NXT MOVE

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ACCELERATE

Breaking the Flat Line

what it will take for the next generation to turn Christianity's century-long plateau up and to the right

Two thousand years of data, the next generation on every continent,
six headline findings and a regional grid for 2050,
with every figure sourced and labelled by how solid it is.

NXT Move Global · Elevating Leaders. Multiplying Impact.

A working paper for the Next Gen Global Collab · Jurie Kriel · NXT Move Global · nxtmove.global/accelerate

Thesis: Retention protects the line. Multiplication bends it. Only an activated church, working from everywhere to everywhere, does both.

FRONT MATTER

What this report does

For most of the last century Christianity has held about a third of the world's people. It grew in number, but only at the pace of the world around it. This report asks what would turn that flat line upward. It traces the long record from AD 33 to today and shows that the church grew fastest when ordinary believers carried the faith from the inside out and across the frontiers of their day. It then shows that the next generation is where the line will bend or break. We look at where young people are holding on, above all in Africa, and at what they teach us about **belonging, trust, depth and leadership**. We model what decides 2050, and how much difference it makes when the church works together rather than apart. We count where the church sends its workers, and where it does not. Two of our claims, that activation bends the line and that working together holds retention, are not proven here. They are the claims Section 5.8 commits to testing from the 2027 baseline. NXT Move writes as a participant, not a bystander. We serve as backbone to the Next Gen Global Collab and the Jesus Following Index (JFINDX), and we wrote this to share our thinking and to invite others into one goal: that everyone in the next generation has an opportunity to follow Jesus by 2033. Every figure is sourced and labelled Counted, Estimated, Modelled, Projected or Unverified, so readers can test the argument as well as act on it.

Headline findings and the argument

The argument runs in four beats, and six findings carry its evidence: there is a flat line, to turn it we retain the next generation, and activate them and send them where the church is not, and that takes the whole church, moving from below and joined by just enough structure. Each finding is a short headline, with one number in it or in its proof, the evidence beneath it, its label and the section where it sits. The modelled numbers come from the regional grid in Part 5 and are stakes, not predictions.

1 There is a flat line.

Finding 1. Since 1900 Islam's share of the world has doubled. Christianity's has held. There are 4.8 times more Christians than in 1900 and 5.1 times more people, so the church has held between 32% and 35% of the world for 125 years [1]. Muslims rose from 12.4% to 25.4%, from 200 million to 2.1 billion, mostly through births. They are the youngest of the major religious groups and have the most children [5]. In the decade Pew counts, 2010 to 2020, the church gained by births in Africa what it lost as people left in the North, and almost nothing by reaching people who were not Christian (Sections 1.1 and 2.3). *Counted. Section 1.1.*

The line has risen twice. The early church grew about 40% a decade from the inside out, and crossed from Jew to Gentile to do it. The missionary century lifted the share about 0.4% a year, mostly on births in a heartland that kept its own, while the churches it planted bore their harvest in the next century. The first rise ran on after patronage made the faith a career in 313, until it reached the Empire's borders. The second ended when the heartland stopped keeping its young (Part 1).

2 To turn it we must retain the next generation.

Finding 2. For every 100 people raised Christian, 17 walk away and 5 walk in. Pew's accounting of 2010–2020: 17.1 left and 5.5 joined per 100 adults raised Christian, measured as adults' lifetime switching [5]. Holding the next generation at today's retention, rather than the drift already observed in South Africa, Brazil and Mexico, is worth about 130 million people by 2050 across the six continents. Against the sharpest observed losses the swing is about 280 million, 2.9 points of the world (Exhibit 29). Africa carries about 125 million of the larger figure. Young people given real responsibility in church as teenagers are more likely to stay as adults (56% against 42%, U.S.) [86]: activation is how the church keeps its own. *Counted; Modelled. Sections 2.3 and 5.2.*

In 41 of 106 countries adults under 40 are less religiously affiliated than their elders, and in only two, Ghana and Chad, are they more [28]. Decline runs participation → importance → belonging, and the West shows where it ends. Africa is the exception and the test: its young people belong almost universally, while trust in leaders and depth of faith are thinner [41, 42]. Faith passes between generations through four conditions, belong, trust, depth and lead, with trust as the foundation (Parts 2 to 4).

3 And activate them, and send them where the church is not.

Finding 3. Births have lifted the line. Only ordinary believers have ever bent it. About 40% a decade for 260 years before the church could build in the open [9]. Where activation stayed among Christians it renewed the church without bending the line: the Pentecostal and charismatic movement grew from under a million in 1900 to 676 million, much of it by transfer within Christianity [1] (Section 1.7). Sustained net growth of a quarter of a per cent a year from 2033, one more person for every 400 Christians each year, would add about 144 million by 2050 and keep compounding (Exhibits 37 and 38). The rate is assumed, an illustration of scale. *Estimated; Modelled. Sections 1.2 and 5.7.*

Finding 4. The church keeps sending itself where it already is. Four in five people who are not Christian do not personally know a Christian. In CSGC's count for 2010 the nine countries that received the most missionaries were all majority Christian and held 3.5% of the world's non-Christians, while the ten countries with 73% of non-Christians received 9% [110]. Lausanne counts about 15,000 of 450,000 cross-cultural workers among unreached peoples [43]. Since 1900 Africa's Christian share has risen 40 points and Asia's 6 [3], and only 18.9% of the world's non-Christians personally know a Christian [1]. Activation reaches the people believers know. Bending the line needs believers who cross. *Estimated. Section 1.8.*

Activation is almost every believer taking part, as in the early church: discipling one another from house to house, inviting others into the fellowship of believers and sharing their faith in everyday life. Where the church is large it mostly renews and keeps the church's own. Where the church is small or absent it reaches people who were not Christian, but only if someone crosses, and the nearest are best placed. Planting is how crossing has been organised: believers sent to start what does not yet exist. Multiplication has an address. Nearly four in five of the world's non-Christians live in Asia, and about 2.3 billion people have no realistic access to the gospel [1, 3] (Parts 4 to 6).

