Establishment and Growth of Protestantism in Colombia

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September, 2005

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This Dissertation is submitted in part fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Ph.D. of the University of Wales
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researcher is most grateful to friends in Colombia who came to his assistance. Some lent books long out of print on the early years of the Protestant Church. Rev. Guillermo Triana, President of the Confederación Evangélica de Colombia (CEDEC), provided minutes of key meetings that helped the researcher gain an understanding of missionary/national conflicts. Rev. Jairo Gutierrez made a special trip to the Baptist Theological Seminary Library in Cali, Colombia and, with their permission, copied several entire books that would otherwise have been unavailable. The chief librarian at the National Library of Colombia in Bogotá was very helpful. An old friend, Jeanne Burford de Bucana (1995) must be thanked for her book La Iglesia Evangélica en Colombia. Without these special resources, the task of completing this work would have been very difficult.

Two men deserve special mention: Dr. Bill Rees and Dr. Colin Baker, my thesis supervisors at the University of Wales, Bangor. Dr. Rees has patiently reviewed this work chapter by chapter and provided invaluable suggestions and assistance. Dr. Baker has been a source of constant encouragement.

As a group, the pastors of the Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Caribe receive chief credit for the completion of this work. They are the men who actually lived out the researcher’s thesis. For their participation in interviews as well as their responses to numerous phone calls and electronic communications, the following individuals deserve special mention: Gregorio Landero, Ubaldo Padilla, Juan González, Marcos Díaz, Alvaro Méndez, Enoc
Palacio, Wilson Martínez, Danilo Díaz, Eleazar Moreno, Eddie Romero, and Nicolas Woodbury.

The researcher’s wife and four sons were constant encouragers, allowing the space and considerable time necessary for reading, thinking and writing. Along with them, special appreciation for the LOGOI office staff must be voiced for the manner in which they provided full access to the LOGOI files. Two individuals deserve special acknowledgement: Angie Torres Moure and Patty Torrelio. All, however, were great cheerleaders, often protecting the researcher from needless office detail and granting him the time necessary for his research and writing. They all truly deserve heart-felt thanks.
ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to show the importance of providing well-constructed programs of theological education for pastors in the South American nation of Colombia. The establishment of the Protestant Church in that land provides the background. The Roman Catholic opposition, the political violence, the missionary/national conflicts, the cultish Pentecostalism and the national pastors’ lack of education supply the study’s framework. Underlying the research is the attempt to show the importance of providing solid biblical training for Colombia’s national pastors by showing the success of the FLET (Spanish acronym for Latin American Faculty of Theological Education) educational programs in transforming 300 churches of the Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Caribe (The Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean).

Chapter 1 presents the highly diverse nation of Colombia, describing how the uncertain political climate has prevailed throughout its history, from the pre-Colonial era through modern times. The effect of the Inquisition is analyzed, including the persecution that ensued and how it delayed the arrival of Protestants in that country. A description of the post-Colonial era during the nineteenth century shows Spain’s loss of power in Latin America, followed by the fight for independence by Colombia and Venezuela. As the political climate began to change, Protestants were identified with the new political liberal movement and thus welcomed into the country.

Chapter 2 presents a look into the Colombian nation today. A description of its geography, people, resources, transportation systems and
economy is provided. The rise of the guerrilla movement is explained, including an introduction of the main characters, including “Tirofijo”, creator of the FARC; Pablo Escobar, leader of the infamous Medellin Cartel; and Camilo Torres; Colombia’s revolutionary priest. This chapter portrays the formation of the paramilitary army, and explains how it was eventually discredited for its abuses.

In Chapter 3 the growth and struggles of Protestants in Latin America is described. When Napoleon invaded Spain, the Inquisition was abolished, resulting in an invitation by President Mosquera for missionaries to enter Colombia. This chapter explains how political convulsions eventually brought about change, which opened the doors for Protestants. A correlation between politics and religion emerged, with Catholics being recognized as Conservatives while Protestants were identified with the Liberals. A return to power by the Conservative party and the Catholic Church marked the signing of a “Concordat” between Colombia and Rome and many obstacles for the Protestants. The differences between Catholicism and Protestantism are presented, including the influence of religion on the Indians and the limitations placed on non-Catholics.

Chapter 4 presents the challenges faced by the Protestant Church in Colombia and introduces the four major problems dealt with in this thesis, all having to do with the education of national church leaders. Rapid growth of the Protestant Church began in Colombia after the Second Vatican Council declared that Protestants were “separated brethren,” thus removing the stigma of heresy from Protestants. Protestant churches multiplied as a result of the great emphasis on evangelism, on the one hand, and the popular
doctrines of neo-Pentecostals on the other. Since there were few well-taught ministers available, ill-prepared leaders were named as pastors. Consequently, little importance was given to the need of preserving the biblical doctrines and the theological heritage introduced by the missionaries. The resulting tangle of teachings and doctrinal confusion led to the hypothesis: the establishment and growth of Protestantism is dependent on the biblical and theological education of its leadership. Those involved in building the Church must train the national leaders so that they build their churches on the historic essentials of Christianity. This hypothesis is spelled out in response to the four serious problems that emerge as a result of the growth of the Protestant Church in Colombia. The chapter explains how efforts were made to remove the severe educational handicap of pastors and national leaders alike.

Chapter 5 shows how the Protestant Church overall was affected by the four main problems identified by this thesis. After identifying the basic problems of the Protestant Church in Colombia, the chapter discusses possible solutions. The chapter details the researcher’s personal and professional background, including his experiences and observations of the Protestant Church throughout Latin America, leading to the formation of the FLET pastor education program by LOGOI Ministries headquartered in Miami, Florida. The chapter concludes by introducing the education program designed for pastors already in service, but with limited Bible and doctrinal studies.

Chapter 6 details how the LOGOI pastor education program was introduced in Colombia and the way it impacted the 300 churches of the
Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Caribe (AIEC), the churches associated with the Latin America Mission. A description of the program and methodologies used by LOGOI in Colombia to train pastors with little education is discussed. The study dates from Vatican II onward, the late 1960s to the mid 1980s. Although details vary from one denomination of churches to another, the findings are broad enough to provide a general picture of the condition of the Protestant Church in Colombia overall.

Chapter 7 completes the story of the training of the 300 AIEC pastors, but also seeks to validate the researcher’s hypothesis—the indispensable need of pastors for a biblical and theological education. The implication of this research is that if Historic Protestantism is to have a lasting, significant role in Colombia as well as throughout Latin America the pastors propagating it must have a solid biblical and theological education. Further, what has been seen in Colombia may serve as an example to other Protestant churches in other nations. It is maintained that churches that have sustained growth are those built around well-trained leaders who hold faithfully to the teachings of the Bible, rather than on those who rely on mere piety, zeal, good religious programs, emotionalism, or on good will.

The conclusion highlights the researcher’s special findings as he follows the history of the growth of Protestantism in Colombia. Then he reviews the priority given by missionaries to evangelism, contrasted with the lack of emphasis on training national pastors. The importance of training national pastors for the establishment of the Protestant Church in Colombia follows, and is demonstrated by the rapid growth of Protestantism, the unexpected departure of most missionaries and the introduction of debilitating
popular doctrines by neo-Pentecostals. The researcher ends presenting personal conclusions along with his view of the role Christian orthodoxy plays in the transfer of the church from the pioneering missionaries to the ongoing leadership of national pastors.
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INTRODUCTION

General Background

This thesis researches the story of the establishment of the Protestant Church in Colombia, South America. Throughout its seven chapters, information will be presented about the struggles, survival and amazing growth of Protestantism in Colombia. The factors that compelled the researcher to pursue this study were threefold:

1. It is important to chronicle the heroic struggle of both Protestant missionaries and national Christians in establishing churches in the Roman Catholic society of the Colombian nation. After the discovery of Colombia in 1499, Protestants were unable to enter the nation for over 300 years because of the Spanish Inquisition (applied in Latin America in 1511 and officially ended by Napoleon Bonaparte when he invaded Spain in 1808).

2. Protestant church leaders must have an awareness of the uniqueness of the character and personality of Colombians. As Bushnell (1993, p. viii) explains: “Colombia does not fit the stereotypes and ‘models’ conventionally used in discussions on Latin America.” Its people are generous, fun-loving, hard-working, and have a surprising ability to “recover from terrible predicaments and to continue their daily round of activities under circumstances that to the outside observer might seem helpless” (Bushnell, 1993, p. ix). That invincible spirit has been particularly visible in the Protestant minority. Despite persistent opposition and severe
persecution, the Protestants have multiplied. This growth, however, has not happened without serious social, doctrinal, and leadership problems—problems that demand investigation and explanation.

3. One last reason for the researcher’s special interest in Colombia was his involvement with the Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Caribe (AIEC), a denomination that nearly collapsed in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1983 the researcher was invited to help provide theological education for 300 pastors in that denomination, a task he was involved with until 1992.

The researcher’s direct involvement with the AIEC leadership and pastors serves as the backdrop for this thesis. The aim of this research, first of all, is to show the underlying causes for the confusion and division that took place among the 300 churches of the AIEC denomination. That division almost caused it to break apart. Secondly, the researcher aims to describe the solutions that helped correct the problems and restore order in the denomination. Lastly, the researcher believes other churches in Latin America that struggle with similar problems can benefit from what was learned from his experience with the AIEC churches. If the same educational solutions used in AIEC churches are applied to other struggling Latin American churches, their problems would likely be solved in similar fashion to their Colombian counterparts.

The research problem and hypothesis

Once the researcher discovered that the common problem in the churches in Colombia was that the vast majority of pastors had no formal
Bible training, he then shifted his focus to the work being done by missionaries in the area.

*Limitations in the training provided by missionaries*

It was important to learn how the missionaries were training their national leaders and how they were preparing for the transition of leadership from the founding foreign missionaries to the continuation of the Protestant Church under national leadership. It quickly became evident that not enough Bible and theological training was being provided. Missionaries were more interested in evangelism than in educating national pastors. The researcher’s work revealed that this neglect of proper training had created a church that fit Christ’s parable: a church built on the sand rather than on a firm foundation (Matthew 7:26). Eighty percent of the pastors in Colombia had neither formal Bible nor theological training.

In his work with Latin American pastors throughout Latin America from 1968 to the present, the researcher sought to discover the essential elements of Christianity that needed to be imparted to and practiced by the national pastors. In 1977, while pursuing his goal of seeing Protestant churches established that were truly based on the Bible and historic Christianity, the researcher began to develop a program of study for Latin American pastors who had little education. By 1980, with the assistance of Anglican missionaries in Chile, a three-year program of study was completed. Details of this program of study are provided in chapters five and six of this thesis.

*Hypothesis*

The hypothesis presented in this research is that for nationals to produce churches that faithfully hold to the essentials of historic Christianity,
their pastors must have sufficient knowledge and grounding in the Scriptures to know what they believe, why they believe it, and when they are straying from those core beliefs.

**The methodology**

The researcher’s approach was to provide a brief history of Colombia and, through that history, show how Protestantism developed and grew.

**Conducting the literature review**

The researcher conducted a review of the literature on the historical development of Colombia, contemporary Colombia, and the growth and struggles of the Protestant Church in Colombia. Numerous Colombian sources were accessed, and the researcher did his own English translations of books by the original Colombian authors. The researcher was born and raised in Cuba and has spent over 50 years serving the educational interests of Protestant churches throughout Latin America.

**Addressing four problems facing the Colombian Church**

After presenting a background on the Protestant Church in Colombia, the researcher turned his focus in chapter four to the four problems revealed by the literature review:

1. **Most missionaries did not make the churches aware of the theological education needed by pastors to biblically lead their churches.**
2. **Once the missionaries left, the untrained pastors were not equipped to recognize or ward off false teachings.**
3. **When strange doctrines were introduced, untrained pastors tended to unquestioningly accept the new beliefs.**
4. *After the missionaries left and doctrinal conflicts arose, there was no plan or program in place to correct the situation.*

**Examination of the AIEC Denomination**

Chapters five through seven focus on the AIEC, the denomination that began as a result of churches started by Latin America Mission (LAM) missionaries. The researcher pays particular attention to the priority given to evangelism by the LAM (Kenneth Strachan, its President, created the very successful Evangelism-in-depth movement). According to Padilla (1995), little was done by the LAM to provide biblical and theological training for the AIEC pastors.

The researcher examines the period of missionary/national exchange, a time when missionaries began to return to their homeland and the national pastors began to take over full responsibility for their churches. Since the national pastors were unprepared theologically, they were not ready for the biblical and doctrinal demands of leading their churches.

This study revealed the way Pentecostalism was introduced in the AIEC churches and the chaos and confusion that resulted as novel and attractive neo-Pentecostal doctrines were introduced. During this time, biblically untrained pastors had a very difficult time coping with strange and controversial teachings and practices. In the case of the AIEC pastors, they ended up accepting the neo-Pentecostal practices. As a result, these 300 AIEC pastors fell into great confusion and dissent. Recognizing that the problem was a lack of biblical understanding on the part of the pastors, a small group of the AIEC leaders and one missionary began searching for an educational solution.
Development of pastor education programs

The search for an educational solution led the group to LOGOI Ministries based in Miami, Florida, an organization that had united with SEAN (a ministry of the Anglican Church based in Viña del Mar, Chile) to create programs of theological training using non-formal methodologies. Soon, according to their levels of competency, all 300 pastors were receiving training. Once the pastors learned the Bible and began teaching its principles, the AIEC denomination returned to its biblical base. Unexpectedly, an additional 4,000 lay leaders asked to be trained as well. With this additional accumulation of trained workers, the AIEC not only established a firm biblical base, but tripled in size. They began their own pastor training seminary, Corporation Institute for Pastor Education and Preparation (CIPEP), and all pastors of the AIEC are now required to receive Bible and theological training.

Once the importance of obtaining a biblical education was understood by the pastors and congregations of the AIEC, both pastors and lay leaders readily responded. This demonstrated that national church leaders were not opposed to receiving an education, rather that reasons for its need must be given along with methodologies appropriate to their conditions and needs. Furthermore, the corresponding changes in the lives and ministries of those AIEC pastors and leaders—obvious to church leaders all across Colombia—serves to confirm the researcher’s contention that when national church leaders understand why they must be trained, they want the education. It is that sound biblical and theological education that will enable them to establish churches true to the historic faith.
The creative ways in which LOGOI Ministries and SEAN delivered their education programs in Colombia demonstrated that novel methods of theological education are available and can be used effectively to train pastors at many levels anywhere in the Spanish world.

**Delimitations of scope and key assumptions**

In doing the research necessary for this thesis, the researcher was tempted to pursue many side-roads of discovery. The extraordinary life of Francisco de Paula Santander, Colombia’s first President, was an example of a worthy side road. Although he was one of the youngest revolutionaries, Santander was a great political visionary in addition to an enthusiastic and well-versed leader of democracy. The researcher was particularly intrigued by Santander’s anti-Catholicism, coupled with his interest in bringing Protestants to Colombia in order to introduce a religious alternative. Colonel James Fraser, a British Protestant officer who settled in Colombia after helping fight the war of independence, married Santander’s granddaughter.

Another example of a worthy side road of discovery was the fascinating story about the tenacity of the Protestant missionaries and their converts who faithfully held their ground in spite of incredible odds. Their reward is evident in the current-day presence of a growing and influential Protestant Church in Colombia.

Still yet, research could have been expanded into the Lancasterian system of education, going back to its roots in England. The researcher was fascinated to discover that Simon Bolivar visited Joseph Lancaster in London in 1810 and hired him to go to Venezuela to introduce his system of education in Nueva Granada (the name originally given to the area now called
Venezuela and Colombia). That system, however, did not survive. In fact, Lancaster moved back to England because Bolivar was unable to round up the money to pay his salary. Interesting though that education system was, to further follow that side road of discovery would have diverted the researcher’s focus from his hypothesis. Although this was an important educational story in the history of Colombia, the core of this thesis was the pastor training program created by LOGOI and SEAN that restored the AIEC denomination with its 300 pastors and laid the groundwork for the continuing education of pastors in Colombia today.

Justification for the Study

Protestant Christianity is a faith strictly based on Holy Scriptures. If Protestantism is to remain true to its roots, it must retain its scriptural purity from generation to generation. Whether by missionaries or national pastors, that faith must be carefully guarded by the boundaries established in Scripture itself (see “Preserving the Historic Faith” in Appendix 1).

When ill-prepared pastors do not know what they are supposed to believe, teach, preach, or protect, they cannot build a church true to the Scriptures. They have no history to follow, no understanding of Protestantism, no idea of what the Christian church is all about. Thus, as the research demonstrates, churches established by untrained pastors can be likened to “the house built on the sand” that Jesus described. When non-biblical doctrines are taught, pastors and laypersons have insufficient knowledge to contradict them. Such ignorance can cause a congregation and an entire denomination to easily fall prey to heresy. Thus these new Christians can forsake their ungrounded beliefs—those beliefs communicated to them by the
missionaries—and quickly become enmeshed in all kinds of erroneous teachings.

This justification led to the development of the following questions that provided guidance for this thesis:

1. What is likely to happen to the national Colombian church when pastors are not biblically trained and theologically educated?
2. Is Protestantism an ad-libbed belief system, a system loosely based on the Bible and improvised by Christians as they went along?
3. When missionaries fail to provide proper biblical grounding to national church leaders who are responsible for extending the work of the missionaries in order to establish the church in Colombia, what can be done to help restore a national church that has lost its doctrinal moorings?

This researcher argues that the task of biblically and doctrinally preparing the Colombian national pastors who are responsible for leading the national churches is a crucial element of the missionary assignment. Such preparation should be sufficiently adequate to empower a national pastor to purposefully propagate Protestantism’s particular distinctive in its purest form. Furthermore, a missionary’s legacy is the nature or the type of Christianity left behind in his/her wake. Accordingly, this study shows what happens to the Colombian national churches when missionaries do not train national church leaders adequately. In particular, the story is told of what happened to that same denomination when their 300 pastors were provided access to formal Bible and theological training. The changes brought about in these pastors’ personal lives, homes, churches and communities demonstrate the critical importance of providing a good, solid education to national pastors.
CHAPTER ONE
COLOMBIA: A HIGHLY DIVERSE NATION

Introduction

History has shown that Colombia is one of the most troubled countries in Latin America. It is divided by four active armies, fed by three major political philosophies, and torn by two major religious ideologies.

In this chapter, the historical background of Colombia will be encapsulated, starting with its discovery by the Spaniards and what little information is known about the nation at the time of discovery. Then a review of the key literature will be presented. This will be followed by noting the struggles and results of colonization. Key to understanding Colombia today is an awareness of the nation’s Roman Catholic heritage, a strong force throughout its history. Additionally, it is important to examine economic, cultural, and religious information outside the Roman Catholic Church that is critical for understanding this troubled nation.

1.1 Discovery by the Spaniards

Colombia was discovered in 1499 by Alonso de Ojeda and Amerigo Vespucci (Melo 1998, p. 88). Because of the Spanish Inquisition, 357 years went by before the first Protestant missionary, Rev. Henry Barrington Pratt (a Presbyterian), arrived. By that time, North America had been populated by Protestants for 236 years. According to Bastian (1990, p. 96), in 1804 there were 15,985,000 Catholics in Latin America and no Protestants, while in the United States there were 537,000 Catholics and 10,295,000 Protestants.

Surprisingly, the opening for Protestants to enter the country was created by Napoleon Bonaparte (Durant 1975, p. 224 and 229) when, in April
of 1808, he captured Charles IV, Spain’s king, and Prince Ferdinand VII, pretender to the throne of Spain, and took them captive to Bayonne, France. Then, on December 4, 1808, Napoleon entered Madrid and on the same day put an end to the Inquisition. With their king gone, those calling for independence (mainly creoles—name given to American-born Spaniards who distrusted their Spanish governors) began scheming on ways to rid themselves of their Spanish yoke. Safford and Palacios (2002, p. 86) reported that finally, after many threats, creoles in Caracas, Venezuela, on April 19, 1810, “formed an autonomous government and other Venezuelan towns did the same.” They added that “creole notables in Cartagena soon followed suit....” The struggle for independence was set in motion.

In *El Régimen de Santander en la Gran Colombia* (The Santander Regime in Gran Colombia), Bushnell (1985, p. 248) tells the story of how Bolívar and Santander defeated the Spanish. He pointed out that not only did Spain lose control over the colonies, but that the control of the Roman Catholic Church was also greatly debilitated. The majority of those leading the revolt were political liberals: Free Masons who resented the power and abuses of the Church. When independence was achieved, Spanish Bishops who resisted the patriots were expelled, and the Jesuits who served as police for the Inquisition were outlawed. Only priests who backed the revolution were allowed to continue.

1.2 Review of the literature

There are many excellent books available in Spanish on the history of Colombia. The researcher was able to find only two English texts: *The Making of Modern Colombia, a Nation in Spite of Itself*, authored by David Bushnell (1993), and *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*, by Safford and
Palacios (2002). A note should be made about the history books in Spanish. While they treat with great detail the general history of the nation, the majority of the Spanish authors give little or no attention to the part of their history recounting the beginnings of the Protestant Church. This oversight may be a result of the predominance of Catholics in the nation and the insignificant number of Protestants to enter Colombia during its first years of independence. The researcher, however, believes that the entrance of Protestantism is an important part of Colombia’s history (see Bushnell 1985 for his retelling of that history in chapters XII and XIII of his _The Making of Modern Colombia_). Not only did this entrance coincide with Colombia’s war for independence, but the strong affinity established between the Protestants and the open-minded, freedom-loving, pro-democratic and strongly anti-Catholic creoles helped solidify the struggle for independence. Clearly the new political leaders, Simón Bolívar and Francisco de Paula Santander, favored the Protestants. Such details, however, are omitted by many of Colombia’s history writers.

For instance, Javier Ocampo López (1994), in his _Historia Básica de Colombia_ (Basic History of Colombia) omits mention of Protestants altogether. Jorge Orlando Melo (1998), in the biographical section of his _Historia de Colombia, La Dominación Española_ (History of Colombia, the Spanish Domination) cites 32 authors on the theme of _La Iglesia_ (the church), but all are Catholics, not one is Protestant. This, in spite of the fact that Melo (1954) translated Bushnell’s _El Régimen de Santander en la Gran Colombia_ (The Santander Regime in Greater Colombia) into Spanish, a book that contains a full chapter dealing with the role played by Liberals, Masons, and Protestants in Colombia’s struggle for independence.
Two texts effectively addressed the subject of religion: *La Historia del Cristianismo en América Latina* (History of Christianity in Latin America) by Hans-Jürgen Prien (1985) and the *Historia del Protestantismo en América Latina* (History of Protestantism in Latin America) by Jean-Pierre Bastian (1990). While Prien (1985) wrote mostly about Catholicism in the Americas, he provided ample notations about the growth of Protestantism from 1810 to 1978. Bastian (1990), providing information from Mexico to Argentina, faithfully and critically traced the story of Protestantism in the Americas from the mid 1800s to the late 1980s. His book provided the historical underpinnings for this thesis. The researcher discovered a book with a promising title, *Historia de la Iglesia en América Latina* (History of the Church in Latin America) by Enrique Dussel (1984); however, this text covered the history of the Catholic Church with no significant mention of Protestants.

After the revolution, from 1819 to 1840, the Catholic Church lost much of its former power. During this period Protestants had a never-to-be-repeated opportunity to fill that religious vacuum (Bushnell 1985, pp. 248-255). In *La Iglesia Evangélica en Colombia* (The Evangelical Church in Colombia), Juana Bucana (1995) wrote about the disappointing number of missionaries who responded to the invitation given by Colombia’s liberal leaders. Protestants arrived too late and were far too few to make an impact. Since Catholicism was the only religion the people knew, it did not take long for them to want their priests back. Safford and Palacios (2002), under the chapter titled “Bolívar’s Colombia,” related that story. In spite of the scars and stains of past abuses to Indians and the number of blacks and patriots who were labeled heretics, the people wanted their religion restored. Although such scars permanently tarnished the image of the Church (Bastian, 1990; Blank 1996;

Thanks to the efforts of the Free Masons and political liberals, the first constitution was approved in 1886, granting religious freedom to Colombians. However, in his book *La Libertad Religiosa en Colombia* (Religious Liberty in Colombia), Samuel Diaz Escandón (1996) explained how the Catholics maneuvered to circumvent the constitution. A year later, in 1887, powerful leaders persuaded President Rafael Nuñez (a pro-Catholic and political conservative) to sign a Concordat with Rome. That story is detailed in *Proceso al Poder Religioso en Colombia* (The Process to Religious Power in Colombia) by Francisco López (1968). López’s text describes the people who were involved and their motives for creating a Concordat with Rome.

Political liberals did what they could to protect the rights of all citizens, but they were clearly in the minority. To protect what little political clout they had, they were forced to repeatedly make compromises with the powerful Catholic Church. The politically motivated Concordat with Rome was in effect for 100 years. In his book, López (1968) explained how the new 1991 Constitution came about and how it was overwhelmingly approved by the people. Since 1991 Colombians have truly enjoy religious liberty.

It was during those 100 years of national bigotry and prejudice, however, that Protestants gained a firm foothold. From 1887 to 1986 the missionary population grew to 852, serving through 73 agencies, totaling 1,817 national churches with 23,000 members (Wilson and Siewert 1986, pp. 376 and 587). By the late 1990s Colombia’s Protestants numbered “2.5 million out of a
population of 32 million” (Sigmund 1999, p. 238), with at least 5,655 churches
dotting the nation. Clearly there is a large Protestant Church in Colombia
today. This study further reveals how foreign missionaries prepared nationals
to lead their churches in anticipation of the missionaries’ personal withdrawal.


The researcher consulted three books written by Roman Catholics that defend the Roman Catholic domination and minimize the ill treatment given Protestants and Masons: *La Cuestión de las Religiones Acatólicas en Colombia* (The Problem of Non-Catholic Religions in Colombia) by Lucio Nuñez, Carlos Ordóñez, and Benjamín Pérez (1956); *Protestantismo en América* (Protestantism in Latin America) authored by Jesuit priest Prudencio Damboriena (1962) with the assistance of Enrique Dussel; and *Colombia, Fragmented Land, Divided Society* by Frank Safford and Marco Palacios (2002). While much in Damboriena’s text is informative, the author’s bias as a Jesuit comes through, further propagating the myth that liberals, Protestants and Masons were supported by the political interests of the United States government and posed significant danger to Catholic interests in the
continent. Safford and Palacios (2002) text neglected to mention Protestants and painted the Catholic Church in radiant colors.

1.2.1 Books dealing with modern Colombia

In order to understand the modern history of Colombia, the reasons for, the extent of, and the devastation resulting from the continuous social, cultural, and political strife are part of the historical Colombia story that must be told. Every citizen has been affected by the deadening effects of the civil wars, which resulted from the differences between conservatives and liberals. Following the wars, rampant kidnappings, wonton murders, violent battles, and senseless bloodshed affected pastors, priests, merchants, farm owners, politicians and members of the police force who became targets of the guerillas. Through the years, multiple thousands have fled for their lives, while thousands of innocent people have died gruesome deaths. The damage done to human life and the progress of the nation is inestimable.

Several books helped clarify the political reasons for the civil violence and the drug cartels, including La Violencia en Colombia (The Violence in Colombia) by Campos, Borda and Lunas (1962). A very thorough and detailed study, La Subversión en Colombia (The subversion in Colombia) by Orlando Fals Borda (1967) examined the problem from a sociological viewpoint. Guerra y Política en la Sociedad Colombiana (War and Politics in the Colombian Society) is a compilation of essays written over a period of years by Gonzalo Sánchez (1991), a political sociologist with the National University of Colombia. Several other books popularize the terrifying conflict: More Terrible than Death, by Robin Kirk (2003); Inside The Cocaine Cartel, by Max Mermelstein (1990); and The “Drug War” in Colombia, by Juan E. Méndez (1990).
1.2.2 The Influence of Pentecostalism

To focus on the problem addressed within this thesis—the training of national pastors to take over Protestant churches—the researcher chose one denomination with 300 churches, the Asociación de Iglesias del Caribe (The Association of Churches of the Caribbean) for special investigation. The AIEC denomination was strongly influenced by founding missionaries until the 1960s. Unexpectedly, many of the historic Christian doctrines were challenged by Pentecostal beliefs, which were unintentionally introduced to pastors and church members of the AIEC through evangelistic activities sponsored by the Latin America Mission. Because the majority of pastors had very little formal theological training, they did not know how to handle these differences in doctrine. The consequence was confusion and division to such a degree that the leaders of the AIEC despaired for the church’s future.

The following books dealing with the Pentecostal and Charismatic doctrinal distinctive provided background and understanding: Latinoamérica en Llamas (Latin America in Flames) by Pablo Deiros and Carlos Mraida (1994); Pentecostals From the Inside Out (1990); Tongues of Fire, by David Martin (1991); Pentecostalism: The World Their Parish, by David Martin (2002); and Protestant Pentecostalism in Latin America, by Karl-Wilhelm Westmeirer (1999). In addition, Paul Sigmund (1999, pp. 61-69), in his anthology, included an article by Pedro Moreno that discussed the “strengths and weaknesses of Latin American Pentecostalism.”

The researcher investigated the steps taken by national church leaders wanting to remedy problems associated with the introduction of Pentecostal doctrines into the AIEC churches. In this search, all the elements that explain the history of the Protestant Church in Colombia are brought together. First,
the Protestant Church began within a nation with no Protestant citizens. Second, missionaries arrived in Colombia and worked under great stress while planting churches. These missionaries and early converts experienced great struggles, persecution, and much suffering. Third, the result of the missionaries and early converts’ hard work was the development of schools and programs that enabled the growth of the Protestant Church; national church gradually began doting the nation. Then missionaries began experiencing conflict with national leaders who wanted to take charge of church growth. Lastly, missionaries, believing they were unwanted, began departing the nation. Consequently, the nationals took over leadership of the churches. However, there appeared to be a new day for Colombia Protestant churches as persecution from Catholics was ceasing. After the 1960s Catholic persecution no longer continued and the Protestant Church began flourishing.

However, a new set of problems began to challenge the Protestant Church’s future. Pastors, the majority of whom were untrained biblically and theologically, became confused and divided by the introduction of new and dynamic doctrines of the neo-Pentecostals. As a result, the AIEC came to the brink of self-destruction. The AIEC leaders’ search for possible solutions to save their denomination is at the core of this thesis.

Juana B. Bucana (1995) in her text La Iglesia Evangélica en Colombia (The Evangelical Church in Colombia), supplied much of the detail for launching this thesis. A critical resource for the resolution of the thesis is a small book by Ubaldo Restan Padilla (1995), 50 Años de la Historia y Misión AIEC (50 Years of the History and Mission of the AIEC). That little book tells the story of the AIEC, the denomination of churches that served as the key to
exposing the problems in the Protestant Church. The author forms his hypothesis out of that milieu.

1.3 Colombia’s early history

In the following section the aim is to present what is known of the early history of the Indians who centuries before had settled in the upper coasts of South America; then to recount the effects of the Spanish discovery, conquest and domination. The researcher provides the original text as presented in Spanish and English translations of key passages from the literature.

1.3.1 The pre-Colonial era (until 1525)

In 1499 don Alonso de Ojeda and Amerigo Vespucci, sponsored by a group of merchants in Sevilla, Spain, traveled along the northern coast of South America hoping to discover a good source for pearls. Melo (1998, p. 87-88) provided the following details:

En 1499 Alonso de Ojeda, quien había sido uno de los capitanes de la conquista en La Española bajo el mando de Colón, obtuvo una de esas licencias y partió de España, en mayo, acompañado por dos socios bastante notables: Juan de la Cosa, quien era considerado como uno de los pilotos y cosmógrafos más hábiles del momento, y el geógrafo Américo Vespucio, ligado a los intereses de la casa comercial florentina de los Médici en Sevilla. Ojeda, cuya expedición constaba de cuatro carabelas, recorrió la costa venezolana desde el golfo de Paria y llegó a la península de la Guajira, en la que dio nombre al Cabo de la Vela. Juan de la Cosa hizo un dibujo de las zonas recorridas, que representa el primer mapa de parte alguna del territorio colombiano; este mapa está fechado en 1501 […] Ojeda regresó con oro, perlas, y algo más de 200 esclavos indios […] los que fueron llevados a Cádiz para su venta.

In 1499 Alonso de Ojeda, who had been one of Columbus’ captains in the conquest of La Española, obtained a license to sail [to the New World] and, in May, left Spain accompanied by two notables: Juan de la Cosa, considered as one of the best pilots and a cosmographer, along with Américo Vespucio, the geographer, who traveled in the interests of the Florentine Médici in Sevilla. In Ojeda’s expeditionary force there were four ships, and they explored the Venezuelan coast starting at the Gulf of Paria and extending to the La Guajira peninsula, which they named Cabo de la Vela. Juan de la Cosa drew a map of the
zones covered, which represents the first map of the Colombian territory; the map carrying the date of 1501 [...] Ojeda returned with gold, pearls, and some 200 Indian slaves [...] who were taken to Cádiz to be sold.

The Colombian historian Melo (1998) estimated that when Ojeda and Vespucio landed on the Colombian coasts, there were some 4,000,000 Indians in that northern region of South America. Apparently the Indians had been expecting the arrival of strange foreigners. There is a record of a prophecy made by Goranchacha, a soothsayer, foretelling the coming of a strange race that would subjugate and enslave them for having forgotten the teaching of their goddess Bochica. Another Indian, Zipa Tisquesusa, had a vision of a large pool of water turning to blood, fulfilled not long after by the Spanish invasions and massacres of the natives (López 1999).

When the Spaniards appeared, the Indians thought them “sons of the Sun,” actual gods who had been given the power to subjugate them. For this reason, many offered no resistance to the adoption of their strange religion symbolized by a cross, black robed priests, and fascinating rituals. Initially, seeing their cavalry, the Indians were filled with terror, believing man and horse to be one, a fearsome beast indeed. Hearing the blasting of guns, and not knowing where the projectiles came from, they took these to be bolts of lightning sent directly from demons or gods, and were filled with terror. Who could resist these invaders? López (1999, p. 39) explained:

*Cuando se dieron cuenta que ‘los hijos del Sol’ eran gentes de carne y hueso, codiciosos, afiebrados al oro y las piedras preciosas, y mortales, cambiaron de opinión y presentaron resistencia.*

Once they discovered the ‘sons of the Sun’ to be mere flesh and bones, common men filled with an inordinate lust for gold and precious stones, they changed their minds and sought ways to resist them.
Prior to the coming of the Spaniards, the inhabitants of Colombia, as
described by the conquerors themselves, were peaceable, at the very least
cordial and cooperative. Only one tribe was known to be ferocious—the
Caribes—living along the northern coastline of South America. Not until the
Spaniards with superior arms and force began to subject them to slavery,
abusing their women, and taking possession of their lands, did the Indians
take to their weapons and trickery.

How unsettling that the representatives of European civilization and the
pretended agents of Christianity should have established such a horrendous
appropriate comment:

How strange the conqueror’s Christ must have seemed to the
aboriginal Americans: the white God who dies for all humanity
establishes a religion with its supreme authority in Rome and with a
king of Spain among its devotees—the same king who sends a group
of warlike subjects to discover and subjugate mysterious distant lands
on the other side of the ocean. In the name of God and of the king,
these men from Castille—ruddy as the sun and riding spirited steeds—
slay Indians right and left, rob their lands, rape their women, and
transform those who survive the slaughter into slaves of the pope and
of the great Spanish empire.

1.3.2 The Colonial era (1525 – 1808)

This section focuses on the way in which the Conquistadores subdued
and ruled the Indians for the almost 300 years classified as the “Colonial Era.”
It is noted that the Indians, for the most part, suffered incredible abuse while
the conquering Spaniards established a lifestyle that would set the standards
for years to come.

López (1999, p. 88) provided statistics on the number of Spaniards
who settled in Colombia. By 1570 there were some 10,000 in Colombia and
Venezuela. That figure grew to 50,000 by the end of 1650 and to 350,000 by
the year 1750. López (1999) explained that these Spanish conquerors believed that they had every right to impose their will on those they conquered. They reasoned that the king and queen had authorized them to conquer, colonize and take possession of all the lands they chose. They were thus entitled to do whatever they wanted with the Indians.

Melo (1998, p. 32) further elaborated on the Spaniards’ reasoning:

*El servicio que deben al rey es cedido por éste a los conquistadores, como premio por los esfuerzos realizados en el descubrimiento y sometimiento de las islas. Por otra parte, se reguló cuidadosamente el trabajo de los indios, ordenando que debían dedicar nueve meses al año al servicio de los españoles y que un tercio debían trabajar en las minas. A los españoles se les impusieron obligaciones de buen trato a los indios, así como restricciones a los abusos usuales; debían dar buena alimentación a los indios, hacerles trabajar únicamente de sol a sol, etc., y en especial responsabilizarse por su catequización.*

[By virtue of conquest] the service the Indians owe the King was delegated to their conquerors as a legitimate prize for their efforts in discovering and subduing the islands. On the other hand, the work required of the Indians was to be carefully regulated. An Indian was to work only nine months out of the year for the Spaniards. One third of them were to work in the mines. The Spaniards were obligated to treat them well, never to abuse them, furthermore, to provide good food. They were to be worked only from sun up to sun down, etc., and, above all, they were responsible to catechize them faithfully.

The King and Queen of Spain granted special rewards, called *encomiendas*, for bravery or special accomplishments. Any Spaniard receiving an *encomienda* immediately joined the ranks of the nobility, was no longer required to work with his hands, and had the right to own and rule the Indians assigned to him (Melo, 1998). Similar attitudes are still held by the wealthy class in Latin America. The King and Queen of Spain received the right of dispensing these special privileges from Pope Alexander VI when he announced that the King of Spain had “full powers, authority, and jurisdiction”
over the lands discovered and the evangelization of the Indians (Melo 1998, p. 19).

The *encomendados* took their privileges to extremes. Because Spain and the King of Spain were thousands of miles away, little could be done to enforce laws enacted to provide just treatment for the Indians. These defenseless people were forced to work their new owners’ fields, dig their mines, and serve their domestic whims. These natives were forced to give up the very lands, gold, silver, emeralds, and pearls that had originally belonged to them.

An overview of the colonization of this geographic area reveals the savagery and needless violence of the conquering Spaniards. Thus was created the very Spanish concept that along with political power came the right to plunder (a concept most visible in Latin American today by the way in which politicians from Mexico to Argentina plunder their national treasuries). Rather than bringing to South America the Enlightenment flourishing in Europe at the time, Spain exported the Middle Ages with all its vices, misery, toil and bloodshed.

According to Núñez and Taylor (1989, p. 59):

It was the Inca legend of *El Dorado*, based in Colombia, that ignited the imagination of the *Conquistadores* and made them willing to kill freely just so long as they could get their hands on the mythical golden man.

While the *Conquistadores* never did find the pot of gold at the end of the famous El Dorado legend, they did find rich quantities of gold, silver, pearls and emeralds. López (1999, pp, 56-59) gave an example. Hearing of the riches of Chief Zaque Quemuenchatocha, Jiménez de Quesada, on July 20, 1537, took a group of soldiers and made his way from the town of Turmeque to the upper plains now known as Bogotá. There he found Zaque,
sitting in a royal chair, surrounded by several of his men, all covered from head to toe with jewels and gold. Jiménez and his men did away with the chief and his followers and carted off their treasures.

They decided to stay in the area that promised so much wealth. They sacked the Temple of the Sun in the sacred city of the Chibchas and then burned down the structure. Several months later, arriving at the fertile valley of Alcazares, Jiménez ordered 12 huts built, one of them to serve as a chapel. Then he ordered Fray Domingo de las Casas, a priest accompanying the expedition, to celebrate a mass “in the name of the Conquering Christ.” Thus was founded the city of Santa Fe de Bogotá, August 6, 1538, which later became the national capital (López 1999, p. 59).

1.3.3 The domination of the Indians

The Spaniards’ firearms gave them overwhelming advantage. The Indians had to defend themselves with spears, arrows and stealth. Against such odds, the Indians’ submission to the conquistadores was inevitable. Soon thousands of Indians had become slaves to the Spaniards. Rather than having the freedom to hunt, fish, and roam through their tropical forests, the Indians were huddled into small quarters, forced to perform hard labor, and to live in miserable conditions. The following story illustrates the abuse suffered by the Indians.

In the coastal town of Santa Marta, controlled by a few hundred Spaniards, hundreds of Indian slaves were forced to dive for pearls in the harbor. All day long they were made to dive without a break. Hearing of the abuse, Bishop Fernández de Angulo, in 1540, traveled to Santa Marta to put a stop to the practice (laws promulgated in Spain forbade using Indians to dive
for pearls). Paid handsomely not to interfere, however, Fernández said nothing, bringing about the deaths of many Indians (Melo 1998).

Slavery, disease and war decimated the Indian population. Bastian (1990, p. 61) quoted a letter from Rev. John Smith, written in 1822 to the London Missionary Society:

*En la colonia hay unos 400 esclavos para 5 blancos capaces de llevar armas. Los esclavos viven en chozas... de las cuales los sacan a las 6 de la mañana los capataces haciendo estallar sus látigos como lo harían a caballos o al ganado. El trabajo sigue hasta las 6 de la tarde y muchas veces aún durante la noche [...] Los castigos consisten en tirar al suelo un hombre o una mujer—manos y pies atados a un poste— y golpearlo con un látigo a veces hasta un centenar de látigos.*

In the colony there are 400 slaves to five white men capable of bearing arms. The slaves live in huts...from which they are driven at six in the morning, their keepers snapping their whips the way they do with horses or cattle. They are worked to six in the evening, but sometimes all night long [...] When they are punished, the Indians are thrown to the ground, whether man or woman, then tied hands and feet to a stake and beaten with a whip sometimes up to a hundred times.

Melo (1998) confirmed the terrible abuse suffered by Indians at the hands of the Spaniards. From the 3,000,000 Indians in the major islands of the Caribbean (Cuba, Jamaica and Dominica) in 1492, only 60,000 remained by 1509. By 1518 the number had been reduced to 11,000, and by 1519, the rest died from an epidemic of smallpox.

Since the *conquistadores* were accompanied by priests with the duty of *Christianizing* the Indians, it is helpful to examine the role of religion. Dussel (1984, p. 99-102) wrote of the “methodical evangelization” carried out by the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinians. He praised the New Spanish laws, stating that the *encomiendas* (laws pertaining to the control and the possession of lands by Spaniards) limited slavery to only “one generation.” After that “the Indians were given their liberty.” He added:
Se peregrinaba de pueblo en pueblo, se bautizaba a los indios, se les predicaba en su lengua o por intérpretes, y se realizaba así una cristianización masiva. Se extirpaban la idolatría y los antiguos cultos en los que tenían de más público y evidente.

[The priests] went from town to town baptizing the Indians, preaching to them in their own tongue, usually through translation, thus doing a massive job of Christianizing. They did away with idolatry and ancient beliefs where these were displayed openly.

A few paragraphs later Dussel (1984, p.101) admitted that on occasion “the use of guns” against the Indians was approved by the priests, but added that in most cases the Catholic priests won over the Indians through their “preaching” and “kind treatment.”

Dellutri (1998, p. 104) further explained how Indians were intimidated into accepting the Catholic faith. He cited from Eduardo Galeano’s (1971) Las venas abiertas de América Latina (Open Veins of Latin America), an excerpt from a formal solicitation that the conquerors read to Indians upon arrival—without translation to their native tongue—detailing the consequences for those who refused to convert:

*Sí no lo hiciereis... yo entraré poderosamente contra vosotros... y os sujetaré al yugo y obediencia de la Iglesia y de su Majestad, y tomaré sus mujeres e hijos y los haré esclavos... y tomaré sus bienes y os haré todos los males y daños que pudiere...*

If you don’t [convert]...I will forcefully attack you...I will make you obey the Church and Crown, and I will take your women and children and will make them slaves...and I will take your possessions and will hurt and harm you as much as I can...

There were a few priests who attempted to save the Indians. López (1999) mentioned Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, Fray Antonio de Montesinos, and Father Francisco de Victoria as outspoken critics of the Spanish abuses. While Dussell (1998) in his writings ignored the abuses of the Church and its priests, others reported the terrible excesses. Burns (1986, p. 59) wrote:
The wealth reinforced the conservative inclinations of the Iberian Church. After the initial phase of evangelization, it too exploited the Indians as well as the African slaves, to till Church lands or to erect larger and more opulent edifices. To the masses it preached resignation. If God made them poor, it would be a sin to question why. Poverty was to have its reward in the next life.

Further, Melo (1998, p. 101) quoted an eyewitness, Fernández Oviedo, account of his alarm over the abuses perpetrated by the governor of Perarías in the area known as Castilla de Oro:

*No bastaría papel ni tiempo a expresar enteramente lo que los capitanes hicieron para asolar los indios e robarles e destruir la tierra, si todo se dijese tan puntualmente como se hizo; pero, pues dije que en esta gobernación… habría dos millones de indios, o eran incontables, es menester que se diga cómo se acabó tanta gente en tan poco tiempo.*

Were all to be told as it happened, I would not have enough paper or time to express completely what the captains did to persecute the Indians and rob and destroy their land. I wrote that in this area there were two million Indians, or that at least they were innumerable. The question is how were so many finished off in such a short period of time.

Throughout the Indies, in order to keep the *haciendas* producing, the *Conquistadores* had to find replacements for the dying Indians. To provide the needed slaves, Queen Isabella of Spain—along with her Father Confessor, Jiménez de Cisneros—granted permission to enslave the Caribe (so called for their ferocious nature) along the Colombian coast. Many of these Indians were taken to the Caribbean Islands. Eventually, these measures were not enough. Because so many Indians were dying, Africans by the thousands (from the Congo, Sudan, and the coast of Guinea) were imported to work the gold mines and care for the fields of the wealthy landowners. In 1570, according to López (1999), 15,000 black slaves were shipped to Colombia. By 1650 there were 60,000. The majority of black slaves were brought in through Cartagena, which also became a slave trading center, shipping blacks to
other South American countries. This trade center was later moved to
Jamaica (Melo 1998).

1.4 The Spanish Inquisition

This section describes the story of the Spanish Inquisition, including its
transplantation to the Americas. It will be shown how the Inquisition also
stretched out its dreadful tentacles throughout the Spanish dominated
countries. More specifically, how it affected the Indians and European
merchants that dared make port in Spanish lands.

The Catholic Inquisition was extended to the Colonies. Burns (1986)
discussed “The Foundation of the Spanish Inquisition.” He pointed out that the
16th-century application of the Inquisition in Spain went far beyond anything
the Church had done previously.

On October 17, 1483, Pope Sixtus IV extended to Ferdinand and
Isabella of Spain the power of naming the inquisitors and controlling the
Inquisition. Previously, the power to pursue and persecute heretics had been
controlled by the Catholic Church. Now, in the hands of Ferdinand and
Isabella, it became a political as well as a religious tool—political in that it was
used to suppress any kind of opposition to the will of the king and queen,
bypassing all civil law.

Furthermore, the Inquisition, with all it entailed, was transported to the
Americas. Indians who refused to become Christians were burned at the
stake as if they were heretics. Núñez and Taylor (1989, p. 60) related several
stories of the treatment given to Indians resisting Christianization. Following is
one of the stories:

The Proud Cuban Cacique Hatuey was condemned to be burned alive
[for rejecting the Catholic faith]. But was also exhorted to convert and
go to heaven. ‘Are there Christians in heaven?’ he asked, and the reply
was, ‘Why, of course.’ Hatuey’s rejoinder came: ‘Well, I don’t want to go to any place where I shall have a chance of meeting them.’

Religion was nevertheless imposed on the Indians who, in retaliation, introduced rites and elements from their pagan ceremonies, slowly developing religious practices that were a far cry from the Biblical Christianity practiced in Spain (Dellutri, 1998).

The Inquisition was used not only to bend the will of rebellious Indians, it also became the government’s tool to prohibit the entrance of non-Catholics to any of the lands owned by Spain.

According to Bastian (1990, p. 70), Pope Paul III issued a papal Bull in 1537 (the *Altitudo divini consilli*), forbidding the entrance of “apostates” (generally understood as Jews, Moors, and Protestants) into the Indies and South America. Further, to protect the interests of the Crown and the Church, special inquisition centers were established where “heretics” could be punished: the first in Lima (in 1568), another in Mexico City (in 1571), and finally one in Cartagena (in 1610). Bishop Juan de Zumárraga was named Inquisitor for the New World (Bastian 1990, p. 71). Six years later he was deposed “for excesses against the Indians.” Of the 153 cases he tried, only five were Protestants; all others were Indians who refused to convert to Christianity.

In 1543 Francisco Tello Sandoval was named to succeed Zumárraga as Inquisitor General (Bastian 1990, p. 71). Under his rulings not only did the inquisitors pursue “unrepentant Indians, Lutherans, and Jews,” but added to that list were Erasmians, who had earned the Pope’s ire by joining Luther in calling for reform in the Catholic Church (Atkinson, 1968). Thus, in all areas under Spanish rule, any person offering resistance to either Crown or Church
was suspected of heresy and was closely watched. Any misstep led to the stake. All Protestant Bibles and books by Luther, Calvin and Erasmus were confiscated and burned.

1.4.1 The ‘Lutheran Heresy’ in the New Spain

Prior to the wars of independence, all non-Catholics, regardless of their origin or talents, were not only unwanted but were denied entrance into the Spanish colonies.

All Europe heard the tales of untold wealth in the Americas. Entrepreneurs of all religious persuasions looked for ways to reach Spanish shores. A majority of those arriving on ships from Germany, Holland, England and even France, if not Protestants, were at the very least Lutheran sympathizers. When they landed they were immediately suspected because of the flags flown by their ships. Such foreigners, unfortunate enough to be permitted to land, were quickly rounded up by the Inquisitor’s office, brought to trial as heretics and imprisoned or burned at the stake.

For example, 32 British sailors with their Captain, John Hopkins, were captured in Mérida, Mexico. They were summarily tried. Two were hanged, four were found dead in their prison cell, and another two were taken to Mexico City where they were used to stir up anti-Protestant feelings, while the others languished in prison (Bastian, 1990). Throughout the Spanish colonies, especially in the seaports, Roman Catholic clerics were on the lookout for any persons belonging to the sectas protestantes. Hundreds were caught and invariably condemned to death.

The first printing press was brought to the New World—to Mexico—in 1535. Immediately it came under the care of the Inquisitor General, Juan Zumarraga. He was determined that no “Lutheran, Erasmian, or Calvinistic“
material would come off that press (Bastian, 1990, p. 72). The possession of Bibles was also forbidden, with the explanation that there were too few theologians to give a right interpretation. Unprepared clergy could cause confusion among the Indians by improper teaching of the Scriptures. Bastian (1990, p. 90) gave a reason for the imposition of such strict rules:

La tolerancia no podía existir en la Nueva España, pues era ajena al catolicismo y por lo tanto a una sociedad conformada por él.

Toleration could not be permitted in the Colonies because it was foreign to Catholicism and therefore not to be allowed in a society formed by the Catholic Faith.

Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius considered the use of the Bible a waste of time (Dellutri, 1998, p. 105). He wrote in 1570:

Dar la Biblia a los legos es echar perlas delante de los cerdos. Las tradiciones bíblicas han hecho muchísimo daño; yo no quiero ninguna. La Biblia pertenece a la iglesia romana; fuera de ella no tiene más valor que las fábulas de Esopo.

Giving the Bible to laymen is like throwing pearls before swine. Biblical tradition has caused a lot of harm; I don’t want any of it. The Bible belongs to the Roman Church; beyond it, it is as valuable as the fables of Aesop.

Dellutri (1998) explained this control by the Catholic Church was the reason for the absence of the Bible for so many centuries in Latin America. While countless churches, rites and festivals throughout the region make the area to appear profoundly Christian, he asserts that the appearance is a mixture of Christianity and Indian rites that has made this a continent full of superstition and paganism.

To enter the Spanish domains, Protestants had to wait for a change in the political climate. This came about, as will be seen in the next section, through groups of national patriots seeking freedom from Spain. These
patriots were labeled “liberals.” Those who were pro-Catholic, pro-Spain and anti-Protestant were known as “conservatives.” The majority of these new “liberals” were Catholics, but objected to the political interference of the Catholic Church in the areas of politics and religion. They were tolerant of people who held other religious views and were eager to learn modern ways as modeled by the northern European countries and the American Colonies. Such liberals included Simón Bolívar and Francisco Santander, the revolutionary leaders of Venezuela and Colombia. In declaring independence and breaking the political bonds with Spain, they opened the doors to Protestants, Jews and other Europeans.

1.5 The post-Colonial era (1808-1902)

This section will show how the wars of independence loosed the grip of Spain’s control over the Colonies, whereby the Roman Catholic Church temporarily lost its religious control.

1.5.1 Spain Loses Power in Latin America

In 1808, a dramatic circumstance brought permanent change to the area called Nueva Granada (Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador). Charles V, King of Spain, and Prince Ferdinand VII, pretender to the throne, were captured by Napoleon and taken to France (Durant 1975, p. 224 and 229). With their king imprisoned, the Spaniards in Nueva Granada were forced to create a temporary government. This gave men who already had been advocating political independence from Spain—Antonio Nariño and Francisco Santander in Colombia, Simón Bolívar and Francisco Miranda in Venezuela—an opportunity to set up their own counter national governments (Bushnell 1985).
The first revolt against Spain took place in Quito in 1809. Although the revolt was quickly put down by Spanish loyalists, the daring Ecuadorean patriots inspired Venezuelans and Colombians. On April 19, 1810, the leaders of the movement for independence declared Venezuela independent and set up a new government in Caracas. To this day, Venezuelans claim their independence was “the cradle of freedom” for the Americas. On May 22 of the same year, an independent national government was set up in Cartagena, and on July 20 another in Bogotá (Bushnell 1985).

To solidify claims for freedom, a Constitutional Assembly was called in Cúcuta (a city on the border between Colombia and Venezuela). Because the leaders were more concerned about establishing a constitution than protecting themselves from Spanish retaliation, they were accused of setting up a “Patria Boba,” a crazy or foolish homeland (Bushnell 1985). For six years (1810 to 1816), these leaders met and argued over the kind of constitution they wanted, ignoring completely the urgency of preparing an army to defend themselves against Spanish retaliation.

When the Spanish finally arrived, Simón Bolívar, the newly named general of the independence movement, suffered terrible losses. However, his poorly equipped army persisted and finally, on August 7, 1819, won a decisive battle against the coastal Spanish fortress of Boyacá. The Spaniards fled to Venezuela. Colombia had won its independence.

1.5.2 Colombia and Venezuela gain independence

After their decisive victory over the Spaniards, the nationalists called another Constitutional Congress, convened on December 17, 1819. This Constitutional Assembly proudly declared the creation of Colombia, an area that included what is now three nations: Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador.
Simón Bolívar was named President, with two Vice Presidents, Francisco Zea ruling Venezuela, and Francisco de Paula Santander over Colombia (Bushnell 1985).

The next few years were taken up trying to determine the type of government that should be set up for this new nation. The conservatives wanted a Catholic nation with an authoritarian type of government patterned after Spain's government. The liberals—the active minority (many of them free thinkers or Masons)—wanted a government “of limited powers and limited popular participation, operating in a predictable legal framework” (Bushnell 1993, p. 97), patterned after the French and American revolutions (Bucana 1995). From that day forth, the models followed by whoever wins an election are those characterized by that party's political views: conservatives are pro-Catholic and authoritarian; liberals are generally anti-Catholic or, at the very least, religiously neutral, pro-democratic and freedom loving.

1.5.3 Liberals, Masons, Socialists, Communists and Protestants

Catholics labeled those who took arms against Spain as “Masons, Socialists, Communists and Protestants.” These accusations are significant because they represent an attempt by the Catholic Church to discredit both the revolutionaries and the few Protestant missionaries who had entered the nation. Catholic colonists were taught that to be Spanish demanded total commitment to Catholicism. As Safford and Palacios (2002, p. 96) described this belief: “…by tying religion to monarchy, insisting that to deny the king was to deny God, undoubtedly played a role in undermining popular support for independence....” Thus, to turn against Spain meant the betrayal of God, church and country.
The label of “Socialists and Communists” had no truth to it. This was simply a way to discredit both movements by using terms that represented ideologies distasteful to Catholics. However, there was truth to the accusations of Masonry and Protestantism, which merits explanation. Freemasonry entered Colombia in 1808 at about the same time the revolutionary movements got started; for this reason, very few would have any knowledge about what being a Mason meant. For that matter, Protestantism was equally new. The first Protestants to arrive in Colombia came as mercenary soldiers to help Simón Bolívar fight against Spain. Therefore, the labels of “Masons, Socialists, Communists and Protestants” used by Catholic leaders in a condemnatory way would create caution among the people, perhaps a bit of curiosity, too, since many favored the revolutionary cause.

In later years, additional accusations against missionaries becoming Freemasons would come. Although this time, the accusations came not from the Roman Catholic Church, but from the Protestant missionaries who entered Latin America after World War I. That being the case, the Freemasonry issue needs to be explained as it relates to the missionaries who first went to Colombia in the mid 1800s.

These new missionaries had become familiar with Freemasonry because, while fighting against modernism, liberalism and false cults, the missionaries’ host churches in the United States had preachers of varied standpoints defining the evils attacking the true church of Jesus Christ—an advantage not possessed by the earlier missionaries. With this background knowledge, these new missionaries could not understand how it was possible for their predecessors to have joined hands with Masons and for some to
have actually joined their lodges. Consequently, those early missionaries were looked on as betrayers of their Protestant faith.

This idea of the early missionaries being betrayers to their Protestant faith lingers to this day. On several occasions, Protestant leaders in Latin America have asked this researcher about those early Freemason missionaries, implying that they were very poor representatives of Christ and His gospel. Therefore, a historical response to this issue of Masonry among the early missionaries is appropriate.

The history of Colombia reveals that in the early 1800s a vast majority of the revolutionary leaders in Colombia became Freemasons. It is also true that the Freemasons readily accepted the Protestant missionaries, and that some of the early missionaries joined Masonic lodges.

Hoffman (2004) in his article, “¿Fue Masón Simón Bolívar?” (Was Bolivar a Mason?), emphatically stated that the leaders of the Colombian revolution—Simón Bolívar, Francisco Miranda, Antonio José Sucre, Francisco de Paula Santander and San Martín—were all Masons. There are numerous sources that confirm that these leading revolutionaries were Masons, including Safford and Palacios (2002, p. 114), Bushnell (1985, p. 255), Bastian (1990, p. 118-121). Hoffman (p.1) added:

La masonería de hoy en día dista mucho de la masonería esplendorosa que le tocó vivir el Libertador Simón Bolívar…En ese entonces era una congregación de científicos, estadistas, artistas, y demás personas deseosas de conocimiento, en momentos en que la sociedad era perseguida por un adoctrinamiento católico que prohibía el conocimiento y apoyaba a la monarquía como sistema de gobierno.

The Masonry we know today is very different from the splendid form of Masonry enjoyed by Liberator Simón Bolívar…In that day it represented a conglomerate of scientists, statesmen, statisticians, artists and people in high society who sought knowledge, in a time when they were persecuted by a doctrinaire type of Catholicism that
prohibited learning and backed the monarchy as the right system of
government.

This background information on the Masons is important to this
research because it explains why these first very well trained missionaries
would be drawn to “scientists, statesmen, statisticians, artists and people in
high society” (Hoffman, 2004, p. 1). These leading revolutionaries were the
advocates of freedom, human rights, and religious plurality.

There is a further point that needs to be made: Free Masonry was new
came to New Granada as an outgrowth of its external trade; the first lodge
was founded in Cartagena in 1808.” It is evident that Masons began their
activity in Colombia at the very birth of the revolutionary movement. Bushnell
(1985, p. 255) added: “In 1820 two lodges were founded, one in Angostura
and the other in Bogotá…. In reading about the establishment of Masonry in
Colombia, it seems to the researcher that what drew Colombian liberals to the
organization were the visible Masonic beliefs. Masons spoke of tolerance and
respect for others. They preached high moral standards and encouraged
good charitable acts—helping the poor, building hospitals, caring for orphans.
This emphasis certainly seemed to both the missionaries and political liberals
to be virtues worthy of true Christianity. Furthermore, it was not a godless
association; to join each person had to profess belief in God.

These viewpoints would attract any upright and thoughtful citizen to the
organization. Since Masonry had been so recently introduced, those joining
the lodges had no way of knowing the history of Masonry or its highly
secretive nature. Safford and Palacios (2002, p. 114) actually affirm this by
saying: “Some of the early members later denounced Freemasonry when they
became more fully aware…” of all that the organization stood for. Simón Bolívar, for one, later denounced the organization for its silly rituals and meaningless secrecy. It would appear that both the missionaries and patriots who joined the lodges were totally ignorant of the cultish nature of Masonry. They joined believing they were associating with an organization that sponsored the great human ideals of democracy and human rights. This also seems to be born out by statements made by Bastian (1990, p. 118-119). He explained that the Masonic lodges in Colombia became:

…the conveyers of a radical liberalism at the very moment the Vatican was demanding their liberal clerics to separate themselves from the [Masons] and condemning them repeatedly with various encyclicals. These lodges were influenced not only by the ideas of the French Revolution but also by the liberal revolutions taking place in the Europe of 1848. By their declared anti Catholicism many members were invigorated…it helped them promote dissident religious activities that eventually moved them to associate with the Protestants. This association also created a place of privilege for the Protestant foreigners that arrived in the different nations of Latin America. It was there that the first Protestant societies met their most combative and best-trained associates. These liberal associates…became their best promoters and backers….

Those who raised up against those early Protestant missionaries for joining the Masons were missionaries who came after World War I, after Masonry had been carefully analyzed for what it really stood for by their
denominational teachers and leaders. Furthermore, they were missionaries who came from the independent church movement in the United States. Their churches called themselves “fundamentalists,” and openly opposed “modernists” and any “false cult.” These churches were skeptical of any society that taught doctrines contrary to those drawn up by their leadership.

This researcher found an article on the Internet that demonstrated the way many condemned Freemasonry. On June 30, 2001, an evangelical Protestant preacher by the name of John Daniel gave a series of messages critical of Masonry. He titled the series "Secret Societies and Their Infiltration of the Seven Churches of Revelation" His accusations included:

What secret society of the past two centuries can be identified as the synagogue of Satan? To answer this question we must look at the most powerful secret society on earth today. The Scottish Rite of Freemasonry is the governing body of all contemporary secret societies… All the Masonic associations owe to it their secrets and their symbols. In that ancient and little understood philosophy the initiate will find the source of many doctrines and may in time come to understand the hermetic philosophers, the alchemists and all the anti-papal thinkers of the Middle Ages.

Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry confirms this: "Each lodge is and must be a symbol of the Jewish Temple, each Master in the chair representing the Jewish King and every Freemason an impersonation of the Jewish workman...."

The Roman Curia... published a book in 1961 entitled "The Plot Against the Church." The Plot was a warning to Catholics that their church had been infiltrated by Freemasonry and in that book the Roman Curia referred to the Scottish Rite as the synagogue of Satan... Dr. Jonathan Blanchard, a former 33rd degree Scottish Rite Mason, confirms in his two-volume work entitled "Scottish Rite Masonry Illustrated," that every lodge is a synagogue of Satan and its ritual is sorcery.

The initiate of the 30th degree is sanctified and declared kadosh (ph) meaning holy, he burns incense to Lucifer and is admitted to the rank of the grand sacrificers of the angel of light. The initiate of the 31st degree mounts the mystic ladder and concludes a pact with Satan, which he seals with a drop of his own blood. The initiate of the 32nd degree is made prince of the Luciferian Secret and joins the army, which
marches to avenge Lucifer and conquer paradise lost. The initiated of the 33rd degree becomes sovereign pontiff of the synagogue of Satan.

Beginning in 1793 with William Cary [sic], the world's first modern missionary, Masons have worshiped alongside of evangelicals. During those years England was the center of world travel and the mighty British East India Company, the world's largest merchant marine co-op, was responsible for carrying the British flag around the world. Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry confirms that Masonic lodges were established in the Americas, India, China and Australia by those merchant Marines suggesting that the British sailors were Masons. In my book "Scarlet and the Beast," I document that one of the requirements for bringing a ship into the co-op was that the ship's owner and his entire crew be Masons. Among these rugged merchant marines sailed missionaries from the British Isles and the Americas. While on the high seas, these missionaries never missed a worship service. Worshiping alongside of them was the ship's Masonic crew... I suggest that the parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13 is a prophecy of secret society infiltration into the church.

Bringing with them beliefs such as these, missionaries who went to Latin America after World War I became very critical of the first wave missionaries for associating with Masons and with Colombia's political liberals. This researcher, on the other hand, believes that neither the early missionaries nor those first political liberals were acquainted with the history of Freemasonry—the movement was new on the scene. Neither group was familiar with the organization, its religious history or background. They saw it as a legitimate democratic association, not as a strange and questionable cult.

Believing they joined with the Freemasons out of ignorance, this researcher has included this fragment of history in order to dispel any false notions about the character of these early missionaries. Continuing the story of Protestantism in Colombia, it will become abundantly clear that these first missionaries were individuals of high integrity, deserving of our praise and admiration.
1.5.4 Protestants are welcomed in Colombia

In her book, Bucana (1995) described the immediate friendship that developed between Colombia’s political liberals and the Protestants. She wrote of 4,986 British soldiers—most of them Protestants—who joined Bolívar’s army in the struggle for independence. Under the command of Colonel James Rook, a group of 160 to 200 accompanied Bolívar on many of his battles and came to be known as Bolívar’s British Legion. Many died of tropical diseases; others died in battle.

Many of these soldiers stayed on in Colombia after the war was won. They intermarried with Colombians and formed a small British Colony in the area of Guaduas. There they practiced, unhindered, their Protestant faith. Prominent among them was a devout soldier, Colonel James Fraser. He fell in love with a granddaughter of President Santander, married her, moved to Bucaramanga and later became Minister of War (Bucana, 1995). Amazingly, these foreign protestantes were not silent about their faith. Colonel Fraser, for instance, recognizing the openness of the new independent government toward missionaries, wrote letters to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland and later to the Presbyterian Church in the United States asking for missionaries to work in the new nation.

Silva-Silva (n.d, p. 42) provided the name and arrival date of the first Protestant missionary to arrive in Colombia, a Presbyterian from Scotland:

*Es en 1856 cuando arriba a Bogotá el primer misionero protestante propiamente dicho: Henry Barrington Pratt, quien siembra la semilla de la que sería la primera iglesia evangélica organizada en este país.*

Properly told, in 1856 the first Protestant missionary arrived in Bogotá: Henry Barrington Pratt, who planted the seeds for what would become the first evangelical church organized in this nation.
Other missionaries joined Pratt. In 1861, General Tomás Cipriano Mosquera, impressed by the work done by a Presbyterian by the name of William McLaren, announced, “Let more Protestant missionaries come” (Bucana, 1995, p. 55). As President of Colombia, he offered to turn over to Protestant missionaries several properties that had belonged to the Catholic Church—a change indeed from earlier days under Spanish rule.

Although this inflow of Protestants was distasteful to most Catholic leaders, under the protection of Colombia’s liberal-minded President little could be done to stop it. Bucana (1995) provided the following two incidents that illustrate the inability of the Catholics to stop Protestant influence as well as what can take place when Protestants have no political protection.

