

Research Report

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*Comparison of Changes in Population,
Southern Baptist Churches and
Resident Members by Region
and State, 1990 to 1997*

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Executive Summary

One measure of effectiveness of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) church planting and evangelism is the comparison of changes in churches and resident membership over time to changes in population. The text, tables, maps, and charts in this report provide such a measurement from 1990 to 1997. Highlights are bulleted below. All information is for the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Population

- ▲ The U.S. population grew 7.6 percent to 268 million, a net gain of 19 million from 1990 to 1997.
- ▲ The South and West led in growth (8.7 and 6.6 million) as well as rate of growth (10.2 and 12.5 percent). See footnote 1 on page 1 for the definition of census regions and divisions.
- ▲ The top 20 states in rate of population growth were all in the South or West regions.
- ▲ 4 states gained more than 1 million people—California (2.5), Texas (2.5), Florida (1.7), and Georgia (1.0)—accounting for 40 percent of the nation's numeric population growth.
- ▲ Arizona, Georgia, Texas, and Washington ranked in the top 10 states in both numeric and percentage growth in population.

Churches

- ▲ SBC churches numbered 40,811 in 1997, an increase of 2,783 or 7.3 percent.
- ▲ 80 percent of churches and 65 percent of the net gain in churches were in the South.
- ▲ Texas, California, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina each netted a gain of 100 or more churches since 1990.
- ▲ California, Maryland, and Pennsylvania ranked in the top 15 states in both numeric and percentage growth in churches.

Population per Church

- ▲ During the 1990s, the growth rate of churches has not quite kept pace with the growth rate of population. Hence, the ratio of population per church was slightly higher (6,558) in 1997 than in 1990.
- ▲ The ratio of persons to churches differs drastically by geographic area. The ratio is under 3,000 in the South and over 80,000 in the Northeast.
- ▲ The District of Columbia and 29 states realized improvement in their population per church ratio from 1990 to 1997—indicating churches grew more rapidly than population.

Resident Membership

- ▲ There were almost 11 million SBC resident members in 1997, an increase of 391,000 or 3.7 percent.
- ▲ Growth in membership failed to keep pace with growth of churches (7.3%) and population (7.6%).
- ▲ Both Mountain and New England states experienced significant declines in membership (-5.7% and -18.7%) while posting substantial gains in the number of churches (+21.3% and +31.3%). This is a puzzling result.
- ▲ The District of Columbia, Florida, and Pennsylvania ranked in the top 15 states in both numeric and percentage growth in resident membership.

Population per Resident Member

- ▲ During the 1990s, the growth rate of resident membership lagged drastically behind population growth, resulting in the ratio of population per resident member worsening to 24.4 in 1997.
- ▲ Population per member also varies greatly by region, ranging from 10 in the South to 875 in the Northeast.
- ▲ Only 13 states improved their population per member ratio from 1990 to 1997 (indicating membership growth rate exceeded population growth rate), compared to 30 states that improved their population per church ratio.

Conclusions and Implications

- ▲ Southern Baptists lost “market share” of the population between 1990 and 1997.
- ▲ Early summary statistics from the 1998 Annual Church Profile indicate losses in both churches and membership from 1997 to 1998.
- ▲ Although individual church data for 1998 is not yet available, the early summary data indicate that the overall trends of this report have worsened again.
- ▲ The church planting and evangelism goals set by the North American Mission Board are indeed God-size goals and will not be attained by “business as usual.”

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Introduction

This report examines population and population changes in the United States and compares them to the changes in Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) churches and resident membership for the years 1990 and 1997. This information is examined at the national level, by the four census regions of the country, by the nine census divisions, and by states.¹

The sources of information are estimates of the population provided by the Bureau of the Census and counts of churches and resident members as enumerated through the Annual Church Profile process administered Convention-wide by LifeWay Christian Resources. In order to make data from the two sources comparable, Southern Baptist data is summarized by geographical state and not state convention. Furthermore only churches physically located in the United States are included, i.e., churches located in Canada or the U.S. Territories, are not included.² Although church-type missions are not included in the counts of churches, members of church-type missions are included in resident membership counts.

The information in this report is organized into five sections—population, churches, population per church, resident membership, and population per resident member. Each section of the report contains introductory text, tables, maps, and bar charts. The text provides highlights of that section's material. The first table in each section looks at the regional differences in data for that topic. The other two tables are at the state level—one providing raw data and the other providing state rankings for the various items. The maps and charts provide thematic views by state and state rankings, respectively.

¹ The four census regions of the United States—South, West, Northeast, and Midwest—are subdivided into census divisions. The South region is divided into the South Atlantic, the East South Central and West South Central divisions. The states in the South Atlantic division are Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. The states in the East South Central division are Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee. The states in the West South Central division are Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and Texas. The West region is divided into the Pacific and Mountain divisions. The states of the Pacific division are Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, and Washington. The states of the Mountain division are Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. The Northeast region is divided into the New England and Middle Atlantic divisions. The states of the New England division are Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The states of the Middle Atlantic division are New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. The Midwest region is further divided into the East North Central division and the West North Central division. The states in the East North Central division are Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. The states of the West North Central division are Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

² The 1997 population estimate for Canada is 30,004,000. Based on 1997 counts, there are 86 churches and 51 missions physically located in Canada. Based on this information the population per church is 349,000 while the population per congregation is 219,000.

Population

The Nation

As of July 1, 1997 there are an estimated 268 million people living in the United States. This is 19 million more people than were counted in the 1990 census—a 7.6 percent increase during the 1990s. (See table 1.) The bulk of the nation's growth, about 70 percent, is attributable to natural increase, i.e., births minus deaths. The other 30 percent is the result of net migration, i.e., the influx of persons into the country minus those leaving.³

Regions

The nation is divided into four census regions. The South is the largest with more than 94 million residents, or 1 of every 3 people living in the U.S. The Midwest is the second largest region with 62.5 million people, followed by the West with 59.4 million, and the Northeast with 51.6 million. (See table 1.)

The South has experienced the largest net increase from 1990 to 1997—8.7 million people. The growth of the South accounted for 46.3 percent of the nation's net population gain during the 1990s. Even though only the third largest region, the West had the second largest increase of population—6.6 million people. The Midwest has increased less than 3 million this decade while the Northeast has increased less than a million people.

The rate of growth for the South during this decade is 10.2 percent. However, the South is not the fastest growing region. That distinction belongs to the West which grew by 12.5 percent. Because of its growth, the West is likely to become the nation's second largest region during the next decade. Within the West region, the Mountain division grew by 20.7 percent, almost double that of any other division. In contrast, the slowest growing region of the country was the Northeast with a 1.5 percent increase. The Midwest fell in the middle with a 4.7 percent increase.

States

The most populous states in 1997 are:

	(millions)
California	32.3
Texas	19.4
New York	18.1
Florida	14.7
Pennsylvania	12.0

Texas replaced New York as the second largest state during the 1990s. (See table 3, which shows the rank of each state in relation to all other states for a particular

³ Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.

variable. For example, Texas was the 3rd largest state in 1990 but by 1997 was the 2nd largest state. From 1990 to 1997 it had the 2nd largest increase of population among the states and the 8th largest percentage increase in population.)

The five states with the largest net gain in population from 1990 to 1997 are:

	(millions)
California	2.5
Texas	2.5
Florida	1.7
Georgia	1.0
Arizona	0.9

All of the top ten states in population gain were either Southern or Western states. (See figures 3 and 4.) In the South, Texas and Florida account for almost half the growth experienced this decade, while California accounts for over a third of the growth experienced in the West. Together, California, Texas, and Florida account for over a third of the nation's population growth during the 1990s—35.2 percent.

Only Rhode Island, Connecticut, and the District of Columbia lost population during the 1990s.

The top five states in percentage increase in population are:

Nevada	39.5%
Arizona	24.3
Idaho	20.2
Utah	19.5
Colorado	18.2

All of these states are part of the rapidly growing Mountain division of the western region of the U.S. (See figures 5 and 6.) Furthermore, all of the states ranked in the top 20 fastest growing states are in the South or the West. Particularly noteworthy in figure 5 is the contiguous line of states ranging from Texas to Washington that are among the fastest growing in the country.

Given their large sizes, the population growth rates of Texas, Florida, and Georgia are notable. Texas, the second largest state, was among the ten fastest growing with a 14.4 percent population growth. Florida was the 11th and Georgia was the 6th fastest growing state. During the 1990s, Georgia grew to be one of the ten most populous states in the nation.

So far this decade, Washington D.C. has lost 12.8 percent of its population. When numbered among the states, it has dropped from 48th in population to 51st during the decade.

Table 1
Population by Region, 1990 to 1997

	—Population—		—Change—	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
United States	248,765,170	267,636,061	18,870,891	7.6 %
Northeast	50,828,313	51,588,281	759,968	1.5
New England	13,206,943	13,378,545	171,602	1.3
Middle Atlantic	37,621,370	38,209,736	588,366	1.6
Midwest	59,669,135	62,460,453	2,791,318	4.7
East North Central	42,008,929	43,889,857	1,880,928	4.5
West North Central	17,660,206	18,570,596	910,390	5.2
South	85,455,793	94,187,161	8,731,368	10.2
South Atlantic	43,571,473	48,230,168	4,658,695	10.7
East South Central	15,179,959	16,325,977	1,146,018	7.5
West South Central	26,704,361	29,631,016	2,926,655	11.0
West	52,811,929	59,400,166	6,588,237	12.5
Mountain	13,658,794	16,482,103	2,823,309	20.7
Pacific	39,153,135	42,918,063	3,764,928	9.6

Source: Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Table 2
Population by State, 1990 to 1997

	—Population—		—Change—	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
United States	248,765,170	267,636,061	18,870,891	7.6 %
Alabama	4,040,389	4,319,154	278,765	6.9
Alaska	550,043	609,311	59,268	10.8
Arizona	3,665,339	4,554,966	889,627	24.3
Arkansas	2,350,624	2,522,819	172,195	7.3
California	29,785,857	32,268,301	2,482,444	8.3
Colorado	3,294,473	3,892,644	598,171	18.2
Connecticut	3,287,116	3,269,858	-17,258	-0.5
Delaware	666,168	731,581	65,413	9.8
District of Columbia	606,900	528,964	-77,936	-12.8
Florida	12,938,071	14,653,945	1,715,874	13.3
Georgia	6,478,149	7,486,242	1,008,093	15.6
Hawaii	1,108,229	1,186,602	78,373	7.1
Idaho	1,006,734	1,210,232	203,498	20.2
Illinois	11,430,602	11,895,849	465,247	4.1
Indiana	5,544,156	5,864,108	319,952	5.8
Iowa	2,776,831	2,852,423	75,592	2.7
Kansas	2,477,588	2,594,840	117,252	4.7
Kentucky	3,686,892	3,908,124	221,232	6.0
Louisiana	4,221,826	4,351,769	129,943	3.1
Maine	1,227,928	1,242,051	14,123	1.2
Maryland	4,780,753	5,094,289	313,536	6.6
Massachusetts	6,016,425	6,117,520	101,095	1.7
Michigan	9,295,287	9,773,892	478,605	5.1
Minnesota	4,375,665	4,685,549	309,884	7.1
Mississippi	2,575,475	2,730,501	155,026	6.0
Missouri	5,116,901	5,402,058	285,157	5.6
Montana	799,065	878,810	79,745	10.0
Nebraska	1,578,417	1,656,870	78,453	5.0
Nevada	1,201,675	1,676,809	475,134	39.5
New Hampshire	1,109,252	1,172,709	63,457	5.7
New Jersey	7,747,750	8,052,849	305,099	3.9
New Mexico	1,515,069	1,729,751	214,682	14.2
New York	17,990,778	18,137,226	146,448	0.8
North Carolina	6,632,448	7,425,183	792,735	12.0
North Dakota	638,800	640,883	2,083	0.3

Table 2 (continued)

	Population		Change	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
Ohio	10,847,115	11,186,331	339,216	3.1 %
Oklahoma	3,145,576	3,317,091	171,515	5.5
Oregon	2,842,337	3,243,487	401,150	14.1
Pennsylvania	11,882,842	12,019,661	136,819	1.2
Rhode Island	1,003,464	987,429	-16,035	-1.6
South Carolina	3,486,310	3,760,181	273,871	7.9
South Dakota	696,004	737,973	41,969	6.0
Tennessee	4,877,203	5,368,198	490,995	10.1
Texas	16,986,335	19,439,337	2,453,002	14.4
Utah	1,722,850	2,059,148	336,298	19.5
Vermont	562,758	588,978	26,220	4.7
Virginia	6,189,197	6,733,996	544,799	8.8
Washington	4,866,669	5,610,362	743,693	15.3
West Virginia	1,793,477	1,815,787	22,310	1.2
Wisconsin	4,891,769	5,169,677	277,908	5.7
Wyoming	453,589	479,743	26,154	5.8

Source: Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Table 3
Rankings of Population and Change by State, 1990 to 1997

	Population Rank		Change Rank	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
Alabama	22	23	22	23
Alaska	50	48	42	13
Arizona	24	21	5	2
Arkansas	33	33	28	20
California	1	1	1	18
Colorado	26	25	8	5
Connecticut	27	28	50	49
Delaware	46	46	40	16
District of Columbia	48	50	51	51
Florida	4	4	3	11
Georgia	11	10	4	6
Hawaii	41	41	38	22
Idaho	42	40	27	3
Illinois	6	6	13	38
Indiana	14	14	17	28
Iowa	30	30	39	42
Kansas	32	32	34	36
Kentucky	23	24	25	27
Louisiana	21	22	33	41
Maine	38	39	47	46
Maryland	19	19	18	24
Massachusetts	13	13	35	43
Michigan	8	8	11	34
Minnesota	20	20	19	21
Mississippi	31	31	30	26
Missouri	15	16	21	32
Montana	44	44	36	15
Nebraska	36	38	37	35
Nevada	39	37	12	1
New Hampshire	40	42	41	30
New Jersey	9	9	20	39
New Mexico	37	36	26	9
New York	2	3	31	47
North Carolina	10	11	6	12
North Dakota	47	47	48	48

Table 3 (continued)

	Population Rank		Change Rank	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
Ohio	7	7	15	40
Oklahoma	28	27	29	33
Oregon	29	29	14	10
Pennsylvania	5	5	32	45
Rhode Island	43	43	49	50
South Carolina	25	26	24	19
South Dakota	45	45	43	25
Tennessee	17	17	10	14
Texas	3	2	2	8
Utah	35	34	16	4
Vermont	49	49	44	37
Virginia	12	12	9	17
Washington	18	15	7	7
West Virginia	34	35	46	44
Wisconsin	16	18	23	31
Wyoming	51	51	45	29

Source: Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Figure 2
States Sorted by Population, 1997

