

THE CHICAGO LATINO CONGREGATIONS STUDY (CLCS): METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Part I: Sampling Frame	4
Part II: Survey Instruments and Data Collection Process	7
Part III: Survey Instrument Comparison and Weighting	11
Part IV: Qualitative Data and Analysis	16
Appendix A: Categorization of Denominations	19
Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Schedules	20
Appendix C: Protocol for In-Depth Interviews with Adult Congregants on Religious Switching and Religious Identity	25
Appendix D: Field Note Guide for Observations at Latino Churches	28

Introduction

Completed in early 2007, the Chicago Latino Congregations Study (CLCS)—a multi-level, comprehensive study of Latino congregations in metropolitan Chicago that includes surveys of clergy, lay leaders, and congregants—provides a unique, in-depth window into Latino Christianity. The CLCS was designed to explore the following aspects of Latino congregational life:

1. The growth and vitality of Latino congregations, including the influence of clergy, worship style, social outreach, and youth and family ministry programs on congregational outcomes.
2. The extent of community services provided by Latino congregations, with a particular focus on the impact of Latino congregations on the spiritual and material well-being of needy families.
3. The formal and informal ways that Latino churches are networked with other faith-based organizations and community agencies, and how these networks improve the delivery of services by nurturing successful strategies for needy families.
4. The role of Latino church leaders, whether clergy or laity, in sustaining spiritually vibrant and socially engaged congregations, and the professional development needs of church leaders.

Other questions the CLCS is designed to address include: What are the characteristics of members and leaders of Latino congregations? What are the religious practices of youth and adult Latino churchgoers, and how do these practices impact their family lives, educational outcomes, and civic engagement? What explains religious switching among Latinos/as; for example, conversion from Catholic to evangelical Protestant congregations? To what extent and in what ways are Latino/a religious leaders and congregants engaged in civic life? In what activities are community-oriented Latino/a ministers engaged? How does leadership style impact whether congregants take action in their communities? What are the contours of Latino churchgoers' political attitudes and behaviors?

The density of Latino neighborhoods in the Chicago metropolitan area offers a unique opportunity to conduct an investigation into the characteristics and outcomes of Latino congregations. The scope of the data collection process and the diversity of questions and issues addressed across three levels of analysis—the laity, the leadership, and the congregation—make the CLCS the largest and most complex study of Latino congregations to date.

This methodological report is divided into four sections. First, we discuss the sampling frame; second, survey instruments and data collection; third, weighting; and, fourth, qualitative data and analysis. The first section explains how the project constructed a comprehensive list of Latino congregations in Chicago. The second briefly describes the survey instruments, issues related to data collection, and the different samples collected. The third section compares the samples using relevant statistics and describes the weights applied to each sample. The fourth and final section describes the qualitative design of the study, which included focus groups, interviews, and other field research.

I. Sampling Frame

The CLCS focused on the universe of Latino Christian churches in the Chicago metropolitan area. The researchers concluded that limiting the research to the Chicago city limits would artificially exclude some of the major concentrations of Latinos/as in the area. Given the growth and expansion of the city's Latino population into nearby suburbs, the researchers expanded their geographic reach to include the towns of Berwyn and Cicero—adjacent suburbs with 38 percent and 77 percent Latino populations, respectively. The geographical proximity of both of these towns and their important historical connections to Chicago makes these communities virtually indistinguishable from the city of Chicago.¹ They are also the most common destinations for Latinos/as who move out of the city and into the surrounding areas.

The next step was to develop for this geographic area a sampling frame of Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Evangelical, and Pentecostal congregations that were Latino.² Developing a sampling frame included two challenging tasks: 1) defining the sampling frame, including choosing a definition of “Latino congregation” that would best suit the purposes of the study; and 2) constructing a list of congregations within the defined geographic area.

The researchers first confronted the challenge of what qualifies a congregation as “Latino.” While self-identification as a Latino congregation is a reasonable definition, some churches may have a large or even majority population of Latinos/as and yet not define themselves as a Latino church. This may be especially the case for Catholic churches, which may self-identify as simply “Catholic” (rather than “Latino Catholic”) in view of Catholic tradition and their connections to the broader Catholic Church. The prevalence of large Catholic parishes with a significant Latino presence also raised the question of congregations that serve a large number of Latinos/as who nonetheless do not comprise a majority of the parishioners. For example, the researchers would not want to overlook the experiences of 2,000 Latino/a churchgoers because they attend a Catholic parish of, say, 5,000 members. Though Latino/a attendees might not comprise a numerical majority in a large parish, the parish is nonetheless a significant Latino-serving congregation.

In light of this complexity, the researchers ultimately defined their sampling frame of “Latino congregations” in terms of the percentage of Latinos/as in the congregation—a statistic that could be attained with relative ease and accuracy during screening interviews with congregational informants. The threshold for inclusion for Protestant congregations was that at least 50 percent of its congregants be Latino/a; for Catholic parishes, inclusion in the sampling frame was limited to churches in which Latino/as made up at least 30 percent of parishioners.

Next, the researchers attempted to construct a list of all Latino congregations within the geographic area. Using a diverse set of sources in order to capture as closely as possible the total population of Latino congregations in the Chicago metro area, the CLCS efforts included the following steps:

¹ John P. Koval, Larry Bennet, Michael I. J. Bennett, Fassil Demissie, Roberta Garner, and Kiljoong Kim, eds. *The New Chicago: A Social and Cultural Analysis* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

² Religious groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and groups that fit the classification of new religious movements were not included.

1) Church lists obtained from various organizations and research efforts.