4 **That takes the whole church, moving from below and joined by just enough structure.**

Finding 5. Collaboration is not optional. Every year the church waits to work together costs 5 million people by 2050. Collaboration does not reach anyone. Activated believers do. Working together makes those who reach more effective, and unity kept with integrity makes the faith they carry credible to the young, which is how retention is held. A shared response that holds retention from 2033 keeps about 90 million more people in the faith by 2050 than a fragmented drift. From 2027 it would have been 120 million, from 2040 it is 60 million (Exhibit 33). The number is a modelled stake, not a prediction. It assumes that a shared response holds retention, and Section 5.8 sets out how that will be tested. *Modelled. Section 5.4.*

Finding 6. The generation that decides 2050 is not yet 20, and a quarter of it is not yet born. The cohorts that carry the modelled effect are aged 18 to 43 in 2050, born between 2007 and 2032: 3.4 billion people the church has to reach together, about a quarter of them not yet born, half under 13, all of them in children's and youth ministry now or within a decade [46]. JFINDX follows them as they come of age: about half of them are inside its 13–30 range by 2033 and two-thirds by 2040, and the index does not stop at 2033, so the trends it records over the next seven years direct the response beyond the goal year (Exhibit 34). *Projected. Section 5.5.*

The evidence sorts into two jobs, retention and reach, and four marks of a church that does both: it keeps its young, its believers are active, it sends them where the church is not, and its leaders work together, united with integrity and joined by just enough structure. Four collaborative levers put them to work, with one shared instrument (JFINDX) and one operating sequence, time → trust → truth (Parts 5 and 6).

THESIS

Retention protects the line. Multiplication bends it. Only an activated church, working from everywhere to everywhere, does both.

Retention is a level: it decides whether the church keeps the third of humanity it has. Multiplication, reach that reproduces itself, is a slope: it decides whether the line rises. The first protects the line. Only the second bends it, and it has bent it only where believers crossed a frontier (Section 1.8). Births are the tide beneath both, and not ours to decide (Purpose and posture).

Purpose and posture

NXT Move serves as the backbone of the Next Gen Global Collab, stewards the Jesus Following Index (JFINDX), and wrote *Hitting the Ball You Cannot See* [60, 61, 32]. We wrote this paper out of two commitments that belong together. The first is the Collab's common goal: that everyone in the next generation has an opportunity to follow Jesus by 2033. The second is NXT Move's vision: to accelerate Christianity in the next generation. **By *accelerate* we mean something specific and measurable.** For a century the church has grown only as fast as the world (Finding 1). Two flows decide the line, and the church's own life decides both. **Reach** is the church going to people outside the faith, counted by those who come to it. **Retention** is the church keeping those already in it, above all its young, counted by those who stay. Births can lift a share, as Islam's doubling shows, and Africa's will lift ours a little before 2050 (Section 1.1). We do not count that as acceleration. To accelerate is for reach to outrun loss: more people coming to faith than leaving it. Multiplication is reach that reproduces itself, as those who are reached reach others. Four in five people who are not Christian do not personally know a Christian (Finding 4), so reach of that kind cannot happen unless the church goes where it is not. The 2033 goal is the opportunity. Acceleration is what happens when it is taken. Like *Hitting the Ball You Cannot See*, this paper was not thought up at a desk. Its thinking was shaped in the rooms NXT Move convenes, where leaders from different generations, regions and

traditions design together what they will own together. The paper writes that thinking down and tests it against the counted evidence. It sets out the reasoning behind both commitments and invites the wider church to test it with us. It is written to inform strategy, not to set it: the Collab, NXT Move and each region decide what to do, and the paper gives them one reading of the evidence to decide from. A shorter companion carries the same argument in simple statements for the wider community and points back here for the proof. The data and the model behind every chart are published alongside the paper. This draft has been shared with invited readers. It has not been through a formal peer-review process, and it does not claim to have been.

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PART 1

The Flat Line: two thousand years, two engines

The church grew fastest from the inside out. Growth from the outside in reached the world, and took root where it activated local believers. The next surge has to come from the inside out again, everywhere at once, and across the frontiers where the church is not.

1.1 The line in one chart

Exhibit 1 shows Christianity's share of the world's people from the first century to 2050, Exhibit 2 the numbers behind that line since 1900, and Exhibit 4 net growth by period. Read together, they say one thing: there have been only two sustained rises in share, one in antiquity and one in the nineteenth century, and since about 1910 the line has been flat. There are almost five times as many Christians as in 1900 (0.56 to 2.67 billion), but the world has grown fivefold too, so the share of humanity has stayed within a band of about 32–35% for 125 years [1].

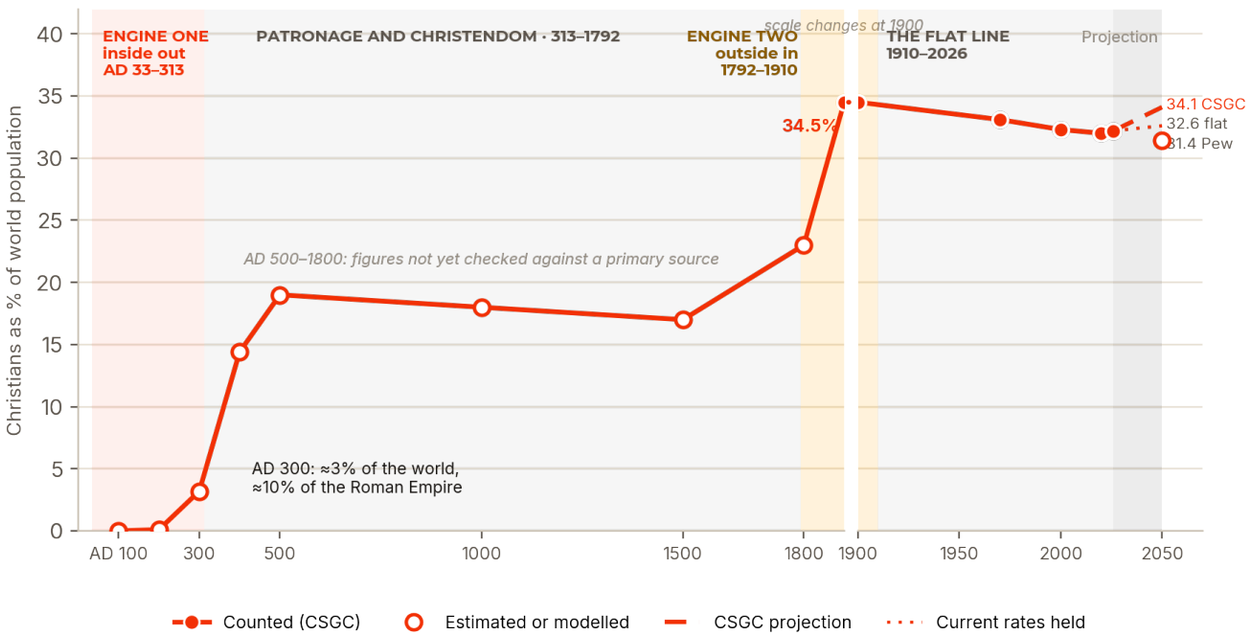


Exhibit 1. Christianity's share of world population, AD 100–2050. Solid markers are counted (CSGC). Hollow markers are estimates or models from partial evidence. The dotted extension is CSGC's projection and the hollow marker at 2050 is Pew's. Bands mark the two engines and the flat line. The chart changes scale at 1900: the left panel covers 1,800 years, the right 150, and the 1900 point sits on both sides of the break. Counted from 1900, Estimated or Modelled before it, Projected for 2050. [1, 2, 9, 10, 12, 7]

