

Mission Atlas Project

Mexico

Estados Unidos Mexicanos

Basic Facts

Name:

Conventional long form: United Mexican States (*Estados Unidos Mexicanos*)

Population:

Estimates range from 98,881,000 (2000-Mexico Gov.) to 101,879,171 (July 2001-CIA). The largest population group, according to CIA statistics, is between the ages of 15 – 64 yrs. (62.28%), while the two other groups are listed, age 0 – 14 yrs. (33.32%) and 65 and over (4.4%) respectively. Mexico's growth rate is listed at 1.5%, and the average life expectancy is 71.76 yrs.

Population growth is expected to produce a population of 112,890,608 by 2010 and 130,196,156 by 2025.

A significant amount of the population lives outside the country, particularly within the United States. The recent trade relations between the two countries and Canada have played an important role in the migration of the people of Mexico.

Location:

Mexico is typically known to be in Central America. The country shares borders with the United States in the north and Belize and Guatemala in the south. The Pacific Ocean and Gulf of California are coastal areas on the west, and the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea on the east.

Mexico is located atop three tectonic plates that cover the globe. This makes Mexico susceptible to earthquakes and volcanic activity. Two of these plates grind against each other, which creates a slip fault at the southern end of the well-known San Andreas Fault.

Land Boundaries

The northern border totals 3,326 kilometers, and combined southern border totals 1,120 kilometers. Mexico's western coastal border totals 7,338 kilometers, and 2,805 kilometers on the eastern side.

Terrain

Mountains extend into central Mexico and create two different plateau areas. A large high plain area is part of an extension of the plains and deserts of the United States. In southern Mexico extensions of the rain forests of Guatemala or Belize thrive.

Climate

The Tropic of Cancer divides the country into temperate and tropical zones at the twenty-fourth parallel. Northern locations are generally cooler than tropical zones. In the south temperatures are more constant, but vary due to changes in elevation.

At 1,000 meters and below moderate conditions prevail in northern low-lying areas that experience hot and humid conditions in the summer, with average temperatures between

20°C and 24°C. South of the twenty-fourth parallel the median temperatures prevail at 24°C to 28°C with only a difference of 5° between summer and winter.

Elevations between 1,000 meters and 2,000 meters experience median temperatures of 16°C and 20°C. In the south there are more constant pleasant temperatures year round, however in the north there are more variations of seasons.

Areas above 2,000 meters average between 8°C and 12°C. Mexico City averages right at 15°C throughout the year. In January, the coldest month, median temperatures are 19°C and 6°C, and in May, the warmest month, they average 26°C and 12°C.

Mexico's location in the hurricane belt causes concern for the coastal areas from June through November. The west coast receives fewer threats of hurricane activity than the east coast. Hurricanes on the east coast have been known to cause significant building damage and some loss of life. Along with the high winds from the storms there is also potential for heavy flooding in the low-lying coastal areas.

Economy:

The private sector dominates Mexico's free market economy with industry and agriculture. Under the Zedillo administration there was significant privatization and competition decreasing the number of state-owned enterprises. Recovery in the economy between 1996 – 2000 was led by a strong export sector. This recovery has not changed the disparity in income distribution. Approximately 20% of the top earners in the country still account for over 50% of income.

NAFTA tripled trading with the US and Canada. To help lessen the dependence on the US, Mexico has completed agreements with European, Middle East, South American, Asian, and other Latin American countries.

GDP-real growth rate – 7.1% (2000 est.)

GDP-per capita - \$9,100 (2000 est.)

GDP-composition by sector – agriculture, 5%; industry, 27%; services, 68% (2000 est.)

Inflation rate – 9% (2000 est.)

Labor force-by occupation – agriculture, 20%; industry, 24%; services 56% (1998)

Unemployment – 2.2% (2000)

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

Government:

Mexico operates under a federal republic. Vicente Fox Quesada is both chief of state and head of government. The president appoints his cabinet, however appointment of attorney general requires consent of the senate. The presidential election is by popular vote for a six-year term. National Congress consisting of 128 seats, and the Federal Chamber of Deputies with 500 seats make up the bicameral legislative branch. The Supreme Court of Justice consisting of judges appointed by the president with consent by the senate handles judicial matters.

Mexico is divided into 31 states and 1 federal district. Legal voting age is 18, which is universal and compulsory but not enforced. There is a mixture of US constitutional theory and civil law system, with judicial review of legislative acts.

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html>

Society:

Mexicans depend heavily on interpersonal relationships rather than bureaucracy and other impersonal relationships. The three divisions of these relationships are: *parentela* members, *compadres*, and *cuates*. All of these categories expect differing degrees of loyalty and commitment to the other party involved. Blood descent, traced equally through paternal and maternal lines, is the primary tie of all relationships.

Within the *parentela*, it is common for one to claim to have dozens of uncles and aunts and cousins from both sides of the family. It is easy for everyone in the *parentela* to identify the degrees of each relationship within the family. Many families rely on *compadres* to extend their support system. This part of the system involves a man and woman who serve as godparents for a person's child. These relationships many times cut across social classes. The third part of the societies support system is the *cuatismo*. This relationship involves a group of men, for instance, that share common interests and can be trusted with confidential information.

There is increasing change in attitude, especially among youth and more educated and upper class, towards relationships with non-family members. The slow acceptance of cultural differences has given rise to this new attitude.

Since the 1970s the role of women in Mexican society has also seen a dramatic change. More and more women are becoming part of the workforce. This acceptance has also led to changes within the family unit. In many homes men and women are sharing the responsibilities of household tasks.

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/mxtoc.html>

Urbanization:

In 1990 around 23% of the population lived in cities with 100,000 to 1 million people. 71% of the population is said to be living in communities with 2,500 residents. Mexico City, with a population estimated as high as 22.5 million, has become one of the world's most populous cities.

