

# EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(FORMERLY UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH)

## STATISTICS

**Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.**—A general summary of the statistics for the Evangelical Congregational Church for the year 1926 is presented in Table 1, which shows also the distribution of these figures between urban and rural territory.

The membership of this denomination consists of persons who are on the registers of the local churches as communicant members.

**TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

ITEM	Total	In urban territory <sup>1</sup>	In rural territory <sup>1</sup>	PER CENT OF TOTAL <sup>2</sup>	
				Urban	Rural
<b>Churches</b> (local organizations).....	153	58	95	37.9	62.1
<b>Members</b> .....	20,449	13,707	6,742	67.0	33.0
Average per church.....	134	236	71		
<b>Membership by sex:</b>					
Male.....	8,100	5,430	2,670	67.0	33.0
Female.....	12,349	8,277	4,072	67.0	33.0
Males per 100 females.....	65.6	65.6	65.6		
<b>Membership by age:</b>					
Under 13 years.....	1,205	805	400	66.8	33.2
13 years and over.....	19,012	12,902	6,110	67.9	32.1
Age not reported.....	232		232		100.0
Per cent under 13 years <sup>3</sup> .....	6.0	5.9	6.1		
<b>Church edifices:</b>					
Number.....	148	57	91	38.5	61.5
Value—Churches reporting.....	142	55	87	38.7	61.3
Amount reported.....	\$2,319,400	\$1,743,500	\$575,900	75.2	24.8
Average per church.....	\$16,334	\$31,700	\$6,620		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	29	20	9		
Amount reported.....	\$240,000	\$225,430	\$14,570	93.9	6.1
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	99	31	68		
<b>Parsonages:</b>					
Value—Churches reporting.....	78	45	33		
Amount reported.....	\$451,300	\$309,800	\$141,500	68.6	31.4
Debt—Churches reporting.....	13	9	4		
Amount reported.....	\$36,900	\$30,500	\$6,400	82.7	17.3
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage.....	56	31	25		
<b>Expenditures during year:</b>					
Churches reporting.....	153	58	95	37.9	62.1
Amount reported.....	\$574,165	\$419,805	\$154,360	73.1	26.9
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$444,444	\$316,183	\$128,261	71.1	28.9
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$129,721	\$103,622	\$26,099	79.9	20.1
Average expenditure per church.....	\$3,753	\$7,238	\$1,625		
<b>Sunday schools:</b>					
Churches reporting.....	148	57	91	38.5	61.5
Officers and teachers.....	2,950	1,537	1,413	52.1	47.9
Scholars.....	27,395	16,791	10,604	61.3	38.7

<sup>1</sup> Urban territory includes all cities and other incorporated places which had 2,500 inhabitants or more in 1920, the date of the last Federal census; rural territory comprises the remainder of the country.

<sup>2</sup> Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

<sup>3</sup> Based on membership with age classification reported.

The data given for 1926 represent 153 active organizations of the Evangelical Congregational Church, with 20,449 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by all of the 153 churches, and the classification by age was reported by 148 churches, including 94 which reported members under 13 years of age.

**Comparative data, 1906-1926.**—Table 2 presents, in convenient form for comparison, a summary of the available statistics of this denomination for the censuses of 1926, 1916, and 1906. The figures shown for 1916 and 1906 represent the entire body of United Evangelical churches prior to the merger of the majority of them with the Evangelical Association.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1906 TO 1926: EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

ITEM	1926	1916 <sup>1</sup>	1906 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Churches (local organizations)</b> .....	153	967	975
Increase <sup>2</sup> over preceding census:			
Number.....		-18	
Per cent.....		-1.8	
<b>Members</b> .....	20,449	89,774	69,882
Increase <sup>2</sup> over preceding census:			
Number.....		19,892	
Per cent.....		28.5	
Average membership per church.....	134	94	72
<b>Church edifices:</b>			
Number.....	148	905	920
Value—Churches reporting.....	142	896	906
Amount reported.....	\$2,319,400	\$4,657,893	\$3,180,359
Average per church.....	\$16,334	\$5,199	\$3,510
Debt—Churches reporting.....	29	245	208
Amount reported.....	\$240,000	\$524,988	\$292,004
<b>Parsonages:</b>			
Value—Churches reporting.....	78	401	346
Amount reported.....	\$451,300	\$962,490	\$610,251
Debt—Churches reporting.....	13		
Amount reported.....	\$36,900		
<b>Expenditures during year:</b>			
Churches reporting.....	153	927	
Amount reported.....	\$574,165	\$1,111,264	
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$444,444	\$831,519	
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$129,721	\$279,165	
Not classified.....		\$580	
Average expenditure per church.....	\$3,753	\$1,199	
<b>Sunday schools:</b>			
Churches reporting.....	148	905	883
Officers and teachers.....	2,950	13,908	12,136
Scholars.....	27,395	129,453	93,176

<sup>1</sup> Figures given represent data for the United Evangelical Church as then constituted. Because of this fact, the increase or decrease in churches and members from 1916 to 1926 is not shown, as the data are not comparable.

