

A “Portrait” of the Assemblies of God

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This paper began with no complex proposition to be proven. The author knew little about the Assemblies of God and still claims great ignorance. The tone is neither apologetic, responding to Pentecostal false claims, or polemic, arguing our Orthodox Biblical position. The work began with the intention of simply and generally answering the question: “Who are the Assemblies of God?” The paper is a rough portrait, a general look at “the fastest-growing American denomination.” It is hoped that the contents will in a small way inform the reader. We start with a capsule history of the generation of the Assemblies of God, take a quick look at the Assemblies of God today, touch on some doctrinal distinctives, and last examine the Assemblies of God and Church growth.

I. Capsule History

It is not the purpose of this paper to trace the relationships between Pietism and Pentecostalism, but it is interesting to begin by noting that there is a connection. Piepkorn names that, “Between 1901 and 1906 the Pentecostal movement emerged from the Holiness movement that had been flourishing among Wesleyan Methodists for a half century.”ⁱ The Wesleys were themselves highly influenced by German pietism and it was out of this that Methodism developed, “one of the most dynamic and consequential religious movements in modern times.”ⁱⁱ “Perfectionism” and “Holiness” were common denominators among the Pietists, the Methodists, and the Holiness movements. Our paper takes a daughter church in this movement, the Assemblies of God, and highlights the events leading up to her beginning.

The first stage in the Pentecostal movement’s genesis took place at Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas. “The gift of the Spirit,” came upon Miss Agnes N. Ozman, student of Charles F. Parham, after she had asked him for the laying on of hands. That it was the 1900, New Year’s Eve, and one hour before the New Year, seemed providential to Parham. As soon as Parham placed his hands on her head, Agnes Ozman began to speak in tongues. Whether Parham was cosmopolitan enough to recognize a China man in Kansas or not, he claimed that the language Miss Ozman spoke was Chinese. Others began to receive the “baptism.” Before long most of the other Bethel Bible students were speaking in tongues. Soon Parham claimed gifts of divine healing and the Pentecostal movement spread to other Holiness churches. Two basic doctrines central to the Assemblies of God today had already established themselves. Christ is healer as well as Savior, and the evidence of baptism in the Holy Spirit is “speaking in tongues.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The setting for stage two is Los Angeles, California. Pentecostalism spread to this west coast city from Texas when William J. Seymour, ardent disciple of Parham, was invited to preach at a Nazarene Mission. After Seymour’s first sermon, calling for “baptism in the Spirit,” the congregation bolted the door shut. Seymour began holding meetings in a private home and on April 9, 1906, Pentecostalism officially descended upon Los Angeles. Seven persons received the baptism and spoke in tongues. When the religious excitement and frenzy of these enthusiasts drew large crowds, it became obvious that another meeting place was needed. “The old house in which Seymour preached literally collapsed when the floor gave way under the weight of the worshipers at one especially tumultuous service.”^{iv} The congregation moved to 312 Azusa street

where there was “a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit.” The Azusa street mission became the reactor which radiated Pentecostalism all over this country and in other parts of the world.

Stage three takes place at Hot Springs, Arkansas. The year is 1914. Eudorus N. Bell, publisher of *Word and Witness*, a Pentecostal publication, has issued an invitation to all “saints who believe in baptism with the Holy Ghost” to meet “for the purpose of providing means to coordinate and propagate Pentecostalism more effectively.”^v Five major reasons are given for the meeting: “doctrinal unity, conservation of the work, foreign missions interests, chartering churches under a common name for legal purposes, and the need for a Bible training school.”^{vi}

From this meeting of ministers and laymen, emerged a cooperative fellowship incorporated under the name “The General Council of the Assemblies of God.” The General Council in 1916 added a Statement of Fundamental Truths to its constitution stating the Assembly’s position on vital doctrines and serving as a basis for The Fellowship. It is interesting to note that the Assemblies of God, right from the beginning, took a strong Trinitarian stance. In fact, this position caused a cleavage within Pentecostalism which still serves as a major dividing line today among Pentecostal groups. One-hundred fifty-six ministers opposed to the Assemblies of God Trinitarian position defected and created a rival “oneness” body, insisting that baptism must be only “in the name of Jesus.”

