

INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

STATISTICS

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

The qualifications for membership are those of the individual organizations and can not be defined for the whole group.

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

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations)	259	71	188	27.4	72.6
Members	40,381	24,376	16,005	60.4	39.6
Average per church.....	156	343	85		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	14,888	8,480	6,408	57.0	43.0
Female.....	22,053	13,297	8,756	60.3	39.7
Sex not reported.....	3,440	2,599	841	75.6	24.4
Males per 100 females.....	67.5	63.8	73.2		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	2,314	918	1,396	39.7	60.3
13 years and over.....	23,379	10,909	12,470	46.7	53.3
Age not reported.....	14,688	12,549	2,139	85.4	14.6
Per cent under 13 years ³	9.0	7.8	10.1		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	203	60	143	29.6	70.4
Value—Churches reporting.....	189	52	137	27.5	72.5
Amount reported.....	\$4,400,278	\$2,862,838	\$1,537,440	65.1	34.9
Average per church.....	\$23,282	\$55,055	\$11,222		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	55	25	30		
Amount reported.....	\$332,332	\$201,472	\$130,860	60.6	39.4
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	106	22	84	20.8	79.2
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting.....	60	16	44		
Amount reported.....	\$240,100	\$120,000	\$120,100	50.0	50.0
Debt—Churches reporting.....	21	8	13		
Amount reported.....	\$42,496	\$34,250	\$8,246	80.6	19.4
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage.....	26	6	20		
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	229	64	165	27.9	72.1
Amount reported.....	\$1,059,330	\$718,650	\$340,680	67.8	32.2
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$811,008	\$499,475	\$311,533	61.6	38.4
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$112,648	\$86,677	\$25,971	76.9	23.1
Not classified.....	\$135,674	\$132,498	\$3,176	97.7	2.3
Average expenditure per church.....	\$4,626	\$11,229	\$2,065		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	215	58	157	27.0	73.0
Officers and teachers.....	2,866	1,024	1,842	35.7	64.3
Scholars.....	27,435	10,842	16,593	39.5	60.5

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 259 active Independent Churches, with 40,381 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by 241 churches and the classification by age was reported by 203 churches, including, however, only 105 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 Independent Churches for the censuses of 1926, 1916, 1906, and 1890.

This group represents a constantly shifting number of organizations. The figures for 1916 include the Church Transcendent and the Nonsectarian Churches of Bible Faith and those for 1906 include the Gospel Mission, the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, and Nonsectarian Churches of Bible Faith, shown as separate denominations for those years, but whose few remaining churches are included with Independent Churches for 1926. A most important change, however, as affecting the comparability of the figures, is the fact that the denominational federated churches, which were formerly included in Independent Churches, are in 1926 shown as a separate group, comprising 361 churches.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1890 TO 1926: INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

ITEM	1926	1916 ¹	1906 ¹	1890
Churches (local organizations)	259	613	1,293	156
Increase ² over preceding census:				
Number.....	-354	-680	1,137	
Per cent.....	-57.7	-52.6	728.8	
Members	40,381	56,757	86,130	14,126
Increase ² over preceding census:				
Number.....	-16,376	-29,373	72,004	
Per cent.....	-28.9	-34.1	509.7	
Average membership per church.....	156	93	67	91
Church edifices:				
Number.....	203	488	853	112
Value—Churches reporting.....	189	464	839	
Amount reported.....	\$4,400,278	\$4,459,148	\$3,960,177	\$1,486,000
Average per church.....	\$23,282	\$9,610	\$4,720	
Debt—Churches reporting.....	55	96	232	
Amount reported.....	\$332,332	\$296,504	\$481,725	
Parsonages:				
Value—Churches reporting.....	60	86	93	
Amount reported.....	\$240,100	\$362,300	\$185,450	
Debt—Churches reporting.....	21			
Amount reported.....	\$42,496			
Expenditures during year:				
Churches reporting.....	229	534		
Amount reported.....	\$1,059,330	\$767,778		
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$311,008	\$521,881		
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$112,648	\$155,923		
Not classified.....	\$135,674	\$89,974		
Average expenditure per church.....	\$4,626	\$1,438		
Sunday schools:				
Churches reporting.....	215	478	859	
Officers and teachers.....	2,866	4,457	6,890	
Scholars.....	27,435	39,691	59,656	

