

PRESBYTERIAN BODIES

GENERAL STATEMENT

History.—As the Lutheran churches represent those features of the Reformation emphasized by Luther, so the Presbyterian and Reformed churches represent those emphasized by Calvin. The doctrinal and ecclesiastical system developed at Geneva, modified somewhat in Holland and in France and transferred to Scotland, became solidified there largely under the influence of John Knox in 1530 and found a practical and thoroughly logical presentation in the Westminster Assembly, London, England, 1645–1649. This was not a distinctively Presbyterian body. Called by act of Parliament to consider the state of the entire country in matters of religion, it represented in its membership all English-speaking Christians, although the Anglicans took no active part in its deliberations. It had no ecclesiastical authority, yet its deliverances on doctrine have furnished the basis both for Presbyterian and many non-Presbyterian bodies; and the form of ecclesiastical government it recommended has gone far beyond the country where it was formulated and has had a marked influence not only on church life, but in civil and national development. In England it fostered the development of the Independents who afterwards became the Congregationalists. In Scotland, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it resulted in the development of several Presbyterian bodies, each insisting upon some specific administrative phase; and one of its strongholds was the north of Ireland, where so many Scotch found a more congenial home for the time being, until they should cross the Atlantic.

The distinctively Presbyterian churches of the United States trace their origin chiefly to Great Britain. Whatever of English and Welsh Presbyterianism there was in the Colonies, together with the few French Protestant, or Huguenot, churches, combined at an early date with the Scotch and Scotch-Irish elements to form the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, from which the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the United States afterwards separated. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church, representing the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales, was united in 1920 with the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.¹

Five Presbyterian denominations are directly connected with the Secession and Relief movements of the church in Scotland in the eighteenth century: The United Presbyterian Church of North America; the Associate Synod of North America, known also as the Associate Presbyterian Church; the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, formerly the Associate Reformed Synod of the South; the Synod and the General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

In close harmony with these distinctively Presbyterian churches are the Reformed churches, traceable to the influence of immigration from the Continent of Europe: The Reformed Church in America (Dutch) and the Christian Reformed Church, both of which originated in Holland; the Reformed Church in the United States (German), whose beginnings were in Switzerland and Germany; and the Free Magyar Reformed Church in America, representing the State Reformed Church of Hungary. All of these, Presbyterian and Reformed, substantially agree in government, and all maintain similar principles of the Calvinistic system, whether expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the

¹ See Methodist bodies, p. 914.

Canons of the Synod of Dort, or the Heidelberg Catechism. The Alliance of Reformed Churches throughout the world holding the Presbyterian system, whose special purpose is to secure cooperation by the different denominations in general church work, has grown out of this concord, as has also the Council of the Reformed Churches in the United States holding the Presbyterian system, organized for the same general purpose.

Doctrine and organization.—Presbyterianism as a doctrinal system has as its fundamental principles the undivided sovereignty of God in His universe, the sovereignty of Christ in salvation, the sovereignty of the Scriptures in faith and conduct, and the sovereignty of the individual conscience in the interpretation of the Word of God. As a polity, it recognizes Christ as the only head of the church and the source of all power, and the people of Christ as entitled under their Lord to participation in the government and action of the church. As polity and as doctrine, it maintains the right of private judgment in matters of religion, the membership in the Church Universal of all who profess the true religion, the validity of church organization, and the power of each association of organizations to prescribe its own terms of communion. It further holds that ministers are peers one of another, and that church authority is positively vested, not in individuals, such as bishops or presbyters, but in representative courts, including the session, the presbytery, and the synod; and in the case of some bodies, especially the larger ones, the general assembly. This principle of coordinate representative authority, by which the individual member of the church has his own share in the conduct of that church, while at the same time he recognizes not merely the headship of Christ but the fellowship in Christ, has given to the system a peculiar hold wherever there has been representative government and has exerted a strong influence modifying both individualistic and hierarchical tendencies. Its advocates call attention to the resemblance between its polity and the political constitution of the United States, in which country it has had its strongest influence, its courts corresponding closely to the local, State, and national organizations.

Statistics.—The denominations grouped as the Presbyterian bodies in 1926, in 1916, and in 1906 are listed in the summary table, with the principal statistics as reported for the three periods.

