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Geographical Change in Religious Denomination Affiliation in Mississippi, 1970-2000

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GEOGRAPHICAL CHANGE IN RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION AFFILIATION IN MISSISSIPPI, 1970-2000

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The religious landscape of Mississippi has long been dominated by evangelical Protestant denominations, most prominently the Southern Baptist and United Methodist. These two denominations have led the state in total number of churches and church members since the early 20th century, with few affiliations contending for their numbers. However, as the aggregate population of the state increases for the first time since the 1930's, these traditional denominational patterns have been subjected to shifts in demographic conditions occurring throughout the state. To evaluate the impacts of demographic changes on traditional geographic religious patterns, an evaluation comparing religious and demographic variables for 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000 was completed. Results of this evaluation indicated changes in Mississippi's patterns of denominational affiliation, with the dominating Southern Baptist, United Methodist, and Presbyterian affiliations experiencing losses in church adherent percentages, and increased church adherent growth in Pentecostal, Latter Day Saints, and Church of Christ affiliations.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Cultural geographers rank religion as one of the most important molders of human values and customs (Shortridge, 1978: 420). It has been used to define cultural regions around the World and in the United States since the early nineteenth century. As interest in the study of religious geography has increased over the past few decades, studies that aim to define cultural regions and the distribution of denominations found within them, have become valuable in understanding the overall religious diversity of American culture.

Two significant religious investigations have provided suggestive maps of the major regions and sub-regions that exist or are perceived to exist within the United States. These two studies are Wilbur Zelinsky's (1952) study, "An Approach to the Religious Geography of the United States" and James Shortridge's (1976) study, "Patterns of Religion in the United States". Zelinsky identified seven major religious regions by linking church data with distributional characteristics such as urban-rural differentials and economic conditions found across the nation. This work supplied the geographic community with religious spatial variations based almost exclusively on the distributions of particular denominations. In hopes of providing a more generalized aspect of American religion, Shortridge identified religious regions within the nation based on proportions of liberal and conservative Protestantism, religious diversity, and

the level of religious commitment found in a given area (Shortridge, 1976: 420). The combined results of these two studies give and excellent overview of the nations dominate denominations, their location, and the diagnostic aspects of the religious community within them.

By breaking down many of the major obstacles in defining religious regions of the U.S., data provided by these studies have opened the door for more intense localized geographic religious investigations. One area in particular is the analysis of demographic conditions on religious bodies. By evaluating how certain demographic factors such as urban/rural differentials, percent change in total population, and ethnic diversity have affected churches of a specific region these investigations have proven beneficial in understanding the present religious landscape of an area, and insight to what patterns may emerge in the future.

One region of the U.S. that has received much attention over the past few years, in terms of demographic change and religious affiliation, is the South. This distinctive cultural region of the U.S. is characterized by certain geographical religious denominational patterns. The most distinguishing of these is dominance of Baptists and Methodists denominations. Unlike other areas of the nation, these two evangelical protestant denominations out number all other religious affiliations in total number of churches and church membership rates. Their strength in numbers has had an extraordinary impact upon life in the South. By conditioning almost every aspect of the daily routines of Southerners, these denominations have created a sense of tradition within the region that has led to the resistance of the ever changing social, economic, and political environments surrounding them (Webster, 1997).

Despite this resistance, changes in demographic conditions throughout the south over the past few decades have begun to affect traditional religious patterns that have seen little changes since the late 18th century. For the first time in history, Baptist and Methodist denominations have experienced declines in their total number of churches and church membership rates. These decreases are most evident in the urban metropolitan areas of the South. For example, in Atlanta, Georgia between 1971 and 1990 Southern Baptist numbers decreased from 110 churches with 87,000 members to 97 churches with 73,000 members (Webster, 2000). As their numbers are declining many other non-traditional southern affiliations such as Mormons, Pentecostals, and Catholics are experiencing increases in their number of churches and membership rates.

Previous investigations have linked these changes to shifts occurring in the demographic make-up of the southern population. Between 1970 and 1990, the aggregate population of the South grew from 50 million to nearly 71 million, an increase of 42% (Webster, 2000). This increase was primarily a result of increases in in-migration rates from both inside and outside the United States. Many of the migrants moving into the South came from a variety of ethnic groups including Asians, Hispanics, Anglos, and African Americans. As these groups entered the south, they brought with them a diverse mix of religious affiliations and practices (Webster, 2000). Because many of them found it difficult to locate congregations that fit their preferred type of worship, they worked to form new and different affiliations in order to meet their spiritual needs (Stump, 1984). It is these new Jewish, Muslim, Mormon, Catholic or other non-traditional southern congregations started or strengthened by these new southerners that has altered traditional denominational patterns in many areas of the South.

Because the strength and dominance of Baptists and Methodists affiliations in the South vary greatly from state to state, as well does, percentage change in population, intensive local studies are imperative to understanding the overall affects of changing demographic conditions on religious patterns. Focusing on individual states and their specific numbers, investigations can provide detailed results in how shifts in populations have affected denominational diversity, church membership, and total number of churches over the past four decades.

Objective of Study

The primary goal of this study is to identify the changes that occurred in Mississippi's traditional geographic religious patterns from 1970 to 2000 and to assess the correlation of these changes to changes that occurred within certain demographic variables of the state from 1970 to 2000. In order to illustrate the changes that have occurred within the state, a GIS (Geographic Information System) know as ArcView 3.3 will be used to create graphic images of both religious and demographic variables. In addition to graphically illustrating changes, the significance of relationships between religious and demographic variables will be measured using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Some of the more specific questions to be answered by this study are as follows:

1. What were the primary areas of the state experiencing increases and decreases in total population, percent urban and rural population, and percent white, black, and other populations from 1970 to 2000?

2. What changes occurred in total number of church adherents and percent of church adherents within the dominant denominations (Southern Baptist, United Methodist, and Presbyterians) of the state from 1970 to 2000, and what were the primary demographic variables associated with these changes at this time?
3. What changes occurred in total number of adherents and percent of church adherents in many of Mississippi's non-traditional denominations (Pentecostals, Latter Day Saints, Catholics, and Churches of Christ) from 1970 to 2000, and what were the primary demographic variables associated with these changes?
4. What changes occurred in the total number of churches, total number of adherents, and total number of denominations in the state from 1970 to 2000, and what demographic variables were positively and/or negatively correlated with these changes?

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

South's Religious Landscape

Unlike other regions around the Nation, Baptists and Methodists denominations dominate the South (Webster 2000, 25). These two evangelical denominations came to dominate the religious landscape of the South in the first few years of the 19th century and have done so ever since. Although many other religious affiliations like Episcopalians, Catholics, and Lutherans have had established churches in the state since the late 18th century, they have been unsuccessful in generating the large number of followers found in the Baptist and Methodists denominations.

During the early years of religious development in the South, lack of growth in numbers by non-protestant institutions was contributed to the institution's inability to meet the emotional needs of Southerners (Hill 1966: 14). Common agrarian people of the region were seeking a more unconventional spiritual style of religious thinking (Hill 1966: 54). By stressing the importance of a "personal religious conversion experience for salvation", Baptists and Methodists were able to pull spiritual needy southerners away from the formal rituals and conservative traditions of the Anglican and Catholic churches within the area (Hill 1966: 54).

Although this was the primary contributing factor in evangelical protestant growth, it would not have been possible to spread this new idea of salvation without the

use of circuit ministry and an acceptance of untrained clergy. Circuit ministry, a style of evangelizing in which one minister would travel a large area preaching at specified locations at different times, enabled Methodist and Baptist to increase their number of churches (circuits) and members throughout the South (Boles 1985: 16). This was especially true in the rural agrarian areas of the region where the limited number of formally trained ministry of other denominations like Presbyterians were unable to reach (Hill 1966: 59).

Despite large increases in numbers through the use of circuit ministry, the height of Baptist and Methodist growth would not occur until a period known as the "Great Revival" (Boles 1985: 14). This was a time, (1800-1805), in which the level of religious intensity grew and religious activity in the South rapidly accelerated (Boles 1985: 24). Through massive outdoor spiritual revivals, known as camp meetings, Baptists and Methodists denominations strengthened their membership dramatically, doubling and even tripling it in some areas (Boles 1985: 25). This period of intense religious fervor had provided a foundation for Baptist and Methodist denominations to grow in years to come. Through continued use of camp meetings and circuit ministry, evangelical Protestantism eventually became the dominant religious force in the South by the third decade of the 19th century. (Hill 1966: 15).

As time progressed, Baptist and Methodist affiliations continued to strengthen their strong hold on the South and began to delineate themselves from other national mainstream Protestant affiliations (Hill 1966: 14). Prior to the civil war, Christianity in the North and West of the nation became subjected to numerous modifying factors that eventually forced the liberalization of many traditional religious organizations in those

areas. Although these same factors, new thoughts in science, philosophy and other disciplines, spread throughout the South their influence was at best minimal due to the lack of emphasis placed on education by Southerners during this time (Boles 1985: 25). A second defining factor separating religion in the South from the rest of the nation was the support of slavery in the south as an "institution used by God to convert the African heathen" (Hill 1966: 15). The support of slavery by Baptist resulted in a separation of Baptist in the South from those of the national organization, leading to the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845 (Webster 1997: 158). After the civil war, the devastation and oppression of the region left many southern residents needing religion, or something like it, in order to cope (Boles 1985: 35). The sole institution of the South able to fill this need was that of the evangelical church (Webster 1997: 158). In the decades following the war, membership of the evangelical churches saw massive increases as many post-war southerners "found it difficult to believe that any person could be decent in morals and manners and not be a church member" (Hill 1966: 66).

Since African Americans encompass a large portion of the South's population it is important to note how separate black Baptist and Methodist affiliations established themselves in the region following the Civil War. Before the Civil War African Americans were generally allowed to worship in white churches separate from white attendees. Although black attendants were not allowed to place formal membership within the churches, they were allowed attenuated membership, so their numbers could be counted (Lincoln 1985: 43). With black attendance often exceeding that of white membership, estimates suggest a quarter of a million blacks were faithful to the Methodist church, and almost twice as many to the Baptist during this time (Hill 1966:

35). After the war the separation of blacks from white churches was the first concrete symbol of the black man's freedom and independence; as a result, blacks left white southern churches in masses to begin establishing their own churches (Lincoln 1985: 51).

Black Baptists rapidly became the largest denomination in terms of numerical strength, and in time they formed three major denominations: The National Baptist Convention (1880), The National Baptist Convention of America (1915), and The Progressive National Baptist Convention (1961) (Lincoln 1985: 48). Together these three denominations represent the largest body of black Baptist in the World (Lincoln 1985: 48).

The first black Methodist Church in the South grew directly out of the predominantly white Methodist Episcopal Church South (Lincoln 1985: 50). Boasting 207,000 black members before the Civil War, the Methodist Episcopal Church South recorded only 78,000 black members once the war ended (Lincoln 1985:50). This large decrease was in part the result of Northern Methodist missionaries working to establish the independent African Methodist churches AME and AMEZ (African Methodist Episcopal Church and African Methodist Episcopal Church, Zion) in the region (Lincoln 1985: 51). Alarmed by the large defection of black members, the southern Methodist in 1866 permitted remaining black members to organized their own churches in hopes they would continue their historic bond with the church (Lincoln 1985: 51). Four years after this decision there were enough black churches whose members were formerly of the Methodist Episcopal Church South to constitute eight annual (local) conferences and the establishment of a new black Methodist denomination, the CME (Colored Methodist

Episcopal Church in America) which was renamed the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in 1954 (Lincoln 1985: 51).

Although few in comparison to that of Baptist and Methodist affiliations, separate black congregations existed within other major denominations including Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians. However, because of their small numbers none outside of the Baptist and Methodist were able to develop independent separate black denominations (Lincoln 1985: 51).

As progress in education and better access to rural areas of the region improved during the early 20th century the number of people considered un-churched decreased and the spread of evangelicalism increased (Boles 1985: 61). The transformation of the South as a whole to evangelical Protestantism was ultimately complete by the 1920's. Just as slavery, political unity, and the agrarian style of life had worked to delineate the southern region from the rest of the nation, religious solidarity had finally emerged as a defining factor in shaping and preservation the region (Hill 1966: 10).

Since the 1920's Baptist and Methodist affiliations have overshadowed all other religious families in size and numerical strength in the South (Hill 1983: 2). During the 1930's one southern journalist wrote "southern Methodism and Baptism so dominate the region below the Mason-Dixon line they are responsible almost wholly for its behavior (Hill 1966: 31). The strength of these two denominations increased steadily through the mid 20th century, especially during the religious boom of the 1950's (Hill 1966: 31). Results from the 1952, *Church and Church Membership of the United States*, indicated combined totals for Baptist and Methodist membership in upwards of 80% for six southern states (Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Tennessee, and South

Carolina) (Hill 1966: 39). Wilbur Zelinsky, the first geographer to identify religious regions in the U.S. stated in 1961, "the aerial distribution of members of Baptist bodies in the Southern states so closely mimics that of aggregate population it is disconcerting to encounter the occasional gaps, such as those in the Kentucky Bluegrass, Appalachian Virginia or eastern North Carolina" (Zelinsky 1961: 158).

Mississippi's Religious Landscape

The development of Mississippi's religious landscape largely parallels that of the South. Therefore, a detailed summary of its development is unnecessary in understanding how Baptist and Methodist affiliations came to lead the state in total number of churches and church membership. What is important to note is the degree to which they dominate the religious landscape and the low level of religious pluralism found within the state.

Baptist and Methodist so control the religious scene of Mississippi their numbers often surpass that of all southern states and in some instances, that of the entire nation. A 1971 religious survey of the state indicated that Southern Baptist members were the majority of religious adherents in 68 of 83 counties and in only three counties, two predominantly black and the third on the Gulf Coast, did southern Baptists fail to place first in total number of denominational bodies (Akin 1985: 196). This type of dominance explains why Mississippi has one of the highest percentages (30%) of Baptists affiliations within in the South and within the Southern Baptist Convention in 1980 (Gaustad 1985: 168). Methodist also hold significant numbers of members within the state, and in 1980

dominated nine of the 83 counties in total membership and churches (Gaustad 1985: 168).

In recent decades, Mississippi has continued to be one of the more prominent southern states in terms of rankings. In 1990 it ranked 3rd in the nation with respect to the total number of Christian churches (94.2%), with 30% Baptists, and 10% Methodist (Cox 1998: 105). During the same year, the state led the nation in total number of churches per capita and was one of only three states to lead the nation in church membership percentage (Cox 1998: 105). Nationally 55% of the U.S. population belongs to a church, but in three of the Southern states, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, the percentage is considerably higher, often meeting or exceeding 70% (Webster 1997: 152).

The second major factor to consider when looking at the religious landscape is the level of religious pluralism found in the state. Mississippi has never achieved the heterogeneous religious environment of Florida, Louisiana, or even Alabama (Akin 1985: 191). This lack of diversity in Mississippi's religious population has often been attributed to the states early reliance on an agrarian economy and its continued lack of ethnic diversity (Akin 1985: 191). Some non-southern denominations have established congregations within the state, but only because of their continued perseverance and outside support. Most of the Jewish, Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox congregations that exist in the state today were not established until after the Civil War, once racial conditions in the state improved, and then only with in the more liberal urban areas of Jackson, Vicksburg, and Columbus (Akin 1985: 190). These establishments were in large part the result of organized social and cultural clubs of ethnic minorities within the state that were able to provide the financial support to build and hire a priest (Akin 1985:

190). Some other non-traditional affiliations that have established churches include Pentecostals, Episcopalians, Churches of Christ, and Presbyterians. All of these congregations have had established churches within the state since the early 19th century, however their numbers are often minimal in comparison to that of the Baptist and Methodist (Akin 1985: 188). Despite a new sense of tolerance within Mississippi's population for diverging religious views, the state continues to lag behind other areas of the nation in terms of religious diversity and remains a remarkably homogeneous Baptist/Methodist state (Akin 1985: 191)

South's Demographic Profile

Historically the south has lacked the wide variety of ethnic and racial groups found in other areas of the United States (Shelley and Webster 1998: 163). Two groups have typically dominated the population, the homogeneous group of whites of English ancestry and the descendents of African-American slaves (Shelley and Webster 1998: 163). While other influential populations such as Jews, Hispanics, and Chinese Americans have called this region home since the late nineteenth century, their numbers until recent decades were often few and not widely represented in the political or religious arena of the area.

Today the South stands at a demographic threshold (Bates 1994: 12). From 1970 to 1990, the aggregate population of the region grew from 50 million to 71 million, an increase of 42% (Webster 1998: 25). This increase in large part has been fueled by extra-regional in-migration that has brought approximately 75 million Southerners of races and ethnic origins other than European and African into the region (Bates 1994: 16). Up until

the 1970's, the non-white population of the South was predominately black, census records from 1970 reported a mere 250,000 Southerners of races other than black and white, equaling only half of one percent of the region's 50 million people (Bates 1994: 12). However, by 1980 the number of southerners neither white nor black soared to two million and by 1990 to 3.5 million (Bates 1994: 12). Asians were the fastest growing ethnic population during this period with 146% increase, followed by Native Americans at 53% and Hispanics at 50%, by comparison black and white Southerners increased by only 12% (Bates 1994: 13). These increases have strengthened ethnic minority population numbers and in 1990, one of every 200 Southerners was Native American, two were Asian, and 17 Hispanic (Shelley and Webster 1998: 170).

Despite their growing numbers, ethnic populations are far from being evenly distributed across the region. Increases have occurred the fastest in the five most populous states of the region, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. Texas and Florida are by far the most diverse, having nearly 86% of all ethnic minority persons of the region living within their state borders (Bates 1994: 13). As with earlier immigrants, many of the newest Southerners settle in coastal and border states such as Florida and Texas, and then gradually move inland to growing metropolitan cities (Bates 1994: 13). This pattern of movement within the region is more evident now that new Southerners show increases in the ever growing metropolitan areas of Atlanta, Georgia, Charlotte, North Carolina, and the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C. (Bates 1994: 13). In more recent years (1990-2000), other areas like Birmingham, AL, Memphis, TN, New Orleans, LA, and coastal areas of Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina have

experienced substantial increases from migrants moving within the region (Shelley and Webster 1998: 172).

As the region moves into the 21st century, the population continues to rapidly change in both numbers and diversity (Shelley and Webster 1998: 174). As newcomers continue to be drawn by increasing job opportunities, lower cost of living, and retirement communities found throughout the South, there seems little doubt these trends will continue into the future (Pandit 1997: 242). The Census Bureau projects that by 2020 Florida and Texas will each gain more than two million immigrants increasing their population totals to that of New York (Bates 1994: 13). Some demographers say the dramatic diversity found within these two states is simply precursors of the South to come in future decades (Bates 1994: 13).

Mississippi's Demographic Profile

Although Mississippi has not experienced the dramatic population increases seen in Texas, Florida, or even Georgia, demographic changes since the 1970's suggest the state has in-fact been impacted by regional changes occurring within the South. Evidence to support this can be seen in the state's total population, rates of urbanization, growth of ethnic minority groups, and declines in black out-migration since the 1960's.

Mississippi's total population grew from 2.2 million to 2.6 million from 1970 to 1990, an increase of 16% (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). This increase marked the first major period of growth in the state's population since the 1920's (U.S. Census of Population 1960: 52). Static population from 1920 to 1970 was in large part a result of the massive out migration of blacks from within the state because of declines in

agricultural employment and better job opportunities in the North (McKee, 1992: 57). From 1920 to 1970, the African American population of the state dropped from 52.3% to 36.8% (U.S. Census Bureau 1970: 57). The Delta, a predominantly African American rural agrarian region encompassing ten counties in the Northwestern portion of the state, experienced the most dramatic decreases in black population during this period with some counties (Tunica and Quitman) loosing up to 30% of their black population some years (Mississippi Almanac 1990: 485). Although population decreases within this region are expected to continue in future years, increased urbanization and job opportunities in larger cities and the coastal communities of Mississippi are now able to provide African Americans residents with possibilities they once had to look for in other states (McKee, 1992: 59).

Growth in the states total population since the 1960's is not only a result in decreased out migration by African Americans it is also in part due to increases in minority ethnic populations (Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans) within the state. In 1970, the ethnic minority populations of the state totaled a mere 0.35% (Mississippi Population Data Center 1971: 8). Of this percentage, Native Americans represented the largest minority group with over 3000 of the 7865 of "other" Mississippians (U.S. Census Bureau 1990). By 1990, the minority ethnic population of the state had increased to 0.97%. Although this percentage is still extremely low in comparison to other states in the nation, it is an overall increase of 210% in the state's ethnic minority population (Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Mississippi 1990: 24). Ethnic groups experiencing growth during this period included Asian or Pacific Islander, American Indian, and "other" (U.S. Census Bureau 1990). The fastest growing group of these was

Asian or Pacific Islander, totaling 13,016 persons of the 24,698 ethnic individuals living in the state, or 52.7% of the total minority ethnic population (Summary Population and Housing Characteristics, Mississippi 1990: 24). Up until recent decades, Hispanics had been the fastest growing ethnic group in the state, however census data from 1990 indicated a 35.6% decline in the state's Hispanic population (Bates 1994: 12). This decline in Hispanic numbers in comparison to Asian increases is not unique to Mississippi, as Census reports have indicated Asians to be the fastest growing group throughout the U.S. (Bates 1994: 14).

Mississippi is one of the most rural states in the nation, but as with other areas in the South it is rapidly becoming more urbanized (McKee 1992: 59). The state's urban population has grown steadily since the mid-twentieth century, increasing from 20% in 1950 to 47.1% in 1990 (Mississippi Almanac 1990: 73). Most increases have occurred in the six major growth centers of the state, the metropolitan Jackson area, the Gulf Coast, the Memphis suburban area in Desoto county, the Golden Triangle, the Hattiesburg area, and certain portions of Northeastern Mississippi (Figure 1). Of the six growth areas, Hinds County located in the Jackson metropolitan area and Harrison County, in the Gulf Coast region have the highest percentages of urbanization with 86% (Hinds) and 84% (Harrison) (Cox 1990: 514). Since urbanization is the process whereby a city increases in size usually due to an increase in population, it is important to note the overall growth in the population of these areas as an adequate indicator of rising urbanization (McKee 1971: 174). From 1970 to 1990, the percent of the state population living within these areas increased from 34.5% to 40.7%, an increase of 6.2% (U.S. Census Bureau 1990). During this period, Desoto County experienced the most growth with an increase in

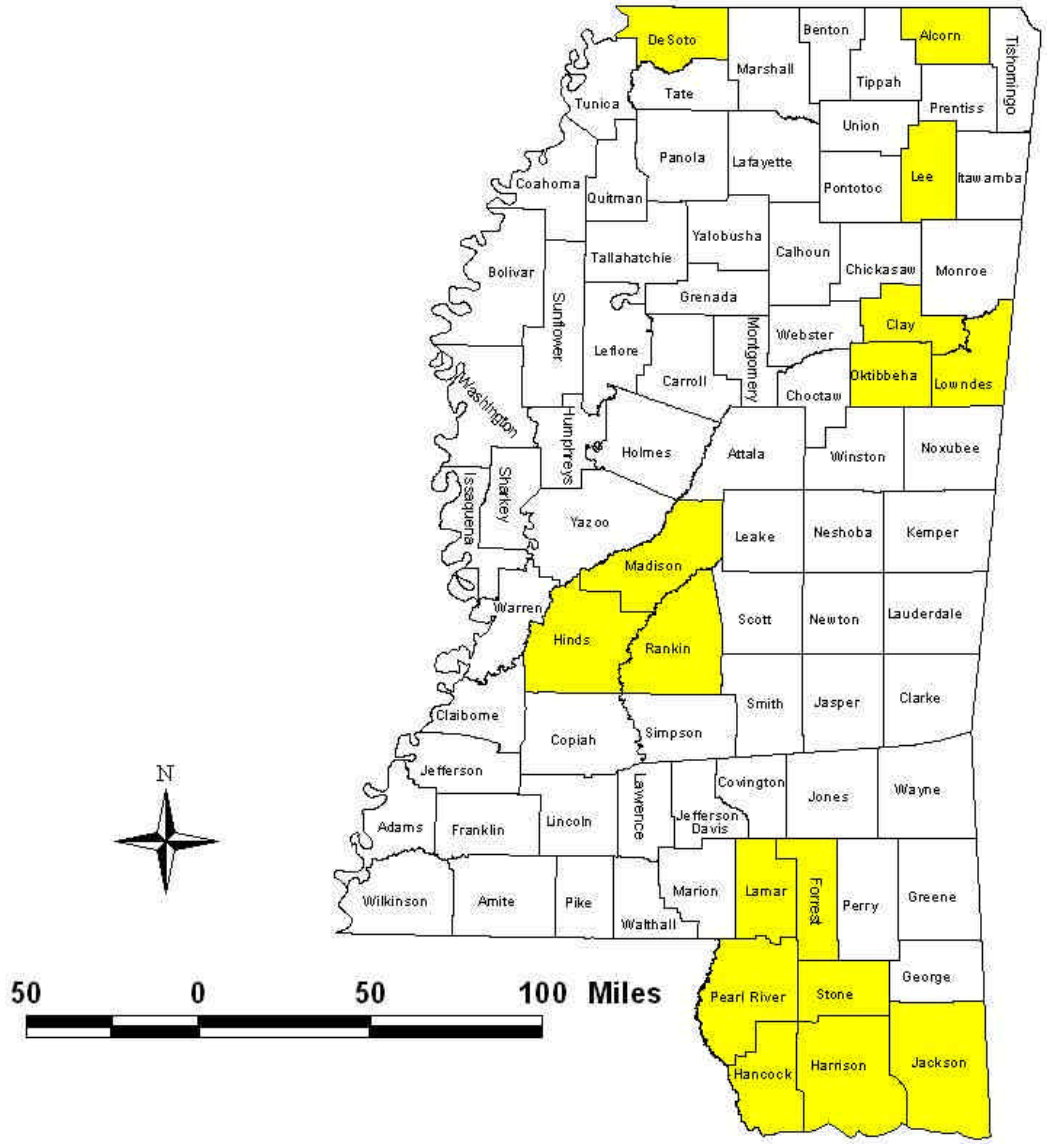

Figure 1: Major Growth Centers of Mississippi

population in upwards of 89.2%, whereas the Jackson region, the second fastest growing area increased by 76.9% (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

Previous Investigations

"The survival and success of a church may depend much more on the demographic environment surrounding it than on its ability to provide meaning and belonging to its members" (Hadaway 1981: 77). This statement made by Kirk Hadaway, in his 1981 study, *The Demographic Environment and Church Membership Change*, was based on his finding that demographic conditions surrounding a church strongly influence religious factors such as church membership, total number of churches, and religious diversity. Although the relationship between these factors is relatively complex and varies greatly based on the range of demographic variation found within an area, it is possible to evaluate at a local level (Hadaway 1981: 81).

Total Number of Churches

The first and most influential demographic factor affecting total number of churches is total population. This obvious correlation, increased population equals increased number of churches, was evident in the first geographic evaluation of religious regions within the U.S. by Wilber Zelinsky. Zelinsky reported that 60.8% of the nation's churches in 1952 were located in standard metropolitan areas where over half (56.8%) of the nation's population resided at the time (Zelinsky 1961: 150). The basis for this finding is that higher numbers of individuals within an area require higher numbers of socializing institutions, including churches in order to fulfill the social and spiritual

demands of individuals within that area. In contrast, population sparseness means a minimum number of socializing institutions can exist within an area, because of a lack in the number of individuals within an area able to support and maintain the institution economically (Shortridge 1976: 433).

The demographic variable most highly correlated with church growth is percent change in population, whether positive or negative (Hadaway 1981: 81). Kirk Hadaway found that churches in areas experiencing positive gains in population were in a much better situation to grow due to a stream of newcomers within the area (Hadaway 1981: 81). Whereas, churches in areas experiencing no growth or declines were at a disadvantage in terms of growth as they have no new residents to draw in new members and must rely solely on converting residents within the community who have no religious commitment (Hadaway & Roof 1979: 197). The "father" of denominational research in America, H. Paul Douglas, summed up this trend in church growth in his statement "Where the environment is prosperous and progressive the church can scarcely fail to succeed, but where the environment is stagnant or declining the church can hardly avoid failure", (Douglas & Brunner 1935: 237).

The link between church growth and percent change in population is found throughout the nation, however it is much more apparent in the Southern region of the U.S. where religious commitment runs high. Roger Stump in his 1984 study, *Regional Migration and Religious Commitment in the United States*, found that regional migration tends to lead to changes in religious commitment in individuals based on regional norms of religious behavior within the area (Stump 1984: 302). Therefore, migrants entering regions where cultural norms support higher levels of religious commitment, such as the

South, tend to shift toward those higher levels and adapt to religious expectations within the area (Stump 1984: 302).

Although, the underlying factors associated with total number of churches and church growth are based on aspects of a regions population, urban/rural differentials are also often good indicators of changes taking place within a regions religious environment. High rates of urbanization often signify growth in an areas overall population, meaning growth in an areas total number of churches. The highest number of churches within the U.S. are found in the densely urban populated states of New York, Florida, and Texas and the Pacific Coast, while the lowest numbers of churches are found in rural, remote, and thinly occupied areas found in the mid-west.

Church Membership Rates

Church membership is the number of persons attending a particular church or denomination within a specific area. It is by far the most studied aspect of religion and has been used repeatedly since the 1930's in defining religious regions of the U.S., and in identifying dominant religious denominations of specific areas. Through these many studies, urban/rural percentages has continually emerged as the most influential demographic factor affecting church membership.

As stated before, increased rates of urbanization are associated with church growth in terms of total number of churches, however this positive association is two-fold as urbanization has also been found to be the primary factor hindering growth in church membership. By simply looking at the total number of church members of a region, one would tend to find increases in membership rates within urban areas and decreases within

rural areas. Although, these calculations are accurate in terms of numbers, they do not provide the true picture of church membership rates within a region. In order to understand the demographic environments affect on church membership, one must look at percent of population with church membership instead of total church membership numbers.

In analyzing church membership in this manner, studies have found the lowest percentages of church members in liberal more urbanized regions of the country like the Pacific Coast and sections of the Northeast (Zelinsy 1961: 150). These urbanized areas tend to be places densely enough populated to have widespread socializing institutions besides churches that are able to meet the social needs of individuals living within them (Shortridge 1976: 433). In addition to increases in socializing institutions, highly urbanized areas are also the areas most likely to adhere to general trends occurring throughout the U.S. (Zelinsky 1961: 150). One popular trend that has taken hold throughout the country since the 1960's is the disillusionment of individuals to identify themselves with organized religion (Shortridge 1976: 433). This trend has led to an unprecedented decline in church membership, especially within the highly urbanized areas of the nation (Shortridge 1976: 433).

In contrast, rural areas generally tend to report a larger percentage of residents as church members. This difference is often contributed to the rural populations use of local churches to meet social needs that are unavailable through other social institutions within the area (Shortridge 1976: 433). Although this is by far the most notable reason for high church membership in these areas, high levels of conservatism within these areas has also been contributed to this increase (Shortridge 1976: 431). James Shortridge stated in his

1971 work, *Patterns of Religion in the United States*, "the high incidence of membership in the rural south may be caused by a more general conservatism, the retention of a value formerly more widespread in the country". As national trends continue to decrease the social pressures that one be a church member, the rural south with its lingering distrust of national trends, is the one place to expect cultural lag (Shortridg 1976: 433).

Religious Diversity

The nation as a whole is extremely diverse in terms of religious denominations, but just as with total number of churches and church membership rates this diversity fluctuates based on the degree of certain demographic conditions found within an area. The most prominent demographic features affecting religious diversity include urban/rural percentages, levels of ethnic diversity and percent change in population.

Gerald Webster, the first to examine denominational growth at the state level, found religious diversity increasing throughout the state of Georgia due to demographic changes occurring within the state (Webster 2000: 25). Results of his study found traditional Baptist and Methodist denominations to be slowly declining in their proportions of the state's population, especially in metropolitan areas. Webster suggests this decrease is in direct relation to increasing rates of in-migration by new residents not associated with these denominations (Webster 2000: 37). His finding was supported by the overall increase found in the number of Baptist and Methodist affiliations in counties indicating stagnant or declining populations (Webster 2000: 37). In addition to declines found in Baptist and Methodist denominations, Webster found Catholic populations to be rapidly increasing within the metropolitan areas of the state. "As their proportions

increase within the state they are significantly correlated with percentage urban and percentage population change within a county", (Webster 2000, 43). Wilber Zelinsky's study in 1961 supports Webster's finding as he found emphatic differences in the number of Catholic churches within an area based on urban/rural differentials. His evaluation of religious regions of the U.S. indicated Roman Catholic populations to be highly urbanized, with 74.5% of their denominations located in metropolitan areas and only 2.4% located in rural areas (Zelinsky 1961: 150). Although Webster's study did not elaborate on growth occurring in the Jewish population of Georgia, one would expect it to also to be highly urbanized based on previous findings. A national survey found 97.5% of the nations Jewish population is located within metropolitan areas, and the remaining 2.5% found in the intermediate urban counties surrounding them (Zelinsky 1961: 150).

In addition, to urban and rural percentages, increases in ethnic diversity may be the one factor most associated with increased rates of religious pluralism. Gerald Webster stated "as ethnic and racial groups increase within an area so do the diverse mix of languages, traditions, perceptions, and religious affiliations of that area" (Webster 2000: 26). Denominational growth is often the result of new comers, in this case new Southerners, to locate suitable congregations after migration, especially in small communities where choice is limited (Stump 1984: 292). While some of these migrants will reform to the traditional dominant denominations within the state many do not and instead work to form new and different affiliations to meet their spiritual needs, it is these new and up-coming denominations that tend to change traditional denominational patterns in many areas (Stump 1984: 302). Webster's work supported this in finding a

41% increase in Georgia's population between 1970 and 1990, in large part due to increased in-migration, had increased the states overall religious diversity through increases in the number of Pentecostal, Mormon, Catholic, Lutheran, Adventists, and Churches of Christ (Webster 2000: 32).

Chapter III

Data and Methods

Introduction

To successfully determine the affects of changes in demographic conditions on religious patterns in the state of Mississippi, religious and demographic variables were gathered and evaluated through statistical analysis and spatial imaging. Several different software programs (Excel, SPSS, and ArcView) were used to perform the necessary functions needed to complete assessment and effectively convey results. Overall, the methodological steps involved in completing this evaluation proved to be fairly simplistic and unproblematic, despite the vast amount of data used and the limitations within it.

Religious Data

Religious data for the state of Mississippi was gathered from a series of religious census reports published by the Glenmary Research Center. These reports to date are the only non-biased compilation of statistics on religious bodies in the U.S., and thus the only available and credible source from which to gather information needed to complete analysis. Reports used were published under the names, *Church and Church Membership in the U.S. 1970, Church and Church Membership in the U.S. 1980, Church and Church Membership 1990, An Enumeration by Region, State, and County,* and *Religious Congregations and Membership in the U.S., 2000.* Information acquired from

these reports included statistics on total number of churches, total number of denominations, total number of members, total number of adherents per denomination, and percent of population per denomination. These data were collected for all of Mississippi's eighty-two counties for 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000. In addition to this data, these reports also contained valuable information on denomination affiliation groupings that was used during the classification process to categorize multiple denomination affiliations.

Because the information within these reports is supplied by national church organizations on a voluntarily basis, some inconsistencies and distorted counts exist within the data. These inconsistencies are an unavoidable aspect of the data that had to be addressed and compensated for when possible in order to avoid distorted results.

