

PRAYING FOR THE WORLD

WEEK 2, JANUARY 11-17

THE NATIONS

AFRICA

The future Church


How different will the world of 2050 be compared with today? We can't know, but we can project some possibilities based on what is happening now. This can shape our prayers.

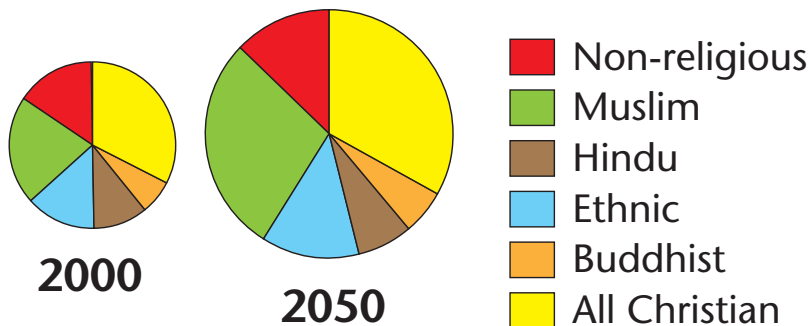
Some projections for 2050:

- One third of the world will still call itself Christian.
- Islam will grow fast (because of high birth-rates) and will become almost the same size as the Christian community.
- Every other faith community – Hindus, Buddhists, followers of Chinese religions – will be a smaller slice of the population than today.
- The non-religious part of the world will also shrink because of low birthrates.
- There will be the same number of under-15s as there are today (around two billion), but over-60s will climb from under a billion today to more than two billion in 2050.

- Half the world lives in a city today, in 2050 that could be two-thirds.
- Four out of ten Christians will live in sub-Saharan Africa, and eight out of ten will be from the Global South. The growth or decline of a faith community is mostly due to birthrates and not conversions.

How will the world be different in 2050 (assuming that Jesus hasn't returned by then)? Apart from all the unknowable things (including plague or war or mass turnings to Christ) it looks like the Church should expect a world with many more Muslims, elderly people and city dwellers.

 Christ has been building his Church for 50 generations. Pray that in this coming generation the Church will grow wider and deeper than ever before.

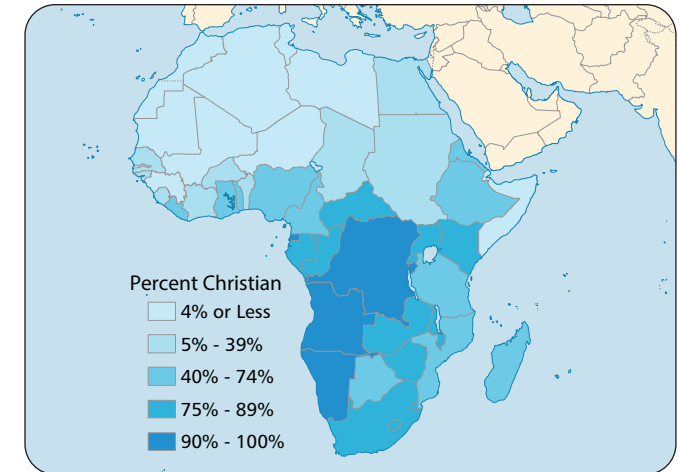


Relative global growth of religions






Africa's Church is a light to the world

The burden of poverty has eased in the last 20 years. Mother and child health, take-up of primary education, and access to clean water and electricity have been transformed in most countries. Deaths from malaria have halved, and the AIDS epidemic is being tamed. But this follows decades of stagnation. Africa is still the poorest continent. Thirty-seven of the world's 40 poorest countries are African – a lingering injustice.



Africa's youth are a fifth of all the young people in the world and they may grow to be a third by 2050. These young people as disciples of Jesus could be a power for good; unemployed and angry they could be the fuel for civil wars.

Africa's Church is a light to the world. Already, one in four of the world's Christians is an African. This could rise to four in 10 by 2050. In great prayer meetings, in faithfulness to the Bible, in starting new churches at home and overseas, Africans are changing the world.

-  Pray for wise, honest leaders in every African sphere, in politics, church and business.
-  Pray for Africa's women. More than a third suffer domestic violence, and they are denied equality almost everywhere: in education, health-care, employment.
-  Pray for a great turning to Christ in Africa's many Muslim peoples.

Praying for the World is a free weekly prayer guide to inspire and inform the whole church to pray for the whole world. Visit www.lausanne.org/pray to start any week. Created through the partnership of Operation World and the Lausanne Movement.