Literacy:

Around 89% of the population is reported to be able to read and write, however, the functional literacy rate is much lower than this figure.

Language:

Spanish is the official language of the country. At least twelve distinct Mexican linguistic families also exist and are used. Mexico has 62 living indigenous languages, i.e. a language that is used everyday. The number of languages in Mexico is second only to India that has 65. There are more than forty subgroups, and over ninety individual languages. *Náhuatl*, the *Aztec* language, is spoken by almost 23% of all native speakers. Other major languages include: *Maya*, the language of 14% of all Indians, is used southeast from the *Yucatan Peninsula* to *Chiapas*; *Zapotec*, the tongue of 7% of all Indians, is used in eastern part of *Oaxaca*; *Mixtec*, spoken by 7% of all Indians, is found in *Oaxaca* and *Guerrero*; *Otomí*, the language of 5% of all Indians is spoken in *México*,

Hidalgo, and *Querétaro*; *Tzeltal*, used by 5% of Indians, is spoken in *Chiapas*; *Tzotzil*, used by only 4% of Indians, is spoken in *Chiapas*.

The region of *Oaxaca* has the most diverse linguistic pattern with twelve different Indian languages.

[http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstty:@field\(DOCID+mx0044\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstty:@field(DOCID+mx0044))

<http://www.elbalero.gob.mx/kids/about/html/indigenous/home.html>

Religion:

Some estimates show that 90-95% of the population is Roman Catholic, which gives a number of approximately 90 million residents. Other reports point to 89.5% of the population as Roman Catholic. Many claim that less than 10% of that number actually attends mass regularly. Other reports place less than 5% of the Catholic population as faithful to the religion, large shares of the Amerindian population, while baptized into the Catholic Church, still practice their pre-conquest religions.

Protestants are identified as 6.20% of the population with a total of 6,128,000.

Independents number 1,794,000 at 1.81% of the population. Anglicans claim 23,000 people or 0.02% of the population.

Non-Christian, church-type groups, Jehovah's Witnesses and Latter day Saints (Mormons) claim as high as 2.29 % of the population and over 2,266,000 adherents (over 900,000 members and 14,000 congregations)

Religions such as Islam (0.26 %) with 257,091 members and a growth rate of + 2.4%, Jewish (.05 %) with 49,441 members and a growth rate of -5.0%, and Baha'i (0.04 %) with 39,533 members but a growth rate of + 7.7% total slightly less than 1% of the population.

Non-religious people number as high as 3.60 % of the people or around 3,559,726 persons and show a + 1.6% annual growth rate.

Johnstone, www.bmm.org/

Historical Aspects

The history of Mexico begins sometime before 8000 B.C., when unknown Indian tribes migrated from the north. These hunters lived a more nomadic life following the herds of large animals that they relied on for food. Five hundred years later the climate became drier, and the herds died off leaving the tribes to live on smaller animals and wild plants. Close to 7000 B.C., Indian tribes who lived in the area that is known as *Puebla* developed farming techniques. The most important food for them was corn. Other vegetables they cultivated were avocados, beans, peppers, squashes, and tomatoes that provided for their daily needs. Permanent settlements began to emerge as they continued to develop this lifestyle.

The Pre-Classic or Formative Period is dated from 1500 BC-300 AD. The Formative Period begins with the first appearance of pottery and ends with the rise of the *Teotihuacan* and *Mayan* civilizations. It was an epoch marked by the emergence of effective agriculture, the establishment of human settlements and the development of fundamental arts.

The earliest site of the period discovered so far is *Chiapa de Corzo*, located in the *Grijalva Depression* of *Chiapas* and estimated to have been inhabited between 1500

and 100 BC. Among other sites of great antiquity (c. 1000-300 BC) are *El Arbolillo*, *Zacatenco*, *Tlatilco* and *Cuicuilco* in the Valley of Mexico, and *hupicuario* in the state of *Guanajuato*.

The first significant civilization to develop in Mesoamerica was that of the Olmecs. Considered by some to be the mother culture of pre-Hispanic Mexico, the "rubber people" venerated the jaguar as supernatural. Olmec artifacts bearing images of the were-jaguar, distinguished by the combined physical characteristics of humans and felines, have been found scattered throughout Mexico.

The *Olmec* culture flourished from around 1200 to 300 BC in central Mexico and parts of Guatemala, Honduras and Costa Rica. Olmec works of art, made of stone, clay, and jade, represent the first sophisticated artistic style thus far discovered in the Americas. The name derives from the Aztec word "Olman" ("Rubber Country") for the topical lowlands near the Gulf of Mexico, where the Olmec archaeological sites are found. It is said that at the time of the Conquest, rubber trees were plentiful. The *Olmec* Indians receive credit for developing a counting system and calendar between 1200 B.C. and 400 B.C.

The remains of Olmec ceremonial centers are found in the humid lowlands near the Gulf Coast in the states of *Veracruz* and *Tabasco*. *San Lorenzo*, the collective name of three related sites in the *Coatzacoalcos River* basin, was an important Olmec political-religious center that flourished between 1200 and 900 BC. It is important for the discovery of the first conduit drainage system known in the Americas and six colossal basalt heads each measuring eight to nine feet in height and weighing 20-40 tons. These heads were carved from stone obtained 50 miles or more from the site. Other Olmec stone heads have been found in other areas. Presumably the stone works were somehow floated via waterways to the sites they command at the Olmec center. The center appears to have been deliberately destroyed around 400-300 BC. The Olmecs were apparently the first Mesoamerican people to fathom the concept of zero, develop a calendar, and create a hieroglyphic writing system. These intellectual achievements, along with Olmec myths and rituals, were influential in the subsequent *Maya*, *Zapotec*, *Mixtec*, and *Aztec* cultures. www.anthroarcheart.org, www.geocities.com, www.mexican-embassy.dk/history.htm.

