

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

PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the Primitive Methodist Church in the United States of 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 Primitive Methodist Church persons are received into full membership upon public profession of faith and a pledge to conform to the discipline and rules of the church. Baptism is administered to infants.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations).....	80	54	26		
Members.....	11,990	10,348	1,642	86.3	13.7
Average per church.....	150	192	63		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	4,539	3,948	591	87.0	13.0
Female.....	7,451	6,400	1,051	85.9	14.1
Males per 100 females.....	60.9	61.7	56.2		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	1,286	1,164	122	90.5	9.5
13 years and over.....	10,567	9,184	1,403	86.7	13.3
Age not reported.....	137	20	117	14.6	85.4
Per cent under 13 years ³	10.8	11.3	8.0		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	83	55	28		
Value—Churches reporting.....	79	54	25		
Amount reported.....	\$1,676,800	\$1,524,700	\$152,100	90.9	9.1
Average per church.....	\$21,225	\$28,235	\$6,084		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	27	26	1		
Amount reported.....	\$121,049	\$119,249	\$1,800	98.5	1.5
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	48	26	22		
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting.....	63	47	16		
Amount reported.....	\$406,300	\$358,500	\$47,800	88.2	11.8
Debt—Churches reporting.....	13	12	1		
Amount reported.....	\$29,800	\$29,000	\$800	97.3	2.7
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage.....	47	33	14		
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	80	54	26		
Amount reported.....	\$326,598	\$283,430	\$43,168	86.8	13.2
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$270,808	\$236,375	\$34,433	87.4	12.6
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$55,090	\$47,055	\$9,035	83.9	16.1
Average expenditure per church.....	\$4,082	\$5,249	\$1,660		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	78	54	24		
Officers and teachers.....	1,571	1,249	322	79.5	20.5
Scholars.....	15,190	12,501	2,599	82.9	17.1

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.

³ Based on membership with age classification reported.

The data given for 1926 represent 80 active Primitive Methodist churches, with 11,990 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by all of the 80 churches and the classification by age was reported by 76 churches, including 55 which reported 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: PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ITEM	1926	1916	1906	1890
Churches (local organizations)	80	93	96	84
Increase ¹ over preceding census:				
Number.....	-13	-3	12	-----
Per cent ²	-----	-----	-----	-----
Members	11,990	9,353	7,558	4,764
Increase over preceding census:				
Number.....	2,537	1,795	2,794	-----
Per cent.....	28.2	23.7	58.6	-----
Average membership per church.....	160	101	79	57
Church edifices:				
Number.....	83	93	101	78
Value—Churches reporting.....	79	91	93	-----
Amount reported.....	\$1,676,800	\$829,035	\$630,700	\$291,993
Average per church.....	\$21,225	\$9,110	\$6,782	-----
Debt—Churches reporting.....	27	36	45	-----
Amount reported.....	\$121,049	\$85,869	\$90,965	-----
Parsonages:				
Value—Churches reporting.....	63	51	49	-----
Amount reported.....	\$406,300	\$164,300	\$103,600	-----
Debt—Churches reporting.....	13	-----	-----	-----
Amount reported.....	\$29,800	-----	-----	-----
Expenditures during year:				
Churches reporting.....	80	92	-----	-----
Amount reported.....	\$326,598	\$147,695	-----	-----
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$270,508	\$124,166	-----	-----
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$56,090	\$20,554	-----	-----
Not classified.....	-----	\$2,975	-----	-----
Average expenditure per church.....	\$4,082	\$1,606	-----	-----
Sunday schools:				
Churches reporting.....	78	90	91	-----
Officers and teachers.....	1,571	1,567	1,563	-----
Scholars.....	15,190	14,918	13,177	-----

¹ A minus sign (-) denotes decrease.