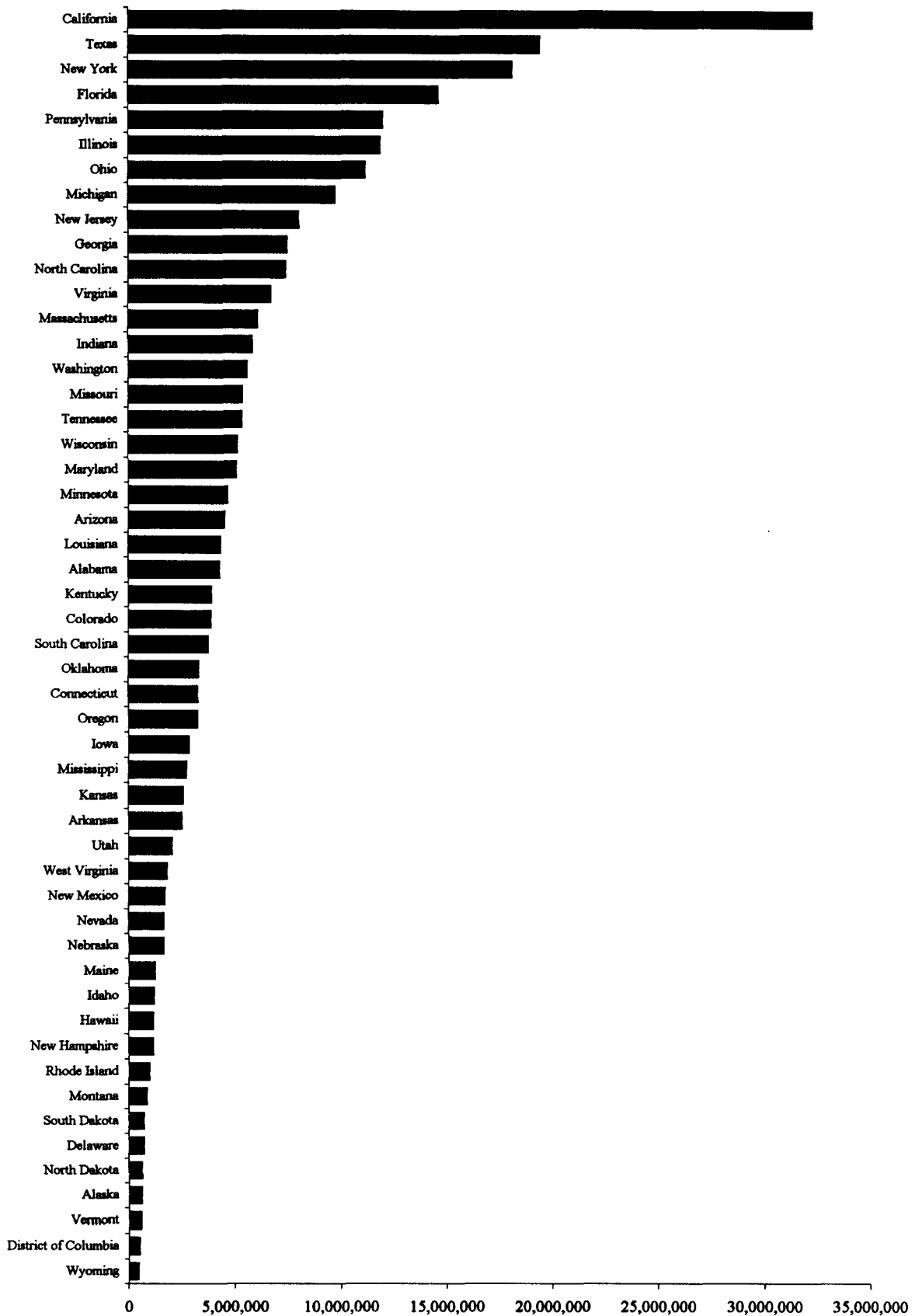


Figure 4
States Sorted by Net Population Change, 1990 to 1997

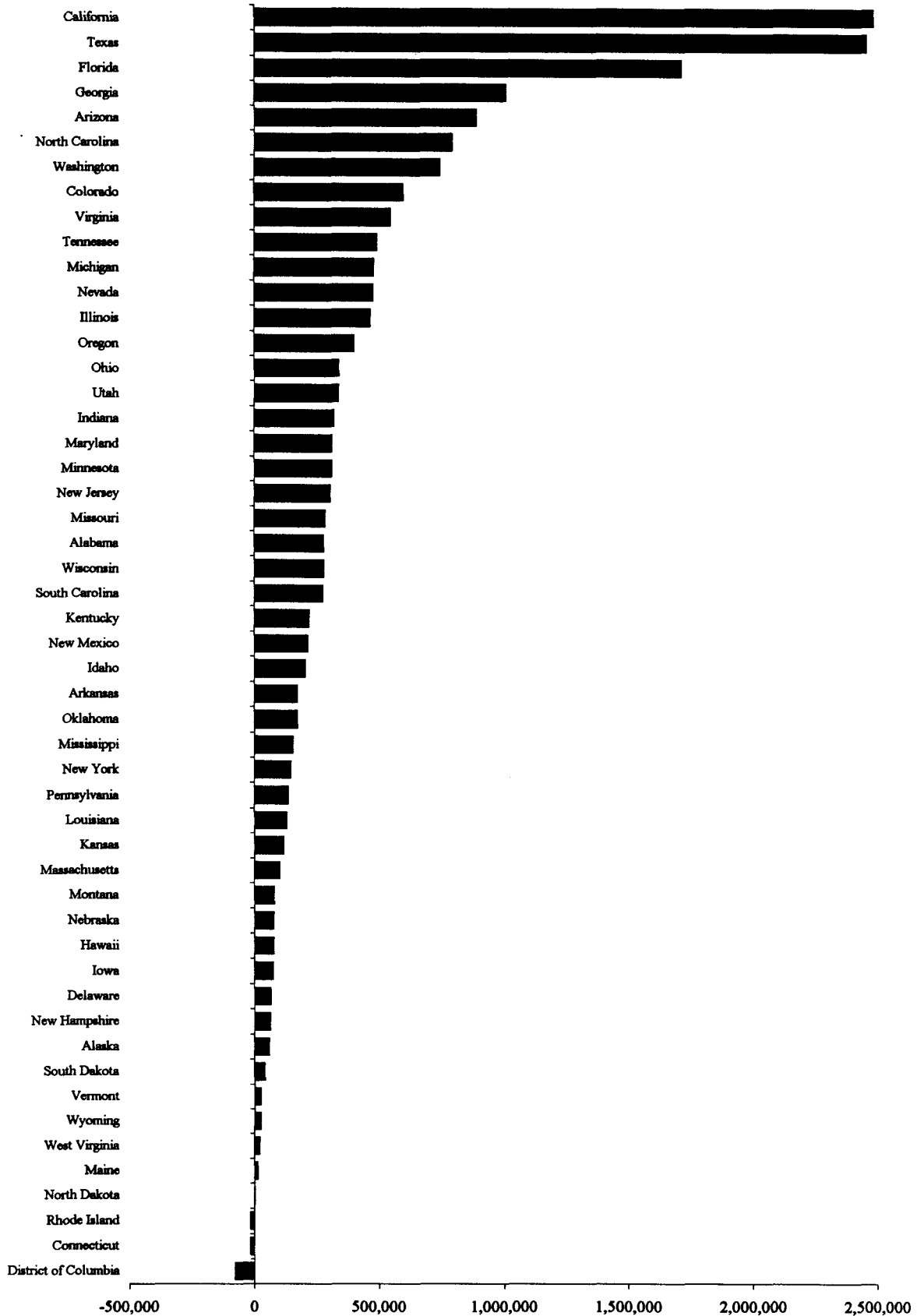
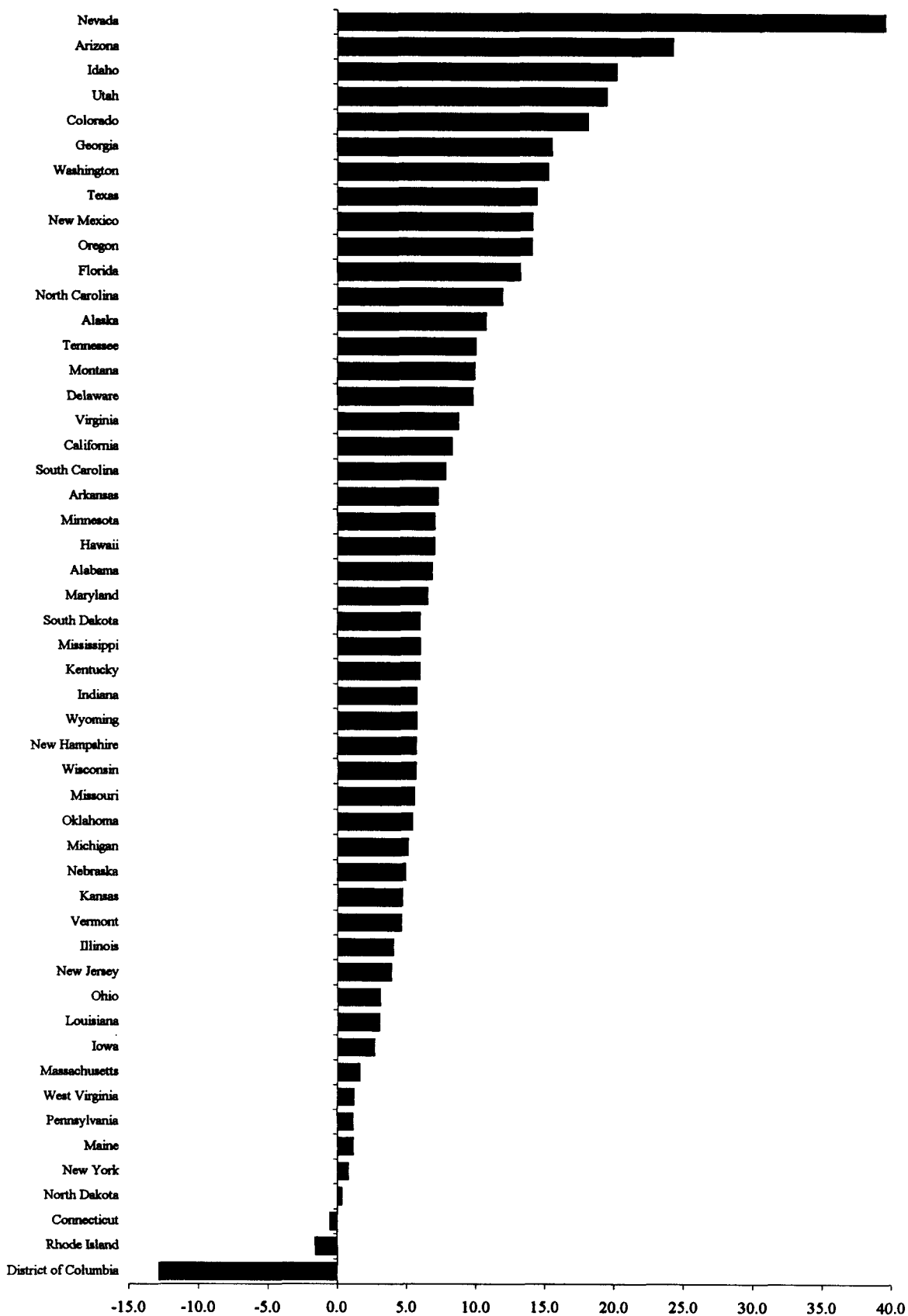


Figure 6
States Sorted by Percent Population Change, 1990 to 1997



Churches

The Nation

Based on 1997 Annual Church Profile information, there are 40,811 constituted Southern Baptist churches physically located in the United States. This is an increase of 2,783 churches since 1990—a 7.3 percent increase, which is slower than the previously noted population growth of 7.6 percent. (See table 4.)

Regions

Even though the Southern Baptist Convention is national in scope, 4 of 5 SBC churches (79.6%) are still located in the South. In percentage distribution of SBC churches, the Midwest is the second largest region (11.2%), followed by the West (7.6%) and the Northeast (1.6%). (See table 4.)

The bulk of the increase in churches during the 1990s occurred in the South—almost two-thirds of the national increase (65.0%). The West registered the second largest net gain, followed by the Midwest and then the Northeast.

Even though the Northeast had the smallest net increase of churches, it experienced the highest rate of increase. Overall, the Northeast increased its number of SBC churches by 45.5 percent during the 1990s. SBC churches in the West increased by 19.2 percent, in the Midwest by 6.4 percent, and in the South by 5.9 percent.

States

The top five states in number of churches are:

Texas	4,839
North Carolina	3,622
Georgia	3,196
Alabama	3,140
Tennessee	2,894

While these are all Southern states, at the other end of the spectrum, the five states with the fewest number of churches are in the Northeast. (See table 5 and figures 7 and 8.)

The top five states in the net increase of SBC churches during the 1990s are:

Texas	542
California	276
Florida	256
Georgia	141
South Carolina	100

Particularly notable is the increase of churches in California, moving that state past Arkansas during the 1990s to become the 14th largest state in SBC churches. (See table 6.) Florida also registered a substantial increase and has moved past

Missouri and South Carolina to become the 8th largest state in Convention churches. Georgia moved past Alabama to become 3rd in number of churches.

The top five states in percentage increase in SBC churches during the 1990s are:

Pennsylvania	69.4%
New Jersey	64.6
North Dakota	61.1
Rhode Island	60.0
District of Columbia	58.6

Table 4
Churches by Region, 1990 to 1997

	—Churches—		—Change—	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
United States	38,028	40,811	2,783	7.3 %
Northeast	440	640	200	45.5
New England	112	147	35	31.3
Middle Atlantic	328	493	165	50.3
Midwest	4,297	4,571	274	6.4
East North Central	2,033	2,175	142	7.0
West North Central	2,264	2,396	132	5.8
South	30,690	32,499	1,809	5.9
South Atlantic	12,138	12,937	799	6.6
East South Central	10,121	10,403	282	2.8
West South Central	8,431	9,159	728	8.6
West	2,601	3,101	500	19.2
Mountain	1,057	1,228	171	16.2
Pacific	1,544	1,873	329	21.3

Source: Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Table 5
Churches by State, 1990 to 1997

	—Churches—		—Change—	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
United States	38,028	40,811	2,783	7.3 %
Alabama	3,070	3,140	70	2.3
Alaska	60	66	6	10.0
Arizona	270	307	37	13.7
Arkansas	1,290	1,348	58	4.5
California	1,119	1,395	276	24.7
Colorado	192	233	41	21.4
Connecticut	28	32	4	14.3
Delaware	13	16	3	23.1
District of Columbia	29	46	17	58.6
Florida	1,758	2,014	256	14.6
Georgia	3,055	3,196	141	4.6
Hawaii	57	65	8	14.0
Idaho	54	63	9	16.7
Illinois	917	957	40	4.4
Indiana	308	359	51	16.6
Iowa	62	79	17	27.4
Kansas	219	255	36	16.4
Kentucky	2,266	2,326	60	2.6
Louisiana	1,351	1,400	49	3.6
Maine	10	14	4	40.0
Maryland	308	399	91	29.5
Massachusetts	46	65	19	41.3
Michigan	238	269	31	13.0
Minnesota	32	45	13	40.6
Mississippi	1,980	2,043	63	3.2
Missouri	1,851	1,893	42	2.3
Montana	77	100	23	29.9
Nebraska	37	49	12	32.4
Nevada	74	97	23	31.1
New Hampshire	10	12	2	20.0
New Jersey	48	79	31	64.6
New Mexico	271	288	17	6.3
New York	159	209	50	31.4
North Carolina	3,534	3,622	88	2.5
North Dakota	18	29	11	61.1

Table 5 (continued)

	—Churches—		—Change—	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
Ohio	512	529	17	3.3 %
Oklahoma	1,493	1,572	79	5.3
Oregon	120	126	6	5.0
Pennsylvania	121	205	84	69.4
Rhode Island	5	8	3	60.0
South Carolina	1,789	1,889	100	5.6
South Dakota	45	46	1	2.2
Tennessee	2,805	2,894	89	3.2
Texas	4,297	4,839	542	12.6
Utah	52	60	8	15.4
Vermont	13	16	3	23.1
Virginia	1,517	1,590	73	4.8
Washington	188	221	33	17.6
West Virginia	135	165	30	22.2
Wisconsin	58	61	3	5.2
Wyoming	67	80	13	19.4

Source: Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Table 6
Rankings of Churches by State, 1990 to 1997

	Church Rank		Change Rank	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
Alabama	3	4	12	49
Alaska	34	35	42	33
Arizona	21	20	22	30
Arkansas	14	15	15	41
California	15	14	2	15
Colorado	24	24	20	19
Connecticut	45	45	44	28
Delaware	47	47	46	16
District of Columbia	44	42	31	5
Florida	10	8	3	27
Georgia	4	3	4	40
Hawaii	36	36	40	29
Idaho	37	38	39	23
Illinois	16	16	21	42
Indiana	18	19	16	24
Iowa	33	33	31	14
Kansas	23	23	23	25
Kentucky	6	6	14	47
Louisiana	13	13	18	43
Maine	49	49	44	8
Maryland	18	18	6	13
Massachusetts	40	36	30	6
Michigan	22	22	25	31
Minnesota	43	44	35	7
Mississippi	7	7	13	45
Missouri	8	9	19	50
Montana	30	30	28	12
Nebraska	42	41	37	9
Nevada	31	31	28	11
New Hampshire	49	50	50	20
New Jersey	39	33	25	2
New Mexico	20	21	31	34
New York	26	26	17	10
North Carolina	2	2	8	48
North Dakota	46	46	38	3

Table 6 (continued)

	Church Rank		Change Rank	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
Ohio	17	17	31	44
Oklahoma	12	12	10	36
Oregon	29	29	42	38
Pennsylvania	28	27	9	1
Rhode Island	51	51	46	4
South Carolina	9	10	5	35
South Dakota	41	42	51	51
Tennessee	5	5	7	46
Texas	1	1	1	32
Utah	38	40	40	26
Vermont	47	47	46	16
Virginia	11	11	11	39
Washington	25	25	24	22
West Virginia	27	28	27	18
Wisconsin	35	39	46	37
Wyoming	32	32	35	21

