

MENNONITE BODIES

GENERAL STATEMENT

HISTORY

The origin of the denominations classed under the head of Mennonite bodies is traced by some to an early period in the history of the Christian Church. As various changes in doctrine and church organization came about, in both the East and the West, a number of communities, unwilling to accept them and preferring the simplicity of the Apostolic Church, remained more or less distinct through the Middle Ages. These communities received various names in different localities and in different centuries, but from the time of the first General Council at Nicea in the early part of the fourth century to the Conference of Dort, Holland, in 1632, they represented a general protest against ecclesiastical rule and a rigid liturgy, and an appeal for the simpler organization, worship, and faith of the apostolic age.

Present historical authorities, however, see little or no connection between these early independent movements and the present Mennonite Church, since those who founded the body to which present Mennonite bodies trace their origin came out from the Roman Catholic Church.

The first congregation of the church now known as Mennonite was organized in January, 1525, at Zurich, Switzerland, by Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, George Blaurock, and others. They called themselves "Brethren" (Swiss Brethren), but were commonly known as "Täufer." Grebel and his friends had been ardent coworkers with Ulrich Zwingli, but had withdrawn from his leadership in 1523, when they had realized that he would consent to a union of the church with the state, and that a church was to be established in which the whole population of the state would be obliged to hold membership. Zwingli's program called for the introduction of certain reforms in the existing Roman Catholic State Church. Grebel and his friends did not recognize infant baptism as scriptural. Hence they baptized again those who had been baptized in their infancy. For this reason they were called Anabaptists (Re-Baptizers). In 1534 the first Anabaptist congregations were organized in Holland by Obbe Philips. Two years later Obbe baptized Menno Simons (1496-1561), a converted Catholic priest. Menno soon became the most prominent leader of the "Obbenites," as the followers of Obbe Philips were called, in Holland and North Germany.

The name "Mennonite" dates from 1550, but would scarcely be recognized in Holland, where the usual name is "Doopsgezinde," or "Dooper," the Dutch equivalent for the English "Baptist." Similarly in parts of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, the German form "Taufgesinnte," or "Täufer," was used to indicate Baptists, although this name was not applied to all Mennonites. It was to some of the Flemish Mennonites, who, upon the invitation of King Henry VIII, settled in England and became the pioneers of the great weaving industry of that country, that the Baptists of England were largely indebted for their organization as a religious body, although it was not as "Mennonites" that they were invited to come to England, since it is known that persons of this faith were severely persecuted in England in the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth along with other nonconformists.

The persecutions of the Mennonites were due to the fact that in all countries, Protestant as well as Roman Catholic, church and state were united and dissenters were not tolerated. The number of Mennonites martyred is very great. Their

Book of Martyrs (First German Edition, Ephrata, Pa., 1749; English Edition, Elkhart, Ind., 1886) is a ponderous volume. In the Netherlands the persecution was very severe, but by the second decade after Menno Simons' death his followers had increased to respectable numbers, since in many places the authorities had been slow to carry out the decrees against them. The very presence of these numerous Mennonites proved the error of the supposition that the best interest of the state demands the toleration of only one creed within its realms. Holland became the first country to throw this principle overboard and grant religious freedom. After the founder of the Dutch Republic, William of Orange, had embraced the Reformed faith he ordered the cessation of persecution there (in 1577).

In Switzerland the persecution continued well into the seventeenth century. The last martyr was Hans Landis, the most prominent Mennonite bishop of that time, who was beheaded at Zurich in 1614. Thereafter many were imprisoned and some sentenced to the galleys.

