

## A CHRONOLOGY OF SIGNIFICANT PROTESTANT BEGINNINGS IN HISPANIC MINISTRY IN THE USA

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### Historical Overview of U.S. relations with Spain and Mexico:

Spanish "conquistador" Hernando Cortés begins the exploration and conquest of Mexico:	1519
Alvarez de Pineda explores the Gulf Coast:	1519
Cortés conquers the Aztecs in Teotihuacán (Mexico City) and establishes Spanish rule:	1521
Pánfilo de Narvaez begins the exploration of Florida and Texas:	1528
The Viceroyalty of New Spain established over Mexico and the western part of what is now the United States of America:	1535
Cabeza de Vaca explores the territory of Texas:	1535
Spanish explorations in the territory of Arizona and New Mexico:	1539
Francisco Vásquez de Coronado explores what is now the Southwestern U.S. and parts of the Great Plains states:	1540
Hernando de Soto explores Florida and other Southern states and discovers the Mississippi River:	1539- 1541
Spanish explorer Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo discovers the territory of California:	1542
Spanish colonization of New Mexico begins:	1548
St. Augustine founded by the Spanish in Florida:	1565
Santa Fe founded by the Spanish in New Mexico:	1609
Spanish colonization of the territory of Arizona begins:	1687
Spain begins the colonization of Alta California:	1769
Los Angeles founded by the Spanish in Alta California:	1781
Spanish forces withdraw from the eastern seaboard of what is now U.S. territory, Mexico becomes independent of Spain, and Anglo-Americans begin to colonize Texas:	1821
Texas becomes independent of Mexico:	1836
Texas becomes the 28 <sup>th</sup> state of the Union:	1845
California declares its independence from Mexico:	1846
Mexican-American War, U.S. occupies Northern Mexico:	1846- 1848
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico cedes to U.S. the territories of California, Arizona, New Mexico and other large fragments of its territory; also approves the prior annexation of Texas:	1848
The Gadsden Purchase, U.S. takes possession of southern Arizona and New Mexico:	1853
Spanish-American War, U.S. occupies Cuba and Puerto Rico:	1898
Number of known Protestant denominations working with Hispanics in 1930:	22
Number of known Protestant denominations working with Hispanics in 1960:	32
Number of known Protestant denominations working with Hispanics in 1990:	79

