

THE CHANGING SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF  
THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

By

ROBERT LEWIS INGLE  
//

Bachelor of Arts

Bethany Nazarene College

Bethany, Oklahoma

1966

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College  
of the Oklahoma State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
July, 1973

NOV 16 1973

THE CHANGING SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF  
THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

*Stephen W. Tweedie*

Thesis Adviser

*George O. Carney*

*John F. Rooney*

*D. N. Surtan*

Dean of the Graduate College

867499

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A sincere appreciation is extended to Dr. Stephen W. Tweedie, who first suggested this study. His encouragement and invaluable assistance made the work much easier than it might have been. Thanks is also extended to Dr. George O. Carney and Dr. John F. Rooney who served on the advisory committee.

The author is also grateful for the assistance offered by Nazarene Headquarters in the person of Dr. B. Edgar Johnson, who offered unlimited access to the archives of the Church.

A special thanks is given to Kathy for her assistance and patience.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. ORIGINS AND DIFFUSION TO 1916. . . . .	8
Holiness in the Northeast . . . . .	10
Nazarenes in the West . . . . .	15
South and Southwest Origins . . . . .	17
National Mergers and Organization . . . . .	22
Dissemination and Boundary Revisions. . . . .	26
Regional Pattern, 1916. . . . .	33
III. UNLIMITED EXPANSION: 1916-1950. . . . .	37
Centralized Organization and Regionalized Education: 1916-1926 . . . . .	37
Emerging Strongholds: 1926-1936. . . . .	46
Unified National Expansion: 1936-1950. . . . .	51
IV. TERRITORIAL SATURATION: 1950-1970 . . . . .	59
Phase I: Growth in Place, 1950-1960. . . . .	59
Phase II: Selected Growth, 1960-1970 . . . . .	64
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS. . . . .	74
An Evolving Emphasis, . . . . .	76
Defining Nazarene Regions . . . . .	80
Future Research . . . . .	86
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	87
APPENDIX - STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS. . . . .	89

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Reported Nazarene Statistics, 1916. . . . .	28
II. Reported Nazarene Statistics, 1926. . . . .	41
III. Reported Nazarene Statistics, 1936. . . . .	48
IV. Reported Nazarene Statistics, 1950. . . . .	53
V. Reported Nazarene Statistics, 1960. . . . .	60
VI. Reported Nazarene Statistics, 1970. . . . .	68
VII. Church Size: 1916-1970 . . . . .	70
VIII. Summary of Nazarene Growth. . . . .	78
IX. Nazarenes and Total Population in SMSA's. . . . .	78

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Central Evangelical Holiness Association, 1896. . . . .	12
2. Member Churches of the Pentecostal Churches of America, 1907.	13
3. Nazarene Church Mergers in the United States. . . . .	14
4. Church of the Nazarene, 1907, . . . . .	16
5. New Testament Church of Christ, 1905. . . . .	19
6. Independent Holiness Church, 1905 . . . . .	20
7. Holiness Church of Christ, 1908 . . . . .	21
8. Reported Nazarene Membership, 1906. . . . .	23
9. Nazarene Districts, 1908. . . . .	25
10. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1916. . . . .	27
11. Nazarene Districts, 1915. . . . .	32
12. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1916. . . . .	35
13. Nazarene Educational Institutions . . . . .	39
14. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1926. . . . .	40
15. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1926. . . . .	45
16. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1936. . . . .	47
17. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1936. . . . .	52
18. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1950. . . . .	55
19. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1950. . . . .	58
20. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1960. . . . .	62
21. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1960. . . . .	65
22. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1970. . . . .	67

Figure	Page
23. Nazarene Districts, 1968. . . . .	71
24. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1970. . . . .	73
25. Nazarene Growth and Expansion, 1916-1970. . . . .	77
26. SMSA's Above the National Norm in Nazarene Membership . . . .	79
27. SMSA's Below the National Norm in Nazarene Membership . . . .	79
28. Per Capita Nazarene Membership by County, 1970. . . . .	81
29. Nazarene Regions. . . . .	83
30. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas . . . . .	90

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Cultural geography is concerned with man, not as an individual, but as a sharer and bearer of culture. Its particular concern is with two kinds of relationships: the interaction between a culture and its complex earth environment, and the spatial interaction among different cultures. The geography of religion investigates these relationships, concentrating its attention on the religious component in culture.<sup>1</sup>

The study of religion and religious groups has prompted little research by the social geographer in America. The geographical aspect of religion has proved to be a difficult component of culture to study, especially in America where so many denominations are prevalent. Wilbur Zelinsky points out that the geography of religion has not developed because of an inadequacy of statistics and fundamental data, and that religion is a many-sided phenomenon with aspects which are difficult to measure and observe.<sup>2</sup>

Prior to any geographic studies in religion, Henry Gannett made an attempt to map the members of religious bodies in the United States in 1890.<sup>3</sup> This work, which was a part of the Eleventh Census, was simply a

---

<sup>1</sup>David E. Sopher, Geography of Religions (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Wilbur Zelinsky, "An Approach to the Religious Geography of the United States: Patterns of Church Membership in 1952," Annals, Association of American Geographers, LI (June, 1961), pp. 140-141.

<sup>3</sup>Eleventh Census of the United States: 1890, Vol. 9, Report on Statistics of Churches in the United States, 1894.



collection of maps of church memberships as a percent of population by counties along with listings of the information mapped. There was no accompanying explanation of the patterns as could be found later in Edwin Gaustad's Historical Atlas of Religion in America, which was published in 1962.<sup>4</sup> While Gaustad appeared to give a broad historical overview of religion in America, most of his maps were based on churches rather than membership which tends to distort a denomination's influence in many cases.

Studies concerned with the geographical significance of religious distributions on a national scale were actually initiated by Wilbur Zelinsky in 1961.<sup>5</sup> Zelinsky used data collected by the National Council of Churches in 1952, mapped twenty-two denominations, and discussed the patterns of church membership. During the following decade, studies which followed usually took the form of an historical geography of an individual religious group,<sup>6</sup> with the exception of a theoretical work on

---

<sup>4</sup>Edwin S. Gaustad, Historical Atlas of Religion in America (New York, 1962).

<sup>5</sup>Zelinsky.

<sup>6</sup>See Judith M. Meyer, "The Historical Geography of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1847-1967: A Case Study in Religious Geography" (unpublished Master's thesis, Southern Illinois University, 1967); see also Ary J. Lamme, III, "The Spatial and Ecological Characteristics of the Diffusion of Christian Science in the United States: 1875-1910" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1968), and Richard E. Mooers, "Origin and Dispersion of Unitarianism in America" (unpublished Master's thesis, Syracuse University, 1971). Two other studies which are somewhat historic and have investigated religious groups include Donald W. Meinig, "The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847-1964," Annals, Association of American Geographers, LV (June, 1965), pp. 191-220; Elaine M. Bjorklund, "Ideology and Culture Exemplified in Southwestern Michigan," Annals, Association of American Geographers, LIV (June, 1964), pp. 227-241.

the geography of religions by David Sopher<sup>7</sup> and an unpublished dissertation on the changing spatial patterns of religious groups in the New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio area of the United States.<sup>8</sup>

The development of this area of geography can be viewed as obviously in the embryo stage, and further research can greatly add to our knowledge of the spatial dimensions of religion. Zelinsky proposes that:

. . . religion is a significant element in the population geography of the United States, in the geography of a number of economic, social and cultural phenomena, and in the genesis and persistence of general cultural regions; but we have too little knowledge of the precise ways in which religion operates in these various directions.<sup>9</sup>

An obvious void exists in this area of social geography, and attempts should be made to fill it.

With the abundance of denominations and sects in America, there is normally little physical evidence of denominational dominance in an area and few regions in the United States where any one group is strongly dominant. Newer denominations which are native to America do not have the numerical strength to be exceptionally strong in any large region (e.g., state or groups of states), with the exception of the Mormons. Thus, the study of individual denominations, especially the smaller sects, becomes a questionable exercise when viewing their seemingly small impact on the totality of our culture. But this impact, which has been a part of American culture since the arrival of the white man, is

---

<sup>7</sup>Sopher.

<sup>8</sup>Stephen W. Tweedie, "The Geography of Religious Groups in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Upstate New York: Persistence and Change, 1890-1965," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1969).

<sup>9</sup>Zelinsky, p. 166.

not dependent on sect size. Recognizing this potential and the need for analysis of religion in a geographical context, the importance of studying one small fundamentalist denomination can be viewed as a step in understanding their patterns of spread and influence. When combined with research on other fundamentalist groups, this can provide some valuable insights into certain social and political behavior patterns of our culture. As Gerhard Lenski stated:

. . . it is clear that religion in various ways is constantly influencing the daily lives of the masses of men and women in the modern American metropolis. More than that: through its impact on individuals, religion makes an impact on all the other institutional systems of the community these individuals staff.<sup>10</sup>

With no likelihood of improved religious data in the future, Zelinsky perceives possible valuable insights into the role of religion in shaping our land by pursuing five methods of research:

. . . (1) intensive local studies; (2) detailed study of the historical geography of individual denominations; (3) the statistical analysis of areal association on a national or regional scale involving such religious statistics as we have and relevant material in both the methodological and substantive writings of scholars in other fields touching on religion -- theology, demography, sociology, social psychology, political science, and history (including the history of ideas, art history, and other topics beyond the more conventional limits of historical scholarship); and (5) comparative studies involving the United States, or substantial sections thereof, and other portions of the world.<sup>11</sup>

With this background, an historical geography of an individual denomination, the Church of the Nazarene, appeared to be an important contribution to research in the area of the geography of religion.

This particular denomination was chosen for a number of reasons:

---

<sup>10</sup> Gerhard Lenski, The Religious Factor (Garden City, New York, 1963), p. 320.

<sup>11</sup> Zelinsky, p. 167.

1. There are no studies on the areal patterns of membership of any native American denominational group classified as fundamentalist. This would serve as a case study in this area of geography.
2. One of the largest and fastest growing fundamentalist groups during the past fifty years is the Church of the Nazarene.
3. The author is familiar with the ideology and theology.
4. Denominational headquarters have adequate records and statistical sources of the Nazarene Church since its inception.

An historical geography would be the most effective method of following and explaining the changing areal patterns of this religious group. As Zelinsky stated:

Any attempt to explain the areal patterns of these denominations must fall back upon the facts of their place of origin, the careers of especially forceful individuals, the almost random events of church history and diplomacy, and, possibly, certain common social and cultural tendencies about which we have no information.<sup>12</sup>

The primary purpose of this paper is to trace the changing spatial distribution of the Church of the Nazarene in the United States since 1916. The development of major regions and the expansion in geographical area will be a major thrust of this study, and the cross-sectional time periods used will include 1916, 1926, 1936, 1950, 1960, and 1970. The first three years (1916, 1926, and 1936) were chosen because of the availability of data on Nazarene membership in the Religious Census. The remaining three years were selected to coincide with the United States Census reports as well as to bring the study to the threshold of the 1970's. The data for these time periods were taken directly from

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 162.

Nazarene Church records. Although there are certain weaknesses in the use of counties, they were deemed the best data units for this research. All counties in the United States with the exception of those in Alaska and Hawaii were included. These two states were omitted from the study because of their physical separation from the rest of the Union and the insignificant number of members in each state.<sup>13</sup>

The organization of this paper follows a chronological sequence, beginning with the background of the formation of the Church of the Nazarene. The Church's early history prior to 1916 is reviewed and a few of the instrumental leaders in this early movement are mentioned. The consolidation of a number of religious sects in 1908 actually stimulated the Nazarenes into a unified national effort.

The membership distribution of the Church is first examined in 1916. The analysis will then follow the Church's growth through time and space during the period from 1916 to 1970. Some important questions will arise which relate to factors or forces affecting that growth.

1. Was there diffusion into contiguous areas or was the spread into more distant discontinuous areas?
2. What effect did the establishment of a centralized organization have on the diffusion of the Church after 1923?
3. Has the establishment of religious educational institutions produced a growth pole effect in these locations?
4. Did the Church gravitate toward certain areas and form any discernable regional patterns?
5. Has there been an abatement in the growth of the Nazarenes

---

<sup>13</sup>In 1970 Alaska had 631 members and Hawaii had 671.

which could be indicative of religious growth patterns in general?

After examining the expansion patterns of the Church during this time period, a probe into the apparent trend toward more urbanization of the Church would seem appropriate. The Nazarenes have experienced considerable membership growth in the SMSA's,<sup>14</sup> and an investigation of their development should be productive. From this broad historical portrayal of the Church's development, Nazarene regions will be identified.

In the final analysis, this study may lead to important discoveries about the growth of "Third Force"<sup>15</sup> groups in general. These groups may be expanding steadily, on the verge of sudden growth, or may have reached a saturation point geographically. Hopefully, a study of this nature could provide some tentative generalizations about spatial behavior of fundamentalist religious groups in America, and stimulate more intensive research into the areal patterns of native fundamentalist groups. Assuredly this inquiry will add to the store of information and give rise to a better understanding of the geography of religion in the United States.

---

<sup>14</sup>SMSA's is the abbreviation for Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. These areas consist of a county or group of counties containing at least one city having a population of 50,000 or more plus adjacent counties which are metropolitan in character and are economically and socially integrated with the central city.

<sup>15</sup>"Third Force" is a term coined by Henry P. VanDusen to describe the activities of the holiness, penecostal, and Adventist groups. The term comes from the idea that these groups compete with both traditional Protestantism and Catholicism as a Christian force. See Henry P. VanDusen, "The Third Force's Lesson for Others," Life (June 9, 1958), pp. 122-123.

## CHAPTER II

### ORIGINS AND DIFFUSION TO 1916

Inspired by Jesus' gospel of the disinherited, despised and neglected groups organize to safeguard their ideals, cultivate spiritual fellowship, and practice mutual aid. Discipline becomes necessary for the attainment of their hopes and the defense of their faith against the heavy hand of the persecutor. In time they gain numbers and a foothold in the political and economic orders. They become respectable and rich and powerful. The pride of power and affluence impels them to soften the earlier harsher faith and even to deny the radical doctrines they preached in the days of their poverty and suffering. They become secularized and given to the flesh pots of Egypt. In opposition to them arises another group of the disinherited, and the same cycle is repeated again.<sup>1</sup>

The rise of Methodism in Britain in the early eighteenth century was the result of the failure of great churches to meet the needs of a segment of society. John Wesley emerged as the doctrinal spokesman and forceful leader for this religious movement and used evangelistic campaigns and revivals as the chief means of spreading his religious doctrine. Methodism, destined to see its most glorious days in America, first appeared around 1765 in America and by 1784 had organized the American Methodist Episcopal Church. The efforts to evangelize the United States were more or less concentrated in the rapidly expanding frontier of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and points further west. The success of this evangelization is evident by the membership growth from 58,000

---

<sup>1</sup>John M. Mechlin, The Story of American Dissent (Port Washington, N. Y., 1934), p. 4.

in 1790 to almost 3,500,000 by 1890.<sup>2</sup>

The growth of Methodism in America during the nineteenth century might be attributed to a number of factors, but one of the more prominent was found in the evangelistic fervor of its leaders and laymen. But as the church continued to grow, especially in the urban areas, the membership had begun to evolve socially upward, and during the latter third of the nineteenth century, the urban Methodist Church evoked an air of indifference toward evangelism and revival campaigns.

While this indifference was taking hold, a much more poignant threat to Methodist harmony emerged. The Methodist founder, Wesley, had stressed the importance of Christian holiness<sup>3</sup> as the only way for a believer to "see the Lord." Holiness had been a basic tenant of the Methodists since Wesley, but following the Second Awakening (1795-1835),<sup>4</sup> many observers felt that the church was drifting away from these original ideals. There was little harmony between the holiness and non-holiness factions, and this discord was a major force in the formation of the

---

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957 (Washington, D.C., 1960), p. 229.

<sup>3</sup>The term "holiness" refers to a work of grace (santification) subsequent to conversion (justification) which imparts the perfect love of God and liberation from sin. It is received instantaneously by the believer. See Manual, Church of the Nazarene (Kansas City, 1964), pp. 29-30.

The use of holiness in this paper will refer to John Wesley's instantaneous santification. Non-holiness will include people who may believe in a form of holiness other than John Wesley's, e.g., growth into holiness.

<sup>4</sup>Religious scholars have defined four periods of revivalism in the United States: The Great Awakening, 1725-1750; The Second Awakening, 1795-1835; The Third Awakening, 1875-1900; and The Fourth Awakening, the period during and after the two world wars. See Prudencio Damboriena, S. J., Tongues as of Fire: Pentecostalism in Contemporary Christianity (Washington, 1969), p. 15.



Wesleyan Methodist Church in the 1840's and the Free Methodist Church in 1859. No other "come-outer"<sup>5</sup> groups emerged until the end of the century and the conflict within the Methodist Church continued.

Many Methodists, both laity and clergy, who struggled for the survival of holiness in the church began to organize bands of holiness people within the church, and statewide holiness associations began to spring up around the country. These people were usually interested in remaining in the Methodist Church but were on a hopeless collision course with the more powerful and numerous non-holiness faction in the church. As this conflict reached its zenith in the 1890's, it was the forceful, urban leaders among the holiness people who organized and offered them a place where holiness was accepted.

In late nineteenth-century America, with its fluid class lines, its geographical and occupational mobility, and its immature community life, all of which tended to isolate the individual, the sect leader performed an important function. He furnished inspiration and guidance as well as religious discipline for many people who were unable to find those necessities in the dominant ethos.<sup>6</sup>

Many of these forceful leaders will be mentioned in the following pages with an effort to show how their leadership was instrumental in the early diffusion of the holiness sects.

#### Holiness in the Northeast

The early history of the Church of the Nazarene in the East actually

---

<sup>5</sup>"Come-outer" was the name given to people who left established churches, such as the Methodist, to form an independent organization.

<sup>6</sup>Stow Persons, "Religion and Modernity, 1865-1914," Religion in American Life: The Shaping of American Religion, I, ed. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton, 1961), p. 401.

began in Providence, Rhode Island in 1887 when F. A. Hillery was expelled from the Methodist Church. He promptly organized a group of dissident Methodists into the People's Evangelical Church. This group along with six other churches and associations organized the Central Evangelical Holiness Association on March 14, 1890.<sup>7</sup> One church was in Rhode Island and the remainder were in eastern Massachusetts (Figure 1). This association did not expand appreciably for the next few years probably due to the competition from the organization of a General Holiness League and the expansion of the Evangelical Association (a holiness group) in New England.

Meanwhile, in New York City, a Congregationalist by the name of William H. Hoople started a mission which led, two years later, to the formation of the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America in 1896. The following year seven churches from the Central Evangelical Holiness Association joined Hoople's organization so that there were now churches from New York City to New Hampshire within this new association<sup>8</sup> (Figures 2 and 3).

Much of the geographical expansion of this alliance was limited to New York City and Boston during the years of its existence, but in 1898 new churches were organized in Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, and New Jersey. Only one year later, work was begun in Allentown, Pennsylvania and as far west as Pittsburgh. In 1900 Washington, D. C. was to be included so that the Association stretched from the Capitol to Maine and

<sup>7</sup> M. E. Redford, The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene (Kansas City, 1956), pp. 87-88.

<sup>8</sup> Timothy L. Smith, Called Unto Holiness. The Story of the Nazarenes: The Formative Years (Kansas City, 1962), pp. 68-70.

