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**ENCYCLOPEDIA OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN  
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:  
RELIGION IN MEXICO**

SECOND EDITION

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# CONTENTS

Country Overview	5
Current Religious Situation	11
Overview of Social, Religious and Political Development	13
The Roman Catholic Church	26
Independent Western Roman Catholic-derived groups	33
The Protestant Movement	39
Other Christian Groups	131
Eastern Orthodox Jurisdictions	138
Non-Christian Religions	140
Ecumenical-Interfaith Groups	162
Those with no religious affiliation or not specified	162
Sources	163
Appendices	169
Appendice I: Freemasonry in Mexico	171
Appendice II: A History of Spiritism in Mexico	181



# RELIGION IN MEXICO

## Country Overview

The United Mexican States (*Estados Unidos Mexicanos*) constitute one of the largest countries (an area of 1,972,550 km<sup>2</sup> or 761,606 square miles) in the Americas, located geographically in North America between the USA in the north and Guatemala and Belize in the southeast. It is bordered on the east by the Gulf of Mexico (part of the Caribbean Sea) and on the west by the Pacific Ocean.

Mexico's population in mid-2000 was estimated at 97.5 million and in mid-2008 at 109 million, third in population size in the Americas after the USA and Brazil. As of July 2012, the population was estimated to be 114,975,406, which made Mexico the 11<sup>th</sup> most populous nation in the world. It retained that rank with an estimated 130.76 million people in mid-2018. Consequently, Mexico has the largest population among the Spanish-speaking countries.

The nation is composed of a diversity of ethnic groups: Mestizos (mixed Spanish-Indian blood who are native Spanish-speakers), 88 percent; Amerindians (there are 287 living languages among 13 linguistical families; of the living languages, 282 are Indigenous and five are non-indigenous), nine percent; and others (including North Americans, Europeans, Afro-Americans, Middle Easterners and Asians), three percent. The predominant Amerindian languages (over 100,000 speakers) in 2010 were: Nahuatl, Yucatec-Maya, Mixtec, Zapotec, Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Otomi, Totonac, Mazatec, Chol, Huastec, Mazahua, Chinantec, Mixe, and Purepecha.

Source: <http://atlas.cdi.gob.mx/> - <http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/temas/lengua/>



Mexico is home to the largest number of U.S. citizens living abroad (an estimated one million in 2012), which represents about 0.76 percent of the total Mexican population and about 11 percent of all U.S. citizens living abroad in 2012 (an estimated 9 million). Other significant communities of foreign residents listed in the 2010 census include those from Guatemala (35,322), Spain (18,873), Colombia (13,922), Argentina (13,696), Cuba (12,108), Honduras (10,991), Venezuela (10,063), and El Salvador (8,088).

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Mexican government granted asylum to fellow Latin Americans and Europeans (mostly Spaniards in the 1930s) who fled political persecution in their home countries. During the 1970s and 1980s, Mexico opened its doors to political refugees from Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia and Central America (mainly from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador during the various civil wars). A second wave of immigrants has come to Mexico from Central America during the 2000s because of the severe social and economic crises resulting from increasing poverty, gang-related violence and violence associated with drug-trafficking. The Northern Triangle of Central America (NTCA), composed of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, is considered one of the most dangerous places on earth, which has caused unprecedented levels of northern migration. However, the goal of most of the migrants from Central America has been to reach the Mexico-U.S. border and seek asylum in the USA or find ways to cross the border illegally. Women and children are the most vulnerable in this crisis as they can easily become victims of rape, kidnapping, torture, or murder. Within the NTCA, gender-based violence is used as a means of intimidation or coercion.

However, the Mexican government's focus has become one of border enforcement rather than humanitarian protection. Detention of illegal immigrants went up 71 percent in 2014 over the previous year, and then in 2015 it deported 150,000 Central Americans from the Northern Triangle. The Mexican government also reported that only 24.7 percent of asylum applications were approved. The U.S. government is much more restrictive: in 2014, its asylum grant rate was only 3.7 percent.

**The official name of the country has had some changes since its creation:** First Mexican Empire (1821-1823), United Mexican States (1824-1836), Mexican Republic (1836-1863), Second Mexican Empire (1863-1867), and finally, since the Constitution of 1917, as the United Mexican States.

Mexico is a federation of 31 free and sovereign states that together exercise jurisdiction over the Federal District (Mexico City) and other territories. Each state has its own constitution, legislature and judiciary; and its citizens elect by direct vote a governor for a six-year term, as well as representatives to their respective state legislatures for three-year terms. Constitutionally, Mexico City is the federal capital; the Federal District is a special political division that belongs to the federation as a whole and not to a particular state, and as such has more limited local rule than the individual states.

The most populous city in the country is Mexico City, with an estimated population of 8.9 million in mid-2016, whereas the **Mexico City Metropolitan Area** had a population of about 20.1 million in 2010 (census) and an estimated 21,580,800 in mid-2018. Approximately 50 percent of the nation's population lives in one of the 55 large metropolitan areas in the country. In total, about 78.8 percent of the population of the country lives in urban areas, meaning that only 21.2 percent live in rural areas.

Greater Mexico City is formed by the Federal District and 60 municipalities of the State of Mexico and one from the State of Hidalgo, which makes this the most densely populated area in

the country. As of 2010, the largest municipalities in Mexico City Metropolitan Area, excluding Mexico City proper, were:

- Ecatepec (1.6 million)
- Nezahualcóyotl (1.1 million)
- Naucalpan (833,000)
- Tlalnepantla de Baz (664,000)
- Chimalhuacán (602,000)
- Ixtapaluca (467,000)
- Cuautitlán Izcalli (533,000)
- Atizapan de Zaragoza (490,000)

**The Mexico City Metropolitan Area was the fastest growing metropolitan area in the country until the late 1980s.** Since then, the annual rate of growth of the agglomeration has decreased and is lower than that of the other four largest metropolitan areas (namely Greater Guadalajara, Greater Monterrey, Greater Puebla and Greater Toluca) even though it is still positive. The net migration rate of Mexico City proper (Federal District) between 1995 and 2000, however, was negative, which means that residents were moving to the suburbs of the metropolitan area, to other states of Mexico, or emigrating to the USA. Also, the Federal Government instituted a policy of decentralization in order to reduce the environmental pollutants of the growing conurbation. Mexico City is also located between two large mountain ranges, which act to trap pollution.

On 19 September 1985, a devastating earthquake (measuring approximately 8.1 on the Richter scale) struck the State of Michoacán and inflicted severe structural damage on Mexico City. Estimates of the number killed range from 6,500 to 30,000.

With its fast growth over the past century, Greater Mexico City has faced numerous problems, including the inability to keep up with public services and housing, which led to the rise of huge shantytowns (slums) on the outskirts of the city without basic services. This includes one of the largest squatter settlements in the world, known as Neza-Chalco-Itza, which has an estimated population of 4 million. A slum household, as defined by United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), is a household that lacks access to potable water, improved sanitation, security of tenure and durability of housing or sufficient living area. Mexico City is considered one of the largest cities in the world and is home to 20 percent of Mexico's entire population. Urban migration has slowed, and now “natural growth” (the rate of natural population increase is classified as the crude birth rate minus the crude death rate in a given year) is the main cause of population growth in the Mexico City Metropolitan Area.

**Consistent with earlier studies about Mexican migration to the USA, the most important source states in the historical region of Mexico are:** Michoacán (13 percent of all migrants), Jalisco (11 percent), Guanajuato (9 percent), Zacatecas (4 percent), San Luís Potosí (3 percent), and Durango (3 percent). Within the central zone, the largest sources are Guerrero (8 percent), the Federal District (7 percent), Puebla (6 percent), Oaxaca (5.5 percent), México (5 percent), Hidalgo (3 percent), and Morelos (2 percent). In the southeastern zone only two states appear to send significant numbers of migrants northward: Veracruz (4 percent) and Chiapas (1 percent). The leading source states in the border region are Chihuahua, Sinaloa, and Tamaulipas (each approximately 2 percent) followed by Baja California, Coahuila, and Nuevo León (each approximately 1 percent). These data confirm the shift away from the historical region and the significant

participation of migrants from the central and southeastern regions, with the border region holding steady at around 10 percent of the total.

(Source: Regional and State Origins of Migrants Who Registered in Mexico's Matrícula Consular Program, 2006: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2931355/>)

**Geographically**, Mexico is crossed from north to south by two mountain ranges known as Sierra Madre Oriental (extends 1,350 km) and Sierra Madre Occidental (extends 5,000 km), which are the extension of the Rocky Mountains in the USA and Canada. From east to west at the center, the country is crossed by the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt (*Cordillera Neovolcánica*), also known as the Sierra Nevada. The Central Plateau (*altiplano*) stretches from the U.S. border to the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt and occupies the vast expanse of land between the eastern and western Sierra Madres. A low east-west range divides the altiplano into northern and southern sections. These two sections, previously called the Mesa del Norte and Mesa Central, are now regarded by geographers as sections of one altiplano. The majority of the Mexican central and northern regions are located at high altitudes, and the highest elevations are found at the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt: Pico de Orizaba (5,700 meters, the third highest mountain in North America), Popocatepetl (5,462 m) and Iztaccíhuatl (5,286 m) and Nevado de Toluca (4,577 m). Three major urban agglomerations are located in the valleys between these four mountain peaks, called the southern altiplano: the Mexico City Metro Area, Puebla and Toluca. The southern altiplano, averaging 2,000 meters in elevation, is higher than its northern counterpart, which averages 1,100 meters in elevation. A fourth mountain range, the Sierra Madre del Sur, extends 1,200 km along Mexico's southern coast from the southwestern part of the Trans-Mexican Volcanic Belt in Michoacán south to the nearly flat Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

The isthmus – 125 miles across at its narrowest point from coast to coast – includes the southeastern parts of Veracruz and Oaxaca, including small areas of Chiapas and Tabasco. The states of Tabasco, Chiapas, Campeche, Yucatán and Quintana Roo are east of the isthmus, with Veracruz and Oaxaca on the west. Geographically, the isthmus divides North America from Central America. The northern side of the isthmus is swampy and densely covered with jungle, which has been a greater obstacle to railway construction than the grades in crossing the Sierra Madres. Southeast of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, the Sierra Madre de Chiapas runs 280 km along the Pacific Coast from the Oaxaca-Chiapas border to Mexico's border with Guatemala.

**The economy.** As a regional power and a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) since 1994, Mexico has been firmly established as an upper middle-income country. It is considered a newly-industrialized country and has the 15<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world by GDP and by purchasing power parity (PPP), and also the second-largest GDP in Latin America, according to the International Monetary Fund (June 2018 report). Despite being considered an emerging power, Mexico's uneven income distribution and the increase in drug-related violence are issues of public concern.

Mexico is the third largest remittance receiving country in the world, with a total of \$25.7 billion received in 2015. The vast majority of these remittances came from the USA. Only \$500 million of the \$25.7 billion in remittances came from sources other than the USA. As of 2006, the Office of Immigration Statistics in the U.S. Department of Homeland Security estimated the number of Mexican undocumented immigrants to be 6,570,000. The remittances from Mexican citizens working in the USA in 2004 accounted for only 0.2% of Mexico's GDP, which was equal to US\$20 billion dollars per year in 2004 and was the seventh largest source of foreign income

after oil, industrial and manufactured goods, electronics, automobiles and food exports. Mexico's major natural resources are petroleum, silver, copper, gold, lead, zinc, natural gas and timber.

The Mexican economy contains a mixture of modern and outmoded industry and agriculture, which is increasingly dominated by the private sector. Recent administrations have expanded competition in seaports, railroads, telecommunications, electricity generation, natural gas distribution and airports. Per capita income is one-fourth that of the USA and income distribution remains highly unequal. Trade with the USA and Canada has tripled since the implementation of NAFTA in 1994. Mexico has 12 free-trade agreements with more than 40 countries, including Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, the European Free Trade Area and Japan; more than 90 percent of Mexico's trade is included in these free-trade agreements. In 2012, Mexico formed the Pacific Alliance with Peru, Colombia and Chile. Mexico has become the U.S.'s second-largest export market and third-largest source of imports. In 2017, two-way trade in goods and services exceeded \$623 billion.

Under *President Enrique Peña Nieto* (2012-2018), the Mexican government emphasized economic reforms by passing and implementing sweeping energy, financial, fiscal and telecommunications reform legislation, among others, with the long-term aim to improve competitiveness and economic growth across the Mexican economy. Since 2015, Mexico has held public auctions of oil and gas exploration and development rights and for long-term electric power generation contracts. Mexico has also issued permits for private sector import, distribution, and retail sales of refined petroleum products in an effort to attract private investment into the energy sector and boost production.

Since 2013, Mexico's economic growth has averaged two percent annually, falling short of private-sector expectations that President Peña Nieto's sweeping reforms would bolster economic prospects. Growth is predicted to remain below potential given falling oil production, weak oil prices, structural issues such as low productivity, high inequality, a large informal sector employing over half of the workforce, weak rule of law and corruption. Mexico's economy remains vulnerable to uncertainty surrounding the future of NAFTA — because the USA is its top trading partner and the two countries share integrated supply chains — and to potential shifts in domestic policies following the inauguration of a new president in December 2018.

**Violent crime is a critical issue in Mexico**, with a homicide rate varying from 11 to 14 per 100,000 inhabitants. Drug-traffic and narco-related criminal activities are a major concern for Mexican authorities. Drug cartels are active in the shared border with the USA and police corruption and collusion with drug cartels is a crucial problem. *President Felipe Calderón* (2006-2012) made combating drug-trafficking one of the top priorities of his administration. In a very controversial move, Calderón deployed military personnel to states and cities where drug cartels were known to operate, including the states along the U.S.-Mexican border (3,169 km or 1,969 miles).

**For many generations Mexicans have illegally crossed the border into the USA.** Reasons for the high rate of emigration from Mexico include the close proximity to the USA and the noticeable difference in the quality of life between the two countries. Many migrants come from poverty-stricken towns in Mexico and Central American countries and desire to migrate to the USA to achieve the "American dream." For many, just gaining employment at a low wage job in the USA provides a much higher standard of living than in their home country. Since the mid-1970s, the USA witnessed a significant increase in illegal immigrants from Mexico. The immigration influx

was not limited to Mexicans from one specific region but rather from communities throughout Mexico. However, since 2010, the number of illegals apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border has declined to fewer than 500,000 yearly.

From the 1980s to the mid-2000s, the U.S. Government reported annually apprehending between 1 million and 1.6 million foreigners who illegally entered the USA at its southwestern border. In 2000 alone, U.S. federal agents apprehended between 71,000 and 220,000 illegal migrants each month. By comparison, monthly border crossings by illegals during the first six months of 2018 ranged from 20,000 to 40,000 people. The number of people who have been either apprehended or turned away at the U.S.-Mexico border also has decreased over the past decade (2008-2018). Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/20/us/politics/fact-check-trump-border-crossings-declining-.html>

**Unemployment and poverty are major problems in Mexico.** In 2000, the national unemployment rate in Mexico was 2.2 percent; however, in 2009, the rate of unemployment increased by 34.43 percent and reached 5.37 percent in 2010. A large portion of the Mexican population are farmers, who live in rural areas where extreme temperatures and the poor quality of the land make it difficult to grow good crops. This situation is causing many Mexican families to struggle for their survival, with 47 percent of the population living below the poverty line. With these high unemployment and poverty rates, many people are motivated to migrate to the USA in search of better opportunities to support their families and achieve a reasonable standard of living.

In April 2017, the Pew Research Center estimated that the USA civilian workforce included eight million unauthorized immigrants in 2014, which accounted for five percent of those who were working or were unemployed and looking for work. The largest number of those unauthorized immigrants were from Mexico and from some of the Central American countries. Source: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/27/5-facts-about-illegal-immigration-in-the-u-s/>

However, in 2012, the net flow of migration from Mexico to the USA, both legal and illegal, actually decreased. From 2009 to 2014, Pew estimates that one million Mexicans and their families (including U.S.-born children) left the USA, while 870,000 Mexicans arrived.

The numbers are estimates, of course, because the flow of unauthorized migration across the U.S.-Mexico border is, by its nature, surreptitious. Pew uses a modeling tool that draws from various sources, including Mexico's national household survey, to make its best estimate.

See: <http://www.pewhispanic.org/2015/11/19/more-mexicans-leaving-than-coming-to-the-u-s/>

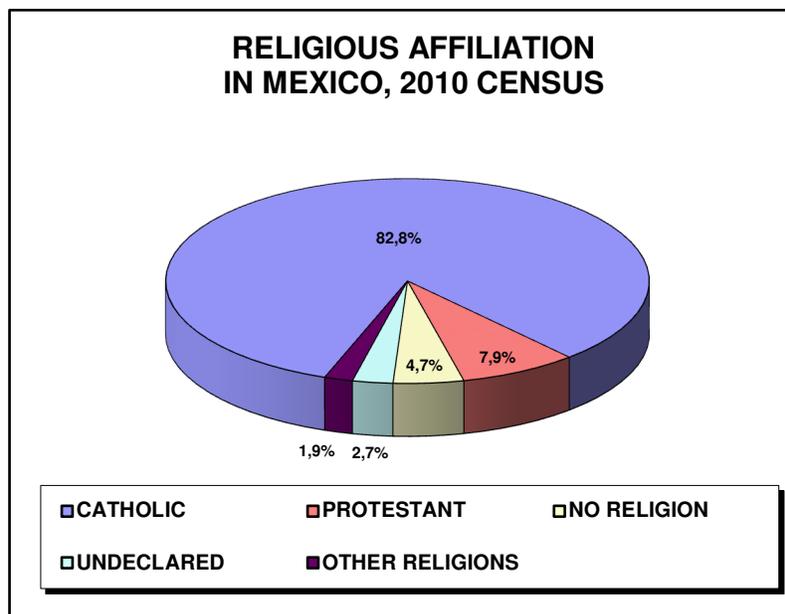
## Current Religious Situation

Although Mexico continues to be dominated by the Roman Catholic Church, those claiming affiliation with Roman Catholicism declined from 89.7 percent of the total population in the 1990 census to 88.0 percent in the 2000 census. Protestant adherents increased from 4.9 percent in 1990 to 5.2 percent in 2000; those affiliated with “other religions” increased from 1.4 percent in 1990 to 1.9 percent in 2000; and those with “no religious affiliation” (or providing “no answer”) increased from 3.9 percent in 1990 to 4.4 percent in 2000. Mexico has the second-largest Catholic population in the world, after Brazil.

In the 2010 census, approximately 84 percent of the population identified themselves as Roman Catholic. Approximately 7.5 percent self-identified as Protestant-Evangelical, 2.3 percent identified as members of “non-Evangelical Bible-based religions” (marginal Christian groups), less than one percent as affiliated with “other religions” (mainly non-Christian groups), and 6.1 percent of the population reported no religious affiliation or “no answer” (unspecified). These calculations were made by PROLADES based on our analysis of the 2010 census data, using our definition of the Protestant movement.

The National Institute of Statistics and Geography / Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI) reported that the number of Protestants/Evangelicals rose from 4.9 percent in 1990 to 5.2 percent in 2000, and reached 7.5 percent in 2010. However, INEGI listed “Seventh-day Adventists” under the category of “non-evangelical Bible-based” groups in the 2010 census, whereas PROLADES considers the Seventh-day Adventists and some of its related groups to be part of the Protestant movement. See *A Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas by Major Traditions and Family Types* (PROLADES 2018), available at: <http://www.prolades.com/clas-eng.pdf>.

Therefore, PROLADES estimated the total Protestant population in 2010 to be 7.9 percent based on our definition of the Protestant movement and of Marginal Christian groups. The 2010 INEGI census data tables on religious affiliation are available at: <http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/programas/ccpv/2010/default.html>



**As of March 2009, the Government's Office of Religious Associations (Subsecretariat of Population, Migration and Religious Affairs of the Secretariat of Government, known as SEGOB) reported a total of 7,073 officially registered religious associations (ARs) in Mexico.** A previous report, issued in June 2005, listed 6,373 ARs, which PROLADES classified as follows: Christian /Roman Catholic (2,962 or 46.5 percent), Christian/Orthodox (21), Christian/Protestant (3,298 or 51.8 percent), Christian/Other (65), and non-Christian (27).

The fact that the SEGOB report for 2009 contains 65 religious groups in the category of "Christian/Other" whereas the 2010 census database only lists three groups in the category of "non-evangelical Bible-based" groups (Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints-Mormons) this seems to indicate that the 2010 census seriously undercounted the adherents in the category "Christian/Other" and probably added those adherents to the category of "Other Evangelicals and Christians." This could change the results of the 2010 census by 0.5 percent as follows: Protestant/Evangelical 7.4 percent (down from 7.9 percent) and Marginal Christian 2.3 percent (up from 1.8 percent).

The major problem with the Mexican government's census data for 2010, and in previous censuses, is that its definitions of "Protestant" and "Evangelical" were based on sociological and not theological criteria, whereas the PROLADES definition is based on the latter. The SEGOB database and INEGI lists numerous religious groups as "Protestant/Evangelical" that should not be included in that category, such as The Light of the World Church (*La Luz del Mundo*), which PROLADES includes in the category of Marginal Christian groups.

Also, the category of "Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostals" of INEGI includes organizations that should not be included, such as: #1212 Plymouth Brethren (*Iglesia Evangélica de Hermanos*), #1215 Voice of the Cornerstone (*Voz de la Piedra Angular*), and #1220 Evangelical Free Churches (*Afiliación de Iglesias Evangélicas Libres*), among others. See the document *Clasificación de Religiones 2010* de INEGI at:

[http://internet.contenidos.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/Productos/prod\\_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/nueva\\_estruc/702825064983.pdf](http://internet.contenidos.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/Productos/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/productos/nueva_estruc/702825064983.pdf)

**The present Constitution provides for freedom of religion;** it states that everyone is free to profess their chosen religious belief and to practice the ceremonies and acts of worship of their respective belief. Congress may not enact laws that establish or prohibit any religion. The Constitution also provides for the separation of Church and State. *The 1992 Law of Religious Associations and Public Worship defines the administrative policies and remedies that protect the right to religious freedom.* In 1992, changes were made in Mexico's Constitution concerning religious associations to allow foreign missionaries to pastor and teach in local churches as well as in Bible institutes and seminaries. A provision was added to the Constitution in 2001 that established, for the first time, a constitutional prohibition against any form of discrimination, including discrimination against persons on the basis of religion.

There have been reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief or practice, usually in small, rural communities in the southern states. However, the incidents of persecution are not exclusively for religious reasons, but rather due to a combination of political, cultural and religious tensions, which limit the free practice of religion within some communities. This is especially true in southern Mexico within some of the Amerindian communities where Protestants (commonly known as Evangelicals) are occasionally persecuted by nominal Roman Catholics under the leadership of Amerindian village elders or caciques. Most incidents occurred in the states of Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca, and to a lesser extent in Mexico, Michoacán and Veracruz. Government officials, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and Evangelical and

Roman Catholic representatives agreed that these conflicts were often attributed to political, ethnic or land disputes, which were related to the traditional "practices and customs" of Amerindian communities.

## **Overview of social, religious and political development**

When the Spanish conquistadors arrived in Mexico in the early 1600s, they discovered some of the greatest cultures in the history of mankind, beginning with the Olmec civilization that began about 1,200 BCE and continuing through the Aztec empire that dominated the central region of the country with its elaborate ceremonial and political center (Tenochtitlan) built on a man-made island in Lake Texcoco in the Valley of Mexico. Approximately 9,000 years ago, ancient Amerindians domesticated corn and initiated an agricultural revolution, which led to the formation of many complex civilizations. Between 1800 and 300 BCE, many of these matured into advanced Mesoamerican civilizations that are credited with many innovations, including cosmology, astronomy, writing, mathematics, government, militaries, engineering and medicine. These civilizations were organized around cities and pyramid-temples.

While many city-states, kingdoms and empires competed for power and prestige in Pre-Colombian times, Mexico is said to have had five major civilizations: the Olmec, Teotihuacan, Toltec, Aztec and Maya. At their peak, an estimated 350,000 Aztecs presided over a wealthy tribute-empire comprising about 10 million people, almost half of Mexico's estimated population of 24 million in 1500. After 4,000 years, the existing civilizations were destroyed following the arrival of the Spaniards in 1519 at a site that became the modern city of Veracruz, located on the Gulf of Mexico.

Conquistador Hernán Cortéz and his small army of 508 Spaniards supported by thousands of Tlaxcalteca allies conquered the Aztecs in 1521 and established Spanish rule on the ruins of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, renamed Mexico City. In 1519, the Aztec capital was the largest city in the world with an estimated population of 350,000; by comparison, the population of London in 1519 was only 80,000 people. At the time of the Spanish arrival, there were an estimated 25 million Amerindians in the territory known today as the nation of Mexico.

During the Spanish colonial period (1521-1821), Mexico was colonized and governed under the **Viceroyalty of New Spain** (1535 to 1821), during which time the majority of its Amerindian population was decimated by warfare, famine and disease. Formal independence from Spain was recognized in 1821. The U.S.-Mexican War (1846-1848) ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ceded almost half of Mexico's national territory to the USA. French forces invaded Mexico in 1861 and ruled briefly until 1867. The Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917 resulted in the death of an estimated 10 percent of the nation's population.

Between 1521 and 1821, there was a strict Church-State relationship in Mexico with the Roman Catholic Church. However, it was easier to build a Catholic church on top of the ruins of an ancient Indian worship center than to impose a new culture, religion and government upon a civilization that predated Spanish rule by many centuries. The persistence of Amerindian cultures and belief systems is a vital force in modern Mexican society, as seen by the prevalence of animistic practices such as shamanism (intermediaries between the human and spirit worlds), magic and witchcraft (*brujería*), indigenous healers (*curanderos*), and "folk saints and healers" throughout Mexico.

The Catholic clergy attempted to bridge the gap between the Spanish and Amerindian cultures by establishing a chapel to Our Lady of Guadalupe at Tepeyac hill (now a suburb of

Mexico City) in 1555-1556, which later became the most sacred site for Catholics in Mexico. Future generations of clerics embellished the legend of Our Lady of Guadalupe, so that by 1648 Mexican peasants considered the shrine to have supernatural significance and to be a sign of divine approval for regarding themselves as the “new chosen people” (a cosmic race) that God had selected through the agency of the Virgin Mary, who, according to the legend, miraculously appeared to a group of shepherds at Tepeyac in 1531.

After Independence from Spain in 1821, the Roman Catholic Church began to lose its place of privilege in Mexican society, because citizens were no longer obligated to pay tithes or to work for the Church as serfs in a feudal society. However, the Catholic Church did maintain its monopoly on religion in Mexico as affirmed by the Constitution of 1824, which declared that religion “will perpetually be Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman.” Full diplomatic relations were maintained with the Vatican until broken in 1867, following the period of French intervention in Mexican politics.

From Independence to the Mexican Revolution (1821-1910), the Catholic Church sided with the more Conservative political parties, but certain elements with the Church identified with the revolutionary struggle of the peasants against the landed aristocracy, such as priest *Miguel Hidalgo* (1753-1811), called the father of Mexican independence, and other liberal-minded priests like *José María Morelos* (c. 1765–1815). For his efforts, Hidalgo was excommunicated, murdered and his head left to rot outside a village church. Morelos assumed leadership of the Mexican independence movement after Hidalgo's execution in 1811. The historic division between the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and the grassroots church, the “popular religion of the masses,” has continued to the present.

During the rest of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholic Church was heavily involved in politics on the side of the Conservatives who opposed the Liberal movement and Freemasonry that gained popularity among the wealthy elite. The Catholic hierarchy opposed the reform movement led by President *Benito Juárez* (lived 1806-1872) and welcomed the French occupation of Mexico in 1862 under Maximilian I of Hapsburg. But the French imperial venture did not survive the stiff resistance of Mexican nationalistic forces and U.S. political pressure. In 1867, Juárez returned to the presidency and counteracted the threat posed by the Catholic hierarchy after capturing and executing Maximilian.

The history of Freemasonry in Mexico can be traced to at least 1806 when the first Masonic lodge (“Arquitectura Moral”) was formally established in the nation. The first Grand Lodge of Mexico, Scottish Rite, was founded in 1813. Many presidents of Mexico were Freemasons. Freemasonry greatly influenced political actions in the early republic, as holders of conservative ideas gathered in lodges of the Scottish Rite, while reformers choose the York Rite. Hence *escoceses* became synonymous with Conservatives, and *yorkinos* with Liberals. General *Antonio López de Santa Anna* (1794-1876) was a Scottish Rite Mason.

**Editorial note:** see Appendice I for an historical overview of Freemasonry in Mexico.

In 1833, *Valentín Gómez Farías* (1781-1858) was elected vice-president in the administration of *Antonio López de Santa Anna*. When Santa Anna left the capital, Gómez Farías, in effective control of the government, immediately obtained legislation that reduced the number of generals, ended the special privileges of the military, and created a civilian militia. Although personally devout, he nonetheless favored a complete separation of Church and state but succeeded only in severing Church control of education, rescinding the compulsory payment of tithes, and permitting members of religious orders to retract their vows. He also reformed the customs houses and

eliminated the tobacco monopoly. The uproar from the offended interests brought Santa Anna back to the capital, and Gómez Farías was forced to flee to New Orleans in 1835.

*General Antonio López de Santa Anna* (1794-1876) was an enigmatic, patriotic and controversial figure who had great power in Mexico. During a turbulent 40-year career, he served as military general at crucial points and served 12 non-consecutive presidential terms over a period of 22 years (1833-1855). During periods of time when he was not serving as president, he continued to pursue his military career. A wealthy landowner, he built a firm political base in the major port city of Veracruz. He was perceived to be a hero by his troops; he sought glory for himself and his army, and an independent Mexico. He repeatedly rebuilt his reputation after major losses. His centralist rhetoric and military failures resulted in Mexico losing about half of its territory, beginning with the Texas Revolution of 1836, and culminating with the Mexican Cession of 1848 following its defeat by the U.S. military in the Mexican–American War.

**The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** brought an official end to the Mexican-American War (1846-1848); it was signed on 2 February 1848 at Guadalupe Hidalgo, a city north of the capital where the Mexican government had fled with the advance of U.S. forces. By its terms, Mexico ceded 55 percent of its territory – including parts of present-day Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Nevada and Utah – to the USA. Mexico relinquished all claims to Texas, and recognized the Rio Grande as the southern boundary with the United States.

In 1848, Santa Anna went into exile in Kingston, Jamaica. Two years later, he moved to Turbaco, Colombia. In April 1853, he was invited back to Mexico by Conservatives who had overthrown the weak Liberal government of *President José Mariano Arista* (1851 to 1853) as part of the *Plan de Hospicio* in 1852, which was drawn up by a group of merchants, landowners and clerics in Guadalajara. Santa Anna was elected president on 17 March 1853 and honored his promises to the Catholic Church by revoking certain decrees that had been promulgated 20 years earlier by Vice-President Valentín Gómez Farías in the reforms of 1833-1834. The Jesuits, who had been expelled from Spanish realms by King Carlos III in 1767, were allowed to return to Mexico in 1853 ostensibly to educate poorer classes, and much of their property, which the Spanish crown had confiscated and sold, was restored to them.

Previously, Pope Pius VII, a member of the Benedictine Order, had restored the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) internationally on 7 August 1814. Three members of the suppressed Society of Jesus who were in Mexico at the time of the Restoration formed a nucleus for its reestablishment there in 1816. In 1820, there were 32, of whom 15 were priests and three were scholastics, in care of four colleges and three seminaries. They were dispersed again in 1821. Although invited back in 1843, they could neither agree to the limitations put on their activities by General Santa Anna, nor was the prospect favorable in the revolutionary condition of the country. Four of their number returned in 1854, the mission prospered, and despite two additional dispersions, in 1859 and 1873, the Jesuits continued to increase in number and activity. In August, 1907, the Society of Jesus was reconstituted as a province. In 1912, it had 326 members with four colleges, 12 residences, six mission stations among the Tarahumara, and a novitiate (a place housing religious novices).

In 1855, *Ignacio Gregorio Comonfort de los Ríos* became President of Mexico (served 1855-1858), after the outbreak of the Revolution of Ayutla that overthrew Santa Anna. The **Plan of Ayutla** was the 1854 written plan aimed at removing conservative, centralist President Santa Anna from control of Mexico during the period of the Second Federal Republic of Mexico. Initially, it seemed little different than other political plans of the era, but it is considered to be the first act of the **Liberal Reform in Mexico**. It was the catalyst for revolts in many parts of Mexico,

which led to the resignation of Santa Anna from the presidency, never to seek that office again. The next presidents of Mexico were the Liberals Juan Álvarez, Ignacio Comonfort, and Benito Juárez. The new regime would then proclaim the 1857 Mexican Constitution, which implemented a variety of liberal reforms.

*La Reforma* (The Reform) was initiated following the ousting of President Santa Anna by a group of Liberals under the 1854 Plan de Ayutla. From the Liberals' narrow objective to remove a dictator and take power, they expanded their aims to a comprehensive program to remake Mexico governed by Liberal principles as embodied by a series of Reform laws and then the *Constitution of 1857*.

Juan Álvarez was appointed interim president (October-December 1855) by a council integrated with one representative of each state after the triumph of the **Revolution of Ayutla**. Ignacio Comonfort was appointed interim president by Juan Álvarez in 1855 when he resigned. He became the constitutional president on 1 December 1857

*Benito Pablo Juárez García* (lived 1806-1872) became a national hero and was president of Mexico (1857–1872), who for three years (1864–1867) fought against foreign occupation under French Emperor Maximilian I and who sought constitutional reforms to create a democratic federal republic. He originally studied for the priesthood, but in 1829 he entered the Oaxaca Institute of Arts and Sciences (1827; now Benito Juárez Autonomous University of Oaxaca) to study law and science. In 1831, he received a law degree and won his first public office, a seat on the municipal council. Politics soon became his life's work: he was a member of both the state and national legislatures, he became a judge in 1841, and he served as governor of his state, a post that brought him into national prominence.

During his early years in politics, Juárez began to formulate liberal solutions for his country's many problems. The road to economic health, he concluded, lay in substituting capitalism for the stifling economic monopoly held by the Catholic Church and the landed aristocracy. He also believed that political stability could be achieved only through the adoption of a constitutional form of government based on a federal system.

The Conservatives' return to power in the elections of 1853, however, doomed any reform in the near term in Mexico. Many prominent Liberals were exiled, including Juárez. From December 1853 until June 1855 he lived in New Orleans in semi-poverty, occupying himself by exchanging ideas with other Mexicans and laying plans to return home. The opportunity to put his ideas into action finally came in 1855, when the Liberals took control of the national government, and Juárez left the USA to join the new administration of President Juan Álvarez (4 October 1855 – 11 December 1855) as Minister of Justice and Public Instruction.

The Liberals carried out three major reforms, which were all supported by Juárez. As Minister of Justice, he was responsible for the law bearing his name that abolished special courts for the clergy and the military because he felt that juridical equality would help promote social equality. In June 1856, the government published the *Ley Lerdo* ("Lerdo Law," named for the Minister of Finance). Although it forced the Catholic Church to sell its property, it contained no threat of confiscation. By breaking up large landed estates, the government hoped that many Mexicans would be able to acquire property and thus create the middle class that it believed was essential for a strong and stable Mexico.

During the presidency of *Ignacio Gregorio Comonfort de los Ríos* (served 1855-1858), the Liberal Constitution of 1857 was approved that created the *Second Federal Republic of Mexico*. The new constitution restricted some of the Catholic Church's traditional privileges regarding land holdings, revenues and control over education. It granted religious freedom, and only stated that

the Catholic Church was the favored faith. The anti-clerical radicals scored a major victory with the ratification of the Constitution, because it weakened the Church and enfranchised all citizens.

The same year that Ignacio Comonfort (1855) was elected president, the new Congress chose Juárez to preside over the Supreme Court and therefore, according to the Constitution, also to serve as the effective vice-president of Mexico. The court position was critical in determining Juárez' future career, for when the Conservatives revolted and ousted Comonfort in January 1858, Juárez had a legal claim to the presidency. Lacking troops to control the area around Mexico City, however, Juárez retired to the eastern port city of Veracruz.

Juárez, as president of the Supreme Court, became interim president after the self-coup of Ignacio Comonfort against the Constitution of 1857. He was arrested and later freed by Comonfort. Juárez established a liberal constitutional government on 18 January 1858. The struggle between the Liberal and Conservative forces is known as the Reform War.

The **War of Reform** was the three-year civil war (1857-1860) between members of the Liberal Party who had taken power in 1855 under the Plan of Ayutla, and members of the Conservative Party who resisted the legitimacy of the Liberal government and its radical restructuring of Mexican laws, known as *La Reforma*. The War of the Reform is one of many episodes of the long struggle between Liberal and Conservative forces that dominated the country's history in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Liberals wanted to eliminate the political, economic and cultural power of the Catholic Church as well as undermine the role of the Mexican Army. Both the Catholic Church and the Army were protected by corporate or institutional privileges established in the colonial era. Liberals sought to create a modern nation-state founded on Liberal principles. The Conservatives wanted a centralist government, some even a monarchy, with the Church and military keeping their traditional roles and powers, and with landed and merchant elites maintaining their dominance over the majority mixed-race and indigenous populations of Mexico.

At Veracruz Juárez faced serious difficulties because he had to create a government and hold it together through quarrels, betrayals and defeat; enforce and implement the Constitution; maintain armies in the field, and defeat the Conservative forces. Because the Catholic clergy was supporting the Conservatives against the legal government, Juárez enacted several laws to curb ecclesiastical power. He nationalized all Church property, exempting only those buildings actually used for worship and instruction. To weaken clerical influence still further, he also nationalized the cemeteries and put birth registrations and marriages under the civil authority. Finally, the Juárez government separated Church and State and guaranteed religious liberty to all citizens.

**The French Intervention.** *Archduke Maximilian of Hapsburg* (lived 1832-1867) served in the Austrian navy, married Princess Charlotte of Belgium and seemed destined for a conventional career, but a conspiracy formed between Emperor Napoleon III of France and wealthy Mexican landowners determined to be rid of the country's republican government and its current president, Benito Juarez. The Mexican government owed huge amounts of money to France and other European countries, which it could not or would not repay, and Napoleon not only wanted the money but cherished grandiose imperial ambitions of his own.

In 1861, Napoleon organized an alliance of troops from Britain, Spain and France that landed at Veracruz in Mexico to demand payment of the government's debts, but when the British and the Spanish realized that the French intended to conquer Mexico they left. French reinforcements arrived and launched a civil war that may have resulted in the loss of some 50,000 lives. They drove Juárez and his supporters out of Mexico City in 1863 and further military victories followed.

Napoleon then selected Archduke Maximilian as a useful puppet to install on the Mexican throne. The archduke was uncertain at first, but his dynamic and ambitious wife urged him on, and he was told that the Mexican people had voted for him in a plebiscite (though the result was in fact extremely dubious). Maximilian and Charlotte, now to be called Carlota, sailed across the Atlantic, reached Veracruz late in May 1864, and went on to be welcomed in Mexico City. He was 31 at this point and she was 23.

The new emperor and his consort settled themselves and their court in Chapultepec Castle situated on a hill on the outskirts of Mexico City. It was built in the 1780s at the time of the Spanish Viceroyalty as summer house for the viceroy. It was given various uses: from a gunpowder warehouse to the military academy in 1841. It became the official residence of Emperor Maximilian I and Empress Carlota during the Second Mexican Empire (1864-1867). Architects were called in to rebuild the 18<sup>th</sup>-century residence, furniture and artworks were brought from Europe, and a grand avenue on the model of the Ringstrasse in Vienna was created to link the palace directly to the center of the city; it was named *Paseo de la Emperatriz* ("Promenade of the Empress"), which later was renamed *Paseo de la Reforma*.

Maximilian took a far more progressive line than his backers had expected, which gradually lost him their support. He regarded himself as the protector of the Mexican peasantry, abolished both serfdom and child labor, and antagonized the senior Roman Catholic clergy. Not only did he refuse to declare the Catholic Church the country's only permitted religion, but he declined to restore the massive Church estates that the Juárez regime had confiscated, or bring back the Catholic religious orders that had been expelled and allow all the schools to be run by the Church again.

The French Army continued to support Maximilian and by early 1865 it had taken control of much of the country. In April, however, the American Civil War finally came to an end and the U.S. government now insisted that the French occupation of Mexico was contrary to the Monroe Doctrine. The French had no realistic prospect of remaining in Mexico; and Napoleon, who now had problems of his own in Europe, agreed in 1866 to withdraw the French troops. Nevertheless, Maximilian fought on with his army of 8,000 Mexican loyalist troops. In May 1867, hopelessly outnumbered and besieged by Mexican Republican troops, Maximilian could hold out no longer. After sustaining a siege for several weeks in Santiago de Querétaro, the city fell to Mexican troops on 15 May 1867 and Maximilian was captured. On the morning of 19 June 1867, Maximilian (age 34), along with Generals Miguel Miramón and Tomas Mejía, were executed by a firing squad at Querétaro, located 213 km (132 mi) northwest of Mexico City.

In August 1867, shortly after his return to Mexico City, President Juárez issued a call for national elections and for a referendum on whether Congress should make five amendments to the Constitution. Public opinion did not object to the president's running for reelection, but the constitutional changes aroused immediate and violent reaction in many quarters, including some of those sympathetic to Juárez. His proposed changes were criticized because amendments enacted by Congress alone were unconstitutional, and the changes would strengthen the executive power. Juárez was reelected (1867-1871), but the controversy had created such a crisis of confidence that the administration did not bother to count the votes on the amendments.

Despite illness and personal loss—in October 1870 Juárez suffered a stroke, and three months later his wife died—he decided to run for the presidency again in 1871. After a bitter campaign he was reelected, but many of his countrymen refused to accept the result as final and took up arms against him. Juárez spent the last few months of his life trying to restore peace. He died of a heart

attack on 18 July 1872 and was buried in the Pantheon of San Fernando in Mexico City.

**Editorial note:** Benito Juárez served as interim president during the Reform War (1857-1861); his second term resulted from his being appointed constitutional president by Congress (1861-1865); his third term (1865-1867) was an extension of the second, a consequence of the French invasion; his fourth (1867-1871) and fifth terms (1871-1872) followed the triumph of the Republic. After his death in 1872, there were two interim presidents for the Liberal Party: Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada (1872-1876) and José María Iglesias (October-November 1876).

**Although Church-State tensions eased** considerably during the Conservative administration of *José de la Cruz Porfirio Díaz Mori* (lived 1830-1915) – a General and politician, who served seven terms as President of Mexico, a total of 31 years, from 1876 to 1880 and from 1884 to 1911) – they flared up again after the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917.

A veteran of the War of the Reform (1858–1860) and the French intervention in Mexico (1862–1867), Porfirio Díaz rose to the rank of General while leading Republican troops against the French-imposed rule of Emperor Maximilian I. Seizing power in a coup in 1876, Díaz and his allies, a group of technocrats known as "Científicos," ruled Mexico for the next 35 years, a period known as the *Porfiriato* (1876-1911)

In 1867, Porfirio Díaz ran against Juárez for the presidency but was heavily defeated. In 1868, he retired from the army to his native state of Oaxaca, where the grateful citizens had given him a large farm, La Noria. Hoping to increase his prestige by a short retirement, Díaz devoted himself to growing sugarcane. In 1871, he again opposed Juárez for the presidency in an election marked by much bitterness over Juárez's decision to seek a fourth term. After the election ended in a tie between Díaz, Juárez and *Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada*, the Mexican Congress made Juárez president and Lerdo became vice-president.

The disappointed Díaz retired to Oaxaca, where he staged a revolt and defined a program that promised effective suffrage and no reelection. Juárez acted quickly by sending troops to Oaxaca to crush the rebellion, which cost Felix Díaz, Porfirio's brother, his life. Porfirio fled to the coastal state of Nayarit, but Juárez's victory was soon followed by his death in 1872, which brought Lerdo to the presidency (1872-1876). Díaz accepted a general amnesty and opened a furniture factory in Veracruz, while he prepared for another try at the presidency. In 1876, after Lerdo announced plans to succeed himself, Díaz again revolted. Lerdo's regime, plagued by popular apathy and a querulous military, soon collapsed and Lerdo fled into exile. Díaz then ran unopposed and was elected to fill Lerdo's unexpired term.

**The Tuxtepec revolution of 1876** was an armed movement based on the Tuxtepec Plan, which began when the constitutional president Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada announced his candidacy for re-election, which was allowed by the constitution of 1857. In January 1876, General Porfirio Díaz – who had already led a failed armed movement against the re-election of Benito Juárez – took up arms again and was supported by a large number of soldiers who had greater sympathy for the hero of the war against the second French intervention in Mexico than to President Lerdo who was the son of Spaniards, so a large part of the army and population supported Díaz. In this plan Díaz promised to respect the constitution of 1857 and offered the guarantee of municipal autonomy, under the principle that "No Mexican will perpetuate himself in power and this will be the last revolution," as well as under the slogan "Effective suffrage; No reelection." His armed movement against the Lerdo de Tejada military forces triumphed so that the Tuxtepec revolution is considered one of the antecedents of the Porfirio Diaz era, because it allowed Porfirio

Díaz to obtain his first presidential term. Paradoxically, this motto was the one that 35 years later Francisco I. Madero raised to force Díaz to abandon the presidency.

Díaz's 35-year rule (1876-1911) was a period of relative peace and economic growth. During his first term, Díaz began to reestablish the federal government's power over the diverse Mexican states. He enlarged and gave great power to a constabulary, called the Rurales. They destroyed many of the bandit gangs that had proliferated during the civil wars and later crushed all political opposition to Díaz's rule. He also formed a compromise with the Catholic Church, by which the federal government would not harass the Church if the latter would not interfere in Mexican politics.

In 1880, Díaz left the presidency to General Manuel González, a longtime supporter and friend. Díaz became governor of Oaxaca and watched while González ran the country into bankruptcy. Friends of the government made huge fortunes in public-land speculation, and foreign companies bought up huge tracts of Mexican land. The government reversed the old Spanish mining laws and allowed foreigners to purchase subsoil rights, or ownership of all oils and metals contained in the ground. The mining industry entered a boom period in which Mexico produced more gold and silver in 20 years than it had in the previous four centuries. Díaz, a widower, meanwhile had contracted his second marriage, to Carmen Romero Rubio, the daughter of a rich supporter of Lerdo. This marriage, sometimes called the "aristocratization of Porfirio Díaz," marked the rough mestizo general's entrance into the best Creole society. Carmen, a devout Catholic, not only made Díaz socially respectable but also helped form a tacit alliance between the government and the Mexican Catholic Church.

In 1884, Díaz abandoned his "no reelection" policy and again assumed the Mexican presidency. Continually reelected until his violent overthrow, Díaz was then free to pursue further the policies begun in 1876. Political peace was maintained through the Rurales and the policy known as "bread or club." Outstanding opponents were given government jobs or rich concessions; those who refused such bribes faced death, exile or prison. Political power lay with Díaz, his old military cronies, and a small group of wealthy Creoles, known as the *Científicos*.

The *Científicos* (Tecnocrats), most prominent in the 1890s, cleverly adopted the positivism of the French philosopher Auguste Comte as a justification for their increasing monopoly over the nation's wealth. Defining their program as one of "freedom, order, and progress," they tried to establish a religion of science based on the cold indexes of Mexico's expanding economy. *The Científicos saw Mexico's future best served by massive white European immigration*, which would relegate other groups to a permanently inferior role. The army launched campaigns against the Yaquí tribes in the north and the Mayans in the south, while the government press defined the Indigenous people as a "national burden."

In 1893, the prominent *Científico* José Ives Limantour became Minister of Finance, and Mexico became one of Latin America's most prosperous nations. By cutting the military budget, the astute banker gave Mexico its first budgetary surplus in years; railroad trackage increased to 16,000 miles as foreign trade quadrupled over the 1870 level. The new transportation system allowed domestic industries such as beer, pulque and textile mills to develop along railroad lines. In 1903, Mexico built its first steel mill in the northern city of Monterrey. By 1910, Mexico was producing about 800 million barrels of oil a year. Limantour also abolished the sales tax and put Mexico's currency on the gold standard.

For most of rural Mexico, the *Porfiriato* vaunted "order and progress" had meant economic and social disaster. In 1910, most rural workers earned about the same wage that they had earned in 1810 while, at the same time, the cost of living had increased alarmingly. A rising population

and a decreasing productivity of land resulted in many Mexican peasants' existing beneath the subsistence level, while the fortunes of the Porfirian aristocracy grew yearly. Only a few peasants were able to find jobs on the railroads or in the growing industries, and many migrated to the USA to seek employment. Despite many promises to improve rural education, illiteracy stood at about 87 percent.

*The underdevelopment of rural Mexico was heightened by the government's actions.* Laws requiring clear land title, surveying, and the dissolution of communal holdings led to the creation of huge estates at the expense of smallholders. The government sold off public lands to foreigners and cronies at bargain prices. Only the large estates could get improvement loans from the banking system. The government's policy of creating large efficient estates to produce export crops caused growing concern among those who held small ranches and farms. Later, those rural middle classes were to compose the backbone of the revolutionary forces. Between 84 and 95 percent of rural families had no land at all, whereas wealthy families often had estates that contained millions of acres. The Terrazas family had 13.5 million acres in Chihuahua, while in the state of Hidalgo the Central Railroad passed through the Escandón estates for a distance of about 90 miles.

In 1910, the Porfirian elite prepared to celebrate a century of Mexican independence. Confident after 34 years of peaceful rule, they were unaware that their carefully contrived system stood on the verge of collapse. The young were impatient with foreign economic control, the destruction of the indigenous peoples, and the hoarding of political power by the Porfirian elite. The ranchers of the north and the communities of the south, still independent and armed, feared that they would become rapidly submerged into large haciendas, and labor in mining and textiles was becoming restive.

In 1907, President Díaz made a critical political error. The aging president told James Creelman, a North American journalist, that Mexico was ready for democracy and that he was about to retire. The interview, published in English and intended for foreign consumption, soon reached Mexico. Opposition parties began to form throughout the nation as both the ambitious and the sincerely critical sought to find a form of government better able to reconcile development and social justice. After some confusion most opposition coalesced around Francisco Madero, the wealthy scion of a prominent Mexican family from the northern state of Coahuila.

Díaz tried to correct his error but it was too late. In 1910, he reelected himself and jailed Madero. The latter, now a national hero, escaped and called for revolution against Díaz and his forces. As the country rose up against him, Díaz' weak army collapsed. Díaz, deserted by many of his followers and without effective armed forces, resigned as president on 25 May 1911. He fled to France, where he died in relative poverty in July 1915.

The above section was adapted from: <https://biography.yourdictionary.com/jose-de-la-cruz-porfirio-diaz>

**The Mexican Revolution**, which began in 1910, ended the Díaz dictatorship in Mexico and established a constitutional republic. The revolution began against a background of widespread dissatisfaction with the elitist and oligarchical policies of Porfirio Díaz that favored wealthy landowners and industrialists. A number of opposition groups, led by revolutionaries including Francisco Madero, Pascual Orozco, Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, participated in the long, bloody and costly conflict. Although a constitution drafted in 1917 formalized many of the reforms sought by rebel groups, periodic violence continued into the 1930s.

*Francisco Ignacio Madero González* (1873-1913) was a Mexican revolutionary, writer and statesman who served as president of Mexico from November 1911 until shortly before his assassination in February 1913. He was an advocate for social justice and democracy.

Following the resignation of Díaz from the presidency on 25 May 1911 after the signing of the Treaty of Ciudad Juárez, Madero became the most popular political leader in the country. Known as "Maderistas," Madero's followers referred to him as the "caudillo de la Revolución" (strong leader of the Revolution). He was elected president on 15 October 1911 by almost 90 percent of the vote. Sworn into office on 6 November 1911, he became one of Mexico's youngest elected presidents at age 38. Despite his considerable popularity among the people, Madero's administration soon encountered opposition both from more radical revolutionaries and from remnants of the former Conservative regime.

In February 1913, a military coup took place in the Mexican capital led by *General Victoriano Huerta*, the military commander of the city, and supported by the U.S. ambassador. Madero was arrested and a short time later was assassinated along with his Vice-President, José María Pino Suárez, on 22 February 1913, following the series of events known as the "Ten Tragic Days" (*La Decena Trágica*). The death of Madero and Pino Suárez led to a national and international outcry that eventually paved the way for the fall of the Huerta dictatorship (February 1913-July 1914), the triumph of the Mexican Revolution and the establishment of the 1917 Constitution of Mexico under *Maderista* President Venustiano Carranza (served May 1917-May 1920).

*Venustiano Carranza Garza* (1859-1920) was one of the main leaders of the Mexican Revolution, whose victorious northern revolutionary Constitutionalist Army defeated the counter-revolutionary regime of Victoriano Huerta and then defeated fellow revolutionaries after Huerta's ouster. During Carranza's administration, the current constitution of Mexico was drafted and adopted. However, Carranza did not implement its most radical elements, such as empowerment of labor, use of the state to expropriate foreign enterprises, land reform in Mexico, or suppression of the Catholic Church in Mexico.

Nevertheless, the Constitution of 1917 established a clear separation between Church and State, guaranteed that public education would be secular and humanistic, and prohibited the clergy from participating in the nation's political life and from owning property. *This meant that all Church property became the patrimony of the State.*

*Adolfo de la Huerta* (1881-1955), while Governor of the northern state of Sonora, led the Revolution of Agua Prieta in 1920, which put an end to the presidency of Venustiano Carranza who was killed during the revolt. It was then that de la Huerta was appointed interim President by Congress (June-November 1920). Pancho Villa and his northern peasant army surrendered during de la Huerta's presidency. When Álvaro Obregón was declared the victor of the 1920 presidential election, De la Huerta stepped down and became the Secretary of Finance and Public Credit, and in that role, negotiated the De la Huerta–Lamont Treaty.

*Álvaro Obregón Salido* (1880-1928) was a General in the Mexican Revolution, who served as President of Mexico from 1920 to 1924. He supported the State of Sonora's decision to follow Governor of Coahuila Venustiano Carranza as leader of a revolution against the Huerta regime. Carranza appointed Obregón commander of the revolutionary forces in northwestern Mexico and in 1915 appointed him as his Minister of War. In 1920, Obregón launched a revolt against Carranza, in which Carranza was assassinated; he won the subsequent presidential election with overwhelming support.

**Obregón's presidency was the first stable presidency since the Revolution began in 1910.** He oversaw massive educational reform (with Mexican muralism flourishing), moderate land reform, and labor laws sponsored by the increasingly powerful Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers. In August 1923, he signed the Bucareli Treaty that clarified the rights of the Mexican

government and U.S. oil interests, and brought U.S. diplomatic recognition to his government. In 1923–1924, Obregón's finance minister, Adolfo de la Huerta, launched a rebellion in part protesting the Bucareli Treaty; Obregón returned to the battlefield to crush the rebellion. In his victory, he was aided by the U.S. Government with military weapons and 17 U.S. planes that bombed De la Huerta's supporters.

In 1924, Obregón's fellow northern revolutionary general and hand-picked successor *Plutarco Elías Calles* was elected president (1924-1928). Although Obregón ostensibly retired to Sonora, he remained influential under Calles. Having pushed through a constitutional reform to once again make reelection possible, Obregón won the 1928 election, but was assassinated by José de León Toral, a Mexican offended by the government's anti-religious laws, before he could begin his second term. Toral's subsequent trial ultimately led to his execution by firing squad, and it also involved a Capuchin nun named María Concepción Acevedo de la Llata, "Madre Conchita," who was thought to be the mastermind behind Obregón's murder.

**The Cristero War** (1926-1929) was an attempt by Conservative Catholic forces to invalidate certain anti-religious laws included in the Constitution of 1917, which were opposed by the Catholic bishops and their political allies. When Conservative attempts to amend the Constitution failed, Catholics in the states of Jalisco, Guerrero, Michoacán, Colima, Guanajuato, Querétaro, Puebla and Veracruz resorted to armed violence against the government of *President Plutarco Elías Calles* (1924-1928). The conflict claimed the lives of an estimated 90,000 people: 56,882 on the federal side, 30,000 Cristeros, and numerous civilians and Cristeros who were killed in anti-clerical raids after the war's end.

The war ended in June 1929 when *President Emilio Portes Gil* (1928-1930) – one of three to serve out the six-year term of president-elect General Álvaro Obregón, who was assassinated in 1928 – promised to end religious persecution and to respect the liberty of conscience, which allowed the Catholic clergy to save face and resume their religious obligations in Catholic churches throughout the country.

**The Institutional Revolutionary Party** (*PRI - Partido Revolucionario Institucional*) dominated the country's political institutions from its founding in 1929 until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Virtually all of the important figures in Mexican national and local politics belonged to the PRI, because the nomination of its candidate to a public office was almost always tantamount to election. Originally called the **National Revolutionary Party** (*PRN - Partido Revolucionario Nacional*), the party was renamed the Mexican Revolutionary Party (*PRM - Partido de la Revolución Mexicana*) in 1938 and took its current name, PRI, in 1946.

**Cárdenas del Río** (1895-1970), who served as President of Mexico from 1934 to 1940, was noted for his efforts to carry out the social and economic aims of the Mexican Revolution. He distributed land, made loans available to peasants, organized workers' and peasants' confederations, and expropriated and nationalized foreign-owned industries. As president, Cárdenas carried out a wide range of reforms. Under the agrarian reform program, he distributed nearly twice as much land to peasants as had all of his predecessors combined, so that by the end of his administration about half of the country's cultivated land was held by previously landless farmers under the *ejido* system.

During the Spanish colonial era and throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, landlessness was a serious issue in Mexico. It was one of the core problems that contributed to the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution, notably in the State of Morelos in South-Central Mexico where Emiliano Zapata

(1879-1919) led revolutionary peasants who sought the return of their lands that had been taken away with the expansion of haciendas in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century under President Porfirio Díaz. “Land and liberty” (*tierra y libertad*) was a slogan used by the Revolutionary movement. However, the redistribution of large areas of land did not begin until Lázaro Cárdenas became president in 1934. The *ejido* system was introduced as an important component of the President’s agrarian land reform program. An *ejido* is an area of communal land used for agriculture, on which community members individually farm designated parcels and collectively maintain communal holdings. *Ejidors* are registered with Mexico's National Agrarian Registry (*Registro Agrario Nacional*). The system of *ejidos* was based on an understanding of the Aztec *calpulli* and the medieval Spanish *ejido*. *Ejidatarios* do not actually own the land but are allowed to use their allotted parcels indefinitely as long as they do not fail to work the land for more than two years. Also, they can pass their rights on to their children.

President Cárdenas also extended the services of government banks so that the peasants who had received land under the reform could borrow money. In an effort to provide a political base for the land-redistribution program, he organized all of its beneficiaries in a new National Peasant Confederation (*Confederación Nacional Campesina* - CNC). This was but one more step in strengthening the general political structure of his new regime. Another major step in this direction was taken early in 1936 when most of the country’s dispersed central labor groups were organized into the *Confederación de Trabajadores de México*, which, for the next generation, continued to represent at least half of the country’s organized workers.

The Cárdenas administration also was well-known outside of Mexico for its efforts to expropriate foreign-owned industries. In 1937, the government expropriated the nation’s principal railways, and in March 1938 President Cárdenas signed a decree nationalizing the country’s oil industry. After short-lived experiments of putting both of these industries under the control of their workers’ unions, they were placed under autonomous public corporations, which were to function more or less like any other large private industry.

A decade after the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917), the **National Revolutionary Party** (*PRN - Partido Revolucionario Nacional*), later renamed the **Institutional Revolutionary Party** (*PRI - Partido Revolucionario Institucional*), came to power in 1929. A corporatist party machine, the leftist PRI controlled national politics from 1929 until 2001. It was not until the 1980s that the PRI lost a senate seat (1988) or a gubernatorial race (1989), events that marked the beginning of the party's loss of hegemony. Through the electoral reforms started by *President Carlos Salinas de Gortari* (1988-1994) and consolidated by *President Ernesto Zedillo* (1994-2000), by the mid-1990s the PRI had lost its majority in Congress.

**In 2000, after 70 years, the PRI lost the presidential election to an opposition candidate, Vicente Fox Quesada** (2000-2006), who won under the banner of the National Action Party (*PAN Partido de Acción Nacional*), the most conservative of the nation’s three major political parties. PAN has close ties to the Roman Catholic Church. However, the continued non-PAN majority in Congress prevented him from implementing most of his proposed reforms during his six-year term in office. In 2006, PAN candidate *Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa*, a self-described devout Roman Catholic, won the presidency for next term (2006-2012) after defeating his close-rival *Andrés Manuel López Obrador* of the Party of the Democratic Revolution (*PRD - Partido de la Revolución Democrática*), a center-left coalition of socialists and liberal parties that was founded in 1989.

The PRI regained the presidency with the election of *Enrique Peña Nieto* (2012–2018). During President Peña Nieto’s first four years, he led an expansive breakup of monopolies, liberalized Mexico's energy sector, reformed public education, and modernized the country's financial regulations. However, political gridlock and allegations of media bias occurred during a period of worsened corruption and increased crime and drug-trafficking in Mexico. He instated the multi-lateral “Pact for Mexico,” which soothed inter-party fighting and led to increased legislation across the political spectrum. The global decline in oil prices and the economic slowdown during the 2010s caused his economic reforms to be only moderately successful, which lowered his political support for the remainder of his term.

*Andrés Manuel López Obrador* (known popularly as AMLO) was a candidate in the 2006 and 2012 presidential elections representing a coalition of the PRD, Labor Party, and Citizens' Movement, but lost both races. He left the PRD in 2012 and in 2014 founded the National Regeneration Movement (*Movimiento Regeneración Nacional*, MORENA), which he led until 2017.

López Obrador was a candidate for the third time in the 2018 presidential election, representing *Juntos Haremos Historia* (“Together We Will Make History”), a coalition of the left-wing Labor Party (PT), the right-wing-Christian-conservative Social Encounter Party (*Partido Encuentro Social* - PES), and MORENA. This time, he won in a landslide victory with 53 percent of the vote to become the nation’s 58<sup>th</sup> president (since 1 December 2018). His policy proposals included increases in financial aid for students and the elderly, amnesty for some drug war criminals, universal access to public colleges, cancellation of the Mexico City New International Airport project, a referendum on energy reforms that ended Pemex's monopoly in the oil industry, stimulus for the country's agricultural sector, delay of the renegotiation of NAFTA until after the elections, the construction of more oil refineries, increased social spending, slashing politicians' salaries and perks, and the decentralization of the executive cabinet by moving government departments and agencies from the capital to the states.

## The Roman Catholic Church

The military conquest of Mexico by Spanish forces was generally perceived as the triumph of Catholicism over the various Amerindian deities, and particularly as the disintegration of the Aztec worldview that required continuous human blood sacrifice to sustain the universe. The defeat of Amerindian religious leaders and the destruction of their sacred temples and images by Cortés' army were seen as a spiritual conquest over a fundamentally-flawed brand of religion by agents of a superior religion. However, most of the Spanish friars were more ambivalent about associating their own missionary enterprise with military conquests.

**The evangelization of the Amerindian tribes of Mexico by Roman Catholic missionaries** began with the arrival of the Franciscans (1524), Dominicans (1526) and the Augustinians (1533). Between 1594 and 1722, the Jesuits worked among the Amerindians in northern Mexico, establishing mission centers in the Valley of Guadiana (Durango), Sinaloa, Sonora, Chihuahua, Baja California and Nayarit. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Franciscans organized a vast mission empire that included 11 districts: from Sierra Gorda and Tampico in the northeast to Sonora, Arizona, New Mexico and Alta California in the northwest. The Dominicans established two important mission centers in Sierra Gorda (1686) and Baja California (1772).

