

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

South America

Uruguay

Oriental Republic of Uruguay
Republica Oriental del Uruguay

General

Name:

Oriental Republic of Uruguay (*Republica Oriental del Uruguay*) is located in the east central region of South America bounded on the north by Brazil, on the east by Brazil and the Atlantic Ocean, on the south by the Atlantic Ocean and the River Plata (*Rio de la Plata*) and one the west by Argentina. The Uruguay River forms the entire western boundary. The country has 660 km of coastline on the Atlantic and Rio de la Plata and 505 mi of frontage along its other boundary rivers.

Area and Population:

Uruguay boasts 176,215 sq km (68,037 sq mi) (slightly smaller than the state of Washington) which makes it the second smallest country in South America. Population in 2000 rests at 3,337,058 with an annual growth rate of +0.73% and population density 19 sq km. The population should rise to 3,565,821 by 2010 when the annual growth rate will drop to +0.63% but the population density rise to 20 persons per sq. km. In 2025 the population should number some 3,906,647 or 22 persons per sq. km. The growth rate will then be +0.59%

The people of Uruguay are predominately of European origin, many born outside Uruguay. The majority traces their lineage to Spain (3,000,000) and Italy (85,000) people from Brazil (32,000), Germany (28,000) and Russia (15,000) exist alongside some 55,000 Jews, 30,000 Argentineans, 13,000 Greeks, 28,000 Portuguese and 9823 Basques. Only some 7% of the people are mestizos (mixture of European and Amerindian peoples).

None of the original *Churra* Indians remain. (*Operation World* – Uruguay, peoples)
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

Urbanization:

Urbanization in Uruguay has reached over 90 %. The people are concentrated near the coast with only 9% rural. The principal cities include Montevideo, the capital, chief port, and economic center with a population of 1,247,920 [1985]. Salto, located on the Rio de la Plata is a commercial and shipping area specializing in the meat-salting and meatpacking industries. Salto has 80,823 people. Paysandu, population of 76,191, is also a port on the river and is important for the meatpacking and frozen-meat industries. [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+uy0060\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+uy0060)).

Language

Uruguay boasts one of the highest rates of literacy among its adult population (97.3%). The literacy rate is partially due to compulsory primary education. Education, including college and postgraduate training, is free. http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Uruguay.

Economy:

Industry, services, and tourism are beginning to replace agriculture although much of the industry depends on the agricultural sector. The meatpacking, meat-freezing industry depends on the cattle industry while the textile industries need the wool from the many sheep

The moderate climate and even distribution of rainfall make stock raising a year-round undertaking. 35% of the Uruguayan exports come in the form of meat, wool, and hides. Only 7% of the land is cultivated.

Most business is privately owned but the government operates the state railroad, electric power, telephones, and broadcasting. <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>.

Government:

By the Constitution of 1966, Uruguay has a democratic republican form of Government with an elected president and legislature. It was suspended was suspended in 1973 and re-instated in 1985. [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+uy0009\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+uy0009)).

Health and Welfare:

Uruguay is noted for its advanced social-welfare programs that cover accidents, occupational illnesses, sickness, old age, maternity, and child welfare. Laws protect families. Women and minors in employment are protected as well.

Uruguay boasted 1 physician for every 310 people and one hospital bed for every 221 persons in 1992. Life expectancy at birth was 79 years for women and 72 for men.

While Uruguay has a high standard of living for Latin America, the extensive educational and welfare systems have placed an economic strain on the country that has necessitated some restructuring and inflation reduction. [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+uy0063\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+uy0063)).

Historical Aspects

Pre-Spanish Period:

Before the arrival of the Spanish the area that is now Uruguay was populated by Amerindians, largely *Charrua* and *Chana*. These small Indian groups (probably numbering less than 10,000), who never developed the tools for farming the grasslands, lived in small bands and subsisted on food from the sea, gathering, and hunting with bolas and bows and arrows. Both the Indian groups exhibited fierce natures and through warfare expanded their hunting territories and captured women and children.

Even more than in other regions of South America, European diseases and wars decimated the Indian populations. The few Indians who survived were ultimately absorbed in the *gaucho* population. The Indian peoples in Uruguay were almost obliterated to the end that almost no indigenous Indian population remains today.

