
Christianity 2012: The 200th Anniversary of American Foreign Missions

This two-page report is the twenty-eighth in an annual series in the *IBMR*. The series began a few years after the publication of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (WCE, Oxford Univ. Press, 1982). Its purpose was to lay out, in summary form on a single page, an annual update of the most significant global and regional statistics presented in the WCE. The WCE itself was expanded into a second edition in 2001 and was accompanied by an analytical volume, *World Christian Trends* (WCT, William Carey Library, 2001). In 2003 an online database, *World Christian Database* (WCD, later published by Brill), was launched, updating most of the statistics in the WCE and WCT. The *Atlas of Global Christianity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), based on these data, was featured throughout 2010, most notably at the centennial celebrations of the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910 (Tokyo in May, Edinburgh in June, Cape Town in October, and Boston in November).

200 Years of American Foreign Missions

This year is the two-hundredth anniversary of the ordination (February 5, 1812) and sailing (February 19), from Derby Wharf in Salem, Massachusetts, of the first American foreign missionaries. From February 5 to 20, 2012, a series of commemorative conferences are planned in and around Salem. Accordingly, we have added data to the table for all categories for the year 1800. This provides a two-hundred-year horizon for comparing statistics related to Christian mission. For example, line 22 shows that 22.7 percent of the world was Christian in 1800, rising to 34.5 percent by 1900. A closer examination of the data (country by country), however, reveals that, in Kenneth Scott Latourette's so-called Great Century (1815–1914), the reason for the global growth of Christianity was primarily its expansion in the Americas and lower death rates among Christians in Europe. Ironically, it was during the period in which the global percentage of Christians was declining (to 32.5 percent by A.D. 2000) that the number and proportion of Christians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America greatly increased (but was not quite able to stem the tide of losses in Europe). Early in the twenty-first century, growth of Christianity in the Global South is exceeding the losses in the Global North. By 2012 the percentage of Christians globally grew to 33 percent and is expected to rise to over 34 percent by 2025 (and on to 36 percent by 2050). Today, American missionaries join a host of others from nearly every country of the world, including many from Burma/Myanmar—the eventual destination of those first American missionaries in 1812!

Another interesting observation is that, in 1800, Christians and Muslims together accounted for just under 33 percent of the world's population (lines 1, 10, and 11). By 1900 this figure had increased to 47 percent, and by 2000 it was 53 percent. We project it to be 58 percent by 2025, and it could rise to 66 percent by 2100. This means that these two religions, which made up a third of the world's population in 1800, will likely make up two-thirds

by 2100. This is a compelling reason for Christian-Muslim relations to be at the top of missiological priorities in coming years.

Missionary Deployment

Line 50 shows that in 2012 there are approximately 417,000 foreign missionaries (i.e., missionaries working in a country other than their own). When examined at the country level, our data (WCD) show that the 42 least-evangelized countries in the world, comprising 958 million people, make up 14 percent of the world's population but receive only 3.5 percent of the world's foreign missionaries (fewer than 15,000). Similarly, the world's 4,400 least-evangelized peoples (1.7 billion, or 25 percent of the world's population) receive only about 7.5 percent of the world's foreign missionaries (about 30,000). It should be noted that about the same proportion—7.5 percent—of national missionaries (those crossing cultural boundaries within their own countries) work among the least-evangelized peoples, and a much lower portion (perhaps less than 1 percent) of all national workers (Christians working among their own peoples) work among these same least-evangelized groups.

One New Country

On July 9, 2011, Southern Sudan became an independent country, leaving the remainder of Sudan to consider itself a “second republic.” Our team has produced detailed tables on the religious demographics of the two new republics (see www.lausanne.org/analysis). The first thing to notice is that Sudan (Northern) has been at least 85 percent Muslim for the past 100 years. Over that same period, animists (or ethnoreligionists) have declined from almost 15 percent to less than 3 percent. A significant Christian minority exists in the North, mostly in Khartoum and the Nubia mountains, consisting mainly of Roman Catholics and Anglicans, many of them transplants from the South. Southern Sudan, in contrast, was largely animistic in 1900 but gradually has become majority Christian over the course of the century. The bulk of the growth has been over the past forty years, even in the face of civil wars and the deaths of perhaps as many as 2 million people in the South.

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, though with few converts to report. 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. 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.

Conflict will likely continue in the new context. The return of refugees to an already underdeveloped country will undoubtedly put great strain on the nation's scant resources. In addition, the situation in Southern Sudan is arguably one of the worst health crises in the world. The nation has essentially no health-care system and is home to a combination of deadly, untreatable, and unique diseases.