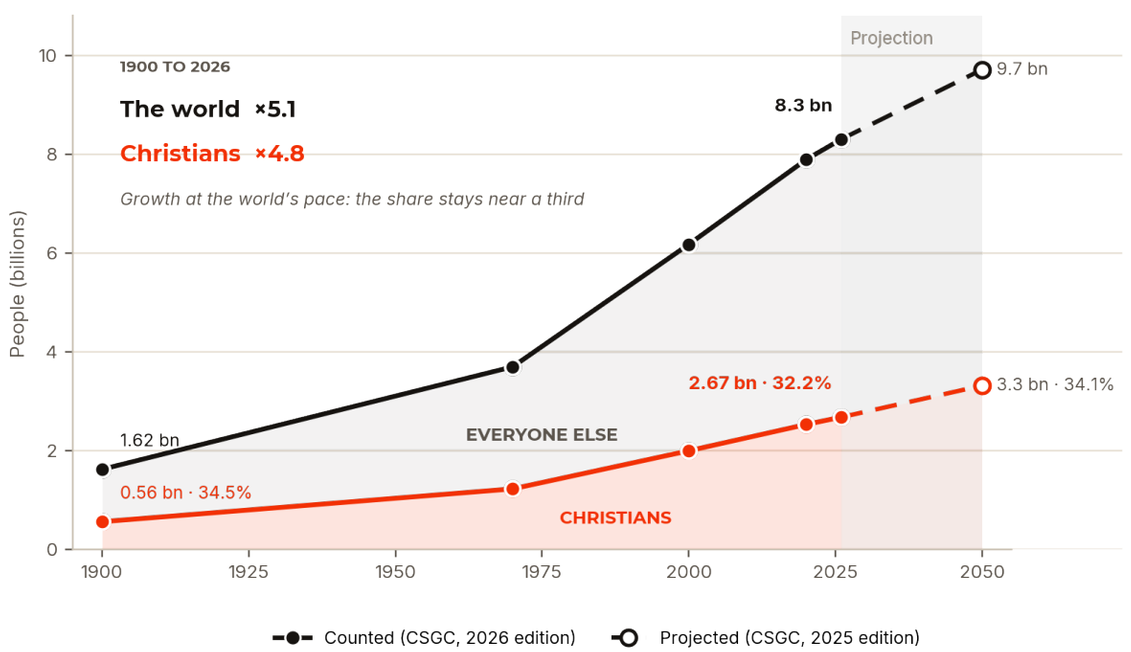


Exhibit 2. Christians and the world, 1900–2050, in billions of people. Both have grown at almost the same pace, the world by 5.1 times between 1900 and 2026 and Christians by 4.8, which is why the share in Exhibit 1 has stayed near a third. The band between the two lines is everyone else. Counted to 2026 (CSGC, 2026 edition). Projected for 2050 (CSGC, 2025 edition), where the multiples are 6.0 and 5.9. [1, 2]

One line doubled while ours held. In the same 125 years Islam's share of the world rose from 12.4% to 25.4%. Muslims grew from 200 million to 2.1 billion, more than ten times over, while Christians grew 4.8 times [1] (Counted). Conversion did not do it. Pew finds Muslim growth driven largely by a young age structure and high fertility, and Christian growth held back by people leaving the faith, which outweighs the high fertility of Christians in Africa [5]. The comparison is not a contest. It is the arithmetic this paper rests on, counted over a century. A faith's share follows its births unless people leave it or come to it. Births can lift a line, and Islam's shows how far. For a century they have not lifted ours, because the church gave back by leaving much of what births gave it. Births are not ours to decide. Reach and retention are.