Demographic Data

Demographic information for the state was gathered from a variety of sources including the Mississippi Center for Population Studies, the 1997-1998 and 2000 edition of the Mississippi Almanac, and the U.S. Census Bureau. The Mississippi Census Data Center, officially known as the Center for Population studies, provided information concerning population totals and percent population change at the county level for 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000. The *Mississippi Almanac*, a source compiled and written by James L. Cox using statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, contained the information needed concerning urban and rural population percentages for 1990 and 2000. Since this source was unable to provide information on previous decades numbers for these demographic factors were gathered from the 1970 and 1980 U.S. Census Bureau housing

reports. These reports also provided information on racial make-up percentages for the state for all four decades. In all, these three sources provided data on total population, percent change in population, urban rural percentages, and racial population divisions (white, black, and other) at the county level for all eighty-two counties in Mississippi for 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

Data Limitations

The inability of religious data sources to provide complete and consistent information for all four years presented problems that had to be addressed to avoid biased results. Major limitations identified within the data included incomplete data on African American churches, lack of a standard definition used by denominations for church member, and nonexistent or missing counts for particular denominations. Each of these limitations was evaluated in its ability to produce biased results and steps were taken to either alleviate or compensate for their inaccuracies when possible.

The most significant limitation within the data was the incomplete or limited data on African American churches. Because African American denominations often lack funding to establish national administrative offices to keep records on churches within the their region, information concerning churches and members of black affiliations is often unavailable for inclusion in national religious reports. Because this limitation significantly hampers the accuracy of religious reports on areas having large black populations like Mississippi, measures have been taken by researchers to estimate counts within predominately African American regions. In 1990, the religious census developed a formula to estimate the number of church members in Black Baptist churches for each

county in the U.S. The method used to determine counts ultimately proved to expensive and unreliable, and therefore numbers calculated for the new denomination called "Black Baptist Estimates" was only included in 1990 reports.

Although many different measures were considered in trying to acquire accurate counts for African American churches within the state, no method assessed could have been done without the help of others or extensive amounts of time and funding. Based on the inability to gather accurate numbers on black churches within the state a method of determining affects of black populations on church counts was evaluated instead. African American population totals for each county were correlated with percent change in total number of churches, denominations, members, and adherents to determine affects on churches within counties. Although this method was unable to assess the growth or decline in African American churches throughout the state it did aid in understanding the effects of large black populations on existing dominant denominations. Also to prevent offset results for 1970, 1980, and 2000 the "Black Baptist Estimates" group was left out of membership totals in 1990.

In addition to African American denominations, a growing number of non-traditional denominational groups within the state were excluded from religious census counts. Denominations such as Hindu, Muslim, Baha'i, and Buddhism were unaccounted for in previous censuses due to a lack of information concerning their numbers. Most of these denominations have developed within small ethnic communities of the state over the past ten to fifteen years and have only recently begun to establish administrative offices that are able to report on their numbers. Other more established denominational groups within the state were also missing data for several of the years considered within

the evaluation. Most of these groups had incomplete data for one or more years because they chose not to participate in the religious survey for a variety of reasons.

In order to compensate for the lack of numbers available for certain denominations only those having complete data for at least three of the four years being evaluated were included in analysis. Some denominations excluded due to a lack of data were the Church of Christian Scientist, the Salvation Army, Swedenborgian, and the Christian Methodist Episcopal denomination. Of the 63 denominations reporting in at least one of the census years only 49 had complete numbers for at least three of the years being considered and were included in the study. For a complete list of all denominations included and excluded from the study, refer to table (Table 1).

Another limitation of the data was the lack of a standard definition used by church affiliations to define church member. Since there is no generally acceptable statistical definition of church membership, the label of member was ultimately made by the denominations themselves. These varying definitions both increased and decreased membership totals within the religious census for some denominations. For example, unlike other protestant churches the Southern Baptist Convention includes non-resident members within their official membership counts. These individuals are those who no longer attend a given church but have never officially withdrawn their membership. This often happens when individuals move or change denominations and do not inform the church of their departure. Estimates suggest that these non-resident members account for approximately five million of the sixteen million reported Southern Baptist members within the U.S. (Webster, 2000). Roman Catholics are another group whose membership records are distorted by the inclusion of baptized infants in official membership counts.

Table 1: Denominations Included and Excluded in Analysis.

Reporting Denominations within Mississippi	Denominations Included or Excluded
Advent Christian Church	Included
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church	Included
American Baptist Association	Included
American Baptist Churches in the USA	Included
The American Association of Lutheran Churches	Excluded
Assemblies of God	Included
Association Reformed Presbyterian Church	Included
Baptist Missionary Association of America	Included
Roman Catholic	Included
The Christian and Missionary Alliance	Included
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	Included
Christian Churches and Churches of Christ	Included
CME	Excluded
Christian Reformed Church	Excluded
Church of Christ, Scientist	Excluded
Church of God (Anderson, Indiana)	Included
Church of God (Cleveland Tennessee)	Included
Church of God in Christ (Mennonite)	Included
Church of God of Prophecy	Included
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints	Included
Church of the Brethren	Excluded
Church of the Nazarene	Included
Chruches of Christ	Included
Churches of God, General Conference	Included
Cumberland Presbyterian Church	Included
The Episcopal Church	Included
Evangelical Church of North America	Excluded
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	Included
The Evangelical Lutheran Association	Excluded
Evangelical Methodist Church	Included
Evangelical Presbyterian Church	Excluded
Free Methodist Church of North America	Excluded
Free Will Baptist, National Association	Included
Swedenburgian	Excluded
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America	Excluded
International Church of the Foursquare Gospel	Included

Most denominations do not include infants in membership counts due to their inability to formally associate themselves with a specific denomination. In contrast to increased membership counts, many denominations often undercount the total number of members within their congregations. Churches of Christ are a prime example of a denomination with under counted membership, in most part because of their strict membership regulations. Congregations who adhere to strict regulations generally do not count individuals as members unless formal membership has been placed within the church. Within such congregations, individuals could regularly attend a church for many years and never be included in membership totals if formal membership is never placed.

In an effort to accurately compare church membership rates, the category church adherent was chosen over church member as the primary variable for evaluating church attendance. Total adherent was a category developed by religious researchers in an effort to establish a comparable membership category. This category includes all official members, their children, and the estimated number of other regular participants who are not considered as communicant, confirmed, or full members (Bradley, M.B, Green, N.M., Jones, D.E., Lynn, M., and McNeil, L., xiv, 1992). By using total adherents instead of disproportionate membership counts, the overall analysis of attendance rates verses population totals was improved.

Data Compilation, Classification, and Analysis

Developing a workable statistical database for each of the data types, religious and demographic, was the first and most demanding step in the analysis phase. It was achieved by compiling and organizing information from data sources by county and year

for each of the variables needed into a data management program. Excel was chosen for this process based on its ability to handle large numerical databases and to calculate basic formulas needed to manipulate and assess data. In total a 169 variables, 40 demographic and 129 religious, were entered into this data management program. A summary of variables within the databases include: total population, urban/rural percentages, racial population percentages, total number of churches, total number of adherents per denomination, and adherent population percentages. For a complete list of variables, refer to table 2.

The initial religious database contained information on 49 separate denominations within the state of Mississippi. Since assessing changes in all of these denominations would have proved cumbersome and inefficient, denominations with multiple affiliations were grouped into a single category based on their dominant denomination type. Because of the complexity in trying to establish a basis for categorizing church denominations, affiliations were merged using groupings defined by Johnson, Picard, and Quinn (1990, p.xii, note 9). This is a classification method used by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies (ASARB) in addition to other researchers to successfully combine multiple church affiliations. By using this classification method, the total number of denominations within the database was reduced from 49 to 15. Although Southern Baptist and United Methodist affiliations could have been grouped with other Baptist and Methodist affiliations, it was decided to leave them free standing due to their dominance and historical significance within the state.

To determine the amount of change occurring within demographic and religious factors of the state a new group of variables were created. These variables, percent

Table 2: Demographic and Religious Variables Used in Evaluation

Demographic Variables	Religious Variables
Total Population	Total Number of Churches
Total White Population	Total Number of Adherents
Total Black Population	Total Number of Denominations
Total Other Population	Total Number of Churches Per Denomination
Total Urban Population	Total Number of Adherents Per Denomination
Total Rural Population	Total Number of Denominations Per County

All Variables Entered at the County Level for 1970, 1980, 1990, and 2000.

change, were calculated for both demographic (total population, racial percentages, urban/rural differentials) and religious factors (total number of churches, number of adherents per denomination). They were created using existing information within the databases and used to assess overall change from 1970 to 2000, in addition to change between each ten-year interval (1970-1980, 1980-1990, 1990-2000). These fields were ultimately used to identify maximum, minimum and mean change rates for each variable and paired with string data (denomination and/or county) to generate spatial images.

The quantitative relationship between demographic and religious factors was assessed using the statistical software program SPSS (Statistical Packaging for the Social Sciences). This program, unlike Excel, was capable of processing a variety of complex statistical formulas, in addition to other graphic functions needed to complete analysis. Person's product moment correlation coefficient (PPMC) was the method chosen to determine relationships between demographic and religious factors for the overall thirty-year period (1970-2000), each ten-year interval (1970-1980, 1980-1990, 1990-2000), and each individual year (1970, 1980, 1990, 2000).

Cartographic Assessment

To have a better understanding of the geographic components affecting changes occurring within the state, spatial interpretations of the data were completed using ArcView, a geographic information system. Within this program, visual images were generated by joining religious and demographic databases with spatial data on the state. Images were created for each demographic and religious factor based on its overall percent change field (1970-2000). In order to categorize the level of change occurring

within variables, the classification method standard deviation and mean rate of change was chosen as the method to classify data into categories. By using these cartographic techniques, a visual perspective was given to the data and the geographic trends occurring within the demographic and religious environment of the state were identified.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Demographic Change

Population

Mississippi's population, despite years of decline, experienced a statewide gain of 28.3% from 1970 to 2000. This growth increased the states total number of residents from 2.2 million to 2.8 million. The majority of growth during this period occurred within the five major growth centers of the state. These areas include the Jackson metropolitan area, the Gulf Coast, the Memphis suburban area in Desoto County, and certain portions of northeastern Mississippi (Figure 1).

In all, sixty-five of Mississippi's eighty-two counties experienced an increase in population during this time. Of these sixty-five, thirty-two increased residents by 1 to 25%, twenty-eight by 25-75%, and five had substantial increases in upwards of 100% (Figure 2). Those increasing by 100% or more included Desoto (198.73%), Rankin (162.51%), Lamar (156.89%), Madison (151.11%), and Hancock (147.12%). Each of these five counties is found within major growth centers of the state where increased industry, suburban development, and tourism are on the rise.

The remaining 17 counties of the state experienced population declines ranging from 1.1% (Amite County) to 36.3% (Quitman County). Of the seventeen counties experiencing declines, ten are located in the northwestern portion of the state in a region known as the Delta. This predominately African American region of the state has

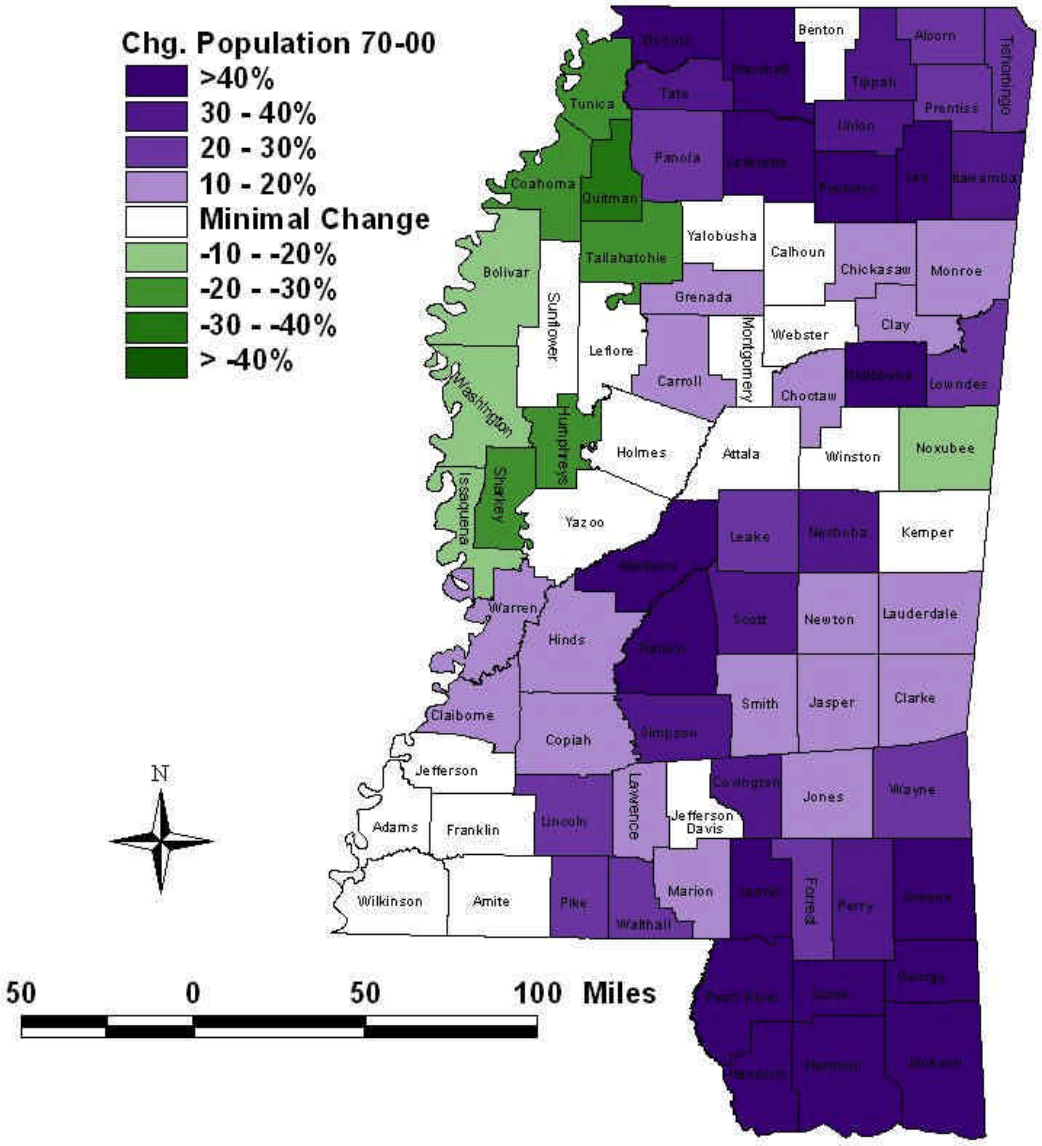

Figure 2: Change in Total Population from 1970 – 2000.

continually lost residents since the 1920's due to the out-migration of blacks. Counties included in this region are Bolivar, Coahoma, Humphrey, Issaquena, Leflore, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tunica, and Washington. This region alone lost over 47,000 residents from 1970 to 2000, reducing the areas total population by 19.3 %.

In addition to the Delta Counties, seven other counties experienced population declines. They included Adams, Amite, Holmes, Montgomery, Noxubee, Wilkinson, and Tallachatchie. These seven counties on average lost less than 10% of their populations during this period. Tallachatchie County was the only exception of the seven with a loss of 22.93%.

Urban Rural Percentages

From 1970 to 2000 Mississippi's total urban population increased from 986,642 persons to 1,338,012 persons. This increase of 351,370 urban residents raised the level of urbanization within the state from 44.5% to 47.0%. Most of this growth, unlike in previous years, occurred within the developing suburban regions of the state surrounding major cities like Jackson, Biloxi, and Memphis.

In 1970, 16 counties within the state were classified as urban (having 50% of the counties total number of residents living within city limits). These counties included Adams, Coahoma, Forrest, Grenada, Hancock, Harrison, Hinds, Jackson, Jones, Lafayette, Lauderdale, Leflore, Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Warren, and Washington (Figure 3). Of these 16 counties, 11 (Adams, Coahoma, Forrest, Grenada, Hancock, Harrison, Hinds, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lefore, and Washington) increased or sustained their urban populations from 1970 to 2000 to retain urban classification. The remaining five counties

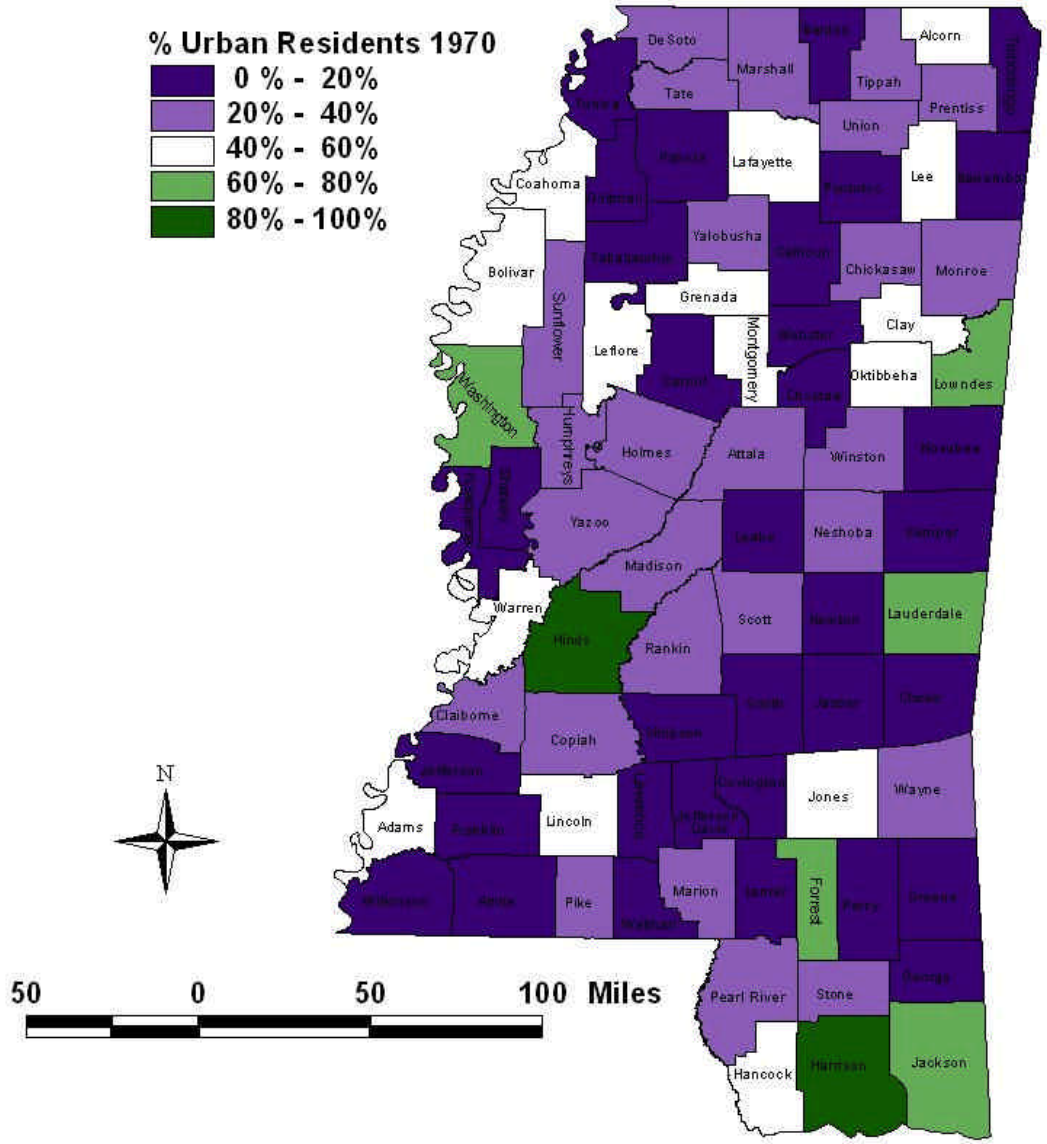

Figure 3: Percent Urban Residents per County in 1970.

(Jones, Lafayette, Lowndes, Oktibbeha, and Warren) experienced declining urban percentages, reversing their urban to rural standing from 1970 to 2000.

In 2000, the number of urban counties within the state remained at 16, although the counties considered urban had changed. Urban counties in 2000 included Adams, Bolivar, Coahoma, Desoto, Forrest, Grenada, Hancock, Harrison, Hinds, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lee, Leflore, Madison, Rankin, and Washington (Figure 4). The five counties replacing the former five urban counties included Bolivar, Desoto, Lee, Madison, and Rankin. Each of these counties, with the exception of Lee, are located in close proximity to other major urban centers which may have contributed to their increased urbanization rates.

Five of the states eighty-two counties experienced substantial increase in urbanization percentages during this period. These five included Hancock (161.4%), Madison (312.4%), Rankin (414.7%), Desoto (536.1%) and Lamar (3614.4%) (Figure 5). Of these five Lamar County, although classed rural in both 1970 and 2000, experienced the most dramatic percent urban growth for the state increasing from 0.01% urban in 1970 with 284 urban residents to 27% urban in 2000 with 10,549 urban residents. Increased urbanization rates within this county were attributed to the continual suburban development of Hattiesburg, a city located in Forrest County just east of Lamar County.

Counties of the state having the highest percentage of urban residents are Hinds, Harrison, Washington, Jackson, and Forrest. Each of these counties is home to major cities within the state including Jackson (Hinds), Gulf Port and Biloxi (Harrison), Greenville (Washington), Pascagoula (Jackson), and Hattiesburg (Forrest). On average,

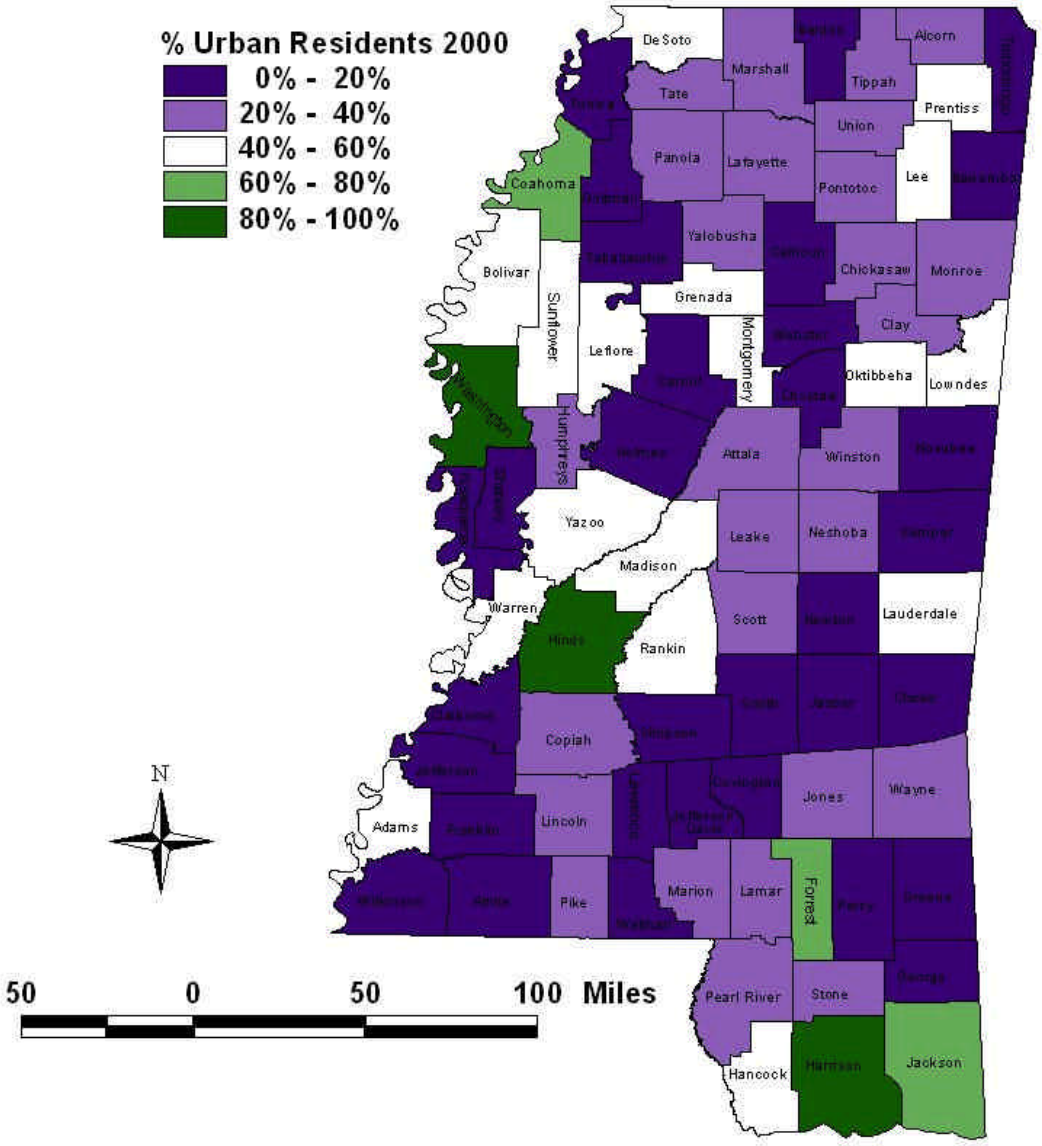

Figure 4: Percent Urban Residents per County in 2000.

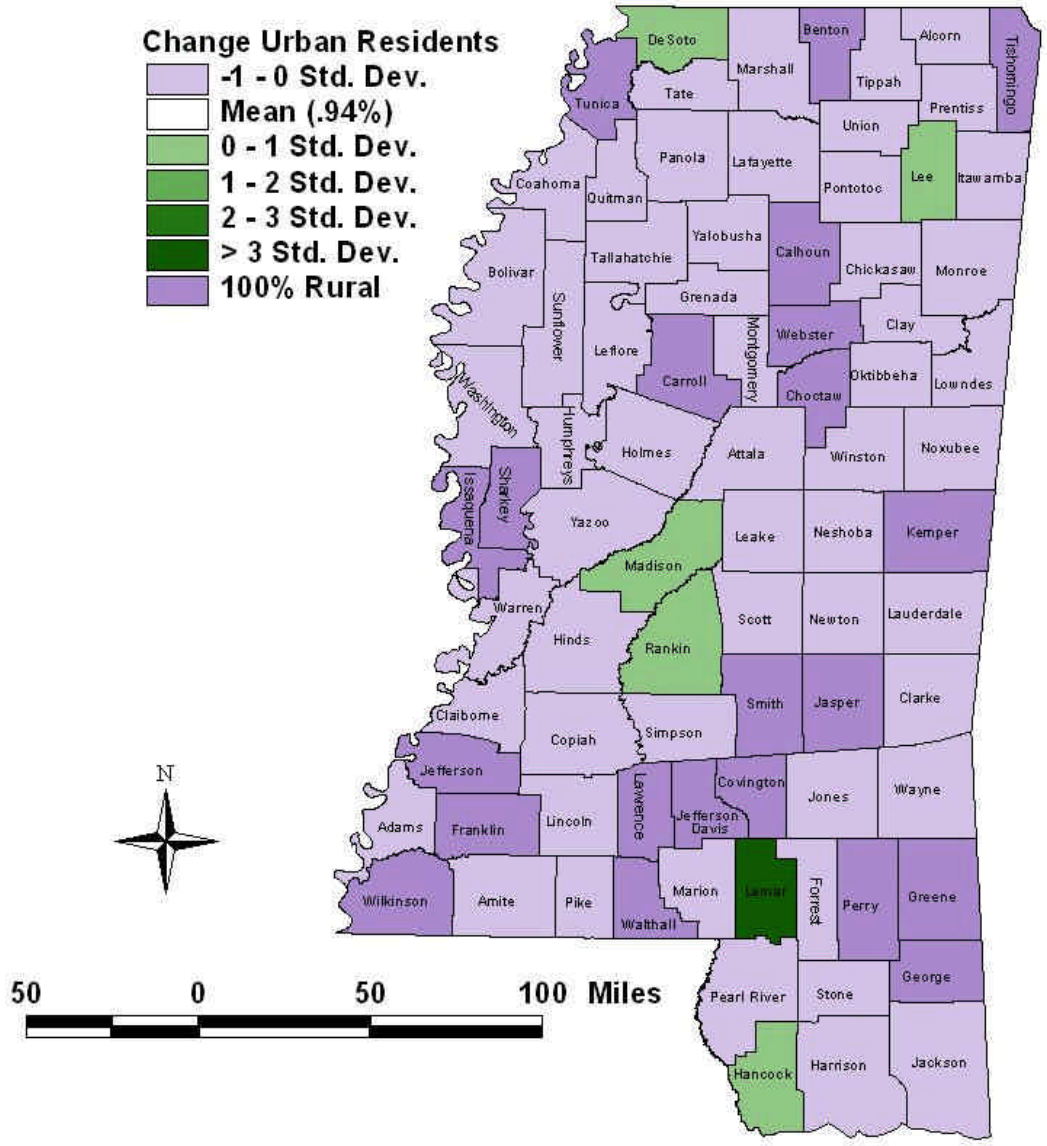

Figure 5: Percent Change in Urban Residents, 1970 - 2000.

the number of urban residents within these counties is greater than 80% and has increased each year since 1970 (Figure 4).

In contrast to increased urbanization rates, some counties experienced increases in rural percentages from 1970 to 2000. Of Mississippi's 82 counties 66 were considered rural in 1970, of the 66 rural counties 23 were classed as 100 percent rural, meaning no city within the county encompassed more than 2,500 residents. By 2000, the total number of rural counties remained at 66, while the number of counties classed 100 percent rural increased to 24. Overall, rural percentages increased in 27 of the state's 82 counties, including two of the counties (Forrest and Leflore) considered urban in 2000 (Figure 6). Of the 27 increasing in the number of rural residents, 22 increased in total population, whereas five experienced declines in total population.

Racial Change

From 1970 to 2000, racial divisions within the state remained comparatively constant, with the exception of the racial group "other". White residents experienced a 2.1% decline in percent of population during this time dropping from 62.7% in 1970 to 61.4% in 2000. Black percentages showed even a smaller degree of change declining from 36.8% in 1970 to 36.3% in 2000, a percent change decline of 1.4%. The third racial group "other", which included all residents of the state neither black nor white, was the only racial group to show substantial change in numbers increasing its percentage from a mere 0.5% in 1970 to 2.3% in 2000, a total percent change increase of 360%.

In 1970, Mississippi's 82 counties were divided in terms of racial dominance as follows, white-57, black-25, and other-0. Graphic illustrations of these counties indicated

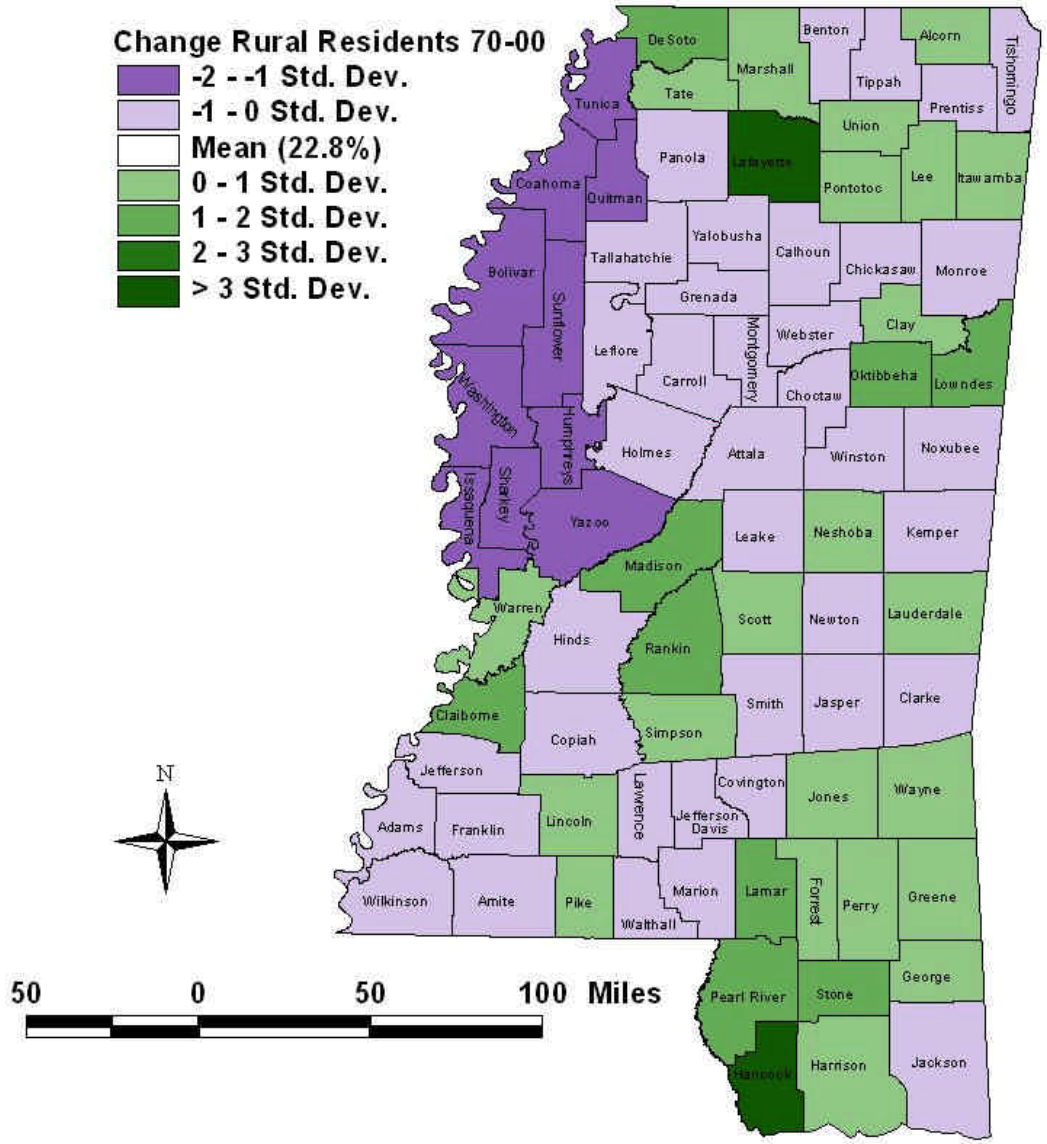

Figure 6: Percent Change in Rural Residents, 1970 - 2000

an obvious regional difference in the geographic location of racial groups within the state (Figure 7). The majority of white dominated counties were found in central and eastern portions of the state, with the highest concentrations of white residents (80-100%) located in northeastern and coastal counties (Figure 8). In contrast, black dominated counties were found in the western portion of the state, especially within the Delta and Natchez region. Of the 25 black dominated counties within these areas, two, Claiborne and Jefferson found in the Natchez region, had the highest percentage of black residents in the state with 75% of their population being black (Figure 9). Although the racial group "other" dominated no county in 1970 results did indicate Neshoba and the surrounding counties (Leake and Newton) as having the highest percentage of minority residents, other than black, within the state at this time (Figure 10). This area is home to the large Choctaw Indian population that resides within the state.

