

METHODISM IN SURRY COUNTY

1954

Winston-Salem District

Western North Carolina Conference

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by

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## INTRODUCTION

About one year ago Dr. Kenneth Goodson, Superintendent of the Winston-Salem District, requested a study of Methodism in Surry, Yadkin and Stokes counties. In the spring of 1954 three students in the Candler School of Theology (Joe Hauser, John Sills and Neil Smith) made a preliminary investigation of certain characteristics of this area. In June the pastors of these counties undertook to collect, in cooperation with their lay people, certain data important to the project. Through the special assistance of Professor Neal McGlamery of Brevard College and the Reverend Wilson Nesbitt, Secretary of the Town and Country Commission, these data, although not complete for every church and charge, were ready for tabulation in early November. Tabulation, analysis, and preparation of the report on a county-by-county basis were accomplished in the sociology laboratory of the Candler School of Theology during November, December and January.

This is a picture of selected characteristics in Surry County. It is not intended to tell the full story of Methodism in the county. That would require many more data about the heroic work and sacrifices of individual pastors and church leaders as well as the account of the spiritual growth and church loyalty of a widespread membership.

The purpose here is much more limited. It is to analyze certain characteristics of Methodism and of the county to provide some guidance for doing more effective work in the future. Unfortunately, analysis of individual charge and church situations cannot be undertaken in this general study. However, the self-survey forms and other data are available for more detailed studies on a charge-by-charge basis. These may be arranged upon request.



The full cooperation and support of all the persons mentioned above, especially of the pastors and people of Surry County, have made this study possible, and it is to them that it is dedicated in the hope that it may prove useful in the March of Methodism in that part of the State of North Carolina.

#### CHURCHES AND PARISH AREAS

In any study of the church in relationship to its community an important factor is the location of the church. Map 1 shows the approximate parish areas of the churches in Surry County. These parish areas were supplied by the pastors and are intended to provide only an estimation of the geographic outreach of the church. The map shows the churches which are grouped together in circuits. It will be noted later that the various townships differ considerably in size of population and in Methodist strength. It can be seen by a study of the map that there are considerable geographic areas in the county which are outside the parish areas of the churches. This is especially true of Marsh, Franklin, Dobson, Westfield and Byran townships. Certainly, more detailed studies should be made locally to determine the advisability of locating new churches or to devise ways to extend the parish areas of present churches.

#### POPULATION AND MEMBERSHIP

One of the important concerns of the Church is to reach more people with the Christian Gospel of salvation and redemption. A study of the relationship between the population of the county and the membership of Methodist churches is helpful in implementing this evangelistic task.



LEGEND FOR MAP 1

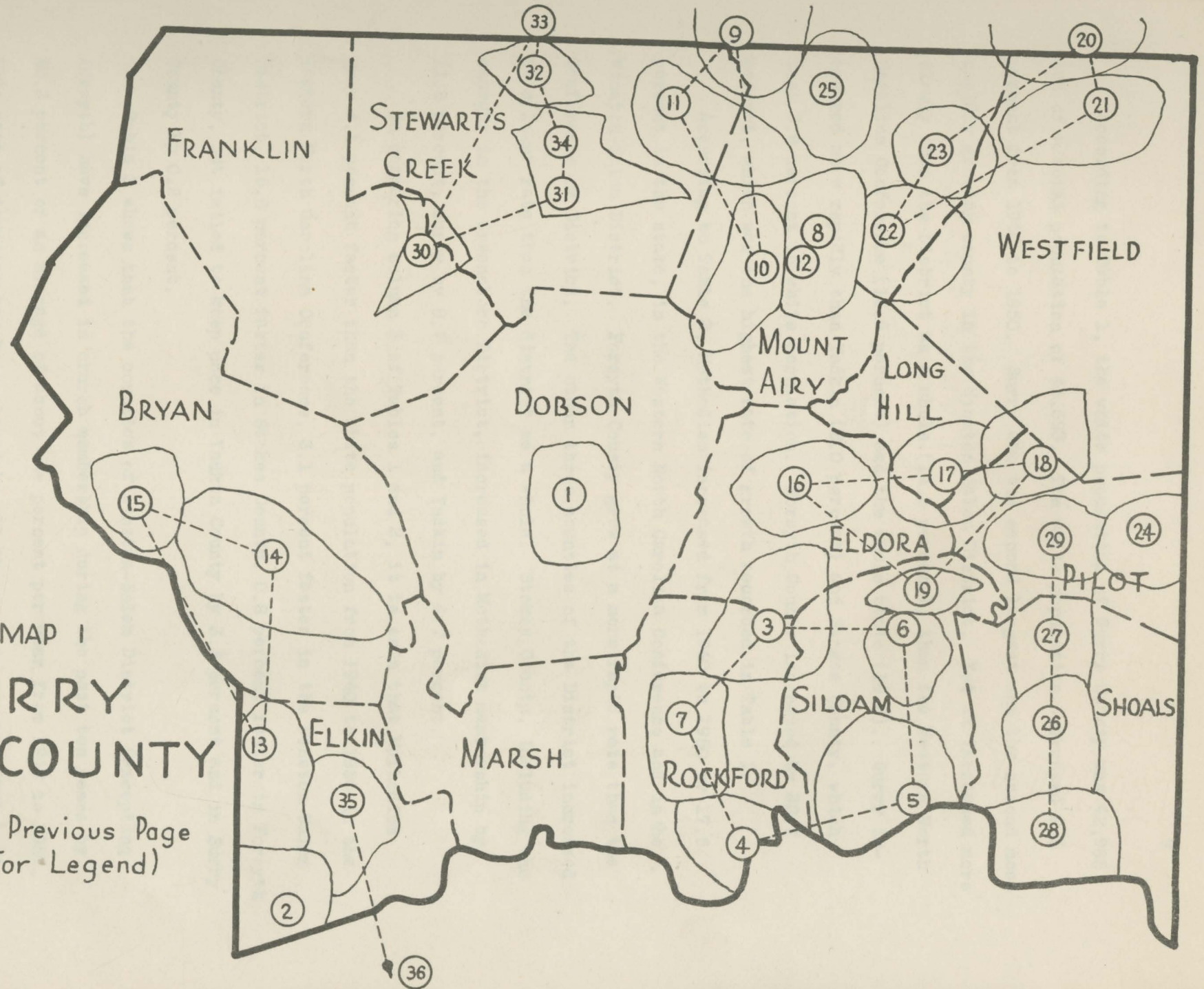
Church	○
Parish boundaries (approximate)	_____
Churches on circuit	-----
Township boundaries	-----

Code Numbers of Churches:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Dobson   | 19. Pine Hill                        |
| 2. Elkin, First<br>Level Cross                    | Oak Grove                            |
| 3. Level Cross                                    | 20. Hatcher's Chapel                 |
| 4. Rockford                                       | 21. Mount Hermon                     |
| 5. Siloam   | 22. Oak Grove                        |
| 6. Stanford                                       | 23. Pleasant View                    |
| 7. Stony Knoll                                    | 24. Pilot Mountain                   |
| 8. Mount Airy, Central<br>Franklin Heights        | 25. Salem<br>Shoals                  |
| 9. Epworth  | 26. Fairview                         |
| 10. Franklin Heights                              | 27. Pilot                            |
| 11. Zion  | 28. Shoals                           |
| 12. Rockford Street<br>Mountain Park-Grassy Creek | 29. Whitakers<br>Surry Circuit       |
| 13. Grassy Creek                                  | 30. Beulah                           |
| 14. Mountain Park                                 | 31. Hebron                           |
| 15. White Rock<br>New Hope Circuit                | 32. Imogene                          |
| 16. Blackwater                                    | 33. Liberty                          |
| 17. Bryant Memorial                               | 34. Maple Grove<br>Ebenezer-Longtown |
| 18. New Hope                                      | 35. Ebenezer                         |
|   | 36. Longtown                         |

MAP I  
**SURRY COUNTY**

(See Previous Page  
For Legend)





According to Table 1, the white population of Surry County was 42,985 out of a total population of 45,593. The white population increased 9.5 percent from 1940 to 1950. Surry was the second largest and the second most rapidly growing county in the Winston-Salem District. Yet it increased more slowly than the District as a whole (14.5 percent), than the Western North Carolina Conference (13.5 percent) and the whole state (16.2). Surry increased more rapidly than Yadkin (8.0 percent) and Stokes County, which lost 3.8 percent in white population. Forsyth County increased by 22.7 percent, which was the highest rate of growth recorded in Table 1.

