

Executive Summary

The following analysis uses Annual Church Profile (ACP) data from 2019 and 2024. The purpose of this work is to look at different church demographics and explore differences in growth. This analysis provides insight into areas with variations in church growth.

Percentage growth was calculated by dividing the 2024 total membership by 2019 total membership. Only churches which reported non-zero data in both years were included.

NOTES:

- The Middle Atlantic Division had the smallest negative church growth. Declines were lower in the New England, East South Central, and West South Central divisions. (*Figure 1*)
- There are differences across states, but this must be viewed cautiously due to low sample size. Of the ten largest states by total membership in 2024, only Tennessee did not see a decline. (*Figure 2*)
- Churches organized since 2000 have experienced an overall church growth of 12%. Churches in the Northeast (-4%) have seen the least amount of decline among regions. (*Table 1*)

Churches were placed into one of three categories based on percentage growth in total membership between 2019 and 2024. The growth categories are defined as follows.

- Declining: A decrease in total membership of 10% or more.
- Growing: An increase in total membership of 10% or more.
- Plateaued: A change in church membership between declining or growing.

NOTES:

- AM Attendance 2019: Churches with average attendance of 500+ (29%) are the most likely to have grown. Churches with 50-99 (20%) are the least likely to have grown. (*Figure 3*).
- Year Organized: Churches organized between 2000-Present (46%) are the most likely to have grown. Those organized between 1950-1999 (21%) are the next most likely. (*Figure 4*)
- Population Zone: Churches in Urban areas (26%) are the most likely to have grown followed by those in Suburban areas (20%) and Rural areas (18%). (*Figure 5*)
- Region: Churches in the Northeast (38%) are the most likely to have grown followed by those in the West (31%), Midwest (22%), and South (20%). (*Figure 6*)

Churches were placed into size categories based on their average worship attendance in 2019. For churches which reported non-zero attendance in 2019 and 2024, seven in ten churches (71%) remained within their same size category. (*Table 2*)

Percent Growth between 2019 and 2024

Percentage growth was calculated by dividing the 2019 total membership by 2024 total membership. Only churches which reported non-zero data in both years were included.

DIVISIONS:

- New England (-4%): Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
- Middle Atlantic (-3%): New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania
- East North Central (-10%): Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin
- West North Central (-17%): Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota
- South Atlantic (-14%): Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia
- East South Central (-5%): Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee
- West South Central (-7%): Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas
- Mountain (-11%): Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, Montana, Utah, Nevada, Wyoming
- Pacific (-17%): Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington

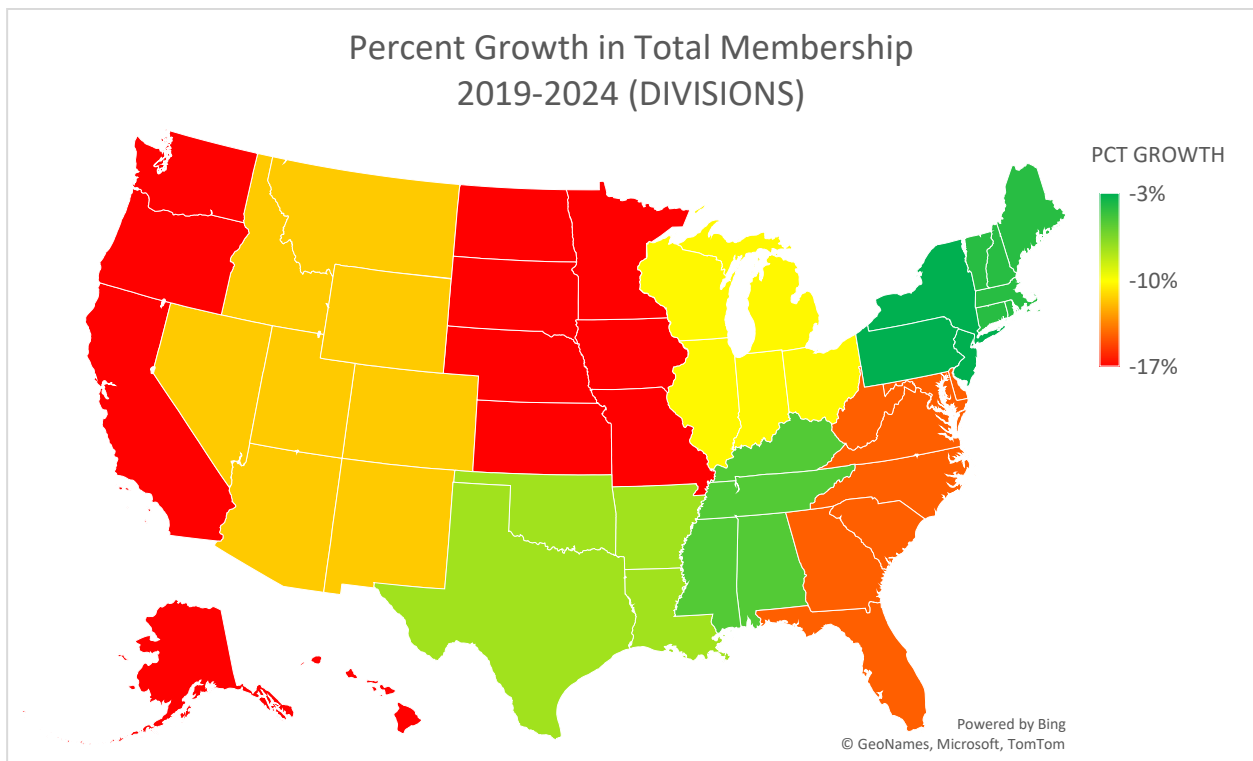


Figure 1: Percentage Church Growth by Census Divisions

2024 ACP Church Performance

States:

The following states have less than 30 churches in the calculation and need to be considered with caution. The number listed next to each state is the sample size.

- Minnesota (4), Oklahoma (4), North Dakota (6), Delaware (9), Rhode Island (10), New Hampshire (11), Maine (18), Utah (19), Wisconsin (20), Nebraska (23), South Dakota (25), Hawaii (28), Vermont (30).

Ten states with the largest growth percentage (highlight indicates less than 30 churches).

- Vermont (14%), New Jersey (12%), Wisconsin (11%), Connecticut (9%), Rhode Island (7%), Massachusetts (6%), Utah (6%), New Hampshire (5%), Iowa (4%), Minnesota (2%).

Ten states with the lowest growth percentage (highlight indicates less than 30 churches).

- Nebraska (-58%), Maine (-43%), North Dakota (-27%), North Carolina (-26%), Kansas (-25%), Idaho (-25%), Alaska (-23%), Washington (-19%), Indiana (-19%), Colorado (-18%).

Growth percentage in the ten largest states.

- Georgia (-12%), Florida (-13%), Alabama (-7%), Tennessee (0%), North Carolina (-26%), Kentucky (-10%), Missouri (-16%), Louisiana (-10%), South Carolina (-9%), Arkansas (-6%).

