

METHODIST BODIES

GENERAL STATEMENT

The Methodist churches of America, in common with those of England and other lands, trace their origin to a movement started in Oxford University in 1729, when John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, and a number of others began to meet for religious exercises. Finding as they read the Bible that, as John Wesley expressed it, they "could not be saved without holiness, they followed after it, and incited others so to do." During the succeeding years the little company was derisively called "The Holy Club," "Bible Bigots," "Methodists," etc.; and this last term, intended to describe their methodical habits, seems to have been accepted by them almost immediately, as the movement they led soon became widely known as the "Methodist movement." The next step and its outcome are described by John Wesley as follows: "They saw likewise that men are justified before they are sanctified, but still holiness was their object. God then thrust them out to raise a holy people. * * * In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London and desired that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; this was the rise of the United Society."

About this time, the Wesleys came into intimate relations with the Moravians, first on a visit to America¹ and subsequently in London, and at their headquarters in Herrnhut, Saxony, and to the influence of these conferences may be traced much of the spiritual power of the new movement.

The three leaders, although ordained ministers of the Church of England, soon found themselves excluded from many of the pulpits of the Established Church on the ground that they were preachers of new doctrines, and they were obliged to hold their meetings in private houses, halls, barns, and in the fields. As converts were received they were organized into societies for worship, and as the work expanded class meetings were formed for the religious care and training of members. Then the circuit system was established, by which several congregations were grouped under the care of one lay preacher; the itinerancy came into existence, as the lay preachers were transferred from one appointment to another for greater efficiency; and finally, in 1744, the annual conference was instituted, in which Mr. Wesley met all his workers. Thus the principal distinctive features of the Methodist organization grew out of the necessities of the work.

As was natural, the doctrinal position accorded in the main with that of the Church of England, and the Articles of Religion were largely formulated from the Thirty-nine Articles of that church, although no formal creed was accepted save the Apostles' Creed. The stricter doctrines of Calvinism, predestination, and reprobation were cast aside, and the milder emphasis of Arminianism on repentance, faith, and holiness was accepted. As John Wesley said: "The first of these we count as it were the porch of religion; the next, the door; the third, religion itself." This acceptance of Arminianism caused a divergence, though not a permanent breach, between the Wesleys and Whitefield. Whitefield was Calvinistic, though not of the extreme type, and became identified with the Calvinistic Methodists, both the Welsh body² and the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection. He afterwards withdrew from the leadership of the latter body, and gave himself to general revival work in England and America.

¹ See Methodist Episcopal Church, p. 926.

² See Presbyterian bodies, p. 1112.

Though the Wesleys lived and died in full ministerial relations with the Church of England, serious differences arose, as already noted, between that church and the Methodists. In 1745 John Wesley wrote that he was willing to make any concession which conscience would permit, in order to live in harmony with the clergy of the Established Church, but he could not give up the doctrines he was preaching, dissolve the societies, suppress lay preaching, or cease to preach in the open air. For many years he refused to sanction the administration of the sacraments by any except those who had been ordained by a bishop in the apostolic succession, and he himself hesitated to assume authority to ordain; but the Bishop of London having refused to ordain ministers for the Methodist societies in America, which were left by the Revolutionary War without the sacraments, Wesley, in 1784, by the laying on of hands, appointed or ordained men and gave them authority to ordain others. He thus ordained Thomas Coke, D. C. L., who was already a presbyter of the Church of England, to be superintendent of the Methodist societies in America, and set apart for a similar purpose in Great Britain Alexander Mather, who had not been episcopally ordained.

The development of church government, while following the general lines laid down by Wesley, was somewhat different in England and in America. In England the conference remained supreme, and the superintendency was not emphasized. In America the superintendency was in fact an episcopacy which, while not corresponding exactly to the episcopacy of the Church of England, became a very decided factor in church life. In each country, but especially in America, considerable opposition has developed at different times in connection with some features of the parent body, and divisions have resulted. In every case, however, the general principles of the founders have been preserved, and, notwithstanding the various separations, the Wesleyan Methodist Connection in England and the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States remain the strongest representatives of the movement initiated in Oxford nearly two centuries ago.

It is to be noted that the influence of the Methodist doctrine and church organization has not been confined to those bodies which have adopted the name Methodist, but has been manifest in the development of a number of bodies which use modified forms of the episcopal, presbyterial, and congregational systems. In the United States several bodies, including the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church (now one denomination), the United Brethren bodies, and particularly the large number of organizations emphasizing the doctrine of "holiness," or entire sanctification, claim to be true exponents of the doctrines of the Wesleys, while their polity is generally Methodist in type. On the other hand, the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, with whom Whitefield identified himself, were Presbyterian in polity, though Methodist in every other respect, as are the Wesleyan Methodist and some other Methodist churches in England and America.