Source: Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

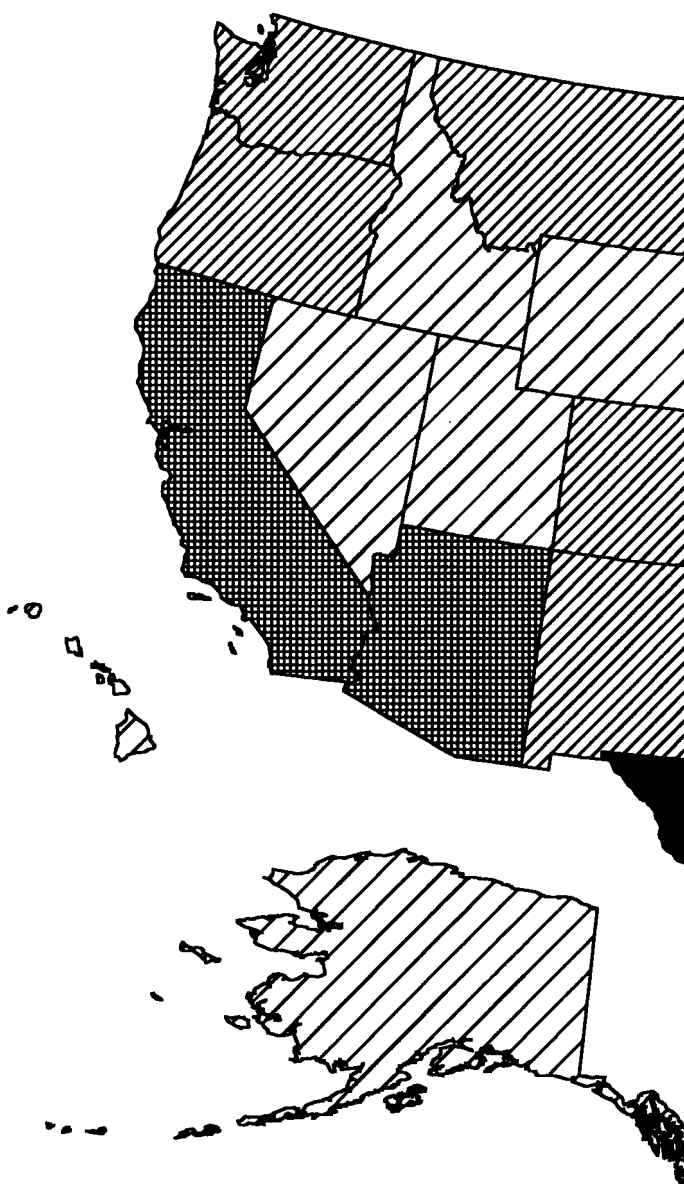


Figure 7
Churches, 1997

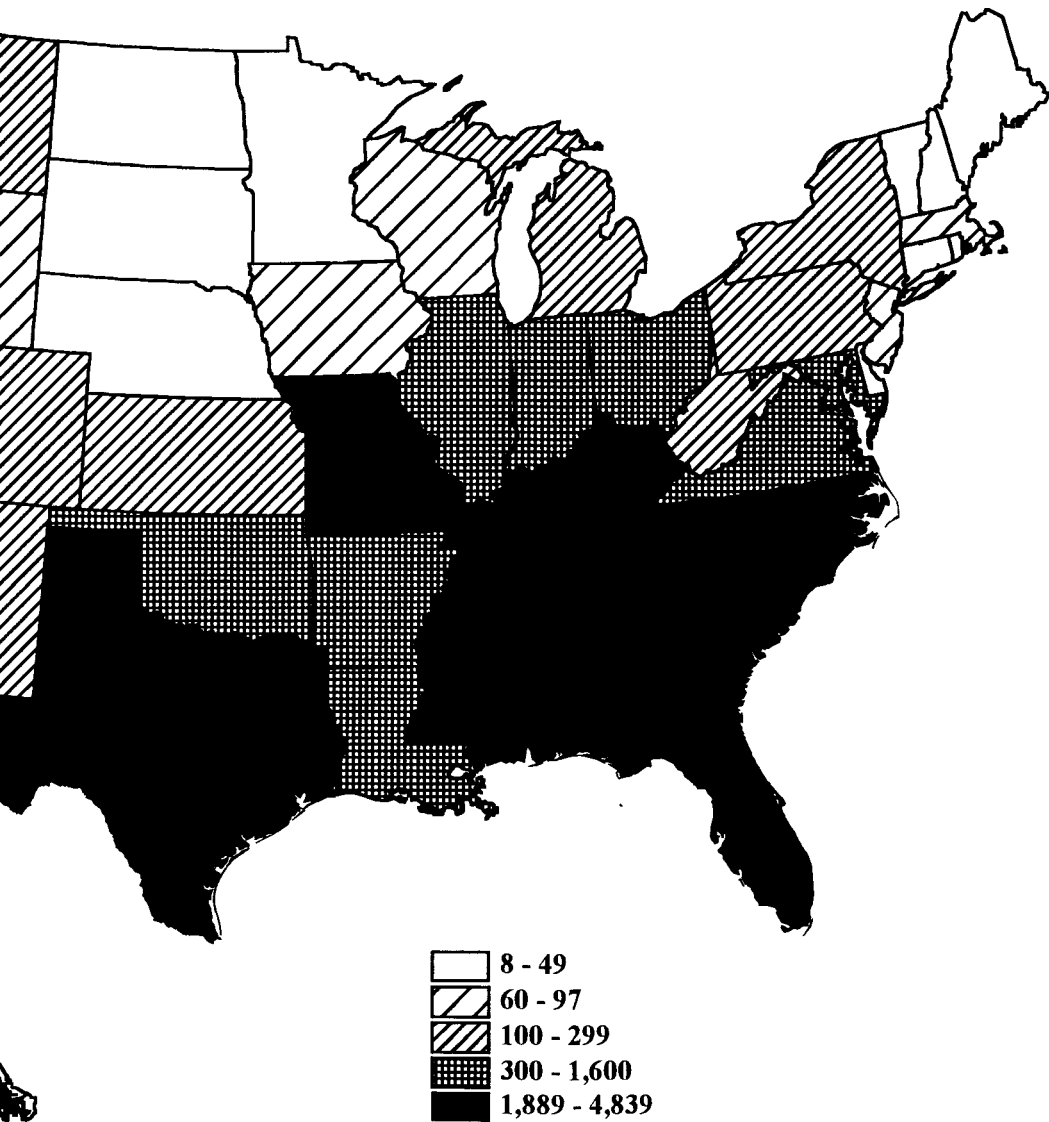


Figure 8
States Sorted by Number of Churches, 1997

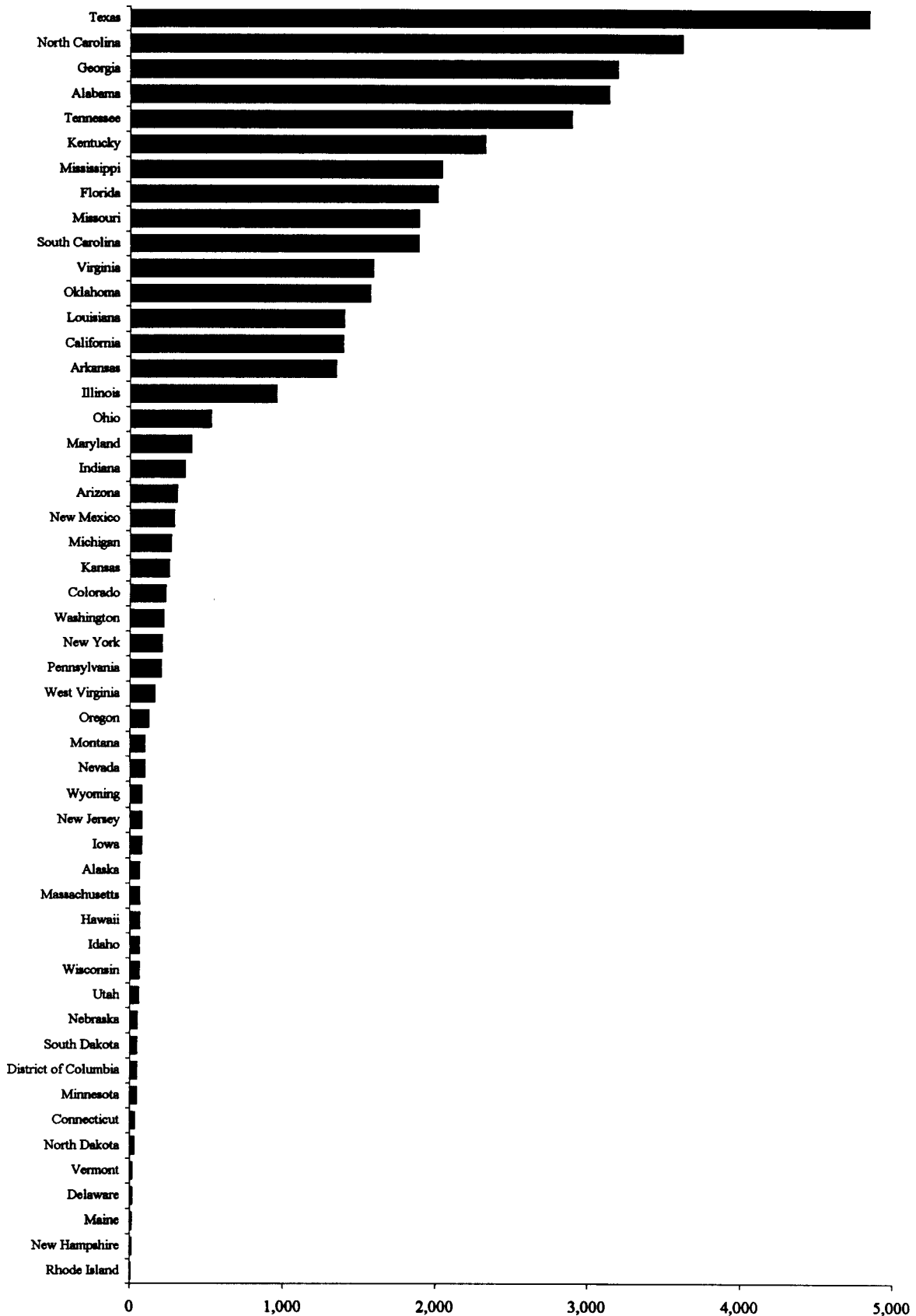


Figure 9
Net Change in Churches, 1990 to 1997

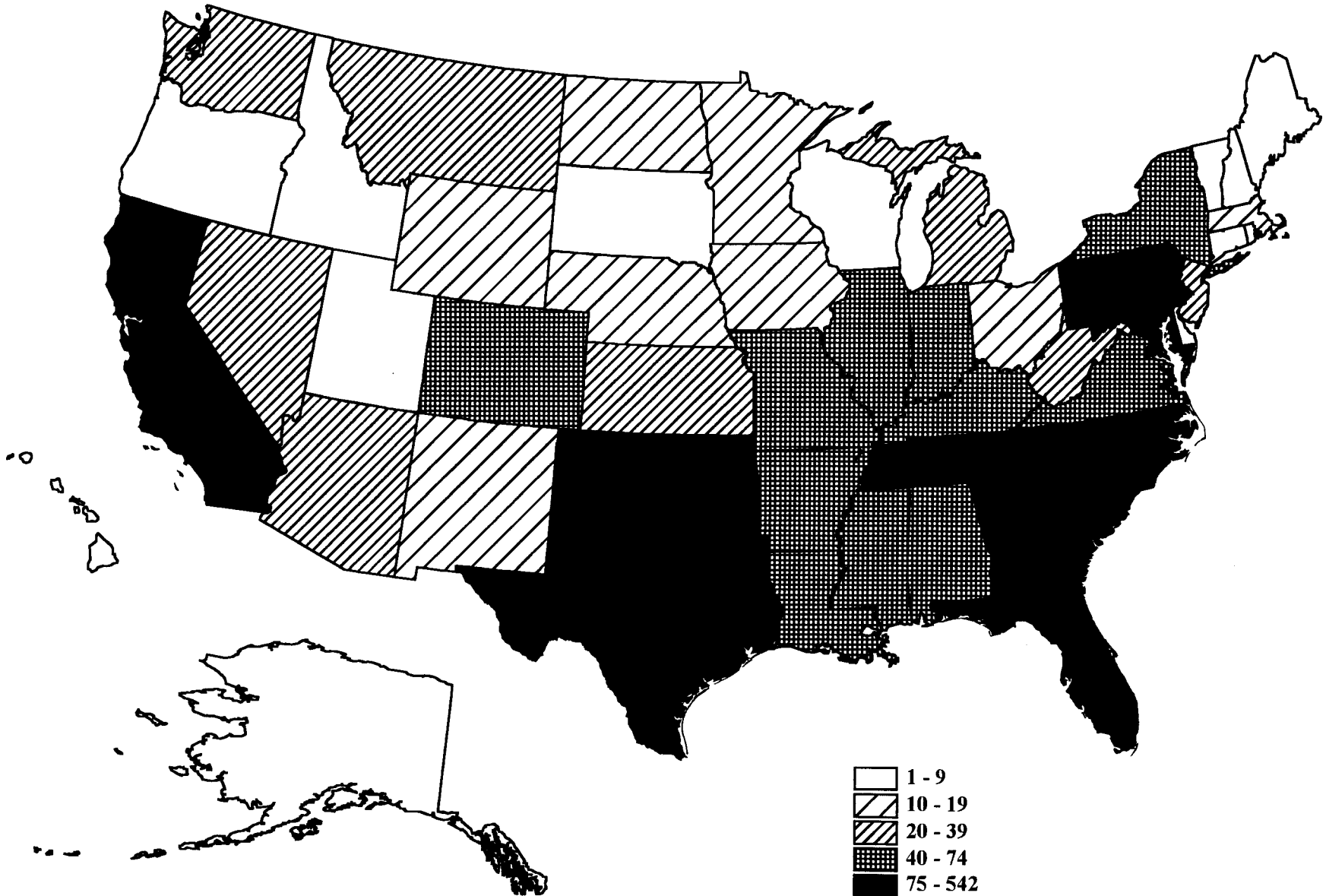


Figure 10
States Sorted by Net Change in Churches, 1990 to 1997

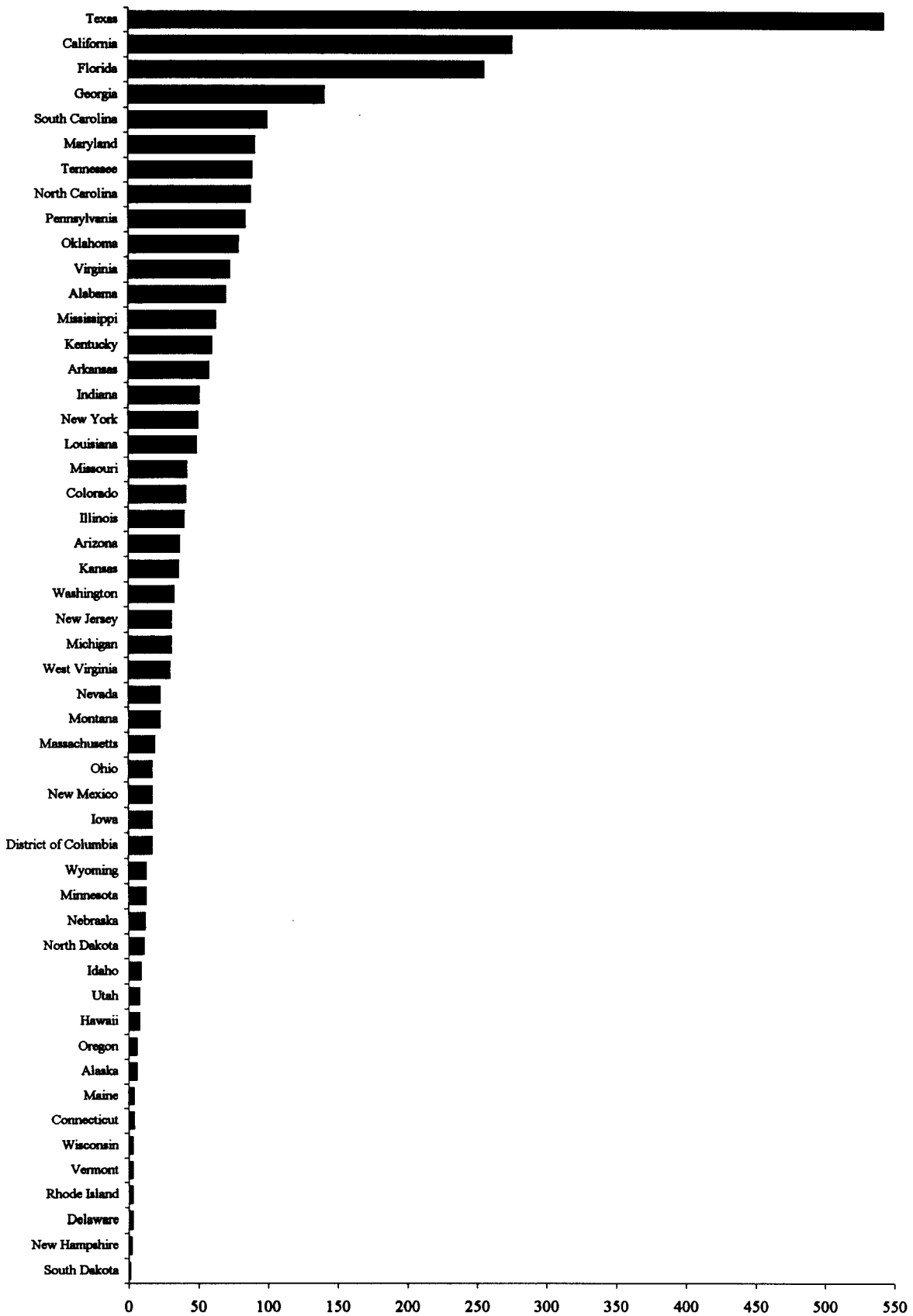


Figure 11
Percent Change in Churches, 1990 to 1997

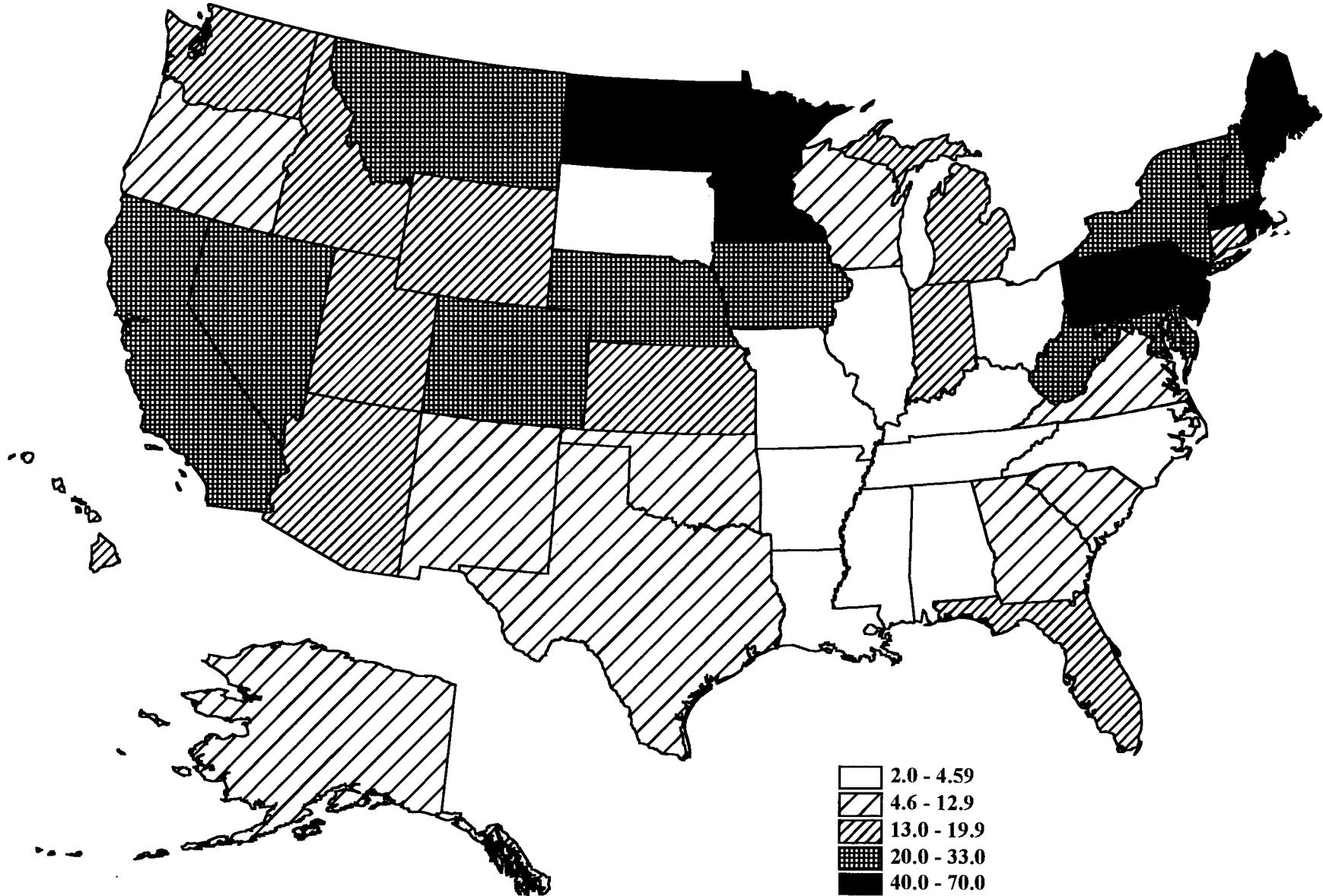
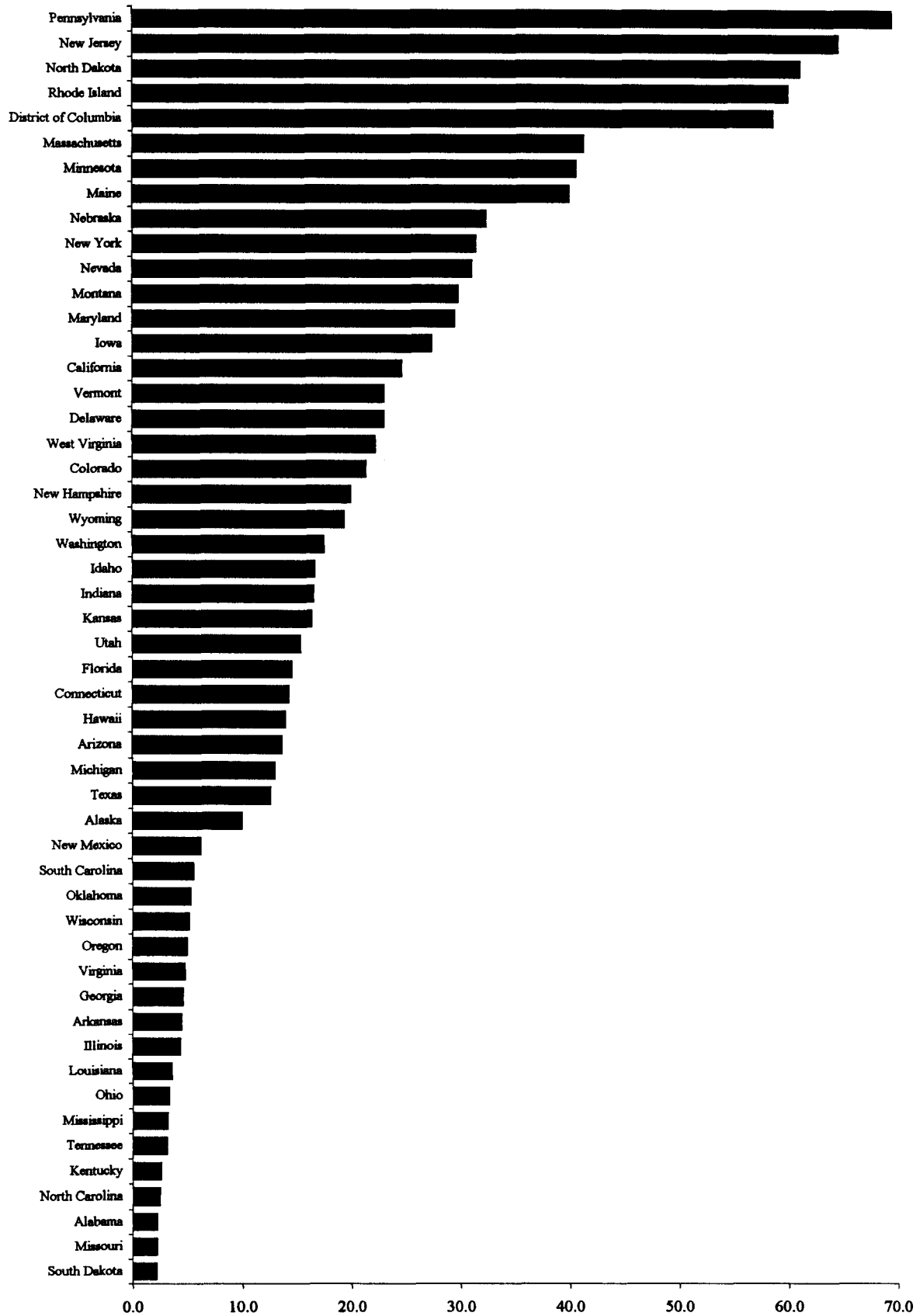


Figure 12
States Sorted by Percent Change in Churches,
1990 to 1997



Population per Church

The Nation

Despite aggressive church planting efforts, Southern Baptists failed to improve their penetration of the population. In the United States there are 6,558 people for every Southern Baptist church based on 1997 counts of churches and population estimates. (See table 7.) This is very similar to the 1990 figure of 6,542 people for every Southern Baptist church. An index of change, which directly compares these two figures, can be computed by dividing the 1997 population per church by the 1990 population per church and multiplying by 100. If the index of change is greater than 100, the population per church ratio is higher in 1997 than compared to 1990 indicating that the ratio has worsened over time. If the ratio is less than 100, the population per church ratio has improved over time. The ratio for the nation is 100.2, indicating that the population per church ratio worsened slightly from 1990 to 1997—i.e., Southern Baptist churches did not keep up with population growth.

Regions

There are substantial differences among the regions in their population per Southern Baptist church ratios. (See table 7.) In the South, there are 2,898 people for every Southern Baptist church. In contrast, there are 80,607 people for every Southern Baptist church in the Northeast. The Midwest and West regions fall between these two extremes with ratios of 13,665 to 1 and 19,155 to 1 respectively.

Despite the presence of Southern Baptists in the South and the fact that two-thirds of the increase in Southern Baptist churches occurred there, the starting of new churches has not kept up with population growth in that region. Specifically, the population per church ratio has worsened from 1990 to 1997 in the South as indicated by an index of change of 104.1 The population per church ratio improved for the other three regions during the same time frame. Most notable is the 30 percent improvement in the population per church ratio in the Northeast as indicated by an index of change of 69.8.

Note that even with the net gain of 117 churches, the Mountain division of the West region did not keep up with the rapid 20.7 percent population growth from 1990 to 1997. The end result is that the Mountain division is the only one outside the South not improving its population per church ratio.

States

The top five states with the highest population per church ratios in 1997 are:

	(thousands)
Rhode Island	123
Minnesota	104
Connecticut	102
New Jersey	102
New Hampshire	98

Most of the states with the highest ratios are in the Northeast. (See table 8 and figures 13 and 14.) Minnesota and Wisconsin in the upper Midwest also have very high population per church ratios.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are six states in the South where the population per church ratio is less than 2,000 people per church.

In examining the index of change, there are 21 states with an index greater than 100, indicating that population per church ratio has worsened from 1990 to 1997, i.e., church planting has not kept pace with population growth. (See figures 15 and 16.) Nineteen of these 21 states are in the South or West. Particularly troubling are the Southern states where the bulk of Southern Baptist churches, members, and resources reside. Even in home territory, Southern Baptists have not been able to keep up with population growth.

