

# CHURCHES OF THE LIVING GOD

## GENERAL STATEMENT

Under this head are included in 1926 two bodies of Negro churches, similar in general type though differing in many details: The Church of the Living God, Christian Workers for Fellowship, and the Church of the Living God, "The Pillar and Ground of Truth."

The Church of the Living God, Christian Workers for Fellowship, was reported in 1906 as Christian Workers for Friendship, having been organized at Wrightsville, Ark., in 1889, by Rev. William Christian. The name was changed to Christian Workers for Fellowship in 1915. The Church of Christ in God, reported in 1906, was afterwards consolidated with the Christian Workers for Fellowship, from which it had seceded.

Other divisions from this church followed, which were consolidated in an organization perfected September 25, 1925, and known as the Church of the Living God, "The Pillar and Ground of Truth." It was joined January 26, 1926, by the Church of the Living God, and the Church of the Living God, General Assembly, which had previously united, December, 1924, at Athens, Tex. These two churches were reported separately in 1916; the Church of the Living God, General Assembly, was returned as the Apostolic Church in 1906.

The denominations grouped under the name "Churches of the Living God" in 1926, in 1916, and in 1906 are listed below, with the principal statistics as reported for the three periods. Certain changes in names and organization, as mentioned above, will be noted in more detail.

### SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR THE CHURCHES OF THE LIVING GOD, 1926, 1916, AND 1906

DENOMINATION AND CENSUS YEAR	Total number of churches	Number of members	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
1926								
Total for the group.....	230	17,402	220	\$539,482	225	\$115,070	166	4,933
Church of the Living God, Christian Workers for Fellowship.....	149	11,558	139	368,935	144	50,515	140	3,465
Church of the Living God, "The Pillar and Ground of Truth".....	81	5,844	81	170,547	81	64,555	26	1,468
1916								
Total for the group.....	192	11,635	93	115,530	98	28,715	136	2,987
Church of the Living God.....	28	1,743	27	23,875	27	6,199	27	491
Church of the Living God, Christian Workers for Fellowship.....	154	9,626	60	78,955	62	18,812	99	2,328
Church of the Living God, General Assembly.....	10	266	6	12,700	9	3,704	10	168
1906								
Total for the group.....	67	4,276	45	58,575			61	1,760
Church of the Living God, Christian Workers for Friendship.....	44	2,676	27	23,175			43	886
Church of the Living God (Apostolic Church).....	14	752	12	25,700			13	585
Church of Christ in God.....	9	848	6	9,700			5	289

# CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, CHRISTIAN WORKERS FOR FELLOWSHIP

## STATISTICS

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

The membership of the Church of the Living God, Christian Workers for Fellowship, consists of all baptized persons on the rolls of the church. Baptism is by immersion.

**TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, CHRISTIAN WORKERS FOR FELLOWSHIP**

ITEM	Total	In urban territory <sup>1</sup>	In rural territory <sup>1</sup>	PER CENT OF TOTAL <sup>2</sup>	
				Urban	Rural
<b>Churches (local organizations)</b> .....	149	82	67	55.0	45.0
<b>Members</b> .....	11,558	7,289	4,269	63.1	36.9
Average per church.....	78	89	64		
<b>Membership by sex:</b>					
Male.....	3,964	2,382	1,582	60.1	39.9
Female.....	7,594	4,907	2,687	64.6	35.4
Males per 100 females.....	52.2	48.5	58.9		
<b>Membership by age:</b>					
Under 13 years.....	164	114	50	69.5	30.5
13 years and over.....	11,329	7,175	4,154	63.3	36.7
Age not reported.....	65		65		
Per cent under 13 years <sup>3</sup> .....	1.4	1.6	1.2		
<b>Church edifices:</b>					
Number.....	141	77	64	54.6	45.4
Value—Churches reporting.....	139	75	64	54.0	46.0
Amount reported.....	\$368,935	\$268,750	\$100,185	72.8	27.2
Average per church.....	\$2,654	\$3,583	\$1,565		
<b>Debt—Churches reporting</b> .....	27	21	6		
Amount reported.....	\$26,460	\$24,240	\$2,220	91.6	8.4
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice.....	107	51	56	47.7	52.3
<b>Parsonages:</b>					
Value—Churches reporting.....	4	4			
Amount reported.....	\$6,300	\$6,300		100.0	
<b>Debt—Churches reporting</b> .....	2	2			
Amount reported.....	\$1,700	\$1,700		100.0	
Churches reporting "no debt" on parsonage.....	2	2			
<b>Expenditures during year:</b>					
Churches reporting.....	144	80	64	55.6	44.4
Amount reported.....	\$50,515	\$36,626	\$13,889	72.5	27.5
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$45,989	\$33,164	\$12,825	72.1	27.9
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$4,525	\$3,462	\$1,064	76.5	23.5
Average expenditure per church.....	\$351	\$458	\$217		
<b>Sunday schools:</b>					
Churches reporting.....	140	77	63	55.0	45.0
Officers and teachers.....	444	285	159	64.2	35.8
Scholars.....	3,465	2,171	1,294	62.7	37.3

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

<sup>3</sup> Based on membership with age classification reported.

