

**MISSIONS ATLAS PROJECT  
AREA OF THE WORLD  
COUNTRY**

**Snapshots Section**

**Country Name:** *Republica del Paraguay* or Republic of Paraguay

**Country Founded in:** Independence from Spain, May 14, 1811

**Population:** 6,667,147.

**Government Type: (national, regional and local)** Constitutional Republic, 17 Departments divided into districts. This comprises municipalities of at least 3,000 people. A Governor elected by popular vote runs each department. Cities have a mayor appointed by the minister of interior. (2007)

**Geography/location in the world:** Paraguay is located in Central South America. It is landlocked and bordered by Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil. Paraguay is the size of California. Eastern Paraguay, between the Parana and the Paraguay rivers, is upland country with the thickest population settled on the grassy slope that inclines toward the Paraguay River. The greater part of the Chaco region to the west is covered with marshes, lagoons, dense forests, and jungles. The largest city is Asuncion. Two other important cities are Ciudad del Este and San Lorenzo.

**Number of people groups:** 40

**Picture of flag:**



**Religion Snapshot**

Roman Catholic	89%
Protestant	6.1%
Other Christians	1.1% Mennonites possibly
Unspecified	1.7% Jewish, Mormon Muslim Baha'i
None	.1% (2002census)

**Government interaction with religion:**

Complete separation of Church and State and equality before the law of all religious bodies was declared in 1992, but the Catholic Church still wields significant political and social power. The Roman Catholic Church is the unofficial state religion. About 89% of the population is Roman Catholic. The Constitution of Paraguay states that there is no official religion and emphasizes its independence from the Roman Catholic Church. It is a weaker and less influential church in this country than in other Latin American countries. The isolation and a government that shows less interest in religion as an institution has been instrumental in the people being irregular in their practice of the faith. Priests are seen as healers or men of magic, not as representatives of the church. The current President was a priest and a bishop; the church says he is always a priest. He resigned from being a bishop and plans to return to the priesthood.

Fundamental Protestants have not achieved much success with the exception of the Mennonites with the Chaco Indians. They were allowed to come in to do agricultural villages in the 1930s. They protect the Indians now that the forest and lands the Indians lived on are being taken over by poor Paraguayans. The drought and deforestation has taken the Chaco Indians' livelihood and ability to care for themselves.

German immigrants were 100,000 strong when they arrived in Paraguay. Their population is now 199,000.

National Holidays often celebrate Catholic festivals. For example, carnival is in February. Other holidays include Christmas, Easter, and the Immaculate Conception, which is celebrated on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Political holidays include a day to celebrate the War of the Triple Alliance on March 1, 1860 and a day to celebrate independence from Spain on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

*Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life, Americas 12<sup>th</sup> edition, 1997, p.362.*

# Country Profile

## Basic Facts

**Country Name:** Paraguay *Republica del Paragua*

### Demographics:

The estimated population of Paraguay is 6,667,147. Children up to fourteen years of age account for 36.9% of the population. There are 1,283,311 male children between the ages of newborn to fourteen years of age. There are 1,240,769 female children between these same ages. Adults between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four years of age account for 57.9% of the population. There are 1,988,256 males in this age category and 1,968,869 females. In the last age category, sixty-five years and above, there are 161,811 males and 188,290 females. The 65 and over group of adults account for 5.1% of the population. The median age for males and females is 21.7 years old.

The birth rate is 28.47 births for every 1,000 people. There are an estimated 3.8 children born to every woman. The infant mortality rate is 25.55 deaths for every 1,000 live births. The death rate is 4.49 deaths for every 1,000 people. The life expectancy for the total population is 75.56 years. The life expectancy for males is slightly lower at 72.99 years while the life expectancy for females is slightly higher at 78.26 years.

There are approximately 40 different people groups living in Paraguay. About 95% of the people are mestizos. Mestizos are people of mixed Spanish and Amerindian descent. Other ethnic groups include immigrants of Chinese, Jewish, and German descent.

The risk of infectious diseases is rated at an intermediate level. Travelers should be aware that bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever may all be contracted from polluted water or food. Other disease risks include dengue fever and malaria.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pa.html>

**Language:** Spanish and Guarani

Spanish and Guarani are the official languages. Seventy-five percent of the people speak Guarani, the Mestizo blend of language; a mix of Spanish-Guarani heritage. Spanish is the language of the government and commerce. Amerindian languages include Lengua, Nivacle, and Ache. These are in the isolated parts of eastern Paraguay. German has become the second language for many Amerindians rather than Spanish.

### Society/Culture:

2008 – President Lugo states his top priority will be to help Indians who live in poverty to be able to live where they will not go hungry as in the past. He also has pledged to ease the plight of the 300,000 landless peasant families who work the crops for paltry wages from the rich

landowners. 1% of the population is the landowners who own the majority of the land and were tied to the previous administrations.

### **Government:**

Paraguay's recent election of President Lugo moved Paraguay from a one-party rule to a full democracy. It is very leftist government.

The national government is elected by the people. It has a president elected for a five year term and a 45 member Senate and an 80 member Chamber of Deputies who are elected for five year terms. Voting is compulsory for all citizens ages 18-60. It is by secret ballot. Women were first allowed to vote in 1963. There are many advisors to the President, as he appoints all of them.

Paraguay is divided into 17 departments, which are subdivided into districts, which in turn make up the municipalities and rural districts. A governor, elected by popular vote runs each department. In principal cities and the capital the executive department is headed by a mayor appointed by the minister of the interior. Police chiefs are appointed by the central government.

### **Economy:**

Gross National Income per household is \$1,280.

*US from the World Book, 2006*

Development: Eastern Paraguay has the largest hydroelectric project in the world as of 2007. It was built and operated jointly with Brazil. Located on the Itaipú Dam, this hydro electric plant generates all the country's power and exports the remaining electricity to the neighboring countries.

