

RESEARCH REPORT

A PUBLICATION OF RESEARCH, HOME MISSION BOARD, SBC

The North Central States: An Update of Church and Population Data

Executive Summary

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January 1997

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This summary gives the highlights from the Home Mission Board Research Report, *The North Central States: An Update of Church and Population Data*. The six state conventions (and seven states) which comprise the North Central States (NCS) are: the Illinois Baptist State Association, the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, the Baptist Convention of Iowa, the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, the Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention, and the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

Church data in this report are from the Uniform Church Letter (UCL) and Annual Church Profile (ACP) submitted by churches in the North Central States. Many, but not all, mission congregations are now reporting their data on the ACP. Therefore, this report is not a full measure of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) presence and activity in the North Central States. In this report, "church" refers to a constituted, reporting SBC congregation. The population data are from the Bureau of the Census. Data for 1980 and 1990 are from the decennial Census (revised). Data for 1995 are Bureau of the Census estimates; data for 2000 and beyond are projections by the Bureau of the Census.

Growth in the Number of Churches

- The net number of newly constituted churches has grown 6 percent since 1992, compared to 4 percent for the entire Southern Baptist Convention. Since 1992, three NCS state conventions have seen double-digit percentage growth in the number of new churches: Iowa (29%), Minnesota-Wisconsin (20%), and Michigan (13%).
- Since 1992, 129 net new churches have been added to NCS conventions. Michigan (30), Indiana (25), and Ohio (22) have led in the number of net new churches added.

Population Trends

- The population of the North Central States is 50,908,000, according to 1995 estimates. Nearly 1 of 5 persons in the United States resides in the North Central States. The percentage of United States residents living in the North Central States has dropped from 22 percent in 1980 to 19 percent in 1995—and is projected to continue declining to 17 percent by 2025.
- The six combined NCS conventions are projected to show a population increase of 2.2 million from 1995 to 2005. Even with this increase, the growth rate will trail the United States by half: 4 percent versus 9 percent over the next 10 years.
- During the ten year period from 1995 to 2005 the Minnesota-Wisconsin convention is projected to lead the other NCS conventions in both net and percentage population growth. About three-quarters of a million new persons will be added to Minnesota-Wisconsin's population by 2005, an 8 percent growth rate.

SBC Presence and Population Growth

- Looking back 15 years, all NCS conventions have added churches and members at rates faster than population growth and faster than the Convention as a whole. The entire SBC has actually lagged behind population growth in the addition of churches and members. North Central State conventions with the most dramatic improvement in population per church ratios from 1980 to 1995 are Iowa, Minnesota-Wisconsin,

and Michigan, each having added churches about 30 percent faster than population growth. Iowa, Indiana, and Ohio showed the most improvement in population per member ratios for the same period.

- Improvements in population per church and member ratios should not obscure the fact that these ratios are significantly higher in NCS conventions than the SBC as a whole. There are 90,000 persons for every SBC church in Minnesota-Wisconsin, 14 times higher than the ratio for the United States. For all NCS conventions combined, the population per church ratio is almost 3½ times the ratio for the United States. The population per member ratios are even more disparate. Again, Minnesota-Wisconsin has the highest: 771 persons for every member of an SBC church. This figure is 45 times higher than the ratio of 1:17 for the entire United States. The population per member ratio for all North Central States is 93, 5½ times higher than the United States ratio.
- Total baptisms were at higher levels in 1995 than in 1992 in 5 of 6 NCS conventions. Despite these increases and the gains in churches and members, baptisms have shown no consistent long-term growth in the North Central States, paralleling trends across the entire SBC. Further, baptism rates—number of baptisms per 100 total members—were uniformly higher in 1980 than in 1995 for the entire SBC and for NCS conventions.

The Median SBC Church

The “typical,” or median SBC church in the North Central States may be described as follows:

- 35 years old
- 158 total members; 120 are resident
- grew by 2 members from 1994 to 1995
- 52 in morning worship
- 4 baptisms and 4 other additions in 1995
- pastor has been at church about 4 years
- 80 enrolled in Sunday School; 40 attend
- \$37,000 in undesignated receipts; 7 percent of that goes to Cooperative Program, 3 percent goes to the association

Of course, these data are driven by the larger state conventions in the North Central States, particularly Illinois and Ohio. Illinois alone accounts for 42 percent of the NCS churches. Ohio’s churches comprise 23 percent. Together these two states contain almost two-thirds of the churches in the North Central States.

- There is considerable variation among the NCS conventions with regard to church characteristics. For example, the typical church in Iowa and Minnesota-Wisconsin is 19 years old, compared to Illinois, where the typical church is 58 years old. The median total membership ranges from 81 in Minnesota-Wisconsin to 210 in Ohio.
- The median net change in total members of 4 (from 1994 to 1995) was highest in Indiana. Indiana also recorded the highest baptism rate among the North Central States, 3.9 per 100 resident members.

- The typical Ohio church is larger than the other NCS conventions, and, not surprisingly, it has the highest receipts, \$49,375. The typical church in Minnesota-Wisconsin, however, has the highest percentage of undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program (8%). The typical church in Illinois gives a higher percentage of undesignated gifts to the local association (4%) than typical churches in the other North Central States.

Racial/Ethnic Population Projections

- During the 1990s, the population of Asian/Pacific Islander racial groups is projected to grow rapidly (58%) in the North Central States.
- The Hispanic population will also see tremendous growth during the current decade (40%).
- Iowa and Minnesota-Wisconsin lead the other North Central State conventions in growth rates for Asian/Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and Blacks—but this growth is from a smaller population base for these racial groups than the other North Central State conventions.
- The North Central States region, as the whole United States, is becoming more diverse racially and ethnically. In 1980 the Anglo population for the North Central States was 87 percent. By 1995 it had dropped to 84 percent, and is projected to drop to 82 percent by 2005. By 2025 Anglos are projected to comprise 77 percent of the total population in the North Central States. The shrinking share of Anglos to total population will be most dramatic in Illinois, where Anglos will have declined from 78 percent in 1980 to 63 percent by 2025. The Minnesota-Wisconsin convention is also undergoing notable racial change. Anglos comprised 95 percent of total population in 1980; by 2025 the Anglo share will have dropped to 84 percent.