

## **Global and National Trends Demographically and Religiously**

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**1. Rise of Church in Global South and Global Immigration:** The church in the Global South has now become the majority church in the world, increasing from only 18% of world Christians in 1900 to 62% by 2010. It is expected that by 2050 western Christians will have declined as a percentage of the total population to only 27%. The majority of the increases have come from renewalists and independents in the Global South who made up about 40% of the total in 2010. Immigration into the US from the Global South has greatly increased since the 1960s, with 70% of those coming indicating that they are “Christian” as of 2012.

**Implications:** Churches in the west are increasingly on the receiving end of world population shifts and their involvement in world mission has shifted much more to practices of partnership with national and indigenous churches. In addition, immigrant churches are increasing alongside of traditional western churches with a view of being “in mission” in their new context.

**2. Influences of Global Church on World Christianity—Changing Values:** The telling of the Christian story has shifted from the West as the center of the story to one about the world Christian movement. Along with the rise of the church in the Global South, changing values are reshaping the Christian world movement—focus on the “other”, from “I” to “We”, every context as a mission location, and the rebirth of world view of spirituality and the spirits.

**Implications:** Churches in the west relating to or receiving Global South Christian immigrants need to expand their assumptions and world views to incorporate appreciation for and involvement with these changes values.

**3. Changing Profile US Population—White Becoming Minority:** The increases among communities of color from both immigration and higher birth rates is leading to a dramatic decline in the proportion of white persons within the total US population—decrease from 87% in 1960 to 65% in 2010, with an expectation of being only 47% by 2050.

**Implications:** Predominantly white churches in the US will increasingly find themselves having less influence in the broader community and predominantly white population areas will increasingly become an exception to the norm (Newtown 97% white).

**4. Changing Characteristics of US Population:** The US population is now proportionally aging with baby-boomers beginning to reach retirement age. In addition, there is an

increase in multi-generational households, along with a significant decline in the number of young adults entering into marriages (decline from 84% in 1970 to only 60% in 2007). Accompanying these trends are an increase in the number of single parent households, a decline of proportionally income for the middle class, and an increase in the percentage of those living in poverty.

**Implications:** The whole concept of “family” has undergone tremendous change and is becoming much more diverse and diffuse. Churches need to adjust their ministries accordingly if they hope to reach the next generation. In addition, church income is likely to continue to plateau or decline for those serving the middle class who are not growing, while community needs among the disadvantaged are likely to increase.

**5. Decline of Mainline Denominations and Flattening of Evangelical Denominations:**

Mainline denominations, like the Episcopal Church, peaked out in overall membership growth in the 1960s and have been in decline ever since. The most recent decade has also seen a slowing of growth among evangelical denominations.

**Implications:** Episcopalians are becoming fewer numerically in the population and especially proportionally in the population, while also becoming disproportionately older in make-up. Churches can no longer rely on traditional Episcopal membership growth from transfers and the birth of children.

**6. Increase of Persons with “No Religious Identification”:** There has been a significant increase in the proportion of the population indicating no religious identification, from only 2% in 1950 to over 18% today. But when broken out by age groups, those in the age group of 18-29 jumps up to 32%.

**Implications:** The challenge today is to reach a whole new generation that has never known the Episcopal faith, or even any Christian faith tradition.