Over the three-decade period being examined, the states leading ethnic group, white, increased by 356,931 persons or 25.7%. The mean rate of growth for white residents within the state during this time was 23%. Graphic illustrations of growth percentages indicated that the majority of counties experiencing growth above the mean rate were found in the Jackson region, counties along the coast, and northern portions of the state (Figure 11). Within these areas, counties having the highest percentage of increase included Desoto (295.7%), Hancock (160.2%), Lamar (152.8%), Madison (303.9%), and Rankin (196.4%). In addition to these findings, the majority of white dominated counties within the state continued to be located in central and eastern portions of the state (Figure 12). However, unlike 1970 when both northeastern and coastal counties showed a high degree of white dominance (80-100%), results of 2000

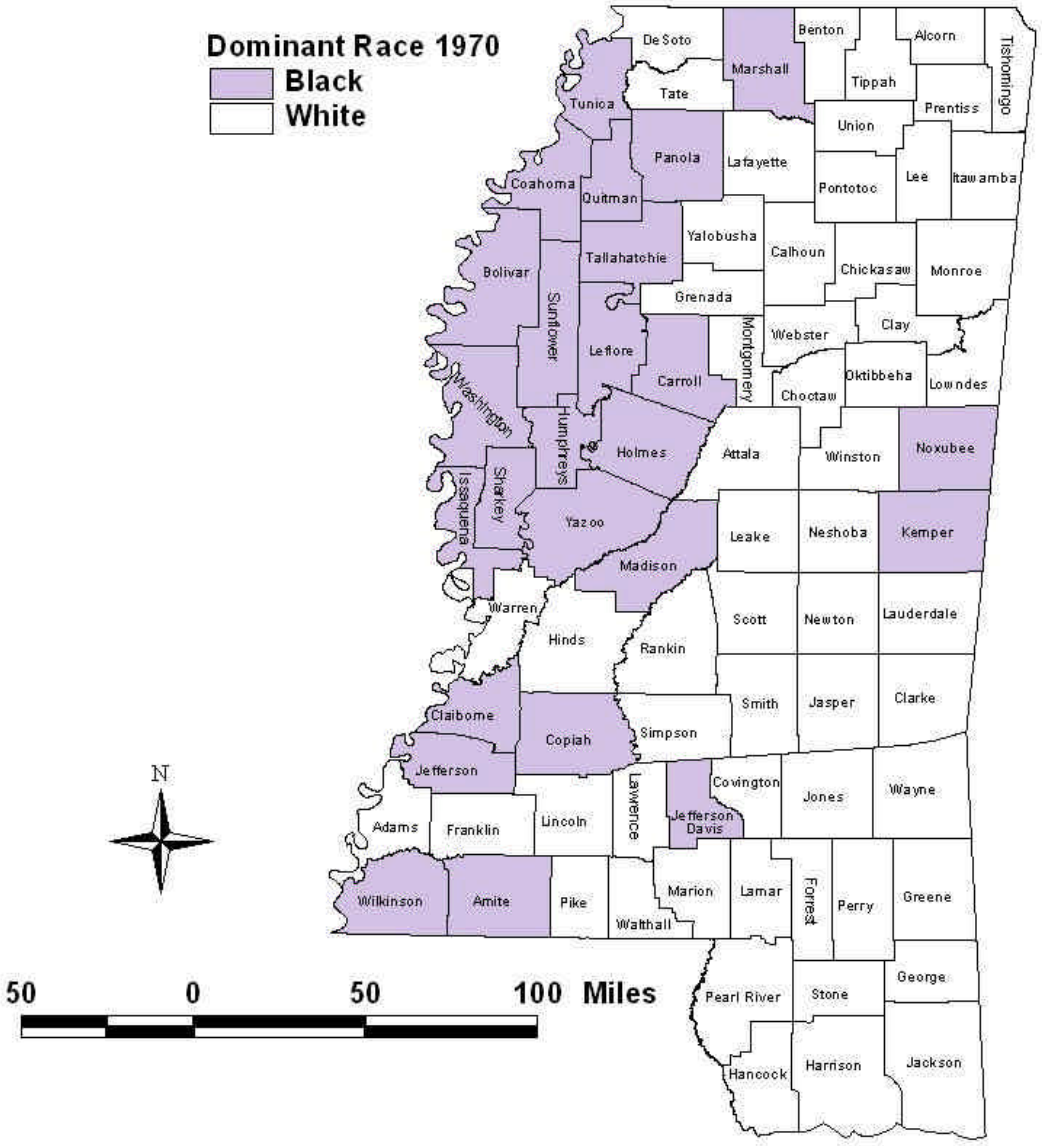

Figure 7: Racial Dominance in Mississippi, 1970.

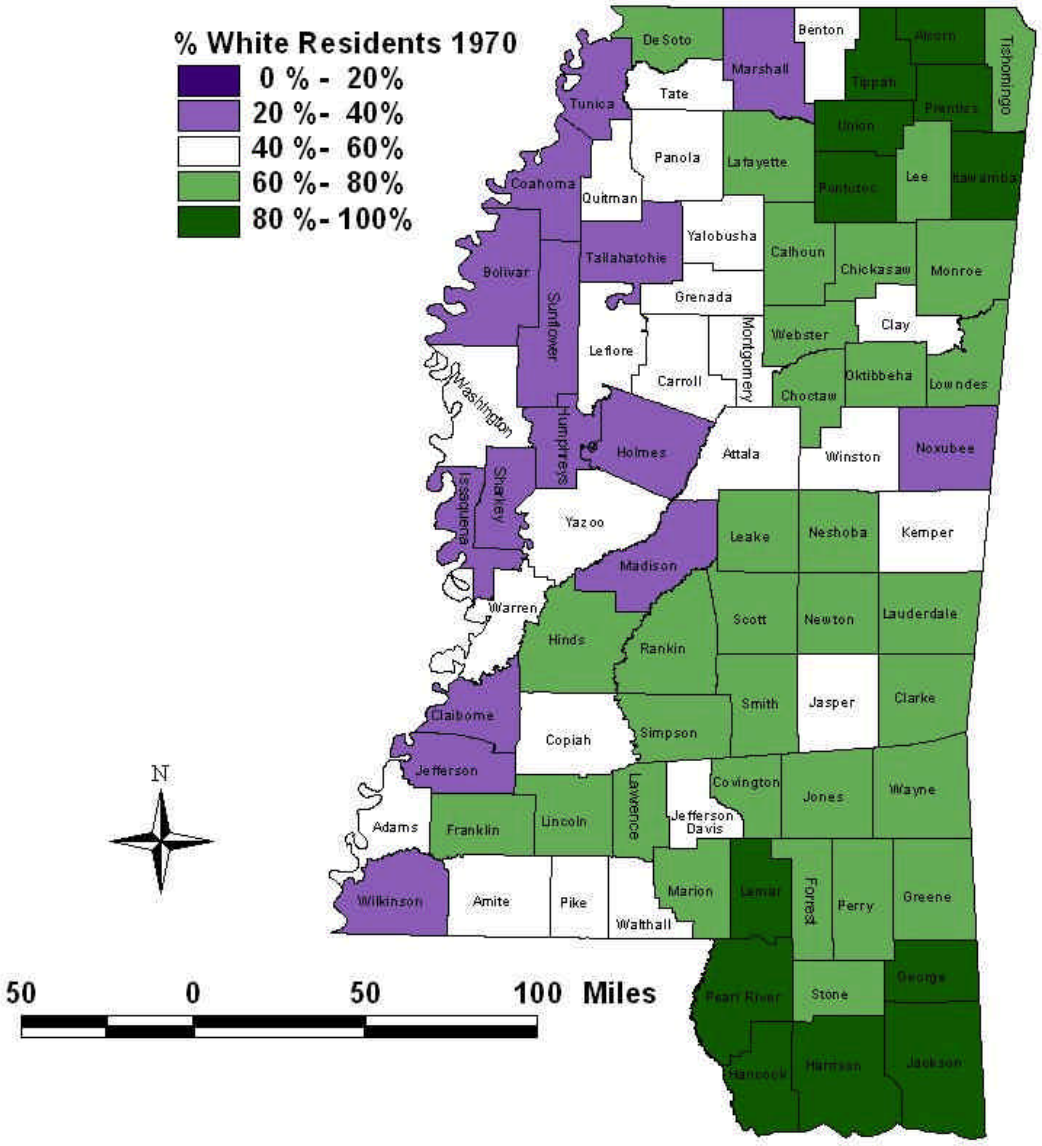

Figure 8: Percent White Residents per County, 1970.

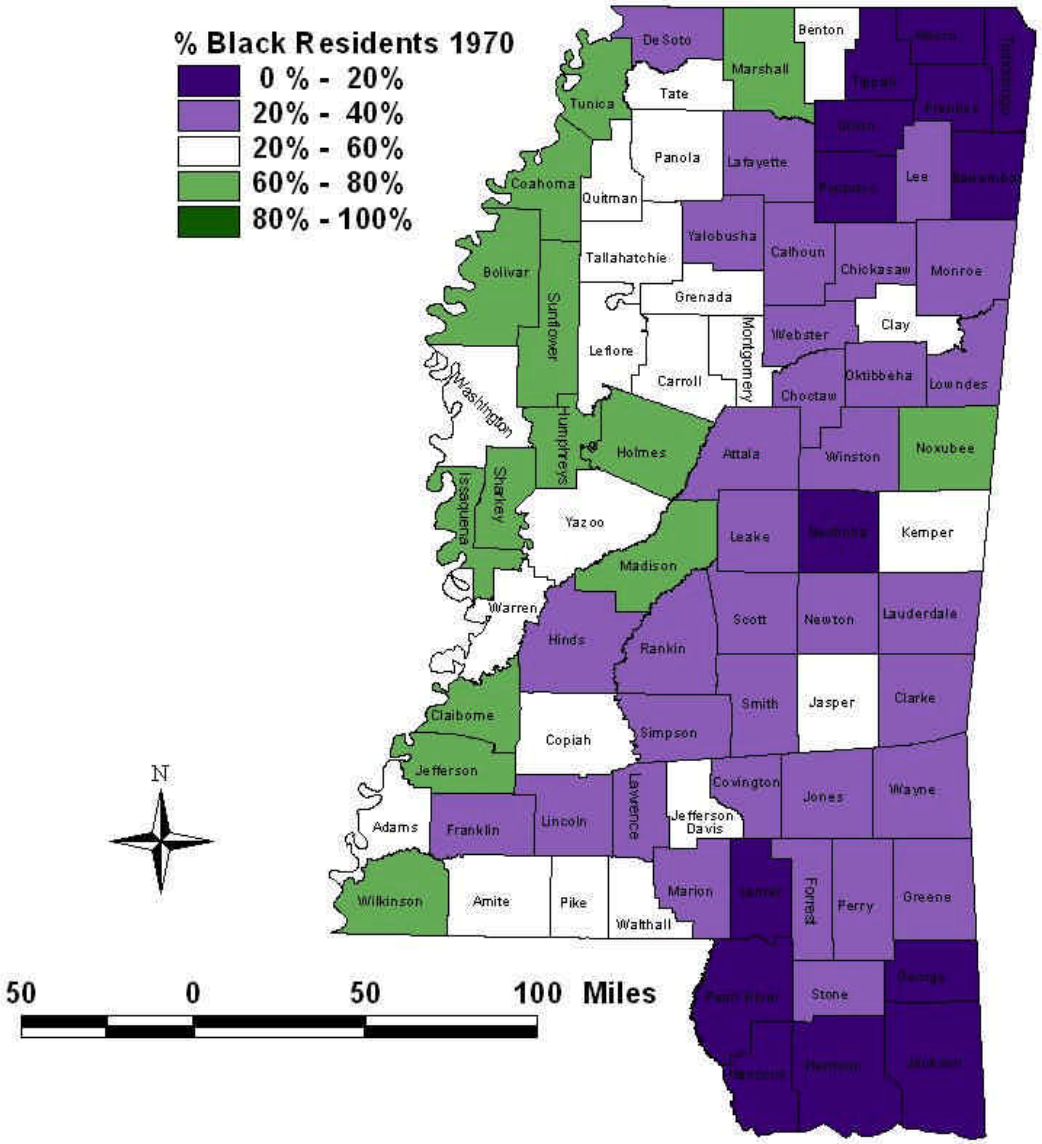

Figure 9: Percent Black Residents per County, 1970

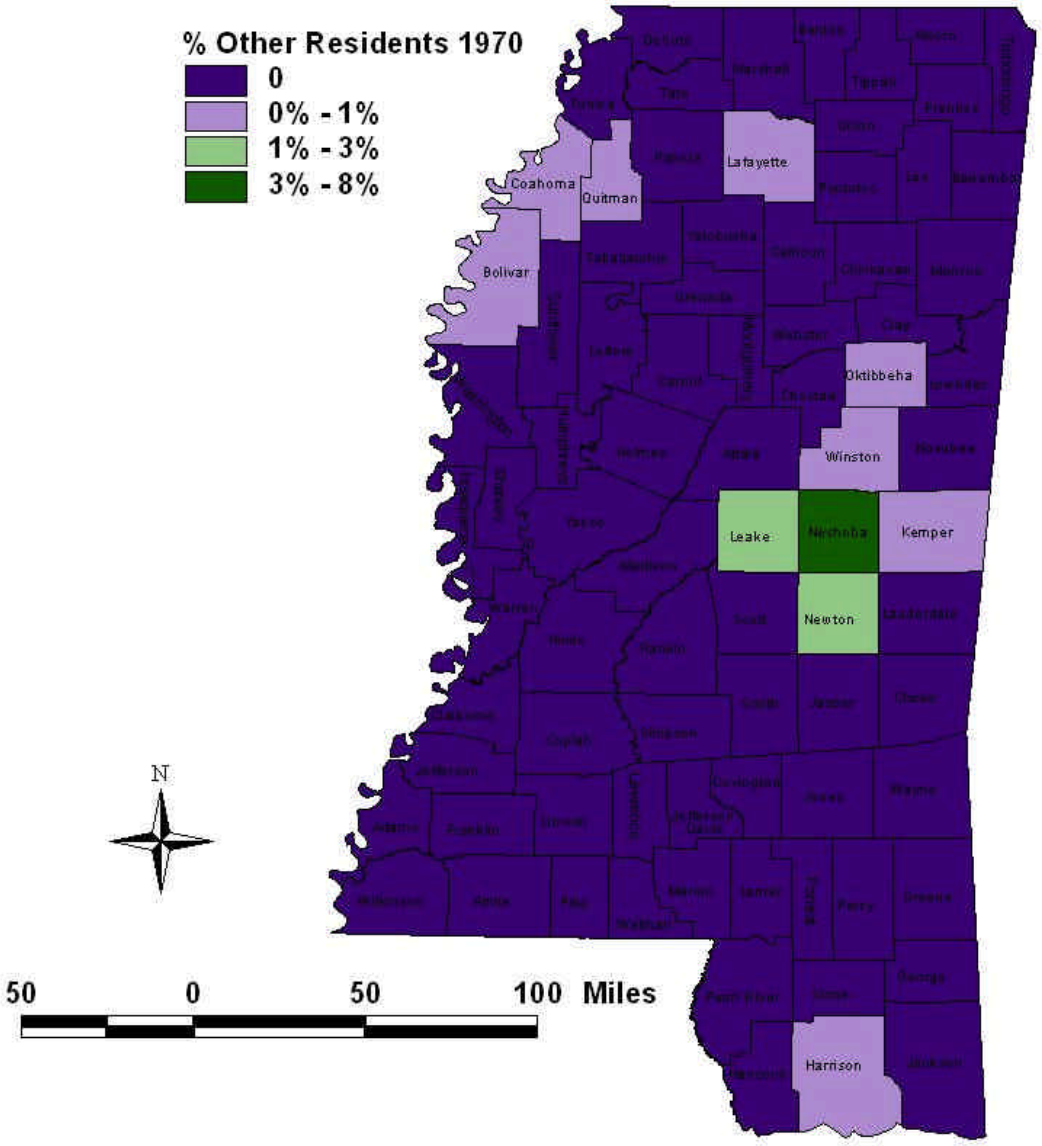

Figure 10: Percent Other Residents per County, 1970.

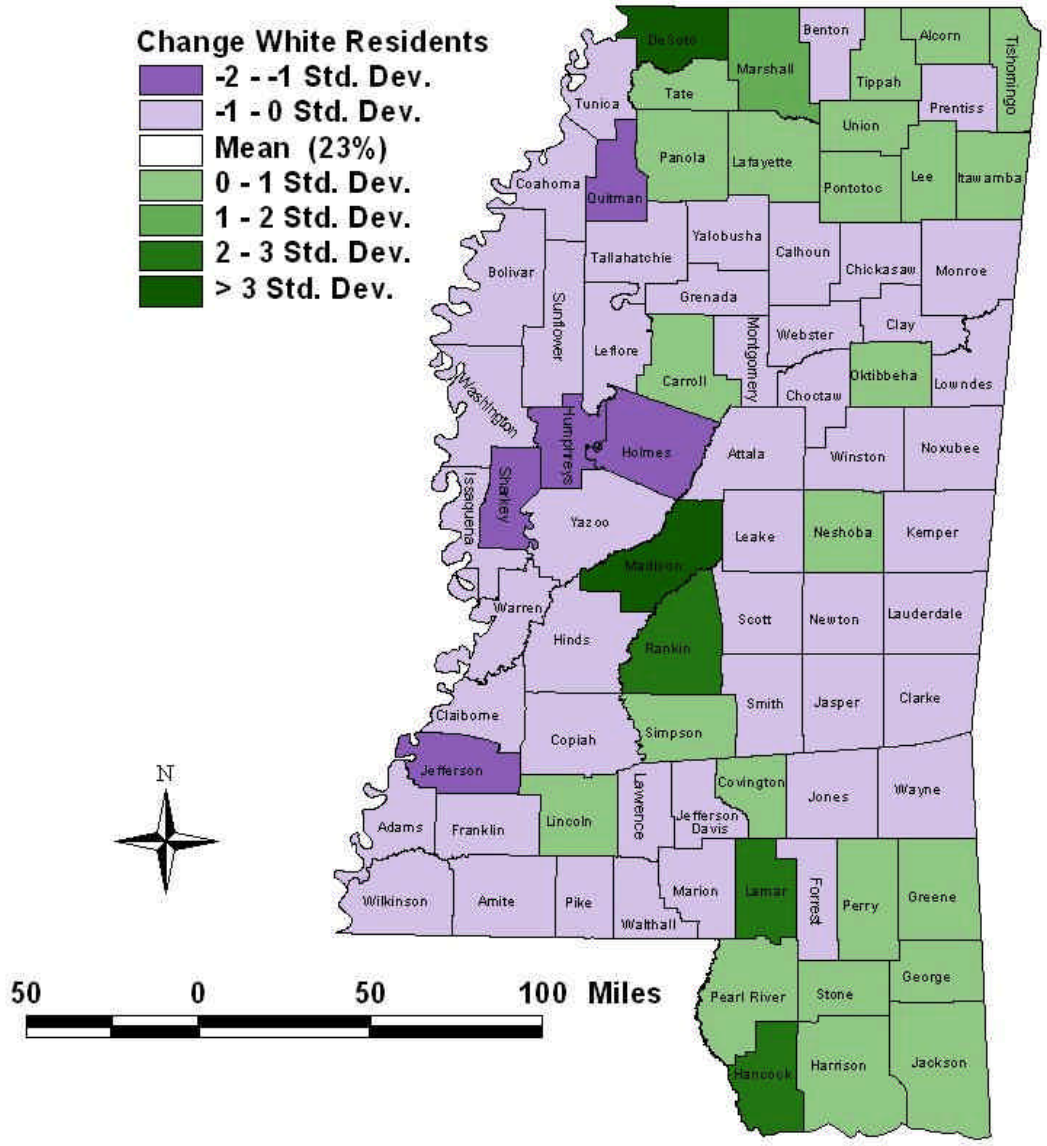

Figure 11: Percent Change in White Residents, 1970 – 2000. Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

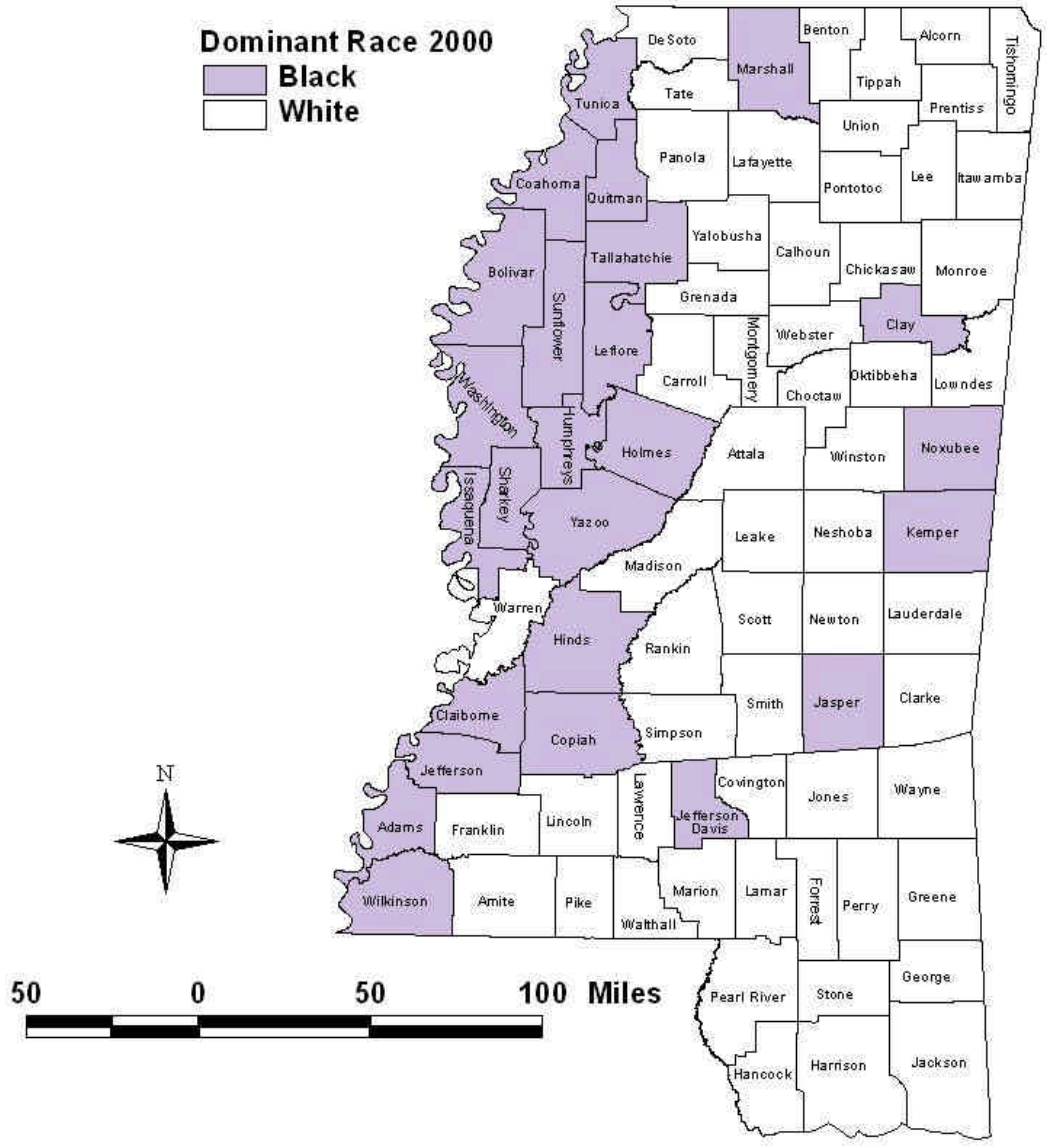

Figure 12: Racial Dominance in Mississippi, 2000.

white population percentages indicated decreases had occurred in several coastal counties reducing overall white populations percentages within this area (Figure 13).

Black residents increased their total numbers within the state by 218,039 persons over the three decades, with an overall percentage increase of 12.17. Areas within the state showing growth in black populations during this time included counties along the coast, counties in the northeast and eastern portions of the state such as Lee, Itawamba, Oktibbeha, Clay, and Lowndes, and the majority of counties within the southern region of the state, especially in the Jackson region (Figure 14). Three counties within these areas indicated substantial increases in black percentages in upwards of 50%, they included Hinds (54.12%), Jackson (65.39%), and Lamar County (80.68%). While the majority of black dominated counties in Mississippi remained within the Delta and Natchez region, most counties within these regions and counties surrounding these regions experienced declines in black population from 1970 to 2000. Counties within these regions experiencing the greatest declines included Issaquena (-36.87), Tunica (-28.63), Tallahatchie (-23.65), Coahoma (-21.37), and Sharkey (-18.98) (Figure 14).

Residents within the state considered "other" had the most dramatic rise in population, increasing their total from 7,865 persons in 1970 to 64,750 persons in 2000, an increase of 723.27%. All 82 counties within the state increased their ethnic minority populations during this time, with a mean increase of 2003% (Figure 15). Although several counties increased their minority ethnic populations dramatically, five counties experienced extreme increases in upwards of 7500.0%. These five counties include

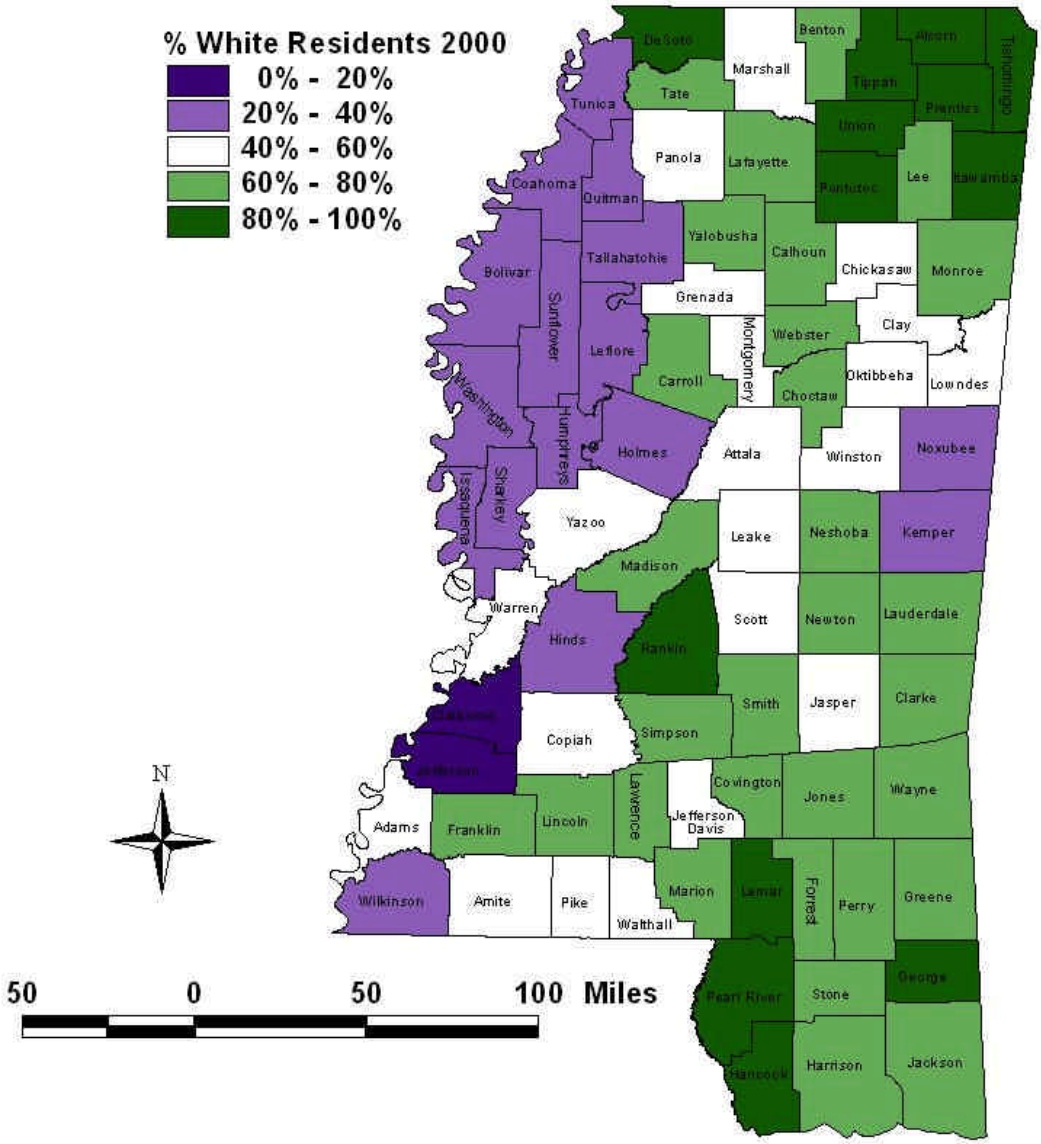

Figure 13: Percentage of White Residents per County, 2000.

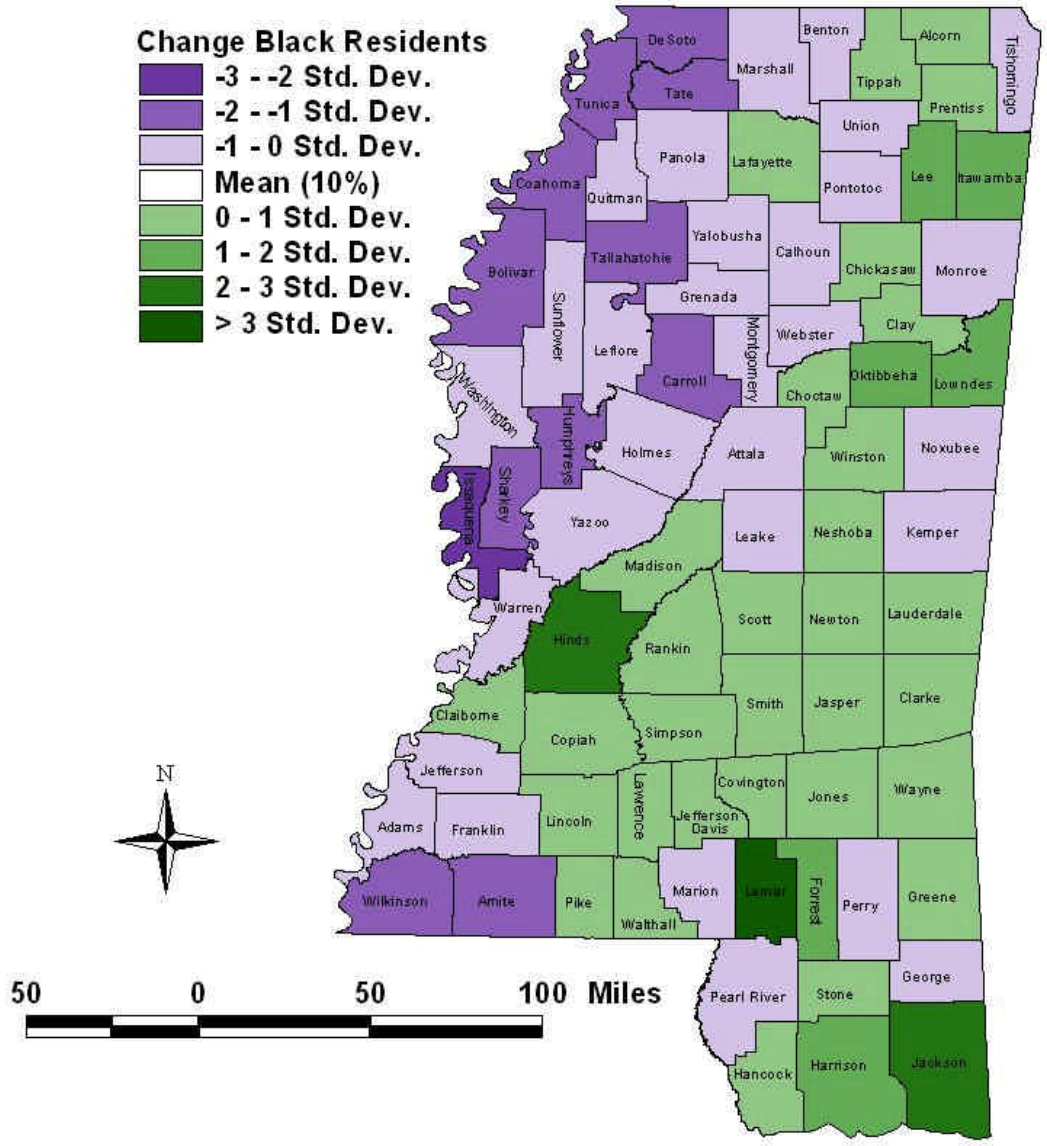

Figure 14: Percent Change Black Residents, 1970 – 2000.
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

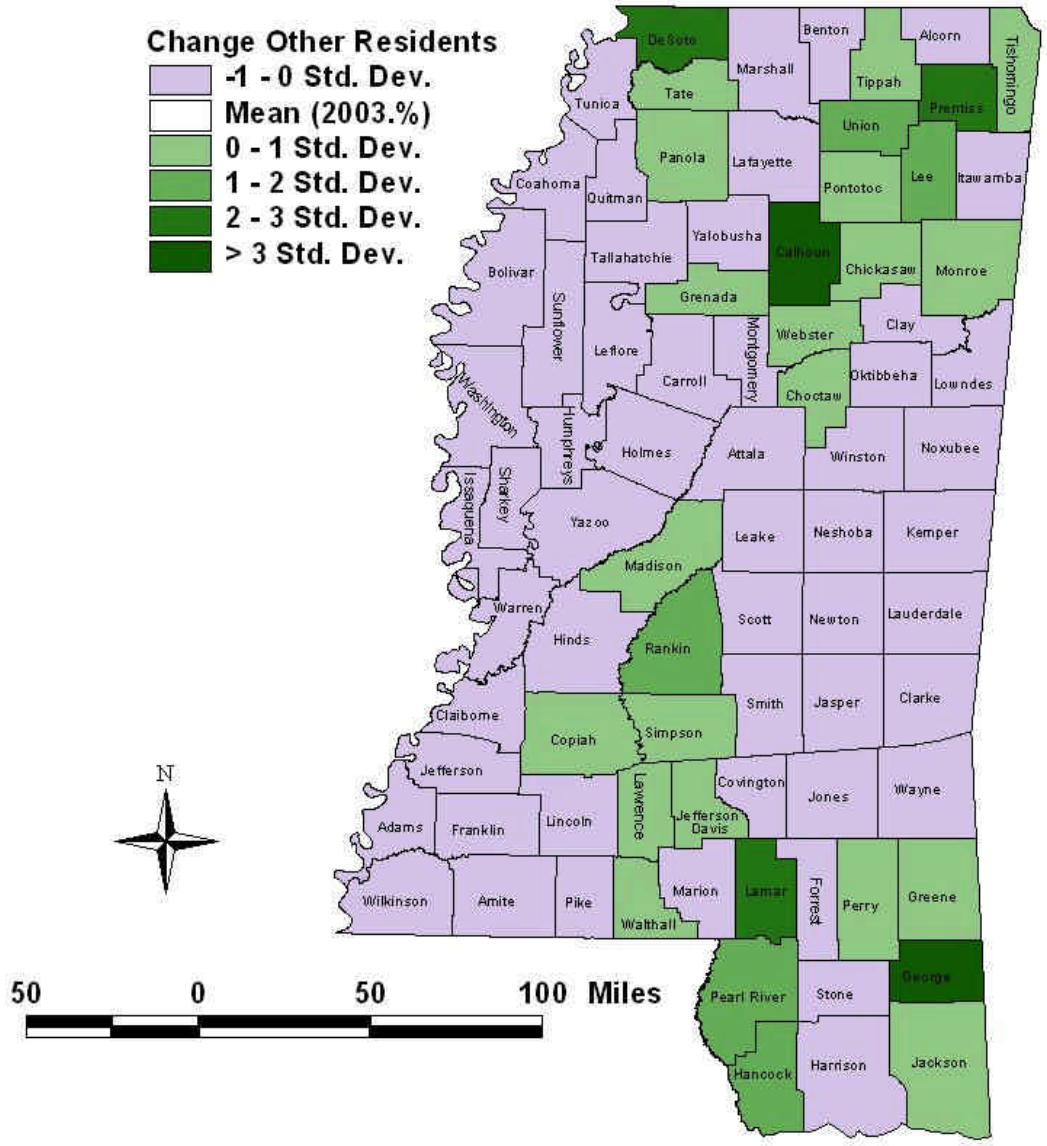

Figure 15: Percent Change in Other Residents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

Calhoun County with the highest percentage increase of 9600%, George County with an increase of 8550%, Desoto County with a 7677% increase, Prentiss County at 7600%, and Lamar County increasing by 7544%. While the largest majority of minority groups remained most prominent within the Neshoba county region, several counties within the coastal region, the Jackson metropolitan region, and counties located in the northern portion of the state (Oktibbeha, Desoto, Lafayette, Kemper, and Jones) increased their total percentage of "other" residents and were identified as the primary areas of ethnic growth within the state from 1970 to 2000 (Figure 16).