The highlands and forests in the south along with Mexico's fertile south-central valley near Lake Texcoco became the location of many large farm villages around 2000 B.C. As villages continued to grow distant communities developed along with new classes of people. By 1000 B.C., flat-topped pyramids with temples became a part of religious centers, such as *Cuicuilco* located near modern-day Mexico City. The people worshiped rain and sun gods, seeking help with their farming. From the Valley of Mexico towns extended coast-to-coast southward down to what we know as Guatemala.

Between A.D. 250 and 900, the Classic Period, several Indian civilizations thrived.

Teotihuacan was home to pyramids meant for worship to the sun and moon gods. *Maya* Indians built beautiful edifices out of limestone as part of southern Mexico's and northern Central America's religious centers. *Monte Alban*, the capital of the *Zapotec* Indians, was built on a flattened mountaintop in the state now known as Oaxaca. Low crop production for large populations, attack by neighboring cities, and possible revolt by farmers are a few of many unclear reasons these classic civilizations fell. It is known, however, that wild *Chichimec* tribes destroyed many cities in the north.

During the 900's the *Toltec* Indians established an empire, north of what we know as Mexico City, in the city of *Tula*. *Chichimec* tribes from the north destroyed the *Toltec* empire around 1200. The famed *Aztec* Indians built the last and greatest Indian empire.

On an island in *Lake Texoco* stood Tenochtitlan the capital of the Aztec empire. By 1519, the arrival of the Spaniards, Tenochtitlan and its suburbs were said to have a population of about 300,000. *Hernando Cortes* led an expedition with approximately 650 Spaniards from Cuba in February of 1519. *Veracruz* was founded, as Cortes defeated large Indian armies. In 1520 the Aztec revolted, and found and killed hundreds of Spaniards trying to sneak out of the city, during *la noche triste* (the sad night). By August of 1521 Cortes and his army had taken control of what was left of the Aztec empire. For 300 years the Spanish ruled Mexico. *Friar Bartolomé de las Casas* is known for protecting indigenous peoples. His efforts culminated with the *New Laws of 1542* that abolished slavery and recognized human rights and their right to property.

The first attempt at revolt against Spain was led by *Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla* in 1810. Indians and mestizos gathered at his church in the town of *Dolores*. He delivered a speech, *Grito de Dolores*, in which he called for a rebellion. Today, on the evening of September 15, the president rings a bell and delivers the same speech, as Independence Day is celebrated on September 16. After Hidalgo was executed, another attempt at rebellion was led by *Jose Maria Morelos y Pavon*. After a short attempt at rebellion Morelos was also executed.

As liberals in Spain revolted, in 1820, Mexican groups saw their chance for revolution. *Augustin de Iturbide* and *Vicente Guerrero* combined rebel and military forces. The last of the loyal Spanish officials withdrew from Mexico in 1821, and Mexico became independent. In 1824, *Guadalupe Victoria* became the first president of the *New Mexican Republic*.

Mexico saw many attempts at revolt, by military men, in the mid-1800's. *General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna* was one of the men who led such a revolt. He became an important political figure, and was president 11 times between 1833 and 1855. In 1834 he took control of the temporary government and became dictator. He gave himself more power, which upset the people from the United States who had settled in Texas, which was at that time a part of Mexico. *Santa Anna*, in the *Battle of the Alamo*, defeated a Texas force, however forces from Texas defeated and captured him at *San Jacinto*. The Mexican government did not recognize the treaty Santa Anna signed to give Texas independence. Mexico still claimed Texas even after Texas joined the United States in 1845.

In May 1846 the United States declared war on Mexico. Santa Anna fought *General Zachary Taylor* at the *Battle of Buena Vista near Saltillo*. *General Winfield Scott* led other U.S. forces at *Veracruz*. The Mexican War was ended with the signing of the *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* in February 1848. Mexico received \$15 million from the U.S. while Texas down to the Rio Grande was recognized as part of the United States.

Benito Juarez led the liberal movement, which took over the government in 1855. The federal system of government was brought back with a new Constitution in 1857. A conservative revolt was the result of the new reforms. A civil war followed Juarez' leaving Mexico City to set up a government in Veracruz. The liberal armies of Juarez defeated the conservatives and Juarez returned to Mexico City in 1861.

Under the leadership of *Napoleon III*, Mexico City was taken over by French troops in 1863. *Maximilian* was named emperor of Mexico. The United States then pressured France to remove its troops in 1866. With the fear of war in Europe, Napoleon withdrew from Mexico. The country was united behind the liberals, and Juarez resumed presidency

in 1867 until his death in 1872. *Porfirio Diaz*, who overthrew Juarez's successor in 1876, ruled as dictator from 1876 to 1880, and from 1884 to 1911.

Francisco I. Madero issued a call for revolution in November 1910. The revolution brought much bloodshed and power struggles. *Victoriano Huerta* seized power in 1913, and Madero was murdered. *Venustiano Carranza* led revolutionaries who opposed Huerta. In 1914, with U.S. forces occupying Veracruz, Carranza's forces took control of Mexico City, forcing Huerta to leave the country. More power struggles developed as those who wanted a more extreme reform opposed Carranza's plans. *Francisco "Pancho" Villa* and *Emiliano Zapata* are the two main extremists who fought with the armies of Carranza. By 1916 Carranza's power had grown, so he called a convention to prepare a new Constitution. In 1917 the Constitution was adopted, that combined many extreme reforms with the liberal ideas of Carranza. In 1920 *General Alvaro Obregon*, who eventually became president, killed Carranza.

