Church Trends in Latin America

Compiled and Edited by Clifton L. Holland, Director of PROLADES

Last revised on 21 December 2012
CONTENTS

Introduction: Defining the “full breadth of Christianity in Latin America”

I. A General Overview of Religious Affiliation in Latin America and the Caribbean by Regions and Countries, 2010

II. The Western Catholic Liturgical Tradition

A. Introduction

B. The period of Roman Catholic hegemony in Latin America, 1500-1900

(1) The Holy Office of the Inquisition in the Americas

(2) Religious Liberty in Latin America after Independence

(3) Concordats

C. The period of accelerated religious change in Latin America, 1800 to date

D. Defections from the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America since 1950; the changing religious marketplace

(1) Defections to Protestantism

(2) Defections to Marginal Christian groups

(3) Defections to independent Western Catholic movements

(4) Defections to non-Christian religions

(5) Defections to secular society (those with no religious affiliation, agnostics and atheists)

E. Contemporary issues and problems facing the Roman Catholic Church

III. Independent Western Catholic groups in Latin America

A. Mexico

B. Colombia

C. Argentina

IV. The Eastern Orthodox Liturgical Tradition

A. Mexico

B. Guatemala

C. Colombia

D. Argentina
V. The Protestant Movement Tradition

A. Defining the Protestant Movement
B. Regional differences in Protestant population size and growth rates
C. Christianity and conflict in Latin America
D. Recent research on Protestant desertion in the context of Central America

VI. Marginal Christian Traditions

VII. A comparative analysis of Roman Catholic and Protestant social strength in Latin America

A. Church attendance
B. Christian education at primary and secondary school levels
C. Theological education
D. Denominational trends in theological education
E. Theological trends in general
F. Mission trends
G. The ethnographic and socioeconomic background of Protestant adherents
H. The importance of evaluating the distribution of Protestant churches at the national level by geographical regions
I. The educational level of Evangelical pastors
J. Average church size of Protestant congregations / mega-church variables
K. Church budgets and spending patterns of Protestant denominations

Summary and Conclusions

Bibliography of Sources
Church Trends in Latin America

Introduction: Defining the “full breadth of Christianity in Latin America”

The first difficulty in discussing “Church Trends in Latin America” is the complex nature of Christianity in the Spanish and Portuguese countries of North, Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean region. I have attempted to give an overview of all known religious groups in each region and country in general and of the different component parts of Christianity in particular in (1) Toward a Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas by Major Traditions and Denominational Families (latest edition, November 2012), which is available at: http://www.prolades.com/clas-eng.pdf; and in (2) The PROLADES Encyclopedia of Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean (four volumes, about 1,300 pages) in two editions, one in English and the other in Spanish, which are now available on the Internet at: http://www.prolades.com/encyclopedia/encyclopedia-main-index.htm.

Volume I of the latter is my religious classification document cited above, which provides an annotated outline of the various branches of Christianity: the Eastern Orthodox Liturgical Tradition, the Western Catholic Liturgical Tradition, the Protestant Movement Tradition, and the Marginal Christian Traditions. Three of my other recent publications provide a general overview of the component parts of the Protestant Movement among Hispanics in the USA, Canada and Puerto Rico: (1) Historical Profiles of Protestant Denominations with Hispanic Ministry in the USA: http://www.hispanicchurchesusa.net/denominations/hsusa_historical_profiles_15August2012.pdf; (2) Historical Profiles of Protestant Denominations with Hispanic Ministry in the Dominion of Canada: http://www.hispanicchurchesusa.net/AETH/Canada/historical_profiles_hispanic_denoms_canada.pdf; and (3) Historical Profiles of Protestant Denominations in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico: http://www.hispanicchurchesusa.net/AETH/Puerto%20Rico/pri_historical_profiles_15august2012_final.pdf

Therefore, in the discussion to follow, I will attempt to differentiate between the various trends that exist within the major traditions of Christianity in the context of Latin America (including Hispanics in the USA and Canada) in order to provide a clearer explanation of this complex reality at the beginning of the 21st century.

I. A General Overview of Religious Affiliation in Latin America and the Caribbean by Regions and Countries, 2010

Since the late 1990s, my organization has conducted an annual review of census documents, public opinion polls, and other scientific studies regarding statistics on “religious affiliation” in each country of Latin America and the Caribbean. As soon as the Internet became available to us in Costa Rica, my home and base of operations since 1972, we have been able to more easily monitor this type of trend data throughout the Americas. By 2010, an enormous amount of information was available about religious groups and religious affiliation on the Internet, whereas in 2000 this kind of information was extremely limited. To my knowledge, PROLADES is the only organization that has provided a general overview of religious affiliation in each country and
region of the Americas via the Internet based on national censuses and public opinion polls for the period 1990-2010. This information is available on our website at www.prolades.com by regions and countries on our home page. The latest census and public opinion poll data for each region and country is available at: http://www.prolades.com/americas-tabla-encuestas-censos.htm

We have produced an adapted version of this table for inclusion in this document (see below) without the non-Hispanic countries and territories of the Caribbean region. This document and the online version are continually undergoing revisions and updates as new information becomes available.

However, I would like to clarify the terms used in this table. “Catholic” refers only to the official Roman Catholic Church in each country; “Protestant” only refers to those religious groups considered by PROLADES to fit our definition of belonging to the Protestant movement; “Other Religions” refers to all other religious groups in the country, including Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic-derived groups as well as any other religious group that considers itself to be “Christian,” which we have labeled Marginal Christian groups. For greater clarity about which groups are included within each of these major traditions, please consult the PROLADES classification code document mentioned earlier: Toward a Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas by Major Traditions and Denominational Families (latest edition, November 2012), which is available at: http://www.prolades.com/clas-eng.pdf.

Because the respective census documents and public opinion polls cited in this table do not necessarily use the same definitions for these same categories, we have made the necessary adjustments and calculations to adapt the statistics to conform to our definitions for the sake of clarity, consistency and comparative analysis. Therefore, the statistics used in our table may not be the same as those found in the respective official census documents and public opinion polls cited as our source documents in the “Source” and “Memo” columns of the table below.

In addition, the statistics used in our table for each country and region may not be the same as those found in other publications that cite the official census or public opinion poll data for each country. Some of the publications often used by scholars and Christian leaders for statistical information on religious affiliation in Latin America may contain inaccurate reports and projections based on false assumptions, especially when the authors of these publications extrapolate data at five or ten year intervals into the future often using erroneous average annual growth rates. This is the case with David Barrett’s World Christian Encyclopedia (second edition, 2001), Peter Brierly’s World Churches Handbook (1997 edition), and Patrick Johnston/Jason Mandryk’s Operation World (all editions).
# TABLE OF STATISTICS ON RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN THE AMERICAS AND THE IBERIAN PENINSULA

Compiled by Clifton L. Holland, Director of PROLADES

Last update on 11 October 2012

SOURCE: DATA TAKEN FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES (SEE MEMO FIELD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION / COUNTRY (alphabetical order by country)</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>% CATH</th>
<th>% PROT</th>
<th>% OTHER</th>
<th>% NONE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>MEMO (NOTE: &quot;NONE&quot; INCLUDES &quot;NO RELIGION&quot; AND &quot;NO ANSWER&quot;)</th>
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<tr>
<td>NORTH AMERICA</td>
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<td>CANADA - TOTAL POP.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>43.2</td>
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<td>21.0</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>2012 (OCTOBER) PEW RESEARCH CENTER</td>
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<td>67.6</td>
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<td>PEW 2006 U.S. RELIGION SURVEY</td>
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<td>BELIZE</td>
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<td>40.4</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
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<td>2010 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION - CARICOM</td>
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<td>COSTA RICA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>22.9</td>
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<td>POLL</td>
<td>CID-GALLUP PUBLIC OPINION POLL #132, SEPT 2012</td>
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<td>EL SALVADOR</td>
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<td>50.4</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>LATINOBAROMETRO 2006 (OTHER / NONE = 12.4%)</td>
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<td>POLL</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>76.5</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>CIEL-PIETTE-CONICET, JAN-FEB 2008</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Catholic (%)</td>
<td>Other Christian (%)</td>
<td>Other (%)</td>
<td>Agnostic (%)</td>
<td>Non-religious (%)</td>
<td>Unknown (%)</td>
<td>Source Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>BOLIVIA</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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<td>2001 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION, INE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>CENSUS</td>
<td>2010 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION, IGBE</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHILE</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>CENSUS</td>
<td>2002 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING</td>
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<tr>
<td>COLOMBIA</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>ESTIMATE: A March 22, 2007, article in the daily newspaper <em>El Tiempo</em> said that 80% of the population was Roman Catholic; 13.5% belonged to non-Catholic forms of Christianity; 2% were agnostic, and the remaining 4.5% belonged to other religious groups, such as Islam and Judaism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECUADOR</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>Encuesta Nacional de Participacion Cuidadana, INEC-SENPLADES 2008; <em>none</em> 21.5% includes other religions.</td>
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<td>PARAGUAY</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>CENSUS</td>
<td>2002 NATIONAL CENSUS: 89.6% Roman Catholic, 6.2% evangelical Christian, 1.1% other Christian, 0.6% indigenous religions, 0.3% other (non-Christian) religions, 1.1% non-religious, and 1% unknown.</td>
</tr>
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<td>PERU</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>CENSUS</td>
<td>2007 National Census conducted by the Peruvian National Institute of Statistics and Information (INEI)</td>
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<td>URUGUAY</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>SURVEY</td>
<td>National Institute of Statistics (INE): National Housing Survey, 2006:</td>
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<td>VENEZUELA</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>PROLADES</td>
<td>PROLADES statistical report for CONELA based on a survey of current literature and the Operation World 2010 Database.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUBA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>PROLADES</td>
<td>PROLADES statistical report based on a survey of current literature and recent news sources.</td>
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<td>DOMINICAN REPUBLIC</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>According to the 2006 CID-Gallup Poll, the population is 39.8% Catholic (practicing) and 29.1% Catholic (non-practicing); 18.2% is evangelical Protestant; 10.6% have no religion; other religions constitute 2.3% (Source: IRFR 2007)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUERTO RICO</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>PROLADES</td>
<td>PROLADES statistical report for CONELA based on a survey of current literature and the Operation World 2010 Database.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments and interpretation of information contained in the above table

For the majority of these countries, there exists reliable statistical information from a series of national censuses, public opinion polls and surveys for the period 2001-2012. However, the national census data for 2001-2002 is not a reliable indicator of the current situation in those countries; currently, some of these national census departments are conducting and compiling the new census data for 2010-2012, but that information is not yet available regarding “religious affiliation.”

However, based on the available information from this table, we can observe the following.

- **Countries with the lowest percentage of Protestant-Evangelical population** (less than 10%): Cuba 5.0%, Paraguay 6.2%, Mexico 7.6%, Argentina 9%, and Hispanics in Canada 9.1%.
- **Countries in the low-middle range percentage** of Protestant-Evangelical population (between 10 and 20%): Uruguay 11.1%, Colombia 12.5%, Ecuador 12.5%, Peru 12.5%, Venezuela 12.8%, Chile 15.1%, Bolivia 16.2%, Dominican Republic 18.2%, and USA Hispanics 19.6%.
- **Countries in the high-middle range percentage** of Protestant-Evangelical population (between 20 and 30%): Panama 21.2%, Costa Rica 22.9%, Brazil 22.2%, and Puerto Rico 23.5%.
- **Countries with the highest percentage** Protestant-Evangelical population (more than 30%): Nicaragua 30.4%, Guatemala 30.7%, El Salvador 38.2%, Belize 39.1%, and Honduras 43.9%.

Conversely, the Latin America countries with the highest percentage (+70%) of Roman Catholic population are the following: Paraguay 89.6%, Mexico 83.8%, Peru 81.3%, Colombia 80%, Bolivia 78%, Venezuela 78%, Argentina 76.5%, Puerto Rico 71%, and Chile 70%.
II. The Western Catholic Liturgical Tradition

A. Introduction

Although the Roman Catholic Church, with its international headquarters in The Vatican (an independent jurisdiction – sovereign city-state -- within the country of Italy), remains a strong and vital force in Latin American society, its composition, strength and vitality has changed during generations of political and social unrest since the Spanish colonial period (1492-1898). Colonial expansion under the crown of Castile was initiated by the Spanish conquistadores and developed by the Monarchy of Spain through its administrators and missionaries. The motivations for colonial expansion were trade and the spread of the Christian faith through indigenous conversions.

Beginning with the 1492 arrival of Christopher Columbus’ first voyage of exploration, over nearly four centuries the Spanish Empire would expand across most of present-day Central America, the Caribbean islands, and Mexico; much of the rest of North America including the Southwestern, Southern coastal and California Pacific Coast regions of what is now the United States of America (USA); and the western half of South America.

In the early 19th century the revolutionary movements resulted in the independence of most Spanish colonies in the Americas, except for Cuba and Puerto Rico that were lost to Spain in 1898 following its defeat in the Spanish-American War, together with Guam and the Philippines in the Pacific. Spain's loss of these last territories politically ended Spanish colonization in the Americas.

Portugal was the leading country in the European exploration of the world in the 15th century. The Treaty of Tordesillas divided the Earth, outside Europe, in 1494 into Spanish (Castilian) and Portuguese global territorial hemispheres for exclusive conquest and colonization. Colonial Brazil comprises the period from 1500, with the arrival of the Portuguese, until 1815, when Brazil was elevated to kingdom status alongside Portugal as the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves.

The territory of present-day Brazil [the largest country in South America, containing more than half of its total territory] was fought over by Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch and French forces, but was finally conquered and governed by Portugal. Conflicts between the Spanish and Portuguese over the southern colonial frontiers of Brazil led to the signing of the Treaty of Madrid in 1750, in which the governments of Spain and Portugal agreed to a considerable southwestward expansion of colonial Brazil and effectively established the present boundaries of Brazil. Political independence from Portugal finally came to Brazil on 7 September 1822.

During the over 300 years of Brazilian colonial history, the economic exploration of the territory was based first on brazilwood extraction (16th century), sugar production (16th –18th centuries), and finally on gold and diamond mining (18th century). Slaves, initially conquered Amerindians and later those brought from Africa, provided most of the work force for the Brazilian economy.

Adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_and_the_Age_of_Discovery
Post-colonial Amazonian history

On 6 September 1850, Brazilian Emperor Pedro II sanctioned a law authorizing steam navigation on the Amazon, and gave the Viscount of Mauá (Irineu Evangélista de Sousa) the task of putting it into effect. He organized the “Companhia de Navegação e Comércio do Amazonas” in Rio de Janeiro in 1852; and in the following year it commenced operations with three small steamers, the Monarch, the Marajó and Rio Negro.

At first, navigation was principally confined to the main river; and even in 1857 a modification of the government contract only obliged the company to a monthly service between Pará and Manaus, with steamers of 200 tons cargo capacity, a second line to make six round voyages a year between Manaus and Tabatinga, and a third, two trips a month between Pará and Cametá. This was the first step in opening up the vast interior.

The success of the venture called attention to the opportunities for economic exploitation of the Amazon, and a second company soon opened commerce on the Madeira, Purus and Negro; a third established a line between Pará and Manaus; and a fourth found it profitable to navigate some of the smaller streams. In that same period, the Amazonas Company was increasing its fleet. Meanwhile, private individuals were building and running small steam craft of their own on the main river as well as on many of its tributaries.

On 31 July 1867 the government of Brazil, constantly pressed by the maritime powers and by the countries encircling the upper Amazon basin, especially Peru, decreed the opening of the Amazon to all flags; but limited this to certain defined points: Tabatinga – on the Amazon; Cametá – on the Tocantins; Santarém – on the Tapajós; Borba – on the Madeira, and Manaus – on the Rio Negro. The Brazilian decree took effect on 7 September 1867.

Thanks in part to the mercantile development associated with steamboat navigation, coupled with the internationally driven demand for natural rubber (1880–1920), Manáos (now Manaus) and Pará (now Belém) in (Brazil), and Iquitos, Peru, became thriving, cosmopolitan centers of commerce and spectacular—albeit illusory—“modern” “urban growth.” This was particularly the case for Iquitos during its late 19th and early 20th century Rubber Bonanza zenith when this dynamic boomtown was known abroad as the St. Louis of the Amazon. Foreign companies settled in this city, from where they controlled the extraction of rubber. In 1851 Iquitos had a population of 200 and by 1900 its population reached 20,000. In the 1860s, approximately 3,000 tons of rubber was being exported annually and by 1911 annual exports had grown to 44,000 tons, representing 9.3% of Peru’s exports. During the rubber boom it is estimated that diseases brought by immigrants such as typhus or malaria killed 40,000 native Amazonians.

The first direct foreign trade with Manaus was commenced around 1874. Local trade along the river was carried on by the English successors to the Amazonas Company—the Amazon Steam Navigation Company—as well as numerous small steamboats, belonging to companies and firms engaged in the rubber trade, navigating the Negro, Madeira, Purus and many other tributaries, such as the Marañón to ports as distant as Nauta, Peru. The Amazon Steam Navigation Company had 38 vessels.

By the turn of the 20th century, the principal exports of the Amazon Basin were India-rubber, cacao beans, Brazil nuts and a few other products of minor importance, such
as pelts and exotic forest produce (resins, barks, woven hammocks, prized bird-feathers, live animals, etc.) and extracted goods (lumber, gold, etc.).

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_River

In contrast to the neighboring fragmented Spanish possessions, the Portuguese colony of Brazil kept its territorial unity and linguistic integrity after Independence, which has allowed Brazil to become the largest country in South America.

At first, Brazil was set up as fifteen private, hereditary captaincies. Pernambuco succeeded by growing sugar cane. São Vicente prospered by dealing in indigenous slaves. The other thirteen captaincies failed, leading the king to make colonization a royal effort rather than a private one. In 1549, Tomé de Sousa sailed to Brazil to establish a central government. De Sousa brought along Jesuits, who set up missions, saved many natives from slavery, studied native languages, and converted many natives to Roman Catholicism. The Jesuits' work to pacify a hostile tribe helped the Portuguese expel the French from a colony they had established at present-day Rio de Janeiro.

Tomé de Sousa, the first Governor General of Brazil, brought the first group of Jesuits [Society of Jesus] to the colony. More than any other religious order, the Jesuits represented the spiritual side of the enterprise and were destined to play a central role in the colonial history of Brazil. The spreading of the Catholic faith was an important justification for the Portuguese conquests, and the Jesuits were officially supported by the King, who instructed Tomé de Sousa to give them all the support needed to Christianize the indigenous peoples.

The first Jesuits, guided by Father Manuel da Nóbrega and including prominent figures like Juan de Azpilcueta Navarro, Leonardo Nunes and later José de Anchieta, established the first Jesuit missions in Salvador and in São Paulo dos Campos de Piratininga, the settlement that gave rise to the city of São Paulo. Nóbrega and Anchieta were instrumental in the defeat of the French colonists of the France Antarctique by managing to pacify the Tamoio natives, who had previously fought the Portuguese. The Jesuits took part in the foundation of the city of Rio de Janeiro in 1565.

The success of the Jesuits in converting the indigenous peoples to Catholicism is linked to their capacity to understand the native culture, especially the language. The first grammar of the Tupi language was compiled by José de Anchieta and printed in Coimbra in 1595. The Jesuits often gathered the aborigines in communities (the Jesuit Reductions) where the natives worked for the community and were evangelized.

The Jesuits had frequent disputes with other colonists who wanted to enslave the natives. The action of the Jesuits saved many natives from slavery, but also disturbed their ancestral way of life and inadvertently helped spread infectious diseases against which the aborigines had no natural defenses. Slave labor and trade were essential for the economy of Brazil and other American colonies, and the Jesuits usually did not object to the enslavement of African peoples.

Spain's administration of its colonies in the Americas was divided into the Viceroyalty of New Spain in 1535 (capital, México City), and the Viceroyalty of Peru in 1542 (capital, Lima). In the 18th century, the additional Viceroyalty of New Granada in 1717 (capital, Bogotá), and Viceroyalty of Rio de la Plata in 1776 (capital, Buenos Aires) were established from portions of the Viceroyalty of Peru.

The Catholic Church during the Age of Discovery inaugurated a major effort to spread Christianity in the New World and to convert the Native Americans. The missionary effort
was a major part of, and a partial justification for, the colonial efforts of Catholic European powers such as Spain, France and Portugal. Catholic Missions to the indigenous peoples were coordinated with the colonial efforts of Catholic nations. In the Americas, and in other colonies in Asia and Africa, most Catholic missions were run by religious orders such as the Augustinians, Franciscans, Jesuits and Dominicans.

From the beginning, the Spanish and Portuguese colonial systems depended on a regular supply of Amerindian slave labor (supplied by colonial expeditions sent to capture and enslave the indigenous peoples) or “free labor” from domesticated Amerindians on the Catholic mission stations. Antonio de Montesinos, a Dominican friar on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola, was the first member of the Catholic clergy to publicly denounce all forms of enslavement and oppression of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Catholic theologians such as Francisco de Vitorio and Bartolomé de las Casas drew up theological and philosophical bases for the defense of the human rights of the colonized native populations, thus creating the basis of international law and regulating the relationships between nations. However, these “enlightened” clergymen did not oppose the African slave trade in the Americas to supply the work force needed to maintain and develop colonial commerce and infrastructure after the decimation of the indigenous peoples due to warfare, enslavement and disease that resulted from European colonization.

In South America, the Jesuits sought to protect native peoples from enslavement by colonists by establishing semi-independent settlements, called reductions, governed by religious orders. Pope Gregory XVI, challenging Spanish and Portuguese sovereignty, appointed his own candidates as bishops in the colonies, condemned slavery and the slave trade in 1839 (papal bull In Supremo Apostolatus), and approved the ordination of native clergy in spite of government racism.

A Jesuit Reduction was a type of settlement for indigenous people in Latin America created by the Jesuit Order during the 17th and 18th centuries. The strategy of the Spanish Empire was to gather native populations into centers called Indian Reductions (reducciones de indios), in order to Christianize, tax, and govern them more efficiently. The Jesuit interpretation of this strategy was implemented primarily in an area that corresponds to modern day Paraguay amongst the Tupi-Guarani peoples. Later reductions were extended into areas now part of Argentina, Brazil, and Bolivia.

Jesuit reductions were different from the reductions in other regions because the indigenous people (Indians) were expected to convert to Christianity but not necessarily to European culture. Under the leadership of both the Jesuits and native caciques, the reductions achieved a high degree of autonomy within the Spanish colonial empire. With the use of Indian labor, the reductions became economically successful. When their existence was threatened by the incursions of Bandeirante slave traders, Indian militia were created that fought effectively against the colonists. The resistance by the Jesuit reductions to slave raids, as well as their high degree of autonomy and economic success, have been cited as contributing factors to the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Americas in 1767. The Jesuit reductions present a controversial chapter of the evangelization history of the Americas, and are variously described as jungle utopias or as theocratic regimes of terror.

The Jesuits, only formally founded in 1540, were relatively late arrivals in the New World, from about 1570, especially compared to the Dominicans and Franciscans, and therefore had to look to the frontiers of colonization for mission areas. The Jesuit reduction system originated in during the early 17th century, when Bishop Reginaldo de Lizárraga, O.P., requested that missionaries be sent to Paraguay. In 1609, acting under instructions from Phillip III, the Spanish
governor of Asunción made a deal with the Jesuit Provincial [Superior] of Paraguay. The Jesuits agreed to set up hamlets at strategic points along the Paraná River that were populated with Indians and maintained a separation from Spanish towns. The Jesuits were to "enjoy a tax holiday for ten years," which extended longer. **This mission strategy continued for 150 years until the Jesuits were expelled in 1767.** Fundamentally the purpose, as far as the government was concerned, was to safeguard the frontier with the reductions where Indians were introduced to European culture. In 1609 three Jesuits began the first mission in San Ignacio Guazú. In the next 25 years, 15 missions were founded in the province of Guairá—but since some of these were within the Portuguese area they were subjected to frequent destructive raids by Bandeirantes of São Paulo to enslave the Indians. In 1631, most of the reductions moved west into Uruguay, which was under Spanish jurisdiction, in some cases to be re-opened from the 1680s onwards.

[The **bandeirantes** (Portuguese for "followers of the banner") were composed of Indians (slaves and allies), caboclos (people of Indian mixed with white), and whites who were the captains of the Bandeiras. Members of the 16th–18th century South American slave-hunting expeditions were called bandeiras (Portuguese for "flags"). Though their original purpose was to capture and force Amerindians into slavery, the bandeirantes later began to focus their expeditions on finding gold, silver and diamond mines. They ventured into unmapped regions in search of profit and adventure. From 1580–1670, the Bandeirantes focused on slave hunting, then from 1670–1750 they focused on mineral wealth. Through these expeditions, the Bandeirantes also expanded Portuguese America from the small limits of the Tordesilhas Line to roughly the same territory as current Brazil. This expansion discovered mineral wealth that made the fortune of Portugal during the 17th and 18th centuries.]

**The missions also secured the Spanish Crown’s permission, and some arms, to raise militias of Indians to defend the reductions against raids.** The Bandeirantes followed the reductions into Spanish territory and in 1641 the Indian militia stopped them at Mbororé. The militias could number as many as 4,000 troops, and their cavalry was especially effective, wearing European-style uniforms and carrying bows and arrows as well as muskets. In the Treaty of Madrid (1750) the Spanish ceded to the Portuguese territories including the Misiones Orientales, reductions now in Brazil, which threaten to expose the Indians again to the far more oppressive Portuguese system. The Jesuits complied, trying to relocate the population across the Uruguay River as the treaty allowed, but the Guarani militia under the mission-born Sepé Tiaraju resisted in the Guarani War and defeated Spanish troops, obliging them in 1754 to sign an armistice in Guarani - a victory that helped to ensure the eventual defeat of the reductions. The war was ended when a larger force of 3,000 combined Spanish and Portuguese troops crushed the revolt in 1756, with Guarani losses in battles and massacres afterwards of over 1,500.

**The reductions came to be considered a threat by the secular authorities** (as well as by the indigenous people), and caught up in the growing attack on the Jesuits in Europe for unrelated reasons. The economic success of the reductions, which was considerable, although not as great as it has often been described, combined with the Jesuits’ independence to become a cause of fear. The reductions were considered by some philosophies as ideal communities of noble savages, and were praised as such by Montesquieu in his *L’Esprit des Lois* (1748), and even by Rousseau, no friend of the Catholic Church. Their intriguing story has continued to be the subject of some romanticizing, as in the film *The Mission* (1986), whose story relates to the events of the 1750s, shown on a miniature scale. It is generally accepted by modern historians that the reasons for the contemporary opposition to them were political, humanitarian and economic. When the Jesuits were expelled from the Spanish realm in 1767, the reductions slowly died out, becoming victims of slave raids or being absorbed into European colonial
society. Some of the reductions have continued to be inhabited as towns while most have been abandoned and remain only as ruins. Córdoba, Argentina, the largest city associated with the reductions, was atypical as a Spanish settlement predated the Jesuits, and functioned as a center for the Jesuit presence with a novitiate center, and a college that is now the local university. The Córdoba mission was taken over by the Franciscans in 1767. Many have been declared UNESCO World Heritage sites, including six of the Jesuit Missions of Chiquitos in Bolivia, and others in Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay. There are also two creole languages, Geral and Nheengatu, which originated in the reductions and are based on Guaraní, Tupi and Portuguese.

During the early years of Spanish and Portuguese colonization, most mission work was undertaken by the Catholic religious orders. Over time it was intended that a normal church structure would be established in the mission areas. The process began with the formation of special jurisdictions, known as apostolic prefectures and apostolic vicariates. These developing churches eventually graduated to regular diocesan status with the appointment of a local bishop. After decolonization, this process increased in pace as church structures altered to reflect new political-administrative realities.

The European conquest was immediately accompanied by evangelization and new, local forms of Catholicism appeared. The Virgin of Guadalupe is one of Mexico's oldest religious images, and is said to have appeared to Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin in 1531. News of the 1534 apparition on Tepayac Hill spread quickly through Mexico; and in the seven years that followed, 1532 through 1538, the indigenous peoples more easily accepted Spanish domination and an estimated eight million indigenous were “converted to the Catholic faith.” The image of Virgin of Guadalupe is often considered a mixture of the cultures that have blended to form modern Mexico, both racially and religiously. Guadalupe is sometimes called the "first mestiza" or "the first Mexican.” One theory is that the Virgin of Guadalupe was presented to the Aztecs as a sort of "Christianized" version of the Aztec deity Tonantzin, which was a necessary step for the Catholic clergymen to convert the indigenous people to their foreign faith. As Jacques Lafaye wrote in Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe, "...as the Christians built their first churches with the rubble and the columns of the ancient pagan temples, so they often borrowed pagan customs for their own cult purposes.”

Such Virgins appeared in most of the other evangelized countries, mixing Catholicism with the local customs. The Basilica of Our Lady of Copacabana was built in Bolivia, near the Isla del Sol where the Sun God was believed to be born, to commemorate the alleged apparition of the Virgin of Copacabana in the 16th century; in Cuba the Virgin named Caridad del Cobre was allegedly seen in the beginning of the 16th century as well, a case reported in the Archivo General de Indias; in Brazil, Our Lady of Aparecida was declared to be the official Patron Saint of the country by Pope Pius XI in 1929; Our Lady of Luján in Argentina; Our Lady Virgin of the Angeles (called “La Negrita”) in Costa Rica; etc.

Adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_Church_and_the_Age_of_Discovery

**La encomienda** was a system of tributory labor established in Spanish America. Developed as a means of securing an adequate and cheap labor supply, the encomienda was first used over the conquered Moors of Spain. Transplanted to the New World, it gave the conquistador control over the native populations by requiring them to pay tribute from their lands, which were "granted" to deserving subjects of the Spanish crown. The natives often rendered personal services as well. In return the grantee was theoretically obligated to protect his wards, to instruct them in the
Christian faith, and to defend their right to use the land for their own subsistence. When first applied in the West Indies, this labor system wrought such hardship that the population was soon decimated. This resulted in efforts by the Spanish king and the Dominican order to suppress encomiendas, but the need of the conquerors to reward their supporters led to de facto recognition of the practice. The crown prevented the encomienda from becoming hereditary, and with the New Laws (1542) promulgated by Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas, the system gradually died out, to be replaced by the repartimiento and finally debt peonage. Similar systems of land and labor apportionment were adopted by other colonial powers, notably the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the French.

Adapted from: [http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Encomienda+system](http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/Encomienda+system)

A characteristic of most cities, towns and villages in Latin America is the presence of a Catholic church situated on the central square or plaza. The Metropolitan Cathedral (often constructed during the colonial period) in the respective capital cities is a visible sign of the historical presence of the Catholic Church in the life of the nation. The Mestizo population of Latin America has strong ties to traditional Roman Catholicism brought to the Americas by Spanish and Portuguese missionaries, who themselves carried the cultural baggage of their Iberian homeland with its pre-Christian Celtic spirituality and Medieval Roman Catholicism. Consequently, the general religiosity of the Ladinos of Latin America contains elements of European as well as modern Amerindian “popular Catholicism” (syncretism).

Many of the native Amerindian peoples practice religious syncretism, which combines their ancient animistic beliefs and practices with a Roman Catholicism imposed on them by civil and religious authorities during the Spanish and Portuguese colonial periods. The result is a “popular Catholicism” that retains significant elements of Amerindian spirituality, which includes animistic beliefs and practices such as magic (white and black, good and evil), witchcraft (bujería), herbal healing (curanderismo) and shamanism (the shaman is an intermediary with the spirit world). Animistic beliefs are strongest among the Amerindians who are the least acculturated to Ladino society, and who live in the central highlands or the rainforests of the lowlands. Since the 1960s, there has been a resurgence of Native American Spirituality in the predominant indigenous areas of the Mexico, Central and South America, among both Roman Catholics and Protestants.

--Clifton L. Holland

Folk Catholicism is any of various ethnic expressions of Catholicism as practiced in Catholic communities around the world, typically in developing nations. Practices that are identified by outside observers as "folk Catholicism" vary from place to place, and often depart from the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church.

Some forms of folk Catholic practices are based on syncretism with non-Catholic beliefs and may involve the syncretism of Catholic saints and non-Christian deities. Some of these folk
Catholic forms have come to be identified as separate religions, as is the case with Caribbean and Brazilian syncretisms between Catholicism and West African religions, which include Haitian Vodou, Cuban Santería, and Brazilian Candomblé. Similarly complex syncretisms between Catholic practice and indigenous or Native American belief systems, as are common in Mayan communities of Guatemala and Quechua communities of Peru to give just two of many examples, are typically not named as separate religions; their practitioners generally regard themselves as "good Catholics."

Other folk Catholic practices are local elaborations of Catholic custom, and do not contradict orthodox Catholic doctrine. Examples of such practices include compadrazgo in modern Latin America and the Philippines, which developed from standard medieval European Catholic practices that fell out of favor in Europe after the seventeenth century, the veneration of saints and angels that aren't officially venerated in Catholicism, generally from the apocryphal books, such as Uriel the Archangel from the Apocalypse of Ezra (2 Esdras or 4 Ezra depending on naming convention), and ritual pilgrimages in medieval and modern Europe. Modern folk Catholic beliefs and practices include miracle stories about priests in Ireland, stories about apparitions of the Virgin Mary and other saints in Spain and Latin America, and folk practices surrounding vows to saints in Latin America and Europe.

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folk_Catholicism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Folk_Catholicism)

Roman Catholic-based Popular Religiosity in Latin America is a syncretism of pre-Christian belief systems, known as Native American spirituality (animism), with Iberian-flavored Roman Catholicism, which developed during the Spanish and Portuguese colonial periods.

The whole world of one's faith system (beliefs, attitudes and behavior) is filled with symbols that make the events of our everyday lives meaningful. The meanings do not reside in the events themselves, but in the memory and culture of the community to which we belong. The Roman Catholic faith brought to the Americas by Spanish and Portuguese priests and colonizers – which was itself an Iberian-brand of popular religiosity contaminated by European paganism – became the dominant religion in Latin America, but it did not erase the Indigenous spirituality inherited from the ancestors. The suppressed native beliefs, reconstituted in the encounter with the religion of the Iberian colonizers and clothed in new names and forms, emerged as a “popular religiosity.”

This new worldview was an adaptation to the dominant Iberian culture and civilization, a new reality imposed on the Native Americans by their conquerors. As a result of the interbreeding of Iberians and Native Americans, a new “cosmic race” emerged as an Iberianized mestizo people whose religion was a “popularized” Roman Catholicism blended with various degrees of Native American spirituality (animism) in each country of Latin America. See the following websites for more information:

http://www.clubdomingosavio.cl/liturgias_y_oraciones/10.doc
http://www.geocities.com/columbanos/religiosidad.html
http://www.sbts.edu/pdf/ChristiAnimism.pdf
http://www.conocereisla verdad.org/Religiosidadpopular.htm

--Clifton L. Holland
B. The period of Roman Catholic hegemony in Latin America, 1500-1900

*The Holy Office of the Inquisition in the Americas*

**General Overview.** As early as 1508, Roman Catholic bishops in Havana and Puerto Rico informed the Spanish Government in Madrid that the New World was being filled with *hebreo cristianos* (Hebrew Christians), *nuevo cristianos* (new Christians), *conversos* (converts), *Moriscos* (Moors), and other heretics, in spite of several decrees barring their entry.

Silvio Zavala wrote: "The Holy Office in Spanish America persecuted the apostates, Moriscos, Jews, Protestants and, in general, heretics. It manifested in America the same intransigency that had characterized the religious life of the Peninsula since the beginning of the modern period."

Due to the shortage of secular clergy in the New World, the pope issued the Bull Omnimoda in 1522, and granted special permission to the prelates of the monastic orders in the New World to perform, in the absence of bishops in the vicinity, all Episcopal functions except ordination. Torquemada's organizational and administrative abilities; and his zeal for the preservation of the faith set the course of the Spanish Inquisition for the 341 years of its existence. As the activities of the Holy Office expanded, it became necessary to establish branches throughout Spain and the New World with the Suprema as the head office. The need of a tribunal of the Holy Office in Mexico was expressed as early as 1532. In fact, the first *auto de fé* in Mexico was held in October 1528, with Fray Vicente de Santa Maria presiding. Two Jews were burned at the stake, and two others were reconciled. On January 25, 1569, Philip II decreed the establishment of the first two formal Dominican tribunals in the New World, one for New Spain (Mexico) and one for Peru. They were known by the full title of "El Tribunal del Santo Oficio de la Inquisición". The Mexican branch included all of the audiencias of Mexico, Guatemala, New Galicia, and the Philippines.

The tribunal at Cartagena (Colombia) was not established until 1610. Prior to that, all prisoners south of New Spain were sent to Lima, Peru, for trial. The Cartagena tribunal had jurisdiction over a vast area, including the bishopries of Cartagena, Panama, Santa Marta, Puerto Rico, Popayan, Venezuela, and Santiago de Cuba. There were many Jews in Cartagena and its vicinity, and they were quite visible; but, according to Seymour B. Liebman, the Holy Office was more involved in disputes among the inquisitors than in persecuting heretics and Jews. The sixty-three procesos of Jews before the tribunal in Cartagena indicate that all were born in Portugal; nine of them were tortured and only one was sentenced to serve in the galleys sailing between Puerto Bello and Spain.

Even though the **Holy Office was established in Portugal in 1536**, there never was a tribunal in Portuguese Brazil. Brazilian prisoners were tried in Portugal. Each viceroyalty was expected to give the tribunals of the Holy Office complete cooperation. The tribunals were autonomous institutions independent of secular authority. The Holy Office was free of the control of the King.

Seymour B. Liebman states that the social contacts between the Jews and their Christian neighbors in America during the colonial era were not marred by the religious intolerance of the Spanish Catholic Church symbolized by the Holy Office of the Inquisition. Many Catholics knew
that their neighbors and friends were Jews, but they neither reported this to the Inquisition nor mentioned it to their confessors.

Periodically, an Edict of Faith or Edict of Grace was nailed to church doors in most towns. These edicts listed the customs of Jews, Moors, and later, Lutherans, so that people could recognize the heretics and denounce them to the Inquisition. Torture was less frequent than is popularly believed; it never occurred at an early stage of the proceedings, and it was administered only when, after several warnings an opportunities to confess, the prisoner insisted on his innocence, refusing to admit the truth --according, obviously, to the inquisitors definition of truth-- or to reveal the names of other guilty of observing the Jewish rituals.

The most common form of torture in the New World was the potro, a bedlike frame with straps from side to side upon which the prisoner was placed, naked. The prisoner's limbs were strapped with leather bands, and tightened by the turns of a wheel, causing excruciating pain. Often, a prisoner would confess after the first turn of the wheel. Another form of torture was administered by placing a silk scarf in the prisoner's mouth and then pouring huge quantities of water into his mouth; the prisoner's stomach became distended and unbearably painful. All persons not sentenced to the stake were to be reconciliado (reconciled), and taken back into the bosom of the Church. Their property was confiscated, they were required to wear a sanbenito and perform certain spiritual penance (fasting, attending mass, counting the rosary, etc.). Reconciliados also received various sentences, ranging from mild punishment to lashes, to scourge, or consignment to serve as oarsman on the galleys between New Spain and Spain, or between Acapulco and the Philippines. The sanbenito, a corrupt form of the words saco bendito (holly sac), was a penitential garment; it was usually yellow, with one or two diagonal crosses imposed on it; penitents were condemned to wear it as a mark of infamy for lengths of time varying from a few months to life. Those who were to be relaxed at an auto de fé had to wear a black sanbenito on which flames or demons were painted. Women were usually sentenced to serve without pay in hospitals or houses of correction. A few were assigned as servants in monasteries. Just like men, women were often sentenced to be lashed.

Death sentence was never administered by the Holy Office. The brazo secular (secular authorities) was responsible for reading the death penalty, and also for igniting the pyre at the stake. The auto de fé, or act of faith, was intended to be an enactment of the Last Day of Judgment. Its primary role was to serve as an example to the recently converted Indians and strike terror into the Hebrews. Punishment, from the Inquisition's point of view, was a penance. The tribunal devoted its efforts not merely to finding its victims guilty, but to extracting penitential confessions from them. An auto de fé was a public expression of penance for sin and hatred for heresy. The solemn mood of penance and piety that prevailed during the autos de fé was responsible for many last minute conversions of stubborn heretics. The ultimate penalty was the stake. Two groups of people qualified for the stake: unrepentant heretics and relapsed heretics (those who, after being pardoned a first serious offense, repeated the offense thus considered to have "relapsed into heresy"). A person who was burned at the stake for being convicted as a heretic was called relajado (relaxed).

There was a marked change in the Holy Office's attitude toward the Jews after 1665, and a decrease in the severity of punishments meted out to Jewish heretics. There are several possible reasons for these changes:
Protestantism became a greater threat to Catholicism than Judaism.
- The Holy Office served more as a political arm of the Spanish throne than as a defender of the faith.
- The disclosure of the venality of some inquisitors in the New World tribunals.
- There was a notable decline in the value of the confiscated goods by the tribunals, thus the Inquisition ceased to be a profitable institution.

The number of penitents in the autos de fe of the 18th and early 19th centuries was small, jail sentences short, and fines never included total confiscation of the prisoner's property.

Adapted from: http://www.sefarad.org/publication/lm/037/6.html

Peru. Francisco de Toledo y Figueroa, the fifth viceroy of Peru (1569-1581), established in Lima the Permanent Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in 1570, which was not abolished until 1820. The Inquisition, as an ecclesiastical tribunal, had jurisdiction only over baptized Christians. It was welcomed by conscientious bishops and viceroys who considered heresy a cardinal sin and the condoning of doctrinal error as an affront to God. This included those who practiced forms of Christianity other than Catholicism, and at the time were considered heretics by the Catholic Church in Spanish kingdoms. In general, the Spanish Inquisition sought to ensure the orthodoxy of recent converts, especially those Jews, Muslims, and others coerced on pain of death to adopt the Christian religion. In the Americas, the Inquisition became a sort of police court for tracking down bigamists, robbers, seducers of youth, and other undesirable people as well as heretics.

In the Peruvian Inquisition both the State and Church were dependent on the Crown’s approval to carry out sentences. Although the Indigenous people were originally subject to the jurisdiction of the inquisitors, they were eventually removed from its control and not seen as fully responsible for deviations from the Catholic Faith. In the eyes of the Church, the Indigenous were viewed as “individuals without reason” (ignorant). As a result their trials were separate from other inquisition cases. The Inquisition was mainly used to judge non-indigenous people who were accused of crimes against the Church. These crimes included heresy, sorcery, witchcraft and other superstitious practices. People accused of these crimes were generally from the lower status of Peruvian society. Among them were individuals of African descent, mestizos and women, as well as Jewish or Protestant Europeans who were discovered in the Spanish colonies and considered heretics. However, during the 250 years of the Inquisition in South America, only 30 people were actually burned at the stake in Lima, although thousands of people were arrested and brought before the Tribunal. Torture was often used to extract confessions from the unfortunate ones who were imprisoned in the dungeons of the Inquisition in Lima.

Peru became an independent Republic in 1824, but it was not until the 1867 Constitution, approved under the administration of President Mariano Ignacio Prado Ochoa (1865-1868), that Roman Catholicism became the official State religion: “The Nation professes the Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Religion. The State protects it and does not permit the public exercise of any other [religion]” (Title III, Article 4).

The Catholic Church continued its hegemony over religion throughout the 20th century. It has been a conservative body, both religiously and politically, although amid the changes in the
decades after World War II, it developed a noteworthy stance against a series of oppressive authoritarian governments that ruled Peru and neighboring countries.

Diverse tensions arose within the Peruvian Catholic Church during the 1960s and following years, resulting from challenges posed by the II General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín (Colombia) in 1968, Latin American Liberation Theology and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. These new movements polarized Catholic bishops, parish priests, religious workers and the laity into various factions: traditionalists who wanted the Church to remain as it was prior to the reforms approved by the Second Vatican Council (late 1960s); reformers who supported the Church’s modern stance; progressives who sought to implement the new vision for “a preferential option for the poor” through social and political action aimed at transforming Peruvian society and establishing social justice through peaceful democratic means; radicals who adopted Liberation Theology, based on Marxist ideology, and advocated violent revolution by the people as a means of overthrowing the oligarchy and creating a socialist state that would serve the marginalized masses; and charismatic agents (priests, nuns and lay members) who sought to transform the spiritual and communal life of Catholics by means of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit (including the “baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues”).

Since the mid-1960s, the Peruvian Catholic Church – influenced greatly by papal calls for a refocus of attention on the needs of the urban poor – has directed significant resources toward assisting the lower classes and empowering the laity in the church. In 1971, the Peruvian Catholic Church issued a document suggesting that evangelism had to be accompanied by a struggle against the oppression of people by their own governments. Soon afterwards it condemned those who would use violence to build and perpetuate “Christian civilization.”

The social and ecclesial context of Peru witnessed the emergence of the first clear articulation of Liberation Theology in the writings of Gustavo Gutierrez, as well as for the backlash against that theology represented by the Catholic rightwing organization Sodalitium Vitae. All of this occurred in a broader political context disrupted by the violent tactics of the Maoist Shining Path guerrilla movement and the attempts of the Peruvian government to counter those tactics, to the point of violating the human rights of ordinary citizens not connected with the guerrilla movement. The so-called “theology of reconciliation,” developed by the founder of Sodalitium Vitae, was an attempt by conservatives to undermine the religious and political implications of the Theology of Liberation by linking it, falsely, with the Shining Path revolutionaries. However, because it co-opted liberationist language, the “theology of reconciliation” was seen as a desirable alternative by conservative Catholics, especially to people who were tired of conflict and violence.

At the Second General Conference of the Latin American Conference of Bishops (CELAM), held in Medellin in 1968, Liberation Theology seemed to come into its own even before the English publication of Gustavo Gutierrez's A Theology of Liberation (1973). Twenty-five years later, however, Liberation Theology had been reduced to an intellectual curiosity, according to some observers. While still attractive to many North American and European scholars, it has failed in what the liberationists always said was their main mission, the complete renovation of Latin American Catholicism.
Among the many books and articles published on Liberation Theology in the 1970s, one of the most famous was written by a Peruvian Catholic priest, Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez, O.P. In his groundbreaking book, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, Salvation* (1971), Gutiérrez (b.1928) theorized that a combination of Marxist and Catholic social teachings had contributed to a socialist current within the Catholic Church that was influenced by the Catholic Worker Movement and the French Christian youth worker organization, *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne*. Gutiérrez holds the John Cardinal O'Hara Professorship of Theology at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, and he has been professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru and a visiting professor at many major universities in North America and Europe.

However, CELAM has never supported Liberation Theology, which has been frowned on by the Vatican. Pope Paul VI and top Catholic officials tried to slow the movement after the II Vatican Council, held between 1962 and 1965. Cardinal Samore, in charge of relations between the Roman Curia and CELAM as president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America (1967-1968), was ordered to put a stop to Liberation Theology and the leftist orientation of "ecclesial base communities" within CELAM, because Liberation Theology was considered antithetical to the Catholic Church's global teachings.

Orthodox Catholic leaders, starting with Pope John Paul II, have reclaimed ideas and positions that the liberationists had claimed for themselves, such as the "preferential option for the poor," and the concept of "liberation" itself. In so doing, the opponents of Liberation Theology have successfully changed the terms of debate over religion and politics in Latin America. At the same time, advocates of Liberation Theology had to face internal philosophical contradictions and the vastly altered political and economic circumstances, both in Latin America and elsewhere.

**Mexico**. The Mexican Inquisition was an extension of the Spanish Inquisition into the New World. When the Inquisition was brought to the New World, it was employed for many of the same reasons and against the same social groups as suffered in Europe itself, minus the Indians to a large extent. Almost all of events associated with the official establishment of the Holy Office of the Inquisition occurred in capital of New Spain, Mexico City, where the Holy Office had its own “palace”, which is now the Museum of Medicine of UNAM. The official period of the Inquisition in New Spain lasted from 1571 to 1820, with an unknown number of victims.

The Spanish crown had complete domination of religious matters in New Spain (Mexico). Pope Alexander VI in 1493 and later Pope Julius II in 1508 gave the crown extensive authority over this domain with the goal of converting the Indians to Catholicism. Spanish officials appointed religious authorities in Mexico and even had ability to reject papal bulls there. The evangelization process and later Inquisition had political motivations. The objective of Christian conversion was to strengthen alternative sources of legitimacy to the traditional authority of the *tlatoani*, or chief of the basic political unit of the city-state.

**Franciscan friars** began the work of evangelization in the mid-1520s and continued under the first Bishop of Mexico, Fray Juan de Zumarraga in the 1530s. Many of the Franciscan evangelists learned the native languages and even recorded much of native culture, providing much of the current knowledge about them. **The Dominicans** arrived as well in 1525. They were both seen as intellectuals and agents of the Inquisition, due to their role as such in Spain. These two orders,
along with the Augustinians, provided most of the evangelization effort in Mexico. By 1560, these three orders had more than 800 clergy working in New Spain. Later the Jesuits would arrive in 1572. The number of Catholic clergy grew to 1,500 in 1580 and then to 3,000 by 1650. In the early years, the clergy’s attention would be focused on the conversion of the Indians. In the latter years, however, emphasis on struggles between religious orders as well as segments of the European society would take precedent.

A series of three ecclesiastical councils met during the course of the 16th century to give shape to the newly established Church in New Spain. In 1565, the Second Mexican Ecclesiastical Council met to discuss how to implement to the decisions of the Council of Trent (1546–1563). The Catholicism being imposed here was heavily influenced by the Counter-Reformation and required total assent from its believers. Its main thrust was not on individual belief or conscience but on collective observation of clerically ordained precepts and practices. This combination of authoritarianism and collectivism became transferred to the Indies during the course of the 16th century.

This sense of collectivism allowed for a certain amount of laxity in the conversion of the Indian population as many outward practices were indeed similar. Both systems intertwined religious and secular authority, practiced a type of baptism with subsequent renaming of the child, and the practice of communion had parallels with eating replicas of Aztec divinities with blood. Franciscan and Dominican studies of Indian culture and language led to a certain amount of appreciation for it. It was definitely different from the Islam that the Reconquista had created such hatred for. Instead, indigenous religion was branded as paganism, and as an authentic religious experience but corrupted by demonic influences. Much of this was helped by the fact that many parallels could be drawn between the gods and the cults of the saints as well as the Virgin Mary. For this reason, evangelization did not result in a direct onslaught against indigenous belief but rather more an attempt to shift existing belief into a Christian paradigm. In the end, while in theory Christianity was to have absolutely supremacy in all things religious, in practice, the Church did not oppose any practices that did not directly conflict with doctrine.

At the time of the discovery and conquest of the New World, Cardinal Adrian de Utrecht was the Inquisitor General of Spain. He appointed Pedro de Cordoba as Inquisitor for the West Indies in 1520. He also had inquisitorial powers in Mexico after the conquest but did not have the official title. When Juan de Zumarraga became the first Bishop of Mexico in 1535, he also had these duties. One of Zumarraga’s first act as inquisitor was the prosecution of an Aztec lord who took the name of Carlos upon baptism. He was likely a nephew of Nezahualcoyotl. Zumarraga accused this lord of reverting back to worship of the old gods and had him burned at the stake on 30 November 1539. However, this persecution was not considered prudent by either the Spanish secular or religious authorities and Zumarraga himself was reprimanded for it. For a number of reasons persecution of the Indians for religious offenses was not actively pursued. First of all, since many native practices had parallels in Christianity, and since this “paganism” was neither the Judaic or Islamic faiths that Spanish Christians had fought so zealously against, ecclesiastical authorities opted instead to push native practices in Christian directions. Also, many of the monks sent to evangelize the native peoples became protectors of them from the extremely cruel treatment at the hands of secular authorities. This would contrast sharply with treatment of European heretics later in the colonial period. However, as a practical matter it was probably not
prudent to pursue such rigid enforcement in an environment where native peoples vastly outnumbered the European conquerors, who also needed to rule through indigenous intermediaries.

This is part of the reason why the Inquisition was not formally established in New Spain until 1571. However, this is not to say that Inquisition-like tactics were never used after the Aztec lord Carlos’ execution. Antagonism with the Spanish led to the Mayan resistance in the Yucatan in 1546–1547. The failure of this movement prompted more aggressive evangelization, with the Franciscans finding out that despite their efforts much of traditional beliefs and practice survived. They, under the leadership of Fray Diego de Landa, decided to make an example of those they considered back-sliders without regard to proper legal formalities. Large numbers of people were subjected to torture and as many of the Mayan sacred books as could be found were burned.

When Holy Office of the Inquisition had been established in New Spain in 1571, it exercised no jurisdiction over Indians, except for material printed in indigenous languages. Its first official Inquisitor was Pedro Moya de Contreras, who established the “Tribunal de la Fé” (Tribunal of the Faith) in Mexico City. By this, he transferred the principles of the Inquisition set by Tomas Torquemada in Spain. However, the full force of the Inquisition would be felt on non-Indian populations, such as the “Negro,” “mulatto” and even certain segments of the European.

Historian Luis Gonzalez Obregon estimates that 51 death sentences were carried out in the 235–242 years that the tribunal was officially in operation. However, records from this time are very poor and accurate numbers cannot be verified.

One group that suffered during this time was the so-called “crypto-Jews” of Portuguese descent. Jews who refused to convert to Christianity had been expelled from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1537. When Spain and Portugal united shortly thereafter, many converted Portuguese Jews came to New Spain looking for commercial opportunities. In 1642, 150 of these individuals were arrested within three or four days, and the Inquisition began a series of trials. These people were accused of being ‘judaisers,’ meaning they still held Judaic beliefs. Many of these were merchants involved in New Spain’s principal activities. On 11 April 1649, the viceregal state staged the largest ever auto da fé in New Spain, in which twelve of the accused were burned after being strangulated and one person was burned alive. Most of the remainder were ‘reconciled’ and deported to Spain.

The best known case of this type was that of Luis de Carabajal y Cueva Born Jewish in Spain in the 16th century, he was a sincere convert to Christianity. However, he was married to a woman who would not give up her Hebraic faith even though he tried to convert her. Finally, when she decided to stay behind as he went to the West Indies to trade wine, he moved on to New Spain. There he became a businessman but was more noted as a soldier. He fought for the Spanish against the Indians in Xalapa and the Huasteca areas. Having made something of a name for himself, he brought a number of his family over from Spain to live there. His economic and political fortunes gradually reversed themselves as businesses failed and it was rumored that the family were secretly practicing Judaic rites. He was brought before the Inquisition and had 22 chapters of charges, including slave trading, read against him but the main charge was reverting back to the Judaic faith. Under torture he not only confessed to abandoning the faith, but denounced associates and even members of his own family. On 8 January 1596, he was executed in the Zocalo [the main public square in Mexico City] along with his mother and three sisters.
Another case was that of Nicolas de Aguilar. Aquilar was a mestizo, the descendant of a Spanish soldier and a P'urhépecha Indian. He was appointed as a civil official in a district in New Mexico. He attempted to protect the Tompiro Indians from abuses by Franciscan priests. In 1662, he was arrested, imprisoned, and charged with heresy. Tried in Mexico City, Aguilar vigorously defended himself, but he was convicted and sentenced to undergo a public auto de fé and banned from New Spain for 10 years and government service for life.

