

Week 18

World Christianity in the 20th and 21st Century

Class Handout

Realities of Christianity Worldwide Today

- Majority of Christians in Asia, Africa, Latin America
- Pioneering and Partnership (not just "West to the Rest")
- Pentecostal influence worldwide
- Churches globally are not copies of Western churches
- Unique cultural dynamics (orality, honor/shame, saving face)

Christianity in Asia

- Small minority in most places
- HUGE Christian growth in China (maybe 60-100 million)
- India – strong Christian minorities in majority Hindu nation

Christianity in China from 1900 to Today

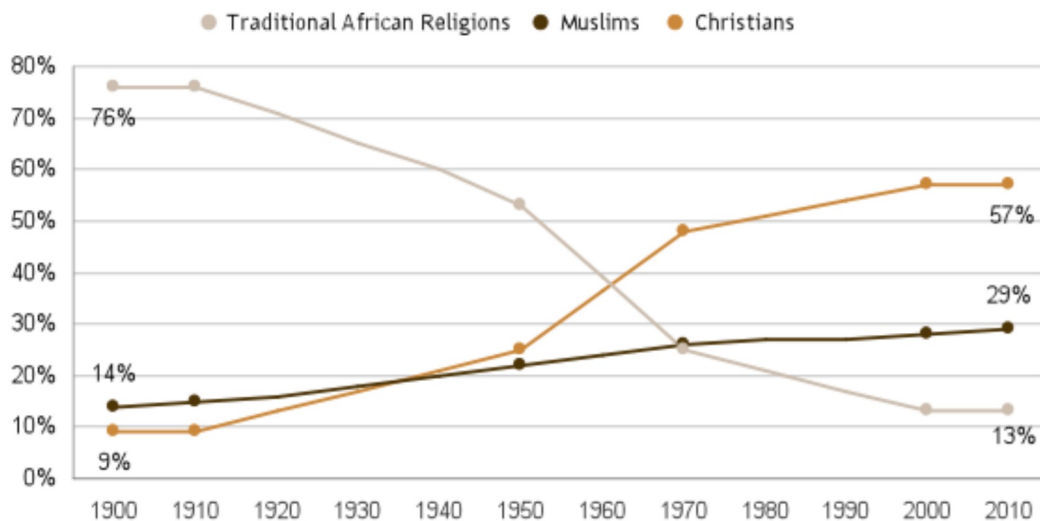
- Growing Anti-foreign sentiment (Boxer Rebellion)
- Missionary domination until late 1930s
- Sino-Japanese War, WWII, Nationalist-Communist Civil War
- 1949 Communist Era Begins, Missionaries Leave
- Three-Self Patriotic Movement / Church Replaces All Others
 - Many joined, some refused (Wang Ming Dao)
- 1958-1960 Great Leap Forward
- 1966-1976 Cultural Revolution (all churches closed)
- 1979 onward – Re-Opening China's Churches
- 1982 law allows "normal religious activities" that don't disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens, or interfere with the educational system of the state

Major Trends in Chinese Christianity Today

- House churches (registered vs. unregistered)
- New religious movements (cults)
- Pastoral training
- Urbanization
- Christian intellectuals and professionals
- Persecution (sporadic, regional, but ramping up recently)
- 1949 – 1 million Christians vs. Today – 40? 60? 100 million?

Christianity in Taiwan (Peter Yao)Christianity in Africa

- Huge growth since 1900 – majority Christian in Sub-Saharan
- Western denominations and African Independent Churches
- Pentecostalism, Syncretism, Prosperity Teaching
- Conflict between Islam and Christianity

Growth of Islam & Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa Since 1900

Source: World Religion Database. Historical data draw on government records, historical atlases and reports of religious organizations at the time. Later figures draw on U.N. population estimates, surveys and censuses.

Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, April 2010

Challenges and Opportunities in World Christianity Today

- Emphasis of many churches worldwide differ from traditional Reformational emphases, persistent threat of false teaching (new and old)
- Few pastors globally have any formal theological education
- Diaspora Populations (both refugees and other migrants)
- Pioneer Missions and Partnership with Global South Believers
- Uncertain Global Situation (wars, economics, another pandemic, government controls and restrictions)

Recommended Resources

John Woodbridge and Frank James, *Church History, Volume Two: From Pre-Reformation to the Present Day*, Zondervan Academic: Grand Rapids, 2013.

Timothy C. Tennent, *How God Saves the World: A Short History of Global Christianity*, Franklin, TN: Seedbed Publishing, 2017.

- This is an enjoyable little book with short chapters that give narrative snapshots of God working throughout history around the world

David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China And Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Salem Books 2012)

- Fascinating summary of the growth and development of the church in China from past to the early 21st century. Written by a journalist, this book is engaging reading

Center for the Study of Global Christianity (Gordon Conwell Seminary)

- <https://globalchristianity.org/>
- LOTS of great maps, infographics, etc. to understand the big picture of Christianity in the world today
- Note: the stats on Christians and churches in this database are based on self-identification, not by a certain doctrinal standard

Video: *Jesus in Athens (2020)*

- <https://www.jesusinathens.com/about>
- This is a fantastic contemporary documentary about how God has been at work among the waves of migrants flooding into Athens, Greece starting in 2015. Most of them Muslims, some unexpectedly found Christ as churches and other ministries worked to feed and clothe them, and to share the Gospel.
- Available to watch on Amazon Prime, iTunes, Vimeo, etc.