STATISTICS

The denominations grouped as Methodists in 1926, 1916, and 1906 are listed in the following table with the principal statistics as reported for the three periods. Since 1916 there have been some changes. The African American Methodist Episcopal Church has disbanded. Other bodies have been added—the Reformed Methodist Church, the Independent African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Holiness Methodist Church, the last an organization listed in 1916 as the Lumber River Mission under the Evangelistic Associations. For general convenience of reference the Negro bodies have been grouped together in 1926, as in 1916. There were 15 independent churches reported at the 1890 census, with a membership of 2,569; these were not reported as a group, however, at the two succeeding censuses, probably having been absorbed by various denominations.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE METHODIST BODIES, 1926, 1916, AND 1906

DENOMINATION AND CENSUS YEAR	Total number of churches	Number of members	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount (dollars)	Churches reporting	Amount (dollars)	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
1926								
Total for the group	60,644	8,070,619	56,493	654,736,975	59,483	152,151,978	54,804	6,567,654
Methodist Episcopal Church.....	26,130	4,080,777	25,290	406,165,659	25,790	89,422,307	24,730	3,796,561
Methodist Protestant Church.....	2,239	192,171	2,064	16,817,278	2,160	3,137,211	1,917	173,438
Wesleyan Methodist Connection (or Church) of America.....	619	21,910	555	1,804,719	585	773,981	561	34,314
Primitive Methodist Church in the United States of America.....	80	11,990	79	1,676,800	80	326,598	78	15,190
Methodist Episcopal Church, South.....	18,096	2,487,694	16,443	161,986,430	17,798	41,651,150	15,525	1,802,464
Congregational Methodist Church.....	145	9,691	110	127,775	120	29,529	80	4,807
Free Methodist Church of North America.....	1,375	36,374	1,140	4,921,760	1,269	1,617,802	1,026	69,549
New Congregational Methodist Church.....	26	1,229	21	23,900	19	1,234	3	126
Holiness Methodist Church.....	7	459	7	18,500	7	2,073	7	531
Reformed Methodist Church.....	14	390	13	26,300	13	9,176	12	356
African Methodist Episcopal Church.....	6,708	545,814	5,829	32,092,549	6,492	7,600,161	5,884	288,247
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.....	2,466	456,813	2,370	18,515,723	2,464	4,757,066	2,429	267,141
Colored Methodist Protestant Church.....	3	533	3	36,000	3	6,685	3	98
Union American Methodist Episcopal Church.....	73	10,169	64	478,951	68	222,621	69	4,240
African Union Methodist Protestant Church.....	43	4,086	40	476,269	43	99,563	42	2,851
Colored Methodist Episcopal Church.....	2,518	202,713	2,341	9,211,437	2,477	2,428,234	2,351	103,523
Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church.....	48	4,538	45	184,075	44	37,601	42	2,882
Reformed Methodist Union Episcopal Church.....	25	2,265	21	74,800	24	17,282	19	673
Independent African Methodist Episcopal Church.....	29	1,003	28	98,050	27	11,704	26	663
1916								
Total for the group	65,686	7,166,451	60,982	317,916,402	64,139	70,887,406	59,191	6,473,500
Methodist Episcopal Church.....	29,315	3,717,785	28,134	215,104,014	28,791	43,993,681	27,549	3,872,264
Methodist Protestant Church.....	2,473	186,908	2,266	7,944,467	2,393	1,509,243	2,081	177,918
Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America.....	579	20,778	514	787,731	525	329,294	500	29,850
Primitive Methodist Church in the United States of America.....	93	9,353	91	829,035	92	147,695	90	14,918
Methodist Episcopal Church, South.....	19,184	2,114,479	17,133	62,428,433	18,751	17,139,398	16,308	1,688,559
Congregational Methodist Church.....	197	12,503	195	166,932	139	13,806	147	8,034
Free Methodist Church of North America.....	1,598	35,291	1,205	2,236,325	1,426	772,038	1,150	58,553
New Congregational Methodist Church.....	24	1,256	18	14,450	16	1,372	6	302
African Methodist Episcopal Church.....	6,633	548,355	6,232	14,631,792	6,516	3,413,395	6,084	311,051
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.....	2,716	257,169	2,475	7,591,393	2,641	1,700,737	2,535	135,102
Colored Methodist Protestant Church.....	26	1,967	16	52,733	23	12,129	24	870
Union American Methodist Episcopal Church.....	67	3,624	59	182,305	65	40,664	54	1,982
African Union Methodist Protestant Church.....	58	3,751	53	205,825	53	47,231	49	2,813
Colored Methodist Episcopal Church.....	2,621	245,749	2,490	5,619,862	2,613	1,736,692	2,541	167,880
Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church.....	47	3,977	47	79,325	41	13,156	42	2,505
African American Methodist Episcopal Church.....	28	1,310	27	6,280	28	13,455	6	200
Reformed Methodist Union Episcopal Church.....	27	2,196	27	35,500	26	3,420	25	699

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE METHODIST BODIES, 1926, 1916, AND 1906—Con.

