

**CHAPTER 36**

**PROTESTANT CHURCH GROWTH IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY  
CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

**by**

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## PROTESTANT CHURCH GROWTH IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

When one thinks of Latin America and religion the term Catholic comes to mind. Many would be surprised to learn that a large number of Latin Americans are Protestants. Catholic scholars Freitag, Emmerich, and Bruijs note that although "There are still real Protestant mission fields in Latin America among the native population of the Republic of Costa Rica, British Honduras, Nicaragua and the north coast of South America," they estimate the number of Protestants in Latin America to have already reached "a following of some 5 or 6 million Christians" (1959:144). Jesuit scholars Prudencio Damboriena and Enrique Dussel estimated in a pioneering study of Latin American Protestantism that on the basis of published statistics the Protestant community in Latin America numbered more than 7.7 million in 1961 (1963:16). This study surveys available estimates, constructs a time series framework of Protestant church growth in Latin America, and evaluates the reliability of those estimates.

The major Protestant study of Protestant church growth in Latin America gives a total figure for 1967 of 4,915,500 Protestants in Mexico, Central America, and South America (Read, Monterroso, and Johnson 1969:49-50).<sup>1</sup> The authors qualify the figures, however, by observing that "at the present time it is impossible to state exactly the size of the Evangelical community in Latin America" because "the various ratios used in Evangelical censuses<sup>2</sup> have been arbitrarily chosen" (ibid., pp. 49, 51).

The World Dominion series (discussed below) used a ratio of 4 Protestants to every 1 member to calculate the total Community. Apparently Read, Monterroso, and Johnson used a ratio of 5:1 to calculate the larger Protestant Community. Such differences exist because "no adequate objective standard has yet been devised by which community can be measured" (ibid., p. 51). It would seem that objectivity would require that a different standard be used for each nation or national region. The ideal would be to establish the standard on the basis of locally or nationally established ratios derived from random sampling. Less ideally one could use the average household size to arrive at a ratio. The lack of an objective standard, however, has not prevented scholars from attempting statistical studies or projections of Protestant church growth in Latin America.<sup>3</sup> The reliability of those studies depends on the reliability of the data used.

### Obtaining Statistics on Protestant Church Growth

Ever since the first volume of *World Christian Handbook* (WCH) was published statisticians have relied on questionnaires for numerical data on the Christian Church. A number of studies publish sample questionnaires (e.g., Damboriena and Dussel, Read and Ineson, and Holland 1974). Although Damboriena and Dussel do not say so, it seems that their questionnaire is a Spanish version of that used by the editors of the WCH. In the case of almost every

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<sup>1</sup> Yet their foreword gives an approximate figure of 15,000,000. The study lacks coverage of the Caribbean and Belize. As used in this study CGRILA refers to the raw statistics gathered by Read, Monterroso, and Johnson. For Mexican American Protestantism in the southwest United States, see Holland (1974, Part II). According to Holland Mexican American Protestants numbered some 14,000 in 1972 in the Los Angeles, California area (about 3% of the area's total Hispanic population).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, "Censo de los Miembros de la Iglesia Evangélica de Colombia" (1967), "Statistics of the Evangelical Alliance of Costa Rica" (1966), and "Sociedades Bíblicas en el Ecuador" (Quito, 1968). Bible societies also keep records of gross sales at regional offices. Total Community is determined by estimates of the ratio of Community to members. In Latin America the term Evangelical is synonymous with Protestant, and rarely assumes theological significance.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Read and Ineson (1973); Smith (1978); "A Statistical Look at the Missionary Task in Brazil, 1969," Occasional Paper No. 27, November, 1969, Missionary Information Bureau, Caixa Postal 1498, São Paulo, S.P., Brazil. The term "church growth" refers to numeric growth. It is a technical term for the study of social, cultural, theological, and historical factors that promote or hinder such growth. Church growth theory is concerned with both quality and quantity and emphasizes homogeneous units and contextualization. It distinguishes between biological, transfer, and conversion growth as defined in note 11 below. Church growth theory is at the core of current missiology and is distinguished from other mission studies by its reliance on statistics, especially time series studies. The other theories are ahistorical. There are a number of regional church growth study centers in the Third World.

published study, questionnaires were sent to mission boards or to selected individuals in Latin America. Others were sent to national church headquarters. The studies by Damboriena and Dussel and Read, Monterroso, and Johnson also entailed field investigation.

Between 1958 and 1961, the Jesuit study was directed by Fr. Houtart of Brussels. Study centers in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Mexico, Chile, and Spain facilitated the study. Research groups were established in Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela, plus several non-Iberian islands of the Caribbean not normally subsumed under the rubric "Latin America" (Damboriena and Dussel 1963:5).

Read, Monterroso, and Johnson gathered data for *Latin American Church Growth* (1969) by means of questionnaires sent to denominational and mission headquarters and to specifically knowledgeable individuals in Latin America. The researchers, called the Church Growth in Latin America (CGRILA) Team, were Brazilianists William R. Read (United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.) and Harmon A. Johnson (Independent Assembly of God Church), and Central Americanist Victor M. Monterroso (Latin American Biblical Seminary, San José, Costa Rica). They followed up the questionnaires with on-site observations and interviews. Following his own itinerary, each sought local statistics and examined church and denominational records. They also engaged in participant observation.<sup>4</sup> The resulting study, *Latin American Church Growth*, was published in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.<sup>5</sup>

Similar procedure was followed by the editors of the WCH. That series, however, grew out of the need for statistics at various ecumenical missions conferences held in different countries periodically during the first half of this century. In the case of the WCH statistics, however, it is apparent that no on-site verification took place. The WCH statistics are not limited to Protestantism or Latin America; the WCH is a compendium of worldwide statistics on the ministry, membership, and Community of all branches of the Christian Church. The WCH series is the work of a permanent Committee of Survey and Research, assisted by the International Missionary Council, World Council of Churches, and World Dominion Press, using the resources of the Missionary Research Library, Union Theological Seminary, New York. The WCH statistics also utilize national religious figures (e.g., the 1960 Mexican national census).<sup>6</sup> Both the Damboriena

and Dussel and CGRILA studies used WCH statistics to construct time series data in order to gauge the growth and development of Protestantism in Latin America.

Another recent assessment of the status of Christianity in Latin America is Clifton Holland's *World Christianity*, Volume 4, *Central America and the Caribbean* (hereafter cited as MARC 1981), part of a series that grew out of the 1966 Berlin Congress on World Evangelization. Beginning with the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization (ICOWE), a series of "Country Profiles" were planned in cooperation with the Strategy Working Group of the Lausanne ICOWE. The *World Christianity* volumes are regional country profiles. Volume 4 on Central America and the Caribbean is divided into two parts: Country Profiles and Unreached Peoples. The latter are ethnic groups who have yet to be evangelized. The Central American studies were done by PROCADES (Central American Socio-religious Studies Project) of the Institute of In-Depth Evangelism, San José, Costa Rica. Under the direction of Clifton Holland, director, PROCADES conducted a series of interviews from 1978 to 1980 in order to obtain the data used in the study. The Caribbean material was obtained by MARC staff from older secondary sources. In both cases the text seeks to evaluate the status of Christianity within ethnic groups as well as nations. The section of the Caribbean includes non-Latin nations and excludes Colombia and Venezuela.

The history of various Christian churches is reviewed. General background information supplements the ecclesiastical data on each nation. Membership statistics are given for various Protestant groups at the end of most chapters. Usually both membership and Community figures are provided. Holland does not state how Community figures were computed, but it appears that membership figures were trebled or quadrupled in order to obtain a total Community figure in most cases. Although claiming that the data are "highly comparable and reliable . . . the accuracy of the data cannot be guaranteed" Holland writes. (A prepublication galley was utilized for the present study.)

*World Christian Encyclopedia* (Barrett 1982) has a statistical grid for utilizing different means of numbering Christians. The work classifies Christians as practicing, non-practicing, and nominal. Protestants are divided into Evangelicals and non-Evangelicals. There is a category of "dual affiliation" for Latin Americans who were baptized Catholic but later became Protestants (mostly Pentecostals). Also included are Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and non-white indigenous groups. Extrapolations and predictions were made by computer. Statistics are for the years 1900 to 1980 (Genet 1982; Heathcote 1982).

#### Limitations of the Statistics

In each edition of the WCH the editors caution against using the statistics for any long-range evaluation of church growth, even though the data derive from annual reports of mission societies and denominations. The limitations of the

<sup>4</sup>For details see Read, Monterroso, and Johnson (1969: 20-29). The team also used published statistics. Non-church statistics were provided by the UCLA Latin American Center.

<sup>5</sup>All correspondence, receipts, charts, graphs, itinerary, and denominational tabulations are filed in the Mission Archives, McAlister Library, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.

<sup>6</sup>The 1960 Mexican national census enumerated 578,515 Protestants, more than half of whom were Pentecostals. A Catholic source estimated almost 100,000 more in forty different denominations (see Orr 1978:153).

WCH data are listed below. Most can be illustrated from the data on Central America.

- (1) National churches and mission societies are often not represented in the data.
- (2) Much statistical data have been omitted because of lack of space.
- (3) Political instability and war have often prevented the collection of data; shifting borders distort data.
- (4) Respondents define membership differently.
- (5) Since other published sources are used, the results are composite statistics.
- (6) No statistical analysis is offered.
- (7) Statistics previously published by others and in earlier World Dominion studies are not always comparable with those in the WCH series.
- (8) Not all the statistics were collected at the same time of the year.
- (9) Not all statistical compilations distinguish between Central American nations, especially if several nations are under the same diocese or district.

The editors of the WCH recognize these inadequacies. To them the worldwide tabulations "may correct our preconceived notions, and amend our sense of proportions without being meticulously accurate." As the statistical population narrows to national, regional, or denominations figures, they "expect to find more precise and accurate figures, though [they] can only report the figures which the churches claim and [note that] the statistical conceptions and standards of churches and missions vary widely" (WCH 1949:4). What is true of the WCH is true of other published compendia.

A study by the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association (EFMA) (Taylor and Coggins 1961) is a two-volume work. One volume consists of detailed maps of each nation showing the locations of various types of churches, congregations, preaching points, and benevolent institutions. The second volume is a statistical survey compiled with the help of the International Foreign Missions Association (IFMA), the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America, the Evangelical Alliance of England, and various independent agencies.