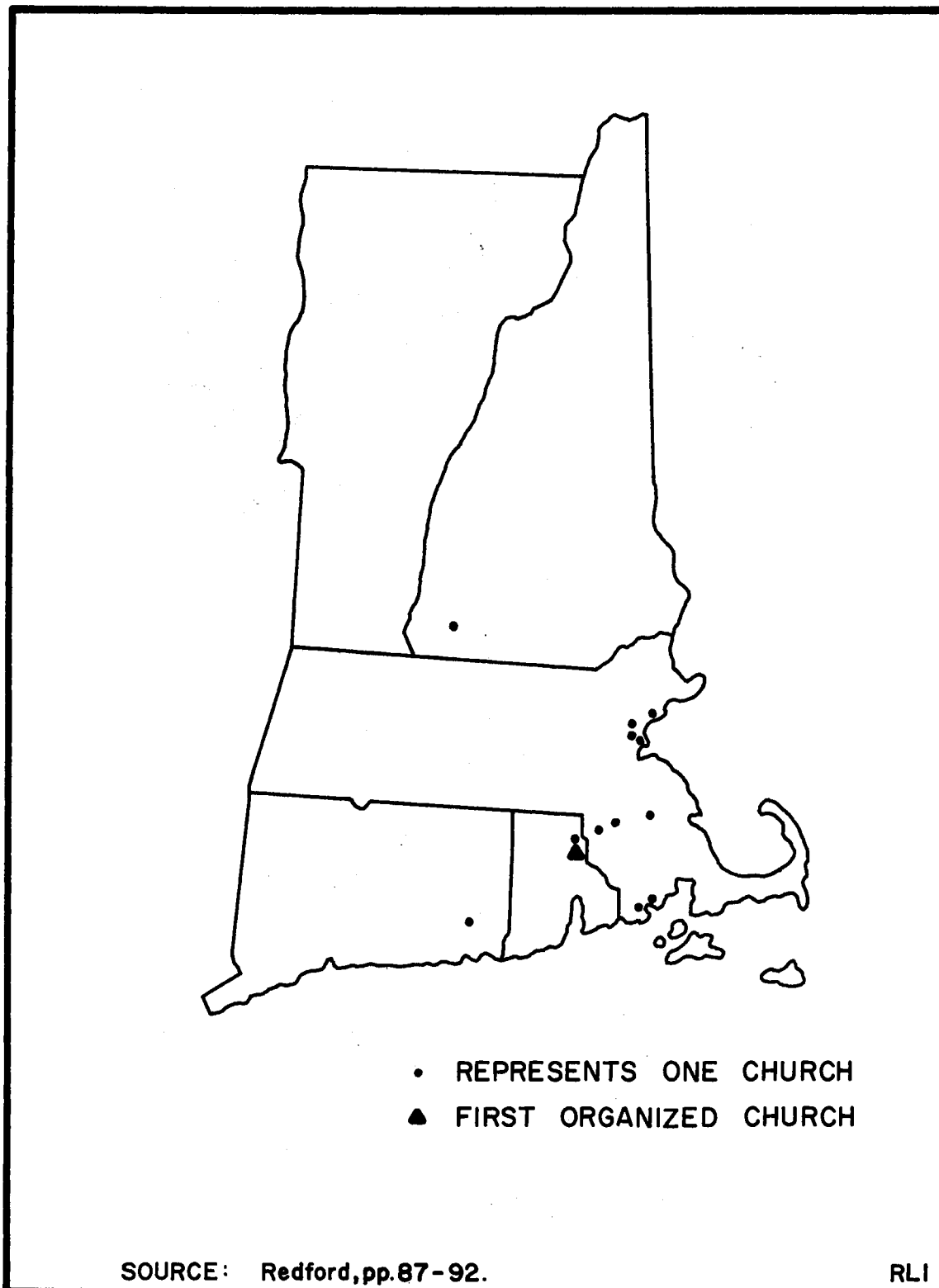


Figure 1. Central Evangelical Holiness Association, 1896

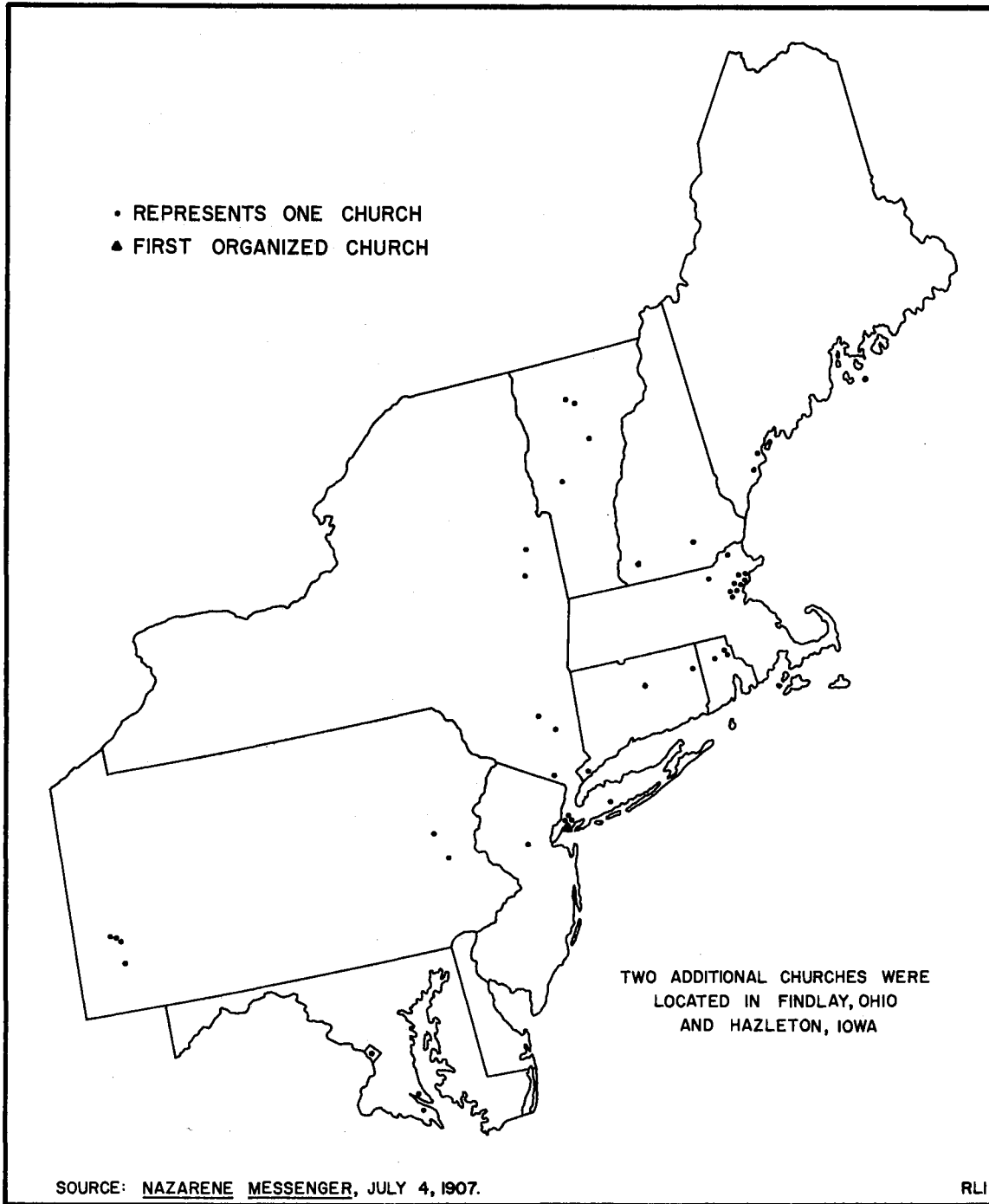
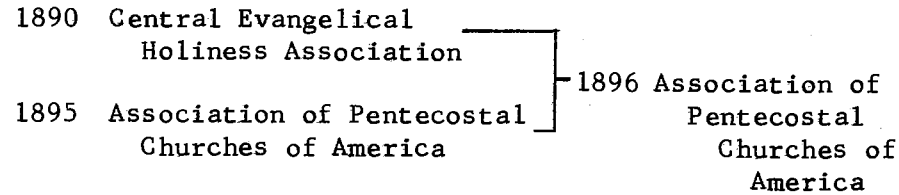
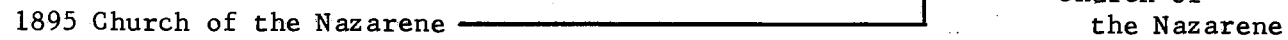


Figure 2. Member Churches of the Pentecostal Churches of America, 1907

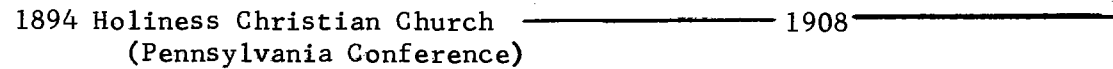
Northeast



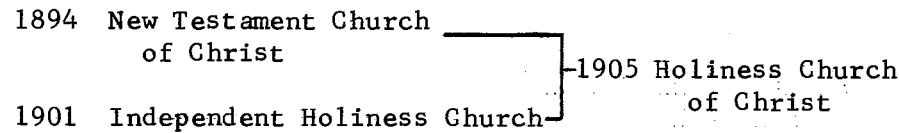
Far West



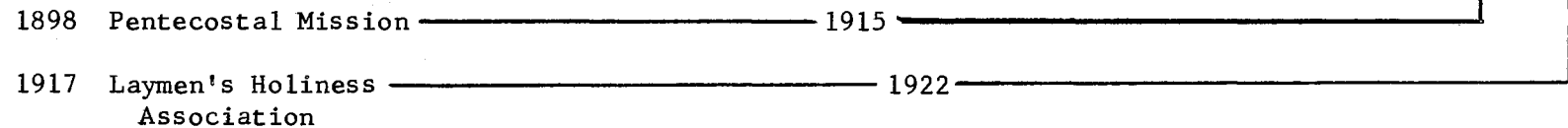
East



South and Southwest



Late Mergers



1908 Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene\*\*

\*\* Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene changed to Church of the Nazarene in 1919.

Figure 3. Nazarene Church Mergers in the United States

westward to Pittsburgh.<sup>9</sup> Two other small societies were begun in Findlay, Ohio, and Hazelton, Iowa, but their status as western outposts would soon be changed by a merger of East and West. Thus, by 1907 the Association of Pentecostal Churches, which had no single, dominant leader or centralized organization, tripled its number of churches to 47, with 2,256 members.

#### Nazarenes in the West

The growth of the Nazarenes in the West during the initial years can be attributed to one man, Phineas F. Bresee. He has been recognized as the founder of the Church as he did much to bring about its expansion and national unification. His initial efforts at organizing a new church were the result of an unhappy ministry and association with non-holiness Methodists in Los Angeles. Believing in a need for Wesleyan holiness and in the failure of the Methodist Church to provide a ministry for the poor, he joined with J. P. Widney, the president of Southern California University, in forming the Church of the Nazarene in 1895.<sup>10</sup>

Geographically, the Nazarene Church expanded much further than their eastern counterparts during the decade prior to union in 1907 (Figure 4). Bresee's church did not leave California before 1901, but in the period from 1901-1907, it located in 11 other states, and by 1906 there were 45 local churches and 3,385 members.<sup>11</sup> The diffusion

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 74-77.

<sup>10</sup>Jack Ford, In the Steps of John Wesley; The Church of the Nazarene in Britain (Kansas City, 1968), p. 18.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 20, and Timothy L. Smith, pp. 140-150.

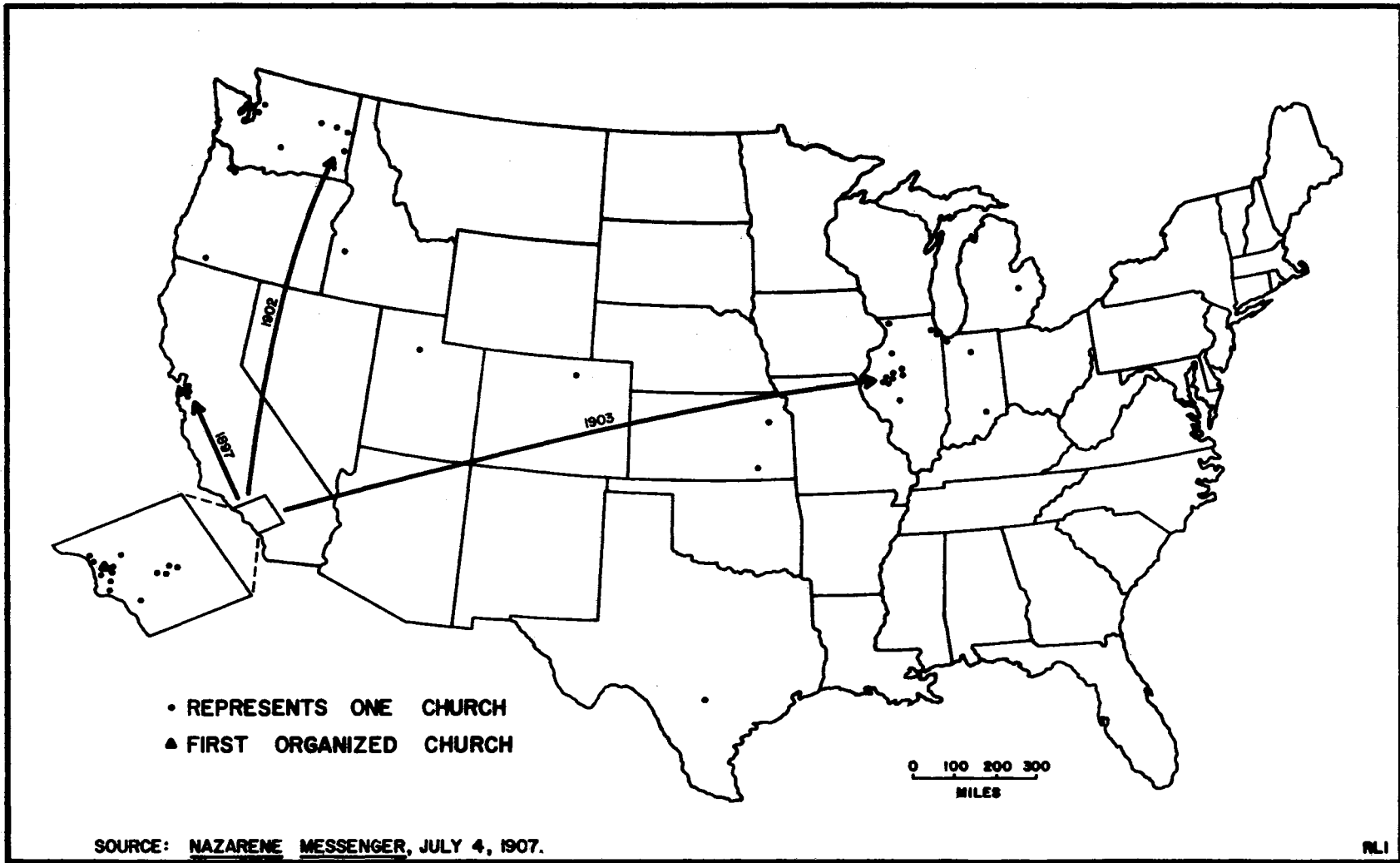


Figure 4. Church of the Nazarene, 1907

of the Nazarenes was urban in nature; the locations chosen were usually the largest cities in the state or area. The spread into northern California first went to the Bay Area at Berkeley; while out of state, the first churches organized in the Northwest were in such places as Spokane, Seattle, Boise, and Portland. Other cities further east included Salt Lake City, Omaha, Minneapolis, and Chicago.

As a result of the conscious effort of Bresee and his followers to expand the Church, some states were exhibiting a slow diffusion into smaller towns within particular areas. Besides California, which had 23 churches in 1906, Illinois had increased to 11, and Washington had seven.<sup>12</sup> A few states lost their existing churches so that the real diffusion of this holiness church did not increase significantly until a national merger brought about an organized effort to "spread the message."

#### South and Southwest Origins

The beginnings of a holiness movement in the South was less of an urban protest against the established church than in the remainder of the country. The crusades were more rural and small-town in nature and were based on a desire to preserve scriptural holiness in the church. Robert L. Harris organized the New Testament Church of Christ in 1894 at Milan, Tennessee, and shortly after his death, his wife, and two friends began an active effort to spread the church's influence.<sup>13</sup> Organized

---

<sup>12</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies, 1906 (Washington, D.C., 1910), p. 505.

<sup>13</sup>Manual, pp. 16-17.



churches began to appear in northern Mississippi, western Tennessee, and scattered areas within Arkansas (Figure 5). An especially strong segment of this church could be found in the rural areas of west Texas around Abilene by 1902. This was the result of Mary Harris' return to her native west Texas to hold revival services in 1895.<sup>14</sup>

While this church was finding supporters for its cause, another movement was rising up in north central Texas. The discontented Methodists of north Texas had already spent many years in conflict as they argued over the question of holiness, and as early as 1894, about 30 churches had declined in membership in the North Texas Methodist Conference. This decrease was attributed in part to the holiness conflict.<sup>15</sup> The first holiness churches were located in 1888 in Collin County, a rural farming area north of Dallas. Other holiness associations were also formed, but the Independent Holiness Church, organized in 1901, became the most viable holiness force and by 1904 had 27 churches centered in north central and north eastern Texas<sup>16</sup> (Figure 6).

In 1905 the New Testament Church of Christ and the Independent Holiness Church merged, thereby strengthening the geographical unity of the former group and greatly increasing the range of the latter. The new church took the name Holiness Church of Christ and in 1905 had 75 churches in parts of four states (Figure 7). Between the years 1905-1908 this organization added new churches from Florida to Colorado, but the majority of these churches were rural and their size and outreach

---

<sup>14</sup>Timothy L. Smith, p. 154.

<sup>15</sup>Walter N. Vernon, Methodism Moves Across North Texas (Dallas, 1967), p. 149.

<sup>16</sup>Ford, p. 25.

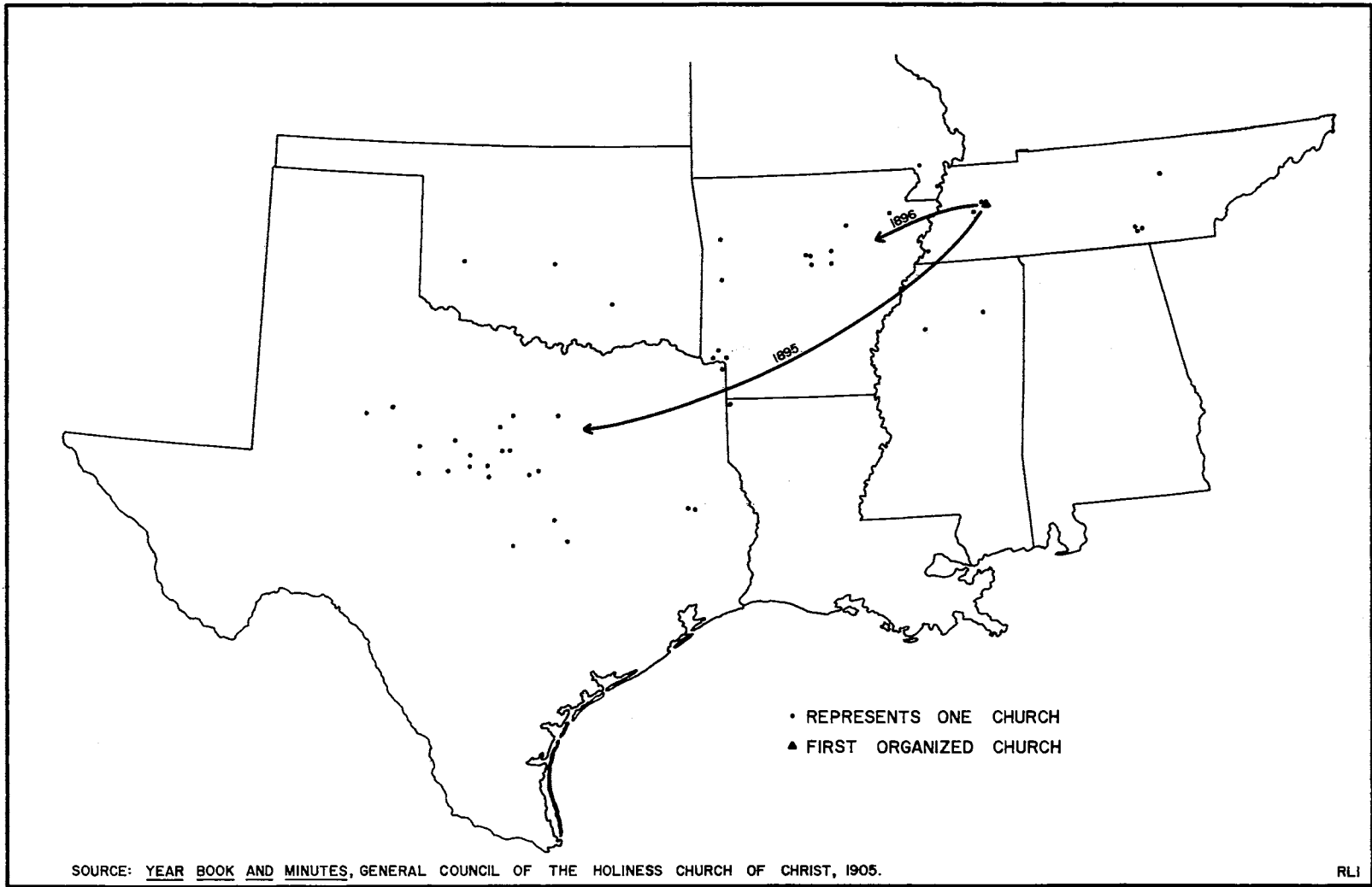


Figure 5. New Testament Church of Christ, 1905

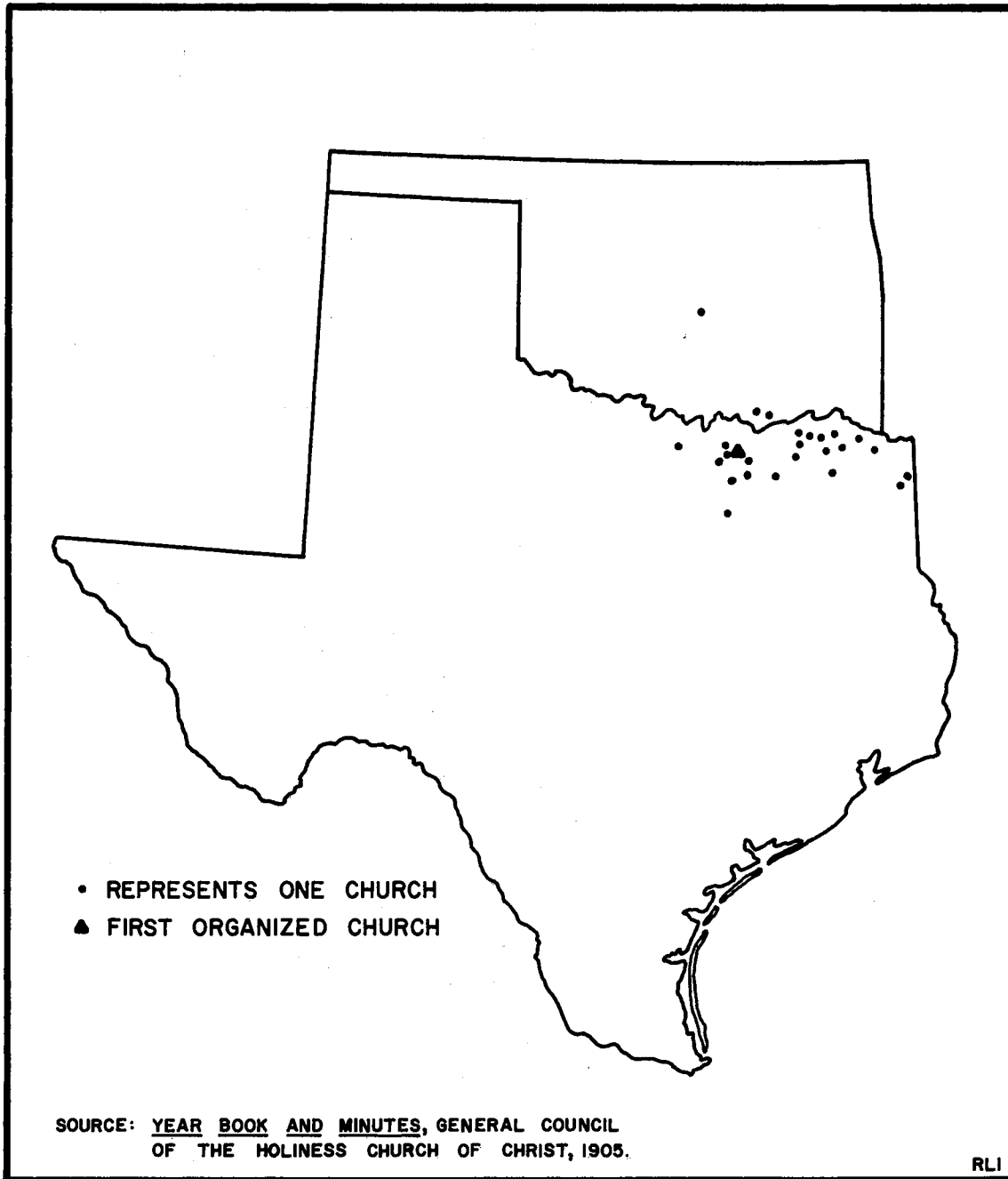


Figure 6. Independent Holiness Church, 1905

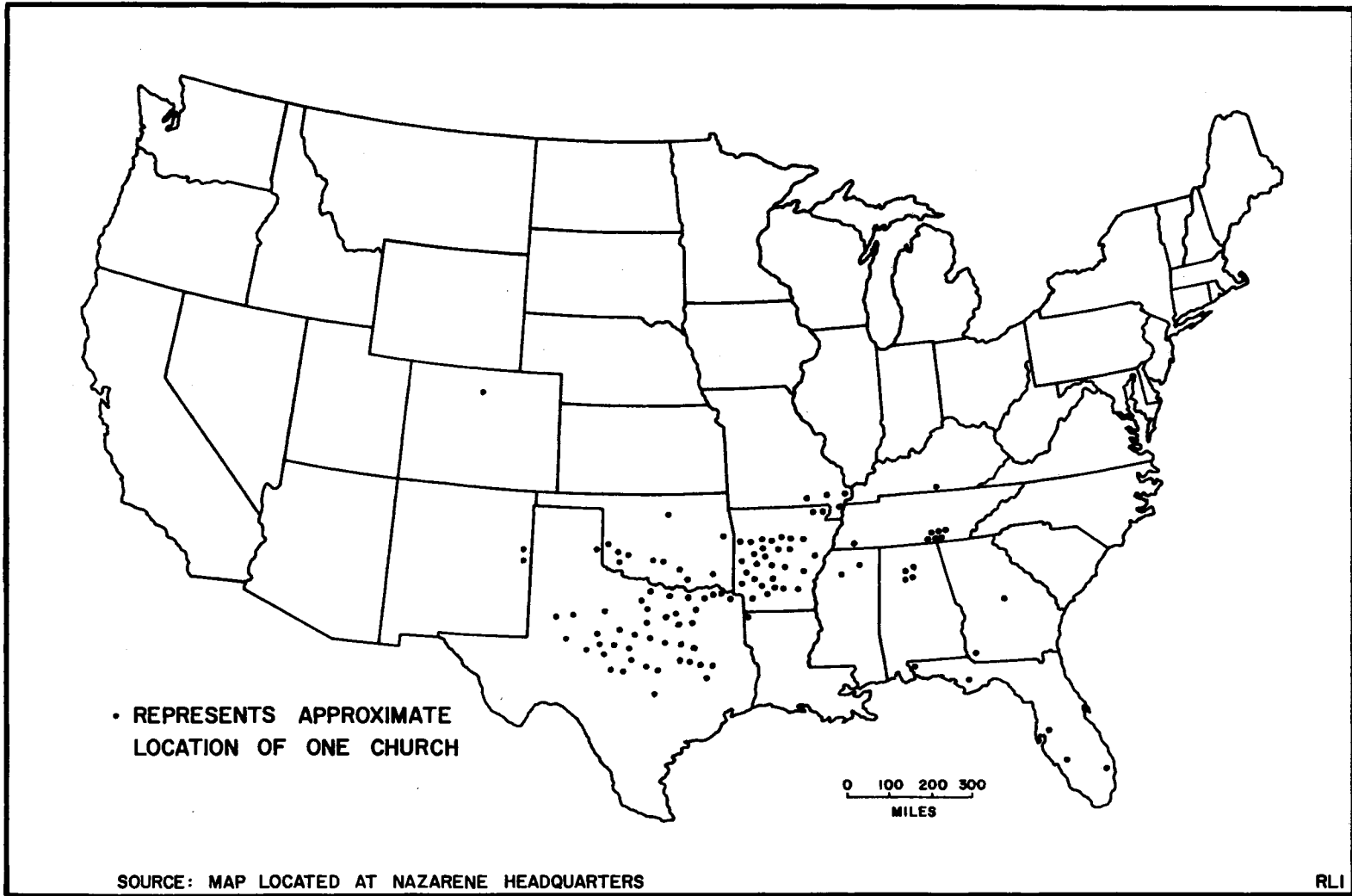


Figure 7. Holiness Church of Christ, 1908

was small.

