

# A Survey of Covid-19 Deaths Among American Clergy

J.M. Dixon,  
Princeton Theological Seminary

**Abstract:** *This research aims to discover the number of clergy deaths in the United States that resulted from complications associated with coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). The FaithX Project, in association with researchers from the Global Center for Religious Research (GCRR), conducted a survey of sixteen major Christian denominations in the United States. The methodology for this study was to contact leaders in these denominations (via email and phone) who oversaw specific church judicatories. The research took place from January to June of 2021. There was an average response rate of 23.12% across the sixteen Christian denominations contacted. 169 judicatories responded to the survey and a total of 118 clergy deaths were reported, with the Catholic Church recording the most: 43 deaths. The average overall death rate for these denominations was 0.23%, with the highest rate being the Catholic Church at 0.73%. Utilizing this information, it can be estimated that somewhere between 1,008 and 1,099 total clergy in the United States died from Covid-19.*

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Covid-19 Deaths, Coronavirus, Clergy, Clergy Deaths, United States

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## Introduction

There is no doubt that religion is a major influence upon American culture. There are over 450,000 clergy employed in the United States.<sup>1</sup> However, there have been no major studies published on how many of these clergy have died from Covid-19. The goal of this research was to produce enough data in order to estimate the total number of religious clergy who died from Covid-19 across the United States. Utilizing the data acquired through this research, additional details were studied to examine other patterns across Christians denominations: this includes the death rate per each denomination and an analysis of clergy deaths along American geographical divisions.

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Clergy”; Data USA, “Clergy.”

This research should not be considered the completion of an endeavor to learn the total number of American clergy who died from Covid-19. This research was completed in June of 2021 and much has changed when it comes to the effects of Covid-19 in the United States. Additionally, several notable areas of the American religious landscape were not fully included in the data due to several factors. However, this research will hopefully spark further investigations and inspire future research into this topic.

### Methodology

Sixteen Christian denominations were surveyed in the United States: the Catholic Church; Southern Baptist Convention (SMC); United Methodist Church (UMC); Assemblies of God (AOG); Church of the Nazarene; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA); Lutheran Church of the Missouri-Synod (LCMS); The Episcopal Church; American Baptist Churches U.S.A. (ABC); United Church of Christ (UCC); Church of the Brethren; Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA); Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC); Anglican Church in North America (ACNA); African Methodist Episcopal (AME); and Seventh-day Adventist.

**Table 1**  
**Total Members Per**  
**Denomination**

| Denomination       | Total Members |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Catholic           | 67,700,000    |
| UMC                | 6,617,825     |
| SBC                | 14,500,000    |
| AOG                | 3,260,021     |
| Nazarene           | 599,525       |
| ELCA               | 3,265,581     |
| Episcopal          | 1,637,945     |
| LCMS               | 1,861,129     |
| ABC                | 1,126,527     |
| UCC                | 824,866       |
| Brethren           | 98,680        |
| PCUSA              | 1,302,043     |
| EPC                | 145,000       |
| ACNA               | 127,624       |
| AME*               | 2,120,000     |
| 7th-Day Adventist* | 1,200,000     |

These sixteen groups were chosen because they are some of the largest denominations in the United States. Collectively, they represent about one-half of the total Christian population in the United States: over 106 million members. The largest denomination, by far, is the Catholic Church with over sixty-seven million members. The next two largest denominations are the Southern Baptist Convention, with over fourteen million members, and the United Methodist Church, with over six million members (see Table 1 for a breakdown of total numbers).

Out of the total 458,000 clergy working in the United States, there are around 290,000 clergy spread out across the sixteen denominations that were surveyed. The three denominations with the largest clergy numbers were the Southern Baptist Convention (which was estimated to have around 71,295

active clergy), the Assemblies of God (which has around 37,713 clergy), and the United Methodist Church (which has around 37,009 clergy). These clergy numbers for each denomination can be found in Table 2.<sup>2</sup>

The timeframe for this research was January 2021–June 2021. The research was conducted by contacting the offices of church judicatories in these Christian denominations. Email was the primary method of communication utilized to reach out to these offices, though phone calls were also occasionally utilized when the respondent requested to be contacted in this manner. The respondents were simply asked to provide the number of clergy who died from Covid-19 in their judicatory and if these deaths occurred before or after lockdown orders were put into effect in their region. Most respondents did not provide a timeframe for their deceased, instead choosing only to provide the number of clergy deaths. Because of this, the research was unable to acquire enough data to draw any conclusions about when the deaths occurred relative to lockdown orders being put into effect.