Researchers solicited lists of Chicago Latino churches from a wide variety of organizations. Lists were supplied by the following: a) 25 denominational or church councils; b) 5 pastoral associations, coalitions, and para-church organizations; c) 5 community organizations; d) the Mayor's office and the office of a local alderman; and e) other research on Chicago-area churches. The research lists included churches gleaned from the Chicago Latino household survey that was conducted through the University of Notre Dame's Institute for Latino Studies in 2003. In that study, randomly selected Latinos/as in Chicago who were involved in a congregation reported the name and location of their church. Another important church list was provided by Dr. Wilbur Zelinsky of Penn State University, who conducted a street-by-street inspection of houses of worship in Chicago in 1999. From an overall list of Chicago congregations, Dr. Zelinsky gleaned 500 congregations that appeared to be Latino (based on congregation name). A third list came from Dr. Lowell Livezey's study of Chicago churches in the early 1990s, and a fourth was compiled by Dr. Juan Sandoval of Northwestern University in 2003 using phone book listings (N=769). While each list had limitations, together the lists greatly strengthened the likelihood of a nearly complete list of the universe of Latino churches.

2) Physical inspections of growing Latino neighborhoods and new dispersion areas.

Researchers did street-by-street inspections in targeted areas to identify churches. This effort was concentrated in ten zip codes that had experienced significant growth in their Latino populations over the prior ten years. Zip codes were included that, according to the US Census, had experienced between ten and fifty percent growth in Latino population.

CLCS intensified efforts to find churches in these newer dispersion areas for two reasons. First, newer waves of immigrants settling in these areas include many people from Central American countries, which, while still majority Catholic, have seen considerable growth in newer Pentecostal and independent church movements.³ Since these churches tend to be newly established and unconnected to US-based church councils, it was possible they would not have appeared on the existing lists from which the master list of Latino congregations was built. Second, the attempt to identify Latino Catholic parishes in these areas is more difficult using official Archdiocesan lists. The Archdiocese identified parishes as "Latino" only if they had an Hispanic Ministries program. The relative newness of the Latino growth in parishes in newer dispersion areas made it likely that such programs had not yet been established. Thus it was important to use physical inspections in these areas to capture parishes with significant numbers of Latino congregants.

³ Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. 2006. "Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals." Washington DC, October.

3) List verification.

After combining these various lists into one, the researchers cross-referenced and eliminated duplicates, which resulted in a master list of 670 churches. If the researchers were not sure whether a listed congregation met the definition of a Latino church, they called the congregation to confirm. They also verified the existence of a randomly selected list of congregations in zip codes in areas of high (50 percent or more) and middle (25–49 percent) Latino population densities by physically inspecting the selected churches. In total, they conducted physical inspections of 425 of the 670 churches in 20 out of the 36 zip codes on the master list, including the 10 new dispersion areas. In addition, they asked a group of “insiders”—leaders representing various constituencies within the diverse Latino religious community in Chicago—to verify the list.

4) Final cleaning of the list.

Through the physical inspections, researchers eliminated churches that did not fall within their established definition of a Latino church or that fell outside of the study’s geographic area. The researchers then eliminated congregations that, when contacted to participate in the study, did not meet the definition of a Latino church. After these efforts, the final master list was reduced from 670 to a total of 606 Latino churches in Chicago, Berwyn, and Cicero. From this final list, the CLCS drew samples for the different phases of the study.

Based on survey data collected from the churches on this list as well as information provided by denominational offices, the religious tradition breakdown of the final 606 churches was as follows: 20 percent Catholic, 13 percent Mainline Protestant, 21 percent Evangelical, 33 percent Pentecostal, and 14 percent unknown.

II. Survey Instruments and Data Collection Process

To ensure a broad denominational representation of Latino congregations in the sample, the researchers stratified the 606 churches by religious tradition. Five religious traditions were defined in the stratum; Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Unknown (see Appendix A for a breakdown of the religious tradition categories). 100 of the churches were then randomly sampled from each religious category in proportion to its relative representation within the total sample, and set aside for the longer, more intensive phase of the survey.

Several survey instruments were designed for the multiple samples in the CLCS design. The complete text of each of the survey can be found in the appendix:

Survey 1: A short mail survey sent to Latino/a lay and professional ministers in 506 of the 606 identified Latino churches.

Survey 2: A longer structured survey of Latino/a lay and professional ministers at the random sample of 100 churches, conducted via face-to-face interviews and recorded on a standardized instrument.

Survey 3: A self-administered instrument left with each sampled minister who participated in the in-person interview (i.e., respondents to Survey 2).

Survey 4: A survey of adult churchgoers administered on-site at the sampled churches whose ministers participated in Surveys 2 and 3.

Survey 5: A survey of youth churchgoers administered on-site at the sampled churches whose ministers participated in Surveys 2 and 3.

II.1 PHASE I: POPULATION SURVEY

After setting aside the random sample of 100 churches, the remaining 506 Latino congregations on the master list were targeted for the population survey. Of those, 52 were later dropped since they had incorrect addresses or had recently moved. The researchers mailed Survey 1 to the remaining 454 congregations. Those that did not complete the survey on the first request received a second mailing of the survey. Excluding duplicates, these efforts netted 65 completed surveys. Compared to the population of Latino churches, completed cases for Survey 1 slightly overrepresented Catholic parishes and underrepresented Pentecostal.

To help improve the response rate and offset this denominational imbalance, the researchers distributed Survey 1 at an event held for Pentecostal ministers in the metropolitan Chicago area. This event was organized by a network of six Pentecostal councils that together include one-third of all Pentecostal congregations in the city.⁴ All of the Latino/a ministers in the greater Chicago area who belong to these councils were invited to the event. Approximately 100 people attended,

⁴ The six councils are: Church of God, Mission Board; Church of God, International Mission; Assembly of God; Latin American Council; Assembly of Christian Churches; and Assembly of Pentecostal Churches of Jesus Christ.

including ministers and their spouses. This event supplied 19 unduplicated surveys from leaders of congregations that were on the project's initial master list of churches, and brought the combined total of responses to Survey 1 to 84 congregations.⁵ It should be noted that though these additional Pentecostal congregations helped increase both the size of our sample and the proportion of Pentecostal responses, the surveys collected at this event were not randomly selected and bias the sample towards Pentecostal churches that are active participants in these six large councils.