Association member churches and boards reported membership and physical facilities to the editors. The editors state that some reports were incomplete or that the questionnaire was not followed. The EFMA study is also a composite statistical report using the WCH data to fill in the gaps in incomplete reports. Comparative data for earlier years were taken from the *Evangelical Handbook for Latin America* (1937). The report was developed to identify unreached areas and to determine the extent of Evangelical work in Latin America.

Incomplete or incorrectly completed questionnaires frustrate such goals. As Grubb noted in 1949, "No statistical information is better than its source . . . ; the figures provided are not sufficient and are too general to form a basis for policy or a strategy" (WCH 1949:239). Yet it is the need for data for policy making and developing evangelistic strategy that historically gives rise to statistical surveys.

Published data are the only sources for diachronic studies of the growth and development of Protestant Christianity in Latin America.<sup>7</sup> Assessing the reliability of those statistics is central to this study.

The 1967 CGRILA data are the most recent statistics available for all of Central America and the Caribbean.<sup>8</sup> William R. Reed commented about them: "Our findings shocked the old line churches and a lot of re-vitalization was triggered in para-church mission groups as a result."<sup>9</sup> The CGRILA team as a whole had made the necessary adjustments in the figures and had determined their reliability to chart and analyze the growth and decline of Protestant churches of Central and South America. Publication of *Latin American Church Growth* was a milestone in missiological research and has influenced all subsequent studies of Latin American church growth.<sup>10</sup> Because the work was an ecumenical Protestant effort, the study received a widespread hearing among Protestants that the comparable Damboriena and Dussel study lacked.

The CGRILA data behind the charts, graphs, and tables in *Latin American Church Growth* are composite statistics, a mixture of field reports, surveys, and published data. As such they have certain limitations. The questionnaires asked for figures on adult membership without defining the term "adult," which could range from 18 to 21 years of age and could be associated with voting or marriage age. Despite reliance on church growth theory there is no definition or discussion of transfer, conversion, or biological church growth.<sup>11</sup> Figures given are cumulative totals. Tabulations are in terms of denominational traditions: faith missions, Pentecostal churches, newer churches, adventist churches, and traditional denominations. Financial statistics are not given. The work suffers from the absence of diachronic statistical tabulation of church and Community membership that lies behind the graphs.

A comparison of the WCH and CGRILA denominational lists with those compiled for Missions Advanced

<sup>7</sup>For example, Dayton (1976) has noted that available statistics may not be reliable for comparative purposes because the definition and completeness of data may vary from one survey to another. Yet he attempted analysis of decennial data (1960-70) in the 1970 edition of his *Mission Handbook*.

<sup>8</sup>A new edition of the WCH reportedly scheduled for publication in 1982 has apparently been superseded by Barrett (1982), a work that came out too late for use in this study.

<sup>9</sup>William R. Reed, personal communication, March 24, 1981.

<sup>10</sup>William R. Reed, personal communication, March 13, 1981.

<sup>11</sup>Conversion growth is congregational or denominational growth by accretion due to conversion from one faith to another (e.g., from animism to Christianity). Transfer growth is the transfer of church membership from denomination to denomination or congregation to congregation. Biological growth is due to offspring growing up to become adult church members. Church growth historiography began with studies of the Christian church in India. The earliest church growth study on Latin America is Hamilton (1962). For church growth theory and practice see McGavran (1970, 1979). For a Marxist criticism see Bastian (1981:29, 40 n).



Research and Communication Center (MARC 1981) by Clifton L. Holland indicates that the WCH and MARC listings are sometimes more complete. Furthermore, the CGRILA backup statistics for Read, Monterroso, and Johnson (1969), on file at the McAlister Library of Fuller Seminary, lack Community statistics since the focus was on church membership. (Occasionally a denomination will have submitted Community figures, for example the Society of Friends, El Salvador.) As the following tables indicate, Community and membership figures are not always available for the same years except in the World Dominion series, the WCH and its predecessors. Figures presented are for those years for which reasonably complete statistics could be obtained. Although there are missionaries in Latin America from the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), and the Jehovah's Witnesses, neither the WCH, CGRILA, nor MARC cite them in their listings.<sup>12</sup>

These limitations stem from the fact that missions and churches do not have traditions of keeping and updating membership records on a regular basis. There are four reasons for such a lack of statistical tradition among Christians.

*Historical.*—Church histories, until recently, did not emphasize the spread of Christianity. Most church histories and church history curricula emphasize church councils, doctrinal controversies, and ecumenical movements—not church growth. Also, histories of missions are notorious for focusing on personalities. Missiologists and mission strategists, on the other hand, are concerned with church growth, but their studies are not widely known to historians.<sup>13</sup> Also, because of controversies about evolution and higher criticism, evangelicals retreated into isolationism and developed an ahistorical attitude early in this century (Kessler 1973: 283-284).<sup>14</sup>

*Theological.*—It is widely held by many Protestants that (according to Biblical literature such as 1 Chronicles 21) it is a sin to be concerned with numbering the people of God.<sup>15</sup> Many Christian churches count all persons who are baptized, even infants. Historically these paedobaptist churches were often state churches. Equating with citizenship obviated the need to be concerned about religious statistics. Failure to distinguish between all baptized persons

and practicing Christians creates statistical problems. Differences in ecclesiology are at the heart of the matter.

*Lexical.*—As noted in WCH (1956, errata), ecumenical agreement is needed concerning the categories and definitions of minimum statistics. There is no standard definition of membership acceptable to all communions.

*Psychological and developmental.*—North Americans have a greater penchant for statistics than do Latin Americans. Few Latin American republics take a regular census. Attempts by missionaries to gather statistics are often met with resentment. Younger churches do not always have the expertise or finances to undertake statistical surveys.<sup>16</sup> Nor do they always see the need to do so. On the assumption that their nation is Catholic, religious affiliation is not always requested in national censuses.<sup>17</sup>

### The Data Series

To illustrate the historical tradition working against gathering data and the limitations on data discussed above, conflicting estimates of Protestant church growth are given in table 3600. The years selected are those for which reasonably complete statistics are available.

Table 3600 shows the unevenness in the availability of data. Not all time series data begin with the same year. But what is most important is the difference in estimates of membership. For example, two estimates for Haiti in 1925 differ by more than 3,000; Guatemalan estimates differ by 12,000 in 1951. The MARC figure for Cuba in 1952 is triple that of the WCH. Such differences reflect inaccurate reporting, inaccurate sampling, or both. Church membership figures may be subject to exaggeration owing to inflation or deflation. The definition of "member" affects reporting. Even statistics from the same church or denomination may vary. The Venezuela CGRILA statistics for the years from 1964 to 1966 vary because of two different sets of denominational figures from two different tabulations. Despite the variations in the data in table 3600, I have used the logic of trajectory in time series data to make the estimates of Protestant church growth shown in table 3601.

Table 3602 differs from table 3601 in that it gives estimates of the size of the Protestant Community in Central America and the Caribbean. By Community is meant all those persons who would identify themselves in some sense as Protestant. The community is therefore larger than the membership. It includes members but it would also include children in non-paedobaptist communions as well as adults who identify themselves as Protestants but who are

<sup>12</sup>See Damboriena and Dussel (1963:102) SALA, 19-1109 and SALA, 20-1109 for relevant statistics.

<sup>13</sup>For recent studies, see Wilkie (1974) and Reich (1977). The writings of Kenneth S. Latourette (Yale Sinologist and church historian) have influenced church growth historiography because of their emphasis on advance and retreat and the reciprocal environmental impact of church and culture. Latourette (1945) was updated by Winter (1971, Appendix).

<sup>14</sup>Kessler distinguishes between academic training and historical sense. The latter he says is lacking among Western missionaries who are impressed with the need for anthropology but not history. For convenient surveys of higher criticism and evolution, see Krentz (1975) and Kennedy (1957).

<sup>15</sup>See Tippet (1965), reprinted in *Church Growth Bulletin*, vols. I-V (1969), D.A. McGavran, ed. Tippet writes against such a view. McGavran is the founder of the church growth school of missiology.

<sup>16</sup>Although Bingle and Grubb state that "the careful maintenance and correction of figures is characteristic of a mature and advanced state of organization" not found in Third World churches (WCH 1957:ix), that may not be the case because many Third World churches are pastored by Western missionaries or are under Western missions. Historically most are products of Western missions.

<sup>17</sup>For Jewish immigration and population in Latin America, see SALA, 18-1114 and 1115.

Table 3600  
COMPARISON OF PROTESTANT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS, CENTRAL AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN, SELECTED YEARS, 1925-61