Agriculture importance has declined and the value of services has risen. The cattle industry remains a key economic activity. Cultivation utilizes only 7.9% of the total land area. Primary agriculture is 20% of the GDP and 35% of the employment figures. Crops include manioc (cassava) and maize (corn). These, along with meat, are the main diet of the people. Export crops are cotton, sugarcane, tobacco, and soybeans for the oil. These comprise 68% of total exports.

Minerals are almost non-existent in Paraguay. There is a small amount of petroleum, some iron ore, manganese, and limestone deposits.

Timber covers ½ of the country, however it is of little commercial value as it is mostly located in areas not easily reached and roads are insufficient. Most wood cut is used for heating, since wood and charcoal are the only fuels produced in Paraguay. Exportation of logs was banned in 1973 in order to encourage the domestic lumber industry.

The leather industry uses the Quebracho tanning in leather tanning industry. Petit grain oil for perfume comes from the leaves and shoots of the bitter orange tree.

Re-export trade on the black market is the country's largest foreign exchange earner. Major income is derived from electronic goods and other products that pass from Brazil through Ciudad Del Este. Stolen cars and illegal drugs including cocaine are shipped to other countries.

The drought in 2008 has caused the International Federation Disaster Relief Emergency Fund to earmark money to ensure immediate financial support to the Red Cross and Red Crescent responses. The Chaco region is suffering from cyclical drought which has been affecting the zone for the past six months. This operation is to be implemented over three months and will be completed by Dec. 16, 2008. The yearly phenomenon is bigger this time than usual due to increasing population, the poverty of the indigenous people, and the existence of agro-industries.

60 % of the people live below the poverty level, food is scarce, and health conditions are very bad. Respiratory problems, flu symptoms, and diarrhea added to the severe malnutrition. Communities are completely out of water and must seek water in other places. The areas affected are Alto Paraguay, Boqueron, and Presidente Hayes provinces.

[www.relieffwebb.int/rw/rwbbb/nsf](http://www.relieffwebb.int/rw/rwbbb/nsf)

Indian land has been taken over by Brazilian loggers and the landless peasants. This presents an opportunity for mission workers to help this indigenous people. Some welfare is given them by the government through the Paraguay Indian Institute and the support of visiting missions groups.

### **Literacy:**

Adult literacy for 2004 was estimated at 91.6%.

Primary schools are for 9 years, compulsory and free. Secondary school is for 3 years and there are 13 universities.

### **Land/Geography:**

Paraguay lies in the heart of South America. The climate is hot and the land is subtropical low. The size of the country is 157,047 sq. miles, slightly larger than Germany and the exact size of California.

The river, Rio Paraguay, divides the country in half with 40% of the population living on the eastern side of this river. A more verdant area is north and south of the river. The Rio Paraguay connects the capital Asunción with the other major river, the Rio Panana, and then continues to the Atlantic Ocean.

The Rio Pananá is in the lower part of the country and runs east and west. The western part of the country is a dry, sparsely populated region known as the Chaco.

The Pilcomayo River rises in the mountains of southern Bolivia and extends about 1,000 miles flowing southeast. It forms the southwestern border between Argentina and Paraguay, joining the Rio Paraguay near Asunción. The lowland plain around the river is subject to annual flooding.

The eastern part of Paraguay contains luxuriant hills, meadows, and forests. The western part is three-fifths a waterless prairie covered with dry grass and sparsely dotted with trees. The water level is only a few feet below the surface; in many places the water is salty.

## History

Paraguay was explored and became a colony for Spain. There was an uprising in the early 1800's and on May 14, 1811 they declared themselves an independent country. There were many problems that resulted in a war in 1865-70 when Paraguay lost the War of Triple Alliance to the countries of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. In the process Paraguay lost 11,550,000 square km. of land and ½ of males 15 to 70 were killed in combat, famine, or disease.

The Chaco war was in 1932-35. Paraguay won large, economically important areas from Bolivia. The next uprising was a Civil War in 1947 when the Colorado Party won. They put in as president and dictator, General Alfredo Stroessner, who maintained the privileged status of the military until he was overthrown in 1989. During the years of 1954 until 1989 there was a large increase in political infighting. Torture and assassinations were the norm. The country had a reputation as a South American police state at that time.

The year of 1991 General Rodriguez won the election by a large majority. Now the country was relatively free of internal problems. Paraguay still remains as one of the most industrially undeveloped countries in South America.

On August 15, 2008 a new president, Fernando Lugo Mendez was elected by popular vote for a single five-year term. Lugo is a former priest from a poverty stricken province. He returned there to address the people about his leftist government with Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez. Lugo pledged to the people to raise living standards by ridding the nation of chronic poverty and corruption in Paraguay.

President Lugo faces widespread pressure from political quarters to make changes fast to ease the deep divide between Paraguay's rich and poor. Elements of the political left and right already have challenged his authority, leading to possible political chaos and civil unrest.

<http://www.foxnews.com/wires/2008Aug15/0,4670,ParaguayInauguration,00.html>

## Christian History

16<sup>th</sup> century Iberian explorers in South America extended their exploration inland to the Rio Paraguay and Rio Parana Rivers. The Spanish rapidly subjugated and assimilated the Guarani creating a society that was overwhelmingly Mestizo. The culture was Hispanic and the Jesuits established the Roman Catholic Church in the area from this group.

The Jesuit-run *reducciones* during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had as many as 100,000 Indians living on them. The Jesuits were expelled in 1767 and the *reducciones* were taken over by civil authorities. The subsequent mismanagement caused the Indian population to

decline. Survivors either were assimilated into the rural Mestizo population or they fled to the hinterland.

2008 – Current affairs in Paraguay show a Catholic bishop as president. However, the Roman Catholic Church is speaking of excommunicating him as a result of his running for the President. A Bishop is a bishop for his entire life and cannot resign as Lugo did in 2006.

President Lugo issued an apology to the pope for his incursion into politics and said he hoped to return to his post as bishop after his five-year term as president.

