

‘Amazing Salvation Numbers’: A Spiritual Shift is Happening

Brazil is witnessing a seismic shift in its religious landscape that’s rapidly reshaping the country’s spiritual and social fabric. As CBN News discovered, evangelicals are poised to outnumber Catholics as the largest faith group there.

In the heart of Brazil, amidst the rhythmic beats of samba and the vibrant colors of carnival, something spiritually profound is unfolding. “We are on the verge of a religious change in Brazil”, said Brazilian sociologist Dr. José Alves.

If there’s one image that symbolizes Catholicism’s influence here, it’s Rio de Janeiro’s 98-foot-tall Christ the Redeemer. Inaugurated in 1931, the iconic statute celebrated the country’s rich Catholic heritage. There’s also the beautiful blue Cathedral of Brasilia – one of the largest Catholic churches in Brazil’s capital city. But despite these historical landmarks, Alves says the faith’s dominance is rapidly declining.

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“In 1950, 93 percent of Brazilians identified as Catholics. The Church was losing about 1 percent of followers every decade,” said Alves. “However, from 1991 onwards, the Catholic Church started to lose 1 percent of followers every year, resulting in a dramatic drop.”

Evangelical Christianity, once a minority faith here, is now growing at unprecedented levels. The surveys show that what was once the world’s largest Catholic nation, will be overwhelming evangelical by 2030.

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Signs of this growth are everywhere—mega-churches dotting the landscape, filled with thousands of worshippers each week. That includes Andre Fernandes' church in São Paulo.

"We are living in the fulfillment of a promise," said Fernandes, who pastors Lagoinha Church. "For many decades, we have heard that Brazil would experience a wave of revival that would be exported around the world, and I believe that this is what we are experiencing at this moment."

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It also includes Lourival Pereira's congregation in the Amazon region—boasting more than 10,000 members across roughly 600 cell groups.

"The foundation of our growth is these cells," said Pereira, pastor of a Foursquare Church in Belem. "The real revival is taking place outside the church walls. Every day, people are meeting in small groups in homes; it's the biblical model."

Then there's J.B. Carvalho's church in the capital city of Brasília.

"We started the church in 2003 with only 25 people. Today, we have about 12,000 people in Brasília alone," said Carvalho of Community of the Nations Church. "We also have another 15,000 people in Fortaleza. Our churches are spread throughout Brazil."

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