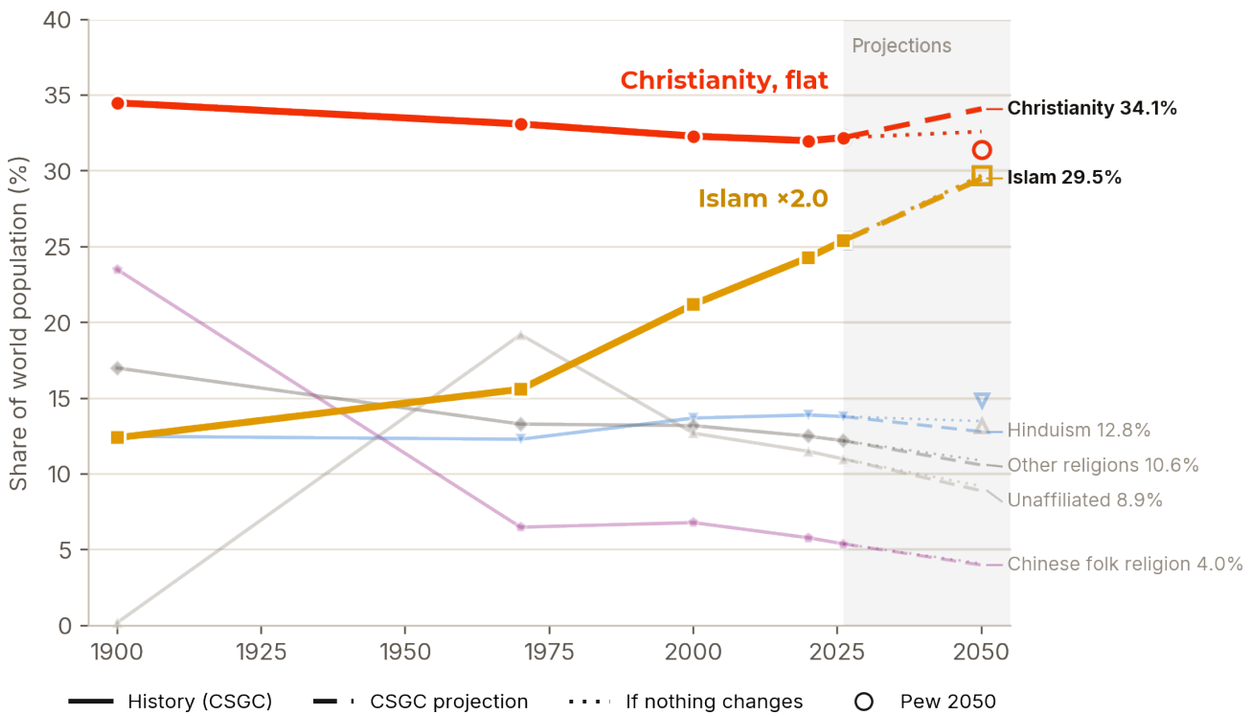


Exhibit 3. Share of world population by group, 1900–2026 (CSGC, 2026 edition), with three views of 2050: CSGC's projection (dashed), current growth rates held constant (dotted) and Pew's 2015 projection (hollow markers). Christianity and Islam are drawn strong and the other groups muted: since 1900 Islam's share has doubled while Christianity's has held. No data points exist between 1900 and 1970. Chinese folk religion fell from 23.5% of the world to 6.5% between 1900 and 1970, largely under communist rule in China, while Hinduism has held about 12–14% throughout. "Other religions" is Buddhism, ethnoreligions, new religions, Sikhism, Judaism and smaller faiths. "unaffiliated" is agnostics plus atheists. Pew has no marker for Chinese folk religion or other religions, because its "folk religions" category also includes African traditional religions. Counted to 2026. Projected or Modelled for 2050. Values in Table B1b. [1, 2, 7]

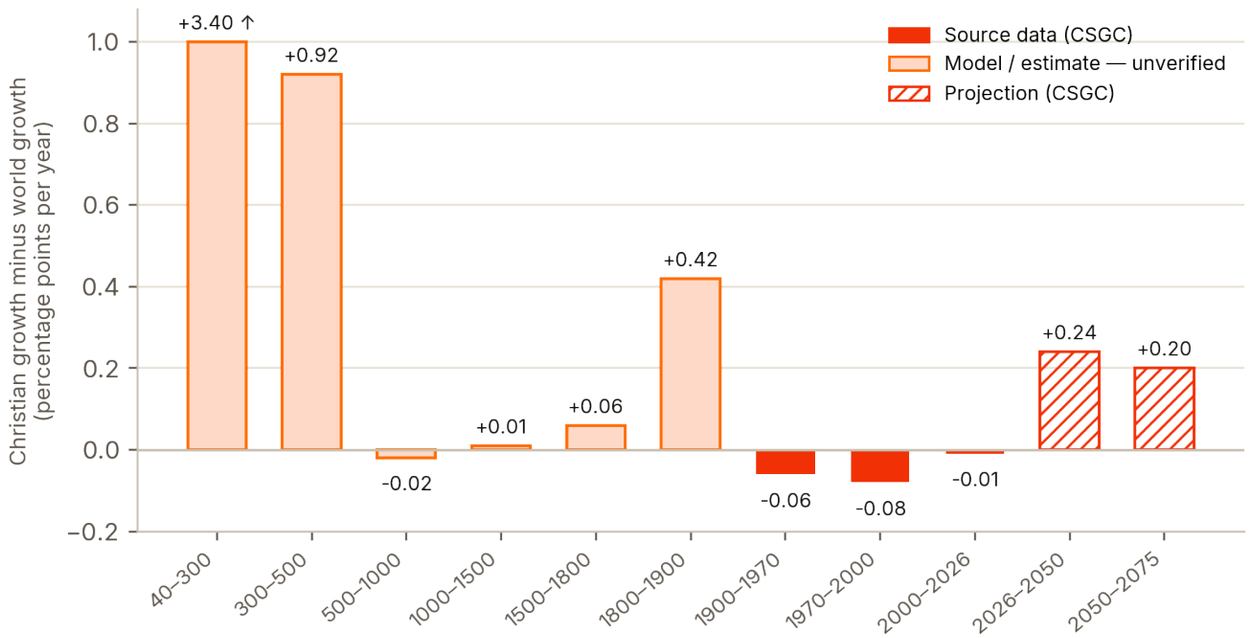


Exhibit 4. Net growth by era: Christian growth minus world growth, percentage points per year. The AD 40–300 bar (+3.40) is cut off at the top. Light bars rest on models or on figures not yet checked against a primary source. Hatched bars are projections. Modelled for AD 40–300, Unverified for 300–1800, Estimated for 1800–1900, Counted from 1900, Projected from 2026. [1, 2, 9, 10, 12]

Two cautions. First, the figures before 1800 are estimates or models, and those between AD 300 and 1800 have not yet been checked against their primary source (Johnson & Chung 2004. The *Atlas of Global Christianity*) [20, 19]. They are shown because the shape matters more than the decimals, and the shape is not in doubt. Second, the modern figures depend on the source: CSGC has Christianity edging up to 34.1% by 2050, Pew's 2015 projection has it at 31.4%, and holding recent growth rates constant gives 32.6% [2, 7]. CSGC's line rises, but on African births rather than on conversion, the demographic lift the grid in Part 5 takes as its central case. None of the three rises because more people come to faith than leave it.

1.2 Engine one: inside out (AD 33–313)

Rodney Stark's reconstruction of the early church starts with about 1,000 believers in AD 40 and reaches about 6.3 million, roughly a tenth of the Roman Empire, by AD 300 [9]. That requires growth of about 40% a decade, about 3.4% a year, in a world whose population was nearly static at 188–209 million [12]. Bart Ehrman's revision starts from a smaller group, assumes faster growth early that slows to about 34% a decade in the second and third centuries, and reaches about 3 million by 300 [10, 11]. Both are models, not counts. Either way it is the highest sustained net growth on record, and it happened before the church could build in the open.

Not all of it was conversion, and Stark says so. Christians rejected infanticide and abortion, so their households raised more daughters and more children, and in the epidemics of 165 and 251 they nursed the sick and survived in greater numbers than their neighbours [9] (Estimated). Births and survival carried part of engine one, as they carried most of engine two (Section 1.6). They do not turn a thousand people into a tenth of an empire. Stark's main argument is that conversion through personal networks did that.

