

Samuel Rodriguez Wants to Meet With Donald Trump

Rev. Samuel Rodriguez, president and CEO of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, has asked for a meeting with presumptive Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump to discuss issues important to the members of his organization.

Rodriguez, who also serves as lead pastor of New Season Church in Sacramento, California, said he wants to come to the table with Trump to discuss “comprehensive immigration solutions,” including “secure borders.” However, the leader of one of the world’s largest Latino evangelical organizations also wants to discuss “the millions of hard-working Latino immigrants who call the United States their home.”

“To date, Donald Trump’s comments about immigration have been inflammatory, impractical and unhelpful,” Rodriguez said. “Now that he is the presumptive nominee, we call upon him to immediately stop rhetorical commentary he has previously used that discredits groups, including Latino immigrants, and start discussing and offering real, productive solutions for comprehensive immigration reform.”

Rodriguez said that in his victory speech following the Indiana primary, Trump spoke of reaching out to the Hispanic community, and that “now is the time to put action to his words” and attempt to heal the hurt and damage his previous statements have caused.

“If Trump truly wants to make America ‘a beautiful and loving country,’ then he must personally begin by treating all—black, white, Latino, male and female—as they deserve to be treated. For at the end of the day, every individual is made in the image of God and merits love and respect,” he said. “As we

continue down the path in choosing our next president, may we remember that our great nation's future depends not on one man or one woman, but rather God."

Rodriguez said Hispanic evangelicals are "still in play" for the 2016 election, noting a recent internal survey of NHCLC members shows that, when asked which candidate they would vote for today, no one candidate had clear support. More than one-third of those polled claimed that no one candidate clearly represented them at this point in the race, and that policy is more important than rhetoric.

"This tells us that evangelical Hispanics are still making up their minds," he said. "This is good news for the remaining candidates who will need their support in a general election, but will have to earn it."