

Catholic Church

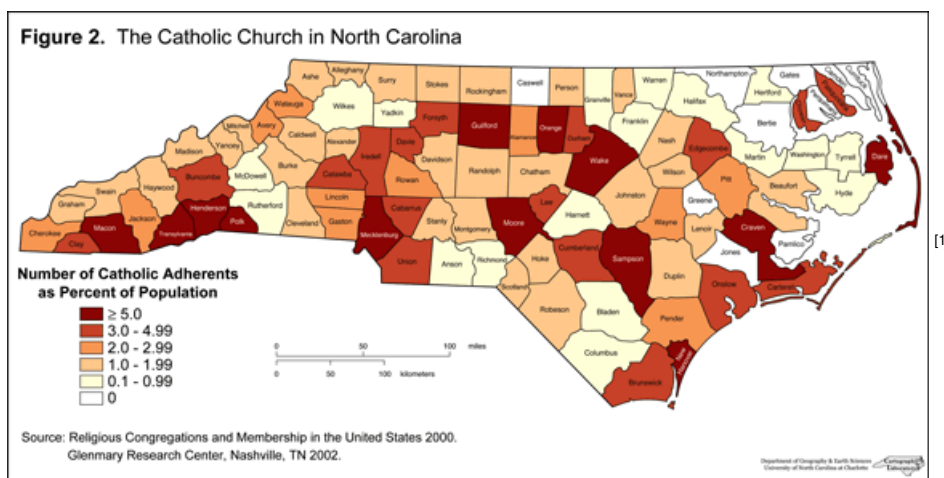
The Catholic Church in North Carolina

See Also: Roman Catholic Church (Encyclopedia of North Carolina)

by Alfred W. Stuart

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The fastest growing among the state's larger denominations was the Catholic church, which more than doubled the number of its adherents between 1990 and 2000. This increase in the number of adherents caused the Catholic church's share of the state total to rise from 4.7 to 8.6%. While the amount of Catholic adherents grew rapidly, the number of congregations in which they worship increased by only five, from 175 to 180. As a result, the average congregation size increased dramatically, from 854 adherents in 1990 to 1,753 in 2000. This was far larger than for any of the other larger denominations.

Figure 2 displays the relative distribution of Catholics within the state. The growth of the Catholic church in North Carolina is a relatively recent phenomenon. It appears to be associated primarily with the in-migration of people from the northeastern US, where the Catholic Church is historically strong, and of [Latinos](#) [2], many of whom also are of the Catholic faith. The association of Catholics with recent in-migrants explains the fact that the larger proportions of them are found in several different types of locations. One is in metro areas such as [Mecklenburg](#) [3], [New Hanover](#) [4], [Onslow](#) [5], [Orange](#) [6], and [Wake](#) [7] counties. Others are in [Dare](#) [8], [Moore](#) [9], [Pasquotank](#) [10], and [Polk](#) [11] counties, all popular destinations for retirees from other parts of the US. Yet another location is in some rural/agricultural areas that have attracted Latino farm workers. [Sampson County](#) [12] illustrates this pattern. On the other hand, several counties, primarily in the northeastern corner of the state, reported no Catholic congregations. These areas are also among those that are experiencing either population losses or slow growth, as shown in the the NCpedia section on [Population](#) [13].

Additional Resources:

2012 Statistical Abstract. Population: Religion. U.S. Census Bureau.
<http://www.census.gov/library/publications/2011/compendia/statab/131ed/p...> [14]

Guide to Researching the History of Religion in North Carolina: Catholic Church. UNC-Chapel Hill Libraries.
<https://library.unc.edu/wilson/ncc/> [15]

Hartford Institute for Religion Research. <http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/> [16]

State Membership Report, North Carolina. The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA)<https://www.thearda.com/> [17]

Subjects:

Religion [18]

Authors:

Stuart, Alfred W. [19]

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Links

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/sites/default/files/relfg2L.gif> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/general-demographics-part-3> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/mecklenburg> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/new-hanover> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/onslow> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/orange> [7] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/wake> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/dare> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/moore> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/pasquotank> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/polk> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/geography/sampson> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/population-part-1-overview> [14] <http://www.census.gov/library/publications/2011/compendia/statab/131ed/population.html> [15] <https://library.unc.edu/wilson/ncc/> [16] <http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/> [17] <https://www.thearda.com/> [18] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/religion> [19] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/stuart-alfred-w> [20] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/north-carolin>