PHASE II: THE SAMPLED LATINO CONGREGATIONS

A. Ministerial Surveys (Surveys 2 and 3)

Phase II was more multifaceted and hence time-consuming than Phase I. Researchers first called religious leaders in the 100 randomly sampled churches. They typically followed up with a visit either to the church office during the week or after weekend services. If the minister could not be accessed via phone or a visit to the church, the research team enlisted the help of area Latino/a religious leaders to gain access. In addition, each minister was sent a letter introducing the project, signed by the Principal Investigator. When introducing the project to the religious leaders of sampled churches, research assistants followed a script that addressed the importance of the study as well as confidentiality issues.

Of the 100 sampled congregations in Phase II, 49 churches in total did not respond.⁶ Leaders at 34 of these churches refused to participate and among the remaining 15 non-respondents, there were three reasons for non-cooperation: the church was in pastoral transition and the lay leadership was unwilling to cooperate; the church had merged with another church or closed its doors between the time of finalizing the sampling frame and the initial contact; or the researchers were unable to contact the leadership of the church after multiple attempts. For each non-responding church, a replacement church was chosen that matched as closely as possible the denominational affiliation, size, and geographic proximity of the non-responding church. As Table 1 shows, 22 of the 34 refusals were eventually replaced with other congregations as were 9 of the 15 churches that were in transition or otherwise unreachable.

In all, leaders at 82 churches (51 original and 31 replacement) completed both of the ministerial surveys in Phase II (Survey 2—the face-to-face interview, and Survey 3—the self-administered follow-up survey). Assuming that replacement churches closely matched the non-responding churches on important dimensions leads to a response rate of 82 percent for this phase of the study. Congregations among the Catholic subgroup had a slightly better response rate than those in the Protestant and unknown categories. This most likely reflects the fact that the culture and structure of Catholic parishes is generally more accessible to researchers, and that the parishes tended to know and trust the University of Notre Dame, the institutional sponsor of the study.

⁵ A number of additional surveys collected at the event came from leaders who had previously mailed in a response, a leader from a church at which another leader had already returned the survey, and leaders whose congregations were outside of the geographical area of the study. None of these surveys were included in the final data set.

⁶ Some of these non-responders were present at the Pentecostal church council event described above and wound up completing the Phase I survey at that event and are thus included in that phase of the data rather than Phase II.

Table 1
Non-Response Congregational Distribution

	Replaced	Not Replaced	Total	% of Subgroup	% Replaced
Nature of Non-Response					
Refusal	22	12	34	-	-
In Transition	4	-	4	-	-
Closed/Unreachable	5	6	11	-	-
Total	31	18	49	-	-
Denomination					
Catholic	6	0	6	30%	100%
Mainline	5	2	7	58%	71%
Evangelical	10	2	12	57%	83%
Pentecostal	6	10	16	48%	38%
Unknown	4	4	8	57%	50%
Total	31	18	49	49%	63%

Only one set of survey instruments was completed at each cooperating church. Though senior pastoral staff members were the most likely informant, on some occasions the researchers collected data from professional and lay ministers who maintained primary responsibility for the Latino community and ministries within a congregation. Lay informants were more likely in large Catholic parishes in which the priests were not Latino. In that case, the researchers targeted the highest-ranking Latino/a religious leader. While only one respondent from each congregation completed the questions on leadership in the survey instruments, at times, particularly in larger congregations, it was appropriate to ask other leaders for information pertaining to budgetary or programmatic issues. But in every congregation, the individual-level data about the religious leader came from the highest-ranking Latino/a on staff, whether lay or ordained.

The team invested considerable resources in order to gain cooperation from the sampled congregations. On average, the researchers spent 10 hours securing an interview with a minister. It was particularly difficult to contact bi-vocational ministers—i.e., those who have full- or part-time jobs in addition to their pastorate responsibilities. Researchers often visited a church 2 to 3 times before being able to complete an interview with a minister. This meant visiting ministers after late-night prayer meetings or on Sundays, or waiting for ministers after attending long weekend services. Gaining ministers' interest and trust in the study was also difficult since many of the Pentecostal and Evangelical ministers were not familiar with the University of Notre Dame and were somewhat suspicious of the research team. Ministers with large numbers of undocumented immigrants in their congregations were often hesitant to allow outside researchers to ask questions of their congregants. The research assistants on the team were mostly Latino/a and conversant in Spanish, and had religious backgrounds representing Catholic, Pentecostal, and Mainline Protestant traditions. These qualifications helped ease some of the entrée issues. The fact that 82 religious leaders did participate in Phase II of the project and that many of these participants were from small, independent churches and denominations that are typically hard to access demonstrates that these intensive efforts made an important difference. The result is a

unique dataset that is unusual in its representation of the religious diversity of the population of Latino Christian congregations and the very difficult to reach religious communities of small and Pentecostal Latino churches.

B. Surveys of Adults and Youth in Latino Congregations

In addition to the face-to-face interviews and self-administered minister instruments in this phase of the study, researchers administered separate instruments to adult and youth attendees (Survey 4 and 5, respectively) at the congregations which completed leader surveys 2 and 3. If possible, congregations were asked to distribute the survey during their main worship service to every person older than 12 years. The congregants would then complete the survey before leaving the church. Altogether, 2,368 adults at 74 of the randomly sampled congregations and 607 youth at 63 of the randomly sampled congregations completed Surveys 4 and 5.

Individual-level response rates varied widely by congregation. Some ministers—mostly at the non-Catholic congregations—strongly encouraged everyone to complete the instrument before leaving a church service. Other churches did not agree to conduct the survey during a main religious service. Particularly in Catholic parishes, pastors would ask those attending the service to find researchers in a back room of the church building. Based on the field researchers’ estimates of attendance at each worship service in which participants were invited to complete the survey, the response rate across all cooperating congregations was 25 percent. In other words, about 2,368 out of roughly 9,500 attendees completed adult or youth surveys. In general, smaller congregations had better attendee response rates than larger congregations. The average response rate at the congregational level was therefore higher. In the average participating congregation, about 55 percent of those attending the worship service completed the survey.

