

African-American Church Planting RESEARCH REPORT

For Presbyterian Church in America - MNA

Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Acknowledgements	3
Methodology and Response Rate	4
Church Plant Attendance	6
Church Plant New Commitments	7
Descriptive Statistics for Church Plants	8
Church Plant Health	17

Acknowledgements

The African-American Church Planting Study was an idea that first emerged within the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Carolyn Curtis, a layperson who had attended an African-American church plant near Washington D.C. that closed, approached PCA leadership wanting to know how to equip future African-American church plants in the same way the 2007 Church Planting Survivability study had equipped churches a few years before.

Wy Plummer and Carl F. Ellis brought the idea to LifeWay Research, and Ed Stetzer shared the opportunity with the Church Planting Leadership Fellowship (CPLF). Soon a group of sponsors emerged to make this study a reality. These included the Mission to North America (PCA), Assemblies of God (AG), Path 1 (United Methodist Church), International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), Southern Baptists of Texas, the Foursquare Church, and North American Mission Board (SBC).

The cross-denominational working team was essential in survey development and reviewing reports. Many thanks go to Candace Lewis (Path 1), Stacy Hilliard (IPHC), Wy Plummer (PCA), Leroy Fountain (NAMB), and consultant Carl F. Ellis. Thanks are also extended to Carolyn Curtis for reviewing the survey and reports and providing helpful suggestions.

Much appreciation is also given to the LifeWay Research team that guided the project from methodology to final statistics and all of the emails, interviews, and phone calls in between: Scott McConnell, Daniel Price, Lizette Beard, and Matthew Lowe.

Finally, this project would not have been successful without the participation of almost 300 church planters. Their contribution of time and reflection on their experiences will make this study valuable for many future church planters. Much appreciation goes to AG, PCA, Church of God MD-DE, districts of the United Methodist Church, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and NAMB for providing lists of church planters for this study.

Methodology and Response Rate

The African-American Church Planting Study was conducted by LifeWay Research. Its objectives were to quantitatively measure characteristics of African-American church plants and to identify characteristics that are related to higher attendance or higher numbers of new commitments to Jesus Christ, to measure the health of African-American church plants, and to measure characteristics that are distinctive to the African-American context.

Project sponsors were Mission to North America (PCA), Assemblies of God (AG), Path 1 (United Methodist Church), International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), Southern Baptists of Texas, the Foursquare Church, and North American Mission Board (SBC).

The quantitative questionnaire was designed by LifeWay Research in consultation with a cross-denominational working team of African-American church planting experts. Lists of African-American church plants that were started between 2005 through 2010 (and beyond) were provided by Assemblies of God, Presbyterian Church in America, Church of God MD-DE, districts of the United Methodist Church, Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and Southern Baptist Convention. Lists were requested from traditional African-American denominations. Lists were rented to ensure invitations would be sent to African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Church of God in Christ, Church of the Nazarene, National Baptist, Baptist Missionary Association, other Baptist, other Christian, other Pentecostal, and Non-denominational churches. A total of 2,880 churches were identified although contact information was incomplete for many churches and more than a third of responding churches were in fact started prior to 2005.

LifeWay Research emailed invitations to complete the quantitative survey to all churches with an email address (at least 1,250) – this is more than three times the number promised in the original project design (400). Reminder emails were sent up to 5 times that included recommendations from denominational leaders, an introduction to the expert cross-denominational working team, and the additional offer of a study Bible for everyone who completed the survey. Phone calls were also made to at least 1,130 church planters to encourage participation. All respondents completed the survey online. In total, 290 surveys were completed between February 16 and May 31, 2012.

Survivability rate of church plants could not be determined since only 18 church plants interviewed stated they were no longer operating. Due to this low response among failed church plants, a year by year analysis for survivability is not possible.

Follow-up qualitative interviews were conducted with 15 of the most effective church planters surveyed in the quantitative survey. Results from the qualitative interviews are available in a separate report: **African-American Church Planting: Qualitative Report**.

