

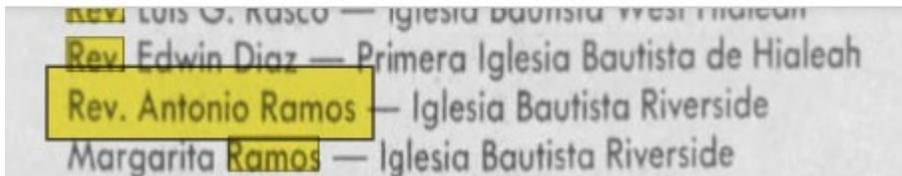
Ramos, Antonio (1911-2007) was a native of Cuba. He served as pastor of Iglesia Bautista Riverside, Miami and Iglesia Bautista Calvario, Miami. In 1992 Ramos was honored as a “Hero of the Faith.”

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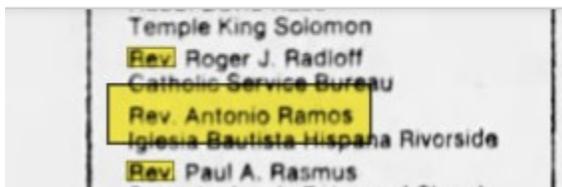
<https://www.intdemocratic.org/cvs/en/marcos-antonio-ramos.html>

Dr. Marcos Antonio Ramos is a Cuban-born historian and theologian, a Protestant cleric, and former moderator of the Southern Baptist Churches in Miami-Dade. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of Baptist Health South Florida and a senior research associate at the Institute for Cuban Studies. Throughout his academic career, he has taught at six universities and theological seminaries. He is the author of 17 books, including *Panorama of Protestantism in Cuba* (Caribe Publishing, San José, 1986), *Protestantism and Revolution in Cuba* (University of Miami, Coral Gables, 1989), and *Castro's Cuba and Beyond* (Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 2007). Among the honors he has received is the Papal "Benemerenti" Medal awarded by Benedict XVI. He was also awarded the National Journalism Award of the Dominican Republic. He is a full member of the North American Academy of the Spanish Language and a corresponding member of the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE). For several years, he was a regular columnist for *El Nuevo Herald*.

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Mon, Jun 06, 1977 · Page 74



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Sun, Jul 09, 1978 · Page 293



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"A more realistic figure would be 10 percent," said Ramos, who assisted Latin America Mission in its survey.

Recent surveys show that 62 percent of Hispanics in the Archdiocese of Miami, which covers Dade, Broward and Monroe counties, are Catholic.

The recent growth of Hispanic Protestantism contrasts with the findings of previous estimates. Al Ortiz, another Latin America Mission researcher, said that when he

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Fundamentalism luring more Latinos

FUNDAMENTALISTS, FROM 1B

Hispanics have left the archdiocese over the past five years for other religious denominations, said Marsha Whelan, a staff aide to Miami Archbishop Edward McCarty.

"In 1960, there was only one Hispanic non-Catholic church in Miami," Whelan said. "Today, there are 300."

Tracking religious preferences in South Florida illuminates social trends among the 2.1 million Hispanics in the United States, the nation's fastest growing minority group. U.S. demographers believe that Hispanics will become the largest minority in the United States before the end of the century.

Protestant church officials, for their part, confirm that their churches in South Florida are receiving a steady influx of Spanish-speaking converts.

"Originally, our church was all Anglo," said the Rev. Daniel J. Vogel, of the Iglesia Luterana San Mateo at 621 Beacom Blvd. in Little Havana. "Now, the majority of its members are Latino, 60 percent."

A new survey being compiled by the Miami-based Latin America Mission organization, which provides information and services to Protestant churches in Latin America and the United States, further underscores the growth of area Latin congregations.

Strong Protestant figures

Preliminary figures from the Mission's survey, researcher Jim Randall said, show that at least four percent of Hispanics in Dade attend Protestant churches.

But Randall said that when the final figures come in they will show that the percentage of Hispanics attending Protestant services exceeds five percent of Dade's Hispanic population.

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PRAYS FOR HEALING: Maria Garcia at service.

undertook a similar survey in 1982, only 2.5 percent of Dade's Hispanics identified themselves as Protestants.

Little Havana churches

In Little Havana and other predominantly Hispanic areas, the growth of Protestantism is reflected in the proliferation of churches with names in Spanish: Iglesia de Cristo Reformada, Iglesia Luterana Principe de Paz and Cuarta Iglesia de Cristo Cientifico.

Nationwide, the precise number of Hispanics who have left Catholicism for other religions is not known, but data compiled in 1988 by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center showed that the rate of religious defections among Hispanics was 60,000 a year.

Faced with a crisis of faith among U.S. Hispanics, Pope John Paul II toured the United States with an urgent appeal.

"Come home to the family of fam-

ilies," the pope told a crowd of Hispanic Catholics in San Antonio, Texas, on Sept. 14, 1987.

Plea falls on deaf ears

Maria Salinas, a 36-year-old immigrant from Colombia who attends services at La Catedral del Pueblo, said she heard the papal plea but did not heed it.