In 1918, the denomination moved its headquarters to Springfield, Missouri. By that year “it listed over five hundred ministers and ninety-one missionaries in affiliation with it.”^{vii} The Assemblies of God has grown impressively through the years until today it stands as “the fastest growing American denomination.”^{viii}

II. The Assemblies of God Today

Back in the August 1, 1960 issue of *Christianity Today*, the General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, Thomas Zimmerman, wrote an article called, “Where is the ‘Third Force’ Going?”^{ix}

The term, “Third Force,” was coined by Dr. Henry Pitney Van Dusen, president of Union Theological Seminary, in 1955, to describe a group of “world-influencing sects, cults, and small church movements” of 20 million-strong, who were making their impact on the religious scene. One of those groups was the Assemblies of God. Its churches had grown from 5,548 in 1949 to 8,088 in 1960. Membership had doubled from 243,515 to 505,552. As the new President of the National Association of Evangelicals, Thomas Zimmerman was, by his article, not only signaling that “The Third Force” was a vital power in the theater of American religion, he was indicating that Pentecostalism and his own church, the Assemblies of God, had arrived to claim “respectability” among the so-called “main-line denominations.” Utilizing his position, Zimmerman has sought to establish Pentecostalism and the Assemblies of God in the mind of the public as an honorable and appealing church. A *Christianity Today* article in the January 4, 1963 issue, entitled “Plea for the Pentecostals,” delivered the party line to the reader. One is to remember “the promise of the Spirit,” seek after “the gift of tongues,” just like Martin Luther did. Just, like Luther? Zimmerman introduces us to a Luther whom we have never known (and who never existed) by quoting Erich Sauer’s *History of the Christian Church*, where it is said, “Dr. Martin Luther was a prophet, evangelist, speaker in tongues (sic!) and interpreter in one person, endowed with all the gifts of the Holy Ghost.”^x

Evidently, the Pentecostal “apologetic has been successful. Last summer’s July-August *Saturday Evening Post* included an article by Edward E. Plowman, entitled “Assemblies of God: On the Clay Up.”^{xi} The article is so informative and vivacious and commending in the way it

presents the Assemblies of God, that the Assemblies decided to reprint the article and distribute it to prospects! Now you might wonder why a secular magazine would speak so well of a church. We discover the answer in the official weekly magazine of the Assemblies of God, *The Pentecostal Evangel*. It mentions that during the 1982 Conference on the Holy Spirit, sponsored by the Assemblies of God, held in Springfield, Missouri, August 16-18, Robert Silvers, religion editor and associate publisher of *The Saturday Evening Post* was present. The words of the article are revealing:

Silvers, himself a Spirit-filled Christian, related the circumstances of his salvation and talked about how God had opened the doors of Christian testimony in the pages of his magazine.

He said the *Post* initially became interested in running Christian articles to draw Christian advertising business. "At that time, I was involved in advertising as well as in editorial and circulation. My boss came to me one day and asked: 'If we would run a Christian article do you think we could get some advertising?' I knew it sounded like the wrong motive, but I believed God was going to use it as an opportunity."^{xii}

The Saturday Evening Post coverage and a recent article in the January 7, 1983, *Christianity Today* prove that Zimmerman has been successful in promoting the Assemblies of God. Billy Melvin, executive director of the National Association of Evangelicals, says about him that, "He has been committed to making the Assemblies part of the evangelical mainstream and he's pulled it off."^{xiii}

The General Council of the Assemblies of God meets every two years. Each of the 15,744 ordained ministers, along with one delegate from each affiliated church, make up the voting constituency. There are fifty-seven districts in the United States, determined primarily by state lines. Each district has the autonomy to ordain ministers, sponsor new church efforts and initiate programs. The General Presbytery, consisting of two-hundred members, is the official policy-making body of the Assemblies of God when the General Council is not in session. It meets annually and its members consist of representatives from each district and foreign missions region. The Executive Presbytery, consisting of 13 members, executes the desires of the General Council. The General Superintendent Thomas F. Zimmerman, General Secretary Joseph R. Flower, Asst. General Superintendent G. Raymond Carlson, and General Treasurer Raymond H. Hudson, serve as The Board of Administration for the Assemblies of God General Council.

To give you a brief feel for the make-up of the church body, we'll simply mention these facts: Seven divisions constitute the structural makeup of the body. They are The Division of Christian Education, Division of Home Missions, Division of Foreign Missions, Division of Church Ministers, Division of Communications, Division of Publication, and The Division of Treasury.

The Assemblies of God has eleven institutions of higher learning including Evangel College, a liberal arts college, and the Assemblies of God Graduate school, both in Springfield, Missouri. Total enrollment 1981-1982 was 8,758 for the eleven schools. Here in Florida, you will find one school in Lakeland, The Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God.

