the decision-making takes into consideration meeting the needs of the Hispanic-Latino group.

3.1.5.4 – Hispanic-Latino department. - This church model consists of a separate ministry to serve an Hispanic-Latino group organized by the dominant non-Hispanic-Latino congregation, sometimes called the Hispanic-Latino department. Generally, the congregation already includes a growing number of Hispanics attending the church who show an interest in becoming members. Because of the economic dependency on the sponsoring congregation, the Hispanic-Latino group will not develop its own identity and independence. For example, their decisions will be subject to approval, or may be made unilaterally by the sponsoring church. This lack of authority for its own priorities and programs will limit the growth of the group.

In a situation where the Anglo congregation is small and losing members, while the Hispanic-Latino group is growing and the community is changing, the choice of a dependent department is justified to reduce the threat of change.

3.1.5.5 – Hispanic-Latino missions. - This is the model which has traditionally been utilized in Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries to produce new churches. In this instance, a well-established Hispanic-Latino congregation with ample financial and human resources decides to establish preaching services in other areas, which are called missions, not yet self-supporting. When the mission group is sufficiently large and can sustain itself, it is organized as a church.

In these cases, the local church fills the part of the presbytery or synod. In the Hispanic-Latino cultural experience this model in organizing a church is not threatening. Within the U. S., this model could cause problems, but the Hispanic-Latino constituencies normally accept this model as a reflection of their own cultural experience and identity.

3.1.6 - Church redevelopment. - This model may find its use among established churches who now find themselves in changed communities not of their own making. The classic example of this is when the community changes in language and cultural makeup and soon the Hispanic-Latino community is larger than the original group. The office of Evangelism and Church Development of the National Ministries Division has defined redevelopment as follows: *"To redevelop a congregation is to redirect its ministry in response to significant changes...among its membership or in the larger community it serves, or both…some describe it as a 'communal conversion'…that is, a congregation turns away from preoccupation with its survival to focusing on Christ's call to new possibilities for ministry, including outreach to new people."*

3.1.6.1 - The process. - This process requires an in-depth, self-study by the congregation. This will determine the ministry which is most effective for ministry. The study will include the evaluation of human and financial resources needed to serve the changing community. The study will analyze the changing context and develop the strategy to serve the changing community, both in the church and beyond the church. The study will consider what other churches already exist in the community, whether they are effective for the new context and what orientation will be needed in the redevelopment process.

It is important that the redevelopment process recognize the need for and create a new program to serve the emerging needs of mission for the local church. It is important that the redevelopment process truly identifies a clear mission and goals, and not just be a pretext for the existing church to receive money for their own failing efforts and using the Hispanic-Latino situation for their benefit. It is important that the presbytery or synod make provisions for evaluating the changing context, and that a new mission program be created.

3.1.7 - Church revitalization. - The revitalization process does not require help from the presbytery or synod. This is the process in which a local church creates and introduces new or additional programs to strengthen, to renew, and to increase the effectiveness of its ministry.

The revitalization process is begun with an in-depth, self-study of its ministry and why it is necessary to make changes. Generally, the church is strong and not losing members, and can easily identify areas for new life. Along with the process of the revitalization of the identified program, the changes should include an evangelism effort which involves the entire membership.

3.2 - The shelter, nurture and the fellowship of the children of God.
The Confession of 1967 states, "*God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ embraces the whole of man' life: social and cultural, economic and political, scientific and technological, individual and corporate.*"
(9.53). Because of this declaration and belief, the third end of the church embraces three concepts: shelter, nurture (education) and fellowship. These levels of relationships can only be experienced in the context of community which the Book of Order calls the church. The Confession of 1967 establishes the connection between God and the church through its preaching and teaching. The Confession states, "*By these,*" teaching and preaching, "*when they are carried on in fidelity to the Scriptures and dependence on the Holy Spirit, the people hear the word of God and accept and follow Christ." (9.49).*

3.2.1 - Christian education
The *Strategy* considers this aspect to be important in ministries with the Hispanic-Latino constituencies. The Confession of 1967 states, "*effective preaching, teaching, and personal witness require disciplined study of both the Bible and the contemporary world." (9.49).* Christian education provides meaning, purpose and direction for understanding faith in the context in which one lives.

The foundations of Christian education in the Reformed tradition are: Christ-centered character with the Bible as the rule of conduct and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In addition, the principal objectives of Christian education are to promote the understanding of faith through the study of the scriptures, to model after Christ, and to be guided by the Holy Spirit. The study of the scriptures takes into account other components of daily life. These are: personal experience (testimony), description of daily life (context), the record on one's formation (history), life in community (koinonia), celebration (worship), the call to change and commitment (vocation).

Among the Hispanic-Latino constituencies there is another objective for Christian education, that of identity. The educational activities serve to create and sustain a sense of identity, to affirm healthy individuality, to create a sense of belonging to the community of faith, and to connect to traditions and cultural roots. The educational process creates opportunities where people may share their common roots.

3.2.1.1 - Methods. Among the Hispanic-Latino constituencies, three methods are used, these are: lecture, community formation, and application.

Because of the priority given to Bible study and of the authority given to the teacher, the lecture is the most commonly used method. The lecture method provides communication between teacher-student, and fills the expectation of having a knowledgeable, prepared teacher who can also guide in the interpretation of the Scriptures. The sermon, Bible study and Sunday School are the main educational activities.

Community formation includes worship, retreats, prayer groups, outings, celebrations and meals. These group activities provide the relationships for learning. Group activities are important in the life of the church community.

While the teacher provides the Biblical interpretation, it is the individual who applies that information to daily life. In making the information relevant to personal experience, it is assimilated. As it is assimilated, and then shared in dialogue with the group, the Bible gains significance and meaning.

3.2.1.2 - Curriculum - The Christian education curriculum for the Hispanic-Latino constituencies requires that it respond to the needs of and that it be appropriate to the community identity and characteristics. The Christian education materials should conform to the fundamentals but reflect community characteristics. The materials should provide information to address the problems faced by the congregations.

Some of the problems include the scarcity of Presbyterian materials in Spanish, the use of materials from other churches, and the inclusion of teachers formed in other churches. Many of the pastors have come from other churches and have not been provided the educational opportunities to learn the Presbyterian theological traditions. There are not enough institutions to provide this new orientation. Spanish, Presbyterian materials have become available only recently. The new Hispanic-Latino constituencies are found in a variety of contexts in the Presbyterian Church, and other than Puerto Rico, and some states in the southwestern U. S. A., it is difficult to find third or fourth generation in a church These are the challenges to create and develop the appropriate curriculum.

The recent establishment of the office for Spanish curriculum development is one of the most important elements for the educational development of the congregations. What is needed for the effectiveness of this office are the resources. We must request more funds from the General Assembly for seminars and workshops for the adequate formation of the Christian Educators, teachers and leaders in the Hispanic-Latino constituencies.

The office has been producing materials for adults. There are no materials for youth, and the materials for children are produced ecumenically by Cokesbury. Many of the Hispanic-Latino churches do not use the current materials for a variety of reasons. What is recognized is that there is an office with the professional skills and capacity to produce the materials which would be well-received by the churches, when the funds become available. The plan for church growth for the Hispanic-Latino constituencies must include the funds for the production Christian education materials for all levels of learning, based on the Reformed tradition for the theological formation of the membership.

Other curriculum needs are for the marginalized, i. e., for special education, for women and girls, for the older adult, for the home bound and other special requirements. The curriculum should be intentional, inclusive and appropriate for the constituency and target group. The curriculum should address the new realities and challenges including discrimination, drugs and addiction, alcohol and abuse, crime, sexism, and partner relationships.

3.2.2 – Secular education
The Reformed tradition has had an historic interest in education. In the U. S. and many of the Latin American countries the Presbyterian Church has been involved in all levels of education, elementary, secondary and university. The Presbyterian Church has had a continuing concern for the education of the socially and economically marginalized or excluded because of situations of injustice or political oppression. The Brief Statement of Faith of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) affirms that "*the Spirit gives us courage…to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom and peace."* (70-71) For these principles the church has worked to provide opportunities for these groups to acquire the tools and skills to fulfill their responsibility and to give faithful testimony as the people of God in the world.

Education is of utmost importance for the Hispanic-Latino constituencies. Access to education is possible at the elementary level, but as the levels advance, access is diminished. The reasons for this phenomenon are various, from being recent immigrants, to drugs and crime.

