



# Lausanne Global Briefing

Furthering the Cape Town Commitment  
through global trends analysis

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CHRISTIANITY

## ABOUT THE LAUSANNE GLOBAL BRIEFING

The Cape Town Commitment is the latest conference document produced by the Lausanne Movement, reflecting the proceedings of the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization held in Cape Town, South Africa, in October 2010. It summarizes the Congress's events in two major sections. The first is a confession of faith that outlines a common love of God and God's world, including all of creation, and the universal Christian responsibility of missions. The second major section contains a call to action. Employing the six themes of the Congress, the Commitment describes current challenges to world evangelization. It offers necessary steps for the global Evangelical church to take in order to address these challenges in a biblical way. In his theological assessment of the document in the April 2011 issue of the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Robert Schreiter suggested that the Cape Town Commitment has the potential to produce a fundamental shift in an Evangelical theology of mission.

Eight months after Cape Town 2010, what impact has the Cape Town Commitment had on Evangelicals worldwide? The subjects addressed in the Commitment have been the source of much discussion among church leaders, missionaries, and laypeople alike, as particularly evidenced by the online activity at the Lausanne Global Conversations. As a follow-up to both the Congress and the Commitment, this briefing attempts to summarize some of those key issues to arrive at a consensus concerning areas within demography and global mission. It outlines both sides of controversial issues (for example, church planting versus "insider" or indigenous movements to Christ) as well as consults with many professionals in the field involved with the statistical analysis of global Christianity. Numerous topics were addressed at Cape Town that are not part of this briefing, but our hope is that these research findings will guide Evangelicals towards greater agreement and understanding, while furthering the dual mission of the Cape Town Commitment: love and unity in action.

This briefing was produced by the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, which aims to serve the global church as a resource for the demographics of Christianity and religions worldwide. Creators of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, *World Christian Trends*, *World Christian Database*, and, most recently, *Atlas of Global Christianity*, researchers at the Center have for decades striven to engage believers worldwide with not only numbers, but also within key issues involving world evangelization and missiology. Highly involved in the Lausanne Movement and Cape Town 2010, the Center has sought to be a fair representative in delving into the issues presented in this briefing.

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## SOUTHERN SUDAN

Sudan has suffered through two catastrophic civil wars since gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1956. The first Sudanese Civil War lasted from 1955–1972 and the second from 1983–2005. Ethnic and religious clashes continued between the two wars, resulting in nearly 50 years of conflict. Millions of Sudanese have died as a result of the violence and millions more have been displaced, both internally and across borders.

The civil wars in Sudan were two of 44 religious civil wars fought around the world between 1940 and 2010 (though religion had a more decisive role in the second).<sup>1</sup> Ethnicity and religion play an important part in the politics and daily lives of people in Sudan; the primarily Arabic-speaking Muslim north and African, English-speaking animist/Christian south have been at odds for decades. In fact, one of the predominant reasons for the second civil war was the north's desire to force their culture, religion, and language onto the south, which was overwhelmingly resistant to such efforts;<sup>2</sup> this also included a push for *sharia* law. The end of this war was mediated under U.S. President George W. Bush by former U.S. Senator John Danforth (Special Envoy for Peace in Sudan, 2001), an ordained Episcopal priest and therefore respected as a "man of God" by Christian and Muslim leaders alike.<sup>3</sup> Danforth acutely understood the tensions surrounding the religious reality of the situation and thus was able to work for peace by bringing Muslim and Christian leaders together, utilizing the Sudanese Inter-Religious Council.<sup>4</sup>

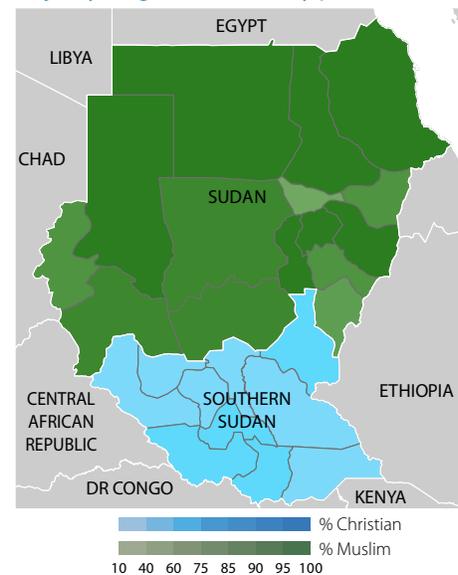
In January 2011 a referendum on independence was held in Southern Sudan, a condition established in the 2005 peace agreement that ended the Second Sudanese Civil War. Voter turnout in Southern Sudan was 99%; only about 45,000 people voted to stay united with northern Sudan and 3.8 million voted for secession (that is, 1.17% against and 98.83% in favor).<sup>5</sup> Southern Sudan will officially become the world's newest country on July 9, 2011 (leaving a much reduced Sudan or Northern Sudan as a second "new" country). Several key issues remain to be resolved, such as oil rights, border demarcation, and the status of Abyei.<sup>6</sup> The map below illustrates the new religious demography of Sudan and Southern Sudan, highlighting a clear North-South divide between Muslims and Christians.

These religious differences are further shown in Tables 1 and 2 below. The first thing to notice is that Sudan (Northern) has been at least 85% Muslim for the past 100 years. Over that same period, animists (or ethno-religionists) have declined from almost 15% to less than 3%. A significant Christian minority exists in the North, mostly in Khartoum, consisting mainly of Roman Catholics and Anglicans, many as transplants from the South.

Southern Sudan, on the other hand, was largely animistic in 1900 but has gradually become majority Christian over the course of the century. The bulk of the growth has been over the past 40 years, despite the civil wars and the death of perhaps as many as 2 million people in the South. Roman Catholic work in Sudan began in 1842, though much of it was focused on Khartoum. Anglicans started in 1899, also initially based in Khartoum.

Although the official split from Sudan was relatively peaceful, there is still great possibility for tension and conflict. The return of refugees to an already-underdeveloped country will undoubtedly put strains on the

Majority religion in Sudan by province



Source: Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2011

1. Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2011), 154, 162.

2. Francis M. Deng, "Sudan—Civil War and Genocide: Disappearing Christians of the Middle East," *Middle East Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (Winter 2001), 13, cited in Toft et al., *God's Century*, 161.

3. Toft et al., *God's Century*, 192.

4. *Ibid.*

5. "South Sudan backs independence – results," *BBC [British Broadcasting Corporation]*, February 7, 2011, accessed May 18, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12379431>.

6. As of May 22, 2011, the Sudanese Army occupied Abyei, claiming the town for North Sudan. See Jeffrey Gettleman and Josh Kron, "Warnings of All-Out War in Fight Over Sudan Town," *The New York Times*, May 22, 2011, accessed May 22, 2011, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/23/world/africa/23sudan.html?\\_r=2&hp](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/23/world/africa/23sudan.html?_r=2&hp). This has great potential to cause continued conflict between the two countries.

Table 1. Sudan (Northern)

Religion	1900		1970		2010	
	Adherents	%	Adherents	%	Adherents	%
Christians	2,375	0.1	318,450	2.9	1,760,649	5.4
Anglicans	30	0.0	90,000	0.8	520,000	1.6
Independents	0	0.0	500	0.0	19,250	0.1
Orthodox	2,000	0.1	107,200	1.0	96,970	0.3
Protestants	0	0.0	53,230	0.5	237,500	0.7
Roman Catholics	345	0.0	62,900	0.6	1,080,662	3.3
Agnostics	0	0.0	100,000	0.9	293,552	0.9
Atheists	0	0.0	30,000	0.3	49,752	0.2
Ethnoreligionists	594,400	14.9	800,000	7.3	924,848	2.8
Muslims	3,390,000	85.0	9,732,000	88.6	29,718,057	90.7
<b>Total population</b>	<b>3,987,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10,981,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32,753,843</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: World Christian Database, 2011

Table 2. Southern Sudan

Religion	1900		1970		2010	
	Adherents	%	Adherents	%	Adherents	%
Christians	100	0.0	857,468	22.7	6,528,508	60.5
Anglicans	0	0.0	210,000	5.6	1,554,000	14.4
Independents	0	0.0	3,600	0.1	48,850	0.5
Marginals	0	0.0	200	0.0	3,100	0.0
Protestants	0	0.0	6,300	0.2	1,163,600	10.8
Roman Catholics	100	0.0	627,368	16.6	5,301,042	49.1
Agnostics	0	0.0	2,000	0.1	42,993	0.4
Atheists	0	0.0	200	0.0	7,812	0.1
Ethnoreligionists	1,392,900	93.9	2,695,232	71.2	3,549,798	32.9
Muslims	90,000	6.1	230,000	6.1	667,328	6.2
<b>Total population</b>	<b>1,483,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,785,000</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10,798,098</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: World Christian Database, 2011

nation's scant resources. Additionally, Dennis Blair (U.S. Director of National Intelligence) warned the U.S. Congress in 2010 that out of the countries he deemed most susceptible to "new outbreak[s] of mass killing...a new mass killing or genocide is most likely to occur in Southern Sudan."<sup>7</sup> It is clear that there is a need for a movement of ongoing interreligious dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Sudan in order for the two communities to be able to live amicably together, despite their rough history. It has been difficult for the church to embrace such a measure since much of the violence has historically been initiated by the Muslim north.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the situation in Southern Sudan is arguably one of the worst health crises in the world. It has essentially no health care system and is home to a combination of deadly, untreatable, and unique diseases.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the conflict, trials, and seemingly poor outlook of life in Sudan, the church has made great gains there in recent decades. Progress began during the nineteenth century when Christians, with slave-trade guilt, began a mission in Sudan with few converts to report. Christianity did not begin to grow significantly until the twentieth century; all missionaries were expelled in 1956 at the start of the First Sudanese Civil War, followed by genocide and displacement. Despite the strife, the church grew. The Episcopal Church of the Sudan is the fastest-growing church in the Anglican Communion; this is apparent even in refugee camps scattered throughout Southern Sudan.<sup>10</sup> Canon Ezra Baya Lawiri, an Anglican leader, summed up the situation in Sudan quite well before his death in a crossfire in 1990: "God is not defeated" in Sudan.<sup>11</sup>

7. "Southern Sudan votes to split from the north," *CNN [Cable News Network]*, February 7, 2011, accessed May 4, 2011, [http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-07/world/sudan.referendum.results\\_1\\_sudanese-president-omar-al-bashir-preliminary-results-comprehensive-peace-agreement/2?s=PM:WORLD](http://articles.cnn.com/2011-02-07/world/sudan.referendum.results_1_sudanese-president-omar-al-bashir-preliminary-results-comprehensive-peace-agreement/2?s=PM:WORLD).

8. Grant LeMarquand, "Faith in Sudan: Recent work on the history and theology of Christianity in the Sudan," accessed May 5, 2011, <http://www.tsm.edu/sites/default/files/Faculty%20Writings/LeMarquand%20-%20Faith%20in%20Sudan.pdf>, 2.

9. Emma Ross, "Southern Sudan has unique combination of worst diseases in the world," *Sudan Tribune*, January 28, 2004, accessed May 4, 2011, <http://www.sudantribune.com/Southern-Sudan-has-unique,1616>.

10. LeMarquand, "Faith in Sudan," 1.

11. *Ibid.*, 6.

# MIGRATION AND EUROPE: A REGIONAL AND ANALYTICAL BRIEF

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## **REGIONAL ANALYTICS: AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*Migration rates are slowing but rates of return are not as high as expected*

Writing in 2011, it is highly likely that internal migration will continue to experience the slow-down that has been in evidence since early 2008. With the downturn in the construction industry in Western Europe, the demand for labor from Central and Eastern Europe also slows. Fluctuating currency exchange rates, a feature of the current "credit crunch," have also affected mobility within the European labor market.

Despite the slowdown, we have yet to see the predicted return of internal EU migrants, many of whom have migrated since 2004, to their countries of origin. This has occurred in relatively modest numbers, but many more migrants have remained in the new host country, taking full advantage of employment, welfare, and social networks.

### *The EU remains committed to managing migration as right-wing influence grows*

The European Union's Reform Treaty (the "Lisbon" Treaty) removed the power of veto that member states have enjoyed over immigration and asylum legislation, and this is likely to enable steps towards a more coherent policy of access to the EU (particularly with regards to asylum applications), irrespective of the first country of entry. The areas of most immediate attention include those of access to the EU labor market, border controls, asylum application, and the granting of refugee status.

The current political turmoil in North Africa has resulted in rising numbers of refugees to Italy, Malta, and France. Italy and France are currently testing the resolve of the EU Commission's commitment to the free movement of people in the face of threats from these two governments to re-introduce routine border checks, considered illegal by Brussels. Denmark has also been told to relax its own recently re-introduced checks on traffic crossing its borders via the bridge connecting it to Sweden. It seems likely that new center-right and right-wing influences in European governments will use the threat of re-introducing border checks as a populist measure to stir popular support. The EU Commission will continue to oppose such attempts in a robust fashion, typically via legal action. To do otherwise ignores a major principle of the European Union.

### *Governments fail to recognize religious component of migration*

European governments and the institutions of the European Union need assistance in identifying and acknowledging religious identity and practice as a factor in migration.

Whereas citizens of European states have tended to see migrants in primarily national terms, increasingly migrants are taking prior cultural and religious self-understandings into account. It is underlined by the question as to whether, for example, an Armenian migrant sees himself or herself as primarily a religious-cultural Armenian or primarily as a citizen of a country called Armenia. Migrants may see themselves as Nigerian Pentecostals, or Syrian Orthodox, but they may not consider the fact that they are migrant Christians to offer sufficient commonality for meeting together at integrated events such as "migrant festivals." Such considerations complicate the framing of harmonized integration policies across the EU because countries respond to such issues in ways that reflect the peculiarities of their own historical, cultural, and political development.

This is especially complex for migrants from countries that are Islamic-majority countries. The EU needs help in learning how to distinguish between Kurdish Christians and Sunni Muslims originating from Iraq. Similar questions occur with migrants from Egypt: are they Coptic Christians, religiously observant Muslims, or "secularized Muslims"?