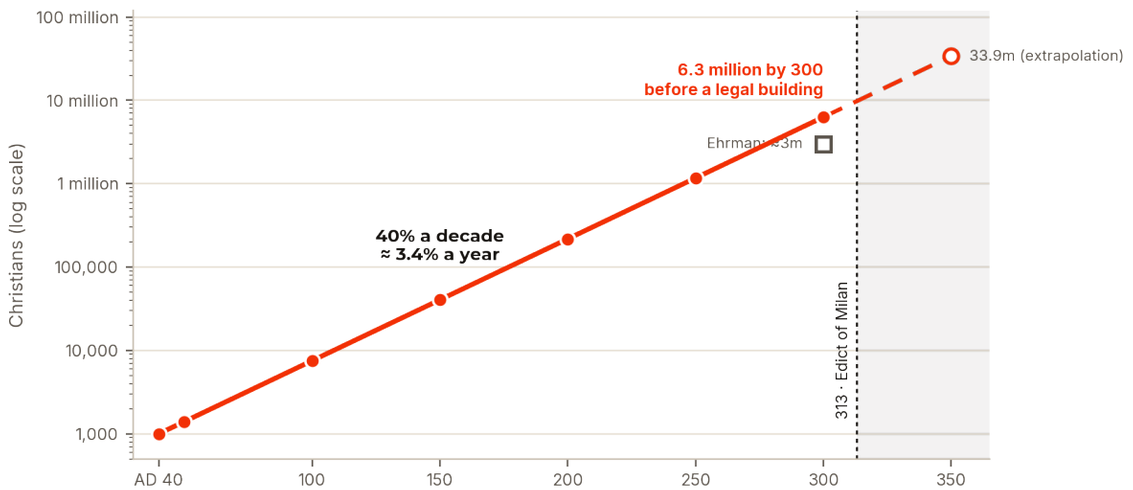


Exhibit 5. Stark's growth trail for the early church, AD 40–350 (log scale). The dashed segment after 300 is Stark's extrapolation, which he notes must flatten. Ehrman shows it would exceed the Empire's whole population by 400. The line at 313 marks the Edict of Milan. Modelled. [9, 10, 11]

Stark makes a second point that matters for this paper: 40% a decade is not a miracle rate [9]. The church has seen faster within living memory: the Pentecostal and charismatic movement grew from under a million people in 1900 to 676 million in 2026, about 5% a year sustained for more than a century [1] (Section 1.7). It is the ordinary pace of a committed movement that spreads through personal networks. Ten believers reaching four people in ten years. The early church did not grow because a few were extraordinary. It grew because almost everyone was involved.

Who carried it. The book of Acts records the pattern. When persecution scattered the Jerusalem church, "those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went" (Acts 8:1, 4). The church at Antioch, which later sent Paul, and where believers were first called Christians, was planted by unnamed refugees from Cyprus and Cyrene (Acts 11:19–21). Celsus, the movement's sharpest second-century critic, sneered that its advocates were "wool-workers, cobblers, laundry-workers, and the most illiterate and bucolic yokels" [13]. He meant it as an insult. It was a description of the engine.

How it was formed. The early church left no treatise on evangelism and no mission strategy. What its leaders wrote about at length was patience: Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine each wrote a treatise on it. Alan Kreider argues that the church grew through a way of life, a *habitus* formed slowly in its members and visible to their neighbours, more than through public preaching [96]. The church order known as the *Apostolic Tradition* prescribes up to three years of instruction before baptism, with sponsors: existing believers who walked alongside each candidate and vouched for how they lived [97]. Its date and authorship are contested, so it shows what one tradition prescribed, not what every church practised (Estimated). This reconciles the two things this paper says about the early church. Formation was slow for each believer, and the movement was fast because almost every believer was forming someone: about a thirtieth of a person per believer per year is a patient rate. The acceleration came from breadth, not from haste.

The words tell the story. The New Testament uses *laos* (people) and *klēros* (allotted portion) for the same people: everybody. Only later did the first become "laity" and the second "clergy" [23]. From its first chapters the church's life ran through three settings, which this paper calls rooms. Believers met "in the temple courts and from house to house" (Acts 5:42, with 2:46), and the faith went into the marketplace, as Paul

took it there "day by day" in Athens (Acts 17:17). **House to house**, believers discipled one another relationally, by name and at a table. In the **temple courts**, they gathered as a fellowship of believers, met God together and invited others into that experience. In the **marketplace**, they shared their faith in their everyday activity, as people on mission. Part 6 turns the three rooms into a practice for today (Section 6.5).

1.3 The switch-off (313 onward)

In 313 the Edict of Milan ended persecution. Within a few years the Empire was regulating who could enter the clergy: a law of 320 barred town councillors and their sons from taking orders, and a law of 326 limited new clergy to replacements for those who died [14]. Ministry had become a career that had to be rationed. Stark's model has the Empire more than half Christian by 350. That figure is an extrapolation and should not be quoted as fact, but a Christian majority by the late fourth century is plausible [9, 10]. Establishment as the official religion followed in 380.

The numbers went up while the engine went off. The believers who had carried the faith through households and workplaces became an audience, and a professional class did the ministry for them. Our teaching series on this period puts it in four words: the church was **slowed, diluted, professionalised and deactivated**. The building did not deactivate the church. Patronage did [23, 96, 14]. The momentum ran on for two centuries, and the Empire finished becoming Christian under establishment (Exhibit 4 shows about +0.9 a year for 300–500, Unverified). Then it stopped at the Empire's borders. Net growth after 500 fell to about zero and stayed there for thirteen centuries (Exhibit 4; Unverified before 1800). The mechanism had changed, and the growth that followed neither travelled nor lasted. A caution for today follows: a full room is not evidence that the church is working. Numbers can rise while the engine is off.

1.4 The church that went east and south, and what it lost

Engine one did not run only inside the Roman Empire, and the first millennium of the church was not a European story. Armenia became the first Christian state in the early fourth century (301 by tradition, 314 on most recent dating), before Constantine. The kingdom of Aksum in Ethiopia followed within a generation. The Thomas Christians of India trace their churches to the first century. And the Church of the East carried the faith along the trade routes to Persia, Central Asia and, by 635, to the Chinese capital [84]. Philip Jenkins's reconstruction suggests that by the 780s about a quarter of the world's Christians looked to the Patriarch of the Church of the East in Baghdad rather than to Rome or Constantinople, and that Africa and Asia together held about a third of all Christians around 1200 [84] (Estimated). Then it collapsed: Christians in Asia fell from about 21 million in 1200 to about 3.4 million in 1500, under persecution in China, the Mongol wars, Timur's campaigns and plague, and Africa and Asia's share of the world's Christians fell to about 6% [84].

Two things follow for this paper. The map of Christianity has been global before, and it was global when the first engine was running. "from everywhere to everywhere" is a return, not an innovation. And a church that is not handed on to the next generation of its own people can disappear within a few centuries, however far it has spread. The switch-off in 1.3 and the collapse in the East are the same lesson from two directions.

