

**AS FAR AS THE EAST IS FROM THE WEST:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPIRITUAL DIFFERENCES AMONG THE
GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS OF KENTUCKY**

BY

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BACKGROUND

In December 2012, the Kentucky Baptist Convention released a report titled *Lostness Indicators For Kentucky*. This report revealed that “many Kentuckians are unclaimed by any religious group, and most of those who identified with a religious group don’t attend services of any sort on a regular basis.”¹

The report included a breakdown of all 120 Kentucky counties, using three metrics:

- Percentage of population which self-identify as religious “Adherents”.
- Percentage of population which self-identify as “Members” of a specific religious congregation.
- Percentage of population which self-identify as regular “Attendees” of religious worship services.

The results from the report indicated that only 51.6% of Kentuckians are identified with any religious group, and only 13.9% of Kentuckians attend a religious gathering on a regular basis. While these results were troubling enough, the county-by-county breakdown revealed that the percentages in some Kentucky counties were far worse.

Over the past few years, the findings from this report have been used by local pastors, Directors of Missions, as well as Kentucky Baptist Convention leaders to raise awareness of the great spiritual darkness that still permeates the state.

PURPOSES OF CURRENT STUDY

The 2012 report was extremely valuable in identifying specific counties across the commonwealth that faced significant spiritual challenges. However, the report did not address any larger geographical groupings, such as local Baptist associations or KBC consultant regions. Therefore, the first purpose of this report is to examine the metrics listed above in order to identify if there are specific regions in the state that include higher concentrations of lostness than other regions.

While the 2012 report examined lostness in Kentucky based upon *percentages*, it did not address “*populations* of lostness.” In other words, while two counties may have a similar percentage of lostness, one of those counties may have a much larger population of lostness simply because it has more people living within its borders. In order to identify potential areas of priority for evangelism and church planting efforts, both metrics are valuable. Therefore, the second purpose of this study will be to factor in both the *percentage* of lostness as well as the *population* of lostness for each county and larger geographic regions.

¹ This quote accessed online at <http://old.kybaptist.org/2012/12/06/report-indicates-lostness-in-kentucky/> on 8/31/2016 at 3:05PM.

Data analyses such as what is found in this report are helpful only if they assist local churches, associations, and other denominational leaders in making strategic decisions. Therefore, the final purpose for this study will be to identify counties and regions that are in the greatest need of an intentional evangelistic and church planting emphasis. However, this report will not seek to address specific ministry strategies for these areas, other than the general observation that church planting and other evangelistic efforts are needed.

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THIS REPORT

The report itself is broken into three sections. In Section 1, the six KBC consultant regions are compared based upon several different metrics. Using these comparisons, a calculation will be introduced to assist pastors, church planters, and other interested individuals in identifying the regions that are *most* in need of intentional evangelism and church planting efforts.

In Section 2, a similar comparison analysis is completed. Instead of comparing the 6 KBC consultant *regions*, Section 2 compares all 120 *counties* using the same metrics from Section 1. Based upon those comparisons, the same calculation is introduced to assist pastors, church planters, and other interested individuals in identifying the specific Kentucky *counties* that are most in need of intentional evangelism and church planting efforts.

In Section 3, a short summary of the findings from Sections 1 and 2 will be presented. If a summary is desired before reading the detailed report, you may turn to pages 22 and 23 for that summary.

DATA SOURCES

The information in this report was drawn from the following data sources:

- U.S. Census Bureau 2015 population estimates (census.gov)
- KBC's 2012 *Lostness Indicators for Kentucky* report
- Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board staff

It is certainly worth noting that the KBC Mission Board staff was very cooperative and helpful during the research phase of this study. All requests for data were handled promptly and accurately. The churches of the Kentucky Baptist Convention are blessed to have a Mission Board staff that truly desires to live out its mission of helping churches reach Kentucky and the world for Christ.

SPIRITUAL LANDSCAPE OF KENTUCKY

The 2015 population estimate for the state of Kentucky is 4,425,273 residents. Of these nearly 4.5 million Kentuckians:

- 51.6% identify as adhering to some type of religious group (2,282,048 Kentuckians)
- 33.8% identify as being a member of a religious congregation (1,497,925 Kentuckians)
- 13.0%² identify as regularly attending religious worship services (575,911 Kentuckians)

In light of these numbers, it should be noted that there are currently 2,503 Kentucky Baptist congregations³ across the state seeking to reach the millions of lost Kentuckians with the gospel of Jesus Christ. To put it another way, there is one Kentucky Baptist church for every 1,768 residents in Kentucky.