Among the male religious orders established in Mexico during the Spanish colonial period were the Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, Carmelites, Brothers of St. James (Dieguinos), Jesuits, Mercedarians, Bethlehemites, Benedictines, Oratorians, and Brothers of St. John of God; and the female religious orders were the Poor Clares, Capuchines, Carmelites, Conceptionists, Cistercians, Augustinians and Dominicans.

The first Catholic bishopric established in Mexico was the See of Yucatán, under the patronage of *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios*. In 1526, Pope Clement VII named *Fray Julian de Garces* as the first Bishop of New Spain. In 1545, at the solicitation of Spanish King Charles V, Pope Paul III separated the dioceses of New Spain from the metropolitan See of Seville and established the Archdiocese of Mexico.

**During the Spanish colonial period (1520-1821), Catholic missionaries systematically established churches in nearly every village of Mexico prior to Independence from Spain.**

The Catholic clergy attempted to bridge the gap between the Spanish and Indian cultures by establishing a chapel to *Our Lady of Guadalupe at Tepeyac* in 1555-1556, which later became the most sacred site for Catholics in Mexico. Future generations of clerics embellished the legend of Our Lady of Guadalupe, so that by 1648 Mexican peasants considered the shrine to have supernatural significance and to be a sign of divine approval for regarding themselves as the “new chosen people” that God had selected through the agency of the Virgin Mary, who, according to the legend, miraculously appeared at Tepeyac in 1531.

**Today, the Virgin of Guadalupe is a symbol of Mexican national identity.** Few nations in the Americas are as Catholic as Mexico, where the Catholic religion stands at the center of Mexican society and is the heart of its culture, which is highly syncretistic: a mixture of Roman Catholicism and native Amerindian beliefs and practices (animism).

**Some of the most famous Catholic clerics in Mexico were:** the Dominican friar *Bartolomé de las Casas* (1485-1566) who defended the rights of the Indians in Chiapas during the 1500s; *Dominican friar Pedro de la Peña* (d. 1583) who was the first professor of theology at the

University of Mexico, founded in 1553, and who later became the Bishop of Quito, Ecuador; *Franciscan friar Junípero Serra* (1713-1784) who established a chain of missions to evangelize and domesticate the Indians in Alta California during the 1700s. *Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla* (1753-1811), a parish priest in the town of Dolores (Guanajuato), raised the standard of revolt against Spain on 16 September 1810 by ringing the church bell. He marched against the capital with an ill-assorted, badly armed company of Indians but he was defeated, captured and executed on 30 July 1811. *Father José María Morelos*, (1785-1825), a parish priest of Carácuaro (Michoacán), led the liberation of much of southern Mexico from Spanish control, drafted a constitution calling for fair land distribution and racial equality; he was captured and executed by Spanish forces in 1815. *Bishop Samuel Ruíz García* (1924-2011) of the Diocese of San Bartolomé de las Casas in Chiapas worked for four decades (1959-2000) to defend the human rights of the poor and the Amerindian population, and played a fundamental role in peace negotiations between the Mexican government and the Zapatista National Liberation Army during the 1990s; he retired in 2000 at age 75.

Although the *Mexican Episcopal Conference* of the Catholic Church prohibits its clergy from joining political parties or becoming political leaders, it also states that priests have a responsibility to denounce actions that violate Christian morality. In 1992, under the administration of *President Carlos Salinas* (PRI), constitutional reforms were approved that officially recognized churches of all religious groups, restored land ownership rights to the Catholic Church, allowed for the wearing of Catholic vestments and robes in public, authorized the teaching of religion in private schools, and gradually restored diplomatic relations between the Vatican and the Mexican government.

Nevertheless, tensions between the Church and the State continued, especially in southern Mexico. Local government officials, PRI party leaders and large landowners accused *Bishop Samuel Ruíz* of the city of San Cristóbal de las Casas of supporting the Zapatista rebellion that began in Chiapas in 1994, which Bishop Ruiz strongly denied. In addition, Vatican officials accused Bishop Ruíz of “theological and pastoral distortions” due to his support for an “Indian Theology,” which they associated with the Marxist-inspired Theology of Liberation. Nevertheless, the Zapatista rebels insisted that Bishop Ruíz continue to serve as a mediator in their negotiations with the federal government.

**Roman Catholicism in Mexico is extremely varied in practice.** It ranges from those who support traditional folk religious practices (known as “popular Catholicism”), especially in isolated rural communities (such as those in Chiapas), to those who are advocates of the Theology of Liberation, and from those who are active in Catholic Charismatic prayer groups to others who participate in the conservative Opus Dei movement. There are a variety of layman’s groups with different goals, purposes and political orientations in contemporary Mexico. The largest and best known include the following: Mexican Catholic Action, Knights of Columbus, Cursillo Movement, Christian Family Movement, as well as a variety of university student and workers’ organizations.

**Throughout Mexico today there are many Catholic shrines and sacred places** – such as caves, grottos, lakes, rivers, lagoons, crossroads, hills and mountains – that were sacred for the Amerindians who inhabited the region prior to Spanish colonization. Many of these places were later clothed with Catholic symbols and renamed in honor of the Virgin Mary, the Christ Child, or a Catholic saint.

Special celebrations are held annually in honor of the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ and Christian saints at many places in Mexico. Three of the most important shrines are those dedicated to “La Virgen de Juquila” in the State of Oaxaca, to “Nuestro Señor Jesucristo y San Miguel de las Cuevas de Chalma” in the State of Mexico, and to “La Virgen de Guadalupe” in the Federal District. In addition, there are a variety of “folk saints” in Mexico that have not been canonized by the Catholic Church but that are treated as sacred by many believers.

**The Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR)** movement has been a source of spiritual revitalization for many Catholics. The “Centro de Renovación del Altillo,” located at the monastery of San José del Altillo in the Coyoacán district of southern Mexico City, led by *Friar Alfonso Navarro Castellanos* of the Congregation of Missionaries of the Holy Spirit (*Congregación de Misioneros del Espíritu Santo*, MSpSC), became the major center of the CCR movement in Mexico. Friar Navarro was born in Guadalajara, Mexico, in October 1935. He joined the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit and was ordained to the priesthood in 1962. He earned a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Fribourg in Switzerland and an advanced degree in theology in Rome. As a young priest, he was present during the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Following his time in Europe, he taught philosophy and theology at various seminaries in Mexico and Peru. Beginning in 1971, he was assigned the post of *Secretary of the General Commission for Pastoral Work* for his religious order. He also began his role as leader of the CCR in Mexico during that year.

Beginning in the 1980s, Navarro conducted seminars on missionary and pastoral work, called **SINE (Systematic Integral New Evangelization)**, for many parishes and dioceses in the USA, Latin America and Europe. SINE has had a tremendous impact upon many lives, families and parishes by helping Catholics realize that evangelization is the essential mission of the Church and of their everyday lives. Friar Navarro, a pioneer in Catholic evangelization and the CRM, died of a heart attack at age 67 in June 2003.

**The following “Apostolic Movements” within the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico operate with legal recognition:** Mexican Catholic Action / *Acción Católica Mexicana*; Mexican Evening Worship / *Adoración Nocturna Mexicana*; Apostolate of Prayer / *Apostolado de la Oración*; Apostolate of Mary in the Domestic Church / *Apostolado de María en la Iglesia Doméstica*; Family Catechesis / *Catequesis Familiar*; Serra Club / Club Serra; Bethany Community / *Comunidad Betania*; Short Courses of Christianity / *Cursillos de Cristiandad*; School of the Cross / *Escuela de la Cruz*; Legion of Mary / *Legión de María*; and Christian Family Movement / *Movimiento Familiar Cristiano*.

**Nominal Roman Catholics.** Within most dominant religions there is some distance between nominal and practicing believers, which is the case of Roman Catholics in Mexico. Historically, the majority of Mexicans were baptized, confirmed and married in the Catholic Church but the majority of weekly Mass attendees are women. As in many countries, fewer Catholics are choosing to marry either civilly or in the Church. The number of marriages celebrated in the Church in Mexico is down 31 percent since 1980—even as the population has grown.

**On the high end of the Mass attendance spectrum in Latin America is Mexico**, where the World Values Survey for 1981-1983 in 22 countries of the world reported that the frequency of weekly church attendance of Catholic adherents in Mexico was 53.8 percent, second only to Ireland with 81.9 percent. The latest World Values Survey in 2000 reported that the frequency of

weekly church attendance of Mexican Catholics was 55.9 percent, which revealed a small increase of 2.1 percent between 1981 and 2000. The other two Latin American countries included in the 2000 survey were **Brazil**, with the frequency of weekly church attendance of Catholic adherents at 23.1 percent, compared to **Argentina** with 24.6 percent.

Source: [http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci\\_arttext&pid=S0102-69922008000200007&lng=en&nrm=iso&tlng=es](http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0102-69922008000200007&lng=en&nrm=iso&tlng=es)

According to the *Nineteen Sixty-four website*, a research blog for the **Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA)** at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, the percentage of Mexican Catholics saying that they attend Mass every week has declined in surveys from an average of 58 percent in the 1980s to only 44 percent in the 2010s. However, a declining percentage does not mean that there are fewer weekly attenders in the pews. With population growth the number of weekly Mass attenders has grown from 36.7 million in 1980 to 42.7 million in 2013 (16 percent growth). Given the number of parishes in Mexico in 2013 and the self-reported Mass attendance of survey respondents, CARA estimated that there were 6,064 weekly attenders per parish.

Since 1980, Vatican statistics indicate that Mexican dioceses have added a net total of 3,072 parishes (77 percent growth). This additional infrastructure has made it possible to decrease the number of Catholics per parish slightly, even with population growth, from 15,932 in 1980 to 13,782 in 2013. These numbers are based on the size of the Catholic population as seen in national surveys rather than the Church's own population estimates, which have been somewhat unreliable in Mexico.

#### Mexico: Catholics, Population, and Parishes

	1980	1990	2000	2013
<b>Parishes</b>	3,972	4,905	5,784	7,044
<b>Catholic population (survey-based)</b>	63,280,000	68,058,000	79,556,000	97,083,000
<b>Catholics per parish</b>	15,932	13,875	13,755	13,782

It has been very uncommon for a parish to be entrusted to a non-priest in Mexico (i.e., Canon 517.2). Eighty-eight percent of parishes in 2013 were administered by a resident diocesan priest. More than 7 percent were administered by a resident religious priest, and 4 percent by a non-resident priest. Less than 1 percent were entrusted to any other type of person or are vacant.

#### Mexico: Parish Administration

	1980	1990	2000	2013
<b>Resident Diocesan priest</b>	3,510	4,336	5,180	6,227
<b>Resident Religious priest</b>	404	466	541	528
<b>Administered by non-resident priest</b>	32	81	52	285
<b>Administered by a deacon</b>	1	1	0	0
<b>Administered by a religious brother</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Administered by a religious sister</b>	11	16	9	3
<b>Administered by lay people</b>	0	1	0	0
<b>Vacant parishes</b>	13	4	2	1
<b>Parishes without a resident priest pastor</b>	0.7%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%

Mexico has experienced growing numbers of clergy and vowed religious since 1980. The number of deacons has increased from 34 to 894. The number of diocesan priests has increased by 82 percent from 7,030 in 1980 to 12,765 in 2013. The numbers of religious priests, brothers, and religious sisters have also all increased. In total, the workforce of the Catholic Church in terms of its clergy and vowed religious in Mexico has grown by 28 percent since 1980 and numbered 47,274 in 2013. This growth rate still lags behind the growth for the Catholic population, which was 63 percent during this same period. *However, Mexico is one of the few countries in the world where the workforce of the Church has consistently grown across all types of clergy and vowed religious.*

**Mexico: Workforce of the Church**

	1980	1990	2000	2013
<b>Bishops</b>	105	109	127	168
<b>Diocesan priests</b>	7,030	8,288	10,421	12,765
<b>Religious priests</b>	3,057	3,244	3,628	3,923
<b>Deacons</b>	34	194	662	894
<b>Religious brothers</b>	1,127	1,364	1,270	1,671
<b>Religious sisters</b>	25,598	25,783	29,050	27,853
<b>Workforce of the Church (total)</b>	<b>36,951</b>	<b>38,982</b>	<b>45,158</b>	<b>47,274</b>

Source: <http://nineteensixty-four.blogspot.com/2016/02/key-catholic-trends-in-mexico.html>

**Although Roman Catholicism remains a major force in Mexico, since 1950 there has been a decline of the Catholic population**, due to the increase of the Protestant / Evangelical population, the growth of Christian sects (Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, The Light of the World Church, etc.), and of those who declare themselves as having no religion. However, this situation has internal disproportions at the state level: in Guanajuato Catholics are 97 percent of the population, while in Chiapas Catholics have dropped to 68 percent. There is also a marked regional trend, in which the southern states are more prone to Catholic population decline, followed by the northern border states, while the central and central-western regions have become the hard core of Catholicism. Nationally, the Catholic population declined from 98.2 percent in 1950 to 82.7 percent in 2010 (see table below).

Year	% Catholics	% non-Catholics
1950	98.2	1.8
1960	96.5	2.3
1970	96.2	2.2
1990	89.7	6.4
2000	88.0	7.6
2010	82.7	9.9

From the decade of the 1980s, the decline of Catholic adherents has increased especially in the southern states of Mexico, in the northern border areas, in the regions with higher rates of marginalization, and in the peripheries of large cities. Catholicism loses followers for many reasons: the phenomenal number of cases of sexual abuse by clergy, the cover ups of these cases by Catholic authorities, the general apathy of millions of Catholic adherents who lack adequate

pastoral services, the growing number of divorced Catholics who are marginalized by the Church as well as those who marry outside the Church, the failure of the laity to abide by official Church doctrine on moral and ethical issues, etc. In general, the decline is because they decided to stop being affiliated with this religion and because they decided to affiliate with other religious groups that, for the most part, make up the universe of Christian options: historical Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, or Bible-based non-evangelical Christian groups (INEGI census categories).

**Below is information about one of the most public cases of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy in Mexico.**

**Marcial Maciel Degollado** (1920-2008) was a Mexican Catholic priest who founded the Legion of Christ (LC) and the Regnum Christi movement; he served as general director of the LC from 1941 to 2005. Throughout most of his career, he was respected within the church as "the greatest fundraiser of the modern Roman Catholic church" and as a prolific recruiter of new seminarians. Late in his life, Maciel was revealed to have sexually abused boys and young men. After his death, it was revealed that he had also maintained relationships with at least two women, one of whom was a minor. He fathered as many as six children, and allegedly abused two of these children as well.

In 2006, Pope Benedict XVI removed Maciel from active ministry based on the results of an investigation that he had started while head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, before his election as Pope in April 2005. Maciel was ordered "to conduct a reserved life of prayer and penance, renouncing every public ministry;" he died in 2008. On 25 March 2010, a communiqué on the legion's website acknowledged as factual the "reprehensible actions" by Maciel, including sexual abuse of minor seminarians. In May 2010, the Vatican denounced Maciel's actions and appointed a Papal Delegate to oversee the order and its governance.

Source: [https://elpais.com/sociedad/2018/12/31/actualidad/1546256111\\_595163.html](https://elpais.com/sociedad/2018/12/31/actualidad/1546256111_595163.html)

**Currently, the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico is divided administratively into 15 regions and 22 jurisdictions:** 14 archdioceses, five territorial prelatures, two eparchy and one apostolic exarchate. The latter include: *Nuestra Señora de los Mártires del Libano en México* (Maronite Eparchy, about 148,250 adherents), *Nuestra Señora del Paraíso en México* (Greek-Melkite Eparchy, about 4,600 adherents), *America Latina e Messico, Faithful of the Oriental Rite* (Armenian Apostolic Exarchate, about 12,000 adherents).

**The Mexican Episcopal Conference** is composed of 157 members (the papal nuncio, cardinals, archbishops and bishops) and presided by Mons. Carlos Aguiar Retes, the Archbishop of Tlalnepantla. The former Archbishop of Mexico City (Federal District) was *Cardenal Norberto Rivera Carrera*, who was appointed Archbishop in June 1995, elevated to Cardinal in 1998, and retired in 2017.

*Mons. Carlos Aguiar Retes* (born January 1950) was Archbishop of Tlalnepantla, and previously served as the Bishop of Texcoco. He was elevated to the rank of Cardinal on 19 November 2016. He was appointed Archbishop of Mexico City on 7 December 2017 and installed on 5 February 2018. He has served as an officer of the Mexican Episcopal Conference and the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM - *Conferencia Episcopal Latinoamericana*) and been president of both. He helped draft the landmark mission statement CELAM issued at the close of its 2007 conference in Aparecida, Brazil. He has been called a "longtime ally" of Pope Francis who combines "intellectual finesse with a pastoral passion." See: Agren, David (7 December 2017). "Pope names longtime ally to lead Mexico City Archdiocese," *National Catholic*

Reporter: <https://www.ncronline.org/news/people/pope-names-longtime-ally-lead-mexico-city-archdiocese>

The following document is included here to help visualize the current situation in Mexico regarding the role of the Roman Catholic Church in dealing “spiritually” with the serious problems of violence and insecurity in Mexican society.

## The Extraordinary Exorcism of Mexico

06/16/2015 | Updated June 16, 2016

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Christian exorcism has become so popular worldwide that now it’s not only performed on tormented individuals but also on entire nations. A few weeks ago, Mexico, the second largest Catholic country, was exorcised of its demons in an unprecedented rite of *Exorcismo Magno* performed in secret in the city of San Luis Potosi. On May 20, the renowned Spanish exorcist José Antonio Fortea, author of the book “El Exorcismo Magno,” joined Cardinal Juan Sandoval Íñiguez, Archbishop Emeritus of Guadalajara, and a cadre of trained exorcists to perform the maximum type of Catholic exorcism, reserved for nations and dioceses, on the Mexican Republic itself. In an interview with the Catholic press, the famed exorcist, Father Fortea, explained that the *Exorcismo Magno* is “useful in situations in which great violence has been unleashed in a country.”

Mexico, of course, has been plagued by hyper-violence since 2006 when former president, Felipe Calderón launched an unprecedented assault on some of the major drug cartels. Since then an estimated 100,000 Mexicans have died in the ongoing battles over access to the largest drug market on earth here in the U.S. The first Latin American pope, Francis, has paid special attention to the conflict in Mexico. The chief reason for the recent promotion of the archbishop of Morelia to cardinal was his condemnations of the narco-violence plaguing his home state of Michoacán. The South American pontiff even got himself in a bit of hot water with his recent warning to his native Argentina to avoid “Mexicanization” of the country. And if Mexican folk saint, *Santa Muerte*, has been condemned by the Vatican and is denounced on a weekly basis in Mexico, it’s because the Church views the skeleton saint as the poster child of the narco-culture of death.

However, the cadre of exorcists working behind closed doors were not only expelling the demons of narco-violence but also of abortion. Though it doesn’t receive extensive international media coverage, the Church in Mexico has felt besieged since abortion was legalized in Mexico City in 2007. Legal and free abortion during the first twelve weeks of pregnancy ranks among the most liberal policies in Latin America, along with those of Uruguay and Cuba. In Mexico legislation on abortion is determined at the state-level, so there is considerable variation among the 31 states.

One of the reasons the state of San Luis Potosi was chosen as the site of the unprecedented exorcism was because of its status as an early opponent of legal abortion. The Mexican church roundly regards the national capital city as a den of iniquity because of its estimated 100,000 legal abortions since 2007 and its status as one of Latin America’s most liberal cities. This was one of the reasons that Pope Benedict XVI bypassed Latin America’s largest city and headed instead to León, the industrial city in Guanajuato, Mexico’s most Catholic state and also one of its most culturally conservative.

The exorcism of the demons of abortion was also done on cue from Pope Francis. The Latin America pope surprised many with his impromptu public exorcism of a Mexican parishioner who claimed to be possessed by four different demons of abortion. Catholic journalist Roberto O’Farrill reported the demons possessing the Mexican parishioner as saying “you are all stupid because she (the Virgin Mary) ran us out of Mexico and now you with your stupid laws have allowed sacrifice, human sacrifice, to return to Mexico. We don’t want to say this, but she steps on our heads and forces us.” O’Farrill, who was the sole journalist permitted to witness the *Exorcismo Magno* in San Luis Potosi, added that during the recent rite the demons said they had returned to Mexico with a new infestation centered in Mexico City.

Exorcism, especially among Catholics and Pentecostals, has been surging worldwide for the past couple decades, but there’s no doubt that Pope Francis, between performing a spontaneous one at the Vatican and making frequent references to the devil and demons, has given it a further boost. The exorcism of Mexico marks a fascinating new development in which entire nations are viewed as demon possessed. Where might Father Fortea perform his next *Exorcismo Magno*?

Sources:

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## Independent Western Roman Catholic-derived groups

**The Mexican Apostolic Catholic Church / *Iglesia Católica Apostólica Mexicana (ICAM)***, founded in 1925, was an independent nationalistic Catholic Church that was organized following the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917 under Bishops *José Joaquín Pérez y Budar*, *Antonio Benicio López Sierra* and *Macario López y Valdez*. It was created to bolster revolution and orchestrate a schism from the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico with the support of the Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) and with Mexican President Plutarco Elías Calles' approval. Its development was marked by several internal crisis, followed by subsequent splits and mergers.

Official government favoritism of a “national Catholic church” enraged revolutionaries who saw this as a “violation of the separation of Church and State” with potential to faction the revolution, so President Calles (served 1924-1928) ended his support of the ICAM after about three months. Although the government failed, in 1925, to orchestrate Pérez's consecration by a visiting Eastern Orthodox bishop, in 1926, *Archbishop Carmel Henry Carfora* (1878-1958) of the *North American Old Roman Catholic Church* (founded in 1908), consecrated Pérez, Antonio Benicio López Sierra and Macario López Valdez as bishops. In 1927, López Sierra established an ICAM church in San Antonio, Texas, where Archbishop Arthur Jerome Drossaerts of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio, called the schismatics “designing proselytizers of the sects supported by Calles and the Mexican government, that arch-enemy of all Christianity;” and in 1929, López Valdes established an ICAM church in Los Angeles, California. Pérez moved his headquarters to San Antonio in March 1930 but returned to Mexico City in April 1931 and established his headquarters at *Templo de Nuestra Señora de la Soledad*, located a few blocks

from the La Merced Market on the eastside of *El Zócalo* (“Plaza de la Constitución”), Mexico City’s central plaza in the Historic District.

The ICAM supported clerical marriage, rituals in the vernacular, the sacrament of Communion “under both kinds” ( i.e., both the consecrated bread and wine), individual biblical interpretation, and the veneration of the saints and Mary the mother of Jesus, but opposed the Roman Catholic dogma of papal infallibility, denied the doctrine of eternal damnation, rejected the sacrament of Penance, and had an "experimental commitment to liturgical innovation." Below is further information about the founding to the ICAM.

In 1925, the priests of the Roman Catholic Church condemned the Oaxacan priest *José Joaquín Pérez Budar* from their pulpits, calling him a schismatic, heretic, apostate and renegade for daring to break with the Pope and the Catholic hierarchy. Pérez Budar founded the *Mexican Apostolic Catholic Church* and became its maximum spiritual leader, called patriarch. Among the teachings of Patriarch Pérez's new Church were the abolition of priestly celibacy, the use of Spanish in the liturgy, the free offering of its religious services to the public, and the obligation for priests to have a job like any ordinary citizen, which attracted to their ranks priests who had wives and children, and even those who wished to have a family. Among them were the priests Antonio López Sierra, whose daughter was married to union leader Ricardo Treviño; the Spaniard Manuel Luis Monge, with wife and four children; the Austrian Armin von Monte de Honor, and the German Jorge Mariano Hank.

Source: <https://www.iis.unam.mx/el-patriarca-perez-la-iglesia-catolica-apostolica-mexicana/>

Bishop Pérez died in 1931, days after his public recantation and reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church, and *José Eduardo Dávila Garza* became the new leader of the ICAM using the religious name *Pope Eduardo I*. Whereas Pérez permitted clerical marriage, Bishop Dávila rescinded Pérez' approval and required clerical celibacy. Bishop Dávila petitioned Eastern Orthodox patriarchs in the 1930s to recognize him as an ordained Catholic priest.

The ICAM was a Western Rite Orthodox Church in Mexico founded on the vision of the relationship between the Soviet Union and the Russian Orthodox Church. After Pérez died the individual parishes continued to exist essentially independently. An entire diocese of the ICAM was subsumed into the *Orthodox Church in America Exarchate of Mexico* in 1972.

That former ICAM Diocese of Mexico is now a missionary diocese of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA). Its territory includes parishes, monasteries and missions located in four states – Chiapas, México, Jalisco and Veracruz – as well as the Federal District, where the diocesan chancery is located. The current ruling bishop of the exarchate is *Antonio Alejo Pacheco-Vera*, Bishop of Mexico City: <https://ocamexico.org/>

The Mexican Exarchate was created through the mass transfer of the membership and adherents – an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 persons – of an entire diocese of the Mexican Apostolic Catholic Church to the OCA in 1972. However, at that time, there were four other existing dioceses under the leadership of Bishop *Eduardo Dávila de la Garza* under the banner of the Mexican National Catholic Church, which later became known as the “**Church of Mr. President**” (*Iglesia del Señor Presidente*). Bishop *Dmitri (Royster)* in Dallas, Texas, was the Exarch of Mexico from 1972 to 2008 for the OCA. On 16 October 2008, the exarchate was reorganized as the Diocese of Mexico and Bishop Alejo (consecrated on 28 May 2005) was elected as the ruling bishop and installed in Ascension Cathedral in Mexico City on 18 January 2009.

Sources: Ramírez Rancaño, Mario. *El patriarca Pérez: la Iglesia Católica Apostólica Mexicana*. Ciudad Universitaria, MX: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones, 2006; also: <http://www.historicas.unam.mx/moderna/ehmc/ehmc24/295.html> - [http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota\\_detalle.php?codigo=4731997&fecha=23/04/1993](http://www.dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=4731997&fecha=23/04/1993)

**The current Mexican Apostolic Catholic Church** (*Iglesia Católica Apostólica Mexicana* - ICAM), also known as the **“Church of Mr. President”** (*Iglesia del Señor Presidente*), was founded in 1979 in Mexico City by excommunicated Catholic Bishop *Eduardo Dávila de la Garza* who previously led an independent Mexican National Catholic Church. The ICAM does not recognize the Pope, rather it claims that the President of the Republic of Mexico is its highest authority—that is, it is submissive to the civil authorities. Until his death in 1985, Bishop Dávila continued to ordain priests for ministry within his organization.

The basic characteristic of this movement is a belief in the miracle of the “*santísima hostia sangrante*” (“bleeding holy Host” = i.e., “bleeding communion wafer”) that is reported to have taken place on 23 March 1978 in the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe, located in a poor neighborhood on the east side of Mexico City, under the leadership of priest *José Camargo Melo*. Camargo took the matter to his immediate superior, Bishop Dávila, who had his reasons for believing the priest. Consequently, Bishop Dávila reported the matter to his superiors in Mexico and in the Vatican, who sometime later ordered him to burn the alleged “bleeding holy wafer” and forget the whole matter.

For failing to obey this order, Bishop Dávila and a dozen priests under his supervision were all excommunicated by the Vatican. Dávila proceeded to ordain Camargo as “bishop” and his second-in-command, and to rename Camargo’s temple the **“Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Bleeding Holy Host”** (*Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y la Santísima Hostia Sangrante*): located at Esquina Zoquipa y Cucurpe, Colonia El Parque, México, DF, Delegación V. Carranza 15960. In 1985, Bishop Dávila was stabbed to death in the Villa de Coyoacán, DF. The police report concluded that the motive for the crime was theft.

Official websites: [http://www.sagradahostia.org/El\\_Milagro/INICIO.html](http://www.sagradahostia.org/El_Milagro/INICIO.html) -

[http://www.sagradahostia.org/El\\_Milagro/Breve\\_Historia.html](http://www.sagradahostia.org/El_Milagro/Breve_Historia.html) -

<https://www.facebook.com/jesushostia/>

Sources: <http://www.clerus.org/clerus/dati/2000-04/18-7/Presidente.html>

The Roman Catholic Church demanded several times the return of the temple premises under priest *José Camargo Melo* – the parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe, renamed the “*Sanctuary of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the Holy Bleeding Wafer*” – which, like every church property in Mexico, is owned by the State but is entrusted for its use and care by specific religious organizations. Neither Dávila nor Camargo ever responded to this claim; as a result, in 1991, Camargo was arrested for having appropriated the temple property, usurpation of ecclesial functions, and illegal appropriation of the alms of his parishioners. Camargo was formally imprisoned but was freed on bail of 5,000,000 pesos that was paid by his followers.

Among the personal effects that Camargo deposited with police authorities while he was imprisoned was a gold watch inlaid with diamonds, a gold ring and five international credit cards; he also declared himself the owner of a three-story house near the temple, a Chevrolet Suburban model 1991 and a good wardrobe, all purchased with the alms (freewill offerings) of his followers.

In 1993, the ICAM was officially included in the Mexican federal register of religious associations (ARs) with *Mons. José Camargo Melo* as its legal representative.

The ICAM is a member of the **Worldwide Communion of Catholic Apostolic Churches** (WCCAC) / *Comunión de Iglesias Católicas Apostólicas Mundiales* (CICAM), an association of a dozen independent Catholic Churches, founded in Guatemala in 2008, with an estimated worldwide population of about four million members.

The WCCAC is governed by the International Bishops Council. For organizational purposes, the Communion has a Board of Directors, an Honorary Advisory Committee, and an Executive

Secretariat. The International Bishops Council meets every two years. The International Bishops Council was formed at San Lucas Sacatepéquez, Guatemala, on 12-18 August 2008.

Member ecclesiastical bodies are formed by several local churches in different nations and are presided over by a bishop. The WCCAC member bodies are:

- Argentina: Iglesia Católica Apostólica Argentina
- Australia: Catholic Apostolic Church of Australia
- Brazil: Igreja Católica Apostólica Brasileira
- Egypt: The Holy Synod of St. Athanasios for the Christian in the Middle East and USA
- France: Église Catholique, Apostolique et Française | Église Catholique Apostolique du France - Archbishop Pierre Pascal
- Guatemala: Iglesia Católica EcuMénica Renovada en Guatemala
- **Mexico: Iglesia Católica Apostólica Mexicana**
- **Mexico: Provincia Eclesial Santa María de Guadalupe; Iglesia Apostólica Católica “Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe”**
- Spain: Iglesia Católica Apostólica - Diócesis de Tarsis
- Venezuela: Iglesia Católica Apostólica Venezolana
- Trinidad and Tobago: The Holy Orthodox and Catholic Church of Trinidad and Tobago - The National Church of Trinidad and Tobago
- Germany: National Catholic Church - Narodowy Kościół Katolicki

Sources: <http://icergua.org/latam/noticias/08-noticias/not01.html>

[https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Worldwide\\_Communion\\_of\\_Catholic\\_Apostolic\\_Churches](https://wikivisually.com/wiki/Worldwide_Communion_of_Catholic_Apostolic_Churches)

**Fraternal Society of Saint Pius X in Mexico** (*Fraternidad Sacerdotal San Pío X en México - FSSPX*), Priorato Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, Colonia Santa María La Ribera, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, DF. This organization is an international priestly fraternity founded in 1970 by Marcel Lefebvre, the French titular archbishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of Synnada in Phrygia. The Society is known for rejecting many of the ecclesiastical reforms both influenced or institutionalized by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), and maintaining the Tridentine Mass among its followers. Official website in Mexico: <https://fsspx.mx/es>

**Colonia La Nueva Jerusalén** was founded in 1973 in Michoacán by excommunicated Catholic priest *Nabor Cárdenas Mejorada* (1910-2008), known as “Papa Nabor” by his followers, in a village about 130 km from the state capital (municipality of Turicato). Cárdenas has been called the “Patriarch of the Mexican Taliban” by the news media because of his authoritarian control of this secluded and tightly-guarded community of believers, who are devoted to “La Virgen del Rosario” (The Virgin of the Rosary) and who believe that the Virgin speaks to them through special messengers. The original messenger was *Gabina Romero Sánchez* – an illiterate old woman who said that she saw the Virgin at this site in 1973; she died in 1980 – and more recently through “don Agapito” who also communicates with “a spirit named Oscar” who allegedly transmits instructions and warnings from the Virgin. The chapel of the Virgin of the Rosary must be attended to by believers 24 hours a day, 365 days a year out of fear that, if not attended to, “God will discharge His anger against all humanity.”

The leadership of the community rejects the changes made by the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s and continues to celebrate Mass in Latin, warning followers of the “immanent end of

the world” when fire will destroy all of mankind, except for those living in “The New Jerusalem” in this fertile valley known as “The Holy Land.” An estimated 5,000 followers dress in long robes and women cover their heads with scarves and all modern conveniences are prohibited; drinking alcohol is prohibited and having children is discouraged because the “end of the world is near.” In 2012, fanatics of the sect burned the public school of the zone, the Vicente Guerrero primary school, because “the Virgen del Rosario told them that it was a refuge for the devil.”

Sources: <http://es.catholic.net/op/articulos/6230/cat/1112/nueva-jerusalen-su-origen.html#modal>  
- <http://www.infocatica.com/blog/infories.php/1410251104-mexico-un-libro-revela-las-in>

**Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Apostolic Church** (*Iglesia Apostólica Católica “Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe”* - IACNSG) was organized in 2001 in Mexico City by *Mons. Kenneth Maley*, who is part Shawnee (an American Indian tribe). Previously he was a member of the Community of the Holy Cross for 28 years and a Roman Catholic priest for 32 years; he served as a missionary in Chile and Africa during that time. After leaving the Roman Catholic Church, Maley helped to organize the **Latin American Apostolic Archdiocese of Our Lady of Guadalupe**, which in early 2008 reported affiliated churches in 14 countries and more than 300 priests. Its work in the Americas includes the USA, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Brazil. The IACNSG is a member of the **Worldwide Communion of Catholic Apostolic Churches** (WCCAC) / *Comunión de Iglesias Católicas Apostólicas Mundiales* (CICAM). Official website: <http://padrevicario.blogspot.com/>

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

Source: <https://wrlrels.org/2016/10/08/mexican-u-s-catholic/>

**The Mexican National Catholic Congregation of Missionaries of the Sacred Scripture** (*El Católico Nacional Mexicano Congregación de Misioneros de la Sagrada Escritura*) was founded in 1973 by Ángel Torres Pineda Puebla (born in 1948 and died of cancer on 22 November 2006). He received his secondary education with the *Padres Mercedarios* in Puebla, where he finished his studies in 1971 at 23 years of age. Then he moved to Mexico City and became associated with the Catholic religious order *Congregation of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit* in 1971, where he said he received the “Lego Habit” (lay brother robes) in Casa Provincial San José del Altillo in Barrio Santa Catarina, Coyoacán, DF. In 1973, he left the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit and moved to Acapulco, State of Guerrero. In the town of Comaltepec, Municipality of Cuajinicuilapa, he said that “God enlightened him to found the Missionaries of Sacred Scripture.”

On 13 October 1973, Ángel Torres Pineda presented a letter addressed to the Municipal President of Cuajinicuilapa, Miguel Cruz Candela, asking for authorization to establish the "Congregation of Missionaries of Sacred Scripture" in the town of Comaltepec. The letter was signed by Municipal Commissioner Gregorio Alvarez Quezada, Ejidal Commissioner Eloy Vázquez Bustos and 26 other people, who placed their inked fingerprints of the document. On 23 November 1973, Miguel Cruz Candela sent an official letter to the General Directorate of the Interior in Mexico City, requesting that the Comaltepec Temple be registered as "Mexican National Catholic," and that Ángel Torres Pineda be recognized as the Founding Pastor of the "Missionaries of the Sacred Scripture." In this document he cites as the founding date of this religious group the 28 of October 1973, and its Patroness as the Virgin of Guadalupe.

This organization evolved into the **Catholic Apostolic National Independent Mexican Church of God** (*Iglesia de Dios Católica Apostólica Nacional Mexicana Independiente*), which was officially registered as such with the government's Office of Religious Associations in 1993 (AR #1440.00). This organization operates under the pastoral leadership of *Mons. Ángel Torres Pineda and Ángel Rentería García*, both of who were legally accused (February 1994) of illegally occupying property (chapels) belonging to the Archdiocese of Acapulco in El Gallinero, San Pedro de las Playas, El Arenal, Colonia La Navidad and Llano de la Puerta. Neither of these leaders were ordained as priests or friars by the Catholic Church, and they were denounced as "criminals," "heretics" and "charlatans" by Catholic laymen in these communities and by Catholic bishops in Guerrero, as well as by government authorities who levied heavy fines against both "fallen angels" in June 2006: <http://ephemeridesacapulcanae.blogspot.com/2010/10/i-origenes-de-una-herejia-la-asociacion.html> - <http://ephemeridesacapulcanae.blogspot.com/2010/10/iv-historias-desde-el-gallinero-la.html>

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

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

## The Protestant Movement

**General Overview.** At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, there were signs of general unrest against the growing power, corruption and abuse of authority by the Papacy. The Roman Catholic Church was beset from within by centuries of frustrated attempts at reform, and without by the rise of strong nation states along the northern border of the Old Roman Empire that were tired of bondage to civil and religious authorities in Rome. What started out as a symbolic protest by a rebellious monk in (East) Germany in 1517, against perceived abuses by his superior officials in Rome, turned out to be the spark that ignited strong movements of religious and civil disobedience (protests) against “the powers that be.” This led to the birth of the Protestant Reformation and the civil independence of Northern Europe from Roman Catholic jurisdiction. Martin Luther, a friar of the Augustinian Order, a Bible scholar and professor at the University of Wittenberg, began his “symbolic protest” by nailing a document known as “Ninety-five Thesis” to the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg. See: <http://www.carm.org/creeds/95theses.htm>

**Fundamental Doctrines of Protestantism.** All denominations and independent churches that are part of the Protestant movement share certain basic beliefs that are clearly stated in *The Apostles Creed* (1<sup>st</sup> century) and *The Nicene Creed* (325 AD), which are shared with other branches of Christianity. However, the Protestant reformers all had a firm conviction in *sola fide* (faith alone), *sola gratia* (grace alone), *sola scriptura* (scripture alone), a simple formula to remember the basic tenets of the Protestant Reformation: *justification by faith alone, salvation by God’s grace alone and not by human merit, and the supreme authority of the Word of God as the only rule of faith and practice.* Other basic concepts include the *priesthood of all believers* and the *lordship of Jesus Christ* (His divinity and power) as the only Savior of mankind.

Any religious group that does not share these convictions cannot be considered part of the Protestant movement, which is formed by church bodies, whether denominations or independent congregations, that are an integral part of the Universal Body of Christ, composed of “all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Conversely, no single church body (denomination, independent church or any other organization) represents the totality of the Church of Jesus Christ on planet Earth. The concept of “denominationalism” means that each church body constituted of “born-again believers” forms part of the invisible Universal Body of Christ, and that those believers have received the gift of the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of their spiritual heritage as members of the Family of God. Those who seek to obey the Lord Jesus Christ as His disciples meet regularly in congregations of believers to share their common faith, study the Holy Scriptures, share the Lord’s Supper, worship together, and support and encourage one another in the endeavors of the Christian life, in obedience to the Great Commandment and in fulfillment of the Great Commission.

The various congregations and denominations of the Protestant movement are related to each other as a “family of believers,” but may have different forms of church government: the basic types are episcopal, presbyterian and congregational. Individual congregations of believers may be affiliated with other congregations in associations of churches (typically called “denominations”) whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. Each of these denominational organizations is self-governing and usually have legal status before their respective civil governments. The various congregations and denominations may have some *historical, doctrinal and life-style affinity* so as to be grouped into Families of Denominations and Major Traditions within the Protestant movement such as those listed below in this document. The categories shown below

are based largely on Dr. J. Melton Gordon's *Encyclopedia of American Religion* (Detroit, MI: Gale Research, 1996, Fifth Edition); see the following links for basic definitions:

<http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/profiles/listmelton.htm>

<http://www.kentaurus.com/domine/protestant.HTM>

[http://bpc.org/reading\\_room/books/wylie/protestantism.html](http://bpc.org/reading_room/books/wylie/protestantism.html)

## Significant Protestant Beginnings: mission agencies and national denominations

**Note:** an \* below indicates a European mission agency or missionary.

1800-1849 (two groups)
1826 – John C. Brigham (1794-1862), of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (created in 1810 by members of the Congregational Church in Boston, Massachusetts), was sent to observe and report on conditions in the newly independent countries from Spain in South America and Mexico (visiting Argentina, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, and Mexico) between 1823-1826; he spent about two months in Mexico during early 1826, before returning to New York City in May of that year; he later served as Senior Correspondence Secretary of the American Bible Society (founded in 1816) from 1826 until his death in 1862.
1827 - *British and Foreign Bible Society colporteur, James Thomson
1850-1899 (20 groups)
1850 - "Mexican Church of Jesus", an autonomous Catholic breakaway movement led by Catholic priests in Mexico City; later affiliated with the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA (1873).
1855 - Independent school work in Monterrey, Nuevo León, by Miss Melinda Rankin (a Presbyterian who later joined the American and Foreign Christian Union) until 1872; Rankin and her associates founded schools and churches in the states of Nuevo León, Coahuila, Zacatecas, Tamaulipas and San Luis Potosí.
1861 - *German Lutheran Congregation in Mexico City (the first organized Protestant church in Mexico)
1864 - Independent Baptist church organized by James Hickey and Thomas Westrup in Monterrey, Nuevo León.
1865 – *The first Plymouth Brethren layman arrived, James Pascue, a young mining engineer from England who became a missionary and settled in Teluca, State of Mexico.
1868 - American and Foreign Christian Union (later the Protestant Episcopal Church) absorbed "The Mexican Church of Jesus" in Mexico City under Bishop Henry Riley.
1870 - American Baptist Home Mission Society (absorbed Hickey's work in Monterrey)
1871 - American Friends Church (Religious Society of Friends, Richmond, VA) in Matamoros
1872 - American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Congregational Church) in Guadalajara; now affiliated with the United Church Board for World Ministry of the United Church of Christ (UCC).
1872 - Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (Northern) in Zacatecas with Phillips and Thomson, and Mexico City with Pitkin and Hutchinson; now affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in the USA.
1873 - Methodist Episcopal Church (North) in Mexico City with William Butler; both the Northern and Southern Methodist Churches are now affiliated with the United Methodist Church, World Program Division, and the World Methodist Council.
1873 - Methodist Episcopal Church (South) in Mexico City with Bishop Keener.
1873-1874 - Presbyterian Church (Southern) in Matamoros with Antonio T. Graybill; now affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in the USA.
1875-1979 - Associated Reformed Presbyterian Church in Tampico with the Rev. Neil E. Pressly.
1876 - The Protestant Episcopal Church takes over the work of the American and Foreign Christian Union in the Valley of Mexico and Morelos under Bishop Riley.
1878 - American Bible Society Agency established in Mexico City with the Rev. Arthur Gore, taking over the work began earlier by the British & Foreign Bible Society.
1880 - Southern Baptist Convention begins work in Muzquiz-Coahuila with the Rev. John Westrup, and in Saltillo with the Rev. William Powell.
1888 - Cumberland Presbyterian Church begins work in Guanajuato and Aguascalientes with the Rev. H. Sharp.
1889 - *Plymouth Brethren missionary Leonard Ingram begins work in Orizaba, Veracruz, which eventually led to the founding of the "Union of Churches that Meet in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ" in Orizabal.
1890 - *Mr. & Mrs. Charles H. Bright, from England, served as Plymouth Brethren missionaries for a few years before relocating to Peru in 1893.
1891 - J. Eglon Harris, a Plymouth Brethren missionary, settled in the city of Tehuacán, State of Puebla, which eventually led to the founding of the "Evangelical Church of Brethren Congregated in the Name of the Lord Jesus."

1893 - Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference (Charlotte, NC) begins work in Guadalajara.
1895 - Christian Women's Board of Missions (Christian Church-Disciples of Christ) begins work in Ciudad Juárez and Monterrey with missionaries Hoblit and Mason.
1897 - *Reginald Carey Brenton, a former Admiral of the British Royal Navy, who became a Plymouth Brethren missionary after his retirement in 1897).

**The presence of agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS) in Mexico**, beginning with the arrival of **James (“Diego”) Thompson** (1788-1854, a Scotch Baptist) and his English wife Mary Morrish in Veracruz in 1827, signaled the initiation of an Evangelical presence. The Thompsons traveled from Veracruz to Mexico City with a caravan of 20 mules loaded with Spanish Bibles, New Testaments and Scripture portions, which he sold in rented public halls not only in those two cities but also in Guanajuato, Aguascalientes, Zacatecas, and other important cities in Central Mexico. At first Thompson’s best customers were Catholic priests who eagerly began to study the Scriptures, until members of the Catholic hierarchy realized what was happening and forbade the sale and distribution of Bibles published by Protestant societies. In 1829, Thompson notified the BFBS that he had sold 3,200 Bibles, 4,200 New Testaments and 4,000 portions of the Scriptures in Mexico. Thompson was a BFBS agent in Mexico from 1827 to 1830. After a year or so in England, he represented the BFBS in the Caribbean (1831-1838) and in Canada (1838-1842). He was the prime mover in founding the *French-Canadian Missionary Society* in 1839. He again took up medical studies and graduated M.D. from McGill University in Montreal in 1842 at age 53. He returned to Mexico in 1842, but a serious illness while in Yucatán brought his ministry in the Americas to a close in 1844. Before Thompson was forced to leave Mexico in 1843, he distributed Catholic versions of Spanish New Testaments to public schools in Mexico City and Mérida in the Yucatán peninsula (Anderson 2005:77; and James Thompson biography at: <http://www.jamesdiegothomson.com/about>).

Before the Mexican province of Texas became part of the USA following the Mexican-American War in 1848, the **American Bible Society (ABS)** and the **American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS)** began to distribute New Testaments in several languages to the settlers in Texas. During 1836-1840, the ABHMS decided to begin mission work in Mexico and sent **James Huckins** and **William Tryon** as missionaries to Texas. After the separation of Northern and Southern Baptists in 1845 over the issue of slavery and the abolition movement, the work of the ABHMS was discontinued in Mexico. During the armed conflict over Texas Independence, the ABS sent **W.H. Norris** as its agent to accompany U.S. troops into Mexico, where he gave Spanish Bibles to Protestant soldiers and asked them to distribute these among Mexican civilians (Anderson 2005:78).

The U.S.-Mexican War (1846-1848) ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ceded almost half of Mexico’s national territory to the USA: Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

**After the Mexican Constitution of 1857 formalized Liberal reforms**, which limited the power of the Roman Catholic Church and broadened individual freedoms, the systematic penetration of Protestant missionaries with the support of their respective denominations and service agencies from the U.S. and Europe began in Mexico, in the context of the civil struggle between Liberal and Conservative factions and rebellions led by military leaders with political ambitions.

**During the 40-year period 1860 to 1900, at least 16 U.S. Protestant mission agencies began work in Mexico**, some of which were started along the U.S.-Mexican border, others on the coastlands (Veracruz and Tampico), and some in Mexico City and other major cities (including

Monterrey, Saltillo, Zacatecas, San Luís Potosí, Guadalajara, Puebla, Pachuca and Guanajuato). However, the first Protestant church organized in Mexico City was a *German Lutheran* congregation, founded between 1857 and 1861 among German immigrants.

An Irish immigrant to the USA, **Mr. James Hickey**, learned Spanish in Missouri so that he could evangelize his Spanish-speaking neighbors and later moved to Brownsville, Texas, where he worked as an agent of the *American Tract Society* (1861) for about 18 months before opening an agency of the *American Bible Society* (ABS) in 1862. Although he made frequent trips into Mexico while headquartered in Brownsville, Hickey was more of an evangelist than a pastor, and he never stayed in one place very long. He made long trips on horseback to visit small villages and ranches in the interior, and he usually returned home exhausted and ill. Hickey died in Brownsville in December 1866 after having sowed the seed of the Gospel along the Mexican border and in the northeastern states of Mexico. Historically, he is considered the founder of Baptist work in Mexico (Anderson 2005:79-80).

In 1863, the *British and Foreign Bible Society* (BFBS) reestablished its work in Mexico, which was discontinued after the departure of James Thompson in 1843, with the hiring of **Mr. J. W. Butler** of Monterrey as its Agent. Butler resumed the distribution of the Scriptures, starting with Monterrey (state of Nuevo León), Ciudad Victoria and Tampico in Tamaulipas, then travelling inland to San Luís Potosí before relocating to Mexico City, according to *A History of the British and Foreign Bible Society*, Volume IV (Canton 1910:142-143). There, Butler established a depository for the materials that he received from the BFBS in London, and he hired colporteurs to distribute them to cities and towns in Central Mexico under the protection of an Imperial permit from Maximilian I (until his execution in 1869) who favored the unrestricted circulation of the Scriptures throughout Mexico. In the Society's *Sixty-Fourth Report, 1868* (London, England: The Bible House, May 1868), there is a lengthy section on "Mexico," which details the activities and accomplishments of Mr. Butler (pp. 303-308).

After Butler's resignation in 1871, the **Rev. William Parkes** of Bideford, England, was appointed by the BFBS in 1872, and he arrived in Mexico in September 1873 to assume his responsibilities as Agent of the BFBS in Mexico City, as detailed in the Society's *Sixty-Ninth Report, 1873*, "Mexico" (pp. 340-343). In both of these reports, the Agent in charge expressed his optimism about the distribution of the Scriptures throughout the country by means of the wise use of a few dedicated colporteurs (less than a dozen), despite the widespread opposition of the Catholic clergy and the occasional mob-generated violence against Protestants, including the brutal assassination in Ahualulco, Jalisco (on 2 March 1874), of the **Rev. John Luther Stephens** (1847-1874), a Congregational missionary from California supported by the *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (ABCFM). Source: *The Missionary Herald*, Volume LXX (May 1874), No. V (pp. 137-140).

The BFBS effort was supported enthusiastically by many Protestant missionaries in different states who were active in the distribution of the Scriptures (Bibles, New Testaments and Portions), which aided the growth and development of their respective local churches. During the year ending 31 March 1874, Agent Parkes reported the following: the sale of 2,409 Bibles, 2,884 New Testaments and 11,255 Portions, according to the Society's *Seventieth Report, 1874*, "Mexico" (pp. 225-229). Parkes resigned from the BFBS in 1875 and returned to England.

**John Westrup** (Sr.) and his family moved to Mexico from England in 1852, where he was employed as a mechanical engineer who specialized in the manufacture of windmills. After working in several interior cities, the Westrups settled in Monterrey in 1861. John was raised an Anglican and his wife Bertha was raised a Baptist in England, and they raised their 13 children in

the Christian faith. Two of the Westrup children, Thomas M. and John (Jr.), became leaders in early Baptist ministry in Mexico.

After James Hickey was invited to visit the Westrups in Monterrey in 1862, it was decided to establish a Bible distribution center in the Westrup's home where Bible studies were held and a "Society of Evangelization" was organized among the English-speaking residents of the city. Soon a Sunday School and preaching services in English and Spanish were begun under Hickey's leadership. It is believed that Hickey preached the first Protestant sermon in northern Mexico in March 1863. After Hickey baptized (by immersion) Thomas M. Westrup (a son of John Westrup) along with José María and Arcadio Uranga, these believers along with Hickey and his wife constituted the first Baptist church established in Mexico, on 30 January 1864, which practiced "closed communion." Thomas M. Westrup was named pastor of the "Christian Church of Monterrey," although it was organized as a Baptist church and was later recognized as the "First Baptist Church of Monterrey" (Anderson 2005:80-81).

When Hickey died in 1866, **Thomas M. Westrup** (1837-1909) succeeded him as an Agent of the ABS. Baptist work began to grow and multiply with new congregations established in Monterrey, Santa Rosa, Cadereyta and Los Ebanos. Westrup later became the ABHMS' first missionary to Mexico in 1870 after his return to Monterrey from New York City where he was formally appointed and commissioned. However, Westrup resigned from the ABHMS in 1874, and the work of the society in Mexico was not restored until 1881 when Westrup was rehired. At that time, he had been working independently in the city of San Lu s Potos  where he had gathered together a small group of believers. Westrup then returned to Monterrey to lead a new attempt to revive the previous Baptist work. Although he was a missionary partially supported by the ABHMS, he had to raise the rest of his support in Mexico (Anderson 2005:80-86,93).

In 1883, the ABHMS commissioned the **Rev. W. T. Green**, formerly a pastor in Illinois and California, to begin work in Mexico City with the **Rev. Pablo Rodr guez**, a Mexican graduate of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Together, they organized their first church in March 1884 with five charter members. Within a year, this church had 33 members and two preaching points had been established in the city. Green was the first pastor of the Mexico City Baptist church until May 1885, when the ABHMS recalled him for lack of funds. Another recent missionary appointee (October 1884) to Mexico, the **Rev. W. H. Sloan**, replaced Green in Mexico City; Sloan was the Superintendent of Missions in Central Mexico for the ABHMS. In January 1885, Sloan used his small printing press to begin publishing a magazine called *La Luz*, which was the beginning of the important literary activity of Mexican Baptists. Sloan raised \$25,000 in the USA during 1887 to purchase property and construct a new church building for the Mexico City Baptist Church. When he ended his pastorate there in May 1888, the church had 35 members. By 1894, this church, pastored by the **Rev. A. J. Steelman**, reported 110 members. The National Baptist Convention was organized in Mexico City in September 1903, with 50 representatives present of self-governing Baptist churches (Anderson 2005:94-95; Chastain 1927:106-107,110).

In 1888, the ABHMS rehired the **Rev. W. T. Green** and sent him to San Lu s Potos , where he was successful in organizing a Baptist church by building on the work begun earlier by Thomas M. Westrup. In 1890, Green left this church under the leadership of pastor **Henry Westrup** (another brother of Thomas) and relocated in San Crist bal, Chiapas, where he formed a Baptist church in that fanatical Catholic area in 1893. Together with **Jacob Trevi o**, they extended Baptist work to the states of Oaxaca and Puebla (Anderson 2005:97).

Although the small Baptist churches suffered hardships during the 1860s thru the 1890s, they were able to survive and later prospered under national leadership. In Monterrey, despite the proselytism of *Miss Melinda Rankin*, a dogmatic Presbyterian who advocated baptism by sprinkling and who preyed on Baptists in Monterrey, the Baptist work progressed. In 1869, Rankin invited a pastor of the (Northern) Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., the **Rev. Andrew J. Park** from Brownsville, to take over the leadership of her small mission work in Monterrey. Together they developed a Presbyterian church in Monterey that was the foundation of later Presbyterian work in Mexico, while Thomas Westrup and his followers remained Baptists (Anderson 2005:83-87).

**Melinda Rankin** (1811-1888), a Presbyterian from New England who began her mission work among Catholics in the Mississippi Valley, was one of the first independent missionaries to begin Protestant work along the Mexican border. After receiving encouraging reports from American soldiers who were returning home after the war with Mexico (April 1846-February 1848), she moved to the border town of Brownsville, Texas, opposite Matamoros, Mexico, in the spring of 1852. There, supported by the (*Northern*) *Presbyterian Board of Education*, she developed a school for Mexican children in 1854. In 1857, when religious liberty was established in Mexico, she distributed Bibles and established Protestant schools and groups of believers in Matamoros, Tamaulipas (1862-1863), and Monterrey, Nuevo León (1866). In Monterrey, she purchased property for a school and church building and hired converts to do missionary work. The interdenominational *American and Foreign Christian Union* (AFCU), founded in New York City in 1849, supported the work of Melinda Rankin in northeastern Mexico between 1856 and 1872.

**Editorial note:** The ministry of Melinda Rankin was detailed in her book, *Twenty Years Among the Mexians: A Narrative of Missionary Labor*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Chase & Hall Publishers, 1875 and newer reprints: <https://archive.org/details/twentyyearsamon00rankgoog/page/n5>

By 1871, there were two Protestant churches in Monterrey, one affiliated with the ABHMS and pastored by Thomas M. Westrup and the other related to the (Northern) Presbyterian Church, USA, pastored by the Rev. Andrew J. Park and supported by Melinda Rankin and the AFCU. In 1872, as a result of her work in organizing and mobilizing Mexican workers to evangelize and plant new churches, 14 congregations had been established, which were later incorporated into the (Northern) Presbyterian Church in Mexico.

In 1871, the newly formed *American Friends Board of Missions* sent their first missionaries, Samuel Purdie and his wife Gulielma, to Mexico supported by the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends. The couple opened a school for girls in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, near the U.S.-Mexican border in 1871. Samuel later published a newsletter and textbooks in Spanish and helped establish schools and monthly meetings in other areas of Tamaulipas. In the 1880s, the school grew into the Hussey Institute, a boarding school for girls and day school for boys. Friends' schools and meetings extended to Matehuala in the state of San Luis Potosi and other places. The Revolution that began in 1884 placed hardships on the Friends missionary work, as well as on the work of other mission boards. However, the first Friends Monthly Meeting was established in Ciudad Victoria in 1888.

At the 1914 Protestant missions conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, 12 denominations decided to assign the various mission agencies to different geographical areas of Mexico to avoid the duplication of efforts. The Friends Board would work in Tamaulipas and San Luis Potosi. Anti-Catholic and anti-American sentiment in Mexico in 1917 led to the approval of laws that assigned

all church property to the government and made it illegal for foreigners to preach and teach in Mexico. Mexican pastors continued to serve in the Friends' ministries, but as public schools improved, the need for Friends' schools decreased.

With the goal of improving U.S.-Mexican relations, the **American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)** started joint work camps in 1939 in the states of Veracruz and Nayarit. Friends in Mexico City bought a building in 1955 and started "Casa de los Amigos" in 1956, which became a base for work camps and later for refugees from wars in Central America. Originally supported by AFSC, Casa de los Amigos became independent in 1984.

The North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends restarted ministry in Tamaulipas by the late 1970s. About the same time, an independent Friends ministry began in Nueva Rosita, Coahuila. The Friends World Committee for Consultation currently lists three yearly meetings in Mexico.

Source: <https://library.guilford.edu/c.php?g=111809&p=723697>

*Casa de los Amigos*, A.C. is a Center for Peace and International Understanding in Mexico City. It is the home of the Mexico City Monthly Meeting of the *Religious Society of Friends* (Quakers). The Casa was established as a nonprofit organization in 1956 by the Quaker community in Mexico, and its work continues to be rooted in Quaker values. Through its programs, community space, and social and cultural activities, the Casa promotes peace with justice, fosters understanding between groups and individuals, and supports the human dignity of every person.

The Mexico City Friends Meeting is affiliated with Pacific Yearly Meeting, which is comprised of Quaker Meetings in California, Nevada, Hawaii, Mexico City and Guatemala and meets each August. Mexico City Friends also participate in the Annual Meeting of Friends in Mexico (Reunión Anual de los Amigos en México), the Section of the Americas of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, and other gatherings of Friends in Latin America.

Source: <https://www.casadelosamigos.org/>

The *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (formed by Congregationalists in Massachusetts in 1810 / New England Congregational Churches) sent two missionary couples to Guadalajara in 1872, and five missionary couples were sent to Monterrey in 1873 to work with congregations formed by Melinda Rankin and Juan Sepulveda that grew out of the early Baptist and Presbyterian efforts.

In 1893, the First Baptist Church in Monterrey, co-pastored for many years by **Thomas M. Westrup** and **Francisco Treviño**, experienced a schism when Treviño left and founded the Second Baptist Church of Monterrey, which presented a serious problem for the ABHMS. Consequently, both Westrup and Francisco Treviño were reassigned to new fields by the ABHMS, and **Alexander Treviño** was named pastor of the reunited church. However, Francisco returned to Monterrey sometime later and organized the Emmanuel Baptist Church, which he pastored until his death in 1901.

Also, in 1901, Thomas M. Westrup returned to Monterrey and began preaching at Emmanuel Baptist Church before beginning meetings of the "Christian Mission" in Monterrey, which became affiliated with the *Christian Church/Disciples of Christ* under missionary **A. G. Alderman**. In 1903, after Alderman died of the yellow fever virus, Westrup took over the supervision of the **Disciples of Christ Mission in Mexico** and edited its magazine, *Vía de Paz* (Way of Peace), until his death in 1909 (Anderson 2005:97-98).

Having lived in Mexico for many years, Thomas M. Westrup mastered the language like a native. This led him to initiate the effort to translate and publish evangelical pamphlets, as well as hymns. In 1875, he published his first hymnal, *Christian Incense*, and in 1889 he published a new edition of this same hymnal and called it, *Christian Incense: Collection of Hymns*. It contained a total of 97 hymns, 72 of which were written by Westrup. Thomas dedicated many years of his life to sharing the Gospel in northeastern Mexico.

After Thomas M. Westrup became part of the **Stone-Campbell movement** in 1901, he served the Mission as editor of Spanish publications, translator, song writer, and preacher. When he died on 14 November 1909, his son *Enrique T. Westrup* carried on his father's work, and under his leadership it continued to grow and expand from Monterrey into the surrounding area. It is estimated that Thomas M. Westrup wrote and/or translated more than 500 hymns.

Sources: <https://www.himnos-cristianos.com/thomas-m-westrup/> and Foster 2004:455.

*The Christian Women's Board of Missions* (CWBM) of the **Christian Church/Disciples of Christ** (formed in 1849 in Cincinnati, Ohio, as the American Christian Missionary Society) began its work in Mexico in Ciudad Juárez with the missionary M.L. Hoblit in 1895; in 1897, Hoblit moved to the city of Monterrey where he established a school for boys. Later, **Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Alderman** came to Monterrey to work with missionary Hoblit. When Hoblit returned to the USA in 1899, Alderman took the lead in the work, which included schools where English and Spanish were taught, along with worship services, visitation of nearby towns, a reading room, and a workshop for printing biblical and evangelistic materials. **Alderman** participated in the formal organization of the first Christian Church in Monterrey on 14 February 1901.

In 1905, the *Disciples of Christ Mission* sent the **Rev. Samuel Guy Inman** to better organize the work in Monterrey and along the northeastern border of Mexico. Later, Inman established the *Instituto del Pueblo* in Piedras Negras, Mexico, across the border from Eagle Pass, Texas. In 1913, Inman founded the *Instituto Cristiano Mexicano* in San Antonio, Texas, to help the victims of the *Mexican Revolution (1910-1917)*, which changed the nature of missionary work in Mexico. Although the Mexican Constitution of 1917 guaranteed freedom of religion, conscience and worship, the government of Mexico was declared the owner of the properties of the churches, but the churches were given the free use of them under certain restrictions: they cannot make political propaganda in them.

Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution of 1917 defines that the land and its corresponding water and minerals are the original property of the nation which has domain over them. Originally this Article was applied to limit the ability of religious organizations from the right to own land in Mexico, although that was not its intent. The Catholic Church just happened to be one of the largest landowners in the country. This amendment was later amended to give limited authority to the churches to control their land.

**The Plymouth Brethren** trace their origin to 1829 when the first permanent meetings were held and where the participants adopted the name "Plymouth Brethren" in the city of Plymouth, located in southern England. One of the original founders of this movement was John Nelson Darby, a former Anglican pastor, who is considered to be the father of modern Dispensationalism. The **Plymouth Brethren** (a network of like-minded, conservative free churches, and not an organized Christian denomination), also known as **Christian Brethren**, first arrived in Mexico from England in 1865 in the person of *James Pascoe*, a young mining engineer (age 24) who became a Brethren missionary and settled in Teluca, State of Mexico, followed by *Leonard Ingram*, in 1889,

at age 21; *J. Eglon Harris*, age 29, and his family arrived in Mexico in 1891 and settled in the city Orizaba, Veracruz, in 1892; *Mr. & Mrs. Charles H. Bright*, from England, who served as Plymouth Brethern missionaries in Mexico for a few years prior to 1893, when they left to work in Peru (1893 to 1902), followed by a few years in Ecuador; and *Captain Reginald Carey Brenton*, a former Admiral of the British Royal Navy, who became a Plymouth Brethren missionary after his retirement in 1897.