According to Table 2, Methodism increased from 1940 to 1950 by 17.6 percent in the state, in the Western North Carolina Conference and in the Winston-Salem District. Forsyth County grew at a more rapid rate than the Conference or District. The other three counties of the District increased at a lower rate than the district as a whole. Stokes County, including the charges in the Greensboro District, increased in Methodist membership by 11.8 percent, Surry by 8.7 percent, and Yadkin by 4.7 percent.

In comparing column 3 of Tables 1 and 2, it is seen that Methodism grew 4.1 percent faster than the white population from 1940 to 1950 in the Western North Carolina Conference, 3.1 percent faster in the Winston-Salem District, 15.6 percent faster in Stokes County, 0.8 percent faster in Forsyth County, but failed to keep pace in Yadkin County by 3.3 percent and in Surry County by 0.8 percent.

Table 3 shows that the counties of Winston-Salem District (excepting Forsyth) have increased in church membership during the past ten years by 10.2 percent or an average of about one percent per year from 1944 to 1954. This rate of increase has been shared by all the counties except that part of Stokes County in the District. Here Methodism lost 8.4 percent in mem-

TABLE 1

WHITE POPULATION OF NORTH CAROLINA, FORTY-FOUR COUNTIES OF THE  
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE, AND FOUR COUNTIES OF THE  
WINSTON-SALEM DISTRICT WITH PERCENTAGE CHANGE, 1940 to 1950

County	1950	1940	Percent Change
All counties in North Carolina	2,983,121	2,567,635	16.2
Forty-four counties in Western North Carolina Conference	1,695,693	1,494,129	13.5
Four counties in Winston-Salem District	188,301	164,408	14.5
Forsyth County	104,693	85,310	22.7
Stokes County	19,588	20,364	-3.8
Surry County	42,985	39,252	9.5
Yadkin County	21,035	19,482	8.0

Source: Studies in Western North Carolina Methodism, 1953, p. 6,  
Table 1.



TABLE 2

METHODIST MEMBERSHIP IN NORTH CAROLINA, FORTY-FOUR COUNTIES OF THE WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE, AND FOUR COUNTIES OF THE WINSTON-SALEM DISTRICT WITH PERCENTAGE CHANGE, 1940 to 1950

County	1950	1940	Percent Change
All counties in North Carolina	401,959	341,883	17.6
Forty-four counties in Western North Carolina Conference	233,330 <sup>a</sup>	198,451 <sup>a</sup>	17.6
Four counties in Winston-Salem District	25,753	21,900	17.6
Forsyth County	16,526	13,381	23.5
Stokes County <sup>b</sup>	2,202	1,970	11.8
Surry County	4,547	4,182	8.7
Yadkin County	2,478	2,367	4.7

<sup>a</sup> These totals differ slightly from those in the Annual Conference Journals due to adjustments in charge boundaries and the division of charges by counties.

<sup>b</sup> Includes part of Greensboro District.

Source: Studies in Western North Carolina Methodism, 1953, p. 7, Table 2.

TABLE 3

METHODIST MEMBERSHIP FOR WINSTON-SALEM DISTRICT (EXCEPTING FORSYTH COUNTY) BY COUNTIES AND BY CHARGES FOR SURRY COUNTY WITH PERCENTAGE CHANGE, 1944 to 1954

County, Charge and Church	Methodist Membership 1954	1944	Percentage Change
Winston-Salem District (excepting Forsyth County)	8,938	8,015	10.2
Stokes County <sup>a</sup>	1,322	1,444	- 8.4
Yadkin County	2,484	2,215	12.1
Wilkes County <sup>a</sup>	296	149	98.7
Virginia State <sup>a</sup>	176	156	12.8
Surry County	4,657	4,051	14.9
Dobson	161	144	11.8
Elkin, First	730	562	29.9
Level Cross	372	271	37.3
Mount Airy, Central	711	1,027	-30.7
Franklin Heights	305	205	48.8
Rockford Street	294	328	-10.4
Mountain Park-Grassy Creek	257	129	99.2
New Hope Circuit	245	213	15.0
Oak Grove	359	286	25.5
Pilot Mountain	284	231	22.9
Salem	236	210	12.4
Shoals	371	257	44.4
Surry Circuit	134	99	35.3
Ebenezer-Longtown	158	129	38.2

<sup>a</sup> Includes only the churches in the Winston-Salem District

Source: Journal of the Western North Carolina Conference of The Methodist Church, 1944 and 1954.



bership. Yadkin County gained least, with 12.1 percent increase, to be followed by the churches in Virginia with 12.8 percent gain, Surry County with 14.9 percent increase, and the churches of the Winston-Salem District in Wilkes County with 98.7 percent gain.

Although the charges of Surry County have increased in membership more rapidly than the part of the Winston-Salem District under study, there is a wide difference in individual charges. This range is from Mount Airy, Central with a loss of 30.7 percent in membership to Mountain Park charge with an increase of 99.2 percent. Only one other charge reported a loss in membership for this ten year period and that was Rockford Street with a decline of 10.4 percent. These losses are doubtless due to revision of rolls following the change in the definition of Methodist membership in 1952. Two charges increased from 40 to 49 percent and these were Franklin Heights and Shoals. Three charges (Level Cross, Surry Circuit, and Ebenezer-Longtown) increased from 30 to 39 percent; three charges (Elkin, First; Oak Grove and Pilot Mountain) from 20 to 29 percent; and three charges (Dobson, New Hope, and Salem) increased from 10 to 19 percent.

All the circuits gained in membership from 1944 to 1954 as seen in Table 4. In fact, the circuits gained 39.5 percent, while Methodism in the county as a whole increased only 14.9 percent. How much this represents better evangelistic work and how much a failure to keep membership rolls accurately and up-to-date on the part of circuit churches cannot be determined without further study. It is assumed that the first condition outweighs any tendency in the second direction. These healthy increases ranged from 15.0 percent for New Hope Circuit to 99.2 percent for Mountain Park-Grassy Creek. Three churches more than doubled their membership for this

TABLE 4

METHODIST MEMBERSHIP FOR THE CIRCUITS OF SURRY COUNTY BY CHURCHES WITH  
PERCENTAGE CHANGE, 1944 to 1954

Circuits	Methodist Membership 1954	1944	Percentage Change
Surry County	4,657	4,051	14.9
All circuits	2,201	1,589	38.5
Level Cross	372	271	37.3
Level Cross	92	38	142.1
Rockford	73	72	- <sup>a</sup>
Silcam	84	61	37.7
Stanford	29	28	- <sup>a</sup>
Stony Knoll	94	72	30.6
Franklin Heights	305	205	48.8
Epworth	111	127	-12.6
Franklin Heights	127	0	-
Zion	67	78	-14.1
Mountain Park-Grassy Creek	257	129	99.2
Grassy Creek	136	66	106.0
Mountain Park	59	43	37.2
White Rock	62	20	210.0
New Hope Circuit	245	213	15.0
Blackwater	70	41	70.7
Bryant Memorial	60	87	-31.0
New Hope	69	44	56.8
Pine Hill	46	41	12.2
Oak Grove	359	286	25.5
Hatchers Chapel	69	51	74.5
Mt. Herman	91	72	26.4
Oak Grove	149	121	23.1
Pleasant View	30	42	-28.6
Shoals	371	257	44.4
Fairview	137	81	69.1
Pilot	62	79	3.8
Shoals	106	66	60.6
Whitakers	46	31	48.4
Surry Circuit	134	99	35.3
Beulah	55	49	12.2
Hebron	39	29	34.5
Imogene	37	21	76.2
Liberty	-	-	-
Maple Grove	43	38	13.2
Ebenezer-Longtown	158	129	22.5
Ebenezer <sup>b</sup>	105	76	38.2
Longtown <sup>b</sup>	53	53	- <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Percentage not reported is less than 0.1.

