

# **International Churches of Christ**

## **2012 Membership Survey: Report and Analysis**

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The International Churches of Christ continue to seek to know God and to make Him known to the world. Following are the results of an annual review of our churches in some small quantitative areas. As we rely on God for direction and strength, we remain committed to seek Him first, love one another, serve the poor and make disciples of all nations.

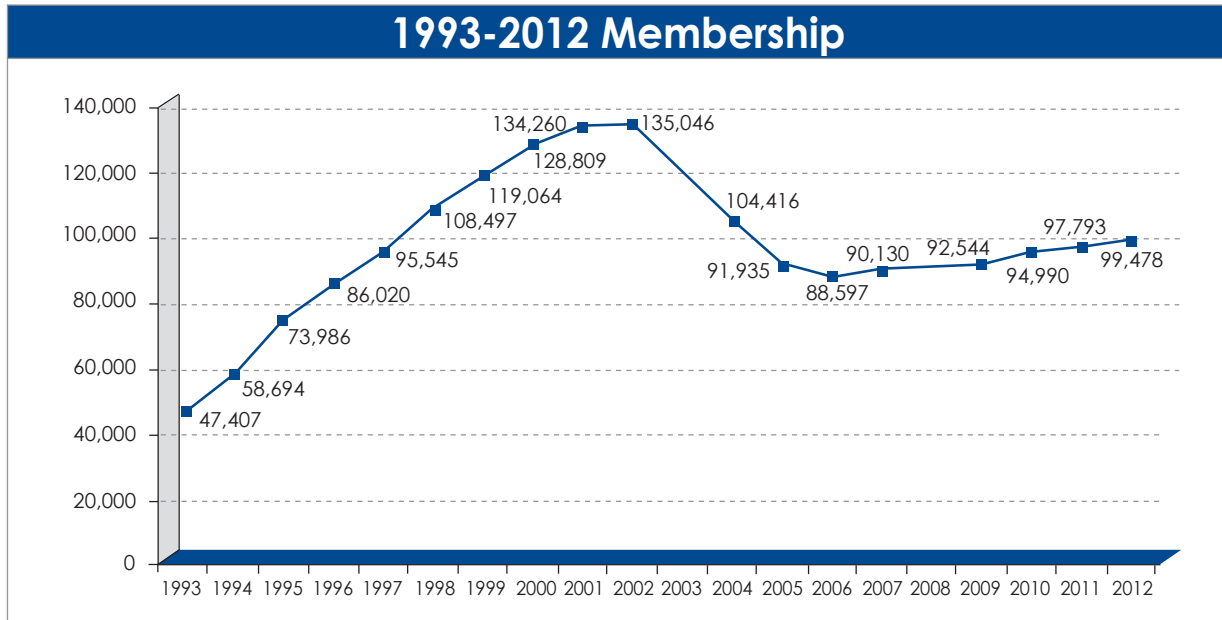
### Summary

The 2012 survey shows a continuing trend of growth since 2006:

- We now number 634 churches in 152 countries, with a total membership of 99,478<sup>1</sup>.
- God grew our membership by 4.9% since 2010, and gave us cumulative growth of over 11.7% since 2006.
- The number of growing churches—359 this year—is down from 385 growing churches in 2011. Just over half (57%) of our congregations grew in 2012.
- Recovery has been far stronger in the U.S. than outside the U.S. Since 2006, U.S. churches have grown by 22%, about four times faster than non-U.S. churches, which have grown by 6%.
- All size categories of churches—from the largest (over 1,000 members) to the smallest (under 100 members)—grew in 2012.
- However, our smallest, youngest churches are growing faster than larger, older churches—and they are making the biggest contribution to overall growth in absolute numbers.
- The consistent and widespread participation of churches in these surveys has allowed us to develop a stronger sense of where our missions “frontline” is.
- The highest percentage of growth in 2012 was in the Middle East, Caribbean and Africa. The largest numerical growth was in North America, Asia/Pacific and Africa.
- Eurasia and Latin America membership both declined by about 2%.
- An International Church: U.S. churches make up only 24% of our 634 churches and 41% of our worldwide membership. Almost 59% of our members are outside of the US. Most all are led by nationals converted and trained there. Only seven of our 20 largest churches are in the U.S.
- There were 25 churches planted in 2012; seven churches no longer meet.
- God has built churches over 1,000 members with attendance from 1,300 to over 7,000 in each of these cities:
  - o Los Angeles
  - o Mexico City
  - o New York
  - o Boston
  - o Manila
  - o Kiev
  - o Abidjan
  - o Hong Kong
  - o Chicago
  - o Lagos
  - o Nairobi
  - o Moscow
  - o Jakarta
  - o South Florida
  - o Sao Paulo
  - o Johannesburg
  - o Bangalore
  - o San Diego
  - o Singapore

<sup>1</sup>The 2012 Survey is perhaps the most comprehensive and accurate of the last 10 years. Almost all churches reported membership, and 85% reported their baptisms, restorations and attendance as well. About 2.5% of churches did not report in 2012.

