Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America

Ten Facts about Geographic Patterns of the Orthodox Church Life in the United States.

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Fact 1. In the United States nationwide and for all jurisdictions of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops combined, the total number of persons (including children) participating in the local parishes is about 800,000. They attend 1,900 parishes and mission communities. In addition, 73 monastic communities belong to the various Assembly's jurisdictions. See Tab. 1 on p.6 and Map 1 on p.12.

Fact 2. Compared to the general US population, the members of the Orthodox Churches are significantly more concentrated in certain geographic areas. 45% of them live in just five states: New York (14% of all Orthodox Church members), California (10%), Illinois (8%), Pennsylvania (7%) and Massachusetts (6%). At the same time, only 29% of the general US population lives in these five states. See Maps 2a and 2b on pp. 13-14.

Fact 3. Further, Orthodox Church life in the United States is geographically "concentrated" not only in certain states but also in particular counties. The 10 top US counties with the largest numbers of the Orthodox Church members account for 26% of entire membership in the jurisdictions that are part of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops. See Tab 4 on p.10 and Map 3 on p. 15.

Fact 4. US nationwide and for all jurisdictions of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops combined, the average size of a single Orthodox parish is 421 persons (including children). But this figure varies greatly not only from jurisdiction-to-jurisdiction but also from state-to-state. See Tab. 1. The most "sizeable" parishes are located in Nevada (890 persons per parish on the average), Utah (848), Illinois (718), New York (656), Massachusetts (651) and Maryland (616). On the opposite end, the smallest parish communities are in North Dakota (50 persons per parish on average), Hawaii (63), Vermont (73), Montana (94) and Idaho (96).

Alexei Krindatch (akrindatch @aol.com) Ten Facts about Geographic Patterns of the Orthodox Church Life in the United States **Fact 5.** Geographic "density" of the network of Orthodox parishes in America (and, therefore, the distances between parishes) is *extremely* different in various states. See Tab.1 on p.6.

There are more than 20 parishes per 10,000 square miles in such states as New Jersey (103 parishes per 10,000 square miles), Connecticut (91), Massachusetts (73), Pennsylvania (50), Rhode Island (41), New York (30), Delaware (27), Maryland (25) and Ohio (22). At the same time, less than 1 (one) parish per 10,000 square miles are in Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, North and South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. Less than 2 parishes per 10,000 square miles are in the states of Alaska, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Oregon.

Fact 6. Similarly to state-to-state variations in the geographic density of the Orthodox parishes, various states have very different "supply" of Orthodox parishes if measured by the number of parishes per 1,000,000 of general state population. See Tab. 1 on p.6.

Alaska is on the "very top" with 130 Orthodox parishes per 1,000,000 general state population. The states with at least 10 parishes per 1,000,000 general population are Pennsylvania (18), Connecticut (14), Massachusetts (12), New Hampshire (11), New Jersey (10) and Washington DC (10). The state with the smallest number of parishes per 1,000,000 general population is Mississippi: only 1.7 parishes per 1,000,000 population. Less than 3 parishes per 1,000,000 general population are in the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah.

Fact 7. "Where can new Orthodox parishes be established" is a difficult question. Indeed, the decision about "planting" new churches should take into account many factors such as local demography, economy, overall level of religiosity of population, availability of clergy, etc. From the perspective of *purely geographic factors*, however, those states should be considered as the "candidates" for the establishing new parish communities where two factors are combined, namely:

- ➤ Low territorial density of currently existing parishes (i.e. small number of parishes per 10,000 square miles) and
- > Small number of parishes in proportion to the total population (i.e. small number of parishes per 1,000,000 population).

Put simply, in the states which satisfy these two conditions, not only distances between currently existing parishes are great but there exists also a significant demographic potential (i.e. sizeable population) upon which the new parishes can be built. The states satisfying these criteria are: Arizona, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Nevada, South Dakota and Utah.

