

# Mapping the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

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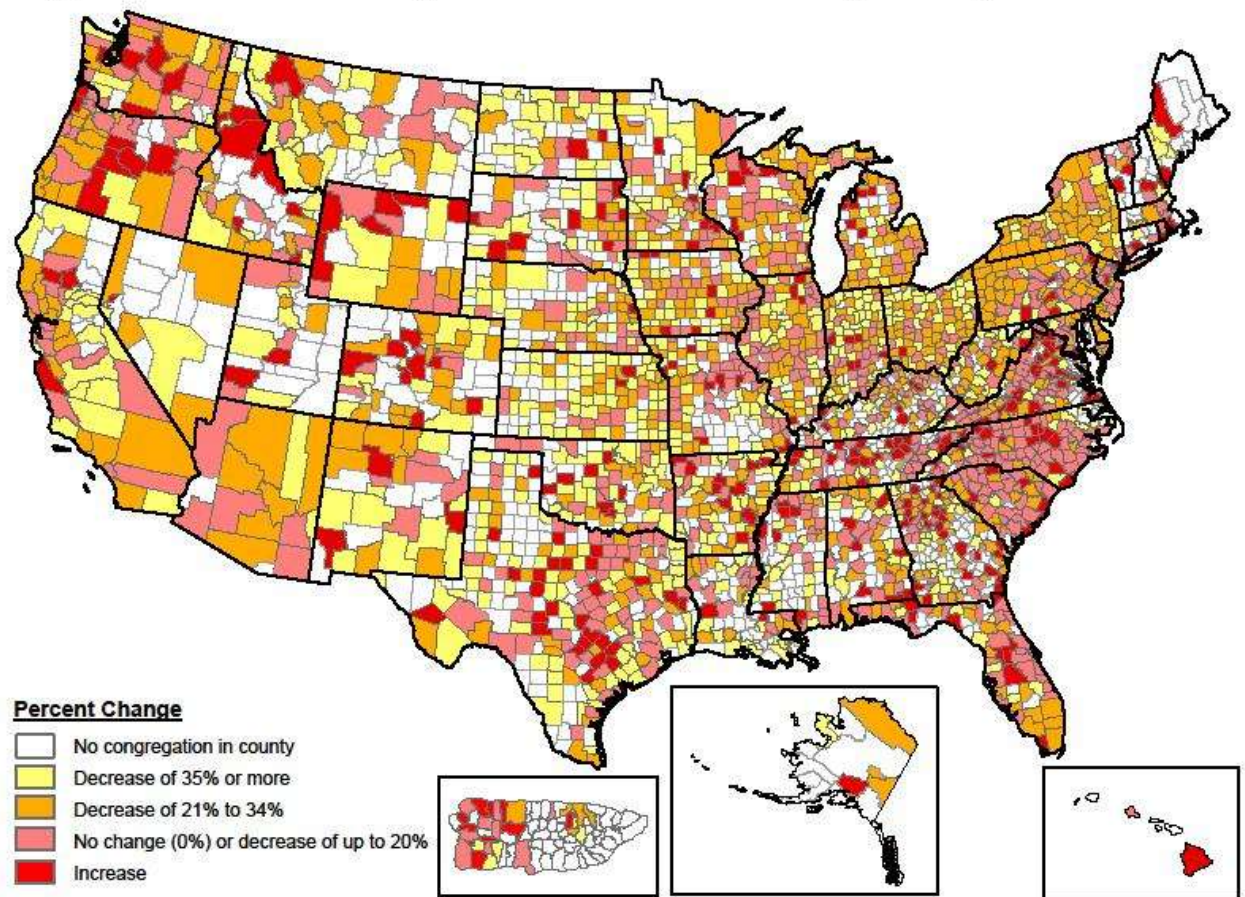
**A**lmost three-fourths of the nation’s 3,221 counties or county equivalents (including 78 *municipios* in Puerto Rico) have at least one PC(USA) congregation (74%). Selected data about the PC(USA) presence in these 2,388 “Presbyterian counties” are shown on this and the following three pages.

**M**embership Change. Total membership in the PC(USA) fell from 2,525,330 in 2000 to 2,016,091 in 2010, a drop of 20%. Losses occurred throughout the country: Of the 2,431 counties or county equivalents with one or more PC(USA) congregations (“Presbyterian counties”) in 2000, 2,087 (86%) have fewer members in 2010, including 43 (2%) that no longer have a Presbyterian congregation. Of the rest, 32 (1%) had no change and 292 (12%) grew. There are also 10 counties with a PC(USA) congregation in 2010 that did not have one in 2000. (See Figure 1.)