After a series of denunciations, authorities arrested 123 people in 1658 on suspicion of homosexuality. Although 99 of these managed to disappear, the Royal Criminal Court sentenced fourteen men from different social and ethnic backgrounds to death by public burning, in accordance to the law passed by Isabella the Catholic in 1497. The sentences were carried out together on one day, 6 November 1658. The records of these trials and those that occurred in 1660, 1673 and 1687, suggest that Mexico City, like many other large cities at the time had an active underworld.

The last group that had to be careful during this time was scholars. Early attempts to reform the educational curriculum to keep pace with contemporary European influences were exterminated during the 1640s and 1650s by the Inquisition. The central target was Fray Diego Rodriguez (1569–1668), who took the First Chair in Mathematics and Astronomy at the Royal and Pontifical University in 1637, and tried to introduce the scientific ideas of Galileo and Kepler to the New World. For thirty years, he argued the removal of theology and metaphysics from the study of science. He was the leader of a small circle of academics that met semi-clandestinely in private homes to discuss new scientific ideas. Political struggles of the 1640s, however, brought the suspicions of the Inquisition down upon them and a series of investigations and trials followed into the middle of the 1650s. When academics worked to hide books banned by the Holy Office’s edit in 1647, the Inquisition required all six booksellers in the city to subject their lists to scrutiny under the threat of fine and excommunication.

Those sentenced under the Inquisition usually had these punishments carried out in a ceremony called the “auto de fé,” almost all of which were carried out in Mexico City. For such, all notables and most of the populace would turn out in their finest garb. The Church set up a stage with pulpits, rich furnishings for the noble guests, tapestries, fine cloth draped for decoration and to serve as a canopy over the stage. No expense was spared in order to show the power and the authority of the ecclesiastical authorities in this matter. In addition, all nobles from the viceroy himself, his court, and all others in position of authority would be conspicuously in appearance. The ceremony began with a sermon and a long declaration of what constituted the true faith. The assembly was required to swear to this. The condemned were led onto the stage dressed capes with marks showing their crime and their punishment. They also were a kind of dunce cap. They were given a chance to repent, in many cases, to modify their sentences, such as strangulation instead of burning alive at the stake. Then sentences were carried out.

The Inquisition remained officially in force until the early 19th century. It was first abolished by decree in 1812. However, political tensions and chaos led to something of its return between 1813 and 1820. It was abolished permanently in 1820.

Adapted from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_Inquisition
Religious Liberty in Latin America after Independence

**Peru.** After Peru's independence from Spain in the early 19th century, the Roman Catholic Church was declared the official Church of the State. This was a result of the Church's influence over members of the constitutional conventions, a factor that ultimately outweighed the liberator's ideological preference for separation of Church and State. Although Catholicism is no longer the official religion of Peru, the Church continues to enjoy a special privilege in relation to the state.

Protestantism began making a significant appearance in Peru in the 19th century, mainly through the presence of British diplomats and merchants, who practiced their faith in private and lived in relative peace with their Catholic neighbors. By the mid-19th century the Catholic clergy had become less tolerant, but Peru's liberal factions made additional attempts to ensure religious freedom for Protestants and members of other religions, an effort that continues today.

Although today Peru does not have an official religion, the Roman Catholic Church--to which about 80 percent of Peruvians belonged--is recognized in the constitution as deserving of government cooperation. Traditionally, the Roman Catholic Church has monopolized religion in the public domain. [The 2007 national census conducted by the National Statistics Institute found that 81 percent of the population was Roman Catholic; 13 percent Protestant (mainly evangelical); 3 percent other religious groups; and 3 percent with no religious affiliation.]

The Peruvian government is closely allied with the Roman Catholic Church. Article 50 of the Constitution recognizes the Catholic Church's role as "an important element in the historical, cultural, and moral development of the nation." Catholic clergy and laypersons receive state remuneration in addition to the stipends paid to them by the Church. This applies to the country's 52 bishops, as well as to some priests whose ministries are located in towns and villages along the borders. In addition each diocese receives a monthly institutional subsidy from the Government. An agreement signed with the Vatican in 1980 grants the Catholic Church special status in Peru. The Catholic Church receives preferential treatment in education, tax benefits, immigration of religious workers, and other areas, in accordance with the agreement.

Although the Constitution states that there is freedom of religion, the law mandates that all schools, public and private, impart religious education as part of the curriculum throughout the education process (primary and secondary). Catholicism is the only religion taught in public schools. In addition, Catholic religious symbols are found in all government buildings and public places.

In the Peruvian Catholic Church hierarchy, staunch conservatives, such as Archbishop Juan Landazúri Ricketts, wielded a great deal of influence. **Six of the total eighteen bishops, including Landazúri, belonged to the ultra-conservative Opus Dei movement.** At the same time, the founder of Liberation Theology, Gustavo Gutiérrez, was a member of the official Church in Peru, and Liberation Theology had a strong presence at the grassroots level. Unlike Brazil, where the official Church could be described as liberal and critical of the more conservative Vatican, or Colombia, where the church was a loyal follower of the Vatican's policies, in the Peruvian Catholic Church hierarchy both trends coexisted, or at least competed for influence. **Conservatives** followed the dictates of Pope John Paul II, a strong proponent of
theological orthodoxy and vertical control of the church. This contrasted sharply with the progressives in the Latin American Church, who espoused the mandate of Vatican II, which exhorted the clergy to become actively involved in humanity's struggle for peace and justice, and to help the poor to help themselves rather than accept their fate.

At the grassroots level, the Church was extremely active at organizing neighborhood organizations and self-help groups, such as communal kitchens and mothers' clubs. Church activities at this level had little to do with theoretical debates at higher levels, although they tended to emanate from the more progressive sectors within. Church-related organizations, such as Caritas (Catholic Relief Services), were active in providing local efforts with donations of food and funds from abroad. Indeed, Caritas had a nationwide network of coverage superior to or at least rivaling that of any state ministry or institution.

In addition to Caritas, the other major nongovernment organizer of communal kitchens and mothers' clubs in Lima was the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, which reflected the increasing importance of the Evangelical movement. Although only about 4.5 percent of Peru's population was Protestant, the Evangelical movement was extremely active at the grassroots level, and, as aforementioned, was critical to the victory of Fujimori and Cambio '90 in poor areas. The Catholic Church hierarchy felt sufficiently threatened by the Evangelicals' support for Fujimori that it unofficially backed Vargas Llosa, an agnostic, against Fujimori, a Catholic.

The church, to the extent that it was an organizer of the poor, had increasingly come into conflict with the SL. Initially, the SL paid little attention to the clergy. In Ayacucho, for example, where the traditionally oriented Church hierarchy had little involvement with social issues, the church was of little relevance to the SL. However, in the late 1980s, the SL's strategy shifted, and the group became more concerned with the Church's organizational potential. The SL had a more difficult challenge in organizing support, particularly in areas where the church had been active in encouraging close community bonds, such as parts of Cajamarca and Puno. In such areas, as in the shantytowns surrounding Lima, clergy had increasingly become targets of SL assassinations as well.

In the face of the weakening of other state institutions, the Church's role, at least at the grassroots level, had increased in importance. Caritas was the primary mobilizer of food donations and aid during the most critical stage of the Fujimori government's shock stabilization plan. Although the government promised its own social emergency programs, none materialized, and the Church surfaced as the primary vehicle for channeling aid to the poor. This activity increased the visibility of the clergy as a target of SL attacks, and posed difficult choices for members of the clergy who continued to operate in the regions where the SL had a strong presence--the majority of the areas where most of the poor of Peru resided.

Adapted from: [http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/peru/GOVERNMENT.html](http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/peru/GOVERNMENT.html)

Today, the Peruvian Constitution and other laws and policies protect religious freedom. The Constitution establishes separation of Church and State but recognizes the Catholic Church’s role as “an important element in the historical, cultural, and moral development of the nation.”
The executive branch formally interacts with religious communities on matters of religious freedom through the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (MINJUS). MINJUS implements laws and interacts with the public through the Office of Catholic Affairs and through the Office of Interconfessional Affairs, which deals with non-Catholic groups. Both offices maintain a continuing dialogue on religious freedom with the Catholic Church and other organized religious groups.

A December 2010 religious freedom law recognizes an individual’s fundamental right of freedom of religion, as stated in the constitution and international treaties that the country has ratified. Under the law, registered religious organizations gain many of the same tax benefits already granted to the Catholic Church. In accordance with a 1980 agreement with the Holy See, the Catholic Church receives preferential treatment in education, taxation, immigration of religious workers, and other areas. The new law codified this arrangement. Several evangelical groups have criticized the law, stating that it did not address the problem of inequality and that it maintained preferential status for the Catholic Church. The government issued regulations to implement the law in July, and revised them in October to address the complaints of minority religious groups.

Adapted from: [http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/193207.pdf](http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/193207.pdf)

**Mexico.** The Roman Catholic Church triumphed in Mexico for 250 years; there was an intimate union of Church and State. However, with the first stirrings of the drive for independence from Spain things started to change. It was now about to enter a period of trauma that in some ways still persisted in the year 2000.

In 1749 the Spanish King, Ferdinand VI issued an order, transferring mission centers from the control of religious orders to the regular clergy. **The order was largely ignored but in 1767 another royal order expelled the Jesuits.** Their property was sized and turned over to the Crown. It is estimated that there were more than 2,200 Jesuits in the country, ministering to over 700,000 Indians. Very unpopular, this order stirred up unrest in the country and started protests against Spanish rule.

**Now the government set out to replace the religious infrastructure.** Under royal patronage, new secular universities were established. The regular clergy and other orders now replaced the Jesuits in their work with the Indians. The entire episode was triggered by the unwillingness of the Jesuits to submit to either royal or diocesan authority. They had established what amounted to a Jesuit Republic in Sonora and Lower California. The expulsion sent a message to Mexicans that they had no voice in the running of their country and fanned discontent with Spanish rule.

For the next 54 years until 1821, when Mexico gained its Independence from Spain, the country was in chaos. Even after that, no government was strong enough to pay any attention to the activities of the Church. The Plan of Iguala had guaranteed the supremacy of the Catholic Church. Although the new Mexican constitution paid lip service to religious tolerance, only Catholics could be Mexican citizens. Its monopoly established, the Church remained a protector of Indian rights, maintained a good working relationship with civil authorities and solidified its hold on the religious life of the country.
But in 1851, all of that started to change as a "liberal" political party was born. One of its leaders, a Zapotecan Indian named Benito Juarez would finally emerge as President of the country. But long before that, he had proclaimed himself as an anti-cleric, determined to destroy the power of the church. With a protégé, Ignacio Comonfort installed in the Presidency, the "Lerdo Law" was proclaimed. It expropriated all property owned by the church or that it held in trust.

Ironically, this act by a party, led by an Indian, stripped his fellow Indians of most of the land they held. Called ejidos, they were lands granted to Indian tribes, clans, communities or even families. They were owned in common and were farmed communally. But because the majority of the Indians were illiterate, the Church held the lands in trust. Now they were seized along with convents, monasteries, hospitals and schools. In 1857 a new Constitution was drawn up. Liberty of conscience, religious tolerance and freedom of worship were all professed by the Liberals, but in reality they had deprived the almost 100 percent Catholic population of much of their religious freedom.

Churches remained open, but they suppressed all religious orders, declared religious vows illegal, prohibited nuns and priests from appearing in public in religious garb. Marriage was made a secular rite and even cemeteries were declared to be secular. In a further blow aimed at Catholicism, Protestants were permitted to establish themselves in the country. Despite the unpopularity of these laws, they remained in effect. But they did not break the allegiance of the Mexican people to Catholicism. Also, it led the clerics and their conservative supporters to appeal to the French, who sent troops and installed Maximillian as Emperor of Mexico.

During the reign of the Emperor Maxmillian, 1864-1867, the Catholic Church was able to recover somewhat with the Archbishops of Mexico City and Michoacán and the Bishop of Oaxaca permitted to return to the country. But the hope of a complete restoration of church property and influence never materialized. Some compensation was paid to the Church, but on the instructions of Napoleon III, himself an anti-cleric, the Church remained in disfavor.

When Maximilian was deposed, Juarez was restored to the presidency and the war against the Church continued. In 1873, a rebellion against the anti-church laws, now being enforced by President Lerdo de Tejada, broke out and continued until 1876 when Porfirio Diaz became President. Though not repealed, the laws were not enforced. But later, Presidents Carranza, elected in 1917, and Obregon who came into power in 1920, enforced them selectively. A new Constitution, adopted in 1917, now made it clear that the state was to control the Church. President Elias Calles, elected in 1924, was a Socialist, and continued to look on the Church as an enemy. During his presidency, all but Mexican born priests were deported, religious schools were closed. Limits were put on the number of priests in the country and their registration with the Government was required.

In the years that followed, these anti-clerical laws were never repealed but were either enforced or ignored at the pleasure of the ruling PRI and the President. This on again-off again pattern of anti-clericalism finally led to the "Cristeros War." It had been brewing since 1925 and in early 1929 the violence escalated as the government moved to crush the rebels. Centered mostly in the northern part of Jalisco called Los Altos, by June of that year, the fighting had ended with a Government victory.

With the election of Lazaro Cardenas to the presidency in 1934, a détente between Church and State became a reality. In 1940, Cardenas was succeeded by Avila Camacho. A devout Catholic
he changed the Constitution to re-affirm religious freedom, but did not succeed in repealing all the anti-clerical provisions it contained. Thus Catholic schools were able open again but were forced to disguise themselves as private institutions.

Now, the Mexican Communist Party entered the scene. Surprisingly, they were pro-church, since the rightwing government was anti-cleric. The late 70's and early 80's again saw anti-clerical laws, still legally in effect, ignored by the government. **It was not until 1992 that President Carlos Salinas actually entered into negotiations with the Vatican and a formal rapprochement took place.**

**Today, Priests and Nuns are free to appear in public in religious garb. There is true freedom of religion. But it is clear that the Catholic Church in Mexico must render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, unto God the things that are God's.**

In May of 2000 the Catholic Church, in both Mexico City and Guadalajara voiced some comments critical of the ruling political party. It immediately received a warning from Ministry of the Interior, reminding them that meddling in politics is strictly prohibited by the Mexican Constitution. This confirms that there are still anti-clerical laws in effect and that the government will not hesitate to invoke them should the Church continue to speak out on political matters.

Thus, at least for the moment, the Catholic Church cannot attempt to influence politics. This is not to say that individual politicians are not devout Catholics and look out for the interests of their Church. The upcoming election may change things, since one of the candidates is friendlier to the Church than those now in power. There are those who warn that any attempt by the Church to regain political influence may lead to social unrest.

Despite some 141 years of harsh treatment by government, Catholicism still holds the hearts of the majority of Mexicans. Perhaps the greatest problems today lie in the area of family planning. Upper and middle class women seem to be challenging church doctrine in this area, but in all other matters, their faith remains firm. Large families are still very much in evidence outside the largest cities. The growth of Evangelic Protestantism is still not a major problem [Protestant adherents increased from 5.0 percent in 1990 to 5.7 percent in 2000, according to the national censuses]. As of this moment the Church remains a unifying force in the private lives of Mexicans. It is the one constant in the changing and sometimes chaotic Mexican scene. There can be no question that without the moderating influence of the Catholic Church, the indigenous people might have been completely wiped out.

As Mexico moves toward Democracy, old political alliances may crumble, but the strength and sincerity of their religious beliefs will always sustain the people.

Published or Updated on July 1, 2000


**Mexican Constitution: Anticlerical articles and the 1934, 1946 and 1992 Amendments**

Articles 3, 5, 24, 27, and 130 as originally enacted were anticlerical and restricted religious freedoms, as well as the power of the Catholic Church, in part due to a desire by anticlerical framers to punish the Mexican Church's Hierarchy for its support of Victoriano Huerta. Attempts
to enforce the articles strictly by President Plutarco Elías Calles in 1926 led to the civil war known as the Cristeros War. Scholars have characterized the constitution’s approach as a "hostile" approach to the issue of church and state separation. The articles, although sporadically enforced, remained in the Constitution until the reforms of 1992, which removed many but not all of the affronts to religious freedom. The constitution was made even more anticlerical in the period from 1934 to 1946, when an amendment mandating "socialist education" was in effect.

In 1926 Pope Pius XI, in the encyclical Acerba Animi, stated that the anticlerical articles of the constitution were "seriously derogatory to the most elementary and inalienable rights of the Church and of the faithful" and that both he and his predecessor had endeavored to avoid their application by the Mexican government.

Article 3 of the constitution required that education, in both public and private schools, be completely secular and free of any religious instruction and prohibited religions from participating in education - essentially outlawing Catholic schools or even religious education in private schools. Article 3 likewise prohibited ministers or religious groups from aiding the poor, engaging in scientific research, and spreading their teachings. The constitution prohibited churches to own property and transferred all church property to the state - thus making all houses of worship state property.

Article 130 of the constitution denied churches any kind of legal status and allowed local legislators to limit the number of ministers (essentially giving the state the ability to ban religion) and banned any ministers not born in Mexico. It denied ministers freedom of association, the right to vote and freedom of speech, prohibiting them and religious publications from criticizing the law or government. The constitution prohibited any worship outside of a church building, which essentially made Pope John Paul II’s outdoor masses and other religious celebrations during his 1980 and 1990 visits illegal acts under the law. In 1934 Article 3 was amended to mandate "socialist education", even more hostile to religion which "in addition to removing all religious doctrine" would "combat fanaticism and prejudices", "build[ing] in the youth a rational and exact concept of the universe and of social life". In 1946 "socialist education" was removed from the constitution and the document returned to the less egregious generalized secular education.

The anticlerical articles were substantially reformed in 1992, removing much of the anticlerical matter by granting all religious groups legal status, conceding them limited property rights, and lifting restrictions on the number of priests in the country. Article 27 was also greatly amended by ending land redistribution, permitting peasants to rent or sell ejido or communal land, and permitting both foreigners and corporations to buy land in Mexico. Still, however, the constitution still does not accord full religious freedom as recognized by the various human rights declarations and conventions; specifically, outdoor worship is still prohibited and only allowed in exceptional circumstances generally requiring governmental permission, religious organizations are not permitted to own print or electronic media outlets, governmental permission is required to broadcast religious ceremonies, and ministers are prohibited from being political candidates or holding public office.

The present Mexican Constitution of 1992 provides for freedom of religion; it states that everyone is free to profess their chosen religious belief and to practice the ceremonies and acts of worship of their respective belief. Congress may not enact laws that establish or prohibit any religion. The Constitution also provides for the separation of Church and State. The 1992 Law of Religious Associations and Public Worship define the administrative policies and remedies that protect the right to religious freedom. A provision was added to the Constitution in 2001 that established, for the first time, a constitutional prohibition against any form of discrimination, including discrimination against persons of the basis of religion.

**Concordats**

A concordat is an agreement between the Holy See of the Catholic Church and a sovereign state on religious matters. Legally, it is an international treaty. Concordats often include both recognition and privileges for the Catholic Church in a particular country. Privileges might include exemptions from certain legal matters and processes, and issues such as taxation as well as the right of a state to influence the selection of bishops within its territory. The Council of Constance [1414-1418] proclaimed the Concordat to be the regular form of governing relations between the Papacy and foreign kingdoms.

Concordats are international treaties with the Vatican that may range from granting little more than diplomatic recognition to a legally binding commitment to observe key aspects of Vatican doctrine and to have taxpayers subsidize the Church. Because the state may be put under pressure to enforce these Vatican policies, Concordat Watch also includes material on church-state separation (political, but not religious secularism).

**What’s the harm?**

1. **Once in place, concordats are removed from democratic control forever**

Laws can be changed by parliaments, but concordats can’t. That's because they're supposed to be international treaties, that is, agreements between a real country and the Holy See (The Vatican).

Even in democracies there is only a brief period, when the legislature has any say over a concordat. That is the time between when the treaty text is revealed and when the ratification vote takes place. This can sometimes be only a matter of days, which does not allow proper legal scrutiny of a very complicated document. A number of other legislative tricks may be used to help get the concordat through. Once the concordat is ratified it is set in stone. That's because treaties cannot be changed unilaterally. Any alteration requires the consent of the Vatican.

And in a dictatorship it's still worse. The concordat may be rubber-stamped by the military junta or even go through with no ratification at all, for the signature of the dictator or his foreign minister is enough. Yet when the dictator is toppled, his concordat remains in force.
2. Concordats can ensure a never-ending transfer of state funds to the Church

Sometimes the money transfer is justified as compensation for church property nationalized as long as 200 years ago. Concordats can lock in inflation-adjusted payments that cannot be ended unless the Vatican agrees.

Concordats often shift funds to the church by requiring that Catholic schools, hospitals and other agencies must be paid for by the State. This gives the Church say over what is taught and what services are offered, without having to pay the tab. A concordat can also help Church agencies get tax exemptions, even for Church-run commercial enterprises. And, despite all the state money flowing in, a concordat can ensure that the finances of the Church are kept secret.

3. Concordats can infringe on human rights

By giving advantages to one religious group, concordats can violate the requirement that all citizens and all religions be treated equally. Occasionally concordats have outlawed divorce, even for non-Catholics. Concordats can also anchor other parts of Canon (or church) Law by stipulating that this is to be used within Church institutions. However, since these also include social agencies, many non-clerics and even non-Catholics may find themselves legally obliged to obey Church rules.

Source: http://www.concordatwatch.eu/

Current concordats with the Vatican include the following countries in the Americas:

- Argentina
- Brazil
- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- Haiti
- Peru
- Portugal
- Spain
- Trinidad & Tobago

**Costa Rica:** During René Castro’s tenure at the ministry of foreign affairs, Castro started negotiations for a concordat with the Vatican. This action has been strongly criticized by observers. Those critics contend that the concordat with the Vatican is far from being a priority for Costa Rica. The previous concordat, which was abrogated during the nineteenth century, was signed in 1852. Thus, for the most part of its republican history, Costa Rica had not had a need of such a treaty with the Vatican. Critics pointed out that granting favorable treatments to the Catholic Church is inherently unfair and anti-democratic, given the large (albeit minority) presence of other Christian denominations in Costa Rica: ¿Queremos un concordato nuevo con el Vaticano? (in Spanish). Other observers have pointed out that the committee representing Costa Rica in the negotiations with the Vatican included Msgr. Barrantes, a Costa Rican bishop. It has been argued that Msgr. Barrantes’ allegiance will lean towards the Vatican and not the Costa

¿Queremos un concordato nuevo con Vaticano?

Por Dr. Carlos Denton: edenton@cidgallup.com

Actualmente la administración de Laura Chinchilla está a punto de firmar un “Concordato” con el Vaticano que serviría para reconfirmar la relación especial que tiene Costa Rica con el estado religioso ubicado dentro de la ciudad de Roma. Ha logrado el gobierno realizar esta negociación sin que lleguen muchos detalles a la prensa y a la opinión pública nacional; tomando en cuenta la importancia que tendría este tratado en lo que sería el futuro social y cultural del país, el gobierno debería divulgar los detalles de este “concordato” y sus implicaciones.

Para dar una idea de cómo se representa Costa Rica en la “negociación” con el Vaticano, Monseñor Hugo Barrantes es uno de los negociadores representando al país. ¿Qué tan fuerte será el pulso entre Barrantes y sus jefes en Roma en una negociación?

Es dudoso que el Vaticano pueda estar concediendo financiamiento, ayudas programáticas, u otros dividendos, y es probable que Costa Rica esté comprometiéndose a financiar programas de educación, de permitir la presencia de sacerdotes asalariados en las cárceles, de autorizar exoneraciones en las importaciones de ciertos productos, de prohibir la fecundación en vitro y cuantas cosas más a cambio de beneficios de tipo “espirituales.” En el Concordato de 1852, el último firmado entre el país y el Vaticano, la parte “leona” fue para el segundo.

Costa Rica ha cambiado mucho en los últimos 159 años y ahora solo un 20 por ciento de la población asiste a servicios religiosos en templos católicos por lo menos tres veces al mes. Aproximadamente un 15 por ciento asiste a servicios religiosos en iglesias evangélicas. ¿Por qué dar preferencia a la Iglesia Católica con un tratado? Es probable que más de una organización evangélica diera todo tipo de beneficios libros, pupitres, ayuda en especie, programas humanitarias y en cantidades muy superiores a lo que concede la organización basada en Roma si recibiera los mismos accesos y beneficios que ahora el gobierno de Chinchilla quisiera dar al Vaticano. Y los evangélicos probablemente tomarían las mismas posiciones sobre fecundación en vitro, educación sexual, el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo que ahora toman los católicos.

Es hora de que Costa Rica concediera a todas las religiones un trato igual frente a la ley. Actualmente se prohíbe que los clérigos católicos sirvan en puestos de elección popular. Se debe aplicar la misma restricción a los pastores evangélicos; la forma en que actúan los dos o tres de estos que sirven en la Asamblea Legislativa actual demuestra por qué no debe estar inmiscuido en la política ningún clero de ninguna iglesia. Si se sigue permitiendo a los pastores evangélicos aspirar a las diputaciones, entonces hay que dejar a los sacerdotes católicos participar también.
Quizás lo más importante es que si la administración actual firma un concordato nuevo con el Vaticano, este debería ser discutido y refrendado después de una amplia discusión en la Asamblea Legislativa.

Se debe estudiar igual como se investiga a cualquier otro acuerdo internacional. Ni los tratados de libre comercio ni el Concordato tienen relación especial con el Todopoderoso. Son acuerdos firmados entre dos estados independientes, donde conceden beneficios uno al otro. Lo que sí es probable ahora es que Costa Rica dará más al Vaticano en términos terrenales. En lo personal no creo que Costa Rica necesite este Concordato y espero que la Asamblea Legislativa lo estudie a profundidad antes de aprobarlo.

C. The period of accelerated religious change in Latin America, 1800 to date

Beginning in the Independence period [mainly 1801-1825, Cuba and Puerto Rico in 1898], the Roman Catholic Church in each new country that emerged from the Spanish and Portuguese colonial periods in Latin America had to face a new strategic dilemma posed by increasing political, economic, cultural and religious pluralism.

Because the Church’s goals of defending institutional interests, evangelizing, promoting public morality and grounding public policy in Catholic social teaching cut across existing political divides, Church leaders had to make strategic choices about which to emphasize in their messages to Catholic parishioners, investment of limited pastoral resources and strategic alliances. In the emerging pluralistic context of democratic societies where the Roman Catholic Church no longer had the financial support of the Colonial Government or the State, it had to compete with new religious minority groups among immigrant populations from Protestant Europe and North America.

Until the 1950s, the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America enjoyed extraordinary influence in politics and a near monopoly on religious belief and practice: in many countries presidents and generals had to be Catholic, more than nine of every ten Latin Americans called themselves Catholic, and children received Catholic religious education in private or state schools. Today, intensifying religious competition and an advancing tide of secularism have eroded the political influence and religious and cultural hegemony of the Catholic Church, with potentially profound consequences for politics and public policy in pluralist democracies.

How has the Catholic Church responded to religious and political pluralism? After a period in which many of Latin America’s Catholic churches stood with progressive sectors of their own societies against bloody dictators, several, falling back into step with a more conservative Vatican leadership, are imposing greater control over the grassroots, defending their corporate interests, and enlisting secular state authorities to enforce the social and family policy outcomes that they cannot induce through moral persuasion; in these cases the old battle lines of the secular versus the religious, liberal rights versus moral protections, and rights of women versus the defense of the family appear to be re-forming. Yet, other Catholic churches have maintained progressive positions, invited more popular participation, devoted more pastoral care to the poor and excluded, and championed the Church’s social doctrine, for reasons that are not clear.

The principal frameworks that for decades have guided our understanding of the shifting involvements and influence of the Roman Catholic Church on politics and society in Latin America—the institutionalist, ideational, and religious economy paradigms—did not anticipate and are now hard pressed to explain diverging responses to the challenges of religious and political pluralism in a post–Vatican II world.

In civil societies where Catholic Churches have lost the capacity to mobilize the faithful—where the institutional reach of the Church and the vitality of its subcultural organizations (and associational life in general) are weak—and where religious competition and/or secularization has eroded the Church’s position of religious dominance, Church leaders are likely to seek strategic allies on the political right who can protect its institutional interests and promote a public policy agenda consistent with the central tenets of Church teachings. On the other hand, where religious pluralism is high and the Catholic Church must be attentive to the possibility of
defection, but where Catholic religious and lay activists lead a dense network of civic and political associations that are reasonably autonomous from the control of religious authorities, the Catholic base has more potential leverage over its alliances and priorities. Finally, where the Church maintains a near religious monopoly and its networks traverse a robust associational life, the Church is better able to mobilize Catholic civil society for its ambitious programmatic agenda that aligns with politically progressive parties on the impact of market reform and with social conservatives on the right on moral issues.

To illustrate these choices I would like to mention three exemplary cases: (1) the Argentine and Chilean Catholic Churches, which diverged sharply in their responses to rightwing military governments and have now converged on a strategic option to emphasize public morality more vigorously than the Church’s social justice message; (2) the Brazilian Catholic Church, which has devoted considerably more attention to mobilizing the poor to use democracy to achieve social justice; and (3) the Mexican Catholic Church, which has straddled both dimensions of Catholic doctrine. The Catholic Church’s strategic dilemma is not, of course, unique to Latin America. However, the Latin American cases illuminate the place of religious institutions in plural and secularizing societies more broadly.

[Diverse tensions arose within the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America during the 1960s and following years, which resulted from challenges posed by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the Conference of Latin American Bishops held in Medellín (Colombia) in 1968, Latin American Liberation Theology, and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) movement. These powerful new currents polarized Catholic bishops, priests (diocesan and religious), lay brothers and sisters (members of religious orders), and the laity in general into various factions. Traditionalists wanted the Church to remain as it was prior to the reforms approved by the Second Vatican Council (mid-1960s), with an emphasis on apostolic authority, orthodox theology, the sacraments and personal piety. Reformers generally supported the Church’s post-Vatican II stance of modernization and toleration of diversity based on its official Social Doctrine. Progressives, inspired by reforms approved at the Vatican II and Medellín conferences, sought to implement the new vision for “a preferential option for the poor” through social and political action aimed at transforming Salvadoran society and establishing greater social justice through peaceful democratic means. Radicals adopted the Marxist-inspired Liberation Theology and advocated violent revolution by the people as a means of overthrowing Conservative dictatorships and creating a Socialist State that would serve the poor marginalized masses. Charismatic agents sought to transform the spiritual and communal life of Catholics by means of the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit (including the “baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues”), rather than by political and social activism. In addition, many Catholic families have been torn apart by armed conflict and forced geographical relocation due to civil wars and by internal conflicts between Conservatives, Liberals, Progressives and the CCR, both in the political and religious arenas.—Clifton L. Holland]

Modern changes in the religious arena of Latin America have had other implications, one of which is pluralization, including the growth of a population segment of people who claim no religious affiliation (see the “Table of Religious Affiliation in Latin America” on pages 3-7). This implies a painful transition for Latin American states to understanding the new nature of the religious marketplace and how to relate to it. At the same time, there has, in a sense, been a grassroots revitalization of Christianity in various forms -- Pentecostal, Catholic
Charismatic, Liberation Theology-oriented base communities -- making Christianity perhaps more rooted in the masses than it ever was when it enjoyed state protection. **Roman Catholicism is no longer integral to Latin American identity.** There is this clear division there now almost throughout the entire region. The religious arena is no longer similar to that of Latin Europe and has become partially more similar to that of the religious marketplace in the USA.

As far as the Catholic world is concerned, obviously Latin American Catholicism gave the world Liberation Theology and the base communities. But they have been in decline since the 1980s, both for internal and external reasons -- internal and external to the Catholic Church. **Within Catholicism, now the most vital movement is the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.** Liberation Theology never became hegemonic anywhere in Latin America: in some countries, it never got beyond isolated groups; in others it became more mainstream and retains some influence, but never on the level that it had 25 years ago.

National Catholic Churches reacted very differently to dictatorships in the 1970s and 1980s and have behaved very variedly under the formal democratic systems that now prevail. The Christian democratic political parties (based on Catholic social doctrine), almost without exception, have declined markedly in recent years in Latin America. The official Catholic project now is the New Evangelization, which aims not at a Christian social order through concordats or Christian political parties, but at an evangelization of culture through a deep penetration of civil society. But recent analyses are pessimistic about the Catholic Church’s capacity to do that, especially in view of its weakening vitality as a religion of personal salvation compared to its previous historical position as a traditional religious and cultural monopoly.

**Today, there are many other Catholic movements involved in politics besides those inspired by Liberation Theology.** The major challenger to President Lula [Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, 2006-2010] in the forthcoming Brazilian presidential elections [2010] is a man [José Serra of the centrist Brazilian Social Democracy Party (Portuguese: *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira, PSDB*)] who is linked to Opus Dei, a very conservative traditionalist Catholic movement, which is also very strong in Peru. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement has also become more and more politically active as well. [Note: the Socialist Workers’ Party candidate, Sra. Dilma Vana Rousseff, won the 2010 election and became Brazil’s first female president.]

Liberation Theology is a Catholic movement, which provided a fundamental reinterpretation of the place of the poor in the Kingdom of God (“preferential option for the poor”). It made political activism a godly virtue in the post-Vatican II period. Liberation Theology played a clear and arguably very decisive role in the civil wars of national liberation in Central America in the 1970s and 1980s. And it was, without doubt, an important mobilizing force for thousands of campesinos, many of whom became part of leftist revolutionary movements.

**However, Liberation Theology has declined significantly in its importance as a political and social movement with the defeat -- at least perhaps a temporary defeat -- of the left in Latin America in the 1980s and 1990s.** It is still present in Latin America, but without much of its political content. Liberation Theology today tends to be very much focused on family and social issues, concerning itself with things like alcoholism, domestic abuse, poverty alleviation and things of that nature.
Roman Catholicism in Latin America today presents a much more conservative face than during the period 1970-2000. Many of the cardinals who were named by Pope John Paul II (1978–2005) are members of the Legion of Mary and of Opus Dei and other very conservative movements within the Catholic Church. Grassroots Catholics within Latin America tend to be much more likely than before to be involved in non-political church movements, such as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal. This is indicative of two long-term trends: one is the "effective" repression of the radical church by Latin American governments in the ’70s and ’80s; and the other is the hard rightward push from the Vatican, beginning with the papacy of John Paul II and continuing so far through the papacy of Pope Benedict XVI.


ON CHANGES IN CATHOLIC DEVOTIONAL PRACTICES

What Catholics call devotions was a phenomenon of the modern world. Although eastern iconography and western art celebrated the risen Christ, the Blessed Virgin, and so on, before the sixteenth century there were few devotional practices other than calendrical feasts, pilgrimages and relics to connect people with the objects of their faith.

After the Council of Trent, a conjunction of historical developments gave rise to devotions such as the rosary, the Stations of the Cross, Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, and devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Sacred Heart of Mary, the Immaculate Conception, and a variety of saints. One factor was the desire of the hierarchy to emphasize the difference between Protestantism and Catholicism by promoting practices based on beliefs that the Reformers had rejected—the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the role of Mary, the communion of saints, etc. Another was the development of printing, which made possible the inexpensive production of devotional books, pamphlets and holy cards. A third was the rigidity of the post-Tridentine liturgy, which prevented the natural evolution of the mass and the sacraments such as had gone on for centuries before the Counter-Reformation.

Devotional practices made it possible for Catholics to experience the sacred in ways that were culturally relevant and personally rewarding. People could experience a transcendent presence by the repetition of prayers, by kneeling, by walking in procession, and by gazing at images of Christ, the Virgin, and countless saints. Such experiences reinforced faith by providing proof that could be felt and not simply believed. When performed together, as in processions and novenas, they provided social support for the faith of individuals.

In the early to mid-twentieth century, children learned how to be Catholic through the practice of devotions. Praying the rosary at home and abstaining from meat on Friday showed them what Catholics did and how they differed from people of other religions. Even when they went to mass, Catholics often prayed devotional prayers, pausing only when they heard the bells rung for the consecration and elevation of the Blessed Sacrament. In parochial schools, devotions and the catechism provided the structure and the content of the faith.
Many of those whose faith was formed before the Second Vatican Council were able to transform the experience of faith from one focused on devotions to one focused more on scripture and the liturgy. When free of superstition (like making the nine First Fridays in order to avoid dying in mortal sin), devotions enabled ordinary people to experience the reality of God and carry it with them from the pre-conciliar church to the post-conciliar church. I believe this is one of the reasons why people who consider themselves to be Vatican II Catholics were so strongly in favor of the council’s changes. Being able to find God in the new mass and the revised sacraments, they were convinced of the validity and value of the liturgical changes.

Letting go of formative practices such as devotions was disastrous, however, for the next generation of Catholics. Except for programs such as the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, which is based on Montessori principles, most religious education was centered on words and stories—and this at a time, when television, movies and popular music provided alternative and much more vibrant images to capture the imaginations of children and young people. If new devotional practices such as charismatic prayer and healing had not been discouraged, if new articulations of faith such as liberation theology had not been suppressed, and if popular religiosity had been allowed to expand in truly multicultural ways, Catholicism might not be contracting in many parts of the world as it is today.

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Louisville, Kentucky
January 18, 2013

Dr. Joseph J. Martos is a retired professor of religion and philosophy living in Louisville, Kentucky, where he divides his time between writing, social activism, and public speaking. He has held full-time teaching positions in Louisville KY, Allentown PA, Cincinnati OH, and Sioux City IA, and he has taught summer courses in over a dozen universities in the United States, Canada and Australia. He did graduate study in philosophy and theology at Gregorian University and Boston College, and he earned a doctorate from DePaul University in Chicago, writing a dissertation on Bernard Lonergan’s theory of transcendent knowledge.

Dr. Martos has written classic books on the sacraments: Catholic Sacraments (1983), Sacraments: Seven Stories of Growth (1989) and - the most popular - Doors to the Sacred: A Historical Introduction to Sacraments in the Catholic Church (1981, more editions). He has also co-authored four books on spirituality with Fr. Richard Rohr among them: Why be a Catholic? (1990) and The Wild Man's Journey: Reflections on Male Spirituality (1996). He has co-edited two books on Christian history and church practices with sociologist Pierre Hégy: Equal at Creation: Sexism, Society and Christian Thought (1998) and Catholic Divorce: the Deception of Annulments (2006). His book May God Bless America: George W. Bush and Biblical Morality, written just prior to the 2004 election, was on religion and politics. His latest book is: The Sacraments: An Interdisciplinary and Interactive Study. His current project involves deconstructing Catholic sacramental theology, exposing its conceptual flaws and intellectual instability. Dr. Martos has a continuing interest in world peace, social responsibility, and ecology. He has taught courses on Christian ethics and he has been a member of local and national organizations such as Pax Christi, Bread for the World, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and Amnesty International.

Sources: Catholic Devotions Blog at "join-in@listserv.adelphi.edu" join-in@listserv.adelphi.edu and http://www.churchauthority.org/sponsors/sponsorsl-m.asp
D. Defections from the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America since 1950; the changing religious marketplace

The Catholic Church's central role in the religious, social, and political life of Latin America has undergone a series of dramatic changes in the last twenty years [written in 2008]. These changes stem from religious pluralism and the popularity of Protestant churches, new forms of civil organization and mobilization, and the consolidation of democratic politics in the region. While the Catholic Church continues to play an important role in Latin American policy agendas, the religious landscape of the region has become a contested space.

Daniel H. Levine, James Orin Murfin Professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan, described the dramatic changes in Latin America's religious scene in the last forty years. The burst of Protestant churches and a more open civil society have led to what Levine described as a pluralization of voices both outside and inside churches, including the Catholic Church. Churches have come to support democracy, while the public image of religion, once believed to be an alliance of power between the Catholic Church and the State, has been changing in light of the multiplicity of venues for the exercise and practice of religion. Social movements once linked to the Catholic Church have both risen and fallen; churches are no longer "the Church," but rather one institution in a competitive space of civil society, itself the result of mounting urbanization and access to the media. Although the Catholic Church remains strong, increasing secularization, the spread of Protestantism, and the rising numbers of the faithful who describe themselves as católico a mi manera ("Catholic in my own way") have augmented the sense of lost hegemony in the Church. Levine argued that these developments have confounded scholars and analysts who espoused functional theories about the need for a basic moral order, or otherwise believed that modernization would lead to an effacing of religion as a social actor in Latin America.

Reflecting on the future of the Catholic Church after the Latin American Catholic Bishop Conference (CELAM) in Aparecida, Brazil, in 2007, Levine highlighted the general sense of fear emerging from the final documents of the meeting. Bishops are worried about the loss of cultural integrity in the region, the decay of a unified view of the faith, increasing moral disorder, gender issues that promise greater equality and freedom to women, and the loss of clerical and ecclesiastical guidance of religious organizations. Levine characterized the current position of Catholic bishops as being mired in fear over a loss of control—over the faithful and over the organization they lead.

Frances Hagopian, Michael P. Grace Chair in Latin American Studies at the University of Notre Dame and current Woodrow Wilson Center Fellow, explained that scholars have largely neglected the importance of the Catholic Church, and religion in general, in studies of democratic politics in Latin America. The shallow view that the Church supports democracy does not address how the Catholic Church still mobilizes grassroots movements, supports parties that advance its moral agenda, and can play an important political role in countries such as Cuba and Venezuela. According to Hagopian, since the 1990s the Catholic Church has supported democracy as a system of political rights, rather than liberalism and the notions of individual liberties and civil rights this philosophy entails. The Catholic Church has also played an important role in Latin American political culture, as early congregational efforts through Catholic Action evolved into CEBs (ecclesiastical base communities) in the 1970s, alongside many grassroots movements supported by the Church. Ironically, these groups sowed the seeds for a democratic political culture in Latin America, by reinforcing a language of individual responsibility and collective action, Hagopian noted.

Yet the Catholic Church faces several important challenges. About one-fifth of Latin Americans are now Protestant and one-tenth consider themselves non-denominational. According to Hagopian, the Catholic
Church is worried about the secularization of popular and political cultures; its loss of moral hegemony as a result of globalization; its ability to influence human rights, education, and public health policies; and its claim to perquisites from Latin American states. Strategically speaking, the Catholic Church intends to reclaim the moral public sphere while balancing its efforts to retain numbers of the faithful with its ability to influence policy, as evidenced in the 2007 Aparecida documents. Yet according to Hagopian, few, if any, political parties adhere to Catholic bishops' optimal position in these efforts.

Tom Quigley, former Latin America policy advisor for the U.S. Catholic Conference, observed that the number of Catholic defections to Protestant churches in Latin America has leveled off; moreover, he noted, such numbers may not be very reliable as they rarely take into account variables such as migration, indigenous populations, or what he termed "indifferent Catholics." In this sense, he questioned when Latin American Catholics have not been Catholics "their own way," even in areas such as reproductive rights. While acknowledging the challenges from globalization and secularization, Quigley asserted that, as one of the first globalized institutions, the Church is not trying to stem globalization, but rather point to its unsavory aspects. The Catholic Church also faces important challenges in the indigenous and Afro-Latin communities, whose traditional rights and practices differ from the core practice of the Church. Reacting to statements from the other panelists, Quigley dispelled the notion that the Church is fearful about its future; that groups in the Catholic Church ever rejected democracy; and that the Church relies on state patronage.

Adapted from: http://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/religious-pluralism-and-political-participation-latin-america-catholics-protestants-and

(1) Defections to Protestantism

Anthropologist David Stoll challenges the fundamentalist stereotypes [of Protestantism in Latin America from] both the left and the right. Though an avowed nonbeliever, he has a keen understanding of the Protestant evangelical ethos. A longtime supporter of justice causes, he can be as critical of Liberation Theology and of liberal stereotypes as of the shibboleths of the religious right. And lest conservatives take too much comfort in his predictions about Protestant ascendancy in Latin America, he suggests that the evangelicalism that is on the horizon may become more socially involved than its present image would indicate. He handles his topic with a good ear for the apt statement and with tongue-in-cheek irony, though at times he lapses into glibness.

Stoll has two objectives. First, he says, "for readers alarmed by evangelical growth, I want to provide a sense of its open-ended nature." Evangelicalism, he insists, "is a generator of social change whose direction is not predestined." To blame this growth on right-wing religious groups and U.S. imperialism—as many do—implies, he says, a profound distrust of the poor and of their ability to "turn an imported religion to their own purposes."

When he began his research, Stoll suspected that the conspiracy theory as the explanation of Protestant growth was exaggerated. The Iran-contra scandal disabused him. His second objective speaks to this issue. "For evangelicals, I wish to dramatize the danger of allowing their missions to be harnessed to United States militarism by the religious right." Accordingly, the initial chapters of Stoll’s work deal with the invasion of the sects and with the Catholic Church’s approaches to the various threats to its ancient hegemony—the Protestant onslaught in particular.

Stoll devotes almost half the book to a carefully nuanced discussion of the ideology, activities and historical context of the Protestant movements that have settled in Latin America, right up to the coming
of the religious right. His typologies are helpful in untangling a complex maze of interrelationships. In three of his chapters he presents case studies of Protestantism in Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua) and Ecuador (the role of World Vision). His conclusion—a reinterpretation of "the invasion of the sects as an Evangelical Awakening"—is bound to raise hackles on both sides of the issue. It is here that Stoll states the questions that have dogged him throughout his research: "Why should a religion which appears to work against the interests of the people help them in their struggle for survival?" Why is conservative Protestantism more successful at attracting the masses than a theology that is so explicitly concerned for the liberation of the masses?

Stoll argues that the impressive Protestant growth, with allowances made for the "revolving door effect," cannot be ascribed entirely to the right-wing sects. The reasons are more complex. He hints strongly that the growing conservatism of Rome may be partly to blame, as Catholics find less and less room in their church for freedom of the spirit. Stoll further insists that "evangelicals provided an ideology, not just of political resignation, as so often noted, but of personal improvement." Indeed, evangelical conversion may have become for the masses a more peaceful outlet for revolutionary fervor than the political message of liberation. While Liberation Theology has raised people’s consciousness, it has also raised expectations beyond its proponents’ capacity to deliver. Meanwhile, Pentecostal churches and Protestant relief agencies are delivering more immediate material results without setting off unmanageable class and ethnic confrontations. Tactical errors by the insurgents in Guatemala during José Efraín Ríos Montt’s rule drove into the arms of right-wing churches entire Mayan villages that had first sought guerrilla protection from the army.

Stoll’s analysis is given more weight by a study recently issued by CEDI, a Brazilian ecumenical documentation and information center, which found that Catholic base community members in that country are joining Pentecostal churches in large numbers. Pentecostalism, the refuge of the masses? Perhaps, but Stoll hints that these new converts may not have entirely forsaken their radical awareness—and as Protestant growth collides with increasing impoverishment, more opportunities for radicalization arise. The gospel, defined “in terms of social justice as well as personal salvation, has the potential to appeal to the millions of evangelicals whose economic position is deteriorating.” Indeed, grassroots Protestant congregations, says Stoll, may be going through the same process of awareness-raising as did the Catholic base communities in the ‘50s.


The Reformation of Latin America

By Pedro C. Moreno San Juan

We live in an age of profound transformations in Latin America – both spiritually and socially. It has been said that the recent spiritual revival that is taking place in the continent – mainly due to the Protestant expansion, but also within Catholic circles – may well be one of the last hopes for the economic and social advancement of Latin America.

According to recent statistics, in a region once considered a Catholic stronghold, Protestants are growing at a rate of 400 per hour, which leads demographers to predict that Latin America will be evangelical before the end of the 21st century. Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo from Nicaragua, addressing the
Vatican College of Cardinals in 1991 pointed out that “Protestants in Latin America have grown surprisingly, from 4 million in 1967 to 30 million in 1985.”

Cardinal Ernesto C. Ahumada from Mexico stated that in the last 30 years “defections (from the Catholic church) to other religious groups have tripled in the Dominican Republic, have increased by 500% in El Salvador and Costa Rica, and have grown by 700% in Guatemala.” No wonder an evangelical president was recently elected in this country. It is estimated that 20% of all Latin Americans are now Protestant.

One could ask, what are the reasons, the causes, the motives for this spiritual transformation that has gone beyond the religious realm into economics, politics, law, and other areas? Some would say it is something to worry about. Others may look with expectation and hope at what has been termed by Forbes magazine a situation “quite literally revolutionary – more so that Fidel Castro or Che Guevara could ever be.”

Referring to the specific Brazilian case, FORBES goes on to say that as a result of evangelical Protestantism having replaced Roman Catholicism as the country’s most widely practiced faith.

“The old Brazilian order, based upon a rigid hierarchy and social immobility, has broken down. A new social atmosphere, one more compatible with capitalism and democracy is emerging. Upwardly striving urban poor are encouraged by religious teachings and support groups that preach the power of individuals to change their lives through faith. This contrasts sharply with the old attitude of resignation to one’s fate and a glorification of poverty.”

Before we go further into the economic and social implications of this spiritual revival, allow me to situate this transformation, or one could say, Reformation, into its proper context. Much of the modern spiritual condition of Latin America resembles the spiritual condition of pre-war Germany, aptly described by Lutheran minister Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In his work, The Cost of Discipleship, Bonhoeffer – who resisted the Nazi atrocities and was martyred at a concentration camp – referred to the grace of God, said that this grace is costly because it took the life of Jesus Christ.

**Pure Grace vs. Cheap Grace**

“It is the only pure grace, which really forgives sins and gives freedom to the sinner. We (WWII era German Lutherans) justified the world, and condemned as heretics those who tried to follow Christ. The result was that a nation became Christian and Lutheran, but at the cost of true discipleship…. But do we also realize that this cheap grace has turned back upon us like a boomerang? The price we are having to pay today in the shape of the collapse of the organized Church is only the inevitable consequence of our policy of making grace available to all at too low a cost. We gave away the word and sacraments wholesale, we baptized, confirmed, and absolved a whole nation unasked and without condition. Our humanitarian sentiment made us give that which was holy to the scornful and unbelieving. We poured forth unending streams of grace. But the call to follow Jesus in the narrow way was hardly ever heard. Where were those truths which impelled the early Church to institute the catechumenate, which enabled a strict watch to be kept over the frontier between the Church and the world, and afforded adequate protection for costly grace? What had happened to all those warnings of Luther’s against preaching the gospel in such a manner as to make men rest secure in their ungodly living? Was there ever a more disastrous instance of the Christianizing of the world than this? What are those three thousand Saxons put to death by Charlemagne compared with the millions of spiritual corpses in our country today? … Cheap grace has turned out to be utterly merciless to our Evangelical Church.”

Much of this description clearly reflects the general situation of spiritual life in Latin America with the Catholic Church as the established one. Moreover, it even applies to the current situation in the U.S. and
some European countries where the Protestant church, as the established or traditional one has lost its vision and the true meaning of the gospel.

But what is now making the difference in Latin America? As Mexican author Richard Rodriguez, himself a Roman Catholic, puts it: “Evangelicals (in Latin America) are the most Protestant of Protestants. Evangelical conversion hinges upon the direct experience of Christ – accepting Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior. Evangelicals are fundamentalists. They read Scripture literally; they say yes when they mean yes, and no when they mean no.”

This reminds us of the Reformers’ principle of Sola Scriptura, the Bible and the Bible – only, which emphasized the paramount importance of the Bible over any other source of guidance in all areas of life. In describing “the problem of Catholicism” as Rodriguez terms it, he mentions that it is “all-embracing, so all-embracing that it defines an entire nation, a whole hemisphere.

“But when religion becomes so all-embracing, it is easily taken for granted. What does it mean that Brazil claims to be the largest Catholic country in the world if nobody goes to Mass in Brazil? The act of conversion does not define Catholicism. Catholicism is a way of life that need never come to a head; it never stands or falls on one decision…. According to evangelical faith, suddenness is holy. Change is a religious imperative. You can – you must – be born-again. Conversion defines faith…. I have sat in the back rows of evangelical churches, astonished by what I have seen: kids with tattoos, tough kids, kids to testify to having been on the streets as recently as last week, kids who spent their childhood on drugs, in gangs, in trouble; kids now in suits and ties, singing hymns to Christ. They are not converted to holy milksops. They are aggressive men who discovered spiritual empowerment.

“The genius of Protestantism seems to be that it is masculine,” says this Catholic author. Evangelicalism demands that you must “become your own man, take responsibility for your own life.”

The Call to a New Life

Of course, this is not new. Jesus Christ Himself, emphasized the importance of an internal transformation through a new spiritual birth, as opposed to an external lifestyle, or what some would call a “cultural Christianity.” In Matthew 16:24-26, He said: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?.”

The call to a new life in Christ seems not to be exclusively coming from the evangelicals (mainly Pentecostals and Baptists), but even from the Catholic Church itself. Pope John Paul II, in a recent Vatican meeting of Charismatic Catholics, that gathered 6,000 priests, 100 bishops, and three cardinals, warned: “The Gospel is not the truths that Jesus proclaimed, but a person: Jesus Christ.”

Ironically, in an age in which it is not fashionable to talk about sin, repentance, and modification of habits and lifestyles, it is precisely the call to repent and be transformed by the power of God which is hitting hardest the hearts and minds of men and women that have become tired of relativistic morality, religious syncretism, and humanistic attitudes and thoughts, that for all their good intentions, cannot and will not change their lives or their social and economic environment.

Lest we are deceived, we should also not forget that in order to drastically change our private lives, the life of our family, and the life of our society, spiritual salvation is not enough. The Bible clearly tells us that we should “not be conformed to this world”, but should “be transformed by the renewing of (our) mind”
(Romans 12:2). That means that going beyond the spiritual change we experience as we surrender to Christ, we should strive to develop such qualities as self-control, respect for others, integrity, good work habits, and a sense of purpose in life, and thus improve our social and economic condition.

Not without reason The Washington Post recently stated that the poor need not only opportunities for work, but the instilling of moral values as the “restoration of the moral environment in which (they) live.” The Post concluded: “(the poor) in New York, like in many other cities, needs a man on horseback. It needs John Wesley.”

Finally, let us remember that all these changes, this peaceful revolution, or this new reformation of Latin America, can continue only if we remember that the force that drives it is not the class struggle, or the forces of history, or simply destiny or coincidence, but it is the power of God, expressed through his undeserved mercy and love that He, sovereignly has chosen to pour on these people and at this time of history. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and we, as our final destiny and purpose in life, are to be conformed to His image and character. Not the other way around. As one theologian explains:

The tension between God’s holy righteousness and his compassionate mercy cannot be legitimately resolved by remodeling His character into an image of pure benevolence as the Church did in the nineteenth century. There is only one way that this contradiction can be removed, through the cross of Christ which revealed the severity of God’s anger against sin and the depth of his compassion in paying its penalty through the vicarious sacrifice of His Son. In systems which resolve this tension (between His righteousness and His compassion) by softening the character of God, Christ and His work become an addendum, and spiritual darkness becomes complete because the true God has been abandoned for the worship of a magnified image of human tolerance.

May we receive the blessings of Christ’s sacrifice, and enjoy a new life that is not for the benefit of the self only, but that will abundantly be poured out on our families, and into our society.

