

## •TIMELINE OF TOPICS•

### Quote

- Completely anonymous; no idea of author or time period

### Crèches from different countries

#### American Church History (1700s/1800s)

- History of the United Methodist Church, its statistics, and what is currently happening to it.

**One of my hobbies is collecting crèches. These are ones I have purchased in different countries**

### Layout:

Kenya - Germany

Kenya - Belize - My first one (USA) app. 1980

Belize - Kenya - Nepal - USA (crèche in a nutshell)



"If a person will attain to that which is best, he must forsake his own will; and he who helps someone to his own will helps him to the worst thing he can."

Unknown

## History of the United Methodist Church (until recently)

The largest Christian denomination in America is the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)(16 million members). And the second largest Christian denomination is the United Methodist Church (UMC)(6 million members). The SBC originated in the South, but what about the UMC? And what about the "United" part? Therein lies a story with five parts.

**First Part:** John and Charles Wesley, the founders of Methodism, grew up in England. Methodism spread to the American colonies in the mid-1700s via English immigration. American Methodism as an organization dates from the Christmas Conference of 1784.

This organization, the Methodist Episcopal Church, would remain as one until 1844. ("Episcopal" means a church uses bishops.) (Several smaller groups of Methodists separated from the main body prior to 1844, but these groups had relatively few members.) In 1844, the northern and southern Methodists decided to split. The northern Methodists kept the name MEC and the southern Methodists adopted the name MEC (South).

They would stay separate until 1939. In that year the MEC and the MEC (South) reunited. The "Episcopal" part was dropped; plus one of the small groups that had separated (in 1830), the Methodist Protestant Church, rejoined. So, these three Methodist groups joined to form a new organization in 1939, named the Methodist Church.

**Second Part:** The Evangelical Association was formed in 1803 when Jacob Albright was ordained a minister. This group was Methodist in nature, but had a uniquely German influence; this led to a separate organization from the English-based Methodist organization in existence. This denomination split in 1894 to form the Evangelical Association and the United Evangelical Church. They reunited in 1922 to form the Evangelical Church.

**Third Part:** The Church of the United Brethren in Christ began in 1767 with a revival meeting in Lancaster, PA in Isaac Long's barn. Martin Boehm, a Mennonite preacher, told of how he became a minister. William Otterbein, a German Reformed minister, was so moved that he went to Boehm, embraced him, and said, "We are brothers." A new organization was formed which united these two ministers and their congregations; it soon spread to other states. In 1800 the new denomination had its first yearly conference, and so technically dates from this meeting. In 1889 they split, but both sides kept the name (one group was larger and one group was smaller).

**Fourth Part:** In 1946, the larger of the two groups of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ decided to merge with the Evangelical Church. They formed the Evangelical United Brethren Church. (We're almost there!)

**Fifth Part:** In 1968, the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church (formed in 1939) decided to merge and formed, ta-duh, the United Methodist Church.

**Sixth Part:** This is for extra credit. The smaller of the two groups of the Church of the United Brethren still exists as a denomination today. When the organization split in 1889, the leader of the smaller group (who did not merge with the Evangelical Church) was a guy named Bishop Wright. He had two sons who he named Orville and Wilber Wright (do they sound familiar?).

### Methodist Statistics (from the website: [www.gciah.org/history/united-methodist-membership-statistics](http://www.gciah.org/history/united-methodist-membership-statistics))

Year: All Methodist): % change from previous year

1790: 57,858: 0 (first year for records)

1800: 65,181: 12.7 % (Second Great Awakening, 1800-40)

1810: 175,088: 168.6%

1820: 268,728: 53.5%

1830: 501,298: 86.5%

1840: 894,753: 78.5%

1850: 1,247,077: 39.4%

1860: 1,802,927: 44.6% (Civil War in this decade)

1870: 2,011,942: 11.6%

1880: 2,963,723: 47.3%

1890: 3,788,426: 27.8%

1900: 4,650,026: 22.7%

1910: 5,571,751: 19.8%

1920: 6,748,837: 21.1%

1930: 7,986,419: 18.3%

1940: 8,346,004: 4.5%

1950: 9,736,752: 16.7%

1960: 10,647,864: 9.4%

1970: 10,671,774: 0.2%

1980: 9,519,407: -10.8%

1990: 8,853,455: -7.0%

2000: 8,411,503: -4.9%

2010: 7,679,850: -9.5%

2023: 5,714,815: -25.6%

(<http://www.umdata.org/UMFactsHome.aspx>)

### But what has happened lately to the Methodists in the USA?

Even though the UMC's "Book of Disciplines" includes rules that prohibit same-sex marriages and the ordination of noncelibate homosexuals, some Methodists decided to follow the lead of society and embrace both of these. The matter was to be discussed at the 2020 General Conference, but that conference was canceled due to Covid.

In 2021, biblical Methodists announced a new conservative Methodist denomination, the Global Methodist Church. In 2022, the Judicial Council of the UMC stated that individual churches could leave the UMC. As of November 2023, 7,286 UMC church have voted and decided to leave the UMC (referred to as "disaffiliation"), with many joining the Global Methodist Church. Before this disagreement, the UMC had roughly 30,000 churches, so, approximately 1/4 of UMC churches have left the denomination.

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