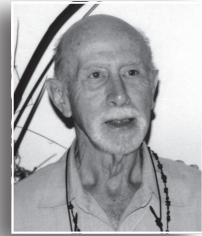


José Míguez Bonino

José Míguez Bonino was born into a Methodist family in the northeastern Argentine city of Santa Fe, capital of the Santa Fe Province, on March 5, 1924. By the time he started elementary school his family had moved to the city of Rosario where Míguez Bonino eventually completed his degree in teaching. After two years in the School of Medicine of the National University he realized that his real vocation lay elsewhere. Subsequently, he entered the *Facultad Evangélica de Teología* in Buenos Aires in 1943, obtaining a Bachelors degree in Divinity in 1946 and a Th. Lic. (**Licenciát teologie**) in 1948. For his year of practical ministry before graduation Míguez Bonino went to Cochabamba, Bolivia, for an “intensive course in Latin American reality, indigenous and poor, with its religious syncretism, rich in its music and dances.”¹ He married Noemí in 1947. The Lord gave them three children: Nestor, Eduardo, and Daniel.



Míguez Bonino was received with full membership into the River Plate Annual Conference of the Methodist Church and was ordained a presbyter in 1949. His first pastorate was

¹ José Míguez Bonino “‘Un silbo apacible y suave...’ (1 Reyes 19:12). Notas autobiográficas de un recorrido pastoral y teológico,” in *El silbo ecuménico del Espíritu: Homenaje a José Míguez Bonino en sus 80 años*, Guillermo Hansen, ed. (Buenos Aires: ISEDET, 2004), 430.

in San Rafael, Mendoza, in northwestern Argentina. In 1953 he received his Masters in Theology from the Candler School of Theology (Emory University, Georgia). He completed his Doctorate of Theology in March 1960 at Union Theological Seminary of New York. In December 1959 he was elected president of Union Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires where he taught systematic theology and ethics.

Since 1972 Míguez Bonino has participated as an active member in the *Fraternidad Teológica Latinoamericana* (FTL). He served as co-president of the World Council of Churches between 1975 and 1983. Before the 1976 military *coup d'état* in Argentina, Míguez Bonino started the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights “to defend and support the already threatened life of our people.”² He was the only Latin American Protestant observer at Vatican II. Later he was elected representative to the Argentine Constitutional Assembly of 1994, the assembly responsible for writing the country’s new constitution. He has also been a member of the Great Honorary Jury of the Nuremberg Human Rights Award.

On July 31, 2003, Míguez Bonino, at the age of 79, suffered a stroke which forced him into an “early” retirement. Until then, his active career inspired many others to get involved not only in doing theology but also in the political and social life of the continent. Dayton Roberts, a missionary with the Latin America Mission (LAM), wrote in 1969 that Míguez Bonino was, in his view, the “number one theologian in Latin America.”³ Furthermore, Míguez Bonino’s influence has spread to other continents. For example, Preman Niles

² *Ibid.*, 433.

³ Letter from W. Dayton Roberts to Vergil Gerber, dated October 28, 1969, Billy Graham Center Archives, “Collection 324,” Box 2, Folder 3.