### National Mergers and Organization

Two major mergers in 1907 and 1908 brought about the final nationwide organization of three geographically separate holiness groups. In 1907 at Chicago the Association of the Pentecostal Churches of America formally joined with the Church of the Nazarene and became the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. This act united churches from 11 states in the East with those of 10 states in the West, which proved to be a giant step in the expansion of this group of holiness people (Figure 8). Though membership was heavily concentrated in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Boston, the Wesleyan holiness message would soon exhibit its appeal to small towns and rural areas throughout the country as well as to urban areas.

The second merger was consummated at Pilot Point, Texas (located in north central Texas) in 1908 when the Holiness Church of Christ joined with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, thus bringing the South into union with the North and West. The distribution of the Church was greatly enlarged by the addition of 12 new states. These Southern churches, mostly small town or rural in nature, contrasted sharply with the churches from large urban areas in the North and West. This was demonstrated by the conservative demands of the Southern church body prior to the merger.<sup>17</sup>

One other group also joined the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene

---

<sup>17</sup> Timothy L. Smith, p. 220. The Southern church demanded an exclusion of the ring ceremony from the marriage ritual, and stronger wording on women's dress and the use of tobacco.

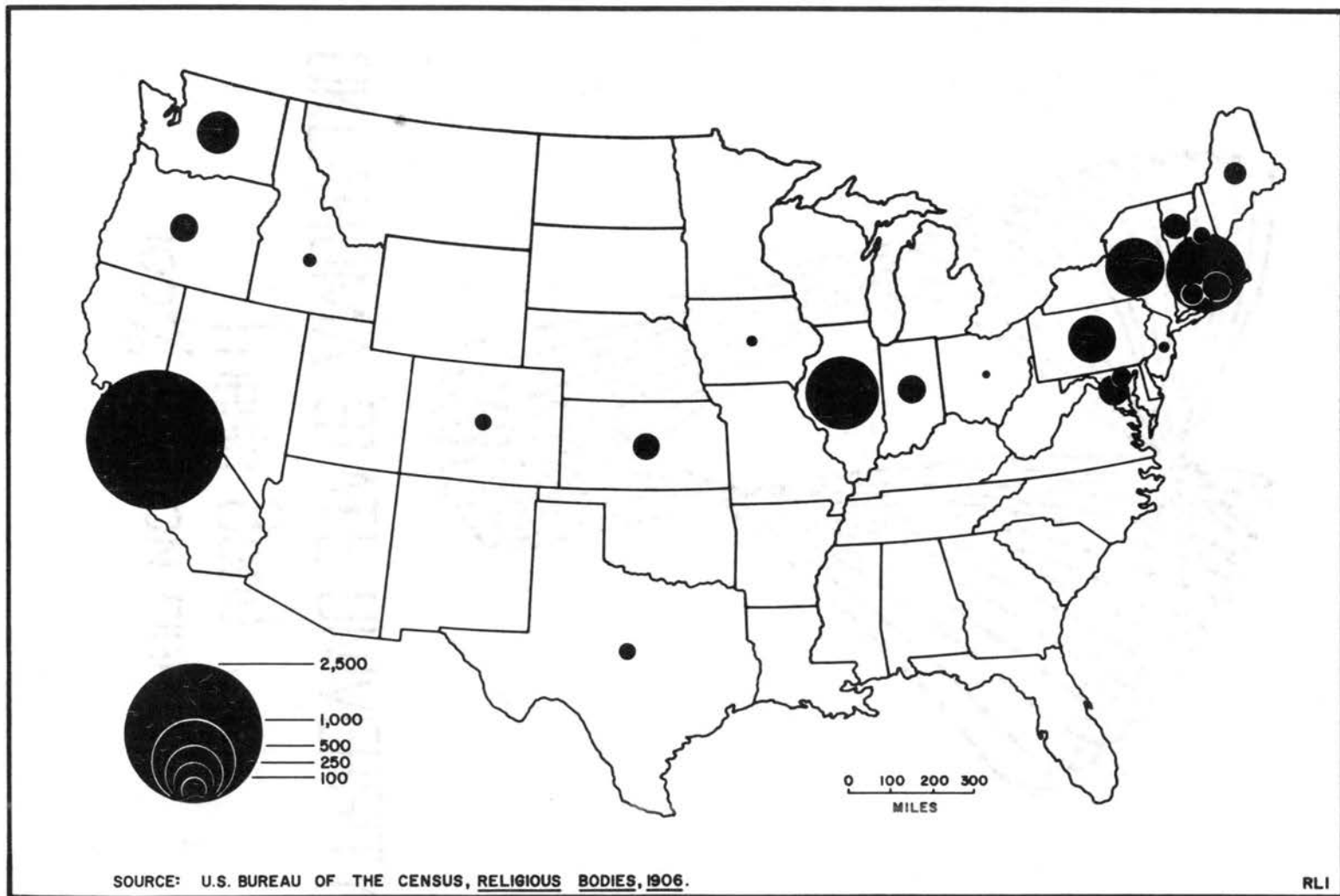


Figure 8. Reported Nazarene Membership, 1906

before the Pilot Point meeting. The Pennsylvania Conference of the Holiness Christian Church was formed in 1894 through the efforts of a band of people intent on evangelizing the Pennsylvania Dutch country. This area of eastern Pennsylvania included 15 churches which joined the Nazarenes in September of 1908, before the national unification.<sup>18</sup> Thus the stage was set for a nationally organized holiness movement.

One of the first steps in the formation of a church growth policy was a geographical division of the United States into districts. Each of these districts had an appointed superintendent who was in charge of organization and supervision of the churches within the district. Hence, the district superintendents usually had more influence over the expansion of the Church in the United States than any other individuals, and so the rapid growth of a district could be greatly dependent upon the ability and dynamics of its superintendent. Although not delving into the personalities of the superintendents, an awareness of the administrative organization of the church contributes to a better understanding of the processes of spatial growth.

There were 17 districts in 1908 with the largest geographical area being in the northwest (Figure 9). Eight states were not included in districts. Six of these were in a contiguous area in the north central part of the United States -- Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska -- and were omitted primarily because there were no Nazarenes there. Within the next year these states were added to the list of districts, leaving only North Carolina and South Carolina outside district boundaries. These latter states were slow to

---

<sup>18</sup> Timothy L. Smith, pp. 229-230.

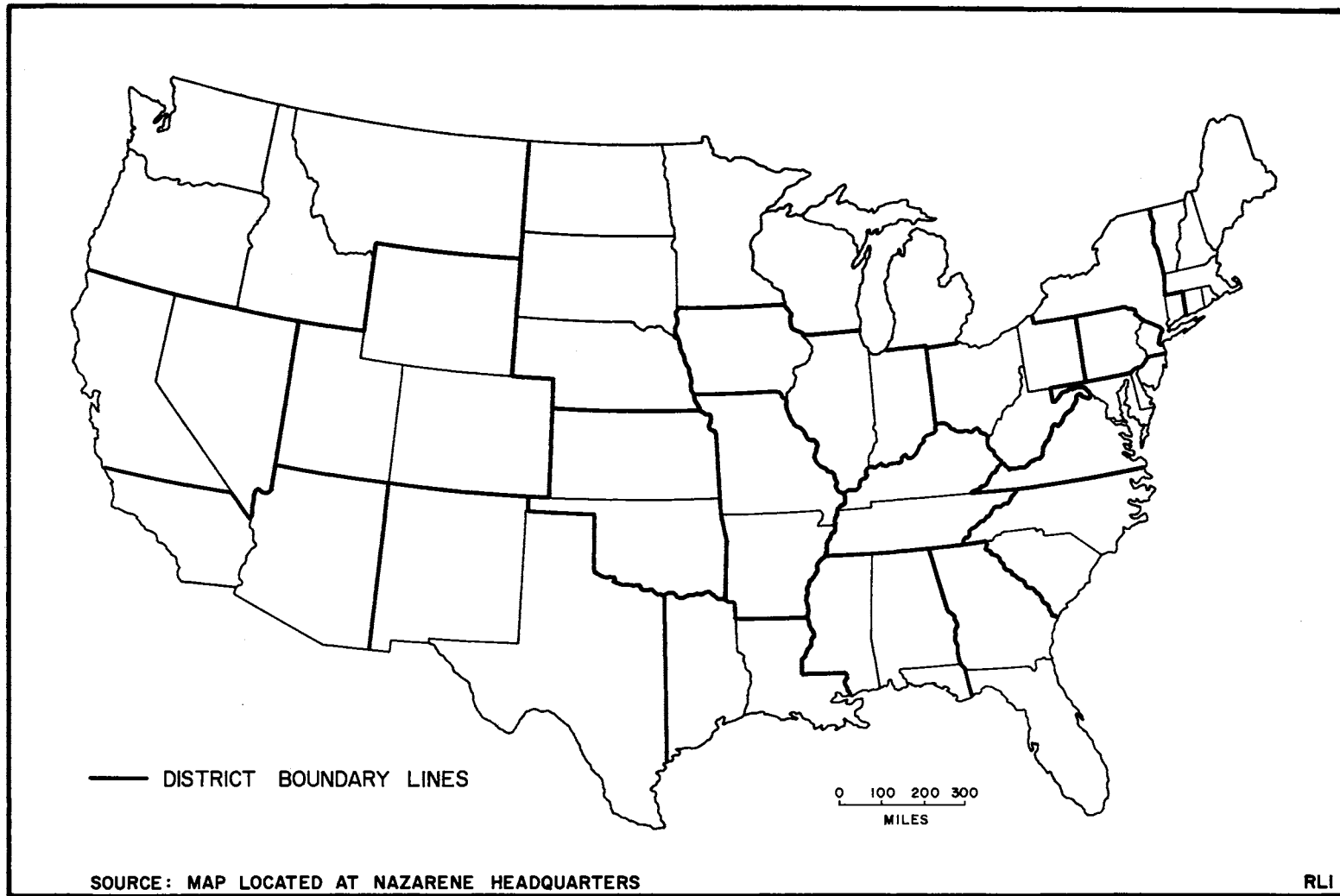


Figure 9. Nazarene Districts, 1908



organize any churches and were added to the Tennessee District in 1911.<sup>19</sup>

#### Dissemination and Boundary Revisions

The Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene more than tripled in membership from 10,000 members in 1908 to over 32,000 in 1916. Much of the expansion enjoyed during this period was a result of dissatisfied holiness people within an established church being offered an acceptable alternative. There were many state holiness groups<sup>20</sup> who found it hard to leave their church for a new "holiness sect," but following the national union at Pilot Point, many individuals and congregations began defecting. A few influential preachers and evangelists of the Baptist, Quaker, and Presbyterian faiths joined, as well as the president of the Iowa Holiness Association.<sup>21</sup> The appeal of the Nazarenes resulted in the addition of congregations in many new states and also within new areas in previously "occupied" states.

There was a tremendous geographical expansion of Nazarenes in the interior of America, especially in the southern great plains centered on Oklahoma, between 1906 and 1916 (Figure 10 and Table I). Oklahoma showed the greatest gain with 100 churches in 47 counties by 1916 compared with 11 churches in 1908. Much of this rapid growth in Oklahoma could probably be attributed to the great influx of people into the newly formed

---

<sup>19</sup> Manual, Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene (Kansas City, 1912).

<sup>20</sup> State holiness groups refers to holiness alliances which were composed of church members from existing churches, usually Methodist. These groups were interested in preserving Wesleyan holiness within the Methodist church and frequently held holiness campmeetings for this purpose. State holiness associations were usually composed of a number of county holiness associations.

<sup>21</sup> Timothy L. Smith, p. 224.

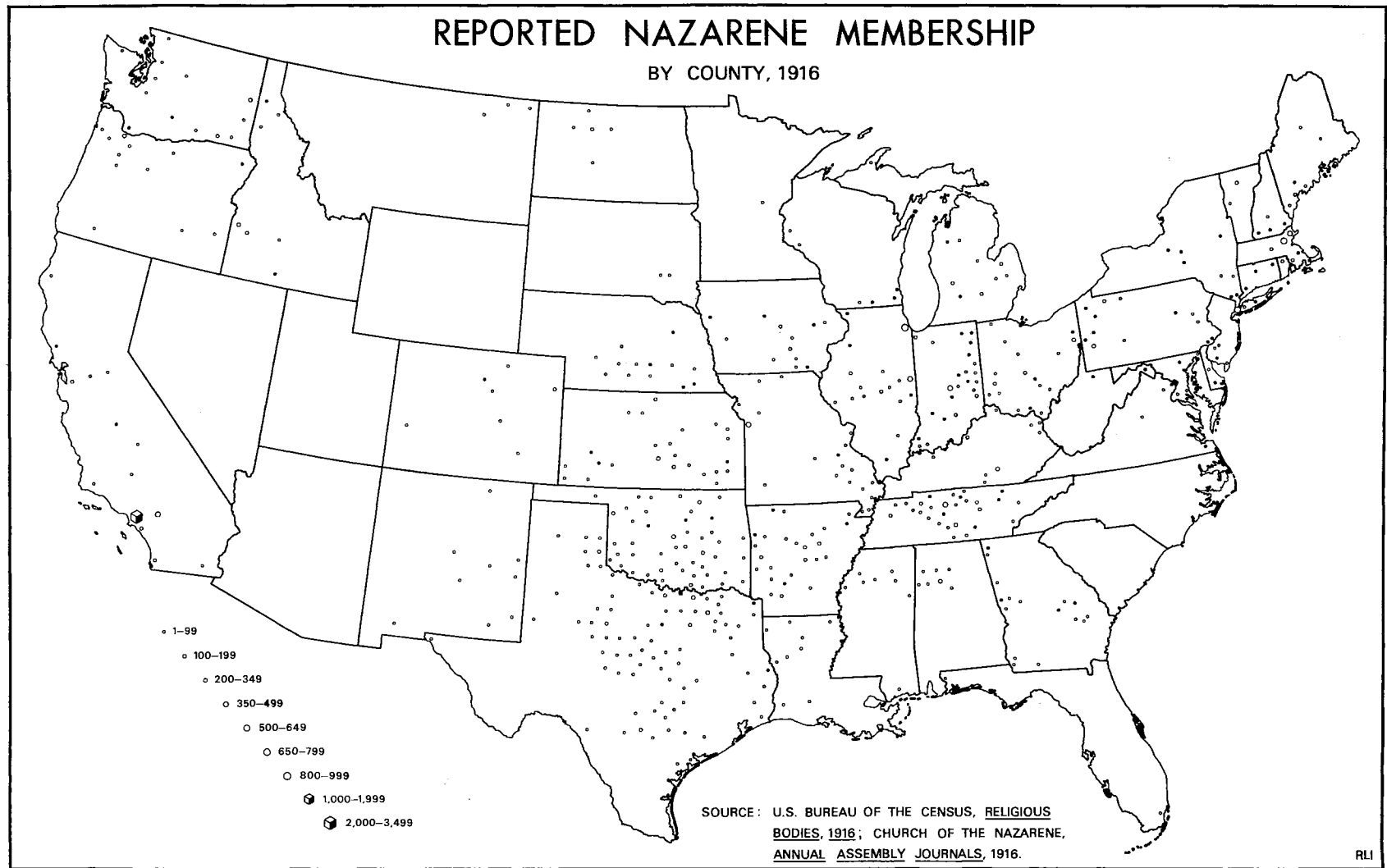


Figure 10. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1916

TABLE I  
REPORTED NAZARENE STATISTICS, 1916

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>New England</b>			
Connecticut	3/8	6	185
Maine	6/16	11	298
Massachusetts	6/14	19	1,319
New Hampshire	4/10	4	139
Rhode Island	2/5	4	198
Vermont	2/14	5	132
Totals	23/67	49	2,271
<b>Middle Atlantic</b>			
New Jersey	4/21	5	104
New York	12/62	17	972
Pennsylvania	13/67	19	776
Totals	29/150	41	1,852
<b>South Atlantic</b>			
Delaware	2/3	2	53
Florida	2/54	3	109
Georgia	16/155	18	265
Maryland	5/24	8	193
North Carolina	0/100	0	0
South Carolina	0/46	0	0
Virginia	4/100	4	92
Washington, D. C.	1/1	2	45
West Virginia	3/55	3	97
Totals	33/538	40	854
<b>East North Central</b>			
Illinois	17/102	28	1,833
Indiana	23/92	33	1,383
Michigan	10/83	18	686
Ohio	17/88	25	1,196
Wisconsin	6/71	6	118
Totals	73/436	110	5,216
<b>East South Central</b>			
Alabama	7/67	19	521
Kentucky	9/120	17	688
Mississippi	8/82	8	204
Tennessee	28/95	48	1,903
Totals	52/364	92	3,316

TABLE I (Continued)

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>West North Central</b>			
Iowa	12/99	14	594
Kansas	24/105	39	1,242
Minnesota	1/86	1	14
Missouri	18/115	30	1,102
Nebraska	13/93	15	550
North Dakota	5/53	8	194
South Dakota	2/69	3	112
Totals	75/620	110	3,808
<b>West South Central</b>			
Arkansas	25/75	53	1,613
Louisiana	9/64	9	152
Oklahoma	47/77	100	2,831
Texas	81/253	129	3,821
Totals	162/469	291	8,417
<b>Mountain</b>			
Arizona	0/14	0	0
Colorado	7/63	13	416
Idaho	8/44	13	462
Montana	3/51	3	42
Nevada	0/17	0	0
New Mexico	9/31	13	291
Utah	0/29	0	0
Wyoming	0/21	0	0
Totals	27/270	42	1,211
<b>Pacific</b>			
California	15/58	46	3,380
Oregon	12/36	18	790
Washington	13/39	26	976
Totals	40/133	90	5,146
<b>United States Totals</b>	<b>514/3,048</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>32,091</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies, 1916; Church of the Nazarene, Annual Assembly Journals, 1916.

state.<sup>22</sup> The lack of established churches in this territory provided an open door for the more zealous holiness people from the surrounding states. Meanwhile, Texas and Arkansas were exhibiting large geographical and numerical gains while the evangelistic fervor was spreading into Louisiana and New Mexico.

To the north of Oklahoma, Nazarenes were growing rapidly in Kansas and Nebraska, as well as in parts of Missouri and Iowa. In the Midwest, Nazarenes were established in some of the rural counties of Ohio and Michigan and were especially strong in eastern Indiana. New organizations had also developed on the southern bank of the Ohio River in Kentucky and a few scattered congregations were found in southern and western Wisconsin. Illinois might be considered the initial stronghold for the Nazarenes in the Midwest during this era. Many congregations had been organized in Illinois prior to the merger in 1907, and by 1916, Chicago had 745 members, 40% of the state total. But a definite trend away from the metropolitan areas and into the small towns and more rural farmlands of the Midwest was evidenced by 1916. Many of the congregations in these more rural areas had their beginnings with county holiness associations.

The Northeast showed a much more limited growth and expansion during this period. Scattered churches appeared in western Pennsylvania, upstate New York, and in much of New England, but total growth was slight compared with that of the Midwest and Southern Great Plains.

The geographical expansion of Nazarenes in the South was in large

---

<sup>22</sup>Oklahoma entered the Union in 1907, and during the period between 1900-1910 it more than doubled its 1900 population of 790,000.

part due to merger with the Pentecostal Mission in 1915. This sect was founded in 1898 by J. O. McClurkan in Nashville, and missions were established in and around Nashville and as far south as the southwestern corner of Georgia. Otherwise the South Atlantic held very few Nazarenes by 1916 with North Carolina and South Carolina having no reported members. This fact was probably a direct result of a lack of Nazarene evangelism in this area.

In the Far West there was a steady increase in number of churches and members in new counties, especially in the Northwest where the distribution appeared to relate fairly well to the overall population distribution with a fairly heavy concentration in the "Puget Sound-Willamette Lowland." California showed a significant increase in churches and members mostly in the Los Angeles area.

As a result of growth and expansion, the number of districts was increased from 17 to 32 by 1915 in an effort to make the district superintendent's responsibilities more manageable in terms of territory and churches served (Figure 11). Several of the larger membership states were subdivided as were most of the larger territorial districts.

Whereas in 1908 almost all of the boundary lines followed state lines, and the deviate boundaries seemed to be rather haphazardly defined, by 1915 functional as well as physical considerations were entering into district boundary decisions. In the Northwest, the Idaho-Oregon district consisted of the portion of Idaho south of the Salmon River as well as the eastern counties of Oregon. This was a functional boundary and was imperative due to the increase in churches and the demands on the superintendent. Montezuma County in Colorado was added to the New Mexico district since high mountain ranges are north and east of

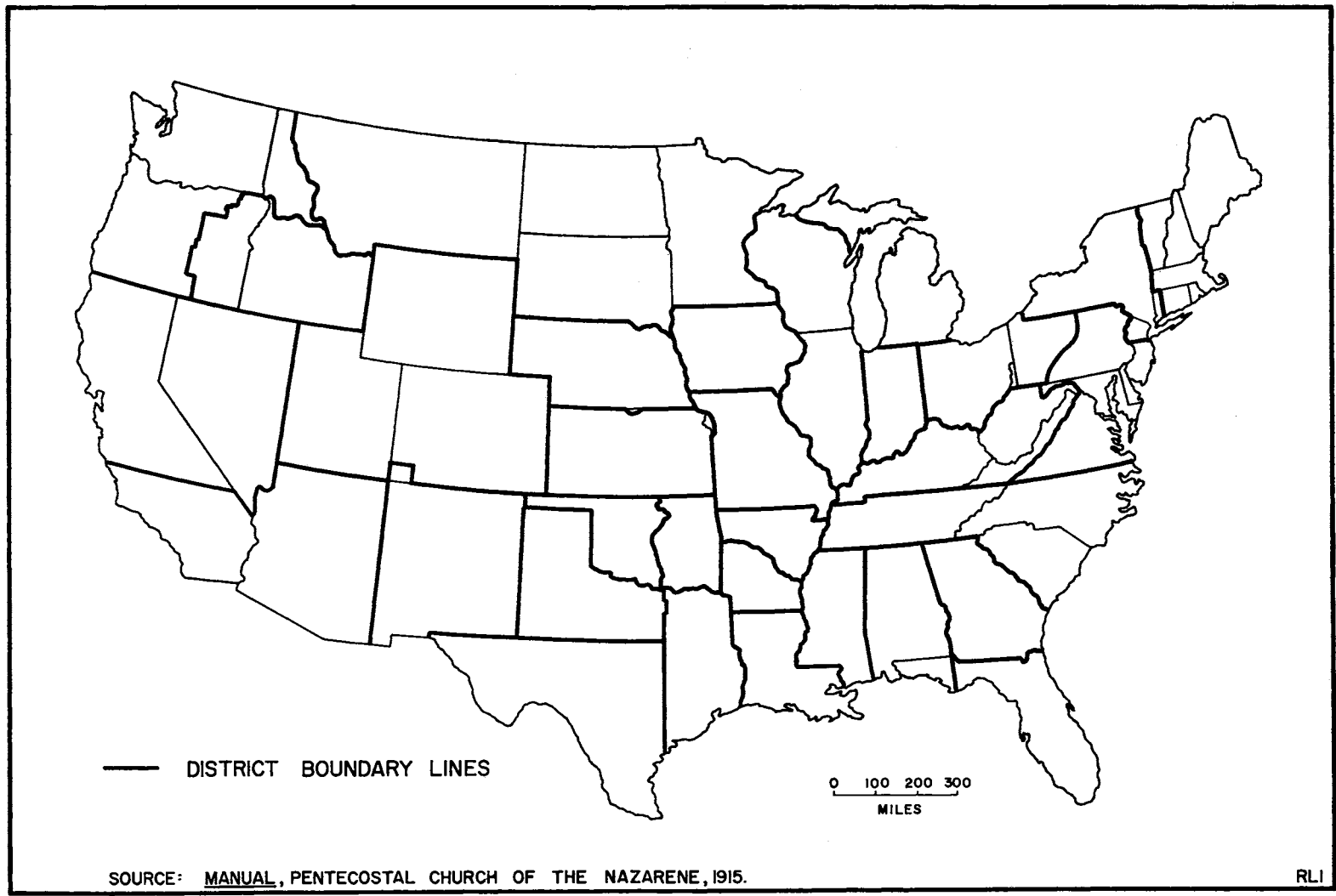


Figure 11. Nazarene Districts, 1915

the county, and it was inaccessible from the west. Arkansas was divided into two districts by the Arkansas River, while two mountain ranges were significant in the East. The eastern edge of the Kentucky district followed the Blue Ridge Mountains through Virginia, and Pennsylvania was divided along the Allegheny Front.

