

Taiwan Church Growth Report 2015

Prepared for the 150th Anniversary of Protestant Missionaries Coming to the Island

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Executive Summary

In 2014 a One Challenge worker and a Taiwanese church leader gained broader vision when they participated in a Global Church Planting Network (www.GCPN.info) gathering of regional teams near Budapest Hungary. In March of 2015, the One Challenge's Global Research Team was asked by Samuel Hsu to prepare maps of Taiwan for a meeting of church leaders to be held in September 2015 to show where the church has been making disciples effectively and where greater focus is needed.

Data provided to the Global Research Team from the "Taiwan Church Report 2013" by Rev. John S. T. Chu of the Christian Resource Center was used by permission for analysis and mapping. The provided data gives a longitudinal perspective of the growth of the church in Taiwan from 1989 until 2013 as well as a more in depth data about the 2011-2013 time period. This report contains two infographics, eight data tables, nine graphs and eight maps generated from the data provided. These are listed in the accompanying Table of Contents. Suggestions for further study and implications for ministry strategy are presented in the comment sections.

Because no GIS base map could be located that fit the data set, maps were prepared using a graphics program and a custom base map. Five English maps were produced. All of these maps are presented with corresponding data tables and interpretive comments. Three additional maps were produced that have Chinese characters for the names of the districts. These are included in the Appendix.

In September 2015 the OC team convened about 80 Chinese denominational and agency leaders on the 150th anniversary of the arrival of protestant missionaries to the island. At this time some of the maps and analysis from this report were shared. By way of follow up, Samuel Hsu is team leader for the national team formed in September, and Jason Ma (OC) is serving as Samuel's coach.

In our study, we were pleased to find that after 150 years from the arrival of protestant missionaries in Taiwan, that the statement "the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied" (Acts 12:24) is just as true of the Taiwan Church as the Early Church in the Middle East. The two infographics that follow highlight some of the accomplishments of Protestant mission work in Taiwan and point out what yet remains to be accomplished.

It was deemed beneficial to present the material developed for Taiwan in a single document with accompanying explanations. This Taiwan Church Growth Report 2015 is a summary of our work. May it increase the insight of those who read it! Comments, corrections and suggestions can be sent to Research@oci.org.

Russ Mitchell
December 2015
One Challenge's Global Research Team
www.OCresearch.info

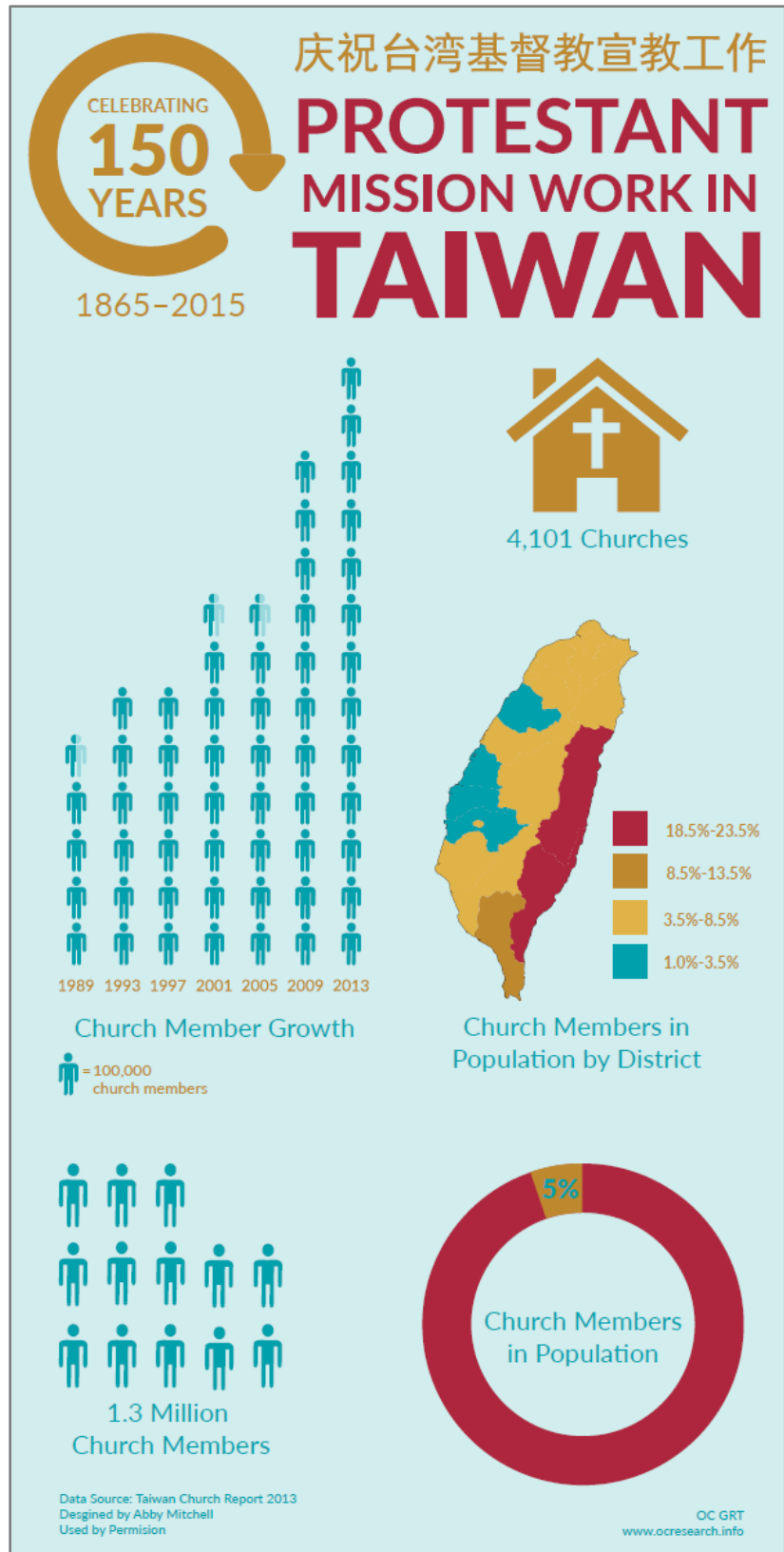
Infographic 1: Celebrating 150 Years of Protestant Mission Work in Taiwan

This infographic highlights five fruits of the 150 years of Protestant mission work in Taiwan:

1. 4,101 Protestant Churches
2. 1.3 Million Church Members
3. 5.6% of Taiwan's population is a member of a Protestant Church.
4. Protestant Church Membership nearly tripled between 1989 and 2013. (See Data Table 1 and Graphs 1-3 for greater detail.)
5. Protestant Church membership by district. (See Map 1 and Data Table 3 for details)

These are impressive accomplishments, built upon the foundation of the first pioneer missionaries and the generations of workers who followed.

Still there is much to do as 22 million people in Taiwan are not yet members of a Protestant church. The next infographic casts vision for the task that remains.

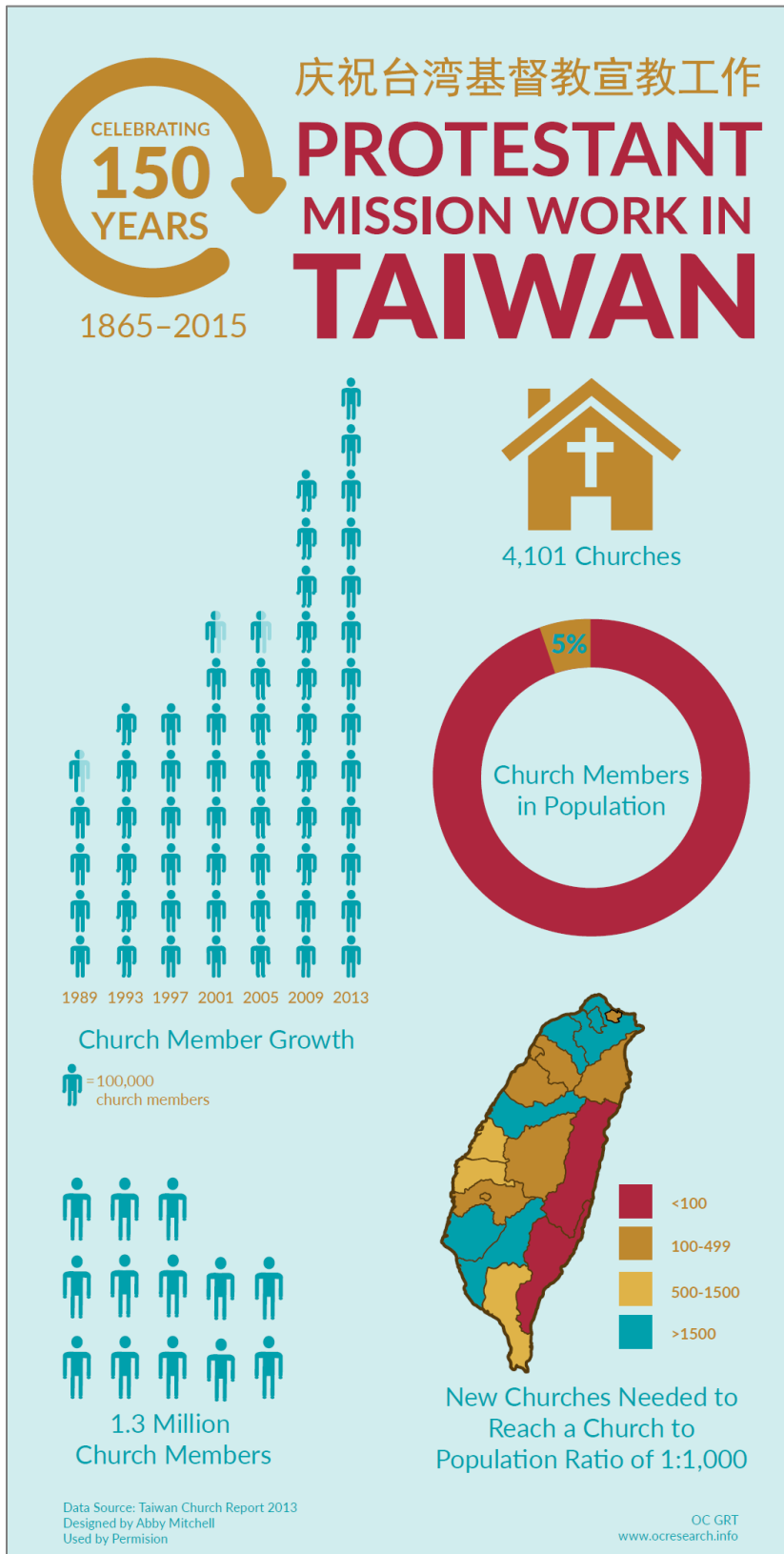


Infographic 2: Protestant Mission Work in Taiwan – Looking Ahead

Since more than 22 million people in Taiwan are not yet members of a Protestant church, this infographic was developed to cast vision for the work that still remains to disciple all of Taiwan’s population. This infographic is the same as the previous one with the exception of the map.