This has a practical application in determining the possibility of whether an asylum applicant who is repatriated is likely to face persecution or hostility. In some countries, the governmental border and immigration agencies have turned to Church-related agencies for expert advice and opinion in such cases. In other European countries the Church's competency or opinion in such matters is ignored.

### *Integrationist migration policies will gradually replace multiculturalist migration policies*

Integration and social cohesion are likely to drive migration and asylum policy and practice within the Commission and Parliament of the European Union as they address inequality and differentiation for the foreseeable future. The migration agencies of the churches of Europe are likely to frame their own policies and practices in line with their postures vis-à-vis the EU institutions and it would seem that there is sufficient missiological justification for adopting such a strategy. However, this cannot be at the expense of acting in solidarity with asylum seekers and migrants whose basic human rights may from time to time be denied by one or another member state of the European Union. Where this happens, the churches of Europe may have to challenge the abuse of power, subtle and not-so-subtle forms of social exclusion, and policies that discriminate unfairly against the vulnerable and exploited. European politicians must be reminded that, at the very least, to allow such abuses to continue is to miss an opportunity for the cultural, social, and religious renewal of truly sustainable societies.

### *Church responses will remain multi-level and highly flexible*

European churches have typically responded in an ad hoc and unstructured fashion to the growing incidence of ethnic minority and migrant church presence. This might seem a weakness, but it might actually be highly appropriate in the face of a contemporary phenomenon that is characterized by transition, fluidity, contingency, impermanence, and high mobility. Across the continent there are signs that somewhat more settled patterns of residence are emerging, but significant parts of the migrant community in Europe remain susceptible to economic and employment factors. Flexibility of response and lightweight structures are likely to remain central characteristics of migrant programs for the foreseeable future in Europe.

European churches and mission agencies are in the vanguard of those working with migrants and migration issues, and 2010 was declared a year of European churches responding to migration. The vision of *koinonia* outlined in the New Testament does not permit social and ethnic diversity to become divisive. The most powerful testimony to a reconciling Gospel is to live that Gospel out within reconciled communities of the Kingdom. The experience of community should always move us beyond ourselves, however, to the vulnerable, needy, and lost who are to be found among migrants and refugees. Integration is rooted in the theological vision of the inter-trinitarian nature of God where essential differences are neither obscured nor allowed to become the cause of division or exclusion. The ultimate human experience of integration is found in the offer of salvation, through which God calls together diverse people into the one common household of faith, a communion of churches bound together in one body through fellowship and mutual covenant.

## **THE EUROPEAN UNION, MIGRATION, AND POLICY RESPONSES**

The 27 member states of the EU have a combined population of just over 500 million. Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein, and Switzerland belong to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) rather than the EU. The Council of Europe, founded in 1949 and pre-dating the EU, has a current membership of 47 countries (including all of Europe except Belarus). The Council of Europe represents a population of approximately 822 million.

In the first half of the 1970s immigration in Western Europe declined, followed by increases for most countries from the mid-1980s onwards. Between 1995 and 2003 most countries experienced fluctuations in the net annual rate of migration (the difference between immigration and emigration). By 2003 several cases, notably Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, reported a further decline in what was proving to be a longer-term trend. In other cases a downturn in 2003 followed a period of steady increase; for example in Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK. In Central and Eastern Europe the picture is more varied. There was evidence in 2003 of an increase in the Czech and Slovak Republics, Poland and Slovenia, decreases in Lithuania and Romania, while Croatia and Latvia showed no obvious trend.

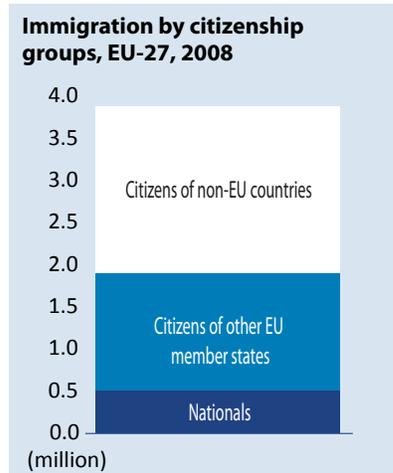
For several Western European countries the accession of new EU member states in 2004 resulted in fresh movements of migrant workers, most notably into countries such as the UK and Ireland. In 2006 there were 65,000 Poles in Ireland (although this is only just over half the number of British migrant workers in Ireland) and an estimated 600,000 to 800,000 Poles in the UK.

### The European Union and internal migration

Every EU citizen has the right to travel to, reside in, and take up employment or self-employed activity in any of the EU member states. Some restrictions are still in place for Bulgaria and Romania (which joined the EU in 2007). Freedom of movement is aimed at increasing the mobility and flexibility of EU citizens within the EU and to open the borders not only for goods but also for people.

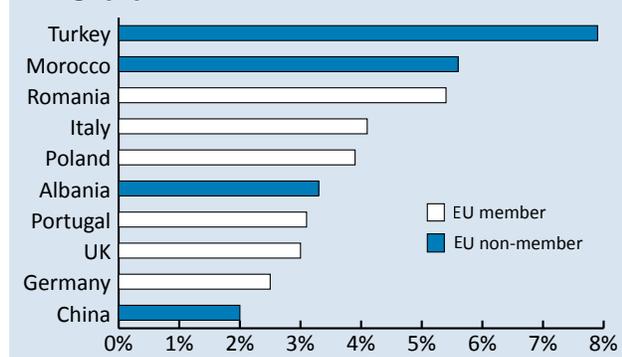
The policy approach of the EU towards internal migration is best described as management rather than control. The European courts will act where they feel a member state is restricting the rights of individual citizens to enjoy the fundamental freedoms they enjoy. The “four freedoms” of movement of goods, services, labor, and capital rest on a fundamental principle of EU law: No member state may discriminate against the citizens of another on grounds of nationality. The first paragraph of Article 39 of the *European Community Treaty*, for instance, concisely states, “Freedom of movement for workers shall be secured within the Community.”

The migration of Polish citizens to the United Kingdom and Ireland and that of Romanian citizens to Italy and Spain tends to distort perceptions of overall patterns of internal EU migration, which continue to show that significant percentages of immigrants are citizens of the country in question and that a majority of migrants in Europe are from the pre-2004 EU members states. Eurostat data indicate that in 2005 and 2006, citizens of the new EU states made up only 0.4 percent of the working-age population of the old members. In contrast, workers from other old EU countries made up about 2 percent of the EU-15 working age population.



Source: Eurostat

#### Ten most numerous groups of foreign citizens usually resident in EU-27, as a percentage of EU total foreign population, 2008



Source: Eurostat

An adequate discussion of contemporary migration in Europe must account for the many migrants who are citizens of one European Union country and who are temporarily or permanently resident in another European Union country. Unwary readers frequently trip over the fact that the EU’s immigration statistics also include citizens of EU countries who are entering or re-entering a country of which they are a citizen. This could be where the individuals have worked in another country for an extended period of residency in another country. It might also include children who are citizens of a country on account of one or both parents, and who are entering their country of citizenship for the first time, again after a significant period of residency since birth in another country. During 2008, 15% (or more than half a million) of all newly arrived “immigrants” in the countries of the European Union fell into these categories. Not

surprisingly, missionaries and their children, born overseas, may frequently add to this total. In 2008, 56% of the non-nationals living in the EU had European citizenship from another EU member state; for example, there were 1.7 million Romanians living in another EU state in 2008.

The impact of these factors upon European indigenous Christianity is perhaps well illustrated by the experience of the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities of Spain (FEREDE), which was able to argue successfully that, on the basis of German and British migrants living across the “sunshine belt” of the south, the Protestant population of Spain was actually far in excess of previous government-published statistics and that for this reason the state allocation of money to religious communities should be increased in favor of FEREDÉ.

### *Immigration into the European Union*

The European Commission, the Council of Europe, and many migration and refugee NGOs have been pressing for harmonized approaches to migration and asylum across the EU for at least the past decade. Commenting on the expulsion from Italy of Roma (or Gypsies) who were Romanian citizens, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso remarked to the European media that it was “absurd to have 27 immigration policies in Europe.”<sup>1</sup>

EU migration policy is currently focused on improving external border security (via its FRONTEX agency), harmonizing IT and security systems, streamlining migration policy, and developing pragmatically driven policies for migrant integration (including language acquisition).

The preferred countries of immigration in 2009 (with most popular first) are Italy, the UK, Spain, France, Sweden, and Belgium. In 2008, Chinese residents in the European Union (EU) were the fourth-largest group of non-EU residents, at an estimated 621,000. In 2006 they represented 8% of the immigrant population in Hungary. However, if one factors in the presence of EU migrants in other EU states, the Chinese migrant population is only the tenth-largest such population. European populations with a larger diaspora presence in Europe than that of China are Romania, Italy, Poland, Portugal, the UK, and Germany.

#### *Ten most numerous non-EU foreign citizens usually resident in EU-27, 2008*

<b>Citizens of non-EU country</b>	<b>Number in EU-27</b>	<b>% of EU foreign population</b>	<b>Main MS of residence and % of non-national group</b>
Turkey	2,419,000	7.9	DE (76%)
Morocco	1,727,000	5.6	ES (38%), FR (27%), IT (21%)
Albania	1,015,000	3.3	EL (57%), IT (40%)
China	621,000	2.0	IT( 25%), ES (20%), UK (15%)
Ukraine	602,000	2.0	DE (23%), IT (22%), CZ (17%)
Algeria	594,000	1.9	FR (80%)
Russia	570,000	1.9	DE (36%)
India	512,000	1.7	UK (58%)
Ecuador	511,000	1.7	ES (83%)
Serbia and Montenegro	473,000	1.5	DE (54%), AT (28%), IT( 14%)

Source: Eurostat

In 2001 it was estimated that there were as many as 150,000 Koreans in Western Europe. In 2008 there were 37,000 Vietnamese active in the Czech economy. In 2006, 13% of immigrants to Cyprus were from Sri Lanka and 10% were from the Philippines. In 2008, Eurostat estimated that 19.47 million non-EU citizens were living among an EU population of just over 500 million; this means that an average of 3.6% of the EU population is foreign-born. Of these, the most numerous were citizens from Turkey, Morocco, Albania, and China. Additionally, in 2008 there was a 6% decrease in immigration to the EU. Initial analysis shows the trend continuing in 2009.

### *Foreign-born nationals in 2010*

There were 32 million foreign-born individuals living in the EU in 2010. In recent years, immigration has been the main driver behind population growth in most member states: between 2004 and 2008, 3 to 4 million immigrants settled in the EU-27 each year. In 2010, a breakdown of the population by citizenship showed that there were 32.4 million foreigners living in EU member states (6.5% of the total population). Of those, 12.3 million were EU nationals living in another member state and 20.1 million were citizens from a non-EU country.

In 2010, the largest numbers of foreign citizens were recorded in Germany (7.1 million persons), Spain (5.7 million), the United Kingdom (4.4 million), Italy (4.2 million), and France (3.8 million). Almost 80% of the foreign citizens in the EU lived in these five member states.

Among the EU member states, the highest percentage of foreign citizens in the population was observed in Luxembourg

1. An ethnic Romani man was arrested in November 2007 for the murder of an Italian woman. This sparked a wave of ejections of Romanian Romani from Italy on the grounds that security concerns over-rode the EU basis of the free movement of people.

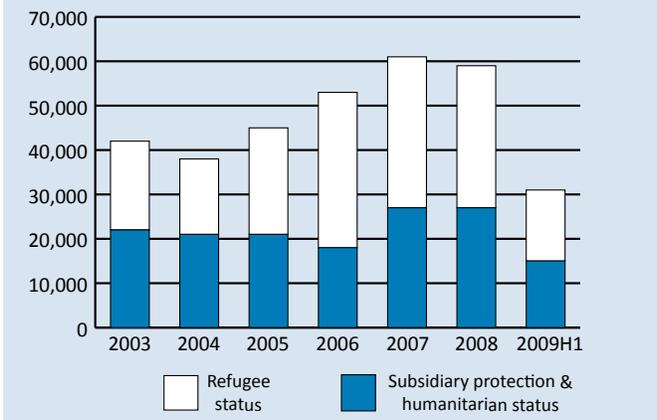
(43% of the total population), followed by Latvia (17%), Estonia and Cyprus (both 16%), Spain (12%), and Austria (11%).

### Asylum applications 2009–2010

From September 2009 to September 2010, the number of asylum applications across the EU fell by 15,000. Against this decrease there were increases in the number of applicants from Serbia and Macedonia. Most applications were processed in Germany (a total of 13,400).

Across the EU, 20% of asylum applicants are aged 13 and under. Also across the EU, 75% of asylum applications are rejected at the first consideration. The largest number of asylum applicants 2009–2010 arrived from Afghanistan, Russia, Serbia, Somalia, and Iraq.

**Grants of refugee status and subsidiary protection/humanitarian status at the first instance in the EU-27, 2003 – 1st semester 2009**



Source: Eurostat

### INTEGRATIONIST MIGRANT POLICIES AND THE EU

In May 2007, then-EU home affairs commissioner Franco Frattini said “There can be no immigration without integration.”<sup>2</sup> In February 2009 the Delegation of the European Commission to the USA reported “The integration of third-country nationals in EU Member States is one of the greatest challenges facing the common immigration policy and a key element in promoting economic and social cohesion within the EU.”<sup>3</sup>

The text of *Common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union* outlines the EU’s commitment to integration and is focused on practical issues including language learning and ensuring access to healthcare, social provisions, education, and labor markets, as well as working towards active participation in civil and political processes. The document is only an outline of principles and cannot be legally enforced.

