

Chile

SIM is involved in church leadership development, outreach and children's ministry in Chile.

Chile is one of the most prosperous nations in South America. Although nearly 95% of the people are of European descent, the indigenous [Mapuche](#), [Aymara](#) and Rapa Nui retain their distinctive cultures and languages. Almost 90% of Chileans consider themselves Roman Catholic and the remainder is considered Protestant.

SIM serves a variety of church denominations in Chile through theological education, libraries and resource centres, joint cross-cultural mission outreach and evangelism.

Current SIM Ministry

This long narrow country has enjoyed a unique evangelical movement throughout the 20th century, primarily within Pentecostal denominations and among the lower classes. Today, however, growth is increasing in the middle class and non-Pentecostal denominations. There is complete freedom of religion.



SIM entered Chile in 1988. The Lord has led to a broad vision of forging links among the many existing denominations through interdenominational activities. Tools have included small theological libraries, ministry resource centres, theological education (formal and non-formal), and networks for cross-cultural mission co-operation.

Relational evangelism and discipleship continue to motivate the SIM missionaries. SIM is involved in the development of theological education and co-operative evangelistic ministries among the Mapuche (a less reached group) from its Retreat and Training Centre in Metrenco, near the city of Temuco. Newer ministries reach out to urban children and families at risk, as well as to those infected with HIV.

Vision for world evangelisation continues to grow slowly in Chile as Chilean missionaries are being equipped and sent out. SIM missionaries are actively promoting this growth in mission vision. There is growing interest in theological studies, combining witness with community service ministries.

Although Chile has one of the strongest economies in South America, and overall has enjoyed relative prosperity, there are still many throughout the country suffering economic hardship. Unemployment is around 6% and crime continues to rise.

History of Christianity

Catholic priests arrived in 1541 with the first group of Spanish settlers. By 1584, the first seminary was built in Santiago. At the time of independence, the constitution recognised Catholicism as the state religion. After 1878, relations between the church and state became increasingly strained and the new constitution of 1925 increased the separation of church and state. In 1960 the Catholic church began what has become a significant renewal.

Pentecostal denominations that have had no financial assistance from outside the country constitute the largest Protestant group in Chile. The Methodist Pentecostal Church and the Evangelical Pentecostal Church have both developed from indigenous work and are currently the largest denominations in the country.

Protestant missions first began in 1821 when the British and Foreign Bible Society were invited by the president of Chile to establish schools in Chile. It was not until 1845 that David Trumbull, the first resident missionary who was not a school teacher, arrived. Several others from various denominational backgrounds joined Trumbull and worked together.

Many other Protestant groups work in Chile, including Presbyterian Church USA, Lutherans, Methodists, Seventh-Day Adventists, German Baptists, Southern Baptists, and several foreign Pentecostal groups who entered Chile to assist the indigenous Pentecostal groups. Forty-two North American missions were working in Chile in 1998. A Chilean missionary movement is growing with probably over 100 missionaries in other countries.

Please pray for

- growing numbers of committed followers of Christ from among the middle and upper classes.
- increased growth in co-operation and partnerships among evangelical denominations.
- the development of a Chilean interdenominational mission agency and a growing commitment in local churches to support missionaries.
- continued development and financing of the Metrenco Retreat and Training Centre (Koyamentu) and related ministries.
- increased hunger for God's Word.
- A desire on behalf of church leaders to equip their congregations through Bible study and the use of TEE materials.
- development of HIV and AIDS related ministries, within SIM and the Chilean church in general.

Opportunities

[Upper Class Church Planter](#)

[World Missions Promoter](#)

[All Chile Opportunities](#)

Projects

[Chile Earthquake](#)

Stories

[Koyamentu Centre is Dedicated](#)

[A Day to Remember in Chile](#)

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