This methodology skews toward congregants that are in smaller congregations and that are more active in the congregation. Of those that completed Survey 4 and 5, over 96 percent of adult and 90 percent of youth respondents reported attending their congregation at least once a month. Respondents in smaller churches, in which the response rates were higher, are overrepresented in the final sample compared to respondents in many of the large, especially Catholic, congregations.

Table 2 shows the denominational breakdown of adult and youth respondents based on the religious tradition of the congregation that the respondent attended.

Table 2
Denominational Affiliation of Youth and Adult Laity

	Adult (N)	Adult (%)	Youth (N)	Youth (%)
Catholic	679	29%	193	32%
Mainline	110	5%	18	3%
Evangelical	696	29%	181	30%
Pentecostal	883	37%	215	35%
Total	2,368		607	

III. Survey Instrument Comparison and Weighting

One important issue the research team faced was whether the Phase I and Phase II data from congregational informants could be combined to increase the overall sample size for the leader data. Almost all of the questions on the Phase I survey instrument were replicated in one of the two Phase II ministerial survey instruments. In a few cases, the response categories were simplified in Phase II to reduce respondent burden. The survey parallels allow analysts to combine the responses of congregational leaders in Phase I with those in Phase II. Considering only the questions in common across the leader surveys, 166 (84 in Phase I and 82 in Phase II) of the 606 Latino churches in the Chicago area are represented in the CLCS, or 27 percent of the entire population of Latino churches.

The questionnaires for the leader surveys in Phase II included a number of follow-up questions to the Phase I questions as well as questions unique to that instrument. Comparisons of the Phase I and Phase II minister responses revealed some demographic differences that were statistically significant. In particular the national origin and generation in the United States of the pastors differed between Phase I and II respondents (see Table 3). These differences are most pronounced among Catholics, in part because a high percentage of white non-Hispanic priests responded to the Phase I mail-in survey while there were a higher number of Latino/a lay leaders in the Phase II sample. Un-weighted analyses would need to take this overrepresentation into account. Due to the small sample size and large number of categories, the differences among the Phase I and Phase II Protestants often depend on only 1 or 2 respondents.

Table 3
Un-Weighted Comparisons of Demographic Breakdown of Phase I and Phase II Minister Responses

	Protestant		Catholic		
	Phase I (N=54)	Phase II (N=62)	Phase I (N=30)	Phase II (N=20)	Merged Samples
National Origin**					
Puerto Rican	48%	34%	7%	15%	31%
Mexican	13%	19%	17%	65%	22%
European/White	2%	3%	63%	10%	15%
South American	9%	16%	10%	5%	11%
Central American	7%	18%	3%	0%	10%
Other Latino	11%	7%	0%	5%	7%
Missing/Other	9%	3%	0%	0%	4%
Generation in the USA*					
First	69%	78%	33%	80%	64%
Second	16%	17%	10%	5%	13%
Third	6%	2%	10%	5%	5%
Fourth or more	10%	3%	47%	10%	14%
Educational Background					
Less than BA	52%	45%	3%	35%	39%
BA degree	18%	15%	7%	20%	15%
Graduate degree	30%	40%	90%	45%	46%
Theological Orientation					
Conservative	41%	36%	3%	10%	28%
Moderate	41%	50%	60%	50%	49%
Liberal	7%	8%	27%	20%	13%
Other/Missing	11%	6%	20%	10%	10%
Leadership Position***					
Clergy	94%	98%	90%	20%	86%
Lay Leader	6%	2%	10%	80%	14%
*p≤.05 ** p≤.01 ***p≤.001					

Interestingly, although only 8 percent of Latinos/as in Chicago are Puerto Rican, 31 percent of Latino/a congregational leaders in this sample are so. This may simply reflect the fact that the sample does not represent the general Chicago Latino population but rather ministers of Latino congregations in Chicago. A high proportion of Latino Pentecostal and Evangelical congregations in the area have Puerto Rican pastors.

In spite of some differences across Phase I and II in the pastor survey (Table 3), a comparison of the congregations by phase of the study shows that they are quite similar in age, size, primary worship language, budget, and percent of congregants who are immigrants (see Table 4). Phase

II congregations tend to be slightly younger, have a higher percentage of immigrants, and use Spanish in their worship life at somewhat greater frequency; however, these differences are not statistically significant.

Table 4
Un-Weighted Comparisons of Phase I and Phase II Congregations on Selected Demographic Variables

	Phase I (N=82)	Phase II (N=84)	Merged Samples
Year founded			
Mean	1944	1963	1954
Size of congregation two years ago			
Median	115	120	
# Who regularly participate in religious life of congregation			
Median	100-150	100-150	100-150
Language of primary worship service			
Mostly/only Spanish	56%	66%	61%
Equally	25%	20%	22%
Mostly/only English	19%	15%	17%
Annual operating budget			
\$0-20K	14%	15%	14%
\$21-40K	8%	11%	9%
\$41-100K	27%	27%	27%
\$101-200K	16%	17%	17%
\$201-500K	22%	26%	24%
\$501K+	12%	5%	9%
% of Latino/a congregants who are immigrants			
Less than 20%	35%	23%	29%
21-40%	7%	14%	11%
41-60%	17%	19%	18%

This analysis finds important similarities between the average Phase I and Phase II congregation, despite the varying methods of data collection. We therefore conclude that on shared variables it is appropriate to merge the minister data from both phases into a combined minister sample (N=166).

Two weights were created for the data. The first is appropriate for the pastor data after merging Phase I and II pastor data. The second is created for the Phase II stratified sample. Creating the weights involved two steps. First, a weight was created to correct for non-response among the stratified Phase II sample. This weight ensures that each religious tradition is represented in the sample proportionate to the religious tradition distribution found in the population of Latino churches (see Table 5).

Table 5

Comparison of the Population Universe of Latino Congregations in Chicago and Phase II Sample Weighting by Religious Family

Religious Family	Latino Church Universe (N)	Latino Church Universe (%)	Phase II (N)	Phase II Weight	Weighted Phase II (N)
Catholic	120	19.80%	20	0.81188	16.2
Mainline	77	12.70%	10	1.04191	10.4
Evangelical	126	20.80%	19	0.89734	17
Pentecostal	198	32.70%	23	1.16487	26.8
Unknown	85	14.00%	10	1.15017	11.5
Total	606	100.00%	82		82

Subsequent research allowed the team to assign a denominational identity to almost all of the sampled congregations in the unknown category. With this information, final weights were created for the Phase II sample of congregations and the merged sample of ministerial surveys. These weights are described in Table 6.

