

## 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 America<sup>1</sup> 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 body<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> See Methodist Episcopal Church, p. 926.

<sup>2</sup> 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
<b>1926</b>								
<b>Total for the group</b> .....	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
<b>1916</b>								
<b>Total for the group</b> .....	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								
<b>Total for the group</b> .....	<b>64,255</b>	<b>5,749,838</b>	<b>59,077</b>	<b>229,450,996</b>			<b>55,227</b>	<b>4,472,930</b>
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

# REFORMED ZION UNION APOSTOLIC CHURCH

## STATISTICS

**Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.**—A general summary of the statistics for the Reformed Zion Union Apostolic 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 Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church comprises those persons who are enrolled in some one of the local churches or missions, upon the evidence of Christian conduct.

**TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: REFORMED ZION UNION APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

ITEM	Total	In urban territory <sup>1</sup>	In rural territory <sup>1</sup>	PER CENT OF TOTAL <sup>2</sup>	
				Urban	Rural
<b>Churches</b> (local organizations).....	48	5	43		
<b>Members</b> .....	4,538	651	3,887	14.3	85.7
Average per church.....	95	130	90		
<b>Membership by sex:</b>					
Male.....	1,876	238	1,638	12.7	87.3
Female.....	2,544	413	2,131	16.2	83.8
Sex not reported.....	118		118		100.0
Males per 100 females.....	73.7	57.6	76.9		
<b>Membership by age:</b>					
Under 13 years.....	346	18	328	5.2	94.8
13 years and over.....	3,723	608	3,115	16.3	83.7
Age not reported.....	469	25	444	5.3	94.7
Per cent under 13 years <sup>3</sup> .....	8.5	2.9	9.5		
<b>Church edifices:</b>					
Number.....	46	3	43		
Value—Churches reporting.....	45	3	42		
Amount reported.....	\$184,075	\$57,000	\$127,075	31.0	69.0
Average per church.....	\$4,091	\$19,000	\$3,026		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	17	3	14		
Amount reported.....	\$11,681	\$9,000	\$2,681	77.0	23.0
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	21		21		
<b>Parsonages:</b>					
Value—Churches reporting.....	1	1			
Amount reported.....	\$500	\$500		100.0	
Debt—Churches reporting.....	1	1			
Amount reported.....	\$200	\$200		100.0	
<b>Expenditures during year:</b>					
Churches reporting.....	44	5	39		
Amount reported.....	\$37,601	\$10,292	\$27,309	27.4	72.6
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$24,267	\$7,264	\$17,003	29.9	70.1
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$13,334	\$3,028	\$10,306	22.7	77.3
Average expenditure per church.....	\$855	\$2,058	\$700		
<b>Sunday schools:</b>					
Churches reporting.....	42	5	37		
Officers and teachers.....	325	37	288	11.4	88.6
Scholars.....	2,882	394	2,488	13.7	86.3

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

<sup>3</sup> Based on membership with age classification reported.

The data given for 1926 represent 48 active organizations of the Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church, with 4,538 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by 47 churches and the classification by age was reported by 44 churches, including 33 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. In 1890 this church was reported under the name Zion Union Apostolic.

**TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1890 TO 1926: REFORMED ZION UNION APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

ITEM	1926	1916	1906	1890
<b>Churches (local organizations)</b> .....	48	47	45	32
<b>Increase over preceding census:</b>				
Number.....	1	2	13	-----
Per cent <sup>1</sup> .....	-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>Members</b> .....	4,538	3,977	3,060	2,346
<b>Increase over preceding census:</b>				
Number.....	561	918	713	-----
Per cent.....	14.1	30.0	30.4	-----
Average membership per church.....	95	85	68	73
<b>Church edifices:</b>				
Number.....	46	49	43	27
Value—Churches reporting.....	45	47	41	-----
Amount reported.....	\$184,075	\$79,325	\$37,875	\$15,000
Average per church.....	\$4,091	\$1,638	\$924	-----
Debt—Churches reporting.....	17	11	7	-----
Amount reported.....	\$11,081	\$1,334	\$825	-----
<b>Parsonages:</b>				
Value—Churches reporting.....	1	-----	-----	-----
Amount reported.....	\$500	-----	-----	-----
Debt—Churches reporting.....	1	-----	-----	-----
Amount reported.....	\$200	-----	-----	-----
<b>Expenditures during year:</b>				
Churches reporting.....	44	41	-----	-----
Amount reported.....	\$37,601	\$13,156	-----	-----
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$24,267	\$9,802	-----	-----
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$13,334	\$3,354	-----	-----
Average expenditure per church.....	\$855	\$321	-----	-----
<b>Sunday schools:</b>				
Churches reporting.....	42	42	35	-----
Officers and teachers.....	325	276	212	-----
Scholars.....	2,882	2,505	1,508	-----