The Spanish explorer, *Juan Díaz de Solís*, entered the region in 1516. The indigenous Charrua killed the first Spanish landing party along the *Río de la Plata*. The Indians continued to resist Spanish attempts to colonize the territory during the 16th century. The Spanish were only able to establish their first permanent settlement in 1624 on the *Río Negro at Soriano*.

The Colonial Period (Spanish Portuguese Struggle):

The absence of mineral wealth in the region of the east bank of the Uruguay River (*Banda Oriental del Uruguay*) made the region unattractive to Spanish settlement. Other resources, however, existed. Cattle that had escaped from neighboring regions grazed the territory and multiplied over the years. Between 1680 and 1683, Portuguese Brazil contested Spanish ownership of the region establishing settlements, notably *Novo Colonia del Sacramento*, along the Río de la Plata opposite Buenos Aires. The Portuguese

hoped to use these settlements for trade with the Spanish settlers in Argentina and to acquire silver from Peru.

In 1723, the Spanish countered the Portuguese efforts by fortifying the area of the *Bay of Montevideo*. A Spanish expedition from Buenos Aires forced the Portuguese to abandon this region after which the Spanish founded the city of *Montevideo* in 1726. Spanish-Portuguese rivalry continued in the 18th century. This struggle ended in 1777 when the Spanish rule was settled under the jurisdiction of the viceroy of Buenos Aires.

Montevideo became the major Spanish port on the South Atlantic. In the process, *the Banda Oriental* was divided into huge unfenced ranches. In 1776 the Banda Oriental became *Viceroyalty of la Plata*, the capital of which was Buenos Aires.

Attaining National Identity (1819-1880) :

In 1810 and 1811, Uruguayan revolutionaries, led by *General José Gervasio Artigas*, along others from Buenos Aires, mounted a revolt against Spain. The Spanish governor was driven from Montevideo in 1814. This newly emancipated territory (known as the *Banda Oriental* (Eastern Shore) *del Uruguay*) remained in a weakened condition after the struggle with Spain. In 1816 the Brazilian Portuguese, noting the weakness, invaded the territory, ostensibly to restore order.

The Portuguese completed their conquest and annexed the Banda Oriental to Brazil in 1821. Uruguayans, the so-called Immortal 33, led by *Juan Antonio Lavalleja*, reasserted the independence of the country in 1825. Aided by Argentina, these Uruguayans defeated the Brazilians and won Uruguayan independence that the Brazilians recognized in 1828.

Independence and Civil War:

Finally in 1830 the *República Oriental del Uruguay* was organized. The new Republic soon divided into hostile factions based on rivalries between the leaders of the revolution. Civil war resulted in 1836 between followers of *President Manuel Oribe*, known as the *Blancos* and those of the first president, *Fructuoso Rivera*, known as the *Colorados*. The names of the factions were based on the colors of their respective white and red flags. The Colorados controlled Montevideo from 1843 until 1852. The Blancos, aided by Argentine forces, invaded Montevideo in 1852 but the Colorados, aided by Brazil and anti-Argentine forces, defeated Oribe and the Blancos and the Colorados took power. Continuing conflict erupted between these two groups in 1855. The Colorados retained and held control almost continuously after 1865. Between 1865 and 1870 Uruguay joined Brazil and Argentina in a war against Paraguay.

The Early 20th Century:

In the early 20th century, the two rival political groups changed. The Blancos became the Conservative Party made up of the rural population and the clergy. The Colorados became the Progressive Party and championed social legislation. Between 1911 and 1915, the Progressive president, *José Batlle y Ordóñez*, instituted extensive social legislation and Uruguay soon became the most progressive nation in South America.

In 1917, during World War I, Uruguay broke with Germany, seized German ships in Montevideo harbor, and leased these ships to the United States. The same year, Uruguay formed a new constitution, dividing the executive authority between the president and the national administrative council and providing for the separation of church and state. Uruguay joined the League of Nations in 1920.

In 1933 *President Gabriel Terra*, who had taken office in 1931, demanded that the Uruguayan constitution be amended to give the president wider powers. When his demands were challenged by threats of revolution, Terra established a dictatorship. In 1934 another constitution was drawn up by a constituent assembly.

