

Presbyterian denomination posts first-ever decline: Presbyterian Church in America

News in the [August 11, 2009](#) issue

The conservative evangelical Presbyterian Church in America has reported a net loss in members for the first time in its three dozen years. The PCA, formed from congregations that left the southern-states Presbyterian Church in the U.S. in 1973, saw membership decline from 345,582 in 2007 to 340,852 in 2008.

Newly elected moderator Brad Bradley delivered the news at the PCA's annual General Assembly at Lake Buena Vista, Florida, in June.

He cited "extenuating circumstances," particularly a purging of membership rolls at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, a megachurch in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, but urged attendees to take the development seriously.

"This might be a wake-up call for us," said Bradley. He urged every PCA congregation to plant at least one new church by 2020.

The PCA wasn't alone in setting a negative record last year. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a mainline body with 2.1 million members, reported a loss of some 69,000 members in 2008—its largest-ever loss in one year. *-Religion News Service*