The Educational Ministries of the Assemblies of God are very progressive. The Berean School of the Bible and National Correspondence Institute continue to serve students abroad as well as at home. Between 1979-1981, 57,233 students were enrolled in the Berean School of the Bible. Christian Day Schools number 1,030 and the Christian Day School enrollment according to June, 1982, statistics was 87,896. Men's and women's and youths' ministries today in the Assemblies of God seem consciously designed to promote evangelism. The same is true of

Sunday Schools. The Communications Division of the Assemblies of God is active in television, radio, and literature ministries. Gospel Publishing House prints *daily* twenty tons of literature! A new Harris M-200 press gives the Assemblies of God the capacity of running sixteen pages of four-color and sixteen pages of black and white at the same time with speeds up to 30,000 per hour. When Zimmerman wrote his article for *Christianity Today* in 1960, the Assemblies of God were printing four and one-half tons per day. More could be said here in general about Assemblies of God, but let us turn for a few moments and consider some Doctrinal Distinctives.

III. Some Doctrinal Distinctives

The two Biblical doctrines so important to our Lutheran church, the monergism of God's grace, and the efficacy of the sacraments as means of grace, are rejected by the Assemblies of God. Their theology is Arminian-Wesleyan at heart. But rather than spending much time surveying the doctrines of the Assemblies of God, the reader is referred to the *Statement of Fundamental Truths*. There you will find a water baptism doctrine which is basically baptistic and an eschatological belief which is pre-tribulational, pre-millennial, etc. Let this paper confine itself simply to two Assemblies of God doctrines. They are "Divine Healing" and "The Baptism in the Holy Ghost."

First, Divine Healing. If you are like me, you probably tend to group the faith healers together. But do not. There are differences of opinion among the Pentecostals on faith healing. The official position of the Assemblies of God and what the Assemblies of God laymen believe seem at odds. And in the realm of reality, where these "miracles" are played out, there seems to be reason for many questions.

But what is the official position on "divine healing?" Officially, the Assemblies of God position is this:

Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers.^{xiv}

The Assemblies of God reasoning goes something like this: Jesus' healing ministry was directly tied to his preaching of the Gospel. Because in such passages as Isaiah 53:4, it says, "Surely he took up our *infirmities*" and because it says in 1 Peter 2:24, "by his *wounds* you have been healed," Christ's atonement not only took away our sins, but provided the basis for claiming divine healing for our infirmities and sicknesses today! Not only is this bad exegesis, but the Assemblies of God have a difficult time establishing in print and in reality its meaning. Even the well known textual critic and professor of New Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Dr. Gordon D. Fee, himself an Assemblies of God theologian, denies this position that Christ's atonement in a *direct* way makes possible all healing today.^{xv}

A section from an Assemblies of God doctrine book, *Bible Doctrines*, suggests that all you have to do is claim God's will as your own and the miracles will follow. "It is God's will to heal *all* the sick, for Jesus and the apostles healed *all* (underlining mine for emphasis) that came to them for healing."^{xvi} The book also states, "The last words of Jesus before He ascended on high, according to Mark 16:18, are a *perpetual promise of the healing power*: (underlining mine for emphasis) 'They (believers) shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.' ...Our Christ is healing the sick in our day."^{xvii} P. C. Nelson in *Bible Doctrines* then quotes Luke 7 to show the normative kinds of miracles which will occur, the blind will see, the lame will walk, lepers will be cleansed, deaf will hear, the dead will be raised.

In the light of all this, do you find anything ironic or contradictory about an article in the Assemblies of God official magazine entitled, "Louisiana deaf rally attracts one-hundred and

fifteen persons,^{xxviii} where not healing but signed preaching and singing is the norm? Or how about an article in the January 30, 1983, *Pentecostal Evangel* by Assemblies of God Representative of Ministries to the *Deaf and Blind* (underlining mine for emphasis), James Banks, entitled, “Calvary Church of the Deaf.” The two page article mentions not one word on healing, but states that “the deaf of Calvary Church have demonstrated how the deaf are taking their places, fully and equally, beside their hearing brothers and sisters within the Assemblies of God...”^{xxix}

When one reads the Assemblies of God position paper entitled *Divine Healing: An Integral Part of the Gospel* finding such statements as, “inner renewal makes us best able to have the faith to claim the privilege of divine healing...” and, “that divine healing comes through faith is further confirmed by the fact that unbelief hindered its reception at Nazareth,”^{xxx} one can only wonder how many poor souls, Assemblies of God blind, deaf, and lame, still possessed of a “disease” or “sickness,” are perhaps made to question their own faith, because God has not healed them!

