

THE (ORIGINAL) CHURCH OF GOD

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for The (Original) Church of God 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 (Original) Church of God includes all persons who have been formally received into any of the local churches.

TABLE 1.—SUMMARY OF STATISTICS FOR CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, 1926: THE (ORIGINAL) CHURCH OF GOD

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations)	50	18	32		
Members	1,869	728	1,141	39.0	61.0
Average per church	37	40	36		
Membership by sex:					
Male	236	47	189	19.9	80.1
Female	304	52	252	17.1	82.9
Sex not reported	1,329	629	700	47.3	52.7
Males per 100 females	77.6	(³)	75.0		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years	4	3	1		
13 years and over	574	134	440	23.3	76.7
Age not reported	1,291	591	700	45.8	54.2
Per cent under 13 years ⁴	0.7	2.2	0.2		
Church edifices:					
Number	22	6	16		
Value—Churches reporting	21	5	16		
Amount reported	\$37,415	\$7,615	\$29,800	20.4	79.6
Average per church	\$1,782	\$1,523	\$1,863		
Debt—Churches reporting	4	1	3		
Amount reported	\$3,684	\$1,600	\$2,084	43.4	56.6
Churches reporting "no debt" on church edifice	14	4	10		
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting	1		1		
Amount reported	\$400		\$400		100.0
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting	11	3	8		
Amount reported	\$5,348	\$2,285	\$3,063	42.7	57.3
Current expenses and improvements	\$4,120	\$1,625	\$2,495	39.4	60.6
Benevolences, missions, etc.	\$1,228	\$660	\$568	53.7	46.3
Average expenditure per church	\$486	\$762	\$383		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting	11	4	7		
Officers and teachers	69	23	46		
Scholars	644	118	526	18.3	81.7

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.

³ Ratio not shown, the number of females being less than 100.

⁴ Based on membership with age classification reported.

The data given for 1926 represent 50 active organizations of The (Original) Church of God, with 1,869 members. The classification of membership by sex was reported by 18 churches and the classification by age was reported by 19 churches, including, however, only 2 which reported any members under 13 years of age.

One church reported a parsonage, upon which there was no debt.

This denomination, although it had a much earlier existence, has not been reported separately until 1926.

State tables.—Tables 2, 3, and 4 present the statistics for The (Original) Church of God by States. Table 2 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 3 gives for selected States the number and membership of the churches for the census of 1926, together with the membership classified as under 13 years of age and 13 years of age and over. Table 4 shows the value of church property and the debt on such property, and also gives the data for Sunday schools. Separate presentation in Table 4 is limited to those States in which three or more churches reported the values of property, in order to avoid disclosing the financial statistics of any individual church. The States omitted from this table can be determined by referring to the complete list which appears in Table 2.

TABLE 2.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES IN URBAN AND RURAL TERRITORY, AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX, BY STATES, 1926: THE (ORIGINAL) CHURCH OF GOD

GEOGRAPHIC DIVISION AND STATE	NUMBER OF CHURCHES			NUMBER OF MEMBERS			TOTAL MEMBERSHIP BY SEX			
	Total	Ur- ban	Ru- ral	Total	Urban	Rural	Male	Female	Sex not report- ed	Males per 100 females (¹)
United States.....	50	18	32	1,869	728	1,141	236	304	1,329	77.6
New England:										
Maine.....	5	1	4	178	17	161	58	59	61	
Middle Atlantic:										
Pennsylvania.....	2	2		57	57		20	25	12	
East North Central:										
Illinois.....	1	1		12	12				12	
Michigan.....	1		1	31		31	17	14		
West North Central:										
Missouri.....	4	4		441	441				441	
South Atlantic:										
Virginia.....	2		2	60		60	15	20	25	
North Carolina.....	7	5	2	116	88	28	27	38	51	
Georgia.....	1	1		38	38				38	
Florida.....	2		2	47		47	6	18	23	
East South Central:										
Kentucky.....	2		2	54		54	28	26		
Tennessee.....	8	3	5	540	63	477	50	76	414	
Alabama.....	11	1	10	197	12	185	12	20	165	
West South Central:										
Arkansas.....	4		4	98		98	3	8	87	