After the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) Mennonites were permitted to settle in the Palatinate, in South Germany. Many fled to this province from Switzerland. When William Penn acquired Pennsylvania from the English Crown, he offered a home to all who were persecuted for their faith. The Mennonite pioneers in America were 13 families from Crefeld, Germany, who came on the ship *Concord*, in 1683, and settled at Germantown, now a part of Philadelphia. During the eighteenth century many Swiss Mennonites emigrated to Pennsylvania. They were for the most part poor. Their brethren in Holland formed an organization for the aid of those who did not have the means to go to America and contributed liberally for this purpose. Practically all the so-called Pennsylvania Dutch Mennonites are of Swiss descent. As their numbers increased during the first third of the eighteenth century, the Mennonites spread northward and westward from Germantown into Lancaster, Bucks, Berks, Montgomery, and other counties in Pennsylvania, and from these original settlements they have since spread to western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and farther west, and to Canada. As these early settlers came in contact with the Indians, they often found that their nonresistant principles served as a better protection than the rifles and stockades of most of the settlers, and there are but few records of injury of any kind inflicted upon them by the Indian tribes.

Since their settlement in this country a number of minor divisions have taken place among the Mennonites, occasioned by divergent views on some questions, but of late years the feeling has developed among nearly all branches that closer union and cooperation along certain common lines of gospel work would be desirable.

DOCTRINE

At a conference of some of the Mennonite groups in the Netherlands held at Dort, Holland, in 1632, a compilation of previous confessions of faith was made and called "A Declaration of the Chief Articles of our Common Christian Faith." This confession, containing 18 articles, was later accepted by the Alsatian Mennonites and is accepted by the great majority of the American Mennonite churches to-day.

A brief summary of these articles includes the following:

God the Creator of all things; the fall of man, through his disobedience; his restoration through the promise of the coming of Christ; the Advent of Christ, the Son of God; redemption has been purchased by His death on the cross for all mankind, from the time of Adam to the end of the world, who shall have believed on and obeyed Christ.

The law of Christ is contained in the Gospel, by obedience to which alone humanity is saved. Repentance and conversion, or complete change of life, without which no outward obedience to gospel requirements will avail to please God, is necessary to salvation. All who have repented of their sins and believed on Christ as the Saviour, and in heart and life accept His commandments, are born again. As such they obey the command to be baptized with water as a public testimony of their faith, are members of the Church of Jesus Christ, and are incorporated into the communion of the saints on earth. By partaking of the Lord's Supper the members express a common union with one another and a fellowship of love for and faith in Jesus Christ. The washing of the saints' feet is an ordinance instituted, and its perpetual observance commanded, by Christ. The state of matrimony is honorable between those spiritually kindred, and such alone can marry "in the Lord."

The civil government is a part of God's ministry, and members are not permitted to despise, blaspheme, or resist the government, but must be subject to it in all things and obedient to all its commands that do not militate against the will and law of God, and should pray earnestly for the government and its welfare, and in behalf of their country. Christ has forbidden his followers the use of carnal force in resisting evil and the seeking of revenge for evil treatment. Love for enemies can not be shown by acts of hatred and revenge, but by deeds of love and good will. The use of all oaths is forbidden, as contrary to God's will, though simple affirmation is allowed.

Those who willfully sin against God are to be excluded from the rights and privileges of the church, but are to be kindly exhorted to amend their ways, the object of expulsion being the amendment, not the destruction, of the offender, and for the benefit of the church. Those who, on account of their obstinacy, are finally reprovved and expelled from the church, because separated from God, must also be shunned socially, "that the openly obstinate and reprobate one may not defile others in the church," though in case of need they are to be kindly cared for, and admonished as those in need of spiritual help.

At the end of earth and earthly existence, all those who have lived and shall then be living are to be changed in a moment at the sound of the last trump, and are to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, where the good shall be separated from the evil; the good to enter into the heavenly joys prepared for them, the evil to depart forever from God's presence and mercy into the place prepared for the devil and his servants.

To the conviction that some of the requirements of civil law are contrary to the will and law of God is largely due the fact that the Mennonites have suffered so severely in past centuries, and have often been charged with being "clannish."

The Lord's Supper is observed twice a year in nearly all the congregations, and the great majority of them also observe the ordinance of washing the saints' feet in connection with and immediately after the Lord's Supper. In nearly all the Mennonite bodies baptism is by pouring.

