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**A STUDY OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND THE EXTENT
OF CHURCH ACTIVITY OF THE MEMBERSHIP AND
OFFICIALS IN THE FREE METHODIST
CHURCH, UPPER MIDWEST
REGION**

**By
Bruce Leffingwell Kline**

**A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree Master of Science at South Dakota
State College of Agriculture
and Mechanic Arts**

June 1956

A STUDY OF SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND THE EXTENT
OF CHURCH ACTIVITY OF THE MEMBERSHIP AND
OFFICIALS IN THE FREE METHODIST
CHURCH, UPPER MIDWEST
REGION

This thesis is approved as a creditable, independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and acceptable as meeting the thesis requirements for this degree; but without implying that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Thesis Advisor

Head of the Major Department

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM

Introduction

Of the many established and recorded religious groups in the United States over two hundred are classified as Protestant.¹ The sociology of religion, however, has dealt mainly with the larger, more liberal denominations, leaving the many, smaller religious associations relatively unexplored. Memberships of large Protestant denominations have been examined in nationwide surveys;² intensive community studies have dealt with specific denominations;³ and much of the recent research on social class structure includes information about religious associations.⁴ Nevertheless little information exists which is focused directly on the membership characteristics of a given denomination throughout a specific region. This is particularly true of the smaller

¹The World Almanac, 1953, pp. 705, 706.

²E.g., "Do Americans Go to Church?", Catholic Digest, December, 1952.

³E.g., August B. Hollingshead, Clinton's Youth.

⁴E.g., Liston Pope, Religion and the Class Structure.

Protestant religious associations,⁵ many of which are more fundamentalistic in their orientation than the larger denominations.

These fundamentalistic churches are classified by Landis under the heading of "Eternity-" or "God-centered" churches in contrast to morality or society-centered liberal denominations. Landis characterizes the fundamentalistic churches as evangelical, authoritarian, concerned with other-worldliness, stressing conversion, and interpreting the Scriptures literally. The more liberal denominations, he believes, place greater emphasis on the application of Christian principles to modern social problems, a non-literal interpretation of Scripture to coincide with present science, and on the morality of society.⁶

Since most previous research deals with the larger, more liberal churches, the question arises, what type of people subscribe to the values and beliefs of these smaller, fundamentalistic denominations? One of these is the Free Methodist Church of North America.

The Free Methodist denomination is of the Methodist tradition which originated through John and Charles Wesley

⁵An association is a group of people organized for the common pursuit of an interest or group of interests in common. MacIver and Page, Society, p. 12.

⁶Paul H. Landis, Social Control, p. 239.

in 18th century England. It is described as follows: "The Free Methodists are a body of Christians who profess to be in earnest to get to heaven by conforming to all the will of God, as made known in His Word."⁷ The Free Methodist doctrine is fundamental-Arminian, subscribing to the teachings of Arminius, a 16th century Dutch theologian, whose interpretation of the Scriptures provides for salvation for all men through the atonement. He taught that any and all might be "saved" by meeting the terms of salvation as given in the Scripture.

A belief in the Scriptures as the inspired word of God, the virgin birth, and the physical resurrection of Christ identifies this denomination with Landis' "fundamentalist" type.

Free Methodism was born in 1860, developing out of a schism in the Methodist Episcopal movement. In 1858 several preachers and a number of laymen were expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church on various doctrinal charges. After appeals were made and rejected, those who were excluded felt compelled to form a new organization; subsequently the Free Methodist Church was organized at Pekin,

⁷Doctrines and Disciplines of the Free Methodist Church of North America, p. 1.

New York.⁸ There has been a slow, consistent growth in this association, and in 1952 there was a total home-church membership of 52,445.⁹

The membership of this denomination may be considered very selective in that the rules to which those wishing to become members must subscribe are generally looked upon as "strict." To illustrate further, such activities as drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking or dealing in tobacco, and membership in secret organizations are prohibited. Adherence to this standard of conduct is practiced throughout the denomination. Failure to comply may result in expulsion.

Central Problem of the Study

The Free Methodists, then, may be thought of as a small, fundamentalistic, "strict" denomination which is Arminian in doctrine. With a view to ascertaining what type of people subscribe to these beliefs in an area large enough to support tentative generalizations, the problem is stated as follows:

⁸ Carl Howland, The Story of Our Church, p. 31

⁹ Conference Minutes of the Free Methodist Church of North America, 1952, p. 387.

Statement of the Problem.

What are the characteristics of the people in the Upper Midwest Region who subscribe to the beliefs and values of the Free Methodist Church?

Other relative questions considered are:

What is the relation of church activity to the selected characteristics of the Free Methodists, Upper Midwest Region?

Do the lay leaders of this denomination possess distinct characteristics from the general membership as found in the Upper Midwest Region?

Explanation of Terms:

Membership: The word membership as used in this study refers to those over sixteen years of age who have "joined" the Free Methodist Church. It includes those known as preparatory members as well as those classified as full members, but excludes the ministers of the Church.

Upper Midwest Region: This term refers to North and South Dakota, the northern half of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, and is the portion of the United States which is included in this study.

Church Attendance: The Free Methodist Churches uniformly hold both a morning and an evening service on Sunday. Attendance at both these services is meant by this term.

Church Participation: Attendance at church activities other than Sunday services include a regular midweek prayer service and/or Bible study as well as activities of a more social or recreational nature. This term refers to attendance at these functions.

Official Status: A member with official status is one who holds membership on the official board of his local church. This board includes the pastors, local preachers, exhorters, evangelists, deaconesses, stewards, class leaders, Sunday School superintendents, advisor to the local youth organization, president of the local Women's Missionary Society, treasurer of the society, president of the local Light and Life Men's Fellowship, and trustees of the local church property.¹⁰

Implications of the Study.

This information will provide the analyst of society with another differing look at a segment of church life today thereby adding a view to the over-all picture of religious associations in the United States.

Administrators of the Free Methodist Church in the Upper Midwest Region may be able to profit from this research by gaining a fuller understanding of membership

¹⁰ Doctrines and Disciplines of the Free Methodist Church of North America, para. 270.

characteristics. Local pastors and members may be benefited by a knowledge of membership characteristics and helped to an awareness of those characteristics which are connected with increase or decrease in church attendance and participation. Such knowledge should enable them to face their task more realistically and plan their programs more effectively.

CHAPTER II

PREVIOUS WORK, OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

Previous Studies

A total of eight studies, which are designed to present background information relating to the present work, is brought to the reader's attention in this section. These studies vary as to type and will be individually described as each is mentioned.

Liston Pope conducted research relating to American social class structure and religion.¹ His data were derived from a breakdown of four opinion polls taken by the American Institute of Public Opinion in 1945-46 covering approximately 12,000 cases. Generalizations, relative to religion and the class structure, which Pope makes are:

Differentiation within Protestantism corresponds fairly close to class divisions. Individual Protestant churches tend to be "class churches," with members drawn principally from one class group. Even where membership cuts across class lines, control of the church and its policies is generally in the hands of officials drawn from one class, usually the middle class.²

In consideration of class structure in the church, Pope used the occupations and the formal education of

¹Liston Pope, Religion and Class Structure, pp. 84-91.

²Ibid., p. 89.

members as criteria in determining class structure. This nation-wide inquiry yields the following percent of Protestant church members found according to their occupations: 23 percent in professions and business, 19 percent white collar workers, 38 percent urban manual workers, and 19 percent farmers. The data concerning education show that 52 percent of the total church members had less than a complete high school education, that 48 percent had graduated from high school, and that 11 percent were college graduates.

John Cuber's analysis of the role of the marginal church participant in American church life includes statistics on church attendance and participation for a few select churches in the United States. He states, "Roughly it has been found that about half of the nominal church membership is in some measure active in the program sponsored by the church."³

A survey relative to the activity of Americans in church programs was sponsored by the Catholic publication, Catholic Digest.⁴ This study also includes the entire United States in its scope and shows in part that approximately one third of Americans attend church every Sabbath,

³John F. Cuber, Marginal Church Participants, pp. 57-62.

⁴"Do Americans Go To Church?", Catholic Digest, December, 1952, p. 5.

approximately one third never attend, and the others attend from once a month to three times a month; furthermore, 29 percent of males attend every Sabbath, 36 percent never attend; whereas 33 percent of the females attend every Sabbath, and 29 percent never attend. Attendance breakdown by education implies that education and regular church attendance are positively correlated; 30 percent of those with a grade school education attend every Sabbath and 39 percent never attend; 31 percent with high school education attend every Sunday and 29 percent never attend, while 36 percent of college graduates attend every Sabbath and 25 percent never attend. Occupational breakdown shows similar results. Those occupations requiring more education such as professional, managerial, and white collar workers show more regular attendance; those in occupations such as service workers, manual workers and farmers show less regular church attendance.

One further breakdown in this study is of interest here. Persons who attend are grouped in ten-year categories and the percent of church attendance per group recorded. There is a very little difference in attendance ratio of groups until the age of sixty-five and over is reached; these persons attend less regularly.

A compilation of the research in the field of rural church participation has been made by Hostetler and Mather

in an effort to assemble in one paper the major information available concerning factors associated with participation in the rural church. The authors make the following observations:

Women show more active interest by attendance and membership in the church than men of the same age....⁵

Participation is more common among older than younger rural residents....⁶

Upper and middle class persons participate more than lower class....⁷

Several studies have shown that church membership is higher among the educated than among the less educated....⁸

The results of research into the relationship of occupation and participation in the rural church are not conclusive; but they suggest that persons engaged in those occupations which demand higher education and return higher income are more apt to have higher church participation rates than persons engaged in other occupations.⁹

A different type of investigation, yet one which may be applied in part to the present study, is that of Warner, Meeker and Wells in their book, Social Class in America.