"I respect the pope because of his intelligence," Salinas said. "But he did not do anything or say anything that made me change my mind about my faith in the Protestant church."

Salinas said she left the Catholic Church in 1986, one year before the Pope visited Miami.

"Since then my faith in God has grown stronger than at any time when I was a Catholic," Salinas said. Her reasons for leaving the Catholic church are varied, like those of other converts, but the principal one was what she said was a Catholic emphasis on icons.

"I came to the conclusion that Catholics, though they profess worship of one God, in fact, worship many idols," Salinas said.

Ramos, the Baptist minister, said fundamentalist churches have succeeded in attracting Hispanics because a large number of them were Catholic in name only.

"I believe that the principal cause is that the great majority of Hispanics in the United States do not really belong to any church," Ramos said.

"As a result, all religious organizations who devote time to Hispanics will attract members, and the fact is that the most active organizations now are the Protestants."

Other church officials and some prominent Hispanics cite other factors for the growth of Hispanic Protestantism.

Roman, the Miami auxiliary bishop, attributes defections to a shortage in Catholic clergy.

A survey indicates at least four percent of Hispanics in Dade attend Protestant churches.

"We do not have enough personnel to take care of all our people," he said.

Political reasons for flight

A prominent Nicaraguan community leader, Rene Quinones, said there are also political reasons for the flight of Catholics.

Quinones said links between priests and unions in Latin America with leftist movements and governments turned ordinary Latinos against the Catholic church.

"In Nicaragua, several Catholic priests were in the Sandinista regime which was voted out of office earlier this year," he said.

Another factor is the enticing atmosphere at some Protestant services, especially those that fundamentalists offer.

"Compared to boring Catholic Masses, in our services you go for the unexpected," Salinas, the Columbian convert, said.

Christian fundamentalist services often feature catchy music, passionate sermons and faith-healing sessions.

At La Catedral del Pueblo, the service offers a band with conga drums, a singer who delivers prayer songs to salsa beat and rousing rhetoric from fiery pastors such as the Rev. Cabrera, who predicted Christ's imminent arrival.

The format has been eminently successful. When La Catedral del Pueblo was founded in 1978, it had 15 members. Today's membership, 5,000.

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A hero

The **Rev. Antonio Ramos**, historian and contributing editor for The Miami Herald, was honored recently in Orlando before 1,700 Hispanic Southern Baptists as a "Hero of the Faith." The honor was presented to **Ramos** by the **Rev. Hugo Ruiz** of Tamiami Baptist Church.

Ruiz honored **Ramos** as "a pastor, writer, historian, thinker and friend of everyone" at the Celebration of the 500 Aug. 1-2 in Orlando. The event celebrated the discovery of America as well as the heritage and future of Hispanic Southern Baptists.

Others honored included Doris Diaz, language specialist for the Woman's Missionary Union; and Oscar Romo, director of the Home Mission Board's language church extension division.

NEWS

NEIGHBORS RELIGION

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Staff, faculty changes

Dr. Melvin Schoonover, president of the South Florida Center for Theological Studies at 609 Brickell Ave., has announced several administrative and faculty appointments.

They are: the **Rev. David Gasperson**, who will serve as acting academic dean; the **Rev. Jonas Georges**, who has been appointed director of field education and assistant professor of pastoral studies; and the **Rev. Marcos Antonio Ramos**, who has been named full-time professor of church history and Latin American studies.

Gasperson, pastor of a church in Fort Lauderdale, also serves as professor of theology at the center. He received his bachelor's degree from Mars Hill College and earned a master's degree and a doctorate from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He succeeds the **Rev. Y. Jacqueline Rhoades**, who has been the center's academic dean since its inception in 1985.

Georges, a native of Haiti, has served as a Salvation Army captain in Miami and recently received his master's degree from the center.

Ramos, also a pastor and author of several books, is a regular contributor to El Nuevo Herald.

University chief to head theology center

The **Rev.** Patrick O'Neill, president of St. Thomas University from 1979 to 1988, has been named interim president of the South Florida Center for Theological Studies.

Since leaving St. Thomas, O'Neill has worked in the chancellor's office of the Archdiocese of Miami. Before coming to Miami, he served as general secretary to the U.S. Catholic Conference in Washington.

The center, organized in 1985, is an indigenous, independent and interdenominational graduate school of theology. It draws students from all denominations and ethnic and cultural groups in South Florida.

The center also announced the appointment of The **Rev.** Marcos **Antonio Ramos** as acting academic dean. **Ramos** is a Southern Baptist pastor in Little Havana.

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Director, Metropolitan
Fellowship of Churches
■ **The Rev. Marcos Antonio
Ramos**, pastor, Iglesia
Bautista Calvario

Jersey. Servicios hoy a las 11 a.m. Cementerio Our Lady of Mercy. Funeraria Bernardo Garcia, Hialeah.

RAMOS, Rev. Antonio, de 96 años, natural de Cuba. Servicios hoy a las 12 p.m. Miami

Memorial Park. Funeraria Caballero Rivero Woodlawn, Miami.

SANCHEZ, Paulina, de 81 años, natural de Marianao, Cuba. Servicios hoy a las 12 p.m. Cementerio Our Lady of