The Council of Europe report recognized in 1999 that some migrants choose assimilation, adapting their lifestyle to the social class to which they aspire to belong. This may involve a conscious rejection or letting go of language, names, forms of dress, or religious culture, among other things. Some migrants consciously seek integration, mostly basing their identity in the culture of their originating country, and some cultural hybridity seems inevitable, particularly among second- and third-generation families of the original migrants. A third group of migrants organize in terms of cultural or religious allegiance, particularly where the religion is seen as a universal religion. This is well advanced in the UK and France and, as far as Muslims are concerned, also in Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium.

According to Bedford-Strohm, migrants and asylum seekers in the European Union “should not be forced to abandon their own religious and cultural traditions for the sake of conforming to the receiving country.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, they should not be obliged to assimilate. Assimilation, two-way integration, and multiculturalism describe policies that span a continuum.

According to the Global Commission on the Integration of Migrants,

Integration is a long-term and multi-dimensional process, requiring a commitment on the part of both migrants and non-migrant members of society to respect and adapt to each other, thereby enabling them to interact in a positive and peaceful manner.<sup>5</sup>

2. Renata Goldirova, “No immigration without integration, says EU commissioner,” *EUObserver.com* (May 2007), <http://euobserver.com/9/24038>.

3. European Commission, 2009.

4. Bedford-Strohm, H., “Responding to the Challenges of Migration and Flight from a Perspective of Theological Ethics,” in *Theological Reflections on Migration: A CCME Reader* (Brussels: Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe, 2008), 43–4.

5. Global Commission on the Integration of Migrants, 2005, 44.

## CHURCHES RESPONDING TO MIGRANTS IN MISSION

Church and mission agency responses have tended to focus on several areas of mission activity: establishing, supporting, and networking with migrant congregations; promoting social and cultural integration; and providing welfare and advocacy services for asylum seekers, refugees, and trafficked migrants. More recently, attempts are being made to understand migration theologically and to learn from the migrant experience. Many migrants have their own active and important mission movements. For example, the Chinese Overseas Christian Mission, based in Milton Keynes, remains the most important Chinese Evangelical body in Europe. Back to Europe is a coalition of Latin American agencies and individuals working alongside European Christians to “stimulate a mission and prayer movement to re-engage Europe with the evangelistic mission of the church.”

Active churchgoers are frequently engaged in church and mission agency responses which have tended to focus on establishing, supporting, and networking with migrant congregations, on promoting social and cultural integration, and on providing welfare and advocacy services for asylum seekers, refugees, and trafficked migrants. More recent attempts are being made to understand migration theologically and to learn from the migrant experience.

In countries that are a source of trafficked individuals, mostly women, agencies such as the International Catholic Migration Commission have a significant anti-trafficking educational presence. Churches Against Sexual Trafficking in Europe (ChASTE) and similar agencies have adopted advocacy and mobilization strategies in countries of destination for trafficked women. Agencies such as the Greek Evangelical agency Helping Hands have established refugee centers in Athens that address a broader range of issues for migrants applying for asylum and seeking refugee status in Greece. In Hungary, the Reformed Church has been active in developing and supporting educational programs for the children of refugees.

These changes seem inevitable and necessary. In French-speaking Belgium, 20% of Protestant pastors and between 30–40% of Protestant church members are of African origin. In France, two migrant denominations are members of the French Protestant Federation, and there were a recorded 250 migrant congregations of African origin in Paris in 2005. In several of the German regional church assemblies there are conferences of foreign-language pastors. In the Netherlands there are three larger migrant denominations and a number of smaller groups that are in membership of the Dutch Council of Churches. In Norway there are seven migrant churches in a similar membership.

In 2010, the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe declared a “Year of European Churches Responding to Migration” and, at the conclusion of the year, published the results of its active engagement in integration issues through its MIRACLE program “Models of Integration through Religion: Activation, Cultural Learning and Exchange.”<sup>6</sup> Practical policy recommendations were developed for European churches struggling to know how best to respond to the presence of migrant Christians in their congregations. Integration is likely to remain at the center of Europe-wide efforts to respond in mission and ministry to the presence of non-Europeans (Christian and otherwise) in Europe.

## THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCHES IN EUROPE TO INTEGRATION AND MIGRATION

The need for a willing acceptance of integration on the part of the migrant as well as on the part of the host culture or society can be rooted in a reading of the story of Ruth and Naomi. The vulnerable Moabitess declares a willingness to be integrated, “Your people will be my people and your God will be my God” (Ruth 1:16–18); she is answered by Boaz, “May the Lord reward you for your deeds, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge!” (Ruth 2:11–13). The challenge for European churches is to promote integration policies that are short-term, detailed, and circumstantial, and which do not fall outside of a number of Biblical principles.<sup>7</sup>

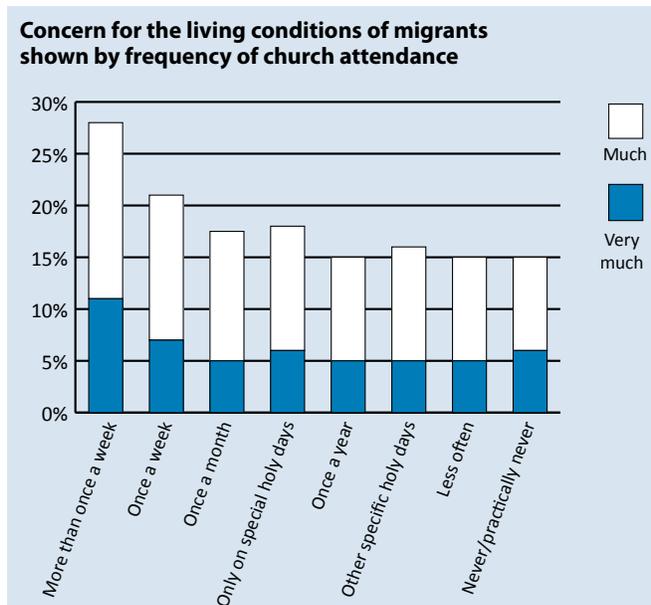
At the European Evangelical Alliance’s General Assembly in 2009, General Secretary Gordon Showell-Rogers underlined the need to address ethnic integration: “Integration is on the lips of many politicians and educators in our countries and at EU level. Everybody knows that it is vital. European Christians arguably have an almost unique selling point in this ‘niche market’: truly modelling integrated communities.”

In 2004 church-based agencies addressing migration and asylum welcomed the fact that integration had become

6. For further information, see the MIRACLE website at <http://www.ccme.be/areas-of-work/uniting-in-diversity/miracle/>.

7. Nick Spencer, *Asylum and Immigration: a Christian Perspective on a Polarised Debate* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2004).

a “top theme of EU migration policies.”<sup>8</sup> Others cautioned against using integration and social cohesion as the sole measure of successful migration policy and practice, pointing to the existing contribution to national identity of ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity.<sup>9</sup>



Source: European Values Survey 2001, Nova Research Centre

In 2001 the European and World Values Survey published data gathered from 2,000 citizens in each of thirty European countries. Analysis carried out by the Nova Research Centre shows that with increasing frequency of church attendance, a respondent is more likely to show a deeper level of concern for the living condition of migrants (see adjacent figure). A person who attends church once a week is twice as likely to feel concerned about the living condition of migrants as somebody who never goes to church. What these data suggest with regard to the integration of migrants is that the “average” European churchgoer is more likely to be socially “progressive” than socially “conservative.”

Pasarelli (2010) reported that despite initial enthusiasm for integration of migrants within the churches of Ireland, current levels of enthusiasm may be in decline. It is not clear at present whether this is because programs and strategies for integration have been judged inadequate or because effective policies are being resisted and resented.

The biblically inspired visions of the wolf, lamb, leopard, and goat lying down together (Isaiah 11:6) require contextualization across a continent whose populations, legal institutions, and political institutions are marked with the reality of sin. The obligation to take sin seriously falls upon the host country as well as upon migrants and those seeking asylum. Xenophobia and unscrupulous exploitation of the asylum processes are realities of contemporary EU migration policy and experience. Both are to be resisted because both ultimately undermine the dynamic towards integration.<sup>10</sup>

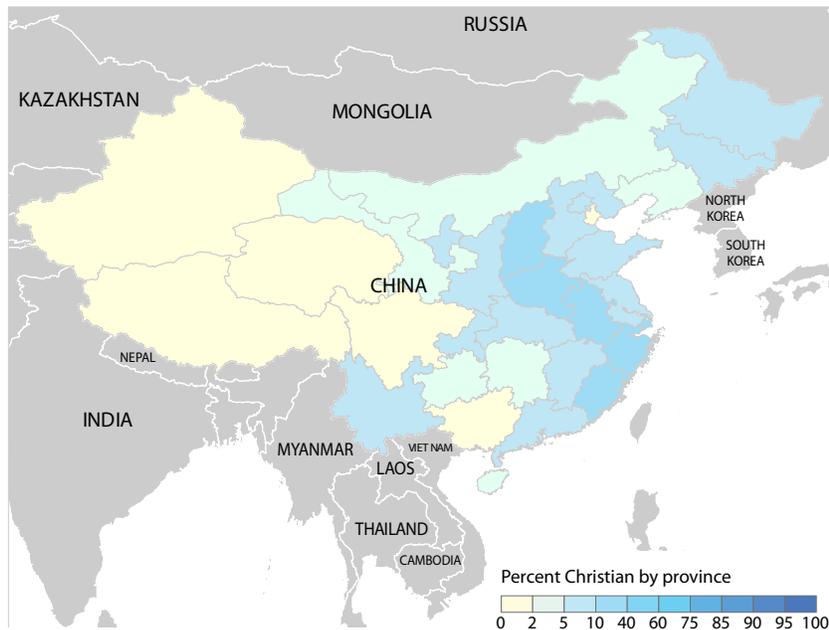
8. See the joint communiqué *Integrating Migrants – Integrating Societies: Essential Elements for EU Migration Policy* of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Europe (COMECE), Caritas Europe, the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe, and the Quaker Council for European Affairs, plus others, at <http://www.jrseurope.org/Integrating%20migrants%20integrating%20societies.pdf>.

9. Paul Weller, *Migration Principles: Statement for Churches working on Migration Issues* (London: Churches Together in Britain and Ireland 2007), 20.

10. In practice I would personally err towards what Campese has described as a “preferential option for the undocumented migrant.” I choose this option as a consequence of encounters with individuals who describe convincing experiences of torture yet who have been repeatedly ignored or considered to be lying by border officials and government authorities. See Gioacchino Campese, “Beyond Ethnic and National Imagination: Toward a Catholic Theology of U.S. Immigration,” in *Religion and Social Justice for Immigrants*, ed. Pierrette Honadneu-Sotelo (New York: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 181.

# NUMBER OF CHRISTIANS IN CHINA AND INDIA

It is exceptionally difficult to estimate the numbers of Christians in the world's two most populous countries, China and India. Both China and India are among the countries with the most total Christians, as these minority populations number in the tens of millions.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the Christian communities in these two countries have seen significant growth throughout the last century.<sup>2</sup> China is a difficult case due to the Communist government's nervousness about religion and the unorganized nature of the house church movement. In India, however, it is a combination of Hindutva (a political movement with the goal of designating India as a "Hindu" country), the Dalit movement, and vast numbers of house churches that make it difficult to accept the census as authoritative.



Source: Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2011

## CHINA

Almost everyone agrees that Christianity in China has experienced remarkable growth over the course of the past century. Pinpointing a reliable number for Christians in China, however, has been extremely difficult for scholars and church leaders alike. The combination of governmental secrecy, a huge general population, and rumors of large numbers of conversions has made this task particularly hard. Other difficulties include the structure of house church networks and the confusing and complicated issue of how to handle and enumerate believing children. Our analysis will provide an overview of a few select studies to arrive at a methodological consensus, while reaching an agreement about figures.

Though each of the studies outlined here arrives at different conclusions for the number of Christians in China, there are some "ground rules" acknowledged by all that are helpful to mention first. Foundational is the discrepancy between official government figures for churches belonging to the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM; Protestant; self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating), the Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA; does not accept the authority of the pope and appoints its own clergy), and unregistered "house churches." Uniformly, scholars deem official government figures as understated. It is generally understood that China's Christian gains are largely through conversion<sup>3</sup> and occur in both the government-sponsored churches and unofficial house churches, though arguably more so in the latter. The double counting of believers who attend both the TSPM and house church meetings is a growing issue as well. Related to this is a "third expression" of Christians in China: urban, professional congregations that are part of neither the TSPM nor house church networks. What remains a primary concern for Evangelicals, however, is the lack of Christian representation among ethnic minorities in western China.<sup>4</sup>

### Paul Hattaway (*Asia Harvest*)

Paul Hattaway's article "How Many Christians are there in China?" details many of the oft-quoted figures for Christians in China with his commentary on each. Underlying the entire issue is what exactly defines an individual as "Christian." Hattaway provides the following helpful definition: "anyone who professes faith in Jesus Christ and calls upon him

1. Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 59.

2. *Ibid.*, 9.

3. *Ibid.*, 78. Asia has the highest rate of conversions to Christianity. Over 65% of China's Christian gains are through conversion.

4. *Ibid.*, 140.

alone for salvation, regardless of their age or their church affiliation.<sup>5</sup> The last phrase is of particular importance. Many studies do not count children (anyone under 18 or under 16) in their totals for Christian populations, nor do all existing estimates consider all Christian organizations in China. Therefore, Hattaway's figures include both children of believing parents and everybody in the TSPM and the CPA. He claims that the figures for the TSPM (18 million) and CPA numbers (12 million) from 2003 and 2005, respectively, are purposely deflated by the Chinese government.

Hattaway believes government numbers to be conservative estimates, especially when considering they do not include children (since it is illegal to baptize minors). He puts the number of Christians in China at around 105 million (84 million Protestants and 21 million Catholics, including members of house churches for both). These figures are based on 2000 census data; like many others, Hattaway awaits the release of 2010 Chinese census figures for recalibration. To arrive at his TSPM number, for example, Hattaway tracked years of clippings from actual TSPM resources and concluded that they were inadvertently reporting a larger number than their "official" estimate. Estimates for house churches were made by analyzing "hundreds of hours of interviews" with house church leaders in "practically every part of China."<sup>6</sup> Asia Harvest impressively breaks down the figures by province on their website, citing both government and other religious sources to arrive at their totals.<sup>7</sup> Despite his hard work, however, Hattaway insists that only God knows the number of Christians in China.

