I. 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.
II. 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
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>STATS</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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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NORTH AMERICA</td>
<td></td>
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<td>CANADA - TOTAL POP.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>43.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td>2001 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>56.8</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<td>2001 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION</td>
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<td>2.4</td>
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<td>2010 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION, INEGI</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA - TOTAL POP.</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>2012 (OCTOBER) PEW RESEARCH CENTER</td>
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<td>USA HISPANICS</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>67.6</td>
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<td>PEW 2006 U.S. RELIGION SURVEY</td>
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<td>CENTRAL AMERICA</td>
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<td>BELIZE</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>CENSUS</td>
<td>2010 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION - CARICOM</td>
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<tr>
<td>COSTA RICA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>CID-GALLUP PUBLIC OPINION POLL #132, SEPT 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>EL SALVADOR</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>IUDOP-UCA, JUNE 2009</td>
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<td>GUATEMALA</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>30.7</td>
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<td>12.4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>LATINOBAROMETRO 2006 (OTHER / NONE = 12.4%)</td>
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<td>HONDURAS</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>43.9</td>
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<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>CID-GALLUP PUBLIC OPINION POLL #81, SEPT 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICARAGUA</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>30.4</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>POLL</td>
<td>CID-GALLUP PUBLIC OPINION POLL #72, SEPT 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>PANAMA</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>21.2</td>
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<td>POLL</td>
<td>CID-GALLUP PUBLIC OPINION POLL #76, SEPT 2012</td>
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<td>Country</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>76.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>POLL CIEL-PIETTE-CONICET, JAN-FEB 2008</td>
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<td>BOLIVIA</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>CENSUS 2001 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION, INE</td>
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<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>CENSUS 2010 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION, IGBE</td>
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<td>CHILE</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>CENSUS 2002 NATIONAL CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING</td>
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<td>COLOMBIA</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>POLL ENCUESTA NACIONAL DE PARTICIPACION CIUDADANA, INEC-SENPLADES 2008; <em>none</em> 21.5% includes other religions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECUADOR</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>POLL ENCUESTA NACIONAL DE PARTICIPACION CIUDADANA, 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>CENSUS 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>
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<td>PERU</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>81.3</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
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<td>CENSUS 2007 National Census conducted by the Peruvian National Institute of Statistics and Information (INEI)</td>
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<td>11.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>SURVEY 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>PROLADES 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>PROLADES PROLADES statistical report based on a survey of current literature and recent news sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOMINICAN REPUBLIC</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>POLL 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>
<td></td>
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<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>
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</tbody>
</table>

FOOTNOTES:

1. **PROLADES ESTIMATE** = PROLADES is the Spanish acronym for the LATIN AMERICAN SOCIO-RELIGIOUS STUDIES PROGRAM, located in San Pedro, Montes de Oca, Costa Rica.
5. **POLL** = PUBLIC OPINION POLL
6. **CENSUS** = AN OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT CENSUS
9. **OPERATION WORLD 2010 DATABASE**
10. For our definition of “Protestant,” see the following resources: [A Protestant Family Tree](http://www.protestantfamilytree.com/102000) and [A Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas](http://www.americasreligionstudy.com).

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%.
III. 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. 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: Demoscopía 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 participants” 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* (Montreal, Canada and Kingston, 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. 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, policymakers 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 Medellin. 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 steeples 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 Lancastrian system of education.

In Guatemala, the Rev. John Clark Hill arrived in late 1882 to begin Presbyterian work in Guatema-la 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.

During 1960-1961, the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA), with headquarters in Washington, DC, conducted a survey of Protestant Mission Agencies at work in Latin America and the Caribbean for the purpose of producing a statistical summary of Evangelical work “in the hope of determining the unreached areas, as well as seeing what has already been accomplished” since 1937, when a similar survey was conducted by the Committee of Cooperation in Latin America and published as the Evangelical Handbook of Latin America.

A summary of the results of the 1937 survey were reproduced on page vi of Protestant Missions in Latin America, A Statistical Survey (edited by Clyde W. Taylor and Wade T. Coggins and published by the EFMA in 1961), and a summary of the results of the 1960 survey were printed on pages vii – ix. Based on the 1960 study, we have created the following statistical table on Christian Education in Latin America for 1960 for the Latin American countries (21, including Belize). The table is sorted by REGIONS and COUNTRIES. This gives us a general overview of
what the situation was like in 1960, although not all the mission agencies at work in Latin America participated in the survey for a variety of reasons.