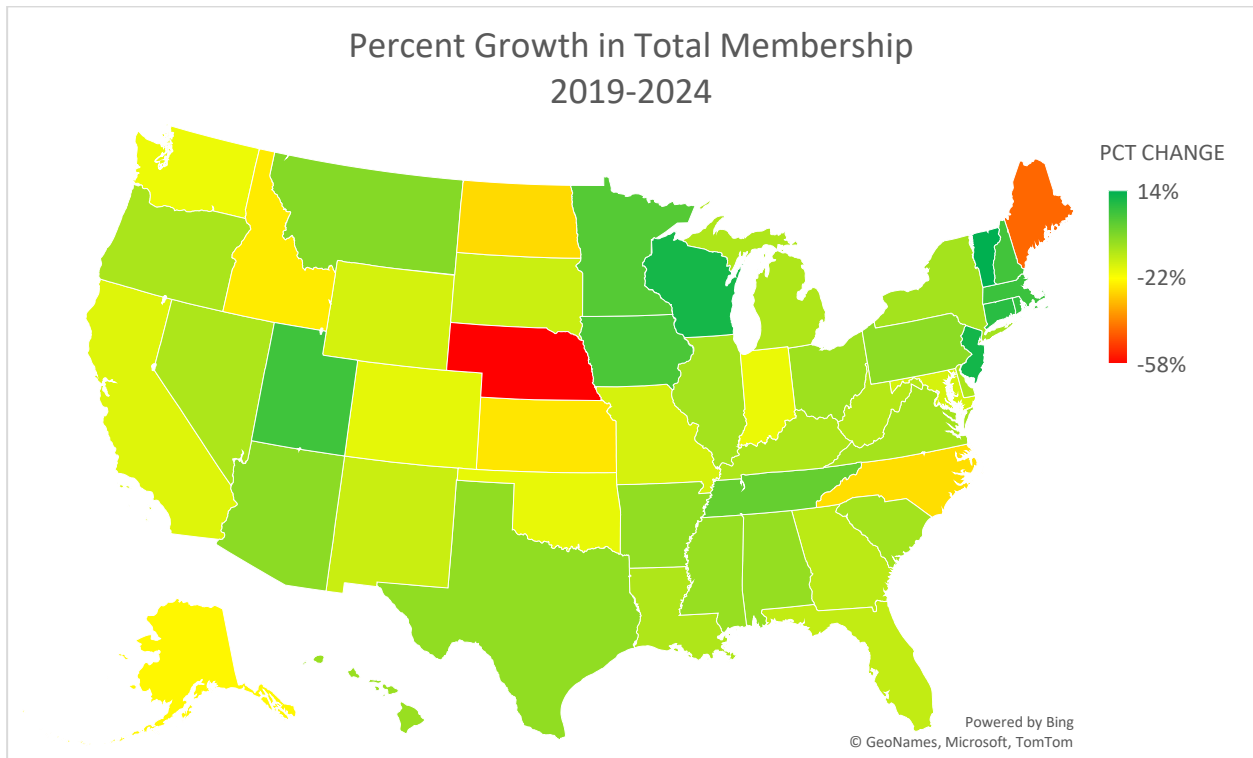


Figure 2: Percentage Church Growth by State

2024 ACP Church Performance

Three different measures of percentage growth were calculated for three church demographics. Churches were divided based on the year organized, population in their city, and region of the United States as defined by the Census Bureau.

Population Zone: Population size as of June 9, 2025, was used for assigning group. Street address defined the city when available and mail address supplemented the data when necessary.

- Rural: Population less than 2,500
- Suburban: Population greater than or equal to 2,500 and less than 50,000
- Urban: Population greater than or equal to 50,000

The following table shows the different measures for percentage growth: mean, median, overall. These measures as defined in the following manner.

- Mean: The average church percentage growth.
- Median: The median church percentage growth.
- Overall: The quotient of the sum of total membership in 2019 and sum of total membership in 2024.

The difference between mean and median indicates there are churches with extreme population growth values. The overall value can be different due to changes in churches with larger total membership.

There was one church whose growth was an outlier. This can be seen in the mean for 2000-Present, Urban, and South churches.

Table 1: Percentage Church Growth by Demographics

PERCENTAGE GROWTH CHANGE			
	Mean	Median	Overall
Year Organized			
Pre-1900	-9%	-4%	-11%
1900-1949	-8%	-5%	-13%
1950-1999	-5%	-6%	-11%
2000-Present	135%	6%	12%
Population Zone			
RURAL	2%	-4%	-11%
SUBURBAN	-2%	-4%	-10%
URBAN	55%	-5%	-10%
US Region			
NORTHEAST	20%	0%	-4%
MIDWEST	-2%	-4%	-14%
SOUTH	12%	-4%	-10%
WEST	7%	-6%	-14%

Growth Categories

Churches were placed into one of three categories based on percentage growth in total membership between 2019 and 2024. A church had to have reported a non-zero value in both years to be included in the analysis. The growth categories are defined as follows.

- Declining: A decrease in total membership of 10% or more.
- Growing: An increase in total membership of 10% or more.
- Plateaued: A change in church membership between declining or growing.