Table 6

Denominational Weights for Phase II and Pastor Surveys (Merged Sample)

	Phase II Weighted by Subgroup (N)	Phase II Weighted by Subgroup (%)	Phase II Denom Weight	Denom Weighted Phase II (N)	Merged Sample (N)	Merged Sample (%)	Merged Denom Weight	Denom Weighted Merged (N)
Catholic	16.2	19.80%	1.00165	16.3	50	30%	0.658512	32.9
Mainline	12.1	14.70%	0.87594	10.6	21	13%	1.019126	21.4
Evangelical	19	23.10%	1.23587	23.4	25	15%	1.898711	47.5
Pentecostal	34.7	42.30%	0.91737	31.9	70	42%	0.921133	64.5
Total	82	100%		82.1	166	100%		166.3

Summary of Quantitative Research Design and Cooperation

The CLCS is a comprehensive quantitative study that focuses on Latino congregations. The cooperation rate, while modest by traditional standards, is very strong relative to the difficulty of enlisting Latino churches in research of any kind, especially given the nature of many Latino churches, which tend to be small, under-resourced, and suspicious of outsiders given the number of undocumented persons therein. More impressively, after careful substitution of non-responding randomly sampled congregations, the CLCS is very likely to provide the most accurate representation of Latino congregations currently available. Adding to these strengths is the research design that combines individual with organizational level data—something that is not often available for congregations, and nearly unknown for Latino congregations. The response rates are admittedly low for the individual level CLCS surveys, but must be judged relative to the difficulty of the task and to the rapidly decreasing response rates for general individual level surveys in the American adult population. Finally, while the CLCS focuses on Chicago, the findings for Latino churches and laity here could help inform research on Latino congregations in other areas of the country. Given the size and importance of Chicago to the Latino community in the United States, the insights gained through analysis of the CLCS data are likely to hold for most areas of high Latino concentration. The unique, multi-level and comprehensive nature of the data collection effort in Chicago provides our first window into the vital and complex diversity of Latino churches in the US.

IV. Qualitative Data and Analysis

In addition to the quantitative data described above, researchers conducted extensive field observations of select Chicago-area Latino congregations.

IV.1 FIELD WORK AT PHASE II CONGREGATIONS

At four of the congregations from Phase II of the study, case studies were conducted to deepen the understanding of how Latino churches connect their congregants with other community groups to provide needed spiritual and material support, as well as how they work to strengthen families and their neighborhoods. The cases studies also sought to shed light on how churches attract, maintain, and engage congregants in the life of the church.

The primary qualitative work for the CLCS involved participant observation, focus groups, and unstructured interviews. This purposive sample was selected based on religious tradition and key research topics. One congregation each was selected to represent the denomination subgroups used throughout the study—Catholic, Mainline Protestant, Evangelical, and Pentecostal. In addition, the four congregations were selected since they were known among leaders of community-based organizations and Latino religious organizations as congregations that were very engaged in the Latino community. The selection was also informed by the analysis of the quantitative data. The selected churches were typical Latino congregations in terms of their emphasis on encouraging and strengthening family relationships, their work in the community especially on labor/work issues, the percentage of congregants who had switched within and between religious faith traditions, and the diverse range of individual and communal faith practices found therein. The cases studies were conducted in churches that were Catholic, Mennonite, Lutheran, and independent Pentecostal.

A. Focus Groups

Focus groups were arranged in each of the four congregations in order to better understand the communal life of Latino churches. Researchers conducted a total of 8 focus groups among the 4 targeted churches—3 with youth informants and 5 with adult congregants (see Table 7 for a breakdown by church).

Table 7
Focus Groups by Church and Age Group

	Mennonite	Catholic	Pentecostal	Lutheran
Adults	1	1	2	1
Youth	1	1	1	0

A total of 77 people participated in the focus groups altogether. Each group had between four and eight participants who were recruited by researchers with the help of leaders of the congregations. The focus group interviews were conducted either in Spanish or English, depending on the preference of the group. Participants signed informed consent forms and were informed that their names and identifying information would remain confidential.

The adult focus group discussions focused on the congregation’s work in the community, congregants’ individual and communal religious practices, and how the church connects congregants with the community. Focus group moderators also asked participants specific questions related to labor and work issues.

The youth focus group was designed to examine the relationship between youth and family, reasons for and the process of becoming involved in the church, types of community or social service work, and devotional practices and religious beliefs. See Appendix B for more information on the types of questions asked in adult and youth focus groups.

B. Face-to-Face Interviews

Researchers conducted five face-to-face unstructured interviews with adult congregants in the selected congregations. The interviews focused on religious identity, vitality, and religious switching (see Table 8 for a breakdown by church). The selected interviewees were identified by church leaders as very active in the congregation. The interviews at the Catholic parish were conducted with persons who were involved in the Charismatic movement. Interviews lasted between one and two hours. The protocol for in-depth interviews with adult congregants on religious switching and religious identity is available in Appendix C.

Table 8
Number of Face-to-Face Interviews Conducted at Each Church

Mennonite	Catholic	Pentecostal	Lutheran
0	2	1	2

All of the focus groups and interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated (from Spanish to English) for content analysis.

C. Participant Observation

Additionally, researchers were participant observers in all four churches. This included attending worship services, youth events, Sunday school fairs, prayer meetings, Wednesday night Bible studies, and other community outreach events. Guidelines for participant observation are shown in Appendix D.

IV.2 ISSUE-SPECIFIC FIELD STUDY WORK

Researchers also conducted two separate investigations of Latino-serving congregations in Chicago that focused on understanding the role of Latino congregations in social service provision and HIV/AIDS.