### Significant Protestant Beginnings or Events:

1829 – 1844	Sumner Bacon, called “a colorful and controversial Cumberland Presbyterian evangelist,” was the first Presbyterian to begin missionary work among Hispanics in Texas; he began his ministry as an itinerant evangelist among the Anglo Americans of east and central Texas and later became a colporteur with the American Bible Society in 1833; he distributed Spanish Bibles and New Testaments and shared the Gospel message with the Spanish-speaking people with whom he frequently came into contact; when he died in 1844, no one in his denomination was willing to continue his work among the Mexican population.
1839 -	William C. Blair, an Old School Presbyterian clergyman, becomes the first person to receive a formal denominational appointment to evangelize Mexicans in Texas, when he began his ministry with the Assembly’s Board of Foreign Missions in Victoria, Texas; he had a long career in Texas and died in 1873.
1846 -	Another Old School Presbyterian minister, John McCullough was assigned to work in San Antonio, Texas, by the Board of Foreign Missions, where he ministered to Anglos, Germans and Mexicans; in 1848, McCullough secured the services of a Spaniard who was a converted Roman Catholic, who came to San Antonio under the auspices of the Evangelical Society of New York to minister to the Mexican American population; McCullough later moved to Galveston, Texas, where he died in 1870.
1849 -	The Rev. Hiram W. Read arrives in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to begin Hispanic ministry for the Southern Baptist Convention; his first convert in Albuquerque was Blas Chávez who became a Baptist preacher and served for fifty years.
1852 -	Melinda Rankin (1811-1888), an independent Presbyterian missionary and school teacher, arrived in Texas to begin her ministry among Mexicans in Texas and Mexico; she made several frustrating attempts at establishing a school for Mexican girls in Brownsville, which she finally accomplished in 1858; Rankin’s sister arrived to help her in 1855, supported by the nondenominational American and Foreign Christian Union.
1853 -	The Methodist Episcopal Church (North) begins Hispanic ministry in New Mexico under the ministry of the Rev. Benigno Cárdenas, a former Roman Catholic priest in Santa Fe.
1860s -	The Rev. Henry C. Riley, an Episcopalian, was reported to have pastored a Spanish-speaking congregation in New York City “for some time,” according to Melinda Rankin in 1868 (Rankin, 1875); in 1869, Riley was sent to Mexico by the American and Foreign Christian Union to organize nondenominational Protestant churches in Mexico City; in 1873, was appointed as “Bishop of the Valley of Mexico” for the Mexican Church of Jesus, which in 1904 became affiliated with the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA.
1861 -	The Texas Baptist Convention (part of the Southern Baptist Convention) appoints J.W.D. Creath as its first missionary worker among the Mexicans.
1869 -	The Rev. Thomas Harwood reopens the New Mexico mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church and begins to train Mexicans for leadership in the Methodist church.
1871 -	Alejo Hernández, a Roman Catholic seminary student in Aguascalientes, Mexico, is converted to Protestantism in Brownsville, Texas, where he became a licensed preacher with the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) and served in Laredo, Texas, and Mexico City from 1871-1875.
1874 -	The West Texas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) creates a Mexican border district.
1876 -	The First Baptist Church (Southern Baptist) of San Antonio organizes a Mexican mission under the direction of Jacob Korman.
1877 -	The first Mexican Presbyterian congregation in Texas was organized in Brownsville by the Presbyterian Church in the US (Southern Presbyterians).
1879 -	The Rev. Antonio Diaz began work among Mexicans in Los Angeles under the

	auspices of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North); Diaz establishes a Spanish-speaking mission at the Fort Street Methodist Church; in 1884, Diaz became a Presbyterian minister and worked with the Rev. Carlos Bransby in established several Presbyterian missions among Mexicans in the Los Angeles area.
1881 -	The official beginning of permanent Southern Baptist work in Texas at Laredo; in 1981, the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas celebrated 100 years of Hispanic Baptist work.
1885 -	The New Mexico Spanish-speaking Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) was organized in Peralta, New Mexico, under the leadership of Thomas Harwood.
1885 -	The Methodist Episcopal Church (South) organizes the Mexican Border Conference; previously, ministry to Mexicans in Texas had been coordinated through two mission districts, one in San Diego (near Corpus Christi) and the other in San Antonio.
1888 -	The Rev. A. Moss Merwin, a former missionary in Chile under the Presbyterian Board, begins his ministry among the Mexican population of Los Angeles; Merwin became the first Superintendent of Mexican Work in Southern California for the Presbyterian Church in the USA (Northern); Mary Merwin, Moss' daughter, became the Superintendent after Moss' death in 1905; by 1930, about 20 Spanish-speaking Presbyterian churches and missions had been established in Southern California.
1892 -	Walter S. Scott of San Antonio, Texas, is ordained for the Presbyterian ministry and commissioned as "evangelist to the Mexican people" by the Presbytery of Western Texas of the Presbyterian Church in the US (Southern).
1896 -	The Rev. A. B. Case begins work among Mexicans in Southern California; he had previously served in Mexico as a missionary with the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions of the Congregational Church; several Spanish-speaking congregations were established by Case in Redlands, Chino, Santa Ana, San Bernardino and Piru; in 1897, Case and his supporters founded the interdenominational California Spanish Missionary Society.
1901 -	The First Baptist Church of Santa Barbara, California, establishes a Mexican mission, pastored by C.T. Valdivia, who also established a mission in Oxnard, CA, in 1903; these were the first two Spanish-speaking ministries of the Southern California Baptist Convention, affiliated with the American (Northern) Baptist Convention.
1905 -	The General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists begins Hispanic ministry in the Boyle Heights district of East Los Angeles; in 2003 there were at least 700 Hispanic Adventist churches and missions in the USA.
1908 -	The Texas-Mexican Presbytery was organized by the Presbyterian Church in the US (Southern Presbyterians).
1911 -	The Rev. Vernon McCombs is appointed by the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) as director of Spanish work in Los Angeles; the McCombs had previously served as Methodist missionaries in Peru, from 1906-1910; in 1912, the Spanish and Portuguese District of the Southern California Conference was organized under McCombs leadership; between 1911 and 1920, about 70 Mexican missions were established in California by the Methodists.
1911 -	The American Baptist Churches in the USA (formerly known as the American Baptist Convention or Northern Baptists) appointed the Rev. and Mrs. L. E. Troyer as general missionaries for Spanish work under the Southern California Baptist Convention; the Troyers had served as Baptist missionaries in Puerto Rico and Mexico prior to returning to California in 1910; between 1911 and 1917, more than 17 Spanish-speaking churches and missions were