The frequency of churches within the growth categories were analyzed across a variety of church demographics.

Average AM Worship Attendance 2019: Churches were divided into categories based on their average AM worship attendance: 0-49, 50-99, 100-249, 250-499, 500+.

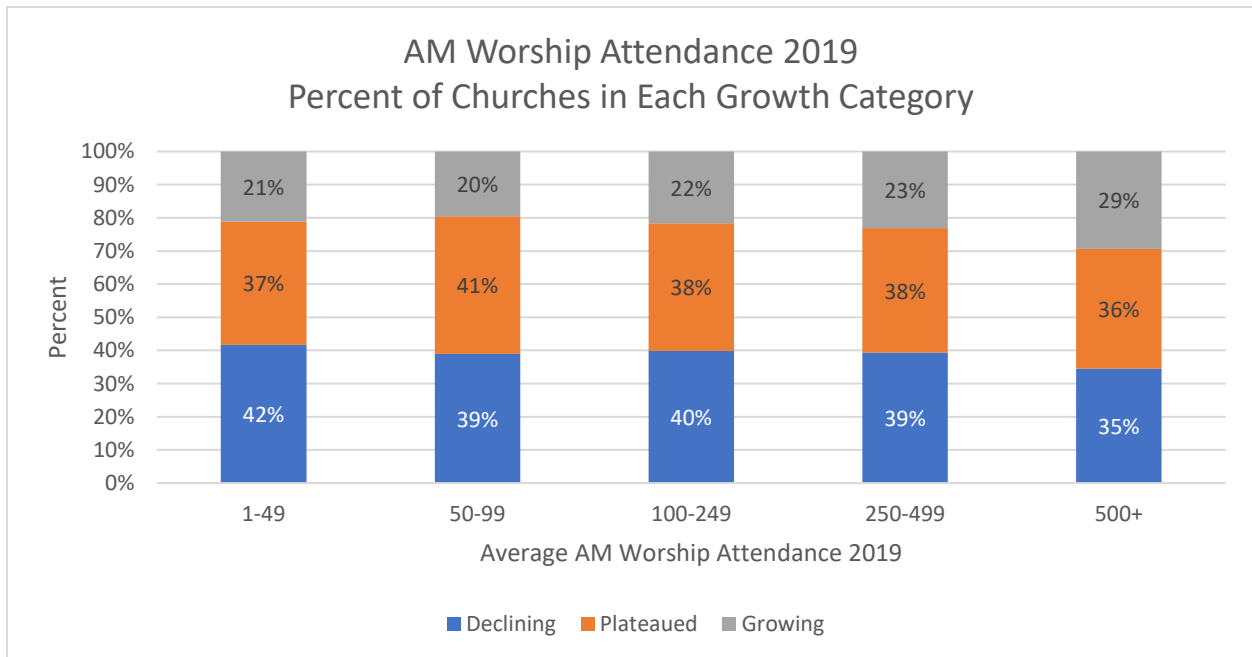


Figure 3: Percentage Church Growth by Average Attendance in 2019

NOTES:

- Growing: Churches with average attendance of 500+ (29%) are the most likely to have grown. Churches with 50-99 (20%) are the least likely to have grown.
- Plateaued: Churches with 50-99 (41%) are the most likely to have plateaued.
- Declining: Churches with average attendance of 500+ (35%) are the least likely to have declined.

2024 ACP Church Performance

Year Organized: Churches were placed into four categories based on the year the church was organized: Pre-1900, 1900-1949, 1950-1999, 2000-Present.