Throughout the 1900's, Mexico has been through many social and economic changes. The Catholic Church has been allowed to run many schools as long as they did not get involved with political affairs. Economic ups and downs have also taken place in Mexico. The economy grew almost continuously until the 1970's. It was at this time Mexico felt the effects of the worldwide problems of recession and inflation. In an effort to stabilize the economy, Mexico's currency was devalued twice. Recently the economy has begun to show signs of strengthening again. Despite the progress of the economy, much of the population lives in poverty. The biggest change the country has seen is in political reform.

In 2000 *Vicente Fox Quesada*, National Action Party candidate became the first non-PRI candidate elected president in 71 years. Mexico will need time to adapt to this change of power.

Encarta, Britannica, www.mexican-embassy.dk/history.htm

People/People Groups

According to *The Joshua Project*, Mexico has 390 People Groups. Listed below are families to which the People Groups belong. The list is arranged from greatest population to the least. Many of these people groups have migrated from foreign countries.

Approximately 30% of Mexico's modern population is Amerindian or predominantly Amerindian, meaning their blood heritage goes back to the days before the Spanish conquest in 1521. It is most likely that 18% are pure indigenous – 18 million souls.

www.odci-gov/mexico

Large Population Blocks

Mexicans, Spanish-Speaking

The great majority of people in Mexico (81,000,000) can be classified as Spanish-speaking Mexicans. They live scattered throughout the country and most are claimed by the Roman Catholic Church

Detribalized Amerindian

Over 10,390,000 persons in Mexico stem from Amerindian roots but are removed from tribal cultures. They are mostly urbanites and many are slum dwellers religiously they follow Roman Catholicism, at least in name.

Nahuas

Over 2,472,411 who can be classed as *Nahuas*, the original *Aztecs*, live in Mexico today. In fact, Nahuas comprise the largest sector of the indigenous population – approximately 50%. Nahuas now live in 28 of Mexico's 32 states but are most represented in the area extending from northwest Mexico to the southeastern part of the country. The *Nahuatl* language is still spoken by over a million people.

The original Aztecs were a wandering band that built perhaps the strongest culture in Mexico. The official center of Aztec leadership was largely in the area that is now Mexico City, but its territories, language and culture reached throughout the peoples of central and southern Mexico, and into the Central American countries of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and Salvador. Classic Aztec language is considered to be one of the great Native American languages, and the leading members of Aztec society and royalty were considered great poets and writers who celebrated the beauty of their world and culture through this vibrant and elegant tongue.

The elegance and simplicity of the *Nahuatl* language system developed by the ancient Aztecs is rich with metaphor deeply connected to the seasons, rituals, and beliefs of agricultural indigenous life. Nahuatl language is as simple and flexible it is sophisticated and poetic. Classic Aztec literature reflects the unique way the Aztecs saw the world around them. The basic structure of Nahuatl allows it to become a common means of communicating among many dozens of tribes and thousands of peoples across broad territories and centuries.

The dominant religion of Nahuas people today is Roman Catholic.

Mixteco

1,239,273; settled in the state of Oaxaca; Roman Catholic, Church of Nazarene

Mayas

1,514,350; indigenous group who occupy the states of Campeche and Quintana Roo. There are approximately 30 dialects spoken by the different Maya ethnic groups.

Ameridian Groups

Zapotecs

Over 809,515 are found in Mexico. They divide into four groups: 1) in the *Sierra de Ixtlan*, 2) *South of Oaxaca*, 3) *the Oaxaca Valley*, and 4) *the Isthmus in Tehuantepec* and Juchitan. The primary religion among the Zapotecs is Roman Catholic. The Zapotec name was coined by Aztecs, however the real Zapotec name was "*Benezaa* or *Vinizza*." Their name means "people from the clouds." The word *Zapotec* comes from the Nahuatl *tzapotécatl*, which means "zapote villages." The Mexicas gave them this name due to the large amount of zapote trees that grow in the territories of the *Ben'Zaa* or "people from the clouds", a Zapotec term which is used as an identification among them.

Archaeologists have traced the Zapotec history back to the first Millennium B.C. Among their most important cities were *Monte Alban* and later *Mitla*. According to tradition, the Zapotecs came from the north and settled in the state of Oaxaca. Their first established capital was *Teotitlan* in the valley and later they migrated to *Zaachila* now known as *Teozapotlan*. Their most developed cultural center took place in Monte Alban and later they constructed their religious capital in Mitla.

Totonac

Around 470,500 people from the *Totonac* group live in the region of *Veracruz* on the eastern coast of Mexico. While many are Roman Catholics the Baptist Mid Missions

reports 12 congregations among them. These people have resisted being drawn into the general Mexican culture.

www.bmm.org/Fields/mexico.htm.

Mazahua

368,000; settled mainly in the state of Mexico; Roman Catholic

Otomi

277,136 Otomi live in the slums of Mexico City; Roman Catholic

Mazatecs

268,500; North of Oaxaca and south of Veracruz; Roman Catholic

Mixe

152,204; Mixe are located in the state of Oaxaca; Roman Catholic, Church of God of Prophecy

Tlapaneco

125,000; Tlapaneco are located in the state of Guerrero; Roman Catholic

Huastecs

123,000; Huastecs are settled east of San Luis Potosi, in all of Veracruz, also northeast of Hidalgo. Some groups are located in Tamaulipas and Puebla; Animists, Roman Catholic

Tarascan, Purepecha

120,000; settled in Michoacan State; Roman Catholic

Chol, Tumbala

100,000; Chol are located primarily in Chiapas State; Roman Catholic, National Presbyterian Church of Mexico

Chinantec

86,300; Chinantec are located in Oaxaca State; Roman Catholic

Popoluca

71,779; Found in Veracruz and Puebla State; Roman Catholic Church

Chatino

68,900; Found in Oaxaca State; they are peasant agriculturalists; Roman Catholic Church

Tarahumaras

66,600; Found in Chihuahua State; Roman Catholic Church

Catalonian

49,000; Settlers from Catalonia, Spain; Roman Catholic

Zoque

45,267; Found in Chiapas; they are peasant agriculturalists and belong to the Roman Catholic Church.

