

# PRAYING FOR THE WORLD

WEEK 20, MAY 15 - 21

## The changing face of mission

Christian mission has passed through several stages:

**First millennium:** During the first millennium, Christians evangelized all the tribes of Europe and Eastern Christians took the gospel across Asia as far as China.

**Catholic missionary orders:** As Eastern Christianity was eclipsed, Catholic missionary orders like the Franciscans and Jesuits became the main bearers of mission vision for several centuries, both before and after the birth of Protestantism in the sixteenth century.

**The mission agency:** The concept of a mission agency was established at the end of the eighteenth century, a structure to recruit and manage Protestant missionaries. It became very effective at mobilizing a new wave of missions.

**Inland:** From the 1850s a new generation of Protestant pioneers took the gospel beyond coastal footholds like Hong Kong or Kolkata into inland regions.

**Unreached peoples and a new mission force:** In the second half of the twentieth century, it became clear that many people were still isolated from the gospel by cultural barriers, even though Christians were present in every country. Work progressed to identify every 'unreached people' and take the gospel to them. At the same time, many newer churches around the world became significant missionary senders.



**Polycentric mission:** Today we see:

- The former pioneer areas like South Korea, Nigeria, India, Brazil and the Philippines sending the majority of the world's missionaries.
- Local churches have cross-cultural opportunities on their doorstep.
- Multiple paths to serving Christ cross-culturally have opened up: bivocational, part-time, temporary, home-based.
- Networking between groups is vital.

🙏 Praise God for the astonishing growth of cross-cultural ministry opportunities and resources.

🙏 Pray that Christians everywhere will rise to the challenge to take the gospel to the whole world.

## THE NATIONS

### ETHIOPIA



This giant country (108 million people) in the Horn of Africa is leading the region in economic and spiritual transformation. The new Prime Minister has freed political prisoners and imprisoned corrupt officials. He has built peaceful relations with neighbouring Eritrea. Ethiopia's economy is one of the fastest growing in the world and it has ambitions to become a middle-income country during the next decade.

Spiritually, the ancient Ethiopian Orthodox Church has been an enduring, isolated witness to Christ in an Islamic region. More recently, Evangelicals and Pentecostals have grown to be around 20% of the country and Orthodoxy has also enjoyed spiritual renewal.

Hostility between Ethiopia's ethnic groups remains a threat, more so, ironically, as the machinery of repression is dismantled. Much also depends on the current Prime Minister whose actions have upended Ethiopia's traditional one-party repression.

🙏 Pray for God's good work in Ethiopia to become firmly established and to spread to every ethnic group and region in the country. Pray for ethnic rivals to make peace through the gospel. Pray for good leaders for this fast-growing Church.

### ERITREA



Eritrea was born out of Ethiopia after a 30-year war of independence. Today it is a poor, one-party state of 5.2 million people, where most able-bodied people are drafted into indefinite military service.

Peace with Ethiopia in 2018 has improved the economy but the nation suffers in the government's repressive grip. Every month, thousands of people flee the country.

Christians have suffered repression along with everyone else, and more than most. Leaders are imprisoned and tortured. Yet underground church networks have grown up, and the large Catholic and Orthodox communities have also seen spiritual renewal.

🙏 Pray for the many Christians imprisoned in horrific situations in Eritrea. Pray for a spiritual and political transformation of 'Africa's North Korea'.

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