[Several of these men, Pascoe and Harris], were self-taught printers who wrote thousands of essays, created periodicals, and swayed public opinion. They were gifted evangelists, teachers, orators, poets, hymnists, and journalists. They started Bible studies, founded print shops, businesses, and churches. They displayed remarkable courage. Their faith emboldened them to face untold dangers. Mexico then was as hostile to the Gospel as closed countries are today. These men promoted Bible reading at a time when papal edict forbade it. They printed and distributed Gospel literature to masses who were incited to destroy it. They preached when angry mobs hurled threats and insults. They planted churches that were subsequently opposed and harassed by the local priests.

Source: [https://www.cmml.us/sites/default/files/mag\\_pdf/missions\\_may\\_2018\\_web.pdf](https://www.cmml.us/sites/default/files/mag_pdf/missions_may_2018_web.pdf)

These pioneers faced resistance and persecution from the Catholic clergy and their Catholic neighbors, but they faced these challenges with determination and ingenuity. *James Pasco* (1841-1888) founded the first evangelistic magazine in Mexico, called *El Herald*, which was published for 17 years (1875-1892), from Toluca, State of Mexico. *J. Eglon Harris* (1862-1932) and his family arrived in the port of Veracruz in 1891 and settled in Orizaba, Veracruz, where he founded the publication *El Sembrador*, in May 1894, which continued to be published in Orizabal under the leadership of his children and grandchildren after the founder's death in 1932:

<http://www.elsembrador.org.mx/Historia/Testimonio%20Historico.htm>

The Emmaus Bible Correspondence courses first arrived in 1942, and were following by waves of missionaries and national workers who distributed literature and organized Bible conferences, camps, and radio programs. At least 18 Mexican missionaries have left their homes to take the Gospel message abroad. Sources: Ken y Jeanette Newton, editors. *The Brethren Movement Worldwide*, 5th edition, 2019, p. 199 (Opal Trust, Lockerbie, UK); also see: James Pasco, *Mission Work in Mexico*, reprinted from *The Sword and the Trowel*, 1886 (Tacámbaro, México: Taller Martín Pescador, 2020). Note: *The Sword and the Trowel* was a monthly magazine published by Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892), a famous Particular Baptist pastor in London, beginning in January 1865: <http://www.godrules.net/library/spurgeon/spurgeon.htm#sword-and-trowel>

Missionary J. Eglon Harris and other Christian Brethren workers founded a series of churches that grew and expanded, primarily in the state of Veracruz. Eventually this group of churches were legally registered as a Religious Association (AR = *Asociación Religiosa*) in 1993, under the name “**Unión de Iglesias que se Reúnen en el Nombre del Señor Jesucristo**” / *Union of Churches that Meet in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ* in Orizabal, Veracruz (SGAR / 726/93). Postal address: Sur 9, No. 328, Orizaba 94300, Veracruz. This AR reports the existence of more than 50 congregations, but has only a list of 49 in its directory in six states, with the majority in Veracruz (41) and others in the states of Puebla (4), Tlaxcala (2) and Chiapas. (1):

<http://uniondeiglesias.mx/directorio.html>

Some of the Brethren Assemblies that were founded primarily in the State of Puebla and in the Mexico City metropolitan area eventually were legally registered as an AR (SGAR/549/93) in 1993, under the name “**Iglesia Evangélica de Hermanos Congregados en el Nombre del Señor**

**Jesús” / Evangelical Church of Brethren Congregated in the Name of the Lord Jesus.** Its history in Mexico is described like this: "More than a hundred years ago this movement spread to all continents and reached our Mexican Republic in the city of Tehuacán, Puebla, in the year 1891, and in Mexico City in 1928." Source: <https://hermanoscongregados.com/>

The address of this AR is: José Moran # 245, Esq. General Villegas, Col. Daniel Garza, Delegación Miguel Hidalgo, C.P. 11830, Mexico, DF. Currently, this AR reports 108 congregations under the name "Centro Evangélico" with most of them located in the states of Puebla (46), Veracruz (12), Mexico (9), and Mexico City, DF (7). for a total of 74 congregations (69 percent) of the 108 reported in 23 states, in addition to 21 missions in the process of being recognized: <https://hermanoscongregados.com/assets/files/Directorio.pdf>

The Plymouth Brethren organization “Christian Missions in Many Lands Inc.” (Belmar, New Jersey) reported on Brethren work in Mexico in its magazine *Missions* in May 2018 (pp. 3-6), under the title “Mexico: A Door through the Spiritual Wall” by Joel Hernández. Below is a graphic from that report, which shows the geographical areas where more than 240 Brethren Assemblies were reported to exist: [https://www.cmml.us/sites/default/files/mag\\_pdf/missions\\_may\\_2018\\_web.pdf](https://www.cmml.us/sites/default/files/mag_pdf/missions_may_2018_web.pdf)



**Admiral Reginald Carey Brenton.** In 1885, General Porfirio Diaz wanted to establish a naval officers’ school in Mexico. Previously Mexico depended on Spain and other European countries for the preparation of its naval officers. President Diaz sent an ambassador to Queen Victoria in England and requested the loan of an officer of the British Royal Navy to train Mexican Naval cadets.

The Queen recommended Admiral Brenton for that assignment, who came from a noble family of seafarers. His grandfather and great grandfather had been admirals. In July 1885, a contract was signed with Admiral Reginald Carey Brenton of the British Royal Navy, who was appointed Captain and naval instructor on the *Zaragoza*. In 1891, the Mexican government signed a contract for the construction of a warship called “El Zaragoza” that later became known as the corvette school. The *Zaragoza*, a 213-foot barque-rigged steamship, was built at the French

shipyards of Forges Chautier and launched from Havre in 1892. The corvette was commissioned in France by Mexican Commodore Ángel Ortiz Monasterio, who sailed her across the Atlantic on her maiden voyage, arriving at Veracruz on 13 February 1892. Captain Brenton was named first commander of the ship and another British officer, Captain Beresford, was second in command. For five years (1892-1897), they prepared young men on the *Zaragoza* who graduated as naval officers. The *Zaragoza* was a corvette of the Mexican Navy in commission from 1892 until 1926.

Under the command of Captain Brenton, the *Zaragoza* sailed back to Europe in October 1892. At the Spanish port of Palos de la Frontera, from where the *Pinta*, *Niña*, and *Santa María* sailed in 1492, she attended the commemorations of the fourth centenary of the discovery of the Americas. The *Zaragoza* acted as guard to the Spanish Royal Yacht and was visited by Queen Maria Christina of Austria. On returning to Mexico, the *Zaragoza* made two further voyages, to New Orleans and to France, before becoming the first Mexican Navy ship to circumnavigate the South American continent. She sailed from Tampico on 5 April 1894, still under Captain Brenton's command, south along the coast of South America and through the Strait of Magellan, and then back north to Acapulco. On 23 April 1896, the ship was placed under the command of Commodore Ángel Ortiz Monasterio. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican\\_corvette\\_Zaragoza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexican_corvette_Zaragoza)



Captain Reginald Carey Brenton, who had a special affection for the Mexican people, resigned from his naval career in 1897 and dedicated himself to traveling on horseback through rural southwestern Mexico and sharing his Christian faith – from Acapulco to Chilpancingo (Guerrero), to Puebla (Puebla) and Tlaxiaco (Oaxaca), and from the Costa Grande to the Costa Chica (the entire coastline of Guerrero) – **as a Christian Brethren missionary**. Captain Brenton's journeys into hard-to-reach terrain was so rugged that off-road travel today is still a challenge.

He died on 18 April 1921 in Ometepec, Guerrero, where he was buried. At that time Ometepec was an isolated town, but it was larger in population than Acapulco, as it was on the route of the horse path that crossed the coast heading to Mexico City. When the government built the Mexico-Acapulco road via Iguala and Chilpancingo, the town of Ometepec was bypassed.

On 24 May 1962, a memorial to Captain-Admiral Brenton was unveiled in Ometepec, and the British embassy sent a flag for the tribute. The Mexican Navy sent a Marine Corps official to guard the memorial, school children were given a history lesson about the frigate school for naval officers, and children made crowns and took them from school to the cemetery for the ceremony. A plaque with a bronze torch was placed on an open Bible with the following words, "The entrance of your Word gives Light." On the bottom of the bronze plaque it says, "Captain R. Carey Brenton Brigadier of the Mexican National Navy and Admiral of the British Royal Navy, December 22, 1848-

April 18, 1921. A servant of God and men, who left his homeland to dedicate his life to Christian service in Mexico."

Nineteen years later, following Captain Brenton's footsteps, in 1940, Dr. James Boyce and his wife Margarita arrived in Ometepec where they founded *Friendship Hospital* along with Reverend John Wood and his wife Magda. Also, the *Colegio Admiral Reginald Carey Brenton* was founded in Ometepec to honor this remarkable man.

Sources: <https://www.facebook.com/247064505829621/posts/522599861609416/>; also, see: *Captain Brenton's Heritage: A Gospel Message for Southwest Mexico, Captain Reginald Carey Brenton, 1848-1921* by Marguerite P. Boyce (Franklin, Tennessee: Providence House Publishers, 1994).

Between 1872 and 1877, the **Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)** had established mission work in and around Mexico City (Rev. and Mrs. H. M. Hutchinson and 19 native preachers and teachers, 10 churches, 45 outstations and 1,857 members) as well as at Tampico on the Gulf coast; and in the northeastern region at Zacatecas and vicinity (Rev. and Mrs. Maxwell Phillips and four native workers), Saltillo and vicinity (Rev. and Mrs. Henry C. Thompson), and San Luís Potosí and vicinity (Rev. D. J. Stewart). The total communicant membership in 1877 was reported as 2,500 (adults). Source: Board of Foreign Missions. *Fortieth Annual Report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, "Missions in Mexico" (pp. 12-16).

These and other early Protestant efforts throughout Mexico were hindered by the violence that exploded during the **Tuxtepec rebellion of 1876-1877** between the government forces of President Lerdo de Tejada and rebel General Porfirio Díaz, as well as persecution – including verbal abuse, stoning, beating, murder and burning down of church buildings – by angry mobs instigated by Catholic priests who opposed the presence and evangelistic activities of Protestant missionaries and their native workers.

In 1868, the **Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (PECUSA)** – officially established in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1789 and formally separated from the Church of England – established a relationship with an independent Catholic Church (non-papal), known as the "*Mexican Church of Jesus*" (*Sociedad Católica Apostólica Mexicana* / Mexican Catholic Apostolic Society, aka Gospel Society of the Mexican Branch of the Church of Jesus), which was organized in 1859 in Mexico City by dissident Catholic priests with the moral support and encouragement of President Juárez. However, financial support from the Juárez government to the dissident priests did not begin until 1861. During the period of French intervention in Mexico (1861-1867), the independent Catholics struggled on their own without government funding. Faced with the removal of government funds, the independent Catholic leadership requested assistance from the Episcopal Church headquarters in New York City, but the Episcopalians – although interested – did not take immediate action to provide funding or personnel.

Upon Juárez' return to power in 1867, the schismatic Catholics were given two church buildings, which had been expropriated by the Juárez government from the Catholic Church in 1860. The dissident Catholics, led by at least 14 former Catholic priests, adopted the name "Iglesia Mexicana de Jesús." This situation prompted the Episcopalians to take immediate action.

In December 1868, diocesan **Bishop Henry C. Riley** was ordained and consecrated by the Episcopal Church in the USA as "Bishop of the Valley of Mexico" for the purpose of providing oversight of the "Mexican Church of Jesus." By 1875, there were 23 *Episcopal Church of Jesus*

congregations in the Valley of Mexico. In 1876, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the USA took over the work of the *American and Foreign Christian Union* (AFCU) in the Valley of Mexico and Morelos under Bishop Riley. Also, in December 1876, **Ramón Betancourt** began mission work in the city of Veracruz and by the end of February 1877 he had formed a congregation of 75 families.

In 1882, Bishop Riley wrote: “This [Mexican] Church is now well organized for work. It has three dioceses, one in the City of Mexico, the second in the Valley of Mexico, and the third in the State of Hidalgo, besides missions in other parts of Central Mexico. Representatives from the Diocesan Synods of these three dioceses form its General Synod... The Mexican Branch of the Church has often cared for over forty congregations connected with its communion; has had about two hundred children frequently in its orphanages and church boarding-schools, and over two hundred more in its day-schools; it has published, and very ably, its Church periodical, *La Verdad*, and done much other Christian work, faithfully teaching the great truths of the Gospel, and exercising a most blessed influence among large numbers.”

Source: <http://anglicanhistory.org/mx/riley1882.html>

In 1884, Bishop Riley resigned his position and the care of the independent “Mexican Church of Jesus” lapsed to the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. The church's local administrator, Henry Forrester, was elected Bishop of the Valley of Mexico, but died before his consecration could take place. In 1904, the Episcopal Church formed all of the Mexican Republic into one Missionary District of Mexico for Anglicans/Episcopalians in the country, which the “Mexican Church of Jesus” joined in 1906.

In 1873, the *Methodist Episcopal Church (North)* sent missionary **William Butler** (1818-1889) and his wife Clementina (1820-1913), both of whom were born in Ireland, to begin mission work in Mexico City. The Butlers previously had founded the Methodist Mission in India in 1856 and, after their return to the USA, William had served as Secretary for the *American and Foreign Christian Union* (AFCU) for three years, 1869-1872. Soon after his arrival in Mexico City in February 1873, Butler purchased from the government properties that formerly belonged to the Franciscan Order of the Catholic Church, where he established the Methodist headquarters. The property in the heart of Mexico City covered four city blocks and included a large church building and four chapels, along with an interior courtyard with adjacent residences, dining rooms and prayer rooms. It was dedicated as a Methodist church on Christmas Day, 1873 (Butler 1918:20, 40, 45).

Butler began his task by recruiting a team of people who were already Protestants, including several former Catholic priests, with whom to begin the mission of the Methodist Church. As the work progressed, Methodist work was soon extended to the cities of Puebla, Pachuca, Orizaba, Querétaro, Guanajuato and Oaxaca. However, these mission efforts faced great obstacles because of the explicit rejection and hostility of the Catholic clergy and their parishioners, which often led to violence against Protestant ministers and their converts (Abraham and Kirby, 2009:145).

Butler informed his superiors in the USA that between 1873 and 1892, 58 Protestant church members had been killed, including one missionary, as the result of attacks by Catholic mobs that directed their violence against Mexican converts (Bastian 1983:76).

Between 1876 and 1910, the *Methodist Episcopal Church (North)* established a chain of mission stations, churches, schools, orphanages and hospitaes in cities along some of the main railroad lines, starting from Mexico City and outward to Pachuca, Guanajuato, Tlaxcala-Puebla, and along the Orizaba, Córdoba-Tuxtepec corridor. By 1910, the Northern Methodists had

established 53 churches (*templos*) and 38 parsonages, with 42 ordained pastors, 30 local preachers and 6,283 church members (Bastian 1983:71-74).

The Methodist Episcopal Church (North) mission established the Methodist Theological Seminary (*Seminario Teológico Metodista*) in the City of Puebla in 1886, under the direction of its founder, Dr. Charles W. Drees (1851-1926), who, in 1878, had been appointed Superintendent of the Mexico Mission. In one of his letters, written after he returned to the USA, he stated: "In Mexico, I had the honor to spend 13 years of hard and dangerous service... Among the early workers there whose names deserve to be immortalized in Methodist annals are the Butler family, father and son, inaugurators of the Mexican mission; Craver, the founder of that of Guanajuato; Siberts, the principal of Puebla Seminary; Smith, the evangelist and story-teller; Greenman, the invader of those two fanatical strongholds, Queretaro and Celaya; and Salmans, the medical missionary... Besides these there were Monroy, Fernández, Palacios, Loza, Gamboa, and other Mexican ministers, worthy to stand in the foremost rank."

Source: Drees, Charles William (author), Ada M. C. Drees (editor). *Thirteen Years in Mexico (1915): From Letters from Charles William Drees*. Whitefish, MT: A Classic reprint by Kessinger Publishing, 2008; available at:

<https://www.amazon.com/Thirteen-Years-Mexico-Letters-Charles/dp/1437434878>

For a general history of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) in Mexico prior to 1918, see: Butler, John Wesley. *History of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Mexico: Personal Reminiscences, Present Conditions and Future Outlook* (New York City, NY: The Methodist Book Concern, 1918), available at:

[https://ia600203.us.archive.org/2/items/historyofmethodi00butl/historyofmethodi00butl\\_bw.pdf](https://ia600203.us.archive.org/2/items/historyofmethodi00butl/historyofmethodi00butl_bw.pdf)

**Editorial note:** *The Methodist Episcopal Church*, founded in 1784, became divided along regional lines during 1844-1846 when pro-slavery Methodists in the South formed their own *Methodist Episcopal Church, South*, whereas in the Northern states the Methodists were largely opposed to the system of slavery, a conflict that later resulted in the Civil War (1861-1865) between the Northern and Southern states. By February 1861, seven Southern states had seceded from the Union. On February 4 of that year, representatives from South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana met in Montgomery, Alabama, with representatives from Texas arriving later, to form the *Confederate States of America* (1861-1865), which was defeated by Union forces in 1865. *The Methodist Church* was the official name adopted by the Methodist denomination formed in the USA in 1939, at the reunification the northern and southern factions of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

In 1873, the *Methodist Episcopal Church (South)* sent **Bishop John C. Keener** (1819-1906), who previously had been the Superintendent of Chaplains for the Confederate States of America west of the Mississippi River during the Civil War (1861-1865), to begin work in Mexico City. At about the same time, Southern Methodist missionaries **Alexander H. Southerland** and **William M. Patterson** began to evangelize towns near the northern frontier and into the central region of Mexico. Their work was extended and consolidated in the cities of Toluca, El Oro, Guadalajara, San Luís Potosí, Monterrey, Saltillo, Nuevo Laredo, Torreón, Chihuahua, Juarez and Durango. In 1885, the first annual conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) was held in Mexico City, with Bishop William Harris presiding (Abraham and Kirby, 2009:145).

The Central College (*Colegio Central*), later known as the Wesleyan School of Theology, was founded in the city of San Luís Potosí by the Methodist Episcopal Church (South) mission in 1889 to provide theological and practical training for its pastors and workers. *Francisco Olazábal* (1886-

1937), born in Sinaloa, studied for the Methodist ministry there between 1908-1910, then pastored Spanish-speaking Methodist churches in El Paso, Texas (1911), and several places in California (1913-1916) with the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) before becoming a Pentecostal in 1917 in Oakland, California, in the home of George and Carrie Judd Montgomery (Espinosa 2008:268-271).

**Editorial note:** *The Rev. Francisco Olazábal* became affiliated with the Assemblies of God in California in 1917, then was associated with the Rev. H. C. Ball in the Latin American District Council in Texas during 1918-1922 before leaving and becoming a founder of the *Interdenominational Mexican Council of Christian Churches* (IMCCC) in March 1923, based in San Antonio, which by the end of 1924 had over 30 affiliated churches in the USA and Mexico. He went on to become internationally famous for conduct “evangelistic healing crusades” across the USA and in the Caribbean (mainly Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic) and Mexico (including a major crusade in Mexico City). He was called the “Mexican Billy Sunday” (a famous North American evangelist between 1893 and 1935) by healing evangelist Aimee Simple McPherson who founded the Foursquare Gospel Church in Los Angeles in 1923. Following Olazábal’s tragic death in an automobile accident while travelling in Texas in 1937, the IMCCC split into three groups, the **Latin American Council of Christian Churches** (*Concilio Latino-Americano de Iglesias Cristianas* - CLADIC) in Houston, Texas (among Mexican-Americans), led by the Rev. Miguel Guillén, which later established five administrative districts in Mexico with 55 churches by 1971 (Holland 1974:372-375); the **Assembly of Christian Churches** (*Asamblea de Iglesias Cristianas* – AIC) in 1939, mainly among Puerto Ricans in the New York City metropolitan area, led by the Rev. Carlos Sepúlveda; and the **Olazábal Council of Latin American Churches** (*Concilio Olazábal de Iglesias Latino-americanas*) in Los Angeles in 1942, led by Francisco’s widow, Macrina Orozco, and other family members. In 1980, the Olazábal Council was given a new name, under which it would work for almost 20 years: “Concilio Cristiano Hispano Pentecostés, Inc”. In 2000, a group of pastors and workers made the decision to give a new name to the council: “Evangelical Church of Jesus Christ, Inc.” (*Iglesia Evangélica de Jesucristo, Inc.*). This Hispanic denomination has affiliated churches in Mexico.

In 1886, the *Cumberland Presbyterian Church* (organized between 1810 and 1829 in Dickson County, Tennessee, among expelled members of the PCUSA over the issue of clergy education) sent the **Rev. Archibald H. Whatley** (1856-1918) as a missionary to Mexico. After 14 months spent in the study of the language, the people, and the field, Aguascalientes, a city of 35,000 inhabitants located in the state of the same name, was selected as his base of operation. There a church was organized in 1889. The Griffin Industrial School for boys was established in 1898. Likewise, a school for girls, Colegio Morales, in which Miss Mary Turner and Miss Kate Spencer taught, was begun. Source: <http://www.cumberland.org/hfcpc/goodnews.htm>

In 1874, the *Southern Presbyterians* (which officially became the **Presbyterian Church in the U.S.** after 1865) began work in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, with missionary **Anthony T. Graybill**. The *Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church* (organized in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1782) sent the **Rev. and Mrs. Neill Erskine Pressley** to Mexico City in 1878 for language study, after which they relocated to Tampico, Tamaulipas, in 1879 to begin their mission work. Also, in 1878, an *American Bible Society Agency* was established in Mexico City under the **Rev. Arthur Gore** that took over the work begun earlier by the *British & Foreign Bible Society* (BFBS, 1863-1875).

The *Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention* (FMBSBC) – organized in 1845 at Augusta, Georgia, by Baptists in the Southern U.S. who split with northern Baptists over the issue of slavery, specifically whether Southern slave owners could serve as missionaries – began

to sponsor (with financial support from the Baptist State Convention of Texas) the work of **John O. Westrup** (a brother of pastor Thomas M. Westrup in Monterrey) in Múzquiz, Coahuila, in northern Mexico in September 1880. However, Westrup was murdered – along with his traveling com-panion Basilio Flores – about two months later while traveling to the town of Progreso, Coahuila, located about 120 miles west of Laredo, Texas.

**William and Victoria Flournoy** of the border town of Loredo, Texas, were appointed by the Baptist State Convention of Texas and the FMBSBC in December 1881 to take Westrup’s place and to supervise the churches he had started in Progreso, Villa de Juárez and San Juan de Sabinas, along with the Baptist church in Múzquiz, all of which were located in the state of Coahuila. The Flournoys were the first official FMBSBC missionaries to serve in Mexico. By the time the Flournoys resigned from the Mission in 1887, they had helped to establish new churches in Salinas, Vildarma and Lampazos, as well as beginning evangelistic work among the Indigenous tribes in the mountains of Coahuila, which resulted in a “small people’s movement to Christianity,” according to Anderson (2005:90-91).

**The Rev. William D. Powell** (1854-1934) was the second official FMBSBC missionary to serve in Mexico, beginning in July 1882. Previously, he had been the Secretary of the Sunday School Convention of Texas Baptists, who had meet Thomas M. Westrup and was familiar with his work in Mexico. Powell, with his wife and sister-in-law, settled in Saltillo, the state capital of Coahuila. Powell was a well-educated leader with vision and unlimited energy, according to Anderson (2005:92), who after three years of evangelistic efforts had organized a Baptist church in Saltillo, along with an association of eight Baptist churches in the zone and a school for girls, and had initiated the publication of a Baptist magazine. After obtained financial support in Texas, the Powells bought property and established the Madero Institute in 1884, with José María Cárdenas as its first director; previously, Cárdenas had been the Superintendent of Public Schools for the state of Coahuila, who was converted and baptized by the missionary. Powell also began a Center for Theological Studies, which later developed into the Zaragoza Institute, both of which were forced to close during the Revolution of 1914.

**Seventh-Day Adventists.** In 1891, an Italian-American Adventist missionary, Salvador Marchisio, arrived in Mexico City to distribute 2,500 copies of *The Great Controversy*, a book written by Ellen G. White (1827-1915), a co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863 in Battle Creek, Michigan. Later, in 1899, George Washington Cavines, together with other missionaries, established the first Adventist church with 20 members, located in the Escandon neighborhood of Mexico City, as reported in the book *100 Años del Adventismo en Mexico / 100 years of Adventism in Mexico*, authored by Adventist pastor Velino Salazar. Today, Mexico City and its metropolitan region has 254 Adventist churches and more than 88,000 church members.

“From the very first church established, the publishing house, the first school that later changed its headquarters to Montemorelos, Nuevo León, and later the Sanitarium, we have witnessed the great progress of the work in Mexico,” said David Javier, president of Adventist-operated GEMA Editores (Mexican Adventist Editorial Group) and a member of the Tacubaya church. Source: <https://www.adventistreview.org/church-news/story14583-first-adventist-church-organized-in-mexico-celebrates-120-years-of-ministry>

**Historically, the Mexico Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church / Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día** grew from one church in 1894 (Guadalajara), to two churches with 121 members in 1908, to eight churches with 280 members in 1921, and to 29 churches with 593 members in 1925. In early 1894, a missionary team led by D.T. Jones, plus a doctor, two nurses, and a teacher

was sent and supported by the General Conference to establish a mission station in **Guadalajara**. There, a doctor's office and a kindergarten were started, and materials in Spanish began to be prepared to spread the Adventist message. Two years later, on 1 January 1896, they managed to start the publication of *El Amigo de la Verdad*, the first Adventist magazine published in Spanish in Mexico. The medical work in Guadalajara prospered in such a way that on 1 January 1899, the Adventist hospital was inaugurated in a brand-new building constructed for this purpose with the help of North American Adventists.

In 1899, a group of missionaries headed by Pastor George W. Caviness and made up of the Marchisio and the Cooper spouses left Guadalajara for Mexico City to begin their missionary program there. Caviness and his team moved to Mexico City the printing house where the magazine *El Amigo de la Verdad* was printed, which they changed its name to *The Messenger of Truth* and established the Tacubaya Adventist temple, the first Adventist church in the capital. Mexico City became the center of Adventist work in the Mexican Republic.

Pastor Caviness, a very cultured man, remained in Mexico for 25 years, from 1897 to 1922, and was the leader of the Mexican Mission, as it was called, during the difficult years from 1911 to 1920 (Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920). Thanks to the diffusion that the magazine *El Mensajero de la Verdad*, which was being sent to many parts of the Republic, many people became interested in the Adventist message, and many were later disciplined and baptized. Among the new adherents were many members of other Protestant denominations.

From Mexico City the work spread, beginning in 1900, to the states of Puebla, Oaxaca and Chiapas, through the work of colporteurs and using the magazine. In 1903, the missionary work spread to the states of San Luis Potosí, Coahuila, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, Puebla, Veracruz, Tabasco and others. *The third city, after Guadalajara and Mexico, that had an Adventist congregation was San Luis Potosí, which became an important center for the dissemination of Adventist doctrine to the central states of the country.* There, Marchisio also developed an important missionary work.

It was in 1903, when the decision was made to permanently change the headquarters of the Adventist Church from Guadalajara to Mexico City, due to the success it had had in that place, and it was established in Tacubaya. On this occasion, the Adventist work in Mexico was called the **Mexican Mission**, its first president was Pastor George M. Brown. In 1904, Ellen G. White's book, *Steps to Christ / El Camino a Cristo* (first published in 1892 by Fleming H. Revell Company), was translated and published in Spanish and sold by colporteurs on their journeys across the country.

Also, in 1904, a printing press was installed at the church in Tacubaya, which was the first Adventist printing press in Mexico and in all of Latin America, and the *La Verdad Publications Company* was created. By this year the Adventist work had grown so much that it was possible to hold the first Adventist administrative congress in Mexico, from September 14 to 19 in the national capital, with representatives of the groups established in different parts of the country. In 1905, the second Adventist magazine was published: *The Christian's Hope / La esperanza del cristiano*.

In 1907, in a Mexican population of 13,697,259 inhabitants, there were only 55 baptized Adventists, plus another 55 who were preparing for baptism. In July 1908, the first colporteur congress in the history of publications was held in Mexico. On 21 September 1910, the first seminary or school was opened to prepare the agents that the IASD needed in the country, but it could not function for long due to the disturbances of the Revolution. During those difficult years, the La Verdad Publications Company had to be closed as well, and books and magazines in Spanish were printed in Panama. There, the magazine *The Messenger of Truth* became *Signs of the Times* and later became "The Sentinel and Herald of Health" / *El Centinela y Heraldo de la*

*Salud*, the current magazine *El Centinela*.

In 1921, the **Mexican Mission** was organized into three districts: Northeast, Central, and South. In 1922, another three districts were added: West, North Central and Southwest. In 1926, the Mexican Mission ceased to depend on the General Association in the USA and was redefined as the **Mexican Union**, which included six missions: Central, Gulf, Lago, Sonora, Tehuantepec and Yucatán.

In 1931, the *Mexican Adventist College* was established in Tacubaya to prepare pastors. In 1933, the first seven Mexican pastors were ordained. During these years, the Adventist Church in Mexico still continued to depend heavily on foreigners, since both the president of the Mexican Union and the leaders of the six missions were all North Americans. The first three Mexican pastors in positions of responsibility were appointed in 1937. The first Mexican to hold the presidency of a mission, the Central Mission, was Pastor Emiliano Ponce, in 1935.

In the decade from 1941 to 1950, the Adventist Church in Mexico experienced significant advancement, especially with regard to its educational and health work. In 1942, there were 104 churches in the country with 5,342 baptized members in the four missions that existed then: Central, Golfo, Pacífico and Tehuantepec.

Also, in 1942, the Mexican Agricultural and Industrial School was founded in Montemorelos, Nuevo León, which later became a university. In 1946, the Montemorelos Hospital and Sanatorium was founded. In 1948, the Pacific Agricultural and Industrial School was begun, today the Pacific College, as well as the Southeast Agricultural and Industrial School, now Colegio Linda Vista. In 1948, the territories of the six missions were reorganized and remained that way until 1974.

In 1960, for a total population in the country of 30,593,660, there were 21,750 Seventh-day Adventists among 185 churches. There were six organized missions: Central, North, and Pacific, organized in 1924; South, organized in 1944; and Sureste and Interoceanic, organized in 1948.

At the end of that decade (1969), the number of baptized church members reached 42,656, distributed in 249 churches. The Adventist Church had 37 primary schools and three colleges in the country with a total of 3,567 students. There were 77 ordained pastors and 2,735 lay preachers. In 1970, the first national president of the Mexican Union was elected; until then all the presidents had been North Americans, since Mexico was considered a mission of the Inter-American Division, which in turn depended on the General Conference based in the USA. The first Mexican president was Pastor Velino Salazar Escarpulli, age 42.

In 1973, the Evangelism Center was built in Mexico City, which began to function as the largest Adventist temple in the country, located in Colonia San Rafael in the center of the city. In 1973, the Adventist University of Montemorelos, Nuevo León, was founded in the place where the Agricultural and Industrial School had operated since 1942.

In 1974, Adventist church members in Mexico numbered 72,807. In 1975, Mexico was the nation with the highest number of baptisms for that year in the denomination, with 10,931. In 1977, due to the advancement and consolidation achieved by the Mexican Union, it was elevated by the Inter-American Adventist Division, from the category of Mission to that of Union Association, with Pastor Samuel Guízar remaining as president. For that year (1977), the Adventist Baptist membership already totaled 100,451. In 1985, the Mexican Union was divided into two unions: the Northern Mexican Union and the Southern Mexican Union.

In 1991, when the Adventist Church reached one-hundred years of its founding in Mexico, its statistics were as follows: for a total population of 85,699,987, there were 355,274 Adventist church members, 1,101 churches, 4,526 Sabbath schools with 457,567 members, 211 ordained pastors, and 1,667 active lay-workers. The educational work included 66 kindergartens, 111

primary schools, 52 secondary and 30 preparatory schools, two colleges and a university. The Pacific Agricultural and Industrial School, founded in 1948 in Navojoa, Sonora, which in 1967 was called the Pacific College, in 1995 became the University of Navojoa; and in 2001, the Linda Vista Adventist College, located in Pueblo Nuevo, Solistahuacan, Chiapas, became Universidad Linda Vista.

Adapted from:

<http://www3.uacj.mx/UEHS/Documents/Mapa%20Religioso/Iglesia%20adventista.pdf>

According to the 2019 statistical report, there were 4,734 churches with 774,296 Adventist church members in Mexico: [http://adventiststatistics.org/view\\_Summary.asp?FieldID=D\\_IAD#SubFields](http://adventiststatistics.org/view_Summary.asp?FieldID=D_IAD#SubFields)

The Adventist Church in Mexico was organized in five major regions in 2019:

FIELD NAME	# CHURCHES	MEMBERS
<a href="#">Central Mexican Union Mission</a>	253	88,188
<a href="#">Chiapas Mexican Union Conference</a>	1,392	253,732
<a href="#">Inter-Oceanic Mexican Union Conference</a>	1,789	203,481
<a href="#">North Mexican Union Conference</a>	698	149,929
<a href="#">Southeast Mexican Union Mission</a>	602	78,966
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4734</b>	<b>774,296</b>

The *Young Men's Christian Association* (YMCA, founded in London, England, in 1844) arrived in Mexico City in 1892. The *Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference* (organized in 1802 in Hopkinton, Rhode Island) began work in Mexico in 1893.

**Between 1900 and 1949, at least 50 Protestant church bodies or mission agencies were established in Mexico, along with a few independent Mexican denominations, including the following.** By 1900, Holiness missionary Fred J. Smith had founded “Peniel Mission” in Progreso, Yucatán, and the **Peniel Missionary Society** (founded in 1895 in Los Angeles, California) began work in Mexico in 1906.

**The Church of the Nazarene** is part of the Wesleyan-Holiness tradition; it was organized as part of merger with several other similar denominations in 1908 in Pilot Point, Texas; its headquarters are now in Lenexa, Kansas. The first Church of the Nazarene was founded in October 1895 in Los Angeles, California, by Dr. Phineas F. Bresee, a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Dr. Joseph Pomeroy Widney, a Methodist physician, and the second president of the University of Southern California.

The **Church of the Nazarene** unofficially began work in Tonalá, Chiapas, in 1903, with support from the Holiness Association of Texas (1877-1908), which became part of the Church of the Nazarene in 1908. In Mexico, in 1908, S.M. Stafford's support was authorized for missionary service; he attended the union assemblies of Chicago and Pilot Point, as well as many others, also he began to write a column in the *Nazarene Messenger*, months before the southern union conference. Months later the denomination did not risk accepting responsibility for the work in Mexico due to its disorganized condition, but the group from the south that had sponsored it originally did not abandon the missionaries it had sent.

Later the difficulties of the work in Mexico, during the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920, emphasized the urgent need for accurate information. J.D. Scott and Dennis Rogers proposed to the mission board to buy the printing press of the *Holiness Evangel* magazine and move it to Tonalá, Chiapas, Mexico. Where they would open a new mission field and publish a mission magazine for the entire denomination, yet disorganization reigned for a whole year. In the end, the General Assembly of 1911 attempted to assist the work in Mexico, but the revolution that broke out in those years forced all the missionaries to return home.

In 1912, despite the revolutionary war and the prohibition of foreign missionaries, a Mexican citizen, Dr. V. G. Santín (a medical doctor), established a thriving congregation in Mexico City. In 1919, Santín was the first national minister appointed superintendent of a Nazarene mission field. Soon, with encouragement and advice from J. D. Scott and General Superintendent John W. Goodwin (served 1915-1940), Santín reopened missions in the southeastern region, down to the state of Chiapas, missions that had been closed for up to seven years. By the end of 1927, there were 11 pastors and 12 congregations with 475 members in Mexico, almost as many as in the mission field in Africa, which began years earlier, despite the fact that only Dr. Santín was directly under the General Board. Source:

[https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iglesia\\_del\\_Nazareno#Historia\\_en\\_M%C3%A9xico](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iglesia_del_Nazareno#Historia_en_M%C3%A9xico)

During the 1990s, the mission strategy for the Church of the Nazarene in Mexico changed from the traditional form of worship to a more contemporary one, and they are now using newer systems of evangelization. For example, more emphasis is placed on forming home groups rather than getting people to the local church, since people traditionally only go to church on Sunday mornings. So, now most of the work is being done during the week in homes, led by lay leaders who have been trained for this ministry.

The ministries in the homes are diverse; some are Bible studies, others watch a biblical documentary film and discuss it, others develop family support and aid such as counseling. In the context of the larger cities, many decaying family structures are present. Now, people are more receptive to family counseling. The church is there to offer support by addressing specific needs within the congregation.

Previously, the Mexico field was divided into Southern and Northern regions, now it is being united as a single area. The Area Strategy Coordinator is Dr. Jorge Córdova, with two development offices, one in Guadalajara and the other in Tuxtla, Gutiérrez. The theological education institution that will serve this area will be SENAMEX, Seminario Nazareno Mexicano (Ciudad de México).

*Ely Camas Pérez*, a third-generation Nazarene, lives in Mexico City where he is superintendent of the Mexico Central District. Born and raised in the state of Chiapas, he serves on the denomination's General Board and is past president of the church's National Board of the Church of the Nazarene in Mexico. Currently, he is rector of the Mexican Nazarene Seminary, also.

The General Board is composed of district superintendents, pastors, and lay leaders representing the global church and elected at General Assembly. Convening in late February each year, the board has governing responsibility for the international Church of the Nazarene between general assemblies. The General Board carries out the corporate business of the denomination.

In 1936, it was reported that the Church of the Nazarene in Mexico had 2,000 members, according to a study published in 1938 by the *International Missionary Council*. For the year 2000, Dr. Peter Brierly (1997) estimated that there were 350 organized Nazarene churches and missions with 32,500 members in Mexico. In 2008, the Church of the Nazarene reported 616 churches and

40,000 members. For 2010, the *Operation World 2010 Database* reported 727 churches and missions with 52,987 members, but this may have been major over-estimate.

Sources: <http://www.mesoamericaregion.org/areas/area-mexico/>

**Protestant mission work in Northern Mexico.** Sometime before 1905, wealthy Irish-American businessman *George S. Montgomery* (1851-1930) of Oakland, California, bought a group of gold mines – which he and his business partners named La Trinidad Mining Company – in Nacozari, Sonora, where he aided in the evangelization of his mine workers as he had done previously among other people on business trips to Mexico. In 1890, he had married the famous *Carrie Francis Judd* (1858-1946) at her parents' home in Buffalo, New York. Judd was an early leader – described later as “a gifted minister-teacher, writer, editor, director of faith homes, and social worker whose ministry spanned 65-years” – in the Holiness, Divine Healing and later Pentecostal movements. After their marriage, the Montgomerys became affiliated with the *Salvation Army* and the *Christian & Missionary Alliance* in various Christian activities in the San Francisco Bay Area, often initiated and financed by themselves, as well as nationally and internationally. Sources: Stock (Spring 1989:5,17-18) and (Summer 1989:12-14, 20) and Miskof (2011:103-142).

By 1907, Nacozari had become the metropolis of far northeastern Sonora, with a population of about 5,000 people, mostly Mexicans and Americans, with some Chinese. Nacozari is located at an elevation of 1,040 meters in a mountainous valley, about 123 km (76 mi) south of the U.S.-Mexican border at Agua Prieta, Mexico / Douglas, Arizona. The export of gold, silver and copper ore became much easier in 1904 when a standard gauge railway line from Agua Prieta-Douglas was extended to Nacozari by the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad (founded in 1888), which had connections east to El Paso, Texas, and west to Benson, Arizona, where it connected to the Union Pacific Railroad with links to major cities in California. This is the route travelled by George Montgomery from Oakland, California, to Nacozari, Sonora, Mexico, during the early 1900s.

After the famous “Azusa Street Revival” brought the Pentecostal message to California and spread the news around the world during 1906-1913, George Montgomery made a special trip to the *Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM)* on Azusa Street in Los Angeles in late 1906, where he himself became a Pentecostal. Although Carrie Montgomery visited the AFM in January 1907, she remained skeptical until she received the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and spoke with tongues (*glossolalia*) in June 1908. During each of his later visits to Nacozari, George Montgomery shared the Pentecostal message and distributed New Testaments and Gospel tracts in Spanish among his workers as well as among the transitory inhabitants of the nearby mining camps and towns.

Independent Pentecostal missionary *George Thomas* (later, an Assemblies of God minister from 1916-1921), a participant in the Azusa Street Revival, was invited by Montgomery to preach the Gospel to the miners in Nacozari, where worship services were begun in a vacant store in 1911. During an open-air evangelistic campaign in Nacozari in 1913, led by Carrie Montgomery and George Thomas and assisted by several Mexican evangelists, many people were converted and five were “baptized in the Holy Spirit,” which led to the establishment of a small Pentecostal mission there. During those days, *Jesse E. Morgan*, the manager of Montgomery's mines, and his two daughters conducted evangelistic work in nearby mining camps (Stock, Summer 1989:12-14).

Later, *Concepción Morgan* (1898-1983), one of Jesse Morgan's daughters who received the “baptism in the Holy Spirit” in 1913 in Nacozari, became a pioneer Latina Pentecostal evangelist, pastor and women's leader in northern Mexico and Arizona while traveling the region on horseback, before and after her marriage in 1919 to an Anglo-American Pentecostal minister, Lloyd Howard, who was pastoring a small Mexican congregation in Arizona.

### **History of the Assemblies of God in Mexico.**

By 1915, the Montgomerys, Thomas and Morgan had become affiliated with the **Assemblies of God** (a Trinitarian-Pentecostal body founded in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1914), as well as some of their converts in Sonora, such as *Fermín Escárcega*, *Antonio Delarré* and *Octavio Lostanau*, who preached the Gospel among the scattered mining camps and ranches of Sonora between 1915 and 1918. *Fermin Escárcega* and his wife established an Assemblies of God church in Tacupeto, Sonora, and *Antonio Belarré* founded one in Agua Prieta between 1920 and 1922 (De la Luz García 2010:52).

In 1917, *John A. Preston* (in Nacozari, Sonora, México) wrote: “We are praising God por the way He is blessing these neglected souls. Some are getting saved and baptized in the Spirit. A Yaqui Indian received his baptism and now God is giving him a revival among his own people, a savage tribe who still worship their Indian Gods. We expect to be working with this brother soon. Please prey that these hungry souls may get the light before Jesus comes” (*The Pentecostal Evangel*, July 1917).

The *Rev. Henry C. Ball* (1896-1989), at age 21, became the first superintendent of Hispanic ministry for the **Assemblies of God** (AoG) in Texas in 1917; he pastored a Spanish-speaking church in Brownsville, Texas, and began to visit towns on the Mexican side of the border. In September 1917, *Miss Sunshine Marshall* (who later became Ball’s wife) and *Miss Alice Luce* began an evangelistic ministry in Monterrey, Nuevo León, but they were forced to return to the USA after a short stay of three months. *Miguel Guillén* and *Felipe Douglas Millisted* (Afro-American) founded **the first AoG church in Mexico** in the town of Villanueva (Rancho La Rosita), Tamaulipas, in 1917 (Jetter 1990:17).

*Francisca D. Blaisdell* (maiden name unknown, ca. 1885-1941), along with her Anglo-American husband the *Rev. George Blaisdell*, pioneered evangelistic work along the Arizona-Mexican border in Douglas-Agua Prieta and Nacozari, beginning in 1915. Francesca, born in Sonora, was ordained a missionary-evangelist in 1923 by Superintendent Henry C. Ball of the **Latin American District of the Assemblies of God** (founded in January 1918 in Kingsville, Texas), and she later pastored AoG churches in Douglas, Arizona (1932-1933), El Paso, Texas (1933-1935), and Agua Prieta, Sonora (1938-1939). Source: Alexander and Yong (2009:102).

Between 1919 and 1929, George and Francisca Blaisdell began missionary work in Moctezuma, Tula de Allende (Hidalgo), and later in San Luís Potosí (SLP), with assistance from *Fermin Escárcega*. The Blaisdells only resided in a town until they founded a local church with its own pastor, then they moved on the next town. In 1921, *Cesáreo Burciága* began his evangelistic ministry in his wife’s hometown of Agujita, Coahuila, where he received the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” while working in a mine. After several others were converted and “filled with the Holy Spirit,” a worship service was begun in one of the believer’s houses. Later, the Burciága family moved to Múzquiz, Coahuila, where they planted another church in 1922. The AoG temple in Múzquiz was the first one constructed for the AoG in Mexico (Jetter 1990:18-19).

In 1921, *Anna Sanders* (1869-1955), an immigrant from Denmark to Canada, arrived in Mexico City by train when she was 52 years old without knowing the language and with only \$10 in her pocket. She was met by *David and Raquel Ruesga* who, together with Sanders, rented a small house and began prayer meetings and held their first worship services with eight adults and five children, all seated on the floor. Later they purchased wooden benches, a few chairs and a pulpit for the small church. From this small beginning was born the “mother church” of the Assemblies of God in Mexico City. Sanders sustained herself by selling Bibles and sewing clothes.

Later, Sanders served as an AoG missionary in Havana, Cuba (1931-1936), and Mérida, Yucatán (1948-1950), Mexico.

In 1922, *Rodolfo C. Orozco* returned to Monterrey, Mexico, from Houston, Texas, where he had gone to work as a farm worker in 1915. He was converted in an English-speaking church in Pasadena, Texas, and a month later he was “baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Soon he felt called to the ministry and pastored a church in Houston from 1917 to 1920; he later became a co-pastor with H. C. Ball in San Antonio. After his wife died in Houston in 1922, Rodolfo and his ten-year-old son Juanito made the journey to Monterrey where he hoped to evangelize his family before dying of tuberculosis. However, soon after his return to Monterrey, he testified that “God had healed him” of this disease, and he went on to found a church there, later to become director of a Bible institute and a national executive with the Assemblies of God in Mexico. In 1924, the new church in Monterrey had over 100 members, and the following year 52 new believers were baptized in water, with one receiving the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” as he arose from the baptismal pool. This was the beginning of work of the AoG in Monterrey, which by 1990 had 105 organized AoG churches.

During the 1920s, members of the Assemblies of God, along with those of other Protestant denominations in Mexico, were persecuted by groups of fanatical Catholics and the work was hindered by anti-religious policies of the federal government. However, the work of the Assemblies of God continued to grow, especially in the northern and central regions of Mexico.

By 1926, there were 25 organized AoG congregations in Mexico, but only four of them had their own temples. At that time, new laws were passed by the government that prohibited the holding of worship services anywhere but in temples built for that purpose, which then became the property of the government and a permit was required to allow worship services to be conducted in them.

In 1929, the AoG held its organizational convention in Mexico City as a national and independent denomination in Mexico, with *David G. Ruesga* as its first superintendent, who previously worked with missionary Anna Sanders in Mexico City beginning in 1921. From 1920 to 1928, the AoG work in Mexico was under the supervision of Henry C. Ball in San Antonio, Texas, who made frequent trips to Mexico and participated in the national conventions. Since 1929, the Assemblies of God progressively implemented its Sunday School program to meet the need of teaching the Bible to its members in local churches. At the same convention, a provision was made for materials to be written for the Sunday School curriculum, called “The Expositor” / *El Expositor*.

Sunday School was for a long time uniquely synonymous with Christian education. Rubén J. Arévalo, by agreement of the Executive Presbytery, was the first General Director of Sunday Schools, beginning in 1946. In this same year, at the XVII National Convention held in the city of Monterrey, *La Guía Dominical* and *El Expositor Evangélico* were institutionalized as study materials for the Sunday schools of that time.

In 1930, pastor *David G. Ruesga* in Mexico City decided to separate from the AoG and form his own rival organization, later called the **National Christian Church of the Assemblies of God / Iglesia Cristiana Nacional de las Asambleas de Dios (ICNAD)**, and became affiliated with the *Church of God (Cleveland, TN)* in 1940. However, Ruesga and his affiliated churches became independent again in 1946 as the **Church of God of the Mexican Republic / Iglesia de Dios de la República Mexicana (IDRM)**.

*Rodolfo C. Orozco*, a pastor in Monterrey, was appointed the new AoG superintendent for Mexico in 1930 and the work continued to advance during the next 10 years. Rubén Arévalo soon

founded a new AoG church in another part of Mexico City, called Iglesia Getsemaní, with the assistance of missionary Anna Sanders, who later became an AoG missionary in Havana, Cuba (1931-1936). Arévalo pastored this church for the next 50 years. In 1936, a temple was built for Getsemani Church that seated 1,000 people.

Under Orozgo's leadership, the AoG placed greater emphasis on the training national workers by establishing Bible institutes in each region. Pastor Rubén Arévalo founded the Elim Bible Institute in Mexico City in 1934. The students, with support from Getsemaní Church, began to evangelize communities throughout Mexico City and establish daughter churches. Another Bible Institute, Magdiel, was founded in Ciudad Victoria, Tamaulipas, in 1935, but it closed in 1939 for a lack of professors and funds; it was reopened in 1945 but relocated to El Control, Tamaulipas, in 1950 and to Matamoros, Tamaulipas in 1953, across the U.S.-Mexico border from Brownsville, Texas. The Alba Bible Institute was opened in Monterrey, Nuevo León, in 1940, under the leadership of Rodolfo and Beatriz Orozco. In 1947, Bethel Bible Institute was founded in Mérida, Yucatán, by Araiza and María de la Paz, and missionary Anna Sanders also taught there for three years, after returning to Mexico from Cuba. Also, in 1947, Betania Bible Institute was founded in Tijuana, Baja California.

In 1940, Rodolfo Orozco resigned as superintendent due to poor health, and *Rubén Arévalo* became the new superintendent, with Juan Orozco as national secretary for four years. Then *Juan Orozco* became the new superintendent in 1944, followed by *Guillermo Fuentes* in 1960. In 1951, the denomination organized its work in three districts, and added a fourth in 1964.

During the 1940s, the work of the AoG in Mexico suffered from widespread persecution by Catholic mobs organized by local Catholic priests, as detailed by author Luisa Jetter de Walker in *Siembra y Cosecha: Las Asambleas de Dios en México y Centroamerica* (Editorial Vida, 1990:26-27). By 1946, at least 59 AoG members had been killed by machettes or stoning, beaten to death or shot, with the form of violence varying from place to place, with little or no protection provided by local government authorities. In 1951 alone, more than 30 evangelicals had been martyred in Mexico, and evangelical children were persecuted in the public schools, more so in rural areas than in cities.

For 20 years in Mexico the opportunity existed for evangelicals to buy time on commercial radio stations for cultural programs with evangelical music but with no preaching. By 1962, the AoG sponsored two weekly programs, and by 1968 there were 15. However, in 1978, the federal government prohibited 50 evangelical radio programs from being broadcast, and in 1980 all religious radio programs were prohibited. Nevertheless, evangelical radio programs from HCJB in Quito, Ecuador, were heard in Mexico, as well as similar programs that were broadcast from radio stations in the USA along the border with Mexico.

During the 1960s and 1970s, AoG missionaries from the USA and national workers began evangelizing and planting new churches in San Luís Potosí, Zacatecas, Oaxaca and Baja California. Also, as a result of a great wave of migration from rural areas to major cities, the AoG began to place more emphasis on planting new churches in the Federal District, which at that time was synonymous with Mexico City. By 1980, there were 60 AoG churches in Mexico City.

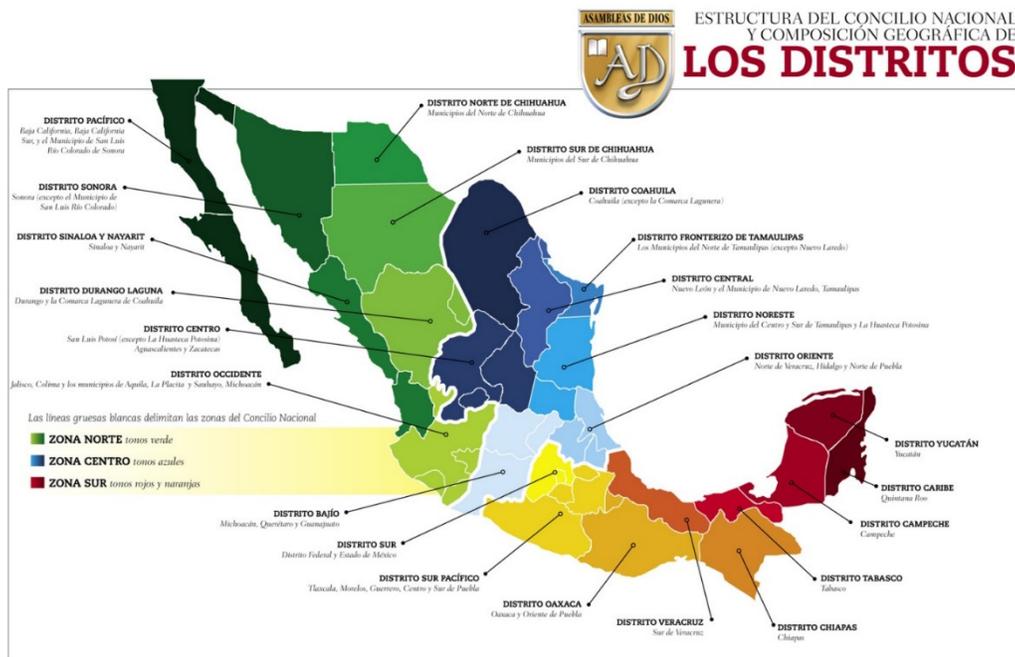
Source for the above historical section: Alfonso De Los Reyes Valdez, *Historia de las Asambleas de Dios en la República Mexicana*. Tampico, Tamaulipas, México: Alfollitos, 1990:

<https://asambleas.net/historia-de-las-asambleas-de-dios-por-alfonso-de-los-reyes-v-libro/>

During the aftermath of a major earthquake (rated 8.0) that struck Mexico City on 19 September 1985 – that killed about 5,000-10,000 people, another 30,000 were injured and 700,000 lost their homes in Mexico City and adjacent suburbs of the State of Mexico (an estimated 18 million people) – national Protestant Churches, with assistance from international relief agencies

and the respective international denominational agencies, provided thousands of volunteers and relief supplies to those in need, including food, water, clothing, tents, Bibles and Christian literature. Tents previously used for evangelistic crusades were converted into temporary housing and distribution center for relief supplies. A series of major aftershocks caused further damage: the first of these occurred on 20 September with a magnitude of 7.5 and the second occurred seven months later on 30 April 1986 with a magnitude of 7.0. Thousands of Christian workers and medical professionals provided grief counseling and comfort to those affected by the earthquakes and their family members.

**Statistical overview.** In 1938, the *International Missionary Council* published a report on Protestant denominations in Mexico for 1936, which listed 6,000 people affiliated with the AoG; whether this number represents church members or adherents is unclear. In 1960, the AoG in Mexico reported 177 local churches, 59 preaching points with 7,130 baptized church members and about 11,600 adherents (Taylor & Coggins, 1962:202). By 1965, they reported 600 local churches and over 300 preaching points, with the most effect church planting in the states of Tamaulipas, Coahuila, Nuevo León, Distrito Federal, Chihuahua and Sonora; few AoG churches had been founded in southern Mexico (Read, et al, 1969:168). Obviously, the 1960s was a period of accelerated church growth for the AoG in Mexico.



**National Council of the Assemblies of God / Concilio Nacional de las Asambleas de Dios** (SGAR /164/93) has a presence throughout the country. In 2016, it reported around 6,000 “preaching centers” (churches, missions and preaching points) where approximately 1.5 million members and adherents are ministered to weekly by about 7,000 ministers recognized within the Church and duly accredited before the authorities in matters of public worship. The national ecclesiastical structure is presided over by a General Board (made up of the General Superintendent, General Secretary, General Treasurer and three deputy superintendents for each of the zones: North, Center and South) and governing bodies called Executive and General Presbyteries,

which represent the 23 districts in which the national Church is structured.

The local churches of this denomination carry out social assistance work through medical dispensaries, health caravans, orphanages, shelters, rehabilitation centers, public soup kitchens, and direct pre-primary, secondary and preparatory schools, in addition to the 48 Bible institutes and seminaries available for the theological training of its ministers.

Source: <https://asambleasdedios.mx/>

**Other Protestant denominations and mission agencies were founded in Mexico also, beginning in the 1910s.** The work of the **Apostolic Church of Faith in Jesus Christ / Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús** (IAFCJ) was founded by *Mrs. Romana Carbajal de Valenzuela* in Villa Aldama, Chihuahua (located about 385 km south of El Paso, Texas), in 1914 after becoming a Pentecostal at the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles (1906-1913). Several historians trace the origins of Mexican Oneness-Pentecostalism to Romana's return to her hometown in late 1914 and to the reported "Holy Spirit baptisms" experienced by 12 of her family members in November of that year. This is first known Pentecostal denomination founded in Mexico, and it is a Oneness Pentecostal body founded by Mexicans (Gaxiola 1994:141-145). From this beginning, the Apostolic Oneness Pentecostal movement spread to other towns in Chihuahua and into Durango, Coahuila and other northern states, so that by 1932, when it was officially organized as a denomination, at least 26 congregations (most met in private homes) had been established (Holland 1974:359).

According to Dr. Manuel J. Gaxiola, prior to the ministry of "hermana Romana" in Villa Aldame, Chihuahua, in 1914, a Pentecostal revival took place in 1907 in the small town of Tacupeto, Sonora (located about 350 km south of Agua Prieta), led by Gabriel García who had begun to read the Bible in 1900 after visiting the border towns of Agua Prieta/Douglas, Arizona. The "revival movement" soon spread to other towns in the Tacupeto valley of Sonora, such as Ariveche, Tampeto, Bámon, Sehuadéhuachi (led by Merced Duarte), La Chihampa and La Ciénega (led by Felipe Ruiz) by 1914. Pastors of the Congregational Church visited Tacupeto in 1918 but did not remain there long. It was not until 1933 that pastor Fermín Escárcega and his wife arrived and built a temple affiliated with the Assemblies of God in Tacupeto (Gaxiola 1994:145-146; De la Luz García 2010:52).

In 1917, *Gonzálo Cisneros* was authorized by **Free Methodist World Missions** to return to his home town in Sonora to serve as missionary pastor. **The Mexican Society for Christian Missions** was founded in 1917 by *Enrique T. Westrup* (1880-1967, a son of Thomas M. Westrup) and colleagues of the independent **Christian Churches & Churches of Christ** to oversee his ministry in northern Mexico from Monterrey.

**It should be noted that most, if not all, of the Protestant foreign missionaries in Mexico left the country after the beginning of the 1910 Revolution and did not return until after the conflict ended in 1917 or sometime later.** In 1914, eleven mainline U.S. Protestant mission agencies that had begun work in Mexico prior to 1910 decided on a voluntary "comity" plan (a courtesy agreement for their mutual benefit) at a conference in Cincinnati, Ohio, which included cooperation in the preparation and distribution of literature, the standardization of education, the establishment of a union seminary, and the division of territory among the cooperating mission boards. The plan was for the various mission agencies to be assigned to different geographical areas of the country in an effort to avoid the duplication of efforts, while leaving Mexico City open to all mission agencies. However, the so-called "Cincinnati Plan" did not work out well in practice

because most Mexican denominational leaders, pastors and their church members refused to switch denominational alliances to comply with the plan, nor were they consulted previously or represented at the 1914 conference. The conference report ends with the statement: "It was recognized by all that it was indispensable that the plan should have the approval and support of the leaders, both men and women, in the Mexican Churches." From beginning to end the national Churches had no voice in the sweeping changes that were to be made. Source: Read, *et al*, 1969: 343, also see an overview of this conference presented in pages 342-344.

On June 30 - July 1, 1914, 60 representatives of eleven different American Protestant missionary boards met in Cincinnati, OH, to decide on a new direction for the work that they had been carrying on in Mexico for over 40 years. American church leaders and missionaries made sweeping decisions in Cincinnati, thousands of miles from the reality of the Mexican Protestant Church, without consulting Mexican church leaders. This plan of mission comity was part of a larger context of the practice of comity by American and other missionaries around the world. The specific actions on the part of the foreign mission boards working in Mexico caused hurt among Mexican church members and in many cases strained the relationship between Mexican and American Protestants in an already charged atmosphere, heightened by [U.S. military] interventions in Mexico during the Mexican Revolution.

Source: Young, Daniel James, "The Cincinnati Plan and the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico: A brief study of relations between American mission boards and Mexican Protestant churches during the Mexican Revolution" (May 2006). ETD Collection for University of Texas, El Paso.

**Many of the Pentecostal denominations and church associations in Mexico** trace their origins to the work begun by the **Swedish Free Mission / Filadelfia Swedish Pentecostal Churches**, founded by *Axel and Ester Anderson* in San Luis Potosí in 1919 and in Coyoacán (a suburb of Mexico City) in 1921, who were later assisted by other Swedish missionaries, such as *Charles Armstrong* and *Gunhild Gustaffson*. The Swedish Pentecostals were led by the *Rev. Lewi Petrus* (1884-1974), who pastored the Filadelfia Church in Stockholm, which in 1929 was reported to be the largest Pentecostal church in the world with 3,540 members. In Mexico, by March 1937, the Swedish Free Mission had established nine churches and 47 preaching points, with more than 4,000 members.

According to Lindy Scott (1991), Manuel J. Gaxiola (1993) and other sources, the Mexican denominations that grew out of this movement include the following: the Independent Evangelical Church of Mexico / *Iglesia Evangélica Independiente de México* (IEIM); the Independent Evangelical Church of the Mexican Republic / *Iglesia Evangélica Independiente de la República Mexicana* (IEIRM); the Independent Pentecostal Christian Church / *Iglesia Cristiana Independiente Pentecostal* (ICIP); the Independent Pentecostal Fraternity / *Fraternidad Pentecostal Independiente* (FRAPI) composed of eight autonomous church associations: *Iglesia Bethel Tacubaya*, *Iglesia Siloé*, *Iglesia Emanuel*, *Iglesia Ebenezer*, *Iglesia Belén*, *Iglesia Getsemaní*, *Iglesia Filadelfia*, and *Iglesia Bethel Elyon* and their affiliated churches.

**Also, founded during the 1920s, were the following new groups:** the **Church of God-Seventh Day** in 1920); the **Pilgrim Holiness Church** (1922), which merged with the Wesleyan Church in 1966; and the **Pentecostal Church of Pachuca / Iglesia de Pachuca** (1922, Andrés Ornelas Martínez).

**The Church of God (Seventh Day) / Iglesia de Dios (7° día)** is affiliated with the **General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day) / Conferencia General de la Iglesia de Dios**

(*Séptimo Día*) that was organized in the USA in 1884 and incorporated in Missouri in 1899. Its offices were located in Stanberry, Missouri, until 1950, when they were relocated to Denver, Colorado. The *Operation World 2010 Database* reported about 160 churches with 16,000 members in Mexico in 2010, but these statistics need to be confirmed by denominational officials. Source: <https://www.iglesia7d.org.mx/>

**The Church of God (7th day)** arrived in Mexico and increased its membership originally thanks to the migratory networks between Mexico and the USA. Many of the early members of this denomination were migrants expelled from the USA who previously had contact or membership with some congregations of the *General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh Day)* based in Stanberry, Missouri, prior to 1950. The first evidence of the presence of the religious organization is reported in Saltillo, Coahuila, in 1920, through an informal missionary, who was also a migrant from the brazero program, Arturo G. Tabel, during his journey to back to Honduras.

Due to several requests for information from Mexico sent to the General Conference in the USA as a result of the distribution of some brochures, *Andrew N. Dugger* (1887-1975), president of the General Conference at the time (1921-1927), proposed the installation of a church printing press in Mexico, which took place in 1923. Many of the information seekers were Seventh-Day Adventists who did not accept the role of Ellen G. White as a prophetess of the Adventist Church.