Popoloca

41,229; Found in the Puebla State and Veracruz; Roman Catholic

Mayo

40,000; Found in southern Sonora; Roman Catholic

Tepehuan

38,900; Lives in northeast Hidalgo, southern Chihuahua, and Durango; peasant agriculturalists; 25% animists, Roman Catholic Church

Tojolaba Chanabal

36,000; Located in Chiapas; Roman Catholic

Tila Chol

35,000; Located in Chiapas; Seventh Day Adventist, Roman Catholic, Church of God of Prophecy

Cora

30,000; Sinaloa State; 55% bilingual in Chinese; Roman Catholic Church

Amuzgos

28,200; Oaxaca State, Roman Catholic

Triquis

23,000; Oaxaca State; Mennonite, Roman Catholic

Cuicatec

20,500; Oaxaca State; Roman Catholic

Huichol

20,000; Found in western Mexico in Jalisco State; They have remained resistant for centuries by evicting missions. They are now 99% animists and have their own culture.

Huave

19,400; Oaxaca State; The San Francisco del Mar Huave are fisherman and Roman Catholics. The San Mateo del Mar Huave are Baptists, Nazarenes, Pentecostals, and Roman Catholics.

Chochoteco

16,202; Oaxaca State; Roman Catholic

Yaqui

16,000; Found in Sonora and in Arizona (USA); they are pastoralists and hunters. Many are bilingual in Spanish and English; they are Roman Catholic.

Mam

12,000; Found in Chiapas and 99% in Guatemala; Roman Catholic

Western Jacaltec

10,500; Mayans found in Chiapas State, 90% in Guatemala and bilingual in Spanish; Roman Catholic

Western Kanjobal

10,100; Mayan group found mainly in Guatemala

Chuj

9,500; Mayans in Chiapas State; bilingual in Spanish; Roman Catholic

Chichimeca Jonaz

6,550; live in Guanajuato State, in a community of San Luis de la Paz municipality

Guarijio, Varihio

5,000; West central Chihuahua; Roman Catholic

Chimalapa Zoque

4,500; Oaxaca State; Roman Catholic

Pima

2,500; Central Sonora-Chihuahua border; Roman Catholic

Matlatzinca

1,742; Found in Central Mexico.

Chicomuceltec

1,500; Mayans found in Chiapas; 100% bilingual in Spanish; Roman Catholic Church

Tacaneco

1,200; Mayans found in eastern Chiapas

Chihuahua Pima Bajo

1,000; Found in Chihuahua-Sonoran border; agriculturalists; Roman Catholic

Ixcatec

804; Santa María Ixcatlán, Oaxaca is the original town

Seri

700; Found on coast of Sonora State where they are fishermen; 15% have converted to Baha'i and others are Roman Catholic

Kikapoo

300; Found in Coahuila; 67% are in the USA; Roman Catholic

Mocho

300; Mayans found in Chiapas and in Guatemala; Roman Catholic

Paipai, Akwaala

300; Found in northern Baja California, south of Diegueno; Roman Catholic

Tatahumara

300; agriculturalists

Tipai

247; Found in Baja California; 15% Animists, Pentecostal Churches, Roman Catholic

Cochimi

220; Found in Baja California

Diegueno, Kimiai

220; Baja California; bilingual in English; Roman Catholic

Cocopa, Kikima

178; Baja California; hunter-gathers, agriculturalists; Roman Catholic

Chiapaneco

150; Found in the Chiapas State

Kiliwa, Kiliwi

24; Baja California south of Paipai and Tipai; Roman Catholic

Opata

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Expatriate Groups**Syrian Arab**

395,000; primarily immigrants from Syria with 40% Muslims; Syrian Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic

Lebanese Arab

392,000; 6% of this group are Muslims; Roman Catholic, Catholic Apostolic Church

Spaniard

343,145; Included in this group are refugees from the 1936 Spanish Civil War; Roman Catholic, Iglesia Cristiana Unida

USA, Black and English

210,723; Blacks are involved mainly in business commerce, and whites include expatriates from USA working in education and government; Roman Catholic, Southern Baptist, United Methodist

Palestinian Arab

196,000; Muslims comprise 35% of this group; Greek Orthodox Church, Roman Catholic

German

80,000; Immigrants from Germany; German Evangelical Congregation in Mexico, Iglesia Menonita, New Apostolic Church, Roman Catholic Church

Russian

78,000; Refugees from the USSR; Orthodox Catholic Church

Low German

56,000; Found in Chihuahua and Durango; Mennonites; 22% speak Standard German, 30% speak Spanish, 60% are literates

Jew, German

52,000; Practicing Yiddish speaking Jews found mostly in Mexico City.

Japanese

42,893; 58% Buddhist, 26% New-Religionists, 11% non-religious; Roman Catholic

Jewish

30,000; Practicing Spanish-speaking Jews found mostly in Mexico City

Italian

21,447; Settlers from Italy; strong Catholics

Basque

20,000; Settlers from Spain; Roman Catholic

Black Gypsy

20,000; Nomadic group found throughout Latin America; Roman Catholic Church

Han Chinese, Yue

20,000; Residents from Chinese diaspora, many have become Spanish-speaking Chinese; 25% Folk Buddhists, Roman Catholic

Afro Seminole

10,723; speak Afro-Seminole Creole which is an English based Creole. It is similar to Sea Islands Creole in the United States and Bahamas Creole. They belong to the Roman Catholic Church.

