

About the Baptists and their Religious Freedom in Chile

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Introduction

In the name of the Baptists of Chile, I am providing this information to the Baptist strategists around the world who honor us with their presence. I am reporting today on five aspects of Chilean Baptist people: 1) Chile Before Baptists; 2) Baptist Arrival and Settlement; 3) Forms of missiological strategy; 4) Its growth and current status; and 5) Baptists and religious liberty in Chile.

Chile Before Baptists

The history of missions, both Protestant and Evangelical, tells us that the shape of Baptist faith did not penetrate in Latin America before the second part of the nineteenth century because Chile was a part of the continent discovered by Christopher Columbus, a pious Catholic. And which then emerged as a new world compared to Europe, Africa, Asia and Oceania, following the explorations of Amerigo Vespucci, as AMERICA.

The new continent was a geographical phenomenon, appropriate and right for the crown of Castile and Leon in Spain. The Castilian kings, especially the devout Catholic Queen Isabel, sponsored, funded, and employed Columbus for the adventure that Cristobal thought would discover the earthly paradise of the "Indies." Because of Columbus's error, thinking he had reached the east coast of India, all of the Spanish possessions in America were named the "Indies." However, in terms of political and economic rights and the competition for discovery from its neighbors Portugal, and further England, Holland and France, the Spanish-Castilian crown had to answer the following question: Ultimately, to whom, in all fairness, does this great property of the Indies belong?

The answer was given in theo-political terms: The Indies belongs to God, the Creator. Another question: Who is the primary administrator of "The Indies"? The Kings, Isabel and Ferdinand? No. The Spanish people? No; much less the Venetian Columbus. The primary administrator, it was thought, was the Vicar of God on earth (i.e., the Successor of Peter, the Pastor from Rome, the Pope). The Castilian Crown then consulted their Universal Pastor, Alexander VI Borgia, who appointed the Spanish-Castilian kings to secondary, but legitimate, administrators of Spanish America. The Pope, however, wrote a Papal Bull, "*Inter Caetera*" ["Among other Works," 4 May 1493], explaining the missionary task of the church: "Among the things about which God is most concerned is the evangelization of the Gentiles," in this case, "the Indians" of "The Indies." In very modern language we would say that Latin America was given to the Castilian Crown for the purpose of evangelization. After this beginning, the explorations were completed, the conquest was finalized, and the new society of colonial culture was then organized between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the second part of the sixteenth century, The Roman Catholic Church convened the Council of Trent in northern Italy. The zeal of some to make improvements (what Luther called a Reformation) from within the church, the intelligent suspicion of the possibility that the Protestant church would be extended world-wide, and the injection of Jesuit theological emphases, are some factors that shaped the canons of the council. Any value that might come from this reforming movement, whether socio-economic, aesthetic, social and family, church religious, philosophical, or theological, if it were not approved by the Pope, would be stifled. Walls made of political, social, philosophical, and religious stones were built west of the East Atlantic and the Pacific, between North and South America. Protestants, Jews, Masons, agnostics and atheists, were regarded as

subjects of expulsion, or criminals, to be executed by the Holy Inquisition.

On the other hand, the struggles to settle the New World between the European powers of Western Christendom occurred mainly from Ecuador to the north. Protestant pirates like Francis Drake raided the Spanish colonial coasts in the sixteenth century, including Chile, but their goals were not primarily missiological. The Castilian-Catholics wall, or walls, remained steadfast throughout the eighteenth century. When the technological and industrial revolutions, especially commercial and military dynamics, opened up new relationships between colonizing Europe and semi-open North America, relationships between European powers and South America also began slowly to change.

There were hints here and there. For example, in Chile, the Scottish Baptist pastor James Thomson was invited, in the year 1821, by the founding father, Bernardo O'Higgins, to work with education at the primary-level. Thomson used the Lancasterian method of instruction (the student who knows more teaches the beginner), and its educational materials highlighted the use of written portions of the Bible. But in 1822, Professor Thomson had to leave Chile because of the natural pressures of the country's ultra-conservative social and political leadership.

Allow me a few words about the thought of O'Higgins on the topic of public education, and Thomson on the relationship of the Bible with the freedom of conscience.

In a newspaper called "La Gaceta de Chile," in the year 1822, the writings of the Father of Chile proposed to "promote the education of all kinds, but especially the poorest social class. For his part in the book Thomson wrote, in *Letters on the moral and religious State of South America*, published in London in 1827: "... and there are those who though they were baptized in the name of Christ, are never compelled by him and hardly know a single precept of what he taught. Can such a people, I wonder, enjoy for a long time civil liberty and the corresponding benefits? ... Without a wide diffusion of the Scriptures, the South Americans will never be as enlightened and refined so that the long-time communities can use the right to universal suffrage with confidence."

With regard to religio-political pressures at that time, there were Protestant elements that dared to ask O'Higgins, who acquired sympathy for the Protestants during his travels to study in England, "the construction of a temple and the official recognition of the cult." This is affirmed by the Anglican Lady Mary Graham, in her book *Diary of My House in Chile*, in which she says, ". . . they were recently granted private freedom of conscience and a cemetery exclusively for them in a country that just twelve years ago was under the Inquisition in Lima." These were only hints of "swallows that did not make summer."