¹ The figures for 1916 include the Church Transcendent and Nonsectarian Churches of Bible Faith and those for 1906 include the Gospel Mission, the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, and Nonsectarian Churches of Bible Faith, which were shown separately for those years. In both years the figures include also the churches reported as federated churches, which are shown as a separate group in 1926.

² A minus sign (-) denotes decrease.

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the Independent Churches 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 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.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX			
	Total	Ur- ban	Ru- ral	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Fe- male	Sex not re- ported	Males per 100 females (¹)
United States.....	259	71	188	40,381	24,376	16,005	14,888	22,053	3,440	67.5
New England:										
Maine.....	4		4	92		92	24	32	36	
New Hampshire.....	2		2	21		21	7	14		
Vermont.....	5		5	343		343	88	255		34.5
Massachusetts.....	8	3	5	716	336	380	394	322		122.4
Rhode Island.....	1	1		48	48		13	35		
Connecticut.....	2	2		471	471		230	241		95.4
Middle Atlantic:										
New York.....	20	6	14	2,703	1,889	814	629	994	1,080	63.3
New Jersey.....	2	1	1	1,190	1,050	140	565	625		90.4
Pennsylvania.....	16	4	12	2,044	897	1,147	1,094	950		115.2
East North Central:										
Ohio.....	13	7	6	1,326	843	483	594	707	25	84.0
Indiana.....	4	2	2	167	75	92	43	64	60	
Illinois.....	24	14	10	8,984	8,218	766	3,538	5,326	120	66.4
Michigan.....	14	1	13	2,021	408	1,613	783	1,145	93	68.4
Wisconsin.....	7	1	6	294	31	263	116	178		65.2
West North Central:										
Minnesota.....	8	3	5	634	407	227	268	366		73.2
Iowa.....	11	2	9	1,185	307	878	449	736		61.0
Missouri.....	13	3	10	1,422	553	869	579	843		68.7
North Dakota.....	3		3	159		159	66	93		
South Dakota.....	7		7	461		461	204	257		79.4
Nebraska.....	6		6	882		882	419	463		90.5
Kansas.....	11	1	10	844	75	769	322	522		61.7
South Atlantic:										
Delaware.....	4		4	60		60	27	33		
Maryland.....	2		2	307		307	153	154		99.4
Dist. of Columbia.....	1	1		25	25				25	
Virginia.....	2	1	1	907	900	7	253	654		38.7
West Virginia.....	4	1	3	432	75	357	177	255		69.4
North Carolina.....	1	1		503	503		214	289		74.0
Georgia.....	3	2	1	907	899	8	24	39	844	
Florida.....	3		3	191		191	54	95	42	
East South Central:										
Kentucky.....	4	1	3	1,200	145	1,055	536	664		80.7
West South Central:										
Arkansas.....	1		1	16		16	5	11		
Oklahoma.....	6	1	5	372	35	337	147	190	35	77.4
Texas.....	4		4	390		390	153	237		64.6
Mountain:										
Montana.....	5		5	334		334	77	97	160	
Idaho.....	2		2	56		56	19	37		
Wyoming.....	2	1	1	93	62	31	39	54		
Colorado.....	6		6	231		231	99	132		75.0
Arizona.....	2	1	1	585	248	337	206	379		54.4
Pacific:										
Washington.....	7	1	6	1,306	163	1,143	407	504	395	80.8
Oregon.....	6	2	4	681	345	336	147	189	345	77.8
California.....	13	7	6	5,778	5,368	410	1,726	3,872	180	44.6

