

CHURCH OF GOD AND SAINTS OF CHRIST

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the Church of God and Saints of Christ for the year 1926 is presented in Table 1, which shows also the distribution of these figures between urban and rural territory.

In the Church of God and Saints of Christ persons are admitted to membership in the local churches upon profession of faith and baptism by immersion.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: CHURCH OF GOD AND SAINTS OF CHRIST

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PERCENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations).....	112	101	11	90.2	9.8
Members	6,741	6,055	686	89.8	10.2
Average per church.....	60	60	62		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	2,539	2,250	289	88.6	11.4
Female.....	4,202	3,805	397	90.6	9.4
Males per 100 females.....	60.4	59.1	72.8		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	1,425	1,260	165	88.4	11.6
13 years and over.....	5,316	4,795	521	90.2	9.8
Per cent under 13 years.....	21.1	20.8	24.1		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	49	43	6		
Value—Churches reporting.....	48	42	6		
Amount reported.....	\$149,210	\$138,860	\$10,350	93.1	6.9
Average per church.....	\$3,109	\$3,306	\$1,725		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	20	19	1		
Amount reported.....	\$30,219	\$30,130	\$89	99.7	0.3
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	24	20	4		
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting.....	23	22	1		
Amount reported.....	\$68,450	\$66,950	\$1,500	97.8	2.2
Debt—Churches reporting.....	9	8	1		
Amount reported.....	\$17,439	\$17,350	\$89	99.5	0.5
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage.....	13	13			
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	100	91	9	91.0	9.0
Amount reported.....	\$137,345	\$129,220	\$8,125	94.1	5.9
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$76,414	\$72,297	\$4,117	94.6	5.4
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$53,917	\$52,716	\$1,201	97.8	2.2
Not classified.....	\$7,014	\$4,207	\$2,807	60.0	40.0
Average expenditure per church.....	\$1,373	\$1,420	\$903		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	67	60	7		
Officers and teachers.....	303	262	41	86.5	13.5
Scholars.....	2,010	1,751	259	87.1	12.9

¹ Urban territory includes all cities and other incorporated places which had 2,500 inhabitants or more in 1920, the date of the last Federal census; rural territory comprises the remainder of the country.

² Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

The data given for 1926 represent 112 active organizations of the Church of God and Saints of Christ, with 6,741 members. The classification by sex and age was reported by all of the churches, including 99 which reported members under 13 years of age.

Comparative data, 1906-1926.—Table 2 presents, in convenient form for comparison, a summary of the available statistics of this denomination for the censuses of 1926, 1916, and 1906.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1906 TO 1926: CHURCH OF GOD AND SAINTS OF CHRIST

ITEM	1926	1916	1906
Churches (local organizations)	112	92	48
Increase over preceding census:			
Number.....	20	44	
Per cent ¹			
Members	6,741	3,311	1,823
Increase over preceding census:			
Number.....	3,430	1,488	
Per cent.....	103.6	81.6	
Average membership per church.....	60	36	28
Church edifices:			
Number.....	49	37	1
Value—Churches reporting.....	48	26	1
Amount reported.....	\$149,210	\$43,746	\$6,000
Average per church.....	\$3,109	\$1,683	\$6,000
Debt—Churches reporting.....	20	12	
Amount reported.....	\$30,219	\$11,754	
Parsonages:			
Value—Churches reporting.....	23		
Amount reported.....	\$68,450		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	9		
Amount reported.....	\$17,430		
Expenditures during year:			
Churches reporting.....	100	45	
Amount reported.....	\$137,345	\$18,674	
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$76,414	\$14,522	
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$53,917	\$4,152	
Not classified.....	\$7,014		
Average expenditure per church.....	\$1,373	\$415	
Sunday schools:			
Churches reporting.....	67	57	1
Officers and teachers.....	303	257	6
Scholars.....	2,010	1,520	150

¹ Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

State tables.—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the Church of God and Saints of Christ by States. Table 3 gives for each State the number and membership of the churches classified according to their location in urban or rural territory and the total membership classified by sex. Table 4 gives for selected States the number and membership of the churches for the three censuses from 1906 to 1926, together with the membership for 1926 classified as under 13 years of age and 13 years of age and over. Table 5 shows the value of church property and the debt on such property, for 1926 alone. Table 6 presents, for 1926, the church expenditures, showing separately the amounts expended for current expenses and improvements, and for benevolences, etc., and also gives the data for Sunday schools. Separate presentation in Tables 5 and 6 is limited to those States in which three or more churches reported the principal items shown (values or expenditures), in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church. The States omitted from these tables can be determined by referring to the complete list which appears in Table 3.