In 1824 James (Diego) Thompson, a famous Protestant missionary, arrived in Bogotá. He was famous for his dual role: setting up centers for Bible distribution for the British and Foreign Bible Societies and for establishing the Lancaster systems of education for South American governments wanting to start public schools for their children. Thompson filled both roles in Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Ecuador. His fame had reached Colombia, and he was warmly welcomed by Pedro Gual—Minister of the Exterior—and several key citizens of the city of Bogotá. Through his influence, the Society was given (April 1825) permission to set up an office in Bogotá. He was instrumental in distributing 2,000 Bibles to key citizens.

Having completed his mission, Diego Thompson continued on to Mexico, leaving the Bible Society office in the hands of Lucas Matthews. Unfortunately, Matthews—a lowly missionary—did not have friends in high places. Once Thompson left, strong resistance to the distribution of the Protestant “heretical Bible” began. Matthews was driven out of Bogotá, and a
large number of his Gospel booklets were burned. Thinking he would be safer
in one of the coastal cities, he made his way down the Magdalena River. He
never arrived. Word got back to Bogotá that he and his books had drowned in
the Magdalena.

1.5.5 Liberals favor Protestants

At the end of the 19th century, whenever liberals were in power, laws
were enacted that would grant more freedom to Protestants. Jean-Pierre
Bastian (1990, p. 117) dedicated an entire chapter to the union of Protestants
with Liberals in their struggle against the political conservatives and the
Catholic Church. He pointed out the contribution of two Colombian presidents:

En Colombia el liberal José Hilario López (1848-1853) impuso varias
medidas anticatólicas que culminaron en la enmienda constitucional de
1853 y la separación de la Iglesia y el Estado. Su sucesor en la
presidencia del país, José María Obando, incluyó la libertad religiosa
en la Constitución y siguió una política anticatólica que fue prolongada
por el general Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera hasta su derrocamiento en
1867.

In Colombia the liberal José Hilario López (1848-1853) imposed
several anti-Catholic measures that ended up being included as an
amendment to the Constitution of 1853, including the separation of
Church and State. His successor as president of the nation, José María
Obando, added religious liberty to the constitution and followed an anti
Catholic policy that was continued by General Tomás Cipriano de
Mosquera until he was unseated in 1867.

Not until Vatican II, when the Council declared Protestants to be
“Separated Brethren,” were attitudes to change permanently. Even after that,
not all the religious battles were won. Full religious liberty for all non-Catholics
would always be a struggle.

1.6 A nation at war with itself: The political struggle (1808-1902)

In this section, the researcher will show that Colombia today is seen as
a nation at war with itself. One reason Colombians seem to accept their
present political turmoil with a measure of nonchalance is that they look at their past—Colombians have always been at war with each other. Between 1864 and 1885 Colombia suffered two devastating civil wars, eight minor revolts and a government coup. One war lasted two years. Amazingly, during the 19th century, 52 civil wars took place in different regions of the country (López, 1999).

The instability of the nation can be demonstrated further by noting that between 1832 and 1886 six constitutions were enacted. In the late 1800s, once again the question came up about the type of government the country should have. In his political campaign for the presidency, Rafael Núñez told the people (López 1999, p. 258):

La regla general [para Colombia] ha sido la Guerra civil; la excepción ha sido el orden público.

The general rule [for Colombia] has been civil war; the exception has been to have public order.

1.6.1 The constitutional conflicts

Under the political banner of “Progress with Order,” Nuñez proposed a new form of Federalism he called “Radicalism.” His idea was decentralizing the central government and giving more power to the states. The people backed his idea and a new constitution was drawn up. This one, established in 1886, lasted to 1991. Articles 38 and 41 of that Constitution stated (Escandón 1996, p. 17):

(Artículo 38) La Religión Católica, Apostólica y Romana es la de la Nación; los poderes públicos la protegerán y harán que sea respetada como esencial elemento del orden social.

(Artículo 41) La educación pública será organizada y dirigida en concordancia con la Religión Católica.
Article 38) The Apostolic, Roman Catholic religion is the religion of the nation; all civic powers are to protect it and assure that it is respected as the chief element of our social order.

(Article 41) All public education will be organized and directed in concordance with the Catholic religion.

The country’s leaders were not happy with that constitution. The “Thousand Day War” broke out (1899–1902), leaving the nation in financial as well as moral ruin (López 1999). Finally, in 1991 the people voted in a Constitution that at long last granted Colombians full religious liberty (Escandón 1996).

Meanwhile, by the end of the 19th century, three million people, basically rural in nature and living in one general geographic area, had not learned to live and work at peace with each other.

**Conclusion**

This first chapter has outlined a brief history of the land of Colombia starting with its discovery by the Spaniards in 1499. The author has reviewed the story of the conquest, the subjection and Christianization of the Indians; the influence and impact of the Spanish Inquisition on the religious outlook of this nation, and the lack of Biblical training that became common in the early stages of Latin America’s Christianization. Since this thesis addresses problems associated with the educational needs of national Protestant church leaders, attention has been given to the work of missionaries who established Protestantism in Colombia, including the factions favoring them and the nature of the opposition they faced from the beginning. As a final item, the research began to flesh out the turbulent political climate in which Colombians—both Protestant and Catholic—have had to endure.
The second chapter will contrast the riches and potential of contemporary Colombia with the dark and treacherous forces struggling for the soul of the nation. On the one hand, the Roman Catholic Church is doing all it can to preserve its power and prominence (established in this chapter); on the other hand, there are difficult obstacles facing the Protestants. However, against the backdrop of the history—religious and secular—and the beauty and natural riches of Colombia, Chapter Two will also show the cruel and savage guerrilla movements allied against the nation as a whole. Whether studying the church, the people, or the government, there is no way of avoiding addressing the insurgent movements in Colombia. They are an integral part of this nation’s modern history. Once a complete picture of Colombia’s historical development—past and present—are established, both the research problem and the hypothesis can be addressed.
CHAPTER TWO
COLOMBIA TODAY

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a panoramic overview of present-day Colombia. The focus is on understanding the forces that struggle for the heart of this besieged nation. The riches and potential of Colombia are contrasted with the dark and treacherous forces struggling for the soul of the nation. Also in this chapter the groundwork is laid for comprehending the growth of the Protestant Church—los evangélicos, as they are called in Colombia—in consonance with the surrounding political, social and Roman Catholic environment.

2.1 The geography

To understand Colombia, some background on the geography and economy of the nation is necessary. Colombia is the northernmost nation of the South American continent, joining the continent to the Central American countries. Of the many natural beauties in the 440,000 square miles that make up the nation, the most singular are the Andes Mountains. These magnificent mountains cover 20 percent of the Colombian territory. Like a huge arm reaching northward throughout the western border of the continent, the Andes turn into a three-fingered hand once they reach Colombia. One finger (called the Cordillera Occidental) goes directly north, ending at the border of Panama. The second finger (the Cordillera Central) bends toward the northeast, ending in the Caribbean Sea, and the third (Cordillera Oriental) curls through central Colombia and on around through western Venezuela. These are the mountains that provide unparalleled hiding places for the
political subversive movements, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) and the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN), as well as those working the enormously profitable cocaine industry—the Medellín and Cali cartels.

The eastern part of Colombia is made up of the *Llanos*, the vast, sparsely populated plains that disappear into the Amazon jungles to the south. These plains make up 80 percent of the land mass. Two rivers water the important valleys between the Andes Mountains, the Cauca in the west and the Magdalena, watering the central areas.

*Figure 1.* Map of modern-day Colombia. Used by permission www.worldatlas.com.

According to the latest figures available, Colombia’s population is 42,310,775 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2004). Since the nation is placed squarely on the equator, an estimated 35 million escape the hot and humid temperatures by living in the cool, temperate mountain areas. For example,
Bogotá with its six million people sits at 8,600-feet above sea level, where temperatures range between 55 and 75 degrees year around.

As for mineral resources, Colombia is rich in coal. While limited in the production of crude petroleum, it is able to produce sufficient oil for its national needs. The mining of nickel began successfully in 1982. New gold discoveries have been made in the southern Llanos region of the Amazon Basin, and Colombia is still the world’s foremost producer of emeralds. Were it not for the guerrillas threatening the stability of the nation, Colombia would most certainly be one of the most prosperous countries in the Southern Hemisphere.

In 2000, the gross domestic product totaled U.S. $88 billion: government: 20.5 percent; manufacturing: 13.8 percent; agriculture: 14.9 percent; financial services: 17.9 percent; commerce: 11.9 percent; transportation and communications services: 8.5 percent; mining and quarrying: 4.9 percent; construction and public works: 4.4 percent; and electricity, gas and water: 3.2 percent (Anzola, 2003).

All the foodstuffs needed by the nation, including some for export, are grown locally. Also, Colombia is second to Brazil in the production of coffee: According to Compton’s Encyclopedia, nearly one quarter of Colombia’s cropland is in coffee, with 300,000 farms employing more than 20 percent of the agricultural labor force—17 percent of the foreign income.

However, forced by leftist guerrillas in recent years to plant marijuana and the coca, the farmers have changed the entire agricultural industry of the nation. Now the DK World Atlas (Heritage, 1999) includes both the “revenues from exports of coffee and illegal narcotics” as crucial to the economy of Colombia.
2.1.1 The nation’s transportation systems

Colombians are served by a good highway system. Late in the presidential term of Andrés Pastrana (1998–2002), the FARC (Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia), the ELN (National Liberation Army), and United Self-Defense Forces brought land transportation to a virtual standstill by systematically attacking vehicles on the public highways (see Figure 2). For instance, they would stop a bus, drag out the passengers, rob them, and set fire to the vehicle. Mobile guerrilla units would appear where least expected, making highway travel and transportation practically impossible. According to data reported by the Police Department to El Tiempo (2001), the major newspaper in Colombia, annual losses to the economy up to October 2001 were estimated at $42,017,000,000 pesos or $13,000,000 USD.

Because of the importance of transportation to the economy, one of Alvaro Uribe’s (a hard-liner elected in 2002 with a mandate to crush Colombia’s rebels) first acts as President was to free the nation’s highways from guerrilla attacks. With new equipment received from the United States, Uribe deployed thousands of soldiers to keep the main highways open.

Additionally, Colombia has an excellent and storied air transportation system. Avianca—the national airline—“was only the second airline ever to operate in the history of aviation, after KLM of the Netherlands, and the first one to fly in the Americas.” (http://avianca.biography.ms/). Founded in 1919, the airline has routes to every major city, even to many of the smaller towns. The army has been able to keep the airports open in spite of occasional attempts by the rebels to close them down.
All stars represent guerrilla attacks, whether the FARC, ELN, or the AUC on Colombia’s highways in 2001.

▲ Represent acts of violence by unclassified bandits.

Most attacks occur on highways around Bogotá and Medellín.

Figure 2. Map of guerrilla activity. (El Tiempo, 16 Oct. 2001, p.2)
2.1.2 The government and growth of the economy (1902 – 1945)

In the first half of the 20th century, Colombians knew nothing about guerrillas and terrorism. This section aims to point out how the nation prospered at first, only to have its strength and vitality sapped by the Marxist revolutionaries and the drug cartels.

Early in the 20th century the political leaders had to face the fact that, industrially, their agrarian nation was in danger of being left far behind. Modernization was essential. According to López (1968, p. 265), the Liberal Party worked to create an open society that would enter vigorously into world trade and capitalism. The Conservative Party, wanting to protect its historical ways and Catholic traditions, fought most of these reforms. The country seemed to take two steps forward when the liberals were in power, one step backward when the conservatives took over.

After World War I, American capitalists began searching for new markets, and Colombia became one of the targets. However, “against a background of a society divided, whose social life revolved around a system of beliefs, traditions and colonial customs” (López 1968, p. 264), Colombians were ill-prepared to meet the challenge.

Then came the Mexican Revolution of 1910 and the Russian Revolution of 1917. The working class took notice. New ideas filled the air. The ordinary laborers of the world began to think of themselves as a special economic class with power. Socialism gave them new optimism. López (1968, p. 267) explained:

*Y en América Latina, el surgimiento de un nacionalismo interno anti-imperialista y a la defensiva, contra imperialismo agresivo y expansionista. Son los años del pesimismo mundial, cuando la imagen
In Latin America there was a defensive anti-imperialistic attitude, alongside a spirit of internal nationalism. People sought to take a stand against aggressive imperialist expansion. These were the years of world pessimism, when the image of Europe in crisis gave vitality and hope to the Latin American nations.

The ever-expanding industrialization of Europe and the United States, including the two world wars, increased demands for raw materials found in Latin America. These demands resulted in creating “one-product nations: tin from Bolivia, copper from Chile, petroleum from Venezuela, fruit from Central America, sugar from Cuba, meat from Argentina, and coffee from Colombia” (López 1968, p. 268). Colombia had grown from a population of 2,391,984 in 1870 to a nation of 7,212,200 in 1928. The 1920s produced what came to be called, “The Dance of the Millions” (Broderick 1987, pp. 33-34):

In 1921 the government of the United States decided to regain the friendship of Colombia after having stolen the State of Panama 20 years earlier. The North Americans made their peace in their own style—that is, pouring out money—and in 1924, with the 'indemnification' payment of $25 million, they renewed their diplomatic relations with Colombia. Immediately following came a wave of investments... The period was called the Dance of the Millions. It corresponded to the Roaring Twenties of the United States.... The millions that danced in Colombia traveled north and helped make the 20s even happier for the North Americans. The millions that danced for
the foreign business owners and their middlemen helped the wealthy classes in Colombia, but never reached the masses.

There were jobs, however, with acceptable salaries, and the nation “benefited from the prosperous affluence of international capitalism” (López 1968, p.277). In 1910, there were 587 kilometers of highways in Colombia; by 1930 there were 5,743. Electric plants were built; tracks were laid for streetcars in Bogotá; streets were improved to make room for the growing quantity of automobiles; machinery for major industries was imported. Coffee plantations grew from a total of 183,000 acres to 360,000. Colombians hoped for a great future.

Yet the political divisions between Conservatives and Liberals ran deep, not only keeping the nation divided but often at war. Broderick (1987, p. 26) provided a picture of its effects early in the 20th century before the present-day guerilla movements began:

*Fue una época de guerras civiles causadas por las clases dominantes, las cuales inducían a los trabajadores del campo a combatirse los unos a los otros en nombre de los partidos políticos. Los conflictos tenían su origen fundamentalmente en las disputas entre los potentados sobre los títulos de propiedad, pero los campesinos ignoraban el verdadero motivo de discordia. Los ánimos se caldeaban de tal manera que bastaba que un cura denunciara a los liberales del villorrio vecino como ‘¡masones!, ¡herejes!, ¡ateos!’ para que los conservadores los consideraran enemigos y los atacaran sin piedad. Los liberales, a su turno, alborotados por la demagogia de los gamonales, incendiaban los ranchos de sus vecinos godos, convencidos de que así adelantaban la lucha por la libertad y la democracia. De hecho los favorecidos eran siempre los terratenientes quienes aumentaban sus tierras con las parcelas abandonadas por los campesinos que huían de la amenaza.*

It was a period of civil wars caused by the dominant classes, which induced the farm workers to fight one against the other in the name of their political parties. The conflicts had their origin fundamentally in disputes among the potentates over the titles to the land, but the farm workers were ignorant of the real motives. All a priest had to do was accuse the people in the next-door village of being ‘Masons! Heretics!
Atheists! for tempers to heat to the point of attacking these supposed enemies without mercy. The Liberals, in turn, aroused by the demagoguery of their political opponents, burned down the huts of the invading farmers, convinced they were furthering the cause of liberty and democracy. Meanwhile, those benefiting were the large landowners who would seize the abandoned properties of the poor farmers fleeing for their lives.

This, no doubt, had much to do with the urbanization of Colombia. Another factor is the growth of the guerrilla movements, as we shall see in the next section. Safford and Palacios (2002, p. 302) rightly call Colombia “a nation of cities.” They add: “As of 1970 some 30 cities composed a network distributed among the four populous regions” of Colombia. These cities not only became the centers where Colombians could find work, they also became their fortresses, their havens of safety from the incessant attacks of the guerrillas. Safford and Palacios (2002, p. 301) described the expansion of these cities:

In 1938 only 29 percent of Colombia’s population lived in cities; at the end of the century the proportion was 70 percent. The rhythm of the urban expansion was slow in the first decades of the century, began to accelerate in the 1930s, and reached maximum velocity in the 1950s. In 1940 no Colombian city contained a half a million inhabitants; in 1958 two cities had more than 2 million, and two more had more than 1 million. And another eight cities contained more inhabitants than Bogotá, the largest city, had in 1940. In less than 50 years a predominantly rural country had become a nation of cities.

Those left in the country suffered conditions scarcely above subsistence. It is little wonder many joined ranks with the rebels. At the same time these poor people abandoned to survive by their ingenuity were the most responsive to the Protestant missionaries. The pages of the following books are filled with stories of the poor and destitute in Colombia’s rural areas who formed the nucleus of the Protestant church: *Historia del Cristianismo Evangélico en Colombia* (The History of Evangelical Christianity in Colombia)
by Francisco Ordóñez (n.d.); 50 Años de Historia y Misión AIEC (50 Years of History and Mission AIEC) by Ubaldo Restan Padilla (1995); Los Evangélicos en Colombia (The Evangelicals in Colombia) by Manuel Rojas and Joyce de Wyatt (1978); Colombia: Land of Conflict and Promise, by William R. Estep, Jr. (1968); and Recuerdos, el Protestantismo en Colombia 1910 – 1945 (Memories, Protestantism in Colombia, 1910 – 1945) by Alexander Allan (1968). However, before further discussing the living conditions in Colombia’s rural areas, it is necessary to describe the formation of the rebel groups.

### 2.2. The rise of the guerrilla movements

The word “guerrilla” has an interesting origin. The term first came into use during the time of the invasion of Spain by Napoleon in 1808. In his comment on the war, Asimov (1991, p. 322) stated that there was no need for that invasion, and defined the word “guerrilla”:

> The Spanish royal family was totally subservient to Napoleon, and when he displaced them, he stirred up a hornet’s nest. The Spanish King and Prince were totally worthless, but the Spanish people, at that time, decided they would rather have a worthless king of their own, than a worthier one imposed on them from the outside. On May 2, 1808, they rose in rebellion and there followed years of guerrilla war that bled France needlessly. (The word *guerrilla* came into use on this occasion. It is Spanish for “little war,” one that is fought by small bands of hit-and-run nonprofessionals).

This section addresses issues related to similar “small bands of hit-and-run nonprofessionals” that have tormented Colombia since the late 1960s, including the formation of the drug cartels.

The largest and most powerful guerrilla movement in Colombia is the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC). Understanding how FARC was formed and how it functions will shed light on the other opposition
groups while providing an explanation for the monumental political problems faced by the government of Colombia. Following are the troublesome factions:

1. Organized in 1964, the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) is the largest of the four guerrilla groups.

2. Also organized in 1964 and having Cuban connections, the National Liberation Army (ELN) originated with the Colombian Communist Party.

3. With connections to the pro-Chinese or Maoist Party, the People’s Liberation Army was formed in 1967.

4. Operating primarily in the cities and made up of Colombian leftist extremists, the April 19th Movement (M19) was formed in 1980 during the occupation of the Dominican Republic Embassy.

Important to this research is an understanding of how the more prominent and notorious rebel groups were started. While the conservatives were in power, from 1946 to 1953, an unfortunate political incident took place that gave birth to this new form of political opposition. In 1946 Mariano Ospina Pérez, leader of the conservative party, was elected president. Unfortunately for his government, on April 9, 1948, a popular liberal candidate to the presidency, Jorge Eliecer Gaitán, was assassinated in Bogotá. A national uprising called “El Bogotazo” resulted. López (1968, pp. 299-300) chronicled the story:

Las masas enloquecidas irrumpieron en las calles de la capital y de otras ciudades del país en su afán de destrucción. La confusión nacional no llegó a la total anarquía, por la energía del presidente Mariano Ospina Pérez, al tomar con sentimiento patriótico las riendas del orden del país. La tensión social y política se generalizó en el país, introdujo varias olas de violencia entre los años 1949 y 1953 y en general en la década de los cincuenta.
The infuriated public took to the streets in the capital and in other cities of the nation bent on destruction. The national confusion did not reach anarchy, due to the strong measures imposed by President Mariano Ospina Perez. [However] between the years of 1949 to 1953 the social and political tension that was generated throughout the nation resulted in various waves of violence, affecting even the rest of the 50s.

During the civil war that ensued—generally called La Violencia (1948–1953)—more than 200,000 people were killed. Using the national uprising and the violence as an excuse, on June 13, 1953, the army took over and named General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla as dictator of Colombia. This move compounded the problem in the eyes of the populace and, according to Gonzalo Sánchez (1991, p. 42), opened the door to revolutionaries. Of particular importance to this study is how the three most prominent revolutionaries came to power: Manuel Marulanda Vélez (nicknamed Tirofijo—Sure-shot), Pablo Escobar, a charismatic revolutionary, and Camilo Torres, a popular Marxist priest whose influence extended to the university students,

2.2.1 “Tirofijo:” creator of the FARC

Furious at the death of his hero Gaitán, an 18 year-old Indian, Pedro Antonio Marín (born May 13, 1930, in the mountainous area southwest of Cali, known as Cambrín), left his produce selling business and began building a reputation as a bold subversive. On August 6, 1964, with 25 companions, he tried and miserably failed to overthrow the township of Genova (a town inland from Barranquilla), run by the very conservative party that he blamed for the death of Gaitán. Now exposed, Pedro Antonio Marín and his companions had to flee for their lives back to the area of his birth. He joined the Marxists, changing his name to Manuel Marulanda Vélez
(name of a deceased Communist labor leader) and, with his band of guerrillas, began invading farms, collecting “protection” taxes, and building a reputation for his uncanny ability to escape army pursuers.

Nicknamed *Tirofijo*—meaning “sure-shot”—for his quickness with a trigger, Manuel Marulanda Vélez inspired his growing band of terrorists with dreams of turning Colombia into a Communist state. In 1965, he formally organized the FARC, the largest guerrilla force that has grown from “350 fighters in 1966, to 7,000 guerrillas in 1995, and up to 20,000 today” (Oppenheimer, 2001, p. 6a).

Tirofijo’s appeal, especially to university students, was the Marxist ideal of helping the downtrodden and those living a life of hopelessness. Sánchez (1991, p. 42) explained:

*Para muchos colombianos, ser guerrillero se convirtió incluso en una opción de vida, como para otros dicha opción podría ser cura, abogado o zapatero. Casi podría decirse sin caer en hipérbole que la guerrilla es no sólo una categoría política sino también un lugar en la estratificación social.*

For many Colombians becoming a guerrilla is a social option, like the idea some have of becoming a priest, a lawyer or a shoemaker. One can actually say without exaggeration that becoming a guerrilla is not only joining a political party but also taking an upward step in the social strata of society.

With clear political goals, Tirofijo and his growing band of Marxists took refuge in the Andes Mountains and the tropical forests of the Amazon Basin. Like Fidel Castro did in the Escambray Mountains of Cuba, Tirofijo broadcast his appeals and directed all military excursions from the mountains. His goals were idealistic. He wanted a new nation built around Marxist ideals.
However, as the years rolled on and new and younger leaders began to take control, they quickly lost their revolutionary ideals and became drug traffickers as an easy means to finance their activities. According to Colombian Major Luis Alberto Villamarín (1996, pp. 167-168), the Revista Semana published the following:

*Tirofijo y sus muchachos dejaron a un lado sus principios ideológicos para darle paso a una industria ilícita...Ante la rentabilidad del narcotráfico, dejaron a un lado los libros del marxismo para dar paso a los de contabilidad donde aparecen las multimillonarias transacciones de sus negocios. Lo anterior quiere decir que las FARC ya no les interesa la búsqueda del poder, sino que en su decadente círculo viciosos, les interesa el dinero de la droga para obtener más poder y les interesa el poder para hacer más negocios de droga.*

Tirofijo and his boys have put aside their ideological principles in order to give way to an illicit industry...Seeing the profitability of drug trafficking, they have replaced their Marxist books with bookkeeping journals in which they jot down their multimillion-dollar business transactions. This means that the FARC is no longer seeking political power, but in a decadent vicious cycle they now want money from drugs and more power to vastly increase the sale of drugs.

With unimagined wealth in their coffers, Tirofijo and his FARC movement have all but lost sight of their original Communist agenda. They now concentrate on expanding their fortunes. According to López (1968, p. 381) and Javier Giraldo (1996, pp. 83, 88, 91), their freedom of action and ability to grow has come to a large degree from handsome payoffs to corrupt politicians, officials, judges, military leaders, and local police who look the other way. As kidnappings, political assassinations, exploitation of farmers, and appropriation of lands to grow marijuana and coca have increased, a reign of terror has descended all over Colombia, especially in the areas controlled by the FARC. In fact, this new millennium has begun with
guerrillas forming a perimeter around Bogotá. Colombia’s capital today is practically held hostage by this well-organized cartel (see Figure 3).

![Areas in Colombia controlled by guerrillas](Map 9 from Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society by Frank Safford and Marco Palacios [2001]. Used by permission of Oxford University Press).

### 2.2.2 Pablo Escobar and the Medellín Cartel

The government of Colombia not only has had to fight against two powerful guerrilla groups for survival, it also has had to deal with the international menace of two powerful drug cartels. The motivation and ambitions of both the Medellín and Cali cartels are similar—to take over the government of Colombia so they can run their illegal trade unhindered. Since these drug cartels affect all Colombia and Colombians, it is essential to understand who they are, where they are, how they operate, and how they disrupt the nation.
Pablo Escobar (1952-1993) established what is now known as the Medellín Drug Cartel; according to Carlos Rodríguez (1997, p.3), this was “the biggest, most organized, criminal operation ever created.”

Escobar was raised in a low class neighborhood of Medellín by his mother (Rodriguez 1997, p. 1). His father abandoned the home when Escobar was a young child. As the older brother, the boy became a thief to help provide food and clothing for the family. Survival was the most important thing. He had no time for a formal education. During his teen years, he was jailed several times for car theft and armed robbery. Prison only hardened him and made him a more creative delinquent.

Then Escobar discovered cocaine and, with the help of trusted friends, began exporting the drug to the United States. Soon, as a very young man, he was earning $100,000 a day (Rodríguez 1997, p.1). Cleverly, as a cover-up for his criminal activities, he decided to turn to politics (1982), setting as his goal the governorship of the State of Antioquia. His ill-gotten money was useful: he bought the votes. At the same time, he never forgot his roots, and, with his wealth, he was generous to the poor, while at the same time killing policemen and government officials whom he thought took advantage of the weak and helpless in the area surrounding Medellín—a modern Robin Hood. For his generosity, people loved him. According to Rodriguez (1997, p. 2), “He built a neighborhood that now has his name with 10,000 homes for many poor families;” adding, “People in Medellín began calling him ‘The Godfather.’” Quickly he gained popularity, respect and fame, and easily won the governorship. Carlos Rodríguez (1997, p. 2-3) added a fascinating detail about Escobar’s character:
For Escobar, family was always a priority. He went out of his way to provide his family with a good safe home and a ‘safe’ family environment. He kept at least 20 bodyguards at all times protecting his family…He loved spending time with his wife and his 2 [sic] sons and his daughter. They went to the best schools, followed by their huge, muscular, “ugly” [sic] bodyguards…

Intuitively a good manager, Escobar surrounded himself with talented people. One trusted associate, Carlos Leder, became the brains behind delivering drugs to the U.S. market. Together they bought a small island off the shores of Cuba from Fidel Castro. There they built a landing strip, good docks and bought several of the best speedboats, even a submarine. Soon he was earning a $1,000,000 a day.

Needless to say, both the Colombian government and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency tried to close him down. Escobar retaliated by hiring an expert team of lawyers. When someone in the legal profession opposed him, a common tactic was to send one of his lawyers with a briefcase full of money and a stack of photographs of that individual’s family. The person either accepted Escobar’s bribe and relented, or paid the price with the lives of close relatives.

Wanting to monopolize the entire drug trade, Escobar tried to put the other cartels out of business, especially the Cali Cartel. He raided their factories, kidnapped their wives or children and bombed their homes. Members of these cartels retaliated by organizing what they called “Victims of Pablo Escobar.” They were successful. Rodriguez explained (1997, p. 4): “Many of Escobar’s buildings were destroyed. His sister was kidnapped, tortured and killed. Her body was thrown in front of one of Escobar’s properties.”
Fearing for his life, Escobar left Colombia with his wife and children. After a few months, he became very homesick. He began negotiating with the government, stating he would give himself up, confess to his crimes, and even build his own prison if he was granted permission to return. The government agreed. Escobar built a luxurious prison, including a swimming pool, special game rooms, and a special kitchen along with several offices. From this "prison" he continued to run his business. Of course, all the guards appointed by the government were bribed. Escobar and his fellow inmates could do as they pleased, as long as they remained in prison. Thus, his business continued to grow; the "boss" was protected by the government.

When finally the Colombian Justice Department realized the mockery of this imprisonment, it was determined to take Escobar and his chief lieutenants and place them in a maximum-security jail. Rodriguez (1997, p. 4) reported: “Escobar discovered the plan before the police arrived at the jail, and escaped hours before they arrived. Escobar just walked out the front door. Of course, the guards didn’t do anything.”

Now on the loose, Escobar was hunted by the army, the secret service and special agents of the DEA. There were few places where he could hide. Aware of his weakness—love for his family—the army and the DEA brought in special phone tracing equipment. Their hunch worked. Lonesome for his family, Escobar daringly traveled to Bogotá where his wife was living in one of his homes. A cell phone-call to his wife gave away his hiding-place. Rodriguez (1997, p 5) told the story of Escobar’s final hours on August 15, 1993:

When the elite forces moved in, Escobar only had time to jump out of a window on the third floor on to the roof to the house next to his. His
bodyguard was supposed to hold the police with gunfire but he was shot and killed in the act. Then after an intense cross fire the police made Escobar’s wishes come true. They shot him to death and ensured a Colombian Tomb for him.

To understand how men like Escobar and the drug trade are seen by many in this poverty stricken land, a closing paragraph in Rodriguez’s (1997, p. 6) biographical article will help:

Although Escobar brought a lot of evil to the world through the “golden powder” he did a lot of good to the community. Maybe his hard childhood changed him into that cold-hearted person that most people say he was. But what about all those people that he helped to accomplish their dreams of owning a home? All those inhabitants of the Pablo Escobar neighborhood surely won’t forget him. All his ex-employees surely will miss him. Who is going to provide them with food for their families? People that had a career for years with him, are now unemployed. How would it look in their resumes the fact that they worked for Pablo Escobar for the last 10 years? Would anybody help them?

Without a moment’s hesitation, the Cali Cartel, operated by the Ochoa brothers, filled the void left by Escobar’s cocaine empire. “Rid of Rivals, Flush with Cash, Colombian Cocaine Cartel Boosts Business,” headlined The Washington Post, June 16, 1994. With the illicit drug business now making up half of Colombia’s National Gross Product, little wonder the drug cartels and the guerrillas worked toward the creation of a new Colombia. Their goal was to create a nation where they could ply their fortune unhindered and make their illegal trade legal.

2.2.3 Camilo Torres: Colombia’s Revolutionary Priest

The Roman Catholic Church, normally deeply involved in national political conflicts, was strangely silent as the rebels began their struggle for the soul and conscience of Colombia. The silence had an explanation, as will be described in this section.
Sánchez (1991, p. 52) clearly pointed out that at the crucial moment when the Church could have lent its authority to unite Colombia against the growing wave of violence (in the early 1970s), Camilo Torres, a prominent Catholic priest, left the church and joined the guerrillas. The publicity surrounding this unexpected occurrence lent considerable credibility to Colombia’s dissident factions and brought uncertainty and confusion to Roman Catholic ranks. Consequently the Church, instead of being able to serve as a helpful arbiter in the struggle, itself became the center of debate, controversy, and struggle.

Camilo Torres was not just any priest. He came from a well-to-do and honored Colombian family. A relative after whom he was named was a member of the first historic Constitutional Assembly. He was captured in 1815 by the Spaniards (along with ten fellow writers of Colombia’s first constitution), then executed later that year (López 1968, p. 206). Throughout Colombia, monuments of these first martyrs for independence adorn city parks (Broderick 1987, p. 28).

Torres’s father, Dr. Calixto Torres, was (Broderick 1987, p. 29)…

…un hombre remilgado, sobremanera escrupuloso, dado a lamentarse exageradamente por cualquier contratiempo. No obstante su gran éxito profesional —llegó a ser el especialista más cotizado por la burguesía bogotana en material de enfermedades infantiles, varias veces decano de la Escuela de Medicina de la Universidad Nacional y reconocido como uno de los pioneros de la medicina moderna en Colombia— nunca feliz.

...a finicky, exceedingly scrupulous man, given to exaggerated complaining for any mishap. In spite of his great professional success—he became the most sought-after children’s specialist in Bogotá’s high society, serving several times as Dean of the Faculty of medicine of the National University and recognized as one of the pioneers of modern medicine in Colombia—he was never happy.
His mother, Isabel, was a flamboyant woman who resented her husband’s *machismo* and loved to be in the public eye. Their marriage was an on-and-off affair, mostly spent arguing over her spend-thrift ways. As Broderick (1987, p. 32) explained: “Camilo’s father was a neurotic and his mother a ‘prima donna.’” He added that fortunately for their son Camilo, his mother Isabel poured all her affection on him and would become a “determinative influence” in his life.

Camilo grew up in the protected environment of northern Bogotá, surrounded by the privileged class, far away from the poverty that, even at that time, was endemic to the south side of town. He went to Catholic schools. Then, in 1947, he was chosen to enter the Law School of the National University (Broderick 1987, p. 40). Although he loved philosophy and spent hours debating philosophical ideas with fellow students, nothing betrayed his interest in leftist thinking. On the contrary, along with his childhood friend, Luis Villar Borda, Camilo began writing a “university page” for a city newspaper, often contributing pieces decrying Colombians who favored a Communist society and others defending American imperialism.

Through some friends, he heard about two avant-garde French Dominican priests, Father Nielly and Father Blanchet, and began attending their conferences. These priests changed his opinion about the lack of intellectual climate within the Church. One of them asked Camilo whether he had ever felt a calling to the priesthood. This made him think seriously about such a career. Against the protests of his mother and father, in September of 1947 he changed schools, enrolling in the Dominican Seminary of the
Diocese of Bogotá (Broderick 1987, p. 44). He was ordained a priest on August 29, 1954.

His parents, convinced of his leadership qualities, now encouraged him to do specialized studies in Europe. A friend from seminary, Gustavo Perez, knowing of Camilo’s interest in social studies, suggested he attend the Catholic University of Lovaina in France (Broderick 1987, p. 69). There, in the company of many Latin American priests, who like himself were doing advanced studies in Europe, Camilo became familiar with the dominating liberal and humanistic ideologies. He graduated in 1958.

Before returning to Colombia, Camilo took advantage of a scholarship for a three-month special sociology course offered by the University of Minneapolis. In January of 1959—the same month in which Fidel Castro took over the reins of Cuba—Camilo returned to Colombia (Broderick 1987, p. 98).

Camilo wanted to teach in the National University. Enrique Acosta, a former teacher, now an old but revered priest, was the university chaplain. When Camilo arrived for an interview, Acosta was thrilled; he had been looking for a replacement, someone more in tune with the “modern” ideas of the university crowd. Camilo fit the profile, and monsignor Luis Concha Córdoba, the cardinal, was in accord. That year, instead of the new coeds getting all the attention, the university was a-buzz with their handsome, loquacious, friendly new chaplain (Broderick 1987, p. 102).

Because of his specialized studies in sociology and the turbulent political climate in Colombia, Camilo was in great demand. According to Broderick (1987, p. 111):

*Múltiples y variadas actividades desempeñaba Camilo en aquella época. No existió ningún comité sobre asuntos sociales que no lo*
tuviera como miembro, ninguna mesa redonda en la que su intervención no fuera obligatoria.

In that period many and varied were the activities in which Camilo was involved. There was no committee set up to discuss social matters in which he was not a member, and no roundtable at which he was not obligated to participate.

Camilo’s fame spread. In 1961, he was invited to attend the Sixth Latin American Congress on Sociology in Venezuela. There he made a hit particularly with the university students affiliated with the Communist Party, a group singing the praises of the Castro revolution and claiming that similar revolutions were the answer to all of Latin America’s social problems. The sincerity, energy, and commitment of those Venezuelan university revolutionaries made a great impression on Camilo. Further, while in Venezuela, Castro’s troops were celebrating their victory over Kennedy’s Bay of Pigs invasion—the first time in history American troops had been defeated! As Broderick (1987, pp. 115-116) pointed out, Camilo began considering the path of revolution traced by Castro’s Cubans as the legitimate path for resolving the social problems of Latin America. No doubt this was a turning point in Camilo’s thinking.

Returning to Bogotá, Camilo began to gather with Marxist students and to listen to their rhetoric with much more interest. To see first-hand the problems faced by those his new Communist colleagues called “oppressed farmers,” he began to travel the countryside. What he saw persuaded him that “no real change would be produced in Colombia without the use of violence” (Broderick 1987, p. 148).

Once reaching that conclusion, he saw his new role as one of awakening the nation—particularly the aristocracy and the government—to
the need for change. Camilo used the press and he used the radio to get across his message (Broderick 1987, p. 150):

Señalaba que, en Colombia, los hijos de la gente adinerada y sus incondicionales seguidores eran los únicos que tenían acceso a los canales de ascenso personal. Analizó cualquiera tratando de mejorar su situación económicamente a través de la formación escolar, o por medio de maniobras políticas o de un puesto en la burocracia, o ingresando en el ejército o en la iglesia. En cualquier caso la grandísima mayoría estaba destinada al fracaso. El éxito lo alcanzaban muy pocos, y a condición de una lealtad absoluta a la minoría que detentaba el poder económico. Los canales permanecían cerrados a quienes no tuvieran ni influencias ni dinero.

He would point out that, in Colombia, the children of the rich and those who followed them unconditionally were the only ones who had access to the channels for personal progress. He analyzed those trying to better their financial situation by bettering their education by political maneuvering, finding a job in the bureaucracy, joining the army, or through the church. In every case the vast majority was doomed to failure. Success was obtained by only a few, and then on condition of absolute loyalty to that minority who controlled economic power. The channels for advance remained closed to those who had neither influence nor money.

Such denunciations immediately got him into trouble with the Catholic Church, the politicians and the bureaucracy. However, his popularity with the people soared, and his persuasive eloquence brought many to his side. Leaders of the Communist National Liberation Army (ELN) began to meet with him secretly, eventually persuading him to join their ranks. Acknowledging this conflict of interests, he wrote his resignation letter to the Church (Broderick (1987, p. 200):

Cuando opté por el estado clerical lo hice principalmente pensando que en esa forma serviría mejor a la Iglesia y a los colombianos. Después de más de diez años de ministerio sacerdotal, me doy cuenta que, en las circunstancias históricas particulares de la Iglesia, de Colombia y mis propias, puedo lograr esos objetivos más eficazmente como laico.

When I chose clerical garbs I did it principally thinking that in that way I would best serve the Church and Colombians. After more than 10 years as a priest, I have come to understand that in the particular
The historic circumstances of the Church, of Colombia, and my own as well, I can best achieve those objectives as a lay person.

Camilo’s name was on everyone’s lips; both enemies and friends discussed his propositions. His sayings were headlined in the newspapers and radio. Church leaders, politicians, and military leaders tried to silence him. The nation, however, followed his every word. He was able to elude capture by hiding out with ELN friends. Finally he knew that if he stayed in Bogotá, he would be captured, possibly tortured, then permanently silenced. He made a final trip to the town of Santander to meet secretly with ELN leaders. His mind was made up. He would join the guerillas in the mountains. On his return to Bogotá, Saturday, July 3, 1965, a boisterous crowd of university students awaited him at the airport. Broderick (1978, p. 231) described that final scene:

Lo llevaron en hombros por las dependencias del aeropuerto y una caravana de autos y buses lo acompañó, al son de bocinas, por la Avenida de El Dorado a la Universidad Nacional... Cuando la multitud se dispersó, jóvenes del ELN lo llamaron a un lado para comunicarle las instrucciones... Se despidió. Y antes de la media noche partía de la ciudad por la carretera de Santander.

They hoisted him on their shoulders and paraded him through the airport, then a caravan of cars and busses accompanied him, horns blaring, down El Dorado Avenue to the National University [where he gave a final speech]...When the crowd dispersed, young leaders of the ELN called him aside to give him final instructions...He bade them farewell. Before midnight he left the city traveling down the highway toward Santander [to join the guerrillas].

High in the Andes Mountains a year later, February 15, 1966, at eight in the morning, Camilo and fellow fighters were ambushed by a brigade of soldiers from Santander. Camilo, along with all in his guerrilla squad, was killed.

Following the example of this popular priest turned revolutionary, a number of the Catholic clergy left the priesthood to join the farmers in their
fight for justice. Leaders of the Church, while not agreeing with Camilo that “no real change would be produced in Colombia without the use of violence” (Broderick 1987, p. 148), recognized nevertheless that there was much truth in the message Camilo gave his life to convey: “In Colombia, the children of the rich and those who followed them unconditionally were the only ones who had access to the channels for personal progress” (Broderick 1987, p. 150). Many in the Church came to conclude that if justice and freedom for all Colombians was to be brought about, the entire structures of all their society would have to be torn down and new ones erected. Others staunchly defended the hierarchical and historic make-up of their nation. A Church deeply divided could only officially stand by, watch the violent conflict, and say nothing.

2.3 The political and military response to the guerrillas

Many years ago, John Fletchers (1579-1625) in “Love's Cure,” Act iii, said: “I find the medicine worse than the malady.” The “medicine” created by the Colombian government to stop the advance of the drug cartels has been far “worse than the malady.” This section will show how the Colombian leadership—the wealthy ruling class—was unwilling to pay the military price to fight their internal war. Instead, leaders created an unruly paramilitary force that has brought havoc to the nation.

First of all, an explanation as to the way the wealthy classes view their strife is appropriate. Andrés Oppenheimer, a student of Latin America and a news columnist for the Miami Herald (The Oppenheimer Report, The Miami Herald, Sunday, July 8, 2001, p. 6A) explained:

Much of Colombia’s ruling class—starting with the government—seems to be in denial about the severity of the war that is destroying this
country...One of the few members of the political class whom I found to be more realistic was Alfonso Gómez Méndez, who has been Colombia’s attorney general...‘The war has not been assumed as such by Colombian society,’ Gómez Méndez told me. ‘Deep down, people in Bogotá still think that the guerrillas will remain in the [FARC-controlled southern Colombia] Caguan zone, where there are no golf courses anyway.’ Indeed, both the government and the opposition politicians talk about the war with euphemisms. Pastrana [the President] often scolds reporters for saying that there is a ‘civil war’ in Colombia...Part of Colombia’s problem...is that there are no upper-class Colombians in the military, let alone the battlefield...This war is fought by poverty-stricken youths who take up arms for both sides as an alternative to unemployment, while the nation watches from a distance... There is no nationwide commitment to win the war.

Instead of facing their internal foes with the regular army, government and military leaders looked for alternative ways to fight this war. Their choice was to establish a paramilitary force they named “The National Front,” an alliance of the military, secret service, ranchers, including some of the drug cartels. Gonzalo Sánchez (1991, p. 66) recounted the steps taken to form this defense mechanism to eradicate the FARC, the ELN, the M19, and even the drug cartels.

2.3.1 The formation of the paramilitary army

In the early 1980s, the President, the Congress and the Military began looking for possible legal options to create an “unrestricted” paramilitary force. According to Javier Giraldo (1996, p. 79) they found the needed permission in paragraph 3 of Article 33 of Decree 3398 of 1968, authorizing commanders in times of crisis “to provide arms considered for the private use of the armed forces to non-military people.” Combining that provision with Article 25 of the same decree (in which the National Government is authorized to use the civilian population “in activities and works by which they contribute to the reestablishment of normality”), the military leaders found the needed rational to create paramilitary “groups of self-defense,” as they were officially called.
Thus empowered, the army went about organizing civil units of defense, training them and arming them not only to fight “the guerrillas and narco-trafficking operations,” but also to “fight and to exterminate social workers, trade unionists, men and women who are not supportive of the establishment, assumed to be Communist extremists,” Giraldo (1996, pp. 10, 12).

This empowering of the army led to what has been called the “Dirty War” of the 1980s. Giraldo (1996, p. 81) described their operations:

Paramilitarism becomes, then, the keystone of a strategy of ‘Dirty War,’ where the ‘dirty’ actions cannot be attributed to persons on behalf of the State because they have been delegated, passed along or projected upon confused bodies of armed civilians. Those committing the crimes are anonymous and easily definable as common delinquents who act and thereafter disappear into the fog. This covers up responsibility for acts which have no legal justification or legitimacy, not even during times of warlike confrontations. The result is…actions of military officers camouflaged as civilians and military action of civilians protected in a clandestine way by military personnel.

The terrorist wave, which was set loose throughout Colombia by the paramilitary has no parallel in the annals of Latin America. A grim strategy of private and clandestine “justice” was mounted throughout the nation. Safford and Palacios (2002, p. 368) explained how the justice system was manipulated:

The State has dealt with its enemies by applying justice under a state of siege. The judicial apparatus and penal legislation have been employed by the executive branch to strengthen and legitimate emergency powers, variously against the opposing party, the drug traffic, social protest movements, or the leftist guerrillas.

Giraldo (1991, p. 85) added: “The State, by means of all its powers, conferred upon the members of MAS [the paramilitary Muerte A Secuestadores—Death to Kidnappers—squads] the highest responsibilities in the management of ‘public order’ and the highest posts and honors in the military hierarchy.” Later, from the Frente Unido (United Front) the name was
changed to The United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*—AUC), the name used today.

2.3.2 The paramilitary discredited because of its abuses

The paramilitary forces are coordinated, trained, and armed by the military and sent across the nation to hunt and exterminate “communists” wherever they might be found. In his accounts of the atrocities perpetrated, Giraldo (1991, p. 23) described crimes against “drug addicts, ex-convicts, petty thieves and criminals, prostitutes, homosexuals, beggars and street children.” He accused the army of using the paramilitaries for acts of “social cleansing.” He wrote (1991, p. 26):

It is difficult for people to really understand the reality in Colombia, so different from their own, unless it is translated into concrete individuals, places, dates and incidents…I will never forget the first week I spent in Caquetá in April of 1982. The large number of denunciations of torture, disappearance and murder that we had been seeing prompted me to travel to the region…I spent the next four full days taking notes and taping interviews…When I returned to Bogotá, I took with me a macabre list of 144 murder victims, some of them had been subjected to extreme cruelty, and 240 cases of torture. In those days, there was no doubt as to who was responsible for these atrocities; soldiers killed and tortured openly in front of numerous witnesses. But it was impossible to identify them because, before committing crimes, they removed the identification they were required to wear by law.

Recognizing the atrocities committed by this organization in Public Notice 3770, the United States Department of State announced: “The Secretary of State hereby designates, effective September 10, 2001, the following organization as a foreign terrorist organization: The ‘United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia,’ also known as the ‘Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia,’ also known as the ‘AUC’” (U.S. Department of State 2001, p. 47051).
Many in Colombia who have felt the cruel effects of the Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC) wonder why the U.S. government took so long to take this action, since the U.S. for years has branded both the FARC and the ELN as terrorist organizations. Nevertheless, the U.S. finally acknowledges this violent group for what it really is—a force connected and controlled by the government that blatantly violates the human rights of thousands of Colombian citizens. In more recent developments, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), according to a new release by the Yahoo-Reuters Spanish News service, announced Wednesday, September 5, 2001 that it was now formally establishing itself as a national political party in preparation for the Colombian elections scheduled for 2002.

Javier Giraldo (1996, p. 17-18) provided a list of the violence in Colombia, then made a comparison with other countries of Latin America (see Tables 1 and 2). Giraldo’s comparison highlights why Colombia is often referred to as the most violent country in the Western Hemisphere.

Table 1. Political Violence in Colombia (1988-1995)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
<th>Number of Incidences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Assassinations</td>
<td>6,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assassinations Presumed to be political</td>
<td>10,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assassinations Presumed to be “social cleansing”</td>
<td>2,459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaths in Combat between Army and Guerrillas</td>
<td>9,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Forcibly Disappeared</td>
<td>1,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obscure Assassinassions</td>
<td>37,595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average per month</td>
<td>701.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average per day</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Bank of the Comisión Inter-Congregacional de Justicia y Paz
Table 2. Political Killings: A Regional Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Under Military Dictatorship</th>
<th>Number of Political Killings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivia</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2,666</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

People Killed During periods of Colombian “Democracy”
- Under President Barco (1986-1990) 13,635
- Under President Gaviria (1990-1994) 14,856
- Victims of Political Violence in Colombia (January 1988-June 1995) 28,332

Source: Data Bank of the Comisión Inter-Congregacional de Justicia y Paz

Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher has attempted to describe the evolution of modern-day Colombia. The research has revealed how the nation has been shaped by revolutionary idealists who, for the most part, gradually gave up their socialistic idealism in order to gain enormous wealth through the expansion of the drug trade worldwide. Since the 1950s the FARC, the ELN, the ELP, the M19, the AUC, and the Medellín and Cali Cartels have viciously carved out pieces of Colombia for themselves, in apparent unconcern over all the blood spilled in the process.

Each of these guerrilla leaders, a self-styled “Robin Hood,” has established his own fiefdom under pretense of defending the aspirations of small farmers and farm workers who struggle for justice throughout the land. Winning the sympathies of idealistic university students and disfranchised workers in the cities, each has effectively been able to increase the disruption...
of the economy and political system through strikes, terror, violence and kidnappings.

The government, under the leadership of its military, has tried to stop the guerrillas using a private army of malcontents and unemployed commonly known as the Paramilitary Forces (the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia); unfortunately, these forces have demonstrated little regard for the law. Furthermore, as noted, the Roman Catholic Church—although generally very involved in the politics of the land—has been powerless as an advocate of peace simply because a number of prominent Catholic leaders have favored the revolutionary cause. Lastly, numerous newspapers in Colombia have accused government officials of corruption for taking advantage of the political conflict in order to enrich themselves with the spoils of the narcotic trade.

The following chapter will continue to develop the general historical background of Colombia. However, the research will shift to the story of the Protestant church.
CHAPTER THREE
THE GROWTH AND STRUGGLES OF THE PROTESTANTS

Introduction

This third chapter will aim to show the growth of the Protestant Church in Colombia. The starting point will be November 1861 and a letter President Tomas Cipriano de Mosquera wrote to Presbyterian missionary William McLaren in Bogota. He asked him to bring more Protestant missionaries to Colombia.

Because many of the new independent governments rejected Catholic leaders and welcomed Protestants (reprisal for the Church’s backing Spain against the patriots), comparisons will also be made with other countries to learn if similar incidents took place. The wars for independence ended the 300 years of religious discrimination governed by the Inquisition. At last, Protestants had the opportunity to penetrate the continent. However, once Catholics regained power in Colombia, los protestantes and their followers suffered terrible mistreatment.

One reason for the clashes between Catholics and Protestants was not their basic beliefs—all Christians have much in common—but their practices. The culture of Catholicism as lived out among the people will be discussed, pointing to areas of significant differences that created many of the problems. The chapter will end by describing incidents of outrageous discrimination against Protestants, pointing to the years of 1947 to 1957 when throughout the nation Protestants were openly martyred.
3.1 The political milieu awaiting Protestants

To understand the political forces that, to this day govern Colombia, a clarification given by Colombian scholar Francisco Leal Buitrago is helpful (Sigmund 1999, p. 235):

One is Liberal or Conservative as one is Catholic, as one is Colombian—by birth. One does not even consider not being Liberal or Conservative, just as one would never think of not being Catholic or Colombian through a simple act of will.

The meaning in practice is that in Colombia, if one is a conservative, one is a staunch Roman Catholic, siding with the interests of the Church. If one is a liberal (in practice the only two choices), one is in alliance with anticlericalism, putting the interests of the nation in first place.

When liberals held power from 1863 to 1885, all kinds of anti-church reforms were enacted. For instance, Colombia was the first Latin American country to declare separation of church and state (Sigmund 1999, p. 236). Then, in 1886, the conservatives gained power and held it until 1930; they wrote a new constitution, annulring separation of church and state. They signed a Concordat with the Vatican, virtually handing over religious control of the nation to Rome. As will be shown, during those years, Protestant missionary progress was very difficult. To this day, whenever the conservative party takes power, the evangelicals in Colombia prepare for discrimination and opposition. Their alliance is clearly with the liberal party.

In recounting the beginnings of Protestant missionary activity, it is important to note that the majority of Colombia’s revolutionary leaders were liberals; they sided against the Roman Catholic hierarchy and Spain. Of course, the church disowned them and resisted their patriotic efforts. Once victorious, however, these revolutionaries turned against the church.
While many individual priests sided with those fighting for independence from Spain, the hierarchy condemned all patriots. They actually branded them as “heretics” because they had denounced Spain, their motherland, the defender of Rome and the Pope (The researcher remembers as a child in Cuba that the history textbooks had drawings of patriots being burned at the stake for fighting against Spain). Dussel (1984, pp. 165-183) conducted a brief review nation by nation to demonstrate the division between many priests and their superiors, as well as the actions taken against the church by the new politicians once victory over Spain was won.

In many countries, the chief Catholic officials were expelled. Some governments, like Mexico and Chile, took a clear secular turn, excluding all religion from politics. Note what happened in Colombia (Dussel 1984, p. 167):

En Colombia el Obispo de Santa Fe de Bogotá—don Juan Bautista Sacristán—no fue aceptado en su primer momento, y después adoptando una posición conciliadora se le dejó gobernar su diócesis; murió en 1817. Igualmente, el Obispo de Santa Marta murió en 1813. Sánchez Serrudo. Carrillo—Cartagena—fue expulsado en 1812 porque no aceptó la Junta Revolucionaria. El Obispo de Popayán, don Salvador Jiménez de Enciso Padilla, tomó posesión en 1818, cumplió una conversión manifiesta y profunda, y significó para la revolución su mayor fundamento. Escribió a Pío VII en abril de 1823 informándole positivamente de los nuevos gobiernos. La actitud de Bolívar—aunque política—fue muy prudente y respetuosa.

In Colombia the Bishop of Santa Fe de Bogota—Juan Bautista Sacristan—was at first rejected [as Bishop]. Later, when he adopted a more conciliatory attitude, he was permitted to lead his diocese; he died in 1817. In the same manner, Sanchez Serrudo, Bishop of Santa Marta [was rejected]; he died in 1813. Carrillo—[Bishop of] Cartagena—was expelled in 1812 because he did not accept the Revolutionary Junta. The bishop of Popayan, don Salvador Jimenez de Enciso Padilla, took over in 1818. However, he had a clear, profound change of heart, making a major contribution to the foundation of the revolution. In April 1823 he wrote a letter to Pope Pius VII giving a positive report on the new governments. The attitude of Bolivar—although political—was very prudent and respectful [toward the Catholic Church].
That antagonism did not last long, however, because the patriots had been Roman Catholics, and they knew no other religion. However, it was during this limited period of religious ambivalence that a number of important Protestant missionaries entered Latin American nations. John H. Sinclair explained in his *Protestantism in Latin America* (1999, p. 32):

Most countries took only small steps toward religious freedom for many decades: Venezuela established religious toleration by congressional decree in 1834, apparently to encourage European immigration. Colombia decreed the separation of church and state in 1850, opening the way for the arrival of the first Protestant missionary, Rev. Henry B. Pratt, in 1856. Not until the liberal Constitution of 1857 was Protestant worship legal in Mexico. Freedom of worship was decreed by Justo Rufino Barrios in Guatemala in 1873 and by President Eloy Alfaro in Ecuador in 1895. Bolivia permitted the establishment of non-Catholic cemeteries as early as 1846, but delayed until 1905 the promulgation of the decree of freedom of worship. In most of Latin America the issues of full religious freedom were delayed until well into the 20th century.

A list of now famous missionaries includes: James Thompson, a Baptist, arrived in Argentina on October 6, 1818; Captain Allen Gardiner, also Anglican, went to the Chilean Patagonia in 1822 (he perished of starvation after a shipwreck); he was followed by David Trumbull in 1861. Robert Reid Kally, a Scottish Presbyterian, went to Brazil in 1836. Melinda Rankin, a Presbyterian educator, in 1848, made it across the U.S. border to the city of Monterrey. She was the first Protestant missionary to enter Mexico. Henry Barrington Pratt, a Princeton graduate, arrived in Santa Marta, Colombia on June 20, 1856. Francisco Penzotti, a British Bible Society employee made his way from Uruguay to Peru in 1884.

In every case, the hard work and social and spiritual contributions made by these first missionaries assured them, as Protestants, of a permanent place in the future of Latin America’s society. Many of these
missionaries were sought by the liberal elements of these new independent
governments simply as a counterbalance to the powerful Roman Catholic
Church, as well as for the contribution they could make to the developing
nations. John Sinclair (Sigmund 1999, p. 36) stated:

One of the early contributions to Latin society by Protestants was the
network of schools established by mission boards in large cities and
provincial centers. The missionaries brought pedagogical innovations
that challenged the nearly medieval education system.

For instance, the very first government school systems in Argentina,
Chile, and Peru were all set up by a Scottish Baptist pastor, James Diego
Thompson, who landed in Buenos Aires on October 6, 1818. He was an
agent of the British and Foreign Bible Societies as well as representative of
the Lancasterian Educational Society. Nuñez and Taylor (1989, p. 148) wrote
of his early efforts:

He was warmly welcomed in Argentina in 1818; and the government
appointed him director of a primary school, paying him a salary of
1,000 pesos. Soon he had about 100 of these schools in operation. His
prime text? The Bible. And his impact was not only felt in Argentina, but
also in Uruguay, Chile, Peru, and Colombia through his schools.
Significantly, in these countries, Thompson was invited by the patriots
of Spanish-American independence—Bolivar, Miranda, O’Higgins, and
San Martin. Although his educational activities were later stymied by
Catholic opposition, his Bible distribution projects spread copies of the
Scriptures from Argentina to Mexico to the Caribbean.

Pablo Burgess (1972, pp. 329-30) explained how the Protestants
entered Guatemala. In 1882, the President of Guatemala, Rufino Barrios,
upset by the political interference of the Jesuits, expelled them, confiscated
their property and disestablished and disendowed the Catholic Church. Then,
at the advice of Mrs. Henry Hall, the U.S. Ambassador’s wife, Barrios traveled
to the Presbyterian Headquarters in New York in search of Protestant
missionaries. Once they arrived, he provided buildings for schools and a
church. Though sponsored by the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, these missionaries came at the expense of the Guatemalan government. Barrios sent his own children to one of the Protestant schools and encouraged government officials to do the same. That gave birth to the Evangelical National Presbyterian Church of Guatemala, now with approximately 60,000 members. This was the first national church to result from Presbyterian mission work in Central America.

3.1.1 Why Protestants delayed to enter Latin America

From 1492 to the early 1800s Spain was in political control of Latin America, the Catholic Church serving as its political partner. The Church’s power over the governments and the people was such that all Protestant efforts were successfully rebuffed. The wars of independence in the early 1800s broke that religious hold. For a period of about 50 years, the new liberal-minded rulers gave Protestants an opportunity to establish churches and ministries in their countries. However, very few missionaries took advantage of that special opening—in the main, only Anglicans, Presbyterians and Baptists.

A few reasons for the lack of Protestant response can be advanced:

1. Most Protestants in Europe or North America thought of Roman Catholic Latin America as “Christian”—in comparison with Africa or India. They simply did not look at these nations as “heathens needing Christ.”

2. There were so many opportunities in other parts of the world where doors were wide open to missionary agencies; consequently most missionaries chose to go to those easier and more responsive areas.
3. In spite of the apparent opening, Latin America was still considered an area under Roman Catholic domination, and the history of the Inquisition was still very alive in the minds of most missionary agencies. Many were reluctant to endanger the lives of missionaries in an unknown political climate.

A trip to South America in 1909 by Robert E. Speer, secretary of the Presbyterian foreign missions board, was the incident that providentially changed the minds of many. Speer took an extensive trip throughout Latin America to visit his church’s missionaries and become acquainted with the region. On his return he gave an unexpected and sobering report that was to awaken many church groups to the needs in the continent to the south. He stated that the vast majority of the people in these regions were living in a “spiritual desert,” adding that the moral conditions of the South American continent demand the presence of the evangelical religion… People are living there without the Bible… The intellectual needs of Latin America and the character of the Roman Catholic priesthood call for Protestant missions… Their religious system …is a relic. (The source for this quote was www.pcusa.org/pcusa/wmd/ylwa/missionpage.htm; however, this quote is no longer available. The researcher has requested another source for this quote from the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but was unsuccessful.)

That report, coming from such a highly respected missiologist had the effect of awakening missionary societies of all denominations. Leaders from across denominational lines, including independent organizations, began setting their sights on the opportunities in Latin America. Soon
3.2. Protestant beginnings in Colombia

It has been established that for 300 years after the discovery of the countries of the Southern Hemisphere, Roman Catholics, through the enforcement of the Inquisition, made it impossible for other religious groups to enter the area. This section will describe the manner by which Protestants were invited to settle permanently in Colombia.

First, there is a brief statement in a Roman Catholic document stating that the first Protestant mission to Colombia took place in 1698. The article is called Aspectos Históricos del Pluralismo Religioso en Colombia (Historical Aspects of Religious Pluralism in Colombia) by Carlos Arboleda Mora (2000):

*En la historia de Colombia continental, encontramos un primer indicio de presencia protestante en el Darién en 1698, la que fue desmantelada en 1700. Hubo algunos misioneros presbiterianos de la Iglesia de Escocia pero no se logró un asentamiento permanente.*

In the history of continental Colombia, we find the first indication of a Protestant presence in the Darien [area in Panama] in 1698, that was dismantled in 1700. There were a few Presbyterian missionaries from the Church of Scotland, but they were unable to establish permanently.

The reference is to the Darien Expedition, a 17th century venture dreamed up by William Paterson to establish a colony on the Isthmus of Panama. “Darien,” said Paterson, would be the “door of the seas, the key of the universe” (Darien Expedition 2005, p. 1). The idea was to establish a trading post in Panama that would reduce by half the travel distance to China and Japan. While the project failed, Paterson was 200 years ahead
of his time. Under the same assumption the Panama Canal was built, beginning in 1881 and opened in 1914.

A number of reports on the Darien Expedition, such as the following, are available online ([http://www.kinnaird.net/darien.htm](http://www.kinnaird.net/darien.htm)):

In July, 1698, five ships left Leith upon a great wave of emotion. They sailed north about and down the Atlantic, made a landfall off the coast of Darien in November, and claimed it as the Colony of Caledonia...The splendid harbour chosen was a trap for vessels that could not sail to windward. Ambition, pride and envy, aggravated by ignorant stupidity, destroyed the spirit of those who survived the killing fevers. Paterson's wife died within a few days of the landing, and he went slowly out of his mind with despair.

The town of New Edinburgh was never more than a few palmetto huts, and the ramparts of Fort St. Andrew were washed away by the pitiless rain. The Spaniards' claim to Darien had been acknowledged by William [Paterson] and the English government, but their attempt to retake it was repulsed by the Scots in a little jungle skirmish. When the English colonies of America and the Caribbean were ordered to give no help to Caledonia, the survivors lost their courage and abandoned the huts, the fort and the bay... Scotland had assembled another expedition of four ships, and it was already at sea before the failure of the first was known. It reached Caledonia in November, 1699, and found only a 'vast, howling wilderness', but the huts were rebuilt and the fort reoccupied.

From the beginning there was jealousy and disunity, fever, desertion and mutiny, and the ministers sent by the General Assembly violently abused the sick and dying for their 'atheistical cursing and swearing, brutish drunkenness and detestable mockery'.

Once again the Spaniards attacked, and were once again thrown back in the green wet mist of the jungle. When they blockaded the colony by sea and land, advanced their guns and trenches to the rotting ramparts of the fort, the Scots resisted bravely for a month and then surrendered.

On April 12, 1700, Caledonia was finally abandoned to the Spanish... The Darien venture was perhaps the worst disaster in Scotland's history.

Carlos Arboleda Mora stated that this was the first “Protestant presence” in Colombia (dated from 1698 to 1700). The only support for
such claims could be that those who went to Darién, being citizens of Scotland, may have been Protestants. Mora added that there were “a few Presbyterian missionaries from the Church of Scotland.” The report on the expedition mentions “ministers sent by the General Assembly” who “violently abused the sick and dying with their atheistical cursing and swearing, brutish drunkenness and detestable mockery.” Though they may have been Presbyterians, no mention is made of their religious affiliation. In the list of “Principal Characters” given in the cited article (Darien Expedition 2005, p.3), three ministers are named: the Reverend Francis Borland, the Reverend Alexander Shields, and the Reverend Alexander Stobo. Since they were from Scotland, one may assume they were Presbyterians, but there is no evidence that they were missionaries. A more logical conclusion would be that they went to Darién to serve the spiritual needs of the hundreds of Scots who migrated. Thus, rather than seeking to use this expedition to prove a “Protestant presence” in Latin America prior to 1808, a more reasoned conclusion would be to simply list it as an interesting commercial venture attempted by merchants who happened to come from Scotland.

Furthermore, the same report stated that the Spaniards, under the Conde de Canillas, attacked these immigrants in January 1699, not for being protestantes, but for invading a Spanish colony. The Scots ably defended themselves, and that first attack failed. Then on February 23, 1700, Spanish ships under the command of Don Juan Pimienta “appear off the mouth of the harbour” (Darien Expedition, p.15). One month later,
on March 31, the Scots signed Articles of Capitulation, and left “with their ships, guns and supplies” (Darien Expedition, p. 16).

3.2.1 Napoleon invades Spain and abolishes the Inquisition

On December 4, 1808 (Durant, 1975, p.224, 229), Napoleon marched on Madrid. Napoleon sent Charles IV of Spain to live “in guarded ease” in Marseilles, and Ferdinand VII (pretender to the Spanish throne) housed “comfortably and securely” in a château at Valençay. Then he named his brother Joseph as ruler. Thereupon, on the same day, he issued a series of decrees:

1. To date from the publication of this decree, feudal rights are abolished in Spain. All personal obligations, all exclusive rights…all feudal monopolies…are suppressed. Everyone who shall conform to the laws shall be free to develop his industry without restraint.

2. The tribunal of the Inquisition is abolished, as inconsistent with the civil sovereignty and authority. Its property shall be sequestered and fall to the Spanish state, to serve as security for bonded debt.…

3. Considering that the members of various monastic orders have increased to an undue degree…religious houses in Spain…shall be reduced to a third of the present number…by uniting the members of several houses of the same order into one.…

4. In view of the fact that the institution which stands most in the way of the internal prosperity of Spain is that of the customs lines separating the provinces…the barrier existing between the provinces shall be suppressed.
Two aftereffects would be felt in Latin America, one political and the other religious. Safford and Palacios (2002, p. 81) reported the first effect: “news of the captivity of the Spanish monarchs…reached Santafe [Bogotá, Colombia] in August 1808.” Once the creoles (sons of Spaniards born in the New World) learned that both King Charles V and Ferdinand VII were powerless, they saw their opportunity to rebel against Spain. “They were discontent with Spain and Spaniards,” reported Safford and Palacios (2002, p. 80), “considering the Spanish appointees [governing them] arrogant, ill-educated, incompetent, and insufficiently concerned about local welfare.” That discontent grew and eventually led to a declaration of independence November 11, 1811.