**Table 2**  
**Total Number of Clergy**  
**Per Denomination**

| Denomination       | Total Clergy |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Catholic           | 35,513       |
| UMC                | 37,009       |
| SBC                | 71,295       |
| AOG                | 37,713       |
| Nazarene           | 16,940       |
| ELCA               | 17,214       |
| Episcopal          | 5,009        |
| LCMS               | 5,938        |
| ABC                | 6,250        |
| UCC                | 9,862        |
| Brethren           | 1,535        |
| PCUSA              | 19,066       |
| EPC                | 825          |
| ACNA               | 1,191        |
| AME*               | 3,817        |
| 7th-Day Adventist* | 20,802       |

<sup>2</sup> Church Membership and Clergy Number Sources: Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, “Frequently Requested Church Statistics”; United Methodist Church, “United Methodists At-A-Glance”; Assemblies of God, “Statistics”; Church of the Nazarene, “Statistics by Region”; Shellnut, “Southern Baptists See Biggest Drop in 100 Years”; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, “ELCA Facts”; Lutheran Church of the Missouri-Synod, “Annual Report 2020”; Church Pension Group, “2019 Episcopal Clergy Compensation Report”; The General Convention of the Episcopal Church, “Fast Facts”; Research Services, “Statistics by World Area”; American Baptist Churches U.S.A., “Summary of Denominational Statistics”; Brumbaugh-Cayford, “Church of the Brethren Denominational Membership”; Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), “Comparative Summaries of Statistics”; Evangelical Presbyterian Church, “2018-2019 Ministry Report”; Bonner and Goodhew, “The Growth and Decline of the Anglican Church in North America”; World Council of Churches, “African Methodist Episcopal Church”; Seventh-day Adventist Church North American Division, “Who are Seventh-day Adventists?”

### Initial Findings Per Denomination

A total of 169 judicatories responded to the survey. The average response rate across all denominations contacted was 23% (excluding outliers). The denomination with the highest response rate was the Presbyterian Church (USA) with 37.5% of the judicatories reporting back. Six of the sixteen total judicatories for the PCUSA responded to the survey. Two denominations (the AME Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Church), were both considered outliers because of low response rates and therefore were taken out of the

**Table 3**  
**Response Rate Per**  
**Denomination**

| Denomination                | Response Rate |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Catholic                    | 16.66%        |
| UMC                         | 16.67%        |
| SBC                         | 14.63%        |
| AOG                         | 14.92%        |
| Nazarene                    | 19.23%        |
| ELCA                        | 20%           |
| Episcopal                   | 23%           |
| LCMS                        | 25.71%        |
| ABC                         | 21.21%        |
| UCC                         | 23.68%        |
| Brethren                    | 33.33%        |
| PCUSA                       | 37.5%         |
| EPC                         | 33.33%        |
| ACNA                        | 22%           |
| AME*                        | 8.33%         |
| 7th-Day Adventist*          | 12.5%         |
| Average (Excludes Outliers) | 23%           |

\*=outlier

general data set when calculating averages. The response rates for each denomination can be found in Table 3.

In total, 118 deaths were recorded via these surveys. The denomination with the largest number of deaths was the Catholic Church, which reported 43 deceased clergy members due to Covid-19. The United Methodist Church had the second highest number, reporting sixteen deaths total. The Southern Baptist Convention and the Assemblies of God had the third highest death rate where both reported twelve deaths each. Finally, three denominations reported zero deaths: the Presbyterian Church USA, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, and the Anglican Church of North America. The number of clergy deaths documented for all reporting denominations can be seen in Table 4.

The survey results for each denomination were also analyzed as a percentage of the total deaths. The Catholic Church represented 36.44% of all reported deceased clergy. However, the Catholic Church represented only 11.54% of the total clergy surveyed. Thus, the percentage of deaths represented by the Catholic Church was 24.9% higher than the percentage of clergy they represented. The percentage representation of the total deaths compared to clergy representation per denomination can be seen in Table 5.