In the Assemblies of God where “stories of healing and other divine interventions pepper Assemblies of God conversation,”^{xxxi} and where articles promoting the doctrine of healing continually saturate the official magazine, *The Pentecostal Evangel*,^{xxii} we note that the Assemblies of God have officially condemned certain teachings about healing, even though the Assemblies’ laity probably in good part, support these erroneous doctrines.^{xxiii}

One of these doctrines condemned by the Assembly of God is advocated by the independent Pentecostals Kenneth Ragin and Kenneth Copeland. Called “Positive Confession” teaching, it advocates that affluence and health are available to *all* who positively declare that it is theirs. Needless to say, this power of positive thinking theology is the stuff of which P.T.L. and a host of other “evangelical” organizations are made. Professor Fee intimates with regard to the Assembly of God position on healing, that “on all such matters we are difficult to pin down because our theology has never been carefully articulated.”^{xxiv} The tyranny seems to be that in so many official publications, the Assembly of God *do* articulate that one should *expect* healing. *The Pentecostal Evangel* is filled with articles substantiating healing. On the other hand, in the same magazine, leprosy is not healed.^{xxv} In another, a paralyzed Assembly of God pastor engages in a ministry to the handicapped—teaching, *not* healing.^{xxvi} The deaf whom we mentioned earlier, remain deaf in most cases; so do the blind. Doesn’t this cheapen the position articulated by Nelson in *Bible Doctrines*?

It should be noted that the Assembly of God’s position leaves room for this. In *Divine Healing*, the closing paragraph states:

In humility we recognize that we do not understand all that pertains to divine healing. We still see through a glass darkly. We do not understand why some are healed and others are not any more than we understand why God permitted James to be martyred, while Peter was delivered. (Sic!) Scripture makes it clear, however, that our part is to preach the Word and expect the signs to follow.^{xxvii}

In the matter of “The Baptism in the Holy Ghost,” the Assembly of God teach that, “All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire...”^{xxviii} According to the *Statement of Fundamental Truths*, this is evidenced “by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues...”^{xxix} The Assembly of God differentiate between a “tongues speaking for edification” in the church, which requires an interpreter and “praying in tongues” which supposedly one does in private, and “tongues speaking as initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy Ghost.”

It should be noted that this particular doctrine seems to function in Assembly of God churches as it does in other charismatic main-line denominations as a fellowship principle. This trend in the Assembly of God began in 1973 when the 35th General Council endorsed the charismatic movement in other churches as a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit. In 1977, Resolution 7 of “The General Council Constitution and Bylaws” stated:

That the Executive Presbytery convene a conference on the Holy Spirit, inviting leaders of the various charismatic movements from the respective denominations to participate... Such a conference should take place in 1978, or as soon as feasible.^{xxx}

Convened in August of 1982, the ecumenical Conference On the Holy Spirit featured Canon Dennis J. Bennet, rector emeritus of St. Luke’s Episcopal Church, Seattle, Washington, as the opening speaker. (Readers familiar with the charismatic movement will recognize Father Bennett also as the “Father of the charismatic movement” who in April 3, 1960, introduced Pentecostalism into St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Van Nuys, California. From there, Pentecostalism spread into all the mainline denominations.) Also featured was Howard Carter, pastor of New Shiloh Baptist Church and Morris G. C. Vaagenes, Jr., pastor of North Heights Lutheran Church in Roseville, Minnesota, editor of Lutheran Renewal International, a ministry which seeks to impart the charismatic movement into Lutheranism.

Arthur J. Clement has touched on the pretentiousness of such a “fellowship principle” in his book *Pentecost or Pretense?*. An Episcopalian priest who denied the virgin birth and resurrection, as well as Pentecostal Christadelphians who deny the divinity of Christ and his preexistence, but speak in tongues, can, according to this shaky principle, be welcomed into the Pentecostal fellowship.^{xxxii}

IV. The Assemblies of God and Church Growth

In 1963, the thirtieth Biennial General Council of the Assembly of God met in Memphis to consider church renewal. “Concern was expressed over a confessed loss of evangelistic zeal, departure of evangelists in the field of duty, and the quality of the churches’ evangelists.”^{xxxiii} The results of a denominational self-study caused the Assembly of God to convene the 1968 Council on Evangelism in Saint Louis. Part of a three-fold mission was to be “outreach to the world.” That 1968 Council initiated a church growth emphasis in the Assembly of God which has burgeoned until today. The Assembly of God stands as the fastest-growing church in America.