This map shows how many new churches are needed by district to attain a church to population ratio of 1:1,000 or one church for every thousand people. From the perspective of Saturation Church Planting (SCP), attaining this church to population ratio would provide every person in Taiwan with easy geographical access to a Protestant church and is a significant milestone to reach in the process of discipling a whole nation.

See Map 4 and Data Table 7 for specific details.



Analysis for the Period 1989-2013

The data from the "Taiwan Church Report 2013" by Rev. John S. T. Chu of the Christian Resource Center forms the basis for a longitudinal perspective of the growth of the church in Taiwan from 1989 until 2013. The following eight graphs and two data tables strive to point out the facts pertaining to the growth of the Church in Taiwan, both in the number of members and the number of worshipping congregations, to highlight trends and suggest implications for ministry strategy and further study.

Data Table 1. Data for Taiwan Churches, 1989-2013

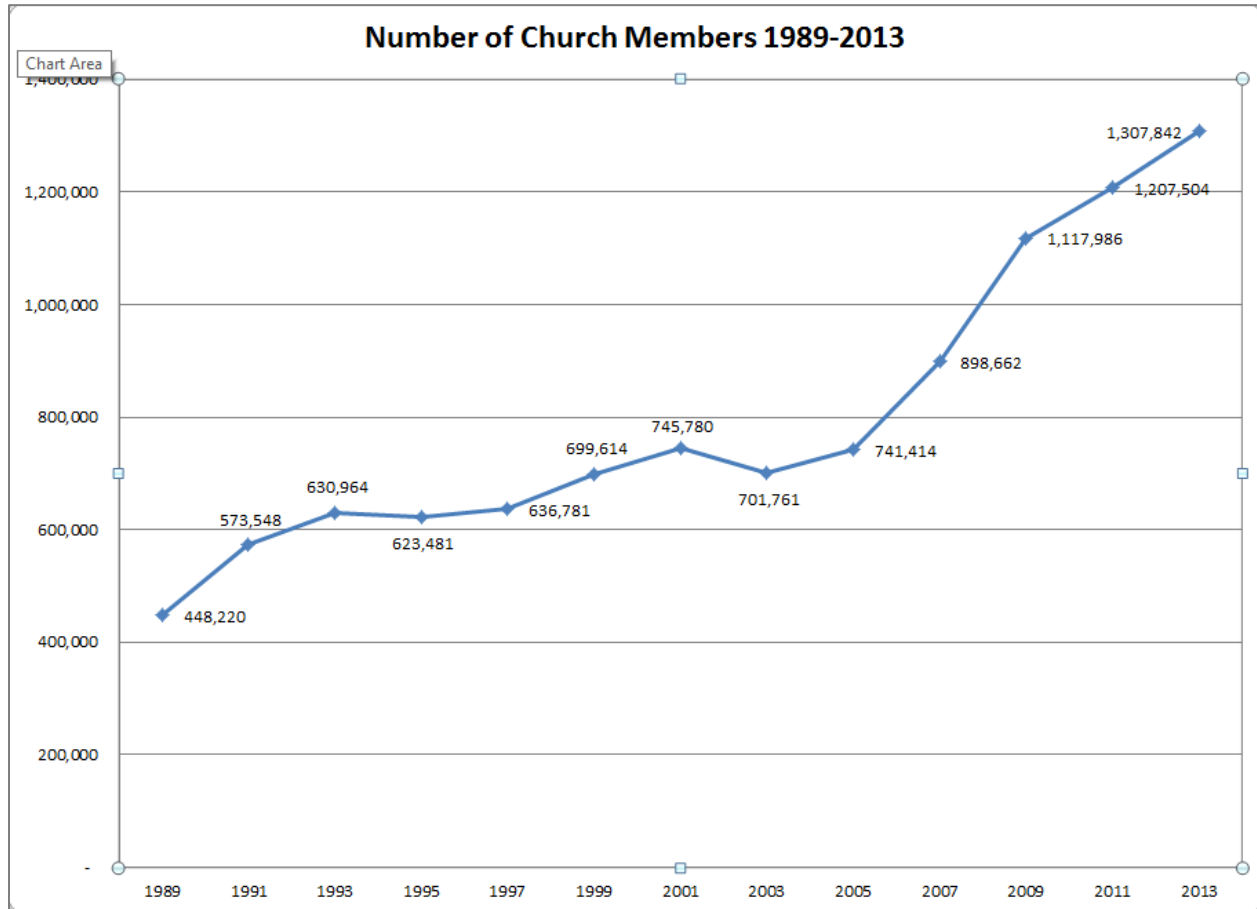
Year	Population	Nr. of Churches	Population to Church Ratio	Nr. Church Members	Percent of Church Members of Population	Church Attendance	Attendance as percent of Population	Attendance as a % of membership
1989	19,954,397	2,660	7,502	448,220	2.2%	204,179	1.0%	45.6%
1991	20,401,305	2,927	6,970	573,548	2.8%	278,471	1.4%	48.6%
1993	20,802,622	3,099	6,713	630,964	3.0%	306,302	1.5%	48.5%
1995	21,177,874	3,361	6,301	623,481	2.9%	297,677	1.4%	47.7%
1997	21,441,432	3,519	6,093	636,781	3.0%	297,277	1.4%	46.7%
1999	21,928,591	3,609	6,076	699,614	3.2%	330,319	1.5%	47.2%
2001	22,276,672	3,710	6,004	745,780	3.3%	369,959	1.7%	49.6%
2003	22,520,776	3,679	6,121	701,761	3.1%	335,863	1.5%	47.9%
2005	22,689,122	3,181	7,133	741,414	3.3%	376,050	1.7%	50.7%
2007	22,876,527	3,275	6,985	898,662	3.9%	453,693	2.0%	50.5%
2009	23,073,031	3,728	6,189	1,117,986	4.8%	521,465	2.3%	46.6%
2011	23,162,123	3,888	5,957	1,207,504	5.2%	566,728	2.4%	46.9%
2013	23,315,822	4,101	5,685	1,307,842	5.6%	604,632	2.6%	46.2%

The following graphs and analysis are based on the data from this table. This data was taken from the previously mentioned "Taiwan Church Report 2013."

Analysis of Church Membership and Attendance, 1989-2013

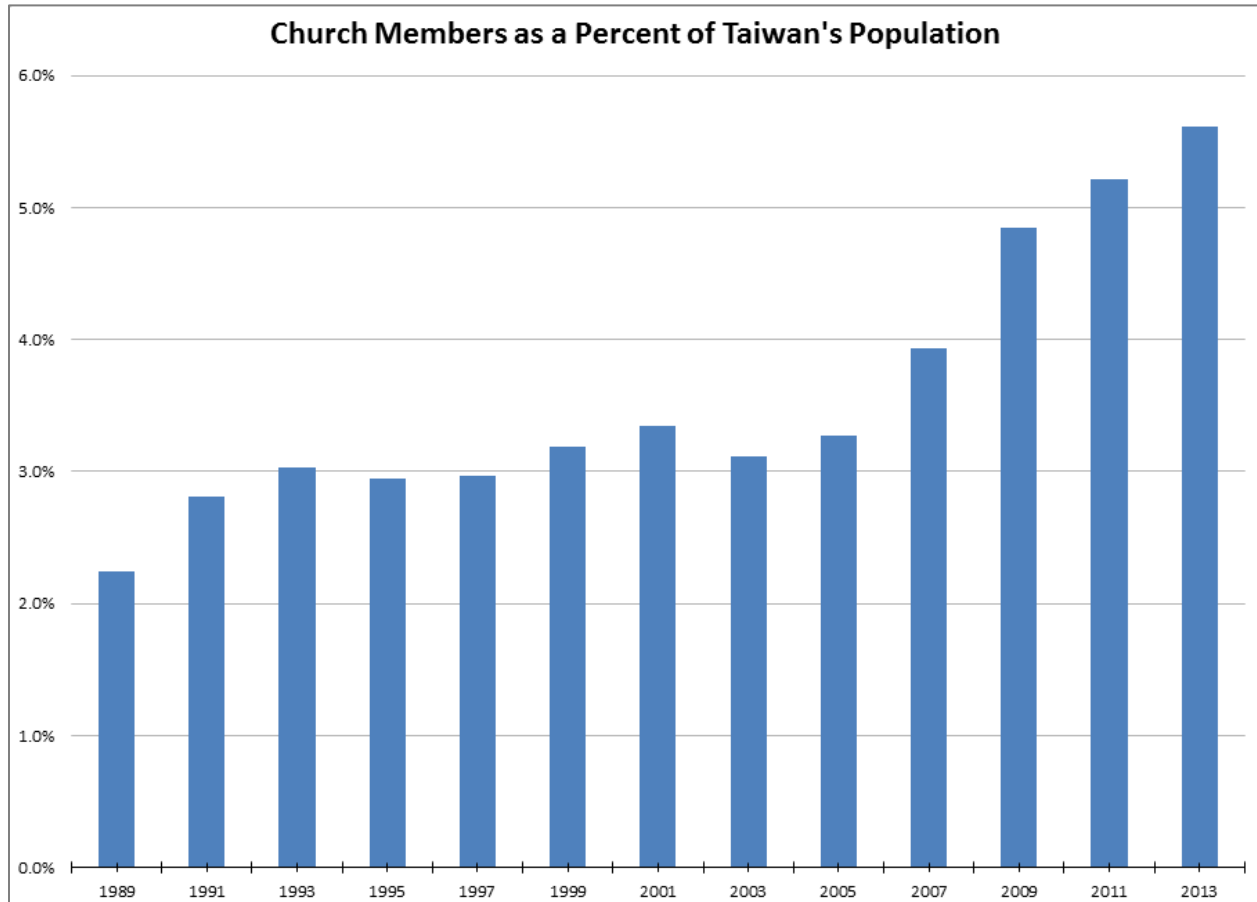
The next five graphs provide an overview of church membership and attendance during the time period of 1989-2013.