Table 4  
Total Recorded Clergy  
Deaths Per Denomination

| Denomination       | Total Recorded Clergy Deaths |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Catholic           | 43                           |
| UMC                | 16                           |
| SBC                | 12                           |
| AOG                | 12                           |
| Nazarene           | 9                            |
| ELCA               | 7                            |
| Episcopal          | 5                            |
| LCMS               | 1                            |
| ABC                | 6                            |
| UCC                | 4                            |
| Brethren           | 1                            |
| PCUSA              | 0                            |
| EPC                | 0                            |
| ACNA               | 0                            |
| AME*               | 1                            |
| 7th-Day Adventist* | 1                            |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>118</b>                   |

\*=outlier

Table 5  
Percentage of Deaths Compared  
to Percentage of Clergy in Survey

| Denomination       | Percentage of Total Deaths | % Clergy out of Total Surveyed | Difference between Death Percentage and Total Surveyed Clergy Percentage |
|--------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Catholic           | 36.44%                     | 11.54%                         | 24.9%  |
| UMC                | 13.56%                     | 11.82%                         | 1.74%  |
| SBC                | 10.17%                     | 20%                            | -9.26%   |
| AOG                | 10.17%                     | 10.91%                         | -0.74%   |
| Nazarene           | 7.63%                      | 6.24%                          | 1.39%  |
| ELCA               | 5.93%                      | 6.6%                           | -0.67%   |
| Episcopal          | 4.24%                      | 2.2%                           | 2.04%  |
| ABC                | 5.08%                      | 2.54%                          | 2.54%  |
| UCC                | 3.39%                      | 4.42%                          | -1.03%   |
| Brethren           | 0.85%                      | 0.98%                          | -0.13%   |
| LCMS               | 0.85%                      | 2.62%                          | -1.77%   |
| PCUSA              | 0%                         | 13.5%                          | -13.5%   |
| EPC                | 0%                         | 0.53%                          | -0.53%   |
| ACNA               | 0%                         | 0.5%                           | -0.5%  |
| AME*               | 0.85%                      | 0.61%                          | 0.24%  |
| 7th-Day Adventist* | 0.85%                      | 4.98%                          | -4.13%   |

A death rate was also calculated for all the denominations surveyed. The highest death rate was the Catholic Church, which was 0.73%. The second

Table 6  
 Estimated Death Rate  
 per Denomination

| Denomination                | ESTIMATED Death Rate | Margin of Error on Death Rate |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Catholic                    | 0.73%                | 2.555374                      |
| UMC                         | 0.26%                | 5.585569                      |
| SBC                         | 0.12%                | 6.840897                      |
| AOG                         | 0.21%                | 5.298936                      |
| Nazarene                    | 0.28%                | 4.326563                      |
| ELCA                        | 0.2%                 | 4.647475                      |
| Episcopal                   | 0.43%                | 3.494015                      |
| ABA                         | 0.45%                | 5.585569                      |
| UCC                         | 0.17%                | 6.333440                      |
| Brethren                    | 0.2%                 | 5.585569                      |
| LCMS                        | 0.04%                | 5.924391                      |
| PCUSA                       | 0%                   | 6.840897                      |
| EPC                         | 0%                   | 8.378354                      |
| ACNA                        | 0%                   | 7.493828                      |
| Average (Excludes Outliers) | 0.22%                | 5.635063                      |

Utilizing the data accumulated from the research, it is possible to make estimations about the total number of clergy that died from Covid-19 in each denomination. The denomination with the most estimated deaths is, once again, the Catholic Church, with an estimated 258 clergy deaths. The next two highest are the United Methodist Church with ninety-six estimated clergy deaths and the Southern Baptist Convention with eighty-two estimated deaths. For the entire population of 458,000 clergy in the United States, it is estimated that somewhere between 1,008 and 1,099 clergy died from Covid-19 with a margin of error of 5.64%. The estimated clergy deaths for each denomination can be found in Table 7.

and third highest were the American Baptist Churches U.S.A. and the Episcopal Church, which had death rates of 0.45% and 0.43% respectively. The overall death rate for the sixteen denominations surveyed was 0.23%. The death rate (along with the margin of error) for just the fourteen denominations surveyed (excluding the two outliers) can be found in Table 6.