## I. Total Membership

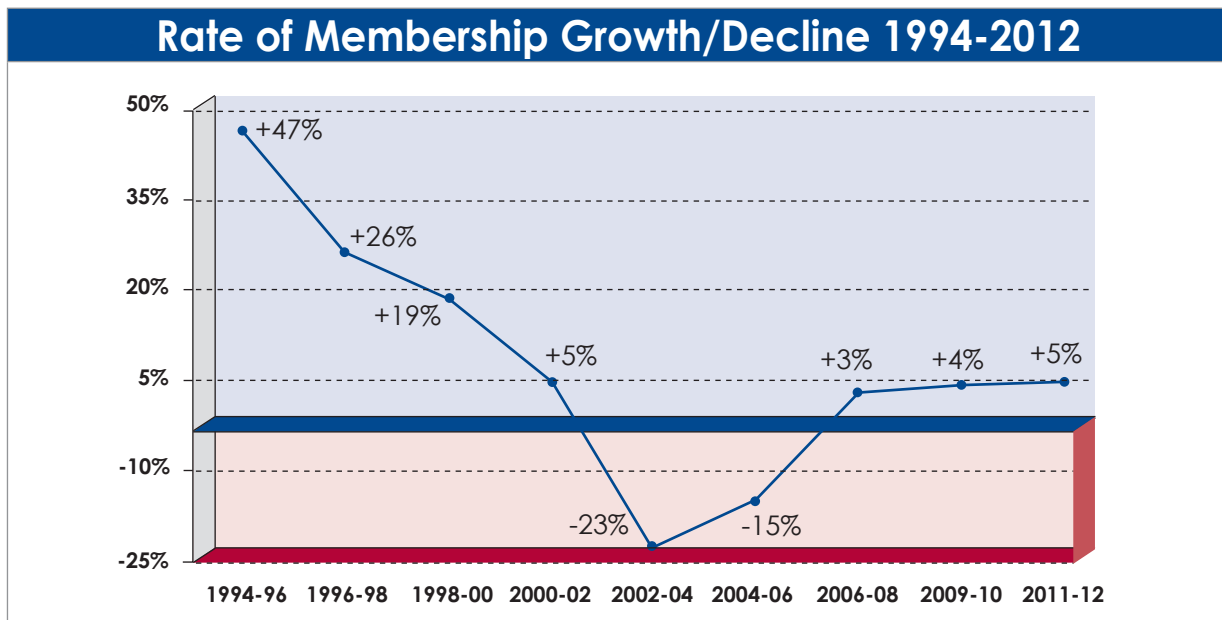


## II. Rate of Membership Growth/Decline

In each of the post-2003 survey reports, we have included charts showing how the declines that occurred in 2003-2005 were “in the works” for many years previous. We included these charts to correct an erroneous narrative, one that explained the 2003-2005 losses only in terms of events that happened in 2002-2003.

In fact, our growth rate had been declining precipitously for almost 10 years, and the 2003-2005 losses, in this context, were a continuation of this trend.

Any single-year survey should be placed in the context of long-term trends. The 2012 survey provided yet another piece of evidence that God has blessed us not only with growth over the past six years, but growth with gathering momentum.