1.5 Renewals that carried the fire

Across those centuries, the movements that grew re-activated ordinary believers. Four are worth naming, because each one maps onto a layer of the handover model in Part 4.

- **Celtic mission (fifth to eighth centuries).** George Hunter's reading of the Celtic pattern is that people were welcomed into the community first and came to faith within it: belonging before believing [15]. Hunter's account is an interpretation, not a census, but the sequence is the one Part 3 finds still working in Africa. It maps to **Belong**.
- **The Jesuits (from 1540).** A movement built on formation and radical obedience, which carried the faith to Asia and the Americas through a small number of deeply formed people. It maps to **Depth**.
- **The Moravians (from 1727).** A community of a few hundred refugees at Herrnhut kept a prayer watch for a century and sent out missionaries within five years, under the cry "May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering" [16]. Their marks were strategic mission, unceasing prayer, humility, and love for one another. They map to **Trust** and **Lead**: ordinary people trusted with the mission.
- **The Awakenings (1730s to 1840s).** Shut out of the pulpits, George Whitefield preached in the open air to the miners of Kingswood near Bristol in February 1739. He was 24. By April he had handed the crowds to John Wesley and moved on [122, 123]. Whitefield gathered people and Wesley kept them. From 1742 every Methodist belonged to a class of about twelve that met weekly under a lay leader, and lay preachers went where the clergy would not [78]. Wesley saw what happened without it. Where there had been preaching but no societies he judged in 1763 that "nine in ten of the once-awakened are now faster asleep than ever" [123] (Unverified, his own estimate). Finke and Stark's reconstruction of America shows the result: church adherence rose from about 17% in 1776 to about 37% in 1860, and the Methodists grew from 2.5% of adherents to 34.2% by 1850 [77] (Estimated). They map to **Belong**, **Depth** and **Lead**.

The pattern across all four is the same. Each renewal put ordinary believers back to work, and each grew at rates the settled church around it did not. None of them began by building or by professionalising. Several of them ended that way.

1.6 Engine two: outside in (about 1792–1910)

The second rise in share came from a different engine, and the first engine lit it. In 1748 Jonathan Edwards called for a "visible union of God's people in extraordinary prayer" [125]. In 1784 the Baptists of Northamptonshire began to pray monthly on that call and invited other denominations to join them [126]. William Carey was among them. His *Enquiry* of 1792 and the Baptist Missionary Society founded the same year opened the Protestant missionary era. The London, Church and American Board societies followed within twenty years [17]. The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910 marked its high point [18]. Between 1800 and 1900 Christians grew from about 204 million to 558 million, and the world share rose from about 23% to 34.5%: net growth of about 0.4% a year, the largest gain since antiquity [1, 12] (Estimated, the 1800 figure is secondary). Where that gain came from needs saying plainly, because Finding 3 rests on it. It was not, for the most part, conversion on the mission field. In 1900 about 94% of the world's Christians still lived in Europe, the Americas and Oceania, and only about 32 million, 6%, in Africa and Asia [1]. The century's increase of about 350 million came mainly from births and migration in the Christian populations of Europe and the Americas, which grew about two and a half times over while the world grew by about four-fifths [12] (Estimated. The regional split of Christians in 1800 is still to be checked against Johnson & Chung [20]). Two things made those births count, and both are the first engine at work. The heartland that

grew had just been re-activated: the Awakenings of Section 1.5 raised church adherence in the United States from about 17% to 37% [77], and a church that kept its own young people grew with its population instead of losing share to it. And the missions of that century took root where local believers carried them, so that the harvest came in the next one: Africa's 9.6 million Christians of 1900 became 754 million by 2025, much of it conversion from traditional religion in the first half of the twentieth century, and the rest births in families that had become Christian [2] (Section 1.7). The share rose because Christian populations grew faster than the world. That they were Christian populations at all, and stayed so, was the part that was not automatic.

This engine reached the world. It planted the churches that now hold most of the world's Christians, translated Scripture into hundreds of languages, and built schools and hospitals across Africa and Asia. But its shape was different from the first engine. The faith was *sent*: from a Christian heartland outward, from a centre to the edges, through missionaries funded from home.

Who carried it where it took root. Not, for the most part, the missionaries. Many of the senders were ordinary believers themselves: Carey was a shoemaker, the Moravians sent artisans, and by the early twentieth century women made up most of the American missionary force [101]. On the ground the work passed quickly to local believers. Around 1908 Protestant missions in Africa had about eight African teachers, evangelists and catechists for every Western lay worker, and in Uganda in 1904 Europeans were barely 3% of the mission workforce [98] (Counted, from mission returns). Lamin Sanneh traces the same shift to translation: once Scripture was in the vernacular, the faith was in local hands [99]. Andrew Walls describes it as each people making the faith its own [100]. In Ghana the Methodist church began in 1831 as a Bible band of Fante believers led by William de Graft. The first missionary arrived four years later and died within the year [127]. The harvest came in the twentieth century, when Africa grew from 9.6 million Christians in 1900 to 754 million in 2025 [2], carried by African churches. **Engine two worked where it turned into engine one.** Where authority, money and ministry stayed with the mission, it reached people without activating them. And when the sending heartland began to lose its own young people in the twentieth century, the share stopped rising.

	Engine one: inside out	Engine two: outside in	Engine one, modern form
Period	AD 33–313	About 1792–1910	1906 onward (Section 1.7)
Who carried the faith	Almost everyone: households, workplaces, refugees, "wool-workers and cobblers"	Sent missionaries, many of them lay (artisans, students, women). On the ground, mostly local catechists, teachers and evangelists	Lay evangelists through personal networks. Indigenous leaders from the start
How believers were formed	Slowly: instruction and sponsors before baptism (the catechumenate)	Through catechists, schools and Scripture in the vernacular	Ministry handed over at once. Depth of formation varies
Direction	Outward from wherever believers already were	From a Christian heartland to the rest of the world	Outward from wherever it took root, in every region at once
Where it grew, and where it stopped	Along the synagogue, city and trade networks of the Empire and the routes east. It stopped at the Empire's borders, and in Asia it collapsed (1.4)	Where colonial access and traditional religion opened the way. Little gain among Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists	Among traditional religions and within Christianity. Asia from 2% Christian to 9% in 125 years

