

Assemblies of God Churches Rank Among Largest, Fastest-Growing in US

LifeWay Research, in cooperation with *Outreach* magazine, recently released the list of the top 100 fastest-growing churches and the top 100 largest churches in the United States. The study found nine Assemblies of God churches in the fastest-growing category and four in the largest category.

Leading the way in fastest-growing churches for the AG was Christ's Place (No. 19 overall) in Lincoln, Neb., and Hope Fellowship (No. 21) in Frisco, Texas. Other churches include International Christian Center (No. 44), Staten Island, N.Y.; Newlife (No. 53), Silverdale, Wash.; Destination Church (No. 57), Colonial Heights, Va.; Hickory First (No. 60), Hickory, N.C.; South Hills Church (No. 62), Corona, Calif.; Rockford, First (No. 64), Rockford, Ill.; and Journey Community Church (No. 69), Fairview Park, Ohio.

In the *Outreach* 100 report, Ronald Squibb, senior pastor of International Christian Center, credits his church's growth due, in part, to Superstorm Sandy.

"Out of that tragedy and out of that adversity, God has used that and has given us favor on the island," he said. "We're not waiting for people to come to the church. We're investing in the community, reaching into our community."

In addition, Destination Church, launched in 2011, also had the distinction of being the youngest church making the fastest-growing list.

Texas is home to 19 of the fastest-growing churches, followed by California and North Carolina, each with seven, and Virginia, with six.

According to Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, one thing that repeatedly stood out to him and his team during this study was that churches that were growing typically had one thing in common: sacrifice.

“Growing churches are showing a great commitment to multiplying themselves,” writes Stetzer in his *Outreach* report. “This commitment to multiplication often creates a need for sacrifice. Sacrifice is inherent to the experience of every growing believer—and every growing church.”

The four AG churches that made the top 100 largest churches list include Phoenix First Assembly (No. 10), Phoenix, Ariz; The House Modesto (No. 40), Modesto, Calif.; James River Assembly (No. 60), Ozark, Mo.; and First Assembly of God (No. 70), Fort Myers, Fla.

Texas leads the country with 17 of the largest churches in the country, followed by California with 16, Florida with 9 and Georgia with 7.

“When I look over the list of fastest-growing churches, it’s exciting to see that fast-growing AG churches are spanning the country,” says AG General Superintendent George O. Wood. “And when I see AG churches not only growing but multiplying themselves through discipleship while being the hands and feet of Christ to their communities, that’s what truly stands out to me—whether the church made one of these lists or not.”