Table 7  
 Estimated Total Deaths  
 per Denomination

| Denomination          | ESTIMATED Total Deaths |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Catholic              | 258                    |
| UMC                   | 96                     |
| SBC                   | 82                     |
| AOG                   | 80                     |
| Nazarene              | 47                     |
| ELCA                  | 35                     |
| Episcopal             | 22                     |
| ABC                   | 28                     |
| UCC                   | 17                     |
| Brethren              | 3                      |
| LCMS                  | 4                      |
| <b>Total (All US)</b> | <b>1,054</b>           |

## Initial Findings Per Geographical Region

The 169 judicatories that responded to the survey were also divided into seven geographical regions: the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, Southwest, Rocky Mountain, Pacific, and Alaska & Hawaii.<sup>3</sup> This allows for the data to be analyzed along geographical lines.

The geographical region with the highest number of reported clergy deaths was the Midwest, with thirty-six reported deaths. The Midwest also had the largest number of judicatories respond and the highest estimated number of clergy in the region. Fifty-two of the 169 judicatories in the survey were from the Midwest region. There were an estimated 13,767 clergy that were surveyed in the Midwest. The number of judicatories per geographical region, as well as the estimated number of clergy surveyed in each region, can be found in Table 8. The number of reported deaths for each region can be found in Table 9.

It should be noted that the Midwest represents the largest percentage of the total reported clergy in the survey at 27.99%. This is probably the main reason why the Midwest reported the most deaths. Consequently, the Midwest represented 30.51% of the total number of deaths. This shows that the percentage of deaths represented by the Midwest were slightly higher than the percentage of deaths elsewhere. However, compare this to the Northeast, which contained

Table 8  
Number of Responding Judicatories  
and Estimated Clergy per Region

| Region          | Number of Responding Judicatories | Estimated Clergy in Region |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Northeast       | 32                                | 5,450                      |
| Southeast       | 21                                | 7,750                      |
| Midwest         | 52                                | 13,767                     |
| Southwest       | 24                                | 11,180                     |
| Rocky Mountain  | 13                                | 4,484                      |
| Pacific         | 20                                | 6,718                      |
| Alaska & Hawaii | 6                                 | 2,763                      |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>168</b>                        | <b>52,112</b>              |

Note: One judicatory from the ACNA was not organized along geographical lines, and therefore there are only a total of 168 judicatories in this table.

Table 9  
Deaths Recorded  
per Region

| Region          | Deaths per Region |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Northeast       | 28                |
| Southeast       | 13                |
| Midwest         | 36                |
| Southwest       | 25                |
| Rocky Mountain  | 8                 |
| Pacific         | 7                 |
| Alaska & Hawaii | 1                 |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>118</b>        |

<sup>3</sup> One judicatory from the Anglican Church of North America did not neatly fit into one geographical region. Because of this, it was left out of the geographical study and only 168 total judicatories were used.

23.73% of recorded deaths, yet represented 11.08% of the total clergy. The comparisons of percentages of recorded deaths to percentages of recorded clergy can be found in Table 10.

Table 10  
 Percentage of Total Death Compared to  
 Percentage of Total Clergy per Region

| Region          | Percentage of Total Recorded Deaths | Percentage of Total Clergy | Difference between Percentage of Deaths and Percentage of Reporting Jurisdictions |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Northeast       | 23.73%                              | 11.08%                     | 12.65%  |
| Southeast       | 11.02%                              | 15.11%                     | -4.09%  |
| Midwest         | 30.51%                              | 27.99%                     | 2.52%   |
| Southwest       | 21.19%                              | 22.73%                     | -1.54%  |
| Rocky Mountain  | 6.78%                               | 9.11%                      | -2.33%  |
| Pacific         | 5.93%                               | 8.37%                      | -2.44%  |
| Alaska & Hawaii | 0.85%                               | 5.62%                      | -4.77%  |

Calculating death rates for the geographical regions gives an even better indication as to which regions took a heavier toll from the Covid-19 pandemic. Significantly, the Northeast had the highest death rate of 0.51%. This is over twice the average death rate across the US: 0.22%. The lowest death rate was Alaska & Hawaii: 0.04%. The total death rate for each geographical region can be found in Table 11.