| Year | Belize             | Colombia            | Costa Rica         | Cuba                 | Dominican Rep.     | El Salvador         | Guatemala             | Haiti               | Honduras           | Nicaragua           | Panama              | Puerto Rico         | Venezuela           |
|------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1925 | ~                  | 3,567 <sup>a</sup>  | 1,005 <sup>a</sup> | ~                    | 3,068 <sup>a</sup> | 925 <sup>g</sup>    | 10,455 <sup>a</sup>   | 8,897 <sup>a</sup>  | 1,727 <sup>a</sup> | ~                   | ~                   | 13,384 <sup>a</sup> | 1,371 <sup>d</sup>  |
| 1925 | ~                  | 3,404 <sup>b</sup>  | 1,729 <sup>b</sup> | ~                    | 2,425 <sup>c</sup> | 1,003 <sup>c</sup>  | 1,117 <sup>c</sup>    | 12,188 <sup>c</sup> | 1,723 <sup>c</sup> | ~                   | ~                   | 12,280 <sup>c</sup> | 1,819 <sup>a</sup>  |
| 1925 | ~                  | ~                   | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | 1,005 <sup>a</sup>  | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1936 | ~                  | 1,881 <sup>c</sup>  | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | 5,788 <sup>c</sup>  | ~                   | ~                   | 713 <sup>b</sup>    |
| 1936 | ~                  | 2,228 <sup>b</sup>  | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | 7,600 <sup>e</sup>  | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | 5,630 <sup>b</sup>  | ~                   | ~                   | 3,454 <sup>f</sup>  |
| 1937 | ~                  | ~                   | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | 3,970 <sup>i</sup>  | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1938 | ~                  | 6,812 <sup>c</sup>  | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | 1,352 <sup>c</sup>  | ~                     | 29,005 <sup>a</sup> | 2,026 <sup>a</sup> | 16,515 <sup>c</sup> | 1,772 <sup>c</sup>  | 29,122 <sup>a</sup> | ~                   |
| 1938 | ~                  | 2,981               | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | 2,823 <sup>a</sup>  | ~                     | 29,769 <sup>c</sup> | 3,961 <sup>c</sup> | 5,775 <sup>b</sup>  | 17,306 <sup>a</sup> | 30,868 <sup>c</sup> | ~                   |
| 1948 | 616 <sup>b</sup>   | ~                   | 2,373 <sup>b</sup> | ~                    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1948 | 4,204 <sup>c</sup> | ~                   | 2,775 <sup>c</sup> | ~                    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1951 | 769 <sup>b</sup>   | ~                   | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | ~                   | 12,893 <sup>b</sup>   | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1951 | 5,184 <sup>c</sup> | ~                   | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | 9,199 <sup>c</sup>  | 24,991 <sup>c</sup>   | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1952 | 5,187 <sup>c</sup> | 10,189 <sup>b</sup> | ~                  | 100,582 <sup>c</sup> | ~                  | 6,536 <sup>b</sup>  | 75,845 <sup>a,c</sup> | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1952 | ~                  | 27,386 <sup>a</sup> | ~                  | 360,000 <sup>d</sup> | ~                  | ~                   | 12,377 <sup>b</sup>   | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1952 | ~                  | 27,386 <sup>c</sup> | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1956 | 1,181 <sup>b</sup> | ~                   | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | 10,276 <sup>b</sup> | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1956 | 4,801 <sup>c</sup> | ~                   | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | 13,406 <sup>c</sup> | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1960 | ~                  | ~                   | 9,953 <sup>h</sup> | ~                    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   |
| 1960 | ~                  | ~                   | 9,127              | ~                    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                     | ~                   | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~                   | 8,797 <sup>c</sup>  |
| 1961 | 1,281 <sup>b</sup> | ~                   | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                     | ~                   | 9,311 <sup>c</sup> | 16,407 <sup>c</sup> | ~                   | ~                   | 7,575 <sup>b</sup>  |
| 1961 | 5,164 <sup>c</sup> | ~                   | ~                  | ~                    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                     | ~                   | 6,459 <sup>b</sup> | 17,742 <sup>b</sup> | ~                   | ~                   | 15,360 <sup>c</sup> |

SOURCE: a. Damboriena and Dussel (1963).

b. CGRILA (1967).

c. WCH (1949, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967).

d. MARC (1981).

e. SALA, 18.

f. Grubb (1936).

g. Otis (1905).

h. Nelson (1963).

i. Taylor and Coggins (1961).

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Table 3601

PROTESTANT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE  
CARIBBEAN, 1901-78

| Year | Belize <sup>1</sup> | Colombia | Costa Rica       | Cuba    | Dominican Rep. | El Salvador        | Guatemala            | Haiti   | Honduras | Nicaragua          | Panama <sup>2</sup> | Venezuela           | Canal Zone |
|------|---------------------|----------|------------------|---------|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------|----------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 1901 | ~                   | ~        | 713 <sup>f</sup> | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1905 | ~                   | 181      | ~                | 3,774   | ~              | ~                  | 47                   | ~       | ~        | 1,072 <sup>f</sup> | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1911 | ~                   | 125      | ~                | 9,173   | ~              | ~                  | 411                  | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | 114                 | ~          |
| 1916 | ~                   | 384      | ~                | 16,768  | 4,031          | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | 1,735              | 1,358               | 144                 | ~          |
| 1925 | ~                   | 3,404    | ~                | ~       | 2,425          | 953                | 1,117                | 8,897   | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | 1,371               | ~          |
| 1934 | 787                 | 1,993    | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | 2,882                | ~       | 71       | 1,095              | ~                   | ~                   | 1,801      |
| 1935 | 649                 | 2,043    | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | 3,137                | ~       | ~        | 5,277              | ~                   | ~                   | 1,580      |
| 1936 | 705                 | 1,881    | 4,095            | ~       | 4,273          | ~                  | 3,107                | ~       | ~        | 5,630              | 828                 | 3,400               | 1,597      |
| 1937 | 354                 | 1,996    | ~                | 21,342  | ~              | ~                  | 14,575               | 14,575  | ~        | 5,815              | 8,539               | ~                   | 1,682      |
| 1938 | 329                 | 2,981    | ~                | 36,184  | ~              | 1,306              | 21,740               | ~       | ~        | 5,775              | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1939 | 345                 | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | 5,881              | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1940 | 349                 | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | 6,597              | ~                   | 1,177               | ~          |
| 1941 | ~                   | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | 6,998              | ~                   | 1,265               | ~          |
| 1943 | 377                 | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | 6,846              | ~                   | ~                   | 6,432      |
| 1944 | 444                 | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | 6,746              | ~                   | ~                   | 6,760      |
| 1945 | 485                 | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | 7,145              | ~                   | ~                   | 7,147      |
| 1946 | 518                 | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1947 | 582                 | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1948 | 616                 | 8,211    | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | 21,233               | 42,462  | ~        | ~                  | 12,776 <sup>a</sup> | ~                   | ~          |
| 1949 | 676                 | ~        | 2,775            | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1950 | 641                 | ~        | 4,170            | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1951 | 769                 | 7,427    | ~                | 31,316  | 9,589          | ~                  | 12,893               | 74,911  | ~        | 11,493             | 20,131 <sup>a</sup> | 5,943               | ~          |
| 1952 | 526                 | 10,189   | 3,544            | ~       | ~              | 7,574 <sup>f</sup> | 12,377               | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1953 | 988                 | ~        | ~                | ~       | 1,080          | ~                  | 14,961               | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1954 | 1,076               | 10,779   | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | 11,463             | ~                   | 5,109               | ~          |
| 1955 | 1,157               | 12,022   | 6,297            | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | 12,466             | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1956 | 1,181               | ~        | 7,571            | ~       | ~              | 13,406             | ~                    | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1957 | 1,404               | ~        | 4,847            | ~       | ~              | ~                  | 40,000               | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | 5,824               | ~          |
| 1958 | 1,474               | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | 3,692    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1959 | 1,405               | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | 4,104    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1960 | 1,349               | ~        | 9,127            | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1961 | 1,281               | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | 29,019             | ~                    | ~       | ~        | 17,742             | ~                   | 15,360              | ~          |
| 1962 | 1,376               | 36,568   | 12,218           | 85,222  | 20,172         | ~                  | 19,169               | 133,171 | ~        | 16,407             | 23,847 <sup>a</sup> | ~                   | ~          |
| 1963 | 1,456               | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | 6,459    | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1964 | 1,610               | ~        | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | 7,158    | 17,824             | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1965 | ~                   | ~        | 11,806           | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | 46,753 <sup>c</sup> | ~          |
| 1966 | ~                   | ~        | ~                | 74,000  | 23,749         | ~                  | 48,927               | 160,697 | 16,812   | 18,071             | 26,976              | ~                   | ~          |
| 1967 | ~                   | ~        | 14,200           | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | 46,000 <sup>c</sup> | ~          |
| 1973 | ~                   | 120,000  | ~                | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | 180,000 | ~        | ~                  | 80,000 <sup>b</sup> | ~                   | ~          |
| 1977 | ~ <sup>d</sup>      | ~        | 46,980           | ~       | ~              | ~                  | ~                    | ~       | ~        | ~                  | ~                   | ~                   | ~          |
| 1978 | 16,000 <sup>d</sup> | ~        | ~                | 160,000 | 79,821         | 88,224             | 335,000 <sup>e</sup> | ~       | 77,054   | 78,387             | 72,700 <sup>b</sup> | ~                   | ~          |

1. CGRILA (1967).

2. Incomplete data.

a. Includes Canal Zone.

b. Includes Canal Zone (?).

c. CGRILA (1967).

d. MARC (1981). See also table 3600, above.

e. National Church Directory (1982) for the year 1981.

SOURCE: Beach and St. John (1916); CGRILA (1967); Dembriena and Dussel (1963); Dennis, Beach, and Fahn (1911); MARC (1981); Nelson (1963); Otis (1905); Read, Monterroso, and Johnson (1969); Taylor and Coggins (1961); WCH (1949, 1952, 1957, 1962, 1967).

Table 3602  
PROTESTANT COMMUNITY IN CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 1901-78

| Year | Belize              | Colombia             | Costa Rica | Cuba                   | Dominican Rep.         | El Salvador          | Guatemala | Haiti   | Honduras             | Nicaragua             | Panama               | Puerto Rico | Venezuela |
|------|---------------------|----------------------|------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-----------|---------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1901 | ~                   | ~                    | 3,021      | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | ~       | ~                    | ~                     | ~                    | ~           | ~         |
| 1905 | ~                   | ~                    | ~          | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | ~       | 2,550                | ~                     | ~                    | ~           | 303       |
| 1911 | ~                   | ~                    | ~          | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | ~       | 8,240                | ~                     | ~                    | 9,692       | ~         |
| 1916 | ~                   | ~                    | ~          | 25,031                 | 12,044                 | ~                    | 18,564    | ~       | ~                    | ~                     | ~                    | 16,178      | 139       |
| 1925 | 1,723               | 3,567                | 1,005      | 15,942                 | 3,068                  | 1,003                | 10,455    | 12,198  | 1,727                | 10,705                | 5,170                | 12,832      | 1,819     |
| 1936 | ~                   | ~                    | 12,000     | 20,328                 | ~                      | ~                    | 13,963    | 10,076  | ~                    | 5,788                 | ~                    | 18,014      | 11,910    |
| 1937 | ~                   | ~                    | ~          | 59,778                 | 20,405 <sup>†</sup>    | ~                    | ~         | 42,024  | ~                    | 17,619                | 27,293               | 28,141      | ~         |
| 1938 | 28,000              | 6,812                | 2,823      | ~                      | 14,934                 | 2,823                | ~         | ~       | 3,961                | 16,616                | 17,726               | 29,122      | 4,534     |
| 1940 | ~                   | ~                    | ~          | 150,000                | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | ~       | ~                    | ~                     | ~                    | ~           | ~         |
| 1948 | ~                   | ~                    | 7,461      | 96,460                 | 26,094                 | ~                    | ~         | ~       | 5,615                | ~                     | ~                    | 45,902      | ~         |
| 1949 | 20,450              | 25,654               | ~          | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | 76,248    | 126,334 | 17,611               | 30,453                | 32,771               | 130,984     | ~         |
| 1951 | ~                   | ~                    | ~          | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | ~       | ~                    | ~                     | ~                    | ~           | 13,600    |
| 1952 | 26,465              | ~                    | 8,475      | 200,000 <sup>†</sup>   | 27,146                 | 20,189               | 75,845    | 193,078 | 27,758               | 29,179                | 52,146               | 136,885     | ~         |
| 1956 | ~                   | ~                    | 27,720     | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | ~       | ~                    | ~                     | 47,722               | ~           | 20,720    |
| 1957 | 14,491 <sup>a</sup> | 45,405               | 10,992     | ~                      | 22,828                 | 39,198               | 142,465   | 313,279 | 22,221               | 37,666                | ~                    | 147,411     | 17,776    |
| 1961 | ~                   | 92,728               | 22,902     | 264,927                | 43,765                 | 51,691               | 148,000   | 327,140 | 34,488               | 40,000 <sup>†</sup>   | 41,778               | 174,707     | 26,042    |
| 1962 | 17,524              | ~                    | ~          | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | ~       | ~                    | ~                     | ~                    | ~           | ~         |
| 1966 | ~                   | 64,954               | ~          | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | ~       | ~                    | ~                     | ~                    | ~           | 184,000   |
| 1967 | ~                   | ~                    | ~          | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | ~       | ~                    | ~                     | ~                    | ~           | ~         |
| 1968 | ~                   | 111,069              | 39,008     | 295,727                | 77,433                 | ~                    | 131,091   | 500,922 | 56,890               | 54,387                | ~                    | ~           | ~         |
| 1973 | ~                   | 480,000 <sup>†</sup> | ~          | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | 300,000 | ~                    | ~                     | 57,387               | ~           | ~         |
| 1977 | ~                   | ~                    | 60,000     | ~                      | ~                      | ~                    | ~         | ~       | ~                    | ~                     | 318,000              | ~           | ~         |
| 1978 | 68,586              | ~                    | 141,000    | 640,000 <sup>†,b</sup> | 319,284 <sup>†,c</sup> | 392,896 <sup>†</sup> | 1,161,600 | 300,000 | 308,216 <sup>†</sup> | 78,387 <sup>†,d</sup> | 290,800 <sup>†</sup> | 256,000     | ~         |

