

Cities and urbanization

The Bible starts the human story in a garden and ends it in a city. Already 55% of the world's people live in a city. Rich-world countries, and Latin America and the Caribbean are highly urbanized; the next few decades are likely to feature strong city-growth in Africa and Asia. India is projected to have 416 million more city-dwellers in 2050 than today; China, 255 million and Nigeria 189 million.

Today's great cities are vast. Each of the world's ten largest cities has a population of at least 19 million people, making them richer, larger and arguably more influential than most countries. Tokyo, the world's largest urban agglomeration, is home to 37 million people.

Cities host the next generation of young people; the people who shape culture and drive innovation; the wealth creators; peoples of many ethnic groups; and the poorest of the poor. Ties of religion, language and culture are often loosened in cities. People can lose the faith they had in the village and adopt a new one. This is both a challenge and an opportunity for the Church.

Pray for the growth of Christian movements in urban areas - this is one of the greatest tasks facing the global Church in the next generation.

Cities are where four major kinds of people are most to be found: the next generation of young people, the most unreached peoples who have migrated, the culture shapers, the poorest of the poor.

-The Cape Town Commitment II-D-4

An issue network of the
Lausanne Movement

www.lausanne.org/cities

Calls for action and prayer for city-dwellers

- Know your city. We can only love that which we know and understand
- Unite the Church in your city by building intercultural and interdenominational relationships
- Convene the body of Christ into strategic gatherings for prayer and collaboration
- Address today's urban issues through collaborative partnerships which foster citywide transformation

CHINA



The birth, survival, and growth of the Church in China is a miracle.

From the 1950s the Communist government persecuted a Church that had been built up by generations of Catholic and Protestant missionaries. In the worst period, during the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s, not a single church building was in use anywhere in the country.

As a response to persecution, Christians started underground networks of house churches. Outsiders provided radio broadcasts. The severe opposition led to great suffering and loss but also Holy Spirit-inspired prayer and brave evangelism, often led by young women. Brutally pruned, the Church took root, flourished, and bore fruit.

In 1978, the government again allowed registered churches to function. Both legal and illegal churches multiplied. The result was a turning to Christ unique in history: 2.7 million Chinese evangelicals in 1975 grew to over 75 million in a single generation. China's Christian community is now estimated by some to be around 8% of the population, and is established in every province, though strongest in the East.

Many Christians do not have enough Bible knowledge - in rural areas there is still a shortage of Bibles and Christian teaching. Pray for wise, godly leadership to be multiplied at every level in the Church, and for Christians to have a part in shaping China as the nation amasses wealth and political influence. The Chinese Church has many mature leaders, but not nearly enough!

Pray for healthy marriages and family life, and for Christians to live lives of integrity within a culture where corruption is a temptation.