According to the recent census, 37% of the Hispanic-Latinos in the labor force do not have a high school diploma compared to 13% of the non-Hispanic-Latino labor force. The causes for this disparity are: inadequate funding for schools, segregation, poverty, absence of Hispanic-Latino personnel at the secondary level, absence of classes to learn English, placement of Hispanic-Latino students in special education classes, inappropriate testing and evaluation, inability to use technology, lack of parental participation in the education of their children, lack of security in the schools, and lack of financial aid for post-secondary education. Education for the Hispanic-Latino constituencies must improve.

If the Presbyterian Church (U. S.A.) wants to continue to be faithful to its traditional role in education, the church must promote the development of well-educated Hispanic-Latino constituencies so that they may contribute to the development, growth and prosperity of the total community. This calls for increasing the funds in the current programs available for scholarships and loans, and will require the creation new funds for scholarships and loans for college and university study for Hispanic-Latinos. This will require access to private institutions and access to public institutions, and obtaining commitments for students from the Hispanic-Latino constituencies.

3.2.3 - Spirituality

The presence of the Spirit of God in people's life is spirituality. Daily life guided by the spirit provides the Holy Spirit the openness for divine creation to be practiced. The traditional practices are prayer, the reading of the Bible, meditation, contemplation, the hearing of the word, the Eucharist and worship. These are the fundamentals for the nutrition and growth of the Christian life. According to the Book of Order, *"…One may contemplate God, moving beyond words and thoughts to communion of one's spirit with the Spirit of God. "* (W-5.4002). This concept indicates the importance of spirituality in Reformed Theology.

To understand John Calvin's concept of spirituality one should have as a point of reference the mystical union with Christ as expressed in the Heidelberg Cathechism. This mystical union evolves as something natural in daily life. The church, too, is part of that spirituality. Calvin's affirmation that, *"to those to whom he is a Father, the Church must also be a mother."* (pg. 281, Book IV, Institutes of the Christian Religion), is an example of this church-spiritual relationship. Calvin affirms that the church's primary function is to preach the word so that spiritual growth might take place.

The influence of Roman Catholicism is strong among Hispanic-Latinos in the practice of their spiritual life. It is recognized that there are Hispanic-Latino groups which have strong Protestant roots with no Roman Catholic influence. The concepts of spirituality for most Hispanic-Latinos Christians were learned from the veneration of relics and images, processions, the apparitions of the Virgin, praying the rosary and from the prohibitions and fear set forth in the Inquisition. Many immigrants from Latin America bring this distorted vision of spirituality with them, as well as the influence of cultural traditions. This country's emphasis on individualism and materialism contribute to the core identity crisis felt by Hispanic-Latinos. The crisis causes many people to compensate by clinging to the traditional values.

3.2.3.1 - Loss of spirituality - The loss of community and close personal relationships among Hispanics in this country is caused by the distorted emphasis on individualism and materialism. This loss affects the caring for one another, and in celebrating the joy and empathy in sorrow as a community. The loss is also felt in the decreased response to the ministry, the call. The church then loses credibility. When the church does not live up to its preaching, it loses its relevance and impact upon society.

3.2.3.2 - Loss of community - The church exists as a community for the faithful. The loss of sense of community has increased within congregations because of social and cultural factors. The same divisions in the secular order caused by intolerance, corruption and the absence of dialogue have had a negative impact on the communities of faith.

Instead everything is seen as protest, the legal right to disagree and in extreme cases, the right to litigate in the courts. This crisis has affected the reason for being the community, the community that gives testimony to peace, joy and gratitude. This loss of community has also affected how pastoral ministry is provided. The answer to this problem is found in the development of a corporate image, not an individual image, in which the appropriate pastoral care is developed, based on the cooperation and collaboration of the community.

3.2.3.3 - Loss of joy and thanksgiving - It is difficult to celebrate joy and thanksgiving in a complex world based on individualism which seeks personal satisfaction and which expects nothing nor wants anything in return from others. Unfortunately, in today's society much more happens for which to mourn than for joy and thanksgiving. The Early Church reflected to the community an image of joy and thanksgiving. The pages of the New Testament remind us of the joy of salvation. This joy produces thanksgiving. Our times call for a joyful church. A pastoral ministry based on joy which is reflected in worship and in all activities of the church community.

3.2.3.4 - Loss of vocation and call to the ministry - The loss of vocation and the call to the ministry is directly related to the loss of spirituality. When the value and dignity of the pastoral ministry are not cultivated among the youth, a positive response cannot be expected. The sense of urgency for ministry in modern society creates synthetic responses leaving little or no time for the cultivation of the call. There is no intentional program to reach potential candidates for the ministry to develop spiritually. The same need exists among the pastors. Many, including youth, look for careers and professions which provide a higher income and more opportunities to participate in social life. The church is also affected by people who come into the pastorate as an escape hatch from an economic or job crisis in their life, or see the ministry as a way to advance in this society. Instead of organizing a program to promote church vocations, we have turned to persons formed in other theological traditions and they in turn are not provided the training in the Reformed Tradition. We also call pastors of the Reformed Tradition from other countries and cultures, who are placed in this society without adequate training. There is a need for an intentional strategy to develop vocation for and among the Hispanic-Latino constituencies which will include conferences, seminars and meetings with potential candidates for the ministry.

3.2.3.5 - Loss of credibility - Doing God's will establishes credibility. Living out the Gospel in community, with joy and thanksgiving, establishes the principles for credibility. Through God's Word the church is granted credibility. Jesus Christ is God's Word, and Christ grants the church credibility.

3.2.3.6 - Regaining spirituality - Only by recognizing the crises created by loss may we recapture spirituality. There is the need to provide alternatives so that the HispanicLatino constituencies will find their way to spirituality within the context of the Reformed Tradition. In broad terms, Reformed spirituality is found in these areas of mission of the church:
- Living the Word, not merely preaching the Word.
- Affirming that the presence of the Kingdom of God means working for human rights and human dignity as well as for peace and justice.
- A new awareness for life guided by the Spirit to create a new relationship with God.

3.2.4 - Stewardship
In the Resource Document, "The Theology of Stewardship," received by the General Assembly in June 1982, from the Advisory Council on Discipleship and Worship, in Section IV, it states, *"Although stewardship seldom receives direct attention in the creeds and confessions...its definition and redefinition is implied in each struggle to say who God is and who we are for this time and place."* It can be inferred from this affirmation that stewardship, more than a word, is a concept which permeates our ecclesiastical doctrine. Stewardship is an essential element of the life and ministry of the church. It could be defined as the grateful response for the gifts from God and the recognition of God's sovereignty, which demand the obedient response to God's call to serve and to live life totally in all its manifestations. (Psalm 24:1, Romans 12: 1-2, Ephesians 2: 8-19, I Corinthians 4:1, and I Peter 4:10).

3.2.4.1 - Implications of wholistic stewardship - The Book of Order states: *"A faithful member accepts Christ's call to be involved responsibly in the ministry of the church. Such involvement includes:...d. supporting the work of the church through the giving of money, time and talents."*
G-50102(d). Wholistic stewardship includes all our capabilities, individually and corporately: the use of time and participation in the life of the church and in the life of the community. Wholistic stewardship is the responsible administration of all of these elements and in obedience to the will of God. As we read in I Peter 4:10 *"Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received."* Wholistic stewardship includes our personal life, our corporate life, and our public life. Among the disciplines in the Directory for Worship we find: *"Those who follow the discipline of Christian stewardship will find themselves called to lives of simplicity, generosity, honesty, hospitality, compassion, receptivity, and concern for the earth and God's creatures."* W-5.005 (W-7.5000).

3.2.4.2 - Personal stewardship - Personal stewardship principally refers to the mind, body and spirit. The important aspects of personal stewardship include the development of the intellect, the caring for the body and good health, the creation of a clean spirit and image, and the development of the right relationship with God. It includes the wise use of time and energy, in fulfilling obligations of work and in the good management of the material possessions and money.

The Reformed Tradition affirms the love of work and respect for work as a basis for the stewardship of daily life. The Directory for Worship states: *"God hallows daily life, and daily life provides opportunity for holy living. As Christians honor and serve God in daily life, they worship God. For Christians, work and worship cannot be separated."* W-5.6003.

There are two guiding principles of the Protestant Reformation which undergird this understanding of stewardship. They are: *"The Sanctity of Daily Life and The Priesthood of all Believers."* Based on these, Calvin promoted the habit of systematic savings, the responsible use of resources, the regular tithe with reverence and in proportion to one's income, regardless of one's economic status. The Directory for Worship states: *"Giving has always been a mark of Christian commitment and discipleship. The ways in which a believer uses God's gifts of material goods, personal abilities, and time should reflect a faithful response to God's self-giving in Jesus Christ and Christ's call to minister to and share with others in the world. Tithing is a primary expression of the Christian discipline and stewardship."* W-5.5004.