a. Alternate figure 27,186 (WCH 1957). Data here from WCH (1962).

b. Alternate figure 160,000 (1975) (MARC 1981).

c. Alternate figure 299,000 (MARC 1981).

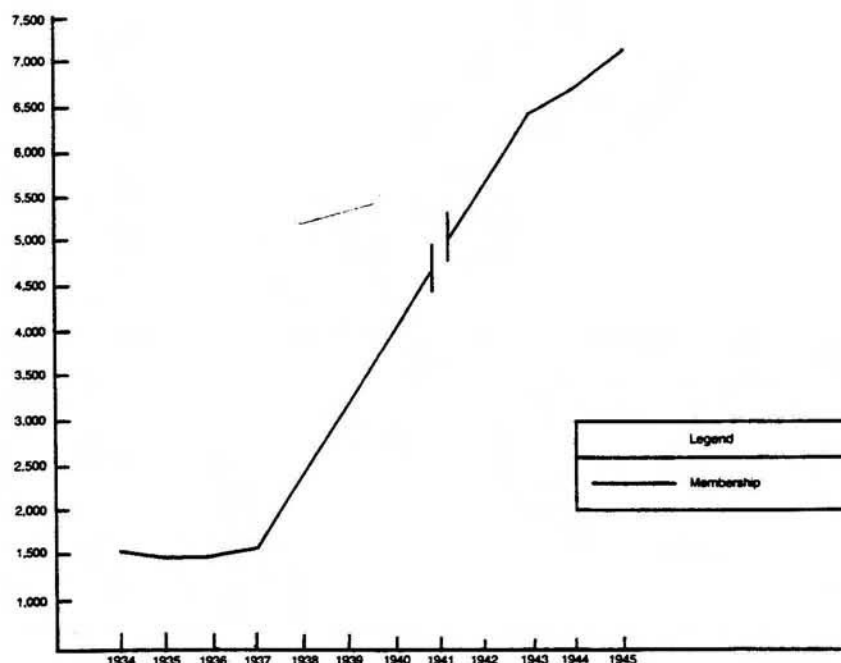
d. Alternate figure 300,000 (MARC 1981).

SOURCE: CGRILA (1967); Damboriena and Dussel (1963); MARC (1981); SALA, 18 and 20; WCH (1957, 1963).



Figure 1

**GROWTH OF PROTESTANT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN THE CANAL ZONE,  
SELECTED YEARS, 1934-45**



SOURCE: CGRILA (1967).

not baptized or who are not formally members of a Protestant congregation. The figures may even include the enumeration of *simpatizantes*. On the local level Community may be the enumeration of church attendance rather than membership. On the national level it is a mathematical extrapolation using a standard ratio of family members per adult member, (discussed above). In terms of Community the Protestant presence in Central America and the Caribbean is greater than membership figures alone would indicate. The greater the Community the greater the impact of Protestantism in Latin American culture, society, and politics.<sup>18</sup>

According to any measure Protestantism has grown sufficiently in a century to be a topic of serious study.<sup>19</sup> By 1970 Protestants numbered between 5 and 7 million in Latin America or about 2% to 3% of the population. Read, Monterroso, and Johnson (figs. 2, 5, 6) give an average annual growth rate for the years 1960 to 1967 of 10% per annum versus 3% per annum for the average annual growth rate of the seventeen nations they surveyed. On the basis of 100 equals 1.00% of the population, the average index of relative size was 204 (Read, Monterroso, and Johnson 1969:49). All

statistical studies indicate that the trend is for increased Protestant church growth.

Figure 1 illustrates several problems. Although it illustrates the growth of Protestant church membership in the Canal Zone, it will be noted that the data are limited to six years between 1934 and 1945. The data cluster around the mid-1930s and 1940s. The Protestant Community is not graphed because of a lack of data. Published figures on Panama rarely indicate whether or not they include Canal Zone data. In the CGRILA data only the Episcopal Church listed both Panama and Canal Zone statistics together in the same tabulation. Panama is also an example of a state whose statistics over time have been affected by changes in political borders, first after its independence from Colombia and then with the creation of the Canal Zone. Separate Canal Zone statistics are published in WCH and include Community figures.

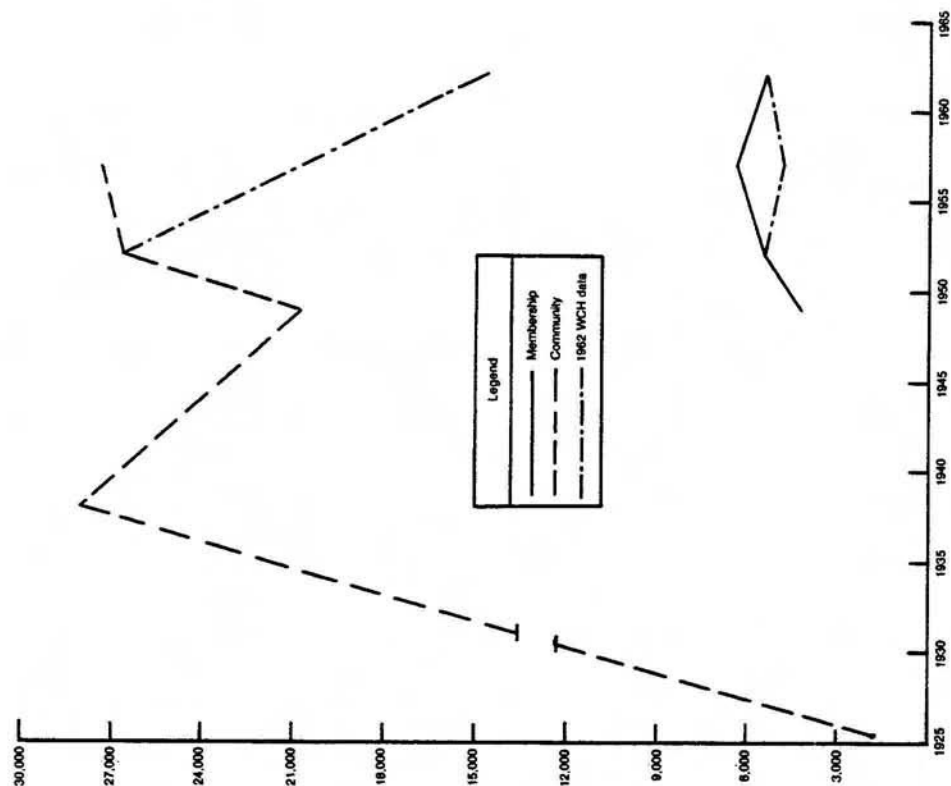
With regard to Belize (formerly British Honduras), the CGRILA files at Fuller Seminary account for all years between 1934 and 1964, (fig. 2). In addition, MARC statistics are available for 1978. The WCH also published statistics for Belize, including Community figures. The CGRILA and WCH figures indicate an upward trend. The degree of rise and absolute figures, however, are in dispute. The Community figures, though, show an early rise in Protestant population followed by a decline (figs. 2 and 3). In 1978 the

<sup>18</sup> For the socio-political impact of Protestantism in Mexico see Bastian (1981).

<sup>19</sup> Research suggestions are given in Read, Monterroso, and Johnson (1969:366-376). McGavran (1979), Kessler (1973), and Waymire and Wagner (1980) give technique. McGavran (1970) gives theory.