But thanks to the international factors of political, commercial and cultural natures, since the mid-nineteenth century, evangelical Protestants (missions independent of the state church), among them Mennonites and Baptists, arrived to stay.

The Chilean government, with its secular liberal ideology, needed to colonize the forested southern regions of the country for economic social and cultural development using technological, mechanical, and educational tools for such development. For this, the rulers looked toward Germany.

From the second half of the nineteenth century the immigration of German settlers began. Catholic leaders, in their zeal, requested that only Catholic settlers come, but the vast majority who accepted the invitation of the immigration officers were Protestant, among them some of fervent Baptist faith, like Lichtenberg, Reinike, and other brothers. Roughly speaking, these Germans of Evangelical Christian faith settled in the southern part of what is now called the Eighth (Los Angeles-Contulmo) through the Ninth Regions (Victoria, Temuco), and reaching the southernmost borders, represented by the cities of Valdivia, Osorno, Puerto Montt to Chiloé Island. They evangelized German Catholics, which began the evangelization of the Chileans. Among those

called by the Chilean government in the last decades of the nineteenth century from England, who would become the founder of the Baptists of Chile, was the teacher and pastor, William McDonald.

Baptist Arrival and Settlement

As we have mentioned, the first rulers of Chile established governments with conservative ideology. In the religious area, the state was in full compliance with the Catholic Church. The national Constitution, established since 1833, had declared that the religion of Chile was Roman Catholic Apostolic, to the exclusion of any other religion. But ideological and commercial dynamics from countries that were mostly Protestant or evangelical like England, Holland, Switzerland, Germany and the United States of America, hit the legal walls of Catholicism, causing cracks where new political, philosophical and religious ideas entered.

The ideology of liberal political thought, the Enlightenment, and the missionary zeal of Christian believers, and worshippers of both secular and theological, coming from the northern hemisphere, created a kind of Trojan horse (real even if invisible), in which Evangelicals entered the National City to prevail over time – and even to this day.

A crack in the Constitutional wall prohibiting the public exercise of any religious expression other than Catholic was the "Interpretative Law" of 1865, the fifth article (the article that had formerly excluded non-Catholic public worship). The National Congress was already pluralized in ideology, with parliamentarians of liberal, secular, and anti-clerical positions of thought. In 1865, Article 5 was changed to allow dissidents to practice cults in private, and found private schools for children of non-Catholics, on the basis of "the doctrines of their religions." This cracking widened between 1871 and 1888. It legislated for "naturalization and citizenship, freedom of assembly, association and education."

Since the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Constitutional text of 1833 began to be interpreted with a hermeneutic of greater social and spiritual openness. From the second half of the century until the First World War (1914-1918) the struggle between liberal secularism, the ideals of the Masons, and the Catholic Church, intensified. In Chile, there developed the parliamentary power that shook hands with presidents with secular tendencies, such as Domingo Santa Maria, Jose Joaquin Perez, and Jose Manuel Balmaceda (until 1891).

Then were freed civil-society structures, which for centuries had been managed completely by the papal clergy, such as civil marriage, freedom of press and journalism, universal suffrage, and others. In that period (second half of the nineteenth century) an evangelical church was started in Valparaiso under the leadership of a congregational pastor, who arrived in the bay of the port as the Marine Corps chaplain, Dr. David Trumbull. Trumbull waged successful battles using public journalism against the Catholic Archbishop Casanova for civic structures to the benefit of all Chileans.

Then the founder of the Baptists, Pastor Guillermo McDonald with his wife, Janet, and their children, arrived in Chile in 1888. Invited by President Balmaceda to serve as professor in the English Colony at a place called Púa, between Victoria and Temuco, he landed at Talcahuano and settled in Púa. After a civic-political revolution led to the suicide of President, McDonald did not receive his salary from the State; instead he earned his "bread" as Bible colporteur of the Bible Society founded by Trumbull in Valparaiso. The new government paid him with a plot of land in the area of Freire, a village near Temuco. New developments soon changed the course of the missionary Baptist preacher.

In 1897, a volunteer missionary from the United States, Henry L. Weiss, founded the Christian Missionary Alliance Church (MAC). Weiss was a fervent Mennonite- and German-speaking

missionary. A committee of evangelical German settlers found him in Concepcion and called him as its pastor because he was fluent in German. The next year, reinforcements from New York arrived for the MAC mission, and the work quickly spread between Victoria and Valdivia, and then to the island of Chiloe. In the German colony there were also Baptist elements. Then McDonald joined the Weiss mission in 1899 and, as a charismatic lead teacher, he made disciples. After some time, trouble began between the Alliance leadership and the Baptist minister. The crisis ended in rupture; McDonald was separated from the MAC in 1907.

In April of 1908, McDonald and several pastoral families, such as Sáez, Valdivia, Chavez, Mella, Gatica, Alvarez, together with more than 300 brothers from cities and fields of the then Border Region, in a small town Cajon, near Temuco, founded the Evangelical Baptist Union of Chile. The founding churches were settled in Gorbea, Lastarria, Mune, Molco, Cajon and Huilío.