Religious Change

Total Number of Churches

From 1970 to 2000 the total number of churches within the state increased from 4321 to 5457, an increase of 1136 churches or 26.2%. The mean rate of increase for the state at this time was 24.4%, with the highest percentage being 100% (Desoto County), and the lowest being –66.7% (Issaquena County) (Figure 17). Out of the state's 82 counties, 74 experienced positive increases in church numbers, while eight showed varying degrees of decline. Twenty counties of the 74 experiencing positive gains within the state indicated growth percentages above 40%, and of these 20, five increased their totals in upwards of 65%. These five counties included Desoto (100%), Stone (71.8%), Madison (71.4%), Pontotoc (67.7%), and Monroe (67.3%) (Figure 18). Each of these five counties were found in regions of the state undergoing the highest levels of church increase, which included the northeast, the Desoto area, counties in the Jackson area, and the area surrounding the coast.

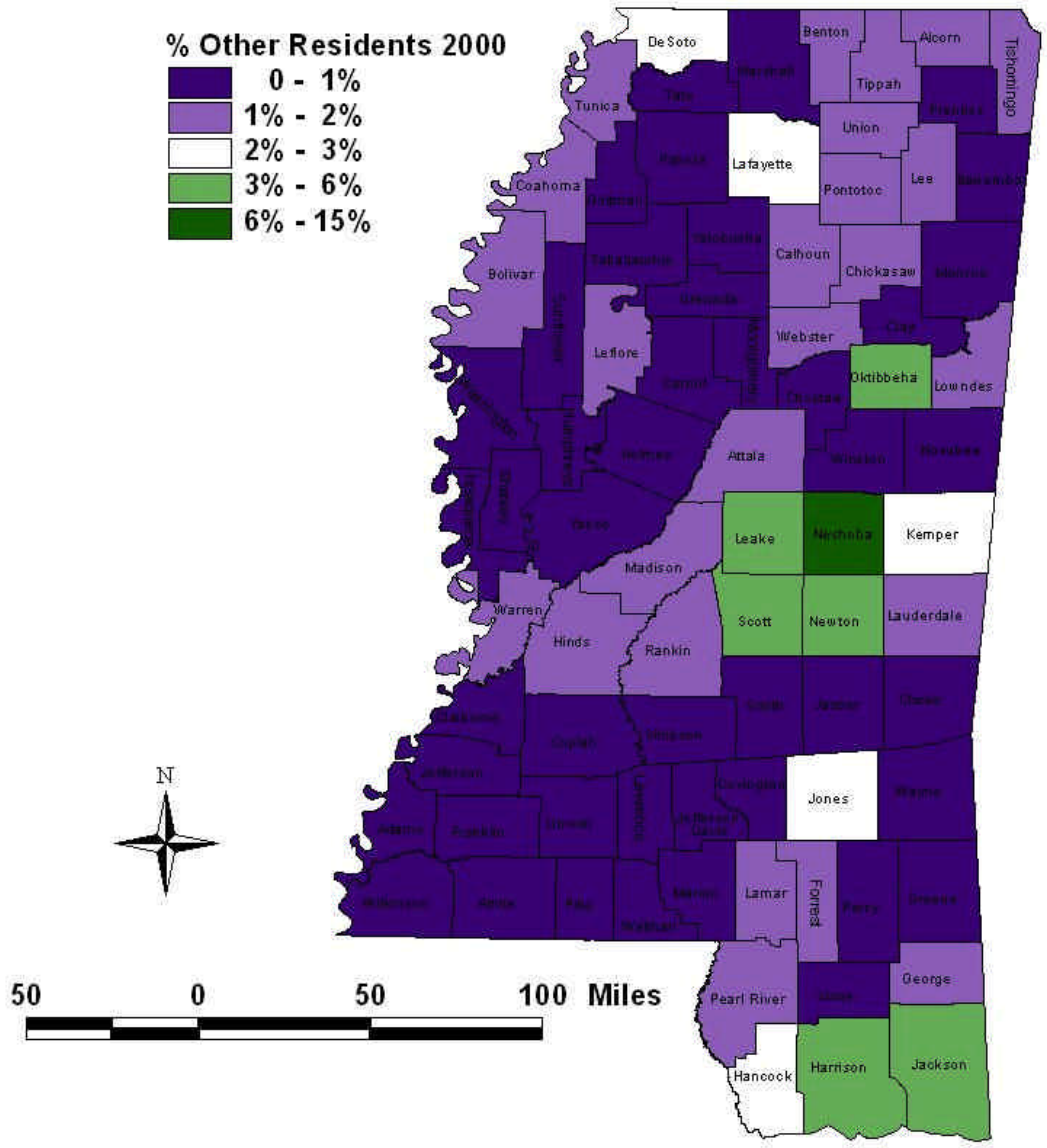

Figure 16: Percent Other Residents in Mississippi, 2000.

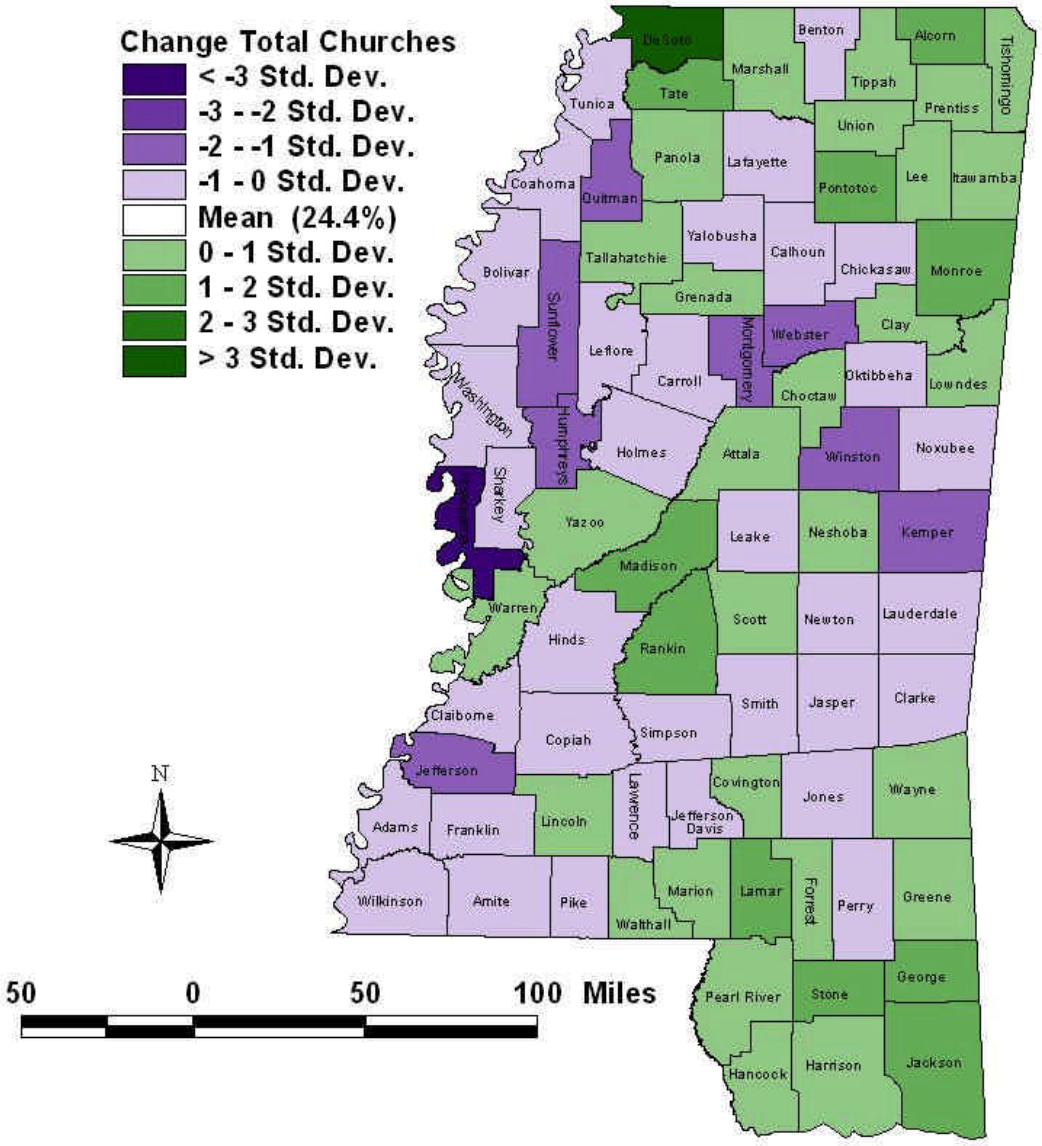

Figure 17: Percent Change in Total Number of Churches, 1970 – 2000 Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

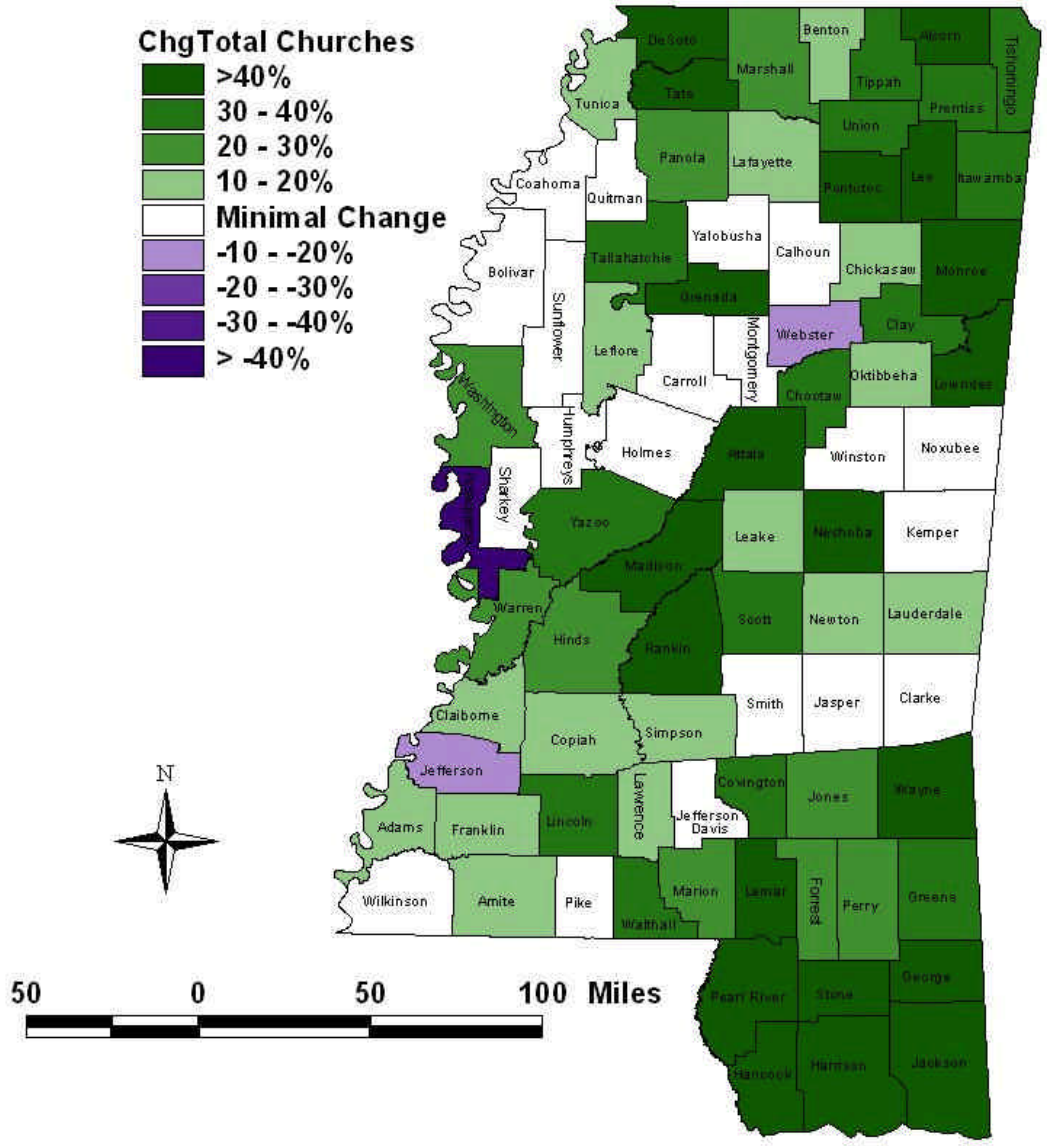

Figure 18: Percent Change in Total Number of Churches, 1970 – 2000

Through this increase, the mean number of churches per county for the state rose from 52 in 1970 to 66 in 2000. Graphic illustrations of the number of churches per county indicated that the total number of churches per county often reflected the total number of residents within a county. This was evident in both 1970 and 2000 when Hinds County, having the largest county population within the state, also reported the highest number of churches within the state (Figure 19 & 20).

Correlation Analysis of Total Number of Churches

In determining the primary demographic variables associated with church growth, percent change in total number of churches was correlated with percent change in total population (r = .653**), percent change in urban (r = .306**) and rural (r = .494**) percentages, and percent change in white (r = .641**), black (r = .305**), and other (r = .464*) population. Correlation analysis revealed strong and significant positive relationships between percent change in total number of churches and all percent change demographic variables being analyzed at the thirty-year interval (1970 – 2000) (Table 3).

Of the demographic variables showing significant positive correlations, percent change in total population (r = .653**) and percent change in white population (r = .641**) were the most highly correlated with percent change in total number of churches. Comparing graphic results of percent increase in population and percent increase in white population to percent increase in total number of churches supported this finding indicating counties with increased population and white residents as areas experiencing the most growth in terms of church numbers (Figures 21). The strongest support for this finding was found in Desoto County where increases in total population

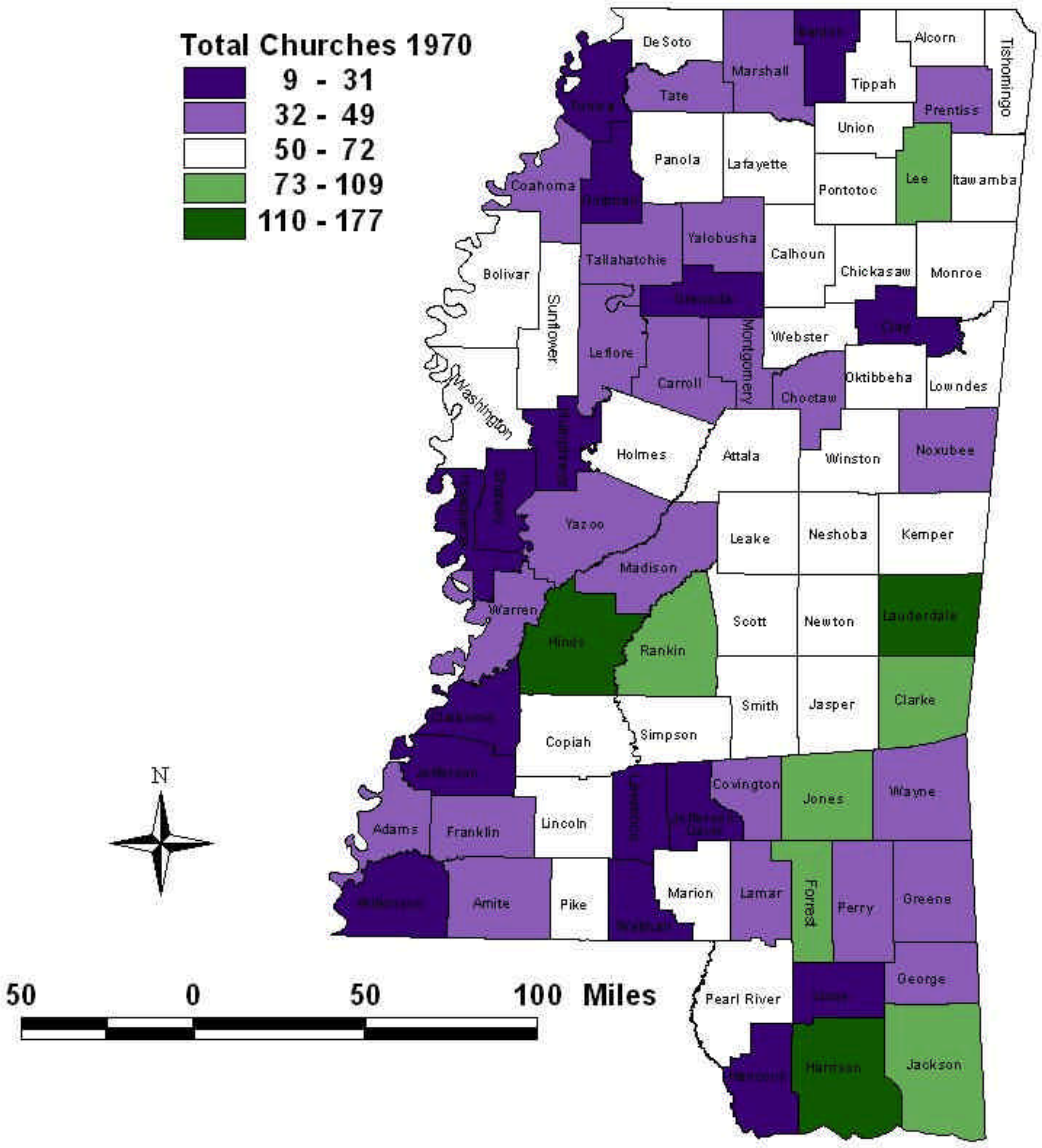

Figure 19: Total Number of Churches in Mississippi, 1970.

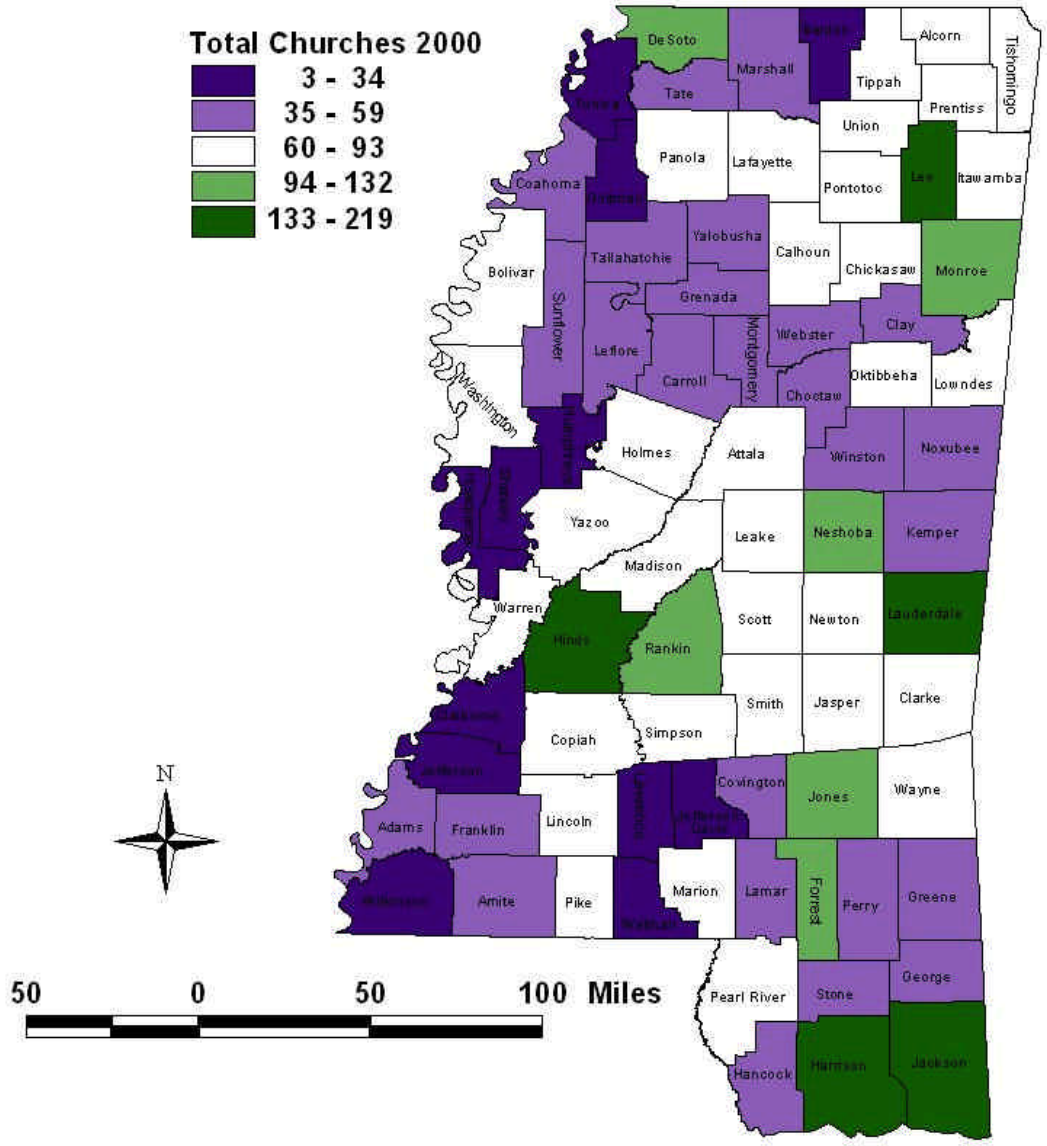

Figure 20: Total Number of Churches in Mississippi, 2000.

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient, Of Percent Change in Demographic Variables and Percent Change in Total Number of Churches, Total Number of Adherents, and Total Number of Denominations.

Demographic Factors (%)b	Percent Change Total Number of Churches	Percent Change Total Number of Adherents	Percent Change Total Number of Denominations
Total Population	.653**	.870**	.400**
White Population	.641**	.892**	.402**
Black Population	.305**	.263*	.275*
Other Population	.464*	.540**	.232*
Rural Population	.494**	.606**	.381**
Urban Population	.306**	.464**	.134

N = 83
(%)b=% Change in Total (1970-2000)
* Significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
**Significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

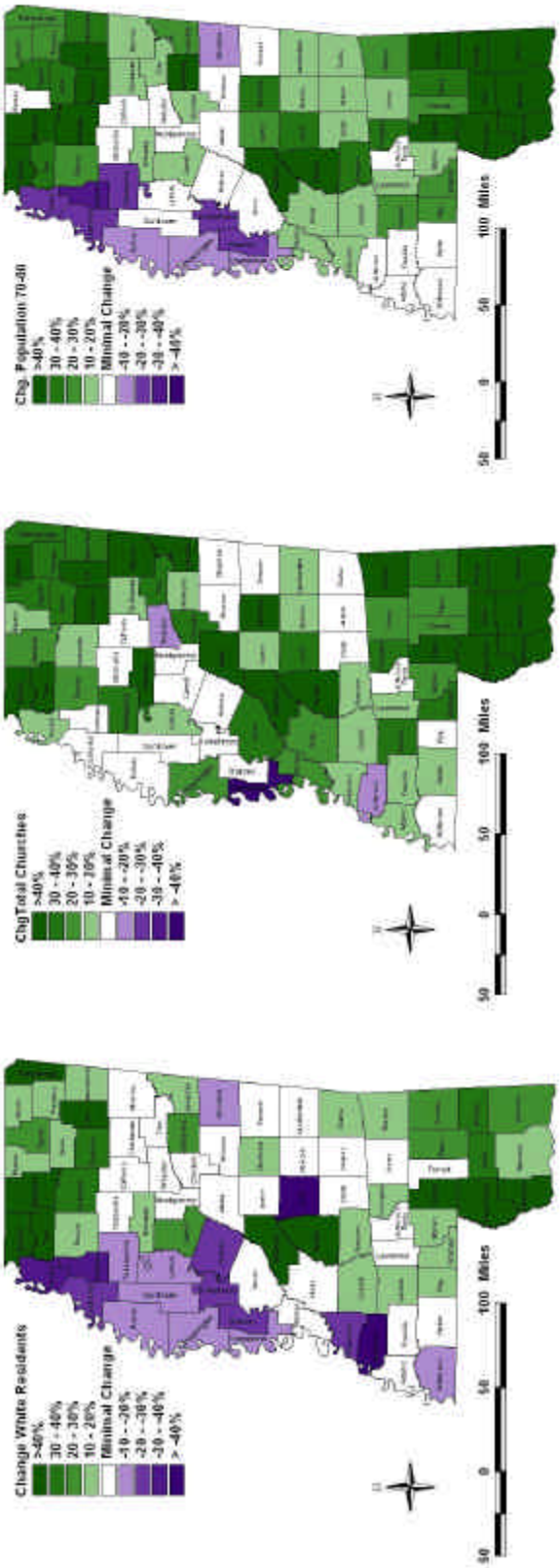

Figure 21: Comparison of Percent Change in Total Number of Churches, Percent Change Total Population, and Percent Change in Total White Population, 1970 – 2000.

(198.7%) and white population (298.7%) and total number of churches (100%) were at there highest for the state.

Although correlations between percent change in urban and rural population and percent black population and percent other population were not as high, they also indicated a strong positive correlation with percent change in total number of churches. Of the three factors having lower, but yet significant correlation coefficients, percent change in black population (r = 305*) had the weakest, suggesting a lower rate of increase in church numbers in predominantly black areas of the state as compared to white dominated areas, all other factors being constant. This finding may or may not be a result of the limited church data on African-American churches.

Total Number of Adherents

From 1970 to 2000, the total number of church adherents within the state increased from 1,119,630 to 1,554,298, an increase of 38.8%. The mean rate of increase for the state at this time was 33.6%, with the highest percentage of increase found in Desoto County (333.0%), and the lowest in Issaquena (-76.9%) (Figure 22). Of the state's 82 counties, 68 indicated an increase in total church adherents, while 14 showed declines. Counties having the highest percentage of growth, two standard deviations above the mean, included Desoto (333.0%), Madison (215.6%), Rankin (177.8%), Stone (111.0%), Lamar (106.2%), George (100.9%), and Tate (90.7%) (Figure 22). All of these counties were found in regions experiencing the highest levels of adherent growth including the coast, the Desoto area, and the Jackson region. The only other area of the state experiencing increased rates of growth not represented by one of these seven

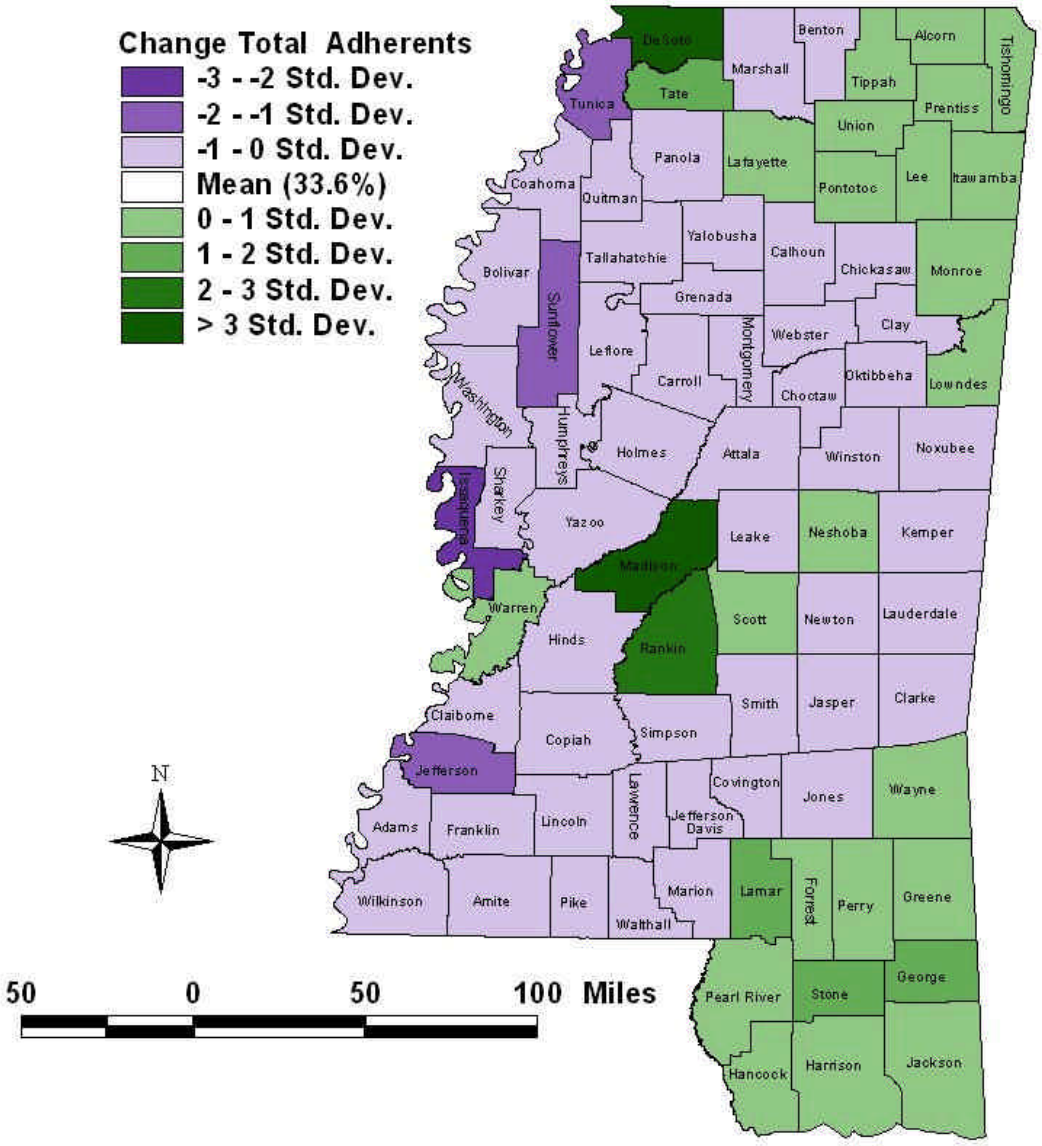

Figure 22: Percent Change in Total Number of Adherents, 1970 – 2000. Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

counties was the northeast, where the majority of counties increased within only one standard deviation of the mean.

Although the overwhelming majority of counties within the state increased their total number of adherents, increases were not sufficient to uphold the state's high percentage rate of church adherents. In 1970, the percentage of Mississippi residents considered church adherents within the state was 62.3%, over the thirty year period this percentage declined to, 54.5%, an overall percentage change of –14.3. An even more evident degree of decline was seen in the average number of church adherents per county within the state. While the average number of residents considered church adherents per county in 1970 was 63.6%, a percentage decline of 19.3 over the thirty-year period reduced this percentage to 53.3% in 2000.

Correlation Analysis of Total Number of Adherents

As with percent change in total number of churches, correlation analysis revealed significantly strong positive associations between percent change in total adherents and all demographic variables being evaluated (Table 3). Demographic variables indicating the highest significance levels were percent change in white (r = .892**) and total (r = .870**) population. This finding was supported by comparing graphic results of these demographic variables and graphic results of percent change in total adherents. Areas experiencing the highest percentage of increases in total number of adherents were also the areas having the highest percentage of increase in total population and white population, and vice versa (figure 23). Percent change in black population had the weakest significant relationship (r = .263*) indicating adherent counts throughout the

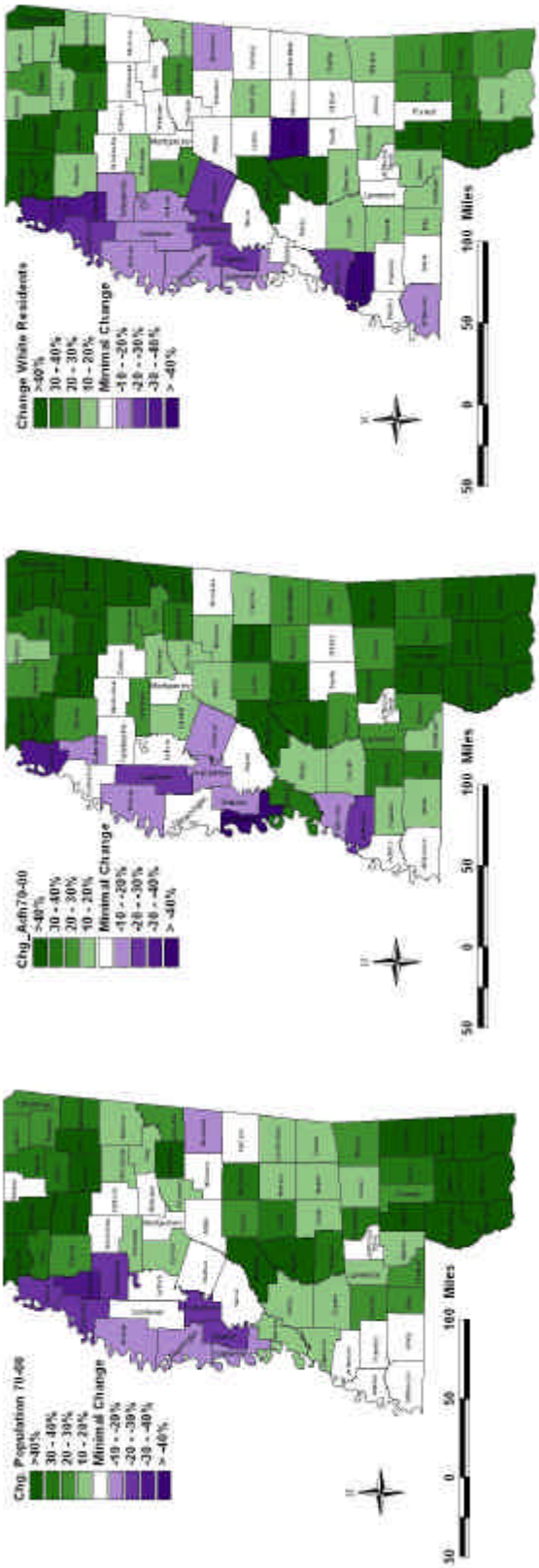

Figure 23: Comparison of Percent Change in Total Number of Church Adherents, Percent Change in Total Population, and Percent Change in Total White Population.

state from 1970 to 2000 to be less impacted by changes occurring in black population totals within the state. This finding may also be the result of insufficient African-American church data. The three remaining demographic variables, change in percent urban (r = .464**), rural (r = .606**), and other (r = .504**) populations, each indicated a positive significant relationship, indicating a strong association between change in their totals and changes in total adherent counts.