⁵John A. Hostetler and William G. Mather, Participation in the Rural Church, p. 1

⁶Ibid., p. 2

⁷Ibid., p. 17

⁸Ibid., p. 24

⁹Ibid., p. 25

The main purpose of these authors is to present a methodology for determining social class. In the section of their work dealing with institutional membership they offer a rough guide for determining the general features of the class structure in specific denominations.

If it has an ideology and ritual which are informal, emotional, and literally interpret the Bible, the chances are high that almost all of the people in the church will be from the lower half of society, and probably from the lowest part. On the other hand, if the church is formalistic, if the emphasis is upon interpretation rather than literal acceptance of the gospel, and if individual expression at meetings is at a minimum, the chances are that it is middle class or higher.¹⁰

According to this distinction, the Free Methodist Church would probably be classified as a lower-middle and/or upper-lower class church.¹¹ Warner, Meeker, and Bells refer to the Free Methodists specifically in one instance. When illustrating their methodology by referring to the community studied, the authors consider the members of that local Free Methodist Church as 100 percent in the upper-lower class.¹²

Two other studies specifically mention the Free

¹⁰Warner, Meeker and Bells, Social Class in America, p. 96.

¹¹The Free Methodist Church upholds the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and accepts it as such even though it is recognized that there are varying interpretations that may be given; its ritual is generally informal. The Church promotes revivals, emotions are sometimes shown, and individual expression at meetings is alight to moderate.

¹²Warner, Meeker and Bells, op. cit. p. 95.

Methodists. Warner and Associates in a study of an Illinois community place the Free Methodists in Jonesville as 20 percent lower-middle class, 60 percent upper-lower class and 20 percent lower-lower class.¹³ The Free Methodist Church included in the study of Jonesville had a total of ten members.

A study by Hollingshead considered the youth of a small Illinois community which was given the pseudonym of Elmtown.¹⁴ This study revealed that religious activities were influenced by class and denominational factors. The high school students were arranged in classes from I to V, with I representing the highest status group and V the lowest. The following statement illustrates which classes the author found in each church:

In the adolescent group as among their parents, the Federated (combination of Presbyterian and Congregational) Church attracts Class II's, tolerates Class III's, repels Class IV's, has no Class V's. The Catholic and Lutheran parishes represent all classes, but the bulk of their membership comes from Classes III and IV and it is divided equally between these classes; both have twice as many affiliations from Class V as from Class II. Like the Federated, the Baptists and Free Methodists are in a category by themselves; they are definitely Class IV churches.¹⁵ They attract the Class IV's, tolerate the Class V's

¹³W. Lloyd Warner and Associates, Democracy in Jonesville, p. 154.

¹⁴August B. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth.

¹⁵Hollingshead's Class IV is roughly equivalent to the lower-middle and upper-lower class.

and repel Class II's and III's. In the Baptist Church Class III's and Class IV's play the same roles and occupy the same position the Class II's do in the Federated, but they do not compete with them for leadership positions.¹⁶

These three studies which specifically mention the Free Methodists would place the membership of this church in the lower-middle and/or the upper lower classes of society. It should be noted, however, that these are but three instances, and the information was obtained from small churches and communities.

One additional study will be cited here as background information for the present study; it is different in nature from those already given. Many religious bodies, in attempts to analyze their own groups, have carried on research and are constantly in the process of gathering new data. Much of this investigation is pursued for definite, practical ends. Representative of this type is Frederick A. Shippey's Methodism in Buffalo and Vicinity, a study of the Buffalo Methodist Church trends and characteristics 1900-1950.

The purpose of Mr. Shippey's research is to give basis for a long-range program of planning for church advancement in that particular area. To accomplish this purpose the researcher investigates general population trends, Methodist population trends, Methodist membership character-

¹⁶August B. Hollingshead, op. cit., p. 249.

istics, and parish geography. The findings are then related specifically to Methodist problems in the Buffalo vicinity. In his investigation of Methodist membership characteristics, Mr. Shippey finds that "The denomination's power to attract persons from the white collar group is large and gratifying while Buffalo Methodism is relatively unsuccessful in reaching persons in the manual occupations."¹⁷ Males are found to be in the minority among Buffalo Methodists, the male percentage being 40.7; it is also noted that in the city churches there are fewer men than in the suburban localities.

Limitations of Previous Studies

Authors must necessarily circumscribe their studies and this is true of works cited herein. Some studies have included the entire United States in research concerning religion and church activity, class structure, occupation and education. Other studies have concentrated on a local community only, while still others limit themselves to rural areas. Some are concerned with specific religious associations which are classed among the larger, more liberal religious bodies. These limitations suggest that the present study which includes data relative to one denomination which is "fundamentalist" in viewpoint, which covers a region in-

¹⁷Frederick A. Shippey, Methodism in Buffalo and Vicinity, pp. 16-17.

cluding both rural and urban churches, and which includes several characteristics of the membership can make a definite contribution to the sociological fields of social class and the sociology of religion.

Summary of Findings of Previous Work

The previous research dealing with church membership, attendance and participation in the United States reveals several findings which serve as valuable guides for the hypotheses of the present study. These are:

1. Individual Protestant denominations tend to be "class churches," with members drawn principally from one class group. Even where membership cuts across class lines, control of the church and its policies is generally in the hands of officials drawn from one class, usually the middle class.
2. Limited previous research suggests that the Free Methodist Church may be characterized as a lower-middle class and/or an upper-lower class church.
3. With respect to church activity, previous research suggests that the following may be expected:
 - a. Women to be more active than men.
 - b. The more educated to be more frequent attenders than the less educated.
 - c. Those persons in the "higher" occupations to be more active than those persons in the "lower" occupations.
 - d. Very little difference in attendance rates for different age groups except for those persons 65 years of age and older.
 - e. About one half of the church membership to be active in the church program.

Objectives and Hypotheses

Objective 1

The first objective is to determine the general characteristics of the membership (sex, age, marital status, occupation, educational level) of the Free Methodist Church, Upper Midwest Region.

Hypothesis 1

The majority of the membership is expected to be employed in white collar, skilled labor, and service occupations.

Hypothesis 2

The educational level of the membership is expected to indicate that the majority of the membership has had 8 to 12 years of formal education.

Hypothesis 3

The majority of the membership is expected to be female, married or widowed, middle-aged; the membership is expected to have a low incidence of divorce.

Objective 2

The second objective is to determine the general

characteristics of the members "most active," "moderately active" or "least active" in the program of the Free Methodist Church, Upper Midwest Region.

Hypothesis 4

Due to the comparative smallness of the congregations, it is expected that at least one half of the membership is regularly active in the church program.

Hypothesis 5

It is expected that female members are more active than male members.

Hypothesis 6

It is expected that the most active members will be 40 to 50 years of age.

Hypothesis 7

The most active members are expected to have attained a higher formal education and to be engaged in occupations indicating a higher social status than the less active members.

Objective 3

A third objective is to determine the general charac-

teristics of lay leaders (official board members) of the Free Methodist Church, Upper Midwest Region.

Synthesis B

It is expected that the members with official positions in the church will be the middle-class, older, married persons who are "most active" in the church program and who have attained a higher education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Possible Methods of Securing Data

Several different techniques for obtaining the information needed for this study were considered. The most reliable technique would have been a personal interview with each church member in the area; this, however, was considered impractical. A direct mailing to each member in the area would also have been a possible approach. This also was inadvisable since no mailing list was available and the compilation of one was deemed too expensive and time-consuming.

Method Used in Securing Data

A Pastor is often spoken of as the "key" man in many church situations and undoubtedly has at his disposal more information about the members of his church than any other one person. The names and addresses of each local pastor were readily available in the combined Conference Minutes, 1951; therefore, it was decided to contact the pastors directly by mail asking them to supply the needed information. This meant that the formulation of a schedule suitable for collecting this information was necessary.

One of the first questions which had to be answered was: What characteristics should be tabulated to answer the

problem of the study? A basic description of each member was needed; to secure such a description, data concerning sex, age, years of formal education, marital status, official capacity, and occupation were requested. In addition, the pastor was asked to rate each member according to his church activity.

The material asked for was judged to be of such a nature as to be readily accessible to the pastor; therefore it was felt that the schedule might be expected to elicit a good response.

Church activity is an ambiguous term, therefore a clarification seemed necessary. This was done by breaking down the term into two aspects: church attendance, defined to mean the attendance of a member on Sunday; and church participation, referring to the presence of a member at services and programs other than on Sunday.¹

In order to standardise the response, two five point scales, one for attendance and one for participation, were drawn up as follows: **N** - never attends, or participates; **S** - seldom attends, or participates; **F** - frequently attends, or participates; **V** - very frequently attends, or participates; and **A** - almost always attends, or participates.

Upon the completion of the schedule, an explanatory

¹Free Methodist Churches regularly conduct mid-week services of prayer and/or Bible study in addition to other church programs.

letter, sufficient schedule blanks, directions for completing the schedule, and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope were mailed to each pastor in the area.² The original letter was mailed April 12, 1951; in eleven days a reminder card was sent to those who had not responded. A second reminder card was sent, where needed, after an additional week had passed. Table I shows the return received from the schedule.

It will be observed that 64.2 percent of the pastors returned completed schedules giving the desired information on 48.7 percent of the church members (Table I). The response was considered satisfactory in the light of the normal or average return which may be expected from a schedule of this type. According to Lundberg, "Most ordinary studies as conducted by private and relatively unskilled persons yield only 5 to 20 percent of returns."³

The response was spread over the entire area and returns were tabulated on no less than 30.4 percent of the members in any one state and as high as 62.6 percent of the members in one state. It seems safe to assume that this information, which is thus available on approximately one half of the entire membership of the region, would also be valid in consideration of the other half which was not reported.

²See Appendix A for copies of materials sent.

³George Lundberg, Social Research, p. 206.

