NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT DATA

NCDAMERICA.ORG

- 2008-2017 data
- 9,529 local congregations
- 258,099 surveys

Church Streams

- Methodists 23%
- Others 25%
- Baptists 11%
- Presbyterians 4%
- Assemblies of God 5%
- Nazarenes 5%
- Lutherans 7%
- Adventists 9%
- Independent/Non-denominational 9%
- Reformed 2%
2015 data

3,847 local congregations

3,847 surveys

Adventist: 8%
Roman Catholic & Orthodox: 14%
Oldline: 50%
Evangelical & Black: 28%
AGING PASTOR?

PURPOSE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

• How are selected measures of a church’s wellbeing related to the pastor’s age?
  • Church size, age of churches
  • Church growth trajectories?
  • Measures of congregational health?
  • Age of the members and groups in churches?
  • Leadership style of the pastor?
PASTOR’S AGE CATEGORIES
FACT 2015 AND NCD 2008-2017

FACT 2015
N = 3374
- 36% 41 TO 50
- 20% 51 TO 60
- 14% 61+ YEARS
- 31% 40 AND LESS

NCD 2008-2017
N = 8824
- 36% 41 TO 50
- 26% 51 TO 60
- 20% 61+ YEARS
- 18% 40 AND LESS
AVERAGE ADULT ATTENDANCE
BY THE AGE OF PASTOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>FACT 2015</th>
<th>NCD 2008-2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 AND LESS</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 TO 50</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 TO 60</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+ YEARS</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td>FACT 2015</td>
<td>NCD 2008-2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 AND LESS</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 TO 50</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 TO 60</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+ YEARS</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 YEARS GROWTH RATE
BY THE AGE OF PASTOR

• Age of pastor and 5 Years Growth Rate
  • FACT 2015
    • $r = -0.095, p = 0.000, N = 2430$
  • NCD 2008-2017
    • $r = -0.076, p = 0.000, N = 8079$

• Age of pastor and 5 Years Average Annual Growth Rate
  • NCD 2008-2017
    • $r = -0.154, p = 0.000, N = 7077$
DISTRIBUTION OF AGE GROUPS IN CHURCH
BY THE AGE OF PASTOR
FACT 2015

CHILDREN AND PRETEEN, AGE 0-12 (%)
YOUTH, AGE 13-17 (%)
YOUNG ADULTS, AGE 18-34 (%)
ADULTS, AGE 35-49 (%)
ADULTS, AGE 50-64 (%)
SENIOR ADULTS, AGE 65+ (%)
# Rate of Presence of Age Groups

**By the Age of Pastor**  
NCD 2008-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastor's Age</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Youth</th>
<th>Young Adults</th>
<th>Young Fam.</th>
<th>Middle Age</th>
<th>Senior citizens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 and less</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td>79.6%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 50</td>
<td>52.3%</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 60</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>34.0%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>87.8%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AGE GROUPS OF SELECTED PARTICIPANTS IN THE SURVEY
BY THE AGE OF PASTOR
NCD 2008-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastor's Age</th>
<th>40 and less</th>
<th>41 to 50</th>
<th>51 to 60</th>
<th>61+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 and less</td>
<td>37.7%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 50</td>
<td>28.4%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>27.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 60</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td>32.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CORRELATION OF AGE GROUPS IN THE CHURCH
AND THE AGE OF THE PASTOR

**Senior Adults 65+**
R = .179, P = .000, N = 3011

**Adults Age 50-64**
R = .050, P = .006, N = 3014

**Adults Age 35-49**
R = -.140, P = .000, N = 3007

**Young Adults 18-34**
R = -.088, P = .000, N = 2982

**Youth Age 13-17**
R = -.127, P = .000, N = 2976

**Children 0-12**
R = -.153, P = .000, N = 2992

**Young Adults, Percentage of Attending Worship**
R = -.136, P = .000, N = 2504

**Young Adults, Percentage of Participating in Other Programs**
R = -.183, P = .000, N = 2374

**Age of Selected Participants in the Survey and Pastors Age**
R = .156, P = .000, N = 248030

FACT 2015

NCD 2008-2017
## Our Church Is Spiritually Vital and Alive

**By the Age of Pastor**  
**FACT 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastor's Age</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree/Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral/Unsure</th>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 and less</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>74.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 50</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 60</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( x^2 = 28.176, \ p = .005, \ N = 3326 \)
## The Rate of Healthy/Unhealthy Churches

**By the Age of Pastor**

NCD 2008-2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastor's Age</th>
<th>Unhealthy (NCD score below 35)</th>
<th>(NCD score between 35 and 65)</th>
<th>Healthy (NCD score above 65)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40 and less</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 50</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 to 60</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
<td>14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2 = 98.861, p = .000, N = 8824$
AGING PASTOR
CONCLUSION

- Younger pastors appear to be driving the largest share of church growth in the US. Pastors who are under 50 account for more than one-third of the growth in the FACT sample.

- Aging pastors head congregations with predominantly older congregants.

- When pastors rely on congregants, for example to respond to surveys, younger pastors reach out to younger respondents while aging pastors request older adults to respond.

- The churches where younger pastors lead, are rated as healthier than churches lead by older pastors.

- The leadership styles of younger pastors are more oriented towards goals whereas older pastors tend to be more serving and people oriented.