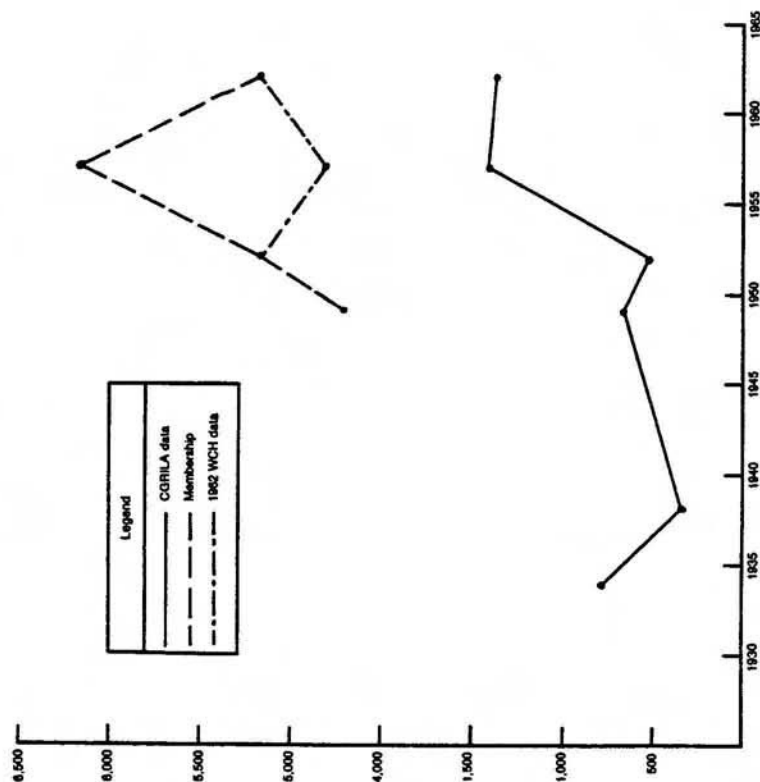
1716

Figure 3  
BELIZE PROTESTANT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND  
COMMUNITY, 1925-65



SOURCE: Beach and St. John (1916); CGRILA (1967); MARC (1981); Otis (1905), WCH (1949, 1952, 1962).

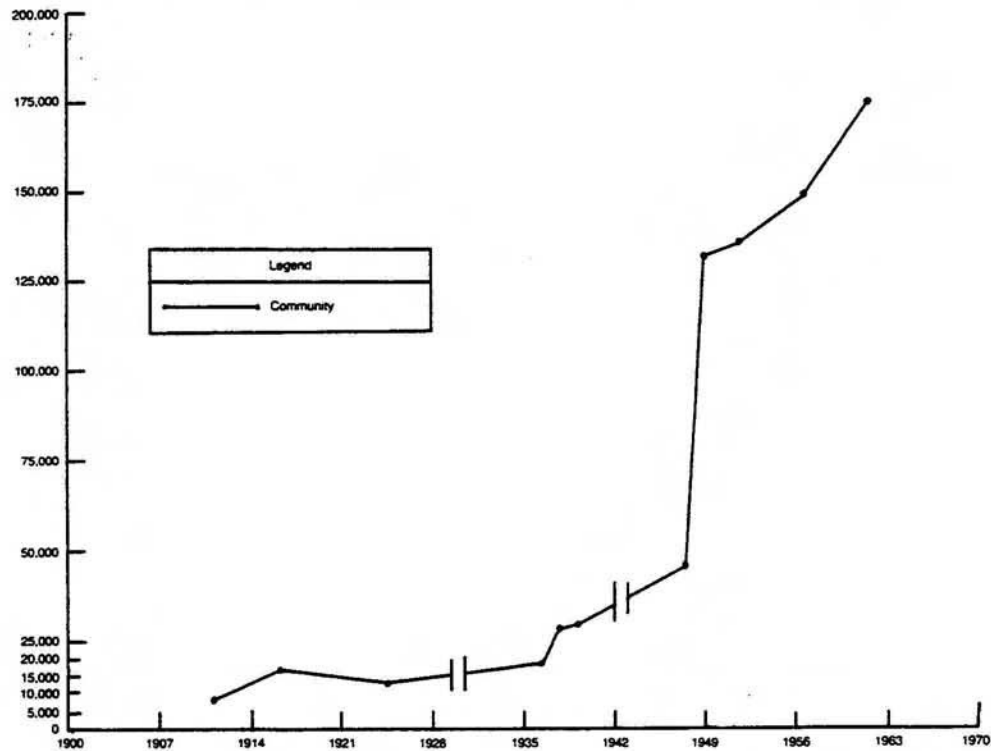
Figure 2  
BELIZE PROTESTANT CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DATA BASE  
COMPARISONS, 1934-65



SOURCE: Beach and St. John (1916); CGRILA (1967); MARC (1981); Otis (1905); WCH (1949, 1952, 1962).

Figure 4

GROWTH OF PROTESTANT COMMUNITY IN PUERTO RICO, 1911-63



SOURCE: Beach and St. John (1961); Damboriena and Dussel (1963); Dennis, Beach, and Fahs (1911); MARC (1981); Orr (1978).

Protestant Community numbered some 68,500, of whom more than 16,000 were members (MARC 1981).

For Puerto Rico it is apparently easier to enumerate Protestant Community than church membership. The 1973 and 1979 MARC statistics were very incomplete. Since figure 4 appears to be complete, one might be tempted to say that it reflects Puerto Rico's status as an American commonwealth. It would be a mistake to draw this conclusion, however, in light of the equally incomplete Canal Zone statistics. (As the Belize data show, years of dependence as an English-speaking nation is no guarantee of accuracy or completeness.) In 1978 the Puerto Rico Protestant Community numbered about 120,900 (MARC 1981).

National statistics must be evaluated in light of their own traditions. Generally statistics within any one statistical series may be comparable, but not comparable with other series. The Canal Zone, Belize, and Puerto Rico illustrate the two limitations mentioned above: national churches and mission societies are often not represented in the data, and data are often omitted because of lack of space in compendia.

Colombia, Cuba, and El Salvador illustrate yet another limitation, that is, the effects of political instability on sta-

tistical data. Colombia experienced an epoch of violence after 1948, Cuba underwent Fidel's revolution, and El Salvador is currently in a state of civil war. Since churches do not exist in a vacuum, each of these struggles has affected Protestant church growth.

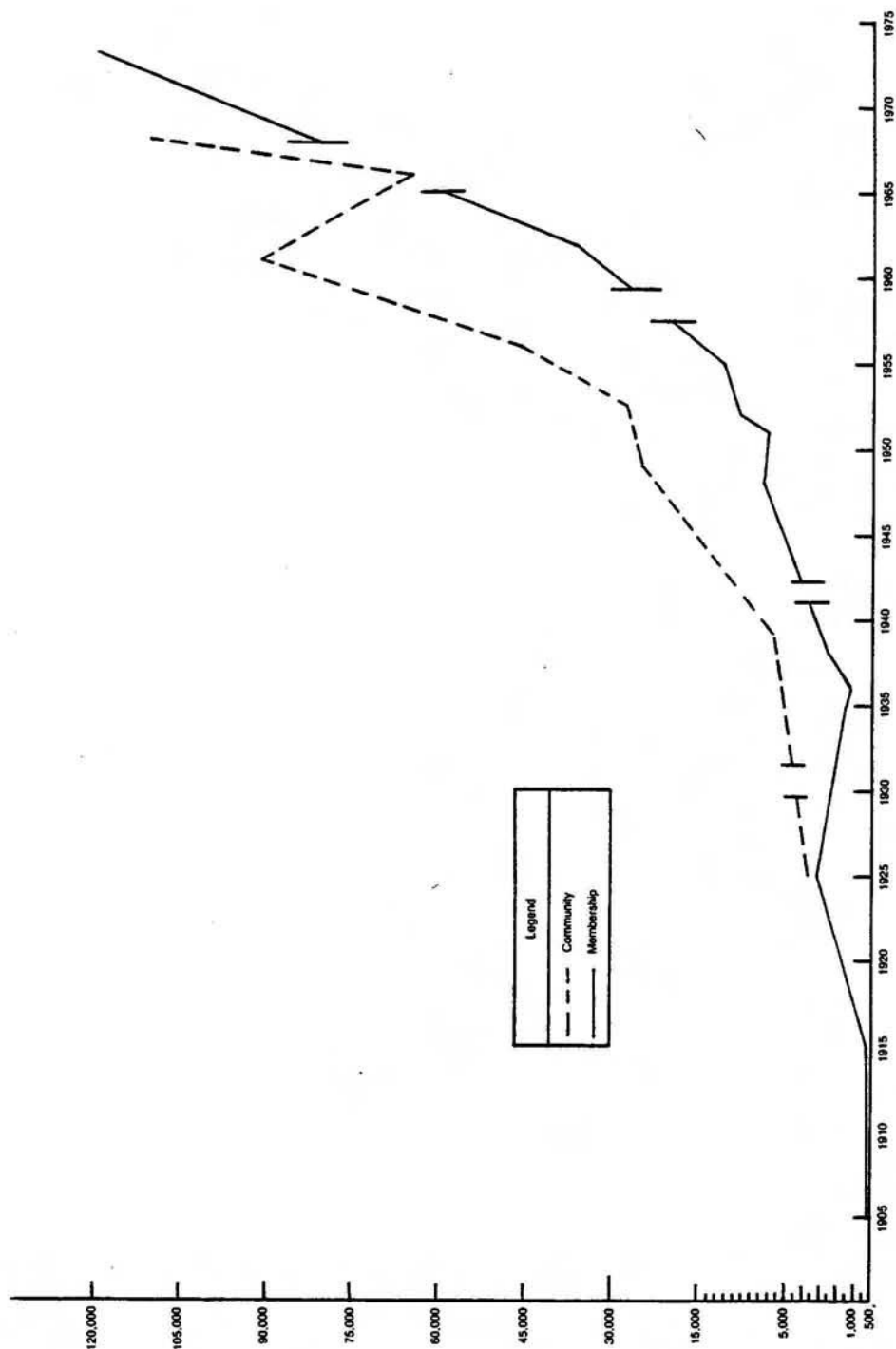
Bannon, Miller, and Dunne (1977:473) note that in Colombia after 1948 Protestant places of worship became targets for mob violence as anarchy and strife spread during the riots that followed the assassination of the popular radical leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. Read, Monterroso, and Johnson (1969:124-126) note that Protestants often sympathized with the Liberal opposition. The sympathy was reciprocated. Much of the chaos was centered in the *campo* forcing many to flee to the cities. Attacks on Protestants made conversion costly, but also led to the development of lay leadership and thus greater indiginity.

Figure 5 shows that despite the chaos, or perhaps because of the social dislocation that it spawned,<sup>20</sup> Protestant church growth in Colombia continued during the 1905-75 period. A drop in church membership occurred

<sup>20</sup>See Houtart and Pinn (1965) for discussion of the effects of social dislocation on Latin American Christianity.

Figure 5

GROWTH OF PROTESTANT COMMUNITY AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN COLOMBIA, 1905-75



SOURCE: Beach and St. John (1916); CGRILA (1967); Damboriena and Dussel (1963); Dennis, Beach, and Fahs (1911); Grubb (1936); International Congress on World Evangelization (1974); Otis (1905); Taylor and Coggins (1961); WCH (1949, 1959, 1962).

between 1948 and 1951, followed by an increase. More surprising is the growth of the Community. But then La Violencia was credited by some with giving Protestants free advertisement as reports of persecution and Liberal championing of religious freedom, long a hallmark of Colombian politics, made the press.