TABLE I

SURVEY RETURNS, SHOWING NUMBER OF REPLIES AND MEMBERSHIP REPORTED, BY STATES

State	No. of Pastors	Pastors Replying	Percent	Membership over 16	Members Reported	Percent
Total	109	70	64.2	4028	1962	48.7
Dakotas	15	13	86.6	407	255	62.6
Minnesota	14	9	64.3	439	251	57.2
Wisconsin	16	13	81.2	591	324	54.8
Illinois	26	12	46.1	1222	372	30.4
Iowa	38	23	60.5	1369	760	55.5

It should be noted, however, that although 62.6 percent of the pastors responded, their information covered just 48.7 percent of the membership. This can be explained in part through the fact that absentee members included in the totals of the Conference Minutes 1952 were not reported by the pastors. Nevertheless, Illinois, a state with a relatively large membership, showed the poorest percentage of response; this may be interpreted to indicate that some pastors of larger churches failed to respond. This factor should be remembered when considering the implications of the data.

The rural-urban composition of the sample is of interest to the sociologist. Table II shows the breakdown of the rural and urban churches according to the location of the churches. The percent of rural churches in the universe is 33.9. Illinois shows the most urbanization with only 11.1 percent of rural churches while 50.0 percent of Minnesota Free Methodist Churches are located in rural localities. The sample investigated in this study shows very nearly the same percentage of rural churches as the universe, 33.8 percent rural.

Method Used to Compile Data

Within this Upper Midwest Region the Free Methodist Church is divided into six conferences. These conferences

TABLE II

NUMBER OF CHURCHES LOCATED IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS, BY STATES*

State	UNIVERSE			SAMPLE		
	Rural	Urban	Percent Rural	Rural	Urban	Percent Rural
Total	37	72	33.9	24	46	33.8
Dakotas	5	10	33.3	5	8	38.4
Minnesota	7	7	50.0	5	4	55.5
Wisconsin	7	9	47.5	6	7	46.1
Illinois	3	23	11.1	0	12	00.0
Iowa	15	23	41.0	8	15	34.7

*A church located in a community with less than 2500 population is considered rural; others are classed as urban.

correspond, in a general way, to the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, the northern half of Illinois, Iowa, North and South Dakota. In the appendix the characteristics of members are compiled according to the states excepting North and South Dakota which are combined; these two are also in one conference. Thus this division by states approximates conference boundaries, and should be of value to those interested in variations between conferences in this region.

In Chapter IV the characteristics of the members as found in this study are compared with the characteristics of the total population in the same area. The same base figure is used in all comparisons excepting that of marital status which difference is explained when the marital status is compared. Further comparisons are drawn between the membership of the Free Methodist Church, Upper Midwest Region, and that of American Church life in cases where comparable data is available.

Chapter V shows the extent of church participation in relation to the characteristics. To differentiate, as objectively as possible, the "most active"; "moderately active", and the "least active" members with respect to participation in the program of the church, the rating scales were assigned numerical values as follows: **I** - value of 0, **II** - value of 1, **III** - value of 2, **IV** - value of 3, and **A** - value of 4. In order to arrive at a total score for parti-

icipation in the church program, the score on the church attendance scale and the score on the church participation scale were combined. Combining the two scales to arrive at the total numerical value of the members' activity, the highest possible score would be 8 and the lowest, 0. If the member's total score equalled 0, 1, or 2 he was classed as "least active"; if his score equalled 3, 4, or 5 he was classed as "moderately active;" and those whose score equalled 6, 7, or 8 were classed as "most active." This procedure of differentiating church activity into two categories of church attendance and church participation and then combining them thus yielded a more inclusive evaluation of the member's church activity.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation of this study is the lack of an instrument of measurement which would give the same objective meaning to each pastor's answers. The reliability of the schedule returns is dependent upon how conscientious and careful each respondent was in making his return. The large majority of schedules returned show careful work, and have been greatly appreciated. There were a few pastors, however, who evidently were not so thoughtful as others. In some instances tables will show a discrepancy between the total number of members reported and the number given for that

specific characteristic; this is due to some unused replies.

It must be remembered that this study gives only a partial picture; it is a study of some characteristics of the church members. Information on income of the members, for example, would supply further evidence of which segments of the population subscribe to the beliefs and values of this denomination; however, it was thought that information of this kind collected by the method employed in this study would not be too reliable.

It may also be noted as significant that this Upper Midwest Region of the Free Methodist Church has not been an aggressive area of the denomination at large during this decade. This is indicated by the fact that in the ten-year period from 1941 to 1951 the churches in the conferences of this area lost a total of 153 members, dropping from 4181 members over 16 years of age to 4028 members over 16 years of age;⁴ whereas the total membership of the entire denomination increased from 48,414 in 1941⁵ to 52,445 in 1951.⁶

⁴These figures are computed from information given in Conference Minutes, 1942, and Conference Minutes, 1952.

⁵Conference Minutes, 1942, p. 289.

⁶Conference Minutes, 1952, p. 387.

CHAPTER IV

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

This chapter compares the age and sex composition, marital status, education and occupation of the membership of the Free Methodist Church of the Upper Midwest Region with the general population in this area.

The 1950 United States Census of Population, U. S. Summary of General Characteristics, is the source for data concerning the general population of the six-state area.¹

For persons desiring information relative to specific states, tables giving a state breakdown are included in the appendix.

Age

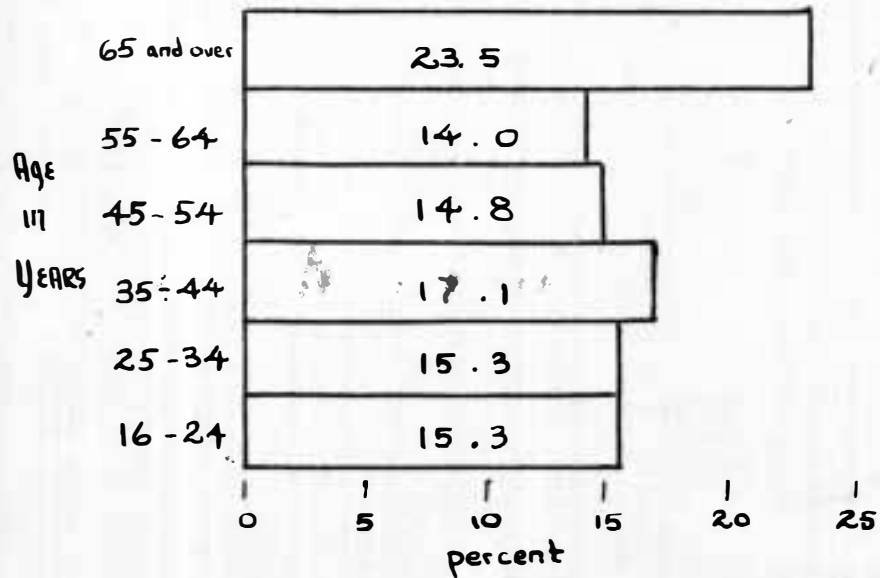
Figure 1 reveals that, in comparison with the general population, a disproportionate percentage of the membership of the Free Methodist Church in the Upper Midwest Area is 65 years of age and over. It will be noted that nearly a fourth (23.5 percent) of the church membership is 65 years

¹The Upper Midwest Region includes the states of North and South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and the northern half of Illinois. Since there is no means of differentiating this area of Illinois from the rest of the state in the census, the entire state of Illinois is included in the data for the general population of the Upper Midwest Region.

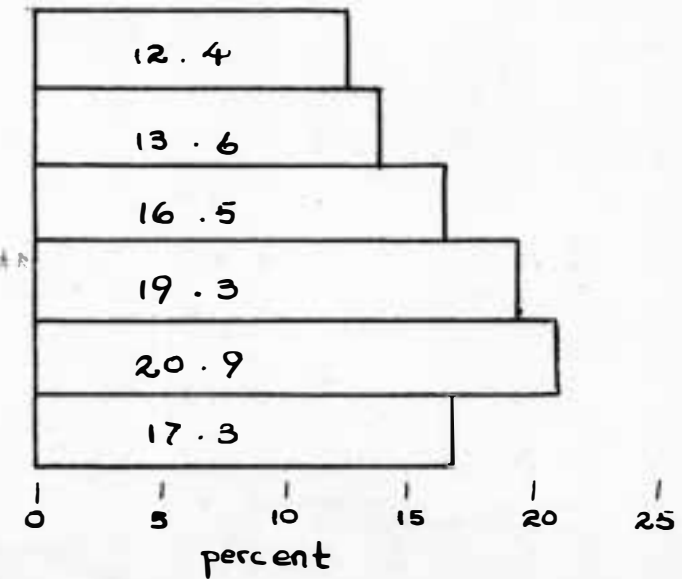
FIGURE 1

AGE COMPARISON OF FREE METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERS OF THE UPPER
MIDWEST REGION AND THE GENERAL POPULATION IN THE SAME AREA

FREE METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERSHIP



GENERAL POPULATION (SIX-STATE AREA)



of age and older as compared with only 12.4 percent of the general population. Figure 1 reveals that the Free Methodist Church contains a smaller proportion of individuals in every age bracket except the two oldest categories. Particularly apparent is the small proportion in the younger age brackets. The general population shows 17.1 percent in the 16-24 year, and 20.9 percent in the 25-34 year category; in contrast, the Free Methodist Church shows only 15.3 percent in each of these categories.

These data suggest questions for needed future research. Questions posed by the age-composition of the Free Methodist Church membership in the Upper Midwest Area include the following: Is there a relationship between the large proportion of elderly people in this denomination and the conservative beliefs of the group? Have relatively large numbers of the younger people of the church moved to regions outside the area studied? Have the churches of this area failed to provide an attractive and aggressive program for youth?

Whatever the answer to these questions may be, the picture presented by the age-composition comparison should be of value to church leaders of the area in pointing up the deficiency of young people in the composition of its membership.

Sex

The ratio of the male to female members of the Free Methodist Church offers another view of the membership of this association. This is given in terms of the number of males per 100 females. The general population of the area shows a sex ratio of 98.7 in the 1950 census.