Pedro C. Moreno San Juan, an attorney, President of the Rutherford Institute of Bolivia and its representative for Latin America; published on September 1, 1992; available at: http://www.forerunner.com/forerunner/X0271_Reformation_in_Latin.html

Catholic Church Losing Followers in Drovess
by Diego Cevallos

MEXICO CITY, Oct. 21, 2004 (IPS) - For the Catholic Church hierarchy in the Vatican, Latin America has changed from the “Continent of Hope” to the continent of concern, as followers are leaving the church in such large numbers that it could lead to the collapse of Catholicism within a decade and a half.

Although Latin America is still home to almost half of the 1.07 billion Catholics in the world today, numerous studies indicate that their numbers are declining throughout the region.

The loss of Catholic faithful “is a painful reality that calls out dramatically to us as pastors of Latin American churches,” said Cipriano Calderón, a member of the Vatican Congregation for Bishops and former president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America.

In Brazil, where there are more Catholics than in any other country in the world -- roughly 100 million, out of a total population of close to 180 million -- close to half a million followers are leaving the Catholic church every year.

Something similar is happening in Mexico, the country with the second largest number of Catholics. Roughly 88 percent of its 102 million inhabitants today identify themselves as Catholics, revealing a decline of almost 10 percent compared to the mid-20th century.

In Colombia, only two out of every three people profess themselves Catholics today, when almost the entire population was Catholic in the 1950s.

The phenomenon is particularly marked in Guatemala, where almost one-third of the country's 12 million inhabitants have left the Catholic Church, and most of those leaving have converted to evangelical Protestantism.

Meanwhile, 71.3 percent of Costa Rica's 4.2 million people declare themselves to be Catholic today, when just one year ago, a full 77 percent professed this faith, according to a survey conducted by the department of mathematics at the public University of Costa Rica.

However, another poll carried out by Unimer Research International, a private firm, revealed that 52 percent of the Costa Ricans consulted “no longer believe” in the Catholic Church, while only 44 percent said they do believe.

According to the Costa Rican Episcopal Vicariate, the Catholic Church is currently losing an average of 658 followers a day in that Central American nation.

"God is being pushed to the backburner,” lamented the president of the Episcopal Conference of Costa Rica, José Francisco Ulloa.

But for Elio Masferrer, chairman of the Latin American Religious Studies Association, it is not a matter of a loss of faith, but rather the fact that the Catholic Church is losing its traditional hold on what he calls “the religious market.”

"If the Catholic Church doesn't make changes to its centralized structures and authoritarian messages, it will suffer a genuine collapse in Latin America within roughly 15 years,” he predicted to IPS.
Israel Batista, the general secretary of the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI) believes that Roman Catholicism, ruled by the Vatican, is losing ground in the region because “it hasn't succeeded in responding to the demands of the faithful,” and has maintained “hierarchical structures that are distanced from the people.”

“The Catholic Church will have to change if it wants to stay strong,” Batista told IPS. His group, CLAI, is based in Ecuador and represents over 150 Baptist, Congregational, Episcopalian, Evangelical, Lutheran, Moravian, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Reformed and Waldensian churches in 21 countries throughout Latin America.

Masferrer and Batista concur that the Vatican has become too distanced from the daily lives of the people, their earthly tribulations, and their need for compassion and love. And this has created a void that the evangelical Protestant churches have rapidly positioned themselves to fill.

Batista noted that over 15 percent of Latin Americans today belong to evangelical churches, which have experienced a “spectacular leap” in growth in the region in recent decades.

“When you go to an evangelical church, you are taken into the community, which is relatively free of hierarchy, whereas in the Catholic churches, the faithful are scattered and receive advice and even orders from faraway places like the Vatican, which often do not relate whatsoever to the reality of the people,” he said.

During the reign of Pope John Paul II, which began in 1978, the number of Catholics in the world, measured by the number of baptisms, grew from 758 million to 1.07 billion people. Nevertheless, this rise in numbers does not imply an actual expansion of Catholicism, because it doesn't take into account the growth of the world's population as a whole.

In fact, Catholics accounted for 17.9 percent of the world's population in 1978, but they now represent 17.2 percent. In addition, many of those who were baptized as Catholics, and are thus counted as parishioners by the Vatican, have in fact left the church.

Statistics from the Pontifical Yearbook reveal that over the last 26 years, the number of priests has fallen by 3.7 percent, while the number of nuns has plunged by 20.9 percent.

“No matter which way you look at it, the statistics show that the Catholic Church is in decline around the world, and Latin America has played a major part in this,” said Masferrer.

He offered other statistics to contrast the differences between the Catholic and evangelical Protestant churches in the region. In Mexico, for example, there is one priest for every 7,200 worshippers, whereas in the evangelical churches, the ratio is one pastor for every 230 followers. What's more, the average age of evangelical pastors in Mexico is 32, as compared to 65 for Catholic priests.

“The [Catholic] Church will fall into crisis unless significant changes are made to the Vatican structures, which have become much more centralized and authoritarian under Pope John Paul II,” he stated.

For Batista, “one of the most obvious errors made by the Catholic Church in Latin America has been the way it has lost touch with the region's poor, who have been welcomed in by the evangelical churches.”

During the 1960s and 1970s, a significant number of Catholic bishops and priests in Latin America became involved in the Liberation Theology movement, based on their belief that the church could not simply minister to people's souls while ignoring their needs here on earth.
They worked in close contact with the poorest and most marginalized sectors of society, as Jesus was said to have done, spreading the gospel while participating in the struggle for economic and political justice.

In fact, the arrival of evangelical Protestant churches was welcomed and even promoted in some Latin American countries as a way of drawing people away from what many viewed as the dangerously “left-wing” Liberation Theology.

But this danger soon passed, as the Vatican hierarchy itself, under Pope John Paul II, became openly critical of the political involvement of the priests and bishops in this movement, many of whom were excommunicated.

A quarter of a century later, there are now extremely few progressive bishops left in Mexico and Brazil, which John Paul II has visited four and five times, respectively.

Fully conscious of the loss of followers, but strictly adhering to the Vatican line, the former president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America has been calling on the priests and bishops of the region to work harder to ensure that the problem does not become even more severe.

“A few years from now, will we still be able to say that half of the Catholics in the world live in Latin America? Do we not see how the Catholic church is being bled dry by the numbers of followers who are continually leaving our church to join sects, or to turn their backs on Christianity altogether?” he asked at a recent gathering of Latin American bishops.

“This is an extremely grave phenomenon, which requires an urgent and serious response,” he added.

Evangelical Protestantism is now the second leading religion in Brazil, according to the 2000 census. The followers of the different denominations have grown from nine percent of the population in 1991 to 15.1 percent, while the proportion of Catholics has dropped from 83.7 percent to 73.7 percent.

The Pope himself has called on Catholic Church leaders in Latin America to “pay special attention to the problem of the sects,” as the Catholic Church refers to the evangelical Protestant churches.

"Resolute pastoral action is essential for dealing with this serious problem, by reviewing the pastoral methods used, strengthening the structures of communion and mission, and making the most of the evangelizing possibilities of a purified popular religiosity,” he declared.

One of the strategies he proposed was the creation of a Latin American Catholic television network.

But in Batista's opinion, if the Catholic Church does not learn to be tolerant towards other religions, and to work in closer contact with the people and address their individual needs, it will continue to lose ground no matter how much “propaganda” it puts out.

"People feel alienated by a church that condemns divorce and is not willing to listen, an authoritarian church that opposes the use of condoms, and isn't willing to adapt to the times and the real needs of people,” said Masferrer. “But expecting changes in all of these aspects seems just short of impossible under the current Vatican leadership,” he concluded.

Religious Conversion in the Americas: Meanings, Measures, and Methods

By Timothy J. Steigenga

Religious pluralism has fundamentally altered the social and religious landscape of Latin America and the Caribbean. From Mexico to Chile, millions of Latin Americans have abandoned their traditional Catholic upbringing to embrace new and different religious beliefs and practices. Evangelical Protestants represent approximately 15 percent of the population in the region today. Indigenous and Afro-diasporan religions have also experienced rapid growth. At the same time, significant changes within traditional religious categories have accelerated.

Large numbers of Catholics have joined charismatic congregations, while sectors of classic Pentecostal and mainstream Protestant congregations have converted to "health and wealth" neo-Pentecostalism.

Religious conversion is the primary motor driving this larger process of religious change. While the macro-level factors that set the context for religious conversion (changes within the Catholic Church, increased Protestant missionary activity, and changes in state policies on religious freedom) have been studied considerably, far less attention has been paid to questions of exactly which people convert and under what circumstances, how social scientists understand and interpret conversion, and how conversion impacts individual and collective beliefs and actions. This essay seeks to provide some guidelines for the study of conversion gleaned from theoretical and empirical treatments of the subject in the context of Latin America.

Within the social science literature on conversion, there is a general consensus that conversion involves a process of radical personal change in beliefs, values, and, to some degree, change in personal identity and worldview. However, questions about how to measure these changes, which level of analysis to utilize, and the role of personal agency versus external contextual factors remain matters of significant dispute and debate. Bringing Latin American scholarship and empirical case studies into dialogue with this existing literature helps to establish a set of guidelines for studying conversion that can direct further scholarship and put to rest some of the widely held misconceptions about conversion in the Americas. In particular, I argue that (1) religious conversion must be understood as a process and continuum rather than a single discrete event, (2) conversion is a multiply-determined phenomenon that demands a complex theoretical model and a multifaceted research methodology, and (3) researchers would be well served by reevaluating the categories and concepts we utilize for measuring the political and social effects of religious conversion.

Conversion as Process and Continuum

The study of conversion in Latin America has given rise to multiple and diverse challenges to the "Pauline paradigm" of conversion: the sudden, dramatic, and all-encompassing view that characterized many early studies. A number of authors focusing on Brazil have argued that such traditional (and generally North American) conceptions of conversion do not apply to the Latin American religious field. Patricia Birman uses the concept of "passages" between religious groups rather than sudden and dramatic conversion. According to Birman, as neo-Pentecostal churches move closer to secular norms, their parishioners are able to relax the tensions between the sacred and the secular enough to make conversion a less radical and complete event. Furthermore, some authors argue that Latin American culture is sufficiently syncretic that transit between religious groups is a natural and non-dramatic occurrence for many converts. Taken together, these insights force us to take a closer look at what we mean by conversion in the Latin American context. If conversion is not always characterized by a dramatic change in religious beliefs and values, how can we define and utilize the concept in comparative study?
Henri Gooren brings us part of the way to resolving this dilemma by positing that conversion should be understood as a continuum rather than a single event. Conceiving of conversion as a continuum allows us to pinpoint passages, multiple affiliations, or even apostasy as levels within this continuum. In other words, we can adopt what Gooren calls a "conversion careers" approach -- that is, looking at levels of conversion, as well as the movement in these levels over time. Understanding the conversion career allows us to differentiate between different stages of conversion and disaffiliation in a coherent and comparative fashion. In particular, Gooren provides us with five categories -- preaffiliation, affiliation, conversion, confession, and disaffiliation -- for following the trajectories of individuals over time. While various authors have provided more complex schémas, Gooren's synthesis establishes a functional model for following and comparing different stages of conversion.

**Theories of Conversion in Latin American**

*Five primary approaches characterize the theoretical literature on conversion in Latin America:* attending to historical supply-side and push factors, developing economistic models of religious consumers responding to religious markets, focusing on religious preferences, foregrounding networks, and privileging instrumental action and context. A brief discussion and evaluation of these approaches will provide background for a methodological synthesis that offers a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary approach to studying conversion.

**Historical supply-side and push factors.** The historical supply-side approach to religious change in Latin America takes both internal and external factors into account. Internally, the difficulties faced by the Catholic Church in the recent past (shortages of priests and tensions between lay workers, priests, and the hierarchy) are seen as push factors influencing people to convert, primarily to Protestantism. Externally, the history of missionaries in Latin America sheds some light on the supply-side of the equation. First, in the 1950s and 1960s Asia was closed to missionaries. This factor, along with the "battle with Communism," diverted American missionaries to Latin America in large numbers. North American Protestant missions presented themselves as a response to the Communist threat. Second, divisions began to form between local church leaders and their North American counterparts. Many local leaders broke from their mother churches, in the process abandoning many of the cultural barriers that North American missionaries had constructed around Protestantism. These new churches quickly became popular as local charismatic leaders made their services more culturally relevant and preached in the native languages of their congregations. Third, new strains of Protestantism and Catholicism began to grow in Latin America. Charismatic Pentecostals began to preach a millennial message, stressing the gifts of the Holy Spirit (such as speaking in tongues), faith healing, and personal testimony. Similar elements of religious belief and practice characterized the growth of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Because of the large influx of American missionaries and their connections to right-wing organizations in the United States, the notion that conversion was externally imposed in Latin America was prevalent in the early literature about the issue. This perspective argued that North American missionaries were trying to demobilize people who might instead embrace the more radical liberation theology. These accusations were fueled by well-documented links between missionary organizations, rightwing evangelicals in the United States, and the U.S. government. Reducing conversion to an entirely external imposition, however, ignores the popular and indigenous nature of the movement, denies the agency of individual converts, and questions the validity of individuals' religious experiences. *Today most Protestant and charismatic Catholic congregations in Latin America are run by Latin Americans, lending further evidence to the critiques of early reductionist accounts of evangelical conversion.*

**Religious markets and religious economy.** A second broad approach to understanding religious change focuses on the macro-level of religious markets. Proponents of this approach look at religion as a market, potential converts as consumers, and the Catholic Church as a “lazy monopoly” in Latin America.
Anthony Gill has been the main proponent of this approach, utilizing it to explain Pentecostal growth and to predict the actions of the state and the Catholic Church as a result of market forces. Andrew Chesnut has extended and altered the market approach to explain the recent growth, not only of Pentecostalism, but also of Afro-diasporan religions and the charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church.

The religious-market approach has not been well received by many scholars in the field of religious studies because, in its most extreme forms, it reduces religious institutions to utility maximizing firms, and converts to consumers. If the "inelastic religious demand" assumption of strict market approaches is relaxed, however, the model can be useful for understanding how local context interacts with religious supply to increase the attractiveness new religions to potential converts. In other words, it is logical to assume that demand for religious goods is higher in some areas than in others, which opens the possibility for an evaluation of both sides of the market (supply and demand), of new areas of product specialization and marketing strategies by religious institutions, and of the religious preferences of individuals. Thus, market analyses can provide important insights about conversion without ignoring the agency of individuals or reducing religious institutions to purely "soul maximizing" firms.

Conversion as religious preference. A third approach to explain conversion focuses primarily on demand and individual religious preferences. In this approach, the spiritual, supernatural, experiential, and doctrinal elements of the growing religions in Latin America are seen as the primary factors attracting converts. The assumption is that the religions that are growing most rapidly are those for which Latin Americans have the greatest natural affinity. Harvey Cox argues that Pentecostal Protestantism is essentially a "restorationist" religious movement in that it helps people to restore "elemental spirituality" in the form of "primal speech" (speaking in tongues), "primal piety" (healings, trances, and other forms of religious expression), and "primal hope" (in the Utopian and millennial eschatology of Pentecostalism). Daniel Miguez takes a more subtle approach, arguing that the motivation for conversion is "defined by people's needs to find answers to transcendental questions and what they feel are appropriate ways to relate to sacred beings and forces." According to Miguez, the primary change that comes with conversion is religious rather than cultural, economic, or political. The idea that the growing religions in Latin America are experienced more intensely than traditional Catholicism is fundamental to this approach. Central to arguments based on the religious features of conversion is the notion that the complete "religious experience" is more intense within Pentecostal, charismatic Catholic, Afro-Brazilian, or indigenous religious communities than in traditional Catholic and Protestant churches. Conversion, then, is explained in part as a preference for the religious and experiential features of Pentecostalism or other religious options.

Some versions of these arguments have drawn criticism for either reifying cultural primitivism or ignoring critical differences in local culture. In other words, the pneumatic elements of Pentecostalism may hold very different meanings for indigenous Pentecostals in Chiapas and black Brazilians in the slums of Rio de Janeiro. The fact that Pentecostalism is growing in both places requires a deeper explanation than a broad generalization about cultural affinity.

Disaggregating questions of how many people convert from specifically who converts requires that we bring social networks into the analysis.

Networks and conversion. Network theory can help us to understand better the connections between religious supply and demand. For example, religious demand may be very high within a particular community, especially when traditional survival strategies and other support networks begin to fail. In such a community Base Ecclesial Communities (BECs), Pentecostal churches, and Charismatic Catholic groups may all gain converts. Which "meaning network" each convert is a part of will influence which group he or she will join. As David Smilde argues, meaning networks are key for understanding who is likely to convert (e.g., if you live away from your family in a house with an evangelical, you are more
likely to convert to an evangelical church). In other words, network theory allows us to take the market approach to the micro-level, making it a complementary, rather than a competing, explanation for religious change. Such an approach reintroduces the interaction between agents (individuals making religious choices) and context (networks and contextual push-and-pull factors) in a manner that avoids causal reductionism in either direction.

Based on his research in Venezuela, David Smilde argues that the personal problems that Pentecostalism helps converts to address are widespread among Venezuela’s popular sectors and thus do not provide a sufficient explanation for conversion. Smilde found instead that networks played an important part. People who were living away from their families or with an evangelical were more likely to convert than those who were not. The presence of nearby Catholic family members acted as a deterrent to conversion, but individuals who moved away from their families were more likely to have the freedom to innovate. Smilde also points out that some people actively construct the network positions that eventually lead to their conversion. In other words, instrumental action on the part of individuals leads them toward or away from conversion.

We come now to a final category of explanations for religious conversion: the broad focus on the interactions between agents and context. Some of the most influential works on conversion in Latin America assert that conversion represents an adaptive response to varying external structures and processes. A relatively large number of authors subscribe to some version of the "anomie" thesis, in which the drastic changes associated with modernization (e.g., urbanization, changing land-tenure patterns, and the loss of traditional community) cause a sense of moral uncertainty and a loss of security in terms of relationships and norms of behavior. People then may turn to Pentecostalism (or other religious options) as a way to adopt capitalist values or as a comforting replication of old norms and values. Some authors from the preparation for capitalism school claim that conversion opens "social spaces" for people who have been dislocated and who associate conversion with development and the promotion of democracy. For example, Amy Sherman argues that Guatemalan converts experience changes equivalent to Weber's "Protestant ethic," which "predispose them to capitalist development." Authors from the replication school focus on the otherworldly and millennialist elements of Pentecostal Protestantism and hold a dimmer view of the potential for individual conversions to produce large-scale social change.

While there may be a correlation between upward social mobility and conversion in the context of Latin America, the question of directionality remains open. Virginia Garrard-Burnett addresses this issue, arguing that upward social mobility may be more myth than reality among immigrant converts to neo-Pentecostalism in Houston. According to Garrard-Burnett, while conversion does not necessarily lead to upward social mobility among converts, it can indeed provide them with a set of beliefs, networks, and sense of community that help them to successfully navigate the difficulties of immigrant life in the Houston community. It is precisely this sort of nuanced and pragmatic treatment of conversion that points us toward a potential methodological synthesis.

Toward a Methodological Synthesis

Taken together, the theoretical perspectives summarized here suggest that researchers should beware of reifying the instrumental nature of conversion as a path to resolving life crises.

Conversion is not the only avenue explored by people in crisis in Latin America. The pathologies of poverty are much more widespread than conversion. Conceiving of conversion as a process allows us to follow the trajectory of individuals over time; it also serves as a cautionary factor, keeping us from becoming overly deterministic about the variables contributing to conversion. While social conformity, networks, and crises may all condition conversion, these are not the sole determining factors. Purely instrumental approaches, however, may give too much credit to the convert's "other" preferences (financial gain, personal safety, crisis management, or changes in gender relations). That which appears
instrumental or purely preference-based to the outside observer may actually have multiple contextual and network determinants that are not immediately evident. One way for researchers to tease out these different levels of analysis is to take a more critical approach to the role of conversion narratives and discourse in the study of conversion.

Conversion is defined, in part, by the new discourse repeated in the conversion narrative. Pitting past against present and future, good against evil, old against new is part of adopting a new religious identity - not only adopting it, but actively reshaping and reembracing it in the retelling. The conversion narrative can thus make conversion appear purely tactical, precisely because the discourse is framed in terms of what was wrong and bad about the past.

Conversion almost always has "practical" explanations: fighting addiction, bottoming out, facing a medical crisis, or other "pathologies of poverty." A common factor among conversionist religious groups is that converts must learn to interpret these factors in a manner consistent with the group's norms and discursive style.

This is not to say that conversion narratives should be discounted as disingenuous or programmed. Rather, researchers must pay attention to the convert's stage in their conversion career, always remaining cognizant of the fact that narratives are socially constructed and retrospectively reinterpreted over time. In other words, conversion accounts may tell us more about current identities, beliefs, and orientations than they do about the past.

Maria Carozzi's study of converts to an Afro-diasporan religious group in Argentina provides an excellent illustration. By speaking with practitioners and analyzing their discourse at various stages of initiation into the group, Carozzi sheds light on the fact that that converts are as much "chosen" by religious authorities as they are "choosers" in their conversion process. Only those who appear to have certain affinities and dedication are invited into the inner circle of the group.

At the same time, an analysis of conversion narratives demonstrates an ongoing process of continuity and rupture with the former life for converts. Patricia Birman argues that, in the case of Brazilian neo-Pentecostals, the spiritual forces of previous religious practices remain very much alive in the worldviews and narratives of converts, despite the fact that they are now demonized within the neo-Pentecostal dualist ontology. In other words, narratives allow converts to keep a place for their former beliefs and spirits in their daily discourse.

These studies provide us with practical methodological lessons for studying conversion. Tracking and measuring religious changes requires a methodology that can capture the multiplicity of causal factors and gradations of conversion. Qualitative interviews and survey data must be complemented with participant observation in order to capture the conversion career of any individual. Non-converts must be interviewed as well. Without this control group we may be missing half of the story. Overlooking this group has led some researchers to over predict the causal nature of precipitant events (drug use, stress, and other emotional/psychological crises) in the conversion process.

Researchers should also approach conversion narratives carefully because, although they are an empirical indicator of conversion, they are socially constructed and influenced by the discourse of the new group to which the convert has affiliated. If the conversion narrative is not considered carefully, we may lose sight of the fundamental tension in conversion discourses between the processes of choosing (individual agency) and of being chosen (either by religious authorities or directly by a deity or spirit).
Political and Economic Effects of Conversion

The debate over the impact of conversion in Latin America has been framed largely in terms of democracy, development, resistance, and accommodation. The results of studies asking questions within that framework have varied widely and have led to inconclusive results, primarily because the wrong questions are being asked. Religious conversion is a personal and religious decision that takes place over time. While individual decisions may add up to a larger process of religious change, the most important political effects of such changes in Latin America have to do with the manner in which new religiously held values enter the public sphere, inform public discourse, and combine to resolve or exacerbate local cultural, social, or familial tensions. These political effects, however, do not fall neatly into categories of democratic /authoritarian, left/ right, or resistance/ accommodation.

Five primary guidelines can assist us in untangling the complicated political and economic impact of conversion in Latin America. First, we must disaggregate and specifically define the religious variables we posit as having political effects. As I have argued elsewhere, the act of conversion or belonging to a given religious affiliation is simply not a good predictor of political attitudes and activities. We are much better served by focusing on the specific religious beliefs and practices associated with the religious groups experiencing rapid growth in the region, and how those beliefs and practices interact with specific local and national contexts.

For example, strong tendencies toward millennialism and charismaticism (among both Protestants and Catholics) are associated with political quietism in closed and authoritarian political contexts. At the same time, the same set of religious beliefs and practices can have a positive impact on voting frequency if political participation is encouraged as both a right and a duty for citizens.

Second, sweeping generalizations connecting religious change to claims about democracy and development should be viewed with suspicion. In a region where multiple powerful factors militate against significant progress on either of these fronts, we can hardly expect a series of individual religious choices to add up to a coherent, direct, and sweeping force for economic or political change. As Jeffrey Rubin argued recently, we may better understand the effects of social and religious movements in Latin America if we investigate the manner in which they introduce alternative rationalities, discourses, and narratives into public spaces, rather than forcing our "square peg" research subject into the "round hole" of classic sociological, anthropological, and political categories.

David Smilde provides us with one such nuanced approach in his study of evangelical political participation in Venezuela. Smilde argues that evangelical "publics" in Venezuela are purposely constructed relational contexts that extend network ties and introduce a "moralized" discourse into the public sphere. The same could be argued for television and radio evangelism throughout the region. This discourse and political responses to it (such as Hugo Chavez's adoption of evangelical images and phrases) constitute a rich field for further study. This sort of political participation does not fall neatly into the bounds of traditional political categories, but it remains important and demands careful analysis.

Third, much of the political impact of religious change can be understood only through a lens that includes both the global and the local. Pentecostalism is a globalized religious movement that interacts with local religious beliefs and practices while simultaneously demonizing them.

Many Pentecostal (and neo-Pentecostal) churches have international headquarters and business plans, but the staff members of most Pentecostal churches are locals, with social, political, and economic concerns that reflect those of their local community. Thus, although Pentecostalism tends to "look the same" across the variant communities in which it has made significant inroads in Latin America, the political and social effects of Pentecostal growth interact with local contexts to produce very different political effects. The same is true among the "pentecostalized" Catholics in charismatic churches throughout the region.
Fourth, upward social mobility certainly plays some role in conversion, but whether it is an empirical or merely a perceptual reality remains unclear. Certainly arguments that posit an upward swing in "development" on a national scale because of religious conversions should be discounted. At the same time, the stories of individuals and communities who have experienced upward social mobility along with conversion merit careful empirical analysis. As Virginia Garrard-Burnett argues, conversion may not make the convert financially rich, but it can provide a wealth of "spiritual capital" in the form of beliefs, networks, self-meanings, and affirmation that assist people in navigating the difficulties of everyday life.

Finally, conversion must be compared between the various religious groups in Latin America instead of focusing exclusively on the Catholic-to-Protestant shift. Widening the scope of the study of conversion makes the conversion picture more accurate. This wider scope facilitates our ability to trace people's movement in their conversion careers and compare variables involved in the process of entering and leaving different religious groups. While the growth of other religious groups in Latin America is commonly assumed to come at the expense of the Catholic Church, the reality is that Catholicism has also experienced a major internal revival during the same time period. Catholicism has certainly lost shares as a self-reported percentage of the population throughout the region, but many experts argue that the Catholic Church, though leaner, is more vibrant and healthier than ever before.

Conclusion

Throughout this essay, I argue for a definition of conversion that is more fluid than static. Conversion is a process that takes place over time; interacts with institutional religion, networks, and cultural contexts; and does not necessarily proceed in a linear or chronological fashion. I argue for a reconceptualization not only of conversion but also of the methods used in research and subjects studied as its effects. Evaluating the scholarship on religious change in Latin America can help us to avoid the pitfalls of overgeneralization, understand the multiple lines of causality involved in conversion, and utilize methods that better capture the complexity of the process of religious change in the region. One can hope that such an approach will help to inform future scholarship and lead to more refined and specific claims about the process and impact of religious conversion in general.

WHY ARE ROMAN CATHOLICS LEAVING THEIR CHURCH TO JOIN EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN LATIN AMERICA?

Compiled by Clifton L. Holland, Director of PROLADES
5 September 2002

COMMON REASONS GIVEN SINCE 1970:

1. The high rate of population growth in nearly every country (+ 3.5% annually), coupled with a decline in the number of Roman Catholic priests (diocesan and religious), has produced the present situation where the population-to-priest ratio is very high and growing (e.g., 50,000 to one, for example).

2. There has been a decline in the number of priests and nuns in many countries, especially of foreign religious workers, as well as a decline in the number of students who are entering the seminaries to prepare for the ministry.

3. Today, there are more Evangelical pastors in most Latin American countries than Roman Catholic priests.

4. The growth rate of Evangelical membership in Latin America is reported to be 10% annually for the period 1960-1995, and the number of local Evangelical churches is multiplying rapidly in many countries.

5. In countries where the Roman Catholic Church is dominant, it is very intolerant of the presence of Evangelical groups, Christian sects, and non-Christian religions, which it denounces as “an invasion of sects” with financial backing of the U.S. government and U.S. business interests (see Stoll, page 34: “Protestantism is the arm of conservative capitalism” — religious imperialism). In countries where the Roman Catholic Church is a minority, it has stressed the importance of “tolerance,” “diversity” and “dialogue” among religious leaders and the defence of human and civil rights — freedom of thought, speech and worship.

6. In some countries, Roman Catholic bishops have been very intolerant of the presence and growth of the Catholic Charismatic Movement with its Pentecostal influences, which has caused a serious crisis of faith among those Roman Catholics whose spirituality has been revitalized by the gifts, presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

7. Overall, since the 1960s, the Roman Catholic Church has been very divided internally by numerous competing ideologies and movements: traditionalists vs. progressives, the rise of Liberation Theology one the one hand and the Catholic Charismatic Movement on the other hand, and the reforms instituted by the II Vatican Council and the Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín, Colombia, and later in Puebla, Mexico.

8. Since Puebla, the Catholic Church in many counties has emphasized the doctrine of Mary as the watershed issue that divides Catholics and Protestants in Latin America; the Pope has made numerous visits to sites where apparitions of the Virgin Mary have supposedly occurred in an effort to convince Catholics that it is the One, True Church of Jesus Christ, apart from which “there is no salvation.”
9. Roman Catholic authorities have also sought to divide Protestants by creating some measure of dialogue with Mainline Protestant groups (Lutherans, Presbyterians, Reformed Churches, United Church of Christ, the Christian Church-Disciples of Christ and other Liberal denominations associated with the World Council of Churches and the Latin American Council of Churches, CLAI, in Latin America) while refusing to dialogue with Evangelical and Pentecostal groups, which it considers to be “sectas.”

10. Some Roman Catholic apologists claim that the problem of desertion among Catholics is due mainly to a lack of pastoral care for parishioners because of population growth and the Church’s inability to train enough priests to fill the needs of all the parishes. Also, they accuse the Evangelicals, mainly the Pentecostals, of “proselitizing” (or stealing their sheep) by unethical means (denouncing the Church as Apostate, the Whore of Babylon, etc.) and preaching against the worship of the Virgin Mary and the saints, and attacking other Catholic doctrines (the infallibility of the Pope, apostolic succession, the mass, use of idols, purgatory, etc.).

11. However, according to public opinion polls in many countries, the Roman Catholic Church has suffered a loss of credibility among a growing number of those who were born Catholics, because of its medieval theology and liturgy, its dogmatism and authoritarianism, its clericalism and bureaucracy, its lack of sensitivity to the masses, its loss of moral authority due to scandals in the Church (financial misconduct, abuse of authority, sexual abuse of children and youth, etc.), and its distance from the lay people over issues of birth control, divorce and remarriage, the role of women in the Church, the requirement of celibacy for priests, artificial insemination, en vitrō fertilization, etc.

12. A recent public opinion poll in Costa Rica (November of 2001), conducted by Demoscopía, reveals that 14.7% of those born Catholic have abandoned the Church for a variety of reasons during the past generation:

- deception (43%)
- try something new (11.7%)
- to follow the Truth (11.2%)
- because they experienced the Holy Spirit in their lives (8.9%)
- learned to study the Bible (3.3%)
- their previous religion was corrupt (3.3%)
- attracted to a new form of worship (2.8%)
- for convenience (1.9%)
- the old religion was too strict (1.9%)
- the old religion was too materialistic (0.9%).

13. According to a 1991 public opinion poll in Peru, conducted by Lic. José Luis Pérez Guadalupe of the Center of Theological Investigation of the Facultad de Teología Pontificia y Civil de Lima among 2,500 ex-Catholics, the following reasons were given for joining Evangelical churches (¿Por qué se van los Católicos?):

- I had an encounter with Christ (33.6%)
- They preach and teach the Truth (22.9%)
- I was attracted by the testimony of the group (17.1%)
• They provided me with a sense of community or fellowship (14.3%)
• They provided me with help (12.1%)

14. Professor Pérez Guadalupe states (page 27) that his own personal opinion regarding the basic reason for Catholic desertion is: “The fundamental cause...is that these Catholics are finding in other groups an intense and profound religious experience that they never experienced in their own archaic Catholic Church.”

15. Also, Professor Pérez Guadalupe reports that 75% of those who disserted the Catholic Church had a low level of identification with the Church; that is, they were “nominal” Catholics who seldom or never attended mass. This points to the fact that many Peruvians, who are born Catholic, live in a “religious vacuum” where the institutionalised Roman Catholic Church is not touching their lives at the local level; the Church is distant, impersonal, mechanical and artificial, whereas the Evangelical churches are offering people a personal encounter with a living Christ and a new sense of “community”—small, personal, fraternal and organic groups.

16. Rather than denouncing the Evangelical groups as being “sects” and teaching “false doctrine,” Professor Pérez Guadalupe stated that Catholic leaders needs to look at their own organizational and ministerial deficiencies:
   • Insufficient bishops and diocesan priests to attend to the ministerial needs of the people.
   • Insufficient religious priests and nuns to the ministerial needs of the people.
   • An uneducated and immature laity that lacks knowledge of basic Catholic doctrine and that has a low level of commitment with the Church.
   • Low levels of regular weekly attendance at Mass.
   • Our pastoral structure is “priest-centered”—we monopolize all of the ministerial functions and the people expect us to do everything.

17. In terms of practical solutions, Professor Pérez Guadalupe suggest the following:
   • Admit that the basic problem is our own lack of pastoral care of the people.
   • Admit that the problem of desertion among Catholics is symptomatic of a generalized crisis WITHIN the Church that we must face and deal with as pastors.
   • Rather than “satanizing” the Evangelicals and other religious groups and warning Catholics not to associate with them, what we need to do is “reevangelize those who are already baptized” (kerigma) and “disciple our own people” (cataquisis) so that they have a more solid doctrinal foundation and a stronger personal and spiritual commitment to the Catholic faith, and so that they will not be so easily impressed by other forms of worship, doctrine and organizational structure.
   • What we need to do is teach our people the basics of the Catholic faith, using sound pedagogical principles by well-trained teachers who are knowledgeable in the Bible and Catholic Theology.
   • We need to organize our people into small groups (base communities) for fellowship, instruction and service in the community.

18. David Stoll concludes his study by stating that he believes that a true religious reformation is taking place in Latin America led by Evangelicals, particularly by Pentecostals, but that it
remains to be seen if this “reformation” will led to social transformation for the poor and oppressed through personal morality and self-improvement rather than social revolution as advocated by Liberation Theology.

Bibliography


(2) Defections to Marginal Christian groups

There is growing evidence from numerous scientific studies on religious affiliation and religious change in Latin America that a significant portion of Roman Catholics who defect have become affiliated with some of these marginal Christian groups, as well as some of the Evangelicals who have defected from their churches. Below is a table on the membership of Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons in Central America in 1978 compared to 2005, based on official reports from these denominations. Overall, the Mormons reported a greater number of members in the region on both dates, as well as a higher average annual growth rate between the two dates, compared to the Jehovah’s Witnesses. However, this related size difference between the two denominations does not necessarily hold true for other regions of Latin America. In some regions and countries, the Jehovah’s Witnesses have had more success in recruiting new members than have the Mormons.

(3) Defections to independent Western Catholic movements.

Since the important historic decisions made by the First Vatican Council (1869-1870), there have been many defections from the official Roman Catholic Church with headquarters in Vatican City. The first wave of defections occurred in Europe among Traditional Catholics who opposed many of the Council’s controversial decisions. The Old Catholic Church movement originated with groups that split from the Roman Catholic Church over certain newly approved doctrines, most importantly that of Papal Infallibility. These churches are not in full communion with the Holy See of Rome, but their Union of Utrecht of Old Catholic Churches is in full communion with the Anglican Communion and a member of the World Council of Churches. Nevertheless, according to Roman canon law, the Old Catholic Church is regarded as a separated, particular Catholic Church, and the Roman Church recognizes that the Old Catholic Church has apostolic succession, valid sacraments and the Eucharist. Therefore, canonically speaking, the Roman Catholic Church and the Old Catholic Church are in a state of “inter-communion.”

Old Catholic theology views the Eucharist as at the core of the Church. From that point the Church is a community of believers. All are in communion with one another around the sacrifice
of Jesus Christ, as the highest expression of the love of God. Therefore, the celebration of the Eucharist is the experience of the Lord's triumph over sin. The defeat of sin consists in bringing together that which is divided.

Through communion, differences between people are reconciled and that which was scattered is brought together. In Old Catholic theology, “Church” means reconciliation. “Church” means the restoration of broken relations between God and men and men with each other.

The Old Catholic Church believes in unity in diversity. As a result, more diversity of belief and practice is to be found among its churches than is characteristic of the Roman Catholic Church or the Eastern Orthodox churches. Old Catholics often refer to the Church Father St. Vincent of Lerins and his saying: "We must hold fast to that faith which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all the Faithful."

See the following section for more information about these groups and defections from Roman Catholicism that have swelled their ranks: Independent Western Catholic groups in Latin America.

(4) Defections to non-Christian religions

Many of the major world religions are present in Latin American countries today, especially among immigrant communities from countries where the dominant religion was non-Christian, such as India, China, Japan; or among the younger generation of more highly educated individuals with access to the Internet, who are able to learn about all the various options available in the worldwide religious marketplace and chose an alternative religion that may appeal to their personal search for greater spiritual knowledge and vitality.

Present in nearly every country of Latin America are an assortment of religious groups derived from the world’s major religious traditions: Animism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jain, Sikh, Sant Mat, Traditional Chinese Religions, Shintoism and Japanese New Religions, Judaism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Bahá’í, Ancient Wisdom, and Psychic-Spiritualist-New Age Movements.

Buddhist groups are present in a variety of national and ethnic types: Asian Indian, Southeast Asian, Chinese, Japanese, and European-North American flavors.

The main Hindu-derived organizations include: the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON), International Sri Sathya Sai Baba Organizations, Transcendental Meditation (TM), and Vaisnava Mission.

Ancient Wisdom groups include Grand Universal Fraternity, RED-GFU, the Ancient & Mystical Order of the Rosæ Crucis [AMORC], Samael Aun Weor Universal Gnostic Movement, and New Acropolis Cultural Centers.

Psychic-Spiritualist-New Age groups include the International Spiritist Association, Spiritual Magnetic School of the Universal Commune, Ishaya Techniques, Church of Scientology, the Unification Church of World Christianity (founded by the Rev. Moon in Korea), the Raelian Movement and home-grown UFO-related movements, and Silva Mind Control / Silvan Method.
(5) **Defections to secular society (those with no religious affiliation, agnostics and atheists)**

One of the population segments in Latin America that has grown considerably since the 1960s are those who declare to pollsters that they have “no religious affiliation,” or are agnostics or atheists. The majority of those who now belong to secular society were previously Roman Catholic adherents, but joining them during the past few decades are many former Evangelicals – especially those who were between 18-29 years -- who deserted the ranks of their former churches.

According to the table, “Latin American Population & Religious Affiliation by Region and Country, 2011,” about 8.3 percent of the population of Latin America fits in this category, or about 46,555,000 people: in Mexico, about 6.2 percent; Central America, about 10.6 percent; the Caribbean, about 22.5 percent (Cuba = 40.8 percent); and South America, about 7.6 percent. See: [http://www.prolades.com/dbases/latam%20statistics/latam_population_and_religious_affiliation_2011_regions_countries-prolades.pdf](http://www.prolades.com/dbases/latam%20statistics/latam_population_and_religious_affiliation_2011_regions_countries-prolades.pdf)

E. **Contemporary issues and problems facing the Roman Catholic Church**

**Vatican II and Its Legacy**

Vatican II took place and was implemented during the tumultuous decade of the counter-culture in the U.S., the Cultural Revolution in China, the end of the Vietnam War, the populist revolution in Peru, Christians for socialism in Chile, and Liberation Theology in Latin America. The various U.S. renewal movements (civil rights, Women Liberation, and the new religions) have been absorbed after leaving their mark and continue to affect us today. It is in that context that I would interpret the Declaration on religious freedom.

A new paradigm and the problem of authority

"The truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth." Of course this view "leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion." (*Dignitatis Humanae*, #1). In a monastic church of "submission of mind and will," there is no room for dissent – as on a cruising ship there is no room for mutiny or on the battle field no room for conscientious objectors. Yet the jinnee has been left out of the bottle. Vatican II did not totally legitimize an appeal to conscience, but it came close to the prevailing views of the 1960s, the time of the counter-culture, social activism and the anti-war movement. But if there is no room for dissent in the church, some people will take the liberty of walking out, and for that, no ecclesiastical approval is needed. Hence freedom and the appeal to conscience have divided the church, and there is no return.

I would summarize the legacy of Vatican II in four points.

1. The recognition of the importance of conscience has produced the most serious crisis of authority in the Catholic Church since the Renaissance. The council reasserted papal in-
fallibility, and at the same time affirmed that, "the infallibility promised to the Church resides also in the body of bishops" (Lumen Gentium, 25), and that, "The entire body of the faithful... cannot err in matters of belief" (ibid. 12). The relationship between the three is not explained; it is up to the individual to reconcile them. The chapter on bishops and collegiality reaffirmed the monarchical authority of the Roman Pontiff who has "full, supreme and universal power over the Church. And he is always free to exercise this power" (ibid. 22). It is also in this chapter on bishops that we find the famous call for "submission of mind and will" (obsequium religiosum) which "must be shown in a special way to the authentic magisterium of the Roman Pontiff, even when he is not speaking ex cathedra" (ibid. 25). There is no room here for a truth that "cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth," but we live in a cultural environment that puts premium on conscience; this is an explosive mix. Again it is up to the individual conscience to reconcile opposites, which ultimately leads to a crisis of authority.

2. The consequence is a change of metaphor, from pyramid to circle. In the past the church was seen as a pyramid with a firm top and a solid base, and strong boundaries with the outside world. Today the church is more like a two-dimensional plane with a center but ill-defined boundaries, or like a circle with an undefined periphery, and little connection between the two. The pre-Vatican pyramid was strongly integrated; the post-Vatican II circle has little cohesion as peripheral Catholics are no different from non-Catholics, and mainline Catholics not very different from mainline Protestants. Today the church is split, into two, three, four or as many circles as you would like to draw. For any society cohesion is important because it conditions the transmission of values; cohesion conditions the future. Today the unity of the church is pretty much weakened by a split or tensions between the center and the periphery.

The emphasis on baptismal commitment and the recovery of "voice"

3. Vatican II also affirmed the primacy of the spirituality of baptism instead of the Tridentine spirituality of frequent confession and communion. It is also a return to the centrality of the kerygma instead of the centrality of ritual and devotions. When baptism came to be applied to infants, it was split into three rituals or sacraments, infant baptism, confirmation, and first communion. Infant baptism does not allow for spiritual rebirth, which is the meaning and purpose of baptism. Initiation and mystagogy now take place during the years of catechism in preparation for confirmation and first communion. The three rites have again been united in the Rite of Initiation of Adults. Most people still identify baptism with infant baptism, which has become marginal in the lives of many Catholics. Hence the call for a spirituality of baptism happens at a time of sacramental decline; it calls for sacramental renewal.

Central to Vatican II is a call to holiness, that is, a spiritual rebirth through baptism in water and spirit, and a lifelong commitment to the baptismal promises. This applies also to priests and bishops: baptism is not an oath of allegiance to the church but a commitment to Jesus Christ. Any Catholic can remind the hierarchy of this basic commitment, something unheard of in the pre-Vatican II church. Vatican II contains implicitly a new agenda for church life and teaching: the fidelity to one's baptismal commitment through adult education rather than just regular church attendance.

4. The primacy of baptism and the emphasis on conscience have given "voice" to the laity (and also to priests) and led to greater attention to the voice of the Holy Spirit in the sensus
fidelium. Since Vatican II there has been a resurgence of prophecy and vision as voice of the Holy Spirit. The study of theology has never been so much alive in the U.S. church, with also multiple pastoral initiatives at the local level. There is even "noise" in the church, for instance about "radical feminism." There was little voice and no noise in the pre-Vatican II church, only magisterial monologue. This trend is quite general in Christianity: there has been a mutual interaction between pentecostalism and evangelicalism, especially in the Third World; sociologists of Latin America speak of the pentecostalization of mainline Protestant churches, and also of the Catholic charismatic movement. When the gifts of the Holy Spirit are emphasized and practiced in churches, there is renewed evangelization, ecumenism, and inner transformation of church structures.

The legacy of Vatican II is clearly with us: 1) in the Catholic authority crisis, 2) the disintegration of Catholic monolithism, 3) the emphasis on baptismal commitment, and 4) the vital role of the Holy Spirit in people and the institutional church.

Source: http://www.wakeuplazarus.net/2012/VATICAN-II-1.HTM

The Magisterium or Teaching Authority of the Church

by Fr. William G. Most

By the Magisterium we mean the teaching office of the Church. It consists of the Pope and Bishops. Christ promised to protect the teaching of the Church: "He who hears you, hears me; he who rejects your rejects me, he who rejects me, rejects Him who sent me" (Luke 10. 16). Now of course the promise of Christ cannot fail: hence when the Church presents some doctrine as definitive or final, it comes under this protection, it cannot be in error; in other words, it is infallible. This is true even if the Church does not use the solemn ceremony of definition. The day to day teaching of the Church throughout the world, when the Bishops are in union with each other and with the Pope, and present something as definitive, this is infallible (Vatican II, Lumen gentium # 25). It was precisely by the use of that authority that Vatican I was able to define that the Pope alone, when speaking as such and making things definitive, is also infallible. Of course this infallibility covers also teaching on what morality requires, for that is needed for salvation.

A "theologian" who would claim he needs to be able to ignore the Magisterium in order to find the truth is strangely perverse: the teaching of the Magisterium is the prime, God-given means of finding the truth. Nor could he claim academic freedom lets him contradict the Church. In any field of knowledge, academic freedom belongs only to a properly qualified professor teaching in his own field. But one is not properly qualified if he does not use the correct method of working in his field, e.g., a science professor who would want to go back to medieval methods would be laughed off campus, not protected. Now in Catholic theology, the correct method is to study the sources of revelation, but then give the final word to the Church. He who does not follow that method is not a qualified Catholic theologian. Vatican II taught (Dei Verbum # 10): "The task of authoritatively interpreting the word of God, whether written or handed on [Scripture or Tradition], has been entrusted exclusively to the living Magisterium of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ."
The 10 Most Important Issues Facing the Catholic Church in America

In alphabetical order . . .

1. Biblical illiteracy -- Not only for the sake of defending the faith against Protestant fundamentalism, but for the sake of spiritual health, for the Bible teaches us something that nothing else does: that though we may not be the center of the physical universe, we are the center of the spiritual universe . . . and that's all that matters.

2. Birth control -- Sooner or later, Catholics will realize that they do not have a choice when it comes to contraception, and they'll have to face the fact that contraception is the handmaiden of abortion and the culture of death.

3. Catechetical illiteracy -- We're never going to have a mature Church that can stand up and respond to modern ideas until we have an educated one.

4. Ecclesial indifferentism -- Perhaps the worst of all ten, because it makes people forget why they're Catholic, and why they should be thankful they are Catholic.

5. Education of the youth -- How should the Church meet the needs of young people today, particularly when their Protestant friends have such fun on Wednesday and Sunday nights. Is Life Teen really the answer? I think not.

6. The Laity -- Just what is the role of the laity? So long as it's defined by volunteering to be lectors, Eucharistic ministers, ushers, and parking lot attendants, there's a serious problem.

7. Liturgical reform -- The Mass is what the Church says the Mass is, and I don't see how permission to celebrate the old Latin Mass is going to help matters any; but, then, I'm not the Pope . . . and let's all say a word of thanks for that.

8. Married priests -- We'll see an increase in the clamoring for a married clergy so long as the priesthood is advertised as a job and not a vocation.

9. Parish administration -- Should the Church start requiring their priests to get an M.B.A. instead of an M.T.S.? When are priests going to be pastors again? There's an easy solution to this: hire and train retired businessmen to run the parish, and let the pastors be pastors.
10. Pop-psychology vs. authentic spirituality -- I've heard enough talks that claim that birth order, family of origin, the four humors, journaling, etc. are legitimate means of spirituality that if I have to hear another one I'm going to superglue my ears shut. Whatever happened to prayer, almsgiving, fasting, self-denial, and advancement in the virtues?

Source: http://thursdaynightgumbo.blogspot.com/2007/05/vehige-10-most-important-issues-facing.html

Issues Facing the Catholic Church Today

5-7 April 2005 – MSMBC News

There was a lot of emotion and centuries-old tradition as Catholics grieved the death and celebrated the life of Pope John Paul II.

Church leaders gathered in Rome last week to grieve John Paul II's death, and now they must look toward formally choosing his successor. The next pope will inherit a church facing serious challenges.

From issues such as scientific advances that directly challenge church doctrine— to a shift in global dynamics, the Catholic Church will be facing a number of urgent concerns in the years ahead.

On “Connected Coast to Coast,” we've took a closer look at these issues. Below are some of the topics discussed, and your reactions to the questions raised.

- On redefining the priesthood
- On condoms and birth control
- On homosexuality
- On the role of women in the Church

On redefining the priesthood | April 5, 2005

The death of Pope John Paul II is forcing Catholics to talk about many of the issues that the next pope will have to tackle— one being that since 1980, the number of Catholic priests has dropped by 15,000. Many American churches have to “share” priests because of the shortage.

How best to deal with this?

American Catholics have their opinions, though it’s probably not what the Vatican wants to hear. When an Associated Press poll asked if the next pope should allow female priests, a majority of American Catholics say yes. Asked if the next pope should change church policy to allow priests to marry, 60 percent say "yes," and 36 percent say "no."
And our own unscientific MSNBC survey today found similar results: When we asked if the next pope should allow priests to marry, 64 percent of you responding said yes, and 36 percent said no.

**Your thoughts**

The rule of celibacy for priests wasn't instituted by Jesus - that came about hundreds of years later when it became necessary to prevent priests, bishops, etc. from passing on church owned property to their children - thus the celibacy rule. As far as Jesus not having any female disciples, it was typical of that time - no women were "working outside the home," in the time that Jesus was teaching, and female disciples wouldn't have been accepted in that culture. Times have changed! Let's have an honest re-evaluation of these rules, perpetuated by men who would rather see this beautiful religion destroyed by perverted pedophiles than explore the solutions that are right in front of our faces.

—Rita W.

From what I've read about having married & women priests, it is mostly an American "agenda". I think it hearkens back to the old mantra, "I'm an American and I want it my way." Just my opinion. —Richard Gosche, Georgetown, Ohio

Regarding the issue of women becoming priests, I believe the idea of a Pope "changing" specific doctrines at the whim of the American public can only be described as a religion of "humanism". The individual who believes he/she can sway particular doctrines smacks of humanism--the idea that we are responsible for the creation of our own particular belief system. That is why we have the problem of "cafeteria Catholics"--picking and choosing what we like and negating what we don't. God calls us to follow Him. He hasn't called us to create conditions in order to follow Him— just follow Him. Faith calls us to believe even when we may not understand. —Michael, Berkeley Springs, W.V.

I am a seminary student in an episcopal seminary and will be ordained as a deacon in June and to the priesthood in aprox. another 6 months. I am appalled by the arrogance and is representation of the male role in the priesthood. The truth is that within the context of ancient times, it was certainly understandable that God would take the form of a male in gender to have an effective ministry within that culture. Ditto for the apostles. Today's context however is very different. If one believes that we are all made in God's image then it is perfectly appropriate that God would call all of us regardless of gender to function in particular ways, including as ordained priests. —Claudia Smith

If the reason women can't be priests is because the apostles were men, then why are Black, Latino & Asian men allowed to be priests? —Paul Collins

I do not think women belong as priests nor do I believe in marriage for priests. God designed the Church and it is not for us to redesign it! —Eleanor Senus, Westfield, N.J.
On homosexuality [April 6, 2005]

One of the most sensitive and controversial issues confronting the next pope is the question of homosexuality. While the Catholic Church recognizes that some people are gay, the Church has called on homosexuals to lead a life of abstinence. Issues about sexuality in the clergy have come to forefront in the wake of the priest abuse scandals that rocked the American church. And recent polls show many are now saying it’s time to re-examine the churches’ stance on celibacy and homosexuality.

Your e-mails

*I think one should be very careful with respect to homosexuality versus pedophilia. The American Catholic church seems to have had recently many problems with priests having sexual relations with young boys. Most gay persons do not have relations with young boys.* —Randal

*If you think homosexuality is "entirely natural" you’re as sick as the rest of them. In fact, you probably are one.* —James B.

*As I was coming to maturity, those friends of mine who were gay, found a place in Manhattan, a Catholic Church ministering to the needs of gays. They have been very happy there. The Catholic Church, a church I was baptized into, does minister to the needs of its gay population but, it will never sanction acknowledging this population outright. Just as, you can have all the renegade female religious on your program that you want, there will never be women priests...because married women and men like myself, when asked say...we like things the way they are and we quietly want to leave it that way. The Catholic Church is not required to mimic a society. The society, in following Christ, should mimic the church.* —Tommie, Long Island, New York

*Let me make this simple and clear: Homosexuality is a sin. It is wrong. It is immoral. If you believe these things (and I do), then how can you expect me (or anyone else who feels as I do) to condone it via marriage or to sanction it in the Church? It is NOT merely an "alternate" lifestyle and yes, it DOES matter who you love and how you love.* —Rosemary E. Lloyd, Elberon, N.J.

*I found it difficult to vote "yes" or "no" on the gay issues. My heart feels for those who choose differently when they do not hurt others. Spiritually, who am I to decide this issue? I cannot either condemn nor promote homosexuality. I do know that if my son or daughter were gay, I would love them no matter what.* —Maria, Wynnewood, Pa.

*I just watched your interview with the Catholic priest and the nun. I want to sincerely compliment both of you on the way both of you handled that and all of your other interviews. Although you brought up differing points of view, you did it in a way that was courteous, respectful and mindful of your guests. These qualities that you both have stand out from the standard vitriolic cable shows where the host(s) attempt to devour their guests. The fact that the two guests were both respectful of each other made it even better.*
Congratulations to the two of you for conducting yourselves so professionally.
—Greg, St. Louis, Mo.

I'm gay, and if it isn't something I was born with, I would like somebody to tell me where it came from and how it can be treated. Please...Ask any homosexual person, we're not "choosing" to be gay so the world can hate us and have the churches condemn us to hell. Homosexuality is not a disease, and it is seen throughout nature, not just in humans. I think it is time for the world to wake up. —Bobby, Va.

On condoms and birth control | April 6, 2005

Pope John Paul II knew what he believed in— and it seemed that in his 26 years as head of the Catholic Church, he was unwavering.

When it came to taking a stand against communism, much of the world rallied to his side. But there was often criticism over his uncompromising stance on birth control.

Opponents to the pope have long complained that his policy may have helped to contribute to the population problems in some parts of the world consider the predicament of the mostly Catholic Philippines.

There, more than 50 percent of the population lives on less than two dollars per day. Condom use is almost nonexistent, leaving that country with one of the highest birth rates in the world.

In the next 30 years, the Philippines could see its population double from the current 84 million people!