Second, the revolutionary war created great confusion about how the country should be governed. Galindo (1994, p. 98) explained:

...la independencia política que siguió a tales guerras [de independencia] fue un estado híbrido para el cual las colonias no estaban preparadas. El personal dirigente del gobierno y de la iglesia regresó en gran parte a España, huyendo de la revolución o expulsado por ella, o simplemente por fidelidad a la corona, y los que asumieron el poder no estaban preparados para gobernar, ni el pueblo estaba educado para ser portador de un régimen republicano. Las diversas repúblicas se organizaron luego con base a la constitución y leyes de países europeos o de los Estados Unidos...pero sin el respaldo de la madurez política y social.

...the political independence that followed the wars [for independence] created a hybrid condition for which the Colonies were unprepared. The personnel who had been leading the government and the church for the most part fled to Spain, either escaping the revolution or expelled by it; some leaving out of loyalty to the crown. Those who assumed power were not prepared to govern, nor were the people educated to become bearers of a republican type of government. Later the various republics organized themselves based on their new constitutions and laws, patterned after those of Europe or the United States...however, without the backing of either the social or political maturity needed.
Napoleon’s invasion of Spain did result in the colonies revolting. The people and their new leaders in the colonies, however, were undecided as to how to handle their new liberty. In Colombia, the creoles’ first attempts at governance resulted in what came to be known as la Patria Boba (the Foolish Homeland). Try as they might, they could not decide whether to create a strong central government or distribute power among strong political centers in a type of federalism. Bushnell (1993, p 40) came to their defense:

But foolish or not, the earliest independent governments produced a good many worthwhile accomplishments. The terrible Inquisition was abolished, and at Cartagena a bonfire was made not of heretics, as in olden days, but of Inquisitorial paraphernalia. Naturally, discrimination against the native-born in appointment to office was done away with; discrimination was now against European Spaniards instead. And naturally, too, the ports...became open to the trade of all friendly nations without restrictions.

The abolishment of the Inquisition meant that the system used by the church and the state to keep all non-Catholics out of the Americas was now without effect. Any religious group could now enter the Latin American countries. Nothing would hinder Protestants from becoming part of the history of Latin America, and it did not take long for the first ones to appear.

Bucana (1995) wrote about the 4,986 British soldiers (most of them Protestants) joined Bolivar’s army and fighting for the independence of Colombia and Venezuela. After the war, most of them stayed, forming an English colony. Colonel James Frazer, an outspoken Protestant, married President Santander’s granddaughter and eventually became Minister of War.

In 1910, Bolivar met Joseph Lancaster, a Protestant educator, in London. So impressed was Bolivar by Lancaster’s education methodology that, after independence was won in 1810, he invited Lancaster to move to Caracas to establish the educational program for the Venezuelan
government. According to Bushnell (1985, p. 227): “His teaching method found great acceptance. By 1827... there were 52 Lancasterian schools in the country and 434 primary schools of the old style, with a total of 20,000 students.”

In 1824, British missionary James (Diego) Thompson, well known in the southern countries of the continent as an educator and a member of the British and Foreign Bible Society, arrived in Bogota. He was warmly received by a host of the prominent citizens of the city and stayed long enough to set up offices and distribute 2000 Bibles among the key citizens. It was some years later, however, that Protestant missionaries began to enter Colombia.

3.2.2 General Mosquera invites missionaries to enter Colombia

On July 18, 1861, General Tomas Cipriano de Mosquera led a successful armed revolt against President Mariano Ospina Rodriguez. He immediately ordered a number of anticlerical measures, expelling both Pope Pius’ IX nuncio and the Jesuits. On November 15 of that same year, William McLaren, a Presbyterian missionary, received the following letter from Dr. M. L. Lleras, Justice of the Supreme Court (Ordóñez 1956, p.40):

El señor Presidente (Mosquera) me ha pedido manifestar a usted sus deseos de que vengan al país más misioneros protestantes; y que deben establecerse iglesias y escuelas protestantes en el país. Por otra parte, habiendo llegado a manos del gobierno varias propiedades antes pertenecientes a la iglesia católica, el Señor Presidente desea que algunos de tales edificios sean utilizados para los fines antes dichos. El propósito del gobierno no es propiamente enajenar tales propiedades, sino facilitarlas para el establecimiento de iglesias protestantes.

Mister President (Mosquera) has asked me to inform you of his desires that more Protestant missionaries come to this country and that they should establish churches and schools in the nation. Also, since a number of properties once belonging to the Catholic Church have now come into the possession of the government, the President desires that some of these buildings be used by you for the aforesaid purposes. The
desire of the government is not to dispose of these properties, but to facilitate them for the establishment of Protestant churches.

In 1861, the government of Colombia, controlled by men tired of the Roman Catholic dominance, was calling for Protestants to enter their country. Some missionaries came, but not in sufficient numbers to impact the nation. No doubt a great opportunity was missed by the Protestant Church in North America. The great Protestant influx would wait until after World War I. At the same time, the freedom these early missionaries enjoyed would not last long.

### 3.3 A return to power for the Roman Catholic Church

The first politicians to rule Colombia were liberals, largely anti-clerical and desirous that all human rights be respected in their new nation, particularly that of religious freedom. They sought to pattern their government after France and the United States. They did all they could to create laws and establish practices to ensure those rights. In Colombia, they held power from 1863 to 1885. Meanwhile, the Roman Catholic Church began steps to retake political and religious power in Colombia.

In the 1885 elections, conservatives won political control away from the liberals. Although the Creole liberals had been responsible for fueling the concept of independence and democracy, and of leading the fighting against Spain, though a minority, they were still the minority party. Most Colombians were Catholics. Amazingly, though a minority, liberals held on to political power from 1819 to 1885. Now, however, the conservatives gained control. Almost immediately they showed their true authoritarian ambition. They began by demanding that a new constitution be written, taking away or limiting most of the religious freedoms granted by the liberals.
After 1876, a new reality had to be faced by Protestants: the Catholic majorities did not want them in Colombia. They were determined to do all in their power to get them out. The procedure used was interesting. In order to agree to the constitution that was being proposed, the Masonic-oriented liberators would have to tone down their anti-Catholic rhetoric and present a more conservative (Catholic) document. In the process, liberals had to relinquish many of their democratic ideals because the Roman Catholic clergy refused to give away their political power and control. That process took 57 years. Safford and Palacios (2002) divided this early transition period of Colombia’s independence into three periods: (1) Bolívar’s Colombia, 1819-1831; (2) The Formation of the New Granada as a Polity, 1831-1845; and (3) The Liberal Era, 1845-1876. Thereafter, the conservatives would take over.

3.3.1 Colombia signs a “Concordat” with Rome

In 1887, just one year after taking power, a special treaty was signed with the Vatican called the “Concordat.” Elizabeth E. Brusco in her essay, “Colombia, Past Persecution, Present Tension,” (Sigmund 1999, p. 235), explained:

[T]his treaty gave the Roman Catholic Church tremendous power over the lives of Colombians… As a result of the Concordat of 1887, the Church played a role in the birth, marriage, and death of every Colombian. The terms of the treaty specified that education at all levels was to be carried out in conformity with the dogma of the Catholic religion. All subsequent debates about religious freedom in Colombia took place in the shadow of this profound state-legitimized hegemony of Roman Catholicism.

Brusco (Sigmund 1999, p. 241) continued, describing the way Protestants were treated as a result of the Concordat. First there was the public effects of excommunication. She tells of hearing a prominent lawyer in the town of El Cocuy say:
The guy whom they excommunicated did not even deserve to live in society, and no one would accept him because they knew that he was already body and soul, from this life onwards, in hell. And actually, you could see how these people began to decay, because everybody began to look badly upon them and no one wanted to have anything to do with them, and they would stop helping in every way. Then the priests would say from the pulpit, 'You see what excommunication does to you? There you have it, now you see how it is'.

She further described (Sigmund 1999, p. 241) the most common Catholic indictment on evangelicals: that they lived in concubinage and bigamy:

This accusation was based on the refusal of the Roman Catholic clergy to recognize civil marriage. The control of the Catholic Church over matters relating to the family and the life cycle of the individual, including baptism, education, marriage, and burial, was guaranteed in the Concordat, making it impossible for evangelical converts to evade the clergy’s authority. Hence, devout evangelical couples who refused to say their vows in the Catholic church were considered unmarried, regardless of the fact that their union had been legitimated both by civil authorities and by their own (evangelical) churches. Catholic clergy were relentless in their allegations against Evangelicals in this regard. In Catholic publications from time to time the oft-mentioned characteristic of Martin Luther was his purported lewdness and debauchery. A booklet issued by the archbishop of Antioquia in 1953 entitled Protestantism, Its History and Errors, states that Luther ‘kidnapped a nun and lived in sacrilegious concubinage with her’.

A third powerful weapon used against Protestants was the refusal to allow evangelicals to bury their dead in official cemeteries, which they claimed belonged to the Church (Sigmund 1999, p. 241):

This policy was particularly cruel and amounted to the kind of ostracism of the dead, desacralizing them at precisely the time when their families most needed to perceive them as linked to the divine.

One final area, as provided or allowed by the Concordat, was the abuse of a Protestant’s proprietor rights (Sigmund 1999, p. 241):

The destruction or confiscation of evangelical property was common, especially books (prayer books, hymnbooks, and Bibles). Possession of a Bible was considered a heretical act. Houses and churches were burned and bombed as well. These actions took place largely in the small towns or in the countryside.
The Concordat was to remain in effect until 1973—86 years of state-ordered religious bondage to Rome. A study of the legislation and actions of the Catholic-run government during those years verifies that this legislation had political priority.

3.3.2 Political convulsions eventually bring about change

The assassination of the liberal party’s presidential candidate, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, on April 9 of 1948 (Bucaná 1995, p. 129) and the take-over of power by Mariano Ospina Perez of the conservative party led to the worst civil disturbance in the history of the nation. President Perez imposed the Concordat’s demands, liberals and Protestants were condemned as “enemies of the government, subversives, communists and guerrillas.” From 1948 to 1958, 50,000 were killed, including 120 identified as Protestants, 70 of their churches destroyed, and 200 of their schools closed.

This intolerance, in particular for the Protestants, led to a public outcry. Ordoñez (1956, p. 362) reported a newspaper in Cali, Colombia as publishing the following:

¿Cómo es posible que las autoridades eclesiásticas no condenen asesinatos, atentados dinamiteros y hechos tan tremendos contra una iglesia hermana a los católicos, como es la protestante, y más, mucho más, si tenemos en cuenta que son exclusivamente los ejércitos de Estados Unidos e Inglaterra a los que debe el Vaticano su vida ahora? En los Estados Unidos, por ejemplo, no pueden comprender cómo es que se quiere imponer en pleno siglo XX la religión a culatazos…

How is it possible that the ecclesiastic authorities do not condemn the assassinations, the dynamiting and terrible acts against a sister church of the Catholics, that is, the Protestant church, even more so when we take into account that today the Vatican owes its very life to the armies of the United States and England [in reference to the Second World War]? For example, people in the United States cannot comprehend that today in the 20th Century attempts should be made to impose the [Catholic] religion by force.
As a result of the national political crisis, a Constitutional Assembly was called for, and on December 9, 1990, the people elected their representatives. Getting the highest number of votes (115,000) was a Protestant leader, Jaime Ortiz Hurtado, Dean of the Colombian Biblical Seminary in Medellín with his doctorate degree in Constitutional Law. He was named Chairman of the Constitutional Assembly. Samuel Escandón (1994, p. 21) wrote:

El 4 de Julio de 1991 fue promulgada una nueva Constitución. En su artículo 19 no sólo se reitera la garantía de la libertad de cultos sino que se reconoce espesamente la igualdad jurídica de todas las confesiones religiosas e iglesias. Esto se logró, pese a que en el seno de la Constituyente varios sectores abogaron por mantener la preeminencia del catolicismo que consagraba la Constitución de 1886.

On July 4, 1991, the new Constitution was enacted. In its 19th article not only is there established the guarantee of religious liberty, but the juridical equality of all religious confessions is established. This was won in spite of the attempt on the part of several constituents to maintain the dominance of Catholicism as declared in the 1886 Constitution.

The Catholic Church was very upset by the new Constitution, since it declared separation of church and state and declared all religions equal. After centuries of total religious control, with one stroke of the pen, its political and religious control was totally abrogated. From now on, like any other religious group, its only power would be limited to the influence it might exert through its constituency. According to Elizabeth Brusco (Sigmund 1999, p, 251), Catholic church attorneys went to work seeking ways to call the new constitution unconstitutional since it revoked the Concordat with Rome. Sigmund (1999) wrote: “In August of 1992 the Colombian Attorney General’s office released a 70-page document declaring that the Colombian laws relating to the Concordat were unconstitutional. Bishops and priests responded to this document with anger, claiming that the Constitution itself
violates the Concordat… [I]n 1993, however, the constitutional court declared that the ruling on the Concordat was beyond its legal jurisdiction.”

Up to the present, several additional legal attempts have been made by the Catholic Church to take back their power. All have failed. Colombia retains freedom of religion.

3.4 Protestants enter South America in greater numbers

At the turn of the century and especially after World War I (1914-1918), a great number of independent societies—the so-called “faith missions”—began to make themselves felt from southern Patagonia to the Mexican borders with the U.S. Since this study is focused on the country of Colombia, this section will reference the listing of organizations (Bucana 1995, p. 73) entering Colombia between the years 1900 and 1930 (see Table 3).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Nature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Cali</td>
<td>Evangelical Missionary Church</td>
<td>interdenominational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Cartagena</td>
<td>American Bible Society</td>
<td>para-church*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>Pasto</td>
<td>British and Foreign Bible Society</td>
<td>para-church*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Cucuta</td>
<td>Scandinavian Alliance Mission</td>
<td>interdenominational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>Cartagena, Santa Marta</td>
<td>Episcopalian Church</td>
<td>Denominational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>Ipiales</td>
<td>Christian &amp; Missionary</td>
<td>Denominational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Charles Chapman and John Funk, two pioneers working with the Gospel Missionary Union, entered Colombia in 1908, settling in Cali and eventually founded a Bible Institute in Palmira. They were followed by the American Bible Society, which set up offices in Cartagena in 1912. Soon after, they were joined by the British Foreign Bible Society, which established their offices in Pasto in 1917. Next came the Scandinavian Alliance Missions, setting up a base in Cucuta in 1918. The Episcopalian Church entered in 1921, beginning their work in Cartagena and Santa Marta. In 1923, the Christian and Missionary Alliance opened work in Ipiales. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church entered in 1927, beginning their operations in Cali.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>Cali</td>
<td>Cumberland Presbyterian Church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1942. The Oriental Missionary Society and the Mennonite General Conference both opened stations in 1943. And in 1945, the Mennonite Brethren began work in one of the least evangelized departments, the Choco, reaching both Indians and people of African descent. Subsequently their work has focused on larger urban centers such as Cali, Medellin, and Bogota.

### 3.4.1 The Protestants begin to multiply

All these organizations produced churches. In some cases, particularly in remote areas where there were no Catholic priests, the Protestants grew rapidly. Generally speaking, however, the growth was slow. Wherever there was a strong Catholic presence, the growth was most difficult, often fraught with danger and persecution, as will be shown. Bucana (1995, p. 234) provided a helpful chart of the growth of the churches during the first half of the 20th century (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Protestant Growth from 1916—1953**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Church Members</th>
<th>Population of Colombia</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>5,579,190</td>
<td>0.0058%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>1,996</td>
<td>8,846,965</td>
<td>0.023%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>7,908</td>
<td>10,845,420</td>
<td>0.073%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>11,957</td>
<td>12,111,260</td>
<td>0.099%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.4.2 Protestant objections to Catholic beliefs

In this section, some of the conflicts between Protestant and Catholic beliefs will be discussed. To understand these clashes, it is important to recognize the differences between Catholicism as practiced in Europe and
North America and the Catholicism that developed in Latin America. The Catholicism practiced in Latin America originated in Spain, the only nation in Europe not moderated by the 16th Century Reformation and the Council of Trent.

Spain held on to the beliefs, traditions and practices of Medieval Catholicism—beliefs Martin Luther, John Calvin, Philip Melanchton, et. al., condemned. One explanation for the conflict is that in Latin America, Protestants have sought to bring a similar Reformation to Catholics who continued practicing medieval beliefs inherited from the Spaniards.

To further understand the reasons for strife, this study looks to the work of Dr. Eugene A. Nida, an anthropologist working with the American and British Bible Society. Dr. Nida has not only traced Catholic practice in Latin America, but he has examined how these beliefs have been absorbed by the people.

**3.4.3 The appeal of medieval Catholicism to the Indians**

Nida (1981, p. 126) explained why Catholicism has been so readily accepted by so many Indian tribes throughout the New World. He pointed out the similarity between the Catholic worship of Mary and the worship of the fertility gods by the Indians:

> During the first few centuries [the Roman Catholic development of the mass] became in many aspects assimilated with fertility rites of the mystic religions. Whether as reflecting the rites of Eleusis, Isis, or Osiris, or reflecting those which centered in the cult of Astarte, the same dominant principle prevailed—the dying god-son raised to life through the principle of female productivity. As the mass developed, it became no longer a commemorative feast, but a miraculous enactment of the shedding of blood. The worshiper was reminded of the fact not just that Christ died and rose again but that he was constantly dying for the people, and they partook of his very body and blood, whether directly or in the person of the priest. This served only to reinforce their equation of Christ with death and not with life. The emotional
unattractiveness of this procedure left a spiritual and psychological void, which was filled by the symbol of the Virgin—readily borrowed from pagan mystery religions and taken over with very little adaptation into the practices of the Church, though with a certain measure of polishing.

This literal transference of their Indian goddesses to the Holy Virgin explains the reason Indian cultures to this day give such devotion and allegiance to the worship of Mary. But her appeal did not stop with the Indians; the Virgin has always been venerated by the Spaniards and the later generations that populated this southern continent. Any student will see that the great tie of Latin America to Rome has not been the Bible, nor Christ the Son of God—not even the Pope—but Mary.

3.4.4 The importance of Catholic symbols

Catholicism, as it has been introduced to the Americas, has not appealed to the mind via theological concepts (that process has always been the despised approach of Martin Luther and his Protestant followers), rather it has appealed to the heart of hispanos by exalting symbols like purgatory, penance, indulgences, and especially the benevolent, all-accepting Mary, Mother of God. Nida (1981, p. 126) provided an explanation as to how Mary has been viewed in contrast to Christ:

If one may speak in purely anthropological terms, Christ is portrayed as the defeated, dying victim. Such a Christ produces feelings of pity and compassion, but he does not inspire confidence and hope... In contrast with the dying Christ, the radiantly beautiful Mary is the benevolent one who is always accessible and always giving. It is Mary who has compassion for the multitudes, and it is the contemplation of this symbol which brings reassurance and a sense of hope and well-being.

Understanding this view of Mary, Nida (1981, p. 128) explained its effect on the Latin culture:

The Latin culture has been in a large measure the product of the teaching of the Church, and in turn the Church has adapted itself to
special Latin characteristics...Latin American culture is female-oriented...[Its characteristics are] (1) machismo, (2) more overt attention paid to sex characteristics of females, and (3) greater concentration of interest in eliciting female response than in simply gratifying sexual drives. Furthermore, the greater distinctiveness in male and female roles tends to reinforce the female-oriented nature of Latin society.

Of particular importance is “the mother role” as it plays out throughout Latin America. This effect is directly drawn from the Church’s teachings about Mary. Nida (1981, pp. 128-129) explained:

In the second place, in Latin American society the mother is the emotional center of the family. The father is more or less expected to have extramarital relations...Since the father is expected to have divided loyalties and to possess other emotional attachments, it is not difficult to understand why children should feel greater emotional attachment to their mother...The mother’s role [is that of] bestower of benefits...Rather than being the direct source of help, she becomes the intercessor for the children with the less approachable father... Hence, the ‘myth’ (or the reality) of the more distant father and interceding mother become the cultural framework in which the concept of an exacting God and a benevolent Mary can have meaning.

Catholic teachings that do not grow out of the Bible have been the fodder used by Protestants to condemn common practices such as the veneration of saints and Mary. Since the Catholic Church exerts so much power throughout the continent, reprisals would be the norm.

Protestants’ emphases on inward rather than outward religion make the external symbols of Catholicism unnecessary. Therefore Catholics fight against Protestant infiltration to save their traditions—especially regarding the Virgin—along with all their additional symbols.

3.5 Catholic reactions to Protestant criticism

To safeguard their power and beliefs, Catholics work hard to gain the influence of politicians at all levels and to keep control of national laws relating to religious freedom. Their goal is to keep the “Lutheran heretics” in check.
Wherever Protestants entered, whether a small town or a large city, priests and the Catholic faithful created obstacles.

In this section, the ways in which the Catholics have interfered with the Protestant advance in Colombia will be traced. Rather than mere statistics, stories of ways in which the Protestants were hounded and bullied by the Church will be recounted. The period being discussed is the 1940s. By this date, there were in Colombia approximately 300 Protestant missionaries and close to 7,000 national believers in a population totaling almost 10 million. Protestants could be found in all the major cities and in most of the larger towns in the nation.

### 3.5.1 Ways in which the Catholic Church limits Protestants

Wherever the Catholic Church has political clout, it uses all possible measures to rescind, or at the very least, limit both the privileges and the liberties granted Protestants. In no place has this been truer than in Colombia. Martin Poblete stated (Sigmund 1999, p. 237): “…Evangelicals even in the best of times have struggled simply to attain official tolerance.”

Even today, the Catholic resistance continues. As recently as the spring of 2002, the Pope, speaking to the Pontifical Commission for Latin America meeting in Rome, alluded to Protestants as a “serious problem,” and called for “resolute pastoral action” on the part of the church to curb their growth (Religion News Service 2001, p. 116).

Margaret Brabon (1993, p. 102) established in a few words the mood in Colombia at the mid-century point:

The Colombia of the 1940s and 50s was, even more than today, a land of paradox. A spirit of progressiveness and quest for modernization existed side by side with a scowling religious fanaticism which could, in an instant, turn with murderous rage upon those perceived as heretics.
While bold voices called for democracy...hard-line reactionaries, in the spirit of the Spanish Inquisition, called for merciless purging of dissident elements. This ambivalence made Protestant missionary work a precarious occupation, to say the least. A town, apparently friendly one moment, could almost in an instant turn into a cauldron of Catholic fervor, with shrieks of ‘Viva la Virgen!’ [Long live the Virgin] and ‘Abajo con los Protestantes’ [Down with the Protestants] splitting the air.

3.5.2 A missionary family recounts Catholic bigotry

In October of 1942 Robert Savage (28 years of age), his 24-year-old wife, Wilma, and their four-year-old son, Stephen, traveled to Colombia to begin their missionary career under the leadership of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission. Their assignment was to work in the difficult mountain regions of eastern Colombia.

Their first task, however, was to learn the language. To this end, they moved to the interior town of Pamplona, where they lived from October 1941 to August of 1942 at a language training center the missionary agency had set up in the Andes Mountains.

Stephen Savage (1990, p. 8) recounted the first trying experience his family suffered after arriving for language study in the town of Pamplona:

An angry mob of several hundred people surged up the cobblestone street toward our house, screaming defiantly: ‘Down with the Protestants! Death to the heretics!’

I was 4 years old. Dad 29, Mom 24. I stood at our second story window, watching the colorful religious procession with childish delight. Mom was kneeling by the bed, praying. Dad stood beside me serene. Roman Catholic penitents with hoods and robes carried images of the Virgin. Boys with incense pots were scattered throughout the assemblage. Several tough-looking men spied us looking out our second-story window. They shook their clenched fists as they shouted with fury and hate: ‘Agentes del Diablo!’ (Agents of the devil!); ‘Muerte a los infieles!’ (Death to the infidels!).

On and on went the screaming. Occasionally Mom would look up from her prayers and implore Dad and me to come away from the window. Finally she succumbed to an urge of curiosity and joined us at the window. Quickly she returned to pray.
Such actions by the Catholic Church against the Protestant missionaries, while tolerated by the people and even by the local police, were neither liked nor approved by the general populace. They felt powerless, however. They called themselves Catholics—at least by name. When priests created these disruptive incidents, there was little the missionaries could do to protest. In this particular case, the bravery of the foreign missionary standing unmoved at the window while being threatened by his fanatic Catholic opponents caught the attention of the local press. They wrote up the account, which was then carried by a number of newspapers throughout the nation. *El Combate de Cúcuta* (August 4, 1943), wrote (Savage 1990, p. 9):

[W]e saw within the window of the second floor a young man with a small child ... calmly witnessing the ...manifestation of the Catholics. Unruffled, he was smiling kindly. He felt no fear before the shouts of ‘Down with the Protestants.’ The composure of this United States citizen caused the most intense sensation.

While many in the area expressed disgust over the way the priests incited the crowd, the antagonistic procession achieved its purpose. It prejudiced the town’s people. The missionaries were now thought of as “heretics” and “evil people.” The majority stayed away from any contact with them. “None of our neighbors, including the children that had been my playmates, entered our house any more. My parents did not let me out of their sight” (Savage, 1990, p. 9).

Ten months later, now handling the language quite effectively, the Savage family moved to their assigned post in Chinacota (Savage, 1990, p. 11-12). Immediately the priests put a notice in the local newspaper warning the citizens of the dangers posed by these newly arrived protestantes:
The most scandalous and regrettable of all schisms is called ‘Protestantism’ which in the 16th century pulled many nations away from the bosom of the Church to put them in captivity to all the errors and vices.

Protestants abound in ministers, well-fed and well-provided for by wealthy, Protestant governments. But what are they good for? They have no ministry to perform. They do not say mass, because this was blotted out by the hypocritical founders. They have abolished all Sacraments except Baptism. Preaching is useless, because they say each Protestant can interpret the Bible for himself. What then is left for the minister? Nothing. Protestant ministers are as necessary as a dog at mass.

One of the frequent Roman Catholic practices intrigued the missionaries. Stephen Savage explained their religious processions (Savage 1990, p. 33):

When the church celebrated one of the grand occasions of their religious calendar, such as the feast of the Ascension or the feast of All Saint’s Day, the priests orchestrated a stately and splendid procession through town. Parishioners marched behind the men who carried an image of a saint or the virgin. It was usually a massive procession, with thousands of people falling in train. Children joined, enjoying the high-flown affair. These colorful parades were festive events, but the mood of the multitude made the missionaries nervous. It felt eerie, almost ominous, to watch the dazed crowds ooze by, mindlessly following an image. The image usually carved from wood, painted in bright colors. For many people, the image itself, not God, was the object of worship.

Mrs. Savage wrote her impressions to her family in the U.S. (Savage 1990, p. 33-34):

Yesterday, I saw my first religious procession. Leading the parade out of a beautiful Cathedral were altar boys with incense, followed by priests, the Catholic students dressed in uniforms, and finally the main crowd.

John the beloved disciple was the first image—carried by men doing “penance” for sins, dressed in purple robes with masks, eyes peering out. Each image was mounted on a heavy platform, decorated with beautiful flowers and candles. Christ on the Cross was carried along, followed by Mary, in gorgeous black velvet, depicted in sadness as her son was crucified.

The city band moved slowly to the most minor, melancholic music I have ever heard. The effect on me was gloom, awe, and wonder.
**3.5.3 Not all experiences with Catholics were negative**

While they suffered disdain and hostility in both Pamplona and Chinácota, not all communities were opposed to the Protestants’ coming. Robert Savage had a bubbly, happy, warm personality. His friendliness won over many an early antagonist. Soon he was being invited to go to nearby villages or on excursions to more friendly areas with fellow missionaries. The following letter to his father on December 15, 1942, described the positive side of missionary work (Savage 1990, p. 12):

The trip from Pamplona to La Donjuana took us through coffee, banana, and sugar cane plantations. Beautiful bright-colored flowers lavishly bedeck the roadside.

La Donjuana’s total population is only 500, but boasts the largest Scandinavian Alliance Mission congregation in Colombia. There were 120 at our service…. The people were kind and attentive as they patiently allowed me to struggle through my first public words in their lovely language.…

On Monday, we hiked up a mountain, two and a half hours from La Donjuana. It was steep and hot, traversing rivers on swaying slender “hammock-bridges” and plunging away over unmarked trails. When we arrived…I discovered I was only the fifth North American missionary to visit here. Almost everyone in this valley is a baptized believer and they seem to feel like missionaries are practically angels from heaven.

On January 10, 1943, he again wrote his father (Savage 1990, p.15-16):

Will Watson, five Colombian believers, and I began a horseback trip that turned out to be a humdinger. After riding two hours at night, we put up in a little country home, sleeping on our army cots in a straw-thatched, mud floor hut. At six a.m. we rise to eat a native breakfast of agua mile (a hot drink made of Colombian brown sugar), soup, and plátanos (cooking bananas).

After an arduous 10 hours, we entered Raganvalia, a town of 7000 near the Venezuelan border. Missionaries had never been here; never had a North American seen the place. What a thrill to be both the first American and missionary to ever step into that city…We discovered three country districts…[where] we were received cordially in almost
every home. Our next destination was Arozco, but we had to slosh through the most beautiful foliage on the most abominable trail. Mud came up to our horses’ knees and overhanging branches frequently slapped us and almost knocked us off our horses.…

At last we arrived in Arozco—what a warm welcome we received. We decided to hold a service that night. In less than two hours, the news got around and 30 people gathered for a glorious service. They urged us to return and promised that if they had advance notice the whole population would be present.…

Such a cordial reception of the gospel is a miracle in Colombia. The cities are cold, indifferent, and unresponsive. It is an oasis in the desert to find a warm place like Arozco.

3.5.4 Not all Roman Catholic clerics were hostile

In Chinacota, the Savages made friends with the dean of the local Catholic college, Brother Gonzalo. Mrs. Wilma Savage wrote to her parents (Savage 1990, p. 32):

The Catholics have been grand to us. Brother Gonzalo, the president of this college, is perfectly lovely and goes out of his way to be nice to us, so decent that Bob wondered if he had our number wrong. He kept inviting Bob to the college to take lessons in Spanish, until Bob finally said, ‘You understand, don’t you, that we are Protestants and we participate in Protestant services here’.

Brother Gonzalo replied, ‘Certainly. It makes no difference. Come anyhow, we are your friends’.

Soon, in this town that was otherwise antagonistic, the missionary was teaching the priest English and the priest teaching the missionary Spanish. “Our language classes with the Catholic brothers are interesting. There is very little grammar study as we discuss our beliefs practically all the time we have together.” Both, however, were making an effort to convert the other to their faith.
3.6 The dark days of persecution, 1948 - 1958

In this section, the period of Colombia’s anarchy—1948 to 1958—is discussed. Of particular note is the great animosity that was built up against both Protestant missionaries and their national believers.

Chapter two referenced an incident that gave rise to a wave of violence. On April 9, 1948, a very popular liberal candidate to the presidency, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, Mayor of Bogota, was assassinated. This deed initiated a period of near anarchy that lasted until 1958. Leaders of both political parties, liberals and conservatives, united under what they called “El Frente Unido” (the National Front) and began restoring order to the nation. During this period, more than 300,000 Colombians perished, many of them evangelicals (Brabon 1993, p. 132):

During this period, known as ‘La Violencia’ [the violence], without fear of police or government interference, many took the opportunity to settle long-standing grievances and take vengeance on their enemies. Evangelicals, however, long a small, persecuted minority became objects of special violence by Catholic fanatics. These acts are well documented by the CEDEC (Council of Evangelicals of Colombia).

A clear distinction can be made between the violence occurring before and after La Violencia. Benjamin Pearson, a missionary to Colombia during this period, described the anarchy (Brabon 1993, p. 133):

Prior to La Violencia, sporadic violence flared occasionally, just as crimes are committed anywhere anytime. During La Violencia throughout Colombia, violence was general, and even the authorities, including the police, became agents of violence. This resulted in personal, political, and religious differences being settled by violence. Anyone’s life could be in jeopardy at any time, from an individual or from armed groups of guerrilla fighters representing two antagonistic political factions.
Leading up to La Violencia, Roman Catholics, especially in the rural areas of Colombia, became much bolder in their direct attacks against los Protestantes.

In 1945, three missionaries—Bill Gillam, Burt Biddulph, George Sanchez (these men were all personal friends of the researcher) and a Colombian student—traveled by Jeep to a small town called Envigado for the purpose of distributing Bible tracts throughout the town. After completing their objective, they started to get into their vehicle to return to Medellin when a bus filled with angry shouting men drove up blocking their exit. Burt Biddulph described what happened (Brabon 1993, pp. 250-252):

Before we could get started, the busload of men were upon us. They swarmed out of the bus as animals pouncing on their prey… By the side of the road was a pile of rocks shattered in long jagged pieces which strongly reminded me of the shrapnel which we had seen in the war. The men immediately picked up these jagged pieces of Andean granite and started toward us… [We] jumped out of the [jeep] and started toward the murderous mob. Bill, extending his hands toward the murderous crowd shouted, ‘Here we are if you wish to kill us, kill us. Here we are.’ As [we] came up to the crowd…the assailants began to drop their rocks as though shame from the Spirit of the Lord had come upon them. Still they continued to mill around angrily and threateningly….

[Then] another busload of angry, shouting men drove up… A black-robed priest, the instigator of the riot, had arrived in the second bus. He was trembling and shaking with anger, his face white and drawn. His presence incited the first busload of fanatics anew. Now there were 80 men against four. Knives flashed, tire tools were being swung threateningly, rocks were dropped on the jeep…We knew we were at their mercy. I could hear Bill shouting above the noise of the mob, ‘What do you want with us? If you want to kill me, here I am, kill me.’ We realized now that only the hand of God could save us…. [I] walked up to the priest and put [my] hand on his shoulder and said, ‘Padre, we are your friends.’

Now some of the men began plunging their knives into the jeep tires. There was the sound of escaping air. Under a hail of rocks, [we] scrambled back in the jeep and attempted to drive away. The air was entirely out of one of the tires and another was nearly flat. The jeep was practically unmanageable. Fortunately [we] were able to drive the
disabled vehicle into a nearby country club where we finally found sanctuary.

In another day and in another book, Tertullian (AD 155 –222) in his Apology noted that the persecution of the church by the Roman authorities actually strengthened the Church: "The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow: the blood of Christians is seed of the church.” This too, as will be evidenced in the following chapters, would be true of the Protestant church in Colombia.

**Conclusion**

This third chapter completes the general background for the thesis. The Protestants now, after a century of work, have a solid foundation. The response to Mosquera’s request for more missionaries in 1861 could be seen throughout the length and breadth of the nation. By 1960, two percent of Colombians (33,156 out of 14,131,660) called themselves evangélicos. Also, the Protestant Church had stood the test of persecution. During those ten years of maltreatment (1947 to 1957), the church had grown from 8,000 members to over 30,000. Now the national pastors outnumbered the missionaries. The Protestants were poised for significant growth.

Three additional events to be described in chapter four will force the posing of specific questions, leading to the hypothesis of this study. The next chapter will show that the desired growth of the church would lead to changes of control from missionaries to nationals (greatly contributing to that growth would be Vatican II). Then, a uniting of all Protestant denominations for a program known as “Evangelism in Depth” would bring further growth to the church but introduce great division and confusion. Finally, as national leaders took control of their own church, many missionaries would leave, revealing
glaring weaknesses in the national leadership of the Protestant church. Significant growth, it seems, is never without its problems.
CHAPTER FOUR

A NATIONAL CHURCH ILL PREPARED FOR GROWTH

Introduction

Chapter three outlined the growth of the Protestant church from the time Bolivar declared independence in the early 1800s to the terrible years of national and religious persecution ending in 1958. Despite their many adversities, missionaries struggled to lay a solid foundation for the church. Only when the liberals were in power did Protestants have protection and freedom of action. These periods were from 1849 to 1885, and again from 1930 to 1946, then again after 1958 when a new system of government was inaugurated called “The National Front.” Under the conservative regimes so favorable to the Roman Catholics, the Protestants were hounded and persecuted.

The persistence and tenacity of both missionaries and national Christians is worthy of admiration. From 1947 to 1986, the church grew from 8,000 members to over 706,000 (Stoll 1990, p. 335). That growth, compounded by the departure of the missionaries who had served as the doctrinal stabilizing force, was what triggered the problems and weaknesses of the Protestant Church in Colombia. This chapter will address the following:

1. the new wave of missionaries entering Colombia after the Great World War;
2. a brief history of the biblical and theological education missionaries provided for Colombia’s national church leaders;
3. significant changes brought about by Vatican II that resulted in dramatic growth for the Protestants;
4. the crisis created in AIEC churches when members were introduced to Pentecostal beliefs and practices;

5. the national/missionary struggle resulting in the departure of most missionaries.

Discussion of the above issues will reveal four basic problems faced by the churches, problems that will be addressed in chapter five. In this chapter, however, more will be revealed about the progress of the Protestants in Colombia. Historian Pierre Bastian (1990) drew attention to a major shift that took place among the missionaries themselves. He reported a difference in the quality of the missionaries who went to Latin America after World War I. That difference resulted in an entirely new outreach approach.

4.1. Differences between the early missionaries and the new ones

The first Protestant missionaries enjoyed the welcome of Colombia’s liberators. As has been noted, they were very highly trained and were welcomed by the new independent governments as helpers in setting up schools and providing alternatives to the Roman Catholic Church. Martin (1990, p. 50) explained:

Liberal governments and anti-clericals regarded them as allies of progress and friends of welfare. If they were not valued specifically for their faith they were at least valued for their schools and hospitals. Structurally they were part of the current of change in Latin America…

For instance, in 1822 Simon Bolivar himself brought Protestant educator Joseph Lancaster from England to establish the Lancasterian Public School System for the new nation (Bucana, 1995). Again, when Diego Thompson, a prominent Protestant educator and representative of the British Bible Societies, arrived in Bogota in 1824, he was met by the most prominent
citizens of the city, including Dr. Pedro Gual, Minister of Exterior Relations; Senator Antonio Malo; Congressman Joaquin Gomez; Dr. Mariano Mio, rector of the San Bartolome College; and Dr. Jose Maria Estevez, rector of the university. Commenting on the reason Protestants were so welcomed in the 19th century, Pierre Bastian (1990, p. 151) wrote:

"El aporte fundamental de la pedagogía protestante ejercida tanto en los templos como en las escuelas desde los años 1870 hasta los años 1920 fue la elaboración de una cultura política antiautoritaria. Esta cultura democrática se fundaba en la conversión individual como acceso a la responsabilidad moral y religiosa del libre examen y se alía a un liberalismo radical anticatólico pero no antirreligioso ni antipositivista, pero sin rechazar el valor de la ciencia y de la razón para el progreso. Ofrecer un acceso a la cultura política moderna fue sin duda una de las características y aportes mayores de este protestantismo latinoamericano que se había constituido en una verdadera vanguardia ideológica…"

The fundamental contribution of Protestant teaching in both their churches as well as in their schools from 1870 to 1920 was the formation of an antiauthoritarian culture. This kind of democratic culture was based on individual conversions that opened them to a life of moral responsibility along with the freedom to examine all things. It was also allied to a radical liberalism that was anti-Catholic but neither antireligious nor antipositivistic, neither rejecting the value of science nor of reason in reference to progress. Without a doubt, one of the greatest characteristics and contributions of this Latin American Protestantism was to offer their followers access to a modern political culture, creating a truly avant-garde ideology…

Thus it was that these first missionaries had much to offer the newly formed republics, and they gladly made their talents—religious and civic—available to the new governments. The political liberals in turn persuaded their friends, employees and government officials to attend Protestant churches and send their children to Protestant schools. Missionaries freely intermingled with the upper classes, and missionaries were favored. Ordoñez (1956, pp. 41-43) reported that shortly after Manuel Murillo Toro became president, in 1865, he himself offered missionary Tomas Wallace an ancient convent for
use as a chapel. Because of the conflict this could create with the Catholic Church, Wallace refused the offer. However, a suitable building was placed on the market, and with President Murillo’s encouragement, Wallace purchased the large colonial home that had belonged to the Echeverry family. This became the first Presbyterian Church in Bogota. The mayor of Bogota, several members of the Supreme Court, along with congressmen and diplomats went to the dedication service. “Worthy of note,” said Ordoñez (1956, p. 43): “The house now consecrated as the place of worship for the evangelicals, during colonial times, was the Holy Inquisition headquarters.”

From 1849 to 1885, while the liberals were in power, the Protestants had freedom of action and access to the ruling classes in Colombia. These were the initial glory days for the Protestant Church. However, as already noted, when the conservatives won back the presidency in 1885 (they were to hold power until 1930), Protestants were no longer favored nor protected by the pro-Catholic government. Although still befriended by the out-of-power liberals during the time the conservatives were in power, Protestants were subjected to all kinds of abuse by the Catholic Church.

After World War I, a new wave of missionaries entered Colombia. Their theological base was the fundamentalism that had swept the evangelical churches in North America at the latter part of the 19th century. This movement opposed the drift of the historic denominations into liberal modernism. Modernists followed Streeter’s dictum that “The world…cannot accept a religion if its theology is out of harmony with science, philosophy and scholarship” (Hart 2000, p.369). Modernists attempted to change basic doctrines that had been taught by Protestants for centuries. Fundamentalists,
believing that higher criticism and intellectualism had caused the historic churches to drift from biblical orthodoxy, now tried to protect their own congregations from being corrupted by modernism.

Missionaries coming to Colombia from these fundamental churches suspected any missionaries who came from the mainline (historic) denominations—Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Lutherans, Baptists—of being theological liberals. As they read the history of the first missionaries, they suspected them of being wishy-washy in their theology and criticized them for their close association with the upper classes, their coziness with government officials, particularly their affiliation with Masons. In true fundamentalist form, they did all they could to separate themselves from these early pioneers, not wanting to be associated with what they considered “worldly” and “pagan.” Bastian (1990, p. 206) explained:

> En cuanto a los primeros [misioneros], reivindicaban la herencia liberal; los otros [los nuevos que él llama ‘neoevangelicos’] negaban todo lazo con cualquier tipo de liberalismo.

As to the first [missionaries], they reclaimed their liberal associations; the others [the new ones, whom he calls ‘neoevangelicals’] rejected all ties with anything called liberalism.

On their part, the Latin American liberals and the upper classes resented the narrowness of these new missionaries and broke off all ties with them. Never again would Latin America’s high-class society embrace Protestants. Bastian (1990, p. 151) lamented the loss of that first Protestant distinctive:

> En los años de 1930 y posteriores, la pérdida tanto de la cultura liberal como de las escuelas contribuyó a la desaparición de este tipo de protestantismo y abrigó un amplio espacio para la cultura subalterna y
anómica del pentecostalismo que ha impregnado incluso a las sociedades protestantes históricas desprovistas de sus escuelas nacionalizadas y de sus intelectuales desaparecidos.

From the 1930s onward, the loss of the liberal culture along with the loss of their schools contributed to the disappearance of the former type of Protestants, providing ample space for an alternative culture and an uncontrolled Pentecostalism that has infiltrated even the historic Protestant societies, leaving them without their nationalized schools and abandoned by the intellectuals.

The majority of these new missionaries had neither the high cultural worldview of Christianity shown by the earlier Presbyterians nor an appreciation for higher levels of education. This would soon become obvious by the way they appointed nationals to pastor churches who had very little training (this tendency will be analyzed in the discussion of the problems uncovered by the researcher). Their bent was more toward holiness, placing special emphasis on the inner life and separation from the world than on nurturing the intellect and preparing their followers biblically. Therefore, having lost access to the more prestigious classes, they confined themselves to those who would listen: the marginalized people of Colombia, the poor and uneducated.

4.2 Missionaries establish schools for children and pastors

In this section, the questions leading to the overall research issue—theological training of national church leaders—will be discussed. As missionary effort increased, so did their workload. Missionaries recognized that to continue growing the Protestant Church in Colombia, they needed to train national pastors and leaders. The issue was whether to train helpers for the missionaries, or to train national pastors to replace the missionaries. While
the second issue would seem to be the logical conclusion, the research findings seem to point otherwise.

4.2.1 Missionaries set up schools for children

Working among the disenfranchised, the missionaries had different needs, and new methods surfaced. For one, few could read or write. Missionaries found that a good way to earn prestige in a community was to start schools for children, especially for the children of their converts. All public schools were run by the Catholic Church. Consequently, the children of Protestants were unwelcome. Bucana (1995, p. 92) wrote:

*A pesar de la garantía de libertad de culto consagrada en la Constitución (Artículo 53) hasta 1930 los protestantes eran, según la acertada frase de Haddox: “ciudadanos de segunda clase”. Las áreas de la vida colombiana donde la iglesia ejercitaba un control casi completo eran cuatro: la celebración de matrimonios, los entierros, la enseñanza y el registro civil de nacimientos.*

In spite of the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution (Article 53), until 1930 the Protestants were accorded, as described by the celebrated phrase of Haddox, 'second class citizenship.' The areas of Colombian life over which the [Catholic] Church had almost complete control were marriages, burials, education, and birth registrations.

It was through the public schools that the Catholics furthered their indoctrination. Children who refused to go along with their rituals and prayers were disciplined. Clemenger (n.d., p. 104) explained how children suffered in the community of San Pedro de la Sierra, where he was stationed:

No law forbids an evangelical student from attending school; but consider the plight of such a child.... Their first problem comes in the opening exercises when all children are required to kneel and repeat a prayer to the Virgin Mary. Ridicule and punishment descend on those who refuse. One child was required to stand bareheaded in the hot sun during the long hours of the morning as punishment for refusing to take part in that ceremony. Another was forced to kneel on beans by the side of the teacher’s desk while other students laughed at his tears... The discrimination is such that most [Protestant] parents prefer to keep
their children at home rather than have them suffer the constant humiliation, which is pure agony to a sensitive Colombian child.

Ordoñez (1956, p.43-44) explained that it was this “cruel and humiliating treatment of Protestant children in the public schools” that led the Rev. Milton Caldwell to set up the first Protestant grade schools called Colegio Americano—one for boys and another for girls—in Bogota in 1877. In later years, Protestant churches all over Colombia would set up schools for children, an action that brought them much good will and attention.

4.2.2 Missionaries set up schools to provide training for national pastors

As missionaries spread throughout Colombia in the early 1900s, the Protestants began to grow in number. Soon missionaries found they could not care for all the small congregations that had sprung up. Helpers were needed. Ordoñez (1956, pp. 80-81) explained how urgent the need for more workers had become:

La predicación sencilla del puro Evangelio de Jesucristo estaba produciendo sus efectos. De todas partes llegaban mensajes alentadores. En el Valle, Dios estaba bendiciendo en forma extraordinaria la labor del la Unión Misionera; pueblos como Sincelejo, en el departamento de Bolívar y Supia, donde en años anteriores se habían cerrado las puertas a los evangelistas ahora habían facilidades para celebrar reuniones al aire libre. En Bucaramanga había un grupo floreciente, pero carecía de pastor; lo mismo en Socorro y otros lugares de Santander; en la Costa crecía el interés en los colegios y la iglesia; en Bogotá hacían falta más obreros para ensanchar las actividades; en Villavicencios pedían con ahínco un pastor que fuera a dirigir las actividades que habían sido iniciadas por algunos dirigentes laicos; en Tolima, en Cauca, en Huila… pero el número de obreros era en extremo limitado.

The preaching of the simple, pure Gospel of Jesus Christ was producing its effects. From all areas encouraging messages were arriving. In the Valley [the state of which Cali is the capital] God was blessing the efforts of the Missionary Union extraordinarily; towns like
Sincelejo, in the Department of Bolivar and Supia, where previously the doors had been closed now gave permission to hold open-air services. In Bucaramanga there was a rapidly growing group, but they lacked a pastor, just as they did in Socorro and other towns in [the province of] Santander. Along the coast there was a growing interest in schools and churches. In Bogotá there was need for more workers to help grow the activities. In Villavicencio they were urgently asking for a pastor to help lead the work begun by a number of lay leaders. In Tolima, in Cauca, in Huila... but the number of workers was extremely limited.

In 1865, two young men responded to the Bible teaching of missionary Tomas Wallace: Carlos Bransby and Manuel Panigua (Odoñez 1956, p. 41). Seeing their commitment, and wanting to prepare national pastors, Wallace sent both of them to the United States for training. No mention was made about their prior education, how long it took for them to graduate, when they returned to Colombia, nor where they worked after their return. The only statement was: “Esta es propiamente la fecha que marca el origen de la Iglesia evangélica nacional” (This is the date that marks the beginning of the national church).

In 1916 in Barranquilla (Bucana 1995, p. 80), the Presbyterians began a school to train their national pastors. They offered courses on Homiletics, Systematic Theology, and Bible Analysis. The other courses were basic reading, writing and arithmetic. Three years later, three pastors graduated.

In 1924, the Missionary Union began a school for pastors in Palmira. In the first two years, they had four students. In Ibague (1926) and in Medellín (1928), the Presbyterians began other schools, but with very small enrollments.

In the mid 1930s and 1940s a number of organizations set up Bible schools. The most difficult problem for the missionaries was not to find
teachers, but how to find materials and simplify the curriculum to teach young Protestant adults who had little or no education. Several denominations saw the need and opened schools. Bucana (1995, p. 108) provided the following information on the development of Bible schools (see Table 5).

Table 5. Protestant Bible Schools Established

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Christian Missionary Alliance</td>
<td>Bethel Bible Institute</td>
<td>Armenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>World Crusade</td>
<td>Bible Institute</td>
<td>Fusagasugá, later moved to Bogotá</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>Lutheran Evangelical Mission</td>
<td>Lutheran Bible Institute</td>
<td>Cocuy and Soacha, later moved to Duitama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Christian and Missionary Alliance</td>
<td>The Jorge Isaacs Bible School</td>
<td>Armenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
<td>Berean Bible Institute</td>
<td>Sogamoso</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Latin America Mission</td>
<td>Caribbean Bible Center</td>
<td>Sincelejo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Presbyterian Missionary Society</td>
<td>Medellin Bible Institute</td>
<td>Ibague</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1944</td>
<td>Interamerican Mission</td>
<td>Interamerican Bible Institute</td>
<td>Medellin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>The Evangelical Alliance Mission</td>
<td>Teacher Training Institute</td>
<td>Salazar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Evangelical Union of South America</td>
<td>Biblical Studies Centers</td>
<td>Villanueva and El Banco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Missionary Union</td>
<td>Teacher Training</td>
<td>Buga (for</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These were fine and commendable efforts, but they were not enough to meet the need. Clemenger (n.d.) told the story of a Bible school she and her husband—along with a handful of other missionaries—established high in the Colombian mountains under the auspices of the Evangelical Union of South America.

4.2.3 A Typical Bible School

The struggles of the Clemengers in establishing a school in the 1950s will serve to illustrate what missionaries went through to train national workers. First, they looked for a location high up in the mountains in an area where they would be least likely to be opposed by the Catholics (this was the period in Colombia’s history when Protestants were being severely persecuted). There her husband Ross put up a house and a few crude buildings to serve as a small campus. Secondly, Clemenger (n.d., p. 98), recounted the joys she and her husband had in putting together what they hoped would be a full-orbed program of study. Their original choices for courses were: Old Testament, New Testament, Bible Synthesis, Bible Doctrine, False Cults, Evangelism, Homiletics, Pedagogy, Child Evangelism, Ancient History, Bible Geography, Grammar, Mathematics, English, and Music.
However, as was the case in practically every Bible school started in Latin America in the 1940s and 1950s, once the students arrived and the teaching started, the severe educational handicaps of these young adult students forced radical changes both in process as well as in content. Clemenger (n.d, p. 105) described the typical students who arrived for training in their Bible schools:

…most of them have had little or no schooling and have no idea how to study or think originally…. Because of all this, we must spend many precious hours teaching simple arithmetic, grammar, spelling, reading, writing, history, science, art and geography.

The small Carmel Colony Bible School set up by the Clemengers in 1956 had six students the first year. Clemenger (n.d., p. 100) recounted the physical strain suffered by these uneducated adults as they began applying themselves to learning:

Within a week of school opening a rash of blinding headaches developed among students from unaccustomed hours of reading. Our scant medical supplies were drained to the dregs by a wave of constipation, sore backs, heartburn and hives, all blamed on the fact that the classes were too hard, too long, and too constant.

The Clemengers deserve congratulations. They recognized the importance of preparing national leaders and knew they needed to have a strong background in Bible and doctrine. Their efforts, at the same time, reveal how difficult the task is of training people who have little or no education. Their struggles reveal why so many missionaries despaired of the task and left the job to others. However, the Clemengers prove that despite all the problems and difficulties, nationals can be trained and that success will mark such efforts.
By 1963, having profited from their studies in the Carmel Colony Bible School, 28 of the 42 graduates were soon in full-time Christian work (Clemenger n.d., p. 216). These selected national leaders were serving in churches of their denomination throughout Colombia.

4.2.4 Reasons for the educational difficulties

These educational attempts demonstrate that the job of equipping national pastors was not an easy one. Most of the new Protestant believers came from the marginalized segments of society. They were unbelievably poor and just as unbelievably unlearned. That, however, was the task these missionaries were handed—to establish a viable church among the people who were responding to their missionary efforts. Part of that task was to equip the national leaders for their future role of leading their own churches. Regardless of the laboriousness of the task, a training program had to be carried out. The strength of the future church in Colombia depended on it.

Bucana (1995, p. 201) stated that in the year 1966, there were a total of 676 students enrolled throughout the Bible schools in Colombia. In the rather broad list of missionary books the researcher read on Colombia, there were few details as to the subjects taught or the requirements made of the students. For instance, Rolando Gutierrez Cortes (1984), in his book *Educación Teológica y Acción Pastoral en América Latina Hoy* (Theological Education and Pastoral Action in Latin America Today), outlined many suggestions for what should be done to train pastors, but provided no practical curriculum, specific program of study, or history of what had been done or could be done. In 1985 throughout the entire continent, from Buenos Aires to Mexico, it would have been difficult to name 10 seminaries whose
standards would have been equivalent to Bible colleges or even Bible schools in Europe or the United States.

4.2.5 The importance of education by missionaries

The establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ is important enough to warrant the Biblical and doctrinal preparation of its national leadership. The goal need not be to create outstanding scholars, good as that might be. The aim should be to provide future church leaders with a thorough enough education so that a true biblical church can be established.

Failure to do so will result in chaos. This is what Padilla (1995, p. 110-111) explained happened to their denomination because the majority of their pastors were not trained biblically:

En 1976 el número de líderes de la AIEC entre pastores y obreros era de 480, todos activos. De éstos solo 80 tenían capacitación de alguna institución teológica. Aunque existía el CBC, a los obreros le era casi imposible abandonar la familia y la iglesia por 5 o 6 meses cada año durante tres años para estudiar en residencia, por la poca capacitación y formación de gran parte de los líderes y pastores de la AIEC, ésta cayó en su vacío doctrinal, prestándose con frecuencia choques verbales, rechazos, divisiones entre líderes y aún de iglesias, abusos en la doctrina y las prácticas eclesiásticas, llegándose algunos casos a la anarquía donde cada uno hacía y enseñaba según creía o entendía.

In 1976 the number of leaders in the AIEC, between pastors and lay leaders, was 480, all of them active. Of these, only 80 had some studies in a theological institution. Even though the CBC existed, it was next to impossible for a worker to abandon his family and his church for three years to do residency studies there. Because of the poor preparation of a great number of the leaders of the AIEC, the [denomination] fell into a doctrinal void, with frequent verbal confrontations, rejections, divisions between leaders and even churches, abuses in doctrine and ecclesiastical practices, in some cases to the point of anarchy, where everyone did and taught according to what they understood.

Again, when making reference to the need for education, the focus need not be on developing future scholars the likes of Aurelius Augustine,
John Calvin, or John Wesley. However, for the sake of the church, missionaries need to provide national pastors the initiating tools and basic knowledge so they can wisely and correctly lead their national churches.

As this chapter will reveal, by the 1980s there were effective programs to train leaders coming from the uneducated segments of society. A good biblical education could be given in sound, multi-layered programs. The researcher has witnessed pastors in Mexico, Chile, Guatemala, and even in Colombia—men who were unable to read and write when they began these programs—who were able to preach acceptable, biblical sermons in a matter of about a year of beginning their program of training.

Along with the training, the natural giftedness of a pastor also comes into play. But one cannot rely on talent alone. Knowledge of the Scriptures has to be an important part of the training. Granted, a pastor working among illiterate people does not need a Master’s degree, but he needs to be better learned and educated than the majority in his congregation. A person’s natural gifts occasionally may come into play. However, without the scriptural and doctrinal knowledge to adequately meet the spiritual needs of the people, a pastor will be spiritually ineffective.

A pastor’s expertise should be biblical and doctrinal. The higher the scale of learning of the people in his congregation, the higher his educational needs will be. Occasionally, one runs into an exceptional pastor who is self-taught and has great pastoral gifts. Such was the case of Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), who, with little formal training, began preaching when he was 19 years of age and developed into one of the greatest preachers of all time. Such men, though, are hard workers, great readers, and fast
learners. Through great self-effort, some can obtain the equivalent of a seminary education. These, however, should not be set up as examples because less talented people can never equal their achievements. Normally, the more learned the people are in a congregation, the more training the pastor needs to have in order to responsibly meet the challenges of his congregation. This is true anywhere in the world.

4.2.6 The first problem found in our study of the educational systems

The first problem uncovered by the researcher adversely affected the missionary enterprise in Colombia. This first problem was discovered while studying the theological educational systems being applied.

Some missionaries serving in Colombia were setting up schools and attempting to train up-and-coming pastors. Others, particularly those involved in evangelism, were setting up churches and putting nationals who had no theological training in charge of them. That incongruity had its adverse effects on the national church. One can hear young national Christians aspiring for the pastorate ask: “Why go to a Bible school or seminary when I can get the job without ever going to school?” The general practice in Colombia was to name pastors to the job on the basis of their personality, not their training.

For instance, of the AIEC denomination’s 300 churches, 287 of those church’s pastors had no biblical education. Furthermore, when churches began to multiply, the qualifications for pastors were not increased; rather the qualifications were lowered. Church leaders in Colombia began to choose leaders with strong personalities rather than with biblical knowledge. Padilla (1995, p. 82) explained:

*Debido a la gran cantidad de nuevas iglesias y la escasez de pastores..., en 1968 el Comité se vio en la necesidad de abolir el*
Because of the great quantity of new churches and the lack of pastors...in 1968 the [Administrative] Committee abandoned the rules that had been in force since 1948 for pastors. Thus, a quantity of lay leaders were promoted to Licentiates and others were ordained, without considering academic or educational requirements, only looking at their vocation and experience.

If neither the missionaries nor the national denominational leaders insisted on a program of study for their pastors, the general opinion would be that theological education for pastors was optional. That very idea identifies the first major problem. The research process for this study will focus first on identifying the problem, and then implications related to the problem will be discussed.

Because missionaries never convinced the national church that their clergy needed to be well educated biblically and theologically, anyone—with or without biblical credentials—could become a pastor. Consequently, little importance was given by the emerging church to the need of preserving the biblical doctrines and the theological heritage introduced by the missionaries.

Through this research, it was discovered that most of the missionaries emphasized evangelization. With the exception of the few schools mentioned earlier and those missionaries committed to the idea of preparing national pastors, the research did not point to unanimity on the subject of education for the national pastors. On the contrary, as already noted, most pastors were being appointed and ordained without any theological education. Considering the importance of establishing a church based firmly on the beliefs and doctrines of historic Christianity, this lack of proper preparation for the
pastorate was considered serious. A church based on New Testament principles and doctrines cannot be established without a well-educated clergy.

All missionaries were certainly aware of the importance of good doctrinal and theological training—most had to fulfill strict educational requirements before becoming missionaries. One is puzzled, then, in noting that so many overlooked the educational needs of the national pastors. Possibly some thought missionaries would be the permanent guardians of the doctrines and the teachings of Scripture. Another reality was the difficulty involved in training people who, for the most part, had not even finished the primary grades. This difficulty could have created the mistaken idea that the deeper things of God were beyond the understanding of uneducated people and, therefore, were kept in the hands of missionaries or an elite group of well-trained nationals. Whatever the reason, the researcher was unable to find materials written to support conclusions of this nature. There had to be a reason, otherwise there would have been much stricter requirements for nationals becoming pastors. One thing the research will point out as the history of the church in Colombia is developed in this study is the sad consequence of this neglectful omission of proper training for church leaders.

First, it is important to examine the unexpected growth of the Protestant church in Colombia. In 1962 Pope John XXIII, determined to bring reformation to the Catholic Church, called for a second Vatican Council. That Catholic convocation was to greatly impact Protestantism. The resultant growth among Protestants, while longed for, nevertheless would create serious problems because neither the missionaries nor the nationals were prepared for it.
4.3 Vatican II opens the door to Latin America’s Protestants

Protestants throughout Latin America are very grateful to Pope John XXIII for initiating Vatican II and bringing about changes in the Catholic Church that would lead to greater religious freedom throughout Latin America. In the following paragraphs, the effects of Vatican Council II will be explained, showing how those decisions created the opportunity for incredible growth among Protestant organizations.

For Colombia’s protestantes, the timing of Vatican II could not have been better. By the early 1960s, most of the persecution of the Protestants by the Catholics had ceased. While great unease and suspicion lingered, both Catholics and Protestants were ready for a new form of conciliation. Simon Bolivar, 140 years earlier, had defined the problem in a letter to the newly formed Nueva Granada Congress, November 27, 1812 (Bucana, p. 31):

\[ Y, \text{ en fin, el fanatismo religioso, hipócritamente manejado por el clero, empañado en trastornar el espíritu público por sus miras de egoísmo e intereses de partido, temiendo la pérdida de su preponderancia sobre los pueblos supersticiosos.} \]

In the end, the religious fanaticism handled hypocritically by the clergy, is certain to disturb the public spirit through its selfishness and partisan interests, [simply] because they fear a loss of control over their superstitious people.

Surprisingly, the end of that power struggle was to come from an unexpected source—Vatican II. Of particular importance to the Latin American situation were three important pronouncements that emerged from Saint Peter’s Basilica on October 28, 1965. These were summarized in three statements broadcast immediately from one end of Latin America to the other (Vatican Council II, Flannery, General Editor, 1996):


**4.3.1 The Bible, a book for all to read**

In the South American world, where the Holy Scriptures were read and interpreted only by priests, this new freedom to read the Bible for oneself was revolutionary. Bibles produced by the Catholic Church were few and expensive. On the other hand, Bibles produced by the British and American Bible Societies (now the United Bible Society) were readily available and priced at a much lower cost. Demands for copies of the Bible were everywhere. Bible sales soared. From 1964 to the year 2000, the United Bible Society reported sales of 79,527,376 Bibles (not counting New Testaments and Bible portions). Interestingly, starting in 1964, sales of the Bible doubled every 10 years: 7,298,170 Bibles were sold from 1965 to 1974; 13,431,344 from 1975 to 1984; and 29,263,064 from 1985 to 1994 (United Bible Society, 2002, personal communication). While the United Bible Society is the largest producer of Bibles, many other entities (including the Catholic Church and several other private companies) also sell large quantities of Spanish Bibles.
There is no question that a copy of the Bible is readily available to any Spanish family or individual desiring one throughout Latin America.

The researcher was living in San Jose, Costa Rica, at the time of Vatican II. He saw banners appear on the streets reading, “Catholic, read your Bible!” Hundreds of thousands responded to this call, hungry to read something that had been forbidden them for centuries. With the Bible in hand, it made it easy for the evangélicos to point out to their Catholic counterparts what they believed and why they believed it. It also belittled the distinction between what had been known as la Biblia Católica (the Catholic Bible which contained the additional apocryphal books) and la Biblia Protestante. It became plain that the differences were basically the noncanonical books added by the Catholic Church and small word changes chosen by the translators, since the meaning and content were the same.

In that revolutionary year of 1965, the total of Bible sales in Colombia was 32,068 plus 23,617 New Testaments and 1,143,024 Bible portions (Bucana, 1995, p. 193). An interesting quote on the cooperation of Catholics and Protestants comes from Aristobulo Porras, then president of the Bible Societies, in his 1965 annual report (Bucana 1995, pp. 191-192):

Imposible terminar esta reseña histórica sin poner de relieve la apertura y cooperación de la Iglesia Católica Colombiana en la divulgación de las Sagradas Escrituras, a partir del Concilio Vaticano Segundo. ...Alguien afirmó hace poco que la distribución del Nuevo Testamento en Versión Popular especialmente ha sido hecha en gran parte por sacerdotes católicos. El autor de estas líneas visitó en 1935 un pueblo cercano a Bogotá para ofrecer la Biblia en calidad de estudiante. Trabajó dos días y sólo pudo vender un Nuevo Testamento y un Evangelio según San Juan, por lo cual fue a la cárcel. Cuarenta años después vio como el sacerdote párroco del pueblo en referencia, vino a las oficinas de la Sociedad Bíblica en Bogotá en solicitud de cuatro mil Evangelios: ‘sólo Evangelios’—dijo—‘las gentes necesitan saber de Jesús’.

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It would be impossible to finish this historic report without adding a note concerning the cooperation of the Colombian Catholic Church in spreading the Holy Scriptures, since Vatican Council Two. ...Someone said recently that the distribution of the New Testament especially in the Popular Version was being done largely by Catholic priests. The author of these lines, as a student, in 1935 visited a town near Bogota to offer the Bible. He worked two days and was only able to sell one New Testament and a Gospel of Saint John, for which act he was sent to jail. Now, 40 years later, he was able to see the priest from that same town come to the Bible Society offices in Bogota asking for 4,000 Gospels: ‘Only Gospels,’ he said. ‘The people need to know about Jesus.’

There is no question that the placing of the Bible in people’s hands did much to do away with the superstitious nature of religion that had become so mixed with beliefs of the Indian tribes as well as African spiritism.

4.3.2 The concept of “Separated Brethren”

The second announcement—that Protestants were not heretics but rather “separated brethren”—made an equal, if not greater impact. That affirmation took the evangelical world by surprise. Accommodated to being thought of as heretics, thereby second-class citizens, it was a refreshing experience for Protestants in Colombia to be accepted as equals. The declaration brought acceptance rather than rejection.

This researcher remembers that in the neighborhood where he lived in Costa Rica, called San Francisco de Dos Rios, Protestants were, for the first time, openly greeted and welcomed. Previously, when some neighbors saw Protestants coming down the street, they would enter their homes to avoid greeting them. Now all that prejudice was not only removed but replaced by curiosity. If protestantes were not heretics, then there could not be that much wrong with them. Many were the occasions when missionaries—along with national believers—were able simply to review a bit of history and explain the
significance of the 16th century Protestant Reformation for Protestants and the world.