² This percentage is slightly lower than the 13.9% listed in the 2012 report. The difference is that the percentage listed in the 2012 report was a non-weighted average (total attendance percentage of all KY counties divided by 120). However, the percentage listed here is a weighted average which takes into account the populations of each of the 120 Kentucky counties. Therefore, the 13.0% is a more accurate representation of worship service attendance in Kentucky as a whole.

³ This total was provided by the Kentucky Baptist Convention Mission Board staff. It includes approximately 100 churches that are members of one of the 70 local Baptist associations in Kentucky, but are not affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention. It does not include the approximately 100 churches in the state which are not currently a member of any local Baptist association but have had some type of affiliation with the Kentucky Baptist Convention in the past and/or at present.

SECTION 1 – REGIONAL COMPARISONS

INTRODUCTION OF KBC CONSULTANT REGIONS

In May 2012, the Kentucky Baptist Convention underwent a significant restructuring of its Mission Board staff. As part of that restructuring, the Church Consulting and Revitalization Team was created and the state was divided into five geographic “consultant regions”. In 2014, a sixth region was created. These six consultant regions will serve as the comparison groups throughout the majority of this report and are shown on the map below.



REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic differences between the six regions are shown in Table 1.1. A few definitions are necessary in order to properly understand the table:

- **Population:** The combined 2015 population estimate of all of the counties in each region.
- **# Counties:** The number of counties included in each region.
- **# KBC Churches:** The number of KBC churches in each region.
- **KBC Church Ratio:** The KBC churches to population ratio for each region. A higher ratio is interpreted as less desirable than a lower ratio.
- **# KBC Funded Church Plants:** The number of church plants and satellite campuses that are receiving funding assistance from the Kentucky Baptist Convention. This number fluctuates from month to month as new church plants

are started and older church plants conclude the 3-year funding schedule from the KBC.

Table 1.1
Regional Demographics

Region	Population	# Counties	# KBC Churches	KBC Church Ratio	# KBC Funded Church Plants
West	474,879	19	506	1:938	13
South Central	540,679	20	425	1:1272	8
Central	1,303,806	15	482	1:2705	20
North Central	1,171,578	21	406	1:2886	10
South	388,048	16	437	1:888	3
East	546,283	29	247	1:2212	1
Total	4,425,273	120	2,503	1:1768	55

As Table 1.1 shows, there are some significant differences among the six regions. Several initial observations can be made from this data.

First, the Central and North Central regions are much more densely populated, which makes sense as these two regions are home to the largest cities in the state. As one might expect, the KBC church to population ratio for these two regions is higher as well. What *is* surprising is that while the North Central region is the second-most populated region, it has the second-fewest number of KBC churches. However, significant church planting efforts are under way in both regions to address some of these issues.

A second initial observation is the strong KBC presence in the West region. Although the population in the West region is the second-lowest, it boasts the largest number of KBC churches. This results in a KBC church to population ratio of nearly half the Kentucky average. Somewhat surprisingly, the West region also has the second-most currently funded KBC church plants, ensuring that the strong KBC presence will continue to grow.

A third and final initial observation is the stark contrast between the West and East regions. While the East region is the third-most populated region behind the Central and North Central regions, it has the fewest KBC churches by far. In fact, while the East region has 71,404 more people in its population (15% difference), it has less than half the number of KBC churches than the West region. Although significant church planting efforts are needed in the East region, it only has 1 currently KBC-funded church plant.

Tables 1.2-1.5 show the rankings of the six regions in each of the categories found in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.2
Regional Population Rankings**

Ranking	Region	Population
1	Central	1,303,806
2	North Central	1,171,578
3	East	546,283
4	South Central	540,679
5	West	474,879
6	South	388,048

**Table 1.3
KBC Church Rankings**

Ranking	Region	# KBC Churches
1	West	506
2	Central	482
3	South	437
4	South Central	425
5	North Central	406
6	East	247

**Table 1.4
KBC Church to Population Ratio Rankings
(Worst to Best)**

Ranking	Region	KBC Church Ratio
1	North Central	1:2886
2	Central	1:2705
3	East	1:2212
4	South Central	1:1272
5	West	1:938
6	South	1:888

**Table 1.5
KBC Church Plants Rankings**

Ranking	Region	# KBC Church Plants
1	Central	20
2	West	13
3	North Central	10
4	South Central	8
5	South	3
6	East	1

LOSTNESS INDICATORS (BY PERCENTAGE)

With an initial understanding of the differences between the six regions, Table 1.6 now presents the metrics that were introduced in the 2012 *KBC Lostness Indicators for Kentucky* report.