Your thoughts on the Catholic Church’s stance on birth control

I just watched the end of a segment you had with a Catholic Priest and a woman by the name of Kissling, I believe. As a practicing Roman Catholic, the problem with many people like Ms. Kissling is that they want to believe that Catholic doctrine should be dictated by actions that seem “nice”. The problem with that thinking is that being a Christian, for the most part, is not an easy thing and sometimes you have to obey and not question.
—Bill Van

An American Catholic can use oral contraceptives to ease painful menstruation. An African cannot use a condom to save her life. There's a word for that difference. It's not racism; it's genocide. —Frannie Schafer, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Ron, You must make up your mind. A few days ago you were telling us starvation (Terri Schiavo’s in particular) caused a state of euphoria. Now we are supposed to promote condoms to lower the population and relieve starvation. Far be it from us to deprive them of their euphoria. —Pat Carlson, Lincoln, Neb.

Ron, I'm born and breed an Italian Catholic. I'd love to give the Father today my 5 kids for 1 month. He'd then know why I practice avid birth control and don't have 6 kids. Let him
walk a mile in my shoes before he preaches to me. Something I've resented with my church for a very long time. —Michelena, Los Angeles, Calif.

Women everywhere have earned the right to plan their families, decide on the size of their families, explore their reproductive options and choose for themselves. Perhaps this man of God feels that we should go back to the early 60's when women had little choice in when/if they had more children - whether they could afford to or not. —Dani, Fla.

Regarding the segment on birth control: speaking as a woman, until a man can conceive, carry and give birth to a child, they should shut up. Bottom line is this is between the woman, her physician and God. Period! —50-something woman in the Midwest

I find it funny how "True" Catholics are so against using condoms, because they prevent God's will, but are all for using feeding tubes even though they prevent God's will. Both issues concern the use of man-made technology. If "True" Catholics were consistent they would have the same stance on each. —Rob, N.J.

On the role of women April 7, 2005

Today our series of discussions continues with a look at the role of women within the Catholic Church. Few issues have created as large a cultural divide between the U.S. Catholic Church and the Vatican.

While the Vatican remains staunchly opposed to the ordination of women, a majority of Americans appear to support the idea. In a CNN USA Today Gallup poll, 55 percent of those questioned said women should be offered the right to join the priesthood.

An Associated Press-Ipsos poll asked a similar question: “Should the next pope allow women to be ordained priests?” And the response was even stronger: 64 percent of those polled responding yes.

Here are some of your thoughts on the issue

Regarding women and their right to be a priest in a Catholic church, I think everyone is missing the point! It is not a matter of "women's right," it is simply a matter of responsibility! I am a Catholic woman and I DO NOT believe that a woman should be a priest. I believe that we all have a role in Christ's eyes, not one is better than the other. I believe that being a woman alone comes with great authority and responsibility. I wonder how many of those opposed to the Catholic's stance on women in priesthood are Catholics. Those of the Catholic faith are the best at appreciating a woman and its immense role in everyone's life. —Joanna, Winston-Salem, N.C.

I have been a Catholic woman all of my 56 years. I have three sisters, lots of female relatives and many female friends. The average Catholic woman does not want to become a priest. Please, start listening to the general public, the masses if you will, and not just to a few people on subjects as important as this. The lady on your show who stated that the Catholic Church is an image of a family is correct. The man is the father, period. We
aren't interested in anyone's political agenda, or whatever cause they are promoting. This is our religion, and these pinheads should leave it alone. —Jennifer Baxter

People look for reasons why women should NOT be priests. Nobody looks for reasons why MEN should not be priests (all the pedophiles for one example).
—Wyman Sanders, M.D., Los Angeles, Calif.

The next pope cannot make women priest because people want him too. The people follow the Church, not the other way around. Also, women play prominent roles in the church as teachers, and even the diocese are run by women. Also the family or domestic Church as JPII said is run by women. The most important non-divine person the Church has is a woman, Mary. —Bill Fitzpatrick

It amazes me how people still believe what they read in the Bible is true. I have never seen or heard of anyone coming back from that era and stated this is what Jesus Christ wanted us to do. I do know that man wrote the Bible assuming interpretation of Christ. This was also done to not raise women as high as man. And you continue to believe this. In olden times, priests used to be able to marry and have kids. But now they pass a law to say they can't. I just get so tired of the hypocrisy of people. Doesn't anyone ever use the brain they were born with? —Anonymous

Source: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/7409618/ns/msnbc/t/issues-facing-catholic-church/#.UMoBGG8sDng

The Future of the Catholic Church

The next pope will face massive challenges, from relating to other faiths to third-world poverty to women’s roles--a tall order. By Deborah Caldwell - 2005

The Catholic Church is no longer simply a European church. It's not even a Northern Hemisphere church. Nor is it primarily a white church. It is now a universal church found in every country, every race, and nearly every global culture.

All of which means that when the 115 cardinals begin their conclave to pick the next pope, they'll debate far more than liturgical fine points or birth control or how the church will deal with women's roles. They'll set the stage for Catholicism's embrace of the 21st century-complete with globalization, terrorism, poverty, American dominance, and the clash of Christianity and Islam.

It is these issues that must drive the Catholic Church in the next decades, says Father James Fredericks, a Jesuit theologian at Loyola Marymount College in Los Angeles. “The challenge is this,” says Fredericks. "How is the Catholic Church-as the world's first transnational community-going to relate to Islam, Judaism, and all the other faiths, as a global community? This pope took important steps, but it was only the beginning of a long and difficult process, and doing so goes to the heart of the mission of the Catholic Church."
How will the cardinals respond? Many people predict they'll elect a pope who is emblematic of these struggles—a cardinal from Latin America or Africa.

"This would have a tremendous impact," says Father Thomas Reese, author of Inside the Vatican. "It would show that this is a universal church." Third World cardinals are worried about their desperately poor and hungry flocks, about the super-dominance of the United States in their economies and cultures, about dealing with Muslims, and about persecution of Christians.

On the other hand, says Reese, American cardinals are worried about the loss of morale among their members because of the priest sex abuse crisis. It's critical the Vatican keep Americans content because U.S. Catholics contribute about 25% of the Vatican's annual budget. Meanwhile, both Americans and Europeans want someone willing to bend on issues such as birth control and priestly celibacy; they also want a man who continues the pope's outreach to Protestants and Jews, and who can continue efforts to lure wealthy, secularized Catholics back to the pews. Those concerns might argue for an Italian pope, who could soothe Americans and energize Europeans.

Jo Renee Formicola of Seton Hall University adds more issues to the list. Pope John Paul II desperately wanted to establish relations with China, she says, but was rebuffed by the Chinese government. He wanted the same with Cuba and Russia. Cuba may resolve itself after the death of Castro, but what of Russia, which—along with large portions of Eastern Europe—is controlled by the Orthodox church? Then there is the "impending disaster" between Islam and Christianity, says Formicola. And the needs of Africa with its unfolding AIDS crisis and its desperate lack of clergy. Or Latin America, where Catholics feel under siege by Pentecostal Christians. She adds that the situation is unsettled in the United States, too, where there are lots of "cafeteria Catholics" who refuse to buy the church's teachings on sexual morality. Or in Holland, where euthanasia is legal; and in France, which is rife with anti-clericalism.

"There are major challenges left," Formicola says. "A new pope will look at these things with new eyes. He can revisit all these problems and bring a new approach to how to deal with these questions in the 21st century."

Sister Christine Schenk, head of the liberal group FutureChurch, says the main issue for Catholics worldwide is a devastating clergy shortage. Schenk says there has been a 52% increase in the number of Catholics worldwide since 1975—but the number of priests has stayed the same. At the moment, the United States and Europe have the best ratio of priests-to-flock in the world: 1 priest for every 1,200 parishioners. In Africa, it's 1 to 4,000. In Central and South America, it's 1 to 8,000.

"If they're having mass once a year they're doing well," Schenk says.

The priest shortage, she says, is the one issue that unites Catholics worldwide. And that is why she believes the next pope must make celibacy optional—not just for progressive Americans, but also for Catholics in other countries who need priests. She also believes that if women can't be ordained as priests, they should be ordained to the diaconate so that they can more fully minister to the world's one billion Catholics.

Increasingly, these Catholics live in the developing world, says Philip Jenkins, author of The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity. He believes this shift of Christianity to Africa, Asia, and Latin America is the most pressing issue facing the church. "We are living through one of the transforming moments in the history of religion worldwide," he says.
According to Jenkins, 2 billion Christians are alive today, about one-third of the planet's population. The largest single bloc, 560 million people, still live in Europe. But Latin America is close, with 480 million; Asia has 313 million Christians; North America has 260 million.

By 2025, there will be around 2.6 billion Christians, of whom 633 million will live in Africa, 640 million in Latin America, and 460 million in Asia. Europe, with 555 million, will slip to third place. By 2050, only about one-fifth of the world's three billion Christians will be non-Hispanic whites. This means that most of the world's Christians will be black, brown, and desperately poor.

"The Catholic Church was the first global organization, and it faces all of these issues in an acute way because so many of its people do live and have lived for many years in the global south," Jenkins said in a 2004 interview. "By 2025, something like 80% of the world's Catholics will be African, Asian, Latin American."

Catholics in the Northern Hemisphere are simply not that important, he contends. "What a lot of Americans also haven't worked out is that the United States represents 6% of the global church and that most of the big Catholic nations of the future are in Africa, Asia or Latin America," Jenkins said. "So it's almost as if North American and Europe don't matter anything like as much as they did."

That's true, according to the numbers—but it's not necessarily true from the point of view of the church's center of power. Fredericks, of Loyola Marymount, contends that the church will never write off Europe, which is struggling with what he calls "militant secularism" every bit as troubling as militant Islam.

Meanwhile, the simple fact is that the center of the media universe is the United States. Cable News Network (CNN), the major American television networks, even the center of the blogosphere—all are here. And Americans care deeply about sexuality and morality issues: abortion, birth control, married priests, euthanasia, stem cell research, divorce, the role of women, among others.

Fredericks called these issues "particularly intractable" with the potential for creating a "train wreck" between liberal American Catholics and the Vatican.

"I'm confident in the Catholic Church's ability to engage Muslims, to develop working relationships," he says. "When it comes to evangelizing in Latin America, can we compete with the Pentecostals? Yes, I think we'll find ways to do that. But in terms of what are obviously vitally important issues in the United States regarding women? This is going to be particularly difficult."

He thinks the cardinals will want to "do it all" in finding a man who can tangle with Western liberals and can also deal with Islamic fundamentalism and poverty in the developing world. But they'll probably have to settle on someone who can tackle one of these gigantic problems. Which one, though?

"How are these collision of visions going to play itself out in the next papacy?" Fredericks asks. "I just don't know." And he adds: "I don't think the cardinals know either."


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**VATICAN II REFLECTIONS & COMMENTS: December 23, 2012**

I've read through the contributions three times and confess that I am deeply moved by them, informed by them and illuminated by people who know the council far better than I do. Nearly half the contributors I know and have read for years, and many I do not, but one and all, thanks.
I am especially happy to see the Council taken so seriously intellectually, pastorally and personally. In connection with a course I have been teaching entitled “Catholicism Today,” I have been reading again the documents that I found and still find ground breaking: Dignitatis humanae, Nostra aetate and the decree on ecumenism. I’ve also been reading the section on the episcopacy in Lumen gentium [#18-25] and sections on the papacy in that and other documents. The documents are as fresh today as they were when I read them forty five years ago, and as challenging. Vatican II was certainly the ecclesial “event” and “experience” of my Catholic lifetime as it seems to have been of yours.

Like several of you I have been disappointed by the aftermath of the Council and especially by the papal undermining of some key elements of its teaching. I am not disappointed with the church but I am with the leadership since the end of the Council in 1965. Thank God Catholics go about leading their Christian lives no matter what foolishness the pope and bishops may be up to. Starting with that disappointment I read the documents with an eye to understanding both its success and failure. Its success is its definitive recognition that the church is the Catholic people. Its [i.e. the Council’s] failure has led to the perilous state in which the church continues its journey today, gaining thousands and losing millions: the Council insisted that the pope is infallible, is the church’s head, its chief executive with universal jurisdiction over all Catholics and, in the absurd proposition of Innocent and Benedict, over every creature. The pope, in mythic terms, is Peter redivivus. Alas, the papal monarchy was celebrated by Vatican II rather than curbed by it.

So far as I can see, at this late date in my work and life, the pope isn’t Peter or even a semblance. And the bishops are not successors to the Twelve. Neither Jesus nor the Christ established the hierarchy; it is in my view a perfectly natural development from the egg laid by Constantine and Theodosius. The Council, in other words, failed to reform the Church, digging its own grave with its repetition of ultramontane doctrines which were likely seen to be untrue by many of the bishops who voted for them. The Council quite deliberately left us in the quagmire of hierarchical Christendom in order to slip in the redefinition of the church. No genuine and thorough reform of the church will be accomplished until parishes and dioceses become communities, the bishops become in fact a collegium and the bishop of Rome becomes a servant of the church rather than its master. Many of the council fathers could, perhaps only on alternate days, see that the church is a horizontal reality, a community of communities, but, God forgive them, they clung to the Church as a vertical reality. Please don’t tell me that it’s both. It isn’t both either in ideal or in hard, cold reality.

The fathers made a crippling mistake, the same mistake made by the great Leo and his successors, repeated inexcusably by the recent popes (they ought to have known better) who have with varying degrees of intensity espoused the by now inexcusable “tradition” of Leo the Great, Gregory, Innocent, Boniface and the whole row of imperial popes. As admirable as each of these men were in other respects, as soon as they are elected they cease to be in the mix with the rest of us. Verticality. They are bred to it. I fondly hope that the cause of this is a viral ingredient in the Vatican water system. There are wonderful filter systems these days! I certainly hope the papal monarchy has nothing to do with the Holy Spirit, and should it, I’m hopeful that She has learned Her lesson by now. So let us keep an eye on the horizon. Maybe these times will have signs after all, and there may be a thorough reform in spite of the water problem.

And, yes, I should be more respectful and appreciative of those who sit on the chair of Moses but I am too old and let down to manage it.

William M. Shea
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III. Independent Western Catholic groups in Latin America

For most members of the Roman Catholic Church, the terms "Catholic Church" and "Roman Catholic Church" are synonymous. It is the world's largest single religious body and comprises 23 "particular Churches," or Rites, all of which acknowledge a primacy of jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome and are in full communion with the Holy See and each other. These particular Churches are the one Latin-Rite or Western Church (which uses a number of different liturgical rites, of which the Roman Rite is the best known) and 22 Eastern Catholic Churches. Of the latter particular Churches, 14 use the Byzantine liturgical rite.

Sui iuris Catholic Churches

- Of Alexandrian liturgical tradition:
  - Coptic Catholic Church
  - Ethiopic Catholic Church
- Of Antiochian liturgical tradition:
  - Maronite Church
  - Syrian Catholic Church
  - Syro-Malankara Catholic Church
- Of Armenian liturgical tradition:
  - Armenian Catholic Church
- Of Byzantine (Constantinopolitan) liturgical tradition:
  - Albanian Byzantine Catholic Church
  - Belarusian Greek Catholic Church
  - Bulgarian Greek Catholic Church
  - Byzantine Church of the Eparchy of Križevci
  - Greek Byzantine Catholic Church
  - Hungarian Greek Catholic Church
  - Italo-Albanian Catholic Church
  - Macedonian Greek Catholic Church
  - Melkite Greek Catholic Church
  - Romanian Church United with Rome, Greek-Catholic
  - Russian Byzantine Catholic Church
  - Ruthenian Catholic Church
  - Slovak Greek Catholic Church
  - Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
- Of Chaldean or East Syrian tradition:
  - Chaldean Catholic Church
  - Syro-Malabar Church
- Of Western liturgical tradition:
  - Latin Church

In addition, within Western Christianity, the churches of the Anglican Communion, the Old Catholics, the Liberal Catholic Church, the Aglipayans (Philippine Independent Church), the Polish National Catholic Church of America, and many Independent Catholic Churches, which emerged directly or indirectly from and have beliefs and practices largely similar to Latin Rite Catholicism, regard themselves as "Catholic" without full communion with the Bishop of Rome, whose claimed status and authority they generally reject. The Chinese Patriotic Catholic
Association, a division of the People's Republic of China's Religious Affairs Bureau exercising state supervision over mainland China's Catholics, holds a similar position.

Source: [http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definitions/Catholicism](http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definitions/Catholicism)

Below is information about religious groups within the independent Western Catholic movement in several countries of Latin America, as examples of what exists today in these specific contexts, based on the PROLATES Encyclopedia of Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean (2010). Although some of the adherents of these church bodies are immigrants from Europe, North America and elsewhere, most are Catholic believers who have deserted the Roman Catholic Church for a variety of reasons that are explained below.

**Mexico.** Independent Western Catholic-derived groups include the following Religious Associations (ARs):

- **Mexican National Catholic Church,** founded in the 1920s, is an independent nationalistic Catholic Church was organized following the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917 under Bishops José Juaquín Pérez y Budar, Antonio Benicio López Sierra and Macario López y Valdez.

- **Colonia La Nueva Jerusalén** was founded in 1973 in Michoacán by excommunicated Catholic priest Nabor Cárdenas Mejorada, known as “Papa Nabor” by his followers, in a village about 130 km from the state capital (municipality of Turicato). Cárdenas has been called the “Patriarch of the Mexican Taliban” by the news media because of his authoritarian control of this secluded and tightly-guarded community of believers, who are devoted to “La Virgin del Rosario” (The Virgin of the Rosary) and who believe that the Virgin speaks to them through special messengers. The original messenger was Gabina Romero Sánchez – an illiterate old woman who said that she saw the Virgin at this site in 1973; she died in 1980 – and more recently through “don Agapito” who also communicates with “a spirit named Oscar” who allegedly transmits instructions and warnings from the Virgin. The chapel of the Virgin of the Rosary must be attended to by believers 24 hours a day and 365 days a year out of fear that, if not attended to, “God will discharge His anger against all humanity.” The leadership of the community rejects the changes made by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s and continues to celebrate Mass in Latin, warning followers of the “immanent end of the world” when fire will destroy all of mankind, except for those living in “The New Jerusalem” in this fertile valley known as “The Holy Land.” An estimated 5,000 followers dress in long robes and women cover their heads with scarves and all modern conveniences are prohibited; drinking alcohol is prohibited and having children is discouraged because the “end of the world is near.” The patriarch of the colony, “Papa Nabor,” is now in his 90s and no one is sure what will happen to the community after he dies.

- **The Mexican Apostolic Catholic Church (Iglesia Católica Apostólica Mexicana),** also known as the “Church of Mr. President” (Iglesia del Señor Presidente), was founded in 1979 in Mexico City by excommunicated Catholic Bishop Eduardo Dávila de la Garza as an independent Mexican Apostolic Church. This church does not recognize the Pope, rather it claims that the President of the Republic of Mexico is its highest authority—that is, it is submissive to the civil authorities. Until his death in 1985, Bishop Dávila continued to ordain priests for ministry within his organization. The basic characteristic of this movement is a belief in the miracle of the “hostia sangrante” (“bleeding communion wafer”) that is reported to have taken place in 1978 in the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe, located in a poor neighborhood on the eastside of Mexico City, under the leadership of priest José Camacho Melo. Camacho took the matter to his immediate superior, Bishop Dávila, who had his reasons for believing the priest. Dávila reported the matter to his superiors in Mexico and to the Vatican, who sometime later ordered him to burn the wafer and forget the whole matter. For failing to obey this order, Dávila and a dozen priests under his
supervision were all excommunicated by the Vatican. Dávila proceeded to ordain Camacho as “bishop” and his second-in-command and renamed Camacho’s church the “Eucharistic Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Bleeding Wafer” (Santuario Eucarístico de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y la Hostia Sangrante”). In 1991 Camacho was finally arrested by the civil authorities for failing to turn over the church property to officials of the Roman Catholic Church as ordered, even though all church property in Mexico officially belongs to the State; as of November of 2002, Camacho was still free on bail and the fate of the church property was still undecided. This group rejects the reforms approved by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s.

- **Society of Saint Pius X** (*Fraternidad Sacerdotal San Pío X en México*), Priorato Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Colonia Santa María La Ribera, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, DF.
- **Our Lady of Guadalupe Apostolic Catholic Church** (*Iglesia Católica Apostólica “Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe“*) was organized in 2001 in Mexico City by Archbishop Kenneth Maley, who is part Shawnee (an American Indian tribe). Previously he was a member of the Community of the Holy Cross for 28 years and a Roman Catholic priest for 32 years; he served as a missionary in Chile and Africa during that time. After leaving the Roman Catholic Church, Maley helped to organize the *Latin American Apostolic Archdiocese of Our Lady of Guadalupe*, which in early 2008 reported affiliated churches in 14 countries and more than 300 priests. Its work in the Americas includes the USA, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Brazil.

- **The Traditional Mex-USA Catholic Church** is led by David Romo Millán, a principal leader of the *Iglesia de la Santa Muerte*, who is the self-appointed Bishop of the *Iglesia Católica Tradicional Mex-USA*. Jesús Romero Padilla is the guardian of one of the movement’s main sanctuaries, located in Tepito in the Federal District; he is reported to lead processions honoring “La Santa Muerta” in Puebla, Toluca, Veracruz and Oaxaca. In May 2005, the Secretariat of Government revoked the legality of the *Iglesia Católica Tradicional Mex-USA*, allegedly because its leaders had violated the statutes upon which the organization was previously registered with the Office of Religious Associations. The justification given for the government’s decision was that, rather than dedicating itself to the conservation of the Tridentine Mass of the Old Catholic Tradition, the organization promoted the worship of “La Santa Muerte.” However, in July 2009, David Romo announced to the press that he and his followers would build a $2.8 million temple (sanctuary) for the *Iglesia de la Santa Muerte* in Tepito, DF. The modern version of adoration of “La Santa Muerte” first appeared in 1965 in the State of Hidalgo.

- **The Traditional Catholic Church San Juanita de Los Lagos** (*Iglesia Tradicional Católica San Juanita de Los Lagos*) was registered with the Office of Religious Associations in June 1994, under the leadership of Francisco Ruiz Abarca; its headquarters are in Delegación Gustavo A. Madero in the Federal District.

- **The Traditional Orthodox Apostolic Old Catholic Church** (*Iglesia Católica, Apostólica, Ortodoxa, Antigua Tradicional*) was registered with the Office of Religious Associations in June 1994; its headquarters are in the Municipality of Ecatepec, State of Mexico.

- **Iglesia de Dios Católica Apostólica Nacional Mexicana Independiente** was founded in Acapulco, State of Guerrero, by Rodolfo Ortiz Peralta.

**Colombia.** Independent Western Catholic jurisdictions in Colombia include the following: (1) The Orthodox and Apostolic Old Catholic Church (founded in 1889 in Utrecht and in the 1980s in Colombia) is registered with the government as *Iglesia Misioneros Veteros de Nuestra Señora de la Alegría*, under Mons. Gonzalo Jaramillo Hoyos in Antioquia; (2) the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X in Bogotá (Capilla de los Sagrados Corazones de Jesús y María), in Bucaramanga (Capilla San José), in Tabio, Cundinamarca (Capilla Nuestra Señora de Lourdes), and in Barranquilla; and there are several groups in Medellín that are led by former Catholic priests
(suspended, excommunicated, not ordained, independent or out of fellowship with the official Roman Catholic Church): the House of Father Anthony, Casa Misionera San Francisco Javier, and Orden Misionera de San Andrés Apóstol.

**Argentina.** The Catholic Church was strengthened by a century of heavy immigration (four million arrived between 1850 and 1950) from predominantly Catholic European countries, such as Italy, Spain, Ireland and Poland. However, other Catholic immigrants arrived from the Ukraine, Armenia and the Middle East, as well as Eastern Rite believers. Affiliated with the official Roman Catholic Church in Argentina and with the Vatican are the following Eastern Rite Apostolic Exarchates: Santa María del Patrocinio [Pokrov] en Buenos Aires de los Ucranios (1968); San Gregorio de Narek en Buenos Aires de los Armenios (1981); San Charbel en Buenos Aires de los Maronitas (1990); and the Greek-Melkite Catholic Church in Argentina (2002, Cathedral of San Jorge in Córdoba).

Also present in Argentina is the Priestly Society of Saint Pius X (SSPX), founded in 1969 by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre in France, which is an international congregation of priests that has establishments in almost every major country. Known as *Fraternidad Sacerdotal San Pío X* (FSSPX) in Argentina and founded in Buenos Aires in 1978, this controversial religious order represents Traditional Catholics, who only use the Tridentine Mass in Latin and who reject the teachings of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), which in 1975 resulted in the SSPX no longer being recognized as an organization within the Roman Catholic Church and in the excommunication of Archbishop Lefebvre and four of his bishops in 1988 by the Vatican. The FSSPX headquarters in Argentina are at the *Seminario Nuestra Señora Corredentora* in La Reja, Moreno, Buenos Aires province.
IV. The Eastern Orthodox Liturgical Tradition

The Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, as well as the Assyrian Church of the East, each consider themselves to be the universal, true Apostolic Catholic Church. Each of the three regards the others—since the divisions at the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedonia (451)—as heretical and as having thus left the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. The patriarchs of the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches are autocephalous hierarchs, which roughly means that each is independent of the direct oversight of another bishop, although still subject, according to their distinct traditions, either to the synod of bishops of each one’s jurisdiction, or to a common decision of the patriarchs of their own communion. They are willing to concede a primacy of honor to the Roman See, but not of authority, nor do they accept its claim to universal and immediate jurisdiction. This is similar to the position taken by the Lutheran World Federation, the Anglican Communion, and the Old Catholic Church.

Eastern Orthodox Churches (Churches in full communion with the See of Constantinople)

- Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
  - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
  - Finnish Orthodox Church
  - American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
- Orthodox Church of Alexandria
- Church of Antioch
  - Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
- Orthodox Church of Jerusalem
- Russian Orthodox Church
  - Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia
  - Japanese Orthodox Church
  - Ukrainian Orthodox Church - Moscow Patriarchy (UOC-MP) (Ukrainian only)
  - Hungarian Orthodox Church - Moscow Patriarchy (Hungarian and Russian only)
- Georgian Orthodox and Apostolic Church
- Church of Serbia
  - Orthodox Ohrid Archbishopric (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)
- Romanian Orthodox Church
- Bulgarian Orthodox Church
- Church of Cyprus
- Church of Greece
- Church of Albania
- Polish Orthodox Church (Polish only)
- Czech and Slovak Orthodox Church (Czech or Slovak only)
- Orthodox Church in America

Other Churches of Eastern Orthodox tradition

- Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece
- Macedonian Orthodox Church
**Oriental Orthodox Churches**

- The Armenian Apostolic Church
- The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria
  - The British Orthodox Church
- The Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church
- The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
- The Malankara Jacobite Syriac Orthodox Church
- The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of the East (also known as the Indian Orthodox Church)
- The Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch (also known as the Syrian Orthodox Church)

**The Assyrian Church of the East**

- Assyrian Church of the East

Source: [http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definitions/Catholicism](http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org/definitions/Catholicism)

**Below is information about religious groups within the Eastern Orthodox Liturgical Tradition in several countries of Latin America**, as examples of what exists today in these specific contexts, based on *The PROLADES Encyclopedia of Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean* (2010). Although most of the adherents of these church bodies are immigrants from European and Middle Eastern countries, some of the current members are “converts” from Roman Catholicism.

**Mexico.** Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions in Mexico include the following:

- **The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Mexico and Central America** (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople) was founded in 1996 in Mexico, and is led by Arzobispo Atenagoras (Anesti); Catedral Ortodoxa Griega Santa Sofía, Colonia Lomas Hipódromo, Naucalpan, Estado de México; this jurisdiction is also known as **Sacro Arzobispado Ortodoxo Griego de México** (Greek Orthodox Holy Mission).

- **The Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church** (*Iglesia Católica Ortodoxa Oriental*), Archdiocese of the Americas & Diaspora, has a valid priesthood and episcopacy coming from the Syrian and Russian Orthodox successions, and uses the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom with Syriac-Greek Typicon; the church is administered by a Synod of Bishops with headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio; Cyril Cranshaw is the Bishop of Central and South America (includes Mexico).

- **The América Orthodox Church in America / Greek Orthodox** (*Iglesia Ortodoxa Católica en México, Exarcado de la Iglesia Ortodoxa en América*) led by Presbyter Desiderio Barrero Sermeno; the Catedral de la Ascensión del Señor is located in Colonia Peñón de los Baños, Delegación Venustiano Carranza, DF.

- **The Antiochian Orthodox Church** (*Iglesia Ortodoxa Antioqueña*) was founded in Mexico in 1943 under the leadership of Mr. Amín Aboumrad who reported to Archbishop Samuel David in Toledo, Ohio; St. George’s Orthodox Cathedral was built in Colonia Roma Sur, Delegación Álvaro Obregón, DF, between 1944 and 1947; in 1966 Antonio Chedraui became the first bishop of Mexico, and in 1996 he was appointed as the Metropolitan Archbishop of Mexico, Venezuela, Central America and the Caribbean.
• The Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow (Iglesia Católica Apostólica Ortodoxa del Patriarcado de Moscú); Parroquia de la Protección de La Santa Madre de Dios, Neptalita, Estado de México.

• The Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia-ROCOR, Patriarch of Moscow (Iglesia Ortodoxa Rusa del Extranjero), under Archbishop Kyrill, Western Diocese of North America; Sacrosanto Ascetsérion de la Santísima Trinidad, Mexico City, DF (Revdo.+Nektariy, Dean).

• The Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Iglesia Ortodoxa Ucraniana del Patriarca Moisés de Kiev, Arquidiócesis de México y Toda Latinoamérica), under Arzobispo Daniel de Jesús (Ruiz Flores); Parroquia de Nuestro Señor - Metokion de San Serafín de Sarov, Colonia 19 de septiembre, Ecatepec, Estado de México.

• The Orthodox Apostolic Catholic Church (Iglesia Católica Apostólica Ortodoxa) was founded in Xochistlahuaca, State of Guerrero, by Presbyter José Manuel Ojeda Alonso.

• The Mexican Independent Orthodox Apostólica Catholic Cathedral of San Pascual Bailón (Catedral Católica Apostólica Ortodoxa Independiente Mexicana de San Pascual Bailón) was founded by Bishop José de Jesús León Aguilar in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, State of Chiapas.

• The Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria (Iglesia Ortodoxa Copta de Alejandría) under Partriarca Shenouda III; Mexican headquarters in Tlayacapan, State of Morelos.

Guatemala. There are only three Eastern Orthodox denominations in Guatemala. (1) The Orthodox Catholic Church of North and South America (with headquarters in Akron, Ohio) ordained José Imre as Bishop of Guatemala in 1990, with headquarters in Tiquisate, Department of Esquintla; this denomination operates a seminary in the municipality of Nueva Concepción, Esquintla. Prior to 1988, the Guatemala jurisdiction was known as the Catholic Orthodox Church of Guatemala and Latin America. (2) The Apostolic Orthodox Catholic Church of Guatemala was legally established in 1995 under the jurisdiction of Archbishop Antonio Chedraui, Metropolitan of Mexico, Central America, Venezuela and the Caribbean, which is affiliated with the Holy Synod of the Patriarchy of Antioch (headquarters in Damascus, Syria). The Orthodox Parish of Guatemala is centered at the Orthodox Catholic Church of the Transfiguration (dedicated in 1997), which is located at the Rafael Ayau Orphanage in Zone 1 of Guatemala City and led by Hieromonje Padre Atanasio Alegría. Associated with this church body is the Orthodox Monastery of the Holy Trinity Lavra Mambré, which was founded in 1986 by Mother Inés Ayau García and Mother María A. Amistoso with the blessing of Metropolitan Damaskinos Papandreu. Although the monastery was originally located in Guatemala City, a new complex of buildings was constructed on the shores of Lake Amatitlán during the 1990s, under the leadership of Madre Inés. (3) The Orthodox Old Apostolic Catholic Church of Guatemala and Central America is led by Archbishop José Adán Morán Santos, with headquarters in Colonia Inde of Villa Nueva, a southern suburb of Guatemala City.

Colombia. During the 1930s, a wave of Middle Eastern immigrants (Maronite Christians) arrived in the Peninsula of La Guajira from Lebanon, Syria, Jordon and Palestine, countries formerly under the Ottoman Empire, and established themselves mostly in the municipality of Maicao, on the border with Venezuela. Today, Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions in Colombia (with an estimated 8,000 adherents) are the following: the Orthodox Church, Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople (Divine Providence Mission Congregation in Medellín); the Mercian Orthodox Catholic Church; the Orthodox Apostolic Catholic Church of Colombia; and the Greek Orthodox Church of Colombia.
Argentina. There are a number of small Eastern Orthodox communities in Argentina, which include the Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, Armenia); Greek Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Antioch); Orthodox Church of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (Constantinople: Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, Parish of Buenos Aires); Autocephalous Orthodox Church in South America (Metropolitan Archdiocese of Brazil, Argentina and Colombia of The Greek Orthodox Church - Old Calendar, headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil); Rumanian Orthodox Church of America in Buenos Aires; Russian Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Moscow); Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church - ROAC, Mission of Our Lady of Vladimir (Diocese of South America under Metropolitan Valentin of Suzdal, Vladimir, Russia); Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia - ROCOR (Metropolitan Laurus of New York City); Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch (Patriarchal-Vicariate of Argentina); and Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church of North & South America and the Diaspora (under Archbishop Odon of Manizales, Eparch of All Latin America, Spain & Portugal and his superior, Metropolitan Mefodiy of Kyiv & All-Ukraine); and the Slavic Belorussian Orthodox Church, founded in Buenos Aires in 2001 by Father Alfredo M. Mingolla.
V. The Protestant Movement Tradition

A. Defining the Protestant Movement

One of the major contributions of PROLADES to the study of religious movements in Latin America has been the production of our Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas by Major Traditions and Denominational Families, which we began to define in the late 1970s as part of our study of the Protestant movement in Central America. In order to study phenomena of Protestant church growth in this region between 1977 and 1981, we had to determine which religious groups belonged to the Protestant movement and which ones did not based on our extensive fieldwork in the region and a study of the current literature. We decided to base our classification system of religious groups in Central America on the newly-published The Encyclopedia of American Religions (first edition, two volumes, 1978), produced and edited by Dr. J. Gordon Melton. After carefully studying Melton’s classification system, we began to modify and expand it to include all of the religious groups we had found through our fieldwork in each country of the Central American region. Since 1981, this process of revision has continued as we discovered additional religious groups in other Latin American and Caribbean countries, which resulted in the production of dozens of revised editions of this document. An outline of the latest edition of our classification system is reproduced below and is available on our website at: http://www.prolades.com/clas-eng.pdf

A CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM OF THE PROTESTANT MOVEMENT BY MAJOR TRADITIONS AND DENOMINATIONAL FAMILIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Tradition</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1.0</td>
<td>Older Liturgical (Classical) Tradition, 1517-1530</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1.1</td>
<td>Lutheran Family (1517, 1530)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1.2</td>
<td>Reformed-Presbyterian-Congregational Families (1523)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1.3</td>
<td>Anglican-Episcopal Family (1534)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.0</td>
<td>Evangelical Separatist (&quot;Free Church&quot;) Tradition, 1521</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.1</td>
<td>Anabaptist-Mennonite-Quaker Families (1521)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.2</td>
<td>Baptist Family (1610)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.3</td>
<td>Pietist Family (1670)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.4</td>
<td>Independent Fundamentalist Family (1827)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.5</td>
<td>Holiness Family (1830s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.6</td>
<td>Restoration Movement Family (1830s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2.7</td>
<td>Other Separatist denominations and churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3.0</td>
<td>Adventist Tradition, 1836</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3.1</td>
<td>Millerist Family that observes Sunday (1855)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3.2</td>
<td>Millerist Family that observes Saturday (1850s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3.3</td>
<td>Adventist Church of God Family (1863)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3.4</td>
<td>Other Adventist denominations and churches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4.0</td>
<td>Pentecostal Tradition: 1901-1906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4.01</td>
<td>Apostolic Faith Pentecostal Family (1901)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4.02</td>
<td>Pentecostal Holiness Family (1906)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4.03</td>
<td>Name of Jesus (&quot;Oneness&quot;) Pentecostal Family (1907)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table gives an outline of our present definition of the Protestant Movement in the Americas. However, not all of the hundreds of denominations that we have included in our definition would themselves use the term “Protestant” or “Protestant movement” to define who they are or their historical origins. Today, many of their leaders are relatively ignorant about their own denominational history in Latin America or worldwide, or refuse to identify with the Protestant movement per se, because of their own denominational bias or lack of denominational identity. This is especially true of many of the church associations within the Baptist Family of denominations or the Restoration Movement Family of denominations, because their leaders and adherents believe that their heritage as a religious group is derived directly from First Century Christianity rather than through the Eastern Orthodox or Western Catholic Traditions and the 16th Century Protestant Reformation (or religious groups that existed before, or came into existence after, the Reformation).

We have included in our definition of “Protestant” all those religious groups that historically, theologically and in practice fit within “the broad stream of consciousness” that was derived from the Protestant Reformation or that identified with this movement after it came into existence, symbolically, in 1517.

B. Regional Differences in Protestant Population Size and Growth Rates

The most complete listing of Protestant denominations in Latin America today, based on our extensive research since 1970, is now available in The PROLADES Encyclopedia of Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean (2010). Included in each country article of this encyclopedia is a presentation of national census and public opinion poll data on religious affiliation, which has enabled us to produce a series of tables, graphs and charts on the historical development of the Protestant movement in Latin America and its current status in 20 countries. See the following link for access to the table, Latin American Population and Religious Affiliation by Region and Country, 2011:
According to this table, the Protestant population of these 20 Latin American countries totals an estimated 89,922,935 or 15.9 percent of the total population. However, examining the data by geographical regions we discover that the Protestant movement is much larger in some regions than in others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North America/Mexico</td>
<td>8,643,041</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central America (6 countries)</td>
<td>12,324,888</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean (3 countries)</td>
<td>3,303,923</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America (10 countries)</td>
<td>65,651,083</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The contextual factors as play in each region and country are somewhat unique regarding the dynamics of Protestant church growth in Latin America, but what is quite clear is that the Protestant movement has grown more spectacularly in the Central American region compared to other regions since 1960, followed by South America (Paraguay and Argentina are lagging behind other countries in this region) and the Caribbean (Cuba has the smallest Protestant population proportionally in the region, as well as in the 20 Latin American countries), with Mexico ranked at 7.6 percent (between the ranking of Paraguay and Argentina).

Although the average annual growth rates of the Protestant population are difficult to measure because of a lack of reliable statistical information for some of these counties, we have been able to produce an overview of Protestant population growth in the following countries for the period 1900-2010:

### A COMPARISON OF PROTESTANT POPULATION AVERAGE ANNUAL GROWTH RATES, 1900-2010

#### MEXICO

1900-1930 = 3.12% (30 years)
1930-1940 = 3.16% (10 years)
1940-1950 = 6.37% (10 years)
1950-1960 = 5.77% (10 years)
1960-1970 = 4.27% (10 years)
1970-1980 = 9.61% (10 years)
1980-1990 = 6.07% (10 years)
1990-2000 = 5.38% (10 years)
2000-2010 = 5.74% (10 years)
*1990-2010 = 5.56% (20 years)

#### BRAZIL

1970-1980 = 5.06% (10 years)
1980-1990 = 5.18% (10 years)
1990-2000 = 6.84% (10 years)
2000-2010 = 4.91% (10 years)
*1990-2010 = 5.87% (20 years)
Based on an examination of the statistical information presented above, a ranking of the countries with the highest AAGR of Protestant population for the 20-year period 1990-2010 is as follows:

BRAZIL = 5.87%
MEXICO = 5.56%
COLOMBIA = 5.16%
CENTRAL AMERICA = 4.01%
See the following website for more information about the Central American region for the period 1990-2010: [http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/cam/cam_aagr_pop_growth1990-2010.pdf](http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/cam/cam_aagr_pop_growth1990-2010.pdf). In addition, the following chart presents the estimated size of the Protestant population in each country of this region by five-year intervals between 1990-2010.

**CENTRAL AMERICA:**
**PUBLIC OPINION POLLS ON PROTESTANT AFFILIATION IN EACH COUNTRY BETWEEN 1990 & 2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Guatemala</th>
<th>El Salvador</th>
<th>Honduras</th>
<th>Nicaragua</th>
<th>Costa Rica</th>
<th>Panama</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>35,0%</td>
<td>40,5%</td>
<td>43,9%</td>
<td>30,4%</td>
<td>22,9%</td>
<td>21,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>31,7%</td>
<td>38,2%</td>
<td>35,5%</td>
<td>27,7%</td>
<td>20,0%</td>
<td>15,5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>30,7%</td>
<td>27,5%</td>
<td>30,5%</td>
<td>23,2%</td>
<td>18,0%</td>
<td>10,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>29,8%</td>
<td>25,2%</td>
<td>22,5%</td>
<td>16,5%</td>
<td>16,0%</td>
<td>10,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>25,9%</td>
<td>16,8%</td>
<td>21,0%</td>
<td>16,6%</td>
<td>12,2%</td>
<td>7,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>18,0%</td>
<td>16,4%</td>
<td>16,0%</td>
<td>11,3%</td>
<td>8,9%</td>
<td>6,5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Below are several documents that attempt to explain some of the reasons for Protestant population growth in Latin America, especially since the 1960s, compared to the decline of the Roman Catholic population in all 20 countries of Latin America. However, the reasons
for the relative increase and decline in the grow rates of these two religious communities (popu-
lations) is influenced by a complex series of factors, both internal and external as well as favor-
able and unfavorable, that have produced a growing exodus of Catholics (many of who are con-
sidered “inactive,” “nominal” or “marginal” adherents) from their parishes while the numbers of
those who attend, become affiliated with, or become members of Protestant congregations has
increased dramatically, especially in the Central American region where the average annual
growth rate of the Protestant population between 1990 and 2010 has been calculated by
PROLADES at 3.9 percent compared to the total population growth rate of 1.3 percent.

C. Christianity and Conflict in Latin America

A Symposium on “Christianity and Conflict in Latin America” (April 6, 2006), held at the National Defense
University in Washington, DC, sponsored by the Pew Forum. Dr. David Spencer, Assistant Professor at the Center
for Hemispheric Defense Studies was the moderator. The presenters were Drs. Paul Freston of Calvin College and
Virginia Garrard-Burnett of the University of Texas, Austin, who examined the political mobilization of Christian
movements in Latin America, including recent social and political conflicts between evangelical Protestants and
traditional Catholics, and the implications for U.S. security policy in the region. The panelists also discussed case
studies in Brazil, Mexico and Guatemala. Available at: http://www.pewforum.org/Government/Christianity-and-
Conflict-in-Latin-America.aspx

Dr. Virginia Garrard-Burnett

Had we had this conversation 20 years ago, we would have talked at a time when pluralism in
Latin America was in its very early stages. Having said that, Latin America is still over-
whelmingly Roman Catholic. That being said, there has indeed been a very dramatic increase in
religious pluralism over the past 20 years. Specifically, there has been a very rapid rise in
Protestant conversions to the extent that some countries in Latin America, such as Brazil, Chile,
Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, have very large Protestant minorities. Looking at the chart
you can see Guatemala has about a third - well, close to a third - El Salvador, 25 percent. Belize
is a British colony so it's not surprising it's 27 percent Protestant; Honduras is 22 percent. Notice
-- we'll talk about his later -- Mexico is only 6 percent Protestant. And the figures are more
symbolic than actually correct, but they give you a sense. In the case of Central America, much
of this conversion took place during the 1970s and 1980s during the era of the civil wars. I don't
want to put too fine a point on this or overstate it, but Protestant conversion was to some extent
during this period a reaction to the violence and upheaval of the era.

There is a continuing perception, or series of perceptions and misconceptions, that certain
Protestant values are very tangible things - almost tangible currencies - within Central America.
That is, Protestants tend to represent in people's minds anticorruption, honesty, trustworthiness
and clean living. They are thought of as being good citizens and very good with money. There are
a number of studies that show that many of these attributes, particularly in the matter of affluence
or relative affluence, are not quantifiably true but this perception still continues to inform
people's thinking about Protestantism.

This brings us to the matter of religious conflict. As Dr. Freston has indicated, there is an obvious
venue for conflict between radical Catholics and conservative Protestants or simply Catholics and
Protestants within Latin America. I think what's really remarkable is how rarely that contestation
has turned violent. Having said that, I'm going to talk about a case that is violent, and that is the case study in the Mexican state of Chiapas.

Mexico, as my previous chart indicated, is one of the least Protestant countries in Latin America. But there are indeed pockets of Protestantism in parts of the country, and one of those pockets is the state of Chiapas in the far south of Mexico. Beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s, violence did break out in highland indigenous villages between Mayan traditionalist Catholics and new Protestant converts. Violence has broken out on a fairly large scale, particularly in this cluster of towns in Chiapas.

Violence broke out largely over the Protestants' failure to pay what Sheldon Annis has called a Catholic cultural tax; that is, their failure to participate in fiestas and to contribute to community funds and to engage in communal farming, and things like that. The competition in these villages ramped up into outright armed violence in the late 1980s and early 1990s and resulted in the expulsion of large numbers of Protestants from their village, who then moved on to the slums outside of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, which is the capital of Chiapas. The Zapatista movement, which started in 1994, is one of the first and only post-Soviet, post-modern guerilla movements to emerge in Latin America. Many of the original Zapatistas were and still are disaffected Protestants.

In December of 1997, there was an extremely unfortunate event in the highland village of Acteal, where 45 men, women and children who were Catholic pacifists were murdered while saying mass. Now, who committed the murders? It's not all together clear. It has been attributed variously to the PRI, the governing party in Mexico at that time, to paramilitary groups and - I think most implausibly - to hostile indigenous Protestants. We'll say that this charge is highly uncharacteristic of Protestants in general, but it does give you a sense of the highly charged religious atmosphere in Chiapas. A couple of years ago, Chiapas elected a Protestant governor, and since he has been in power -- Pedro Salazar -- there has been at least a truce between Catholics and Protestants. This truce remains to this day and will probably remain at least as long as Salazar remains governor. He has about two more years.

I wanted to mention, too, something that is somewhat unique to Chiapas. There is a theory -- I don't think either of us particularly subscribe to it -- it's called the religious marketplace theory. The idea behind the theory is that people pick and choose their religion. They see it as a commodity and they make religious choices just like you would choose a brand of toothpaste in a grocery store. Although I think the theory itself may demand a little further scrutiny, it does seem clear that once people leave the Catholic Church, which for them is an enormous rupture culturally and socially and in every other way, they are much more likely to engage in what sociologist Henri Gooren has called "conversion careers." That is, they're much more likely to change their religions to suit changing life circumstances. In the case of Chiapas, this has also meant conversion to Islam, particularly among the expulsados, the people who have been evicted from their villages.

It's not at all clear to me what this means. This is not a large-scale movement, but it has, in fact, happened. I think it's safe to say that if they are not more doctrinaire Muslims than they were Christians, maybe, in a global sense, it really doesn't mean anything at all. There have been efforts by a group of Spanish, that is, Iberian, imams to open a madrassa in San Cristóbal De Las Casas in order to bring the Islamic converts closer into orthodox Islam and to internationalize
Islam. It's not at all clear where this is going and, again, I think it's doubtful that it's a significant trend. But I think it certainly bears watching, particularly in a place where you have a very liminal character such as in Chiapas.

The second case study that I would like to discuss today is Guatemala and the Ríos Montt regime. We've had a little prelude to this. Ríos Montt was a Guatemalan general who served between 1982 and 1983 as head of state. Guatemala is arguably [one of] the most Protestant countries in Latin America. Perhaps as many as a third of the people in the country are Protestants. The vast majority of that conversion has taken place since 1976 when a catastrophic earthquake hit the country and many missionaries came into the country in its wake. But it's also the point -- '76 -- when the guerilla war really escalated dramatically.

When Ríos Montt took power in 1982, he oversaw the scorched earth campaign in the largely indigenous highlands that virtually eliminated the URNG guerillas. It also destroyed, along with it, 450 indigenous villages and may have killed as many as 100,000 people in 18 months. Ríos Montt was also a born-again Christian. I don't know how many of you read Spanish, but the headline here says, "God put me here, says President Ríos Montt." He appeared on TV every Sunday night offering what were called Sunday sermons, in which he very freely mixed evangelical language and anti-communist rhetoric. He demanded honesty and accountability from his government.

This is actually a public service ad during the Ríos Montt era: "This government has committed to change. I don't lie." This is the pledge that every public servant was required to take: "I don't lie. I don't steal. I don't abuse." Three of Ríos Montt's singular points that he made again and again in his discourses -- his Sunday sermons -- were pledges against corruption, in favor of law and order and respect for the proper authority. Ríos Montt remained a very powerful political figure in Guatemala up until very recently. His idea of there being these evangelical values, these Protestant values, is still an idea that has strong salience in Guatemala and has a tremendous amount of political capital.

The issue of evangelicals has been brought to bear in recent times by a series of events in the community of San Lucas Toliman. I took this map off, of all things, an evangelical website. This is a Mayan village on the highland lake of Lake Atitlan. In this village, something new has emerged within the last year or so, and it is that a group of Christian leaders in the town decided to initiate a policy of what they actually called, in so many words, social cleansing.

The project of social cleansing probably began around 2004 or 2005. The village itself was damaged very badly as a result of Hurricane Stan in October 2005, which is what this picture of devastation is about. The Hurricane certainly has exacerbated the policy of social cleansing. There are a group of evangelical vigilantes who have named themselves the moral arbiters of this Mayan village. They have closed down bars and have exacted sin taxes from businesses they consider to be sinful. They send Bible verses and threats out to sinners in the community, and in a small village, you know who the sinners are, right? Beginning in July 2005, they began to go onto city buses with lists of people who they considered to be sinful and needed to be called down for it. Actually, that was a very common practice in Guatemala in the ‘80s when the death squads would get on buses and take people off. But they get on buses and pull people off and either rough them up or in a couple of cases kill them. In July of 2005, there was a case where a group of vigilantes got on a bus and pulled off a serial adulterer and executed him in full view of
everybody on the bus. Seven of the vigilantes of this group were arrested in February of 2006, but there are many more of them.

Now, I should say that the events in San Lucas Toliman are part of a larger vigilante movement in Guatemala that has nothing particularly to do with religion. In 2005, there were 3,000 people killed in Guatemala by vigilantes. Vigilantes in Guatemala enjoy the support of the general population, who believe that they enforce order in the face of what would otherwise be a chaotic and lawless society. What I think distinguishes the San Lucas Toliman case, of course, is the religious element, which I think may actually be part of an emerging trend. This is not, in fact, the first incidence of Christian vigilantism in Guatemala. A couple years ago in the village of Almolonga, which is also a Mayan village, a group of men from a church killed two teenage boys who they accused of having brought un-Christian values into the town. I think, specifically for the Guatemala case, it raises the possibility that people may want to see a return to the Ríos Montt-era law-and-order mentality through the enforcement of evangelical values, but without the return to the politics and the excesses of Ríos Montt himself.

In terms of security, the case of San Lucas Toliman, I think, is particularly concerning for two reasons. Number one - vigilantism of any kind indicates the absence of the rule of law. The soaring incidences of lynchings in Guatemala and elsewhere in Central America, especially in El Salvador - and I will say, I've heard unsubstantiated cases of Christian vigilantism in El Salvador as well - points to the dangerous disintegration of civil society that had built up in these areas since the region's civil wars came to an end. And certainly, this sort of disintegration provides an opening for all kinds of self-appointed enforcers and power struggles in the absence of a functional rule of law.

Second, the presence of self-appointed moral enforcers suggests that the Talibanization of fundamentalist Christianity, at least in this one corner of Latin America, may be starting. While this presents a very different kind of security issue than does fundamentalist Islam, radicalized Christian fundamentalism is very much like radical Islam in the sense that it seeks to repudiate the ills of modern society that people associate with a post-modern West: excessive consumerism, rampant sexuality, disregard for authority, family disintegration and the like. Down the line, this would seem to have very serious implications for how people feel about the kinds of cultures and values that they associate very strongly with the United States, rightly or wrongly. It is too early to say whether this is a trend or not, but it most certainly bears watching.

Dr. Paul Freston

Latin American Protestant identity was forged strongly in opposition to the dominant Catholicism; and, therefore, the political operationalization of a specifically Protestant identity has been more marked there than in the rest of the world in recent decades. By the turn of the 21st century, Protestantism had become the religion of perhaps 12 percent of all Latin Americans. In Brazil it's over 15 percent; in Guatemala it's over 20 percent. In countries like Uruguay, it's probably still below 5 percent.

Protestantism, and especially Pentecostalism, is disproportionately associated with the poor, the less educated and the darker skinned. Protestant membership is predominantly female. And although it doesn't have the classic Protestant work ethic and operates in a very different economic context, there is significant evidence for individual economic improvement as
disorganized lives become more organized and the capacity to survive increases markedly due to conversion to Protestant Christianity and the emergence of alternative communities of “born-again” believers.

Political involvement by Protestants is not recent. But since the 1980s, it has increased tremendously, especially with the involvement of Pentecostal denominations. Two Protestant presidents have governed Guatemala, and in some countries, such as Brazil, there have been large Protestant congressional caucuses. Over 20 political parties of Protestant inspiration have been founded in various countries, although none has achieved much success as yet. Much Protestant political activity has been very conservative and/or oriented toward institutional aggrandizement, leading in some countries to a significant worsening of the public image of Protestants as a whole do to the poor performance of Protestant politicians and legislators.

Latin American Protestant politics is a phenomenon of democratization. Whether it's also a phenomenon for democratization - deepening it - is an important query. But it has certainly played a role in incorporating grassroots sectors into the democratic process and has provided a significant route for individuals of lower social origin to achieve political visibility.

The political implications of Protestantism, especially Pentecostalism, have been appraised in very varied ways by scholars. On the one side are authors who emphasize the repressive and corporatist nature of the Pentecostal churches and see them as reproducing traditional authoritarian political culture and social control. Other authors stress Protestantism's democratizing potential, talking of a vibrant civil society. They contend that Protestant churches offer a free social space, an experience of solidarity and a new personal identity, as well as responsible participation in the community and, for some, the development of leadership skills.

Evangelicals have been less useful in democratic transitions than in phases of democratic consolidation or democratic deepening. But on the whole, they have been kept within the democratic track. There are very few who have non-democratic theocratic projects. In any case, they're so divided that they could never implement any such project. Also, the more they grow, the more they penetrate the mainstream and become more similar to the general society.

In some countries, notably in Brazil, in the last 15 years there has been a marked shift towards the left - or at least towards the center-left - on the part of the Evangelicals. Partly this is due to a change in the perception of where the Catholic Church is located politically. It's also, in some cases, of course, due to the class aspect, especially of Pentecostalism. There has been a growing Evangelical social discourse with an emphasis on justice, partly resulting from an increased participation in social projects. Also, there have been many left-wing politicians who have converted to Evangelical churches and have continued their left-wing militancy in their new religious identity.

And finally, of course, the new left in Latin America is usually extremely nationalist, and Evangelicals are often very nationalist too, which is not surprising when you consider that they're usually very nationalist in the USA also. Therefore, there is often considerable doubt about the idea of a free-trade area of the Americas. There has been considerable Pentecostal support for the Hugo Chávez government in Venezuela. Evangelicals do not seem to be very worried about the political agenda of President Evo Morales in Bolivia, at least not so far. Another factor is
Evangelical penetration of the indigenous communities in the Andes and Central America, and that also has taken a strong political connotation in many areas where the indigenous population represents a large portion of national population.