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

INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

[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 ¹	1906 ¹	1926	1916 ¹	1906 ¹	Under 13 years	13 years and over	Age not reported	Per cent under 13 ²
United States.....	259	613	1,293	40,381	56,757	86,130	2,314	23,379	14,688	9.0
Maine.....	4	17	12	92	651	346	1	55	36	-----
Vermont.....	5	16	5	343	824	280	8	61	274	-----
Massachusetts.....	8	38	38	716	3,190	2,098	21	457	238	4.4
Rhode Island.....	1	5	5	48	1,068	364	-----	-----	48	-----
Connecticut.....	2	7	10	471	225	664	50	421	-----	10.6
New York.....	20	50	85	2,703	6,482	10,066	39	2,639	25	1.5
New Jersey.....	2	14	24	1,190	2,057	1,600	343	847	-----	28.8
Pennsylvania.....	16	44	136	2,044	4,645	8,351	659	1,344	41	32.9
Ohio.....	13	35	50	1,326	2,912	2,994	26	1,154	146	2.2
Indiana.....	4	13	42	167	924	3,221	9	56	102	-----
Illinois.....	24	36	57	8,984	5,883	14,363	68	4,101	4,815	1.6
Michigan.....	14	27	37	2,021	3,069	2,149	74	1,446	501	4.9
Wisconsin.....	7	19	20	294	1,589	1,477	14	224	56	5.9
Minnesota.....	8	22	28	634	1,618	1,340	59	520	55	10.2
Iowa.....	11	13	32	1,185	1,789	2,782	54	973	158	5.3
Missouri.....	13	27	73	1,422	2,288	2,949	95	1,222	105	7.2
North Dakota.....	3	7	8	159	452	275	1	158	-----	0.6
South Dakota.....	7	7	8	461	236	334	62	399	-----	13.4
Nebraska.....	6	9	18	882	601	885	262	620	-----	29.7
Kansas.....	11	12	42	844	391	1,016	44	665	135	6.2
Delaware.....	4	-----	3	60	-----	66	3	38	19	-----
Maryland.....	2	7	18	307	1,678	1,738	100	200	7	33.3
Virginia.....	2	9	17	907	369	949	-----	7	900	-----
West Virginia.....	4	19	33	432	1,212	2,541	7	425	-----	1.6
North Carolina.....	1	11	50	503	632	2,252	-----	-----	503	-----
South Carolina.....	-----	3	8	-----	355	485	-----	-----	-----	-----
Georgia.....	3	2	14	907	181	1,538	6	57	844	-----
Florida.....	3	8	19	191	479	553	35	114	42	23.5
Kentucky.....	4	6	28	1,200	467	908	64	1,136	-----	5.3
Tennessee.....	-----	8	37	-----	428	2,587	-----	-----	-----	-----
Alabama.....	-----	13	36	-----	1,367	1,409	-----	-----	-----	-----
Mississippi.....	-----	5	23	-----	509	2,404	-----	-----	-----	-----
Arkansas.....	1	9	58	16	519	2,269	-----	16	-----	-----
Louisiana.....	-----	7	16	-----	289	637	-----	-----	-----	-----
Oklahoma.....	6	13	58	372	354	1,563	2	135	235	1.5
Texas.....	4	9	55	390	961	1,566	18	372	-----	4.6
Montana.....	5	-----	-----	334	-----	-----	19	155	160	10.9
Colorado.....	6	5	8	231	124	361	4	164	63	2.4
New Mexico.....	-----	6	1	-----	210	30	-----	-----	-----	-----
Arizona.....	2	-----	4	585	-----	25	50	535	-----	8.5
Washington.....	7	11	21	1,306	552	1,172	1	965	340	0.1
Oregon.....	6	13	9	681	780	323	86	250	345	25.6
California.....	13	25	43	5,778	4,000	2,969	17	1,322	4,439	1.3
Other States.....	7	6	4	195	397	236	13	126	56	9.4

¹ The figures for 1916 include the Church Transcendent and Nonsectarian Churches of Bible Faith and those for 1906 include the Gospel Mission, the Christian Catholic Church in Zion, and Nonsectarian Churches of Bible Faith, which were shown separately for those years. In both years the figures include also the churches reported as federated churches.