ORGANIZATION

With two exceptions the form of church government in the different bodies of the Mennonites is the same. The local church is autonomous, deciding all matters affecting itself. District or State conferences are established, in most cases, to which appeals may be made; otherwise the authority of the congregation or of a committee appointed by the congregation is final. All decisions of State or district conferences are presented to the individual congregation for ratification. The divinely appointed offices of the Church of Christ are held to be those of bishop (sometimes called elder and sometimes presbyter), minister (pastor or evangelist), and almoner (deacon). The ministers are generally self-supporting, sharing the farming life of most of the Mennonite communities. Besides these there are teachers, male and female, as coworkers in the administration of the work.

STATISTICS

The denominations grouped as Mennonite bodies in 1926, 1916, and 1906 are listed in the following table, with the principal statistics as reported for the three periods.

As will be noted, there have been a number of changes in the names of the denominations, occasioned partly by changes in the bodies themselves, partly by a better classification. The Bruederhoef Mennonite Church is now known as the Hutterian Brethren, Mennonites; the Central Illinois Conference has dropped the "Illinois"; the Schellenberger Brueder-Gemeinde is now the Mennonite Brethren Church of North America; and the Nebraska and Minnesota Conference of Mennonites is now the Conference of Defenseless Mennonites of North America. The Amish Mennonite Church of 1906 has been consolidated with the Mennonite Church, but in its place has appeared the Conservative Amish Mennonite Church, while the Old Amish Mennonite Church has become the Old Order Amish Mennonite Church. The Stauffer Mennonites constituted a new body in 1916, as did the Kleine Gemeinde, which appears to have been included with the Krimmer Brueder-Gemeinde in 1906. The Unaffiliated Mennonite Congregations, shown for the first time in 1926, comprise various bodies of Mennonites who adhere to the tenets of the Confession of Faith adopted by the Mennonites at Dort in 1632, but have not affiliated themselves with any of the organized conferences.

In view of the influence exerted by the Amish Mennonites in the development of the Mennonite bodies, a preliminary statement of the movement is given following the summary of statistics and preceding the statement of the Mennonite Church, with which the Amish Mennonite Church as an ecclesiastical body has been consolidated.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE MENNONITE 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 | 826 | 87,164 | 680 | \$4,453,613 | 731 | \$1,270,067 | 631 | 87,897 |
| Mennonite Church..... | 295 | 34,039 | 264 | 1,565,800 | 279 | 320,151 | 261 | 37,788 |
| Hutterian Brethren, Mennonites..... | 6 | 700 | 5 | 19,000 | 3 | 9,645 | 3 | 115 |
| Conservative Amish Mennonite Church..... | 7 | 691 | 7 | 16,845 | 5 | 2,718 | 6 | 871 |
| Old Order Amish Mennonite Church..... | 71 | 6,006 | 5 | 20,300 | 35 | 8,011 | 13 | 898 |
| Church of God in Christ (Mennonite)..... | 26 | 1,832 | 18 | 78,850 | 18 | 7,705 | 8 | 436 |
| Old Order Mennonite Church (Wisler)..... | 19 | 2,227 | 18 | 68,700 | 12 | 2,504 | | |
| Reformed Mennonite Church..... | 31 | 1,117 | 28 | 108,800 | 27 | 20,565 | | |
| General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America..... | 136 | 21,582 | 130 | 1,212,350 | 131 | 378,794 | 130 | 23,537 |
| Defenseless Mennonites..... | 10 | 1,060 | 10 | 87,200 | 10 | 37,001 | 10 | 1,386 |
| Mennonite Brethren in Christ..... | 99 | 5,882 | 90 | 544,643 | 96 | 229,803 | 93 | 8,560 |
| Mennonite Brethren Church of North America..... | 61 | 6,484 | 49 | 318,920 | 54 | 118,384 | 50 | 7,575 |
| Krimmer Brueder-Gemeinde..... | 14 | 797 | 14 | 54,105 | 14 | 13,543 | 14 | 1,182 |
| Mennonite Kleine Gemeinde..... | 4 | 214 | 4 | 6,700 | 4 | 486 | 3 | 150 |
| Central Conference of Mennonites..... | 29 | 3,124 | 24 | 263,000 | 29 | 100,747 | 28 | 3,614 |
| Conference of the Defenseless Mennonites of North America..... | 9 | 818 | 9 | 60,900 | 9 | 14,680 | 8 | 1,415 |
| Stauffer Mennonite Church..... | 4 | 243 | 2 | 4,500 | 1 | 180 | | |
| Unaffiliated Mennonite Congregations..... | 5 | 348 | 3 | 23,000 | 4 | 5,150 | 4 | 370 |