Table 11  
 Death Rate per Region

| Region          | Death Rate |
|-----------------|------------|
| Northeast       | 0.51%      |
| Southeast       | 0.16%      |
| Midwest         | 0.26%      |
| Southwest       | 0.22%      |
| Rocky Mountain  | 0.18%      |
| Pacific         | 0.15%      |
| Alaska & Hawaii | 0.04%      |
| Average         | 0.22%      |

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## Analysis of Data

According to John Hopkins, the average death rate from Covid-19 in the United States is 0.24%.<sup>4</sup> This shows that the data uncovered is fairly realistic, as it reported an average clergy death rate of 0.22%.

Comparing the percentage of clergy deaths to the percentage of clergy represented in the research is a good first signifier determining which denominations faced the hardest burden of the Coronavirus crisis. If all groups had a similar reported death rate, then the deaths they report would be consistent with the percentage of clergy they represent. Despite the fact that the Catholic Church represented 11.54% of the total clergy surveyed, they account for 36.44% of the total clergy deaths reported. No other denomination had a death percentage as high as the Catholic Church. This was the first indication that the Catholic Church had a much higher death rate than average and much higher than the other denominations.

Once a death rate was finally calculated, the Catholic Church reported over three times higher than the average Covid-19 death rate in the United States, the average death rate being 0.24% and the Catholic Church being 0.73%. There are a couple of factors that could help examine why the Catholic Church had the highest number of deaths and the highest death rate. For starters, the Catholic Church has the highest membership of any American church, coming in at over sixty-seven million members. This is over four times more than the second largest denomination surveyed, the Southern Baptist Convention. Additionally, the Catholic Church has more members in the United States than all other fifteen denominations that were surveyed combined. Because of this, the clergy from the Catholic Church could simply be exposed to a much greater number of people than the clergy from other denominations, thereby increasing their chances of infection.

The Northeast had the highest recorded death rate compared to other geographical regions. The top four American states with the highest percentages of Catholics are located in the Northeast: Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Arizona was fifth.<sup>5</sup> So another factor for the Catholic Church having the highest death rate may have been because of its presence in the Northeast, a region which may have been exposed to Covid-19 much earlier than the rest of the country.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> John Hopkins, "Mortality Analyses."

<sup>5</sup> Pew Research Center, "Catholics."

<sup>6</sup> Moore, "Northeastern model suggests."

Another major factor is the average age of clergy in the Catholic Church. According to a 2012 Georgetown University study, the average age of a Catholic priest in 2009 was sixty-three.<sup>7</sup> For reference, this can be compared to the United Methodist Church, a similarly sized denomination, which has only 2,000 more clergy than the Catholic Church. But in the United Methodist Church, the average age for clergy in 2009 was reported to be fifty-three, ten years younger than Catholics.<sup>8</sup> If the Catholic Church does indeed have a higher-than-average age for its clergy compared to other denominations, it is understandable why this research would discover their death rate to be the highest since their clergy were part of the most vulnerable at-risk population.

When it comes to analyzing deaths across geographical regions, there are a couple of factors that could help explain why the Northeast had the highest death rate. At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States, the Northeast was the site for many of its earliest mass outbreaks. This was a time period before public health measures like social distancing and mask-wearing became a widespread practice to help prevent infections and deaths.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, there was the presence of the Catholic Church in the region during this time. As previously observed, the Catholic Church is mainly concentrated in the Northeast and it is the largest religious group in the region. Given the previously observed factors like age and membership of the Catholic Church, this denomination could be a significant factor as to why the death rate in the Northeast was so much higher than the other geographical regions.

It is unclear whether the factors specific to the Catholic Church or the factors specific to the geographical region are responsible for the death rate in the Northeast. Perhaps there is some overlap and interplay of the factors involved here.

It was surprising to see the death rate for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) be as low as it was: only 0.12%. Considering how the denomination had the highest number of clergy (71,295) and the second-highest membership in the United States (14.5 million), there was certainly a good possibility for a higher death rate. Additionally, the SBC is most heavily concentrated in the geographical region of the South in the United States. This region was largely slow to put in place public safety measures to protect against Covid, as well as quick to remove lockdown orders and mask mandates. Such a factor could have increased the death rate dramatically. But this did not occur.

