

Adventists top million; mainline slips: Presbyterians and Methodists post declines

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The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America has more than 1 million members, according to a report presented during the denomination's recent general conference in St. Louis.

Officials said the church has grown by 153,000 new members since 2000 and that there are now 6,000 Adventist congregations in the U.S. and Canada. The denomination, founded in 1863, has headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Meanwhile, the 2.3-million-member Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) reported that its membership declined by 43,175 in 2004, the second-largest yearly decline in the last decade. The year before, the denomination lost 46,658 members, the Presbyterian News Service reported.

In a preliminary report, officials of the 8.2-million-member United Methodist Church said that it suffered a net loss of about 71,000 members last year. The UMC decline has been steady for at least three decades. However, a tally of regional conference reports by United Methodist News Service found that overall average attendance grew by a small margin last year.