A notable exception is the state of Florida. Despite the rapid population increase, Southern Baptists have been able to slightly improve their penetration of the population.

The five states with the highest (i.e., worst) indexes of change are:

	Index of Change
Georgia	110.5
Arizona	109.3
North Carolina	109.2
Oregon	108.7
New Mexico	107.4

In contrast, 29 states and the District of Columbia improved their population to SBC church ratio from 1990 to 1997—some substantially. Major church planting gains were made in the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, North Dakota, and New Jersey.

Table 7
Population per Church by Region, 1990 to 1997,
and Index of Change

	Population per Church		Index of Change
	1990	1997	
United States	6,542	6,558	100.2
Northeast	115,519	80,607	69.8
New England	117,919	91,011	77.2
Middle Atlantic	114,699	77,505	67.6
Midwest	13,886	13,665	98.4
East North Central	20,664	20,179	97.7
West North Central	7,800	7,751	99.4
South	2,784	2,898	104.1
South Atlantic	3,590	3,728	103.9
East South Central	1,500	1,569	104.6
West South Central	3,167	3,235	102.1
West	20,304	19,155	94.3
Mountain	12,922	13,422	103.9
Pacific	25,358	22,914	90.4

Note: The index of change in population per church is calculated by dividing the 1997 population-per-church ratio by the 1990 population-per-church ratio and multiplying by 100. An index of 100 means that the ratios were the same for both years. An index greater than 100 means that the population-per-church ratio worsened from 1990 to 1997. An index less than 100 indicates the ratio improved.

Source: Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.; Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Table 8
Population per Church by State, 1990 to 1997,
and Index of Change

	Population per Church		Index of Change
	1990	1997	
United States	6,542	6,558	100.2
Alabama	1,316	1,376	104.5
Alaska	9,167	9,232	100.7
Arizona	13,575	14,837	109.3
Arkansas	1,822	1,872	102.7
California	26,618	23,131	86.9
Colorado	17,159	16,707	97.4
Connecticut	117,397	102,183	87.0
Delaware	51,244	45,724	89.2
District of Columbia	20,928	11,499	54.9
Florida	7,360	7,276	98.9
Georgia	2,121	2,342	110.5
Hawaii	19,443	18,255	93.9
Idaho	18,643	19,210	103.0
Illinois	12,465	12,430	99.7
Indiana	18,001	16,335	90.7
Iowa	44,788	36,107	80.6
Kansas	11,313	10,176	89.9
Kentucky	1,627	1,680	103.3
Louisiana	3,125	3,108	99.5
Maine	122,793	88,718	72.3
Maryland	15,522	12,768	82.3
Massachusetts	130,792	94,116	72.0
Michigan	39,056	36,334	93.0
Minnesota	136,740	104,123	76.1
Mississippi	1,301	1,337	102.7
Missouri	2,764	2,854	103.2
Montana	10,377	8,788	84.7
Nebraska	42,660	33,814	79.3
Nevada	16,239	17,287	106.5
New Hampshire	110,925	97,726	88.1
New Jersey	161,411	101,935	63.2
New Mexico	5,591	6,006	107.4
New York	113,150	86,781	76.7
North Carolina	1,877	2,050	109.2
North Dakota	35,489	22,099	62.3

Table 8 (continued)

	Population per Church		Index of Change
	1990	1997	
Ohio	21,186	21,146	99.8
Oklahoma	2,107	2,110	100.2
Oregon	23,686	25,742	108.7
Pennsylvania	98,205	58,632	59.7
Rhode Island	200,693	123,429	61.5
South Carolina	1,949	1,991	102.1
South Dakota	15,467	16,043	103.7
Tennessee	1,739	1,855	106.7
Texas	3,953	4,017	101.6
Utah	33,132	34,319	103.6
Vermont	43,289	36,811	85.0
Virginia	4,080	4,235	103.8
Washington	25,887	25,386	98.1
West Virginia	13,285	11,005	82.8
Wisconsin	84,341	84,749	100.5
Wyoming	6,770	5,997	88.6

Note: The index of change in population per church is calculated by dividing the 1997 population-per-church ratio by the 1990 population-per-church ratio and multiplying by 100. An index of 100 means that the ratios were the same for both years. An index greater than 100 means that the population-per-church ratio worsened from 1990 to 1997. An index less than 100 indicates the ratio improved.