Introduction

The 2012 African-American Church Planting study provides quantitative measures of African-American church plants that both describe their formation and identify characteristics that are related to higher attendance and higher numbers of new commitments to Jesus Christ. Total Protestant data is available in a separate report: **African-American Church Planting: Research Report**.

The primary emphasis and commentary of this report are the responses of African-American church plants in the Presbyterian Church in America from this 2012 survey. Where question wording matches, comparisons are shown to the Church Plant Survivability and Health Study 2007 by Ed Stetzer and Philip Connor (noted as 2007). The ethnicity of the PCA church plants was not included in the 2007 report, but few if any are believed to be African-American churches.

Cautionary Information about Small Sample Size

The information presented in this section contains data from both a 2007 and 2012 survey of Presbyterian Church in America church plants. For the 2007 survey there are a total of 34 completed surveys sampled among all PCA church plants and the 2012 survey contains 13 completed surveys among African-American PCA church plants. The small sample sizes mean that any comparisons between results should be performed cautiously. While there may appear to be large differences in percentages between the two surveys, this can be the result of a very small number of church plants providing different responses. Therefore, use caution when drawing distinctions between the two surveys.

Increased volatility will also be seen in some of the mean responses (attendance, growth, dollars received, etc) because of the small sample sizes. The growth or closure of one large church can have a noticeable impact on these averages.

Factors associated with higher baptisms or attendance are statistically significant which means that the factor has a probability value (p-value) less than 0.05 (5%) or a 1 in 20 chance that the described conclusion is a statistical anomaly. Due to the small sample size in the 2012 survey, these factors are interesting but should not be deemed as conclusive in determining what impacts higher attendance or new commitments.

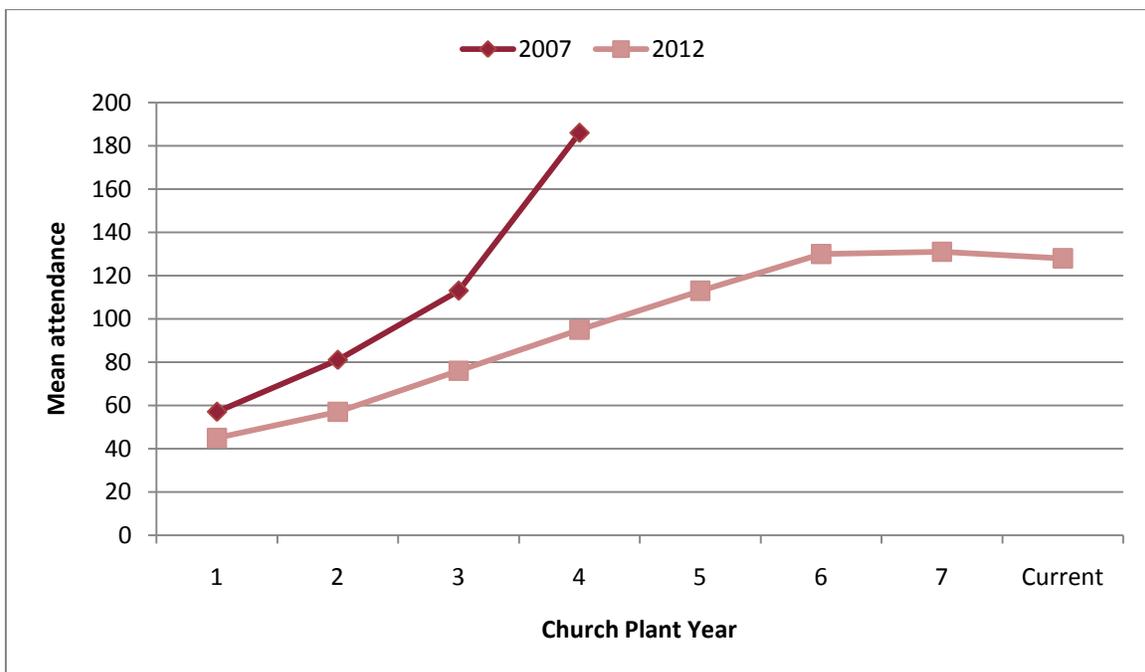
The survivability rate of PCA church plants could not be determined since a small number of church plants interviewed stated they were no longer operating. Due to this low response among failed church plants, a year by year analysis for survivability is not possible.