**Color versions of each map  
 are on the Web at  
[www.pcusa.org/research/2010maps](http://www.pcusa.org/research/2010maps)**

Counties with the largest percentage membership losses are concentrated in the Middle Atlantic states, from New York, New Jersey, and Delaware west through Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and much of the Midwest. Other pockets of sizable loss are found in the Plains states (especially North Dakota, Kansas, and Oklahoma), southern New Mexico, and California, especially the central valley.

**Figure 1: Percent Change in the Number of Presbyterians, 2000 to 2010**



Gains are found in multiple counties in Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia (especially greater Atlanta), Tennessee, central Texas, and scattered parts of the West, from the interiors of Washington and Oregon through Idaho, Wyoming, and Colorado. Several *municipios* in Puerto Rico also grew.



**Presbyterians as a Share of Total Population.** Presbyterians are rarely a sizable percentage of the population. Nationally, PC(USA) members comprise 0.6% of the total, and, as Table 3 shows (see p. 7), the largest statewide concentration is only 1.6%, the share found in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.<sup>1</sup> Figure 2 shows this regional pattern, along with similar relative concentrations in parts of Virginia, West Virginia, New York, and New Jersey. Of the 30 counties that are 5% or more Presbyterian, 11 are found in either Virginia (8) or Pennsylvania (3).

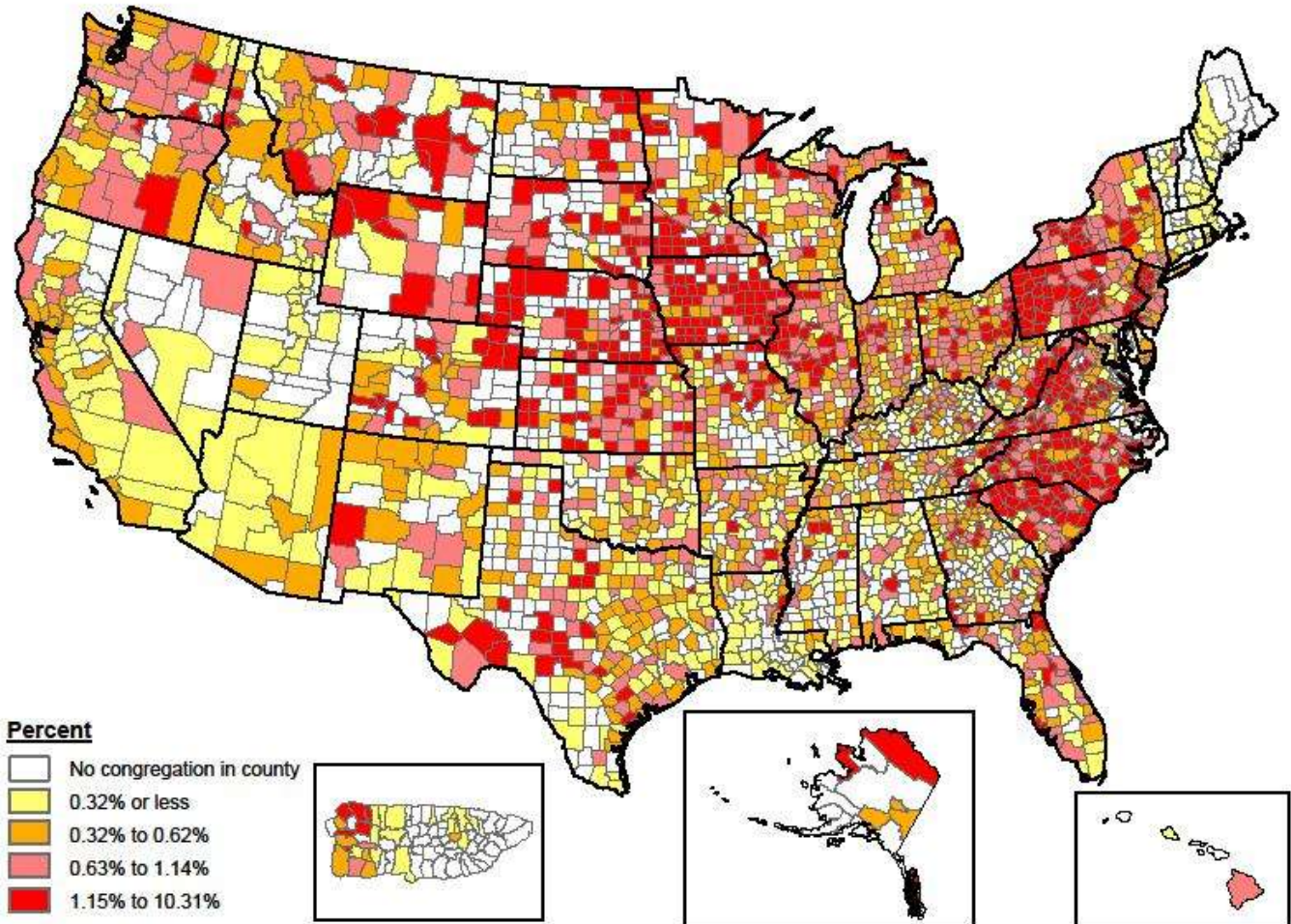
The largest share for any one county, however, is in Treasure County, Montana, where 10.3% of the population is Presbyterian. That county is part of the other large area of Presbyterian concentration, in the plains and upper Midwest. Sixteen of 30 counties where Presbyterians are 5% or more of the population are in this region—five in Iowa, four in South Dakota, three in Nebraska, two in Montana, and one each in Colorado and Minnesota.

