

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, "THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH"

STATISTICS

Summary for the United States, with urban-rural classification.—A general summary of the statistics for the Church of the Living God, "The Pillar and Ground of Truth," 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, "The Pillar and Ground of Truth," consists of all baptized person 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, "THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH"

ITEM	Total	In urban territory ¹	In rural territory ¹	PER CENT OF TOTAL ²	
				Urban	Rural
Churches (local organizations)	81	45	36		
Members	5,844	3,886	1,958	66.5	33.5
Average per church.....	72	86	54		
Membership by sex:					
Male.....	3,247	2,168	1,084	66.6	33.4
Female.....	2,597	1,723	874	66.3	33.7
Males per 100 females.....	125.0	126.5	124.0		
Membership by age:					
Under 13 years.....	965	630	335	65.3	34.7
13 years and over.....	4,879	3,256	1,623	66.7	33.3
Per cent under 13 years.....	16.5	16.2	17.1		
Church edifices:					
Number.....	84	48	36		
Value—Churches reporting.....	81	45	36		
Amount reported.....	\$170,547	\$126,665	\$43,882	74.3	25.7
Average per church.....	\$2,106	\$2,815	\$1,219		
Debt—Churches reporting.....	45	30	15		
Amount reported.....	\$29,277	\$24,960	\$4,317	85.3	14.7
Parsonages:					
Value—Churches reporting.....	14	13	1		
Amount reported.....	\$25,100	\$24,100	\$1,000	96.0	4.0
Debt—Churches reporting.....	2	2			
Amount reported.....	\$3,350	\$3,350		100.0	
Expenditures during year:					
Churches reporting.....	81	45	36		
Amount reported.....	\$64,555	\$43,338	\$21,217	67.1	32.9
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$51,284	\$32,682	\$18,602	63.7	36.3
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$13,271	\$10,656	\$2,615	80.3	19.7
Average expenditure per church.....	\$797	\$963	\$589		
Sunday schools:					
Churches reporting.....	26	19	7		
Officers and teachers.....	169	132	37	78.1	21.9
Scholars.....	1,468	1,177	291	80.2	19.8

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 81 active organizations of the Church of the Living God, "The Pillar and Ground of Truth," with 5,844 members. The classification of membership by sex and by age was reported by all of the 81 churches, including 75 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. The figures given for the years prior to 1926 represent, so far as they were separately reported, the statistics of those bodies which combined in 1925 under the new designation.

TABLE 2.—COMPARATIVE SUMMARY, 1906 TO 1926: CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, "THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH"

ITEM	1926	1916 ¹	1906 ²
Churches (local organizations).....	81	38	14
Increase over preceding census:			
Number.....	43	24	-----
Per cent ³	-----	-----	-----
Members.....	5,844	2,009	752
Increase over preceding census:			
Number.....	3,835	1,257	-----
Per cent.....	190.9	167.2	-----
Average membership per church.....	72	53	54
Church edifices:			
Number.....	84	33	12
Value—Churches reporting.....	81	33	12
Amount reported.....	\$170,547	\$36,575	\$25,700
Average per church.....	\$2,106	\$1,108	\$2,142
Debt—Churches reporting.....	45	9	2
Amount reported.....	\$29,277	\$8,133	\$1,600
Parsonages:			
Value—Churches reporting.....	14	1	2
Amount reported.....	\$25,100	\$250	\$1,500
Debt—Churches reporting.....	2	-----	-----
Amount reported.....	\$3,350	-----	-----
Expenditures during year:			
Churches reporting.....	81	36	-----
Amount reported.....	\$64,555	\$9,908	-----
Current expenses and improvements.....	\$51,284	\$9,031	-----
Benevolences, missions, etc.....	\$13,271	\$872	-----
Average expenditure per church.....	\$797	\$275	-----
Sunday schools:			
Churches reporting.....	26	36	13
Officers and teachers.....	109	164	67
Scholars.....	1,468	650	585

¹ Statistics for 1916 represent the combined data for the Church of the Living God and the Church of the Living God, General Assembly.

² Statistics given for 1906 are those of the Church of the Living God, Apostolic Church.

³ 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 the Living God, "The Pillar and Ground of Truth," 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.

Ecclesiastical divisions.—Table 7 presents, for each diocese in the "Pillar and Ground of Truth," the more important statistical data shown by States in the earlier tables, including number of churches, membership, value of church edifices, debt on church edifices, expenditures, and Sunday schools.

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, "THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH"

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.....	81	45	36	5,844	3,886	1,958	3,247	2,597	125.0
East North Central:									
Ohio.....	2	2	-----	257	257	-----	115	142	81.0
Indiana.....	3	2	1	475	320	155	245	230	106.5
Illinois.....	1	1	-----	501	501	-----	300	201	149.3
East South Central:									
Kentucky.....	1	1	-----	132	132	-----	60	72	-----
Tennessee.....	1	1	-----	134	134	-----	34	100	34.0
West South Central:									
Arkansas.....	1	1	-----	42	42	-----	14	28	-----
Oklahoma.....	18	14	4	1,100	908	192	629	471	133.5
Texas.....	54	23	31	3,203	1,592	1,611	1,850	1,353	136.7

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

TABLE 4.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, 1906 TO 1926, AND MEMBERSHIP BY AGE, 1926, BY STATES: CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, "THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH"

[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 ¹	1906 ¹	1926	1916 ¹	1906 ¹	Under 13 years	13 years and over	Per cent under 13 ²
United States.....	81	38	14	5,844	2,009	752	965	4,879	16.5
Indiana.....	3	-----	-----	475	-----	-----	70	405	14.7
Arkansas.....	1	1	8	42	10	338	2	40	-----
Oklahoma.....	18	2	1	1,100	46	35	199	901	18.1
Texas.....	54	31	2	3,203	1,848	178	620	2,683	16.2
Other States.....	5	4	3	1,024	105	206	174	850	17.0

¹ Combined figures for the Church of the Living God and the Church of the Living God, General Assembly.