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

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the Primitive Methodist 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 each State 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 each conference in the Primitive 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: PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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.....	80	54	26	11,990	10,348	1,642	4,539	7,451	60.9
New England:									
Massachusetts.....	10	10	—	2,415	2,415	—	876	1,539	56.9
Rhode Island.....	8	7	1	787	703	84	306	481	63.6
Middle Atlantic:									
New York.....	3	3	—	432	432	—	161	271	59.4
Pennsylvania.....	41	29	12	7,137	6,142	995	2,782	4,355	63.9
East North Central:									
Ohio.....	2	2	—	328	328	—	103	225	45.8
Illinois.....	2	2	—	285	285	—	116	169	68.6
Wisconsin.....	11	—	11	543	—	543	171	372	46.0
West North Central:									
Iowa.....	3	1	2	63	43	20	24	39	—

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: PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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.....	80	93	96	11,990	9,353	7,558	1,286	10,567	137	10.8
Massachusetts.....	10	11	9	2,415	1,599	1,264	161	2,254	—	6.7
Rhode Island.....	8	8	8	787	500	532	61	622	104	8.9
New York.....	3	2	3	432	205	298	8	424	—	1.9
Pennsylvania.....	41	42	43	7,137	5,793	3,807	969	6,168	—	13.6
Ohio.....	2	4	3	328	232	138	44	284	—	13.4
Illinois.....	2	2	3	285	259	331	5	280	—	1.8
Wisconsin.....	11	22	25	543	725	1,158	38	472	33	7.5
Iowa.....	3	2	2	63	40	30	—	63	—	—

¹ Based on membership with age classification reported.

TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926: PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF 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.....	80	83	79	\$1,676,800	27	\$121,049	63	\$406,300	13	\$29,800
Massachusetts.....	10	10	10	361,200	6	30,275	8	68,000	3	6,400
Rhode Island.....	8	8	8	98,500	2	4,900	5	24,800	2	2,800
New York.....	3	3	3	87,000	2	8,500	3	21,500	1	6,000
Pennsylvania.....	41	41	40	999,500	15	75,799	34	253,500	5	9,400
Wisconsin.....	11	14	11	50,600			8	17,500		
Iowa.....	3	3	3	6,500				(1)		(1)
Other States ²	4	4	4	73,500	2	1,575	5	21,000	2	5,200

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 2 churches in Iowa.

TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926: PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF 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.	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States.....	80	80	\$326,598	\$270,508	\$56,090	78	1,571	15,190
Massachusetts.....	10	10	60,049	54,627	5,422	10	250	2,604
Rhode Island.....	8	8	27,321	24,480	2,841	8	122	995
New York.....	3	3	16,800	14,600	2,200	3	42	457
Pennsylvania.....	41	41	190,047	151,989	38,058	41	945	9,438
Wisconsin.....	11	11	15,484	11,795	3,689	9	109	774
Iowa.....	3	3	1,746	1,280	466	3	20	165
Other States.....	4	4	15,151	11,737	3,414	4	83	757

TABLE 7.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, VALUE OF EDIFICES, DEBT, EXPENDITURES, AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY CONFERENCES, 1926: PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF 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.....	80	11,990	79	\$1,676,800	27	\$121,049	80	\$326,598	78	15,190
Eastern.....	20	3,384	20	511,700	10	43,675	20	96,170	20	3,731
Pennsylvania.....	60	8,606	59	1,165,100	17	77,374	60	230,428	58	11,459

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

Among the features of the evangelistic movement in this country during the first decade of the nineteenth century was one that was distinctively American—the camp meeting. The first one appears to have been conducted in eastern Kentucky in 1800 by a union of Methodists and Presbyterians. Subsequently the Presbyterians withdrew to a considerable degree, and the camp meeting became a special feature of Methodist revival work, particularly throughout the West and the South. So much attention was attracted to this institution that several accounts were printed in the Methodist magazines of England, and early in the nineteenth century an American named Lorenzo Dow went over to England and aroused in the hearts of several members of the Wesleyan Connection a strong desire to have one in that country. Accordingly arrangements were made and one was held at Mow Cop, Staffordshire, on Sunday, May 31, 1807. So successful was this that other meetings followed, and a large number of converts were organized into societies or classes. When they sought admission into the Wesleyan Connection, however, they were refused unless they would break off all connection with the camp meeting Methodists, the conference declaring the meetings highly improper and likely to be productive of considerable mischief. A few persisted in holding them, and the immediate result was the expulsion from the Methodist body in June, 1808, of Hugh Bourne, and in September, 1810, of William Clowes, two of the leaders, who have always been considered the founders of the Primitive Methodist Church.