Denominational Change

In 1970, the total number of denominations represented within the state was 27. The average number of denominations per county at this time was eight, with the most diverse county having 20 (Hinds) affiliations, and the least having two (Walthall) (Figure 24). By 2000, the number of practicing denominations within the state increased to 63, with an average of 14 denominations per county. This increase of 36 denominations raised the level of denominational diversity within the state by 133.3%. Of all the state's counties, 79 increased in number of denominations over the thirty-year period, while three (Issaquena, Humphreys, and Sunflower) experienced neither an increase nor decrease (Figure 25).

The mean rate of increase for state was 69.4%, with exactly half of the 82 counties meeting or exceeding this percentage. Counties indicating the highest percentage of growth included Walthall (200.0%), Lafayette (183.3%), Madison (150.0%), Rankin (150.0%), and Pontotoc (140.0%) (Figure 26). Although these counties experienced the highest rates of increase, many were also the counties reporting the least number of denominations in 1970 and 2000, making their overall increase in

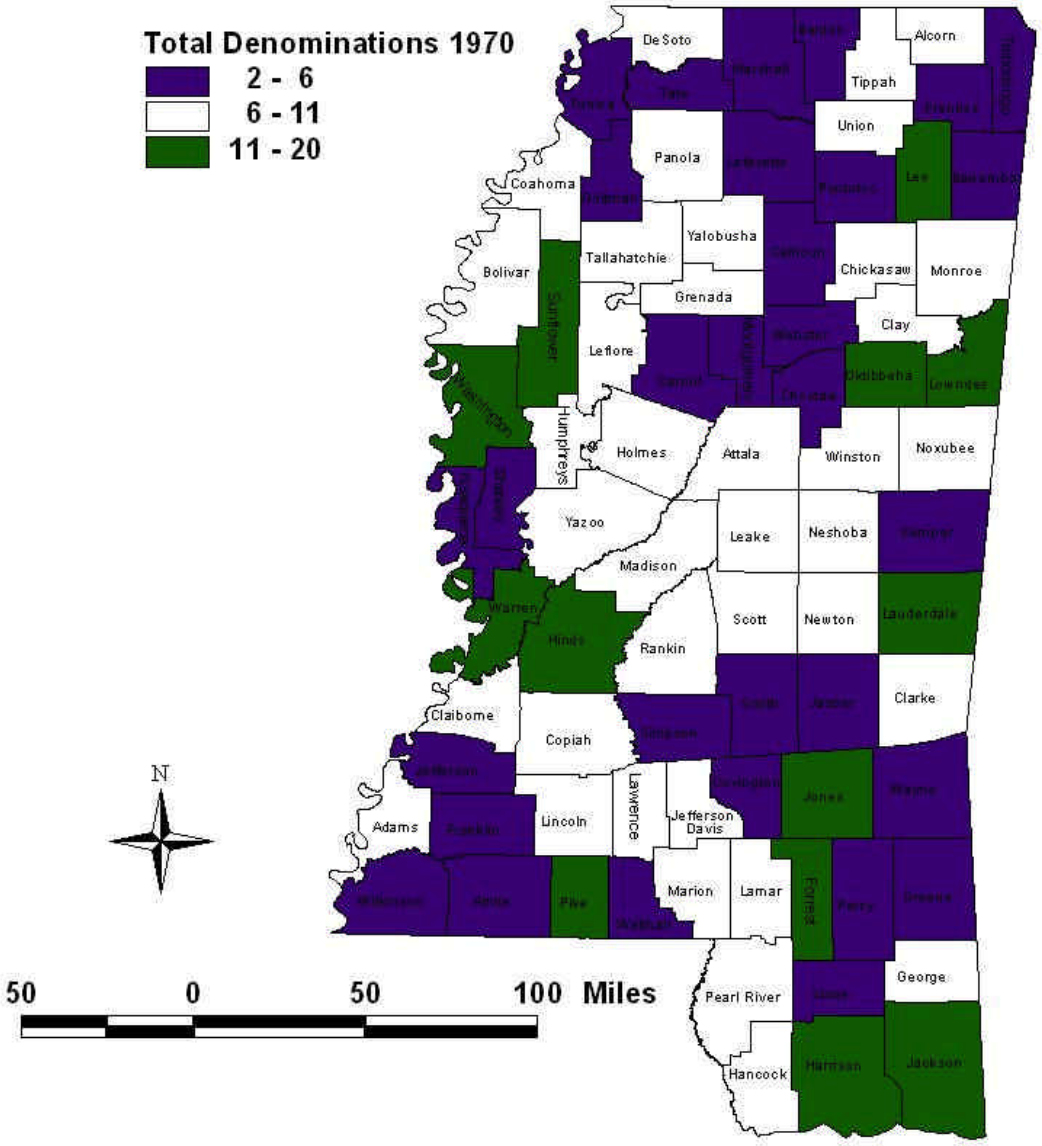

Figure 24: Total Number of Denominations per County in Mississippi, 1970.

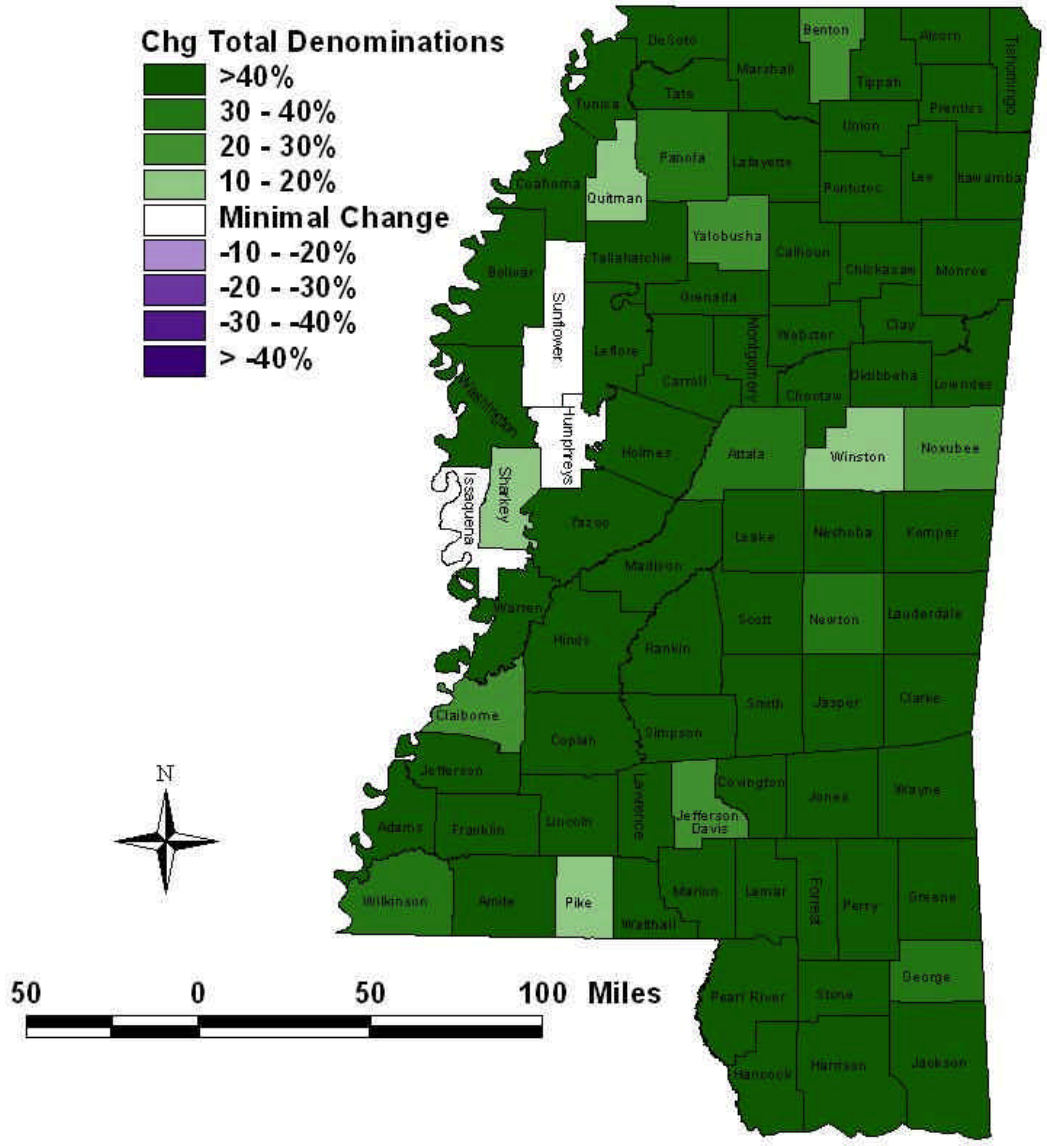

Figure 15: Percent Change in Total Number of Denominations, 1970 – 2000.

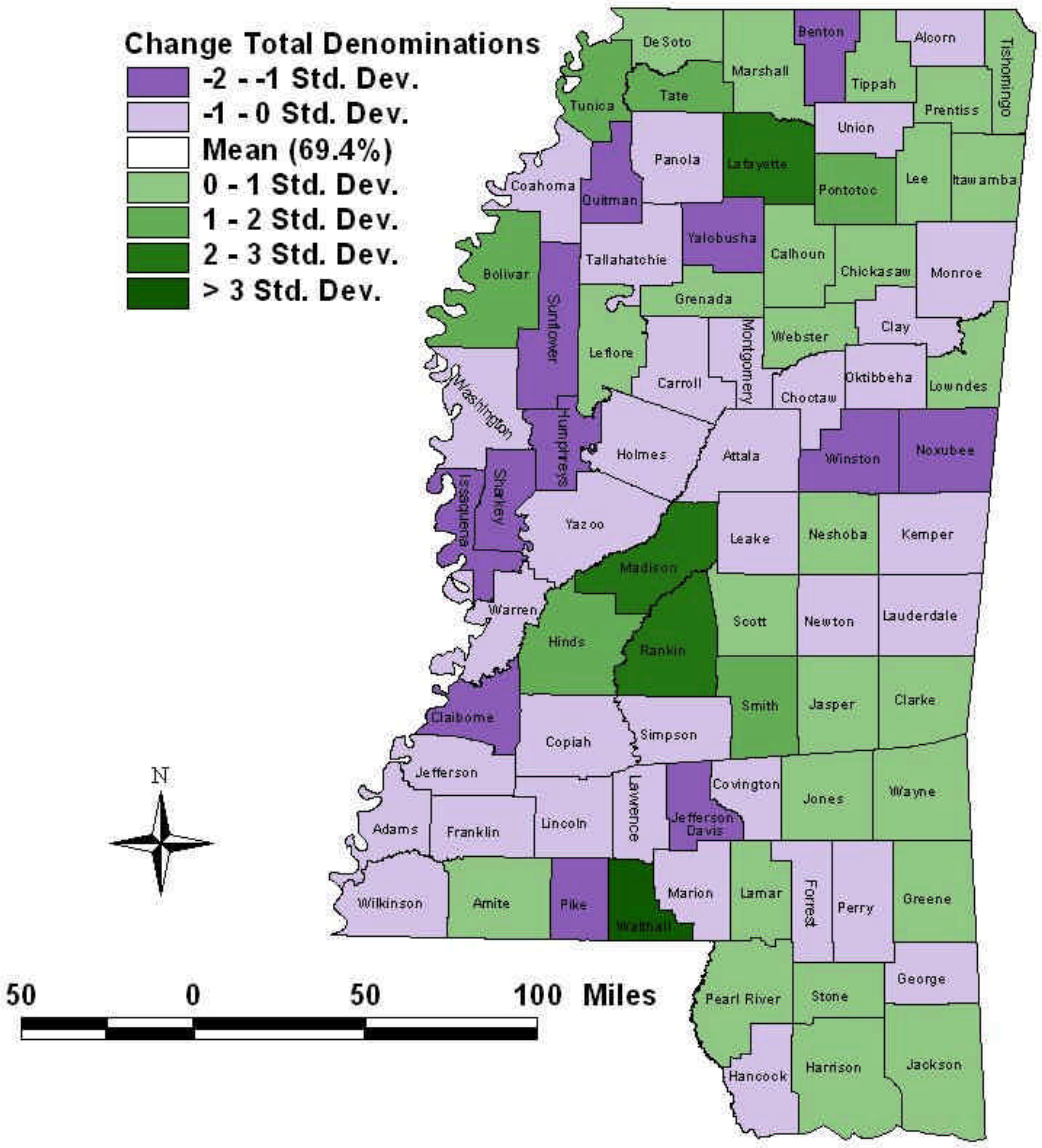

Figure 15: Percent Change in Total Number of Denominations, 1970 – 2000 Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

total denominations minimal. For example, Walthall County in 1970 reported a total of two denominations, the lowest in the state, despite its 200.0% increase over the thirty-year period the total number of denominations within the county in 2000 was a mere six, the second lowest within the state. Therefore, it is important to note the most denominationally diverse counties at this time included Hinds (42), Harrison (35), Lee (27) and Lauderdale (27), while the least diverse included Walthall (6), Benton (6), and Issaquena (3) (Figure 27).

Correlation Analysis of Total Number of Denominations

Of all the correlation analysis performed between demographic variables and religious variables, percent change in denominations revealed the weakest relationship (Table 3). Demographic variables most highly correlated with percent change in denominations were percent change in total population (r = .400**), and percent change in white population (r = .402**), indicating a positive association between denominational growth and increases in total population and white population. In terms of "other" population and black population, percent change in denominations also revealed a strong significantly positive relationship with r values of .275* (black population) and .232* (other population). The only demographic variable not associated with percent change in total denominations was percent change in urban population (r = .134), indicating no relationship exist between the two variables.

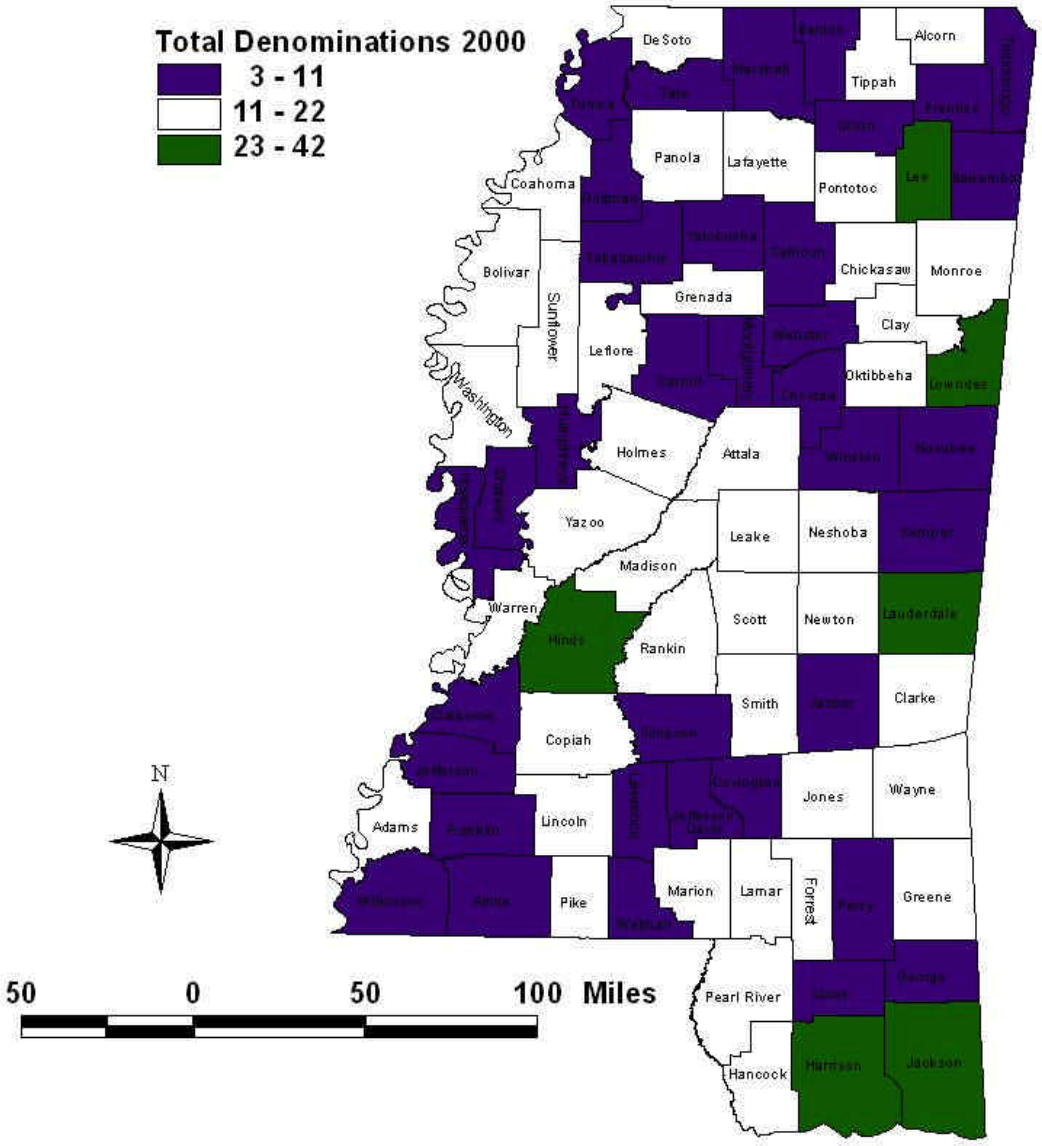

Figure 27: Total Number of Denominations per County in Mississippi, 2000.

Individual Denominational Growth

Based on the total number of church adherents per denomination at the county level, graphic illustrations were created to show the dominant denomination within each county for 1970 and 2000. Results of adherent counts in 1970 indicated Southern Baptists as the dominant denomination in all but four of the state's counties. The only other dominating affiliations were United Methodist found in Kemper and Jefferson County, Baptist in Itawamba County, and Catholic found in Hancock County (Figure 28). In 2000, results once again indicated Southern Baptist as the dominating denomination in 78 of the state's counties. The four counties not dominated by Southern Baptist in 2000 included Jefferson dominated by United Methodist, Itawamba and Stone dominated by Baptist, and Hancock dominated by Catholic (Figure 29). The only differing factor between 1970 and 2000, was the inclusion of Kemper County as a county dominated by Southern Baptist and the exclusion of Stone County as a county dominated by Southern Baptist. For individual denomination adherent counts in 1970 and 2000, and percent change in total number of adherents per denomination refer to (Table 4). In addition to total number of adherents per denomination, each denominations percentage of total adherents within the state were identified for 1970 and 2000 and compared to determine the percentage of growth and decline for each denomination at the state level (Table 5).

In order to determine the leading growing and declining denomination within each county, percent change in percent of total number of church adherents were used in identifying the highest and lowest change rate percentage within each denomination for each county from 1970 to 2000. Graphic illustrations of denominations experiencing the highest percentage of growth in percent of total adherents within each county revealed

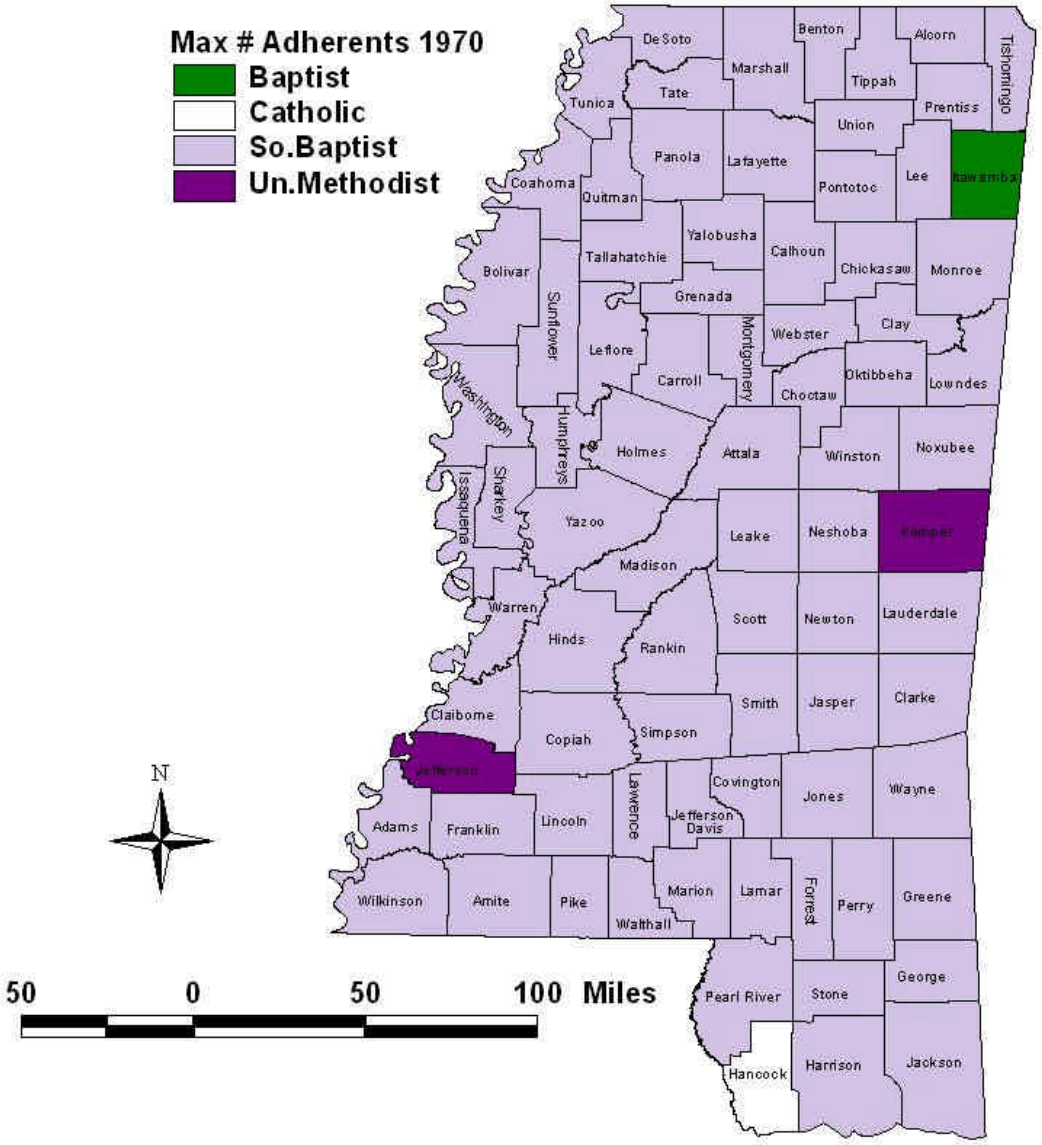

Figure 28: Dominant Denomination per County, 1970.
Classification Based on Percentage of Adherents per Denomination.

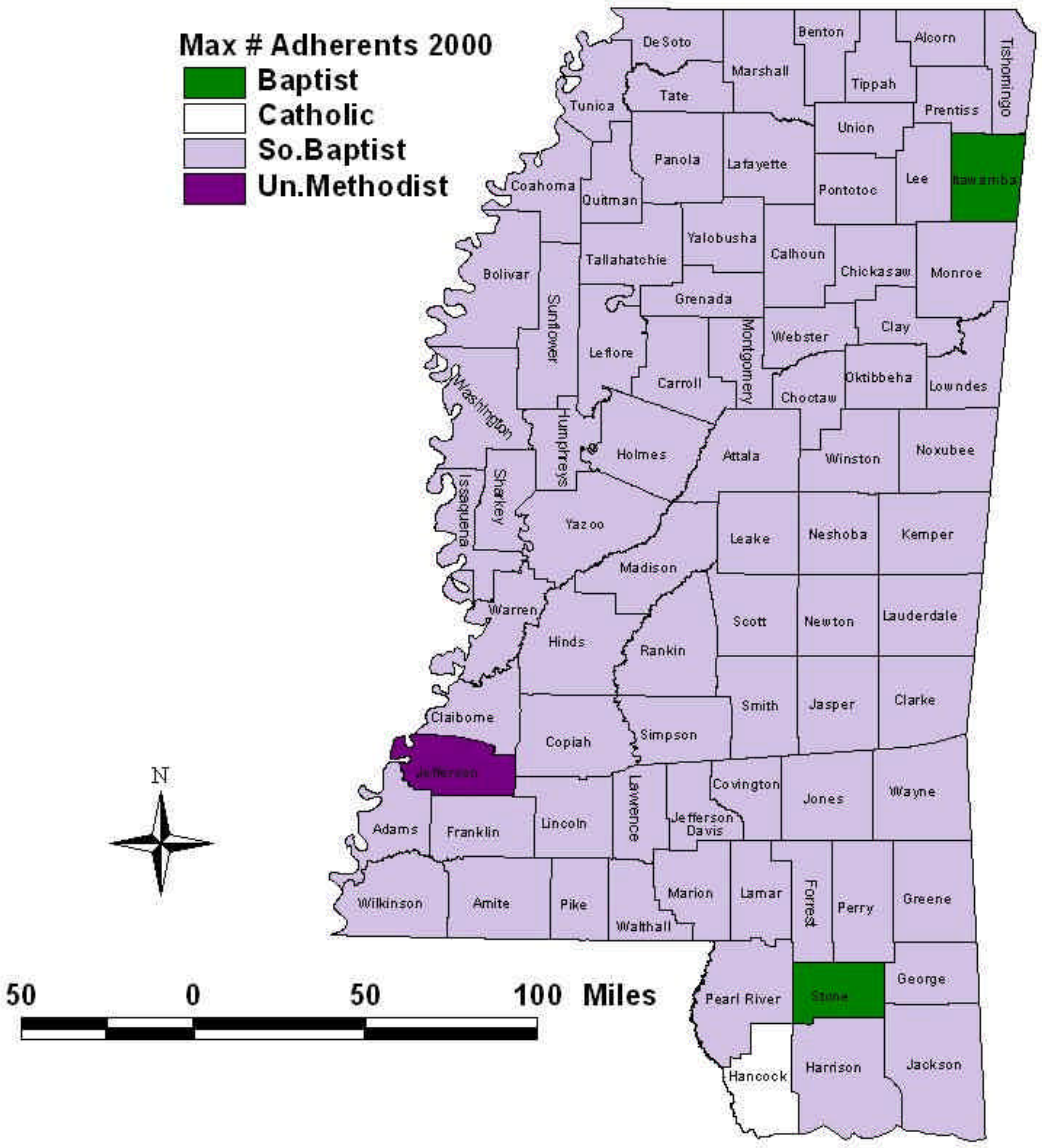

Figure 29: Dominant Denomination per County, 2000.
Classification Based on Percentage of Adherents per Denomination.

Table 4: Total Number of Church Adherents Per Denomination 1970 and 2000, and Percent Change in Total Number of Adherents Per Denomination.

Denominational Rank in 1970 Based on Total Adh.	Total Adherents 1970	Total Adherents 2000	% Change Total Adherents 1970-2000	Ranking in Percent Change Total Number of Adherent (1970-2000)	Denominational Rank in 2000 based on Total Adh.
Southern Baptist	**679,574**	**903,239**	**32.91%**	Mennonite	Southern Baptist
United Methodist	**214,603**	**240,576**	**12.10%**	Pentecostal	United Methodist
Catholic	**83,043**	**115,749**	**39.38%**	Baptist	Catholic
Presbyterian	**49,477**	**41,957**	**-15.19%**	Latter Day Saints	Baptist
Baptist	**30,197**	**61,345**	**103.14%**	Adventist	Church of Christ
Episcopal	**17,858**	**21,124**	**18.28%**	Catholic	Presbyterian
Pentecostal	**15,715**	**37,375**	**137.83%**	Southern Baptist	Pentecostal
Christian	**10,363**	**9,793**	**-5.50%**	Church of Christ	Episcopal
Nazarene	**6,034**	**5,456**	**-9.57%**	Episcopal	Latter Day Saints
Lutheran	**4,966**	**5,690**	**14.57%**	Lutheran	Christian
Adventist	**3,847**	**6,415**	**66.75%**	United Methodist	Adventist
Mennonite	**230**	**2,159**	**838.69%**	Christian	Lutheran
Latter Day Saints	**7,683**	**12,738**	**65.79%**	Nazarene	Nazarene
Church of Christ	**34,148**	**42,914**	**25.67%**	Presbyterian	Mennonite
Judaism	**2,075**	**1,400**	**-32.50%**	Judaism	Judaism

Table 5: Percentage of Total Church Adherents Per Denomination in 1970 and 2000, and Percent Change In Percentage of Total Church Adherents.

Denomination	Percent of Total Adherents 1970	Percent of Total Adherents 2000	% Change Total Adherents 1970-2000	Ranking in Percent Change Total Number of Adherent (1970-2000)	Denominational Rank in 2000 based on Total Adh
Southern Baptist	60.70%	58.11%	-4.26%	Mennonite	Southern Baptist
United Methodist	19.17%	15.48%	-19.24%	Pentecostal	United Methodist
Catholic	7.42%	7.45%	0.40%	Latter Day Saints	Catholic
Presbyterian	4.42%	2.60%	-41.17%	Baptist	Baptist
Baptist	2.70%	3.95%	46.29%	Adventist	Church of Christ
Episcopal	1.60%	1.36%	-15.00%	Church of Christ	Presbyterian
Pentecostal	1.40%	2.40%	71.42%	Catholic	Pentecostal
Christian	0.93%	0.64%	-31.18%	Southern Baptist	Episcopal
Nazarene	0.54%	0.35%	-35.18%	Episcopal	Latter Day Saints
Lutheran	0.44%	0.08%	-81.81%	United Methodist	Christian
Adventist	0.34%	0.41%	20.58%	Christian	Adventist
Mennonite	0.02%	0.14%	600.00%	Nazarene	Nazarene
Latter Day Saints	0.55%	0.82%	49.09%	Judaism	Mennonite

that of the 15 denominational groups being evaluated, nine were identified as the leading growing denomination within one or more counties of the state. These nine denominations and the number of counties they dominated in terms of percentage increase included, Baptist (13), Catholic (7), Church of Christ (27), Latter Day Saints (2), Mennonite (1), Nazarene (1), Pentecostal (11), Southern Baptist (14), and United Methodist (6) (Figure 30). Five of the fifteen denominations used were identified as experiencing the highest percentage of decline within counties throughout the state. These denominations and the total number of counties they indicated substantial losses in included, Presbyterians (16), Episcopal (1), Nazarene (1), Southern Baptist (60), and United Methodist (4) (Figure 31).

In addition to identifying the dominant denomination and the leading growing and declining denomination within each county, church adherent counts were also used to graphically illustrate growth and decline percentages for each of the fifteen denominations being evaluated. Because percentage rates can vary significantly among denominations due to differences in original adherent totals, standard deviations based on mean percentage rates were used to classify data and identify growth and decline areas for each denominations. Figures 32-46 represent graphic illustrations for the following denominations, Adventist, Baptist, Catholic, Church of Christ, Southern Baptist, United Methodist, Lutheran, Jewish, Christian, Episcopalian, Mennonite, Latter Day Saints, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, and Nazarene.

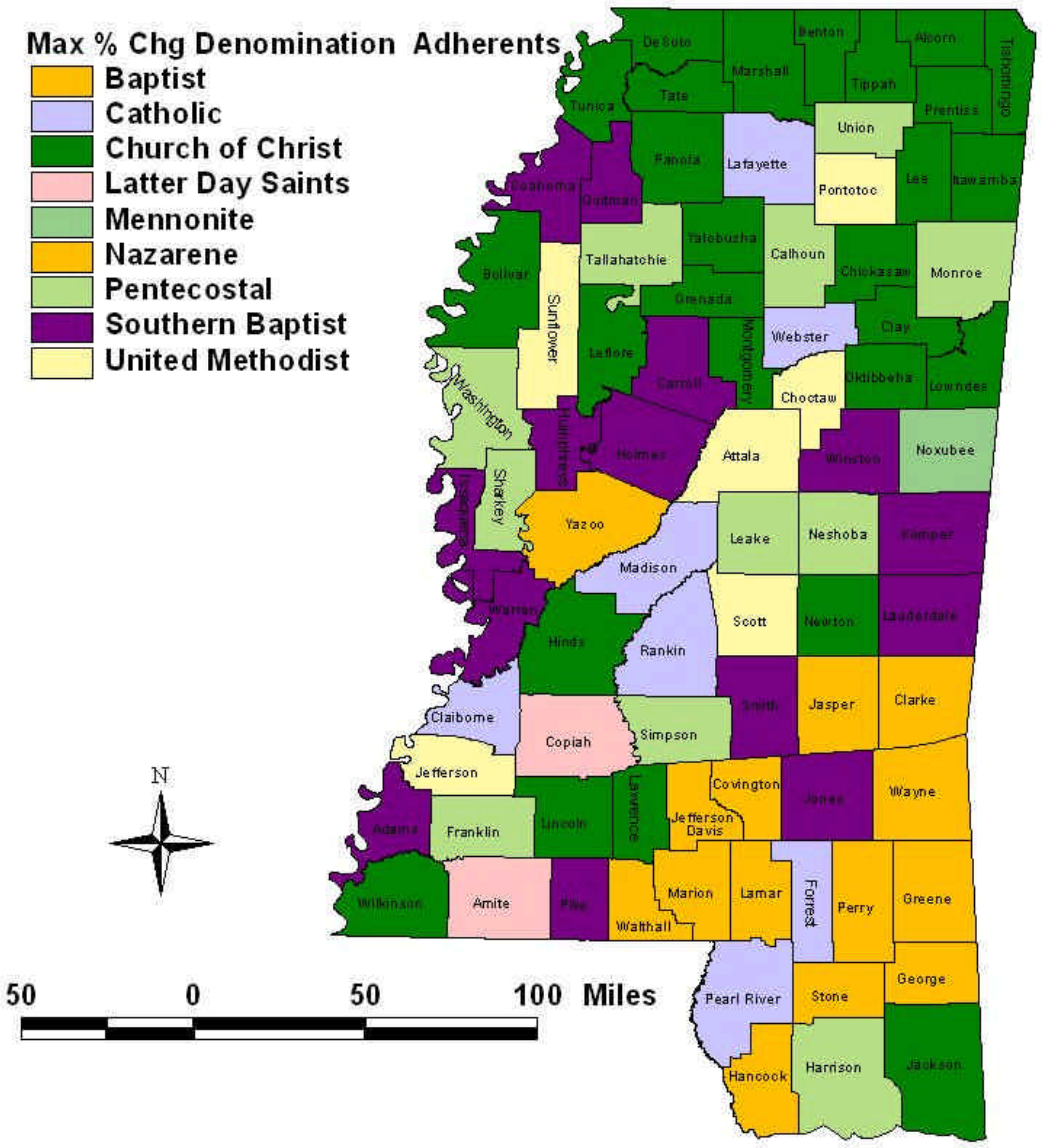

Figure 30: Maximum Percent Change in Total Adherents per Denomination, 1970 – 2000.

