

# **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT**

## **Alton Garrison**

It is my distinct privilege to serve the Assemblies of God as the assistant general superintendent and a great honor to work with Dr. Wood and the Executive Leadership Team. We are co-laborers fulfilling our unique callings and serving the district leaders, pastors, and congregations in the United States.

### **ACTS 2 JOURNEY INITIATIVE**

Beginning in January 2015, I began leading the church revitalization effort for the Assemblies of God USA. This past year we made application and were approved by Rights and Permissions to change the name of the Church Transformation Initiative to the Acts 2 Journey Initiative. This moniker better identifies to our external public our mission and vision to equip and empower leaders and the congregations they lead to discover and pursue God's vision for spiritual health and vitality.

In order to assist every church that is seeking to be strengthened, a decision was made in January 2017 that we would scholarship (valued at \$2,000) every church participating in an Acts 2 Journey. Each Acts 2 Journey consists of quarterly retreats: Friday from 2-6 p.m. for pastors and Saturday from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. for pastors and church teams. There are 30 Acts 2 Journeys scheduled in 2017. Presently, there are 323 churches located in 12 districts engaged in Acts 2 Journey Cohorts; and throughout the fall, 6 additional journeys will begin.

### **ACTS 2 SURVEY**

We have reached the final phases of full development in designing the Acts 2 Survey. Many Acts 2 Journey alumni churches assisted us with the validation of survey questions in our pursuit of the best tool for measuring Spirit-empowered church health for the Acts 2 Church. We have now tested the survey among more than 40 pilot congregations, and the top four dominant factors that influence Spirit-empowered church health are:

- Outward focus demonstrated in community engagement
- Absence of unhealthy conflict
- Spirit-led worship
- Pursuit of Spirit-empowerment

Stats of interest (based upon a 10% increase or decrease over a 5-year period from 2011-2016):

- Less than 1 out of 3 or 31.3% of AG churches in America is growing.
- Just over 2 out of 3 or 68.7% are plateaued or declining.
- The rate of declining churches (43.1%) is the highest since the 1984-1989 period.
- The highest percentage of growing churches is among those 1,000+ in attendance and those 0-49 in attendance.
- Churches with 700-999 in attendance continue to have the highest percentage of plateaued congregations (29.4%).
- This is the first year since the study began in 1980 where the percentage of growing smaller churches (under 200) is smaller than the percentage of growing larger churches (31.3% to 33%). This underscores the intensifying of the current struggle among our smaller churches.

## 2016 AG USA SELECTED WORSHIP ATTENDANCE RANGES

Worship Attendance Range	# of Churches	% of Total Churches	Worship Attendance	% of Total Worship Attendance
Less than 50/no report/ PAC*	5,324	40.9%	133,117	7%
Less than 100	8,715	66.9%	367,996	18%
Less than 200	11,021	84.6%	681,994	34%
Less than 400	12,112	93.0%	979,386	49%
Less than 1,000	12,764	98.0%	1,353,936	68%
1,000+	259	2.0%	650,961	32%
2,000+	98	0.8%	436,126	22%

\*Parent Affiliated Church (PAC) data are included in the parent church's totals. Since individual PAC attendance is unknown, the PAC church counts are included in this category.

Total churches: 13,023  
Total worship attendance: 4,004,897

### STATUS OF ACTS 2 JOURNEY CHURCHES

- The percentage of Acts 2 Journey churches that have less than 100 in weekly attendance is 61%.
- The percentage of Acts 2 Journey churches that have fewer than 200 in weekly attendance is 86%.
- The percentage of Acts 2 Journey churches plateaued or declining (declining or total growth of less than 10% in attendance over a 5-year period) is 68%.
- Of the DECLINING churches to engage the Acts 2 Journey from 2010-2016, 62% are no longer declining.
- Only 2.7% or 16 of 600 churches to engage the Acts 2 Journey in the last 5 years have closed or moved to PAC status versus 12% of all AG churches that have closed or moved to PAC status during this same period of time.

The emphasis Dr. Wood gave in his *Core Values* regarding “planting churches and revitalizing existing ones” is gaining fresh momentum. We are partnering with Church Multiplication Network to assist in infusing the Acts 2 Model in new church plants. The Acts 2 Model is being adopted by many churches in the United States as well as in other parts of the world. The Dominican Republic recently chose the Acts 2 Model as their “health” model and has scheduled an Acts 2 Journey to begin in the fall of 2017. Africa and

Latin America are in discussion with us to adopt the Acts 2 Model for church planting and strengthening existing churches. Plans are to translate *A Spirit Empowered Church* into French, Portuguese, and Swahili. The book is already in English and Spanish.

In addition to my role as the Assistant General Superintendent, I serve as chair of the Pentecostal Charismatic Churches of North America (PCCNA) and the Empowered 21 USA Cabinet. Both have renewed their interest and efforts in strengthening churches under their influence and have adopted the Acts 2 Model.

I am grateful for the team that serves the office of the Assistant General Superintendent and the Acts 2 Journey Initiative. Jackie Chrisner serves as my Executive Administrative Assistant, and Austin Jacobs serves team members and the churches engaged in the Acts 2 Journey Cohorts. Both are a blessing and serve with excellence. In addition to Dr. Ron McManus, Rick Allen, and Dr. Mike Clarensau, several more have joined the Acts 2 Journey team: John Johnson, Dr. George Winney, Wes Bartel, Loren Hicks, and Todd Clair.