The meeting at Mow Cop is regarded as the real beginning of Primitive Methodism, although the first society or church was organized in March, 1810, at Standley, and was composed of 10 converts, none of whom belonged to any other church. The name "Primitive" was officially assumed at a meeting held at Tunstall, England, in February, 1812, in order to distinguish the new societies which, up to that time, had been known as Camp Meeting Methodists, from the original Methodist body, which later adopted the name Wesleyan. The subsequent emigration of considerable numbers of members to America led to the formation of societies in various parts of the United States and Canada, the first missionaries arriving in July, 1829, while Bourne himself visited America in 1844. As the work extended, three conferences were formed—the Western, the Pennsylvania, and the Eastern.

At the meeting of the General Conference in Kewanee, Ill., in September, 1925, a proposal was made to unite the three conferences into one annual conference. This resulted in the union of the Pennsylvania and Western Conferences, they having already voted in favor of the union; but the Eastern Conference deferred action on the question until the General Conference meeting in September, 1929.

DOCTRINE AND ORGANIZATION

The doctrine of the Primitive Methodist Church is essentially that of other branches of Methodism. It lays special emphasis on one triune God; the deity of Jesus Christ; the deity and personality of the Holy Spirit; the innocence, fall, and redemption of mankind; the necessity of repentance, justification by faith, regeneration, and sanctification producing holiness of heart and life; the resurrection of the dead and the conscious future existence of all men; the general judgment and eternal rewards and punishments.

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. Alfred Humphries, Ph. D., president of the General Conference, and approved by him in its present form.

In polity the church is very democratic. There is no centralization of authority. The General Conference is the legislative body and is composed of an equal number of ministerial and lay delegates elected by the several annual conferences on the basis of 1 each for every 300 members or fractional part thereof over 150. There is no distinction in this respect between male and female. Women are eligible to every office, including the regular ordained ministry.

The annual conferences have general and district committees which attend to necessary business in the interim of the annual meetings.

There are no bishops or district superintendents and there is no time limit for the pastorate. Each church is supplied with a pastor by the annual conference, usually by its "invitation." A society meeting is called the first week in March, at which three ministers are designated as first, second, and third choice for pastor for the ensuing year beginning in May. If the first declines, the second is invited; if he declines, the third is invited; if he declines, another society meeting is called, and the same course pursued. When an invitation is accepted by a minister, the annual conference simply ratifies the agreement, "except for grave reasons." The invitation is for one year, but may be renewed indefinitely. All uninvited ministers are stationed by the annual conference, and no candidates for the ministry are received unless there are churches for them.

WORK

The general activities of the Primitive Methodist Church are under the care of committees elected by the conference. The home mission work is under the direction of conference missionary boards, the members of which are elected annually by the two conferences of the denomination. Each board has jurisdiction within the bounds of its own conference and reports to it annually. During the year 1926 there were 14 missionaries employed, serving 14 churches, and contributions were reported to the amount of \$13,000.

The foreign mission work is under the care of a General Conference foreign missionary committee, composed of two representatives from each annual conference, one minister and one layman, elected by the General Conference and holding office for four years.

In 1921 the General Conference began to centralize its foreign missionary activities in Guatemala, Central America. A missionary was sent to open the work and it has grown with unexpected rapidity. The headquarters on the field are at Totonicapan, Quiche, Chichicastenango, and San Cristobal. There are 17 outstations, with 7 paid missionaries, 8 paid native workers, and 12 volunteer native workers. Since the opening of this field, January 12, 1922, approximately \$50,000 has been contributed to the work.

The board of education is elected quadrennially by the General Conference.

The official denominational organ is the Primitive Methodist Journal, published monthly.