<sup>2</sup> A minus sign (-) denotes decrease.

**State tables.**—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the Evangelical Congregational Church by States. Table 3 gives for each State the number and membership of the churches classified according to their location in urban or rural territory and the total membership classified by sex. Table 4 gives for selected States the number and membership of the churches for the three censuses from 1906 to 1926, together with the membership for 1926 classified as under 13 years of age and 13 years of age and over. Table 5 shows the value of church property and the debt on such property, for 1926 alone. Table 6 presents, for 1926, the church expenditures, showing separately the amounts expended for current expenses and improvements, and for benevolences, etc., and also gives the data for Sunday

schools. Separate presentation in Tables 5 and 6 is limited to those States in which three or more churches reported the principal items shown (values or expenditures), in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church. The States omitted from these tables can be determined by referring to the complete list which appears in Table 3.

**Ecclesiastical divisions.**—Table 7 presents, for the two conferences in the Evangelical Congregational Church, the more important statistical data shown by States in the earlier tables, including number of churches, membership, value of church edifices, debt on church edifices, expenditures, and Sunday schools.

**TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Males per 100 females
United States.....	153	58	95	20,449	13,707	6,742	8,100	12,349	65.6
Middle Atlantic:									
Pennsylvania.....	140	51	89	19,309	12,817	6,492	7,667	11,642	65.9
East North Central:									
Ohio.....	7	4	3	604	519	85	226	378	59.8
Illinois.....	6	3	3	536	371	165	207	329	62.9

**TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches in either 1926, 1916, or 1906]

STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926			
	1926	1916	1906	1926	1916	1906	Under 13 years	13 years and over	Age not reported	Per cent under 13 <sup>1</sup>
United States.....	153	957	975	20,449	89,774	69,882	1,205	19,012	232	6.0
New York.....		6	6		249	158				
Pennsylvania.....	140	576	578	19,309	62,792	45,480	1,132	18,010	167	5.9
Ohio.....	7	42	45	604	4,729	4,293	60	519	25	10.4
Illinois.....	6	75	86	536	6,830	6,447	13	483	40	2.6
Wisconsin.....		3	4		199	170				
Minnesota.....		18	13		648	492				
Iowa.....		73	84		5,202	5,017				
North Dakota.....		8	3		226	96				
South Dakota.....		8	8		231	155				
Nebraska.....		60	60		3,028	2,992				
Kansas.....		11	14		615	547				
Maryland.....		19	15		2,155	1,769				
West Virginia.....		4	4		262	105				
Oklahoma.....		13	7		576	199				
Oregon.....		36	43		1,695	1,661				
Other States.....		5	5		337	301				

<sup>1</sup> Based on membership with age classification reported.

TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926:  
EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

STATE	Total number of churches	Number of church edifices	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		DEBT ON CHURCH EDIFICES		VALUE OF PARSONAGES		DEBT ON PARSONAGES	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount
United States.....	153	148	142	\$2,319,400	29	\$240,000	78	\$451,300	13	\$36,900
Pennsylvania.....	140	137	131	2,202,400	25	219,642	70	410,800	13	36,900
Ohio.....	7	5	5	34,000	2	4,858	4	14,500		
Illinois.....	6	6	6	83,000	2	15,500	4	26,000		

TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926:  
EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

STATE	Total number of churches	EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR				SUNDAY SCHOOLS		
		Churches reporting	Total amount	For current expenses and improvements	For benevolences, missions, etc.	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States.....	153	153	\$574,165	\$444,444	\$129,721	148	2,950	27,395
Pennsylvania.....	140	140	534,173	413,957	120,216	136	2,727	25,587
Ohio.....	7	7	14,464	11,467	2,997	6	101	857
Illinois.....	6	6	25,528	19,020	6,508	6	122	951

## HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION <sup>1</sup>

### DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

The United Evangelical Church, as a separate ecclesiastical body, dates from the year 1894. Previous to that time its members constituted a part of the Evangelical Association, organized under the evangelistic labors of Jacob Albright, in eastern Pennsylvania, in the year 1800. The division which resulted in the formation of the new church was due to differences of opinion as to what were considered fundamental principles of church polity, and official acts affecting the claims of a large minority of the ministers and members of the association. Seven annual conferences, with from 60,000 to 70,000 members, who were designated the "minority," entered a protest against what they regarded as "abuse of the powers conferred by the discipline, and usurpation of powers in violation of the discipline." This protest availed nothing, and in due time a separate organization was effected, with articles of faith and a discipline in strict accord with the doctrine, spirit, and purpose of the original church. On October 10, 1894, the former members of the East Pennsylvania Conference met in convention and organized as the "East Pennsylvania Conference of the United Evangelical Church," and called a general conference to meet in Naperville, Ill., November 29, 1894. Other conferences joined in the call, and on the designated day the conference met, and on the following day declared itself to be the first General Conference of the United Evangelical Church.

<sup>1</sup> This statement, which is substantially the same as that published in Part II of the Report on Religious Bodies, 1916, has been revised by Bishop E. S. Woodring, of the Evangelical Congregational Church, and approved by him in its present form.