The first official mission was created in Saltillo with 14 people in 1922. In Mexico City, there were three ordained ministers of this denomination, who organized the "Mexican Conference of the Church of God Seventh Day," with *Baltazar Laureano Ramírez* representing the organization in the central area of the country as of 13 May 1922. At the "First General Convention of the Church of God" in 1923 in Saltillo, Coahuila, present were *Andrew N. Dugger*, Milton Piedra and *José María Rodríguez*. The latter was appointed as an official missionary and president of the "National Conference of the Church of God Seventh Day" in Mexico. The first issue of "The Bible Advocate" was published in Mexico in November 1923. The II Convention of the Church of God was celebrated in 1926, where the influence of *Baltazar Laureano Ramírez* was so great that the administration of the church moved from Saltillo to Mexico City.

The formal registration of the organization was made in Saltillo on 27 February 1928; however, the Cristero War delayed the process. It was not until 1932 that the Mexican government granted permission for the use of the name "**La Iglesia de Dios Nacional Mexicana.**"

During the period 1929 to 1944, the Saltillo church broke relations with the headquarters in Mexico City due to its possible resistance to the imposition of an American missionary as its leader. This is considered as the first division in the denomination in Mexico.

*The churches in central Mexico.* In 1922, José María Rodríguez appointed *Baltazar Laureano Ramírez*, Daniel Guevara and Victor Model as ministers, who took on the responsibilities of the organization in Mexico and established its offices in Callejón 5 de Mayo in the Historic Center of Mexico City, near a congregation called *Nidjei Israel* (a group that would later create the Justo Sierra 71 Historical Synagogue). Laureano is believed to have deep admiration for Jewish rites.

*Ezequías Campos Aguilar*, a Mexican who lived in Texas, was converted in 1924 and became a missionary in Mexico. In 1932, Campos had friction with Baltazar Laureano about the organization of the churches in Mexico City. The identity of the denomination in central Mexico has been called "Judaizing" for integrating ritual aspects and other Jewish practices beyond the Ten Commandments, which constituted a notable difference with the congregations in northern Mexico that had a stronger connection to the General Conference in the USA.

While the USA General Conference was losing strength due to the division between the Salem (West Virginia) Conference and the Stanberry (Missouri) Conference (later in Denver), the Mexican Church was gaining strength and expanding geographically.

*Andrew N. Dugger* influenced missionaries appointed in the USA to expand into Mexico through an affiliation with the Salem Conference. In the USA, Andrew N. Dugger insisted on moving the denomination's headquarters to Jerusalem, Palestine. By 1930, the congregations in Mexico City were using pamphlets that presented the denomination with headquarters in Jerusalem.

It appears that Dugger's ideas had influenced the work in Mexico before the formal separation of the Salem Conference and the Stanberry Conference in 1933 in the USA. The organization had two orientations, the more Judaizing of Baltazar Laureano Ramírez and the more moderate of Minister Ezequías Campos, who had constant communication with Andrew N. Dugger. In 1933, the institution's first formal temple was created on Caruso Street #256 in the Vallejo neighborhood of Mexico City. The trend of *Judaization* was greater in the following years due to the identity needs of the Church of God (7th day) against Catholicism and other Protestant currents in Mexico.

At this point the final break between Laureano and Campos took place, where Baltazar Laureano kept the temple on Caruso Street and separated from the Church of God (7th day); later he would become a rabbi and the temple would become a synagogue. Baltazar Laureano spent years (as did his family) identifying himself as a descendant of crypto-Jews who were forced to renounce their faith in Europe and by the Spanish inquisition in Mexico.

From 1933 to 1949 there were two separate Church of God (Seventh Day) organizations, one in Stanberry, Missouri, and the other in Salem, West Virginia. The Salem Conference was organized under a so-called apostolic model (twelve apostles, seventy elders, and "seven men to occupy the business affairs of the church"), while the Stanberry Conference was organized through a ruling group of seven ministers.

In August 1949, an agreement to unite the two conferences were sent to the membership of both Conferences, which, despite opposition from Andrew N. Dugger, voted in favor of unification, and the unity of the Church as an organization was declared. In 1950, the headquarters were moved to the city of Denver, Colorado, to keep all members in harmony. Burt F. Marrs, who replaced Dugger as head of the Department of Foreign Missions, made a trip to Mexico when the president of the Conference in Mexico was José Kim Peck, around 1950. When the "Return to Salem" movement emerged in 1950 led by Andrew N. Dugger, he tried to draw the Mexico Conference into this post-merger movement; however, Burt F. Marrs made trips to try to counter the literature distributed by Dugger in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

As early as 1949-1950, dissident ministers F.L. Summers and his son-in-law Chris Royer returned to Salem and established their headquarters there. The "Back to Salem" movement was divided into at least three factions: (1) A minority of the people originally from the organization in Salem who stayed in Salem with it as their headquarters; (2) Andrew N. Dugger, who went to Jerusalem, Palestine; and (3) Olson and Groshans, who formed the Seventh-day Church of God in Caldwell, Idaho.

According to the Denver Conference and the International Ministerial Congress of the Church of God (Seventh Day), salvation is by the grace of God, received by faith in Jesus Christ, apart from good works, human merit or ceremony (Section 4). Obedience to the moral law, while not a means to salvation, is encouraged as an important part of the Christian life. Eating contaminated meat such as pork and seafood, as well as the observance of Christmas and Easter, is discouraged under the justification of the alleged pagan origins in these celebrations (Section 10).

In Mexico, the Board of Directors is, after the Ministerial Council, the collegiate body in charge of administering the **Church of God (7th Day)** A.R. in the United Mexican States. It is composed of the President of the General Executive Council, three District Supervisors and eight Associate Ministers, who will choose their Directorate, and will be governed by their own Regulations. The three District Supervisors will be part of the Board of Directors for a period of two years, and may be reelected, if they continue to be Supervisors. The eight Associate Ministers will be elected by the Ministerial Council to form part of the Board of Directors for a period of two years, and may be reelected for one more consecutive period.

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**Apostolic Church of God, Seventh-day / Iglesia de Dios, Apostólica del 7° Día.** Headquarters address: Calle Imprenta 331, Colonia Janitzio, Delegación V. Carranza, México, DF 15200. Source: <http://www.iglesiadediosapostolica.org/>

The movement of the **Israelite Churches of God**, also called the **Church of God (Israelita)**, is a religious movement that broke away from the *Church of God (Seventh Day)* in Mexico in 1963, therefore this movement is an indirect descendant of the U.S. Millerite-Adventist Movement in Latin America that worships on the Sabbath (Saturday). This religious current in Mexico is often known as *los cabañistas*.

This division in the Church of God (Seventh Day) was known in the 1960s as the "Cabañista second national separation." The members of the dissident group were called "Cabañistas" by the Church of God (Seventh Day) because the origin of the division in their mother church in the USA when the National Council of the Church of God (Seventh Day) agreed to a doctrinal change to eliminate the celebration of the biblical feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles (cabañistas) since at that time many of its ministers agreed not to participate in them. However, a minority of approximately 12 ministers did not accept this change, whereas the majority of workers, ministers and deacons wanted to eliminate from their doctrine the Feasts of Leviticus 23 (Passover, Pentecost and *Las Cabañas* or Tabernacles), which were celebrated in the Church of God (Seventh Day) at that time, under the argument that these festivals were for Jews, not for Christians.

Source: [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iglesia\\_de\\_Dios\\_Israelita](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iglesia_de_Dios_Israelita)

**The Church of God (Israelite) / Iglesia de Dios (Israelita)** has its headquarters in Colonia Churubusco, Mexico City, DF. There are affiliated churches in Belize, Guatemala, El Salvador and among Hispanics in the USA: California, Nevada, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Texas and Wisconsin.

<http://www.iglesiadedios-israelita.org/> /

<http://www.iglesiadedios-israelita.org/indice.html> /

[http://www.iglesiadediosisraelita.org/puntos\\_fe.html](http://www.iglesiadediosisraelita.org/puntos_fe.html)

Below are some of the religious associations (ARs) in Mexico that are part of this movement:

- **Israelite Church of God / Iglesia de Dios Israelita** (Mexico City; current supervisor, Jorge López Ayala, in Iztapalapa, Mexico, DF)
- **Aurora Israelite Church of God / Iglesia de Dios Israelita Aurora** (Nezahualcoyotl, State of Mexico; Isaac Loyola Diaz)
- **Israelite Church of God of the New Covenant / Iglesia de Dios de Israel del Nuevo Pacto** (Azcapotzalco, DF)

- **El Elohe Israel Israelite Church of God / Iglesia de Dios Israelita** (Puebla de Los Angeles, Puebla, Mexico; Helario Hernández Gutierrez)
- **House of God Israelite Church / Iglesia Israelita Casa de Dios** (Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico; Betuel Cruz Aguilar)
- **Israelite Church of God in the Mexican Republic / Iglesia de Dios Israelita en la República Mexicana** (Puebla, Puebla, Mexico; Eugenio Ruiz Hernández)
- **Israelite Churches for the Distribution of the Holy Scriptures / Iglesias Israelitas para la Difusión de las Sagradas Escrituras** (Delegation Venustiano Carranza, Mexico, DF; Angel Ruben Romero Rivera)
- **Judah Israelite Church of God / Iglesia de Dios Israelita Judá** (Teziutlan, Puebla, Mexico; Indalecio López)
- **Judeo-Christian Church of God of Mexico / Iglesia de Dios Judeo-Cristiana de México** (Jalapa, Veracruz, Mexico; Jerson Sastre Castelán)
- **Mexican Israelite Church of God / Iglesia de Dios Israelita Mexicana** (Coyoacán, Mexico, DF, Mexico; Juan Manuel Juarez Navarro)

**The Mennonites.** Between 1922-1926, an estimated 20,000 **Mennonites** from Canada immigrated to Mexico to establish agricultural colonies in the states of Chihuahua and Durango at the invitation of the Mexican government. Mennonites from Europe first began arriving in Upper Canada around 1776. Since the Mennonites mainly originated in German-speaking countries, the German language has been one of their defining characteristics. Because of this, many of the Mennonites who came to Canada, especially during the early years of immigration, were perceived as a minority group with ethnic as well as religious characteristics.

**The various groups that settled in Mexico include:** *Altkolonier Mennonitengemeinde* (Old Colony Mennonites who settled in the West Reserve in Manitoba from the Chortitza settlement in the Ukraine, beginning in 1875), *Kleingemeinde* (“small church,” known today as the Evangelical Mennonite Church, was founded in 1812 in the Molotschna Colony in the Ukraine), *Sommerfelder Mennonitengemeinde* (a conservative Mennonite body, founded in 1890 in Manitoba among members of the Bergthal Colony in the Ukraine who settled in the West Reserve of Manitoba in the 1880s), and *Reinländer-Gemeinde* (Old Colony Mennonites from the Reinländer colony, founded in 1875 in Manitoba, Canada, by immigrants from the Chortitza settlement in the Ukraine).

The Mennonites are members of church communities of Anabaptist tradition, named after *Menno Simons* (1496–1561), a former Catholic priest of Friesland (which today is a province of the Netherlands). Through his writings, Simons articulated and formalized the teachings of earlier Swiss Anabaptist founders. The Anabaptists (“rebaptizers”) were a radical reform movement of the 16th-century Protestant Reformation. The early teachings of the Mennonites were founded on the belief in both the mission and ministry of Jesus, which the original Anabaptist followers held to with great conviction despite persecution by the various Roman Catholic and Protestant principalities in Europe. An early set of Mennonite beliefs was codified in the *Dordrecht Confession of Faith* in 1632, but the various Anabaptist groups do not hold to a common confession or creed. Rather than fight, the majority of these followers survived by fleeing to neighboring states where ruling families were tolerant of their belief in “believer’s baptism” (baptism by *emersion* of adult believers rather than baptism by *pouring or sprinkling* water on the heads of infants or older minor children). Over the years, Mennonites have become known as one of the historic peace churches because of their commitment to pacifism.

Sources: <https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Mexico> / Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO): [https://gameo.org/index.php?title=A-Z\\_index](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=A-Z_index)

**The Apostolic Assembly of Faith in Jesus Christ** / *Asamblea Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús* (AAFCJ) began in California, USA, during the 1910s, but it was not officially organized as a denomination until 1925 at meeting held in San Bernardino, California. Prior to 1920, most of the early assemblies were established in California among Mexican migrant farm workers. During the early 1920s, the AAFCJ (a “Jesus only” or Oneness Pentecostal body) established its first congregations (most met in private homes) in Mexico: in Baja California Norte, at Mexicali and Colonia Zaragoza, located across the border from Calexico, California, and in 1926 in Tijuana, located opposite San Diego, California. Later, more congregations were established in northern Mexico by migrant Mexican workers who became Apostolics (Oneness Pentecostals) while working in the USA. The AAFCJ has a sister denomination in Mexico, *Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús*, that was founded by *Mrs. Romana Carbajal de Valenzuela* in Villa Aldama, Chihuahua, in 1914 after becoming a Pentecostal at the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles (1906-1913).

In addition, the **Independent Congregational Church** / *Iglesia Congregacional Independiente* was founded in 1923 by Estevan Chávez Escoto; the **Reformed Church in America** / *Iglesia Reformada* (1924); the **Spiritual Christian Evangelical Church** / *Iglesia Evangélica Cristiana Espiritual* (IECE), founded in 1926 by Irish Oneness-Pentecostal missionary Joseph Stewart in Monterrey; the **Interdenominational Christian Church in the Mexican Republic** / *Iglesia Cristiana Interdenominacional* (ICI), founded in 1927 by Josué Mejía Hernández in Colonia Portales; and the **Bethel Church of Tacubaya** – *Iglesia Bethel de Tacubaya* (1929, founded in Delegación Miguel Hidalgo, Mexico City, DF).

**The Spiritual Christian Evangelical Church** / *Iglesia Evangélica Cristiana Espiritual* (IECE) was founded in 1926 by Irish Oneness-Pentecostal missionary Joseph Stewart (1871-1926) in the city of Monterrey. Mexican Apostolic church historian Manuel J. Gaxiola (1994) states that Stewart visited several Protestant churches in the port of Tampico after his arrival in 1924, where he met Ireneo Rojas Castillo, who later became president of the IECE after its formal establishment in 1926. Together, Stewart, Rojas and other leaders established the first of many “spiritual churches” that later became associated with the IECE.

Stewart travelled to other places in northern Mexico between 1924 and 1926, and when he returned to Tampico in January 1926, he discovered that the first church he helped establish had grown to about 200 members. Later in 1926, some of the small congregations established by Stewart and his associates in northern Mexico were organized under the name “Iglesia Evangélica Cristiana Espiritual” with headquarters in Tampico. Stewart ordained Juan Carreón Adame for the ministry of Elder (Gaxiola 1994:165) prior to leaving Tampico and travelling to the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco, in mid-1926, where he became seriously ill and died later that year.

Some of the first converts and ministers of this church were related to what is now the *Apostolic Church of Faith in Jesus Christ* / *Asamblea Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús* (which we have described previously), whereas others were former members of other Protestant churches in the region. Today, IECE has spread throughout Mexico and parts of the USA, Central and South America (Gaxiola 1993).

After the death of Stewart in late 1926, the first Pastor General of IECE was Francisco Borrego of Torreón, followed by Ireneo Rojas Castillo in 1934 and continuing until his death in 1954,

according to Gaxiola. In 1993, the President of IECE was Félix Moreno Hernández, who registered this denomination as an AR (*Asociación Religiosa* = SGAR/27/93) with the federal government. As of April 2008, Félix Moreno Hernández was still the President of IECE, according to a local press report.

Overall, the IECE is considered to be socially very conservative and apolitical in terms of its religious practices and its relationship with the larger society. Its other-worldly orientation is said to offer its adherents a retreat from the world's problems ("a refuge for the masses") while providing them with a strong sense of community. According to several reliable sources, some of the unique characteristics of this Oneness Pentecostal denomination are:

- It only uses the "Reina Valera 1602" version of the Spanish Bible as Holy Scripture.
- Its leadership tends to be authoritarian and hostile to other denominations, but the denomination is missionary-minded and seeks to plant new churches where needed, both nationally and internationally.
- Believers must be baptized (or rebaptized) in Jesus' name in order to experience True Salvation based on the Oneness doctrine (Acts of the Apostles, 2:37-42).
- The traditional Protestant Trinitarian doctrine is rejected as being un-biblical and polytheistic.
- Members are taught that all the other churches (Protestant, Catholic or whatever) are erroneous, while the IECE doctrines and practices represent the True Gospel.
- Members are not allowed to visit or have fellowship with believers of other denominations, although since 1972 there have been a few exceptions to this rule.
- The pastor functions as a type of priest before whom church members have to confess their sins; he is a disciplinarian who is in charge of maintaining proper order and decorum with the congregation; and he has the authority to remove rebellious members from the fellowship of the church (the practice of shunning or excommunication).
- Members are prohibited from earning a living from sports activities, which are considered to be worldly pursuits.
- Women are prohibited from cutting their hair, using makeup, using jewelry and wearing slacks; and their skirts and dresses must be less than 20 centimeters above their shoes.
- Women must cover their heads with a scarf while praying.
- Women and men must be seated on opposite sides of the sanctuary during religious services.
- Men are prohibited from wearing shorts in public places.

It has been reported by Gaxiola and other sources that the IECE has experienced several notable organizational splits due to leadership conflicts during the past decades. Nevertheless, the denomination has experienced geographical expansion within Mexico as well to other Latin American countries, as well as membership growth in many of the existing congregations. In 1994, Gaxiola reported that the IECE had an estimated 14,000 baptized church members in Mexico.

According to a later source (date unknown), there were 362 IECE congregations and 578 missions ("campos blancos") in Mexico, as well as an unknown number of associated churches in other countries: the USA, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Paraguay, and the Philippines.

In July 2005, IECE held its 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in its own installations in San Luís Potosí, México, with the participation of an estimated 18,000 people from many parts of Mexico and

several other countries. In the city of San Luis Potosí alone, the work of IECE is organized in four districts, with an estimated 3,000 adherents, according to a local press report. In 2010, IECE reported 362 churches and 578 preaching centers with an estimated 62,500 members.

There is a video of the Historical Museum of IECE (2016) available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKBL27YletU>

In addition, there are many other IECE videos, including music videos, available on YouTube at:

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=IECE](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=IECE)

Sources: “Historia del IECE” at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHcN3NM6mM0&t=1264s> / <http://oracion.es/i-e-c-e-historia-de-la-iglesia-evangelica-cristiana-espiritual.html>

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- Holland, Clifton L, “The Spiritual Christian Evangelical Church (Iglesia Evangélica Cristiana Espiritual)” (2009) at: [https://www.academia.edu/23609879/Spiritual\\_Christian\\_Evangelical\\_Church\\_Iglesia\\_Evang%C3%A9lica\\_Cristiana\\_Espiritual](https://www.academia.edu/23609879/Spiritual_Christian_Evangelical_Church_Iglesia_Evang%C3%A9lica_Cristiana_Espiritual)
- Internet (author unknown): “Las características de la IECE son”: <http://www.foroekklesia.com/showthread.php?t=45374>

The **Interdenominational Christian Church / Iglesia Cristiana Interdenominacional (ICI)** was founded in 1927 by Josué Mejía Hernández in Colonia Portales, Delegación Benito Juárez, Mexico City. In 1922, a group of evangelical families of various denominations began to populate the colonies of the Federal District now known as General Anaya, Moderna, Postal, Nativitas, Independencia, Zacahuitzco and Portales. The aforementioned families professed the same faith and had the same Christian sentiments. “They began to seek each other out to hold house services and praise and glorify God in a fraternal atmosphere.” On 4 May 1927, with the authorization of the Ministry of the Interior, the temple that houses Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists was inaugurated. The brethren, by mutual agreement, decided to call the organization: *The Interdenominational Christian Church* (non-Pentecostal).

In 1931, the Federal Government decreed that all ministers of worship should register with the Government, and that all churches had to be registered and authorized before this same Secretariat for the exercise of their religious activities. In compliance with this Federal Government requirement, on the last days of December 1931, the *Interdenominational Christian Church* (ICIAR) was officially registered as an AR (*Asociación Religiosa*). Josué Mejía Hernández was

appointed as responsible owner and director, who together with Heliodoro Flores signed the Registry Book.

The ICIAR recognizes a special position in its history for Josué Mejía Hernández and Felipe Antonio Sánchez Muñiz, who are among the founders. Also, the following people were active in the early history of this denomination: Timoteo Gutiérrez Cintora, Lorenzo Cruz López, Jacob Sánchez Lagunas, Nicolás Estrada Camarillo, Azael Cedillo Garduño, among many others.

By 2005, the ICIAR had greatly multiplied its membership. Seventy years after starting spiritual activities with the participation of just seven families, the ICIAR had more than 1,500 affiliated congregations, and an equal or greater number of pastors and ministers to serve them. The ICIAR has temples throughout the Mexican Republic, as well as in some states in the USA, such as Texas, California, Illinois, Oklahoma, and Georgia.

The organization of the ICIAR includes the Central Church, 16 presbyteries and 3 regions, and the National or General Commissions have been established as needed. The ICIAR headquarters are in the Mexico City: Libertad #27, Colonia Portales, Delegación Benito Juárez, C.P. 03300, Ciudad de México, DF.

The Presbyteries are: Central (Federal District), Missions of the Central Church, states of Mexico, Chiapas, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Metropolitan Mexico-Hidalgo, Nuevo León, Coahuila, Oaxaca, the Northern Pacífic, and the Northern Peninsular Coast (Veracruz-Tabasco). The Presbyteries in the USA are: Central-West, Central-East and Northwest. Since its origin, the ICIRM has been a totally national, autonomous association, independent of any affiliation with foreign denominations.

Source:

<http://www3.uacj.mx/UEHS/Documents/Mapa%20Religioso/iglesia%20cristiana%20interdimensional.pdf>

For the years 1970-2000, Dr. Peter Briery ( *World Churches Handbook*, 1997) gave the following estimates of the size of ICIRM:

YEAR	CHURCHES	MEMBERS
1970	333	40000
1980	448	53700
1990	600	72000
2000	720	86900

The previous estimate of 1,500 local churches in 2005 may have been exaggerated. The *Operation World Database for 2010* gave the following estimate for ICIRM: number of local churches = 800; membership = 96,556.

**During the 1930s, the following 12 groups were founded in Mexico:** the **Union of Independent Evangelical Churches / Unión de Iglesias Evangélicas Independientes** - UIEI (1930); the **Metropolitan Church Association** (1930); the **Ephesus Pentecostal Church / Iglesia Efeso** (1931, Miguel Leal Rojas); the **National Christian Church of the Assemblies of God / Iglesia Cristiana Nacional de las Asambleas de Dios** (ICNAD) separated from the AoG in the USA in 1931 under David G. Ruesga, and became affiliated with the *Church of God (Cleveland, TN)* in 1940, but Ruesga and his affiliated churches became independent again in 1946 as the *Church of God of the Mexican Republic / Iglesia de Dios de la República Mexicana* (IDRM); the **Church of**

**God (Cleveland, TN) / Iglesia de Dios Evangelio Completo** (in 1931, *María de los Ángeles Rivero de Atkinson* joined this denomination and returned to her native Mexico as a Church of God missionary to Sonora); the **Independent Evangelical Pentecostal Church Movement / Movimiento Iglesia Evangélica Pentecostés Independiente - MIEPI** (1931, founded by Valente Aponte González [1894-1961] in Colonia La Merced, Centro, Cuauhtémoc, Mexico City, DF); the **Pentecostal Holiness Church / Iglesia de Santidad Pentecostal** (1932); the **Independent Christian Church / Iglesia Cristiana Independiente** (1933, Raymundo Ramírez); the **Church of God in Christ / Iglesia de Dios en Cristo** (1933); **America's Keswick** (1934); **The Salvation Army / El Ejército de Salvación** (1934); **Wycliffe Bible Translators** (1934, William Cameron Townsend, also known as Summer Institute of Linguistics); and the **Universal Pentecostal Church of Jesus / Iglesia Pentecostal Universal de Jesús** (1935, founded in Morelos).

**Independent Evangelical Pentecostal Church Movement / Movimiento Iglesia Evangélica Pentecostés Independiente (MIEPI)**. The founder of MIEPI was *Valente* (“*Valentito*”) *Aponte González* (1894-1961), originally from the city of Zacatelco, State of Tlaxcala, who was born on 21 May 1894. At age 21, he married Miss Elisa Garrido Garnica. In 1927, Valente was president of the bus line between Colonia Guerrero and Colonia San Lázaro in Mexico City. He met Benito Villafán, who was a mechanic and fixed the buses for him. Benito and his wife belonged to a Baptist church and they spoke about the Gospel to Valentito.

Valentito and his wife accompanied the Villafáns to the church where Swedish missionary Axel Anderson was founder and pastor, Saron Evangelical Church, located on Calzada de los Misterios #168, Colonia Vallejo, Delegation Cuauhtémoc, in Mexico City. The Aponte González family attended the temple on Calzada de los Misterios, but also gathered their neighbors to preach to them at their home in Colonia La Merced of Mexico City, the populous and traditional capital neighborhood. When the group grew and Valente discovered that some of its members were having financial difficulties to travel to the temple on Calzada de los Misterios, they rented a room in another neighborhood and then bought a property at Carretones 37-8, Colonia La Merced, Cuauhtémoc, Mexico City. This was the beginning of the Independent Pentecostal Evangelical Church Movement (MIEPI) in 1931.

By the time Valente Aponte González died in 1961, thirty years after the work began, Valente and his collaborators had founded 250 churches and missions, and their magazine “*El Consejero Fiel*” (The Faithful Counsellor) had a monthly print run of 12,000 copies. It was estimated that, in 1993, there are at least 1,500 churches affiliated with this movement (Gaxiola 1993:11).

The first MIEPI Temple on Calle Carretones was demolished in 1961 because it was in poor condition, so they bought property for a new temple in the Magdalena Mixhuca neighborhood of Mexico City, where the first stone was laid for the new building on 1 May 1962. The inauguration of the new Temple “*Face of God*” (Templo “*Rostro de Dios*”) was held on 21 May 1963. An Ordination Service of New Ministers and Deaconesses was held at MIEPI on 23 May 1963, and a similar service is held every year in the month of May.

*Elisa Febe* (“*Febita*”) *Flores Miranda* was named the new Director of MIEPI, and she served in this position from 1963 to 1989. On 25 October 1989, in Poza Rica, Veracruz, a new director of MIEPI was appointed, *Francisco Esteban Martínez Díaz* (1944-). Febita rested from her previous responsibilities and was happy to see the new Director installed in this office, but she “was transported to heaven” on 29 December 1989. Pastor Martínez Díaz became the legal representative of MIEPI, pastor of the Central Church, Rector of the Esdras Institute (also a professor), and editor of “*The Faithful Counselor*,” and responsible for the Daniel Internship.

Since Pastor Martínez Díaz became General Director of MIEPI, the movement has undergone reforms, for example, the creation of the Representative Board, new Zones and Subzones were formed, the Men's and Marriage Conventions were created, the CORIAC Children's Convention, the legal registration as a Religious Association (AR) before the Government was obtained in 1993, the Library "Elisa Febe Flores Miranda" was founded in Temple "Rostro de Dios," among other achievements. As of June 2010, Pastor Martínez Díaz was still the General Director of MIEPI.

Sources: <http://www.miepi.com/1.1historiaM.html> / <https://www.facebook.com/SOYMIEPI/photos/el-d%C3%ADa-16-de-noviembre-de-1944-naci%C3%B3-en-la-ciudad-de-m%C3%A9xico-nuestro-hermano-fran/2169681606632283/>

For the years 1970-2000, Dr. Peter Brierly (*World Churches Handbook*, 1997) gave the following estimates on the size of MIEPI:

YEAR	CHURCHES	MEMBERS
1970	520	15000
1980	900	27000
1990	1400	42000
2000	1830	55000

The *Operation World Database for 2010* gave the following estimate for MIEPI: number of local churches = 3,833; membership = 115,000. If these estimates are correct (or in the ball park), then the work of MIEPI has grown significantly since 1970, from 15,000 members to about 115,000 members, and from 520 local churches in 1970 to about 3,833 in 2010.

MIEPI's national headquarters are at "Iglesia Central de MIEPI" in Colonia Zona Centro, Alcaldía Venustiano Carranza. Ciudad de México. C.P. 15100  
Teléfono: (+52) 55 5768-0687 y (+52) 55 5768-6417

The **Church of God (Cleveland, TN)** / *Iglesia de Dios Evangelio Completo*. Mrs. María Rivera de Atkinson (1878-1963) is considered the instrument for the initial formation of this Holiness Pentecostal denomination in Mexico, beginning in the state of Sonora that borders the Gulf of California on the west and the state of Chihuahua on the east. She claimed to have been miraculously healed at an Assemblies of God church in Douglas, Arizona. There she received the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" and her ministerial calling, but later she established her own church in her house in the same city, and by 1930 she had already preached several times "with miraculous results" in Sonora, her native state. In 1931, she met a minister of the Church of God, named J. H. Ingram – who had been appointed Overseer (bishop) of California and Arizona in 1929 – while he was on a preaching trip in Douglas, Arizona, and decided to join him in order to formalize her missionary work in Mexico, which included four congregations in Sonora: Nogales, Santa Ana, Hermosillo and Ciudad Obregón. Later, she conducted revival meetings in Ciudad Obregón where 24 people "received the baptism of the Holy Ghost." This church in Ciudad Obregón was the first one to be officially recognized by the Church of God under Ingram in 1932 (Conn 1959:118-120).

During 1934, Atkinson and her faithful co-workers founded local churches in Nogales (Sonora) and Mazatlán (Sinaloa), as well as several missions in the states of Sonora and Sinaloa. From the beginning, these Mexican churches were met with strong opposition from the older

churches, both Catholic and Protestant. Newspaper editors, pastors in their pulpits and some civil authorities fought against the Church of God with intensity. The persecution grew worse until April 1934 when the governor of Sonora “began an organized attack upon religion by closing all churches to be closed, forbidding all religious services, prohibiting public baptisms...and limiting worship in the homes to members of the households.” However, this action only served to drive the worship services undercover, both in the city and in the country, and rarely in the same place to avoid detection by the authorities. The churches remained closed from April 1934 to the end of 1936. During this time of trial, the Church of God members gained strength and character (Conn 1959:121-122).

After the reopening of the churches in 1936, the Church of God began a period of expansion in northwestern Mexico. By 1938, officially established churches were reported in Ciudad Obregón, Nogales, Santa Ana, Hermosillo (the original four places of worship), Mazatlán, San Blas, El Gagur and Esperanza. In addition, there were several missions and preaching points, which included evangelistic work among the Mayo and Yaquí indigenous villages where the people lived in absolute poverty and primitive conditions (Conn 1959:122-123).

In 1940, this denomination began work in the Federal District and the central region of the country thanks to the efforts of missionary Vessie D. Hargrave. From the Federal District, the “Church of God Full Gospel” expanded to the rest of the country. One of its most distinguished ministers, the Alejandro Portugal, was for a time superintendent of this denomination for all of Latin America.

While the Church of God was making great progress in northwestern Mexico, it also entered the central region of the country in 1940 through a partnership with the *National Christian Church of the Assemblies of God* (NCCAD), which had separated from the Assemblies of God under the leadership of David G. Ruesga (1898-1960). The merger was approved by both organizations in January 1940, with the NCCAD reporting 82 churches, 68 pastors and 4,816 members. Although these churches were located in eight different states, the center of its strength were in the Federal District and in Veracruz, located on the Gulf of Mexico. However, this union was short-lived due to irreconcilable differences, “due to certain moral, spiritual and administrative standards of leadership” in the NCCAD under Ruesga’s supervision, which the General Overseer and the Mission Board of the Church of God could not endorse. After this rupture between the two organizations in April 1941, only about 10 churches remained with the Church of God, most of which had been established by David Arcos of Veracruz. Two other ministers and 12 missions chose to stay with the Church of God rather than with Ruesga.

Nevertheless, in September 1942, missionary Archer began to argue for the reunification of the Church of God with the churches under the leadership of David G. Ruesga. After lengthy negotiations, the reunification was achieved on 5 June 1943 and Ruesga was appointed Overseer for Mexico, succeeding J. H. Ingram who had served as Overseer over a decade. However, Ruesga withdrew from the Church of God in June 1946 to avoid being excluded from the leadership. Over the years, missionaries Archer and Hargrave and many of the Mexican pastors had lost faith in Ruesga’s ethics and principles, and some of the pastors had brought charges against him. Many of the pastors who had joined the Church of God along with Ruesga also withdrew with him. Although no accurate statistics exist, the Church of God lost about 3,000 members because of this separation. After this loss, there remained about 5,260 members of the Church of God in Mexico (Conn 1959: 122-123, 128).

Meanwhile, in northwestern Mexico, a convention was held 1-8 June 1941 in Ciudad Obregón, Sonora, with the participation of twenty churches and missions and 15 pastors.

Thereafter, this became an annual convention, although held in different locations. Coinciding with the northwestern convention in 1942, the first annual convention was held in Mexico City for central Mexico, which followed an outstanding work of expansion led by missionaries Mr. & Mrs. J. Willis Archer and national pastor David Arcos. The Bible institute had been reopened in Mexico City and evangelistic efforts had begun in the mountainous region of southern Mexico, where missions were begun among the Chinanteca indigenous people. Some of the places that Archer reached in Veracruz and Oaxaca were so remote that few outsiders had ever been to them.

During 1945, the Church of God was established in primitive regions of southern Mexico, when David Arreola and Pascual Palacios brought their affiliated churches into the denomination. Thirty-three independent churches were located in the Mayan territories of Yucatán, Tabasco, Campeche and Chiapas. The following year, new churches were established in northeastern Mexico, around Monterrey, Nuevo León, and in the state of Coahuila (Conn 1959:126-127).

At the time Ruesga withdrew from the Church of God in June 1946, Fernando A. González was appointed the new Overseer for Mexico. By August 1946, González could report to the Missions Department in the USA a total of 5,619 members, 160 churches and missions, with 144 pastors and lay-workers. In 1947, at the VIII annual national convention held in Mexico City, June 19-22, the work of the Church of God was divided into four regions, each one with its own overseer: Northwestern region, Fernando A. González; Northeaster region, Samuel Gómez; Central region, Alejandro Portugal, Jr.; and Southern region, Apolinar Castro. Each of these regions began to hold their own annual conventions, with smaller district conventions in the individual states. During the next 10 years, evangelism and church expansion in Mexico was unparalleled in any other Church of God mission field (Conn 1959:128-129).

Particularly noteworthy was the mission work among the Yaqui and Mayo amerindians in the northwest region and the Chinantecas in Oaxaca. Juan Ortiz, a Chinanteca convert, attended the Bible Institute in Mexico City and then returned to minister among his own tribes-people. Ines Sabinos also attended the Bible school and returned to work among his own people. The Bible Institute in Mexico City survived many obstacles and produced many outstanding workers due to the efforts of professors such as Alejandro Portugal, Jr, Rafael González and Leopoldo Domínguez. In March 1949, another Bible school was opened in Ciudad Obregón in the northwestern region, and during the next few years similar Bible schools were opened in the other two regions, northeast and southern (Conn 1959:129-130).

By 1949, the situation of the Church of God at the national level was completely consolidated with 6,480 members, 259 ministers and more than 200 churches and missions. Over the years the Church of God in Mexico has progressed until it is recognized in the national evangelical sphere as a serious Pentecostal denomination committed to the cause of the Gospel of Christ.

The growth and expansion of the Church of God in Mexico is undoubtedly the result of the vision and dedication of its leaders, pastors, and membership in general. By 2010, it was possible to find a congregation of the Church of God in the vast majority of the states of the Mexican Republic; from remote and marginalized rural indigenous regions to the largest and most sophisticated cities in the country. The national leaders who have contributed by giving direction and direction to the Church of God in Mexico are the following:

- María W. Atkinson (founder)
- Rev. Alejandro Portugal, Jr.
- Dr. Antonio Bonilla, Jr.
- Dr. Cornelio M. Castelo

- Rev. Abel Sánchez Flores
- Dr. Regino Palazuelos Villegas.

The **Church of God International (Cleveland, Tennessee)** / *La Iglesia de Dios en México Evangelio Completo - IDMEC* (SGAR/11/93) is distributed throughout the Mexican Republic in ten territories under the administration of territorial supervisors or bishops and these in turn under the direction of Dr. Francisco Jiménez Arias, current National Superintendent. In the area of basic leadership training and ministerial preparation, it has four Bible institutes and a seminary. The Mexican Biblical Seminary currently offers undergraduate studies in theology, Christian education and music, and a master's degree in Christian Ministry.

Source: <https://www.taringa.net/+info/historia-de-la-iglesia-de-dios-en-mexico-evangelio-completo-12rgbw>

Because of the evangelistic zeal and energy of the Mexican ministers and lay-workers during the decade 1948-1958, the Church of God in Mexico grew from 187 churches and 5,260 members to 379 churches, 229 missions, and 14,737 members. The greatest growth was in the southern region, where the grow was from only 30 churches in 1948 to more than 200 in 1958. The gains in the central and northwestern regions were somewhat less than in the southern region, with only modest gains in the northeastern region (Conn 1959:130). In 1962, Full Gospel Church of God, reported 15,500 members, according to McGavran (1963).

For the years 1970-2000, Dr. Peter Brierly (*World Churches Handbook*, 1997) gave the following estimates on the size of **Full Gospel Church of God in Mexico** (Cleveland, TN-related):

YEAR	CHURCHES	MEMBERS
1970	580	21100
1980	690	25000
1990	854	31000
2000	1050	37600

The IDMEC reported about 1,500 churches and 100,000 members in 2010. Overall, its growth was quite phenomenal during the period 1948-2010, as recorded above.

By comparison, the **Church of God in the Mexican Republic** / *Iglesia de Dios en la República Mexicana* (IDRM = SGAR/17/93), a split from the Assemblies of God under David G. Ruesga Salazar in 1946, was previously called *National Christian Church of the Assemblies of God* / *Iglesia Cristiana Nacional de las Asambleas de Dios* (ICNAD). In 1946, the IDRM had about 3,000 members. Source: <https://www.idrmar.net/index.html>

For the years 1970-2000, Dr. Peter Brierly (*World Churches Handbook*, 1997) gave the following estimates on the size of **Church of God in the Mexican Republic**:

YEAR	CHURCHES	MEMBERS
1970	333	40000
1980	448	53700
1990	600	72000
2000	720	86900

The *Operation World Database for 2010* gave the following estimate for the IDRM: number of local churches = 1,643; membership = 189,000. Overall, the growth of the IDRM was spectacular for the 64-year period 1946 (3,000 members) to 2010 (189,000 members), although we could not find very much historical information for this period, and its website was not operational in August 2020.

The **Pentecostal Holiness Church** / *Iglesia de Santidad Pentecostal de México* (ISP) was founded in 1932 in Ciudad Reynosa, Tamaulipas, under the leadership of Pastor Esteban B. López. Currently, there are more than 100 affiliated churches in the following districts: Bajío, Costa Chica, Costa Grande, Sureste, Norte de Nuevo León, Veracruz, Norte de Tamaulipas, Sur de Tamaulipas, Norte de Chihuahua, Sur de Chihuahua, Norte de Coahuila and Sur de Coahuila.

Headquarters address: Antiguo Camino a Villa de Santiago #108, Las Jaras 64990, Monterrey, Nuevo León. Telephone: (821) 119-7948; Email: [contacto@ispm.com.mx](mailto:contacto@ispm.com.mx)  
Sources: <https://www.ispm.com.mx/sobre-nosotros/> / <https://www.ispm.com.mx/distritos/>

For the years 1970-2000, Dr. Peter Brierly (*World Churches Handbook*, 1997) gave the following estimates on the size of Pentecostal Holiness Church in Mexico:

YEAR	CHURCHES	MEMBERS
1970	55	3505
1980	100	7000
1990	173	12100
2000	210	15300

The *Operation World Database for 2010* gave the following estimate for the ISP: number of local churches = 181; membership = 15,580. However, all of these estimates seem to be exaggerated based on the fact that the current ISP website only reports about 100 churches.

### **Wycliff Bible Translators / Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL)**

The *Instituto Lingüístico de Verano, A.C.* (ILV) is a nonprofit organization in Mexico that applies linguistic research of indigenous languages to language development that serves the needs of language communities. The organization began in Mexico in 1936 with the help and friendship offered by *President General Lázaro Cárdenas* to the founder of ILV, William Cameron Townsend. As the work progressed, the number of languages researched by ILV grew, and the organization continued to receive the support of subsequent presidential administrations in Mexico and the backing and advice of many Mexican officials and scholars. From its beginnings in Mexico, the work of ILV has spread around the world, and as of 2015 SIL International has worked in more than 1,600 languages in eighty-five countries.

Sources: <https://mexico.sil.org/>

Encouraged by the president, Townsend founded the Summer Institute of Linguistics as an establishment for recruitment and training of missionary linguists, and over the course of the years he placed the graduates—married couples, as a rule—in a hundred ethnic groups. There they have lived together with the inhabitants of the place for lengthy periods, in some cases settling permanently in a village without services, a place of poverty and hostile terrain. The linguists have learned the

indigenous language to perfection, analyzing the structure, collecting the vocabulary, the phonetics, and the meanings, and they have given the spoken words a written expression using the symbols of the Spanish alphabet. Furthermore, they have built up an impressive bibliography, basically composed of linguistic studies of the highest academic caliber, covering all of the Native American languages still spoken in the country. To these things they have added the production, still on-going, of manuals for language learning, primers for teaching, dictionaries and vernacular literature, everything from the smallest pamphlet explaining agricultural or sanitary practices to the voluminous translation of the New Testament. Never in the history of Mexico, not in the Colonial period nor during the age of Independence, has any institution, whether religious or secular, native Mexican or foreign, been able to boast of a loftier contribution to the understanding and the transformation of our linguistic situation. Source: <https://mexico.sil.org/about/distinguished-mexicans/gonzalo-aguirre-beltran-brief-history>

**During the 1940s, the following 14 groups began work in Mexico:** the **Pentecostal Church of God / Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal** from Puerto Rico (1942); the **Latin American Lutheran Mission** (1942); the **International Church of the Foursquare Gospel** (1943); the **World Mission Prayer League** (1943); the **Church of God of Prophecy** (1944); **Churches of Christ in Christian Union** (1944, Wesleyan Holiness-oriented); **Mexican Mission Ministries** (1945); the **Evangelical Covenant Church** (1946); the **Evangelical Methodist Church** (1946); the **Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)** (1946); the **Pentecostal Holiness Church** (1947); the **Christian Fellowship Union** (1947); the **Missionary Revival Crusade** (1949, later known as Centers of Faith, Hope and Love); and “Air Mail from God” (1949, later known as **Trans World Missions**).

**The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel / Iglesia del Evangelio Cuadrangular** began its ministry in Mexico in 1943. This denomination now reports 198 churches with about 20,000 members. There are four districts and three sectors, predominantly in the north of the country, and sectors in the center and south of the Mexican Republic.

The President of the Foursquare Gospel Church in Mexico is Juan S. Muzquiz V., who has been a member of this denomination for 24 years. He is author of nine books on theology and leadership. While he was supervisor of the Pacific District, 42 new churches were established, along with three Bible institutes.

Headquarters: Ensenada #20, Ejido Plan Libertador, Playas de Rosarito, Baja California Norte.  
Telephone: +52 661-120-1159; [cuadrangularenmexico@hotmail.com](mailto:cuadrangularenmexico@hotmail.com)  
Source: <http://cuadrangularmexico.com/>

**The Church of God of Prophecy / La Iglesia de Dios de la Profecía** began its work in México in 1944. Dr. Peter Brierly estimated that there were 280 churches with about 10,000 members in the year 2000. The denomination itself reported 555 churches, 232 missions (a total of 787) and about 28,100 members in 2019, along with 432 ordained ministers. However, no historical information was found.

Bishop Rey Martínez is the National Supervisor.

Headquarters address: Oriente 185 #41, Colonia Villahermosa 07410, Delegación Gustavo A. Madero, Distrito Federal, México: [contacto@idp-mexico.org](mailto:contacto@idp-mexico.org)  
Sources: <https://www.idp-mexico.org/web/> / <https://www.facebook.com/IDPMexicoOficial/> / <http://globalcogop.org/countries/mexico/>

In 1945, Garland Cary of the **independent Christian Churches & Churches of Christ** established the “Colegio Bíblico” in Eagle Pass, Texas, near the border to train Mexican nationals

for ministry in their own country. Also, numerous “direct support” (by local churches in the USA) missionary families from the USA relocated in Mexico during the 1950s and 1960s, where they engaged in a wide variety of evangelistic, benevolent and educational initiatives under the sponsorship of organizations such as the *Western Mexico Christian Mission* and the *Calxico-Mexicali Mission* (Foster 2004: 459).

These ministries are part of the **Stone-Campbell movement** (aka “Restoration movement”) that emerged during the early 1800s, mainly in Kentucky and Pennsylvania, and that grew rapidly during the period 1832 to 1906, when the Stone-Campbell movement was first recognized in the 1906 U.S. Religious Census. The Stone-Campbell churches are found mainly in three branches of the movement: independent **Churches of Christ** (*a capella* = no musical instruments are allowed in worship services), independent **Christian Churches & Churches of Christ** (instrumental = musical instruments are used in worship services), and the **Christian Church-Disciples of Christ** (an ecumenical denomination officially formed in 1968 that traces its origin to 1832).

Source: Foster 2004: xxv-xxx.

**The Directorio del Ministerio del las Iglesias Cristianas e Iglesias de Cristo de Habla Hispana 2008**, published by the Spanish American Evangelistic Ministries in El Paso, Texas, reported the following for Mexico:

Aguascalientes – 3	Morelos – 4
Baja California Norte - 20	Nayarit – 2
Baja California Sur - 0	<b>Nuevo León - 28</b>
Campeche – 1	Oaxaca – 21
<b>Coahuila - 71</b>	Puebla – 4
Colima - 1	Querétaro – 13
Chiapas – 11	Quintana Roo – 3
Chihuahua – 21	<b>San Luís Potosí – 34</b>
Durango – 1	Sinaloa – 4
Guanajuato – 15	Sonora – 4
Guerrero – 1	Tabasco – 1
Hidalgo – 5	Tamaulipas – 18
Jalisco – 8	Veracruz – 13
<b>Mexico City, DF - 15</b>	Yucatán – 19
<b>Mexico – 27</b>	Zacatecas - 16
Michoacán – 1	

This directory reported the total number of independent churches and missions in Mexico in 2008 = 385 with about 19,250 members (average size = 50 members per congregation; estimate by PROLADES). These statistics include the independent “Churches of Christ” (*a capella*) and Christian Churches & Churches of Christ (instrumental) of the Stone-Campbell movement; see category B2.6 below in the Table: **Protestant Denominations in Mexico by Traditions and Families of Churches** (page 68).

Source: Spanish American Evangelistic Ministries (SAEM) en El Paso, Texas: *Directorio del Ministerio de las Iglesias de Cristo e Iglesia Cristianas de Habla Espana 2008*, “Mexico,” pp 53-110, disponible en: <https://www.yumpu.com/es/document/read/12166426/directorio-ministerio-2008-wwwsaeministriescom>

**The Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) / Iglesia de Dios en México** began its ministry in Mexico in 1891, when B.F. Elliott felt the call to take the gospel to the Spanish-speaking people of Baja California, a work that eventually spread across Mexico. He became the first recorded cross-cultural evangelist of the Church of God: <https://www.chogglobal.org/our-history/>

However, it was not until 1946 when permanent mission work was undertaken in Mexico by the Church of God. Currently, it reports 43 churches with about 4,000 members in Mexico: <https://www.chogglobal.org/faq-items/mexico/>

The Church of God, with U.S. offices in Anderson, Indiana, began in 1881 as a movement waving the banner of salvation in Christ alone, the unity of believers, and the holiness of God's people. Early leaders, such as Daniel S. Warner and Mary Cole, sought to forsake denominational hierarchies and formal creeds, trusting solely in the Holy Spirit as their overseer, and in the Bible as their statement of belief. These individuals saw themselves at the forefront of a movement to restore unity and holiness to God's church. Their aim was not to establish another denomination, but to promote primary allegiance to Jesus Christ and transcend denominational loyalties.

The Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) is a Holiness movement with roots in Wesleyan pietism and also in the restorationist traditions (to restore 1<sup>st</sup> century Christianity in the world today). The organization grew out of the evangelistic efforts of several Holiness evangelists in Indiana and Michigan in the early 1880s, most notably *Daniel Sidney Warner* (1842-1895). The desire of Warner and the others was to forsake denominationalism and creeds. One of its more distinctive features is that there is no formal membership, since the movement believes that true biblical salvation makes one a member. Similarly, there is no formal creed other than the Bible. Accordingly, there is much official room for diversity and theological dialogue, even though the movement's culture is strongly rooted in Wesleyan Holiness theology.

Church polity is autonomous and congregational, with various state and regional assemblies offering some basic support for pastors and congregations. In North America, cooperative work is coordinated through Church of God Ministries with offices in Anderson, Indiana. Currently, the General Director is Jim Lyon.

First **Inter-American Conference of the Church of God** met in Mexico City in 1962. This conference of Church of God leaders from across Latin America continues today as *Confraternidad Interamericano de la Iglesia de Dios* (CIID), which meet biennially with smaller regional forums occurring in the off years. Today, the CIID includes leaders from the Church of God in Central America, South America, and the Dominican Republic.

The Church of God (Anderson, Indiana) conducts a variety of ministries in Mexico, such as: evangelistic campaigns, educational programs, Bible Institutes, the publication of literature, medical assistance programs, radio programs and work camps. "La Hora de Hermandad Cristiana" radio program is the international voice of the Church of God; it is heard every week on more than 70 stations in the Hispanic world. "Thousands of people collaborate to bring their family and friends to Christ, and to establish new congregations. The local church is the 'spiritual home' of believers, and it is where they learn to grow in faith and in service to others."

Headquarters: Genaro García #23, Colonia Jardín Balbuena, Ciudad de México

Telephone: 5571.8084; email: [contacto@iddmexico.mx](mailto:contacto@iddmexico.mx)

Internet: [iddmexico.com](http://iddmexico.com)

**The Evangelical Covenant Church / Iglesia Misionera del Pacto (Iglesia Evangelista Misionera del Pacto)** was founded in Mexico in 1947 by missionaries from the USA, who worked in northern region and in the State of Oaxaca. Other Evangelical Covenant missionaries began working in

Mexico City in 1974, after having served previously in Ecuador. The denomination was founded in the USA in 1885 among Swedish immigrants who were part of the Scandinavian Pietist Family of Churches, a reform movement within the State Lutheran Church in Sweden. The USA headquarters of this denomination are located in Chicago, Illinois.

The Evangelical Missionary Covenant Church seeks to form and nurture communities that are deeply committed to Jesus Christ and passionately involved in Christ's mission in the world. The purpose of the Covenant Affirmations is to clarify the values and principles that have guided the Covenant Evangelical Missionary Church since its founding in 1885. Maintaining its consistency with the affirmation of classical Christianity and its own historical experience, the Covenant Church affirms as central to his life and thought certain evangelical emphases. Among them, the most important are the following: • Centrality of the word of God • Necessity of the new birth • Commitment to the integral mission of the Church • Church as a community of believers • Conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit • Reality of freedom in Christ.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/iglesiaelDorado>

The first Covenant church was founded in Residencial El Dorado, Tlalnepantla, State of Mexico, in 1975, which became the “mother church” of four daughter churches in the Mexico City metropolitan area: Cuautitlán Izcalli, Coacalco and Atizapán, followed by another one in Cuautla. By 1988, the Evangelical Covenant community in these churches of about 1,600 people and 60 home bible study groups under lay leadership. After the attendance in each home Bible study group reaches 20 people, the group divides into two groups, and then continues this pattern of multiplication. The El Dorado central church began with about 120 members in 1977, and by 1987 it had 705 members (Source: Pretiz & Larson 1989:121-132).

In 2000, the Evangelical Covenant Church in Mexico (*Iglesia Evangélica del Pacto*) had 75 organized churches with about 3,030 members. Headquarters office: Calle Escorial #0, Fraccionamiento Residencial El Dorado, Tlalnepantla de Baz, Estado de México, México, CP 54020; Telephone: 555-379-213.

**The Missionary Revival Crusade (MRC)**, founded in 1958 by missionaries Daniel (1910-1985) and Ruby Ost, who first arrived in Mexico in 1948 after originally settling in southern Texas, from where they ventured into small villages in northern Mexico to evangelize and help plant local churches.

In 1960, Danny sensed the need to prepare and disciple the next group of national church leaders. He purchased a property in El Carmen, Nuevo León, a town with 1,500 people near Monterrey, Mexico, where he settled with his growing family and founded *Calvary Ministerial Institute*. With extremely humble beginnings, he systematically began teaching and training a group of young people that wanted to serve the Lord in courses related to basic Biblical courses and church leadership. Danny recruited other missionaries and pastors that would come and teach at the Institute during the day and go out to the different villages to preach and plant small congregations in the evening.

The ministry began to grow and, in 1966, Danny started broadcasting a 15-minute daily radio program called *Agua Viva con el Hermano Daniel* (“Living Waters with Brother Danny”), on which he played traditional Mexican gospel music, preached briefly from a Bible passage, prayed for the sick and needy, and offered a free Bible School correspondence course.

Over time, the Living Waters radio program was heard daily on 45 stations across Mexico and Central America. More than 250,000 radio listeners completed the Bible Correspondence course,

including those who received gospel tracts that fell from the sky...delivered by Danny in his Cessna 182 aircraft while visiting missionaries and preaching in different towns and villages across the nation.

The small town of El Carmen started to receive a large number of visitors that wanted to come and meet this man that would pray for the sick and would encourage them to put their hands on the radio as a point of contact and faith. There was such an increase of people being healed, saved and delivered that Brother Danny saw the need to open a building that would be large enough to receive those responding to the radio program and seeking God's favor.

Countless miracles of healing and deliverance were witnessed in cities impacted by this unique move of God. Danny was busy planting *El Calvario* or Calvary churches, and mentoring those eager to enter the ministry. Large crusades and open-air meetings were becoming common, and each year, during Easter week, crusades were held at the boxing arena in downtown Monterrey. Large crowds would fill the venue and hundreds would come forward to accept the Lord as their Savior each day.

Daniel Ost and his national associates opened the first *Faith, Hope & Love Center* in Monterrey, NL, in 1971, followed by another one in Monclova (Coahuila). Later the work was extended to Guadalajara and Puebla, and then to Mexico City in 1976, as well as in other key cities of the Mexican Republic. Currently, the *Centers of Faith, Hope and Love* have about 280 branches around the country "that preach a single message: Only Jesus Saves." This organization is now present in most of the states in the Mexican Republic, also in North, Central and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

In 1976, the powerful momentum produced by the daily radio program, led Brother Danny to open the first *Faith, Hope & Love Center* in Mexico City on a busy 16-lane boulevard that served as the main entrance to the capital city from southeast and its suburbs. He located a vacant facility that at one time was used to store and age wine. Once the purchase was settled, a similar approach was used as in the former Centers with "All hands' on deck" as pastors and volunteers came from across Mexico and the United States to help renovate the building. Some painted walls, while others built benches and installed lighting fixtures. Activities started each morning with a one-hour prayer meeting for Mexico, followed by services that ran from 9 am to 9 pm every single day, seven days a week. This went on from June 1976 to June 1992. Danny felt impressed to use the name "**Faith Hope and Love Centers**," in part, to steer away from the religious connotations inherent to "churches" and because he said "everyone needs faith, hope and love."

Source: <https://mrcpartners.org/danny-ost-biography/>

Tim Ost (born in 1952, a son of the founders) graduated from Missionary Revival Crusade's Calvary Ministerial Institute in El Carmen, Nuevo León, in 1972. After finishing Bible School, Tim and his wife Noemi worked with a young growing church in northern Mexico in Monclova, Coahuila, where there are now twelve churches in the area pastored by national leaders. In 1973, they moved to Rio Verde, San Luis Potosi, 600 miles south of the Laredo, Texas border to pioneer several works there for three and a half years. They moved to the southernmost tip of Mexico in 1976, on the Guatemala border, to pioneer what is currently a growing Faith, Hope and Love Center with several missions and sister churches. In the Fall of 1977, Tim and Noemi moved to Mexico City to assume the position of Senior Pastor at *Faith, Hope and Love Center* #1. He also collaborated with the founding of Mexico City's Faith, Hope and Love Centers #2, #3 and #4 and worked there until the Spring of 1984.

Tim Ost is still an active missionary and member of the Missionary Revival Crusade's

International Board of Directors since 1985. Tim and Noemi were instrumental also in establishing the Home Bible Studies (cells) in Mexico City's *Faith, Hope and Love Centers*, where there are 1,800 all over the city. He has also imparted these teachings in Colombia, Romania, France and different parts of Mexico and the USA.

Tim was the director of the "Living Waters" radio broadcast that aired in Mexico and Central America daily from 1984 to 2000. Many churches were planted as a direct result of these programs. The radio listeners were followed up through the Living Waters Bible Correspondence School, which is still a vital tool for follow-up.

As of 2012, Tim and Noemi were living in Mexico City, where they were pastoring two of the largest churches of the organization as well as providing general oversight to the whole work in Mexico and Nicaragua. They have assumed the responsibilities of "Faith, Hope and Love International," a branch ministry of the Missionary Revival Crusade.

Sources: <https://mrcpartners.org/missionary/tim-noemi-ost/> / <https://centrodefeesperanzayamor.org/quienes-somos/>

**The "Calzada Zaragoza Faith, Love and Hope Center" in Mexico City** grew from 250 members in 1977, to 4,000 in 1982, to 8,600 members in 1987, according to Rolando Rengifo, Chapter 3 (pp. 33-40), in *Estudios de Casos de Crecimiento en la Gran Ciudad de México* (Mexico City, DF: VELA-PROLADES, 1989). This mega-church was the largest Protestant congregation in Mexico City at that time. In 2015, there were about 300 "centers" with 70,000 members in Mexico alone; some of these "centers" were mega-churches with over 10,000 members each (Pentecostal-Charismatic orientation).

**Between 1950 and 1980, at least another 100 Protestant mission agencies (denominational, nondenominational, interdenominational and para-church groups) began work in Mexico,** and scores of new denominations came into existence under national leadership, including the following:

1950-1959 (33 groups)
1950s - National Conservative Presbyterian Church of Mexico (a split from the National Presbyterian Church, led by Eleazar Z. Pérez of the El Divino Salvador parish in Mexico City; a conservative and fundamentalist body influenced by Dr. Carl McIntire in the USA)
1950 - Baptist Bible Fellowship International
1950 - Mennonite Brethren Missions
1950 - Mennonite Mission Board of the Pacific
1950 - General Conference Mennonite Church
1950 - Mexican Border Missions
1950 - World Gospel Mission
1950 - Mexican Missionary Church, later known as <i>Iglesia Mexicana del Evangelio de Cristo Pentecostés</i>
1951 - Church of God of Apostolic Faith
1951 - Grace Brethren Foreign Missions
1951 - Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod Mission
1951 - Baptist General Conference
1951 - Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Conference
1951 - United Missionary Fellowship
1952 - International Pentecostal Church of Christ
1952 - Conservative Baptist Home Mission
1953 - World Baptist Fellowship Mission
1953 - Baptist Missionary Association of America
1953 - World Baptist Fellowship Mission
1953 - Bethel Christian Church (founded by Moisés Salas Cruz, formerly with David Ruesga)
1954 - Christian and Missionary Alliance
1954 - National Evangelical Pentecostal Church (founded by Isidro Pérez and Noé Ruiz)

1955 - American Baptist Association
1955 - CAM International (now Camino Global, formerly the Central American Mission)
1956 - Gospel Missionary Union
1956 - Casa de los Amigos established in Mexico City, operated by Friends/Quaker support groups in the USA.
1956 - Mexican Christian Mission
1957 - Christians in Action
1957 - Next Towns Crusade, Inc.
1957 - Operation Mobilization
1958 - Franconia Mennonite Conference Mission
1959 - Bethany Missionary Association
1959 - World Missions, Inc.
<b>1960-1969 (34 groups)</b>
1960 - Baptist Mid-Missions
1960 - BCM International, Inc.
1960 - National Association of Congregational Christian Churches
1960 - World-Wide Missions International
1960 - Youth Enterprises, Inc.
1961 - Mexican Border Missions
1961 - Project Partner with Christ
1962 - Campus Crusade for Christ
1962 - Christian Reformed World Missions
1962 - Elim Fellowship
1962 - Source of Light Ministries International
1962 - World Literature Crusade
1963 - Apostolic Church of Pentecost
1963 - Congregational Holiness Church Missions
1963 - World Vision International
1964 - Gospel Recordings, Inc.
1964 - New Life League
1964 - Pentecostal Free Will Baptist Churches
1964 - YUGO Ministries (Youth Unlimited Gospel Outreach)
1965 - Baptist International Missions
1965 - Bible Missionary Church
1965 - Open Bible Standard Missions
1965 - Youth With A Mission (YWAM)
1966 - The Navigators
1967 - Luis Palau Evangelistic Association
1967 - Evangelical Friends Mission
1967 - Church of God (Holiness) Mission
1967 - Foundation for His Ministry
1967 - Missions of Baja, Inc.
1967 - Vacation Samaritans (affiliated with Church of God, Anderson, IN)
1967 - Gospel Fellowship Association
1968 - Christian Nationals Evangelistic Commission
1968 - Christian Reformed World Relief
1968 - Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Missions
<b>1970-1979 (32 groups)</b>
1970 - Latin America Mission (MILAMEX, Latin America Mission of Mexico)
1971 - Bethany Fellowship Missions
1971 - Baptist World Missions
1971 - Globe Missionary Evangelism
1971 - UFM, International (USA)
1972 - Children's Haven International
1972 - Missionary Air Transport, Inc.
1972 - New Tribes Mission
1972 - Shield of Faith
1972 - Amistad Cristiana / Christian Friendship
1972 - Totonac Bible Center, Inc.
1973 - Macedonian Missionary Service

1973 - Presbyterian Church in America
1974 - Evangelical Congregational Church
1975 - AMG International
1975 - International Orphanage Association
1975 - Trinity International Baptist Missions
1976 - Mission SOS
1976 - Mennonite Board of Missions
1976 - Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society
1977 - Bible Missionary Church
1978 - Ichthus International
1978 - Wycliffe Associates, Inc.
1979 - Brethren Church Mission Board
1979 - Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
1979 - American Messianic Fellowship
1979 - Compassion International
1979 - Food for the Hungry
1979 - Logoi, Inc.
1979 - O.C. Ministries (Overseas Crusades)
1979 - United Pentecostal Church International
1979 - We Go, Inc.

**The Mexican Missionary Church**, later known as *Iglesia Mexicana del Evangelio de Cristo Pentecostés*, is a Religious Association legally constituted by the Ministry of the Interior. It was founded in 1950 as part of the intense evangelical and evangelistic movement that sprung up with its own national characteristics throughout Latin America.

A group of believers working in Colonia Zaragoza east of Mexico City (called the Federal District at that time) saw an increase in the number of attendees at their prayer meetings and Bible study groups that in 1952 it became necessary to acquire property to formally establish a Pentecostal mission under the name *Iglesia Misionera Mexicana*. This first congregation was followed by others in the State of Mexico, and subsequently in the states of Veracruz, Puebla, Hidalgo and later in almost the entire Mexican Republic.

The original name was changed in 1955 to the *Mexican Church of the Gospel of Christ* under which the organization now operates. It has more than 500 affiliated churches and missions in 29 states of the Mexican Republic, mainly in the central and southern regions, currently under the direction of its founder Dra. Graciela Esparza and pastors Ruery and Ivonne Juárez.

The Mexican Church of the Gospel of Christ annually sponsors camps, retreats, seminars, plenaries, training sessions and national congresses in search of spiritual growth and moral development of all sectors of the congregation, such as: children, adolescents, youth, men, women, married couples and older adults.

