



EFCA

TEN GLOBAL TRENDS IN MISSIONS JANUARY 2018

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Dear Pastor and Mission Leaders,

Greetings in Christ. Mission trends are important to look at from time to time to see how the global mission effort is progressing. Special thanks this month to Aaron Earls, the Online Editor of Facts and Trends. Take a few minutes to read about these trends.

These 10 trends point to a global church that looks very different from today.

1. Some Christian groups are growing faster than others.

While Protestants (1.64 percent) and Catholics (1.08 percent) are growing near or below the population growth rate of 1.21 percent, evangelicals and Pentecostals/Charismatics are growing much faster. Evangelicals (2.12 percent) and Pentecostals (2.22 percent) are outpacing other branches of Christianity. By 2050, those two groups combined (1.67 billion) will outnumber Catholics (1.61 billion).

2. Pentecostals continue with their explosive growth.

In 1900, there were less than 1 million Pentecostals/Charismatics in the world. In 2017, they will climb to 669 million. By 2050, they will top 1 billion—the second Christian group to do so, behind Catholics.

3. Cities are growing faster than Christians are moving to them.

In 2017, 55 percent of the world's population will live in an urban environment. More than 4.1 billion people will live in cities and almost 1.6 billion of them will be Christian. The global urban population is growing at a 2.2 rate, while the Christian urban population is growing slightly slower at 1.6.

4. Christianity is no longer a Western-dominated religion.

In 1900, there were twice as many Christians in Europe as the rest of the world combined. By 2017 both Africa and Latin America will have passed Europe in the number of Christians living there. By 2050, Africa will be home to 1.25 billion Christians. In a few decades, more than 1 in 8 people in the world will be an African Christian.

5. Only half of Christians live in Christian-dominated nations.

Entering the 20th century, 95 percent of Christians lived in countries that were at least 80 percent Christian. By the 21st century, the portion of Christians living in predominantly Christian nations dropped to 59 percent. The percentage will continue to fall, but at a much slower rate. In 2017, 53 percent of Christians will live in heavily Christian nations.

6. Churches have crossed the 5 million mark.

In 2017, there will be more than 5.5 million congregations in the world thanks to a 2.9 percent growth rate. Churches will number 7.5 million in 2025 and around 9 million in 2050, according to projections.

7. Christians possess and are giving large amounts of money.

The total personal income of Christians around the world will equal close to \$53 trillion in 2017. In 2017, believers will also give \$900 billion to Christian causes. Churches themselves will bring in \$360 billion, while parachurches and other religious institutions will collect \$540 billion. The income of global international missions will reach \$53 billion.

8. Less of the world is unreached than ever before.

In 1900, more than half of the world was unevangelized. By 2000, that number had fallen to 30 percent. In 2017, it will drop even further. In 2017, 28.4 percent of the population will be unreached with the gospel. That adds up to more than 2 billion people who still have yet to hear about Jesus. The percentage decrease of the world's unreached population has also plateaued. Over the next few decades, the unevangelized number is expected to stay around 28 percent of the world's population.

9. Missionaries are growing slowly.

In 2017, there will be 430,000 international missionaries—up from 420,000 in 2000. While up dramatically from 62,000 in 1900, the growth rate (0.54 percent) is less than half the population growth rate as a whole (1.21 percent).

10. More non-Christians will have Christian friends.

As local believers grow in number, more non-Christians will be acquainted with or have friends who are Christians. In 1900, only 5.6 percent of the world's non-Christians knew a Christian. That will climb to 18.4 percent in 2017 and near 20 percent by 2050.

What trends do you see in missions? How do you want to be more effective in your mission outreach, both local and global in 2018? How can we help you achieve your goals in 2018?

Blessings,

Steve Austvold