Source: Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.; Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Table 9
State Rankings of Population per Church,
1990 to 1997, and Index of Change

	Rank		Index of Change
	1990	1997	
Alabama	50	50	8
Alaska	35	34	19
Arizona	30	28	2
Arkansas	47	47	16
California	18	19	36
Colorado	26	25	27
Connecticut	6	3	35
Delaware	11	11	32
District of Columbia	22	31	51
Florida	36	36	25
Georgia	43	43	1
Hawaii	23	23	28
Idaho	24	22	14
Illinois	32	30	23
Indiana	25	26	30
Iowa	12	14	41
Kansas	33	33	31
Kentucky	49	49	12
Louisiana	41	41	24
Maine	5	7	45
Maryland	28	29	40
Massachusetts	4	6	46
Michigan	15	13	29
Minnesota	3	2	44
Mississippi	51	51	15
Missouri	42	42	13
Montana	34	35	38
Nebraska	14	16	42
Nevada	27	24	7
New Hampshire	8	5	34
New Jersey	2	4	47
New Mexico	38	37	5
New York	7	8	43
North Carolina	46	45	3
North Dakota	16	20	48

Table 9 (continued)

	Rank		Index of Change
	1990	1997	
Ohio	21	21	22
Oklahoma	44	44	21
Oregon	20	17	4
Pennsylvania	9	10	50
Rhode Island	1	1	49
South Carolina	45	46	17
South Dakota	29	27	10
Tennessee	48	48	6
Texas	40	40	18
Utah	17	15	11
Vermont	13	12	37
Virginia	39	39	9
Washington	19	18	26
West Virginia	31	32	39
Wisconsin	10	9	20
Wyoming	37	38	33

Note: The index of change in population per church is calculated by dividing the 1997 population-per-church ratio by the 1990 population-per-church ratio and multiplying by 100. An index of 100 means that the ratios were the same for both years. An index greater than 100 means that the population-per-church ratio worsened from 1990 to 1997. An index less than 100 indicates the ratio improved.

Source: Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.; Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Figure 13
Population per Church, 1997

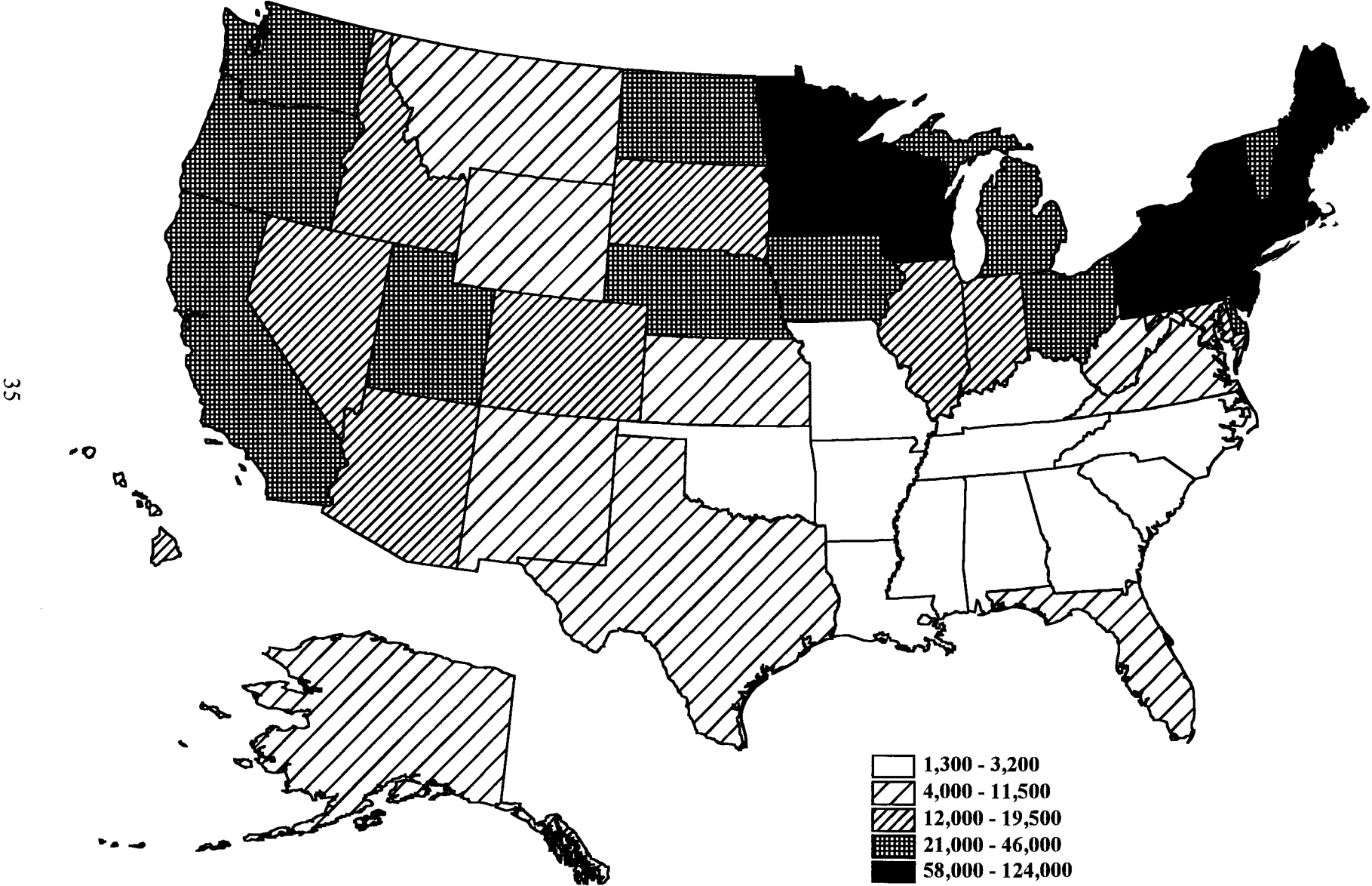


Figure 14
States Sorted by Population per Church, 1997

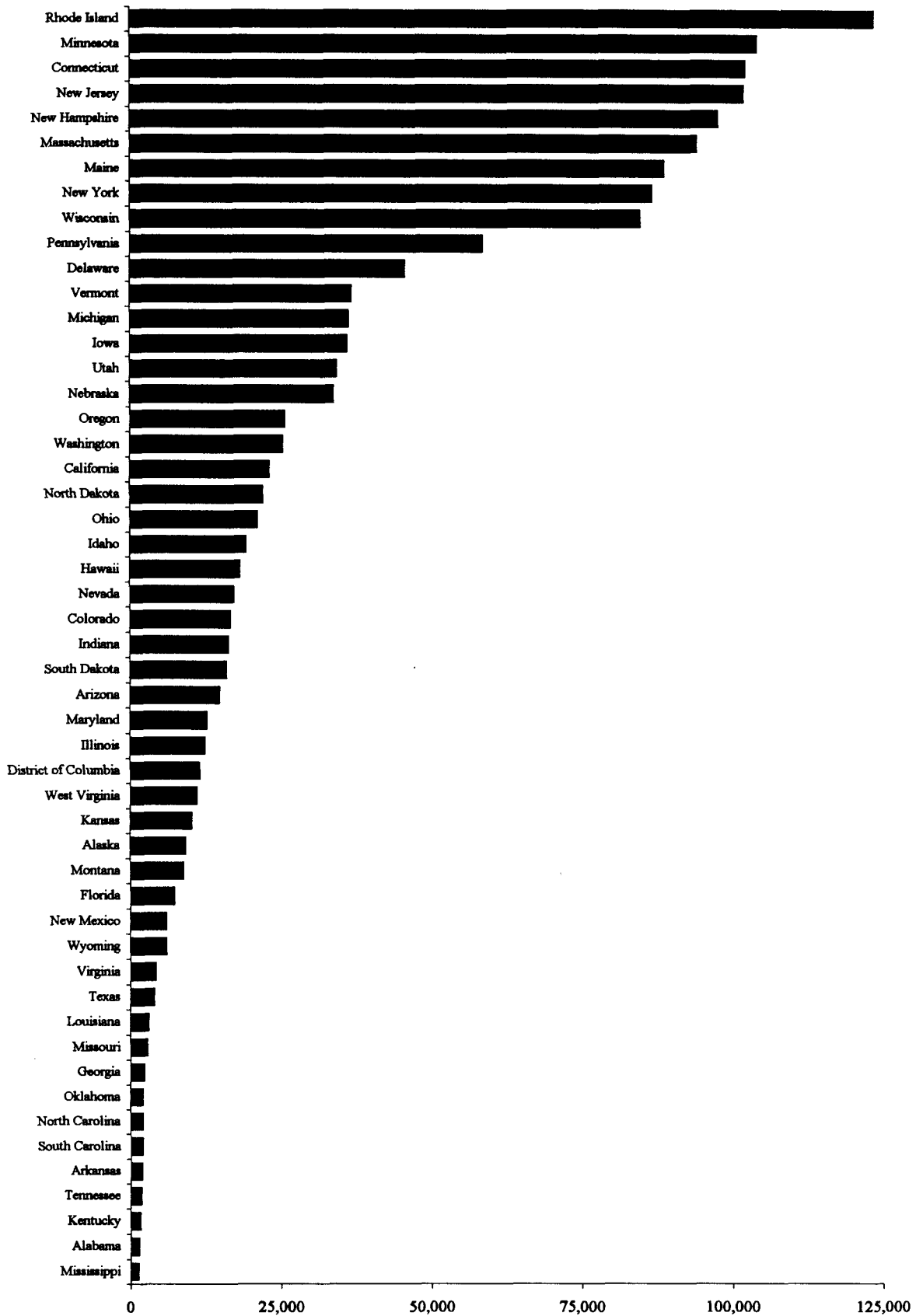
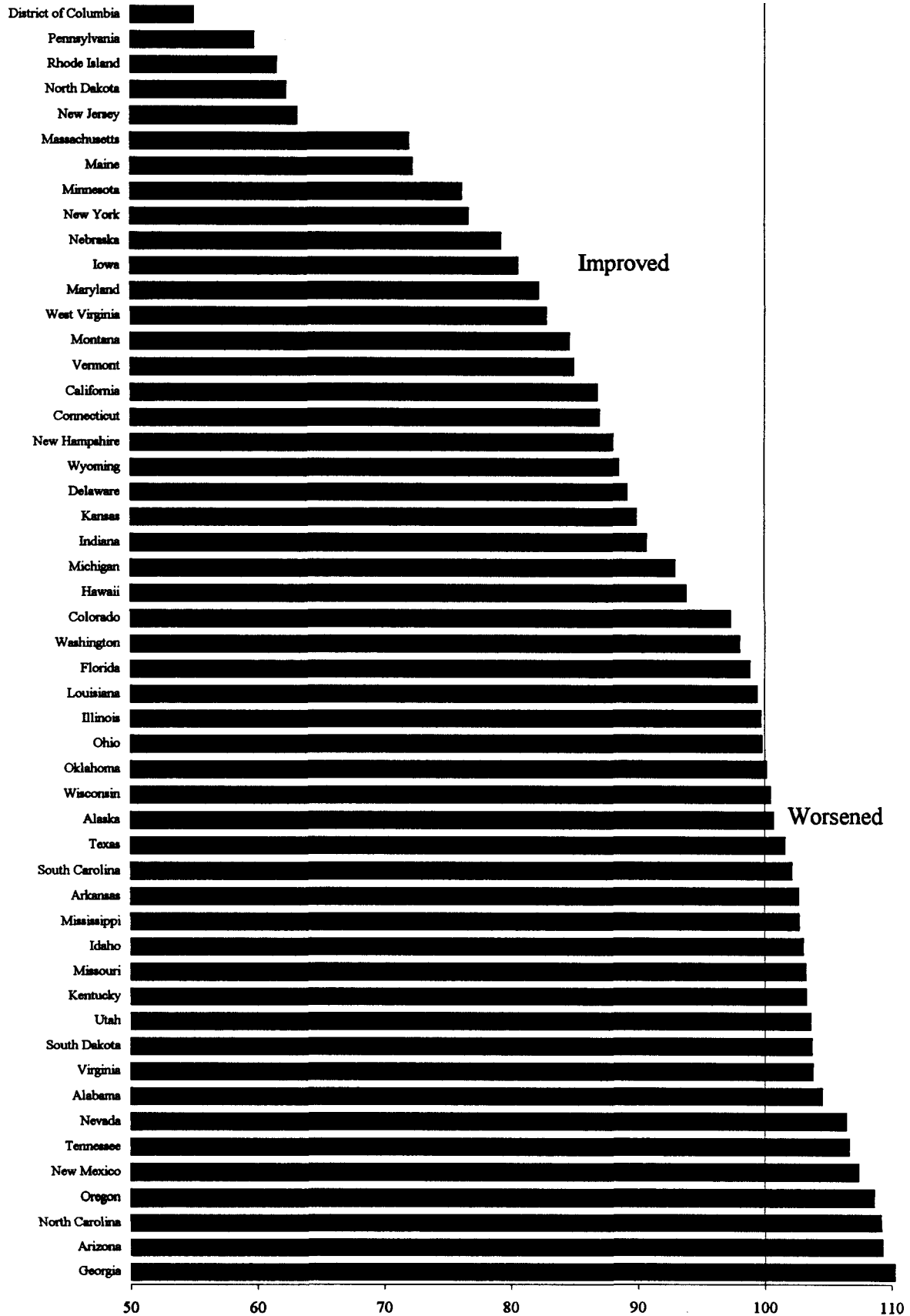


Figure 16
States Sorted by Population per Church Change Index,
1990 to 1997



Resident Membership

The Nation

There were almost 11 million resident members of Southern Baptist churches in the United States in 1997. There has been a net increase of 391,000 during the 1990s or a 3.7 percent increase—considerably less than the previously noted population increase of 7.6 percent. (See table 10.)

Regions

The bulk of Southern Baptist resident members—86 percent—are located in the South. (In contrast, 35.2 percent of the U.S. population is in the South.) Earlier, it was noted that 20 percent of SBC churches are located outside the South, but now it is apparent that only 14 percent of members are outside the South. Churches outside the South are newer and tend to be smaller than those in the South.

In membership, the Midwest is the second largest region, with 900,000 resident members or 8.2 percent of total Convention membership. The West has 574,000 members or 5.2 percent of membership, while the Northeast has 59,000 or 0.5 percent of membership.

The South region has accounted for 97.3 percent of the resident membership growth from 1990 to 1997 with a net increase of nearly 380,000 members. In sharp contrast, there are nearly 8,000 fewer resident members in the West in 1997 than were reported for 1990. This decline in membership occurred even though there was a net increase of 500 churches in the West. These declines are more specifically attributable to several states in the Pacific division of the West region. The Midwest increased by 15,000 members while the Northeast increased about 3,000 members.

States

The top five states in resident membership are:

	(thousands)
Texas	1,743
Georgia	970
North Carolina	926
Tennessee	820
Alabama	795

At the other end of the scale, there are 19 states that have fewer than 10,000 resident members. Vermont in particular has fewer than 500 resident members. (See table 11 and figures 17 and 18.)

The top five states with the largest gain of resident members are:

	(thousands)
Texas	137
Florida	73
Georgia	37
Alabama	31
Louisiana	28

(See figures 19 and 20.)

Of particular note are Florida, the 6th largest state in resident members yet registering the 2nd largest increase; and Louisiana, the 12th largest state, yet 5th in increase in membership increase. (See table 12.)

Note that 14 states declined in resident membership from 1990 to 1997. The states with the largest losses are Kentucky, California, Michigan, New Mexico and Alaska, consecutively. Even more puzzling is the fact that all of these states registered an increase in churches from 1990 to 1997. Possibly there is some reporting anomaly with the data or some existing churches are declining in membership. This problem will require further investigation. In particular, the Pacific division is showing nearly 20,000 fewer members at a time when it shows an increase of over 300 new churches. The same phenomenon is found in New England where there is a net loss of 3,000 members while there has been a gain of 35 churches.