	Engine one: inside out	Engine two: outside in	Engine one, modern form
Net growth	About +3.4% a year (Modelled)	About +0.4% a year (Estimated), mostly births in a re-activated Europe and Americas	From under a million (1900, Estimated) to 676 million (2026, Counted). The world line stayed flat
What it produced	A church of several million with no buildings, budgets or professionals	The churches of the Global South. Scripture in hundreds of languages	About a quarter of all Christians. The churches Africa's young are choosing
What switched it off	Slowly: patronage and professionalisation after 313	The heartland's own decline. Where authority stayed with the mission, the engine was not handed over	Not switched off. Offset by losses elsewhere and by transfer within Christianity
What it teaches	Growth is a function of how many believers are active	Sending worked where it activated local believers	Regional activation cannot bend a world line on its own

Exhibit 6. The two engines compared, with the modern form of the first. [9, 96, 1, 98, 43]

1.7 The Pentecostal century: engine one in modern form

The first engine did not stay in antiquity. In April 1906 a prayer meeting led by William Seymour, the son of former slaves, at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles became the launch point of the global Pentecostal movement [80]. The Welsh revival of 1904–05 had just added an estimated 100,000 converts in a year [79] (Estimated). The Pyongyang revival of 1907 shaped Korean Protestantism. And from 1929 the East African Revival spread from Rwanda through Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, led by lay "saved ones" practising public confession and reconciliation across ethnic lines [81]. Pentecostals and charismatics, under a million in 1900, numbered 676 million in 2026, about a quarter of all Christians, and they are the fastest-growing part of the church [1]. Lausanne's summary is precise about the mechanism: they are "the leading edge of Christian growth around the world … typically more missionary in orientation, placing a high emphasis on lay evangelism through personal networks" [43] (SGC p. 30).

That is engine one in modern form. The movement hands leadership to ordinary believers immediately. It expects every believer to minister (Joel's promise of the Spirit "on all people", Acts 2:17, is its founding text). It grows through households and networks rather than institutions. And in Africa, Latin America and Asia it raised indigenous leaders from the start rather than sending a professional class from a heartland. Part 3 shows where it is now: the churches Ghana's young are choosing are Pentecostal and charismatic (32.5% of 15–39-year-olds against 28.4% of those 40 and over [37]). The 20th century also produced the largest lay-led church growth since antiquity in China, where the numbers are contested but the mechanism, unregistered house churches, is not [83].

Then why did the world line stay flat while this engine ran? Three reasons, and each one matters for what follows. **Much of the growth was transfer within Christianity.** In Latin America a large share of Protestants were raised Catholic [82]. In Ghana the young moved from mission churches to Pentecostal ones (Part 3). Activation re-formed existing Christians more than it added new ones. **Where it did convert, it was regional.** Africa went from 9.6 million Christians in 1900 to 754 million in 2025, much of it conversion from traditional religion in the first half of the century [2]. Little of it crossed into Islam, Hinduism or Buddhism, where most of the world's non-Christians live (Exhibit 6). But the world line is an average, and Europe and North America were switching off at the same time. **And where a revival was not handed on, it faded within a century.** Korea's 1907 revival produced one of Asia's largest churches. In Pew's 106 countries South Korea now has

the third-largest gap between young and old in religious affiliation, 24 points [28]. Activation is not inherited. It has to be done again in every generation, which is the argument of Part 2.

1.8 The church is now everywhere

The map has changed since Edinburgh. About two-thirds of the world's Christians now live in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania, and Africa alone supplies about 80% of the growth CSGC projects to 2050 [2, 3]. The old picture of a sending centre and a receiving edge no longer describes anything. This section sets out the map as it is: by continent, by the regions NXT Move works in, and by the 10/40 Window, where the line has to bend. Section 1.1 has already set the world's faiths side by side (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 7 shows why the world line stayed flat while the map changed. Each column is a continent, as wide as its share of the world's people and filled to the share that is Christian. Between 1900 and 2050 the two columns that were almost wholly Christian, Europe and Northern America, narrow from 30% of the world to 12%, while Africa widens from 7% to 26% and fills from 9% to 52%. Asia is the constant. It holds 59% of the world's people in 2025 and 16% of its Christians, and 79% of everyone who is not Christian lives there, a figure on which CSGC and Pew agree [2, 3, 45, 119]. The line will not bend without Asia.

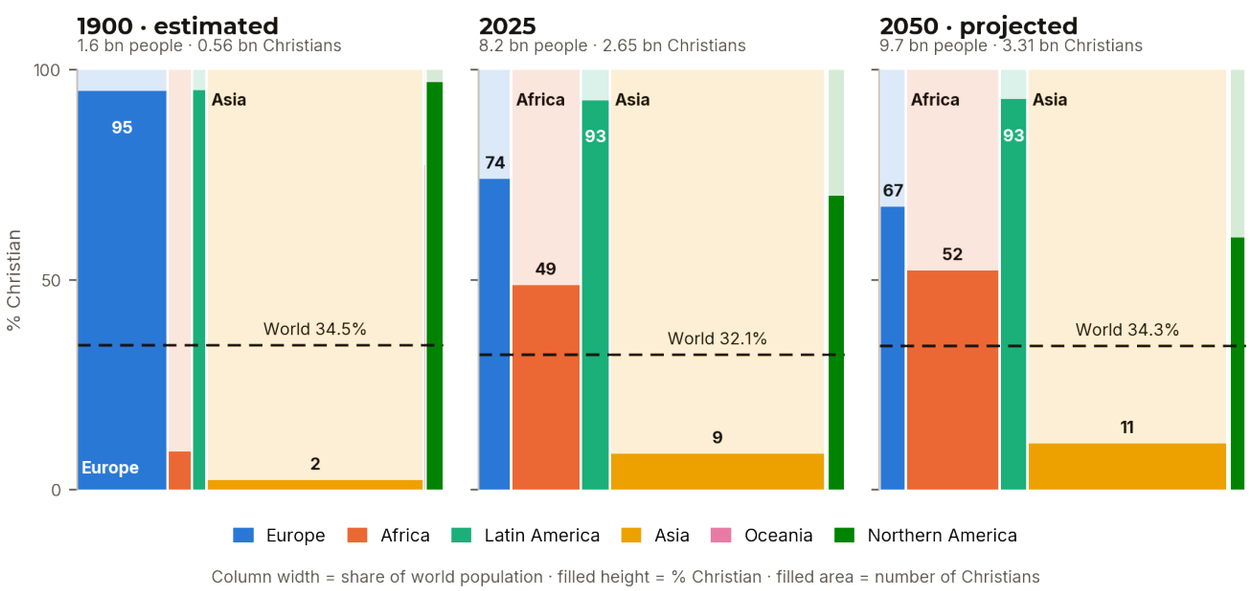


Exhibit 7. How big and how Christian, 1900, 2025 and 2050. Column width is each continent's share of world population and the filled height is the share that is Christian, so the filled area is the number of Christians. The dashed line is the world share. Christians by continent are from CSGC and population from the UN for 1970 onward and from CSGC's own estimates for 1900. 1900 Estimated, 2025 Counted, 2050 Projected. Values in Table B6. [2, 3, 45]

