

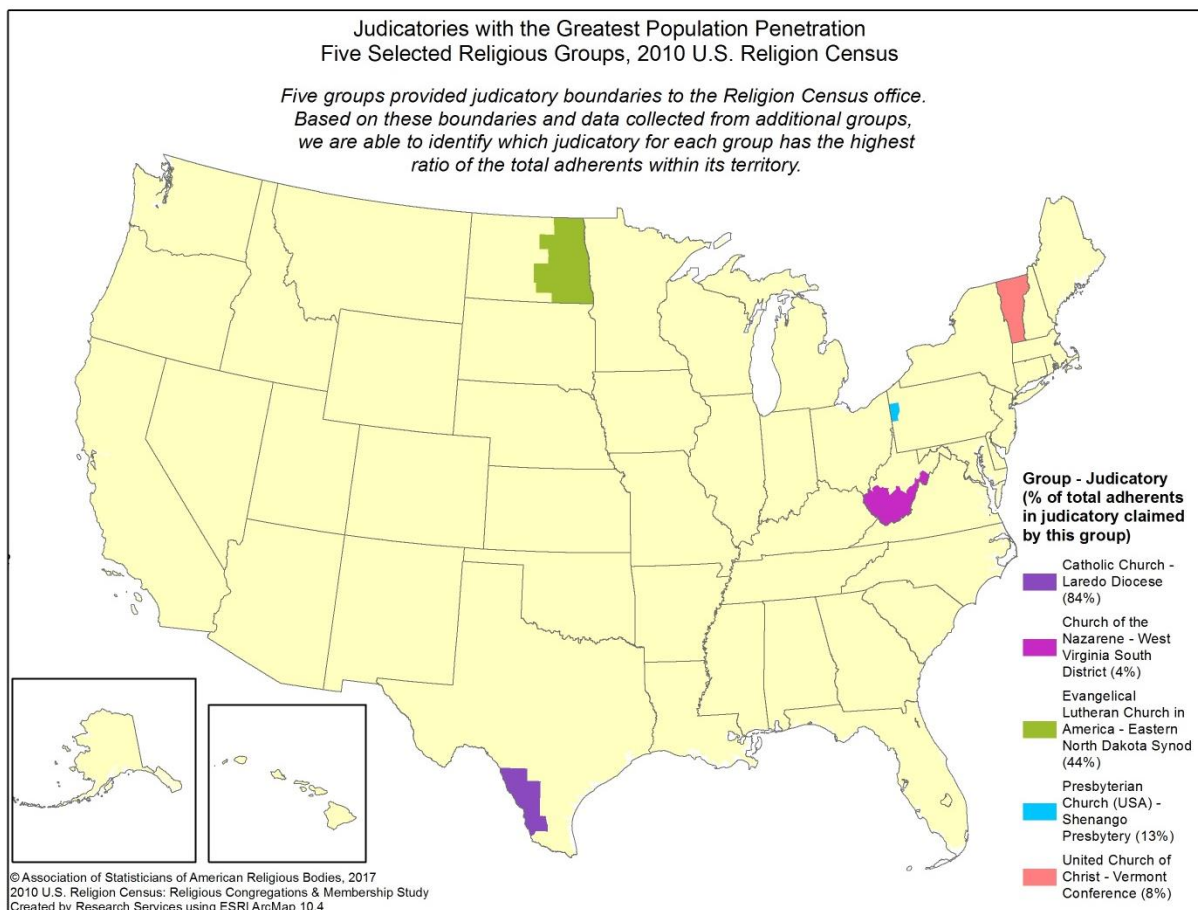
Religion Census Newsletter

July, 2017

Religious Group Judicatory Statistics

A little-used feature of the U.S. Religion Census is the ability to group the data into denominational boundaries. Five groups have provided boundary information to the Religion Census office. Researchers and strategists interested in these five groups can readily obtain comparative information for all 236 participating groups based on the smaller groups' geographies.

For instance, the Catholic Church provided 176 diocesan boundaries. Based on those boundaries, we find that the Catholic Church reports 164,750 adherents* within the Laredo diocese. All the participating groups together reported 196,393 adherents within that same territory. This means that 84% of religious adherents in Laredo diocese are claimed by the Catholic Church. This is the highest ratio for any Catholic diocese in the United States.