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3.2.4.3 - Public stewardship - Public life is an extension of private life. This means that public life is a testimony of how the private life is lived. Calvin in Book III of the Institutes of the Christian Religion states: *"That we may know in what manner we ought to use the present life and its aids, for necessity and delight. Necessity demands that we possess all things as we possess them not; that we bear poverty with mildness and abundance with moderation; that we know how to endure patiently fulness, and hunger and want; that we pay regard to our neighbour, because we must give account to our stewardship; and that all things correspond to our calling..." (*<u>One hundred auphorisms,</u> No. 51).

The stewardship of daily life means to become involved in public affairs. This participation includes exercising the right to vote, and being active in community, social and political affairs. Some examples of carrying out the stewardship of public life are: the PTA, owners and renters neighborhood associations, volunteer associations in hospitals, jails and prisons, homes for the elderly, and other not-for-profit agencies. The Confession of 1967 states: "*The members of the church are emissaries of peace and seek the good of man in cooperation with powers and authorities in politics, culture and economics."* (9.25).

3.2.4.4 - Corporate stewardship - Corporate stewardship is a combination of private and public stewardship carried out with other people. In joining a community organization, religious or civic, one assumes the principles of the organization. The organization seeks the support of all its members to fulfill the objectives of the organization. In working with other people to fulfill the objectives and reach the goals of the organization in which one is a member, corporate stewardship is being carried out.

Corporate stewardship in the religious sense would include the church. The Confession of 1967 states: *"Wherever the church exists, its members are both gathered in corporate life and dispersed in society for the sake of mission in the world." (9.35).* When the church cares for, repairs and improves its property it works for the improvement of the neighborhood, and when it takes the message of Christian hope to hospitals and prisons it is carrying out its corporate stewardship. The Confession of 1967 continues: *"...The church calls every man to use his abilities, his possessions and the fruits of technology as gifts entrusted to him by God for the maintenance of his family and the advancement of the common welfare. It encourages those forces in human society that raise men's hopes for better conditions and provide them with opportunity for decent living."* (9.46).

3.2.4.5 - Practicing wholistic stewardship - Every church should include the development of wholistic stewardship.   The development of stewardship is the total life of the local church. It is not the annual campaign that only has the goal of meeting the budget needs. It is the inculcation in every person for dependence on God and the recognition of the sovereignty of God. It is a permanent program in the life of the church based on Biblical and theological principles.

To determine the type of program to implement, an analysis of the condition and the needs of the local church should be carried out, taking into account what resources are available.   There is no one model to fit every church. What is important is to carry out the study carefully and select what is applicable.

3.2.4.6 - Identifying needs - The Presbyterian system of government provides the flexibility for congregations to be able to meet their needs according to the available resources. Every congregation should conduct an annual needs assessment. The main question should be: What are we going to do this year, and how shall we do it? The answer will provide information to plan the program of activities and to complete the calendar for the year.

3.2.4.7 - Determining resources - The next step is to calculate the resources needed to complete the program. Every activity in the program should provide the information needed for the plan, the funds, the materials, and the personnel. It may be that resources can be substituted. For example, if the annual plan requires a visitation pastor, that need may be met in various ways: increase the budget for a salary, organize the visitation duties with volunteers from the congregation, or contract with a nearby seminary for a student candidate. The best decision is to fulfill the congregational needs with the resources available.

3.2.4.8 - Planning a program for wholistic stewardship - Once the plan has been determined and the needs have been identified, the next step is to design a program to educate the congregation so that the congregation will develop the capability and capacity to fulfill the plan. This will require time, participation, different group abilities, a budget, and materials so that in the end every member of the congregation will endorse and commit to fulfilling the plan. This activity may be called a plan for wholistic stewardship. The plan will provide a variety of ways to meet the needs of the congregation. (For funding sources and for funding mission see section **3.6.1.6**).

3.2.4.9 - The target audience - The plan should identify the target group who will be asked to supply the activity, and how the presentation will be made. Among the congregation will be found people who fit certain categories: members, non-members, supporters, those who attend periodically, children, youth, men's and women's groups. A program of wholistic stewardship will allow for people to contribute in a number of ways and will allow for those with limited financial resources to contribute in important ways. Special allowances should be made for children and youth to contribute. The program of wholistic stewardship will include all the activities of the church, and provide for a periodic evaluation of the activities.

3.3 - The maintenance of divine worship

The Reformed faith has a rich liturgical tradition. John Calvin considered this topic so important as to create the order of worship for the churches in Geneva. This order was called the *"The Geneva Order,"* and it became the basis for worship for the majority of the churches of the Protestant Reformation. For Calvin, worship was a way to know God. Calvin states in Book I of The Institutes of the Christian Religion: *"...the knowledge of God consists not in frigid speculation, but carries worship along with it; and we touched by the way...(is) how God is duly worshipped."* (Pg. 104). For Calvin, the difference between the true religion and superstition is found in worship. Calvin continues in the same quotation, *"The Greek word eusebia means 'right worship;'...(the Greeks)...were always aware that a certain rule was to be observed, in order that God might not be worshipped absurdly."* (Page 104).

There is abundant material for worship in the Book of Order. One of the sections in the Book of Order is called The Directory for Worship. The *Strategy* will highlight important aspects to take in consideration for worship.

3.3.1 – The community at worship

The Directory for Worship affirms that each member of the community at worship interacts with God with conviction acknowledging God's presence in their life. The Directory states, "…As they respond to God's claim and redemptive action in Jesus Christ, believers are transformed and renewed. In worship the faithful offer themselves to God and are equipped for God's service in the world." God's response in worship is for the benefit of the community. It is not a response of exclusivity for the individual. The Directory continues, "…*To each member, that Spirit gives gifts for building up the body of Christ and for equipping it for the work of ministry. A Christian's personal response to God is in community*." W-1.1005a. The following are the elements of worship which enable the community at worship to interact with God.

3.3.1.1 – Language – Words serve an important role in Reformed worship.

The Directory states, *"God brings all things into being by the Word. God offers the Word of grace, and people respond to that divine initiative through the language of worship."* (W-1.2001). The worship service has its own expressions and language, and both are subject to change or evolve with time , context, discovery and vision. These changes bring to the Directory new forms of expression and language as they are added or discarded. The Directory for Worship states, *"b.The church shall strive in its worship to use language about God which is intentionally as diverse and varied as the Bible and our theological traditions. The church is committed to using language in such a way that all members of the community of faith may recognize themselves to be included, addressed, and equally cherished before God. Seeking to bear witness to the whole world, the church struggles to use language which is faithful to biblical truth and which neither purposely nor inadvertently excludes people because of gender, color, or other circumstances in life."* W-1-2006b)

3.3.1.2 – Symbols – God cannot be reduced to a symbol. One of the Ten Commandments makes

us aware of this: *"Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth."* (Exodus 20:4). The Directory helps to adequately interpret what is a symbol and what is its meaning. *"No merely human symbols can be adequate to comprehend the fullness of God, and none is identical to the reality of God. Yet the symbols human beings use can be adequate for understanding, sharing and responding to God's gracious activity in the world since God has chosen to accommodate to humanity in self revelation: a. through the created order, b. in the events of covenant history, and c. most fully in the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. Symbols spoken or acted are authentic and appropriate for Christian worship to the extent that they are faithful to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ."* (W-2002).

3.3.1.3 – Gestures – Gestures are part of the drama of worship. In The Book of Common Worship are found the gestures of Biblical Christian worship. Some are well-known and familiar: the minister raises the hands for the benediction; the ministers pours water for baptism; those being ordained kneel; elders place their hand over those being ordained; the minister breaks the bread and pours the wine to celebrate Holy Communion, etc.. Some gestures are spontaneous to each congregation, such as taking the hand or embracing during the greeting, or opening the Bible for the beginning of worship. The service may also include as an act of worship the taking of the offering.

3.3.1.4 – Arts – Worship may also include a variety of expressions from the arts. These may be in the form of drama, pantomimes, dance, music, sculpture, architectural, still pictures or paintings, film, video and computer projections. The design of the sanctuary, its stained glass windows and the vestments of the minister are also artistic expressions for worship. The Directory states, *"The people of God have responded through creative expressions in architecture, furnishings, appointments, vestments, music, drama language, and movement. When these artistic creations awaken us to God's presence, they are appropriate for worship. When they call attention to themselves, or are present for their beauty as an end in itself, they are idolatrous. Artistic expressions should evoke, edify, enhance, and expand worshipers' consciousness of the reality and grace of God."* (W-1.3034-2).