Growth continued following the subsidence of instability. What figure 5 does not show is that most of the denominations lost members in the 1950s. Only the United Pentecostal Church and Seventh Day Adventists experienced steady growth during those years (Read, Monterroso, and Johnson 1969:126). Other denominations exhibited greater changes.

Fluctuations continued upward in the 1960s. Figures for member churches of the Evangelical Confederation of Colombia indicate that the average rate of increase of member churches between 1960 and 1966 was 123.1%. Eleven denominations had percentage increases of more than 100%. Four showed a decrease in membership, while one recorded no change. The largest increase was by New Tribes Mission, up to 2,900 persons from 300, an increase of 866.7%. Their growth included mestizo farmers as well as Indians.<sup>21</sup> Clearly, political stability facilitated church growth in Colombia.

Figure 6, illustrating Cuban Protestant church growth, reveals incomplete data, a rise in Community at a time of membership decline, and apparent prosperity under the Revolution. It would appear that U.S. acquisition of Cuba favored Protestant church growth. By 1916 Protestants were almost five times more numerous than in 1905. Much of this growth, however, occurred under Liberal governments, not under U.S. rule. (Historically, Liberal governments in Latin America have been favorable toward religious pluralism.)<sup>22</sup> The gap in the data and the decline in Community size most likely reflect deteriorating conditions under Machado. Following the end of his regime instability continued until Batista came to power.

The Cuban Revolution does not seem to have seriously hurt the work of Protestant churches (see table 3603). Membership was greater in 1962 than in 1951. Although membership declined between 1962 and 1966, the number of persons belonging to the larger Protestant Community actually grew. Does this mean that some persons terminated their church membership but continued to identify themselves as Protestants? Were members excommunicated, but continued to identify themselves as Protestants? Was decline in membership due to persecution which in turn attracted others who would identify themselves as Protestants but who declined to join a church? These questions cannot be answered from the data in the tables or the figures.

<sup>21</sup> Information on the composition of New Tribes membership is from Charles Bennett of Mission Aviation Fellowship, Redlands, California, Sept. 2, 1970. He doubted that New Tribe church growth constituted a people movement. The Evangelical Confederation gave no figures on the other Indian mission, Wycliffe Bible Translators.

<sup>22</sup> The historiographic significance of this is discussed in Nelson (1963).

The most recent estimate (MARC 1981) puts Protestant Community in 1978 at about 160,000 persons. The Cuban statistics, however, illustrate the warning in the WCH that the larger the area surveyed the less accurate the statistical measurement. Country figures do not show the impact of the Revolution to the extent that denominational figures do. In the 1981 MARC survey<sup>23</sup> Clifton Holland notes that in 1957 there was one Roman Catholic priest for every 8,145 Cubans. One estimate was that by 1960 only 2% of the Cuban populace were practicing Catholics. Reflecting an adjustment to the Revolution, 49% claimed to be Roman Catholic in 1978. (Another 49% he terms "secular.") Nonetheless, many had left for the United States. Church leadership in both communions, however, suffered from emigration. Both Catholic and Protestant publishing was curtailed.

By 1970 more than half of Cuba's Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and Methodists had emigrated or left the church. In 1958 there were 7,600 Methodists pastored by 120 ministers. By 1971 there were 2,700 Methodist members and only 6 pastors. Episcopalians in 1958 had 85 congregations, 20 Cuban pastors, and 2,000 members, after seeing membership drop by 50% up to 1956. In 1959, Presbyterians numbered 1,500 members with 15 pastors. Decrease in ordained clergy necessitated an increase in lay leadership, especially in light of subsequent growth. Holland notes that evangelical churches experienced an initial decline in membership after Castro came to power. Later membership grew to about the size it was prior to the Revolution.

Some denominations, however, grew in size. In 1969 there were about 90 Baptist churches in western Cuba. In 1976 they numbered 102, one of which had more than 1,500 members. The Revolution forced the West Indies Mission (Worldteam) to reduce the number of congregations while church membership actually increased. The Assembly of God Church actually saw an increase in the number of congregations. Holland estimates that by 1975 about 2% (160,000) of the Cuban populace were Protestants. In 1952 there were about 360,000 Protestants (MARC 1981). The percentages and numbers will fluctuate periodically as people take advantage of opportunities to leave Cuba.

It is in light of such microstatistics that published data on Cuban Protestantism need to be interpreted. Figure 6 approximates the dynamics of growth and decline. Clearly the church is learning to adapt to the Revolution.

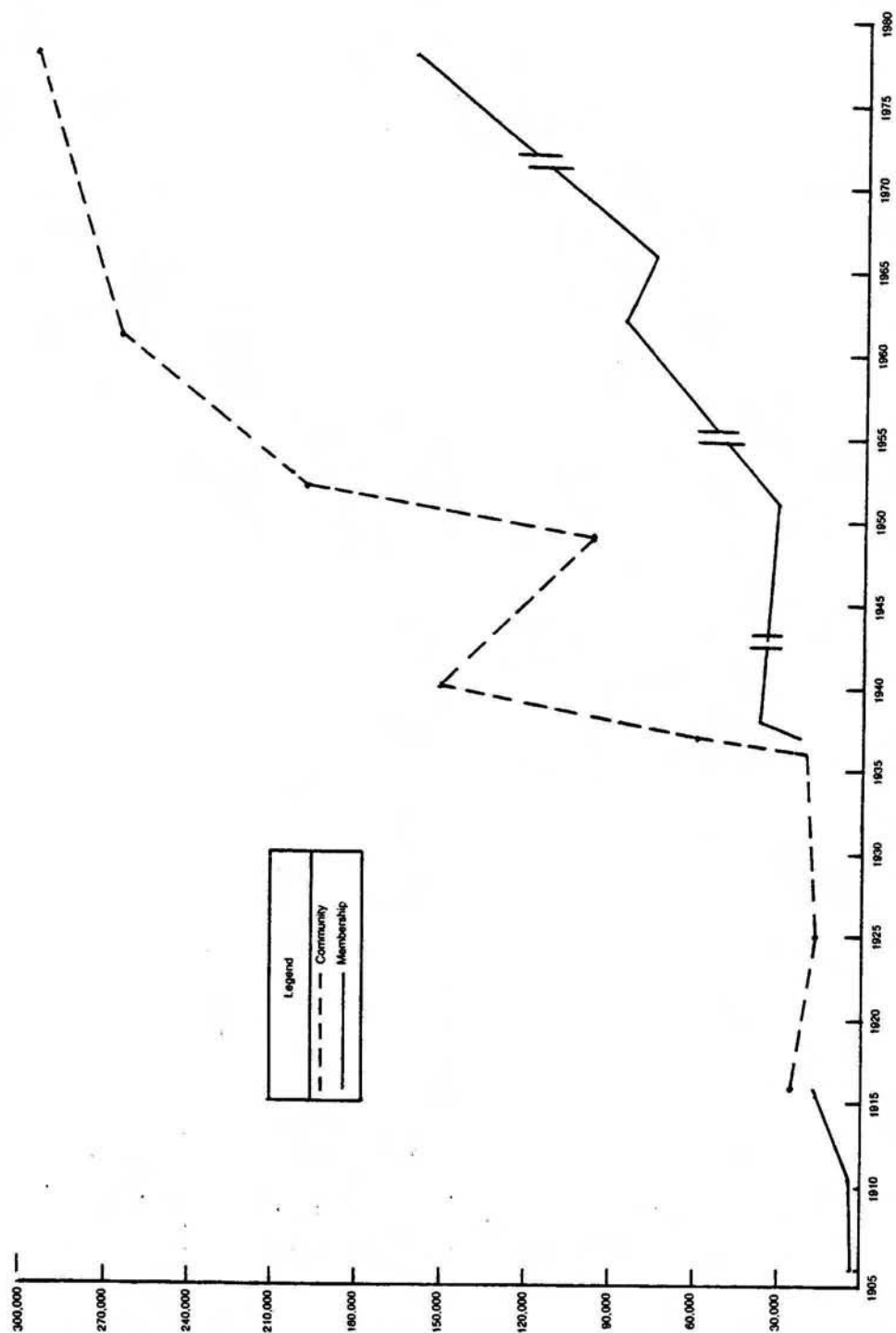
In addition to membership totals there are other religious statistics for Cuba. There are still missionaries in Cuba. In 1979 they numbered 36, only one of whom was Protestant. Of the 34 Catholic missionaries all were from Canada except two from the United States. Cuba had eight seminaries in 1979 (3 Baptist, 2 Roman Catholic, 1 interdenominational, and one each Seventh Day Adventist and Nazarene). The interdenominational seminary favors the Cuban Revolution. All have small student bodies. The Revolution ended Protestantism's dependence on foreign leadership, theologi-

<sup>23</sup> A galley proof was used at the time of this writing.



Figure 6

GROWTH OF PROTESTANT COMMUNITY AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN CUBA, 1905-75



SOURCE: Beach and St. John (1916); CGRILA (1967); Damboriena and Dussel (1963); MARC (1981); WCH (1949, 1952, 1962).