**Table 1.6
Regional Comparison of Lostness Indicators (By Percentage)**

Region	% Adherents	% Members	% Attenders
West	65.0%	48.4%	19.4%
South Central	56.9%	40.5%	15.9%
Central	53.1%	30.8%	11.6%
North Central	49.8%	29.4%	11.4%
South	52.4%	41.9%	15.1%
East	34.2%	25.8%	10.0%
Total	51.6%	33.8%	13.0%

The lostness indicators found in Table 1.6 correlate with several of the initial observations identified from the regional demographics found in Table 1.1.

First, just as the East region had the fewest number of KBC churches, it also has the lowest percentages in each of the lostness indicators. Similarly, just as the West region had the highest number of KBC churches, it also has the highest percentages in each of the lostness indicators. And just as the West region doubled the East region in the number of KBC churches, the West region nearly doubles the East region in each of the percentages above.

Another observation is that just as the Central, North Central, and East regions had the highest KBC church to population ratios, those same regions have the lowest percentages of membership and attendance in Table 1.6.

The regional rankings for each of these lostness indicators are found in Tables 1.7-1.9.

**Table 1.7
% Adherents Rankings
(Worst to Best)**

Ranking	Region	% Adherents
1	East	34.2%
2	North Central	49.8%
3	South	52.4%
4	Central	53.1%
5	South Central	56.9%
6	West	65.0%

Table 1.8
% Membership Rankings
(Worst to Best)

Ranking	Region	% Members
1	East	25.8%
2	North Central	29.4%
3	Central	30.8%
4	South Central	40.5%
5	South	41.9%
6	West	48.4%

Table 1.9
% Attendance Rankings
(Worst to Best)

Ranking	Region	% Attenders
1	East	10.0%
2	North Central	11.4%
3	Central	11.6%
4	South	15.1%
5	South Central	15.9%
6	West	19.4%

LOSTNESS INDICATORS (BY POPULATION)

The percentages of lostness shown in Tables 1.6-1.9 tell part of the story of lostness in Kentucky, but not the whole story. Based upon these percentages, Table 1.10 provides an estimated number of lost people that are living in each region.

Table 1.10
Regional Comparison of Lostness Indicators (By Population)

Region	Total Non-Adherents	Total Non-Members	Total Non-Attenders
West	166,444	245,069	382,967
South Central	232,959	321,911	454,920
Central	611,505	902,291	1,152,492
North Central	588,236	827,275	1,037,562
South	184,752	225,343	329,497
East	359,330	405,459	491,925
Total	2,143,225	2,927,348	3,849,362

Tables 1.11-13 show the rankings for each of these three metrics included in the preceding table.

**Table 1.11
Total Non-Adherents**

Ranking	Region	Total Non-Adherents
1	Central	611,505
2	North Central	588,236
3	East	359,330
4	South Central	232,959
5	South	184,752
6	West	166,444

**Table 1.12
Total Non-Members**

Ranking	Region	Total Non-Members
1	Central	902,291
2	North Central	827,275
3	East	405,459
4	South Central	321,911
5	West	245,069
6	South	225,343

**Table 1.13
Total Non-Attendees**

Ranking	Region	Total Non-Attendees
1	Central	1,152,492
2	North Central	1,037,562
3	East	491,925
4	South Central	454,920
5	West	382,967
6	South	329,497

DEVELOPING EVANGELISTIC PRIORITIES

In order to be the best possible stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to them, the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board have developed missional strategies to focus on the locations and people groups that are in most desperate need of the gospel. A similar strategy is needed in Kentucky. In order to focus on the locations that are in most desperate need of an evangelistic witness and

the subsequent planting of new churches, some type of systematic process is needed to identify those locations.