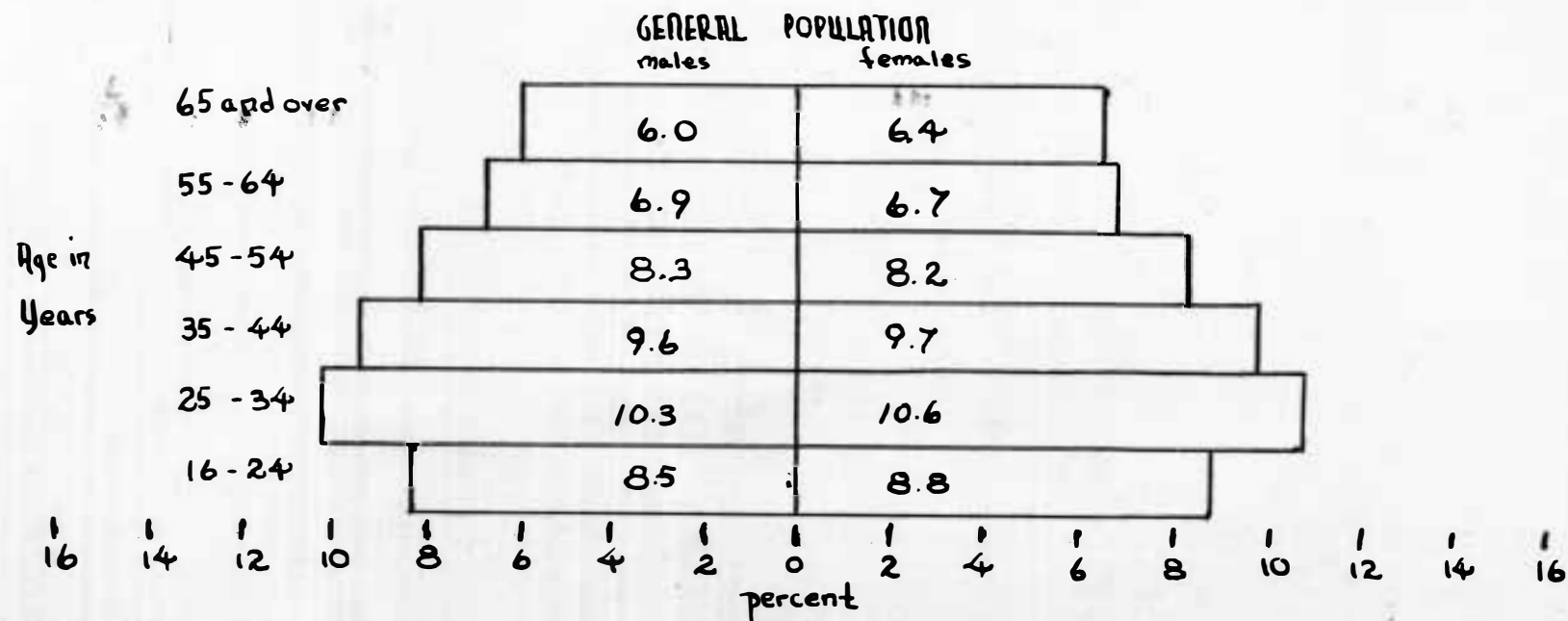
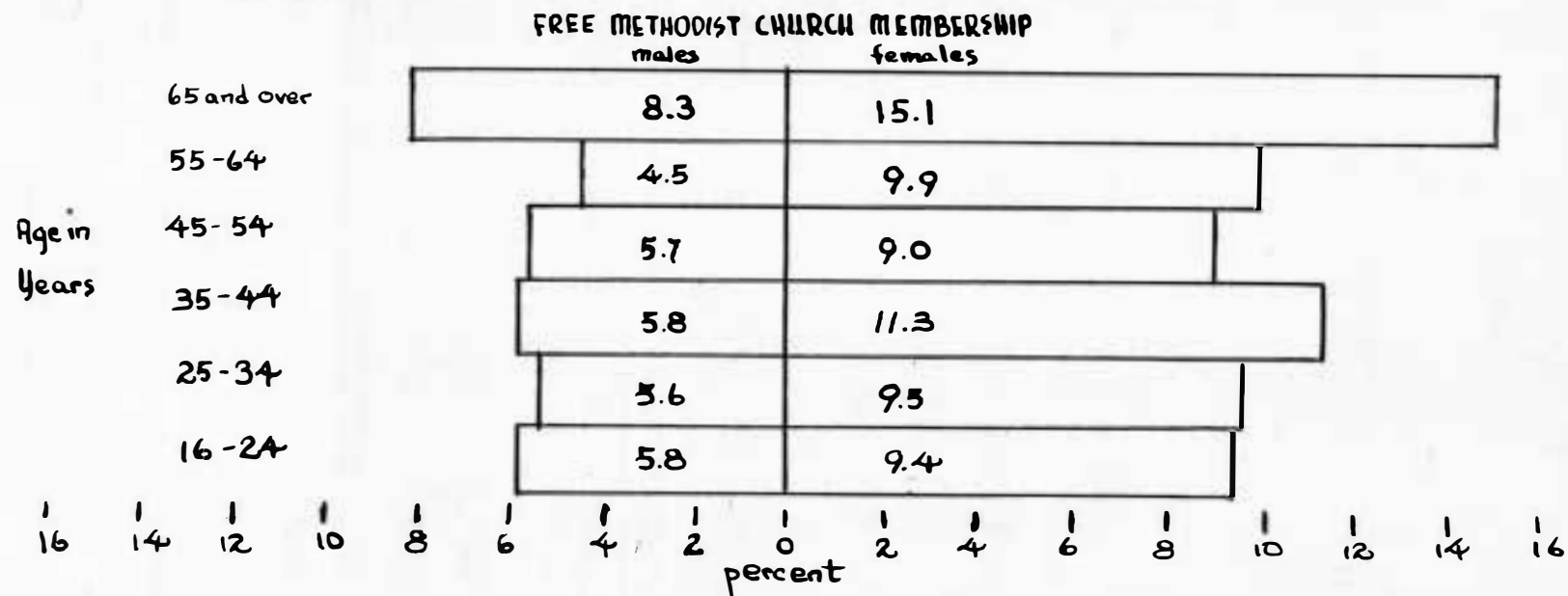
The sex ratio of the church under study is 54.5 or, in other words, almost two female members for every male. Considered again against the backdrop of the general population this fact takes on added import. It is generally recognized, as shown by previous works cited, that women participate in church affairs more than men; one might thus expect a larger number of women members among the Free Methodists. However, such a disproportionate sex ratio in comparison to the general population is undoubtedly a matter for the attention of those interested in this denomination.

Figure 2 shows the combined characteristics of age and sex by percentages of males and females in each age category. Most evident among the comparisons is the large percent of females in the Free Methodist Church who are 65 years of age and over in comparison to the general population of the area (15.1 percent to 6.4 percent).

In every age bracket but the 25-34 age group, the Free Methodist Church shows a higher proportion of females

FIGURE 2

POPULATION PYRAMIDS OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERSHIP, UPPER MIDWEST
REGION, AND THE GENERAL POPULATION IN THE SAME AREA



in its membership than is seen in the comparable bracket of the general population. There is a particular preponderance of elderly females among the Free Methodists as shown in Figure 2.

A look at the percentages of males in the Free Methodist Church, Upper Midwest Region, discloses a strikingly different picture. Every age category, except the 65-and-older bracket, shows a smaller percentage of males than the general population. The 65-and-older category contains 8.3 percent of the Free Methodist males, while the general population tabulates 6 percent. Particularly noticeable is the disproportion among the younger age groups for males; in the 16-24 year and the 25-34 year brackets the Free Methodists show only 5.8 percent and 5.6 percent respectively while the general population indicates 8.5 percent and 10.3 percent respectively.

Two questions immediately arise from these observations. First, why is there such a large proportion of elderly people, especially females, in the Free Methodist Church of this area? Second, why do the percentages of males fall so far below those of females for every age grouping, and is there a similar dearth of males in all or most church bodies?

Marital Status

Table III compares the members of the Free Methodist Church, Upper Midwest Region, and the general population with respect to marital status. Actually the data secured in this study is not completely comparable to that available in the census reports since this study includes all persons sixteen years of age and over while the census reports include all persons fourteen years of age and older. However, the comparison discloses a similarity of marital profile with very little deviation in the married category (67.9, Free Methodists; 65.8, general population). The variance of almost 7 percent in the single grouping is doubtless due in part to the difference in age base of the two studies. An observation of the widowed and divorced category reveals a difference with 13.5 percent of the Free Methodists falling in this group but only 9.2 percent of the general population. Census figures showed no breakdown between widowed and divorced peoples, but the data in this study showed that only 1.3 percent of the Free Methodists are divorced, leaving 12.2 percent of these persons as widowed.

Assuming that most widowed persons are elderly and most single individuals are younger people, these findings coincide with those already observed which indicate that the Free Methodist Church in this area tends toward a preponderance of elderly people and a deficiency of younger

TABLE III
COMPARISON OF THE MARITAL STATUS
of
FREE METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERS, UPPER MIDWEST REGION,
with
THE GENERAL POPULATION OF THE AREA
(In Percent)

	Single	Married	Widowed or Divorced	Total Percent
Free Methodist Members	18.6	67.9	13.5	100
General Population	25.0	65.8	9.2	100

individuals.

Education

A survey of the educational attainment of Free Methodists in the Upper Midwest Area as compared with the general population and with the church population as studied by Liston Pope is presented to further delineate the characteristics of this membership.