<sup>b</sup> Longtown is located in Yadkin County.

Source: Journal of the Western North Carolina Conference of The Methodist Church, 1944 and 1954.



period. White Rock Church increased 210.0 percent, Level Cross 142.1 percent, and Grassy Creek 106.0 percent. Franklin Heights grew to 127 members by 1954 and was not organized in 1940. At the other extreme, four individual churches lost membership: Bryant Memorial, Pleasant View, Zion, and Epworth; while three churches (Rockford, Siloam, and Longtown) were practically stationary in membership.

There is considerable variation in the percentages of increase within circuits. The Level Cross charge increased 37.3 percent, but Level Cross church grew by 142.1 percent while Rockford and Stanford increased only by one member each during this ten year period.

Franklin Heights charge increased 48.8 percent in membership, but two of its churches (Zion and Epworth) lost membership.

Mountain Park-Grassy Creek circuit gained 99.2 percent with White Rock trebling and Grassy Creek church doubling its membership while Mountain Park grew at the healthy rate of 37.2 percent.

New Hope circuit increased 15.0 (about the same as Methodism as a whole in the county) while two of its churches (Blackwater and New Hope) grew more than 50 percent and one church (Bryant Memorial) lost population and Pine Hill gained more slowly than the circuit as a whole.

Shoals circuit increased more rapidly than the circuits as a whole with three of its churches (Fairview, Shoals, and Whitakers) growing more rapidly than the circuit while Pilot increased only 3.8 percent.

Surry circuit grew nearly as rapidly as the average for the circuits, but the range of growth was from 76.2 percent for Imogene to 12.2 percent for Beulah. There was no report for Liberty.

All the growth for the Ebenezer-Longtown charge was scored by the

TABLE 5

WHITE POPULATION OF SURRY COUNTY, BY TOWNSHIPS, WITH RANKING BY  
SIZE AND PERCENTAGE CHANGE, 1940 to 1950

Township	Rank by Size	White Population 1950	White Population 1940	Percentage Change 1940-50
Surry County		42,985	39,252	9.5
Bryan	7	1,813	1,959	-7.8
Dobson	3	3,911	3,449	13.0
Eldora	8	1,624	1,351	19.8
Elkin	2	4,965	4,362	13.4
Franklin	9	1,322	1,323	-0.4
Long Hill	14	497	551	-10.1
Marsh	12	1,021	969	5.0
Mount Airy	1	17,799	14,885	19.1
Pilot	5	2,383	1,949	22.7
Rockford	10	1,220	1,234	-1.4
Sheals	11	1,130	1,094	-3.1
Siloam	13	823	891	-8.0
Stewarts Creek	6	1,850	2,557	-27.9
Westfield	4	2,549	2,642	- 7.6

Source: Computed from U. S. Census of the Population, 1940 and 1950.



Ebenezer church since Longtown reported the same membership in 1954 as in 1944.

It should be noted that these substantial gains in membership in circuits has contributed greatly to Methodism in the county and, doubtless, through the process of continuing transfers to other Methodist churches to Methodism outside the county. This, too, needs additional investigation.

Surry County is comprised of fourteen townships as seen in Table 5 and Map 1. Eight of the fourteen townships lost white population ranging from Franklin with a loss of 0.4 percent to Stewarts Creek with a decline of 27.9 percent. The fastest growing township was Pilot with an increase of 22.7 percent during the decade. Dobson, Eldora, Elkin, Mount Airy, and Pilot all increased in white population at a more rapid rate than the county as a whole, and of these Eldora, Mount Airy, and Pilot increased at a more rapid rate than the state. Thus, the open country areas lost population, while the large gains were scored by townships with towns or cities in them.

Twenty-two churches reported their membership by townships. They made up around 70 percent of the total membership of the county. In 1950 there were 4,657 Methodists in Surry County. This gave Methodism 10.6 percent of the white population. The membership distributed by townships comprised 7.6 percent of the white population, as seen in Table 6.

No Methodist members were reported in Marsh, Stewarts Creek and Westfield townships. From the map it may be seen that no Methodist churches are located in Marsh township and here lived more than 1000 white people. Stewarts Creek township had four Methodist churches located within it and one nearby in Franklin township but these churches did not report their membership by townships. Westfield, with over 2500 white people has only one Methodist

church with fewer than 100 members. It did not report its membership by townships. Westfield, with over 2500 white people, has only one Methodist church with fewer than 100 members. It did not report its membership by townships. However, there were several churches near the borders which did distribute their membership by townships but none was reported in Westfield.

The township in which Methodism was reported next weakest was Shoals. Here, again, the three churches within the township did not report their membership by townships but nearby Pine Hill had some members living in Shoals Township.

Most of the other townships had most of the resident church members distributed among them. The range among them was from Dobson, 2.5 percent Methodist, to Elkin and Rockford which were 13.8 percent Methodist in each case. Dobson township had only one church located within its borders and only 95 of the 161 members lived in the township. There were fewer than 100 Methodists in a white population of 3911 in Dobson township, which was growing from 1940 to 1950 at a more rapid rate than the county as a whole.

Eldora was the next weakest township from the Methodist standpoint with only 2.6 percent of its population in Methodist membership. There was only one Methodist church in Eldora township and only 20 of its 70 members lived in the township. Other Methodists in the township belonged to New Hope, Pine Hill and Level Cross churches. Here were over 1600 white people with the Methodists claiming fewer than 50 members among them.

Byran is 4.0 percent Methodist with fewer than 75 members among over 1800 population. Here, again, nearly one-half of the membership of the churches in the township was non-resident.

Mount Airy township was 6.6 percent Methodist with 1168 members reported among 17,799 white population in 1950. Six churches were located in the



township with two others on the borders. However, three of these churches (Pleasant View, Oak Grove and Zion) did not distribute their membership by townships.

Siloam township was about as Methodist as the county as a whole. This small township with 823 white people had fewer than 75 Methodists.

The other townships had better than average percentage of the population in Methodist membership. These were Long Hill, the smallest township, Franklin, Pilot, and, finally, the two top townships, Elkin and Rockford.

The data of Table 6, even though incomplete, offer at least the preliminary basis for a serious analysis of the strength of Methodism in relation to the white population in the different townships of the county. Attention should be paid to townships where Methodism is weak, to townships where the population is increasing, and to opportunities for new advances.