<http://latinamericanhistory.about.com/od/presidentsofsouthamerica/p/09flugo.htm>

## **Religion**

### **Non Christian**

*Buddhism (50% Han-Chinese)* – The Han Chinese has been moving into Paraguay steadily since 1949. They reside primarily in the cities. Their economy is small business and services. They have retained their culture, foods, and language. The Buddhist religion has continued in their culture, along with blended philosophies of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Many of them are non-religious in practice.

*Animism- (168,220)* – As a precontact society, these people do not have a formal religion. There is no belief in a supreme deity. People are formed by the essence of the game that a mother eats while pregnant. The child retains part of the animals' spirits. Myths are in two categories: historical and moral. Most reservation Ache people have nominally been converted to Protestantism by missionaries. They hold their own services several times a week. There are no religious practitioners in a precontact society. Young educated Ache men have become Christian preachers at the reservation.

Their beliefs about the afterlife vary, but most believe that the spirit of a dead person can linger at the site of death and cause harm. They burn the old, mean, wicked, or powerful people. They also burn those who die violently. Most individuals are simply buried.

*Roman Catholic Church*—Influence of the Roman Catholic Church is quite strong. Priests first began evangelizing in 1524. Today about 5,402,542 people are nominal affiliates with the church. Many are non-adherents. There are 11 dioceses and one archdiocese. There are two Vicariate Apostolics and one Military Ordinariate.

<http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/dpy2.html>

*Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons)*—This group began work around 1946. In 2001 there were 141 congregations and 21,164 members. There are an additional 40,000 affiliates.

*Jewish (900)* – Jews began settling in Paraguay in the late 1800's. Migration increased before and during World War II due to Paraguay's liberal immigration policies. Today there are

congregations of Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews. Many have intermarried with other Paraguayans but still choose to ensure that their children receive a Jewish education.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Paraguay.html>

*Iglesia Ortodoxa Griega (Greek Orthodox)*—This church formed around 1970. In 1995, there was one church and 1,000 members. There was an additional 1,900 affiliates.

*Iglesia Ortodoxa Russa (Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia)*—This group began around 1918. In 1995 there were 2 churches and 100 members. There were an additional 200 affiliates.

*Iglesia Ortodoxa Ucraina (Ukrainian Orthodox Church)*—This church is affiliated with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the United States. It began work around 1925. In 1995 there were 2 churches and 3,000 members. There were an additional 5,700 affiliates.

*Testigos de Jehova*—Argentineans began work in 1925. In 2001 there were 86 congregations and 6,883 members. There were an additional 10,000 affiliates.

### **Christian/Evangelical**

*Asambleas de Dios en el Paraguay (Assemblies of God in Paraguay)*—This group started work in 1945. In 2001 there were 70 churches and 12,454 members. There were an additional 37,000 affiliates.

*Asambleas Locales (Local Churches, Little Flock)*—This group began to work around 1980. Many of its members are originally from China. In 1995 there were 9 churches and 275 members. There were an additional 400 affiliates.

*Asociacion de Cristianos Unidos (Association of United Christians)*—This group started work in 1965. In 1995 there were 12 churches and 1,725 members. There were an additional 5,130 affiliates. In 2001 there were 13 churches and 2000 members. There were 6,000 affiliates.

*Convencion Evangelica Bautista del Paraguay (Baptist Convention of Paraguay)*—This group started work in 1920. In 2001 there were 106 churches and 7,981 members. There were an additional 19,000 affiliates.

*Ejercito de Salvacion en el Paraguay (Salvation Army Paraguay District)*—This group began work in 1910. In 1995 there was one church and 40 members. There were an additional 120 affiliates.

*Hermanos Menonitas*—This group began to work in 1930. Initially many of the workers were Germans who had chosen to leave the Soviet Union. In 1995 there were 10 churches and 3,000 members. There were an additional 8,000 affiliates.

*Iglesia Adventista del Septimo Dia (Seventh Day Adventist)*—This group began work around 1900. In 1995 there were 23 churches and 5,200 members. There were an additional 13,000



affiliates. In 2008 there were 50 churches and 14,738 members. This denomination runs at least two secondary schools and several medical operations.

<http://www.adventistdirectory.org/>

*Iglesia Alianza Cristiana y Misionera (Christian and Missionary Alliance)*—This group began work in 1966. In 1995 there were 3 congregations and 115 members. There were an additional 378 affiliates.

*Iglesia Anglicana Paraguaya (Anglican Church of Paraguay)*—This group started around 1889. In 2001 there were 36 churches and 6,400 members. There were an additional 16,000 affiliates.

*Iglesia Bautista Independente Maranatha (Maranatha Independent Baptist Church)*—This group began work in 1965. In 1995 there was one church with 590 members. There was an additional 1,013 affiliates.

*Iglesia Cristiano Evangelica Bautista Eslava (Christian Evangelica Slavic Baptist Church)*—This church formed around 1955. In 2001 there were 33 churches and 3,000 members. There were an additional 4,500 affiliates.

*Iglesia de Biblia Abierta (Open Bible Standard Church)*—This church began as a result of work accomplished by missionaries from the U.S. who arrived around 1985. In 1995, there was one church with 33 members. There were an additional 83 affiliates.

*Iglesia de Dios de la Profecia (Church of God of Prophecy)*—This denomination formed around 1977. In 1995 there were 8 churches and 173 members. There were an additional 540 affiliates.

*Iglesia de Dios en el Paraguay (Church of God)*—This group began work in 1954. In 2001 there were 146 churches and 7,618 members. There were an additional 14,000 affiliates.

*Iglesia de los Hermanos Libres (Free Brethern)*—This group began work around 1919. In 1995 there were 45 churches and 1,380 members. There were an additional 4,050 affiliates.

*Iglesia del Evangelio Cuadrangular (International Church of the Foursquare Gospel)*—This denomination formed around 1985. In 1995 there were 5 congregations and 150 congregants. There were an additional 250 affiliates.