Church Plant Attendance of Presbyterian Church in America Church Plants

WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

The following are the mean attendance figures for each year of church plants surveyed. Average worship attendance for the first year of African-American PCA church plants is 45. By year four, the average worship attendance has doubled.

Figure 1 – Mean attendance for church plants by church plant year



FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER ATTENDANCE

2007 –

- starting the church with a staffed church planting team financed by funds exterior to the church plant
- starting at least one daughter church within three years of the church plant

2012 –

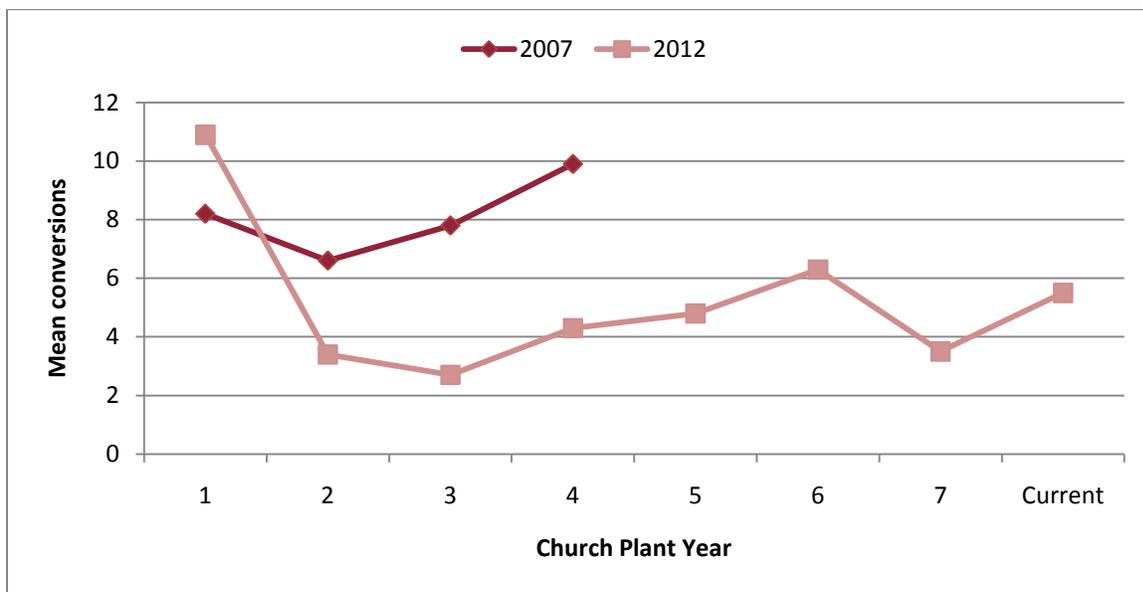
- pastor led decision making in the first two years of the church plant
- sponsoring church mentors the church planter or church planting team
- church planter peer network provided by the denomination or network

Church Plant Conversions/Baptisms of Presbyterian Church in America Church Plants

NEW COMMITMENTS

The following are the mean number of conversions or new commitments to Jesus Christ for each church plant year among church plants surveyed.

Figure 2 – Mean conversions for church plants by church plant year



NOTES: 2007 - Respondents were asked for the number of baptisms or conversions
2012 - Respondents were asked for the number of new commitments to Jesus Christ

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER CONVERSION COUNTS

2007 –

- meeting in the sponsoring church’s building
- having the church planter assessed prior to planting the church
- having the parents of the church planter live within 300 miles of the church plant

2012 –

- meeting in a school
- using prayer walking as an outreach activity
- having received demographics and/or research expertise from denomination

Descriptive Statistics For Presbyterian Church in America Church Plants

Although descriptive statistics do not indicate factors that increase the chances of survivability nor church plant health, the following tables and graphs do provide a summary as to what Presbyterian Church in America church planters are doing and experiencing.

Values are shown for both the 2012 African-American church plants and the 2007 survey of PCA church plants.