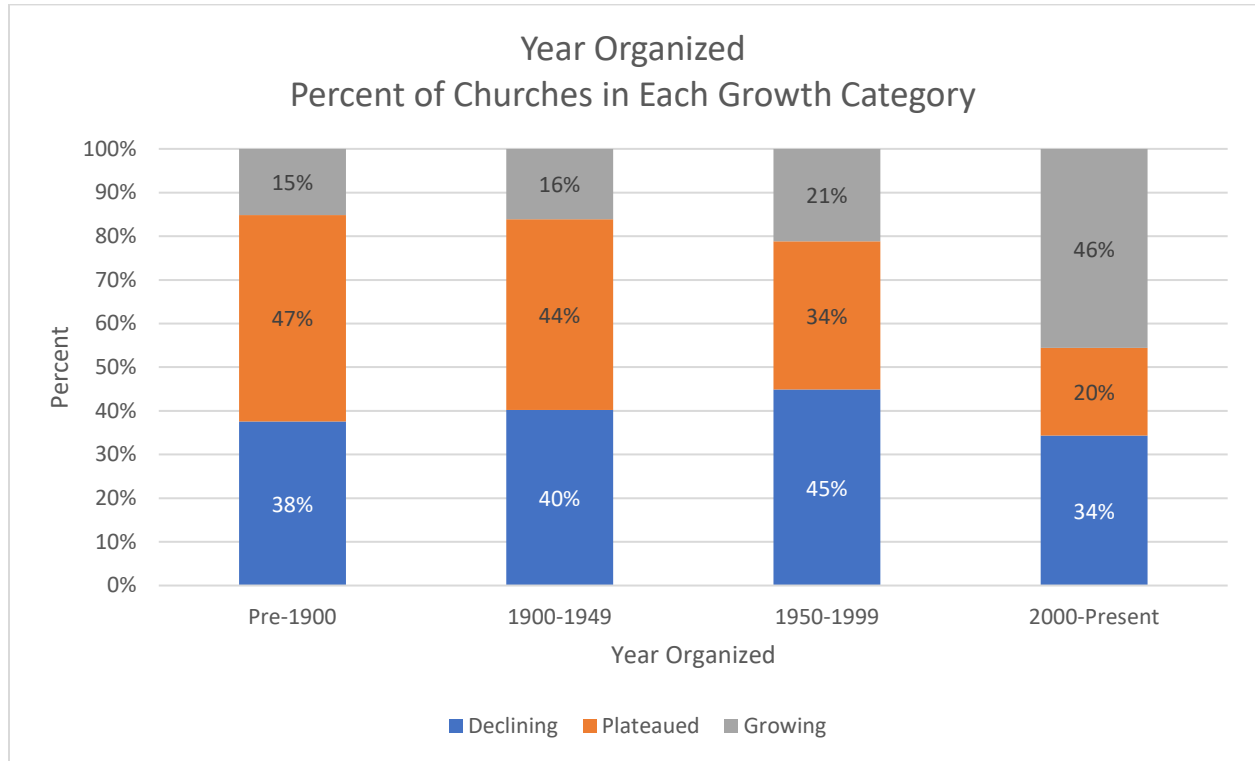


Figure 4: Percentage Church Growth by Year Organized

NOTES:

- Growing: Churches organized between 2000-Present (46%) are the most likely to have grown. Those organized between 1950-1999 (21%) are the next most likely.
- Plateaued: The frequency of churches that plateaued decreases from year the church was organized; Pre-1900 (47%), 1900-1949 (44%), 1950-1999 (34%), 2000-Present (20%).
- Declining: The frequency of churches that have declined is different across the year the church was organized; 2000-Present (34%), Pre-1900 (38%), 1900-1949 (40%), 1950-1999 (45%).

Population Zone:

- Rural: Population less than 2,500
- Suburban: Population greater than or equal to 2,500 and less than 50,000
- Urban: Population greater than or equal to 50,000

