

Biographical Information about Rev. Richie Sanchez

Education and Training:

Rev. Sanchez has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Inter-disciplinary studies with a minor in Business Administration. He has a Masters of Divinity with a Master of Arts degree in Multi-cultural Christian Education from Christian Theological Seminary. He has formal training in Pro-Reconciliation and Anti-Racism, Boundaries, Legal/Ethical, and Sexual Misconduct and he participated in a Professional Grant Development Workshop.

Faith Journey:

Richie was born to parents who came to the US from Puerto Rico, and he grew up as a native Spanish speaker in the midst of cultural diversity in Brooklyn, NY. His parents were members of the Disciples of Christ Church and spent his formative years as a member of the First Hispanic Christian Church in Brooklyn, NY. His conversion experience occurred at 18 years of age, and he developed leadership skills by working in youth and young-adult ministries. These experiences awoke Richie to answer the call to ministry, after which he served in a number of commissioned roles in local and regional ministry leading up to his formal education in seminary, becoming an ordained Minister in 2015. He has a regular practice of journaling, prayer walks, devotions, and personal retreats, stating that “prayer, stillness, biblical reflection, and rest are my constant.”

Statement of God’s covenantal call to be a part of the Christian Church (DOC) and the broader ecumenical/ interfaith ministries:

Richie writes, “It is God who has prepared for humanity a covenantal call of redemption through Jesus Christ. This redemption has adopted us as God’s people, and joined us together in the body of Christ. “We are not the only Christians; we are Christians only!” For this reason, we’re committed to ecumenism and interfaith ministry. “Unity is our Polar Star.” I enjoy the centrality of the Lord’s Table, a sacrament within our worship, helping to remind us of our unity, the covenant we share, and the revealed Christ in our midst. We are a church that is expressed locally, regionally, and as a general manifestation within the United States and Canada with a mission to the world.”

Statement of Mission and the Church:

Reverend Sanchez states that the church in its mission must be courageous enough to “encounter the life of the Spirit already present and at work” in the world’s greatest challenges. We are “God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation.” When we accept God’s commission, at God’s command we are sent with the word Go (Mat. 28: 19), and it is our action or engagement within these challenges that can help to make the world a different place. As God’s people, using our hands, our feet, our resources, our efforts (Mat. 25: 35-36), and our prayers (to send more laborers - Mat. 9:38) we face the world’s bad news with the “Good News” of God found in Jesus Christ. We are never alone in these challenges, when we recognize the activity of the Spirit of God already within them (Mat. 28:20).

Relevant Work Experiences: Richie started out his professional work life in the corporate world, working for 4 years with ATT network services. He left this position to serve as the Administrative Assistant to the Regional Minister in Florida during a particularly difficult transitional period. In this position, he was the contact for the Committee on Ministry (COM) working with congregations and pastoral call, managed special projects and improved office technologies. After 2 years in this position, he became the Special Assistant to the Regional Minister, and he spent 3 years in this position supporting the executive staff, COM, leading the visioning for moving the regional office, and developing deeper relationships with the Latino constituencies in the region. He then was selected as the Associate Regional Pastor and served as the “Pastor to Pastors,” managed seasonal camp programs for children, youth, and young adults. He supported the launching of several new congregations, the transformation of others and the closing of a few ministries. After 3 years as the Associate Regional Pastor, he moved to Indianapolis for Seminary, and for 1 ½ years he served as a Student Minister at Light of the World Christian Church in Indianapolis. His service to this very active and large African American congregation included preaching, teaching, pastoral care, and fostering a new congregational culture. After seminary, he spent the next year serving as the interim pastor of 2 churches (FCC New Castle, Indiana and Danville Christian Church in Danville, Indiana) before being called as the Interim Regional Minister and President of the Arizona Region. He has served in this role since August of 2017. In his current role, he is a member of the College of Regional Ministers. Richie’s service in the wider church includes:

- Chair of local arrangements for various regional assemblies
- Chair of Regional Youth Programs
- Chair of the National Board of Directors of Disciples Home Mission
- Chair of the Search Committee for the General Minister for the Central Pastoral Office of Hispanic Ministries
- Member of Week of Compassion Advisory Committee

Strengths:

Reverend Sanchez has a deep and abiding faith which was evidenced in his papers and by references. The committee experienced this with him, also. He identifies a key strength as “the ability to extend or share leadership,” in which he finds joy “in building other's capacity, and fearlessness to lead in diversity.” He grew up in a culturally diverse environment and is bilingual in Spanish and English. His life experiences have translated to a passion of bringing people from diverse backgrounds into communion and his successes of doing so during his time in ministerial leadership reflect this passion.

Growing Edges:

One of Richie’s references stated, “He is quite humble about his gifts and graces, yet has keen self-awareness about his growing edges.” His self-proclaimed growing edge is that he has a tendency to “over-function on occasion” taking on more than he can handle. He overcomes this by actively discerning his role and promoting an environment of mutuality, insuring that everyone is engaged and sharing responsibilities.

Strengths in Areas of Ministerial Practice:

Reverend Sanchez has a variety of strengths, including Biblical Knowledge, Cross Cultural and Anti-Racism Experience, Education and Leader Development, Church Administration and Planning, Communication, Pastoral Care, and Proclamation of the Word

Leadership:

One reference describes that as a leader, “he is committed to faithfully living out his call. He recognizes that people are in different places in their own faith journeys and respects that, while creating opportunities where all can learn from each other. That's good leadership. He is not afraid to stand up for his beliefs or to speak truth to power, but it is always tempered in deep love and respect for all.” Another says, “He believes in the strength of the team. He values the gifts and input of others and will seek to hear what others have to offer.” “He is likable and has a good sense of humor. People warm up to him easily and quickly, which serves him well as a leader. He is a hard worker and leads by example. He is willing to make the sacrifices that it takes to get the work done.” When commenting on his leadership within a local church, one reference said he demonstrated “a willingness to stretch himself by leading an inter-generational lesson once a month and also doing the children's sermon each Sunday.”

Self-Identified Calling:

Richie states that he has interests “in preaching, teaching, worship, leadership development.” He enjoys and thrives in the beauty of diversity. He notes that his “future ministry will “see me as a unifier, a champion for wholeness in the midst of the multitude of fractures that are caused by the many “-isms” of this world.”

References:

Four letters of reference were included in the Search and Call packet. At the request of the Search Committee, an additional three more names were provided by Richie. All seven of these individuals were contacted by phone to get their verbal comments. Among the references were regional ministers, supervisors, mentors, regional staff, regional moderator, and local pastors and lay leadership in the region he currently leads. All references were extremely positive and all seven specifically stated that they would be happy to have Rev. Richie Sanchez serve as their regional minister.