Graph 1: Church Members 1989-2013



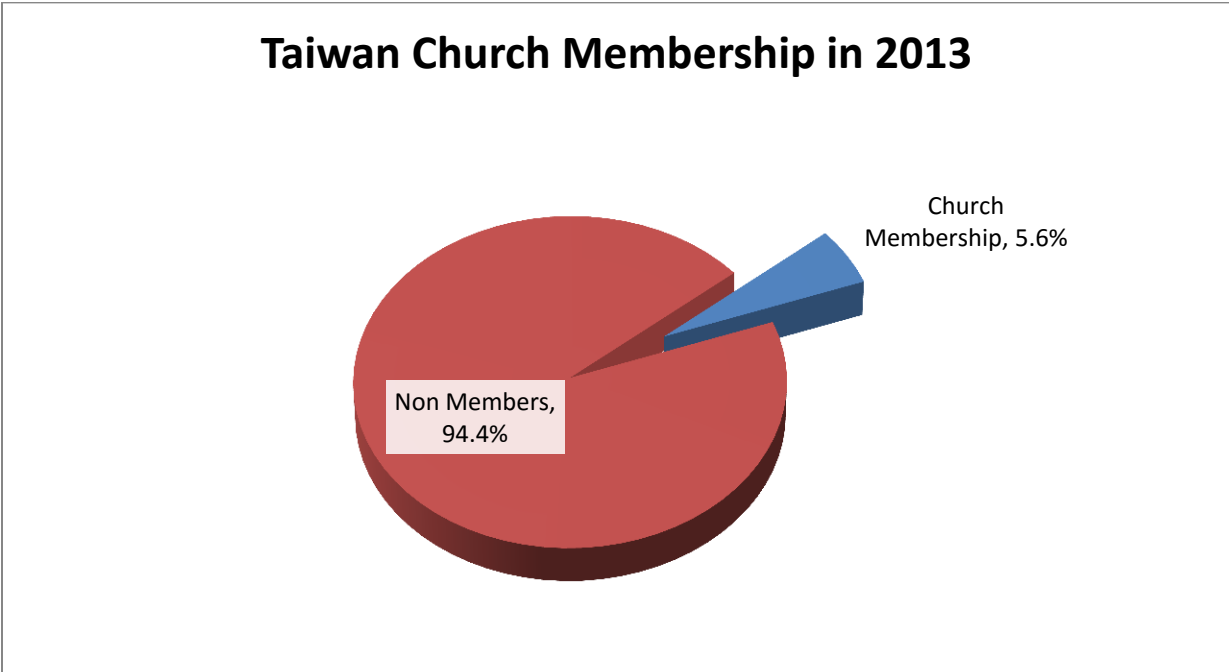
The number of church members nearly tripled during this period. The following graphs will take a closer look at this good growth in the number of church members.

Graph 2: Church Members as a Percent of Taiwan's Population 1989-2013



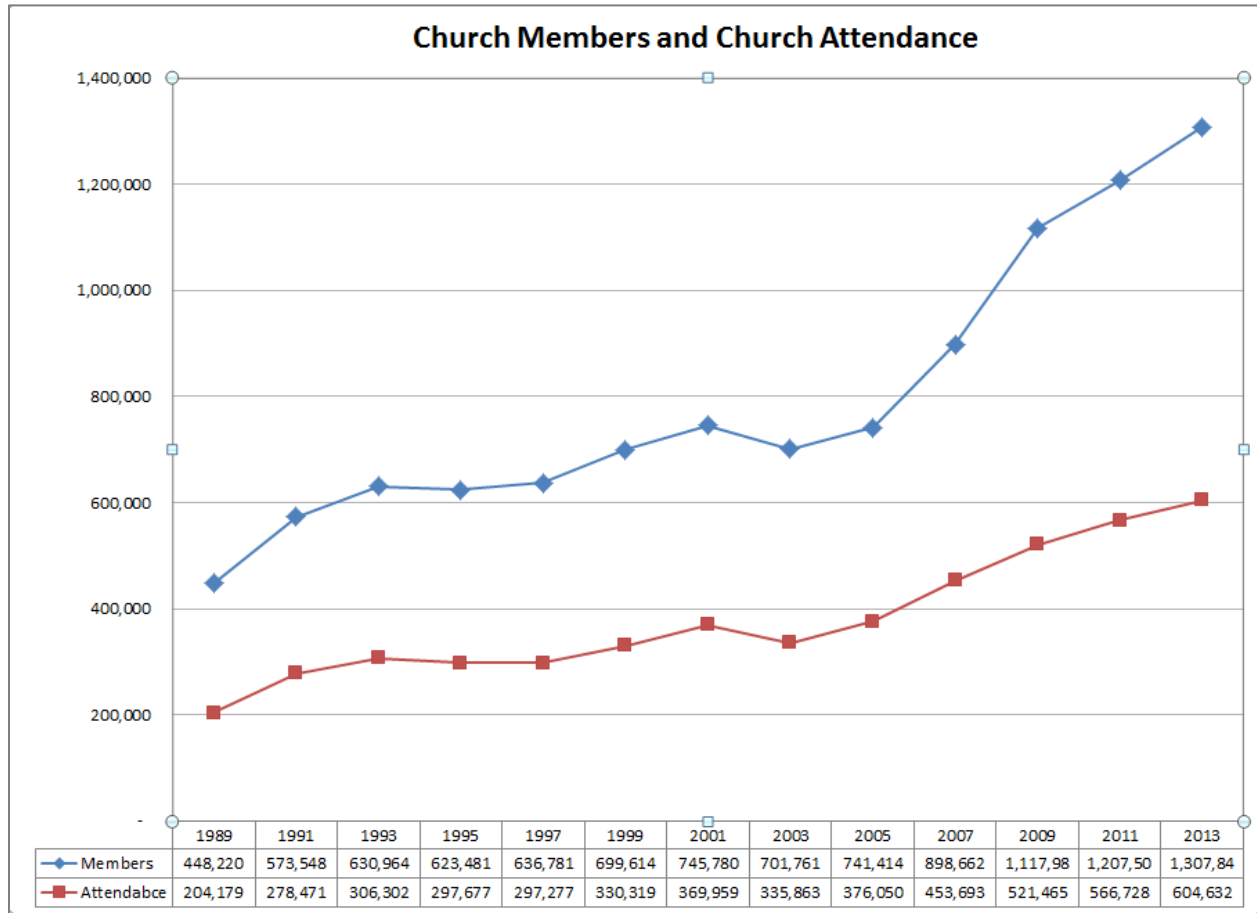
2003 marks a significant upturn in the percentage of church members as a percentage of Taiwan's population. The number of church members rose from 701,761 in 2003 to 1,307,842 in 2013. The rate of growth for this ten year period is 86.4%, compared to 11.2% for the previous ten years. This trend shows that in recent years the Taiwanese people are indicating a greater openness to the message of the Church. Identifying the factors in the country and/or the churches that contributed to this growth could provide important insights that would lead to even more fruitful practices.

Graph 3. Taiwan Church Membership in 2013



The percentage of Taiwan residents who are not church members is 94.4%, while church members comprise 5.6% of the population. The percentage of church attenders at 2.6% is three percent of the population less than church membership. More than 22 million people in Taiwan are not members of a Protestant church. It is clear that the task of evangelism is not yet complete in Taiwan and that an important focus is to turn church members into message bearers.

Graph 4: Church Membership and Church Attendance 1989-2013



This graph tracks the number of church members and the number of church attenders. Information from Data Table 1 indicates that Church Attendance ranges from a low of 45.6% in 1989 to a high of 50.7% in 2007. For the entire period, the church attendance averages 47.9% of church membership. Data table 2 shows that church attendance has not increase as rapidly as church membership over the last 20 years studied.

Graph 5: Growth Rates for Church Membership 1989-2013

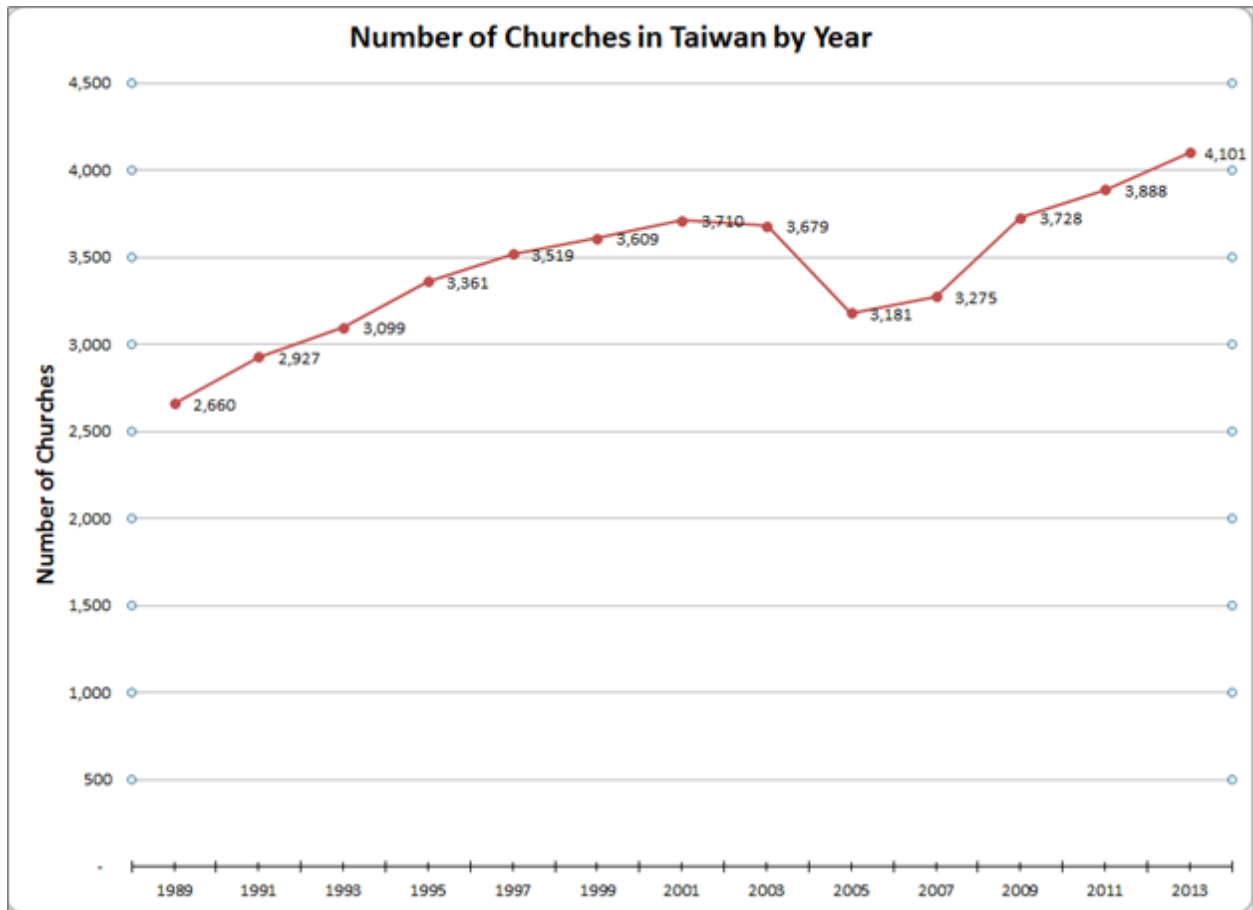


This graph shows the average annual growth rates for church membership between 1989 and 2013, calculated at two year intervals. The average growth rate for the entire period is 4.56%: five periods were higher; seven periods were lower, including two periods of decline. At this rate, membership would double in about 16 years.