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Status of Global Mission, 2012, in the Context of AD 1800–2025

	1800	1900	1970	mid-2000	Trend % p.a.	24-hour change	mid-2012	2025
GLOBAL POPULATION								
1. Total population	903,650,000	1,619,625,000	3,696,189,000	6,122,770,000	1.18	229,000	7,052,132,000	8,002,979,000
2. Urban dwellers (urbanites)	36,146,000	232,695,000	1,342,451,000	2,849,489,000	2.02	200,000	3,620,811,000	4,549,674,000
3. Rural dwellers	867,504,000	1,386,930,000	2,353,738,000	3,273,281,000	0.39	29,000	3,431,321,000	3,453,305,000
4. Adult population (over 15s)	619,000,000	1,073,646,000	2,312,042,000	4,272,601,000	1.61	228,000	5,175,954,000	6,087,748,000
5. Literates	123,800,000	296,153,000	1,476,151,000	3,275,110,000	2.17	252,000	4,238,241,000	5,131,500,000
6. Nonliterates	495,200,000	777,493,000	835,891,000	997,491,000	-0.51	-24,000	937,713,000	956,248,000
WORLDWIDE EXPANSION OF CITIES								
7. Megacities (over 1 million population)	1	20	161	402	1.92	–	505	650
8. Urban poor	18 million	100 million	650 million	1,400 million	3.10	172,000	2,020 million	3,000 million
9. Urban slum dwellers	3 million	20 million	260 million	700 million	3.35	96,000	1040 million	1,600 million
GLOBAL POPULATION BY RELIGION								
10. Christians (total all kinds) (=World C)	204,980,000	558,131,000	1,229,238,000	1,991,602,000	1.30	83,000	2,325,507,000	2,727,153,000
11. Muslims	90,500,000	199,818,000	577,039,000	1,279,859,000	1.79	78,000	1,583,783,000	1,951,389,000
12. Hindus	108,000,000	202,973,000	463,215,000	821,948,000	1.39	37,000	969,602,000	1,108,202,000
13. Nonreligious (agnostics)	300,000	3,029,000	542,632,000	666,060,000	-0.06	-1,100	661,288,000	636,826,000
14. Buddhists	69,400,000	126,956,000	235,095,000	418,963,000	1.03	13,400	473,818,000	546,590,000
15. Chinese folk-religionists	310,000,000	380,174,000	228,822,000	434,638,000	0.60	7,700	467,216,000	479,302,000
16. Ethnoreligionists	92,000,000	117,437,000	168,801,000	234,664,000	1.00	7,300	264,552,000	256,530,000
17. Atheists	10,000	226,000	165,506,000	140,001,000	-0.20	-800	136,642,000	132,342,000
18. New-Religionists (Neoreligionists)	0	5,986,000	39,382,000	61,321,000	0.25	400	63,220,000	64,108,000
19. Sikhs	1,800,000	2,962,000	10,678,000	20,542,000	1.51	1,000	24,585,000	29,326,000
20. Jews	9,000,000	12,292,000	15,045,000	13,744,000	0.69	300	14,921,000	16,004,000
21. Non-Christians (=Worlds A and B)	698,670,000	1,061,494,000	2,466,951,000	4,131,168,000	1.13	146,000	4,726,625,000	5,275,826,000
GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY								
22. Total Christians as % of world (=World C)	22.7	34.5	33.3	32.5	0.11	–	33.0	34.1
23. Affiliated Christians (church members)	195,680,000	521,683,000	1,119,824,000	1,886,698,000	1.33	80,000	2,209,645,000	2,607,894,000
24. Church attenders	180,100,000	469,303,000	885,777,000	1,359,420,000	1.04	44,000	1,539,066,000	1,760,568,000
25. Evangelicals	25,000,000	71,728,000	95,106,000	228,231,000	2.25	18,000	298,016,000	393,478,000
26. Great Commission Christians	21,000,000	77,924,000	276,680,000	603,989,000	1.20	23,000	697,089,000	837,687,000
27. Pentecostals/Charismatics/Neocharismatics	10,000	981,000	62,634,000	460,108,000	2.41	40,000	612,314,000	828,427,000
28. Christian martyrs per year (10-year average)	2,500	34,400	377,000	160,000	-3.84	270	100,000	150,000
MEMBERSHIP BY 6 ECCLESIASTICAL MEGABLOCS								
29. Roman Catholics	106,430,000	266,566,000	664,987,000	1,043,333,000	1.09	35,000	1,187,637,000	1,323,199,000
30. Protestants	400,000	103,028,000	208,304,000	353,401,000	1.71	20,000	432,896,000	532,301,000
31. Independents	30,980,000	7,931,000	84,622,000	271,426,000	2.35	23,000	358,611,000	496,164,000
32. Orthodox	55,220,000	115,855,000	144,497,000	257,109,000	0.62	5,000	276,891,000	291,712,000
33. Anglicans	11,910,000	30,578,000	47,408,000	74,892,000	1.52	4,000	89,716,000	112,983,000
34. Marginal Christians	40,000	928,000	11,121,000	29,009,000	1.97	2,000	36,679,000	50,821,000
MEMBERSHIP BY 6 CONTINENTS, 21 UN REGIONS								
35. Africa (5 regions)	4,330,000	8,736,000	115,879,000	357,109,000	2.61	35,000	486,695,000	681,825,000
