Mennonites in the United States

Born in Switzerland in 1525, Anabaptism grew three branches: Mennonite, Amish and Hutterite. A fourth, the Brethren, emerged in Germany in 1708. Today Mennonites comprise more than 50 groups, ranging from Old Order to progressive. In between are numerous conservative bodies whose members drive cars and engage in mission activity but wear plain clothing and embrace conservative standards of doctrine and practice. As researchers Donald B. Kraybill and C. Nelson Hostetter, who provided the statistics for this map and chart, have written: "As ecumenical Anabaptists, we hope that all of these communities of faith will flourish."

Mennonite Church USA ■ 105,941 members ■ 887 congregations

Formed by a 2002 merger of the Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church. The most progressive Mennonite group. Main offices in Elkhart, Ind., and Newton, Kan. Twenty-one area conferences, five colleges, two seminaries.

U.S. Conf. of Menn. Brethren Churches ■ 30,554 members ■ 187 congregations

Founded in 1860 in Russia, with an evangelical and pietist orientation. Most congregations are west of the Mississippi River. Offices in Wichita, Kan., and Bakersfield, Calif. Five district conferences, two colleges, one seminary.

Old Order Mennonite ■ 20,900 members ■ 130 congregations

Eight groups, most of which split from the Mennonite Church between 1872 and 1913. They fall into two categories:

- **Horse-and-buggy:** Six groups with 12,875 members in 83 congregations. Largest is Groffdale Conference, with about 10,000 members in 50 congregations. Groffdale kept horse-drawn buggies in a 1927 split with Weaverland Conference.
- **Automobile:** Two groups with 8,025 members in 47 congregations. Largest is Weaverland Conference, with about 9,000 members in 40 congregations. Weaverland adopted use of cars in a 1927 split with Groffdale Conference.

Church of God in Christ, Mennonite ■ 14,493 members ■ 135 congregations

Often called Holdeman Mennonites, formed in 1859 under the leadership of John Holdeman. Wear plain clothing. Largest concentration is in Kansas. Headquarters in Moundridge, Kan.

Amish Mennonite ■ 12,325 members ■ 167 congregations

Seven groups, plus more than 20 independent congregations. The largest group, the Beachy Amish, emerged in the 1920s in Somerset and Lancaster counties of Pennsylvania and today has about 7,350 members in 97 congregations in 20 states. Members dress plain and drive cars.

Independent congregations ■ 11,425 members ■ 159 congregations

Congregations with no formal affiliation to a larger body. They fall into two categories:

- **Traditional:** 6,425 members in 109 congregations. Some of these plain-dressing congregations relate to but do not belong to groups such as Midwest Mennonite Fellowship.
- **Assimilated:** About 5,000 members in 50 congregations, many of whom split from the General Conference Mennonite Church and whose members are assimilated into mainstream culture.

Conservative Mennonite Conference ■ 11,557 members ■ 110 congregations

Organized in 1910, mostly of members from Amish Mennonite background. Largest numbers are in Ohio. Headquarters and Bible college at Rosedale, Ohio.

Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church ■ 4,500 members ■ 56 congregations

A 1968 split from Lancaster Conference (before Lancaster joined the Mennonite Church denomination in 1971) over issues of dress, television and other cultural changes. Congregations in 13 states.

Nationwide Fellowship Churches ■ 2,850 members ■ 62 congregations

Formed by congregations that withdrew from several conferences of the Mennonite Church in the mid-20th century due to concerns similar to those of the Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church.

Biblical Mennonite Alliance ■ 2,375 members ■ 47 congregations

A split from Conservative Mennonite Conference in 2000.

Alliance of Menn. Evangelical Congregations ■ 2,200 members ■ 13 congregations

Formed in 2002 by former Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church congregations that did not join the merger that created Mennonite Church USA.

Small conferences and groups ■ 17,735 members ■ 236 congregations

With fewer than 2,000 members each, these fall into four categories:

- **Former Mennonite Church:** Seven groups that withdrew from conferences of the Mennonite Church and that retain Mennonite identity in their name.

  Conservative Mennonite Churches of York and Adams Counties, Cumberland Valley Mennonite Church, Good News Mennonite Fellowship, Keystone Mennonite Fellowship, Mountain Valley Mennonite Churches, Southeastern Mennonite Conference, Washington-Franklin Mennonite Conference.

- **Other conservative:** Eleven groups with conservative origins.