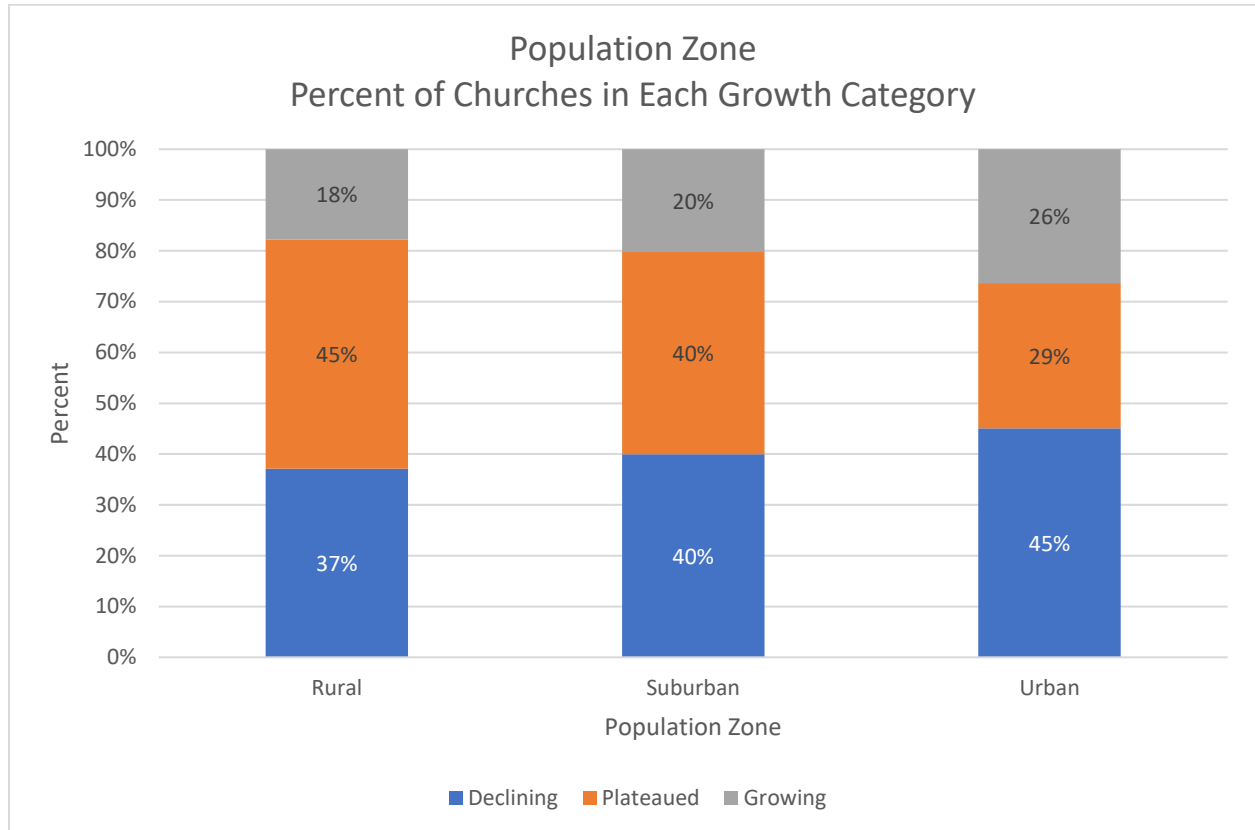


Figure 5: Percentage Church Growth by Population Zone

NOTES:

- Growing: Churches in Urban areas (26%) are the most likely to have grown followed by those in Suburban areas (20%) and Rural areas (18%).
- Plateaued: Churches in Rural areas (45%) are the most likely to have plateaued followed by those in Suburban areas (40%) and Urban areas (29%).
- Declining: Churches in Urban areas (45%) are the most likely to have declined followed by those in Suburban areas (40%) and rural areas (37%).

2024 ACP Church Performance

Regions: US Census Bureau regions are used to define Northeast, Midwest, South, and West.