Vatican II removed the fear many Colombian Catholics had related to Protestants. Elizabeth Brusco (Sigmund 1999, p. 240) explained how this fear had been created: “The Roman Catholic clergy not only promoted outright physical violence [against Protestants, but]…the Roman Catholic priests had a method of frightening the people, and that was excommunication” simply for associating with them. She added that “Catholic denunciation of the Protestants…routinely accused [them] of being Communists.” Not until after Vatican II did this fear disappear. Many began to visit evangelical churches to see for themselves what these evangélicos were really like.

Many Catholic visitors liked the informality of Protestant church services. They liked the excitement in the music, the directness and simplicity of the sermons, even the fact the protestantes prayed directly to God. This form of worship appealed greatly to the emotional and free spirit of latinos (Deiros 1994, p.76). David Stoll (1990, p. 29) provided additional reasons. He cited Thomas Bamat in stating that the Protestant churches tend “to create more egalitarian and participatory relations. They allow even the poorest people to assume leadership roles, and they encourage emotional expression during liturgical services.”

4.3.3 Preaching in the vernacular

The third Vatican II pronouncement, preaching in the vernacular, changed the liturgy of the Hispanic Catholic Church. Prior to Vatican II, the priests read their homilies in Latin. Devout Catholics would sit silently in their
cathedrals, respectful, but ignorant of what was being said. Sermonizing became a vital and interesting part of the ritual.

Levine (1992, p. 40) wrote about “the return to biblical sources” after Vatican II:

This technical innovation has altered the quality of religious participation and spurred great popular interest and concern with Bible study. Making shared Bible study central to religious practice has enormous impact in societies whose majority is often poor and illiterate, where most poor people have long been given to understand that their opinions are of no value (or, more precisely, that they have no opinions). If all can read and comment on the Bible, the value of popular insights is enhanced and traditional distinctions of rank in religious life are undercut. Equal access to the Bible can be a great leveler, as experience of the Puritan revolution in seventeenth-century England reminds us.

On many a free Sunday, the researcher sat in a Catholic church and listened to very profitable sermons. These were often better than the ones heard in Protestant churches because the majority of Protestant pastors were not as well trained as the average priest. One time in Monterrey, Mexico, the researcher heard Mendelssohn’s Wedding March. A number of people were walking into the cathedral, so he joined them and sat at the rear of the church. That day he was surprised by one of the best expositions on Ephesians 5 (“husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church”) he had ever heard. Not only was he happy that the homily had not been given in Latin, he was delighted with some points made in that Spanish sermon so applicable to the Spanish lifestyle. Since that occasion, he has used a number of those thoughts in his own talks to husbands.

The researcher’s job at this particular time in Latin America required a lot of travel. What he first experienced in Costa Rica, he saw repeated time and again all over the continent. Previously, in many Protestant churches, one
would hear constant criticism of Catholics. But surprising testimonials began to be shared in Protestant churches about changes in treatment by their Catholic neighbors, even surprising acceptance. In many instances, one heard of united Bible studies between Catholics and Protestants. Occasionally, a report was heard of Catholic priests preaching in a Protestant church or visa versa.

The most welcome sign was the way Catholics started responding to Protestant evangelism. Now that the barriers had been removed, dissatisfied Catholics began welcoming the Protestant message. Thousands began joining Protestant churches. In 1960, the estimate for the total number of Protestants from Punta Arenas, Chile, to Tijuana, Mexico, was eight million. Today, only 43 years later, the figure stands at 60 million (Sigmund 1999, p. 50). According to the Latin American Bishops’ Conference, “There are 8,000 converts to evangelicalism every day.” While such statistics are very pleasing to Protestants, they have become worrisome to Catholics. At the Santo Domingo Conference of Latin American Bishops (1992), John Paul II addressed this issue, stating that “the sects were like ‘ravenous wolves’ devouring Latin American Catholics and ‘causing division and discord in our communities’” (Sigmund 1999, p. 21). Although such is unlikely, Protestants still live in the fear that because of their minority status throughout the continent, at any moment the Catholic Church may persuade a national government to crack down on them and bring back persecution.

4.4 Problems created by unexpected growth

Early growth for Protestants in Colombia came slowly. This section will reveal that: (a) only a handful of missionaries responded to President
Mosquera’s call on November 15, 1860 for missionaries to be sent to Colombia, (b) the vast majority of Colombians were Roman Catholic and reluctant to accept a new religion that was labeled heretical by their priests, and (c) while the conservative party was in power, the Catholic Church opposed Protestants at every turn, seeking to make it impossible for them to rent buildings or purchase properties. Also, the Catholics harassed all Protestants who dared join them. Obviously, to be a Protestant in Colombia, one had to have firm convictions in one’s faith; otherwise the criticism and ostracism were unbearable.

In spite of the obstacles, Protestant growth from 1856 to 1960 was slow, healthy and steady. This steady growth was held together by the careful teaching and supervision of experienced missionaries. The missionaries’ followers knew what they believed and held firmly to their faith. With the new movements that were about to take place, the missionaries would lose their influence and biblical doctrine would be replaced by experience and emotions.

In this and in the following section, two movements will be examined that coincided in the 1960s for the intended purpose of bringing about unimagined Protestant growth: Vatican II and Pentecostalism. First, by removing the stigma of “heresy,” Vatican II made Protestantism acceptable to all latinos. Secondly, neo-Pentecostals introduced a new form of worship and emphasis that had great popular appeal (Martin 1990, p. 83):

Pentecostals speak the language of the people…[they] offer the old fiesta in the form of lively worship, the old trances in the form of spiritual ecstasy, the old networks in the form of brotherhood… [I]t is the autonomy, the self-support, the liveliness, the chance of release and participation which count for the most in the Pentecostal appeal, plus a sense of having something which nobody else has.
With the stigma attached to Protestantism and related persecution ended, a phenomenon occurred. Little churches began in homes and storefronts all across the continent. These small churches were run by fiery people more influenced by neo-Pentecostal beliefs and practices than by the Bible and the Gospel. Unfortunately, as noted by missionary John Stam: “They have been repeating all the ‘saved by faith’ formulas, but in general have tended to fall into unevangelical legalisms” (Stoll 1990, p. 172).

These churches and their pastors operated outside the control of the established church and outside the influence of missionaries who had served to give the national churches a doctrinal and biblical base. These churches multiplied, led by men and women who in the main had very little education and were biblically illiterate. Thus we can identify our second problem:

4.4.1 Second Problem: a consequence of the lack of pastor training

As the Protestant church grew, fewer and fewer pastors sought theological education. The concept of an educated clergy came from the missionaries, especially those representing the historic denominations (Presbyterians, Lutherans, Baptists), but their influence was waning in light of the new, exciting Pentecostal teachings. Deiros and Mraida (1994, p. 118) explained what Pentecostals believed:

*Cualquier persona puede ejercer el poder en las iglesias del pentecostalismo…en la medida en que reciba algún don del Espíritu Santo. El don de lenguas, de manera particular, es suficiente para ascender a los puestos de liderazgo o para sentirse reconocidos y rodeados de prestigio en el seno de la congregación.*

Anybody can hold power in the Pentecostal churches…in the measure they receive a gift from the Holy Spirit. The gift of tongues, in particular, is sufficient to enable one to ascend to positions of leadership, or to feel recognized and surrounded by prestige in the congregation.
This idea that a pastor needs only the gifts of the Holy Spirit spread quickly. Padilla (1995, p. 82) explained that by 1968 the Latina America Mission churches in Colombia had bought into these concepts: “A number of [church] workers were given licensures to preach and others were ordained to the ministry without meeting any educational requirements, simply because of their vocation and experiences.” As fewer and fewer pastors were theologically equipped, less and less biblical theology was taught from the pulpits. Westmeier (1999, p. 126), described the content of the preaching:

[their] medium of communication…is not the definition but the description, not the statement but the story, not the doctrine but the testimony, not the book but the parable, not a systematic theology but a song, not a treatise but the TV program, not the articulation of concepts but the celebration of banquets [i.e., fiesta-like worship services].

Emilio Nuñez (Nuñez & Taylor 1989, p. 325) affirmed the underlying reason: “[We] evangelicals in Latin America have been behind schedule in our theological work. Our underdevelopment is also theological.” Deiros and Mraida (1994, p. 117) arrived at the consequence: “Es una religión emocional más que una racionalización teológica” (This is an emotional religion more than one of theological rationalization).

This lowering of the demands of the clergy and the consequent lack of biblical knowledge and teaching in the churches led Jean-Pierre Bastian (1986, p. 272) to compare the first generation of Protestants with the later ones, coming to a disappointing conclusion:

Esta relación privilegiada del protestantismo latinoamericano con su historia y su cultura liberal radical que mezclaba lo intelectual y lo espiritual, donde los pastores y maestros de escuela hacían historiadores en sus congregaciones, ya no existe desde hace unos 40 años. A partir de los años 1950, los protestantes latinoamericanos se instalaron en la ignorancia de su propia historia, y por lo tanto, no tienen otra cultura que la del oprimido y el marginado social, con un
That privileged relationship Latin American Protestantism had with history and its liberal and radical culture that mixed the intellectual with the spiritual, when pastors and school teachers became historians in their congregations, has not existed in the last 40 years. From the 1950s onward, the Latin American Protestants adopted ignorance and no longer know their own history, as a result they now have no other culture than that of the oppressed and the socially marginalized, and bear a persecution complex with a fragmented, heterogeneous conscience, that expresses itself as the apocalyptic millennialism of its fundamentalist theology.

Bastian claimed that present-day Protestants do not know who they are or what their heritage is. As Protestants they had so much to offer, but because of their mistaken choices, now offer little. Rather than lifting society to the level once held by historic Protestantism, they have lowered themselves to insignificance, becoming one in kind with the society that surrounds them. When missionaries ceased demanding that the Protestant clergy should be properly educated, the consequence was that the new church leaders lost the essence of who they were.

To put it another way, when the pastors in Colombia were not taught what the Bible contained, they created their own ideas of what it meant to be a Christian. They emphasized the outward appearance—what Christians “did” rather than on what they “believed.” For instance, rather than the great historic ideals associated with Christ and Christianity, it became common belief that a protestante was simply someone who did not drink, smoke, go to movies or dance. Christianity lost its essence. It became a form of conduct rather than a matter of the heart. This outcome leads to the second problem uncovered.

*Problem Two:* Because Colombian pastors did not receive the biblical and theological training they needed in order to fill their historic role,
the Protestant Church lost its radical, transforming essence. Pastors did not know what to teach and preach. Many began substituting their own ideas or creating their own doctrines instead of proclaiming God’s truth.

A multiplying number of churches throughout Colombia were calling themselves “Protestant.” However, because pastors had so little biblical training, they lacked a clear understanding of the areas of particular belief that gives a Protestant Church its distinctive Protestant ethos. Roman Catholic beliefs were clear; the Protestant ethos was vague. Many condemnatory things were written pointing out the errors of Catholicism—small pamphlets or even magazines like “La Estrella de la Mañana” (Star of the Morning)—but other than differing on the Virgin and on the pope, but with few exceptions, precious little was explained about what Protestantism was or what made a protestante. Rather than becoming educators and improving the standards of their society, untrained Colombian Protestant pastors led their congregations into legalism. Instead of challenging their neighborhoods to improve by implanting the great biblical ideals of liberty, justice, and righteousness, they began offering miracle formulas of healing and wealth. To all too many, religion became something one “claims” and “names,” a combination of jingles, noise and enthusiasm, rather than men and women, boys and girls, and entire communities experiencing social and spiritual transformation through the careful teaching of the gospel.

For example, the idea of “faith alone” as the prerequisite for acceptance by God would have been an enigma for the majority of untrained pastors who had had little exposure, say, to Saint Paul’s letter to the Romans. Many who called themselves Protestant believed that, for salvation, one must come before God with deeds that were worthy of Him—something sacrificed,
something no longer done, something promised. The ability to explain that the
only requirement for salvation was simple faith in all Jesus gained on the
cross on a sinner’s behalf would have been difficult for those not properly
exposed to the Scriptures. After all, all kinds of deeds were required of the
Catholics. To require nothing of a Protestant would be akin to antinomianism.
Of course, all knew that Jesus died on the cross and that he died for sinners.
But the spiritual implications of that death, to a large extent, were unclear to
those without training. The common practice was to require those who joined
the church to do something: quit smoking, quit drinking, quit going to movies,
and quit dancing as demonstration of their faith. The idea that God is the one
who acts when a sinner comes to Christ in faith was generally not
comprehended, simply because what the Bible informs about God’s plan of
salvation was unclear to preachers who had no Bible studies.

In such churches, the belief lingered that salvation came through the
church. One must be a baptized member and a faithful attendee in order to be
accepted by God and be “saved.” Thus, services were held every day,
offerings elicited to pay the pastor, and attendees believing these actions
brought salvation. The doctrinal issues involving God, the Bible, man and the
church were basically unknown. All their lives, Colombians had been taught
by their priests that the church was the instrument of salvation. Now as
protestantes they kept believing the same thing. They did not understand that
the church did not die for their sins, Christ did. They did not understand that
the church did not satisfy God’s demands for holiness, Christ did. What they
needed to learn was that since it was Christ who died, bore the punishment
for sinners, and satisfied the demands of God’s justice in order to redeem
sinners, then it had to be that Christ and Christ alone could save. Thus church membership, church baptism, and church attendance could never satisfy God’s demands. These actions were outcomes of genuine faith, where pastors with a good biblical foundation preached. Unlearned pastors, not knowing the biblical doctrine of the church nor what the Bible teaches about Christ, easily taught false notions about how people come to God.

Finally, among the untrained there was ignorance about the Bible, the very basis for the standards that make society great. But, not understanding how we got the Bible nor what the Bible contained would have made it difficult for such pastors and people to accept the fact that the guide for a person’s soul is “Holy Scriptures alone.” These pastors, in their lack of knowledge, looked for something visible instead—a religious experience, spiritual signs and wonders—something that could be seen and felt that gave people a sense of a relationship to God.

Because so many pastors and church leaders had so little training, Protestant Christianity turned out to be a mixture of beliefs and feelings, very far from what the Reformers taught in the sixteenth century. The religious concepts many came to accept were largely an invented mix of religious beliefs (even superstitions) along with true biblical concepts heard from the missionaries. If Martin Luther decried the beliefs of Christians in his day, one can only imagine what he would have said about all these churches led by pastors unlearned in the Scriptures.

The second problem then, is the result of the lack of Bible teaching and the lack of Bible understanding. If the pastors are not taught the doctrines of the faith and taught how to understand the Bible, one can scarcely expect
their congregations to be “built upon the foundation of the apostles, and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20).

4.5 The uniting effect of Evangelism in Depth

In the previous chapter, the entrance of many Protestant organizations to Colombia, particularly after the First World War, was reported. These groups, for the most part, chose areas of the country where other evangelicals were not working and began to develop their church groups following procedures and methods brought from their church or country of origin. There was little interchange or relationship between these organizations. Each kept to its own chosen turf.

In this section, the focus is on a technique for evangelism introduced to Colombia in 1968 by the Latin America Mission, called “Evangelism in Depth.” So effective was this methodology that 20 Protestant organizations put aside their prejudices and joined together in an all-out effort to evangelize all of Colombia (Bucana 1995, p. 187). The effects, as in other countries of the Latin world, were impressive. Thousands joined the protestante ranks. In Colombia, it resulted in many new congregations, but also in unanticipated problems. The theories behind the movement, the methods used, and the results of the program in Colombia will be examined.

4.5.1 The ideas behind Evangelism in Depth

Dr. Kenneth Strachan, born in Argentina, was raised in Costa Rica by Scottish missionary parents. Old Henry Strachan devoted his life to evangelism (term used by Protestants for the methods used to propagate their faith). Young Kenneth followed in his father’s footsteps. However, after a
frustrating preaching experience in Nicaragua in 1952 (Pretiz & Roberts 1998, p. 17), he came away from an open air meeting saying:

…There’s got to be a better way of evangelizing, where we are not at the mercy of so many circumstances beyond our control. This campaign has been disrupted by prejudices of the committee, the emergency illness of the evangelist, complications of international travel and even by the weather. There’s got to be a better way of doing things.

By 1958, after carefully studying the strategies of the Billy Graham Association, his own father’s style and approach and, as Director of the Latin America Mission, experimenting with various tactics, he decided changes needed to be made. He set about to develop a new evangelization package, calling it “Evangelism in Depth” (Pretiz & Roberts 1998, pp. 71-73). The foundation for his new approach was based on four presuppositions:

1. Abundant reaping results from abundant sowing.
2. Christians [from a broad spectrum of the church body] not only can but must work together in evangelism.
3. When Christians pool their resources, God multiplies them.
4. A dedicated minority can make an impact on an entire nation.

Relying on those four presuppositions and loaded with training manuals, Strachan began visiting denominational offices in Central America. His goal was to persuade leaders to join in all-out efforts to evangelize the Central American nations. Strachan explained that to impact a nation with the gospel every church and every member of the church had to be involved. He showed them the manuals he had prepared and the way to carry out his methodology (Pretiz & Roberts 1998, pp. 73 – 74):
1. Mobilize every Christian in every church to be a witness; that is, teaching everyone—young and old—the process of spreading the gospel message.

2. Mobilize each church so that rather than expecting people to come to their churches to hear the gospel, the membership would go out into the community visiting every home and business establishment.

3. Mobilize the local church leadership to take responsibility for training and choosing the leaders and delegating the responsibilities (the plan required that this teaching process take several months).

4. Mobilize the congregation into small group prayer cells, teaching them in weekly classes how to share their faith and firing them up so that each individual (young and old) would understand the comprehensive, global objectives of the evangelism task (Pretiz & Roberts 1998, pp. 73 – 74).

Thus prepared, taught and discipled, the local church could see itself as an important cog in the process of evangelizing the entire nation. Then, beginning at an agreed-upon date as a mighty army, all the churches simultaneously throughout the nation would go out into their communities to impact them for Christ. A good and persuasive salesman, Strachan convinced these denominational leaders to unite behind the effort.

**4.5.2 Evangelism in Depth modeled in Guatemala**

In 1962, the Strachan plan took shape in Guatemala. The timing was ideal. Vatican II was about to mellow the attitudes of Latin Americans. Political hostilities were at a minimum. The nation was ripe for a fresh religious
experience. The normally divided Protestants had set their differences aside and had joined hands to do God’s work.

Under Strachan’s leadership, 30 denominations had pledged to work together. The first step was to get the church people praying. Weeks into the plan, 6,135 prayer cells had been established throughout the nation in homes, offices, churches and businesses. During the months that followed, nearly 1,000 conversions were reported as a direct result of those prayer cells, which were not even designed for evangelism. These cells were fed by a bi-weekly En Marcha (On the March) bulletin giving minute details of what was taking place throughout the nation (Pretiz & Roberts 1998, p. 32).

About 1,000 pastors and denominational leaders participated in Strachan’s courses and, in turn, began to teach their congregations. Fifty thousand church members throughout the nation studied, practiced and rehearsed the methodologies they were to begin using in September.

September arrived. In the first week of the mass effort, 250,000 homes were visited, and 1,400 conversions were reported. This mobilization and effort continued through October and November. At the closing rally in Guatemala City on November 25, a crowd of 30,000 gathered in the football stadium, including the President of the Republic, Ydigoras Fuentes (Pretiz & Roberts 1998, pp. 32 – 39) to celebrate all that had been accomplished.

Interestingly, that three-month effort proved to be only the beginning of a process that thereafter was carried out for a number of years by many of the churches who had participated. Evangelism in Depth (E/D) was incorporated by many churches into their regular activities. As a result, from 1962 to the year 1998, the number of evangelicals in Guatemala grew from 300,000 to
2,800,000—26 percent of the population (Pretiz & Roberts 1998, p. 39). As a result, the eyes of Protestants throughout Latin America were on these unparalleled events. Every country wanted to see the same results. Since the Latin America Mission already had churches in Colombia (the name they used was Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Caribe—AIEC), this was a natural area for another national effort.

4.5.3 Evangelism in Depth initiated in Colombia

Two of the national leaders of the AIEC in Colombia, Rev. Dionisio Crespo and Rev. Roberto Calderon, participated in the E/D program in Guatemala. Crespo and Calderon not only served as evangelists in Guatemala, they also learned all the details of the E/D methodology. Upon their return, not only was the AIEC leadership anxious to hear their report, but so were leaders from many denominations. Under the auspices of World Vision (an organization based in California), representatives from 20 denominations met in Medellin on April 10-21, 1967 to discuss the viability of doing the program in Colombia. Evangelism in Depth was officially invited and a national committee appointed (presided by Hernando Bidulph). Colombia was divided into three main regions with coordinators appointed for each, and 1968 was designated as the year for the all-out effort (Padilla, 1995, pp. 74-75).

From May to December 1967 the churches carried out their intensive training programs. Although the main effort was designed to prepare church members to approach homes in a community, a number of additional targets were developed: special outreaches to children, teenagers, and women. In January 1968, Evangelism in Depth was launched throughout Colombia. It
would be difficult to describe the excitement and enthusiasm of thousands of protestantes all fired up to use the techniques they had been learning for a solid year in order to tell their neighbours about Christ. Juana Bucana (1995, p. 188) charts the results of the first day of the massive activities:

**Table 6. Launch of Evangelism in Depth, January 1968**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>No. Churches Involved</th>
<th>Visits Made</th>
<th>Individual Homes Visited</th>
<th>People Expressing Interest</th>
<th>Professions of Faith or Conversions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2,053</td>
<td>12,206</td>
<td>3,781</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>1,354</td>
<td>8,698</td>
<td>2,098</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1,988</td>
<td>17,979</td>
<td>2,714</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>5,395</td>
<td>38,883</td>
<td>8,593</td>
<td>1,527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, 35 major evangelistic crusades were organized in key centers throughout the nation backed by 113 churches located in those regions, to which 26,000 church members lent their services. At the Latin American Congress of Evangelism held in Bogota in November of 1969, the delegate for the churches in Colombia reported the following (CLADE, 1969, p. 116):

*1968 fue el año de Evangelismo a Fondo y dio tan grandes resultados que nos hemos convencido de que si la América Latina se ha de alcanzar con el mensaje del evangelio, tiene que ser por medio de un esfuerzo unido y coordinado entre todas las denominaciones, por medio del entrenamiento de cada creyente para hacer la obra de evangelización, y por medio del entusiasmo y el testimonio de vidas que han sido transformadas por el poder de la obra redentora de Cristo. Se estima que durante el año de Evangelismo a Fondo unas 20,000 personas aceptaron a Cristo como Salvador personal. Esto significa que en 1970 la población evangélica comulgante habrá alcanzado un número mayor de 90,000, o sea, once veces más de lo que era en 1948.*
1968 was the year of Evangelism in Depth and the results were so great we are convinced that if Latin America is to be reached with the message of the gospel, it will have to be done through a united and coordinated effort of all the denominations, by means of teaching every believer to do the work of evangelism, and by means of the enthusiastic testimony of those whose lives have been transformed by the power of the redeeming work of Christ. It is estimated that during the year of Evangelism in Depth some 20,000 people accepted Christ as personal Savior. This means that by 1970 the number of communicant members of the evangelical church would have reached a total of more than 90,000, in other words, 11 times more members than there were in 1948.

Many were the cases when the Catholic Church or its priests cooperated with the program, proving again the effects of Vatican II (Bucana 1995, p.190). For instance, in the town of San Carlos a priest lent his sound equipment. In Bogota, the capital, Father Rafael Garcia Herreros invited evangelist Samuel Ballesteros to preach in his church. In Villavicencio, the priest was about to lead a Bible study when some E/D leaders paid him a visit. He invited them to participate in the Bible study and asked for their viewpoints on the passages they were discussing. Incredibly, E/D had the effect of uniting churches, denominations, and even a number of Catholics.

4.6 Evangelicals and Pentecostals come together

Evangelism in Depth did a great thing in uniting evangelicals of all creeds. At the same time it brought together factions of Protestant belief that had never worked together, for instance, the popular Pentecostalism that began growing significantly in the late 1950s. Bastian (1986, p. 205) explained that Pentecostalism expanded as:

…como movimiento de avivamiento puramente latinoamericano. Con su exuberancia, su llamado a la espontaneidad del Espíritu y la glosolalia, el canto alegre, los gritos sagrados, las oraciones unidas, el culto pentecostal era una expresión auténtica de la religiosidad popular de las masas del continente.
...a purely Latin American revival movement. With its exuberance, its spontaneous dependence on the Spirit and glosolalia [speaking in tongues], its happy songs, its sacred shouting, its prayers in unison, the Pentecostal cult was a truly authentic expression of popular religiosity among the masses in the continent.

As the mix took place, the immediate consequence was an inbreeding of Pentecostal beliefs that up to that time had been largely restricted to that particular off-shoot of Protestantism. Non-Pentecostals for the first time experienced non-traditional Pentecostal practices. This happened among ordinary Bible believing Christians who, up to this time, had simply sat in church pews, not doing much, but were now joined by happy, enthusiastic, clapping, shouting, miracle-believing Pentecostals. This kind of religion was contagious. Pentecostals deduced this was the way the early Christian church worshipped on the Day of Pentecost (in reference to Acts of the Apostles, chapter two). For people with a very superficial doctrinal base, this kind of Christianity was catching. It took little to persuade them to absorb these new forms and ways of worship. The resulting chain effect serves as a clarifying insight into the controversial direction the Latin American Protestant church was to take from then on.

4.6.1 Evangelicals and Pentecostals in controversy

Since the emphasis of Evangelism in Depth had been strictly on evangelism and did not include church doctrine, unity had been possible by agreeing at the simplest common denominator: that is, telling people about Christ. Once the evangelism was over and the indoctrination of these new believers began in their individual churches, tensions surfaced. However, evangelicals of all backgrounds had been praying for months, singing,
shouting, and believing in miracles together. For months they had heard: “We are one in Christ.”

Naturally, that “oneness” by the majority of the E/D participants (lay people) was understood in the totality of its meaning, not simply in the area of evangelism. Brushing shoulders with Christians who held very distinct views on the work of the Holy Spirit (different from what they had been taught), who practiced glosolalia as a must for all believers and believed in spiritual signs and wonders had its consequences. These practices not only became a point of curiosity, but of experimentation. As David Stoll (1990, p. 121) stated: “By imitating the most rapidly growing churches, the Pentecostal ones, and inviting them to join evangelical alliances, LAM [the Latin America Mission] helped establish their legitimacy.”

John H. Sinclair in his essay on “Historical Protestantism” (Sigmund 1999, p. 37) stated that Pentecostalism “offered a new dimension of Protestant identity.” With their concepts of prosperity theology and healing in the atonement “Pentecostals developed pastoral strategies which take into account the deep problems of Latin American society, [because] they believe that God can intervene to create a society of justice, health, and love.” He then added: “Pentecostalism has definitely presented ‘a new face’ of Protestantism in Latin America. The historic churches clearly have lost their monopoly over the religious life of Latin American society.” This was done, however, at the sacrifice of biblical authority, now that spiritual experience became the chief guideline, replacing both faith and Scripture.

In his story of the AIEC (the name of the Latin America Mission work in Colombia) Ubaldo Padilla provided evidence of the confused state of the
pastors and their congregations as a direct result of these Pentecostal influences after the successful E/D program (Padilla 1995, p. 80):

Entre los años de 1967 a 1974 se presentaron muchas exageraciones, abusos y grandes extremos. En algunas iglesias no se hacía énfasis en el conocimiento de la Biblia sino en las profecías, las visiones, y manifestaciones sobrenaturales. Se dejó de lado el conocimiento bíblico para enfatizar la experiencia, las emociones, los sentimientos. Se hizo mal uso del don de sanidad de tal manera que se llegó a rechazar la medicina científica prohibiendo a los creyentes consultar al médico en caso de enfermedad. Se generalizó la opinión que toda la enfermedad era producida por demonios… Se llegó a depender tanto en las profecías que en algunas iglesias se nombraron pastores no por la decisión democrática del voto de los miembros sino por profecías. Se sabe de matrimonios realizados no por voluntad de los contrayentes sino por profecías, visiones, o interpretación de lenguas. Otros extremos que se empezaron a manifestar a finales de los sesenta en algunos sectores, fue el rechazo a la educación y a la capacitación teológica. Algunos líderes laicos menospreciaban la educación, que lo verdaderamente importante era la vida espiritual, el ayuno, la oración y la práctica de los dones.

Between the years 1967 to 1974 many exaggerations, abuses, and [spiritual] extremes developed. In some churches the emphasis no longer was on the teachings of the Bible but on prophesies, visions, and supernatural manifestations. The knowledge of the Bible was put aside and experience, emotions and feelings were emphasized. Bad use was made of the gifts of healing, to the extreme that scientific medicines were rejected and [church members] were forbidden to go to doctors when they got sick. The idea spread that all diseases were produced by demons… It got to the point where so much dependence was placed on prophesies that in some churches pastors were called to serve, not by a democratic vote of the congregation, but by prophesies. In some cases people were married not out of love for each other but as a consequence of a prophecy, a vision, or the interpretation of tongues speaking. Other extremes that were manifested in some sectors by the end of the 60s were the rejection of education and theological training. Some of the leading lay leaders belittled education, believing that what was truly important was living a spiritual life of prayer, fasting, and the practice of [spiritual] gifts.

In a paper on “Leadership Training Models,” Nicholas Woodbury (1984, p. 1) wrote of the growth experienced by the AIEC in the late 1960s. From 25 congregations in early 1960, there were now 300 churches with a Christian community approaching 20,000.
There is no doubt that the general acceptance of Pentecostal beliefs drew many people to the Protestant churches. Religion became something very visible, experiential, external, and spiritualistic. There were clear “do's” and “do-not's,” since spirituality was proven by adherence to strict legalistic requirements. However, as long as one had “the experience” (especially speaking in tongues), one was “saved.” Things internal and invisible, like faith alone for salvation, fidelity to the Scriptures, Bible study, intellectual understanding of truth, and living by a biblical standard, were basically set aside (Padilla 1995, p. 80). The rules and doctrines followed were those established by someone’s pronouncement in church: a prophecy believed to be coming directly from God, a vision in the night, someone claiming they were interpreting someone else’s indiscernible glosolalia. In practice, these outward Pentecostal practices came to be more trusted than the simple words of Scripture (Padilla 1995, p. 80).

This same Pentecostal flame spread not only throughout Colombia, but throughout Latin America. Books have been written trying to explain this phenomenon: Pentecostalism: the World Their Parish and Tongues of Fire, by David Martin (2002); Is Latin America Turning Protestant? by David Stoll (1990); Historia del Protestantismo en América Latina, by Jean-Pierre Bastian (1990); Fire From Heaven, by Harvey Cox (1995). Other books have been written condemning the movement. These books include: Crisis in Latin America, by Emilio Nuñez and William Taylor (1989); Charismatic Chaos, by John MacArthur (1992); Charismatic Explosion, by Wolfgang Bühne (1996). And, of course, a good number of books defend the movement: Latin America in Flames, by Pablo Deiros and Carlos Mraida (1994); As the Spirit Leads Us,
edited by Kevin Ranaghans (1971) (detailing the growth of the Pentecostal movement in the Catholic Church); *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (1988), to name a few.

Rodolfo Blank (1996 p. 181), in his *Teología y Misión en América Latina* (Theology and Mission in Latin America) clearly stated that a turning of the doctrinal tables took place among Protestants:

> Las iglesias protestantes históricas constituyeron el bloque más grande de iglesias del protestantismo en América Latina al principio del siglo XX. A fines del siglo, en cambio, solo el 10 por ciento de los protestantes latinoamericanos pertenecen a las iglesias protestantes históricas.

The historic Protestant churches [Presbyterian, Lutheran, Anglican, Episcopalian, and Baptist] constituted the largest block of Protestant churches in Latin America at the beginning of the 20th Century. By the end of the century, on the other hand, only 10 percent of Latin American Protestants are members of the historic churches.

The historic churches did their best to hang on to their historic faith. But in the rest of the churches throughout Latin America, historic faith was replaced by a general acceptance of Pentecostal or Charismatic beliefs and practices.

This movement not only affected the Protestant churches, it had a great impact on the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America. Kenneth P. Serbin (Sigmund 1999, pp. 21-19) dates the beginning of the movement to 1967 when, at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a group of Catholic professors and students were touched by Pentecostals and began the Catholic Renewal Movement. Shortly thereafter this “Pentecostal zed” movement was taken to Brazil from where it spread like wild fire throughout the rest of the Latin Catholic Church. It is estimated one third of Latin Catholics are involved in the movement. It should be noted that because of
the similar beliefs and practices, there is considerable interaction between Catholic and Protestant Charismatics.

4.6.2 Explaining the Protestant/Pentecostal crisis

Meanwhile, missionaries and pastors—those who stood in the pulpits—saw the growing Pentecostal phenomena with much apprehension. David Howard, Director of the Latin America Mission in Colombia, was called on by the AIEC national leadership to help bring some sort of order to all the ensuing confusion. Padilla (1995, p. 79) summarized Howard’s conclusions:

1. Hizo diferenciar entre pentecostalismo y movimiento del Espíritu Santo…
2. La posición de la Misión Latinoamericana era quedarse abierta a toda la obra del Espíritu Santo
3. La Misión tenía el propósito de vigilar y estar atenta para prevenir y corregir cualquier error y el extremismo en que pudiera caer la AIEC
4. La Misión quiere exaltar a Cristo, es decir, procurar que la Asociación permanezca con una doctrina Cristocéntrica, previniendo un sobre énfasis en la doctrina y la Persona del Espíritu Santo.

1. [Howard] differentiated between Pentecostalism and the work of the Holy Spirit.
2. He explained that the position of the Latin America Mission was to keep open to the [genuine] work of the Holy Spirit.
3. The goal of the Mission was to watch and be attentive in order to prevent and correct any error as well as any extreme beliefs that could befall the AIEC.
4. The Mission’s desire was to exalt Christ, that is, try to hold the Association to a Christ-centered doctrine, by preventing an over-emphasis of the doctrines of the Holy Spirit.

However, the basic problem lay in the fact that the ones most interested in the Pentecostal type of experiences were the untrained pastors and lay people. The doctrines of the Holy Spirit were inseparable in their minds from the experiences of the Holy Spirit. Since people were experiencing what they thought were the “spiritual gifts” described in the Bible, they saw no need for the study of doctrine. For this reason, explained Padilla
(1995, p. 77), these new beliefs produced “radical conflicts” between the better-trained pastors and their lay people and also between national leaders who accepted the neo-Pentecostal experiences and missionaries.

One must remember that the majority of Protestants came from the marginalized areas of Colombia. The majority lived in the country or the outer fringes of towns and cities. They had very little education. They were miserably poor. Only a few could read or write. Up to this point, they had depended entirely on their pastors and the missionaries to guide them spiritually. Now, however, they were experiencing exhilarating new feelings and practicing joyous new ways of worship. They were being told of special personal powers that could be obtained through a Holy Spirit experience. These powers would enable them to realize impossible things, including healing the sick, seeing visions, speaking in tongues, and obtaining great possessions, money, houses and lands.

However, to be told by a missionary or a well-trained pastor that they were experiencing what might be the work of the devil (Padilla 1995, p. 77), had, at best, to be very disconcerting. They had come to believe what the Pentecostal friends were preaching, that what was taking place was exactly the same special anointing of the Holy Spirit that had been manifested in Acts of the Apostles, but now in an even greater and more powerful way.

When pastors with a solid Bible training quoted Luther, Calvin or even Wesley to contradict what neo-Pentecostals were experiencing, or when they repeated explanations from their theological texts, such arguments were simply not accepted. Jean-Pierre Bastian (1986, p. 266) provided the reason:

Para los protestantes latinoamericanos, más que Lutero, Calvino o Wesley, sus símbolos fueron Juárez, Martí o Sarmiento, vale decir, un
For Latin American Protestants, more than Luther, Calvin or Wesley, their symbols were Bolivar, Juarez, Marti or Sarmiento, that is to say, their imagined nationalist, liberal, anti-Catholic, modern, secularist [heroes], who refused to submit their national identity to the political social values defended by Catholicism.

Luther and Calvin were unknown names to them. Furthermore, an experience had more logic than a teaching. Those past, unknown Protestant personalities, whoever they happened to be, were simply contradicting what they thought was reality and spiritual truth. Like Bolivar, Juarez, Marti and Sarmiento, the Colombians were duty-bound to stand up and fight in defense of their newfound Colombian friends and their beliefs. Those so-called great church leaders of the past had nothing to do with what they were experiencing. To them (Padilla 1995), it sounded as if their pastors and the missionaries were openly and dangerously denying the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

For each argument presented, these lay Christians recounted a vision, or a direct “word from the Lord” that someone they knew had received in church or a supposed miracle they had actually seen. In their minds, these were much more authentic than any doctrinal opinions anyone else might express. Thus the contrary opinions of those with theological training—who, after all, did not understand the ethos and aspirations of the poor—were rejected off hand (Padilla 1995, p. 77). Those who refused to go along with these new beliefs were closed to the work of the Holy Spirit, unspiritual or accused of being stooges of the missionaries.
In the mysterious ways in which the human mind works, the corrective measures trained pastors and missionaries tried to introduce were completely rejected. Experience now outweighed reason. This experiential religion was one of the underlying reasons behind the approaching rejection of missionaries along with theological education in general.

4.6.3 Common practices of the popular neo-Pentecostals

Prior to the neo-Pentecostal takeover, those churches known as “evangelical” had simply emphasized the Bible and living a life of obedience to God by faith. Now the Pentecostals introduced new beliefs supposedly inspired directly by the Holy Spirit. Deiros and Mriada (1994, pp. 117-121), who favor these radical Pentecostal beliefs, summarized them:

In the culto pentecostal popular, el arreglo del discurso no es lógico, sino mágico, en el sentido de que las palabras por sí mismas tienen poder. Es por eso que el discurso no es elaborado, sino repetitivo y testimonial. No se procura entender sino sentir…

[C]ualquier persona puede ejercer el poder… en la medida en que reciba algún don del Espíritu Santo. El don de lenguas, en manera particular, es suficiente para ascender a los puestos de liderazgo y para sentirse reconocidos y rodeados de prestigio en el seno de la congregación… Las iglesias pentecostales populares son comunidades del Espíritu más que de conocimiento…

En las iglesias pentecostales populares…el campo siempre está abierto para lo ‘novedoso’, que viene mediante la acción del Espíritu. Esta apertura a lo ‘novedoso’, o expectativa por ello, es lo que hace sumamente atractivo el culto popular. Como no sabe qué es lo que puede ocurrir, reina la libertad y la alegría de la novedad en el reino del Espíritu…

[L]a fe pentecostal popular no camina esencialmente en dirección a la salvación por vía ética, sino en la de la solución de los problemas cotidianos por la fe en el poder de Dios…

Cada creyente se siente participe no solo de la gracia sino del ministerio, a través del ejercicio de los dones carismáticos. Se da una ‘popularización’ de lo religioso, por la cual todos tienen la oportunidad de introducirse a los misterios de la fe…
Todo el mundo se siente en libertad de expresar como mejor lo sienta sus emociones. Lo más común son las caídas al suelo, bien por el toque del Espíritu Santo o por resistencia de los demonios a ese toque… En lugar del lenguaje técnico-teológico que sólo el clero puede entender, los creyentes pueden recibir el don de lenguas, que resulta en una experiencia mucho más emocionante que recitar frases abstractas de un lenguaje especializado o técnico. De este modo, todo creyente tiene acceso a un código de comunicación de corte trascendente y divino.

La fe no se piensa sino que se actúa. No se canta para transmitir un mensaje lógico, sino para dar testimonio de un hecho concreto y que vive. De allí que las canciones se repitan hasta el cansancio. No importa tanto qué se canta sino el cantar mismo como expresión de la fe y alegría. Junto con esto se da también un fuerte énfasis en lo sobrenatural y milagroso…Hay también un marcado énfasis sobre participación grupal. Todos pueden hacerlo cantando, orando en voz alta, gritando ‘aleluyas’ y ‘glorias a Dios’, palmeando, saltando, danzando, cayendo al suelo, etc.

In popular Pentecostalism, the sermon is not logical; rather it is magical, in the sense that the words themselves have power. For this reason the sermon is not elaborate, rather repetitive and of a testimonial nature. One does not expect to understand, but rather to feel....

Anybody can exert power...in the measure that they receive a spiritual gift from the Holy Spirit. The gift of tongues, in a special way, is sufficient for a person to rise to the levels of leadership or to feel prestige and to be recognized by the congregation...Thus the churches of popular Pentecostalism are communities of the Spirit rather than of knowledge...

In these popular Pentecostal churches...there is always room for 'novel' things that come through the action of the Spirit. This opening for 'new and novel' things is what makes the services so attractive. Since the congregation does not know what to expect next, liberty and joy reign in the Spirit...

Faith, in the popular Pentecostal movement, does not move essentially in the direction of an ethical type of salvation, rather it is a means for the solution of every day problems through the power of God...

Through the exercise of his charismatic gifts, every believer has the sense of being a participant not only of grace but of the ministry. Everything religious is ‘popularized,’ to the extent that all feel they have equal opportunity to share in the mysteries of the faith...
Everyone is free to express their emotions, however they may feel them. The most common way is by falling to the ground, whether by a touch of the Holy Spirit or as a result of resisting the work of demons… Instead of a technical-theologic language that only the clergy can understand, believers can receive the gift of tongues that provides a far greater emotional experience than merely reciting some specialized abstract technical phrases. In this way, every believer has access to a transcendent and divine communications code...

Faith is not something that is thought through or deliberated, rather something acted on. One does not sing to transmit a logical message, rather to give testimony to a lived-out, concrete fact. For this reason the songs are repeated until they become tiresome. The importance is not in the singing rather that the singing itself is an expression of faith and gladness. Together with this is the strong emphasis in the supernatural and the miraculous …There is also a strong emphasis on group participation. They can express this through song, through praying out loud, shouting ‘Halleluiahs’ and ‘Praise the Lord,’ and by clapping, jumping, dancing, or falling on the floor, etc.

Little wonder that David Stoll (1990, p. 113), in commenting on the movement throughout Latin America, explained:

Instead of praying to the Virgin for a cure or going to a folk healer, Pentecostals pray for deliverance by the Holy Spirit… Many rural pastors are former shamans who, in effect, continue to divine and cure under the new religion, as a more effective source of power and legitimation… [F]rom an orthodox point of view, faith healing, prophecy, and the like are ambiguous and risky. Such phenomena are so common in other traditions that they are not necessarily Christian. Even if reports of miracles are true, are these the work of God or the devil, demonstrations of Christian power or of witchcraft?

When converts interpret Christianity as a superior form of magic, in any case, they are bringing their traditional belief in magic into the new religion. That means they could be carried off by the next miracle worker to come along, even if he is a raging heathen.

This description of the beliefs and practices of so many churches certainly was not true of all. David Martin (1990, p. 52) claimed that in 1936 in Central America 2.3 percent of all Protestants were Pentecostal. At this point in history, they accounted for 80 percent. Deiros and Mraida (1994, p. 9) claimed that now three quarters of all Protestants in Latin America are Pentecostal. Significant as these figures may be, there are still about a third of
the estimates 60,000,000 evangélicos (or 20 million) who have not become Pentecostal. These non-Pentecostals are the ones who generally ask for education and maintain a clearer Protestant profile. Also, as this researcher has traveled throughout Latin America, many Pentecostals have come to his gatherings looking for biblical help. In other words, all is not lost. However, the increase in Pentecostalism, especially neo-Pentecostalism, leads to the identification of a third problem.

4.6.4 The third problem: a lack of discernment

There can be no doubt that a large segment of those who classify themselves as neo-Pentecostal reject many of the doctrinal tenets accepted by Historic Christians. They have opted for new standards of belief. The third problem can thus be explained in the following way:

PROBLEM 3: When strange and new doctrines were introduced to pastors in Colombia, the untrained pastors were unable to discern and deal with them. Most accepted the new beliefs without question.

We discover a Protestant Church—untaught at the top—that lost its moorings. It now substituted ‘Faith alone,’ ‘Christ alone,’ and ‘Scripture alone’ for a different faith—one based on signs, wonders, experience and emotions. It moved—practically unconsciously—from the tenets of historic Christianity to another gospel, away from all that had been taught in the Bible by Christ, the Apostles, and the Old Testament Prophets.

The Apostle Paul criticized the Galatians for so quickly abandoning what he had taught them, substituting “another gospel” (Gal. 1:6). Missionaries could have made the same accusation when many of their followers adopted neo-Pentecostalism wholesale. In Paul’s day that new ‘gospel’ was one of ‘works,’ going back to the ancient Hebrew practices and attaching these to
faith in Christ alone. In Colombia, the neo-Pentecostals substituted ‘faith alone’ for feelings—visible and experiential manifestations of their religion. They offered their believers not a God who came to forgive man his many sins, but a much more popular god who was at man’s beck and call to reward people (those who learned the secrets of faith) with all kinds of physical cures and material goods. One need never be sick and one need never be poor—the “health to wealth” gospel had the ultimate solution.

This new ‘gospel’ has worked exceedingly well in poverty-stricken Latin America. Thousands upon thousands have joined churches where neo-Pentecostalism has been preached. One can understand the appeal of this ‘gospel,’ because people who are poor want miraculous solutions. They have joined these churches joyfully and enthusiastically hoping for a way of escape.

However, as congregations throughout Colombia began absorbing these new doctrines and practices and joining the churches that had this emphasis, changes necessarily began to take place in their religious rituals and beliefs. Christianity became something experienced rather than believed. The Bible took second place to their new exotic experiences, and what missionaries had faithfully taught was put aside for a more emotional message.

Now missionaries seemingly had three choices: join the parade, fight the overpowering movement, or pack up and leave. What happened next made their decisions much easier.

4.7. The missionary moratorium begins

This section will aim to show, in sketchy fashion, the struggle between foreign missionaries and national church leaders in Colombia as the 1970s came to a close. Rather than go into the relational and cultural problems so
manifest between missionaries and nationals, we will research the details of a very crucial gathering that took place on this subject February 19 to 24, 1978, in the picturesque city of Medellin. Surrounded by beautiful exotic flowers and spectacular mountains, Colombian national leaders and several missionary leaders met to make a critical assessment of the place and role of foreign missionaries in the country. The meeting was called by CEDC (Confederación Evangélica de Colombia), the official coordinating body for the evangelical churches. CEDC was established in 1950 to defend the interests of the Protestant Church before the government during the years of persecution (described in Chapter 3). After the persecution ended, CEDC continued as the main, official body to mediate disputes between the different evangelical agencies and to further the interests of the Protestant church in general.

### 4.7.1 A very divisive debate

According to Jaramillo (1978, p. 158), who took the minutes of the gathering, both missionary leaders (representative of different societies) and leading national pastors were invited to this special gathering. The purpose, as noted, was to debate the place foreign missionaries should occupy in Colombia. These were the themes chosen for debate:

1. What is a missionary?
2. The transplanted foreign structures and their incidence in the evangelical church
3. Moratorium for missionaries
4. What is the position of the foreign missionary in the evangelical church of Colombia?
5. What is the position of the evangelical church in Colombia?
6. Concerning the foreign missionary
7. The role of the missionary today
8. How to avoid some of the relational problems between national individuals and foreign entities

First of all, what is striking is that a meeting for such a purpose would have been called. Secondly, since most latinos dislike official face-to-face confrontations, it is fascinating that this meeting ever took place. The fact that they met reveals the very special character of Colombians: they are a very up-front and self-assured people. Thirdly, this gathering reflects the growing maturity of the national church in recognizing the problem that existed and the need to find a just solution.

Up to this point, dependency on missionaries for instruction and direction in the church was taken for granted. Also, the national church was still very dependent on the missionary dollar, dollars that would be sorely missed once the missionaries departed. As national leaders, however, they had come to the place where they wanted to assume full control of their destiny. Obviously, missionaries had hung on to their authority and power too long. Like a child that had become an adult, the nationals wanted to be treated as equals. This was their country. The missionaries were foreigners. It was time for nationals to take control. Harsh and negative feelings were expressed at the meeting. Once missionaries understood that such attitudes existed, they took note that it was time for them to pack their bags and leave as graciously as possible.
4.7.2 The points made in the controversial debate

The first to speak was Ignacio Guevara, the founder of the Iglesia Panamericana, a splinter group from the Iglesia Cristiana del Cuerpo de Cristo (Christian Church of the Body of Christ). After giving an introduction based on Jesus and his life, he immediately charged the modern missionary, as follows (Jaramillo 1978, p. 159):

La mayoría de los misioneros de hoy ejercen su ministerio en oficinas; no ven la necesidad, no la sienten, de ejercer un ministerio andante; no se dan para suplir esta necesidad, porque la obra misionera se ha vuelto muy profesional. Gastamos horas y días discutiendo palabras técnicas, estudiando a Dios por medio de la teología. Mientras humildes campesinos que escasamente saben leer, aquí mismo en Colombia, están plantando iglesias y ganando almas para Cristo, los líderes de la Iglesia desperdiciamos el tiempo olvidando abrir la Biblia y, perdonen la crítica, por discutir teología, queriendo probar nuestros puntos de vista personales. Esto es lo que nos tiene enfermos, metidos en esta maraña de la cual no podemos salir.

The majority of missionaries today do their work in offices; they do not see nor feel the need to go out walking among the people. They will not give themselves to such things because missionary work today has become too professional. Hours are spent discussing technical terms, studying God by studying theology. Meanwhile, the humble farmers that barely know how to read here in Colombia are the ones going out and planting churches and winning people to Christ. These leaders [missionaries] of the church are misspending their time; they are forgetting to open their Bibles and, forgive the criticism, but they are out discussing theology simply to prove their personal points of view. This is what makes us sick, all stuck in this morass from which we cannot dig out.

The second speaker, Juan Vanegas (a Presbyterian pastor), took two orange seedlings to the pulpit and spoke about how they could be made to grow: by planting a seedling into the ground, or by grafting it into an already existing plant. Then he went back in history to the first missionary, Henry Pratt, who landed in Barranquilla July 20, 1856, at 2:00 p.m. He said Pratt brought with him his North Americanism, his Presbyterianism, his administrative structures, his devotionals, his theology, and then grafted these
into the structure of the church he was about to plant. Nothing was national; everything was foreign (Jaramillo 1978, p. 166). This, he claimed, was what was so wrong with so many missionaries.

The third speaker, Hector Valencia (a teacher in the Mennonite Brethren Church), simply asked the question, “Do we need the presence of missionaries?” and introduced the term “moratorium.” (In the 1970s there was wide discussion on a proposal made by John Gatu, an East Africa church leader, for a “moratorium” on Western Missionaries; proposed at a time when colonialism was coming to an end and colonial leaders were being recalled. Some national church leaders saw a parallel application to western missionaries (Latourette 1997, page 1496). First of all, Valencia called for an “Anthropological Moratorium: no more missionaries to be sent to the Colombian Indians.” Secondly, “No more missionaries to be sent to the successful Colombian churches.” Third, a general “moratorium on missionaries being sent to Colombia was needed because of the many failures of those already there (Jaramillo 1978, p. 171).”

These were the most strident voices. After this, Rev. Robert Hess, a missionary and director of the Overseas Missionary Society, was called on to speak on behalf of the missionaries. He gave a defense based on the biblical mandate, stressing that as long as there were people without the knowledge of God there would be the need for missionaries (Jaramillo 1978, pp. 176).

He was followed by the soft, reasoned voice of Aristobulo Porras, a Presbyterian pastor and Director of the Bible Societies in Bogota, who spoke of the many sacrifices the missionaries had made to bring the gospel to
Colombia (Jaramillo 1978, p. 186). Rather than downgrading them, he praised and thanked them for their efforts.

One of the more effective speakers was Luz Dary Marin, Director of Alfa-Lit (an effective international literacy agency). She addressed the point that there were missionaries and there were missionaries, distinguishing between those who blend in with the nationals and their culture, and those who do not. Then she spoke of the fact that there were nationals and there were nationals, that is, those who were hard to work with, and those who selectively accepted all the kindnesses and bounty brought by the missionaries (Jaramillo 1978, p. 187-190).

Others spoke, echoing mostly what had already been said. It was clear, however, that leadership changes had to be made. It was time for the nationals to take their leadership role seriously. At the very end Ross Clemenger—representing the Evangelical Union of South America—issued a wise warning. He picked up on the example of the “seedling” used by Juan Vanegas (the second speaker), emphasizing that for these seedlings to grow effectively they needed the loving care of those who had planted them. He explained that the missionaries had been the go-between Colombia and Canada, the United States, and Europe. The Colombian church needed money, and he wanted them to be aware that with the “seed-planters” departure the “seedlings” would most likely soon run out of water and fertilizer and dry up (Jaramillo 1978, p. 193).

We now can identify a fourth problem: a church left leaderless once the missionaries began to pack their bags and return to their homeland.
4.7.3 Fourth problem: What happened once the missionaries left

The importance of missionaries in Colombia was undeniable. They were the founders of the churches. They were the doctrinal stewards. They held the purse strings. They were the ones who, for the most part, occupied the positions of control. There is no doubt that the greatest loss for the church would be this spiritual resource. Missionaries took the spiritual temperature of the church. Missionaries gave the diagnosis. Missionaries provided the medicines. However, with the missionaries gone, the health and well-being of the church was at stake.

PROBLEM 4: Now that the missionaries had left, the problem for those concerned with the training of national pastors was how to bring all those untrained pastors and churches back to the Scriptures and the Historic Christian faith.

Because the growing, multiplying, national church had so very few theologically trained pastors and leaders, it was dependent on the missionaries for its doctrinal orientation. Once the missionaries returned to their homeland, whether the national leaderships recognized it or not, the church would be greatly weakened for lack of doctrinal guidance—untrained pastors did not have the knowledge to provide it.

In the heat of the national/missionary debate, little attention was given to the consequences of a missionary withdrawal. National pastors saw the opportunity to take control over mission stations, mission properties, mission offices, and the national churches. That, to them, became more immediate and important than the long-range consequences. However, for most of the churches, the departure of the missionaries would mean the loss of doctrinal guidance. The national church simply did not have enough well-trained pastors to replace the missionaries. The short-sightedness of those who
thought it was time for the missionaries to leave simply did not understand the contribution they made as doctrinal guardians.

Thus, after a century of work, Protestant missionaries in the 1970s began to pack their bags, hoping that the foundation they had laid would ensure the continued growth of the Colombian church. No one, however, could have predicted the surprising growth that would occur among Protestants in the 1970s and 1980s. That growth would reveal how weak the national church truly was.

**Conclusion**

In preparation for the next chapter, we summarize the four major problems learned from the failures of both the missionaries and the national church leaders:

1. *Missionaries did not make the churches aware of the theological education needed by pastors to lead their churches biblically.*
2. *Once the missionaries left, the untrained pastors were not equipped to recognize or ward off false teachings.*
3. *When strange doctrines were introduced, untrained pastors tended to accept the new beliefs unquestioningly.*
4. *After the missionaries left and doctrinal conflicts arose, there was no plan or program in place to remedy the situation.*

Without question, one of the most difficult things for a missionary to do is to turn over his life’s work to the national Christians. He knows this must happen and that eventually it will, however, the tendency is to keep putting off those decisions. What makes it difficult is that the work being turned over represents the investment of a lifetime. The inevitable day can creep up
unexpectedly, especially when circumstances mandate it. Life-long ministries have ended in disaster because missionaries prolonged that interchange needlessly. The national leaders also were unprepared for that exchange of responsibilities.

As the researcher studied the history of the church in Colombia, he came to the sad conclusion that the exchange of control was more forced than voluntary. No one, it seems to the researcher, was prepared for the February 1978 debate that led to the missionary moratorium. Prior to that debate most missionaries, to his mind, acted as if they were going to lead the church indefinitely. When they awoke to the fact that they were no longer wanted, that exchange of power came far too late, simply because the task of preparing their replacements had not been completed. Later, when the doctrinal difficulties came, the national church leaders who knew what was at stake began to feel the consequences.

We will see in the next chapter the spiritual crisis that developed and note the struggles of one denomination to save their churches from spiritual chaos. We will learn, at the same time, that adequate programs to train national pastors were becoming available. Today, many resources exist to help both the national church and missionaries give solid biblical training to the national pastors. There is no excuse for not preparing national leaders adequately.
CHAPTER FIVE
A NATIONAL CHURCH IN NEED OF REPAIR

Introduction

In the previous chapters, the history of the Church in Colombia was examined and the early beginnings of the Protestant Church in this Catholic land were particularly noted. A church clearly under missionary leadership was struggling to create a national following in the midst of the successful planting of the first Protestant churches and their progressive growth throughout Colombia. The new wave of missionaries was described; specifically, how they differed from the early pioneers in beliefs and approach. The explosive growth of the Protestant Church in the wake of Vatican II (once the stigma of heresy was removed from Protestants) was examined. This growth was helped by a popularized form of Pentecostalism that responded to the physical wants and dreams of the poor. Additionally, the means by which theological aspects of this Pentecostalism came into conflict with earlier teachings of the missionaries was discussed. This theological conflict created a doctrinal crisis throughout Colombia. Finally, the Missionary-National controversy that resulted in the departure of the majority of the missionaries was reviewed. How this missionary departure affected the churches was closely examined, since the original guardians of the faith and doctrine were removed from the culture.

In noting these particular historical developments, the research identified four major problems in the Protestant churches that would seriously affect the future of these Colombian churches. Here they are summarized:
1. Missionaries did not make the churches aware of the theological education needed by pastors to lead their churches biblically.

2. Once the missionaries left, the untrained pastors were not equipped to recognize or ward off false teachings.

3. When strange doctrines were introduced, untrained pastors tended to accept the new beliefs unquestioningly.

4. After the missionaries left and doctrinal conflicts arose, there was no plan or program in place to correct the situation.

The aim of this chapter is twofold. First, it is important to show how the previously mentioned factors affected the Protestant Church overall. Secondly, now that the basic problems of the Protestant Church in Colombia have been identified, the aim will be to move on to discussing possible solutions. To this end, the final sections of this chapter will be devoted to examining an education program created by LOGOI Ministries that is designed for pastors already in service who have limited Bible and doctrinal studies. It is important to understand this particular program of pastor education because it was the program chosen by one of the major denominations in Colombia (the AIEC with 300 churches) to lift pastors out of their doctrinal quagmire.

With these areas investigated, the finding should lead us to a workable hypothesis for our overall study of the Protestant Church in Colombia.

5.1 The priority of evangelism in the 1960s and 1970s

In this section, the priorities placed by the missionaries in their efforts in Colombia will be discussed. It will be revealed that though numerically there were enough missionaries to have given national leaders an adequate
preparation, this was not the main priority. Evangelism, not pastoral training, was the chief priority of the missionaries.

The following statistics provided by Grubb and Coxill (1962) are helpful to identify the chief areas of interest. In 1961, there were 466 North American missionaries in Colombia, 1,618 places of worship, 838 national pastors, and a total of 92,728 Protestant Church members. What this means is that, statistically, for every two pastors, there was one missionary. Surely there were enough missionaries to not only help pastors keep straight theologically, but to have provided lay leaders with necessary biblical and theological training. Yet pastors were inadequately prepared. According to Padilla (1995, p. 111): “Eighty percent of the pastors had not finished their primary education and the same percentage had no formal biblical or pastoral training.”

From this data, the following conclusion can be drawn: there would seem to have been enough missionaries present in Colombia to have provided potential pastors the biblical and theological training they needed, had this been a priority. However, the missionary emphasis during the 1960s was evangelism and not education for those within the Colombian Protestant Church who would succeed the missionaries.

5.1.1 A leading mission declares evangelism its priority

Regardless of the organization, Protestant missionaries in Colombia would certainly have echoed Kenneth Strachan’s statement (Roberts 1971, p. 120):

Therefore, the essential mission of the church of Christ for which it has been equipped by the Holy Spirit is to proclaim the good news of salvation to every creature in all the world and to attest the reality of the power of the gospel through the holy lives and genuine love of its members, their devoted service to mankind everywhere, and their patient endurance of suffering.
There is no doubt that a study of the Latin America Mission during the 1960s is a study of an organization totally wrapped up in creating methods and working out concepts for world evangelization. Pretiz and Roberts (1998, p. 74) chose as title for their book *Like a Mighty Army*, a phrase growing out of Kenneth Strachan’s theorem: “The growth of any movement is in direct proportion to the ability of that movement to mobilize its total membership in the constant propaganda of its beliefs.” Kenneth Strachan, Director of the Latin America Mission, was determined to focus all the organization’s energies and resources on the evangelization of Latin America.

In his biography of Strachan, Roberts (1971, p. 41) wrote:

Harry Strachan’s call had been to evangelize. The Latin America Mission had been organized for evangelism. Its original name was the ‘Latin America Evangelization Campaign.’ The congregations formed in Costa Rica were, in a sense, merely accidental by-products of the evangelistic campaigns… Reared in this atmosphere, Ken [the son who took over the Mission’s leadership] knew no denominational loyalties as a youth, and he had never developed a feeling for the ongoing presence of the visible church. Nor did his years at an interdenominational college or his ministerial training in an interdenominational seminary contribute much to a sense of churchmanship.

This focus on evangelism helps explain why so little importance was given to provide solid training for the pastors associated with the Latin America Mission in Colombia (AIEC). In fact, the Bible school, Centro Bíblico de Colombia, established in 1953 in Sincelejo, was created to teach young Colombians how to do evangelism, not how to lead a church (Padilla 1995, p. 61): “In a period of 14 years only three pastors were ordained” who had studied in the CBC.

Furthermore, as one of the leading missionary organizations during the 1950s and 1960s, the Latin America Mission’s influence was enormous. Pretiz
and Roberts (1998) showed that influence by discussing the way most missionary organizations in Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Peru and Colombia joined wholeheartedly in their Evangelism in Depth (E/D) efforts. These other organizations modeled their emphasis on the precedents set by this progressive society, the Latin America Mission.

5.1.2 The failure of Bible schools for pastors

Another factor was that schools established for the purpose of training pastors were unsuccessful. Bucana (1995) reported that in 1968 the Evangelical Union of South America closed its Bible Institute stating:

...luego de cuarenta años de existencia, debido a la merma en el número de estudiantes, y la convicción de que el instituto no cumplía su propósito de preparar líderes para fundar y construir iglesias que crecieran.

...after 40 years of existence, due to the small number of enrolled students, and the conviction that the institute does not fulfill its purpose of preparing leaders to establish and build churches that grow.

Bucana (1995, p. 202) added that in 1974 another mission, the Evangelical Crusades, closed the doors to its Bible Institute. A sister organization, however, calling itself the Christian Crusade opened an experimental, nonresidential Bible College that set up an intermittent schedule of eight weeks of classes and eight off so that students who had jobs or led churches could study and not lose their jobs or churches.

Two other schools provided pastor training at the seminary level, the Seminario Bíblico de Colombia, established in 1944 in Medellín by the Interamerican Mission, and the Seminario Bautista in Cali, Colombia, established in 1951 by the Southern Baptist Association, basically to serve the needs of their own Baptist churches (Estep, 1968). These schools had
relatively small enrollments. Reading through the *History of the Evangelical Church in Colombia* by Bucana (1995), most education efforts were schools for children, as reviewed in previous chapters. Because of the poor quality of students—most of whom had very little education—schools set up to train pastors were few, their struggles great and their successes sporadic.

5.2 Pastors unprepared for their responsible jobs

In this section the consequence of the neglect of the missionaries to give appropriate attention to their future replacements will be examined. Missionary Javier Voelkel, in a statement made in 1974, described what the situation was in Bogotá, the capital at that time, in the history of the church (Bucana 1995, p. 201):

*Casi todos los pastores evangélicos son hombres de una dedicación espiritual impresionante quienes invierten en su ministerio su corazón y su vida. Muchos han sufrido ostracismo social, penuria económica y aun violencia física al seguir a su llamamiento de Dios al servicio cristiano a tiempo completo…sin embargo, pocos, aun en las ciudades, tienen su título de bachiller. De los más de cien iglesias evangélicas en Bogotá, ni una es dirigida por un pastor nacional con título universitario.*

Practically all of the evangelical pastors are men of impressive spiritual dedication who have invested their heart and soul in the ministry. Many have suffered social ostracism, economic poverty and even physical violence as a consequence of their divine calling and full-time service to the church…however, few, even in the cities, have a bachelor’s degree. Of the more than 100 evangelical churches in Bogotá, not one is being led by a pastor with a university title.

Because so little priority was given to training pastors for their churches, when most missionaries departed in the 1970s, they left behind—to again quote the numbers given by Grubb and Coxill (1962)—1,618 places of worship, and 92,728 church members to be cared for by 838 national pastors most of whom did not know the Scriptures, lacked a basic grounding in
Christian doctrines, and had mere notions of what a biblical church was all about from observing the missionaries.

5.3 The crisis faced by untrained national pastors

Previous chapters provided an account of the way the Pentecostals introduced their doctrinal ideas and practices during the 1968 Evangelism in Depth program. In this section, how the unprepared pastors faced these new doctrines and practices will be examined. The following quote by Padilla (1995, pp. 81-82) explained the crisis that resulted among church leaders:

"La AIEC pasó por una profunda crisis de liderazgo a nivel de toda la organización, pues casi todos los líderes fuertes y de experiencia salieron de la misma por desacuerdos con el movimiento Pentecostal... Con la salida del país de la mayoría de los misioneros, los laicos asumieron la administración y se cometieron muchos errores... Algunos de los nuevos líderes motivados por un espíritu nacionalista y un espiritualismo sectario desconocieron el trabajo de los misioneros y rechazaron la educación teológica que estos habían impuesto... una cantidad de obreros laicos fueron ascendidos a Licenciados y otros a Ordenados, no teniendo en cuenta requisitos académicos, sino únicamente la vocación y la experiencia.

The AIEC went through a deep leadership crisis throughout the entire organization [denomination], now that almost all the strong and experienced leaders left because they were not in favor of this Pentecostal Movement... Then, when the majority of the missionaries also left the country, laypeople assumed control of the administration and they made many mistakes... Some of the new leaders, motivated by a nationalistic and a spiritualistic sectarian spirit, rejected all the theology they had been taught by the missionaries... At the same time a good number of lay leaders were promoted, some were licensed to preach, others ordained simply because of their vocation and experience, disdaining all the former academic prerequisites.

Throughout Colombia, many Protestant churches were in similar confusion. Missionaries had lost control, and neo-Pentecostalism had become the rage. A spirit of nationalism inspired a desire for independence from all things foreign. In addition, a good number of church splits occurred, brought
about by the collision of all the new controversial movements. Bucana (1995, p. 181) provided a chart of the larger denominations that split (see Table 7).