Table 10
Resident Membership by Region, 1990 to 1997

	Resident Membership		Change	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
United States	10,570,299	10,960,861	390,562	3.7 %
Northeast	55,993	58,984	2,991	5.3
New England	15,651	12,725	-2,926	-18.7
Middle Atlantic	40,342	46,259	5,917	14.7
Midwest	885,642	901,117	15,475	1.7
East North Central	395,627	408,895	13,268	3.4
West North Central	490,015	492,222	2,207	0.5
South	9,047,265	9,427,110	379,845	4.2
South Atlantic	3,658,619	3,818,973	160,354	4.4
East South Central	2,595,333	2,632,404	37,071	1.4
West South Central	2,793,313	2,975,733	182,420	6.5
West	581,399	573,650	-7,749	-1.3
Mountain	233,898	245,958	12,060	5.2
Pacific	347,501	327,692	-19,809	-5.7

Source: Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Table 11
Resident Membership by State, 1990 to 1997

	Resident Membership		Change	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
United States	10,570,299	10,960,861	390,562	3.7 %
Alabama	763,964	794,746	30,782	4.0
Alaska	11,606	9,514	-2,092	-18.0
Arizona	82,773	85,730	2,957	3.6
Arkansas	328,057	344,621	16,564	5.0
California	278,856	255,484	-23,372	-8.4
Colorado	43,408	45,692	2,284	5.3
Connecticut	5,284	3,643	-1,641	-31.1
Delaware	3,309	3,091	-218	-6.6
District of Columbia	12,013	20,296	8,283	69.0
Florida	681,639	755,103	73,464	10.8
Georgia	932,897	970,041	37,144	4.0
Hawaii	11,308	11,162	-146	-1.3
Idaho	6,310	7,370	1,060	16.8
Illinois	160,365	173,288	12,923	8.1
Indiana	73,161	76,867	3,706	5.1
Iowa	8,115	9,491	1,376	17.0
Kansas	48,758	49,836	1,078	2.2
Kentucky	555,791	523,446	-32,345	-5.8
Louisiana	395,332	423,587	28,255	7.1
Maine	943	1,203	260	27.6
Maryland	81,240	83,048	1,808	2.2
Massachusetts	6,371	4,830	-1,541	-24.2
Michigan	38,329	31,520	-6,809	-17.8
Minnesota	3,112	3,722	610	19.6
Mississippi	476,572	494,519	17,947	3.8
Missouri	417,813	415,762	-2,051	-0.5
Montana	5,911	8,602	2,691	45.5
Nebraska	7,038	8,504	1,466	20.8
Nevada	15,595	21,352	5,757	36.9
New Hampshire	1,418	1,427	9	0.6
New Jersey	6,902	6,391	-511	-7.4
New Mexico	66,151	62,443	-3,708	-5.6
New York	16,752	15,535	-1,217	-7.3
North Carolina	915,744	925,883	10,139	1.1
North Dakota	1,721	1,980	259	15.0

Table 11 (continued)

	Resident Membership		Change	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
Ohio	116,774	117,759	985	0.8 %
Oklahoma	464,141	464,631	490	0.1
Oregon	16,292	18,028	1,736	10.7
Pennsylvania	16,688	24,333	7,645	45.8
Rhode Island	998	1,187	189	18.9
South Carolina	552,882	573,339	20,457	3.7
South Dakota	3,458	2,927	-531	-15.4
Tennessee	799,006	819,693	20,687	2.6
Texas	1,605,783	1,742,894	137,111	8.5
Utah	5,932	6,875	943	15.9
Vermont	637	435	-202	-31.7
Virginia	452,095	459,420	7,325	1.6
Washington	29,439	33,504	4,065	13.8
West Virginia	26,800	28,752	1,952	7.3
Wisconsin	6,998	9,461	2,463	35.2
Wyoming	7,818	7,894	76	1.0

Source: Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Table 12
Ranking of Resident Membership by State, 1990 to 1997

	Resident Membership Rank		Change Rank	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
Alabama	5	5	4	24
Alaska	32	33	47	48
Arizona	18	18	18	28
Arkansas	14	14	9	23
California	15	15	50	45
Colorado	23	23	21	21
Connecticut	43	44	45	50
Delaware	45	45	40	42
District of Columbia	31	29	12	1
Florida	6	6	2	15
Georgia	2	2	3	25
Hawaii	33	32	38	39
Idaho	40	39	28	11
Illinois	16	16	10	18
Indiana	20	20	17	22
Iowa	34	34	26	10
Kansas	22	22	27	31
Kentucky	7	8	51	41
Louisiana	13	12	5	20
Maine	50	49	33	6
Maryland	19	19	23	30
Massachusetts	39	42	44	49
Michigan	24	25	49	47
Minnesota	46	43	31	8
Mississippi	9	9	8	26
Missouri	12	13	46	38
Montana	42	36	19	3
Nebraska	36	37	25	7
Nevada	30	28	15	4
New Hampshire	48	48	37	36
New Jersey	38	41	41	44
New Mexico	21	21	48	40
New York	27	31	43	43
North Carolina	3	3	11	33
North Dakota	47	47	34	13

Table 12 (continued)

	Resident Membership Rank		Change Rank	
	1990	1997	Net	Percent
Ohio	17	17	29	35
Oklahoma	10	10	32	37
Oregon	29	30	24	16
Pennsylvania	28	27	13	2
Rhode Island	49	50	35	9
South Carolina	8	7	7	27
South Dakota	44	46	42	46
Tennessee	4	4	6	29
Texas	1	1	1	17
Utah	41	40	30	12
Vermont	51	51	39	51
Virginia	11	11	14	32
Washington	25	24	16	14
West Virginia	26	26	22	19
Wisconsin	37	35	20	5
Wyoming	35	38	36	34

Source: Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Figure 17
Resident Membership, 1997

