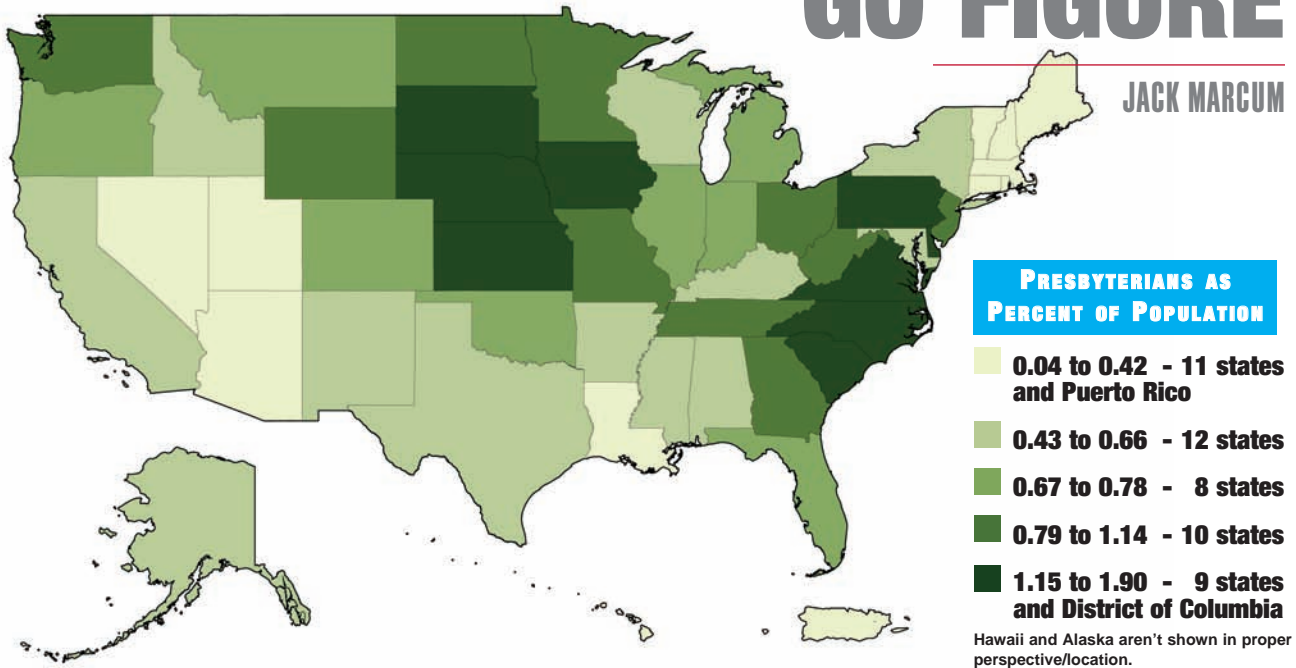


GO FIGURE

JACK MARCUM



Lack of concentration

In my May column, I discussed the geographic center of Presbyterian membership, which is located in Southern Illinois. At that spot, the distances to all PCUSA members add up to the smallest total. This month, let's refocus and examine the distribution of Presbyterians around that central point:

Presbyterians are found in every state.

■ **The most members** are in Pennsylvania (235,577), California (168,499), North Carolina (159,676) and Texas (133,523).

■ **The fewest members** are in Maine (538), Vermont (692), Rhode Island (1,936) and Hawaii (1,953).

■ **In relative terms, the most members** live in Pennsylvania and South Carolina (1.90 percent of each state's population), North Carolina (1.84 percent) and Iowa (1.68 percent).

■ **The fewest members as a percentage** are in Maine (0.04 percent), Massachusetts (0.06 percent), Vermont (0.11 percent) and Hawaii (0.15 percent).

For a complete list of numbers and percentages of Presbyterians in each state, go to www.pcusa.org/research/compstats/cs2005/2005-table3.pdf.

What the research shows

Present in every state, Presbyterians nowhere dominate the population, as Lutherans do in the Dakotas and Minnesota. There are more than 100,000 Presbyterians in each of eight states, but all of these are very populous. Presbyterian percentage of the total population in all other states, is less—usually much less—than 2 percent. Presbyterians are only 0.77 percent of the U.S. population.

The primary importance of this pattern is a reflection of the long-term Presbyterian emphasis on education and an educated clergy.

Over time Presbyterian congregations have become disproportionately home to individuals who value education, are well-

educated themselves, and who work in professional and managerial occupations that prefer or require many years of formal schooling. In a 2005 survey, 65 percent of Presbyterians age 25 or older had a bachelor's degree, including 29 percent with a graduate degree. In the United States overall, by contrast, the corresponding figures are 28 percent and 10 percent.

Current interest in making congregations more diverse often focuses on race and ethnicity. As great a challenge as it is to break down such long-standing barriers, though, I think an even greater challenge will be to find ways for Presbyterian congregations to bring together people from the entire spectrum of educational backgrounds. □

Jack Marcum is associate for survey research, Research Services, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Louisville, Ky.