Source: <https://imec.org.mx/about/>

**During the 1940s and 1950s there were many reports of severe persecution against Protestants-Evangelicals by fanatical Catholics, especially in rural areas and within Amerindian communities.** Historically, the states with the greatest religious intolerance and opposition to Protestant efforts have been Hidalgo, Guerrero, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Chiapas and Veracruz.

Missionaries of the *Church of God (Cleveland, TN)* reported a strong outbreak of violence by Catholic mobs in Veracruz and Oaxaca during the 1940s. In La Gloria, Veracruz,

...the local Catholic priest incited his congregation to drive the Protestants from their midst. This they undertook to do so on 14 May 1944. With machetes, hatchets, and other implements, a raging Catholic mob destroyed much Church of God property, including the church building and several homes. The police not only failed to protect the victims, but the police chief himself was reportedly a leader of the

mob. Other homes were destroyed on 16 May. Pleased with the matter he had fomented the priest whipped the Catholics into a further passion by urging them to continue and intensify their violence as “an act of faith.” On 21 May, the quiet of the night was broken by fireworks and the ringing of the Catholic church bell. At this signal, the frenzied mob surged against the hapless Protestants, burning their homes, raping or whipping the women and girls, beating or stabbing the men and boys, and committing any other atrocities their evil minds fell upon... Some of the church members fled into the hills and woods where they hid in caves and underbrush, eating roots and wild fruit and drinking the mountain streams. After three days, about forty-six of the refugees made their way to Mexico City, but several children died along the way (Conn 1959:126-127).

*The Assemblies of God* also reported 59 violent deaths of their church members in 1946 due to machete attacks, beatings, stoning and firearms. Others were threatened, beaten and forced to leave their villages because they had become Evangelicals. In 1951, the Assemblies of God reported that 30 Evangelicals were martyred for refusing to return to Roman Catholicism. Many Evangelical children and youth have suffered persecution from Catholic teachers and students in public schools (Jetter 1990:27).

More recently, incidents of persecution by community leaders in Indigenous villages against Protestants, as well as against Catholics, have been reported during the 1990s and 2000s.

### **Harassment of Christians in Mexico**

Protestant Christians in the states of Oaxaca, Guerrero and Chiapas have been subject to harassment by their community and officials. The persecution ranges from difficulty in everyday life, to illegal imprisonment, destruction of buildings and physical threats.

June 28, 1999, Chiapas. Meeting held between Protestant representatives and state government officials regarding the persecution of Protestants by *caciques* [village chiefs]. Protestants seek reconciliation in contrast to previous attempts at legal retribution.

July 1, 1999, Chiapas. Reports that in some villages that *caciques* are producing documents, which state that “no one in this village will change their religion,” coercing villagers to sign them, and then using them as “legal” grounds to expel any Protestants.

Evangelical Christians in Chiapas have borne the brunt of much of the lawlessness there. They are frequently expelled from their homes and villages because they refuse to drink alcohol or to participate in local syncretistic festivities where large amounts of alcohol are consumed. The powerful local leaders [*caciques*], who control the alcohol industry fear a considerable decrease of their earnings and see these Christians as threat to their power. The village authorities often expel the Protestants or threaten them with arrest or other abuse. Catholic Christians or authorities who speak out against the expulsions have also been driven away.

“The general repression in Chiapas hits also many Catholic Christians. The main cause for this repression lies in the fact that power is held mainly by the *caciques* and the big landowners and the local wine and alcohol dealers. The persecution of the Protestant Christians can also be brought in connection with this fact: For religious reasons they refuse to drink alcohol. The liquor dealers are afraid of a loss of sales of their goods. Therefore, they arrange the expulsion of the Christians.”

-- As described by Mr. B. Ruiz

The expelled villagers, mostly subsistence farmers, have to leave behind their entire harvest and all their breeding cattle in their villages. Under threat of death, they are hindered from returning to their homes – not even to gather their harvests. Guards are often posted in front of their former houses to

prevent their return. From that point on the expelled families are often forced to earn their living as street vendors.

Many of the village authorities still refuse to admit that there have been expulsions. Even a leading representative of the regional parliament declared that, "If such expulsions had taken place, they would not have to be considered as crimes anyway." The government's approach may change now that an Evangelical Christian, Pablo Salazar, has been elected governor of Chiapas.

### **Overall human rights situation**

The constitutional protection of religious liberty is generally respected in the north, central and urban areas of Mexico, however, in the rural areas, the *caciques* have enormous influence on the application of laws. *Amnesty International* reports that the situation has deteriorated significantly and arbitrary detentions, torture, extra-judicial killings and disappearances have become wide-spread. The government in many cases seems unwilling or unable to enforce the rule of law. Indeed, human rights monitors are under constant threat of death and peaceful peasant demonstrations in support of much-needed land reform are often broken up by force. Mexican police and security forces frequently target their political opponents, as well as human rights activists, for arbitrary arrest, torture and execution. Source: <http://www.cswusa.com/Countries/Mexico.htm>

**During the 1960s and 1970s, the Charismatic Renewal Movement (CRM) began and flourished in Mexico.** An ecumenical bridge between Catholics and Protestants in Latin America in the late 1970s and early 1980s was the *John 17:21 Fellowship* associated with David du Plessis (1906-1987), known worldwide as "Mr. Pentecost," affiliated with the Assemblies of God from 1948-1962. A Latin American branch of this Fellowship was established in Guatemala City after a major earthquake occurred there in 1976; the coordinator was the *Rev. Robert Thomas* of Los Altos, California. In Mexico, Thomas worked closely with *Friar Alfonso Navarro Castellanos* (1935-2003) and the *Catholic Missionaries of the Holy Spirit* (MSPSC) to form UCELAM (*Unión de Cristianos para la Evangelización de América Latina* / Christian Union for Evangelizing Latin America) in 1978, which held annual ecumenical CRM conferences in Mexico City for a decade or more. Some of the UCELAM teams included Evangelicals such as *Bob Thomas*, *Paul Northrup* (secretary of the Latin American John 17:21 Fellowship), *Bill Finke* and *Juan Carlos Ortiz* (an early leader in the Argentine CRM between 1967 and 1978), who spoke to many ecumenical audiences in the USA and Latin America during the 1980s.

*Bill Finke* was an independent Pentecostal missionary trained in the Assemblies of God Bible College in Seattle, Washington. In 1972, while living in Chilpancingo, Mexico, Finke purchased a new Cessna 210 Turbo-charged six-passenger aircraft to facilitate his ministry. Between 1972 and 1979, Finke taught and trained Catholic bishops, priests, nuns and lay workers throughout Mexico and other parts of Latin America as part of his CRM-related activities.

**Amistad Cristiana A.C. / Christian Friendship** was founded by Doctors Idilio and Rosa María Pardillo (dentists) as a Cultural Association (AC) and not as a Asociación Religiosa (AR) "for the purpose of making known the message, philosophy and thought of Jesus of Nazareth and establishing a personal relationship with God, regardless of any religious creed." Its headquarters are at Calle San Felipe #72, Colonia Xoco, Ciudad de México, DF CP 03330. Telephone: (55) 9183-0670; Internet: <http://www.amistadcristianaac.org/> Also, see: <http://www.findglocal.com/MX/Mexico-City/1053376261368985/Amistad-Cristiana-CDMX>

The history of Amistad Cristiana is presented by Dr. Rosa María Pardillo in a video on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGyP7QvxBA4>

The story of this ministry begins in the early 1970s, when Dr. Pardillo had a patient named Fernando Nieto, who came to his office to receive his dental treatments. Over time, there was more trust between the patient and the doctor, in such a way that this motivated Mr. Fernando to invite the Pardillos to a “special” dinner, which would be in a hotel in Mexico City. And it was at that dinner that the speaker, Pablo Finkenbinder (known internationally as “Hermano Pablo”), shared the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that in a special way reached the hearts of the Pardillos. “In that month of October 1972, the Holy Spirit used the message with power so that that night it could powerfully impact the hearts of the doctors, and right there the spouses Pardillo, Idilio and Rosa María, gave their lives to Jesus Christ.”

As a consequence of this event, the Pardillos opened their home to share the “Good News of salvation” with many people, which if counted to date might be as many as ten thousand people. Those who heard the Gospel message came from various states of the Mexican Republic, as well as from several other countries in the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia. Amistad Cristiana has also been characterized as “a birthplace of leaders who have blessed the lives of many people, not only in Mexico, but in various nations of the world.”

Source: [http://www.amistadcristianamexico.org/bol\\_oct\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.amistadcristianamexico.org/bol_oct_pdf.pdf)

The Pardillos also established a video teaching ministry on AC TV at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMIDI0QtOiT3ZGKzankt9xw>

In addition, Drs. Idilio and Rosa María Pardillo founded the *Centro de Capacitación y Estudios Bíblicos de México A.C.* (CCEBMAC) / the Bible Study and Training Center during 1986-1987 in Mexico City. The success of this program motivated the Pardillos to formalize a relationship with *Christ For The Nations Bible College* in Dallas, Texas, in order for their students to receive a certification of academic credits earned at CCEBMAC. Consequently, the name was changed to *Instituto Cristo para las Naciones de México* / **Christ For The Nations Institute of Mexico** in 1998.

Statistically, this organization did not appear in any of the previous national reports, cited elsewhere, except in the *Operation World 2010 Database*, which reported 800 affiliated churches and missions with about 30,000 members. These statistics need to be confirmed from other sources or directly from Amistad Cristiana.

**The United Pentecostal Church (UPC) / Iglesia Pentecostal Unida de México (IPUM)** began with the arrival of the first UPC missionary to Mexico, Johnny Wilhoite, in 1979. In March 1980, he baptized his first convert in Veracruz, Isabel Villafán. Since then the UPC-IPUM (a Oneness Pentecostal denomination founded in 1945 in Hazelwood, Missouri) has grown to include more than 665 churches and missions throughout the country, with more than 630 pastors and ministers and more than 80,000 “baptized in the Name of Jesus” who identify with the IPUM. The Presiding Bishop is Dr. Thomas W. Drost, who has been in that position since February 1991, having been elected by the National Assembly of Pastors every two years. The IPUM has an Executive Committee, a National Council, 28 Districts – each with its District Committee and headed by a District Supervisor. The UPC has affiliated churches in all the states of Mexico.

Headquarters: Avenida Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas #175, Colonia Doctores, CP 06720, Mexico City, Distrito Federal, Mexico.

Sources: [www.ipumex.net](http://www.ipumex.net) / <https://www.facebook.com/IPUMEXICO/>

**Between 1980 and 1995, at least another 70 Protestant missions and service agencies were established in Mexico, including the following, as well as scores of Mexican denominations and independent church associations.**

1980-1995 (68 groups)
1980 - Christian Missionary Fellowship (Indiana), now CMF International
1980 - Christian Union Mission
1980 - Global Outreach with the Gospel
1980 - Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship
1981 - Harvest
1981 - Mennonite Central Committee
1981 - Comisión Centros Cristianos / Christian Centers Commission
1981 - World Indigenous Missions
1982 - Blessings International
1982 - Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference, Canada
1982 - Frontier Ministries International
1982 - Calvary Missionary Fellowship
1982 - Calvary Commission, Inc.
1982 - The Missionary Church, Overseas Ministries (World Partners)
1983 - Christian Faith Ministries
1983 - Maranatha Baptist Mission
1983 - New Covenant Evangelical Ministries
1983 - Pocket Testament League
1983 - Priority One International
1983 - Reach Ministries International.
1983 - Self Help Foundation
1983 - World Salt Foundation
1983 - Childcare International
1983 - Mission Ministries, Inc.
1984 - Mexico Inland Mission
1984 - Fellowship of Independent Missions (Fellowship International Mission?)
1984 - All Peoples Baptist Mission
1984 - Pocket Testament League
1984 - Presbyterian Reformed Church of Mexico (in fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church in the USA)
1984 - VELA Ministries International
1985 - Independent Faith Mission
1985 - Christian Advance International
1985 - Precious Seed Ministries
1986 - Calvary International
1986 - International Outreach Ministries
1986 - Global Strategy Mission Association
1986 - Mazahua Mission
1987 - Advent Christian Church, World Missions
1987 - Liberty Baptist Mission
1987 - Dayspring Outreach Ministries – El Camino de la Biblia
1987 - Habitat for Humanity International
1988 - TEAM (The Evangelical Alliance Mission)
1988 - Christ for the City International
1990 - Brethren in Christ World Missions
1990 - OMS International, Inc. (USA and Canada)
1990 - Medical Ambassadors Mission
1990 - Impact International
1990 - Kids Alive International
1990 - WEC International
1990 - World Teach (formerly, West Indies Mission)
1991 - Association of Baptist for World Evangelism (ABWE)
1991 - Action International Ministries
1991 - AMF International
1991 - International Partnership Missions
1992 - International Gospel Outreach
1992 - North American Baptist Conference
1992 - The Master's Harvest

1992 - World Servants
1993 - Evangelical Mennonite Church
1993 - Evangelical Presbyterian Church
1993 - Fraternity of Pentecostal Churches (FRAPI); an association formed by eight autonomous churches and their affiliates.
1995 - Christ for the City International (affiliated with Latin America Mission)
1995 - Living Water Teaching International
1995 - Mission Society for United Methodists
1995 - Primitive Methodist Church USA
1995 - Ripe for Harvest, Inc.
1995 - The Master's Mission, Inc.
1995 - Walk Thru The Bible Ministries
1995 - International Family Missions

**Since 1995, at least 33 new Protestant denominations and service agencies have begun work in Mexico**, according to Peggy E. Newell, editor, *North American Mission Handbook: U.S. and Canadian Protestant Ministries Overseas 2017-2019* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2017). However, most of these efforts may not be statistically significant enough to be included here.

In addition, the following denominations have established work in Mexico:

**The Pentecostal Church of God International Movement / Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal Movimiento Internacional (Región México)**, founded in Puerto Rico in 1921.

Headquarters: Calle La Paz y Niños Heroes No 17, Colonia La Paz H., Matamoros, Mexico

[https://www.facebook.com/Iglesia-De-Dios-Pentecostal-MI-Mexico-219024708266225/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/Iglesia-De-Dios-Pentecostal-MI-Mexico-219024708266225/?ref=page_internal)

**Latin American Council of the Pentecostal Church of God / Concilio Latinoamericano de la Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal (CLANY)**, founded in New York City in 1954)

Currently, it has 18 organized churches and 11 preaching points in Mexico, which are located in Acapulco, Cancún, Distrito Federal, México, Veracruz and Yucatán—founding date in Mexico unknown.

Its representative in Mexico is the *Rev. Martin Apolinar*:

Headquarters: 2a. Cerrada de Constitución de 1917, Número 3, Colonia Venustiano Carranza, Municipio de Chicoloapán de Juárez, Estado de Mexico, 56377, Mexico.

Teléfono: 55-1318-2649

Source: [http://clany.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=337](http://clany.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=337)

**Latin American United Pentecostal Church in Mexico / Iglesia Pentecostal Unida Latinoamericana** (from Colombia), registered as an AR in 2006 (now with 43 churches in Mexico; first annual convention was held in 2005)—founding date in Mexico unknown.

Missionary (Distrito Federal), *Elvis Gutiérrez*.

Headquarters: Avenida Vicente Villada #290 Dpto 2, Colonia Ampliación Vicente Villada, Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, Estado de México.

Tel. 55-5792-4270; Cel. 55-5476-8893

Email: [egutierrez2001@hotmail.com](mailto:egutierrez2001@hotmail.com)

Source: <http://ipulmexico.com/>

**Church of Christ Final Call Ministries / Iglesia de Cristo Ministerios Llamado Final** was founded in Inglewood, California, in 1990 by Dr. Otto Rene Azurdia, from Guatemala. The central church moved to Downey, California, in 2001, where it built a 5,000-seat auditorium. This denomination was established in Mexico about the year 2000 by Pastors Víctor and Rosy Garduño.

The Church of Christ Final Call Ministries in Mexico was initially located in Los Reyes la Paz, State of Mexico. The Garduños came from a fellowship of evangelical churches called *El Camino*, where they received the Lord's call to the pastorate, in which they have been serving for more than 17 years. Currently, they are pastoring a church with membership of 3,000 adults and 800 children in Mexico City; the denomination now has 70 churches with about 21,000 adherents in the Mexican Republic. The central church is located at: Calle Comunal 4, Colonia Agrícola Pantitlán, Delegación Iztacalco, CP 08100, Mexico City, DF.

Sources: <https://www.salvare.com.mx/acerca-de-nosotros/nuestros-pastores/> / <http://llamadafinal.com.mx/> / [contacto@llamadafinal.com.mx](mailto:contacto@llamadafinal.com.mx)

**Statistics on the various Protestant denominations in Mexico at any point in time has been difficult for most researchers and church historians to find.** One of the first sources of information about this was *The Missionary Review of the World* (May 1911, Vol. XXIV), which reported 469 organized local churches with 16,250 members in Mexico in 1888. In 1910, this source reported 23,940 baptized Protestant church members in Mexico: Methodists (12,500), Presbyterians (5,700), Baptists (2,630), Congregationalists (1,540), Christian Church-Disciples of Christ (900), and Quakers (670).

However, in 1936, the total membership of these same denominations was reported to be only 22,882, which reflects some of the difficulties encountered during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917) and the Great Depression years (1929-1939). Nevertheless, some of the newer denominations reported the following membership statistics in 1936: Assemblies of God (6,000), Seventh-day Adventists (4,000), Swedish Pentecostals (4,000), Church of the Nazarene (2,000), Pentecostal Holiness Church (1,300), Pilgrim Holiness Church (1,200), and Mexican Indian Churches (560), for a total of about 19,000 members. These are partial statistics because other denominations (with an estimated total of 6,000 members) were known to exist in 1936 that were not included in a study published in 1938 by the *International Missionary Council* (founded at Lake Mohonk, New York, in 1921). *The total Protestant membership in Mexico for 1936 was estimated to be 48,000 but did not include the Mennonite colonies.*

**The period 1950-1960 was described by McGavran (1963) and Read, Monterroso and Johnson (1969), as well as other sources, as one of substantial Protestant church growth in Mexico.** For example, the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) reported that, between 1948 and 1958, its work in Mexico increased from 187 churches and 5,262 members to 379 churches, 229 missions and 14,737 members (Conn 1959:130). Although the Mexican national census of 1960 reported that 578,515 people were affiliated with Protestant denominations and local churches, Rivera (1962:25-27), based on his fieldwork, gave the total number of Protestant adherents for 1960 as 645,145, which were affiliated with 41 Protestant denominations with 2,420 organized churches, 1,622 congregations (missions), and 2,470 Sunday Schools.

**The principal Protestant denominations in Mexico in 1962 were reported to be the following:** National Presbyterian Church (42,000); Methodist Church (33,000); Seventh-day Adventist Church (22,700); Apostolic Church of Faith in Christ Jesus (16,500, Oneness Pentecostal); Full Gospel Church of God, Cleveland, TN (15,500, Trinitarian-Holiness Pentecostal); Swedish Pentecostals (15,000, Trinitarian Pentecostal); Assemblies of God (15,000, Trinitarian Pentecostal); National Baptist Convention (12,000, independent since 1903 but initially supported by the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board);

and Movement of Independent Evangelical Pentecostal Churches (10,000 - *Movimiento Iglesia Evangélica Pentecostés Independiente* – MIEPI).

Sources: McGavran (1963:130); Read, Monterroso and Johnson (1969:165-167); and Clyde W. Taylor and Wade T. Coggins, *Protestant Missions in Latin America: A Statistical Survey* (1961).

**The Association Fraternity of Pentecostal Churches in the Mexican Republic** (*Asociación Fraternidad de Iglesias Pentecostales en la República Mexicana* – AFIPRM), in 1965, included the following denominations: Assemblies of God, Church of God in the Mexican Republic, Interdenominational Church of Jesus Christ (Portales), Bethel Christian Church, Union of Independent Churches, Free Pentecostal Movement, Foursquare Gospel Church, Pentecostal Churches of God, Independent Apostolic Pentecostal Churches, Berea Pentecostal Church, Gedeon Christian Church, Community of Free Pentecostal Churches, Independent Evangelical Church, and Independent Church of God. Source: Read, Monterroso and Johnson (1969:169).

**By 1962, there were about 276,000 Protestant church members in Mexico**, according to a study conducted by Dr. Donald McGavran, but there was no mention of the Mennonite colonists. However, the size of the Protestant Community (adherents) was at least twice as large as the membership. In 1960, the Mexican national census reported the Protestant population at 578,515.

According to Read, Monterroso and Johnston (1969), in *Church Growth in Latin America*, the estimated total Protestant membership in Mexico was about 430,000 in 1967, of which 64 percent was Pentecostal and 36 percent non-Pentecostal. Obviously, the number of Pentecostal church members had increased faster than the non-Pentecostals in the 30-year period 1936 to 1966. However, once again, there was no mention of the Mennonite colonists.

**The size of the Protestant population in 2000** was 5.2 percent of the total population, compared to 4.9 percent in 1990, 3.3 percent in 1980 and 1.8 percent in 1970, based on statistics from the Mexican national censuses. By comparison, in 2000, the percentage size of the Protestant population in Mexico (5.2 percent) was much lower than in the countries of Central America where Protestants were between 15-35 percent of the national population in each country. However, in terms of actual population size, the number of Protestants in Mexico was very large, an estimated 8,874,586 in 2010 (census), third in size in the Americas after the USA (150 million), Brazil (30 million) and Canada (9.5 million).

Dr. Peter Brierly (*World Churches Handbook*, 1997) gave the following estimates of the size of some of the Protestant denominations in Mexico for the year 2000:

<b>World Churches Handbook, 1997: Estimated number of Protestant churches and members in Mexico for the year 2000.</b>			
<b>RANK</b>	<b>DENOMINATIONS-RANKED BY MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>CHURCHES</b>	<b>MEMBERS</b>
01	Seventh-Day Adventist Church	1140	383000
02	Union of Independent Evangelical Churches (UIEI)	1220	368000
03	Assemblies of God, National Council	2760	207000
04	National Presbyterian Church	3850	155000
05	Church of God in the Mexican Republic (Ruesga)	720	86900
06	National Baptist Convention	970	82900

07	Independent Evangelical Pentecostal Movement (MIEPI)	1830	55000
08	Methodist Church	520	46900
09	Apostolic Church of Faith in Jesus Christ	1810	46400
10	National Christian Church of Assemblies of God	790	39200
11	Full Gospel Church of God (Cleveland, TN)	1050	37600
12	Church of the Nazarene	350	32500
13	Pentecostal Holiness Church	210	15300
14	Church of the Foursquare Gospel	150	12200
15	Unevangelized Fields Mission-related churches	170	11000
16	Church of God (Seventh Day)	460	10800
17	Church of God of Prophecy	280	9970
18	Churches of Christ (instrumental)	240	8530
19	Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church	270	8280
20	Churches of Christ (non-instrumental = a capella)	200	8210
21	Christian Brethren (Plymouth Brethren)	130	7500
22	Interdenominational Christian Church	420	7050
23	The Salvation Army	140	6550
24	Christian Reformed Church	43	3890
25	Christian & Missionary Alliance	44	3380
26	Baptist International Mission-related churches	21	3100
27	Evangelical Covenant Church	75	3030
28	Wesleyan Methodist Church	70	2750
29	Christian Church-Disciples of Christ	61	2700
30	Free Methodist Church	55	1940
31	Congregational Church	27	1720
32	Association of Bible Churches (CAM-related)	35	1650
33	Lutheran Church of Mexico	19	1500
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>20,130</b>	<b>1,671,450</b>
	Note: all others had fewer than 1,000 members or information was lacking about their national membership.		

**Editorial Note:** These statistics are an estimate made by the Editor, Dr. Peter Brierly, Director of The Christian Research Association and his staff in London, UK, and they may not be official statistics provided by denominational sources in Mexico.

**Data analysis of above table:** ten Pentecostal denominations reported 877,570 members in 10,820 churches, which corresponds to 52.5 percent of the total members reported of 1,671,450 and 53.8 percent of the total number of churches reported of 20,130; twenty-one non-Pentecostal denominations reported 400,080 members, or 23.9 percent of the total members reported and 38.3 percent of the total churches reported; and two Adventist-related groups reported 383,800 members, or 23.6 percent of the total members reported and 8.0 percent of the total churches reported. *The average church size was 83 members per church* (total membership divided by the total number of churches).

This analysis is based on the data of the denominations listed above with 1,000 or more church members, although there may be other denominations in Mexico with 1,000 or more members that were not listed for lack of information. The total number of churches listed in the above sample represents 50.3

percent of the estimated total number of Protestant congregations (churches and missions) in Mexico in the year 2000: 40,000.

**The Operation World 2010 Database reported the following statistics for the largest-known Protestant denominations in Mexico** (the denomination highlighted in **YELLOW** below was not part of the original database).

<b>Operation World 2010 Database for Mexico: Estimated number of Protestant churches and members, 2010</b>			
<b>RANK</b>	<b>DENOMINATIONS-RANKED BY MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>CHURCHES</b>	<b>MEMBERS</b>
01	Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día (IASD)	2670	650000
02	Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de México (INPM)	4800	624000
03	Unión de Iglesias Evangélicas Independientes (UIEI)	1500	450000
04	Concilio Nacional de Las Asambleas de Dios (CNAD)	7400	444000
05	Iglesia de Dios en la República Mexicana (Ruesga)	1643	189000
06	Iglesia Evangélica Independiente de México (IEIM)	1409	155000
07	Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús (IAFCJ)	1400	150000
08	Convención Nacional Bautista de México (CNBM)	1700	136000
09	Movimiento Iglesias Evangélicas Pentecostes Independientes (MIEPI)	3833	115000
<b>XX</b>	<b>Iglesia de Dios en México Evangelio Completo (Cleveland, TN)</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>100000</b>
10	Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal Movimiento Internacional (IDPMI)	900	90000
11	Iglesia Episcopal Mexicana Independiente	600	60000
12	Iglesia Metodista de México	400	55000
13	Iglesia del Nazareno en México	727	52987
14	Frente Evangelístico de Avivamiento	500	40000
15	Centros de Fe, Esperanza y Amor	50	35000
16	Iglesia de Dios de la Profecía	927	32432
17	Amistad Cristiana Asociacion Civil	800	30000
18	Iglesias Bíblicas Bautistas	560	22400
19	Iglesia Pentecostal Unida	859	21250
20	Iglesia de Dios en México (Séptimo Día)	800	20000
21	Old Colony Mennonite Church - Altkolonier Mennonitengemeinde	1945	19450
22	Misión Bautista Internacional	124	18000
23	Iglesia Anglicana-Episcopal	335	16766
24	Iglesia Cristiana de los Hermanos Libres (Open Brethren)	166	16647
25	Iglesia de Dios (7°. Día)	160	16000
26	Iglesia de Santidad Pentecostal	181	15580
27	Iglesia Cristiana Interdenominacional de la República Mexicana (ICIDRM)	800	15500
28	Iglesias de Cristo (no instrumental = <i>a capella</i> )	372	14500
29	Unevangelized Fields Mission	229	13740
30	Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada / Christian Reformed Church	149	13410
31	Iglesia Bautista Fundamental de México	160	10000
32	Iglesia Unidad Cristiana Nacional	160	10000
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>39,759</b>	<b>3,651,662</b>
<b>Note: All other denominations had fewer than 10,000 members nationally or were not listed for lack of information.</b>			

**Editorial Note:** These statistics are an estimate made by researchers and staff members of the Operation World 2010 Database Office, under the direction of General Editor Jason Mandryk of WEC International in the UK, and they may not be official statistics provided by denominational sources in Mexico.

**Data analysis of above table:** eighteen non-Pentecostal denominations reported 1,703,400 members, or 46.6 percent of the total members reported of 3,651,662, and 40.6 percent of the total number of churches reported; twelve Pentecostal denominations reported 1,262,262 members, or 34.6 percent of the total members reported, and 50.3 percent of the total number of churches reported; and the three Adventist-related groups reported 686,000 members, or 18.8 percent of the total members reported, and 8.1 percent of the total number of churches reported. *The average church size was 91.8 members per church* (total membership divided by the total number of churches). This analysis is based on the data of the denominations listed above with 10,000 or more church members, although there may be other denominations in Mexico with 10,000 or more members that were not listed for lack of information. One of the denominations listed above was not included in the original *Operation World 2010 Database* report (Iglesia de Dios en México Evangelio Completo- Cleveland, TN) but was added to the table by PROLADES along with its statistical information. The total number of churches listed in the above sample represents 72.3 percent of the estimated total number of Protestant congregations (churches and missions) in Mexico in 2009: 55,000.

**A summary of comparative data from 2000 and 2010.** The average church size increased from 83 members per church to 92 members per church, which indicates that the individual congregations (churches and missions) had increased in size during the decade. Based on this sample of 33 denominations for both dates, the number of non-Pentecostal churches (NP) had increased in relative proportion to those of Adventist-related groups (A) and Pentecostal denominations (P): the NP churches were 23.9 percent of the total number of churches reported in 2000 compared to 46.6 percent in 2010 (an increase of 22.7 percent); the A-related churches were 23.6 percent of the total number of churches reported in 2000 compared to 18.8 percent in 2010 (a decline of 4.8 percent); and the P churches were 52.5 percent in 2000 compared to 34.6 percent in 2010 (a decline of 17.9 percent). *This indicates that the non-Pentecostal denominations had planted more new churches between 2000 and 2010 than the Adventist-related groups and the Pentecostal denominations.*

However, between 2000 and 2010 the relative proportion of members among this sample of 33 denominations remained about the same: the reported membership of Adventist-related groups was 8.0 percent in 2000 compared to 8.1 percent in 2010; the reported non-Pentecostal membership was 38.3 percent in 2000 compared to 40.6 percent in 2010; and the reported Pentecostal membership was 53.8 percent in 2000 compared to 50.3 percent in 2010. *This shows a slight increase (2.3 percent) in the relative proportion of non-Pentecostal membership, and a slight decrease (3.5 percent) in the relative proportion of Pentecostal membership between 2000 and 2010 in this sample of 33 Protestant denominations.*

**According to the government database of registered “religious associations” (ARs) in 2009, there were a total of 7,073 ARs,** of which 1,568 were identified as Baptist (many were independent local churches); 280 Pentecostal; 15 Presbyterian; 10 Holiness; eight Lutheran; six Methodist; and three Mennonite.

In 2008, *VELA Ministries International*, in collaboration with the *Bible Society of Mexico* and the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*, conducted a national study of “Evangelical groups” (all Adventist-related groups were excluded) in Mexico and produced a national directory of 22,796 local Evangelical churches (VELA 2008). Although this study and the resulting database of churches were incomplete due to a lack of cooperation from some denominations and a lack of information from others, the states with the largest number of reported Evangelical churches were the following: Mexico, 2,571; Veracruz, 2,443; Tabasco, 1,634; Chiapas, 1,492; Federal District, 1,351; Chihuahua, 1,317; and Baja California Norte, 1,265. All other states had less than 1,000 churches each. However, in terms of church-to-population ratios by state (total population), the national directory reported that the states with lowest ratios (“the most evangelized areas”) were: Chihuahua 1:0,706; Tabasco 1:1,208; Chiapas 1:1,648; Yucatán 1:1,901; Campeche 1:2,007; Baja California Norte 1:2,113; Guerrero 1:2,631; Hidalgo 1:2,638; Sonora 1:2,872; and Veracruz

1:2,895. And the states with the highest ratios (“the least evangelized areas”) were: Colima 1:43,219; Guanajuato 1:15,293; Querétaro de Arteaga 1:15,077; Jalisco 1:10,517; Puebla 1:10,412; Tlaxcala 1:9,538; Zacatecas, 1:9,368; Nayarit, 1:8,713; Coahuila 1:8,402; Aguascalientes 1:8,389; Michoacán 1:7,185; Baja California Sur 1:6,483; and the Federal District 1:6,455 (VELA 2008:46).

**\*\*Based on information from a variety of sources, the 33 largest Protestant denominations in Mexico today are believed to be the following in order of relative size by membership:**

- **National Council of the Assemblies of God / Concilio Nacional de las Asambleas de Dios** (more than 6,000 “preaching centers” and about 1,500,000 members in 2016): <http://asambleasdedios.mx/>
- **National Presbyterian Church / Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana** (4,800 congregations and 1,200,000 members in 2016): <http://presbiterianosag.com.mx/> - [https://issuu.com/jornadaspresbiterianas2/docs/resena\\_historica\\_de\\_la\\_inpm-2012](https://issuu.com/jornadaspresbiterianas2/docs/resena_historica_de_la_inpm-2012)
- **Seventh-day Adventist Church / Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día** (more than 4,321 congregations and 768,996 members in 2017; and 4,691 churches with more than 781,000 members as of March 2020): <http://iasdcentralcdmx.org/index.php/contactenos/>
- **Union of Independent Evangelical Churches / Unión de Iglesias Evangélicas Independientes** (UIEI, about 1,500 churches with 450,000 members in 2010?): [https://www.facebook.com/pg/UNI%C3%93N-DE-IGLESIAS-EVANG%C3%89LICAS-INDEPENDIENTES-AR-261608220540915/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/UNI%C3%93N-DE-IGLESIAS-EVANG%C3%89LICAS-INDEPENDIENTES-AR-261608220540915/about/?ref=page_internal)
- **National Baptist Convention of Mexico / Convención Nacional Bautista** (more than 1,700 congregations and 272,000 members in 2009): <https://www.convencionbautista.mx/>
- **Interdenominational Christian Church of the Mexican Republic / Iglesia Cristiana Interdenominacional de la República Mexicana** (ICIRM), founded by Pentecostal pastor Josué Mejía Hernández (more than 1,200 congregations and 190,000 members in 2000): <http://iciar.org/quienes-somos/>
- **Church of God in the Mexican Republic / Iglesia de Dios en la República Mexicana** (IDRM), a split from the Assemblies of God under David G. Ruesga (about 1,650 churches with 190,000 members in 2010): [https://www.idrmar.net/que\\_creemos.html](https://www.idrmar.net/que_creemos.html)
- **Independent Evangelical Church of Mexico / Iglesia Evangélica Independiente de México** (IEIM), founded by Swedish Pentecostal missionary Axel Anderson (about 1,500 churches with 155,000 members in 2010): <http://www.ieimar.org/>
- **Apostolic Church of Faith in Jesus Christ / Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús** (IAFCJ) with more than 1,394 congregations and 151,123 members in 2009 (Oneness Pentecostal); <http://www.iafcj.org/>
- **Movement of Independent Evangelical Pentecostal Churches / Movimiento de Iglesias Evangélicas Pentecostales Independientes** (MIEPI), about 3,850 churches with 115,000 members in 2010: <http://www.miepi.com/>
- **Independent Mexican Episcopal Church / Iglesia Episcopal Mexicana Independiente** (IEMI). Since 1931, this church in México has been led by Mexican bishops. On 3 May 1995, at a ceremony in the cathedral of San José de Gracia in México City, the newly christened **Anglican Church of Mexico / Iglesia Anglicana de México** was officially granted autonomy by the Episcopal Church (USA) and became an autonomous province

of the worldwide Anglican Communion. There are five dioceses in the province: Mexico, Cuernavaca, Northern Mexico, Western Mexico and Southeast Mexico; the province has about 150 parishes and missions, 100,000 baptized members, six bishops and 75 priests and deacons: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/article/sidebar-anglicans-m%C3%A9xico-have-long-history>

- **Church of God International (Cleveland, Tennessee) / La Iglesia de Dios en México Evangelio Completo** (about 1,500 churches and 100,000 members in 2010): <https://www.idmecar.org/> [https://www.taringa.net/+info/historia-de-la-iglesia-de-dios-en-mexico-evangelio-completo\\_12rgbw](https://www.taringa.net/+info/historia-de-la-iglesia-de-dios-en-mexico-evangelio-completo_12rgbw)
- **Pentecostal Church of God International Mission / Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal, MI (IDPMI)**, from Puerto Rico; about 900 churches with 90,000 members in 2010: <https://www.facebook.com/Iglesia-De-Dios-Pentecostal-MI-Mexico-219024708266225/>
- **United Pentecostal Church / Iglesia Pentecostal Unida de México** (665 churches and missions throughout the country, with more than 630 pastors and ministers and more than 80,000 church members): [https://www.facebook.com/IPUMEXICO/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/IPUMEXICO/?ref=page_internal) / <http://www.ipumex.net/>
- **Centers of Faith, Hope and Love of the Missionary Revival Crusade / Centros de Fe, Esperanza y Amor (CFEA)**; about 280 “centers” with 70,000 members in 2015; some of these “centers” are mega-churches with over 10,000 members each (Pentecostal-Charismatic): <http://centrodefeesperanzayamor.org/>
- **Spiritual Christian Evangelical Church / Iglesia Evangélica Cristiana Espiritual (IECE)**, 362 churches and 578 preaching centers with an estimated 62,500 members in 2010 (Oneness Pentecostal): [https://www.academia.edu/23609879/Spiritual\\_Christian\\_Evangelical\\_Church\\_Iglesia\\_Evang%C3%A9lica\\_Cristiana\\_Espiritual](https://www.academia.edu/23609879/Spiritual_Christian_Evangelical_Church_Iglesia_Evang%C3%A9lica_Cristiana_Espiritual)
- **Methodist Church of Mexico / Iglesia Metodista de México (IMM)**, 400 congregations and 55,000 members in 2010: <http://www.iglesia-metodista.org.mx/>
- **Church of the Nazarene / Iglesia del Nazareno (IN)**, 616 churches and 40,000 members in 2008: <http://www.mesoamericaregion.org/areas/area-mexico/>
- **Independent Pentecostal Fraternity / Fraternidad Pentecostés Independiente (FRAPI)**: <https://www.facebook.com/IglesiasFrapitimeline?l=100006336755295%3A100010845393092%3A1550519244>
- **Independent Evangelical Church in the Mexican Republic / Iglesia Evangélica Independiente en la República Mexicana (IEIRM)**, Swedish Pentecostal-origin, a split from the **Independent Evangelical Church of Mexico / Iglesia Evangélica Independiente de México (IEIM)**: <https://www.civico.com/lugar/iglesia-evangelica-independiente-en-la-republica-mexicana-casa-de-dios-y-puerta-del-cielo-mexico/>
- **Church of God of Prophecy / Iglesia de Dios de la Profecía (IDP)**, about 790 churches and missions with 28,100 members in 2018: <http://idpmexico.org/> - <http://globalcogop.org/countries/mexico/>
- **Amistad Cristiana** (about 800 churches with 30,000 members in 2000)???: <https://www.amistadcristianaac.com/>
- **Various Mennonite denominations** (about 26,000 Mennonite church members in 2006): <http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Mexico>

- **Baptist Bible Fellowship-related churches / Iglesias Bíblicas Bautistas** (about 560 churches with 22,500 members in 2010??): <http://ibbh.org/spanish/> (contact for related churches in Mexico)
- **Church of Christ Final Call Ministries** (70 affiliated churches with about 21,000 adherents; central church in Mexico City; work began about the year 2000 in Mexico) <https://www.salvare.com.mx/acerca-de-nosotros/nuestros-pastores/> / <http://llamadafinal.com.mx/> / [contacto@llamadafinal.com.mx](mailto:contacto@llamadafinal.com.mx)
- **Independent Christian Churches / Churches of Christ** (instrumental and *a capella*, non-instrumental). Total reported independent churches and missions in Mexico in 2008 = 385 with about 19,250 members (average size = 50 members per congregation; estimate by PROLADES). Source: <https://www.yumpu.com/es/document/view/12166426/directorio-ministerio-2008-wwwsaeministriescom>
- **Seventh-Day Church of God / Iglesia de Dios (7° día) / Iglesia de Dios Apostólica del 7° Día** (about 160 churches with 16,000 members in 2010??; established in 1922 in Saltillo, Coahuila; affiliated with the General Conference of the Church of God (Seventh-day) / Conferencia General de la Iglesia de Dios (Séptimo Día) in Denver, Colorado): [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iglesia\\_de\\_Dios\\_\(S%C3%A9ptimo\\_D%C3%ADa\)](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iglesia_de_Dios_(S%C3%A9ptimo_D%C3%ADa)) - <http://www.iglesiadediosapostolica.org/>
- **Pentecostal Holiness Church / Iglesia de Santidad Pentecostal** (began in Mexico in 1933 in Ciudad Reynosa, Tamaulipas), about 180 churches with 16,000 members in 2010??): <http://www.ispmexico.org/>
- **Foursquare Gospel Church / Iglesia del Evangelio Cuadrangular** (198 churches with about 20,000 members in 2019): <http://cuadrangularmexico.com/>
- **National Christian Unity Church / Iglesia Unidad Cristiana Nacional** (President, José Felipe Centeno, Municipio de Macuspana, Tabasco); an estimated 160 churches and 10,000 members in 2010??): <http://pbrocarmenlopezalejandro.blogspot.com/>
- **Independent Fundamentalist Baptist Churches** (about 160 churches and 10,000 members in 2010??; includes Bible Baptist, Fundamentalist Baptist and other independent Baptist churches), see this website for directory of these Fundamentalist Baptist churches: <http://www.literaturabautista.com/directorio-de-iglesias-bautistas-independientes-en-mexico>
- **Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church / Iglesia Presbiteriana Asociada Reformada** (IPAR), reported 68 churches with about 6,120 members in 2017 in the states of Tamaulipas, San Luís Potosí, Veracruz, Durango and the DF: <http://ipardemexico.blogspot.com/>
- **Baptist International Mission-related groups / Iglesia Bautista Internacional** (50 churches with about 4,500 members in 2018): <https://www.bimi.org/countries/mexico.php>
- **Plymouth Brethren - Gospel Halls / Hermanos de Plymouth - Salas Evangélicas**; the following document reports 215 churches and 80 preaching points with about 4,000 members in Mexico (p. 197): <https://online.fliphtml5.com/ycin/agxm/#p=225>
- **CAM International – Camino Global** (formerly Central American Mission) / *Iglesias Bíblicas de México* (statistics unknown): <https://www.caminoglobal.org/explore/resource/puebla-bible-seminary>

**\*\*THESE STATISTICS NEED TO BE VERIFIED AND UPDATED.**

**Editorial note:** The size of the smaller Protestant denominations and church associations in Mexico (less than 10,000 members) is difficult to determine for lack of information about them in print or via the Internet.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 2000, **VELA Ministries** published a study of all known Protestant denominations (Adventist-related groups were excluded) in the **Mexico City Metro Area** (MCMA: the DF and 20 continuous urban municipalities in the State of Mexico), which revealed the following information (see table below).

**TABLE OF THE LARGEST PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS  
IN THE MEXICO CITY METRO AREA (MCMA) IN 2000**

	<b>DENOMINATION NAME</b>	<b>CHURCHES &amp; MISSIONS</b>	<b>BAPTIZED MEMBERS</b>
1	Iglesia Evangélica Independiente Pentecostal (IEIP, founded by Swedish missionary Axel Anderson)	115	16,500
2	Convención Nacional Bautista de México (CNBM)	176	15,188
3	Concilio Nacional de las Asambleas de Dios (CNAD)	102	13,650
4	Centros de Fe, Esperanza y Amor (CFEA, founded by Daniel Ost)	18	13,500
5	Iglesia Cristiana Interdenominacional en la República Mexicana (ICIRM)	155	10,688
6	Movimiento de Iglesias Evangélicas Pentecostales Independientes (MIEPI)	125	13,175
7	Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de México (INPM)	124	11,025
	Note: The largest seven denominations shown above had more than twice the number of baptized members as the other seven denominations listed below.		
8	Iglesia de Dios del Séptimo Día (IDSD)	63	5,670
9	Iglesia Metodista de México	56	5,145
10	Vida Nueva para el Mundo (VNM)	2	4,500
11	Comisión Centros Cristianos (CCC)	11	4,125
12	Iglesia de Dios Independiente en la República Mexicana (IDIRM)	44	3,938
13	Iglesia del Nazareno en México (INM)	46	3,825
14	Iglesia de Dios en México Evangelio Completo (IDMEC, affiliated with the Church of God-Cleveland, TN)	45	3,690
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>1,082</b>	<b>124,219</b>
15	All other denominations (less than 3,500 members each)	1,517	117,362
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,599</b>	<b>241,581</b>

Source: VELA. *Metrópolis 2000: Visión Evangélica para el Nuevo Milenio. Estudio del Crecimiento de la Iglesia Evangélica en el Área Metropolitana de la Ciudad de México*. México, DF: Visión Evangelizadora Latinoamericana (VELA), 2000.

\*Founded by Swedish Pentecostals under the leadership of Axel Anderson.

Notes:

1. The Seventh-day Adventist Church and Adventist-related denominations were not included in this study.
  2. Average size of “all other denominations” = 77.7 members per church/mission.
  3. Average size of largest 14 denominations = 114.8 members per church/mission.
- 

**An analysis of the data from the VELA Church Directory for the Mexico City Metro Area of 1986, compared with the VELA directory of 2000 (cited above),** reveals that some of the major denominations increased significantly in membership and in the number of churches and missions between these two dates while others lost membership.

*Iglesia Cristiana Independiente Pentecostal* (ICIP, founded by Swedish missionary Axel Anderson in 1921) reported 114 churches/missions with 4,270 members in 1986 and 115 churches/mission with 16,500 members in 2000, which is a membership increase of 386 percent (286 percent more) over a period of 14 years, while adding only one new church/mission.

*Convención Nacional Bautista de México* (CNBM) reported 129 churches/missions with 13,051 members in 1986 and 176 churches/missions with 15,188 members in 2000, which is a membership increase of only 116 percent, or 16 percent more than in 1986, while adding 47 churches/missions by 2000.

*Concilio Nacional de las Asambleas de Dios* (CNAD) reported 7,974 members in 98 churches/missions in 1986 and 13,650 members in 102 churches/missions in 2000, which is a membership increase of 171 percent, or 71 percent more than in 1986, while adding four new churches/missions by 2000.

*Centros de Fe, Esperanza y Amor* (CFEA, founded by U.S. missionary Daniel Ost) reported 14,950 members in 11 churches/missions in 1986 and 13,500 members in 18 churches/missions in 2000, which is an increase of seven churches/missions but a net loss of 1,450 members by 2000.

*Iglesia Cristiana Interdenominacional en la República Mexicana* (ICIRM) reported an increase of 75 churches/missions between 1986 and 2000; the data for 2000 indicated that there was an average of 69 members per church (10,688 divided by 155 churches/missions) with only 80 churches/missions in 1986, so we could estimate that those 80 churches/missions could have had an average of 60 members per church, which indicates 4,800 members in 1986. If that estimate is accurate then there was a membership increase of 226 percent (126 percent more) in 2000 than in 1986.

*Movimiento de Iglesias Evangélicas Pentecostales Independientes* (MIEPI) reported an increase of 35 churches/missions between 1986 and 2000; the data for 2000 indicated that there was an average of 105.4 members per church (13,175 divided by 125 churches/missions) with only 90 churches/missions in 1986, so we could estimate that those 90 churches/missions could have had an average of 90 members per church, which indicates 8,100 members in 1986. If that estimate is accurate then there was a membership increase of 163 percent (66 percent more) in 2000 than in 1986.

*Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de México* (INPM) reported a decline in the number of churches/missions as well as in membership between 1986 and 2000: a loss of nine churches/missions and 3,219 members.

*Iglesia Metodista de México* (IMM) reported 43 churches/missions and 7,808 members in 1986; although the number of churches/missions increased to 56 in 2000 (a gain of 13), the membership declined from 7,808 in 1986 to 5,145 in 2000 (a loss of 2,663).

**Note:** Some of these gains and losses may be attributed to population migration factors (migration in and out of the Mexico City Metro Area - MCMA), while some of the gains may be the result of adding eight municipios in the State of Mexico to the definition of the MCMA: in 1986, the MCMA included the DF plus 12 municipios in the State of Mexico, whereas in 2000 the MCMA included the DF and 20 municipios in the State of Mexico.

**Church-State relations.** On 27 June 2009, a group of Evangelical denominational leaders met with the President of Mexico, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, to discuss Church-State relations, the principle of freedom of religion and worship, the role of the Christian Churches in matters of public security and the prevention of adictions among the youth. Present at that meeting were a group of distinguish government officials and the following list of prominent Evangelical leaders:

- Presbítero Daniel de los Reyes Villarreal, Superintendente General del Concilio Nacional de las Asambleas de Dios / National Council of the Assemblies of God;
- Reverendo Moisés Valderrama Gómez, Obispo de la Iglesia Metodista de México / Methodist Church of Mexico;
- Francisco Jiménez Arias, Superintendente Nacional de la Iglesia de Dios en México del Evangelio Completo / Full Gospel Church of God in Mexico;
- Pastor José Trinidad Bonilla Morales, Presidente de la Convención Nacional Bautista de México / National Baptist Convention of Mexico;
- Presbítero Saúl Feria Acosta, Presidente de la Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de México / National Presbyterian Church of Mexico;
- Pastor Pedro Olvera Rivera, Presidente de la Iglesia Cristiana Independiente Pentecostés / Independent Pentecostal Christian Church;
- Pastor César Gómez Gómez, Presidente de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día / Seventh-day Adventist Church;
- Pastor José Masaru Hayasaka Kuwasoi, Líder Histórico de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día / Seventh-day Adventist Church;
- Reverendo Félix Gaxiola Inzunza, Obispo Presidente de la Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús / Apostolic Church of Faith in Jesus Christ;
- Pastor Arturo Farela Gutiérrez, Presidente Nacional de la Confraternidad Nacional de Iglesias Cristianas Evangélicas, A.C. / National Fellowship of Evangelical Christian Churches;
- Presbítero Abner López Pérez, Director General de la Sociedad Bíblica de México, A.C. / Bible Society of Mexico;
- Pastor David Enríquez Olgún, Representante Legal de la Fraternidad Pentecostés Independiente / Independent Pentecostal Fraternity;
- Reverendo Fernando Marcín, Maestro Presidente y Representante Legal de la Iglesia Misionera del Pacto / Missionary Church of the Covenant (Evangelical Covenant Church);
- Pastor Cirilo Cruz Lázaro, Presidente de la Confraternidad Evangélica de México / Evangelical Confraternity of Mexico;

- Pastor Gonzalo Vega Monroy, Presidente de la Comisión Centros Cristianos y su esposa Olivia Almaraz Vega / Christian Centers Commission;
- Graciela Belem Esparza Estrada, Directora General de la Iglesia Mexicana del Evangelio / Mexican Gospel Church;
- Pastor Adán Hidalgo Mejía, Presidente de la Iglesia Evangélica Independiente de México / Independent Evangelical Church;
- Pastor Francisco Medina Barrera, Iglesia Evangélica Independiente en la República Mexicana / Independent Evangelical Church of the Mexican Republic;
- Pastor Carlos E. Perea Zaldívar, Coordinador General de las Alianzas Evangélicas de Baja California / Evangelical Alliances of Baja California;
- Pastor Ernesto Alonso Delgado, Director del Centro Cristiano Estandarte para las Naciones / Banner for the Nations Christian Center;
- Pastor Francisco Martínez Díaz, Presidente del Movimiento Iglesias Evangélicas Pentecostés Independiente / Independent Pentecostal Evangelical Churches Movement;
- Pastor Jacobo González Torres, Presidente de la Iglesia de Dios (7º Día) / Church of God (Seventh-Day);
- Pastor Wein Mayers;
- Pastor Timoteo Ost, Director General de los Centros de Fe, Esperanza y Amor / Centers of Faith, Hope and Love;
- Pastora Noemí Villarreal;
- Pastor Luis Marroquín, Director de ENLACE (una cadena internacional de comunicación satelital TV cristiana en español / an international network of satellite TV Christian communication in Spanish)
- Pastora Carla Marroquín;
- Pastor Alfredo Ferrara, Director General de Castillos del Rey / Castles of the King;
- Pastor Benjamín Rivera, Director del Centro Familiar Cristiano / Christian Family Center;
- Pastor Alfredo Ferez Rodríguez, Iglesia de la Comunidad Cristiana Internacional / International Christian Community Church;
- Pastor Kalef Palau, Presidente de Alianza de Pastores de Nuevo León / Pastors Alliance of Nuevo León;
- Pastor Joe Beringer Trackman, Amistad Cristiana / Christian Friendship;
- Pastor Enrique Bremer, Líder de Alianza Internacional / International Alliance;
- Pastor Alejandro Escobedo, Conquistando Fronteras / Conquering Frontiers; and
- Alejandro Orozco Rubio.

President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa was accompanied by his wife Margarita Zavala; the Secretary of Government, Fernando Gómez Mont Urueta; the Subsecretary of Population, Migration & Religious Affairs, Alejandro Poiré Romero; la Senadora Blanca Judith Díaz Delgado; congressmen/women Emilio Flores Domínguez, Dolores de María Manuell-Gómez Angulo and Alma Eduviges Alcaraz Hernández, also Mr. Humberto Rice, Director en Grupo Industrial Mazatlán / Director of the Mazatlán Industrial Group.

Source: <https://laicismo.org/respaldan-representantes-de-las-iglesias-cristianas-y-evangelicas-de-mexico-las-acciones-emprendidas-por-el-presidente-calderon-en-materia-de-seguridad/>

**The National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) reported that the number of Protestants/Evangelicals was 7.6 percent in 2010.** However, INEGI listed Seventh-day Adventist adherents under the category of “non-Evangelical Bible-based” (*Bíblica diferente de Evangélica*) groups, whereas *PROLADES* considers the Adventists to be part of the Protestant movement.

Therefore, PROLADES estimated the total Protestant population in 2010 to be 7.9 percent based on our definition of the Protestant movement and of Marginal Christian groups. The 2010 INEGI census data tables on religious affiliation are available at:

<http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/temas/religion/>

Since none of the above census categories helps us to clearly identify which specific groups are Protestant or Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal, as well as other major traditions and denominational families within the Protestant/Evangelical non-Pentecostal categories, we have included below the categories used by PROLADES in *A Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas by Major Traditions and Family Types* (Holland 2018) to orient the reader to the “universe of study” of Protestant religious groups in the Americas, and specifically in Mexico:

<http://www.prolades.com/clas-eng.pdf>

### Protestant Denominations in Mexico by Traditions and Families of Churches, 2020

PROTESTANT TRADITIONS & FAMILY GROUPS	CLASCODE	NAME_ENGLISH
LUTHERAN	B1.101	EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN MEXICO
LUTHERAN	B1.102	LUTHERAN SYNOD OF MEXICO
LUTHERAN	B1.109	EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN (GERMAN-SPEAKING) CHURCH IN MEXICO CITY
LUTHERAN	B1.110	EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONFESSIONAL CHURCH IN MEXICO
LUTHERAN	B1.199	CENTRAL MEXICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
LUTHERAN	B1.199	CHRIST THE KING MEXICAN LUTHERAN SYNOD
LUTHERAN	B1.199	HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CIUDAD JUAREZ, CHIHUAHUA
LUTHERAN	B1.199	LUTHERAN CHURCH OF BAJA CALIFORNIA
LUTHERAN	B1.199	MEXICAN LUTHERAN APOSTOLIC ALLIANCE
LUTHERAN	B1.199	MEXICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH
LUTHERAN	B1.199	RIVERS OF LIVING WATER LUTHERAN CHURCH
LUTHERAN	B1.199	TRIUMPH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2199	LIBERTY REFORMED CHURCH
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2202	REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2203	CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2204	ASSOCIATE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2207	BIBLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.22081	KOREAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN MEXICO
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2210	EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CHRIST
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2210	EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.221104	NATIONAL EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	ALLIANCE OF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES OF THE DIVINE MASTER
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	CONSERVATIVE NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	EMMANUEL EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	KING OF KINGS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	MARANATHA PRESBYTERIAN MINISTRY
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	MEXICAN AUTONOMOUS PRESBYTERIAN MISSION
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, AREA OF SALVATION
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	REFORMED INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	RENEWED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	UNION OF PRINCE OF PEACE EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	UNITED IN CHRIST EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2299	YEON HAP PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN MEXICO (KOREAN)
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2304	GENERAL BOARD OF CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF MEXICO
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2399	EBEN EZER EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
REFORMED-PRESBYTERIAN-CONGREGATIONAL	B1.2399	LATIN AMERICAN EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

ANGLICAN-EPISCOPAL	B1.301	ANGLICAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
ANGLICAN-EPISCOPAL	B1.307	AMERICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ANGLICAN-EPISCOPAL	B1.313	ANGLICAN CHURCH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNION
ANGLICAN-EPISCOPAL	B1.313	INDEPENDENT MEXICAN EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.1103	BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH OF MEXICO
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.1104	KLEINGEMEINDE IN MEXICO
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.1106	CONFERENCIA MENONITA DE MEXICO
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.1107	ALTKOLONIER MENNONITENGEMEINDE
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.11081	RHINELANDER OLD COLONY MENNONITE CHURCHES / REINLÄNDER-GEMEINDE
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.11083	SOMMERFELDER MENNONITENGEMEINDE
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.1110	CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST, MENNONITE
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.1112	EVANGELICAL MENNONITE MISSION CONFERENCE
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.1199	CONFERENCE OF ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE CHURCHES
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.1199	CONSERVATIVE (PLAIN) MENNONITE CONFERENCES, FELLOWSHIPS AND CONGREGATIONS
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.1199	IGLESIA CRISTIANA DE PAZ EN MÉXICO
ANABAPTIST-MENNONITE	B2.1302	CONVENCIÓN DE IGLESIAS EVANGÉLICAS MENONITAS DEL NOROESTE
FRIENDS-QUAKERS	B2.1405	EVANGELICAL FRIENDS CHURCH IN MEXICO
FRIENDS-QUAKERS	B2.1499	FRIENDS EVANGELICAL CHURCHES OF THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
FRIENDS-QUAKERS	B2.1499	NORTHEASTERN FRIENDS OF THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
BAPTIST-ARMINIAN	B2.2101	NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCHES
BAPTIST-ARMINIAN	B2.21013	ORIGINAL FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCHES
BAPTIST-ARMINIAN	B2.2103	BAPTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2304	NORTH AMERICAN BAPTIST CONFERENCE
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2306	GOSPEL MISSIONARY UNION
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2310	NATIONAL BAPTIST CONVENTION OF MEXICO
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2311	BAPTIST MID-MISSIONS
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2314	ASSOCIATION OF BAPTISTS FOR WORLD EVANGELISM / CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN MEXICO
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2317	CONSERVATIVE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF MEXICO
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.23173	BAPTIST WORLD MISSIONS
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2318	BIBLICAL MINISTRIES WORLDWIDE
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2320	BIBLE BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP OF MEXICO
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2320	BIBLE BAPTIST MISSION CHURCH
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2322	BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2323	MARANATHA BAPTIST MISSION
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2326	MACEDONIAN WORLD BAPTIST MISSIONS
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2329	FUNDAMENTALIST BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP CHURCH
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2329	VICTORY INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2331	COLUMN & BULWARK OF TRUTH INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST BAPTIST CHURCHES
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2331	INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST BAPTIST CHURCHES
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2331	INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2332	UNION OF BEREAN BAPTIST CHURCHES
BAPTIST-CALVINISTIC	B2.2399	INDEPENDENT PARTICULAR BAPTIST CHURCH
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	AZTECA GROUP BAPTIST CHURCH
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	BEREA BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	BOARD OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH OF CAMPECHE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	CAHUISORI BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	CALVARY BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	CALVARY FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SAN JORGE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	CALVARY INDEPENDENT BAPTIST GROUP
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	CHRIST ROCK OF AGES SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	DIVINE REDEEMER BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	EMANUEL BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	GARDEN OF GETHSEMANI BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION BAPTIST CHURCH

BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	HOREB BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH FOR THE DEAF
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCHES IN MEXICO
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	JERUSALEM BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	JOHN 3:16 THIRD BAPTIST CHURCH
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	MARANATHA FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF XOCHICUATLA
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	MISSION FRONTIER INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	MT. ABARIM BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	NATIONAL MISSIONARY BAPTIST GROUP
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	OBREGON BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	PENIEL BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	ROCK OF HOREB INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCHES
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	SILOE BAPTIST TEMPLE
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	TECATE MISSION BAPTIST UNION
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	THE MOUNT HOREB BAPTIST CHURCH OF SALTILLO
BAPTIST-OTHER	B2.2400	UNION OF MEXICAN BAPTIST CHURCHES
PIETIST-FRENCH, ITALIAN & GERMAN	B2.3104	CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN (ELGIN, IL)
PIETIST-FRENCH, ITALIAN & GERMAN	B2.3104	EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
PIETIST-FRENCH, ITALIAN & GERMAN	B2.3105	BRETHREN CHURCH (ASHLAND, OHIO)
PIETIST-FRENCH, ITALIAN & GERMAN	B2.3106	FELLOWSHIP OF GRACE BRETHREN CHURCHES
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3202	METHODIST CHURCH OF MEXICO
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3205	CHURCH OF THE UNITED BRETHREN IN CHRIST
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3208	CONGREGATIONAL METHODIST CHURCH
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3212	EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3212	FUNDAMENTAL METHODIST CHURCH
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3214	SOUTHERN METHODIST CHURCH
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3218	EVANGELICAL METHODIST CHURCH - MEXICAN EVANGELISTIC MISSION
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3220	FELLOWSHIP OF FUNDAMENTAL BIBLE CHURCHES
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3299	EMBASSADORES OF CHRIST METHODIST CHURCH
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3299	MESSIAH EVANGELICAL FUNDAMENTAL METHODIST FRATERNITY
PIETIST-METHODIST	B2.3299	REDEEMER INDEPENDENT METHODIST CHURCHES
PIETIST-SCANDINAVIAN	B2.3301	EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH
PIETIST-SCANDINAVIAN	B2.3302	AFFILIATION OF EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES OF MEXICO
PIETIST-SCANDINAVIAN	B2.3302	EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH IN MEXICO
PIETIST-SCANDINAVIAN	B2.3302	FELLOWSHIP OF EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCHES OF MEXICO
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.401	CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE FREE BRETHREN
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.404	BIBLE CHURCHES OF CHIHUAHUA
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.404	BIBLE CHURCHES OF MEXICO, PUEBLA ZONE
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.404	BIBLE CHURCHES OF SIERRA TONACA
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.404	BIBLE CHURCHES OF THE PACIFIC
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.407	ACTS 11:26 CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY WHO MEET IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.407	CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY OF BRETHREN WHO MEET IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.407	EMANUEL TEMPLE GROUP OF BRETHREN WHO MEET IN CHRIST'S NAME
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.407	EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH WHO MEET IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.407	EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF BRETHREN WHO MEET IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.407	EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF BRETHREN WHO MEET IN THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD JESUS
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.407	UNION OF CHURCHES THAT MEET IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.4081	LOCAL CHURCHES IN MEXICO (WITNESS LEE MOVEMENT)
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.409	INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST EVANGELICAL CHURCHES OF MEXICO
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.410	BERACHAH CHURCH
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.411	BEREA INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTAL BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.412	GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP ASSOCIATION
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.414	NEW TRIBES MISSION-RELATED CHURCHES
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.418	CHURCH OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.499	BIBLE CHURCH COMMUNION OF BELIEVERS OF MEXICO
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.499	BIBLE TEMPLE OF MEXICO
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.499	BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF ARMERIA COLIMA
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.499	FUNDAMENTAL BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN TEMPLE OF GUADALAJARA
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.499	FUNDAMENTAL EVANGELICAL CHURCHES
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.499	FUNDAMENTALIST EVANGELISTIC CHURCH
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.499	GREAT COMMISSION ASSOCIATION OF CHURCHES
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.499	LIGHTHOUSE BIBLE CHURCHES
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.499	MISSIONARY BIBLE CHURCH
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST	B2.499	MISSIONARY BIBLE CHURCH COMMUNION OF BELIEVERS OF MEXICO
HOLINESS	B2.501	FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF MEXICO
HOLINESS	B2.502	SALVATION ARMY, THE
HOLINESS	B2.503	CHURCH OF GOD IN MEXICO (ANDERSON, IN)
HOLINESS	B2.5031	CHURCH OF GOD (GUTHRIE, OK)
HOLINESS	B2.507	CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE IN MEXICO
HOLINESS	B2.509	CHRISTIAN & MISSIONARY ALLIANCE CHURCH OF THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
HOLINESS	B2.513	CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN CHRISTIAN UNION
HOLINESS	B2.514	WORLD GOSPEL MISSION OF MEXICO
HOLINESS	B2.517	CHURCH OF GOD (HOLINESS)
HOLINESS	B2.518	GOD'S MISSIONARY CHURCH
HOLINESS	B2.520	BIBLE MISSIONARY CHURCH
HOLINESS	B2.521	THE PILGRIMS EVANGELICAL CHURCH (PILGRIM HOLINESS)
HOLINESS	B2.524	NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOLINESS CHURCHES
HOLINESS	B2.5271	CONFRATERNITY OF MISSIONARY EVANGELICAL CHURCHES
HOLINESS	B2.528	THE MISSIONARY CHURCH OF MEXICO
HOLINESS	B2.529	BIBLE METHODIST CONNECTION OF CHURCHES - BIBLE METHODIST MISSIONS
HOLINESS	B2.530	HOPE INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS-RELATED CHURCHES
HOLINESS	B2.531	INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF BIBLE CHURCHES
HOLINESS	B2.599	CHRISTIAN UNION OF HOLINESS
HOLINESS	B2.599	CHURCH OF HOLINESS AND FAITH
HOLINESS	B2.599	EVANGELICAL HOLINESS CHURCH IN MEXICO
HOLINESS	B2.599	HOLINESS CHURCH
HOLINESS	B2.599	HOLINESS MISSIONS IN EXPANSION
HOLINESS	B2.599	NEW HOPE HOLINESS CHURCH
HOLINESS	B2.599	WAY OF HOLINESS CHURCH OF GOD
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.601	CHRISTIAN CHURCH / DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.601	DISCIPLES OF CHRIST EVANGELICAL CHURCH RESTORATION MINISTRIES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.601	DISCIPLES OF CHRIST INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN INSTITUTION
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.6011	ALLIANCE OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES-DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.6012	CONFRATERNITY OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES DISCIPLES OF CHRIST
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.603	CHRISTIAN CHURCHES - CHURCHES OF CHRIST (NON-INSTRUMENTAL)
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.604	CHRISTIAN CHURCHES - CHURCHES OF CHRIST (INSTRUMENTAL)
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	BETHEL INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	BIBLE CHAPEL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	BROTHERLY LOVE INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	CHRIST IS THE POWER CHRISTIAN CHURCH
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLIES IN MEXICO
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	CHURCH OF CHRIST FILADELFA MINISTRIES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MEXICO
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	CHURCH OF CHRIST ROOT OF DAVID INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	CHURCH OF CHRIST VERBO MINISTRIES IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	CHURCH OF CHRISTIANS

RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	CONFRATERNITY OF SPRINGS OF LIFE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	DELICIAS CHURCHES OF CHRIST
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	EMANUEL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	ETERNAL COVENANT CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	FUNDAMENTAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	GETHSEMANI EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	GRACE & TRUTH INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTALIST EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	GYPSY CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN MEXICO
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	INDEPENDENT CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OF THE COVENANT
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTAL CHURCH OF CHRIST
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	JEWISH TEMPLE CHURCH OF CHRIST
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	MEXICAN EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	MT. ZION NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	NATIONAL CHURCH OF CHRIST
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	NEW COVENANT CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF MEXICO IN BAJA CALIFORNIA
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE NEW COVENANT
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	NONDENOMINATIONAL CHURCH OF CHRIST IN MEXICO
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	ONLY CHRIST SAVES CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	PRINCE OF PEACE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	TABERNACLE OF GOD CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN MEXICO
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	THE BEAUTIFUL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	THE BEAUTIFUL DOOR CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	THE FLAME OF TRUTH EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	THE FUTURE IS OURS CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	THE ROCK CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	TLAPANECAN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	UNITED CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN MEXICO
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	UPPER ROOM MISSIONARY CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
RESTORATION MOVEMENT	B2.699	ZION CHRISTIAN CHURCH & RIVERS OF LIVING WATER BIBLE CENTER
EVANGELICAL-OTHER	B2.7	CHRISTIANS IN ACTION CHRISTIAN CENTER
EVANGELICAL-OTHER	B2.7	CHRISTIANS IN ACTION MISSIONARY CHURCH
EVANGELICAL-OTHER	B2.7	RENOVATION IN CHRIST EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF GOD
EVANGELICAL-OTHER	B2.7	THE OPEN DOOR CHURCH OF GOD OF MEXICO
EVANGELICAL-OTHER	B2.7	UNIVERSAL AUTONOMOUS EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF GOD
ADVENTIST	B3.101	SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST GENERAL CONFERENCE
ADVENTIST	B3.102	INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST REFORM MOVEMENT
ADVENTIST	B3.302	CHURCH OF GOD SEVENTH-DAY IN LAS CASAS, CHIAPAS
ADVENTIST	B3.303	CHURCH OF GOD 7TH DAY
ADVENTIST	B3.304	ISRAELITE CHURCH OF GOD
ADVENTIST	B3.30402	ISRAELITE CHURCH OF GOD, AURORA
ADVENTIST	B3.30403	ISRAELITE CHURCH OF GOD OF THE NEW COVENANT
ADVENTIST	B3.30404	EL ELOHE ISRAEL ISRAELITE CHURCH OF GOD
ADVENTIST	B3.30405	HOUSE OF GOD ISRAELITE CHURCH
ADVENTIST	B3.30406	ISRAELITE CHURCH OF GOD IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
ADVENTIST	B3.30407	ISRAELITE CHURCHES FOR THE DIFUSION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES
ADVENTIST	B3.30408	ISRAELITE CHURCH OF GOD, JUDAH
ADVENTIST	B3.30409	JUDEO-CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GOD (PRIMITIVE)
ADVENTIST	B3.304091	JUDEO-CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GOD OF MEXICO
ADVENTIST	B3.304092	CHURCH OF GOD OF JUDAISM OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
ADVENTIST	B3.30410	ISRAELITE CHURCH OF GOD, MEXICAN
ADVENTIST	B3.30499	ISRAELITE CHURCH OF GOD OF THE NEW SINAI COVENANT
ADVENTIST	B3.30499	ISRAELITE CHURCH OF GOD, UNIVERSAL

ADVENTIST	B3.399	APOSTOLIC SEVENTH-DAY CHURCH OF GOD
ADVENTIST	B3.402	UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF GOD
ADVENTIST	B3.5	CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF SINALOA
ADVENTIST	B3.5	MEXICAN NATIONAL SEVENTH-DAY CHURCH OF CHRIST
ADVENTIST	B3.5	SEVENTH-DAY CHRIST OF POWER TEMPLE
ADVENTIST	B3.5	SEVENTH-DAY CHURCH OF CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-APOSTOLIC	B4.010211	APOSTLES & PROPHETS EPH. 2:20 EVANGELICAL MISSIONARY CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-APOSTOLIC	B4.01025	THE NEW JERUSALEM IN MEXICO CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-APOSTOLIC	B4.0105	CHURCH OF GOD APOSTOLIC
PENTECOSTAL-APOSTOLIC	B4.0111	APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD
PENTECOSTAL-APOSTOLIC	B4.0111	ORIGINAL APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD
PENTECOSTAL-APOSTOLIC	B4.0199	CHRIST THE ROCK APOSTOLIC CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-APOSTOLIC	B4.0199	CHRIST, PRINCE OF PEACE APOSTOLIC CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-APOSTOLIC	B4.0199	JESUS CHRIST, THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE APOSTOLIC CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-APOSTOLIC	B4.0199	NEW LIFE CENTER APOSTOLIC CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-APOSTOLIC	B4.0199	UNIVERSAL APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0201	FULL GOSPEL CHURCH OF GOD IN MEXICO (CLEVELAND, TN)
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02032	BAPTIST PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0204	CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST (MEMPHIS, TN)
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0204	CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02041	CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02041	CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS OF BETHANY
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0205	PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS CHURCH OF MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0207	METHODIST PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02081	FILADELFA EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02082	FILADELFA PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02083	FILADELFA PENTECOSTAL EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02091	INTERNATIONAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02121	CONGREGATIONAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0213	CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.021301	CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY OF THE SANCTUARY OF CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.021305	CHURCH OF GOD OF PROPHECY, TABERNACLE OF CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0214	LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02141	UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02144	ASSEMBLY OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0220	COUNCIL OF DAMASCUS CHRISTIAN PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0223	FEDERATION OF ALPHA & OMEGA PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02231	ALPHA & OMEGA EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.02232	ALPHA & OMEGA EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL SOCIETY
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0299	DEFENDERS OF THE PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS GOSPEL CHURCH OF MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0299	INDEPENDENT PENTECOSTAL FRATERNITY (FRAPI)
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0299	INTERDENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC (IGIRM)
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0299	PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE FULL GOSPEL OF HOLINESS
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0299	PENTECOSTAL FULL GOSPEL CHURCH OF GOD
PENTECOSTAL-HOLINESS	B4.0299	PENTECOSTAL WAY OF HOLINESS CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0304	APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0304	APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF FAITH IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.03041	APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLY OF FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.03042	SPIRITUAL APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.03042	SPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0320	UNITED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST (APOSTOLIC)
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0321	NATIONAL UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0321	UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0321	UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF MEXICO

PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.03212	LATIN AMERICAN UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0332	ANCIENT PATH CHURCH OF FAITH
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0332	THE ANCIENT PATH PENTECOSAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	APOSTOLIC ASSEMBLIES OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST OF MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	APOST. CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, PILLAR & COLUMN OF TRUTH, NEW ISRAEL
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF GOD OF CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	APOSTOLIC FELLOWSHIP CHURCH OF FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	APOSTOLIC TEMPLE OF THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	APOSTOLIC UNIVERSAL PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF JESUS
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	CENTRAL APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF FAITH IN JESUS OF MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	CHURCH OF THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST IN TAPACHULA
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	INTERNATIONAL APOSTOLIC UNITY OF THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	NAME OF JESUS PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	THE ANGLE SPIRITUAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-ONENESS	B4.0399	UNITED APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.04012	UNION OF PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.04014	NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.04015	PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF GOD, INTERNATIONAL MISSION
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.040151	PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST, INDEPENDENT
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.040152	INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES OF JESUS CHRIST IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.040153	ASSEMBLY OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.04016	LATIN AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF GOD OF NY
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.04019	KOREAN ASSEMBLIES OF GOD IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.04033	THE CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0404	BETHEL AUTONOMOUS EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0404	BETHEL EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH AND ITS MISSIONS
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0404	BETHEL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH OF MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0407	EVANGELICAL FOURSQUARE CHURCH IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0408	DEFENDERS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0411	OPEN BIBLE (STANDARD) CHURCHES
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0415	REHOBOTH PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.04151	CENTERS OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0416	PRINCE OF PEACE CHRISTIAN FRATERNITY
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0416	PRINCE OF PEACE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0416	PRINCE OF PEACE EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0416	PRINCE OF PEACE EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL FRATERNITY
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0416	PRINCE OF PEACE INDEPENDENT PENTECOSTAL EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0416	PRINCE OF PEACE PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0416	PRINCE OF PEACE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.04181	WORLDWIDE MISSIONARY & EVANGELISTIC ADVANCE
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.04182	MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES, INC.
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0419	VICTORY OUTREACH OF MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0422	INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES FREED BY JESUS CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0423	LIGHT OF THE WORLD EVANGELICAL WORK INTERNATIONAL (TRINITARIAN)
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0499	CHURCH OF GOD IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC (DAVID G. RUESGA-RELATED)
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0499	FOUNTAIN OF FAITH, HOPE & LOVE EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0499	INDEPENDENT EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF MEXICO (AXEL ANDERSON-RELATED)
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0499	INDEPENDENT EVANGELICAL PENTECOSTAL CHURCH IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0499	INDEP. PENTECOSTAL EVANGELICAL CHURCH MOVEMENT (VALENTE APONTE GONZÁLEZ)
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0499	LIVING WORD FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCHES-MONTERREY, NL
PENTECOSTAL-FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST	B4.0499	NATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD (DAVID G. RUESGA-RELATED)
PENTECOSTAL-SABBATICAL	B4.0501	INTERNATIONAL EVANGELICAL CHURCH SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST
PENTECOSTAL-SABBATICAL	B4.05011	SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS CONTINENTAL EVANGELICAL MINISTRY

PENTECOSTAL-DIVINE HEALING & DELIVERANCE	B4.0606	CHRISTIAN CENTER CHURCH-TRANS WORLD MISSIONS OF MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-DIVINE HEALING & DELIVERANCE	B4.0608	CHRIST FOR THE NATIONS, INC.
PENTECOSTAL-DIVINE HEALING & DELIVERANCE	B4.06081	CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP / AMISTAD CRISTIANA
PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC	B4.0805	CALVARY CHAPEL
PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC	B4.0806	VINEYARD MINISTERIES INTERNATIONAL
PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC	B4.0811	VERBO CHRISTIAN CHURCH
PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC	B4.0816	CHRISTIAN CHARISMATIC COMMUNITIES OF MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC	B4.0899	CHARISMATIC CHRISTIAN CENTER
PENTECOSTAL-SHEPHERDING	B4.0903	CHURCH OF CHRIST ELIM ASSOCIATED MINISTERIES
PENTECOSTAL-SHEPHERDING	B4.0905	LIVING WATER MINISTERIES OF MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-SHEPHERDING	B4.0905	LIVING WATER TEACHING INTERNATIONAL - AGUA VIVA
PENTECOSTAL-WORD OF FAITH	B4.1004	SHIELD OF FAITH INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCHES
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1104	MARANATHA WORLD REVIVAL MINISTERIES INTERNATIONAL (APOSTLE NAHUM ROSARIO)
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1106	CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST "PALABRA MIEL" (APOSTLE GASPAR SAPALU ALVARADO)
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1107	EBENEZER CHURCH OF CHRIST OF GUATEMALA (APOSTLE SERGIO ENRIQUEZ)
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.110711	CHURCH OF CHRIST FINAL CALL MINISTERIES (APOSTLE OTTO RENE AZURDIA)
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1118	ELOHIM PENTECOSTAL CHRISTIAN MINISTERIAL COUNCIL
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1199	APOSTOLIC WORLD FRATERNITY IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1199	CASTLE OF THE KING / CASTILLO DEL REY (ROGER WOLCOTT) MONTERREY, NL
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1199	CHURCH OF THE LORD APOSTOLIC MINISTERIAL NETWORK
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1199	FRATERNITY OF APOSTOLIC CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1199	NEW WINE, WORLD COVENANT APOSTOLIC NETWORK
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1199	PENTECOSTAL APOSTOLIC NETWORK IN MEXICO
PENTECOSTAL-NEW APOSTOLIC REFORMATION	B4.1199	THE APOSTOLIC NETWORK KINGDOM MINISTERIES
PENTECOSTAL-UNCLASSIFIED	B4.1200	309 LISTINGS
PROTESTANT-UNCLASSIFIED	B5.0	889 LISTINGS

Many of the religious groups mentioned above as “Pentecostal Unclassified” (309 groups) and “Protestant Unclassified” (889 groups) are probably **denominations** (formal, legal organizations = ARs) or **church associations** (fellowships without legal status) of Mexican origin without any relationship to Protestant groups in the USA, Canada or Europe. This is an area of research that needs to be done to determine their date and place of origin, founding leaders, theological orientation, and geographical expansion, among other important factors. Most of these religious groups probably were included in the “Other Evangelicals” category of the 2010 national census, which totaled 5,595,116 adherents or 4.98 percent of the total population of Mexico.

Some people may question the inclusion of the **Adventist Family of Churches** in the PROLADES *Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas by Major Traditions and Family Types* (Holland 2018) because of the controversial origins of Adventism, Adventist beliefs and lifestyle, and its historic antagonism with other branches of Christianity, which has included the practice of prosylitism by seeking to convince “apostate Protestants” that the Adventist-way is the only way regarding the true Christian Faith. See the following websites for a discussion of issues regarding the Adventists and their distinctives in comparison with other branches of the Protestant movement. For a general overview of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, see J. Melton Gordon’s, *Encyclopedia of American Religions*, Eighth Edition (2009: 577-578).

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism\\_of\\_the\\_Seventh-day\\_Adventist\\_Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_the_Seventh-day_Adventist_Church)

<https://web.archive.org/web/20070403153158/http://www.adventistbiblicalresearch.org/documents.htm#independent>

<https://www.adventistworld.org/adventist-theologians-approve-statement-on-biblical-eschatology/>

**A general history of the Protestant movement and its component parts has not yet been written for Mexico**, although some denominations / associations of churches or mission organizations have produced their own histories (at least partial histories) in print or via the Internet. Some of the respective histories have only been produced as unpublished Master's or Doctoral thesis. The most complete bibliography on the Protestant movement in Mexico was produced in 1997 by Dr. Luis Scott Smith, *Bibliografía de los Evangélicos en México*, Documento No. 6, Serie Estudios México Hoy y Mañana. This document was published by Visión Evangelizadora Latino Americana (VELA) and the Junta Misionera de la Conferencia General Bautista en México.

The above PROLADES database (RITA-Excel version) of the Protestant movement in Mexico can serve as a framework for the development of such a general history, as well as another PROLADES document, *A Chronology of Protestant Origins in Mexico* (30 August 2020), which is available at: [www.prolades.com/historical/chron-mex.pdf](http://www.prolades.com/historical/chron-mex.pdf).

## **Summary: Protestant Church Growth in Mexico**

In addition to the Mexican national census, public opinion polls are another means of estimating the relative size of adherents of various religious groups. For example, the *Pew Research Center* estimated that, in 2013, the Protestant population (adherents) in Mexico was 9.0 percent, compared to 81.0 percent for Catholics, 4.0 percent for Other Religions, and 7.0 percent for the Unaffiliated (totals 100.1 percent due to rounding decimals).

Another source of reliable information is found in professional journals. James W. Dow, in *“The Expansion of Protestantism in Mexico: An Anthropological View”* (2005: 830), provides the following information on “annual growth rates” of the Protestant population based on census data: 1970-1990 = 7.08% and 1990-2000 = 5.98%.

Although Dow indicates that the Protestant population (adherents) grew by about 7.1 percent annually between 1970 and 1990, while during the period 1990-2000 the annual growth rate was about 6.0 percent, a more careful examination of the census data over a longer period of time as well as by decades gives us a clearer picture of Protestant growth in Mexico (see table below).

Source: James W. Dow, *“The Expansion of Protestantism in Mexico: An Anthropological View”* (p. 830), in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 4 (Autumn 2005), pp. 827-851.

*Why did the Protestant population grow more rapidly during the last three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and more slowly in the early part of that century as seen in the as seen in the document by Dow above and the table by PROLADES below?* The largest percent increase in the Protestant population, by decades, occurred between 2000 and 2010 (+2.7%). Something other than its emotional appeal must have stimulated its growth between 1970 and 2010. *There are many reasons why people change their religion and not all “conversions” are based on a spiritual “born-again” experience.* Since 1970, at least 2.0 percent of the annual Protestant population increase in Mexico has been the result of “biological growth” – children who are born into Protestant families.

In order for the Protestant population growth to reflect “conversion growth” it must be greater than the “natural population growth” (births minus deaths) and immigration gains minus emigration losses in Mexico for any given period. Mexico's population over the past seven decades (1940-2010) has averaged an annual growth rate of three percent. After 1980, the population growth displayed a steady decrease to less than three percent per year. This subsequently dropped to less than two percent in the late 1980s and 1990s and reached an all-time low of one percent or below in 2004. Migration from Mexico and a decrease in the fertility rate of women

have been the causes of consecutive drops in the population's average annual growth rate over the years. Source: <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/mexico-population/>

Based on an evaluation of the data from the table by PROLADES below, it is evident that prior to 1970 the rate of Protestant population growth was slower (an increase from 0.5 percent in 1900 to 1.8 percent in 1970 = +1.3 percent in 70 years) than after that date: +3.4 percent between 1970 and 2000 (30 years). By decades, the Protestant population increased +1.6 percent between 1970 and 1980; +1.5 percent between 1980 and 1990; +0.3 percent between 1990 and 2000; +2.7 percent between 2000 and 2010; and an estimated +1.4 percent between 2010 and 2015.

### Total Mexican Population and Protestant Population Estimates, 1900-2015

Created by Clifton L. Holland, Director of PROLADES

DATE	TOTAL POPULATION ESTIMATE	PROTESTANT POPULATION ESTIMATE	PERCENT PROTESTANT ESTIMATE
1900	13,607,259	51,796	0.5
1910	15,160,369	68,839	0.5
1921	14,334,780	73,951	0.5
1930	16,552,722	130,322	0.8
1940	19,653,552	177,954	0.9
1950	25,779,254	335,130	1.3
1960	34,923,129	593,693	1.7
1970	48,226,238	868,072	1.8
1980	66,846,833	2,272,792	3.4
1990	81,249,645	3,981,233	4.9
2000	97,483,412	5,069,137	5.2
2010	112,336,538	8,874,586	7.9
2015	119,938,473	11,154,278	9.3

**SOURCES:** Protestant population and percent Protestant estimates for 1900-1990 by Dr. Peter Larson; estimates for 2000-2015 by PROLADES based on the respective census reports.

Larson, Peter. *El Uso Evangélico del XI Censo General de Población y Vivienda, 1990*. Mexico City: VELA, 1993.

Official Census population data 1900-2015 from: <http://www.beta.inegi.org.mx/temas/estructura/>

**There are many explanations for the growth of Protestantism in Mexico, but they can be divided into four types:** (1) *spiritual explanations* attribute its growth to the “conversion” of people from other religions (mainly Roman Catholicism) or from no religion; (2) *psychological explanations* attribute the change to the way Protestantism resolves personal and family problems; (3) *historical explanations* view Protestantism (composed of lay-centered, freedom of choice groups) as a process of confrontation with the authoritarian, clergy-centered Roman Catholic Church; and (4) *contextual explanations* view it as resulting from changes in the socioeconomic

and political situation. All of these types of explanation have some validity when we examine changes in “religious affiliation” over time.

The chart below shows that 90 percent of the Mexican population was raised Roman Catholic but at the time of the 2013-2014 Pew Research poll, cited above, only 81 percent self-identified as such, which represents a net change of minus 9 percent (a loss of 10,110,288 Catholics using 2010 population data: 112,336,538). This decline is largely due to the widespread “conversion” of Catholics to Protestant (and especially Pentecostal) denominations and independent church associations, as well as to some people joining other religions (Marginal Christian groups or non-Christian religions), or leaving organized religion altogether.

Source: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/10/a-snapshot-of-catholics-in-mexico-pope-francis-next-stop/>

### Trend away from Catholicism less pronounced in Mexico

*% of adults in each country who say they were raised Catholic compared with % who currently identify as Catholic*

	<b>Raised Catholic</b>	<b>Currently Catholic</b>	<b>Net change</b>
Nicaragua	75%	50%	-25
Uruguay	64	42	-22
Brazil	81	61	-20
<b>Mexico</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>-9</b>
Paraguay	94	89	-5
Panama	74	70	-4

Source: Survey conducted October 2013 to February 2014 in 18 Latin American countries and Puerto Rico.

CHANGE NOT STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT

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Conversely, the Protestant population increased from 868,072 adherents in 1970 to 11,154,278 in 2015 (a period of 45 years), which is an increase of 10,286,206 adherents. That increase can be attributed mainly to “conversions” of Catholics (or non-Catholics) to Protestantism as well as to the “natural population increase” of children born into Protestant families at the average rate of 2.5 percent per year X 45 years = 2,670,723. This means that there were an estimated 7,615,483 “conversions” to Protestantism and 2,670,723 were added by “natural population increase” (+35.0 percent).

**The phenomenon of “religious conversion” has many contributing factors,** such as poverty levels, ethnicity, rural-urban context, migration and emigration variables, etc. But the flip side of this “religious conversion” context is the problem of the retention of those who are converted, because not everyone remains within the Protestant camp as mentioned by Kurt Bowen (1996:70-75): “Had Evangelicals been able to keep their converts within the fold, their real rate of growth might have been three times greater than the census rate.”

There is a recognized “drop-out” problem among second and third-generation Evangelical families, some of whose members no longer consider themselves part of the Evangelical world, although few of them embrace Catholicism or other religions. The majority of the “dropouts” neither consider themselves Protestant-Evangelical nor Catholic, but rather “nothing” (no religious affiliation).

The following books and articles discuss at length the socio-demographic variables that influence “religious change” from a social science perspective:

Bowen, Kurt. *Evangelism and Apostasy: The Evolution and Impact of Evangelicals in Modern Mexico*. Montreal, Canada: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996.

Dow, James W. and Alan R. Sandstrom, editors. *Holy Saints and Fiery Preachers: The Anthropology of Protestantism in Mexico and Central America*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2001.

Dow, James W. “The Expansion of Protestantism in Mexico: An Anthropological View” in *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 4 (Autumn, 2005), pp. 827-851.

Gooren, Henri, editor. *Religious Conversion and Disaffiliation: Tracing Patterns of Change in Faith Practices*. New York City, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Steigenga, Timothy J. and Edward L. Cleary, editors. *Conversion of a Continent: Contemporary Religious Change in Latin America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007.

Stoll, David. *Is Latin America Turning Protestant? The Politics of Evangelical Growth*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990.

**Also, from a Roman Catholic perspective**, the question has been raised as to why Catholics are leaving their church and going elsewhere—becoming Protestants, joining Marginal Christian groups (Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Light of the World Church, etc.), converting to non-Christian religions, or becoming “nones” (no religious affiliation). See the following books and documents for a discussion about this question:

Giménez, Gilberto, coordinador. *Identidades religiosas y sociales en México*. Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1996.

Pérez Guadalupe, José Luís. *¿Por qué se van los Católicos? El problema de la “Migración religiosa” de los católicos a las llamadas “sectas.”* Lima, Perú: Conferencia Episcopal Peruana, 1992.

De la Torre, Renée and Cristina Gutiérrez Zúñiga, coordinadores. *Atlas de la Diversidad Religiosa en México (1950-2000)*. Ciudad de México, DF: SEGOB, 2007:

[http://www.asociacionesreligiosas.gob.mx/es/AsociacionesReligiosas/Atlas\\_de\\_la\\_Diversidad\\_Religiosa\\_en\\_Mexico](http://www.asociacionesreligiosas.gob.mx/es/AsociacionesReligiosas/Atlas_de_la_Diversidad_Religiosa_en_Mexico)

Beltrán Cely, William Mauricio. “Pluralización Religiosa y Cambio Social en Colombia,” unpublished Doctoral dissertation at the University Sorbonne Nouvelle - Paris 3, Latin European Doctoral School, Institute of Higher Studies on Latin America, Center for Research and Documentation on Latin America, Doctorate in Social and Latin American Studies, 27 January 2012.

#### **Abstract: Religious Pluralization and Social Change in Colombia (Beltran Cely 2012)**

While Colombia has traditionally been dominated by a conservative Catholic culture, its religious milieu has gone through a rapid transformation characterized by the growth of many new religious organizations. This study will aim to more deeply understand the causes of this transformation and its effects in other social fields, notably in the political and cultural field. A large multitude of questions have shaped the research: *Which causes have contributed and driven this religious pluralization and which factors — political, economic, demographic or cultural— are associated with it?* How has this religious pluralization manifested itself in rural, urban and indigenous contexts? What has been the impact of the religious pluralization in the cultural and political fields? The present thesis will outline the ways in which the processes of secularization and modernization on Colombian society are the

principle causes of this religious pluralization and how this pluralization involves different cultural affinities and forms of cultural inertia. Furthermore, most of the believers who abandon the Catholic Church integrate themselves within similar or related religious movements, preferring above all the Pentecostal movement. Moreover, this pluralization leads to an increased promotion of religious entrepreneurs of an independent and charismatic nature. Available at:

[http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/sam/col/beltran\\_cambio\\_religion\\_colombia\\_2011.pdf](http://www.prolades.com/cra/regions/sam/col/beltran_cambio_religion_colombia_2011.pdf)

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MEXICO CITY (3 April 2011) – *More than 1,000 Mexicans left the Catholic Church every day over the last decade, adding up to some 4 million fallen-away Catholics between 2000 and 2010, sociologist and historian Roberto Blancarte told EFE.*

The specialist from Colegio de Mexico and the National Autonomous University of Mexico, or UNAM, said that the decline has been uninterrupted over the past 60 years. In 1950, 98.21 percent of Mexicans said they were Catholic, in 1960 the percentage dropped to 96.47 percent, in 1970 to 96.17 percent, in 1980 to 92.62 percent, in 1990 the percentage dropped to 89.69 percent, in 2000 the country was only 88 percent Catholic, and now that percentage is lower still at 83.9 percent.

This signifies that the last decade has seen a drop of more than 4 percentage points, equivalent to almost 4 million people or an average of 1,300 people a day leaving the Catholic Church. In contrast, the number of Protestants and Evangelicals went from 1.3 percent in 1950 to almost 8 percent of the total population in 2010, without counting Jehovah's Witnesses or Mormons.

In the coming years, according to Blancarte's projections, Mexico's Catholics will tumble to below 80 percent. Blancarte admits the difficulty of understanding why this massive exodus from Catholicism is taking place, since without serious studies into the real causes, "we'll only be speculating," and added that not all leave for the same reasons – some could be "fed up with religion in general, or offended by the priestly scandals. Everyone has his own reason." He recalled that the church itself has expressed concern about these prodigal sons, these members of the congregation who leave and never return.

Felipe Arizmendi, bishop of the Mexican municipality of San Cristobal de las Casas in the southern state of Chiapas, recalled several days ago a Church document that warned that among the causes of these losses is an "ecumenicalism" practiced in a mistaken manner, the adoption of fundamentalist creeds [of Protestant and Marginal Christian groups] and priests' failure to get their message across.

In other words, Blancarte said, "as long as the Church continues with its boring liturgies, as long as its representatives remain unconnected to people's needs and keep slamming the use of contraceptives and condoms and saying that sex education is bad, more and more people will leave." He added that the Catholic hierarchy is aware of all these problems but "does nothing to change them, they're stagnant and bureaucratic." He said that the crisis in the Church is obvious, and what is interesting is that not even the visits of Pope John Paul II to Latin America could halt the loss of believers, "so that Catholicism is destined to be abandoned."

Source: <http://www.laht.com/article.asp?ArticleId=390745&CategoryId=14091>

\* \* \* \* \*

**With regard to Mexico, the following section provides information about some of these contributing factors, such as the geographical distribution of the Protestant population, ethnicity,**

socioeconomic factors, rural-urban context, migration and emigration variables, poverty levels, etc.

**Geographically, according to the 2010 national census, the states with the highest percentage of Protestant population were:** Chiapas, 19.2 percent; Tabasco, 18.4 percent; Campeche, 16.5 percent; Quintana Roo, 14.5 percent; Tamaulipas, 12.2 percent; Baja California Norte, 12.0 percent; Yucatán, 10.8 percent; Oaxaca, 10.5 percent; Coahuila, 10.1 percent; Chihuahua, 9.5 percent; Morelos, 9.5 percent; Veracruz, 9.2 percent; Nuevo León, 8.2 percent; and Sonora, 7.7 percent. **The states with the lowest percentage of Protestant population were:** Guanajuato, 2.6 percent; Zacatecas, 2.8 percent; Michoacán, 3.1 percent; Jalisco, 3.2 percent; Querétaro, 3.2 percent; Aguascalientes, 3.5 percent; Tlaxcala, 4.1 percent; Nayarit, 4.9 percent; Sinaloa, 5.1 percent; Colima, 5.2 percent; San Luis Potosí, 5.7 percent; Puebla, 5.8 percent; Durango, 6.0 percent; Guerrero, 6.3 percent; Hidalgo, 6.7 percent; and Baja California Sur, 7.4 percent. **The Mexico City Metropolitan Area reported the following:** State of Mexico, 5.6 percent; and the Federal District (Mexico City proper), 3.6 percent. **The national average was 7.6 percent.**

Source: [http://internet.contenidos.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/Productos/prod\\_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/producto\\_s/censos/poblacion/2010/panora\\_religion/religiones\\_2010.pdf](http://internet.contenidos.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/Productos/prod_serv/contenidos/espanol/bvinegi/producto_s/censos/poblacion/2010/panora_religion/religiones_2010.pdf)

**The nine established regions of Mexico are:** the **South-East** (Campeche, Quintana Roo and Yucatán), **Gulf** (Veracruz and Tabasco), **South-Pacific** (Chiapas, Oaxaca and Guerrero), **Central** (Federal District and states of Mexico, Morelos, Puebla, Tlaxcala and Hidalgo), **Central-North** (Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas), **West** (Baja California South, Colima, Nayarit, Jalisco and Michoacán), **North-West** (Baja California North and Sonora), **North** (Chihuahua, Coahuila and Durango), and **North-East** (Nuevo León and Tamaulipas). Source: Hernández, Alberto and Carolina Rivera. *Regiones y Religiones en México: Estudios de la transformación sociorreligiosa*. Tijuana, BC, México: Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2009.

In 2010, Protestantism was strongest in the southeastern part of the country that includes **Chiapas** (19.2%) in the South-Pacific region; **Campeche** (16.5%), **Quintana Roo** (14.5%) and **Yucatán** (10.8%) in the South-East (Yucatán Peninsula) region; as well as **Tabasco** (18.4%) in the Gulf region. Protestantism also had a large presence (higher than the national average) in the Mexican states that border the U.S. states of California (Baja California Norte, 12.0 percent; North-West region) and Texas: **Chihuahua** (9.5 percent), **Coahuila** (10.1 percent), **Tamaulipas** (12.2 percent), and **Nuevo León** (8.2 percent), all of which are in the North and North-East regions. Two other states also had a higher than average presence of Protestants: **Morelos**, 9.5 percent (Central region); and **Veracruz**, 9.2 percent (Gulf region).

**Ethnicity.** According to the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (*Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* - CDI) and the INEGI, in 2015, the number of people who self-identified as being Indigenous in Mexico totaled 25,694,928 of many different ethnolinguistic groups, which constituted 21.5 percent of Mexico's population. The five states with the largest Indigenous-language-speaking populations in 2015 were (percent Protestant = 2010 census):

- **Oaxaca**, with 1,165,186 Indigenous language speakers, accounting for 34.2% of the state's population (10.5% Protestant).
- **Chiapas**, with 1,141,499 Indigenous language speakers, accounting for 27.2% of the state's population (19.2% Protestant).

- **Veracruz**, with 644,559 Indigenous language speakers, accounting for 9.4% the state's population (9.2% Protestant).
- **Puebla**, with 601,680 Indigenous language speakers, accounting for 11.7% of the state's population (5.8% Protestant).
- **Yucatán**, with 537,516 Indigenous language speakers, accounting for 30.3% of the state's population (10.8% Protestant).

These five states accounted for 61.1 percent of all Indigenous language speakers in Mexico. Most Indigenous Mexicans do not speak their own native languages and speak only Spanish. This is reflected in the population of these five states as seen above. The majority of the Indigenous population is concentrated in the central and southeastern states. According to the CDI, the states with an Indigenous population of 25 percent or higher as of 2015 were the following (percent Protestant = 2010 census):

Oaxaca, 65.73% (10.5% Protestant).  
 Yucatán, 65.4% (10.8% Protestant).  
 Campeche, 44.54% (16.5% Protestant).  
 Quintana Roo, 44.44% (14.5% Protestant).  
 Hidalgo, 36.21% (6.7% Protestant).  
 Chiapas, 36.15% (19.2% Protestant).  
 Puebla, 35.28% (5.8% Protestant).  
 Guerrero, 33.92% (6.3% Protestant).  
 Veracruz, 29.25% (9.2% Protestant).  
 Morelos, 28.11% (9.5% Protestant).  
 Michoacán, 27.69% (3.1% Protestant).  
 Tabasco, 25.77% (18.4% Protestant).  
 Tlaxcala, 25.24% (4.1% Protestant).

Eight of these 13 states with large Indigenous populations have higher than average Protestant populations (7.6% = national average), while six of those exceed 10 percent Protestant as well as four of the five states with the largest Indigenous-language-speaking populations in 2015. *The growth of the Protestant population in these Indigenous areas of the states of Mexico may indicate that the respective Indigenous people have been more responsive to the Protestant “message” than in non-Indigenous areas.*

*Some social scientists believe that Protestantism (especially Pentecostalism) has had a particular appeal to some Indigenous peoples because it has a particular affinity to Indian culture, it offers them an opportunity for economic improvement, and it is clearly anti-Catholic.* The latter element of the Protestant “message” and lifestyle gives them a more independent identity from the dominant mestizo culture and its religion (Roman Catholicism). Pentecostalism offers Indigenous people a supernatural alternative to the traditional animistic religious rituals performed by *shamans* (a practitioner who achieves an altered state of consciousness in order to perceive and interact with a spirit world and channel these transcendental energies into this world), *folk-healers* (curanderos) and *witches* (brujos and brujas who use their magical powers for good or evil purposes). The Pentecostal teaching on the power of the Holy Spirit to provide ecstatic experiences (glossolalia, dreams and visions), healing for the body and mind, and deliverance from the power of “evil spirits” has its parallels in native culture.

**Socioeconomic factors.** The establishment of local Protestant congregations or groups composed of “converted” individuals and families in native villages allows the men to escape from the heavy burden of the **cargo system** (a civil-religious hierarchy), which is a collection of secular and religious positions held by men or households in rural Indigenous communities throughout central and southern Mexico. These revolving offices, or *cargos*, become the unpaid responsibility of men who are active in civic life. Individuals who hold a cargo are generally obligated to incur the costs of feasting during the *fiestas* that honor particular Catholic saints or Indigenous deities.

The expectation of local men to take part in this system is both an economic and a social one, as those who do not contribute are seen as not being deserving of living in the village. It served to create a village system where the old were helped by the young and women were helped by men. Furthermore, the legal enforcement of village obligations solidified communal (social) identity, rather than an identity dependent upon and linked to the national state.

According to anthropologist James W. Dow, in “The Expansion of Protestantism in Mexico: An Anthropological View” in the *Anthropological Quarterly* (Vol. 78, No. 4, Autumn 2005, pp. 827-828):

In the last three decades of the twentieth century, many people in Mexico and Central America turned to Protestantism as a new religion. The greatest increase has been in rural and Indian areas. This article shows that Protestantism in these areas is not a reaction against the Catholic Church as much as it is a reaction against traditional Indian **cargo systems** generating political and economic power. These people are farmers who live in tight-knitted, closed communities that dominate their lives...

This article shows how Protestantism has grown recently in Mexico and how its appeal to Indian people has been a major factor in its growth. It has opposed the power generated by traditional **cargo systems** and has helped Indian communities shift from an agricultural subsistence economy to an economy based on labor migration and trade.

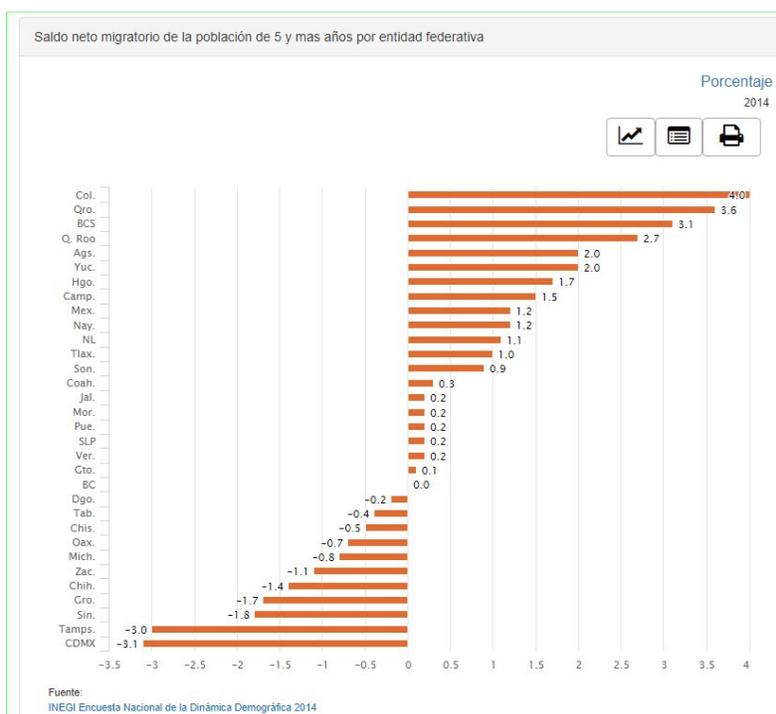
**Other important factors influencing Protestant growth in Mexico relate to:** internal migration (rural to urban), international migration (to the USA and home again to Mexico), changing employment patterns, levels of poverty, personal and family crisis and disorientation due to socioeconomic changes, the degree of dissatisfaction with the Roman Catholic Church (doctrinal and ethical issues, authoritarian structure, pastoral deficiencies, sexual misconduct by the clergy, official coverups of sexual abuse, etc.), and the degree of attraction to the Protestant message and lifestyle (especially to Pentecostalism). In order for people to change their social and religious identity, there must exist *good reasons for leaving* (levels of rejection) the religion into which they were born as well as *good reasons for joining* a new religious group (levels of attraction). *A combination of these push-pull factors will strongly influence the willingness of people to “change their religion” regardless of family and community opposition.*

Although Protestantism has been the major attraction for those interested in changing their religion in Mexico, other religious groups also have been attractive alternatives for some people who have sought new religious experiences and sources of spiritual authority, whether in Marginal Christian groups (Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, The Light of the World Church, etc.) or some non-Christian religion or religious philosophy (such as Theosophy, Freemasonry, Rosicrucianism or Psychic-Spiritualist-New Age-UFO traditions).

**People who migrate from rural to urban areas**, alone or with their families, tend to be more open to new ideas and experiences. Below is a chart of the **Net Migration Gain or Loss by States of Mexico** based on a study by INEGI in 2014, which might shed some light on the relationship between internal migration and Protestant growth during the 2000s.

**The 12 Mexican states that experienced the highest percentage of population increase due to internal migration were** (Protestant size = 2010 census): Colima (4.0% - 5.2% Protestant), Guerrero (3.6% - 6.3% Protestant), Baja California Sur (3.1% - 7.4% Protestant), Quintana Roo (2.7% - 14.5% Protestant), Aguascalientes (2.0% - 3.5% Protestant), Yucatán (2.0% - 10.8% Protestant), Hidalgo (1.7% - 6.7% Protestant), Campeche (1.5% - 16.5% Protestant), Mexico (1.2% - 5.6% Protestant), Nayarit (1.2% - 4.9% Protestant), Nuevo León (1.1% - 8.2% Protestant), and Tlaxcala (1.0% - 4.1% Protestant). Eight of the above states had Protestant populations below the national average (7.6%), while only four states had Protestant populations above the national average. *Therefore, state population increases because of internal migration did not seem to be an important factor in Protestant population growth.*

**On the other hand, the six states that experienced the greatest net loss of population because of internal migration were:** Mexico City, DF (-3.1% - 3.6% Protestant), Tamaulipas (-3.0% - 12.2% Protestant), Sinaloa (1.8% - 5.1% Protestant), Guerrero (-1.7% - 6.3% Protestant), Chihuahua (-1.4% - 9.5 Protestant), and Zacatecas (-1.1% - 2.8 Protestant). Four of these states had Protestant populations below the national average (7.6%), while only two states had Protestant populations above the national average. *Therefore, state population loss due to internal migration does not seem to be an important factor in Protestant population growth.*



**Migration to the USA from Mexico** (statistics from 2010 census). Generally, the people who tend to leave Mexico for the USA are from lower-class backgrounds. They primarily come from the following nine states: Zacatecas (2.8% Protestant), Guanajuato (2.6% Protestant), Michoacán (3.1% Protestant), Oaxaca (10.5% Protestant), Guerrero (6.3% Protestant), San Luis Potosí (5.7% Protestant), Hidalgo (6.7% Protestant), Chiapas (19.2% Protestant) and Sinaloa (5.1% Protestant). The emigrants were predominantly from Mexican states with a low percentage of Protestant population, except for Chiapas and Oaxaca that had Protestant populations above the national average (7.6%). *Therefore, states that experienced significant population loss due to emigration do not seem to be an important factor in Protestant population growth.*

**Regarding the factor of poverty**, there are 10 states where the greatest poverty exists in Mexico and where 81 percent of the population living in poverty reside, compared to the percent Protestant (2010 census):

**1. Chiapas** (19.2% Protestant)

Percent of the population living in poverty: 76.2%

Number of people living in poverty: 3.96 million

Number of people living in extreme poverty: 1.6 million

**2. Oaxaca** (10.5% Protestant)

Percent of the population living in poverty: 66.8%

Number of people living in poverty: 2.66 million

Number of people living in extreme poverty: 1.13 million

**3. Guerrero** (6.3% Protestant)

Percent of the population living in poverty: 65.2%

Number of people living in poverty: 2.31 million

Number of people living in extreme poverty: 868,100

**4. Puebla** (5.8% Protestant)

Percent of the population living in poverty: 64.5%

Number of people living in poverty: 3.95 million

Number of people living in extreme poverty: 991,300

**5. Michoacán** (3.1% Protestant)

Percent of the population living in poverty: 59.2%

Personas en situación de pobreza: 2.7 million

Number of people living in extreme poverty: 641,900

**6. Veracruz** (9.2% Protestant)

Percent of the population living in poverty: 58%

Number of people living in poverty: 4.6 million

Number of people living in extreme poverty: 1.3 million

**7. Estado de México** (5.6% Protestant)

Percent of the population living in poverty: 49.6%

Number of people living in poverty: 8.26 million

Number of people living in extreme poverty: 1.2 million

**8. Guanajuato** (2.6% Protestant)

Percent of the population living in poverty: 46.6%

Number of people living in poverty: 2.68 million

Number of people living in extreme poverty: 317,600

**9. Jalisco** (3.2% Protestant)

Percent of the population living in poverty: 35.4%

Number of people living in poverty: 2.78 million

Number of people living in extreme poverty: 253,200

#### 10. Distrito Federal (3.6% Protestant)

Percent of the population living in poverty: 28.4%

Number of people living in poverty: 2.5 million

Number of people living in extreme poverty: 150,500

Source: El Consejo Nacional de Evaluación de la Política de Desarrollo Social (CONEVAL), *Medición de la Pobreza 2014* - <https://www.forbes.com.mx/los-10-estados-con-mas-pobres-en-mexico/>

**Only three of these states with large populations living in poverty also had a larger than average size Protestant population (7.6% national average).** *Therefore, it seems logical to assume that Protestant growth is somewhat unrelated to state poverty levels but it could be related to those living in poverty at the municipal and community levels as one of the motivations for changing their religion.*

An analysis of the size of the Protestant population in 2000 compared to 2010 reveals the following: **Chiapas** had the largest Protestant population increase (+5.3%), followed by **Tabasco** (+4.8%), **Durango** and **Baja California Norte** (+4.1%), **Tamaulipas** (+3.5%), and **Quintana Roo** (+3.3%). *No single factor discussed above can account for this increase in Protestant population during the decade of 2000.*

Below are seven important documents that provide comprehensive information about the distribution of the Protestant population in Mexico between 1980 and 2000, and that discuss some of the reasons for the social and religious changes that have occurred in Mexican society since the 1960s, especially in the Southeastern and Gulf states (Veracruz and Tabasco).

Pick, James B., Edgar W. Butler and Elizabeth L. Lanzer. *Atlas of Mexico*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1989.

Giménez, Gilberto, editor. *Identidades religiosas y sociales en México*. Ciudad de México, DF: Instituto de Investigaciones sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), 1996.

De la Torre, Renée and Cristina Gutiérrez Zúñiga, editores. *Atlas de la Diversidad Religiosa en México (1950-2000)*. Ciudad de México, DF: SEGOB, 2007:

[http://www.asociacionesreligiosas.gob.mx/es/AsociacionesReligiosas/Atlas\\_de\\_la\\_Diversidad\\_Religiosa\\_en\\_Mexico](http://www.asociacionesreligiosas.gob.mx/es/AsociacionesReligiosas/Atlas_de_la_Diversidad_Religiosa_en_Mexico)

De la Torre, Renée, et al. "Perfiles socio-demográficos del cambio religiosos en México" (1950-2000), Lectura #5, *Revista Enlace*: <http://www.organizacionessociales.segob.gob.mx/uao-s-rev4/perfiles.html>

Hernández, Alberto and Carolina Rivera. *Regiones y Religiones en México: Estudios de la transformación sociorreligiosa*. Tijuana, BC, México: Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 2009.

McIntyre, Kathleen Mary. "Contested Spaces: Protestantism In Oaxaca, 1920-1995," Ph.D. dissertation in History (December 2012), University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico: [https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hist\\_etds/54/](https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/hist_etds/54/)

Nutini, Hugo G. and Jean F. Nutini. *Native Evangelism in Central Mexico*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2014. (Córdoba-Orizaba region and the Tlaxcala-Pueblan Valley, states of Veracruz, and Tlaxcala and Puebla)

## Nondenominational and Interdenominational Protestant Service Organizations

The following organizations are known to exist in Mexico.

ALFALIT
ALLIANCE OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
AMEXTRA
BIBLE SOCIETY OF MEXICO – UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES
CAMPUS & PROFESSIONAL CRUSADE FOR CHRIST
CHILD EVANGELISM FELLOWSHIP
CHRIST FOR THE CITY INTERNATIONAL
CHRISTIAN CAMPING INTERNATIONAL
CONFRATERNITY OF EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN THE MEXICAN REPUBLIC
COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATIONAL AUDIO-VISUAL CENTER (CAVE)
EDUCATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF MEXICO (JAIL AND PRISON MINISTRY)
EVANGELICAL CONFRATERNITY OF THE FEDERAL DISTRICT AND METROPOLITAN AREA
EVANGELICAL CONFRATERNITY OF MEXICO - CONEMEX
EVANGELICAL MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE OF CIUDAD NEZAHUALCOYOTL
FELLOWSHIP OF PASTORS IN COACALCO
GOSPEL RECORDINGS
HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INTERNATIONAL
HEIFER PROJECT INTERNATIONAL
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES
INTERNATIONAL MINISTRY OF CHAPLAINS AND MINISTERS IN MEXICO
INTERVARSITY – COMPAÑERISMO ESTUDIANTIL DE MÉXICO
KIDS ALIVE INTERNATIONAL
LATIN AMERICA MISSION – MILAMEX
MEDICAL AMBASSADORS INTERNATIONAL
MEXICAN EDUCATIONAL AND BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION
MEXICAN EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EMERGENCIES AND DEVELOPMENT (CEMPED)
MEXICAN MEDICAL, INC.
MEX-OIKOS (AID TO REFUGEES, HOUSING, MEDICAL, COOPERATIVES & DISASTER RELIEF)
MISSION AVIATION FELLOWSHIP
NATIONAL EVANGELICAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE
NATIONAL UNION OF EVANGELICAL PASTORS
NAVIGATORS, THE
OC INTERNATIONAL, INC.
OPEN DOORS WITH BROTHER ANDREW
OPERATION MOBILIZATION
PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL

RESCUE MISSIONS OF MEXICO
TEEN CHALLENGE – RETO A LA JUVENTUD
THE SALVATION ARMY (SOCIAL SERVICES FOR STREET CHILDREN, ALCOHOL REHABILITATION FOR MEN, LITERACY EDUCATION AND MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR THOSE IN NEED)
VELA MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL
WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS-SUMMER INSTITUTE OF LINGUISTICS
YOUTH FOR CHRIST / USA
YOUTH WITH A MISSION
YUGO MINISTRIES – YOUTH UNLIMITED GOSPEL OUTREACH
*THIS COLOR DENOTES INTERDENOMINATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS

**\*\*NOTE: THIS LIST IS INCOMPLETE AND NEEDS TO BE EXPANDED.**

## Protestant Theological Education

Most of the Protestant denominations in Mexico have established their own Bible Institutes and/or Seminaries throughout the country. Below are some of the most well-known theological training institutions.

**The Theological Community of Mexico** (CTM – *Comunidad Teológica de México*) was founded in 1964 as a consortium of seminaries from different Christian traditions that share their academic and ministerial resources. Currently, five Mexican seminaries and one non-profit organization participate in the Theological Community of Mexico: the Augsburg Lutheran Seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); the Baptist Seminary of Mexico (American Baptist Churches USA-related); the St. Andrew’s Theological Seminary of the Anglican Church in Mexico; the Dr. Gonzalo Báez Camargo Methodist Seminary of the Methodist Church of Mexico; the Latin American School of Reformed Theology of the National Presbyterian Church (*Facultad Latinoamericana de Teología Reformada*); and the non-profit organization, the Mexican Association for Rural and Urban Transformation.

Source: [https://www.globalministries.org/theological\\_community\\_of\\_mexico](https://www.globalministries.org/theological_community_of_mexico)

**St. Andrew's Theological Seminary** is the oldest Anglican institution of theological education in the Spanish-speaking world. It was founded in 1894 by the Rev. Henry Forrester. It participates in a consortium of seminaries called the *Comunidad Teológica de México*. It was a seminary of the Episcopal Church as long as Mexico was part of the Episcopal Church. In 1994, the General Convention granted the five Mexican dioceses permission to withdraw from the Episcopal Church and constitute an autonomous province. **The Anglican Church of Mexico** came into existence on 1 January 1995. The seminary is now called St. Andrew's Anglican Seminary.

Source: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/glossary/st-andrews-theological-seminary-mexico-city>

**Mexican Baptist Theological Seminary.** At the annual meeting of the **Mexican Baptist National Convention** (CNBM – *Convención Nacional Bautista Mexicana*) in 1910, in Mexico City, it was thought that there would be only one seminar for the whole country, so the new Institution began its work on 3 October 1917 in Saltillo, Coahuila, in the rooms that the Zaragoza Institute had

occupied. Soon after, in 1918, the Seminary was renamed the Presbyterian School, and in 1925 it was moved to buildings in Campo Redondo, Saltillo. Later, in 1927 it was relocated to the pastoral house of Saltillo's First Baptist Church. In 1929, the Seminary moved to Monterrey, Nuevo León, and then returned to Campo Redondo, Saltillo, where its name was changed to the Border Institute of Higher Education. In 1934, it was closed due to the application of legal restrictions on religious services and associations, but in 1935 it opened again in Monterrey, under the name *Mexican Baptist Theological Seminary*. In 1936, it was moved to San Antonio, Texas, and in 1939 to El Paso, Texas, where he remained until 1946. In 1946, the **Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention** (FMBSBC) decided to relocate the Seminary to Torreón, Coahuila, where it remained until 1973. In 1973, the Seminary occupied its new home in new buildings built in Lomas Verdes, Naucalpan, State of Mexico, under the directorship of Dr. Pat H. Carter.

Source: <http://stbm.mx/quienes-somos/historiastbm>

**The Mexican Bible Seminary** (SEBIME - *Seminario Bíblico Mexicano*) was started in 1947 as a small Bible Institute called the “Instituto Bíblico Berea” whose aim was to prepare pastors for ministry within the **Church of God of Mexico (COGM, related to the Church of God in Cleveland, TN)**. Prospective pastors and ministers journeyed from across Mexico to live and study for three years in the city of Hermosillo, in the northwestern State of Sonora. In 1978, under the leadership of Dr. Bill George, the transition was made to a four-year-institution that offers Bachelors’ Degrees. Since then, SEBIME has been the flagship institution for the denomination in Mexico, and has prepared and graduated more pastors and ministers serving the Church of God in Mexico than any other school. The majority of current Mexican COG leaders had their formation within the walls of SEBIME. As a theological and ministerial school, SEBIME has done an excellent job of training and empowering church leaders and laity alike. Additionally, SEBIME has the only School of Music for the denomination in Latin America.

Source: <https://cogwm.org/news/sebime-the-mexican-bible-seminary/>

**The Anna Sanders Bible Institute / El Instituto Bíblico Anna Sanders.** In May 1970, the General Superintendent of the **Assemblies of God in Mexico**, the Rev. Guillermo Fuentes Ortíz, and the Executive Presbytery felt the burden for Mexico City and founded the Institute in order to prepare ministers to respond to the challenge that the explosive population growth of the capital city represented. The Institute, whose emblematic and colonial building was used for the denomination’s headquarters, was named in honor of *Anna Sanders* (1869-1955), an immigrant from Denmark to Canada and later Mexico, one of the pioneers of the work of the Assemblies of God in Mexico City. In 1986, after the State Assemblies of God mission acquired a property in the old church of Candelaria, the Anna Sanders Bible Institute left the General Offices to occupy those facilities. From 1987 to 1990, the Institute trained students in a remodeled building on Calle de Cintura. In 1990, the Institute began the construction and development of its present facilities.

The Anna Sanders Bible Institute, now the **Anna Sanders Theological Seminary**, offers various study programs such as Diploma in Ministerial Theological Studies; Bachelor in Bible and Theology; Bachelor in Theological Education; Specializations in Pastoral Theology, Evangelism, Missions and Christian Education; Continuing Education for Pastors; Comprehensive Training for Children's Teachers; and Integral Training for Youth Leaders. All the programs of study integrate three elements of academic excellence, student ministry and spiritual development. Parallel to the rigor of the studies the students participate in cross-cultural missionary trips and annual spiritual retreats that include fasting and prayer.

Sources: <https://asambleas.net/instituto-biblico-anna-sanders-algo-de-su-historia/> / <http://www.annasanders.org/>

### **Nazarene Seminary of Mexico (founded in 1987 by the Church of the Nazarene)**

*Seminario Nazareno Mexicano* (SENAMEX), main campus, is located in the hills to the south of Mexico City proper, at: Ruta 95, Carretera Federal Mexico-Cuernavaca No. 10020, Colonia Parres el Guarda, Delegación Tlalpan 14900, DF.

Academic Programs and Degrees Offered include the following:

Diploma: Theological Studies, Teaching / Pedagogy

Bachelor's Degree: Pastoral Theology

Associate Degree: Teaching / Pedagogy

Affiliated with Nazarene Theological Seminary Studies (ETASEN)

Affiliations with other Institutions: Seminario Nazareno de las Américas (San José, Costa Rica).

During early 2005, the International Board of Education (IBOE) and General Board of the Church of the Nazarene approved the merger of all Mexican Nazarene theological institutions into one Nazarene Mexican Seminary (SENAMEX), which now serves the entire country at every level of education. Part of the project included the creation of two sub-centers: Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, with Miguel Angel Ceballos serving as director, and Ensenada, Baja California, with Carlos Martínez serving as director. On 10 April and 15 May 2005, respectively, the new centers were inaugurated with special services attended by hundreds of supporters. According to the Mexico and Central America (MAC) Regional office, this decisive step is expected to result in more ministers receiving expanded training and education across throughout Mexico. Currently, there are 15 regional campuses throughout Mexico.

Sources: <http://holinesstoday.org/nazarene-mexican-seminary-changes-format>

**The Reformed Theological Seminary of Mexico** is the maximum house of studies of the **Reformed Presbyterian Church of Mexico** / *Iglesia Presbiteriana Reformada de México* (IPRM). The institution had its beginnings in 1948 in what was the Theological School "Juan Calvino" of the memorial chapel "Margaret Whittaker Mumurtrie," which today is Iglesia "Getsemaní" of the IPRM in Delegación Coyoacán, Mexico City, DF. On 23 July 1963, the "Juan Calvino" Presbyterian Seminary was inaugurated. In 1993, the General Missionary Synod of IPRM renamed the institution: Reformed Theological Seminary of Mexico / *Seminario Teológico Reformado de México*. Source: <http://www.strmexico.net/>

### **Biblical Seminary of Puebla / Seminario Bíblico de Puebla (SBP)**

The indispensable formation of Ministers for the Evangelical Churches of Mexico has been a great need since the appearance of Christian work in the country. In response to this need, and given the growing threat of *theological liberalism* that was invading the churches of that time, the **Central American Mission, now CAM International (CAMINO Global)**, undertook the task of investigating what it could do to help the Evangelical movement in Mexico. The result was the establishment of the Biblical Institute and Seminary of Mexico in 1959 with the purpose of training ministers with a pure Biblical doctrine. The city of Puebla was chosen for its proximity to Mexico City and for offering a more economical education than in the capital of the country.

At first, entrance was open for all those who wanted to study, but due to the development of national education, the entrance requirement was raised until it was required that students had to have completed their high school or baccalaureate. Therefore, the SBL began to offer studies at

the Bachelor level. The academic degree that is currently awarded is the Bachelor of Theology with four specialties: Music, Ministerial Theology, Youth Ministry and Missions.

Source: <http://www.sbp.mx/content.html?id=3>

**The Biblical Seminary of Mexico** / *Seminario Bíblico de México* (SEMBIMEX) was founded in 1992 by OMS (One Mission Society, formerly OMS International & Oriental Missionary Society) whose mission is to "Train servants in the Biblical-Theological area, helping them to Grow, Love and Obey the Lord's call."

For over 25 years SEMBIMEX has offered undergraduate courses, workshops, conferences and training programs, taught by teachers trained in their respective fields of study, committed to academic excellence and surrendered to the lordship of Christ. The collaboration of OMS International through its missionaries and teachers contributes to the enrichment of the study programs, providing different cultural perspectives and invaluable experiences for teachers and students of this seminary.

SEMBIMEX offers the Bachelor of Applied Theology degree (Licenciatura) balanced in four emphases: Biblical, Theological, Ministerial, and General Studies. This program is currently undergoing a restructuring that allows not only to offer competitive training in accordance with the current challenges of the Church in Mexico, but also the challenges of Latin America.

Address: Blvd. Cuautitlán Izcalli No.160, Colonia El Campanario, Atizapán de Zaragoza, CP 52928, Estado de México, México: <https://www.facebook.com/sembimex/> / <https://www.sembimex.com/>

#### **Other major theological education programs include:**

**Evangelistic Institute of Mexico** / *Instituto Evangelístico de México* (founded in 1949 by Edelmiro J. Espinoza; located in Calle Montes de las Cruces, San Lorenzo Acopilco, Cuajimalpa de Morelos, CP 01480, DF: <https://www.facebook.com/Conocercreeryvivirlabiblia/>

Many other denominations and church associations operate their own Bible Institutes and seminaries in many parts of the country, as we have noted previously.

#### **Ecumenical Organizations among Protestants in Mexico**

**CONELA-affiliated members** in Mexico are the Secretariat of Social Communication of the Evangelical Christian Church of Mexico (*Secretaría de Comunicación Social de Iglesias Cristianas Evangélicas de México, SECOSICE*) and the Evangelical Confraternity of Mexico (*Confraternidad Evangélica Mexicana, CONEMEX*), founded in 1982. The only **CLAI members** in Mexico are the German Lutheran Church and the Methodist Church of Mexico (affiliated with the United Methodist Church in the USA).

**The Evangelical Confraternity of Mexico (CONEMEX)** was organized in May 1982, a month after the founding of Latin American Evangelical Confraternity (CONELA) in Panama. Both emerged with the participation of the same Mexican delegates. CONEMEX previously existed as an entity under the name *Comisión Nacional de Denominaciones y Organizaciones Evangélicas* (National Commission of Evangelical Denominations and Organizations) and the *Comisión Nacional de Ejecutivos Denominacionales* (National Commission of Denominational Executives). These organizations had the support of most of the main denominations and Christian

service agencies in Mexico, which organized various events of national importance. CONEMEX has sponsored a variety of activities to promote spiritual unity: Pastoral retreats, Evangelism Conferences, Ministry Schools, Continuous Meetings of the Board of Directors and its respective Commissions, and Orientation Seminars in Constitutional Law, with the participation of members from at least 66 denominations and Service Entities. CONEMEX is a member of the Latin Evangelical Alliance / *Alianza Evangélica Latina* (AEL) and the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).