A study of the age-sex distribution of the white population reveals that the trend during the past 30 years in Surry County has been toward more older and fewer young people. In 1950, 12.02 percent of the total white population was under five years of age. This represents an increase of 1.12 percent over 1940, but it shows an over-all decrease of 2.30 percent for the 20 year period from 1930. In 1950, 6.05 percent of the total population was over 65 years of age, representing an increase of 1.27 percent over 1940, and a total increase of 2.05 percent since 1930. A most significant fact for this survey is the trend which is evident in the church membership training age group--10-14 years. In 1930 the percentage of the total white population in this 10-14 years age group was 12.21. This had decreased by 1940 to 12.10 percent, and by 1950 to 10.03 percent, revealing an over-all decline in this group for the 20 year period of 2.18 percent. Thus it is apparent that if the present trend continues The Methodist Church

TABLE 6

WHITE POPULATION, 1950, AND METHODIST MEMBERSHIP, 1954, FOR SURRY COUNTY BY TOWNSHIPS WITH THE PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION IN METHODIST MEMBERSHIP

Township	White Population	Methodist Membership	Percentage Population in Methodist Membership
Surry County	42,985	3,268 <sup>a</sup>	7.6
Bryan	1,813	72	4.0
Dobson	3,911	99	2.5
Eldon	1,624	42	2.6
Elkin	4,965	689	13.8
Franklin	1,322	150	11.3
Long Hill	497	50	10.0
Marsh	1,021	-	-
Mount Airy	17,799	1,168	6.6
Pilot	2,383	292	12.2
Rockford	1,220	168	13.8
Shoals	1,130	7	0.6
Siloam	823	61	7.4
Stewarts Creek	1,850	-	-
Westfield	2,549	-	-

<sup>a</sup> Total Methodist Membership for Surry County was 4,657. Seventy percent of this membership (3,268 members) was reported by townships.

Source: Computed from U. S. Census of Population, 1950 and Survey Tabulations.



will have in its membership fewer young people and more older people.

The age and sex characteristics of Methodist membership and church school enrollment in relationship to the age and sex characteristics of the population of the county or parish area provide suggestive information for strategy planning in the interest of more effective work. Table 7 shows these data.

It will be noted that 49.4 percent of the white population of Surry County was male and 50.6 percent was female. Yet only 42.8 percent of church members were men, while 57.3 percent of them were women. The sex differentiation in the church school, though not as decidedly female as the church membership, was less male than the white population. The percentages were 44.9 for males and 55.1 for females. In relationship to the population there was a deficit of 6.6 percent of men in Methodist membership and 4.5 percent male deficit in the church schools. With one or two exceptions this excess of females and deficit of males are true for all age groups.

These relationships can be seen more quickly and graphically by comparing the three pyramids of Figure 1. They are drawn to represent 100 percent each and the length of the age-sex bars for the church membership and church school enrollment should approximate those of the white population if the churches were reaching the people in the various age-sex groups as they appear in the population. In the 0-4 age groups the church membership is unusually low and reflects little attention to the preparatory membership rolls. However, this is partly remedied by the increase in the age groups for the church schools. Yet, even here, the Nursery Departments are not keeping up with the population of the county. In the 5-9 age groups the church membership is more poorly represented than for the 0-4 age groups, but the church schools in the Beginner and Primary Departments are ahead

TABLE 7

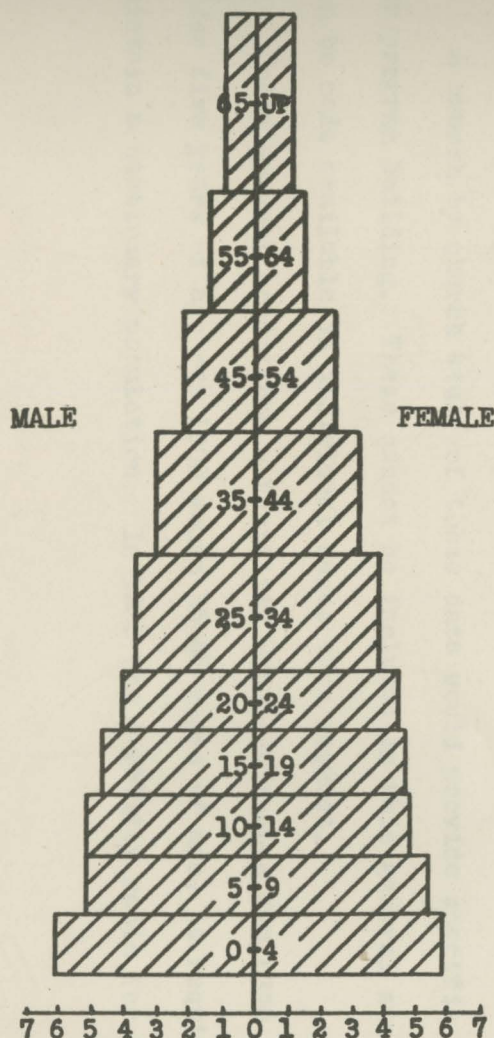
AGE AND SEX PERCENTAGES OF THE WHITE POPULATION, 1950, METHODIST MEMBERSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT, 1954, FOR SURRY COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

Age	White Population		Methodist Membership		Church School Enrollment	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
All ages	49.4	50.6	42.8	57.3	44.9	55.1
65 and up	2.9	3.2	3.7	6.5	2.4	3.9
55-64	2.9	3.1	4.3	6.0	2.7	3.7
45-54	4.4	4.7	5.9	9.5	4.1	6.3
35-44	6.3	6.5	8.3	10.7	6.0	7.0
25-34	7.5	7.8	8.6	11.1	6.1	7.7
20-24	4.0	4.4	3.3	3.8	3.2	3.9
15-19	4.7	4.6	3.5	4.0	4.7	6.3
10-14	5.2	4.8	2.4	3.1	5.9	6.3
5-9	5.2	5.4	1.0	0.9	5.9	5.9
0-4	6.1	5.8	1.9	1.6	3.8	4.1

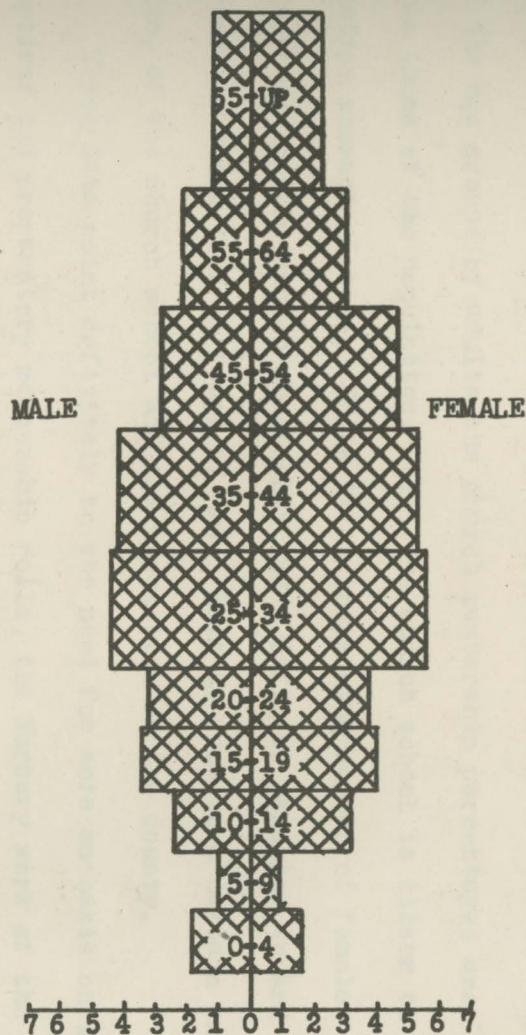
Source: Computed from U. S. Census of Population, 1950; Survey Tabulations.