PROTESTANT EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA, 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REGION</th>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>PRIMARY</th>
<th>SECONDARY</th>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
<th>NORMAL SCHOOL</th>
<th>BIBLE INSTITUTE</th>
<th>SEMINARY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARIBBEAN</td>
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<td>86</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>PUERTO RICO</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CENTRAL AMERICA</td>
<td>BELIZE</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL AMERICA</td>
<td>PANAMA</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH AMERICA</td>
<td>MEXICO</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUTH AMERICA</td>
<td>ARGENTINA</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUTH AMERICA</td>
<td>BOLIVIA</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUTH AMERICA</td>
<td>BRAZIL</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>SOUTH AMERICA</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>SOUTH AMERICA</td>
<td>COLOMBIA</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH AMERICA</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUTH AMERICA</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH AMERICA</td>
<td>VENEZUELA</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

Countries where LACC currently has affiliated schools and special programs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mexico</th>
<th>Jamaica</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>Argentina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>Bolivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Ecuador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>Paraguay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>Venezuela</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

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 Sociorreligiosos, 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. 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 monestaries, 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)


### 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 develop 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 Hispánica  
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

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/

Affiliated Institutions:

   ARGENTINA - 17
   BOLIVIA - 5
   CHILE - 13
   PARAGUAY - 1
   URUGUAY - 2
   TOTAL = 38

ASTE. Association of Evangelical Seminaries of Brazil - Associação de Seminários Teológicos Evangélicos do Brasil. It was founded on December 19, 1961, in Rudge Ramos, São Bernardo do Campo, São Paulo, in a constituent Assembly, held at the Theological Seminary of the Methodist Church. Its headquarters are located in the city of São Paulo, the State Capital of the same name. Its offices occupy the 13º floor of a building on the Calle Rego Freitas 530, Sao Paulo, Brasil.

Affiliated Institutions as of October 2011:

   Northern Region - Região Norte: 2
   Northeast Region - Região Nordeste: 8
   Central-West Region - Região Centro-Oeste: 2
   Southeast Region - Região Sudeste: 18
   Southern Region - Região Sul: 9
   TOTAL = 39

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

Presidente - Dr. Néstor Míguez
Dirección: A/C. Instituto Universitario ISEDET, Camacuá 252 - C1406DOF, Argentina
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

Affiliated institutions:

   Argentina - 1
   Brasil – 6
   Bolivia - 1
   Chile - 2
Colombia – 3
Costa Rica - 1
Cuba - 1
Ecuador – 1
El Salvador - 1
Guatemala -2
Honduras – 1
Mexico – 1
Nicaragua – 2
Peru – 2
Puerto Rico - 1
Venezuela - 1
TOTAL = 27

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

DIRECTORY OF FUNDAMENTALIST BIBLE INSTITUTES

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

Argentina- 1
Bolivia- 1
Chile- 1
Colombia- 1
Costa Rica- 1
Ecuador-1
El Salvador – 1
Estados Unidos – 6
Guatemala- 2
México- 8
Perú – 2
Puerto Rico- 2
Venezuela - 1
TOTAL = 28


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:
Statistical Overview 1984 / 2012

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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

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/

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
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 distinctly 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 Queretaro, 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.

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.

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.

4. 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. 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 in 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 Waldensian 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 Theory of Revolution (Marxist and Socialist thinking) and the Roman Catholic variety of the Theory 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.

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](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)

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**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 is 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.

* * * * *
Critiques of the “Theology of Prosperity” are available in English at:

One of the members of the Editorial Commission of APHILA (Association of Church History Professors in Latin America), Dr. J. B. A. Kessler, has recently written a critical article about the “Gospel of Prosperity,” which was published in the September issue of The APHILA Journal. It is available in Spanish at: http://aphila-cam.net/?page_id=35

6. 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; Alfa-lit 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 ethno-linguistic 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 (IINDEF) where Holland was a staff member and director of the Central American Socio-Religious Studies Program (PROCADES, 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 Licenciature 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/](http://www.apmb.org.br/)

### 7. 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, Coordinadores

  Elio Masferrer Kan, Compilador

  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-Pentecostals").
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 to 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 than 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 subcontinent. 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 Latter-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 socio-demographic 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.

