

2nd Partner's Consultation
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria
São Paulo, Brazil, September 6-12, 2013

Fraternity Movement of Christian Churches of São Paulo state

Movimento de Fraternidade de Igrejas Cristãs MOFIC

11.09.13

The MOFIC aims at enhancing the spirit of fraternity and cooperation between Christian Churches of São Paulo State. It seeks to plan, promote, and evaluate ecumenical activities in the state of São Paulo, in the areas of prayer, celebration, spirituality, education, and social action.

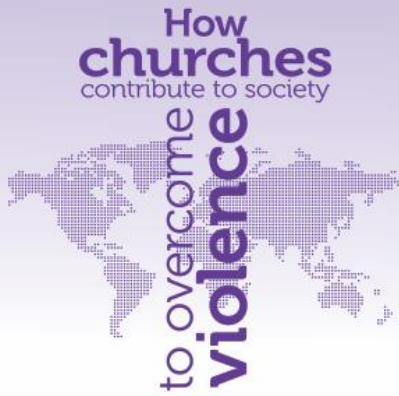
1. *Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil*

It is an ecclesiastical province of the Anglican Communion which covers the whole territory of Brazil. The province is formed by nine dioceses, each one of them guided by a bishop, from among whom one is elected as the First Bishop. Their worship services follow the Anglican liturgy, established as of the 16th century, similar to the current Catholic mass after the Vatican Council II liturgical reformation. The church is administered by an episcopal government. Currently it is a church which is aligned to a moderate to liberal and liturgical theology. However, the church also works at being a democratic space where the laity has an active role in the ecclesiastical administration process.

The basic structure of the IEAB is the following:

- General Synod
- Chamber of Bishops
- Chamber of Clerics and Laity
- Dioceses and Missionary District
- First Bishop
- General Secretary
- Executive Council
- Work Groups
- Theological Education
- Religious Orders and Communities
- Anglican Diaconal and Development Service

It is active in social and educational projects and is a strong supporter of the ecumenical movement.



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2. *Roman Catholic Church*

A Christian church of approximately two thousand years of age, placed under the supreme authority of the Pope. Its goal is to convert to the teaching and to the person of Jesus Christ leading to the Kingdom of God. It grants an important role in this mission to the person of the Holiest Virgin Mary (to whom the church gave the title of “Mother of the Church”). Toward this end, the Catholic Church administers the sacraments and preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The hierarchy of the church is divided basically into 3 levels:

- **Episcopal** – is the highest level, corresponding to the bishops.
- **Presbyteral** – is the intermediary level, of the priests.
- **Diaconal** – is the lower level, pertaining to the deacons.

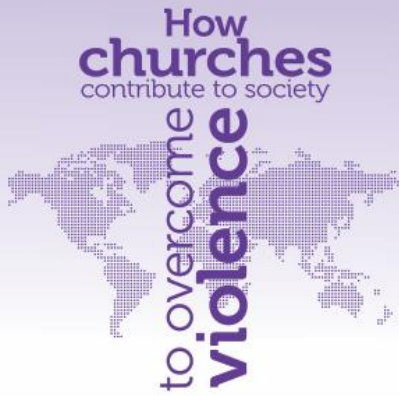
Brazil, with 123 million faithful, according to the statistics of the last census (2010), is the country with the greatest number of Catholic persons in the world. It works in social programs and institutions all around the world, including schools, universities, hospitals, and shelters, as well as administers other charity institutions which help families, the poor, the elderly and the sick.

3. *Armenian Apostolic Church of Brazil*

The origin of the Armenian Church remits back to the period of the apostolic preaching. In the first centuries of Christianity Armenia had close ties with the west, from whence the new religion penetrated this country. From the south came the influence of the Assyrian Christians. Small Jewish communities, probably constituted during the days of the Babylonian slavery helped to propagate the Good News in Armenia.

The Armenian Apostolic Church is one of the original Ancient Churches and throughout the whole history of Christianity it remained as part of the “**One, Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church**” of Christ.

The Armenian Church survived many moments of difficulties through its history, suffering with its people during periods of great anguish. The Patriarchal See, before establishing itself definitively, moved several times to different locations before returning to the Holy See of Etchmiadzin (Armênia).



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4. ***Antiochian Orthodox Church:***

This is a communion of autocephalous Christian churches, that is, it covers a territory, generally a national territory and it has the right to resolve all its internal problems at base. It has its own authority, having the right also to remove its own bishops, including the patriarch himself, or the archbishop or metropolitan archbishop who presides over this church.

The Antiochian Orthodox Churches are inheritors of the Byzantine Empire Christianity, which recognizes the primacy of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople ever since the See of Rome ceased to commune with orthodoxy. It claims to be the continuity of the church founded by Jesus, considering its leaders to be the successors of the apostles.

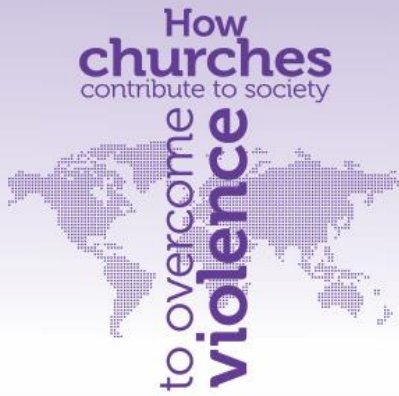
In Brazil the Orthodox Church disembarked together with the Arab immigrants. The first institution was edified in São Paulo, in the year 1904. They are immigration churches, directing their services toward their communities, which reveals a certain closure, founded on an ethnicity peculiar to all of them, in spite of them presenting themselves as Catholics and apostolic, that is, universal. The Greek-Orthodox bishopric responsible for the Brazilian parishes and the South-American countries is located in Argentina, more precisely, in Buenos Aires.

Contrary to Catholicism, for the Orthodox Church, the Holy Spirit comes from the Father, but is not connected to the Son; purgatory does not exist and the orthodox do not believe in the virginity of Mary, although they admit her ascension to heaven. In the clerical structure, only the bishops are required to maintain celibacy, the priests are liberated for marriage as long as it takes place before their ordination.

The Antiochian Orthodox Church of São Paulo attends the Syrian-Lebanese community of São Paulo besides maintaining an educational institution and homes for elderly people.

5. ***National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (Conselho Nacional de Igrejas Cristãs CONIC)***

CONIC was founded in 1982, in Porto Alegre (RS). Its creation is the result of a long process of discussion and joint efforts between the Roman Catholic church, the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, the Episcopal Anglican Church of Brazil and the Methodist Church. The first talks for the creation of the Council took place in 1975. Thirteen preparatory meetings between the presidents of the national churches mentioned above were necessary to set up the creation of CONIC in 1982.



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The final message of the conference that gave birth to the Council presented the organization's MISSION: "To be at the service of the unity of the churches, endeavoring to follow the Brazilian reality, confronting it with the Gospel and the demands of the Kingdom of God." It's a commitment of CONIC to act in favor of the dignity and rights and obligations of persons, as a way to fulfill the Gospel's message.

Today, headquartered in Brasilia (DF), CONIC keeps seeking to promote ecumenical relations between Christian churches and to strengthen the common witness of its member churches to advocate for human rights. To achieve this goal, the member churches, as entities that seek a common path, take part in ongoing dialogues that values human life, fraternal friendship, and coexistence.