

2022 Assemblies of God Church Growth Report Growing, Plateaued, and Declining Churches

Prior to establishing this report, the Assemblies of God had determined church growth, plateau, and decline (GPD) informally and generally in a manner inconsistent with that of the larger church world. The difference in calculation approach had caused our reporting to be inaccurate for comparison purposes with other church groups. The Assemblies of God approach to calculation was driven by the limitations of software and further affirmed by past leadership decision.

In mid-2022, the Assemblies of God Office of the Statistician reviewed individual church data and constructed the database and spreadsheets necessary for calculating GPD in the manner commonly used by other church groups. This report provides a summary of those calculations.

In addition, this report provides a bulleted list of “talking points” that can be derived from this research. That list is provided at the conclusion of the report.

THE CALCULATION:

In order to calculate a comparable GPD, a five-year period (2017-22) was used. Using the most common standard in church health literature, the following labels were attached to each congregation:

Growth $\geq 10\%$	GROWING
$-10\% < \text{Growth} < 10\%$	PLATEAUED
Decline $\leq -10\%$	DECLINING

The calculated results for all AG churches in the United States are as follows:

<u>Churches¹</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Plateaued & Declining²</u>
10,692	2,057 19.2%	2,778 26.0%	5,857 54.8%	8,635 80.8%

¹To be included in the calculation, a church must exist under its account number in both 2017 and 2022. This requirement applies to all subsequent calculations in this report. Since a church had to report under their own account number in both 2017 and 2022 to be included in the study, some smaller existing churches in 2017 that have subsequently become PAC churches may not be included in the study, if their 2022 numbers continue to be incorporated in the data reported by their parenting church.

²Since publications frequently refer to “Plateaued and Declining” congregations, this calculation is additionally provided.

The calculated results for smaller/larger churches are as follows (2017-22):

<u>Churches (<200)</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Plateaued & Declining</u>
8,724	1,779 20.4%	2,348 26.9%	4,597 52.7%	6,945 79.6%
<u>Churches (200+)</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Plateaued & Declining</u>
1,968	278 14.1%	430 21.8%	1,260 64.0%	1,690 85.9%

The calculated results for church size groups are as follows (2017-22):

<u>Churches (<50)</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Plateaued & Declining</u>
3,488	939	976	1,573	2,549
	26.9%	28.0%	45.1%	73.1%
<u>Churches (50-99)</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Plateaued & Declining</u>
3,109	520	846	1,743	2,589
	16.7%	27.2%	56.1%	83.3%
<u>Churches (100-199)</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Plateaued & Declining</u>
2,127	320	526	1,281	1,807
	15.0%	24.7%	60.2%	85.0%
<u>Churches (200-399)</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Plateaued & Declining</u>
1,084	165	250	669	919
	15.2%	23.1%	61.7%	84.8%
<u>Churches (400-699)</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Plateaued & Declining</u>
475	66	99	310	409
	13.9%	20.8%	65.3%	86.1%
<u>Churches (700-999)</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Plateaued & Declining</u>
152	18	31	103	134
	11.8%	20.4%	67.8%	88.2%
<u>Churches (1,000+)</u>	<u>Growing</u>	<u>Plateaued</u>	<u>Declining</u>	<u>Plateaued & Declining</u>
257	29	50	178	228
	11.3%	19.5%	69.3%	88.7%

SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

1. Given that 2022 attendance is being compared to 2017 attendance (pre-COVID), it is not surprising to see continuing high numbers of plateaued and declining churches, though it should be noted that the percentage of plateaued and declining churches has been on the rise since the early 1990s and set the previous record level in 2019.
2. Less than 1 out of 5 (19.2%) of Assemblies of God churches in America are growing (2017-22), a number that reached a peak of 40.2% in 1994-99.
3. More than 4 out of 5 (80.8%) of Assemblies of God churches in America are plateaued or declining (2017-22), a number that has been increasing since a low of 59.8% in 1994-99. It should be noted that in 2022 this number decreased from a record high of 81.4% in 2021.
4. 54.8% of Assemblies of God churches in America are in decline (2017-22). Recent rates of declining churches are up significantly from 42.2% in 2010-15. The lowest percentage of declining churches since the turn of the century occurred in 1995-2000 (39.3%).
5. In 2022, this percentage of declining churches decreased from a record high of 58.6% last year (2016-21).
6. Of significant interest in the 2017-22 study, churches 0-49 have the lowest percentage of plateaued and declining congregations (73.1%).
7. Also of note, in 2017-22, 1 in 9 of the largest churches (1000+) were growing (11.3%)—down from 39.5% in 2014-19. A similarly small percentage of churches 700-999 were growing (11.8%).
8. In the two COVID-19 impacted years (2015-20 and 2016-21), a higher percentage of smaller churches (<200) were growing than larger churches (>200). This trend continued in the 2017-22 study (20.4% compared to 14.1%). This has come after a four-year trend where larger churches (200+) had a higher percentage of growing churches (2014-19, 2013-18, 2012-17, 2011-16). This current shift demonstrates a return to the pattern of the previous thirty-six years prior to 2011-16.
9. Over the past thirty-plus years, churches 100-199 and churches 200-399 have the highest percentage of plateaued and declining churches. However, in the years impacted by COVID, churches 700-999 and churches 1000+ are at the highest levels.

