

The Hispanic Wave

In September 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week observed September 15 and 16. In 1989, Congress expanded the observance to a month-long celebration (September 15-October 15) of the culture and traditions of those who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico, and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

As of July 1, 2015, the U.S. Hispanic population reached 57 million, 17.6% of the nation's total population, making them the nation's largest ethnic minority. This wave was first evident in cities. The influence of Hispanic population by language or culture is now being felt far beyond a few urban centers.

UNEXPECTED PLACES?

In the article "From Migrants to Residents," we read, "Some East Idaho districts are offering college courses that will help native Spanish speakers develop skills necessary to compete for jobs in a variety of industries."

The *Journal Standard* (Freeport, IL, population: 25,638) states signs are posted in both English and Spanish throughout Freeport Blackhawk Elementary School, where Caucasian and Hispanic students each comprise 32.5% of the school's population. Phone messages for parents are left in both languages. The school's Hispanic population has doubled since 2010.

The *Gazette Xtra*, Walworth County, WI, reported that when ten-year-old Oscar Nicia came to Walworth County from El Salvador, almost 13 years ago, he didn't see many Hispanics in Lake Geneva. There was only one Mexican supermarket nearby. Today, there are three local Mexican grocery stores and he's noticed the local Walmart carries more ingredients for preparing Mexican dishes. In Walworth County, the Hispanic population increased 41% from 2000 to 2006. In Wisconsin, the numbers of Hispanics increased by 48% from 2000-2009.

Recently, the fastest Latino population

growth has come in areas with a relatively small number of Latinos. Three counties in North Dakota had the fastest growth in Latino population from 2007 to 2014. The South accounted for 43% of U.S. Hispanic population growth from 2007-2014.

NATIONAL TRENDS:

- Latinos nationwide reveal a younger population; median age is 28 versus 37 years for the general population.
- Despite slowing growth rates, Latinos still accounted for more than half (54%) of total U.S. population growth from 2000-2014, driving at least half of overall population growth in 524 counties that had at least 1,000 Latinos in 2014.
- Nearly all Latinos lived in half of the nation's more than 3,000 counties in 2014.
- From 2007-2014 the U.S. Hispanic population had an annual average growth rate of 2.8%.
- California continues to have the nation's largest Latino population among states. However, Texas has grown faster. In 2014, 15 million Hispanics lived in California with a 37% increase from the 10.9 million Hispanics in 2000. Texas saw even quicker growth with its Hispanic population increasing 56% from 6.7 Million in 2000 to 10.4 million in 2014.
- Nearly half of the country's Hispanic population lives in ten major metropolitan areas. The following housed nearly 45% of the Hispanic population in the country: Los Angeles, New York, Houston, San Bernardino, Chicago, Dallas, Miami, Phoenix, San Antonio, and San Francisco.
- From 2000-2010, Hispanic population has grown more in the suburbs than in the cities.

Here in Chicago, I have watched Hispanics move from the city to the suburbs. In the last 15 years, it seems newcomers don't make the traditional stop in the city. They move straight to the suburbs near family or friends.

HISPANIC CULTURE IMPACTS U.S.

In June 2016, Univision Deportes Network beat every other cable sports network in prime time among the key demos of adults 18 to 49 and 18 to 34, finishing ahead of Fox Sports 1 and NBC Sports Network, but it also beat cable sports big dogs ESPN and ESPN 2. Five years ago UDN didn't even exist.

A decade ago ABC adapted a tele-novella as a dramedy. "Ugly Betty" became a surprise hit that ran four seasons. The past two years, three English-language shows have been based on, borrowed from, or poked fun at the tele-novella format: NBC's "Telenovela," USA's "Queen of the South," and the CW's "Jane the Virgin." The latter is a critical hit, the other two are ratings duds, but still notable for making it on the air.

Some of the most successful music artists in today's pop culture have Hispanic heritage.

In social media, Hispanics are especially active on Instagram and Twitter. Former Disney star Selena Gomez has more Instagram followers (89 million) than anyone else.

There were an estimated 3.3 million Hispanic-owned firms nationally in 2012, up from 2.3 million in 2007.

QUESTIONS

1. Are you viewing this Hispanic phenomenon through biblical, God-so-loved-the-world lenses?
2. Have you recently checked census data in your city, township, or county?
3. How are you and your church preparing to be on mission in the face of this wave?
4. In view of these realities, what Great Commission opportunities might be before you?

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