Table 7. Denominations that Divided in Colombia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Year of Division</th>
<th>New Entity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church of Christ</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>Panamerican Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel Evangelical Church</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Interamericanc Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Crusade</td>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Colombian Evangelical Crusade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Evangelical Crusade</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Colombian Evangelical Crusade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God of Prophecy</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Church of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformed Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Colombia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of these churches then split again as new leaders challenged the beliefs of the older ones. Long-held beliefs changed; new national leaders espoused theological ideas that contradicted historic Christianity. Feeling uncomfortable and unwanted in this religious milieu, missionaries looked to other areas of the world where they might serve. With their exit, however, went the doctrinal stabilizing force that had been present in Colombia since the founding of the Protestant Church in 1856.
5.3.1 Pastors make choices

Padilla (1995, p. 85) noted that pastors who were neither in favor of the missionaries nor of the Pentecostal emphasis on experience turned to a more pragmatic approach to Christianity called Liberation Theology (then being taught at the prestigious Latin America Mission seminary in Costa Rica). Their emphasis was on ways of saving the poor and downtrodden via a convoluted combination of socialism and Christianity. Levine (1992, p. 42) explained:

In Liberation theology, the very enterprise of doing theology moves from a deductive and axiomatic logic to become an interpretive discipline, shaped and limited by the context in which it evolves and by the interests and experiences of the Christian community itself. As a practical matter, these interests and experiences are the way they are because of historical realities of exploitation, injustice, and oppression. By framing the matter in these terms, liberation theology commits itself to listening to the poor and learning about the world as they see and experience it. Commitment and involvement with struggles for liberation are central, and therefore stances of dispassionate neutrality are dismissed as unrealistic and hypocritical...The relation of all this to Marxism is highly controversial and has provided much of the ground for ecclesiastical and political attacks on liberation theologians and those associated with them.

So in the early 1970s, at this very fascinating juncture in the history of Colombia, the Christian community was caught in an incredible mix of ideologies. On the one hand were the traditional values and beliefs of Catholicism; on the other hand were the newer teachings handed down by Protestant missionaries. To this mix was added the wave of interest in Communism brought about by the appealing figure of Fidel Castro and the popularity of Father Camilo Torres (who in a blaze of publicity left the Catholic Church in Colombia to join with the Army of National Liberation, a Communist front). Additionally, a number of Protestant pastors joined the Liberation Theology movement. Finally came the new neo-Pentecostal wave—an
appealing gospel with emphasis on the Holy Spirit, healings, tongues, miracles and spiritual power, Satan and his demons.

5.3.2 How Pentecostalism got started

In reviewing the growth of Protestantism in Colombia, the research points to the infusion of Pentecostalism into the mainstream churches as (a) a cause for growth, and simultaneously (b) a direct cause for a doctrinal crisis in the churches, which resulted in church splits. Further discussion will be helpful for gaining an understanding of the Pentecostal movement and the reasons for the tensions between Pentecostal and other traditional Protestant groups.

First, however, one must always remember that Pentecostals consider themselves to be Protestants. Historically, as Martin (2002, pp. 7-11) pointed out, their roots are in the Methodist Church. Burgess and McGee (1988, pp. 220-221) added that the movement came as people sought the “baptism of the Holy Spirit as an enduement of power for service.” The gifts most sought after were speaking in tongues and divine healing. Historically, the movement began in a small church off Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1906 “that launched Pentecostalism into a worldwide movement:”

The first persons to receive the experience [speaking in tongues] were poor and disinherited people from the mainline churches, primarily those from the Methodist and Holiness movements that flourished in the late nineteenth century…The Pentecostal movement soon spread far beyond the Holiness movement to practically every Protestant denomination in America [and to the rest of the world].

Deiros and Mriada (1994) viewed Pentecostalism from its Latin American expression (one needs to be selective in analyzing Pentecostals because there are so many different groups and each group has its particular emphasis and standards or customs). These authors described what they call “popular Protestantism” (a mix of Pentecostal beliefs with the historic
Christianity existent in Latin America). In many instances, both traditional Pentecostals and traditional Protestants would decry the extremes to which these churches have taken their beliefs.

5.3.3 Understanding popular Pentecostalism and its appeal

In Latin America, the reality was one of a confusing mix of Christian doctrines. One could name this popular type of Christianity Pentecostalism. A few comparisons would be helpful (see Table 8).

Table 8. Comparison Between Traditional and Pentecostal Churches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Churches</th>
<th>Pentecostal Churches</th>
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1. The Pastor:
He is educated; a graduate of a recognized school; he follows the learned liturgy of his denomination and his sermon is a reasoned presentation of a biblical portion of Scripture; he ends his sermon calling for mental ascent, if not practical obedience, to his propositions.

1. The Pastor:
Anybody can be a pastor; the prerequisite is having received the gift of tongues. He needs no biblical education. His sermons are not reasoned, but repetitive and of a testimonial nature. The idea is for people to “feel” rather than understand (Deiros & Mraida 1994, p. 118).

2. The Church Service:
This is a well-organized and planned event with a mix of singing, announcements, offering, special music, reading of Scripture, and prayer.

   The greater portion of time is given for the sermon. Then a closing hymn and a benediction take place.

   All is cohesive and predictable, at the same time, solidly based on the teachings of the Bible. If pastors are not creative and innovative, the church services and liturgy can become boring.

2. The Church Service:
The gatherings are mostly very spontaneous and unorganized. The singing is punctuated by many prayers and occasional testimonies of spiritual experiences enjoyed during the week. A song may be repeated 20 or 30 times until the power of the music overcomes the audience. Everyone is waiting for whatever new thing will happen, especially the moment when the Spirit manifests Himself, whether in a prophesy, tongues, or “a word from the Lord.” The service is ruled by liberty, joy and praises, not form or schedule (pp. 117-118).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Churches</th>
<th>Pentecostal Churches</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Decision Making:</strong></td>
<td><strong>3. Decision Making:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility is divided between the pastor and a board of Deacons or Elders.</td>
<td>All responsibility is in the hands of the pastor (p. 131).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4. Finances:</strong></td>
<td><strong>4. Finances:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The deacons along with the pastor handle the finances.</td>
<td>The Pastor handles all the finances (p. 131, implied).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This list of comparisons could be greatly extended, but enough has been stated to show there are significant differences between traditional churches and churches that become Pentecostalized. All the changes that have been introduced in style and content have, in and of themselves, appeal. Deiros and Mriada (1994, pp. 114-127) explained one of their strongest appeals: “Pentecostals are not interested in one’s religious background or beliefs, rather they invite people of all walks of life to participate in their way of experiencing God. They want people to experience religion in a happy, exhilarating, participatory, fiesta-type environment.”

Further, Deiros and Mriada (1994) explained the Pentecostal appeal by showing that traditional churches do not have the capacity to integrate people from different social classes—they are too rigid. Pentecostals, on the other hand, appeal to all, regardless of status, because they promise immediate answers to suffering, emotional needs, and health. They offer “an emotional religion rather than a theologically rational one” (p. 117). Experiences substitute for reason and promises for reality. People also participate because of the promises made by Pentecostals—health and healing regardless of the problem; power and authority over demons of passion, drink, and all manner of evil; and especially the recompense of wealth—houses, lands, cars and money in the bank—to those who believe and follow Christ according to their
definitions. When promises do not get fulfilled, the fault is always placed on the lack of “faith” on the part of the believer.

5.3.4 Areas of Pentecostal belief difficult to accept

“Faith” is the spiritual key that opens the door to all of God’s blessings. David Martin (2002, p. 6) explained how Pentecostals interpret “faith”:

Faith gives permission to speak without certification, through the authoritative offer of new names and re-formed identities. It issues open-ended and pressing invitations to come off the highways and byways to forge a new ‘respectability’ in a deep sense of that misused word. It initiates participation in a bounded social space of the like-minded through the exercise of an outrageous religious entrepreneurship. It creates a mobilization from bottom up by ‘unlearned and ignorant’ men. The fissiparous star-burst that follows has traditionally been accounted the Achilles heel of Protestantism because it leads to a Babel of disjointed rival movements, but in today’s rapidly changing world, with its demand for constant adjustment, it can also lead to a jostling Pentecost. All this means that…it is a repertoire of religious explorations controlled, though sometimes barely, within a Christian frame and apt for adaptation in a myriad of indigenous contexts.

Credulous people, especially those coming from the marginalized social groups of society, clearly are susceptible to suggestions. This researcher was visiting pastors in southern Chile last year (October 2004) and was told of a Pentecostal leader who had journeyed from Colombia to cast out demons in Chile. His method was to walk down the long central highway of the nation “anointing” with “holy oil” the highway center stripes. Supposedly, the demons would not descend to the regions or areas where the holy oil had been splattered, thus freeing the country from demons. Characteristically, this Pentecostal leader would stop in each town, visit the churches, and ask for offerings to purchase more oil. This researcher asked the pastors in the town of Osorno (the men had gathered from the area for a seminar) about this unusual way of casting out demons: “Where do they get these ideas?” The
reply was: “This Colombian pastor told us the Holy Spirit had commanded him to do this,” adding, “How are we to know what the Holy Spirit told him?” In the seminar, the author took the opportunity to explain what the Bible says about the way God speaks and warn the pastors about confusing their imaginary thoughts with the “voice” of God.

The emphasis placed on the Holy Spirit by most Pentecostal groups creates, in the opinion of the researcher, a type of Modalism (the teaching that there is only one person in the Godhead who variously manifests Himself as Father, Son or Holy Spirit). In other words, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are successive revelations of the same person. While the majority of Pentecostals would not openly deny the existence of the three Persons of the Trinity, the stress and emphasis they place on the Holy Spirit for all practical purposes would exclude the Father and the Son. Believing wrongly that this is the day of the Holy Spirit (history can never be confined to the action and involvement of only one Person of the Trinity), the sole emphasis is placed on the wonders, signs, miracles, and manifestations of the Holy Spirit.

These types of problems arise even to a greater extent in a nation like Colombia. Most of the Colombian Pentecostal leaders have not benefited from formal Bible studies. They have not learned basic hermeneutical rules for interpreting the Bible: (a) the exact meaning of the words should be accepted, (b) the grammatical structure of the sentences should be followed, and (c) the historical context of the passage must be understood. Rather, Pentecostals have been taught to look for and accept allegorical interpretations. In other words, they have been taught to find in Scripture texts passages that offer immediate responses to their needs. Deiros and Mriada (1994, p. 184)
illustrated this method by citing an incident related to the Rev. J. A. Dennis, a pastor from Austin, Texas, who was suffering from a stomach ailment. In his Bible reading, this pastor came across the text in Exodus 23:25, “I will take away sickness from the midst of you…” He took the phrase “from the midst of you” to mean his stomach which was ailing. Declaring the Holy Spirit had given him the text, by faith he declared himself healed.

Unfortunately, such interpretative practices that do not follow hermeneutical rules take people away from the meaning of Scripture and twist the message to mean whatever they want it to mean. There is no telling to what extremes this type of interpretation will take a person, a church, or a denomination.

In most churches that follow popular Pentecostal beliefs, spontaneity is glorified. Members in the congregation will interrupt church proceedings to declare a “word from the Lord” just received or deliver a special prophesy. According to Deiros and Mriada (1994, p. 230), members with the supposed gift of prophesy will rise in a service and inform a congregation about things like which persons are to be chosen as deacons, who is to marry whom, and when the pastor is to be replaced by someone else. These declarations are all accepted as direct revelation, without question, coming to them directly from the Holy Spirit.

This researcher clearly remembers a two-hour discussion in a car full of pastors on the way to the city of Concepción, Chile. The pastors attempted to convince the researcher that the Holy Spirit spoke audibly to them. The more they explained how this phenomenon occurred, the surer the researcher was
that they confused their own thoughts and expressions with the speaking of
the Holy Spirit.

5.4 The crisis faced by churches in Colombia

Once one begins hearing about such beliefs and notions, one can
understand the confusion created in so many churches. A quote from Ubaldo
Padilla (1995, p. 80) merits repeating:

*Entre los años de 1967 a 1974 se presentaron muchas exageraciones, abusos y grandes extremos. En algunas iglesias no se hacía énfasis en el conocimiento de la Biblia sino en las profecías, las visiones, y manifestaciones sobrenaturales. Se dejó de lado el conocimiento bíblico para enfatizar la experiencia, las emociones, los sentimientos. Se hizo mal uso del don de sanidad de tal manera que se llegó a rechazar la medicina científica prohibiendo a los creyentes consultar al médico en caso de enfermedad. Se generalizó la opinión que toda la enfermedad era producida por demonios... Se llegó a depender tanto en las profecías que en algunas iglesias se nombraron pastores no por la decisión democrática del voto de los miembros sino por profecías. Se sabe de matrimonios realizados no por voluntad de los contrayentes sino por profecías, visiones, o interpretación de lenguas. Otros extremos que se empezaron a manifestar a finales de los sesenta en algunos sectores, fue el rechazo a la educación y a la capacitación teológica. Algunos líderes laicos menospreciaban la educación, que lo verdaderamente importante era la vida espiritual, el ayuno, la oración y la práctica de los dones.*

Between the years 1967 to 1974 many exaggerations, abuses, and [spiritual] extremes developed. In some churches the emphasis no longer was on the teachings of the Bible but on prophesies, visions, and supernatural manifestations. The knowledge of the Bible was put aside and experience, emotions and feelings were emphasized. Bad use was made of the gifts of healing, to the extreme that scientific medicines were rejected and [church members] were forbidden to go to doctors when they got sick. The idea spread that all diseases were produced by demons... It got to the place where so much dependence was placed on prophesies that in some churches pastors were called to serve, not by a democratic vote of the congregation, but by prophesies. In some cases people were married not out of love for each other but as a consequence of a prophesy, a vision, or the interpretation of tongues speaking. Other extremes that were manifested in some sectors by the end of the seventies were the rejection of education and theological training. Some of the leading lay leaders belittled education, believing that what was truly important was living a spiritual life of prayer, fasting, and the practice of [spiritual] gifts.
One can see how a religious movement filled with these beliefs would create so much apprehension and doubts about its authenticity among missionaries and national leaders with a solid Bible background. At the same time, how these dramatic and unusual practices and promises would have great appeal among the poor and unlearned. With an army of people crossing the land proclaiming these beliefs, one understands why this popular Pentecostalism spread so rapidly across Colombia. Dr. Kenneth Strachan, who created the very successful Evangelism in Depth program of evangelism (Roberts 1971, p. 86), studied Pentecostalism, Communism, and other fast-growing ideologies:

I discovered that the doctrines in itself had nothing to do with the expansion of a movement; that neither did the form of worship; nor did the form of government; nor did the ministerial preparation; …nor the money that the organization might have available to spend in propaganda, nor was it its own particular emphasis—one thing alone could account for the growth of any movement. I tried then to reduce it to a proposition, and I arrived at this conclusion: that the expansion of any movement is in direct proportion to the success achieved in mobilizing and deploying its total membership in the continuous propagation of its beliefs.

Bastian (1986, p. 236) also attributed the rapid spread of this popular Pentecostalism to the way some leaders have learned how to integrate former magical practices, fears and superstitions believed in a community to their message. He claimed that not enough research has been done on this particular practice, adding that in Mexico a number of pastors were former witchdoctors who continued using their former beliefs and practices. Few would deny that included in the practices of these untrained religious leaders are beliefs and ideas foreign to the biblical gospel.
5.5 A program to provide training for Latin America’s untrained pastors

There appeared to be a real need for some Biblical education for the pastors whose previous training, compared with the education provided by theological institutions, has been deficient in this respect. This final section will relate how LOGOI Ministries decided to create the Latin American Faculty for Theological Studies (FLET) and explain why this particular study methodology would be applicable to the pastoral needs in Colombia. Since the researcher of this thesis was the one who initiated the project (although many others helped and participated), this section will be written in the first person. The author tried to write the section in the third person, but found the writing far too artificial and impractical.

It all began in 1960 with the researcher’s move from Cuba to Costa Rica. His new assignment required extensive travel throughout all of Latin America during the years following Vatican II when the Protestant churches experienced explosive growth—1965 to the 1990s. A number of circumstances combined to cause him to focus his attention on finding a training solution for these many thousands who were being named to pastoral roles without having the basic biblical training required.

5.5.1 My birthplace and background

Briefly, I was born in Placetas, Cuba on a cold January morning in 1931. Since I was reared in Cuba, Spanish was my first language. I began studying English at the age of 10 in preparation for a year of furlough my parents were planning to the United States. My father, Elmer Thompson, had gone to Cuba in 1928 to the interior town of Placetas where he established a very successful Bible Institute. From that school, in a matter of 15 years, the
students went throughout the central part of Cuba and established 150 churches. From my father, I learned that for a solid church to be established, the national pastors had to have a good biblical foundation. This concern was validated during the Castro-Marxist revolution—the majority of those churches established by my father’s students were strong enough to withstand the anti-religious tides during Castro’s communist rule. Furthermore, in the year 2000, those same Cuban churches invited me to return to the island to prepare teachers so that the school my father started might be reopened (we at FLET were granted permission by both the Cuban and U. S. governments to return to Cuba to fulfill that request). But I’m getting ahead of my story.

From 1953 to 1960, I worked and taught at the school my father started, called Los Pinos Nuevos (named after an oft quoted speech by José Martí, the George Washington of Cuba, delivered in Tampa on November 26, 1891). Martí stated that the hope of Cuba lay in its “new pines.” The reference was to the youth of Cuba upon whose shoulders the future of the island would fall. Those young leaders were the very ones my father sought to train in order to build a strong church in Cuba.

In 1959, after Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista escaped to Spain, Fidel Castro, Ché Guevara and their band of rebels victoriously made their way to the island’s capital of Havana. During the first two years of his rule, Castro not only consolidated his dictatorship, but also began socializing Cuba. The radical revolution made many uncomfortable (Levine & Asis 2000, p.22):

In Cuba, patriots who had fought or sympathized with the self-pronounced ‘Maximum Leader’ soon had misgivings. Castro lashed out at those who challenged his policies, purging his own supporters as ruthlessly as he persecuted former Batista officials. Castro's 'revolutionary justice' included a judicial system bullied into overturning verdicts of acquittal for Batista sympathizers.
He attempted to rid the nation of practically all the former social influences, especially things North American. This affected all North American missionaries. Although Frances Kerry (1998) reported on Roman Catholics, the same applied to Protestants:

After the 1959 revolution, church schools were closed and more than 100 foreign priests were expelled...Castro's explanation...was that the early conflict with the Roman Catholic Church was not with believers but with the institution and its particular role in society. He said it arose because the church was not "popular" but was an institution of the landed and rich classes who were affected by revolutionary reforms, and one whose clergy were in many instances foreign and ‘reactionary’.

Castro’s actions to Cuba of former social influences affected my work in Cuba. My responsibility was twofold: directing the Los Pinos radio teaching ministries called Alas del Alba (Wings of the Morning) and leading the school’s Imprenta Biblia, that is, its literature department. After eight years in that role, on a Saturday afternoon in June of 1960 (a year and a half after Castro took over), my work as a religious leader on the island came to an abrupt end. Let me explain.

Early on, after Castro came to power, I sensed the direction his government was taking. Rumors flying around the island warned that what Castro claimed was a modern brand of democracy was in truth communism. We received dozens of letters from our radio audience asking us to explain communism. Aware of what the church in Russia had suffered under Marxism, I came to the conviction that our radio audience should be warned about communism. At the time, we had a half-hour daily broadcast on 13 radio stations, blanketing the island. For two weeks, I delivered a broadcasted series on Christianity and communism, titled “The Two Cities” (borrowing the idea from the City of God by Saint Augustine). Before every broadcast, I
would make a disclaimer, quoting some government statement to the effect that what was taking place in Cuba was not communism. Through these broadcasts, I defined communism, but spent most of my time defining the Christian world-view, describing how the City of God functioned through people living out their faith in this world.

Just days after I finished the series, my broadcasts in Cuba were cancelled by the government. Thankfully, they let me finish my series. I felt I had satisfied my intention of giving the churches and Christian people of Cuba a warning of what was coming.

Shortly thereafter, on a Saturday afternoon, a small commission of fellow Protestant ministers (all well known to me as loyal to Fidel Castro) came for what was to be much more than a mere visit. They were headed by Dr. Raúl Fernández Ceballo, who had joined the Castro Revolution in the late 1950s and was now working with the Cuban government in rooting out religious elements considered subversive. He had been named President of the National Commission of Alphabetization; this was added to his post as President of the Cuban Evangelical Council of Churches. As soon as I saw him, I knew trouble was brewing.

After the customary greeting, Ceballo asked me what I thought of el presidente, Fidel Castro. Apparently I had made my misgivings about the direction the Castro government was taking clear through those radio broadcasts. I tried to ward him off by asking why I, as a minister, should be asked that question. I would be glad to tell him what I believed about the Bible or to answer some doctrinal question. Why, however, should I be asked about Cuban politics? Finally, after a good deal of argument and beating around the
bush, I told the group I felt Castro had betrayed our revolution and that he was setting up a socialist dictatorship in Cuba. All the men reacted angrily. After a bit of wrangling, Dr. Raúl Fernández Ceballo, as official representative of the government, told me I had one week to get out of Cuba or else the Paredón.

To this day, I am very grateful to those men. In those revolutionary days, what I had said on the radio could have been construed as treason. One accusation of anticastrismo was all that was needed to send someone to El Paredón to be shot as a traitor. Instead, I was graciously given one week to leave the island.

Castro’s way of dealing with unwanted influences was to simply stop them at their source. In those early days of the revolution radio stations, television stations or newspapers were summarily shut down when someone was suspected of opposing Castro. Then, a few weeks later, those same stations would be functioning again, but now “under new management”—Castro’s. If those who owned the businesses complained or dared to verbalize their opposition, they were forthwith brought before a “People’s Court,” publicly accused and just as publicly shot at El Paredón. Very few were granted exile.

In my case, knowing that I had been targeted and had to get out of Cuba, I spent a miserable weekend wondering where I would go and what I would do. A friend, Patrick Arnold, came to console me. We spent all day Sunday together talking, wondering about the future and repeating thoughts found in a book in the Bible, Habakkuk. Unexpectedly, that next Monday I got a call from an acquaintance in Costa Rica, Dr. Dayton Roberts. He informed me I had been nominated to take over the position of coordinator of
Evangelical Literature for Latin America (LEAL) and urged me to accept. Several times, I interrupted him to tell him I would go, but he was so intent on persuading me to accept, he really did not hear me. Finally, with genuine surprise, he stopped talking: “You mean you accept? You’re coming?” I assured him I’d be in Costa Rica by the next Friday.

By the next Friday, with one suitcase (all I was permitted to keep of my earthly possessions), I moved to Costa Rica. My new job at LEAL was to serve as a literature consultant to 79 missionary agencies scattered throughout the continent. From the start, I knew a lot of travel would be my destiny.

5.5.2 From Cuba to the expanse of an entire continent

Little did I know the part this new job would play in my future. Up to this moment in time, I had done very little international travel. Now my job involved constant travel. I enjoyed the assignment. At times, my job involved setting up a bookstore, while at other times, I was responsible for the production of a new line of literature. Sometimes I was required to give advice about the purchase of a print shop. Many times, I instructed others though presentations on how to write. The important point is that, starting in 1960, I had a job that permitted me to travel to every Latin American country, visit hundreds of churches, and see first-hand the progress and growth of the Latin American churches at the very dawn of their most explosive years, 1960-1964.

Since I had to work with so many organizations, I saw the Hispanic church through the eyes of Baptists, Methodists, Anglicans, Brethren, Presbyterians, Pentecostals and dozens of independent missionary agencies. I saw the burgeoning cities of Latin America, from Buenos Aires, Rio,
Santiago, Lima, Bogotá, Caracas, all the way to Mexico City. In fact, over the course of four years with LEAL, I had the opportunity to visit practically every major city in the continent. Many a Sunday caught me sitting in a beautiful church built by missionaries. More often than not, I sat in small rented halls that served as churches—the best a national pastor could afford. Occasionally, I heard glorious preaching from outstanding Spanish preachers. Most often, I heard the confused efforts of sincere but unlearned men. My heart went out to those whose great spiritual poverty would best be described in terms of old tattered hand-me-downs of biblical concepts.

In my counsel to those producing literature I pleaded for two things:

1. Please make your literature attractive; add color and design so that people will want to read what you produce. We would sit down and talk about it, only to have the costs of production become an obstacle.

2. Please prepare materials for these hundreds of untaught pastors who every Sunday struggle to come up with a good Bible lesson. And we would sit and talk about that, only to have the publishers say their task was to produce evangelism tools, not help to pastors.

I remember that in 1964, after one of my return trips to Costa Rica (I had just visited some of the churches and preachers whom I considered to be under-achieving in Guayaquil, Ecuador), I looked up Dr. Wilton Nelson, the Dean of the Latin America Mission Seminary. We talked about ways in which we might help untaught pastors. Then, before rushing off to a class, he said: “Les, I’m sure you’re describing a very real need, but unless they come to a seminary like this and get a proper education, there is no earthly way they can be helped.”
After four years of trying, I realized I had failed in persuading the Spanish publishers to write materials to help pastors and Christians know the Bible. I began thinking about ways I might address that glaring void. Perhaps I should start a publishing house. In no way did I consider myself an educator. Through literature, however, I felt sure I could supply appropriate helps.

5.5.3 The formation of LOGOI

In 1960, when I accepted the appointment in Costa Rica, I made arrangements to continue some of the literature efforts we had carried on in Cuba. In fact, in 1961, Juan Rojas (one of my students with exceptional writing gifts) graduated from the Los Pinos Instituto Bíblico. I invited him and his wife to join me in San José. The purpose was to continue producing materials for Cuba. During that year, we wrote several articles for the Los Pinos school magazine and even a few booklets. However, during 1962 and 1963, restrictions got tighter and tighter and we were unable to get materials back into Cuba. Noting there was next to nothing available for Christian young people in Spanish, Juan and I began talking of needs we saw in the Spanish Christian publishing market. We began by producing a series of colorful booklets addressing the needs of Spanish young people: Para Tí, Señorita (For You Young Lady); Para Tí, Joven (For You Young Man); Para Tí, Recién Casada (For You Recently Married); Para Tí, Universitario (For You, University Student), etc. Because of my work with LEAL, I had direct contacts with all the Spanish Christian bookstores (at that time there were approximately 500 stores). These publications were to become extremely popular. Unbeknown to Juan and me, those very materials would serve to
open many doors to our future attempts to help pastors. Church leaders came
to know who we were and to trust in our doctrinal integrity.

In the fall of 1964, I resigned from LEAL, believing that Juan Rojas and
I would better serve the Spanish church by producing the kind of books and
materials about which I had been talking. We established ourselves in Miami,
called our publishing house Latin Youth Publications, and, for a time,
continued to produce the type of literature we felt could help fill some of the
voids in Spanish literature for the Christian youth of the continent.

As we had imagined, once Spanish Christian publishers saw the
difference color and good graphics made in the marketplace, they quickly
began imitating us. While our youth line was successful, I felt our real target
should be the needy pastors. Early in 1970, we changed our name to LOGOI
(Greek for “words”) and started selecting materials aimed at providing biblical
helps that we thought would be suitable to untrained church leaders.

During 1974 and 1975, we began working on a special series of
quarterlies called Guía Pastoral (Pastoral Guide). These guides were
designed to provide sermon outlines for every Sunday of the year. Now surely
we had a tool that would assist pastors where they needed help. By early
1976, the first issues were distributed. We got a number of letters in return.
The majority of those were pastors asking how they were supposed to use
these outlines. One in particular clearly defined the problem (Thompson
Report, October 1978):

Dear Mr. Thompson, thank you for the book of sermons. I like your
sermons; they are very good. I think you have chosen very important
topics. However, they are far too short. Please make them longer. I can
read them to my congregation in less than 15 minutes. Our people,
however, expect much longer sermons. Please let me know when you
have longer sermons.
Obviously, with so little education, these pastors had no idea how to expand or fill-out a sermon outline. Besides, by the relative small quantity of books purchased (considering the large number of pastors in need), we came to the conclusion that our target audience actually had little interest in reading. The design, the color, the format, and the beauty of our materials were not attracting those we most wanted to help.

I continued to travel throughout the continent looking for answers. I became convinced that in order to establish a church true to the historic faith, the leadership of that church must be trained biblically and theologically. Without that basic foundation, the church would be unable to lead itself, much less impact the society around it. From then on, I began working on this tentative assumption, discovering it to be true after every test.

Wherever I traveled, I found that the common denominator for church failure was a lack of doctrinal understanding among the pastors. When I talked to missionaries or denominational leaders about this deficit, they explained that the majority of their pastors did not have any formal Bible training and that most had not had the opportunity to complete their primary education. I ran into missionary educator Nicholas Woodbury of the Latin America Mission, and he gave me a study he had developed. On page four, I read that “80% of the pastors had not even finished primary studies and very few had studied in high school at all” (Woodbury, 1984, p.4). Obviously, uneducated pastors not only had difficulty reading, they obviously lacked the ability to take something read and convert it into practical sermonic talks.

I asked bookstore owners who were handling our new books for pastors about the purchasing habits of pastors. They explained they had
trouble getting pastors to visit their stores. One suggested I find someone to go to denominational leaders and even into the churches themselves to promote our books designed for pastors. In response, in May of 1977 I added José Alejandro Wojnarowicz (of Polish descent and a first-rate promoter from Argentina) to our staff. His job was to attend church conferences, visit denominational leaders, or go wherever he could to have an opportunity to show our books and explain how they were to be used. José’s experiences as a result of these visits were to take us to our next logical step. His efforts did help. Book purchases in the bookstores increased, but not enough to warrant the expenses of keeping José Alejandro on the road.

5.5.4 Pastors in Southern Chile ask for a seminar

Toward the end of 1977, Alejandro was visiting Chile. After covering the area around Santiago, he requested permission to visit southern Chile. I had been as far south as Temuco. At our office in Miami, we wondered whether this trip would simply be a frivolous pleasure junket for our extroverted Argentine promoter. Anyway, José Alejandro traveled all the way down to the very end of the Pan American Highway, all the way to Puerto Montt.

Soon after he got to that area, I received a lengthy report. He told me how interested the pastors were in every major town he visited. He reported that when they were shown our books, instead of buying them, they began peppering him with all kinds of doctrinal questions. As I read his letter, it occurred to me that if they had so many questions and were looking for sound biblical answers, perhaps we should plan a seminar for them. I could invite several speakers and we could go down to Chile and give those pastors some immediate training. I sent José Alejandro a telegram.
José Alejandro—always a step or two ahead of me—had already come to that same conclusion. He promised the pastors that if they invited me, I would find some good speakers and we would come to help them. Not only did he accept their invitation in my name, but he also set dates for three seminars in 1977: April 6-8 in Temuco; April 10-12 in Osorno; April 13-15 in Puerto Montt. When I received his reply telegram, I was upset at José Alejandro’s presumption. These scheduled seminars would require a large financial investment, and we had little money at the time. Inside, however, I knew that I would have done the same thing José did. These seminars were opportunities too good to miss. As things turned out, this event was to dramatically affect everything we did from then on in Latin America.

Fortunately, I have a diary of that historic trip to present the three seminars in Chile. I invited three pastors to come along, informing them that I did not know what we would find, but that these Spanish church leaders needed help and that they would be very appreciative of whatever teachings we might provide. I roughed out a schedule of activities and the three of us flew down to Chile. Because of the effect these meetings would have on our future as an organization, I will allow ample space for the details. I will quote from the diary I kept (Thompson, Chile Diary, 1978).

APRIL 5, 1978, Santiago, Chile:
QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR U.S. PRESS

Here I am in Chile, and I’m shocked. Chile has really gotten a bad press. I expected to find a country suffering under the heels of a harsh dictator, dissatisfaction and distrust everywhere. Instead, I’ve found a total absence of fear; gratefulness on the part of a people for the military government who saved them from the confusion, the chaos and anarchy of the communists under Allende. Inflation under Allende rose to 1,000% a year, now Pinochet has it down to an acceptable 6%. Kidnappings, bombings, organized confusion were part of the Marxist pattern, and now the government is bringing the kind of stability that
gives business and the populace confidence. Things are thriving, the people are obviously happy, and there is absolutely no evidence to support the stories we've been reading in the press about a repressive and heartless police state. In fact, I got lost in Santiago, and looked in vain for a soldier or policeman to help me.

APRIL 7/ Temuco:
THE SURPRISE OF SUCCESS

The people are gentle, kind and considerate, mostly European in background. Temuco is the most Protestant town in all Chile – it has 12 Protestant churches and only two Catholic ones. The climate has been beautiful, frost in the morning, sun and warmth at midday and then cooling off in the evenings – remember, we're south of the Equator and the seasons are reversed.

And have we been surprised! We expected around 50 or 60 pastors, instead 140 pastors and church leaders are attending – it's just beautiful! And their response to the classes is unbelievable – they're like sponges. And you should have seen their eyes when José showed them the CERTIFICATES they would receive for having attended. Seems silly to be making so much out of a little piece of paper, yet
they’ve gotten so little recognition that a little symbol like a certificate, meaningless to us, means recognition to them.

Figure 5. Les Thompson (center) and Rev. Salabarría hand out certificates.

APRIL 8 / Temuco
EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK

José woke up sick. Apparently it’s some kind of flu. In spite of it, he did admirably all day. His work of promoting these retreats has been the secret of success. We have every Protestant church in the city represented, and several pastors have traveled considerable distances. One I talked to today came 120 kilometers to attend. Another drove 110 kilometers from his church in the Andes Mountains. They all keep telling us that this conference has been a tremendous boost to them.

APRIL 8 / Temuco

Almost every pastor wants us to continue to provide this new pastor’s program. How beautiful. Not only can we minister right now, eyeball to eyeball, but we have our pastor’s line of books that will continue to guide them and serve all year long. The appreciation of these pastors overwhelms us. They think our teaching is tremendous. One pastor said, “Estos hermanos son unos verdaderos angelitos” (These brothers are veritable angels.)

Figure 6. One of the teachers, Rev. Salabarría, illustrates a point
APRIL 10 / Osorno:
BEAUTIFUL SITE OF OUR SECOND RETREAT

What scenery! After flat and hot Florida, this area looks like Paradise. The mountains are off in the distance, majestic and glorious. The trees are in all shades of fall. Flowers such as we see in the northern United States are colorfully competing for attention. But all this pales when compared to the joy of helping these men. What spiritual jewels we’ve found here in Chile!

April 11/ Osorno
A RENTED THEATER AND 1000 PEOPLE

The retreat here in Osorno has gone beautifully. Regular attendance has been over 175. Again, the response has been unbelievable. This is the first time so many pastors and leaders have gotten together for anything.

I must mention the final night—what they called “Graduation Night.” So many wanted to attend that there was no church large enough. So the meeting was held in a rented theater. Over 1,000 came. Simply unbelievable! We just marvel at everything, and keep rejoicing. My voice gave out. Too much speaking, I guess.

Figure 7. The Puerto Montt Band adds to the joy of the event.

APRIL 13 / Puerto Montt:
EXPECTING THE WORST, WE FIND THE BEST

2:00 pm: Time to go to the chapel. José believes that perhaps 70 pastors will attend. I’ll be happy if there are that many.

2:30 pm: We near the Salvation Army chapel where our classes are to be given. The wind is whipping up a storm. The building appears empty, but it’s difficult to tell from the outside, because these men can’t afford cars. We park the jeep by the chapel, and pull out our boxes of helps, plus a good supply of books.

2:45 pm: As we go through the outer door, one of the pastors comes out to help us. José asks, “How many have come?” He answers, “I don’t know, but the place is full.” I walk in and simply can’t believe it. One hundred and seventy pastors and Christian leaders have registered—a full hundred more than we expected! They’re
squeezed into the small chapel and we're met by several men who ask us if we should find a larger location.

Funny, the first thought I have: “We don’t have enough certificates, what will we do for their graduation?” It all works out. Our classes are off to a great start. And Mr. Svensson, a Swedish missionary, comes to our rescue with an electronic stencil maker and a good old mimeograph. From 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm we go non-stop. Then we rush out for an evening service at one of the churches – another two hours of talking and teaching.

Figure 8. The church where we met in Puerto Montt.

APRIL 14
BOOKS CONDEMned AS “TOOLS OF SATAN”

Here in the area only one in 20 pastors has ever gone to a seminary; the rest have had absolutely no training! To them, these classes are heaven-sent. The interest, thus, is unbelievable. They’re like little children eating out of our hands. How much help they need! In each place they’ve begged us to return next year, but for a longer period.

A positive, immediate result has been a new interest and awareness of Christian books. Some of these pastors have actually condemned books as “tools of Satan.” José asked for a show of hands how many pastors or leaders owned a Bible dictionary – of the 175 present only 11 could raise their hands. Part of the reason is their idea that only the Bible should be read, no other book. I approached the subject by recounting how God in His providence had Gutenberg invent the printing press at about the same time that Martin Luther translated the Bible into German, then recounting how the printing press, and the printing of the Bible together with Luther’s sermons and booklets, sold throughout all of Europe. That talk seemed to help; at least afterwards our book table was mobbed. Here, as in Temuco and Osorno, all the pastors registered to continue in our pastor’s program, insuring the follow-up we’re planning for. I believe our new books will make this program last.

The earnestness and eagerness of each pastor, their interest in taking notes, in learning how better to serve God and their
congregations is delightful to see. I can’t help but think of our churches and attitudes in the States. We have so much, we’re over-fed and God’s truth doesn’t seem to move or stir us anymore. These leaders were spiritually starved. Eagerly they received God’s Word. What a delight to teach such attentive students!

Figure 9. My talented and faithful assistant, José Alejandro Wojnarowicz

APRIL 15 / Puerto Montt
WHAT A FINISH!

Tonight was “graduation” night. We met in a large Methodist Pentecostal church with seating for 1,200 people. It was jammed and a great number of people were standing.

An added attraction was the participation of the Puerto Montt military band. They have taken hymns and arranged them for the band. When they played Onward Christian Soldiers, it electrified the audience! I’ve never heard a group sing better or with more excitement and feeling.

I should add one note of interest. Before going to Chile I knew that the majority of those attending would be Pentecostal (about 60% of Latin American pastors are charismatic). I feared we might encounter some opposition to our teaching because we’re non-charismatic, and that certainly here and there we would face some charismatic demonstration such as speaking in tongues. Not once did it happen. In fact, in Puerto Montt we had a pastor attend whose church had been closed down by the government last Christmas: in their excess, people in the congregation were literally knocking themselves out against walls of the church and having to be hospitalized. That very pastor came to me after the “graduation,” and with tears in his eyes thanked me for the seminar, saying: “God has used you to get me straightened out. I’m a different man because of this retreat.”

Now one last assignment is left: evaluation. I think José and I will enjoy going over these days and reliving them in our minds. I trust that each pastor who attends will be doing the same.
After the Chile seminars, we returned to our office in Miami exhilarated. We had discovered there was an incredible education opportunity and that we as an organization had the contacts and the abilities to meet at least some of the challenges these thousands of untrained pastors represented. In this first encounter we had learned that:

1. The pastors we met had little education but were actively looking for ways to find biblical and theological help at their level of need. Most of the theological helps available in Spanish were beyond the ability of most.

2. The pastors who attended came from a broad band of denominations: Baptists, Presbyterinas, Anglicans, various Pentecostals groupings, and a number of independents. Most had had very little help from their denominations, and they all were searching for ways to get the training they needed for their Christian profession.

3. The pastors who came were smart, eager to learn and had gifts and abilities beyond their limited education. They were motivated self-
learners. Their problem was a lack of opportunity, not the ability to learn.

4. They would need specially designed programs, not for lack of intelligence, but because of their limited reading and writing skills.

5. Most pastors came from among the very poor, since their churches were not able support them, most had additional jobs to make ends meet.

6. Their needs were for training in biblical skills, communication skills, vocational skills, administrative and planning skills, and people skills.

The more we pondered these findings, the more convinced we became of the challenge and opportunity that lay before us. The need of pastors in Chile was clear to us, and certainly these men represented the needs among thousands of Christians all over Latin America who unexpectedly found themselves pastoring a church as a result of the great explosion of Protestantism after Vatican II. Many questions filled our minds and gave us much to talk about: new educational systems, human resources, finances, areas of highest need. Now, however, we had to concentrate on the opportunity at hand and let circumstances and the future guide us.

5.5.5 First steps in our evolution of a program

Now that we had discovered that pastors—at least in Chile—were eager for help and that they would respond to our invitation for a study seminar, our next concern was to determine how much learning could be given at a seminar and what other formats might be used to further the learning throughout the year. In this section, the aim is to show the initial steps we took to enhance what we had begun. We already had some pastor
helps in book formats. In fact, because pastors throughout the continent had seen our books and church leaders were recommending them for their content and orthodoxy, our reputation had preceded us. Pastors felt confident in inviting us.

At last we had met the pastors we wanted to help face-to-face and had learned that we could provide instant help through seminars. The actual fact was that what we experienced in south Chile was far more revealing and impressive than anything we had dreamed possible. We felt certain we had found the launching pad we needed for training these needy pastors. Now we needed an overall educational plan.

In my planning, I leaned heavily on all I had seen my father do in his school in Cuba. The great difference, however, was that we were dealing with men already in charge of churches, whereas my father had taught young people before they began working in churches. Many of the subjects could be the same, but because of the pastors’ time limitations, we would have to package our training in adjustable units for part-time students. Also, the task was much more complex than simply setting up a program with a standard seminary curriculum. The majority of the pastors who had come to our seminars had no more than a sixth-grade education. As mature adults with much wisdom, their learning capabilities certainly needed to be honed. Here is a chart we published after enrolling around 500 pastors into our program (Thompson, May Report, 1980):
Table 9. Educational Needs of Latin American Pastors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastors with Primary grades and very limited Bible study.</th>
<th>Pastors with Bible school Primary grades</th>
<th>Pastors with Bible school High school Primary grades</th>
<th>Pastors with Seminary Bible school/college High school Primary grades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.5.1 Fall of 1978: Our first summary of a training plan

I found in my files a seven-page letter sent to churches in the U.S. who were contributing to our Spanish missionary efforts. In the letter, I gave a full description of the need, and then I summarized the program we proposed to offer (Thompson, Spanish Pastor’s Project, 1978):

Our program is unique in many ways. It is interdenominational in appeal. It zeroes in on the problem by directly traveling to the areas of [pastoral] need. It is the only program we know of aimed at providing training for the host of unlearned pastors throughout the Latin American continent. It is designed to give instant help to these needy pastors. Then, through carefully planned printed materials, we will provide follow-up helps for the entire year.

It is fascinating to me to go back to those formative stages to see how the whole plan fell together. Here are the main features as described in what now appears to have been a very ambitious plan (Thompson, Spanish Pastor’s Project, 1978):

**Purpose**

The pastor helps program is designed to increase the biblical and theological training of pastors. It will serve to:

1. inspire pastors to make a more consistent study of the Scriptures,

2. provide the tools (books) for such a study on a level of their understanding,
3. help them in their sermonic preparation,
4. heighten the motivation of these pastors,
5. provide programs and concepts to activate their congregations,
6. augment their chances of making a greater impact on their community.

Overall, our aims are to educate, motivate, and give practical assistance to poorly educated pastors throughout the continent.

Procedure

1. The retreat or seminar concept is the first tool. An educational experience is provided by way of classroom-type instruction: facing a teacher, receiving printed classroom notes, jotting down concepts, asking questions and interchanging ideas create an environment for learning. The courses are not designed to show the pastor how little he knows, rather to prove to him how much he can learn with a little personal application and the right kind of tools at his disposal. An attempt is made to expose him to the special literature prepared for him and show him the potential for advancement in biblical learning if he will dedicate time for personal study.

2. Specially designed books are the second tool. One series of books helps the pastor plan his preaching program for the entire year and gives him three Bible studies for each week of the year. A second series, Bible commentaries, are provided and written at his level of understanding. A third series provide help in areas of counseling, evangelism and church planting.

3. Follow-up seminars will be the third tool. The first seminar introduces the pastors to the overall training program. Thereafter, follow-up seminars will be designed to zero in on special needs and problems the teachers detect in the first meeting with the pastors.

Curriculum

Our seminars and pastor-helps program will attempt to deal with seven broad areas:

1. a pastor's preaching responsibility,
2. a pastor's spiritual life and training,
3. the pastor's message to his people,
4. a pastor's relational responsibilities to his congregation,
5. a pastor's ministry to his community,
6. the pastor's continued education,
7. the pastor's tools.

With a basic plan spelled out, the few of us at our Miami office now had our work cut out for us. A couple of secretaries were added; Juan Rojas (our editor) was given an assistant. We added an office manager, Robert Nicolet (once he saw what we were aiming to accomplish, he volunteered his services). I am amazed at the budget we planned for the year (Thompson, Spanish Pastor’s Project, 1978, p. 8):

**Table 10. Budget: April 1978—April 1979**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Pastor’s retreats subsidy (400 @ $50)</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Salaries</td>
<td>14,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Office Supplies</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Curriculum Supplies</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Preparatory Travel Costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and Promotion</td>
<td>2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publicity</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Pastor’s Book Production</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Pastor Guides</td>
<td>21,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bible Commentaries</td>
<td>8,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark (Steve Brown)</td>
<td>10,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God’s Plan Unfolded</td>
<td>4,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.T. Survey</td>
<td>4,900</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### VII. Other Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio/Visual Materials</td>
<td>1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Travel to Seminars</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 103,920

Obviously, we expected to do a lot with very little. One more item will help round out our beginning. I’m referring to the schedule of events planned for the balance of 1978 and 1979. Because of our success in Chile, I assumed we would be welcomed in similar fashion anywhere we went—a presumption I certainly would not make today (Thompson, Spanish Pastor’s Project, 1978, p. 6):

**Projected Outlook**

**October – November, 1978**

We are planning three pastor seminars for October and early November to be held in Bolivia, Paraguay, and Argentina. We anticipate at least 100 pastors and Christian leaders at each retreat. As we did in Chile, we will be using church facilities for these first retreats in these countries. Our staff man, José Alejandro—who did such a splendid job in setting up the retreats in Chile—will also make the arrangements for these three retreats, setting up local committees, advertising the retreats, and making all necessary preparations.

After evaluating the response in Chile, we do feel that follow-up retreats will be necessary next year, especially since the pastors in Chile requested all-day meetings as well as more days of instruction. We plan to comply. Our idea is that instead of going to each center and holding three retreats, we will hold one major retreat at a government center called Termas de Puyehue. It will house up to 500 pastors at reasonable rates. We will plan for a four-day retreat. This expanded schedule will permit us to offer several electives and give more concentrated teaching in areas of special need.

As we proceed with this program of special instructions, we will seek to refine and improve our courses and presentations. Also we will be seeking teachers who have specialties applicable to the needs of pastors in Latin America.
Our front man, José Alejandro, was dispatched to the areas where we envisioned possible pastor seminars. In some cases, we received invitations from pastors who had gotten news of our activities in southern Chile. In other cases, we as staff simply projected the possibility of interest. Alejandro's job was to follow up on all these possibilities, determine the best places, establish the most appropriate dates, and make the necessary arrangements. He was a master at it. As a result of the exploratory trip he took, I wrote to our supporting churches (Thompson, letter to churches, October 1979):

From November 1 to December 3, we will be sponsoring a whole new series of retreats, expanding our program into new areas. The retreats will be held in Valparaiso and Concepción, Chile, where we anticipate 250 pastors; in Neuquen and Bahía Blanca, southern Argentina; and in Uruguay (with an additional 300 attendees).

As I review those old files, the memories of our joy and excitement all come back. All of us were in a rush to reach every corner of the Spanish world. The fact is that within three years, we had a stream of pastor seminars going all the way from Chile to Mexico. Now I question how much we actually accomplished through those gatherings. But one thing did happen, pastors learned we were determined to help them and welcomed us warmly. They were so eager to learn, and they had the patience to wait while we worked out our methodology.

5.5.5.2 Summer of 1979: The Million-Dollar Question

I awoke to our real educational challenge, however, at our second round of seminars in Chile. We got back there April 6-8 of 1979. Going to a government workers campground, we were able to rent in a place called Villarica, some 40 miles southwest of Temuco. My wife joined us for that event. I found a copy of a letter she wrote on her return that described the
setting for that four-day retreat—an event that would move us on from providing mere seminars to the beginnings of a full-scale educational program for Latin American pastors (Carolyn Thompson, June 1979):

Dear friends,

Can it be possible to express how exciting it has been for me to have finally seen some of our work in South America, after seventeen years of seeing Les off time after time?

It took a twelve-hour flight from Miami to get to Santiago, Chile. A man who runs an orphanage met us at the airport in his dilapidated van to help us get the baggage, boxes, and books to be taken to the train station, only to have two of the paper-thin tires on his van explode from all the weight. And he kept on smiling, insisting it was nothing.

When we got to the hotel, a beautiful bouquet of roses was in our hotel room. What a nice welcome to Chile. The next day we took an all-night train, going farther south. That was followed by a ride on another vehicle for several more hours before we arrived at the spot of the pastor's retreat. I wondered how on earth the pastors were going to find us in such a remote and faraway place. We had even left the pavement and were on mud and gravel roads. Les just laughed. ‘You'll see,’ he promised.

It had all been carefully arranged—chartered buses came in from Chile’s southland, filled with 104 pastors. Since most of them have no cars, those buses were pleasure cruises (they really were modern—much nicer than our U.S. buses). From the moment I saw their faces, I knew why Les loved these people and wanted to help them. How happy they were. And it made me happy, too.

Then I listened to a pastor announce to his fellow-pastors that there was not room enough for all of them at the retreat campground and that two would have to sleep in a bunk—keeping warmer that way, he added jokingly. No one seemed upset (although I was!).

Much of the time I felt like weeping: seeing the pastors seated at those humble, crudely-hewn tables, heads bowed, eyes closed-singing the prettiest prayer of thanks for the simple starchy soup and fresh fruit—or listening to a dear older woman tell me her pastor-husband had died two years ago and she had to take his place because there was no one else…and getting acquainted with a dedicated Chilean couple who, on a shoe-string, care for 140 orphan girls… watching Les sing with a taped background with nothing but a hanging lantern for light and a borrowed cassette tape recorder from one of the Indians who had come… playing the pump organ—as much of an instrument as they will ever have (of all the churches we visited on this trip, only three had pianos)... knowing that of all the people who came to the retreat, none had anything like we have here at home. Our churches are so beautiful, so well equipped, so taken for granted.
I’ve seen sights I never want to forget, because now I’ve become conscious of the tremendous needs in South America. Now I know why Les weeps when he returns from a journey and tries to tell us about the people and the work and their needs, for I have wept, too.

Thanks for helping us to reach these wonderful people.
Su amiga,
Carolyn

On the last day of that four-day seminar, during a question and answer session, a pastor stood and asked me the million-dollar question: “Rev. Thompson,” he said, “we greatly appreciate these seminars and the certificates you give us, however, we need more. We need a real education, a certification or diploma that proves we have the biblical and theological training a pastor needs. Would you please provide such a program for us?” All the pastors came to their feet and cheered.

I made them a rash promise that I later wondered if I would be able to keep. However, I was determined to do whatever it took to get these pastors on a solid footing. I promised to return the following November with a study plan. Again they stood and cheered. José and I got together with the regional leaders and we set dates for my return in November. I would start in Valparaiso, then go on to Concepción, Temuco, Osorno, and end in Puerto Montt—these were now the five areas represented at that retreat. Hopefully, I would return with a program of study in hand.

5.5.6 The emergence of our education program “FLET”

In this section, I will provide a brief description of the first study program we put together for pastors, along with our initial hopes and frustrations. Surely, with the right tools, people could learn outside the classroom. The challenge was to discover how to match the learning desire of all these pastors with the kind of materials that would give immediate satisfaction. If we
could impart biblical knowledge in a way that would help them as pastors pass on spiritual and inspirational help to their congregations, then these men would see the value of studying and learning. Studying would become important, not merely a way to obtain a diploma.

Back in Miami, I remembered some of the struggles my father had in Cuba at his school. I remembered his positive answer: “They may not have much of an education, but they are intelligent. What we have to do is to find the right ways to challenge that intelligence.” As a boy, I watched students who came to the Los Pinos Bible School barely able to read and write—timid, clumsy learners—who evolved into brilliant, self-assured preachers. Now I wanted to see the same thing happen with these men in Chile. The urgency was to find the right tools.

I took a serious look at the books we had published with pastors in mind. Surely there was enough material there if we could assemble it in logical order. At the University of Western Washington (in Bellingham) my curriculum included a course on how to teach six-year-olds. Some of those principles now found an echo:

1. find ways of making the subject exciting or fun,
2. don’t hide the fact that learning involves work,
3. challenge your students to do their best,
4. focus on achievements and assignments or tasks as stepping stones,
5. awaken the mind of your learners to the extent that they can repeat back in their own words what they have learned.
I was very aware of the challenge: to figure out a way to accomplish teaching without the everyday presence of a teacher. Instinctively, I knew the textbook I chose would have to be the teacher.

5.5.6.1 The first textbooks are selected

I chose for my first textbook *Enciclopedia de Doctrinas Bíblicas* (All the Doctrines in the Bible) by Herbert Lockyer, a book we translated in 1978 and printed in 1979. It was written in everyday language to help lay leaders understand the importance of biblical doctrine. All the major doctrines of the Bible were divided into 30 areas of thought. If a student were to study two doctrines per week (there were around six pages of reading for each doctrine), he or she would be able to complete the text in approximately four months. Certainly that would not be too much to expect of our pastors.

![Enciclopedia de Doctrinas Bíblicas](image)

*Figure 11. First text.*

For my second book I chose *Cómo Preparar Sermones Dinámicos* (How to Prepare Dynamic Sermons), written by four of us (see Figure 12), Osvaldo Casati (an Argentine Baptist pastor), Pedro Vega (a Chilean Presbyterian pastor), Luis Palau (the Argentine well-known evangelist) and myself.

The book contained seven chapters explaining the process of sermon preparation. Then these processes were illustrated by historic sermons from
famous preachers of the past. Finally, the book contained 48 brief sermon outlines. The intent was to give the pastors three months to go through this text with the assignment to choose a passage of Scripture and, following the guides given, prepare a written sermon. To determine how well the pastor understood the various sermonic forms, the student could be given a brief exam. His grade would be made up as follows: 50 possible points for his sermon and 50 possible points for his exam.

Figure 12: Second Text.

The third text was the *Guia Pastoral LOGOI* (see Figure 13), the book referred to earlier, providing three Bible studies (or sermons) for each week of the month. The sermons were dated. For instance, the Sunday evening sermons for May presented a series on The Sermon on the Mount: May 1, “Blessed are the Poor”; May 8, “Blessed are those who Mourn,” May 15, “Blessed are the Meek”; etc. The assignment would be to use this sermon manual for their preaching from May to August. This was to prove a winner—traveling in Chile that next year I ran into a number of businessmen and traveling salesmen who all told me the same story. As they traveled from city to city, they never missed a sermon in a series.
In every town they visited they would enquire what pastor was studying with LOGOI. They would go to that church and, without fail, would catch the next sermon in the series!

The fourth text was a pastor’s commentary on Paul’s letter to the Phillippians, simply titled *Filipenses* (see Figure 14), a series of studies prepared by Frank Barker, a pastor in Birmingham, Alabama, a commentary we published in 1978. I imagined giving the students three months to complete this course. The assignment would be to select a series of studies from the 18 chapters, rewrite them in their own words, and teach those lessons to their congregation. For their grade, they would hand in copies of the studies they had prepared.
Thus prepared, I was ready to return to Chile. The first task was to get our four proposed textbooks into Chile. Since previously we had run into rather high charges for importing our books, I wrote to a few of the pastors living in the port cities of Valparaiso and Concepción, asking them to inquire about special concessions for importing books for religious purposes. Arturo Leal, pastor of the Assemblies of God in Valparaiso, answered saying he had gone to the customs office and obtained a free importation permit. A copy was to accompany the shipment. In September, we sent the books, 750 copies of each, including extra copies for anyone who came in to study at the last moment. The shipment was scheduled to arrive in mid-October, since the cargo ship stopped at several ports. Arturo Leal promised to get them out of customs and re-ship 150 copies of each book to the five centers where the studies were to begin. I sent José Alejandro and Osvaldo Casati some instructions so they could help me prepare the pastors for their studies and asked the two to meet me in Santiago. Everything was set. I felt pretty good about the program we were about to offer. Once we learned how they responded to their first assignments, we would then begin planning for the following year.

5.5.6.2 The first program introduced in Chile

The first week of November, José Alejandro, Osvaldo Casati and I were back in Chile, according to correspondence to our churches (Thompson, October Letter, 1979). We had written the pastors a detailed letter. The first line read: “From November 1 to December 3, we will be sponsoring a whole new series of retreats, expanding our program...”
The plan was to return eight weeks later and spend three days in each of the five centers in Chile, which I thought would provide enough time to give the exam, grade it, and move on to the next city. The program was simple. I had printed up a sheet spelling out all the requirements (Thompson, Educación Teológica, Año Uno, 1979-1980):

**REQUISITOS PARA OBTENER UN DIPLOMA EN TEOLOGIA SACRA**

Pastores que deseen obtener un Diploma de Teología Sacra tendrán que cumplir con los siguientes requisitos:

1. Matricularse en cada uno de los Seminarios/Retiros ofrecidos por LOGOI y pagar entre 15 y 25 dólares, dependiendo en los cursos ofrecidos.
2. Cumplir durante el año correspondiente los trabajos de estudios asignados en cada Seminario o Retiro.
3. Someterse a los exámenes requeridos y pasarlos satisfactoriamente.
4. Pagar las cuotas pertenecientes a los exámenes: dos exámenes en el año (aproximadamente $10.00 por examen).
5. Esta certificación se dará como acto final del quinto Seminario-Retiro LOGOI.

**Requisitos para el primer año:**

Primer semestre:

1. Estudiar los primeros 10 capítulos de Enciclopedia de doctrinas bíblicas por Herbert Lockyer y prepararse para un examen sobre esta materia.
3. Preparar un sermón textual original escrito en detalle sobre un texto bíblico. Véase la página 55 de Cómo preparar sermones dinámicos.
4. La presentación de un “Plan de Trabajo” para su iglesia siguiendo el patrón de la tercera clase del Seminario/Retiro “Lo que la congregación espera del pastor” (Véase primer artículo en esta hoja informativa).
Segundo Semestre

1. Estudiar el resto del libro *Enciclopedia de doctrinas bíblicas* y prepararse para un examen escrito sobre esta materia.

2. Dar un estudio consecutivo en la iglesia sobre *Filipenses* siguiendo el Comentario LOGOI. Dará prueba que ha realizado este estudio (no menos de 12 semanas) y tomará un breve examen oral o escrito sobre el contenido.

3. Preparar un sermón expositivo original escrito usando los principios enseñados en *Cómo preparar sermones dinámicos*, página 23.

4. Informe del progreso del “plan de trabajo” iniciado en el primer cuatrimestre.

Se le informará por escrito sobre la fecha y el lugar donde se tomarán los exámenes y se presentará el material escrito.

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------

REQUIREMENTS FOR A DIPLOMA IN SACRED THEOLOGY

Pastors who wish to obtain a diploma in sacred theology must meet the following requirements:

1. Register for every one of the Seminars or Workshops offered by LOGOI and pay between $15 and $25 depending on the type of course offered.

2. Complete during the course of the year the study assignments given at each Seminar or Workshop.

3. Take the required exams and pass them with satisfactory grades.

4. Pay the quotas required for the exams: two per year (approximately $10.00 per exam).

Certification will be given at the last Seminar or Workshop of the year.

Requirements for the first year of study:

First Semester:

1. Study the first 10 chapters of the *Encyclopedia of Bible Doctrines* by Herbert Lockyer and prepare for an exam on the content.

2. Preach a series of messages based on the “Sermons on the Mount,” offered in the No. 1 *Pastoral Guide* (red cover). Prepare to take an oral or written exam on that series.

3. Choose a biblical text and prepare an original textual sermon. See page 55 of *How to Preach Dynamic Sermons*. 
4. Prepare a Work Plan for your church, following the guidelines given at LOGOI’s Seminar, titled: “What the congregation expects from their pastor” (for additional help see the first article in this folder).

**Second Semester:**


2. Give a series of consecutive studies from the Philippians commentary, following the guidelines given in the LOGOI commentary. The student will offer proof that he has carried through on this assignment (lasting no less than 12 weeks) and take a brief exam on the contents.

3. Prepare an original expository sermon using the principles taught in *How to Prepare Dynamic Sermons*, beginning on page 23.


5. Students will be informed in writing as to the dates and the place where the exams will be given and where they can hand in their written projects.

At each center, the pastors registered, paid the required fees, and received their first textbooks: *Enciclopedia de Doctrinas Bíblicas*, *Guía Pastoral LOGOI*, and *Cómo Preparar Sermones Dinámicos*. José then reviewed all the study requirements for their textbook, and Cassatti gave some general classes on how to study a textbook. Then I asked the pastors to open their doctrine book and began a review on the major doctrines. The purpose was not only to familiarize them with their new textbook but to show them how exciting these biblical concepts were.

I remember that all three of us got a lot of questions. Most pastors revealed their fears—they simply were not accustomed to this type of work. We responded with a lot of reassurances. Also, in each center, we chose a leading pastor to serve as coordinator or go-between (we needed someone the pastors could call if they ran into trouble and someone we could contact to
learn how things were going). Believing we had covered all the bases, we bade them goodbye and told them we’d be back in April to (a) see how they were doing, (b) give them their first exams, and (c) introduce the second half of their year’s studies. This we did in each of the five centers, amazed that in each place around 100 pastors had enrolled. That job completed, José Alejandro returned to Uruguay (where he and his family now lived), Casati returned to his church in Cordoba, Argentina, and I went back to my family in Miami.

5.5.6.3 The first test of our program proves to be a failure

April was very slow in arriving that year. I could not wait to find out first-hand what had happened. I had kept busy going to new areas with our seminars. For instance, Mexico opened up to us like a flower. I had selected several more books for translation in preparation for a second year of study in Chile. Also, I had kept up correspondence with our five regional coordinators. From their reports, it appeared as if things had gone very well indeed. The reports were that the pastors were very pleased with the program.

The second week of April, right after Easter, José Alejandro, Osvaldo Casati and I were back in Chile. We started at our southernmost point, Puerto Montt. The pastors all arrived on schedule. There was great joy and elation at our reunion, although expressions of much fear at the prospects of taking their exams were shared. We collected the written work—a quick glance revealed it looked like material written at sixth grade level. Then they all sat down for their exam.

I have been unable to find a copy of that exam. Neither could José Alejandro (who kept very good records of all our activities) find a copy. I do
remember the anxious looks on so many faces as they tried to find the answers. When the time was up, we collected the exams. José and Osvaldo then began re-registering them for their second semester of work, giving out copies of the commentary on Philippians and explaining their new assignments. I took the stack of exams over to a corner table and began grading them.

I could not believe it. Most of the questions were left blank. Not one of the 86 students in Puerto Montt had answered enough questions to pass the exam. Again I recalled what was taught at Western Washington University: “If the majority in the class fails, the fault is not in the student, it is in the teacher.” I had taken too much for granted, there was a lack of clear understanding in the assignment; the demands I had made were unrealistic; the material was over the heads of the learners. Whatever it was, our fundamental core course was a failure. Now what remained was to see how the pastors would do in the other centers.

In Osorno, we had the same experience: (a) much joy over the fact that they were studying, (b) gratitude for the help they were receiving, and (c) in spite of bad grades, recounting all important improvements they were making in serving their congregations. There simply were far too many blanks in their exams. As in Puerto Montt, I apologized and took the blame, assuring them we had come a long way and would not give up now. Somehow we would find the right approach. In true Latin fashion, they were most reluctant to let the blame fall on me, using expressions like “Qué será, será” or “Next time we’ll get it right. It’s that we have not taken an exam since we were children.”
So it went also in Temuco and Concepcion—no one passed the exam on *Enciclopedia de Doctrinas Bíblicas*. The grading of the sermons they handed in as their other work requirement was not as subjective. We could give passing grades simply for tasks accomplished, pointing out weaknesses here and there. But pastors needed to have a solid footing in Bible doctrine, and we could not consider our teaching successful until they had a pretty good hold on what they believed and why they believed it.

One last center, Valparaiso, was to be visited. Again José, Osvaldo and I went through the process. As in the other places, I grabbed the exams and started grading them—failure after failure. Then, surprisingly, I found one exam with practically all the answers correct. Then another. And still another. Twenty-two of the 125 pastors who took the exams not only passed them but got very good grades. I showed José and Osvaldo. Immediately we called some of these students forward. We wanted to find out what they had done to pass.

**5.5.6.4 We discover the solution to distance learning**

It would be hard to forget how the answer to our educational methodology materialized. One of the 22 men who passed the exam said, “Yes, we can tell you what we did; just let me grab something from my briefcase,” and ran off. He was back waving some sheets in his hand. “See these notes,” he said. “This is what we used to study the book and get ready for the exam.”

“Where did you get them? Who prepared them?” I asked.

“You need to talk to that man back there,” he said, pointing to an elderly man sitting in the back of the sanctuary.
That notable day we were introduced to Tony Barratt, an Anglican missionary who had spent most of his adult life in northern Argentina teaching Indians how to read and write, along with providing a series of Bible courses to prepare their Indian pastors. He had recently moved to Chile with the assignment of preparing some young men to serve as Anglican priests. In his polite English manner, he told us he had been present at our gathering the previous November when we had given the original assignments. In fact, he had brought along his 22 students, hoping that we could help with their theological education. He went on to say that as he listened to the assignments we gave on the book of doctrines, he realized we did not know how to use a textbook for distance learning. However, he liked our books and believed our goals were sound, but our methodology was unworkable. Instead of interrupting our presentations, he decided to go along with the process and wait to see what happened. When his 22 got stuck, he then stepped in, providing them the worksheets we had just been shown.

That was a historic day for us at LOGOI. At last we found an experienced educator who knew how to do distance learning for people with scarcely any education. He believed in our objectives. He too wanted to see that multitude of untrained Spanish pastors get the education they needed, and he was willing to work with us to help us develop effective programs with sound teaching methodologies.

Soon in Viña del Mar, Chile, where Tony Barratt lived, we set up our educational office. Within two years, 16 people were working with us to create a full curriculum of biblical studies. From Miami, we directed the mechanics of preparing the textbooks for printing and distribution, Tony and his staff
designed the methodology and created the study workbooks. By the mid 1980s, we had a full-blown, five-year program. The first two years were introductory, supplying a basic biblical education not only for pastors, but for church lay leaders as well. What we called Nivel Dos (Level Two) was an additional three years of studies for those who felt called to ministry and needed to perfect their knowledge and skills.

That excellent program would serve us from the late 1970s through the early 1990s. In a matter of 20 years, 45,000 graduated from those programs in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, San Salvador and Colombia. Churches were radically transformed into centers where the Bible was preached with much more faithfulness and understanding, an example of which we will see in the following chapters. Then, in addition, over 100,000 church leaders completed one full year of studies. Though they did not finish the program, there was enough Bible taught in that one year to give them a good understanding of what biblical Christianity is all about.

**Conclusion**

In the first part of this chapter, I reviewed the three critical problems our research surfaced in the Protestant Church in Colombia:

1. The lack of consciousness on the part of churches and national church leaders that their leaders needed a biblical and theological education to effectively lead their churches.

2. Because missionaries placed a low priority in training pastors, their main priority being evangelism, they failed to adequately equip their national pastors to biblically and theologically lead
the congregations they had built up with so much work and sacrifice.

3. Once the missionaries left, the uneducated church leaders who took their places were unable to discern and deal with the unbiblical doctrines and practices that arose in the very first crisis faced by the national churches.