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: CHURCH OF GOD AND SAINTS OF CHRIST

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Males per 100 females ⁽¹⁾
United States	112	101	11	6,741	6,055	686	2,539	4,202	60.4
New England:									
Massachusetts.....	3	3	—	188	188	—	54	134	40.3
Rhode Island.....	2	2	—	203	203	—	93	110	84.5
Connecticut.....	6	6	—	381	381	—	148	233	63.5
Middle Atlantic:									
New York.....	13	13	—	711	711	—	292	419	69.7
New Jersey.....	7	6	1	458	453	5	150	308	48.7
Pennsylvania.....	6	6	—	472	472	—	173	299	57.9
East North Central:									
Ohio.....	8	8	—	356	356	—	134	222	60.4
Indiana.....	2	2	—	46	46	—	14	32	—
Illinois.....	2	2	—	335	335	—	109	226	48.2
Michigan.....	1	1	—	112	112	—	37	75	—
West North Central:									
Missouri.....	2	2	—	118	118	—	46	72	—
Kansas.....	3	3	—	47	47	—	13	34	—
South Atlantic:									
Delaware.....	1	1	—	36	36	—	9	27	—
Maryland.....	6	4	2	255	224	31	101	154	65.6
District of Columbia.....	1	1	—	135	135	—	52	83	—
Virginia.....	19	15	4	1,298	870	428	542	756	71.7
West Virginia.....	5	5	—	182	182	—	79	103	76.7
North Carolina.....	14	11	3	692	569	123	247	445	55.5
South Carolina.....	1	1	—	28	28	—	20	8	—
Georgia.....	4	3	1	392	293	99	132	260	50.8
Florida.....	2	2	—	180	180	—	65	115	56.5
East South Central:									
Kentucky.....	1	1	—	5	5	—	2	3	—
Tennessee.....	2	2	—	59	59	—	15	44	—
Alabama.....	1	1	—	52	52	—	12	40	—

¹ Ratio not shown where number of females is less than 100.

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION¹

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

In the latter part of the year 1896, William S. Crowdy, a Negro man employed on the Sante Fe railroad as a cook, claimed to have a vision from God, calling him to lead his people to the true religion and giving him prophetic endowment. He immediately gave up his employment, went into Kansas, commenced preaching, and soon after organized the Church of God and Saints of Christ, at Lawrence. At first only a few persons joined him, but the numbers increased rapidly, and the headquarters were removed to Philadelphia. He was appointed bishop of the new body, and one white man who was associated with him was subsequently raised to the same office.

¹ This statement, which is substantially the same as that published in Part II of the Report on Religious Bodies, 1916, has been revised by Bishop William H. Plummer, of the Church of God and Saints of Christ, and approved by him in its present form.

TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: CHURCH OF GOD AND SAINTS OF CHRIST

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches in either 1926, 1916, or 1906]

STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926		
	1926	1916	1906	1926	1916	1906	Under 13 years	13 years and over	Per cent under 13 ¹
United States.....	112	92	48	6,741	3,311	1,823	1,425	5,316	21.1
Massachusetts.....	3	2	2	188	76	202	43	145	22.9
Connecticut.....	6	5	4	381	145	42	69	312	18.1
New York.....	13	16	7	711	473	102	181	530	25.5
New Jersey.....	7	8	5	458	245	253	109	349	23.8
Pennsylvania.....	6	9	5	472	603	548	102	370	21.6
Ohio.....	8	3	---	356	44	---	88	268	24.7
Kansas.....	3	2	3	47	56	78	11	36	---
Maryland.....	6	3	2	255	82	44	58	197	22.7
Virginia.....	19	17	10	1,298	439	260	292	1,006	22.5
West Virginia.....	5	2	---	182	86	---	40	142	22.0
North Carolina.....	14	11	2	692	301	32	111	581	16.0
Georgia.....	4	4	2	392	174	32	90	302	23.0
Other States.....	18	10	6	1,309	587	230	231	1,078	17.6

¹ Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926: CHURCH OF GOD AND SAINTS OF CHRIST

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting value of edifices]

STATE	Total number of churches	Number of church edifices	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		DEBT ON CHURCH EDIFICES		VALUE OF PARSONAGES		DEBT ON PARSONAGES	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount
United States....	112	49	48	\$149,210	20	\$30,219	23	\$68,450	9	\$17,439
New York.....	13	4	4	20,500	1	1,200	---	---	---	---
New Jersey.....	7	3	3	29,500	3	16,940	---	(¹)	---	(¹)
Pennsylvania.....	6	4	3	18,200	2	1,250	---	---	---	---
Kansas.....	3	3	3	10,060	1	46	---	(¹)	---	---
Virginia.....	19	13	13	32,250	4	4,200	6	9,800	1	4,500
North Carolina.....	14	7	7	9,600	3	1,544	---	(¹)	---	---
Other States ²	50	15	15	29,100	6	5,039	17	58,650	8	12,939

¹ Amount included in figures shown for "Other States," to avoid disclosing the statistics of individual churches.