The median years of formal education completed by Free Methodists 25 years of age and older is 11.7 while that of the general population is 9.1. A comparison of the Free Methodists with the general population in a breakdown of years of formal education completed is seen in Table IV which shows the same general finding as the median years of formal education but indicates more specifically the areas of difference. Whereas 49.5 percent of the general population has completed 0 through 8 years of formal education, 37 percent of the Free Methodists fall within this grouping. However, 43 percent of the Free Methodists have completed all or part of their secondary education while only 37 percent of the general population have done so. Twenty-plus percent of the Free Methodists have completed all or part of their college training whereas only 13.6 percent of the general population shows similar attainment. It is evident that the Free Methodist membership has completed a higher average of for-

TABLE IV

COMPARISON OF THE YEARS OF FORMAL EDUCATION
of
FREE METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERS, UPPER MIDWEST REGION,
with
THE GENERAL POPULATION OF THE AREA
(In Percent)

	Years of Education			Total Percent
	0 - 8	9 - 12	13 and over	
Free Methodist Members	36.9	42.9	20.2	100
General Population	49.5	36.9	13.6	100

mal education than is seen in the general population.

Since it is generally assumed that a religious association is a selective group, the question arises: Are all churches as selective in educational attainment as these findings indicate the Free Methodist Church in the Upper Midwest Region to be? Table V offers some insight into this question by comparing the educational attainment of the membership of the Free Methodist Church with that of the total church members as found by Liston Pope in his work cited in Chapter II.

Forty-eight percent of the church members studied by Mr. Pope have completed a secondary education and 51 percent of the Free Methodists in the area under study have finished secondary school. Conversely, 49 percent of the Free Methodists have less than a complete high school education and 52 percent of the church members in Pope's study fall within this category.

A smaller percentage of Free Methodists have completed college (7.5 percent) than is shown by the church population studied by Pope (11.0 percent). In evaluating this comparison it is of interest to note that there is a Free Methodist junior college located in Wessington Springs, South Dakota, which serves the area under study. Possibly a number of Free Methodists of this area have completed a two-year terminal course offered by this school but would thus

TABLE V
COMPARISON OF THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
of
FREE METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERS, UPPER MIDWEST REGION
with
THE STUDY MADE BY LISTON POPE

	Percent with Less than Complete High School Education	Percent Graduated from High School	Percent of College Graduates
Free Methodist Members	49	51	7.5
Liston Pope Study	52	48	11.0

not qualify as "college graduates."

These facts cited with respect to years of formal education indicate that the Free Methodist members in the Upper Midwest Region have attained considerably more formal education than the general population in the same region, and that they show an amount of formal education comparable to that of the general church population represented in Pope's study.

Occupations

Thirteen occupational groupings were included in the schedule. However, Table VI shows the percentages of combined groups of occupations of the Free Methodists as compared with similar groupings tabulated for the general population. In Appendix B is a table which gives detailed occupational breakdown including all thirteen occupational divisions by state.

Categories combined to obtain data for Table VI are professional, business men and managers, Group I; clerks and kindred workers, skilled manual workers, Group II; unskilled workers and service workers, Group III; farm owners, tenant farmers, and farm laborers, Group IV. Categories combined from the 1950 census to obtain similar occupational divisions in the general population are: professional, technical, kindred workers, and managers, officials, proprietors except farm, Group I; craftsmen, foremen, kindred workers, and

TABLE VI
COMPARISON OF THE COMBINED GROUPS OF OCCUPATIONS
of
FREE METHODIST CHURCH MEMBERS, UPPER MIDWEST REGION,
with
THE GENERAL POPULATION OF THE AREA
(In Percent)

	Professional, Business Men, Managers and Proprietors Except Farm	Skilled Manual, Clerks, Foreman, and Kindred Workers	Unskilled Laborers, and Service Workers	Farm Owners, Tenants, and Laborers	Total Percent
Free Methodist Members	24.4	29.1	24.7	21.8	100
General Population	16.5	28.7	26.8	26.6	98.6*

*1.4% was not reported in the census tabulation.

sales workers, clerical and kindred workers, Group II; operatives, private household workers, laborers except farm and mine, and service workers, Group III; farmers, farm managers, and farm laborers, Group IV.

Table VI indicates that Group I shows the greatest variance between the Free Methodist and the general population since 24 percent of the Free Methodists fall within this category while only 16.5 percent of the general population are included here. Group II shows little variance between the Free Methodists (29 percent) and the general population (28 percent). Somewhat larger deviation is seen in Group III which includes 26 percent of the general population and 24 percent of the Free Methodists. In Group IV the deviation enlarges to 5 percent with the general population registering 26 percent and the Free Methodists only 21 percent. Thus we find that the occupations which require more education comprehend a larger proportion of the Free Methodist membership in this area than of the general population; and correspondingly, that those occupations requiring less education comprise a smaller proportion of Free Methodists than of the general population.

Groups I and IV are comparable to the occupational divisions employed by Pope in his study of the general church population. The findings of this study coincide quite closely to his description of Protestant church popu-

lation which includes 24 percent in the professional and business class while the Free Methodists show 25 percent. Pope finds 19 percent of church members in general to be farmers while this study indicates that 22 percent of the Free Methodists are farm people. The large rural population in the area under observation may account for a part of the deviation in this division.

Although groups II and III are not comparable to Pope's categories, these two comparisons indicate a similarity between the occupational status of the members of the Free Methodist Church in the Upper Midwest Region and that of church members throughout the United States as studied by Liston Pope.

To summarize, it is seen that in comparison with the general population of the same area, the Free Methodists in the Upper Midwest Region indicate a disproportionate number of elderly persons, especially females and a smaller percentage of young males; their membership shows almost two males for each female in comparison with about one to one in the general population; the percentage of married persons is almost identical but there are fewer single persons and more widowed among the membership of this church than found in the total population. The Free Methodists have completed a higher average of formal education than the total population and a degree comparable to that of the church popula-

tion; occupationally they have larger percentages included in Groups I and II (professions, skilled laborers, etc.) and smaller percentages in Groups III and IV (unskilled, farmers, etc.) than the population of the area shows.

CHAPTER V

PARTICIPATION OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Since the value of a member to any organization is usually appraised in terms of the extent to which he participates in that organization, it is a concern of this study to determine what characteristics are positively related to the extent which members of the Free Methodist Church of the Upper Midwest Region participate in the activity of that association. Each characteristic selected for observation in the general schedule is thus considered in its relationship to the extent of membership activity in the association.

The data cited in Chapter II from the Catholic Digest will be used in comparison;¹ however, the reader should keep in mind that only general comparisons are appropriate since the methodologies of the two studies differ. Chapter III of this study gives full information as to the procedure followed in determining the extent of activity for each member.

Out of the entire membership of the Free Methodists in this region 58 percent are classified as "most active", 24 percent as "moderately active", and 18 percent as "least active." Clearly a high level of membership activity is

¹Lundberg, Schrag, Larson, op. cit., p. 570. See Appendix B for abridged copy.

indicated by these data. The Catholic Digest study discloses that only 25 percent of Protestant adults attend church every Sunday, and 32 percent do not attend.² Even a combination of the percentages of those attending church every Sunday (25 percent) and those who attend about three times a month (16 percent) fails to equal the "most active" total of the Free Methodists (41 percent of the general Protestant population, 58 percent of the Free Methodists). It is evident that the members of this association manifest greater activity in the church life than might be expected according to the findings of previous works. These data bear out the hypothesis of this study in respect to membership activity.

Age and Participation

When membership activity is surveyed in terms of the ages of the participants, the largest percentage of "most active" members is found in the 25 to 34 year age division (Table VII). Sixty-five percent of the members within this age grouping are classified as "most active" while less than 12 percent are "least active." In contrast, the age group of 65 and over evidences the least amount of church activity; 45 percent "most active," 28 percent "least active." It is

²Ibid., p. 570.

TABLE VII

EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH PROGRAM BY AGE OF MEMBERS

(In Percent)

Age Bracket	Number in Sample	Least Active	Moderately Active	Most Active	Total Percent
16-24	297	18.5	20.9	60.6	100
25-34	299	11.9	22.4	65.7	100
35-44	322	15.3	27.3	57.4	100
45-54	282	13.0	27.0	60.0	100
55-64	268	18.8	24.0	57.2	100
65 & over	456	28.4	26.6	45.0	100

also interesting to note that this category includes a larger number of members than any other single grouping. If the percentages of members classified as "most active" are combined with the "moderately active," the 25-34 age group still leads in church activity (88 percent "most and moderately active"). However, the 45-54 age division is a close second with 87 percent "most and moderately active." Members who are 65 and over register the smallest percentage of "most and moderately active" (71 percent). From every vantage point the 25-34 year olds are thus seen as the most active age group and the 65 year olds and over as the least active.

These data coincide with the findings of the study in the Catholic Digest which also attribute the least activity in the church program to individuals 65 and older.³ The most striking difference in the findings of the two studies lies in the wide divergence of percents of "most active" participants. Whereas this study shows one age group of the Free Methodists (25-34) with 65 percent of its members classified as "most active," the study of the general Protestant church population indicates 34 percent as the highest percentage of individuals who attend church every Sabbath in any category (18-24). Even by combining this figure with

³Ibid., p. 570.

the percent of members who attend three Sundays out of four, a total of only 46 percent of the membership is reached. This percentage falls very near to the percent of "most active" in the Free Methodist age grouping of 65 and older (45 percent) which was found to show the least activity of the age categories.

Sex and Participation

Table VIII provides a comparison of the extent of church activity of males and females. Although females outnumber males almost two to one in church membership, a slightly larger proportion of males (58 percent) than females (57 percent) are found in the "most active" category.

Thus, if only the percentages of "most active" members are considered, a difference of less than one percent is noted between males and females. If the "most active" and "moderately active" divisions are combined there is even less difference between the amount of activity by the sexes in the church program. This combination gives the females a very slight advantage (.2 percent) over the males. These findings indicate that although there are just a little over half as many males as females, percentagewise the males show as much activity in the church as the females. This is contrary to the data cited in Chapter II by previous studies, including the Catholic Digest which reports 4 per-

TABLE VIII

EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH PROGRAM BY SEX OF MEMBERS
(In Percent)

	Number in Sample	Least Active	Moderately Active	Most Active	Total Percent
Males	714	18.4	23.4	58.2	100
Females	1248	18.2	24.5	57.3	100

cent more females than males attending church every Sabbath and 7 percent fewer females than males who never attend church.⁴

Questions arise from these findings: Why do male members of Free Methodism in the Upper Midwest Region differ from the male members of the general Protestant church population with respect to amount of church activity? Is it because the local church memberships tend to be small and to expect more of the individual? Is it because of the conservative belief which demands a greater spirit of sacrifice and devotion?