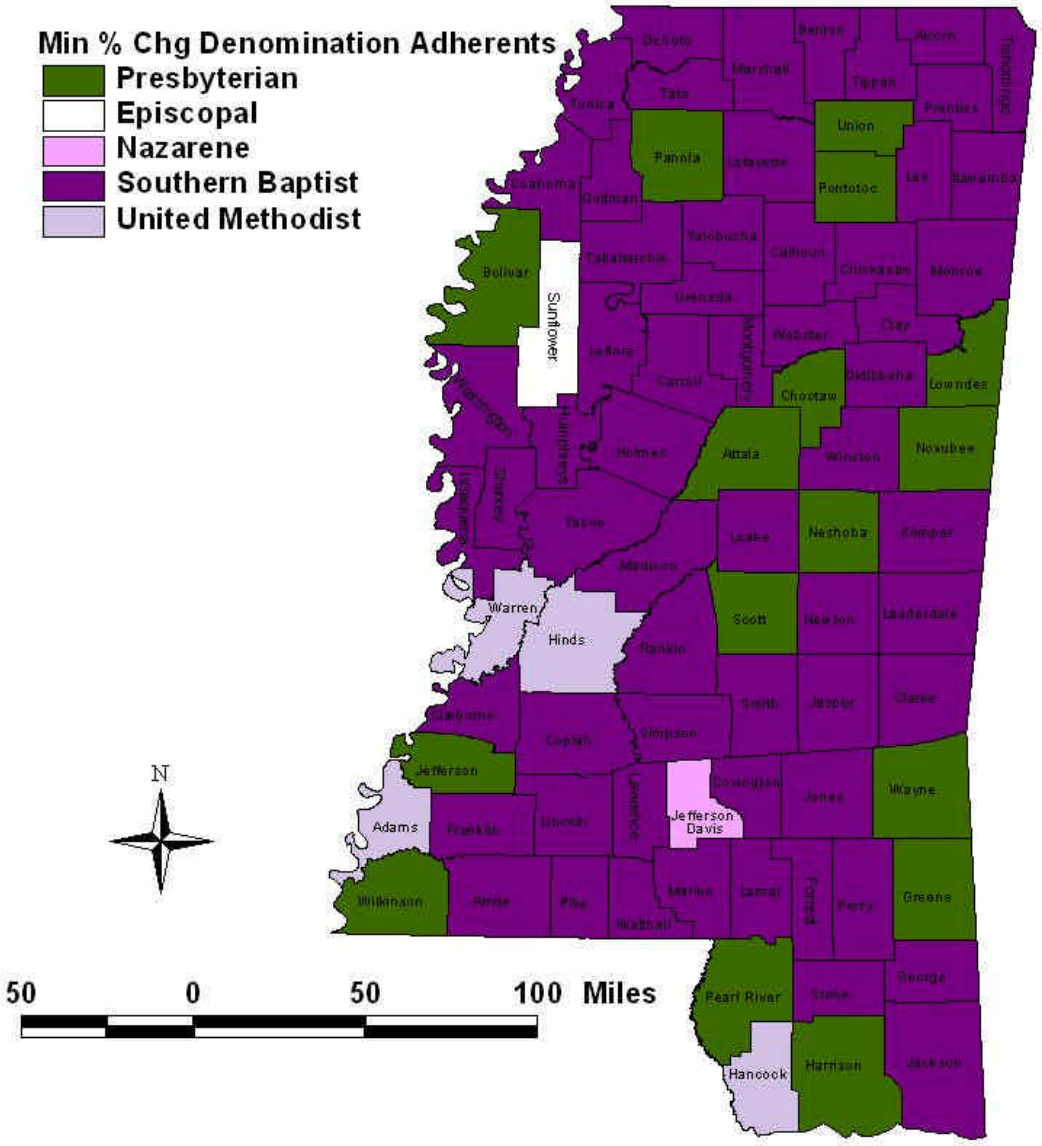

Figure 31: Minimum Percent Change in Adherents per Denomination, 1970 – 2000.

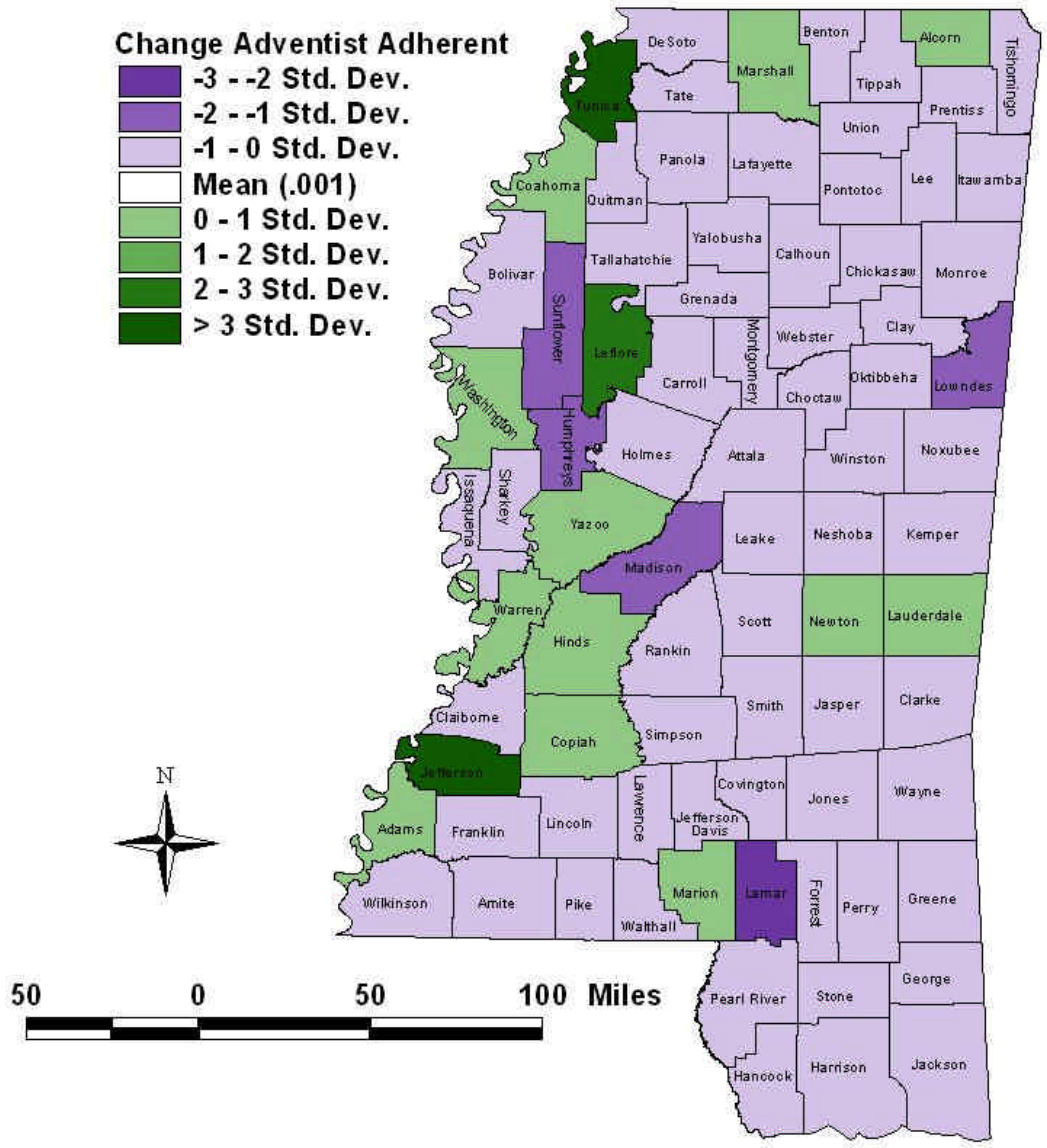

Figure 32: Percent Change in Adventist Adherents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

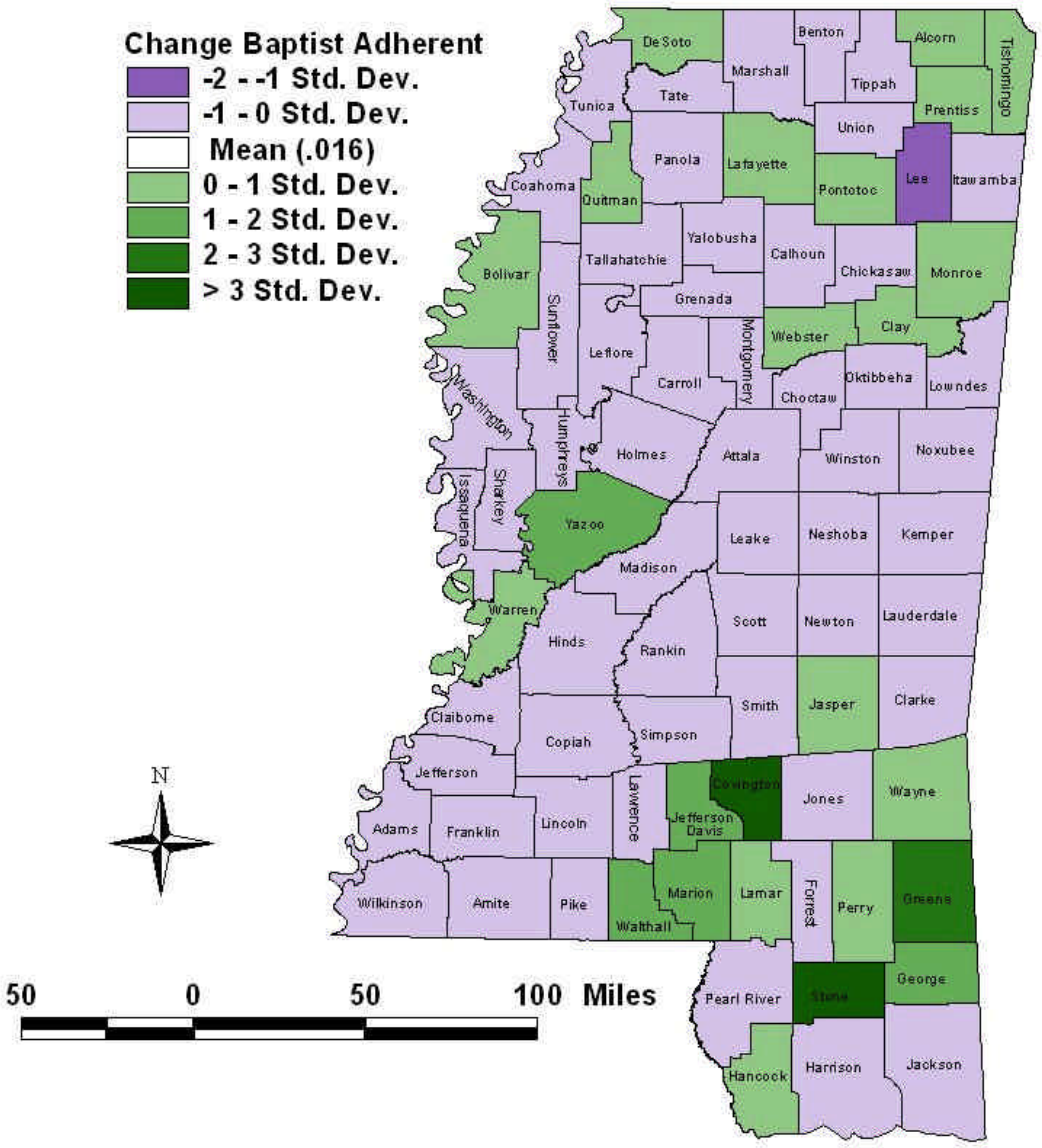

Figure 33: Percent Change in Baptist Adherents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

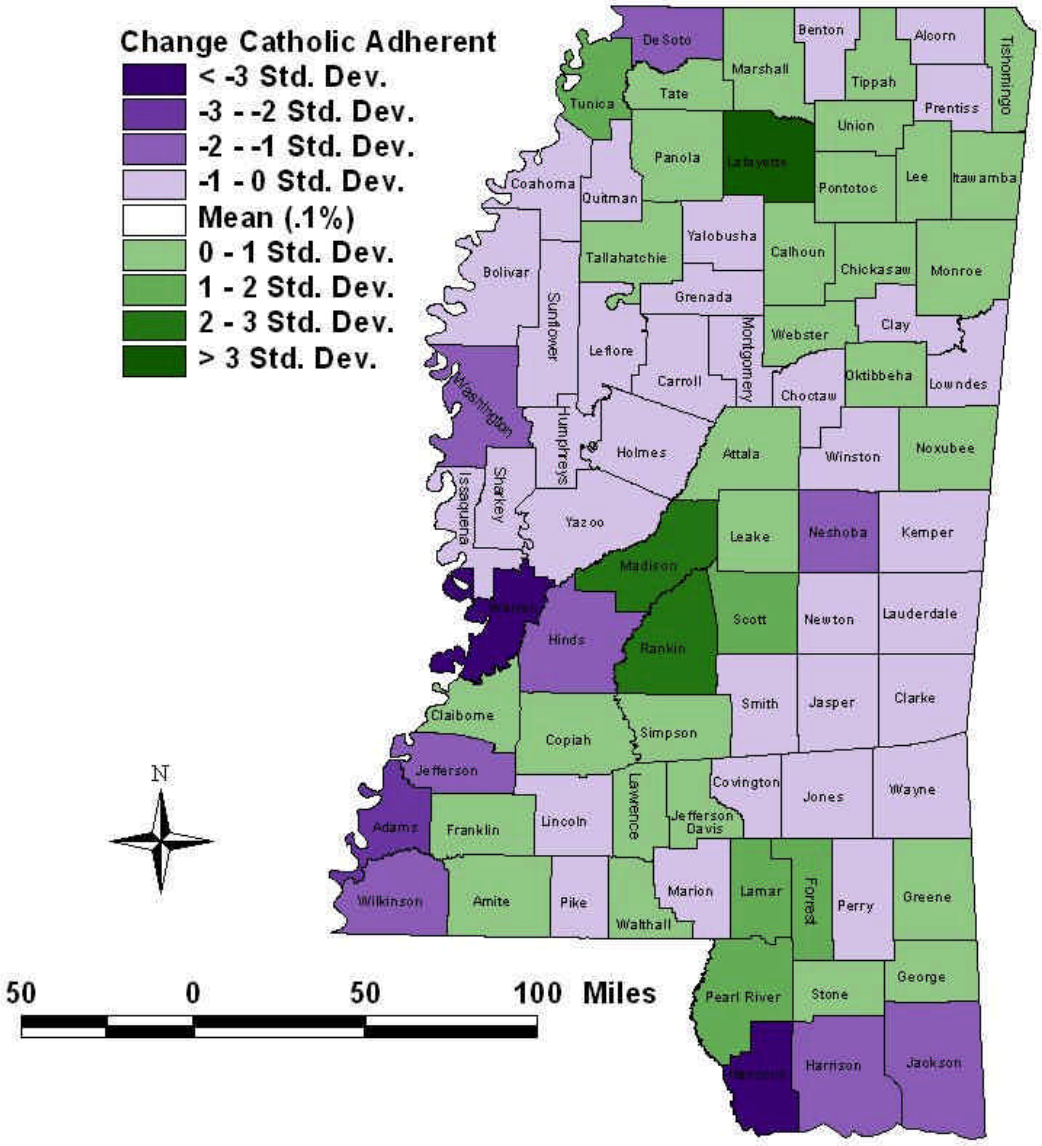

Figure 34: Percent Change in Catholic Adherents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

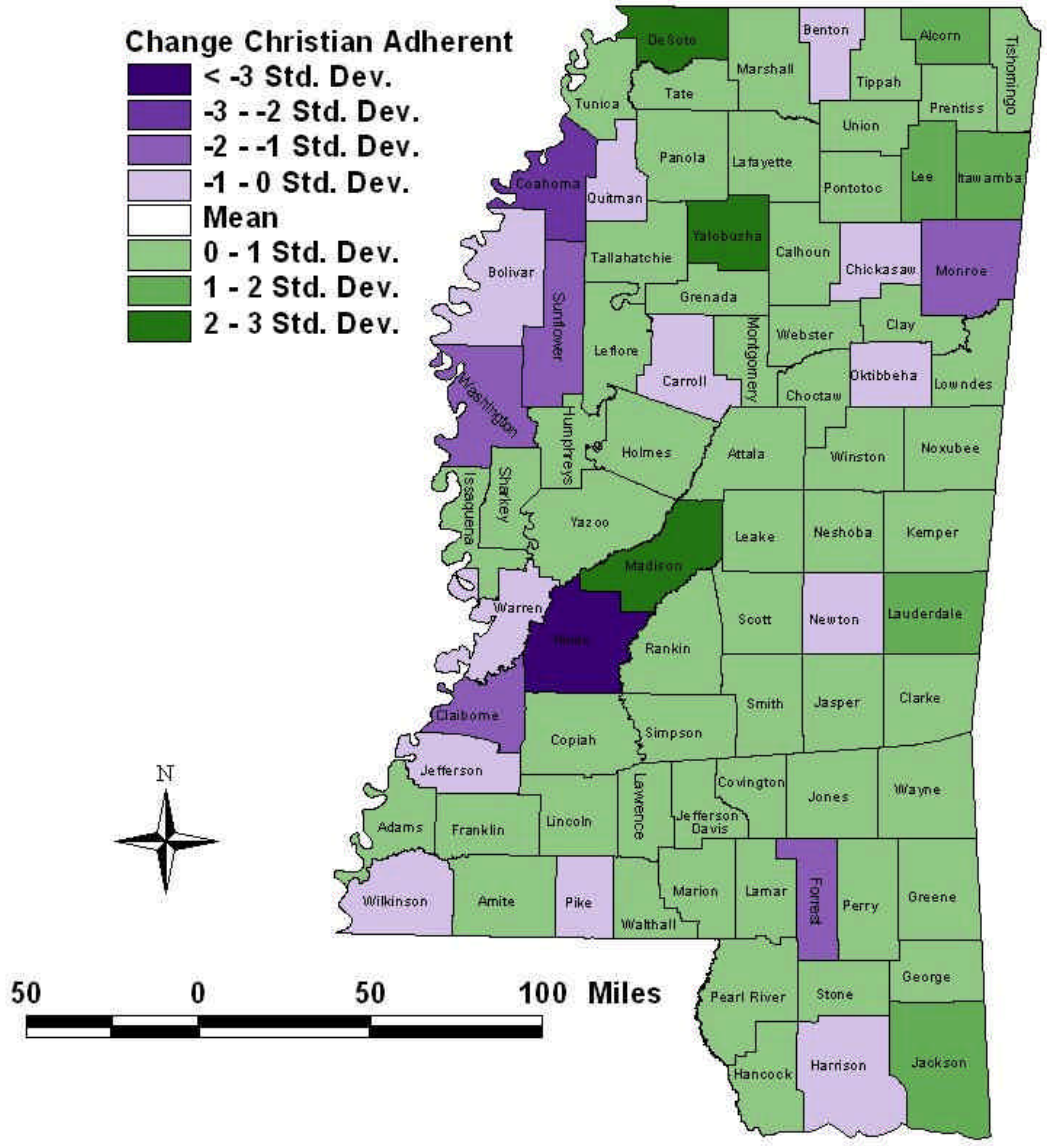

Figure 35: Percent Change in Christian Adherents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

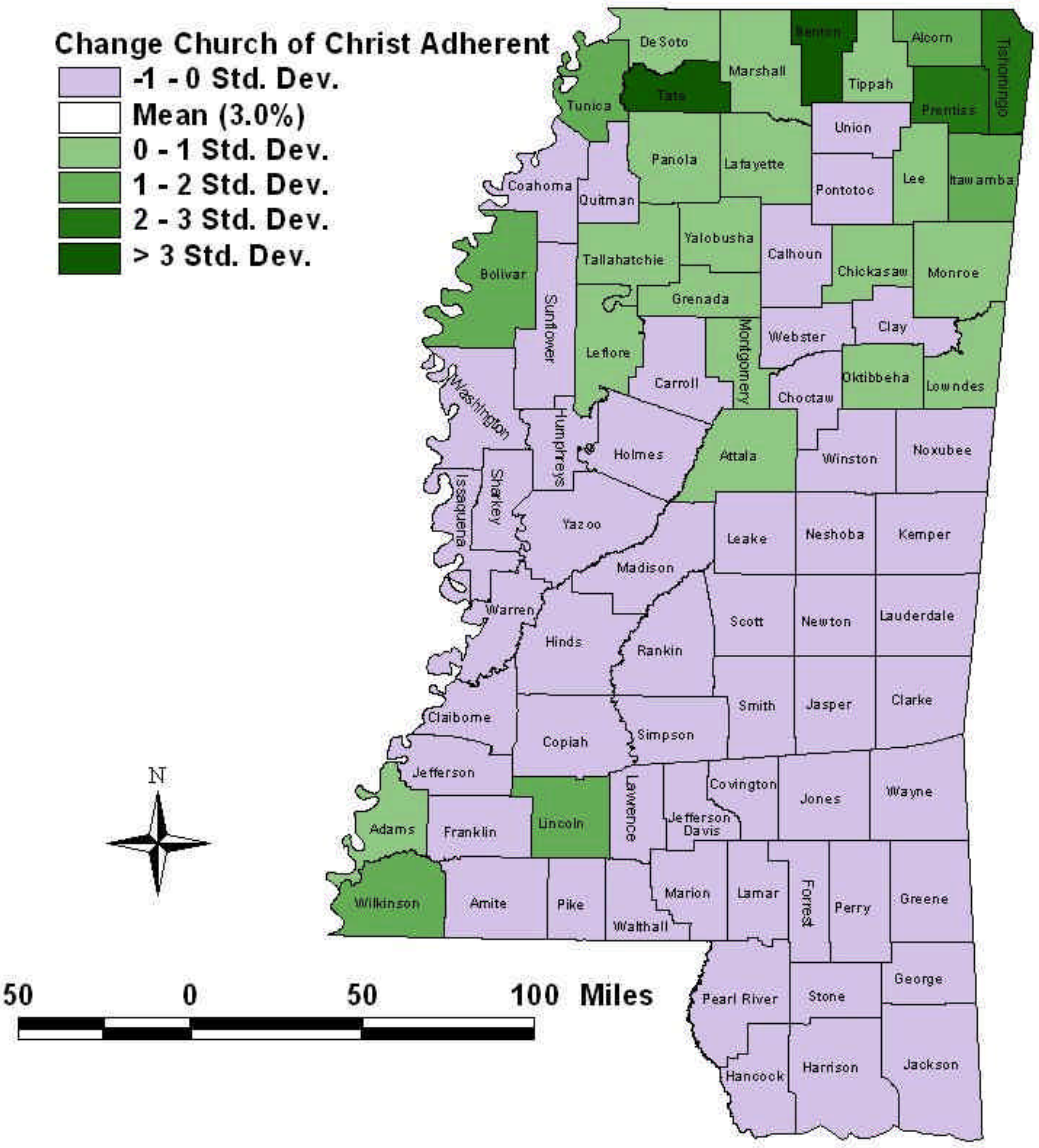

Figure 36: Percent Change in Church of Christ Adherents, 1970 – 2000 Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

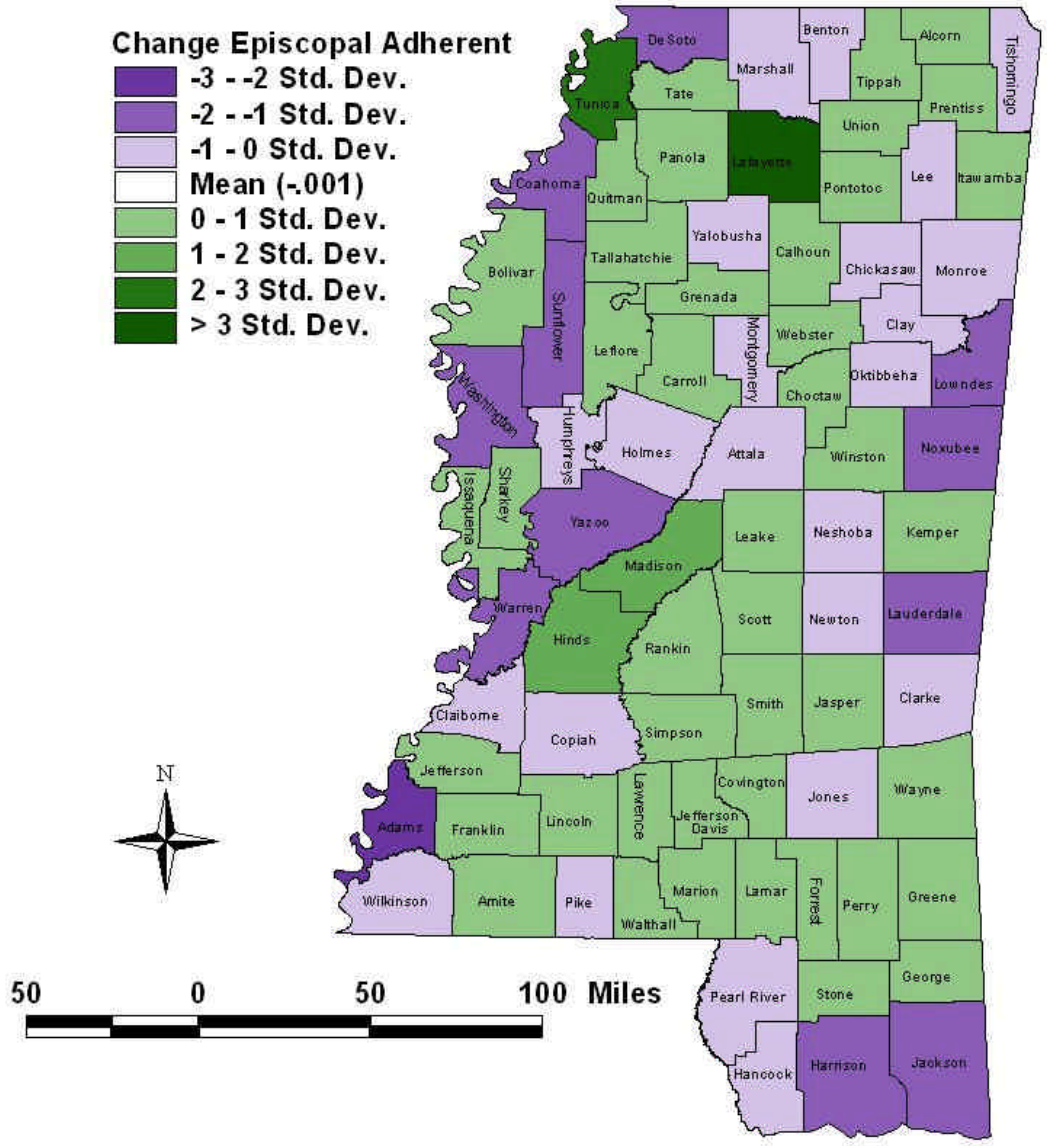

Figure 37: Percent Change in Episcopal Adherents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

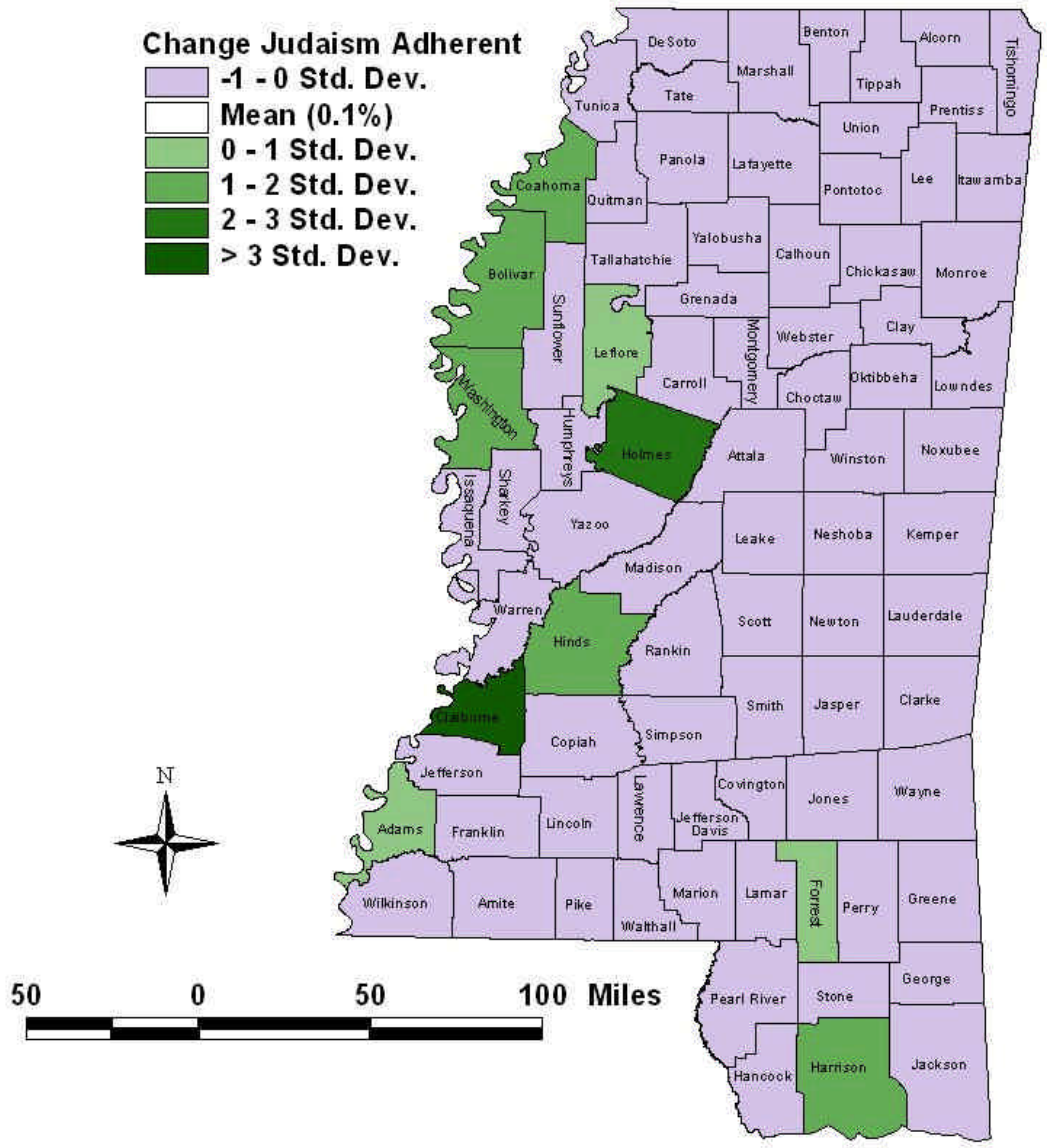

Figure 38: Percent Change in Jewish Adherents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

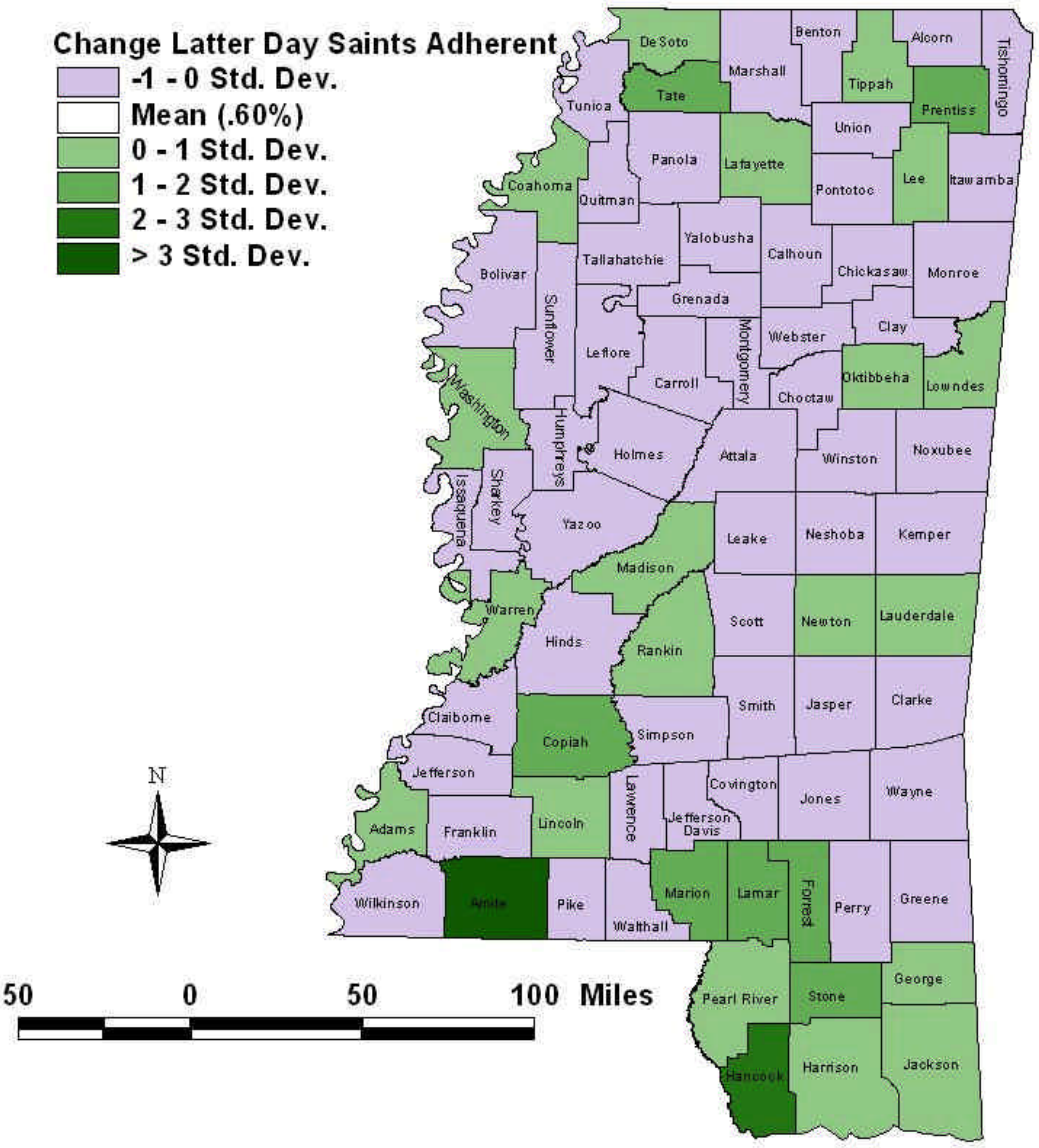

Figure 39: Percent Change in Latter Day Saint Adherents, 1970 – 2000 Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

