

Presbyterian Church

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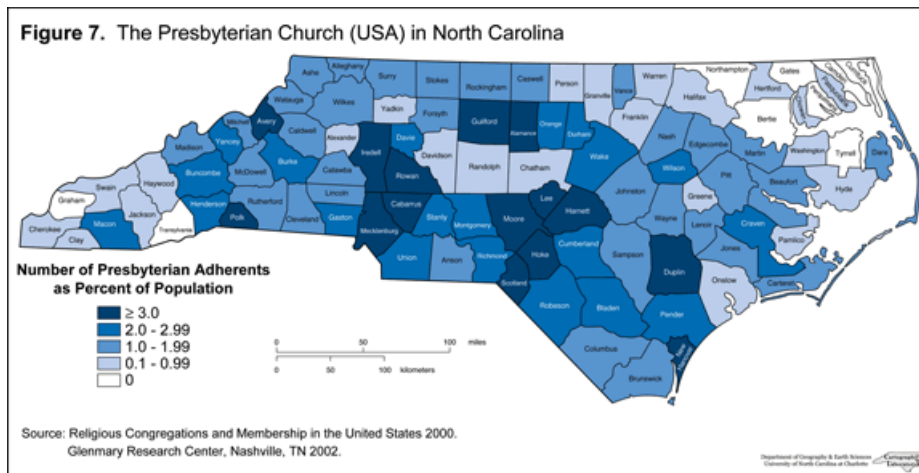
The Presbyterian (USA) Church

See Also: [Presbyterian Church \(From the Encyclopedia of North Carolina\)](#)

by Alfred W. Stuart

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Presbyterian churches were originally brought into the state by both Scots-Irish and [Highland Scots](#) [1] in-migrants. The former settled mostly on the Piedmont while the Highland Scots came in through the Cape Fear Valley and, in some cases, moved on into mountain coves in the western part of the state. In the past, it was said that in [Mecklenburg County](#) [2] there were more Presbyterians than people! While never literally true, of course, today Presbyterian (USA) adherents make up only 6% of the population in [Mecklenburg](#) [3], trailing [Baptists](#) [4], [Catholics](#) [5], and [Methodists](#) [6] in that regard. In fact, the Presbyterian church (USA) saw the number of its adherents decline slightly statewide between 1990 and 2000. It is another mid-sized denomination, with 276 adherents per church. As Figure 7 shows above, Presbyterian congregations are found in 92 counties, with the heaviest concentration still found in parts of the [Piedmont corridor](#) [7] but also on its eastern flank and in some other eastern counties. They are least well represented in the northeastern part of the state, where six counties lack a single congregation.

Another component of Presbyterianism in the state is the Presbyterian Church in America. It was formed in the 1970s at about the same time that the northern and southern branches of the church were moving toward reunification to form the current PC USA. It is somewhat like the Missouri Synod of the [Lutheran Church](#) [8] in that it is more conservative than is its larger counterpart. It has fewer than 10% of the number of adherents as the PC USA but it experienced stronger recent growth, adding almost 65% to the number of its adherents between 1990 and 2000. This growth may help explain the decline in PC USA numbers since many Southern Presbyterian congregations that were opposed to reunification withdrew to join the PC in America instead.

Additional Resources:

2012 Statistical Abstract. Population: Religion. U.S. Census Bureau.
<http://www.census.gov/library/publications/2011/compendia/statab/131ed/p...> [9]

Guide to Researching the History of Religion in North Carolina: Presbyterian Church. UNC-Chapel Hill Libraries. <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/religious-studies> [10]

Hartford Institute for Religion Research. <http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/> [11]

State Membership Report, North Carolina. The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA)<https://www.thearda.com/> [12]

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Links

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/highland-scots>

[2] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/mecklenburg>

[3] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/mecklenburg>

[4] <https://ncpedia.org/southern-baptist-convention>

[5] <https://ncpedia.org/religion/catholic-church>

[6] <https://ncpedia.org/religion/united-methodist-church>

[7] <https://ncpedia.org/our-state-geography-snap-three>

[8] <https://ncpedia.org/religion/evangelical-lutheran-church>

[9] <http://www.census.gov/library/publications/2011/compendia/statab/131ed/population.html>

[10] <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/religious-studies>

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