

## **Conservative Evangelicals Worldwide**

**By Dan Jensen (2023)**

(In order to fully benefit from this essay, I recommend reading through my “works for beginners” first. They can be found on my website.)

In this essay, I thought it could be helpful and interesting to some to know where God seems to be most working in the world today. I have talked about before in some of my writings, that true Christians are spread all over the world today. There are no countries, other than the Vatican, where there are not at least a few Conservative Evangelicals. This is truly remarkable and is a major sign that we are moving closer to the return of our Lord.

With that said, there are a number of countries that have a large number and/or a large percentage of us within them. God has always worked this way throughout church history. While the gospel often spreads slowly in certain parts of the world, and often in the face of horrible persecution, God has tended to really grow His kingdom in certain nations or cultures where He has set up circumstances where it can thrive. This does not always mean that Christians have it easy in those places (although sometimes that is indeed the case as in the United States for a long time [but this is starting to change rapidly]). Take Nigeria for example. Nigeria has a massive number of people who claim some version of “Christianity,” and it also has a huge number of sincere believers. Yet, almost half of the country is also Muslim, and many of those Muslims are very hostile towards Christians. Many Christians have experienced severe persecutions at the hands of these Muslims. Or take the Vikings as another example. You can read about this in my book on church history on my website. It is one of my works for beginners. Despite Christianity becoming a dominant cultural influence upon much of Europe at that time, the Vikings still attacked and persecuted believers for almost 200 years.

In spite of all of these factors, God has often clustered His kingdom in certain areas so that it can best thrive. And we continue to see this pattern today. Before plowing forward, I not only recommend reading all of my works for beginners as said above, but I particularly recommend quickly reviewing pages 30-31 of the first book of my “basics” series, and pages 106-107 in my *Doctrine: Going Deeper* (part 1). These are each one of my works for beginners. These sections will help you understand how I breakdown the numbers of the church. Then I would also particularly review pages 14-16 of my book on the religions of the world. It is also one of my works for beginners. That section will help you understand not only the basic geographic breakdown of the true church, but also of the world religions more broadly. My hope is that all of that review will help you to much better understand my breakdown below. My breakdown below is based on the invisible church. Looking at the visible church and the institutional church is a bit more complicated, but even those aspects of the church are still mostly found in the same places. However, I think it will be more interesting to look at the numbers from the perspective of those that seem to be truly, truly saved.

I cannot provide all of my resources as to how I reached these numbers in an essay of this nature. It has come from years of intense study and research of works of church history (from all perspectives and not just from Conservative Evangelical scholars), and from looking at census data from all over the world (I know, I know, don't I sound like a riot!). For a small sampling of these works of church history for those that do want to go deeper, I recommend the church history section in the extensive bibliography I provided at the end of my *A False Kind of Christianity*. That work can be found on my website. And as a starting point for census data, for those who want to dive into that arduous task, I would start with Wikipedia. Wikipedia gets a lot wrong, and so you need to actually look stuff up further and dig deeper, but Wikipedia is often a good starting point for finding where you can locate census data where it is available. And it should be remembered that my numbers below are very much rough estimates. Because of the complexities of categorization from a biblical perspective that I have detailed in many of my works, I cannot give exact numbers. But, I do believe that my numbers are very, very close in the big scheme of things.

Below is a basic breakdown of where most of the true church (the invisible church) is found all over the world. It should be noted that this breakdown is mostly by country, but for both the West Indies and Polynesia, I have gone by region instead. It should also be noted that my total number comes out to about 220 million, and I have said that I think the invisible church is made up of about 200 million people. Again, it must be remembered that all of these numbers are rough estimates. Let us pray that the true number is closer to the 220 (or much higher than that)! It should further be noted that there are certainly nations that have more than 300K Conservative Evangelicals that I don't include here. The reason I include Polynesia is because of the major presence of the church in that region for a long time now. As you will see, that region has the highest percentage of believers in the world. Finally, "M" stands for millions here and throughout the rest of this essay. And "K" stands for thousands.

