

CHURCHES OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

GENERAL STATEMENT

The Churches of the New Jerusalem, popularly called Swedenborgian, are two in number. The early history of both of these churches is given in the statement for the General Convention of the New Jerusalem, the older body, while the movement which resulted in the organization of the second body and the points on which it differed from the General Convention are set forth in the statement of the General Church of the New Jerusalem.

The principal statistics of the two bodies as reported for 1926, 1916, and 1906 are given in the following table:

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE CHURCHES OF THE NEW JERUSALEM, 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	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
1926								
Total for the group	98	6,438	62	\$3,266,100	90	\$317,221	65	2,682
General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America.....	85	5,442	57	3,196,100	77	260,373	58	2,621
General Church of the New Jerusalem.....	13	996	5	70,000	13	56,848	7	61
1916								
Total for the group	123	7,085	78	1,766,122	101	189,129	80	3,050
General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America.....	108	6,352	72	1,711,090	87	172,463	67	2,732
General Church of the New Jerusalem.....	15	733	6	55,032	14	16,666	13	318
1906								
Total for the group	133	7,247	92	1,791,041			84	3,544
General Convention of the New Jerusalem in the United States of America.....	119	6,612	87	1,760,691			77	3,434
General Church of the New Jerusalem.....	14	635	5	30,350			7	110

GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the General Church of the New Jerusalem 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 the General Church of the New Jerusalem includes only baptized adults who, upon individual application, have been duly registered and certified.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations)	13	10	3		
Members	996	424	572	42.6	57.4
Average per church	77	42	191		
Membership by sex:					
Male	416	174	242	41.8	58.2
Female	580	250	330	43.1	56.9
Males per 100 females	71.7	69.6	73.3		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years	15	15			
13 years and over	981	409	572	41.7	58.3
Per cent under 13 years	1.5	3.5			
Church edifices:					
Number	7	3	4		
Value—Churches reporting	5	3	2		
Amount reported	\$70,000	\$24,000	\$46,000	34.3	65.7
Average per church	\$14,000	\$8,000	\$23,000		
Debt—Churches reporting	1		1		
Amount reported	\$13,000		\$13,000		100.0
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice	3	2	1		
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting	4	2	2		
Amount reported	\$35,500	\$18,000	\$17,500	50.7	49.3
Debt—Churches reporting	2	1	1		
Amount reported	\$6,000	\$4,500	\$1,500	75.0	25.0
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage	2	1	1		
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting	13	10	3		
Amount reported	\$56,848	\$14,228	\$42,620	25.0	75.0
Current expenses and improvements	\$52,360	\$12,750	\$39,610	24.4	75.6
Benevolences, missions, etc.	\$4,488	\$1,478	\$3,010	32.9	67.1
Average expenditure per church	\$4,373	\$1,423	\$14,207		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting	7	7			
Officers and teachers	15	15			
Scholars	61	61			

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 Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

The data given for 1926 represent 13 active organizations in the General Church, with 996 members. The classification of membership by sex and by age was reported by all 13 of the churches, including, however, only 1 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, and 1906. The figures for 1890 are included with those of the General Convention, of which this body was formerly a part.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1906 TO 1926: GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

ITEM	1926	1916	1906
Churches (local organizations).....	13	15	14
Increase ¹ over preceding census:			
Number.....	-2	1	
Per cent ²			
Members	996	733	635
Increase over preceding census:			
Number.....	263	98	
Per cent.....	35.9	15.4	
Average membership per church.....	77	49	45
Church edifices:			
Number.....	7	8	5
Value—Churches reporting.....	5	6	5
Amount reported.....	\$70,000	\$55,032	\$30,350
Average per church.....	\$14,000	\$9,172	\$6,070
Debt—Churches reporting.....	1	5	3
Amount reported.....	\$13,000	\$11,000	\$7,250
Parsonages:			
Value—Churches reporting.....	4	1	1
Amount reported.....	\$35,500	\$5,000	\$3,000
Debt—Churches reporting.....	2		
Amount reported.....	\$6,000		
Expenditures during year:			
Churches reporting.....	13	14	
Amount reported.....	\$56,848	\$16,666	
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$52,360	\$16,656	
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$4,488	\$10	
Average expenditure per church.....	\$4,373	\$1,190	
Sunday schools:			
Churches reporting.....	7	13	7
Officers and teachers.....	15	40	20
Scholars.....	61	318	110

¹ A minus sign (—) denotes decrease.

² Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, and 5 present the statistics for the General Church of the New Jerusalem 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 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 Table 5 is made only for the State of Pennsylvania, all other States being shown in combination in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church; and for this reason separate figures are not shown for value of church property or debt on such property, there being no States in which these items were reported by as many as three churches.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

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 (¹)
United States.....	13	10	3	996	424	572	416	580	71.7
New England:									
Massachusetts.....	1	1		16	16		3	13	
Middle Atlantic:									
New York.....	1	1		64	64		29	35	
Pennsylvania.....	3	2	1	525	89	436	214	311	68.8
East North Central:									
Ohio.....	2	2		72	72		35	37	
Illinois.....	2	1	1	213	100	113	89	124	71.8
South Atlantic:									
Maryland.....	1		1	23		23	14	9	
District of Columbia.....	1	1		15	15		8	7	
Mountain:									
Colorado.....	1	1		32	32		12	20	
Pacific:									
California.....	1	1		36	36		12	24	

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

TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

[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	Per cent under 13
United States.....	13	15	14	996	733	635	15	981	1.5
Pennsylvania.....	3	5	5	525	344	314		525	
Illinois.....	2	3	2	213	192	99		213	
Other States.....	8	7	7	258	197	222	15	243	5.8

TABLE 5.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926: GENERAL CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM

[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.	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States.....	13	13	\$56,848	\$52,360	\$4,488	7	15	61
Pennsylvania.....	3	3	39,058	39,030	28	2	5	21
Other States.....	10	10	17,790	13,330	4,460	5	10	40

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION¹**DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY**

The General Church of the New Jerusalem traces its origin as an independent ecclesiastical body to the development, at the very beginning of the New Church in England and America, of a movement "toward a strict adherence to the doctrines and principles revealed in the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, and toward distinctiveness of teaching, worship, and life, in the Church of the New Jerusalem." Under the influence of two prominent theologians, the Rev. Richard de Charms and the Rev. W. H. Benade, both of Philadelphia, this movement gradually assumed more definite form, and in 1876 the institution known as "The Academy of the New Church" was founded as the organic exponent of its principles, which were subsequently adopted by the Pennsylvania Association, connected with the General Convention of the New Jerusalem. That association in 1883 adopted an episcopal form of government, elected the Rev. W. H. Benade bishop, and changed its name to "The General Church of Pennsylvania." In 1890 it severed its connection with the General Convention, and in 1892 adopted as its name "The General Church of the Advent of the Lord." In 1897 a complete reorganization was effected, and the name "The General Church of the New Jerusalem" was adopted.

DOCTRINE

In doctrine the General Church of the New Jerusalem differs from other branches of the organized New Church simply in its attitude toward the theological writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, which it regards as being "divinely inspired, and thus the very Word of the Lord revealed at His second coming."

ORGANIZATION

The polity of the General Church is based upon the principle of "practical unanimity," to be secured through deliberation and free cooperation in "council and assembly." The spiritual affairs of the church belong exclusively to the priestly office, of which three distinct degrees are recognized—namely, ministers, pastors, and bishops—though at present, on account of the limited membership, the services of but one bishop are required. The administrative functions of church government are vested in the office of the bishop, who is assisted by a consistory and an executive committee, consisting of the most representative ministers and laymen. Admission to church membership is by direct application to the bishop, the only conditions required being adult age and baptism into the faith of the New Church. Ordination to the ministry is by the bishop of the General Church.

WORK

Under the head of general uses the General Church includes all the activities supported by the general fund, namely, the support of the bishop's office and of the visiting pastor, the pension fund, the extension fund, special funds, the publication of the *New Church Life*, a monthly magazine, the organ of the denomination, and of *New Church Sermons*, a pamphlet issued monthly from October to June. The contributions for these purposes during the year 1926 amounted to \$16,839. In addition, \$12,179 was expended from an endowed fund for extension work. Seven churches were aided.

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 Rev. W. B. Caldwell, secretary of the General Church of the New Jerusalem, and approved by him in its present form.

An orphanage fund, intended primarily to assist orphaned children of the church, was instituted in 1900. The receipts of this fund for the year 1926 amounted to \$3,184 and the expenditures to \$2,774.

The General Church has a world-wide membership of 1,866, with 38 ministers and 23 organized churches in charge of local or visiting pastors, and maintaining regular public worship. Thirteen churches are in the United States and 10 in foreign countries—namely, England, France, Holland, Sweden, Natal, Australia, Brazil, and Canada—with 429 members, and 5 schools, with 55 pupils, were maintained. Missionary work is carried on by these churches, and, in addition, native missions are conducted in South Africa, with 582 native members. The headquarters are at Bryn Athyn, Pa., where the bishop resides, and there is a cathedral church.

The energies of the General Church have been concentrated largely upon the religious education of children, and parochial schools for those who have been baptized into the faith of the New Church have been established in the main centers of the church under the direct supervision of the pastors of local churches. In 1926 there were 3 of these schools, with 197 pupils, in the United States. The higher education of the church is intrusted to the Academy of the New Church, which includes a theological school and college for young men and women, an academy for boys, and a seminary for girls. The central office of the legal corporation of the academy is in Philadelphia, although the schools of the academy were removed from Philadelphia to Bryn Athyn, Pa., in 1896. A sustentation fund of \$400,000 was received in 1899, and new school buildings were erected at Bryn Athyn in 1901 and 1903. In 1926 there were 128 pupils, property valued at \$422,462, and an endowment of \$1,967,207.