Analysis of Church Growth in Taiwan, 1989-2013

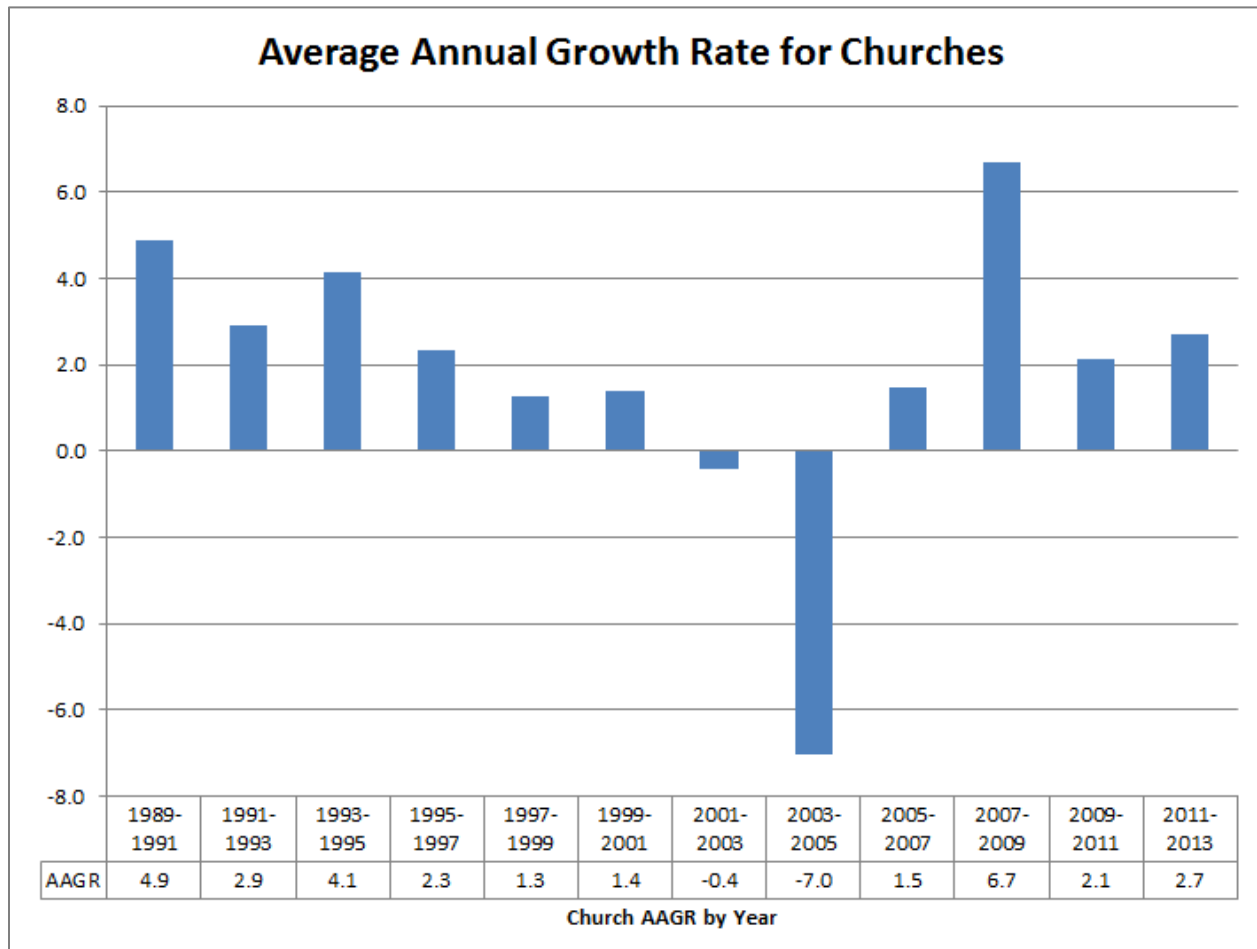
The next graphs provide an overview for the growth in the number of churches during the period 1989-2013.

Graph 6. The Number of Churches in Taiwan by Year, 1989-2013



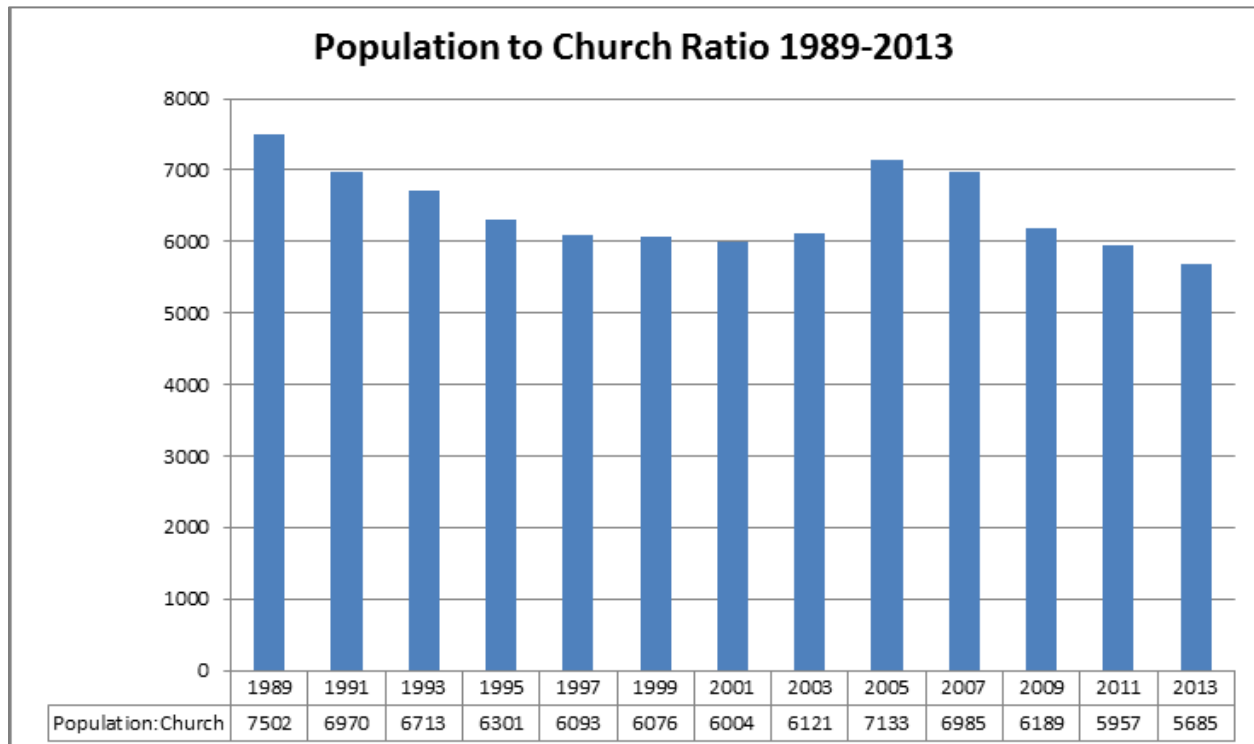
The increase in the number of churches is positive for each two year period except for a slight down turn between 2001 and 2003 (71 churches) followed by a significant drop between 2003 and 2005 of 498 churches. It is unknown what factors account for the reported drop of churches between 2001 and 2005.

Graph 7. Average Annual Growth Rate for Churches 1989-2013



This graph provides the average annual growth rate for the number of churches in Taiwan and the accompanying data table. There was a slight decline in the number of churches in 2001-2003 (-0.4% AAGR) and a rather significant drop between 2003 and 2005 (-7.0% AAGR). What contributed to the decline in the number of churches during those periods is not known at this time.

Graph 8. Population to Church Ratio 1989-2013



The overall trend shows that the number of churches has been increasing at a faster rate than population growth. There decline in the number of churches in the middle of the first decade of the new millennium is evident, as well as the recovery of a positive growth rate thereafter.

The best population to church ratio of 5,685 people per church suggests that there is still a need to start new congregations in Taiwan. An appropriate follow up study would be to identify cities, towns and villages that do not have a church. Also it would be profitable to identify zones in urban areas that need new congregations.

Data Table 2. Ten Year Growth Rates for Membership, Attendance and Churches

The following data table shows the ten year growth rates for church membership, attendance and the number of churches.

Ten Year Period	Church Membership	Church Attendance	Number of Churches
1993-2003	11.2%	9.7%	18.7%
2003-2013	86.4%	80.0%	11.5%

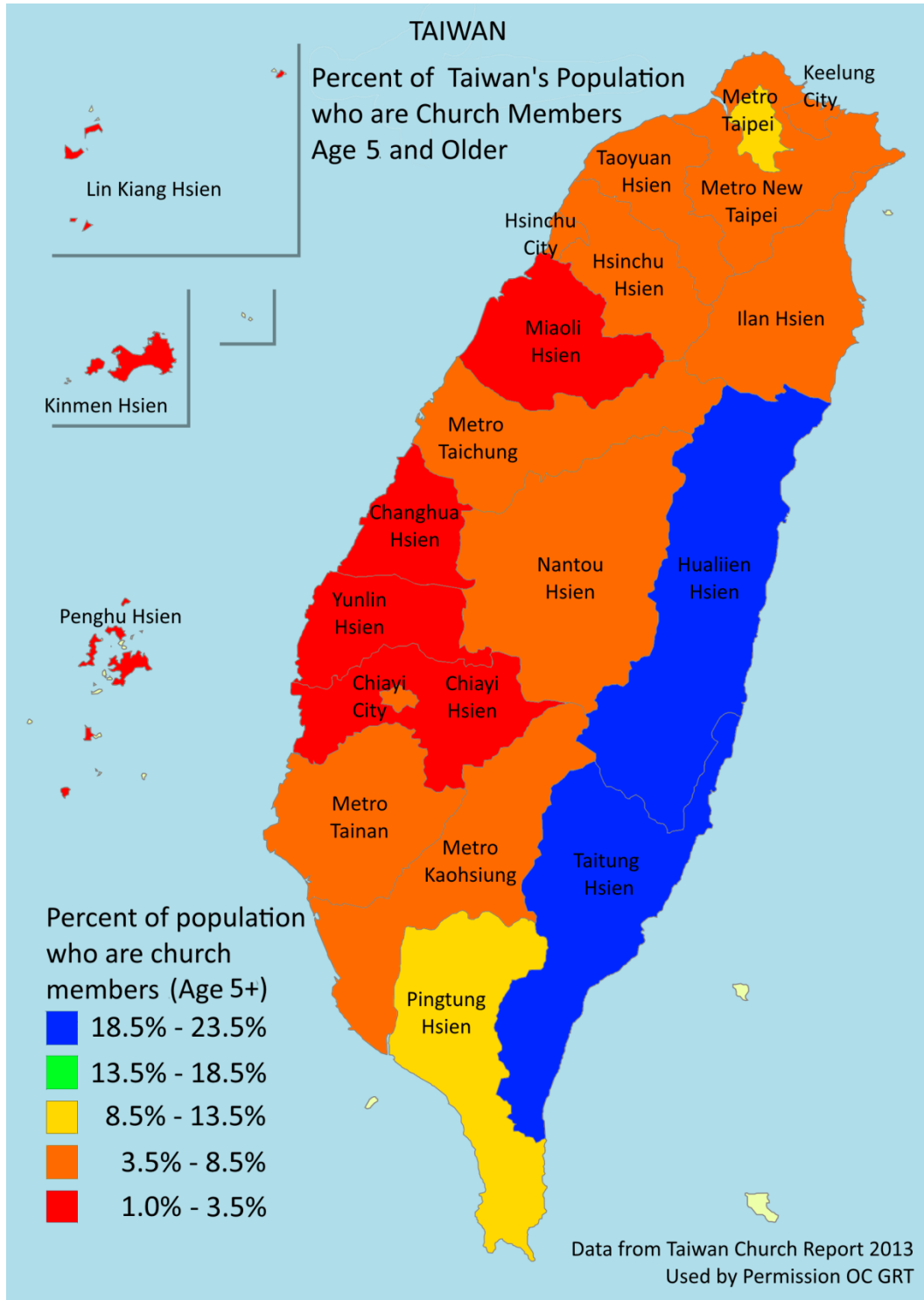
This analysis shows that church membership more than doubled in the twenty year period from 1993 to 2013, from 630,964 to 1,306,842 members. Attendance also nearly increased twofold from 306,302 to 604,632. The number of churches, however, increased by about one third (32.3%) or 1,002 churches.