Puerto Rico also has a relatively high concentration of Presbyterians in the west of the island.

The lowest concentrations of Presbyterians are found in the Southwest, including California, Arizona, and Utah; the Deep South, especially Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama; Oklahoma and East Texas; and New England.

This map and the others also show the location of counties without any Presbyterian congregations. These are concentrated in New England, the Southern Appalachians, the Deep South north into Missouri and Kentucky, the high plains from Texas to North Dakota, the Rocky Mountains, the intermountain West, and the eastern two-thirds of Puerto Rico (excepting San Juan and adjacent areas).

**Figure 2: Presbyterians as a Percent of the Population, 2010**



<sup>1</sup> Keep in mind that children are not counted as members until confirmation; the share would be between 0.7% and 0.8% nationally if they were included.

**New Congregations.** Between 2000 and 2010 a total of 226 new PC(USA) congregations were chartered.<sup>2</sup> They are located in 39 states, plus Puerto Rico. Most states with a new congregation had at least two; only 12 had just one. For the nation as a whole—the 50 states plus Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia—the median number of new congregations per state is 2.5; the average is 4.3. Eight states have more than 10 new congregations: California, 23 (located in 12 counties); Georgia, 16 (14); New Jersey, 15 (8); Texas, 15 (13); Florida, 13 (11); New York, 13 (9); Pennsylvania, 13 (8); and Washington, 13 (7). Together, these eight states account for 54% of all congregations newly chartered over the past decade and contain 47% of all counties with a new congregation. (See Figure 3.)

