

SPIRITUALISTS

GENERAL STATEMENT

In 1906 the only organized Spiritualist body was the National Spiritualist Association. It was claimed by this association and by others that there were numbers of individuals, and even of small communities, that were not included in its enrollment, and later a new body was formed under the name "Progressive Spiritual Church." In 1913 another group was formed, the National Spiritual Alliance, holding doctrines so similar to the two older bodies that it has seemed appropriate to combine them all under one head. A general review of the history and doctrine of the Spiritualists as a religious body is given in connection with the older body.

The principal statistics as reported for 1926, 1916, and 1906, so far as available, are given below:

SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE SPIRITUALIST 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	611	50,631	94	\$1,384,156	509	\$531,508	92	5,552
National Spiritualist Association.....	543	41,233	86	1,307,356	463	475,842	86	5,412
Progressive Spiritual Church.....	9	7,383	3	32,800	9	28,469	1	46
National Spiritual Alliance of the United States of America.....	59	2,015	5	44,000	37	27,197	5	94
1916								
Total for the group	354	29,028	78	492,455	289	195,682	76	3,230
National Spiritualist Association.....	343	23,197	75	440,955	278	173,048	75	3,180
Progressive Spiritual Church.....	11	5,831	3	51,500	11	22,634	1	50
1906								
Total for the group	454	35,056	100	958,048			75	2,699
National Spiritualist Association.....	454	35,056	100	958,048			75	2,699

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ALLIANCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the National Spiritual Alliance of the United States of America 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 National Spiritual Alliance comprises those who have subscribed to the creed and have paid their yearly membership fees.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ALLIANCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations).....	59	55	4		
Members	2,015	1,772	243	87.9	12.1
Average per church.....	34	32	61		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	719	617	102	85.8	14.2
Female.....	1,206	1,075	131	89.1	10.9
Sex not reported.....	90	80	10		
Males per 100 females.....	59.6	57.4	77.9		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	36	36			
13 years and over.....	1,779	1,546	233	86.9	13.1
Age not reported.....	200	190	10	95.0	5.0
Per cent under 13 years ³	2.0	2.3			
Church edifices:					
Number.....	5	4	1		
Value—Churches reporting.....	5	4	1		
Amount reported.....	\$44,000	\$34,000	\$10,000	77.3	22.7
Average per church.....	\$8,800	\$8,500			
Debt—Churches reporting.....	4	4			
Amount reported.....	\$23,550	\$23,550		100.0	
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	1		1		
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	37	35	2		
Amount reported.....	\$27,197	\$25,485	\$1,712	93.7	6.3
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$24,529	\$23,059	\$1,470	94.0	6.0
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$2,126	\$2,126		100.0	
Not classified.....	\$542	\$300	\$242	55.4	44.6
Average expenditure per church.....	\$735	\$728	\$856		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	5	5			
Officers and teachers.....	10	10			
Scholars.....	94	94			

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 59 active organizations of the National Spiritual Alliance, with 2,015 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by 56 churches and the classification by age was reported by 49 churches, including, however, only 9 which reported any members under 13 years of age. As this body has no regular ministers no parsonages were reported.

This denomination was not reported in 1916 and no comparative data are available.

State tables.—Tables 2, 3, and 4 present the statistics for the National Spiritual Alliance by States. Table 2 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 3 gives for selected States the number and membership of the churches for the census of 1926, together with the membership classified as under 13 years of age and 13 years of age and over. Table 4 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 Table 4 is limited to those States in which three or more churches reported expenditures, in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church. The States omitted from this table can be determined by referring to the complete list which appears in Table 2.

TABLE 2.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ALLIANCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX			
	Total	Urban	Ru- ral	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Sex not re- ported	Males per 100 females (¹)
United States.....	59	55	4	2,015	1,772	243	719	1,206	90	59.6
New England:										
Massachusetts.....	5	4	1	340	139	201	130	210		61.9
Rhode Island.....	4	4		76	76		26	50		
Connecticut.....	1	1		10	10		3	7		
Middle Atlantic:										
New York.....	7	6	1	257	242	15	65	142	50	45.8
Pennsylvania.....	17	16	1	520	510	10	163	317	40	51.4
East North Central:										
Ohio.....	5	5		198	198		83	115		72.1
Indiana.....	1	1		14	14		5	9		
Illinois.....	3	3		80	80		23	57		
Wisconsin.....	1	1		13	13		5	8		
West North Central:										
Iowa.....	2	2		101	101		51	50		
Missouri.....	4	4		122	122		50	72		
Kansas.....	1	1		14	14		5	9		
South Atlantic:										
Maryland.....	1	1		60	60		20	40		
Florida.....	3	2	1	60	43	17	26	34		
West South Central:										
Oklahoma.....	1	1		94	94		40	54		
Mountain:										
Colorado.....	2	2		33	33		15	18		
Pacific:										
California.....	1	1		23	23		9	14		

