

UNITED BRETHREN BODIES

GENERAL STATEMENT

The denominations grouped under the name United Brethren, in 1926, 1916, and 1906 are listed in the table below, with the principal statistics as reported for the three periods. These three bodies had a common origin, in the formation about 1800 of the denomination called the United Brethren in Christ; the small group known as the United Christian Church and reported in 1926 for the first time, separated in 1864; and the Church of the United Brethren in Christ (Old Constitution) separated in 1889. The general history for these three bodies, as well as the general statement of doctrine and organization, is presented in connection with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, the largest body.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR UNITED BRETHREN 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	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
1926								
Total for the group.....	3, 375	395, 885	3, 224	\$29, 578, 679	3, 288	\$7, 321, 073	3, 068	408, 749
Church of the United Brethren in Christ.....	2, 988	377, 436	2, 877	28, 520, 619	2, 918	6, 976, 440	2, 739	376, 982
Church of the United Brethren in Christ (Old Constitution) ..	372	17, 872	338	1, 022, 660	359	341, 687	344	23, 214
United Christian Church.....	15	577	9	35, 400	11	2, 946	5	583
1916								
Total for the group.....	3, 889	367, 934	3, 598	14, 494, 975	3, 775	3, 501, 103	3, 618	425, 951
Church of the United Brethren in Christ.....	3, 481	348, 828	3, 220	13, 787, 579	3, 373	3, 315, 238	3, 251	402, 538
Church of the United Brethren in Christ (Old Constitution) ..	408	19, 106	378	707, 396	402	185, 865	367	24, 112
1906								
Total for the group.....	4, 268	296, 050	3, 839	9, 073, 791	-----	-----	3, 777	301, 329
Church of the United Brethren in Christ.....	3, 699	274, 649	3, 356	8, 401, 539	-----	-----	3, 325	278, 764
Church of the United Brethren in Christ (Old Constitution) ..	569	21, 401	483	672, 252	-----	-----	452	22, 566

UNITED CHRISTIAN CHURCH

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the United Christian 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 the United Christian Church is composed of those persons who are formally received into the local churches upon subscribing to the confession of faith, discipline, and customs.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: UNITED CHRISTIAN CHURCH

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations).....	15	3	12		
Members.....	577	120	457	20.8	79.2
Average per church.....	38	40	38		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	248	55	193	22.2	77.8
Female.....	329	65	264	19.8	80.2
Males per 100 females.....	75.4	(³)	73.1		
Membership by age:					
13 years and over.....	543	120	423	22.1	77.9
Age not reported.....	34		34		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	9	2	7		
Value—Churches reporting.....	9	2	7		
Amount reported.....	\$35,400	\$8,700	\$26,700	24.6	75.4
Average per church.....	\$3,933	\$4,350	\$3,814		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	1	1			
Amount reported.....	\$1,200	\$1,200		100.0	
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	7	1	6		
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	11	2	9		
Amount reported.....	\$2,946	\$1,025	\$1,921	34.8	65.2
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$2,296	\$900	\$1,396	39.2	60.8
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$250	\$125	\$125	50.0	50.0
Not classified.....	\$400		\$400		100.0
Average expenditure per church.....	\$268	\$513	\$213		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	5	1	4		
Officers and teachers.....	70	17	53		
Scholars.....	553	157	396	28.4	71.6

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 Ratio not shown, the number of females being less than 100.

The data given for 1926 represent 15 active United Christian churches, all located in the State of Pennsylvania, with 577 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by all of the 15 churches and the classification by age was reported by 14 churches, none of which, however, reported any members under 13 years of age.

Although this body has been in existence, under its present name, since 1878, it has not been reported at any census of religious bodies prior to 1926.

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

The United Christian Church originated in the breaking away, about the year 1864, of a number of members of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ, both ministerial and lay. They were opposed, "on account of conscientious convictions" to some of the doctrines and practices, as then held and practiced by the church; these principally related to infant baptism, voluntary bearing of arms, and the admission of members of oath-bound secret organizations into the church.

For some years after their withdrawal the dissenting members met for worship from time to time in private houses, barns, groves, and in the few meeting houses that were open to them. Near the end of the year 1868 interest in the meetings increased to such a degree that it was necessary to procure a church in which to hold regular services.

The development of the organization of the church is shown by the adoption of the confession of faith in 1877, of the present name of the denomination in 1878, of a revised confession of faith in 1892, and of the constitution and discipline in 1894. Annual conferences have been held since 1878 and annual camp meetings since 1897.

DOCTRINE AND ORGANIZATION

This denomination holds the beliefs of other orthodox evangelistic churches in regard to the Trinity, the Scriptures, justification, regeneration, and the observance of the Sabbath. It admits man's total depravity, and defines sanctification as being "born again," by which experience men are "separated in their acts, words, and thoughts from sin."

The ordinances of the church are baptism, the Lord's Supper, and foot washing; the mode of baptism is left to individual choice, provided only that it shall be administered in the water if possible.

The early attitude of the church toward secret societies is still held by this body.

The organization follows in the main that of the Methodist Episcopal Church; the conferences are limited, however, to district and annual conferences. They follow the itinerant plan, in the ministry, and local preachers have a vote in the annual conference. The headquarters of the church are at Palmyra, Pa. No report of the denominational activities of the church in 1926 was obtained.

¹ This statement was prepared from information supplied by Rev. M. D. Landis, presiding elder, United Christian Church.