Other functional boundaries were drawn in the East due to the influence of a large city. The northern panhandle of West Virginia remained on the Pittsburg district, while the northern part of New Jersey and the western quarter of Connecticut were a part of the New York district.

The new district boundaries which evolved during the period to 1915 were for the most part a direct result of the rapid growth and expansion of the Church. The future spread of the Church was destined to bring many more district subdivisions, and the number of districts would eventually total 66 by 1968. While many of the additional districts were created as administrative conveniences and did not aid growth, other districts may have sparked expansion through exceptional individual leadership. A full investigation of such individual contributions is beyond the scope of this study.

#### Regional Pattern, 1916

By 1916 the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene, from its scattered "beginnings" in New York-New England, Los Angeles, and Nashville in the 1890's, had spread to 42 states and the District of Columbia. There was no particular core region in 1916, but the location of Nazarenes using a



location quotient<sup>23</sup> shows two regional concentrations (Figure 12). A contiguous group of states appears in the West -- three of the states containing a Nazarene population three times the national norm with Los Angeles county alone accounting for 6.7% of the total United States membership. But although the Nazarene Church in California and the Pacific Northwest appeared to be thriving, the "future heartland" was forming in the center of the nation. This area from Ohio to the northwestern plains of Texas had been fertile Methodist ground and now appeared to more readily accept the John Wesley tradition of holiness. The southern holiness people, who had been strongly rural in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Texas prior to the national merger had evangelized in the rural areas of Oklahoma, Kansas, and New Mexico, producing relatively strong per capita Nazarene populations in these states. This expansion extended into Colorado, Nebraska, and Missouri, to a lesser degree.

The only states east of the Mississippi above the national norm were Tennessee, Indiana, and five of the six New England states. Indiana was a rapidly developing Nazarene stronghold while New England, with the exception of Maine, was exhibiting its early but short-lived force in the Northeast.

---

<sup>23</sup>The location quotient or per capita index equals Nazarene membership as a percentage of the population in each state or county divided by Nazarene membership as a percentage of the total population of the nation. Thus, for example, an index of 3.03 would indicate one Nazarene per 1,086 persons within Arkansas in 1916.

$$\text{where } lq = \frac{\text{U.S. Population}}{\text{Total Nazarene Population}} \div \frac{\text{Arkansas Population}}{\text{Arkansas Nazarene Population}}$$

or

$$3.03 = \frac{105,710,620}{32,091} \div \frac{1,752,204}{1,613}$$

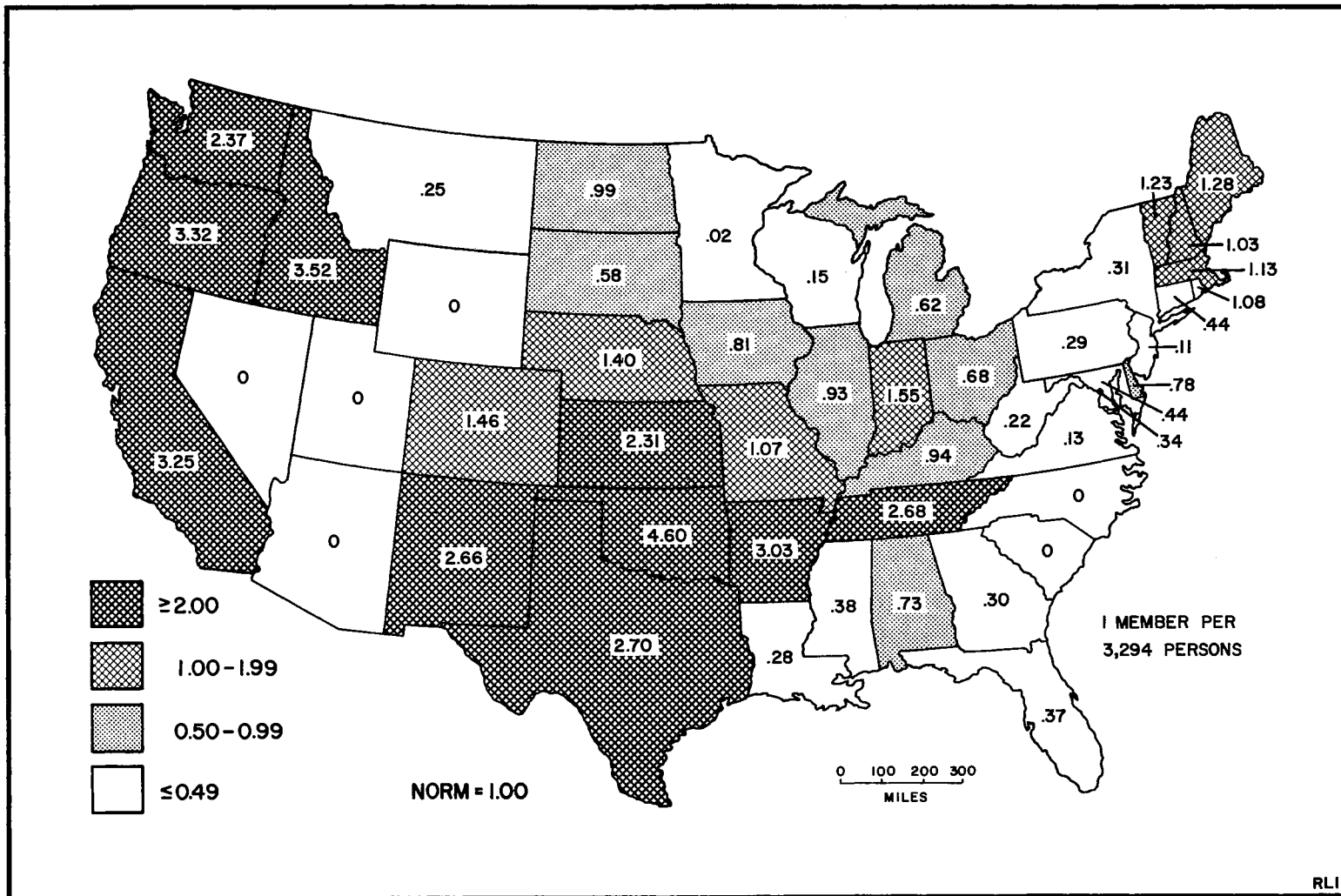


Figure 12. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1916

There were three areas of obvious weakness, the largest of these extending down the Atlantic seaboard from Connecticut to Florida and including the Gulf states west to Louisiana. The Nazarene Church was especially weak in the three South Atlantic states of Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Two other areas showed little or no penetration -- five of the Mountain states, and the strong Lutheran area of Minnesota and Wisconsin. But despite these gaps, the incipient national character of the Church of the Nazarene was evident.

## CHAPTER III

### UNLIMITED EXPANSION: 1916-1950

The numerical growth of the Nazarenes during the next three and one-half decades was in excess of 194,000 for an annual average of about 5,700. The peak years were in the decade of the 1930's while membership showed smaller increases during the world wars. But overall growth during this era was very steady with only one year showing an increase of over 10,000 (1933-1934). Church growth followed the same pattern with an increase of 2,611 churches for an average of 77 per year. Thus, while membership and church growth rates were relatively steady, geographical expansion on a national scale was at its peak during this era (see Figure 25). A more careful examination of the patterns of expansion through time reveals regional disparities which seemed to mark the spread of the Church.

### Centralized Organization and Regionalized

#### Education: 1916-1926

The Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene formally changed its name to the Church of the Nazarene in 1919. While this event probably had little effect on Church expansion, the events following it most certainly did. It was during this decade that the initial independent tendencies of many members and leaders in the Church were brought together in the formation of the General Board in 1923, which placed the Boards of Home

Missions, Extension, Publications, and Foreign Missions under one governing body.<sup>1</sup> This centralization quelled the internal bickering over finances and jurisdiction between the numerous Boards and accorded the Church a more unified outlook on national evangelism and expansion.

Education also played an important role during this era since many of the young leaders believed that it was the key to success for the Church. In 1926 there were 10 colleges and junior colleges which were affiliated with and at least partially supported by the Nazarene Church or its members (Figure 13). Four of these were in the southern plains states with Bethany-Peniel College in Bethany, Oklahoma, the largest. The strong growth of the Nazarenes in Oklahoma County can be heavily attributed to the fact that Bethany was founded as a Nazarene town and the ". . . college, church, and 'public' school shared common purposes with the homes of the community."<sup>2</sup> This presented the Nazarenes with a viable retreat from the world around them. The effects of this growth extended into almost all the counties of western Oklahoma so that by 1926, membership was located in 60 of the 77 counties within Oklahoma (Figure 14). Kansas and Colorado also showed strong numerical and geographical advances. Texas, on the other hand, experienced considerable internal fluctuation with little net increase or overall change in pattern (Table II). This turnover could probably be attributed to the unstable nature of these small, rural churches during this period. Apparently, the two smaller colleges in this region had little effect on expansion.

---

<sup>1</sup>Timothy L. Smith, p. 338.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 327.

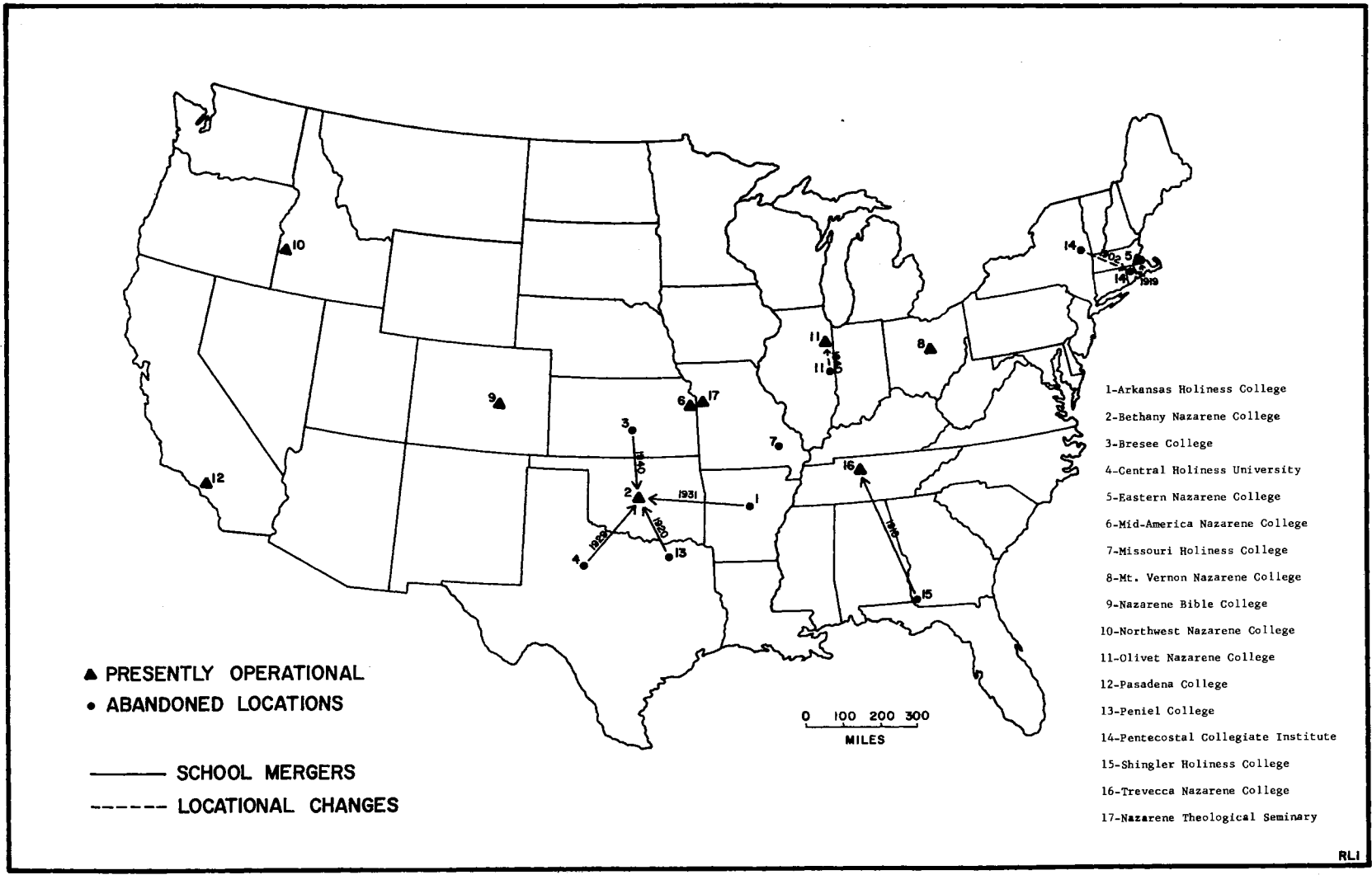


Figure 13. Nazarene Educational Institutions

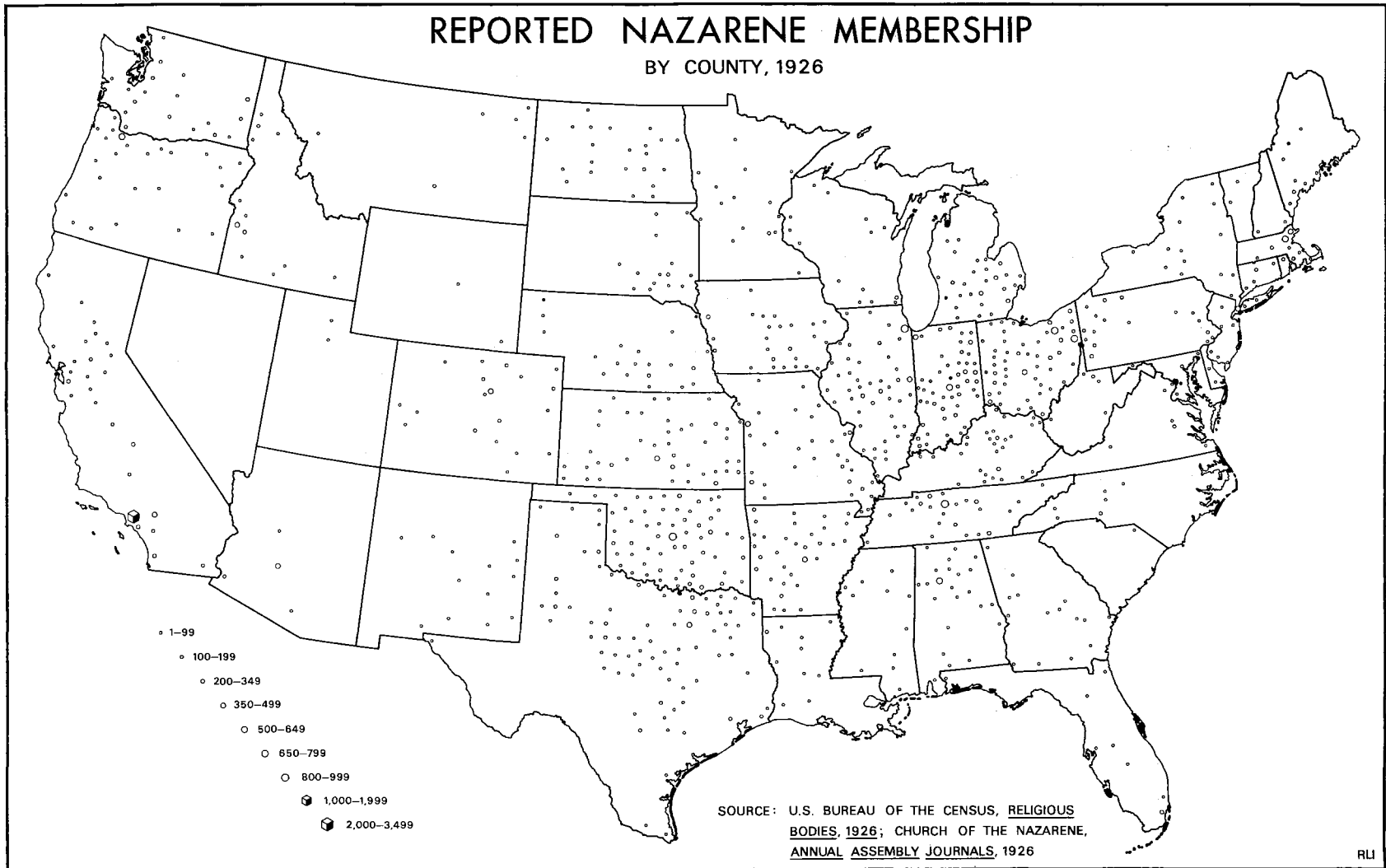


Figure 14. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1926

TABLE II  
 REPORTED NAZARENE STATISTICS, 1926

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>New England</b>			
Connecticut	4/8	8	272
Maine	8/16	12	412
Massachusetts	8/14	22	1,413
New Hampshire	2/10	2	67
Rhode Island	2/5	3	156
Vermont	2/14	5	104
Totals	26/67	52	2,424
<b>Middle Atlantic</b>			
New Jersey	6/21	7	163
New York	18/62	27	1,014
Pennsylvania	17/67	28	1,518
Totals	41/150	62	2,695
<b>South Atlantic</b>			
Delaware	2/3	2	53
Florida	9/67	13	374
Georgia	15/161	19	431
Maryland	6/24	6	287
North Carolina	6/100	7	261
South Carolina	1/46	1	24
Virginia	6/100	7	312
Washington, D. C.	1/1	2	103
West Virginia	6/55	8	448
Totals	52/557	65	2,293
<b>East North Central</b>			
Illinois	46/102	86	3,606
Indiana	49/92	105	5,260
Michigan	27/83	49	1,961
Ohio	50/88	92	5,954
Wisconsin	14/71	16	428
Totals	186/436	348	17,209
<b>East South Central</b>			
Alabama	23/67	46	1,448
Kentucky	28/120	42	1,447
Mississippi	11/82	11	225
Tennessee	24/95	45	2,596
Totals	86/364	144	5,716



TABLE II (Continued)

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>West North Central</b>			
Iowa	25/99	29	1,390
Kansas	42/105	65	2,705
Minnesota	15/87	16	510
Missouri	33/115	54	2,185
Nebraska	20/93	25	863
North Dakota	22/53	31	783
South Dakota	14/69	18	474
Totals	171/621	238	8,910
<b>West South Central</b>			
Arkansas	32/75	66	2,104
Louisiana	10/64	13	539
Oklahoma	60/77	128	5,594
Texas	79/254	134	4,956
Totals	181/470	341	13,193
<b>Mountain</b>			
Arizona	4/14	9	617
Colorado	19/63	40	1,752
Idaho	12/44	22	1,291
Montana	6/56	9	230
Nevada	0/17	0	0
New Mexico	13/31	20	353
Utah	2/29	2	26
Wyoming	2/23	2	77
Totals	58/277	104	4,346
<b>Pacific</b>			
California	27/58	86	6,368
Oregon	24/36	39	1,526
Washington	19/39	42	1,742
Totals	70/133	167	9,636
United States Totals	871/3,075	1,521	66,422

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies, 1926; Church of the Nazarene, Annual Assembly Journals, 1926.

Throughout Minnesota and the northern plains, Nazarenes were spreading rapidly. While there had been few churches in this area in 1916, there were now 65. Most of this expansion was a direct result of the union of the Laymen's Holiness Association with the Church of the Nazarene in 1922 and 1923. The story of this association and its ultimate union with the Nazarenes illustrates

. . . how a Wesleyan variety of fundamentalism spread through the small towns and rural communities of the Middle West, loosening the ties of faith and sentiment which bound countless men and women to Methodism, and causing many of them to turn to younger denominations.<sup>3</sup>

The Association's greatest area of strength was North Dakota, and thus, was also the Nazarene's strongest state in the northern plains in 1926.

The Midwestern states experienced their greatest geographical expansion during this decade. The number of counties increased by 165% from 73 in 1916 to 186 in 1926. More than one-third of the national membership gain was in the four state area of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, with Ohio showing the largest increase. A few urban areas can be detected by their larger county memberships -- Akron, Columbus, Indianapolis, and Chicago -- while Columbiana County, particularly East Liverpool, had become a Nazarene bastion in eastern Ohio. Olivet College, on the eastern border of Illinois, was an apparent aid to the spread of churches in western Indiana and throughout Illinois. The school was much like Bethany-Peniel in that the village of Olivet was a Nazarene community and provided an incentive for Nazarenes to move to Vermilion County.

The diffusion of the Church was limited to specific areas in the

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 298.

South until 1926. There were excellent geographical gains in central and south central Kentucky and in the northern half of Alabama. Walker County in north central Alabama emerged as a rural Nazarene stronghold -- a position which it maintained for many years. In Tennessee, Nashville was becoming the "citadel" of the South in numerical membership as well as the regional education center. But the real effectiveness of Trevecca Nazarene College had not yet been felt because of internal financial problems as well as an inability to harmonize the local church needs with the national aims and control.

The changes evidenced in the east coast states between 1916 and 1926 were minimal. Churches were established in North Carolina and South Carolina, but in no state was there any sizable expansion. In fact, New Hampshire lost existing churches in two counties and the total membership was halved.

The remaining states in the Far West and Rocky Mountain regions showed modest overall gains, with Oregon and California adding the most counties to their geographical territory. The presence of Pasadena College plus the migration of people to the Los Angeles area obviously aided in the addition of over 1,200 new members in that county. Three states, Wyoming, Arizona, and Utah, now had Nazarene churches within their borders, and only Nevada had no reported Nazarene members in 1926.

