

KIRTON | McCONKIE

BYU International Center for Law and Religion Studies
Religious Freedom - Annual Review
Fairness for All

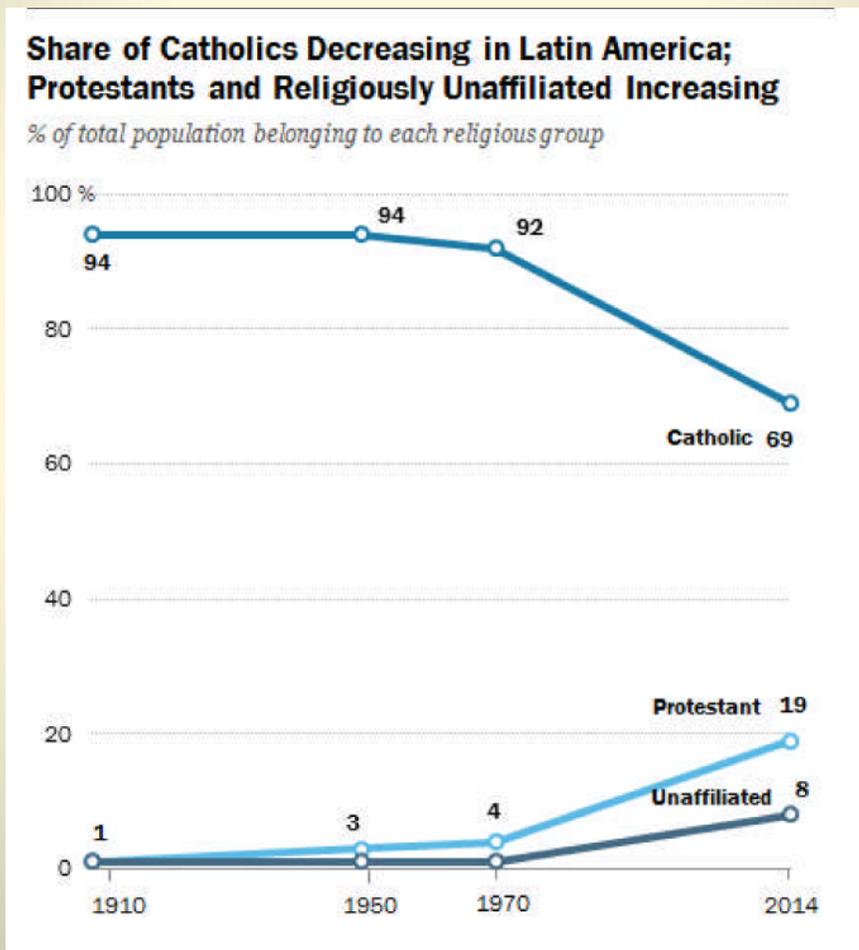
Scott Isaacson

July 6 - 8, 2015

Legal Issues Affecting Religious Freedom in Latin America

1. Massive social change in last 50 years from nearly 100% Catholic to a Plurality of Religions

Decline of Catholicism in Latin America



“Religion in Latin America” Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (November 13, 2014).

<http://www.pewforum.org/2014/11/13/religion-in-latin-america/#history-of-religious-change>
accessed on July 6, 2015.

Catholic Affiliation by Country

Catholic Affiliation in Latin America

% of Catholic population

	1910	1950	1970	2014	1910- 1970 Diff.	1970- 2014 Diff.
Argentina	97	95	91	71	-6	-20
Brazil	95	93	92	61	-3	-31
Bolivia	94	94	89	77	-5	-12
Chile	96	89	76	64	-20	-12
Colombia	80	91	95	79	+15	-16
Costa Rica	99	98	93	62	-6	-31
Dominican Republic	98	96	94	57	-4	-37
Ecuador	88	98	95	79	+7	-16
El Salvador	98	99	93	50	-5	-43
Guatemala	99	99	91	50	-8	-41
Honduras	97	96	94	46	-3	-47
Mexico	99	96	96	81	-3	-15
Nicaragua	96	96	93	50	-4	-43
Panama	84	87	87	70	+3	-17
Paraguay	97	96	95	90	-2	-5
Peru	95	95	95	76	0	-19
Puerto Rico	100	94	87	56	-13	-31
Uruguay	61	62	63	42	+2	-21
Venezuela	93	91	93	73	0	-20

The 1910, 1950 and 1970 estimates are from the World Religion Database and the Brazilian and Mexican censuses. The 2014 estimates are based on the Pew Research Center survey. See this report's methodology for more on how population estimates were calculated.

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2. Non-Catholic Churches are generally free to exist and operate (outside of Cuba).

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3. However, there is a lack of appropriate laws and regulations to meet the needs of Non-Catholic Religions.

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4. Some appropriate laws have been adopted in some countries. Others are considering laws.

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5. Growth of Evangelical Churches and the temptation to persecute newer religions.

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6. Leftist governments (Venezuela, Bolivia) treating foreign religions as “neo-colonialism.”

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7. In spite of Catholic Church's influence, LGBT agenda is advancing in many countries in Latin America.

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8. Latin America stands out as a wonderful example of peaceful religious evolution and toleration.