Based upon the information found in the preceding pages of this report, an attempt has been made to develop a “church planting priority index” for each of the six regions. This index is calculated by taking the average ranking for each region in each of the following categories:⁴

- % Non-Adherents
- Total Non-Adherents
- % Non-Members
- Total Non-Members
- % Non-Attendees
- Total Non-Attendees
- KBC Church to Population Ratio
- # of Current KBC-Funded Church Plants

Table 1.14 shows the rankings for each of the categories included in the calculation.

Table 1.14
Church Planting Priority Index Calculation

Region	% Non-Adh	Total Non-Adh	% Non-Members	Total Non-Mbrs	% Non-Attd	Total Non-Attd	KBC Church Ratio	KBC Church Plants	Average Ranking
West	6	6	6	5	6	5	5	5	5.50
S. Central	5	4	4	4	5	4	4	3	4.13
Central	4	1	3	1	3	1	2	6	2.63
N. Central	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	4	2.13
South	3	5	5	6	4	6	6	2	4.63
East	1	3	1	3	1	3	3	1	2.00

In light of the calculations in Table 1.14, the church planting priority index indicates that church planting is needed in the KBC regions in the following order of priority:

1. East (Index = 2.00)
2. North Central (Index = 2.13)
3. Central (Index = 2.63)
4. South Central (Index = 4.13)
5. South (Index = 4.63)
6. West (Index = 5.50)

⁴ In order to calculate a meaningful and consistent church planting priority index, the rankings for each category were determined by assigning a ranking of 1 to the region with the most undesirable value and a ranking of 2 to the region with the second most undesirable value, and so on. For example, the region with the highest number of total non-adherents received a ranking of 1 for that category because a higher number of non-adherents is an undesirable value for the purposes of this study. Similarly, the region with the lowest number of KBC-funded church plants received a ranking of 1 for that category because a lower number of church plants is an undesirable value.

SECTION 2 – COUNTY COMPARISONS

In this section, the analysis from Section 1 will be applied to all 120 counties in Kentucky. Because of the massive number of counties, the data in this section will only list the Top 25 counties in each category.

POPULATION

**Table 2.1
Top 25 Counties By Population**

Ranking	County	Region	Population
1	Jefferson	Central	763,623
2	Fayette	North Central	314,488
3	Kenton	North Central	165,012
4	Boone	North Central	127,712
5	Warren	South Central	122,851
6	Hardin	Central	106,439
7	Daviess	South Central	99,259
8	Campbell	North Central	92,066
9	Madison	North Central	87,824
10	Bullitt	Central	78,702
11	Christian	West	73,309
12	McCracken	West	65,018
13	Oldham	Central	64,875
14	Pulaski	South	63,782
15	Pike	East	61,792
16	Laurel	South	60,094
17	Scott	North Central	52,420
18	Jessamine	North Central	51,961
19	Franklin	Central	50,375
20	Boyd	East	48,325
21	Henderson	West	46,407
22	Hopkins	West	46,222
23	Shelby	Central	45,632
24	Nelson	Central	45,126
25	Barren	South Central	43,570

As Table 2.1 shows, both the Central and North Central regions include the highest number of counties in the Top 25 most populated counties in the state (7 each), followed by the West with 4, South Central with 3, and the East and South regions with 2 counties each.

KBC CHURCHES & CHURCH PLANTS

**Table 2.2
Top 25 Worst KBC Church to Population Ratios**

Ranking	County	Region	KBC Ratio
1	Boone	North Central	1:7512
2	Jessamine	North Central	1:6495
3	Bath	East	1:6114
4	Rowan	East	1:5973
5	Johnson	East	1:5839
6	Fayette	North Central	1:5718
7	Kenton	North Central	1:5000
8	Jefferson	Central	1:4400
9	Campbell	North Central	1:4185
10	Martin	East	1:4102
11	Elliot	East	1:3824
12	Oldham	Central	1:3604
13	Carter	East	1:3395
14	Bourbon	North Central	1:3353
15	Scott	North Central	1:3276
16	Magoffin	East	1:3202
17	Menifee	East	1:3179
18	Montgomery	North Central	1:3068
19	Fleming	East	1:2927
20	Breathitt	East	1:2697
20	Floyd	East	1:2697
22	Pike	East	1:2687
23	Morgan	East	1:2655
24	Lawrence	East	1:2624
25	Greenup	East	1:2576

As Table 2.2 shows, the East region is home to 15 out of the top 25 counties with the worst KBC church to population ratio, followed by the North Central region with 8, and the Central region with 2. It is very significant that the South, South Central, and West regions do not have any counties in the top 25 in this category.