At the level of civil society, very often the contribution of Evangelicals has a rather different feel to it from what one might perceive looking at the parliamentary and party level. For example, it's often said that in the favelas, the shanty towns in Brazil, there are really only two things that function. The state is virtually absent. The Catholic Church is virtually absent. There are really only two things that function: one is organized crime and the other is the Evangelical churches. And there's a very interesting relationship there, in the sense that Evangelicals are having an impact on communities that are very crime-ridden. In as much as such ungoverned areas are, of course, vulnerable to all kinds of illicit activities, there is a very interesting Evangelical presence, which is based very much on the idea of exorcising the demons of violence and what have you, and also preaching in the prisons.

So, I would say that clearly Latin American evangelical Protestantism is not tributary to U.S. evangelicalism. It's not an extension of American soft power, as some authors have portrayed it. There were no Venezuelan evangelical terrorists willing to assassinate Hugo Chavez at the behest of Pat Robertson, for example. What about violence on the other side?

Well, I would say that in Latin American evangelicalism, there is some marginal use of violence. For example, there was a lot of evangelical involvement in the peasant patrols in the highlands of Peru against the Shining Path guerillas. There have been some evangelicals, it seems, involved in the Zapatista guerilla movement in Mexico. And, of course, the Ríos Montt presidency in Guatemala in the 1980s was extremely violent. At the same time, there is considerable anti-Americanism in sectors of Latin American evangelicalism. I would say anti-Americanism of the policy type, if you like, rather than of the cultural or geopolitical type - that is, an anti-Americanism driven by disagreement with specific policies.

But I would also say that there is - so far, anyway - no conflation of violence and anti-Americanism perceptible in the Latin American evangelical world. There is, as I said, considerable policy-driven anti-Americanism, especially with regard to the war in Iraq and, to some extent, the so-called war on terror in general. In fact, there would seem to be something of a geopolitical chasm between Latin American evangelicals and U.S. evangelicals. It was interesting to observe at the time when the Iraq war was just starting how all Brazilian evangelicals, however conservative they were in many other things and however wild and woolly some of their churches were, were all to a man totally against the Iraq war. So, I would say that Brazilian evangelicals at least -- and I think in most of Latin America this is true -- are closer, perhaps, to U.S. mainline church positions than to U.S. evangelical positions on this.

And just a final comment. It's important to note, of course, that the vast majority of illegal immigrants in the United States are Latin American Christians, either Catholic or Protestant. About 30 percent of them either are already or become Protestants. I have done studies on Brazilian evangelicals in this country, the majority of whom are illegal. It's interesting to see how these churches develop what you might call a theology of the undocumented based on theological, historical and pragmatic arguments.
D. Recent research on Protestant desertion in the context of Central America

According to a series of public opinion polls on “religious affiliation” conducted by CID-Gallup in the following countries during June-July 2012, we now have a clearer understanding of the situation of Protestant desertion in these countries although comparable data is not yet available for other countries of the region or elsewhere in Latin America. In this report, the terms “Protestant” and “Evangelical” are used synonymously as is the case in most of Latin America.

Panama: Roman Catholics 66.8%, Protestants 21.3% (Evangelical deserters 4.6%), no religion 7.2%, and other religions 4.7%.

Costa Rica: Roman Catholics 63.4%, Protestants 22.9% (Evangelical deserters 7.9%), no religion 10.0%, and other religions 3.7%; Protestants are only 15.7% among those of higher education and Catholics 69.1%; under 24 years of age Protestants are 27.9%, Catholics 55.0% and no religion 13.7%; highest Evangelical desertion rates are 11.2% for 25-39 year olds and 10.9 among secondary students; among those with higher education desertion is only 5.3%.

Nicaragua: Roman Catholics 55.7%, Protestants 30.4% (Evangelical deserters 6.5%), no religion 10.8%, and other religions 3.1%.

Honduras: Protestants 43.9% (Evangelical deserters 6.3%), Roman Catholics 43.8%, no religion 9.3%, and other religions 3.0%.

Desertion is determined by asking those who currently are not Evangelicals in each country if at any time in their lives they were Evangelicals, either because they were born into an Evangelical family or later became one by attending or becoming a member of one or more Evangelical churches or groups (such as a home Bible study or prayer group).

What these statistics tell us is that if no one had deserted the Evangelical ranks in each country then the total Protestant population would have been as follows: Panama 25.9%; Costa Rica 30.8%; Nicaragua 36.9%; and Honduras 50.2%. Some of the possible reasons for disaffiliation or desertion from Protestantism are discussed below.

The above data on Protestant desertion in Costa Rica, which is the highest recorded in Central America among the countries listed, is consistent with research conducted by Jorge Gómez during 1989-1994 in Costa Rica as part of the fieldwork for his doctoral dissertation, which was published under the title: El Crecimiento y la Deserción en la Iglesia Evangélica Costarricense (San José, Costa Rica: Publicaciones IINDEF, 1996).
WHY ARE EVANGELICALS DESERTING THEIR CHURCHES TO JOIN OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS OR TO STOP PARTICIPATING IN ANY RELIGIOUS GROUP IN LATIN AMERICA?

Compiled by Clifton L. Holland, Director of PROLADES
5 September 2002

1. Reasons given by ex-Evangelicals in a control group of 17 people on 18 August 1989 in the offices of CID-Gallup in Costa Rica:

   - Lack of transparency in the financial administration of the church.
   - Unethical conduct of some pastors (lying, cheating, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc.).
   - Excessive noise, both musical and vocal, produced by some churches.
   - Mandatory collection of tithes and offerings.

2. Causes of desertion uncovered in a fieldwork investigation done by 15 seminary students in Costa Rica as part of a course on Christian Ministry, taught by the Rev. Rafael Baltodano, at ESEPA during May-August, 1991:

   - Internal divisions in the congregation.
   - Change of residency.
   - Transportation problems.
   - Failure to subject oneself to disciple imposed by church elders.
   - Arguments among members.
   - Disagreements with the pastor.
   - Bad testimony of the pastor and/or other members of the congregation.
   - Favoritism by the pastor towards certain leaders.
   - Lack of participation in the congregation.
   - Exaggerated denominationalism.
   - Lack of transparency in the management of church finances.
   - Lack of good spiritual nourishment.
   - Nepotism (domination by members of the same family or families)
   - Abuse of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
   - Exaggerated legalism or liberalism.
   - Disorder and loud noise in the worship services—sound system too high!
   - Excessive “spiritualization of life”
   - Lack of concern for social needs.

- Lack of pastoral care.
- Lack of teaching on the essentials of the Faith—discipleship.
- Lack of healthy relationships in the church (misuse of funds, bad testimony of some pastors, competition among leaders, pride, arguments and gossip).
- Legalism and prohibitions: TV, use of slacks and makeup by women, etc.
- Lack of meaningful things to do other than attend worship services.
- Repetitive sins among some church members and pastors.
- Families divided by religious affiliation (mixed marriages of Catholics and Evangelicals) and resulting social pressures.
- Failure to forgive offenses.
- Desire for dramatic experiences: speaking in tongues, prophesy, dreams and visions, etc.
- Intellectual misgivings: science and faith, supernatural signs and gifts, politics and ideology, other religions, etc.
- Informality in the worship services or a great deal of formality in others.

4. What can we do about these problems so that people do not abandon the churches?

- Do a better job of training pastors and Christian workers in formal programs of theological education (Bible institutes, seminaries, Christian universities).
- Continuing education for pastors and Christian leaders (nonformal).
- Active participation in pastoral associations where these kinds of problems are discussed and solutions are proposed.
- Special training for pastors and Christian workers to care for people who are at risk for desertion.
- Better discipleship training for new converts and young people (pre and post-baptismal care).
- Better preparation of leaders to provide pastoral and family counseling.
- Develop greater sensitivity to the concerns and needs of members of the congregation.
- Train and mobilize church members for involvement in ministry programs through the local congregation and service agencies.
- Give more attention to the needs of those who are suffering physical and emotional pain, separation from loved ones, anxiety, conflicts with family members, and other emotional problems.
VI. Marginal Christian Traditions

Between 1990 and 2010, those affiliated with “other religions” in Latin America have remained relatively steady at between 3-4 percent, while those with “no religious affiliation” (this includes agnostics, atheists, those with no religious preference, and no response) were between 8-10 percent, according to most public opinion polls in each country, which coincides with the averages shown for these categories in the table, Latin American Population and Religious Affiliation by Region and Country, 2011:


Included in the “other religions” category of most public opinion polls in Latin America are non-Protestant marginal Christian groups, such as the following: the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society (Jehovah's Witnesses), the Philadelphia Church of God, Yahweh’s House of God, the Children of God (The Family), United Church of Religious Science, the Christadelphian Bible Mission, Voice of the Cornerstone, and Growing in Grace Ministries International (all from the USA or the UK); the Light of the World Church (Luz del Mundo, Guadalajara, Mexico); Mita Congregation and the People of Amos Church, both from Puerto Rico; the God is Love Pentecostal Church and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, both from Brazil, etc.

Some of these religious groups are relatively small in size compared to the dominate groups, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Latter-day Saints (Mormons) from the USA, the Light of the World Church from Mexico, and the God is Love Pentecostal Church and the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God from Brazil.

All of these so-called “marginal” religious groups exhibit certain characteristics that separate them from the other Christian traditions described previously, including the Protestant movement because the marginal groups reject some of the basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation. Most of these major differences in doctrine and practice are explained in Toward a Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas by Major Traditions and Denominational Families (latest edition, November 2012), which is available at: http://www.prolades.comclas-eng.pdf.

Whereas the Light of the World Church from Mexico has had some success in gaining adherents in some of the Central American countries, this denomination does not have a significant presence in the Caribbean or South America. Apparently, the leadership of Luz del Mundo has exaggerated the size of its membership in Mexico, because the 2010 national census only reported about 188,330 adherents for this denomination whereas the denomination itself claims to have several million adherents.
MARGINAL CHRISTIAN GROUPS IN CENTRAL AMERICA:
MEMBERSHIP OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AND MORMONS
BY COUNTRY, 1978 AND 2005

Created by Clifton L. Holland, Director of PROLADES
Last revised on 15 January 2008

<table>
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NOTE: AAGR = Average Annual Growth Rate (1978 - 2005 = 27 years)

SOURCES:


On the other hand, the **God is Love Pentecostal Church** and the **Universal Church of the Kingdom of God** from Brazil seem to have enjoyed greater success in recruiting new members from outside their countries of origin than Luz del Mundo or marginal Christian groups, with the exception of the JWs and Mormons. Both of the Brazilian-based denominations have a notable presence in most countries of Latin America, including within the Hispanic community in the USA from coast-to-coast. However, membership statistics are not available for these groups outside of Brazil.

According to the 2010 national census of Brazil, these two denominations had the following number of adherents:

- **God is Love Pentecostal Church**: 845,000.
- **Universal Church of the Kingdom of God**: 1.873 million (8 million according to ECKG sources).
VII. A comparative analysis of Roman Catholic and Protestant social strength in Latin America and the contribution of these religious traditions to Latin American society

1.0 Church attendance (an approximation of church attendance based on census information, public opinion polls, and other socio-religious research)

1.1 Roman Catholic

Most of these scientific studies indicate that the numbers of Roman Catholics who attend Mass at least once a week or more are between 5-56 percent of the national population, whereas the rest of the Catholic population only attends Mass a few times a year or not at all. This indicates that the majority of Catholic adherents in any country of Latin America can be considered “nominal” or “inactive” parishioners. Many of the active Catholics in a given country are probably participants in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement, which has led to more active attendance in the weekly Mass and other religious activities, such as Charismatic conferences, retreats, prayer groups and home Bible study groups.

On the low end of this spectrum, in 1987, the Montevideo Journal in Uruguay reported that only 4.5 percent of the people in Montevideo went to Mass regularly, with attendance slightly higher in the rest of the country. Priests said that this is the lowest level of Mass attendance in Latin America. Another study found that 55 percent of the people of Montevideo professed "religious sentiments," and 45 percent called themselves atheists or agnostics. Still another study concluded that only 3,000 people in Montevideo, a city of 1.1 million people, regularly contributed to the Church. That is in addition to the parents of some 70,000 children who attend church-run primary and secondary schools.


On the high end of the attendance spectrum is Mexico, where the World Values Survey for 1981-1983 in 22 countries of the world reported that the frequency of weekly church attendance of Catholic adherents was 53.8 percent, second only to Ireland with 81.9 percent. The latest World Values Survey in 2000 reported that the frequency of weekly church attendance of Mexican Catholics was 55.9 percent, which revealed a small increase of 2.1 percent between 1981 and 2000. The other two Latin American countries included in the 2000 survey were Brazil, with the frequency of weekly church attendance of Catholic adherents at 23.1 percent, compared to Argentina with 24.6 percent.


According to the 2010 Mexican national census, Roman Catholic adherents were 82.7 percent of the total population, down from 87.9 percent in 2000 and 96 percent in 1970. In absolute terms, Mexico has the world's second-largest number of Catholics after Brazil.

In Costa Rica, by comparison, two public opinion polls by the firm Demoscopía, conducted in February 1996 and December 2001, found in the first study that 41.9 percent of Catholics
adherents attended Mass “once a week,” 8.2 percent “two or three times a week,” 6.9 percent “several times a month,” 25.8 percent “occasionally,” 11.9 percent “hardly ever,” and those who said they “never attend” or didn’t answer the question were 5.3 percent of Catholic adherents nationally. In the later study (December 2001), Demoscopía found that the frequency of Mass attendance was as follows: “once a week” 42.1 percent; “several times a week” 6.9 percent; “two or three times a month” 8.0 percent; “occasionally” 25.2 percent; “hardly ever” 10.9 percent; and those who said they “never attend” or didn’t answer the question were 17.7 percent of the Catholic adherents.

These two studies indicated that the frequency of Mass attendance in Costa Rica had not changed significantly (margin of error + or – 2.5 percent) between 1996 and 2001 for those Catholics who attended at least weekly (50.1 percent in 1996 and 49.0 percent in 2001), or the percentage of those who attended Mass less frequently (32.7 percent said “several times a month” or “occasionally” in 1996 and 33.2 percent in 2001), or “rarely” or “never” were 17.2 percent in 1996 and 17.7 percent in 2001.

What had changed significantly were the percentage of Catholic adherents in Costa Rica between 1996 and 2001: Demoscopia found that the number of Catholic adherents had declined from 78.8 percent of the population in 1996 to 70.1 percent in 2001 (a decline of 7.7 percent in five years), and that the percentage of Protestant adherents had increased from 12.2 percent in 1996 to 18.0 percent of the total population in 2001.

According to the last public opinion poll on religious affiliation in Costa Rica, conducted by CID-Gallup in August-September 2012, Roman Catholic adherents were 63.4 percent of the total population compared to 22.9 percent for Protestant adherents, 3.6 percent for adherents of other religions, and 10 percent for those with no religion/no answer. Compared to the Demoscopía poll in 2001, the number of Catholic adherents in Costa Rica declined from 70.1 percent to 63.4 percent in 2012, which is a decline of 6.7 percent in 11 years compared to a decline of 14.4 percent during the past 16 years, since 1996.

1.2  Protestant

According to Argentine sociologist Hilario Wynarczyk, the percentage of Evangelicals in Argentina [May 2009] could be between 10 and 13 percent of the total population, an opinion shared by the main leaders of the Evangelical federations. In addition, Wynarczyk states that the Catholic population that participates actively in the life of their church is only about five percent nationally. This means that in many local communities the number of active Evangelicals may be greater than the number of active Catholics in terms of weekly church attendance.

In the two public opinion polls in Costa Rica conducted by the firm Demoscopía, in February 1996 and December 2001 respectively, it was found that non-Catholic Christians totaled 12.2 percent of the total population and that the frequency of church attendance was as follows:

- At least once a week = 25.9 percent
- Several times a week = 53.7 percent
- Once in a while or hardly ever = 15.0 percent
Never = 5.4 percent
Total respondents = 100 percent

By comparison with Roman Catholic attendance at Mass in February 1996, which was reported to be 50.1 percent for those who “attended Mass at least once a week,” the attendance of Protestants at religious services “at least once a week or several times a week” was reported to be 79.6 percent. This indicates that Protestants were about 30 percent more active in their local churches than were Roman Catholics in 1996.

In the 2001 public opinion poll by Demoscopía, it was found that non-Catholic Christians totaled 18.0 percent of the national population and that the frequency of church attendance was as follows:

- At least once a week = 16.5 percent
- Several times a week = 52.8 percent
- Two or three times a month = 11.0 percent
- Once in a while or hardly ever = 14.2 percent
- Never = 5.5 percent
Total respondents = 100 percent

By comparison with Roman Catholic attendance at Mass in December 2001, which was reported to be 49.0 percent for those who “attended Mass at least once a week,” the attendance of Protestants at religious services “at least once a week or several times a week” was reported to be 69.3 percent. This indicates that Protestants were about 20 percent more active in their local churches than were Roman Catholics in 2001. If we add into this comparison the frequency of church attendance by those who said they attended “two or three times a month” for both Catholics and non-Catholic Christians, the differences were 8.0 percent for Catholics and 11.0 percent for non-Catholic Christians. Combining these statistics with the previous ones, we find that about 57 percent for Catholics and about 80 percent for non-Catholic Christians (the majority of whom are considered Protestant) were “active participantes” in their respective religious groups in 2001. Therefore, it is obvious that the majority of Catholic adherents were less active in their attendance at religious services than were the majority of Protestants adherents (most of whom were considered to be Evangelicals) in 2001.

According to Kurt Bowen, in *Evangelism and Apostasy: The Evolution and Impact of Evangelicals in Modern Mexico* (Monteal, Canada and Kingson, Jamaica: McGill-Queens University Press, 1996, p. 83), “The handful of Catholic priests that I interviewed throughout Mexico estimated that 25 percent or fewer of their flock attended Mass weekly, though they were quick to add that attendance was far higher at the major festivals. Yet various public opinion polls in the 1980s put Catholic weekly attendance at Mass at about 45 percent.”

Bowen (1996: 104-105) also reported that, out of 479 people interviewed for his study of Protestant church attendance in Mexico, the average number of religious services attended per week per person was 3.5, although the average was higher for Pentecostals (3.8) than for non-Pentecostal believers (3.0). Also, the frequency of church attendance for Protestants was higher among city dwellers (3.7) than for rural dwellers (3.1). Bowen also reported that women attended religious services more frequently than did men, although he offered no specific statistics about this. Nevertheless, in my experience of more than 40 years of living in Latin
America and attending local churches, Bowen’s observation is generally accurate in this regard: more women attend than men.

In Latin America, Evangelicals are expected to devote huge amounts of time to attending local church services weekly, as Bowen reported above in the case of Mexico (an average of 3.5 services per week).

2.0 Christian education at primary and secondary school levels

2.1 Roman Catholic

Since the latter colonial era, the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America has had a great influence on society, especially in the area of education: both in public schools and in private primary and secondary schools and universities, which were often subsidized by the government. These educational institutions and programs were largely founded, staffed and administered by religious orders until the Independence era when many of these schools were taken over by the government in some countries, such as Mexico. However, in the majority of countries today, the government has continued to subsidize Catholic schools because they are an integral part of the nation’s educational system and because treaties (concordats) with the Vatican require it.

For example, in 1910, the Catholic Church in Chile operated numerous private schools and colleges throughout the land under the administration of religious orders, but even in the public schools Catholic religious instruction was compulsory. In Chile today, publicly-subsidized schools are required to offer “religious education” twice a week through high school (colegio), although participation is optional with a signed parental waiver. Local public school administrators decide how funds are spent on religious instruction. Although the Ministry of Education has approved curriculums for 15 denominations, 92 percent of public schools and 81 percent of private schools offered only Catholic religious instruction in 2007.

In Guatemala, according to Leonard Stahlke (1966), Roman Catholic sources reported 459 priests – 128 diocesan priests and 331 religious priests – of which 346 were foreign-born, serving in 213 parishes throughout the country in 1966 under Archbishop Monsignor Mario Casariego. In addition, there were 417 male religious and 604 female religious serving in their respective religious orders in a variety of ministries. Catholic institutions included three seminaries for preparing local clergy, 115 primary schools, 47 secondary schools, six agricultural schools, one university, seven hospitals, 50 medical clinics and 18 dental clinics.

In Puerto Rico, the Catholic Church since the founding of its first grammar school in 1512 has shown deep concern for Catholic education. During the 16th to the 19th centuries, Catholic schools were totally responsible for the educational process in Puerto Rico. During the present century, the Catholic schools in the Archdiocese have increased in number and are responsible for the education of 40,000 students distributed in 76 Catholic schools, under the Office of Catholic Education System of the Archdiocese of San Juan.

Catholic schools (also called Parochial Schools) are distinct from their public school counterparts in focusing on the development of individuals as practitioners of the Catholic faith. The leaders, teachers and students are required to focus on four fundamental rules initiated by the Church and school. This includes the Catholic identity of the school, education in regards to life and faith, celebration of life and faith, and action and social justice.

Traditionally, Catholic schools in Latin America originated as single sex schools and were founded, staffed and operated by religious orders or congregations, both male and female. Today, most of the Catholic schools are co-educational for both male and female students.

The Religious Education as a core subject is a vital element of the curriculum where individuals are to develop themselves: “intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally and of course, spiritually.” The education also involves: “the distinct but complementary aspect of the school's religious dimension of liturgical and prayer life of the school community.” In Catholic schools, teachers teach a Religious Education Program provided by the Office of Bishop. Both teacher and the Office of Bishop, therefore, contribute to the planning and teaching of Religious Education Lessons.

For a partial list of Catholic schools (primary and secondary = colegios) in Latin America by countries, go to the following link: http://www.esglesia.org/MostrarCategorias.asp?Nivel=2&idCat0=44&idCat1=85&idCat2=0&Lang=0

For a partial listing of Roman Catholic universities in the Americas (outside the USA), go to the following link: http://www.esglesia.org/ListaEnlaces.asp?Temas_id=350&codIdioma=0

Below is information about a new book on Catholic education worldwide, with a five chapters on Latin America:

International Handbook of Catholic Education: Challenges for School Systems in the 21st Century

Series: International Handbooks of Religion and Education, Vol. 2
Grace, Gerald; O'Keefe, Joseph, SJ (Eds.) – Available in March 2013
New York City, NY: Springer Publishing Group

• First handbook on Catholic educational scholarship and research
• International coverage
• Focuses on the challenges and responses in Catholic education
• Catholic Education: challenges and responses’ in a number of international settings
• This publication will be of value, not only to Catholic educators, but also to all educators, researchers, policy-makers and school leaders interested in the international dimension of education and in the impact of globalization upon educational systems.

The Catholic school system is the world’s largest faith-based educational network, with 120,000 schools and over 1,000 colleges and universities. With growing international interest in the significance of faith-based educational systems worldwide, this is an appropriate time to focus upon the Catholic system as the largest of these. Knowledge of Catholic educational scholarship and research has been largely confined to specific national settings. Now is the time to bring together this scholarship in an international Handbook reflecting the fact that the Catholic Church is an international organisation and that its various educational systems can learn from each other.
PART 2 - CHALLENGES FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLING IN LATIN AMERICA:
CHAPTER 8. Secularization: challenges for Catholic schools in Uruguay: Dr. Adriana Aristimuño
CHAPTER 9: A Theological-Pedagogical Turning Point in Latin America; A new way of being school in Brazil: Danilo Streck and Aldino Segala
CHAPTER 10: Catholic schools in Peru: Elites, the Poor and the Challenges of Neo-Liberalism: Fr. Jeffrey Klaiber, SJ
CHAPTER 11: The Catholic School in the Context of Inequality: the case of Chile: Sergio Martini and Mirentxu Anaya
CHAPTER 12: Contemporary political relation of Catholic education in Argentina: Elvira Suñer et al
CHAPTER 13: Title to be decided: Luciano Fontana


2.2 Protestant

Prior to 1960, most of the larger Protestant denominations and missionary societies had established Christian schools at the primary and secondary levels in many countries of Latin America, especially countries with large urban populations, such as Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia in South America; Cuba, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean; Guatemala, El Salvador and Costa Rica in Central America; and Mexico.

However, some of the early Protestant missionary efforts in Latin America are recorded below as an introduction to this section. One of the first independent missionaries to begin Protestant work along the Mexican border was Miss Melinda Rankin (1852 in Brownsville, Texas), a Presbyterian who later joined the American and Foreign Christian Union and established Protestant schools in Matamoros, Tamaulipas (1862-1863), and Monterrey, Nuevo León (1866).

It was not until 1856 that the first permanent U.S. missionary, the Rev. Henry Barrington Pratt, settled in Bogotá, Colombia, as a representative of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (now a constituent part of the Presbyterian Church [U.S.A.]). This was the only Protestant denomination in Colombia for many years, and it succeeded because of the establishment of a school system and medical facilities. Nevertheless, this denomination attracted relatively few church members during the 19th century.

In Colombia, Conservative political opposition to reforms and modernization culminated in the terrible decade of violence (“La Violencia” - 1948-1958), in which Protestants were identified with the Liberals and suffered the consequences of that association: vast destruction of church and school property, over 120 Colombian Protestants were killed, and thousands had to flee for their lives. The Gospel Missionary Union lost the majority of its church buildings. Overall, more than 47 evangelical churches and chapels were completely destroyed, many more were damaged, and over 200 primary schools were closed.

However, by 1974, missionary Donald C. Palmer reported the existence of 156 primary schools and 13 secondary schools (total 169) in Colombia operated by Protestant denominations, the largest of which were: United Presbyterians (31), Southern Baptist (29), Christian & Missionary Alliance (26) and Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (21). The Southern Baptists, the Gospel Missionary Union and the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade operated one hospital each. In
terms of theological education, the Southern Baptists had their own seminary in Cali and the Inter-American Mission (affiliated with the Oriental Missionary Society, OMS) operated one in Medellín. Severn Bible institutes were operated, respectively, by the Assemblies of God (1), the Christian & Missionary Alliance (2), the Inter-American Mission (1), the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel (2), Worldwide Evangelization Crusade (1).

In 1865, the Chilean Liberal government granted non-Catholics the freedom to worship as they pleased without public display (no church steeple or bells, for example), the freedom to operate their own schools, and a few cemeteries were established for non-Catholics. The beginning of the Methodist Episcopal Church (now a constituent part of the United Methodist Church) can be traced to the schools started by lay missionary William Taylor (b.1821-d.1902) in Bolivia and Chile during 1877-1878 as part of a self-supporting missionary enterprise not officially indorsed or supported by his denomination, using the Lancasterian system of education.

In Guatemala, the Rev. John Clark Hill arrived in late 1882 to begin Presbyterian work in Guatemala City, although Hill did not speak Spanish upon his arrival and his first activities were among 30-40 distinguished English-speaking foreigners who were already Protestants. Nevertheless, Hill and his successors were successful in establishing Presbyterian churches and schools in the country.

In Bolivia, the Canadian Baptists arrived in 1898 and the American Methodists in 1901. Early mission work by these two missions centered on the building of schools to provide basic as well as Christian education for their adherents and others in the local communities.

In Cuba and Puerto Rico, following the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, numerous Protestant denominations and missionary societies began work in these two countries, including the establishment of programs of primary, secondary and theological education.

Since 1960, Latin American ChildCare (LACC), now based in Springfield, MO, traces its origins to 1963 in El Salvador when missionary Juan Bueno of the Assemblies of God, pastor of the Evangelistic Center in San Salvador, established a small Christian primary school with 81 students in his church facilities with the support of his local congregation. As a network of Christian schools developed in El Salvador, the model expanded to other Central American countries and later to the Caribbean and South America. Although the Assemblies of God school institutions are not affiliated legislatively either nationally or inter-nationally, they are all part of a fraternal relationship and voluntarily affiliate and function under the larger umbrella of LACC. According to Douglas Peterson, by 1995, “LACC was the largest institutional program of social action in Latin America, and … it was also the largest unified network of Evangelical educational institutions found anywhere.”

By 1993, LACC (called Piedad in Spanish, which means “compassion”) reported that its network in 18 countries included 198 primary schools and 63 secondary schools, for a total of 261 projects in 18 countries. Collectively, these schools provided education for 67,487 children. In addition to establishing Christian primary and secondary schools, LACC has assisted in the development of numerous other social programs throughout Latin America and the Caribbean,
which includes pre-school programs, kindergartens, vocational schools, universities, homes for abused children, adult literacy programs, and socioeconomic development.

According to LACC’s website: http://lacc4hope.org/

Poverty and despair were stealing away the dreams of the children of El Salvador. Hopelessness leached the spirit of every youngster like a disease. For American-born, Chilean-raised Pastor John Bueno and his wife Lois, seeing the children who lived near their church slowly sucked dry of all self-esteem or hope was heart-rending. It moved them to action.

In 1963, despite the very limited resources of their church, Centro Evangelístico in San Salvador, the missionaries were led to open a small school, combining education with Christian values. This eventually was expanded to include high school and night school.

This was the genesis of what was to become Latin America ChildCare, built on a vision given by God to one man, and the sacrifice of a single congregation.

By 1978, God had called missionaries Doug and Myrna Petersen to service as well, and they began to develop the international focus of LACC. Under their faithful leadership, the successful pattern that had been established in El Salvador was implemented over and over, throughout Latin America.

The plan was two-fold: establishing new churches and schools in slum areas of Latin America cities, and recruiting sponsors for the children.

The gifts of each sponsor would provide a Christian education and things like food, medical care and, in some cases, uniforms for the individual children.

Over the years, God has perfected the first plan into a proven, effective formula of evangelism and education that gives needy children hope. Today, LACC serves nearly 100,000 children in 300 schools and projects in 21 countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. In El Salvador alone, over 406,000 children have attended the LACC-sponsored schools since 1963.

Countries where LACC currently has affiliated schools and special programs:

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In Panama, LACC provides assistance to over 1,000 of the more than 7,800 children and youth in Panama's Christian schools, with more than 300 on the waiting list to receive help. LACC of
Panama partners with the **Good Shepherd Schools of the General Council of the Assemblies of God of Panama** to offer assistance to those in greatest need. In addition to a quality Christian education, LACC also assists with feeding and medical needs.

Panama continues to experience consistent growth in its Christian school program. More and more churches and pastors are discovering that the Christian school is an effective evangelistic and discipleship ministry. **In just the last four years, total attendance has increased from 5,500 to 7,800 students**, with strong prospects for continued growth for the years to come.

Growth is strongest in the junior high level. Most of Panama’s Christian schools are called Good Shepherd Schools, known for their quality and strong Christian values.

There are currently 29 elementary schools, 19 junior highs (grades 7-9) and 5 senior highs (grades 10-12) located on 30 campuses throughout Panama. New schools usually begin by offering kindergarten through first or second grade; then they add a new grade each year. The new schools and continued growth of existing schools demands ongoing construction of classrooms and other school facilities.
The Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), based in Colorado Springs, CO, is a nondenominational worldwide network of schools. Countries with affiliated schools in Latin America include the following: Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Venezuela. For further information, go to: http://www.acsilat.org/

Worldwide Christian Schools is based in Grand Rapids, MI: http://wwcs.org/

Worldwide Christian Schools is a global family of organizations striving to bring glory to God by making quality education more accessible and affordable to all regardless of income, faith, or ethnicity.

Founded in 1987 in the USA, Worldwide Christian Schools does not own or operate schools but concentrates its activities in the following areas: building unity among Christ-centered schools globally while sharing best school practices, nurturing the preparedness of indigenous teachers, inspiring multiple local and non-local supportive relationships and encouraging the development of safe and efficient facilities. Within all of these programs inclusivity and the stewardship of resources and creation is emphasized. Worldwide Christian Schools has assisted hundreds of school projects in 44 countries around the globe, impacting the lives of over 76,000 students and helping to train an average of 1,000 teachers yearly.
The main emphasis of Worldwide Christian Schools is to unify, inspire, and equip Christian non-profit and for-profit school leaders with free or low-cost relationships, information, and tools that ultimately help an educational endeavor improve its degree of community engagement and access.

**Manual of Evaluation and Strategic Planning for Christian Schools**

In early 2003, I had preliminary conversations with Mr. Dale Dieleman of Worldwide Christian Schools (WCS) and Dr. Thomas Soerens, Dean of the School of Distance Education at the Evangelical University of the Americas (UNELA) in San José, Costa Rica, about the need to create tools for the evaluation of primary and secondary Christian schools and to conduct a series of case studies of Christian schools in Central America for the purpose of helping these schools improve the quality of Christian education offered in this region. Mr. Dieleman expressed his support for this idea and offered to provide financial assistance from Worldwide Christian Schools. This project was funded and implemented in May 2003 by myself and a team of researchers and Christian educators in Costa Rica and Nicaragua under my supervision. It was conducted under the auspices of UNELA’s Institute for Socio-Religious Research (IDES in Spanish), of which I was the director and professor of Missiology, Social Sciences and Urban Studies at UNELA.

This project was completed in February 2005 with the production of a series of four case studies in Costa Rica and Nicaragua, and the production of manuals in Spanish and English: [http://www.prolades.com/ides/wwcs/IDES-WCS-english.htm](http://www.prolades.com/ides/wwcs/IDES-WCS-english.htm)

- *Manual de Políticas, Normas y Procedimientos para la Evaluación de Escuelas Cristiana en América Latina y el Caribe*

**MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL OF THE IDES-WCS PROJECT**

- Dr. Clifton L. Holland, Director of IDES (professor at UNELA and Director of the Latin American Socio-Religious Studies Program - Programa Latinoamericano de Estudios Siororreligiosos, PROLADES, an independent research and consulting organization)
- Lucy Barquero, M.A., Dean of the School of Education at UNELA.
- Thomas Soerens, M.A., Dean of the School of Distance Education at UNELA.
- Dr. Willy Soto Acosta, educational consultant (San José, Costa Rica)
- Dr. Joel Huyser, President of the Nehemiah Center in Managua, Nicaragua.

**The Seventh-Day Adventist Church**

With 5,218 schools, 35,319 teachers, and almost three quarters of a million students in 142 nations, the Seventh-day Adventist school system is probably the largest educational program sponsored by a single Protestant denomination. Currently, some 558,000 students attend its elementary schools, more than 133,000 attend its secondary schools, and its colleges and universities provide tertiary education to some 43,000 students.
In the United States and Canada enrollment in Seventh-day Adventist schools, at 63,108 students, is fourth to that of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod schools (194,404), the National Association of Episcopal Schools (78,438), and the Christian Schools International (67,627). Adventist schools (K-12) in these two countries number 1,100 second only to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's 1,754.

The educational system that was but a seedling in 1900 has spread its branches far. At the turn of the century [1900] it was comprised of 220 elementary schools, 18 secondary schools, and 8 colleges, almost all in the United States and Europe. Today, the Adventist educational system has 2,320 elementary schools, 326 secondary schools, and 32 colleges in the Americas outside of the USA and Canada.


3.0 Theological education

3.1 Roman Catholic

Since the early years of its presence in the Spanish and Portuguese colonial territories of the Americas, the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) has been the dominant Christian tradition in Latin America and has remained so until today. After the establishment of the first major jurisdictions of the RCC in each country, the various European Catholic religious orders (male priests and friars) and congregations (for laymen and laywomen = religious workers) began to recruit and train new members (novices) from among the local population in their convents and monasteries, which later led to the establishment of formal theological education programs to train local parish priests (secular) and religious priests (members of male religious orders). The first such formal theological institutions were called “seminaries” or “theological institutes,” and later similar programs were offered in the growing number of Catholic universities in Latin America.

See the following book for an analysis of ten trends in the RCC worldwide, including trends in Catholic theological education in Latin America and the training of clergy and religious workers (men and women).

The Future Church: How Ten Trends are Revolutionizing the Catholic Church
By John L. Allen, Jr. (Doubleday Religious Publishing Group, 2009 - 480 pages)

One of the world’s foremost religion journalists offers an unexpected and provocative look at where the Catholic Church is headed—and what the changes will mean for all of us.

What will the Catholic Church be like in 100 years? Will there be a woman pope? Will dioceses throughout the United States and the rest of the world go bankrupt from years of scandal? In THE FUTURE CHURCH, John L. Allen puts forth the ten trends he believes will transform the Church into the twenty-second century. From the influence of Catholics in Africa, Asia, and Latin America on doctrine and practices to the impact of multinational organizations on local and ethical standards, Allen delves into the impact of globalization on the Roman Catholic Church and argues that it must rethink fundamental issues, policies, and ways of doing business. Allen
shows that over the next century, the Church will have to respond to changes within the institution itself and in the world as a whole whether it is contending with biotechnical advances—including cloning and genetic enhancement—the aging Catholic population, or expanding the roles of the laity.

John Allen includes some surprising figures in his 2009 work concerning the rise of Catholic seminary students in Latin America:

"Even while Pentecostals eat away at a once-homogenous Catholic population in Honduras, the national seminary had an enrollment of 170 in 2007, an all-time high for a country where the total number of priests is slightly more than 400. Twenty years ago, there were fewer than 40 candidates. Bolivia saw the most remarkable increase; in 1972, the entire country had 49 seminarians, while in 2001 the number was 714, representing growth of 1,357 percent. Overall, seminary enrollments in Latin America have gone up 440 percent over the last quarter-century, according to statistics collected by the Religion in Latin America website created by Dominican Fr. Edward Cleary of Providence College." (p. 29)


12/ 3/2011

Historic turning point in Bolivia on religious teaching

The agreement was signed Monday, 28 November 2011 by the Secretary General of the Bolivian Conference of Bishops (CEB), Monsignor Oscar Aparicio, and Roberto Aguilar of the Ministry of Public Education, acting for the State

GIACOMO GALEAZZI - VATICAN CITY

A historical turning point in Bolivia: the Catholic Church has been permitted to appoint religion teachers in public schools. The Catholic Church and the Bolivian government reached an agreement on education, with the government recognizing the educational structure of the Catholic Church through the delegation of each of the Church's jurisdictions and education centers. The special nature of Catholicism in Bolivia is at the heart of the agreement: "On one hand, Bolivian theology is similar to that of the rest of the continent, but manifests very much within the cultural and social context of the country," explains Father Victor Codina, a Spanish Jesuit who moved to Bolivia in 1982, where he asked to be sent after the assassination of Father Luis Espinal (one of the most famous Latin-American liberation theologians).

Today, Bolivia is attracting international attention for the first time in a great while for its indigenous president, Evo Morales. Says Father Codina: "In 1990 Morales participated in a congress of missions at Sucre, where he spoke of connecting with cultures. Fundamentally, his grand aspirations (for example: to build a world free of injustice, exclusion, and corruption, where the indigenous have a voice, where there is health care, no illiteracy, the recovery of natural resources) are in line with the Kingdom." So, “at first the Church supported him, since this was in line with the Gospel.” But many errors were made: “arrogance, corruption, authoritarianism, a kind of racism, a spirit of revenge which provokes division within the country, clashes, lack of dialogue, and the paralysis of the Constituent Assembly.” The president
also had very radical advisors, “such as former Minister of Education Felix Patzi, whom many parts of the Church had distanced themselves from.”

Soon slogans like “Evo Communist,” “Stop Cuba,” “They are expelling foreign missionaries,” “They are closing Church colleges and hospitals,” and “Friend of Chavez and Fidel” began to circulate. And the homage to Che Guevara on the 40th anniversary of his death was disliked by the militants who had fought against him. A few months after someone had written “Christ is coming and he’s the president” on a wall, other graffiti appeared saying things like “Evo Antichrist,” and “Out with Evo!” But dialogue between the Church and society is rather intense, and affirms the opinion of American Vatican correspondent John Allen, written some time ago - the influence of Catholicism throughout South America, but particularly in Bolivia, is growing unstoppably: “In all of Latin America, candidates for the priesthood have grown by 440% over the last 25 years, according to the statistics gathered in Religion in Latin America by the Dominican Edward Cleary of Providence College.”

And again: “In Bolivia there were 49 candidates for the priesthood in 1972. Thirty years later there were 714 – an increase of 1,357%.” Says Father Codina: “There is a reflection on intercultural dialogue, which religious figures from Maryknoll – which has a missionology center - are particularly engaged in, as well as some young Bolivian theologians like Jubenal Quispe.”

Father Codina adds: “In Cochabamba there is the Missionology Institute at the Superior Institute of Theological Studies at the Bolivian Catholic University, directed by Father Roberto Tomichà, a Bolivian Franciscan monk, very capable, who wrote his doctoral thesis on the Jesuit missions to the Chiquitos and works in this area at the institute.” Furthermore, “a recently deceased Jesuit, Father Gabriel Siquier, worked for years in Charagua on a dialogue between Catholic and Guarani theologies, while another Jesuit, Father Enrique Jordá, developed a meditation with some Eastern Bolivians. He had already written a thesis called ‘Theology of the Titikaka,’ but after 20 years in the East, perhaps his is the more complete vision, as it united the Andean and Amazonian worlds.”

The agreement between the Catholic Church and the State allows the Church to appoint personnel to educational institutions as employees to ensure the Catholic identity of these centers. Similarly, the State recognized that the Church can appoint religion teachers at public schools where families request a Catholic religious education.


3.2 Protestant

Within the Protestant movement in Latin America, since the later part of the 19th century, the larger denominations and missionary societies began to establish programs of theological education for their respective pastors and church leaders, as well as interdenominational programs and institutions. Today there are many national and international organizations that coordinate and development theological education programs throughout Latin America.
There are several associations of seminaries and theological institutions in Latin America, which were mostly organized in the 1960s under the auspices of the World Council of Churches (WCC) through its Fund for Theological Education (FTE) and several missionary agencies: ASIT, Association of Seminaries and Theological Institutions (in the Southern Cone); ASTE, Association of Evangelical Theological Seminaries (Brazil); ALIET, Latin American Association of Institutions of Theological Education (Central America, Mexico), and several others.

Below is an overview of these organizations and a list of their affiliated institutions in the various countries. However, it should be noted that very few of these theological education institutions – Bible institutes, Bible schools, theological seminaries, or programs of distance education have been accredited or otherwise authorized by the respective government Councils of Higher Education to offer university-level programs of theological education or to grant degrees to their graduates. Nevertheless, the various regional associations of Protestant theological education, described below, have established accords to accept academic credit and theological degrees from affiliated institutions so that students who begin their theological education programs in one institution, region or country may continue their studies in other institutions.

In Costa Rica, for example, the Council of Higher Education (CONESUP) is the government agency responsible for authorizing, approving, accrediting and monitoring university-level education in the country. There are only five programs of theological education in Protestant universities in Costa Rica that are accredited by CONESUP: the Latin American Biblical University (UBLA) in Cedros, Montes de Oca, San José; the Evangelical University of the Americas (UNELA) near downtown San José; the Methodist University of Costa Rica (UMCR) in Sabanilla, San José; and the Adventist University of Central America (UNADECA) in Alajuela. However, there are dozens of other Evangelical theological education programs of various kinds in the country that are not accredited or authorized to function at the university level. Most of these alternative programs are licensed to function at the Bible Institute level and only offer a diploma for studies at the high school level; however, at least one alternative program does function at the university level in Costa Rica: ESEPA Seminary in Paso Ancho, San José, which is affiliated with the Association of Costa Rican Bible Churches (AIBC), related to the inter-denominational Latin America Mission with headquarters in Miami, Florida. ESEPA offers several degree programs in theological education that are not accredited by CONESUP but transfer credit has been granted to its students in other theological education institutions in other countries, such as the Central American Theological Seminary (SETECA) in Guatemala City, Guatemala, founded and funded by the interdenominational fundamentalist Central American Mission with headquarters in Dallas, Texas.

Below is an overview of Protestant theological education institutions and programs in Latin America.

AETH. Association for Hispanic Theological Education – Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana. AETH exists to stimulate dialogue and collaboration among theological educators, administrators of institutions for ministerial formation, and Christian ministerial students in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.
AETH was founded as a result of a meeting of Hispanic theological educators that took place in August of 1991. AETH has since experienced a dramatic growth. Its current membership includes over 1,200 individuals and **100 affiliated institutions**.

AETH has regional chapters in Puerto Rico and in several regions of the United States. Regional chapters sponsor workshops, stimulate ministerial development of its members and encourage the exchange of educational resources.

AETH publishes books and educational materials related to its objectives. Its bulletin “Encuentro” informs its membership regarding Hispanic theological education.

AETH encourages the creation and development of programs and projects aimed at strengthening and equipping people of God for Hispanics.

La Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana
2620 S. Parker Rd., Suite 274, Aurora, CO.80014, USA
Toll-Free Telephone: 720-535-5435
Internet: [http://www.aeth.org/aeth/ae11/](http://www.aeth.org/aeth/ae11/)

**Affiliated institutions (December 2012 = 104):**

USA = 77
Puerto Rico = 26
Dominican Republic = 1

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**ALIET. Latin American Association of Theological Education Institutions** - Asociación Latinoamericana de Instituciones de Educación Teológica

1st contact person: Dr. Jerjes Ruiz, Executive Secretary and president
UPOLI, Costado Sur de Villa Rubén Darío, Managua, Nicaragua
Apartado Postal No. 3595, Managua, Nicaragua.
2nd contact person: Cherie R. White
Vice-President, ALIET
Methodist Seminary, Mexico City

No other information was available at this time.

________________________________________

**ALISTE. Latin American Association of Institutes and Theological Seminaries by Extension (TEE programs)** - Asociación Latinoamericana de Institutos y Seminarios Teológicos por Extensión (this organization may not longer exist).
ASIT. Asociación de Seminarios e Instituciones Teológicas del Cono Sur – Association of Seminaries and Theological Institutions in the Southern Cone (South America).
Casilla de Correo 103, (1449) - Sucursal 49 (B) - Buenos Aires, Argentina
E-Mail: asit@asit.org.ar Secretaria Ejecutiva: Claudia Seiler
Internet: http://www.asit.org.ar/

History. El 20 de Noviembre de 1963, en una Asamblea constitutiva se formó la Asociación Sudamericana de Instituciones Teológicas (ASIT); más tarde se llamaría Asociación de Seminarios e Instituciones Teológicas. Este acontecimiento era el resultado de varios años de consultas y acercamientos entre instituciones, que iniciaron entre otros, el Dr. Foster Stockwell, rector de la entonces Facultad Evangélica de Teología de Buenos Aires y el Dr. Guillermo Cooper, rector del Seminario Internacional Teológico Bautista de la misma ciudad. También tuvo lugar una consulta formal realizada en Agosto de 1962, en oportunidad de recibir la visita del Dr. Scopes de la Theological Education Fund (TEF). De esa Consulta surgió una “Comisión de Continuación” con el propósito de llamar a la constitución de una asociación de instituciones de enseñanza teológica en el Cono Sur de América Latina.

Affiliated Institutions:

ARGENTINA

Centro de Estudios Interdisciplinarios
Decano Académico: Guillermo Steinfeld
Dirección: José Marmol 1734
(1602) Florida – Pcia de Buenos Aires
Teléfono: +54 (011) 4796-3306
Página web: www.kairos.org.ar
Contacto: ceti@kairos.org.ar

Seminario Emanuel
Director: Jorge Julio Vaccaro
Vice-Director: Carlos Busto Potenzo
Dirección: José A. Miralla 453
(1408) Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires
Teléfono: +54 (011)
Página web: www.seminarioemanuel.com.ar
Contacto: sememanuelsede@yahoo.comcom.ar

Escuela de Cadetes del Ejército de Salvación
Directora: Estela Nicolassa
Dirección: Donato Álvarez 467
(1406) Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires
Teléfono: +54 (011) 4631-4815
Página web:
Contacto:

Universidad Adventista del Plata, Facultad de Teología
Decano: Carlos A. Steger
Secretario Académico: Rubén R. Otto

115
Dirección: 25 de Mayo 99
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Its founding members were the following:

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- Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Recife, PE
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37. Seminário Concórdia da Igreja Evangélica Luterana do Brasil  
   Av. Getúlio Vargas 4388  
   Caixa Postal 202  
   93001-970 São Leopoldo, RS  
   Tel. (0xx51) 592-9035
39. Faculdade Batista Pioneira  
Rua Dr. Pestana, 1021 – Centro  
98700-000  Ijuí, RS  
Tel. (0xx55) 3332-2205  
faculdade@batistapioneira.edu.br  
www.batistapioneira.edu.br

40. ULBRA - Universidade Luterana do Brasil - Curso de Teologia  
Av. Farroupilha 8001  
92425-900  Canoas, RS  
(0xx51) 3477-9229  
dirteologia@ulbra.br  
www.ulbra.br/teologia/

CETELA. Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana y Caribeña – Latin American and Caribbean Ecumenical Theological Education Community

Presidente - Dr. Néstor Míguez  
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E-mail: cetelapres@isedet.edu.ar

Vice-Presidenta - Profesora Blanca Cortés  
Dirección: A/C. Facultad Evangélica de Estudios Teológicos - FEET  
Plaza el Sol 1c. Al Sur 1/2c. Arriba-Pancasán, Apartado Postal RP 082  
Managua, Nicaragua  
E-mail: blancacortes1@hotmail.com

History

ANTECEDENTES: EL FEPETEAL

El origen de CETELA se remonta a los comienzos de la década de los 80, cuando con ocasión de una reunión de la Comisión Latinoamericana de Educación Teológica (CLAET), efectuada en Cali, Colombia, se decide hacer efectiva la idea de crear el Fondo Especial para Educación Teológica en América Latina, conocido por la sigla FEPETEAL. En la creación de este fondo participaron representantes de los movimientos ecuménicos continentales como es el caso de CELADEC, ULAJE y el CLAI; también representantes de las asociaciones teológicas regionales.
como ASTE, ASIT y ALIET. Por supuesto se contó con representación de los seminarios ecuménicos de América Latina, como también del PTE (Program Theological Education), del Consejo Mundial de Iglesias, del Consejo Nacional de Iglesias de Estados Unidos y de Evangelisches Missionswerk. El propósito del Fondo era asistir económicamente a los seminarios ecuménicos que por diferentes razones entre las que se contaban la inestabilidad de las economías de los diferentes países, incurrieran en situaciones de emergencia presupuestaria. Las agencias cooperantes fueron: Evangelisches Missionswerk de Alemania, Zending de Holanda, La Misión de Basilea, la Iglesia Metodista del Reino Unido y el Consejo Nacional de Iglesias de los Estados Unidos.

A lo largo de los ocho años de existencia el Fondo auxilió con aportes diferenciados a los siete seminarios afiliados al Fondo. Las siete instituciones teológicas que formaron el FEPETEAL fueron: La Comunidad Teológica de México, el Seminario Evangélico de Puerto Rico, el Seminario Evangélico de Teología de Cuba, el Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano de Costa Rica, el Instituto Ecuménico de Pós-graduação em Ciências da Religião de Brasil y el Instituto Superior Ecuménico de Estudios Teológicos de la Argentina. Por tratarse de siete instituciones fue llamada humorísticamente como "sietela".

El carácter ecuménico era un requisito para pertenecer al Fondo. Este fue definido por dos características:

- La clara adhesión, respaldo y compromiso de distintas iglesias e instituciones ecuménicas que buscan juntos, a partir de una práctica y reflexión creativa, la renovación de la educación teológica y de la formación ministerial.

- Una visión ecuménica que incorpore una clara opción por la unidad de la iglesia en el marco de la solidaridad con las aspiraciones de los pueblos oprimidos de América Latina.

**FUNDACIÓN DE CETELA**

Desde el principio se intuyó que el alcance del FEPETEAL no se podía limitar sólo al orden financiero. Fue así como se concibió la idea de avanzar en la formalización de una Comunidad Ecuménica para la Educación Teológica en América Latina (CEPETEAL). El cambio de nombre no fue suficiente pues se continuaba con la misma función anterior. Una y otra vez se discutió este proyecto. Las fronteras propias del Fondo Ecuménico impuestas por su naturaleza exclusivamente financieras no facilitaban el espacio requerido para desarrollar el trabajo mancomunado por una educación teológica ecuménica. Por otra parte tampoco la CLAET permitía esta posibilidad dado su carácter denominacional marcadamente evangélico. Se requería, entonces, crear un nuevo espacio en el que las instituciones de clara vocación ecuménica pudieran discutir sus problemas y se estudiara a manera de foro una estrategia para la educación teológica ecuménica en América Latina.

El nombre de CETELA fue acordado por el comité Ejecutivo del Fondo en diciembre de 1986 en Buenos Aires. No obstante la conformación propiamente de CETELA no se hizo realidad sino hasta la asamblea de octubre de 1988 en Indaiatuba, Brasil, en la cual se disolvió el FEPETAL y
se creó formalmente La Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana (CETELA). Por estatuto el Fondo Especial pasó a ser parte integrante del nuevo organismo.