During World War II (1939-1945), Uruguay severed diplomatic, financial, and economic relations with the Axis powers. In 1945 the country joined the United Nations.

Post World War II Uruguay:

Tomás Berreta, candidate of the Colorado Party and former public works minister, who was elected president in 1946. He died a few months after taking office and *Vice President Luis Batlle Berres* completed Berreta's term. *Andrés Martínez Trueba* (the Colorado Party) assumed power in the presidential and general assembly elections of 1950. Trueba sponsored a constitutional amendment in 1952 that abolished the presidency and transferred executive power to a national council of government.

In retaliation against the Uruguayan policy of granting asylum to Argentine political refugees, the *Argentine dictator Juan Perón* imposed travel and trade restrictions on Uruguay. Uruguay retaliated by severing diplomatic relations with Argentina in January 1953. Declines in wool prices and falling meat exports led to increasing unemployment and inflation. In 1956 Uruguay formed trade agreements with the People's Republic of China and other Communist countries in efforts to ease the economic situation. In spite of these measures, however, Uruguay's economy continued to deteriorate.

In 1958, after 93 years of Colorado government, the Blancos regained power in an overwhelming election victory. The new government initiated extensive economic reforms even though it faced strong leftist agitation and labor unrest. The conditions led to international charges that Uruguay was becoming a base of international communism.

A Period of Political Turmoil:

The Blancos remained in power until 1966 when they, aided by the Colorados, enacted a measure to return to the presidential system. This measure was approved by referendum in November 1966. The Colorados won ensuing general elections, and *Oscar Daniel Gestido*, a retired air force general, became the elected president. The vice president, *Jorge Pacheco Areco*, succeeded Gestido and his anti-inflationary policies (actually capitalistic plans) led to widespread unrest. A guerrilla organization, the *Tupamaros*, increased efforts to overthrow the government and destroy capitalism. From June 1968 until March 1969, Uruguay remained under modified martial law. *Nelson Rockefeller*, then governor of New York State, made a fact-finding visit to Uruguay in June 1969 and faced violent demonstrations. At this time, Pacheco imposed a modified state of siege.

Elections in 1971, produced a virtual tie between the Colorado candidate, *Juan María Bordaberry*, and the Blanco candidate. The *Electoral Court* proclaimed Bordaberry president and he began a five-year term on March 1, 1972. The Tupamaros increased their violence. Kidnappings and killings became common. Widespread arrests did little to quiet the nation as around 150 Tupamaros escaped in two separate prison breaks. In April 1972 the Uruguayan Congress declared a state of internal war and suspended constitutional guarantees. Over 35,000 police and military searched for guerrilla hideouts. The state of war was lifted on July 11, 1972, but constitutional guarantees continued in suspension until 1973.

Bordaberry came under pressure from both the Blancos and from dissident factions of his own party. Labor reacted to the government's stringent economic and social policies with strikes throughout 1972. Inflation soared and the currency was devalued ten times in that year.

In February 1973 Bordaberry yielded a measure of his executive authority to the armed forces, which had become more and more powerful because of success in their action against the Tupamaros. This shared authority resulted in conflict with Congress which eventuated in Bordaberry dissolving the legislature and replacing it with a 25-member appointed Council of State, dominated by the military. The Communist-led *National Labor Confederation (CNT)* responded with a general strike that the government broke after violent confrontations in 1973. The government ended the autonomy of the unions and banned the CNT. In the following years the military extended its control to most of the country's institutions.

The armed forces desired a gradual return to democracy but in 1976, Bordaberry canceled scheduled elections. The eventual result was the fall of Bordaberry in June 1976 and a new National Council of 25 civilians and 21 military officers elected *Aparicio Méndez*, a former minister of public health, as president for a five-year term. As one of its first acts the Mendez government revoked the political rights of people who had been active in politics between 1966 and 1973.

While some of the banned politicians regained their political rights after a few years, many remained dispossessed until 1980 when both the Blanco and Colorado parties were again legalized. A new constitution was submitted to a popular referendum in November 1980 but was rejected. The government then canceled the scheduled elections. September 1, 1981, *General Gregorio Alvarez* was installed as president for a term expiring in March 1985. Political parties that were sanctioned by the military conducted internal elections in 1982. In the period of turmoil (1973-1985), over 150 Uruguayans were executed and some 200 others “disappeared.”