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE MENNONITE BODIES, 1926, 1916, AND 1906—
Continued

| 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 |
| 1916 | | | | | | | | |
| Total for the group | 835 | 79,363 | 661 | \$2,292,424 | 664 | \$503,972 | 626 | 79,426 |
| Mennonite Church..... | 307 | 34,965 | 276 | 1,014,246 | 281 | 156,069 | 270 | 37,096 |
| Hutterian Brethren..... | 17 | 982 | 12 | 11,100 | | | 14 | 605 |
| Conservative Amish Mennonite Church..... | 13 | 1,066 | 12 | 20,060 | 11 | 3,517 | 11 | 882 |
| Old Order Amish Mennonite Church..... | 88 | 7,665 | | | 4 | 406 | 5 | 242 |
| Church of God in Christ (Mennonite)..... | 21 | 1,125 | 14 | 23,815 | 17 | 6,333 | 10 | 675 |
| Old Order Mennonite Church (Wisler)..... | 22 | 1,608 | 18 | 43,900 | 5 | 185 | | |
| Reformed Mennonite Church..... | 29 | 1,281 | 29 | 85,965 | 27 | 5,606 | | |
| General Conference of Mennonites of North America..... | 113 | 15,407 | 106 | 544,560 | 107 | 149,237 | 105 | 17,594 |
| Defenseless Mennonites..... | 11 | 854 | 11 | 33,500 | 10 | 10,241 | 10 | 1,423 |
| Mennonite Brethren in Christ..... | 108 | 4,737 | 91 | 223,648 | 105 | 91,317 | 101 | 7,755 |
| Mennonite Brethren Church of North America..... | 53 | 5,127 | 47 | 131,605 | 53 | 38,101 | 53 | 7,716 |
| Krimmer Brueder-Gemeinde..... | 13 | 894 | 12 | 31,700 | 13 | 13,075 | 13 | 1,556 |
| Kleine Gemeinde..... | 3 | 171 | 2 | 3,200 | 2 | 25 | 4 | 66 |
| Central Conference of Mennonites..... | 17 | 2,101 | 16 | 91,500 | 17 | 21,621 | 16 | 2,059 |
| Conference of the Defenseless Mennonites of North America..... | 15 | 1,171 | 12 | 30,625 | 12 | 8,239 | 14 | 1,757 |
| Stauffer Mennonites..... | 5 | 209 | 3 | 3,000 | | | | |
| 1906 | | | | | | | | |
| Total for the group | 604 | 54,798 | 497 | 1,237,134 | | | 411 | 44,922 |
| Mennonite Church..... | 220 | 18,674 | 202 | 500,112 | | | 156 | 15,798 |
| Bruederhoef Mennonite Church..... | 8 | 275 | 8 | 9,100 | | | | |
| Amish Mennonite Church..... | 57 | 7,640 | 52 | 122,275 | | | 54 | 6,367 |
| Old Amish Mennonite Church..... | 46 | 5,043 | 4 | 6,700 | | | 6 | 493 |
| Reformed Mennonite Church..... | 34 | 2,079 | 29 | 52,650 | | | | |
| General Conference of Mennonites of North America..... | 90 | 11,661 | 84 | 303,400 | | | 84 | 12,472 |
| Church of God in Christ (Mennonite)..... | 18 | 562 | 2 | 1,600 | | | | |
| Old (Wisler) Mennonite Church..... | 9 | 655 | 9 | 17,950 | | | | |
| Defenseless Mennonites..... | 14 | 967 | 13 | 16,800 | | | 13 | 1,102 |
| Mennonite Brethren in Christ..... | 68 | 2,801 | 57 | 140,747 | | | 59 | 3,720 |
| Bundes Conferenz der Mennoniten Brueder-Gemeinde: | | | | | | | | |
| Krimmer Brueder-Gemeinde..... | 6 | 708 | 6 | 17,900 | | | 6 | 680 |
| (Schellenberger Brueder-Gemeinde)..... | 13 | 1,825 | 13 | 13,000 | | | 13 | 2,550 |
| Central Illinois Conference of Mennonites..... | 13 | 1,363 | 12 | 25,900 | | | 12 | 968 |
| Nebraska and Minnesota Conference of Mennonites..... | 8 | 545 | 6 | 9,000 | | | 8 | 782 |