DENOMINATION AND CENSUS YEAR	Total number of churches	Number of members	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount (dollars)	Churches reporting	Amount (dollars)	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
1906								
Total for the group	64,255	5,749,838	59,077	229,450,996			55,227	4,472,930
Methodist Episcopal Church.....	29,742	2,986,154	27,888	163,357,805			26,809	2,700,742
Union American Methodist Episcopal Church (Colored).....	77	4,347	59	170,150			76	3,372
African Methodist Episcopal Church.....	6,608	494,777	6,299	11,303,489			6,056	292,689
African Union Methodist Protestant Church.....	69	5,592	68	183,697			66	5,266
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.....	2,197	184,542	2,104	4,833,207			2,060	107,692
Methodist Protestant Church.....	2,825	178,544	2,442	6,053,048			2,118	141,086
Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America.....	591	20,043	480	637,117			475	21,463
Methodist Episcopal Church, South.....	17,683	1,638,480	15,859	37,278,424			13,846	1,040,160
Congregational Methodist Church.....	324	14,729	250	194,275			181	8,785
New Congregational Methodist Church.....	35	1,782	33	27,650			27	1,298
Colored Methodist Episcopal Church.....	2,365	172,996	2,264	3,017,849			2,207	92,457
Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church (Colored).....	45	3,059	41	37,875			35	1,508
Primitive Methodist Church in the United States of America.....	96	7,558	93	630,700			91	13,177
Free Methodist Church of North America.....	1,541	32,838	1,140	1,688,745			1,066	41,443
Reformed Methodist Union Episcopal Church (Colored).....	57	4,397	57	36,965			54	1,792

FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

STATISTICS

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

In the Free Methodist Church persons are received into full membership upon public profession of faith after six months of probation. Baptism is required and persons baptized in infancy must publicly assent to the baptismal covenant before being received into full membership.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations).....	1,375	492	883	35.8	64.2
Members	36,374	20,905	15,469	57.5	42.5
Average per church.....	26	42	18		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	12,287	6,852	5,435	55.8	44.2
Female.....	23,602	13,685	9,917	58.0	42.0
Sex not reported.....	485	368	117	75.9	24.1
Males per 100 females.....	52.1	50.1	54.8		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	1,132	688	444	60.8	39.2
13 years and over.....	32,561	18,561	14,000	57.0	43.0
Age not reported.....	2,681	1,656	1,025	61.8	38.2
Per cent under 13 years ²	3.4	3.6	3.1		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	1,207	463	744	38.4	61.6
Value—Churches reporting.....	1,140	435	705	38.2	61.8
Amount reported.....	\$4,921,760	\$3,382,005	\$1,539,755	68.7	31.3
Average per church.....	\$4,317	\$7,775	\$2,184		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	139	94	45	67.6	32.4
Amount reported.....	\$292,817	\$241,554	\$51,263	82.5	17.5
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	760	263	497	34.6	65.4
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting.....	783	361	422	46.1	53.9
Amount reported.....	\$2,144,535	\$1,419,575	\$724,960	66.2	33.8
Debt—Churches reporting.....	144	107	37	74.3	25.7
Amount reported.....	\$157,108	\$132,218	\$24,890	84.2	15.8
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage.....	474	191	283	40.3	59.7
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	1,269	468	801	36.9	63.1
Amount reported.....	\$1,617,802	\$1,027,993	\$589,809	63.5	36.5
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$1,241,701	\$793,393	\$448,308	63.9	36.1
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$329,741	\$212,790	\$116,951	64.5	35.5
Not classified.....	\$46,360	\$21,810	\$24,550	47.0	53.0
Average expenditure per church.....	\$1,275	\$2,197	\$736		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	1,026	437	589	42.6	57.4
Officers and teachers.....	9,458	4,946	4,512	52.3	47.7
Scholars.....	69,549	40,817	28,732	58.7	41.3

¹ 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.

² Based on membership with age classification reported.

The data given for 1926 represent 1,375 active Free Methodist churches, with 36,374 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by 1,357 churches and the classification by age was reported by 1,175 churches, including, however, only 290 which reported any members under 13 years of age.