French

10,723; Expatriates from France in commerce; Roman Catholic

Galician

9,800; Expatriates from northwest Spain in business; Roman Catholic

British

9,800; Expatriates from Britain; Episcopal Church in Mexico

Han Chinese, Mandarin

9,800; Residents from Chinese diaspora; 30% Folk Buddhists, Roman Catholic

Levantine Jew

9,800; Immigrant from Levantine, most are practicing Jews

Greek

8,579; Immigrants from Greece; Greek Orthodox Church, Jehovah's Witness

Romani, Vlach

5,000; Immigrants from the Balkan Region of Europe

Christianity in Mexico

The Mexican Constitution, ratified in 1917, establishes freedom of conscience and freedom of practice of religion. There have been constitutional dispositions that have regulated the internal structure of churches, especially the Roman Catholic Church. Mexico considers the religious ministry as a profession, and is thereby regulated by the state. The government has the authority to determine the number of clergy and also the opening of any place of worship. Clergy could not vote or participate in politics and could not criticize the laws of the country or public authorities, until constitutional amendment in 1992. Churches also do not have any property rights. Clergy and religious associations are forbidden to conduct education. The establishment of monastic orders is also forbidden.

These constitutional dispositions are a result of the past struggle between the Mexican people and the Catholic Church, which was the state church until 1857. Today, these anti-clerical laws are rarely applied, but they continue to exist. The tough laws on separation of church and state have begun to improve under the presidency of Vicente Fox.

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/news/nation-world/html98/foxx07_20000807.html

Marginal Non-Christian Church Type Groups

Roman Catholic

For nearly 5 centuries, beginning with the arrival of *Franciscan* missionaries in 1522, the Catholic Church has been the primary organized religious influence in Mexico. Other religious orders followed and the first bishop was appointed in 1528. The University of Mexico was founded in 1551. The Catholic community in Mexico is the largest in Latin America. Nationals comprise most the church's clergy. 11 archdioceses, 48 dioceses and 7 other jurisdictions were established by 1974.

The Roman Catholic Church claims 5,321 congregations with 46,824,339 members and 88,498,000 affiliates.

In addition to a Mexican major seminary in New Mexico (USA) there are 26 diocesan or interdiocesan major seminaries. There is also a seminary for missionaries in Mexico. Sisters are continually taking over the work of catechists with the help of young girls. The customs of Mexican Catholics differ from region to region. Over 90% of the population is baptized Catholics, with 80% confirmed and 77% married in the church.

The Cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe

The *Cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe* is one of the best-known syncretistic elements among Mestizo Catholics. The cult looks to a reported event as its beginning. The Catholic version of this beginning reports in detail that on the morning of December 9, 1531, *Juan Diego* crossed the barren hill called *Tepeyac* to attend Mass. He was brought to a sudden halt by a blinding light and the sound of heavenly music. Before him appeared an astounding vision--a beautiful dark-skinned woman who, calling the Indian "my son", declared herself to be the *Virgin Mary*, the mother of Jesus Christ. She told *Juan Diego* it was her desire to have a church built on *Tepeyac* hill, and asked him to relay that message to *Bishop Juan de Zumarraga*.

With great difficulty the humble Indian sought an audience with the top prelate. *Juan Diego's* persistence won and he was finally admitted. The incredulous Bishop demanded that he be provided with some proof of the unlikely encounter. Confused and fearful *Juan Diego* avoided *Tepeyac* for several days. On December 12, while rushing to find a priest to attend a seriously ill uncle, he took a short cut across the hill. The Virgin once again

appeared. Juan Diego told her of the Bishop's request. The Virgin instructed him to pick roses from the usually barren and desolate hill and deliver them to Zumarraga as the sign. Juan Diego gathered up the miraculous blossoms in his mantle and hurried off to complete his mission. Before the Bishop, Juan let the roses spill out before him. To the wonder of all assembled, a perfect image of *La Virgen of Guadalupe* was revealed emblazoned on Juan Diego's cloak.

Juan Diego's mantle, carefully preserved in the new *Basilica*, has been subjected to extensive analysis over the years. Experts have authenticated the fabric as dating to the 16th century, but have been unable to determine the type of pigment from which the image was rendered. It seems doubtful that in the Colonial era in Mexico human hands were capable of creating a portrait of its exquisite nature. It is even doubtful it can be done in Mexico today. Most wondrous, after 465 years, the image of the *Virgen de Guadalupe* remains clearly imprinted on the miraculous cloak without visible signs of deterioration.

A small church was soon constructed on the site designated by the Virgin. Coincidentally, the Virgin appeared on *Tepeyac*, the very site of an Aztec temple dedicated to *Tonatzin* (earth goddess, mother of the gods and protectress of humanity) which had been destroyed by order of Bishop Zumarraga. The original church was replaced by a larger structure built in 1709. The Miracle of Guadalupe was officially recognized by the Vatican in 1745. The second sanctuary was declared a Basilica in 1904. A new Basilica, of modern design and enormous capacity, was dedicated in October of 1976. This is found in the northern section of present-day Mexico City.

http://wais.stanford.edu/Mexico_Cultofthevirgin.htm

The cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe is actually the syncretic version fusing together the Virgin Mary story with the Aztec legend of *Coatlicue*. The Virgin of Guadalupe is another remarkable case of syncretism. Most Mexicans would be shocked to learn that it was imported from Spain, where the shrine of Guadalupe, near *Cáceres* is the most important shrine to the Virgin. The story was modified in Mexico, making her *morena*, brown or Indian. Actually Juan Diego, the Indian to whom she appeared, was brown. The exaltation of the Indians in the Guadalupe legend compensates for their feeling humiliated by society. She has become a kind of tribal goddess. She is the Patron of the Americas, although other Latin Americans pay little heed to her, viewing her as Mexican. President V. Fox showed his devotion to her by receiving mass there on the day of his inauguration.