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

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, BY STATES, 1926: NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ALLIANCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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

STATE	Number of churches	Number of members	MEMBERSHIP BY AGE			
			Under 13 years	13 years and over	Age not reported	Per cent under 13 ¹
United States.....	59	2,015	36	1,779	200	2.0
Massachusetts.....	5	340	1	329	10	0.3
Rhode Island.....	4	76	—	31	45	—
New York.....	7	257	7	200	50	3.4
Pennsylvania.....	17	520	—	448	72	—
Ohio.....	5	198	10	188	—	5.1
Illinois.....	3	80	—	80	—	—
Missouri.....	4	122	4	118	—	3.3
Florida.....	3	60	—	60	—	—
Other States.....	11	362	14	325	23	4.1

¹ Based on membership with age classification reported.

TABLE 4.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926: NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ALLIANCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

[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.....	59	37	\$27,197	\$24,529	\$2,126	\$542	5	10	94
Massachusetts.....	5	5	5,019	4,947	72	—	—	—	—
Rhode Island.....	4	4	3,024	2,704	20	300	—	—	—
New York.....	7	5	2,411	2,256	155	—	3	4	60
Pennsylvania.....	17	9	6,666	5,063	1,361	242	—	—	—
Ohio.....	5	4	3,096	3,066	30	—	1	1	9
Other States.....	21	10	6,981	6,493	488	—	1	5	25

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION¹

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

The National Spiritual Alliance of the United States of America is a recent development from the teachings of Spiritualism and was founded in 1913 by Dr. G. Tabor Thompson for the purpose of uniting individuals, churches, camp-meeting associations, State alliances, and Sunday-school alliances into one cooperative body. It was incorporated under the laws of the State of Massachusetts, in September, 1913, with headquarters at Lake Pleasant, Mass. The Alliance holds as fundamental a belief in eternal and progressive life, the proof of which has been demonstrated through persons peculiarly sensitive to spirit influence from Bible times up to and including the present day.

¹ This statement was furnished by Mrs. Shirley C. Whicher, secretary, National Spiritual Alliance of the United States of America.

The Alliance also believes in supernormal personal or impersonal manifestations, which portend Deity; in salvation through development of personal character; in an evolving rational morality, which belief requires one to withhold judgment toward those who may be "elementals"; that truth is eternal and should be utilized whether found in individuals, books, or nature; that one reaps as he sows, yet that all things are working together for good and evolution obtains perpetually in all persons; and that intercommunication between the denizens of different worlds is scientifically established.

The membership holds that organized religious union is conducive to the general good of humanity and so affiliates in the Alliance, agreeing to differ, but pledging each other to lovingly cooperate with all who seek for immortality.

The pond lily has been chosen as the emblem of the organization. Though it strikes its roots into the mud, sends its shoots up through the putrid waters, and spreads its leaves over the green scum of the pond, yet it evolves purity, beauty, and fragrance, and but dies to live again.

While subject to the rules and regulations set forth in the constitution and by-laws of the National Spiritual Alliance, the auxiliary churches act independently in the election of their officers and the choice of ministers. Each year a three-day convention is held, in which delegates and members from the various churches meet for the conduct of business affairs and the election of national officers.

The work of the National Spiritual Alliance comprises benevolent, literary, educational, musical, and scientific activities. Particularly does it engage in experimental investigation with a view to multiplying the evidences of spirit communication. The missionary work is conducted under the direction of the Official Board of Directors of the Alliance by ministers and certified mediums who freely devote their time and efforts for the cause of Spiritualism. Though advocating education in all its branches, the Alliance does not require a college education for its ministers.