The data given for 1926 represent 149 active organizations of the Church of the Living God, Christian Workers for Fellowship, with 11,558 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by all the churches, and the classification by age was reported by 148 churches, including, however, only 37 which reported any 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. Statistics for the Church of Christ in God, which united with this body between 1906 and 1916, have been added to the 1906 data.

**TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1906 TO 1926: CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, CHRISTIAN WORKERS FOR FELLOWSHIP**

ITEM	1926	1916	1906 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Churches (local organizations)</b> .....	149	154	53
<b>Increase<sup>2</sup> over preceding census:</b>			
Number.....	-5	101	-----
Per cent <sup>3</sup> .....	-3.2	-----	-----
<b>Members</b> .....	11,558	9,626	3,524
<b>Increase over preceding census:</b>			
Number.....	1,932	6,102	-----
Per cent.....	20.1	173.2	-----
Average membership per church.....	78	63	66
<b>Church edifices:</b>			
Number.....	141	60	33
Value—Churches reporting.....	139	60	33
Amount reported.....	\$368,935	\$78,955	\$32,875
Average per church.....	\$2,654	\$1,316	\$996
Debt—Churches reporting.....	27	14	8
Amount reported.....	\$26,460	\$7,350	\$1,816
<b>Parsonages:</b>			
Value—Churches reporting.....	4	-----	-----
Amount reported.....	\$6,300	-----	-----
Debt—Churches reporting.....	2	-----	-----
Amount reported.....	\$1,700	-----	-----
<b>Expenditures during year:</b>			
Churches reporting.....	144	62	-----
Amount reported.....	\$50,515	\$18,812	-----
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$45,989	\$14,502	-----
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$4,526	\$4,310	-----
Average expenditure per church.....	\$351	\$303	-----
<b>Sunday schools:</b>			
Churches reporting.....	140	99	48
Officers and teachers.....	444	206	143
Scholars.....	3,465	2,328	1,175

<sup>1</sup> Statistics for 1906 include those of the Church of Christ in God, united with this denomination between 1906 and 1916.

<sup>2</sup> A minus sign (-) denotes decrease.

<sup>3</sup> Per cent not shown where base is less than 100.

**State tables.**—Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 present the statistics for the Christian Workers for Fellowship 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 THE LIVING GOD, CHRISTIAN WORKERS FOR FELLOWSHIP**

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 <sup>(1)</sup>
United States.....	149	82	67	11,558	7,289	4,269	3,964	7,594	52.2
Middle Atlantic:									
Pennsylvania.....	1	1		15	15		3	12	
East North Central:									
Ohio.....	4	4		659	659		263	396	66.4
Indiana.....	4	4		183	183		67	116	57.8
Illinois.....	8	8		644	644		212	432	49.1
Michigan.....	4	4		293	293		125	168	74.4
West North Central:									
Missouri.....	3	3		193	193		54	139	38.8
Nebraska.....	4	4		369	369		68	301	22.6
Kansas.....	3	3		134	134		39	95	
South Atlantic:									
Florida.....	4	1	3	192	49	143	68	124	54.8
East South Central:									
Kentucky.....	5	5		868	868		331	537	61.6
Tennessee.....	9	5	4	1,044	526	518	388	656	59.1
Alabama.....	8	2	6	535	86	449	198	337	58.8
Mississippi.....	5	2	3	145	45	100	45	100	45.0
West South Central:									
Arkansas.....	23	8	15	1,683	760	923	588	1,095	53.7
Oklahoma.....	20	7	13	1,396	676	720	454	942	48.2
Texas.....	38	15	23	3,107	1,691	1,416	1,017	2,090	48.7
Mountain:									
Arizona.....	1	1		45	45		25	20	
Pacific:									
Washington.....	1	1		25	25		8	17	
California.....	4	4		28	28		11	17	

<sup>1</sup> Ratio not shown where number of females is less than 100.

**HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION<sup>1</sup>**

**DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY**

The Church of the Living God, "Christian Workers for Friendship," was organized at Wrightsville, Ark., in 1889, by Rev. William Christian. In 1915 the name was changed to Christian Workers for Fellowship. There have been numerous secessions from this church: In 1902, the Church of the Living God (Apostolic Church), afterwards known as the Church of the Living God, General Assembly; the Church of Christ in God, which later was reunited with the parent body; and some other groups, which were consolidated and organized in 1925 as the Church of the Living God, "The Pillar and Ground of Truth."