A certain abnormality is observed in these ten year growth rates. The rate of growth for church membership and attendance was far greater for the second ten year period in comparison to the first ten year period. The growth rate for the number of churches was, however, greater during the first ten year period than the second. It would be insightful to further examine the relationship of these two measures. Did the increased number of churches started in 1993-2003 result in the increase in church membership there after? Or does church planting have a negative impact on overall church membership? The data provided does not enable deeper analysis of this subject. It would be necessary to have the founding year of churches and membership figures for 1989-2013 or a period similar in length to perform this deeper analysis.

Analysis for the Period 2011-2013

Detailed data was provided for Taiwan's districts for the period 2011-2013. The following is an analysis based on this data.

Map 1: Percent of Taiwan's Population (Age 5+) who are Church Members



Data Table 3: Percent of Taiwan's Population (Age 5+) who are Church Members

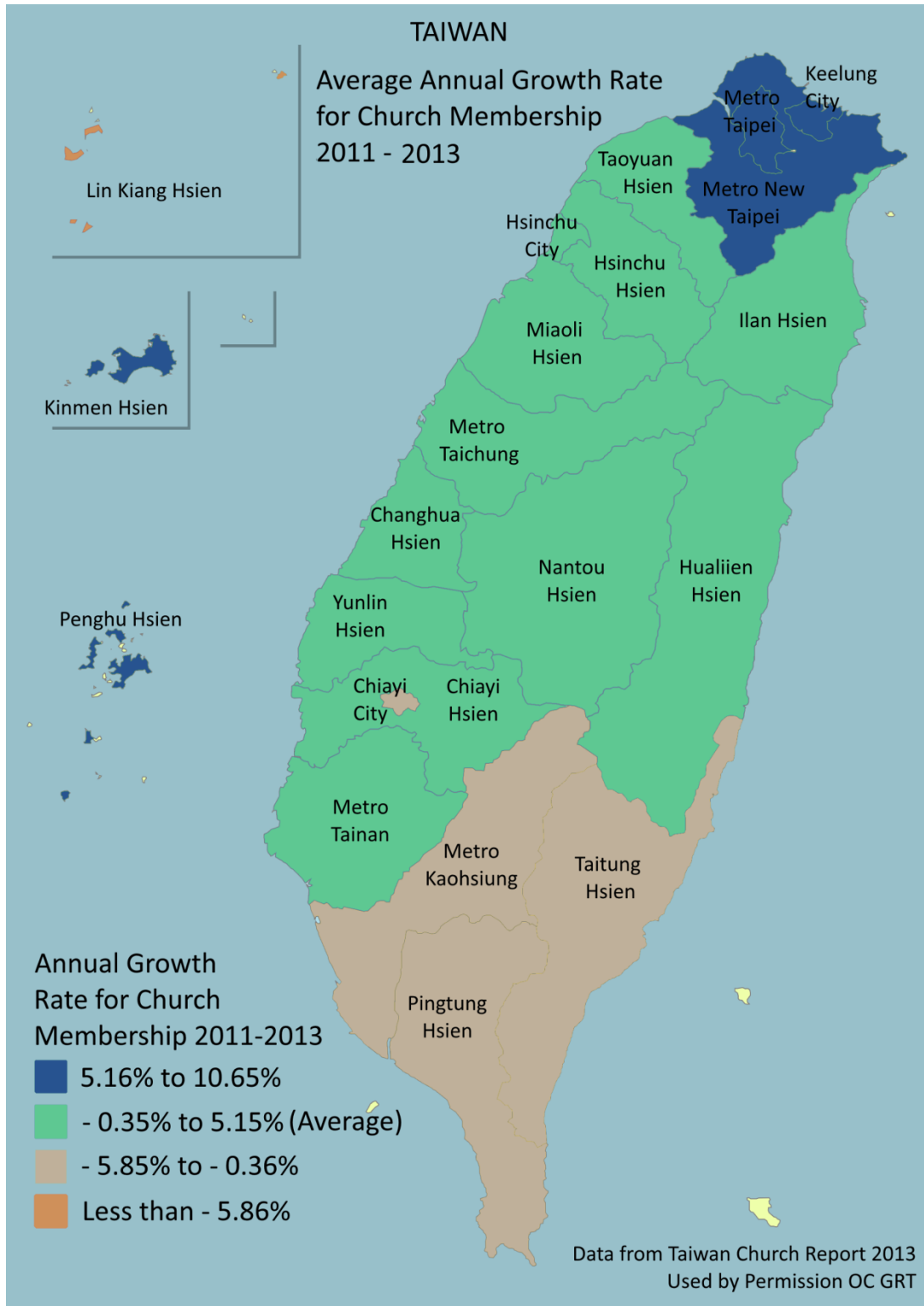
District	Population as of 12/2012		Church Members as of 12/2013 (Incl. Sun. School)		Church Members as a percentage of population (Age 5+) (C+D)/B*100
	A 0-100 yrs.	B 5-100 yrs.	C Age 12+	D 11 and under	
Metro Taipei	2,673,226	2,544,210	288,793	43,598	13.07%
Metro New Taipei	3,939,305	3,777,002	123,580	19,466	3.79%
Metro Taichung	2,684,893	2,563,696	107,972	18,672	4.94%
Metro Tainan	1,881,645	1,807,742	73,956	12,720	4.53%
Metro Kaohsiung	2,778,659	2,671,430	130,489	24,068	5.79%
Keelung City	377,153	365,974	13,379	3,870	4.71%
Hsinchu City	425,071	399,416	21,396	3,098	6.13%
Chiayi City	271,220	261,111	10,762	2,308	5.05%
Ilan Hsein	458,595	441,237	14,505	3,050	3.95%
TaoYuan Hsein	2,030,161	1,937,470	64,076	10,710	3.80%
Hsinchu Hsein	523,993	495,022	17,481	4,814	4.5%
Miaoli Hsein	563,976	539,187	11,156	2,604	2.55%
Changhua Hsein	1,299,868	1,243,771	26,110	5,792	2.57%
Nantou Hsein	520,196	502,005	28,251	5,342	6.69%
Yunlin Hsein	710,991	684,081	11,174	2,320	1.97%
Chiayi Hsein	533,723	516,037	13,931	3,514	3.38%
Pingtung Hsein	858,441	830,105	60,628	11,366	8.67%
Taitung Hsein	226,252	217,499	26,251	8,188	20.43%
Hualien Hsein	335,190	322,378	50,674	9,818	18.76%
Penghu Hsein	98,843	95,015	2,094	856	3.10%
Kinmen Hsein	113,111	107,609	1,009	270	1.21%
Lin Kiang Hsein	11,310	10,742	175	70	2.28%
Taiwan (Total)	23,315,882	22,332,139	1,097,842	196,510	5.59%

Comments about church membership

The data provided gives the percentage of those who are church members (five years and older) in comparison to the general population (five years and older). This percentage was found by adding columns C and D, dividing the sum by column B, and then multiplying by 100. For the entire country church membership totals 1,304,352 or 5.59% of the population (age 5+).

The data shows that the distribution of Protestants throughout Taiwan is uneven. The highest percentages of church members are in the two districts on the eastern coast, followed by Metro Taipei and Pingtung Hsein. The districts that fall in the “average” band are colored orange. The districts that are below average, found on the west coast of Taiwan and the outlying island districts, are colored red.

Map 2: Average Annual Growth Rate for Church Membership (2011-2013)



Data Table 4: Average Annual Growth Rates for Church Membership and Attendance by District (2011-2013)

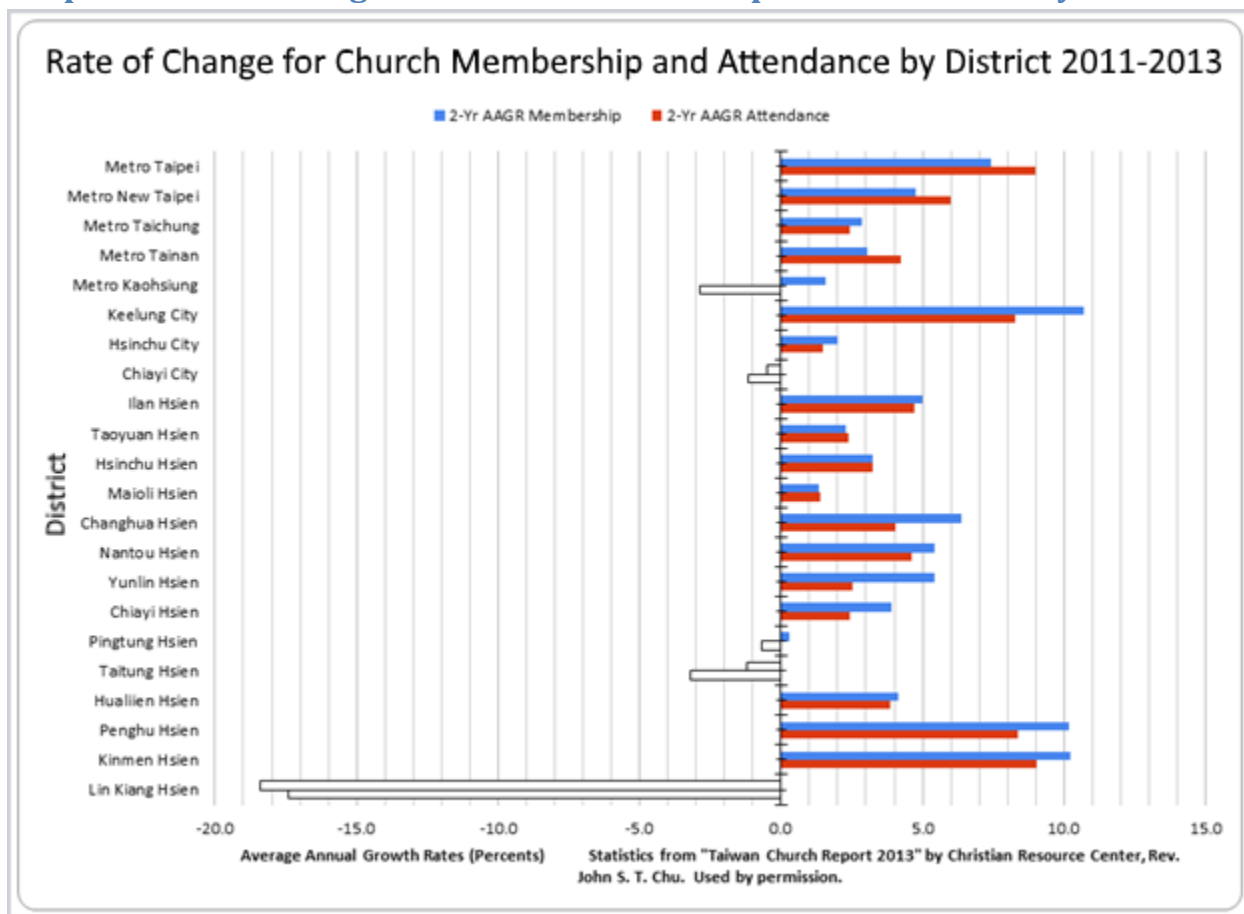
Taiwan District	2-Yr AAGR Membership	2-Yr AAGR Attendance
Metro Taipei	7.44%	8.97%
Metro New Taipei	4.75%	6.02%
Metro Taichung	2.87%	2.44%
Metro Tainan	3.03%	4.24%
Metro Kaohsiung	1.60%	-2.85%
Keelung City	10.68%	8.27%
Hsinchu City	2.01%	1.49%
Chiayi City	-0.51%	-1.15%
Ilan Hsien	4.99%	4.73%
Taoyuan Hsien	2.30%	2.40%
Hsinchu Hsien	3.24%	3.25%
Maioli Hsien	1.35%	1.39%
Changhua Hsien	6.38%	4.03%
Nantou Hsien	5.42%	4.61%
Yunlin Hsien	5.41%	2.52%
Chiayi Hsien	3.92%	2.41%
Pingtung Hsien	0.27%	-0.67%
Taitung Hsien*	-1.18%	-3.21%
Hualien Hsien	4.17%	3.85%
Penghu Hsien	10.16%	8.37%
Kinmen Hsien	10.21%	9.06%
Lin Kiang Hsien	-18.41%	-17.40%
Taiwan (Total)	4.03%	3.70%