YEAR BEGAN

The following table displays the breakdown for church plant starts surveyed by year.

Table 1 – Presbyterian Church in America church plants by year begun

Year Began	2012	2007 Survey
2001 or Prior	38%	13%
2002		23%
2003		6%
2004	8%	23%
2005		25%
2006	8%	10%
2007	23%	-----
2008	15%	-----
2009		-----
2010	8%	-----

EVANGELICAL CONTEXT

2007 – Approximately 35% of PCA churches were planted in communities where it is 10 percent or less evangelical Christian.

2012 – Over 90% of African-American PCA churches were planted in communities where it is more than 10 percent Bible believing Christians.

FACILITIES

The following table represents the percentage of PCA church plants by the type of facility they used. More than one type could be indicated by a church in each timeframe asked.

Table 2 – Facility type for Presbyterian Church in America church plants

Facility	Percent of church plants using this facility in the first year		Percent of church plants using this facility in subsequent years	
	2012*	2007 Survey	2012	2007 Survey
School	38%	29%	15%	24%
Movie Theater	0%	6%	0%	6%
Church building	15%	21%	54%	15%
Homes	8%	6%	8%	12%
Business establishment	8%	12%	8%	9%
Hotel or conference center	0%	6%	8%	6%
Community hall	8%	9%	0%	15%
Other	-----	-----	23% ¹	-----

¹Other responses include Music Theater, Funeral Home Fellowship Hall, and Non-profit Agency

PROMOTION

2012 – Word of mouth, Internet communication, mailers, and door hangers were most common types of promotion used among African-American PCA church plants.

2007 – Word of mouth, newspaper ads, and Internet communication were the most common types of promotion used among PCA church plants.

The following table represents the percentage of PCA church plants by the various promotional means used for communicating the news of a new church in their area.

Table 3 – Promotion type used by Presbyterian Church in America church plants

Promotion type	Percent of church plants using this form of promotion	
	2012	2007 Survey
Word of mouth	100%	71%
Internet communication	46%	35%
Mailers	38%	21%
Door hangers or flyers	38%	3%
Other	23% ¹	-----
Newspaper ads	15%	38%
Television or radio ads	15%	9%
Social media	15%	-----
Billboards and/or road signs	0%	9%
Mailers to new movers	0%	9%
Telephone campaigns	0%	3%

¹Other responses include Vision casting meetings, Door-to-door evangelism, Contact with Homeless Shelters/Agencies

WORSHIP STYLES

The following table represents the percentages of PCA church plants by their identified worship style. The only worship style that churches in both the 2012 and 2007 surveys utilize is blended. However, the 2007 survey defined this as “blended traditional and contemporary” while the 2012 survey defined it as “blended (traditional, gospel, and/or contemporary).

Table 4 – Worship styles used by Presbyterian Church in America church plants

Worship style	Percent of church plants using this worship style	
	2012	2007 Survey
Liturgical	0%	11%
Traditional	0%	11%
Contemporary	0%	26%
Postmodern or emerging	8%	0%
Seeker	0%	0%
Blended	77%	48%
Fellowship	0%	0%
Gospel	0%	0%
No particular identified style	8%	4%
Unknown/ Not sure	0%	0%
Contemporary Gospel	8%	-----
Traditional Gospel	0%	-----
Urban Contemporary	0%	-----

SPONSORING CHURCHES

2012 – Almost 70% of African-American Presbyterian Church in America church plants had a sponsoring church: 77% of these sponsoring churches provided funding to the church plant, 56% provided church planting mentorship to the church planter, and 33% of church plants were loaned lay people by the sponsoring church.

2007 – Nearly 62% of Presbyterian Church in America church plants had a sponsoring church: 92% of these sponsoring churches provided funding to the church plant, 54% provided church planting mentorship to the church planter, and 23% of church plants were loaned lay people by the sponsoring church.

Table 5 - For each of the following, please indicate if it was a type of assistance provided by the sponsoring or mother church or churches during the first 5 years of existence.

