AROUND THE WORLD IN SIXTY MINUTES
The State of Missions
Current Missionaries

Full-time, long-term U.S. missionaries:

Africa = 183
Asia = 260
L. America = 238
Europe = 265
Oceania = 63
Total = 1009
Latin America

- Population: 561 million
- Churches: 1800
- Members: 90,000-100,000
- Missionaries: 238
Encouraging Trends

- Spiritual openness due to shift away from traditional Catholicism
- More national evangelists and Latin American mission teams
- Better prepared national leaders
- Hispanics in the USA
Challenges

- Population explosion
- Demographic shift to urban sites
- Resurgence of socialism
- Rise of Pentecostalism
- Contextualizing the Gospel and Church
Challenges

• Balancing evangelism and relief/development ministries
• Partnering with nationals and developing leaders
Europe

- Population: 710-810 million
- Churches: 400-500
- Members: 12,000-13,000
- Missionaries: 265
Encouraging Trends

- Evidence of new spiritual hunger
- Fear of Islam causing some people to reconsider Christianity
- Growth of churches comprised of non-European immigrants
- Many new churches planted since fall of communism
- European church leaders taking more initiative
Challenges

• Post-Christian mindset
• Rising costs and weak dollar
• Low level of trust
• Need for long-term mentality among workers
Africa

- Churches: 14,669 (2002)
- Members: 1,1077,121 (2002)
Africa

Sub-Saharan Churches of Christ: Members per Congregation

1989—6,222 (67 per congregation)
1992—6,959 (59 per congregation)
1993—7,008 (58 per congregation)
1997—9,401 (73 per congregation)
2000—12,365 (65 per congregation)
2002—14,669 (73 per congregation)
Africa

Sub-Saharan Churches of Christ: Members Who Attend Regularly

1989—419,207
1992—409,924
1993—408,682
1997—685,532
2000—799,870
2002—1,077,121
Encouraging Trends

- Continued growth
- New missionaries among unreached peoples, especially in French-speaking West Africa & Portuguese-speaking Mozambique
- Emphasis on partnership between Africans and Americans
Challenges

- French and Portuguese-speaking nations
- Spread of Islam
- Chronic poverty, need for sustainable, holistic development
- 2000+ languages
Asia

- Population: 3.7 billion (60% of earth’s population)
- 2000 languages
- 89 world class cities
- only 8% claim allegiance to Christ
- 260 missionaries
Encouraging Trends

- Estimated 1,000+ congregations
- Globalization brings new exposure to gospel
- Bright spots:
  - 100+ vocational missionaries teaching English in China
  - 24 missionaries, 900 congregations in Philippines
  - 10 missionaries, 4 congregations in Cambodia
Challenges

• The odds: Estimated 260 missionaries working to reach 3.7 billion
• Government restrictions limit access
• Christianity equated with Western culture
• Pervasive influence of ancient religions
Oceania

- Total of 25,000 islands covering 1.6 million square kilometers
- The largest spread of territory on the planet, includes Australia, New Zealand, Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia
- Population: 34 million people
- 63 missionaries
Oceania

- Australia: 20.4 million people, 90 congregations, 2000 members, 3 American missionaries
- New Zealand: 4.1 million people, 24 congregations, 1100 members, 7 American missionaries
- Papua New Guinea: 5.7 million people, 160 congregations, 5 American missionaries
United States

• Population: 300 million
• Churches: 12,963
• Members: 1,265,844
• Missionaries: ???
# United States

## Overall Growth in U.S. Churches of Christ (1980-2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Churches</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Adherents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>12,719</td>
<td>1,239,612</td>
<td>1,600,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>12,963</td>
<td>1,265,844</td>
<td>1,639,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net</td>
<td>+ 244</td>
<td>+26,232</td>
<td>+39,318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Flavil R. Yeakley, Jr., Ph.D.  
Harding Center for Church Growth Studies  
(2007)
Encouraging Trends

• Evidence of new spiritual hunger
• Religion and Christianity openly discussed
• Spiritual restlessness due to cultural, economic, and other changes
• Search for significance, reality, values
• Rising interest in simple, reproducible, non-denominational churches
• Increasing interest in evangelism
Challenges

- Post-Christian mindset
- Decreasing popularity of “Christianity”
- Urbanization
- Losses in “Bible Belt”
- Leaders walking by faith
- Viewing U.S. as mission field
United States

U.S. States With a High Concentration of Adherents, Members, and Congregations in Churches of Christ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative % of total U.S. membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>48.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# United States

## U.S. States With a High Concentration of Adherents, Members, and Congregations in Churches of Christ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative % of total U.S. membership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>67.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## United States

**States With Greatest Loss of Congregations (1980 – 2007)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>- 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>- 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>- 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>- 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>- 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>- 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>- 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>-  5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## United States

### States With Greatest Loss of Members (1980 – 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Loss (in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Virginia</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In thousands*
United States

U.S. Distribution of Adherents, Members, and Congregations

10 states have about 50% of the total population of the USA.
United States

U.S. Distribution of Adherents, Members, and Congregations

37 states have 75% of USA population, but less than 30% of adherents, members, and congregations.
Overall Positives

1. Growing number of young people interested in missions.
2. Mission teams are common.
3. More missionaries are being trained in holistic ministry, the “both/and” of benevolence and development.
Overall Positives

4. Increasing number of missionaries from countries other than the U.S.

5. Shift away from bringing nationals to America for training to training them at home.
Overall Positives

6. Increasing number of short-term efforts is raising missions awareness in sending churches.

7. Sending churches are coordinating their efforts in certain fields.
Overall Positives

8. Wealth, mobility and technology are enhancing the role of sending churches in the efforts they support.

9. Increasing number of churches that are recruiting missionaries.
Overall Positives

10. U.S. churches reaching out to internationals in their own communities.
Overall Challenges

1. Missionaries committing to shorter terms of service.

2. Danger that short-term campaigns replace more effective, long-term missions.

3. Number of countries closing doors to American missionaries.
Overall Challenges

4. The impact of philosophical pluralism, relativism and terrorism on prospective missionaries and their parents.

5. Declining evangelism in U.S. Churches and “plateaued” growth.
Overall Challenges

6. Economic priorities in American churches and increased competition for missions dollars.

7. Worldwide urbanization

8. Finding ways to bridge the widening gap between rich and poor
Overall Challenges

9. Globalization that is “flattening” the world

10. Forming partnerships with nationals that help and don’t hurt