UNDERLYING THE ENTIRE ISSUE IS WHAT EXACTLY DEFINES AN INDIVIDUAL AS "CHRISTIAN."

### *Operation World*

*Operation World* (OW) applies a method of self-identification to enumerate Christians and leans on Hattaway's work as a key informant (and even reaches the same conclusion for the number of Christians in China, 105 million). Therefore, anyone who calls himself a Christian is considered one in their study, regardless of church affiliation or theology. OW arrives at an almost identical number to that of Hattaway and Asia Harvest, and estimates the annual growth rate of Christians in China at 2.7% per annum. In line with other studies, OW employs estimates from both the government and house church leaders. Additionally, OW claims that the gap between house church leaders' estimates and those of the government is closing as the government slowly becomes more transparent and accepting of the reality of unregistered house church networks in their country.<sup>8</sup> Finally, OW's survey of the Chinese Christian figures incorporates other, more recent, information and articles related to religious data, population growth data, and ethnic population data (as well as subsequent estimates of religious affiliation of certain minority populations) than Hattaway's material. This entailed a number of micro-adjustments to the overall situation that yielded a large number of specific, but minor, changes to the Christian population.

### *World Christian Database*

The *World Christian Database* (WCD), as a data collection and analysis resource, provides a list of "denominations" with separate estimates for each in 1970, 2000, 2005, and 2010.<sup>9</sup> These estimates were supplied by a variety of informants and also influenced by Hattaway's study. Utilizing this approach, the WCD estimates 107 million for the number of Christians in China in mid-2010 (8% of the population). The 2009 *Atlas of Global Christianity* listed the number of Christians in China at over 115 million, but researchers at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity lowered that number to 107 million two years later, taking into account recent reliable, scholarly sources on the issue.

### *Rodney Stark, Byron Johnson, and Carson Mencken*

The most recent of the surveys discussed in this report (May 2011) is Rodney Stark, Byron Johnson, and Carson Mencken's *First Things* article, "Counting China's Christians."<sup>10</sup> The authors used as a starting point Horizon's 2007 national survey,<sup>11</sup> which interviewed 7,021 individual Chinese ages sixteen and over who had lived at their current residence

5. Paul Hattaway, "How many Christians are there in China?," accessed May 13, 2011, <http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/christiansInChina.html>, 11.

6. Ibid., 22.

7. See <http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/Christians%20in%20China/Provinces/=CHINA=.htm>.

8. Jason Mandryk, *Operation World*, 7th edition (Colorado Springs: Biblica Publishing, 2010), 216.

9. *World Christian Database* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), accessed May 3, 2011, <http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org/wcd/>.

10. Rodney Stark, Byron Johnson, and Carson Mencken, "Counting China's Christians," *First Things* (2011), accessed April 21, 2011, <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2011/05/counting-chinarsquos-christians>.

11. Horizon, Ltd. is one of China's largest and most respected polling firms.

for three months and had not been a part of a survey in the past six months. That study arrived at a number of 35.3 million Christians over the age of sixteen. The authors concluded that this number was too low, and subsequently conducted a follow-up study in collaboration with Peking University in Beijing, resulting in a number of 58.9 million Christians aged sixteen and over.

Still dissatisfied, the authors corrected the 58.9 million figure by taking into account that “of those known Christians who did agree to be interviewed, 9 percent did not admit to being Christians when asked.” Such a move helps counter the reality that many Chinese Christians are likely to refuse taking part in such surveys due to the sensitivity and danger of claiming adherence to Christianity in China. The authors conclude that “it seems entirely credible that there are about 70 million Chinese Christians in 2011.”

There are two critical issues in the numbers of Stark’s survey. It differs from others in that it excludes children under sixteen years of age; it is unlikely that there are no Christians in China in this age bracket, as large numbers of Chinese Christians are parents. In demographic studies of religion such as this, children must be included as adhering to the religion of their parents if the study refers to the entire population. Another issue is that of growth rates; the authors claim that there is only a 2% growth rate per annum between 2007 and 2011, a number difficult to determine based on a single-year study. Other estimates indicate that the church in China grows by as much as 10% per annum, with a more conservative estimates around 4%. These two issues cause Stark’s estimates to be viewed with caution.

*Brian Grim (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life)*

Brian Grim’s 2008 article from the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, “Religion in China on the Eve of the 2008 Beijing Olympics,” utilizes surveys of religious belief in China between 2005 and 2007.<sup>12</sup> In 2005, 6% of Chinese expressed belief in the possible existence of “God/Jesus” (or, the “Christian God”), a figure 50% higher than the number of people self-identifying as a Christian in the same poll. This indicates that there is possibly a large number of unaffiliated Christians in China. The next year, a poll indicated that 31% of Chinese consider religion to be very or somewhat important in their lives, and in 2007 2% of the polling group responded “Christian” when asked “what is your religious faith?” (1% each for Protestant and Catholic).

Grim’s report cites estimates from the *World Christian Database*, Global China Center, and Holy Spirit Study Centre, claiming that these religious demographers and researchers have the best access to house church leaders and networks and are thus able to provide more reliable estimates than the Chinese Embassy itself.<sup>13</sup> Grim’s report does not give definitive figures, only general trends and acknowledgements of others’ estimates for house-church movements only (WCD 70 million, Global China Center 50 million, and Holy Spirit Study Centre 12 million Catholics). Important from this study, however, is the polling of Chinese that potentially indicates a higher percentage of Christian adherents than official government records.

*Conclusion*

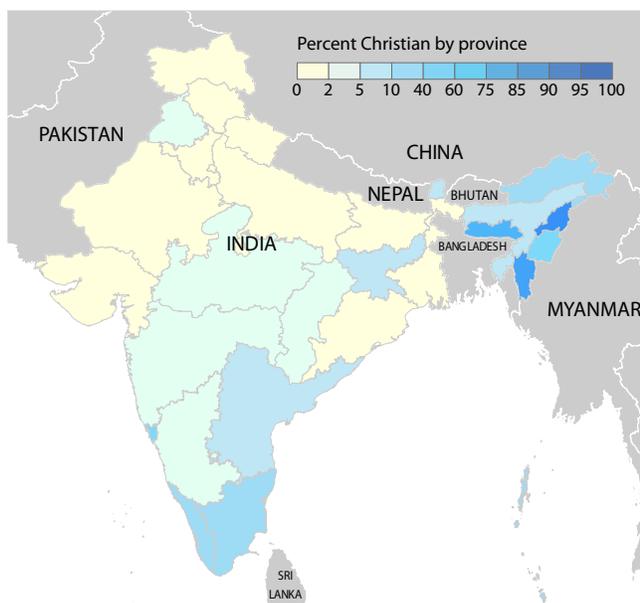
Over the past few decades estimates for the number of Christians in China have ranged from 2.3 million to 200 million. Although it may be impossible to arrive at a definitive figure, the studies and opinions expressed here are helpful indicators of how the church is growing in China. An estimate of around 100 million Christians seems reasonable in light of the issues discussed above: discrepancies between official and unofficial estimates, the inclusion of children, lack of information about ethnic churches, and annual growth rates. China’s sizeable Christian population—whatever exactly the number may be—is overshadowed by its much larger total population (1.3 billion and growing), which can easily mask religious growth.

*Summary of estimates, 2010*

Organization	Number of Christians
Paul Hattaway	105 million
<i>Operation World</i>	105 million
<i>World Christian Database</i>	107 million
Rodney Stark, et al.	70 million

12. Brian Grim, “Religion in China on the Eve of the 2008 Beijing Olympics,” May 1, 2008, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://pewforum.org/Importance-of-Religion/Religion-in-China-on-the-Eve-of-the-2008-Beijing-Olympics.aspx>.

13. “Although the new background brief provided by the Chinese Embassy reports only a small number of these groups, the document does state that ‘There are no [government] data available on the number of “house meetings” that exist.’”



Source: Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2011

## INDIA

The starting point for tackling religious demography in India is with official estimates from the government census about the status of religion. The Indian census has been taken faithfully every ten years since 1871 and has always included religion (along with population, race, rural distribution, and occupation, among others).<sup>14</sup> The most recently published census data are from 2001 (the results of the 2011 census are expected to be released in 2013).

The 2001 census states that of the 1 billion people in India, 24 million (2.3%) are Christians, with little change in percentage expected in 2011. There was widespread complaint in the Indian Christian community at the release of these results, many believing the number to be significantly underestimated for political reasons. Some argue that Christian Dalits were undercounted.<sup>15</sup> Caste and religious affiliation were linked in the census in a way that permitted Dalits to choose only among Hinduism,

Buddhism, and Sikhism, though there has been a significant movement to Christianity among the Dalit class over the past several decades. Therefore, the census overlooked India's 14 million Dalit Christians, as well as 130 million Dalit Muslims.<sup>16</sup> In addition, persecution of Christians in India has had a higher profile since the brutal murder of Graham Staines and his two young sons in Manoharpur, Orissa. The Indian Supreme Court ruled in favor of a life sentence for the leader of the mob (Dara Singh, who was linked to the extreme right-wing Hindu group Bajrang Dal) and acquittals for the eleven men who committed the crime with him. The court also expressed their disapproval of conversion.<sup>17</sup> This incident is just one example of recent hostility towards Christians.

Another approach to assessing religious demography in India, specifically the Christian population, is to canvas all Christian groups for their membership figures. Virtually all groups keep some kind of records, and this approach yields a surprising result that is markedly higher than government census figures. By collecting information from both denominations and networks in India the following picture emerges:

### Christian traditions in India, 2010

Tradition	Estimate	Examples of traditions
Roman Catholics	21.7 million	Protestant Church of South India, Church of North India, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, others
Protestants	21.1 million	
Independents	18.2 million	Orthodox Orthodox Syrian, Mar Thoma Syrian, Malankara Syrian, others
Orthodox	4.8 million	
Double-counted	7.4 million	Independents New Apostolic Church, Indian Pentecostal Church of God, New Life Fellowship, many independent networks
All Christians	58.4 million <sup>18</sup>	

Source: Atlas of Global Christianity, 2009

14. Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs, Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, "History of Indian Census," accessed May 9, 2011, [http://censusindia.gov.in/Data\\_Products/Library/Indian\\_perceptive\\_link/History\\_link/censushistory.htm](http://censusindia.gov.in/Data_Products/Library/Indian_perceptive_link/History_link/censushistory.htm).

15. One example of a potential undercount is in Andhra Pradesh. According to Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) data, 6.1% of women aged 15–49 are Christian; of these, 74% identify as Scheduled Caste in DHS. In the Indian census, however, it is not possible to simultaneously identify as Scheduled Caste and Christian. The census reports that 1.6% of Andhra Pradesh is Christian. These figures suggest the possibility of undercounting of Scheduled Caste Christians. For more information on DHS, see <http://www.measuredhs.com>.

16. Anto Akkara, "Churches Angry that Indian Census Ignores 14 Million Christian Dalits," *Christianity Today*, February 21, 2001, accessed May 28, 2011, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/februaryweb-only/56.0c.html>.

17. *The Times of India*, "Life term adequate for Staines murder convicts: SC [Supreme Court]," January 21, 2011, accessed May 23, 2011, [http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-01-21/india/28351453\\_1\\_dara-singh-graham-staines-minor-sons#ixzz1BkKapVhd](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-01-21/india/28351453_1_dara-singh-graham-staines-minor-sons#ixzz1BkKapVhd).

18. Johnson and Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 332, 336, 338. *Operation World* figures are higher for Protestants and unaffiliated Christians and are found on pages 407.

This method produces a figure of 58.4 million Christians in India for mid-2010 (about 4.8% of the population). The advantage of this approach is that working through Christian networks allows us to locate Christians who might otherwise be hidden from view. A disadvantage of this method is that counting members from hundreds of loose networks carries with it its own problems, as individuals may belong to more than one denomination or network. Nonetheless, for the major Christian research centers, this method provides the greatest consistency for estimating the numerical strength of Christianity in every country of the world. Consequently, the results can be compared across countries.

It is also difficult to track the growth of Christianity in India. Official figures do not tell the whole story, and it remains dangerous in some states to openly affirm the tenets of Christianity. Pentecostal/Charismatic fellowships are growing, and many key Evangelical networks have recently increased, such as the Evangelical Fellowship of India, Pentecostal Fellowship of India, and Baptist Evangelical Alliance.<sup>19</sup> Despite persecution, there has been obvious growth of the church in select states over the course of the past century, much of which occurred following independence in 1947. In the northeastern states (excluding Assam), Indian religionists in 1901 were 90% of the population; by 1991 these states were only 60% Indian religionist and 40% Christian. Christianity has dominated the religious sphere in states such as Nagaland (90% Christian), Mizoram (90% Christian), the outer districts of Manipur (40% Christian), and Meghalaya (75% Christian).<sup>20</sup>

HIGHER ESTIMATES REFLECT REALITIES IN THE GROWTH OF INFORMAL CHRISTIAN MOVEMENTS ACROSS INDIA THAT ARE NOT EASILY PERCEIVED BY THE GOVERNMENT

A significant feature of Indian Christianity is cross-cultural movement within the country itself, mainly southern Christians doing missionary work in the north. This has resulted in remarkable growth of Indian cross-cultural outreach agencies despite opposition and persecution.<sup>21</sup> Often these outreaches take the form of highly contextualized ministries among Hindus, such as the *Yesu Darbar* (Court of Jesus) at the *Yesu Mandir* (Temple of Jesus), full of *Yesu bhaktas* (Jesus devotees), a “new type” of Christian emerging in South Asia.<sup>22</sup> These new believers come from non-Christian backgrounds (unlike the generations-old Orthodox Christianity found, for example, in Kerala) and are sometimes poor.<sup>23</sup> They are Hindus who choose to remain in their religious communities while simultaneously pledging allegiance to Christ. Exact numbers for these believers are difficult to acquire, but it is estimated that in 2010 as many as three million people could be identified in this way.<sup>24</sup>

The distribution of Christians in India is certainly not uniform. As stated above, the far northeastern states are predominantly Christian (have the highest Christian percentages of any states). Southern India is historically more Christian than northern India due to very early missionary activity there, such as in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Goa. Many of the northern states have only small percentages of Christians, such as Orissa (home to much persecution in recent years), Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, and Himachal Pradesh, among others.