Table 2.3
Currently-Funded KBC Church Plants By Region

Ranking	County	Region	KBC Church Plants
1	Jefferson	Central	12
2	McCracken	West	4
3	Calloway	West	3
4	Daviess	South Central	2
4	Fayette	North Central	2
4	Garrard	North Central	2
4	Graves	West	2
4	Hardin	Central	2
4	Henderson	West	2
4	Kenton	North Central	2
4	Nelson	Central	2
4	Warren	South Central	2
13	Boone	North Central	1
13	Grant	North Central	1
13	Hart	South Central	1
13	Knox	South	1
13	LaRue	South Central	1
13	Letcher	East	1
13	Lincoln	South	1
13	Madison	North Central	1
13	Meade	Central	1
13	Monroe	South Central	1
13	Muhlenberg	West	1
13	Oldham	Central	1
13	Pulaski	South	1
13	Scott	North Central	1
27	Remaining 94 counties	N/A	0

Tables 2.3 shows the number of currently-funded KBC church plants by county. As the table indicates, there are churches currently being planted in 5 Central region counties, 1 East region county, 7 North Central region counties, 3 South region counties, 5 South Central region counties, and 5 West region counties.

LOSTNESS INDICATORS (BY PERCENTAGE)

The percentages listed in Tables 2.4-2.6 are also found on the 2012 *Lostness Indicators for Kentucky* report.

**Table 2.4
Top 25 Counties With Lowest % of Adherents**

Ranking	County	Region	% Adherents
1	Elliot	East	5.1%
2	Menifee	East	11.8%
3	Breathitt	East	14.8%
4	Rowan	East	19.9%
5	Morgan	East	21.3%
5	Wolfe	East	21.3%
7	McCreary	South	21.7%
8	Knott	East	21.9%
9	Martin	East	22.2%
10	Robertson	East	23.1%
11	Letcher	East	25.2%
11	Magoffin	East	25.2%
13	Jackson	South	26.4%
14	Carter	East	26.6%
15	Johnson	East	28.0%
15	Lewis	East	28.0%
17	Lee	East	28.1%
18	Jessamine	North Central	28.8%
19	Lawrence	East	30.6%
20	Leslie	East	30.8%
21	Allen	South Central	31.1%
22	Floyd	East	31.6%
23	Pike	East	31.7%
24	Bullitt	Central	33.2%
24	Owsley	South	33.2%

As Table 2.4 shows, 19 out of the top 25 counties with the lowest percentage of adherents are located in the East region, followed by the South region with 3, and one each in the Central, North Central, and South Central regions. The West region had no counties in the top 25 in this category.

**Table 2.5
Top 25 Counties With Lowest % of Members**

Ranking	County	Region	% Members
1	Elliot	East	4.5%
2	Menifee	East	7.5%
3	Breathitt	East	9.7%
4	Rowan	East	11.5%
5	Wolfe	East	15.2%
6	Kenton	North Central	16.0%
7	McCreary	South	16.7%
8	Knott	East	17.3%
9	Morgan	East	17.4%
10	Campbell	North Central	18.3%
11	Lee	East	18.5%
12	Martin	East	18.8%
13	Johnson	East	19.2%
14	Magoffin	East	19.3%
15	Jessamine	North Central	20.0%
16	Robertson	East	20.1%
16	Jackson	South	20.1%
18	Carter	East	20.7%
19	Letcher	East	20.9%
20	Lewis	East	23.2%
21	Bullitt	Central	23.3%
22	Floyd	East	24.0%
23	Leslie	East	24.2%
24	Montgomery	North Central	24.4%
24	Powell	East	24.4%
24	Marion	Central	24.4%

Because of a tie, there are actually 26 counties in the top 25 for the lowest percentage of members. The East region leads the way again with 18, followed by the North Central region with 4, and the Central and South regions each with 2 counties. The West and South Central regions did not have any counties in the top 25 in this category.