AMISH MENNONITE MOVEMENT

Jacob Ammon, or Amen, whose name gave the term "Amish" to the movement, was a native of Canton Bern, Switzerland; but, probably to escape persecution, he settled in Alsace in 1659. There was a tendency on the part of many of the Mennonites of the time, during the interval of rest from persecution, to become lax in their religious life and discipline. Ammon was the acknowledged leader of those who held to the strict letter of Menno Simons' teachings and the literal interpretation of several points of doctrine presented in the Confession of Faith, adopted at the Conference held at Dort, Holland, in 1632. Maintaining that, because they were not literally and rigorously carried out, some of the articles of the confession were a dead letter with many of the congregations, he traveled extensively, laboring to restore the communities to the spiritual life and condition manifested during Menno's ministry among them. The special point of

divergence between his followers and the other Mennonites was in regard to the exercise of the ban, or excommunication of disobedient members, as taught in I Corinthians v, 9-11; II Thessalonians III, 14; Titus III, 10, and incorporated in the Confession of Faith. The Amish party interpreted these passages as applying to daily life and the daily table; while the others understood them to mean simply the exclusion of expelled members from the communion table.

In 1690 two bishops, Ammon and Blank, acted as a committee to investigate conditions in Switzerland and southern Germany. As those accused of laxity in the particulars mentioned did not appear when called upon to answer the charges preferred against them, the Amish leaders expelled them. They in turn disowned the Amish party, and the separation was completed in 1698. Some time after this, Ammon and his followers made overtures for a reconciliation and union of the two factions, but these were rejected, and it remained for the closing years of the nineteenth century, almost exactly two centuries later, to see the steps taken that virtually reunited the two bodies, or the main part of each, for in the meantime there had been other divisions between the extreme elements of both.

At about the time of the separation, the migration of Mennonites from Europe to the crown lands acquired by William Penn in America began to assume large proportions, and included many of the Amish Mennonites, who settled in what now comprises Lancaster, Mifflin, Somerset, Lawrence, and Union Counties, in Pennsylvania. William Penn himself traveled extensively among the Mennonites in Europe, preaching in their meetings, and rendering them aid in various ways. From Pennsylvania the Amish Mennonites moved with the westward tide of migration into Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Nebraska, and other States. There was also a large exodus from Pennsylvania and from Europe direct to Canada, principally to the section westward of the large tract acquired by the early Mennonite settlers in Waterloo County, Ontario.

Toward the middle of the nineteenth century a growing sentiment in favor of closer relations between the two main bodies of Mennonites became manifest. Many prominent men on both sides, feeling that the division of 1698 was an error for which both sides were more or less to blame, used their influence toward a reconciliation. The establishment in 1864 of a religious periodical, and later the publication of other religious literature, for the benefit of, and supported by, both the Mennonite Church and the Amish Mennonites, naturally drew them into closer relationship. One result was the revival in both branches of direct evangelistic and missionary effort, which had been largely neglected ever since the migration from Europe to America. In this resumption of long neglected activities, denominational lines between the two bodies were disregarded. The establishment also of a common church school, in the closing decade of the last century, brought the most prominent men and ablest thinkers, as well as the young people of both parties, into one working body. Almost simultaneous with this, and as a natural result of it, was the establishment in 1898 of a General Conference, in which each body was accorded equal rights in all things pertaining to conference work. Subsequently, as stated above, the three conferences reported in 1906 as Amish Mennonite became identified with the Mennonite Church,¹ and the term as used at present refers to the two main branches—Conservative and Old Order—which still retain some of the beliefs and practices which were the basis of the separation.