In the most recent statistics^{xxxiii} (March 28, 1983), the Assembly of God claim 10,173 churches, 15,744 ordained ministers, 8,385 licensed ministers, 61 active duty military chaplains, 306 home missionaries, 1,220 foreign missionaries. 110 countries are served by Assembly of God missionaries. Foreign national ministers are numbered at 81,301, foreign churches and outstations at 98,318. United States church membership is estimated at 1,103,134 (October, 1982), and foreign members and adherents 10,250,571. 1982 World Ministries giving totaled \$91,658,450.

Since the 1968 Council on Evangelism, the Assembly of God total church mission seems church growth oriented. When one examines the statistics, the Assembly of God establish themselves as the growth rate leaders. Between 1970-1980, the Assembly of God increased by 70% followed by the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.) 60%, Jehovah’s Witnesses 45%, Seventh-Day Adventists 36%, Mormons 36%, Salvation Army 28%, Church of the Nazarene 26%, Southern Baptists 17%.^{xxxiv}

The following chart from the 1979-1981 Biennial Report pictures church growth for the years 1973-1981:^{xxxv}

Year	Total Members	Gain	Per Percentage Gain
1973	710,071	64,180	9.9
1975	785,348	75,277	10.6
1977	898,711	113,363	14.4
1979	932,365	33,654	3.7
1981	1,064,490	132,125	14.2

As of October 1982, the Assembly of God numbered:

5th in number of Sunday Schools with 9,795

5th in Sunday School enrollment with 1,382,149

7th in number of ordained ministers faith 23,568

19th in inclusive Church membership with 1,382,149

(For additional information cf. the yellow sheet titled "How the Assemblies of God Ranks.")

It is of interest to us here in the Florida Conference to note that of the 57 districts, the Peninsular Florida District was second only to the North Texas District in member gains between 1973-1981 with 11,463. It numbered fourth in percentage growth (33.8%) and fourth in church gains with twenty. Of the top ten District World Ministries givers (1979-1981) Peninsular Florida placed ninth with \$4,115,292 contributed. Orlando Calvary Assembly of God, Winter Park, FL, was eighth in individual church giving among United States Assembly of God churches with \$363,556 given.

Individual churches in Florida's Assembly of God have shown phenomenal growth. One example is the First Assembly in Fort Myers, Florida. It all began in a rented tent on borrowed ground in 1946. The church affiliated with Assembly of God in 1947. On Easter Sunday, in 1972, a congregation of 125 moved to a new location with a sanctuary that would seat 600. By 1979, it moved to a 1,200 seat-all-purpose building. In October, 1982, it dedicated a new 3,000 seat sanctuary with 2,467 present.^{xxxvi}

By far, the greatest Assembly of God progress has been among the Latin American population. The Pentecostal President of Guatemala, General Efraim Rios Montt, has close friends in the Assembly of God constituency. In this country, plagued by conspiracy and revolt, the Assembly of God is the strongest evangelical group with 748 churches, 1,545 outstations, and over 30,000 baptized members.^{xxxvii} El Salvador claims 700 Assembly of God churches and 5,500 other meeting places (foxholes??), with a membership of 140,000. Last, but by no means the least, Brazil ranks largest with six million Assembly of God members including 60,000 churches.

Why have Assembly of God churches been so successful in church growth? It would stand to reason that the Assembly of God would explain their "success" in terms of their "baptism with the Holy Spirit." Melvin L. Hodges, an Assembly of God Missiologist, states that the church's growth is due "largely to the fact that their ministers and members have received the Biblical endorsement of the Holy Spirit which has resulted in a Spirit-directed and empowered ministry."^{xxxviii} Elmer Towns, dean of Liberty Baptist Seminary, in explaining Assembly of God growth, has another explanation. He attributes it to the Assembly of God intention to grow. "They talk about growth from top to bottom." The Assembly of God as it turns out have brought the non-charismatic Towns to their headquarters in Springfield, Missouri three different times to lecture. "They've reprinted Southern Baptist training materials. Tommy Barnett, who's built

their second-largest Sunday School out in Phoenix, openly admits he learned busing from independent Baptists.”^{xxxix}

One suspects also that Assembly of God growth success comes from charismatic transfers out of the main-line denominations. And this fact has been substantiated by studies.^{xi} Already mentioned above is Assembly of God leader Thomas Zimmerman’s success at promoting his church so as to remove the “Pentecostal Stigma.” Last December, Billy Graham visited the Assembly of God headquarters in Springfield, Missouri, at a public assembly of students, saying, “There is no churchman I love and admire more than your General Superintendent (Thomas Zimmerman)... The Assemblies of God is fortunate to have such a leader.”^{xli} Such accolades from the non-Pentecostal Graham, certainly are not going to hurt the Assembly of God reputation among those drawn to the charismatic experience.