**Table 2.6
Top 25 Counties With Lowest % of Attenders**

Ranking	County	Region	% Attenders
1	Elliot	East	2.0%
2	Lewis	East	3.9%
3	Edmonson	South Central	4.5%
4	McCreary	South	4.9%
5	Kenton	North Central	5.9%
6	Carter	East	6.1%
7	Martin	East	6.3%
8	Lawrence	East	6.5%
8	Robertson	East	6.5%
10	Campbell	North Central	7.1%
11	Spencer	Central	7.2%
12	Johnson	East	7.3%
13	Nicholas	East	7.8%
14	Breathitt	East	7.9%
14	Letcher	East	7.9%
14	Bracken	East	7.9%
17	Marion	Central	8.1%
18	Knott	East	8.2%
19	Rowan	East	8.3%
20	Pike	East	8.5%
21	Menifee	East	8.7%
22	Gallatin	North Central	9.0%
22	Jackson	South	9.0%
22	Morgan	East	9.0%
25	Bullitt	Central	9.4%

Table 2.6 shows that the East region has the most counties in the top 25 with the lowest % of attenders with 16, followed by the Central and North Central regions each with 3 counties, the South region with 2 counties, and the South Central region with 1 county. The West region once again did not have any counties in the top 25 for this category.

From the data found in Tables 2.4-2.6, it is clear that the East region contains the majority of the most lost and unchurched counties in Kentucky when the percentages are the metric under consideration. Tables 2.7-2.9 will rank the Top 25 counties in each category based upon population rather than by percentage.

LOSTNESS INDICATORS (BY POPULATION)

**Table 2.7
Top 25 Counties With Most Non-Adherents**

Ranking	County	Region	Total Non-Adherents
1	Jefferson	Central	345,158
2	Fayette	North Central	150,325
3	Kenton	North Central	84,981
4	Warren	South Central	67,445
5	Boone	North Central	63,984
6	Hardin	Central	55,774
7	Madison	North Central	53,748
8	Bullitt	Central	52,573
9	Campbell	North Central	46,770
10	Pike	East	42,204
11	Jessamine	North Central	36,996
12	Oldham	Central	34,903
13	Christian	West	34,015
14	Laurel	South	33,893
15	Scott	North Central	31,190
16	Daviess	South Central	29,877
17	Pulaski	South	26,406
18	Floyd	East	25,825
19	Barren	South Central	22,787
20	Franklin	Central	21,561
21	Greenup	East	20,956
22	Nelson	Central	20,577
23	Shelby	Central	20,352
24	Carter	East	19,934
25	Henderson	West	19,677

Table 2.7 shows that based upon population, both the Central and North Central regions have the most counties in the top 25 with 7 each, followed by the East region with 4, South Central with 3, and the South and West regions each with 2 counties.

Table 2.8
Top 25 Counties With Most Non-Members

Ranking	County	Region	Total Non-Members
1	Jefferson	Central	538,354
2	Fayette	North Central	212,594
3	Kenton	North Central	138,610
4	Boone	North Central	95,912
5	Warren	South Central	83,047
6	Campbell	North Central	75,218
7	Hardin	Central	73,124
8	Madison	North Central	63,145
9	Bullitt	Central	60,364
10	Daviess	South Central	59,258
11	Oldham	Central	48,332
12	Christian	West	46,258
13	Pike	East	45,973
14	Jessamine	North Central	41,569
15	Laurel	South	39,362
16	Scott	North Central	38,424
17	Pulaski	South	33,996
18	Nelson	Central	33,799
19	McCracken	West	30,428
20	Franklin	Central	28,865
21	Floyd	East	28,695
22	Henderson	West	28,447
23	Barren	South Central	27,580
24	Shelby	Central	27,288
25	Boyd	East	27,110

Table 2.8 shows that based upon population, both the Central and North Central regions have the most counties in the top 25 with 7 each. The East, South Central, and West regions each have 3 counties in the top 25, and the South region contains 2 counties.

**Table 2.9
Top 25 Counties With Most Non-Attendees**

Ranking	County	Region	Total Non-Attendees
1	Jefferson	Central	676,570
2	Fayette	North Central	270,774
3	Kenton	North Central	155,276
4	Boone	North Central	114,941
5	Warren	South Central	103,195
6	Hardin	Central	93,134
7	Campbell	North Central	85,529
8	Daviess	South Central	84,966
9	Madison	North Central	77,461
10	Bullitt	Central	71,304
11	Christian	West	63,192
12	Oldham	Central	58,647
13	Pike	East	56,540
14	Pulaski	South	52,265
15	Laurel	South	51,981
16	McCracken	West	50,259
17	Jessamine	North Central	46,713
18	Scott	North Central	45,972
19	Franklin	Central	42,517
20	Nelson	Central	40,749
21	Boyd	East	40,738
22	Shelby	Central	40,339
23	Henderson	West	39,817
24	Hopkins	West	37,763
25	Barren	South Central	36,904

Table 2.9 shows that based upon population, both the Central and North Central regions have the most counties in the top 25 with 7 each, followed by the West region with 4, South Central region with 3, and the East and South regions with 2 each.