Fact 8. US nationwide, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA) accounts for 474,500 out of 798,000 persons participating in the Orthodox Church life in America. That is, of all persons who attend in the parishes that belong to the various Assembly's jurisdictions, 60% attend the parishes of the GOA. Accordingly, by the number of church members and parishes, the GOA dominates in most states.

There are, however, a number exceptions from this fact. Tab. 2 on p.8 shows that Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese (AOCA) has the largest number of parishes and members in Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky and Oklahoma. In Texas, the AOCA is largest jurisdiction by number of parishes, while GOA prevails in the total of church members. In Alaska and North Dakota, the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) is the largest Orthodox jurisdiction, both in terms of members and parishes. In the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington and Wisconsin, the GOA dominates in terms of the number of church members, but OCA has the largest number of parishes. Compared to other Orthodox jurisdictions, the OCA also has largest number of parishes in the United States nationwide.

Fact 9. During decade of 2000-2010, the total number of parishes and monastic communities that belong to the various Assembly's jurisdictions increased from 1689 to 1936: that is, + 15% growth. See Tab. 3 on p.9 and Map 4 on p. 16.

Alexei Krindatch (akrindatch @aol.com) Ten Facts about Geographic Patterns of the Orthodox Church Life in the United States The states which grew in parishes most dynamically are: Georgia (+ 35% increase in number of parishes during 2000-2010), Maryland (+ 39%), Texas (+ 45%), Kansas (+ 45%), Arkansas (+ 50%), Iowa (+ 50%), North Carolina (+ 50%), Virginia (+ 52%), Missouri (+ 54%), Oklahoma (+ 57%), Washington (+ 60%), Delaware (+ 75%), Kentucky (+ 75%), Tennessee (+ 80%) and Hawaii (+ 150%). When placed on the US map, with the exception of Washington and Hawaii, all states with the fastest growth in parishes form one single region.

Map 5 on p.17 provides detailed information on increase or decrease in the Orthodox Church presence for each US county. Between 2000 and now, the US Orthodox Churches "entered" and established their parishes and missions in 140 new counties. Regrettably, during the same period, in 32 counties Orthodox parishes and missions were closed or moved out.

Fact 10. As of January 1, 2013, there were 50 active (not retired) Orthodox bishops in the United States that belong to the various Assembly's jurisdiction. This includes 32 ruling diocesan bishops, 17 vicar/auxiliary bishops¹ and 1 titular bishop. See Tab. 6 in Appendix.

On the one hand, the current geography of the church hierarchy reflects to a large extent geographic distribution of the Orthodox Church *members*. Indeed, with the exception of New Jersey, the states with the largest numbers of hierarchs² are the same as the states with the largest numbers of the Orthodox Church members (see Fact 2 above). These states with the largest number of hierarchs are: New York (11 bishops), Illinois (7), California (7), Pennsylvania (5) and New Jersey (5). On the other hand, the states where the Orthodox bishops reside do not necessarily "mirror" the states where the Orthodox *parishes* are located. Today, 70% of all US Orthodox hierarchs live in New York, Illinois, California, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, but only 39% of US Orthodox parishes are situated in these states.

¹ Including seven bishops of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese who administer their dioceses, but have official status of "auxiliary" bishops to the Primate of the Antiochian Archdiocese.

² There are few discrepancies between locations where some hierarchs actually "reside" and places where they "cathedrals" are. Examples include two ruling bishops of Ukranian Orthodox Church (we count them as residing in NJ) and Primate of Orthodox Church in America (in our report we count him as residing in NY).