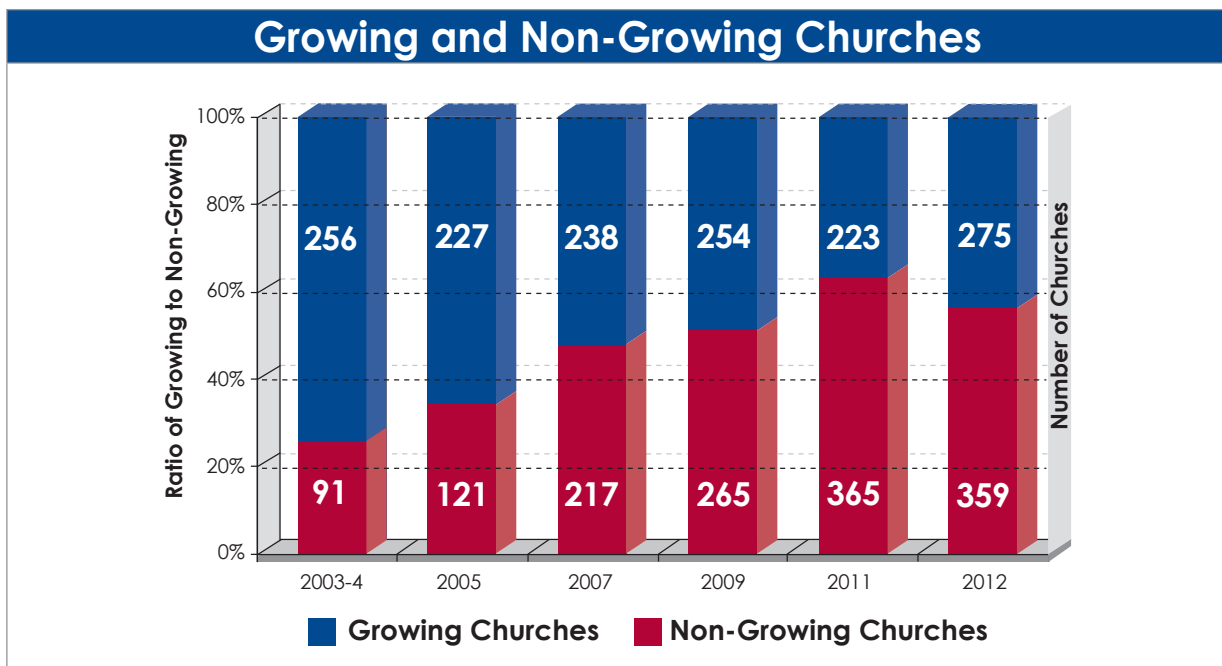


### III. Growing to Non-Growing Church Ratio

Was the 2012 growth of 1.7% concentrated in a few churches, or widely spread among many churches? The 2012 survey showed a declining ratio of growing to non-growing churches. This indicates that growth has not only slowed somewhat (from 2.6% in 2010 and 3% in 2011), but is also concentrated in a smaller number of congregations.

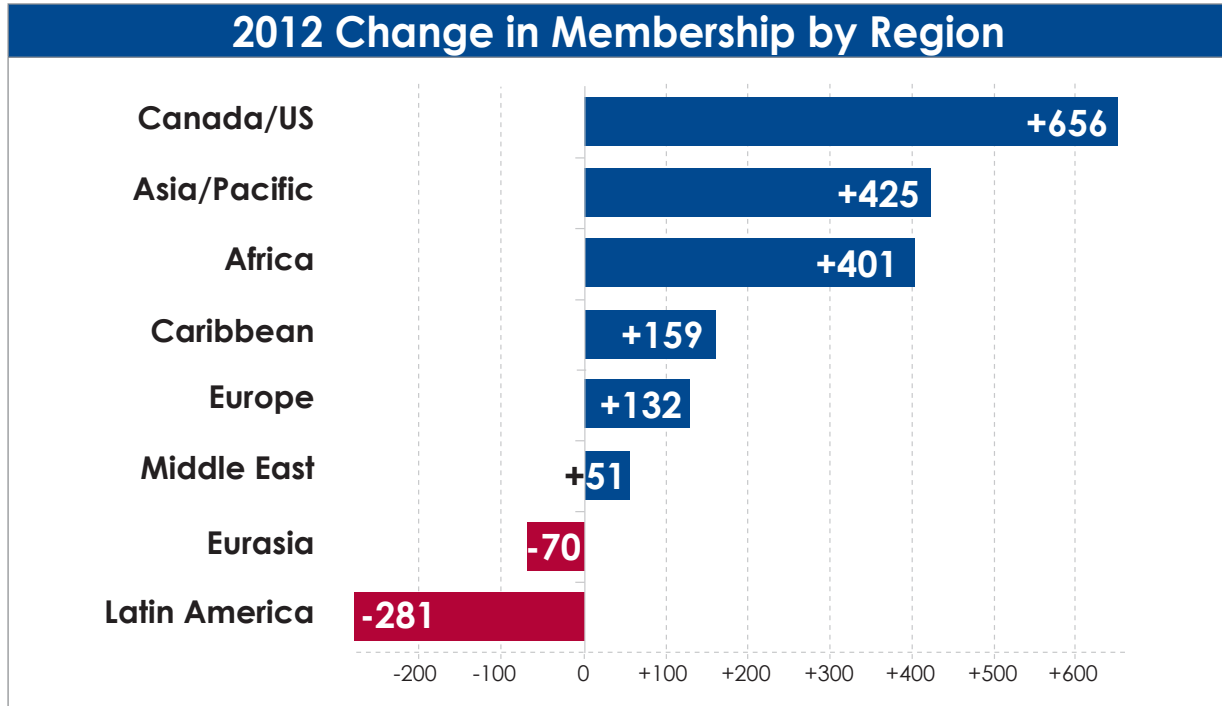
Even more encouraging, the 2012 survey revealed the highest number of growing churches in a single year in our movement's history: 420