² 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:
INDEPENDENT CHURCHES**

[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 States¹	259	203	189	\$4,400,278	55	\$932,332	60	\$240,100	21	\$42,496
Vermont	5	4	4	20,500				(1)		
Massachusetts	8	7	7	67,000				(1)		
New York	20	16	15	622,400	2	14,000	4	16,100	1	4,000
Pennsylvania	16	11	11	182,300	6	31,100		(1)		(1)
Ohio	13	11	11	123,900	3	6,142		(1)		
Indiana	4	3	3	5,700						
Illinois	24	25	19	703,128	5	31,300	8	33,800	3	9,000
Michigan	14	15	13	572,000	2	800	3	13,000	2	800
Wisconsin	7	5	5	23,500	2	5,800		(1)		(1)
Minnesota	8	6	5	115,900						
Iowa	11	10	10	97,500	3	10,680	4	6,100		
Missouri	13	11	10	64,200	4	21,880	3	7,600		
South Dakota	7	6	6	17,400	1	2,000		(1)		
Nebraska	6	6	6	28,000	1	1,000	3	8,000		
Kansas	11	7	7	21,350	2	600		(1)		(1)
Kentucky	4	4	4	138,500	3	23,130		(1)		
Oklahoma	6	4	4	11,000				(1)		(1)
Montana	5	3	3	17,500	1	700		(1)		(1)
Colorado	6	5	4	18,000				(1)		(1)
Washington	7	5	5	178,000	2	50,700		(1)		(1)
Oregon	6	4	4	12,700	3	1,800		(1)		(1)
California	13	10	9	426,500	5	35,800	5	45,500	2	10,250
Other States ²	45	25	24	933,400	10	94,900	30	110,000	13	18,446

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 21 churches in Vermont, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Kansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Montana, Colorado, Washington, and Oregon.

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION

HISTORY

Under this head are presented those single churches which are not identified with any ecclesiastical body and have not even such affiliation as would entitle them to inclusion under a special name. Although any general classification is impracticable, through the several censuses certain distinct types have persisted.

The first includes certain churches which were originally missions or Sunday schools, established in newly settled or outlying districts by Christian workers representing different denominations, and which have grown gradually into a definite church life. A few such churches appear in the present survey.

The second and larger class embraces those churches variously called union, community, nondenominational, and interdenominational. These represent the growing movement toward nonsectarian unity and the consolidation of church work to eliminate weak churches and the waste of duplicated effort in overchurched localities, and they also show a trend toward churches which serve the religious and social needs of the entire community, regardless of its specific creedal beliefs, and emphasize social righteousness rather than individual salvation. In the current census all churches of this class which have any ecclesiastical

TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926:
INDEPENDENT CHURCHES

[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.....	259	229	\$1,059,330	\$811,008	\$112,648	\$135,674	215	2,866	27,435
Maine.....	4	3	979	919	60	-----	3	22	201
Vermont.....	5	5	6,809	6,512	297	-----	4	56	281
Massachusetts.....	8	8	16,617	15,509	1,108	-----	7	50	425
New York.....	20	19	49,744	37,639	12,105	-----	20	179	1,295
Pennsylvania.....	16	11	12,222	10,841	1,381	-----	12	93	868
Ohio.....	13	12	24,881	23,347	1,534	-----	11	112	1,050
Indiana.....	4	3	955	407	50	498	3	22	115
Illinois.....	24	23	302,653	283,712	17,141	1,800	21	338	3,784
Michigan.....	14	13	82,628	78,234	4,143	251	12	201	1,686
Wisconsin.....	7	6	4,103	3,783	320	-----	6	38	276
Minnesota.....	8	8	13,336	12,202	1,134	-----	4	78	665
Iowa.....	11	10	42,475	41,139	1,336	-----	9	102	1,017
Missouri.....	13	11	20,009	17,218	2,791	-----	13	161	1,415
North Dakota.....	3	3	2,160	1,875	285	-----	3	24	183
South Dakota.....	7	7	7,785	6,983	802	-----	7	42	360
Nebraska.....	6	6	7,806	6,925	881	-----	6	70	604
Kansas.....	11	10	18,871	16,257	2,614	-----	9	105	1,144
Delaware.....	4	4	1,711	1,636	75	-----	1	1	43
Florida.....	3	3	1,275	1,150	-----	125	3	27	205
Kentucky.....	4	4	19,850	16,013	3,837	-----	4	70	731
Texas.....	4	4	5,350	4,750	600	-----	3	46	365
Montana.....	5	4	5,592	5,570	22	-----	5	37	378
Colorado.....	6	5	7,001	6,429	572	-----	6	61	644
Washington.....	7	7	66,493	47,716	18,777	-----	7	135	1,562
Oregon.....	6	6	18,994	5,550	1,444	12,000	5	56	516
California.....	13	12	179,493	56,291	3,202	120,000	9	336	3,398
Other States.....	33	22	139,538	102,401	36,137	1,000	22	404	4,224

affiliation are shown with their respective denominations, while the federated churches, formerly included with the independent churches, are presented as a separate group. Community churches and nondenominational churches together comprise nearly one-half of the number of so-called independent churches, while about one-fifth of the whole report themselves as union or interdenominational churches. Of these latter, "Union" may be simply a part of the name and have no other significance, or the term may be historic and suggest a former denominational connection. Interdenominational churches, as included in this group, are those having organic unity in which the several denominations represented have fully merged their individuality.

The third class includes churches which use a denominational name, but for one reason or another are not included in denominational lists and are not reported by the denominational officers. In the past a number of Lutheran churches were so listed because not included in the synodical returns, but the Lutheran bodies, as a part of the larger movement toward union, now report both synodical and nonsynodical churches. Among other bodies it occasionally happens that a Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Methodist, Reformed, or other church, for some reason—doctrinal, ecclesiastical, or geographical—is not included in the lists of any association, presbytery, classis, or other body. In some cases these have simply grown up dissociated from the ecclesiastical bodies,

and have preserved their independent status from habit rather than from difference of opinion. Not being included in the denominational returns, however, they are classed as independent.

The fourth class includes churches which were organized by individuals independent of any denominational status, some that originally had denominational connection, and some which are the result of holiness or evangelistic movements. An outstanding example of this class is the Angelus Temple of Los Angeles. In some cases these independent churches have come into affiliation and subsequently into organization, so that several of the denominations included in the report on religious bodies, as the Christian and Missionary Alliance and the Pentecostal and Holiness churches, are largely composed of churches that formerly were classed as independent. This group includes also the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church in Zion, organized in 1896 by John Alexander Dowie, with headquarters at Zion City, Ill., and cultivating a strong religious and industrial community life.

With regard to all these classes it is to be noted that they represent a constantly shifting number. In each class, occasionally, a church which is one year reported as independent will in another year be reported as identified with some ecclesiastical body. Others, lacking the support of some general body, drop out of existence entirely or become consolidated with other churches. Two denominations included in previous reports—the Church Transcendent and Nonsectarian Churches of Bible Faith—have disintegrated and any organizations formerly belonging to them are now included among the Independent Churches.

DOCTRINE AND ORGANIZATION

The withdrawal from the list of Independent Churches, as reported in 1916, of the denominational federated churches has left a group for which no special features either of doctrine or polity can be definitely stated. Each of the organizations included in this report draws up its own creed, adopts its own form of organization, chooses its own officers, makes its own conditions of membership, and conducts its own worship as it chooses, and no general statement is practicable, except that the union and interdenominational churches accord more or less closely to the customs of the denominations represented in their organizations. There is evidence, however, of a certain loose organization among the undenominational churches in the States of Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Wisconsin.

While it is probable that most of the individual churches carry on the usual programs of religious and social activities, no reports on these were received.