Table 3603

MICROSTATISTICAL IMPACT OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION ON THE  
CHURCH IN CUBA, SELECTED DENOMINATIONS, 1958-81

| Denomination            | Year | Members   | Community           | Congregations | National<br>Pastors | Seminaries     | Seminary<br>Students | Outstations | Book<br>Stores |
|-------------------------|------|-----------|---------------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Anglican                | 1959 | 2,000     | ~                   | 85            | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1981 | 1,000     | ~                   | 40            | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
| Assembly of God         | 1958 | 2,600     | 6,800               | 200           | 130                 | ~              | ~                    | 143         | ~              |
|                         | 1981 | ~         | ~                   | 63            | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
| Baptist                 | 1981 | 16,500    | 66,000              | ~             | ~                   | 3              | 30 <sup>†</sup>      | ~           | ~              |
| W. Baptist <sup>1</sup> | 1959 | 7,000     | 28,000 <sup>†</sup> | 120           | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1969 | 8,000     | 32,000              | 90            | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1976 | ~         | ~                   | 102           | 75                  | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1981 | 6,300     | 25,200              | 105           | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
| E. Baptist <sup>2</sup> | 1976 | 6,200     | 24,800 <sup>†</sup> | 125           | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1981 | 6,200     | 24,800 <sup>†</sup> | ~             | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
| Baptista Libre          | 1981 | 4,000     | 16,000 <sup>†</sup> | ~             | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
| Methodist               | 1958 | 7,600     | ~                   | ~             | 120-130             | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1971 | 2,700     | ~                   | ~             | 6                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
| Nazarene                | 1978 | ~         | ~                   | ~             | ~                   | 1              | 10                   | ~           | ~              |
| Presbyterian            | 1959 | 3,000     | ~                   | ~             | 50                  | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1981 | 1,500     | ~                   | ~             | 15                  | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
| Roman Catholic          | 1960 | ~         | ~                   | ~             | 2,941 <sup>a</sup>  | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1970 | ~         | ~                   | ~             | 228 <sup>a</sup>    | ~              | 128                  | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1978 | 1,911,000 | ~                   | ~             | 215 <sup>a</sup>    | 2              | 110                  | ~           | ~              |
| Seventh Day Adventist   | 1978 | 9,000     | 36,000 <sup>†</sup> | ~             | ~                   | 1              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
| Worldteam <sup>3</sup>  | 1958 | ~         | ~                   | ~             | ~                   | 1              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1959 | 2,600     | ~                   | 200           | ~                   | 0              | 0                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1978 | ~         | ~                   | 63            | ~                   | 0              | 0                    | ~           | ~              |
| Interdenominational     | 1978 | ~         | ~                   | ~             | ~                   | 1 <sup>b</sup> | 65 <sup>c</sup>      | ~           | ~              |
| Total Protestant        | 1952 | ~         | 360,000             | ~             | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | ~              |
|                         | 1958 | ~         | ~                   | ~             | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | 2              |
|                         | 1968 | ~         | ~                   | ~             | ~                   | ~              | ~                    | ~           | 1              |
|                         | 1978 | ~         | 160,000             | 1,000         | ~                   | 6              | 105                  | ~           | 0              |

1. Originally affiliated with the Southern Baptists (U.S.A.).

2. Originally affiliated with the American (Northern) Baptists (U.S.A.).

3. West Indies Mission.

a. Includes priests and nuns.

b. Plus two extension centers.

c. Supports the Revolution.

SOURCE: MARC (1981).

Table 3604

**PROTESTANT POPULATION, CENTRAL AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN,  
SELECTED YEARS, 1901-78**

(%)

| Year              | Colombia        | Costa Rica       | Cuba             | Dominican Rep.   | El Salvador      | Guatemala         | Haiti             | Honduras         | Nicaragua         | Panama <sup>1</sup> | Puerto Rico      | Venezuela        |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1901              | ~               | .9               | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                 | ~                 | ~                | ~                 | ~                   | ~                | ~                |
| 1905              | ~               | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                 | ~                 | .5               | ~                 | ~                   | ~                | .1               |
| 1911              | ~               | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                 | ~                 | 1.5              | ~                 | ~                   | .9               | ~                |
| 1916              | ~               | ~                | .9               | 1.5              | ~                | 1.5               | ~                 | ~                | ~                 | ~                   | ~                | .1               |
| 1925              | .1              | .2               | .5               | .3               | .10              | .7                | .5                | .2               | 1.6               | 1.1 <sup>a</sup>    | 1.0              | .1               |
| 1936              | ~               | 2.1              | .5               | ~                | ~                | .7                | .4                | ~                | .8                | ~                   | 1.1              | .1               |
| 1937              | ~               | ~                | 1.4              | ~                | ~                | ~                 | 1.6               | ~                | 2.3               | 4.7                 | ~                | ~                |
| 1938              | .1              | .5               | ~                | .9               | .2               | ~                 | ~                 | .2               | 2.1               | 3.1                 | ~                | .2               |
| 1948              | ~               | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                 | ~                 | .4               | ~                 | ~                   | ~                | ~                |
| 1949              | .2              | 1.0              | 1.8              | ~                | ~                | 2.8               | 3.8               | 1.3              | 3.0               | 4.2                 | 5.9              | ~                |
| 1952              | ~               | .9               | 3.5              | .1               | ~                | 2.5               | 5.5               | 1.8              | 2.6               | 6.2                 | ~                | .3               |
| 1956              | ~               | 2.6              | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                 | ~                 | ~                | ~                 | 5.1                 | ~                | .3               |
| 1957              | .3              | 1.0              | ~                | ~                | 1.8              | 4.1               | 8.2               | 1.3              | 2.9               | ~                   | ~                | .3               |
| 1961              | .6              | 1.8              | 3.8              | 1.4              | 2.1              | 3.7               | 8.5               | 1.8              | 2.8               | 3.8                 | 7.3              | .4               |
| 1968              | ~               | 2.4              | 3.6              | 2.1              | ~                | 2.8               | 12.2              | ~                | 3.1               | 4.3                 | ~                | 2.0 <sup>a</sup> |
| 1973              | .3 <sup>a</sup> | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                 | 7.7               | ~                | ~                 | 13.9                | ~                | ~                |
| 1977              | ~               | 2.9              | ~                | ~                | ~                | ~                 | ~                 | ~                | ~                 | ~                   | ~                | ~                |
| 1978              | ~               | ~                | 6.6 <sup>a</sup> | 6.2              | 9.1 <sup>a</sup> | 2.0               | ~                 | 9.9 <sup>a</sup> | 3.3 <sup>a</sup>  | 16.0 <sup>a</sup>   | ~                | ~                |
| 1978 <sup>c</sup> | ~               | 7.9 <sup>b</sup> | 2.0 <sup>b</sup> | 1.0 <sup>b</sup> | 7.0 <sup>b</sup> | 21.0 <sup>b</sup> | 10.0 <sup>b</sup> | 8.0 <sup>b</sup> | 12.0 <sup>b</sup> | 12.0 <sup>b</sup>   | 8.0 <sup>b</sup> | ~                |

1. National population figures excluded Canal Zone in computations.

a. Calculated on a ratio of 4:1.

b. MARC (1981).

c. Belize = 54.5% (MARC 1981).

SOURCE: Table 3602, above; SALA, 20; Damboriena and Dussel (1962); WCH (1949, 1952, 1957, 1962); U.S., Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (1981); Bureau of Economic Analysis and Projections (1977), and U.S., Bureau of the Census (1979).

Catholicism. Liberals saw religious pluralism as a means of weakening the political influence of the Roman Catholic church, but anticlericalism did not facilitate Protestant church growth. Membership remained almost constant during those years. Although showing more fluctuation, the Protestant Community showed little growth also. Significant growth occurred only after the end of anticlerical politics.<sup>26</sup> Among the factors limiting growth were North American theological controversies, Protestantism's immigrant status, emphasis on institutions such as radio and education, rural missions, and Catholic renewal. Although the upward trend continued, it was not a steady advance. There were numerous church splits among Baptists and Pentecostals. According to Read, Monterroso, and Johnson (1969:144), only the Seventh Day Adventists showed consistently high growth

rates, although they too suffered serious losses about 1960, which may account for the overall decline about that time.<sup>27</sup>

Table 3605 shows a drop of 61% in the Protestant Community from 1956 to 1957. Only in the 1970s did the Protestant Community again reach the 1956 level.

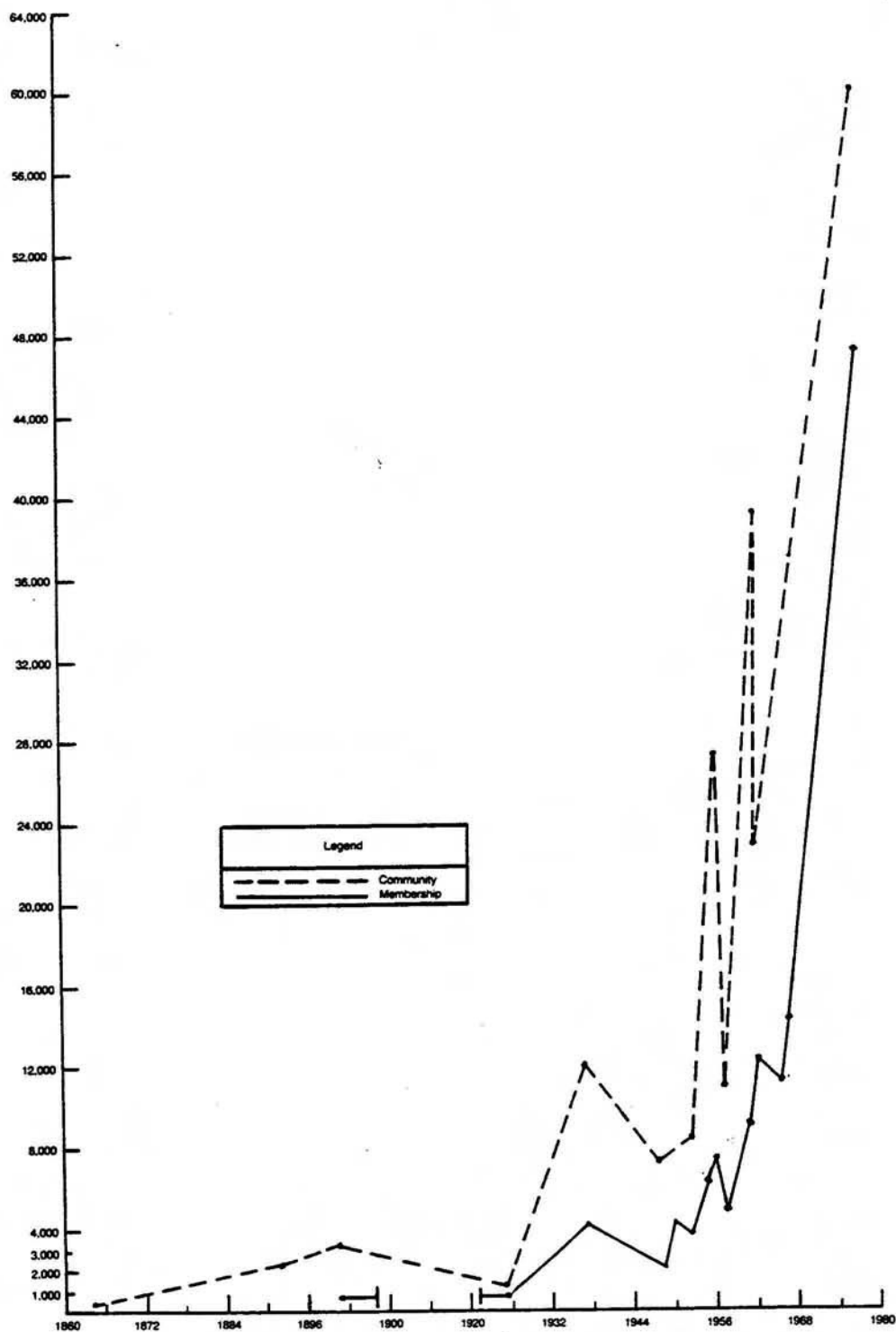
Much of the Costa Rican Protestant growth came through urban evangelistic campaigns such as Evangelism-in-Depth (1961) and the Billy Graham Crusade (1958). Although growth often precedes such campaigns as interest builds, decline sometimes follows as converts drift away or participating congregations fail to maintain the original enthusiasm. Table 3605 and figure 8 show that Protestants in Costa Rica have experienced uneven growth with respect

<sup>26</sup> Read, Monterroso, and Johnson (1969:143) describe the years from 1890 to 1940 as years of anticlerical government. Not all governments of the time, however, were anticlerical.