The Brazilian Baptist Convention was organized in 1907 and, responding to a letter from McDonald, adopted Chile as a missionary field. The mission of the Southern Baptist Convention of the USA had sent Dr. William Buck Bagby on mission to Brazil. He was sent to support the founding of the Baptists of Chile. Baptists from Argentina, Cuba and Mexico, also brought their offerings to support the Baptist workers in Chile. Most evangelical German settlers, once the work was extended to the Spanish speaking population, remained in the churches of the MAC. In Chile we have a saying: "I am pure Chile," means that I do not have a penny in my pocket. Financially, and structurally speaking, the Baptist work in Chile was born "pure Chile." But the pain of missiological poverty was cured by the largesse of the missionary wealth of the Southern Baptists of the US. From this body missionaries began to arrive, very well trained in theology, and well equipped in family resources and dollars. They came to plant, harvest, and store, the rich fruits of evangelization.

The first family, William Earl Davidson and his wife, Mary, arrived in 1917. Roberto Cecil Moore and his wife, María, arrived in 1919. Agnes Nora Graham arrived the next year, and in 1921, José Lancaster Hart and his wife, Tennessee, arrived in 1922. Santiago W. McGavock and his wife Catalina, and others followed in this decade and beyond. The missionaries settled in the country's strategic cities such as Temuco, Concepción, Talca, Santiago, Antofagasta, all in South Central and Northern Chile. In 1922, McDonald, nationalized in the USA and was appointed missionary of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He then settled in Temuco, and from there moved to the cities or towns and places mentioned above, adding Freire, Laureles, Villarrica, Pucón, Liucura, and Pichares as well.

Forms of Missiological Strategy

The primary meaning of the term "strategy" is related to military leadership and war. The Chilean evangelicals and Baptists settled in a country with martial war. They had to fight against closed social institutions to obtain room for social tolerance and religious freedom. Between the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the right to engage in public worship had been obtained; however, the evangelical Baptists and non-Baptists still had to face a constitutional giant – the union of Church and State. The president of Chile was a civic and ecclesial colleague of the Pope of Rome. The bureaucratic offices were attacked by the zeal and fanaticism of the faithful, led by ultra-conservative Catholic pastors. Allow me to relate an anecdote, told by Baptist missionary historian, Dr. R. Roberto C. Moore in his book *Baptist Men and Events of Chile*:

"... In Quirihue, the local priest (the Catholic pastor, parentheses mine) took out in precession, a much-venerated statue of the Virgin Mary. Precisely in front of the house of one of the few evangelical people, there was an electric light wire that was so low that it reached the head of the statue knocking her to the floor and smashing her to pieces. An evangelical, with more fervor than prudence, shouted: "Glory to God." The priest had him arrested, charging that he had placed the

wire on purpose.” Dr. Moore wrote this in the 1960s, saying: "Fortunately, these times have changed and we breathe the air of freedom to preach the gospel *at the discretion of each individual*" (Moore, p. 41; emphasis mine).

The primary method from the beginning was both to preach and testify about the gospel of personal salvation. Following individual repentance, belief with full faith in Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a pattern regenerated by the Holy Spirit, men, women and teenagers were baptized by immersion and joined or organized local churches. The local church was a home to grow members of "the family of God" and prepare for the church to continue the work of evangelization. Members preached and testified in homes, in their workplaces, outdoors, on the streets, and in the chapels or temples, wherever they were.

Local churches, founded from the beginning as autonomous in government, discipline, and mission strategies, freely chose to strengthen the unity and maintain denominational identity through the "Evangelical Baptist Union of Chile." The term "Union" was later changed to "Convention" and, a few years ago, to back to "Union," perhaps because the impact of postmodern and neo-Pentecostal context dynamics threatened to spread. The statutes, in the Chilean context of early twentieth century, stated that the Baptist Union consisted of "Baptist churches and individuals who hold evangelical doctrines based on the Scriptures, different from the rationalism and Socinianism on the one hand, and the ritualism and Romish errors on the other, and are consistent in promoting its objectives and contribute annually to its funds' (Moore, p.13; retouching and emphasis mine). With the passage of time, the biblical zeal in opposition to the new rationalistic materialism has endured; the polemics against the "Romish ritualism and error" has softened, and the financial contribution or "funds" for the support of the work of the Baptist churches of Chile has strengthened.

In the early twenty-first century, the Union of Baptist Churches of Chile published statutes as a corporation of legal person of public law. Before, the CONVENTION was of private law. Culled sentences from the context of the first three ARTICLES state: "it is a fraternal community of evangelical Baptist churches who identify, link and share a common historical tradition, a body of doctrine and congregational polity" . . . ; and "promote, support and coordinate all the initiatives that the local Baptist evangelical churches deem appropriate for the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the extension of the values of the Kingdom of God." In the FOURTH ACTICLE are the basic principles of faith with which the churches of the UNION define their identity as Baptist churches. I transcribe the entire article.

"According to the Bible, the only authority for doctrine and practice for believers and churches, the UNION ... declares and supports the following principles of faith.

