

## 12 Key Insights on World Christianity & Mission

*Deepening Faith, Embracing God's Church Worldwide*

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*The global church is shifting, growing, and transforming. Engaging deeply with World Christianity requires listening, learning, and embracing diverse voices and perspectives. This document offers twelve key insights to help you understand and navigate this dynamic landscape.*

## 12 Key Insights on World Christianity & Mission

While many statistics show that the church in the West is in multi-generational decline, the opposite is true almost everywhere.

Non-Western cultures and churches aren't the minority; they are the majority.

The churches of the Majority World (sometimes called the Developing World) have seen extraordinary and sustained growth for decades. Places like Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Oceania and the Caribbean. The Middle East and Eastern Europe. First Nations and Indigenous communities. Finally, immigrant Christian communities are also going through a time of growth and revitalization. Insights from churches in these cultures can help renew the worldwide church. They can invigorate our churches as we learn from each other. And they can invest Western mission, worship, and discipleship strategies with new vibrancy.

In 2016, I founded *The Global Church Project* so that we can listen to and learn from non-Western Christian churches and leaders. I traveled the globe to meet and film interviews with hundreds of non-Western church leaders. The hundreds of filmed interviews and podcasts at <https://grahamjosephhill.com/worldchristianity/> are their voice.

Whether you're a pastor, a student, a teacher, or a church planter, these voices are for you. They can help us embrace fresh mission, discipleship, prayer, worship, community, gospel-confidence, and more.

### **How is God renewing the global church today?**

Christians in non-Western and Indigenous settings are redefining twenty-first-century Christianity. Christianity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America grew from 94 million in 1900 to 1.389 billion in 2010. This number is likely to increase to 2.287 billion by 2050.

Let's take China, for example. Professor Fenggang Yang of Purdue University makes a meaningful prediction. If current growth rates continue, China will have more Christians within one generation than any other nation.

US historian Philip Jenkins says, “We are living through one of the transforming moments in the history of religion worldwide. Over the last five centuries, the story of Christianity has been inextricably bound up with that of Europe and European-derived civilizations overseas, above all in North America. Until recently, the overwhelming majority of Christians have lived in white nations... Over the last century, however, the center of gravity in the Christian world has shifted inexorably away from Europe, southward to Africa and Latin America, and eastward toward Asia. Today, the largest Christian communities are found in those regions.” (Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 1).

### **What can Western Christians learn from the global church today?**

At <https://grahamjosephhill.com/worldchristianity/>, we’ve released hundreds of videos and podcasts with Asian, African, Latin American, Eastern European, Middle Eastern, Caribbean, Aboriginal, and Indigenous Christian leaders.

What can Western Christians learn from the global church today? What can Christians outside the West learn from each other?

Here are 12 key things:

#### **1. Growing churches emphasize mission and evangelism**

Most Christians are outside Europe and North America. This exponential growth results from focusing on evangelism and the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches. This includes a deep passion for grassroots mission and multiplying disciples and churches in every area of society. There is no church without a mission and no mission without the church. This involves abundant gospel sowing and confidence in the power of the Holy Spirit. Mission is proclamation, social engagement, social justice, peacemaking, and signs and wonders.

#### **2. Renewed churches emphasize the Holy Spirit and renewal**

Mission and Spirit go hand-in-glove. The rapid growth of Christianity outside the West must make us rethink the place and power of the Spirit in church life (including the impact of the Spirit on the worship, liturgy, mission, multiplication, church planting,

and ministry of churches). I can't remember where I first heard this saying. Still, one researcher into Asian Christianity wrote: "What the West calls Pentecostal, Asia calls Christianity." This includes relying on the Holy Spirit's power, protection, presence, and provision to renew and grow the church. This comes with a passion for prayer.

### **3. Spiritual churches emphasize prayer and community**

Prayer is the pillar for worship, mission, planting, and more. It is the greatest resource we bring to our ministry and mission. But prayer isn't done alone. It's done in a vibrant community, and it's done in the neighborhood. Prayer and spiritually alive Christian communities go hand-in-hand.

### **4. Multiplying churches emphasize intentional church planting**

Church planting includes strategies of deliberate church planting and local church mission. Almost every pastor is expected to be a church planter in many cultures, and every Christian is a missionary in their local community and neighborhood. Churches don't just happen—intentional, focused, deliberate planting strategies are needed.

### **5. Confident churches emphasize biblical power and authority**

The Bible is believed fully. It is the guiding source for doctrine, church, life, and planting. We need a fresh hunger for the Bible and confidence in its power and authority.

### **6. Effective churches emphasize local leadership**

Forget importing missionaries. Forget focusing on outside talent. The best church movements identify, develop, train, and release local and grassroots leaders.

### **7. Inspiring churches emphasize the "Priesthood of all Believers"**

This includes a fresh focus on the voice and ministry of the laity. People are inspired to use their gifts and participate in mission and ministry. When the church grows rapidly, you can't depend on ordained pastors; you must get everyone involved in ministry and mission. Every member's mission and ministry are vital.

## **8. Prophetic churches emphasize justice and human dignity**

They are often surrounded by injustice, poverty, and corruption, and they seek to address them with courage and passion. They usually integrate and honor people experiencing poverty—they are movements from the margins. This is a common theme.

## **9. Expanding churches emphasize simple, cell, and house models**

There is a great diversity of church life in the non-West. But, the most common model is cell and house churches. Small and reproducible cell churches of 10 to 30 members meet in homes or storefronts. They are leading to an explosive growth in the church. Cell churches often link to a structured network, but not always (e.g., the Full Gospel Church in Seoul is a famous example of this, with 50,000 cell groups). House churches are usually more autonomous.

## **10. Reproducing churches emphasizes churches planting churches**

We need denominational and other groups to resource plant churches. But wherever churches are multiplying rapidly, it is because churches are planting churches. Reproduction is seen as natural, and there's little reliance on external aids for church planting. This focus on churches planting churches is one of the great keys to the explosive growth of the church in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

## **11. Healthy churches emphasize rapid reproduction**

Church planting movements have this common feature: rapid reproduction. This is the key to their health. Living things reproduce. If your focus is internal, you go stagnant and die. But suppose your focus is on rapid reproduction. In that case, you often discover the health and vitality that comes from stepping out in faith and pursuing witness, conversion, and the Great Commission. The rapid multiplication of disciples, small groups, leaders, and churches in the non-West is almost breathtaking. This isn't common in the West but in Asia and Africa. And non-Western church planting movements say it's the key to their success: this is about momentum, passion, urgency, and importance. It's about stepping out in faith and watching God respond.

## **12. Impacting churches emphasize whole-of-life faith and mission**

Mission isn't just about proclaiming the gospel and planting churches. It's about every aspect of life. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Instead, in a holistic (or integral) mission, our proclamation has social consequences, as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. Our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we witness the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. Micah Global put it this way: If we ignore the world, we betray the word of God, which sends us out to serve the world. We have nothing to bring to the world if we ignore God's word. Justice and justification by faith, worship, political action, and spiritual, material, personal, and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing, and saying are at the heart of our integral task.

### **How can we learn more from the global church today?**

All the videos and podcasts at <https://grahamjosephhill.com/worldchristianity/> are free and will always be. Our resources help Christian leaders and churches thrive and grow as they learn from the global church. We help you and your church become more innovative, missional, and multicultural. These resources are used by a worldwide church and are free to your local ministry and church. It's time Western Christians learned to follow Jesus locally and globally.

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