<sup>27</sup> Inexplicably Read, Monterroso, and Johnson (1969:141-146) do not discuss the growth of the Seventh-Day Adventists in Costa Rica. Adventists constituted 18% of the Protestant church in 1965. By 1967 they numbered 2,412 communicant members, the largest Protestant denomination in Costa Rica at the time.

Figure 8

PROTESTANT COMMUNITY AND CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN COSTA RICA,  
1860-1978



SOURCE: Damboriena and Dussel (1963); Grubb (1936); MARC (1981); Nelson (1963); Read, Monterroso, and Johnson (1969).

to the population at large, unlike other Central American and Caribbean nations.

An example of ethnic church growth (table 3606) comes from the work of the Church of Christ among the Maya Quiche, one of some 20 Maya language groups in Mexico and Guatemala. The study was made by the staff of the Clínica Cristiana of Quetzaltenango. Analysis of Quiche church leaders showed that Quiche evangelists themselves began 11 congregations, two were begun spontaneously from a Bible study, two by Ladinos, two as a result of Bible correspondence courses, two by Spanish-speaking Americans, and three by Quiche-speaking American missionaries. The congregations are self-propagating and self-supporting. Missionary input consists of leadership training, medical care, community development, and agricultural assistance (Rheinbolt 1982:179). Apparently the work began in the city and spread to the country. No figures were given for other missions working among the Maya Quiche. The work began in 1970. Assuming a Community of four persons per baptized adult member, the total Church of Christ Community among the Quiche would be 2,524. On the average a congregation would consist of 23 baptized adults with a congregational Community of 92 in 1981. (These figures are extrapolated from the report's membership figures.) The total Quiche population in 1979 was about 500,000 (MARC 1981).

These data are of interest because about half of Guatemala is Indian. In February 1982, Guatemala's Protestants celebrated their centennial with the publication of their first *National Church Directory*. According to the *Directory* Protestant churches number more than 6,000 congregations with nearly 335,000 members and an estimated Community of 1.5 million or about 20% of the population. From 1952 to 1962 Protestant church growth tripled. Most of the growth occurred in Pentecostal churches. In March 1962, a military junta asked the Protestant brother of a Catholic bishop to head a new government (Genet and Sywulka 1982: 34). The significance of that appointment for Protestant church growth remains to be seen.

The data presented here are conservative. Recognizing problems in the data, I have preferred to deflate rather than inflate the figures. Concerning the reliability of the data, a number of things can be said. The Venezuela CGRILA data in table 3607 have 3 years of contradictory statistics on the Evangelical Free Church.<sup>28</sup> As table 3607 shows, the two statistical sets differ little from each other. When measured as a percentage of the national populace the range is insignificant.

In contrast, the Belize data are unreliable regardless of source. The WCH published two different sets of statistics for 1957. A comparison of membership figures published in the WCH and the CGRILA data shows superficial resemblances. A closer look reveals a decline between 1949 and 1957 in the

<sup>28</sup> The Evangelical Free Church in Venezuela is the result of a North American missionary effort, but in North America it is Scandinavian in origin. In Europe the term "free church" means a church that is not a state church.

Table 3605

**COSTA RICA PROTESTANT COMMUNITY AS  
PERCENT OF POPULATION, 1864-1977**

| Year | %   | Year | %   |
|------|-----|------|-----|
| 1864 | .2  | 1952 | .9  |
| 1892 | .9  | 1956 | 2.6 |
| 1901 | .9  | 1957 | 1.0 |
| 1925 | .2  | 1961 | 1.8 |
| 1936 | 2.1 | 1968 | 2.4 |
| 1938 | .5  | 1977 | 2.9 |
| 1949 | 1.0 |      |     |

SOURCES: Table 3602 above; Nelson (1963:258), SALA, 20-606.

Table 3606

**GROWTH OF CHURCH OF CHRIST AMONG  
THE MAYA QUICHE IN GUATEMALA,  
1973-81**

| Year | Total Membership | Number of Congregations |
|------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1973 | 75               | ~                       |
| 1976 | 212              | ~                       |
| 1979 | 459 <sup>a</sup> | 24                      |
| 1981 | 631 <sup>a</sup> | 27                      |

a. Adult baptized believers.

SOURCE: Rheinbolt (1982).

Table 3607

**EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH MEMBERSHIP AND  
PERCENT OF VENEZUELA NATIONAL  
POPULATION, SELECTED YEARS**

| Year | Set I <sup>a</sup> |     | Set II |     | Difference | II/I |
|------|--------------------|-----|--------|-----|------------|------|
|      | N                  | %   | N      | %   |            |      |
| 1964 | 10,481             | .12 | 9,503  | .11 | 978        | 90.6 |
| 1965 | 9,406              | .08 | 9,434  | .10 | 28         | 99.7 |
| 1966 | 11,586             | .12 | 9,586  | .10 | 2,000      | 82.7 |

a. Set I and Set II are two different sets of CGRILA statistics for Evangelical Free Church membership, Venezuela, for each of the given years.

SOURCE: CGRILA (1967) absolute figures; for population figures see SALA, 20-620.



WCH figures while the CGRILA figures indicate an increase in the number of Protestants in Belize. Furthermore, although both the WCH and CGRILA membership figures increase, the WCH Community totals drop or rise depending upon the WCH edition used. Since the sources are incomplete, it is not possible to be confident concerning any of the Belize data. Community figures do not act as a control. A glance at the data suggests why Belize was omitted from *Latin American Church Growth* (Read, Monterroso, and Johnson 1969).

Where Community data are independent of membership data the former can be a control on the latter. Most of the figures show parallels between Community and membership. The data in tables 3601 and 3602, therefore, are reasonably accurate for determining trends in Latin American Protestantism, except for Belize and Panama. (Like Belize, Panama shows an irregularity owing in part to a lack of data.)

### Conclusion

Latin American Protestantism is a reality, whose extent and indigeness scholars and churchmen are increasingly prone to assess. Data for study derive from published and unpublished sources of varying quality, completeness, and reliability. Several questions still remain unanswered. Which statistics, membership or Community, are more reliable? To what degree (and when) are the statistics valid, and what trends do they indicate?

Since Community figures are usually projections calculated from membership statistics it would seem that Community statistics are as reliable as their membership base. However, as Read, Monterroso, and Johnson learned in Brazil (1969:50-51), assumptions concerning the ratio of Community to member can vary from place to place. In most cases published sources do not say how Community figures or ratios were calculated. In view of these facts, I believe that membership figures are more accurate than Community figures.<sup>29</sup> Membership figures do not result from arbitrary ratios. Denominational statistics are more accurate than national statistics because the latter may not include every denomination.

When are figures most likely to be correct? Figures obtained by an independent observer generally lack the inflation that often occurs when they are collected by those seeking favor with their superiors or foreign sources of funds. Rarely, however, are religious statistics so gathered. Accuracy is facilitated where there is less confusion over terminology. Thus ongoing surveys such as the WCH are more accurate over time than a one-time survey such as CGRILA. On the other hand, in one of the time series there

is bias because of a change in methodology. All of the surveys used questionnaires.

The questionnaire, however, is a problem if the respondent sees no need for the collection of the data. In that respect early World Dominion surveys done for evangelistic congresses should be more accurate than surveys done for no specific purpose. The 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization (ICOWE) survey is an example of a study conducted to meet a felt need. Finally, statistics are more accurate when collected during periods of peace. Civil wars and religious persecution bias data negatively by the loss of records or access to them, and shifts of population which affect transfer growth. Data collected during La Violencia must be critically evaluated before using them in applied studies.

Scholars are agreed that Protestantism is on the increase in Latin America. Between 1960 and 1967, Protestantism grew at an annual rate of 10% against a current annual growth rate of 3% for the populations of Mexico, Central America, and South America, excluding Belize (Read, Monterroso, and Johnson 1969:49). Of those nations, only Nicaragua's church growth rate was less than the rate of growth of the national population. According to the figures of Read, Monterroso, and Johnson, in 1967 between 2% and 3% of the Latin American populace was Protestant. Table 3604 gives the percentage of the population of Central America and the Caribbean that is Protestant and documents the increase in the Protestant population since 1901. In 1925 the Protestant population of Central America and the Caribbean averaged .5% of the total population. In 1961 the Protestant population averaged 3.2% of the population. Thus between 1925 and 1961, the Protestant population increased its small share of the population more than sixfold.<sup>30</sup> In 1978, according to Holland's Community figures (MARC 1981), 13% of the Central American and the Caribbean population, excluding Venezuela and Colombia, were Protestant. Most of the republics have exhibited steady growth in the Protestant population. Guatemala and Nicaragua, however, evidence more irregularity. Protestantism declined numerically in Haiti between 1968 and 1973 by about 50%, probably because of migration to the Dominican Republic and Miami. To more accurately measure these changes one can only hope that better data will be gathered in order to analyze Protestant church growth, which is clearly taking place in both absolute and relative terms.

<sup>29</sup> The WCH modifies both Community and membership figures for a given year in subsequent editions, rarely with comment though.

<sup>30</sup> Protestant influence, however, is greater than these figures would suggest. In Central America Protestants pioneered in advocating religious pluralism, in literacy programs in this century for American Indians, in extension education (Kinsler 1977), and radio. Protestant schools, contrary to Bastian (1981), have educated the elite of both the left and the right in Latin America. In March 1982 a Protestant was chosen by a junta to lead Guatemala.

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