Taking into consideration the issues surrounding the 2001 Indian census and on-the-ground reports from Christians (both nationals and missionaries) within India, it is reasonable to suspect that the government’s estimate of 24 million (2001 census) Christians is simply too low. For mid-2010, the *Atlas of Global Christianity* claims 58.4 million (4.8% of the population) and *Operation World* 71 million (5.8%). It is likely that these higher estimates reflect realities in the growth of informal Christian movements across India that are not easily perceived by the government. The wide range of estimates is clear evidence that much more work is needed to properly represent Christian demography in India.

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19. Mandryk, *Operation World*, 412.

20. A. P. Joshi, M. D. Srinivas, and J. K. Bajaj, *Religious Demography of India* (New Delhi: Centre for Policy Studies, 2003), xxi; *World Christian Database* for approximated percentages.

21. Mandryk, *Operation World*, 413.

22. Daniel J. Bhakiaraj, “Christianity in South-central Asia, 1910–2010” in *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 142.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Johnson and Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 144. Estimates are derived from in-country informants at work in these networks. More in-depth research is needed to verify these estimates. Note that these believers are counted as Hindus in the census.

# NUMBER OF EVANGELICALS WORLDWIDE

Evangelicalism is a dynamic Christian force in the world today. From the onset of Evangelicalism in Great Britain in the 1730s to the United States in the nineteenth century and now as a global phenomenon, Evangelicals have had great influence in many spheres, most notably religion and politics. Throughout the twentieth century a series of gatherings and movements converged into the Lausanne Movement and the World Evangelical Alliance, arguably the two most active global bodies of Evangelicals today. All of this leads to two important questions: what exactly defines a Christian as an Evangelical, and how many are there in the world today? The issue is multifaceted, requiring much more than just a cursory tally of adherents. Our analysis will detail two working definitions of the term found in the *World Christian Database* and *Operation World*, and specify how these definitions result in differing estimates.

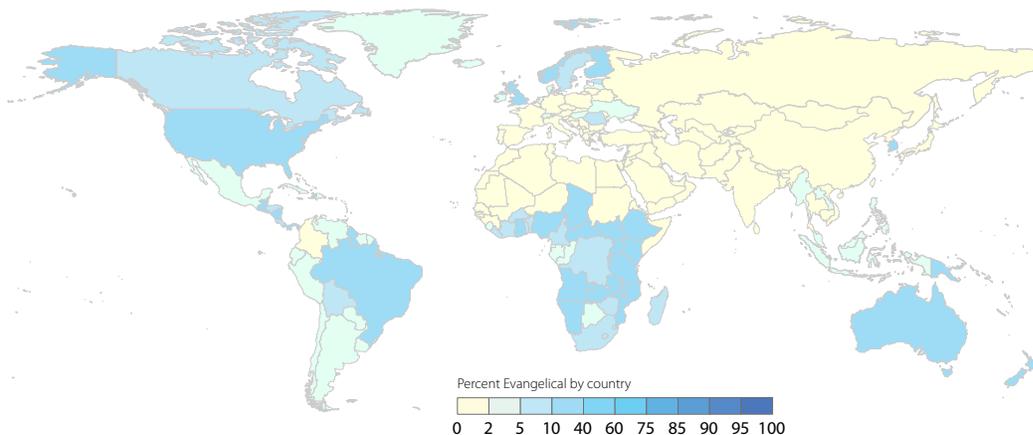
## *World Christian Database*

The *World Christian Database* (WCD) is an online resource based on the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (1982, 2001) and *World Christian Trends* (2001). Data for the WCD are constantly gathered, analyzed, and updated by full-time staff at the Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

The WCD, building on the methodology of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, uses a “structural” approach in defining evangelicals. The methodology is slightly complex, differentiating between the terms “evangelical” (lower-case “e”; also called Great Commission Christians<sup>1</sup>) and “Evangelical” (capital “E”). Although the distinction may at first appear minor, these terms represent two distinct groups of Christians within what is broadly global Christianity. First, an evangelical (lower-case “e”) is any church member (therefore, on a church roll) who believes in or embraces seven key components:

1. Believers centered on the person of Jesus
2. Believers obedient to Christ’s Great Commission
3. Believers committed to the gospel as set forth in the Bible
4. Day-to-day personal witness to Christ
5. Involved in organized methods of evangelism
6. Involved in Christ’s mission in the world
7. Working towards Christ’s second coming and final Advent

As such, these “evangelicals” can be found in virtually any Christian tradition (Protestant, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Independent, Marginal). For the purpose of counting, evangelicals are evaluated at the level of people groups, where two variables are assessed: (1) the degree to which the churches are engaged in evangelism among non-Christians in their people group, and (2) the per-capita sending of missionaries from their people group to other countries. The complex formula is explained and analyzed in *World Christian Trends*.<sup>2</sup>



Source: Center for the Study of Global Christianity, 2011

1. The term “Great Commission Christians” (GCC) takes center stage in the conversation about global evangelicalism in the *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Johnson & Ross, eds, 2009), 290–3. GCCs are defined as “believers in Jesus Christ who are aware of the implications of his Great Commission, have accepted its personal challenge in their lives and ministries, and are seeking to influence the Body of Christ to implement it.”

2. See Part 21, “Geopersonnel,” on pages 665–74.

Alternatively, Evangelicalism (capital “E”) is a movement within Protestantism (excluding Anglicanism) consisting of all affiliated church members self-identifying as Evangelicals. Christians are also considered Evangelicals when they are members of an Evangelical church, congregation, or denomination (the WCD is structured around denominational data). Characteristics of Evangelicals include personalized religion (being “born again”), dependence on the Bible as the word of God, and regular preaching and/or evangelism. In addition, both of these sub-groups typically adhere to a degree of conservatism in both values and theology.

For the purpose of counting, Evangelicals are located by assessing whether a particular denomination belongs to an Evangelical council (either national, regional, or global). Every denomination with such an affiliation is coded as “Evangelical,” and 100% of its adherents are considered to be Evangelicals. In the case where denominations are not identified as “Evangelical,” an estimate is made of the percentage (0–99%) that self-identify as Evangelical.

This is assessed by contacting Evangelical groups in the denomination to see if they have made their own estimates of Evangelicals. If no such groups exist, then rough estimates are made based on published materials or other informants.

ALL OF THIS LEADS TO TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS: WHAT EXACTLY DEFINES A CHRISTIAN AS AN EVANGELICAL, AND HOW MANY ARE THERE IN THE WORLD TODAY?

This structural approach leads the WCD to claim that there are 706 Evangelical denominations worldwide with a total of around 300 million adherents in mid-2010. The formula used for the broader term “evangelical” produces a total of approximately 700 million Great Commission Christians worldwide in mid-2010. A parallel assessment of Pentecostals and Charismatics results in about 600 million for the same year. These three categories—Evangelical, Great Commission Christian (or evangelical) and Pentecostal—are not mutually exclusive. For example, one can be a Pentecostal and an Evangelical but not a Great Commission Christian. Likewise, an individual can simultaneously be all of the above.

### *Operation World*

Since 1964 there have been seven editions of *Operation World* (OW), with the most recent edition released in October 2010. Begun by Patrick Johnstone and now continued by Jason Mandryk, *Operation World* was listed #43 in *Christianity Today's* “Top 50 Books That Have Shaped Evangelicals” in 2006.<sup>3</sup> *Operation World* is an easy-to-read, accessible resource intended primarily for missionaries and missions-minded laypeople (that is to say, evangelicals). The editors clearly have a burden for prayer, with *Operation World* outlining specific prayer requests for particular denominations, parachurch organizations, and challenging situations around the world.

*Operation World's* philosophy of defining and counting “evangelicals” differs from that employed by the *World Christian Database*. The editors focus on the theology of evangelicalism in defining adherents, not so much the structure or experience of believers (as in the case of the WCD). In the most recent edition of the book, the authors define their usage of the term as “very close but not identical” to David Bebbington’s usage in *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*.<sup>4</sup> The “Bebbington Quadrilateral,” as it is deemed, includes four characteristics: crucicentrism, conversionism, Biblicalism, and activism. Therefore, OW defines evangelicals as affiliated church members who adhere to the four qualities above. This generally means grounded belief in the crucified Christ, an experience of a personal conversion, theological foundation in the Bible as the word of God, and active missionary evangelism or preaching of the gospel.

Similar to the *World Christian Database*, the editors of OW calculate the number of evangelicals by assessing denominations. The editors look at each denomination and determine what percentage of that group is similar in theology and practice to their definition of “evangelical.” While many denominations would be considered 100% evangelical by both the WCD and OW, there are many that do not meet the stricter definition of the WCD but are theologically similar to Evangelicals. These would be assigned a higher Evangelical percentage by the editors of OW.

Using this method, *Operation World* states that there are about 550 million evangelicals worldwide in 2010. OW claims

3. “Top 50 Books That Have Shaped Evangelicals,” *Christianity Today*, October 10, 2006, accessed May 2, 2011, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/october/23.51.html?start=1>.

4. Mandryk, *Operation World*, 958–9.

that North America is the most evangelical continent in the world, but Asia contains the most evangelicals (followed by Africa and North America). This parallels the shift of global Christianity to the south throughout the twentieth century. The Evangelical center of gravity has shifted from the North Atlantic Ocean in 1910 to Burkina Faso in 2010, which is even further south than the Christian center of gravity in Mali.<sup>5</sup>

*Comparing the numbers*

The difference between the OW and WCD definitions lies largely in that OW uses a theological measuring stick when enumerating evangelicals. The WCD is rooted in similar denominational data but follows a stricter definition for Evangelicals (with a capital “E”), and a wider definition for evangelicals (with a lower-case “e”). The WCD defines particular Evangelical denominations, therefore making all members on the rolls of those denominations’ churches Evangelical Christians (these denominations are typically historical ones with ties to the Reformation). OW, on the other hand, uses a more customized approach that does not differentiate between “big E” and “little e” evangelicals.

EVANGELICALISM IS NOT A MONOCHROMATIC PHENOMENON, DESPITE MANY SIMILARITIES IN THEOLOGY AND EXPERIENCE. NONETHELESS, IT CAN LIKELY BE GENERALLY AGREED UPON THAT THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 500 MILLION EVANGELICALS IN THE WORLD TODAY.

OW’s theologically-based estimate of 550 million evangelicals is significantly higher than the WCD’s structural estimate of 300 million. However, other categories of the WCD must be taken into consideration, namely, 600 million Pentecostal/Charismatics and 700 million Great Commission Christians, all of whom may overlap with the Evangelical total. OW’s total falls between the WCD’s estimates for Great Commission Christians and Evangelicals.

*Sub-groups within Christianity worldwide*

Data Source	Evangelicals	Pentecostals/Charismatics	Great Commission Christians
World Christian Database	300 million	600 million	700 million
Operation World	550 million	600 million	N/A

These two authoritative sources illustrate that counting evangelical Christians results in a range of estimates. It can be difficult to compare the estimates since they are generated from different definitions, methodologies, and categories. Evangelicalism is not a monochromatic phenomenon, despite many similarities in theology and experience. Nonetheless, it can likely be generally agreed that there are approximately 500 million Evangelicals in the world today. Evangelicalism, akin to global Christianity as a whole, is a diverse and transformative group that is making headway for the gospel of Christ throughout the world.

5. Johnson and Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity*, 98.

# HIGHLY CONTEXTUALIZED MISSIONS: SURVEYING THE GLOBAL CONVERSATION

A special feature of Cape Town 2010 was the opportunity for people around the world to witness the live events via the 650 GlobalLink sites and afterwards to participate in the online Lausanne Global Conversation. Through the Global Conversation, tens of thousands of people regularly dialogue with each other about key issues in missions, evangelism, theology, and a variety of other topics, providing insights and continuing the work begun at Cape Town. The purpose of these conversations is to keep the increasingly fragmented global church engaged with one another to discuss issues pertinent to world evangelization. It is impossible to peruse the most popular conversations without coming across articles about contextualization, Christianity and other world religions, syncretism, identity, and ethnicity. Thousands of people are discussing highly contextualized missions among people of other world religions, especially Muslims, but also among Hindus and Buddhists.

## Concerns

Joseph Cumming wrote an insightful article entitled “Muslim Followers of Jesus?” that opens by comparing the relatively new (beginning in the 1980’s) movement of “Messianic Muslims” to the (also recent, but comparatively older) Messianic Jewish movement.<sup>1</sup> Messianic Judaism has largely been accepted by mainstream Christianity as a legitimate form of faith in Jesus Christ in spite of the fact that Jewish religious leaders deny that Jesus is the Messiah or divine, whereas the same has not uniformly been extended to Muslims who have faith in Christ but choose to remain within their Islamic identity. Cumming addresses key concerns from advocates of C4 Christ-centered communities (see explanation below) in this debate by providing sound C5 responses to them, such as the supposed link between contextualization and syncretism, the “deceitfulness” of C5, reception of Jesus-followers by the Muslim community, sloppy Christology, and the definition of “Muslim” itself. The issue is one of identity; who does the Muslim “convert” choose to identify with, Western Christianity or the Muslim *ummah* (religious community) he was born into?