State	Number of	Number	Total of	Average size	Number of	Number of
	monastic	of	adherents: of a single		parishes per	parishes
	communities	parishes	1000	parish:	1,000,000	per
		(1)	(2)	persons	population	10,000 sq
				(3)		miles
Alabama	0	12	2,880	244	2.5	2.3
Alaska	2	92	13,473	146	129.6	1.4
Arkansas	0	10	1,214	121	2.8	1.6
Arizona	3	21	11,390	542	3.6	2.0
California	9	168	80,355	478	4.5	10.3
Colorado	2	26	10,013	385	5.2	2.5
Connecticut	0	48	17,522	365	14.0	91.0
Delaware	0	6	1,106	184	7.4	26.6
Florida	4	97	48,349	504	4.8	13.7
Georgia	1	27	11,911	441	2.7	4.4
Hawaii	0	5	315	63	4.0	5.0
Idaho	0	9	863	96	4.8	0.9
Illinois	3	90	64,576	718	6.8	15.2
Indiana	2	48	18,702	390	6.3	11.3
Iowa	0	12	2,081	173	3.9	2.1
Kansas	0	16	2,847	178	5.6	1.9
Kentucky	0	6	2,095	349	1.9	2.0
Louisiana	0	12	2,148	179	1.9	1.6
Maine	0	7	1,738	248	5.3	2.0
Maryland	0	33	20,315	616	5.4	25.0
Massachusetts	0	74	48,153	651	11.8	72.9
Michigan	4	73	34,734	476	6.6	6.7
Minnesota	1	28	6,778	242	5.3	3.2
Mississippi	0	7	995	142	1.7	1.0
Missouri	2	19	6,370	335	2.9	2.5
Montana	0	6	565	94	6.1	0.4
Nebraska	0	10	1,463	146	6.4	1.5
Nevada	0	9	8,007	890	3.3	0.8
New Hampshire	0	15	4,266	284	11.4	16.1
New Jersey	0	91	46,793	514	10.2	103.4
New Mexico	1	8	1,986	248	3.0	0.5

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	Number of	Number	Total of	Average size	Number of	Number of
	monastic	of	adherents:	of a single	parishes per	parishes
State	communities	parishes	1000	parish:	1,000,000	per
		(1)	(2)	persons	population	10,000 sq
				(3)		miles
New York	12	168	109,473	656	8.5	30.0
North Carolina	3	32	14,033	439	2.9	5.2
North Dakota	0	3	150	50	5.6	0.5
Ohio	6	102	45,785	449	8.5	21.8
Oklahoma	0	12	2,151	179	2.6	1.5
Oregon	0	18	5,781	340	4.9	1.9
Pennsylvania	6	226	51,974	231	17.9	49.5
Rhode Island	0	8	3,781	473	5.8	41.0
South Carolina	2	18	5,097	283	3.8	5.4
South Dakota	0	3	460	153	2.5	0.3
Tennessee	1	20	3,991	200	2.3	3.4
Texas	3	70	23,088	330	2.6	2.4
Utah	0	7	5,935	848	2.5	0.8
Vermont	0	4	290	73	6.4	4.2
Virginia	1	38	13,373	361	3.9	7.3
Washington	2	29	10,895	389	4.8	4.4
West Virginia	2	15	2,681	179	7.8	6.0
Wisconsin	1	31	11,908	384	4.4	3.8
Wyoming	0	5	885	177	6.4	0.4
Wash., DC	0	6	11,900	1983	10.0	8.6
US total	71	1,900	797,632	421	5.9	4.8

Notes: (1) – Including mission parishes; (2) – "Adherents" are defined as the most inclusive category of membership. "Adherents" include all individual "full members" (whatever definition of "full members" each Orthodox jurisdiction utilizes), their children and estimated number of persons who are not "full members," but participate – at least occasionally – in the life of the local Orthodox parish. Data on "adherents" for each state also include persons who attend church services at monastic communities instead of the local parishes; (3) – Average size of a single parish is calculated as total of adherents attending in the local parishes divided by the number of parishes. The persons attending in monastic communities instead of the local parishes are not included.