WHITE POPULATION  
1950



METHODIST MEMBERSHIP  
1954



CHURCH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT  
1954

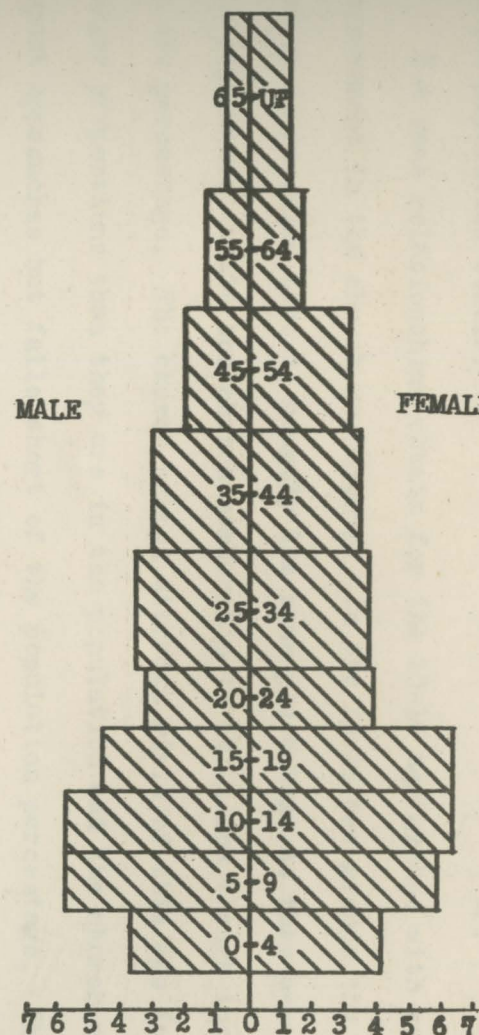


FIGURE 1. Age and Sex Pyramids of White Population, 1950, Methodist Membership, 1954, and Church School Enrollment, 1954. Surry County, North Carolina. (Source: *U.S. Census of Population, Vol. II, 1950 and Survey Tabulation, 1954.*)



of the population itself.

The same relationships obtain for the 10-14 age groups with some improvement in the church membership. In the 15-19 age groups the church school is reaching boys in exactly the same percentage as they appear in the population, while the church membership is still low though increasing in its percentage. The church school attracts girls of this age in much larger proportions than they are in the population and the church membership impact approaches but falls short of the population percentage. The church school and membership percentages are close together for the 20-24 age groups but both fall below the population percentages. For the remainder of the age groups of adults the church membership percentages are larger than those of the population, while the church school is closer to the population characteristics. There is an increasing number of females in these age groups of the church membership and a definite tendency toward an increase in those over 65 years of age. This is true to a certain extent, also, of the church school and the population of the county.

These data point definitely to the need for more emphasis on infant baptisms and preparatory membership rolls, the Nursery work of the church school, membership training classes for the older children and young people, and programs designed to meet the needs of the larger group of older persons.

A church by church study of these data would provide specific guides for program building. These cannot be included in this general study but can be made available in individual cases upon request.

Under present conditions a fertility ratio of around 370 (370 children under five years of age per 1000 women 15-45 years of age) is required to maintain a stationary population. In 1950 the fertility ratio for Surry



County was 511.8. This is 141.8 higher than is needed to continue the normal population. The fertility ratio for North Carolina was 490.6, yet the state increased more rapidly than Surry County in white population. This means that Surry County has a large out-migration. This places Methodism in the county under the necessity of training many church members who must transfer to out-of-county churches.

#### ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS AND FINANCES

A study of the economic characteristics of the county provides the background for the financial records of churches.

The economic structure of Surry County is composed primarily of agriculture and manufacturing, being about equally divided between the two. In 1950, there were 5,041 people, or 30.6 percent of all employed people, in agricultural occupations, and 5,355 people, or 32.5 percent, employed in manufacturing. Compared with the State of North Carolina as a whole, Surry County has a higher percentage of workers in both agriculture and manufacturing. The state has only 24.6 percent employed in agriculture and 27.9 percent in manufacturing. Therefore, in comparison, Surry County has 6.0 percent more in agricultural work and 4.6 percent more employed in manufacturing than the state as a whole.

There were 11,828 dwelling units in Surry County in 1950, and of these, 7,371 were non-farm units. The median value of the units of \$4,752.00 compared with \$4,901.00 for North Carolina. Only 28.1 percent of the dwelling units have modern facilities, compared with 34.5 percent for the state. Sixteen and three-tenths percent have central heating, compared with 14.8 percent for North Carolina. However, 74.3 percent have refrigeration com-



pared with 64.1 percent for North Carolina, and 94.6 percent have radios, compared with 92.0 percent for the state. Sixty-four and five-tenths percent of the 11,828 dwelling units are owned by the occupants, compared with 53.3 percent for North Carolina. The median number of rooms per unit is 4.5 as compared with 4.5 for the state. The median number of persons per unit is 3.6 as compared with 3.5 for North Carolina. Thus, by comparing Surry County with the State of North Carolina it is revealed that the value of the dwelling units in Surry County is slightly lower than that of the rest of the state, but they are nearly equal with those of the rest of the state in all other respects.

In 1947 there were 79 manufacturing establishments in Surry County employing 6,763 people, with total wages of \$13,624,000. The total value of manufactured products was \$21,592,000. In 1949 the value of farm products which were sold totaled \$8,139,000. Of this amount, \$7,111,000 was obtained from crops and \$399,000 from poultry and poultry products.

There are 4,306 farms in Surry County, of which 3,316 are commercial farms. Thirty-two and three-tenths percent of all the farms are operated by tenants, compared with 38.3 percent for the state of North Carolina. The average value of land and buildings of all farms is \$5,706, as compared with \$6,490 for the state, while the average value of land and buildings on commercial farms is \$6,034, compared with \$7,336 for the state. The farm-operator family level-of-living index was 40 in 1940 and rose to 80 in 1950; whereas, for the State of North Carolina this index was 45 in 1940 and 80 in 1950. This is an indication that agriculture in Surry County is raising the level of living for the farm family. Surry is not above the average of the counties in the state in agriculture.

In 1950 the median family income in this county was \$2,075. At the



same time the median family income for the state was \$2,121. There were 48.2 percent of the people having incomes of less than \$2,000, while only 8.3 percent of the people had incomes of more than \$5,000. In North Carolina 47.1 percent of the people have incomes of less than \$2,000, whereas, 10.8 percent have incomes of more than \$5,000. Thus, Surry has 1.1 percent more people than the State of North Carolina who have incomes of less than \$2,000 and 2.5 percent less people who have incomes of \$5,000.

There were in 1950 6,340, or 96.6 percent of the persons from 7 to 13 years of age in school in this county as compared with 95.4 percent for the state. There were 2,580, or 76.0 percent of the persons from 14 to 17 years of age in school, compared with 78.1 percent for the state. However, the median school years completed of persons over 25 years of age was 7.5, compared with 7.9 for the state. Twenty-three and four-tenths percent completed less than 5 grades, compared with 21.4 percent for the state, while only 13.1 percent completed high school or more as compared with 20.8 percent for North Carolina. Therefore, while Surry County has a greater percentage of persons enrolled in school, the median years completed is less than the state. This shows that the county has improved considerably in education, which is related to its increasing capacity to support educational and related enterprises.

Against this background, it will be instructive to review selected financial performance records for the charges of Surry County in 1954. According to Table 8 the per member giving on the part of Methodists in Surry County was slightly higher (\$0.07) than the district as a whole but \$5.43 below the per member giving of the Western North Carolina Conference. This was distributed differently by the county, district and conference. Surry County had a higher per member giving to the current budget, pastor's

TABLE 8

## SELECTED FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE RECORDS OF THE WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE, WINSTON-SALEM DISTRICT AND CHARGES OF SURRY COUNTY, 1954

Charge	Total Budget	Per Member Contribution		
		Current Budget	Pastor's Salary	World Service
Western N. C. Conference	\$39.14	\$24.00	\$ 6.93	\$ 1.56
Winston-Salem District	33.64	26.38	6.89	1.54
Surry County	33.71	28.49	8.32	1.81
Dobson	33.86	33.86	18.63	.93
Elkin, First	53.64	50.83	7.12	3.66
Level Cross	17.25	12.55	5.38	.50
Mount Airy, Central	56.96	52.68	8.44	5.31
Franklin Heights	20.71	20.71	11.80	.49
Rockford Street	19.81	18.45	8.50	1.02
Mountain Park-Grassy Crk.	20.36	15.79	6.81	.39
New Hope	13.73	10.87	6.53	.39
Oak Grove	16.78	8.42	4.18	.35
Pilot Mountain	38.76	30.46	14.08	1.62
Salem	45.03	31.90	12.71	.60
Shoals	19.42	14.02	6.47	.34
Surry Circuit	10.96	10.96	5.75	.43
Ebenezer-Longtown	51.10	20.45	7.59	.47

Source: Computed from Journal of the Western North Carolina Conference, 1954.



salary and World Service than either the district or conference. This means, among other things, that the district and conference spent more funds on indebtedness and buildings than Methodists in the county. The unusually good record of Elkin, First and Mount Airy, Central provide the high average per member giving to World Service.

