

The Challenges of The Church in Asia

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Definition of Asia

"The largest of the continents, bordering on the Arctic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean and Red Seas in the west. It included the large peninsulas of Asia Minor, India, Arabia, and Indochina and the island groups of Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Ceylon (Sri Lanka); contains the mountain ranges of the Hindu Kush, Himalayas, Pamirs, Tian Shan, Urals, and Caucasus, the great plateaus of India, Iran and Tibet, vast plains and deserts, and the valleys of many large rivers including the Mekong, Irrawaddy, Indus, Ganges, Tigris and Euphrates. (Collis English Dictionary-Complete & Unabridged 2012 digital edition, Dictionary.com)

"Asia has 48 countries, three of them (Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkey) having part of their land in Europe. Asia has extremely diverse climates and geographic features. Climates range from arctic and subarctic in Siberia to tropical in southern India and Southeast Asia" (Asia-Wikipedia)

Myriad of Culture, Ethnicity and Language

"Out of Ethnologue's 6,909 for instance, only 230 are spoken in Europe, while 2, 197 are spoken in Asia" (How many languages are in the world? Linguistic Society of America)

Challenge of Exclusivity of Christ in realm of polytheism

- Thinking pervasive in Asian thinking of oneness of God. He is manifest in different forms and religious identities. (Church in Asia Today, Saphir Athyal)
- How do we reconcile Acts 4:12 "There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be save." (NLT)

Geo Politics and Economics

- First, second and third world economies
- Where is our identification? Do we identify with the poor and marginalized?

Religious identification

According to a Pew poll in 2016 Asia is most religiously diverse in world.

Major religions of world born and practiced in Asia; Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Jainism, Sikhism, Judaism and Zoroastrianism which have also seen various sects and subsects come forth. (Religion in Asia, Wikipedia)

- Culture: diversity ranging from European, Arab, South Asian and South East Asian.
- Nation: Myriad of nations and affiliations based on religious, ethnic and economic affinity.

Emerging leadership from mission dependency

- Legacy of historical and mission churches

Cult of Personality

- A legacy of leadership or only a memory of a leader

Local empires vs. Kingdom of God

- Building for faith and family or for Kingdom of God

Persecution

- Internal

Catholic vs. Protestant

Intra Protestant (established or mainline, charismatic, independent)

- External

Anti-Christian (religious based, culturally based, historically bias)

- Out of the 50 countries on World watch list by Open Doors 33 are in Asia. Based on Pressure and Violence. North Korea 1, India 15, China 39
- They will overcome (“by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony” Rev.12; 11 NJKV)

Church in Asia—Future is bright

- Jesus is drawing people unto Himself (“that any should perish but all come to repentance.” 2 Pet 3:9 NKJV)
- Jesus is shaping and molding His Church (“not having spot or wrinkle” Eph 5:27 NKJV)
- Jesus is building His Church (“I will build My church” Matt 16:18 NKJV)