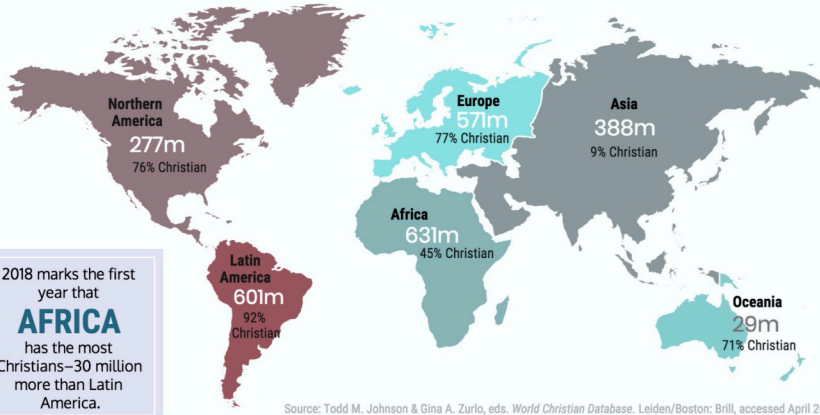
GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

a look at the status of Christianity in 2018



Christians, 2018

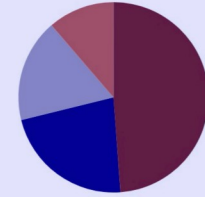
2.5 billion total, 33% of global population



2018 marks the first year that **AFRICA** has the most Christians—30 million more than Latin America.

Source: Todd M. Johnson & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. *World Christian Database*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2018. Not equal to total Christians because unaffiliated and double-counted are excluded.

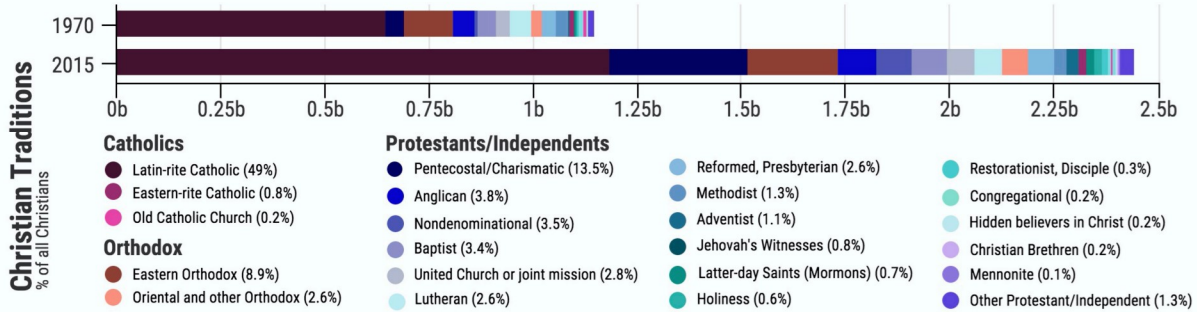
Christian Traditions



2018

- Catholics (49%)
- Protestants (22%)
- Independents (17%)
- Orthodox (12%)

Percent of all Christians excluding unaffiliated and double-affiliated.



Source: Todd M. Johnson & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. *World Christian Database*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2018. Not equal to total Christians because unaffiliated and double-counted are excluded.

TOP 10

Largest Denominations by Country

Rank	Denomination	Country	2015
1.	Igreja Católica no Brasil	Brazil	149,550,000
2.	Iglesia Católica en México	Mexico	111,233,000
3.	Russian Orthodox Church	Russia	109,650,000
4.	Han house churches	China	82,400,000
5.	Catholic Church in the Philippines	Philippines	78,271,000
6.	Catholic Church in the USA	United States	72,798,000
7.	Chiesa Cattolica in Italia	Italy	45,563,000
8.	Eglise Catholique au Congo-Zaire	DR Congo	42,891,000
9.	Iglesia Católica en Colombia	Colombia	42,706,000
10.	Iglesia Católica en España	Spain	39,967,000

Largest Protestant/Independent Denominations by Country

Rank	Denomination	Country	2015
1.	Han house churches	China	82,400,000
2.	Three-Self Patriotic Movement	China	26,000,000
3.	Assembleias de Deus	Brazil	25,000,000
4.	Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland	Germany	24,450,000
5.	Church of England	United Kingdom	23,400,000
6.	Anglican Church of Nigeria	Nigeria	22,000,000
7.	Southern Baptist Convention	United States	20,000,000
8.	Church of Uganda	Uganda	14,185,000
9.	Eglise de Jésus Christ sur la Terre par Son Envoyé Spécial Simon Kimbangu	DR Congo	12,000,000
10.	National Baptist Convention	United States	9,195,000

Source: Todd M. Johnson & Gina A. Zurlo, eds. *World Christian Database*. Leiden/Boston: Brill, accessed April 2018.

Distribution of CHRISTIANS