Music is considered an art form of worship. Music includes the language, words, the melodies and the style of the interpreter. Special care is to be given to the language in the music, the words. In I Corinthians 14, Paul gives advice for the language of worship and *"all things should be done decently and in order."* I Corinthians 14:40. Not much appears in the Bible regarding the melody used by the Hebrews. Psalm 150 indicates two elements for worship: praise with words (verses 1-2), and use of instruments (verses 3-5). Today's society and cultures makes more use of music in worship. Some common identifiable melodies and songs are used for specific and daily worship expressions for which consideration be carefully given. The interpretation of the music by the artist(s), either a soloist, duet, trio, quartet or choir, when done to promote other than the worship, may detract from worship.

3.3.1.5 – Silence – Silence contributes to worship. The Directory for Worship states, *"They call God by name, invoke God's presence, beseech God in prayer, and stand before God in silence and contemplation."* (W-1.2001). In prayer, the Directory states, *"One may wait upon God in attentive and expectant silence."*(W-5.4002). Silence provides the moment for God to speak. All worship services need and require time for silence and meditation.

3.3.3 – Planning for worship
Planning for worship is simply selecting the order which will channel the creative freedom for the response to God. *"The Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) acknowledges that all forms of worship are provisional and subject to reformation. In ordering worship the church is to seek openness to the creativity of the Holy Spirit, who guides the church toward worship which is orderly yet spontaneous, consistent with God's Word and open to the newness of God's future."* W-3.1002).

3.3.2.1 – Culture – Worship should reflect the culture of the community. One must take into account that among the Hispanic-Latino constituencies there is a wide variety of cultures without any one being dominant. While Spanish and Portuguese are the common languages, there is a mosaic of cultures depending on the country of origin. It is uncommon to find Hispanic-Latino congregations composed of people from only one country. The cultural reality is one of diversity among the Hispanic-Latino constituencies.

3.3.2.2 – Inclusiveness – This is an important factor in planning worship. Everyone should sense participation in worship. The participation of men and women in worship is fundamental. It is important that language used does not discriminate against any one regarding gender, age, skin color or culture. Care should be taken to include the children. The worship service should be planned to permit everyone's presence and participation.

3.3.2.3 – Contemporary needs – The Brief Statement of Faith states, "*God is faithful still.*" (51). This means that God continues to work and act in the church and in the world today. One cannot limit God's presence to contemporary culture nor alienate God from it. Today's needs call for God's voice to be heard because God is faithful to us, God stands by us and God is with us. *"Human life in community reflects a variety of rhythms which also affect Christian worship. Among these are the annual cycles of civic, agricultural, school, and business life; special times of family remembrance and celebration; and the patterns of a variety of cultural expressions, commemorations, and events. The church in carrying out its mission also creates a cycle of activities, programs, and observances. While such events may be appropriately recognized in Christian worship, care shall be taken to ensure that they do not obscure the proclamation of the gospel on the Lord's Day."* (W-3.2003).

3.3.3 – The strategy for worship in the Hispanic-Latino context –
Worship in the Hispanic-Latino context should reflect the Presbyterian identity and the cultural identity. The Directory for Worship states, *"When a place is set aside for worship it should facilitate accessibility and ease of gathering, should generate a sense of community, and should open people to reverence before God. It should include a place for the reading of scripture and the preaching or exposition of the Word. It should provide for the celebration and proper administration of the sacraments, with a font or pool for baptism and a table suitable for the people's celebration of the Lord's Supper. The arrangement of space should visibly express the integral relation between Word and Sacrament and their centrality in Christian Worship."* (W-1.3024). Seminars, workshops, study courses and educational events should be held for the leaders of the congregation to learn to plan worship and to learn about the theology of Reformed worship. These educational events should include learning about the variety of styles of worship, music for worship and how worship can reflect the culture.

The content of worship may be summarized with the following quote from the Book of Common Worship, "*Freedom within order.*" For Presbyterians, freedom does not eliminate form, "*form enables freedom to be truly free*". (pp. 6-9)

3.4 – The preservation of the truth

The Book of Order states, *"That truth is in order to goodness; and the great touchstone of truth, its tendency to promote holiness, according to our Savior's rule, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' And that no opinion can be either more pernicious or more absurd than that which brings truth and falsehood upon a level, and represents it as of no consequence what a man's opinions are. On the contrary, we are persuaded that there is an inseparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty. Otherwise, it would be of no consequence either to discover truth or to embrace it."* (G-1.0304). When Presbyterians speak of truth, it is about Jesus. Jesus said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* John 14:6. The church as guardian of the truth, declares the centrality of Christ as the only source of salvation and the only path to God. In the prologue of the book of John, Christ is the incarnate word, *"And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."* John 1:14. Therefore, Christ cannot be ignored nor placed on the same level as other founders of other religions.

In the history of the Reformed Tradition, there is a vibrant example of what it means to preserve the truth. In Germany, in 1933, the world was faced with a totalitarian system of government which declared itself as the only source of truth. In this situation, the Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church, a federation of German Confessional Churches, met and declared, *"Jesus Christ, as he is attested for us in Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God which we have to hear and which we have to trust and obey in life and death.* (8.11) *"We reject the false doctrine, as though the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, apart from and besides this one Word of God, still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation."* (8.12). Both are quotations from The Theological Declaration of Barmen. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), stated in the Confession of 1967, *"The one sufficient revelation of God is Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate, to whom the Holy Spirit bears unique and authoritative witness through the Holy Scriptures, which are received and obeyed as the word of God written."* (9.27). The Brief Statement of Faith alerts everyone that when there is rebellion against God, when one hides from God, when the Ten Commandments are ignored, or when one takes God's name in vain, then one *"accepts lies as truths."* (36). Among the Hispanic-Latino constituencies there is confusion regarding the place and value of truth. The proliferation of many sects, cults and religions in recent years in the United States, has made it difficult to proclaim the truth of the Gospel and the centrality of Christ as the only path to salvation. The Brief Statement of Faith after stating that the church is *"the one body of Christ,"* (57), calls us *"to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,"* and *"to unmask idolatries in Church and culture."*

3.4.1 – Our dialog with God

To begin the dialog with God, one responds to the call God makes to each one. The Book of Order states, *"God calls a people to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, to follow Jesus Christ in obedient discipleship, to use the gifts and abilities God has given, honoring and serving God in personal life, in household and families, in daily occupation, and in community, nation and the world."* (W-5.6001). God's call demands obedience. In the Bible, the dialog between God and God's people is called a covenant. In the covenant, God promises to fulfill the promises God makes, and the people are to be obedient to God's demands.

These three concepts, the call, the dialog, and the covenant, fall into the category of vocation. *"A person responds to God's call to faith in Jesus Christ through Baptism and through life and worship in the community of faith. Persons respond to God's call to discipleship through the ministries of God's people in and for the world. Persons respond to God's call to honor and serve God in every aspect of human life, in their work, in their thought and in their action, in their private and in their public relationships."* (W-5.6002).

      3.4.1.1 – Vocation for a secular career – When one responds to God in a secular career (teacher, carpenter, graphic artist, economist, plumber, machine operator, etc.) to serve others, it is to develop oneself to make a better world. The Confession of 1967 states, *"Each member of the church in the world, endowed by the Spirit with some gift of ministry and is responsible for the integrity of his witness in his own particular situation."* An important aspect of the call which is sometimes forgotten follows, *"He is entitled to the guidance and support of the Christian community and is subject to its advice and correction. He in turn, in his own competence, helps to guide the church."* (9.38). This support and Biblical and theological orientation is to fulfill the call to a secular career as believers. This professional orientation can be provided in workshops such as for careers in computers, English, accounting, arts and crafts and homemaking, etc.. It is important for the church to witness to Christian ethics in the work place and in the professions. It is also important to assist the young people through the study of the Bible to discover their secular career.

      3.4.1.2 – Vocation for a church career – The Confession of 1967 states, *"In recognition of special gifts of the Spirit and for the ordering of its life as a community, the church calls, trains, and authorizes certain members for leadership and oversight. The persons qualified for these duties in accordance with the polity of the church are set apart by ordination or other appropriate act and thus made responsible for their special ministries."* (9.39). Those called to serve shall receive the appropriate preparation for their ministry. God may not call the most able, but God will provide adequate preparation for those called. The church is responsible to provide the appropriate education for its leaders to carry out their ministry. Different types of Christian education programs are needed for leaders to fulfill the different roles, these are: the elders, the deacons, the pastors, the Christian educators, and the Lay Pastor, recently approved by the General Assembly.