A. Investigating the Role of Latino Churches in Social Service Provision

As part of research for the Annie E. Casey Foundation on the role of Latino/a religious leadership in social ministries, the research team conducted two case studies of socially engaged churches in the city of Chicago—one a Mainline Protestant congregation and the other a Catholic parish. These case studies examined the ways, best practices, and challenges for church leadership of social service provision in Latino congregations.⁷

B. Latino Churches and HIV/AIDS

Lastly, the study included qualitative research at Latino churches involved in HIV/AIDS-related ministry. These unstructured and informal interviews with Protestant and Catholic lay-leaders and community workers, as well as field observations in the churches and community, provided rich insights into Latino congregational activity regarding HIV/AIDS and related issues.

The data collection included participant observation, interviews, and case studies that focused on HIV/AIDS communication and social service provision. As part of this effort, seven face-to-face interviews were conducted with two Latino/a clergy, four Latino/a lay-leaders, and one Latina community health worker. All interviewees were Protestant except for a Catholic lay-leader. Four men and three women were interviewed. Researchers used an open-ended interview schedule that included questions focused specifically on HIV/AIDS and church responses to HIV/AIDS and related issues.

In addition to observing congregational worship settings, researchers conducted field work at community events for World AIDS Day, at church health fairs, and at a church memorial service for unknown victims of HIV/AIDS. The researchers also participated in an HIV/AIDS training for Latino/a ministers, and attended a youth presentation at a Latino church on preventing HIV/AIDS.⁸

⁷ For more information on this analysis see *Leadership Matters: The Role of Latino/a Religious Leadership in Social Ministry*. A report prepared for the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Edwin I. Hernández, Rebecca Burwell, Marciana Popescu, Milagros Peña, and Juan Carlos Rivera. March 2006. Available at: <http://latinostudies.nd.edu/pubs/pubs/LeadershipMatters.pdf>

⁸ For more on these findings see *Answering the Call: How Latino Churches Can Respond to the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: A Study of Latino Congregations in Chicago*. Edwin I. Hernández, Rebecca Burwell, and Jeffrey Smith. Notre Dame, IN: The Institute for Latino Studies, June 2007. Available at: http://latinostudies.nd.edu/pubs/pubs/HIV_AIDS_Companion_WEB.pdf

Appendix A: Categorization of Denominations

Catholic

Mainline

Episcopal
Lutheran
Lutheran - ELCA
Presbyterian
Reformed Church in America
United Church of Christ
United Methodist

Evangelical

Baptist
Baptist - Southern
Baptist - General Conference
Mennonite
Church of the Nazarene
Christian and Missionary Alliance
Evangelical Free
Evangelical Covenant
Evangelical
Seventh-day Adventist

Pentecostal

Assembly of God (AG)
Asamblea de Iglesias Cristianas (AIC)
Asamblea de Iglesias Pentecostales de Jesucristo (AIPJC)
Church of God, MB
First Christian Charismatic Church
Iglesia de Cristo Ministerios Ebenezer
Iglesia de Cristo Ministerio Elim–Miel
Iglesia de Dios, MI
Iglesia Elim
Independent (Pentecostal)
Luz del Mundo
Non-denominational
Pentecostal
Victory Outreach
Vineyard Fellowship

Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Schedules

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE #1: ADULT FOCUS GROUPS

General Questions about Church Life, Community Ministry, and Labor Issues

INSTRUCTIONS: Your church is one of 4 congregations that have been selected to be studied in-depth. This is a conversation where we would like everyone to participate. There is no right or wrong answer. We simply want to know your feelings, beliefs, and opinions about different aspects of your congregation. What you say in this conversation is confidential. No one will ever be able to connect your answers to your name. We will be recording the conversation. We need you to sign the consent form before we begin. We expect our conversation with you today to take approximately one to two hours. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

[Instructions for Interviewers: Please make sure to ask the “probe” questions. Many times people will have other comments, but we want to elicit information about these areas as well.]

I. Religious and Spiritual Life: Individual Practices and Communal Norms

1. Think about the first time you came to this church. What attracted you most to this church? Be specific. *Probe: Did a family member or friend invite you? Describe for us your very first visit to this church. What still attracts you most to this church?*
2. This church has been growing in numbers in recent years. From your perspective what are the key reasons for this growth? *Probe: What role do pastors, key leaders, programming, warm/friendly culture play in this growth? Do you do things with other churches, support their ministries?*
3. From your perspective, what are the greatest challenges that parents face in supporting the development of their children’s faith? *Probe: Be specific - how does your church help people in dealing with the needs of their children? Does the church have programs or initiatives that help to support the development of children or adolescents’ faith?*

II. Civic/Community Engagement: The Collective Story of the Church’s Work in the Community

4. What do you think is the most important way in which your church serves the local community? What social issues does the church engage? [Note to Interviewers: we are talking about programs that mostly serve people outside of the church.] *Probe: How does the church address this issue? In what way are you involved in any ministries or programs that serve the community? What do you do? What does it mean to you to be involved in this way?*

5. Is getting the church involved in social service ministry an important mission/value of your church? [For interviewer: Wait for answer and discussion, then ask]: If so, how is this made evident to the members? *Probe: Through preaching, teaching, key lay-leaders, etc.?*
6. What types of things do you do as a church to minister to families in need? *Probe: From your perspective how well is your church ministering to their needs? Has this church ever helped you or your immediate family with any type of assistance (housing, cash assistance, counseling)?*
7. How does your church work with other churches or other community organizations when doing community outreach and ministry? [For Interviewer: Don't cut off discussion.] *Probe: Who do you work most closely with? Do you ever work with non-religious groups? Why or why not? Do you work with churches outside of your tradition? What have you done? Do you work with non-Latino churches? Why or why not?*
8. Do you in any way volunteer with a community organization outside of your church? If so, how are you involved? *Probe: Do you volunteer as an individual or with other people from your church? Does your pastor or others at the church encourage you to be involved in volunteering outside of the church?*

III. Labor Issues:

Now, we'd like to talk to you more specifically about how your church has helped people with work-related issues.