Marital Status and Participation

That married members are likely to be more active than single, widowed, or divorced members of the Free Methodist Church in the Upper Midwest Region is shown by Table IX which reveals that 59.7 percent of the married are found in the "most active" category. Single people register the next largest percentage of "most active" members with 56 percent, and widows or widowers the next largest with 47 percent. Divorced persons show the least activity (44 percent "most active"). However, since there are only 25 divorced individuals in the entire study, this finding may

⁴Ibid., p. 570.

TABLE IX**EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH PROGRAM BY MARITAL STATUS OF MEMBERS****(In Percent)**

	Number in Sample	Least Active	Moderately Active	Most Active	Total Percent
Single	366	21.5	21.7	56.8	100
Widows or Widowers	239	29.3	23.4	47.3	100
Divorced	25	20.0	36.0	44.0	100
Married	1332	15.3	25.0	59.7	100

not be significant.

Widowed people show a large percentage of "least active" (29-plus percent) and this is the only marital group in which the percent of "least active" members is greater than the percent of "moderately active" members (23 percent).

Education and Participation

The extent of church activity according to the number of years of formal education of the Free Methodists is presented in Table X. Except for the small group of 31 members possessing over sixteen years of education, there appears to be a positive correlation between the number of years of formal education and the amount of church activity.

A high of 22 percent is found in the "least active" category representing members who have completed 8 or less years of formal education; conversely only 12 percent of those members with college level education are classified as "least active."

On the other hand, 68 percent of those members with college level education are "most active," but only 47 percent of the members with eighth grade or less education are classed as "most active." This study further substantiates the assertions of previous works cited with respect to the effect of education upon church activity and again demonstrates that as the amount of education increases the trend

TABLE X**EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH PROGRAM BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF MEMBERS****(In Percent)**

Grades	Number in Sample	Least Active	Moderately Active	Most Active	Total Percent
0 - 8	638	22.7	30.0	47.3	100
9 - 12	754	15.4	23.2	61.4	100
13 - 16	326	12.5	19.4	68.1	100
Over 16	30	6.4	32.3	61.3	100

toward greater activity in church affairs also increases.

Occupation and Participation

Table XI provides the first picture of occupational groupings and their relation to church participation among the Free Methodists. This table indicates that students and tenant farmers have the largest percentages of members in the "most active" category (66 percent for both groups). However, several other occupational groups including farm owners, skilled manual workers, clerks, and professional people also indicated 60 or more percent of their members classified "most active."

At the other end of the activity scale are the retired people, (40 percent "least active"), farm laborers (31 percent), unemployed (29 percent), and unskilled workers (23 percent). The retired people comprise the only category which registered a larger percentage of "least active" (40.7) than "most active" (35.5). This coincides with the finding of members 65 and older to be the "least active" age group.

The housewives include by far the largest number of members (738) and register better than half way up the activity scale with 59 percent of their group classified "most active", 25 percent "moderately active," and 15 percent "least active."

TABLE XI

**EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH PROGRAM
BY OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF MEMBERS
(In Percent)**

Occupation	Number in Sample	Least Active	Moderately Active	Most Active	Total Percent
Professional	126	11.9	25.4	62.7	100
Business Men and Managers	72	15.3	29.2	55.5	100
Clerks and Kindred Workers	100	18.0	19.0	63.0	100
Skilled Manual Workers	136	14.7	25.0	60.3	100
Unskilled Workers	130	23.2	27.7	49.1	100
Service Workers	70	17.4	30.4	52.2	100
Farm Owners	111	12.6	22.5	64.9	100
Housewives	738	15.2	25.5	59.3	100
Tenant Farmers	50	15.1	18.9	66.0	100
Unemployed	31	29.0	35.5	35.5	100
Farm Laborers	16	31.3	12.5	56.2	100
Retired	189	40.7	23.8	35.5	100
Students	160	13.8	20.0	66.2	100

Another aspect of the participation-occupation picture is provided by Table XII which combines groups of occupations into four major divisions. This arrangement of occupations reveals that the farmers register the largest percentage of "most active" members (65 percent); the skilled manual group ranks next with 61 percent; the professional people third with 60 percent; and the unskilled workers last with but 50 percent classified as "most active."

By combining the "most active" percentages with the "moderately active" percentages the professional division ranks first with 87 percent; the farm group ranks closely behind with 85 percent; the skilled manual workers register almost 84 percent, and the unskilled laborers still fall behind with 79 percent.

These findings appear to corroborate the data presented in the section dealing with education and participation in that, excepting the farm group, those members whose occupations require more education are more active in church life than those members whose occupations require less education.

In summation of this chapter it may be reviewed that the age category showing the greatest percent of "most active" members is the 25-34 year group; that percentage-wise males and females indicate very similar activity traits; that married persons are "most active"; that there is a

TABLE XII

EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH PROGRAM BY COMBINED GROUPS OF OCCUPATION

(In Percent)

Occupations	Number in Sample	Least Active	Moderately Active	Most Active	Total Percent
Professional, Business Men, and Managers	198	13.1	26.8	60.1	100
Skilled Manual, Clerks, and Kindred Workers	236	16.1	22.5	61.4	100
Unskilled and Service Workers	200	21.0	28.5	50.5	100
Farm Owners, Tenants and Laborers	177	14.7	20.3	65.0	100

positive correlation between the number of years of formal education and the amount of church activity; and that farm people and workers in those occupations requiring the most education show more church activity than those in occupations requiring less education.

CHAPTER VI

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHURCH LAY LEADERS

In this study 35 percent of the members of the Free Methodist Church in the Upper Midwest Region are classified as officials or "leaders." These people are elected by the local church body and they comprise the "official board" of each local church.

A member of a local Free Methodist Church who is elected to any of the following offices automatically becomes a member of the official board: local preachers, exhorters, evangelists, deaconesses, stewards, class leaders, Sunday School superintendent, advisor to the local youth organization, president of the Women's Missionary Society, treasurer of the society, president of the men's group, and trustees of the local church property. For the purposes of this study, a member of the local church official board is defined as an "official member."

This official board is the body which determines the policies of the local church and outlines the program of action to be undertaken. The functions of such a board are circumscribed by general church rules and regulations, but much of the planning and decision-making which is necessary to organized church life is done by this body. In view of these facts, the members of the official board may be cor-

restly considered the important lay leaders of the local Methodist Church.

The question arises as to whether these leaders vary in their characteristics from the main body of the membership, and if so, in what ways?

Tabulations which relate to these officials in the Free Methodist Church of the Upper Midwest Region appear in Tables XIII through XIX, each of which contains two columns of data. Column I, entitled "Percent of Total Officials," reveals the composition of the official group according to the percentage of officials in each division. Column II lists the composition of the entire membership by percent thus providing a basis for comparison between the official membership and the total membership. A category of officials containing a larger percent than the corresponding category in the total membership indicates a preference among the Free Methodists in choosing officials from that particular group. A category of officials containing a smaller percent than the corresponding category in the total membership indicates averseness in choosing officials from that group. The larger the difference between the percents of officials and membership the greater the degree of either preference or averseness for that specific category.

Age and Leadership

The official membership is comprised largely of persons thirty-five years of age and older; whereas the total membership is rather evenly distributed among all age categories except for a large percentage of people who are 65 and over (Table XIII). The difference between the composition of the officials and the total membership is greatest in the 16-24 age group (11 percent fewer officials). The next greatest difference is found in the 45-54 age category with 6 percent more officials than total membership. The 55-64 age group includes 5 percent more officials than the total membership. There are 2 percent fewer officials who are 65 and older than in the corresponding category of the total membership.

These statistics reveal that Free Methodists choose very few officials between the ages of 16 and 24 and that there is a preference for officials who are between the ages of 35 and 64. The greatest preference is indicated for officials between 45 and 54, while those over 65 are not preferred.

Sex and Leadership

Although the church membership as a whole in this region contains a predominance of women, there is an obvious preference for males as officials since 47 percent of

TABLE XIII
CHURCH OFFICIALS BY AGE

Age Categories	I Percent of Total Officials (n-687)	II Percent of Total Membership (n-1924)
16 - 24	4	15.3
25 - 34	15	15.3
35 - 44	20	17.1
45 - 54	21	14.8
55 - 64	19	14.0
65 & over	21	23.5
Total	100	100

the officials are males while only 35 percent of the total sample is male (Table XIV). In contrast 53 percent of the officials are females but 64 percent of the total sample are females. Actually a few more females than males occupy official positions (53 percent), but a decided preference for males is indicated.

Marital Status and Leadership

Eighty-one percent of the officials of the Free Methodist Church are married persons, 10 percent are widowed, 8 percent single and one percent divorced (Table XV). In comparison, about 68 percent of the total membership are married, over 18 percent are single, 12-plus percent widowed and one-plus percent divorced. The difference of 13 percent between the proportion of married officials and the total membership shows a large preference for married people to serve as officials; the variation of 10 percent fewer single officials than the total membership reveals a decided rejection of single persons as leaders in the church. There is a slight averseness toward widowed people serving as officials as indicated by a 2 percent variance between the percentage of widowed people in the total membership and in the official segment. Comparison of the divorced individuals indicate but a 0.3 percent variation; however, only 25 persons are in the category, thus any finding would not

TABLE XIV

CHURCH OFFICIALS BY SEX

Sex Categories	I Percent of Total Officials (n-687)	II Percent of Total Membership (n-1962)
Male	47	36.4
Female	53	63.6
Total	100	100

TABLE XV
CHURCH OFFICIALS BY MARITAL STATUS

Marital Status Categories	I Percent of Total Officials (n-687)	II Percent of Total Membership (n-1962)
Single	8	18.6
Widow or Widower	10	12.2
Divorced	1	1.3
Married	81	67.9
Total	100	100

be significant.