This ratio of growing to non-growing churches may be more helpful to understanding what is really happening among the churches than the overall membership growth rate itself. It is a leading indicator of future overall growth or decline, since a few large, fast-growing churches can mask underlying declines in a greater number of small, newly planted, or struggling older congregations—but only for a time.

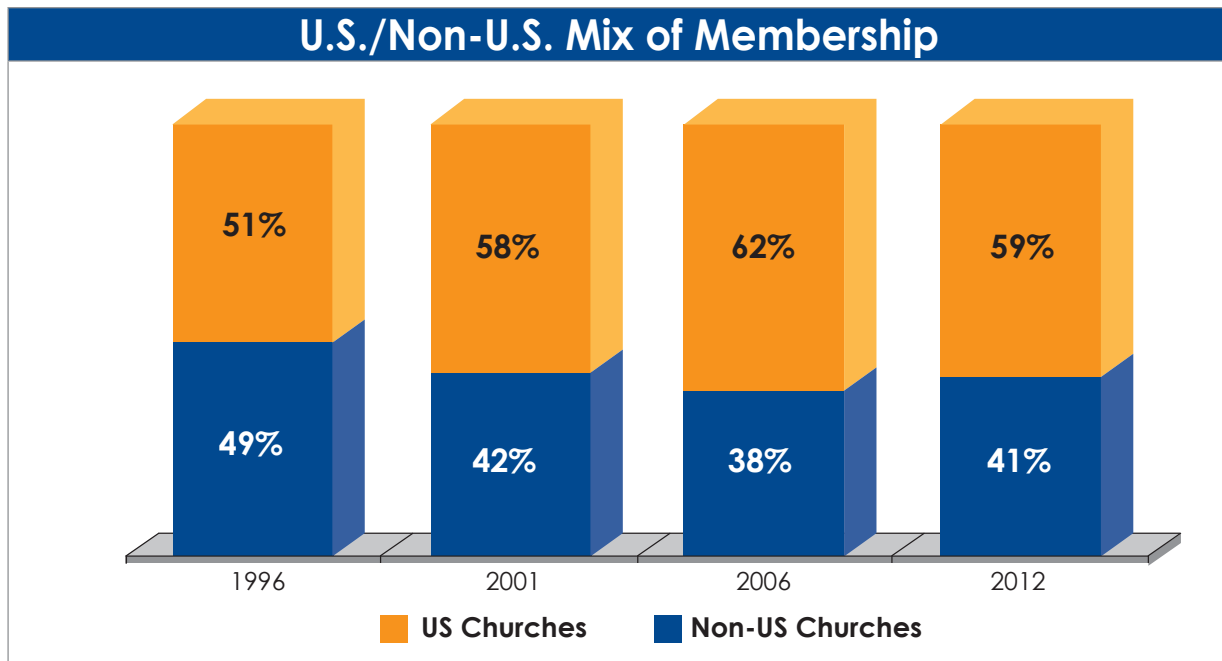


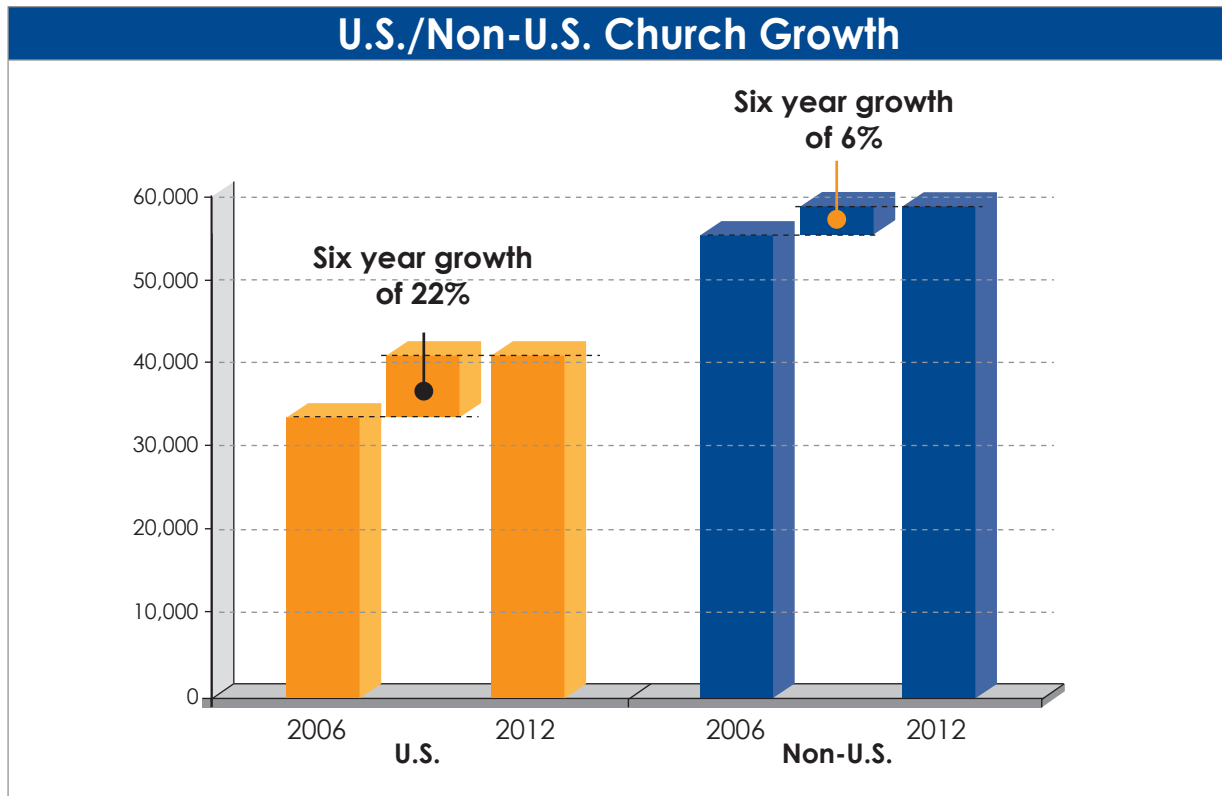
## IV. Geographic Distribution

At least one ICOC exists in 152 countries. The recovery has clearly been stronger in the U.S. Over half the net growth of 2012 occurred in the U.S. churches. While these growth numbers are good because they represent precious souls, none of the numbers are the growth that is possible.



An unfortunate side effect is that after years of continuously becoming more and more international, we're now seeing the international membership get smaller relative to U.S. membership.