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

HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND ORGANIZATION¹

DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

This church, though shown under a new designation in 1926, is an outgrowth of the body organized at Wrightsville, Ark., in 1889, by Rev. William Christian, as the Church of the Living God, Christian Workers for Fellowship.

There had been a previous division, in 1902, of a group which called themselves the Church of the Living God, Apostolic Church; these churches were organized in 1908, by Rev. C. W. Harris, under the name Church of the Living God, General Assembly. In 1925 a number of other churches withdrew from the original

¹ This statement was furnished, in part, by Right Rev. E. J. Cain, D. D., presiding bishop of the Diocese of Western Oklahoma and Northern Texas, and approved by him in its present form.

**TABLE 5.—VALUE OF CHURCH PROPERTY, AND CHURCH DEBT, BY STATES, 1926:
CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, "THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH"**

[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.....	81	84	81	\$170,547	45	\$29,277	14	\$25,100	2	\$3,350
Indiana.....	3	3	3	12,300	2	4,100	3	4,200		
Oklahoma.....	18	20	18	45,685	14	10,215	4	4,400	1	350
Texas.....	54	55	54	89,512	26	11,807	4	11,500	1	3,000
Other States.....	6	6	6	23,050	3	3,155	3	5,000		

**TABLE 6.—CHURCH EXPENDITURES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY STATES, 1926:
CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, "THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH"**

[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
United States.....	81	81	\$64,555	\$51,284	\$13,271	26	169	1,468
Indiana.....	3	3	3,740	3,180	560			
Oklahoma.....	18	18	20,290	12,856	7,434	14	79	686
Texas.....	54	54	34,625	30,698	3,927	11	70	482
Other States.....	6	6	5,900	4,550	1,350	1	20	300

body and were united by Rev. E. J. Cain under the name Church of the Living God, "The Pillar and Ground of Truth"; and the following year two bodies joined them, one of them being the General Assembly and the other a group of churches organized in 1908 in the State of Texas, the Church of the Living God, these two having previously united at Athens, Tex., in 1924.

ORGANIZATION

The denomination is episcopal in form of government, having at the present time three bishops, each in charge of a diocese holding annual assemblies. Every two years there is a meeting called the general assembly, presided over by the bishops in order of their age. Bishops are elected at these meetings by a two-thirds vote of the accredited delegates.

WORK

The church maintains a home for aged Negroes, called the Booker T. Washington Home, at Oklahoma City, Okla., and a secondary school and orphans' home, the Edmondson Institute and Orphanage, at Athens, Tex. The official organ, the Western News Review, is published weekly at Oklahoma City, Okla., at which place the headquarters of the denomination are located.

TABLE 7.—NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF CHURCHES, VALUE OF EDIFICES, DEBT, EXPENDITURES, AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS, BY DIOCESES, 1926: CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD, "THE PILLAR AND GROUND OF TRUTH"

DIOCESE	Total number of churches	Number of members	VALUE OF CHURCH EDIFICES		DEBT ON CHURCH EDIFICES		EXPENDITURES DURING YEAR		SUNDAY SCHOOLS	
			Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Amount	Churches reporting	Number of scholars
Total	81	5,844	81	\$170,547	45	\$29,277	81	\$64,555	26	1,466
Arkansas.....	1	42		(¹)		(¹)		(¹)		
East Oklahoma.....	4	206	4	6,150	2	685	4	2,615	2	64
East Texas.....	48	2,832	48	80,612	22	9,665	48	30,532	11	483
Illinois.....	1	501		(¹)		(¹)		(¹)	1	300
Indiana.....	3	475	3	12,300	2	4,100	3	3,740		
Kentucky.....	1	132		(¹)		(¹)		(¹)		
Ohio.....	2	257		(¹)		(¹)		(¹)		
Oklahoma and West Texas.....	1	235		(¹)		(¹)		(¹)	1	190
South Texas.....	1	49		(¹)		(¹)		(¹)		
West Oklahoma.....	13	659	13	21,035	11	4,080	13	11,375	11	432
West Tennessee.....	1	134		(¹)		(¹)		(¹)		
West Texas.....	5	322	5	8,300	4	2,142	5	3,597		
Combinations ²			8	42,150	4	8,655	8	12,696		

¹ Amount included in the figures shown on the line designated "Combinations," to avoid disclosing the statistics of individual churches.

² The figures for value, debt, and expenditures represent data for churches in the following dioceses: Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, Oklahoma and West Texas, South Texas, and West Tennessee.