Similarly, West Virginia South district of the Church of the Nazarene had the highest ratio of Nazarenes as adherents (4%) among any of their 73 districts. Of 63 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) synods, Eastern North Dakota had the highest ratio (44%). Of 170 Presbyterian Church (USA) presbyteries, Shenango had the highest ratio (13%). And of 37 conferences in the United Church of Christ (UCC), Vermont Conference had the highest ratio of UCC adherents (8%).

Such readily available geographic data is helpful to those studying how a given denomination has impacted certain areas of the country. And within denominational offices, such information can be matched with known historical patterns or demographic statistics. Such studies may reveal additional opportunities or challenges for denominational planners.

But there are additional tools available that may help those in judicatory offices as well.

One of our sister sites, the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA), has built a [report program](#) using U.S. Religion Census data from 1980 through 2010. Many people use the county, state, and metro report system to understand their target area better.

U.S. Congregational Membership: Reports
Maps and Reports > Membership Reports

Data Source: The [2010 Religious Congregations and Membership Study](#). Both the [county](#) and [state](#) collections can be downloaded.

Reports
RCMS DATA

Generate congregational membership reports for any county, state and urban area in the United States using data collected by the Religious Congregations & Membership Study.

Find a Report by Zip Code or City, State:

(eg. Seattle, WA. or 76710)

Browse Reports:

- > Counties
- > Metro Areas
- > States
- > United States
- > **Custom Denominational Reports [What is this?]**

[Try our updated Denominational QuickLists!](#)

However, there is another report geography available as well. Custom Denominational Reports (circled in red at the left) use the judicatory boundaries supplied to the U.S. Religion Census office.

This means that judicatory leaders can pull up reports about their own synod, diocese, presbytery, or district. They can see not only how their own group has done over the past decades, but they can quickly see how well other groups have done in the same territory over the same time period.

Are other Lutheran groups reaching a larger proportion of the population in the ELCA's South Carolina province? Or is another group so strong that Lutherans have difficulty making inroads?

One interesting feature in each of these reports is the inclusion of the "unclaimed" figure. Nationally, about half the population is not claimed by any of the 236 participating groups. But for the Church of the Nazarene, that ratio varies from 31% on their Intermountain district to 72% in Maine. These ratios may help to indicate the amount of receptivity or resistance to outreach efforts within specific areas.

The U.S. Religion Census office works closely with the ARDA. Any group interested in having its denominational geography available on-line is invited to work through the [U.S. Religion Census office](#).

As we gear up for the 2020 Religion Census, we will alert participants about this option for their group. Of course, some groups do not have geographic divisions, and others are aligned by state. But for those with fairly clear non-state geographies, our offices are ready to work on setting up such reports even now.

**Adherents: Every participating group is asked to provide an actual count or an estimate of the number of people associated with each local congregation. This number is termed "adherents." Ideally, adherents include all regular participants and/or all those regarding that congregation as their spiritual home. This is done because religious traditions differ in whether they would include children and regular worshippers in their normal membership counts; and some traditions do not even have a membership category.*

For specific adherent definitions for a particular group, see [Appendix A](#) on our [Methods](#) web page. For the general definition used when a group didn't have a specific adherent figure, see page xvi of the [introductory material](#).

Every decade the US Religion Census tries to include additional religious groups, making the US Religion Census increasingly accurate. The 236 groups that took part in 2010 are listed [online](#). If you know of other faith groups that would like to participate and be included in this census effort, please [send us](#) the group's contact information or contact person.

Meanwhile, over 5,000 people visited our website in June. Several have let us know how valuable this resource is, and how they are looking forward to the 2020 update. Naturally, we hope to include information from your group in the 2020 counts.



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Published by the [Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies](#), sponsor of the U.S. Religion Census

This newsletter is intended for the following audiences:

Groups that participated in the 2010 Religion Census. *The newsletter is sent to the latest contact we have for the supplier of the statistics.*

Groups that are eligible to participate in the upcoming 2020 Religion Census. *The newsletter is sent to the latest contact we have for the supplier of the statistics.*

Members of the sponsoring agency for the Religion Census, the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies.

Those who requested to receive the newsletter through our website.