Overall Numbers by Nation or Region:

- 1.) United States - 35M
- 2.) India - 30M
- 3.) China - 25M
- 4.) Nigeria - 25M
- 5.) Democratic Republic of the Congo - 25M
- 6.) Brazil - 20M
- 7.) South Africa - 15M
- 8.) Kenya - 15M
- 9.) West Indies - 5M
- 10.) South Korea - 5M
- 11.) Polynesia - 300K
- 12.) Others - 20M

Total: 220M

By Percentage within the Nation or Region:

- 1.) Polynesia - 40%
- 2.) Kenya - 35%
- 3.) South Africa - 25%
- 4.) DR Congo - 22%
- 5.) Nigeria - 12%
- 6.) West Indies - 12%
- 7.) United States - 10%
- 8.) South Korea - 10%
- 9.) Brazil - 9%
- 10.) India - 3%
- 11.) China - 2%

With this basic breakdown laid out, let us now look more closely at the United States. Despite our waning numbers, percentage, and influence in this nation, it should still be a huge encouragement to us that we still have the largest number (as far as just raw numbers are concerned) of Conservative Evangelicals of any nation or region in the world. Further, because of our history and wealth in this country, we also still hold tremendous amounts of influence towards the church worldwide. We should not take this responsibility lightly, and we should not despair over our fading place in this nation. We are still, for the time being, a powerful force in the kingdom of God. That should spur us on to continue to fight the good fight for the advancement and health of God's kingdom.

Below is a breakdown of the American church according to major denominations and branches. I am again only looking at the invisible church. Please remember that if you look up these denominations, you will probably see much higher numbers for some of them. Many of these denominations don't eliminate members when they leave or stop attending as they should. This is frustrating. This is especially true of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). I am not trying to pick on them either. I have tremendous

respect for that denomination overall and I'm extremely grateful to God that it is so large. However, the denomination does have some real problems in certain areas if we are being honest.

Finally, AME stands for African Methodist Episcopal Church. PCA stands for the Presbyterian Church in America. CRC stands for Christian Reformed Church in North America. IB stands for the Independent Bible branch. In parentheses I have placed which branch each of the major denominations belong within. Some branches are not represented in the first list because there are no major denominations in our nation from those branches. But, as you will in the second list, there are still true Christians in our nation that are part of those branches in small numbers.

#### Major U.S. Conservative Evangelical Denominations:

- 1.) SBC (Baptist) - 7M
- 2.) Church of God in Christ (Pentecostal) - 4M
- 3.) Assemblies of God (Pentecostal) - 2.5M
- 4.) AME (Methodist) - 2M
- 5.) Lutheran Missouri Synod (Lutheran) - 1M
- 6.) Calvary Chapel (Charismatic) - 1M
- 7.) Vineyard (Charismatic) - 1M
- 8.) PCA (Presbyterian) - 300K
- 9.) CRC (Continental Reformed) - 150K

Total: Approximately 20M

#### Overall Breakdown of the Branches in the U.S.:

- 1.) IB - 10M
- 2.) Baptist - 10M
- 3.) Pentecostal - 8M

- 4.) Methodist - 3M
- 5.) Charismatic - 2M
- 6.) Lutheran - 1.5M
- 7.) Presbyterian - 1M
- 8.) Continental Reformed - 200K
- 9.) Anglican - 100K
- 10.) Congregationalist - 50K

Total: Approximately 36M

It should also be said that the American church is most prominent in the Old South. According to my research and calculations, I would say that about 65% (could be as high as 70%) of the true American Church is in that region of the country. And in case anyone wants to accuse me of being overly focused on white believers with that stat, it should be said that most true African American Conservative Evangelicals are found in predominantly rural African American pockets of the Old South. Plenty exist outside of that world, but most are found within it.