Comparative data, 1890-1926.—Table 2 presents, in convenient form for comparison, a summary of the available statistics of this denomination for the censuses of 1926, 1916, 1906, and 1890.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1890 TO 1926: FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

ITEM	1926	1916	1906	1890
Churches (local organizations)	1,375	1,598	1,541	1,102
Increase ¹ over preceding census:				
Number.....	-223	57	439	
Per cent.....	-14.0	3.7	39.8	
Members	36,374	35,291	32,838	22,110
Increase over preceding census:				
Number.....	1,083	2,453	10,728	
Per cent.....	3.1	7.5	48.5	
Average membership per church.....	26	22	21	20
Church edifices:				
Number.....	1,207	1,217	1,140	620
Value—Churches reporting.....	1,140	1,205	1,140	
Amount reported.....	\$4,921,760	\$2,236,325	\$1,688,745	\$805,085
Average per church.....	\$4,317	\$1,856	\$1,481	
Debt—Churches reporting.....	139	171	112	
Amount reported.....	\$292,817	\$121,979	\$61,124	
Parsonages:				
Value—Churches reporting.....	783	700	598	
Amount reported.....	\$2,144,535	\$946,618	\$612,050	
Debt—Churches reporting.....	144			
Amount reported.....	\$157,108			
Expenditures during year:				
Churches reporting.....	1,269	1,426		
Amount reported.....	\$1,617,802	\$772,038		
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$1,241,701	\$606,860		
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$329,741	\$162,298		
Not classified.....	\$46,360	\$2,880		
Average expenditure per church.....	\$1,275	\$541		
Sunday schools:				
Churches reporting.....	1,026	1,150	1,066	
Officers and teachers.....	9,458	8,763	7,493	
Scholars.....	69,549	58,553	41,443	

¹ A minus sign (-) denotes decrease.

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the Free Methodists 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 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 each conference in the Free Methodist 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: FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX			
	Total	Ur- ban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Sex not re- ported	Males per 100 females (¹)
United States.....	1,375	492	883	36,374	20,905	15,469	12,287	23,602	485	52.1
New England:										
Vermont.....	1	1		48	48		14	34		
Massachusetts.....	7	4	3	96	76	20	20	37	39	
Middle Atlantic:										
New York.....	108	43	65	3,227	1,887	1,340	1,037	2,173	17	47.7
New Jersey.....	3	3		73	73		29	44		
Pennsylvania.....	179	63	116	5,142	2,984	2,158	1,597	3,379	166	47.3
East North Central:										
Ohio.....	63	28	35	1,955	1,426	529	666	1,289		51.7
Indiana.....	53	27	26	1,606	1,153	453	495	1,061	50	46.7
Illinois.....	128	53	75	3,784	2,255	1,529	1,245	2,519	20	49.4
Michigan.....	214	49	165	5,705	2,468	3,237	2,016	3,591	98	56.1
Wisconsin.....	37	12	25	672	301	371	239	433		55.2
West North Central:										
Minnesota.....	21	4	17	355	76	279	117	238		49.2
Iowa.....	67	26	41	1,296	821	475	394	833	69	47.3
Missouri.....	20	8	12	423	261	162	142	281		50.5
North Dakota.....	12	3	9	181	98	83	61	120		50.8
South Dakota.....	19	4	15	476	139	337	190	286		66.4
Nebraska.....	42	7	35	572	200	372	226	346		65.3
Kansas.....	65	19	46	1,711	892	819	580	1,131		51.3
South Atlantic:										
Maryland.....	7	1	6	184	40	144	65	119		54.6
District of Columbia.....	1	1		60	60		27	33		
Virginia.....	6	1	5	103	62	41	31	72		
West Virginia.....	19	9	10	266	187	79	91	175		52.0
Georgia.....	6	4	2	178	145	33	44	134		32.8
Florida.....	9	3	6	208	114	94	71	137		51.8
East South Central:										
Kentucky.....	10	2	8	144	50	94	37	81	26	
Tennessee.....	8	1	7	136	37	99	37	99		
Alabama.....	1		1	25		25	11	14		
Mississippi.....	3		3	11		11	4	7		
West South Central:										
Arkansas.....	2	2		23	23		9	14		
Louisiana.....	10		10	180		180	67	113		59.3
Oklahoma.....	43	10	33	938	321	617	339	599		56.6
Texas.....	22	8	14	400	205	195	124	276		44.9
Mountain:										
Montana.....	1	1		32	32		15	17		
Idaho.....	10	5	5	216	125	91	87	129		67.4
Wyoming.....	6		6	59		59	27	32		
Colorado.....	19	12	7	442	363	79	142	300		47.3
New Mexico.....	2		2	12		12	2	10		
Arizona.....	3	2	1	109	87	22	40	69		
Pacific:										
Washington.....	53	23	30	1,840	1,210	630	683	1,157		59.0
Oregon.....	37	14	23	842	471	371	324	518		62.5
California.....	58	39	19	2,644	2,215	429	942	1,702		55.3

¹ Ratio not shown where number of females is less than 100.