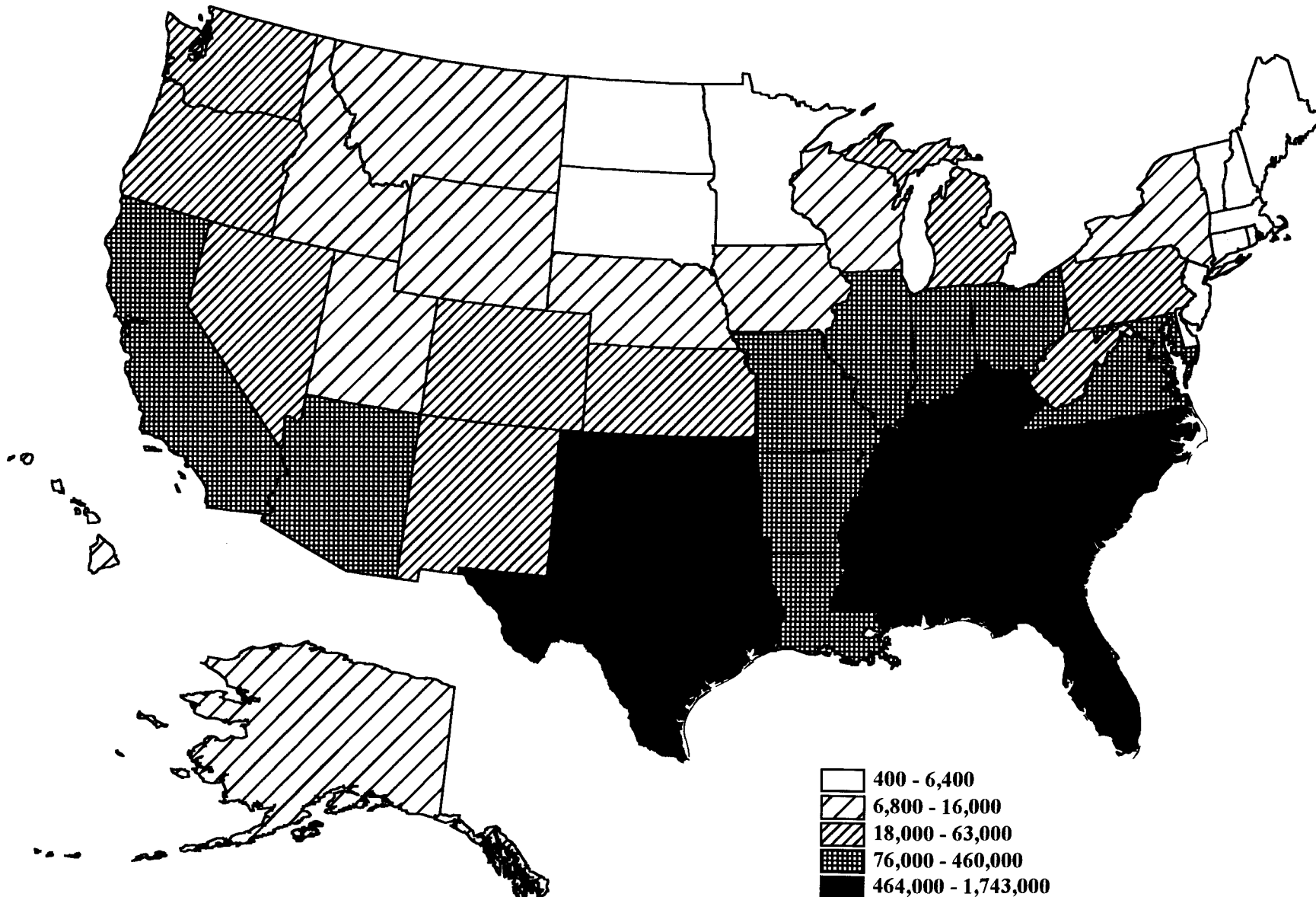


Figure 18
States Sorted by Resident Membership, 1997

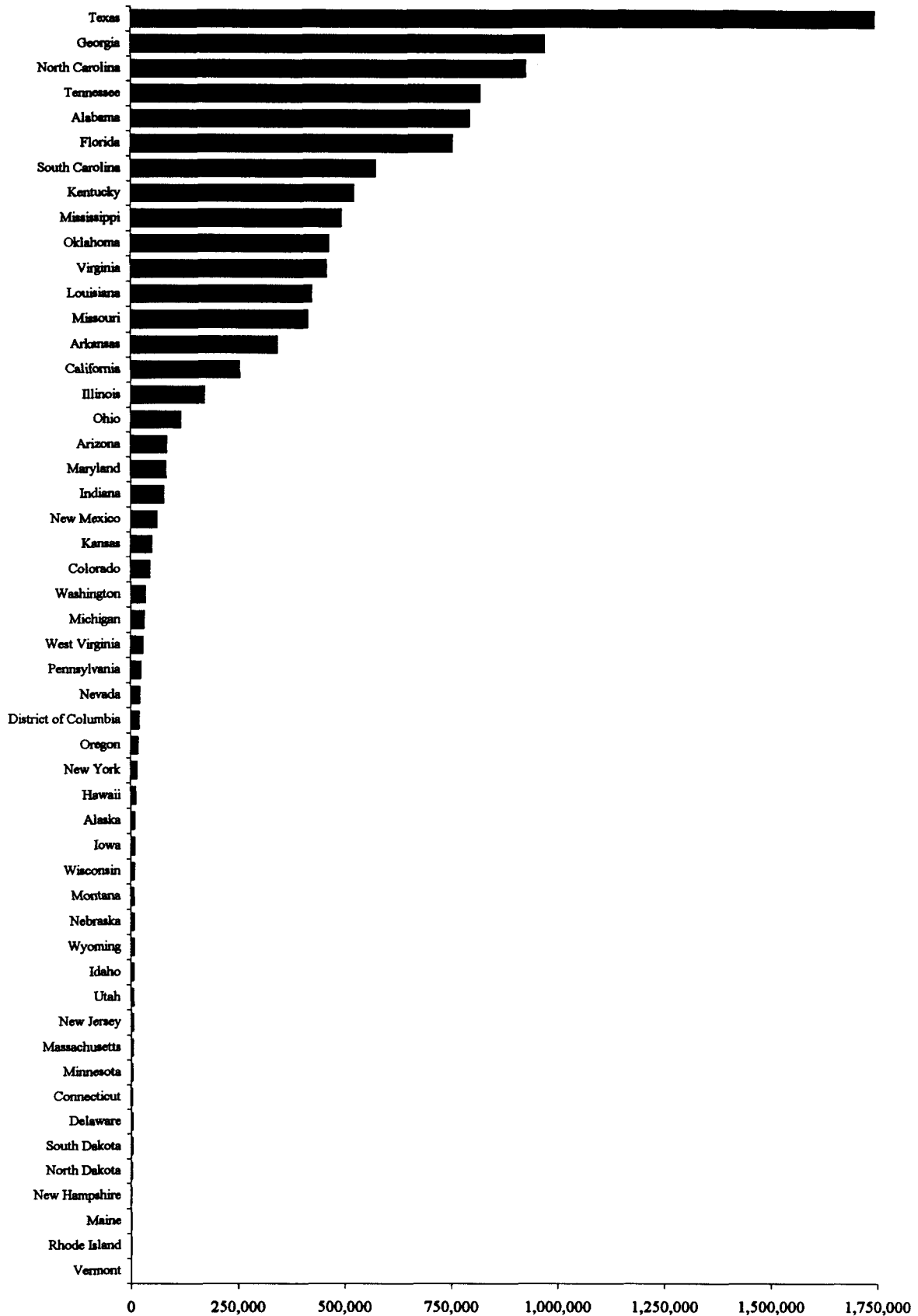


Figure 19
Net Change in Resident Membership, 1990 to 1997

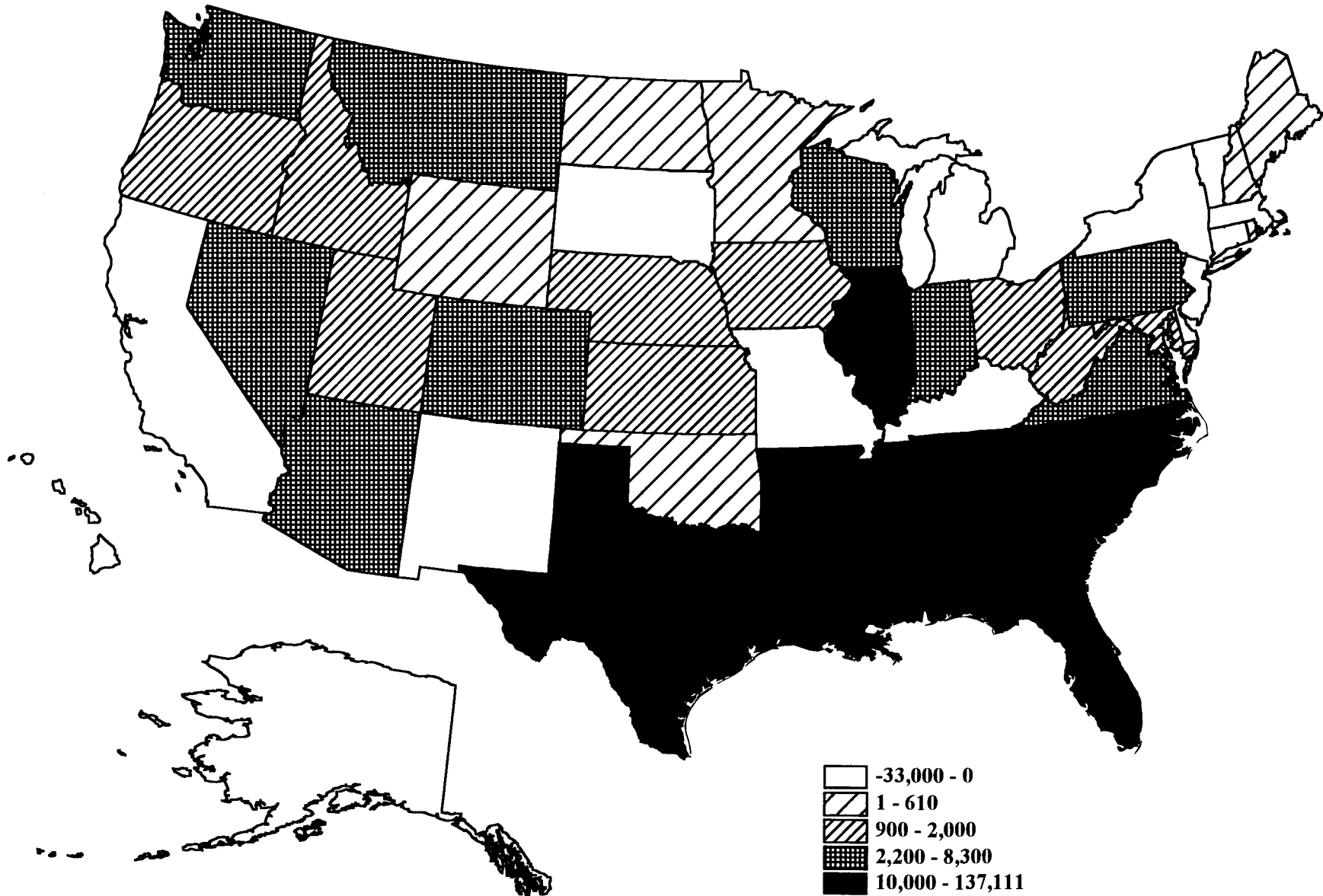


Figure 20
States Sorted by Net Change in Resident Membership,
1990 to 1997

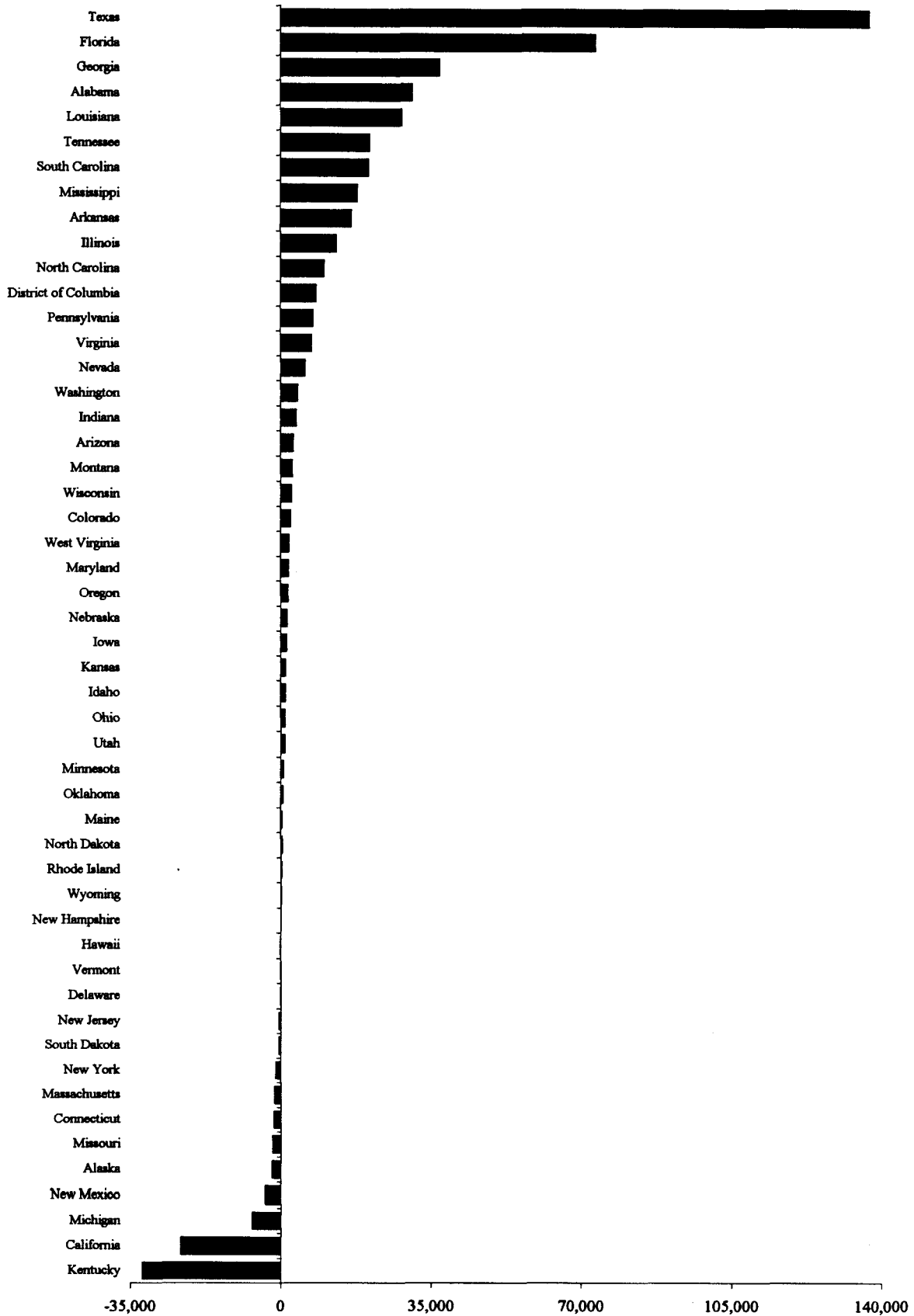


Figure 21
Percent Change in Resident Membership, 1990 to 1997

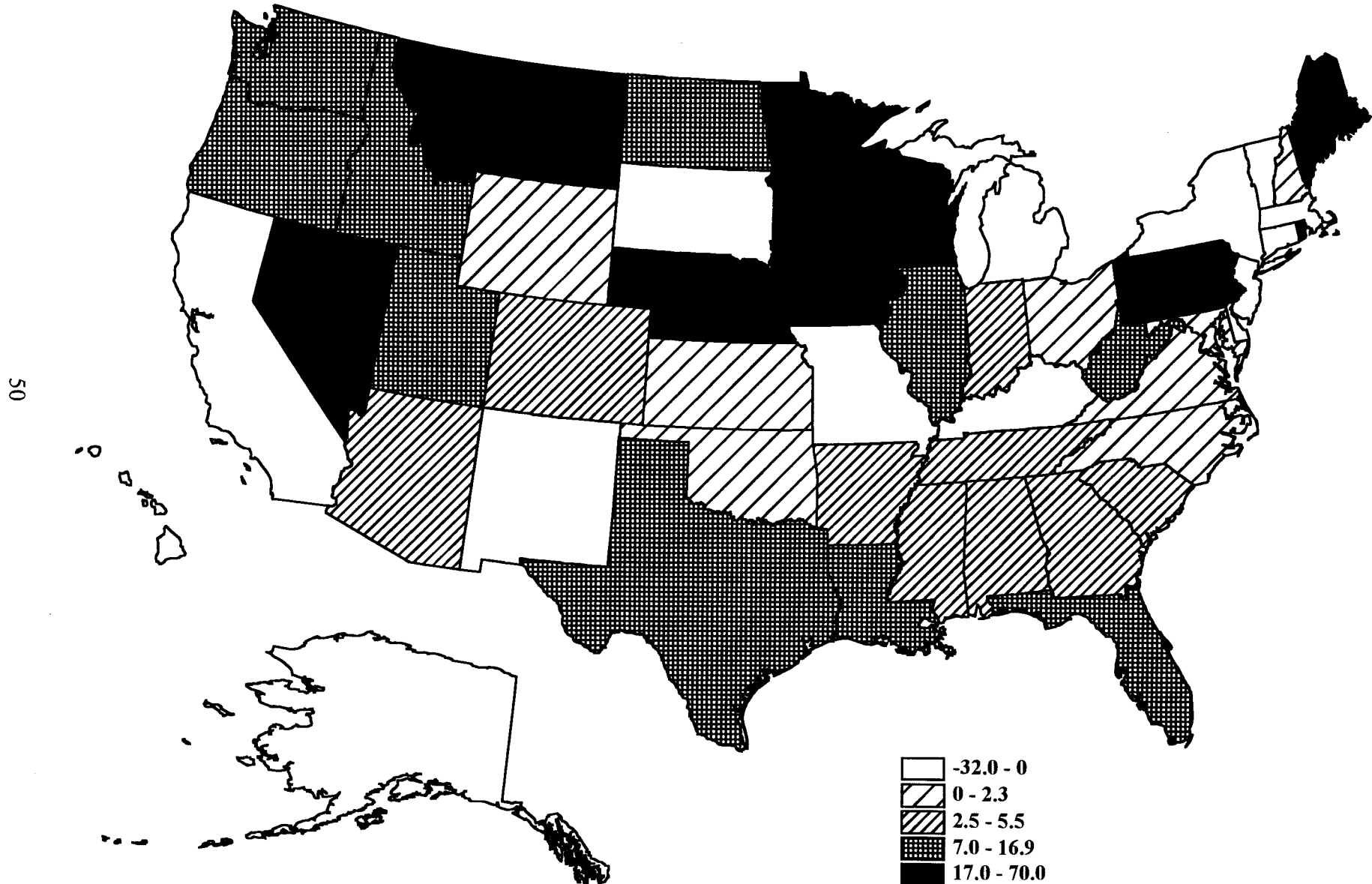
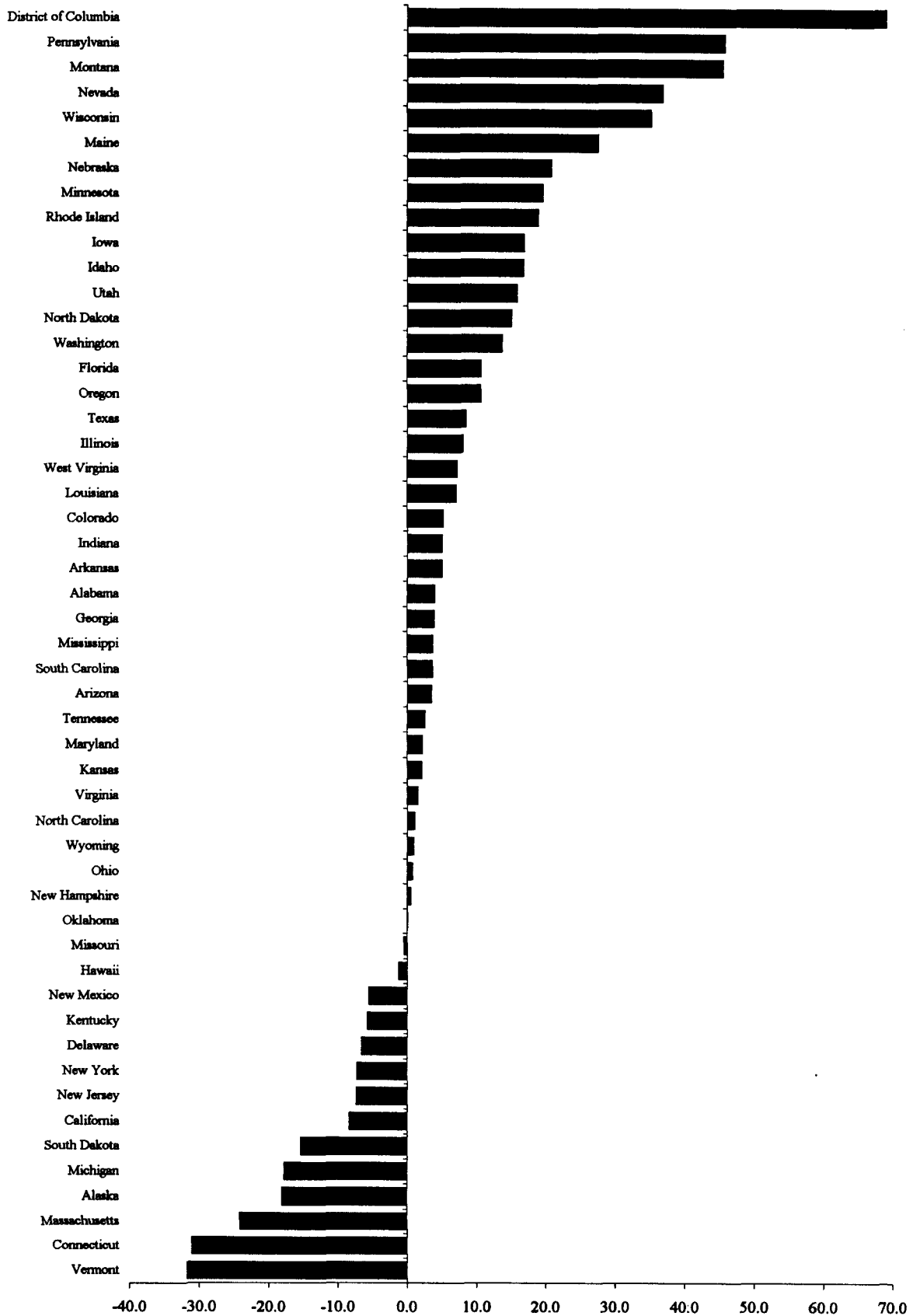


Figure 22
States Sorted by Percent Change in Resident Membership,
1990 to 1997



Population per Resident Member

The Nation

The best indicator of the denomination's penetration of the population, or its "market share," may be the ratio of population to resident members. In 1997 there were 24.4 people for every Southern Baptist resident member in the U.S. (Another way to communicate this is if you randomly select 25 people in the U.S., you would expect 1 to be Southern Baptist. See table 13.) This ratio has worsened since 1990 when there were only 23.5 people per resident member. As with population to church ratios, these numbers can be compared directly by computation of an index of change. This index is computed by dividing the population per resident member in 1997 by the population per resident member in 1990 and then multiplying by 100. Scores above 100 indicate the ratio has worsened from 1990 to 1997, while those below 100 indicate the population per member ratio has improved. The computed index of change for the nation is 103.8, meaning that growth in Southern Baptist resident membership did not keep up with the growth in population during the same time frame.

Regions

The market share varies greatly throughout the nation. In the South there are 10 people for every Southern Baptist resident member. At the other extreme, in the Northeast there are 875 people for every Southern Baptist resident member. In the West the ratio is 104 to 1, while in the Midwest it is 69 to 1. (See table 13.)

The index of change for population to membership is worsening for most regions of the country. The only exception is the Northeast where the index shows improvement from 1990 to 1997. Further examination shows improvement has taken place only in the Middle Atlantic division of the Northeast, while the ratio has worsened substantially in the New England division. In fact, the ratio in New England has worsened by 25 percent, which is more than for any other census division in the nation. Yet, New England's population per church ratio improved by 23 percent in the same time frame. (Problems with declining membership figures in New England have been previously noted.) The number of churches not reporting membership also increased from 1990 to 1997 in New England.

At the region level, the West shows the highest index of change, indicating Southern Baptists have not been able to keep up with population growth occurring there. Part of this is due to the loss of members in the Pacific division and part due to the rapid population growth of the Mountain division.

States

As noted previously, the population to member ratio is not evenly distributed across the United States. It ranges from a high of 1,354 people for every Southern Baptist resident member in Vermont, to a low of 5.4 people per member in Alabama. (See table 14 and figures 23 and 24.)

There are six states where the ratio is more than a 1,000 to 1. Those states are:

Population per Resident Member	
Vermont	1,354
Massachusetts	1,267
New Jersey	1,260
Minnesota	1,259
New York	1,168
Maine	1,033

Five of these states are in the Northeast, the other in the upper Midwest. As expected, the states with the lowest ratios are in the South.

An examination of the index of change shows that only 13 states showed improvement in the population per resident member ratio from 1990 to 1997. (See figures 25 and 26.) Most of these states are in the Midwest and the Northeast. Outside these regions, the only areas to show improvement are the District of Columbia and Louisiana in the South, and Montana in the West.

While church membership lost ground vis-à-vis population gain for most all the states of the South, the loss of market share in the South was not nearly so dramatic as for some of the states outside the South. There are six states where the population per resident member worsened by 25 percent or more from 1990 to 1997. These states are as follows:

Index of Change	
Vermont	153.3
Connecticut	144.3
Alaska	135.1
Massachusetts	134.1
Michigan	127.9
South Dakota	125.3

All of these states registered membership declines. Of these, only Connecticut experienced a population decline during the same time period; however, the percentage decline in membership was far greater than the percentage decline in population.

Table 13
Population per Resident Member by Region, 1990 to 1997,
and Index of Change

	Population per Resident Member		Index of Change
	1990	1997	
United States	23.5	24.4	103.8
Northeast	907.8	874.6	96.3
New England	843.8	1,051.4	124.6
Middle Atlantic	932.6	826.0	88.6
Midwest	67.4	69.3	102.9
East North Central	106.2	107.3	101.1
West North Central	36.0	37.7	104.7
South	9.4	10.0	105.8
South Atlantic	11.9	12.6	106.0
East South Central	5.8	6.2	106.0
West South Central	9.6	10.0	104.2
West	90.8	103.5	114.0
Mountain	58.4	67.0	114.8
Pacific	112.7	131.0	116.2

Note: The index of change in population per resident member is calculated by dividing the 1997 population-per-resident-member ratio by the 1990 population-per-resident-member ratio and multiplying by 100. An index of 100 means that the ratios were the same for both years. An index greater than 100 means that the population-per-resident-member ratio worsened from 1990 to 1997. An index less than 100 indicates the ratio improved.