**CONEMEX COMITÉ EJECUTIVO 2018-2020**

**Rev. Cirilo Cruz Lázaro, Presidente**

*Concilio Latinoamericano de la Iglesia de Dios Pentecostal en México*

**Pbro. Isaí Montoya Carbajal, Primer Vicepresidente**

*Asambleas de Dios en México*

**Pbro. Saúl Arteaga Reséndiz, Segundo Vicepresidente**

*Iglesia Cristiana Independiente Pentecostés, A.R. (ICIPAR)*

**Pbro. Aaron Cortés Hernández, Tercer Vicepresidente**

*Iglesia Cristiana Interdenominacional, A.R. (ICIAR)*

**David Monroy Adame, Tesorero**

*Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de México, A.R.*

**Lic. Rosa Addy Duarte de Markham, Secretaria**

*Misionera de Misión de Fe Internacional, USA*

Source: <http://www.conemex.org/>

**The National Fraternity of Evangelical Christian Churches / *La Confraternidad Nacional de Iglesias Cristianas Evangélicas*** (CONFRATERNICE) is a civil association made up of individuals and legal entities, among whom we have ministers of worship, professionals and intellectuals, all evangelical Christians. In the same way, various religious and civil associations with an evangelical Christian profile have joined the ranks of this organization. CONFRATERNICE arises initially as a response to the new obligations derived from the constitutional reforms of 1992 and the promulgation of the Law of Religious Associations and Public Worship, serving the Evangelical Christian Churches, and it does so through 10 national commissions among them, that of Legal, Fiscal and Accounting Counseling, Mass Evangelism, Defense of Human Rights, predominantly of evangelical Christian indigenous people, among other commissions. On 9 December 1996, CONFRATERNICE was registered as a corporation in the United States of America, under the support of ministers of worship, Churches and Ministries of that nation. However, the heart of CONFRATERNICE is in the defense and protection of the evangelical Christian indigenous people. They are the ultimate goal of this organization; it is the main mandate that Jesus Christ has entrusted to us and we diligently strive to fulfill it.

<http://www.confraternice.org/MX/index.php/que-es>

Headquarters address: Calle Liverpool No. 65, 3er Piso Despacho 301, Colonia Juárez, México, DF; Telefonos: (55) 5208-4903, (55) 5208-4990, (55) 5208-4995

Founder and President: Arturo Farela Gutiérrez

<http://www.confraternice.org/MX/>

## Other Christian Groups

Although some of the **non-Protestant Christian Groups** were probably included in the "Protestant-Evangelical" category in the 1990, 2000 and 2010 censuses, the three main denominational families included in the category "non-evangelical Bible-based religions" were the Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs), the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and The Light of the World Church (LLDM – *Iglesia La Luz del Mundo*). In the 2010 census, 2.3 percent identified themselves as members of other "non-evangelical Bible-based religions," which PROLADES has identified as "marginal Christian groups" in our Mexican database of religious groups.

Some of these groups are sometimes called Christian "sects" and are characterized as having some affinity with Christianity, but are non-Catholic, non-Orthodox and non-Protestant in their general orientation, hence the term "marginal." Not only have some of these groups experienced the rejection of other branches of Christianity, but they tend to be exclusive and reactionary in their dealings with other religious groups; most of the marginal Christian groups believe that they "have a corner on the Truth" and that other groups constitute "false religions." The "sect" rejects the mother church or other branches of Christianity and is committed to a "new interpretation of reality" or worldview, which cult members believe is "the only way of salvation." Some of their inspiration and teaching is often based only on parts of the Bible, but they depend mainly on non-biblical writings/messages, dreams, visions, prophetic declarations and interpretations or creeds that tend to contradict *orthodox Protestant teaching* about basic Biblical truths. For reference, see the following website regarding definitions of "cults" and "sects" and a listing of such groups: <http://www.religioustolerance.org/cults.htm>

The following such groups are known to exist in Mexico:

THE WATCHTOWER BIBLE & TRACT SOCIETY (JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES) (USA ORIGIN)
CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (USA ORIGIN)
THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD CHURCH & DISSENTING GROUPS (MEXICAN ORIGIN)
MITA CONGREGATION IN MEXICO (FROM PUERTO RICO)
PEOPLE OF AMOS CHURCH (FROM PUERTO RICO)
NEW APOSTOLIC CHURCH INTERNATIONAL (BASED IN SWITZERLAND)
GOD IS LOVE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH (FROM BRAZIL)
UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD (FROM BRAZIL)
WILLIAM BRANHAM MOVEMENT & THE VOICE OF THE CORNERSTONE (USA-PUERTO RICO ORIGIN)
CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST (USA ORIGIN)
CHRISTADELPHIAN BIBLE MISSION (UK ORIGIN)
FAMILY OF GOD INTERNATIONAL (USA ORIGIN)

The largest of these in terms of the size of their membership or adherents are the following.

**Jehovah's Witnesses.** The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (originally named "Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society" and commonly known as Jehovah's Witnesses or JWs since 1931) was founded in 1881 by *Charles Taze Russell* (1852-1916) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, but the headquarters were relocated to Brooklyn, NY, in 1909. The JWs began "evangelizing" in Mexico in 1893, but significant growth did not begin to take place until the 1950s. By 1966, the JWS reported 1,090 congregations in Mexico with 30,261 "publishers" (lay missionaries).

The 2000 Mexican census reported 1,057,736 JW adherents, which means that the JWs in Mexico were the second-largest worldwide to JWs in the USA. The 2010 national census reported 1,561,086 JWs, which indicates a growth of 503,350 JW adherents in Mexico between 2000 and 2010. The official 2018 JW data for “annual memorial attendance” for Mexico was 2,214,594 (i.e., adherents). The number of people who attend Jehovah's Witnesses' yearly commemoration of the Memorial of Christ's death (“memorial attendance”) includes active JWs, their children, and others who are invited to attend; perhaps this could be considered the total number of adherents or community.

The official *2005 Report of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide* (JWs) listed 11,192 congregations with “peak publishers” listed as 593,802 in Mexico. Currently, the JWs website for Mexico (2018 data) lists 871,339 “ministers who teach the Bible” (peak publishers) and 13,245 congregations: <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/worldwide/MX/> - <https://www.jw.org/en/publications/books/2018-service-year-report/2018-country-territory/>

**The Jehovah's Witnesses** organization is a millenarian-restorationist Marginal Christian denomination with non-trinitarian beliefs that are distinct from mainstream Protestant Christianity. “Restorationism,” also described as “Christian primitivism,” is the belief that Christianity should be restored along the lines of what is known about the apostolic early church in the first century CE. They continued to develop doctrines that they considered to be an “improved restoration” of first century Christianity, including increased emphasis on the use of *Jehovah* as God's personal name. The organization reported a worldwide membership of approximately 8.6 million “publishers” (trained lay workers who teach JW doctrine), with an annual “Memorial attendance” of over 20 million in 2013.

Jehovah's Witnesses are well-known for their door-to-door preaching, distributing literature such as *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* and refusing military service and blood transfusions. JW parents and their children have experienced difficulties in the sphere of public education; some JW children have been expelled from elementary and secondary schools for not honoring national symbols, such as saluting the flag and singing the national anthem, which are considered offenses against the nation. JWs consider the use of God's name in Hebrew (*Jehovah*) to be vital for proper worship. They reject the belief in a Triune God (Trinitarianism), the inherent immortality of the soul, and a literal Hell, which they consider to be unscriptural doctrines. They do not observe Christmas, Easter, birthdays or other holidays and customs they consider to have pagan origins incompatible with Christianity. They prefer to use their own Bible translation, although their literature occasionally quotes and cites other Bible translations. *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* is an easy-to-read translation of the Bible produced by this organization. It has been published in whole or in part in over 160 languages; more than 220 million copies have been produced.

Adherents commonly refer to their body of beliefs as “The Truth” and consider themselves to be “in the Truth.” They consider secular society to be morally corrupt and under the influence of Satan, and most limit their social interaction with non-Witnesses. Congregational disciplinary actions include *disfellowshipping*, their term for formal expulsion and shunning. Baptized individuals who formally leave are considered *disassociated* and are also shunned. Disfellowshipped and disassociated individuals may eventually be reinstated if deemed repentant. Official websites: <https://www.jw.org/en/> - <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/worldwide/MX/>

**Mormons.** The 2000 Mexican census reported a total of 205,229 adherents for all Mormon groups, whereas the official *Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* website reported 1,158,236

members in 1,977 congregations for 2007. According to the 2010 national census, there were only 314,932 Mormon adherents in Mexico. The latest official report from the LDS online website (accessed n 21 January 2019) gives the following information: total membership in Mexico, 1,434,383; Stakes, 229; Congregations, 1,987; Missions, 34; Family History Centers, 274; and 13 Temples: <https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/facts-and-statistics/country/mexico>

**Official LDS history for Mexico.** In 1875, President Brigham Young called a party of six missionaries to take Spanish language materials about the LDS Church from Salt Lake City to Mexico. Upon arriving in Mexico in 1876, the missionaries divided into two groups. In 1876, Helaman Pratt and Meliton Trejo, a Spanish convert, traveled to Hermosillo, Sonora, where they baptized the first five members in Mexico.

In 1885, a group of nearly 400 colonists from Utah arrived at the northern Mexico Casas Grandes River and acquired property. Mexico's first stake (similar to a diocese) was created in Colonia Juárez in 1895. By 1912, more than 4,000 members had settled in Chihuahua and Sonora.

When Rey L. Pratt returned to central Mexico in November of 1917, he found the members had remained faithful in difficult living circumstances. Local Mexican leaders again maintained stability and expanded proselyting work, calling six local missionaries in 1930. In 1946, Church President George Albert Smith visited Church members in Mexico, who then numbered more than 5,300.

On 3 December 1961, the Mexico Stake was created, with Harold Brown as president. Membership numbered nearly 25,000. Church schools were begun in Mexico in 1959. On 3 April 1976, a temple was announced for Mexico City and the completed temple was dedicated on 2 December 1983 by President Gordon B. Hinckley. At that time, membership in Mexico was conservatively numbered at about 240,000. Mexico was the first country outside the United States to hold 100 Latter-day Saint stakes.

An historic moment came on 29 June 1993, when the Mexican government formally registered the Church, allowing it to own property. President Howard W. Hunter visited Mexico to create the Mexico City Contreras Stake, the Church's 2,000<sup>th</sup>, on 11 December 1994.

*The various Mormon groups that exist in Mexico today include:* the **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** (Utah Mormons first arrived in the Casas Grandes Valley of Chihuahua in 1885 and eventually established nine agricultural colonies: six in the state of Chihuahua and three in Sonora; in February 2000, the Utah Mormons dedicated a new temple in Juárez to serve its 25,000 members in that state); the **Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** (Missouri Mormons, now called The Community of Christ); the **Church of the Firstborn in the Fullness of Times** (known as the LeBaron Mormon polygamist movement, arrived in Chihuahua in 1922); **Church of Christ Temple Lot** (Illinois Mormons); **United Order Front** (Utah-Arizona Mormons); and the **Apostolic United Brethren** (a split from the United Order Front).

**Editorial note:** for an overview of the JWs and Mormons in Mexico, see: Patricia Fortuny Loret de Mola, “Mormones y Testigos de Jehová: la version Mexicana” (pp. 175-215) in Gilberto Giménez, Coordinador, *Identidades religiosas y sociales en México*. Ciudad de México: Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1996.

**The Light of the World Church.** Another significant religious tradition in Mexico was founded in the city of Monterrey, Nuevo León, in 1926 by *Eusebio Joaquín González* (known as the Prophet Aarón, who died in 1964). It has blended Mexican mysticism with Pentecostal fervor to create **The**

**Light of the World Church / Iglesia La Luz del Mundo.** Its full name is the “Church of the Living God Column and Pillar of Truth, the Light of the World” / *Iglesia del Dios Vivo Columna y Apoyo de la Verdad, La Luz del Mundo (LLDM)*. Since 1952, its headquarters have been in Colonia Hermosa Provincia, Guadalajara, State of Jalisco. The Prophet Aarón was considered by his followers to be “the voice of God on earth.” Eusebio Joaquín González was succeeded by his eldest son *Samuel Joaquín Flores* (1937-2014), under whose leadership the current *Templo Casa de Oración* (see photo below) was constructed in Colonia Hermosa Provincia and inaugurated in 1991, with a seating capacity of 12,000 people.

In December 2014, *Naasón Joaquín García* (b. 1969), the fifth of eight Joaquín children, became the maximum leader of LLDM after the death of his father. Naasón Joaquín previously served as a church minister for 22 years, during which time he launched Berea Internacional, the church's media and publishing arm. Under his leadership the LLDM has expanded to four additional countries, increasing to 54 the number of countries with LLDM presence. The most important yearly LLDM ritual is the Holy Communion Service (*Santa Cena*), held yearly on 14 August, which is attended by ten of thousands of followers from Mexico and many other countries,

Church officials claim that this denomination grew from 80 members in 1929, to 75,000 in 1972, to 1.5 million in 1986, and to about four million members in 22 countries in 1990. However, the 2000 Mexican census only reported 69,254 LLDM adherents in Mexico and only 188,326 in 2010, which also may include some of the following related groups.

Official website: <http://www.lldm.org/index.html>



Templo of The Light of the World Church in Guadalajara, Jalisco

LLDM Official Proclamation: “The Church of the Living God Column and Support of the Truth, The Light of the World, is *the Restoration of the Church that Jesus Christ founded in the first century* of our era, with the mission of announcing to every person the good news of salvation... The Church conserves invariable fidelity to God, the Government, Doctrine, Sacred Offices, as well as the heavenly promises, established and given by Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.”

However, multiple accounts of sexual abuse against their followers (both men and women), by the Prophet Aaron, later by his son Samuel Joaquín Flores, and most recently by his grandson Naasón Joaquín García, as well as of financial mismanagement, were reported in the Mexican press for decades, which were believed to be true by the public but denied by church officials. For accusations against Naasón Joaquín García, see: <https://www.univision.com/noticias/estados-unidos/tiene-276-dias-en-la-carcel-el-lider-de-la-luz-del-mundo-seguira-detenido-hasta-abril-por-su-lento-proceso-penal>

**Some of the new religious organizations that have been formed by leaders who left the LLDM “mother church” for a variety of reasons include the following:** Church of the Living God, Column and Support of the Truth, The Good Shepherd (1942); Church of Jesus Christ of Brother Abel Joaquín Avelar (1965); Christian Apostolic Church of the Living God, Column and Pillar of Truth, New Israel (1978); Church of Jesus Christ of Brother José Larios (founding date unknown); and Church of the Living God, Love Justice and Holiness (founding date unknown); and Church of Jesus Christ, Column and Support of the Truth, “The Great I Am” (1992).  
Source: <http://jesucristoelgranyosoy.blogspot.com/2013/11/nuestro-objetivo.html>

In 1942, The Light of the World Church experienced a division that led to the founding of the **Church of the Good Shepherd** (*Iglesia del Buen Pastor*), led by *José María González*, with headquarters in Toluca de Lerdo, capital of the State of Mexico. Similar to the mother church, this denomination holds an annual celebration of the Lord’s Supper (Communion) in April during Holy Week with the participation of Pastors and lay representatives from all of its local congregations in Mexico, the USA, and Central America (Source: Renée de la Torre, 1996:155).

In 1965, *Abel Joaquín Avelar*, a son of Eusebio Joaquín (the Prophet Aarón), left the Light of the World Church in Guadalajara, moved to Mexico City and founded his own organization, **The Church of Jesus Christ** (*La Iglesia de Jesucristo*), which now has at least 22 organized churches. The leader of this denomination has taken the title “Apostle of the Church” and has an “Apostolic Council” composed of 12 members. “La Iglesia de Jesucristo” was officially registered as an AR with the government in 1992 by Apostles Abel Joaquín Avelar, Pablo Joaquín Rodríguez and Antonio Cruz Pérez at Riva Palacio No. 59, Colonia Granjas Valle de Guadalupe, Sección A, Municipio de Ecatepec de Morelos, Estado de México.

**The Christian Apostolic Church of the Living God, Column and Pillar of Truth, New Israel** (*Iglesia Cristiana Apostólica del Dios Vivo, Columna y Apoyo de la Verdad, Nuevo Israel*) was founded in 1978 in Cuernavaca, Morelos, by *Francisco Jesus Adame Giles*, who claimed to have a dream or vision in 1978 in which he reported that “an angel appeared to me and called me to preach the Gospel and announce the Kingdom of God.” In 1989, he formed a community of followers in Colonia Lomas de Chamilpa on about 25,000 square meters of land, north of Cuernavaca, with himself as the maximum authority. This community of an estimated 400 families is now called *Colonia Provincia de Jerusalén*; its members are prohibited from smoking, drinking, dancing and women may not use makeup, jewelry or slacks. Adame has a dominant role in their lives—spiritually, socially and economically; this group claims to be neither Catholic, Protestant nor a sect, but rather “Israelites of the New Israel of God.” The movement claims to have about 50,000 followers in the states of Morelos, Oaxaca, Veracruz, Guerrero, México, Puebla, Guanajuato and Baja California Norte.

Sources: <https://es.calameo.com/read/000906880b6aaef7f20ce>

**Editorial note:** for a historical overview and analysis of LLDM, see: Elio Masferrer Kan, *et al*, editores. *Sectas, iglesias y nuevos movimientos religiosos. La Luz Del Mundo, un análisis multidisciplinario de la controversia religiosa que ha impactado a nuestro país*. Bosques de Echeagaray, Estado de México: Revista Académica para el Estudio de las Religiones, Tomo I, 1997.

**The Church of Jesus Christ and Column and Support of the Truth, “The Great I Am”** (founded in 1992) believes that the greatest spiritual warfare is, at this moment, not against the Catholic Church as everyone customarily thinks, but our warfare is against the CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, COLUMN AND SUPPORT OF THE TRUTH, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, which has degenerated the church of the Lord [due to doctrinal error, administrative corruption and sexual immorality under the leadership of Samuel Joaquin Flores since 1964]; for this same reason, as Eusebio Joaquin once said, "a great summit divides us"; and we officially declare that our PERMANENT ENEMY is the THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD CHURCH (LLDM)—posted by Apostol de Jesucristo Daire Alain Joaquin Martinez.

Source: <http://jesucristoelgranyosoy.blogspot.com/>

Some of these aforementioned denominations affirm their belief in “only one God and creator of the universe and his name is Jesus Christ; in water baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and in the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the gift of tongues (*glossolalia*). Those denominations that believe as such may be reclassified as part of the Oneness Pentecostal movement depending on their belief in other doctrines that are essential to being part of the Protestant Family of denominations as defined by PROLADES in *A Classification System of Religious Groups in the Americas by Major Traditions and Family Types* (Holland 2018) at: <http://www.prolades.com/class-eng.pdf>

**Editorial note:** This is the end of the LLDM-related groups.

**The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God** (*Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus – IURD*) first arrived in Mexico in 1992 under the leadership of Brazilian bishop Romualdo Panceiro, who founded the first IURD congregation, known as "First of Mexico," located in the San Cosme neighborhood of Mexico City, Federal District. In an interview with the "Plenitude Magazine" (07/2005), he stated: “In the beginning we suffered a lot of discrimination because of being foreigners and because of the difficulty with the language. Nobody believed us. We could not use any means of communication to disclose the work. Everything was very complicated." But that reality changed and, currently, under the administration of Bishop Paulo Roberto Guimarães and Bishop Franklin Sanches, the IURD of Mexico has more than 128 temples distributed throughout the country, and a cathedral with a seating capacity of 3,000 people. Official website in Mexico: <https://www.universal.org.ar/iurd-en-el-mundo-mexico/>

However, the IURD and *Bishop Edir Bezerra Macedo*, who founded this organization in 1977 in Brazil have been denounced by Evangelical leaders in Brazil and elsewhere because of its controversial beliefs and practices, such as those described by Harvard Divinity School’s Religious Literacy Project: <https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/faq/universal-church-kingdom-god>

Also, see the **God is Love Pentecostal Church** (born in Brazil and disavowed by Evangelicals in Brazil) in Mexico City website:

[https://www.facebook.com/pg/IpdaMexico/about/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/IpdaMexico/about/?ref=page_internal)

**A William M. Branham related-movement** was founded in Mexico City following Branham's 1956 "Faith Healing and Deliverance Crusade," which gave birth to a fellowship of 13 organized churches and 25 missions that are called Tabernacles (*Tabernáculos*). The current website of this organization lists about 40 churches and missions throughout Mexico:

[http://williambranhamenmexico.org/WBMX\\_Principal.html](http://williambranhamenmexico.org/WBMX_Principal.html) /

<http://www.luzalatardecer.com/>

*William Marrion Branham* (1909-1965), one of the first post-WWII "faith healing evangelists" in the USA, claimed to have received an angelic visitation on 7 May 1946, who commissioned his worldwide ministry and launched his campaigning career in mid-1946. His fame spread rapidly as crowds – often interracial – were drawn to his stories of angelic visitations and reports of alleged miracles that happened at his meetings. His ministry spawned many emulators and set in motion the broader healing revival movement. By the mid-1950s, dozens of the ministers associated with Branham and his campaigns had launched similar healing campaigns across North America. From 1955, Branham's campaigning and popularity began to decline as Pentecostal churches began to withdraw their support from his healing campaigns because of controversies surrounding Branham's ministry. Unlike his contemporaries, who followed doctrinal teachings known as the Full Gospel tradition, Branham developed an alternate theology that was primarily a mixture of Calvinist and Arminian doctrines, and had a heavy focus on dispensationalism and Branham's own unique eschatological views. While widely accepting the restoration doctrine he espoused during the healing revival, his divergent post-revival teachings were deemed increasingly controversial by his Pentecostal contemporaries, who subsequently **disavowed** many of the doctrines as "revelatory madness." Many of his followers, however, accepted his sermons as "oral scripture" and refer to his teachings as "The Message." In 1963, Branham preached a sermon in which he indicated that he was a prophet with the anointing of Elijah, who had come to herald Christ's second coming. Branham claimed to have made over one million converts during his career. He died in 1965 but his teachings continue to be promoted through the *William Branham Evangelistic Association* (founded in 1966), which reported in 2018 that about two million people had receive their materials, and *The Voice of God Recordings*: <https://branham.org/en/home>

**The Voice of the Cornerstone / Voz de la Piedra Angular** was founded in 1974 in Cayey, Puerto Rico, by *William Soto Santiago* (born 1940), who claims to be a disciple of *William M. Branham* who founded a similar movement in Jeffersonville, Indiana, in 1955, although there is no evidence that the two ever met. Soto Santiago borrowed much of the teachings of Branham and launched his own movement in Latin America, calling himself the "Voice of the Cornerstone" and the "Angel who opens the Seventh Seal" in the Book of Revelation. This organization, based in Puerto Rico, has a related ministry in Mexico City: <http://carpa.com/es/> /

<https://www.facebook.com/lavozdelapiedraangularmex/> / <http://www.carpa.com/en/who-are-we>

**The New Apostolic Church International (NACI) / Iglesia Nueva Apostólica Internacional** was founded in 1879 in Hamburg, Germany, with headquarters today in Zurich, Switzerland. It traces its origins to the "Irvingites" in Scotland and England in the 1830s and to the Hamburg schism in 1862. In 2006, the New Apostolic Church claimed to have about 10.8 million members worldwide; it has affiliated churches in Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia, Oceania and the Americas: USA, Canada, **Mexico**, Central America, the Caribbean and South America.

Adapted from: <http://www.nak.org/en/about-the-nac/history-of-ourchurch/>

**Other groups of foreign origin.** Also present in Mexico are the **Children of God** (now called "The Family"), the **Christadelphian Bible Mission**, **Christian Science** (Church of Christ, Scientist), **Growing in Grace Ministries International** (based in Miami, FL), **Mita Congregation** (from Puerto Rico), and the **People of Amos Church** (a split from Mita Congregation under Nicolas Tosado Aviles in Puerto Rico).

Children of God/The Family International-Mexico and Central America:  
<https://www.thefamilyinternational.org/en/work/america-central/>

Christadelphian Bible Mission (local groups are called "ecclesia":  
<http://cristadelfianosdemexico.blogspot.es/>

Church of Christ, Scientist (5 churches in Mexico):  
<http://cienciacristiana.org/iglesias/listado-iglesias-ciencia-cristiana-mexico>

Growing in Grace Ministries (José Luís de Jesús Miranda):  
<https://cegmexico.wordpress.com/jh/>

Mita Congregation: <https://ubicalas.com/i/iglesias/iglesia-congregacion-mita-mexico-1588010/> / <https://www.congregacionmita.org/html/espanol/inicio.html>

People of Amos Church: <http://iglesiapueblodeamos.com/id3.html>

## **Eastern Orthodox Jurisdictions in Mexico**

List of organizations: <https://ortodoxos.es.tl/DIRECTORIO-IGLESIAS-ORTODOXAS-EN-MEXICO-.-.htm>

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

Website: <http://iglesiaortodoxagriegaacr.blogspot.com/2016/04/patriarcado-ecumenico-de-constantinopla.html>

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

**Iglesia Ortodoxa Católica en México, Exarcado de la Iglesia Ortodoxa en América** (Orthodox Church in America / Greek Orthodox), led by Presbyter Desiderio Barrero Sermeño; the Cathedral

de la Ascensión del Señor is located in Colonia Peñón de los Baños, Delegación Venustiano Carranza, DF.

The **Antiochian Orthodox Church** (*Iglesia Ortodoxa Antioqueña*) was founded in Mexico in 1943 under the leadership of Mr. Amín Aboumrad who reported to Archbishop Samuel David in Toledo, Ohio; St. George's Orthodox Cathedral was built in Colonia Roma Sur, Delegación Alvaro Obregón, DF, between 1944 and 1947; in 1966 Antonio Chedraui became the first bishop of Mexico, and in 1996 he was appointed as the Metropolitan Archbishop of Mexico, Venezuela, Central America and the Caribbean.

**Iglesia Católica Apostólica Ortodoxa del Patriarcado de Moscú** (Russian Orthodox of Moscow); Parroquia de la Protección de La Santa Madre de Dios, Nepantla, Estado de México.

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

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

**Iglesia Católica Apostólica Ortodoxa** was founded in Xochistlahuaca, State of Guerrero, by Presbyter José Manuel Ojeda Alonso.

**Catedral Católica Apostólica Ortodoxa Independiente Mexicana de San Pascual Bailón** was founded by Bishop José de Jesús León Aguilar in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, State of Chiapas.

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

## Non-Christian religions

In the 2010 census, less than one percent of the population was affiliated with non-Christian religions. According to the 2010 census, the number of adherents reported by categories was as follows:

**Oriental origin** (18,185): Buddhist (14,062), Hindu (1,930), Other Orientals (2,193), as well as **Judaism** (67,476) and **Islam** (3,760).

**Religions by Ethnic Origin** (27,893): African-based religions (7,204), Amerindian religions (17,585), and other ethnic religions (3,050).

**Spiritualists** (35,995): Marian Trinitarian Spiritualists (9,215) and Other Spiritualists (36,780).

**Other religions** (14,493): Popular Cults (5,627), New Age and Esoteric Schools (5,534), and Other Religions (3,332).

However, official statistics based on self-identification during the 2010 census sometimes differ from the membership figures stated by religious groups.

According to our research, in Mexico there are at least 60 officially registered religious associations (ARs) that represent the following traditions.

## EASTERN RELIGIONS

### Buddhism

Approximately 14,000 Buddhists were reported in the 2010 national census of Mexico. One of six Tibet Houses in the world – Casa Tibet México – is located in Mexico City. It is used by the Dalai Lama and other leaders of **Tibetan Buddhism** to preserve and share Tibetan culture and spirituality. There are two institutions of the **Theravada Buddhism** tradition: the Theravada Buddhist Monastery and the Vipassana House of Meditation. There are at least 30 Buddhist groups in Mexico.

#### Japanese Buddhism

Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-Ha Mission of Mexico:

[http://www.budismoenmexico.com.mx/grupo\\_budista.php?ID=126&i=1](http://www.budismoenmexico.com.mx/grupo_budista.php?ID=126&i=1) /  
<http://international.hongwanji.or.jp/html/c2p8.html>

Ekoji Buddhist Temple - Jodo Shinshu Hongwanji-Ha Ekoji de México:

[https://wikivividly.com/wiki/Ekoji\\_Buddhist\\_Temple](https://wikivividly.com/wiki/Ekoji_Buddhist_Temple)

#### Japanese New Religions

Organización Espiritual Mundial Sukyo Mahikari México:

<https://www.facebook.com/sukyo.mahikari.la/>

Soka Gakkai of Mexico: <https://www.sgmex.org.mx/soka-gakkai-mexico>

## Hinduism

There are about 800 Asian-Indian families in Mexico, which include about 900 Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), most of whom are recent arrivals in the country. Many of those who have recently arrived are working for Tata Consultancy Services in Guadalajara, Querétaro and Mexico City. Mexico has a nondiscriminatory policy with regard to the granting of its citizenship. The spouse of a Mexican national would generally not face any problem in acquiring local citizenship. Although quite a few NRIs have married Mexicans, they have retained their Indian citizenship.

A Sai Baba temple (**Shirdi Sai Baba movement**) and a **Vaishnav** temple (a sect devoted to the worship of Vishnu) have been constructed in Mexico City by the Sangam Organization. Other Hindu organizations include: Iglesia del Señor Chaitanya / Sri Chaintanya Saraswat Ashram de Mexico; Suddha Dharma Mandalam Vidyalaya México; and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), known colloquially as the Hare Krishna movement or Hare Krishnas, is a **Gaudiya Vaishnava** Hindu religious organization.

## Sant Mat – Meditation in the Internal Light and Sound

<https://hermandadblanca.org/sant-mat-meditacion-en-la-luz-y-sonido-internos/>

**Sant Thakar Singh** (1929-2005) was a spiritual teacher in the Sant Mat lineage of Hindu religious leaders. He was initiated by Sant Kirpal Singh in 1965 and began work as a *Satguru* (“true guru”) himself in 1976, following the death of Kirpal Singh. Thakar Singh distributed what he paraphrased from Kirpal Singh as Science of the Soul: "a practical form of spirituality which is not connected to any particular religion, sect, or thought."

<http://sectasyreligiones.blogspot.com/2013/07/ciencia-del-alma-sant-tankar-singh.html>

**Eckankar of México** (The religion of the Light and Sound of God): <https://www.eckankar.org.mx/>

**Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness (MSIA) / Movimiento del Sendero Interno del Alma:**  
<https://www.msia.org/> / <https://www.msia.org/es/>

## Sikhism

Sikh Dharma of Mexico: <http://www.sikhdharma.org.mx/> / [http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikhs\\_in\\_Mexico](http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Sikhs_in_Mexico)

Sikh Center in Mexico City and Cancún: <http://www.sikhcentermexico.org/>

## MIDDLE-EASTERN RELIGIONS

### Judaism

*Marranos* are **Jews** who publicly converted to Christianity to avoid persecution in Spain but who retained their Jewish identity in private. They accompanied the Spaniards into Mexico in the 16<sup>th</sup> century; however, the present Jewish community was largely built upon migration from the USA early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The community was further enlarged by Jews from England and Germany, and two small groups from Syria, one from Damascus and a strict Orthodox group from Aleppo. The Jewish community in Mexico, one of the largest in Latin America, numbered 45,260

according to the 2000 census, with an estimated 22,000 Jews in Mexico City (DF), many of whom live in Delegación Miguel Hidalgo and Delegación Cuauhtémoc. According to the 2010 census, the Jewish community totaled approximately 67,500 persons, of which nearly 42,000 lived in Mexico City (DF) and the state of Mexico

The following Jewish religious associations are known to exist: Religión Judía de México (Delegación Cuauhtémoc, DF), Comunidad Ashkenazi de México (Delegación Cuauhtémoc, DF), Comunidad Sefaradí (Delegación Cuauhtémoc, DF), Centro Comunitario Nadjel Israel (Colonia Condesa, Delegación Cuauhtémoc, DF), Comunidad Bet-El de México (Colonia Polanco, Delegación Miguel Hidalgo, DF), Comunidad Maguen David (Colonia Polanco, Delegación Miguel Hidalgo, DF), Beth Israel Community Center (Colonia Lomas Chapultepec, Delegación Miguel Hidalgo, DF), Sociedad de Beneficencia Alianza Monte Sinaí (Naucalpan, State of Mexico), Comunidad Israelita de Guadalajara (Guadalajara, State of Jalisco), Centro Israelita de Monterrey (Monterrey, State of Nuevo León), and Centro Comunitario Ramat Shalom (Tecamachalco, State of Puebla).

## **Islam**

Although **Muslims** migrated to Mexico throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was not until the 1980s that organized Islamic worship became visible. In 1995, Mark (Omar) Weston, a convert to Islam, opened the **Islamic Cultural Center** in Mexico City as a meeting place for the Muslim community. Dozens of other small Islamic groups are known to exist throughout the country. Nearly half of the country's approximately 4,000 Muslims are concentrated in Mexico City and the state of Mexico. There is also a small Ahmadi Muslim population of several hundred living in Chiapas, most of whom are converts and of ethnic Tzotzil Maya origin.

## **Bahai Faith**

Members of the Bahá'í Faith visited Mexico during the early 1900s, and by 1937 a branch of the Bahá'í had become established in Mexico as a result of missionary work by Bahá'ís from the USA. In 2005, an estimated 37,900 Bahá'í resided in Mexico, with large communities in San Luis Potosi and Yucatán.

## **NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN RELIGIONS**

During the 1500s, an estimated 700 Native American tribal peoples (ethnolinguistic groups) resided in the land now comprising the modern nation of Mexico. Most of these groups had developed specific, complex religious belief systems based on *animism*. Several powerful empires ruled the region, particularly between 100 and 900 CE. Unique religious systems developed within the Olmec, Toltec, Mayan and Aztec Empires. By the early 1500s, the Aztec Empire controlled large portions of the Mexican territory. After the Spaniards arrived in Mexico, bringing the Catholic faith with them, the Indigenous religions experienced important changes that led to the exclusion of many deities in favor of one, the Christian God announced by the Spanish priests. However, far from being marginalized and forgotten, many ancient religious beliefs and practices were incorporated into the Mexican adaptation of the Catholic religion.

**“Popular religiosity” (syncretistic)** is practiced by a majority of the Hispanic population, which is also present among numerous **Amerindian religions (animist)** that have blended elements of Catholicism to create several varieties of popular religiosity. The Amerindian groups are scattered

throughout the national territory, with the largest concentration in the State of Oaxaca in southern Mexico. Religious shrines, images and sacred places form part of the religious landscape in Mexico, some of which are dedicated to the Virgin Mary (“la Virgen de Guadalupe”), the Christ Child, the Black Christ, Saint Death (“La Santa Muerte”) and revered “**folk saints and healers**,” such as the Niño Fidencio cult (José Fidencio Sintora Constantino, 1898-1938) in Guanajuato, and the Juan Soldado cult (Juan Castillo Morales) in Baja California. For further information, see: Scheffler, Lilian. *Magia y Brujería en México*. Ciudad de México, DF: Panorama Editorial, 1994.

**Animism.** The term “animism” was used by British anthropologist Sir Edward Tylor (1832-1917) to denote a belief in spirit beings, which have personalities but lack physical bodies, and that are found in a variety of forms: human and animal souls, witches, demons, ghosts, goblins, angels and other forms. Many of the so-called “primitive peoples” of the world (as defined traditionally by anthropologists) believe that man can control these supernatural beings by some form of manipulation: magic potions or rituals, chants, prayers, sacrifices, etc. The person (male or female) who has special gifts or training to control the supernatural world is called the shaman, witch-doctor, sorcerer or priest, who may practice “white magic” (for doing good) or “black magic” (for doing evil) as the case may warrant.

In the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, where Roman Catholicism is often the predominant modern religious system in the former Spanish, Portuguese and French colonies, Catholicism is often mixed with traditional religious systems (native American Indian belief systems or imported religious systems from Africa that accompanied the slave trade), but the common ingredient is animism.

Sources: <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/ency/Tylor.htm> /

<http://www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/a/animism.htm>

**Curanderismo (herbal healing)** is the use of natural or traditional medicine that developed among the Native American Indian peoples over thousands of years of isolated existence; the “curandero” is an herbal healer, who uses “white magic” to cure illness (physical, emotional and spiritual) by means of natural herbs and potions; throughout the Americas, both in urban and rural areas, one can find shops of herbalists that prescribe and sell herbal medicine, principally within Native American, Hispanic and Afro-Caribbean communities; see: <http://www.cuandero.com/>

**Shamanism.** The **shaman** (*chamán*) is a specialist in communicating with the spirit world and in efforts to control them (“white magic”) for the benefit of the community: to discern the future, to guarantee a good harvest, to protect people from illness and other natural forces, etc. However, “black magic” may be used depending on the situation; “black magic” is practiced by means of ceremonies, rites, manipulations and potions that may be necessary to attack an enemy and cause him physical, emotional and/or spiritual harm. This was developed as a means of social control among the various Native American Indian groups, and it continues to survive today, especially among rural and tribal populations; see: <http://www.deoxy.org/shaman.htm> / <http://www.shamanism.org> / <http://alaskan.com/docs/shamanism.html> / <http://www.deoxy.org/rushingw.htm> / <http://www.corazon.es.org/apologetica/practicas/hechiceria.htm>

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## *A War of Witches*

*A Journey into the Underworld of the Contemporary Aztecs*  
by Timothy J. Knab (first published by HarperOne in 1995)

### A KIRKUS REVIEW

Timothy J. Knab successfully bridges ancient and modern realities in this latest addition to the fast-growing genre of anthropologist-turned-shaman's-apprentice tales. While doing fieldwork in San Martín, Mexico, Knab overhears a conversation in which his informant, Don Inocente, offers to kill a woman's son-in-law with black magic. Knab is startled to realize that this man is a brujo (witch) as well as a curandero (healer). When his other informant, Doña Rubia, falls ill, she determines that her soul has been stolen by witches and implores Knab to help her regain it. He is eventually drawn into the reality of the shamans where he learns to enter the underworld, Talocán, through dreams and to navigate its cities with the help of a nagual, an animal spirit. He learns that every nagual is both a guide and a potential lethal weapon of sorcery. The opossum, for example, can lead one quickly through the treetops of the underworld, while its dried tail can be driven through a victim's eye and into the brain. Under Doña Rubia's tutelage, Knab learns the prayers and rituals necessary to walk the "good path" of the underworld and incorporates the metaphors of the ancient Aztecs into his own daily existence. When a family in Mexico City asks him to cure their daughter or "soul loss," Knab finds the father a job, reunites the daughter with her grand-mothers, and performs the shamanistic ceremonies necessary to free the girl's soul from below. The book's title derives from a bizarre episode in the history of San Martín in which more than 20 people were killed by witches during a land dispute resolved only when a witch was publicly crucified and the army stepped in and arrested the mayor. A spellbinding story for the general reader, particularly those with an interest in New Age philosophy or the occult.

Source: <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/timothy-j-knab/a-war-of-witches/>

### **Catemaco: Mexico's cradle of sorcery and witchcraft**

By Diodora Bucur (3 March 2010)

Magic-filled stories abound in Mexico: *curanderos* claiming to cure illness with herbs and special oils and sorcerers insisting they can bring back straying spouses or cast evil spells on enemies. A Mexican union leader travelling to Africa to partake in a "black magic" ritual sacrificing a lion in hopes of gaining political ground back home, and Mexican presidents seeking witch doctors' guidance on public matters. As unfathomable as these stories may seem to some, they cut to the heart of spirituality in Mexico, where many — regardless of their socioeconomic status — give credence to the power of *brujeria* (sorcery), whether good or evil.

The city of Catemaco (Veracruz), Mexico's capital of sorcery, lies at the spiritual crossroads of the Catholic faith (Catholic saints are generally invoked during prayers) and pre-Hispanic indigenous rites, an uncomfortable union that eventually led to the birth of today's witchcraft practices. The small Veracruz town of 35,000 located in the Los Tuxtla region is the host of the annual *Congreso Nacional de Brujos de Catemaco*, officially known as *Ritos, Ceremonias y Artesanías Mágicas* (Magical Rituals, Ceremonies and Handicrafts) since 2008, when the name was changed in the wake of wide condemnation from the Catholic Church, which rejects the idea of a sorcerers' gathering.

The three-day event begins at midnight on the first Friday of every March and features about 200 shamans, healers, herbalists, psychics and fortune tellers, as well as thousands of visitors from across the country, as well as many scam artists.

Adapted from: <http://www.mexconnect.com/articles/3605-catemaco-mexico-s-cradle-of-sorcery-and-witchcraft>

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**Mexican Folk Saints / Healers.** In many ways the belief in “folk saints” allows for a sort of cafeteria-style Catholicism that incorporates *healing* (physical, emotional and spiritual), *spiritualism* (via mediums who allegedly channel spiritual beings) and *shamanism* (magic and witchcraft) just like other practitioners claim to do in the modern New Age movement.

These popular “saints,” who are not recognized officially by the Roman Catholic Church, are believed to have special powers to heal the sick and perform other miracles, even after their death. These folk healers are revered and honored by devotees, who offer special prayers and celebrations in the hope that the “spirit” of the deceased healer will respond to their requests; see the examples listed below: <http://vpea.utb.edu/folk/folksaints.html> / [http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0094-0496\(198802\)15%3A1%3C136%3ATMOHCI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E/](http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0094-0496(198802)15%3A1%3C136%3ATMOHCI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E/) <http://www.collegenews.org/x4400.xml>

Also, see Dr. Frank Graziano’s book on “folk saints” at: <http://www.culturesofdevotion.com/>

**One of the most popular folk saints is *José Fidencio Síntora Constantino***, known as *El Niño Fidencio*, who was born on 18 November 1898, in Irámuco, State of Guanajuato (central region) and died in Espinazo in 1938. He became known to the Mexican press in 1928, which coincided with a period of turmoil known as the Cristero War (1926-1929), when Catholics were persecuted during the administration of President Plutarco Elías Calles. *El Niño Fidencio*, who is popularly identified with the Christ Child, is reported to have received his calling as a child and later, as a young man, he received the gift of healing and achieved fame as a *curandero*, using herbal remedies to allegedly cure the sick from a variety of ailments.

In 1921, at age 23, he moved to Espinazo, a small town in the State of Nuevo León, located near the large city of Monterrey. There, he is said to have employed a variety of healing methods and his cures were sometimes quite unorthodox, such as rolling people in the dirt to heal them and getting the mentally ill to swing in circles in a giant swing that he invented; he sometimes performed surgery using shards of glass and claimed that his gift had come from God. His followers claim that Fidencio had numerous supernatural experiences, such as revelations and visions, which added to his notoriety. At the height of his popularity during the 1930s, Fidencio led a colony of about 10,000 followers in Espinazo who praised his healing ability, whereas his detractors accused him of being a spiritualist medium and of using magic (witchcraft) to deceive people. A small army of faithful followers, called the Red Brigade, protected Fidencio from constant attacks by the press, the medical community, the government and those associated with the Catholic Church. After Fidencio’s death in 1938, he continued to have a great cult following, especially in northern Mexico and southwestern USA. Yearly, thousands of his followers travel to the village of Espinazo to call on his spirit and seek similar cures and miraculous manifestations. There are some 800 curanderos registered in the church and small chapels in his honor in the north of Mexico and south of Texas and California) – <http://rcadena.com/ensayos/Fidencio.htm> / <http://unix.utb.edu/~vpea/fidencio.html> / <http://unix.utb.edu/cgi-bin/netforum/dean/a/3--45/> / <http://www.cybersepa.org.mx/inquietud/revista100/fidencio.html> / <http://vpea.utb.edu/elnino/ninointernetenlaces.html>

**The Cult of Juan Soldado** (Tijuana, Mexico: Juan Castillo Morales). As the story goes, a mob handed over this poor soldier to be killed for a murder he allegedly committed in February 1938,

realizing too late that he had been framed by a superior who had actually done the crime. Burdened with guilt, people placed stones at his unmarked grave and soon began talking about the miracles he had performed; affectionately known as "Juan Soldado," or Soldier John, he was later adopted as the unofficial patron saint of the impoverished Mexicans who sneak illegally into the USA in search of a better life: [http://www.tij.uia.mx/elbordo/vol04/bordo4\\_soldado.html](http://www.tij.uia.mx/elbordo/vol04/bordo4_soldado.html) / <http://www.zermeno.com/J.C.Morales.html>

**Another folk saint who has been popularized throughout Mexico is “La Santa Muerte.”** Her larger-than-life statue, which devotees keep in glass boxes at roadside sanctuaries, is usually draped in lace-trimmed satin; her hooded, grinning skull is crowned with a rhinestone tiara, and her bony fingers that protrude from beneath her cloak are adorned with glittering rings. Stories of prayers answered and miracles performed have fueled the spread of this popular cult, whose worship is said to date back only two generations among rural villages in the mid-1960s. Prisoners, petty thieves, corrupt policemen and powerful drug traffickers are believed to be devotees of *La Santa Muerte*, who appeals to the faith of simple working-class Mexicans who daily face hunger, injustice, corruption and crime in some of Mexico's toughest neighborhoods.

Santa Muerte is a Mexican folk saint that personifies death in the form a female skeleton. Whether as a votive candle, gold medallion, or statue, she is depicted as a Grim Reapress, wielding the same scythe and wearing a shroud similar to that of the Grim Reaper male forebear. Unlike canonized Catholics, folk saints are spirits of deceased Latin American women and men who are considered holy for their miracle working powers. What really distinguishes the Bony Lady, however, from the regional folk saints is that for most devotees she is the personification of death itself and not of a real woman who lived and died on Mexican soil. Adapted from:

<http://folklorethursday.com/folklife/meet-mexicos-trinity-of-death-day-of-the-dead-santa-muerte-and-catrina-calavera/>

Yearly, there is a special celebration in honor of the dead, called “*Culto a los Muertos*,” which is celebrated from 21 October to 2 November. In many villages, towns and cities across the country, Mexican peasants take a variety of offerings – flowers, food, drink, candles, etc. – to a family altar in their homes or to the graveside of their dead relatives, and there is a celebration with music, dances, masks and other symbols of death, and fireworks in their honor.

**According to the 2010 national census, there were only 27,839 adherents of Native American religions.**

A revitalization movement among Amerindian tribes in the northern and central regions of Mexico (along the western Sierra Madre mountain range) is called the **Peyote religion**, due to its use of the peyote cactus, which is a psychotropical plant that produces “altered states of consciousness” during shamanic rituals. According to authoritative sources, this practice dates to about 7,000 BCE in Mexico. The **Native American Church of Itzachilatlan** was founded by Aurelio Dias Tepankai in Yoricostio, Michoacán. Similar religious organizations exist in the USA, which have blended Christianity with the Peyote religion, such as the Native American Church in North America with headquarters in Box Elder, Montana.

**Francisco Jiménez** (a.k.a. Tlakael) is a former member of the *Movimiento Confederado Restaurador de las Culturas del Anauak* (Confederate Movement Restorer of the Cultures of the Anauak). Jiménez claims that, in 1943, he was one of the members of a group of youth (along with Pablo F. García, José González Rodríguez, Rodolfo Nieva López, Aurora Morales, and Federico

Rojas) who received the mandate of “Cuauhtémoc” – the last Aztec ruler (*tlatoani*) of Tenochtitlan (a large Mexica city-state in what is now the center of Mexico City) from 1520 to 1521 – from the council of elders from Colhua in Xochimilco. Cuauhtémoc means "one who has descended like an eagle."

**Jiménez was the supreme director of In Kaltonal** ("La casa del sol," *Iglesia del Movimiento de la Mexicayotl*, headquartered in the city of Coacalco de Berriozábal, State of Mexico), which was the first Indigenous spiritual organization to be recognized by the government of Mexico in 1993. He was also one of the first Mexicanists to reject the official history of Pre-Cuauhtémoc Mexico, arguing that it is simply a discourse based on the lies of the conquerors and Catholic priests who burned indigenous books containing the real records. He also rejects the claims by some anthropologists and archaeologists who say they are influenced to perpetuate these lies held by their respective governments. *Jiménez incorporated the Lakota sun dance, sacred pipe rituals, vision quest, and sweat lodges into his practice of Mexicayotl and also promoted the existence of extraterrestrials and other dimensions.*

Sources: <http://movimientoconfederado.com/Inicio.html/>  
<http://www.calmecacanahuac.com/blog/uncategorized/a-brief-history-of-the-mexicayotl-movement-by-itztli-ehecat/>

**What is known today as the Mexicayotl movement** was initiated by well-educated Nahuatl speakers during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917) and flourished under the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). Nahuatl, known historically as Aztec, is a language or group of languages of the Uto-Aztecan language family. Varieties of Nahuatl are spoken by about 1.7 million Nahuatl peoples, most of whom live in central Mexico. Nahuatl has been spoken in central Mexico since at least the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE. President Cárdenas supported Indigenous education in Mexico and many of the founders of the movement worked in the schools he funded.

Throughout the years this movement has been referred to by various names including Mexicayotl, Mexicanidad, Neoaztekatl, Aztekayotl, and Nativismo. The Mexicayotl movement is nationalistic in nature and strives to reject European influence along with the promotion of what the original founders claim is the original form of Nahuatl. Many people, since the movement was created in the 1920s, have further developed the work of these progenitors. The claims of many of the members of Mexicayotl are problematic because they are purported to be based on oral tradition and as a result they can't always be cross-referenced with other sources.

The founder of Mexicayotl was *Juan Luis Cárdenas*. In 1920, he formed the organization *Ueyi Tlatekpanaliztli Ikniuhtik Aztekatl* with the primary goal of spreading what he considered to be a pure form of Nahuatl. Together with Fidencio Villanueva Rojas, he also worked with the *Movimiento Confederado Restaurador de las Culturas del Anauak* and Proyecto Aztekatl. At that time, Rojas and Cárdenas preferred to use *Azteka* rather than the more recent *Mexica*.

The *Movimiento Confederado Restaurador de las Culturas del Anauak* was co-founded by *Ezequiel Linares Moctezuma* in the 1950s. Although earlier organizations were founded by native Mexicans, the *Movimiento Confederado Restaurador de las Culturas del Anauak* began to incorporate urban mestizos. Moctezuma also founded the *Pro-Lengua Nahuatl Mariano Jacobo Rojas* and *Mexihkatlahtolkalli*.

Estanislao Ramírez Ruiz co-founded the *Movimiento Confederado Restaurador de las Culturas del Anauak* and was also a member of the *Ueyi Tlatekpanaliztli Ikniuhtik Aztekatl*, *Aztekatlahtolmelauhkan*, and the *Kalmekak de Tláhuac*. Ruiz claimed he was a direct descendant of the *tlatoani Nezahualcoyotl*. In 1925, he became a professor of physics and chemistry. He spent many years disseminating the teaching of Nahuatl, which he learned from his parents. In

1951, he ventured into the field of archaeology to participate in approximately 157 experiments to determine the authenticity of the supposed remains of Cuauhtémoc discovered in 1949 by Eualalia Guzmán.

*Fidencio Villanueva Rojas* was a member of *Ueyi Tlatekpanaliztli Ikniuhtik Aztekatl* and eventually became a professor. Later he became a leading member of the *Gran Fraternidad de Amigos Aztekah*. Along with the *Academia de la Lengua Aztekatl*, Rojas taught what he said was the pure form of Nahuatl that was spoken in Tenochtitlan.

In addition to the leaders of the aforementioned organizations, there were many more prominent members who contributed greatly to the development of *Mexicayotl* in the early years, including Nieva Rodolfo López, Ignacio Romero Vargas Yturbide, Eualalia Guzmán and Paula Gómez Alonzo. Many of the members of the early Neo-Aztekah groups were forced to leave their villages due to the conflict between the Zapatistas and the Carrancistas, which further spread their philosophy and activities.

In the years since the establishment of the first *Mexicayotl* organizations under the presidency of Cárdenas, many members have worked to disseminate the original message throughout Mexico and the USA. This original message has changed throughout this time period due to various influences.

Sources: <http://www.calmecacanahuac.com/blog/uncategorized/a-brief-history-of-the-mexicayotl-movement-by-itztli-ehecat/> / <http://www.ird.fr/relietrans/?Mexicayotl-mouvement-de-la&lang=es>

## AFRO-AMERICAN DERIVED RELIGIONS

Among the Afro-American population of Mexico, elements of African-derived religions from the Caribbean and Central America may exist, such as Vodou (Haiti), Santería (Puerto Rico and Cuba), Myal-Obeah and Rastafarianism (Jamaica and other parts of the British West Indies).

**Afro-Mexicans** (*afrodescendientes*) are Mexicans who have both a predominant heritage from Sub-Saharan Africa and identify as such. As a single population, “Afro-Mexican” includes individuals descended from Spanish colonial-era transatlantic African slaves brought to Mexico, as well as others of more recent immigrant African descent, including Afro-descended persons from neighboring English, French and Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean and Central America, and to a lesser extent to recent immigrants directly from Africa.

Afro-Mexicans are largely concentrated in specific, largely isolated communities, including *the Costa Chica region of Oaxaca*, the neighboring states of Guerrero and Veracruz, and in some cities in northern Mexico. Escaping slavery, some refugee African slaves settled in Costa Chica, as the region was isolated and relatively inhospitable. They were able to maintain their freedom and intermixed with indigenous peoples where they were enculturated into Native American religions (based in animism).

Sources: <https://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2018/01/11/exploring-the-history-of-afro-mexicans/> / <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/afro-mexicans/> / <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afro-Mexicans>

**Santería.** As far as the Mexican case is concerned, Juárez (2007) has studied the presence of Cuban Santería through the establishment of Cubans in Mexico City, highlighting three historical stages. The first began "in the forties and fifties (with) the cultural industries of music and film" (Ibid: 282), taking as reference the first anchors of Cubans in the country. The second began in 1959

with "the migratory waves of Cubans to the United States ... In the eighties, both its practitioners and those who resorted to consulting the santeros were increasing ... at the end of this decade the scandal of the called satanic narco of Matamoros makes Santería national news "(Ibid). The third, is part of the nineties from the "disclosure and visibility particularly manifest and much wider Santería in the capital and its conurbation areas and also, although to a lesser extent, in other states of the country" (Ibid). Both in Veracruz and Guadalajara and other cities in Mexico, Santería has been easily established from the formation of communities of Cuban migrants, the spread of religion in the media and the commercialization of their own elements of Santería in popular markets and stores.

**Adapted from:** Saldívar Arellano, Juan Manuel, "La nebulosa del afro-americanismo religioso: el caso de la santería en Catemaco, Veracruz, México" in La Salle Victoria, *Revista de la Investigación*, julio-diciembre 2012; citation in text: Juárez Huet, Nahayeilli Beatriz. "Un pedacito de Dios en casa. Transnacionalización, relocalización y práctica de la santería en la ciudad de México." Tesis doctoral, Centro de Antropología, El Colegio de Michoacán, Zamora, México, 2007. This document was later published as: *Un pedacito de Dios en casa. Circulación transnacional, relocalización y praxis de la santería en la ciudad de México*. Autor: Nahayeilli Beatriz Juárez Huet. Coedición: Publicaciones de la Casa Chata (CIESAS) y El Colegio de Michoacán, 2014.

**Also see:** "Santería cubana en la ciudad de México: estudio de caso en una colonia popular al sur de la ciudad de México" by Diana Cano Miranda in *Revista Brasileira do Caribe*, Vol. 17, núm. 33, julio-diciembre, 2016, (pp. 161-186), Universidade Federal do Maranhão, São Luís, Brasil:  
<https://www.redalyc.org/pdf/1591/159149454009.pdf>

### **Relocalization Processes of Santería in Mexico: Some Ethnographic Examples**

Abstract. In Mexico, adherence to Santería as a choice of religious belief began to spread in the 1970s, if not earlier, though that was but an incipient diffusion with its epicenter in Mexico City and the surrounding metropolitan area. Over the past twenty years, however, the presence of Santería has gained new strength and extended further, together with certain complementary uses and resignifications of its symbolic universe. This essay examines some of the main tendencies in Santería's interactions and complementarities with other forms of religiosity, especially in Mexico's capital city, based on ethnographic examples that make it possible to demonstrate that this religion has neither eliminated "old ways of understanding" the world, nor generated a "true transformation" of the religious beliefs among new adepts in Mexico. Rather, Santería operates from a field of complementarity and therapeutic logics linked to "divine agents."

Source: "Los procesos de relocalización de la Santería en México: algunos ejemplos etnográficos" by Nahayeilli B. Juárez Huet. Available at:

[https://www.academia.edu/6581953/los\\_procesos\\_de\\_relocalizaci%3%93n\\_de\\_la\\_santer%3%8da\\_en\\_m%3%89xico\\_algunos\\_ejemplos\\_etnogr%3%81ficos\\_1](https://www.academia.edu/6581953/los_procesos_de_relocalizaci%3%93n_de_la_santer%3%8da_en_m%3%89xico_algunos_ejemplos_etnogr%3%81ficos_1)

**Also see:** "Transnational networks and re-Africanization of Santería in Mexico City" by Nahayeilli B. Juárez Huet, Chapter 7 (pp. 165-189), in *Blackness and mestizaje in Mexico and Central America*, edited by Elisabeth Cunin and Odile Hoffmann. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2013. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/6581963/Transnational\\_networks\\_and\\_re-africanization\\_of\\_the\\_santer%C3%ADa\\_in\\_Mexico\\_City](https://www.academia.edu/6581963/Transnational_networks_and_re-africanization_of_the_santer%C3%ADa_in_Mexico_City)

## ANCIENT WISDOM TRADITIONS

These religious traditions are represented by **Ritual and Ceremonial Magic** groups; **Rosicrucianism**; **Freemasonry**; the **Grand Universal Fraternity** (headquarters in El Limon, Aragua, Venezuela); **GFU Network** (led by Jose Manuel Estrada Vasques, with headquarters in Morelos, Mexico); the **Universal Gnostic Movement of Mexico** (founded by Victor Manuel Gomez Rodríguez, known as “Samael Aun Weor” after 1956, with headquarters in Mexico City); the **International Gnostic Movement** (headquarters in Guadalajara, Mexico); the **Universal Christian Gnostic Church**; the **Gnostic Movement Cultural Association**; the **Quetzalcoatl Cultural Institute of Psycho-Analytical Anthropology** (Loreto, Zacatecas, Mexico); the **New Acropolis Cultural Association**; the **Cafh Foundation**; **Wicca**; and the **International Pagan Federation of Mexico**. Also, a variety of **Satanist** groups are known to exist in Mexico.

### Ritual and Ceremonial Magic groups

**The United Confederation of Autonomous & Independent Temples of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn / La Confederación Unida de Templos Autónomos e Independientes de la Orden Hermética de la Aurora Dorada.** There are many affiliated organizations around the world, including Argentina, Colombia, Honduras, **Mexico**, Paraguay, Spain, Uruguay, the USA and Venezuela: <http://www.golden-dawn.com.test.levonline.com/temple/index.jsp>

**Servants of the Light (SOL) School of Occult Science** is an Esoteric Movement or school of occult science (**Teaching the Mystical Qabalah**) based in Jersey, Channel Islands, UK. It was founded in 1971 by W. Ernest Butler (1898-1978), based on the Helios Course, which was set up by Butler, Gareth Knight (b. 1930) and John Hall of Helios Book Service, in 1965. Both Butler and Knight have written significant books on various aspects of the Western Mystery Tradition. Butler was succeeded as SOL's Director of Studies in 1976 by *Dolores Ashcroft-Nowick* (b. 1929), who has also written numerous books on esoteric subjects, including Tarot. Butler, Knight and Ashcroft-Nowicki had previously been initiated members of the *Fraternity of the Inner Light*, the *Inner Court of the Society of the Inner Light*, founded by “Dion Fortune” (her real name was Violet Mary Firth, 1890-1946). Butler was also an ordained priest in the *Liberal Catholic Church*. As well as in the UK, there are SOL Lodges in Australia, Canada, **Mexico**, Netherlands, Sweden, and the USA. SOL has 2,600 members in 23 countries.

Sources: <https://www.servantsofthelight.org/about-sol/history/> / <http://circulo-dorado.org/> / <http://what-when-how.com/religious-movements/servants-of-the-light-religious-movement/>

The affiliated SOL organization in Mexico is known as The Fraternity of the Golden Circle, a School of Mysteries and Sacred Sciences, founded in 1987. It teaches classroom and distance courses over the Internet around the world. Its teachings are based on the esoteric traditions of the Mystic Qabalah, the Initiatic Tarot of the Masters, Esoteric Astrology, Mental Alchemy and Ritual Magic.

**The Fraternity of the Golden Circle / La Fraternidad del Círculo Dorado (FCD)** emerged during the year 1986-1987 at the initiative of 12 men who, together under the ideal of expanding the Light, formed a group of study and teaching that they called "The Golden Circle." Its interest focused on the research and study of the spiritual teachings of the Western Mystery Tradition. In 1992, the group contacted the School of Alexandria through Servants of the Light (SOL), the English occult school founded by W. Ernest Butler and directed by Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki and Michael Nowicki. This initiated a process of assimilation and adaptation of SOL teachings, until

achieving the reception of the sacred fire, which allows it to be constituted as a Mystery School fully-contracted with the FCD Internal School: “It is part of the network of Lighthouses established by the Lords of Light in order to help the development and welfare of this planet, of human beings and of all living creatures that inhabit it.”

Source: <http://circulo-dorado.org/sobre-nosotros/origen/>

**Rosicrucian Family – Rosicrucianism** (ca. 1614, Germany; Valentín Andreae or Christian Rosencreutz, "The Order of the Rosae Crucis") - <http://www.crcsite.org/>

**The Ancient & Mystical Order of the Rosae Crucis (AMORC)** was founded in 1915, San Jose, California, by H. Spencer Lewis; there are affiliated centers in **Mexico**, Spain, Portugal, Costa Rica, Brazil and other countries of the Americas: <http://www.amorc.org>

**Fraternitas Rosicruciana Antigua (FRA)** was founded in 1921 in Germany by Arnaldo Krumm-Heller (1876-1949); a series of centers were established in Latin America beginning in 1927: Colombia in 1928, Argentina and Chile in 1929, Brazil and Spain in 1933, Peru in 1935, **Mexico in 1948**, Venezuela in 1952, Cuba in 1976, among others: <http://fratreslucis.netfirms.com/Fra.html>

## **The Masonic Lodge Movement or Freemasonry**

**Overview:** During the 1630s in the British Isles, this movement developed as a philosophical, esoteric and occult movement in Scotland and England, and during the XVII century as a British version of a revitalized **Gnosticism** in Germany, known as the **Rosicrucian movement**. Modern symbolic masonry (in contrast to operative masonry) has its roots in the post-Reformation revival of Gnostic thought and practice, which built on the heritage of the **Order of the Knights Templar**. The first Grand Masonic Lodge of London was publicly founded in 1717, and the definition of his basic regulations and statutes was contained in the “Anderson Constitution” of 1722-1723. In France, **Freemasonry** had a distinct political character and had a strong influence of the development of “democratic thought” as a foundation for the French Revolution and, later, for the Italian and American revolutions.

Its political perspective in Europe and Latin America challenged the Roman Catholic Church, which led to the condemnation of Freemasonry in the papal bulls of 1738 and 1751. In 1917, the Roman Catholic Church declared that “whatever Catholic who becomes affiliated with a Masonic lodge will be automatically excommunicated.” Since the 1730s, there have been Masonic lodges in the British colonies of North America, and many revolutionary leaders — such as Gen. George Washington and the majority of his high command and the politicians Thomas Jefferson and John Hancock, among others — were Masons. Also, in Latin America, the revolutionary leaders José de San Martín and Simón Bolívar, among others, in the XIX century were Masons.