	established.
1912 -	The first two leaders of what was to become the Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Jesus Christ, the first Hispanic Pentecostal denomination in the USA, begin to evangelize Mexicans in Southern California: Juan Navarro and Francisco Llorente; during 1914-1915, churches were organized in Colton, San Bernardino, Riverside, Los Angeles (the Spanish Apostolic Faith Mission on North Hill Street) and Watts; the first convention of this new denomination was held in 1925 in San Bernardino with the participation of 27 affiliated pastors; however, it was not incorporated in California until 1930.
1912 -	The New York City Mission Society begins work among Spanish-speaking immigrants, later establishing the Church of the Good Neighbor, which became the “mother church” for many other Hispanic congregations.
1915 -	The young Rev. Henry C. Ball begins his life-long ministry with the newly formed Assemblies of God in Texas, where he established a Spanish-speaking church in Kingsville; he was appointed the first General Superintendent of the Mexican District of the Assemblies of God in 1917, which was renamed the Latin American District Council in 1929.
1915 -	The Friends Church (Quakers) begins Hispanic ministry in Whittier, California, under the leadership of Enrique Cobos, originally called the Jimtown Mission and now known as the Pico Rivera Friends Church.
1917 -	The Free Methodist Church in North America begins ministry among Hispanics in Los Angeles, California.
1918 -	Miss Alice E. Luce begins work among Hispanics in Los Angeles, California, and establishes the first Spanish-speaking Assembly of God church, “El Aposento Alto,” in a rented hall near the Mexican Plaza; Ball reports that another Spanish-speaking Assembly of God congregation also existed in 1918 in San José, California.
1920s -	The Evangelical Lutheran Church begins Hispanic ministry in Texas.
1920s -	The Evangelical United Brethren (a German denomination) begins Hispanic ministry in Texas; in 2003, there were 15 Hispanic congregations in six states, with the largest number in California (9).
1920s -	The Christian Church-Disciples of Christ begins Hispanic ministry in the USA.
1921 -	The First Spanish Baptist Church was organized in New York City as part of the American Baptist Convention, under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Perry D. Woods of the Home Mission Board and Miss Albertina D. Bischoff of the Women’s Baptist Home Mission Society.
1921 -	Rodney W. Roundy, Associate Secretary of the Home Mission Council, reported that Protestant denominations had at least 300 Spanish-speaking churches and missions in the USA, with a paid staff of 250 ministers and Christian workers, in addition to 157 mission school teachers; also, that there were more “preaching points” than the number of reported churches and missions.
1923 -	The Latin American Council of Christian Churches (known as CLADIC in Spanish) was organized in Houston, Texas, under the leadership of the Rev. Francisco Olazabal, who left the Assemblies of God over a dispute with the Anglo-American leadership; CLADIC’s headquarters are now located in Brownsville, Texas; also, Bethel Temple is established in the Belvedere Gardens district of Los Angeles in 1923 by the Rev. Francisco Olazabal.
1925 -	Latin American Council of the Pentecostal Church of God began work in New York City as an extension of its ministry in Puerto Rico; the former became independent of the mother church in Puerto Rico, Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal, during the 1950s; Everett Wilson refers to the related denomination in NYC as