Tab. 2 "Orthodox Jurisdictions with Biggest Numbers of Parishes and Adherents (1) in Each State"

	Jurisdiction	Jurisdiction	libers of Farishes a	Jurisdiction	Jurisdiction
	with the	with the		with the	with the
State	biggest	biggest	State	biggest	biggest
	number of	number of		number of	number of
	parishes (2)	adherents		parishes (2)	adherents
Alabama	GOA	GOA	Nebraska	GOA	GOA
Alaska	OCA	OCA	Nevada	GOA / OCA /	GOA
Alaska	OCA	OCA	Nevaua	Serbian	
Arkansas	AOCA	AOCA	New Hampshire	GOA	GOA
Arizona	GOA	GOA	New Jersey	GOA	GOA
California	GOA	GOA	New Mexico	GOA / OCA	GOA
Colorado	GOA / OCA	GOA	New York	GOA	GOA
Connecticut	OCA	GOA	North Carolina	GOA	GOA
Delaware	OCA	GOA	North Dakota	OCA	OCA
Florida	GOA	GOA	Ohio	OCA	GOA
Georgia	GOA	GOA	Oklahoma	AOCA	AOCA
Hawaii	GOA	GOA	Oregon	OCA	GOA
Idaho	AOCA	AOCA	Pennsylvania	OCA	GOA
Illinois	GOA	GOA	Rhode Island	GOA	GOA
Indiana	GOA / OCA	GOA	South Carolina	GOA	GOA
Iowa	GOA	GOA	South Dakota	AOCA / GOA	GOA
Kansas	AOCA	AOCA	Tennessee	GOA	GOA
Kentucky	AOCA	AOCA	Texas	AOCA	GOA
Louisiana	AOCA / GOA	GOA	Utah	GOA	GOA
Maine	GOA	GOA	Vermont	GOA / OCA	GOA
Maryland	GOA	GOA	Virginia	GOA	GOA
Massachusetts	GOA	GOA	Washington	OCA	GOA
Michigan	GOA	GOA	West Virginia	GOA	GOA
Minnesota	OCA	GOA	Wisconsin	OCA	GOA
Mississippi	AOCA / GOA	GOA	Wyoming	GOA	GOA
Missouri	OCA	GOA	Wash., DC	GOA / AOCA	GOA
Montana	OCA	GOA	US nationwide	OCA	GOA

Note: (1) - "Adherents" are defined as the most inclusive category of membership. "Adherents" include all individual "full members" (whatever definition of "full members" each Orthodox jurisdiction utilizes), their children and estimated number of persons who are not "full members," but participate – at least occasionally – in the life of the local Orthodox parish. (2) – if more than one jurisdiction is indicated, this means that several jurisdictions have equal number of parishes.

Tab. 3 "Change in the Total Number of Parishes and Monastic Communities which Belong to the Jurisdictions of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops by the State: 2000-2010"

	Total of parishes and monastic during State communities State State		Total of parishes and monastic communities		Change during		
State	2000	2010	(%)	State	2000	2010	2000-2010 (%)
Alabama	10	12	+ 20%	Nebraska	9	11	+ 22%
Alaska	87	94	+ 8%	Nevada	9	9	0%
Arkansas	6	9	+ 50%	New Hampshire	15	15	0%
Arizona	19	24	+ 26%	New Jersey	92	90	- 2%
California	154	178	+ 16%	New Mexico	8	8	0%
Colorado	22	28	+ 27%	New York	170	175	+ 3%
Connecticut	45	50	+ 11%	North Carolina	22	33	+ 50%
Delaware	4	7	+ 75%	North Dakota	3	3	0%
Florida	83	95	+ 14%	Ohio	91	107	+ 18%
Georgia	20	27	+ 35%	Oklahoma	7	11	+ 57%
Hawaii	2	5	+ 150%	Oregon	17	18	+ 6%
Idaho	6	8	+ 33%	Pennsylvania	239	234	- 2%
Illinois	77	92	+ 19%	Rhode Island	7	7	0%
Indiana	39	46	+ 18%	South Carolina	15	20	+ 33%
Iowa	8	12	+ 50%	South Dakota	2	2	0%
Kansas	11	16	+ 45%	Tennessee	10	18	+ 80%
Kentucky	4	7	+ 75%	Texas	49	71	+ 45%
Louisiana	8	10	+ 25%	Utah	7	7	0%
Maine	7	7	0 %	Vermont	4	4	0%
Maryland	23	32	+ 39%	Virginia	23	35	+ 52%
Massachusetts	68	76	+ 12%	Washington	20	32	+ 60%
Michigan	67	73	+ 9%	West Virginia	13	17	+ 31%
Minnesota	23	29	+ 26%	Wisconsin	28	29	+ 4%
Mississippi	5	6	+ 20%	Wyoming	5	4	- 20%
Missouri	13	20	+ 54%	Wash., DC	8	6	- 25%
Montana	5	6	+ 20%	US nationwide	1689	1936	+ 15%