9. Have you or anyone you have known been helped, through your church (or through a member of the church) to find a job? If yes, how were you/they helped?
 - Were you referred to another organization?
 - Is there an informal network of people who help people in your church find jobs? *Probe: Who helped them find the job? What did that person do? Referral? Introduced me to a business? Wrote a letter? Was it individual help or did they get help through a program?*
10. Have you helped someone from your church get a job? (If yes) *Probe: Can you describe how you helped them—what specifically did you do for them to help them find a job?*
11. Does your church have a specific program or work with a specific organization (or send people to that organization) to help people find work or improve their job skills? *Probe: ask them to talk about the program and if they've been involved or someone they know has been involved in the program. What was the experience like? If there is no program, ask them about other churches or community groups that they might work with or refer people to when a job-related issue arises – what does that group do? How is the church involved with them?*

12. Does your pastor or priest ever talk about labor issues during mass or other worship services? [For Interviewer: If not specifically, do religious leaders at the church ever mention work in the context of discussions about immigration?] *Probe: does your minister ever mention the importance of good working conditions or fair wages? Does your pastor encourage getting involved politically to address a work-related issue? If your pastor doesn't say anything publicly, have you had private conversations with him/her about this issue?*
13. Are you or anyone you know at your church involved with a union? *Probe: In your opinion, does the church support members' involvement in unions?*
14. Have you ever approached your pastor/priest or someone at church because of a work-related issue? *Probe: If so, who did you approach? What was it about? What did that person do? Were you referred to a community organization or other group that works on job-related issues?*
15. Is there anything that your church isn't doing that you think they should do in terms of outreach to the community? *Probe: Why don't you think there is any ministry right now addressing this issue? What is keeping the church from forming a ministry or program around this issue? How likely is it that the church would start a ministry like that?*

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE #2: YOUTH FOCUS GROUPS

Instructions: Your church is one of 4 congregations that have been selected to be studied in-depth. This is a conversation where we would like everyone to participate. There are no right or wrong answers. We simply want to know your feelings, beliefs, and opinions about different aspects of your congregation. What you say in this conversation is anonymous and confidential. No one will ever be able to connect your answers to your name. We will be recording the conversation. We need you to sign the consent form before we begin. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

[Instructions for Interviewers: Please make sure to ask the “probe” questions. Many times people will have other comments, but we want to elicit information about these areas as well.]

I. Participation in Life of the Church

1. How did you get involved in this congregation? Can you describe the types of activities that you participate in at this church? *Probe: Do you attend weekly worship services, Sunday/Sabbath School/CCD, or youth events?*
2. What is it about this church that you like? *Probe: Was there anyone who was instrumental in getting you involved with the church? What did that person do?*
3. In what ways are youth active in your congregation? *Probe: Do you do anything in the worship services, or help with religious education? Are you a Sunday School teacher or Eucharistic minister or liturgical reader, musician, or serve in other ministries?*
4. If left to you to decide, would you continue to come to this church? *Probe: Would you attend another church? Or stop attending church altogether? Why?*

II. Religious Vitality

5. Describe an experience in your life that brought you closer to God. *Probe: Did the church play a role in any way in bringing you closer to God? How? What ministry or program of your congregation has helped you grow in faith?*
6. Describe what you like and dislike about the worship services in your church.
7. What, in your opinion, is the single greatest barrier to involving more youth in the church?

III. The Church and Its Impact on the Community

8. In what ways are you involved in the community outreach ministries of your church? [Note to Interviewer: We are talking about programs that mostly serve people outside of the church.] *Probe: Are you encouraged by leaders or others in your church to be involved in programs serving the community? Are there other ways in which you are involved in the community, other than through your church (such as school or another organization)?*
9. Has your involvement in community service helped you grow in your faith? *Probe: How has this work helped you?*
10. Does the pastoral staff at your church emphasize in any way the importance of getting an education? *Probe: What types of things does the church do to support the educational needs and aspirations of the youth at the church (scholarships, tutoring, etc.)?*
11. If you could recommend one thing to your pastor and church leaders that your church could do to help serve the needs of youth in your community, what would that be?

IV. Relationships with Family and Friends

12. Who do you go to for advice? *Probe: Are there adults at your church that you feel close to that support you? How did those relationships develop?*
13. How important is religion/faith in your home? *Probe: Do you attend church with family members? Who attends with you? Who first brought you to church?*
14. How does going to church make a difference in your life? How does it affect the types of activities you engage in? *Probe: How has it affected your relationships with family? With friends or people at school?*
15. Does your faith or religious life influence your educational life? *Probe: If so, how does your faith or religious life influence your education? Your study habits? Your attitudes towards learning? Your future educational or vocational aspirations?*
16. Do you have a lot of friends at church? *Probe: In what ways are your relationships at church different than the relationships you have with peers at school?*

Thank you so much for your participation!!

Appendix C: Protocol for In-Depth Interviews with Adult Congregants on Religious Switching and Religious Identity

These questions assume that the person has switched within or between traditions/churches. Depending on the exact context (example: person switching between a conservative Pentecostal council and an independent church, or a Catholic person switching into charismatic movement), questions should be addressed in such a way as to speak to the person's experience. The following questions are broken down between Catholic Charismatic respondents and Protestant/other Catholic respondents. However, each set of questions should be tailored for specific informants.

INSTRUCTIONS: Your church is one of 4 congregations that have been selected to be studied in-depth. Think of this as a conversation where we would like to hear from you about how you got involved in this church and why. There is no right or wrong answer. We simply want to know your feelings, beliefs, and opinions about different aspects of your church and your faith. What you say in this conversation is confidential. No one will ever be able to connect your answers to your name. We will be recording the conversation. We expect our conversation with you today to take approximately one hour. We need you to sign the consent form before we begin. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

For Respondents that have Switched from Catholic-Protestant Churches (or vice versa) or switched within the Protestant tradition:

1. Tell me about your experience with the church growing up? Did you attend church regularly as a child? As an adolescent? With whom did you attend church? How involved was that person(s) in the church? What kind of church did you attend and how involved were you in that church?
2. Were you involved in a similar church before you started attending this church? How many churches have you attended in your adult life?
3. Do you have family members or friends that are members of or attend this church? Do you have family members that remained in the congregation or tradition that you were previously involved with?
4. Before you switched into your new tradition/church, how involved were you with the old church? How many times a week did you attend? What types of church activities were you involved with?
5. Why did you switch tradition/churches? Was there some experience that made you switch? Were there people who were instrumental in getting you involved in this church?
6. What types of activities are you involved in with this church? How did you get involved in these activities?