	the "Council of (Spanish) Christian Churches of New York."
1926 -	Alice E. Luce establishes the Latin American Bible Institute of the Assemblies of God in San Diego, California; later, this school was moved to La Mesa, then to Los Angeles, and finally to La Puente, CA, where it remains today. Also in 1926, Ball established a similar institute in San Antonio, Texas, which was relocated later to Saspamco and then to Ysleta, Texas, now a suburb of El Paso, where it is presently.
1929 -	The Assemblies of God reorganized its Spanish-speaking work into two districts: the Latin American District Council (includes all the states west of the Mississippi River, in addition to Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana) and the Spanish Eastern District Council (the rest of the states of the Union plus Puerto Rico).
1929 -	The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel begins Hispanic ministry in Los Angeles, California.
1930 -	The Pacific Coast Latin American Conference was organized under the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church of North America; in 1930, McLean reported there were ten Spanish-speaking churches with a total of about 300 members.
1930 -	The Church of the Nazarene organized its Latin American District in the Southwest, which included Spanish-speaking churches in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Northern Mexico (Chihuahua, Sonora and Baja California); this district included 11 churches in the USA with 415 members in 1930, according to McLean.
1930 -	Robert McLean reports the existence of 367 Protestant Spanish-speaking congregations in the USA with an estimated 26,600 members, but this does not include any Pentecostal denominations.
1930s -	The Christian and Missionary Alliance begins Hispanic ministry in the USA.
1931 -	The Church of God of Anderson, Indiana, begins Hispanic ministry in the Belvedere Gardens district of Los Angeles, CA.
1932 -	The Mennonite Church begins Hispanic ministry in Chicago; in 1999 there were 68 Hispanic congregations and 3,471 members.
1933 -	The Salvation Army begins Hispanic ministry in the Belvedere Gardens district of Los Angeles, CA.
1937 -	Fifty-five Spanish-speaking congregations are reported to exist in New York City: six were affiliated with the New York Mission Society, 18 with Pentecostal groups, and the others with the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Adventist, Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist and Presbyterian churches.
1937 -	The Mennonite Brethren began Hispanic ministry in Texas in 1937 and in California in 1956; in 1982 there were seven congregations and 284 members in Texas, and eight congregations and 291 members in California; training for Hispanic leaders is offered at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary in Fresno, CA; in 1994, the Pacific District Conference reported 20 Hispanic churches and missions with a total membership of 600.
1939 -	The Assembly of Christian Churches is organized in New York City among Puerto Rican leaders who were loyal to the Rev. Francisco Olazabal but who decided to form their own organization and separate from the Latin American Council of Christian Churches, with headquarters in Brownsville, Texas, which was led by Mexicans.
1946 -	The Church of God of Cleveland, Tennessee, begins Hispanic ministry in the USA under the leadership of Josué Rubio.
1950s -	The independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ (non-instrumental) begins ministry among Hispanics in Los Angeles, CA.