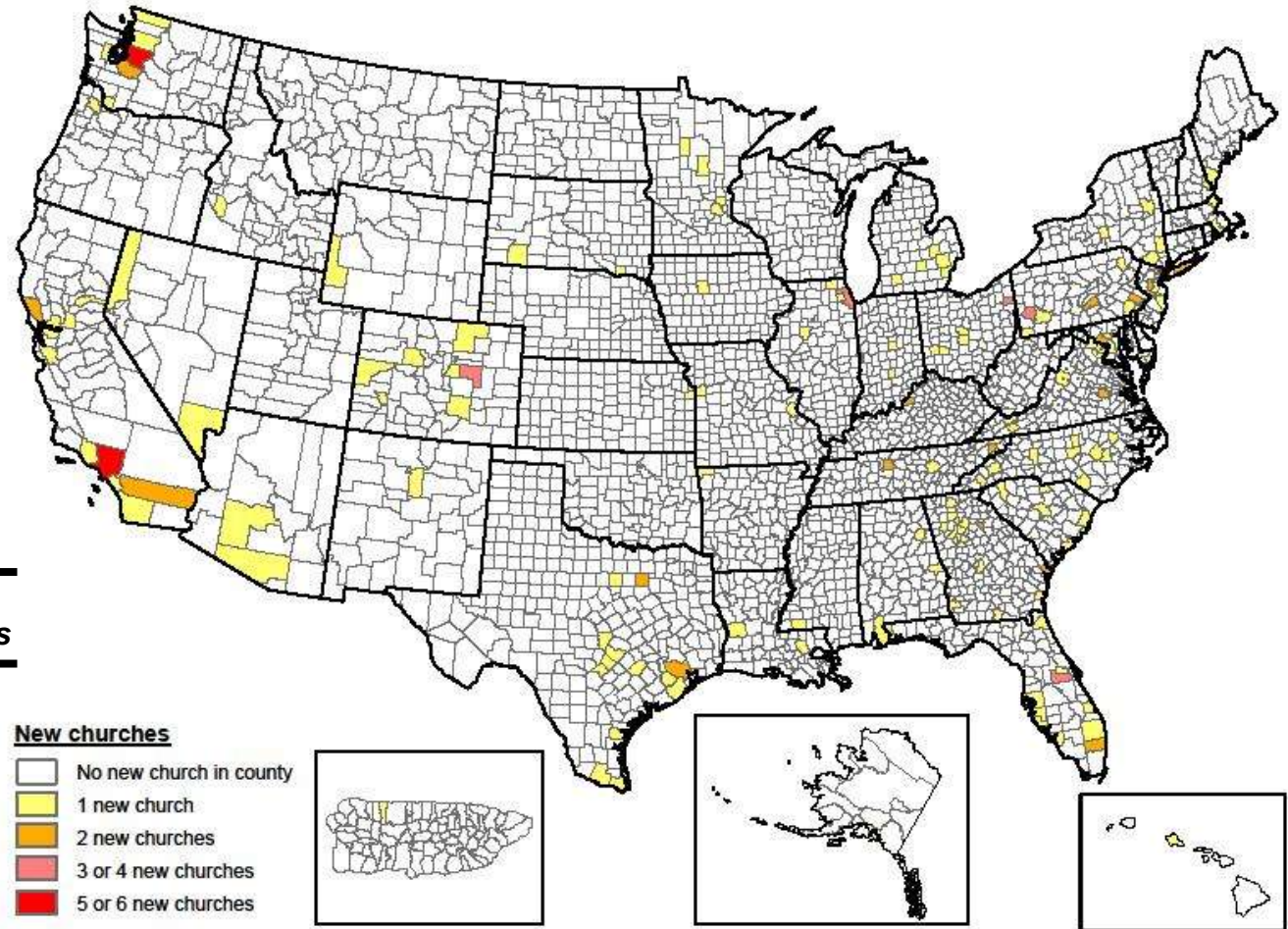
New congregations created over the past decade are located in 174 counties, or 5% of the national total of 3,221. Most of these counties—145, or 83%—have only one new congregation, and most of the rest have only two (19; 11%). One county, San Francisco, has five new congregations, and three others have six each: Los Angeles; Bergen (New Jersey); and King (Washington).

Most counties with a new congregation already had at least one PC(USA) congregation. In only ten counties was a new congregation established where there had been no PC(USA) presence. Only two of these were in the same state: Gilmer and Paulding Counties in Georgia.

***Zoom in on a PDF of each map at [www.pcusa.org/research/2010maps](http://www.pcusa.org/research/2010maps)***

Most new congregations are relatively small; the membership in new congregations in the median county is 89. A few counties have more than 500 members in their new congregations, including two counties where a single new congregation has that many: Dutchess, New York (545), and Peoria, Illinois (570).

**Figure 3: Newly Chartered Churches, 2000 to 2010**



<sup>2</sup> We have excluded churches resulting from mergers of existing congregations, congregations received from other denominations, and congregations that were chartered during this period but that have since closed.



**Congregations without Pastors.** As average membership size has shrunk, fewer congregations can afford an installed pastor, relying instead on stated supply pastors, commissioned lay pastors, or other arrangements—including no regular pastoral leadership. By 2010, more than four in ten PC(USA) congregations (4,653, or 44%) had no installed pastor.<sup>3</sup> These congregations are scattered widely, as Figure 4 shows; 1,781 Presbyterian counties (75%) have at least one such congregation.