Within the county the total per member giving ranged from Mount Airy, Central with \$56.96, to Surry Circuit with \$10.96 average contribution. In addition to Mount Airy, Central, Elkin, First, Ebenezer-Longtown and Salem gave above \$40.00 per member to all purposes in 1954. In addition to Surry Circuit, New Hope, Oak Grove, Level Cross, Shoals and Rockford Street contributed less than \$20.00 per member last year.

The current budget is a better comparative basis of analysis since the items paid on indebtedness and on buildings are not taken into account. All other items are included. The county gave to the current budget \$4.49 more than the conference and \$2.11 more than the district on a per member basis. The per member giving for the county was \$28.49 with a high of \$52.68 for Mount Airy, Central and a low of \$8.42 for Oak Grove. Charges paying more than \$30.00 per member to the current budget were Mount Airy, Central, Elkin, First, Dobson, Salem, and Pilot Mountain, while charges under \$20.00 were Oak Grove, Surry Circuit, New Hope, Level Cross, Shoals, Mountain Park-Grassy Creek and Rockford Street.

Surry County Methodists paid \$1.29 more per member to their pastors than the conference and \$1.41 more than the district. There is a tendency for charges with smaller memberships to put more of their current budget into pastor's salaries. The county contributed \$8.32 per member to this item with Dobson(\$18.63) ranking first and Oak Grove last(\$4.18). Other

charges contributing more than \$10.00 to this purpose were Pilot Mountain, Salem, and Franklin Heights. Others paying less than \$7.00 per member to the pastor were Level Cross, Surry Circuit, Shoals, New Hope, and Mountain Park-Grassy Creek.

The per member giving to World Service for the county was \$1.81 with a range from Mount Airy, Central (\$5.31) to Shoals (\$0.34). Other charges with per member contributions of more than \$1.00 to World Service were Elkin, First, Pilot Mountain, and Rockford Street. Other charges paying less than one penny per week per member for the year (\$0.52) were Oak Grove, New Hope, Mountain Park-Grassy Creek, Surry Circuit, Ebenezer-Longtown, Franklin Heights, and Level Cross.

Table 9 shows the variations by individual churches on circuits in per member giving to the total budget, current budget, pastors' salary, and World Service. Individual circuit churches range from \$112.28 for Longtown to \$4.71 for Blackwater in per member giving to the total budget. The range within individual circuits is, also, very great in some cases. For instance, Oak Grove Circuit paid only around one-half as much per member to all causes as the county. Yet Hatcher's Chapel contributed the second largest amount for circuit churches.

Only two circuit churches (Longtown and Whitakers) rise to the average per member giving to the current budget for the county. On the other side, seven churches contributed under \$10.00 per member to these purposes.

The circuit churches ranged from \$18.48 (Whitakers) to \$2.17 (Pine Hill) in per member payments to the pastor's salary. Here, however, nine churches paid higher than the average for the county for this purpose. Thirteen churches paid less than ten cents per member per week for the services of



their pastor (those paying less than \$5.20).

The World Service budgets of the circuit churches are exceedingly low. No individual circuit church reaches the average for the county. The range is from Whitakers (\$0.98) to Pine Hill (0.13) in per member giving to World Service. Twenty-one of the 28 circuit churches reporting on this item pay less than one penny per member per week to World Service.

These financial records reveal the actual and potential economic strength of Methodism in Surry County in relationship to Methodism in the district and conference. The need for additional stewardship cultivation and practice is seen in many of the churches in these records and in the reported absence of systematic work in this field in later sections of this study.

#### OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF METHODISM IN SURRY COUNTY

Through the cooperation of the pastors and lay officials of the churches in the county, self-study guides dealing with various aspects of the work of Methodism were filled out and made available. This study guide, developed by the Department of Research and Survey of the Board of Missions and Church Extension, is intended to be used by the various commissions and committees as an aid in studying the local church and community situation for the purpose of developing policies and programs to do a better job. It is hoped that this primary purpose has been achieved and that much good is being accomplished in terms of better planning and performance in the 36 churches in this study. To this end one copy of the self-survey should have been kept in the hands of the pastor and his key church leaders.



In addition, copies of the questionnaire were made available to this study through the district superintendent. There has been a tabulation and analysis of the most important and most complete sections of these survey materials. All the materials turned in for individual charges or churches may be made available with individual analysis and interpretation upon request. Here, the purpose is limited to a general picture of the situations in all the churches of the county.

Winston-Salem is considered the nearest major city by nine of the pastors and Mount Airy by three. These three are within Mount Airy or closer than 10 miles to it. One parsonage is less than 30 miles from Winston-Salem, four are between 30 and 39, three between 40 and 49, and one around 50 miles from the district parsonage. All these charges are well located in relationship to the district headquarters since, for the majority of them Winston-Salem is the natural trading and marketing city.

Thirteen of the fourteen pastors in the county indicated the length of time in the ministry. The range was from 2 to 42 years. Two pastors had served less than 5 years, two from 10 to 14 years, one from 15 to 19 years, one from 20 to 24 years and seven, exactly half of the ministers in the county, had served in the ministry more than 25 years.

The pastors of Surry County had served their present parishes from 1 to 5 years for an average tenure of 2.7 years. Two pastors were in their first year, ten in their second year, nine in the third year, one in the fourth year, and two in the fifth year.

Twelve of the pastors indicated their educational background. Four were seminary graduates and one other had done some seminary work. Three others had graduated from college with another having some college training. Three had not graduated from high school. One pastor had been awarded the



honorary D. D. degree. Two ministers did not reply. Several pastors had carried on their education by correspondence and by attendance upon special summer courses and pastors' schools.

With the relatively short tenure in their communities it is not surprising that, outside membership in the ministerial association, membership in community organizations is low. In fact, the 14 pastors reported a total of 15 memberships in such organizations. Civic clubs (Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis, Civitans) accounted for five memberships, the Parent-Teachers Association for another five with the remaining five including the Grange, Masons, American Legion, and Theta Phi.

In an effort to get a picture of the opportunities for specific types of community service available to the pastors, they were asked to check the frequency of performance of selected activities. Five ministers did not check any of the activities. The other nine pastors performed the following activities more than once per month.

<u>Service</u>	<u>Number of Pastors</u>
Family and marital guidance	8
Help individuals find jobs	6
Supervision of recreational groups	5
Case work with alcoholics	5
Help people find housing	2
Juvenile delinquency cases	2
Counseling veterans	1
Interracial friction or prejudice	1
Adult crime cases	0
No reply	5

730 members with an average membership of 332 per charge, which is considerably below the average of the conference.

Thirty-three of the churches reported a total of 1601 families in their membership, which is an average of 115 families per pastor. Twenty-one of the 36 churches reported a constituency of 2,443 persons or 116 persons per church. These were distributed among 601 families reported in the constituency of these churches. Nearly half of these were homes in which more than one denomination was represented.

All charges and 33 of the churches reported 2,442 in average attendance at services of worship and preaching which is an average of 74 per church with a range from Mount Airy, Central with 394 to Stanford on the Level Cross charge with 12 persons reported in average attendance. Only seven of the churches report 100 or more in attendance at preaching time, while 11 churches reported under 50 persons present.