Apart from these considerations, growth patterns in this church body have issued from diligent efforts to evangelize and plant new churches. District and congregational autonomy has encouraged local programs. The Assembly of God seem successful at the art of exploiting fresh mission fields as well as “techniques.” Take, for example, the recent Cuban refugee influx around Miami. The Home and Foreign Missions Departments combined efforts to print evangelism materials in Spanish. Since that time, this has become a ripe mission field.

Where will the Assembly of God be in ten, twenty, or thirty years? Your guess is as good as any. As for now, one cannot help but be impressed with the enthusiasm (not “enthusiasm”) of the Assembly of God laymen who zealously seek to win converts for Christ. We certainly desire that among our members, that zeal to bring lost souls to a saving knowledge of the Savior. We will reject the Assembly of God Wesleyan-Arminian doctrine, their doctrines of Divine Healing and Holy Spirit Baptism, their “tongue-speaking fellowship principle,” their obsession with numbers, etc. Hopefully this sketch of the Assembly of God will help just a little to acquaint you with the Assemblies. The Assembly of God are alive and well off in Florida, growing, going out for souls. May our Lutheran zeal to bring the pure Gospel to our neighborhoods surpass the zeal of these modern day “enthusiasts” who are having so much “success” around us.

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*How the Assemblies of God Ranks

Summary

- 5th in number of Sunday Schools with 9,795
- 5th in Sunday School Enrollment with 1,382,149
- 7th in number of Churches with 9,930
- 7th in number of Ordained Ministers with 23,568
- 19th in Inclusive Church Membership with 1,382,149

Sunday Schools

The United Methodist Church	36,230
Southern Baptist Convention	34,897
Churches of Christ	11,725
The Roman Catholic Church	10,302
<i>Assemblies of God</i>	9,795
United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.	8,770
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	7,379

Sunday School Enrollment

The Roman Catholic Church	8,082,993
Southern Baptist Convention	7,425,999
The United Methodist Church	4,222,229
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	2,632,000
<i>Assemblies of God</i>	1,382,149
Churches of Christ	950,000
Church of the Nazarene	879,756
American Baptist Association	850,000

Number of Churches

The United Methodist Church	38,444
Southern Baptist Convention	35,778
**National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.	26,000
The Roman Catholic Church	24,188
Churches of Christ	12,700
***National Baptist Convention of America	11,398
<i>Assemblies of God</i>	9,930
United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.	8,770
Jehovah's Witnesses	7,515

*Comparisons from the 1982 *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* and the *latest available* Assemblies of God statistics.

**1958 Statistics

***1956 Statistics

Number of Ordained Ministers

The Roman Catholic Church	58,845
Southern Baptist Convention	56,200

The United Methodist Church	36,283
*National Baptist Convention of America	28,574
**National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.	27,500
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	25,075
<i>Assemblies of God</i>	23,568
Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	16,574
Church of Christ	16,200
United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.	14,222
The Episcopal Church	12,672

Church Membership, Inclusive

The Roman Catholic Church	50,449,842
Southern Baptist Convention	13,600,126
The United Methodist Church	9,584,711
Jewish Congregations	5,920,900
**National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.	5,500,000
Lutheran Church in America	2,923,260
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints	2,811,000
The Episcopal Church	2,786,004
*National Baptist Convention of America	2,668,799
The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod	2,625,650
The United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.	2,423,601
The American Lutheran Church	2,353,229
African Methodist Episcopal Church	2,050,000
***Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America	1,950,000
United Church of Christ	1,736,244
****American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.	1,600,521
Churches of Christ	1,600,000
American Baptist Association	1,500,000
***** <i>Assemblies of God</i>	1,382,149
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	1,177,984

*1956 Statistics

**1958 Statistics

***1977 Statistics

****1979 Statistics

*****Sunday School Enrollment figure (the Assemblies of God constituency, including persons of all ages who identify with an Assemblies of God church is 1,788,394.)

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