FREE METHODIST CHURCH

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TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

[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 ¹
United States.....	1,375	1,598	1,541	36,374	35,291	32,838	1,132	32,561	2,681	3.4
Massachusetts.....	7	2	2	96	29	29	2	45	49	-----
New York.....	108	127	127	3,227	3,774	3,609	36	3,010	181	1.2
New Jersey.....	3	4	6	73	213	91	-----	64	9	-----
Pennsylvania.....	179	189	188	5,142	4,697	4,167	154	4,332	656	3.4
Ohio.....	63	73	76	1,955	1,717	1,376	58	1,760	137	3.2
Illiana.....	53	47	46	1,606	1,128	1,075	65	1,487	54	4.2
Missouri.....	128	137	146	3,784	3,690	3,597	146	3,335	303	4.2
Michigan.....	214	252	248	5,705	5,554	5,121	95	5,055	555	1.8
Wisconsin.....	37	37	49	672	689	960	14	658	-----	2.1
Minnesota.....	21	28	28	355	514	451	7	320	28	2.1
Indiana.....	67	85	99	1,296	1,614	1,838	70	1,143	83	5.8
Missouri.....	20	28	33	423	370	719	10	378	35	2.6
North Dakota.....	12	16	14	181	239	190	-----	141	40	-----
South Dakota.....	19	26	23	476	418	444	8	449	19	1.8
Nebraska.....	42	76	61	572	736	1,009	13	509	50	2.5
Texas.....	65	78	98	1,711	1,794	1,795	66	1,632	13	3.9
Maryland.....	7	7	6	184	199	163	-----	165	19	-----
Virginia.....	6	1	1	103	45	38	3	90	10	-----
West Virginia.....	19	17	10	266	256	150	3	255	8	1.2
Georgia.....	6	9	4	178	212	102	1	177	-----	0.6
Florida.....	9	2	-----	208	30	-----	13	195	-----	6.3
Kentucky.....	10	13	13	144	145	196	7	105	32	6.3
Tennessee.....	8	13	7	136	178	131	-----	126	10	-----
Alabama.....	1	2	4	25	27	29	-----	25	-----	-----
Mississippi.....	3	8	6	11	59	73	-----	11	-----	-----
Oklahoma.....	2	7	8	23	50	146	-----	23	-----	-----
Louisiana.....	10	12	10	180	171	109	3	142	35	2.1
Alabama.....	43	56	50	938	985	975	72	855	11	7.8
Arkansas.....	22	46	40	400	619	783	7	324	69	2.1
Montana.....	1	8	-----	32	101	-----	-----	32	-----	-----
Idaho.....	10	16	6	216	181	68	6	193	17	3.0
Wyoming.....	6	-----	6	59	-----	-----	13	46	-----	-----
Colorado.....	19	35	20	442	520	433	9	373	60	2.4
New Mexico.....	2	4	-----	12	43	-----	-----	12	-----	-----
Arizona.....	3	3	2	109	108	43	5	104	-----	4.6
Washington.....	53	52	39	1,840	1,680	1,301	67	1,765	8	3.7
Oregon.....	37	40	38	842	850	664	42	756	44	5.3
California.....	58	38	29	2,644	1,585	886	136	2,362	146	5.4
Far States.....	2	4	4	108	71	77	1	107	-----	0.9

Based on membership with age classification reported; not shown where base is less than 100.

TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926: FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting value of edifices]