- I. We believe in One God, self manifested for salvation (in the temporal and the eternal) of humans, as Sovereign Father, as Son and Holy Redeemer and Sanctifier.
- II. We believe that a church is built by a community of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on the basis of personal faith in him and whose mission is to worship, loving service, fellowship, integral evangelization, formative education in their environment and the prophetic denunciation, extending its mission to the whole world. "
- III. We believe that salvation of the human being responds to God's grace and requires faith alone in Jesus Christ that is personal, communal, and eschatological.
- IV. We believe that local churches are governed by congregational polity, which are autonomous from other churches or institutions, but both can associate freely with other churches (in Chile, in each geopolitical region there are respective organizations of Baptist churches in functional relation with the NATIONAL UNION - par. mine) or institutions for special projects related to the nature of Christian mission in the world.
- V. We believe in the voluntary principle on faith and church membership. Every human being has the inalienable right to worship the Deity where, when, and as his conscience dictates. The

Christian's conscience is illuminated by biblical values of the Kingdom of God. This conscience is moral guarantee in favor of every good social custom.

VI. We sustain the principle of autonomy of the Church from the State and the State in the church. The state is a legitimate institution, which ensures order, justice and health of temporal society, the Church is an eschatological society, lives the faith which works by love, evangelizes and educates on the basis of faith, according the Spirit of Jesus Christ. " And in the FIFTH ARTICLE states the membership of the Union, with the Latin American Baptist Union and the Baptist World Alliance.

Speaking of "funds" or financial resources for mission projects conducted by the churches of the Convention, until about thirty years ago, these came mainly from the United States of America. The missionaries sent to Chile by the Foreign Mission Board of the SBC, were organized as the "Evangelical Baptist Society" for, among other things, managing contributions to Baptist work in Chile. The Convention put together precise objectives, including the approval of a national fund consisting of the tithes of the treasuries of the local churches – the Cooperative Program. This fund has financed projects of the various boards composed of Chilean foreign missionaries.

The names of boards, from the beginning, explain its objectives: Home Mission Board, today National Evangelism and Missions (Dinemis) Publications Board (now not in force); the Board of the Theological Seminary (now Board of Directors as a functional part of Diego Thompson Educational Foundation); and the Board of Home for Orphans (now Baptist Foundation to Love, located in Temuco). In this regard, Chilean Baptists have been concerned, though not largely, in the loving care of the orphaned and the elderly, and the health of people. Beyond this home just mentioned, on the initiative of a pastor's wife (Ana Lara de Pozo) another home was created for the elderly in a metropolitan area, supported by the Association of Churches in the region, and in the Eighth Region the Association created another home with the same profile.

In Antofagasta, in the northern part of the country, a daughter of the missionary Joseph Hart, Lois, and a Chilean young lady named Belia Perez provide great service in a poor neighborhood in favor of the physical health of the urban population. For this we created the Baptist Clinic Board. The Ministry of Health of the Region has recognized this clinical practice. It has had to fight hard to get the necessary resources for a growing demand of the population.

The Board of the Baptist College was founded in Temuco in the last decade of the twentieth century (now the Baptist Educational Corporation), which has created other schools in the region. School education has not been a strong emphasis as a strategy for mission, but it has been significant. For example, the first primary school in the beginning of Chilean Baptist work was created by a Baptist pastor, brother Faustino Escobar, in the city of Pucon in the region of La Frontera. In Concepcion, attached to the Temple, a Baptist College was created similar to the one in Temuco. In Curicó, Antofagasta, and Santiago, descendants of the Baptist Pioneer Alvarez family, have created schools of primary and secondary education.

Also, since the beginning, missionaries sent by Richmond engaged in theological education and practical pastoral leadership. The first efforts took place on alternative sites, but in 1939, the Baptist Theological Seminary of Chile became operational in a building erected in the streets of the capital of Argomedo, with three students and three teachers. Its first Chilean rector was a young graduate of the University of Chile, with a major in law, and a native of Cauquenes, Don Honorio Espinoza Soto.

In 1955 the seminary moved to larger quarters at Avenida Miguel Claro, the Municipality of Providencia. To this date, the seminar has trained hundreds of men and women for ministry, both in Chile and abroad. The institution was jointly directed until 2011 by three guiding "American" rectors and three guiding "Latin-American" rectors. The current rector, pastor Robert Carter, is

"American" by right of blood and "Chilean" by the right of the sun. It has been more than a decade since the Baptist Evangelical Society (formerly comprised of the Anglo-American missionaries in Chile) was authorized to donate the valuable Headquarters Seminar of the Convention, or Union of Churches of Chile, managed by the Diego Thompson Foundation. In Arica, Iquique, Antofagasta-Calama, Copiapó, Valparaíso, Rancagua, Talca, Concepción, Temuco and Valdivia, there are theological institutes teaching ministry extension of the seminary for working men and women of the churches. Brothers and sisters with calls to specific ministries can complete their theological training at the headquarters of Miguel Claro, in Santiago.

The Board of Evangelism, who used large tents in their evangelistic campaigns across the country, is now assimilated into Dinemis. The former Convention also organized their pastors in a Board of Pastors (now called the National Union of Baptist Pastors). I mention one more board of major infrastructural importance – the Building and Loan Board, also founded in the early Baptist work. The Board has provided funds for the construction of churches and parsonages. Most of the funds for lending came from the SBC; likewise, the resources to buy land to build the "mission" and provide their respective buildings came from the same sources. These funds not only came from the offerings of Richmond, but have also been donated by churches or Baptist missionary friends compassionate about world missions. For example, in Temuco, Concepcion, Santiago, and Valparaiso, magnificent temples were built by the foundation that bears the surname of an American Baptist named Jarman. From this Board the churches are able to borrow at a fixed return.