The Return to Civilian Government:

The Presidential elections that were held in November 1984 were subject to veto power by the armed forces who controlled the choice of nominees. The winner, *Julio María Sanguinetti* (the Colorado Party) took office on March 1, 1985 and the government granted an amnesty to all members of the military accused of human rights violations from 1973 to 1985. A referendum in April 1989 upheld this amnesty.

In November 1989 *Luis Alberto Lacalle* of the National Party was elected president. Economic stagnation and rising inflation led him to implement an austerity program including plans to privatize state-run companies. Labor leaders protested by calling a series of general strikes. Former president *Julio María Sanguinetti*, a candidate for the Colorado Party, won the presidential election of 1994. In legislative elections that same year, *the Broad Front*, a leftist party that includes communist and socialist views, made significant inroads against the more traditional Blanco and Colorado parties.

In 1999, the Colorado Party candidate, *Jose Battle* defeated the Broad Front candidate, *Tabre Vasquez* but the left groups made further gains. In March 2000, Battle replaced *Sanguinetti* and promised to work toward national unity and strengthened economy. Uruguay remains a secular state striving to reach political and economic stability.

Uruguay’s secularization is demonstrated by the fact that the nation celebrates Christmas as Family Day and call Easter Holy Week Tourism Week. Two of three marriages end in divorce and Uruguay has the highest abortion rate in Latin America. In 1980, 37 percent of the people claimed to be atheist.

[http://leweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field\(DOCID+uy0012\)](http://leweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field(DOCID+uy0012)).

People Groups in Uruguay

Uruguay’s population is highly European in nature as the Amerindians (Charrua and Chua) were either eliminated by death or by absorption into the Spanish settler populations.

Name	Number	Language	Religion	Notes
Uruguayan People	2928,000	people in the main speak Spanish but some 28,000 Uruguayans also speak Portuguese Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	30% non-religious, 7% atheists, Baha’is, Jehovah Witnesses	93.1% of people are of Spanish and Italian origins often mixed between various European peoples Denominations: Roman Catholic, Assembly of God, Seven Day Adventist, Wesleyan, Salvation Army, International Church of the Four Square Gospel, Church of the Nazarene, Waldensian, Confederacao Evangelica do Brasil, Apostolic Church, Church of God, Avante (Brazil). Missions: IMB, Team Expansion, Lester Sumrall Evangelistic Association
Mulatto	55,666 mixed Anglo & African peoples	Spanish. Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	7% Afro-American Spiritists (Umbanda) 10% non-religious,	Mixed race Uruguayans Denominations: Roman Catholic, Assembly of God, Seven Day Adventist, Methodists Church in the Caribbean and the Americas.

			Jehovah Witnesses	
Italians	85,136	Italian language--usually along with Spanish. Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	9% non-religious Jehovah Witnesses	Immigrants from Italy. Denominations: Roman Catholic, Waldensian, Assembly of God, Seven Day Adventist, United Pentecostal Church International. Missions: Jesuits, Franciscians
Jewish	57,000	mostly speak Spanish Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	30% non-religious	blend into the Uruguayan society, annual immigration of practicing Jews from Germany, Russia, Middle East and Eastern Europe
Brazilian	29,470	Portuguese Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	94/95% Adherents, Jehovah Witnesses	Divided between Mulato (9,823) a mixed race people. Denominations: Roman Catholic, Seven Day Adventist, Salvation Army. Anglo (19,647) who expatriates from Brazil involved in business. Denominations: Roman Catholic, Assembly of God, Wesleyan Church, Seven Day Adventist, New Testament Missionary Union. Missions: National Association of Free Will Baptist & International Mission Board, SBC.
Galician	39,294	Galician. Have the Bible, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	70% Adherents	Expatriates from Western Spain. Denominations: Roman Catholic Missions: Jesuits
German	29,470	Standard German Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	88% Adherents Jehovah Witnesses	Expatriates from Germany. Denominations: Roman Catholic, Indian Evangelical Mission (Mennonite), International Missions, New Apostolic Church, Seven Day Adventist, Evangelical Covenant Church.
Argentineans	29,470	Spanish. Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	10% non-religious Jehovah Witnesses	Emigrants, expatriates involved in business. Denominations: Roman Catholic, Methodists Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, United Pentecostal Church International, Seven Day Adventist, Evangelical Covenant Church, New Testament Missionary Union. Missions: International Mission Board, SBC.
Spaniard	29,470	Spanish, Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	92% Adherents	Emigrants from Spain and long time Uruguay residents. Denominations: Roman Catholic Missions: International Mission Board, SBC
Greek	13,098	Greek. Have the Bible, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	91% Adherents	Immigrants from Greece & Cyprus involved in trade & business. Denominations: Greek Orthodox Church