**From Independence in 1821 and until 1982, it is believed that many Mexican leaders were members of Freemasonry.** When political independence arrived, the few existing lodges came out of hiding and multiplied. With the arrival of the Minister Plenipotentiary (i.e., envoy or ambassador) of the United States *Joel Roberts Poinsett* (1825-1830), the young Mexican Freemasonry became divided into two political movements, without really being defined. Poinsett promoted the creation of the **Lodges of York Rite**, close to the interests of the U.S. government. Those opposed to the realization of the interventionist theory of U.S. Manifest Destiny were the conservative Freemasons of the **Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite**, headed by *Manuel*

*Codorniu y Ferreras* (1788-1857), a Spanish military physician, educator and publisher from Barcelona, who promoted Freemasonry through his newspaper "El Sol." Thus, within the lodges of the York Rite were Freemasons related to American liberalism, while the "conservatives" remained close to the Scottish Rite lodges that were heirs of Spanish liberalism. Soon, the Mexican Freemasons, who did not identify with these two existing alternatives, choose a third way by founding, in 1834, a national rite called the **National Mexican Rite**, which aimed to create a "politico model of representation" and a clean government in Mexico.

**Editorial note:** See Appendice I for a History of Freemasonry in Mexico.

Today, Freemasonry plays an important role in the political and economic life of many leaders and nations, especially in the USA but also in Mexico. Although the Masons say that their movement is secular and not religious, its heritage as a secret society based on Gnostic and occult wisdom means that these societies are quasi-religious with a worldview that requires members to make a very serious commitment and an oath of loyalty to the brotherhood (men only):

<http://www.corazon.es/apologetica/grupos/masoneria.htm>

**What is Freemasonry?** "Essentially, it is a philosophic, philanthropic, mystical, esoteric and progressive institution," according to its leaders. It allows into its membership persons of all religious creeds, without distinction, as long as they are tolerant and respectful of the opinions expressed by others; this means that members cannot be fanatical, egotistical or superstitious. An essential requirement is to believe in the existence of a Supreme Being who is called "The Great Architect of the Universe"—Masons are monotheists.

<https://chevalieramsay.be/what-is-freemasonry/> /

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/order-of-Freemasons>

## OCCULT AND MAGICAL SOCIETIES ORIGINATING IN LATIN AMERICA

**Grand Universal Fraternity** [or Brotherhood], **Mission of the Order of Aquarius** – *La Gran Fraternidad Universal, Misión de la Orden de Aquarius* (known as GFU). Its headquarters are at an Ashram in El Limón, Aragua, Venezuela, founded in 1948 by the Frenchman *Serge Justinien Raynaud*, known as "Supreme Master Serge Raynaud de la Ferriere" (1916-1962). His first disciples were *José Manuel Estrada* (who was named General Director in 1950), Juan Victor Mejías, Alfonso Gil Colmenares and David Ferriz Olivares. There are affiliated groups in 26 countries of the Americas, Europe, Australia and Japan; it was reorganized as **Grand Universal Fraternity Foundation** after the founder's death in 1962: <http://www.gfufundacion.org/> / <http://www.sergeraynauddeferriere.net/index.php>

**Network - Red GFU.** Founded in 1961, Morelos, Mexico, by José Manuel Estrada Vásquez (1900-1982), the first disciple of Supreme Master Serge Raynaud. Estrada was a former member of the *Theosophical Society*, the *Ancient and Mystical Order of the Rosacruz* (AMORC), the *Masonic Order*, and the *Liberal Catholic Church* in Venezuela. The official name of this organization is: *Red Internacional de Organizaciones Culturales no Gubernamentales, Gran Fraternidad Universal* – REDGFU; the movement is also known as *GFU Línea Solar* and *Suprema Orden del Acuario* – SOA. Estrada's principal disciples are José Marcelli, José Michán and Carlos Michán: <http://www.redgfu.org/> / <http://www.soa.edu/> / <http://www.soa.edu/articulos06.htm>

**Colegio Iniciática “La Ferrière”** in Mexico City, Mexico; founded by Luis Murguía Alarid:  
<http://lmurguia.tripod.com/index.html>

**Augusta Gran Fraternidad Universal** was founded in 2000, both in Mexico and Venezuela, by Pedro Enciso and his disciples: <http://www.augustagfvenezuela.blogspot.com/>

**The Universal Gnostic Movement / El Movimiento Gnóstico Universal (MGU)** was founded in the 1950s in Mexico by *Víctor Manuel Gómez Rodríguez* (1916-1977), known as “**Samael Aun Weor**” after 1956, who was born in Santa Marta, Colombia. He moved to Mexico City in the 1950s and founded the MGU movement that has affiliated groups in many Latin American countries. Among his followers he is known as the “Venerable Master,” “Kalki Avatara of the Age of Aquarius,” the “Avatar of the White Horse” and other symbolic names. Master Samael named his successor in 1964, M. Gargha Kuichines; also, the **Movimiento Gnóstico Internacional** was founded in 1961 in Ciénaga Magdalena, Colombia, by Samael Aun Weor. The Mexican headquarters are located in the City of Guadalajara, Jalisco. The international headquarters are now in Bogotá, Colombia; the current leader is Teófilo Bustos García, known by his spiritual name since 1986, *V.M. Lakshmi*: [http://www.gnosis.org.br/emov\\_gno.htm/](http://www.gnosis.org.br/emov_gno.htm/)  
<http://iglesiagnostica.blogspot.com/> / <http://www.megaplaza.com/carlos/gnosis.htm/>  
<http://www.gnosis.org.br/indice.htm/> / <http://www.mgcu.org/default.htm/> /  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~gnosisla/SamaelAunWeor.html>

**Universal Gnostic Movement of Mexico / Movimiento Gnóstico Universal de México** was founded in the 1950s in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico; it has affiliates in many Latin American countries: <http://guadalajara.olx.com.mx/movimiento-gnostico-universal-iiid-72588577>

**Universal Christian Gnostic Church of the Christ Samael / Iglesia Gnóstica Cristiana Universal del Cristo Samael** was founded in June 1977 in Mexico City, DF, Mexico; it has branches in many countries, such as Colombia, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Honduras:  
<http://iglesiagnostica.com/>

**Gnostic Movement Cultural Association / Movimiento Gnóstico Asociación Cultural** (Toluca, Mexico): <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Thebes/4279/>

**Quetzalcoatl Cultural Institute of Anthropological Psychoanalysis / Instituto Cultural Quetzalcoatl de Antropología Psicoanalítico** (Loreto, Zacatecas, Mexico):  
<http://www.samaelgnosis.com/cursos/icq.htm>

**Gnostic Association for Anthropological and Scientific Studies / Asociación Gnóstica de Estudios de Antropología y Ciencias (AGEACAC)** (Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico; it has affiliates in many countries: <http://www.paginasprodigy.com/ageacac/default.htm>

**New Acropolis Cultural Association / Asociación Cultural Nueva Acrópolis**  
Founded in 1957 in Buenos Aires by Jorge Angel Livraga Rizzi and his wife, Ada Albrecht, this organization, with international headquarters in Buenos Aires, claims to have more than 10,000 members in more than 40 countries. Professor Livraga Rizzi was born in Buenos Aires in 1930 of Italian ancestry, and he died in 1991 in Madrid, Spain. He allegedly studied medicine, philosophy

and the history of art at a university in Buenos Aires and was the author of numerous books and articles: the study of ancient cultures and civilizations, novels, philosophical essays and reflections on the contemporary world, among others. His house in Buenos Aires is now a museum, maintained by the New Acropolis Cultural Association, where his achievements are honored and preserved. Some of Livraga's books and articles, as well as those of some of his disciples, are available in an electronic format on the Internet at: [www.acropolis.org](http://www.acropolis.org)

**New Acropolis is a post-Theosophical movement that combines elements from many sources:** theosophy, esoteric thought, alchemy, astrology, and oriental and Greek philosophy. Although, it claims to be a humanist organization, independent of political and religious ties, some of its former members in France have accused the organization of being right-wing and promoting Fascist and neo-Nazi ideas. The alleged use of paramilitary language, symbols and forms of organization, along with recent charges of brainwashing, have led to many criticisms of New Acropolis in Europe, especially in France, since the mid-1970s.

The New Acropolis movement promotes the idea of a universal "philosophy" or "tradition" upon which the world's different religions and esoteric traditions are based. However, it emphasizes Western rather than Eastern esotericism and particularly focuses on Greek philosophy in the tradition of Pythagoras and Plato, according to Introvigne.

The stated aim of New Acropolis is to help each member reach his or her Higher Self and to reclaim a higher consciousness that, while normally dormant, is preserved in the esoteric schools and accessible through symbols, the active use of imagination, the study of one's own dreams, and other techniques. The Higher Self, in turn, is a gateway to the Cosmic or Universal Self, described as a collective archetypal reality. When an adequate number of human beings achieve that Higher Self, the Universal Self may emerge as collective consciousness and may have important social and political implications. Although the society inspired by the collective consciousness of the archetypal Universal Self has been described in different ways throughout the history of the movement, it is certainly different from modern democracy. Indeed, the founder's criticism of contemporary democracy (quoting Plato and other authors) is often offered by critics of New Acropolis as evidence of the movement's "reactionary" or "fascist" attitude, although other texts by Livraga and his successors unequivocally condemn nazism, fascism and more recently the National Front in France." (Massimo Introvigne in "Defectors, Ordinary Leavetakers and Apostates.")

The New Acropolis website lists member organizations in the following countries: Argentina, Costa Rica, Japan, Paraguay, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey, USA and Venezuela. Also, similar organizations that use the same name are known to exist in **Mexico**, Colombia, Belgium and France.

Sources: New Acropolis Cultural Association website: [www.acropolis.org](http://www.acropolis.org)

Introvigne, Massimo, "Defectors, Ordinary Leavetakers and Apostates: A Quantitative Study of Former Members of New Acropolis in France," available on the CESNUR website at: [www.cesnur.org](http://www.cesnur.org)

**CAFH Foundation**, also known as **Order of the American Knights of Fire – Orden de los Caballeros Americanos del Fuego** was founded in 1937 in Buenos Aires, Argentina by *Santiago Bovisio* (1903-1962), who was born in northern Italy at Bergamo. His formal schooling was in the small town of Vigevano as well as at a monastery of the Passionists in Turin; he became a member of the **Order of the Knights of Fire** in Venice, Italy, allegedly under the tutorship of Master Giovanni Venieviene. Bovisio is alleged to have had contact with followers of Madame Blavatsky

and Rudolf Steiner who introduced him to Theosophic and Antroposophic philosophies; his early studies gave him a deep understanding of the Judeo-Christian tradition of asceticism-mysticism. Bovisio immigrated to Argentina at age 22 and sometime later founded the *Unión Savonaroliana* – named after Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498), an Italian Dominican priest who preached passionately about the Last Days, accompanied by visions and prophetic announcements of direct communications with God and the saints – in Buenos Aires. He also founded the *Universidad Espiritualista Argentina* in Rosario before establishing the **Sagrada Orden de los Caballeros Americanos del Fuego (IHES)**, similar to the European order but independent. Bovisio became the Knight Grand Master of CAFH; the 11<sup>th</sup> letter of the Hebrew alphabet, which for members of the order signifies: the force of the soul to achieve union with God, or the presence of the divine in each soul. The teaching of Cafh is centered on its vision of spiritual unfolding, of becoming, the great religions, and Judeo-Christian asceticism-mysticism, along with the traditional teachings of the esoteric schools concerning the astral and mental worlds. The asceticism-mysticism was based on prayer, meditation, self-control and the practice of upright actions, and in the early years was practiced by a small group of individuals in Buenos Aires. Bovisio died in an automobile accident in Argentina in 1962 at the age of 59; his successors were **Jorge Waxemberg** (1962-2005) and **José Luis Kutscherauer** (b. 2005); affiliated groups now exist in North and South America (including Mexico), Europe, the Middle East and Australia): <http://www.cafu.org>  
CAFH Mexico website: <https://www.cafh.org/index.php/es/actividades/mexico.html>

## NEO-PAGAN GROUPS

**Wicca** (1930s, New Forest, England); a school of magic founded by **Gerald Gardner** (1884–1964) that constitutes an amalgamation of rituals and practices said to be from ancient non-Christian societies in Europe, mixed with Gnostic, Masonic and Rosicrucian elements. The name “Wicca” was an invention of Gardner and his followers in 1954 in an effort to popularize and expand the movement after the British government, in 1951, eliminated the last laws that prohibited the practice of witchcraft. The Wicca movement spread to the USA in the 1960s after the publication of several of Gardner’s books:

[http://branwenscauldron.com/witch\\_wicca.html](http://branwenscauldron.com/witch_wicca.html) / <http://www.wicca.org/links/resources.html> /  
<http://wicca.net/links/churchs.html> / <http://www.omphalos.net/rants/index.htm> /  
[http://www.branwenscauldron.com/site\\_index.htm](http://www.branwenscauldron.com/site_index.htm) / <http://wicca.net/links/churchs.html>

### **Wiccan groups in Mexico:**

Brotherhood of the White Goddess / *Hermandad de la Diosa Blanca*: <https://www.hdiosablanca.org/>

Wicca Mexico School of Magic: <https://wicca.mx/>

Wiccan Circle of Mexico: <http://www.circulowicca.com/>

Wiccan Society of Mexico: <http://swiccamexicoac.org/WP/>

*Wicca Eléctrica México*: <http://wiccaeclecticamexico.mex.tl/frameset.php?url=/>

*La Escuela Wicca Diánica de México*: <http://ladiosaluna.blogspot.com/2011/08/escuela-wicca-dianica-de-mexico.html>

*La Cofradía Wicca de La Luna Azul*: <http://ladiosaluna.blogspot.com/2011/08/escuela-wicca-dianica-de-mexico.html>

## **Pagan Federation International (PFI) of Mexico**

The Pagan Federation (*Federación Pagana Internacional*) has been operating since 1971, as well as publishing "Pagan Dawn," which began in 1969 under the name of *The Wiccan*. The publication now has about 10,000 readers quarterly. These facts make PFI one of the oldest and largest organizations of its kind in Europe, with affiliated organizations worldwide:

<http://www.paganfederation.org/> / <http://mx.paganfederation.org/>

## **Satanist groups are known to exist in Mexico.**

In Mexico, the satanic sects, or secret organizations that worship the devil, registered an increase in the late 1990s, according to research carried out by the **Research Center of the Christian Institute of Mexico (ICM)**, over the past 12 years there has been a "Resurgence" of Satanism in Mexico. This research about the satanic presence in Mexico alerted the Roman Catholic's Mexican Episcopal Conference / *Conferencia Episcopal Mexicana* (CEM) about the problem. For example, in 1997, the exorcist and then Secretary General of CEM, *Bishop Ramón Godínez Flores*, warned that the satanic cult groups had a large presence on the northern border and that they were becoming increasingly abundant. According to Godínez Flores, the sects performed "black masses" in which they sacrificed human beings and committed other serious immoral acts, in addition to using sacred hosts and crosses.

**According to the ICM, Satanism is classified as:** "a religion centered on worship and devotion to Satan or Lucifer. Satanism is a belief system that expresses in symbols, rituals, liturgies and is based on traditions, doctrines and books considered sacred by their followers. In this belief system, the central character that is worshiped is Satan."

Sources: <https://culturacolectiva.com/historia/estas-son-las-sectas-satanicas-que-existen-en-mexico/> / [http://www.sectas.org/sectas\\_satanicas.asp](http://www.sectas.org/sectas_satanicas.asp)

## **PSYCHIC-SPIRITUALIST-NEW AGE-UFO TRADITIONS**

The government's Religious Associations (ARs) database includes 27 **Spiritualist** associations, several **Theosophical** groups, the **Church of Scientology**, the **Unification Church** (Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, among others.

**Mysticism and Occult practices in Mexico:** <https://masdemx.com/category/misticismo/> / <https://masdemx.com/?s=espirita/> / <https://masdemx.com/2016/06/la-magia-de-mexico-que-inspiro-al-ocultismo/>

## **Psychic - Spiritualist (Spiritist)**

**Overview:** Adherents have a fundamental belief that living human beings today can communicate with the dead through "gifted individuals" known as mediums, clairvoyants, psychics and metaphysicals. **Emanuel Swedenborg** (1688-1772) was the first medium of importance in modern times. The **Fox sisters**, Catharine and Margaretta, reported Spiritist or Spiritualist phenomena (the former term is used more frequently in Europe) in Hydesville, New York, in 1847-1850, and later published their own experiences. **Baron Ludwig von Guldenstrubbe** in France began to have his own Spiritist experiences in 1850. **Hypolyte Léon Denizard Rivail**, known internationally as "**Allan Kardec**" (1804-1869), was the "father of the Spiritist movement" in France and Europe; since 1856, his books, translated into many languages, have had a strong influence on the develop-

ment of this movement around the world, especially in Mexico, Brazil and Argentina. Kardec taught “**reincarnation**” as an essential element of his philosophy; the Spiritualist movement in the USA is similar to the European variety but does not accept the teaching on reincarnation:

<http://www.spiritwritings.com/kardec.html> / [http://www.wix.com/puerto\\_rico/eeak/](http://www.wix.com/puerto_rico/eeak/)  
<http://www.spiritwritings.com/kardecspiritstoc.html>

**Allan Kardec** (France) defined “Spiritism” as “the science that studies the origin, nature and destiny of the human spirit and its relationship with the corporal world,” while the **National Association of Spiritualist Churches** (USA) defines “Spiritualism” as “the science, philosophy and religion of continued life, based on the demonstrable fact that mediums can and do communicate with those who live in the spirit world.” The heart of Spiritualism is the “**séance**” by means of which the medium allegedly provides his/her clients with a variety of Spiritualist phenomenon (such as the levitation of objects and the materialization of the spirits), and the “spirit guide” speaks through the mouth of the medium in a **trance state** to communicate messages from the dead or other spirits to family members or friends present in the session, according to testimonials from followers of this movement.

Also, we have included here groups that practice “**channeling**,” whose leaders received “messages” and “revelations” from other spiritual beings according to their own testimony, before the birth of the New Age movement in the 1950s.

**For further information, see the following Internet links:**

<http://www.metareligion.com/Espiritualismo/espiritualismo.htm> /  
<http://www.corazones.org/apologetica/practicas/espiritismo.htm> /  
<http://www.croydonspiritualistchurch.org.uk/history.htm> /  
<http://www.lighthousepiritualcentre.ca/churches.html>

**Editorial note:** See Appendice II, A History of Spiritism in Mexico.

**The Spiritist Council of Mexico** / *El Consejo Espírita de México* (COEM), founded in 1872, is composed of Spiritist associations, groups and federations throughout the country. The COEM is affiliated with the Executive Commission of the International Spiritist Council / *Comisión Ejecutiva del Consejo Espírita Internacional* (CEI). COEM has its headquarters at Torres Adalid #1957 Interior 2, Colonia Narvarte, Delegación Benito Juárez, C.P. 03020, Ciudad de México.

<http://www.consejoespiritademexico.org/> /  
<https://masdemx.com/2016/03/la-curiosa-sociedad-espiritista-de-la-republica-mexicana/>

**International Spiritist Council** / *Conselho Espírita Internacional* (CEI) was founded in 1992 in Brasilia, Brazil; it is an organization that resulted from the unification, on a worldwide scale, of representative associations from Spiritist movements within the various countries:

<http://intercei.com/acoes-federativas/> / <http://www.spiritist.org/site/index.php/en>

**Member organizations include the following:**

Argentina: Confederación Espiritista Argentina  
Brazil: Federação Espírita Brasileira  
Belgium: Union Spirite Belge  
Colombia: Confederación Espiritista Colombiana – CONFECOL  
France: Union Spirite Française et Francophone

Guatemala: Cadena Heliosófica Guatemalteca  
 Italy: Centro Italiano Studi Spiritici Allan Kardec  
 Japan: Comunhão Espírita Cristã Francisco Cândido Xavier  
**Mexico: Consejo Espírita de México**  
 Norway: Gruppen for Spiritistiske Studier Allan Kardec  
 Paraguay: Centro de Filosofia Espiritista Paraguayo  
 Peru: Federación Espirita del Perú – FEPERU  
 Portugal: Federação Espírita Portuguesa  
 Puerto Rico: Confederación de los Espiritistas de Puerto Rico  
 Spain: Federación Espirita Española  
 Sweden: Svenska Spiritistiska Förbundet Uniao Espirita Sueca  
 United Kingdom: British Union of Spiritist Societies  
 United States of America: United States Spiritist Council  
 Uruguay: Federación Espírita Uruguaya

**Marian Trinitarian Spiritualism** / *Espiritualismo Trinitario Mariano* is a Mexican national religious tradition, with at least 47 registered associations, which blends Catholicism with Spiritualism (communication with the dead through the use of mediums and séances). It was founded by *Roque Jacinto Rojas Esparza* (1812-1869) in Mexico City in 1866. Rojas allegedly received a message from the biblical prophet Elijah (*Elías* in Spanish), who named him “the prophet of the First Period.” Rojas and his followers wrote the Third Testament between 1866 and 1950, which explains the concepts of the movement and the prophecies of the Latter Days.

After Rojas died, in 1969, *Damiana Oviedo* became the spiritual leader of the movement, which divided into various groups: **Iglesia Mexicana Patriarca Elías, Cábala Esoterica del Saber Asuncionista, Sello Supremo del Dios Vivo, Iglesia Filosófica Asuncionista, Iglesia Purificada Elías, Evangelismo Eliano, Roquismo, Iglesia del Sexto Sello, Eliasismo Partriarcalista**, etc. The concept of the trinity is formed by Moses, Jesus Christ and Roque Rojas; homage to the Virgin Mary is directed to Damiana Oviedo as the prophetess of the New Age. These groups are known today as the **Prophet Elijah (Elias) movement** with at least 47 registered religious associations in 2009. Source: <http://144000.net/etm/faqetm.htm>

**Also see:** “Relación entre el espiritualismo trinitario mariano y la santería en México” by Gabriela Castillo Terán in *Estudios sociales y humanísticos. Miradas múltiples* (pp. 107-131), Ángel Alejandro Gutiérrez Portillo, Coordinador. Tabasco, México: Universidad Juárez Autónoma de Tabasco y Altres Costa-Amic Editores, 2018:

[https://www.academia.edu/38381052/GABRIELA\\_CASTILLO\\_Relaci%C3%B3n\\_entre\\_el\\_Espiritualismo\\_y\\_la\\_Santer%C3%ADa.pdf](https://www.academia.edu/38381052/GABRIELA_CASTILLO_Relaci%C3%B3n_entre_el_Espiritualismo_y_la_Santer%C3%ADa.pdf)

## Theosophical Groups

The first circles of theosophical students in Mexico came out of the spiritualistic groups that flourished throughout the capital Mexico City towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1906, the first Mexican lodge named “Aura” was founded as part of the Cuban Section of the Theosophical Society (TS).

Between 1900 and 1920 the following lodges were founded: “Mayab” (1908) and “Zammá” (1909) in Mérida, Yucatán; “Apolonio de Tyana” (1915) in Veracruz; “Mercury” (1917), “Teocitlali” (1917) and “Sirius” (1918) in Mexico City. Together with the Mother Lodge “Aura,” these formed the Mexican Section of the Theosophical Society.

The pioneers of the theosophical movement in Mexico were, among others, the following members: José Romano Garro, Roberto R. Rivera, Daniel Eguiarte, Joaquín Valadez Zamudio, Adolfo de la Peña Gil, José Romano Muñoz, Consuelo R. de Aldag, Agustín Servín de la Mora, Enrique Guzmán, Guillermo Werner, Josefa Díaz de Obeso, the sisters Luz and Esperanza Balmaceda, Soledad Rivera, Guadalupe G. de Josef and the sisters Sara, Elena and Nohemí Salinas.

The Mexican Section obtained recognition from the **International Theosophical Society** on the 12th of November 1919, having its headquarters at 28 Calle Iturbide — in the heart of the historical center of Mexico City — for almost 50 years and moved to its present premises at Ignacio Mariscal 126 in the 1970s, very close to this historic quarter.

Since its foundation, the Mexican Section has experienced changes as some lodges failed and other arose to take their place. In 2006, the Mexican Section was formed by the following seventeen lodges: Alpha, Harmony, Atma-Vidya, Aura, Veracruz City, Evolution, Fraternity and Perseverance, HPB, White Lotus, Light of the West, Morya, Glorious Presence, Quetzalcoatl, Solomon, Siryo, Sun and Unity; with three study centers “Isis Urania,” “Puchkara” and “Annie Besant.” Total membership: 263 active members from all around the country: Baja California, Coahuila, Jalisco, Morelos, Puebla, Tamaulipas, Veracruz and the Federal District.

Since its foundation, the Mexican Section has witnessed a healthy renewal of its team of directors. After Agustín Garza Galindo, first General Secretary, the following members respectively succeeded in the office: José Romano Muñoz, Agustín Servín de la Mora, David Cervera, Adolfo de la Peña Gil, Arturo Vado López, Rosa Olmedo, Luis Medina Barrera. In more recent years this office was held by Alfonso Morales, Isaac Jauli, Carlos López, Lissette Arroyo, and Dr. Hugo Gerardo Figueroa Salinas Mosqueda (2006).

Adapted from: [http://theosophy.ph/encyclo/index.php?title=Mexico, Theosophy\\_in](http://theosophy.ph/encyclo/index.php?title=Mexico, Theosophy_in)

## The New Age Movement

**General Overview:** Although the New Age Movement did not become a dominant force in the North American psychic community until the 1980s, its origins can be found in the historical development of **channeling** as a phenomenon in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, channeling became a major influence and introduced the ideas of **reincarnation** and **karma** into Spiritualist thinking. Now mediums who channel are almost universally agreed on the ideas of evolution and reincarnation, whereby humans (fallen and trapped spirit-beings) evolve through many lifetimes toward a purer spiritual Existence. Whereas earlier Spiritualist channeling groups relayed messages from deceased relatives and friends, the New Age groups center on **discourses by evolved spirits** (some from other planets or solar systems) speaking through the medium.

During the 1950 and 1960s, the New Age Movement began to take shape and emerge in the USA, Britain, Korea and Germany among others, and since the mid-1970s has become a well-known religious movement worldwide. Through the 1980s, channeling oriented on both the Ascended Masters and extraterrestrials became a defining element of the New Age. The original New Age vision had been derived from and shaped by channeled messages, and thus it is not surprising that channelers would take the lead in redefining the post-New Age. The most prominent group of channelers who have come to the fore in elevating the idea of Ascension are those loosely associated with the periodical *Sedona: Journal of Emergence*. This magazine began in 1989 in Sedona, Arizona, a revered location among New Agers as a sacred site of global significance.

During that decade, many New Age practitioners had relocated to Sedona, and the magazine presented their common message. However, by the end of the 1980s, the New Age movement began to fade, according to Dr. J. Gordon Melton (2009), and was transformed into what he calls the **Post-New Age movement** with an emphasis on **Ascension**:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20060614001357/religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/newage.html>

Also see the following websites for more information:

<http://www.newageinfo.com/> / [http://www.corazones.org/apologetica/grupos/nueva\\_era.htm](http://www.corazones.org/apologetica/grupos/nueva_era.htm) /

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/newage.htm> / <http://www.trancechanneling.com/> /

<http://www.thelighthouseonline.com/marina/channel/whatchan.html> /

[http://www.starlighter.com/myama/articles/ch\\_intr2.htm](http://www.starlighter.com/myama/articles/ch_intr2.htm) /

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Crete/1071/mediumship.html> /

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~wichm/newage3.html> / [http://www.thefullwiki.org/New\\_Age](http://www.thefullwiki.org/New_Age)

## The New Age Movement in Mexico

**Church of Scientology – Dianetics** was founded in 1954 by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard in Los Angeles, CA. According to its official website, Scientology is a religion that offers a precise path leading to a complete and certain understanding of one’s true spiritual nature and one’s relationship to self, family, groups, Mankind, all life forms, the material universe, the spiritual universe and the **Supreme Being**; it addresses the spirit — not the body or mind — and believes that Man is far more than a product of his environment, or his genes. Scientology comprises a body of knowledge that extends from certain fundamental truths, prime among these are: *Man is an immortal spiritual being – His experience extends well beyond a single lifetime – His capabilities are unlimited, even if not presently realized.* Scientology further holds Man to be basically good, and that his spiritual salvation depends upon himself, his fellows and his attainment of brotherhood with the universe. Scientology is not a dogmatic religion in which one is asked to accept anything on faith alone; on the contrary, one discovers for oneself that the principles of Scientology are true by applying its principles and observing or experiencing the results. The ultimate goal of Scientology is true spiritual enlightenment and freedom for all.

<http://www.dianetics.org/dnhome.html> / <http://www.scientology.org/> /

<http://www.authenticscientology.org/authentic-scientology.htm>

**Church of Scientology / *Cienciología* in Mexico:** <https://www.scientology-mexico.mx/>

For articles critical of Scientology, see the following sources:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church\\_of\\_Scientology/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Scientology/)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientology\\_controversy/](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scientology_controversy/)

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/02/09/10-juiciest-bits-from-ex-scientologist-s-tellall-beyond-belief.html> / <http://www.xenu.net/> / <http://www.rickross.com/groups/scientology.html>

**The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity** (aka, The Unification Church) was founded in 1954 in North Korea by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon (1920-2012). Its international headquarters were later moved to New York City, NY. This organization is also known as “Moonies” after the name of its founder, who is considered the “Lord of the Second Advent” of Jesus Christ, that is, he claims to be the Messiah. There has been considerable discussion among social scientists as to whether or not this group should be considered “Christian” or not. Dr. J. Gordon Melton includes it under his **New Age** category in his *Encyclopedia of American Religions* (8<sup>th</sup> edition, 2009: pp. 808-809).

Official websites: <http://familyfedihq.org/about/> / <http://familyfed.org/>

**Recent information:** In 2005 Moon appointed one of his sons, *Kook Jin Moon*, as the chairman of Tongil Group, which represents church-owned businesses in South Korea and other nations. **Tongil Group** is a South Korean business group (*chaebol*) associated with the Unification Church; “Tongil” is Korean for “unification,” and the name of the Unification Church in Korean is “Tongilgyo.” It was established in 1963 by Unification Church founder Sun Myung Moon as a nonprofit organization that would provide revenue for the church. Its core focus was manufacturing, but in the 1970s and 1980s it expanded by founding or acquiring businesses in pharmaceuticals, tourism, and publishing. The **Family Federation for World Peace and Unification** (FFWPU) was established in 1994 with the goal in promoting ideal families that serve God. Since 1996, it has been used as the official name of the Unification Church worldwide.

In 2008, Moon appointed another son, *Hyung Jin Moon*, to be the international president of the Unification Church. At the same time, he appointed his daughter *In Jin Moon* as the president of the Unification Church in the USA. In 2008, Moon assumed the position of CEO at the Unification Church's Manhattan Center in New York City, and implemented a restructuring. She was appointed president of the HSA-UWC America in August 2008 and worked to modernize the church's worship style in an effort to bring in younger members. In 2011, she spoke at an inter-religious conference on religious freedom in Washington, DC. In 2012, she resigned from her office following her divorce and remarriage.

In 2010, *Forbes* magazine reported that Moon and his wife *Hak Ja Han* were living in South Korea while their children took more responsibility for the day-to-day leadership of the Unification Church and its affiliated organizations. Moon died on 2 September 2012 at age 92 at a church-owned hospital near his home in Gapyeong, northeast of Seoul, South Korea.

Adapted from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unification\\_Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unification_Church) and from recent news reports: <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/news/2012/09/02/unification-church-founder-self-proclaimed-messiah-rev.-moon-dies-at-92>

The first missionary of the Unification Church arrived in Mexico City in 1975 from the USA. Rev. Moon himself visited Mexico City in December 2005 to promote the Unification Church in Mexico, which was presided over by Salvador Tello Ibarra:

<http://archivo.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/133547.html>

The extend of the Unification Church's work in Mexico is unknown at this time, although affiliated groups are known to exist in many Mexican states as reported in the 2010 national census.

### **Sources critical of the Unification Church:**

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/239693937700100304?journalCode=ibmb> / <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/06/26/archives/rev-moons-church-held-not-christian-national-council-report-calls.html> / [https://www.cesnur.org/2004/waco\\_chryssides.htm](https://www.cesnur.org/2004/waco_chryssides.htm)

## **UFO-Extraterrestrial-related Groups**

### **The Raelian Movement / *El Movimiento Raeliano***

The Raelian movement is a UFO religion founded in 1974 by Claude Vorilhon (b. 1946), now known as **Raël**. The Raelian Movement teaches that life on Earth was scientifically created by a species of *humanoid extraterrestrials*, which they call “the Elohim.” The beginnings of Raëlism

are rooted in the experiences of a French former automobile journalist and race car driver Claude Vorilhon. In his books *The Book Which Tells the Truth* (1974) and *Extraterrestrials Took Me to their Planet* (1975), Vorilhon alleges that he had alien encounters with beings who gave him knowledge of the origins of all major religions. The Raëlian movement has a quasi-clerical structure of seven levels. Joining the movement requires an official apostasy from other religions. Raëlian ethics include striving for world peace, sharing, democracy and nonviolence. Its international headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland.

**Beliefs:** Thousands of years ago, scientists from another planet came to Earth and created all forms of life, including human beings, whom they created in their own image. We can find references to these scientists and their work in the ancient texts of many cultures. Due to their highly advanced technology, they were considered as gods by our primitive ancestors and were often referred to as “Elohim,” which in ancient Hebrew means “Those who came from heaven;” this we can find in the original Bible (Genesis: 1:1).

They created life on Earth long ago thanks to a perfect DNA domain. Just as Moses, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad who were sent by them, RAEL is also a Prophet: the last messenger. In the era of the Apocalypse (or 'Revelation') in which we live, they have asked RAEL to spread this last message around the world and build an Embassy so that we can receive them officially.

**The Raelian mission.** The first objective of the Raelian Movement is to spread around the world the message that the Elohim gave Rael in 1973 and 1975. This message explains how the Elohim created all life on Earth, including humans: "Let us make man our image, according to our likeness "(Genesis 1:26). In this message, we also find the values and advice prescribed by those who created us in order to improve our own harmony, both physically and spiritually. The second objective of the Raelian Movement is to build an embassy on a neutral ground to receive the Elohim so that they can be officially and safely shown to a humanity ready to accept them.

**Ethics:** The Raelian movement defends the rights and freedoms of gays and lesbians, recognizes gay marriage and ordains gay clergy. Some Raelian leaders have performed licensed same-sex marriages. According to the book *Maitreya* (2003) by Claude Vorilhon, love involves experiencing different varieties and possibilities that allow one to break habits in order to make life more pleasant and interesting and that it is the only thing that can stop war and injustice that persists in today's world. Raëlians believe in the right to form new religions or new political parties as long as they do not promote violence. Raëlians say they encourage adult homosexual, bisexual, and heterosexual relationships and that society should recognize them legally.

Sources: <http://www.rael.org/home> / <http://mexico.rael.org/index.php?elan=Spanish>

Raelian contacts in Mexico: <https://raelmexico.org/>

Non-Raelian sources: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ra%C3%ABlism/>

[https://www.cesnur.org/2003/mi\\_rael.htm/](https://www.cesnur.org/2003/mi_rael.htm/)

<https://www.equip.org/article/descending-masters-a-history-of-the-raelian-movement/>

## Ecumenical-Interfaith Groups

**The Inter-Religious Council of Mexico** was founded in Mexico City in 1992 with representatives from the following traditions: Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Mormon, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Sufi-Muslim. In 1999, the coordinator of the council was Jonathan Rose, the Jewish representative.

### **Mexican InterFaith Council / Concilio Intrafe de México (CIM)**

Its purpose is to promote tolerance among religious groups and within Mexican society; to develop an understanding of the different religious traditions in the country; and act with other projects that reflect the universal values for all humanity:

<https://uri.org/who-we-are/cooperation-circle/mexican-interfaith-council-cim-cc>

**Jonathan Rose** was born in the USA and has been living and working in Mexico City for many years. He served as a publishing executive for the Addison Wesley Publishing Company until 1998, when he retired as Latin American Divisional President. He is a founding member of the **Mexican Interfaith Council** and became involved in **United Religions Initiative (URI)** in 1997. Mr. Rose was elected as a URI trustee from Latin America in 2002 and served on the Executive Committee of the Global Council as secretary from 2002 to 2005. From 2005 to 2007, he was regional coordinator for the URI's Multi-Region sector and served on URI's Finance Committee. Currently, he is working closely with the Multi-Region leaders to plan and implement their new vision and conclude the search for a permanent regional coordinator: <http://tio.squarespace.com/who-we-are/single-gallery/10646569>

## Those with no religious affiliation or not specified

In the 2010 census, only 6.1 percent of the population reported “no religious affiliation” or did not specify their religious affiliation. Most of the people who fall under these categories were born and raised in Roman Catholic, Protestant-Evangelical or Other Christian Groups and later became disassociated with the religion of their parents for a variety of reasons. The category “no religious affiliation” also includes atheists and agnostics. These two categories include more than 8.3 million people: 5.3 million with “no religious affiliation” (“nones”) and 3.1 million “not specified.”

For information about “Agnostics and Atheists in Mexico” (Carlos Mora, 2018), see the following document at: <https://www.aacademica.org/carlosndu/14.pdf>

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# APPENDICES



# APPENDICE I

## Freemasonry in Mexico

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### Preamble

The Roman Catholic Church first prohibited Catholics from membership in Masonic organizations and other secret societies in 1738. Since then, at least eleven popes have made pronouncements about the incompatibility of Catholic doctrines and Freemasonry. From 1738 until 1983, Catholics who publicly associated with, or publicly supported, Masonic organizations were censured with automatic excommunication. Since 1983, the prohibition on membership exists in a different form. Although there was some confusion about membership following the 1965 Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church continues to prohibit membership in Freemasonry because it concluded that Masonic principles and rituals are irreconcilable with Catholic doctrines. The current norm, the 1983 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's (CDF) *Declaration on Masonic associations*, states that "the faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion" and membership in Masonic associations is prohibited. The most recent CDF document about the "incompatibility of Freemasonry with the Catholic faith" was issued in 1985.

### Early History

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The history of Freemasonry in Mexico can be traced to at least 1806 when the first Masonic lodge was formally established in the nation. Many presidents of Mexico were Freemasons. Freemasonry has greatly influenced political actions in the early republic, as holder of conservative ideas gathered in lodges of the Scottish Rite, while reformists choose the York Rite. Hence *escoceses* became synonymous with Conservatives, and *yorkinos* with Liberals. President Santa Anna, among others, was a Scottish Rite Mason.

However, Freemasonry arrived in colonial Mexico during the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, brought by French immigrants who settled in the capital. However, they were condemned by the local Inquisition and forced to desist. It is probable, though no written evidence exists, that there were itinerant lodges within the Spanish army in New Spain. Freemasons may even have been able to participate in the first movements for autonomy, then for independence from Spain, conveying the ideas of the Enlightenment in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Some historians, both Freemasons and non-Freemasons, including León Zeldís Mendel and José Antonio Ferrer Benimeli, emphasized that Freemasonry in Latin America had built its own mythology, well away from what history records. The confusion between Patriotic Latin American Societies and Masonic lodges is tenuous. Between the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, their operative structure was very similar, as is indicated by historian Virginia Guedea Rincón Gallardo, a Mexican writer, translator, researcher and academic. She has specialized in the political history of the vice-regal period of New Spain and the Mexican War of Independence.

The first Masonic Lodge of Mexico, "Arquitectura Moral," was founded in 1806. The year 1813 saw the creation of the first Grand Lodge of Mexico of the Scottish Rite. José María Mateos, a leading Liberal politician of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, stated in 1884 that Miguel Hidalgo, José María Morelos y Pavón and Ignacio Allende were Freemasons. According to Mateos, they were, for the most part, initiated in the lodge *Arquitectura Moral* (now Bolívar No. 73), but it is true that there are no documents to prove his point. Instead, there are documents that tend to prove that the first Governor of independent Mexico, the

emperor *Agustín de Iturbide*, and the *Dominican friar Servando Teresa de Mier* were Freemasons. But it is true that it was common that the Inquisition used the charge of belonging to Freemasonry against those who supported independence from Spain, which guaranteed the impossibility of proving the innocence of the accused, because of the clandestine nature of the Masonic Orders. Thus, the archives of the Inquisition merely increased the uncertainties on this subject.

From Independence in 1821 and until 1982, it is believed that many Mexican leaders belonged to Freemasonry. When political independence arrived, the few existing lodges came out of hiding and multiplied. With the arrival of the Minister Plenipotentiary (i.e., envoy or ambassador) of the United States *Joel Roberts Poinsett* (1825-1830), the young Mexican Freemasonry became divided into two political movements, without really being defined. Poinsett promoted the creation of the **Lodges of York Rite**, close to the interests of the U.S. government. Those opposed to the realization of the interventionist theory of U.S. Manifest Destiny were the conservative Freemasons of the **Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite**, headed by *Manuel Codorniu y Ferreras* (1788-1857), a Spanish military physician, educator and publisher from Barcelona, who promoted Freemasonry through his newspaper "El Sol." Thus, within the lodges of the York Rite were Freemasons related to American liberalism, while the "conservatives" remained close to the Scottish Rite lodges that were heirs of Spanish liberalism. Soon, the Mexican Freemasons, who did not identify with these two existing alternatives, choose a third way by founding, in 1834, a national rite called the National Mexican Rite, which aimed to create a politico model of representation and a clean government in Mexico.

Poinsett eventually obtained Charters from the *Grand Lodge of New York* for five Lodges: "Rosa Mexicana", "Federalista" and "Independencia" in 1825, and "Tolerancia No. 450" and "Luz Mexicana No. 451" in 1826. After the receipt of these Charters, the Lodges were instituted and the officers installed by Brother Poinsett. These Lodges then formed a Grand Lodge that was formed and duly installed in 1825, under the name of "La Gran Logia Nacional Mexicana" with Don Ignacio Esteva as Grand Master. The Grand Lodge issued Dispensations and Charters throughout the country, and in 1828 there were 112 Lodges on the roster of which 90 met regularly, while the others were not active for one reason or another. Among the members were many Generals, Colonels, and other Army Officers as well as Senators, Congressman, Clergymen, and Government Employees and Merchants.

During the French military occupation of Mexico that brought Maximilian I of Hapsburg to the throne in 1864, various French military lodges, dependent on the *Grand Orient de France*, arrived in Mexico, but disappeared after the French forces left the country. Thus, it is very likely that these Itinerant Lodges of the French Rite, regarding their status as invaders, left no influences of Masonic ritual. At the museum of Masonic Grand Orient of France, a banner of one of those lodges is conserved.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Freemasonry was heralded as a means of removing the influences of the Roman Catholic Church. Several of the men who were masons, who had an expressed desire to free women from the Church's grasp through education, approached *Laureana Wright de Kleinhans* to help spread Freemasonry. Though she was totally committed to the education of women, she ultimately rejected the organization because they refused to acknowledge the equality of men and women and in fact had an initiation oath that declared "never admit to their ranks a blind man, a madman, or a woman."

## **Majors Rites**

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### **Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite**

The Grand Lodge of Mexico of the Scottish Rite was founded in 1813 after Spanish military forces were sent to Mexico in aid of her Colonial Dominion. These forces introduced the Scottish Rite, and established the first Lodges under that Rite in Mexico. However, these Lodges were exclusive to Spaniards,

and to Mexicans of noble lineage, who adhered to the Spanish cause. For a number of years, these Lodges met only in strict secrecy, but the Order still flourished and, although the number is unknown, several Lodges were established.

In 1821, the Independence of Mexico established, the Lodges were able to meet more freely, and little by little the Mexicans began to withdraw from the Spanish Lodges, forming their own Lodges directed by General Nicolas Bravo. In this manner, the Scottish Rite was propagated throughout Mexico, and within a few years the Spaniards finally were working amicably with the Mexicans.

## York Rite

The York or American Rite was first introduced in México in 1816 when the Grand Lodge of Louisiana chartered Lodge "Amigos Reunidos No. 8" in Veracruz and, in 1817, "Reunida La Virtud No. 9" in Campeche. Although no exact data are available, it can be assumed that these Louisiana Lodges had a short existence. In 1823, New York chartered "Triunfo de la Libertad No. 363", also in Veracruz, and in 1824, Pennsylvania constituted "Hermanos Legítimos de la Luz de Papaloapan No. 191" in Alvarado, which worked until 1837. Due to the geographic distance these three Lodges had no bearing on the introduction of the York Rite in México City. See: <https://www.mn-masons.org/sites/mn-masons.org/files/3898.pdf>

The York Rite bodies in Mexico are integrated in two bodies that practice the Royal Arch Masonry, which are recognized internationally:

- The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Mexico / *Gran Capítulo de Masones del Real Arco de México*
- The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the United States of Mexico / *Gran Capítulo de Masones del Real Arco de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*

The next degrees Bodies are:

- The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of Mexico
- The Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Mexico

The York Rite bodies have a horizontal structure, as opposed to the vertical Scottish Rite where the philosophical degrees commence with the 4th to the 33rd degree. However, the entrance has always been through the Royal Arch degrees, which enable all Master Masons now as Royal Arch Masons, to continue their path in search of further light in Masonry with the Cryptic and Commandery degrees. These last two degrees can be chosen separately and in no particular order.

In Mexico, the regular working York Rite bodies recognized internationally are: The Royal Arch, The Cryptic Masons and The Grand Commandery of Knights Templar.

As a result, only The General Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons International supports and acknowledges two Royal Arch Grand Chapters in Mexico:

**\*The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Mexico / *Gran Capítulo de Masones del Real Arco de México*.** Located in Tepic, state of Nayarit. The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of Mexico has 12 constituent chapters.

**\*The Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of the United States of Mexico / *Gran Capítulo de Masones del Real Arco de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*.** Located in the city of Guadalajara, state of Jalisco. Both Grand Chapters have Ambassadors as appointed by the General Grand Chapter:

- Grand Chapter of Mexico: Ambassador, Manuel del Castillo Trulín; Deputy Ambassador, Jaime Pérez-Velez Olvera PGHP.

- Grand Chapter of the USM: Ambassador, Ricardo Ruíz Guillén

**\*The Grand Council of Cryptic Masons of México.** Located in the city of Guadalajara, state of Jalisco.

**\*The Grand Commandery of Knights Templar of Mexico.** Located in Ensenada, state of Baja California. The Grand Commandery of Mexico has 12 constituent Commanderies.

- Grand Encampment of Knights Templar: Ambassador, SKT Luis Eduardo Luna Arredondo.

There are more Honorary or Invitational degrees available, Para-masonic national organizations.

## Mexican National Rite

In 1825, the York Rite upon its birth plunged into the severest political wrangle, when nine Brothers, full of idealism, five from the Scottish Rite and four from the York Rite, endeavored to form a Lodge subject to true Masonic principles. However, they encountered difficulties in obtaining, from either of the two Rites, letters of dispensation. Accordingly, they decided to found a new Rite to accomplish their goals, and on 22 August 1825, a meeting set forth the principles of the new organization, establishing the three symbolic degrees of Universal Masonry and six special philosophical degrees. Also, this convention authorized five Lodges, which in turn constituted the Gran Logia "La Luz" of the **Mexican National Rite**, which was installed on 26 March 1826. In 1830, this Rite was accepted in all parts of the country, as many of the York Rite Lodges were dormant. A number of these members went into the new organization, and by 1831 there were two additional Grand Lodges under this new Rite, one in Guadalajara with six subordinate Lodges and one in Toluca, also with six subordinate Lodges. In 1833, a general meeting of these bodies advocated many social changes. It was soon apparent that these changes would be difficult to achieve, nevertheless these reforms were accomplished, costing "rios de sangre" (rivers of blood). The American invasion of 1847 caused this body to temporarily cease its labors, and then in 1850 the cholera epidemic also seriously interfered with its work.

Conforming with the decree issued by Congress on 25 October 1828, the Gran Logia Nacional Mexicana (the York Rite) issued a circular calling for obedience to the Law (forbidding secret societies) and declared its Lodges in suspense until better times. Notwithstanding this, several Lodges, both York and Scottish Rites, continued to work until closed by the police.

## Other Masonic Rites

After several years of little active work, in 1848 there were traces of a German Lodge under the *Grand Lodge of Hamburg*, and in 1845 traces of a Lodge under the *Grand Lodge of France*. In 1859, a member of the *Grand Oriente of New Granada* arrived in Mexico City, and joined with members of the French Lodge to establish a Lodge "Union Fraternal" with a charter from the Grand Oriente New Granada. The first Master was James C. Lohse, a merchant in the city. Brother Lohse, born in New York, received his degrees in Friendship Lodge No.247 in Blossborg, Pennsylvania.

During this period there were many reactionaries among the political parties and the Lodge came under immediate attack. Brethren were insulted and molested, the Lodge work disturbed by armed men, and its members arrested. Handbills were distributed picturing Masons attacking the Holy Mother Church captained by Brother Lohse with cannon directed at the door of the Church. These actions fanned the flames, and the Lodge membership grew dramatically. In June 1863, French troops entered Mexico City and while the Lodge "Union Fraternal" remained in the city, other Lodges fled. By the end of 1863, the Lodge numbered about 200, composed of Mexicans, Spaniards, Americans, English, and Germans.

Many of the French Army officers and soldiers, enthusiastic Masons, affiliated with the Lodge. Great harmony prevailed under the leadership of Brother Lohse.

In 1864, a Portuguese man, Manuel Reis, arrived in Mexico City. He was initiated into Masonry in Rio de Janeiro in 1844, moved to New York in 1856 and joined the New York Consistory and received his 32nd Degree. In 1858, he went to Havana, Cuba, being more or less active in organizing Lodges, etc. When he arrived in Mexico City, he was 44 or 45 years old, and had a perfect knowledge of Masonic ritual. He eventually joined the Lodge "Union Fraternal", and because of his extensive knowledge of Masonry he became a driving force in the Lodge. Eventually, he organized the Supreme Council 33rd, and also suggested dividing up the Lodge "Union Fraternal" into three Lodges.

This was accomplished with one Lodge working in English, one in French, and one in German. In 1865, these three Lodges formed the Grand Lodge under the name "Gran Logia Valle de Mexico". Brother Lohse was the first Grand Master, a position he held until 1872. **The Grand Lodge Valle de Mexico**, having been duly organized, began to exercise its functions, issuing Dispensations and Charters throughout the country, and thus started its legitimate career.

Source: <https://www.mn-masons.org/sites/mn-masons.org/files/3898.pdf>

## Mexican Masonic Organization

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### Confederations

#### Confederation of Regular Grand Lodges of the United Mexican States

The Confederation of Regular Grand Lodges of the Mexican United States (*Confederación de las Grandes Regulares Logia de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*) brings together the Regular Grand Lodges in Mexico since 1932. It is headed by the **Masonic National Council** (*Consejo Nacional Masónico*), consisting of grand masters of the grand lodges' members of the confederation. The confederation includes the Grand Lodges of 30 states of the 31 states that constitute the United Mexican States:

### Federal Grand Lodges

#### Mexican Grand Lodge of York

#### Grand Lodge of the Valley of Mexico

The jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the Valley of Mexico covers 260 lodges. It practices the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*. This Grand Lodge is not regular and was accused for many jurisdiction's invasions. The Grand Lodge of the Valley of Mexico also is irregular and no recognized for the violation of no admitting the politics in the lodges, the political parties in Mexico have covering the resolutions and the elections of Grand Masters since 2001.

This Grand Lodge has been accused of establishing lodges in territories of many Mexican jurisdictions. As a result of these problems, the member Grand Lodges of the Confederation of Mexican Grand Lodges and the Grand Lodge Valle de Mexico have terminated Masonic Relations with each other.

### State Grand Lodges

- Grand Lodge of Baja California Norte
- Grand Lodge of Baja California Sur
- Grand Lodge of Campeche
- Grand Lodge of Chiapas
- Chihuahua: Grand Lodge Cosmos

- Coahuila: Grand Lodge Benito Juárez
- Colima: Grand Lodge Sur-Oeste
- Distrito Federal: Grand Lodge of the City of Mexico (G.L.C.M.). Regular jurisdiction established in 2010, under the standards of Recognition: Legitimacy of Origin, Exclusive Territorial Jurisdiction, except by mutual consent and/or treaty, and Adherence to the Ancient Landmarks (Belief in God, the Volume of Sacred Law, and the prohibition of the discussion of politics and religion).
- Durango: The Grand Lodge "Guadalupe Victoria" of Durango State is a federation of Masonic lodges created in 1923, but before that date, the lodges of the state depended on the Grand Lodge of the State of Coahuila. These lodges practice exclusively the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*. The Grand Lodge is located in the capital of the State of Durango. It is a founding member of the *Confederation of Regular Grand Lodges of the United States of Mexico*. As such, it has an important role in the Mexican Freemasonry. Each year it participates to the seminars of Grand Lodges of Mexico to synthesize the work on the society facts done in its lodges. The symposium ends with sending the summary of its analysis to the Government of the Mexican Republic.
- Grand Lodge of Hidalgo
- Jalisco: Grand Lodge Occidental Mexicana
- Michoacana: Grand Lodge Lázaro Cárdenas
- Grand Lodge of Nayarit
- Grand Lodge of Nuevo León
- Oaxaca: Grand Lodge Benito Juárez García
- Grand Lodge of Querétaro
- Grand Lodge of Quintana Roo
- San Luis Potosí: Grand Lodge El Potosí
- Grand Lodge of Sinaloa
- Sonora: Grand Lodge Del Pacífico
- Tabasco: Grand Lodge Restauración
- Grand Lodge of Tamaulipas
- Veracruz: Grand Lodge Unida Mexicana
- Yucatán: Grand Lodge Oriental Peninsula

Adapted from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freemasonry\\_in\\_Mexico](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freemasonry_in_Mexico)

## *In eminenti*

### **Papal Bull dealing with the condemnation of Freemasonry Pope Clement XII - 1738**

CLEMENT, BISHOP, Servant of the Servants of God to all the faithful, Salutation, and Apostolic Benediction.

Since the divine clemency has placed Us, Whose merits are not equal to the task, in the high watchtower of the Apostolate with the duty of pastoral care confided to Us, We have turned Our attention, as far as it has been granted Us from on high, with unceasing care to those things through which the integrity of Orthodox Religion is kept from errors and vices by preventing their entry, and by which the dangers of disturbance in the most troubled times are repelled from the whole Catholic World.

Now it has come to Our ears, and common gossip has made clear, that certain Societies, Companies, Assemblies, Meetings, Congregations or Conventicles called in the popular tongue *Liberi Muratori* or *Franco Massons* or by other names according to the various languages, are spreading far and wide and daily growing in strength; and men of any Religion or sect, satisfied with the appearance of natural probity, are joined together, according to their laws and the statutes laid down for them, by a strict and unbreakable bond which obliges them, both by an oath upon the Holy Bible and by a host of grievous punishment, to an inviolable silence about all that they do in secret together. But it is in the nature of crime to betray itself and to show itself by its attendant clamor. Thus, these aforesaid Societies or Conventicles have caused in the minds of the faithful the greatest suspicion, and all prudent and upright men have passed the same judgment on them as being depraved and perverted. For if they were not doing evil, they would not have so great a hatred of the light. Indeed, this rumor has grown to such proportions that in several countries these societies have been forbidden by the civil authorities as being against the public security, and for some time past have appeared to be prudently eliminated.

Therefore, bearing in mind the great harm which is often caused by such Societies or Conventicles not only to the peace of the temporal state but also to the well-being of souls, and realizing that they do not hold by either civil or canonical sanctions; and since We are taught by the divine word that it is the part of faithful servant and of the master of the Lord's household to watch day and night lest such men as these break into the household like thieves, and like foxes seek to destroy the vineyard; in fact, to prevent the hearts of the simple being perverted, and the innocent secretly wounded by their arrows, and to block that broad road which could be opened to the uncorrected commission of sin and for the other just and reasonable motives known to Us; We therefore, having taken counsel of some of Our Venerable Brothers among the Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church, and also of Our own accord and with certain knowledge and mature deliberations, with the plenitude of the Apostolic power do hereby determine and have decreed that these same Societies, Companies, Assemblies, Meetings, Congregations, or Conventicles of *Liberi Muratori* or *Franco Massons*, or whatever other name they may go by, are to be condemned and prohibited, and by Our present Constitution, valid for ever, We do condemn and prohibit them.

Wherefore, We command most strictly and in virtue of holy obedience, all the faithful of whatever state, grade, condition, order, dignity or preeminence, whether clerical or lay, secular or regular, even those who are entitled to specific and individual mention, that none, under any pretext or for any reason, shall dare or presume to enter, propagate or support these aforesaid societies of *Liberi Muratori* or *Franco Massons*, or however else they are called, or to receive them in their houses or dwellings or to hide them, be enrolled among them, joined to them, be present with them, give power or permission for them to meet elsewhere,

to help them in any way, to give them in any way advice, encouragement or support either openly or in secret, directly or indirectly, on their own or through others; nor are they to urge others or tell them, incite or persuade them to be enrolled in such societies or to be counted among their number, or to be present or to assist them in any way; but they must stay completely clear of such Societies, Companies, Assemblies, Meetings, Congregations or Conventicles, under pain of excommunication for all the above mentioned people, which is incurred by the very deed without any declaration being required, and from which no one can obtain the benefit of absolution, other than at the hour of death, except through Ourselves or the Roman Pontiff of the time.

Moreover, we desire and command that both Bishops and prelates, and other local ordinaries, as well as inquisitors for heresy, shall investigate and proceed against transgressors of whatever state, grade, condition, order dignity or preeminence they may be; and they are to pursue and punish them with condign penalties as being most suspect of heresy. To each and all of these We give and grant the free faculty of calling upon the aid of the secular arm, should the need arise, for investigating and proceeding against those same transgressors and for pursuing and punishing them with condign penalties.

Given at Rome, at Saint Mary Mayor, in the year 1738 of Our Lord.

Source: <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/clem12/c12inemengl.htm>

## CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH

### *DECLARATION ON MASONIC ASSOCIATIONS*

It has been asked whether there has been any change in the Church's decision in regard to Masonic associations since the new Code of Canon Law does not mention them expressly, unlike the previous Code.

This Sacred Congregation is in a position to reply that this circumstance is due to an editorial criterion which was followed also in the case of other associations likewise unmentioned inasmuch as they are contained in wider categories.

Therefore, the Church's negative judgment in regard to Masonic association remains unchanged since their principles have always been considered irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church and therefore membership in them remains forbidden. The faithful who enroll in Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion.

It is not within the competence of local ecclesiastical authorities to give a judgment on the nature of Masonic associations which would imply a derogation from what has been decided above, and this in line with the Declaration of this Sacred Congregation issued on 17 February 1981 (cf. AAS 73 1981 pp. 240-241; English language edition of *L'Osservatore Romano*, 9 March 1981).

**In an audience granted to the undersigned Cardinal Prefect, the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II approved and ordered the publication of this Declaration which had been decided in an ordinary meeting of this Sacred Congregation.**

Rome, from the Office of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 26 November 1983.

Joseph Card. RATZINGER  
*Prefect*

+ Fr. Jerome Hamer, O.P.  
*Titular Archbishop of Lorium*  
*Secretary*

Source:

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19831126\\_declaration-masonic\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19831126_declaration-masonic_en.html)



## APPENDICE II

### A History of Spiritism in Mexico

In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, a novel esoteric doctrine led by Allan Kardec in France began to expand, while in England this practice and philosophy also was popularized, known as Spiritism in Europe and Latin America, and Spiritualism in the USA. In Mexico, since 1858, *The Spiritist Magazine* (*La Revista Espiritista*) began to arrive from France, and with it a group of followers began to form. Eventually they decided to form the *Spiritist Society of the Mexican Republic* in 1872. Although before this intervention there were already ideas that were somehow forming space for the acceptance of Spiritism; Allan Kardec was its main proponent after he wrote *Le Livre des Esprits* (*The Spirits Book*) in 1857. His other books include: *Le Livre des Médioms* (*The Book on Mediums*) in 1861; *L'Évangile selon le Spiritisme* (*The Gospel According to Spiritism*) in 1864; *Le Ciel et L'Enfer* (*Heaven and Hell*) in 1865; and *La Genèse* (*The Genesis According to Spiritism*) in 1868.

In general terms, Spiritualism postulates that it is possible to have contact with disembodied spirits and other spirits through a medium. This doctrine studies the origin, destiny and nature of spirits. It had great popularity because in Europe there was, largely because of Liberalism, a growing rupture with ecclesiastical institutions. For practitioners of Spiritualism, a natural spirituality is sufficient and even more appropriate for the “realization of being.” Therefore, Spiritualism lacks rituals, worship, temples or people with religious privileges. In Mexico, of course, there were also people who communed with the practice of a spirituality that dispensed with ecclesiastical institutions as a means of having contact with the deity. Among these characters were the promoters of the *Spiritist Society of the Mexican Republic*: General Refugio I. González, Manuel Powers and Santiago Sierra (brother of the founder of UNAM, Justo Sierra); they all signed the articles of incorporation of that society.

The newspaper *La Ilustración Espírita* was the most important means of dissemination by the Spiritist Society of the Mexican Republic. The newspaper, with some intervals in which it stopped publishing, survived from 1868 to 1879. It was a "Newspaper dedicated exclusively to the exhibition and defense of spiritualism." As a sample on the type of articles they published (and scandalized the public) are: “Modern Magic,” signed by the pseudonym *Eléutheros* (Santiago Sierra). In the issue of 15 May 1872, meanwhile, the spiritualist communication between Pedro Escobedo and the medium *Eléutheros* (Santiago Sierra) is narrated. It should be noted that, according to Antonio Saborit, quoted in "Spiritism Seduces Francisco I. Madero," at that time there were already some Spiritist associations such as the "Allan Kardec Circle of Mexico City" and the Spiritist Society of Baroyeca, Sonora.

At the end of 1800 in the world, including Mexico, a spiritual search different from that of conventional religions was manifested with an overflowing esotericism. This was more criticized in Mexico than it was in Europe: it must be said, its proponents in this country had guts before a public opinion that was not prepared for this type of vanguard and searching ...

Source: <https://masonerialibertaria.com/2019/02/01/la-curiosa-sociedad-espirita-de-la-republica-mexicana/>

## Magic and Spiritism in Mexico

The possibility of syncretizing western Spiritualism and the sacred texts of the East, with the ancient numinous practices of the Mexican prehispanics, is perhaps the most admirable of the hybrids constructed by the Mexican will. One of the most notable examples was the *Spiritist Society of the Mexican Republic*, an occultist congregation aimed at the understanding of communication from spirit to spirit. It studied the teachings of *The Spirits Book* of Allan Kardec, which came to Mexico through French influence in the country and thanks to people like Refugio I. González, Francisco I. Madero and the founders of the *Spiritist Society of the Mexican Republic*, brothers Santiago and Justo Sierra.

As in its time it was the *Astronomical Society of Mexico*, the Spiritist was the object of secret and difficult access. But the symbiosis would have to occur. The spiritual customs of the Mexican people merged with the passage of time. In those years, the figure of the healer Pachita (1900-1979) already existed in Mexico City. Inherited from generation to generation, but also “Frenchified” with the figure of Spiritualism, Mexican mediums like Pachita acquired the gift of healing after a preparation. They also spoke with spirits and were transported to other worlds.

The rhythm of the practice of revelation from spirit to spirit continued its course and soon more Spiritualist doctrines were heard in Mexico, such as those initiated by Roque and Benito Juárez. Those names would forge hundreds of temples of this kind that to this day continue to exist. And they do it, rightly, in the depth of a thousand-year-old Mexican tradition: the open secret (like all the great deep secrets of culture that Mexico conceals under its time).

Source. <https://masdemx.com/2016/06/la-magia-de-mexico-que-inspiro-al-ocultismo/>

**Editorial note:** It is alleged that “El Niño Fidencio” healed thousands of people. He practiced surgery with pieces of glass like scalpels and his followers affirm that he possessed the gift of clairvoyance.