Finally, in the second part of this chapter, I reported how a program to biblically train pastors with very little education was created in 1977 in Chile by LOGOI. Because of the importance for such a program throughout the Latin American world at that critical time in the history of the exploding growth of the church after Vatican II, I have provided all this detail to explain its origins and its theological and biblical coverage.

While the LOGOI program would not have been sufficient for churches in the first world, it did meet the basic theological and educational demands of that first generation of uneducated national leaders. For this thesis, it is important to understand this LOGOI program of pastor education because, it was the program chosen by one of the major denominations in Colombia (the AIEC with 300 churches) to lift their pastors out of their doctrinal quagmire. This program also is a key to our hypothesis.

Since those first steps of creating a distance education program that pastors could study in their churches and the areas where they worked, many changes have taken place. Chief among them have been all the educational improvements a number of organizations have made for the second and third generation of pastors. Today in Latin America, while many pastors have not chosen to get the education they need to lead a church, they have no excuse.
Good programs are available in every country. Unfortunately, all too many groups—basically those of Pentecostal leanings—continue to believe that a biblical and theological education is unnecessary for a pastor. They maintain that all a pastor needs is unction from the Holy Spirit. Such churches, at the same time, appear to show by their practices and beliefs that their doctrines and their form of worship are not those that were believed and practiced in the historic Christian churches established by the Apostle Paul throughout Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy in the first century.

In the next chapter, the aim is to detail how the LOGOI program described in this chapter was introduced in Colombia and the way it impacted the 300 churches of the AIEC, the churches associated with the Latin America Mission.
CHAPTER SIX
EDUCATION FOR PASTORS IN COLOMBIA

Introduction

The aim in this chapter is to describe the program and methodologies used by LOGOI in Colombia to train pastors with little education. To do this effectively, the research narrowed to the Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Caribe (AIEC) denomination with 300 churches, one of the successful Protestant church groups working in Colombia. The study will date from Vatican II onward, the late 1960s to the mid 1980s. Although details would surely vary from one denomination of churches to another, the findings should be broad enough to provide a general picture of the condition of the Protestant Church in Colombia overall.

In the previous chapter, four significant problems in the Colombian Protestant churches exposed:

1. Missionaries did not make the churches aware of the theological education needed by pastors to lead their churches biblically.
2. Once the missionaries left, the untrained pastors were not equipped to recognize or ward off false teachings.
3. When strange doctrines were introduced, untrained pastors tended to accept the new beliefs unquestioningly.
4. After the missionaries left and doctrinal conflicts arose, there was no plan or program in place to correct the situation.

The second half of the previous chapter detailed the creation of LOGOI’s pastor training program, a program developed for pastors with very little education. In this chapter, the aim will be (a) to give some background on
the Latin America Mission and the AIEC (the organization and churches that would use the LOGOI program), and (b) to show the process by which the LOGOI program was implemented throughout the churches of the AIEC. Incidentally, it will become evident that this educational program was carried out during all the political turmoil created by the uprising of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the National Liberation Army (ELN). In the next chapter, examples of the effect of these political rebels on students will be provided.

As further background, Ubaldo Padilla (1995, pp. 112-113), in his short history of the AIEC, provided the statistical overview of the situation:

Más de 100 pastores se graduaron con tres años de estudio, obteniendo el grado de Diplomado en teología. 1200 líderes realizaron dos años de estudios en el nivel Certificado Básico, 350 completaron estudios de Vida de Pablo, 490 validaron y aprobaron la primaria. 3600 realizaron el curso de Vida Abundante y 17 realizaron estudios en el Seminario Bíblico de Colombia… Este ha sido uno de los eventos de mayor trascendencia en la AIEC en los últimos 20 años.

More than 100 pastors graduated with three years of studies, earning a Diploma in Theology. 1200 leaders completed two years of studies at the Certificate Level, 350 went on to complete the Life of Paul Studies, 490 validated their Primary Studies, 3,600 completed the Abundant Life course, and 17 went on to study at the Biblical Seminary of Colombia... This has been one of the events of greatest transcendence in the history of the AIEC in the last 20 years.

Finally, throughout the second half of the chapter, it will be evident how providing education for needy pastors—regardless of their educational level—immediately upgrades their ministry effectiveness. But first, it is important to learn more about the AIEC denomination to better understand the educational solution that was offered.
6.1 An overview of the Latin America Mission’s work in Colombia

Much of the information for this section was drawn from the book, 50 Años de Historia y Misión (Fifty Years of History and Mission) by Ubaldo Restán Padilla (1995). Padilla is one of the leaders of the La Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas de Colombia (AIEC), the group of churches related to the Latin America Mission based in San José, Costa Rica. In his book, he relates the story of the efforts of the Latin America Mission (LAM) in Colombia.

The Mission was founded by Harry Strachan, a missionary of Scottish origin who began his ministry in Argentina in 1902. A year after he arrived in Buenos Aires, Strachan married Susan Beamish, an Irish missionary already serving in Argentina. From Buenos Aires, the newlyweds moved to the town of Tandil where they would serve for 16 years. Three children were born to them in Tandil: Kenneth, Harry, and Grace.

According to Padilla (1995, p. 12) Strachan’s dream was essentially the evangelization of all Latin America:

La visión y la pasión de Enrique Strachan eran que cada latinoamericano escuchara por lo menos una vez el evangelio de Jesucristo, por eso quiso tener campañas grandes en todos los países de América Latina… Ellos [Enrique y Susana] habían sentido el llamado de Dios para iniciar una campaña continental de evangelización intensiva, por tanto decidieron conocer el territorio y el liderazgo evangélico, y a la vez hacer planes y preparativos para llevar a cabo su propósito. Realizaron un viaje de exploración que duró un año completo, en cual recorrieron casi todos los centros principales de la América Latina, desde Guatemala hasta Buenos Aires… En 1919 formaron la Campaña Evangelística de América Latina, que más tarde se llamó “Misión Latinoamericana.”

The vision and passion of Harry Strachan was that every Latin American should hear at least one time the gospel message of Jesus Christ; on this quest he purposed to have large campaigns in every country of Latin America… They [Harry and Susan] sensed the call of God to sponsor a continent wide program of intensive evangelism, for this reason they determined to get to know the entire area and the
evangelical leadership, while making plans and preparations to carry out their proposal. They made an exploratory trip that took an entire year, visiting all the principal centers of Latin America, from Guatemala to Buenos Aires… In 1919 they formed the Evangelistic Campaign of Latin America, that later came to be called the “Latin America Mission.”

Eventually Harry and Susan made Costa Rica their headquarters. From its inception, the Latin America Mission (LAM) had evangelism as the organization’s priority. Their approach to evangelism was to choose a key city, hold evangelistic meetings in the town’s central park, a rented theater, empty warehouse, or even in tents. In his book, Padilla (1995) wrote nothing about what was done with those who responded to Harry Strachan’s preaching.

According to Padilla (1995), Harry Strachan and his wife Susan made their first evangelistic trip to Colombia in 1922 to hold three weeks of evangelistic meetings in Bogota. The average attendance at these gatherings was 200. Padilla (1995, p. 14) explained the love demonstrated by the Strachans for Colombia:

Admiraron sus majestuosas montañas, sus valles y sabanas productivas, sus recursos abundantes de agua, petróleo y minerales. Pero más que nada, quedaron impactados por la necesidad espiritual de su pueblo. Siendo un país de comunicaciones dificilísimas, Colombia no hallaba manera de proporcionar a sus ciudadanos la educación, salud y otros beneficios necesarios para su desarrollo nacional. Como resultado, reinaba la penuria, la enfermedad, la ignorancia y la superstición religiosa. La situación del pueblo conmovió a Don Enrique y a Doña Susana.

They admired its majestic mountains, its valleys and productive plains, its abundant resources of water, petroleum and minerals. But more than anything, they were impacted by the spiritual needs of its people. Being a nation with very limited communications, Colombia could not find the way to provide its citizens the education, health and other benefits needed for its national development. As a result, poverty, sickness, ignorance and superstition reined. The situation of the people moved the hearts of Don Harry and Doña Susan.
A very similar story, but with a different ending, was reported by Roberts (1971, p. 47) in his biography of Harry Strachan’s son Kenneth. It took place in 1944, and 22 years had gone by since Harry preached in the theaters and parks of Bogota. Age and the wear and tear of years of untiring travel and preaching had slowed both father and mother down. Their son Kenneth, now appointed Deputy Director for the Mission, was beginning to assume leadership of the Mission. Interestingly, Colombia again came to the forefront:

A trip up the Magdalena River on the Mission’s gospel launch, *El Heraldo*, provided Ken an opportunity to meditate on the church’s tremendous task. The wide, strong flow of the river was both a challenge and a comfort. The launch chugged past dusty towns, impoverished fishing villages and long stretches of mangle and swamps, beyond which lay still other dusty towns and impoverished villages. Nowhere, except in the largest towns, did he see churches of any kind. Life was crude, raw, and primitive. Any impact of the gospel was yet undiscerned. Was it fair to expect the Colombian church to evangelize all this territory? What part should the [Latin America] Mission play?

Roberts (1971, p. 48) told of a series of “five-year” plans that Ken, Roberts and other missionaries laid out to organize churches and prepare national leadership to set up “a strong, scriptural pattern of ecclesiastical expansion” in Colombia. Like his father before him, Kenneth Strachan devoted himself to the evangelism of Latin America. Roberts (1971, p. 53) quoted from one of Strachan’s articles where he expressed his desire “to contribute to the complete evangelization of the continent in an unusual and effective way.” A few pages later, Roberts (1971, p. 84), noted Ken Strachan’s dissatisfaction with so many ineffective approaches to evangelism:

The fact is no one is really, honestly thinking and working in terms of total evangelization. We have all settled for limited goals, secondary objectives, and immediate ends. For the carrying out of our evangelistic assignment we have set up certain necessary institutions and our
energies are inevitably narrowed down to promoting them. We get so taken up with the machinery of the organizations which we have created that we haven’t the time and energy to look beyond to the ultimate goal.

6.1.1 Beginnings of the Latin America Mission in Colombia

The area chosen by the Latin America Mission (LAM) for missionary work in Colombia was the northern coastal area bordering the Caribbean Sea. In 1937, the Mission sent its first missionaries and established an outpost in Sincelejo, Colombia (Padilla, 1995). This area, because of the extreme tropical heat, lack of roads, and unhealthy environment, had been passed over by most organizations.

In 1937, according to Padilla (1995), there were 90 foreign missionaries in the whole of Colombia. Most had chosen the central, mountainous areas and towns along the Pacific coast, which were safer, healthier and had better communications. Three among those 90 were the first LAM missionaries sent from Costa Rica to serve in the northern regions of Colombia: Catherine Jephson, Jenny Jorgenson and Alice Bachert. All three were nurses, sent in direct response to the physical needs of people in those northern, tropical areas of the nation. Shortly thereafter (no date is given), a second band of missionaries, six men and four women, joined the three women. This group went to Colombia “to plant the gospel in these lands” (Padilla 1995, p. 19).

Padilla (1995) reported that by 1944, the LAM missionaries had 14 churches and, in keeping with the Mission’s policies, decided it was time to officially organize these churches into a new national entity. In that same year, from February 26 to March 4, official delegates from the churches met with Mission representatives in the town of Sincelejo. There they adopted the
name of Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Caribe (Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean—AIEC) and elected a National Administrative Committee composed of three nationals and two missionaries.

Apart from the missionaries, there were only three ordained pastors: Pedro Gutierrez, Dionisio Crespo and Emilio Zayas, men who had graduated from the Seminario Bíblico in Costa Rica and had come to Colombia as national missionaries (Padilla 1995, p. 19). Most of the churches were taken care of by these missionaries and a few Colombian obreros (workers), men and women who had natural talents and gifts for ministry, but did not have formal biblical training.

Woodbury (1984), a LAM missionary who worked closely with the AIEC in training programs for the pastors, added:

By the 1960s, leadership was in the hands of the Colombian pastors and not the missionaries. Also by the 1960s, the church was experiencing revival and an unprecedented period of rapid growth... So a church association that had about 25 churches and another 25 congregations in the early 1960s, had grown to over 300 churches and congregations by 1980 with a Christian community approaching 20,000 people.

Woodbury (1984, p. 2) goes on to explain how the leaders of these churches became familiarized with their roles as over-shepherds of the congregations:

As believers lived in close fellowship, one learned from another, and the apprenticeship model was the prominent teaching method combined with the imitation model. Very few had the opportunity to attend the Bible institute for lack of academic preparation, money and time, but many were trained through example.

There is no further explanation given. There is no evidence of particular missionaries assigned to help, teach and provide spiritual orientation for these men now responsible for the churches that were grown
out of the evangelistic efforts. At last, the Mission established a Bible school.

Woodbury (1984, pp. 3-4) provided a few details:

The Latin America Mission established the Caribbean Bible Center (CBC) in Sincelejo, Colombia in the early 1950s as a training center to prepare young men and women to serve Jesus Christ... The CBC remained as the chief training institution for the AIEC until the 1970s... With the influx of many new churches in the 1960s and 70s, CBC tried to keep up with the pace in preparing leadership for the AIEC... However, it became increasingly evident that CBC was not able to reach its goal in providing pastors and leaders for the churches of the AIEC.

Woodbury (1984, p. 4) added, however, that the school “was woefully missing the mark to train leadership for the churches.”

On his part, Padilla (1995, pp. 61-62), expressing the viewpoint of the leaders of the AIEC, explained that the school’s emphasis was on training people for evangelism, not in preparing pastors (the very issue or problem at the heart of this thesis):

Desde nuestra perspectiva el trabajo de evangelización que realizó el CBC a través de sus estudiantes fue sobresaliente, pero se fracasó en la formación de los líderes autóctonos para asumir la dirección de la Asociación... La formación y capacitación del liderazgo nacional fue deficiente, en parte porque el Instituto se limitó a capacitar a los laicos para hacer evangelización, lo cual era bueno, pero no se formó y capacitó para pastorear y administrar la obra de manera eficaz.

From our perspective the work of evangelism that the CBC [Centro Bíblico del Caribe] accomplished through its students was excellent, but the [Mission] failed in forming national leaders to assume the direction of the Association [of Churches]... The preparation and training of the national leadership was deficient, in part because the Institute limited itself to train lay people to do the work of evangelism, which was good, but it did not prepare and train people effectively to pastor and administer the churches.

Further indication can be seen in the curriculum chosen for the school and the number of students who attended (Padilla (1995, p. 47):

Se iniciaron las clases con 15 alumnos y las materias ofrecidas eran: estudios bíblicos, evangelismo personal, doctrina, arte de hablar en
Classes were started with 15 students and the subjects offered were: biblical studies, personal evangelism, doctrine, the art of speaking in public, and bookkeeping; later shoemaking and tailoring were added.

Clearly, the school was not set up to prepare ministers, rather, in keeping with the LAM’s goals, its chief purpose was to train people to do evangelism. Also one notes in the curriculum chosen that missionaries greatly simplified the level of studies in order to make the education program accessible to the students, the majority of whom had not completed their primary studies. Padilla (1995, p. 61) stated, in reference to the school’s graduates, that “en un período de 14 años solo tres pastores fueron ordenados y ocho licenciados” (in a period of 14 years only three pastors were ordained and eight licensed to preach).

In all fairness, one can understand why a new formal seminary was not set up in Colombia. The LAM had one of the best seminaries in Latin America in San Jose, Costa Rica, not far away. Colombian candidates fit for the ministry could all go to that seminary. It was certainly a logical reason, but when considering the immediate need and the special type of people leading the churches in Colombia—their lack of educational and financial limitations—it was not a very practical and satisfying reason.

In his paper, Woodbury (1984, pp. 4-7) told of a survey he and leaders of the AIEC took of the pastors in 1983. Out of a total of 342 pastors and leaders in the AIEC churches, there were 232 lay preachers who had no formal training, an additional 80 were lay pastors with some training, and 14 were licensed pastors with sufficient leadership qualifications to be
recognized eligible for ordination. Only 16 were ordained pastors with a formal Bible education.

6.1.2 Requirements for pastor ordination by the AIEC

Interestingly, the AIEC leadership had great expectations of their leaders. These desires and ideals are expressed in the high requirements for ordination of their pastors. Sadly, circumstances and need on occasion overruled these excellent national requirements (Padilla, 1995, p. 45):

1. Haber cursado estudios de manera satisfactoria en un Seminario o Instituto Bíblico reconocido por la Asociación.
2. Haber trabajado mínimo por un año como ayudante de un pastor.
3. Haber sido aceptado como obrero por el comité administrativo.
4. Haber sido Predicador Licenciado por un tiempo mínimo de dos años.
5. Ser aceptado por la iglesia donde trabaja.
6. Ser aprobado por el Comité Administrativo.
7. La solicitud de ordenación debía hacerla tanto la iglesia como el candidato. Si al estudiar la solicitud el Comité encontraba apto para ejercer el ministerio, se continuaba con los requisitos o de lo contrario quedaba aplazado.
8. Luego del visto bueno del Comité, el candidato debía escribir tres trabajos, el primero sobre el Espíritu Santo, el segundo sobre la historia de la iglesia y un tercero sobre teología pastoral y homilética.
9. Presentar por escrito una declaración de fe.
10. Conocer la Constitución de la AIEC.

1. Pass satisfactorily the required course of studies required by a Seminary or Bible School.
2. Worked for the minimum of a year as helper to a pastor.
3. Be accepted as a church worker by the Administration Committee.
4. Be a licensed preacher for at least two years.
5. Be accepted by the church where he worked.
6. Be approved by the Administrative Committee.
7. The request for ordination had to be made by the church as well as by the candidate. If on studying the application the Committee found the candidate suitable, he could continue the application process, otherwise he was excluded.
8. Once approved by the Committee, the candidate had to write three papers: the first on the Holy Spirit, the second on the history of the church, and the third on pastoral theology and homiletics.

9. Present a declaration of faith in writing.

10. Know the Constitution of the AIEC.

These requirements, however, were abandoned in 1968 (Padilla 1995, p. 82) when the churches began growing so rapidly that leaders had to be appointed for the churches.

The reason the AIEC did not have more ordained pastors to serve their churches was neither a lack of desire nor because they lacked high standards. The reason was that because their candidates for ministry did not have enough education to meet the requirements of existing seminaries either in Colombia or in Costa Rica, an alternative solution for their training was not found. No program was provided that met their particular needs.

6.2 The growth of the AIEC

In spite of their lack of training, the leaders of the AIEC did an amazing job of establishing new churches—this was the first building block for growth in the AIEC. Researching the reasons for growth in any movement is always fascinating because of the surprises one encounters. In this case, the first significant growth in the denomination came, not through the activity of missionaries, but as a result of the fervor of a convert by the name of Victor Landero—a simple farmer who could barely read and write.

The second building block was the Latin America Mission’s Evangelism in Depth program, a methodology that harnessed the total church membership in a creative an expansive movement of evangelism. (While this effort was to bring a wave of numerical growth, that very growth, would bring the AIEC to a critical juncture in its history.)
The third important reason behind the growth was the removal of the stigma against Protestants by Vatican II. Thereafter Catholics felt free not only to deal and speak with los hermanos protestantes (their Protestant brothers), but to join their churches.

Before we proceed, a comment about the involvement of the LAM missionaries in the growth of the AIEC churches is important. They seemed to be absent, even when needed. The churches were left to operate basically on their own. The reason is stated by Padilla (1995, p. 38):

\[
\text{[E]l ideal de Enrique Strachan era que las iglesias fundadas fueran autónomas, bajo liderazgo de nacionales y con sostenimiento propio.}
\]

Henry Strachan’s ideal was that the churches established [by the Misión] be autonomous, self governing, and self sustaining.

That being the understood policy, the LAM missionaries— for good or for evil—did not get involved in neither the program nor the operation of the churches. This will be evaluated later. The story of Victor Landero is worthy of close examination.

6.2.1 Victor Landero: The farmer turned evangelist

Eight months after buying and reading his new Bible, Victor Landero found himself one night listening to a fellow Colombian, Eliecer Benavides, explain the gospel. As Padilla (1995, pp. 66 – 73) told the story, that night Victor was converted. He went back to his family, and told them what had happened to him, and the whole family was converted. That was only the beginning (Padilla, 1995, p. 66):

\[\text{En 1958 Victor Landero decide irse a vivir a la región de Puerto Libertador y compró una pequeña finca a Calixto Amante, allí se estableció con su familia. Una vez Victor se ubicó en la región empezó a evangelizar a cuanta persona iba conociendo en la región, así que}\]
In 1958 Victor Landero decided to move to the region of Puerto Libertador, bought a small farm from Calixto Amante, and moved his entire family. Once established, Victor began evangelizing whoever he met in that region, so that soon all the people in that part of the country near the San Jorge and San Pedro rivers had heard the gospel...

Hearing stories about what was occurring through Landero, missionary Robert Reed decided to see whether all these conversions were really taking place. This is what he wrote the Mission office in Cartagena (Padilla, 1995, p. 66):

*Para llegar allí tuve que usar caballo, una piragua y caminar a pie, pero donde quiera que iba me encontraba con poblaciones enteras de creyentes. Todas estas gentes habían sido convertidas por el testimonio de Victor Landero.*

To get there I had to go by horse, canoe and walking, but wherever I went I found entire villages of believers. All these people had been converted through the testimony of Victor Landero.

That same year, 1958, according to Padilla (1995), Landero and Calixto Amante got together to build a housing project in a jungle area called Corozalito (about 120 kilometers south of Montería). Soon they had cleared the land, put up homes and built a chapel. By 1960, there were 94 people in that new village, 92 of them converts.

Padilla (1995, p. 68) recounted how these simple farmers would meet, read the Bible, particularly the book of Acts, pray and seek to follow everything they understood. Then, he quoted Landero telling him about an unusual experience:

*Oraba en voz alta cuando de repente me di cuenta que estaba hablando en una lengua desconocida para mi…. Estaba consciente que alababa a Dios, aunque no entendía el sentido de las palabras que pronunciaba. Fue una hermosa experiencia. Me sentía radiante,*
I was praying aloud when unexpectedly I realized I was speaking in a
tongue that was unknown to me... I was conscious that I was praising
God, although I did not understand the words I was speaking. It was a
wonderful experience. I felt radiant. I had a new concept of the love of
God and a new consciousness of the life of Christ in me. For several
days I was full of praise and adoration. It seemed to me that I was
overcome by gratitude to God.

Padilla (1995, p. 69-70) wrote that from 1960 to 1964, the municipality
of Corozalito became a center of “la manifestación soberana del poder del
Espíritu Santo” (the manifestation of the sovereign power of the Holy Spirit).
He explained that other signs and wonders followed: the casting out of
demons, amazing healings, and many speaking in tongues. So much so, that
people from all over the area stared visiting Corozalito to see what was
happening or to bring their sick for healing.

According to Padilla (1995), these manifestations were repeated in
other areas where the AIEC was working. Padilla attributed these repeated
manifestations as the reason for the rapid growth of their denomination in
Colombia. Likewise Woodbury (1984, p. 1), in his paper on the work of the
AIEC in Colombia, made reference to this movement, although he provided
no details. He simply states: “Also by the 1960s, the church was experiencing
revival and an unprecedented period of rapid growth.”

In the book, *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*,
(Burgess & McGee 1988, p. 152) these events are briefly mentioned:

In Colombia, a spontaneous movement began around 1960 in the
north Colombian forest under the leadership of Victor Landero, with
manifestation of spiritual gifts and following intense spiritual seeking
and reading of the Book of Acts. Like many other such groups in Latin
America, the assemblies linked with Landero call themselves
renovación, reject the label “Pentecostal,” and are affiliated with the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean, a non-Pentecostal body.

Padilla (1995) clearly attributed the first great spurt of growth in the AIEC to the untiring work of evangelism done by Victor Landero and to that special movement of the Holy Spirit among those simple farmers in Corozalito. Their example was contagious and those dedicated and uneducated farmers believed that the Spirit moved convincingly among them. Padilla (1995, p. 72) stated that in 1958, before this manifestation, there were 13 organized churches, 12 beginning congregations and a total of 600 members in the AIEC. Thereafter, as a result of what was accomplished through the work of Victor Landero and his simple farmer friends, the churches almost doubled. By 1965, they had 22 organized churches, 29 beginning congregations and a membership of 1,100 (a growth of 95% in seven years).

6.2.2 Evangelism in Depth: The Program that put people to work

As Kenneth Strachan, Director of the Latin America Mission, began to feel the need to mobilize the church in Latin America for evangelism, he began to ask himself (Roberts 1971, p. 92):

Why not a program that would mobilize all Christians, train all Christians, get all Christians praying and witnessing? Why not visit systematically all the houses in the cities and large towns? And reach all the unevangelized villages? Wouldn’t it be possible to coordinate all the missionary and church agencies to produce maximum impact—Child Evangelism, Youth for Christ, publishing houses and radio stations, bookstores and youth centers, Christian schools and hospitals, Christian professionals and laborers – in fact, all Christians, using all means to reach all people of all ages and occupations?

From those questions, reported Roberts (1971), came the name “Evangelism in Depth” (E/D)—mobilizing every Christian and every Christian
organization in purposeful evangelism. This became the work for the LAM. After successful efforts in Nicaragua (1959-1960); in Costa Rica, 1961; Guatemala, 1962; Honduras, 1963-1964; Venezuela, 1964; Bolivia, 1965-1966; Dominican Republic, 1965-1966; and Peru, 1967, the opportunity came to Colombia in 1968. (This researcher participated in the Nicaraguan Evangelism in Depth program, working in three cities of that nation.)

As reported previously in this research, under the auspices of World Vision (an organization based in California), representatives from 20 denominations met in Medellin on April 10-21, 1967, to discuss the viability of doing the program in Colombia. Evangelism in Depth was officially invited and a national committee appointed (presided by Hernando Bidulph). Colombia was divided into three main regions with coordinators appointed for each, and 1968 was designated as the year for the all-out effort (Padilla 1995, pp. 74-75).

From May to December 1967, the churches that cooperated carried out their intensive training programs. In January of 1968, Evangelism in Depth was launched throughout Colombia. Juana Bucana (1995, p. 188) reported that 35 major evangelistic crusades were organized in key centers throughout the nation, backed by 113 churches located in those regions, to which 26,000 church members lent their services. At the Latin American Congress of Evangelism held in Bogota in November of 1969, the delegate for the churches in Colombia reported the following (CLADE 1969, p. 116):

1968 fue el año de Evangelismo a Fondo y dio tan grandes resultados que nos hemos convencido de que si la América Latina se ha de alcanzar con el mensaje del evangelio, tiene que ser por medio de un esfuerzo unido y coordinado entre todas las denominaciones, por medio del entrenamiento de cada creyente para hacer la obra de evangelización, y por medio del entusiasmo y el testimonio de vidas...
1968 was the year of Evangelism in Depth and the results were so great we are convinced that if Latin America is to be reached with the message of the gospel, it will have to be done through a united and coordinated effort of all the denominations, by means of teaching every believer to do the work of evangelism, and by means of the enthusiastic testimony of those whose lives have been transformed by the power of the redeeming work of Christ. It is estimated that during the year of Evangelism in Depth some 20,000 people accepted Christ as personal Savior. This means that by 1970 the number of communicant members of the evangelical church would have reached a total of more than 90,000, in other words, eleven times more members than there were in 1948.

According to Pretiz and Roberts (1998, p. 94), statistics compiled by James Goff for the Evangelical Confederation of Colombia reported:

The average general growth of the [all the Protestant] churches in Colombia from 1960 to 1966 was 5,000 people. In 1967 it was 7,000. In ’68, the year of E/D, it reached 14,000.

In reporting on the direct effects of the E/D efforts on the AIEC, Padilla (1995, p. 75) provided no statistics, he simply stated:

_Todas las iglesias de la AIEC fueron promovidas para la evangelización. En adelante hasta el 1975 encontramos que la filosofía de EVAF se continuó aplicando, especialmente lo relacionado con la movilización de los laicos en la evangelización total. La filosofía de EVAF ha influido poderosamente en el quehacer misionero y evangelístico de la AIEC, no solamente en el período de 1968 al 1975, sino hasta hoy._

All the churches of the AIEC were mobilized for evangelism. From then on through 1975 we found that the philosophy of E/D was continued to be applied, especially in relation to the mobilization of the lay people in total efforts of evangelism. The philosophy of E/D has had a powerful influence in the missionary and evangelistic work of the AIEC, not only from 1968 to 1975, but until today.
6.3 A spiritual crisis forces the AIEC to a search for answers

According to Padilla (1995, p. 72), by 1974 the AIEC had grown to an organization with 62 organized churches, 120 unorganized congregations, and a total membership of 5,200. That year alone, 91 small mission churches had been elevated to the status of congregations. However (p. 76), to serve those churches there were only 12 ordained pastors (pastors theologically prepared) with close to 300 lay leaders who had very little formal training, if any. Most of these lay leaders worked in rural and isolated areas.

It was in this growing church and through these several hundred lay-leaders that the crisis erupted. Two separate but similar incidents came together to produce the crisis, all having to do with what the Christian Church is all about.

6.3.1 The ingredients that created the Crisis

As previously noted, in the 1960s a number of groups, starting in Corozalito with Victor Landero, had been involved in a movement or experience of the Holy Spirit among the poor, uneducated farmers. Missionaries who investigated the movement called it genuine; in fact some of the missionaries also experienced the special demonstrations. These varied manifestations normally were part of the Pentecostal movement and considered as such. However, what began in Corozalito had been totally unrelated to the presence or work of Pentecostals. Because the movement was analyzed by respected LAM missionaries and found to be genuine, credence in these types of manifestations spread throughout the AIEC denomination.
In 1968, “Evangelism in Depth” was introduced in Colombia. As noted, this was the program created by the Latin America Mission, the organization that sponsored the AIEC. Whatever the Evangelism in Depth team proposed was accepted as good. Therefore, when they invited those who called themselves Pentecostals to participate, such involvement was understood to mean their doctrines and beliefs were acceptable. However, up to this moment Pentecostals had not been accepted by most Protestant denominations. LAM’s invitation was unprecedented. As David Stoll (1990, p. 121) stated, by “inviting [Pentecostals] to join evangelical alliances, LAM helped establish their legitimacy.” Then, for months, in the year-long preparation for the Evangelism in Depth evangelistic effort, Christians from all denominations prayed together, sang together, shouted together, and began believing in miracles together. For months, they had united under the banner of “We are one in Christ.” Naturally, that “oneness” was understood in the totality of its meaning, not simply in the area of evangelism.

To the hundreds of church lay leaders of the AIEC, the Pentecostal teachings, manifestations, doctrines and beliefs which they claimed were based on the Acts of the Apostles seemed to parallel those of trusted nationals and LAM missionaries in the town of Corozalito. Therefore, rather than questioning these doctrines, these lay leaders embraced them. Then, too, by this time, most of the missionaries had left the country, meaning that the AIEC churches had no one around to warn about extreme and non-biblical doctrines, no one to give responsible restraints. The result was that the untrained church leaders along with their congregations accepted these new Pentecostal practices.
6.3.2 The neo-Pentecostal fire spreads

Padilla (1995, p. 80) recounted what began to take place throughout the churches of the AIEC as these untrained lay leaders began following what they learned from the Pentecostals:

[S]e presentaron muchas exageraciones, abusos y grandes extremos. En algunas iglesias no se hacía énfasis en el conocimiento de la Biblia sino en las profecías, las visiones, y manifestaciones sobrenaturales. Se dejó de lado el conocimiento bíblico para enfatizar la experiencia, las emociones, los sentimientos. Se hizo mal uso del don de sanidad de tal manera que se llegó a rechazar la medicina científica prohibiendo a los creyentes consultar al médico en caso de enfermedad. Se generalizó la opinión que toda la enfermedad era producida por demonios…Se llegó a depender tanto en las profecías que en algunas iglesias se nombraron pastores no por la decisión democrática del voto de los miembros sino por profecías. Se sabe de matrimonios realizados no por voluntad de los contrayentes sino por profecías, visiones, o interpretación de lenguas.

[M]any exaggerations, abuses, and extremes developed. In some churches the emphasis no longer was on the teachings of the Bible but on prophecies, visions, and supernatural manifestations. The knowledge of the Bible was put aside and experience, emotions and feelings were emphasized. Bad use was made of the gifts of healing, to the extreme that scientific medicines were rejected and [church members] were forbidden to go to doctors when they got sick. The idea spread that all diseases were produced by demons… It got to the place where so much dependence was placed on prophesies that in some churches pastors were called to serve, not by a democratic vote of the congregation, but by prophesies. In some cases people were married not out of love for each other but as a consequence of a prophecy, a vision, or the interpretation of tongues speaking.

Padilla (1995, p. 111) wrote of the turmoil that took place among the leaders of the churches, bringing great doctrinal division among the pastors:

Por la poca capacitación y formación de gran parte de los líderes y pastores de la AIEC, esta cayó en un vacío doctrinal, presentándose con frecuencia choques verbales, rechazos, divisiones entre los líderes y aun de iglesias, abusos en la doctrina y las prácticas eclesiásticas, llegándose algunos casos a la anarquía donde cada uno hacía y enseñaba según creía o entendía. La situación se agudizaba cuando algunos líderes menospreciaban la educación secular o religiosa, aduciendo que lo de importancia para hacer la obra era el Espíritu Santo y su poder, que el estudio era de la carne,
Because of the lack of training on the part of so many leaders and pastors of the AIEC, the denomination suffered a doctrinal vacuum. There were frequent verbal confrontations, rejections, division between leaders and also churches, including abuses of ecclesiastic doctrines and practices. This resulted in a number of cases of anarchy, in which every one did and taught according to their beliefs or understanding. The situation became so acute that some of the leaders belittled secular or religious education altogether, concluding that all that was needed to pastor was the Holy Spirit and His power, and that education was of the flesh. They justified their rationale on an erroneous interpretation of Second Corinthians 3:6 where the Apostle Paul says that “the letter kills but the Spirit gives life.”

Gregorio Landero, one of the denominational leaders, told the researcher in a recent phone call that after the majority of the churches turned to neo-Pentecostalism, the AIEC generally split into three groups: (a) those who chose radical Pentecostalism, (b) a small group, mostly pastors who had gone for training in the LAM seminary in Costa Rica and turned to Liberation Theology, and (c) a handful of the stalwart backers of the LAM, faithful pastors who wanted to save the denomination and turn it back to what it had been originally under the Latin America Mission. As the leaders in this third group analyzed what was taking place, they recognized that most of the chaos was due to the lack of doctrinal training on the part of all those lay church leaders.

6.4 Legitimate concerns of the AIEC church leaders

Among the few educated pastors and leaders of the AIEC, there developed a deep concern over the direction the rapidly spreading Pentecostal beliefs were taking their denomination. In this section, the aim will be to see how the AIEC church leaders sought to resolve their problem.
Juan Gonzalez, who had a background in education (he had been a professor at the Caribbean Bible Center in Sincelejo), now served as president of the AIEC (from 1976 to 1980). He made it the aim of his administration to find an educational solution for their churches. According to Padilla (1995), he appointed a commission of AIEC leaders—one of them missionary Nicolas Woodbury—to begin a serious search for answers.

One of the first items discussed was the possibility of reviving the Caribbean Bible Center in Sincelejo, the school that had previously served the denomination. Woodbury (1984) explained that they rejected the idea because of the ineffectiveness of the school:

The Latin America Mission established the Caribbean Bible Center in Sincelejo, Colombia, in the early 1950s as a training center to prepare young men and women to serve Jesus Christ. It later became known as the center to train pastors and leaders for the churches. It varied between a three- to four-year Bible institute program with a typical Western-oriented curriculum and a balance between Colombian professors and missionary teachers. C.B.C. remained as the chief training institution for the AIEC until the late 1970s…

However, it became increasingly evident that C.B.C. was not able to reach its goal in providing pastors and leaders for the churches of the AIEC. The church association was just growing too rapidly. The Bible institute never had a large enrollment, usually varying between 15 to 30 students.

I taught there from 1970-1977. The best year that I remember was 1973 when out of a total enrollment of 45 students, 20 were pastors. This was made possible through the provision of scholarships and the institute program only running for four months that year. After 1973, things brightened a bit as to the percentage of pastors in attendance, but it became more and more difficult to enlist enough students, and C.B.C. ceased functioning by 1980…

Once Juan Gonzalez and the members of his commission recognized that reviving the school was unfeasible as part the solution, they decided that the next step was to find out some specifics—the real, palpable needs of the AIEC pastors. Juan Gonzalez ordered the members of his commission to
prepare a survey that would give them a better understanding of the real needs of the pastors. Woodbury (1984, p. 5) recounted the findings:

It was discovered that out of approximately 300 pastors, six had some seminary training, 18 had attended the Bible institute [the school already alluded to in Sincelejo]; 50 had studied some TEE or correspondence courses and the other 200 plus were basically untrained in theology. It was also discovered that 80% of the pastors had not even finished primary school studies and very few had studied at all in high school.

The commission then began asking themselves about the kind of educational program they should seek and what they expected to gain from such a program. According to Ubaldo Padilla (1995, p. 111), this is what the commission set out to find:

Un programa de estudios por extensión que permitiera capacitar mayor número de pastores en su propio medio social, familiar y religioso, complementándose los estudios por extensión con cursos intensivos en residencia de quince días a un mes.

A program of extension studies that would make possible the training of a large number of pastors in their own social, family and religious environment, studies that could be complimented by a month or even 15 to 30 days of intensive residency studies.

6.4.1 The AIEC discovers the LOGOI pastor training program

One of the committee members, Gregorio Landero, wrote to key leaders in Mexico to find out what programs were used by denominations in that large nation. After hearing about LOGOI’s program, he wrote Jose Alejandro, LOGOI’s international director, asking for details. Meanwhile, Nicolas Woodbury traveled to the U.S. on a similar search, checking with North American missionary agencies. As fruit of that search, the LOGOI offices received a letter dated March 3, 1981, from Nicholas Woodbury (LOGOI archives, 1981), stating:
As you can see by the enclosed project—Programa Pastoral de la Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Caribe—we are precisely looking for ways to train our many pastors. The pastoral committee has authorized me to write to you for more information on your program. But first let me explain to you our needs. Our pastoral program is geared to help the pastors on 3 levels – those without primary school (the vast majority of our pastors); those who have completed primary school; and those who have finished high school. We plan to work on the first two levels but we need help on the highest level.

There are a few evangelical seminaries in Colombia but our pastors cannot afford to go away for 1, 2 or 3 years to study. They do not have the finances or the time to do this. Therefore, your program is attractive because it seems to combine residence, extension and correspondence. Do you have any plans for working in Colombia? Do you have a program for those who have studied several years of high school but have not completed their *bachillerato*? Would anyone from LOGOI be visiting in Colombia in the next few months with whom we might be able to get in contact and talk more about your program? How many pastors need to be enrolled for you to set up a program?

In the LOGOI files, attached to that letter is a note from an office secretary indicating the LOGOI office had sent samples of its materials to his office in Colombia via first class mail on June 16, 1981. Here, briefly, is what was written to Nicolas Woodbury in response to his inquiry (LOGOI Archives, April 1981):

> Thank you for your inquiry in regard to our Pastor Training Program for Latin America. I am sure I won’t have all the answers for you, but at least we may get started in some of the areas that may be of help to you… [We] are entering into relationships with denominations and organizations such as yours who want to use our textbooks and methodology…

I am sure you are anxious to know about the curriculum that we are offering so I am enclosing several sheets describing the courses… We would be delighted to work with you should you feel our materials and program are the kind of thing you are looking for. Thank you for your inquiry.

Sincerely yours,

Les Thompson, President
6.4.2 Leaders in the AIEC ask for LOGOI’s program

A response from Woodbury (LOGOI Archives, 1981) dated July 15 stated: “Thank you so much for sending us the information on your Pastor Training Program...We are seriously considering the possibility of adopting [it],” and he asked that LOGOI send him samples of its newest textbooks. Not only did LOGOI send him the requested samples, but it dispatched its International Director, Jose Alejandro, to visit with the AIEC’s search commission to discuss all the details of the program LOGOI had put together. In early October, that commission met with Jose Alejandro in the city of Medellín, Colombia.

A letter dated October 23, 1981, addressed to Jose Alejandro informed the leadership at LOGOI that the AIEC wanted the program (LOGOI Archives, 1981):

El propósito de la presente es comunicarle que de acuerdo a conversaciones que usted tuvo en Medellín con Nicolás Woodbury y Gregorio Landero sobre su programa LOGOI, el Comité Administrativo de la Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas del Caribe acepta complacido dicho programa, ya que satisfacen nuestras inquietudes, y es en realidad lo que intentamos establecer con el programa pastoral, un sistema para educar a nuestros pastores. Estamos listos para comenzar el próximo año... Tenemos aproximadamente 40 estudiantes; los datos precisos se los estaremos enviando después. Por nuestras limitaciones económicas solo podremos pagar el 20% [del costo]...

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that, in keeping with your conversations held with Nicolas Woodbury and Gregorio Landero in Medellin related to your LOGOI program, the Executive Committee of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean gratefully accepts your program since it satisfies our needs, and is in reality the kind of program we want to establish for our pastors. It contains the systems of learning we want to use to educate them.

We are ready to begin the program next year. We have approximately 40 students; their precise data will be sent to you shortly. Because of our limited funds we will only be able to pay 20% [of the cost]....
That letter immediately introduced a major problem. Apparently the AIEC had insufficient funds to pay for these studies. LOGOI as an organization was stretched keeping up with all the commitments they had in the other countries they served that it could not assume any additional financial burden.

6.5 A bit of clarification

In continuing with the material that will now be reported in this chapter, it should be remembered that the author was serving as president and founder of LOGOI, Inc. As such, he was directly involved in all the details of the development of both the LOGOI Pastor Training Program as well as its launching in Colombia. While the rest of the chapter will be written in Third Person, it should be remembered that the information and details given were all part of the personal experience of the author. He will seek to relate the information as faithfully as he remembers it. Citations from letters and reports related to the happenings will be given as support evidence wherever available.

6.5.1 The areas of concern in preparing the LOGOI curriculum

In the previous chapter, the beginning of LOGOI’s Pastor Education Program was described. The chapter ended explaining that Tony Barratt, along with his son Terry and other missionaries banded together—under the auspices of LOGOI—to create the materials necessary for the training of pastors. Chosen for the purpose was a methodology new to most areas of Latin America that took the education to the pastors and to the churches where it was needed. Rather than the students traveling to a school, the school traveled to the students.
After meeting with Tony Barratt and working out an agreement to work together to produce the kind of training materials needed to satisfy the needs of untrained pastors, the writer of this thesis sent a memo to the LOGOI Board of Directors: The heading read: “LOGOI’s Spanish Pastor’s Project.” It is dated 1978 and summarizes the agreements made with Tony Barratt and his staff:

As we work together, our education program will attempt to deal with seven broad areas:

1. **A Pastor’s Preaching Responsibility**: Unquestionably preaching is the key tool of a minister. Along side of direct teaching in the seminar classroom, we have prepared a text, *How to Prepare Dynamic Sermons* (by Luis Palau, Pedro Vega and Les Thompson), giving a step-by-step guide to the development of preaching skills. Further detailed instructions and helps in preaching will be given in follow-up seminars.

2. **A Pastor’s Spiritual Life and Training**: This area of emphasis stresses the reality that a pastor’s profession is a spiritual one. His relationship to God must be real and vital. Hence, stress is laid on his personal prayer life, his personal Bible study, his personal relationship to the God he serves. The pastor is referred to materials already available in Spanish on this subject, including biographies of great Christians.

3. **The Pastor’s Message**: After stressing the reality that he is responsible for the spiritual instruction of his congregation (for feeding the people), great stress is made on the content of his sermonic materials. The pastor is then shown the printed helps we have provided in this area – quarterly books containing three full sermons per week.

4. **The Pastor’s Relational Responsibilities**: This is one of the courses provided in the first seminar, pointing out that the pastor is friend, counselor, coach, arbitrator, “father confessor,” and guide to his congregation. Also, it is he who must keep the “family” living in harmony, peace and love. He is referred to helpful materials on the Christian home, ways to happiness, etc. We seek to make the pastor aware of his leadership responsibilities and how carefully he must lead and guide his people.

5. **A Pastor’s Obligations to His Community**: In one of the courses in the first seminar an endeavor is made to help the pastor see the place of the church in the community, its influence and importance. Since Protestantism is in the minority in Latin America, many pastors humbly take a low profile. The community consequently does not give the *evangelio* importance. Stress is laid on the words of Christ: “You are the salt of the earth. You are the light of the world.” A manual for
effective evangelism is introduced and ideas for making the Protestant church visible in the community are presented.

6. **The Pastor’s Continuing Education:** Tremendous stress should be placed on the need for constant learning. We’ve had to recognize that part of the problem pastors have faced in Latin America is that the materials available to him are written on such a high level that they are beyond his comprehension. We place in his hands our LOGOI materials, thorough yet written in plain language. We challenge him to become a real student of the Word of God.

7. **The Pastor’s Tools:** Many pastors are unfamiliar with all that is available in the Spanish language. We suggest an initial selected library. We show him where the sources for materials are to be found, and give him practical ideas on how to acquire the kind of tools he can use (most of these poorly educated pastors live on an inadequate salary – about $40.00 per month). NOTE: In our seminary in Puerto Montt, Chile, we asked those present who had a Bible dictionary to raise their hands. Of the 175 present, only 12 had such a dictionary.

This outline became the sieve through which LOGOI screened goals, purposes, and materials. It has served well through the years. With these observations made as to the focus of the program, we will shift to learn why such a program would be appealing to the leadership of the AIEC in Colombia.

**6.6 Delays in initiating the study program in Colombia**

In this section, the problems faced by both the AIEC and LOGOI due to their limited financial backing are reviewed. While excited about the prospects of adding Colombia to the countries where LOGOI was now serving, there were a number of concerns. First, LOGOI did not have the personnel that would be needed to supervise the program and train the facilitators needed to initiate the program in Colombia. Secondly, LOGOI’s success in Mexico was wiping out all the LOGOI reserves, since more students had joined than planned. Thirdly, LOGOI officials were surprised to learn that the AIEC, the supposed beneficiaries of the program, were expecting LOGOI to pay for 80% of the program costs.
The AIEC’s expectation that LOGOI would fund 80% of program costs merits further explanation. In missionary work, such expectations are common. All missionary work is done through donations from churches and interested organizations; therefore, it can easily be assumed that someone who has a specialty—such as LOGOI with a program designed to help pastors—could very possibly have the financial backing to provide, at no cost, its programs and assistance to other like organizations.

6.6.1 Financial problems brought on by LOGOI’s success

The LOGOI staff in Miami was glad the Executive Committee of the AIEC had made the decision to use its program, and that they wanted to start the training in early 1982. However, before entering Colombia, there were a few problems to solve.

First, the LOGOI office would have to dispel the false expectations held by the AIEC. Their financial obligations would have to be made clear to them. Yes, LOGOI was a not-for-profit organization, and in hundreds of cases were already providing full scholarships for pastors unable to pay. However, North American related organizations, such as the AIEC associated with the Latin America Mission, would have to assume the lion’s share of the costs.

A memo sent to the executive staff in Miami (LOGOI archives, April 25, 1981) notes the expectations in Colombia:

Along with you, I am excited about LOGOI’s possible outreach into Colombia. We would love at this time to help the AIEC, but the timing is off. The only way we can consider the invitation is if they take full financial responsibility as well as provide the personnel needed. I will get back to Woodbury and Lander and explain what needs to happen.” (The note was signed by Les Thompson, President.)

However, even after informing the AIEC in Colombia that LOGOI simply did not have the human and financial resources to help them, they kept
insisting that LOGOI should start to provide the program anyway. They were going through the strains of division in the churches and they felt a real urgency to get their pastors trained. However, while LOGOI officials appreciated their urgency, they still had to face the reality of their own limitations. Success, too, can bring special problems of its own. In sum, the program was so effective it quickly spread from Chile to Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and then jumped to Mexico.

In Mexico the program became an immense success, particularly with the pastors of the National Presbyterian Church. That denomination had over 3,000 churches and many of their pastors served in rural areas where they had no opportunity to get the theological training needed. By 1983, from Merida (in the Yucatan Peninsula) to Tijuana (in the northwest corner), eleven strategically situated study centers had been set up by LOGOI. The following map shows where those centers were located:

![Map showing eleven LOGOI centers scattered throughout Mexico.](image)

*Figure 15. Eleven LOGOI centers scattered throughout Mexico.*
In Mexico LOGOI had hired the necessary personnel to oversee the educational program. LOGOI had trained these workers. This staff not only recruited students for the program but also supervised their studies and administered the exams. LOGOI also opened a warehouse in Merida, Mexico so that its textbooks and training materials would be readily available throughout the nation.

In March of 1982 a letter sent to churches, foundations and general donors stated that LOGOI now operated in five countries—Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Paraguay, and Uruguay—with a total of 27 study centers and a total student enrollment of 3,200 (LOGOI archives, 1981). The success in Mexico was one reason LOGOI could not afford to consider adding Colombia to the list.

6.6.2 The cost entailed in creating the right products

Another reason Colombia would have to wait was the cost of operating the Education Office in Viña del Mar, Chile, the office that produced all the study materials. To meet the demand for courses, LOGOI had added six full-time employees, bringing that total staff to 16. That office now was being led by Terry Barratt (Tony Barratt, the father, had turned over the development of curriculum to his son Terry and he went on to fulfill other responsibilities within the Anglican Church). Terry was an equally able and experienced educator. He and his father had developed a basic two-year program of study on the life of Jesus based on the book of Matthew (the program was titled El Compendio de Teología Pastoral). So successful was the program that it was translated into 15 languages. (Later, when we began training the lay church leaders in
Colombia, we resorted to this special program because it was so well suited to those who had limited reading and writing skills.

Now, in 1982, LOGOI’s Education Office in Viña del Mar was devoting its full energy to producing a steady stream of workbooks and study materials for what came to be called the Level 2 Program, a program designed for pastors who had completed their primary education. As mentioned in the previous chapter, LOGOI’s responsibility in Miami was to produce the main textbooks (whether these were translated texts from English or textbooks originally written in Spanish). Once a textbook was printed, the Education Office in Viña del Mar, Chile, would then prepare the workbook and study methodology for that text.

The LOGOI office in Miami was under the management of Bob Nicolet (and later John Underwood). The book production and editorial office, also in Miami, was run by Juan Rojas, an able journalist from Cuba. He supervised a small group of translators, typesetters and proof-readers. Once a textbook was finished and the workbook completed, the Miami office was responsible for coordinating the printing and shipping of that text to all of LOGOI’s study centers in the continent. (Every step in the production process was crucial to the educational process.) Jose Alejandro kept busy traveling from country to country meeting with denominational leaders and encouraging LOGOI’s regional managers, coordinating calendars, and keeping the whole overseas machinery going. The researcher, the president of LOGOI, tried to keep everything running as smoothly as possible.
6.6.3 Financial resources

Sponsorship for LOGOI came from churches throughout the United States that heard about the program and sent in donations. In some cases, individuals in those churches took special interest and gave additional donations. The growth of Protestantism all over Latin America after Vatican II attracted a lot of interest throughout North America. By 1978, when LOGOI began to help Spanish pastors directly, around a hundred U. S. churches and organizations got involved in sponsoring the education program.

In spite of that, in 1981, when the AIEC wanted to join the program, there was not sufficient funding to add them to the program. New sources of revenue had to be found.

6.6.4 The arrangement that permitted expansion into Colombia

Since the AIEC churches in Colombia were affiliated with the Latin America Mission (one of the largest independent missionary societies in Latin America) LOGOI, together with the AIEC, sent their officers a special request for assistance. The LAM responded favorably, so long as Nicholas Woodbury and Gregorio Landero agreed to make a tour to churches in the U. S. to solicit that help.

The LOGOI office in Miami provided Woodbury and Landero flyers and materials they used in their fundraising projects. These materials outlined the educational needs of Latin America’s pastors and suggested ways donors might help.

With a set of slides showing pastors and churches in Colombia and a brief description of the Colombia educational project, Woodbury and Landero set out visiting churches in the eastern part of the U. S. Their goal was to
raise enough money for 100 students at $300 each per year. In addition, they needed to raise money to fund the salaries for a small staff and office for the supervisory aspects of the program. Their mission was successful, and by late fall 1982, Woodbury informed LOGOI the necessary funding to launch the program had been raised. January 24-28 were set as the dates for beginning the Colombian program.

A new alliance had been established. LOGOI and the Latin America Mission joined forces to provide theological training for pastors of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean. The 72 Colombian pastors who enrolled in that beginning class became the first among hundreds in a very laudable effort to provide desperately needed education for the AIEC.

6.7 The LOGOI/LAM educational program in Colombia

In this section, the program and methodologies used in Colombia will be explained. It will be seen that a great number of advances had been made in study methodologies and delivery systems. Before looking at those innovations, it is important to learn the arrangements made in Colombia.

The commission under Juan Gonzalez had done a good job organizing the pastors, and Woodbury and Landero had worked hard raising the necessary funds. Since this was the first time another organization had joined forces with LOGOI to do the actual training of the pastors, LOGOI’s leadership wanted to make sure every detail was carefully covered.

The starting date was set for January 24-28, 1983 in the town of Sincelejo. The AIEC Education Department reported they were anticipating 60 pastors in the first class. With a firm date in hand, the LOGOI management
gave Bert Warden (their warehouse manager in Miami) shipping instructions for all the materials that would be needed in Colombia. Terry Barratt in Chile was contacted, and arrangements were made for him to direct that introductory education seminar. First, however, he was to train Gregorio Landerro (named Director of the AIEC Theological Education Department), Eleazar Moreno (a teacher), and Nicolas Woodbury (a teacher, as well as liaison between the LAM and LOGOI) in the training procedures.

In the fall of 1982, LOGOI had promoted Terry Barratt to the post of Education Development Director. Although England was his homeland, he had been brought up by his missionary parents in Argentina, and his Spanish was impeccable. In fact, most of his advanced education was in Argentinean universities. As the program grew, LOGOI needed an experienced hand managing the entire education process. Jose Alejandro would spend his time opening new countries and dealing with the coordination needed between national church offices and LOGOI. Barratt was to ensure the thoroughness of the educational process. Since Barratt lived in Viña del Mar, Chile, he would still be able to look in on the Education office.

In his new assignment, Barratt began traveling and holding special workshops for all the personnel involved in the education. They came to love Barratt’s gentle manner—a trait that came along with his British no-nonsense demands—and his obvious understanding of the educational process. Improvements soon were noticeable throughout the expanded organization.

Now that a date was set for initiating the program in Colombia, Barratt made his travel plans, allowing time to train the trainers and introduce the methodology to 60 pastors, most of whom had very little education.
6.7.1 The educational program begins in Colombia

The first news received in the Miami LOGOI offices of the activities in Colombia came from a letter sent by Landero (LOGOI archives, 1983) briefly telling this researcher about the initiating seminar:

I want to inform you that the seminar celebrated January 24 to 28 [in Sincelejo] was a great success. We had made plans for 60 students, as we agreed, but God sent us 72. Therefore, for this year we will continue with this new count.[As an afterthought, I was happy I had asked Bert Warden to ship a few extra books].

Shortly thereafter arrived a fuller report sent by Terry (LOGOI Archives, 1983):

Work Week One was the successful culmination of their nearly three-year search to find a realistic way to train the 300 pastors in their denomination, the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean. The 72 men who attended had been carefully screened by the denomination, and they were enthusiastic in their response... One pastor had walked three hours to the nearest bus stop, still 100 kilometers and three dusty hours away from our training site in Sincelejo, just so he could attend. The next morning, we gave them the materials for their first course, a detailed approach to Bible study, which forms the foundation for all their remaining courses of study... Evening sessions were devoted to inspirational films designed to challenge the pastors to even greater commitment and service.

In the weeks to come, the men will be studying individually the course materials in a modified approach to programmed learning, and in regular small group sessions under a tutorial approach. A denominational coordinator, Gregorio Landero, will be visiting the small groups, while LOGOI will be providing the course materials and follow-up evaluation... By year's end, they will have fully completed five basic courses applicable to their pastoral responsibilities.

Throughout the sequence of courses, the men are required to test out what they are learning in their weekly preaching or Bible study experience. In other countries we have seen a number of new churches and Bible study groups started in response to this requirement. And as you know, one of the best ways to find out whether you've really grasped new material is to teach it.

One evidence of the pastors' commitment which was particularly touching to me personally was the pastors' desire to take the program to their brethren in remote, rural areas under guerrilla
control. Using their own meager resources, they plan by September to introduce pastors in these areas to our Level 1 curriculum, especially designed for those pastors with a minimum level of literacy. In all, LOGOI has made a great start in Colombia.

6.7.2 The methodology used in implementing the LOGOI program

At this juncture, it would be helpful to provide a fuller explanation of the LOGOI Pastor Education Program delivery system.

When denominational leaders or pastor associations contacted the LOGOI office asking about the program, letters and flyers were sent explaining the program, costs, and benefits. Once a group of pastors responded that was sufficient to make a visit worthwhile, a LOGOI representative would be sent (normally Jose Alejandro). If that representative agreed there was genuine interest by the regional or denominational leaders, a date would be set for an “Introductory Workshop.”

Pastors who were interested came to the workshop bringing their application forms filled out and ready to pay for their first course (around 15 dollars). Recognizing that these pastors had very low incomes, LOGOI made the costs affordable and provided easy payment terms.

The LOGOI office would send two or three experienced teachers to the area (normally close to 100 pastors would attend those initiating workshops and the majority would begin studies). Since the majority of those attending had not completed their primary education nor gone to school for many years, each enrolling pastor required much personal attention and a lot of encouragement.

At the appropriate time in that first workshop, the attending pastors would receive their first textbook. This was always a spectacle to behold, since it represented the first book, after the Bible, for most pastors to own.
Once the excitement died down, the LOGOI teacher would go through the book and explain the importance of the topic contained and review the general outline and content. Here and there, the teacher would pause to read a key passage, then show its appropriateness to their job as pastors. The teacher would also explain that the textbook from now on would literally take his place and become their teacher. That demanded that the pastors read it carefully, following the instructions in the workbook that was then distributed to them.

Once textbooks and workbooks were distributed, another LOGOI staff person would review these materials with the pastors (these workbooks were the ones designed by Terry Barratt and his staff in Viña del Mar, Chile). The workbooks made it easy for a pastor student to understand the study process and methodology of learning the content of the textbook. The workbook was divided into eight programmed weeks of study. The students were to set aside two hours a day for study. An imaginary week was sketched on the blackboard and the pastors were taught how to select a two-hour period each day out of their schedules for that study. Before that class period ended, each pastor (following the model sketched out for them) would designate the special two-hour period he would give daily for his own study.

6.7.3 Guaranteeing the learning process

Repeatedly, each pastor was told that when he studied faithfully every day, he would find the learning process not only possible but enjoyable. In fact, he would quickly discover that what he was learning every week would provide all the information he needed for his preaching responsibilities during the week.
The LOGOI teacher then reviewed the most interesting part of the week’s study process: the weekly *peña* or study group. He explained that they would all be divided into groups of no more than 10 and that once a week they would gather (normally at a church location) to review the answers to the questions in their workbooks and discuss what they had learned.

Here was the genius of the learning process: every week the students were forced to verbalize what they had studied during the week. That process forced them not only to internalize what they were learning but to process it through their minds and explain it in their own words. When they could repeat what they had learned, that meant the learning process had been accomplished. At last, those concepts stuck in their minds and they could repeat them from their pulpits in their sermons. In this way, they learned and their congregations learned. Significant education had taken place.

There was one additional tool created to help assure the learning process: a *facilitator* for each weekly study group or *peña*, as they were called. It was impossible for LOGOI to send a teacher to each small group that met every week throughout each country. Yet someone needed to help each group finish their assignments, respond to their questions and help them reason out and evaluate what they were learning. Again, the educators in Chile came up with the solution. To provide adequate *facilitators*, Barratt and his educators created an additional tool, a *facilitator’s guide*. This guide went along with the weekly workbook and provided the special guidelines and instructions needed by each study group. For each week, the cleverly designed guide provided all kinds of suggestions, made key questions, and provided the answers for those persons studying and meeting together.
Obviously, since it would be impossible to send staff to supervise each individual group, this facilitator would have to be selected from within the small group of pastors meeting every week. If the instructions were clear and objectives understandable—and the facilitator did his job well—this was the maximum that could be expected in our LOGOI educational process. Finally, on the last pages of the *Facilitator's Guide*, a grade sheet was printed. Using the grade sheet, the facilitator graded the weekly attendance and the work assignments according to careful instructions. On that same sheet, there was a place for the grade received on the final exam and the total grade. These grade sheets were all turned in to the LOGOI representative in the area. Each student's final grade point was calculated from these grade sheets.) Thus the success or failure of each group depended very much on the way the facilitator led his group. Given the circumstances, the distances, and the number of students enrolled, the facilitator approach was the best design solution. However, if the LOGOI representative in an area received a complaint about the facilitator, the representative’s immediate task was to correct the problem as quickly as possible.

A word must be added as to the effectiveness of this method. Simply stated, it worked exceptionally well. The reason for its success lay in two factors: (a) the heart-felt desire on the part of pastors to learn, providing the motivation; and (b) the right tools in the right hands made the process workable. The fact that 45,000 graduated with satisfactory grades speaks for itself. As an aside, it was amusing to hear people speaking about “a new gift of the Spirit”—that of becoming a facilitator (equivalent to a teacher). Indeed,
many of those facilitators became excellent teachers in their churches and Sunday Schools.

6.7.4 Completing the training process

At an appropriate time in the workshop, all pastor attendees were divided into groups. Prior to group assignments, staff reviewed all attendees applications and selected those who had the most education to serve as facilitators. The LOGOI instructor would divide the pastors into townships to ensure that they lived close enough to attend the weekly peñas. Each pastor was assigned to a study groups (peña), according to the churches represented, numbering no more than ten per group. Then a facilitator was named over each group.

After facilitators were named, the group decided the most convenient day of the week for their particular group to meet for their peña to review and grade their week’s work. On the blackboard, an eight-week calendar outlined what the pastor students had to copy into their workbooks. In this way, the schedule for that area of study was clearly marked. The date, place and hour were established for the final exam. This date would correspond to the time a LOGOI representative would travel to the area to administer the exam (the LOGOI office in each country coordinated those travel dates). The facilitators were instructed to make sure all the scheduled dates were adhered to, so the pastors would be well prepared for their final exam. Weekly quizzes and mid-course exams were also provided in the Facilitator’s Guide, which helped the pastors become familiar with taking tests and prepare themselves for the final exam at the end of each course.
At each introductory seminar, the last day was designated for a test-run. The pastors were given an assignment. That night, they were to carefully read a selected number of pages in their textbook. When they came to class the next morning, each pastor was given an hour to write out the answers related to the reading that had been assigned. With that test-run assignment completed, after a brief recess, the facilitators were asked to gather their groups to review the answers given and also to practice their leadership skills in a peña. Using their Facilitator's Guide, each facilitator practiced his skills (as a LOGOI supervisor watched) while conducting a group discussion. LOGOI’s staff supervisor corrected missteps or helped those who had not previously learned people-skills to feel comfortable with the facilitation process.

Having completed these test-run exercises, the closing moments were used to answer questions, set the dates for the final exam for that course and for a one-day introductory workshop for the subsequent course of study. The students were sent to their homes, most of them leaving with high expectations. Interestingly, by the time students had completed a couple of LOGOI courses; they understood the methodology and could do the work with very little supervision.

6.7.5 The supervisory arrangement between LOGOI and the AIEC

Returning to the subject of the delivery of the LOGOI program to Colombia, in mid January of 1983, Terry Barratt traveled to Sincelejo to introduce the LOGOI education program to the AIEC. His helpers were Nicholas Woodbury, Gregorio Landero, Calixto Amante, Juan Gonzalez, and Jose Villalba. This was the staff he would prepare to lead the educational
process. The first three men would devote full time to the program, the other two would be available to assist as needed.

The supervisory arrangement made between LOGOI and the AIEC was that Terry Barratt would meet with the above mentioned leaders twice a year and be available to answer questions or guide them through whatever educational problems arose. Gregorio Landero or Nicholas Woodbury would provide Miami with a copy of the student’s registration, send in the monthly reports on the progress of the program, and send copies of the grades received by each student upon completion of their exams. Another item was related to the materials needed from course to course, since the number of students enrolled constantly changed—generally upwards. The pastors were to complete five courses a year and, on that basis, the schedule for payments to LOGOI was made. The Latin America Mission would pay LOGOI directly according to the enrollment and LOGOI would provide training for the pastors as directed by the AIEC.

The last item in the contract was that once a year Jose Alejandro and this researcher would meet with the AIEC executive council to exchange ideas, give recommendations, and speak at their annual church convention. The purpose was to strengthen the educational relationship between the two organizations and to stimulate the churches to keep sending their pastors for training until they were adequately prepared to biblically lead their churches.

6.8 An overview of the curriculum of study provided by LOGOI

In the previous chapter, the attempt was made to describe how the LOGOI Pastor Training Program was started. The unsuccessful first efforts in southern Chile were noted as was the providential meeting with Rev. Tony
Barratt, an Anglican priest who had created a very effective program of Bible training for Indians in Northern Argentina. In this chapter, the researcher described how Tony Barratt and his son Terry put together an excellent team of educators. This was the program that was quickly introduced in Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Paraguay, Honduras, Guatemala, and Uruguay—and now in Colombia.

Terry Barratt was an educator who was well aware of the needs of Latin America’s pastors and worked diligently to help them get them biblically trained. Without his expertise and his supervision of the program in Colombia, LOGOI could not have been successful in its efforts to affect 300 lay-pastors, bringing solidarity to a group of churches that had almost been torn apart.

In the next section, the education program that was carried out in Colombia will be summarized. This effort was all done through the direct supervision of missionary Barratt and the staff in Colombia, which was provided by the AIEC.

6.8.1 A brief description of the program introduced in Colombia

When LOGOI began to work with the AIEC in Colombia in 1983, the Pastor Education Department in Chile was well along the path of completing a full curriculum. A three-level sequence of study and application had been designed. These levels and applicable courses are provided at the end of this thesis (see Appendix B).

The Colombian program of instruction included normal subjects studied by churchmen: methods of Bible interpretation, homiletics, church history, Bible doctrine and theology, evangelism, counseling, community outreach and Christian service. In total, some 1,325 hours of personal study were involved,
including 12 one-day workshops and three seminars. A Diploma in Biblical Studies was awarded to all who satisfactorily completed their courses.

Few pastors in Colombia (and elsewhere in Latin America) are financially supported by their congregations. Most must work at other jobs to provide for their families. Yet these are the men who needed the training because they represented the largest number of churches in the AIEC. These also were the men who could not afford to go to seminary even if they would have had the necessary education because neither they nor their churches could have afforded to fund it. These were the church leaders that LOGOI, the AIEC and the LAM began to train. These leaders were already serving as pastors of churches, without theological training or a primary education. For them, the LOGOI program was a god-send. Soon these leaders would be showing off a Bible diploma in their field of service; soon their level of study would be such that many would be able to continue their education by beginning seminary-level work. One advantage of the program was that without leaving their homes, their jobs or congregations, these leaders could study the Bible and develop pastoral skills right where they lived. In three short years, the following skills for effective service would have been acquired:

1. how to study, interpret and teach the Bible;
2. how to communicate Scripture convincingly;
3. how to assemble and use reference materials and books;
4. how to counsel from a biblical perspective;
5. how to organize and administer a church;
6. how to study books of the Bible, or books on doctrine, theology or church history;

7. how to run a business meeting;

8. how to plan and organize their own workshops and seminars for their church people.