*Iglesia de Nazareno (Church of the Nazarene)*—This group began around 1980. In 1995 there were 13 churches and 528 members. There were an additional 945 affiliates.

<http://app.nazarene.org/FindAChurch/>

*Iglesia Discipulos de Cristo del Paraguay (Disciples of Christ)*—This group formed around 1886 as a result of the work of Methodist missionaries. In 1995 there were 8 churches and 1,400 members. There were an additional 2,430 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica Asambleas de Dios en el Paraguay (Evangelical Assemblies of God Church)*—This group formed around 1970. In 1995 there were 12 churches and 920 members. There were an additional 2,835 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica Asambleas de Dios Misionera (Evangelical Missionary Assemblies of God)*—This denomination also started around 1970. In 2001 there were 35 congregations and 6,250 members. There were an additional 13,000 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica del Nuevo Pacto (Evangelical Church of the New Covenant)*—This group began around 1950. In 1995 there were 3 churches and 200 members. There were an additional 400 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica del Rio de la Plata*—This denomination started when German immigrants migrated and started new churches beginning in 1893. In 2001 there were 52 churches and 4,192 members. There were an additional 7,000 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica Filadelfia de Asuncion*—This church began around 1938. In 1995 there were 27 churches and 805 members. There were an additional 2,295 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica Gracia y Gloria (Evangelical Church of Grace and Glory)*—This church formed around 1950. In 2001 there were 61 churches and 5,550 members. There were an additional number of 11,000 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica Menonita en el Paraguay*—This group began around 1921. Many of the initial members were Germans who immigrated from the former Soviet Union. In 1995 there were 50 churches and 10,000 members. There were an additional 20,000 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica Paraguaya*—This denomination started as a result of a schism from the NTMU. In 1995 there was 1 church with 50 members. There was an additional 150 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica Filadelfia de la Incarnacion (Philadelphia Evangelical Church of the Incarnation)*—This group began around 1965. In 1995 there were 23 churches and 1,127 members. There were an additional 3,038 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica Pentecostal Paraguaya (Paraguay Evangelical Pentecostal Church)*—This group began work around 1975. In 1995 there were 7 churches and 863 members. There were an additional 2,100 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica Plenitud (Fullness Evangelical Church)*—This group of churches consists of a small group of indigenous Pentecostals. In 1995 there were 4 churches and 500 members. There were an additional 1,500 affiliates.

*Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Corea (Korean United Evangelical Church)*—This group consists of immigrants from Korea. In 1995 there were 3 churches and 200 members. There were an additional 300 affiliates.

*Iglesia Luterana Misuri (Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Holy Cross)*—This denomination formed in 1936 and is associated with the Missouri Synod in the U.S. In 2001 there were 75 churches and 5,000 members. There were an additional 6,200 affiliates.

*Iglesia Metodista Libre en el Paraguay (Free Methodist Church)*—This group began work in 1946. In 1995 there were 16 churches with 1,200 members. There were an additional 2,020 affiliates.

*Iglesia Mundial Evangelica (World Gospel Church)*—This group began work around 1985. In 1995 there was one church with 14 members. There were an additional 35 affiliates.

*Iglesia Nueva Apostolica (New Apostolic Church)*—This group began work around 1980. In 1995 there were 10 churches and 500 members. There were an additional 749 affiliates. Many of the members are of German descent.

*Iglesia Paraguaya Misionera (Paraguay Missionary Church)*—This church formed in 1935 among the Northern Lengua. In 1995 there were 21 churches and 3,860 members. There were an additional 5,000 affiliates.

*Iglesia Pentecostal de Chile*—This denomination largely consists of people who have migrated from Chile. In 1995 there were 50 churches and 7,000 members. There were an additional 15,000 affiliates.

*Iglesia Pentecostal Unida (United Pentecostal Church)*—This group started around 1973. In 1995 there were 20 churches and 500 members. There were an additional 1,000 affiliates.

*Iglesias Evangelicas Coreanas (Korean Protestant Churches)*—This group of churches began work around 1960. In 1995 there were 8 churches and 1,183 members. There were an additional 3,240 affiliates.

*Iglesias Pentecostales Coreanas (Korean Pentecostal Churches)*—These churches formed around 1960. In 1995 there were 3 churches and 1,000 members. There were an additional 2,000 affiliates.

*Mision de las Tribus Nuevas (New Tribes Missions)*—This group from the U.S. began work around 1946 among 7 Indian tribes in northern Paraguay. In 1995 there were 34 churches and 1,200 members. There were an additional 2,025 affiliates.

*Mision Alemana entre los Nativos del Paraguay (German Mission among the Natives of Paraguay)*—This group started around 1970. In 1995 there were 9 churches and 510 members. There were an additional 878 affiliates.

*Sociedad Fraternal Hutteriana (Hutterian Brethern)*—This group began around 1941. In 1995 there were 6 churches and 600 members. There were an additional 1,200 affiliates.

*Union de Iglesias Evangelicas Pentecostales*—This group started around 1970. In 1995 there were 7 churches and 1,000 members. There were an additional number of 1,706 affiliates.

*Union Misionera Neotestamentaria (New Testament Mission Union)*—This denomination is associated with missionaries from the United Kingdom. Work began around 1904. In 1995 there were 10 churches and 690 members. There were an additional 2,160 affiliates.

## **People Groups**

**17242**

### **Ache, Guayaki (1,500)**

The Guayaki are a South American Cluster Group. They are an indigenous people. They live in five provinces: Alto Parana, Caaguazu, Caazapa, Guaire, and Paragoari. They speak a language called Ache.

There are several important cultural practices that affect family life. When a baby is born, ceremonies must be performed to cleanse the baby. The father is especially attractive to animals at this time so he could have a good hunting season. However, he also could be killed by an animal. Coming of age ceremonies are also observed for both boys and girls at puberty.

Singing is an important part of the family life. The Ache do not dance. They do body painting and other ornamentation.