Education and Leadership

The composition of the official membership varies little from that of the total membership in respect to education (Table XVI). The largest variation is the 2-plus percent fewer officials in the high school category than the total membership shows for the same category; there is but 1.5 percent difference in the college group, 1.1 percent variation between the two groups in the grade school category and only 0.3 percent variation in the categories of those with more than sixteen years of education. These findings indicate that education does not act as a marked selective factor in the electing of church officials among the Free Methodists.

Occupation and Leadership

The proportion of officials in occupational categories is indicated in Tables XVII and XVIII. It is readily seen that housewives dominate the occupational picture, comprising 37 percent of the official members (Table XVII). Skilled laborers are next with 11 percent and farm owners third with 9 percent. No other occupational group shows more than 7 percent representation in the official membership.

TABLE XVI

CHURCH OFFICIALS BY YEARS OF FORMAL EDUCATION

Years of Education Categories	I Percent of Total Officials (n-619)	II Percent of Total Membership (n-1748)
0 - 8	38	36.9
9 - 12	41	42.9
13 - 16	19	18.5
16 plus	2	1.7
Total	100	100

TABLE XVII

CHURCH OFFICIALS BY OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

Occupation Categories	I Percent of Total Officials (n-687)	II Percent of Total Membership (n-1929)
Professional	7	7.0
Business-Managerial	6	2.7
Clerks	7	5.7
Skilled Laborers	11	6.5
Unskilled Laborers	6	7.5
Service Workers	4	2.9
Farm Owners	9	4.9
Housewives	37	39.5
Tenant Farmers	4	3.5
Unemployed	.5	2.5
Farm Laborers	.5	0.9
Retired	7	9.1
Students	1	7.3
Total	100	100

When the composition of officials is compared with the composition of the total sample it becomes evident that there is a preference for skilled laborers, farm owners, and business and managerial workers to serve as officials (Table XVII). Only 6-plus percent of the total sample is composed of skilled laborers, but 11 percent of the officials are in this category. Similarly, only 5 percent of the total sample are farm owners, but 9 percent of the officials are farm owners; 2 percent of the total sample are business managerial workers, but 6 percent of the officials are included in this category.

By way of contrast, 7 percent of the total sample is composed of students, but only 1 percent of the officials are in the student group. Also 39 percent of the total sample are housewives, but 37 percent are officials. These figures indicate that although the proportion of housewives who are officials is large, they are not actually preferred for official capacity. Students, unskilled laborers, unemployed, farm laborers, and retired people also show a negative differential indicating that they are not preferred for leadership.

Table XVIII, which combines groups of productive workers and eliminates housewives and others from the scene, shows skilled manual workers, etc., to be the predominant occupational group (32 percent of the officials). Farm

TABLE XVIII

CHURCH OFFICIALS BY COMBINED GROUPS OF OCCUPATION

Occupation Categories	I Percent of Total Officials (n-362)	II Percent of Total Membership (n-811)
Professional, Business Men, and Managers	23.2	24.4
Skilled Manual, Clerks and Kindred Workers	32.9	29.1
Unskilled and Service Workers	18.8	24.7
Farm Owners, Tenants and Laborers	25.1	21.8
Total	100	100

workers rank second (25 percent), professional, businessmen, etc., third with 23 percent, and unskilled workers last with 18 percent. Free Methodists prefer the farm workers group and the skilled manual and clerical workers for their officials, and do not prefer unskilled and service workers for official capacity. Farmer people comprise 21 percent of the total sample but account for 25 percent of the officials; likewise skilled manual and clerical workers make up 29 percent of the total sample and comprise almost 33 percent of the officials. In contrast, 24 percent of the total sample are unskilled and service workers, but only 18 percent of the officials are within this category. Professional and businessmen appear in almost the same proportions in both the official group and the total sample.

Participation and Leadership

Out of the total membership of the Free Methodists in the Upper Midwest Region, 58 percent are rated "most active." Concomitantly, these people are the most likely to be chosen for official capacity and they make up 82 percent of the official body (Table XIX). Twenty-four percent of the total sample are "moderately active" but only 15 percent of the officials were so rated. Eighteen percent of the total sample are rated "least active" but only 3 percent of this category serve as officials.

TABLE XIX

CHURCH OFFICIALS BY EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION

Extent of Participation Categories	I Percent of Total Officials (n-687)	II Percent of Total Membership (n-1962)
Most Active	82	58
Moderately Active	15	24
Least Active	3	18
Total	100	100

In conclusion it may be pointed out that in this church and area the preference for lay leaders or officials runs to males, to individuals between 35 and 65, to married persons, and to farm workers or skilled manual laborers. The number of years of formal education does not appear to operate as a selective factor in the choice of leaders, but a high preference for individuals rated as "most active" is noted. The actual composition of the official group differs from the composition of the total membership mainly in the disproportionate percentage of male leaders, of married people who are officials, and of the "most active" members.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary of the Characteristics

The central problem of this study as previously stated is: What are the characteristics of the people in the Upper Midwest Region who subscribe to the beliefs and values of the Free Methodist Church? Other relative questions are: What is the relation of church activity to the selected characteristics of the Free Methodists, Upper Midwest Region? Do the lay leaders of this denomination possess distinct characteristics from the general membership as found in the Upper Midwest Region?

This study reveals that the Free Methodists of the Upper Midwest Region comprise a religious association which differs considerably in its characteristics from the general population of that same region. With respect to the characteristics of age, sex, and education the differences are most clearly defined; occupation and marital status do not show such marked variance, but appreciable differences are indicated.

Contrary to the hypothesis on age this study shows that a much larger proportion of Free Methodists are older people than is found in the general population; also there

is a comparatively small proportion of young people under 35.

There are nearly twice as many females as males among the Free Methodists, confirming the hypothesis on sex, and almost all age categories in their membership include a smaller percentage of males than is evidenced in the general population. Questions arise as to why females dominate the numerical membership to such a marked degree, and as to what steps might be taken to equate more closely the representation by sex in the membership.

Free Methodists have a higher average of formal education than the general population, but are about on a par with the educational average of the membership of American Church life in general. Linked with the educational factor is the greater incidence of Free Methodists who are employed in the so-called "higher" occupations and a smaller percentage in the "lower" occupations than is found in the general population of the same region. Almost 30 percent of the productive workers in this denomination are classed as skilled manual laborers, clerks, foremen, and kindred workers, while nearly 25 percent are professional, businessmen, managers, or proprietors.

Free Methodists differ only slightly from the general population in the proportion of married persons in their membership, but they include a larger proportion of widowed

people and a smaller proportion of single people than is found in the general population of the same area. As expected in a denomination with these beliefs, a very low incidence of divorce is evidenced; this picture substantiates the hypothesis on marital status.

Summary of Participation by Characteristics

By relating these characteristics of age, sex, education, occupation and marital status to church activity, some of the factors which influence church participation become evident. The greatest rate of activity among the Free Methodists in this region is found in people between the ages of 25-34, and married persons are more active than members in other marital categories.

Contrary to the hypothesis on male church activity, it is discovered that Free Methodist males are just as active in the church as are females. In the light of previous studies this is a significant finding for this church.

Education is clearly a motivating force to church activity since people with more formal education are also more active in this association; this upholds Hypothesis 7. Furthermore, Free Methodists employed in occupations which require more education tend to show more church activity than members employed in occupations requiring less education. Within its scope and methodology this study supports

the findings of other research and demonstrates that more active church participation is concomitant with a higher educational attainment among the Free Methodists in the Upper Midwest Region.

The very high degree of church activity evidenced throughout the Free Methodist membership in the Upper Midwest Region, males as well as females, may be due in part to the majority of small, local churches in which many aspects of primary group relationships exist. In addition, the Free Methodists are a denomination requiring relatively "strict" standards of behavior; this would tend to promote group identification and solidity within the membership of the denomination.

Summary of Lay Leadership Distinctions

The data of this study concerning the lay leaders of the church reveal that leaders are distinctive from the general membership in that the male percentage of leaders is greater than that found in the total membership. A higher percent of married persons and "most active" members are leaders. Middle-aged people who are occupationally established are preferred for officials while the amount of education possessed by a member seemingly has no relation to his being chosen as a leader. Hypothesis 8 is substantiated by these findings except in regard to educa-

tion; this was expected to be a selective factor in choosing leaders.

Conclusions

The largest proportion of Free Methodists in the Upper Midwest Region are older people, but their most active members are between the ages of 25 and 34. The lay leaders of the denomination are, for the most part, between the ages of 45 and 64.

Although the Free Methodists are in majority women, they prefer men for their lay leaders and consequently there are almost as many men as women serving officially. Men and women manifest almost an equal rate of church activity. The preference for male leaders and the degree of male activity is a reflection of the continued adherence to the traditional male role in American society.

A large majority of the Free Methodists are married people who are also the most active in church life. Married persons tend to be chosen for lay leadership and predominate numerically among the officials.

Slightly more than half of the Free Methodists are high school graduates, and the average of formal education is well above that of the general population. Considering these findings and the fact that more education is concomitant with increased church activity, it is significant

to note that the Free Methodists do not appear to consider the education of members in choosing lay leaders. This indicates that there are untapped human resources within the membership.

The occupational picture of the Free Methodists is not conclusive, but the data have indicated a slightly greater proportion of the membership in "higher" occupations and a slightly smaller proportion in "lower" occupations than is found in the general population. Farm people, business men, professional, and skilled persons are most active in the church, and are preferred for official positions. The skilled manual laborers constitute the largest single occupational group among officials.

The results of this study cannot be regarded as conclusive relative to the social class structure of Free Methodist Church members in the Upper Midwest Region, but occupational and educational data suggest that the majority of the membership of the denomination in this region would be considered as upper middle and/or lower middle class rather than lower middle and/or upper lower class as was indicated by previous research.

