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250 Years of United Methodism  
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*Community Leader,  
Mentor, and Founder of  
Anchor House*

**1917-2013**



# Alfredo Cotto-Thorner

Rev. Cotto-Thorner's 54-year ministry touched and transformed the congregations and communities he served. He was a beloved mentor to his fellow Hispanic clergy and he left the legacy of Anchor House, the faith-based residential treatment facility for alcohol and substance abusers that he founded.

A native of Cayey, Puerto Rico, Cotto-Thorner served South Third Street UMC in Brooklyn from 1955 when he was received as an elder in the New York East Conference until his retirement in 1988. Through the many Spanish-language social service programs he initiated there, he nurtured future leaders who continue to serve the community today.

In 1967 Rev. Cotto-Thorner agreed to help a drug addict on the condition that he bring 10 other addicts to church for food, coffee and conversation. He brought 30 others, and thus the ministry of Anchor House was born.

After retirement he became Hispanic associate pastor at Community Church in Jackson Heights, Queens, a multi-ethnic church with services in Spanish, English, Korean and Chinese. He began with 17 Hispanic attendees, but within a year his warmth, charm, and dedication increased that number to 200!

## *For Discussion*

- Personal invitation played a large role in the creation of Anchor House. How well does your church use personal invitation in its ministry?
- Mentoring was an important part of Rev. Cotto-Thorner's ministry. Have you had a spiritual mentor? Are you a spiritual mentor?
- Methodism is built on connectionalism. How does Anchor House demonstrate the importance of sharing the burden of such outreach programs?

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