TABLE 7.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, VALUE OF EDIFICES, DEBT, EXPENDITURES, AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY CONFERENCES, 1926: EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

CONFERENCE	Total number of churches	Number of members	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		DEBT ON CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
Total.....	153	20,449	142	\$2,319,400	29	\$240,000	153	\$574,165	148	27,395
Eastern.....	136	18,963	127	2,168,900	25	219,642	136	529,972	132	25,286
Western.....	17	1,486	15	150,500	4	20,358	17	44,193	16	2,109

In 1910 a movement was started looking toward a reunion of the United Evangelical Church and the Evangelical Association. Commissions were appointed by the general conferences in 1914 to consider the question and prepare a basis of union. For a number of years the matter lay dormant, but in 1922 the majority of the delegates to the General Conference held in Barrington, Ill., voted to reunite on the basis proposed by the commission.

The East Pennsylvania Conference, long recognized as the mother conference, at its annual session prior to the session of the General Conference, refused to vote on the basis of union, giving nine reasons for its action, which briefly stated were: That the method of procedure was irregular and contrary to the law of the church; that it meant a return to a church polity which had been objectionable 30 years before and had been one of the principal reasons for the establishment of the United Evangelical Church; that it meant the omission of a number of articles of faith which were deemed of vital importance and concerning which the discipline explicitly stated "The Articles of Faith shall never be changed."

This conference also instructed its delegates to the General Conference to enter a protest in harmony with the foregoing action. This protest was, however, disregarded and the merger declared effected.

The protesting delegates, upon their return from the General Conference, called a special session of the East Pennsylvania Conference and presented their report. This body indorsed the action of their representatives and decided to perpetuate the United Evangelical Church. Since that date the large majority of churches in this conference, together with individual churches in the Central, Pittsburgh, Ohio, and Illinois conferences, have been functioning apart from the merger, with marked success. Though the Supreme Court of the State of Pennsylvania declared the merger to be legal, its decision did not define exactly the status of these churches; but, pending such interpretation, and under an agreement with the larger body, they continued their separate existence under the same name. They later adopted the name Evangelical Congregational Church.

The boundaries of the East Pennsylvania Conference remain the same as before the merger, while the churches in the Middle West have been organized into a Western Conference.

The valuation of the property owned by the congregations reporting in 1926 is \$2,682,650, to which must be added the value of a home for the aged, making a total valuation of \$2,702,650.

The ministerial ranks are composed of 117 itinerant preachers serving charges and 52 local preachers.

The Evangelical Congregational Church is a constituent member of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and is identified with the various movements for church union and fellowship.

**DOCTRINE**

In doctrine the Evangelical Congregational Church may be characterized as Arminian. Its confession of faith, formulated in 25 articles, varies but little from the teachings of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The church emphasizes the principle of voluntary giving, not only for the support of the ministry, but also for the maintenance of all the religious and benevolent enterprises of the church; "voluntary abstinence from all intoxicants, as the true ground of personal temperance, and complete legal prohibition of the traffic in alcoholic drinks, as the duty of civil government"; the exercise of strict discipline for the safety, purity, and power of the church; the integrity of the Bible, as given by inspiration of God; and the fellowship of all followers of Christ.

**ORGANIZATION**

In polity the church resembles the Methodist Episcopal Church. The local congregations are self-governing in their temporal affairs. There is equal clerical and lay representation in the annual conferences, as well as in the General Conference. The itinerant system of ministerial supply and service prevails, the appointments of ministers being made at each annual conference, by a committee consisting of a presiding bishop and presiding elders, for one year, with the privilege of reappointment to the limit of a five years' term.

**WORK**

The missionary interests of the church are committed especially to a Society of Home and Foreign Missions, which has a branch in each annual conference. Its affairs are managed by a general board, consisting of its officers, together with one delegate from each conference auxiliary, and one from the Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society. The latter is auxiliary to the general society. The annual conferences are empowered to establish missions within their own bounds, and supervise them, while beyond the limits of conference districts the board of missions can act. The number of such missions now in operation within and beyond the conference bounds is 58, cared for by the same number of missionaries; and for the prosecution of the work in 1926, the sum of \$25,000 was contributed.

Foreign missionary work is carried on through interdenominational boards. The Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Society is especially active and it is largely through its efforts that 20 missionaries are being supported in several foreign countries.

The Keystone League of Christian Endeavor Societies in 1926 numbered 130 with a membership of 5,281 and contributed \$1,835 for missionary purposes, while the Sunday schools contributed for various purposes the sum of \$100,663.

A home for the aged has been established at Herndon, Pa., with a property valuation of \$50,000, which includes a farm of 110 acres. Three fine parks are owned by the church—namely, Waldheim Park, located near Allentown, Pa.; Rosedale Park, near Reading; and Herndon Park, adjoining the property of the Home for the Aged, at Herndon, Pa. Successful summer assemblies are conducted in all of these parks.

A publishing company has been organized with headquarters at Allentown, Pa. The official church publication is called The United Evangelical.