36. Asia (4 regions)	8,350,000	20,774,000	91,330,000	274,792,000	2.26	22,000	359,373,000	484,433,000
37. Europe (including Russia; 4 regions)	171,700,000	368,254,000	466,987,000	547,998,000	0.21	3,000	562,087,000	560,961,000
38. Latin America (3 regions)	14,900,000	60,027,000	262,793,000	477,058,000	1.18	18,000	549,075,000	612,812,000
39. Northern America (1 region)	5,600,000	59,570,000	168,372,000	208,650,000	0.63	4,000	224,930,000	239,752,000
40. Oceania (4 regions)	100,000	4,323,000	14,464,000	21,092,000	1.21	1,000	24,356,000	28,111,000
CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS								
41. Denominations	500	1,600	18,700	34,100	1.95	2.3	43,000	55,000
42. Congregations (worship centers)	150,000	400,000	1,416,000	3,400,000	2.80	360	4,738,000	7,500,000
43. Service agencies	600	1,500	14,100	23,000	1.95	1.5	29,000	36,000
44. Foreign-mission sending agencies	200	600	2,200	4,000	1.71	0.2	4,900	6,000
CONCILIARISM: ONGOING COUNCILS OF CHURCHES								
45. Confessional councils (CWCs, at world level)	20	40	150	310	1.25	–	360	600
46. National councils of churches	0	19	283	598	1.50	–	710	870
CHRISTIAN WORKERS (clergy, laypersons)								
47. Nationals (citizens; all denominations)	900,000	2,100,000	4,600,000	10,900,000	0.98	328	12,249,000	14,000,000
48. Men	800,000	1,900,000	3,100,000	6,540,000	0.92	185	7,302,000	8,000,000
49. Women	100,000	200,000	1,500,000	4,360,000	1.06	143	4,947,000	6,000,000
50. Aliens (foreign missionaries)	25,000	62,000	240,000	420,000	-0.06	-1	417,000	550,000
CHRISTIAN FINANCE (in US\$, per year)								
51. Personal income of church members	40 billion	270 billion	4,100 billion	17,000 billion	5.38	87 billion	31,890 billion	50,000 billion
52. Giving to Christian causes	1 billion	8 billion	70 billion	300 billion	5.47	1.6 billion	569 billion	890 billion
53. Churches' income	950 million	7 billion	50 billion	120 billion	5.44	620 million	227 billion	350 billion
54. Parachurch and institutional income	50 million	1 billion	20 billion	180 billion	5.49	940 million	342 billion	540 billion
55. Cost-effectiveness (cost per baptism)	7,500	17,500	128,000	330,000	7.22	151	762,000	1,470,000
56. Ecclesiastical crime	100,000	300,000	5 million	18 billion	5.87	100 million	35 billion	60 billion
57. Income of global foreign missions	25 million	200 million	3 billion	17 billion	5.54	90 million	32 billion	50 billion
58. Computers in Christian use (numbers)	0	0	1,000	328 million	5.45	93,000	620 million	1,300 million
CHRISTIAN LITERATURE (titles, not copies)								
59. Books about Christianity	75,000	300,000	1,800,000	4,800,000	3.67	700	7,400,000	11,800,000
60. Christian periodicals	800	3,500	23,000	35,000	4.30	7	58,000	100,000
SCRIPTURE DISTRIBUTION (all sources, per year)								
61. Bibles	500,000	5,452,600	25,000,000	53,700,000	2.91	207,000	75,800,000	110,000,000
62. Scriptures including gospels, selections	1,500,000	20 million	281 million	4,600 million	1.07	14 million	4,960 million	6,000 million
63. Bible density (copies in place)	20 million	108 million	443 million	1,400 million	1.97	96,000	1,770 million	2,280 million
CHRISTIAN BROADCASTING								
64. Total monthly listeners/viewers	0	0	750,000,000	1,830,000,000	1.11	64,000	2,090,000,000	2,400,000,000
CHRISTIAN URBAN MISSION								
65. Non-Christian megacities	1	5	65	226	1.08	–	257	300
66. New non-Christian urban dwellers per day	500	5,200	51,100	119,000	0.21	0.7	122,000	125,000
67. Urban Christians	5,500,000	159,600,000	660,800,000	1,230,131,000	1.62	66,300	1,492,262,000	1,819,232,000
GLOBAL EVANGELISM (per year)								
68. Evangelism-hours	600 million	5 billion	25 billion	165 billion	0.02	450 million	165 billion	300 billion
69. Hearer-hours (offers)	900 million	10 billion	99 billion	938 billion	1.92	3.2 billion	1,178 billion	3,000 billion
70. Disciple-opportunities (offers) per capita	1	6	27	153	0.72	0.5	167	375
WORLD EVANGELIZATION								
71. Unevangelized population (=World A)	674,350,000	880,122,000	1,653,168,000	1,832,151,000	1.01	57,000	2,066,504,000	2,261,675,000
72. Unevangelized as % of world	74.6	54.3	44.7	29.9	-0.17	–	29.3	28.3
73. World evangelization plans since AD 30	160	250	510	1,500	2.84	0.2	2,100	3,000