A per capita examination of the states (Figure 15) reveals that Indiana was the only state east of the Mississippi with a high per capita value ( 2.00). The Nazarenes had oriented themselves toward the interior states, and Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee formed a very strong contiguous area around the Ohio Valley. It can also be noted that almost the entire Great Plains "region" was above the national norm in reported

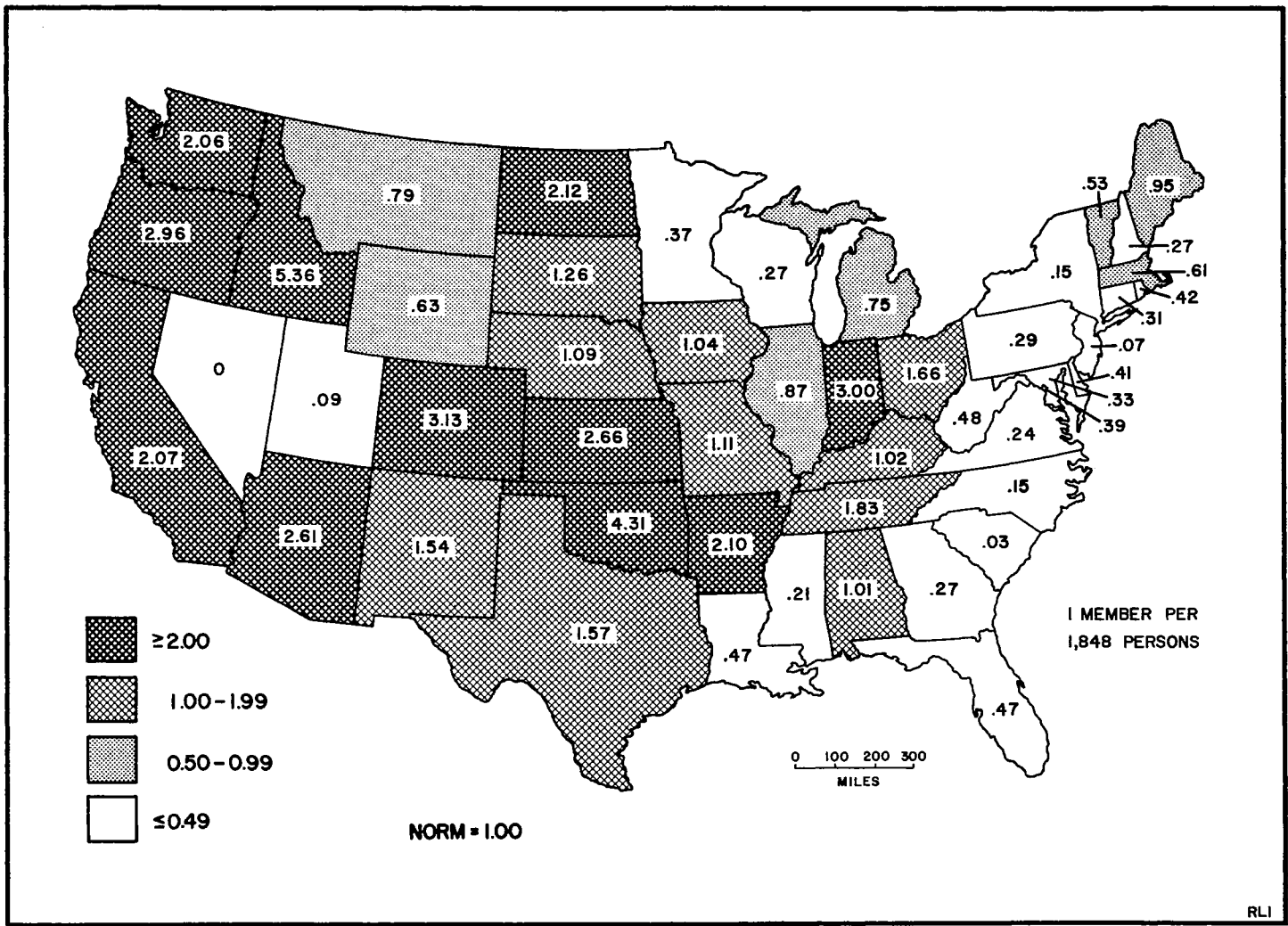


Figure 15. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1926

Nazarene members in contrast with the eastern seaboard states, which were all below the norm. In general, most of the states which were below 0.50 in 1916 remained low in 1926.

#### Emerging Strongholds: 1926-1936

Territorial gains by the Nazarenes continued to be made predominately in the Midwest and the adjoining states during the years between 1926-1936. Four states outside the Midwest which had shown little or no gain during the previous decade now exhibited a healthy county diffusion by 1936 (Figure 16). They included Tennessee, Florida, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania -- the most impressive being Pennsylvania which totaled 21 counties more than in 1926. Although every state showed geographical gains except Utah and South Dakota, the real heart of the geographical and numerical growth, both by churches and members, was from western Pennsylvania to Oklahoma during this decade.

A somewhat closer examination of the expansion in the Mountain and Pacific states reveals California and Colorado with the most county gains, and Washington, Idaho, and Wyoming showing moderate gains (Table III). Los Angeles County had a gain of 1,004 members for the largest numerical gain in the West. Other large urban areas in the West, such as Phoenix, Denver, and Portland, also experienced considerable growth in membership. The extraordinary growth in Canyon County, Idaho was an expected result of the location of Northwest Nazarene College, which would be a permanent boom to growth in the Northwest. One other county, Yakima, Washington, appeared to be an anomaly since there was no large urban area to support its strong Nazarene membership. This was possibly the result of a strong evangelistic effort by certain individual leaders

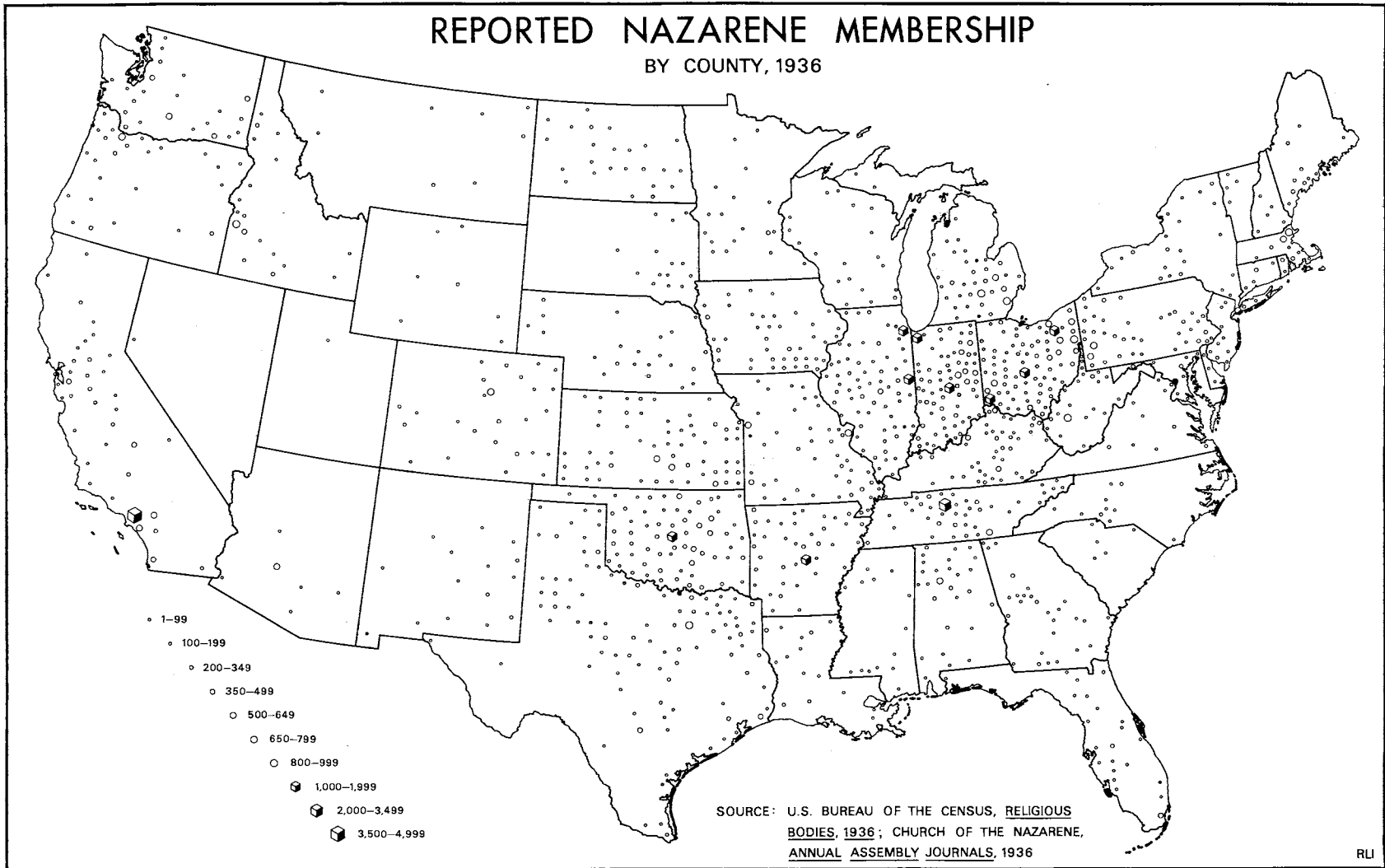


Figure 16. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1936

TABLE III  
REPORTED NAZARENE STATISTICS, 1936

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>New England</b>			
Connecticut	4/8	6	484
Maine	10/16	20	928
Massachusetts	8/14	25	2,161
New Hampshire	5/10	6	176
Rhode Island	3/5	6	310
Vermont	4/14	7	189
Totals	34/67	70	4,248
<b>Middle Atlantic</b>			
New Jersey	9/21	10	456
New York	26/62	41	2,047
Pennsylvania	38/67	75	4,882
Totals	73/150	126	7,385
<b>South Atlantic</b>			
Delaware	3/3	4	177
Florida	23/67	40	1,702
Georgia	27/159	33	1,322
Maryland	8/24	13	899
North Carolina	10/100	12	547
South Carolina	5/46	5	224
Virginia	10/100	14	796
Washington, D. C.	1/1	2	256
West Virginia	22/55	44	2,599
Totals	109/555	167	8,522
<b>East North Central</b>			
Illinois	64/102	133	7,162
Indiana	67/92	165	12,277
Michigan	36/83	86	5,638
Ohio	73/88	188	14,984
Wisconsin	19/71	22	762
Totals	259/436	594	40,823
<b>East South Central</b>			
Alabama	27/67	60	2,527
Kentucky	42/120	70	3,870
Mississippi	14/82	16	416
Tennessee	39/95	76	5,417
Totals	122/364	222	12,230

TABLE III (Continued)

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>West North Central</b>			
Iowa	40/99	51	2,751
Kansas	56/105	86	5,491
Minnesota	18/87	23	995
Missouri	46/115	79	4,423
Nebraska	21/93	32	1,342
North Dakota	24/53	31	1,082
South Dakota	14/69	18	462
Totals	219/621	320	16,546
<b>West South Central</b>			
Arkansas	38/75	78	4,105
Louisiana	15/64	24	1,142
Oklahoma	64/77	161	10,992
Texas	94/254	155	8,646
Totals	211/470	418	24,885
<b>Mountain</b>			
Arizona	6/14	16	888
Colorado	26/63	56	3,090
Idaho	18/44	34	2,481
Montana	8/56	13	425
Nevada	1/17	1	31
New Mexico	15/31	25	869
Utah	1/29	1	17
Wyoming	7/23	9	377
Totals	82/277	155	8,178
<b>Pacific</b>			
California	37/58	125	9,871
Oregon	25/36	48	2,675
Washington	23/39	46	3,266
Totals	85/133	219	15,812
United States Totals	1,194/3,073	2,291	138,629

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Religious Bodies, 1936; Church of the Nazarene, Annual Assembly Journals, 1936.



within the County.

In the area between the Mississippi River and the Rockies, membership doubled in the four state area of Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. Significant geographical expansion was limited to Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and the northern half of Texas. With the exception of Reno County, Kansas, which was still the location of Bresee College in 1936, the largest memberships were found in urban counties containing such cities as Kansas City, St. Louis, Wichita, Little Rock, Dallas, and the hub of Nazarene work in this area, Oklahoma City.

In the fast growing midwestern and south central states, county expansion was monopolized by the four Ohio Valley states and Tennessee. Diffusion in Tennessee was strongest in the central part of the state with the city of Nashville having over 2,000 reported members. Kentucky's expansion was still highly concentrated in the central and south central while Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois continued to spread statewide. Michigan also showed a large increase in churches and members. As with the Plains, the largest memberships within these states tended to be urban counties with the exception of three counties previously mentioned (Walker, Alabama; Columbiana, Ohio; and Vermilion, Illinois).

The Atlantic area had only three states which showed significant expansion. Two of these, West Virginia and Pennsylvania were probably extensions of the Ohio Valley stronghold. West Virginia quintupled its churches and members and quickly began establishing Kanawha County as a Nazarene stronghold. Pennsylvania's growth was in the west and southeast with no churches in the northeast or central mountain areas. Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) and Washington County were the counties with the largest memberships. In the South, Florida tripled in churches and

quadrupled in members while exhibiting a fairly evenly scattered distribution down the peninsula. Geographical expansion in the remaining Atlantic states was moderate to non-existent. If the college in Quincy, Massachusetts (Eastern Nazarene College) was aiding growth, there was little evidence of it in Norfolk County just south of Boston where the college was located.

By 1936, the eastward trend, barely perceptible in 1926, had been accentuated (Figure 17). Three clusters of states emerged, each of which was to remain an important area of relative strength for the Nazarene Church. These clusters centered on Idaho in the Northwest, Oklahoma in the southern plains, and Indiana in the Midwest. But in spite of the strong growth in the Midwest, more than two-thirds of the states ranking above the national per capita norm were west of the Mississippi, while the Eastern and Southeastern seaboard continued to rank below the norm from New Hampshire to Louisiana.

#### Unified National Expansion: 1936-1950

The rate of expansion of the Church of the Nazarene remained unabated during the next 14 years, and for the first time in its existence, the Church was represented in more than half the counties in the United States (Table IV). Despite regional concentrations, geographical growth occurred in every state outside of New England.

The spread of new churches west of the Mississippi was most noticeable in the Pacific Coast states and from Iowa south to Texas and Louisiana. The seven state area along the Mississippi Valley and southern plains saw a large increase in membership and new counties "occupied" (Figure 18). Kansas City, which became the location for the

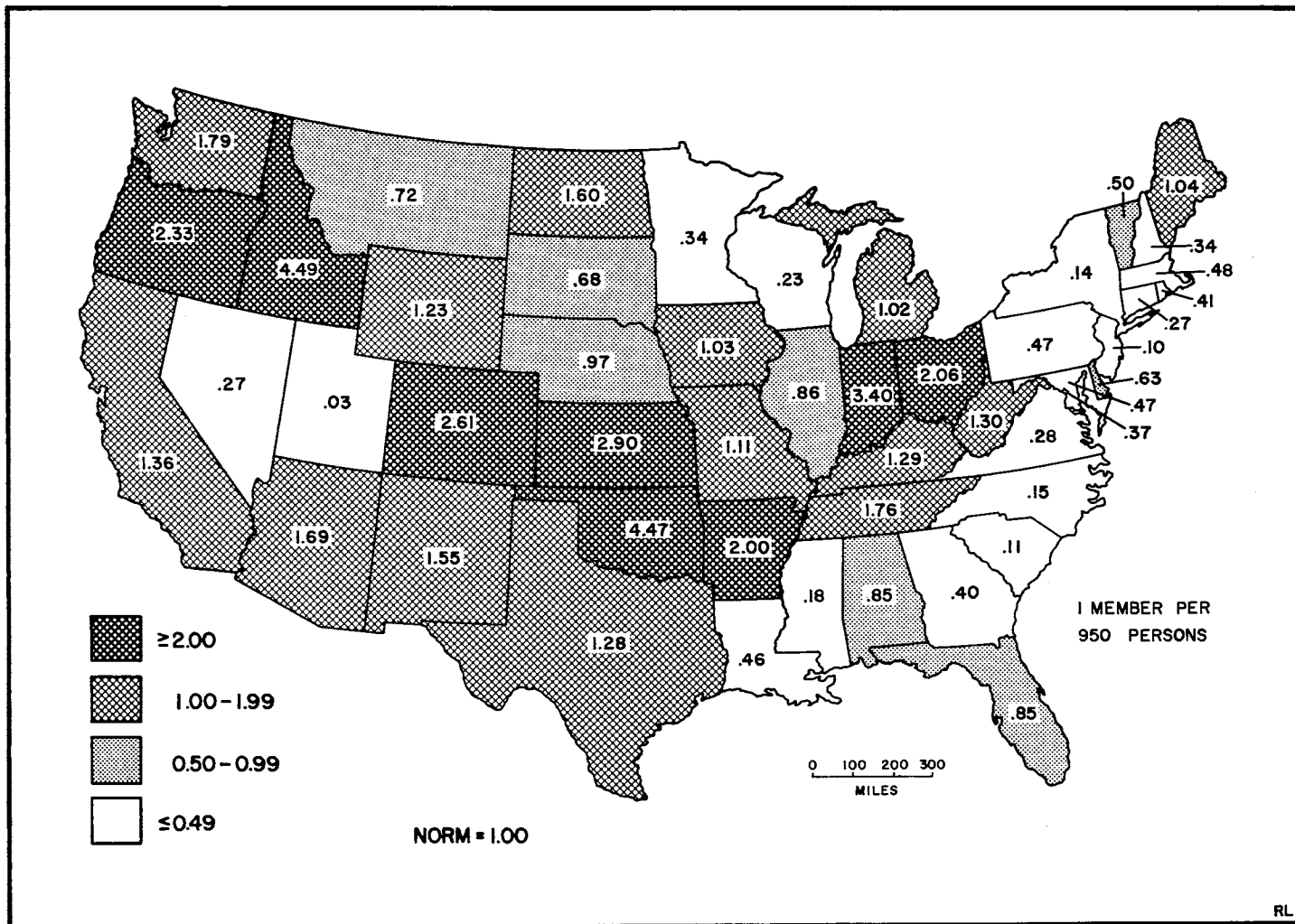


Figure 17. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1936

TABLE IV  
REPORTED NAZARENE STATISTICS, 1950

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>New England</b>			
Connecticut	4/8	7	519
Maine	12/16	30	1,424
Massachusetts	8/14	30	2,108
New Hampshire	5/10	5	124
Rhode Island	3/5	7	377
Vermont	5/14	10	256
Totals	37/67	89	4,808
<b>Middle Atlantic</b>			
New Jersey	12/21	20	874
New York	34/62	63	3,088
Pennsylvania	47/67	135	8,583
Totals	93/150	218	12,545
<b>South Atlantic</b>			
Delaware	3/3	6	303
Florida	34/67	64	3,502
Georgia	40/159	61	2,986
Maryland	13/24	21	1,532
North Carolina	20/100	36	1,827
South Carolina	20/46	31	1,841
Virginia	19/100	27	1,638
Washington, D. C.	1/1	4	503
West Virginia	34/55	85	5,540
Totals	184/555	335	19,672
<b>East North Central</b>			
Illinois	70/102	181	11,254
Indiana	81/92	269	21,700
Michigan	44/83	130	9,524
Ohio	80/88	279	24,358
Wisconsin	31/71	38	1,437
Totals	306/436	897	68,273
<b>East South Central</b>			
Alabama	40/67	84	4,305
Kentucky	55/120	99	6,972
Mississippi	30/82	45	1,932
Tennessee	54/95	136	8,021
Totals	179/364	364	21,230

TABLE IV (Continued)

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>West North Central</b>			
Iowa	51/99	76	4,245
Kansas	64/105	108	7,265
Minnesota	27/87	35	1,641
Missouri	61/115	107	7,199
Nebraska	27/93	44	1,644
North Dakota	26/53	35	1,030
South Dakota	15/68	19	512
Totals	271/620	424	23,536
<b>West South Central</b>			
Arkansas	45/75	91	5,041
Louisiana	28/64	71	3,146
Oklahoma	72/77	198	12,822
Texas	124/254	218	12,782
Totals	269/470	578	33,791
<b>Mountain</b>			
Arizona	8/14	24	1,984
Colorado	31/63	60	3,667
Idaho	22/44	46	4,230
Montana	14/56	20	638
Nevada	6/17	9	223
New Mexico	18/32	32	1,326
Utah	4/29	4	117
Wyoming	13/23	18	590
Totals	116/278	213	12,775
<b>Pacific</b>			
California	43/58	211	19,432
Oregon	30/36	69	4,724
Washington	29/39	78	5,764
Totals	102/133	358	29,920
<b>United States Totals</b>	<b>1,557/3,073</b>	<b>3,476</b>	<b>226,550</b>

Source: Church of the Nazarene, Annual Assembly Journals, 1950.

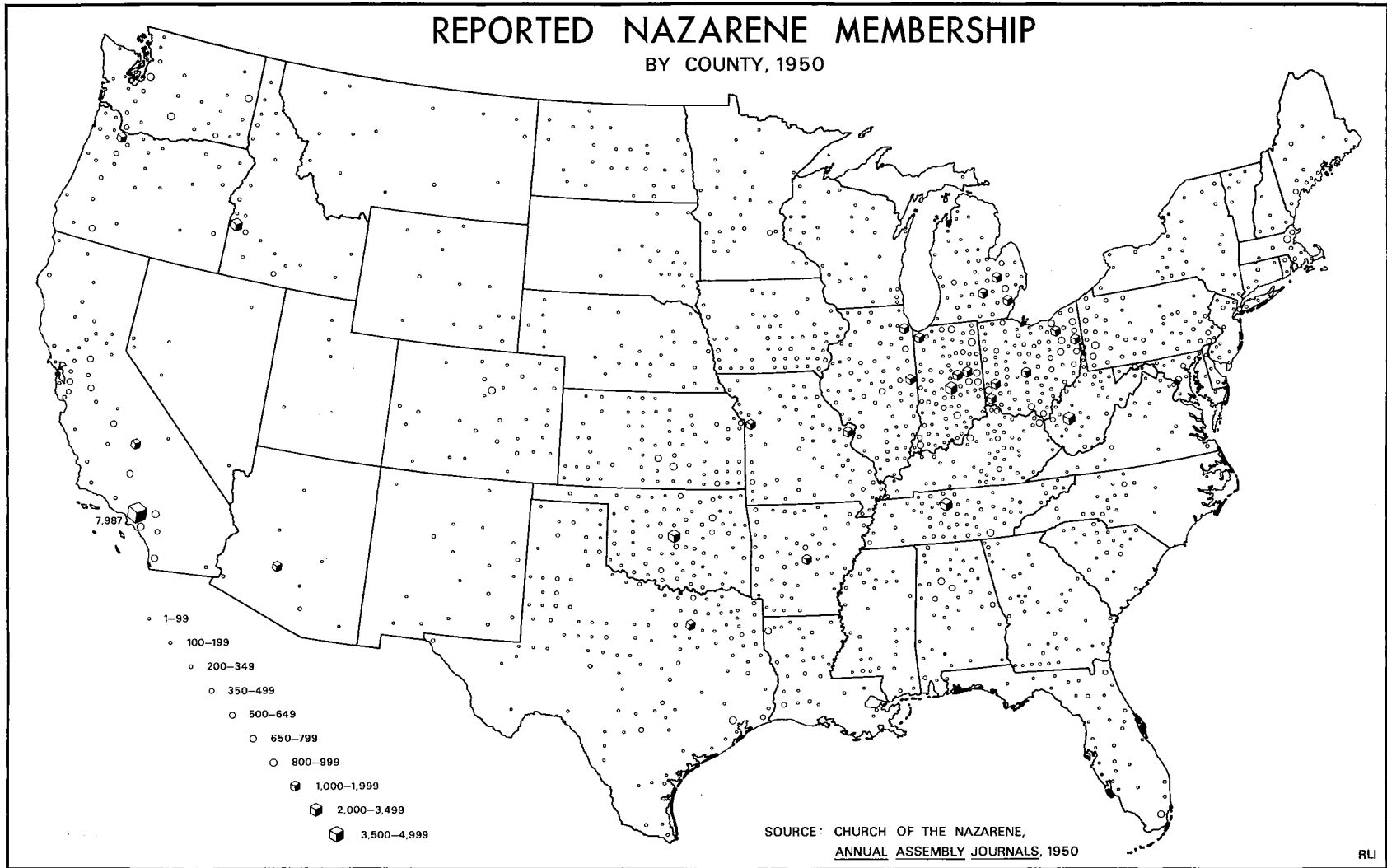


Figure 18. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1950

Nazarene Theological Seminary in 1945, almost doubled its membership during the period. St. Louis also showed a large increase, while the metropolitan area of Oklahoma City, which included Bethany Nazarene College, had gained almost 1,300 new members. County expansion was greatest in Texas with a net increase of 30 counties in various parts of the State.

Growth in the northern plains and the mountain states was moderate, and although geographical expansion was limited, the Pacific states showed a tremendous increase in churches and members. Los Angeles County had a gain of almost 3,600 members which strengthened its position as the city with the largest Nazarene membership. The San Joaquin Valley had begun to show signs of rapid growth, especially in and around Visalia and Porterville. With the exception of Nampa, Idaho, the major increases in the Northwest were in the largest cities. With the college giving impetus, this city with a population of only 16,185 had increased from 733 to 1,987 members during this period.