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<sup>7</sup> Georgetown University, "Average Priest Age Now Nearly 20 Years Older."

<sup>8</sup> Lewis Center, "Clergy Age Trends in the United Methodist Church."

<sup>9</sup> Moore, "Northeastern model suggests."

A few variables could help explain this lower-than-expected death rate. For one, the SBC had a reporting rate of only 14.63%, this was the second-lowest reporting rate (excluding outliers). Perhaps, with a higher reporting rate, the SBC would have had a much higher death rate. Additionally, the median age for clergy in the SBC is 52.7.<sup>10</sup> This is ten years younger than the median age for clergy in the Catholic Church. While further research is needed to understand the lower-than-expected death rate for the SBC, the most likely explanation is that the SBC simply underreported their numbers.

### **Potential Problems**

There are several potential problems with the data collected through this research. For instance, because the average response rate was 23% across all denominations (excluding outliers), there were sizable gaps in the data. Some of the largest denominations like the Catholic Church, United Methodist Church, and Southern Baptist Convention had even lower response rates at 16.6%, 16.6%, and 14.6% each respectively. Having response rates this low indicates substantial gaps in the data.

Additionally, non-denominational and independent churches were not contacted through the survey. This was largely because this research relied upon contacting judicatories within larger church polity structures. Non-denominational and independent churches are not organized along these governmental structures due to their individualistic makeup.

Non-denominational churches represent around 4.9% of Christians (the third-largest religious group in America) only behind the Southern Baptist Convention, which represents 9.2% of Americans, and the Catholic Church, which represents 20.8% of Americans. Independent Baptists were left out of the survey; they represent 2.5% of Americans. The Mormon Church was also unable to be contacted. This religion represents 1.6% of Americans.<sup>11</sup>

Non-Christian faiths in the United States, notably Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism, were also not contacted for this survey. This was either because of a non-response or because there was not a larger governmental structure that represents clergy within the religion. Non-Christian faiths make up 5.9% of all Americans.<sup>12</sup>

Another major problem spot in this research is that the Covid-19 pandemic is still an ongoing crisis in the United States. This survey only took

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<sup>10</sup> Illinois Baptist State Association, "Exiting youth."

<sup>11</sup> Pew Research Center, "Religious Landscape Study."

<sup>12</sup> Pew Research Center, "Religious Landscape Study."

place from January through June of 2021. As of August 16, 2021, the United States had seen a weekly increase of 149,642 cases and 854 deaths.<sup>13</sup> There will almost certainly be more clergy who die from Covid-19 as time progresses.

Given these two factors: failing to conduct surveys with significant pockets of American religious groups and the ongoing nature of the pandemic, it is safe to assume that the numbers reported in this research will be below the actual number of American clergy who died from Covid-19. This should not detract from the data that has been found in the research, but it is important to acknowledge the shortcomings in any statistical research.

### **Conclusion**

This research was intended to begin a conversation and further study on the number of American clergy who died from Covid-19. The data has achieved this goal. While it certainly has not closed the door on future research, enough information was accumulated and analyzed in order to demonstrate some basic findings: 1) The Catholic Church reported having both the highest number of clergy who died from Covid-19 and the highest death rate; 2) when examined along geographical regions, the Midwest recorded the highest number of clergy deaths, while the Northeast recorded the highest death rate; 3) there is likely some relationship between the high death rate of the Catholic Church and their location in the Northeast considering the concentration of Catholics in the region and the early spread of Covid-19 in the Northeast before many public health measures were put into effect.

By no means is the research into total clergy deaths from Covid-19 complete. The estimated total number of deaths is likely below the actual numbers. Additionally, the gaps in data, particularly from non-denominational groups and non-Christian religions are significant. Future studies would benefit greatly from filling in these gaps in the research.

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<sup>13</sup> World Health Organization, "United States of America."

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

J.M. Dixon is from Mount Airy, North Carolina. He is currently a second-year graduate student at Princeton Theological Seminary where he is pursuing his Master of Divinity. His focuses are in Early Christianity, Jewish-Christian studies, and American Evangelicalism. His undergraduate degree is from Wake Forest University where he majored in Philosophy and minored in Politics & International Affairs.

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