Type of Assistance	Percent of church plants receiving assistance
Active prayer support	100%
Mentored the church planter or church planting team	56%
Permitted the church plant to meet in the sponsoring church building	0%
The sponsoring church pastor preached occasionally at the church plant	22%
Loaned lay people for specific time period as workers	33%
Rented a facility for the church plant to meet	0%
Bought property and/or a facility for the church plant to meet	22%

DENOMINATIONAL ASSISTANCE

2007 – Denominational helps were used extensively by Presbyterian Church in America church planters. Approximately 52% of PCA church plants accessed demographic information about their communities from a denominational office. Almost 83% had a church planting mentor or supervisor provided by the denomination. About 80% of church planters were involved in a church planter peer network. Church planter training was provided by the denomination for 100% of church planters surveyed.

2012 – More detail was obtained from African-American church planters in 2012. As a result, we see that with the exception of accounting and legal help, each type of help was known to be available among a majority of these church plants and actually received by the majority. Awareness was highest for church planter assessment. The following table shows whether different resources were made available by a denomination or network and whether it was received.

Table 6 – For each of the following other forms of support please indicate whether the resource was made available and/or received from a denomination or network

Resource	Percent of church plants with resource available and received	Percent of church plants with resource available but not received
Demographics and/or research expertise	55%	0%
Church planter mentoring, coaching, and/or supervision	54%	31%
Church planter peer network	58%	17%
Training for church planter and/or team	69%	15%
Church planter assessment program	62%	31%
Accounting or bookkeeping	31%	8%
Legal work or counsel	23%	23%

STAFF TEAM

2012 – Only 1 of the 13 African-American church plants surveyed (8%) began with a staff team and it had four members.

2007 – Approximately 19% of church plants began with a staff team of more than one person. Of those church plants that started with a staff team, the average team had three members.

CHURCH PLANTER EDUCATION

2012 – The great majority of African-American Presbyterian Church in America church planters are well-educated. 77% indicate their highest formal education is a Bachelor’s degree and 23% indicate their highest education is Master’s degree.

2007 – The great majority of Presbyterian Church in America church planters are well-educated. 69% indicate their highest formal education is college degree and 31% indicate their highest education is graduate degree (Master’s and/or doctorate).

CHURCH PLANTER THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

2012 – All African-American Presbyterian Church in America church planters have theological education. In fact, 100% of these planters have a Master’s seminary degree.

2007 – All Presbyterian Church in America church planters have theological education: 81% have a Master’s seminary degree, 16% a Doctor of ministry, and 3% a PhD.

CHURCH PLANTING TRAINING

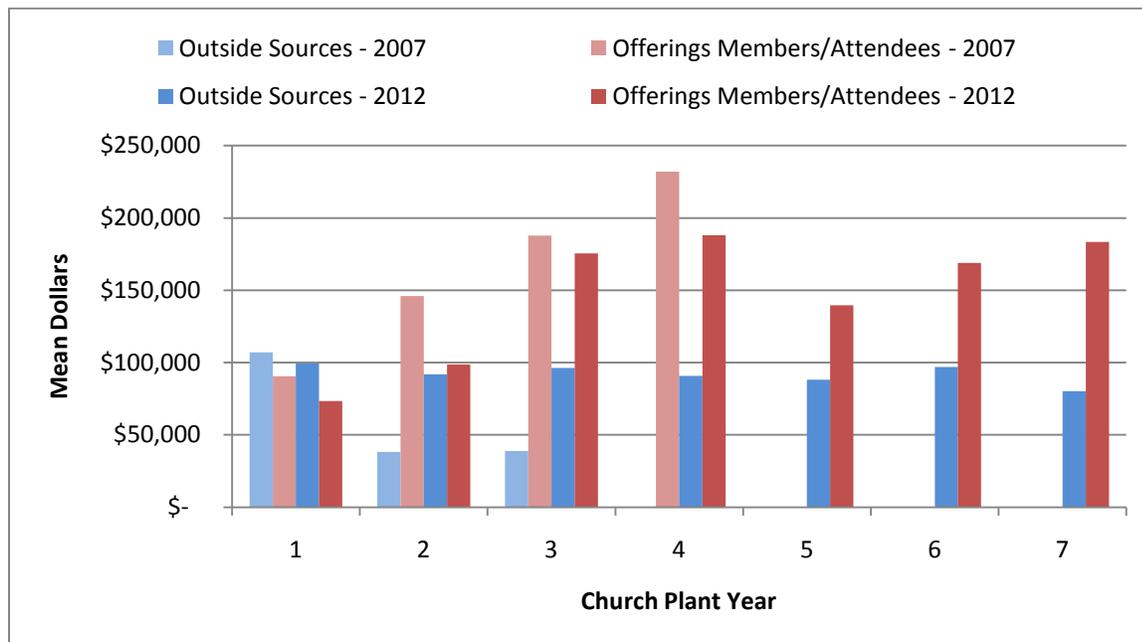
2012 – Around 62% of church planters in African-American Presbyterian Church in America church plants participated in some sort of church planting training prior to planting the church.