Certain changes are to be noted. The union between the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, under discussion in 1906, was consummated, but a considerable number of the Cumberland Presbyterian churches refused to adopt the plan and continued the old organization. This explains the decrease in the statistics of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church which is shown for both 1916 and 1926. The body reported in 1906 as the Associate Reformed Synod of the South changed its name in 1913 to Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. The single organization reported in 1906 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States and Canada later joined the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod; the single organization reported in 1906 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Covenanted) was listed in 1916 with the Independent churches. In 1920, the five synods of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church were absorbed into the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN 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.....	14,848	2,625,284	13,852	\$443,572,158	14,259	\$87,535,390	13,222	2,001,928
Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.....	8,947	1,894,030	8,437	338,152,743	8,656	63,230,663	8,237	1,407,298
Cumberland Presbyterian Church.....	1,097	67,938	986	3,321,287	961	759,021	765	48,052
Colored Cumberland Presbyterian Church.....	178	10,868	162	353,825	167	80,304	152	5,223
United Presbyterian Church of North America.....	901	171,571	879	29,714,845	890	6,642,820	871	148,668
Presbyterian Church in the United States.....	3,469	451,043	3,148	67,798,658	3,330	15,612,028	2,959	367,795
Associate Synod of North America (Associate Presbyterian Church).....	11	329	10	28,800	11	8,841	6	150
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.....	143	20,410	139	2,428,100	142	809,883	137	15,998
Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.....	89	7,166	79	1,427,100	89	851,179	83	7,495
Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod.....	13	1,929	12	346,800	13	40,651	12	1,259
1916								
Total for the group.....	15,840	2,255,626	14,328	192,989,599	14,661	40,058,907	13,978	1,947,421
Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.....	9,639	1,611,251	8,677	150,239,123	9,059	80,166,158	8,848	1,381,653
Cumberland Presbyterian Church.....	1,313	72,052	1,150	1,935,072	1,009	830,905	903	53,431
Colored Cumberland Presbyterian Church.....	136	13,077	130	230,420	127	39,497	133	7,471
Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church.....	134	14,566	126	1,012,000	120	173,977	127	10,789
United Presbyterian Church of North America.....	991	160,726	952	13,543,213	974	3,094,945	970	156,072
Presbyterian Church in the United States.....	3,365	357,760	3,041	28,924,915	3,101	5,809,909	2,744	313,165
Associate Synod of North America (Associate Presbyterian Church).....	12	490	12	26,400	12	8,114	5	137
Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.....	133	15,124	128	667,650	133	178,138	128	13,411
Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.....	103	8,185	98	1,131,600	103	225,263	100	9,498
Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod.....	14	2,386	14	279,200	14	32,001	14	1,765

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE PRESBYTERIAN 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
1906								
Total for the group	15, 471	1, 830, 555	14, 160	150, 189, 446			13, 048	1, 511, 175
Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.....	7, 927	1, 179, 566	7, 405	114, 882, 781			7, 393	1, 045, 056
Cumberland Presbyterian Church.....	2, 846	195, 770	2, 451	5, 803, 960			1, 817	120, 311
Colored Cumberland Presbyterian Church.....	196	18, 066	192	203, 778			192	6, 952
Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church.....	147	13, 280	145	761, 350			136	11, 347
United Presbyterian Church of North America.....	964	130, 342	943	10, 760, 208			948	115, 963
Presbyterian Church in the United States.....	3, 086	266, 345	2, 734	15, 488, 489			2, 301	189, 767
Associate Synod of North America (Associate Presbyterian Church).....	22	786	19	28, 825			9	289
Associate Reformed Synod of the South.....	141	13, 201	134	436, 550			126	9, 732
Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.....	113	9, 122	110	1, 258, 105			103	9, 613
Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod.....	27	3, 620	26	365, 400			22	2, 013
Reformed Presbyterian Church (Covenanted).....	1	17						
Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States and Canada.....	1	440	1	200, 000			1	132

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, GENERAL SYNOD

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America, General Synod, 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 Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, includes those persons who have been admitted to the local churches, having subscribed to the doctrinal position taken by the denomination.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, GENERAL SYNOD