Source: Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.; Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Table 14
Population per Resident Member by State, 1990 to 1997,
and Index of Change

	Population per Resident Member		Index of Change
	1990	1997	
United States	23.5	24.4	103.8
Alabama	5.3	5.4	102.8
Alaska	47.4	64.0	135.1
Arizona	44.3	53.1	120.0
Arkansas	7.2	7.3	102.2
California	106.8	126.3	118.2
Colorado	75.9	85.2	112.3
Connecticut	622.1	897.6	144.3
Delaware	201.3	236.7	117.6
District of Columbia	50.5	26.1	51.6
Florida	19.0	19.4	102.2
Georgia	6.9	7.7	111.1
Hawaii	98.0	106.3	108.5
Idaho	159.5	164.2	102.9
Illinois	71.3	68.6	96.3
Indiana	75.8	76.3	100.7
Iowa	342.2	300.5	87.8
Kansas	50.8	52.1	102.5
Kentucky	6.6	7.5	112.6
Louisiana	10.7	10.3	96.2
Maine	1,302.2	1,032.5	79.3
Maryland	58.8	61.3	104.2
Massachusetts	944.3	1,266.6	134.1
Michigan	242.5	310.1	127.9
Minnesota	1,406.1	1,258.9	89.5
Mississippi	5.4	5.5	102.2
Missouri	12.2	13.0	106.1
Montana	135.2	102.2	75.6
Nebraska	224.3	194.8	86.9
Nevada	77.1	78.5	101.9
New Hampshire	782.3	821.8	105.1
New Jersey	1,122.5	1,260.0	112.2
New Mexico	22.9	27.7	120.9
New York	1,073.9	1,167.5	108.7
North Carolina	7.2	8.0	110.7
North Dakota	371.2	323.7	87.2

Table 14 (continued)

	Population per Resident Member		Index of Change
	1990	1997	
Ohio	92.9	95.0	102.3
Oklahoma	6.8	7.1	105.3
Oregon	174.5	179.9	103.1
Pennsylvania	712.1	494.0	69.4
Rhode Island	1,005.5	831.9	82.7
South Carolina	6.3	6.6	104.0
South Dakota	201.3	252.1	125.3
Tennessee	6.1	6.5	107.3
Texas	10.6	11.2	105.4
Utah	290.4	299.5	103.1
Vermont	883.5	1,354.0	153.3
Virginia	13.7	14.7	107.1
Washington	165.3	167.5	101.3
West Virginia	66.9	63.2	94.4
Wisconsin	699.0	546.4	78.2
Wyoming	58.0	60.8	104.7

Note: The index of change in population per resident member is calculated by dividing the 1997 population-per-resident-member ratio by the 1990 population-per-resident-member ratio and multiplying by 100. An index of 100 means that the ratios were the same for both years. An index greater than 100 means that the population-per-resident-member ratio worsened from 1990 to 1997. An index less than 100 indicates the ratio improved.

Source: Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.; Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Table 15
State Rankings of Population per Resident Member, 1990 to 1997,
and Index of Change

	Rank		Index of Change
	1990	1997	
Alabama	51	51	30
Alaska	35	30	3
Arizona	36	34	8
Arkansas	44	46	35
California	23	22	9
Colorado	27	26	12
Connecticut	11	7	2
Delaware	17	17	10
District of Columbia	34	37	51
Florida	38	38	33
Georgia	45	44	14
Hawaii	24	23	17
Idaho	21	21	29
Illinois	29	29	39
Indiana	28	28	38
Iowa	13	14	43
Kansas	33	35	31
Kentucky	47	45	11
Louisiana	41	42	40
Maine	2	6	47
Maryland	31	32	25
Massachusetts	6	2	4
Michigan	15	13	5
Minnesota	1	4	42
Mississippi	50	50	34
Missouri	40	40	20
Montana	22	24	49
Nebraska	16	18	45
Nevada	26	27	36
New Hampshire	8	9	23
New Jersey	3	3	13
New Mexico	37	36	7
New York	4	5	16
North Carolina	43	43	15
North Dakota	12	12	44

Table 15 (continued)

	Rank		Index of Change
	1990	1997	
Ohio	25	25	32
Oklahoma	46	47	22
Oregon	19	19	28
Pennsylvania	9	11	50
Rhode Island	5	8	46
South Carolina	48	48	26
South Dakota	18	16	6
Tennessee	49	49	18
Texas	42	41	21
Utah	14	15	27
Vermont	7	1	1
Virginia	39	39	19
Washington	20	20	37
West Virginia	30	31	41
Wisconsin	10	10	48
Wyoming	32	33	24

Source: Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.; Annual Church Profile, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.; compiled by Strategic Planning Support, NAMB, Alpharetta, Ga.

Figure 24
States Sorted by Population per Resident Member, 1997

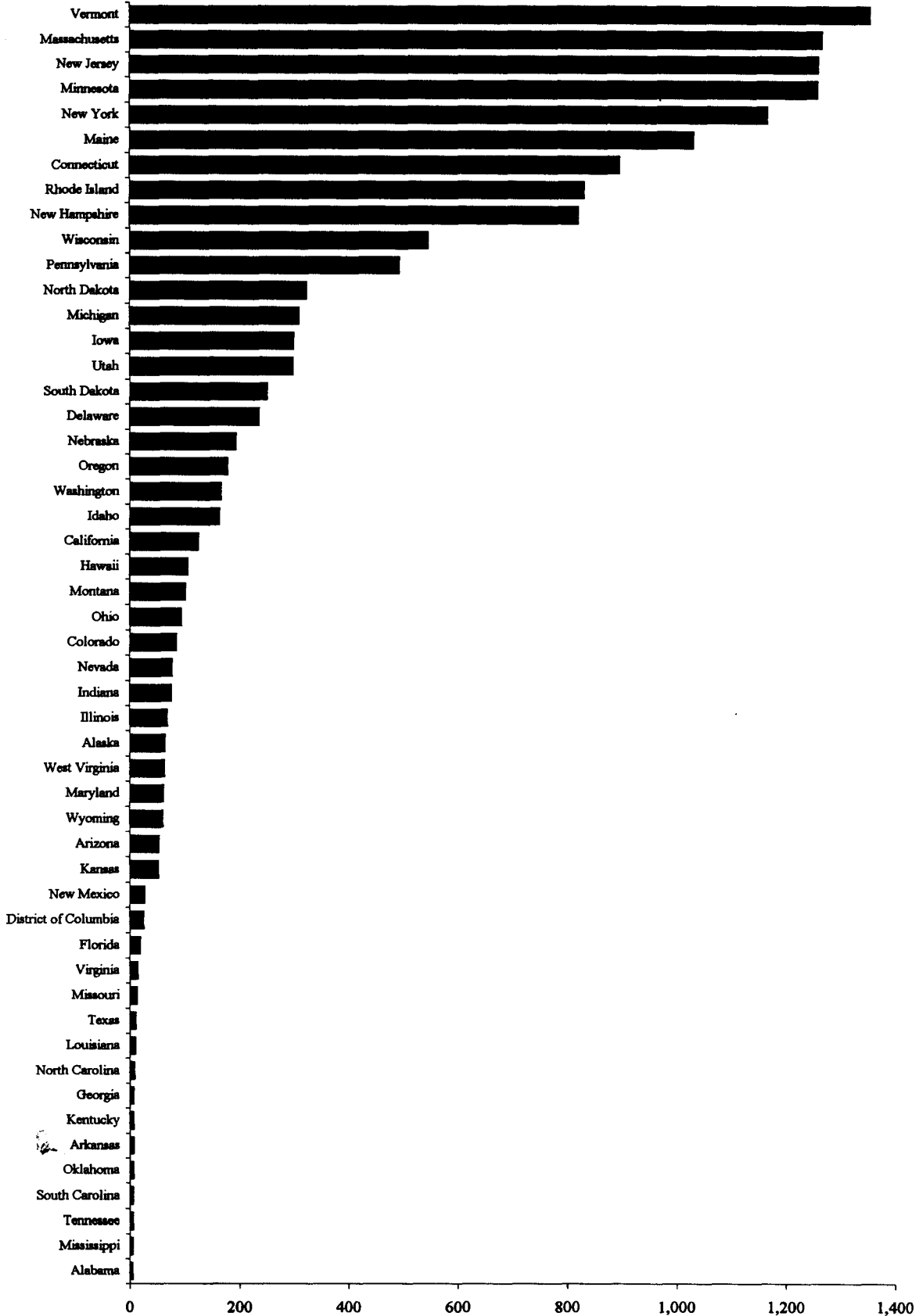


Figure 25
Population per Resident Member Change Index, 1990 to 1997

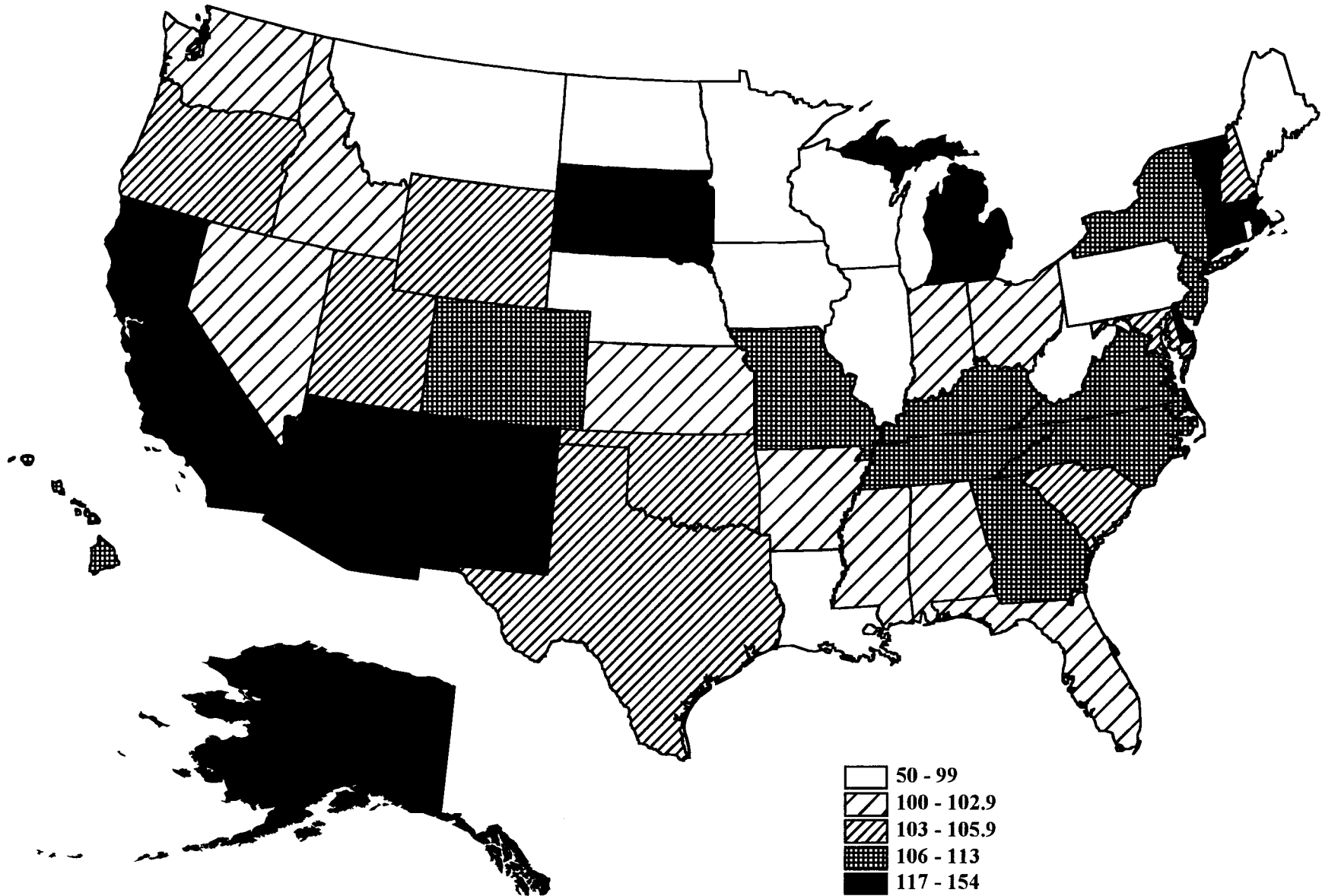
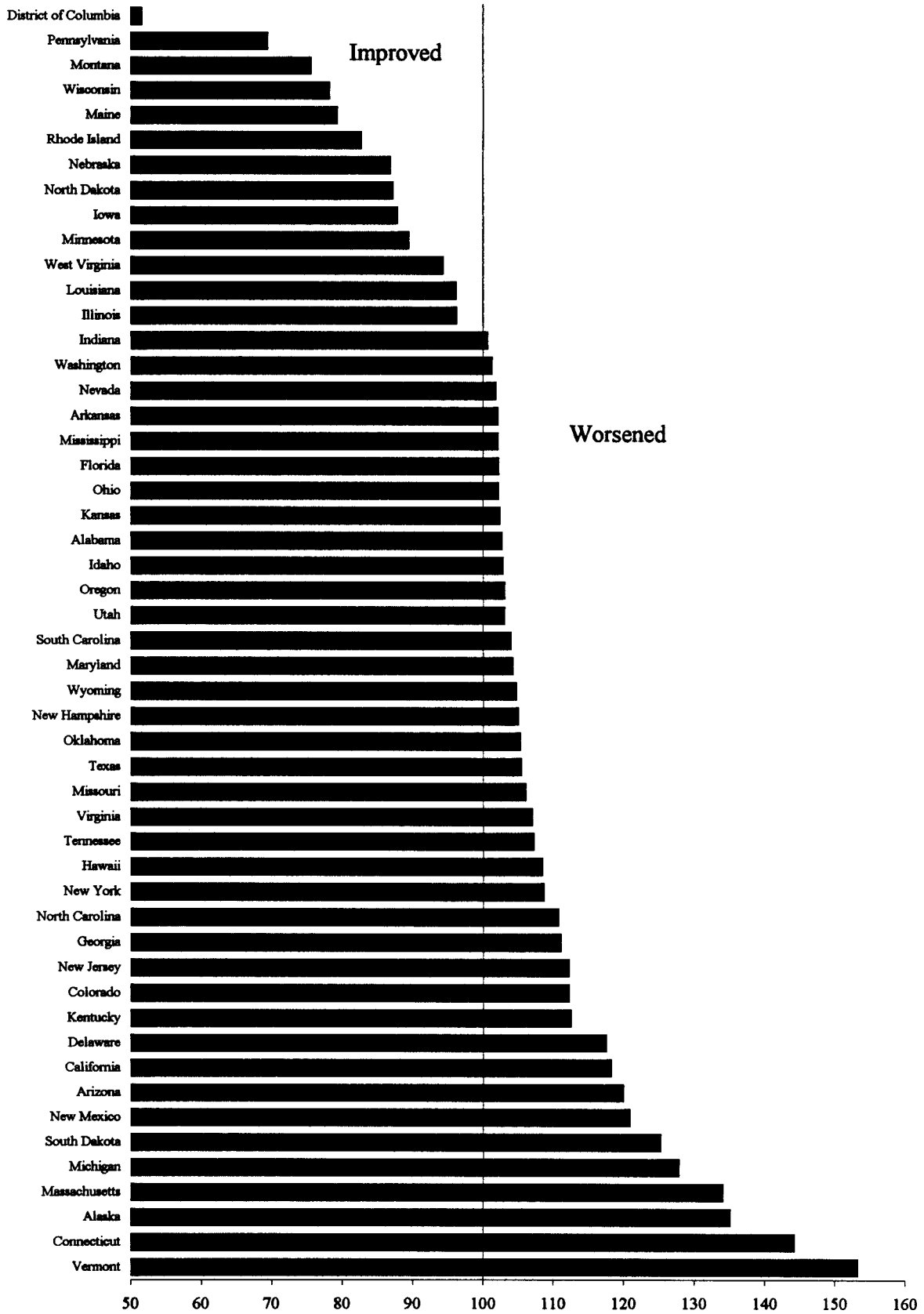


Figure 26
States Sorted by Population per Resident Member
Change Index, 1990 to 1997



Concluding Remarks

Between 1990 and 1997, growth rates of Southern Baptist churches (7.3%) and resident membership (3.7%) in the U.S. have not matched the population growth rate (7.6%). This occurred in spite of the denomination's emphasis on church planting and evangelism. Southern Baptists increased their "market share" in some states and regions, particularly outside the South.

State convention directors of missions reported more than 10,000 church starts during 1990 through 1997—an average of 1,330 per year. Yet, an average of only 345 constituted churches were gained each year. These two indicators of church planting success have been in conflict for some time.

States differ in the type of units counted as church starts. Perhaps NAMB can lead states to agree on standard definitions on the types of units to count as new church starts. Assuming most church starts reported by states are church-type missions, many of those begun each year never become constituted churches.

LifeWay Christian Resources recently released summary statistics from the 1998 Annual Church Profile (ACP). The 1998 ACP reported fewer churches, members, and baptisms compared to 1997. Not since 1930 has the number of SBC churches declined from the previous year. LifeWay is unaware of any non-reporting bias in the collection process for the 1998 ACP. It should be noted that the process of collecting data from churches has changed each year beginning with 1994.

There is nothing in the first glimpse of 1998 data to indicate improvement in the trends of this report. In fact, the latest data show that population per church and population per resident member continued to increase (worsen) from 1997 to 1998.

Taking a look back can sometimes assist us as we plan for the future. This report helps Southern Baptists understand that divine intervention and much work will be required in order to reach the goals for churches and baptisms set by the North American Mission Board.