10. Compared with the 1990s, there had been a sharp decline in percentage of growing churches among most all of our size groupings except our largest churches (>1000). However, as expected due to COVID impact, all size groupings have demonstrate a sharp decline in the percentage of growing churches, with the largest churches (1000+) suffering the greatest impact.

DATA AVAILABLE

Growth, Plateau, and Decline data is available from CTI for each five-year study period from 1980-85 through 2017-22.

ADDITIONAL REPORTS

The Acts 2 Journey Team has also developed and provided church health metrics calculations based on these congregational size groupings so we can begin to compare what ACMR data can tell us of missional effectiveness, assimilation, kingdom growth, discipleship, mobilization, and reproduction being achieved in local churches of various sizes. These calculations will help us to identify the healthiest churches among our U.S. congregations.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Mike Clarensau
Statistician

PREVIOUS YEARS

While the research numbers above provide data from the most recent five-year period (2017-22), the previous study periods (2016-21, 2015-20, 2007-12, 2006-11, 2005-10, 1997-02, 1996-01, 1995-00) were used to reach these conclusions. A chart providing the growth, plateau, and decline summaries for the three five-year periods from the 2000s, 1990s, and 1980s is provided below.

Growth Report by Church Size

GROWTH																		
SIZE	2017-22	R	2016-21	R	2015-20	R	2007-12	R	2006-11	R	2005-10	R	1997-02	R	1996-01	R	1995-00	R
0-49	26.9%	1	27.0%	1	28.2%	1	44.5%	1	43.1%	2	44.4%	1	47.5%	2	48.3%	1	47.8%	1
50-99	16.7%	2	15.9%	2	17.4%	3	30.9%	4	31.3%	5	31.7%	4	33.8%	4	35.2%	5	36.8%	5
100-199	15.0%	3	14.0%	4	14.8%	6	28.3%	7	29.0%	6	29.4%	7	31.5%	5	32.9%	6	33.7%	6
200-399	15.2%	4	14.4%	3	16.0%	4	30.7%	5	28.0%	7	29.8%	6	29.7%	7	31.7%	7	33.1%	7
400-699	13.9%	5	12.1%	5	15.5%	5	30.1%	6	33.3%	3	30.1%	5	30.9%	6	36.8%	4	37.4%	4
700-999	11.8%	6	10.3%	7	14.6%	7	35.8%	3	32.9%	4	34.2%	3	37.7%	3	41.5%	2	41.2%	3
1000+	11.3%	7	12.5%	6	21.1%	2	43.0%	2	43.7%	1	44.2%	2	48.5%	1	40.5%	3	42.1%	2
0-199	20.4%		19.8%		20.9%		35.5%		35.2%		36.0%		38.3%		39.5%		40.2%	
200+	14.1%		13.3%		16.4%		32.1%		31.1%		31.7%		31.9%		34.1%		35.2%	
ALL	19.2%		18.6%		20.9%		34.9%		34.5%		35.3%		37.2%		38.6%		39.4%	