The work of the Missionary Baptist Women's Union has been very significant. Many of the pastors and leaders of both sexes began their biblical studies in child and adolescent organizations of the Women's Union. Young people have fought hard as the Young Baptists of Chile, and the young men complete the three Auxiliary Unions of the National Union with the Union of Baptist Men. Other tools for missions, created in recent decades, are the National Communications, National Commission on Children and Adolescents, and the Network of Testimony and Social service.

The National Union has a headquarters in Miguel Claro. The property was purchased with funds from the Richmond Mission offices and provides service to the Auxiliary Unions, the Association of Churches and Pastors' Union, of the Metropolitan Region. The leaders of the Union of Baptist Churches today are: Rev. Mauricio Reyes (Chairman); the "secular" brother Jorge Quinteros (Vice Chair); Pastor Manuel Urbina (Treasurer); and Pastor Nelson Castillo (Secretary).

Growth and Current Status

Baptists of the Evangelical Baptist Union of Chile (EBUCH) have grown qualitatively in their forms of mission and number of churches and membership. In the century of its existence, the Baptist body has undergone only one division; not for doctrinal reasons, but for administrative and human resources reasons. In 1937, in the southern town called Cherquenco, Pastor Ismael Neveu Zambiena, led a group of brothers to organize the Chilean Baptist Mission. Over time, this mission has remained in fellowship with the parent Convention. These brothers have also founded a Theological Seminary in which a female professor chairs as a graduate of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Magisterial Studies at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. It is good to report that in recent decades there have been missions to Chile from other sectors of U.S. Baptists.

Getting back to business. In terms of number of churches and membership Robert Cecil Moore points the following from 1908 to 1965:

1908 – 5 churches with 300 members.

1923 – 29 churches report 210 baptisms and 1,154 members; 26 classes with 1,146 students; 12 ladies' societies; 10 youth unions; and several “Sunbeam” classes (children from infancy and childhood).

1929 – 30 churches with 1,188 members; 42 Sunday school classes; 18 ladies' societies.
1945 – 48 churches with 113 groups, 2,461 members; 58 Sunday school classes with 5,100 enrollment; 59 ladies' societies; 47 properties.
1955 – 61 churches with 135 groups, 6,216 members; 135 Sunday school classes; 84 classes for gentlemen; 74 Youth, 90 properties.
1965 – 106 churches, 189 groups, 9,598 members; 153 Sunday school classes with 8,560 students; 126 SS. Ladies classes; 76 Training Unions; about 200 properties.

By 1982, there were more than 200 churches and 21 missions (cell groups in homes and other places), of which 15 of the latter became churches. The largest number of churches was in the Metropolitan Region (capital city, Santiago), in the Ninth Region (capital city, Temuco) and in the Eighth Region (main city, Concepción). In 2010, there were 335 churches and 175 missions.

Regarding Convention membership: in 1908 church membership stood at 300; by 1981, it had grown to 16,000; and in 2010 there were close to 30,000 baptized members. In 1919 there were 12 pastors, 92 in 1981, and in 2010 there were 308 ordained and practicing pastors. Responsible for churches and missions were 25 in 1925; 92 in 1981; in 2010 there are 18 couples and 28 men in these roles.

In home missions and missionaries worldwide growth has been remarkable. In 1919 there were three domestic missionaries; in the year 2010, there were three girls (one sent by the local church), four single men (one from the Young initiative), nine couples (one sent by a local church), included in the total of 25 missionaries. The National Evangelism and Missions Board placed a missionary couple in Ecuador and two missionaries in Easter Island for several years. Currently, with the support of some local churches, there is a missionary in India, Ms. Lisette Troppa.

Speaking of world missions, the Baptists of Chile have been blessed by the Baptists of the US and Brazil. The beloved "gringos" in the United States have effectively and generously collaborated with us from the mid-1920s to the late twentieth century. Starting about two years ago, they returned to partner in the ministry, especially in theological education. The Board of World Mission of Brazil has also agreed to work with the Chileans, sending field missionaries and teachers for the Theological Seminary (the Oliveira-Jacobsen couple and, since 2012, Rangel Rawderson with his wife Mayre and children). This year we have six Brazilian couples and a man and lady missionary. The EBUCH has also made an agreement with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of USA to support this work.

As I said above, the Southern Baptists of the United States have re-established partnerships with the Baptist Union of Chile. Their strategy is aimed primarily at the middle and upper sectors of unreached Chileans, which has abundantly enhanced the work in theological education, fellowship, and collaboration in some local churches. In the year 2012 there are 55 missionaries in Chile organized today as the "International Baptist Cooperation." Among them, 25 are married couples and five are single missionary women. A church in Temuco supports a missionary overseas, Miss Dorka Anabalon.