This cult is uniquely Mexican, with a vast iconography, in which worship of the earth goddess *Cuauhtli* has become fused with veneration of the Virgin Mary. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visit the shrine and basilica each year. The Virgin has come to represent the future of women in Mexico.

Jehovah's Witnesses (*Testigos de Jehova*)

Jehovah's Witnesses which began as early as 1893 in Mexico has over 13,000 congregations with 526,478 members and 1,500,000 adherents

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormons) (*Iglesia de Jesus Cristo do los Santos do loss UD*)

The Mormons claim to have been at work in Mexico since 1879 and reports 1,545 congregations, 370,000 members, and 740,000 adherents.

However one interprets the statistics of these marginal groups (Catholic, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons), they report over 14,545 congregations, 906,478 members—this is almost equal to the number all the Protestant and Independent churches combined report. When one adds the “other denominations” these data are not quite so alarming, but the marginal groups are growing at an estimated + 4.5%.

Protestant

Protestant efforts in Mexico began in 1824 with the American Bible Society's distribution of Scriptures. With the revolution of 1857, Mexico became open to Protestant missions. Juarez, the president, encouraged Protestant activities and missionaries began to enter Monterrey during the 1850s. In 1861 Lutheran immigrants began a German-speaking congregation, and the first Baptist church was started the next year. By 1872 American Board missionaries were serving in Monterey and Guadalajara. American Presbyterians and Methodists entered Mexico City by 1873. The formation of the Presbyterian Synod of Mexico was established in 1901 and the autonomous Methodist Church of Mexico in 1930. In 1880 the Southern Baptist Convention made Mexico its first Latin American field. The Seventh-day Adventist church constituted another important arrival in 1893.

Many missions left because of anti-church laws that were created in 1910. These laws were directed at limiting the Catholic Church, but they hampered Protestant missions as well. Protestant church membership dropped considerably during the next 25 years. In 1917, to prevent overlapping of effort, 9 of the earliest missions agreed to a comity arrangement but the new lines of demarcation were not observed by several of the missions. Evangelicals or Protestants have increased in number since the mid-1930, because of a shift in attitude across the country. Even in the face of some continuing opposition, both international denominations and indigenous movements have experienced growth. The highest concentrations of evangelical groups are found in the southern states of Chiapas (19%), Tabasco (17.5%), Campeche (15.4%), and Quintana Roo (14%).

The three largest Protestant denominations are Assemblies of God, Seventh-day Adventists, and the National Presbyterian Church. The Church of God has registered the most significant gains. Wycliffe Bible Translators has provided assistance in reaching out to the large Indian population having translated portions of the Bible in many of the over 100 different languages of the Indian people. The Mission Aviation Fellowship has also been a great aid to Wycliffe in delivering the scriptures to the Indian people.

Church Groups in Mexico:

National Presbyterian (*Iglesia Nacional Presbiteriana de Mexico*) began in 1872 has 5000 congregations and 700,000 members and 1,350,000 adherents.

Assemblies of God (*Asambleas de Dios de Mexico*) began in Mexico around 1915 now have over 4009 congregations with 200,000 members and 480,000 adherents.

Seventh Day Adventist (*Iglesia Adventista dei Septimo Dia*) began in Mexico as early as 1893 and now has over 1543 congregations with 477,813 members and 820,000 adherents.

The Methodist Church (*Iglesia Metodista de Mexico*) began in Mexico in 1873 now has 440 congregations with 160,000 members and 360,000 adherents.

The Union of Independent Evangelicals (*Union de Iglesias Evangelistica Independientes*) has served in Mexico since 1923 and boasts of over 1330 congregations with more than 400,000 members and 800,000 adherents.

The Church of God (Cleveland) (*Iglesia de Dios*) began service in Mexico in 1932 and now has over 1150 congregations with a total membership of 105,736 with 260,000 adherents.

The Church of God in Mexico (*Iglesia de Dios en Mexico*) dates from 1893 and has over 917 congregations with 110,000 members and 220,000 adherents.

The National Baptist Convention (*Convencion Nacional Bautista de Mexico*) actually began in 1862 and now reports 1257 congregations with 82,906 members and 160,000 adherents.

The Independent Pentecostal Movement, which is listed as Independent rather than Protestant, has 2667 congregations and 80,000 members—145,000 adherents.

National Christian Church of Assembly of God a large independent group has 1223 congregations with 55,000 members and 110,000 adherents.

The Church of the Nazarene (*Iglesia del Nazareno en Mexico*) began ministry in Mexico in 1903 and now numbers almost 600 congregations with 49,000 members and 70,000 adherents.

The Church of God of Prophecy (*Iglesia de Dios de la Profecia*) began in Mexico in 1944 and has some 460 congregations with 21,000 members and 45,000 adherents.

The Foursquare Gospel Church (*Iglesia del Evangelio Cuadrangular*) began in 1943 and now has over 250 congregations with a total membership of 5500 and 11,000 adherents. Other denominations number 28,167 congregations with 1,697,000 members and 3,188,700 adherents.