Tab. 4 "Top Ten US counties by the total number of adherents (1) of the Orthodox jurisdictions which are part of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops"

Rank	Name of County	State	Total of Orthodox Church
			adherents (including children)
1.	Cook (greater Chicago area)	IL	48,114
2.	Queens (New York: Flushing area)	NY	28,260
3.	Los Angeles (city of Los Angeles)	CA	24,061
4.	New York (New York: Manhattan)	NY	16,790
5.	Middlesex (towns of Cambridge and Lowell)	MA	16,674
6.	Pinellas (cities of Clearwater and St. Petersburg)	FL	15,395
7.	Cuyahoga (greater Cleveland area)	ОН	13,624
8.	Wayne (greater Detroit area)	MI	14,404
9.	Nassau (New York: Long Island area)	NY	13,395
10.	Kings (New York: Brooklyn area)	NY	13,210

Note: (1) - "Adherents" are defined as the most inclusive category of membership. "Adherents" include all individual "full members" (whatever definition of "full members" each Orthodox jurisdiction utilizes), their children and estimated number of persons who are not "full members," but participate – at least occasionally – in the life of the local Orthodox parish.

Tab. 5 "Top Ten US counties by the total number of parishes of the Orthodox jurisdictions which are part of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops"

Rank	Name of County		Total of Orthodox Parishes
1.	Cook (greater Chicago area)	IL	49
2	Los Angeles (city of Los Angeles)	CA	32
3.	Allegheny (greater Pittsburgh area)	PA	28
4.	Cuyahoga (greater Cleveland area)	ОН	24
5.	New York (New York: Manhattan area)	NY	25
6	Queens (New York: Flushing area)	NY	19
7.	Wayne (greater Detroit area)	MI	20
8.	Fairfield (towns of Bridgeport and Danbury)	CT	20
9.	Middlesex (towns of Cambridge and Lowell)	MA	20
10.	Bethel census area	AK	17

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Tab. 6 "State-by-State Geography of the Orthodox Bishops in the United States"

State	Total	Diocesan bishops /	Bishops by jurisdictions (*)
	number of	Auxiliary bishops ⁴	
	bishops ³		
New York	11	6/5	3 GOA; 2 OCA; 2 ROCOR; 2 BLG; 1 AOCA;
			1 RUS
California	7	4/3	2 GOA ⁵ ; 2 ROCOR; 1 OCA; 1 AOCA; 1 SRB
Illinois	7	6 / 1	2 GOA; 2 ROCOR; 1 OCA; 1 SRB; 1 ROM
Pennsylvania	5	4 / 1	2 OCA; 1 GOA; 1 SRB; 1 CRP
New Jersey	5	4 / 1	2 AOCA; 2 UKR; 1 GOA
Massachusetts	4	3 / 1	1 GOA; 1 OCA; 1 AOCA; 1 ALB
Michigan	3	2 / 1	2 OCA; 1 GOA
Ohio	2	1 /1	1 OCA; 1 AOCA
West Virginia	2	0 / 2	1 AOCA; 1 ROCOR
Colorado	1	1/0	1 GOA
Florida	1	0 / 1	1 AOCA
Georgia	1	1/0	1 GOA
Kansas	1	1/0	1 AOCA
US total	50	32 / 18	13 GOA; 10 OCA; 9 AOCA; 7 ROCOR;
			3 SRB; 2 UKR; 2 BLG; 1 RUS; 1 ALB;
			1 ROM; 1 ALB.