In the eastern half of the United States, the diffusion of this holiness religion was finally making rapid territorial gains. Outside of New England, the average net gain was 10 counties per state. Signs of vigorous expansion appeared in the South where the Church had previously been weak. Many of the additions were in small cities and towns in the South with only Nashville having a large Nazarene population. Further north, Indiana and Ohio were well established as the heartland of the Midwest. During this period most of their gains were within counties already containing Nazarene churches, but the number of churches and members gained was very significant. In addition, three counties in adjacent states showed exceptional growth. One of these

counties was Kankakee in Illinois, which had become the location for Olivet Nazarene College. The movement of the college from Olivet, Illinois, in 1940 brought the membership of Kankakee from 23 in 1936 to 501 in 1950. Genesee County in Michigan as well as Kanawha County in West Virginia were the other two areas of large growth. Charleston, in Kanawha County, was rapidly becoming a major force in Nazarene work within West Virginia. The Northeast showed moderate growth in Pennsylvania and New York, and very little change in New England.

The per capita strength of the Nazarenes in 1950 is illustrated in Figure 19. Three states emerge with location quotients over 3.00 -- Idaho, Oklahoma, and Indiana -- and each of these states is adjacent to another state having at least twice the national norm. Thus, the three major areas of concentration in the United States noted in 1936 appear to have stabilized during this period. One other feature prominent on this map is the strong growth of Nazarenes in the South. Four states experienced a rather dramatic increase, and all states south of the Ohio River showed a relatively strong per capita growth.

The Church of the Nazarene had officially existed for 42 years and had grown from roughly 10,000 members in 1908 to almost 227,000 members in 1950. With nearly 3,500 churches distributed in 1,557 counties, the stage was set for even greater growth in the 1950's. However, the vigorous territorial expansion of the Church (into new counties) would soon begin to wane, perhaps due to the geographical saturation of small towns and rural areas which were receptive to Nazarene holiness. Further growth would occur in place, especially in urbanized areas, which required the Church to evangelize to an increasingly urbanized population.



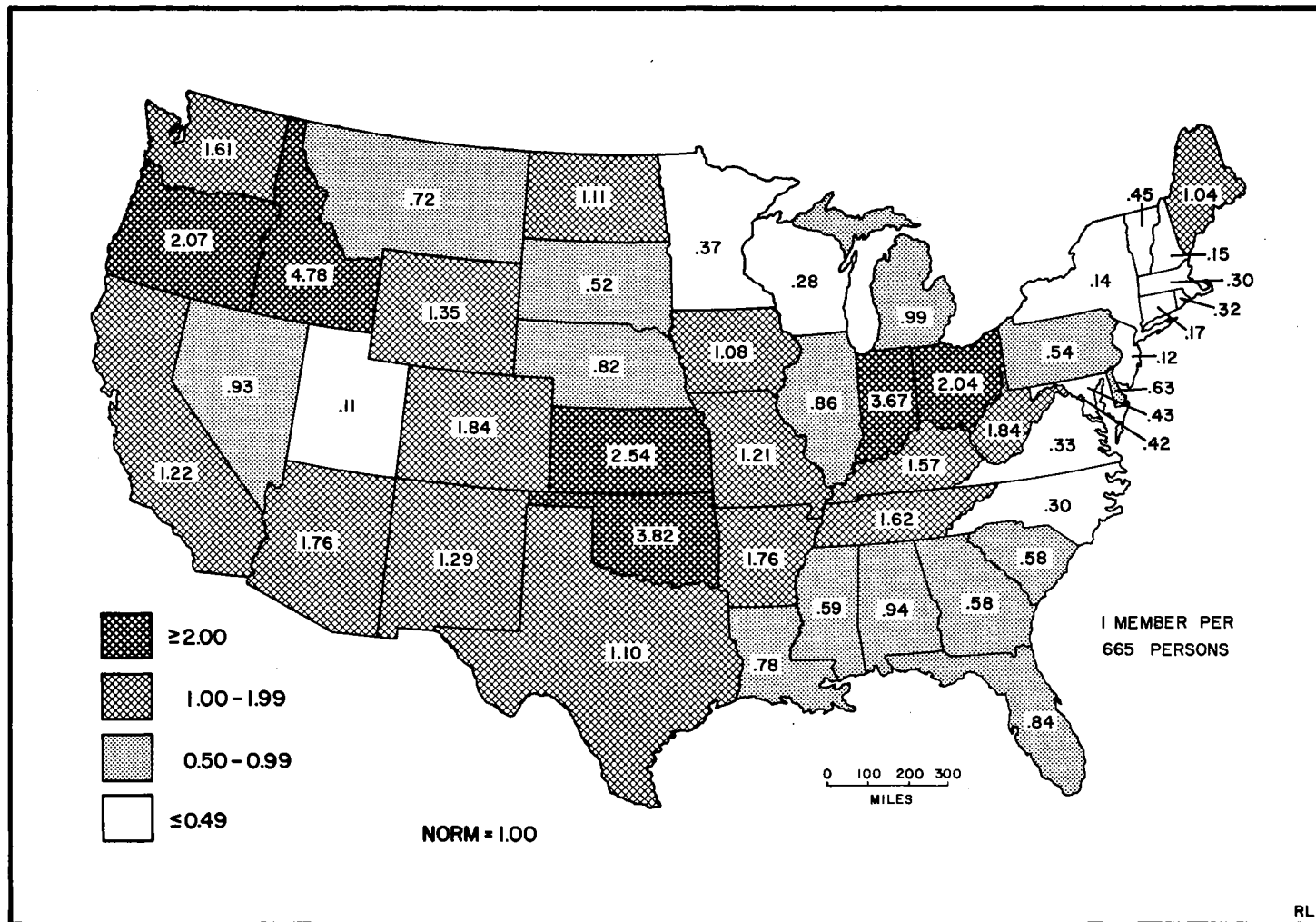


Figure 19. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1950

## CHAPTER IV

### TERRITORIAL SATURATION: 1950-1970

In 1950 the Church of the Nazarene was poised to enter two decades of continuous, steady membership growth. The rate of territorial expansion as measured by addition of churches reached its zenith during the Fifties. The Sixties saw a much slower rate of church formation and very little geographical expansion with the increase in membership being almost wholly due to the growth of individual, especially urban, congregations.

#### Phase I: Growth in Place, 1950-1960

The decade of the Fifties could possibly be described as the "golden era" in the growth of the Nazarenes. The Church gained over 81,000 members and added nearly 1,000 churches during this period (Table V). These gains represented the highest totals for any 10 year period after 1908 (see Figure 25). Since a vast majority of new churches were added to counties with existing churches, the expansion into new counties was much less than any previous decade. Concentrations of Nazarenes were more evident in specific states and counties.

A comparison of county membership maps for 1950 and 1960 (Figure 20) reveals a fairly large increase in the metropolitan areas, especially in the Far West and in the interior states from Ohio through Texas. In the Far West, Seattle, San Bernadino, and Los Angeles SMSA's

TABLE V

## NAZARENE STATISTICS, 1960

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>New England</b>			
Connecticut	5/8	8	601
Maine	13/16	40	2,113
Massachusetts	8/14	32	2,487
New Hampshire	5/10	6	217
Rhode Island	4/5	7	321
Vermont	6/14	10	319
Totals	41/67	103	6,058
<b>Middle Atlantic</b>			
New Jersey	13/21	25	1,250
New York	36/62	73	4,125
Pennsylvania	48/67	166	10,960
Totals	97/150	264	16,335
<b>South Atlantic</b>			
Delaware	3/3	8	387
Florida	41/67	110	7,838
Georgia	53/159	82	4,360
Maryland	16/24	26	2,145
North Carolina	28/100	50	2,962
South Carolina	25/46	51	3,054
Virginia	25/98	44	2,778
Washington, D. C.	1/1	4	593
West Virginia	46/55	120	7,982
Totals	238/553	495	32,099
<b>East North Central</b>			
Illinois	78/102	246	15,260
Indiana	89/92	344	25,831
Michigan	54/83	170	12,716
Ohio	84/88	360	32,802
Wisconsin	33/71	44	1,758
Totals	338/436	1,164	88,367
<b>East South Central</b>			
Alabama	42/67	99	5,407
Kentucky	59/120	125	9,019
Mississippi	34/82	56	2,575
Tennessee	60/95	172	10,277
Totals	195/364	452	27,278

TABLE V (Continued)

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>West North Central</b>			
Iowa	55/99	83	5,088
Kansas	69/105	130	9,840
Minnesota	26/87	39	1,887
Missouri	70/115	153	9,585
Nebraska	30/93	45	1,876
North Dakota	25/53	34	1,084
South Dakota	16/67	20	587
Totals	291/619	504	29,947
<b>West South Central</b>			
Arkansas	50/75	108	6,309
Louisiana	25/64	64	2,592
Oklahoma	72/77	228	15,352
Texas	130/254	273	16,999
Totals	277/470	673	41,252
<b>Mountain</b>			
Arizona	10/14	46	3,889
Colorado	30/63	70	5,105
Idaho	23/44	55	5,213
Montana	17/56	22	779
Nevada	8/17	12	408
New Mexico	20/32	38	2,117
Utah	4/29	4	177
Wyoming	13/23	20	790
Totals	125/278	267	18,478
<b>Pacific</b>			
California	46/58	322	31,660
Oregon	33/36	98	7,165
Washington	31/39	116	8,985
Totals	110/133	536	47,810
United States Totals	1,712/3,070	4,458	307,624

Source: Church of the Nazarene, Annual Assembly Journals, 1960.

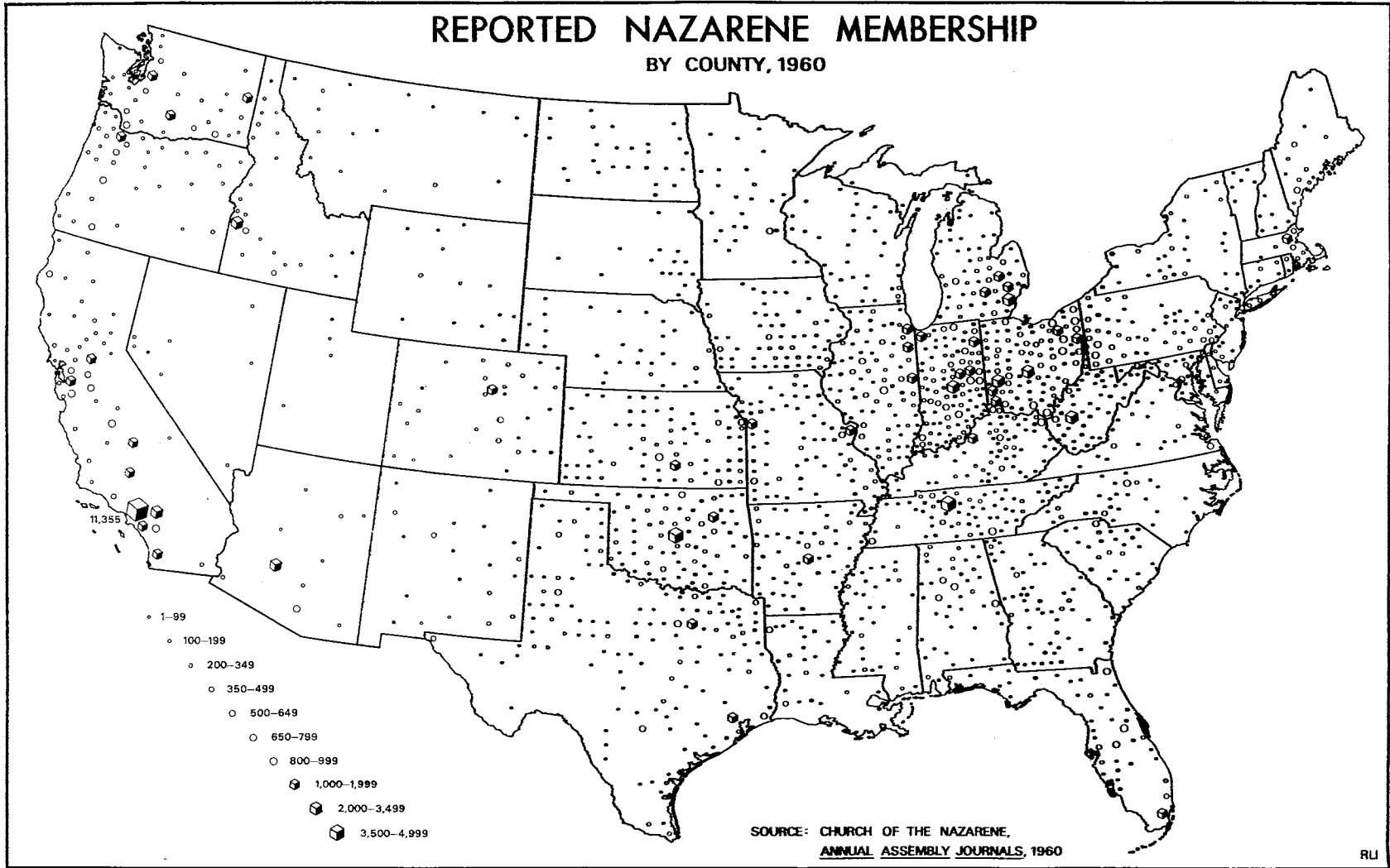


Figure 20. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1960

showed increases of over 1,000 members, with the latter having a gain of 3,368 members. Further east, Oklahoma City, St. Louis, and Columbus SMSA's added over 1,000 members each.

An examination of geographical expansion by regions showed the Midwest and South Atlantic states exhibiting the largest county gains. Nazarene activity in the Southeast had begun to blossom in the 1940's, and perhaps because of this late start, it remained one of the few geographically expanding areas in the Nation. All the states from Virginia to Florida showed moderate expansion while Florida experienced exceptional growth in churches and members. Central Florida received much of this growth and was developing as the strongest Nazarene area in the State.

The Midwest continued to grow numerically and geographically, but territorial expansion was almost at an end in Indiana and Ohio by 1960, with only seven counties lacking a Nazarene Church. Ohio added over 8,000 new members with Indiana and Illinois gaining approximately 4,000, respectively. The bulk of membership growth east of the Mississippi during this decade was found in the six Ohio River Valley states plus Michigan and Tennessee.

The western half of the United States saw little geographical growth with the exception of Missouri and its adjacent states. Expansion was evident especially in the counties surrounding Kansas City, which could possibly be attributed to the impetus provided by the theological seminary. Further south, Oklahoma and Texas were growing in membership despite a net loss of six counties during this period. Louisiana, which had shown a sharp increase from 1936-1950, became an arena of controversy in the 1950's. An influential district superintendent, C. Elbert Dodd,

left the Nazarene Church and aided in forming the Bible Missionary Church in 1956. The developing "liberal" trend of the Nazarenes was the basis for the formation of the new church, and the effect on the Church of the Nazarene in Louisiana left a seemingly permanent scar on the work there.<sup>1</sup> During this most productive decade for the Nation, Louisiana lost over 550 members and seven churches as well as being located in three fewer counties.

In the Far West church and membership growth reached a peak during the Fifties. California gained more than 100 churches and 12,000 members, with its most sizable gains in southern California and the interior valleys. Further north a number of cities showed strong growth as well as Phoenix in the Southwest.

The per capita index for 1960 showed few changes from 1950 (Figure 21). The unusual decline in Louisiana was the result of the previously mentioned controversy, and the actual effect becomes more apparent on a per capita basis. Two states showed strong Nazarene growth--Arkansas and West Virginia. Both were contiguous to strong Nazarene areas and their growth was probably due in part to their proximity to these "cores." The South and Southeast continued their per capita growth, especially South Carolina.

#### Phase II: Selected Growth, 1960-1970

The end to territorial expansion which had been hinted at during the late Fifties became a reality in the Sixties. The Church was

---

<sup>1</sup>The "liberal" trend indicated a very gradual acceptance of secular social practices which were once prohibited in the Nazarene Church. This trend was not theological in nature but was closely associated with interpretation and enforcement of Church rules.

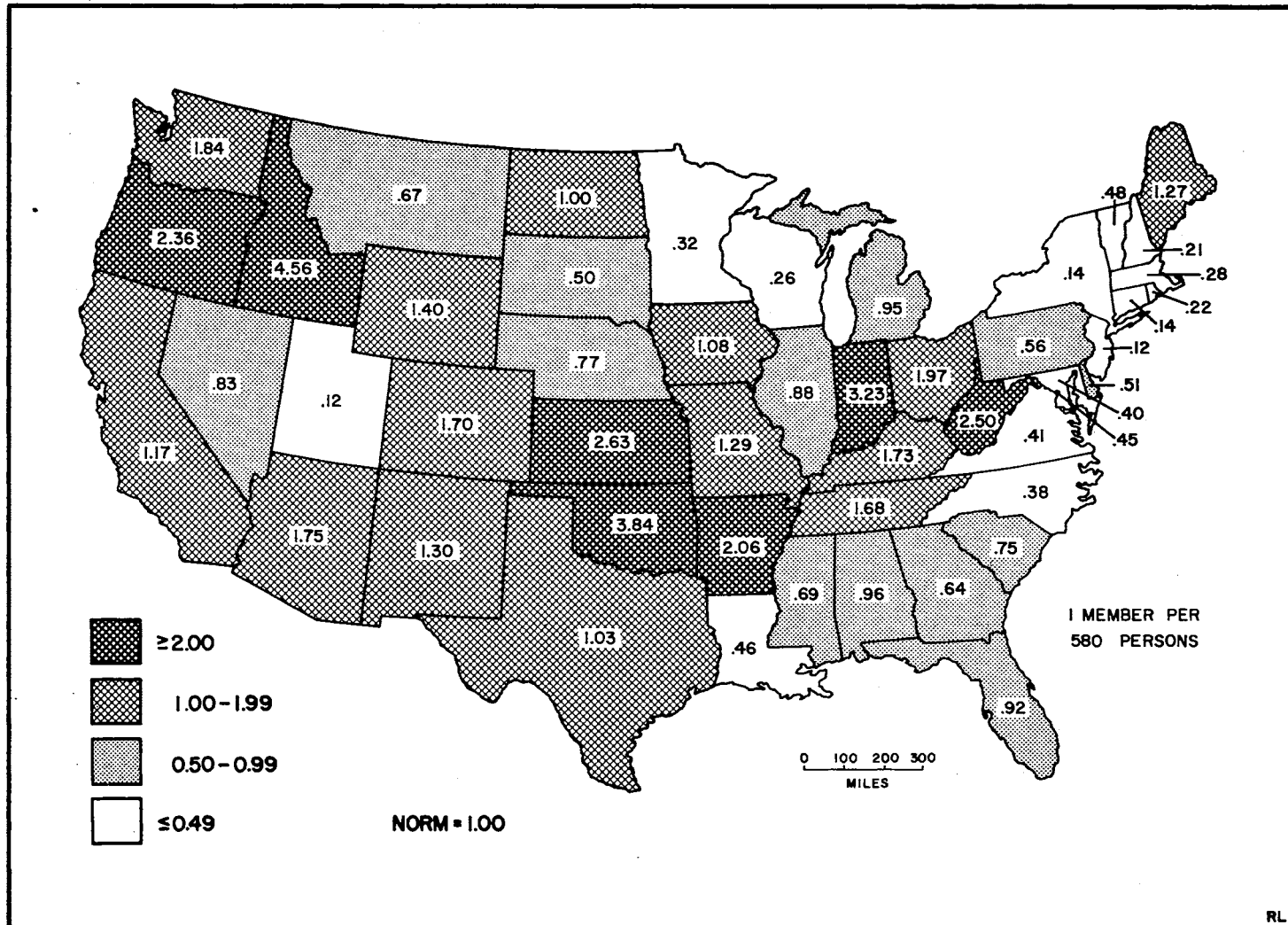


Figure 21. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1960



located in only 42 more counties in 1970 than in 1960. With the possible exception of California, which gained six counties, no state made any exceptional geographical advances. Two states which had always been relatively weak gained five counties each -- New York and Virginia -- but no other state added more than four counties, and a number lost counties from their 1960 total (Figure 22).

The formation of new churches had been a relatively steady factor throughout the history of the Nazarenes through 1960. But the Sixties ushered in a new era and the number of churches rose by only 188 during this period (Table VI). In 1968 the church total was 4,674 which was the highest in history, but during the following two years the total number declined, perhaps an indication that the number of organized churches may have reached a leveling-off point and that future expansion might require new methods of evangelizing.

An examination of the states which showed the largest church gains reveals the four state area of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky having a net gain of 81 churches. This is by far the most productive area for new churches, although three other states -- California, Florida, and Maine -- had sizable church gains.

The New England area showed relatively strong growth in churches, members and new counties compared with its minimal gains through the years. Maine totaled 14 more churches during this period and now had churches in every county in the State. Further south, New Hampshire and Massachusetts showed surprising county and membership growth, and for the first time, Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy seemed to be aiding the growth in Norfolk County just south of Boston.