In order to determine whether the candidate for pastor has received the proper training, the Book of Order requires ordination examinations. Presbyteries should monitor the examinations so that they be applied and judged on an equal basis. This monitoring will guarantee that the formation and examination of all candidates will not run the risk of having a gap, or some less prepared than others. The church has two large problems for Hispanic-Latino pastors: the need for pastors and the scarcity that exists. Many presbyteries which need Hispanic-Latino pastors to serve,or to open churches to serve Hispanic-Latinos, face this scarcity. In instances pastors are admitted who have not had the same education as Presbyterian pastors receive nor do they receive the proper training, nor pass the same processes after being admitted. The Presbyterian seminaries which only provide the formal theological education curriculum have not resolved how to meet the need to provide for an alternative theological education. An educational program in Spanish and Portuguese with all the qualified Reformed courses is needed for those candidates who aspire to serve or are serving Presbyterian Hispanic congregations.

3.4.2 Our dialog with other Christian churches -
One must begin with the definition of the relationship between the church and the truth. The Book of Order states, *"The Church is the body of Christ, both in its corporate life and in the lives of its individual members, and is called to give shape and substance to this truth."* (G-3.0200-c) The church is not the truth, rather it gives testimony to the truth.. For the truth to be made evident in every age and at every historical period, the church is called *"to a new openness to God's continuing reformation of the Church ecumenical, that it might be a more effective instrument of mission in the world."* (G-3.0401-d).

The dialog with other Christian churches is the ecumenical relationship among the churches. The ecumenical relationship is based on the statement from the Book of Order, *"…Yet the church, in obedience to Jesus Christ, is open to the reform of its standards of doctrine as well as of governance. The church affirms "Ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda,' that is, 'The church reformed, always reforming,' according to the Word of God and the call of the Spirit."* (G-0200). The Confession of 1967 adds further interpretation and meaning for the basis of dialog: *"The institutions of the people of God change and vary as their mission requires in different times and places. The unity of the church is compatible with a wide variety of forms, but it is hidden and distorted when variant forms are allowed to harden into sectarian divisions, exclusive denominations, and rival factions."* (9.34).

Congregations need to be informed about the ecumenical dialog to avoid fear and misunderstanding. Efforts must be made to reach out to other churches by carrying out common activities and worship services together. Much information and material is available from the General Assembly already translated into Spanish. The Book of Order affirms the ecumenical dialog by the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.): *"Visible oneness, by which a diversity of persons, gifts, and understandings is brought about together, is an important sign of the unity of God's people. It is also a means by which that unity is achieved. Further, while divisions into different denominations do not destroy this unity, they do obscure it for both the Church and the world. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), affirming its historical continuity with the whole Church of Jesus Christ, is committed to the reduction of that obscurity and is willing to seek and to maintain communion and community with all other branches of the one, catholic Church."* (G-40203; G-15.0000).

3.4.3 Our dialog with other religions
The Confession of 1967 is precise in its guidance in the dialog with other religions. The Confession of 1967 states: *"The church in its mission encounters the religions of men and in that encounter becomes conscious of its own human character as a religion."* (9.41). Christianity has its roots in the Jews of the New Testament who in the course of time and history has had its own changes and modifications. The first change was with its encounter with the Greek and Roman cultures, then with the wider western culture, then with the Protestant Reformation and in modern times the various Movements of the Spirit have had their influence. The frame of reference and unity is found in Jesus Christ, *"looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.."* (Hebrews 12:2). The Confession of 1967 affirms: *"The Christian finds parallels between other religions and his own and must approach all religions with openness and respect. Repeatedly God has used the insight of non-Christians to challenge*

the church to renewal. But the reconciling word of the gospel is God's judgment upon all forms of religion, including the Christian. The gift of God in Christ is for all men. The church, therefore, is commissioned to carry the gospel to all men whatever their religion may be and even when they profess none." (9.42).

3.5 – The promotion of social righteousness
"God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit to share with Christ in establishing God's just, peaceable, and loving rule in the world." (W-7.401) (G-3.0300).   *"Justice is the order God sets in human life for fair and honest dealing and for giving rights to those who have no power to claim rights for themselves. The biblical vision of doing justice calls for dealing honestly in personal and public business, exercising power for the common good, supporting people who seek dignity, freedom, and respect that they have been denied, working for fair laws and just administration of the law, welcoming the stranger in the land, seeking to overcome the disparity between rich and poor, bearing witness against political oppression and exploitation, and redressing wrongs against individuals, groups and peoples in the church, in this nation, and in the whole world." (W-7.4002).* This text serves as the basis for the *Strategy* to develop the program for social justice. The text also serves as the basis for ethics for those who serve the people in public positions. The churches have developed the social service programs with the objectives cited in the text. These programs have been called ministries. The Book of Order has called these programs *"ministries to exercise compassion in the world."* (W7.3001; W-7.3002).   The texts establish how to carry out the ministries, be they part of the church or not.

The Hispanic-Latino congregations have a unique call for these ministries. In the church one finds people with legal and immigration problems, and with socio-economic, and educational needs.   *"The Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will assure a greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life. Persons of all racial ethnic groups, different ages, both sexes, various disabilities, diverse geographical areas, different theological positions consistent with the Reformed tradition, as well as different marital conditions (married, single, widowed or divorced) shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the church." (G-4.0403; G.9.0104ff).* Following are some of the ministries.

3.5.1 – Ministry with the community
These are the ministries in which compassion is exercised directly, focused and individualized. These encompass many areas addressing the following: the conditions of poverty in a region or neighborhood, the legal problems of undocumented persons, the school drop-out rate among minority students, the problems of drug abuse and addiction, the exploitation of women for sex, the low-paying jobs in the agricultural and urban labor markets, the issue of discrimination because of race, skin color, gender, age or racial ethnic group, and the problems existent at the border crossings. The Confession of 1967 states: *"In each time and place, there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act. The church, guided by the Spirit, humbled by its own complicity and instructed by all attainable knowledge, seeks to discern the will of God and learn how to obey in these concrete conditions."* (9.43)

There is no fixed list of problems. The church must continually analyze the context in which it finds itself, the socio-political, economic status in the light of the Word of God, and decide what community ministry would be most pertinent. The ministries are not permanent because of changing situations. The church must maintain a close relationship with these ministries to fulfill their prophetic role, that of service or advocacy for change. Community ministry must continually evaluate itself to determine whether the service meets current needs, or is it serving outmoded needs.

3.5.2 – Ministry with women
The church recognizes its ministry with women within the church and outside of the church's structure. The Book of Order includes women in all areas of the life of the church, *"The Church is called... to a new openness to its own membership, by affirming itself as a community of diversity, becoming in fact as well as in faith a community of women and men of all ages, races and conditions, and by providing for inclusiveness as a visible sign of the new humanity.'* (G-3.0401b). The church recognizes that women have the same rights as men to serve in the pastorate and ministry, and in the hierarchy and government of the church. The Church affirms: "*...The law and government of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) presuppose the fellowship of women and men with their children in voluntary covenanted relationship with one another and with God through Jesus Christ. The organization rests upon the fellowship and is not designated to work without trust and love."* (G-7.0103).

Among the various traditional Hispanic-Latino constituencies, women do not always receive equal treatment, and that is a major reason that women's ministry should be given special attention. This is to avoid patterns of conduct and behavioral criteria that do not conform to Presbyterian, biblical and doctrinal ideals. Ministries with women should aim to educate, to provide skills and to promote women's equal participation in the life and governance of the church at all levels.

Ministry with women should also focus on the elimination of all forms of abuse, exploitation, violence, discrimination, and absence of equality and opportunities present in society. The 1985 General Assembly declared: "*In growing numbers, women are victims of sexual harassment in the workplace and abuse in their own homes as well as in danger in the streets...A church committed to peacemaking cannot avoid its responsibility to address the issue of domestic and international violence against women."*
(39.060, page 571).

Another important aspect related to women's issues is the anarchy and confusion in sexual relationships. The Confession of 1967 clearly addresses this matter: "*The relationship between man and woman exemplifies in a basic way God's ordering of the interpersonal life for which he created mankind. Anarchy in sexual relationships is a symptom of man's alienation from God, his neighbor, and himself. Man's perennial confusion about the meaning of sex has been aggravated in our day by the availability of new means for birth control and the treatment of infection, by the pressures of urbanization, by the exploitation of sexual symbols in mass communications, and by world overpopulation. The church, as the household of God, is called to lead men out of this alienation into the responsible freedom of the new life in Christ.*

Reconciled to God, each person has joy in and respect for his own humanity and that of other persons; a man and woman are enabled to marry, to commit themselves to a mutually shared life, and to respond to each other in sensitive and lifelong concern; parents receive the grace to care for children in love and to nurture their individuality. The church comes under the judgment of God and invites rejection by man when it fails to lead men and women into the full meaning of life together, or withholds the compassion of Christ from those caught in the moral confusion of our time." (9.47).