Source: http://cetela.net/index.php/historia

Affiliated institutions:

CENTRO EVANGÉLICO DE ESTUDIOS PASTORALES EN CENTROAMERICA – CEDEPCA
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Tel/fax (502) 2254-1093
E-mail: cedepca@cedepca.org
Neli Miranda: nmiranda@cedepca.org

CENTRO EVANGÉLICO DE ESTUDIOS PENTECOSTALES – CEEP
Cautín 9133 – Pobl. Rene Schneider - Hualpen
Concepción, Chile
Tel: (56-41) 247-0625
Cel. (56) 9 – 7838-2305
Dirección Postal: Casilla 2454 – Concepción - Chile
E-mail: luisceep@entenchile.net
Director – Luis Orellana

CENTRO VENEZOLANO DE ESTUDIOS TEOLÓGICOS - CEVET
Apartado 388
Av. Padilla No. 13-108, Maracaibo, Venezuela
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Directora – Elida Quevedo
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Tel: (56 2) 6970630
Fax: (56 2) 6970630
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Página Web: ctedechile.cl
Rector – Dr. Daniel Godoy (rectoria@cte.tie.cl)

COMUNIDAD TEOLÓGICA DE HONDURAS -CTH
Apartado Postal No. 15021, Colonia Kennedy
Tegucigalpa, Honduras
Director: Edgardo Hernández Silva
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C.P. 01000 México, D.F.
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E-mail: ulloasergio@hotmail.com
Decano – Profesor Sergio Ulloa
CORPORACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA REFORMADA – CUR
Facultad de Teología
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Tel: (575) 3702056/3490943
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mpua@unireformada.edu.co
Director: Milcíades Pua

ESCUELA DE BIBLIA Y TEOLOGÍA
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E-mail: eamericana@chpc.org.co
www.colamerican.edu.co
Director: Luís Fernando Sanmiguel Cardona
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Rua Amadeo Rossi, 467, Caixa Postal 14
93001-970 São Leopoldo, RS, Brasil
Tel: (0055) 51 2111-1400
Fax: (0055) 51 2111-1411
E-mail: est@est.edu.br
www.est.edu.br
Rector – Dr. Oneide Bobsin

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Plaza el Sol 1c. Al Sur 1/2c. Arriba-Pancasán
Apartado Postal RP 082, Managua, Nicaragua
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www.cieets.org.ni
Decana – Lic. Blanca Cortes Robles

FACULDADE DE TEOLOGIA DA IGREJA METODISTA - FTIM
Rua do Sacramento, 230, Caixa Postal, 5151
09640-000, São Bernardo do Campo, SP, Brasil
Tel: (5511) 4366-5957
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Rector – Dr. Rui de Souza Josgrilberg

INSTITUTO DE EDUCAÇÃO TEOLOGICA DA BAHIA - ITEBA
Rua da Mangeira, 73 - Nazaré
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INSTITUTO ECUMÉNICO DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM CIENCIAS DA RELIGIÃO - IEPG
Rua do Sacramento, 230, Rudge Ramos 09640-000
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Coordinador – Dr. Jung Mo Sung (e-mail: jung.sung@metodista.br)

INSTITUTO METODISTA BENNETT - IMB
Rua Marquês de Abrantes 55, Flamengo 22230-060
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Director – P. Marcelo Carneiro

INSTITUTO SUPERIOR ECUMENICO ANDINO - ISEA
Calle Baron de Carondelet 29-35, entre Carabobo y Juan Montalvo, segundo piso
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E-mail: yachayisea@yahoo.com
Director – Gerónimo Yantalema

INSTITUTO SUPERIOR ECUMÉNICO ANDINO DE TEOLOGIA - ISEAT
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Rector – Abraham Colque (e-mail: abrahamco2001@yahoo.com)

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Rector – Dr. Pablo Andiñach; e-mail : andinach@isedet.edu.ar

PROGRAMA MINISTERIAL DE ESTUDIOS TEOLÓGICOS ABIERTO - PROMESA
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EVANGÉLICA – AEET – En convenio con la UBL
Jr. Huaraz 2030 – Pueblo Libre
Apartado 21-0033, Lima 21 - Perú
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E-mail: recintoubllima@speedy.com.pe
Director: Efraín Barrera Rivera

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26 Calle 15-56, Zona 11, Colonia Las Charcas
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Rector – Willi Hugo Pérez

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Isdalia Ortega (Decana) y Zarai Gonzalía (Administrativa)

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Rector - Dr. Sergio Ojeda

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E-mail: set@enet.cu seth@enet.cu
Rector - Dr. Reinerio Arce; e-mail: reiarce@enet.cu

SEMINARIO TEOLÓGICO BAUTISTA - STB
Costado norte Colegio Bautista, 2 1/2 c. Abajo
Apartado 2555, Managua, Nicaragua
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Decana – Guadalupe Gómez ( decano@stbnica.org)

SEMINÁRIO TEOLÓGICO DE SÃO PAULO
Igreja Presbiteriana Independente do Brasil
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Site: www.seminariosaopaulo.org.br
Presidente – Reverendo Gerson de Correia Lacerda

UNIVERSIDAD BÍBLICA LATINOAMERICANA - UBL
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De la Marsella 25 metros al este, mano izquierda
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Fax: (506) 2836826
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UNIVERSIDAD LUTERANA SALVADOREÑA – Facultad de Teología
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E-mail: uls@uls.edu.sv
www.uls.edu.sv
Director: Ms. Luzaoir Lenz

Source: http://cetela.net/index.php/instituciones-afiliadas

DIRECTORIO DE INSTITUTOS BÍBLICOS FUNDAMENTALES

El hecho de que un instituto bíblico aparezca aquí no significa que el equipo de Literatura Bautista conoce el instituto o los profesores. No necesariamente endosamos los institutos que aparecen aquí. Todos son fundamentales en doctrina, pero habrá una variedad de diferencias en filosofías del ministerio (métodos de ganar almas, normas de separación, etcétera) entre diferentes institutos. Si está considerando un instituto, recomendamos hacer su propia investigación del instituto que le interesa, y orar y buscar el consejo de personas piadosas que le puedan orientar.

Para solicitar que se añada un instituto bíblico a esta listado, favor de enviar la información correspondiente por medio de la sección de comentarios al pie de esta página. Si el instituto no tiene un sitio de internet, favor de incluir más detalles acerca del instituto, e información de contacto como una dirección de correo electrónico.

Source: http://www.literaturabautista.com/institutos-biblicos-fundamentales
Argentina

Seminario Bautista Bet-el
Director: Lorenzo Owens
Tucuman
http://www.iglesiabautistabeteltucuman.com/

Bolivia

Seminario Bíblico Bautista Fundamental
Director: Rubén Quiroz
Cochabamba
Correo electrónico: rquiroz@digicom-bo.com

Chile

Facultad Teológica Bíblica Bautista
http://www.ftbb.cl/

Seminario Chileno Bautista
Para más información, comunicarse con el misionero Jason Holt.

Colombia

Seminario Bautista de Colombia
http://www.seminariobautistacolombia.com/

Costa Rica

Instituto Seminario Bíblico Bautista
Director: Juan R. Barnes D.
http://www.biblicobautista.org/seminario/index.html

Ecuador

Seminario Bautista Panamericano SBP
Iglesia Bautista de la Fe Fundamental e Independiente
Santo Domingo de los Tsáchilas
593-998800366

El Salvador

Instituto Bautista Independiente
Apartado Postal #16, Santa Ana, El Salvador
Tel. (503) 2434-5148
Correo electrónico: institutobautistaindependient@hotmail.com
**Estados Unidos**

Instituto Bíblico Bautista Fundamental  
Director: Luis Parada  
Long Beach, CA  
http://www.fbclb.org/spanish/ministerios/instituto.html

Ontario Baptist College  
Dr. Ezekiel Salazar  
2560 Archibald Ave. Ontario, CA 91761  
(909) 923-8455 FREE (909) 923-8455  
http://www.montecito.ws/College.html

Instituto Fuegos de Evangelismo  
Director: Elmer Fernández  
345 West River Road, Elgin, IL 60123  
Tel. 847-695-6222 FREE 847-695-6222

Seminario Bíblico Fundamental  
Monterey Park, CA  
http://www.sbfsc.com/

Instituto Bíblico Bautista Libertad  
Houston, TX  
Fundado por el Pastor Rogelio (Roy) Carrizales  
http://iblibertad.org/

Iglesia Bíblica Fundamental De Katy  
Pastor Pablo de la Garza  
6101 Hwy. Blvd  
Katy, TX 77492  
Tel. 281-391-1065 FREE 281-391-1065  
frojas9@houston.rr.com  
Contamos con seminario Bíblico gratuito lunes y jueves de 7 a 9 pm.

Instituto Bíblico Bautista  
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Tel. (254) 421-0766 FREE (254) 421-0766  
Tel. (254) 644-4090 FREE (254) 644-4090  
hebrodriguez@hotmail.com

**Guatemala**

Instituto Bíblico Bautista La Esperanza  
Director: Pastor Fredy Trujillo P.  
E-mail ibbeguatemala@gmail.com o sigtrujilllop@yahoo.com.mx

Seminario Bíblico Bautista Independiente de Quetzaltenango  
Calle Cirilo Flores 2-127
Zona 5, Colonia Molina, Quetzaltenango
Tel. (502) 4704-9039
http://www.iglesiabautistacristosalva.org/

México

Instituto Bautista Fundamental de Celaya, Gto
Director: Alejandro Córdova Karán

Instituto Práctico Ebenezer
http://www.institutoebenezer.net/

Colegio Bíblico Bautista
Director: Luis Ramos Cisneros
San Luis Potosí
http://www.ibbslp.org.mx/

Colegio Bautista Fundamental Monte Sion
http://www.montesion.net84.net/cbfms.html

Instituto Bautista Fundamental Abrek de Guadalajara
http://ibfgdl.org/instabrek.html

El Instituto Bíblico Bautista Monte Hebrón
http://mthebron.net/informacion/instituto-biblico-bautista-monte-hebron/

Instituto Bautista Sonora
Ministerio de la Iglesia Local "Templo Bautista Sahuaro"
Pastor John Perez
Hermosillo, Sonora
Teléfono (Templo) 662-219-35-64
E-mail: johnpg@prodigy.net.mx y johndpg@gmail.com

Instituto Bíblico Torre Fuerte
Mexicali, B.C.
http://www.iglesiabautistaesperanza.com/

Perú

Seminario Bautista Macedonia
Director: Chris Gardner
http://seminariomacedonia.blogspot.com/

Seminario Bautista del Perú
http://seminariobautistadelphiaperu.blogspot.com/
Puerto Rico

Colegio Bautista Universitario
Director: Miguel Casillas
http://www.prbc.edu/

Calvary Baptist Bible College
Directores: Pastor Johnny Daniels, Dr. Dudley
Este instituto bíblico es totalmente en inglés, pero proveen un año de enseñanza de inglés antes de la enseñanza teológica para los que no conocen el idioma.
http://www.calvarypr.org/cbbc.html

Venezuela

Seminario Bautista de Venezuela
Iglesia Bíblica Bautista De Vista Alegre
Pastor Victor Paez
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Email: iglesiabbbvistaalegre@mac.com
Web: www.bautistadevistaalegre.org

Material para institutos bíblicos

Este listado no consiste de institutos bíblicos, sino de ministerios que proveen material para que un estudiante tome cursos en su tiempo libre, donde esté, bajo el cuidado de su pastor.

Oremundo (cursos por DVD)
http://oremundo.com/

Editorial Bautista Independiente
http://www.ebi-bmm.org/curriculum.htm

Estudios por correspondencia

Escuela Bíblica por Correspondencia Bethel de Hermosillo, México
Leocadio Salcedo 210 Esquina Heroes de Caborca
Colonia Jesús García, CP 83140
Hermosillo, Sonora, México
Ofrecemos Educación Bíblica en Principios Bíblicos Bautistas
Cursos por Correspondencia para Nuevos Creyentes
Independiente Bíblica Misionera Fundamental
bethel_47@hotmail.es

Estudios por Internet

Instituto Bíblico de la Red de Radiodifusión Bíblica
www.bbnradio.org/WCM4/spanish
The Association of Church History Professors in Latin America – Asociación de Profesores de Historia de la Iglesia en Latinoamérica (APHILA) was founded in Costa Rica by a small group of Evangelical church historians who were concerned about serious deficiencies in the production, distribution, teaching and study of historical documents related to the History of the Protestant Movement in Latin America, especially in the Central American region. Therefore, at the initiative of Dr. Clifton L. Holland, Director of PROLADES, a board of directors was established in 2011 that included the following members:

President – Dr. Clifton L. Holland  
Vice-President – Dr. Jaime Prieto  
Secretary-Treasurer – Dr. Dorothy de Bullón

During a series of trips to other Central American countries during 2011-2012, Holland invited other Protestant church historians, professors and students of church history, and other interested persons (denominational executives and directors / deans of programs of theological education) to join APHILA. Therefore, the current membership (both formal and informal) included individuals in Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama at the end of 2012. Also, during CLADE V -- held in Costa Rica in July 2012 -- Holland and other APHILA members shared with interested persons from various countries of Latin America information about APHILA and its programs, projects and products, which are now available on the APHILA website at: [http://aphila-cam.net](http://aphila-cam.net)

**Historical Overview.** During the year 2011, Mr. Clifton L. Holland, director of the Latin American Socio-Religious Studies Program (PROLADES, founded in Costa Rica in 1977 by Holland) was in communication with evangelical leaders in the Central American region in order to encourage them to create a National Evangelical Church History Commission in each country of the region, with the support of PROLADES and technical advice offered by Holland. As a result of Holland’s visit to El Salvador and Guatemala in April 2011, he managed to establish direct and personal contacts with key leaders in each country interested in participating and collaborating with PROLADES’ program of historiography, which is now available on the Internet as a medium of communication and dissemination of information among people in every country. For more information about this program, please visit this page of the Internet at: [http://www.prolades.com/historiografia/historiografia_home.htm](http://www.prolades.com/historiografia/historiografia_home.htm)

In September 2011, Holland succeeded in establishing a National Costa Rican Evangelical Church History Commission with the support of more than one dozen evangelical leaders of different denominations and institutions academics (colleges and theological seminaries). By January 18, 2012, about 30 people had participated in the monthly meetings of this Commission, among them leaders of 19 Protestant institutions, 13 historians and six professors of church history. In addition, Holland re-established contacts by telephone and e-mail with evangelical leaders in Nicaragua and Honduras, with whom he had collaborated on research and documentation projects since the 1970s. The result of this effort was positive to enlist the support of officers of several Evangelical institutions in Nicaragua and Honduras, including the rector of the Universidad Evangélica Nicaragüense Martin Luther King, Jr., in Managua and the director of the Church History program of this university. In Honduras, Holland won the support of officials
of the Honduran Evangelical Fellowship and directors of various programs of theological education. During June 2012, Holland travelled to Panama for 8 days to contact Evangelical leaders, especially denominational officials and directors of programs of theological education, to continue to build this Central America network of national church history commissions and to invite those interested to join APHILA.

During several meetings of the National Costa Rican Evangelical Church History Commission, its members discussed the possibility of establishing fraternal relationships with "church historians and professors of church history" in other Central American countries and of cooperating with them in various tasks of common interest. The result of this dialogue was the creation of the Association of Professors of Church History in Latin America (APHILA), Central America branch, and the later development of APHILA Website serves as a bridge between the national church history commissions.

Source: [http://aphila-cam.net/](http://aphila-cam.net/)

During 2011-2012, Dorothy de Bullón and Clifton Holland worked on producing an update on the Directory of Protestant Theological Education Programs in Central America, first produced by the PROLADES Team in the mid-1980s. Here is an overview comparison of these two editions:

### Resumen Estadístico 1984 / 2012

<table>
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Also see: Directory of Christian Colleges and Universities in Latin America
Monday, August 03, 2009; 72 Pages
Data provided by the Global Christian Higher Education Research Project - a collaborative project by IAPCHE, the Nagel Institute for the study of world Christianity and Baylor University.

Source: [http://www.iapche.org/GCHE%20Website%20Files/Latin%20America/Latin%20America3.pdf](http://www.iapche.org/GCHE%20Website%20Files/Latin%20America/Latin%20America3.pdf)
**IAPCHE is a network of institutions and individuals worldwide** committed to advancing Christian education through training, capacity building, scholarship, and networking in ways that reflect both the universal (shared view of Christ’s centrality in our identity and work) and the local (attending to the specific realities and practices of where and who we serve). It was founded in 1975 in South Africa with the aim of bringing together reformed higher education institutions through networking and mutual exchange. Over the years IAPCHE became more and more ecumenical as it spread its networks to all corners of the world and drew members from different denominations and countries. **Today it has regional offices in Costa Rica, India, and Kenya, and the head office is located at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA.** IAPCHE is run by an executive director who reports to a ten-member board representing Africa, Asia/Oceania, Europe, **Latin America**, and North America.

**The purpose of IAPCHE,** an organization of individuals and institutions, is to serve Jesus as Lord by fostering, worldwide, the development of integral Christian higher education through networking and related academic activity.

Source: [http://iapche.org/wordpress/](http://iapche.org/wordpress/)

**For a list of members of IAPCHE in Latin America and the Caribbean, see:** [http://www.iapche.org/search/index.php?region=Latin%20America&individuals=yes&affiliates=yes&institutions=yes&action=find](http://www.iapche.org/search/index.php?region=Latin%20America&individuals=yes&affiliates=yes&institutions=yes&action=find)

![James De Borst, Director Latin American Region](image)

**(via the Institute for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education in Costa Rica, appointed in 2010)**

E-mail: jpadilladeborst@gmail.com
Skype: jpadilladeborst

**IAPCHE’s Continued Collaboration with AMECES**

The Mexican Association of Christian Schools of Higher Education (AMECES, Asociación Mexicana de Escuelas Cristianas de Educación Superior) has been working in promoting education from a distinctively Christian perspective. In this sense and consistent with its objectives, AMECES has been establishing and developing strong ties with the National Union of Church Teachers (UNMI, Unión Nacional de Maestros de Iglesia), which is supported by the Ministry of Education of the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico. Recently, AMECES
collaborated actively with the UNMI in the planning of their Seventh National Congress of Education “Christian Responsibility in Education: Scopes and Challenges in the threshold of twenty-first century”, held in the central city of Querétaro, MEXICO, in July 28-31, 2011. During this event, more than 100 Christian Teachers gathered to participate in workshops and keynote talks addressed by distinguished scholars and active members of AMECES and IAPCHE.

**New IAPCHE Board Member: Dr. H. Fernando Bullon, PhD**

Dr. H. Fernando Bullon is a Peruvian-born scholar living in Costa Rica since 1991, where he is professor at the Universidad Evangélica de las Americas (UNELA) and at the Seminario Nazareno de las Americas (SENDAS). His work links mission, ethics, social sciences and development, and has lectured in various countries of Latin America and the Hispanic Caribbean region (Mexico, all of Central America, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Cuba, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico). He is also a member of the adjunct faculty of the Latin American Doctoral Program (PRODOLA) coordinated from Pasadena CA, USA; of the Master on Organizational Leadership for Latin America, of The Campolo College of Eastern University, Philadelphia; and a consultant for research of the Doctoral Program for Latin America of the Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City.

Dr. Bullon has interdisciplinary training combining the fields of agroindustrial engineering (B.Sc. & Lic. Eng.), anthropology (Dip.), economics (MSc), educational administration (MA), and Latin American studies (D.Phil). He earned his doctorate (Ph.D., 1991) in the Faculty of Economic and Social Studies, University of Manchester, and did specialized studies in Theology and Development at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS), both in Britain. In the 1970s he was a pastoral worker of the Association of Evangelicals University Groups of Peru (AGEUP), associated to the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES); he served first as General Secretary and later as Director of the Program of Service and Social Action, creating and leading the Huaylas Project in the Andean region of Peru – an initiative for training in Christian professional service. In the first part of the 1980s he served as university professor in economics and as pastor of a local church in Lima. In the second part of the 1980s he served as director of PROESA, a regional development project in the northern Peruvian Andes.

He is a member of the Latin American Theological Fellowship and was a member of its Continental Board from 2000-2008. He is the author of “Theological and Technical Approaches about Development in Latin America” (World Vision, 1995), “Mission and Development in Latin America: Challenges on the Threshold of the 21st Century” (Kairos, 2000), “Christian Mission and Social Responsibility “(a three-volume work, Kairos, 2009), and co-author of other books on development and education as well as being a speaker at various international events.

**Research on Protestant Social Thought in Latin America**

Dr. Fernando Bullon from the Universidad Evangélica de las Americas (UNELA), in Costa Rica, concluded a research in the program of Latin American Studies at the National University of Costa Rica. The topic of the research was “The Protestant social thought in relation to the Latin American debate on Development.” The main purpose of this research was to investigate the social thought underlying the Latin American Protestant sector, within the context of the post 1960 debate on development, in order to identify some of its most relevant features, its contri-
bution to the Latin American Social thought, its limitations, and contradictions. The research analyses the different theories and current thinking regarding the development of the region, specifically from within the specialized field of Development Studies. The post 1960 period is divided in two main sub periods, marked by the historic changes at the world level that occurred at the end of the 1980s. An analysis of the contributions and limitations of every main development theory is made as well as an interpretation of the whole debate.

A panoramic vision of the development of Protestantism since its more significant presence in the continent at the beginning of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century is provided along with a general understanding of the main subsectors of which it is composed, the characteristics of its thought with reference to social issues and its contribution to the development of key sectors of society. Likewise, referencing important Latin American authors, Bullon carries out an initial evaluation of status questions with reference to the perspectives of the whole Protestantism in the post 1960s period. Further, the study looks at two selected subsectors of Protestantism – the ecumenical and the evangelical churches – attempting to see, first the interrelations between the world context and the regional context. This is followed by the development of social thought in each case, taking into account their relationship to the social thinking of the epoch within their representative movements and institutions, but especially in some of their most known thinkers. Through this process the study highlights discussions and tensions between the studied subsectors and the general context of the debate.

The study concludes that the post 1960 Latin American context generated the appropriate climate for the discussion and interaction of diverse ideologies and development theories; that the thinkers of both subsectors of Protestantism (ecumenical and evangelical) involved in the debates on development from their particular theological stances, gave their contribution, and were also immersed within the constant movement of paradigm shifts that occurred in those times, although with differences of approach and style. From a long-range perspective, Protestantism has contributed to the thinking as well as the social development of Latin American nations. Moreover in spite of some divergent perspectives regarding its future, Protestantism appropriately assumed, in line with its best historic antecedents and taking into account comparative studies at world level, an alternative means of contributing to better development for Latin America.

\textbf{Institute for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education: } We serve as catalysts for the creation and consolidation of a learning community of students, professors, administrators, institutions and alumni in Latin America that contextualize a Kingdom worldview in the area of higher education and in their professions, and intentionally connect to their local churches for the transformation of their societies.

\textbf{Building on existing programs and projects and in partnership with IAPCHE, UNELA, the Latin American Theological Fellowship and others}, the Institute hopes to help bring Christian faculty together for mutual support and development, to foster the publication of books by Latin American authors, to contribute to the strengthening of Christian universities, to encourage able people to rethink curriculum so that educational practice contributes to transformation, and to facilitate South-North exchange and learning.
FTL. Latin American Theological Fraternity – Fraternidad Latinoamericana de Teología

President: Jorge Henrique Barro - jorge@ftsa.edu.br - http://www.ftl-al.org/

Jorge Henrique Barro holds a Bachelor’s degree in theology and a doctorate in Inter-Cultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He is one of the founders of the South American Theological College in Londrina, Paraná, Brazil, where he currently teaches. He is a writer, lecturer and researcher in the area of urban mission and pastoral theology.

FTL History, a Bird’s-Eye View

By Dr. Sydney Rooy

Uncertain times to the south of the Rio Grande spawned the call for responsible discipleship to a diverse group of Christian leaders. Many of their countries had fallen to military dictatorships fearful of losing elite hegemony over a restless and still largely voiceless multitude. Under the guise of rooting out the Red tide, social workers, union organizers, protesting students, and poor men’s clergy, were mercilessly pursued, tortured, and sometimes made to “disappear”.

Meanwhile, the Protestant movement was rapidly growing. The masses, disenchanted with the official Roman Catholic acquiescence in this purge of the poor man’s defenders, were seeking other options for life’s ultimate answers to their immediate needs. Some spiritual leaders, also among the Protestants, pointed to final spiritual rewards, with suffering as the gateway to eternal bliss. They did not protest to temporal leaders or publicly struggle against the economic and military stranglehold on the poor. To do so invited blacklisting and uncertain retribution.

In this context, a mass Protestant conference of Latin American leaders was held in October of 1969 in Bogotá. One of the 25 speeches, given by Samuel Escobar, was on the “Social Responsibility of the Christian”. He touched a responsive chord among many of those present, bringing to the surface the underlying existent tensions between those who called for soul salvation as the primary task of the church and those who sought a more integral kingdom-oriented vision of evangelism. In spontaneous conversations a group decided to call for a meeting the following year in Cochabamba, Bolivia, to discuss the authority of the Scriptures and their interpretation in the evangelistic calling of the church. There the Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana (FTL) was born, and a broad representation of Latin American leaders were invited to participate.

From this humble beginning under the leadership of Samuel Escobar, René Padilla, Peter Savage, Pedro Arana, Emilio Antonio Nuñez, Orlando Costas, Rolando Gutierrez, and others, the FTL defined its calling to integrate the gospel message into the culture and reality of the Latin American context. Rather than accepting the imposition of foreign criteria, grass-roots reflection, vigorous dialogue, and local publications stimulated a mediating theology in the then polarized ecclesiastical context. Situated between the more ecumenically oriented CLAI (Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias) and the personal and mass evangelism oriented CONELA (Confraternidad Evangélica Latinoamericana), the FTL counted not only participants from both, but as much or more from those who identified with neither.

From 1972 the FTL edited its quarterly Boletín Teológico, in which many members wrestled with contemporary contextual issues from an integral mission vision. To deepen the cross cultural and pan-American dialogue, numerous regional and continental conferences contributed to broaden horizons. Chiefly the continuing CLADE (Conferencia Latinoamericana De Evangelización) gatherings provided a meeting ground for the diverse interpretative currents and stimulated the formation of consensus documents on significant evangelism and social issues. The value of indigenous perspectives,
the role of women in theology and life, liberation theology, political participation, social and family ethics, incarnational evangelism, peace and justice issues, . . . all demanded and received appropriate consideration. Much of this material can be found in the extensive and continuing publications of Ediciones Kairos, in Buenos Aires, under the editorship of René Padilla.

Perhaps the most important of the Conferences was CLADE III, held in Quito, Ecuador, in 1992, with over a thousand participants from nearly every country in Latin America. Nearly three hundred were from various indigenous communities. At this conference for the first time, the respective presidents, the executive secretary, and the secretary of evangelism of the two representative international organizations CLAI and CONELA shared in a public forum of dialogue on the basic issues of evangelism and missions. The Bible studies and the diversity of concerns were related to the general theme: “Todo el evangelio desde América Latina para todos los pueblos” (“The whole Gospel from Latin America for all Peoples”). The resulting consensus document, approved by the overwhelming majority of delegates, remains one of the classic historic statements on evangelism and missions produced by the Latin American Church.

The FTL is a loosely knitted association of national groups which determine their own agenda, frequency of meeting, and themes of discussion. Written study papers are usually presented with a view to publication and wider distribution. International membership calls for a written paper, which is presented to the local group, a recommendation from that group to the General Board, and the payment of a nominal annual quota. The FTL is governed by a geographically and denominationally representative Board elected every four years, whose work is directed by the General Secretary, at present Ruth Padilla DeBorst. Membership in our continent has consistently remained at several hundred adherents. However, its participation in national, regional, and international meetings, as well as diverse other activities, extends the network of its influence significantly. resulting consensus document, approved by the overwhelming majority of delegates, remains one of the classic historic statements on evangelism and missions produced by the Latin American Church.

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A REFLECTION ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

EL BOSQUE DE LA EDUCACIÓN TEOLÓGICA
Por José Duque

V Asamblea General
Buenos Aires, 19-25 de febrero de 2007

¿Qué tienen que ver el bosque tropical y la educación teológica? Pues bien, en este corto ensayo deseo mostrar la relación de estos dos componentes como parte de una misma realidad. Esto lo intento mezclando una aproximación a la realidad ambiental con una metáfora. El marco donde introduje estas ideas fue el Congreso Ecuménico, en el cual participaron más de cien estudiantes de teología en representación de todos los continentes y de una gran variedad de iglesias, de nacionalidades, de etnias y razas. Los organizadores se esmeraron porque la participación de mujeres y varones fuera equilibrada. Por lo tanto, dicho Congreso constituyó una de las experiencias ecuménicas más profundas para quienes participamos en él, un modelo de encuentro que todo estudiante de teología debiera experimentar alguna vez en su vida. El aprendizaje que lograron los y las estudiantes durante la convivencia social, el estudio, la espiritualidad y el encuentro cultural marcará, sin duda, su vida para siempre. En todo este encuentro del Congreso de compartir para desarrollar la sabiduría, también participaron 48 exponentes de las áreas de la cultura, la teología y de muchas ciencias humanas.

Resumo así las ideas que compartí en el Congreso Ecuménico: la primera fue una corta mirada panorámica sobre la educación teológica en América Latina y el Caribe. Esta idea, que no incluyo en este resumen, la limité, sobre todo, a partir de las Asociaciones de la región, como la Asociación de Seminarios Teológicos Evangélicos (ASTE), la Asociación de Instituciones Teológicas (ASIT), la Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana y Caribeña (CETELA), la Asociación Latinoamericana de Instituciones Evangélicas de Teología (ALIET) y la Asociación de Escuelas Teológicas del Caribe (AETC). La segunda idea que compartí, aprovechando que estábamos en Brasil, contexto ideal para pensar en el significado de la Amazonía para la humanidad y para toda la creación, fue la de introducir el tema de la realidad de los bosques tropicales, su impacto y amenazas. Una tercera idea fue la realidad nefasta de la deforestación como contaminación ambiental, natural y cultural. Seguidamente recalcamos en la idea de que es posible revertir el proceso de deterioro, si asumimos la tarea profética, teológica y pastoral de hacerlo. Finalmente, llamo la atención por medio de una metáfora de los viveros de la educación teológica para recrear el bosque de Dios.

Los bosques tropicales

Como sabemos gracias al trabajo científico, los bosques tropicales, que sobrepasan los mil millones de hectáreas, han requerido de millones de años para desarrollarse y proporcionar un hábitat equilibrado, no solo para la flora, sino también para la fauna y con ella, para todas las formas de vida, incluida la de la humanidad. En América Latina y el Caribe, los bosques tropicales constituyen una franja que cubre desde el sur de México hasta la Amazonía Boliviana. Es decir, paralela a la línea ecuatorial. Estas selvas, predominantemente lluviosas, albergan hasta 300 distintas especies de árboles por hectárea y algunos de sus árboles tienen alturas de hasta de 70 metros. Pero los bosques tropicales no solamente son vegetación, entre ellos existe también la mayor biodiversidad del planeta. La fauna alberga en ellos gran variedad de insectos, aves, mamíferos, reptiles y anfibios. La Amazonía, como zona tropical, considerada el mayor “pulmón” del planeta tierra, también posee las cuencas acuíferas más abundantes del globo terráqueo. Los bosques tropicales son también el mayor de los sofisticados, aromáticos y coloridos jardines, por lo tanto estos son una maravilla no cuantificable de la creación.
Una maravilla amenazada

Pero los bosques tropicales están siendo destruidos aceleradamente por una racionalidad perversa, es decir, irracional. En América Central ya han sido talados el 60% de los bosques tropicales, sobre todo para destinar tierras al cultivo de pastos destinados a la ganadería para exportar carne para hacer hamburguesas en los Estados Unidos. Según los científicos, entre 1960 y el 1990, es decir en solo treinta años, se exterminó el 20% de todos los bosques tropicales del mundo. Pero los científicos estiman que a ese ritmo, la destrucción para el año 2004 alcanzaría el 50% de esos bosques. Es decir, que en aproximadamente 50 años se destruyó la mitad de las fuentes de vida que habían requerido millones de años para desarrollarse. Con esta irracional conducta estamos destruyendo una maravillosa casa, cuya construcción ha sido un regalo de gracia para la humanidad.

Causal destructiva

Está ampliamente demostrado que la deforestación constituye una de las causas directas más destructivas del mundo verde y animal. Pero la deforestación tiene muchas causas, entre las cuales podemos destacar el modelo económico que centró su prioridad en producir para exportar. Esta razón instrumental dio rienda suelta a la exportación de la ganadería y de la agricultura, tanto como de las maderas. Este vino a ser el modelo para el Tercer Mundo, que incluía explotar y exportar sus recursos naturales. Esa fue la receta para el desarrollo: explotar y exportar para crecer económicamente. Entonces se abrieron las puertas para explotación y exportación de minerales y de las reservas petroleras. Pero la deforestación también se rellenó con monocultivos, acompañados de sus respectivos abonos químicos y plaguicidas que han contaminado el aire y las cuencas hidrográficas. Insistimos en que ese modelo de explotación está sustentado en una causa subyacente, cual es la razón instrumental para animar el consumismo y la acumulación. Es decir, con este modelo de producción, la sustentabilidad de la vida ya no fue una prioridad; para la razón instrumental, la prioridad se orientó hacia la tasa de ganancia. Con esto, el criterio ético crítico se retiró de la mesa de negocios y también se retiraron de ella los criterios de justicia, equidad, sustentabilidad y dignidad de la naturaleza entera y del ser humano.

La razón instrumental ha creado también una conciencia pasiva en los individuos y en las instituciones sociales. Las iglesias han sido pasivas, los gobiernos han sido pasivos, la sociedad en general ha sido pasiva. Para la educación teológica, lo peor es que también los seminarios son pasivos. Quizá hay algo más que pasividad, no hay pastoreo, hay un claro descuido y abandono de las responsabilidades pastorales para con el prójimo y para con la creación. Debido a este descuido y pasividad, la contaminación natural y cultural sigue haciendo estragos casi irreparables. Pero “¡Ay de los pastores de Israel, que se apacientan a sí mismos! ...No fortalecisteis las ovejas débiles, ni curasteis la enferma; no vendasteis la perniquebrada, ni volvisteis al redil la descarriada...” (Ez. 34: 2ss).

Contaminación de la naturaleza y de las culturas

La destrucción de los bosques por la lógica de la razón instrumental ha producido efectos desastrosos, casi irreparables. Podemos decir que la deforestación produce una grave contaminación, tanto en la naturaleza como en las culturas. Por ejemplo, para los pueblos que han habitado los bosques tropicales por siglos, la deforestación implica la pérdida de sus culturas. Al quebrarse el equilibrio en los bosques, se quiebra la cultura de los pueblos que han tenido los bosques como su casa; esto significa que se acaba con las formas de alimentación propias, que se pierde la medicina natural que han desarrollado, se cambia el uso de los recursos energéticos acostumbrados se extinguen sus propias lenguas y las expresiones espirituales de sus cultivadas tradiciones. Entonces, quebrada la cultura en los bosques, estos pueblos están obligados a emigrar hacia las ciudades, donde la contaminación cultural aumenta en términos de desempleo, desnutrición, prostitución, hacinamiento y complejos de inferioridad.
La contaminación cultural también impacta en la región y no solo en los pueblos que viven en los bosques. Sin bosques no se puede conservar el agua, se erosionan los suelos, aparecen plagas, proliferan las enfermedades. Además, al disminuirse los drenajes se producen inundaciones o sequías prolongadas. Todos estos males no se agotan en lo local, sino que la deforestación y la contaminación cultural también producen impactos extremadamente negativos en el ámbito global. Según los científicos, la deforestación y la contaminación están produciendo acelerados calentamientos climáticos. Además, múltiples formas de vida tanto en la flora como en la fauna están condenadas a la extinción.

Pero la contaminación cultural producida por el criterio del lucro, no solo destruye los bosques: también está produciendo catástrofes sociales sin precedentes. En América Latina, la contaminación cultural se extiende ahora hacia los países ricos, con oleadas de emigrantes; según los últimos datos, en los Estados Unidos viven once millones de indocumentados, quienes ahora alzan su voz para pedir justicia y gritar: “no somos terroristas”. Esto sucede, porque en la región acumulamos 220 millones de pobres. También en nuestra región, acumulamos casi cien millones de indigentes. Y si sumamos la población catalogada como pobre más la población indigente hablamos de más del sesenta por ciento de la población total de la región. Esto es, de casi dos tercios de nuestra población total. Se dice que en América Latina y el Caribe tres de cada cinco niños trabajan y lo hacen en condiciones insalubres, aunque debieran estar en la escuela.

La contaminación cultural incluye también la discriminación étnica, racial, de género, de generación y, por supuesto, la discriminación de clase. Pero un dato más trágico aún es que en el sistema capitalista neoliberal actual se niega la sensibilidad solidaria a favor de los y las “pequeñitas”. Se niega la solidaridad y toda posibilidad alternativa en favor de la enorme población marginada y excluida. Es más, se niega la solidaridad y se abre la posibilidad de transformarla en una ‘fuerza diabólica’. De esta manera, además de talar caobas, cedros, taguis, arrayanes, ceibas y demás distinguidas variedades de árboles, la deforestación cultural ha talado árboles-profetas como Francisco Chico Mendes, o como Monseñor Arnulfo Romero y miles y miles de árboles mártires ecologistas, educadoras, defensores de los Derechos Humanos y pastores y pastoras en todos los ministerios que claman justicia y paz para la integridad de la creación. Porque la contaminación cultural, además de talar bosques, reprime, excluye, margina y explota.

Revertir el proceso de destrucción: Una buena noticia y una tarea

La situación que acabamos de esbozar a medias, es crítica y caótica pero no es definitiva. Porque según los científicos, hay una buena noticia que consiste en saber que no solo es posible frenar el ritmo de contaminación y destrucción de la naturaleza y con ello el de la humanidad, sino que también se puede revertir. Esto significa, como punto de partida, aceptar que la precariedad del medio ambiente natural y cultural no se halla fuera de nosotros, que nosotros somos arte y parte de tal desequilibrio. Así que es necesario, para empezar a frenar y revertir tal situación, aceptar que somos parte del problema; entonces, debemos empezar a pensar y organizar proyectos con los cuales solucionarlo. En ese sentido, entendemos que se trata de un proyecto que se encamina a recrear un enorme bosque natural y cultural que recupere los espacios tropicales, así como los polares. Es decir, no se trata de un proyecto para salvar solo el trópico, sino de un proyecto que incluya la integridad de la creación.

Sin embargo, la creación del bosque cultural que está en nuestro horizonte es un proyecto ético que requiere empezar con viveros y huertas a lo largo y ancho de la desolada región. Para ello hay que empezar a buscar en las raíces de las culturas indígenas, racistas, mestizas y cristianas las semillas que aún permanecen esperando un vivero para brotar hacia la vida.
Los viveros de la educación teológica

Afinando nuestras visiones de fe, podemos ver en el ambiente ecológico actual de nuestra región, la conformación de múltiples viveros nuevos. Se trata de novedosos y diversos viveros o huertas orientadas hacia el cultivo de otro bosque tropical, con el cual se logre limpiar la contaminación ambiental, biológica y cultural, para recrear la integridad de la vida de la creación. En el horizonte de estos esperanzadores viveros, similares a las huertas del Edén, se perfila el cultivo de una vegetación paradisíaca, como señales, anticipos y primicias de los cielos y tierra nueva anunciada desde la antigüedad por los profetas como aquella que citó Isaías: “Porque yo crearé nuevos cielos y tierra nueva; y de lo primero ya no habrá memoria” (Is. 21:17ss)

Los viveros sobre los que atestiguamos, de donde nace la mayor diversidad de árboles, incluidos el árbol de la vida y el árbol de la ciencia del bien y del mal (Gn. 2:9) porque este es un bosque de libertad creado para crecer, multiplicar y fructificar hasta llenar toda la tierra. Será allí donde se albergará, alimentará y sostendrá en plena salud toda clase de especies vivientes de los reinos vegetal, animal y mineral, que en su conjunto conformarán el soñado bosque de la vida. El bosque de Dios.

En este bosque de la vida volverán a fluir en todas las direcciones ríos cristalinos, enormes humedales y mares majestuosos, donde se zambullirán alegres peces de todos los colores, tamaños y especies, incluidos los grandes monstruos marinos. La belleza y la felicidad de este bosque tropical nuevo constata la justicia y el equilibrio logrados con creces en ese medio, por el fruto del amor. En ese ambiente no se oirán nunca más voces de llanto, ni clamores desgarradores, no habrá más tristeza, ni dolor. En su medio no habrá jamás huérfanos, viudas, refugiados, ni desplazados; tampoco habrá emigrantes ni exiliados; mucho menos, nadie que trabaje en vano. La niñez jugará placenteramente con todas las fieras y serpientes, y nadie saldrá lastimado. Los ancianos compartirán la sabiduría y vivirán como los días de los árboles. Este será un bosque repleto de flores, aromas, sabores y sonidos maravillosos; en él no habrá frío ni calor, y la desnudez será un adorno. El amor será más dulce que la miel, y su dulzura permanecerá para siempre.

Tales viveros no son otra cosa que semilleros de tierra fértil, digamos aldeas donde el culto cultivará la cultura de la vida plena. Cultivará la cultura basada en el equilibrio, la tolerancia, la equidad, la justicia, es decir, el amor. De la misma manera, el conocimiento allí cultivado redundará en sabiduría, porque se trata de un saber sabio que da sabor a la vida. Sí: los viveros son semilleros conocidos en la educación teológica como seminarios, donde los seminaristas y las seminaristas son las semillas de la simiente de Abraham cargados de fe. Estos vienen a ser como árboles plantados a las orillas del agua, donde echan sus raíces y un follaje frondoso, y donde la sequía pasará inadvertida (Jer. 17: 7ss). Así que cada seminarista tiene, cual árbol frondoso, un lugar en el bosque de la vida para dar mucho fruto, porque “El fruto del justo es árbol de vida” (Pr. 11:30).

Los seminarios serán, entonces, los lugares de donde saldrán árboles suficientes para irradiar de vida toda la faz de la tierra que ha sido llevada “al caos y confusión y oscuridad por encima del abismo” (Gn. 1:1). Los seminarios, institutos y facultades de teología se han constituido en sementeras para que de nuevo “produzca la tierra vegetación: hierbas que den semillas y árboles frutales que den fruto según su especie” (Gn.1:11). En este bosque de Dios, la diversidad de especies incluye como mínimo, aquellas que resultan de la condición de género, etnia, raza, confesión, nación, generación.

Pero para que los viveros produzcan árboles que den frutos cada uno según su especie, hay que erradicar también la idea equivocada del mono-cultivo. El monocultivo excluye la biodiversidad y causa los mismos efectos que los de la deforestación. En la historia de la humanidad se han desarrollado muchos monocultivos culturales, engendros de dogmatismo y sectarismo: fascismos, nazismos, fundamentalismos, racismos, machismos Por esto, los viveros de la educación teológica son seminarios con espíritu
ecuménico, capaces de conformar el más variado y fecundo de los bosques: el bosque de la vida abundante y plena.

Eso sí, entre los árboles del bosque tropical, en cuanto son de diversas especies, ninguno de ellos se destacará por ser cabeza, ni centro, ni elite, ni mayor entre los demás de la flora; porque todos por igual tendrán la tarea, o de renovar el oxígeno, o de proporcionar la alimentación o la energía. Otros estarán allí para sanar, otros esparcirán las aromas, es decir, la arboleda en su conjunto equilibrará el más complejo y sustancioso hábitat. Eso sí, un árbol en soledad no hace un bosque, el bosque tropical lo constituye una múltiple variedad de especies que viven en comunión, es decir, que hacen comunidad. En ese bosque se restablecen múltiples relaciones de reciprocidad, como aquella de contribuir a la fecundación y expansión de las semillas, lo cual en muchos casos se da gracias al trabajo de los insectos y otros animales, los cuales las transportan de un lugar a otro.

Advertida está toda la arboleda que ha salido de los viveros restauradores del bosque de Dios, de que, mientras se logre el equilibrio definitivo, aún tendrá que afrontar tempestades, ciclones, huracanes y tormentas. Tendrá que lidiar con ellos, pero ya no serán una amenaza para el bosque, porque la fuerza de la comunión de este las controlará. No, estas inclemencias del tiempo no destruirán el bosque de Dios; al contrario, vendrán como insumos de energía, tanto para reacomodar el hábitat como para fortalecer la resistencia de los macizos troncos y dotarlos de las cualidades que los vuelven aptos para cuidar la integridad de la creación.

Así pues, los viveros serán como semilleros, es decir los seminarios donde se cultiven sabiamente las seminaristas y los seminaristas, que con su formación recrearán y cuidarán pastoreándolos, los nichos ecológicos, la sociedad sustentable, el prójimo, en especial los y las “pequeñitas”, como también su propio cuerpo. Allí, en el nuevo bosque de la aldea global, gracias al pastoreo mutuo, se moverá el Espíritu trascendiendo todas las formas de vida para despertar los más transformadores sueños utópicos.

Los viveros del bosque de Dios son, entonces, los seminarios ecuménicos, capaces de cultivar la Gracia en la integridad de la creación. De estos seminarios saldrán las semillas para cultivar los bosques de vida donde se pastoreará la humanidad y la integridad de la creación. Cada seminarista, hombre o mujer, es un árbol de la vida. “Será como árbol plantado junto a corrientes de aguas que da su fruto a su tiempo y tiene su follaje siempre verde, pues todo lo que él hace le resulta” (Sal. 1:3)

Este es, pues, el reto de la educación teológica: convertir las escuelas teológicas en viveros para recrear el bosque de Dios: el bosque de la vida.


Source: [http://www.claiweb.org/Signos%20de%20Vida%20-%20Nuevo%20Siglo/SdV40/el%20bosque%20de%20la%20educacion%20teologica.htm](http://www.claiweb.org/Signos%20de%20Vida%20-%20Nuevo%20Siglo/SdV40/el%20bosque%20de%20la%20educacion%20teologica.htm)
4.0 Denominational trends in theological education

Although in many countries of Latin America Protestant denominations and missionary societies have provided adequate programs and institutions of theological education for their pastors and church leaders, there is still a serious problem in some countries of failing to provide accredited programs at various academic levels, such as in the Republic of Panama. During a recent trip to Panama in June 2012, I visited with the directors and deans of several programs of theological education in Panama City, where I discovered that most of the existing Bible institutes, Bible schools and theological seminaries are providing academic instruction only at the high school level (colegio), including the Baptist Theological Seminary in La Chorrera, near Panama City. Although this seminary was established in the 1960s by the Panama Baptist Convention (CBP) with financial and personnel support of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board / Home Mission Board, its facilities are now being used mainly for offices, housing, and meeting rooms for conventions, retreats and other special activities for the CBP rather than for seminary classes because of a lack of students and funding. The only government approved and accredited program of Evangelical theological education in Panama is offered by the Theological Faculty of the Hosanna Christian University, which is sponsored by and meets on the campus of the Hosanna Christian Church in Panama City, affiliated with the General Conference of the Assemblies of God of Panama.

This situation speaks to the urgent need that exists in many Latin American countries to upgrade existing programs of theological education to include government approved and accredited programs of university-based theological education at the Licenciate and Master’s levels to better prepare the nation’s top Evangelical leaders, especially those who are denominational executives and those who are currently directing and teaching in the existing theological education programs. If the academic level of the directors, deans and professors in these institutions does not improve by acquiring accredited Licenciate and Master’s degrees, and even Doctoral level training and academic degrees, then the quality of education in the existing programs of theological education cannot be expected to improve and provide the knowledge and leadership training needed by the current generation and future generations of Protestant leaders.

Although advanced leadership training for Protestant pastors and church leaders is now available in some of the South American (Brazil, Argentina and Chile), Central American (Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica are leading the way in this region, while Honduras and Panama are lagging behind), and Caribbean countries (mainly Puerto Rico), Mexico, and the USA, the availability and cost of Licenciate, Master’s and Doctoral programs of theological education is beyond the reach of most Latin Americans in these countries without the financial assistance of their respective denominations and other scholarship funds.

One of the countries in serious need of outside assistance is Cuba, where a great need exists for textbooks for programs of theological education. Although some Evangelical leaders and directors of programs of theological education have access to e-mail accounts, most do not have Internet access and, therefore, are unable to download onto their computers available materials for their respective programs. APHILA, in collaboration with various programs of theological education in Central America are joining forces to provide needed textbooks and study materials to their brethren in Cuba by producing CDs and DVDs with recorded materials for this purpose.
5.0 Theological trends in general

The so-called liberal or “mainline” Protestant denominations and independent churches in Latin America have led the way in the area of theological innovations since 1900 due to the influence of theological modernism (Liberalism as opposed to Fundamentalism), acquiring higher education, experiencing upward social mobility, especially in urban areas, and learning to survive and provide leadership to their parishioners in the social and political spheres of the developing world in the new global economy. The liberal wing of the Protestant movement in Latin America has become more sophisticated and organized than their conservative counterparts due to their participation in the worldwide ecumenical movement through their membership in the Latin American Council of Churches – Concilio Latinoamericano de Iglesias (CLAI), which is a member of the World Council of Churches (WCC). As we mentioned previously, the WCC, through its Theological Education Fund, has provided a large amount of financial and organizational assistance to theological education programs and institutions in Latin America.

Most of the liberal Protestant denominations and independent churches in Latin America are part of the following major traditions: Lutherans, Reformed-Presbyterian-Congregational, and Anglican-Episcopal Families of Denominations. However, some of the denominations that originated in the European Free Church Movement have also adopted liberal-modernist beliefs and practices, such as the Waldesian Church, the Moravian Church, the United Methodist Church, and the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas within the Pietist Family of Denominations; American Baptist Churches in the USA and a few others (Baptist Family of Denominations); the Christian Church / Disciples of Christ (Restoration Movement Family of Churches); as well as several Union Churches that were created as mergers within these liberal traditions, etc.

It was in this liberal wing of the Protestant movement that the Protestant variety of the Theology of Revolution (Marxist and Socialist thinking) and the Roman Catholic variety of the Theology of Liberation (based on a Marxist critique of history and socioeconomic development) took root in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s in ecumenical circles.

One of the most stirring moments of the World Conference on Church and Society held in Geneva in 1966 was during the third plenary session on 14th July. For that evening the subject was ‘The Challenge and Relevance of Theology to the Social Revolutions of our Time’. It had been chosen with some hesitation by the preparatory Committee; for although the relevance of the subjects on the first and second evenings—the technological and social revolutions of our time—was clear to all the delegates, the importance of a ‘theological revolution’ seemed simply incommensurable in comparison with the others. However, this evening proved to be a real challenge to the Conference (and also in its repercussions on the social-theological thinking in the ecumenical movement) and its influence on the discussions afterwards was lasting and varied. The ‘theology of revolution’ presented itself as an extremely burning issue for ecumenism.

Source: http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract;jsessionid=8F198658E25CF1CF07DE61BF08B7E28C.journals?fromPage=online&aid=3354620
MANY WRITERS have seen anticipations of the characteristic elements of “liberation theology” in writings by Latin American theologians in the early and middle 1960s. Such elements can be found, for example, in the earlier writings of Juan Luis Segundo S.J., a Uruguayan Jesuit. In 1962, Segundo published an essay in Spanish, "The Function of the Church in the River Plate," which developed a dialectical vision of the church as a small community in tension with the mass society of modernity but continually engaged with it in a common struggle of transformation. Others have pointed to the World Council of Churches' Conference on Church and Society, "The Christian in the Technical and Social Revolutions of Our Time," held in Geneva in June 1966—in particular, to the call by Richard Shaull, then a professor at the Princeton Theological Seminary, for a “theology of revolution” that could be applied to the urgent needs of Latin America (in particular to Brazil, where he had taught for a number of years). However, the clearest beginning of the new line of theological speculation is in the writings of Gustavo Gutiérrez in the period leading up to and following the 1968 Medellin meeting of the Latin American bishops. What the meeting did was to legitimate a new kind of Catholic radicalism in Latin America that could now cite the official statements of the bishops in support of their arguments.

Even before the end of the Second Vatican Council there had been meetings of theologians who were concerned to develop a theologically grounded response to the problems of Latin America. In 1964 at a meeting in Petropolis, Brazil (which was also attended by Segundo), Gutiérrez first presented his conception of theology as scripturally based critical reflection on experience (praxis), and he outlined similar ideas to a group of Catholic student leaders in 1967. A more developed version, "Towards a Theology of Liberation," was presented at a meeting in Chimbote, Peru, in July 1968 shortly before Medellin, but it was only after Medellin that his ideas began to receive wide attention. He was himself in attendance at the Medellin meeting and he influenced some of the texts that were finally adopted.

Thus there was something of a circular process at work in which the ideas associated with liberation theology were developed before the Medellin meeting, the bishops at Medellin adopted certain key elements and phrases, and then the bishops in turn were cited to give additional legitimacy to the new theological currents.


Whereas the majority of the conservative non-Pentecostal denominations and independent churches in Latin America have not changed their basic theology and lifestyle (some may be called socio-religious “island” communities -- such as the more conservative Mennonite (Amish-Mennonite Family of Churches), Baptist (Baptist Family of Churches), Holiness Family of Churches), Plymouth Brethren (Independent Fundamentalist Family of Churches), independent Christian churches and churches of Christ (Restoration Movement Family of Churches), and Adventist churches (Adventist Family of Churches) -- in more than 50-60 years due to their conservative, fundamentalist and separatist-isolationist stance toward the modern world and other denominations, there has been significant change in the basic orientation, theology and life-style of many Pentecostal denominations and independent churches as a result of new theological trends in Latin America. Most of the non-Pentecostal denominations and independent churches have rejected these new theological trends with the exception of the Charismatic Renewal Movement, which greatly impacted some of these conservative and
moderate non-Pentecostal groups beginning in the late 1960s as well as some of the more liberal denominations.

Some of the countries in Latin America most affected by the Charismatic Renewal Movement (CRM) were Argentina, Brazil and Costa Rica during the 1960s and 1970s in terms of its impact on some conservative Evangelical denominations and churches, both non-Pentecostal and Pentecostal groups, due to the nature of its origin in these countries. Rather than detailing the origin and development of the CRM in Latin America in this document, I would like to refer the reader to a series of studies on this topic, which are available on my website at: http://www.prolades.com/documents/charismatics/charismatic-docs.htm

Many of the conservative Evangelical denominations and independent churches in Latin America are now members of interdenominational “evangelical alliances,” federations, councils or “fellowships” in their respective countries, although in some cases there are two or more interdenominational fraternal organizations that have development because of theological or political differences between these organizations.

For example, in Nicaragua during that nation’s civil war (1961-1979) when the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (known as FSLN in Spanish) waged a revolutionary struggle against the Liberal authoritarian regime of the Somoza family dynasty (1936-1979), many Evangelicals were divided in their political loyalties between support for the FSLN and the Somoza government that had the strong support of the U.S. Government, USAID and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The FSLN-led revolt overthrew the Somoza Government in July 1979 and formed a coalition government with several other political parties that had also opposed the Somoza dynasty; this Sandinista-led government was in power from 1979-1990, but not without great difficulties. In this context, the FSLN-sympathizers were among the supporters of CEPAD (a national Evangelical relief and development agency that was organized following the disastrous Managua earthquake of 1972) and RIPEN (the Pastoral-Social Action Department of CEPAD), whereas sympathizers of the Somoza regime and of the later Contra rebellion (counter-revolutionary military forces trained, armed and supplied by the U.S. Military and the CIA between 1981 and the early 1990s) organized themselves as CNPEN (National Council of Evangelical Pastors in Nicaragua - Concilio Nacional de Pastores Evangélicos en Nicaragua) in August 1981.

In the context of Central America, every country has established these kinds of interdenominational fraternal organizations, and in some cases the differences are between the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal denominations and local churches that have formed separate fraternal organizations. In Central America, the major interdenominational fraternal organizations are: the Evangelical Alliance of Guatemala, the Evangelical Alliance of Honduras, the Evangelical Alliance of El Salvador, CEPAD-RIPEN and CNPEN in Nicaragua, the Evangelical Alliance of Costa Rica, and the Evangelical Alliance of Panama.

This same polarization between the Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal denominations and independent churches has produced the creation of a multitude of similar interdenominational fraternal organizations in the larger Latin American counties, such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela in South America; Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic and Cuba in the Caribbean; and Mexico (part of North America). Also, it should be noted that the Adventist Family of Denominations does not participate in these interdenominational fraternal
organizations in any country of Latin America, nor do the majority of those who form part of the Independent Fundamentalist and Restoration Movement Families of Denominations. In several countries, there are fraternal organizations of Fundamentalist denominations and local churches, which do not participate in the national Evangelical alliances, federations, councils or fellowships; this is known to be the case in Mexico, Guatemala and Puerto Rico, for example.

Internationally, the moderate and conservative Evangelical denominations, local churches and their leaders in each country of Latin America have tended to affiliate with the Latin American Fellowship of Evangelicals – Confraternidad Evangélica Latinoamericana (CONELA) since its founding in April 1982 in the Republic of Panama, with logistical support from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. CONELA is affiliated with the World Evangelical Fellowship, now renamed the World Evangelical Alliance (WEF-WEC), founded in 1951.