¹ See Conservative Amish Mennonite Church, p. 860, and Old Order Amish Mennonite Church, p. 864.

OLD ORDER MENNONITE CHURCH (WISLER)

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the Old Order Mennonite Church (Wisler) 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 Old Order Mennonite Church (Wisler) consists of communicant members of the local congregations, who have made confession of faith and have been baptized.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: OLD ORDER MENNONITE CHURCH (WISLER)

| ITEM | Total | In urban territory ¹ | In rural territory ¹ | PER CENT OF TOTAL ² | |
|--|----------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| | | | | Urban | Rural |
| Churches (local organizations)..... | 19 | 2 | 17 | | |
| Members | 2,227 | 75 | 2,152 | 3.4 | 96.6 |
| Average per church..... | 117 | 38 | 127 | | |
| Membership by sex: | | | | | |
| Male..... | 1,083 | 34 | 1,049 | 3.1 | 96.9 |
| Female..... | 1,144 | 41 | 1,103 | 3.6 | 96.4 |
| Males per 100 females..... | 94.7 | (*) | 95.1 | | |
| Membership by age: | | | | | |
| Under 13 years..... | | | | | |
| 13 years and over..... | 2,047 | 75 | 1,972 | 3.7 | 96.3 |
| Age not reported..... | 180 | | 180 | | 100.0 |
| Church edifices: | | | | | |
| Number..... | 19 | 1 | 18 | | |
| Value—Churches reporting..... | 18 | 1 | 17 | | |
| Amount reported..... | \$68,700 | \$3,000 | \$65,700 | 4.4 | 95.6 |
| Average per church..... | \$3,817 | | \$3,865 | | |
| Expenditures during year: | | | | | |
| Churches reporting..... | 12 | 1 | 11 | | |
| Amount reported..... | \$2,504 | \$100 | \$2,404 | 4.0 | 96.0 |
| Current expenses and improvements..... | \$376 | \$75 | \$301 | 19.9 | 80.1 |
| Benevolences, missions, etc..... | \$2,128 | \$25 | \$2,103 | 1.2 | 98.8 |
| Average expenditure per church..... | \$209 | | \$219 | | |

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 19 active organizations of the Old Order Mennonite Church (Wisler), with 2,227 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by all of the 19 churches and the classification by age was reported by 17 churches, none of which, however, reported any members under 13 years of age.

Of the 18 churches reporting value of church edifices, none reported debt on such property; no parsonages were reported; and the church maintains no Sunday schools.

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: OLD ORDER MENNONITE CHURCH (WISLER)

| ITEM | 1926 | 1916 | 1906 | 1890 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|---------|
| Churches (local organizations)..... | 19 | 22 | 9 | 15 |
| Increase ¹ over preceding census: | | | | |
| Number..... | -3 | 13 | -6 | |
| Per cent ² | | | | |
| Members..... | 2,227 | 1,608 | 655 | 610 |
| Increase over preceding census: | | | | |
| Number..... | 619 | 953 | 45 | |
| Per cent..... | 38.5 | 145.5 | 7.4 | |
| Average membership per church..... | 117 | 73 | 73 | 41 |
| Church edifices: | | | | |
| Number..... | 19 | 23 | 10 | 12 |
| Value—Churches reporting..... | 18 | 18 | 9 | |
| Amount reported..... | \$68,700 | \$43,900 | \$17,950 | \$8,015 |
| Average per church..... | \$3,817 | \$2,439 | \$1,994 | |
| Expenditures during year: | | | | |
| Churches reporting..... | 12 | 5 | | |
| Amount reported..... | \$2,504 | \$185 | | |
| Current expenses and improvements..... | \$376 | \$185 | | |
| Benevolences, missions, etc..... | \$2,128 | | | |
| Average expenditure per church..... | \$209 | \$37 | | |