Implications for Future Research

This research has discovered facts which give rise to new concepts which in turn suggest problems for addi-

tional study. Following is a partial list:

Does a smaller fundamental church such as the Free Methodist denomination exhibit a holding power on its youth that is less than, equal to, or greater than that exerted by larger, more liberal denominations?

Are the males of other fundamental churches as active in the program of their denomination as the females?

How does the extent of church participation found in this study compare with church activity found in other churches of approximately the same size?

Is education a selective factor in other denominations, both liberal and fundamental, relative to the choice of lay leadership?

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APPENDIX A

COPY OF THE LETTER SENT TO ALL PASTORS IN THE AREA

**Bruce L. Kline
Barracks 202
Brookings, South Dakota**

Attention: Pastors of the Free Methodist Churches

Dear Pastor:

We are asking you to participate in a scientific study which, we trust, will be of practical value to the church and to you as a local pastor. The aim of this study is to learn the occupations of our church members in this "Upper Midwest Area," and other relevant items concerning them. Wouldn't you like to know what groups of people the church is contacting and those to whom the church is not ministering? Would it be of interest to you to know whether education increases or decreases a person's participation in church activity? With your cooperation, we expect to be able to answer these questions and others.

When filling out the enclosed questionnaire, please keep in mind that the reliability of this study is highly dependent upon the accuracy of your information. The final results of this study, which is a thesis problem, will be available from the author upon request when it has been completed.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely yours,

Bruce L. Kline

SENT TO ALL PASTORS IN THE REGION

DIRECTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE:

Column I

- a. Do not give names.
- b. Do not include absentee members on your church records.
- c. Include each full or probationary member over 16.

Columns II, III, and IV are self-explanatory.

Column V. Check in the appropriate space if the member is:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| S - Single | D - Divorced |
| W - Widow or widower | M - Married |

Column VI. Church attendance refers to attendance at Sunday services.

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| N - Practically never | V - Very frequently |
| S - Seldom | A - Almost always |
| F - Frequently | |

Column VII. Church participation refers to attendance at church programs other than Sunday services. The letters have the same meaning as those in Column VII.

Column VIII. Place a check in this column only if the member belongs to your official board.

Column IX. The member should be placed in one of the following categories. Examples are given, where necessary, to aid you in determining in which category the member belongs.

1. Professional - lawyers, doctors, dentists, school teachers, editors, etc.
2. Business men and managers - proprietors and managers of businesses, regional and divisional managers, department managers, etc.
3. Clerks and kindred workers - accountants, salesmen, postal clerks, stenographers, salespeople in stores, etc.
4. Skilled manual workers - contractors, factory foremen, plumbers, electricians, carpenters, mechanics, radio repairmen, draftsmen, etc.
5. Unskilled workers - assistants to skilled workers, factory workers, miners, heavy laborers, etc.
6. Service workers - dry cleaners, butchers, conductors, taxi drivers, janitors, etc.

(The rest of these categories are self-explanatory.)

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| 7. Farm owners | 10. Unemployed | 12. Retired |
| 8. Housewife | 11. Farm laborers | 13. Students |
| 9. Tenant farmers | | |

SCHEDULE

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
NUMBER	AGE	SEX	YEARS OF POSTAL EDUCA- TION	MARITAL STATUS	CHURCH ATTENDANCE	CHURCH PARTICIPA- TION	OFFICIAL CAPACITY - CHURCH	OCCUPATION
				S W D M	N S F V A	N E F A A		
Example	43	Male	8	X	X	X	X	Clerk
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								
8								
9								
10								
11								
12								

APPENDIX B

AGE COMPOSITION OF MEMBERSHIP BY STATES

State	Number in Sample*	16-24 Years	Percent of 25-34 Years	Membership 35-44 Years	in 45-54 Years	Age 55-64 Years	Category 65 and Over	Total Percent
Dakotas	253	19.7	13.1	13.8	13.1	16.6	23.7	100
Minnesota	251	17.6	8.4	21.6	16.8	13.6	22.0	100
Wisconsin	323	13.3	17.2	15.4	16.4	12.4	25.3	100
Illinois	364	15.3	16.4	18.9	15.1	12.1	22.2	100
Iowa	733	13.8	16.6	16.4	13.5	16.1	23.6	100
Total Sample	1924	15.3	15.3	17.1	14.8	14.0	23.5	100

*Difference between this number and the total number reported is due to blanks unmarked or marked in error.

SEX COMPOSITION OF MEMBERSHIP BY STATES
(In Percent)

State	Number in Sample	Males	Females	Total Percent	Sex Ratio*
Dakotas	255	35.3	64.7	100	54
Minnesota	251	44.6	55.4	100	80.5
Wisconsin	324	35.8	64.2	100	55
Illinois	372	33.6	66.4	100	51
Iowa	760	32.9	67.1	100	49
Total Sample	1962	35.3	64.7	100	54.5

*Sex Ratio refers to the number of males per 100 females.

MARITAL STATUS OF MEMBERSHIP BY STATES

(In Percent)

State	Number in Sample	Single	Widow or Widower	Divorced	Married	Total Percent
Dakotas	255	20.4	10.2	.8	68.6	100
Minnesota	251	16.3	9.5	1.2	73.0	100
Wisconsin	324	19.2	11.4	1.2	68.2	100
Illinois	372	19.6	12.1	1.3	67.0	100
Iowa	760	18.2	14.1	1.4	66.3	100
Total Sample	1962	18.6	12.2	1.3	67.9	100

YEARS OF FORMAL EDUCATION OF MEMBERSHIP BY STATES

(In Percent)

State	Number in Sample*	1 - 8 Years	9 - 12 Years	13 - 16 Years	Over 16 Years	Total Percent
Dakotas	255	34.0	36.0	28.0	2.0	100
Minnesota	251	49.8	38.2	11.3	0.7	100
Wisconsin	256	26.2	45.3	24.2	4.3	100
Illinois	311	37.7	44.4	15.7	2.2	100
Iowa	675	35.8	46.4	17.2	0.6	100
Total Sample	1748	36.9	42.9	18.5	1.7	100

*Difference between this number and the total number reported is due to blanks unmarked or marked in error.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF ENTIRE SAMPLE BY STATES

(In Percent)

State	Number in Sample*	Professional	Business Men and Managers	Clerks and Kindred Workers	Skilled Manual Workers	Unskilled Workers	Service Workers	Farm Owners	Housewives	Tenant Farmers	Unemployed	Farm Laborers	Retired	Students	Total Percent
Iakotas	255	9.4	2.3	4.3	1.9	2.7	2.3	9.0	40.0	4.7	2.0	1.1	9.0	11.3	100
Minnesota	250	6.4	3.2	3.6	5.6	5.2	4.4	11.2	27.6	4.4	4.0	1.2	14.8	8.4	100
Wisconsin	324	7.4	1.8	6.2	6.8	6.6	2.2	4.9	41.0	3.1	1.8	0.9	10.4	6.7	100
Illinois	352	6.5	3.4	8.2	7.9	11.0	4.5	1.7	35.5	3.1	3.6	0.1	5.6	7.9	100
Iowa	748	6.4	2.9	5.4	7.4	8.4	2.4	3.1	44.3	3.2	2.3	0.6	8.3	5.3	100
Total Sample 1929		7.0	2.7	5.7	6.5	7.5	2.9	4.9	39.5	3.5	2.5	0.9	9.1	7.3	100

*Difference between this number and the total number reported is due to blanks unmarked or marked in error.

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF COMBINED GROUPS BY STATES

(In Percent)

State	Number in Sample	Professional, Business Men and Managers	Skilled Manual, Clerks and Kindred Workers	Unskilled and Service Workers	Farm Owners Tenants and Laborers	Total Percent
Dakotas	98	32.6	16.3	13.3	37.8	100
Minnesota	115	22.6	20.0	20.9	36.5	100
Wisconsin	132	24.2	32.6	22.0	21.2	100
Illinois	167	22.2	34.1	32.3	11.4	100
Iowa	299	23.8	32.6	26.9	16.7	100
Total Sample	811	24.4	29.1	24.7	21.8	100

**EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE PROGRAM
OF THE CHURCH BY STATES**

(In Percent)

State	Number in Sample	Least Active	Moderately Active	Most Active	Total Percent
Dakotas	255	13.0	30.2	56.8	100
Minnesota	251	17.1	25.1	57.8	100
Wisconsin	324	15.1	32.1	52.8	100
Illinois	372	21.2	21.0	57.8	100
Iowa	760	21.0	20.3	58.7	100
Total Sample	1962	18.0	24.0	58.0	100

ADULT CHURCH ATTENDANCE IN THE UNITED STATES*

	Don't Attend <u>1</u>	Once a Month or Less <u>1</u>	About Twice a Month <u>2</u>	About Three Times a Month <u>3</u>	Every Sunday or Sabbath <u>4</u>
Total U. S.	32	11	12	13	32
Protestant, total	32	14	13	16	25
Methodist	37	13	14	16	20
Sex: Men	36	12	11	12	29
Women	29	11	12	15	33
Age: 18-24	30	14	12	10	34
25-34	31	12	11	14	32
35-44	32	14	11	13	30
45-54	32	11	14	11	32
55-64	32	11	11	15	31
65 and over	42	5	8	14	31
Education:					
0-8th grade	39	9	11	11	30
1-3 years of high school	33	11	11	15	30
High school graduate	29	13	13	14	31
1-3 years college	31	14	12	15	28
College graduate	25	15	9	15	36
Occupation:					
Professional	23	14	12	13	38
Proprietor or Manager	33	12	11	17	27
White-Collar Worker	29	15	10	14	32
Service Worker	34	13	9	16	28
Manual Worker	35	10	12	12	31
Farmer	30	11	14	15	30
Other	43	8	7	13	29

*"Do Americans Go To Church?", Catholic Digest, December, 1952, p. 5, cited in Lundberg, Bohring, Larsen: Sociology, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1954, p. 570.