## V. Additional Notes

### Encouragement:

- 94% of churches have affirmed the Plan for United Cooperation

### Highest % of growth among churches (1000+)

Bangalore	9.8%
Abidjan	7.8%
Jakarta	5.9%
San Diego	4.8%
Boston	4.4%
Singapore	3.5%

### Highest % of growth among churches ( 500-1000)

London	11.3%
Houston	4.2%
Dallas	4.0%
Phoenix	3.9%
Toronto	3.1%

### Highest % of growth among churches (200-500)

Port au Prince	28.1%
Kinshasa	20.9%
Quito	18.9%
Monrovia	17.7%
Marietta, Georgia	13.8%
Greater Atlanta	9.7%
San Antonio	9.6%
Indianapolis	9.0%
Tangerang, Indonesia	8.9%
Northern Virginia	8.7%
Port of Spain	8.5%
Milwaukee	7.8%
Las Vegas	7.7%
Columbia, SC	7.0%

### CHALLENGES:

\*70% of our churches (442) comprising only 17% of our total membership are under 100 members, 31% of these churches lost members yet they still had the highest growth % in 2012

\*53% of our membership is in our 39 largest churches, 40% in just the 20 largest churches

\*In our largest churches it took 1,100 people to grow by one person in one year, in our smallest churches it took only 11 people to grow by one person in 2012