French	19,647	French. Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	77% Adherents 23% non-religious	Expatriates from France involved in business. Denominations: Roman Catholic. Missions: Jesuits & Franciscians
Russians	13,098	Russian. Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	78.6% Adherents 23% non-religious	Refugees from Russia since 1917. Denominations: Russian Orthodox Church, Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia, Indian Evangelical Mission (Mennonite), International Missions, Novy Izrail.
Basque	9,823	many maintain their Basque language. Have the Bible, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	92% Adherents	Strong Catholics from Spain. Denominations: Roman Catholic. Missions: Jesuits
Black	9,830	Spanish. Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	83% Adherents 7% Umbanda Jehovah Witnesses	Afro-American Spiritualists. Denominations: Roman Catholic, Episcopal Church of USA, Methodists Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, Seven Day Adventist, and Evangelical Covenant Church
Platine Italian	6,549	Language unknown	85% Adherents 10% non-religious Jehovah Witnesses	Settlers with their own culture in River Plate area. Denominations: Roman Catholic, Assembly of God, Wesleyan Church, Seven Day Adventist, and United Pentecostal Church International
Chilean Mestizo	3,274	Spanish. Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	89% Adherents Jehovah Witnesses	Mestizos immigrants from Chile Denominations: Evangelical Pentecostal Church of Chile, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Seven Day Adventist, and United Pentecostal Church International
Serbo-Croatian Speakers	4,912 Serbs & 3,275 Croats	Maintain at least some usage of the Serbo-Croatian language. Have Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	C - 82.99% Adherents 10% non-religious S - 89.99% Adherents 17% non-religious	Croats – refugees from the former Yugoslavia. Denominations: Roman Catholic Serbs – refugees from Serbia Denominations: Serbian Orthodox Church
Slovak	3,276	Primary language is Slovak. Have Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	78.99% Adherents 20 % non-religious	Refugees from Slovakia Denominations: Roman Catholic
Polish	3,256	Use the Polish language along with the Spanish. Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio	90.99% Adherents 9% non-religious	Refugees from Poland Denominations: Roman Catholic, Indian Evangelical Mission (Mennonite), International Missions

		recordings & Jesus Film		
Czech	4,912	Czech. Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	78.99% Adherents 20% non-religious	Refugees from CSSR after 1940 Denominations: Roman Catholic, Moravian Church
Bulgar	1,637	Bulgarian. Have Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	70.98% Adherents 25% non-religious	Refugees from Bulgaria Denominations: Bulgarian Orthodox Church
Assyrian	3,274	Speak Assyrian Neo-Aramaic language. Have the Bible, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	84.99% Adherents	Refugees from the Middle East. Denominations: Ancient Church of the East, Roman Catholic
Ukrainian	1,965	Ukrainian, Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	78% Adherents 20% non-religious	Refugees from the USSR after 1917. Denominations: Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church Missions: Ukrainian Orthodox Church of USA
Armenian	1,113	Armenian speaking. Have Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	80% Adherents 18% non-religious	Refugees from the 1915 genocide. Denominations: Armenian Apostolic Church, Roman Catholic Missions: Armenian Missionary Association of America
USA Anglo	1,637	English. Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	78% Adherents 16% non-religious Mormons Jehovah Witnesses Church of Christ, Scientist	Citizens of the USA are expatriates involved in business. Denominations: Seven Day Adventist, Episcopal Church of USA, Evangelical Covenant Church, Lutheran Church of America Missions: International Mission Board, SBC