*It is possible that the data provided for this district contains an error.

Comments about average annual growth rates

The dark blue districts have above average growth rates, which are quite good. The green districts are average. The tan districts are below average and also have negative growth rates. Geographically, the highest growth rates are in the North and the lowest growth rates are in the South. Local factors that have contributed to high or low growth rates are unknown at this time. The next chart and comments further explain this data.

Graph 9: Rate of Change for Church Membership and Attendance by District



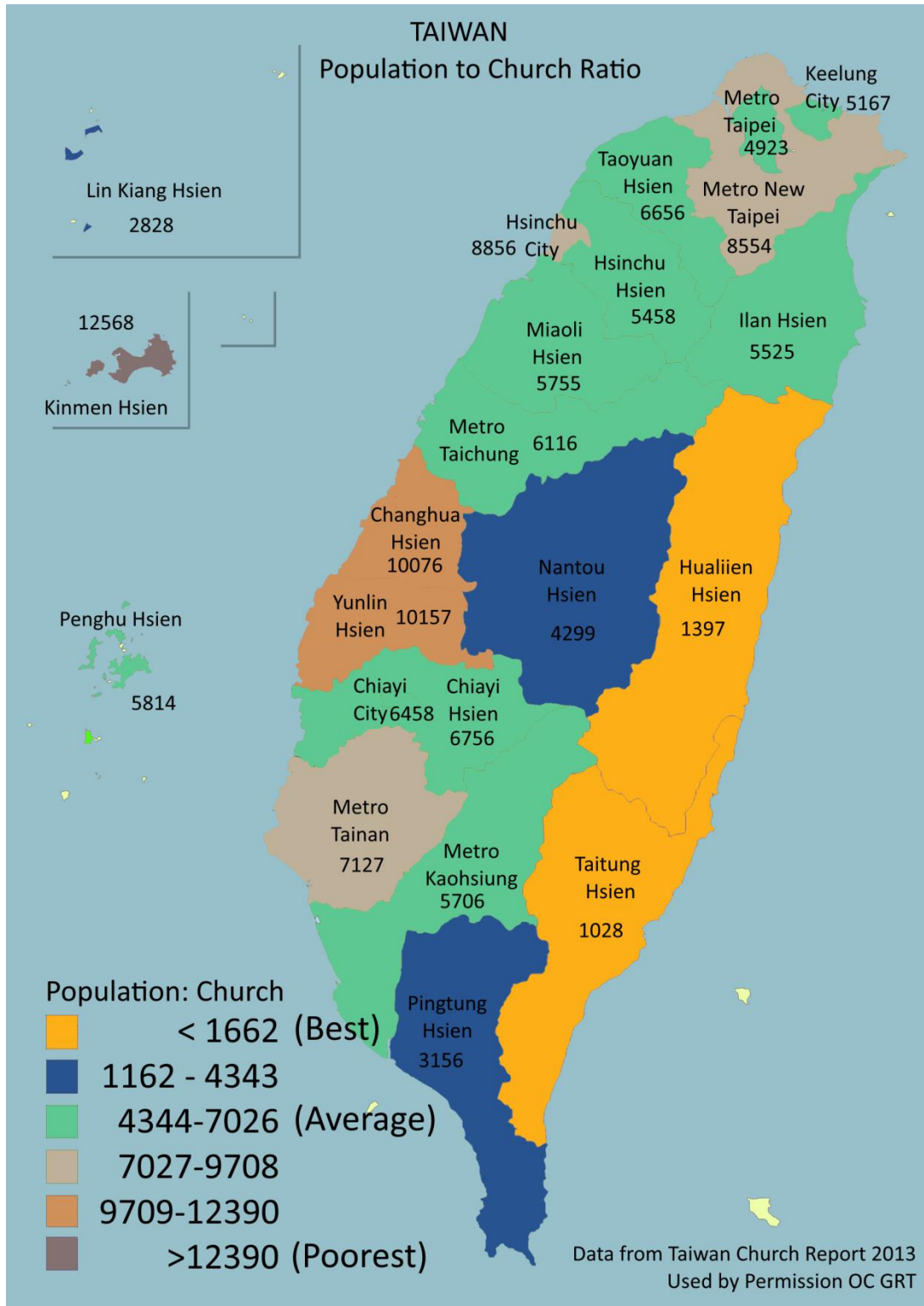
Data Table 5: Rate of Change for Church Membership and Attendance by District (2011-2013)

District	2-Yr AAGR Membership	2-Yr AAGR Attendance	District	2-Yr AAGR Membership	2-Yr AAGR Attendance
Metro Taipei	7.44%	8.97%	Maioli Hsien	1.35%	1.39%
Metro New Taipei	4.75%	6.02%	Changhua Hsien	6.38%	4.03%
Metro Taichung	2.87%	2.44%	Nantou Hsien	5.42%	4.61%
Metro Tainan	3.03%	4.24%	Yunlin Hsien	5.41%	2.52%
Metro Kaohsiung	1.60%	-2.85%	Chiayi Hsien	3.92%	2.41%
Keelung City	10.68%	8.27%	Pingtung Hsien	0.27%	-0.67%
Hsinchu City	2.01%	1.49%	Taitung Hsien	-1.18%	-3.21%
Chiayi City	-0.51%	-1.15%	Hualien Hsien	4.17%	3.85%
Ilan Hsien	4.99%	4.73%	Penghu Hsien	10.16%	8.37%
Taoyuan Hsien	2.30%	2.40%	Kinmen Hsien	10.21%	9.06%
Hsinchu Hsien	3.24%	3.25%	Lin Kiang Hsien	-18.41%	-17.40%

Comments related to rates of change for church membership and attendance

For the period 2011-2013, the average annual growth rate of church membership for the entire country was 4.03%, compared to 3.70% for church attendance. Overall, church membership grew slightly more than church attendance. Seven districts did not follow this general trend. The bold district names show where the rate of change for church attendance was greater than that for church membership

Map3: Population to Church Ratio for Taiwan by District



Data Table 6: Population, Number of Churches and Population to Church Ratio by District

Taiwan District	Population	Nr. Churches	Population to Church Ratio
Metro Taipei	2,673,226	543	4923
Metro New Taipei	3,939,305	460	5125
Metro Taichung	2,684,893	439	6116
Metro Tainan	1,881,645	264	7127
Metro Kaohsiung	2,778,659	487	5706
Keelung City	377,153	73	5167
Hsinchu City	425,071	48	8856
Chiayi City	271,220	44	6458
Ilan Hsein	458,595	83	5225
Taoyan Hsein	2,030,161	305	6656
Hsinchu Hsein	523,993	96	5458
Maioli Hsein	563,976	98	5755
Changhua Hsein	1,299,868	129	10076
Nantou Hsein	526,491	121	4299
Yunlin Hsein	710,991	70	10157
Chiayi Hsein	533,723	79	6756
Pingtung Hsein	858,441	272	3156
Taitung Hsein	226,252	220	1028
Hualien Hsein	335,190	240	1397
Penghu Hsein	98,843	17	5814
Kinmen Hsein	113,111	9	12568
Lin Kiang Hsein	11,310	4	2828
Taiwan (Total)	23,315,822	4,101	5685

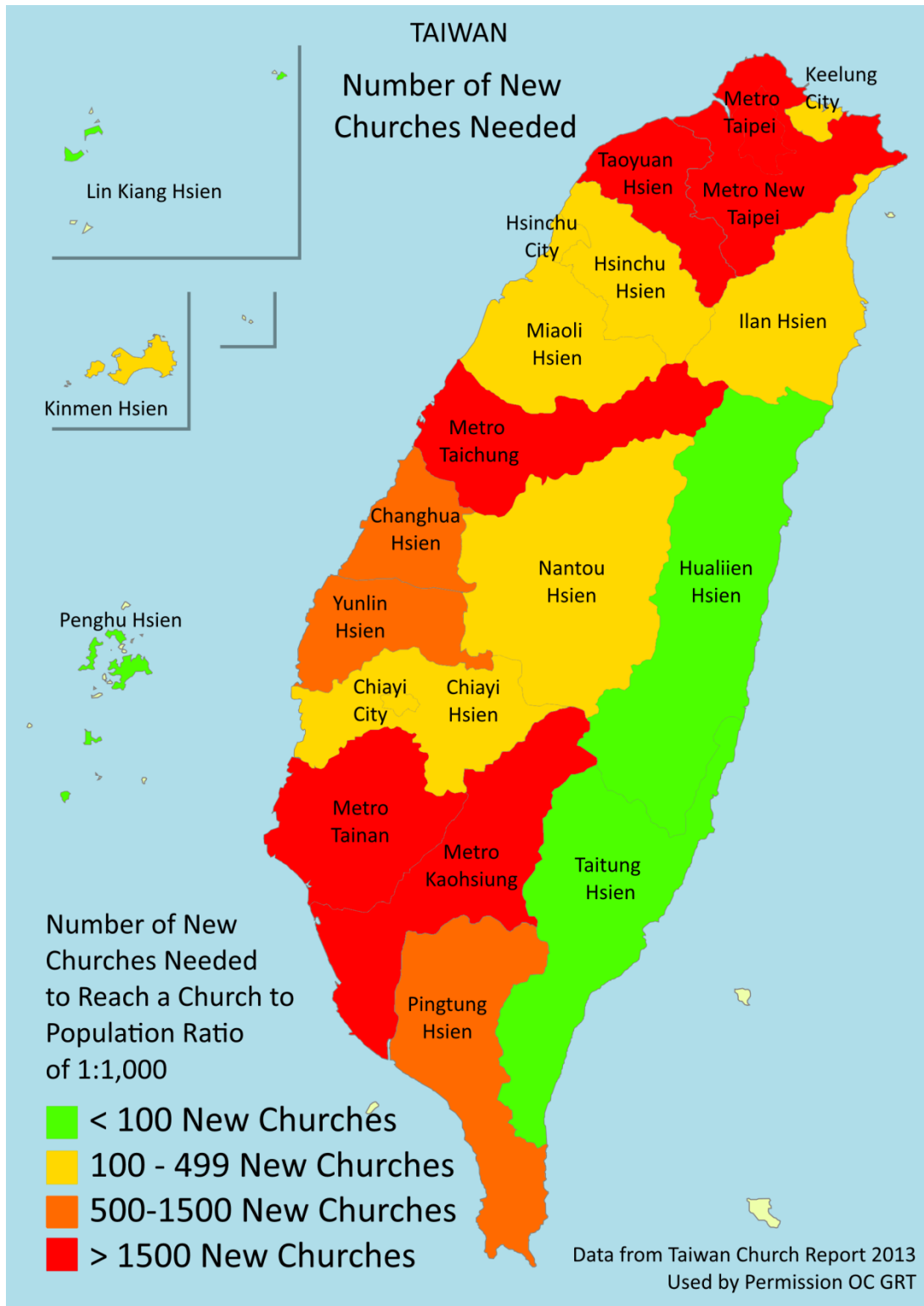
Comments regarding church to population ratios