<sup>1</sup> Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

**State tables.**—Tables 3, 4, and 5 present the statistics for the Reformed Zion Union Apostolic 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.

In order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church, no separate presentation of church expenditures is made, Virginia being the only State for which three or more churches reported these items.

**TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: REFORMED ZION UNION APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX			
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Sex not reported	Males per 100 females <sup>(1)</sup>
United States.....	48	5	43	4,538	651	3,887	1,876	2,544	118	73.7
South Atlantic:										
Virginia.....	45	5	40	4,304	651	3,653	1,828	2,476	-----	73.8
North Carolina.....	3	-----	3	234	-----	234	48	68	118	-----

<sup>1</sup> 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 ZION UNION APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

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 <sup>1</sup>
United States.....	48	47	45	4,538	3,977	3,059	346	3,723	469	8.8
Virginia.....	45	42	39	4,304	3,821	2,929	320	3,515	469	8.3
North Carolina.....	3	5	6	234	156	130	26	308	-----	11.1

<sup>1</sup> Based on membership with age classification reported.

**TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926: REFORMED ZION UNION APOSTOLIC CHURCH**

[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...	48	46	45	\$184,075	17	\$11,681	1	\$500	1	\$200
Virginia.....	45	43	42	176,425	16	11,581	} 1	1,500	1	1,200
North Carolina.....	3	3	3	7,650	1	100				

<sup>1</sup> Amount for Virginia combined with figures for North Carolina, to avoid disclosing the statistics of individual churches.

**HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION<sup>1</sup>****DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY**

At the close of the Civil War the Negro Methodists in southeastern Virginia, especially in the counties of Mecklenburg, Brunswick, and Lunenburg, found themselves in a peculiar situation. They were no longer permitted to gather for worship in the white churches, had no educated ministry, and were not in sympathy with the ecclesiasticism of the Negro Methodist denominations. For several years the more influential men, mostly former slaves, had endeavored to form some sort of organization to meet their own immediate needs. In April, 1869, Elder James R. Howell, from New York, a minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, met with them at Boydton, Mecklenburg County, and the result was the organization of the Zion Union Apostolic Church. At a meeting in October a constitution was adopted and Elder Howell was elected president. Five years later he was elected bishop for life, under a change of constitution; but dissensions, largely personal in character, soon arose, and for two years the church was completely disorganized.

In 1881 Elder John M. Bishop, one of the most prominent of the founders, gathered together the scattered members, effected a union, and in 1882 the church was reorganized under the name of "Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church." Elder Bishop was elected bishop, and since then the church has prospered.

**DOCTRINE AND ORGANIZATION**

The doctrine and polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church are, in general, accepted, including the episcopate and a series of conferences. Under the earliest organization the episcopate was limited to a presidency of four years, but subsequently a change was made, and the bishop has now a life tenure. There is but one ordination required for eldership, and a circuit system is in force. The annual conference meets in August. The General Conference meets in October, every four years. In 1922 a general or connectional council was constituted, which passes upon matters of doctrine and discipline during the intervals between meetings of the General Conference.

**WORK**

Home missionary work is conducted by organizations within the individual churches, for which approximately \$200 was contributed during the year. There is a college, which reports an attendance of 50 students, and property valued at \$30,000. The nucleus of an endowment has also been obtained.

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<sup>1</sup> This statement, which is substantially the same as that published in Part II of the Report on Religious Bodies, 1916, has been revised by Right Rev. F. Watson, bishop of the Reformed Zion Union Apostolic Church, and approved by him in its present form.