The Hispanic-Latino constituencies and communities need orientation and education to analyze the issues related to the preceding statement. The church is called to give special attention to these issues and to promote and motivate a dialog among men and women regarding these issues.

The *Strategy* based its statements in this section on the "Message from the Hispanic-Latino Presbyterian Women to the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.)." This document was prepared by 14 women, lay and clergy, who respresented all the synods in which there is Hispanic-Latino ministry. The meeting took place at Stony Point, N. Y., November 6-9, 1998. See the bibliography.

3.5.3   Ministry with men
As with women's issues, among the various Hispanic-Latino constituencies and cultural traditions there exist patterns of conducts for the man. These established patterns affect the behavior and attitudes of men towards the church, towards the family and towards society. For example, many men were educated and formed with the idea that the church is for women. That may be one reason that there are fewer men than women in the membership of the church. The traditional cultural patterns of conduct have a patriarchal tendency and affect the ministry and witness of the church. In society there are men's organizations which unfortunately do not reflect the Biblical orientation and behavior for men. It is thought that men should not cry, not express emotions or affection, and not show any weakness. It is thought that a man does not need compassion and should not show compassion; that a man has no personal need but rather is expected to provide for the needs of others; that a man should not be touched but that he can touch; and that a man be strong and virile, able to face anything and to maintain his masculinity.

The church is called to a new ministry that witnesses to a new dimension of manhood. The Brief Statement of Faith states: *"We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human…"* (7,8). Not enough has been done to explore and to discover Christ's humanity, and in it Christ's manhood. This is a special call for the church for ministry with men. The church needs to create structures for men to participate in the church. The church needs to offer seminars, conferences and programs for men to discover and understand manhood and its implications for the new life in Christ. The church could organize sports events, study and reading events, and support groups which enable a wholesome formation, and for men to be involved in the life and work of the church.

3.5.4 – Ministry with youth and young adults
The Second Helvetic Confession states: *"YOUTH TO BE INSTRUCTED IN GODLINESS…the pastors of the churches act most wisely when they early and carefully catechize the youth, laying the first grounds of faith, and faithfully teaching the rudiments of our religion…"* (5.233). The time of youth is a particularly important formative stage of life; it is when the future is being formed. Calvin, in the Commentary of the Pastoral Letters of St. Paul, analyzed Titus 2:6 saying, *"Paul simply directs that the young men be taught to be prudent as prudence…leads to understanding."* The church is called to devote special attention to

youth, providing time, space, activities, programs, and orientation so that they are encouraged and motivated to live the Christian life.

The Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) permits youth and young adults to be elected to the offices of elder and deacon. (Cf. G-14.0201a). The General Assembly has also authorized the attendance of Youth Advisory Delegates who are permitted a symbolic-vote on all proposals submitted to the assembly. The church needs to provide youth their space to participate in the life of the church. The ministry with youth should also provide opportunities outside the church such as sports activities, counseling, mission work camps and other activities.

Young adults demand special attention. This group comprises those between 25 and 35 years of age. A vacuum for appropriate activities has existed in the church for this group. The group falls between youth and adulthood. The group does not have the characteristics of youth nor of adulthood. Young adults have been a small number in the church because many have left the church after age 25. This is indicative that the church has no program for them nor is able to retain them in the life of the church. The challenge for the church may be to envision the effort towards young adults as a missionary venture and to plan accordingly.

3.5.4 – Ministry with children
The Heidelberg Catechism responds to the question whether children should be baptized as follows: *"Yes, because they, as well as their parents, are included in the covenant and belong to the people of God."* (4.074). The Biblical command to instruct the children cannot be overemphasized. The Presbyterian worship service includes the children. The Directory for Worship states: *"Children bring special gifts to worship and grow in the faith through their regular inclusion and participation in the worship of the congregation. Those responsible for planning and leading the participation of children in worship should consider the children's level of understanding and ability to respond, and should avoid both excessive formality and condescension. The session should ensure that regular programs of the church do not prevent children's full participation with the whole congregation in worship, in Word and Sacrament, on the Lord's Day."* (W-3.1004). The Directory also states: *"…When the child begins to express a desire to receive this Sacrament, the session should take note of this and provide an occasion for recognition and welcome."* (W-4.2002).

The ministry with children should include the study of the Bible in the Sunday School. The other activities for children should also be Bible-centered, including Vacation Bible School, Children's Club, counseling and tutoring activities, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, or the Christian equivalent of such organizations. Special care and attention needs to be given to young girls and acknowledge their person-hood. The appropriate age and gender developmental activities need to be taken into consideration. The ministry with children in recreation and sports outside the church should include the children of the neighborhood.

3.5.6 – Ministry with older adults
Different names identify this age group. The term, older adults, is chosen because the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) already has a ministry and an office with this terminology and it is a widely used term. In Spanish, the word most commonly used is elder.

The word elder in Scripture is translated presbyter. Calvin's analysis in the Commentaries on The Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, refers to older adults as elders because of their age. Calvin writes, "*The Apostle enjoins him to reprove elder persons as parents…Yet it ought to be observed, that he does not wish old men to be spared or indulged in such a manner as to sin with impunity and without correction; he only wishes that some respect should be paid to their age, that they may more patiently bear to be admonished." (*Page 119*).*

Older adults have special and different needs. Traditionally, older adults had a special place and their advice and wisdom were taken into consideration in decision making. The Old Testament is full of this kind of example. In modern society the situation is different. Many times older adults are ignored or not taken into consideration, perhaps because they are not young and do not have the energy of younger people.

The Hispanic-Latino constituencies and the churches need to have a special ministry with older adults. Many of the older adults do not speak English and are nostalgic for their country of origin and where they were born. Because the rest of the family members are so involved in working just to survive, the older adults do not receive the proper care and attention that they need. The combination of their immigrant status in this country and lack of proper attention makes for a double suffering. The church is called to offer them special activities with a Christian perspective. These include fiestas (parties), dances, trips, picnics and other recreational activities; also included are opportunities to serve as volunteers, such as in hospitals and the maintenance of proper physical and mental conditioning.

3.5.7 – Ministry with persons of different capacities
In the episode at the pool of Bethesda, the Greek word that is used in John 5:3 is translated into Spanish as paralytic. The word means impaired. It can also be translated dried up or shrunk. In the *Dios Habla Hoy* version of the Bible, the word is translated crippled. What the episode shows us is there were people with diminished capacities around the pool. People of different capacities have always been among us, and often they are discriminated against and set apart.

In the Hispanic-Latino communities, people in these situations do not always receive adequate attention. Often they are set apart or hidden because family members are ashamed, or they do not want to be objects of pity or scorn. The Book of Order in a section previously cited states, "*The Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership…Persons…of various disabilities…shall be guaranteed full participation and access to representation in the decision making of the church."* (G-4.0403). Therefore, the churches and congregations should plan to facilitate physical access to all the buildings and areas of the church. The church and congregation should plan for the full participation for persons with different capacities, according to their capability, in the life and leadership of the church. The church and congregation should plan programs and activities where their talents and skills are developed.

3.5.8 – Ministry with married couples, singles, widowed and divorced
The Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) guarantees the participation and the rights to all persons, regardless of their marital status. The Brief Statement of Faith states: *"The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one Body of Christ, the Church."* (54-57). Ministry with married couples is the most common in the church. Because of the importance of the marriage commitment, the church provides the most materials for the ministry with married couples.

The Directory for Worship states: *"Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between a woman and a man. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which a man and a woman are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship."* (W-4.9001) Because marriage is the basis of the family, it is important to provide educational and guidance programs for all who strive to make the marriage work.

Another important program for the church is the ministry with singles. The ministry will vary as the state of singleness will vary. The Bible offers much material for the ministry with singles. The Apostle Paul had much to stay about the virtues of being single, though not superior (see I Corinthians 7:7). Paul also advised that if it were not possible to remain single, then it is better to marry *"than burn with desire."* (I Corinthians 7:9). The integrity of being single is addressed in the Second Helvetic Confession written in 1581 as follows: *"We also detest an impure single life, the secret and open lusts and fornications of hypocrites pretending to be continent when they are the most incontinent of all."* (5.251). The conditions of singleness in the Hispanic-Latino constituencies is very complex. The ministry for singles is complicated by some of the following situations: the common practice of living together, the quest for marriage only to satisfy immigration requirements, the availability of birth control methods, the emphasis of personal privacy in sexual relations, and the more open and less stringent behavioral patterns than found in the country of origin.