Twenty-three of the churches reported on the date of the last religious census of the parish area. Three of these did not know when the last census was taken. The remaining 20 churches reported surveys as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of churches</u>
1954	5
1953	2
1952	5
1950	3
1949	2
1948	1
1944	2

Fifteen of the 36 churches reported holding church membership classes for preparatory members. All the 21 churches not holding such training classes were on circuits.



Only eight of the churches in Surry County were in campaigns to raise money for building purposes. The dates of completion of present church buildings were provided for 28 churches.

<u>Year Present Building Completed</u>	<u>Number of Churches</u>
1950-1954	4
1940-1949	6
1930-1939	4
1920-1929	4
1910-1919	2
1900-1909	5
1890-1899	2
1880-1889	1

Nearly one-third of the church plants have been completed since World War II, while another third antedate World War I. The median age of the present buildings is 19 years, although three of them are only a little more than one year old and one 65 year old plant is still in operation.

Thirteen of 29 churches reporting indicated that the present church building was not adequate for their programs and activities, while 16 were satisfied with with present plants. Twenty-seven churches were reported covered by fire insurance, while four were reported not covered. Five churches did not report on this item. However, public liability insurance was reported by only four churches.

Thirty-two of the 36 churches reported on the number of tithers in the church membership. Seven of these did not know the number of tithers, while 10 others knew that there were no tithers among them. This left 19

churches to report a total of 87 tithers or 4.5 tithers per church reporting the presence of tithing members. It is likely that the current emphasis on stewardship will increase this number.

Six of the 14 pastoral charges received no financial aid from outside the parish, while eight reported a total of \$10,474.50 or \$1,309.31 per charge on the average. This was out of a total current budget of \$132,685 for the churches last year. Of the 36 churches nine did not report the number of families contacted in the every-member canvass, 19 churches reported contacting no families, four contacted their families partially, and only four churches, all station appointments, reported contacting 696 families in the every-member canvass.

All except two churches reported the number of regular contributors. Four of these did not know the regular givers, three reported that they had none, and 25 churches claimed 1,320 systematic givers, which was an average of 52 per church, with a range from 3 to 457 regular givers.

None of the churches reported participation in Lord's Acre Projects last year.

With 29 churches reporting, 11 held schools of missions last year, while 18 did not have such schools.

Six churches reported having 28 young people in camps and assemblies while 20 churches had no representatives in these activities, and 10 churches did not report on this matter.

Six churches have had nine persons go into full-time Christian service in the past five years. These are Elkin, First (1), Epworth (1), Franklin Heights (1), Rockford Street (4), Salem (1), and Beulah (1).

Unless one of the eight churches not reporting is involved, no new



church has been established in Surry County since 1945 when Franklin Heights was established. The oldest church reported was Central, Mount Airy, which was established in 1825. The periods of organization for 28 of the 36 churches follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of churches</u>
1950-1954	None
1925-1949	3
1900-1924	7
1875-1899	8
1850-1874	6
1825-1849	4
1800-1824	None

Ten churches were organized between 1825 and 1875 and ten were established from 1900-1950. The greatest quarter century for organization of churches in Surry County was 1875 to 1900 when eight were started.

Twenty-two churches reported the distance to the nearest Methodist Church. Dobson was 10 miles from another Methodist Church, while Rockford Street was only four blocks away from another Methodist Church. Seven churches were five miles or more and 12 churches were three miles or less from the nearest Methodist Church.

Twenty-seven of the 36 churches report members working outside the community in which they live, while 16 churches lose young people permanently from their communities.

Thirty-two churches indicated their chief educational problems. Fourteen churches have problems of physical space and equipment, 21 cited inadequately trained teachers, seven reported a shortage of teachers, two

had transportation problems, six felt that the provisions of the general agencies did not meet the situations of their churches. Other miscellaneous problems were mentioned but all the churches were satisfied with the church school literature being used.

Eighteen churches did cooperate in community activities by sponsoring or working with various community organizations and activities. Only two churches sponsored community forums, five cooperated in community recreational activities, one was related to community music groups, seven sponsored Cub Packs or Boy Scouts, while only three supported Girl Scout groups and one cooperated with the Campfire Girls. The agricultural background of the churches is brought out in the fact that seven of them work with Home Demonstration Clubs.

This relatively low level of participation in these types of community organizations is partially due to the absence of such activities in many of the villages and open country neighborhoods of the churches. This is indicated in the types of community problems recognized by church leaders. Only four churches failed to report on this item. Sixteen churches pointed to a lack of civic pride as a community problem, fourteen mentioned inadequate leadership, eleven indicated inadequate housing, eight recognized problems connected with commercial recreation, community conflict was the problem in five of the churches and other problems mentioned were racial tension, poor schools, transportation difficulties, and lack of opportunity for youth. With few exceptions, the churches did not appear to be engaging in programs along with community leaders to correct the most serious of these problems.

The Woman's Society of Christian Service members have cooperated in various ways in this self-study. According to the 1954 Conference Journal



the 14 charges of Surry County have a total of 764 members of the Woman's Society. This is an average of 54 members per charge which is well below the conference average of 83 members per charge. Actually, three charges and 20 churches of the county report no members. It is not unlikely that more intensive work in this field would tend to raise the level of church life in these particular situations.

There were no chartered groups of Methodist men reported, although a membership of 10 for Shoals was given.

#### PROGRESS IN PERFORMANCE

Through the cooperation of the Town and Country Commission, performance records for the charges of Surry County in evangelism, church school attendance and per member contribution to the current budget are available for both 1953 and 1954. By looking at these records for charges for each of the years it is possible to determine whether the charges are doing as well this year as last. Examined over a period of years such performance records would indicate the degree of growth in evangelism, education, and stewardship.

Table 10 shows the evangelistic ratio for the charges for 1953 and 1954. It should be remembered that this evangelistic ratio is computed by dividing the number of persons received into the church by profession of faith into the total membership. As the General Board of Evangelism indicates "it shows how many church members are required to win one." Thus, the higher the evangelistic ratio the lower the evangelistic activity and vice versa. This should be kept in mind in interpreting Table 10.

On the average it took nine more people in the conference to win one

TABLE 10

EVANGELISTIC RATIO FOR WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE,  
WINSTON-SALEM DISTRICT, AND CHARGES OF SURRY COUNTY WITH  
THE DIFFERENCE FOR 1953 AND 1954

Charge	Evangelistic Ratio		
	1954	1953	Difference
Western North Carolina Conference	38	29	9
Winston-Salem District	40	30	10
Surry County charges	-	-	-
Dobson	0	27	-
Elkin, First	49	45	4
Level Cross	22	20	2
Mount Airy, Central	47	27	20
Franklin Heights	18	28	-10
Rockford Street	33	28	5
Mountain Park-Grassy Creek	21	15	6
New Hope Circuit	245	31	214
Oak Grove	0	0	0
Pilot Mountain	57	17	40
Salem	118	22	96
Shoals	31	11	20
Surry Circuit	0	0	0
Ebenezer-Longtown	158	<sup>a</sup>	-

<sup>a</sup> No record available for 1953.

Source: Studies in Western North Carolina Methodism, Supplement 1.



person into church membership in 1954 than in 1953. The record in the district was about the same with a ratio of 30 in 1953 and ten more, 40, in 1954. Only one charge in Surry County had a better evangelistic ratio in 1954 than in 1953. This was Franklin Heights which moved from a ratio of 28 in 1953 to 18 in 1954. Three charges did not report any persons received on profession of faith and another had only one. In 1953 Shoals had the best evangelistic ratio (11), while in 1954 Franklin Heights was first. It is certainly to be hoped that all the churches will make a fresh study of their plans in the field of evangelism.

A measure of educational performance which does not depend on the size of the church schools is the percentage of the church school enrollment in average attendance. This is shown in Table 11. The Conference improved slightly by 0.1 percent and the district by 0.3 percent in this field. The churches in Surry County did better but improved over the 1953 record only by 1.0 percent. Indeed, seven charges did better in 1953 than in 1954 while six improved over their 1953 record.