Hungarian	982	Hungarian, Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	80.98% Adherents 15% non-religious Jehovah Witnesses	Refugees from Hungary after 1945 & 1956. Denominations: Hungarian Reformed Church of Uruguay, Seven Day Adventist, Roman Catholic
Amerindian	327	Spanish, Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	80% Adherents 15% non-religious	Scattered members of from Amerindian tribes, mostly located in urban areas, Denominations: Roman Catholic
Han Chinese, Mandarin	158	Chinese, Mandarin, Have the Bible, Christian Radio, Gospel Audio recordings & Jesus Film	50.3% Adherents 40% Buddhists/ Chinese folk-religionists 10% non-religious	Long-time immigrants from China. Denominations: Roman Catholic
Other Minor Peoples	3,337		15% non-religious 15% Muslims	USA Blacks (NBCUSA), British, Portuguese, other Latin Americans, other Europeans, other Asians,

Religion in Uruguay

Secularism and Non-religion :

Uruguay, the most secular country in South America, lies under the domination of non-religion and atheism that hold the major part of the minds and hearts of the people who are from largely European backgrounds. The European immigrants brought with them the anti-clericalism and opposition to the Catholic Church characteristic of their European countries. The high literacy rate and the separation of church and state (formalized in 1916) contribute to the secularization of the people. Uruguay represents the least Catholic and least Christian and most secular of any Latin American country. The 24.64 % of the people who claim to be non-religious (*liberates*) number over 822,000 persons.

Spiritism:

The secular and non-religious nature of the people of Uruguay has opened the door during times of political and economic disruption to the entrance of Brazilian spiritism. While Afro-American spiritism had flourished primarily among the Blacks and Mulattoes before 1973, the entrance of the African-Brazilian religions such as Umbanda, around 1973-74 began making vast inroads in Uruguayan society especially among the lower classes in the large cities. Spiritism numbers some 430,000 adherents or 12.86 % of the population. Over 200,000 spiritists are reported to live in Montevideo and the spiritists groups have more worship centers in Uruguay than there are Protestant churches. Numerous *terreiros* (cult centers) can now be found throughout Uruguay. The spiritist religions are growing at an alarming + 6.7% rate. The spread of Brazilian cultic religions shows a spiritual hunger on the part of the people of Uruguay.

New Age:

New Age thinking also has filled the religious gap among the agnostic middle-class groups and the intelligentsia.

Baha'i:

The Baha'i religion has shown marked growth since its beginning in Uruguay around 1964. By 1973, over 23 Baha'i assemblies have formed and a membership of over 65,000

Judaism :

Jewish religion has increased in the 20th century to number over 60,000 adherents today. Jewish religion now shows a + 0.7 % increase

Marginal Christian groups (Church of Later Day Saints, Jehovah's Witnesses, Unification Church):

These non evangelical groups show a + 3.0 % increase that compares to 0.8% increase among Protestants. The Mormons report 153 congregations with 52,000 members and 78,000 adherents. The Jehovah's Witnesses claim 135 congregations with 10,422 members and 22,000 adherents. Only the independent New Apostolic Church with 170 congregations and 25,500 members and the Assemblies of God, USA with 129 congregations and 9340 members compare with these marginal groups. The Unification Church (Moonies) has made advance primarily through capital investment.

Christianity in Uruguay

Roman Catholic:

Catholic ministry in Uruguay began in 1616 when Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries arrived. The Jesuits began developing communal villages (Reductions) among the Indians, supposedly to evangelize them but actually aiding in the of the tribes people. The Reductions were destroyed in 1767 after the expulsion of the Jesuits from Uruguay. A Catholic diocese was established in 1878 and this organization became an archdiocese in 1897.

While the early Catholic Church sought evangelistic goals, the Catholics in recent years have turned attention towards problems of development in the urban ghettos. This change can be marked from the meeting in Medellin and the Papal Encyclical "*Populorum progressio*" which centered on the needs of societies.

The Roman Catholic Church claims 49.59 % of the people of Uruguay (1,655,000) but admits a growth rate of - 0.1 %. Evidence leads to the conclusion that less than 40% of Catholics (some 40,000) in Uruguay actually attend mass. These Catholics are for all practical purposes non-religious. For example, a survey in 1965 showed that in Salto province (population over 60,000) only 10.4 % of Catholics actually attended Mass. Most alarming, only 4.4 % of men attended. Much the same results showed for other areas of Uruguay. Now, as many as 200,000 baptized Catholics claim to be disaffiliated with the Church.