The ministry with widows, widowers and divorced persons is usually limited to counseling. There is a need to provide other activities and programs, while recognizing that their loss requires attention and counseling. Widows were specifically cared for in the early church while widowers were hardly ever mentioned. Widowers were not mentioned because they did not exist. Men who practiced polygamy were never left alone. Men who were monogamous soon sought another woman following the wife's death. Men and women in the monogamous life style of western society equally face the loss of the spouse. No distinction is made to assist the woman nor the man. These situations call the church to develop a ministry which will assist persons left alone to face a new reality in their life.

The ministry for the divorced person has different problems. Women face more pressures and challenges than men. It is more difficult for women to find a new partner. When divorced persons already have children, the situation changes and the problems are more complicated. In these situations the children usually remain with the mother who usually faces more problems than does the father. All of these situations are critical to be able to live out one's faith. Many chose to leave the church when faced with divorce. Often the church itself marginalizes divorced persons. The Second Helvetic Confessions in 1581 bravely addressed the situation: *"...We therefore condemn polygamy, and those who condemn second marriages."* (5.246). The ministry with singles must take into account these complex situations by being supportive and helping to strengthen their spirit.

The ministry with married couples, singles, widowed and divorced persons can offer counseling, the creation of support groups, courses for healing caused by the broken marriage, and workshops on sexuality

3.5.9 – Ministry with the environment

The Directory for Worship states: *"God calls the Church in the power of the Holy Spirit to participate in God's work of creation and preservation. God has given humankind awesome power and perilous responsibility to rule and tame the earth, to sustain and reshape it, to replenish and renew it."*
(W-7.5001). The church is called to develop the ecological conscience of the members in the congregations of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies. This means caring for creation and its resources as well as restoring creation. Congregations are called to establish recycling programs, using less water and power, reforesting the community, and cleaning the streets of the neighborhood. The ecological conscience is developed not only by implementation, but also by study and investigation. Workshops need to be offered to investigate these topics.

The 1990 General Assembly stated (The Church): *"Recognizes that restoring creation is not a short term concern to be handled in a few years, but a continuing task to which the nation and the world must give attention and commitment."* (40.584. pg. 647). The Directory for Worship also sets forth some guidelines for this ministry stating, *"As stewards of God's creation who hold the earth in trust, the people of God are called to: a) use the earth's resources responsibly without plundering, polluting or destroying, b) develop technological methods and processes that work together with the earth's environment to preserve and enhance life, c) produce and consume in ways that make available to all people what is sufficient for life, d) work for responsible attitudes and practices in procreation and reproduction, e) and use and shape earth's goods to create beauty, order, health, and peace in ways that reflect God's love for all creatures."* (W-7.5003a-e). The ministry with the environment could impact the church's worldwide missionary program. Many of the governments from which the Hispanic constituencies come do not have environmental programs and this could offer a missionary opportunity of service.

3.5.10 Ministry in the urban context

The Confession of 1967 states: *"In each time and place, there are particular problems and crises through which God calls the church to act."* (9.43). This is the foundation for the urban ministry of the church. This ministry is important for the Hispanic-Latino constituencies because the majority of our people are living in the large cities. *"In 1971 the General Assembly asserted 'that justice demands that everyone have the material conditions necessary for…physical and social existence'…"* From *Christian and Citizen*, page 35. The social well-being of the city was important to Calvin. *"The material prosperity of the city was not neglected. Greater cleanliness was introduced…Calvin insisted upon the removal of filth from houses and the narrow and crowded streets…he induced the magistrates to superintend the markets, and to prevent the sale of unhealthy food…low taverns and drinking shops were abolished…Mendicancy in the streets was prohibited. A hospital and poorhouse were provided and well-conducted. Efforts were made to give useful employment to every man who could work. He (Calvin) set a high and noble example of a model community."* Quoted by Walter Lingle, *Presbyterians, Their History and Beliefs, pg.3.* From *What Presbyterians Believe*, page 104. Were we to follow Calvin's example, we would be conducting urban ministries appropriately.

3.5.11 Ministry in the rural context

The fundamental principle which guides the Presbyterian Church in rural ministry was affirmed by the 1979 General Assembly: *"God the Creator has made the world for all to enjoy and His wish is for daily bread for all."* From *Christian and Citizen*, page 16. Hispanic-Latino groups have a strong presence in the rural, agricultural labor force. The church is called to serve the agricultural workers, commonly called *braceros.* It is the church's responsibility to be an advocate for just wages, for fair working hours, and for health care. An additional concern is to combat the use of harmful chemicals in the fields where the people work and in areas where they live. The agricultural workers are one of the most discriminated groups, and need the church's attention. Hispanic-Latino churches among these rural groups are called to be advocates for fair prices for the agricultural products, to be advocates for fair labor laws and practices from the local, state and federal governments and to establish benefits for the workers from the sales of the products.

3.5.12 Ministry at the border and with immigrants

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) in its report to the 211th General Assembly, called for a new level of engagement at all levels of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in the following approved action: *"Christians should engage in pastoral, compassionate, educational, and prophetic ministries with refugees, asylum seekers, and immigrants."* From *Transformation of Churches and Society Through Encounters with New Neighbors,* page 3. All along the U. S.-Mexico border the church's border ministries respond to fill the basic needs of the immigrants whether or not they possess the appropriate legal papers and documents. The Confession of 1967 states: *"God has created the peoples the earth to be one universal family. In his reconciling love, he overcomes the barriers between brothers and breaks down every form of discrimination based on racial or ethnic difference, real or imaginary."'* (9.44). The struggle against discrimination is one of the important elements in the border ministry. The church has a responsibility is to support human rights, regardless of the immigrant's status, and to see that all people are treated with justice, dignity and compassion.

3.6   The exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven in the world

The Directory for Worship states, *"…In an age hostile to the reign of God, the church worships and serves, with confidence that God's rule has been established and with firm hope in the ultimate manifestation of the triumph of God."* (W-7.6001). The Confession of 1967 adds clarity to this concept: *"…The kingdom represents the triumph of God over all that resists his will and disrupts his creation. Already God's reign is present as a ferment in the world, stirring hope in men and preparing the world to receive its ultimate judgment and redemption. With an urgency born of this hope, the church applies itself to present tasks and strives for a better world."* (9.54-9.55)

The manifestation of the kingdom of God in the world is directly related to the mission of the church. The Great Commission continues to be the cornerstone for the mission of the church. (see Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16: 15-18). This impressive call by Christ directed to his followers continues to challenge one's conscience and serves as a measure of one's commitment. The Directory for Worship states: *"The church participates in God's mission to the world through its ministry and worship…The church in its ministry bears witness to God's reign through the proclamation of the gospel, through works of compassion and reconciliation, and through the stewardship of creation and of life. Signs of God's reign are also manifest in the world wherever the Holy Spirit leads people to seek justice and to make peace."*(W-7.1001).

Taking the Great Commission as the guide, the following are basic church activities which bear witness to the manifestation of the kingdom of God in the world.

3.6.1 – Implementing the mission

'Go into all the world....'' (Mark 16:15). The heart of the missionary work of the church is found in this command. The gospel was preached and the missionary impetus of the church was present in many of the countries of origin of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies. The Directory for Worship states: *"God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit,...b)to tell all nations and peoples of Christ's call to repentance, faith, and obedience,...e) to call people everywhere to believe in and follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior..."''* (W-72001b.e).

The people of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies are indebted to the missionary work of the church because they are the product of the mission work in their countries of origin. The missionary work of the church requires human resources, material and financial resources as well as the establishment of relationships among and between the churches.

3.6.1.1 – Local mission – Mission work is not always beyond the border. There are many needs within the country which are just as important and demanding as those outside the country. Local mission is becoming very important to the congregations as they realize that the needs which called them to service outside the country, are next door and calling for their help. Local mission is found in the neighborhood, around the streets of the church and at the front door of the church. The mission may be in food service or refuge for the homeless, in providing clothes for the needy and other projects which are identified in the community in which the congregation finds itself.

3.6.1.2 – Mission beyond the local area – This is mission work beyond the immediate area, in service in another country, or in another part of this country. This type of project will require planning, major funding and more time.

3.6.1.3 – Commissioning and supporting missionaries – Programs should be planned that call for volunteers in mission. Current mission needs are so diverse that not only pastors are called to serve in the mission field. The call is made to technicians, teachers, doctors, engineers, architects and to the professions which the need and the region require. This situation demands that the church be more creative and assertive. The Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.), through the structures of the General Assembly, provides information about the most pressing needs from the countries and areas where the church is called to mission. The local congregations and members can respond in fulfilling these needs through financial support or by supporting a volunteer or missionary to serve in the mission field. The people of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies, because of their proficiency in Spanish and Portuguese, could respond to the needs where language proficiency is required.