  Three groups with a total of 3,450 members — Pilgrim Mennonite Church, Mid-Atlantic Mennonite Fellowship and Hope Mennonite Fellowship — split from Eastern Pennsylvania Mennonite Church.

  Five groups with a total of 2,975 members — Midwest Mennonite Fellowship, Bethel Mennonite Fellowship, Reformed Mennonite Church, South Atlantic Mennonite Conference and Western Conservative Mennonite Fellowship — drew from multiple sources or resulted from splits that do not fit any other category.

  Three groups with a total of 700 members — Ohio Wisler Mennonite Churches, Orthodox Mennonite Church and Haven Mennonite Fellowship — split from Old Order groups.

- **Canadian-Mexican origins:** Six groups with a total of 22 congregations in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas, composed largely of immigrants from German-speaking groups in Canada and Mexico.

  Evangelical Mennonite Mission Conference, Kleine Gemeinde, Mennonite Evangelical Church, Old Colony Mennonite Church, Reinland Mennonite Church, Sommerfeld Mennonite Church.

- **Mennonite congregations in non-Mennonite conferences:**

  Fellowship of Evangelical Churches, which changed its name from Evangelical Mennonite Church in 2003, includes eight congregations with about 1,000 members that retain Mennonite in their name.

  Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches, which changed its name from Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church in 1987, includes four congregations with 455 members that retain Mennonite in their name.

Other U.S. Anabaptist groups

Brethren ■ 174,825 members ■ 1,517 congregations

Includes Church of the Brethren (124,000 members in 1,000 congregations) and 12 related Brethren groups, such as Old German Baptist Brethren. The Brethren were founded in 1708 in Germany. After a three-way split in the 1880s, the largest branch was the German Baptist Brethren, which became Church of the Brethren in 1908. Headquarters in Elgin, Ill.

Amish ■ 101,600 members ■ 1,693 church districts

Most Amish (97,700 members) are Old Order. New Order Amish (3,500 members in 58 districts) encourage religious activities for youth, Sunday school, mission work and are more change-minded than the Old Order. New Order Amish Fellowship (400 members in seven districts) permits greater use of technology.

Brethren in Christ ■ 23,950 members ■ 286 congregations

Emerged in 1780 in eastern Pennsylvania, blending features of Mennonite Anabaptism and Brethren pietism. Headquarters and college in Grantham, Pa. Includes two small conservative subgroups, Old Order River Brethren and United Zion.

Mennonite-related ■ 14,600 members ■ 109 congregations

Five groups with Mennonite origins or connections that continue to identify as Anabaptist but not as Mennonite, or that do not include Mennonite in their name. Some congregations in these groups retain the Mennonite name, but most do not. Several of these groups withdrew from conferences of the Mennonite Church. Includes Anabaptist Native Fellowship of Churches, Association of Radical Church Networks (with seven networks, including Cornerstone and Hopewell), Fellowship of Evangelical Churches, Harvest Fellowship of Churches and Koinonia Fellowship of Churches.

Hutterites ■ 5,075 members ■ 127 colonies

Founded in Moravia and named for 1530s reformer Jakob Hutter, Hutterites live communally in rural colonies. About 100 of the U.S. colonies are in South Dakota and Montana, with much greater numbers in Canada. Divided into four branches: Schmiedeleut (two groups), Dariusleut and Lehrerleut.

Total U.S. Mennonites: 236,855

Total U.S. Anabaptists: 556,906

World membership of Mennonite and related churches:

1,616,126

Mennonite World Conference 2009 statistic. Some counting methods differ from the survey on these pages; for example, MWC count does not include the Church of the Brethren and related groups.

The membership summary list is based on statistics provided by Donald B. Kraybill and Steve Scott at the Young Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies at Elizabethtown (Pa.) College. The statistics were compiled in 2008 and 2009 from group directories and reports of informants. Membership totals refer to baptized members only. If children and unbaptized participants were counted, the church population would be two or three times greater, in some cases.

Kraybill and the Young Center staff are compiling the statistics for a book, ***Concise Encyclopedia of Amish, Brethren, Hutterites and Mennonites***, to be published in the fall of 2010. The book will cover Canada, Mexico and Central America as well as the United States.

State-by-state statistics for the map were compiled by C. Nelson Hostetter of Akron, Pa., who worked with Kraybill on a previous statistical project, ***Anabaptist World USA*** (Herald Press, 2001). Statistics for the map differ in some ways from data in the summary list, but the two projects' results are mostly consistent.