With regard to financial support, Chilean Baptists began with a few pesos in 1908. The Department of Statistics Convention book, *Baptist Diamonds*, published in 1983, reports that one problem surrounding the growth of Baptist work was funding. There is no detailed income and expense by year; but in 1932, the income of all churches was \$68,449 of which figure 52% was allocated to pastoral support. From the beginning, the members of the churches have cooperated to fund the church and mission programs. In 1976, the budget for the Baptist work in Chile, without regarding capital funds for special expenses, was funded 79.7% by foreign funds (from the SBC FMB in Richmond –parenthesis mine) and **30.3% by domestic**

funds (bold mine). In 1981 the budget ratio had dropped to 57.4% foreign and 42.6% domestic funding. The income of the churches in 1981 was a total of \$42,449, 664 with 8.7% of contributions coming from the Cooperative Program of the Convention and 33.7% of the 15,852 members giving their tithes to their (local) churches."

For some 20 years, the budget of the Obra Bautista de Chile has been financed without the contributions of foreign resources. The annual budget of the EBUCH for this year is about 210 million pesos. (Oral information from the treasurer, pastor Manuel Urbina). If all of the churches contribute to the Cooperative Program, and if all that did contribute did so with 10% of the local church income, that figure would multiply remarkably.

Chilean Baptists have also grown in the organizational forms for the mission as Union. The names of the traditional boards were changed: for example, the Publications Board is now the National Communications and Publications; the former Planning Committee is now the Planning and Coordination Council (Coplancor), a structure extended to include all administrative and logistical leadership of the Baptist entities. This leadership meets at the first and last of each year. The Coplancor is chaired by the Executive Board of EBUCH and meets at the headquarters of Av Miguel Claro 755.

Churches in North, Central, South and Southern Africa have also recently organized along associational lines. Now they have multiplied on the basis of the new political-administrative division of the long and narrow territory of Chile (4200 km north to south and an average of 100 km wide, presenting its widest in the Region of Antofagasta in the north). In the current regions of the country, churches that formed District Associations have reorganized into more than 14 associations from Arica to Punta Arenas (from north to south).

The newer mission entities are the Department of Communications; the Commission for Children and Adolescents; the Network of Social Testimony; and Prayer Commission.

Religious Freedom in Chile

Chile was part of the Castilian Spanish Empire from the 15th century discovery of America until the second decade of the nineteenth century. Imperial rule governed the cultural, social, economic and, especially, the religious and ideological aspects of Chilean life. In both fact and law Latin America was not only administered under the sovereignty of the Castilian Crown from The Council of the Indies in Spain, but also under the religious-theological sovereignty of the Papal Church. In Chile, as elsewhere in Latin America in those centuries, political power was exercised by the Church and as a "social ethic," the "Indians" were evangelized and instructed. The church was organized and managed; God was worshiped as mediated through Jesus crucified and by the "Blessed Virgin," his mother. All this took place with absolute and deadly bans against any other religion or confession or theological or philosophical thought.

Freedom, in general, was a freedom enslaved. In particular, religious freedom was the last to be conquered and was always related to other forms of liberty, such as education, marriage, the press, public opinion, etc. Religious freedom was imprisoned within the doctrine and practice of a Union of Church and State. The first model of this imprisonment of churches in recorded history was enacted fiscally, politically, and doctrinally in the Roman Empire by Constantine and related by church historian Eusebius of Caesarea in the fourth century AD.

As this system unfolded across the centuries, world and church history record both the satisfaction of the ecclesiological State majority and the plight of minority sectors of the Christian communities of Europe and America. Seeking release had to be conducted in the legislative-constitutional field. The Constitution of a politically organized nation is supreme law, which must be interpreted, implemented, and reformed.

The Chilean example of this fight I have already mentioned. During the second half of the nineteenth century, foreign Christians, led by the founder of evangelical Christianity in Chile, Dr. David Trumbull, won the right to fight for more freedom in the public press by arguing with the Conservative leadership represented by the Catholic champions Mariano Casanova and Rafael Valentín Valdivieso. In 1865, Congress passed the reform of Article 5 of the Constitution of 1833. Since then, defenders of the Christian faith and philosophy of life may speak both privately before God and in the country of Chile itself. As time passed, they could marry, enroll their children in a family book, and bury their dead with social dignity. But the children of evangelicals remained catechized "in religion and morality" for the sacred history and doctrine of state-church or church-state.

Some background on the spiritual and political history since the mid-nineteenth century, explains the release of religious freedom in Chile, which emerged from the second quarter of the 20th century, and concluded with a new Constitution. The process, broadly speaking, was as follows: First, since the mid-19th century, the leading sectors of the country began to be influenced by individualism, rationalism and scientific positivism, which came especially from Europe. The seed of freedom of conscience created a secular consciousness, as opposed to the religious consciousness, even of the Chilean churches.

For example, since 1830, the political consciousness of Parliament required that every member must swear to uphold his national role by kneeling and touching the Bible with the right hand. In 1860, the prostration was abolished. By 1870, even the parliamentary oath of one's relationship with the divine was abolished. A radical Cauquene Deputy refused to swear "by God and the Gospels" in accordance with Rules of the House of Representatives, simply stating that he would swear upon his personal honor and conscience. Several other lawmakers imitated his posture. This raised within Chilean parliamentary the flag of secularism, from the individual to the collective. The secular conscience proved to be the David that severed the Goliath Church and State head. The Parliament and the Senate (Congress) remained the seat of supreme authority in Chile since the death of the powerful President Balmaceda, in 1891 until the second decade of the 20th century when another strong president, Arturo Alessandri, liberal and a Mason, won the freedom to worship through a constitutional point.