Elsewhere other colleges, established by the Church in 1964,

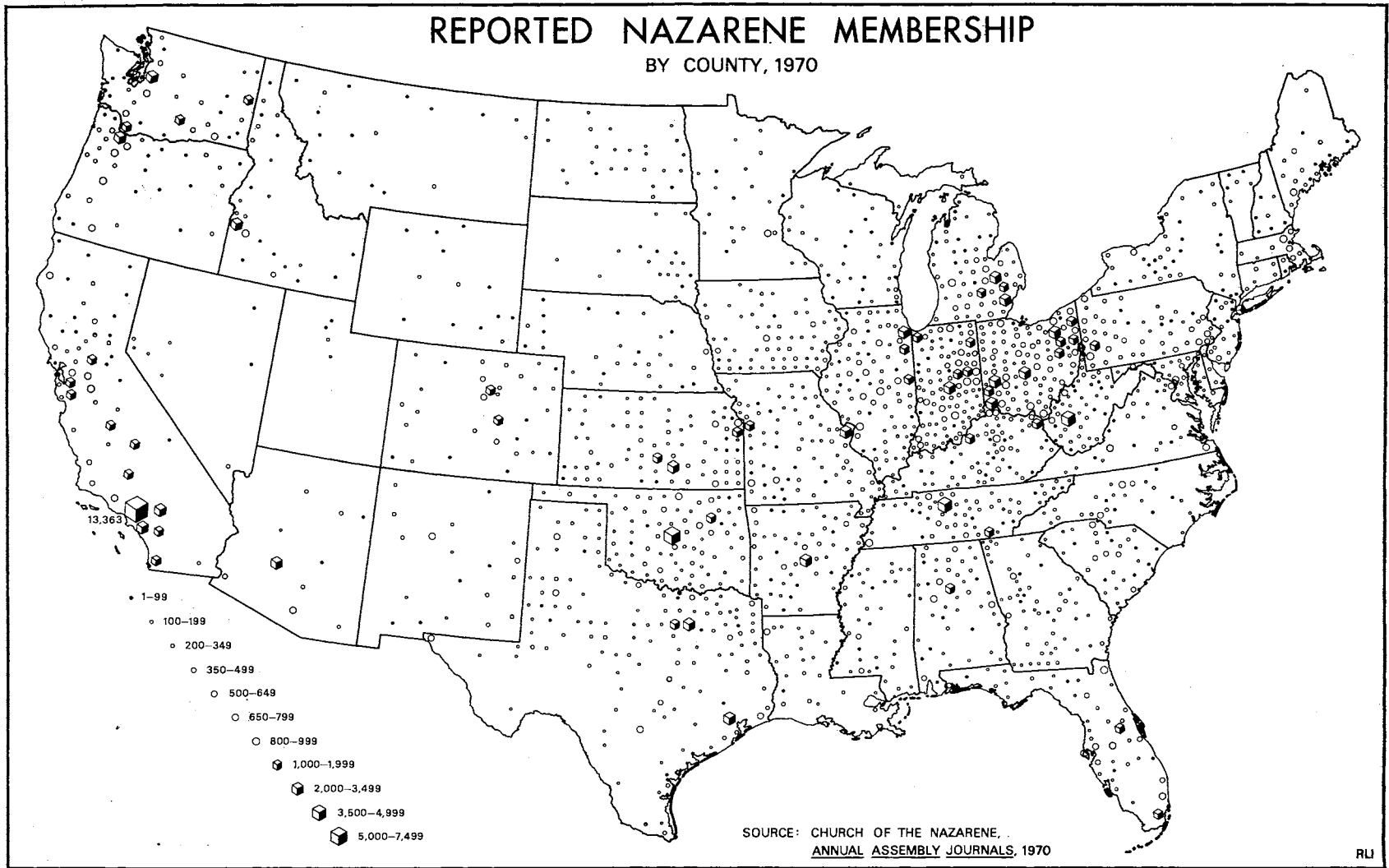


Figure 22. Reported Nazarene Membership by County, 1970

TABLE VI  
NAZARENE STATISTICS, 1970

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>New England</b>			
Connecticut	5/8	8	657
Maine	16/16	54	2,958
Massachusetts	10/14	35	3,035
New Hampshire	7/10	8	349
Rhode Island	3/5	6	297
Vermont	6/14	9	328
Totals	47/67	120	7,624
<b>Middle Atlantic</b>			
New Jersey	15/21	30	2,064
New York	41/62	82	5,599
Pennsylvania	47/67	155	12,840
Totals	103/150	267	20,503
<b>South Atlantic</b>			
Delaware	3/3	9	500
Florida	42/67	132	11,314
Georgia	54/159	85	5,943
Maryland	19/24	29	2,729
North Carolina	27/100	48	3,651
South Carolina	29/46	54	4,179
Virginia	30/96	51	4,373
Washington, D. C.	1/1	4	697
West Virginia	42/55	127	10,196
Totals	247/551	539	43,582
<b>East North Central</b>			
Illinois	82/102	254	19,229
Indiana	90/92	360	29,272
Michigan	56/83	195	16,604
Ohio	87/88	387	40,061
Wisconsin	32/72	42	2,153
Totals	347/437	1,238	107,319
<b>East South Central</b>			
Alabama	44/67	105	7,100
Kentucky	63/120	138	11,119
Mississippi	36/82	55	2,964
Tennessee	56/95	171	12,318
Totals	199/364	469	33,501

TABLE VI (Continued)

Census Region State	Counties Occupied/ Total Counties	Churches	Members
<b>West North Central</b>			
Iowa	58/99	83	5,635
Kansas	72/105	135	12,572
Minnesota	22/87	34	2,187
Missouri	74/115	161	11,932
Nebraska	29/93	40	2,071
North Dakota	25/53	33	1,107
South Dakota	17/67	21	641
<b>Totals</b>	<b>297/619</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>36,145</b>
<b>West South Central</b>			
Arkansas	51/75	111	7,898
Louisiana	22/64	54	2,642
Oklahoma	73/77	220	18,026
Texas	125/254	281	20,116
<b>Totals</b>	<b>271/470</b>	<b>666</b>	<b>48,682</b>
<b>Mountain</b>			
Arizona	10/14	53	5,553
Colorado	31/63	77	7,258
Idaho	24/44	53	5,962
Montana	17/56	22	977
Nevada	8/17	13	582
New Mexico	19/32	40	3,099
Utah	4/29	5	260
Wyoming	13/23	17	921
<b>Totals</b>	<b>126/278</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>24,612</b>
<b>Pacific</b>			
California	52/58	347	40,198
Oregon	33/36	91	9,717
Washington	32/39	122	11,396
<b>Totals</b>	<b>117/133</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>61,311</b>
<b>United States Totals</b>	<b>1,754/3,069</b>	<b>4,646</b>	<b>383,279</b>

Source: Church of the Nazarene, Annual Assembly Journals, 1970.

appeared to stimulate local growth. Junior colleges were located in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, and Olathe, Kansas, while a Bible college was established in Colorado. The impact of the schools at Olathe, just south of Kansas City, and Colorado Springs are evident from Figure 22. Mt. Vernon Nazarene College had not affected the growth in central Ohio as noticeably, but its eventual influence may be even more dramatic due to the large number of Nazarenes in Ohio. By 1970 the Church had eight liberal arts schools and a Bible college located in the United States.

Another major trend, not readily apparent on the maps, was the increase in church size, especially the urban churches, during this era. Church size began to affect evangelism in that many of these churches were now operated by large staffs rather than by the traditional method of one minister responsible for all activities. This change in church size is evidenced by Table VII.

TABLE VII  
CHURCH SIZE: 1916-1970

	1916	1926	1936	1950	1960	1970
Average size	38	44	55	65	69	82

One effect of the increases in churches and members is apparent in Figure 23. The church districts, which totaled 32 in 1915, had increased to 67 in 1968. Many of the boundaries are a direct result of large church and membership increases as can be detected in such states as California, Oklahoma, Indiana, and Ohio -- all of which are divided into at least four districts. The average district size rose from 61 churches per district in 1950 to 70 in 1970. During this same period

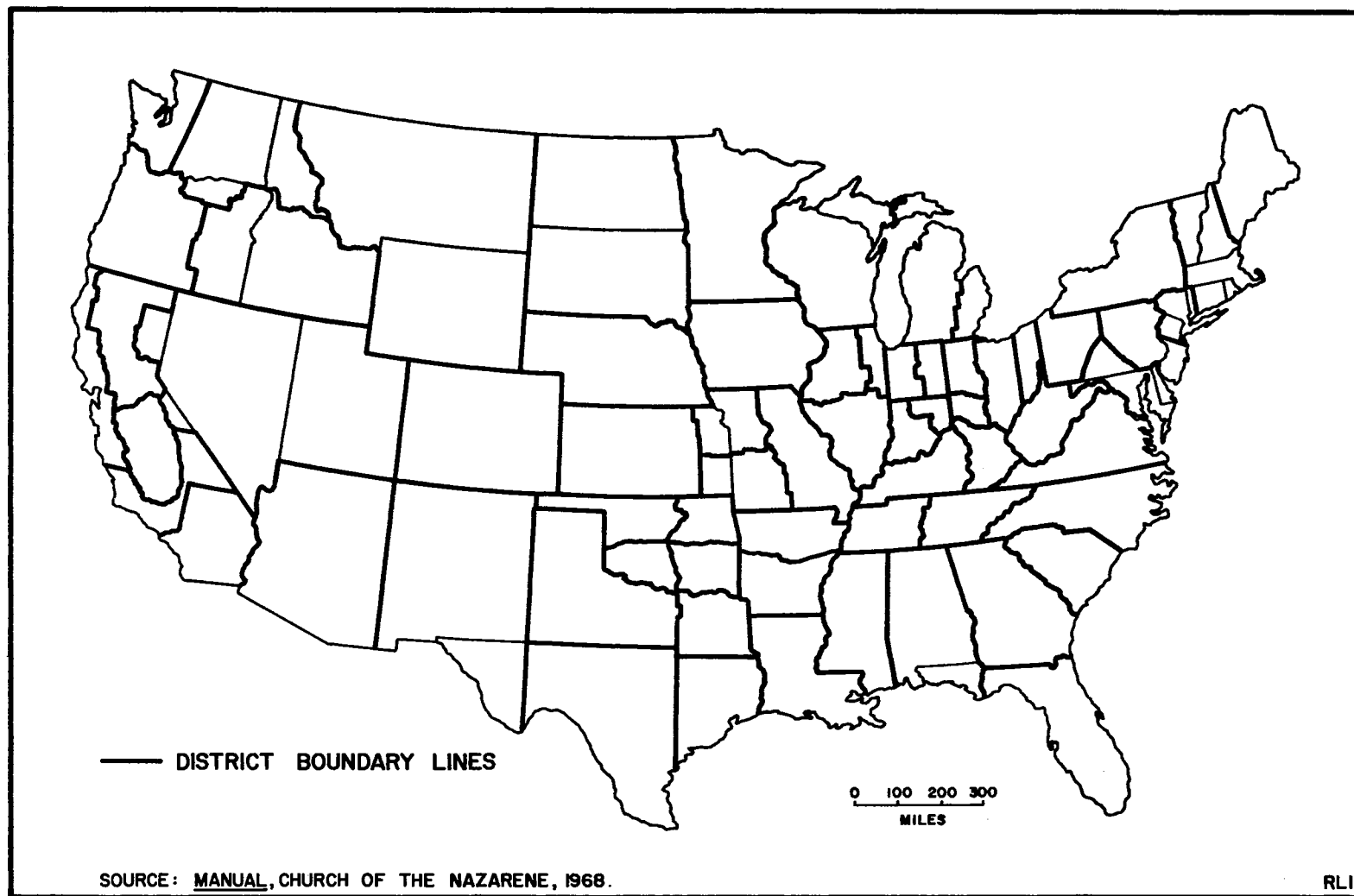


Figure 23. Nazarene Districts, 1968

membership increased from 3,976 per district to 5,787. The actual size of districts ranges from 20 churches in the Nevada-Utah district to 138 churches in the Central Ohio district, an indication that districts are viewed as functional units and that both area and membership are considered in districting decisions.

A final examination of the per capita membership for 1970 shows basically the same overall pattern as 1960 and before (Figure 24). The Southeast, with the exception of Florida, continued to increase in strength. Further north the West Virginia, Virginia, and Kentucky area was growing rapidly with Virginia reaching 0.50 for the first time. The Pacific Northwest still remained a strong region, but the real strength of the denomination -- the Nazarene heartland -- was firmly anchored in the interior states from western Pennsylvania and West Virginia to the southern Rockies.

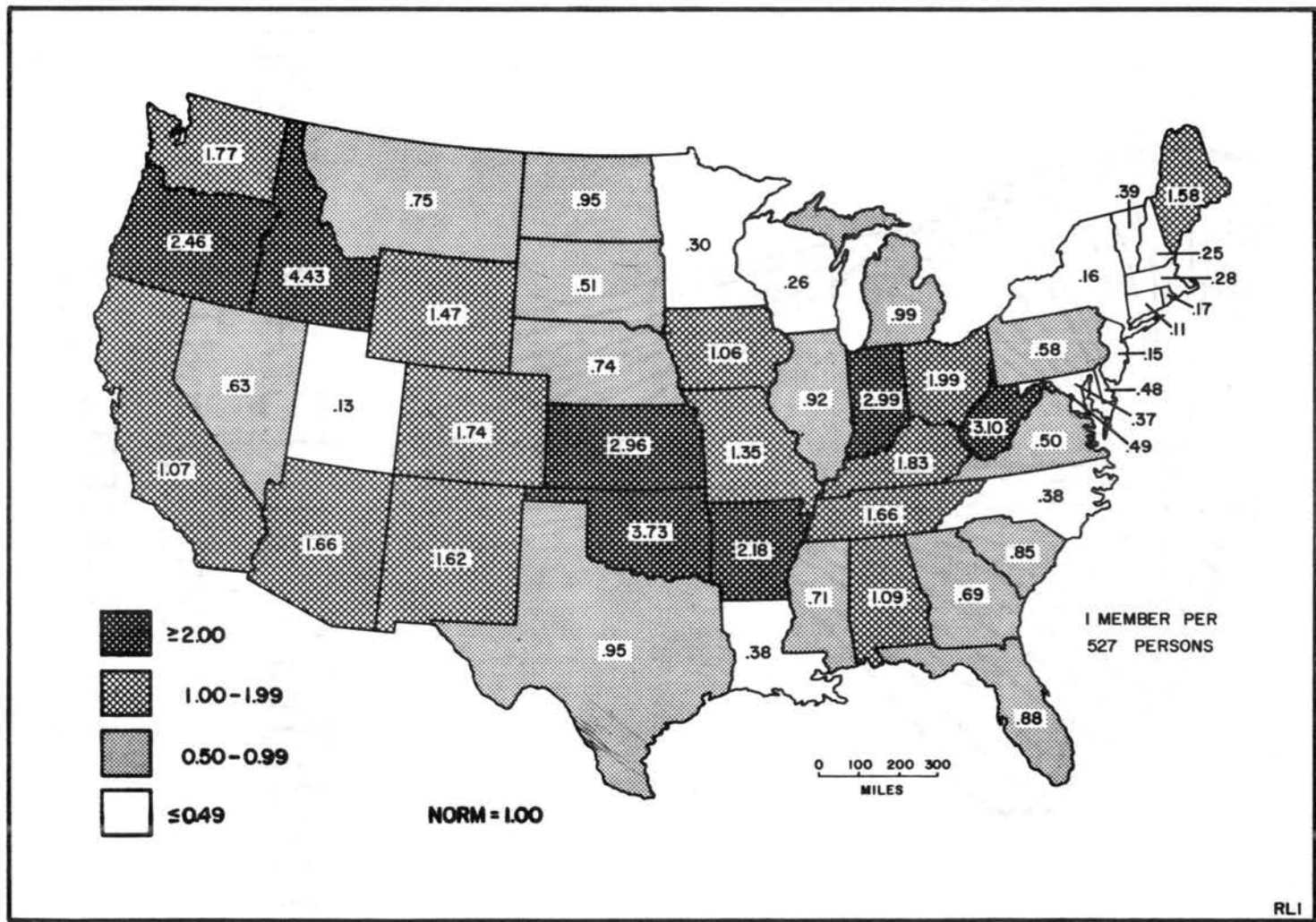


Figure 24. Per Capita Nazarene Distribution, 1970



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The dissemination of Wesleyan holiness via the Church of the Nazarene has always been remarkably national in scope since its early beginnings. The diffusion of the Nazarenes from Los Angeles, the westward additions of new churches joining the Pentecostal Churches of America in New York, and the rural spread of the holiness groups in the South and Southwest placed the Church of the Nazarene in an ideal position for national growth in 1908. Thus, it is not surprising that by 1926 only one state (Nevada) was without an organized church.

Through the years there has been no one focal point of high Nazarene membership with the possible exception of Los Angeles, but many separate locales distributed across the nation have emerged as relative<sup>1</sup> strongholds. The most apparent areas have historically been the counties with church colleges, and the effect of these colleges becomes evident when reviewing the growth patterns. Not only have the colleges been a boon to local growth, but their influence has spread to nearby counties and stimulated state growth. Eastern Nazarene College at Quincy, Massachusetts, has remained the only exception to this rule, and its recent growth may signify that it too will soon be following

---

<sup>1</sup>The terms relative and absolute are used to denote different indices of Nazarene strength. Relative refers to the strength of the Nazarenes when compared with the population of an area, while absolute applies only to the total membership in the area.

the educational institution pattern. The addition of new schools in the 1960's has already stimulated further growth in certain areas and will undoubtedly continue to do so.

There has been a continual shift of the "center of gravity" from a more western oriented organization to one centered nearer the Midwestern states of Indiana and Ohio (compare Figures 10 and 11 with Figures 22 and 24). These two states in particular have become the strongest Nazarene area in the nation, considering both absolute and relative strength, a fact that was accomplished without the benefit of a college until 1964. The high growth and expansion rate of these states has had a strong influence on surrounding states such as Kentucky, West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania.

Expansion was quick to come to the Plains states and the Far West in the early years of the Church, and both regions have remained important centers of Nazarene activity. In contrast, establishing the Church in the Deep South had been a difficult task which met little success until after 1936. By 1970 considerable strides had been made in spreading Nazarene holiness in this region, with Alabama, Florida, and South Carolina leading the way.

It is along the Atlantic seaboard that the Nazarenes have encountered the most rigorous challenge to their evangelism. Though the area includes early birthplaces of the Church, geographical gains in this section of the country have been gradual and uninspiring. But expansion during the most recent decade may indicate that much more growth is likely in this area. Maine and Virginia both exhibited healthy increases and the overall outlook is promising with the impetus of Eastern Nazarene College beginning to unfold.

### An Evolving Emphasis

The Nazarenes produced consistent increases in counties, churches, and members from 1916 to 1950 (Figure 25). In the Fifties the number of new counties added to the Church was much lower in preceding decades. At the same time churches were being established at a faster rate than ever before which implied a changing emphasis towards building additional churches within counties already having a Nazarene church (Table VIII). As the Church advanced through the Sixties, a much smaller gain in churches and counties was present. This fact, coupled with a steady rise in membership, seemed to indicate that increased church size had become the major element in church growth.

A comparison of the percent of Nazarenes in SMSA's to the total population reveals that the Nazarenes were less urbanized than the rest of the Nation prior to 1950 but have kept pace with the rate urbanization of the United States population as a whole since that time (Table IX).<sup>2</sup> The relative strength of the Church in the SMSA's, and the distribution of these SMSA's is shown by Figures 26 and 27. One of the most interesting discoveries is the failure of the Nazarenes to establish their work in the coastal SMSA's. This outcome could probably have predicted in the East and along the Gulf Coast. But on smaller scale in the West, the pattern shown in California also suggests the non-coastal appeal of the Nazarenes. Even along the Great Lakes, this trend is

---

<sup>2</sup>Major growth of Nazarenes in the SMSA's is due to either migration or conversion. The opinion of the author is that a majority of the growth is a result of Nazarene migration into the SMSA's. This generalization is based on the author's experience in the Church as well as limited investigations of church statistics. Sampling of records indicates more new metropolitan members join by transfer rather than profession of faith.

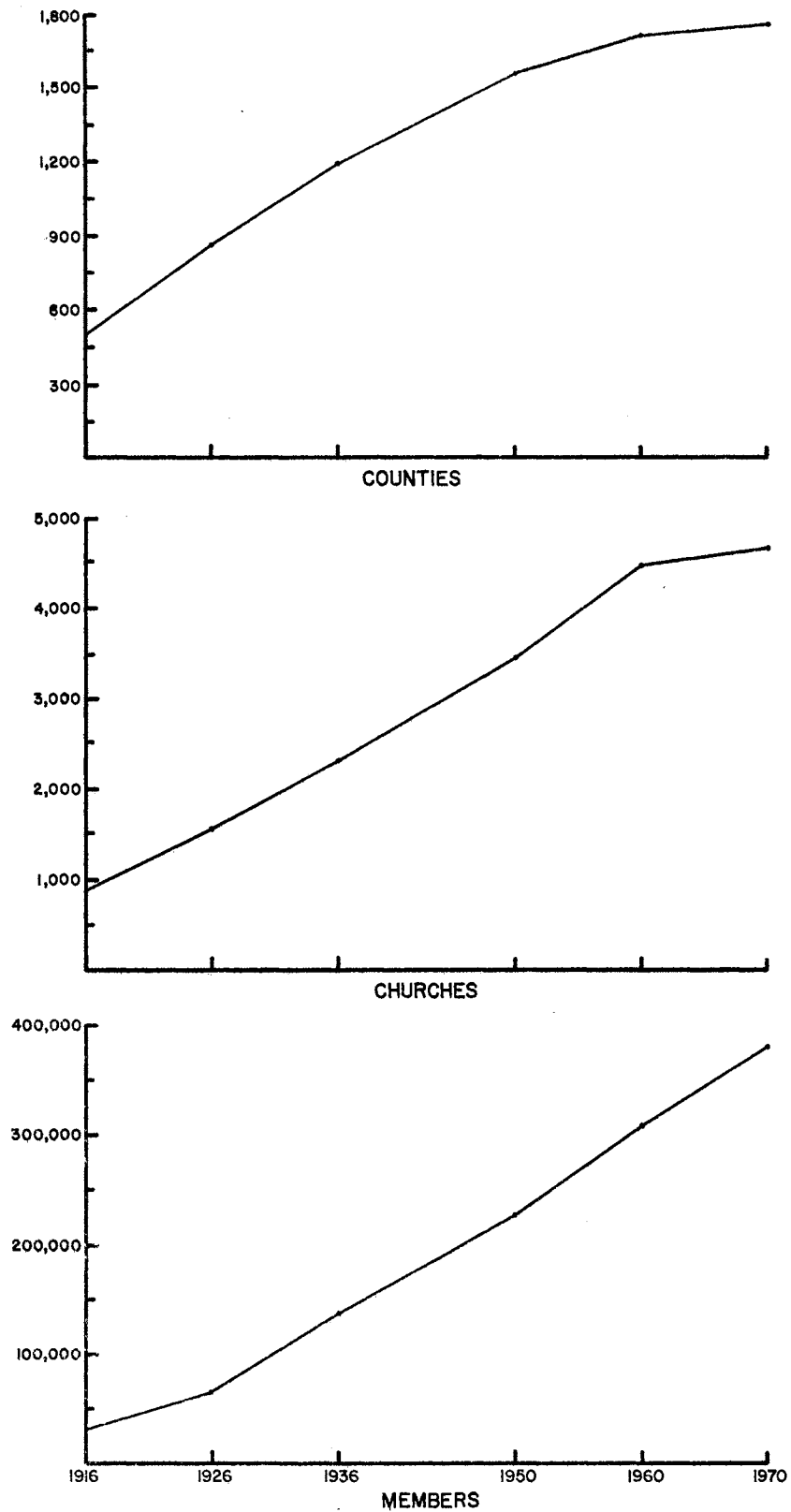


Figure 25. Nazarene Growth and Expansion, 1916-1970

TABLE VIII  
SUMMARY OF NAZARENE GROWTH

	1916	1926	1936	1950	1960	1970
Counties	514	871	1,194	1,557	1,712	1,754
Churches	865	1,521	2,291	3,476	4,458	4,646
Members	32,091	66,422	138,629	226,550	307,624	383,279

TABLE IX  
NAZARENES AND TOTAL POPULATION IN SMSA'S

	Total Number 1950	% 1950	Total Number 1960	% 1960	Total Number 1970	% 1970
Nazarenes	117,685	51.9	169,024	54.9	218,484	57.0
United States Population	94,579,008	62.6	119,594,754	66.5	139,418,811	68.6

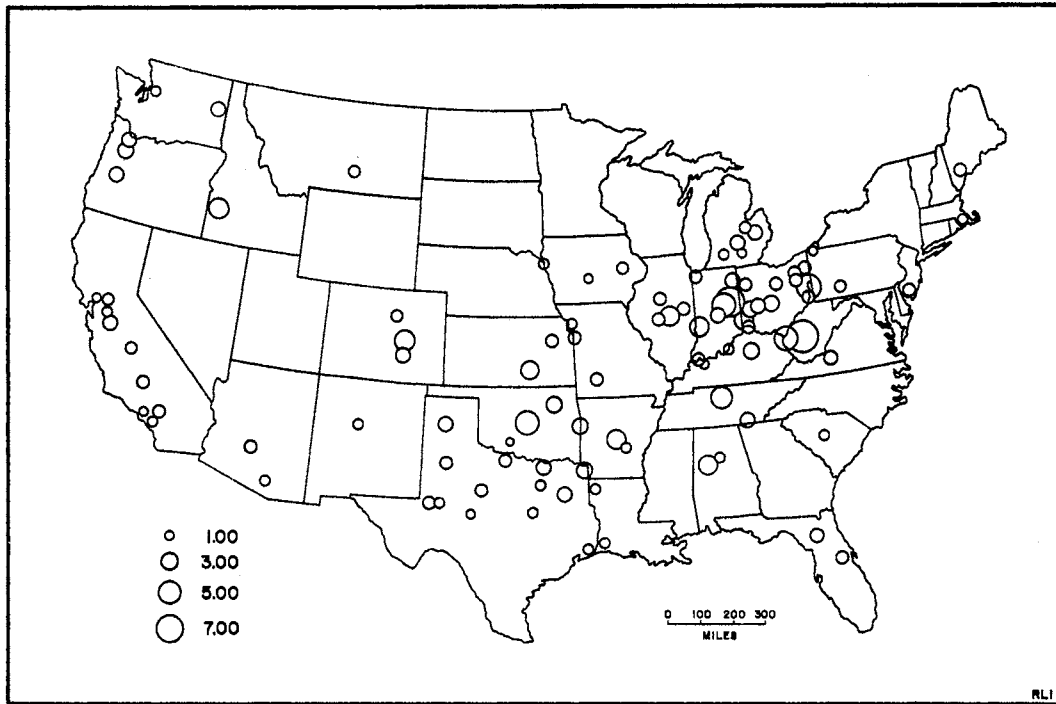


Figure 26. SMSA's Above the National Norm in Nazarene Membership

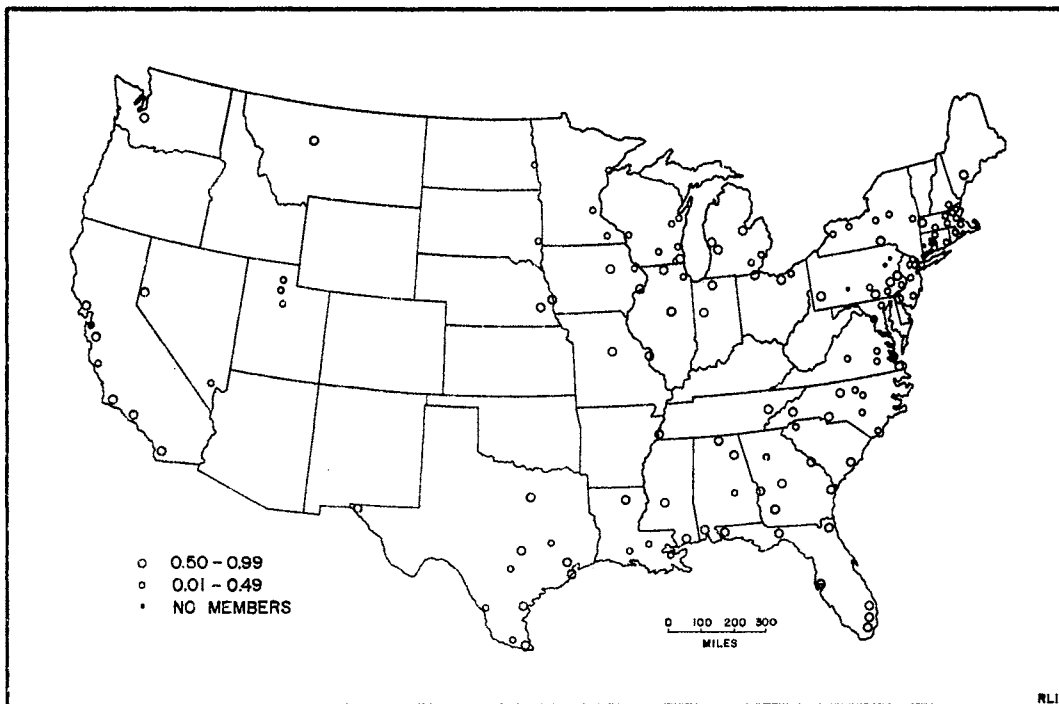


Figure 27. SMSA's Below the National Norm in Nazarene Membership

apparent. Throughout the remainder of the Nation, the SMSA's reveal much the same pattern of concentration as the state per capita maps have shown. The Midwest and Southern Plains contain the strongest per capita SMSA's, while the Pacific Northwest, although represented by fewer metropolitan areas, remains an area of important relative strength (see Appendix for map of SMSA's).