PLATEAU																		
SIZE	2017-22	R	2016-21	R	2015-20	R	2007-12	R	2006-11	R	2005-10	R	1997-02	R	1996-01	R	1995-00	R
0-49	28.0%	1	24.8%	1	22.9%	1	20.7%	7	20.7%	7	20.3%	7	19.6%	7	18.6%	7	19.4%	7
50-99	27.2%	2	23.6%	2	22.6%	2	27.6%	3	26.2%	2	24.9%	2	22.4%	6	20.6%	6	21.6%	6
100-199	24.7%	3	21.9%	3	22.0%	4	26.4%	4	25.4%	4	24.0%	5	22.7%	5	20.9%	4	23.0%	2
200-399	23.1%	4	19.9%	4	19.0%	6	22.5%	6	24.4%	5	22.4%	6	26.1%	2	24.3%	2	22.9%	3
400-699	20.8%	5	18.5%	5	19.7%	5	31.5%	1	24.4%	5	25.2%	1	24.3%	4	20.7%	5	21.7%	5
700-999	20.4%	6	16.4%	7	22.5%	3	27.7%	2	26.2%	2	24.7%	3	26.3%	1	22.8%	3	21.9%	4
1000+	19.5%	7	17.3%	6	17.4%	7	26.3%	5	28.9%	1	24.2%	4	26.1%	2	33.3%	1	24.8%	1
0-199	26.9%		23.6%		22.5%		24.6%		24.0%		22.9%		21.4%		19.9%		21.1%	
200+	21.8%		19.0%		19.3%		25.2%		25.0%		23.4%		25.7%		24.0%		22.7%	
ALL	26.0%		22.8%		21.9%		24.7%		24.1%		23.0%		22.2%		20.6%		21.4%	

DECLINE																		
SIZE	2017-22	R	2016-21	R	2015-20	R	2007-12	R	2006-11	R	2005-10	R	1997-02	R	1996-01	R	1995-00	R
0-49	45.1%	1	48.2%	7	49.0%	7	34.8%	6	35.9%	6	35.2%	6	32.9%	6	33.1%	6	32.8%	7
50-99	56.1%	2	60.6%	6	59.9%	6	41.5%	3	42.6%	3	43.4%	4	43.7%	4	44.1%	2	41.6%	3
100-199	60.2%	3	64.1%	5	63.3%	3	45.3%	2	45.6%	2	46.6%	2	45.8%	1	46.2%	1	43.3%	2
200-399	61.7%	4	65.7%	4	65.0%	1	46.8%	1	47.6%	1	47.8%	1	44.2%	3	44.0%	3	44.0%	1
400-699	65.3%	5	69.3%	3	64.9%	2	38.5%	4	42.3%	4	44.7%	3	44.8%	2	42.5%	4	40.8%	4
700-999	67.8%	6	73.3%	1	62.9%	4	36.5%	5	40.9%	5	41.1%	5	36.2%	5	35.8%	5	36.8%	5
1000+	69.3%	7	70.2%	2	61.5%	5	30.6%	7	27.4%	7	31.6%	7	25.4%	7	26.2%	7	33.1%	6
0-199	52.7%		56.6%		56.6%		39.9%		40.8%		41.1%		40.3%		40.6%		38.7%	
200+	64.0%		67.8%		64.4%		42.6%		43.9%		45.0%		42.3%		41.8%		42.1%	
ALL	54.8%		58.6%		58.0%		40.3%		41.3%		41.7%		40.6%		40.8%		39.3%	

PLATEAU & DECLINE																		
SIZE	2017-22	R	2016-21	R	2015-20	R	2007-12	R	2006-11	R	2005-10	R	1997-02	R	1996-01	R	1995-00	R
0-49	73.1%	7	73.0%	7	71.8%	7	55.5%	7	56.9%	6	55.6%	7	52.5%	6	51.7%	7	52.2%	7
50-99	83.3%	6	84.1%	6	82.6%	5	69.1%	4	68.7%	3	68.3%	4	66.2%	4	64.8%	3	63.2%	3
100-199	85.0%	4	86.0%	4	85.2%	2	71.7%	1	71.0%	2	70.6%	1	68.5%	3	67.1%	2	66.3%	2
200-399	84.8%	5	85.6%	5	84.0%	4	69.3%	3	72.0%	1	70.2%	2	70.3%	1	68.3%	1	66.9%	1
400-699	86.1%	3	87.9%	2	84.5%	3	69.9%	2	66.7%	5	69.9%	3	69.1%	2	63.2%	4	62.6%	4
700-999	88.2%	2	89.7%	1	85.4%	1	64.2%	5	67.1%	4	65.8%	5	62.3%	5	58.5%	6	58.8%	5
1000+	88.7%	1	87.5%	3	78.9%	6	57.0%	6	56.3%	7	55.8%	6	51.5%	7	59.5%	5	57.9%	6
0-199	79.6%		79.1%		79.1%		64.5%		64.8%		64.0%		61.7%		60.5%		59.8%	
200+	85.9%		86.7%		83.6%		67.9%		68.9%		68.3%		68.1%		65.9%		64.8%	
ALL	80.8%		81.4%		79.9%		65.1%		65.5%		64.7%		62.8%		61.4%		60.6%	