
A CHRONOLOGY OF PROTESTANT ORIGINS IN MEXICO

by Drs. Clifton Holland and Daryl Platt

(Last revised on August 11, 2009)

Historical Overview of Mexico:

Spanish Conquest under Hernán Cortés:	1520
Independence from Spain Declared:	1810
Independent Republic Established:	1822
Period of Civil Wars -- fifty different administrations:	1822-1917
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends Mexican-American War: (Half of national territory ceded to the U.S., including Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California)	1848
Mexican Revolution:	1910-1917
Separation of Church and State First Established:	Constitution of 1857
Separation of Church and State reestablished:	Constitution of 1919
Number of North American Agencies reported in Mexico in 1985:	209
Number of North American Agencies reported in Mexico in 1996:	178
*Indicates European Mission Agency	

Significant Protestant Beginnings: mission agencies and national denominations

1800-1849 (two groups)

1824 - Independent Bible colporteur, John Brigham

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 Westrupp in Monterrey, Nuevo León.

1868 - American and Foreign Christian Union (later the Protestant Episcopal Church) absorbed "The Mexican Church of Jesus" in Mexico City under 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 Westrupp, and in Saltillo with the Rev. William Powell.

1888 - Cumberland Presbyterian Church begins work in Guanajuato and Aguascalientes with the Rev. H. Sharp.

1890-1892 - *Christian Missions in Many Lands (Plymouth Brethren) begins work in Orizaba, Veracruz.

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 the Hoblits and Masons.

1900-1949 (50 groups)

1902 - Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) begins work in Mexico City.

1903 - Church of the Nazarene, World Mission Division, begins work in Mexico City with the Straffors and Millers.

1904 - Protestant Episcopal Church Foreign Mission Society

1906 - Peniel Missionary Society (Pilgrim Holiness Church)

1911-1916 – Independent Pentecostal missionary George Thomas begins evangelistic work in the gold mining town of Nacazari de García in the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains, state of Sonora, where George S. Montgomery of Oakland, CA, operated the La Trinidad Mining Company. Thomas later joined the Assemblies of God (1916-1921). The migratory nature of the Mexican gold miners and the mining camps meant that no permanent Protestant work was established there.

1914 – Romana de Valenzuela was converted to the Pentecostal Faith in the USA and return to her hometown of Aldama, Chihuahua, to evangelize her family, friends and community; this marked the beginning of a growing number of Oneness Pentecostal congregations in northern Mexico, originally called the "Spiritual Evangelical Church," that later became known as the Apostolic Church of Faith in Jesus Christ - Iglesia Apostólica de la Fe en Cristo Jesús, which was officially organized in 1928.

1915 - 1918 – Fermín Escárcega, Antonio Delarré and Octavio Lostanau engaged in itinerant preaching in the State of Sonora; Escárcega founded a church in Tacupeto, Sonora (1920-1922), and Delarré founded a church in Agua Prieta on the Mexico-Arizona border.

1917 – Henry C. Ball became the first superintendent of Hispanic ministry for the Assemblies of God in Texas; in 1917 he pastored a Spanish-speaking church in Brownsville, TX, and began to visit towns on the Mexican side of the border; in September 1917, Miss Sunshine Marshall (later 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.

1917 – Miguel Guillén and Felipe Douglas Millisted founded the first Assembly of God church in Mexico in the town of Villanueva (Rancho La Rosita), Tamaulipas.

1917 - "The Cincinnati Plan" (a mission "comity" agreement among major denominations that assigned mission agencies to different geographical areas of Mexico to avoid the duplication of efforts; the plan was generally unworkable and the national church leaders ignored the agreement).

1917 - Free Methodist Church

1919 - *Swedish Free Mission (Filadelfia Swedish Pentecostal Churches, Axel Andersson) – first known as Sharon Independent Evangelical Church in Mexico City; now known as the Independent Evangelical Church of the Mexican Republic; other denominations and independent churches trace their origins to this original Swedish Pentecostal movement in Mexico.

1920 - Church of God (Seventh Day)

1920 - Church of God in the Mexican Republic-IDRM (split from Assemblies of God; founded by David Ruesga)

1922 - Wesleyan Church World Missions

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; the groups include: *Altkolonier Mennonitengemeinde*; *Kleingemeinde*; *Sommerfelder Mennonitengemeinde* and *Reinländer-Gemeinde*.

1922 - Pentecostal Evangelical Christian Church in Pachuca, Hidalgo (Andrés Ornelas); now part of FRAPI.

1923 - Mexican Union Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church

1923 - Independent Congregational Church (Estevan Chávez Escoto); now part of FRAPI.