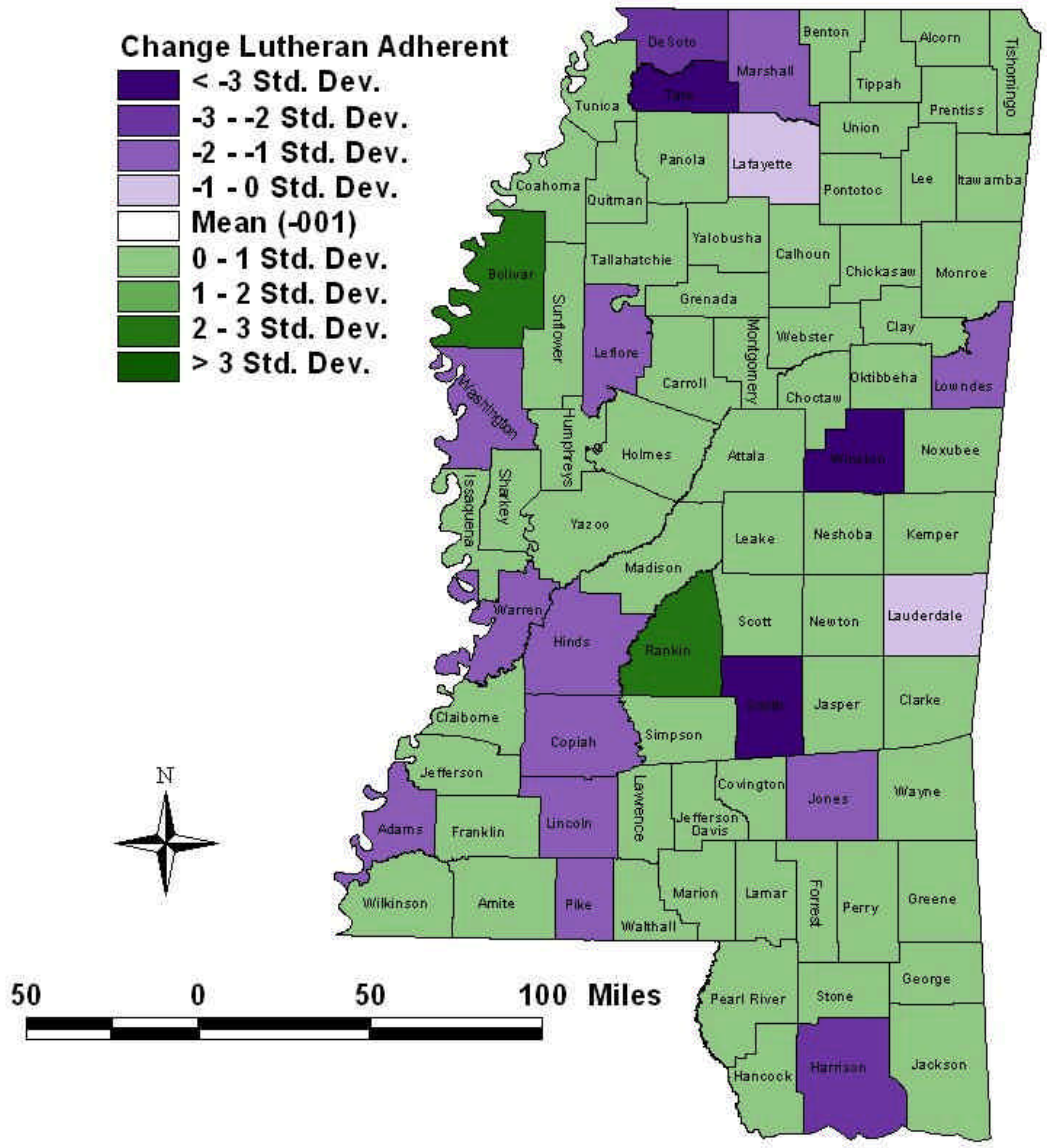

Figure 40: Percent Change in Lutheran Adherents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

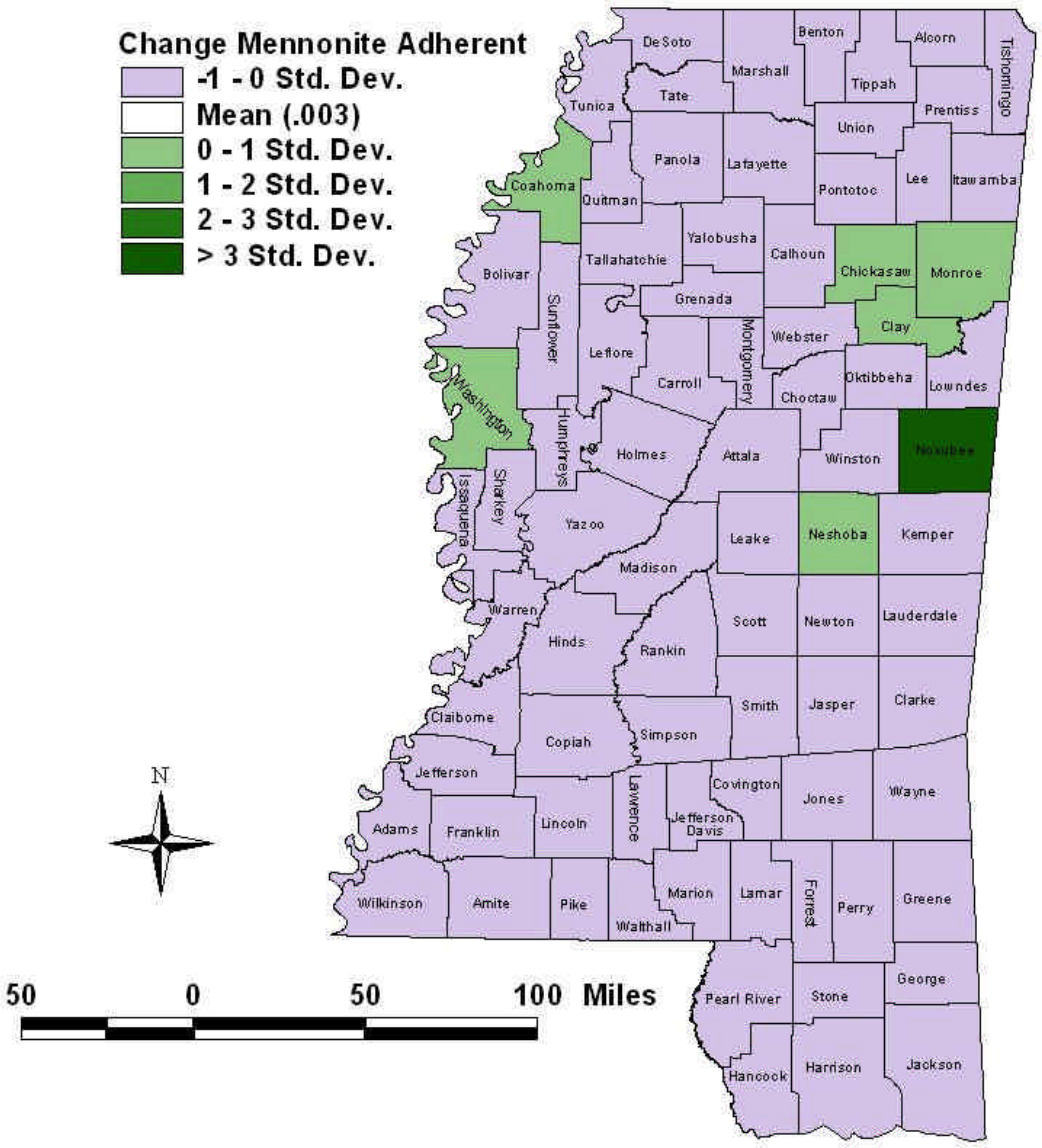

Figure 41: Percent Change in Mennonite Adherents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

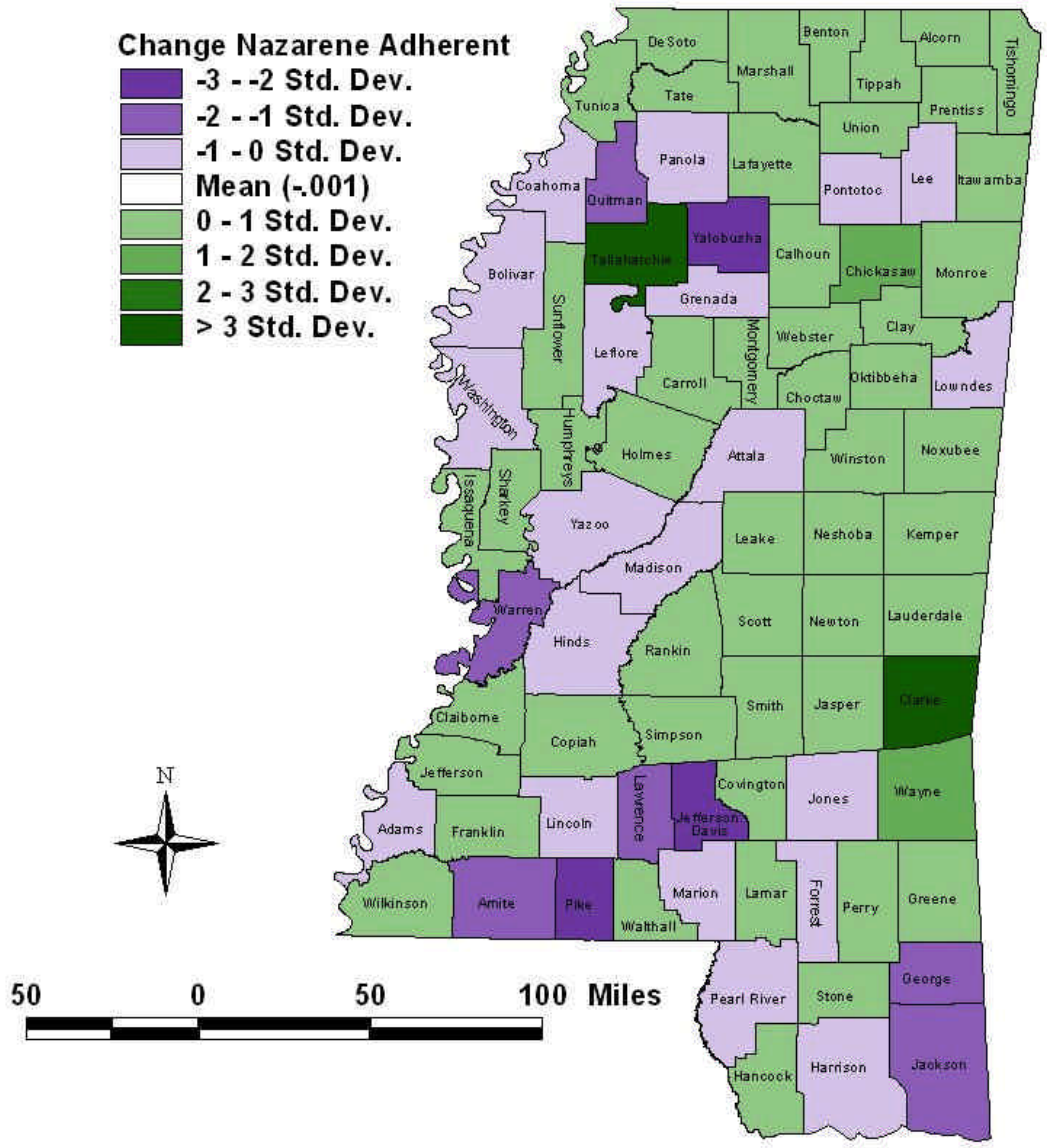

Figure 42: Percent Change in Nazarene Adherents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

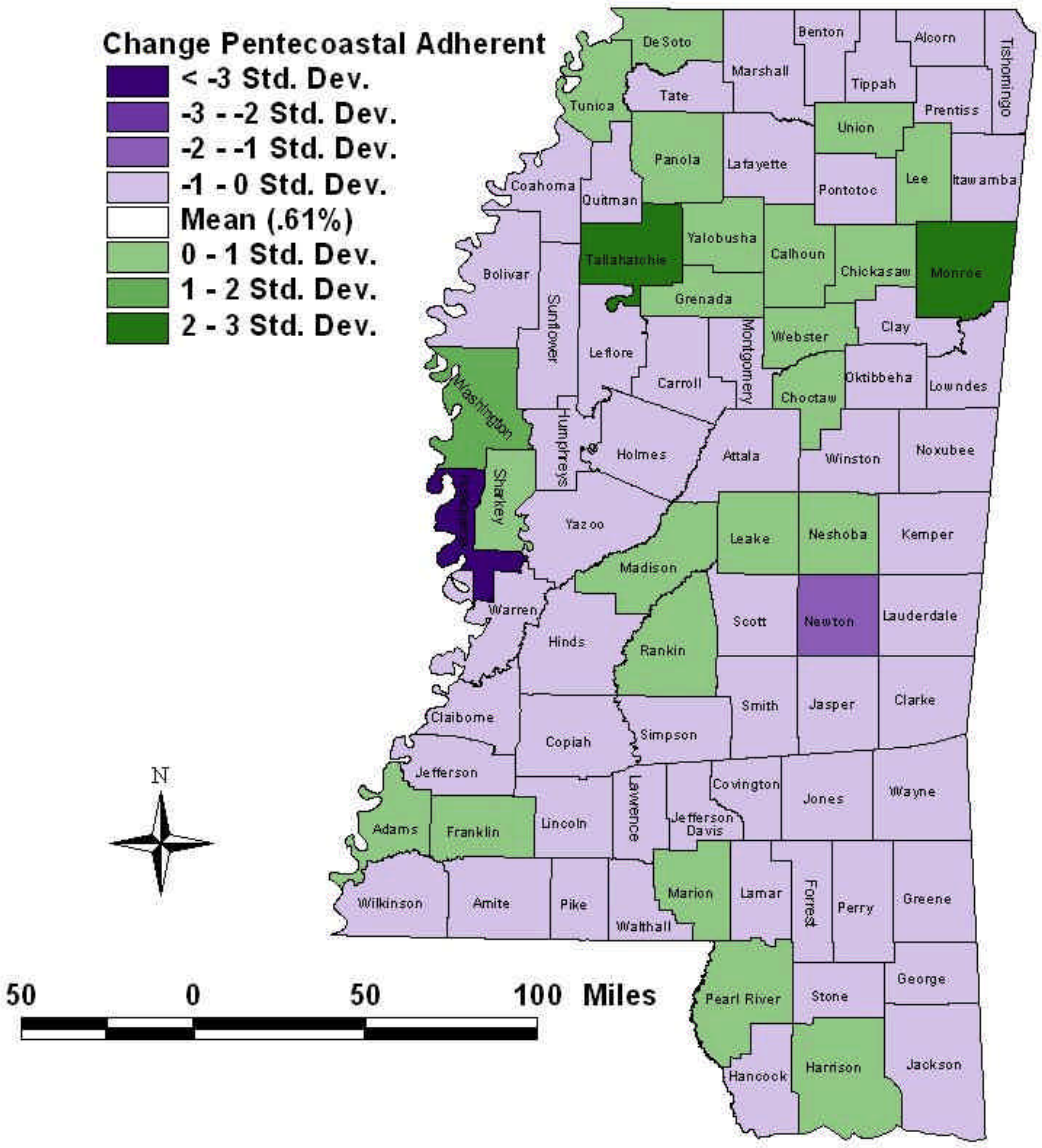

Figure 43: Percent Change in Pentecostal Adherents, 1970 – 2000
Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

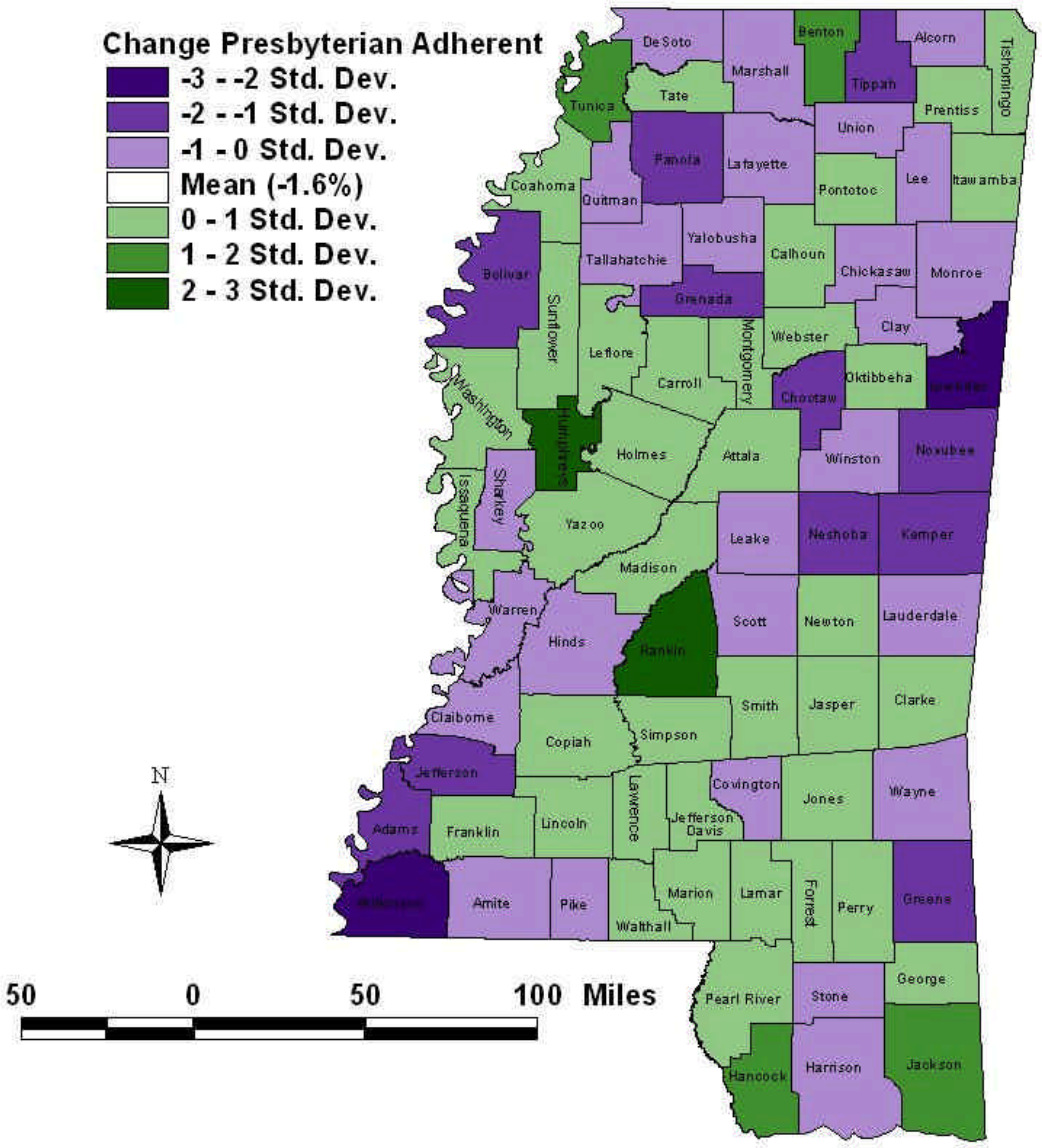

Figure 44: Percent Change in Presbyterian Adherents, 1970 – 2000 Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

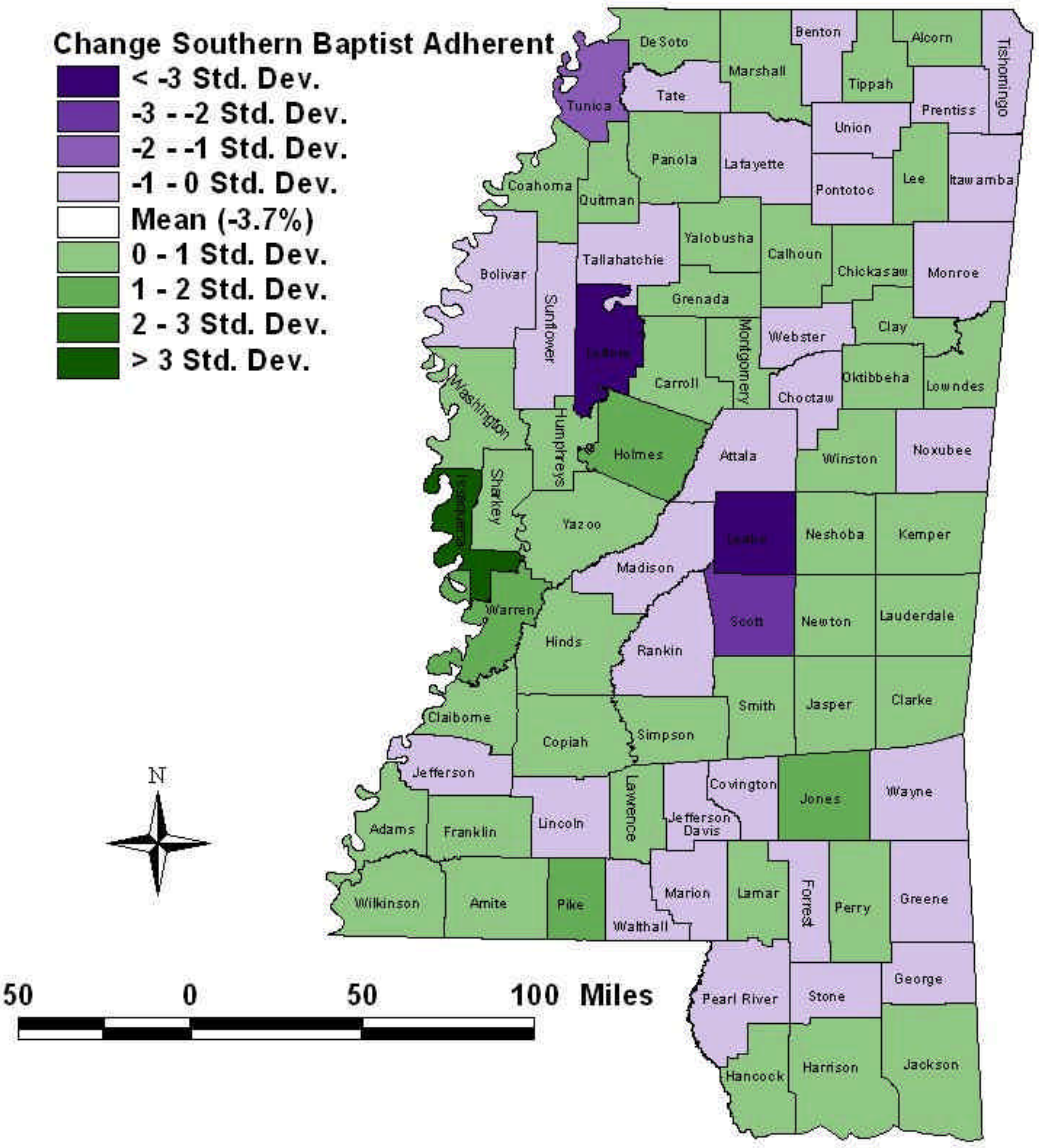

Figure 45: Percent Change in Southern Baptist Adherents, 1970 – 2000 Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

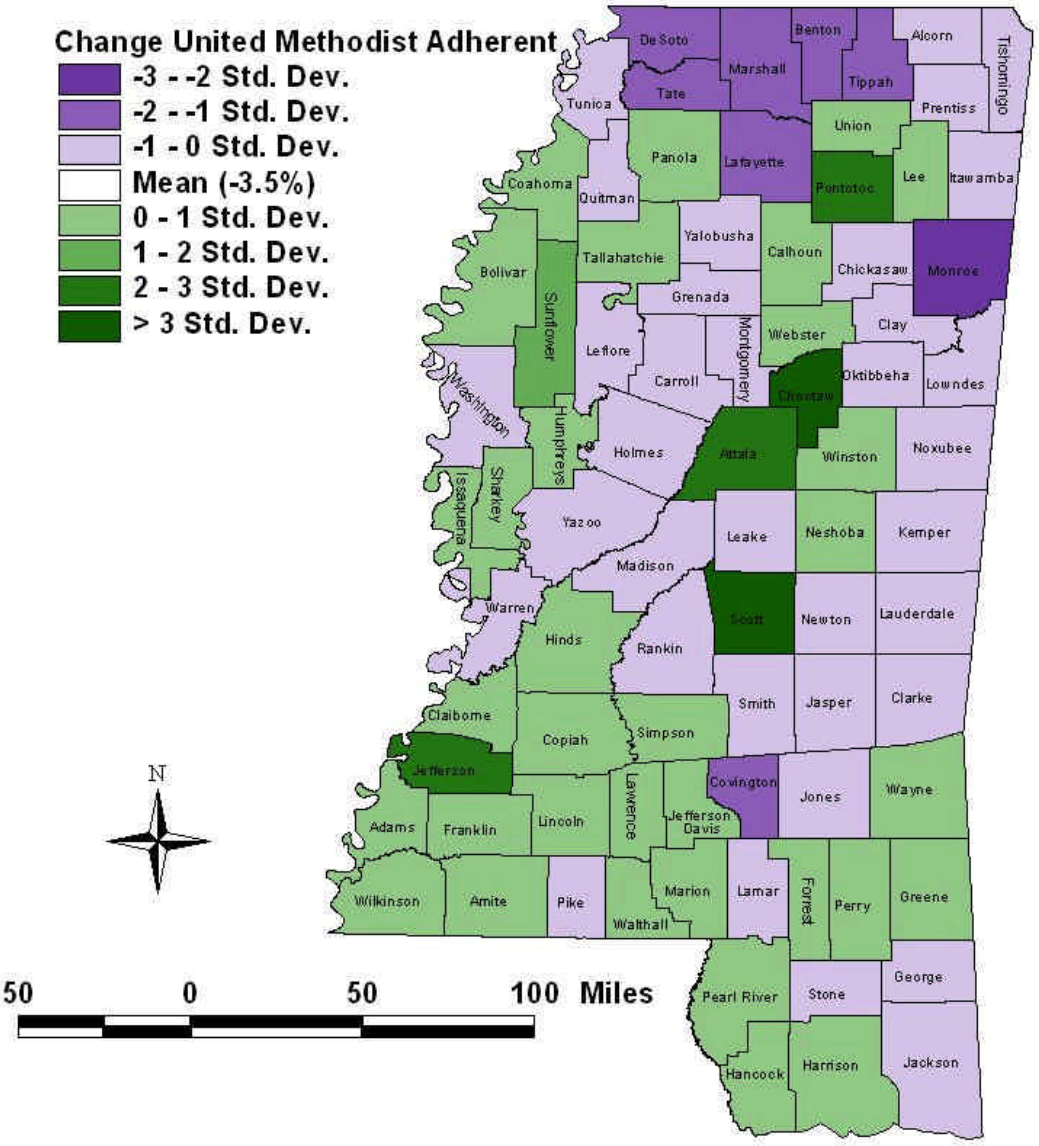

Figure 46: Percent Change in United Methodist Adherents, 1970 – 2000 Classification Based on Mean Percent Change and Standard Deviation.

Correlation Analysis of Individual Denominational Growth

A series of correlation matrices were created to determine the relationship between growth and decline percentages in total adherents occurring within denominations and changes in demographic conditions within the state. Significance levels between variables were identified at the decadal level, each ten-year interval, and the overall thirty-year period. Because several of the fifteen denominations being evaluated did not show significant increases or decreases in adherent percentages, only those denominations experiencing measurable change were used for correlation analysis.

Tables 6, 7, 8, and 9 identify the strength and direction of relationships between demographic variables for the state for each decade and the percentage of adherents within each of the following denominations, Southern Baptist, United Methodist, Presbyterian, Churches of Christ, Pentecostal, Catholic, and Latter Day Saints. Because of the vast amount of data within these tables, only results meaningful and significant are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Southern Baptist, the dominant denomination within the state, revealed a significantly negative correlation with percent black population for the state in 1970 (r = -.516**), 1990 (r = -.477**), and 2000 (r = -481**). In contrast, a significant positive correlation was found between percent white population and Southern Baptist adherents in 1970 (r = .532**), 1990 (r = .445**), and 2000 (r = 495**). This finding is consistent with graphic illustrations of the percent of population within Southern Baptist denominations, as areas indicating the highest numbers of Southern Baptist adherents were found in the predominantly white areas of the state and the lowest percentage of

Table 6: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of Demographic Variables and Denominational Affiliation in 1970.

Percent Population Per Denomination	Percent White 1970	Percent Black 1970	Percent Other 1970	Percent Urban 1970
Southern Baptist	.532**	-.516**	-.036	-.219*
United Methodist	.073	-.088	.105	.023
Presbyterian	-.114	.128	.147	.284**
Church of Christ	nd	nd	nd	nd
Pentecostal	-.037	.038	-.034	.147
Catholic	.173	-.165	.047	.408**
Latter Day Saints	nd	nd	nd	nd

N = 83; nd=No Data Available
* Significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
**Significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of Demographic Variables and Denominational Affiliation in 1980.

Percent Population Per Denomination	Percent White 1980	Percent Black 1980	Percent Other 1980	Percent Urban 1980
Southern Baptist	.402	-.421	-.207	-.249*
United Methodist	-.046	-.023	.084	-.169
Presbyterian	-.142	.155	.051	.233*
Church of Christ	.306**	-.271*	-.134	.030
Pentecostal	.219*	-.253	.125	.071
Catholic	.134	-.127	.162	.430**
Latter Day Saints	.308*	-.272	.063	.179

N = 83
* Significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
**Significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 8: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of Demographic Variables and Denominational Affiliation in 1990.

Percent Population Per Denomination	Percent White 1990	Percent Black 1990	Percent Other 1990	Percent Urban 1990
Southern Baptist	.445**	-.477	-.002	-.190
United Methodist	-.070	-.025	.107	-.143
Presbyterian	-.081	.105	.067	.195
Church of Christ	.235*	-.215	-.118	.048
Pentecostal	-.214	-.218*	-.052	.176
Catholic	.152	-.157	.187	.535**
Latter Day Saints	.169	-.174	-.023	.112

N = 83
* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 9: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of Demographic Variables and Denominational Affiliation in 2000.

Percent Population Per Denomination	Percent White 2000	Percent Black 2000	Percent Other 2000	Percent Urban 2000
Southern Baptist	.495**	-.481**	-.051	-.109
United Methodist	.004	-.009	.056	-.016
Presbyterian	-.216	.204	.089	.297**
Church of Christ	.277*	-.264*	-.086	.070
Pentecostal	.160	-.165	.098	.051
Catholic	.193	-.217	.299**	.528**
Latter Day Saints	.266*	-.263	.025	.266*

N = 83
* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Southern Baptist adherents found in predominantly black areas (Figure 47). In addition, correlations indicated significant negative correlations in 1970 (r = -.219*) and 1980 (r = -.249*) between urban percentages and Southern Baptist adherents, and a weak but not significant negative correlation in 1990 (r = -.190) and 2000 (r = -.109), indicating Southern Baptist adherents are more prevalent in rural portions of the state as compared to urban regions. The total number of "other" population did not significantly correlated with Southern Baptist adherents in any year, but showed an overall negative relationship in 1970 (r = -.036), 1980 (r = -.207), 1990 (r = -.002), and 2000 (r = -.051). This finding is consistent with rural significance levels as the majority of "other" residents within the state were shown to be increasing in urban regions of the state, where Southern Baptist are not as strongly concentrated.

No significant correlations were found between the demographic variables being considered and the total number of United Methodist adherents in 1970, 1980, 1990, or 2000. This finding suggest, unlike Southern Baptist, the total number of adherents within United Methodists affiliations are not associated with changes occurring in the demographic environment surrounding them. Despite non-significant correlation results, graphic illustrations of percent change in total number of United Methodist adherents strongly suggest a positive relationship between percent black population and increased numbers of United Methodist adherents (Figure 48). This finding was also supported by the substantial decrease in total number of United Methodist adherents in northern portions of the state where white population percentages are at their highest (Figure 48).

The most significant relationships found between Churches of Christ and demographic variables were percent white 1980 (r = .306**), 1990 (r = .235*), 2000

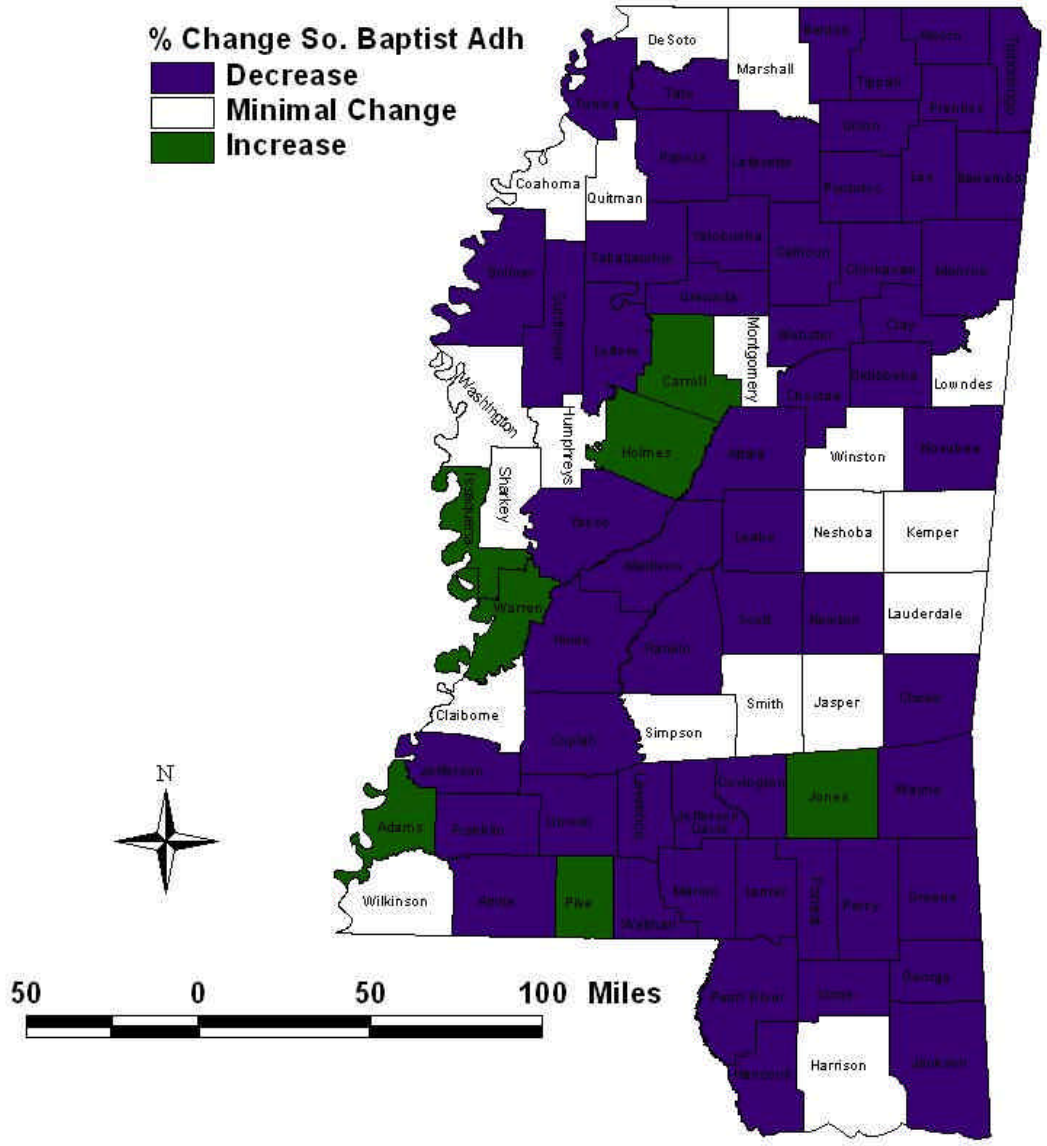

Figure 47: Percent Change in Southern Baptist Adherents, 1970 – 2000

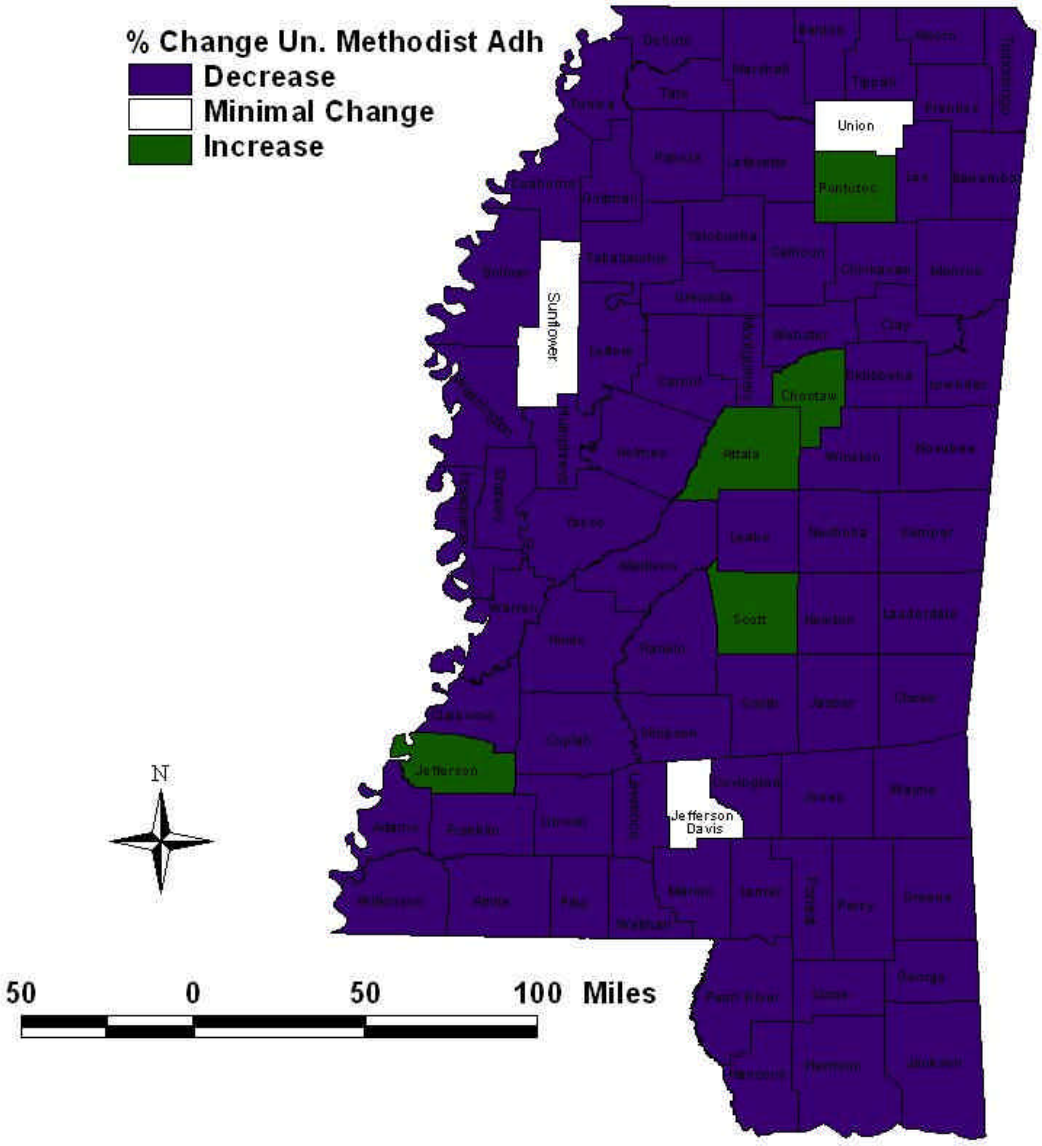

Figure 48: Percent Change in United Methodist Adherents, 1970 – 2000

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(r = .277*) and black population 1980 (r = -.271*), 1990 (r = -.215), and 2000 (r = -.264). Correlation values between these factors indicated a strong positive association between percent white population and total number of church adherents and as expected a strong negative association with black percentage. This finding was also supported by graphic results of change in total number of adherents within the denomination as the most concentrated areas of growth were found in areas having the highest percentage of white residents in the state (Figure 49). All correlation values between church adherents and percent urban residents for 1980 (r = .030), 1990 (r = .048), and 2000 (r = .070) were relatively close to zero and non-significant, suggesting no relationship exist between the number of Church of Christ adherents and the percentage of urban residents within the state. In looking at the relationship between adherents and "other" population, r values were also low in 1980 (r = -.134), 1990 (r = -.118), and 2000 (r = -.086). Although no significant relationship exist between these two variables, the continual rise in negative correlation values indicates increased growth in the number of Church of Christ adherents and the percent of "other" residents within the state.