Identity is an important issue in the Global Conversation. It is a complicated matter when one tries to unite Christian and ethnic identity, a concern at the heart of highly contextualized ministries. Contributor Songram Basumatary writes, “my ethnic blood is stronger than the blood of Jesus Christ. The water of baptism is too thin to clean my thickly stained ethnic blood.”<sup>2</sup> Basumatary details his struggles as a northeast Indian Christian trying to reconcile two opposing worldviews and identities, further complicated by violence and hostility from his native culture. Responses in the global conversation express desire for Basumatary to overcome “superficial spirituality” and to find balance between “valuing one’s ethnic heritage and idolatring it.” This issue falls in line with another: ethnicity. Concerning both, what does one choose, and how does one choose it? Perhaps a more biblical question is, does God consider ethnicity a stain that must be eschewed to follow Jesus or does He free us from sin within our ethnic complexities?

Syncretism is a related topic in the global conversation. Some feel that the Lausanne Theology Working Group is unfair in suggesting a tenuous connection between contextualization and syncretism, as if there is a causal relationship between the two.<sup>3</sup> Syncretism is a problem where ever there are new believers, regardless of the degree of contextualization. It is a false dichotomy to imply that less contextualization leads to less syncretism. The Cape Town Commitment also warns of syncretism when addressing contextualization under the heading “love respects diversity of discipleship.” Cody C. Lorange, an active Global Conversation contributor involved in both church planting and insider movements among Hindus, rejects the notion that such a link exists.<sup>4</sup> He and many others desire a scale that indicates movement towards Christlikeness, which is necessary in all new fellowships, rather than unhelpfully contrasting contextualization and/or syncretism. Comments on similar articles by other users, however, indicate that many feel there is a greater danger of syncretism in this kind of ministry.

1. Joseph Cumming, “Muslim Followers of Jesus?” (Cape Town 2010 advanced paper), October 18, 2010, accessed May 14, 2011, <http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/conversations/detail/11298>.

2. Songram Basumatary, “Christian Identity vs Ethnic Identity,” July 19, 2010, accessed May 14, 2011, <http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/resources/detail/10593>.

3. “The dangers of syncretism are worldwide, and so are the complexities of careful, biblically faithful contextualization.” Lausanne Theology Working Group, “The Whole Church Taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World,” accessed May 14, 2011, <http://www.lausanne.org/participant-information/twg-paper.html>.

4. Cody C. Lorange, “The Mythical Link between Contextualization & Syncretism: Lausanne Theology Discussion (7 of 7),” October 7, 2010, accessed May 14, 2011, <http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/resources/detail/11128>.

Contextualization, identity, ethnicity, and syncretism are important concerns when ministering among Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. In light of the reality that, globally, 86% of these religionists do not personally know a Christian,<sup>5</sup> it is more crucial than ever for the global church to discuss these matters. Our analysis will examine both insider movements and church planting movements in light of these concerns.

### Scale of Christ-centered communities

The discussion of church planting versus insider movements begins with the C1–C6 scale that describes the spectrum of Christ-centered communities, developed by John Travis in 1988.<sup>6</sup> Below is the scale as it pertains to Muslims (though this scale has been reinterpreted for other contexts<sup>7</sup>):

#### Scale of Christ-centered communities

Scale	Definition
C1	Traditional church using non-indigenous language; essentially a foreign church within the culture
C2	Traditional church using indigenous language; cultural forms still mostly foreign
C3	Contextualized Christ-centered communities using indigenous language and non-religious aspects of the culture; believers typically meet in a church and call themselves Christians
C4	Contextualized Christ-centered communities using indigenous language and biblically permissible cultural and religious forms; believers call themselves followers of Isa Al-Masih (Jesus the Messiah) and are typically rejected by the Muslim community
C5	Christ-centered communities of Muslim followers of Christ that remain within the Muslim community and are often still active in the mosque
C6	Christ-centered communities of secret/underground believers

Source: Adapted from Travis, 1988

Travis has stressed that the scale is *not* about the methods missionaries use to live among and share the gospel with Muslims (that is to say, the scale does not promote any radical contextualization on the part of missionaries, such as the idea that one becomes a Muslim or a Hindu to minister to a Muslim or a Hindu).<sup>8</sup> The scale is about how Christ-centered communities of new believers view their new identity in Jesus Christ, and their own decision as to how to live within that new identity. In 2007, the Global Trends and Fruitful Practices Consultation found that among missionaries serving in Muslim contexts, hundreds of fellowships had been formed along the entire C1–C6 scale (see graphic on next page).<sup>9</sup>

### Church planting movements

David Garrison defines “church planting movements” as “rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment.”<sup>10</sup> According to the International Mission Board’s Global Research Department, an estimated 201 such groups currently have growing church planting movements within them.<sup>11</sup> Church planting movements typically fall between C2 and C4 on the scale. These are churches often founded by foreign missionaries with varying levels of adaptation to the culture around them.

5. Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 316.

6. John Travis, “The C-1 to C-6 Spectrum,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 34:4 (October 1988), 408. For the most recently published outline of the C1–C6 scale, see Rick Brown, Bob Fish, John Travis, Eric Adams, and Don Allen, “Movements and Contextualization: Is There Really a Correlation?” *IJFM* 26:1 (Spring 2009).

7. The scale has been adapted for Hindu Christ-centered communities. H1: Traditional Christians separate from anything “Hindu”; H2: Traditional Christians renounce Hinduism but accept some non-religious Hindu practices; H3: Hindu Christian renounce Hinduism for Christianity, but adapt some Hindu and cultural practices; H4: Hindu disciples of Christ do not develop contextual expressions of discipleship; H5: Hindu disciples of Christ seek to develop contextual expressions of discipleship; H6: Hindu disciples of Christ recognized by other Hindus but remain unassociated with other disciples of Christ; and H7: Hindu disciples of Christ keep their faith completely private. See H. L. Richard, “H-Scale for Hindu Contextualization,” *Voice of Bhakti: Text and Context in Dialogue* Vol 4 No 4, accessed May 14, 2011, <http://bhaktivani.com/volume3/number4/scale.html>.

8. John Travis, “Messianic Muslim Followers of Jesus,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions*, 17:1 (Spring 2000).

9. John and Anna Travis, with contributions by Phil Parshall, “Factors Affecting the Identity That Jesus-Followers Choose,” in *From Seed to Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices, and Emerging Issues among Muslims*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2008), 195–6.

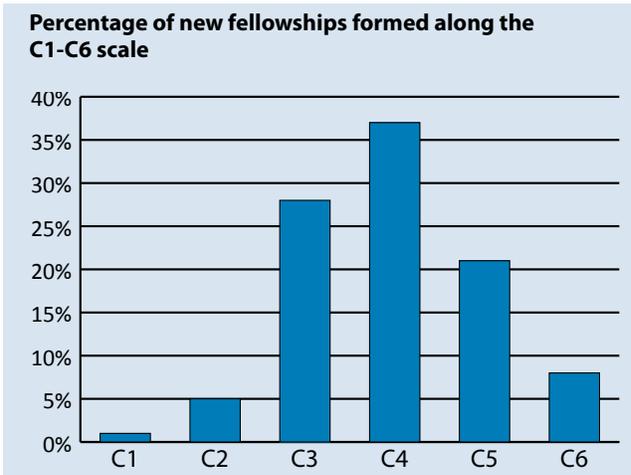
10. David Garrison, “10 Church Planting Movement FAQs,” *Mission Frontiers* (March–April 2011), accessed May 14, 2011, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/10-church-planting-movement-faqs>.

11. Ibid. Three criteria to be registered as a legitimate house church movement are (1) a 25% annual growth rate in total churches for the past two years; (2) a 50% annual growth rate in new churches for the past two years; and (3) field-based affirmation that a church planting movement is growing.

As the least contextualized, C1 and C2 churches are often isolated from local customs and therefore generally do little to reach nationals with the gospel. These churches are typically unsuccessful in making new converts and disciples, or starting church planting movements. By contrast, C3 and C4 churches are more culturally appropriate and are therefore more inviting to Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, as well as more likely to become movements. There are two main differences between the two: C3 believers use only neutral cultural forms (such as folk music) and call themselves “Christians;” C4 believers adapt what they believe to be biblically permissible religious forms (such as certain feasts or styles of worship) and call themselves “followers of Jesus” (therefore separating themselves from the term “Christian,” which often has a connotation of Western or foreign influence).<sup>12</sup> The majority of churches planted in Muslim contexts fall between C3 and C4. It is generally agreed that these are legitimate and effective ways of reaching Muslims (and by extension, Hindus and Buddhists) with the gospel and creating communities of genuine Christ-followers.

There are numerous church planting movements worldwide that fall within the C3–C4 range. The Fruitful Practices network is a group of missiologists who study effective practitioners of mission—particularly in Muslim areas, but applicable around the world—and how God is working through them. Throughout 2009 and 2010 the *International Journal of Frontier Missions* published a series titled “Fruitful Practices: What Does the Research Suggest?” that was dedicated to their work. One study suggested that social networks are at the heart of missiological paradigms and that contextualization is key in transforming those social networks, no matter where they fall on the scale.

In 2009 members of this group developed a “descriptive list” of practices relating to society, believers, God, teams, seekers, leaders, communication, and faith communities to describe fruitful practices that promote “the emergence, vitality, and multiplication of fellowships of Jesus followers in a Muslim context,” though not limited to that context alone.<sup>13</sup>



Source: *Global Trends and Fruitful Practices Consultaion*, 2007

### Insider movements

The Cape Town Commitment defines “insider movements” as “groups of people [from other religions] who are now following Jesus as their God and Saviour. They meet together in small groups for fellowship, teaching, worship and prayer centered around Jesus and the Bible while continuing to live socially and culturally within their birth communities, including some elements of its religious observance.” According to the scale outlined above, these are C5 communities where individuals remain rooted in the identity and religious culture of their birth, even after coming to faith in Jesus Christ. They often continue to worship in the mosque and are identified by the Muslim community as Muslims. When the faith of these believers begins to spread rapidly along relational lines, it becomes an indigenous “insider” movement.

There has been much discussion—and disagreement—among scholars and missionaries in response to these types of movements. Many excellent articles have been written that address these issues in detail.<sup>14</sup> There are two primary points relevant to our assessment, based on voices from the Lausanne Global Conversations: syncretism and identity. Many feel that the theology of Muslims becoming sincere followers of Jesus while continuing to identify with their Muslim community is too complex and messy to be biblical, especially in light of contradictions between the Qur’an and the Bible. In these communities, parts of Islam that do not fit with the Bible are rejected, or if possible, reinterpreted.<sup>15</sup> Some see these believers as maintaining their birth or earthly identity (as Paul maintained both his

12. Timothy C. Tennent, “Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques: A Closer Examination of C-5 ‘High Spectrum’ Contextualization,” *IJFM* 22:3 (Fall 2006), 101–15.

13. Don Allen, et al., “Fruitful Practices: A Descriptive List,” *IJFM* 26:3 (Fall 2009), 111.

14. See Timothy C. Tennent, “Followers of Jesus (Isa) in Islamic Mosques: A Closer Examination of C-5 ‘High Spectrum’ Contextualization,” *IJFM* 22:3 (Fall 2006); Kevin Higgins, “Discipling the Nations and the Insider Movement Conversation,” *Mission Frontiers* (January–February 2011); Rick Brown, “Contextualization without Syncretism,” *IJFM* 23:3 (Fall 2006).

15. Brown, et al., “Movements and Contextualization,” 22.

Jewish identity and Roman citizenship) while adding a new spiritual identity in Christ. Others have concerns that the dual identities of these believers are incompatible and will cause them to have split loyalties between the two religious communities. In the 1970's Phil Parshall was the leading advocate of C4 contextualization that, at the time, caused almost identical concerns in the Evangelical community. Joshua Massey has argued that Parshall's groundbreaking work in advocating for C4 contextualization (which is now the most commonly prescribed) laid the groundwork for C5, the only difference being one of identity.<sup>16</sup> Parshall has subsequently been particularly vocal about his support for contextualization but rejection of the C5 approach.<sup>17</sup> Other advocates, most notably John Travis and Joshua Massey, claim that insider movements are simply one of God's diverse ways of drawing Muslims (and other religionists) into faith in Jesus Christ, and that throughout history God has been asking his followers to do unexpected things.<sup>18</sup>

Several have suggested that C5 contextualization can serve as a springboard for more orthodox Christian faith within C3 or C4 communities, not be an end in itself.<sup>19</sup> However, there are many who firmly believe in highly contextualized missions among Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists as effective and biblical ways of making disciples, where discipleship consists of obedience to Christ's commands, not conformity to religious forms. It has also been argued that in many Muslim (for example) cultures, it is not actually legally permissible to have C4 fellowships; fellowships of Muslim believers in Christ are "more feasible and more effective," as well as more apt to multiply.<sup>20</sup> A few organizations exist to help communities of faith in Christ that are developing within other religions to be fully biblical while remaining in context. Born out of the Institute of Hindu Studies at the U.S. Center for World Mission, the Rethinking Forum strives to promote Christ-centered communities within Hindu contexts. The name recalls its desire to "re-think Indian cultural and religious issues."<sup>21</sup> SEANET is a similar group with a passion for Buddhist peoples and equipping ministers in research, resources, training, and strategy.<sup>22</sup>

### Conclusion

There might never be a consensus among missiologists and active practitioners of mission whether or not indigenous movements to Christ that retain their former religious identity, on the one hand, or highly contextualized outreach ministries, on the other hand, represent sound, biblical practice. Despite the controversy, many are authentically coming to Christ through these movements. There has yet to be enough long-term investigation of these communities to decide exactly how successful they are in discipleship and multiplication. The fact remains that less than 1% of the world's Christians ever share their faith with a Muslim, a serious concern for all involved in this debate.<sup>23</sup> The focus of our analysis has been contextualization, but perhaps a more significant issue is that of discipleship. Alan R. Johnson has commented that in the Buddhist context,

the most significant reason for slow church planting and growth...comes from the modes of evangelism, ministry, church structure, and church life that are employed. I want to suggest that it is less of a case of us not making sense to people from Buddhist backgrounds than it is one of perpetuating philosophies and models of ministry and ways of "doing church" that hinder our ability to plant and grow churches capable of multiplying rapidly and over long periods of time.<sup>24</sup>

The apprehensiveness illustrated by many regarding these indigenous "insider" movements may be needed to keep the global church accountable to each other and to God. As the body of Christ, however, the global church should show support for any circumstance where bona fide believers are being added to the fold, especially in the numbers indicated by those providing resources for highly contextualized, Christ-centered communities.