2007 – Nearly 94% of Presbyterian Church in America church planters participated in some sort of church planting training prior to planting the church.

FUNDING

The following graph represents the mean annual funding from all outside sources (i.e., denomination, sponsoring church, individual support) and all offering and gifts from members and attendees for church plants surveyed.

Figure 3 – For each year of the church plant’s existence, please indicate the amount of total dollars received from outside sources and from offerings and gifts from church plant members and attendees.



The same 2012 data for African-American church plants is shown below.

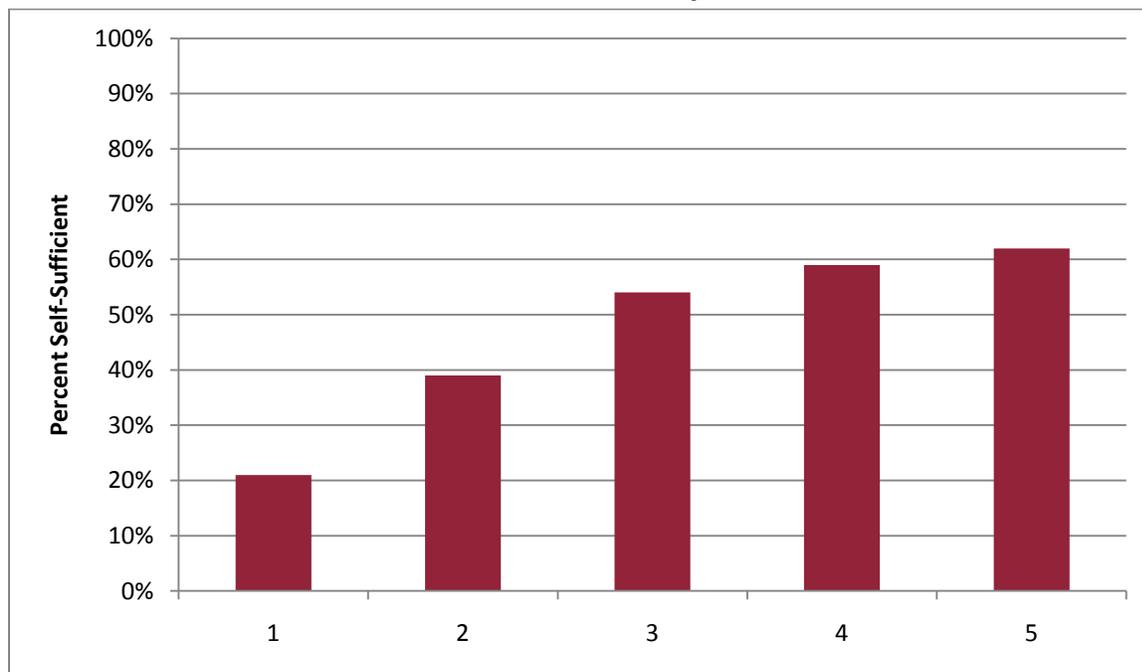
Table 7 – Average dollars received from different sources by year of church plant existence