The people primarily practice some form of animism. About 12.5% of the population adheres to other forms of religion. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

A few Christian resources exist. Portions of the Bible were translated between 1978 and 2007. Audio recordings have been produced. However, the *Jesus* film is inaccessible.

**00000**

### **Afro-Paraguayan of Paraguay (63,000)**

These people are the descendents of runaways or self liberated people called Cimarron's. They speak Spanish so they have ample access to Christian resources.

About 90% of the Afro Paraguayan people have some type of religious belief. In fact, they regard themselves as true Christians. However, they have many syncretistic practices. The Catholic Church tried to stamp out their native beliefs seen as pagan and African. They have faith healers, and they also claim some saints. They practice secret spells whereby they invoke the powers of the devil. These are used to make people ill, infertile, or to ruin a person's business. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

The currulao is a secular ceremony, although they hold it at Christian sacred times, such as Easter. It has the rhythm and music of African extraction. In the dramatic ceremony Christ dies, has the reign of the devil and brings the forest into the Catholic Church. The resurrection of

Christ is in a forest inside the church. The liberation of the people and church happens there, only if the priest permits people to do the ceremony. The people travel great distances to attend and perform.

Art is an important form of expression. Men make canoes, paddles, wooden bowls, drums, fish nets and ritual paraphernalia. They also construct houses and shrines. Some specialize in making clay pipe bowls with wooden stems. Women make gold jewelry in some areas. Tourist goods include polished black coral and black coral figurines, ivory-nut carvings, coconut and shell figures, and model boats.

## **00000**

### **Anglo-Australian (2,500)**

The Anglo-Australians living in Paraguay speak English. Most likely they immigrated there for business or government related purposes. About 67% of the people have some type of religious belief. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. They have access to the complete Bible, the *Jesus* film, and audio recordings.

## **17211**

### **Angaite (4,200)**

The Angaite Indians live in the Gran Chaco area, in the department of Boquerón. Their homes are in the towns or on the cattle ranches. One-half of the Angaite speak their native tongue, while the other half communicate in Guaraní.

During the Wars, many of the Angaite were killed by soldiers from Bolivia. By 1990, they had become acculturated because of the work they did on the Trans-Chaco highway. Many work in factories and have married non-Angaité Indians. Some have learned agricultural techniques and have been given land to farm.

The Angaite people practice a mixture of their ethnic religion and Christian beliefs. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Oral literature emphasizes the mythical importance of terrestrial and celestial spaces. Human life evolves under the influence of a benign eastern ancestral god and a western lord of death. Shamans mediate between humankind and the two worlds.

There are a few Christian resources. Portions of the Bible were translated between 1994 and 2007. The *Jesus* film is inaccessible. An audio recording of *God's Story* is available.

Garden crops of maize, sweet manioc, beans, pumpkins, squash, watermelon, sweet potatoes, tobacco, and cotton are for home consumption. Fishing is available during a few months in the year. Hunting is not as important as it once was to the people, mainly because the white people have reduced the amount of game available.

The Angaité live without shelter most of the year, sleeping on skins, their dogs are for protection. They raise sheep and goats. Famine has forced them to seek labor where they will earn a wage. Men and women are greatly tattooed, the wealthier the man, the more tattoos the women have.

### **17213**

#### **Ayoreo, Moro (3,000)**

The Ayoreo people live primarily in the departments of Chaco and northern Alto. They speak a language called Ayoreo which has a dialect called Tsiracua. Some alternate names for this people group include Morotoco, Moro, Ayoré, or Pyeta Yovai.

Power is emphasized by the Ayoreo mythology. Every natural and cultural phenomenon has its origin and meaning explained in various parallel myths. Myths and therapeutic songs have a damaging effect if they are used outside the context of an illness or misfortune, in which they can be beneficial. The cult of Asohnsá, who as an ancestor resembles a bird, his power derives from the fact that he is the only divinity to whom a formalized religious ceremony is held. The effects of his malevolence are triggered by taboos that cause illnesses that lead to death. The shaman and the wise men know the myths and songs; they are the responsible for religious practices.

The natives have rain dances and rites to protect killers from harm of the victim's soul and blood. The other annual ceremony relates to the cycles of the seasons.

The Ayoreo make artifacts that are decorated with the clan insignia of colored red and blue string. These items are very primitive.

Curing illness is essentially done through the use of chants provided by the various *nanibaháde*. The only precondition to becoming one is to know the chants.

Cultural Relations have been prevented because of their isolation, natural obstacles, no roads, and their hostile relationship with *criollos* (European decent). They are only now receiving Western cultural ideas and goods.

Four periods comprise the Ayoreo's history. Prior to 1691 they had no contact with the outside world. Then, between 1691 and 1767, Jesuits came and instigated religion. These priests were later expelled from the area. The period of 1767 – 1940 was unknown. After 1940, Catholics and Protestants both renewed evangelistic efforts.

Planting season brings the group to a semi permanent camp near a stream to plant crops. Their housing is usually six dome-shaped ones arranged in a circle. Each house shelters ten people. They have two seasons. The "forest" or "forbidden world" is from May to August, the "free world" from September to April. These seasons and the rain that comes during those times are celebrated with a festival. Men do the planting and care of the crops, some widows help. Most women do cooking, plaiting, cording, and make pottery. They also gather plant foods. They have a collective ownership of all products and game. Women are called in to harvest the produce.

Marriage is contracted by the couples. Usually no formal ceremony occurs. Most couples are monogamous, and divorce is rare.

There is no pattern of inheritance, since movable goods are abandoned as grave goods. Iron products belong to the widows and remain in use with the extended family. People commit suicide when they reach old age.

About 55% hold to some type of religious belief. The people practice both animism and Catholicism. Approximately 11% of the people are evangelical Christians.

There are a few Christian resources in their language. Portions of Bible were translated between 1957 and 1985. Translation of the New Testament was completed in 1982. The *Jesus* film is not accessible. Audio recordings include: *Good News*, *Jesus - Lord & Saviour*, and *Words of Life 1 and 2*.