<sup>1</sup> This statement, which is substantially the same as that published in Part II of the Report on Religious Bodies, 1916, has been revised by Rev. William Christian, chief, Church of the Living God, Christian Workers for Fellowship, 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 THE LIVING GOD, CHRISTIAN WORKERS FOR FELLOWSHIP

[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 <sup>1</sup>	1926	1916	1906 <sup>1</sup>	Under 13 years	13 years and over	Age not reported	Per cent under 13 <sup>2</sup>
United States.....	149	154	53	11,558	9,626	3,524	164	11,329	65	1.4
Ohio.....	4	6	1	659	304	15	7	652	-----	1.1
Indiana.....	4	4	2	183	316	120	-----	183	-----	-----
Illinois.....	8	9	2	644	218	55	11	633	-----	1.7
Michigan.....	4	1	-----	293	10	-----	10	283	-----	3.4
Missouri.....	3	6	3	193	298	695	-----	193	-----	-----
Nebraska.....	4	-----	-----	369	-----	-----	-----	369	-----	-----
Kansas.....	3	4	3	134	110	135	2	132	-----	1.5
Florida.....	4	5	-----	192	280	-----	-----	192	-----	-----
Kentucky.....	5	7	5	868	1,046	174	7	861	-----	0.8
Tennessee.....	9	10	10	1,044	805	776	6	1,038	-----	0.6
Alabama.....	8	9	2	535	792	37	30	505	-----	5.6
Mississippi.....	5	11	5	145	282	253	-----	145	-----	-----
Arkansas.....	23	34	12	1,683	1,857	780	35	1,648	-----	2.1
Oklahoma.....	20	19	4	1,396	661	79	20	1,376	-----	1.4
Texas.....	38	27	4	3,107	2,486	405	34	3,008	65	1.1
California.....	4	-----	-----	28	-----	-----	-----	28	-----	-----
Other States.....	3	2	-----	85	61	-----	2	83	-----	-----

<sup>1</sup> Statistics for 1906 include those of the Church of Christ in God, united with this denomination between 1906 and 1916.

<sup>2</sup> Based on membership with age classification reported; not shown where base is less than 100.

#### DOCTRINE

The distinctive characteristics of the church are believers' baptism by immersion, the washing of the saints' feet, and the use of water and unleavened bread in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The local organizations are known as "temples" rather than as "churches," and are subject to the authority of a general assembly. The presiding officer is styled the "chief," or "bishop," and the ministry also includes, besides the bishops, ambassadors, evangelists, pastors, missionaries, and local preachers.

A considerable number of the ministers are engaged in general missionary work for the extension of the church; Sunday schools occupy an important place in the church life; and there is a benefit club engaged in works of mercy, particularly along the lines followed by fraternal societies, rendering assistance in the care of the sick and the burying of the dead.

#### WORK

Two institutions are in operation, one of which is the C. L. Bryant Widows and Orphans' Home, located at Oklahoma City, Okla., and the other, at Ponta, Tex., is a theological and girls' seminary. In aid of these institutions certain sums were contributed during the year; and the property was valued at about \$14,500.



**TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926:  
CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, CHRISTIAN WORKERS FOR FELLOWSHIP**

[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
<b>United States.....</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>\$368,935</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>\$26,460</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>\$6,300</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$1,700</b>
Ohio.....	4	4	4	25,000	1	3,000				
Indiana.....	4	4	4	11,800	2	2,300				
Illinois.....	8	8	8	27,300	3	3,450				
Michigan.....	4	3	3	10,000	2	5,500				
Missouri.....	3	3	3	18,200	1	3,500				
Nebraska.....	4	3	3	6,000	1	290				
Florida.....	4	4	4	8,300	1	700				
Kentucky.....	5	5	5	39,250	1	800				
Tennessee.....	9	9	9	48,400	1	200				
Alabama.....	8	8	7	19,050	1	400	(1)		(1)	
Mississippi.....	5	4	4	9,150						
Arkansas.....	23	22	22	36,550			(1)			
Oklahoma.....	20	21	20	31,585	4	1,780	(1)			
Texas.....	38	36	36	69,700	7	3,510	(1)		(1)	
California.....	4	4	4	4,850	1	200				
Other States <sup>1</sup> .....	6	3	3	4,300	1	800	4	6,300	2	1,700

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

<sup>2</sup> The figures for parsonages (value and debt) include data for 4 churches in Alabama, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.

**TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926:  
CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, CHRISTIAN WORKERS FOR FELLOWSHIP**

[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.	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
<b>United States.....</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>\$50,515</b>	<b>\$45,989</b>	<b>\$4,526</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>3,465</b>
Ohio.....	4	4	1,645	1,600	45	4	13	143
Indiana.....	4	4	2,147	1,966	181	4	13	67
Illinois.....	8	8	2,647	2,540	107	8	32	372
Michigan.....	4	3	1,388	1,325	63	3	12	76
Missouri.....	3	3	2,994	2,760	234	3	11	46
Nebraska.....	4	4	1,028	1,004	24	4	19	91
Kansas.....	3	3	245	240	5	2	5	28
Florida.....	4	4	1,063	1,040	23	4	8	64
Kentucky.....	5	5	2,907	2,810	97	5	19	238
Tennessee.....	9	9	3,937	3,697	240	9	33	415
Alabama.....	8	8	4,733	4,081	652	8	30	148
Mississippi.....	5	4	1,345	1,330	15	3	6	46
Arkansas.....	23	23	4,877	4,352	525	22	57	447
Oklahoma.....	20	20	5,319	4,029	1,290	20	52	363
Texas.....	38	36	13,380	12,477	903	35	117	839
California.....	4	3	443	338	105	3	9	27
Other States.....	3	3	417	400	17	3	8	55