The church to population ratio is a measure of how easy it is for the population to come into contact with the ministry of a local church. In an ideal situation, there would be one church seeking to minister to 1,000 people. In rural areas this might be one church per 500 people or in urban areas one church for every 1,500 people.

The best church areas are on the east coast of Taiwan (gold) followed by the dark blue districts. Both of the gold districts are very close to “ideal”. The green districts are average. The tan, red and dark brown areas show the districts with the fewest number of churches in proportion to the population.

Recommended steps would be to identify the cities, towns and villages that do not have a church and to then to prioritize the establishment of witnessing congregations in these locations

Map 4: The Number of New Churches Needed to Reach a Church to Population Ratio of 1:1000 in Taiwan



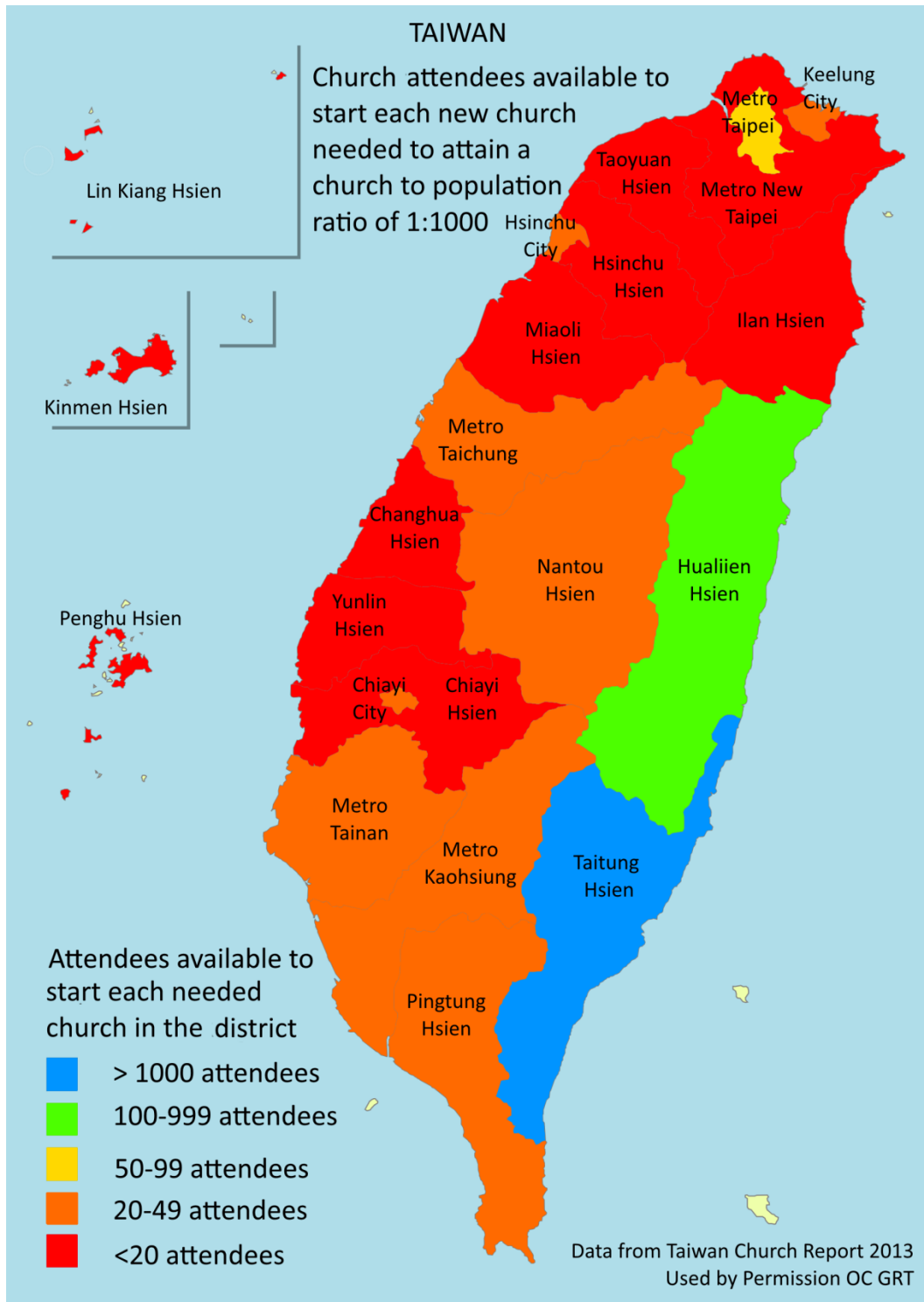
Data Table 7: Number of Churches Needed to Reach a Church to Population Ratio of 1:1000 in Taiwan by District

District	Population	Nr. Churches	Total Nr. of Churches Required	Total Nr. of New Churches Needed
Metro Taipei	2,673,226	543	2673	2130
Metro New Taipei	3,939,305	460	3939	3479
Metro Taichng	2,684,893	439	2685	2246
Metro Tainan	1,881,645	264	1882	1618
Metro Kaohsiung	2,778,659	487	2779	2292
Keelung City	377,153	73	377	304
Hsinchu City	425,071	48	425	377
Chiayi City	271,220	44	271	227
Ilan Hsein	458,595	83	459	376
Taoyan Hsein	2,030,161	305	2030	1725
Hsinchu Hsein	523,993	96	524	428
Maioli Hsein	563,976	98	564	466
Changhua Hsein	1,299,868	129	1300	1171
Nantou Hsein	526,491	121	526	405
Yunlin Hsein	710,991	70	711	641
Chiayi Hsein	533,723	79	534	455
Pingtung Hsein	858,441	272	858	586
Taitung Hsein	226,252	220	226	6
Hualien Hsein	335,190	240	335	95
Penghu Hsein	98,843	17	99	82
Kinmen Hsein	113,111	9	113	104
Lin Kiang Hsein	11,310	4	11	7
Taiwan (Total)	23,315,822	4,101	23,322	19,221

Comments regarding the need for church planting

This map provides an estimation of the number of new churches needed to reach a church to population ratio of 1:1,000 or one church per one thousand people. From the perspective of Saturation Church Planting (SCP), attaining this church to population ratio would signify that every person in Taiwan has access to a Protestant Church, and it is an important milestone to reach in the process of discipling a whole nation.. The Taitung and Lin Kiang districts need few churches to reach this idea with 6 and 7 churches needed respectively. Hualien and Penghu districts are also in good standing with 95 and 82 new churches needed. All the other districts are in three or four digits. The districts with the greatest need for new church starts are all the metropolitan districts, New Metro Taipei (3,479 new churches needed), Metro Taichng (2,246 new churches needed), Metro Taipei (2,130), and Metro Tainan (1,618), as well as Taoyan Hsein (1,725) and Changhua Hsein (1,171). Again a field survey would be necessary to identify the exact locations that need new disciple making congregations.

Map 5: Church attendees available to start each new church needed to attain a church to population ratio of 1:1000.



Data Table 8: Number of Current Church attenders per new church needed to attain a church to population ratio of 1:1000

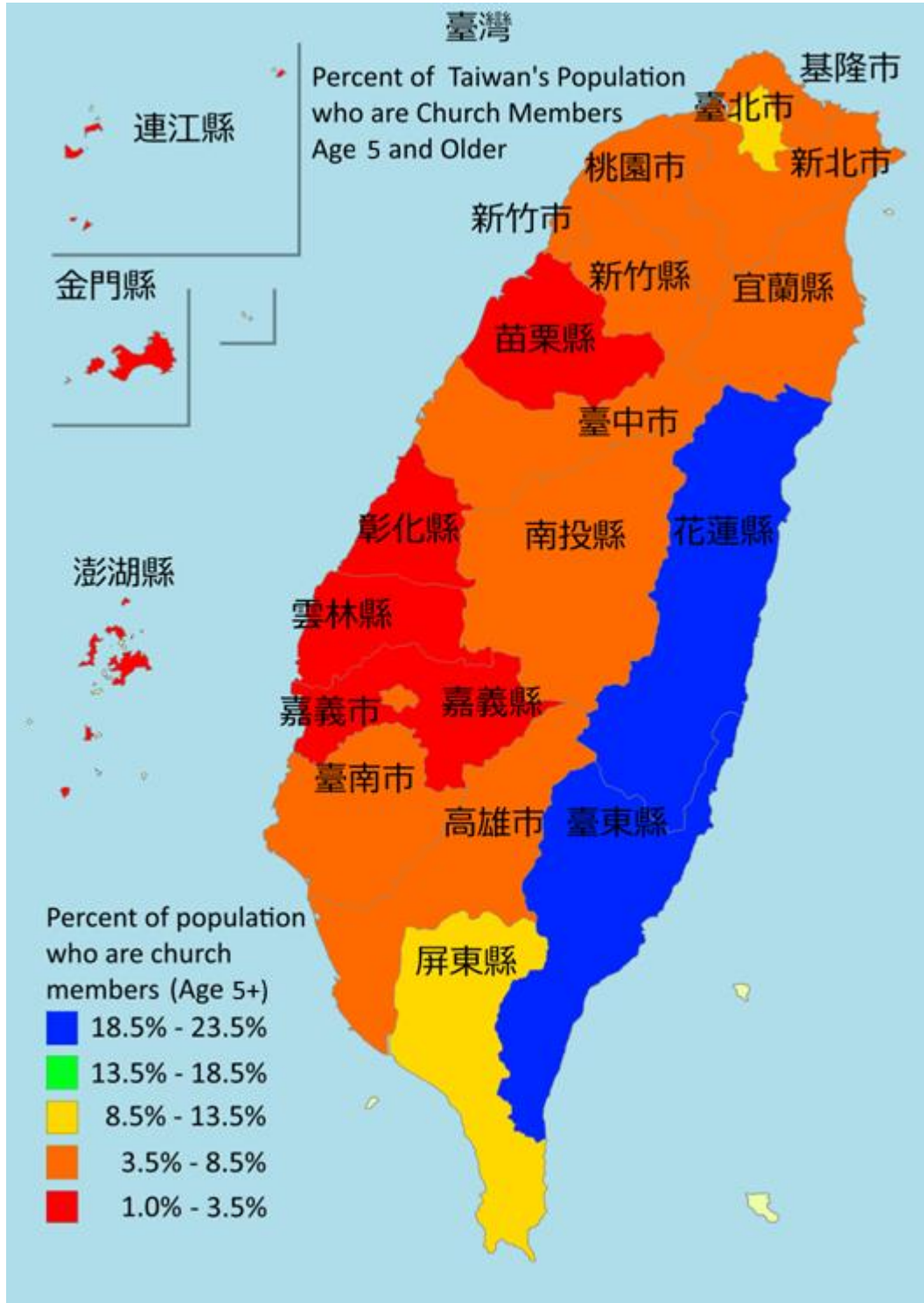
District	Attendance (12+)	New Churches Needed	Attendees available to start each need church in the district
Taitung Hsein	133,006	6	2,263
Lin Kiang Hsein	62,098	7	13
Penghu Hsein	49,642	82	10
Hualien Hsein	34,642	95	232
Kinmen Hsein	55,534	104	4
Chiayi City	6,456	227	23
Keelung City	9,401	304	21
Ilan Hsein	5,132	376	17
Hsinchu City	6,281	377	25
Nantou Hsein	31,298	399	30
Hsinchu Hsein	7,794	428	18
Chiayi Hsein	4,926	455	13
Miaoli Hsein	10,979	466	11
Pingtung Hsein	11,947	586	49
Yunlin Hsein	4,887	641	8
Changhua Hsein	5,839	1,171	9
Metro Tainan	28,878	1,618	21
TaoYuan Hsein	14,148	1,725	18
Metro Taipei	22,101	2,130	62
Metro Taichung	816	2,246	22
Metro Kaohsiung	468	2,292	24
Metro New Taipei	96	3,479	18