#### **46804**

#### **Brasiguayo (660,000)**

The Brasiguayo primarily speak Portuguese so many Christian resources are available to them. The people are predominantly Catholic. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Another name for this people is Brasi-Guayo.

#### **00000**

#### **Brazilian Mestico (38,000)**

The Brazilian Mesticos primarily speak Portuguese and thus have ample access to Christian resources. About 90% of the people have some type of religious affiliation. About 17.1% of the population is evangelical Christian.

#### **00000**

#### **British (300)**

Most British living in Paraguay are expatriates who have moved there for business or government purposes. The people primarily speak English so they have easy access to many Christian resources. About 70% are affiliated with some type of religious group. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

#### **17219**

#### **Chamacoco (2,600)**

The Chamacoco primarily speak a language called Chamacoco, which has two dialects Chamacoco Bravo and Ebitoso. Few are proficient in Spanish or Guaraní. They live in the provinces of Bahia Negra, Braaavo Chamacoco, Jshiro, and Vshuro. Two alternate names for this people group are Ishiro and Jeywo.

Europeans entered their territory, and they became salaried workers in the lumber industry and in ranching. Their economy was completely changed. The state gave them a reservation in Puerto Esperanza, approximately 21,000 hectares, and this is where the majority live. They now hunt, or farm for home consumption. They breed livestock and manufacture handicrafts for the tourist trade. The government supplements their existence. Socialization has influenced the treatment of children and has caused sexual permissiveness.

The Chamacoco people practice their traditional religion and some Catholicism. Traditional Chamacoco religious thought has concepts of purity, impurity and sacredness, divine beings, and mythological events. They come from a vision of the world contrasting death and life. They have deities of the hunt and demonic entities. The evangelistic influence of some groups has become very strong, but is being resisted by the most traditional factions. About 1% are evangelical Christian.

There are a few Christian resources. Portions of the Bible were translated between 1992 and 1995. Translators finished the New Testament in 2001. The *Jesus* film is inaccessible. Audio recordings of *Words of Life* exist.

### **17253**

#### **Chorote, Manjuy (520)**

The Chorote speak a language called Chorote. They live in Pilcomayo, Boquerón, and Chaco. Some alternate names for this people group include Manjuy, Manjui, or Choroti.

The Chorote people practice animism mixed with Christianity. About 80 are affiliated with some type of religious organization. Approximately 11.2% are evangelical Christian.

There are few Christian resources in their language. Portions of the Bible were translated by 1992. The *Jesus* film is inaccessible. Audio recordings of *Words of Life* exist.

### **17234**

#### **Chulupe (14,000)**

The Chulupe speak a language called Nivache, which has several dialects. They live in the Provinces of Boqueron and Presidente Hayes. Some alternate names for this people group include Chulupí, Churupí, Chulupie, Chulupe, Nivaklé, Ashlushlay, or Axluslay.

The people practice a mixture of animism and Catholicism. About 40% are affiliated with some type of religious entity. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

Few Christian resources exist. Bible translation efforts began in 1969 and were completed in 1995. The *Jesus* film is inaccessible. Audio recordings include *Words of Life* and *Faith Comes by Hearing*.

### **17236**

#### **Emok (1,300)**



The Emok people primarily speak Spanish today although they have an indigenous language called Emok which has fallen out of use. Some alternate names for this people include Toba-Emok, Toba, or Paraguayan Toba. Today the people live near Asunción.

The Emok people practice a mixture of animism and Catholicism. About 80% are affiliated with some type of religious group, but only .008% of the people are evangelical Christian. Since the majority of the people speak Spanish, they have easy access to many different types of Christian resources.

**17238**

**German, Standard (199,000)**

The people speak Standard German and are most likely the descendents of early German immigrants from the late 1800's or of people who migrated before and after World War II. They live in the provinces of Boquerón and Presidente Hayes.

The German people usually have some type of Christian belief system. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Because of the wide publication of Christian resources in the German language, they have easy access to the Bible, the *Jesus* film, and audio recordings.

**00000**

**Greek (2,800)**

The Greek people primarily speak Greek. Many are affiliated with the Greek Orthodox Church. About 90% hold some type of religious belief. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. They have easy access to Christian resources.

**47056**

**Guana, Kaskiha (2,600)**

The Guana people speak a language called Guana, which has two dialects, Layana and Echoaldi. Their language is similar to Sanapaná. Some Guana people are becoming bilingual in Paraguayan Guaraní. Alternate names for this people include Kaskihá or Cashquiha. They live in the province of Boquerón around the Salado River. Their villages lie south of Chamacoco and north of the Sanapaná.

People often choose to live in fairly large agrarian settlements although some are also fishermen. These are generally divided into sections based upon kinship groups. Inter-marriage with people from other ethnic groups occurs.

The Guana people practice both animism and Christianity. About 60% of the people belong to some type of organized religious entity. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

There are no Christian resources in their own language. Most likely those that do speak Paraguayan Guaraní use Christian materials that have been printed in this language.

**17264**

## **Guarani (5,876,796)**

This branch of the Guarani people speak Paraguayan Guarani. They live in ten of the sixteen provinces: Alto Paraguay, Amambay, Boquaron, Caazapa, Central, Cordillera, Caaquazu, Canindeyyu, Concepcion, and Guaira.

About 97% of the Guarani people claim to belong to some type of religious entity. A large majority of these are nominally affiliated with the Roman Catholic Church. About 4.6% of the people are evangelical Christian.

Several Christian resources are available. Bible translation began around 1905 and was completed by 1997. Tracts have been printed in Paraguayan Guarani. The *Jesus* film is accessible and many different audio recordings exist.

## **17222**

### **Chiripa, Guarani, Ava (10,000)**

The Chiripa people speak a language called Chiripa although many also use a form of Guarani called Ava Guarani. They mostly live in the eastern parts of Paraguay. Some alternate names for this people group include Tsiripá, Txiripá, Apytare, Nhandeva, or Ñandeva.