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

TABLE 3.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, BY STATES, 1926: THE (ORIGINAL) CHURCH OF GOD

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

STATE	Number of churches	Number of members	MEMBERSHIP BY AGE			
			Under 13 years	13 years and over	Age not reported	Per cent under 13 ¹
United States.....	50	1,869	4	574	1,291	6.7
Maine.....	5	178	3	114	61	2.6
Missouri.....	4	441			441	
North Carolina.....	7	116		65	51	
Tennessee.....	8	540		126	414	
Alabama.....	11	197		32	165	
Arkansas.....	4	98		11	87	
Other States.....	11	299	1	226	72	0.4

¹ Based on membership with age classification reported.

TABLE 4.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, CHURCH DEBT, AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926: THE (ORIGINAL) CHURCH OF GOD

[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		SUNDAY SCHOOLS		
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Officers and teachers	Scholars
United States.....	50	22	21	\$37,415	4	\$3,684	11	69	644
North Carolina.....	7	4	4	4,500			2	11	128
Tennessee.....	8	4	4	11,000			2	18	240
Alabama.....	11	5	5	6,150	1	39	2	11	88
Other States.....	24	9	8	15,765	3	3,645	5	29	188

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION ¹

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

The (Original) Church of God was organized August 19, 1886, near Birchwood, Tenn. (in what was at that time James County, but at present is Hamilton County), by Rev. R. G. Spurling and his father, Rev. R. Spurling, with 10 members.

The name Church of God was chosen because it was a Bible name and, so far as was known, had never been applied to any other denomination.

From the place of organization, the church spread first into the State of North Carolina, where it went through the trials and difficulties common to all new denominations. However, it multiplied and spread further into several other States, to the Bahama Islands, to Japan, and to South America.

In 1917 a difference of opinion arose among the members in regard to the fundamental principles and teachings of the church and it divided into factions.

¹ This statement was furnished by Rev. J. L. Scott, editor and publisher of The (Original) Church of God Messenger, Chattanooga, Tenn.

Later, one faction withdrew. The faction which claimed to adhere to the original teachings and doctrines of the church adopted the word "original" as part of the title and legally inserted it into the name of the denomination, which has since been known as The (Original) Church of God. This body has not been previously reported in the Census of Religious Bodies.

DOCTRINE

This denomination stands for the whole Bible, rightly divided, taking the New Testament as the only rule of government and discipline. They believe in and teach repentance, justification, regeneration as defined by Martin Luther, sanctification as set forth by John Wesley, divine healing for the body, the premillennial second coming of Jesus, eternal life for the righteous and eternal punishment, with no liberation or annihilation, for the wicked.

They stress belief in pentecostal experience, when, under divine power of the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, as the disciples did on the Day of Pentecost.

The ordinances of the church are baptism by immersion, the Lord's Supper, tithing, and freewill offerings.

ORGANIZATION AND WORK

This church, in its organization, is founded on the practices of the apostolic church of God. Like the early churches, each individual organization takes a local name, such as the Church of God at Corinth, etc. They have local self-government, each church with its pastor, officers, and members having entire authority within itself to transact its own business, such as selecting pastors, dealing with its own members, finances, and church property.

It recognizes the orders of the ministry as given in the New Testament—evangelists, deacons, and bishops or elders. Any local church may recommend a person whom they believe to be called of God and qualified for the ministry, and after an examination by two or more ordained bishops, he may be ordained or licensed to preach.

They have a General Convention which meets annually in the autumn at Chattanooga, Tenn. It is a delegated body in which all the churches are represented.

In connection with the usual work of evangelization, the church has a general office and publishing house, located at Chattanooga, Tenn. This city is also the location of the official headquarters of the denomination. Here a church manual, various tracts and other church literature, as well as the official organ, The (Original) Church of God Messenger, are published.