

# Appendix J / Non-denominational Christian Churches

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### Non-denominational Christian Churches

Over the past several years, the primary researcher has been collecting nondenominational church lists found on the Internet. To this list were added eight additional listings of non-denominational congregations, house churches, megachurches, and independent networks of churches that were collected on the web and privately during 2009/10. Additionally three purchased mailing lists of independent and non-denominational Christian congregations were added to the database. After all these lists were merged together, the database was then screened for duplicates, incorrect entries, and non church listings.

Following this effort, a team of 6 temporary staff persons spent over 1,000 hours culling the web to attempt to verify the status of these congregations. Every church in the database was looked up on Google and in the online Yellow Pages to confirm if it existed and if it was independent/non-denominational. Every church was also emailed and/or called in order to confirm further their independent/non-denominational status, their membership and their attendance. Additionally, one of the staff members spoke Spanish and established contact with the obviously Hispanic/Latino churches in the listing. Approximately 30% responded to the request and verified their information. While engaged in this research, the staff found additional church lists from the websites of newspapers, towns and counties that added new independent and non-denominational churches. They then attempted to confirm the information on these churches using the above method.

The end result was a database that contained over 50,000 potential entries. Over 15,000 were removed due to uncertainty about their existence, size, non-denominational status or being a part of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship or Calvary Chapel Networks (which are listed separately in the U.S. Religion Census). The resulting 35,496 congregations are the best estimate of the independent and non-denominational churches in the U.S.

Even given these efforts, the primary researcher is certain that the current listing is not entirely accurate. The independent status or exact size of many churches could not be confirmed. Additionally, we found that when we checked several cities approximately 9 months later, quite a few of the previously confirmed congregations had already closed. Non-denominational and independent congregations are a very fluid grouping of churches. Additionally some of the non-denominational churches listed might be affiliated with a denomination but did not indicate it on their website, in their published material or even after we contacted them.

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