According to Table 12, there was an increase of \$1.58 in the Conference, \$3.11 in the district, and \$2.14 in the churches of Surry County. This is an exceptionally fine financial record for Methodism in these areas. Only three charges in Surry County gave less per member to the current budget in 1954 than in 1953. Ten charges did a better job with the range from \$0.14 for Shoals to \$9.50 for Salem.

These are only examples of ways individual churches and charges may in the planning meetings of the officials and leaders discover the facts about their activities as the basis for better work in the future.

TABLE 11

PERCENTAGE OF CHURCH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN AVERAGE ATTENDANCE FOR  
WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE, WINSTON-SALEM DISTRICT, AND  
CHARGES OF SURRY COUNTY, WITH DIFFERENCES FOR 1953 and 1954

Charge	Percentage Attendance		
	1954	1953	Difference
Western North Carolina Conference	54.4	54.3	0.1
Winston-Salem District	58.4	58.1	0.3
Surry County charges	-	-	-
Dobson	75.0	57.5	17.5
Elkin, First	63.2	64.1	- 0.9
Level Cross	71.0	55.6	15.4
Mount Airy, Central	45.9	59.9	-14.0
Franklin Heights	50.5	55.8	- 5.3
Rockford Street	68.3	62.5	5.8
Mountain Park-Grassy Creek	69.1	66.0	3.1
New Hope Circuit	55.1	57.8	- 2.7
Oak Grove	80.8	79.2	1.6
Pilot Mountain	40.4	46.5	- 6.1
Salem	58.1	56.1	2.0
Shoals	75.5	72.7	- 2.8
Surry Circuit	30.4	40.6	-10.2
Ebenezer-Longtown	53.1	- <sup>a</sup>	-

<sup>a</sup> No record available for 1953.

Source: Studies in Western North Carolina Methodism, Supplement 1.



TABLE 12

PER MEMBER CONTRIBUTION TO THE CURRENT BUDGET FOR WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE, WINSTON-SALEM DISTRICT, AND THE CHARGES OF SURRY COUNTY WITH DIFFERENCES FOR 1953 and 1954

Charge	Per Member Contribution		
	1954	1953	Difference
Western North Carolina Conference	\$24.00	\$22.42	\$ 1.58
Winston-Salem District	26.38	23.27	3.11
Surry County charges	-	-	-
Dobson	33.86	31.74	2.12
Elkin, First	50.83	41.78	9.05
Level Cross	12.55	13.26	-0.71
Mount Airy, Central	52.68	49.05	3.63
Franklin Heights	20.72	22.80	-2.08
Rockford Street	18.45	17.60	0.85
Mountain Park-Grassy Creek	15.79	12.44	3.35
New Hope Circuit	10.87	9.98	0.89
Oak Grove	8.42	7.36	1.06
Pilot Mountain	30.46	31.37	-0.91
Salem	31.90	22.40	9.50
Shoals	14.02	13.88	0.14
Surry Circuit	10.95	9.90 <sup>a</sup>	1.05
Ebenezer-Longtown	20.42	-	-

<sup>a</sup> No record available for 1953.

Source: Studies in Western North Carolina Methodism, Supplement 1.



## SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

At various points the implications of the study for the strategy of Methodism in Surry County have been suggested. It remains here to draw the more important of these together. Two things should be kept in mind. One is that it is not the purpose or function of a researcher to lay down programs of action for churches. Rather, the researcher points out important facts and trends which should inform specific church strategy. The launching of well planned programs designed to strengthen Methodism is, of course, the privilege and duty of the responsible leaders, both ministerial and lay, of the church or churches involved. The other thing is that this is a county-wide study and does not focus on the problems and prospects of individual charges or churches. Yet, in the long run, church planning and performance must go on in individual churches and communities. With these facts in mind the following suggestions may be worthwhile.

In general, Methodism in Surry County has a good record when compared with that of the district and annual conference. Doubtless, this favorable position is due in no small measure to the various projects and plans in which the ministers and laymen of the county have cooperated during the past dozen or so years. It cannot be stressed too much that cooperative planning and performance on a county or district basis with the strong churches assisting the weak ones and with each individual church doing its very best will prove increasingly fruitful as Methodism faces its future.

In spite of the number of the charges and churches in the county there are considerable geographic areas not now within the parish areas of individual churches. Careful studies of the outreach of specific churches in their communities should lead to methods of extending present parish areas or to considerations of the need for extension church schools or new congre-



gations. Too little attention would seem to have been paid to this field of church extension during the past ten years.

The growth of Methodism in relationship to the growth of white population in the county is not as good as it should be. However, many individual churches scored heavy gains in membership from 1944 to 1954. This was especially true of some of the churches on circuits. This record together with the wide variations in membership changes could lead to more intensive analysis of individual factors responsible for the records. In view of the unusually good records of many of the circuit churches in slowly growing or declining population areas attention should be given to the adequacy of membership records and to the frequency and location of transfers to other churches. This is especially critical in view of the high fertility ratio for the county as a whole.

In incompleteness of the data relating Methodist membership to white population by townships makes any conclusions tentative. Yet, it is apparent that these variations in Methodist strength should be the occasions for serious study locally. It is likely that the presence of other denominations in the various townships would be part of the picture.

The study of the age and sex characteristics of the white population, church membership and church school enrollment should be definitely be done on a church-by-church basis. For the entire county the study reveals a need for renewed emphasis on infant baptisms, preparatory membership rolls, nursery work in the church school, membership training classes for older children and youth and programs to appeal to the increasing number of older persons in both the church and church schools.

The economic situation in Surry County has materially improved in the past several years in relationship to the state as a whole. This is re-



flected in the fine financial record of most of the churches in the county on a per member basis. This record exceeded the conference and district for several items. However, it is evident that not enough funds are currently going into buildings and improvement and the improved economic status of the county calls for renewed stewardship for Methodism to secure its share of these gains. Also, the wide range in per member support of various budgetary items opens the way to specific studies to determine the reasons for success and failure as guides for more dependable and Christian stewardship programs. The urgent need for developments here is dramatized by the small number of tithers and regular contributors together with inadequate stewardship cultivation programs.

The provisions for parsonages in the county seems unusually good on the whole and is doubtless a credit to the cooperative work of the "Surry Project" as well as an indication of the financial level of the county. In specific parsonage situations, improvements are indicated and will doubtless be forthcoming. The provisions of plumbing, electricity, central heat and refrigeration point to the revolution in housing standards for the whole county, including housing for ministers.

On the whole the ministers had good training and they were not beginners. This is contrasted with the fairly short tenure in their present pastorates accompanied by low-level participation and leadership in community affairs. The latter is a decided loss of potential influence for Methodism in building more Christian human relationships in local communities.

The average size of parishes, the number of families under the care of a pastor, and the number reported in the constituency of the churches are far too small for efficient and effective service on the part of fully trained and experienced ministers.



The small numbers of persons in average attendance at services of worship in most of the churches is an indication that Methodism remains a connection of chapels, especially in open country and village areas.

Performance records are important indications of the progress of the church. Individual churches can keep these records from year to year as guides for future planning. The Town and Country Commission of the Conference is doing a fine job in making some of these performance records available for all the charges of the Conference. Such records as were reviewed here indicate good educational and financial activity but low evangelistic enterprises in relationship to the district and conference. It is urged that individual charges extend these records for their own purposes and program building.

Methodism has a strong position in the life of Surry County. The heroic labors of leaders of other days have become a rich heritage for present day Methodism. The pastors and people should take a new look at the opportunities before them today with a view to more efficient and dedicated programs and plans. In these ways the next generation will be more Christian and Methodism in the county will be stronger. It is hoped that this report may provide some guidance in this march of Methodism in Surry County.