3.6.1.4 – Mission trips – Congregations and churches can also support missions by planning periodic mission trips to different places. Mission trips can be planned within the country and to other countries. The preparation for a mission trip requires work and time, skills and funding. Mission trips are possible to all, not just large and wealthy churches. Resources for mission trips are available from the General Assembly, synods, presbyteries and other congregations which may unite with others for this type of project.

3.6.1.5 – Creating Partnerships with other churches – The General Assembly provides the process to establish relationships with other churches; it is called Partnership in Mission. Relationships can be established church-to-church in several countries; these may include mutual visits, common projects, financial aid or assistance with materials, praying for one another and exchanging information with the churches or the denomination. The relationship may include more than one congregation or church. The General Assembly provides the guidelines, information and resources which are important in the establishment of the Partnership in Mission.

3.6.1.6 – Funding and financing mission – The church lives in the world of the market place and thus must be knowledgeable in how to invest its resources in order to fund its mission projects. We must not be so naïve as to think that the local and missionary work of the church will be funded only by the Sunday offerings. The total mission work of the work can only be fully funded and survive as the church takes advantage of the resources of the world in which it lives. The strategies that the church develops to include the Hispanic-Latino constituencies in the funding of mission should respond to the cultural and diversity among generations. The church needs to take into account these differences as it works with people in the church and outside the church.

The congregations and the churches need to consider the various funding sources within and outside the denomination, including foundations. They need to develop a fiscal discipline in planning and managing the money for the budget, including the investments in short, medium and long term programs. The buildings should also be well managed. Some of the less used facilities could be rented to produce income so that critical funds are not consumed in just maintenance. The creation of trusts can provide another source of permanent income for continuing programs and activities. The congregations and the churches need to learn about the investment strategies and involve the members in this process.

3.6.2 – Effective communication
"*Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.*" (Mark 16:15) The Directory for Worship clearly states: "*God sends the church in the power of the Holy Spirit a) to announce the good news that in Christ Jesus the world is reconciled to God.*" (W-7.2002a). Effective communication among two or more people takes place when the information being transmitted connects and unites them. The Gospel is most effectively communicated when it takes place in the cultural context and responds to the needs of the people. The missionary potential surrounds the church. It is important to take advantage of the most effective means of communication, including the most modern technologies available. The proliferation of the methods of communication directed specifically at the Hispanic-Latino constituencies is a recent phenomenon in this country. The Church needs to explore the free services available in the field of communications and use them to proclaim and communicate the Gospel.

3.6.2.1 – Written communication – Among the churches of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies the majority of the written communication falls on the pastor to produce letters, bulletins, magazines, etc.. Often the limitations of the budget do not provide for secretarial services and this creates additional work for the pastor. A strategy for communication should include the creation of a committee for communication and public relations. This group would produce the pamphlets, bulletins and other written and printed materials used by the church.

3.6.2.2 – Radio – The radio lends itself for a means of communicating Christian music, counseling programs and the worship and preaching services. Many of the Christian and secular radio stations provide free time for the churches. This work requires trained persons to form a team with the adequate skills to produce a quality radio program. The General Assembly has an office with specialized personnel who can provide the proper orientation to use this means of communication.

3.6.2.3 – Television and videos – The use of videos is increasing in Sunday School classes, workshops, conferences and other educational programs. The low cost for the development and the accessibility of the technology for production, makes it possible for its utilization by the local church. There are youth in the churches and congregations who, if we placed a video camera in their hands, would be challenged to receive further training in courses that the church or secular agencies offer.

3.6.2.4 – The computer, the internet/Website and PowerPoint – The church has witnessed the rapid growth of the internet in recent years. The low cost of computers and the easy access and availability of this technology for all, makes it possible for Hispanic-Latino constituencies to consider its uses. The creation of a web page for the local church places it in the realm of global communication. The use of this technology makes for the expansion of the missionary work of the church in many regions. The use of the computer is changing the homiletic preparation and delivery for the church. The use of the computer combined with PowerPoint and projection presentations is increasing for educational programs, classes and sermons. The church can communicate instantly, directly and live with another church anywhere in the world. Probably most pastors and lay leaders need the training to use this technology. Workshops and short courses should be offered in Spanish and Portuguese so that these skills can be learned and implemented in the ministry for the Hispanic-Latino constituencies.

3.6.3 – Developing discipleship

"…and make disciples of all nations…baptizing them…and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you…." (Matthew 28:19-20). Developing discipleship is more than leadership training and new conversions. The purpose of discipleship is to prepare individuals to develop and live more complete Christian lives. The church needs to prepare a national program of discipleship to train its leaders in the difficult task of retaining in the church those who are called by the Lord to a life of service. The development of discipleship is a matter of practical learning and application of what it means to be a Christian. The training should include all ages accordingly. This preparation is what provides a person a purpose for life. Often new people coming into the church cannot discover how to contribute and be useful. The development of discipleship will prepare new persons to contribute and to apply their faith in practical ways.

3.6.4– Interaction with the Holy Spirit

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses…to the ends of the earth.." (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit is responsible for the missionary task. The Lord's promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples is not to disrupt daily life, but to illuminate daily living. The Westminster Confession of Faith states: *"…Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word."* (6.006). When one's daily life is illuminated, one understands salvation, one understands Biblical revelation, and one's identity takes on a new dimension.

According to the Confession of 1967, *"…The Holy Spirit creates and renews the church as the community in which we are reconciled to God and to one another."* (9.20). The *Strategy* has no meaning without first acknowledging that the renewal of the church is the work of the Holy Spirit. The Brief Declaration of Faith states: *"..empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives."* (72-74).

4. Conclusion

In the introduction to the *Strategy for Ministry with the Hispanic-Latino Constituencies*, it was stated that this is not the definitive document, nor is it a permanent document. The topics included in this document need to be studied and analyzed by the congregations and the governing bodies. The document does not attempt to include every circumstance faced by the large variety of congregations. The document must be adapted in the context of the local situation and of each particular group. Nevertheless, there are some things that do not change and which are permanent: the call by God to everyone, the witness of one's testimony, and the eternal presence of both.

4.1 – "You did not chose me, but I chose you…" (John 15:16a)

God is faithful and will be faithful to his people. All of the confessions of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) support this fundamental truth: we have not chosen God, it is God who first chose us. The Hispanic-Latino constituencies are called by God and are empowered and "…*enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed by it."* (6.064-65). *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation…."* (I Peter 2:9). It is important for the Hispanic constituencies to affirm God's call and election. God has called the Hispanic-Latino constituencies to a new life, and the call includes the language, the culture, the traditions and the musical rhythms. God has made the call for His Name and virtues to be proclaimed, and to acknowledge that we were taken from darkness to live illumined by the Spirit.

4.2 – "And I appointed you to go and bear fruit.." (John 15:16b)

God has placed the Hispanic-Latino constituencies in this time and place to produce fruit. God has chosen us and has also chosen the places and the circumstances for us to bear witness. *"For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life."* (Ephesians 2:10). This is why the Westminster Confession of Faith states: *"These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith."* (6.088).

The congregations of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies have been placed by God in this land and within the denomination. We have not been invited, nor admitted, nor assimilated, nor tolerated. Rather, we have been called by God to bear witness to the faith encarnate in our many cultures. The fruit that we produce has a particular taste. It is not better nor worse than the taste of other fruits. Humbly and joyfully we acknowledge that it is ours and it is genuine.

4.3 – "…fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. (John 15: 16c).
We are convinced that the fruit and witness of the Presbyterian Churches of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies shall not disappear from the faith history of this nation. The *Strategy* is a product of this link, and the assurance that there is a future to fulfill. In the history of the congregations there are found the names of the ministers, elders, deacons, and lay leaders whose lives have enabled us to be present today. We owe them our respect and gratitude. Luke reminds Theophilus that it is the time to recall the truth of what he has heard: "*…just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word." (*Luke 1:2*).

As witnessed and recorded by the Synod of Puerto Rico during their centennial year, it is time to recall the story of the life of all the churches of the Hispanic-Latino constituencies from across the United States of America*.

The last phrase of John 15:16, *"…so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name,"* is more than a mere condition, it is the promise of God to be with the Hispanic-Latino constituencies. God will give us what we ask for. It is for that purpose that God called us and placed us in this time and place. It is "*with believers in every time and place, we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Brief Statement of Faith, 77-80).

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