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical workers should expect increased freedom to work in Mexico and added protection as they do. With the election of a new president, and changing governmental systems, missionaries may be given more freedom to minister around the country. This change in government involvement may also offer greater protection of the missionaries who are ministering in isolated areas of the country.
2. Evangelicals should increase their efforts to share the gospel with persons who are nominally Catholic. The Catholic Church has long dominated Mexico's religious life. The revolutions of 1850 and 1910 reduced the power and prestige of the church, but its cultural influence remained. During the 1990's, the Catholic Church regained some of the previously denied privileges. A small minority threatens the Catholic hierarchy due to the fact that they regularly read the Bible. Also, large numbers of Mexican youth are rejecting the Catholic Church. Most Mexicans are culturally Catholic, but traditionalism and syncretistic practices abound. Pray that the Mexican people would be free from traditionalism and begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
3. Evangelicals should seek to project a positive approach to Mexico and Mexican culture. The persecution of Evangelicals continues to grow in Mexico. The media

often portrays Evangelicals as anti-Mexican spies and destroyers of culture. In the states of *Chiapas* and *Oaxaca*, there have been incidents of mob violence, crop burnings, destruction of churches and homes, expulsion of Evangelicals from villages, harassment at outreach events, and arrests on trumped up charges. Pray for religious freedom for these Evangelicals and that the growth would continue despite persecution.

4. Evangelicals should seek to establish and project a spirit of cooperation to the peoples of Mexico. Issues of unity challenge evangelicals. The *Evangelical Fraternity of Mexico (CONEMEX)* works to strengthen unity, deal with the government, and sponsor events. A Pentecostal fellowship has also developed to promote unity among Pentecostal Christians. Evangelicals also need better discipleship programs. The Mexican parallel of *Promise Keepers* has made impact among Mexican men.
5. Evangelicals should redouble efforts at leadership training on every level. Church leadership training is important to strengthening indigenous churches. There are over 100 Bible schools and seminaries training thousands of church leaders. Pray that these training efforts will impart spiritual depth and evangelistic vision to these students. Evangelicals should especially seek to train indigenous leaders for the churches among the poor.
6. Evangelicals should seek more avenues to evangelize and train the younger people of Mexico. The young people in Mexico will be a vital part in the spread of the gospel. Since over 50% of the population is under the age of 20, the overwhelming need for Evangelicals to be involved with college and high school ministries should motivate Christians. The needs of these younger people open opportunities for missionaries to develop discipleship and leadership training for youth to start and be involved in indigenous church work
7. Evangelicals should continue to seek ways to send and support missionaries who may work under that direction of indigenous groups. Foreign missionaries' legal position for years has been restrictive, but religious visas can now be obtained. The majority of missionaries is U.S. citizens and has to overcome perceived disadvantages of their origin and wealth. Missionaries to Mexico, as to other regions, must seek ways to adjust to and fit into Mexican cultures.
8. Evangelicals should seek ways to engage in evangelistic and church starting efforts among the many sections of the Mexican population that now have little Christian witness.
 - Evangelicals make up only 1 to 2% in the central states of Zacatecas, Jalisco, Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Colima, Michoacan, and Queretaro. The states of Baja California Sur, Sonora, Sinaloa, Durango, Nayarit, and Mexico are only 2 to 4% Evangelicals.
 - Evangelicals should intensify efforts to reach the Indian peoples. Indian people are largely Catholic in culture, but pagan in practice. The old gods and spirits have been given Catholic names.
 - Evangelicals should seek ways to impact the many conservative Catholic and animistic towns, cities, and groups where little evangelical witness exists.
 - Evangelicals should seek ways to reach the wealthy elite who have strong atheist-agnostic beliefs that the educational system has planted and reinforced.

9. Evangelicals should seek to intensify efforts among the various language groups in Mexico. The more than 100 different language variations in Mexico, mostly Indian groups, provides opportunities for Bible translators and people who will be willing to develop discipleship and leadership training materials in these languages.
Evangelicals should seize the opportunities these language groups provide. Wycliffe Bible Translators has been actively involved in translation projects and currently has 235 workers committed to 76 translation projects. The Bible Society and Bible League has been influential in production and distribution of Spanish and indigenous Scriptures.
10. Evangelicals should enlarge their engagement in Christian support ministries.
 - Christian Radio – Radio broadcasts were denied to Evangelical in 1980, but constitutional changes in 1992 have made it possible for some programs to be aired locally. There are also many international broadcasts beamed towards Mexico.
 - The *Jesus Film* has been extensively used as a film and on television. The viewing audience is now equivalent to over half of Mexico's population. The film is in use in 54 languages and being prepared for a further 6 languages.
 - Cassette recordings – Global Recording Networks produces messages for the Mexican population.
 - Mission Aviation Fellowship plays a key role in the mountainous and inaccessible regions in southern Mexico.
 - Christian literature – *Prisma* magazine has been published since 1969 and has been used in evangelism and edification of believers. There are a growing number of Christian magazines and Mexican-authored books. Pray that these will be used in the education of the local church.
11. Evangelicals should seize opportunities to evangelize the migrant workers along Mexico's northern border with the United States. In northern Mexico, along the border to the U.S., an astounding numbers of migrant workers cross daily to work. Persons won to Christ as they work in the United States can return to Mexico as positive witness for Christianity.
12. Evangelicals should seek to increase urban ministries in the great cities of Mexico. Mexico City, home of one of the world's largest metropolitan areas, is open for many different types of urban ministries. Other Mexican cities can likewise provide urban ministries openings.
 - Upper-class neighborhoods are in great need of the gospel as many of these communities are totally without evangelical churches
 - Among the 18 million poor in Mexico City, over 7 million squatters live within the metropolitan area. Difficulty and challenge abound in ministering to these people and few are prepared for the commitment.
 - The million Indians living in Mexico City who represent nearly every language group in Mexico are spiritually needy in that little to meet their spiritual needs is being done.
 - The new satellite cities that are being built around Mexico City need gospel proclamation and church starting ministries.
 - Over 600,000 street children receive little Evangelical attention.