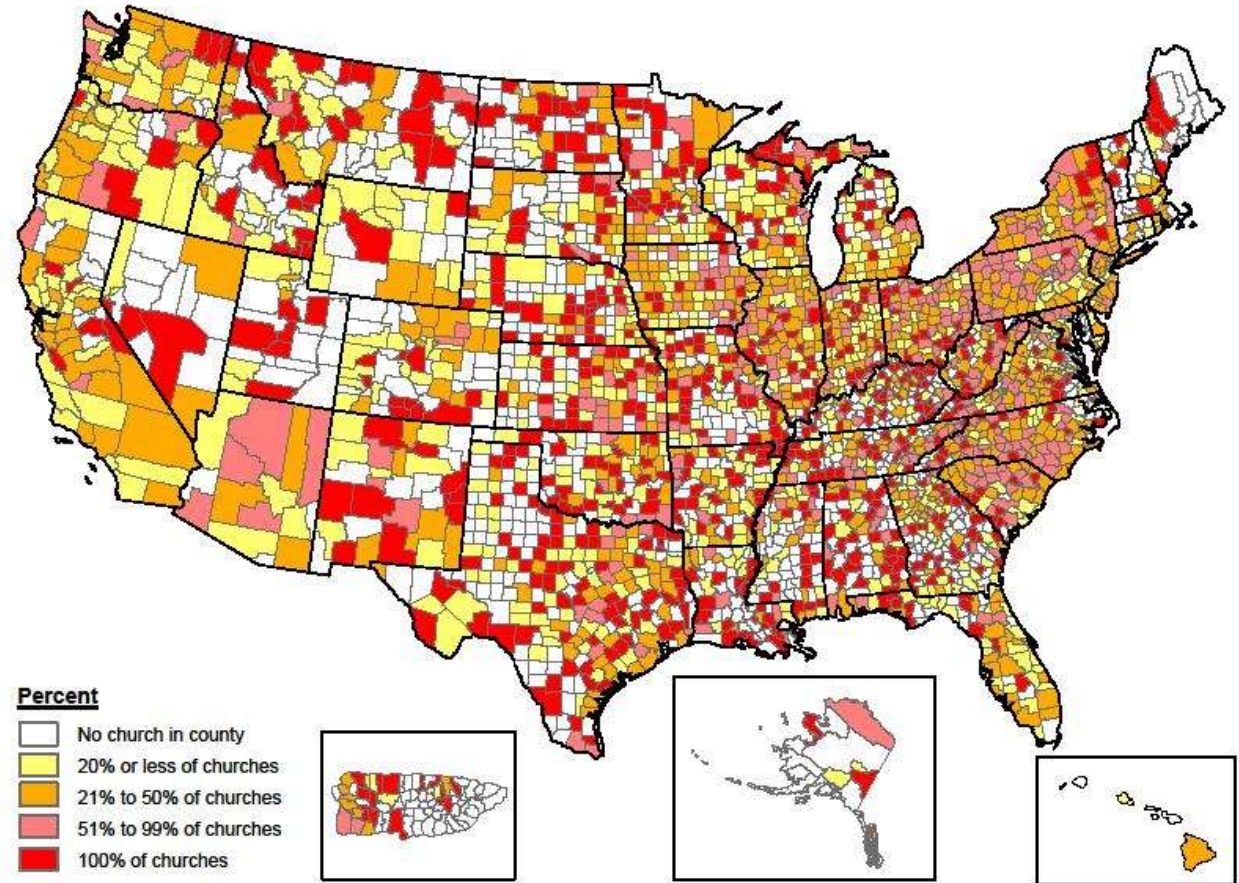
In a number of these counties (668, or 28% of all Presbyterian counties) there are *no* congregations with an installed pastor. These counties are located throughout the country (save Hawaii), but only a few clusters of more than ten adjacent counties occur where all congregations lack installed pastors (e.g., along the Mississippi River in Missouri, Arkansas, and Tennessee). Most PC(USA) counties have one (852; 36%) or two (386; 16%) congregations without installed pastors, though there are 54 (2%) with ten or more congregations without installed pastors, including Allegheny, Pennsylvania, with 47.

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At the same time, 773 (32%) PC(USA) counties have installed pastors in at least 75% of their congregations. This total includes 607 counties (25% of all PC(USA) counties) where *all* congregations have installed pastors. Most of these counties have only one (386) or two (132) such congregations, though 11 have more than five, including Contra Costa, California, where all 15 congregations have installed pastors. More generally, counties where 75% or more of congregations have installed pastors are scattered widely, with occasional small clusters (e.g., Oregon, Wyoming).

In sum, these maps present four major characteristics of the PC(USA): the geographically broad-based drop in membership over time; the fairly even dispersal and locally low concentrations of Presbyterians across the country; the small number and widely scattered placement of new congregations; and the large number and broad spread of congregations without installed pastors. At the same time, they reveal exceptions to each pattern. What makes these locations different? What might the rest of the church learn from them?

**Figure 4: Percent of Churches Without an Installed Pastor, 2010**



<sup>3</sup> An unknown number of these congregations are between pastors, but it is likely relatively small; at this writing there are fewer than 500 openings for installed positions listed on the church's call-search service, some of which (i.e., associate pastor) are for positions in congregations that already have at least one installed pastor.