Next, the majority of the Catholic bourgeois social landscape was influenced by positivist rationalism and was only nominal Catholic. Only grief and baptism (more by the zeal of the wives) kept this class of citizens related to the Catholic Church.

Third, upon the universal throne of the Catholic Church, the papacy reversed its epochal strategy. On the one hand, Pope Pius IX (1864) repudiated rationalist liberalism, scientism, and social secularization on the one hand. On the other, Leo XIII (1873-1900), in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (Renewal of Things) stated: "the Roman Pontiff can and should reconcile and compromise with progress, liberalism and modern civilization." The influence of the social teaching of Leo XIII also influenced the conservative Pope Pius X (1903-1914).

In Chile the Conservative Party was born in the year 1857. The party focused its clerical forces towards political action. Its spiritual ideologue was Rafael Valentín Valdivieso, who injected into the core of the party the idea of freeing the church from the bonds that tied her to the government (ties stronger than patronage, the century-old institution that gave the state the right to propose the appointment of Catholic Bishops). He called for ignoring the patronage, established prior censorship of the press in religious matters (Trumbull, with his developing evangelical church, took advantage of this freedom), delivered to churchmen the absolute supervision of public instruction, encouraged dissenters in the private exercise of their religion and immigrants who professed other

religions, as well as keeping faithful the most influential and Catholic ruling class. Intelligent Jesuit, he advised these reforms and spearheaded reaffirmed by the political party. So he played with advantage in the polls, continued re-evangelization of the liberals, and the Conservative Party won an enormous socio-economic and religious influence.

The fourth step in the development of religious freedom in Chile was the challenge to Catholicism by Freemasonry on the grounds of winning moral and spiritual openness in the society. The Masonic thought and action marked, in the nineteenth century, a revolutionary course in the Americas, encouraged and directed by European liberal movements participating in the successful independence of former colonial countries of Spain. Most political Latin American liberators were members of Masonic lodges. In these movements, liberal parliamentarians were, many times, actively supported by Freemasonry.

Freemasonry supported rationalism, tolerance, freedom and philanthropy. The Grand Lodge of Chile proposed freedom, equality and fraternity against intolerance in the religious-philosophical arenas, against clerical privilege in the social structure, and against the exploitation of man by man in labor and employment. The love of freedom has been and remains the core principle of the lodges. Everything revolves around this principle. The whole history of parliamentary Chile between 1861 and 1925 was reduced to a struggle for various forms of freedom. Significant to the parliamentary political activism that began in 1860 was the organization of the Grand Lodge of Chile that occurred in 1862. The liberal presidents, Domingo Santa Maria and Jose Manuel Balmaceda, favored social and religious freedoms, influenced by Masonic thought.

The historian Julio Heise, of the University of Chile declares that Freemasonry passionately fought the interference of the clergy in public and private life and inspired and directed the anticlerical struggle (which was neither anti-church or anti-religion) of the Liberal and Radical parties (two Conservative Party rivals) of these years. The anticlerical struggle spread to the entire population, political parties, women, religious associations, teachers, university students, invading even the secondary high school students, where students in public schools fought with students schools of Catholic congregations.

Fifth, in the struggle for freedom there was created an alliance between the Evangelicals, Protestants, and Masons. The founder of Evangelicals, David Trumbull, who acquired institutional freedoms in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was a Mason, and many evangelical leaders with whom I personally met in the mid-20th century were Masons of high degree. In the brief mimeograph of the Anglican Bishop, Pytches, one reads that "In a sense it was a happy fact that Protestants found such influential friends who supported their cause but few of those friends ... Protestant Christians were declared. This caused much confusion in the minds of Catholics who tend to equalize (demonize the Masons was the same as demonizing Evangelicals - parenthesis Mine). Masons and radicals (one of the secular parties that dominated the government since the early 30's, and was a favorite party of the evangelicals and evangelical Baptists – parenthesis mine) who used this influence *in favor of religious freedom* (emphasis mine) mostly were Freemasons and free thinkers, but were regarded as dissidents (along with Protestant and/or evangelical – parenthesis mine); they held different concepts." Masonry considers that humanism is philosophical, not religious, and proposes a kind of philosophically ideal deity, similar to the Deism of the eighteenth century European Enlightenment.

Sixth, immigrants from mostly Protestant nations like England, Holland, Germany, and the US, who came to promote the economic and cultural development of Chile, demanded tolerance and freedom, which highlighted religious freedom and was applied as freedom of worship. Moreover, the ideological struggle between liberal political theory reinforced by Masons, and the legal humanism of the Catholic clerical tradition, ended in the victory of the former under the

government of president and liberal legislator Don Arturo Alessandri Palma. The new Constitution of 1925 under this presidential leadership legally separated the Church from the State. During these years, Anglo-American Baptist theologian, Dr. George Truett, visited Chile. One of his quotes for the press articulated the ideal of freedom in the opinion of Baptists. The new law favors both entities: A FREE CHURCH IN A FREE STATE.