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16. Joshua Massey, "God's Amazing Diversity in Drawing Muslims to Christ," *IJFM* 17:1 (Spring 2000).

17. Phil Parshall, "Danger! New Directions in Contextualization," *Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, 34:4 (October 1998).

18. See Joshua Massey, "His Ways Are Not Our Ways," *Mission Frontiers* (April 1999).

19. See Tennent, "Followers of Jesus (Isa)" and Bill Nikides "Evaluating 'Insider Movements': C5 (Messianic Muslims)," *St Francis Magazine* 4 (March 2006).

20. Rick Brown, "Contextualization without Syncretism," *IJFM* 23:3 (Fall 2006), 133.

21. See <http://www.rethinkingforum.com/>.

22. See <http://www.globalprayerdigest.org/index.php/issue/day/SEANET>.

23. David Garrison and Seneca Garrison, "Factors that Facilitate Fellowships Becoming Movements," in *From Seed to Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices, and Emerging Issues among Muslims*, ed. J. Dudley Woodberry (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library), 207.

24. Alan R. Johnson, "Structural and Ministry Philosophy Issues in Church Planting among Buddhist Peoples," in *Sharing Jesus Effectively in the Buddhist World*, ed. David Lim et al. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2005), 263-4.

# “FINISHING THE TASK” OF WORLD EVANGELIZATION

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## *What is “Finishing the Task”?*

According to its website, “Finishing the Task (FTT) is an association of mission agencies and churches who want to see reproducing churches planted among every people group in the world.”<sup>1</sup> This network includes some 319 denominations, mission organizations, and churches. Its origins lie in a strategy session held during the Billy Graham Conference on Evangelism in Amsterdam in the fall of 2000, where its organizers were seated at Table 71, inspiring the original name for the organization.<sup>2</sup> Participants in the session were challenged to reach with the gospel those people groups among whom there was no known evangelism or church planting work. Ministry leaders at Table 71 committed themselves to mobilize workers among people groups not engaged by any of the other session attendees and to enlist the help of other ministries (such as Bible translation) needed to accomplish it.<sup>3</sup>

## *What is the list of Unengaged Unreached People Groups?*

In 2006, distribution of the list from Amsterdam among the organizations represented at Table 71 and their field personnel resulted in the compilation of a list of 639 Unengaged Unreached People Groups (UUPGs) with populations of 100,000 or more.<sup>4</sup> A “people group” was defined as “the largest group through which the gospel can flow without encountering significant barriers of understanding and acceptance.”<sup>5</sup> “Unreached” meant “less than 2% of the population are Evangelical Christians,” with “Evangelical Christian” defined as “a person who believes that Jesus Christ is the sole source of salvation through faith in Him, has personal faith and conversion with regeneration by the Holy Spirit, recognizes the inspired word of God as the only basis for faith and Christian living, and is committed to Biblical preaching and evangelism that brings others to faith in Jesus Christ.”<sup>6</sup> Finally, “unengaged” meant “as far as could be ascertained, no one was even trying to reach them.”<sup>7</sup> These 639 UUPGs represented over 500 million people.

Evangelism and church planting have begun among many listed in the original 639 UUPGs, while others have been “adopted” (that is, a commitment has been made but work has not yet started). As a result, the UUPG list has been expanded to include people groups with smaller populations. The Finishing the Task website includes a “UUPG List” (last updated February 16, 2011) of peoples with populations of 50,000 or more.<sup>8</sup> The list is color-coded to show the status of each group, with green representing the presence of full-time workers engaged in church planting, blue indicating those groups who have been adopted but not yet engaged, and white denoting those groups who have yet to be engaged. A quick look through the list reveals that relatively few of the groups are completely unengaged.<sup>9</sup>

## *Why is the UUPG list controversial?*

A slightly different list, entitled “632 Unengaged Unreached People Groups – Population over 50,000,” was given to participants at Cape Town 2010, the first time such a list had been distributed in eight different languages

1. Finishing the Task, “About us,” <http://finishingthetask.com/about.html> (all websites last accessed May 25, 2011).

2. Table 71, “Frequently Asked Questions about Table 71,” <http://www.table71.org/T71-FAQs.asp>.

3. Call2All Media, “The history of Table 71” (video presentation with recollections of those seated at Table 71), available online at <http://finishingthetask.com/videos.html>.

4. Table 71, “Frequently Asked Questions about Table 71”; Finishing the Task, “About us.”

5. Peoplegroups.org, “What is a People Group?”, <http://www.peoplegroups.org/faqs.aspx#WhatsPG>. A more technical definition of “people group” is available at Orville Boyd Jenkins, “What is a People Group,” <http://www.peoplegroups.org/WIAPGfaq.aspx>.

6. Peoplegroups.org, “What is an Unreached People Group?”, <http://www.peoplegroups.org/faqs.aspx#UnrchPG>, and “What do you mean by ‘Evangelical’ Christians and churches?”, <http://www.peoplegroups.org/faqs.aspx#WhatDoECC>.

7. Table 71, “Frequently Asked Questions about Table 71.”

8. Finishing the Task, “UUPG List,” <http://finishingthetask.com/uupgs.php?sort=Country>. The downloadable table further notes that an additional 1,226 people groups with populations between 10,000 and 50,000 are not listed.

9. This is more apparent in the downloadable version of the list ([http://finishingthetask.com/downloads/FTT\\_UUPG\\_List.xls](http://finishingthetask.com/downloads/FTT_UUPG_List.xls)), entitled “1,012 Unengaged People Groups – Population over 50,000.” A note below the table indicates that 99 of the 1,012 groups listed had been neither adopted nor engaged as of February 11, 2011. An additional 350 had been adopted only, with no known engagement. The remaining 563 (almost 56%) had been engaged to some degree by “international churches, missionaries, or near-neighbor believers.” An examination of the list shows that 303 of these 563 “engaged” groups (or about 30% of the list) had at least the recommended 1 full-time worker per 50,000 population.

simultaneously.<sup>10</sup> The list—and indeed the entire plenary presentation made by Paul Eshleman, Director of the Finishing the Task Network—proved to be immediately controversial.

Perhaps the most prominent critic has been René Padilla, a Latin American theologian and plenary presenter at the 1974 Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization who was present in Cape Town. For example, Padilla’s assessment of Cape Town 2010 published in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* included the following critique:

... a whole plenary session was dedicated on Wednesday [the session actually was Friday] to the *strategy for the evangelization of the world in this generation* (made in U.S.A.) [emphasis in the original] on the basis of a chart of so-called unreached people groups prepared by the Lausanne Strategy Working Group. Their strategy chart reflected the obsession with numbers typical of the market mentality that characterizes a sector of evangelicalism in the United States. Besides, according to many of the people participating in the congress who have firsthand knowledge of the evangelistic needs in their respective countries, the chart of unreached groups failed to do justice to their situations. Curiously enough, no unreached groups were listed for the United States!<sup>11</sup>

Some of Padilla’s criticisms are justified. For example, in response to an appeal by Eshleman for updates and corrections to the list, Cape Town 2010 participants provided information indicating previously unknown engagement of 110 people groups.<sup>12</sup> A number of Padilla’s points, however, might have derived as much from the perception of what was said as the reality of it. Indeed, while some in Eshleman’s audience reacted negatively to his call to adopt and engage with one or more peoples from the list,<sup>13</sup> 1,558 delegates committed to initiate ministry among 187 different UUPGs over the next three years.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, lost in the controversy surrounding Eshleman’s presentation was the update given by Dr. Alex Abraham of India after Eshleman spoke.<sup>15</sup> Abraham noted that when Finishing the Task shared the UUPG challenge with partners in India in 2006, the resulting prayer movement gave birth to a national resource center. In collaboration with the India Missions Association (IMA)—which was already working to reach India’s peoples—this center has collected extensive information on all the UUPGs with populations over 100,000 listed in India: 310 of the global total of 639. Over the last 5 years, seminars to build awareness among Indian churches have led to the adoption of 307 of these 310 UUPGs. Training courses for evangelists and church planters have yielded the active engagement of at least 260 of these 310 UUPGs with intentional evangelism and church planting.

*Definition of “Unengaged Unreached People Group”*

Term	Definition
People group	“the largest group through which the gospel can flow without encountering significant barriers of understanding and acceptance”
Unreached	“less than 2% of the population are Evangelical Christians”
Unengaged	“as far as could be ascertained, no one was even trying to reach them”

Sources: *Finishing The Task, 2011; Peoplegroups.org, 2011*

Unengaged Unreached People Groups (UUPGs) differ from Unreached People Groups (UPGs). The table above shows the definition of the terms, illustrating how the term “unengaged” narrows the focus of Finishing the Task.

10. This list, along with other documents distributed at the “Unengaged People Groups” plenary during Cape Town 2010, may be downloaded in all eight languages at <http://finishingthetask.com/downloads.html>.

11. C. René Padilla, “The Future of the Lausanne Movement,” *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 35:2 (April 2011), 87.

12. Communicated by Paul Eshleman at a meeting of the Finishing the Task Task Force in Laguna Woods, California, December 8–9, 2010.

13. See Justin Long, “The devil is in the definitions (or: the controversies around Unengaged at #capetown2010),” *The Long View*, November 1, 2010; at <http://www.justinlong.org/2010/11/the-devil-is-in-the-definitions-or-the-controversies-around-unengaged-at-capetown2010/>.

14. Paul Eshleman, personal communication, received June 10, 2011.

15. A video of Abraham’s presentation, “Priorities – India’s Unreached People,” is available online at <http://conversation.lausanne.org/en/conversations/detail/11456>.

The most apparent disconnect between what was presented and what was heard, however, might be the failure of many to grasp the distinction between unreached people groups (UPGs) and unengaged unreached people groups.<sup>16</sup> The difference between UPGs and UUPGs explains why, for example, the United States was missing from the list (that is, there were no known people groups of population 50,000 or greater in the United States in which a church planting movement was not active) as well as why certain peoples from other countries were absent. Indeed, the concept of UPGs might have been so familiar to most of Eshleman's audience that the mention of UUPGs did not register properly. Others have said that the concept of "unengaged" was not explained sufficiently.<sup>17</sup>

THE MOST APPARENT DISCONNECT BETWEEN WHAT WAS PRESENTED AND WHAT WAS HEARD WAS THE FAILURE OF MANY TO GRASP THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS AND UNENGAGED UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS.

Non-evangelicals have raised a different sort of criticism. Danut Manastireanu, an Orthodox observer present at Cape Town 2010, reacted with "great disappointment and, I think, legitimate anger"<sup>18</sup> to the inclusion of groups identified as "traditional Christian" on the list of UUPGs distributed during Eshleman's plenary session. Eshleman's response<sup>19</sup> to Manastireanu is noteworthy for several reasons. It offers an apology for "the ecumenical insensitivity shown in the list presented" and graciously affirms that brothers and sisters in Christ can be found beyond what are considered traditional Evangelical churches. Thus, Eshleman counters in one sense Manastireanu's suggestion that the UUPG list assumes "only Evangelicals are true Christians." At the same time, however, Eshleman agrees with Manastireanu, although perhaps not in the way the latter might have expected (recall the definition of "Evangelical Christian" quoted at the beginning of this paper). By referring in his reply to both "followers of our Lord" and those who "identify themselves as adherents to the Christian faith" (including, presumably, even some who call themselves "Evangelical"), Eshleman draws a distinction that might not be apparent to every reader.

A third critique questions the necessity of FTT's list of UUPGs given its divergence from similar lists. Doug Lucas<sup>20</sup> notes the differences (particularly in the number of deaf peoples) between the FTT list and that of the Joshua Project.<sup>21</sup> Lucas also makes reference to a paper by Dan Scribner that sheds some light on the differences. Scribner<sup>22</sup> describes the three principal databases used by people studying Unreached People Groups: the *World Christian Database* (WCD; [www.worldchristiandatabase.org](http://www.worldchristiandatabase.org)), the Church Planting Progress Indicators database of the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention (CPPI; [www.peoplegroups.org](http://www.peoplegroups.org)), and the Joshua Project database (JP; [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net)). Both the CPPI and the JP databases have their origins in the WCD, although they contain significant modifications, while all three databases owe much to the work of SIL International and its *Ethnologue*.

An earlier paper by Justin Long provides an instructive analysis of the differences among the databases:

- The primary distinctive of the WCD is its emphasis on Christianity as a whole (all traditions, not just evangelicals) and its focus on the activity of evangelization: which groups have "not heard" (World A [those ethnolinguistic groups that are less than 50% evangelized]),<sup>23</sup>

16. Doug Lucas of Brigada illustrates quite well a change in perspective based on an evolving understanding of Eshleman's presentation. See "Give your Opinion on This Lausanne Appeal –", October 31, 2010, [http://www.brigada.org/2010/10/31\\_5720](http://www.brigada.org/2010/10/31_5720); "How do we Fix UPG List-Mania? [edited 13 of Nov.] [sic] –", November 7, 2010, [http://www.brigada.org/2010/11/07\\_5765](http://www.brigada.org/2010/11/07_5765); "Finishing the Task is the Real Deal –", December 12, 2010, [http://www.brigada.org/2010/12/12\\_6035](http://www.brigada.org/2010/12/12_6035).

17. Long, "The devil is in the definitions."

18. Danut Manastireanu, "Open Letter to Paul Eshleman – UPDATE – On the list of so-called 'unreached people groups,'" December 8, 2010, <http://danutm.wordpress.com/2010/12/08/open-letter-to-paul-eshleman-on-the-list-of-so-called-unreached-people-groups/>.