Comments about the strength of the harvest force

This particular analysis strives to quantify the strength of the Harvest Force in each district. Dividing Church attendance by the number of new churches needed to reach a church to population ratio of 1:1000 yields the number of church attenders potentially available to start each new church. In the Taitung District, 2,263 attendees are available to start the six new churches needed there. The Hualien District has potentially 232 attendees who could help start each of the 95 needed churches. Metro Taipei needs 2,130 new churches. But due to the large number of attendees, 62 people could potentially assist in the starting of each of these needed churches. . In these three districts, the potential for new church starts within the district is quite strong and it is quite likely that outside assistance may not be needed to start new churches. . All the other districts have less than 50 people to start new churches; 11 districts (colored red) have less than 20 attendees. Thus it is likely that outside assistance may be needed to assist church planting in the orange and red districts.

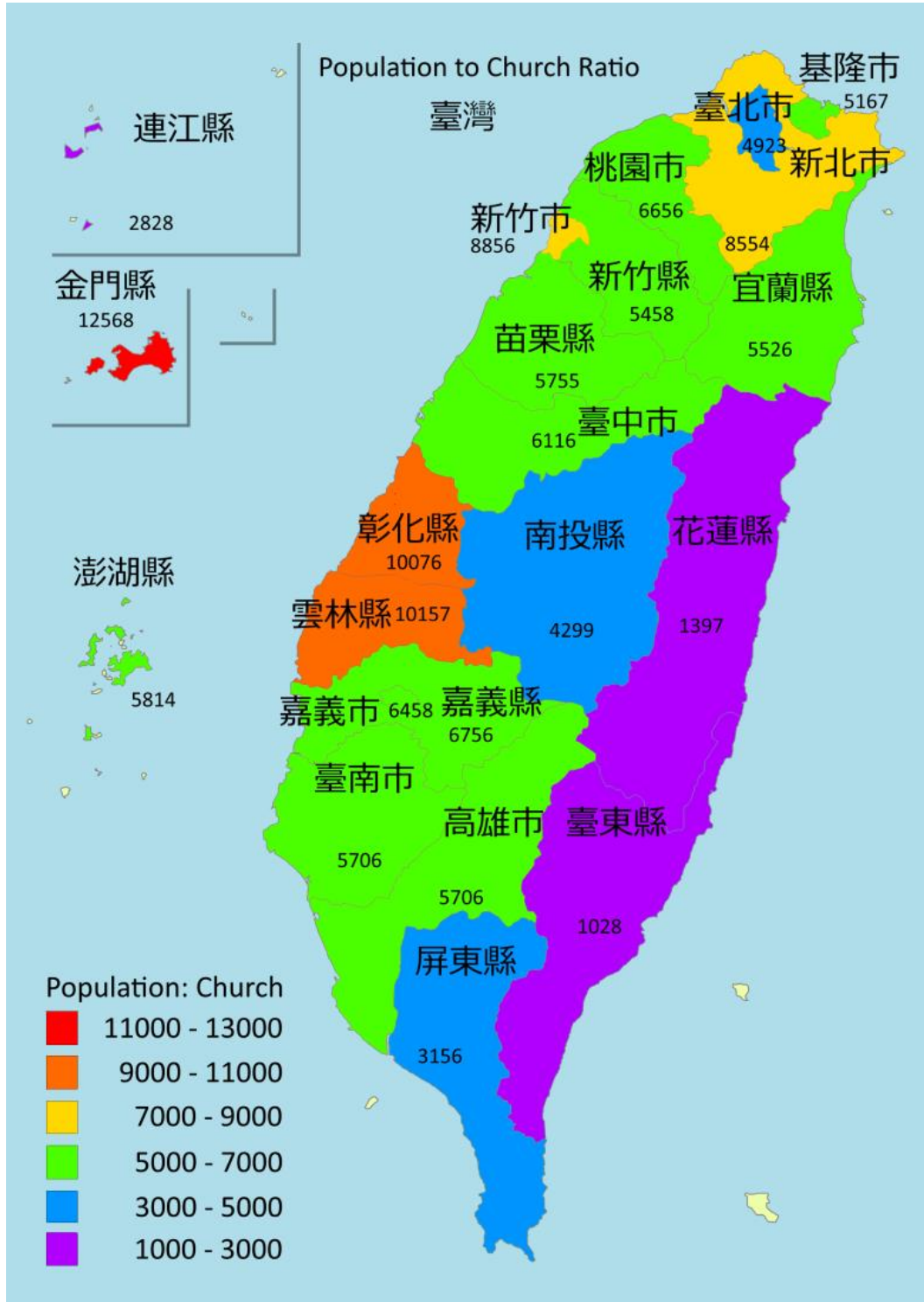
Appendix: Chinese Maps for Taiwan

Map 6. Percent of Taiwan's Population (Age 5+) who are Church Members (Chinese)



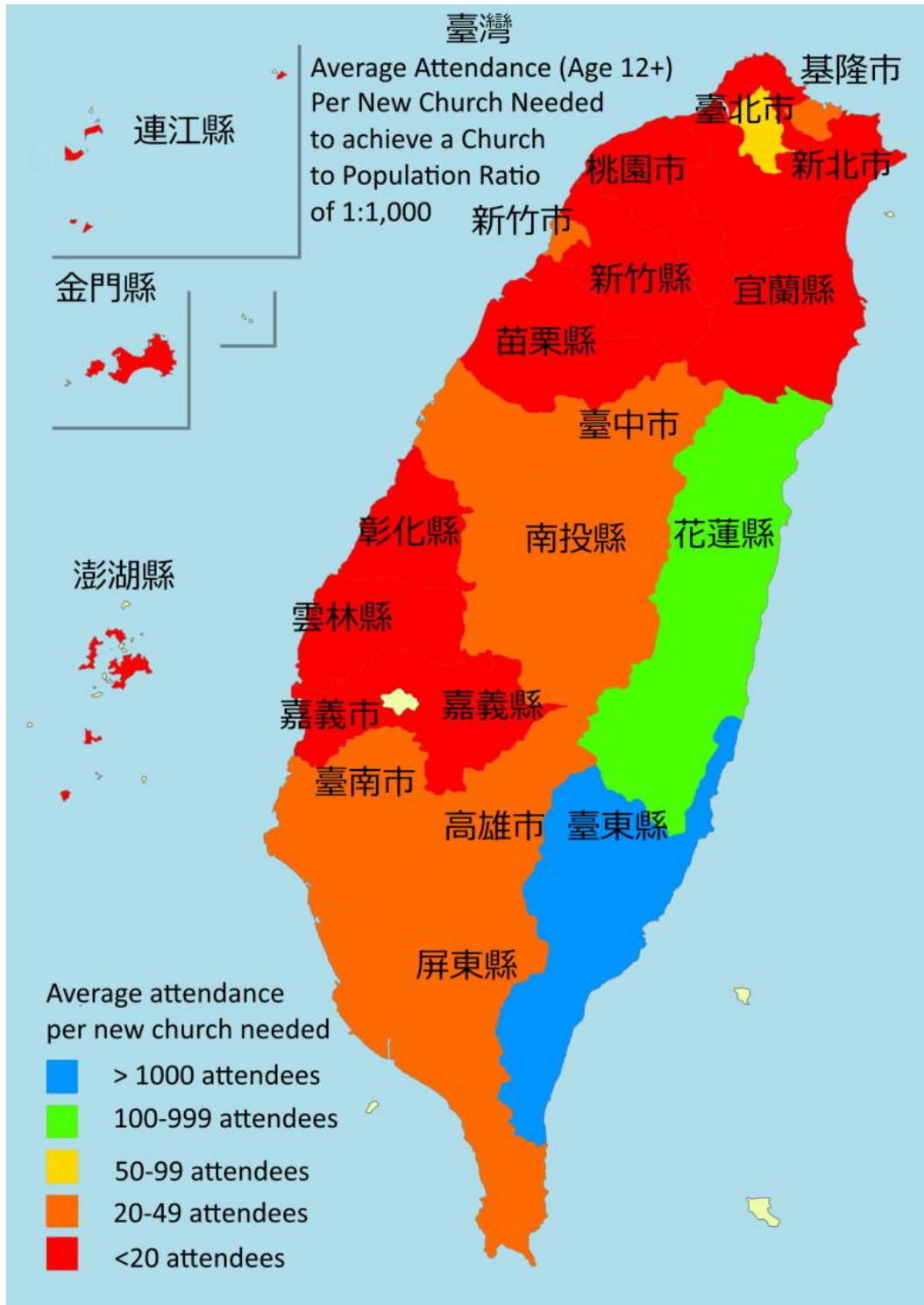
See Map 1 in the body of this report for related comments.

Map 7. Population to Church Ratio for Taiwan by District (Chinese)



See Map 3 for related comments.

Map 8. Church attendees available to start each new church needed to attain a church to population ratio of 1:1000. (Chinese)



See Map 5 for explanation and related comments.