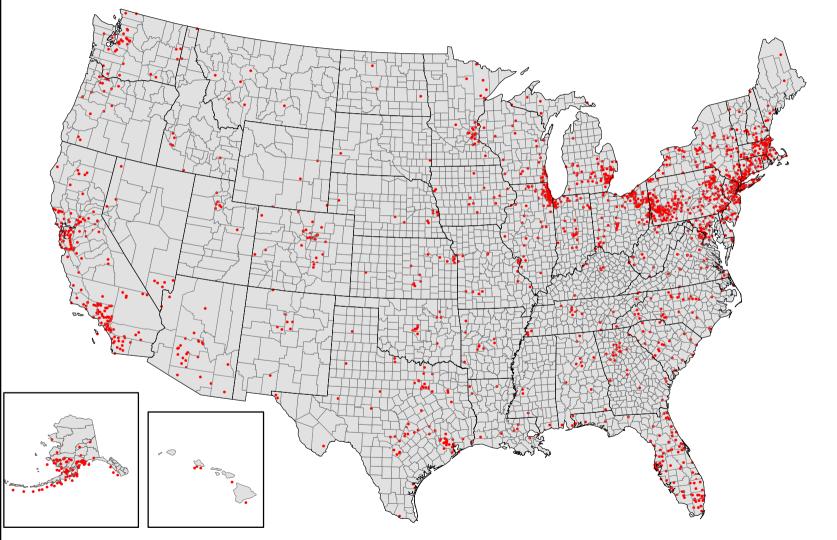
(*): GOA - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America; OCA - Orthodox Church in America; AOCA - Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese; ROCOR - Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia; SRB - Serbian Orthodox Church; ROM - Romanian Archdiocese; BLG - Bulgarian Diocese; RUS - Patriarchal Parishes of Russian Orthodox Church; UKR - Ukrainian Orthodox Church; CRP - Carpatho-Russian Diocese; ALB - Albanian Diocese.

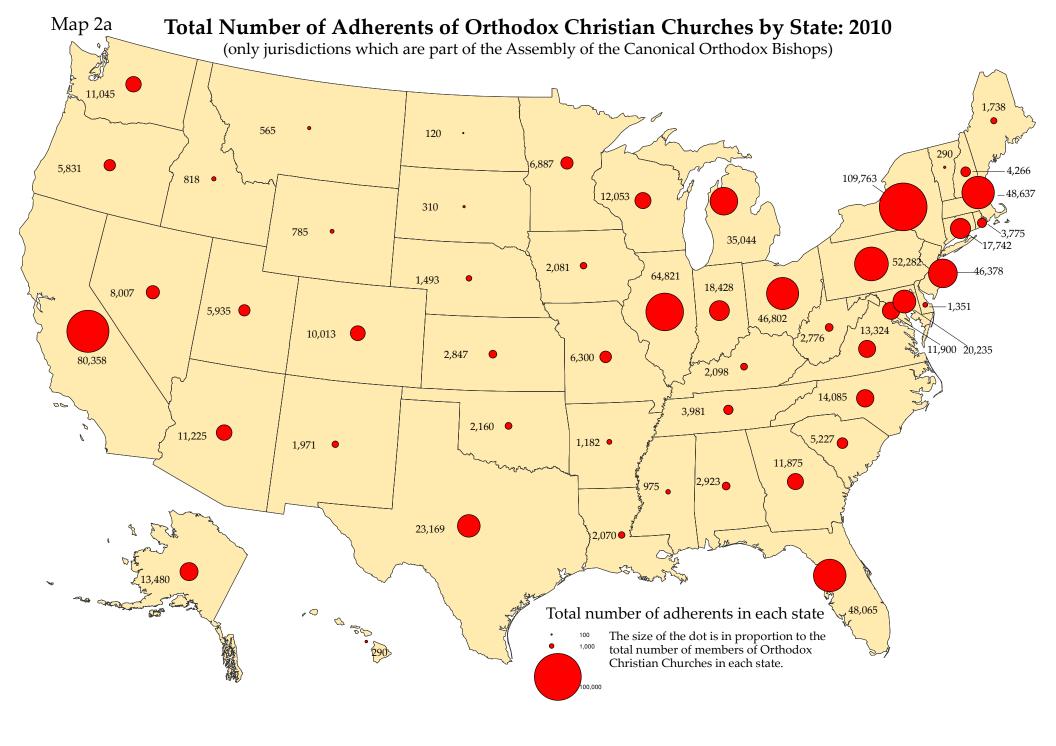
⁵ Including Metropolitan Nikitas.