The only significant association between Presbyterian adherent percentages and demographic variables was a significant positive relationship with percent urban in 1970 (r = .284), 1980 (r = .233*), and 2000 (r = .297**). In comparing this association to graphic results, illustrations supported this finding with the highest majority of Presbyterian adherents found in the urban metropolitan area of Jackson (Figure 50). In terms of racial populations, Presbyterians showed a consistent but non-significant negative relationship with white percentages in 1970 (r = -.114), 1980 (r = -.142), 1990 (r = -.081), and 2000 (r = -.216) and a non-significant positive relationship with black

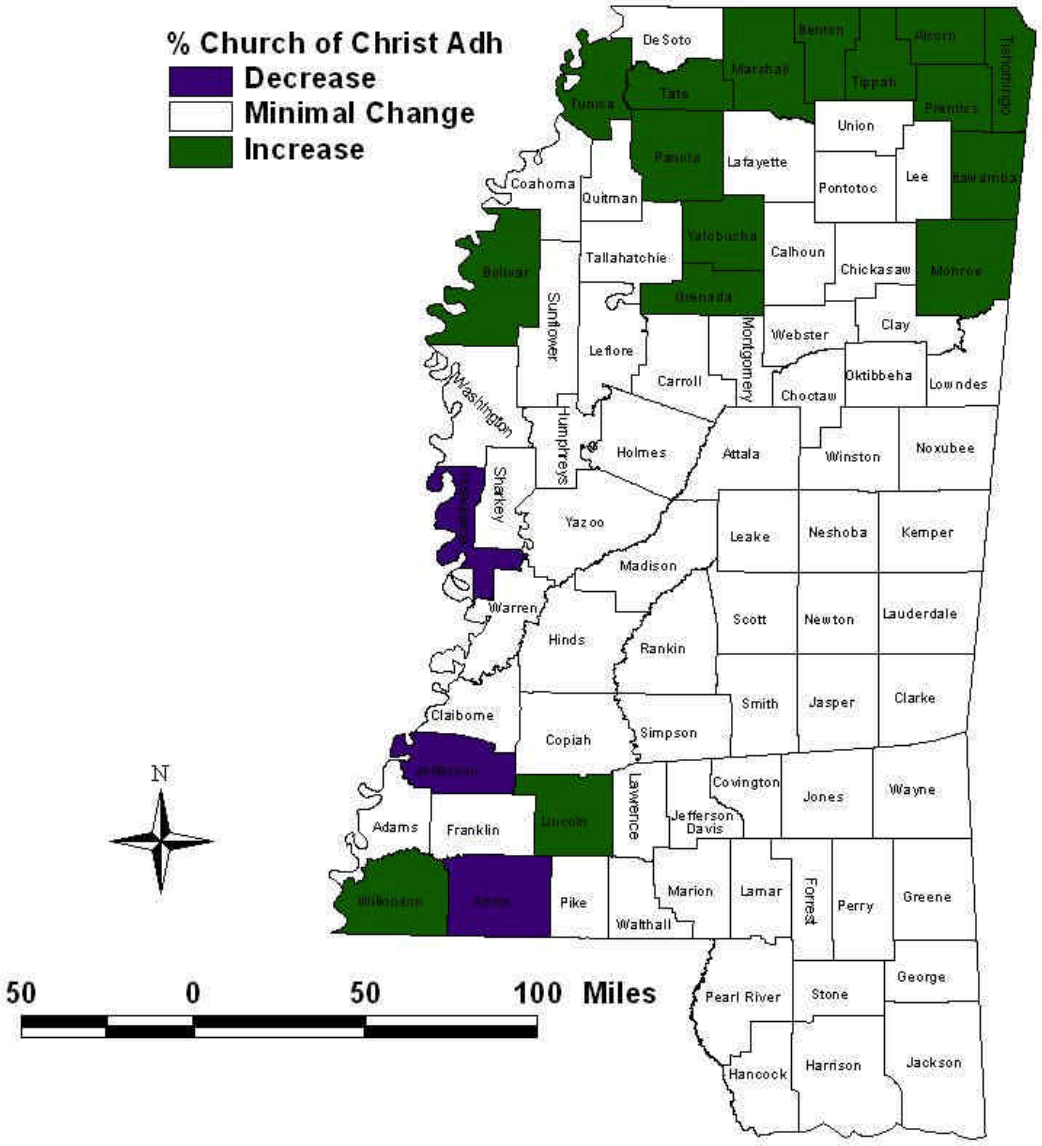

Figure 49: Percent Change in Church of Christ Adherents, 1970 – 2000

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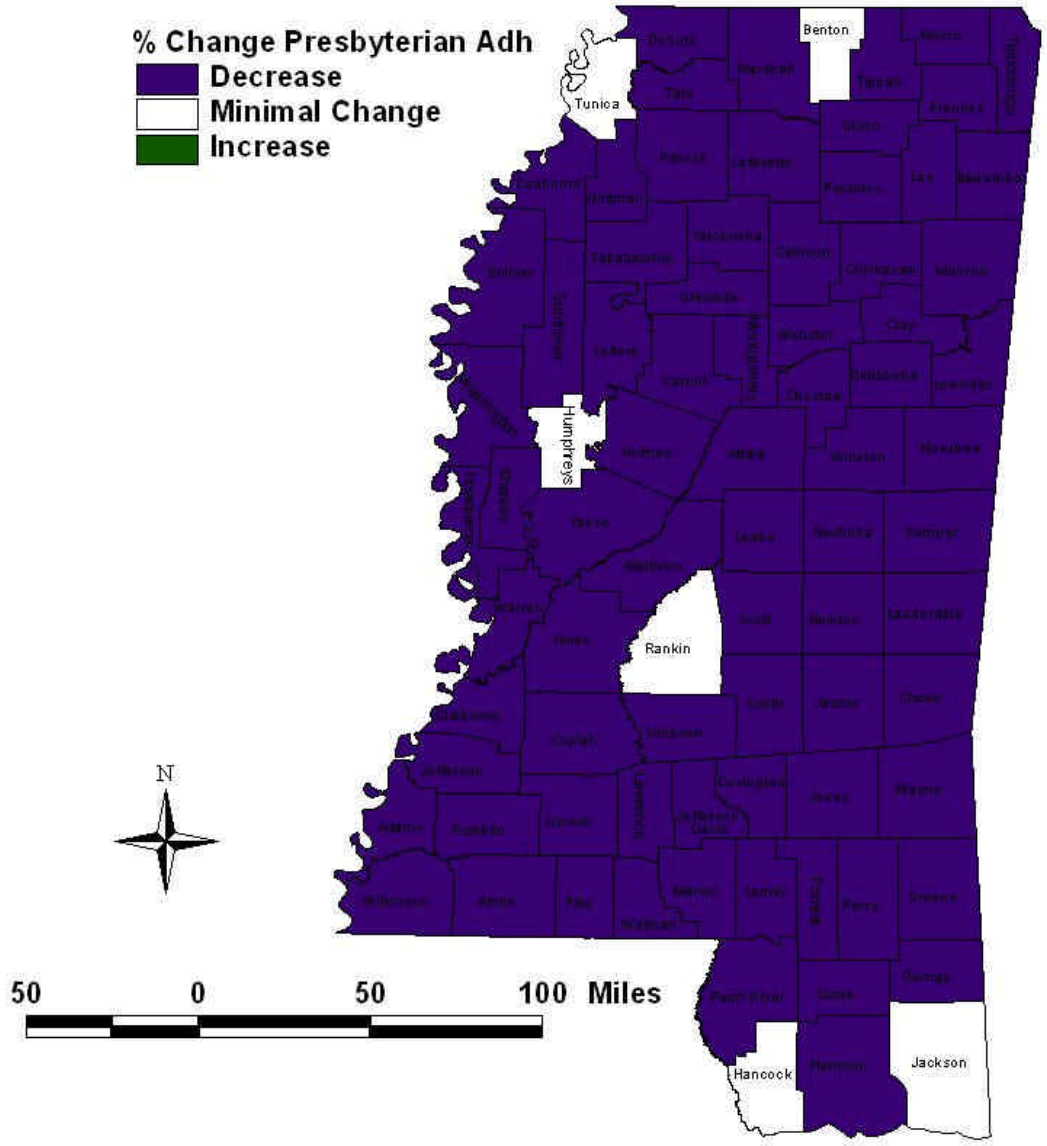

Figure 50: Percent Change in Presbyterian Adherents, 1970 – 2000

percentages in 1970 (r = .128), 1980 (r = .155), 1990 (r = .105), and 2000 (r = .204). This finding suggest a positive relationship between the percentage of Presbyterian adherents and the percentage of black residents and a negative relationship with white percentages and percentage of Presbyterian adherents.

Significant correlations with Pentecostal adherent counts were limited to white population percentages in 1980 (r = .219*) and black population percentages in 1990 (r = -.218). Although variable correlations were only significant in these two instances, a positive relationship between white population and Pentecostal adherents counts were found in all four years, just as a negative trend with black population percentages were indicated in all four years. The consistent non-significant correlation values between Pentecostal adherent percentages and demographic variables suggest no strong association exist between the percentage of Pentecostal adherents and percent white, black, other, and urban populations. This is consistent with graphic illustrations that indicate Pentecostal adherents to be distributed fairly evenly throughout the state (Figure 51)

The only consistent significant correlation between demographic variables and Catholic adherent percentages was percent urban population. Catholic percentages indicated a strong positive relationship with percent urban in 1970 (r = .408**), 1980 (r = .430**), 1990 (r = .535**), and 2000 (r = .528**), in addition to a significant positive relationship with percent "other" in 2000 (r = .299**). This finding indicates a strong positive relationship between Catholic adherents and the percent of urban residents within the state. A strong positive relationship between Catholic adherents and percent other residents in 2000 suggest increases in "other" residents, which are found in

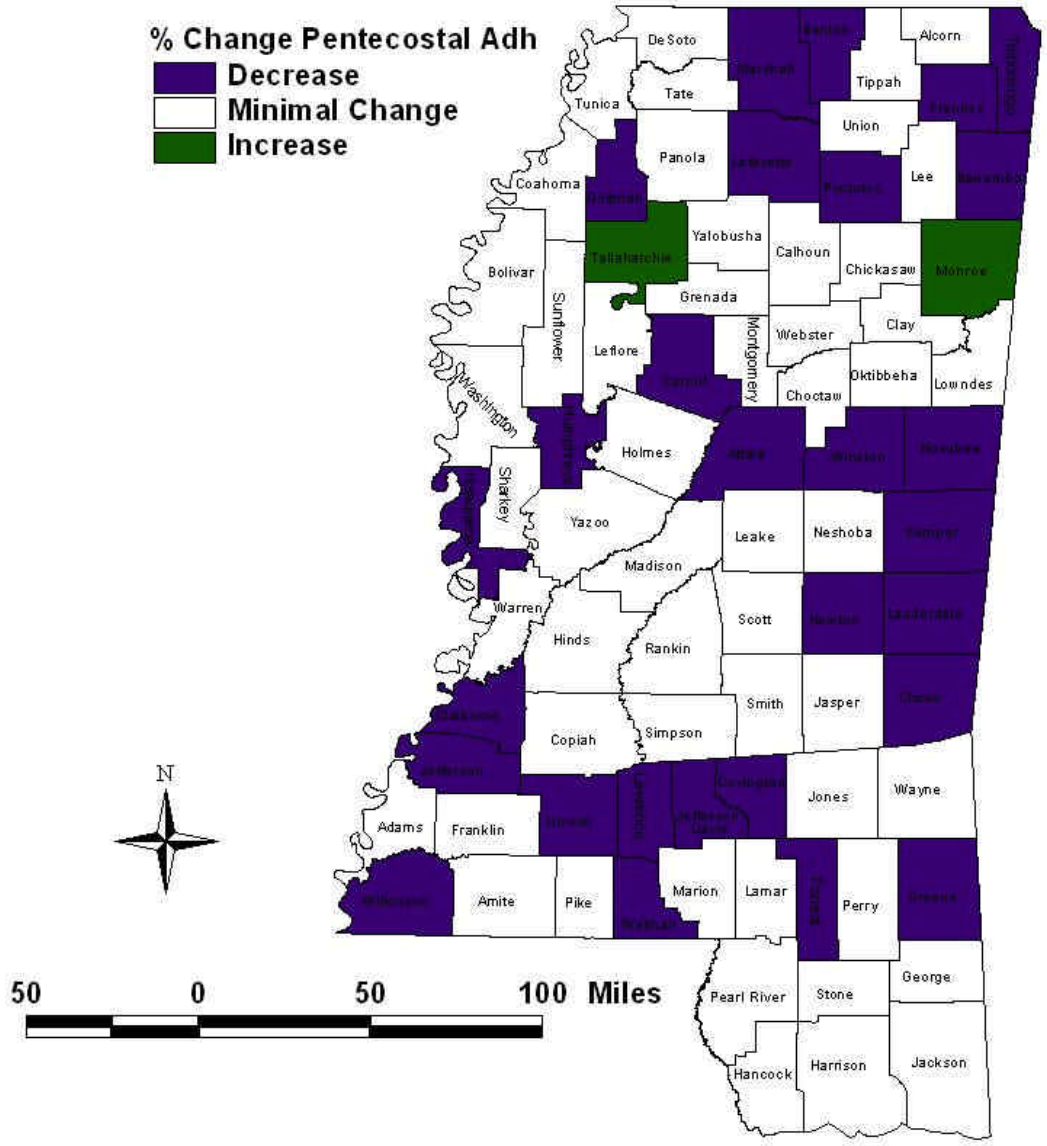

Figure 51: Percent Change in Pentecostal Adherents, 1970 – 2000

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predominantly urban regions of the state, are in conjunction with increases in Catholic residents. Graphic results also indicated a strong concentration of Catholic adherents in the predominately urban region of Jackson where ethnic minority groups have increased substantially over the past fifteen years that would also explain the high correlation with percent other population in 2000 (Figure 52).

Latter Day Saints indicated significant associations with each of the following demographic variables, percent white in 1980 (r = .308*) and 2000 (r = .266*), percent black in 2000 (r = -.263*), and percent urban in 2000 (r = .266*). The substantial increase in significant correlation values in 2000 suggest growth within this denomination over recent years is associated with growth and decline percentages occurring in demographic variables being assessed throughout the state. Graphic results supported these findings indicating the majority of Latter Day Saints adherents in the largely white urban regions of Jackson, the Gulf Coast, Desoto County, Hattiesburg, and portions of the northeast (Figure 53).

In evaluating the effects of percent change in total population on denomination adherent population percentages, percent change in population per denomination was correlated with percent change in total population from 1970 to 1980, 1980 to 1990, 1990 to 2000, and 1970 to 2000 (Table 10). Correlation values between these variables indicated no consistent negative or positive trends within any denomination. Although, many significant positive and negative correlations were found at each ten-year interval for several of the different denominations, the only denomination indicating significance in terms of overall population change was Latter Day Saints (r = .262*). This finding suggest the while population variations are associated with denominational affiliation

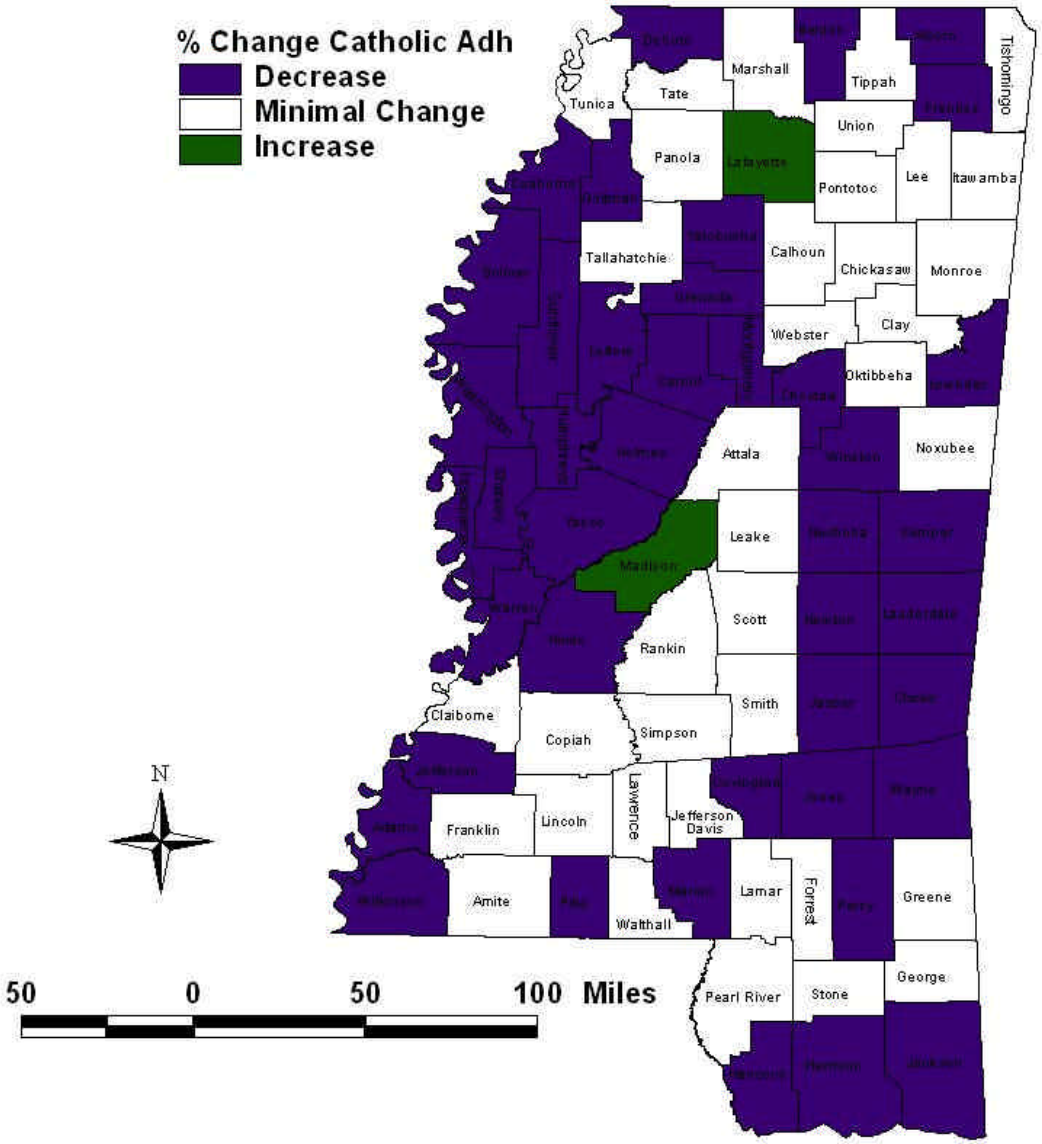

Figure 52: Percent Change in Catholic Adherents, 1970 – 2000

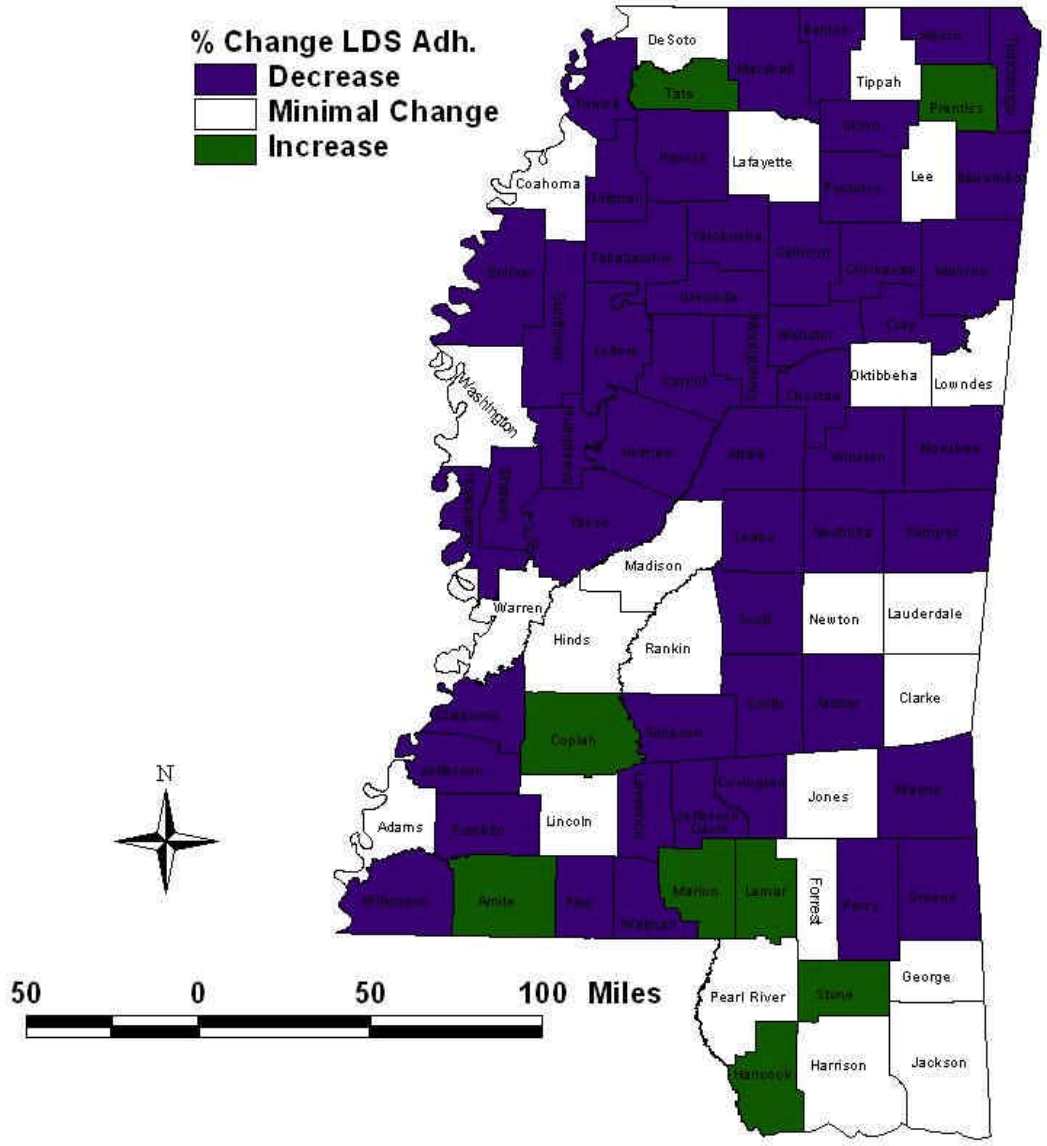

Figure 53: Percent Change in Catholic Adherents, 1970 – 2000

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Table 10: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of Percent Change in Population and Percent Change in Total Population Per Denomination.

Percent Change Total Population Per Denomination	Percent Change Population 1970-1980	Percent Change Population 1980-1990	Percent Change Population 1990-2000	Percent Change Population 1970-2000
Southern Baptist	-.053	.403**	-.317**	-.073
United Methodist	-.236*	.301**	-.251*	-.144
Presbyterian	.256	.304**	-.159	.140
Church of Christ	.028	.312**	.216	-.002
Pentecostal	.233*	-.107	-.046	.105
Catholic	-.159	.024	.314**	-.130
Latter Day Saints	-.079	.244*	.232*	.262*

N = 83
* Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
**Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

population percentages in the short term, the overall affects of variations are more often than not offset by fluctuations in denominational counts and thus less evident over an extended period of time.

The final correlation between demographic and religious variables was run to determine the relationship between percent change in percentage of total adherents and percent change in percent of adherents per denomination (Table 11). Unlike that of correlations concerning population changes, adherent percentage changes for several denominations showed both consistent and significant associations with percent change in total percentage of adherents at each ten-year interval. Results from this correlation indicated a strong significant negative relationship between Southern Baptist, United Methodist, and Presbyterian adherent percentages and percent change in total number of adherents for each ten-year interval. This finding suggest that as the total percentage of adherents within the state increases the total number of Southern Baptist, United Methodist, and Presbyterian adherents included within this total decreases. The remaining five denominations included in the analysis indicated inconsistent levels of significance fluctuating between positively significant and negatively significant values, suggesting they are much more susceptible to variations occurring in total percentage adherent counts from year to year. In terms of overall percentage change in total adherents from 1970 to 2000, the only denominations having significant correlation values were Latter Day Saints (r = .280*) and Pentecostals (r = .255*).

Table 11: Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of Percent Change in Percentage of Total Adherents Per Denomination And Percent Change in Total Adherents.

Denomination (%)b	(%)b Change Total Adherent (1970 - 1980)	(%)b Change Total Adherent (1980 - 1990)	(%)b Change Total Adherent (1990 - 2000)
Southern Baptist	-.661**	-.550**	-.563**
United Methodist	-.104	-.639**	-.622**
Presbyterian	-.407**	-.322**	-.554**
Church of Christ	.141	-.050	.167
Pentecostal	.305**	-.094	-.309**
Catholic	.106	-.012	.218*
Latter Day Saints	.104	-.026	.358**

N = 83
(%)b=% Change in Percentage of Total Adherents, 1970-1980, 1980-1990, 1990-2000, and 1970-2000
* Significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)
**Significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Important Findings

Results from this evaluation clearly indicate changes occurring in Mississippi's patterns of denominational affiliation. The most important of these changes include the decline in church adherents found in Mississippi's historical dominating affiliations, growth in church adherents within more non-traditional Mississippi denominations, the dramatic growth in denominational diversity occurring within the state, and the overall decline in percentage of church adherents at both the state and county level.

The first and most notable finding was the decline in Southern Baptist, United Methodist, and Presbyterians adherent counts all showed overall declines in their total percentage of church adherents. Of these three, Presbyterians experienced the most dramatic amount of decline, with an overall decrease of 41.1% in total church adherents, followed by United Methodist with a 19.25% decrease, and Southern Baptist with a 4.27% decline. In terms of areas of the state experiencing the most substantial losses in numbers, Presbyterian adherents indicated declines in all but six counties of the state, each of which were located in urban regions of the state. This would explain the positive association between Presbyterian adherent growth and percent urban population from 1970 to 2000. Losses in United Methodist adherent counts were also found throughout the state, with 76 of the state's counties experiencing losses during the thirty-year period.

Areas experiencing the most dramatic degree of declines in United Methodist adherents were found in the Northeast portion of the state where white population percentages are at their highest. Southern Baptist indicated declines in all but 26 counties, with the majority of decline occurring in urban regions of the state. The only regions of the state showing increases in Southern Baptist adherents are found in the rural portions of the state, especially within the poorest counties where overall church growth and denominational growth are declining. These increases may be attributed to declines in the number of churches available to people in these areas seeking church participation.

As the dominance of these three denominations has declined during this period, a variety of new and old affiliations have begun to emerge throughout the state as prominent affiliations contending for adherent counts. The most noteworthy of these include Pentecostals, Latter Day Saints, and Churches of Christ. Of these Churches of Christ led in percentage of growth in a majority of the state's counties and was the only denomination of the 15 evaluated to increase adherent counts in all of Mississippi's 83 counties. Areas experiencing the highest percentage of Church of Christ adherent growth were found in the Northeastern portion of the state. This is a predominately white region of the state with most counties encompassing up to 80% white residents, which would explain the positive significance levels found between Churches of Christ and white population percentages. Pentecostals were the second fastest growing denomination in the state, increasing adherent counts by 71.4% from 1970 to 2000. Growth within this denomination occurred throughout the state within 56 counties. Unlike other denominations, Pentecostal adherent growth was found to be evenly distributed within the state in both rural and urban regions as well as in both white and black regions of the

state. Latter Day Saints also experienced substantial increases with a 49.0% growth in percent of adherents. Unlike Pentecostal and Church of Christ affiliations, Latter Day Saint affiliations are found in only 31 of the state's counties, predominately within the urban regions of the state, making their dramatic percentage of growth even more astounding. As the number of Latter Day Saint congregations continue to grow throughout the state their adherent totals will undoubtedly continue to increase making them one of the fastest growing affiliations within the state.

The third most notable finding was the overall increase in denominations found throughout the state. From 1970 to 2000, the total number of denominations found within the state increased from 27 to 63, a percentage increase in denominational diversity of 133.3%. The most denominationally diverse areas in Mississippi were found in urban regions of the state where population increases and ethnic minority populations are on the rise. Hinds County, found in the Jackson metropolitan area, was the most diverse county in terms of denominations with a total of 63 different denominations in 2000. Only three counties of the state, Issaquena, Sunflower, and Humphreys experienced no growth in total number of denominations during this period. These three counties are found within the predominately black region of the state (Delta) where population declines and economic hardships are at their highest, which may have attributed to their lack of growth in denominational diversity.

Of the new denominations establishing themselves within the state, Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal affiliations are the fastest growing, with new affiliations in all of Mississippi's 83 counties. Some of these new affiliations include Free Will Baptist, American Baptist Churches in the U.S., Southern Methodist, Free Will Methodist of

North America, Church of God, Church of God Holiness, and The Church of God of Prophecy. In addition to these denominations some of the more non-traditional denominations increasing throughout the U.S. are also establishing themselves within Mississippi. Some of these denominations include Muslims, Bahai', Hinduism, and Buddhism. Although the data used for this study did not allow for a complete analysis of growth and decline within these denominations, it did supply information on the counties in which these denominations have established affiliations (Table 12). The largest majority of these denominations were located within urban regions of the state where total population and ethnic minority populations are there highest.

One of the most interesting findings from this analysis was the overall decline in percentage of church adherents found at both the state and county level. From 1970 to 2000, the percentage of church adherents within Mississippi declined from 62.3 to 54.5, while the average county percentage declined from 63.6 to 53.3. Areas having the highest amount of decline were found in the urban regions of the state, especially in the Jackson area and urban counties along the coast. This decline in church adherents within the state is consistent with other religious studies that have found declining church membership and religious affiliation occurring throughout the U.S., and especially within urban regions of the nation (Shortridge 1976).

Table 12: Number of Baha'i, Buddhism, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh Affiliations Per County in 2000.

County	Baha'i00	Buddhism00	Hindu00	Muslim 00	Sikh00
Adams, MS					
Alcorn, MS					
Amite, MS					
Attala, MS					
Benton, MS					
Bolivar, MS				1	
Calhoun, MS					
Carroll, MS					
Chickasaw, MS					
Choctaw, MS					
Claiborne, MS					
Clarke, MS				1 (163)	
Clay, MS					
Coahoma, MS				1 (163)	
Copiah, MS					
Covington, MS					
De Soto, MS					
Forrest, MS	1			2 (576)	
Franklin, MS					
George, MS	1				
Greene, MS					
Grenada, MS					
Hancock, MS	1	1			
Harrison, MS	1	2		1 (200)	
Hinds, MS	2	1	2	2 (1218)	
Holmes, MS	1				
Humphreys, MS	1				
Issaquena, MS					
Itawamba, MS					
Jackson, MS	1	1			
Jasper, MS					
Jefferson, MS					
Jefferson Davis, MS	1				
Jones, MS					
Kemper, MS					
Lafayette, MS	1			1 (163)	

Conclusions Drawn from Findings

While several of the demographic variables correlated with denominational data for this study proved significance in bringing about changes in denominational affiliation patterns, a number of other variables not used may also prove significant associations with religious change. Other demographic factors that have shown importance in previous studies include median income, median education, and mean age. Since each of these factors can vary greatly within regions of a state, assessing their potential for impact could prove beneficial in identifying denominations more susceptible to socio-economic changes.

Another aspect of this study that was not fully addressed was the ever growing non-traditional religious affiliations such as Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhism increasing throughout the Mississippi. Although the data used in this evaluation did not allow for growth assessment or correlation analysis of these religious institutions within state, new information gathered by religious surveys in recent years could be used in future studies of the state to understand the primary factors associated with their growth.

In conclusion, while the changes occurring among the religious institutions within Mississippi are significant, they cannot be characterized as dramatic. However, given the importance of Southern Baptists and United Methodists influence on almost every aspect of southern life in Mississippi since the early 20th century these slight changes may prove more substantial in the coming decades as their numbers continue to decline. Although this remains to be seen, continuations of studies such as this one will help to provide insight in defining the primary demographic factors most likely to alter religious patterns at both the national and state level.

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