**Conclusion**

In 1987, Dr. Luis Palau, Argentina’s world-renowned evangelist, said this of the LOGOI program (LOGOI archives, 1987):

So many Latin Americans are coming to Christ that there are no pastors and no trained leaders. But that’s the beauty of what LOGOI is doing. LOGOI has stepped in, and as an organization, is providing materials where pastors and lay leaders can train themselves because they provide the right kind of books. And what I like to see is that they train Latin lay people and some humble pastors who don’t have much education to be grounded in the knowledge of the Word of God. LOGOI continues what the missionary started. LOGOI is on the cutting edge of the situation in Latin America. LOGOI is preparing shepherds whether they are ordinary fellows, businessmen, or the beginning of full-time pastors that Latin America needs today.

Seven decades ago, in *The Outline of History*, H.G. Wells (1921) wrote, “Human history becomes more and more the race between education and catastrophe.” This has certainly been true for the AIEC church in Colombia. Providentially, LOGOI arrived at the right place with the right program at the right time.

As this chapter describes, the great need the AIEC had to provide its 300 lay pastors with a good Bible education finally began to be met through association with LOGOI. LOGOI representatives had the opportunity to learn much more about how their program was structured and how best to implement it. These representatives learned reasons for its approaches and the kind of tools that were needed to make the program work.
LOGOI representatives also came to understand more about what the program was capable of accomplishing and expanded their hopes in the following areas: (a) that upon completion of LOGOI’s three-year, program pastors would have a workable foundation for their ministry; (b) that these pastors would learn a methodology for personal study that would enable them to pursue their private studies; (c) that these pastors would learn the basic skills for preaching and teaching needed by every pastor; and (c) that the whole process would make the pastors useful servants of God.

In the next chapter, the complete story of the training of the 300 AIEC pastors will be told, and testimonials and examples of the effectiveness of this educational program in such a convulsed area of the world will be provided.
CHAPTER SEVEN
A CHURCH TRANSFORMED

Introduction

On February 15, 1819, Bolivar spoke to the Congress of Angostura in Colombia. One sentence stands out from his speech: “Slavery is a child of darkness; ignorant people become the blind instruments of their own destruction” (Sherwell, 1921, p. 111). Bolivar’s observation aptly summarized the focused efforts made by the AIEC leadership to bring their untrained pastors out of the slavery of their spiritual darkness and into the freedom enjoyed by those who have light.

In previous chapters, the crisis faced by the AIEC churches in Colombia that were tested by new doctrines was noted. The lack of education among pastors was not just a problem of the AIEC in Colombia but a common problem throughout Latin America. Programs developed by LOGOI Ministries to provide education for Latin America’s untrained pastors were detailed.

Also previously, research conducted on one denomination, the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC) was described. First, the history, programs, and growth of the denomination were reviewed, and the crisis faced by the denomination when the untrained pastors were challenged by new doctrines was discussed. Specific steps involved in launching LOGOI’s Pastor Training Program were outlined.

In this chapter, the story of the training of the 300 AIEC pastors will be completed, and the researcher will seek to validate his hypothesis—the indispensable need of pastors for a biblical and theological education. That hypothesis was described previously in response to the four serious problems
discovered by research pertaining to the growth of the Protestant Church in Colombia.

At the start of the thesis, this researcher noted that one of his aims was “to show that by formally educating national pastors in the historic truths of Christianity, they will be able to draw their churches out of their environmental and theological confusion and produce communities of believers that significantly impact the society around them.” Additionally, this researcher explained: “This study has grown out of the researcher’s aim to show that the key to the successful establishment of a national church is the theological training of its national pastors. For his demonstration, the researcher chose to relate the history of the development of the Protestant Church in Colombia, South America.” This hypothesis is further clarified with the following argument: “The establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ is important enough to warrant the Biblical and doctrinal preparation of its national leadership… The aim should be to provide future church leaders with a thorough enough education so that a true biblical church can be established.” Furthermore, an even more direct statement was made: “A church based on New Testament principles and doctrines cannot be established without a well-educated clergy.” Previous chapters established a basis for what happens to a denomination when the pastors are not trained. The researcher further stated: “If the pastors are not taught the doctrines of the faith and taught how to understand the Bible, one can scarcely expect their congregations to be “built upon the foundation of the apostles, and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20). Based on this biblical text, the researcher asserts that the Christian Church has a fixed foundation;
therefore, it is indispensable for those who lead the church to know, understand and be fully conversant with the teachings of the apostles, prophets and Jesus.

Negatively, the researcher seeks to prove his hypothesis by demonstrating what happens to churches led by uneducated pastors. His main example is the AIEC denomination. Because they had no training and little knowledge of biblical doctrine, these church pastors were easily misled by the erroneous teachings of neo-Pentecostals, suffering the consequence described by Padilla (1995, p. 111):

*Por la poca capacitación y formación de gran parte de los líderes y pastores de la AIEC, esta cayó en un vacío doctrinal, presentándose con frecuencia choques verbales, rechazos, divisiones entre los líderes y aun de iglesias, abusos en la doctrina y las prácticas eclesiásticas, llegándose algunos casos a la anarquía donde cada uno hacía y enseñaba según creía o entendía. La situación se agudizaba cuando algunos líderes menospreciaban la educación secular o religiosa, aduciendo que lo de importancia para hacer la obra era el Espíritu Santo y su poder, que el estudio era de la carne, justificándose en una errónea interpretación de primera de Corintios 3:6 [sic] donde el apóstol Pablo dice que “la letra mata más el Espíritu vivifica”.*

Because of the lack of training on the part of so many leaders and pastors of the AIEC, the denomination suffered a doctrinal vacuum. There were frequent verbal confrontations, rejections, division between leaders and also churches, including abuses of ecclesiastic doctrines and practices. This resulted in a number of cases of anarchy, in which every one did and taught according to his beliefs or understanding. The situation became so acute that some of the leaders belittled secular or religious education altogether, concluding that all that was needed to pastor was the Holy Spirit and His power, and that education was of the flesh. They justified their rationale on an erroneous interpretation of Second Corinthians 3:6 where the Apostle Paul says that “the letter kills but the Spirit gives life.”

In this chapter, the researcher concludes the demonstrations of his hypothesis. He does so by showing how the entire denomination changed following the introduction of the LOGOI educational program. The starting
point is the manner in which the LOGOI pastor training program was applied to the AIEC situation. At the time the program was initiated in Colombia, both the LOGOI and SEAN programs were being administered by the LOGOI staff. This staff, working with the Education Committee of the AIEC, determined what programs were to be delivered to meet the specific needs of the pastors.

7.1 An education plan is established

In early 1980 (Padilla, 1995, p. 111), an Education Committee was named to find an educational solution for the AIEC. Juan González, Nicholas Woodbury, Gregorio Landero, Calixto Amante and José Villalba were the individuals named to that committee. They began their work by conducting a study of the problem, which included administering surveys, visiting churches, and conducting personal interviews with pastors.

The committee members discovered that a total of 878 church leaders desired further education (LOGOI Document, “Report on Visit to Colombia,” July 27, 1984). These interested leaders were divided as follows:

1. 178 leaders who could not read and write,
2. 640 leaders who had completed sixth-grade studies,
3. 60 who had completed eighth-grade studies or more.

Next, the committee had to determine the teaching materials appropriate for each of these three levels of need. In the same document mentioned above, the four instructional programs that were chosen by the committee are identified:

1. ALFALIT for those who could not read,
2. ABUNDANT LIFE for new and limited readers,
3. SEAN for proficient readers,
4. LOGOI’s FLET program for the more advanced pastors.

A description of the four programs will be beneficial. First, the program designed for non-readers, Alfalit, is described. The material provided by Alfalit (now headquartered in Miami, Florida) is excellent. This program of study was created by a Cuban educator named Justo Gonzalez who escaped Castro’s Cuba in the 1960s. Traveling the Central American republics, he became conscious of the high degree of illiteracy among adults and set out to do something about it. Incidentally, many were the times this researcher and Don Justo (as Costa Rican’s called him) got together at his small ranch in Alajuela, Costa Rica, sipping Cuban coffee and discussing ways of improving his creative little booklets and alphabet cards (Figure 26 shows an example of one of Justo’s cards, teaching the letter “a” through association and easy-to-identify drawings).

![Justo's alphabet cards](image)

*Figure 16. Justo’s alphabet cards.*

Justo’s little booklets, generally related to farm themes, taught new readers to write the letters and words correctly, aiding the entire process of
literacy. By the time adult learners had finished the Alfalit training, they also had learned sufficient basic mathematics to avoid getting cheated on their groceries.

The second program (see Figure 17), the one for new readers, is called *La Vida Abundante* (The Abundant Life). This was a smart choice. The instructional booklet contains 18 short lessons that detail and explain a person's personal commitment to God and his church. This program was particularly appropriate because it clarified key doctrinal beliefs for these Colombian leaders who had experienced so much confusion from the neo-Pentecostal teachings. Further, this program also taught the study methodology that would be used in the two more advanced programs, SEAN and FLET: (a) self-study during the week using the manual received; (b) weekly review of each lesson with a peer group of no more than 10, at which time all members of the group would review the important topics presented in the material, have a chance to discuss it, ask questions, and agree on it; (c) a short evaluation quiz to measure the learning; and (d) a final exam and grade.

![La Vida Abundante](image)

*Figure 17. Courses for new readers.*

This second-level program served to screen leaders who really wanted to advance in their learning and church service; at the same time, it tested the pastors' reading and studying skills. As the AIEC leadership reviewed the
work of these new readers in the *Vida Abundante* Program, they were able to determine who was truly interested in serving the church.

After *La Vida Abundante* came the six books of the SEAN Compendium, a study of the Life of Jesus based on the Gospel of Matthew. Previously, reference was made to the British educationist Tony Barratt, indicating that in northern Argentina he developed a Bible study program for adults with little education and low reading skills. This program, *El Compendio de Teología Pastoral* (Compendium of Pastoral Theology) is the program that was chosen to train the largest number of leaders for the AIEC. In the first two years, 217 lay leaders of the AIEC churches graduated from this program. Eventually, in a period of 10 years, 5,757 leaders (all members of AIEC churches) would take this SEAN program of education (see Figure 18).

![Figure 18. A six-book study of the life of Jesus.](image)

The Compendium was a program that took participants two years to complete. It covered the Synoptic Gospels, using the book of Matthew as the base. Combined in the program were a few side-lines: a brief survey of the Old Testament, a summary of the Acts of the Apostles, a brief outline of the Letters of Paul, and a short course on how to preach. Church leaders who completed this course would be equipped to serve the church as deacons, elders, teachers and general assistants to the pastors. In many cases, the
Compendium became the preparatory program before entering the more formal pastoral program provided by LOGOI.

Finally, the entire study program was capped off by the LOGOI program previously described. As stated, this was a three-year program designed to meet the essential biblical and theological knowledge requirements of pastors. To enter, pastors were required to have completed the primary grades. The requirements for the first year of study were:

**First Semester:**
1. Study the first 10 chapters of the *Encyclopedia of Bible Doctrines* by Herbert Lockyer and prepare for an exam on the content.
2. Preach a series of messages based on the “Sermons on the Mount,” offered in the No. 1 *Pastoral Guide* (red cover). Prepare to take an oral or written exam on that series.
3. Choose a biblical text and prepare an original textual sermon. See page 55 of *How to Preach Dynamic Sermons*.
4. Prepare a Work Plan for your church, following the guidelines given at LOGOI’s Seminar, titled: “What the congregation expects from their pastor” (for additional help see the first article in this folder).

**Second Semester:**
2. Give a series of consecutive studies from the *Philippians* commentary, following the guidelines given in the LOGOI commentary. The student will offer proof that he has carried through on this assignment (lasting no less than 12 weeks) and take a brief exam on the contents.
3. Prepare an original expository sermon using the principles taught in *How to Prepare Dynamic Sermons*, beginning on page 23.

The original plan laid out between LOGOI and the AIEC was to provide education for the pastors only. However, as news spread about the possibility of getting a good Bible training, many wanted to be included. At first the idea had been to serve only those filling pastoral roles. However, the great number
of lay persons who came forward wanting training caused the Education Committee to expand its aims. By equipping many more, the AIEC would be able to multiply its outreach far more than anyone had dreamed.

7.2 Bible Learning Replaces the Charismatic Excitement

The researcher found no official comment in the AIEC literature concerning the bickering, division, inner fighting, and doctrinal excesses within the AIEC that occasioned all this educational effort in the first place. One does read comments like this one from a pastor, Pedro Vazques (LOGOI Files, 1985, Colombia Journal, November):

The course that helped me especially was Homiletics. As I was studying I remembered a sermon I preached the year before in the town of Monteria. I remember it because Nickolas Woodbury was present and I’m embarrassed as I think of it now. All I did was scream and holler because I didn’t know what I was saying. But thank God for these LOGOI studies. All has changed now. I’m learning how to study God’s Word and how to proclaim it much better.

In the same Colombia Journal (LOGOI Files, 1985) there is a comment from a lay leader, Carlos Ricardo, studying in the SEAN, “Life of Jesus” program:

At first the [lesson] book seemed simple, but soon I was gripped by what I was learning. I began to realize how very little I knew and that there was a whole new world of knowledge out there. These studies have opened my heart to God.

Once the program of studies began, studying—rather than charismatic phenomena—absorbed the attention and discussion of the people throughout the AIEC denomination. One simply has to visualize the unusual sight of hundreds of adults throughout the towns and villages of northern Colombia (well over 4,000 of them in those first 10 years) with a book in hand and talking about its contents. Until this event, most had not opened a book since childhood. Now they were diligently studying material at their level of ability.
Some were learning to read and write. Others—with appropriate written helps—were investigating Biblical truths for themselves for the very first time.

Around these eager learners one can see curious relatives and children asking all manner of questions. One can watch the students mouthing the letters slowly (as new readers are prone to do), pausing now and then to repeat some significant truth just grasped. Then, as in olden times, one can hear these listeners repeat to their friends the truths just heard.

Three hundred churches scattered throughout the northern area of Colombia were being impacted by biblical truth. First were the special 178 unlettered leaders learning to read the Bible. Soon they, too, would be studying a SEAN course. Next, another 640 who could read and write were engaged in a detailed study on the Life of Jesus, comparing what each of the four Gospels had to say, in addition to an introduction to the Old Testament as well as the Pauline Epistles. Finally, with much more detail, another 60 men—all of them pastors who had finished high school—grappling directly with the Old and New Testaments, doctrine, ethics, homiletics, ecclesiology, church history, counseling, etc. In one magnificent and united act, the entire AIEC denomination was taking the educational steps needed to be “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus as the cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20). A spiritual revolution lasting 10 years was beginning and the changes taking place were all-embracing.

7.3 An Observation Regarding the Importance of Pastor Education

While not belittling prior educational efforts in Colombia, what made this AIEC training program significant is that these denominational leaders
(a) understood that they had a problem, (b) were determined to address it, and (c) found the way to address the problem. Most theological schools, as best could be determined by the researcher, were established to meet a general need simply because pastors with Biblical and theological training were needed.

But what made this particular AIEC education program very different was that it was specifically initiated to save the denomination in a moment of recognized crisis. It was created to meet four levels of ability with a specific objective: to teach the denomination’s pastors how to study the Bible, how to preach, how to discern truth from error, how to care for their congregations, and how to help new Christians grow in their faith. Behind each need were the names of specific persons—the 878 church leaders who came forward asking to be trained—representing different congregations, different communities and different situations. The names of all 878 were known; their churches were known; their families were known, and their needs were known.

Further, the AIEC program’s teaching was designed according to the learning capability of each participant (instead of one general teaching approach for all). Some had to start by learning to read and write, while others who had limited writing and reading skills set out to learn the Bible. In the process, each learner was being transformed into someone who had the spiritual tools to serve the church.

The point is that the entire denomination of churches united in order to save itself. Their united efforts represented more than simple isolated desires; their efforts demonstrated a collective imperative. Leaders understood that in order to pastor a church, a person required an adequate biblical education.
Amazingly, knowing what needed to be done, these denominational leaders methodically followed through. This research will show the applicability of the concepts and the effectiveness of the resultant training efforts.

The conviction of this researcher is that if a true Christian Church is to be established, theological training for the pastors must be directed, determined, and specific. Biblical and theological education for a pastor is not an option. It is not a decision that is to be left up to individual pastors. It must be a requirement of any group that claims adherence to the historic Christian faith. This statement will be expanded in the conclusion.

The next section provides a review of some of the results of this combined program of study: the education provided by the LOGOI, SEAN and ALFALIT programs as applied to the AIEC.

7.4 The Results Start Being Seen

A summary statement from a letter addressed to the LOGOI office by Terry Barratt, dated July 27, 1984 (LOGOI Archives, Colombia, 1984), seemingly expresses the general sentiment of people in the AIEC: “This training has been the turning point event for this 300 church denomination in Colombia.”

The AIEC educational program began on January 24, 1983. A year and a half later, clear changes were evident among the pastors, and there was excitement among the leaders over the improvements in attitudes, cooperation, and responsiveness to the courses of study being offered.

In November of 1985, almost two full years after the start of the program, a special AIEC pastor conference was announced. The first graduation of 150 church leaders from Level I (the completion of the six book
“Life of Jesus” program) and 52 pastors who completed the Level II program (the first part of LOGOI’s three-year pastor program) would be celebrated at this conference. For this special event, the researcher, his wife Carolyn Thompson, Jose Alejandro (the President’s Assistant) and Norberto Saracco (LOGOI Director for South America) traveled to Colombia. The graduation ceremony was held in the town of Sincelejo, about 600 miles north of Bogota.

7.4.1 A visit to northern Colombia

This section provides a glimpse of the area where the education program was to take place in northern Colombia. The report was written by the wife of the researcher, Mrs. Carolyn Thompson. This was her first trip to Colombia (LOGOI Archives, “Colombia Journal,” November, 1985, pp. 2-3). The group flew from Miami to Bogota. From Bogota, they took another flight north to the town of Monteria and a short bus-ride to Sincelejo. This is Carolyn’s report of the trip, the land, the people, and the sights.

MONTERIA: We arrived at a simple little airport—everything was outdoors with just roofs and floors, and posts holding them together. Horses and cows were grazing all around the field. It was shockingly hot and humid. Gregorio Landero [the AIEC Director] and his son were waiting to take us back to the city in their two-door jeep. All six of us squeezed in. Our luggage (including a computer, printer, and bulky suitcases) went on the top.

The hotel [in Monteria] was new, but simple. We walked up two flights of stairs to our sparse room. It was air conditioned—that is, until morning when the electricity went out. There was no hot water, only one cold water spigot in the shower. I no longer could pretend to be in the USA. This was not a tourist town.

Next morning, we took a walk. Squalid thatched roof huts were part of the landscape right along side of CBS-constructed buildings. The roads were full of potholes and muddy. Garbage was everywhere—the stench was awful.

It became a serious problem to find a place to eat. After looking for over an hour, we got in a taxi (a jeep) and asked the driver to take us to the best restaurant in town. He took us a long way and dumped us off at a
walled-in place. Inside there was a thatched roof, open air dining area, but the food and surroundings were still the same…the food that came was hardly appetizing, but we survived.

That night we went to Gregorio’s church. His jeep and one other vehicle were the only ones outside. I thought the church would be empty, but it was full. No one has cars. But it did have a piano that no one knew how to play. They were singing a cappella...

**SINCELEJO:** The bus ride to Sincelejo [the next day] was on a terrible road with cows, horses, donkeys, pigs, chuck holes, and people. It took us two-and-a-half hours to go 75 miles. The air conditioning on the bus went out en route, but the driver and his helper stopped for about 10 minutes and re-wired things and got it going again (people pay extra to travel in the air conditioned buses).

Our hotel [in Sincelejo] was across the street from a terribly dirty and rundown bus station. Still no hot water, only cold water gushed out from an overhead spout. This time we had to walk up three flights of stairs (good exercise).

The streets are narrow. Street vendors carry baskets of foods on their heads…Whatever you can imagine is carried by people on their heads. Garbage is in the streets. Dead rats are in the streets. Sandaled and dusty feet are in the streets. I notice a mother and her son weaving clumsily through the crowds with a big pot slung between them. On a stick hang plastic cups, I suppose to serve their concoction to people on the street. Crude wheelbarrows roll down the streets past us, filled with wares to sell. And here and there are pretty girls in the latest fashions (wide, low-hanging belts, big shirts). Jeeps—no cars—drive slowly down the street, followed by rickety buses. Trucks with canvas tops transport grain, people and animals. Little ladies carry live chickens by their legs upside-down, whether to sell or take home to cook, I don’t know. To me, so unused to it, the streets of Sincelejo are an unbelievable mix of fascinating sights and sounds and smells.

Now, with this glimpse of the region in Colombia where the pastor education program was taking place, the focus is shifted to the activities of the first graduation in 1985.

**7.4.2 The first graduation**

The graduation was scheduled to take place on the outskirts of Sincelejo, at “La Finca Betel” (The Bethel Farm), acreage the Latin America Mission had purchased that housed a school for children, a training center for
adults (the Centro Bíblico del Caribe), a large meeting hall or tabernacle, a few homes for staff, and a farm.

The tabernacle, where the meetings would take place, was a simple wood structure with a tin roof and a seating capacity between 600 and 800 on rough wood benches. Large openings on the sides and a few fans kept the building tolerable in the tropical heat. The first pastor graduation was a momentous occasion, and this tabernacle was filled to capacity. During the introductory remarks, Juan González, then president of the pastor’s association, said, “Everyday things in Colombia are getting worse, but God is preparing us to be used by Him for these very days.” After the welcome, Eleazar Moreno, one of the educators, gave some rather surprising announcements; some of these announcements are included here to help readers understand the conditions of poverty and need that were the everyday issues for the pastors we were educating (LOGOI Archives, “Pastor’s Conference,” Sincelejo, 1984, p. 2):

1. There is no water except well water, and it is not going to be functioning except for a few sparse hours a day. We’ll let you know when we can get it working so you can take baths. However, the water has a strong odor, but you will have to make do. The earlier you get up, the better chance you’ll have for a shower.

2. The electricity won’t be on all the time, either.

3. There’s a watchdog on campus that is set loose at 11 p.m. Please do not go out after that hour; the dog is fierce and you will be endangered.

4. You didn’t travel all this distance to beautiful Sincelejo to shop. You came to study. Your course isn’t over yet; you still don’t have your diplomas. We are in class until Wednesday’s graduation. If you must go out, please let me know, and I will help you make arrangements. Thank you, if you have any questions, please come to see me personally.

During the daytime, Dr. Norberto Saracco, Nicholas Woodbury and the researcher conducted classes. These classes were related to the subjects the
pastors had been studying. These classes not only served to provide additional teaching on the themes but to show the pastors how they could take their lesson material and use it to teach their congregations. At mealtime, the auditorium turned into the dining room.

After the noon meal, the pastors rested (many brought their hammocks, and these were strung on the outer posts of the auditorium). Some, however, preferred to play soccer in an open meadow next to where we were meeting. Those of us unused to the equatorial heat returned to the hotel room, where they kindly turned on the electricity so that we might cool off.

At four o’clock, the pastors all returned to the hotel, bathed, changed, and met for instructions on the next programs available for study. Evenings were inspirational, including a lot of singing, testimonials, and a short Bible lesson. Those of us from the LOGOI office were particularly interested in the testimonials. We wanted to hear what the pastors had to say about their studies. Following are some of the most interesting ones (LOGOI Archives, “Pastor’s Conference,” Sincelejo, 1984, p. 4-7):

Carlos Ricardo: Before my studies, I lived in a very small world. (And that’s a long time, because I began serving the Lord when I was 12.) Well, I began studying. The first book seemed to be so simple—I was back in the ABC’s. I wanted to quit. But the Lord helped me to understand I needed to go back to the basics. Soon I was gripped by what I was learning. I began to realize how very little I knew and that there was a whole new world of knowledge out there. How these studies have opened my heart to God!

Juan Para (one of the oldest students, 71 years of age): I remember when I first went to school how happy I was. When I started with LOGOI, I went with the same joy. [In] the last book we studied—on the Reformation—were things I knew absolutely nothing about. But as I studied, since I had not done it for many years, I got horrible earaches… Then I started getting horrible headaches. Then I lost my voice and I couldn’t share in the peñas…The last thing was that my
eyes started hurting... I know I’ll die of old age, but until I die, I want to keep on learning especially about God....Before I started these studies the Association of Caribbean Churches ordained me pastor. That made me experience something new—I got a complex—something I’d never had previously. I felt I was so unlearned and others knew much more than I. It was then that I knew I needed to learn. How thankful I am for what I have learned to date and I want to keep on learning. [He then turned to the researcher and said]: Mr. Thompson, please keep on learning too, because if you stop, we won’t have any new courses to study! [Everyone laughed and agreed and clapped.]

Jorge Montaño: I had been praying with a friend for two years that the Lord would enable us to get more training. One morning at 6:00 a.m., a pastor came by and told us about LOGOI. What joy! How wonderfully God has answered our prayers through this program. It has met all our expectations.

Moisés López: One day in church it was as if the Lord spoke to me and said, “Moisés, I want you to serve me.” But of what use would it have been if I had not had a program like this to help me learn? My busy schedule at the hour the group had chosen to meet made it difficult for me to get there on time. At last, the group, realizing I couldn’t attend at the time they had chosen, changed the time to suit my schedule. That change has transformed my life—now I’ve completed all six books [of the SEAN course]. And now I have something to say when I get up in the pulpit.

Edison Jaramillo: Studying the lives of Luther, Calvin and the great reformers has been thrilling. I had never even heard those names. Now I want God to use me like he used them.

Astiria Alvarado [a pastor’s wife—they live up the Magdalena River in a remote area]: I am so thankful this program reached across the Magdalena River so that my husband and I might have a chance to learn. How wonderful that we have had this great opportunity to really learn who Jesus is and how to love and serve him.

Rafael Díaz: For me studying the fifth SEAN book was [as] if I were living through the crucifixion of Jesus. It became so very real to me. When I read or see judges and courtrooms now, I always think of Jesus’ trial.

As we listened to these reports, those of us from the Miami office became interested in learning more about the 300 pastors who were present for this first graduation. We took time out one morning and took a poll (see Table 10).
Table 11. First Pastor Graduate Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Pastor Graduates</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Christian homes</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From non-Christian homes</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With some previous Bible studies</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With no previous Bible studies</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average church members in their churches</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With primary education</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With secondary education</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With some college education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We were told by Gregorio Landero that the AIEC Education Department made it a requirement for all students in Level I (the SEAN Life of Jesus program) to complete their primary education if they wished to continue studies in the upper LOGOI levels. To make sure this happened, they assigned a staff person to travel around to all the study centers to check up personally on each student. During the two years they studied in SEAN, each student who had not finished the primary grades was interviewed and checked on by staff. As a result, the students in Level I made great gains in both their secular and Biblical education. Pastors in the AIEC, as a result of this requirement, had far better credentials than pastors in most denominations.

One of the men most involved in the training of the pastors, Nicholas Woodbury, wrote (1991, p. 13): “From its humble roots roughly 10 years ago, the program has sprouted into the training program for the AIEC churches.... We realize now the Pastoral Training Program has filled a tremendous
vacuum, because leaders can receive a good pastoral education without ever leaving their home or church.”

Aimee McQuilkin (1991, p. 12), among the first LAM missionaries to go to Colombia, wrote: “When I arrived in Colombia 50 years ago, there were just a handful of churches,” she said. “Now, look at what great things God has done and how he has blessed.” The article goes on to state: “In just the last five years, membership in the AIEC churches almost doubled—from 11,626 baptized members in 1985 to roughly 20,000 in 1990.” Getting the AIEC pastors, leaders and members trained made a great difference overall in the growth and stability of the AIEC denomination.

7.5 Pastors Study in the Hostile Environment of Guerrilla Opposition

It is important to remember that the AIEC educational program was started in a nation filled with political turmoil. During the 1970s and 1980s, Colombia’s fragile democracy was starting to crumble against the onslaught of wave after wave of antigovernment guerrilla activity. No less than five reactionary groups, fueled by a faltering economy, were waging daily war against Colombia's legal and economic systems.

Even more insidious, if possible, was the thriving drug trade, which was systematically unraveling the moral fiber of the nation. Colombian officials, sapped by their efforts to contain the havoc wreaked by leftist insurgents, appeared singularly ineffective—almost helpless—against the well-organized drug traffic.

The horrors of the drug scene, dramatized in frightful movies like the *French Connection*, were fast becoming a brutal way of life in the very area of Colombia where our program was being sponsored. Just months
before the start of the program, the AIEC pastors gathered in Sincelejo with Terry Barratt to begin their studies. While they were gathered, three Protestant leaders were murdered for their active opposition to marijuana dealers. In the next section, the confrontations faced by pastors and AIEC church members with guerrillas and paramilitaries in the Sincelejo area will be described. This description will demonstrate that problems with subversives and guerrillas are still ongoing even today.

7.5.1 Christian Pastor and Lay Leaders Jailed for Subversion

In January 2005, in Yopal (a region recently “liberated” of guerrillas by the Colombian Army), Pastor Wildeman Contreras told the researcher about “persecution” being suffered by Christians in the Sincelejo area. According to his information, paramilitary forces (so called “freedom fighters” working in cooperation with the military) had arrested many Christians. This is the same area where the first LOGOI graduation took place in 1984. The researcher uncovered further information on the Internet about this persecution. This following information was provided by Miller (2005) in an article titled “Christian Lawyers Association Defends Evangelicals against Terrorism Charges.” Information found in Miller’s article verifies what pastor Contreras in Yopal told the researcher. Here is the published report that involves members of the AIEC churches in Sincelejo.

Christian Lawyers in Colombia have assumed the defense of a pastor and several church lay leaders arrested by security forces near the city of Sincelejo and accused of terrorism.

Devis Manuel Carrascal, a pastor of the Association of Evangelical Churches of the Caribbean (AIEC), was arrested in a military sweep at his home in the village of Coloso at 5 a.m. on August 20, 2004…

In all, security forces arrested 156 residents from communities in the area of Montes de Maria and charged them with rebellion against the
state and acts of terrorism, crimes punishable by 20 to 30 years in prison.

In recent years, Montes de María has been the scene of bloody massacres committed against the civilian population by paramilitary units and guerrilla groups operating in the area.

Carrascal, 23, is married and has a small daughter. In addition to pastoring the AIEC congregation in Coloso, he is currently enrolled in theological studies at CIPEP, an AIEC pastoral training program based in Sincelejo. [This program is based on the education materials introduced to the AIEC by LOGOI in 1983.]

According to attorney Maggie Urueta, one of four female lawyers who has assumed defense of the jailed pastor, Carrascal and other suspects were arrested solely upon the accusation of one ex-guerrilla informant who wore a hood over his head to conceal his identity as he led military units from house to house. Urueta says that the informant's testimony against her clients is itself suspect.

“This man says he trained Deivis to use explosives in a guerrilla group and that Deivis is a guerrilla commander,” Urueta told Compass. “But this was supposedly in 1983. At that time, my client was only eight years old.”

“How could he even recognize Deivis after all these years? This claim alone disproves the man’s entire testimony. Nevertheless, my client remains there in jail,” Urueta said.

Urueta plans to raise these objections once officials begin hearing charges against Deivis and the other evangelical defendants. However, the military has not yet completed preliminary investigations, so she and her clients must wait to have their day in court.

Security forces refuse to reveal the identity of their informant; however, Urueta has discovered that he is participating in a government program for “repentant insurgents that rewards information leading to the arrest of fellow guerrillas with reduced penalties for past crimes.”

Due to anti-terrorism laws recently introduced in Colombia, the defendants have no possibility of bail until their case is resolved by a court of law. Nevertheless, Urueta and her colleagues are petitioning for the provisional release of Carrascal and the other evangelical defendants.

The war in Colombia is by no means over. President Alvaro Uribe, present President of Colombia, has made great strides in limiting the effects of the FARC and the ELN, as well as disarming paramilitary units. However,
should Uribe not be re-elected, or a weak successor be elected in 2006 at the end of Uribe’s term, there is no doubt these subversive elements in the country would rise again.

The guerrillas still hold strong feelings against the Protestants. These feelings are cited in an article by Mora (2000) titled “Aspectos Históricos del Pluralismo Religioso en Colombia” (Historical aspects of Religious Pluralism in Colombia).

En cuanto a los grupos protestantes, la guerrilla ha presentado los siguientes argumentos:

- Presunción de las Farc de que los militares y autodefensas se hacen pasar por ministros evangélicos para efectuar labores de inteligencia. Esto ha sido cierto en algunos lugares, especialmente, del Magdalena Medio.

- Las Farc estiman que los evangélicos viven de espaldas a la realidad pues no participan en las reuniones que hacen los guerrilleros para tratar los problemas sociales de la región.

- Consideración de que los grupos protestantes son un estorbo, pues sí son hábiles para explotar al pueblo y enriquecerse con los diezmos y ofrendas que solicitan a los fieles con carácter obligatorio (CLAI, Boletín Rápidas, 314. Diciembre 99. P.14).

- Las Farc se oponen a las actividades misioneras protestantes porque los evangélicos desestiman la participación de los campesinos en sus actividades y se oponen a su filosofía socialista (www.persecution.org International Christian Concern). Esto es corroborado por la Conferencia Episcopal colombiana en el documento ya citado:

“Acusaciones que esgrimen las FARC en contra de los pastores son: tienen nexos estrechos con la CIA; los diezmos que recogen no representan ningún sentido social; con sus predicaciones y actuaciones crean perjudicial división entre la población” (CONFERENCE EPISCOPAL DE COLOMBIA. Op. Cit.).

El ELN se muestra desconfiado de quienes promueven paz, no violencia y lealtad al gobierno central. Esto estaría indicando que la guerrilla todavía considera que el protestantismo está siendo avalado y ayudado por los EE.UU, y que, en general, el protestantismo está en contra de las reformas sociales y del compromiso político.


La guerrilla sigue manteniendo la teoría de la conspiración norteamericana contra América Latina, teoría que no se compadece con las verdaderas causas de la explosión religiosa y de la aparición de nuevos movimientos religiosos...

As for the Protestant groups, the guerrilla forces have presented the following arguments:

- The FARC presumes that both army and paramilitary agents, pretending they are Evangelical [Protestant] ministers, infiltrate in order to pursue their intelligence work. This has been true in certain regions, especially in the areas in the middle of the Magdalena [basin].

- The FARC believe the Evangelicals live with their backs to the truth, because they do not participate in the meetings arranged by the guerrillas to deal with the social problems in the region.

- They believe the Protestants are a bother, because they are quick to exploit the poor by taking their tithes and enriching themselves by those offerings they take by demand from their faithful followers (CLAI, Fast Bulletins, 314. December 99. P.14).

- The FARC oppose missionary activity because these Protestants take away all stimuli from the farmers (www.persecution.org International. Christian Concern) to participate in activities of a socialistic nature. This is corroborated by the Colombian Episcopal Conference in the above cited document.

Accusations used by the FARC against pastors are the following: they have close ties with the CIA; they collect tithes from their faithful that have no social justification; with their preaching and actions they create prejudices and divisions among the people (Episcopal Conference of Colombia, Op. Cit.).
The ELN are distrustful of those who promote peace, rather than violence and loyalty to the central government. This takes for granted that the guerrillas still believe that Protestantism is being backed and helped by the United States, and that, in general, Protestantism is against social reform and political compromise.

The EPL accuse priests and the Catholic Church clergy of “utilizing the pulpit to criticize the insurgency” (*The Colombian, May 5, 2000, p. 8*).

The guerrilla groups continue to use the argument once used by Conservative Catholics to attack Protestants throughout Latin America in the 1920s and subsequent years. With the pretext of a coming Protestant invasion from the United States, the Catholics presented themselves as the defenders of the nation and its Catholic identity. Similarly groups on the right and on the left—the new sociologists and anthropologists whose “Marxist dogmas substituted for the dogma of the inquisition”—have formulated a conspiracy theory. According to them, the Protestant sects are the vanguard of a North American imperialistic invasion that pretends the annexation of Latin America to the United States with the goal of destroying the identity of the people and subjecting them to the capitalistic system (*Bastian, Jean Pierre. The religious mutation of Latin America, Mexico, FCE, 1997, p. 23-39. Stoll, David, “With what right do you try to indoctrinate our Indians?” The polemic surrounding the Summer Institute of Linguistics. In Indigenous America, Mexico, 1984, Vol. XLIV. Pp. 9-24*).

The guerrillas continue believing these conspiracy theories, ideas of North America against Latin America that are not consistent with the true causes of the religious explosion and the appearance of new religious movements throughout the area...

While at the present, under President Uribe, there is more calm and safety in Colombia than has existed in a number of years, the FARC and the ELN have not disbanded. They continue to believe in their socialist political agenda and, given the opportunity, will surface at any moment and at any place.

As previously mentioned, last January this researcher traveled to Yopal, an area southeast of Bogota, where the Andes end and the great plains of the Amazon meet—an area, too, where the FARC was born. In November of 2004, President Uribe ordered the army to clear this area of guerrillas. Oil fields had been discovered, and the government wanted no interference from the FARC. The researcher went for a city-wide meeting of
Protestants and to speak to Protestant ministers in the area. Since the Protestant church was too small for the anticipated audience, a nunnery was rented. About 1,000 people packed the auditorium. However, as a matter of safety, the gatherings for the approximate 30 ministers who came for the ministerial conference Monday and Tuesday met in a hall in the military barracks. From Yopal, the researcher traveled to Cali, headquarters for the ELN, to speak to 125 Protestant leaders. Although working in areas that had been under control of the guerrillas, the researcher felt quite safe during the entire week.

The point is that church activities have continued enthusiastically despite Colombia’s guerrillas. There are areas more dangerous than others. Taking proper precautions, foreigners can travel, particularly to the major cities. One is advised to avoid rural areas. One never knows where the guerrillas may be lurking.

7.5.2 An Interview with a Pastor Serving in a Guerrilla Area

While in Bogota at a LOGOI training conference at Hotel Bacatá, Calle on October 12-15, 2001, the LOGOI area coordinator, Jairo Rincón, informed this researcher that there were three pastors present who served churches deep in guerrilla territory. The researcher was able to contact two of these men and took time during the afternoon of October 13 to interview them. Following are transcripts of the interview with the Rev. Gustavo Alberto Ramírez Rodríguez (the interview was made in Spanish; the English translation follows).

\[ P \quad \text{Es un gusto conocerle y tenerle presente en este encuentro. Entiendo, por lo contado por Jairo Rincón que usted trabaja en una zona controlada por la FARC. Cuénteme algo del área donde trabaja.} \]
Es un gran gusto conocerle a usted, Sr. Thompson. Y antes de nada quiero agradecerle este magnífico programa de estudios que ustedes en LOGOI nos ofrecen. Vengo de Tauramena, que está en la provincia de Casanare. Está a dos horas de la ciudad de Yopal, que es la ciudad capital. Vivimos al pie del monte. Lo que es montaña es todo controlado por la guerrilla. Esa región está más o menos una hora, subiendo la montaña, de nuestro pueblo. Si vamos en la opuesta dirección, decir, al valle, allí a las dos horas de camino encontramos los paramilitares. Unos son tan temibles como los otros.

¿Ha tenido algún encuentro con la FARC o con los paramilitares?

Nuestro trabajo normal es visitar las familias de nuestra iglesia, especialmente las necesitadas. Han habido ocasiones en que he tenido que subir la montaña para hacer una visita. Tenemos una población de unos 250 miembros y el caso de personas que asisten que no son todavía miembros. Cuando hay una emergencia hay que ir a verles, ese es nuestro trabajo. Cuando he subido la montaña, bandos de la guerrilla me han parado. Ellos saben que yo soy pastor. No se oponen realmente. Sólo me han dicho que si tengo problemas no volveré al pueblo.

No entiendo lo que quiere decir esa frase, que no volverá al pueblo.

Hemos tenido que aprender y conocer la política de ellos. Por lo que hacemos tenemos que enfrentar y tener diálogo con ellos. Si hemos ofendido a alguien allá en su pueblo, ellos lo saben. Tienen gente metida en todas partes. Ellos se establecen como los protectores del pueblo. Ellos hacen, lo que llaman, “un trabajo de limpieza”.

En otras palabras, ¿ellos le matarían?

Sí, esa es la política de ellos. Pero no sólo de la guerrilla, también de los paramilitares. Ellos me han dicho, “Si usted tiene problemas, también nosotros tenemos una lista. O sea, el trabajo siempre es difícil, pero se aprende a manejar eso. Salir para hacer el trabajo de la iglesia es salir a arriesgar su vida. Nunca sabe uno qué va a encontrar.

Ya que existen estos peligros, me imagino que ustedes limitan su ministerio al pueblo de Tauramena para no meterse ni con la guerrilla ni con los paramilitares.

No, no. Nosotros trabajamos en todo el municipio. Representa un total de 36 veredas, es decir, caminos rurales. Allá es mucha la extenuidad, y nuestro deber es ayudar a la gente donde tengan necesidad. La llanura es mucha y la montaña es bastante. De un
extremo al otro del municipio es por lo menos unas seis horas de camino a pie y por el otro lado, a unas siete horas. Es una región bien extensa.

P ¿Se puede ver que la guerrilla ha afectado adversamente a la región?

R Hacia la montaña ya queda poca gente. Se ha venido al casco urbano debido a la situación. Y en la parte de abajo, donde están los paramilitares, pues también pasa lo mismo. Algunos quieren trasladarse a otra parte de Colombia pero no pueden hacerlo. No lo hace porque ahí es donde tienen su plananera, sus vaquitas, tienen su leche. Si lo hacen es meterse a un sacrificio, a morir.

P ¿Conoce de algún guerrillero que ha dejado la guerrilla y se ha unido a la iglesia?

R Conmigo no. Pero conozco a otro pastor que tuvo esa experiencia.

P ¿Cómo es que la congregación les paga?

R Allá lo que recibimos es muy poco. La gente nos regala la comida, una gallina, viandas. Sabemos que ellos aprecian mucho la obra que hacemos, pero tienen tan poco que en dinero la mayoría no nos pueden pagar. A veces nos toca en el saludo, que nos dejan un billete. En otras, al darnos la mano meten el billete dentro de la mano. Por mi parte, viendo la situación en que viven, siento una satisfacción tremenda sirviéndoles. Esto no es cuestión de dinero, es un llamado. En la iglesia no podemos pedir diezmos ni ofrendas, porque enseguida daríamos razón a la guerrilla para cerrar la iglesia, y posiblemente peor.

P Digame algo en cuanto a la manera en que el programa de FLET le ha ayudado a usted.

R El libro que ahora estudio es Cristo su persona y su obra. Aprender de su poder, su fuerza, su presencia y ayuda constante me da la fuerza y el valor para continuar. Los Apuntes Pastorales, la Guía Pastoral. Para mí me ha ayudado bastante. También estudiando la vida de grandes cristianos del pasado, viendo el testimonio de ellos, me han ayudado bastante y me madurado en conocimiento. Ahora salgo a predicar y oiga a la gente decir, “¿De dónde sacó este hombre tanto conocimiento?” No tengo palabras para agradecerle todo lo que estos estudios han significado para mí y para mi iglesia.

P Una pregunta final. Ya que recibe tan poco, ¿cómo llegó a este encuentro?
R  [Se echó a reír.] Haciendo y vendiendo tamales, mi hermano Thompson. Mi esposa y yo hicimos 300 tamales, y con su venta, pude comprar el boleto del ómnibus para llegar.

Q  It is a joy to meet you and to have you come to this training seminar. I understand from Jairo Rincón that you serve a church in a zone controlled by the FARC. Please tell me something about the area.

A  It is a real pleasure to meet you, Mr. Thompson. Before saying anything, I want to thank you for this great study program that you at LOGOI offer us. I work in Tauramena, in the province of Casanare. It is two hours away from Yopal, the capital of the province. We live in the foothills. Up in the mountains everything is controlled by the guerrillas. That area is about an hour’s distance, as one goes up the mountain, from our town. If we travel for about two hours in the opposite direction, that is, toward the valley, we run into the Paramilitary. We fear one as much as the other.

Q  Have you had an encounter with the FARC or the Paramilitary?

A  Our job is to visit the families of the church, especially those who are in need. There have been occasions in which we have had to go up the mountain to visit someone in an emergency. We have 250 members in the church as well as people who come to our services but are not yet members. When there is an emergency we must go see them. That is our job. On occasions, when I have gone up the mountain, bands of guerrilla fighters have stopped me. They know who I am, that I am a pastor and they haven’t kept me from doing my job. However, they have reminded me that if I get into trouble, I will not be coming down from the mountain nor going back to town again.

Q  I don’t understand. What do they mean by saying you won’t be coming down from the mountain nor going back to town again?

A  We have had to learn what their political language means in order to talk to them. They mean that if I have offended someone in town by something I’ve said or done, they will hear about it. They have informers everywhere. They think of themselves as protectors of the community. They do what they call special jobs of “cleansing.”

Q  In other words, they would kill you if they heard some complaint?

A  Yes, that is what they would do. The Paramilitary would do the same thing. They have told me, “We also have a list, and we’ll know if you have any problems.” These threats, of course, make our work difficult, but we learn to live with them. To do church work in this area is to constantly risk one’s life. One never knows what will happen.
Q Since all these dangers exist, I suppose you try to limit your activities to the town of Tauramena itself, so as not to have to deal with the guerrillas and the Paramilitary?

A No, not at all. We work throughout this entire municipality. There are 36 roads or trails in all. This is a large area. Our job is to meet the spiritual needs of the people wherever they are. The valley is vast and the mountain is huge. From one end to the other is a long way. In one direction, toward the mountain, it is a six-hour walk from town. It takes us seven hours to go the other direction where the Paramilitary are. As I said, it is a large area.

Q Has the presence of the guerrilla forces adversely affected the area?

A Toward the mountain, few people remain. One by one they have been moving away from the guerrillas and coming to the hub of the area. The same thing has happened in the region close to the Paramilitary. Some would like to move out of the area to other parts of Colombia, but they can't afford to. Here they have their little banana farms, their cattle, their milk cows. To leave would be to risk everything, even possible death.

Q Have any of the guerrillas left their base and come down to join your church?

A It has not happened to me. But I have a pastor friend who has had that experience.

Q How does the congregation pay you?

A We don't get much of a salary; however, the church members give us food, a chicken now and then, and vegetables. We know they appreciate our ministry, but most of them have so little money they cannot pay anything. Sometimes someone will put a bill in my hand when they greet me. Some will pass me some money when they shake my hand. As for me, knowing how little they have, I find tremendous satisfaction simply serving them. This is not a matter of money, it is my calling. As it is, in the church we cannot take up any offerings or ask for a tithe because the guerrillas would find out about it right away. They would accuse us of stealing from the people and come down and close the church or even worse.

Q Tell me, how have the FLET studies helped you?

R Right now I am studying the book, “Christ, His Person and His Work” [by J. Oliver Buswell]. Simply learning about the power of Christ, his love, his presence that is with us all the time has given me strength and the courage to keep on going. Also, the Apuntes Pastorales
[magazine] and the Pastor’s Guide you’ve sent me have helped me more than I can say. Reading about great Christians of the past and seeing how they stood up against great obstacles has encouraged me and helped me mature in my faith. Sometimes I hear people say, “Where did this man learn all of that?” That is what you have done. I don’t know how to thank you enough for all you have meant to me and my church.

Q One final question: Since you get no salary to speak of, how did you get to this conference?

A [He started laughing.] Making and selling tamales, Mr. Thompson. My wife and I made 300. With those sales, I was able to buy my bus ticket.

7.5.3 Second interview with a Pastor Serving in a Guerrilla Area

The second pastor interviewed was Amat Rodriguez Mejia. Since the interview (October 13, 2001), he has completed his Bachelor’s Degree in Bible with LOGOI. In a letter received from him February 20, 2004, he informed us the AIEC pulled him out of this area and gave him a church near Santa Marta, in the town of Pailitas. In this area, he is not bothered by either guerrillas or the paramilitary. When we interviewed him, Amat was serving a church in the town called Zapatsa Cesar in an area known as Sur del Cesar. This area (when the interview was conducted) had been declared a “zone of active neutrality” (meaning a neutral territory used to carry on dialogues between the government and the Paramilitary). As we shall see, although called a “zone of peace,” it was anything but peaceful. Here are selected portions of the interview (Note that the interview was made in Spanish. The English translation follows).

P Cuéntame de esa zona de despeje y como se vive ahí.

R La zona entera ha estado en conflicto todo este año puesto que la guerrilla ha querido pedir que sea zona de despeje para diálogos. Pero yo no la llamaría zona de despeje para diálogos, no zona de paz. Lo llaman así para disfrazar sus intereses. Uno que vive en ese
lugar se da cuenta de las estrategias que usa la guerrilla para lo que llaman “zona de despeje”.

**P** Explica por qué no es una zona ni de paz ni de diálogos.

**R** Le cuento un incidente. Me tocó servir como asesor a una familia a la que llegaron los paramilitares. Sacaron dos hermanos miembros de la familia (ya hace tres años habían asesinaron a otro hijo frente de la mamá). En el mes de marzo se presentaron y sacaron [de la casa] a otros dos muchachos. Los llevaron como a escasos 10 minutos del pueblo y allí mismo, durante dos días los torturas. Los gritos de ellos se oían en el pueblo. Uno tenía 22 años y el otro 30. Por fin cayó silencio y nos dimos cuenta que los habían matado a los dos. Cuando se fueron, fuimos y encontramos sus cadáveres.

**P** Luego de un acto tan espantoso seguramente dejarían a aquella pobre madre tranquila.

**R** Son terribles, señor Thompson. Hace tres años asesinaron a un muchacho frente de su mamá. Le habían hecho tortura, le habían pellizcado los ojos con pinzas, una tortura muy terrible delante de la misma mamá.

El caso es que ahora tenían a otro muchacho en su poder. Este rehusaba enlistarse como soldado de ellos. Pero como no había cometido ningún crimen, él mismo fue a presentarse ante ellos porque decía que era inocente y que tenía la conciencia limpia.

Un vecino me pidió que, como pastor, fuera a la defensa de este muchacho, porque los paramilitares no entienden lo que es ser inocente. Cuando ellos llegan, la gente del pueblo siente pánico y terror. Por experiencia saben que los paramilitares llegan para matar.

**P** ¿Qué hizo usted? ¿Se atrevió interferir a favor del muchacho?

**R** Creo que el Señor me dio fuerza. Sí, fui y hablé con el propio comandante de los paramilitares. Sentía que como pastor tenía que hacer lo posible para rescatar a ese muchacho. Cuando llegué a la casa donde el comandante había establecido su cuartel, y le pregunté por el muchacho, me dijo que no lo tenían en lista. No supe que hacer. Salí de la casa, y en ese momento llegó un hermano del muchacho y me dijo que sí lo tenían y lo tenían en tortura. “Pastor, ayúdenos, porque yo sé que a mi hermano lo van a matar”.

Esa tarde empezamos a la una a hacer gestiones a favor del joven. Nos metimos allá donde estaban todos los paramilitares. Como a unos 100 metros vimos a varios muchachos atados. Rogué al comandante que me dejara hablar de Dios a ellos, para prepararles para morir. Sabíamos que los iban a matar. Insísti hasta las seis de la tarde y no me lo permitieron. Esa noche los mataron a todos.
Esa fue una de las experiencias más difíciles, porque ¿cómo consolar a una familia que ya tanto había sufrido? ¿Cómo explicarles que Dios es amor frente a estos crueles e inmisericordes hombres sin moral y sin escrúpulos. Decían ante el gobierno estar buscando la paz, cuando en realidad se deleitaban en matar.

Entonces, después que suceden cosas como estas, uno se pregunta ¿en qué me metí yo? Porque de pronto pudieran pensar que yo era uno cómplice de las acciones de los muchachos que asesinaron. Que ahora vendrían contra mí. De todas maneras, como usted comprenderá, esta es una situación que a uno le enseña a madurar.

P  En todo esto, ¿ve usted algo positivo, algo que le anima?

R  Lo que quiero decir es que de verdad estoy agradecido con el Señor por estar en un lugar como este aquí en el hotel. Las clases me han inspirado. El ambiente me ha ayudado a calmar mis nervios. He podido buscar más a Dios y a ponerme más en sus manos. La situación en la que estamos viviendo es dolorosa, pero a la vez es un reto muy grande. Yo estoy agradecido a Dios porque me ha llamado a trabajar en esa zona de tanto conflicto. Allí hay mucha necesidad de Dios, y yo tengo en mi iglesia a unas cien ovejitas que Dios ha pedido que cuide para él.

Q  Explain what is meant by a zone of “active neutrality” and what it is like to live there.

A  That zone has been in conflict for a good long time; now the guerrilla are asking the government to declare it a neutral zone where they can safely talk with government officials. But in no way would I call it a zone of peace nor one for safe dialogues. We who live in that area know the Paramilitary are simply disguising their purposes. They want protection from reprisals, not a place for dialogue.

Q  Tell me why you do not believe they really want peace and dialogue.

A  I’ll answer by giving you an incident. I became involved in counseling a family that had been accosted by the Paramilitary. They had captured two brothers from this family (already, three years earlier, they had captured another member of the family and killed him in front of his mother). Last March they came and took these two sons by force. They took them about 10 minutes away from the town and tortured them for two days. We could hear their screams. One was 22, and the other was 30. Finally the screams ceased and we realized they had killed them both. As soon as they left [the Paramilitary] we found their bodies.

Q  Surely after that they left the mother and her family alone.
They are evil, Mr. Thompson, you must understand that. Three years ago here in town, they killed a boy in front of his mother. First they tortured him by pulling out his eyes with a pair of pincer pliers, a terrible torture, and they did it right in front of his mother. Now they had another young man in their power. This one had refused to join their forces. He had committed no crime. He simply did not want to join them. Since he felt he was innocent, he went to them and declared he was no criminal and that his conscience was clear.

A neighbor came and told me they had captured this young man and asked me, as the pastor, to please intercede on his behalf. The reality is that when the paramilitary arrive in town, everybody panics. The townspeople know they are there to kill somebody.

Q What did you do? Did you dare confront the Paramilitary on behalf of the boy?

A The Lord must have given me valor. Yes, I went and spoke to the Paramilitary commander. I felt that as the pastor of the community, I had to do something to try to save that boy. When I got to the house the commander had seized, I asked him about the boy. He denied having captured him, saying he was not on his list. I went out of the house and at that very moment a brother of the boy arrived and told me that indeed they did have him and that he was being tortured. “Help us, pastor, please help us. I know they are going to kill my brother.”

At one o’clock that afternoon I began to do everything I could to try to free the young man. I even went in among the soldiers. There I saw the young men they had captured, he and several others were bound and about 300 feet away. I went back and pled with the commander to let me talk to those young men about God, because they were about to die. He refused. That night they killed all of them. That was one of the worst experiences I have ever faced. How does one go to the parents to try to comfort them? What does one say? How can one talk about a loving God in the face of such cruel, unmerciful, immoral and unscrupulous men? Those men don’t want peace, death is what they give.

After I got involved in this case, I began to ask myself what kind of trouble I had gotten myself into. These men could think I was an accomplice with the young man I had tried to save. Now they would most likely come after me. I’m sure you understand these are the things that bring maturity to a person...

Q In all of this, have you found something positive, something to encourage you?
Well, right now I thank the Lord for being in a place like this—in this hotel. The classes have been an inspiration. The companionship of other pastors has helped calm my nerves. I have found time to pray and trust in God. I understand the place where I serve is a place that is hurting. I feel the great challenge that entire area represents. And I do thank the Lord he has called me to work in a place of such conflict. People need God in that area. Besides, I have one hundred “sheep” God has asked me to take care of.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, approximately 75 pastors studying in the LOGOI program lived and worked in areas occupied by either the guerrillas or paramilitary soldiers. Most survived their difficult circumstances. The author remembers of only one incident where our pastor students were attacked.

7.5.4 LOGOI students shot by a militia group

The following report was sent to us by Jairo Gonzalez, the LOGOI representative in Colombia. It concerns a group of LOGOI students in the zone called Casanare, in the central part of Colombia, and the incident took place in August (no exact dates were given) of 1997. The Casanare River flows from high up in the Andes Mountains east to the Venezuelan border; there it empties into the Orinoco River.

Twelve students were returning one afternoon by canoe, upriver, from the home of one of their companions, after their LOGOI weekly study gathering. As they approached their landing, gunfire rang out. Rev. Pedro Carrizo, one of the pastors who escaped, provided this account (LOGOI, “Monthly Letters” file, August, 1997):

Three of my friends in the canoe were killed instantly and several others were critically wounded. We dove into the river trying to escape. Only six of us made it to shore. As we dragged ourselves out of the river, we were quickly surrounded by the militia group who had attacked us. The captain accused us of being guerrilla spies. They pointed guns at our heads—we were to be executed on the spot.
One of my companions, a young pastor named Flavio had two fingers shot off while jumping from the canoe. He still had his backpack where he had his Bible and LOGOI books, wrapped up in an extra shirt. He was given permission to get his shirt and wrap it around his bleeding fingers. When he pulled out his shirt, his Bible fell out.

Flavio picked up his Bible and began pleading, “We’re not guerrillas! Look, we’re Christians returning from a Bible study!”

The attitude of the captain immediately changed. He looked confused. He grabbed Flavio’s pack and pulled out one of the text books: *The God We Worship*. The captain shook it at Flavio, “What’s this all about?”

Then, in spite of his fear, Flavio began telling the captain and his men about the majesty and glory of God. When he stopped talking he did not know what the captain would do—their guns were still pointed at us. Unexpectedly, he ordered his men to leave and they faded into the jungle. That, however, was not the last we saw of them.

Two months later two of those militia men came looking for “the man with three fingers.” They wanted to know more about the God Flavio spoke of at the river’s edge. They left their weapons at Flavio’s church, stating they were quitting the militia and disappeared.

Though reports like these are grim, the attractive part is the initiative taken by the church leaders to get their education. They recognized their ignorance and took steps to remedy it. But deeper than that, they recognized that in order to serve God, they needed to perfect themselves in their chosen profession. Furthermore, they continued studying in the midst of trying situations because of the help and satisfaction received.

As one studies the AIEC from 1983 to 1990, he observes a denomination remedying past deficiencies. Padilla (1995, p. 112-113) described the pastors’ accomplishments this way:

*Entre 1985 y 1990, más de 100 pastores se graduaron con tres años de estudios obteniendo el grado de Diplomado en Teología [con los programas de LOGOI], 1200 líderes realizaron dos años de estudios en el nivel Certificado Básico [con los programas de SEAN], 350 completaron estudios de la Vida de Pablo [un programa SEAN], 490 validaron y aprobaron la primaria, 3,600 realizaron el curso de Vida Abundante [otro programa SEAN] y 17 realizaron estudios en el Seminario Bíblico de Colombia.*

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Between 1985 and 1990, more than 100 pastors graduated from the three-year program earning their Diploma in Theology [through the LOGOI program], 1,200 leaders finished their two years studies in the Basic Certificate level [a SEAN program], 350 completed the Life of Paul studies [another SEAN program], 490 validated their primary studies, 3,600 finished the Abundant Life program [from SEAN] and 17 completed their studies with the Biblical Seminary of Colombia.

That is an astounding educational achievement for one denomination in a five-year period—5,757 of the main church leaders received biblical and theological training at the level of their ability while living in a terrorist environment. What remains to be told are the repercussions of this educational drive.

### 7.6 AIEC leaders report on the effects of their educational drive

In 1990, after successfully completing the assignment with the AIEC in Colombia, LOGOI Ministries continued new projects in Venezuela and Cuba. During that same year, the leadership of the AIEC established its own education department, named Corporación Instituto para la Educación Pastoral (Corporation Institute for Pastoral Education). To this day, the CIPEP continues to make sure that all new pastors in the AIEC obtain a sound biblical education before being ordained.

The memories of those seven years working together with LOGOI have not faded. Nor have the pastors forgotten the crisis that almost brought the AIEC churches to ruin. The joys of seeing change take place before their eyes as biblical learning revolutionized their churches still bring exclamations of wonder and thanksgiving. I had the opportunity to ask three good friends some of their opinions regarding the LOGOI/AIEC educational process in Colombia from 1983 to 1990—all three were very involved in the process. Here is some background on these friends:
Marcos Diaz Rivas is pastor of *Palabra de Vida* (Word of Life) church in Sincelejo. When the AIEC program began in 1983, there were 30 in his congregation—men, women and children. He had a high school education, but very little theological training. What he knows of the Bible, he learned mostly from the LOGOI program. Here are his answers to questions asked by the researcher during a 12-minute telephone interview on November 5, 2004:

**When we arrived with the LOGOI program, where were you, spiritually speaking, as a pastor?**

I grew up in a quasi-Pentecostal environment. I would not say I was orthodox in my doctrine. At church we were very animated, however, yet placing a lot of emphasis on holiness and piety. We as pastors had many doctrinal differences and no clear direction from the denomination. Some pastors wanted to break away. There was a lot of confusion and division. When the idea of studying was announced, I, for one, had problems. I understood it was unspiritual to study.

**In your studies with LOGOI, where did you begin?**

After some persuasion, I joined those studying the Life of Jesus. As I studied, my opinions regarding theology and studies began to change. In fact, after finishing the Life of Jesus, I went on to study the Life of Paul. Now I was hooked. I moved on to the LOGOI program and finished all those studies.

**How did the studies change you?**

All my personal perspectives have changed. First, I began to change mistaken ideas that were unbiblical. Then, I realized my thinking began to grow out of what I was learning from the Bible. I became more organized and conscious of a new ability to lead others. I had a much greater understanding of who I was as a person, of my ethical responsibilities, of why I should fear God, of the terribleness of sin, even of my responsibilities toward my family.

**Did it become easier for you to speak about biblical themes?**

Oh, yes. Not only could I speak about many more things, but now I knew how to apply them and make these biblical principles part of my own life.

**Now, how did your preaching affect the members of your church?**

For one thing, they quickly learned that biblical truth is far more important than personal experiences. Another thing I’ve noticed is that the people are more considerate of me as a pastor. They respect me
more; they have become much more interested in all the areas a pastor must work. Also I’ve noticed changes in their behavior as they, too, began to understand the gospel. They now knew how a Christian should behave.

**Did all of this affect the growth of your church?**

Very much, first of all because the members learned what their mission was, and they began to get involved in different ministries. All of this brought growth. Before I began my studies, there were 30 people in my congregation. Now we have 500. Besides, we have opened six preaching points in areas around Sincelejo. Altogether over 1,000 people are attending church.

**Do you attribute these changes to the programs brought in by LOGO! and the AIEC?**

Without any doubt whatsoever. These programs have given new direction to our denomination and totally revitalized our pastors, our churches and our people. You made it possible for us to get the training we needed.

Gregorio Landero is one of the author’s special friends. He has been one of the leaders of the AIEC denomination for many years. His brother Victor is the one mentioned in the previous chapter as the fervent evangelist who brought more growth to the AIEC than any other single individual. Gregorio’s gifts have been more in the area of administration than evangelism. He is a visionary with great personal drive, and he is a very persuasive individual. Once he became persuaded that the pastors needed to be biblically trained, he became one of the chief organizers of the education program. When the pastor education program started, he drove to all areas where the denomination had churches and persuaded the pastors they needed an education. It was Gregorio’s energy that kept the program going. After a number of attempts to reach him via telephone, on November 10, at 1:30 in the afternoon, the researcher finally caught up with him at his son’s home just outside of Sincelejo.
Now, after all is said and done, give me your opinion as to the effectiveness of our pastor education drive. Was it worth it?

We set off an explosion, my friend. Everybody agrees this was a great blessing. It was the cause that brought about great growth. Everyone was studying: the Abundant Life, the Life of Jesus, the Life of Paul, the Pentateuch, and on top of that the [LOGOI] diploma program. And those studies brought about immediate change. It was something tremendous to see. Once the pastors learned, they knew what to do and what to preach. That brought about tremendous change and growth to our churches.

What can you tell me about that growth?

Well, from 250 churches when we started back in 1983, we now have over 700. I don’t have the exact statistics in front of me but I know our total membership now surpasses 30,000. Another thing, too: our churches are sending missionaries to other nations. Several now serve in Venezuela and Ecuador. But one of the things that pleases me most is that now we know what a difference an education makes, we can help others outside our denomination to get the training they need. Twenty-two denominations in Colombia are coming to our CIPEP for training. Our blessing now is flowing out to others.

That same day, November 10, 2004, the researcher also spoke with Alvaro Mendez Rueda, the present director of the Corporación Instituto Para la Educación Pastoral (CIPEP). This institute has been set up by the AIEC to ensure that all new pastors get the training they need before being assigned to a church. The institute is patterned after techniques learned from LOGOI, and in fact, it uses many of the SEAN and LOGOI texts. During 1989 and 1990, Alvaro worked with LOGOI as one of the educators. It became very obvious during the conversation that Alvaro Mendez is totally committed to the task of training pastors.

Alvaro, what has motivated you to give your life to the task of training pastors?

I was in the first class, among those first 70 who began studying the LOGOI program. As a young man, I wanted to be a pastor, but I shied away from it. The pastors I knew seemed confused. I would hear them quarreling over their ideas. There seemed to be a lack of unity among them. Some, I thought, had very strange ideas that I could not reconcile with the Bible. One pastor was a barber, and I wondered what he could teach people. Another was a banker who might have
known a lot about money, but what did he know about the Bible? Many were trying to start churches but they knew so very little about the Bible. There was something wrong with it all. When the LOGOI program came, I realized this was what could make the difference, so I began to study.

How far have you gotten in your studies?
I finished the three-year LOGOI program. After that I got my Bachelor’s in Philosophy and Religious Sciences. Then I took special studies in education. Now I’m working on my Master’s degree.

Why have you stayed in the education field?
I have seen first-hand what education has done to unify the beliefs and bring cohesion to our denomination, especially in theology and doctrine. Also I have seen the tremendous growth the education has caused. I have heard the leadership of the AIEC recognize publicly the significance of the LOGOI studies and how these have helped the denomination in many aspects. They speak about pastors who could not read and write who now are earning degrees in theology. About pastors who had no interest in studies but are now going to universities. When I see what education can do for people I want to help in that process.

What are you doing now that brings you satisfaction?
I am working with a denomination in Barranquilla called Iglesia Salem. They have been in Colombia for 70 years, ten more than the AIEC, but have only 70 churches. Look what has happened to us. Because of LOGOI in just 21 years, from 1983 to 2004, we have grown from 300 churches to more than 700. The work you at LOGOI have done has been great. I want to help pastors in other denominations learn the Bible. I want them to learn how to teach and preach so that the same kind of thing happens to them.