7. Do you do things with other churches, such as attend services or support their ministries in any way? If so, is that church from the same tradition or similar to your own church?
8. Have you helped bring other people to this church? If so, how? What specific things did you do?
9. How is your church perceived by other churches? For example, are you considered more conservative or liberal or moderate by other churches? Why?
10. Are there ways in which you combine different practices from the different churches of which you've been a part through your life? Do you recite certain prayers or sing different songs from various churches from your past?

For Catholic Respondents involved in the Charismatic Movement:

1. Tell me about your experience with the church growing up. What kind of church did you attend and how involved were you in that church? Did you attend church regularly as a child? As an adolescent? With whom did you attend church? How involved was that person(s) in the church?
2. How did you get involved in the Charismatic movement? What difference has it made in your life?
3. Do you have family members or friends that are part of the Charismatic movement? Do you have family members that attend the traditional Catholic mass regularly?
4. Before you switched into the Charismatic movement, how involved were you with the traditional Catholic mass? How many times a week did you attend? What types of church activities were you involved with?
5. Why did you become Charismatic? Was there some experience that made you switch? Were there people who were instrumental in getting you involved in this movement?
6. What types of activities are you involved in with this church? How did you get involved in these activities?
7. How does this group relate with the larger Catholic Church? What is the group's relationship like with the head priest?
8. Do you collaborate with other groups within the church (such as Comunidades de base, Cursillo Movement, etc.), such as attend services or support their ministries in any way? If so, what do you do together?
9. Have you helped bring other people to the Charismatic movement? If so, how? What specific things did you do?

10. How is the Charismatic movement perceived by other members of the church? For example, are you considered more conservative or liberal or moderate by other churches? Why?
11. Are there ways in which you combine different practices from the different movements within the Catholic churches? For example, do you recite certain prayers or sing different songs from various movements in the Catholic churches (such as speak in tongues and pray the rosary?)?

Thank you so much for your participation!!

Appendix D: Field Note Guide for Observations at Latino Churches

Name: _____

Date: _____

Organization: _____

This information will help us to understand the life of Latino churches in Chicago. As you are conducting participant observation, any materials you might pick up at the site are relevant to include with your notes: brochures, bulletins, or religious booklets, etc. As you are participating in services and church activities, please keep in mind these areas and include them in your field notes if they are relevant to the particular activity that you are observing.

1. Spatial Map

A. Physical Structures

- In what type of structure is the church housed (office building, school, church, retail space, old industrial facility)?
- Is there more than one building related to/owned by this organization?
- Did the main building used to be a church of another denomination?
- Is there parking? How much space is allotted for cars? Is it zoned?
- What is the arrangement of the church space (sanctuary upstairs, fellowship hall in basement, education classes in another building)?
- What is the condition of the building on the outside? What are indoor spaces like? (new, modern, freshly painted, multiple bathrooms)?
- Are there other churches/organizations using the space?
- Is the space conducive to the types of activities taking place (is there enough seating, is the sound system good, do they have space for multiple groups of people, such as children, the elderly, the disabled)? Is there ample space in the reception/waiting areas?
- What types of technology does the church have (large sound system, computers in church offices, multiple microphones)?

B. Aesthetics: Religious and Cultural Symbols

- Are there religious symbols around the buildings (cross, banners, Virgen de Guadalupe)?
- Are there cultural or national symbols in the space (Puerto Rican flag, etc.)?
- Are the aesthetics reflective of the groups that use the space? That is, the choice of posters, paint, etc.—what does that say to people about who uses the space? Is it geared so that Latinos/as (or perhaps, more specifically, a particular group, such as Mexicans) feel that the programs or organizations value and welcome them?
- Was there religious literature in the vestibule, fellowship hall or other areas in the church (besides the sanctuary)? What did the literature address?

- Were there any types of posters, brochures, or flyers hanging on the walls or scattered around the church? If yes, what topics did they address (HIV/AIDS posters, pamphlets on domestic violence, flyers for community protests, cultural festivals, etc.)?

C. Neighborhood Context

- Briefly describe the immediate neighborhood where the church is located (1-2 block area) —socio-economic aspects, racial/ethnic composition, housing stock, green space, if any.
- Is the building where the church is located visible and easily identifiable?
- Is the building accessible to public transportation?
- Are there other churches and/or community based organizations in the immediate proximity (1-2 blocks)? If identifiable, which faith communities and/or issues do they address (San Lucas Worker's Rights Center, Salon de Testigos de Jehova, etc.)?

2. Social Map

- D. Approximate # of people in church at particular activity you are observing
- E. Demographic characteristics: Age, gender, race of participants
- F. How many different groups were at the site (children under 12, adolescents and young adults, middle aged adults and the elderly)? Were there non-church members there or people from the community?
- G. Who appear to be the leaders (women, men, Latinos/as, Anglos, ages, etc.)?
- H. Does leadership appear to be shared? Are there multiple members of one family in leadership positions in the church?

3. Temporal Map

- I. What activities were going on?
- J. What is the interaction between congregants like? (people interacting, talking, sitting alone, praying together, was there much physical contact? Crying? Quiet meditation, praying in tongues or praying out loud?)
- K. Were there outside groups/people (non-church people) coming in and out of the space?
- L. What is the interaction between leaders and congregants like? Between men and women, young and old? Latinos/as and non-Latinos/as (if applicable)?
- M. What types of issues did the leaders and congregants discuss? What themes emerged in sermons, prayer meetings, youth groups, or other activities?
- N. What types of activities are going on in the street/sidewalk, immediately outside of the church?