Here is a link to an article that I wrote on CONELA that was published in Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices (second edition 2010 in six volumes): http://www.prolades.com/encyclopedia/articles/english/CONELA.pdf

Here is a link to an article that I wrote on CLAI that was published in Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices (second edition 2010 in six volumes): http://www.prolades.com/encyclopedia/articles/english/CLAI.pdf

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The Protestant Theological Spectrum in Latin America Today
A Model Created by Clifton L. Holland

RADICAL – LIBERAL – MODERATE – CONSERVATIVE – FUNDAMENTALIST

LIBERATION THEOLOGY ↔ CHARISMATIC RENEWAL MOVEMENT
(among Radicals & some Liberals) (among some Liberals, Moderates and Conservatives)

G-12 & RELATED CELL MOVEMENTS
PROSPERITY THEOLOGY
NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION
(among some Pentecostal denominations and independent Pentecostal churches)
Types of Protestant-Evangelical Churches in Latin America

Open/traditional Protestant-Evangelical

The so-called mainline Protestant Churches are broadly Evangelical but may not adhere to specific conservative doctrines or practices. They preach from the Bible and believe it to be very important, but may not hold so strongly to the sufficiency and ultimate authority of the Bible. They might have a more tolerant attitude to women in positions of leadership authority in the church. Many of them have a long denominational history of being moderate or liberal in theological, social and political spheres in their respective countries. They have a more intense and focused concern about social justice, racial-ethnic-gender equality, human rights and ecological-environmental issues in modern society. They are associated together in ecumenical fraternal organizations, such as CLAI and the WCC.

Conservative non-separatist Evangelical

This is the most numerous group in Latin America and includes both Evangelicals who are non-Pentecostal and Pentecostals, whose parent denominations and independent churches emerged with the Free Church movement in Europe and North America before their arrival in Latin America as the result of immigration or missionary work in each country prior to 1950. Also, this group is strongly represented in the founding of national denominations and independent churches that were derived from foreign denominations and/or missionary societies. They are conservative theologically and socially, but who want to work together in unity with those with a broadly similar theological, social and political prospective and agenda. They are the most active participants in the various Evangelical councils, federations or fellowships in each country, as well as in international organizations such as CONELA and WEF.

Conservative separatist Evangelical

This refers to the Fundamentalist wing of Evangelicalism in Latin America, who perceive of themselves as staunch defenders of Biblical truth and inerrancy, are uncompromising in their doctrinal beliefs and practices, and refuse to have fellowship with others who differ from their rigid positions, even when the “other believers” are within the same “Family of Churches” (such as the Baptist Family of Denominations and churches). The so-called “Primitive Baptists” or “hardshell Baptists” are strict and uncompromising Baptists, whereas “Landmark Baptists” believe in the exclusive validity of Baptist churches and invalidity of non-Baptist churchly acts. These groups profess to be non-Protestant Baptists who have always existed throughout church history and represent “a trail of blood” (blood-line) from the Apostolic era to the present time.

Landmarkism is a type of Baptist ecclesiology. The movement began in the Southern United States in 1851, influenced by James Robinson Graves of Tennessee. The movement was a reaction to religious progressivism earlier in the century. At the time it arose, its proponents claimed Landmarkism was a return to what Baptists had previously believed, while scholars since then have claimed it was "a major departure". In 1859, the Southern Baptist Convention approved several resolutions disapproving of Landmarkism leading adherents to withdraw gradually from
the Southern Baptist Convention "to form their own churches and associations and create an independent Landmark Baptist tradition.

**Landmark theology, or heritage theology**, is the belief among some independent Baptist churches that only local, independent Baptist congregations can truly be called “churches” in the New Testament sense. They believe that all other groups, and even most other Baptists, are not true churches because they deviate from the essentials of landmarkism. Those essentials are 1) church succession—a landmark Baptist church traces its “lineage” back to the time of the New Testament, usually to John the Baptist; 2) a visible church—the only church is a local (Baptist) body of believers; there is no such thing as a universal Body of Christ; 3) opposition to “pedobaptism” (sprinkling of infants) and “alien immersion” (any baptism not performed under the auspices of a landmark Baptist church)—all such baptisms are null and void. Another corollary belief is that only faithful landmark Baptists will comprise the true Bride of Christ.

**The Independent Fundamentalist Family of Churches** is the most representative of these groups, many of whom are anti-denominational and anti-missionary society, and only relate to other local churches in “fellowships” of independent or autochthonous churches. This is true of most of the Plymouth Brethren-type groups and those groups of churches that we have classified as part of the Restoration Movement of independent Christian churches and churches of Christ. Also, most of the denominations and churches that are part of the Adventist Family of Churches belong in this category. Most of these separatist Evangelical groups do not participate in the various Evangelical alliances, federations or fellowships in their respective countries. An exception has been some of the church associations historically related to the Central American Mission in Central America and Mexico, which was one of the first nondenominational mission agencies at work in Central America beginning in the 1890s.

**Controversial Evangelical Movements in Latin America since 1980**

Although the debates pro and con about Liberation Theology and the Charismatic Movement divided many Evangelicals and their denominations into different ideological and pragmatic camps in Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s, other theological and methodological concerns provoked debate and criticism among Evangelicals during the 1980s and have continued to the present.

**The G12 Vision & Strategy and related “cell group” movements in Latin America** have been both a blessing and a curse to many Evangelical churches and denominations; whereas some of the churches that implemented these programs of discipleship prospered and became “mega-churches” in their respective countries, some of the leaders and members in other churches strongly objected to this new model and characterized it as a “modern marketing strategy” that ran counter to their denomination’s traditional methods and organizational structure.

In the Assemblies of God (AoG) in various countries, some of the top denominational leaders and pastors of local churches implemented the “cell group” strategy and achieved good success. The **Rev. Paul David Yonggi Cho**, an AoG pastor of the largest Pentecostal church in South Korea, has been one of the leading advocates of the “cell group” strategy for discipleship training and achieving greater church growth.
Pastor César Castellanos of Colombia developed the so-called “G-12 strategy” in 1983 after visiting with Pastor David Yonggi Cho, who had successfully implemented a cell-group structure in the Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea, which had about 1,000,000 members in 2007.

Pastor César returned to his church, Misión Carismática Internacional in Bogotá, Colombia, with the revelation that he had allegedly received from God while he was in South Korea — that God had given him the G12 vision that would increase the number of Christian believers and help him to care for the growing numbers of church members.

The G12 Vision is considered to be an effective strategy for Christian evangelism to fulfill the Great Commission. It was founded upon the idea that every Christian can mentor and lead twelve people in the Christian faith, following the example of Jesus. However, this strategy requires top leaders to provide intensive personal discipleship training to the initial groups of 12 church members, who will later form their own groups of 12 disciples and provide them with similar intensive personal discipleship training, etc. In some cases, this strategy has become an abusive authoritarian methodology that allows the top leaders to control the personal and family lives of church members to such an extreme that there have been accusations of “spiritual abuse” by those in authority over them.

Other Pentecostal leaders, both those within the traditional Pentecostal denominations and churches and those who identify with the neo-Pentecostal Movement (originally this term was used to identify the Charismatic Renewal Movement in Latin America, but it later was applied to those leaders and their followers who now are part of the New Apostolic Reformation), have developed their own versions of the G12 strategy within a democratic congregational framework, as opposed to an abusive authoritarian structure. One such leader is Pastor Mario Vargas of Elim Christian Mission of El Salvador, who has been very successful in achieving strong church growth within his Central Church and its daughter congregations, both in El Salvador as well as in other countries. For more information about this denomination, see my report on my visits to Evangelical mega-churches in San Salvador in April 2011 as part of my research on this phenomena in each country of Central America during 2011 and 2012 at: http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/cam/megachurches_cam.htm

However, this Salvadoran denomination rejected the teachings of the founder of the Elim Christian Mission of Guatemala, the Rev. Ontoniel Ríos Paredes, after Paredes claimed to have received a vision from God that directed him to appoint “apostles and prophets” in his organization during the 1980s.

This emphasis on naming modern-day “apostles and prophets” later became known as the New Apostolic Movement, so named by Dr. C. Peter Wagner who became one of the major gurus of this movement after his “conversion” to the neo-Pentecostal movement and his association with the founder of The Association of Vineyard Churches, the Rev. John Wember (now deceased) in Anaheim, California. Wagner later moved his headquarters to Colorado Springs, CO, and founded the World Prayer Center with his wife Doris. Wagner was president of Global Harvest Ministries (GHM) from 1993 to 2011 when he became the chancellor emeritus of Wagner Leadership Institute, which serves to train leaders for the New Apostolic Reformation.

Charles Peter Wagner (b.1930) is a Protestant theologian, missiologist, writer, teacher, and church growth specialist best known for his controversial writings on spiritual warfare. Wagner,
originally a Quaker, served as a missionary in Bolivia under the South American Mission and Andes Evangelical Mission (now part of SIM International) from 1956 to 1971. He then served for 30 years (1971 to 2001) as Professor of Church Growth at the Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission in Pasadena, CA, until his retirement in 2001. He is the author of more than 70 books. According to Wagner, “The second apostolic age began in the year 2001,” when, according to him, the lost offices of "Prophet" and "Apostle" were restored, in this age.

Wagner wrote about spiritual warfare, in books including Confronting the Powers: How the New Testament Church Experienced the Power of Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare and Engaging the Enemy. In Confronting the Powers, Wagner breaks down spiritual warfare as having three levels: "Ground Level: Person-to-person, praying for each other's personal needs. Occult Level: deals with demonic forces released through activities related to Satanism, witchcraft, astrology and many other forms of structured occultism. Strategic-Level or Cosmic-Level: To bind and bring down spiritual principalities and powers that rule over governments." "Strategic-level intercession" uses "spiritual mapping" and "tearing down strongholds" to engage in spiritual warfare against "territorial spirits."

According to Wagner, these methods "were virtually unknown to the majority of Christians before the 1990s.". The premise of Engaging the Enemy is that Satan and his demons are literally in the world, that Satan's territorial spirit-demons may be identified by name, and that Christians are to engage in spiritual warfare with them.

On his 80th birthday, August 15, 2010, Wagner officially turned GHM over to Chuck Pierce of Denton, Texas. Instead of continuing GHM, Chuck organized Global Spheres, Inc. (GSI), a new wineskin for apostolic alignment. Chuck is President and I am Apostolic Ambassador of GSI:

http://www.globalharvest.org/

Today, there are many so-called New Apostolic Reformation networks that are led by self-appointed Apostles or their disciples who have received their “annointing” from a Senior Apostle. This movement has been accused of being highly authoritarian and abusive because followers are taught not to question the decisions and teachings of the Senior Apostles.

* * * * *

Another theological trend in Latin America and elsewhere has been the teaching of the so-called “Theology of Prosperity” that emerged mainly within neo-Pentecostal circles during the 1980s and 1990s and has continued to be controversial today. The Prosperity Gospel has been propagated by some of the leading Pentecostal TV personalities, especially on their TV programs and networks. The major proponent of the “Prosperity Gospel” has been the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN, called Enlace in Latin America), led by the Rev. Paul Crouch. In 2010, Paul Crouch was TBN's President and Chairman, his wife Jan Crouch is its vice-president and Director of Programming, and their son Matthew Crouch is Vice President.

The Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) is a major Pentecostal / neo-Pentecostal television network. TBN is based in Costa Mesa, California, with auxiliary studio facilities in Irving, Texas; Hendersonville, Tennessee; Gadsden, Alabama; Decatur, Georgia; Miami, Florida; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Orlando, Florida; and New York City. TBN broadcasts programs hosted by a diverse group of ministries from traditional Protestant and Catholic denominations, Interdenominational
and Full Gospel churches, non-profit charities, Messianic Jewish and well-known Christian media personalities. TBN also offers a wide range of original programming, and faith-based films. TBN owns and operates five broadcast networks, each reaching separate demographics; in addition to the main TBN network, TBN owns The Church Channel, Smile of a Child TV, TBN Enlace and JCTV.

The Trinity Broadcasting Network was actually co-founded by Paul Crouch, Jan Crouch, Jim Bakker and Tammy Faye Bakker in 1973 as Trinity Broadcasting Systems; the Bakkers left by 1975 to start their own ministry, The PTL Club. TBN began national distribution through cable systems in 1978. The network was a member of the National Religious Broadcasters association until 1990.


TBN claims to be “the world’s largest religious network and America’s most watched faith channel. TBN offers 24 hours of commercial-free inspirational programming that appeal to people in a wide variety of Protestant, Catholic and Messianic Jewish denominations’ and local churches. Source: [http://www.tbn.org/about-us](http://www.tbn.org/about-us)

The TBN-Enlace network for Latin America is based in San José, Costa Rica, and operated by a board of directors led by the son of the late founder, the Rev. Jonás González, named Junior González.

**Controversy**

**Theology**

Trinity Broadcasting Network has come under heavy criticism for its promotion of the “Prosperity Gospel,” which teaches viewers that they will receive “heavenly blessings” (which have been called “financial kick-backs from God”) if they donate or give offerings. In a 2004 interview with the Los Angeles Times, Paul Crouch, Jr. expressed his disappointment that “the prosperity gospel is a lightning rod for the Body of Christ.”

Non-denominational programmers on TBN's schedule include: Joel Osteen, Nasir Siddiki, Steve Munsey, Benny Hinn, Rod Parsley, Creflo Dollar, Joyce Meyer, Eddie L. Long, Jesse Duplantis, Paula White, and Kenneth Copeland. Traditional Protestant pastors that air on TBN include: Dr. Charles Stanley, Franklin Graham, Billy Graham, Michael Youseff, David Jeremiah, and Robert Jeffress (pastor). Senator Chuck Grassley, the chairman of the United States Senate Committee on Finance has conducted investigations into whether Hinn, White, Copeland, Dollar, Meyer, or Long mishandled their finances; none were found to have committed wrongdoing.

**Wealth and transparency**

TBN is an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit company. The full disclosure of TBN’s financial statements has been evaluated by Charity Navigator, the nation’s largest evaluator of charities and non-profit companies. TBN has received a 3/4 star rating for 4 consecutive years, and in 2009 earned a 2/4 star rating due to a 2% increase in administrative costs in 2009; the report also revealed that for
the fiscal year ending December 2009, TBN president Paul F. Crouch Sr. earned $419,500, Vice-President Janice Crouch earned $361,000, and Vice-President Paul F. Crouch Jr. earned $214,137.

Another charity watchdog group, Ministry Watch, has given TBN an "F" in 2011, for its failure to provide financial statements, lack of timeliness in responding to correspondence, and its lack of clarity in the provided information. As a result, TBN was placed on their alert list annually since 2009. TBN’s annual financial information is monitored by the Chronicle of Philanthropy where it is ranked 243 out of the top 400 non-profit corporations in the United States. TBN is not a member of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

In February 2012, Brittany B. Koper, TBN's former Director of Finance (and the granddaughter of Paul Sr. and Jan Crouch), filed a lawsuit against her former attorneys, Davert & Loe. The three counts of the complaint were: Breach of Fiduciary Duties; Intentional Infliction of Emotional Distress; and Professional Negligence. Koper filed the suit following the termination of her employment with TBN. Davert & Loe, who also represented TBN, denied her claims. Koper’s suit against Davert & Loe is pending. No official judicial ruling has been made in this matter.

In a May 2012 interview with The New York Times, Koper claimed that, "My job as finance director was to find ways to label extravagant personal spending as ministry expenses." Koper alleged that the network had “ordained herself and chauffeurs and sound engineers as ministers of the Gospel” in order to avoid paying Social Security taxes on their salaries. Paul Crouch, Jr., resigned his position at TBN. As of November 10, 2011, Paul Crouch, Jr. had joined The Word Network as Director of Project Development.

**Lawsuits**

In September 2004, the Los Angeles Times reported that Paul Crouch had paid Enoch Lonnie Ford, a former TBN employee, a $425,000 formal settlement to end a wrongful termination lawsuit in 1998. Ford alleged that he and Crouch had a homosexual tryst during his employment. TBN officials acknowledged the settlement but contested Ford's credibility, noting that he had been previously convicted for child molestation and drug abuse. In 1996, Ford was fired by TBN after he was arrested for drug-related violations and returned to prison for a year. Ford allegedly threatened to sue TBN for wrongful termination and sexual harassment after the network refused to hire him following his release, resulting in his claims against Paul Crouch. TBN officials stated that the settlement was made in order to avoid a lengthy and expensive lawsuit.

In June 2012, The Orange County Register reported that Carra Crouch, the granddaughter of Paul and Jan Crouch, filed a lawsuit claiming that TBN covered-up her rape by a network employee when she was thirteen years old. Carra Crouch claimed to have been given a date rape drug and sexually abused while staying at an Atlanta, Georgia, hotel during TBN’s "Praise-a-thon" in the spring of 2006. She also claimed that when she informed Jan Crouch and TBN attorney John Casoria of the rape, they professed disbelief in her claims and blamed her for the incident. However, according to the lawsuit, Crouch and Casoria fired the employee, agreeing to not turn him in to the authorities if he didn't file for unemployment, worker's compensation, or EEOC benefits. As ordained ministers, Crouch, Casoria, and other Crouch family members are legally obligated to report a sexual assault. TBN attorney Colby May "vehemently denied" Carra Crouch's claims, calling them "without merit and baseless." Her lawsuit against TBN is ongoing.
Historical Overview of Prosperity Theology

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosperity_theology (see quotes below)

Although nearly all of the healing evangelists of the 1940s and '50s taught that faith could bring financial rewards, a new prosperity-oriented teaching developed in the 1970s that differed from the one taught by Pentecostal evangelists of the 1950s. This "Positive Confession" or "Word of Faith" movement taught that a Christian with faith can speak into existence anything consistent with the will of God.

Kenneth Hagin was credited with a key role in the expansion of prosperity theology. He founded the RHEMA Bible Training Center in 1974, and over the next 20 years, the school trained more than 10,000 students in his theology. As is true of other prosperity movements, there is no theological governing body for the Word of Faith movement, and well-known ministries differ on some theological issues. The teachings of Kenneth Hagin have been described by Candy Gunther Brown of Indiana University as the most "orthodox" form of Word of Faith prosperity teaching.

The Neo-Pentecostal movement has been characterized in part by an emphasis on prosperity theology, which gained greater acceptance within Charismatic Christianity during the late 1990s. By 2006, three of the four largest congregations in the United States were teaching prosperity theology, and Joel Osteen has been credited with spreading it outside of the Pentecostal and Charismatic movement through his books, which have sold over 4 million copies. Bruce Wilkinson's The Prayer of Jabez also sold millions of copies and invited readers to seek prosperity.

By the 2000s, adherents of prosperity theology in the United States were most common in the Sun Belt. In the late 2000s, proponents claimed that tens of millions of Christians had accepted prosperity theology. A 2006 poll by Time magazine reported that 17 percent of Christians in North America said they identified with the movement. There is no official governing body for the movement, though many ministries are unofficially linked.

Theological criticism

Mainstream evangelicalism has consistently opposed “prosperity theology” and prosperity ministries have frequently come into conflict with other Christian groups, including those within the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements. Critics, such as Evangelical pastor Michael Catt, have argued that prosperity theology has little in common with traditional Christian theology. Prominent evangelical leaders, such as Rick Warren, Ben Witherington III, and Jerry Falwell, have harshly criticized the movement, sometimes denouncing it as heretical. Warren proposes that “prosperity theology” promotes the idolatry
of money, and others argue that Jesus' teachings indicate a disdain for material wealth. In *Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior*, R. Kent Hughes notes that some 1st-century rabbis portrayed material blessings as a sign of God's favor. He cites Jesus' statement in Mark 10:25 that "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (KJV) as evidence to oppose such thinking.

Other critics of the movement assail promises made by its leaders, arguing that the broad freedom from problems they promise is irresponsible. Church leaders are often criticized for abusing the faith of their parishioners by enriching themselves through large donations. Prosperity theology has been opposed for not adequately explaining the poverty of the Apostles. For instance, some theologians believe that the life and writings of Paul the Apostle, who is believed to have experienced significant suffering during his ministry, are particularly in conflict with prosperity theology.

In their book *Health, Wealth and Happiness*, theologians David Jones and Russell Woodbridge characterize the doctrine as poor theology. They suggest that righteousness cannot be earned and that the Bible does not promise an easy life. They argue that it is inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus and propose that the central message of the gospel should be Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Jones and Woodbridge see Jesus' importance as vital, criticizing the prosperity gospel for marginalizing him in favor of a focus on human need. In another article, Jones criticizes the prosperity theology interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant, God's promise to bless Abraham's descendants, arguing that this blessing is spiritual and should already apply to all Christians. He also argues that the proponents of the doctrine misconstrue the atonement, criticizing their teaching that Jesus' death took away poverty as well as sin. He believes that this teaching is drawn from a misunderstanding of Jesus' life and criticizes John Avanzini's teaching that Jesus was wealthy as a misrepresentation, noting that Paul often taught Christians to give up their material possessions. Although he accepts giving as "praiseworthy," he questions the motives of prosperity theology and criticizes the "Law of Compensation," which teaches that when Christians give generously, God will give back more in return. Rather, Jones cites Jesus' teaching to "give, hoping for nothing in return." Jones and Woodbridge also note that Jesus instructed followers to focus on spiritual rewards, citing his command in Matthew 6:19–20 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth... But lay up for your selves treasures in heaven" (KJV). Jones criticizes the doctrine's view of faith: he does not believe that it should be used as a spiritual force for material gain but seen as selfless acceptance of God.

In 1980, the General Council of the Assemblies of God criticized the doctrine of positive confession, noting examples of negative confessions in the Bible (where Biblical figures express fears and doubts) that had positive results and contrasting these examples with the focus on positive confessions taught by prosperity theology. The Council argues that the biblical Greek word often translated as "confess" literally translates as "to speak the same thing", and refers to both positive and negative confessions. The statement also criticizes the doctrine for failing to recognize the will of God: God's will should have precedence over the will of man, and Christians should "recognize the sovereignty of God". The statement further criticizes prosperity theology for overlooking the importance of prayer, arguing that prayer should be used for all requests, not simply positive confession. The Council noted that Christians should expect suffering in this life. They urge readers to apply practical tests to positive confession, arguing that the doctrine appeals to those who are already in affluent societies but that many Christians in other societies are impoverished or imprisoned. Finally, the paper criticizes the distinction made by advocates of prosperity theology in the two Greek words that mean "speaking", arguing that the distinction is false and that they are used interchangeably in the Greek text. The Council accused prosperity theology of taking passages out of context to fulfill its own needs, with the result that doctrine of positive confession is contradictory to the holistic message of the Bible.

Prosperity theology, however, casts itself as the reclamation of true doctrine and thus part of a path to Christian dominion over secular society. It contends that God's promises of prosperity and victory to Israel in the Old Testament apply to New-Covenant Christians today, and that faith and holy actions
release this prosperity. Dr. C. Peter Wagner, a leader of the New Apostolic Reformation, has argued that if Christians take dominion over aspects of society, the Earth will experience "peace and prosperity."

Some Latin American Pentecostal leaders who have embraced “prosperity theology” argue that Christianity has historically placed an unnecessary focus on suffering. They often view this as a Roman Catholic doctrine that should be discarded and replaced with an emphasis on prosperity. Prosperity theology advocates also argue that biblical promises of blessings awaiting the poor have been unnecessarily spiritualized, and should be understood literally.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosperity_theology

6.0 Mission trends

Prior to 1980, the major emphasis among North American Protestant missionary societies working in Latin America was on evangelism, church planting and church development, which required a large investment of funds and missionary personnel in many countries. Some of these missionary societies also engaged in educational, medical, social welfare, social action, and community and agricultural development programs.

In addition, numerous specialized Protestant service agencies were at work in Latin America: The American Bible Society/United Bible Societies; Alfalit and other literacy programs; Christian publishers, distributors and bookstores; Child Evangelism Fellowship and similar ministries; Bible translation ministries; Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAP) and JAARS (Jungle Aviation & Radio Service of Wycliffe Bible Translators); High School and College student ministries; camping programs for all ages; radio and TV ministries; Christian businessmen’s and women’s associations; etc.

Also, there were a growing number of Protestant general service agencies at work in Latin America, among them: World Vision International, Food for the Hungry, Compassion International, The Heifer Project, Samaritan’s Purse, PIEDAD (known as Latin American ChildCare in Spanish, founded by Assembly of God missionaries and their national brethren in El Salvador and later established in other Latin American countries), etc.

In Central America, each country founded its own Evangelical relief and development agency under local leadership as a joint venture with major denominations. By 1980, the following agencies had been founded: Goodwill Caravans in Costa Rica (1960, by the Costa Rican Evangelical Alliance after a widespread flood occurred in parts of Guanacase Province); CEPAD in Nicaragua (after a major earthquake in 1972 destroyed most of the capital city of Managua); CEDEN in Honduras (1974 by the Honduran Evangelical Alliance in response to a major flood on the northern coast caused by Hurricane Fifi); the Guatemalan Evangelical Alliance organized the Evangelical Committee for Integral Development after the nation experienced a major earthquake in 1976; AEPAD in Panama (1980, by a small group of Evangelical leaders who wanted to create a national relief and development agency, modeled after CEPAD in Nicaragua, as part of their “national emergency preparedness plan” before any major disaster impacted their nation). The only country that did not establish a national relief and development agency by 1980 was El Salvador, where serious divisions existed between the Pentecostal and non-
Pentecostal denominations and local churches and where the Evangelical Fellowship of Evangelicals (Confraternidad Evangélica Salvadoreña - CONESAL) did not come into being until 1987. In that year of its organization, CONESAL was able to mobilize broad assistance from the Evangelical community to provide emergency aid to victims of a local flood disaster. After 1980, largely due to the growing influence of The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (founded in 1974 with international headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland) and its international congresses, a new missionary emphasis emerged in Evangelical circles in Latin America. At the First Lausanne Congress in 1974, Dr. Ralph Winter’s plenary address, in which he introduced the term ‘unreached people groups’, was hailed as ‘one of the milestone events in missiology’. Some were calling for a moratorium on foreign missions, but Winter argued the opposite. Thousands of groups remained without a single Christian, and with no access to Scripture in their tongue, so cross-cultural evangelization needed to be the primary task of the Church.

Because of the presence of many Latin Americans and missionaries who were working in Latin America, Winter’s plenary address sparked great interest in “reaching the unreached ethnolinguistic groups” in Latin America and worldwide, which became a strong emphasis among some conservative Evangelical denominations, mission agencies, and theological educators. However, at that time, there were no Evangelical academic institutions in Latin America that offered courses or concentrations in missiology or the history of world missions, transcultural communication, and the social sciences (especially Cultural Anthropology and Linguistics). Nevertheless, some of the missionary graduates of the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, were instrumental in the founding of academic programs with courses on these important subjects in order to educate and train Latin Americans for missionary service around the world “in the spirit of Lausanne.”

In Costa Rica, Holland and some of his missionary and national associates founded the Missiological Institute of the Americas (known as IMDELA in Spanish) in San José in 1982, with the logistical support of the Latin America Mission (LAM) and the International Institute for In-Depth Evangelization (INDEF) where Holland was a staff member and director of the Central American Socio-Religious Studies Program (PROCALDES, which later development into PROLADES with an emphasis on all of Latin America and the Caribbean). IMDELA offered training in Missiology at the Master’s level to students who had previously earned a Licenciate degree at a theological seminary, mainly in Costa Rica. IMDELA became an integral part of the Evangelical University of the Americas (UNELA in Spanish) at its founding in San José in 1997, as the Department of Missiology under the leadership of Dr. Paul Bergsma, a missionary on-loan to IMDELA-UNELA from Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM), who had previously served with CRWM in Honduras as a missionary pastor.

At about the same time as IMDELA was founded in Costa Rica, similar academic programs in Missiology were established in Peru and Brazil by U.S. Evangelical missionaries and their national brethren. Young Obed Alvarez and his colleagues organized the ministry of AMEN (Agencia Misionera Evangélica a las Naciones) in 1979 to prepare, support and send Peruvian young people as cross-cultural missionaries to reach the unreached people of the world. AMEN actually began in 1916 in Peru and was called the National Evangelical Mission Agency (Agencia Misionera Evangélica Nacional), led by Juan Cuerva. Alvarez, a Methodist, became General Director of AMEN in 1979 at age 21, and it was renamed with a focus on world
missions. However, the **AMEN School of Missions** began teaching young Peruvians at a Bible Institute level by holding classes three times yearly for one month before sending the students out to evangelize and plant churches in remote areas of the country. Alvarez later served as the Chairman of the **Third World Missions Association (TWMA)** and was one of the leaders of **COMIBAM** (Cooperación Misionera Iberoamericana) -- founded in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 1987 during the **First Iberoamerican Missionary Congress** – to coordinate activities among leaders of the emerging “world missions” movement in Latin America. More recently, he founded **NEWMA (New World Missions Association)** that trains Latin American Christians for full-time mission work at their School of Missiology in Lima, Peru. Alvarez has served as NEWMA's founding director for over 30 years, overseeing 900 full-time Latin American missionaries in over 37 countries.

Dr. Rubén “Tito” Paredes and his wife Joy returned to Peru in 1981 as missionaries with the **Latin America Mission**, after Tito completed a Ph.D. program in Anthropology at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), to begin a more formal education program in Missiology (Licenciate and Master’s level) at the **Evangelical Seminary of Lima**. Later, Dr. Paredes left the Evangelical Seminary of Lima to become the founding director of the Dr. Orlando E. Costas Evangelical Faculty at the “Evangelical Center of Andean-Amazonian Missiology” (CEMAA), which promotes “holistic reflection, training and mission,” in areas of the Andean-Amazonian Basin.


**The Association of Professors of Missions in Brazil** had its roots in the city of Belo Horizonte at the 1st Brazilian Congress of Evangelism, held in October 1983. There a meeting was held of the Group of Leaders of the Association of Brazilian Cross-Cultural Missions (AMTB), which had been formed in the mid-1970s, with the help of the World Evangelical Alliance (at that time, the WEF-World Evangelical Fellowship) and MIB (Missão Informadora do Brasil). At this meeting the AMTB decided to form a Committee specifically directed to the training and development of teachers of missions. There were then few schools offering Missiology and only five or six people with missionary training, and the missionary movement had begun to grow. The name given to the Committee was "COM" - Comissão de Orientação Missionária (Missionary Orientation Committee). The idea was to offer assistance to schools and teachers to prepare Brazilians for the cross-cultural task. COM consisted of the following members: Lydia Almeida Menezes, Élben M. Lenz César and Cécio Sanches Carvalho, with Barbara Helen Burns as rector.

The first formal activity with was two weeks intensive courses for teachers and leaders of missions in July 1984. More or less thirty participated, hearing about "emergent structures in Cross-cultural Mission of the Church today" with Dr. Theodore Williams of WEF and "the pedagogy of missions" with Dr. Lois McKinney, Professor of Missions at Wheaton College in the USA and had been one of the founders of AETAL. In November 1984, Dr. Russell Shedd gave another week on the theme "the Missionary Strategy in the New Testament". The issue impacted the lives of the 30 students in attendance, but also impacted Dr. Shedd personally, who had never taught the New Testament through the lens of missions. So far he is one of the leading experts of this field in Brazil. More intensive courses were offered in 1986 ("Ethnography" with Lois
McKinney and "Theological Movements in Contemporary Brazilian Reality" with Ricardo Sturz), who participated in the meetings and published the Bulletin of AMTB, taking advantage of the opportunity to include practical information, available to teachers of the literature and teaching of missions.

At this time the group of professors of missions realized that the administrative structure of AMTB was quite limited. Some wanted to have more freedom to develop activities and publications directed at the need for teaching new missionaries.

Source: http://www.apmb.org.br/

ABOUT THE LAUSANNE MOVEMENT

The story of Lausanne begins with the evangelist Dr Billy Graham. As he started preaching internationally, he developed a passion to ‘unite all evangelicals in the common task of the total evangelization of the world’.

In 1966 the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, in partnership with America’s Christianity Today magazine, sponsored the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin. This gathering drew 1,200 delegates from over 100 countries, and inspired further conferences in Singapore (1968), Minneapolis and Bogotá (1969), and Australia (1971). Shortly afterwards, Billy Graham perceived the need for a larger, more diverse congress to re-frame Christian mission in a world of social, political, economic, and religious upheaval. The Church, he believed, had to apply the gospel to the contemporary world, and to work to understand the ideas and values behind rapid changes in society. He shared his thinking with 100 Christian leaders, drawn from all continents, and they affirmed the need. It would be a timely gathering.

The First Lausanne Congress

In July 1974 some 2,700 participants and guests from over 150 nations gathered in Lausanne, Switzerland, for ten days of discussion, fellowship, worship and prayer. Given the range of nationalities, ethnicities, ages, occupations and church affiliations, TIME Magazine described it as ‘a formidable forum, possibly the widestranging meeting of Christians ever held’.

Speakers included some of the world’s most respected Christian thinkers of the time, including Samuel Escobar, Francis Schaeffer, Carl Henry and John Stott. Ralph Winter’s plenary address, in which he introduced the term ‘unreached people groups’, was hailed as ‘one of the milestone events in missiology’. Some were calling for a moratorium on foreign missions, but Winter argued the opposite. Thousands of groups remained without a single Christian, and with no access to Scripture in their tongue, so cross-cultural evangelization needed to be the primary task of the Church.

The Lausanne Covenant

A major achievement of the congress was to develop The Lausanne Covenant. John Stott chaired the drafting committee and is best described as its chief architect. This was to be a Covenant with God, publicly declared, and a Covenant with one another; it has proved to be one of most widely-used documents in modern church history. The Covenant has helped to define evangelical theology and practice, and has set the stage for many new partnerships and alliances. On the last day of the congress, it was publicly signed by Billy Graham and by Anglican Bishop Jack Dain of Sydney, Australia. It has since
been signed personally by thousands of believers, and it continues to serve as a basis for unity and a call to

global evangelization.

Reflecting on the impact of the 1974 congress, John Stott writes, ‘Many a conference has resembled a

fireworks display. It has made a loud noise and illuminated the night sky for a few brief brilliant seconds. 

What is exciting about Lausanne is that its fire continues to spark off other fires.’

**From a Committee to a Movement**

Over 70% of the congress urged that a Continuation Committee be established, to build on what had been

achieved. In January 1975 this group, appointed by the congress, met in Mexico City with Bishop Jack 

Dain in the chair. Some members pressed for an exclusive focus on evangelization; others favoured a

broader, holistic approach. The Committee agreed on a unified aim to ‘further the total biblical mission of 

the Church, recognizing that in this mission of sacrificial service, evangelism is primary, and that our 

particular concern must be the [then 2,700 million] unreached people of the world.’ This aim continues to 

characterize The Lausanne Movement.

The Committee invited Gottfried Osei-Mensah of Ghana to serve as its first General Secretary, and re-

named itself The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. It was united by the Covenant and by 

what Billy Graham first called ‘the spirit of Lausanne’, a spirit exemplified by prayer, study, partnership 

and hope - in, we trust, a spirit of humility. According to Leighton Ford, the Committee’s first chairman, 

‘the Lausanne spirit was a new and urgent commitment to world evangelization in all its aspects, a new 

attitude of co-operation in the task, and a new cultural sensitivity to the world to which we are called.’

When the Committee met the following year in Atlanta, its defined aim was broken into four functions:

intercession, theology, strategy and communication. A working group for each was set up, and all four of 

these groups remain now.

**Continuing Impact**

Throughout its history, The Lausanne Movement has preferred to remain structurally lean. It strives to be 
a catalyst for new partnerships and strategic alliances among like-minded missional Christians who pray, 
plan and work together on global evangelization. Its few staff are largely seconded; its committee chairs 
are volunteers, often shouldering the Lausanne role on top of other major responsibilities. Its structures are 
simple, with tentacles reaching into 200 nations. Lausanne does not claim to be widely-known; it does not 
strive to make a name for itself, but to serve the Church.

Since 1974, dozens of Lausanne-related conferences have been convened. Global gatherings include the 
Consultation on World Evangelization (Pattaya 1980), the Conference of Young Leaders (Singapore 
1987), the Forum for World Evangelization (2004 Forum) and the Younger Leaders’ Gathering (Malaysia 
2006). Lausanne has inspired many regional networks and issue-based conferences such as the Asia 
Lausanne Committee on Evangelism (ALCOE), Chinese Co-ordination Centre for World Evangelization 
(CCCOWE), a series of Nigerian congresses on world evangelization, and several international 
consultations on Jewish evangelism.

The second major congress, known as Lausanne ll (Manila, Philippines, July 1989) drew 3,000 
participants from 170 countries including Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, but sadly not China. 
Lausanne ll produced *The Manila Manifesto*, as a corporate expression of its participants. This statement 
of 31 clauses elaborated on The Lausanne Covenant, after 15 years. Lausanne ll was the catalyst for over
300 partnerships and new initiatives, in the developing world and elsewhere. Its significance is best seen through the wide influence of such initiatives.

Lausanne gatherings have often produced landmark documents known as Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs). Most of the early LOPs focus on Christian witness to specific groups such as Hindus, Buddhists, refugees and nominal Christians. The 2004 Forum in Pattaya generated 31 LOPs on a wide range of areas, including bioethics, business-as-mission, the persecution of Christians, and globalization.

Cape Town 2010

The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization was held in Cape Town, South Africa, 16-25 October 2010. The goal of Cape Town 2010 was to re-stimulate the spirit of Lausanne, as represented in The Lausanne Covenant, and so to promote unity, humility in service, and a call to active global evangelization.

Some 4,000 leaders from 198 countries attended as participants and observers; thousands more took part in seminars, universities, churches, and through mission agencies and radio networks globally, as part of the Cape Town GlobalLink.

Begun in the year leading up to the Congress, and extending beyond it, is the Lausanne Global Conversation at www.lausanne.org/conversation. This is engaging evangelical leaders on every continent.

Christ’s last command on earth has never been rescinded. We want many more to hear and respond to the gospel of Christ, and to grow in their faith, and themselves to become evangelists, for the glory of God. We must work together as we proclaim and defend the eternal message in a contemporary and culturally appropriate manner. The next chapter of the Lausanne history is currently being written.

Connecting with the Movement

The Lausanne Website allows leaders to access current and historical information on global evangelization, learn about national, regional and international gatherings on evangelization and share theological and practical studies and research.

The regions page offers ways to connect regionally with Lausanne Movement leaders. In addition, through the Lausanne Global Conversation visitors can learn more about a wide range of topics related to world evangelization in which Lausanne is engaged, and find ways to connect with others involved in those issues.

Source: http://www.lausanne.org/en/about.html
7.0 The Ethnographic and Socioeconomic background of Protestant adherents

This kind of information is difficult to find for most Latin American countries because of a lack of reliable scientific research of recent origin. However, Mexico is one exception to this general situation because of research conducted by the National Census Department, some of the nation’s major universities, and other social scientists since the mid-1990s. Here are some of the publications that can help us find answers to some of these important questions:


Alberto Hernández and Carolina Rivera, Coordinadors

Elio Masferrer Kan, Compilor

Kurt Bowen.

Gilberto Giménez, Coordinador

Religious Affiliation in Mexico, 2000

Roman Catholicism: 88.0 percent
Protestantism: 5.8 percent
Other Religions: 1.9 percent
No Religion/No Answer: 4.3 percent
(2000 Census, INEGI)

Under the PROTESTANT label were included the following groupings: (1) Historical Protestant denominations and independent churches; (2) Evangelicals with Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal roots; (3) Other Protestant / Christian / Evangelical groups; and (4) Adventists-related groups.

The so-called “Historical Protestant” churches had about 655,000 adherents in 2000 (or 13.2% of all Protestants). In this category are grouped: Presbyterians, Baptists, Nazarenes, Methodists and Mennonites. The category "Other Protestant" (2,291,757 adherents or 46.1%) includes Anglican-Episcopal, Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, Congregationalists, Holiness Church, Lutherans, Plymouth Brethren, Salvation Army, etc. “Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals” totaled 1,475,310 adherents or 30.1%. All Adventist-related groups totaled 538,226 adherents or 10.6% of all Protestants.
However, my study of the 2000 census reports on religious affiliation found that some of the Pentecostal-related groups were listed under the category “Other Protestant,” and the marginal Christian group Light of the World Church (with 63,111 adherents) was listed under “Pentecostal Roots” in the Pentecostal category. Therefore, the categories used in the 2000 Mexican Census are somewhat arbitrary and are only a rough approximation of the proportional representation of the various Protestant traditions and families of denominations in Mexico that were labeled “Protestant.”

Although Protestant missionaries began working in Mexico during the 19th century, the various Protestant denominations and local churches experienced slow growth until the 1960s. Since then, the various Evangelical and Pentecostal groups have had noticeable increases in the number of adherents. Some of these denominations have shown much dynamism and growth, as it is particularly the case with the Presbyterians, Baptists and Pentecostals. The data contradict the idea that the historical Protestant churches developed in urban middle layers of the society. They also have a significant presence in indigenous populations and among those living in very marginal conditions.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the only religious minority that has a propensity to concentrate territorially, especially in southeastern Mexico: Chiapas, Veracruz, Tabasco, Chetumal and Quintan Roo. Adventist adherents shared similar traits, such as marginality, ethnicity and rurality.

Those groups listed under "other Protestant" and "Pentecostal and neo-Pentecostal" include hundreds of denominations of different sizes, origin and organizational structure, as well as many independent local churches. These categories include a higher percentage of dissidents to the Catholic faith than the previous category of historical Protestant denominations and local churches. Therefore, various sociologists and anthropologists of religion have affirmed that the main character of religious change in Mexico has occurred among those who are now adherents of Evangelical churches classified as "other Protestant" or Pentecostal ("Pentecostals and neo-Pentecostales").

Religious pluralism: a new national regionalization

In recent years, especially since the 1950s, some regions of the country have had a transformation of religious affiliation due to the growing presence of various Protestant, Evangelical and Pentecostal movements. For example, the Catholic population declined notably in the Southern States, followed by the Northern Border States, while the Central and West-Central regions have become the hard core of Catholicism. At the state level these shifts in religious affiliation have produced huge internal imbalances; for example, the Catholic population of the State of Guanajuato was 97 percent; while in Chiapas, the State where there is greater religious plurality, the Catholic population has dropped to 68 percent.

In the Southeastern region of the country, formed by the States of Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche and Quintana Roo, where indigenous populations are concentrated and where Catholic missions were less present than in the rest of country, Protestantism has managed to conquer significant proportions of the population. It is a fact that in Mexico a person defined as indigenous (based on the language indicator) presents greater probability of belonging to non-Catholic Christian
groups. For example, "of every 10 Pentecostals, two speak an indigenous language." This is because "all the indigenous groups in the country without exception have shown a tendency to change their religion over the past two decades" (see Garma Navarro and Hernández, 2007; De la Torre, Gutiérrez Zúñiga y Janssen, 2007).

It is significant to recall that in this region the Summer Institute of Linguistics missionaries started an intense work beginning in the 1940s. The Pentecostals have a greater number of indigenous believers (274,000), with the largest presence among populations of speakers of Maya and Nahua languages. But from another angle, among all indigenous peoples there is a greater religious presence of Pentecostal adherents: "19% of the indigenous population declared itself Pentecostal, which tripled the national average in the country" between 1990 and 2000 (Garma Navarro, 2007).

In second place, we find the "Other Protestant" adherents (190,000, with prominence between Mayan and Nahuatl peoples). Thirdly, we find the Historical Protestant churches (182,000), highlighting the Presbyterians, with a strong presence among the Tzeltal (62,440) population. In fourth place are the various Adventist groups (90,210, with a large presence among the indigenous Tzotzil (29,562), Choles (11,790) and Maya (7,986). [Also, the Jehovah's Witnesses (54,936) were present among the Mayan, Nahuatl and Zapotec populations.].

The strong presence of Protestant adherents in the Southeastern part of the nation coincides with the historical difficulties that the Roman Catholic Church has had with strengthening its presence in areas with a high degree of marginalization and poverty, where a large proportion of the indigenous population resides. These areas include the States of Chiapas, Campeche and Quintana Roo, where there has been an intense process of colonization, internal migration and expansion of the agricultural frontier.

The Northern Border States of Mexico also are distinguished as having large concentrations of Protestant adherents, although the indigenous population in this area is not large but it is characterized by extreme poverty, intense urban development, rapid industrialization, and high population growth due internal migration from other parts of the country (“the northern migration stream” toward the U.S.-Mexican border).

Two of the States with the greatest increase in the number of Protestant adherents have been Chiapas in the South-Pacific Region, with the largest and most diverse indigenous population in the nation, and Baja California in North-Western Region along the U.S.-Mexican Border, with the Tijuana Metro Area now having a larger population that San Diego, California, its border twin-city, both of which are heavily industrialized and are strong employment magnates.

In addition to the overall regional trends, one must distinguish that they are traversed by differences between urban/rural and center/periphery. The phenomenon of overflowing urban growth has favored the Evangelical, Pentecostal and para-Protestant [marginal Christian] groups, which have grown particularly in the peripheries and bordering municipalities of Monterrey, Tijuana, Guadalajara, Ciudad Juárez, and especially Mexico City (Hernandez, 2007). Religious diversity in the Federal District (Mexico City proper) and in nearby districts of the State of Mexico (Chalco, Ecatepec and Nezahualcóyotl) have high concentrations of Protestant adherents, which have high internal (rural to urban) migration and poverty rates.
These places have become a synthesis of the variety of religious organizations but have not reached the proportions of the large Latin American cities, such as Rio de Janeiro, Guatemala City and Santiago de Chile, which have exemplified the religious transformation of the sub-continent. In marginal colonies of the big cities, migrants from the countryside to the city found in Pentecostalism an important community of identity and mechanisms for insertion in the urban environment (De la Torre, 1995; Bowen, 1996).

It is worth mentioning that, although conversion to Protestantism in indigenous populations occurs in small household units, in the urban centers of greater population density conversion to marginal Christian groups occurs in highly institutionalized churches, such as the Mormons, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Light of the World Church. The latter is a distinctly Mexican denomination, whose international headquarters are in the city of Guadalajara, the capital of the West-Central region, which is characterized by the highest levels of Catholic population at the national level.

In general terms, Mexico has been characterized as having a "non-Catholic religious geography of misery and marginalization" (Bastian, 1997, p. 18). Although in recent days, the Charismatic movement has begun to be accepted among sectors of the middle and upper classes in the largest cities of the country.

**Religious Affiliation in Mexico, 2010**

In order to have a better record of religious diversity, the 2010 census expanded its classification system, especially in regards to the different Christian denominations where the number of adherents increased, but also includes groups of more recent origin. Given that their presence is not uniform in the national territory, it was considered useful to draw up a document on the panorama of religious beliefs by each federal entity to show some indicators that outline the sociodemographic characteristics of the population according to their religious creed.

Religions that are described by entity are: Catholic first, followed by a broad grouping of Christian churches that include: Protestant, Pentecostal, Evangelical and other Christian, and continues with the Seventh-day Adventists, the Church of Jesus Christ of Later-day Saints (Mormons), Jehovah's Witnesses, Judaism, and finally the population with no religious affiliation.

The document begins with some methodological notes that provide a context to the sociodemographic indicators; the essential part is the description of major religions and their characterization by federal entity, with an initial paragraph to describe the situation nationally.

Each paragraph by federal entity begins with a summary of the geographic, demographic and social conditions collected by the Census. In addition, religious traditions are described in the State using the categories defined by INEGI that have been made available to the general public.

Stated indicators by religion relate to: the population composition, spatial location in urban-rural context, educational, economic characteristics, fertility, religious marital union, indigenous speech, religious variations with the family households, and the institutional legal infrastructure of religious associations.
## RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN MEXICO, 2010 CENSUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL POPULATION 2010</td>
<td>112336538</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic</td>
<td>9224489</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protestant / Pentecostal / Christian / Evangelical</strong></td>
<td>8859759</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Protestant or Reformed</td>
<td>820744</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anabaptist/Mennonite</td>
<td>10753</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>252874</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of the Nazarene</td>
<td>40225</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>25370</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>437690</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Protestants</td>
<td>53832</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal / Christian / Evangelical</td>
<td>7377137</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>1782021</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian - Evangelical (may include some Pentecostals)</td>
<td>5595116</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventist</td>
<td>661878</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Religions</strong></td>
<td>2237235</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal Christian</td>
<td>2064344</td>
<td>1.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light of the World Church</td>
<td>188326</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mormons</td>
<td>314932</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jehovah's Witnesses</td>
<td>1561086</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Religions</strong></td>
<td>172891</td>
<td>0.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriental Origin: Asian Indian, Chinese, Japanese, etc.</td>
<td>18185</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>67476</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>3760</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Roots (indigenous religions)</td>
<td>27839</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritist-Spiritualist</td>
<td>35995</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Religions</td>
<td>19636</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>None / No Response</strong></td>
<td>8315055</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Religion</td>
<td>5262546</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None specified / no answer</td>
<td>3052509</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Produced by Clifton L. Holland based on 2010 Mexican National Census Data
23 December 2012
Here are some of the results of the 2010 National Census of Mexico.

In 2010, 77.8 percent of the national population was urban (communities with more than 2,500 inhabitants) and 22.2 percent was rural. The distribution of the population of Mexico, at the national level, is as follows regarding the size of the local communities where Catholics and Protestants resided:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLACE OF RESIDENCE</th>
<th>CATHOLIC</th>
<th>PROTESTANT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fewer than 2,500 inhabitants</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500 to 4,999 inhabitants</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 to 14,499 inhabitants</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000 to 99,999 inhabitants</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 100,000 inhabitants</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The National Registry of Religious Associations (ARs) lists 4,328 as Protestant and the number of Protestant ministers at 41,133.
- In households where the head is Protestant / Evangelical, 73.4% of the residents are of the same religious affiliation.
- The Protestant literacy rate is 92%
- The average educational level of Protestants is 8 years of formal schooling.
- However, 44.6% of the Protestant population has not completed basic primary education.
- Among the Protestant population of 3 years or older, 975,975 speak an indigenous language and 196,455 of these do not speak Spanish.
- The gender distribution of Protestants is 53.2% female and 46.8% male.
- The age distribution nationally of Protestant males and females is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE GROUPS</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 20 years of age:</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years of age:</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39 years of age:</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49 years of age:</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59 years of age:</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 60 years of age:</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the territorial distribution of Roman Catholics and Protestants in 2000 and 2010 by states and regions of Mexico, the following information is available in the table below.
The Catholic population is more heavily concentrated in the following regions and states: Central (with the exception of the State of Morelos), North-Central, Western, most of the Northwest (except for Baja California Norte), and in the State of Guanajuato in the South-Pacific region, where the rate of religious change has been the slowest since 1950. **By contrast, the geographical areas with the highest concentrations of Protestant population and with the highest rates of religious change since 1950 have been the following regions and states:** the border states in the North (Coahuila and Chihuahua), Northeast (Tamaulipas), and Northwest regions (Baja California Norte); the Gulf region (Tabasco and Veracruz), the Yucatan Peninsula region (Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatán); and the South-Pacific region (Chiapas and Oaxaca). The latter regions and states of Mexico represent the periphery of the nation where there is a higher level or marginalization and poverty, according to INEGI.

### RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN MEXICO BY STATES, 2000 & 2010
*(sorted alphabetically by Regions and States)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>States</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>TOTAL POP</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Federal District</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td><strong>8,851,080</strong></td>
<td>7,299,242</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>476,242</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Guerrero</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>3,388,768</td>
<td>2,928,364</td>
<td>86.4</td>
<td>214,734</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Jalisco</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>7,350,682</td>
<td>6,762,011</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>234,000</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>México</td>
<td>91.2%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td><strong>15,175,862</strong></td>
<td>12,958,921</td>
<td>85.4</td>
<td>851,665</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Morelos</td>
<td>83.6%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>1,777,227</td>
<td>1,386,152</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>169,07</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Puebla</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>5,779,829</td>
<td>5,104,948</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>336,873</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>Tlaxcala</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>1,169,936</td>
<td>1,062,465</td>
<td>90.8</td>
<td>48,156</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf</td>
<td>Tabasco</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
<td><strong>13.6%</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,238,603</strong></td>
<td>1,444,672</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>411,277</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulf</td>
<td>Veracruz</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>7,643,194</td>
<td>6,015,058</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>702,643</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Chihuahua</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>3,406,465</td>
<td>2,601,366</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td>323,236</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Coahuila</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>2,748,391</td>
<td>2,209,688</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>276,138</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Durango</td>
<td>90.4%</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>1,632,934</td>
<td>1,403,479</td>
<td>85.9</td>
<td>97,335</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-Central</td>
<td>Aguascalientes</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1,184,996</td>
<td>1,101,785</td>
<td>93.0</td>
<td>40,987</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-Central</td>
<td>Querétaro</td>
<td>95.3%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1,827,937</td>
<td>1,680,681</td>
<td>91.9</td>
<td>58,975</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-Central</td>
<td>San Luis Potosí</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>2,585,518</td>
<td>2,299,405</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>148,152</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-Central</td>
<td>Zacatecas</td>
<td>95.1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1,490,668</td>
<td>1,394,224</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>41,878</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Nuevo León</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>4,653,458</td>
<td>3,834,212</td>
<td>82.4</td>
<td>382,873</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Tamaulipas</td>
<td>82.9%</td>
<td><strong>8.7%</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,268,554</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,384,024</strong></td>
<td>72.9</td>
<td>397,626</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baja California Norte</td>
<td>81,4%</td>
<td>7,9%</td>
<td>3,155,070</td>
<td>2,274,186</td>
<td>72.1</td>
<td>377,837</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>Baja California Sur</td>
<td>89.0%</td>
<td>4,0%</td>
<td>637,026</td>
<td>517,722</td>
<td>81.3</td>
<td>47,411</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>Sinaloa</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td>2,9%</td>
<td>2,767,761</td>
<td>2,320,206</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>140,745</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest</td>
<td>Sonora</td>
<td>87.9%</td>
<td>4,8%</td>
<td>2,662,480</td>
<td>2,190,693</td>
<td>82.3</td>
<td>203,861</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Pacific</td>
<td>Chiapas</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
<td>13,9%</td>
<td>4,796,580</td>
<td>2,796,685</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>921,357</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Pacific</td>
<td>Guanajuato</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>1,3%</td>
<td>5,486,372</td>
<td>5,147,812</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>142,529</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Pacific</td>
<td>Oaxaca</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
<td>7,8%</td>
<td>3,801,962</td>
<td>3,064,977</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>399,468</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Colima</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>2,9%</td>
<td>650,555</td>
<td>571,825</td>
<td>87.9</td>
<td>33,831</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Hidalgo</td>
<td>90.1%</td>
<td>5,2%</td>
<td>2,665,018</td>
<td>2,315,687</td>
<td>86.9</td>
<td>179,782</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Michoacán</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
<td>1,9%</td>
<td>4,351,037</td>
<td>3,983,396</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>135,649</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Nayarit</td>
<td>91.8%</td>
<td>3,0%</td>
<td>1,084,979</td>
<td>957,556</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>53,446</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatan</td>
<td>Campeche</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>13,2%</td>
<td>822,441</td>
<td>519,023</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>135,763</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peninsula</td>
<td>Quintana Roo</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>11,2%</td>
<td>1,325,578</td>
<td>839,219</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>191,559</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatan</td>
<td>Yucatán</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>8,4%</td>
<td>1,955,577</td>
<td>1,554,805</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>211,109</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>112,336,538</td>
<td>92,924,489</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>8,386,207</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CODES**

- = 15-20%
- = 10-15%
- = 8-10%

AN OVERVIEW OF
PROTESTANT CHURCH GROWTH IN MEXICO

FIGURE #1 - PROTESTANT CHURCH GROWTH: 1885-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CONG.</th>
<th>AVERAGE CONG. SIZE</th>
<th>ESTIMATED PROTESTANT MEMBERSHIP</th>
<th>ESTIMATED PROTESTANT POPULATION</th>
<th>COMM. TO MEMBERS RATIO</th>
<th>PROTESTANT DATA SOURCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>La Luz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>16,250</td>
<td>49,512</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Butler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>17,265</td>
<td>51,796</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>CLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>68,839</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Ross*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>756</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26,451</td>
<td>66,128</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Winton*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>22,274</td>
<td>73,951</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Ross*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1,241</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43,441</td>
<td>130,322</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>CLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>1,391</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55,652</td>
<td>166,956</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Parker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1,483</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>59,318</td>
<td>177,954</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>CLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>2,221</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>110,037</td>
<td>330,111</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>RMJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>4,042</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>275,000</td>
<td>578,515</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>McGavran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>6,440</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>418,589</td>
<td>850,000</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>RMJ**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>5,225</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>339,621</td>
<td>679,241</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>CLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>13,548</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>880,644</td>
<td>2,201,609</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>CLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>22,684</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1,587,868</td>
<td>3,969,671</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>CLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>25,640</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1,794,775</td>
<td>4,486,938</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>CLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>28,967</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2,027,655</td>
<td>5,069,137</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>CLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Johnstone***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>35,738</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2,680,344</td>
<td>6,700,860</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>CLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>47,252</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3,543,904</td>
<td>8,859,759</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>CLH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mandryk****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The decline in Protestant church growth between 1910 and 1921 was due to the chaos created by the Mexican Revolution that caused a large-scale internal migration as people sought to escape the violence.