**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>
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<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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION IN MEXICO BY STATES, 2000 &amp; 2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(sorted alphabetically by Regions and States)</td>
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<td>Regions</td>
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<td>South-Pacific</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatan Peninsula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatan Peninsula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yucatan Peninsula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CODES:**
- **15-20%** = 15-20%
- **10-15%** = 10-15%
- **8-10%** = 8-10%

**SOURCE:** INEGI. Censo de Población y Vivienda 2000, 2010.

**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)
PROTESTANT POPULATION GROWTH RATES IN MEXICO, 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

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 Martin 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 Martin 19.5% (Hispanic), Amazonas 18.1% (14.1% Indigenous-various), La Libertad 16.5% (Hispanic), Ayacucho 16.3% (64% Quechua), Junin 15.8% (9.6% Quechua), and Apurimac 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, Junin and Apurimac). 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 Quechus 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</th>
<th>&quot;by region&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;by gender&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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>137,925,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant 2000</td>
<td>26,184,941</td>
<td>15,4</td>
<td>22,736,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Pop. 2010</td>
<td>190,755,799</td>
<td>100,0</td>
<td>160,934,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant 2010</td>
<td>42,275,440</td>
<td>22,2</td>
<td>37,824,089</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**

In 2010, a telephone survey (3,853 interviews) was conducted by William Beltán Cely, a Ph.D. student in Latin American Social Sciences at the University of Sorbonne (Paris, France), 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%** 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%** 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%** estimate for 2010.

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%** of the population was Protestant in 2010, whereas the Catholic Bishops’ Conference estimates that **90%** of the population is Catholic. A **2007** article in the daily newspaper *El Tiempo* stated that **80%** of the population was Catholic, **14 percent non-Catholic Christian**, **2%** agnostic, and the remaining **4%** 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. 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

To illustrate this model, please go to our website and review the report on Puerto Rico 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 to 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.

9. The Education 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. 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/era/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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>1935</th>
<th></th>
<th>1950</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>CHURCHES</td>
<td>MEMBERS</td>
<td>AFFILIATED</td>
<td>CHURCHES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUATEMALA</td>
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<td>15.943</td>
<td>40.657</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>129</td>
<td>10.235</td>
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<td>91</td>
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<td>70</td>
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<td>7.260</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
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<td>NICARAGUA</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>6.242</td>
<td>19.301</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSTA RICA</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.553</td>
<td>3.550</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAMA</td>
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<td>9.139</td>
<td>28.543</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
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<td>1.254</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1960</th>
<th></th>
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<td>MEMBERS</td>
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<td>CHURCHES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>35.628</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>6.467</td>
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<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EL SALVADOR</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>18.506</td>
<td>43.078</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9.401</td>
<td>28.593</td>
<td>931</td>
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<tr>
<td>NICARAGUA</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>21.461</td>
<td>57.034</td>
<td>863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSTA RICA</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>16.157</td>
<td>47.361</td>
<td>589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PANAMA</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>27.102</td>
<td>61.054</td>
<td>665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>2.257</td>
<td>134.722</td>
<td>345.729</td>
<td>6.077</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th></th>
<th>1990</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>CHURCHES</td>
<td>MEMBERS</td>
<td>AFFILIATED</td>
<td>CHURCHES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUATEMALA</td>
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<td>281.000</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<td>MEMBERS</td>
<td>AFFILIATED</td>
<td>CHURCHES</td>
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<td>26,530</td>
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<td>83,096</td>
<td>705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>6,910</td>
<td>494,635</td>
<td>1,188,670</td>
<td>7,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
<td>4,994</td>
<td>243,116</td>
<td>680,357</td>
<td>13,247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicaragua</td>
<td>4,864</td>
<td>296,790</td>
<td>766,410</td>
<td>7,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>2,779</td>
<td>283,356</td>
<td>685,832</td>
<td>4,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panama</td>
<td>1,763</td>
<td>168,610</td>
<td>428,250</td>
<td>3,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>34,901</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,601,102</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,511,305</strong></td>
<td><strong>63,569</strong></td>
</tr>
</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 |

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 mega-churches 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 country.
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**

\[+25,000 = 3\]
\[10,000-24,999 = 5\]
\[5,000-9,999 = 9\]
\[2,000-4,999 = 16\]

**TOTAL = 33**

11. **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 on a given Sunday in their worship services, but there are only about 35 known mega-churches: more than 2,000 in attendance on a given Sunday.

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.**

IV. **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 behaviors 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, ethnomlinguistic 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 behaviors. 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 loose 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 composed 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 composed 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 World Council of Churches (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.

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 ideo-syncrecies 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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The Internet: this has become a major source of information for our research on specific religious groups and on individual countries. See our Religion Links page for more information about general sources: www.prolades.com/weblinks.htm

NOTE: Many other sources are mentioned in the text and they are too numerous for us to mention again here.