

THE U.S. AS A NEW MISSION FIELD

Christianity is spreading faster now than it has at any time in human history. But, only in the Global South, not in the Global North.

In the Global South:

- Africa: in 1900 there were 9 million believers, in 2000 there were 335 million (37 x growth); there are 3.7 x as many Protestants in Africa than in North America
- Latin America: in 1900, 50,000 Protestants, today 64 million (1,280 x growth)
- Asia: between 1970 and 2000 # of Christians grew from 101 million to 351 million. In China 10,000 people become believers every day. In 50 years Christianity grew in China 4,300 percent!
- In 1980, 65% of the missionaries were sent from the Global North, by 2020 63% are coming from the Global South;¹

Yet, in the Global North, especially in the U.S. we see something totally different.

In the past few decades radical and rapid changes have occurred in the U.S.. These changes impact our mission.

Q: How do you inoculate someone against a disease?

A: You give them a weakened or dying version of it.

Q: How do you inoculate a culture against Christianity?

A: You give a weakened or dying version of Christianity.

While we were doing church, the following happened...

THE REALITY OF THE U.S. CHURCHES :

1. CHURCHES IN THE U.S. ARE RAPIDLY DECLINING

- U.S. is the 4th largest unchurched nation in the world. Over 200 million are unchurched. - [SOURCE](#)
- In 2016 48% of Americans (**appr. 160 million**) define themselves as post-Christian (don't believe in God, do not go to church, do not believe in the Bible). - [SOURCE](#) - and that number grew 4% / year since 2013 each year.
- 2.7M leave the church every year - [SOURCE](#).

¹ The Kingdom Unleashed: How Jesus' 1st-century kingdom values are transforming thousand of culture and awakening his Church. - Jerry Trousdale, Glenn Shunshine

- 49.8 M foreign born immigrants reside in the USA; 13.5% of U.S. population are from unreached people groups (UPG) + 820,000 students are studying here mainly from China.²
- 361 UPG are in the USA, making us the nation with the 3rd largest # of UPG³
 - 378,000 Turks, 122,000 Albanians, Hundreds of thousands of Urdu, 100,000 Somalis, Tens-of-thousands of Afghans, 80,000 Punjabi Sikhs, Hundreds of thousands of Burmese, 60,000 Iraqis, etc.
- There are 10 States where 96% of the population are unreached & unchurched.⁴
- There are 100 counties in the U.S. where the evangelicals are less than 2% of the population⁵
- There are 20 major metropolitan areas where the evangelical population is under 6%.⁶
- “aggregating all costs of American churches, the total expense per baptism in the United States is \$1.55 million.”
- In order just to keep pace with the amount a people leaving the church or falling into the NONE/Post-Truth descriptors, most church planters and missiologist say we need to plant 4,000 churches a year. BUT in order to reach the currently unchurched, too, we need to plant 8,000 churches every year. One denomination plants 4,000 a year, but within two years only 300 remain due to finances, lack of fruit, leadership changes, no multiplication, etc. Sustainability is an issue among all church-planters.
- Self-Identified born-again Christians’ [secular worldview](#):
 - 62% of self-identified born-again Christians contend that the Holy Spirit is not real.
 - 61% say that all religious faiths are of equal value
 - 60% believe that if a person is good enough, or does enough good things, they can earn their way into Heaven.
 - Only 6% holds a biblical worldview⁷

“Something is missionally malignant when we are willing to make great sacrifices to travel the world to reach a people group but not willing to walk across the street... What kind of theology and missiology support going ‘over there’ and fails to advocate going ‘down the street?’” - J.D. Payne

² Unreached Peoples, Least Reached Places - An Untold Story of Lostness in America, by J.D. Payne, 2014. p.35.

³ Unreached Peoples, Least Reached Places - An Untold Story of Lostness in America, by J.D. Payne, 2014. p.40

⁴ Unreached Peoples, Least Reached Places - An Untold Story of Lostness in America, by J.D. Payne, 2014. p.19

⁵ Unreached Peoples, Least Reached Places - An Untold Story of Lostness in America, by J.D. Payne, 2014. p.21

⁶ Unreached Peoples, Least Reached Places - An Untold Story of Lostness in America, by J.D. Payne, 2014. p.28

⁷ https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/CRC_AWVI2021_Release06_Digital_01_20210831.pdf

2. MOST CHURCHES IN THE U.S. ARE RAPIDLY SECULARIZING

- [Only 2% of millennials possess a biblical worldview](#) and only 19% of them think that human life is sacred.
- 86% of Millennials consider themselves Post-Christian
- Atheism doubled in [Gen Z - SOURCE](#) . It means that 35 million in Gen Z will leave the church by 2030.
- From 2013 to 2015 the number of Americans who qualify as “post-Christian” rose from 37% to 44%. - [SOURCE](#)
- Cultural relevance, political correctness became the most important value instead of representing God’s truth. *“What we are seeing now is the result of the church raising up influencers who did not supremely value truth who have led a generation who also do not believe in the supremacy of truth”* - [SOURCE](#)

3. MOST CHURCHES IN THE U.S. ARE NOT MISSIONAL

- US churches lost their interest in mission: *“It’s becoming clear that our churches in North America... have lost their once fervent passion for missions work... many in the church are largely DISENGAGED or, worse, SIMPLY DISINTERESTED.”* Ed Stetzer - [SOURCE](#)
- 52% of church attenders are saying that their church is doing a great job on discipling people, but only 1% of the church leaders think it’s true - [SOURCE](#)
- 51% of Christians don’t know the Great Commission at all. Only 17% have heard the GC and knows what it means. Only 10% of the millennials church-goers have heard about the GC. - [SOURCE](#)
- Almost Half of Practicing Christian Millennials Say Evangelism Is Wrong: Almost half of Millennials (47%) agree at least somewhat that it is wrong to share one’s personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith. - [SOURCE](#)
- Millennials won't share their faith, they think it’s morally wrong - [SOURCE](#)
- Non-Christians wants CHristians to listen to them in conversations. - [SOURCE](#)

There are 4 types of churches in the U.S. regarding mission expansion (from Exponential leadership *)

1. Subtracting and/or Plateauing (80% are either 1 or 2)
2. Growing by adding from other churches (16%)
3. Growing through conversion (about 3.6%)

4. Multiplying (0.4%)

(*) Bill Couchenour of Exponential writes, “The percentages were originally pieced together. There were a couple of surveys that suggested +/- 80% of churches were L1/2. There was an SBC study that suggested 4% of churches were reproducing. We had been searching for L5 and could only find a few; not statistically significant so, essentially 0%. That left 16% for Level 3. You can find that in chapter 3 of *Becoming a Level 5 Multiplying Church* [HERE](#).”

However, LifeWay did some research specifically related to this that they debuted at the Orlando Conference earlier this year. They looked at it a little differently in that they considered L 1, 2, and 3 churches = 100%. Then they looked at those churches to see how many exhibit Level 4 behaviors. The thinking is that some reproducing churches could, in a given year, look like they’re plateaued or in decline because they just sent off a large portion of their people and money to launch a church. Their research showed that there are now 4% of churches that are L4. You can find that research [HERE](#).”

U.S. CITIES ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY LOST - [source](#)

- 22.5 population / 21 million are lost in NYC
- 20 population / 18 million are lost in LA
- 6 population / 3 million are lost in Atlanta
- 8.8. population / 8 million are lost in Chicago
- 2.3 population / 1.5 million are lost in KC

Other Sources:

- [Church Attendance in America](#)