#### Defining Nazarene Regions

Is there a "Nazarene region?" Obviously a group whose constituents comprise less than five percent of the population of any county in the U.S.A. can hardly be considered to be the dominant, pervasive moral or social force in any region. But it is possible to outline portions of the nation where Nazarenes are relatively strong, or concentrated when compared with their overall membership distribution. Figure 28 illustrates one approach which serves as an excellent aid in identifying Nazarene regions. While the method is the same as that used on previous per capita maps at the state level (see Figure 23), the detailed variations in strength within states are clearly revealed, as in the case of Idaho, Iowa, and Kentucky. There are two inherent disadvantages in working with this data at the county level. One is the false impressions created by counties of unequal size, such as in western Idaho, eastern Oregon, and Arizona. A second problem is that mapping of per capita figures may overemphasize the importance of sparsely populated rural areas, while metropolitan areas with large numbers of members may be given too little consideration.

Thus, in the final regionalization a combination of per capita membership (Figure 28) and total membership (Figure 22) as well as

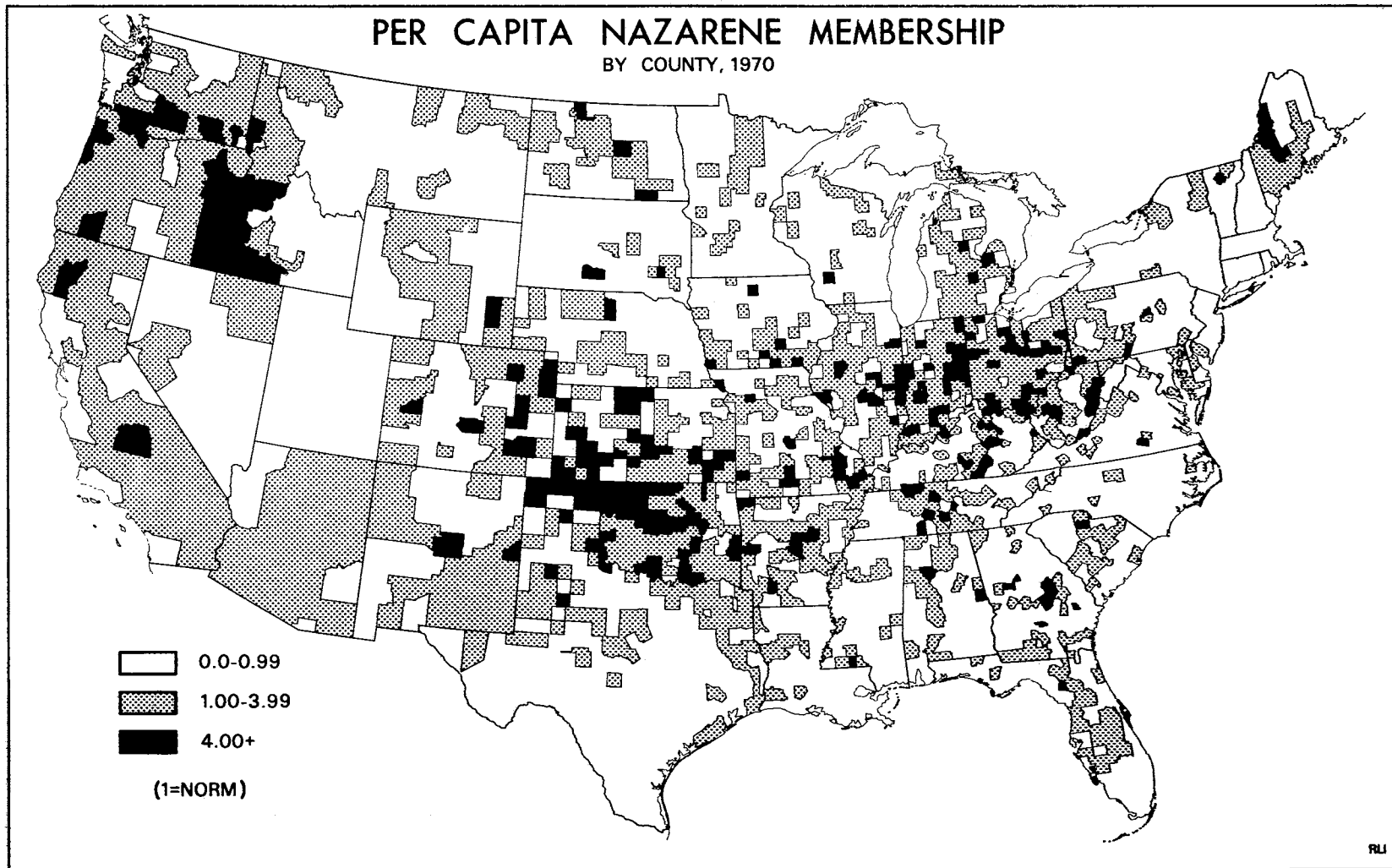


Figure 28. Per Capita Nazarene Membership by County, 1970



careful examination of the membership patterns exhibited by the SMSA's (Figures 26 and 27) was employed. A fourth factor considered was the historical expansion of the Church. The resultant regions are meant to be suggestive rather than definitive: boundaries on the map are best interpreted as representing gradual transitions in degree of Nazarene strength, rather than sharp or abrupt breaks.

The major and secondary Nazarene regions are illustrated by Figure 29. Three major regions are shown, and each has been a dynamic area of Nazarene growth since the early days of the Church. Although the initial holiness founders began their work outside these three major regions, the arrival and sudden flourish of growth was in evidence in 1916 in Oklahoma and the Pacific Northwest (see Figure 11). By 1926 Indiana had also shown extraordinary growth, and the three clusters had established themselves as growth centers which would both expand and solidify into the areas that are apparent in 1970.

The most powerful region numerically and possibly the strongest "core" region is found in parts of nine states centered in Indiana and Ohio. This area includes three church schools and contains about 30% of the total U.S. membership. The second major region is centered on the Oklahoma City-Wichita axis and reaches into five states. Much of this region's relative strength lies in small towns throughout western Oklahoma and Kansas, although the absolute power is found in Oklahoma City and Kansas City. The Pacific Northwest holds a third major region and is also more small town and rural in nature. The boundaries contain most of the population centers in this area and follow the Snake and Columbia Rivers as well as including the Willamette Valley.

The similarities of the regions are most apparent when comparing

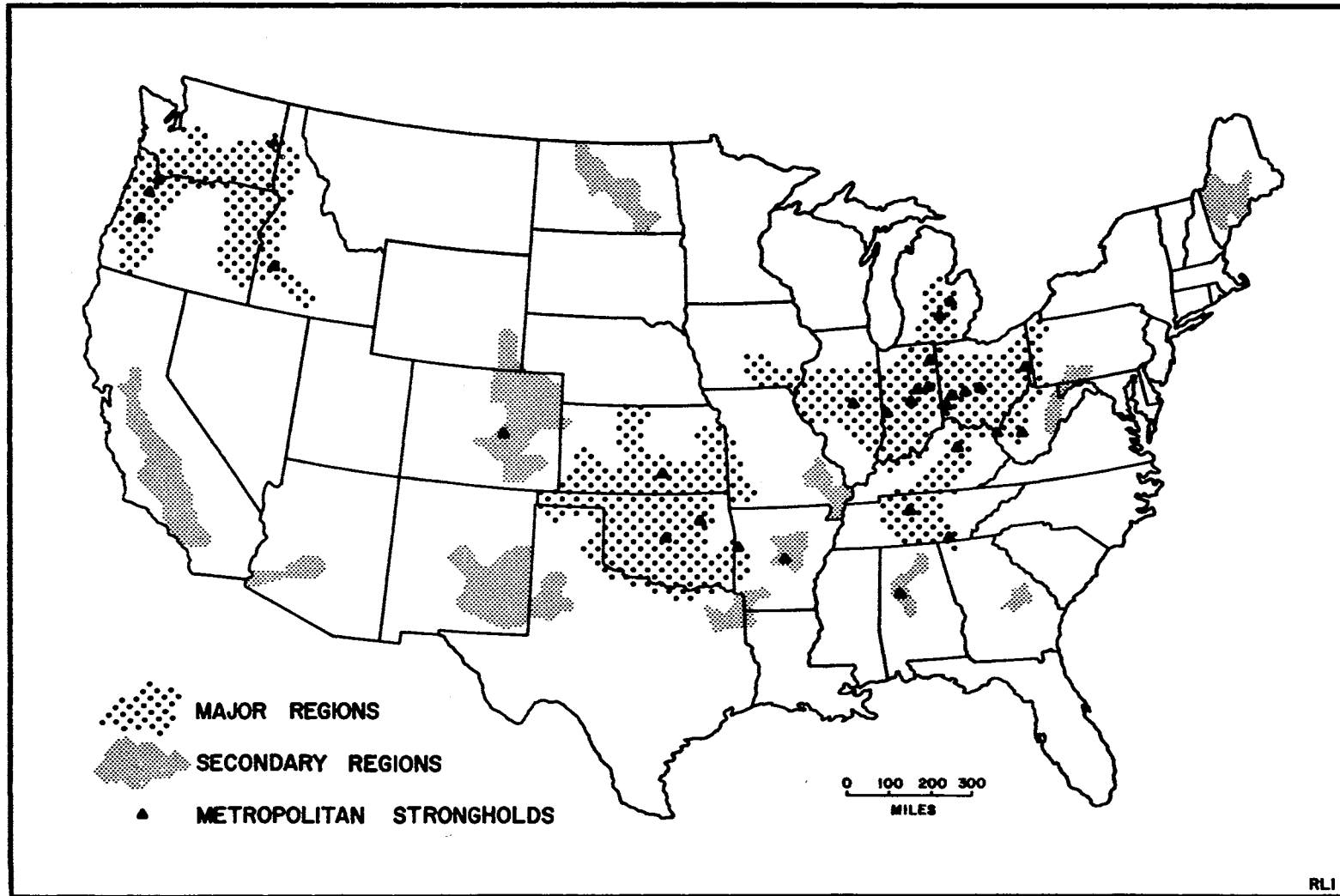


Figure 29. Nazarene Regions

the urban and non-urban percentages. The Midwestern and Southern Plains regions have 55% of their membership located in SMSA's while the Northwest has 48%. This lower percentage is due to the high concentration of Nazarenes in the non-metropolitan county of Canyon, Idaho -- the location of Northwest Nazarene College. The SMSA's within these regions appear consistently above average Nazarene strength, with exception of three SMSA's in the Midwestern region. A breakdown on the locations of the SMSA's shows 10 and six in the Southern Plains and Northwest respectively, while the Midwest totals 38. This large variance is further enforced when comparing the absolute strength among the regions. Approximately 110,000 members are located in the Midwest (30% of the total Nazarene population). The more rural Southern Plains and Northwestern regions encompass only 9% and 6%, respectively, of the total Nazarene population. Thus, the Midwestern region has become most prominent through sheer numbers.

More than 90% of the counties in each of the regions is above the national norm in per capita membership with the Northwestern region having only two out of 41 counties below the norm. The real strength of the Northwest is shown in that 60% of its counties have more than four times the national average in per capita Nazarene membership. The Southern Plains also ranks high with just under 50%, while the Midwest has 25%.

An important element of Figure 29 is the location of SMSA's which met certain criteria ( $\geq 2.00$  and  $> 750$  members)<sup>3</sup> as Nazarene strongholds.

---

<sup>3</sup> Nazarene strongholds were identified by combining absolute and relative strength. The SMSA's selected were those with at least 750 members and a location quotient of 2.00 or more.

The most startling result is that only three SMSA's (Colorado Springs, Little Rock, and Tuscaloosa) were located outside the major regions. No SMSA's in California are included although Los Angeles County alone had over 13,000 members. The grouping of SMSA's in eastern Indiana and western Ohio seems to indicate a central area of concentration for this region. Charleston, West Virginia ranks highest among all SMSA's in relative strength, while Huntington-Ashland, Steubenville-Wierton, Anderson, and Muncie have a per capita index of greater than 5.00. Strongholds of absolute strength include Indianapolis, Dayton, and Nashville, all with over 4,000 members. Further west, this central core idea is enforced by the grouping of the three central SMSA's -- Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Wichita -- and the omission of outlying ones such as Wichita Falls, Kansas City, and Topeka. The Pacific Northwest is best represented since five out of six SMSA's within the region are included (only Seattle fails to qualify).

All of the secondary regions, especially those adjacent to the major regions, represent a diminished, but still relatively strong, Nazarene presence. The California region is as strong numerically as two of the core regions (7% of Nazarene membership), but the relative strength is diluted by the large population of the region. Secondary areas in Georgia, southeast Missouri, and North Dakota are highly rural with only one town over 20,000 in population. Three secondary regions which contain stronghold SMSA's are found in Colorado, Arkansas, and Alabama. Colorado Springs has grown as a result of the Bible College while Little Rock has historically maintained a relatively strong Nazarene population. Tuscaloosa has only recently begun to emerge -- probably a product of accelerated Nazarene growth in the South.

### Future Research

The expansion of the Church of the Nazarene has, in all probability, reached its approximate geographical limit. A review of the 1972 statistics for the Church reveals a gain of 45 churches since 1970 but a net gain of only seven since 1968. Limited gains and losses in number of churches seems to be a pattern which the Church will follow if the present trend continues. Meanwhile, membership continues its steady growth contrary to the trend in many of the older, more established denominations toward membership decline.

Excellent possibilities for future research are present in the form of more localized studies within one of the major regions which is still expanding, or within a thriving metropolitan area such as Charleston, West Virginia, where Nazarenes have grown rapidly over the last 30 years. The spread of the Nazarenes within an urban center could reveal insights into their future growth potential in an increasingly urbanized society. Another research topic could examine the effects of a Nazarene college on local or regional expansion.

Geographical research into other native American fundamentalist religions has received limited attention. The difficulty in obtaining data, combined with frequently inadequate records, has made this a doubtful quest. But hopefully the combination of this research with efforts of others in this field of study will lead to a better understanding of regional variation in religious behavior in the United States, and add to our knowledge of "why things are where they are."

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bjorkland, Elaine M. "Ideology and Culture Exemplified in Southwestern Michigan." Annuals, Association of American Geographers, LIV (June), pp. 227-241.
- Church of the Nazarene. Annual Assembly Journals. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1916, 1926, 1936, 1950, 1960, 1970.
- Damboriena, S. J., Prudencio. Tongues as of Fire: Pentecostalism in Contemporary Christianity. Washington, D. C.: Corpus Books, 1969.
- Eleventh Census of the United States: 1890, Vol. 9, Report on Statistics of Churches in the United States. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1894.
- Ford, Jack. In the Steps of John Wesley: The Church of the Nazarene in Britain. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1968.
- Gaustad, Edwin S. Historical Atlas of Religion in America. New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1962.
- Lamme, Ary J. "The Spatial and Ecological Characteristics of the Diffusion of Christian Science in the United States: 1875-1910." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1968.
- Lenski, Gerhard. The Religious Factor: A Sociological Study of Religion's Impact on Politics, Economics, and Family Life. Rev. ed. New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1963.
- Licate, Jack Anthony. "The Geographic Study of Religion: A Review of the Literature." Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Chicago, 1967.
- Manual. Church of the Nazarene. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1964, 1968.
- Manual. Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1912, 1915.
- Mecklin, John M. The Story of American Dissent. Port Washington, New York: Kennikat Press, 1934.
- Meinig, Donald W. "The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847-1964." Annuals, Association of American Geographers, LV (June), pp. 191-220.

- Meyer, Judith M. "The Historical Geography of the Lutheran Church-- Missouri Synod, 1847-1967: A Case Study in Religious Geography." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Southern Illinois University, 1967.
- Mooers, Richard E. "Origin and Dispersion of Unitarianism in America." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Syracuse University, 1971.
- Nazarene Messenger. Los Angeles, July 4, 1907.
- Persons, Stow. "Religion and Modernity, 1865-1914." Religion in American Life: The Shaping of American Religion, I. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison, eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961, pp. 369-401.
- Redford, M. E. The Rise of the Church of the Nazarene. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1956.
- Smith, Timothy L. Called Unto Holiness. The Story of the Nazarenes: The Formative Years. Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1962.
- Sopher, David E. Geography of Religions. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1967.
- Tweedie, Stephen W. "The Geography of Religious Groups in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Upstate New York: Persistence and Change, 1890-1965." Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1969.
- United States Bureau of the Census. Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1960.
- United States Bureau of the Census. Religious Bodies. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1906, 1916, 1926, 1936.
- Van Dusen, Henry P. "The Third Force's Lesson for Others." Life (June 9, 1958), pp. 122-123.
- Vernon, Walter N. Methodism Moves Across North Texas. Dallas: Historical Society, North Texas Conference, Methodist Church, 1967.
- Zelinsky, Wilbur. "An Approach to the Religious Geography of the United States: Patterns of Church Membership in 1952." Annals, Association of American Geographers, LI (June), pp. 139-193.

## APPENDIX

### STANDARD METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS

The Appendix consists of a map of the SMSA's in the United States. The areas were defined on January 15, 1968, and since that time 13 new SMSA's have been added to this total. The new SMSA's include the following:

1. Modesto, California
2. Santa Rosa, California
3. Bristol, Connecticut
4. Danbury, Connecticut
5. Gainesville, Florida
6. Owensboro, Kentucky
7. Rochester, Minnesota
8. Columbia, Missouri
9. Nashua, New Hampshire
10. Bryan-College Station, Texas
11. Petersburg-Colonial Heights, Virginia
12. Appleton-Oshkosh, Wisconsin
13. LaCrosse, Wisconsin



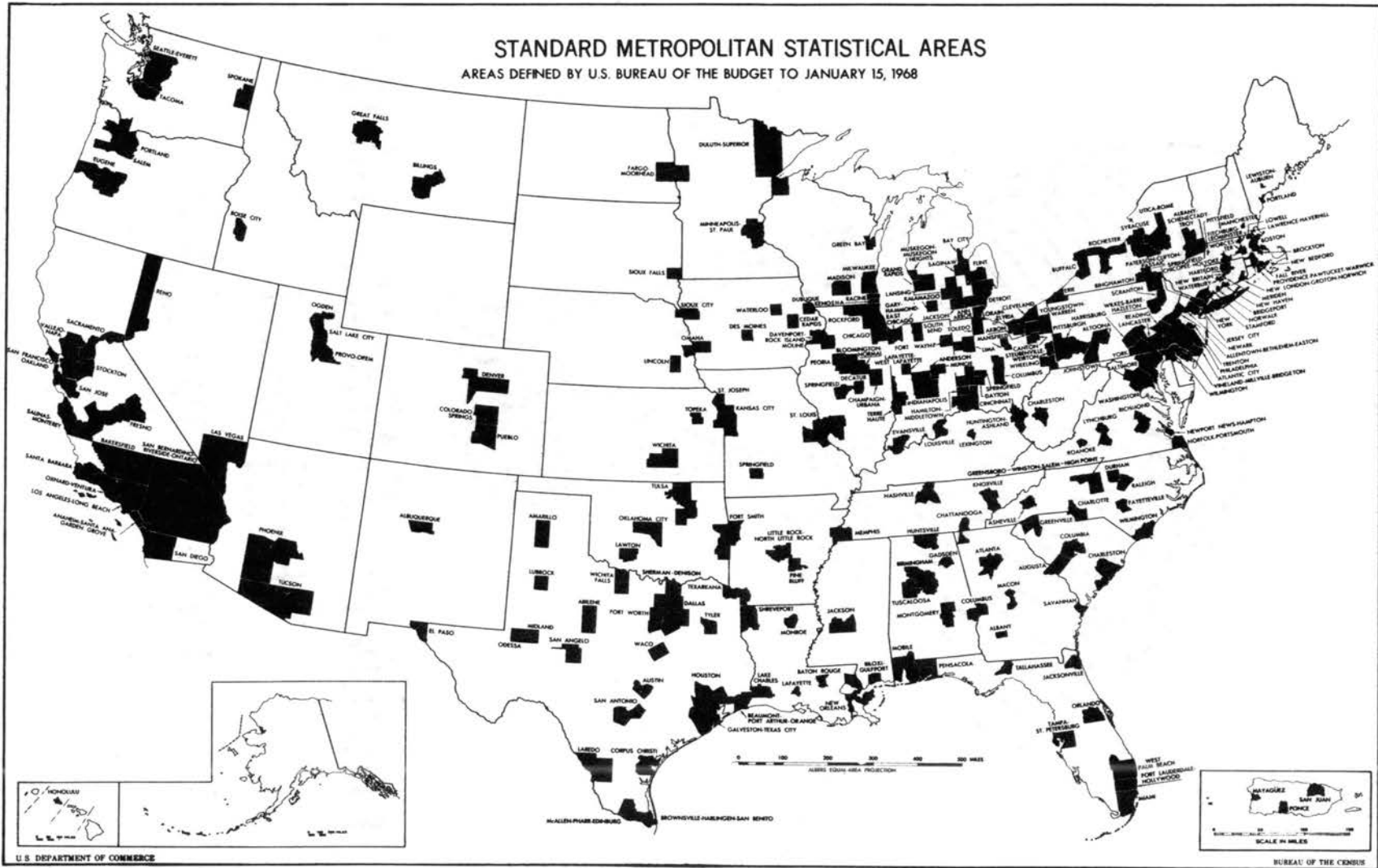


Figure 30. Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas

VITA

Robert Lewis Ingle

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE CHANGING SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

Major Field: Geography

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Crystal City, Texas, March 14, 1943, the son of Dr. and Mrs. J. Lewis Ingle.

Education: Graduated from Marshall High School, Marshall, Texas, in May, 1961; received Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Bethany Nazarene College, Bethany, Oklahoma, in 1966; enrolled in law school at Oklahoma City University Law School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1966-1967; completed requirements for Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1973.

Professional Experience: Graduate research assistant, Geography Department, Oklahoma State University, 1971-1973; member of Association of American Geographers and Western History Association.