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 Old Order Mennonite Church (Wisler) 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 by age, so far as reported. Table 5 shows, for 1926 alone, the value of church property and the church expenditures, showing separately the amounts expended for current expenses and improvements, and for benevolences, etc. Separate presentation in Table 5 is limited to those States in which three or more churches reported the value of church edifices, in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church. The States omitted from Table 5 can be determined by referring to the complete list which appears in Table 3.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: OLD ORDER MENNONITE CHURCH (WISLER)

| 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..... | 19 | 2 | 17 | 2,227 | 75 | 2,152 | 1,083 | 1,144 | 94.7 |
| Middle Atlantic: | | | | | | | | | |
| Pennsylvania..... | 6 | | 6 | 1,600 | | 1,600 | 800 | 800 | 100.0 |
| East North Central: | | | | | | | | | |
| Ohio..... | 6 | 2 | 4 | 272 | 75 | 197 | 121 | 151 | 80.1 |
| Indiana..... | 4 | | 4 | 122 | | 122 | 55 | 67 | |
| Michigan..... | 1 | | 1 | 53 | | 53 | 27 | 26 | |
| South Atlantic: | | | | | | | | | |
| Virginia..... | 2 | | 2 | 180 | | 180 | 80 | 100 | 80.0 |

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: OLD ORDER MENNONITE CHURCH (WISLER)

[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 | 13 years and over | Age not reported |
| United States..... | 19 | 22 | 9 | 2,227 | 1,608 | 655 | 2,047 | 180 |
| Pennsylvania..... | 6 | 7 | --- | 1,600 | 960 | --- | 1,600 | --- |
| Ohio..... | 6 | 8 | 6 | 272 | 275 | 353 | 272 | --- |
| Indiana..... | 4 | 4 | 2 | 122 | 155 | 241 | 122 | --- |
| Other States..... | 3 | 3 | 1 | 233 | 218 | 61 | 53 | 180 |

TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH EXPENDITURES, BY STATES, 1926: OLD ORDER MENNONITE CHURCH (WISLER)

[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 | | EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | | | Churches reporting | Amount | Churches reporting | Total amount | For current expenses and improvements | For benevolences, missions, etc. |
| United States..... | 19 | 19 | 18 | \$68,700 | 12 | \$2,504 | \$376 | \$2,128 |
| Pennsylvania..... | 6 | 6 | 6 | 30,000 | 6 | 2,000 | --- | 2,000 |
| Ohio..... | 6 | 5 | 5 | 16,200 | 4 | 329 | 271 | 58 |
| Indiana..... | 4 | 5 | 4 | 14,500 | --- | (¹) | (¹) | (¹) |
| Other States ² | 3 | 3 | 3 | 8,000 | 2 | 175 | 105 | 70 |

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

² The figures for expenditures include data for 1 church in Indiana.

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION ¹

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

The development of the progressive movement in the Mennonite Church about the middle of the nineteenth century was accompanied by considerable opposition, manifesting itself especially in regard to the introduction of the English language into the church services, the practice of holding evening meetings, revival meetings, Sunday schools, and certain other "innovations" which were regarded as unorthodox. Other minor matters, magnified into important issues, were added to these differences of opinion, and under the lead of Jacob Wisler, the first Mennonite bishop in Indiana, a separation took place in 1870. He was disowned by the Mennonite Church, and, although various efforts at reconciliation were subsequently made, he and a small following in Indiana and Ohio formed a separate conference, claiming to be the real Mennonite Church.

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. J. A. Ressler, editor of the Mennonite Year Book, Scottdale, Pa., and approved by him in its present form.

In 1886 the corresponding conservative element of the Mennonite Church in Canada formed a separate body along practically the same lines; others again in Pennsylvania in 1893 and in Virginia in 1901. All of these separated bodies are now united in their work and with few exceptions oppose Sunday schools, the use of the English language in public worship, evening and revival meetings, higher education, and missions.

The division reported 10 years ago in regard to the use of telephones still persists in the West, though in Lancaster County, Pa., the church is not divided, and the eastern wing acknowledges both western branches as in fellowship with themselves. It would be difficult to report these bodies otherwise than as one.

In matters of doctrine the Old Order Mennonites adhere very strictly to the Dort Confession of Faith. Each section has a separate district conference. There is no church periodical, and no organized charitable work, though the individual members are generous in case of need among themselves.