

Orthodox Statistics



According to a recent study of Orthodoxy in the United States, the real membership in all Eastern Christian Churches in the USA can be estimated at about 1,200,000 persons. This figure is considerably less than the commonly accepted estimations, which range as high as over four million.

The greatest disproportions between "claimed" and actual memberships were found in the two largest Orthodox jurisdictions: The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese (typically claimed 1,954,500* members versus 440,000 actual adherents) and The Orthodox Church in America (1,000,000* versus 115,000 actual adherents). The most likely reason for this

Orthodox jurisdictions	Parishes	Membership	
		Full members	Adherents (estimate)
1. Orthodox Church in America (OCA)	456	39,400	115,100
1a. Regular Territorial diocese of OCA	368	29,600	76,000
1b. Albanian diocese of OCA	12	1,500	6,500
1c. Bulgarian diocese of OCA	19	1,500	8,800
1d. Romanian episcopate of OCA	57	6,800	23,800
2. Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America	525	N/d	440,000
3. Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese	206	41,840	83,700
4. Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA	78	N/d	57,500
5. Serbian Orthodox Church	40	N/d	N/d
6. Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA	106	9,200	30,000
7. American Carpatho Russian Greek Catholic	76	11,753	20,000

Diocese of USA			
8. Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada	14	N/d	6,200
9. Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA	9	N/d	4,340
10. Albanian Orthodox Diocese in America	2	350	500
11. Patriarchal parishes of Russian Orthodox Church	33	N/d	N/d
12. Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia	128	N/d	N/d
13. Parishes of Macedonian Orthodox Church in USA	16	N/a	14,500
14. Holy Orthodox Church in North America	25	N/a	1,900
15. Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Vasiloupolis	39	5,000	28,500
16. Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East	18	N/a	36,016
17. Armenian Church of America	89	11,400	45,800
18. Armenian Apostolic Church of America	38	11,100	23,200
19. Archdiocese of North America of Coptic Orthodox Church	116	N/a	N/d
20. Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch	23	N/d	15,100
21. Malankara Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church	22	N/a	4,340
22. American diocese of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church	59	N/a	13,300

"N/a"- not applicable; "N/d" – no data available

The data were obtained directly from the headquarters (diocesan

discrepancy is the common practice of equating Church membership with the total number of representatives of a corresponding ethnic group including second and third American generations of the original immigrants, independent of these persons actual relationship to the Orthodox Church.

The research also found that Orthodox Churches are struggling with the issue of their changing nature and mission in American. Beginning in the 1970's, fundamental changes took place in the demographics of the Orthodox jurisdictions. These changes included: the increasing proportion of the American-born members and of converts who came to the Orthodoxy mainly through the inter-Christian marriages, the new developments in religious education and liturgical life;

offices) of Orthodox Churches in North America by personal visits there and by interviewing of the church's leaders or the chancellors.

and the grassroots movements encouraging greater Orthodox unity for the sake of mission.

These changes have essentially altered the standing of the Orthodox Churches on the contemporary American religious scene. Religious faith and ethnic identity, once seen as inseparable, are increasingly less important for the socially-mobile, geographically-dispersed, English speaking second, third and fourth generations of Orthodox in America. Nor is this an important consideration for the ever-increasing number of Orthodox converts raised in other religious traditions. Nevertheless, at the beginning of a new millennium, the jurisdictional distinctiveness still does remain a basic characteristic of Orthodox Christianity in the USA.

This project is a study by Alexei D. Krindatch (Institute of Geography, Moscow, Russia) of 22 major Orthodox (Eastern Christian) Churches in the USA with a total membership of 1,200,000 adherents gathered in 2,400 local parishes. The research was sponsored by "Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies" as a part of the nationwide "Religious Congregations Membership Study: 2000."



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