Year	Mean \$ from Outside Sources	Mean \$ from Members/Attendees
1 st year	\$99,284	\$73,500
2 nd year	\$91,965	\$98,672
3 rd year	\$96,220	\$175,588
4 th year	\$90,800	\$187,937
5 th year	\$88,250	\$139,542
6 th year	\$97,000	\$168,940
7 th year	\$80,166	\$183,460

FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

2007 – The graph below indicates the percentage of all PCA church plants by year of self sufficiency. The graph is cumulative, meaning that the percent self-sufficient for a cohort of PCA church plants begun in a particular year is 54% by year three. This data has been extrapolated and projected from the aggregate as not all church plants surveyed were six years old. Continuing with our example, those church plants which may not have had enough time to reach year three (i.e., church plants started since 2005) are not included. This includes only those church plants which survived.

Figure 4 – Percent self-sufficient by year
2007 Survey



2012 – None of the 7 African-American churches started in 2006 or later are self-sufficient. Of the 6 remaining churches started prior to 2006, 83% are self-sufficient. One church reached self-sufficiency in its 3rd year (for comparison to 2007, this would be 10% of all surviving churches), a total of 3 were self-sufficient by year 7 and 5 were self-sufficient by year 9.

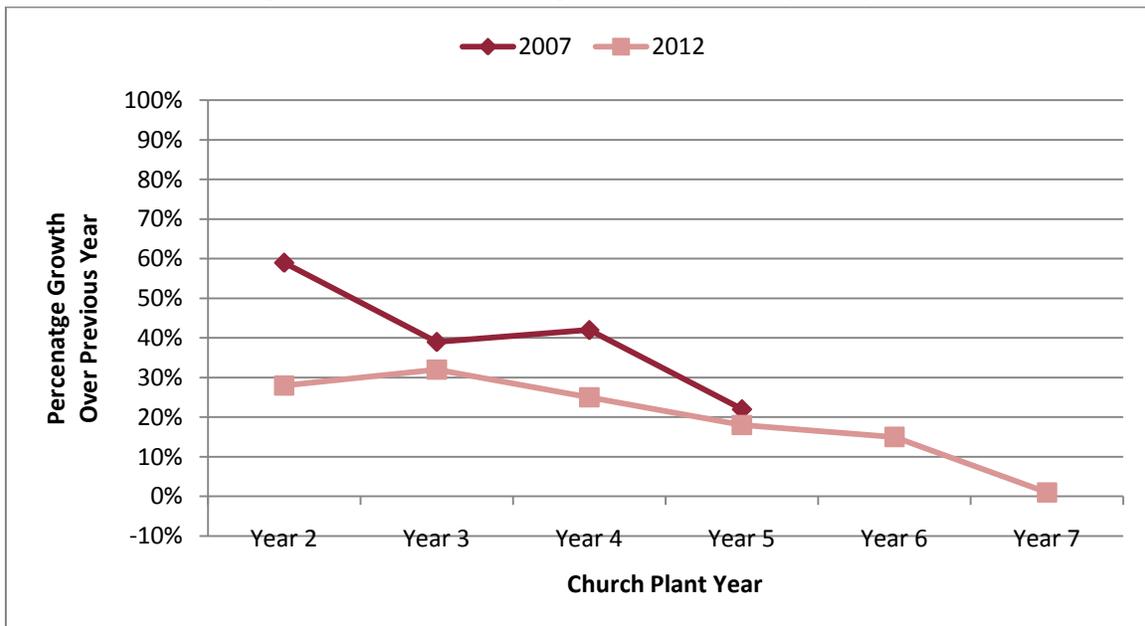
Church Plant Health of Presbyterian Church in America Church Plants

Worship attendance and number of new commitments are two measures that demonstrate the health of the church. To decide if the churches are healthy and growing it is necessary to review the data in a different manner. The following two charts provide additional information regarding these church plants.

MEAN ANNUAL GROWTH

The following graph displays the mean annual growth by church plant year

Figure 5 – Mean annual growth by church plant year



MEAN ANNUAL NEW COMMITMENTS RATE

The following graph displays the average annual number of conversions or new commitments to Jesus Christ per 100 worship attendees for each church plant year.

Figure 6 – Mean annual new commitments per 100 worship attendees