Many voices in the AIEC would give acclaim to these Alfalit, SEAN and LOGOI programs used to transform the 300-church denomination. However, that is not the purpose of this chapter, but rather an attempt to show that biblical and theological education will make the difference wherever the Church of Jesus Christ is being established. With this truth, this researcher begins to draw conclusions about this study.
Conclusion

This chapter began by making reference to the thesis hypothesis: Simply stated, in order to establish a Church true to the historic faith, the leadership of that church must be biblically and theologically trained. If that basic biblical foundation is either abandoned or neglected, the church will cease to be The Church, unable to lead itself, much less impact society around it. It was on that premise that LOGOI went into Colombia to help the AIEC denomination.

Further, as has clearly been established, the majority of the 300 pastors serving the AIEC had very little or no biblical or theological training. LOGOI was invited to help train the pastors specifically because of the spiritual chaos among them when they gave in to neo-Pentecostal doctrines. In this chapter, the importance of systems was established, as was the fact that pastors needed to have access to the right courses of study. LOGOI and AIEC instructors needed access to Alpalit, SEAN and LOGOI to effectively teach the several thousand church leaders arriving for training. In a matter of seven short years—from 1983 to 1990—that educational task was accomplished. The testimonials cited support the effectiveness of the training and the remarkable changes produced throughout the entire AIEC denomination.

The accounts given related to the part biblical education has played within the AIEC denominations are part of the remarkable story of Protestantism in Colombia. Fascinating accounts could be written about how the Protestant Church developed in any nation of Central or South America. There is no doubt that in each story there would be special and significant
differences. However, anyone who has traveled widely in Latin America would most likely agree with the researcher that the spiritual similarities are much greater than the differences.

A review of Protestantism in Colombia concluded with a happy ending. But such an ending would not be true of other denominations where the lessons the researcher has emphasized in his thesis have been neglected. The spiritual success of the Christian Church, this researcher believes, is in direct proportion to the biblical and theological training the pastors have received.

Evangelism has become the main thrust of the Protestant world. Important as it is, especially at the beginning when attempting to establish a foothold in a community, at some point the church leadership must pause, shift gears, and provide emerging leadership with the doctrinal and theological education they require. Not to do this, as this thesis has carefully pointed out, is to breed disaster.
CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

A review of some of the findings resulting from the research on Colombia, South America is appropriate, inclusive of special emphasis on the establishment of Protestantism. This is followed by some arguments supporting and opposing the researcher’s hypotheses, particularly about the responsibility that comes with successful evangelism and how the absence of it debilitates the doctrinal standards of the churches. Finally, the researcher presents the result of an inconsistent emphasis on evangelism and the resulting lack of spiritual discernment that led untrained pastors to depart from the teachings of the Scripture.

C-1.1 Napoleon’s role in Latin America’s wars of independence

In 1808, in “the Peninsular War,” Napoleon invaded Portugal and Spain. He took King Charles IV and Prince Ferdinand VII prisoners to France, weakening the stranglehold Spain had over the Colonies and paving the way for the wars of independence throughout the entire South American Continent. Asimov (1991, p. 334) summarized the aftermath of the Peninsular War in the Spanish colonies:

The example of the successful rebellion of the British colonies in North America 30 years earlier had not been lost on the Spanish colonies, and the confusion in Spain during the Peninsular War gave them their chance.

Beginning in 1809, country after country throughout Latin America began fighting for independence. Colombia and Venezuela (see Chapter 3, section 3.2.1) were among the first to declare independence in 1819; Cuba was the last, winning independence in 1898.
C-1.2 Napoleon’s role in the entrance of Protestants in Latin America

For 300 years after the discovery of the Americas, the Inquisition had kept Protestants out of all lands under Spanish rule. How the Inquisition came to an end was unexpected.

On the day he entered Madrid, December 4, 1808, Napoleon issued a number of decrees. His second decree put an end to the Inquisition. Thereafter Protestant missionaries began working throughout Latin America.

In 1861, Colombian President Cipriano de Mosquera formally invited Protestant missionaries to come to establish churches and schools in the land. This was a very surprising request in view of the feelings most Catholics had toward Protestants.

C-1.3 The struggle over democracy and religious liberty

Seldom mentioned in history books on Latin America is the struggle over the matter of religious liberty faced by the new progressive revolutionaries at the time of independence. For 300 years, the Colonies had been ruled by Catholics; obviously Catholicism had become an integral part of society (Chapter 3, section 3.3). Catholicism was not simply a once-a-week religious adjunct; it was part of everyday life for Latin Americans. Granting full equality to all religions, for Latinos, meant that other religions were given equal status to Catholicism. That was unthinkable. Their belief in Catholicism as the only true religion was inbred, making the issue of full religious liberty (as part of the requirement for democracy) a subject very hard to handle. They recognized the historic abuses and mistakes of Catholics in the Church, but the religion itself was blameless. Therefore they looked for a compromise.

Bastian (1990, p. 98) explained:
Las primeras generaciones liberales independentistas fueron más atraídas por la idea de una reforma del catolicismo romano desde adentro que por una aplicación de los principios liberales en material de tolerancia religiosa y libertad de culto y conciencia.

The first generation of liberals creating independence were more attracted to the idea of reforming the Roman Catholic Church from the inside rather than an application of the principles of religious tolerance, freedom of religion and liberty of conscience.

It was not a matter of dethroning Catholicism, rather it was a matter of seeking a process whereby they might “reconcile Catholicism with Republicanism, at the same time maintaining Catholicism as the State religion” (Bastian 1990, p. 97). There was no way that a new religious group entering the former Spanish Colonies could expect equal treatment. Simply, they had to accept whatever tolerance was extended to them by whoever happened to be in power at the moment (Chapter 3, section 3.3.1).

One additional pertinent comment is worth adding: in 1831 Vicente Rocafuerte, an Ecuadorian, wrote a tract on religious liberty (Bastian, 1990). As a Roman Catholic and in defense of Catholicism, his suggestion was that foreigners be allowed to practice their own religion, in their own place of worship, for their own kind, but in their own language. However, no religious services whatsoever would be allowed in Spanish, other than those led by the Catholic Church. His proposal was accepted by many countries as a way to handle the issue of religious liberty among foreigners. This became law, for example, in Argentina.

**C-1.4 Protestants were welcomed in Colombia at the beginning**

It is noteworthy that the country that eventually would become the most anti-Protestant—Colombia—was the first to warmly welcome Protestants (Chapter 1, section 1.4.4). This welcome held rather firmly during the early
revolutionary period, lasting approximately fifty years (Chapter 3, section 3.2.2). In view of the strength of Catholicism, it is impressive that those early Colombian patriots were true democratic ideologues. It is important to the researcher to emphasize this subject because it is largely ignored in history books on Colombia. (For examples of this omission see: Colombia, Fragmented Land, Divided Society by Frank Safford and Marco Palacios; The Making of Modern Colombia, by David Bushnell; Historia Básica de Colombia by Javier Ocampo López; Historia de la Iglesia en America Latina by Enrique D. Dussel). Some elaboration is needed.

Political liberals, many of whom had become Freemasons—men like Narino, Bolivar, Santander, and Paez—represented the first anti-Catholic element in Colombia (see Chapter 1, section 1.4.3). A number of crioles not only openly criticized Spain’s harsh rule, but also the abusive Catholicism that had been introduced in the New World (see Chapter 1, section 1.2.3). In reaction, powerful revolutionaries called for Protestants to enter Colombia. They wanted other religions to counterbalance the overpowering political and religious control exercised by Catholicism. Bastian (1990, p. 117) added:

En Colombia el liberal José Hilario López (1848-1853) impuso varias medidas anticatólicas que culminaron en la enmienda constitucional de 1853 y separación de la Iglesia y el Estado. Su sucesor en la presidencia del país, José María Obando, incluyó la libertad religiosa en la Constitución y siguió una política anticatólica que fue prolongada por el general Tomás Cipriano de Mosquera hasta su derrocamiento en 1867.

In Colombia the liberal Jose Hilario Lopez (1848-1853) imposed several anti-Catholic measures that ended up being added to the Constitution of 1853 along with separation between Church and State. His successor in the presidency, Jose Maria Obando, included liberty of religion in the Constitution and followed an anti-Catholic rule that was extended by General Tomas Cipriano de Mosquera until he was overthrown in 1867.
In previous chapters, further support was given for the warm welcome given Protestants in the first fifty years of the independence of Colombia.

**C-1.5 Important differences between the early and later Protestants**

We come to what the researcher believes is an important observation made by Mexican historian Pierre Bastian concerning the marked difference between the character and temperament of the early Protestants and that of the Protestants who have come on the scene in Latin America after the 1950s. This is the only note of its kind the researcher has seen making such a comparison. The contrast between the two merits consideration when studying the history of Protestantism in Latin America (see Chapter 4, section 4:1 for further quotes and discussion). Bastian (1990, p. 266) simply stated:

[L]as sociedades protestantes durante un siglo (de la mitad del siglo XIX a la mitad del siglo XX) fueron en America Latina un intento de reforma intelectual y moral…

Protestant societies for one century (from the middle of the XIX century to the middle of the XX century) were an intellectual and moral force in Latin America…

In summary of his extended statements, Bastian claimed the nineteenth century Protestants arose from the radical liberal democratic segments of Latin American society. Through the establishment of excellent schools, faithful Bible preaching and public stands for justice and equality, these first Protestants, though a minority, became a moral and intellectual force in Latin society.

Bastian (1990) drew from John A. Mackay’s missionary work in Peru as illustration. A year after arriving in Peru (1916), Mackay enrolled in the San Marco University where he earned a doctorate in Spanish literature. In
addition to his duties as a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland, and a further project of establishing the Anglo Peruvian School, he established himself at one of the main centers of influence by teaching philosophy at the San Marcos University. As a professor, he was able to share his democratic views with staff and students while also passing along his deep love and devotion to God. This combination became attractive to the university students, who at that time were grappling with ways of introducing democratic reforms needed in their nation. Mackay’s rapport with the students and outspoken love for democracy brought him into contact with leading political reformers, among them Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, founder of the Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) political party. A life-long friendship was established between them. In fact, when Haya de la Torre had to flee for his life for opposing President Agustin Leguia’s attempt to consecrate Peru to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (a political move to turn Peru over to Catholic control), Mackay risked everything to hide him in his home. As a Protestant missionary, John Mackay made a lasting impact on Peru.

Bastian claimed, however, that in the 1950s Protestantism suffered profound changes. They split into hundreds of different religious societies, each with their unique brand of home-spun religious constructs mixed with their health and wealth gospel (see Chapter 4, section 4.6.1 to 4.6.4). Most of the modern Protestants, effervescent but unlettered, come from the marginalized sectors of Colombia. They are poor, abused and oppressed. Desiring personal improvements, recognition and power, they easily become clients of authoritative governments that seek out those populous segments of society that will support their illegitimate ambitions (clear examples are found
in the way Protestants responded to Peron in Argentina, Fidel Castro in Cuba, Pinochet in Chile, Rios Montt in Guatemala, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and in the way they back Chavez in Venezuela today). Bastian claimed that the price Protestants have paid for this popular acceptance has been the loss of their civic culture and democratic ideals. Modern Protestants, he claims, no longer espouse those special, initial ideals that made Protestantism a significant project of civilization, of intellectual reformation and moral transformation. Bastain (1990, p. 271) concluded:

Se puede lanzar la hipótesis de que los protestantismos latinoamericanos han dejado de ser un proyecto de reforma intelectual y moral para el continente para volverse a un milenarismo de los marginados y oprimidos, religión del analfabeto, y antiintelectual…

We can launch the hypothesis that Protestants throughout Latin America are no longer a movement of intellectual and moral reform in the continent, becoming instead the millenarianism of the marginalized and oppressed, the religion of the illiterate and anti intellectuals….

Modern Protestants, he believes, no longer represent a force for the “intellectual and moral reform of the continent.” They no longer adhere to that system of belief that sought the redemption of Christ in all areas of society. Siding with the religious liberals in society today, Bastian has little praise for today’s Protestants. To him they are the providers of the neo-Pentecostal message of miracles, happiness, health-and-wealth and a future millennium of joy and glory when Christ returns (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.3). He admits that message has enormous appeal to the marginalized, oppressed and unenlightened in Latin America, but believes it ultimately does little to transform the many ills affecting Latin America’s modern society.

While not accepting the religious, liberal solutions backed by Bastian in the conclusions he presents in his Historia del Protestantismo en America
Latina, this researcher agrees there is a significant difference between the former Protestants and the present neo-Pentecostal Protestants. At stake is the faithfulness of the Church to the teachings of the New Testament Apostles, the Old Testament Prophets and Jesus Christ the Cornerstone (See Chapter 7, sections 7.2 and 7.3).

C-1.6 The warlike nature of Colombians

For several years prior to conducting this study, the researcher wondered about the unending guerrilla wars in Colombia. Colombians seemed to be a warm and friendly people, yet article after article recounted the terrible violence occurring throughout the land. Reading its history, the researcher was surprised to discover Colombians have always been at war with each other from the very beginning (see Chapter 1, section 1.5.1).

Between 1864 and 1885, Colombia suffered two devastating civil wars, eight minor revolts, and a government coup. After that, 52 civil wars took place in different regions of the country. Little wonder that Rafael Nunez, in his political campaign for the presidency, told Colombians (Lopez 1999, p. 258):

"La regla general [para Colombia] ha sido la Guerra civil; la excepción ha sido el orden público."

The general rule [for Colombia] has been civil war; the exception has been to have public order.

From 1899 to 1902, a “Thousand Day War” broke out, leaving the nation in financial as well as moral ruin. From 1946 to 1964, during a period rightly called La Violencia (the violence), some historians calculate up to 400,000 people died. Finally, since the beginning of the modern guerrilla wars
in the late 1960s to the year 2000, statistics report that another 33,000 have been killed.

As an interesting sideline, it has been noted that the word “guerrilla” originated in Spain. It was coined in 1809 to describe the nonprofessional fighters who, with their hit and run tactics, tried to oust Napoleon’s occupying army. “Guerrilla” translates as “tiny wars” and refers to small bands of hit-and-run nonprofessionals who attack larger, well-organized forces.

Before going on to the next topic, this section ends by explaining that by the end of the 20th century, forty million people, basically rural in nature and living in one general geographic area, have not learned to live and work at peace with each other.

**C-2 Conclusions about research questions or hypotheses**

In this section, the researcher shows a few matters of agreement as well as disagreement with some of the conclusions or hypotheses expressed by authors he has researched regarding the establishment and growth of Protestantism in Colombia.

**C-2.1 Missionaries are responsible to teach their converts**

A book that has been very helpful in writing this thesis has been *50 Años de Historia y Misión AIEC* (50 Years of History and Missiony AIEC) by Ubaldo Restan Padilla (1995). It is a book that, without any complications, narrates the history of the AIEC churches. It is written by a Colombian pastor who desired to record as best he could the story of his denomination. It is also a very brave book because the author dared tell where the missionaries he loved failed his churches. He stated:
The [Latin America] Missión…did not give the church workers sufficient biblical preparation and for that reason they committed many mistakes, and there was a lot of disorder and confusion. (p. 79)

In another section of his book, Padilla (1995) wrote:

From our perspective the work of evangelism that the CBC [Centro Bíblico del Caribe] accomplished through its students was excellent, but the [Mission] failed in forming national leaders to assume the direction of the Association [of Churches]… The preparation and training of the national leadership was deficient, in part because the [CBC] Institute limited itself to train lay people to do the work of evangelism, which was good, but it did not prepare and train people effectively to pastor and administer the churches (p. 61).

Padilla (1995) further explained that in a period of 14 years only three pastors who studied in that school were ordained (p. 61).

This researcher agrees with Padilla’s premise. When missionaries do not train leaders to continue the task of teaching new converts, they fail in the very purpose of evangelism, that is, the establishment of national churches. At issue is not evangelism per se, it is the responsibility that is created as a result of successful evangelism. Of course missionaries need to start by doing evangelism. However, when sufficient followers have been won so that a church can be established, the missionaries’ task takes on an additional dimension. At that point, Christ’s command to “teach” followers “to obey everything I have commanded” comes into play (Matthew 28:19-20). Padilla (1995, p. 110-111) certainly believes the Latin America Mission missionaries failed the Colombian churches by not providing proper education for the AIEC pastors:

En 1976 el número de líderes de la AIEC entre pastores y obreros era de 480, todos activos. De éstos solo 80 tenían capacitación de alguna institución teológica. Aunque existía el CBC, a los obreros le era casi imposible abandonar la familia y la iglesia por 5 o 6 meses cada año durante tres años para estudiar en residencia, por la poca capacitación y formación de gran parte de los líderes y pastores de la AIEC, ésta cayó en su vacío doctrinal, prestándose con frecuencia choques
verbales, rechazos, divisiones entre líderes y aún de iglesias, abusos en la doctrina y las prácticas eclesiásticas, llegándose algunos casos a la anarquía donde cada uno hacía y enseñaba según creía o entendía.

In 1976 the number of leaders in the AIEC, between pastors and lay leaders, was 480, all of them active. Of these, only 80 had some studies in a theological institution. Even though the CBC existed, it was next to impossible for a worker to abandon his family and his church for three years to do residency studies there. Because of the poor preparation of a great number of the leaders of the AIEC, the [denomination] fell into a doctrinal void, with frequent verbal confrontations, rejections, divisions between leaders and even churches, abuses in doctrine and ecclesiastical practices, in some cases to the point of anarchy, where everyone did and taught according to what they understood.

Of all the missionary societies, none did a better job of evangelization than the Latin America Mission (LAM). However, for some incomprehensible reason, they did not give sufficient importance to the training of national pastors. The consequence of this neglect was disastrous, as stated above and repeated below (Padilla (1995, p. 111):

...the [denomination] fell into a doctrinal void, with frequent verbal confrontations, rejections, divisions between leaders and even churches, abuses in doctrine and ecclesiastical practices, in some cases to the point of anarchy, where everyone did and taught according to what they understood.

Missionaries must provide adequate Bible and theological training for church leaders. This is clearly as much a part of the missionary task as evangelism. Once a group of converts organizes into a church, the educational task must begin. Not to do so might result in types of spiritual disarray similar to those seen in the AIEC Churches. At some unexpected moment, false teachers will appear and untaught Christians will become their victims.

This researcher believes that the purpose of evangelism is to establish churches that are true to the Bible. That task can only be accomplished by
providing a thorough program of training for the leadership of those new churches. In the next section, the relation between evangelism and education will be discussed.

C-2.2 “Evangelism” must not be the only missionary watchword

This study has grown out of the researcher’s aim to show that key to the successful establishment of a national church is the theological education of its national pastors. This belief is in tension with premises presented by W. Dayton Roberts (1971) in *Strachan of Costa Rica: Missionary Insights and Strategies*. Before going any further, the researcher needs to say that he was a friend of Kenneth Strachan and worked very closely with the author, Dayton Roberts, in Costa Rica. Further, he participated in the Evangelism in Depth crusades sponsored by the Latin America Mission in Nicaragua in 1960 and in Costa Rica in 1961.

Kenneth Strachan died on February 24, 1965. It was in 1977 that the researcher began his involvement in training pastors in Latin America. Had he been asked about his missionary beliefs up to that moment, he most certainly would have echoed the emphasis made by Roberts in his book. The researcher loved evangelism and was often involved in evangelistic programs. But then his travels took him around Latin America, and he began discovering the dismal biblical preparation most pastors possessed. The stories of terrible failures reported to him personally by pastors and their cry for more training persuaded the researcher to get involved in programs of pastor education. He came to the conviction that evangelism was merely the starting point, not the end of the missionary task. This personal involvement with the problems of pastors forced changes in the researcher’s strategy and approach. He would
like to think that had his friends Kenneth Strachan and Dayton Roberts benefited from the same type of experiences with untrained pastors, they surely would have added a few chapters on the need for training pastors in the book, *Strachan of Costa Rica* (1971).

Strachan felt the job of every Christian was to evangelize. Roberts (1971, p. 86) quoted him: “What I am trying to say is this: ...every solitary Christian is a witness....” (p. 89) The job of the LAM was “the mobilization of all believers in Christian witness. (p.90) “It [evangelism] is the joyful privilege of every Christian, young and old, new and mature, foolhardy and wise. And in the exercise by every believer of this inherent and inescapable calling, the purpose of God will be realized—and only this way.”

These ideas led to the development of what came to be known as “Evangelism in Depth,” that is, every Christian mobilized to accomplish the task of telling every person in a given area—a city, a region, a nation—the gospel of Christ. In the history of the Protestant Church in Latin America, there has been no equal or parallel movement to match the energy and exposure of Protestant Christianity as this movement demonstrated.

It is interesting to note how a prominent Colombian Catholic writer reported this movement. Florencio Galindo, CM (1994, p. 305) wrote:

...fue esta una campaña lanzada en 1961 por Kenneth Strachan, director de LAM, con el fin de dinamizar el trabajo misionero aprovechando las experiencias de evangelización agresiva de las cruzadas de Billy Graham durante los años 50. Su táctica era conquistar naciones claves enteras, y en ellas ante todo los ciudadanos más ricos e influyentes. Además...infundir más consciencia política al trabajo misionero, a fin de cerrar el paso al comunismo.

...this was a crusade launched in 1961 by Kenneth Strachan, director of the LAM, with the goal of exploding missionary work, following the
aggressive evangelization tactics of the Billy Graham crusades during the 1950s. His tactic was to conquer entire important nations, especially the rich and influential in those nations. Furthermore...create more of a political conscience in missionary work in order to close the doors to Communism.

The movement sought to convert entire nations, but there is no support for the accusation of an overt effort to win over the rich and influential—everyone, both poor and rich was targeted alike. The second accusation of an anti-Communism objective is likewise false. Yes, Strachan—like most Americans of that period—was against Communism, and he did speak publicly about his feelings (especially Communism’s anti-god stance and the dangers of political takeovers like Castro’s in Cuba), but this was not the aim of Evangelism in Depth. As one who worked on the inside of the organization, the researcher can vouch for the spiritual integrity of the movement. The movement had one solitary goal: to lead people to Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible.

The researcher’s disagreement with the movement, as expressed in previous chapters, was that very little care or declared concern was voiced about the need of training the national leadership biblically and theologically in order to create strong biblical churches. As will be seen in the next section, the consequence was that the majority of these converts turned to neo-Pentecostalism rather than to a biblically based Christianity.

C-2.3 Neo-Pentecostalism versus Biblical Protestantism

In studying the literature for this thesis, one book stands out over which the researcher has strong disagreements: *Latinoamérica en Llamas* by Pablo A. Deiros and Carlos Mraida. In the researcher’s opinion, these authors presented both the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal movements as the
“salvation” of a dead and stilted Christianity and invited all Christians to join in the movement (see Chapter 4, sections 4.6.1 to 4.6.4). The researcher believes that Deiros and Mraida (1994) do not see Pentecostalism as a deviation from New Testament teaching; rather they see it as a restoration of New Testament Christianity as expressed in the Book of Acts.

Pentecostals, from Deiros and Mraida’s (1994) perspective, are truly free. Pentecostals are not bound by tradition nor historical creeds; they are not limited to the meaning of Greek and Hebrew words. Pentecostals, according to Deiros and Mraida, benefit from a religion that can explore and roam and seek and find, without restrictions, as long as what is said, done and believed can be justified by what they call the “leading of the Spirit.” For the sake of clarity, it is important to emphasize some of the popular Pentecostal beliefs extolled by Deiros and Mraida in the fifth chapter of their book. Alongside each of the following Deiros and Mraida quotes, this researcher will add a Scripture verse that opposes that belief, recognizing that there are additional Bible quotations that could also have been used:

Deiros and Mraida say Pentecostals believe that Christianity is more of an emotional religion than a theologically rational one (p. 117). However, Jesus said: “You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Jn. 8:32) and Paul states that he prays “that you may be filled with all knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Col. 1:9).

Deiros and Mraida say that Pentecostals believe it is right for the sermon not to be logical, rather, the words of a preacher are actually magic, in the sense that the very word preached has power in and of itself (p. 117). However, Paul, in speaking to the Colossians admonishes them to be wise and accurate in what they say: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (Col. 3:16). Nothing of magic is indicated in Paul’s words.

Deiros and Mraida say Pentecostals believe that anybody should exercise power in the church and that the power or authority given to a person should be according to the measure of the gifts he/she receives
from the Holy Spirit. The gift of tongues, especially, is sufficient for anyone to be a pastor or church leader (p. 118). However, regarding the gift of tongues and its application, the Apostle Paul says: “I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue” (1Co. 14:19).

Deiros and Mraida say the Pentecostal churches are communities where the Spirit manifests itself, rather than places where Christians learn God’s Word and acquire spiritual knowledge (p.118). On the other hand, Paul says his desire for the church is “that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (Eph. 1:18).

Deiros and Mraida say there should always be room for ‘novelty,’ that is, new and unusual things, because this resurgence of new expressions and actions comes from the Spirit. The openness to new manifestations and the expectancy of them should be what make church services attractive. When no one knows what will occur, liberty reigns, resulting in the joyous newness of the kingdom of the Spirit (p. 118). The Apostle Paul, contrariwise, says: “So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter” (2 Th. 2:15; and see also Heb. 3:6; 4:14; 10:23; Rev. 3:3).

Deiros and Mraida say Pentecostals are correct in believing that no one should place great emphasis on the purity of the faith and its practice, since there are other things more important (p. 120). On the other hand, Paul tells his disciple Titus that Jesus “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Tit. 2:14).

Deiros and Mraida say faith is not something one reasons through, it is something one acts on (p. 121). However, the writer to the Hebrews tells us: “Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Heb. 11:1).

Deiros and Mraida say we should sing not to transmit a logical message, but to testify to a concrete experience we have lived (p. 121). However Paul tells Timothy that church singing should reflect the richness and wisdom of the doctrines learned: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

Other beliefs and practices difficult to accept are mentioned in previous chapters. But, moving on, it is important to know the size of the Pentecostal movement.
C-2.4 Number of Protestants calculated to be Pentecostal

Galindo (1994, p. 313) revealed that there are around 50 million Protestants in Latin America; of these, 75 percent are calculated to be Pentecostal. At least 6,000 new Protestant congregations are established annually; of those, 4,000 are Pentecostal. While Deiros and Mriada (1994) believe Pentecostalism has lit the fires of Protestantism in Latin America, not all agree. Galindo (1994, p. 314) wrote:

[N]o todos saludan el hecho como el inicio de un futuro brillante del protestantismo en A.L. Por el contrario, autores como Jean-Pierre Bastián consideran la pentecostalización como el ocaso de la verdadera Reforma, crítica, culta, ilustrada....

Not everyone believes [Pentecostalism] is the beginning of a brilliant future for Protestantism in Latin America. On the contrary, some authors like Jean-Pierre Bastian believe that ‘Pentecostalization’ will be the death-knell of the true, critical, cultured, and distinguished Reformation...

Because most Pentecostals belittle theological and biblical education for their pastors and leaders, the researcher agrees that the movement has brought considerable confusion to the church in Latin America. It has greatly debilitated the doctrinal standards of churches and introduced teachings and practices that have no Scriptural warrant. At the same time, Galindo (1994, p. 315) asserted that Pentecostals are filling a socio-religious void in the continent that neither Catholicism nor Protestantism has been able to fill. Time will tell whether the contribution will have brought benefit or loss to the marginalized peoples of Latin America. Galindo (1994. p. 315-316) explained:

Si por ahora aparece lleno de elementos contradictorios, ello se debe a que en él confluyen factores de muy diverso valor: de una parte es un movimiento de gran espontaneidad y libertad, en el cual sin duda se manifiesta la acción del Espíritu Santo, pero también el capricho y los intereses de determinadas personas y organizaciones, y la línea divisoria no es clara.

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If in the present it appears filled with contradictory elements, the reason is that many confluent factors of very different values flow through the movement. On the one hand, it is a very spontaneous and free movement through which undoubtedly the action of the Holy Spirit is manifest. But through it also are manifested the capricious interests of certain individuals and organizations, and the dividing line is not at all clear.

However, in his overall evaluation of Pentecostalism, Galindo (1994, p. 314), as a Roman Catholic, is very critical:

*El [pentecostalismo] es una religión sincretista, sectaria, irracional, analfabeta, cuya expansión no es una reforma ni del catolicismo ni del protestantismo. Es simplemente una forma de religión populista que, sobre una base de protestantismo, reúne elementos de chamanismo y autoritarismo, sin contenidos de fe precisos y que además ha asimilado la cultura de la represión política que caracteriza gran parte del continente.*

Pentecostalism is a syncretistic, sectarian, irrational, illiterate religion, which in its expansion is neither a reformation of Catholicism nor of Protestantism. It is simply a popular religion based on Protestantism that gathers elements of shamanism and authoritarianism without the essential contents of faith, and that in addition has assimilated the culture of political oppression that characterizes much of the continent.

In previous chapters, this researcher has made clear the problems facing the Protestant Church as a result of the neo-Pentecostal movement. While many Pentecostals have done much good and have helped to extend the Kingdom of Heaven in Colombia, others—mainly those in the neo-Pentecostal camp—have created more religious problems than they have solved. Chief among these problems is the belief that pastors do not need Bible or theological training. This assertion has created severe set-backs in thousands of churches simply because the congregations do not know what the Bible teaches nor what Christianity stands for. Also, Pentecostals’ emphasis on miracles and on the health and wealth gospel has distracted
from all the great teachings of the Bible. People have come to believe that God manifests Himself simply to provide material well-being for mankind.

Having looked at these areas of basic disagreement, in the next section research problems associated with this study are examined.

C-3.1 Conclusions about the research problem

Previously, this researcher noted the problems facing the Protestant Church in Colombia as it moved from leadership by missionaries to leadership by nationals. We will look at them one by one:

C-3.1.1 Problem one: the missionary failure to emphasize training

The problem was stated as follows:

Because missionaries never convinced the national church that their clergy needed to be well educated biblically and theologically, anyone with or without biblical credentials could become a pastor. Consequently, little importance was given by the emerging church to the need of preserving the biblical doctrines and the theological heritage introduced by the missionaries.

The majority of missionaries were themselves biblically and theologically educated. Most missionary organizations required their missionaries to have a minimum of a college degree in biblical studies. The remarkable thing is that missionaries did not recognize that their national counterparts also needed biblical and theological training.

One reason for this lack of recognition could have been related to cultural differences. In the 1940s and 1950s, most missionaries coming from North America entered an area very different from the surroundings to which they were accustomed. The poverty and accompanying ignorance encountered in these foreign lands would have been appalling to the North American missionaries. Working with adults who had very little education would have been difficult because the learning skills of these national
Christians would have been very limited. It would have been easy for these early missionaries to conclude that such uneducated people could not be provided with a thorough Bible training.

This same attitudinal problem was brought home to the researcher through a movie, Coach Carter, which was released by Paramount Studios on January 14, 2005. The movie is based on a true story of a controversial high-school basketball coach, Ken Carter, who, in 1999, benched his entire team for bad grades in an inner city public school in Richmond, California.

In the movie, the coach establishes a series of strict rules for the team: (a) they must maintain a 2.3 grade average; (b) they must attend all classes; (c) they must sit on the front row, be on time for each practice, and follow to the letter everything he demands. Under the tough requirements, the team starts winning games.

However, when the coach discovers his players are not following his academic requirements, he locks the gym, cancels practices, and forces the team to spend their practice times studying in the school library. As he works to get them to lift their grade averages, Coach Carter has to forfeit important games.

The parents, the school principal, and school board members think it unreasonable to expect that those deprived teenagers should be able to get reasonable grades and achieve in life. They claimed that the boys had nothing else to live for except success in basketball. Amazed, Coach Carter tells them
that it is the parents’, principal’s, and board members’ low expectations that have kept these underprivileged teenagers mired in their hopelessness year after year. If the parents’, principal’s and board members’ attitudes changed, Coach Carter asserted that they could transform the community. But as long as teachers and parents do not believe in the potential that each student possesses, no one in the community will ever amount to anything.

The movie speaks to the natural attitudes of the privileged. It is difficult for some people to see the potential among the downtrodden, and it is easy for them to draw wrong conclusions. Because people cannot read or write or because they live in wretched conditions, this does not mean that there is no way out for them. Some people, because of their background, conclude that helping such people would do little good; that one cannot expect great changes among the disadvantaged. Coach Carter, however, comes along to remind us of the wrongness of such thinking.

Attitudes and preconceptions have a lot to do with the way Protestants—whether missionaries or national leaders—do their work. Those who believe that all people, no matter what their background, have great potential will act like Juan Gonzales, Nicholas Woodbury, Gregorio Landero, Calixto Amante and Josh Villalba (the AIEC Education Committee) acted. These five men believed the AIEC denomination could be saved, that their pastors could be trained, that people could change, and they set out to make it happen (see Chapter 7, section 7.1 and 7.2).

From the lack of emphasis on the need for pastors to get an education, national Christians could have arrived at several conclusions. The researcher mentions two:
1. Anyone, with or without biblical credentials could become a pastor.

2. Little concern about the need to preserve the biblical doctrines and theological heritage was introduced by the missionaries.

This first conclusion on the part of the AIEC leaders and congregations is obvious because from the beginning they chose untrained pastors to lead their congregations (See Chapter 5, section 5.2). The research showed that of the 300 AIEC pastors, only 13 had the reasonable theological training required of a pastor.

The second conclusion is harder, yet possible, to demonstrate. This demonstration can be found in the story of Victor Landero's spiritual experiences related in Chapter 6, section 6.2.1. Speaking in tongues and healing miracles were new. The pastors and people did not know whether the experience was legitimate or not, so they went to one of their trustworthy sources, missionary David Howard. He gave them answers and a set of standards to follow. In other words, since the missionaries were around to provide doctrinal advice, the local leaders themselves did not need to go to the trouble of learning.

Again, after neo-Pentecostalism overwhelmed the Colombian church leaders with all their doctrines, it was at that moment that the leaders realized the fact they had to learn for themselves, because the missionaries had gone. They knew they did not have the answers. That crisis awoke them to their need for action.

It was unfortunate that many of the missionaries did not teach the national pastors. For some inexplicable reason, they did not see the importance of establishing national churches with well trained pastors. The
AIEC was fortunate in having a very select though small group of well-trained leaders willing to risk providing this training. As shown in Chapter 7, these AIEC leaders recognized the problem and took appropriate action. By seeing to it that all 300 pastors in their denomination were trained, their denomination today is flourishing and their churches are growing.

C-3.1.2 Problem two: the disproportionate emphasis on evangelism

The second research problem was stated as follows:

*Because they placed their main emphasis on evangelism, most missionaries did not adequately train their national replacements biblically and theologically. In most instances, when the missionaries left, neither the national pastors nor their church leaders were properly grounded in the Historic Faith. Therefore, they would be unable to ward off false beliefs and keep their churches and congregations on target biblically.*

This research revealed that the main concern and emphasis of missionaries was evangelism. This point was amplified by detailing the *program and goals of Evangelism in Depth*. So strong was this evangelistic thrust in Colombia (and elsewhere) that most Protestant organizations were brought under its powerful influence. Clearly, evangelism was the goal of all who were involved in Evangelism in Depth movement.

Four areas related to this second problem were exposed in this study:

1. The main interest of missionaries was in evangelism.
2. Missionaries gave insufficient time to train nationals.
3. National leaders were not grounded in Scripture.
4. Pastors were not equipped to lead their congregations biblically, nor were they capable of gauging religious errors.

The first two problems are related to one another, and the last two are connected to one another. The first two problems have to do with the priority
chosen by the missionary in respect to the task; the last two problems deal
with the consequences of those choices. Perhaps it can be illustrated with the
following story.

Some time ago, the researcher received a magazine from World Vision
(a leading Christian relief organization) based in Monrovia, California. Among
the pages advertising all kinds of books and resources was an article titled,
"What Kind of Evangelism?" (Haas, 2005). In the case of this article, the
quarrel was not between evangelism and education, rather the argument was
related to evangelism and providing relief for impoverished people. A
purported argument was between “Jack” and “Jill.” Jill favored evangelism to
the exclusion of everything else ("so that people would not go to hell"), and
Jack favored an emphasis on relief ("Getting people to heaven is important,
but hardly celebratory if they are vulnerable in life to all kinds of evil"). The
point the researcher is trying to make is that the debate over the priority of
evangelism over other areas of ministry continues to this day.

In preparing for this chapter, the researcher wrote to the William Carey
Library, Pasadena, California, which has a bookstore that sells more books on
missionary activity than any other in the United States. The library is part of
the U. S. Center for World Missions. He asked for the five recent best-sellers
on the subject of world missions. These are the books that were sent: The
Missions Addiction by David Shilbley (2001), Today's All-Star Missions
Churches by Tom Telford (2001), Every Nation In Our Generation by Rice
Broocks (2002), Church Planting Movements by David Garrison (2004), and
The Hispanic Challenge by Manuel Ortiz (1993). Each book was carefully
examined, and the main emphasis of each was evangelism.
First, *Church Planting Movements* (Garrison, 2004) will be examined. Missionaries talk about church planting as the best way to evangelize the modern world. This researcher does not disagree with church planting as a great tool for evangelism; however, if a Protestant church is being planted somewhere, at some point, new leadership of that church needs to be trained. That item was absent in Garrison’s book. For instance, on page 172 the researcher found a summary of "the ten most important elements that should be found in every Church Planting Movement" (Garrison, 2004, p. 172):

1. extraordinary prayer,
2. abundant evangelism,
3. intentional planting of reproductive churches,
4. the authority of God's word,
5. local leadership,
6. lay leadership,
7. house churches,
8. church-planting churches,
9. rapid reproduction,
10. healthy churches.

In his book, Garrison (2004, p. 292) defined training as "expertise in evangelism, discipleship, church planting, training, and multiplication needed to accomplish the strategy that will lead to the vision's fulfillment." Garrison (2004, p. 71) referenced “eight modules of training,” each one lasting two weeks. These, however, take the format of what he calls “the 222 Principle,” based on 2 Timothy 2:2: “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will be qualified to
teach others.” Under this approach, the appointed new leader follows the missionary around to learn how the missionary does his work. Fine and good, but as the researcher looks at that text—“reliable men who will be qualified to teach others”—much more than following and watching a missionary is required. The one who will take charge of the church needs to know and understand the elements of Bible and theological education that shape the convictions and train the mind so that that new church leader follows the doctrines of the apostles, the prophets, and Jesus Christ. These must be the teachings that become the on-going guiding principles for the church. Garrison (2004, p. 308), rather, seems to extol simple methodologies and techniques, like the training process used by John and Hope Chen to train national workers: the use of the "Jesus Film, Four Spiritual Laws, Evangecube, Evangelism Explosion and others." The researcher would label these as aids for ministry, not the kind of theological education a pastor needs to wisely and correctly lead his congregation along biblical lines.

Of the five books, Every Nation in our Generation by Rice Brooks (2002) was the most encouraging. He subtitles his book, "Recovering the Apostolic Mandate." While still strong on the importance of evangelism, Brooks emphasized the need for a good education on the part of church leaders. "To any Christian who wonders what God is saying today to the church," Brooks (2002, p.39) underscored the answer: "The same thing He has been saying for 2000 years: make disciples, train leaders, plant churches." Another example provided by Brooks: (p. 123) was: "We must resist the temptation to take shortcuts or to ordain leaders too quickly. As much as we want to reach the world for Christ, we must not yield to the
pressure of putting people in leadership before they are ready." He speaks about the need for education but at the same time voices his fear of overemphasizing it. For instance, on page 51 he warns against a “scholasticism” that “focuses only on the truth” and “ends up squelching the life of the Spirit” as if the two were antithetical. Furthermore, he does not go on to explain nor outline the type of Bible and theological education that is suitable for the training of national pastors. The researcher is gratified, however, for the emphasis given to leadership education.

In his *The Hispanic Challenge, Opportunities Confronting the Church*, Manuel Ortiz (1993) addressed the problem of Hispanics in the United States. Rightly, he encouraged them to rise to the standards (educationally, linguistically and socially) accepted in the North American culture. The book had little to say about the problems faced by missionaries and churches in Latin America.

Likewise, the book *Today's All-Star Missions Churches* by Tom Telford (2001) was written for the benefit of U. S. churches that need to learn how to create a missionary interest in their North American congregation. The author does not discuss the subject of the missionary task today.

Shibley (2001) also wrote his book, *The Missions Addiction*, to get churches in North America enthused about doing missionary work. He stated (p. 38) that "the new role of American missionaries is as the junior partner, strengthening the hands and affirming the vision of the church in developing nations and partnering with our brothers and sisters worldwide...." He added (p. 39): “By far the greatest challenge to missions in this decade is theological. If we ‘derail’ theologically, it could take another century to rebuild a solid track
underneath the church." The point at issue, as far as the researcher is concerned, is not the fear of "derailing" missionary work in the future, but what to do for the already theologically "derailed" churches in many parts of the world (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.2). That subject is not covered in Shibley's book.

In order to show the relationships between problems one and two and problems three and four, it is helpful to restate them as follows:

1. Since the main interest of missionaries was in evangelism, they gave insufficient time or emphasis to the training of nationals.

2. Leaders were not grounded in the Scriptures, they had not studied doctrine or theology; consequently, pastors were unequipped to lead their congregations biblically nor able to gauge religious errors.

In this researcher's opinion, at fault was the priority given to evangelism, totally disproportionate to the effort given to the preparation of national pastors (see Chapter 4, section 4.5.1). At some point, the proper training of national pastors should have taken place. Unless the future leaders of the churches were trained, the future church would have no foundation, no pillars on which to build and grow. One goes back to the point made by Jesus when He explained the danger of building our "house" on "sand" instead of on the "rock."

Previously, it was noted there were enough missionaries in Colombia to give the national church stability. In 1961, there were 466 North American missionaries in the country, 1,618 places of worship, 838 national pastors, and a total of 92,728 Protestant Church members. Statistically, there was at least one missionary for every two pastors. It is clear that there were enough
missionaries to have worked out an educational solution. However, when the Protestant church began to grow in the 1970s and missionaries unexpectedly began to withdraw, the opportunity to train pastors was long gone. The pastors were already leading churches; however, the majority had no biblical training.

Thus, when the missionaries left, the national pastors who were ungrounded in the historic faith were unable to ward off false beliefs and keep their churches and congregations within biblical boundaries.

**C-3.1.3 Problem three: untrained pastors without spiritual discernment**

The research problem was stated as follows:

*When strange and new doctrines were introduced, the pastors and the Christians had little discernment. The tendency was to accept new beliefs unquestioningly.*

Previously, this researcher quoted Martin (1990, p. 83) speaking to the popular appeal of Pentecostals in Latin America:

*Pentecostals speak the language of the people... [they] offer the old fiesta in the form of lively worship, the old trances in the form of spiritual ecstasy, the old networks in the form of brotherhood.... [I]t is the autonomy, the self-support, the liveliness, the chance of release and participation which count for the most in the Pentecostal appeal, plus a sense of having something which nobody else has.*

It was previously noted that when all church bodies who called themselves Protestant united to work together in the evangelizing movement, the Pentecostals joined in, too. However, the Pentecostals did not leave their beliefs behind when joining this united evangelizing movement. They began spreading their doctrines throughout all the churches where they gathered and worked, sang, and prayed. Quickly these quixotic beliefs became the rage. Because pastors had no Biblical training and no doctrinal foundation, they were unable to distinguish between feelings and faith, correct and
incorrect uses of Scripture, true doctrine and false teachings (see section 6.3.1 and 6.3.2). Not until later, when they were able to question these new beliefs with the Bible in hand, were they able to see for themselves where they had departed from the teachings of Scripture (Chapter 7, section 7.4).

The point the researcher has attempted to make is that without a clear understanding of what true Christianity is, without the ability to go to the Scriptures for answers, without a basic grounding in a ministerial profession—a profession as demanding as any other, whether education, medicine, science, or mathematics—a pastor lacks the necessary tools to lead a congregation correctly. In this researcher's opinion, Protestant missionaries need to have a high view of the Church so that they commit themselves to ensuring its establishment in whatever area of the world they work according to the Scriptural mandates (see Chapter 6, section 6.4).

C-3.1.4 Problem four: how to biblically educate untrained pastors

The problem was stated as follows:

Now that the missionaries had left, the problem for those concerned with the training of national pastors was how to bring all those untrained pastors and churches back to the Scriptures and the Historic Christian faith.

Background for this topic is found in Chapter 4, section 4.7 through 4.7.3 and Chapter 5, section 5.2. Thankfully, in Colombia, when the spiritual crisis came in the early 1970s, Juan Gonzales (the AIEC president) named a committee to look for answers. When the committee members met, their first thought was to revive the old CBC school in Sincelejo and go back to the old methods of training. The committee, however, had good educational sense. They recognized the old format had not worked and that, if implemented anew, it would not work again. They needed a new way to educate their
pastors, a program that would meet them at the place of personal need and with the type of instruction that would help them learn to serve the church biblically (see solutions discovered by LOGOI's personnel in Chapter 5, section 5.6.4 and then its application in Colombia, Chapter 6, sections 6.7.1 through 6.7.4).

An aside comment is fitting here. Missionaries, to solve many of the problems they encounter, must be very creative. What worked for them in their homeland does not always work in their new environment. People who have a different and less privileged background will have different patterns of thinking. Therefore, as we look back at the educational decisions made by the leadership in Colombia, we can be thankful Latin Americans had the main input. They realized that if pastors were to study, they would have to study where they served, not in some distant school. Furthermore, each would have to study at their particular level of competence—meaning educational flexibility and the need for a wide range of approaches was required. The AIEC committee members began looking for something that would meet—at least to some extent—that demanding criteria. Fortunately, they were neither the first to have wrestled with these kinds of needs nor the first to look for that specific type of flexible programming.

As is well recognized, education can come in vastly different types of packages. One can be traditional, where the student adjusts to the system and where the program is set, the location fixed, and the methodology established. In such a traditional educational setting, the professors teach what they can test, and the goal of the student is to get a diploma. Another type of education can be non-formal, where the system accommodates the
student. Under this format, functionality is the key. The program is flexible; the location varies from case to case; the methodology is adaptable, and the professors (normally the materials themselves) teach what the pre-categorized students can learn. The goal is for the student to learn how to perform certain functions well—like a pastor learning the necessary functions to be able to preach and lead a congregation.

It was fascinating to watch the various groups in the learning combinations that were created for the Colombian pastors. The unlettered were learning to read and write using the ALFALIT methodology. Students with limited reading skills were working with the *Vida Abundante* course. Those with a fourth-grade education were doing the two-year SEAN program. And those who had an eighth-grade education or more were studying the LOGOI pastor program.

Thatched roofed huts became centers of learning. Churches became schools. Very rapidly, in a matter of only ten years, over 6,000 church leaders and church workers were trained biblically. These leaders now had sufficient Bible knowledge so that they could follow and teach the principles found in the New Testament.

As the researcher examined the creation of the LOGOI pastor training programs in 1977 and its rapid deployment throughout most of the Hispanic countries through 1992 (the AIEC was simply one part of it), he realized that a number of factors had combined to create the need for such a program. First, there was the rapid growth of the Protestant Church throughout the continent. In the majority of the countries, the churches had been started by missionaries who were Protestant fundamentalists (Pentecostal churches...
were off to one side). Throughout all Latin America, the Protestant churches were very similar in background. However, with the strong emphasis on evangelism fostered mostly by the popular Evangelism in Depth movement, the churches came together—including the Pentecostals—and then the neo-Pentecostal doctrines began to spread and take over the churches. The AIEC was not the only denomination in trouble. Many churches looked for a way out of their confusion. From 1977 to 1992, LOGOI Ministries, in cooperation with SEAN, were able to graduate 45,000 pastors and lay leaders, and another 100,000 church leaders studied their Bibles for at least one year.

In 1992, many things began to change. People from the rural areas moved to the large urban centers. Consequently, public education became available in most areas. Pastors and their children along with many church leaders took advantage of the educational opportunities. Today one has to go to the marginalized sectors to find those without a basic education. Back then, however, we were working in the first blush of Protestantism's success. That setting no longer exists. With changes in the educational environment, our approach and methodology have had to be upgraded. But looking back on it all, the researcher misses what so often appeared to be unsolvable educational challenges. Mistakes were made, but overall, significant learning took place, and the lives of hundreds of pastors (along with their congregations) were transformed.

To give an example, the researcher last April (2005) sat with one of those pastors who studied in the 1980s. He cares for a church of 400 members. Twenty years ago, he could barely read or write, that is, until LOGOI’s education program became available to him. Now he and the
researcher were discussing Karl Barth’s struggle with theological liberalism and his theological contribution through his Church Dogmatics. From there the discussion led to the writings of John Stott and J. I. Packer. That pastor's name is Andres Cornelio, a man who today delights in keeping up with all the lines of modern theological thinking. Such were the transformations that took place, although not always to that degree. Again and again through the study programs offered, hundreds of pastors came out of their intellectual darkness. In the next final section, conclusions along with their implications will be discussed.

C-4 Implications

Christianity is a faith strictly based on Holy Scriptures. What it teaches and what it demands are crucial to anyone who calls himself a Christian.

Since the sixteenth century reformation a number of Protestant denominations have been established. Some of these have extended themselves all the way to Colombia. Also in the last couple of centuries, the number of denominations has multiplied, not only in Colombia, but throughout the world—each with its own brand of doctrines and particular emphasis. In every case, however, the church’s orthodoxy depends on how strictly each adheres to the body of Scripture—referred to in previous chapters as: “Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:20).

Orthodoxy applies just as much to individuals as it does to entire churches. Without it, one may call himself/herself a Christian but not be one. A church may be established, but not necessarily be a truly Christian Church. It may have the appearance of a Christian church and communicate some of
its symbols, but if it is not based solidly and knowingly on the foundation set 
by Christ, the apostolic writings and the Old Testament, such a church is 
merely a fading shadow of what it was intended to be. That is the foundational 
premise made in this thesis and the reason for the imperativeness of a 
comprehensive program to teach Bible and theology to national pastors. If 
churches in any given nation are to carry on the name of Christianity, what 
they do and teach must in fact be orthodox.

People need to understand what it means to accept and follow the 
beliefs of Christianity. Note the convincing way in which Chesterton (1959, p. 
156-157) explained why he was an orthodox Christian:

This, therefore, is, in conclusion, my reason for accepting the religion 
and not merely the scattered and secular truths out of the religion. I do 
it because the thing has not merely told the truth, or that truth, but has 
revealed itself as a truth-telling thing. All other philosophies say the 
things that plainly seem to be true; only this philosophy has again and 
again said the thing that does not seem to be true, but is true. Alone of 
all creeds it is convincing where it is not attractive; it turns out to be 
right, like my father in the garden. Theosophists for instance will preach 
an obvious attractive idea like reincarnation; but if we wait for its logical 
results, they are spiritual superciliousness and the cruelty of caste. For 
if a man is a beggar by his own pre-natal sins, people will tend to 
despise the beggar. But Christianity preaches an obviously unattractive 
idea, such as original sin, but when we wait for its results, they are 
pathos and brotherhood, and a thunder of laughter and pity; for only 
with original sin we can at once pity the beggar and distrust the king. 
Men of science offer us health, an obvious benefit; it is only afterward 
that we discover that by health, they mean bodily slavery and spiritual 
tedium. Orthodoxy makes us jump by the sudden brink of hell; it is only 
afterwards that we realize that this danger is the root of all drama and 
romance. The strongest argument for the divine grace is simply its 
ungraciousness. The unpopular parts of Christianity turn out, when 
examined, to be the very props of the people. The outer ring of 
Christianity is a rigid guard of ethical abnegations and professional 
priests; but inside that inhuman guard you will find the old human life 
dancing like children, and drinking wine like men; for Christianity is the 
only frame for pagan freedom. But in the modern philosophy the case 
is opposite; it is its outer ring that is obviously artistic and emancipated; 
its despair is within.
And its despair is this, that it does not really believe that there is any meaning in the universe; therefore it cannot hope to find romance; its romances will have no plots. A man cannot expect any adventures in the land of anarchy. But a man can expect any number of adventures if he goes traveling in the land of authority. One can find no meaning in a jungle of skepticism; but a man will find more and more meaning who walks through a forest of doctrine and design. Here everything has a story tied to its tail, like the tools or pictures in my father’s house, for it is my father’s house. I end where I began—at the right end. I have entered at least the gate of all good philosophy.

If Protestantism is to remain true to its historic roots, it must retain the truth and the power and the purity about which Chesterton (1959) wrote. For in doing so, it commits itself to the faithful transmission of its orthodoxy from generation to generation. Whether by its clergy, its missionaries, or its national pastors, that faith is then carefully guarded by the boundaries established in Scripture itself (see Appendix A).

Christianity cannot be left up to individuals, no matter how intelligent or charismatic, to determine by their likes or dislikes what is orthodox. The Christian way, the Christian truth and the Christian life—that is, true orthodoxy—has been clearly spelled out by its original Author. To capriciously try to modernize it, choose another more appealing way, to attempt improving on its truth, or believe there is a better way to proclaim its life is to negate the original foundation and, in effect, to start a new religion.

As previous chapters explained, pastors who are untaught have no way of knowing what they are supposed to believe and protect. They have little understanding of what the Church of Jesus Christ is all about. Thus, the 300 churches established by the Latin America missionaries in Colombia practically collapsed, like the house Jesus talked about that was “built on the sand.” Christ himself predicted that unless his church is built on solid rock, the doctrinal storms that will come will crush and crumble those built on sand.
C-5 Summary

On the issue of training national pastors, the researcher has come to the following conclusions:

1. When the national pastors are not biblically and theologically educated, their churches will drift into whatever doctrine appears most convincing.

2. Protestantism is not a religion that can be made up by Christians as they go along, loosely based on the Bible.

3. Protestantism is a faith based strictly on the Bible and its sound doctrinal teachings. This knowledge must be passed on faithfully from pastor to congregation, missionary to national, Christian to Christian.

4. The Christian leadership task is more than simply presenting Christian beliefs to people, followed by grouping converts into so-called churches and letting them drift on their own. The task, as Jesus explained it, involves “teaching them [the new believers] to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mt. 28.20).

5. Every missionary must ask himself/herself: “What biblical and theological educational responsibilities do I have as I evangelize and plant churches so that the people who are brought into the church truly follow Christ?”

6. Every national pastor must ask the same question: “What biblical and theological educational responsibilities do I have as I build the church God has put under my care?”
7. Those overseeing the missionaries or the national churches must see to it that the pastors under their supervision get a good biblical and theological education so that their churches are built on the Bible.

The researcher believes that unless this educational task is effectively carried out, those responsible to build the Christian Church are building “on the sand” as Jesus explained. Their converts may meet regularly in some building they call “church,” have a leader they call “pastor,” claim they are “Christians,” and even multiply into huge mega congregations, but unless the converts are built solidly on the doctrinal foundation of Holy Scripture, they simply have what the Apostle Paul called a “form of godliness” rather than the true understanding of what it means to be followers of Jesus Christ (2 Ti. 3:5).

The Church, in order to be a true Christian church must be established on what Christ called “the rock” (Mt.7:24-27). The Apostle Paul affirmed that the Christian Church is “built upon the foundations of the apostles [the writers of the New Testament] and prophets [the authors of the Old Testament], with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone” (Ephesians 2:20). In other words, a Christian Church is based and established solely and solidly on the Bible in its entirety. Anything less—or more—signifies a religion built “on the sand.”

Thus the research would indicate that to execute a successful transfer of a Protestant Church from a missionary to a national pastor, the national leader must have a very clear understanding of what the historic Christian Church is and of what is entailed in its establishment in a foreign country. Missionaries must provide that knowledge through solid programs of Bible and theological training. What composes a “good” Bible education can and
should be debated. Nonetheless, the researcher argues that the program provided by LOGOI to the Asociación de Iglesias Evangélicas de Colombia (AIEC), plus the results of that education, serve to illustrate the type of Bible training that can help pastors understand their role in establishing churches that are true to the required historic and biblical roots.

While the oft quoted verse, Ephesians 2:20 provides the foundation upon which all Christian churches must be based (the apostles, the prophets and Jesus Christ the corner stone), later in the same letter, the Apostle Paul seems to encapsulate what is required of those who seek to contribute to the development of the Christian Church in an ever-changing world:

*He [Christ] gave some to be apostles [the writers of the New Testament], some to be prophets [the writers of the Old Testament], some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers [applying to those who lead the church today], to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming (Eph. 4:11-14).*
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The following list of Bible texts show the responsibility on all who call themselves Christian to correctly safeguard the faith that has come down to us generation after generation from the time of Jesus Christ. The researcher has italicized the words or phrases that call for the preservation of the biblical faith.

**Jude 1:3 (New King James Version)**

I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to *contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

**Acts 14:20-22 (New International Version)**

The next day [Paul] and Barnabas left for Derbe. They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and *encouraging them to remain true to the faith.*

**Romans 16:25-26 (New King James Version)**

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the *revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began* but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith.

**Corinthians 4:13-14 (New King James Version)**

And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

**Ephesians 4:11-13 (New King James Version)**

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the
saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, \textsuperscript{13}till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ…

**Philippians 1:27 (New King James Version)**

\textsuperscript{27}Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you \textit{stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel}…

**1 Timothy 4:1 (New King James Version)**

\textsuperscript{1} Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times \textit{some will depart from the faith}, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons…

**1 Timothy 4:6 (New King James Version)**

\textsuperscript{6}If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, \textit{nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed}.

**Titus 1:4 (New King James Version)**

\textsuperscript{4}To Titus, a true son in our \textit{common faith}: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ\textsuperscript{[a]} our Savior.

**Hebrews 6:1-4 (New King James Version)**

\textsuperscript{1} Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, \textit{not laying again the foundation} of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, \textsuperscript{2}of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. \textsuperscript{3}And this we will do if God permits.

**Hebrews 10:23 (New King James Version)**

\textsuperscript{23}Let us \textit{hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering}, for He who promised is faithful.

**2 Peter 1:1 (New King James Version)**

\textsuperscript{1} Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained \textit{like precious faith with us} by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ…
Jude 1:20-21 (New King James Version)

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Revelation 14:12 (New King James Version)

12 Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 13:5 (New King James Version)

5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.

Colossians 1:21-23 (New King James Version)

21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight--

23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister…

PART 2

The Christian faith is not a religion that can be changed at will to suit one’s likes. Understanding this permits us to understand the call Scripture makes for teachers who are faithful to teach the truth received:

Colossians 2:7 (New King James Version)

7 Rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

I Timothy 2: 5-7

5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle--I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying--a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.
EXAMPLES OF JESUS’ TEACHING

Matthew 4:23 (New International Version)

23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Mark 10:1
1 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

John 8:2 (New International Version)

2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.

Matthew 28:20 (New International Version)

20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

EXAMPLES OF THE DISCIPLES’ TEACHING

Acts 5: 21-22

21 At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people.

25 Someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.”

Romans 16:17

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

2 Timothy 1:13 (New International Version)

13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 4:20 (New Living Translation)

20 But that isn't what you were taught when you learned about Christ.
Philippians 4:9 (New International Version - UK)

9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me— put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

2 Timothy 3:14 (New International Version)

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it.

Romans 15:4 (New International Version)

4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us…

2 Timothy 3:16 (New International Version)

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness…

Acts 15:35 (New International Version)

35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Acts 18:11 (New International Version)

11 So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

Acts 28:31 (New International Version)

31 Boldly … he preached … and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1:28 (New International Version)

28 We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.
APPENDIX B
CURRICULUM
The LOGOI Pastor Training Program

INTRODUCTORY COURSE

Textbooks:
1. *Cómo Estudiar* (How to Study) by Tony Barratt.
   A course based on the programmed principles of British educator Derek Rowntree (Learn How to Study).
2. *All the Doctrines in the Bible*, Dr. Herbert Lockyer

Additional Helps:
1. *Pastor Guides I, II, III*
   (Each Guide gives pastors practical, guided sermonic material for three months of preaching.) The purpose for these Guides is to help the pastor add biblical depth and substance to his preaching while he learns the basics in our programmed study.
2. *Philippians* – (a commentary on Paul’s Epistle) by Frank Barker
3. *Acts of the Apostles* – (a commentary) by Dr. Manford Gutzke

YEAR 1

1. Spanish Bible Introduction
   Text: *A Layman’s Guide to Our Bible*, by Donald Demaray

   Workbooks:
   a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (student workbook)
   b. Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)

   Purpose:
   To help the pastor know and teach the origin, inspiration, and authority of the Bible; and how we got our Spanish versions. Also, to familiarize the pastor with the theme, aim, and author of every book and the geography of the Bible.

2. Systematic Theology -- Theism
   Text: *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, by James Oliver Buswell Jr., Part 1, Theism (Teología Sistematica 1, Dios)

   Workbooks:
   a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (student workbook)
   b. Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)
Purpose: To lead the pastor to understand
1. God and His attributes
2. Arguments for the existence of God
3. The Holy Trinity
4. The works of God in Creation and Providence and to help pastors teach these truths to their congregations.

3. Introduction to Pastoral Counseling
Text: *Encyclopedia of Psychological Problems*, by Clyde Narramore
(Enciclopedia de Problemas Psicológicos)

Workbooks:
- a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (student workbook)
- b. Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)

Purpose:
1. To familiarize pastors with the many varied human problems he may have to face and with the technical terms.
2. To show him how to relate the human problem to scripture in counseling.
3. To advise him on the type of problems he should refer to specialists.

4. Homiletics
Text: *Cómo Preparar Sermones Dinámicos*, by Casati, Vega, Thompson, Palau; LOGOI, Inc. (How to Prepare Dynamic Sermons)

Workbooks:
- a. *Cómo Predicar* (SEAN), an excellent programmed workbook on the principles of Biblical preaching.
- b. *Cómo Predicar*, Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)

Purpose:
To help pastors study effective preaching methods and principles and to learn to implement proper methodology in their sermon preparation.

5. History
Text: *A Short History of the Early Church*, by Harry R. Boer, Eerdmans (Historia de la Iglesia Primitiva) Note: LOGOI has added a biographical supplement of leading historical figures of the past and present.

Workbook:
- Guía Para el Estudio de la Historia (A History Reading Study Guide)
Purpose:

To acquaint the pastor with the richness of early church history and fill the needed gaps of his knowledge of the development of heresies, dogma, doctrine, strengths, and weaknesses of the church through the centuries. (This is a reading course, not necessitating group studies, designed for study during the pastor's vacation period.)

ADDITIONAL HELPS:

1) **Pastor Guides IV, V, VI** (see Introductory Course explanation)
2) **Hebrews** – a commentary by Roy Hession
3) **Song of Solomon** – a commentary by Joseph Dillow

YEAR 2

1. **Bible (Old Testament Survey)**
   
   Text: *God’s Plan Unfolded*, Jack Scott; Tyndale (El Plan de Dios en El Antiguo Testamento)
   
   Workbooks:
   a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (student workbook)
   b. Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)

   Purpose:

   To most pastors in Latin America, the Old Testament is an unknown book. We hope to introduce him to the rich content of this part of God’s revelation and give him sufficient background to excite him in further study and teaching from the Old Testament.

2. **Systematic Theology --Anthropology**
   
   Text: *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, James Oliver Buswell, Jr.; Zondervan (Teología Sistemática
   
   Text: *El Hombre y Su Vida de Pescador*
   
   Workbooks:
   a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (workbook)
   b. Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)

   Purpose:

   To help the pastor understand the Biblical teaching regarding man, his creation, his fall, the consequences of that fall in man’s now frail nature, and his utter dependency on God for help and understanding of himself.
3. Hermeneutics

Text: *Methodical Bible Study*, Robert Traina; Asbury Theological Seminary (El Estudio Metódico de la Biblia)
Text: *Knowing Scripture*, R.C. Sproul; Bethany (El Conocimiento de las Escrituras)

Workbooks:

a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (student workbook)
b. Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)

Purpose:

To help the pastor understand and learn the basic guiding rules to Biblical interpretation and apply those to his personal use of Scripture in preaching.

4. Ethics

Text: *Etica Cristiana, Un Enfoque Bíblico-Teológico*, Gerald Nyenhuis; LOGOI, Inc. (Christian Ethics, a Biblical-Theological View)

Workbooks:

a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (student workbook)
b. Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)

Purpose:

To take the pastor through an in-depth study of the moral implications of God's revealed truth, affecting all aspects of life, and to help him teach these Biblical standards to his congregation.

5. History

Text: *Historia de la Reforma*, Ismael Amaya; LOGOI, Inc. (History of the Reformation), containing a supplement on the creeds of the Church.

Workbook:

*Guía para el estudio de la Reforma* (A Guide to the Study of the Reformation)

Purpose:

To familiarize the pastor with the events and issues that brought about the great reformation, the individuals God used in renewing the church and the world consequences. (This, again, is a reading course designed for study during the pastor’s vacation period.)

6. Communications

Text 1. *School of Christian Writing*, Wirt; The Billy Graham Association

Purpose:
To introduce pastors to the skills of writing. This course will be provided by the Billy Graham Association and will be offered to interested pastors as an elective.

ADDITIONAL HELPS:
1. Pastor Guides VII, VIII, IX
2. Diccionario Bíblico LOGOI (Bible Dictionary)
3. Romans (a commentary) by Roger Bowen
4. I Corinthians (a commentary by F. Barker)

YEAR 3

1. Bible

   Workbooks:
   a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (student workbook)
   b. Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)

   Purpose:
   To take pastors through a systematic study of the New Testament as a background for further in-depth studies on individual books.

2. Systematic Theology -- Soteriology

   Workbooks:
   a. a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (student workbook)
   b. b. Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)

   Purpose:
   To seek to explain and study the vast subject of God’s plan of salvation freely offered to the world through Jesus Christ. These are the deepest things we can possibly learn, the highest and holiest, the most essential matters for our salvation. They are key to our obedience to Christ’s Great Commission.

3. Pastoral Counseling
   Text: *Effective Biblical Counseling*, Larry Crabb; Zondervan (Consejería Bíblica Efectiva)
Workbooks:

a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (student workbook)
b. Manual del Orientador (leader's guide)

Purpose:

To give the pastors a thorough course on the principles and methods of counseling with the Bible as the source of answers. God, who created man, has the answers for man’s need; however, God who gives us wisdom also has enabled man to understand to a degree our human and mental functions. How this knowledge blends with God’s ultimate truth is the purpose for this study.

4. Christian Education

Text: *Introduction to Christian Education*, E. Daniel, J. Wade, C. Greshem; Standard (Introducción a la Educación Cristiana)

Workbooks:

a. Cuaderno de Trabajo (student workbook)
b. Manual del Orientador (leader’s guide)

Purpose:

Lay a foundation for pastors on the needs of a consistent Christian education program in the church, laying out the principles, why and wherefores, along with suggested methodology, for them to adapt and apply to their actual situation and needs.

5. History

Text: *La Iglesia Evangélica en América Latina*, Ismael Amaya, LOGOI, Inc. (The Evangelical Church in Latin America)

Supplement: A Short History of Major Denominations

Workbook:

*Guía Para el Conocimiento de la Iglesia Evangélica en América Latina*  
(Guide to the study of the Evangelical Church in Latin America)

Purpose:

To recount the story of God’s grace and work throughout the major countries of the southern hemisphere. To help the pastors understand their roots and fix a perspective on the challenges of this great continent.

ADDITIONAL HELPS:

1. *Pastor Guides X, XI, XII*
2. *Genesis* (a commentary), Aalders
3. *Jesus*, Malcolm Muggeridge
4. *Leviticus* (a commentary), Goldberg