

**News and Current Events :: United Methodist numbers fall**

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) -- The United Methodist Church, America's second largest Protestant body, reported a net loss of 71,518 U.S. members during 2004, bringing the total under 8.2 million. That followed a 69,141 decline for 2003.

The denomination has suffered annual declines for decades, but losses appeared to be slowing in the late 1990s, United Methodist News Service reported.