² The figures for parsonages (value and debt) include data for 5 churches in New Jersey, Kansas, and North Carolina.

DOCTRINE

Believing that the Negro race is descended from the ten lost tribes of Israel, the prophet taught that the Ten Commandments and a literal adherence to the teachings of the Bible, including both the Old and the New Testaments, are man's positive guides to salvation. In order, however, that the faithful may make no mistake as to the commandments which they are to follow, a pamphlet has been published by the church under the direction of the prophet, called the "Seven Keys," which includes Bible references giving the authority for the various customs and orders of the church. Among these customs are the observance of the Jewish calendar and feast days, especially the Jewish Sabbath, and the use of the corresponding Hebrew names.

TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926:
CHURCH OF GOD AND SAINTS OF CHRIST

[Separate presentation is limited to States having 3 or more churches reporting expenditures]

STATE	Total number of churches	EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR				SUNDAY SCHOOLS			
		Churches reporting	Total amount	For current expenses and improvements	For benevolences, missions, etc.	Not classified	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States.....	112	100	\$137,345	\$76,414	\$53,917	\$7,014	67	303	2,010
Massachusetts.....	3	3	3,765	2,975	790	-----	2	10	66
Connecticut.....	6	6	6,746	4,602	2,144	-----	6	25	143
New York.....	13	10	8,126	3,482	4,612	32	6	33	290
New Jersey.....	7	5	12,059	6,729	5,330	-----	2	10	78
Pennsylvania.....	6	6	26,980	13,101	13,879	-----	4	16	146
Ohio.....	8	6	12,563	5,271	7,292	-----	5	18	118
Kansas.....	3	3	1,913	1,608	305	-----	1	5	17
Maryland.....	6	6	5,053	3,711	1,342	-----	3	8	43
Virginia.....	19	16	14,783	7,939	3,712	3,132	15	77	488
West Virginia.....	5	4	1,646	620	1,026	-----	3	11	53
North Carolina.....	14	14	10,431	6,772	2,809	850	6	21	94
Georgia.....	4	4	2,210	1,750	460	-----	1	4	26
Other States.....	18	17	31,070	17,854	10,216	3,000	13	65	448

Admission to the church follows repentance for sin, baptism by immersion, confession of faith in Christ, the reception of unleavened bread and water at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, with the washing of the feet by an elder, and the pledge of the holy kiss. The last-mentioned is also a general form of greeting, but, having been criticized severely, it is frequently omitted.

ORGANIZATION

The organization of the church centers in an executive board or council, called a presbytery, consisting of 12 ordained elders and evangelists, whose duty it is to look after the general business of the church. The prophet, who is presiding officer both of the executive board and of the church, is not elected but holds his position by virtue of a divine call. He is believed by his followers to be in direct communication with the Deity, to utter prophecies by the will of God, and to perform miracles. On his death the prophetic office lapses until a new vision appears.

There are district annual and general assemblies, composed of the different orders of the ministry, and including delegates from each local church or tabernacle. The ministerial order includes ministers not in full ordination, elders fully ordained, evangelists (elders engaged in general missionary work), and bishops, the last mentioned not exceeding four in number. The ministers hold office during good behavior. The temporal affairs of the church are cared for by deacons under general supervision of the assemblies.

WORK

For the support of the ministry, including the prophet, tithes are collected, as well as freewill offerings, and the district assemblies are required to establish storehouses for the tithes. From these storehouses groceries and other necessities of life are sold to the members, the net receipts being used to supplement the tithes contributed for the support of the ministers in the work.

The church is a strong advocate of temperance, refusing even to use wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It allows marriage only within the circle

of the faithful, except by special permit, and exercises a rigid censorship over all printed matter, permitting only that to be used which receives the approval of the publishing house, and referring the decision of all disputed points to the Bible.

One of the main auxiliaries of the church is an organization known as the "Daughters of Jerusalem" and "Sisters of Mercy." It is the duty of this organization to look out for straying members and attend to the comfort or welfare of the members of sister churches of the organization who may chance to be visiting the place in which the tabernacle is located.