The Chiripa people usually practice a mixture of animism and some form of Christianity. About 80% of the people are associated with some type of religious organization. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

Few Christian resources exist in their language. Portions of the Bible have been translated into Chiripa and some translation has occurred into the dialect of Guarani that is used. The *Jesus* film and audio recordings are not available.

## **17221**

### **Guarani, Eastern Bolivian (2,000)**

This Guarani people speak a dialect of Guarani known as Eastern Bolivian. They live in the Chaco region. Some alternate names for this people group include Guasurango, Guarayo, Chawuncu, or Chiriguano.

The Guarani people practice animism mixed with Christianity. About 70% of the people belong to some type of religious entity. One planter team reported that there were at least 100 believers, however, there has been no active church planting in the past two years.

There are available Christian resources. Bible translation was completed in 2001. The *Jesus* film and audio recordings exist.

## **17224**

### **Guarani Mbya (14,000)**

The Guarani Mbya people speak a language called Mbya. They have a special subset of words that they use specifically for ancient traditional rituals. They live in the departments of Caaguazú, Guairá, Caazapá, San Pedro, Concepción, Canindeyú, and Itapúa. They also live in other scattered locales. Two alternate names for this people are Mbyá and Mbua.

The Guarani Mbya people practice animism mixed with Christianity. About 70% of the people are affiliated with a religious group. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

Several Christian resources exist. Translators completed the Bible in 2004. The *Jesus* film and audio recordings are also available.

## **17244**

### **Han Chinese, Mandarin (25,000)**

Most of the Han Chinese people are descendants of immigrants who migrated beginning around 1949. They speak the Mandarin dialect and are largely non-religious or Buddhist.

Only about 1.75% of the Han Chinese are evangelical Christian. Many Christian resources are accessible to those that have been educated in Mandarin.

## **00000**

### **Italian (38,000)**

The Italians living in Paraguay are most likely familiar with Italian and Spanish. Many people are nominally Roman Catholic. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Many Christian resources are available in Italian and Spanish.

## **00000**

### **Japanese (15,000)**

The Japanese people speak Japanese. They are primarily Buddhist. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. The complete Bible is available. The *Jesus* film and audio recordings also exist.

## **00000**

### **Jew (900)**

The Jewish people living in Paraguay are descendants of immigrants who began migration when the Roman Catholic Church began forced conversions in Spain during the Spanish Inquisition. Most immigrants arrived during the late 1800's. Another wave occurred before and during World War II. The Jewish people predominantly speak Spanish while some may also speak German or Yiddish.

Many nominally practice Judaism or at least ensure that their children receive a Jewish education. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Since most speak Spanish, many Christian resources are available to those who show interest.

**47029****Kaiwa (28,000)**

The Kaiwa people speak a language called Kaiwa. They live on the eastern side of Paraguay near Brazil on a government reservation. They work on ranches or exist as hunters and gatherers.

The people are predominantly animists. They practice some form of Christianity mix with animism. The number of evangelical Christians, if there are any, is unknown. No resources are available in their language, but they are part of the Guarani linguistic family so may be able to use resources in Guarani.

**17246****Korean (20,000)**

The Koreans living in Paraguay still speak Korean as their primary language although some may also use Spanish.

About 51% of the people are associated with some type of religious group. Approximately 3.8% are evangelical Christians. Many Christian resources are accessible.

**17247****Lengua (17,000)**

These Lengua people are Indians who live in the Gran Chaco area and constitute the largest Indian group in that region. The Spanish Conquest almost extinguished them by 1800. Later wars were costly to their population. They speak a language called Lengua.

Anglicans worked in the region beginning around 1900, but no significant work is listed. There are no known evangelical Christians. Many appear at the mission for Christmas and Easter festivals, yet animism predominates. There are many shamans who work with each band or family. These religious leaders are important in daily life. The Lengua people believe that they have powers to avert attacks by evil spirits. They also believe that shamans regulate rainfall and guarantee fertility of the land, plants, and animals. Shamans try to cure illness by chanting, sucking, and recapturing the soul of their patients.

Few Christian resources exist. Bible translation began in 1900 and now has been completed. The *Jesus* film has not been reproduced in their language. However, some audio recordings exist.

Mennonite farms now occupy the traditional Lengua hunting grounds so the tribe has divided up. Many follow seasonal work. They are hired by farmers as cowhands. They live in houses made of frames of sticks tied together with bark of the bottle tree and covered with bulrush mats. The Lengua sleep on animal skins which are also used as wall coverings. Oval communal houses shelter extended families and beehive huts are arranged in a semicircular line to form a settlement with a plaza for ceremonies. All households now use iron cooking pots.

**17249**

**Plautdietsch, Low German (38,000)**

The Plautdietsch people speak Plautdietsch. They live in Chaco and eastern Paraguay. Many are associated with the Mennonite Church. About 93% are religious. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

Several Christian resources exist. Bible translation has been completed. The *Jesus* film is accessible. Audio recordings exist.

**17251****Maca, Maká (1,500)**

Many Maca people live in the department of Presidente Hayes. They speak a language called Maca. Some alternate names for this people group include Towolhi, Maka, Mak'á, Maká, Macá, Enimaca, or Enimaga.

The Maca people either practice animism or Christianity. About 29% are affiliated with some type of religious entity. Only 2.24% are evangelical Christian.

Few Christian resources exist. Portions of the Bible had been translated by 1985. The *Jesus* film is inaccessible. Audio recordings exist.

**00000****Maskay Pidgin (6,300)**

They Maskay Pidgin people speak Paraguayan Guarani. About 92% are part of some type of religious group. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Since they speak the most popular dialect of Guarani, several Christian resources exist.

**17258****Northern Lengua (10,700)**

This Northern Lengua group speaks Lengua. The people are predominantly animists. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Portions of the Bible have been translated, but no other Christian resources exist.

**17261****Pai Tavytera (15,000)**

The Pai Tavytera people group speaks a language also called Pai Tavytera. They live in Colonia Juan Carlos. An alternate name for this people is Pai.