19. Ibid.

20. Lucas, "Give your Opinion on This Lausanne Appeal –."

21. Joshua Project, "Unreached Listings," <http://www.joshuaproject.net/unreached.php>

22. Dan Scribner, "A Simple Guide to People Group Lists for World Mission", *Lausanne World Pulse*, September–October 2010; available online at <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives.php/1320/09-2010?pg=all>.

23. Justin Long, "Which Peoples Need Priority Attention? Seeking Agreement on the 'Core of the Core,'" *Mission Frontiers* (January–February 2007), 20. A more detailed comparison of the databases is available online at <http://www.joshuaproject.net/people-list-comparison-detail.php>.

- The primary distinctive of the [CPPI database] is its emphasis on evangelical Christianity and church planting. A population that is less than 2% evangelical will always be considered unreached by this methodology, no matter how many resources (like radio broadcasting, JESUS Film distribution, etc.) or how many non-Evangelical Christians (generally, Catholic or Orthodox) there are.<sup>24</sup>
- Joshua Project weighs several factors, and its methodology represents a “combination” position between the IMB and the WCD. More than the other lists, the JP list incorporates factors like caste. To be [considered unreached], a group must have a small percentage of evangelicals (less than 2%, like the IMB) but also a small percentage of total Christians (less than 5%).<sup>25</sup>

Both Long and Scribner affirm the usefulness of multiple databases from which to draw. Likewise, Scribner and Long<sup>26</sup> note that the researchers who put together the people group databases maintain close contact with each other.

An example of the usefulness of multiple perspectives (and data sets) is provided by Ted Bergman and Bill Morrison.<sup>27</sup> Bergman and Morrison begin by asking how many languages remain to be learned in order to evangelize the least-reached peoples. Using data on Christian adherence from the WCD; on “the existence of disciples and churches” from the JP and CPPI databases; and on the existence of Scripture translations (also from the JP database), Bergman and Morrison conclude that 138 “language groups” including more than 4 million people have no known Christians and no book of the Bible in their native languages. While noting that their list is preliminary and that the databases contain differences that must be reconciled, the authors find it useful nonetheless, concluding, “It must be emphasized that this list will surely contain inaccuracies. But having such a list to start from and sending it to knowledgeable missionaries working in the same country might help us make the needed corrections.”<sup>28</sup>

Doug Lucas came to a similar conclusion after the December 2010 meeting of the Finishing the Task Task Force:

Is there dissonance among the lists of various presentations of unreached peoples — a “list-mania?” To a certain extent, yes — there is. Because the lists were all launched for different purposes, by different people, looking at different perspectives. But the core message is still the same: Let’s find out who hasn’t heard, then get there with the Good News of redemption.<sup>29</sup>

Ironically, overcoming the confusion surrounding Finishing the Task’s list of Unengaged Unreached People Groups might be as simple as providing more information to users. For example, the online list would benefit from including details present in the downloadable version.<sup>30</sup> In addition, Dan Scribner<sup>31</sup> notes that the UUPG list derives primarily from the CPPI database, with engagement updates coming from a variety of sources; yet that information seems to appear nowhere on the list itself or the FTT website. Furthermore, whereas the downloadable list defines “unengaged,” the online version does not, and “unreached” is defined on neither.<sup>32</sup> The simple knowledge that the FTT list combines CCPI data with JP criteria might do much to explain why the list resembles, yet differs from, its parents. Finally, FTT should consider sharing more stories of how mission agencies and networks around the world, such as those mentioned by Alex Abraham, are partnering with FTT to both utilize and update information on UUPGs. Those who consult the UUPG list might then find it not only more understandable, but also more useful in fulfilling its purpose of advocating for those to whom no one has yet gone.

24. Ibid., 19–20.

25. Ibid., 20.

26. Long, “The devil is in the definitions.”

27. Ted Bergman and Bill Morrison, “No Christians, No Scripture, No Missionaries: Priority People Groups,” *Lausanne World Pulse* (September–October 2010); available online at <http://www.lausanneworldpulse.com/perspectives.php/1321/09-2010>.

28. Ongoing comparison with data from other sources indicates Bergman and Morrison’s list is “significantly smaller yet.” Ted Bergman, personal communication, May 26, 2011.

29. Lucas, “‘Finishing the Task’ is the Real Deal –.”

30. These details include the summary statistics, the full range of resource information (such as availability of written and oral Scriptures), the color-coding distinction between “partially” and “fully” engaged groups, and the final explanatory paragraph that the downloadable version has.

31. Scribner, “A Simple Guide to People Group Lists for World Mission.”

32. Definitions are available in “A Simple Guide to People Group Lists” (no author listed; available for download at [www.joshuaproject.net/assets/GlobalPeoplesListComparison-General.pdf](http://www.joshuaproject.net/assets/GlobalPeoplesListComparison-General.pdf)) and Table 71, “Frequently Asked Questions about Table 71.”

## PROGRESS IN BIBLE TRANSLATION

Many of the salient points of the Cape Town Commitment are difficult to measure tangibly: love, faithful witness, and discipleship, among others. Helpful indicators of actual progress for some of the topics referenced, however, are much easier to pinpoint. One of those is Bible translation. The Cape Town Commitment discusses Bible translation under the heading “unreached and unengaged peoples” as one of the many challenges facing eradicating “Bible poverty” in the world. The Commitment states that the church must “hasten the translation of the Bible into the languages of people who do not yet have any portion of God’s Word in their mother tongue” and includes a statement regarding making the Bible widely available orally. Defining the progress of Bible translation might seem on the surface like a relatively simple undertaking, considering the plethora of resources made available by numerous organizations who have a similar heart for the task. However, it is challenging because of the nature of that task: defining and tracking progress across 7,000+ languages can be burdensome. For example, the databases of the American Bible Society, the United Bible Societies, and Wycliffe Bible Translators contain many languages listed by different names, making it next to impossible to clearly define the progress of Bible translation in those languages.<sup>1</sup>

Bible translation is typically measured in three ways: availability of full Bibles, New Testaments, or portions (normally the gospels, but can be any published book of the Bible). It is important to view translation deficiencies through these three lenses in order to gain a more accurate depiction of the situation. Additionally, the size of the world’s languages must also be taken into consideration. There are approximately 7,000 languages worldwide, but they obviously do not all have an equal number of speakers. Therefore, language percentages indicating either translation progress or deficiency have to be examined in context. Another factor to give attention to is how Scripture reaches people: (1) in a mother tongue; (2) in a near language or cluster language (where no mother-tongue translation exists); (3) in an intercultural language (or *lingua franca*); or (4) in any given second language.<sup>2</sup>

Ninety percent of people worldwide have at least a portion of Scripture available in their mother tongue. However, these texts are not widely distributed, so many have never even seen one (such as in Yemen, where distribution is so low only one in ten have access to a mother-tongue portion).<sup>3</sup> Most of the work remaining in Scripture translation is in full Bibles. Only 8.2% of languages in Asia, for example, have a complete Bible translation, though the percentage is much higher for New Testaments and portions. It should be noted, however, that Asia is the continent with the most languages (2,107; Africa is second with 2,075). The complete Scriptures are least available to people in North Africa and Western Asia. In Melanesia, where there are 1,054 distinct languages (many of which are mother-tongue for only a small number of people), only 4.4% of them have a full Bible translation, the lowest regional percentage. The highest availability to full Bibles is in North America, Latin America, and Europe, where there are fewer mother-tongue languages, and more speakers of some of the largest languages (Spanish, English, Portuguese).

NINETY PERCENT OF PEOPLE WORLDWIDE HAVE AT LEAST A PORTION OF SCRIPTURE AVAILABLE IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE. HOWEVER, THESE TEXTS ARE NOT WIDELY DISTRIBUTED, SO MANY HAVE NEVER EVEN SEEN ONE.

There are 4,723 languages in the world that currently have no Scripture translation available whatsoever; this accounts for 64.7% of languages (not individuals) worldwide. In addition, only 6.3% of languages have translations of the complete Bible.<sup>4</sup> On the surface this looks daunting, but a closer look reveals that the world’s largest languages have full Bible translations available (see graphic below), resulting in billions of people with linguistic access to the Scriptures. The 2,393 remaining languages with no full Bible translation represent “only” 200 million people; still a large number, but in perspective seemingly manageable. Many of the mid-sized languages in the graphic below have full translations in progress, but lack distribution methods and literacy programs for these efforts to be effective.<sup>5</sup>

1. Todd M. Johnson and Kenneth R. Ross, *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 300. The American Bible Society, the United Bible Societies, and Wycliffe Bible Translators are all members of the Forum of Bible Agencies International. By agreement of the Forum agencies, they look to Wycliffe and SIL to be the keepers of the number of languages worldwide. In turn, UBS is designated as the authority on the number of translations finished. As of June 2, 2011, the SIL database records that of the world’s 6,863 languages, 2,013 have active language development; 729 have adequate Scripture; 2,025 have “likely needs;” 1,600 have “unlikely needs;” and 493 have “unknown need.”

2. *Ibid.*, 300.

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.*, 301.

5. *Ibid.*

Although there is still much work to be done in terms of Bible translation, the real issue is that of distribution. Distribution often comes in three forms: commercial (by secular or religious retailers at commercial prices), subsidized (by Bible societies selling at subsidized prices), and free (by organizations such as The Gideons). While true that most people in the world have access to at least a portion of the Scriptures, over 200 million people have no access whatsoever; these people primarily live in Northern Africa and Western Asia.<sup>6</sup> The reality is that printed words are only useful to those able to read them; therefore, literacy programs ought to go hand-in-hand with Bible translation projects. A significant phenomenon in this area, however, is that of digital distribution of Scripture. Digital delivery through the Internet and via cell phones/smart phones (such as in extremely remote places in Africa) is skyrocketing. It is the most dramatic thing happening today in Scripture distribution. A staggering example is the YouVersion Bible application, which hit 10.7 million users in November 2010 from its launch for mobile phones in 2008 by LifeChurch.tv. It is one of the world's most popular apps; every 2.8 seconds someone installs the app, and in the same time period 12 other people are using it to read the Bible.<sup>7</sup> Other organizations involved in this work include the International Orality Network<sup>8</sup> and Faith Comes by Hearing.<sup>9</sup>

Bible translation organizations are teaming up together to tackle the task of translating the Bible into every language. The Forum of Bible Agencies International (FOBAI) brings together more than 25 Bible agencies throughout the world, “working together to maximize the worldwide access and impact of God’s Word.”<sup>10</sup> The 2010 Annual Report for the SEED Company—an organization with a vision for speeding up the process of Bible translation and distribution—mentions partnerships with SIL International, Pioneer Bible Translators, Word for the World, Wycliffe Associates, and New Tribes Mission, among others, each targeting a specific challenge facing Bible translation and distribution.<sup>11</sup> In 2010 the organization entered their 600<sup>th</sup> language partnership.<sup>12</sup> The SEED Company’s Vision 2025 aims to start a Bible translation for every language group with a need by 2025,<sup>13</sup> and FOBAI has a similar goal slated for 2050.<sup>14</sup> Both of these organizations highlight the need for—and great success of—collaboration with local churches and believers to develop programs focused on these translation goals. Intra-Christian cooperation is a key element in hastening the translation of the Bible and eliminate “Bible poverty” in the twenty-first century.

#### Largest languages by translation category

Language	Population	Christians
1 Chinese, Jinyu	55,973,000	2,239,000
2 Chinese, Xiang	39,230,000	160,000
3 Chinese, Gan	38,312,000	575,000
4 Arabic, Najdi	23,602,000	86,400
5 Arabic, Sa`idi	21,510,000	3,589,000
1 Maithili	42,392,000	373,000
2 Arabic, N. Levantine	32,424,000	6,763,000
3 Haryanvi	29,349,000	895,000
4 Chhattisgarhi	14,477,000	188,000
5 Sylheti	12,792,000	13,000
1 Arabic, Egyptian	53,593,000	7,495,000
2 Bhojpuri	43,127,000	420,000
3 Arabic, Sudanese	29,155,000	1,016,000
4 Uzbek, Northern	26,008,000	23,500
5 Arabic, Algerian	24,637,000	28,700
1 Chinese, Mandarin	876,583,000	88,673,000
2 Spanish	380,764,000	359,593,000
3 English	338,342,000	280,185,000
4 Bengali	220,861,000	616,000
5 Portuguese	211,015,000	193,079,000

No translation  
 Scripture portions only  
 New Testament only  
 Complete Bible

Source: Atlas of Global Christianity, 2009

6. Ibid., 302.

7. Michelle A. Vu, “LifeChurch.tv: YouVersion Bible App Users Grow to 10.7 Million,” *The Christian Post*, November 17, 2010, accessed June 5, 2011, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/lifechurchtv-youversion-bible-app-users-grow-to-107-million-47672/>.

8. See <http://www.oralbible.com/home/>.

9. In April 2011, Faith Comes by Hearing developed an Arabic version of their popular Bible app, Bible.is. The organization plans on making this app available in the top 20 most spoken languages in the world. See <http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/bibleis-app-expands-global-gospel-outreach-english-spanish-arabic>.

10. Forum of Bible Agencies International, “Mission & Vision,” accessed May 7, 2011, [http://www.forum-intl.org/about\\_ifoba/default.aspx?id=157](http://www.forum-intl.org/about_ifoba/default.aspx?id=157).

11. SEED Company 2010 Annual Report, <http://www.theseedcompany.org/cc/annual-report/2010/Annual-Report-2010.pdf>. The SEED website lists at least twenty partnering organizations (See <http://www.theseedcompany.org/organizational-partners>.)

12. SEED Company, <http://www.theseedcompany.org/about>

13. “Words from Roy Peterson – Winter 2010,” <http://www.theseedcompany.org/wordsfromroypeterson-winter-2010>.

14. Forum of Bible Agencies International, “Scripture Partnership Goals: Statement of Intent.” April 2008. [http://www.forum-intl.org/uploaded-Files/about\\_ifoba/Scripture%20Partnership%20Goals.pdf](http://www.forum-intl.org/uploaded-Files/about_ifoba/Scripture%20Partnership%20Goals.pdf).