CHURCH PLANTING PRIORITY INDEX (BY COUNTY)

Based upon the data presented in Section 2, a church planting priority index was calculated for each of the 120 counties.⁵ Table 2.10 reveals the 25 counties that are most in need of church planting efforts.

⁵ The calculation for the church planting priority index for each county uses the same methodology that was used for the 6 KBC consultant regions presented earlier in this report. Although only the top 25 counties have been displayed in this report, the church planting priority index was calculated for all 120 counties.

Table 2.10
Top 25 Counties in Need of Church Planting Efforts

Ranking	County	Region	Priority Index
1	Campbell	North Central	13.00
2	Jessamine	North Central	14.25
3	Bullitt	Central	15.75
4	Rowan	East	16.75
5	Pike	East	16.88
6	Carter	East	17.25
7	Floyd	East	20.13
7	Johnson	East	20.13
9	Kenton	North Central	23.25
10	McCreary	South	25.75
11	Boone	North Central	27.63
12	Breathitt	East	28.25
13	Knott	East	29.13
14	Montgomery	North Central	29.38
15	Oldham	Central	30.38
16	Greenup	East	30.88
17	Martin	East	31.63
18	Morgan	East	32.25
19	Lawrence	East	32.88
20	Laurel	South	33.00
21	Lewis	East	33.13
22	Madison	South	34.00
22	Perry	East	34.00
24	Grayson	South Central	34.63
25	Magoffin	East	34.75

Table 2.10 confirms the results from the study of the church planting priorities for the 6 KBC consultant regions in Section 1. The East region leads this list with 14 out of the 25 counties most in need of church planting. The North Central region follows with 5 counties in the top 25, followed by the South region with 3 counties, the Central region with 2 counties, and the South Central region with 1 county. The West region did not have any counties in the top 25.

SECTION 3 – SUMMARY

The 2012 *Lostness Indicators for Kentucky* report was a very enlightening and informative report, and it served as a catalyst for the analysis included in this report. The present analysis has sought to enhance the results of the 2012 study by diving deeper into the available data to discover the spiritual characteristics of Kentuckians in greater detail. The summary findings of this report follow.

Population:

- The Central region has the most people (1,303,806) while the South region has the fewest people (388,048).
- The East region has the most counties (29) while the Central region has the fewest (15).

KBC Churches & Church Plants:

- The West region has the most KBC churches (506) while the East region has the fewest (247).
- The North Central region has the worst KBC church to population ratio (1:2886) while the South region has the best (1:888).
- The Central region has the most KBC-funded church plants (20) while the East region has the fewest (1).

Lostness Indicators (By Percentage):

- The East region has the lowest percentage of religious adherents (34.2%) while the West region has the highest (65.0%).
- The East region has the lowest percentage of members (25.8%) while the West region has the highest (48.4%).
- The East region has the lowest percentage of attenders (10.0%) while the West region has the highest (19.4%).
- Nineteen out of the top 25 most lost counties (based upon percentage) are located in the East region.

Lostness Indicators (By Population):

- The Central region has the most religious non-adherents (611,505) while the West region has the fewest (166,444).
- The Central region has the most non-members (902,291) while the South region has the fewest (225,343).
- The Central region has the most non-attenders (1,152,492) while the South region has the fewest (329,497).
- The Central & North Central regions have the most counties (7 each) in the top 25 most lost (by population) while the South and West regions have the fewest (2 each).

Church Planting Priority Index

- The East region ranks #1 on the church planting priority index, followed by the North Central region at #2, and the Central region at #3.
- The top 5 counties that have the greatest need for church planting efforts are: #1: Campbell (North Central), #2: Jessamine (North Central), #3: Bullitt (Central), #4: Rowan (East), and #5: Pike (East).
- 14 out of the top 25 counties that have the greatest need for church planting efforts are located in the East region, followed by 6 in the North Central region. None of the 25 counties identified as having the greatest need for church planting are located in the West region.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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