1950s -	The Episcopal Church begins Hispanic ministry in East Los Angeles, CA.
1950s -	The Damascus Christian Church is organized in New York City among Hispanics.
1950s -	The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod begins Hispanic ministry in Texas.
1953 -	The Conservative Baptist Association begins Hispanic ministry in Whittier, California.
1958 -	The General Conference Mennonite Church began its work among Hispanics in Lansdale, PA; during the 1980s Hispanic work began in several other states and in Toronto, Canada; in 1986, there were seven Hispanic congregations in the USA and Canada.
1960s-	The Evangelical Free Church begins Hispanic ministry in Los Angeles, CA.
1960s -	The Baptist General Conference begins Hispanic ministry in Chicago, Illinois; later, the Mexican Baptist Seminary was founded in 1973 in Chicago; in 2003, there were 10 Hispanic churches and missions in Illinois, 18 in Southern California, seven in Northern California and three each in Colorado and Florida, for a total of 41.
1960s -	The Church of God of Prophecy begins Hispanic ministry in the USA.
1960s -	The Christian Church-Disciples of Christ begins Hispanic ministry in Los Angeles, CA.
1960s-	The Baptist Bible Fellowship begins Hispanic ministry in Los Angeles, CA.
1960s-	The General Association of Regular Baptists (GARB) begins Hispanic ministry in Los Angeles, CA.
1960 -	Grebler, et al, reports the existence of 1,535 Spanish-speaking churches in the USA with an estimated 113,130 members, based on a survey by Glen W. Trimble for the National Council of Churches, but this report only included one Pentecostal denomination: the Assemblies of God; also, other non-Pentecostal denominations (such as the Church of the Nazarene) were omitted from the report; PROLADES estimates that there were at least 2,200 Spanish-speaking churches in the USA in 1960, based on its own research.
1960 -	Whitam reports that there were 460 Protestant churches in New York City with "some form of ministry to Spanish-speaking people;" these included 16 denominations as well as independent churches and missions; these included Adventist, Baptist, Congregational, Christian, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, New York City Mission Society, Presbyterian, Salvation Army and other non-Pentecostal denominations; the Pentecostal denominations reported to exist were the following: Spanish Eastern District Council of the Assemblies of God (40 churches and 5,400 members), Latin American Council of the Pentecostal Church of God (32 churches and 2,325 members), Assembly of Christian Churches (26 churches with 1,600 members), and the others had fewer than 10 churches each, including Damascus Christian Church, Defenders of the Faith, and the Church of God (Cleveland, TN)-Spanish District Council for the East.
1967 -	Victory Outreach is organized in the Boyle Heights district of East Los Angeles under the leadership of Sonny Arguinizoni.
1974 -	<i>The Religious Dimension in Hispanic Los Angeles: A Protestant Case Study</i> (550 pages), authored by Clifton L. Holland, is published by the William Carey Library in Pasadena, CA; this study was based on two years of field research by Holland while a Master's student at the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA; the book includes a directory of 227 Hispanic churches in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

1983 -	Ildefonso Ortiz of Worldteam produced a "Directory of Churches, Organizations and Ministries of the Hispanic Evangelical Churches in Miami-Dade," with technical assistance provided by IDEA-PROLADES, that included 222 Hispanic churches and missions, distributed as follows: Southern Baptist Convention (37), independent Pentecostal churches (31), Assemblies of God (17), other independent churches (15), United Methodist Church (14), independent Baptist churches (13), Church of God-Cleveland, TN (9), Lutheran churches (9), Presbyterian churches (8), Episcopal churches (6), and the Pentecostal Church of God (6).
1985 -	Dr. Everett Wilson reports the existence of at least 2,159 Hispanic Pentecostal churches in the USA in his article on "Hispanic Pentecostals" in the <i>Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements</i> , edited by Stanley M. Burgess and Gary B. McGee.
1986 -	Lou Cordova produced a "Directory of Hispanic Protestant Churches in Southern California" for the Hispanic Association for Theological Education (known as AHET in Spanish), with technical assistance provided by IDEA-PROLADES; a total of 1,048 Hispanic churches were listed in nine counties: Los Angeles county (687), Orange (80), San Diego (75), San Bernardino (65), Riverside (52), Ventura (29), Kern (26), Imperial (22) and Santa Barbara (12); the denominations with the largest number of churches and missions were: Assemblies of God (124), Apostolic Assembly (108), American Baptist Churches (97), Seventh-day Adventist (68), Southern Baptist Convention (67), Foursquare Gospel (48), Church of God-Cleveland, TN (45), Church of the Nazarene (40), Conservative Baptist Association (24), United Methodist (19), Presbyterian Church USA (18), and the Assembly of Christian Churches (16).
1988 -	Stewart Stout produced "A Guide to Hispanic Protestant Churches in the San Francisco Bay Area" as part of a National Study of Hispanic Church Growth in the USA, sponsored by IDEA-PROLADES; the study lists 157 Hispanic churches in six counties, with the denominations with the largest number of churches being: Assemblies of God (28), Southern Baptist Convention (16), Seventh-day Adventist (9), American Baptist Churches (8), and the Church of God-Cleveland, TN (7); 49 churches were unaffiliated.
1993 -	IDEA-PROLADES reports the creation of a national database of Hispanic churches in the USA with 6,837 listings, which was developed as a support service for the Hispanic Association of Bilingual-Bicultural Ministries (HABBM), directed by the Rev. Danny De León of Templo Calvario (Assemblies of God) in Santa Ana, CA; the distribution of Hispanic churches and missions by state was as follows (8 largest): California (2,388), Texas (1,799), Florida (643), New York (353), Illinois (277), Arizona (231), New Mexico (173), and New Jersey (118); the largest denominations in terms of number of churches and missions were: Assemblies of God (1,268), Southern Baptist Convention (759), other Baptists (447), Apostolic Assembly (444), Seventh-day Adventists (283), Churches of Christ (248), Church of God-Cleveland, TN (227), United Methodist Church (199), Presbyterian Church USA (143), Church of the Nazarene (129), American Baptist Churches (124), Foursquare Gospel (113), Evangelical Lutheran (111) and the Christian & Missionary Alliance (102); the total number of Hispanic churches and missions in the USA was estimated to be over 10,000 in 1993.
1995 -	IDEA-PROLADES produced "A Resource Directory of Hispanic Protestant Churches in Southern California" that included 1,626 Hispanic churches and missions, distributed in 10 counties as follows: Los Angeles (1,026), Orange (182), San Diego (99), Riverside (97), San Bernardino (93), Ventura (45), Imperial (29), Santa Barbara (27), Kern (25) and San Luis Obispo (6); the denominational totals were as follows: Assemblies of God (148), Apostolic Assembly (131), various Baptist groups (99), Seventh-day Adventist (95),