Non-Roman Catholic Church Groups:

Evangelical churches have struggled to impact Uruguayan society and report little advance until recent years. All non-Catholic churches (not counting Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses) combined number just less than 125,000 members. Tragically, sectarian groups (Unification Church, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses) number almost one-half this many people. Pentecostals and Baptists have seen some growth since 1986.

Independent Churches The larger church groups all rest inside the independent category

New Apostolic Church serves primarily among German Immigrants and boasts 170 congregations, a membership of 25,564, and adherents 34,000.

The Church is the Answer Tabernacle reports 23 congregations with over 8000 members and 17,500 adherents

The Mission Vida has 50 congregations, 4000 members, and 8,800 adherents.

Protestant Type Churches

Methodists (*Iglesia Metodista en el Uruguay*) began in Uruguay in 1838 but closed due to civil war. The mission reopened in 1878. The Methodists in Uruguay now report 47 congregations, 2730 members, and some 6000 adherents. These churches have produced some of the finest leaders—both in Uruguay and over all of Latin America.

The Waldensian Church (*Iglesia Valdense del Rio de la Plata*) began in 1856 with the arrival of people from Italy. In 1877, the first pastor was appointed. The church now is led by many lay pastors. The Church has 25 congregations, 3165 members, and 13,700 adherents.

The Assemblies of God (USA) (*Asambleas de Dios USA*) point to 161 congregations, 9340 members, and 18,600 adherents. This Church group began work in Uruguay in 1944.

Assemblies of God (Finland) has 79 congregations with 3116 members and 7790 adherents

The Church of God (Cleveland) reports 42 congregations, 3120 members, and 7800 adherents. This group began its work in Uruguay in 1940

The Baptist Convention (*Convencion Evangelica Bautista del Uruguay*) From its beginnings from Argentina in 1911, the Baptist churches have 60 congregations, with 4554 members, and 11,000 adherents. Some 39 Southern Baptist Convention missionaries supplement the group's work

The Church of the Nazarene (*Iglesia del Nazareno*) has 25 congregations, 1450 members, and 4500 adherents. This work began in 1949.

Seventh Day Adventists (*Iglesia Adventista del Septimo Dia*) Working in Uruguay since 1895, the Seventh Day Adventist group now has 45 congregations, 4079 members, and 8159 adherents.

Some 60 other denominations report 825 congregations with 58,000 members and 121,000 adherents.

Missiological Implications

1. Churches should take full advantage of the increasing spiritual hunger in Uruguay that shows in the rapid spread of the Africo-Brazilian religions in the country. This spread of Umbanda, other spiritists movements, and New Age thinking, all demonstrate an awakening spiritual hunger that evangelicals should seek to satisfy. The years of small harvest may well be past if evangelicals can find the key to fruitful proclamation in Uruguay.
2. Churches should seek to proclaim a message to combat the secular and anti-clerical attitudes that exist among the people of Uruguay. Uruguayans greatly need the Gospel contentment and spiritual health.
3. Churches should seek answers as to why the marginal Christian groups (Mormons, Moonies, Adventists) report so many more members and such a higher growth rate
4. Churches should continue in cooperative efforts such as Cooperation 2000 (sponsored by DAWN with the goal of 2000 new congregations by 2005) and the Evangelical Alliance (that hopes to double the number of congregations between 1998 and 2005). Churches should strive to work together to reach these goals.

5. Churches should emphasize the method of starting new congregations—especially among the various ethnic peoples.
6. Churches should emphasize evangelistic and church starting ministries among the less-reached peoples—the upper classes who live along Montevideo’s coasts, the increasing poor classes, the Jews, who are concentrated in the capital, Montevideo, and the many immigrant groups
7. Missionary groups should seek ways to join hands with local Christian groups to provide leadership training, Christian literature, special programs (concerts, drama, films), and emphases on church starting.
8. Churches and Christian organizations should continue the significant ministry by way of television and also increase the witness through radio (Uruguay is better only than Cuba in Latin America in the provision of Christian radio ministry)