1924-1925 - Reformed Church in America, World Ministries

1926 - Spiritual Evangelical Christian Church (founded by Irish Oneness Pentecostal missionary Joseph Stewart in Monterrey; doctrinally, this denomination is similar to the Apostolic Church of Faith in Jesus Christ, which was first organized in 1928, but whose origins can be traced to 1914)

1927 - Interdenominational Christian Church (Portales)

1929 - Bethel Church of Tacubaya (Jesús Huerta Romero); now part of FRAPI.

1930 - Movement of Independent Evangelical Pentecostal Churches-MIEPI (Valente Aponte González)

1930 - Metropolitan Church Association

1932 - Church of God World Missions (Cleveland, TN)

1931 - Ephesus Church in Puebla (Miguel Leal Rojas); now part of FRAPI.

1933 - Independent Christian Church (Raymundo Ramírez)

1934 - America's Keswick

1936-1937 - The Salvation Army, USA

1935 - Pentecostal Apostolic Universal Christian Church of Jesus (Palemón Moreno Rivera)

1935-1936 - Wycliffe Bible Translators (first field started), also known as Summer Institute of Linguistics

1938 - Church of New Victory (Iglesia de la Nueva Victoria)

1942 - Pentecostal Church of God

1943 - Child Evangelism Fellowship

1943 - International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, Mission Board

1943 - World Mission Prayer League

1944 - Church of God of Prophecy

1944 - Churches of Christ in Christian Union (independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ)

1945 - Mexican Mission Ministries

1946 - Evangelical Covenant Church

1946 - Evangelical Methodist Church Missions

1946 - Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)

1946 - Missionary Aviation Fellowship

1947 - Pentecostal Holiness Church Missions

1947 - Independent Presbyterian Church (a split from the National Presbyterian Church of Mexico)

1947 - Christian Fellowship Union, Inc.

1949 - Air Mail from God (now, Trans World Missions)

1949 - Missionary Revival Crusade; later known as Calvary Churches and still later as Centers of Faith, Hope and Love (founded by Daniel Ost).

1949 - Pentecostal Church of God

1950-1969 (63 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 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

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

1956 - Gospel Missionary Union

1956 - Mexican Christian Mission

1957 - Christians in Action

1957 - Next Towns Crusade, Inc.

1958 - Franconia Mennonite Conference Mission

1959 - Central American Mission (CAM International)

1959 - Bethany Missionary Association

1959 - World Missions, Inc.

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)
1968 - Christian Nationals Evangelistic Commission
1968 - Christian Reformed World Relief
1968 - Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod Missions

1970-1979 (31 groups)

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 - 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 - Icthus 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.

1980-1995 (67 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 - 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 of North America)

1984 - VELA Ministries International

1985 - In-Depth Evangelism Associates (IDEA Ministries)

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 - Habitat for Humanity International

1988 - TEAM (The Evangelical Alliance Mission)

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 - Privative Methodist Church USA

1995 - Ripe for Harvest, Inc.

1995 - The Master's Mission, Inc.

1995 - Walk Thru The Bible Ministries

1996 - International Family Missions

DATE OF ORIGIN UNKNOWN (9):

AmeriTribes

Christian Aid Mission

Full Gospel Grace Fellowship

*Glad Tidings Missionary Society, Canada

Gospel Fellowship Association

In Touch Mission International

Operation Mobilization

United Evangelical Churches

Youth For Christ, USA

TOTALS: 241 GROUPS

NOTES:

(1) Dates listed indicate the earliest recorded ministry or in case of discrepancies, the date most frequently indicated.

(2) With the separation of church and state in 1857 church lands were confiscated and privileges demolished. Historical data taken from the ***Cambridge Encyclopedia of Latin America and the Caribbean*** (Collier, Blakemore and Skidmore 1985:217,302-303).

SOURCES:

(1) Daryl Platt, "Who Represents the Evangelical Church in Latin America? A Study of the Evangelical Fellowship Organizations." Pasadena, CA: an unpublished Doctor of Missiology dissertation, School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1991; modifications, corrections and updates by Clifton L. Holland, 1997-2009.

(2) North American Agencies include U.S. and Canadian (Roberts and Siewert, ***Mission Handbook: North American Protestant Ministries Overseas***, MARC 1989).

(3) John A. Siewert and Edna G. Valdez, editors: ***Mission Handbook of U.S. and Canadian Christian Ministries Overseas*** (MARC 1997).

(4) Additional historical information was derived from personal interviews in Mexico conducted by Clifton L. Holland, and from published sources in Spanish that are now part of his personal library, including books, articles, letters and other documents.

(5) Jean-Jacques Bauswein and Lukas Vischer, ***The Reformed Family Worldwide*** (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999).