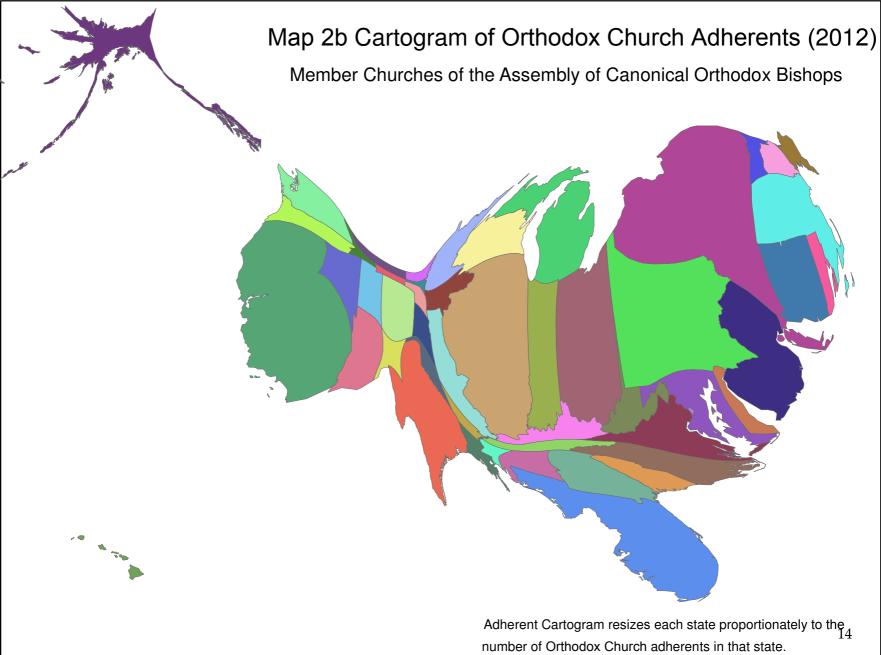
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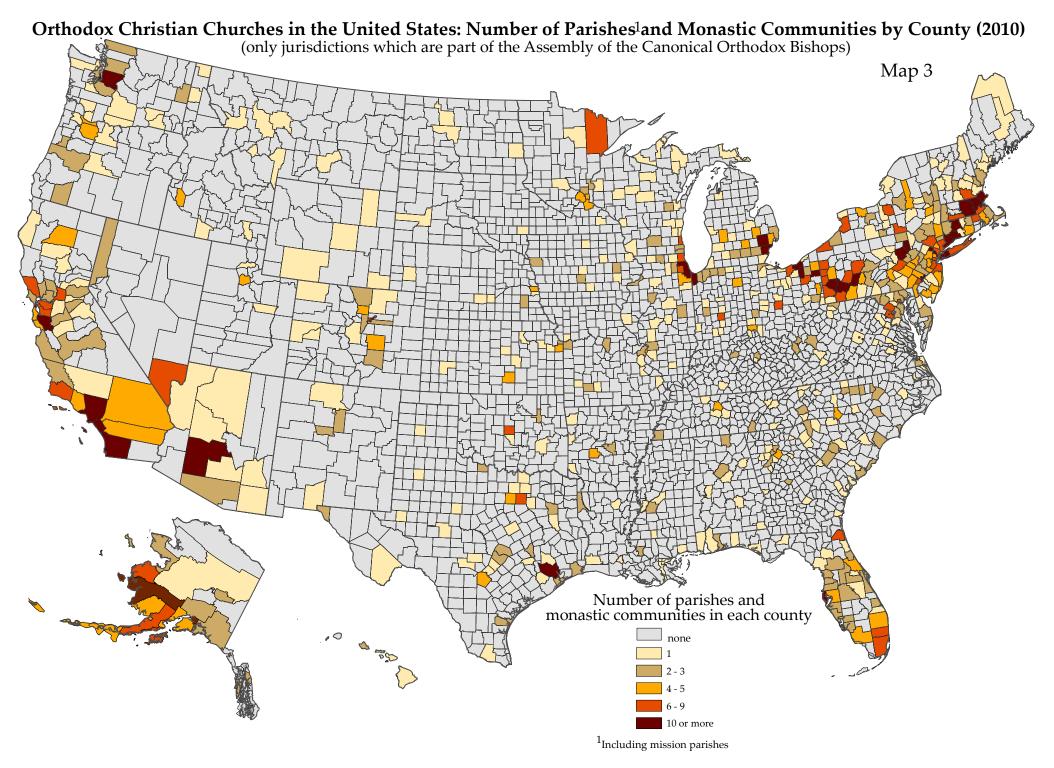
⁴ Including seven bishops of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese who administer their dioceses, but have official status of "auxiliary" bishops to the Primate of the Antiochian Archdiocese.