The Pai people practice traditional ethnic rites. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. No Christian resources are available in their language.

**17274**

**Pilaga Toba (300)**

The Pilaga Toba people speak a language called Pilaga. They live in the department of Presidente Hayes. The people practice a mixture of animism and Christianity. About 95% of the people are part of some type of religious group. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown.

Few Christian resources exist. Bible translation efforts began around 1938. The New Testament was finished in 1993. The *Jesus* film is inaccessible. Audio recordings exist.

**17263****Paraguayan Deaf (2,678)**

The Paraguayan Deaf are scattered throughout the country. Those who have received the benefits of education probably use a mixture of Spanish and a standardized sign language. Those in rural areas most likely use hand signs or lip read. About 4.7% of the deaf population are evangelical Christian. Those familiar with Spanish have access to Christian resources.

**00000****Polish (2,500)**

The Polish people speak Polish. About 88% of these people are affiliated with some type of religious entity. The most popular religious group is Roman Catholic. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Since most speak Polish, many Christian resources exist.

**00000****Portuguese (6,300)**

The people primarily speak Portuguese. About 93% belong to some type of religious organization. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Many Christian resources are available.

**00000****Russian (800)**

The Russians speak Russian. About 70% are religious. Many are affiliated with the Orthodox Church. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Many Christian resources are available in Russian.

**17277****Sanapana (2,900)**

The Sanapana people speak a language called Sanapana. They live in the Chaco region. Some alternate names for this people group include Quiativis, Quilyacmoc, Lanapsua, Saapa, or Sanam.

The Sanapaná people predominantly practice animism. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Portions of the Bible are available, but the *Jesus* film is inaccessible. Audio recordings exist.

**17278**

**Southern Lengua (5,100)**

The Southern Lengua group speaks Lengua. The people are predominantly animists. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Portions of the Bible have been translated and some audio Christian resources exist.

**17280**

**Tapieta, Guasurango (3,500)**

The Guasurango Tapieta speak a language called Tapieta although many are possibly familiar with some form of Guarani. They live on the Laguna Negra reservation. Some alternate names for this people group include Guasurangué, Tirumbae, Yanaigua, Ñanagua, and Nandeva.

The Guasurango Tapieta people predominantly practice animism. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. The Bible has not been translated into their language, but audio recordings exist. They have access to materials printed in Guarani.

**17283**

**Toba Qom (2,000)**

The Toba Qom people speak a language called Toba Qom which is linguistic separate from Toba-Maskoy and Toba-Pilagá. They live 60 km northwest of Asuncion.

The Toba Qom people predominantly practice animism or Christianity. About 45% of the people are evangelical Christians.

A few Christian resources exist. New Testament translation was completed in 1980. The *Jesus* film is not available. Audio recordings are accessible.

**17282**

**Toba – Maskoy (2,000)**

These Toba people speak a language called Toba – Maskay, but many older men are also familiar with Paraguayan Guarani, which is the language used in church settings. They live on a reserve of 30,000 hectares near Puerto Victoria and Puerto. Some alternate names for this people group are Toba of Paraguay, Quilyilhrayrom, Cabanatit, Machicui, or Enenlhit.

The Toba-Maskoy people practice a mixture of animism and Christianity. About 95% of the people consider themselves to be religious. Less than 1% are evangelical Christians.

Very few Christian resources exist in their own language. The Bible has not been translated, and the *Jesus* film is inaccessible. Audio recordings do exist. Resources do exist in Paraguayan Guarani.

**00000**

**Ukrainian (38,000)**

Ukrainians speak Ukrainian. Many immigrated around the time of World War II.

About 78% are religious. Many are Russian Orthodox or Baptist. The number of evangelical Christians is unknown. Many Christian resources exist in their language.

**17257**

**Wichi Mataco (2,600)**

The Wichi Mataco people speak a language called Wichí Lhamtés Güisnay. They live in the Pilcomayo River area. People prefer the title Wichi because Mataco is considered to be demeaning.

The Wichi people are predominantly animistic. The number of evangelical Christian is unknown. There are no available materials in their heart language.

### **Missiological Implications**

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop and train local believers to employ methods for sharing the Good News with Roman Catholics. Many people in Paraguay are nominally Roman Catholic. The Roman Catholic Church continues to be influential, but these nominal Catholics often lack a real understanding of the true meaning of the gospel. In actuality they may practice a syncretistic blend of Catholicism and traditional religious rites. Thus, solid biblical teaching is needed.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should develop methods for evangelizing and starting churches among the followers of Traditional Religions.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to evangelize and start churches among the German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean populations in Paraguay. These groups will most likely respond to churches targeted directly for their cultural realities.
4. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to address the linguistic opportunities in the nation. Translation efforts have progressed but literacy rates need to increase. Christians who desire to evangelize among the various people should learn indigenous languages and then offer literacy classes which could aid new Christians and non-believers.
5. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to aid in the development of leadership training programs—including training for lay pastors and church workers.



6. Evangelical Christians and churches should introduce methods for small group evangelism and worship. House churches and other approaches to small groups should provide a basic need in this country.
  
7. Evangelical Christians and churches should provide aid to the many Protestant groups such as the Mennonites, German-speaking Lutherans, and Korean Presbyterians that have been present in the country for decades. They have worked to impact the local peoples, but may still remain somewhat isolated due to cultural and language difficulties. Support for these groups and encouragement of cooperative efforts between Paraguayan indigenous churches is needed.

### Pictures



### Links

#### General Country Info

- [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/ame/country\\_profiles/1222081.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/ame/country_profiles/1222081.stm) country report
- <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100649.htm> Human rights report
- <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1841.htm> Country studies
- <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2007/90263.htm> Religious freedom report
- <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/pytoc.html> Library of Congress country report

#### Watch for validity of sites

- <http://www.projectparaguay.com/culture.htm>
- <http://www.usatoday.com/>