

A M E R I C A

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RELIGIOUS STATISTICS, 1945 The *Yearbook of American Churches*, 1945 estimates the total church membership in the United States for 1943 and 1944 at 72,492,669, which is equal to 52.5 per cent of the population. Catholics form the largest religious body, by far: 23,419,701, according to the *Yearbook*; but the *Official Catholic Directory* puts the figure at 23,963,671—quite a different matter! And the *Catholic Directory* errs, if at all, by understatement. 256 religious bodies are listed. Of these 13 report a membership in excess of a million. The Methodist Church comes second to the Catholic Church, with 8,046,129; the Baptists third, with 5,667,926, and Jewish congregations count 4,641,184. All the Protestant bodies add up to 41,943,104. Three challenging facts come to the surface from a study of the *Yearbook*: 1) though the number of church members, and the percentage of church members in the population, are the highest ever reported by the *Yearbook*, nevertheless the truth is that almost one half of our American population is not affiliated with any religious body; 2) gifts and bequests to religion in 1942 amounted to \$720,800,000, which was only about .8 per cent of a total consumer outlay of 89 billion dollars; and 3) in 1942, 16 Protestant bodies with 23 million members, reported gifts of \$351 million, or \$15.17 per capita.

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