Either the estimates by Read, Monterroso & Johnson were too high for 1965, or the official Census figures for 1960 and 1970 were a serious undercount.

Estimates by Patrick Johnstone for *Operation World 2000*.
Estimates by Jason Mandryk for *Operation World 2010*.

### FIGURE #2 - TOTAL POPULATION AND PROTESTANT POPULATION ESTIMATES: 1900-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION ESTIMATE</th>
<th>PROTESTANT POPULATION ESTIMATE</th>
<th>PERCENT PROTESTANT ESTIMATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>13,607,259</td>
<td>51,796</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>15,160,369</td>
<td>68,839</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>14,734,780</td>
<td>73,951</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>16,552,722</td>
<td>130,322</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>19,653,552</td>
<td>177,954</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>25,500,000</td>
<td>330,111</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>34,000,000</td>
<td>578,515</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>48,377,363</td>
<td>879,241</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>66,846,833</td>
<td>2,201,609</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>81,249,645</td>
<td>3,969,671</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>93,700,000</td>
<td>4,685,000</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>97,483,412</td>
<td>5,069,137</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>103,263,388</td>
<td>6,700,860</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>112,336,538</td>
<td>8,859,759</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**FIGURE #3**

PROTESTANT POPULATION GROWTH RATES, 1900-2010

- **1900-1930 = 3.12%**
- **1930-1940 = 3.16%**
- **1940-1950 = 6.37%**
- **1950-1960 = 5.77%**
- **1960-1970 = 4.27%**
- **1970-1980 = 9.61%**
- **1980-1990 = 6.07%**
- **1990-2000 = 5.38%**
- **2000-2010 = 5.74%**

Source: Clifton L. Holland, Director of PROLADES

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**SOURCES:** Total population estimates for 1900-2010 by the Mexican National Census Department; Protestant population and per cent Protestant estimates for 1900-1980 by Larson and from the other sources cited previously; estimates for 1990-2010 by PROLADES based on our Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas: [http://www.prolades.com/clas-eng.pdf](http://www.prolades.com/clas-eng.pdf)
FIGURE #4
SOURCES OF INFORMATION: MEXICO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>DATA SOURCE</th>
<th>DETAILS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>RMJ</td>
<td>Reed, Monterroso and Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>CLH</td>
<td>Clifton L. Holland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>CLH</td>
<td>Clifton L. Holland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Mexican National Census</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Produced by

PROLADES

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(Last revised on 27 December 2012)
Chile. According to the 2002 census, the geographical distribution of the Protestant population (national = 15.14 percent) in Chile was as follows by census zones:

- **Zona Norte Grande**, 11.4 percent (area #1, Región de Tarapacá, 11.84 percent; area #2, Región de Antofagasta, 11.0 percent).
- **Zona Norte Chico**, 9.0 percent (area #3, Región de Atacama, 10.7 percent; area #4, Región de Coquimbo, 7.4 percent).
- **Zona Centro**, 12.1 percent (area #5, Región de Valparaíso, 9.56 percent; area #6, Región de O’Higgins, 11.4 percent).
- **Zona Metropolitana**, 13.9 percent (Región de Santiago, 13.1 percent; area #7, Región del Maule, 14.67 percent).
- **Zona Sur**, 23.2 percent (area #8, Región del Bío Bío, 28.0 percent; area #9, Región de Araucanía, 24.0 percent; area #10, Región de Los Lagos, 17.8 percent).
- **Zona Extreme Sur**, 11.2 percent (area #11, Región de Aysén, 14.6 percent; area #12, Región de Magallanes, 7.8 percent).

Asked to explain the reasons for the high concentration of Protestant adherents in the **Southern Zone** (23.2 percent, the highest in the nation), Protestant leaders stated that the **Region of Bío-Bío** has a strong presence of Pentecostal churches that have grown among the lower-classes, especially in the Comunas of Galvarino and Lota; whereas in the **Region of Araucanía**, the Evangelical non-Pentecostal churches had a strong appeal to the middle-class in this region, known as the “capital of Latin American Evangelicalism,” due largely on the establishment of Swiss and German colonies there during the 1900s. The Protestant presence in the **Metropolitan Zone** is slightly lower than the national average (13.9 percent compared to 15.1 percent nationally), but the Protestant presence is weakest in the **Northern Zones** (Norte Grande and Norte Chico) and the **Extreme Southern Zone** (11.2 percent), which are the most remote regions of the nation and have the fewest inhabitants.

**Source:** Clifton L. Holland, “Religion in Chile” in *The PROLADES Encyclopedia of Religion in Latin America and the Caribbean* (San José, Costa Rica: PROLADES, 2010).
Peru. According to the 2007 national census, the total population was 28,220,764. Roman Catholic adherents totaled 81.3 percent; Protestants were 12.5 percent; Other Religions were 3.3 percent; and those with “No Religion” or no answer were 2.9 percent. The 1993 national census reported the following: Catholic 89.9 percent, Protestant 6.8 percent, Other Religions 2.8 percent, and None 1.4 percent. By comparison, the proportion of Protestant adherents in Peru almost doubled between 1993 and 2007, from 6.8 percent to 12.5 percent (an increase of 5.7 percent in 14 years, or an increase of 184 percent). In 2007, 53.9 percent of Protestant adherents were female and 46.1 percent were male.

In terms of rural-urban residence, the proportion of Protestant adherents in Peru changed as follows between 1993 and 2007:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1993</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RURAL</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>+5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URBAN</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>+6.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This shows that the Protestant population grew significantly both in rural areas (communities with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants) and urban areas (communities with more than 2,500 inhabitants) of the country, with a slightly greater increase in urban areas than in rural areas – possibly due to rural-to-urban migration or because urban residents have been more receptive to conversion to Protestantism than have their rural counterparts, historically. The urban population in Peru was 71.6 percent of the total population in 2010 and 28.4 percent was rural. By comparison, 71.8 percent of Protestant adherents resided in urban areas and 28.2 percent in rural areas.

Regionally, the Catholic population is proportionally smaller in the departments of Amazonas, San Martín and Ucayali: 67.8%, 65.8% and 65.2% respectively. By comparison, the Protestant population is proportionally larger in the following departments: Ucayali 22.9% (10.4% Indigenous-various), Huancavelica 21.8% (64% Quechua), Huánuco 20.9% (28% Quechua), Loreto 19.8% (6.4% Indigenous-various), Pasco 19.5% (9% Indigenous-various), San Martín 19.5% (Hispanic), Amazonas 18.1% (14.1% Indigenous-various), La Libertad 16.5% (Hispanic), Ayacucho 16.3% (64% Quechua), Junín 15.8% (9.6% Quechua), and Apurímac 13.5% (71% Quechua), all of which are higher than the national average of 12.5%. However, in the Lima Metro Area, the Protestant population is lower than the national average, at 11.1%, as well as in the rest of Lima Department at 9.9%.

Two of these departments are predominantly Hispanic (San Martín and La Libertad), four have high concentrations of Amazonian Amerindian peoples (Ucayali, Loreto, Pasco and Amazonas), and five have high concentrations of Quechuas (Huancavelica, Huánuco, Ayacucho, Junín and Apurímac). However, in most of the predominant Hispanic departments of Peru, the Protestant population percentage is below the national average of 12.5 percent, as well as in the Ayamara-speaking departments of Arequipa, Moquegua, Puno and Tacna in the southeastern region. The Amazonian region of lowland tropical rainforest is home to dozens of small, scattered and isolated tribes of Amerindians who are distinct from the highland and lowland Quechuas and Ayamaras.

Source: [http://censos.inei.gob.pe/Anexos/Libro.pdf](http://censos.inei.gob.pe/Anexos/Libro.pdf)
DEPARTMENTS OF PERU

Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peru_-_Regions_and_departments_(labeled).svg
Brazil. According to the 2010 national census, the total population was 190,275,440. Roman Catholic adherents totaled 64.6 percent of the national population; Protestants were 22.2 percent; Other Religions were 5.1 percent; and those with “No Religion” or no answer were 8.1 percent. Between 2000 and 2010, the Protestant population of Brazil increased by 6.8 percent. In 2010, 55.6 percent of Protestant adherents were female and 44.4 percent were male; by comparison, in 2000, 56.3 percent were females and 43.7 percent were males. Information about the regional (urban-rural) and gender distribution of the total population of Brazil compared to the Protestant population in 2000 and 2010, according to the national censuses, is given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion or faith</th>
<th>Total Pop. 2000</th>
<th>Protestant 2000</th>
<th>Total Pop. 2010</th>
<th>Protestant 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Pop. 2000</td>
<td>169,872,856</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>169,872,856</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant 2000</td>
<td>26,184,941</td>
<td>15,4</td>
<td>26,184,941</td>
<td>15,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Pop. 2010</td>
<td>190,755,799</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>190,755,799</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant 2010</td>
<td>42,275,440</td>
<td>22,2</td>
<td>42,275,440</td>
<td>22,2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 2007 poll, conducted by Datafolha and published in newspaper Folha de S. Paulo, asked diverse questions about the beliefs of the Brazilian people. In this poll, 64% reported their religious affiliation as Roman Catholic; 17% Pentecostal Protestant; 5% non-Pentecostal Protestant (total Protestant = 22%); 3% Kardecists or Spiritists; 3% followers of other religions; 7% non-religious or atheists. Less than 1% said they were followers of Afro-Brazilian religions.

In terms of rural-urban residence, the proportion of Protestant adherents in Brazil changed as follows between 2000 and 2010 (rural = communities with fewer than 2,500 inhabitants):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RURAL</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>+4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URBAN</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>+7.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the 2010 national census of Brazil, 84 percent of the population lived in urban areas and 16 percent in rural areas. In 2010, 89.5 percent of Protestant adherents in Brazil resided in urban areas, and only 10.5 percent resided in rural areas. This shows that the Protestant population, compared to the national population, is more concentrated in urban areas. By comparison, 71.8 percent of Protestant adherents in Peru resided in urban areas and 28.2 percent in rural areas.

COLOMBIA. The Demography of Colombia is characterized for being the third-most populous country in Latin America, after Mexico and Brazil. According to the 2005 census, there are 46,219,699 Colombians in the world (42,888,592 living in the national territory and 3,331,107 living abroad).

According to the 2010 edition of the World Population Prospects, the total population was **46,295,000 in 2010**, compared to only 12,000,000 in 1950. The proportion of children below the age of 15 in 2010 was 28.7%, 65.6% was between 15 and 65 years of age, while 5.6% was 65 years or older.

**Urbanization**

Movement from rural to urban areas was very heavy in the middle of the twentieth century, but has since tapered off. The **urban population** increased from 31% of the total population in 1938, to 57% in 1951 and about 70% by 1990. Currently the figure is about **77%**. Thirty cities have a population of 100,000 or more. The nine eastern lowlands departments, constituting about 54% of Colombia's area, have less than 3% of the population and a density of less than one person per square kilometer (two people per sq. mi.).

**Religious affiliation**

Según datos de nuestra encuesta, en la actualidad (2010), la gran mayoría de los colombianos se consideran «creyentes» —94.1% de la población—; el 58.2% se identifica como «creyente practicante», y el 35.9% como «creyente pero no practicante». Ateos y agnósticos suman en conjunto un poco menos del 5% de la población. Por otro lado, el 85% de los colombianos considera que la religión «es importante» o «muy importante» en sus vidas; sólo el 4.2% afirma que la religión no es importante. En conclusión, la sociedad colombiana es en su gran mayoría creyente, en su seno la increencia constituye aún un fenómeno marginal.

This survey (3,853 interviews) was conducted by telephone in the four largest urban areas of Colombia (Bogotá, Medellín, Cali and Barranquilla); in the following intermediate cities of Maicao, Bucaramanga and Barrancabermeja; and in various municipalities of the Urabá región.

Therefore, the results of this survey are not necessarily representative of the situation nationally, but only of the urban areas of the country where about 77 percent of the population resides. The urban population in 2010 was estimated at 33,141,570 (77%), whereas the rural population was calculated to be 5,534,642 (23%).

If 16.7 percent of the urban population was Protestant, according to this survey, then we can calculate the urban Protestant population at 5,534,642. Since we have no corresponding information about the Protestant population in rural areas (communities with less than 2,500 inhabitants), we have arbitrarily estimated that about 6 percent of the rural population is Protestant, or about 2,410,296. After adding these two figures, we can estimate that the Protestant population of Colombia in 2010 was about 6,128,608 or 14.2 percent of the national population. Until more accurate information is available about the rural-urban distribution of the Protestant population in Colombia, we use the 14.2 percent estimate for 2010.
### Tabla 11. ¿De qué religión se considera?
(May-August 2010 = 3,853 interviews by telephone)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agrupación</th>
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<th>%</th>
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<td>70.9</td>
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<td>0.9</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Protestante</td>
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<td>Ateos y agnósticos 4.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ateo</td>
<td>83</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>133</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Creo en Dios pero no en la religión 3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Testigos de Jehová</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Testigos de Jehová y adventistas 1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adventista</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>Musulmán</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>Otros 0.2</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hare Krishna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rastafari</td>
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<tr>
<td>Católico ortodoxo</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Estudios espirituales</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NS/NR</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>NS/NR 2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 3,853 100  **Total** 100

The Colombian government does not keep statistics on religious affiliation, and estimates from religious leaders vary. According to the Colombian Evangelical Council (CEDECOL), approximately 15 percent of the population was Protestant in 2010, whereas the Catholic Bishops’ Conference estimates that 90 percent of the population is Catholic. A 2007 article in the daily newspaper El Tiempo stated that 80 percent of the population was Catholic, 14 percent non-Catholic Christian, 2 percent agnostic, and the remaining 4 percent belonged to other religious groups, including Islam and Judaism.

Therefore, our estimate that the Protestant population of Colombia in 2010 was about 14.2 percent of the national population seems to be valid.

**DEPARTMENTS OF COLOMBIA**

Colombia is divided into 32 departments and one capital district, which is treated as a department (Bogotá also serves as the capital of the department of Cundinamarca). Departments are sub-divided into municipalities, each of which is assigned a municipal seat, and municipalities are in turn subdivided into corregimientos. Each department has a local government with a governor and assembly directly elected to four-year terms. Each municipality is headed by a mayor and council, and each corregimiento by an elected corregidor, or local leader.
According to the 2005 census by DANE, the population of Colombia was composed of the following ethnic groups:

- 58% Mestizo (European and Amerindian).
- 20% White (European).
- 14% Mulatto (European and Black/African).
- 4% Afro-Colombian.
- 3% Zambo (African and Amerindian).
- 1% Amerindian.

Other ethnic groups include Arabs counted with Whites (Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians), Chinese, Roma or Gypsies from Eastern Europe, and South Asians (East Indians).
8.0 The importance of evaluating the distribution of Protestant churches at the national level by geographical areas to determine priority areas for new church planting.

After we completed the 2000-2001 national study of Protestant church growth in Costa Rica, the PROLADES Team assisted leaders of the Costa Rican Evangelical Alliance (AECR) in determining priority areas for new evangelistic outreach and church planting by evaluating the church-to-population data we presented to them in our reports and computer-generated maps, including large wall maps of the country showing the Provincial, Cantón (County) and District boundaries, with red dots indicating the location of each of the Protestant churches nationally. In addition, we created similar maps for each Province so that the leaders could more easily visualize the information to see the Districts without any known Protestant church that were listed in our various reports on the study. Consequently, the AECR leadership coordinated a series of training activities with denominational leaders and representatives of regional Pastoral Associations throughout the nation for the purpose of targeting the Districts without any known Protestant church as priority areas for evangelistic outreach and new church planting.

The PROLADES Team has recently completed national studies of the Protestant movement among the Hispanic population in the USA, Puerto Rico and the Dominion of Canada (January 2010-August 2012). Part of our research methodology consisted in creating databases of all known local churches with Hispanic ministry in the USA and Canada, and of all Protestant churches in Puerto Rico. This process included mining the information available in print and on the Internet for each Protestant denomination that reported that it was involved in Hispanic ministry; or, in the case of Puerto Rico, of conducting extensive research on all Protestant denominations and church associations in the Commonwealth. Here is a link to these three important national studies: [http://www.hispanicchurchesusa.net/aeth-prolades-network-main.htm](http://www.hispanicchurchesusa.net/aeth-prolades-network-main.htm)

To illustrate this model, we have included the report on Puerto Rico below that shows the geographical distribution of all known Protestant churches by census regions, census divisions and municipalities, along with the corresponding population figures for 2010.

By dividing the number of known Protestant churches by the total population in each of these geographical areas, we can calculate the church-to-population ratio. The number in ( ) is the church-to-population ratio; for example, one church for an average of 1,500 inhabitants = 1:1500; this figure is the result of dividing the total population of each geographical unit by the number of Protestant churches found there.

The higher the population figure per church in each of these geographical units, the greater need there is plant new churches or to expand existing ministries to reach out to more people in the surrounding area. This is where the model of mother-daughter churches has proven successful in multiplying evangelistic and church planting ministries from a central church in larger population areas to reproduce daughter churches in nearby communities or in other parts of the country, as needed.
PROLADES

Chart of the Distribution of Known Protestant Congregations in Puerto Rico by Census Regions, Divisions & Municipalities, July 2012 (using census data for 2010)

Map of Puerto Rican Census Divisions

Map of Puerto Rican Municipalities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CENSUS REGION</th>
<th>CENSUS DIVISION</th>
<th>MUNICIPALITIES</th>
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<td>CAGUAS (298,642)</td>
<td>AGUAS BUENAS (29,032) (33 iglesias)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(997 iglesias = 1:0866)</td>
<td>(268 iglesias = 1:1114)</td>
<td>CAGUAS (142,893) (124 iglesias)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>GURABO (45,369) (43 iglesias)</td>
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<td>JUNCOS (40,290) (44 iglesias)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SAN LORENZO (41,058) (24 iglesias)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CAROLINA (308,774)</td>
<td>CANOVANAS (47,648) (88 iglesias)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(353 iglesias = 1:0875)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>FAJARDO (81,811)</td>
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<td>(168 iglesias = 1:0487)</td>
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<td>FAJARDO (30,993) (77 iglesias)</td>
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<td>(208 iglesias = 1:0837)</td>
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<td>MAUNABO (12,225) (13 iglesias)</td>
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<td>Iglesias</td>
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<td>Location</td>
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</table>

**TOTALS BY MAJOR CENSUS REGIONS:**

- North Region = 1,462 churches (1:1047)
- East Region = 997 churches (1:0866)
- West Region = 773 churches (1:0816)
- South Region = 672 churches (1:1048)

Note: the number in ( ) is the church-to-population ratio; for example, one church for an average of 1,500 inhabitants = 1:1500; this figure is the result of dividing the total population of each geographical unit by the number of Protestant churches found there.

**TOTAL REPORTED CHURCHES = 4,080 (15 July 2012)**
9.0 The Educational level of Evangelical pastors

Protestant missionary Duane E. Anderson’s late-1990s study of Evangelical pastors in Costa Rica gives us an overview of the educational level of “The Costa Rican Pastor, His Person and His Ministry” (Columbia International University, Doctor of Ministry Dissertation, Columbia Biblical Seminary and School of Missions, a Division of Columbia International University, Columbia, South Carolina: October, 1999). A copy of the dissertation is available at: http://www.prolades.com/cra/docs/chip/chipdiss.htm

During 1997-1998, this study examined the Costa Rican Evangelical pastor in the context of his personal life and ministry. Church growth research has amply documented the major factors of healthy church growth. These studies have demonstrated that the leadership abilities of the pastor are a key component in the success of a church.

This study used a forty-four question survey instrument that contained inquiries into six areas of the personal lives of pastors and six areas of ministry context. Results and data derived from the survey were examined to develop a "profile" of the average Costa Rican Evangelical pastor.

The pastor's personal life was studied in the areas of his age, family background, spiritual background and academic profile. Areas of his personal needs also were surveyed.

In terms of ministry context, data was gathered in the areas of the background of the church the pastor is currently serving as well as programs that are active in the church. The study also sought information about the background of the community from the pastor’s perspective and his opinions in such areas as the moral situation of the country, why people are attracted to the Evangelical church, why people leave the church and what he considers is the most effective methods of evangelism to reach his community.

Significant correlations were developed and significant opinion consensus’s derived from the interrelationship of various areas coming from the survey instrument. Factor analysis was used to
reduce the variance within the data to produce a profile that is faithful to the occupational perspective and worldview of pastors.

The survey sampled 431 pastors, which represents approximately 18.7% of the 2,300 churches currently thought to exist in the country.

Significant findings and data are presented in graph form to facilitate factor recognition. The questionnaire and tabulation forms that were used in the study are included in the appendices as well as a reference list of books used in the background study.

**Findings**

This study showed that the leadership of most Costa Rican evangelical churches is young. The average age of pastors is 41.6 years. Most pastors are between the ages of 36 and 40. This has both advantages and disadvantages. Young pastors are more open to change, have more energy and more access to the younger generation. On the negative side, if a pastor does not know how to lead and disciple his leaders effectively, his lack of experience and maturity may result in decisions that hurt church growth. In view of these circumstances it seems critical to the future success of pastors that they become skillful in managing and resolving conflicts between estranged groups and between themselves and others.

This study showed that currently 40.6% of pastors have been or are in Bible Institutes and that 51.9% have been or are in Seminaries. It is encouraging to see that in the light of societal trends toward increased professionalism, pastors know they have a need to upgrade their level of education and are seeking ways to do so. As the pastors become better educated they will be able to lead their churches more effectively and minister better to the needs of people.

Ninety-four percent (94%) of the pastors surveyed have completed primary school, which covers grades 1 - 6 in Costa Rica. Only 34.2% however, have completed high school. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the pastors have completed some form of Bible Institute training, while only 12% have earned a university degree. There were thirty responses (7.3%) marking “other” educational programs. Of those who indicated the nature of “other” education, three wrote “Doctorate,” one wrote “Masters,” and one wrote “Commercial.” This shows that while almost all pastors have a basic education, a great many, 65.8%, have not completed high school and only a few (12%) have earned a university degree.

**10.0 Average church size of Protestant congregations**

Below are presented a series of documents about the average church size in a few Latin American countries where data is available. The PROLADES Team has had a long history of conducting research on each country of Central America since 1977, although we began our research efforts with a national study of Protestant church growth in Costa Rica in 1974. Between 1977 and 1982, PROLADES designed, conducted and supervised fieldwork in each country of Central America to determine the origin and development of the Protestant movement to 1980. Information about this series of national studies is available on our website at: http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/cam/reldirca2.htm
Earlier this year I conducted a study of published documents on Protestant church growth in Central America for the period 1935 to 2010. Below is a summary of my findings based on the sources cited at the bottom of the table. In general, all of these sources attempted to describe and measure Protestant church growth in each country with their limited time and financial resources. Not all the denominational leaders contacted in each country could provide accurate and current data on the historical development and present status of their denominations, often for lack of time, resources or personal interest in the research. Some leaders considered “church growth research” to be un-Biblical and refused to cooperate with investigators.

In all countries studied, the data presented at the national level by the various individuals or research teams on the respective dates listed below contains some distortion due to omissions and duplications of some denominational groups. However, we believe that the data are sufficiently reliable for all countries in the region for us to make a comparative analysis of the reported statistics for the period 1935-2010, although the totals reported for each country are probably an undercount of 10-15% for any particular date based on our analysis.

**HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF PROTESTANT CHURCH GROWTH IN CENTRAL AMERICA, 1935-2010**

Created by Clifton L. Holland, Director of PROLADES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHURCHES</td>
<td>MEMBERS</td>
<td>AFFILIATED</td>
<td>CHURCHES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUATEMALA</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>15.943</td>
<td>40.657</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELIZE</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>10.235</td>
<td>21.350</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL SALVADOR</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>4.130</td>
<td>7.260</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICARAGUA</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>6.242</td>
<td>19.301</td>
<td>196</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSTA RICA</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.553</td>
<td>3.550</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAMA</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>9.139</td>
<td>28.543</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>51.423</td>
<td>130.151</td>
<td>1.254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVE. CHURCH SIZE</td>
<td>79.0 members per church</td>
<td>60.7 members per church</td>
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<tr>
<td>FORMULA: A / M = RATIO</td>
<td>Members X 2.086 = Affiliated</td>
<td>Members X 2.5 = Affiliated</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CHURCHES</td>
<td>MEMBERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUATEMALA</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>35.628</td>
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<tr>
<td>BELIZE</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>EL SALVADOR</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>18.506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HONDURAS</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>9.401</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICARAGUA</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>21.461</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSTA RICA</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>16.157</td>
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<tr>
<td>PANAMA</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>27.102</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>2.257</td>
<td>134.722</td>
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<tr>
<td>AVE. CHURCH SIZE</td>
<td>59.7 members per church</td>
<td>61.5 members per church</td>
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<td>FORMULA: A / M = RATIO</td>
<td>Members X 2.566 = Affiliated</td>
<td>Members X 2.381 = Affiliated</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>GUATEMALA</td>
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<td>286.129</td>
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<td>BELIZE</td>
<td>275</td>
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<td>EL SALVADOR</td>
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<td>98.224</td>
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<td>HONDURAS</td>
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<td>NICARAGUA</td>
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<td>COSTA RICA</td>
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<td>PANAMA</td>
<td>1.034</td>
<td>72.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>13.709</td>
<td>674.098</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| AVE. CHURCH SIZE | 49.2 members per church | 71.0 members per church |
| FORMULA: A / M = RATIO |
| Members X 3.688 = Affiliated | Members X 2.438 = Affiliated |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GUATEMALA</td>
<td>13.158</td>
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<td>2,033.343</td>
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<td>29.275</td>
<td>83.096</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>65.086</td>
<td>153.574</td>
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<td>EL SALVADOR</td>
<td>6.910</td>
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<td>989.507</td>
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<td>4.864</td>
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<td>766.410</td>
<td>7.414</td>
<td>731.008</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSTA RICA</td>
<td>2.779</td>
<td>283.356</td>
<td>685.832</td>
<td>4.871</td>
<td>413.708</td>
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<td>PANAMA</td>
<td>1.763</td>
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<td>428.250</td>
<td>3.102</td>
<td>310.161</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
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<td>2,601.102</td>
<td>6,511.305</td>
<td>63.569</td>
<td>5,263.553</td>
<td>13,541.892</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| AVE. CHURCH SIZE | 74.5 members per church | 82.8 members per church |
| FORMULA: A / M = RATIO |
| Members X 2.503 = Affiliated | Members X 2.573 = Affiliated |

**SOURCES**

Despite the temptation to discuss the nature and quality of each of these sources, I would like to limit my comments to a review and comparison of the relative church size (“members per church”) at the national level in each country through time. Grubb’s survey showed that the average church size for the entire Central American region in 1935 was about 79 members per church shortly after the end of the Great Depression; by 1950 there were about 60.7 members per church a few years after the end of World War II; in 1960, the average church size remained about the same at 59.7, and by 1970 it was about 61.5 members per church.

During the period 1950 to 1970, the Protestant movement experienced considerable growth in Central America, which produced a situation where the number of those attending church services was far greater than the number of communicant or regular members. By 1980, the average church size had dropped to about 49.2 members per church during a period of accelerated church growth nationally and regionally. The 1980s was a time of the consolidation of results from the previous period of rapid church growth in most countries, which caused the average church size to increase to about 71 members per church by 1990. Thereafter, the average church size has continued to increase each decade: 74.5 members per church in 2000 and an estimated 82.8 by 2010. In Mexico, we estimated that currently there are about 75 members per church nationally (2010).

However, the 2010 data for Central America is considered a low estimate because of the growth and development of Protestant mega-churches in this region, which were much smaller in size in 2000 and most were founded during the 1990s or later. After factoring in the growth of the mega-churches (defined as having at least 2,000 people in attendance at the combined Sunday church services) in each country, we would expect the average church size to increase nationally, especially in the larger urban areas where the mega-churches are located. To date we have identified about 35 Evangelical mega-churches in Central America. Below is an overview of our research on this phenomenon.

Research on the Evangelical Mega-Church Phenomenon in Central America: Facts and Fiction
By Clifton L. Holland
Draft copy, 19 May 2011

Introduction

On April 25, 2011, my old friend Dr. J. B. A. (John) Kessler wrote me the following: “Jorge [last name deleted] told me that I had no right to criticize mega-churches in Costa Rica unless I had actually been to them. So for the last few months, I have wasted my time doing just that. My experience is that it is a mixed bag. Three churches were simply awful. One was doubtful because, although the preaching was good, the pastor spent more time speaking about the offering than on his sermon. Two were doubtful because, although they did not say anything heretical about the offering, they did not really edify the sheep. One was good and one was very good.”
So I decided to find out from John what churches he visited, when and what he thought about each one in particular, so that I could sort out which ones he was talking about. However, John was travelling in Peru and wasn’t expected to return to Costa Rica for several weeks.

In the meanwhile, I began to explore the Internet in an attempt to find out what others have been saying about mega-churches in Central America in particular and in Latin America in general. On the narrower search on “mega-churches in Central America” I discovered that there were nine listings on Google: eight of them were my own web pages (in the Central America section of www.prolades.com) and one was from an article written in 1994 by a veteran Evangelical missionary in Central America who represents the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. Below are his comments about Evangelical mega-churches to start off my discussion of this growing phenomenon in Central America.

**Some Alleged Characteristics of Mega-Churches in Central America**


- Evangelical mega-churches are conservative theologically, socially and politically.
- Evangelical mega-churches are predominantly Pentecostal-Charismatic (or neo-Pentecostal).
- Evangelical mega-churches are predominantly fundamentalist with a strong tendency toward sectarian exclusiveness that promotes dogmatism and fanaticism.
- Evangelical mega-churches have leadership structures that are very hierarchical and authoritarian.
- Evangelical mega-churches are predominantly composed of members with little education who are drawn from the lower socio-economic levels of society.
- Evangelical mega-churches preach and teach the “prosperity gospel” of health, wealth and happiness that promotes capitalism and the free enterprise system.
- Evangelical mega-churches support rightwing political parties and governments.

Therefore, if we start off with the premise that these are the perceived characteristics of mega-churches in Central America by some observers, then we can proceed to investigate the phenomenon first-hand through fieldwork in each country of the region using a case study approach with participant-observation as our research method in an attempt to prove, disprove or modify these perceived characteristics in order to describe the reality of the situation from my own profession perspective based on more than 40 years of experience in designing, conducting, coordinating and supervising social science research in Latin America.

**Current Research Findings by PROLADES**

At the beginning of 2011, I began to gather, study and evaluate information about the Evangelical mega-church phenomenon worldwide in preparation for conducting my own fieldwork (and motivating and training others to do the same) in Costa Rica and the rest of Central America, where I have lived and worked as a Christian educator since April 1972. I soon came to realize...
that what most observers were saying about megachurches around the world was not necessarily true of the situation in Central America.

Consequently, I began to make plans to travel to El Salvador and Guatemala in April 2011 in order to begin the long process of identifying what and where the mega-churches are within each country, when they were first founded as a congregation and by whom (founder/ founders, denominational background and theological orientation), when each congregation developed into a mega-church (defined as those churches having 2,000 or more people in attendance in all their Sunday worship services on a given day), what are the actual characteristics of each mega-church in each country (using every criteria known to mankind), and make a photo documentary of my journey using my digital camera that takes still shots as well as moving pictures.

After completing fieldwork in El Salvador and Guatemala (April 7-17, 2011), I visited each of the other countries of Central America during 2011-2012 and conducting similar fieldwork on each mega-church that I was able to identify in my interviews with Evangelical denominational and para-church leaders. The schedule of my visits was as follows: Costa Rica (October-November 2011), Nicaragua (February 18-27, 2012), Honduras (June 2-11, 2012), and Panama (October 20-29, 2012).

The Project Description and a series of research-in-progress reports, evaluations and photos about my own fieldwork on mega-churches in Central America, as well as copies of our questionnaires and other tools for the evaluation of mega-churches, are available at: http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/cam/megachurches_cam.htm

Below is a ranking of the size of Evangelical mega-churches that I have been able to identify so far, although due to time constraints I was unable to visit each one that was reported to exist in every country of Central America. This list represents our current research agenda through 2015 in Central America in cooperation with various programs of theological education in each county. Currently, several professors and their students in Evangelical university programs of theological educations in El Salvador and Guatemala are conducting their own research on Evangelical mega-churches with technical support from PROLADES.

**RANKING OF MEGA-CHURCHES IN CENTRAL AMERICA**

**25,000+**

"Friends of Israel" Bible Baptist Tabernacle - Tabernaculo Bíblico Bautista "Amigos de Israel" - Pastor Brother Toby - Dr. Edgar Lopez Bertrand (International Baptist Mission - Fundamentalist) Colonia San Benito, San Salvador, El Salvador Auditorium seats 10,000 people; has six Sunday worship services Total estimated Sunday attendance = 48,000
International Harvest Ministry of Honduras -
Ministerio Internacional La Cosecha Honduras
(International Church of the Foursquare Gospel)
Pastor General Misael Argenal Rodriguez
Located in San Pedro Sula, Honduras
Auditorium seats 30,000 people; total attendance unknown.

Iglesia Elim Central de San Salvador -
Mision Cristiana Elim Internacional
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastor General Mario Vega
Calle al Matazano, Final Colonia Santa Lucia
San Salvador, El Salvador
Auditorium seats 5,000 people; has five Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 22,000

10,000-24,999

Iglesia Casa de Dios - House of God Church
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastor Carlos "Cash" Luna
Km. 17 on Main Highway to San José Pinula and El Salvador
Near Guatemala City, Guatemala
Auditorium seats 3,500 people; has five Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 15,000

Comunidad Apostólica Hosanna - Hosanna Apostolic Community
Pastor Apostle Edwin Alvarez
Hosanna Vision TV
Via España y Martin Sosa, La Cresta Calle Primera, Panama City
Three Sunday worship services with a total average attendance of about 14,000.

Comunidad Apostólica Hosanna - Hosanna Apostolic Community
(affiliated with Assemblies of God)
Pastor Apostle Edwin Alvarez Hosanna Vision TV
Via Espana y Martin Sossa, La Cresta Calle 1era., Panama City, Panama
Auditorium seats 5,000 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 13,500

Iglesia Fraternidad Cristiana - Christian Brotherhood Church
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastor Jorge H. Lopez
Templo Mega-Frater, Km. 13.5 Calzada Roosevelt 8-25, Zona 3,
Colonia Cotio, Municipality of Mixco, Guatemala City, Guatemala
Auditorium seats 12,200 people; has one Sunday worship service
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 10,500

Ministerios Ebenezer de Guatemala -
Ebenezer Ministries of Guatemala
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastor Sergio Enriquez
Barrio San Pedrito, Zona 5, Guatemala City, Guatemala
Auditorium seats 2,500 people; has one Sunday worship service
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 10,500

5,000-9,999

Iglesia de Jesucristo La Familia de Dios -
Family of God Church of Jesus Christ
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastor Luis Fernando Solares
Municipality of Mixco, Guatemala City, Guatemala
Auditorium seats 5,000 people; has two Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 9,000

Ministerios Apostolar Centro Cristiano -
Christian Center Apostolic Ministries
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastor Augusto Marenco
Rotonda de la Residencial Bello Horizonte, Managua, Nicaragua
Auditorium seats 1,500 people; has six Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 9,000

Ministerio Internacional Ríos de Agua Viva -
Rivers of Living Water International Ministry
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastor Omar Duarte
Sector de Rubenia de Managua, Nicaragua
Auditorium seats about 3,000 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total Estimated Sunday attendance = 8,500

Comunidad de Renovación Familiar Hosanna -
Hosanna Community of Family Renewal
(affiliated with the Assemblies of God)
Pastor David Spencer
Pista Jean Paul Genie, Managua, Nicaragua
Auditorium seats 2,500 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 7,000

Iglesia de Cristo Elim Central - Elim Central Church of Christ
Pastor General Héctor Nufio
(independent Pentecostal)
3a Avenida 11-42, Colonia El Rosario, Zona 3
Municipality of Mixco, Guatemala City, Guatemala
Auditorium seats 3,200 people; has two Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 6,000

"Oasis of Hope" Assembly of God -
Iglesia Asambleas de Dios "Oasis de Esperanza"
Pastor Apóstol Raul Vargas
Moravia, San José, Costa Rica
Auditorium seats 2,500 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 5,250

Misión Cristiana Mundial La Rosa de Sarón -
Rose of Sharon Worldwide Christian Mission
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastor José Luis Madrigal
San Francisco de Goicoechea, San José, Costa Rica
Auditorium seats 3,000 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 5,000

"Passion for Souls" International Apostolic Community -
Comunidad Apostolica Internacional "Pasión por las Almas"
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastor Apóstol William Magana
Avenida 10, Hospital District, San José
Auditorium seats 2,000 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 5,000

Iglesia Palabras de Vida Eterna - Words of Eternal Life Church
(Independent Pentecostal)
Apostle Ruben Dario Aguirre
Sector La Candalaria, Frente al Centro Comercial La Doña, Tocumen, Panama City
Four Sunday worship services with a total average attendance of about 5,000.

2,000-4,999

Iglesia Lluvias de Gracia - Showers of Blessing Church
(Misión Cristiana Evangélica Lluvias de Gracia)
Pastor Apóstol Edmundo Madrid Morales
10 Avenida 16-70, Sector 5, Planes de Minerva
Zona 11, Municipality of Mixco, Guatemala City, Guatemala
Auditorium seats 5,000 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 4,700

Iglesia El Shaddai - El Shaddai Church
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastora Cecilia de Caballeros
4 Calle 23-03, Zona 14, Guatemala City, Guatemala
Auditorium seats 5,000 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 4,700

Centro Evangélistico de las Asambleas de Dios - Evangelistic Center of the Assemblies of God
Pastor Olvidio Valladares
Colonia Javier Cuadras Montoya, Managua, Nicaragua
Auditorium seats 1,000 people; has six Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 4,500

Tabernáculo de la Fe - Tabernacle of Faith
(Church of God, Cleveland, TN)
Apostle Manuel A. Ruiz
Colonia Juan Díaz, Panama City
One Sunday worship services with a total average attendance of about 4,500.

Iglesia Ejército de Dios - Army of God Church
(Independent Pentecostal)
Apostle Carlos Morales y Pastor Saúl Espinosa
Calle 9, Colonia Río Abajo, Panama City
Two Sunday worship services with a total average attendance of about 4,000.

Abundant Life Christian Community-
Comunidad Cristiana "Vida Abundante"
(Federacion de Iglesias Vida Abundante - FIVA)
(independent Charismatic)
Pastor Ricardo Salazar
San Antonio de Coronado, San José
Auditorium seats 2,100 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 3,800

Eagles Nest Apostolic Mission - Misión Apostólica "Nido de Aguilas" (MANA)
(MANA Internacional / Kingdom Takers Church - formerly known as the International Charismatic Mission - MCI)
Pastor Apóstol Guido Luis Núñez
La Uruca, San José, Costa Rica
Auditorium seats 1,800 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 3,800

Church of Jesus Christ "Palabra Mi-El" Central -
Iglesia de Jesucristo Palabra Mi-El Central
(independent Pentecostal: Mi-El = "Mision Elim")
Pastor Apóstol Gaspar Sapalu Alvarado
Boulevard El Naranjo 29-55, Zona 4
Municipality of Mixco, Guatemala City, Guatemala
Auditorium seats 3,500 people; has one Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 3,400

Evangelistic Center of San Salvador
Centro Evangelístico de San Salvador
(affiliated with the Assemblies of God)
Pastors Juan Angel and Edith Castro
2a Avenida Norte, Colonia La Rabida, San Salvador, El Salvador
Auditorium seats 1,500 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 3,000

Joshua Christian Church - Iglesia Cristiana Josué
(affiliated with the Assemblies of God)
Pastor Lisandro Bojorquez
Avenida Mansferrer Sur, Colonia Campestre, San Salvador, El Salvador
Auditorium seats 1,000 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 3,000

Family Worship Center Church -
Iglesia Centro Familiar de Adoración
(affiliated with the Assemblies of God)
Pastor Francisco Karra
Colonia Santa Lucia, San Salvador, El Salvador
Auditorium seats 1,000 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 3,000

Christian Temple - Templo Cristiano
(affiliated with the Assemblies of God)
Pastor Orlando Flores
Colonia San Benito, San Salvador, El Salvador
Auditorium seats 1,800 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 3,000

Iglesia Cristiana Vida Real - Royal Life Christian Church
(independent Pentecostal)
Pastor Rony Madrid
Centro de Convenciones Ilumina
19 Avenida 16-02, Zona 10, Guatemala City, Guatemala
Auditorium seats 1,100 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 3,000

Assemblies of God Christian Center
Iglesia Asambleas de Dios "Centro Evangelístico"
Pastor Hugo Solís González
Zapote, San José, Costa Rica
Auditorium seats 1,500 people; has two Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 3,000

City of God - Ciudad de Dios
(Affiliated with Brethren in Christ Church)
Pastor Dr. Alex Alvarado
Hatillo, San Jose
Auditorium seats 1,000 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 3,000

Casa de Oración Cristiana- Christian House of Prayer
(General Council of the Assemblies of God)
Pastor Hermes Espino
Avenida Santa Elena, Panama City
Three Sunday worship services with a total average attendance of about 2,500.

Bible Temple of San José - Templo Bíblico de San José
(Asociación de Iglesias Bíblicas Costarricenses - AIBC)
Pastor Reynaldo Salazar
Downtown San José, 200 meters west of Parque Central, Costa Rica
Auditorium seats 800 people; has three Sunday worship services
Total estimated Sunday attendance = 2,400

11.0 Church budgets and spending patterns of Protestant Denominations

So far I have been unable to gather information about these subjects because of a lack of time and the lack of information available in print or on the Internet.

The general rule is that the larger the membership size or attendance in a local church, the larger the church budget, the size of the facilities and the church staff. If the average church size was about 83 members per church for all countries in the entire Central American region, then we can expect that the average church budget would also be relatively small by comparison.

In 1980, there were only a few local churches in each country of Central America that had 1,000 members or more, but with the passing of each decade the number of +1,000 member congregations grew in keeping with urban population growth patterns in each country, especially in the largest urban areas. Obviously, there are multitudes of local congregations in each country of Central America (except for Belize) that have between 1,000 and 2,000 members or attendance
Traditionally in Central America, Protestant church growth resulted from the multiplication of small churches (50-100 members) throughout the country, starting in the major cities and expanding out into the surrounding communities. In most countries of Central America today, there are local Protestant churches in nearly every district of every municipality of every province or department (state). Since 2000, in Costa Rica, the Evangelical Alliance has targeted every district of the country that did not have a known Evangelical church at the time when we finished our last national church growth survey of that nation (2000-2001) as a strategic area for new church planting by the combined forces of the various denominations, church associations, local churches and service agencies that are its members. Consequently, the entire nation has been saturated with the planting of new Evangelical churches, with combined efforts to better train local pastors at various academic levels (primary, secondary and post-secondary), with the formation of interdenominational Pastoral Fellowships in every major city, and with the formation of strategic partnerships between some of the larger urban churches (such as the Bible Temple in San José) with these same Pastoral Fellowships.

Most of the new Evangelical churches in outlying areas have been planted as “daughter churches or missions” by other churches of the same denomination, usually by large urban churches that train and send out church planting teams to begin home Bible study and prayer groups in communities without a local Evangelical church; to conduct evangelistic crusades; to distribute Bibles, New Testaments and other Christian literature house-to-house; to provide a variety of human and social services to needy people in those communities; and to eventually win converts to Christ, baptize them and teach them the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and form new congregations of born-again believers. *Most of these activities are being done today using national resources without any foreign financial assistance or human resources.*
Summary and Conclusions

This document is a brief study of CHURCH TRENDS within the major traditions and denominational families of Latin American Christianity.

Each religious tradition and denominational family of Christianity represents a unique configuration of beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that have been culturally conditioned over the past centuries, modified by political, social and religious conflicts in the parent continent and mother country, and transported through immigration and migration to distant lands and transplanted in the native soil of each Latin American nation and within each racial, ethnolinguistic and socioeconomic component of society. Today, all the Latin American nations are considered to be predominantly Christian with a variety of blends and flavors in a complex mix of competing brands in the modern religious marketplace that an estimated 596 million people call home.

The old religious monopolies are undergoing a process of crisis, conflict, fragmentation, disintegration, reconfiguration (mergers, unions, redefinition and revitalization) or extinction/absorption. The remaining religious monopolies are largely composed of traditionalists who oppose modernization and change because of their firm belief and commitment to a traditional worldview and their fear of an unknown future.

Traditionalists exist within each of the major Christian traditions but are most common in the Eastern Orthodox and Western Roman traditions, and within the Older Liturgical Protestant traditions (Lutheran, Reformed-Presbyterian-Congregational, and Anglican-Episcopal Families of Denominations). However, within the Protestant “Free Church” Tradition that originated among dissenter groups within the Protestant State Churches (Lutheran, Reformed-Presbyterian, and Anglican) of Europe and spread to the Americas (especially North America) prior to 1900, there are a few traditionalist groups of churches (some reject all denominational structures) in modern Latin America. These groups include some of those within the Amish-Mennonite Family of denominations, the Baptist Family, the Pietist Family, the Holiness Family, the Independent Fundamentalist Family, the Restorationist Family, and independent-separatist “Free Church” groups. The Adventist Family of denominations is also largely traditionalist and separatist in their relationships with other Protestant groups. Also, the Pentecostal Family of denominations has some groups that are strongly traditionalist, which has led to numerous conflicts and divisions in each country and the multiplication of splinter movements, new denominations and church associations, as well as independent local churches.

The Marginal Christian Groups represent a large variety of religious traditions and denominational families within Christianity in general but are separated and isolated from the Major Christian Traditions that we have described previously. In Latin America, some government organizations that are responsible for monitoring and registering religious associations have used the term “para-Protestant” to describe what we have termed Marginal Christian Groups within the PROLADES Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas. None of these groups fit within our definition of the “Protestant Movement” because each one deviates in various degrees from the historic Protestant worldview of beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. In the official census reports of Mexico and Brazil, the Adventist Family of denominations is listed as “para-Protestant,” whereas we have opted to include this tradition within our definition of the Protestant Movement.
As we have seen earlier in this document, the traditionalist groups (authoritarian and dogmatic) tend to lose adherents to the more democratic and moderate groups, such as the defection of Roman Catholic adherents to Evangelical-Protestant mainstream groups and to groups within the Pentecostal movement, or even to some Marginal Christian groups (“para-Protestant”). However, most of the latter groups in Latin America are also authoritarian and dogmatic, and some of them claim to be the “only true path of salvation.” Also, there are defections from these Christian traditions and denominational families to other religions (non-Christian) and to secular society (no religious affiliation, agnostics or atheists).

At some point of time, we are prone to ask ourselves, “where is the True Church of Jesus Christ” in the world today, within all of these competitive and confusing religious alternatives that call themselves “Christian?” “Who are the members of the Universal Christian Church that is comprised of all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?”

True Biblical conversion is to the historical Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah and only Redeemer and Savior of humankind, and to His teachings as revealed in the New Testament, and never to another religious leader or organization. Attendance, membership or affiliation with a religious organization is not salvific, nor can any religious organization authentically claim to be so. Nor can eternal salvation be earned by good works, but by sola gracia, sola fé, solo Cristo.

Therefore, not everyone who attends, is a member of, or is affiliated with any particular Christian denomination or church body (by choice or by birth) has experienced true conversion, as defined above. Statistics on church membership, attendance and/or affiliation (“community”) as reported in this document are only an indication of the relative size of that denomination in comparison with all other denominations within the various Christian traditions and families of denominations. Such statistics can be used to measure average annual growth rates (AAGR) of those denominations that honestly and fairly issue reports on the same. By comparing such statistics at intervals of 5, 10 or more years, researchers (such as myself) can analyze the data and calculate the AAGR for one or more denominations in a given geographical area, as we have done in this document and in hundreds of other documents produced by PROLADES since 1977, when our organization was founded as a parachurch ministry in research and information management.

In addition to formal church structures, which we have called “denominations” in this document, there are also parachurch organizations within all the various traditions and families of denominations of Christianity. **Parachurch organizations** are faith-based organizations that work outside of and across denominational boundaries to engage in a variety of Christian ministries, usually independent of direct church oversight. These bodies can be businesses, non-profit corporations, or private associations. Some of these organizations cater to a defined spectrum of beliefs within the various major traditions and families of denominations, but most are self-consciously interdenominational and many are ecumenical. In Catholic and Protestant theology, parachurch organizations are termed sodalities, as distinct from modalities, which is the structure and organization of the local church and of the thousands of denominational bodies within Christianity as we have described above.

If the “True Church of Jesus Christ” is comprised of all born-again believers in the Risen Lord throughout the world – regardless of race, gender, age, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic
variables, political orientation, citizenship, denominational affiliation, etc. -- then we should recognize and celebrate the fact that “we are all brothers and sisters in the Lord” and act like we are part of the same Family of God, the Body of Christ, the Church Universal.

The reality is that, although we call ourselves “Christians,” we are seriously divided by artificial, man-made boundaries of church structures (modalities), religious traditions and denominational families of churches in Latin America and worldwide. However, there have been various attempts to create some unity in the midst of diversity among Christian groups, both within the major traditions and within the various denominational families of churches.

The various Ecumenical Councils in the history of the Christian Church prior to the Protestant Reformation were attempts to find “common ground” within the various Eastern Orthodox and Western Catholic traditions in the Middle East, North America and Europe. That same ecumenical dialogue continues today through various international forums that were created by The Vatican (See of the Roman Catholic Church), the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church, and other Eastern Orthodox jurisdictions. The most recent initiatives in this regard were undertaken following the Second Vatican Council (mid-1960s) of the Roman Catholic Church, which renewed its contacts with leaders in the main Eastern Orthodox Churches and in some Protestant denominations and parachurch organizations, such as the World Council of Churches (WCC, founded in 1948).

The WCC is “a worldwide fellowship of churches seeking unity, a common witness and Christian service.” The WCC’s counterpart in Latin America is the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI, founded in 1978). However, the WCC-CLAI sphere of influence in Latin America is very weak in most countries because of the under-representation of mainline Protestant denominations (liberal and progressive doctrinally, socially and politically).

The WCC is the broadest and most inclusive among the many organized expressions of the modern ecumenical movement, a movement whose goal is Christian unity. The WCC brings together 349 churches, denominations and church fellowships in more than 110 countries and territories throughout the world, representing over 560 million Christians and including most of the world’s Orthodox churches, scores of Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Reformed churches, as well as many United and Independent churches. While the bulk of the WCC’s founding churches were European and North American, today most member churches are in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific.


The Evangelical-Protestant sphere of influence in Latin America has developed slowly since the late-1900s under the umbrella of the Latin American Fellowship of Evangelicals (CONELA), founded in 1982 in Panama City, Panama, after initial discussions were held among Evangelical leaders who participated in various Lausanne Congress for World Evangelization-sponsored activities with logistical support from the Luis Palau Evangelistic Association (headquarters in Portland, Oregon, USA). CONELA is affiliated internationally with the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF, founded in 1951), now renamed the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA, 2001).

The World Evangelical Alliance is a global ministry working with local churches around the world to join in common concern to live and proclaim the Good News of Jesus in their communities. WEA is a network of
churches in 129 nations that have each formed an evangelical alliance and over 100 international organizations joining together to give a world-wide identity, voice, and platform to more than 600 million evangelical Christians. Seeking holiness, justice and renewal at every level of society -- individual, family, community and culture -- God is glorified and the nations of the earth are forever transformed.

Today … a new day dawns upon a revitalized WEA with its regional and national alliances, commissions (theology, religious liberty, mission, youth, women, and information technology), affiliated specialized ministries, and organizational ministries.

Source: http://www.worldea.org/whoweare/introduction

Rather than having a membership composed directly of individual denominational, local church and parachurch leaders, such as is the case with CONELA, the WEF built a worldwide coalition of national evangelical alliances and federations, which are composed of denominational, local church and parachurch leaders.

Nevertheless, there are many Evangelical-Protestant denominations and church associations in Latin America (as well as worldwide) that have not joined these so-called “ecumenical” organizations, whether those related to the WCC-CLAI sphere of influence or the WEA-CONELA sphere. Most of those denominations and church associations that decline to be involved ecumenically are identified as conservative-separatist Evangelical groups within the Fundamentalist wing of the Protestant movement in Latin America. In addition, the anti-ecumenical stance of most of the groups within the Adventist Family of Churches isolates them from having fraternal relations with most of the Evangelical-Protestant denominations and parachurch organizations. Although it is usually easier for most Pentecostal leaders to have fellowship at various levels with other Pentecostals, not all of them have become associated with non-Pentecostals in regional, national and/or international fellowship organizations, such as the WCC-CLAI and WEA-CONELA networks.

Regarding the Protestant movement in Latin America, there is more unity in the midst of diversity among the various Christian traditions and denominational families of churches in Latin America today than in previous decades, when doctrinal differences and denominational idiosyncrasies played a more dominant role in interdenominational relationships. Of course, there are still some major tensions and conflicts within the Evangelical-Protestant spectrum in Latin America due to the principal controversies that we mentioned earlier: the Pentecostal-non-Pentecostal polarization, Liberation Theology, the Charismatic Renewal movement, the Prosperity Gospel, the G12 Vision & Strategy, and the New Apostolic Reformation (and its emphasis on modern-day apostles & prophets, spiritual warfare, territorial spirits, dominion theology, etc.).

* * * * *

In my next PROLADES Study, Reflection & Discussion Document, I will make my own SWOT Analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats -- of the Protestant movement in general in Latin America and define a research, evaluation and strategic planning agenda for the next decade for PROLADES.

--Clifton L. Holland
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