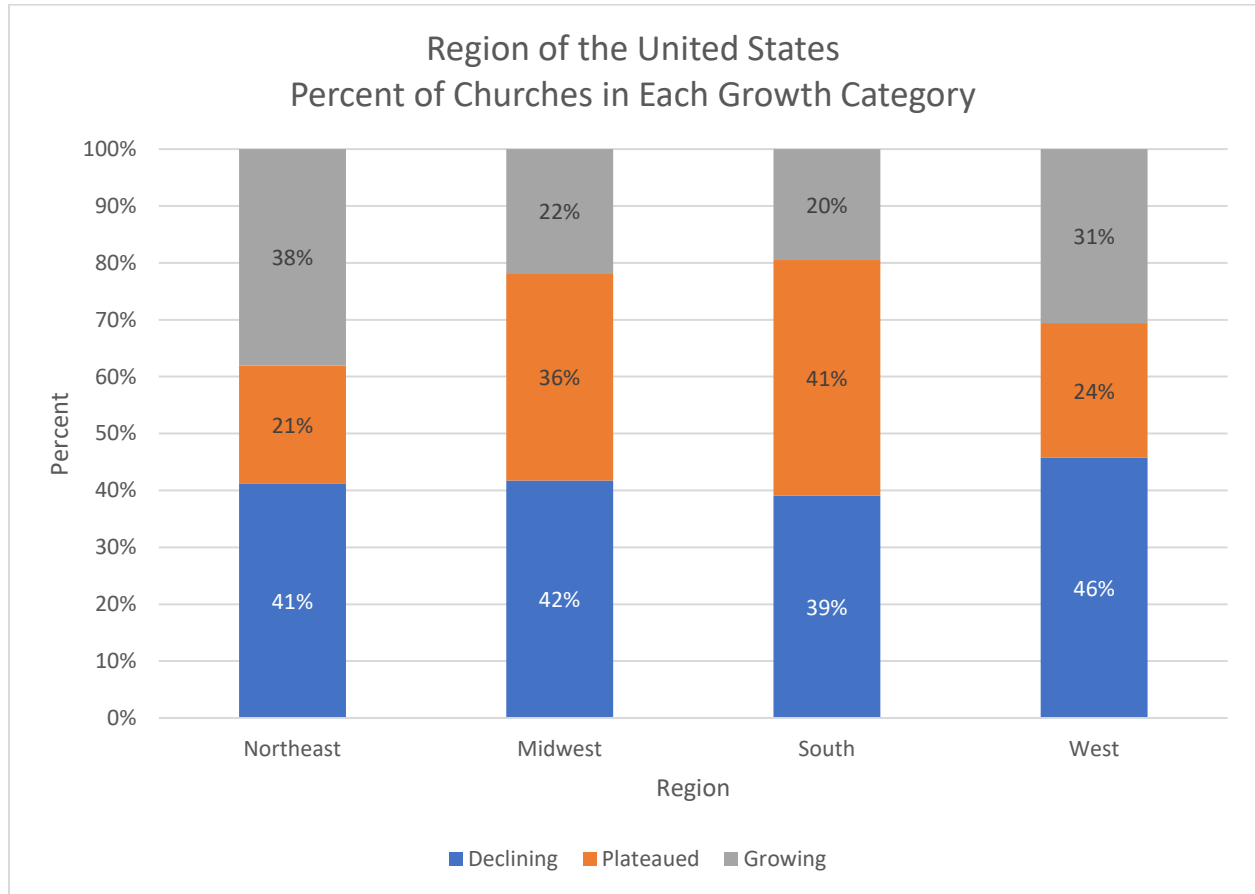


Figure 6: Church Growth Category by Region

NOTES:

- Growing: Churches in the Northeast (38%) are the most likely to have grown followed by those in the West (31%), Midwest (22%), and South (20%).
- Plateaued: Churches in the South (41%) are the most likely to have plateaued followed by those in the Midwest (36%).
- Declining: Churches in the West (46%) are more likely to have declined than those in the Midwest (42%) and South (39%).

Average AM Attendance 2019 vs 2024

For churches which reported non-zero attendance in 2019 and 2024, nearly seven in ten churches (69%) remained within their same size category. The table below shows churches by size category.

NOTES:

- Nearly all churches with 1-49 average attendance in 2019 remained in that category.
- 77% of the largest churches (500+) from 2019 are still in that category.
- 71% of all churches remained in the same attendance category.
- For churches between 50-499 in 2019, 31% moved down in size category.

Table 2: Attendance Group 2019 versus 2024

	AM Attendance 2024				
AM Attendance 2019	1-49	50-99	100-249	250-499	500+
1-49	89%	10%	1%	<1%	<1%
50-99	31%	59%	9%	<1%	<1%
100-249	2%	27%	65%	6%	<1%
250-499	<1%	1%	34%	57%	8%
500+	<1%	<1%	1%	20%	77%