	Foursquare Gospel (83), Southern Baptist Convention (54), Church of the Nazarene (54), Church of God-Cleveland, TN (54), American Baptist Churches (48), various Pentecostal groups (44), Church of God of Prophecy (43), and the Presbyterian Church USA (34).
	<b>Date of Origin of Hispanic Ministry is Unknown:</b>
	Advent Christian Church
	American Lutheran Church
	Assemblies of Pentecostal Churches of Jesus Christ (Asambleas de Iglesias Pentecostales de Jesucristo) – same as United Pentecostal Church International?
	Baptist Missionary Association of America
	Brethren Church (Ashland, OH)
	Brethren in Christ
	Christian Reformed Church
	Church of God of Prophecy
	Concilio Cristiano de la Iglesia Pentecostal Hispana (Los Angeles)
	Concilio Hispano Pentecostal de la Iglesia de Dios (Chicago)
	Concilio Iglesia de Cristo Misionera, Inc. (NYC and Chicago)
	Evangelical Church of Apostles and Prophets (Chicago and Los Angeles)
	Evangelical Covenant Church (Chicago and Los Angeles)
	Evangelical Methodist Church
	Freewill Baptist Churches
	Grace Brethren Churches (Chicago, with headquarters in Winona Lake, IN)
	Lutheran Church in America
	Mexican Border Missions (Texas)
	Open Bible Standard Churches
	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
	Pentecostal Assembly of Jesus Christ
	Pentecostal Holiness Church International
	Reformed Church in America
	Seventh-day Adventist Reform Movement
	Soldiers of the Cross, International Evangelical Church (Miami, NYC, Los Angeles, etc.)
	United Lutheran Church (Texas and Chicago)
	United Pentecostal Church
	Vineyard Ministries International
	Wesleyan Church
	World Wide Missionary Movement (from Puerto Rico)

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**NOTES:**

- (1) Dates listed indicate the earliest recorded ministry or in case of discrepancies, the date most frequently indicated.
- (2) Protestant denominations include those that have begun ministry among

Hispanics or those that were founded as Hispanic organizations by Hispanic leaders.

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