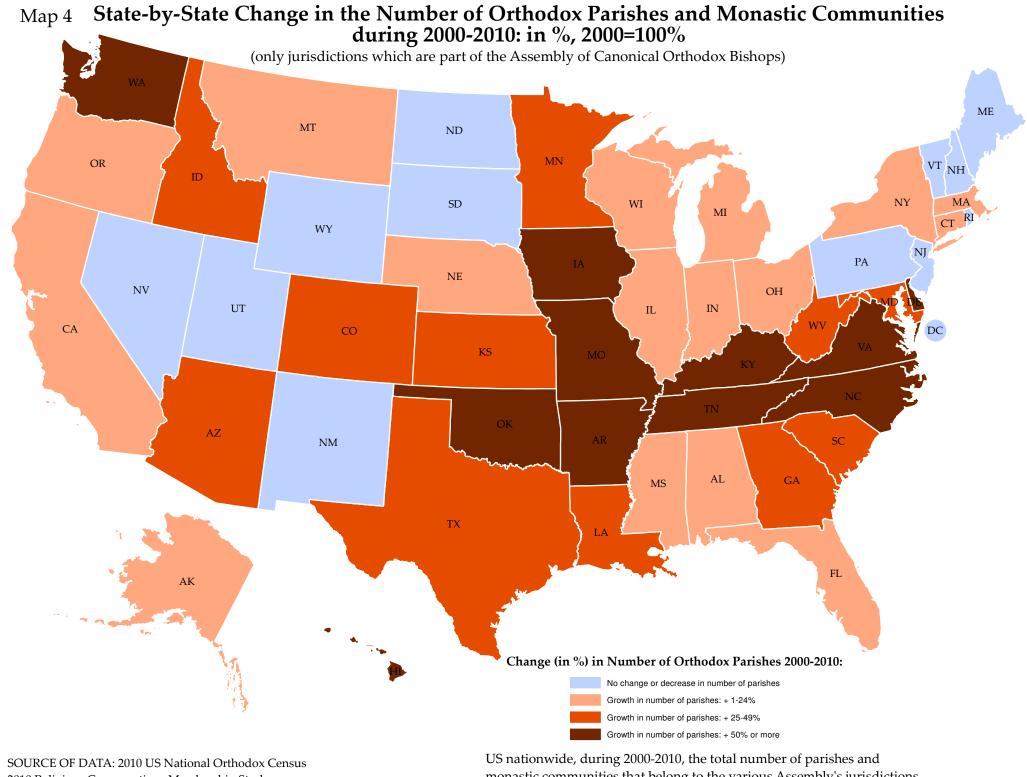
Map 1. Locations of Parishes of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the United States, 2012











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monastic communities that belong to the various Assembly's jurisdictions increased from 1,689 to 1,936: +15% growth.

Map 5. Change in Presence: 2000 to 2010. Churches of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops