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.....	1,375	1,207	1,140	\$4,921,760	139	\$292,817	783	\$2,144,535	144	\$157,108
Massachusetts.....	7	3	3	26,000	2	2,400	(¹)	(¹)		(¹)
New York.....	108	106	103	522,100	14	24,000	79	277,400	15	20,920
Pennsylvania.....	179	150	148	926,925	29	83,905	93	346,475	20	39,825
Ohio.....	63	66	58	275,400	7	18,250	36	139,500	7	7,400
Indiana.....	53	48	43	206,100	6	20,900	26	73,900	5	3,900
Illinois.....	128	125	121	580,150	12	16,485	71	245,500	14	19,344
Michigan.....	214	198	189	634,200	22	22,792	134	301,860	23	18,163
Wisconsin.....	87	30	27	75,600			13	29,500		
Minnesota.....	21	17	16	32,900	1	2,100	12	19,100	1	109
Iowa.....	67	61	57	170,330	5	5,500	36	86,150	6	4,613
Missouri.....	20	20	19	40,000	1	205	9	11,250	2	1,050
North Dakota.....	12	6	6	29,000	1	1,600	4	3,800		
South Dakota.....	19	14	13	41,700	2	2,800	11	23,200	1	1,200
Nebraska.....	42	26	26	54,700	2	650	24	37,600	3	2,400
Kansas.....	65	51	51	128,300	2	400	45	77,800	5	2,790
Maryland.....	7	7	7	26,500			4	19,000	1	2,100
Virginia.....	6	5	5	24,000			3	6,500	1	400
West Virginia.....	19	14	14	63,850	2	6,750	5	20,550	3	2,250
Georgia.....	6	6	6	17,500			3	4,600	1	250
Florida.....	9	8	8	82,000	1	1,000	4	27,000	2	2,148
Kentucky.....	10	11	10	23,100			7	7,950	1	90
Tennessee.....	8	7	6	10,500			3	3,250		
Louisiana.....	10	10	8	8,725			3	3,100		
Oklahoma.....	43	29	26	56,200	3	5,700	21	31,700	1	200
Texas.....	22	16	16	31,050	2	2,000	10	18,250	5	2,330
Idaho.....	10	6	6	17,500			3	3,750		
Colorado.....	19	15	14	48,480	1	300	14	29,000	4	2,631
Arizona.....	3	3	3	18,200			3	6,800		
Washington.....	53	48	41	144,500	8	12,975	34	68,050	3	2,100
Oregon.....	37	24	24	68,250	1	1,000	20	36,950	3	700
California.....	58	55	53	452,550	13	43,530	44	155,600	13	15,920
Other States ²	20	13	13	85,450	2	17,575	9	29,450	4	4,275

¹ Amount included in figures shown for "Other States," to avoid disclosing the statistics of individual churches.

² The figures for parsonages (value and debt) include data for 1 church in Massachusetts.

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION ¹

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

The Free Methodist Church had its origin in an agitation started about 1850 in the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the State of New York. A number of ministers, prominent among whom was the Rev. Benjamin T. Roberts, felt very strongly that the Methodism of their time had come to be removed in no small degree from its primitive standards of faith, experience, and practice, especially in regard to the following points: "The evangelical conception of doctrine; nonconformity to the world; simplicity, spirituality, and freedom in worship; discrimination against the poor in connection with the system of pew renting; the subject of slavery; the employment of executive power and

¹ 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 Walter A. Sellew, president of the Board of Trustees of the Free Methodist Church of North America, and approved by him in its present form.

TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926:
FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting expenditures]

STATE	Total number of churches	EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR				SUNDAY SCHOOLS			
		Churches reporting	Total amount	For current expenses and improvements	For benevolences, missions, etc.	Not classified	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States.....	1,375	1,269	\$1,617,802	\$1,241,701	\$329,741	\$46,360	1,026	9,458	69,549
Massachusetts.....	7	7	5,373	4,937	436	-----	5	30	152
New York.....	108	101	156,393	120,308	33,061	3,024	86	727	4,918
New Jersey.....	3	3	3,977	2,924	1,053	-----	3	20	96
Pennsylvania.....	179	171	284,166	215,420	52,757	15,989	139	1,361	11,488
Ohio.....	63	56	101,948	81,991	18,059	1,898	52	563	4,122
Indiana.....	53	49	71,096	59,791	11,255	50	41	378	3,194
Illinois.....	128	114	137,391	106,009	28,444	2,938	107	1,042	7,891
Michigan.....	214	200	248,216	187,953	55,912	4,351	169	1,480	10,672
Wisconsin.....	37	34	23,346	18,888	4,458	-----	23	137	1,127
Minnesota.....	21	17	14,935	9,421	5,514	-----	14	108	766
Iowa.....	67	63	48,292	39,179	9,113	-----	42	356	2,013
Missouri.....	20	20	13,471	11,556	1,865	50	13	123	867
North Dakota.....	12	9	11,125	9,113	1,687	325	5	39	255
South Dakota.....	19	18	29,688	23,485	6,203	-----	16	147	1,057
Nebraska.....	42	33	21,617	16,928	4,268	421	21	144	777
Kansas.....	65	57	60,197	46,848	10,899	2,450	48	472	3,156
Maryland.....	7	7	9,968	6,531	3,437	-----	5	54	374
Virginia.....	6	6	7,351	6,629	722	-----	2	27	120
West Virginia.....	19	19	17,352	14,080	2,336	936	11	110	972
Georgia.....	6	5	4,706	3,537	433	736	5	38	273
Florida.....	9	7	22,831	14,319	4,012	4,500	7	62	475
Kentucky.....	10	7	1,494	1,180	314	-----	6	35	474
Tennessee.....	8	8	2,178	1,589	589	-----	6	29	177
Mississippi.....	3	3	812	612	200	-----	-----	-----	-----
Louisiana.....	10	10	2,708	869	1,239	600	4	29	229
Oklahoma.....	43	43	30,011	19,376	7,633	3,002	28	265	1,325
Texas.....	22	19	12,466	8,938	3,528	-----	11	73	543
Idaho.....	10	8	5,917	4,949	968	-----	5	38	342
Wyoming.....	6	6	1,115	879	236	-----	3	13	97
Colorado.....	19	17	19,873	14,979	2,594	2,300	14	135	741
Arizona.....	3	3	4,633	3,678	955	-----	3	28	236
Washington.....	53	52	68,763	53,523	14,182	1,058	43	470	3,926
Oregon.....	37	35	30,933	21,606	7,605	1,722	28	234	1,513
California.....	58	54	124,037	92,034	32,003	-----	55	626	4,865
Other States.....	8	8	19,423	17,642	1,771	10	6	65	316

ecclesiastical machinery in unjust discrimination against, and in inexcusable oppression of, devoted and loyal preachers and members." In addition, it was claimed by them that "many ministers of the Genesee Conference were members of secret societies, whose vows and spirit were not in conformity with Christianity, and that some of these members had formed a union for the control of the conference, and for the destruction of the influence of those who stood for old-fashioned Methodism, and that the teachings of this powerful coterie (the 'Regency'), as represented in their organ, the Buffalo Christian Advocate, were liberal to the verge of Unitarianism." The work of revival and reform was of a thoroughly radical character, and soon acquired such proportions and momentum as to arouse most formidable opposition.

In 1857 Mr. Roberts published two articles setting forth the evidences of defection from original Methodism of which the reform party complained. For this he was brought before the conference, declared guilty of un-Christian and immoral conduct, and sentenced to be reprimanded by the bishop. Later the same articles were republished by a layman, and Mr. Roberts was charged with the responsibility

TABLE 7.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, VALUE OF EDIFICES, DEBT, EXPENDITURES, AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY CONFERENCES, 1926: FREE METHODIST CHURCH OF NORTH AMERICA

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	1,375	36,374	1,140	\$4,921,760	139	\$292,817	1,269	\$1,617,802	1,026	69,549
Arkansas and Southern Mis- souri.....	6	82	5	5,400	.....	.....	6	1,613	3	165
California.....	16	620	14	63,500	1	1,250	16	28,465	14	969
Central Illinois.....	68	2,186	65	215,150	9	6,985	60	60,083	59	4,174
Colorado.....	19	445	15	50,980	1	300	17	20,752	15	764
Columbia River.....	33	588	19	48,100	1	525	30	21,006	18	1,057
East Michigan.....	99	2,637	82	309,200	11	17,711	92	118,835	80	5,660
East Texas.....	11	137	6	11,500	1	1,500	11	4,191	3	120
Genesee.....	48	1,626	47	273,000	7	11,180	45	74,518	36	2,395
Georgia and Florida.....	15	386	14	99,500	1	1,000	12	27,537	12	748
Illinois.....	32	891	29	288,500	2	3,900	30	50,882	23	2,122
Iowa.....	30	734	26	89,300	2	3,400	29	25,495	23	1,312
Kansas.....	33	1,092	29	81,300	2	400	32	39,565	25	1,935
Kentucky and Tennessee.....	18	280	16	33,600	.....	.....	15	3,672	12	651
Louisiana.....	14	216	11	10,675	1	75	14	4,308	5	264
Michigan.....	35	1,219	33	160,200	4	3,200	34	59,596	28	2,153
Minnesota and Northern Iowa.....	18	278	12	35,400	2	2,400	17	15,595	11	580
Missouri.....	15	331	15	31,000	1	205	15	10,970	10	687
Nebraska.....	13	314	12	31,500	1	500	12	13,586	11	539
New York.....	68	1,314	54	281,600	8	26,465	65	99,931	44	2,066
North Dakota.....	12	181	6	29,000	1	1,600	9	8,335	5	255
North Indiana.....	23	393	17	73,200	1	1,400	20	21,945	18	878
North Michigan.....	79	1,831	73	162,100	7	1,881	73	68,594	60	2,828
North Minnesota.....	12	235	11	17,700	.....	.....	8	8,768	9	509
Ohio.....	55	1,729	51	243,900	6	17,850	49	89,780	44	3,487
Oil City.....	95	2,580	79	520,025	12	46,614	91	129,475	71	4,998
Oklahoma.....	43	938	26	56,200	3	5,700	43	30,011	28	1,325
Oregon.....	25	673	18	54,650	1	1,000	23	24,156	20	1,126
Pittsburgh.....	78	2,484	64	420,050	17	42,876	76	135,817	68	7,207
Platte River.....	39	340	17	28,400	1	150	31	9,686	14	360
South Dakota.....	17	462	12	40,100	2	2,800	16	32,078	15	1,032
Southern California.....	45	2,133	42	407,250	12	42,280	41	100,205	44	4,132
Southern Oregon.....	9	147	6	13,600	.....	.....	9	5,068	7	317
Susquehanna.....	50	1,421	47	199,200	5	7,820	46	72,963	42	2,282
Texas.....	11	263	10	19,550	1	500	8	8,275	8	423
Wabash.....	61	1,996	56	226,100	7	25,500	56	79,466	50	3,982
Washington.....	34	1,522	29	115,900	7	12,450	34	56,433	32	3,321
West Iowa.....	27	379	23	52,830	1	1,400	25	12,169	13	378
West Kansas.....	32	619	22	47,000	.....	.....	25	20,632	23	1,221
Wisconsin.....	37	672	27	75,600	.....	.....	34	23,346	23	1,127

for their republication and circulation. He protested his innocence, offering the testimony of the layman himself, but was declared guilty and was expelled from the conference and the church on the charge of contumacy. Other prosecutions and expulsions, on what were considered by the reform party unjust grounds, followed in quick succession.

A large number of laymen met in convention on two occasions and solemnly protested against this proscription of reputable preachers. This action of the laymen was followed by their being "read out" of the church as having withdrawn, a method which had never been used before, and which has never been adopted since. An appeal was made by the expelled preachers to the General Conference of 1860, which, however, refused to entertain it; and this refusal being taken as an indication of what would result in the other cases pending, all were withdrawn.

A motion to reverse the action of the Genesee Conference was lost, in the committee appointed to investigate the affairs of that conference, by a majority of two. Then followed hundreds of withdrawals from the church, both of preachers and of laymen. Another convention was called, this time of preachers and laymen together, at Pekin, N. Y., in 1860, and the Free Methodist Church was organized, Mr. Roberts being elected the first general superintendent.

DOCTRINE

As its standard of doctrine the new church adopted the Articles of Faith held by the Methodist Episcopal Church, with two additional articles—one on entire sanctification, which was defined as being saved from all inward sin, and as a work which takes place subsequently to justification and is wrought instantaneously upon the consecrated, believing soul; and the other on future rewards and punishments, embodying the stricter view as to a general judgment and the future condition of the righteous and the wicked.

ORGANIZATION

The general organization of the church is essentially that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with the exception that on credentials of proper election, laymen, including women, are admitted to the district, annual, and general conferences in equal numbers and on the same basis as ministers.

The bishops are elected to supervise the work at large, preside at the conference, etc. They are elected for four years at a time, but may be, and so far have been, continued in office by reelection until death or failing powers terminate their term of service. District elders are appointed over the conference districts.

The probationary system and the class meeting are emphasized, being regarded as important parts of the church's economy, so far as it relates to spiritual culture and wholesome discipline.

With respect to disciplinary regulations and usages, this body aims to exemplify Methodism of the primitive type. Its "general rules" are those formulated by John Wesley and still subscribed to by Methodist churches generally, with the addition of one against slavery and one forbidding the production, use, or sale of narcotics. It insists upon a practical observance of the general rules by all of its members, including simplicity and plainness of attire, abstinence from worldly amusements, and separateness from all secret societies. It also excludes instrumental music and choir singing from public worship and requires that the seats be free in all its churches.

WORK

In charge of the general activities of the church are an executive committee, with certain powers delegated to it by the General Conference; a General Missionary Board, having supervision of all home and foreign missionary work; a Board of Church Extension; a Board of Conference Claimants, having charge of funds for disabled and superannuated preachers; and a Board of Education. It has also a well-organized Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. The Boards are all elected by the General Conference. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society is independent, but works in harmony with the boards of the church.

In its home missionary work, 13 agents were employed during 1926 and 125 churches were aided, and the amount contributed by the churches for this work was \$17,046.

The foreign missionary work is in British South Africa, Portuguese East Africa, Central India, Province of Honan, China, in Japan, and in the Dominican Republic, West Indies. The report of 1926 shows 44 stations, occupied by 96 missionaries

and 221 native helpers; 108 organized churches, with 5,389 members; 94 schools, academies, etc., with 2,900 pupils; 3 hospitals, treating during the year about 2,500 patients; and 2 homes, with 100 inmates. The contributions for the foreign work were \$159,851, and the value of property on the foreign field was estimated at \$547,535.

The educational institutions of the church are 2 colleges and 7 seminaries, with a total of 1,525 students. They have property valued at \$475,000, and an endowment of \$135,000. The amount contributed during the year for their support was \$157,500.

There are 3 philanthropic institutions, with 225 inmates, for which \$45,000 was contributed during 1926. The property value of these institutions is \$240,000, and there is an endowment of \$60,000.

The young people's societies numbered 335, with a membership of 6,335.