Years later, in reaction, Catholic clergy tried to replace State-Catholic teachings in public schools. Baptist leaders, along with other evangelical leaders, prevented it. Article 10, No. 2 of the new Constitution of 1925, assured the people of Chile: "The manifestation of all beliefs, freedom of conscience and exercise (private and public - parenthesis mine) of all cults that are not contrary to morals, good customs or public order, therefore, the respective faiths can build and maintain churches and their agencies with health and safety conditions set by the laws and ordinances ... Temples and Dependencies, intended for use in a cult, be exempt from taxation. "

The Constitution thus sealed the secular nature of the Teaching State: "Public education is a state priority." The teaching of religion in schools was excluded from the so-called "tax" schools. But this ruling also reaffirmed the freedom of education, which had been approved in a constitutional reform of 1874. The beginning of Teaching State represented the call of the government to the University and the School to be trustworthy, not sided with political parties, free of prejudices, and free from coercive dogmas. Universal morality included the religious morality of Catholics and non-Catholics alike, and remained in the curriculum of Primary Education, citing the subject, "Religion and Morality," as a course that teachers considered to refer to the moral behavior of students in their school environments.

Some 25 years later, a pious Catholic senator, Mr. Muñoz Cornejo sent a bill to Parliament to place Catholic religious teaching back into public schools. The evangelical Christian leadership raised the public voice and took the pastors, church members, and students of seminaries to the streets. Among evangelical leaders who fought this bill were the president of the Baptist Convention and Baptist Seminary Rector, pastor Honorio Espinoza Soto, and other pastors like de Concepcion Hannibal and Jose Giorlano. In Parliament, a secular humanistic philosophy, called the Radical Party, was strongly similar to the Liberal and Democratic parties in many respects.

The Cautín province, the Ninth region, with Temuco as capital, elected to the National Congress, Don Roberto Contreras Galaz, a faithful Baptist believer. He was a member of the Radical Party. Deputy Contreras, who I knew personally in the mid-20th century, led the fight in Congress to reject this bill, which he achieved, supported by the mobilization of evangelicals, and Baptists, which I mentioned above. In the decades following the constitutional debate, other laws expanded the space for freedom of religion and worship that became, until now, a model in Latin America.

In the year of 1980, there was promulgated a new Constitution. The 6th Article reiterates the freedom of Article 10 of the previous Constitution, with only a syntactic change in the first paragraph, placing first the freedom of conscience and secondly, the manifestation of all faiths, followed by the phrase, "with the free exercise of all religions." Most notable, however, has been the enactment of Law No. 19,638, made official in 1999. It lays down rules on the legal constitution of all churches and religious organizations in Chile in a position of equality before the law. This law as a project began to be processed by a Catholic President, Mr. Patricio Aylwin, and was passed by another Catholic president, Mr. Eduardo Frei Ruiz Tagle.

The ideals of the Christian Catholic humanism and reformist thought of Pope John XXIII, who inspired the Second Vatican Council, assimilated into the consciousness of the deputies and senators of the Christian Democratic Party and became the consensus of all other political parties that agreed with both the secular tradition of the liberal secular Constitution of 1925 and with

evangelical Christian thought. These are records that explain the steps by which the State and people of Chile have arrived at Religious Freedom. In fact, the Catholic Church had acted as a religious entity of public law. Now, she and all religious and ecclesiastical entities of the country are allowed to be institutions of public law.

In this law, published as the ACT FOR FREEDOM OF RELIGION, freedom shook hands with equality. Chapter II is interpreted and governed by Article 6 of the Constitution of 1980. In short, it states: "freedom of religion and worship means that any person has the power to:

Profess religious beliefs they freely choose, or not to profess any...

Practice in private or in public ... acts of prayer or worship....

To receive religious assistance upon one's own confession wherever one is (in Chile there are chaplains: in the Currency, in the army, prisons, and the Directorate of Police, or the civil police, and access to evangelical pastors in hospitals.)

Receive and provide religious instruction or information through any means, and choose for themselves ... the religious and moral instruction in accordance with their own beliefs (the Baptists also offer an optional program approved by the Ministry of Education).

Meet or assemble publicly for religious purposes and to associate for religious activities in community development.

And ... Articulate, communicate and disseminate, in word, in writing, or by any means, express your own beliefs and doctrine.

In the democratic process towards the creation of the 19,638 Law, a National Seminar was held in the Temple of the Second Baptist Church of Santiago in July of 1994. This seminar considered papers on religious liberty itself, and religious freedom and the political and civic participation of evangelicals and ongoing legislative initiatives on behalf of churches and corporations. Invited to this National Seminar were the Minister of Justice, deputies and senators, lawyers, and theologians. Among some 22 participants (8 political, 6 pastors, 5 theologians, and 3 lawyers), four were Baptists, and of these, 3 presented papers. There were other instances and other cities in which representatives of all religions and faiths presented their views and comments on the draft Law. Baptists attended the Evangelical Organizations Committee (COE) that brought leaders of Chilean evangelicalism to collaborate with legislators and "push" the project to the Senate.

When Congress closed the approval process of the Law 19,638, on that day, evangelicals sang the hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," in the gallery of the Hall of Honor, in Valparaiso, precisely where the Evangelical Church of Chile had begun. ALELÚ-YAH!