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PERCENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations).....	13	9	4		
Members.....	1,929	1,472	457	76.3	23.7
Average per church.....	148	164	114		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	866	663	203	76.6	23.4
Female.....	1,063	809	254	76.1	23.9
Males per 100 females.....	81.5	82.0	79.9		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	23	14	9		
13 years and over.....	1,906	1,458	448	76.5	23.5
Per cent under 13 years.....	1.2	1.0	2.0		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	13	9	4		
Value—Churches reporting.....	12	9	3		
Amount reported.....	\$346,800	\$304,800	\$42,000	87.9	12.1
Average per church.....	\$28,900	\$33,867	\$14,000		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	2	1	1		
Amount reported.....	\$3,200	\$1,200	\$2,000	37.5	62.5
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	10	8	2		
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting.....	4	2	2		
Amount reported.....	\$12,800	\$5,800	\$7,000	45.3	54.7
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	13	9	4		
Amount reported.....	\$40,651	\$32,916	\$7,735	81.0	19.0
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$32,392	\$25,892	\$6,500	79.9	20.1
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$8,259	\$7,024	\$1,235	85.0	15.0
Average expenditure per church.....	\$3,127	\$3,657	\$1,934		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	12	8	4		
Officers and teachers.....	138	106	32	76.8	23.2
Scholars.....	1,259	1,009	250	80.1	19.9

¹ Urban territory includes all cities and other incorporated places which had 2,500 inhabitants or more in 1920, the date of the last Federal census; rural territory comprises the remainder of the country.

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

The data given for 1926 represent 13 active organizations of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, with 1,929 members. The classification by sex and by age was reported by all of the 13 churches, including, however, only 3 which reported any members under 13 years of age. The four churches which reported owned parsonages in 1926 stated that there was no debt on such parsonages.

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: REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, GENERAL SYNOD

ITEM	1926	1916	¹ 1906	¹ 1890
Churches (local organizations)	13	14	28	34
Increase ² over preceding census:				
Number.....	-1	-14	-6	
Per cent ³				
Members	1,929	2,386	4,060	5,202
Increase ² over preceding census:				
Number.....	-457	-1,674	-1,142	
Per cent.....	-19.2	-41.2	-22.0	
Average membership per church.....	148	170	145	153
Church edifices:				
Number.....	13	15	28	34
Value—Churches reporting.....	12	14	27	
Amount reported.....	\$346,800	\$279,200	\$565,400	\$544,000
Average per church.....	\$28,900	\$19,943	\$20,941	
Debt—Churches reporting.....	2	3	7	
Amount reported.....	\$3,200	\$11,000	\$30,420	
Parsonages:				
Value—Churches reporting.....	4	5	8	
Amount reported.....	\$12,800	\$15,500	\$17,250	
Expenditures during year:				
Churches reporting.....	13	14		
Amount reported.....	\$40,651	\$32,001		
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$32,392	\$23,682		
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$8,259	\$8,319		
Average expenditure per church.....	\$3,127	\$2,286		
Sunday schools:				
Churches reporting.....	12	14	23	
Officers and teachers.....	138	198	275	
Scholars.....	1,259	1,765	2,145	

¹ Statistics for 1906 and 1890 include 1 organization of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States and Canada, which united with this denomination between 1906 and 1916.

² A minus sign (-) denotes decrease.

³ Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, 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.

Ecclesiastical divisions.—Table 7 presents, for each presbytery in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, General Synod, 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: REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, GENERAL SYNOD

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Males per 100 females (1)
United States.....	13	9	4	1,929	1,472	457	866	1,063	81.5
Middle Atlantic:									
New York.....	1		1	45		45	20	25	
Pennsylvania.....	6	4	2	1,338	990	348	618	720	85.8
East North Central:									
Illinois.....	3	3		398	398		164	234	70.1
West North Central:									
Kansas.....	1	1		69	69		34	35	
East South Central:									
Kentucky.....	1		1	64		64	26	38	
Pacific:									
California.....	1	1		15	15		4	11	

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: REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, GENERAL SYNOD

[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 ¹	1926	1916	1906 ¹	Under 13 years	13 years and over	Per cent under 13
United States.....	13	14	28	1,929	2,386	4,060	23	1,906	1.2
Vermont.....			3			170			
New York.....	1		3	45		247		45	
Pennsylvania.....	6	7	10	1,338	1,608	2,505	4	1,334	0.3
Illinois.....	3	4	5	398	439	656	10	388	2.5
Other States.....	3	3	7	148	339	482	9	139	6.1

¹ Includes figures for the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States and Canada.

**TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926:
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, GENERAL SYNOD**

[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	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount
United States.....	13	13	12	\$346,800	2	\$3,200	4	\$12,800
Pennsylvania.....	6	7	6	307,000	1	2,000		(1)
Illinois.....	3	3	3	24,000				(1)
Other States ¹	4	3	3	15,800	1	1,200	4	12,800

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

² The figures for value of parsonages include data for 2 churches in Pennsylvania and Illinois.

**TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926:
REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, GENERAL SYNOD**

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting expenditures]

STATE	Total number of churches	EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR			SUNDAY SCHOOLS			
		Churches reporting	Total amount	For current expenses and improvements	For benevolences, missions, etc.	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States.....	13	13	\$40,651	\$32,392	\$8,259	12	138	1,259
Pennsylvania.....	6	6	29,708	24,550	5,158	6	82	775
Illinois.....	3	3	6,228	3,932	2,296	2	27	236
Other States.....	4	4	4,715	3,910	805	4	29	248

TABLE 7.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, VALUE OF EDIFICES, DEBT, EXPENDITURES, AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY PRESBYTERIES, 1926: REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA, GENERAL SYNOD

PRESBYTERY	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.....	13	1,929	12	\$346,800	2	\$3,200	13	\$40,651	12	1,259
Ohio.....	1	64					5	¹ 16,835	1	65
Philadelphia.....	4	751	4	125,000			3	13,963	2	535
Pittsburgh.....	3	632	3	187,000	1	2,000	3	13,963	3	275
Western.....	5	482	5	34,800	1	1,200	5	9,833	4	384

¹ Amount reported for Ohio presbytery combined with figures for Philadelphia presbytery to avoid disclosing the statistics of individual churches.

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION¹

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

The Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church, which was reorganized in 1798 and developed into a synod in 1809,² was divided in 1833 on the question of the relation of its members to the Government of the United States. The two parties were termed "Old Light" and "New Light," the former objecting to any participation in public affairs, the latter leaving the decision with the individual. The former was called the "Synod" and the latter the "General Synod."

The General Synod holds equally with the Synod to the Westminster Standards, to the headship of Christ over nations, to the doctrine of "public social covenanting," to the exclusive use of the Psalms in singing, to restricted communion in the use of the sacraments, and to the principle of "dissent from all immoral civil institutions," but allows its members to decide for themselves whether the Government of this country should be regarded as an immoral institution, and thus determine what duties of citizenship devolve upon them. They may, therefore, exercise the franchise and hold office, provided they do not in these civil acts violate the principle that forbids connection with immoral institutions. Many of them do participate in elections. Negotiations for the union of the General Synod and the Synod failed in 1890, because the latter would not agree to a basis which interpreted the phrase "incorporate with the political body" as meaning "such incorporation as involves sinful compliance with the religious defects of the written constitution as it now stands, either in holding such offices as require an oath to support the constitution, or in voting for men to administer such offices."

In 1883, in consequence of dissatisfaction over this question of the participation in political elections, the Reformed Presbyterian Church in the United States and Canada was organized; their one church in this country, however, rejoined the General Synod prior to 1916.

In polity this church is in general accord with other Presbyterian bodies.

WORK

The church has a sustentation fund for aiding weak congregations, and a Church Extension Board which assists in building church edifices and parsonages.

Foreign missionary work was begun in northern India by Dr. James Campbell in 1836. In 1869 it was suspended, but in 1883 a native Hindu, the Rev. G. W. Scott, was appointed missionary. The report at the close of 1916 showed 4 Americans and 20 native workers; 9 churches, with 755 members; 1 orphanage; 2 leper asylums; contributions by the church in this country amounting to \$7,979; and property with an estimated value of \$4,000.

The church has a college and a theological seminary located at Cedarville, Ohio. The two institutions reported 24 instructors and 253 students, property valued at \$200,000, endowments of \$244,445, and a student aid fund of \$38,954. There are 12 young people's societies, with nearly 250 members, and 11 women's missionary societies, with a total membership of 225.

There is one church publication, *The Reformed Presbyterian Advocate*.

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. L. A. Benson, D. D., stated clerk of the General Synod, and approved by him in its present form.

² See Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, p. 1188.