Three maps. The paper reads the world through three maps, and Exhibit 8 sets them side by side. The long series uses the six UN continents, because only that division has counted data from 1900 to 2050. NXT Move works in eleven regions, drawn from Lausanne's twelve. The 10/40 Window cuts across both. Asia in the long series is four NXT Move regions, Central, South, East and Southeast Asia, together with most of the Middle East. Africa in the long series is NXT Move's Africa region together with North Africa. The Window takes in the whole of the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia and Central Asia, all of East Asia except South Korea, most of Southeast Asia and 43% of the people in NXT Move's Africa region, among them Nigeria and Ethiopia. Two in three of the world's people live inside it, and nearly nine in ten of those who are

not Christian [119, 120, 121].

NXT Move region	UN continent in the long series	Lausanne region	Christian, 2020	In the 10/40 Window
North America	Northern America	North America	63%	0%
Latin America & Caribbean	Latin America	Latin America; Caribbean	87%	0%
Brazil	Latin America	Latin America	81%	0%
Europe	Europe, plus Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Cyprus	Europe; Eurasia (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Caucasus)	66%	2%
Africa	Africa, less North Africa, Sudan, Somalia and Mauritania	EPSA Africa; Francophone Africa	63%	43%
Middle East & North Africa	Africa (north) and Asia (west)	MENA, plus Iran (Lausanne: South Asia)	2%	100%
Central Asia	Asia	Eurasia (Central Asian states)	7%	100%
South Asia	Asia	South Asia, less Iran	2%	100%
East Asia	Asia	East Asia	3%	97%
Southeast Asia	Asia	South East Asia, plus Timor-Leste (Lausanne: Oceania)	22%	83%
South Pacific	Oceania	Oceania, less Timor-Leste	61%	0%
10/40 Window	Africa, Asia and Europe	Nine of NXT Move's regions	6%	100%

Exhibit 8. Three maps of the world: NXT Move's eleven regions against the UN continents used in the long series, Lausanne's twelve regions and the 10/40 Window. Shares are Pew's 2020 country counts summed to each region (Counted). The working definition of each region and the country lists are in Appendix A.6. [119, 120, 121, 43]

Present everywhere, sent to few places. The church is now on every continent, and its workers are not. In CSGC's count for 2010 the nine countries that received the most missionaries were all majority Christian. Together they held 3.5% of the world's non-Christians and received more than a third of all missionaries, while the ten countries with 73% of non-Christians received 9%, many of them because they restrict access [110]. Lausanne counts about 15,000 of 450,000 cross-cultural workers among unreached peoples [43] (Estimated). This was partly a strategy. The receptivity principle taught that most missionaries and money should go to receptive peoples and that resistant fields should be held lightly [151]. In 1982 the 85 agencies of one North American mission federation confessed to staying too long in established ministries [153]. At Lausanne in 1974 Ralph Winter answered that most non-Christians are not near neighbours of any Christian, and can be reached only by people who cross a cultural frontier [152]. We have found no published series that shows whether the share of workers among the unreached has moved since he spoke. Both engines grew along lines of access and response, and crossed frontiers only where a few went on purpose (Exhibit 6). Inside-out activation needs an inside. Four in five people who are not Christian do not personally know a Christian [1], and the 2.05 billion people in frontier groups have no church among them to activate (Table A5). For them, everywhere to everywhere means someone crossing.

Where the weight falls. The flat line is a world average, and this paper reads it as one. Every region appears in it twice: as a teacher and as a learner. Europe and North America show the end of the decline sequence and the first counted signs of return. Latin America shows how fast the South can slide within a generation. Asia holds both the largest lay-led growth of the last century and the largest unreached populations. The Middle East shows resilience under pressure. Africa shows the beginning of the sequence, with belonging intact and trust under strain. The weight is not equal, and the paper does not pretend it is. Africa supplies about 80% of the Christian growth projected to 2050 [2], so it carries the most weight in the grid of Part 5 and receives its own Part 3. But the four conditions of the handover in Part 4 are the same on every continent, the regional evidence is set side by side in Section 2.8, and the strategy in Part 6 is written for everywhere to everywhere. One asymmetry runs the other way. Africa carries the weight of retention. Asia is where multiplication matters most, because nearly four in five of the world's non-Christians live there (Section 5.7).

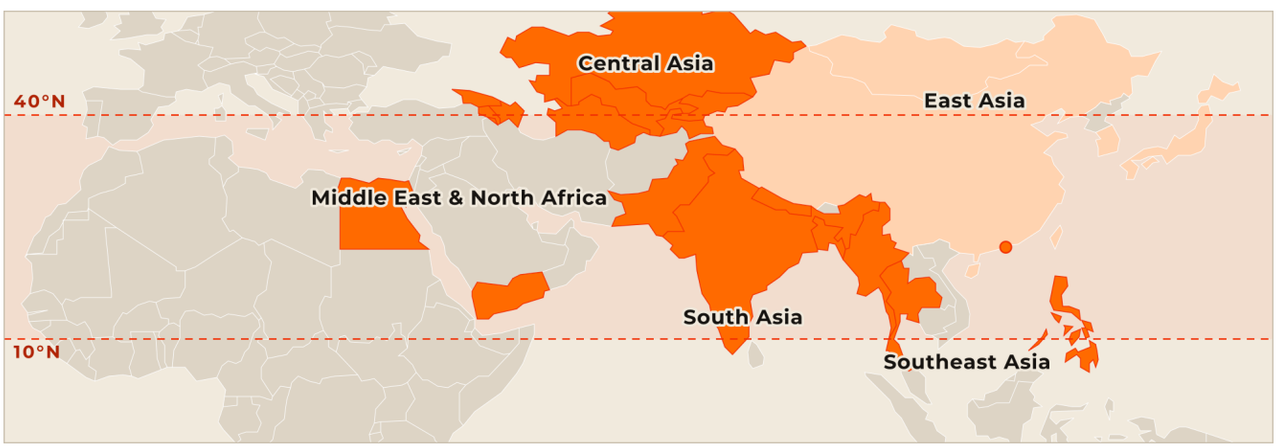


Exhibit 9. The 10/40 Window, 10°N to 40°N, and the five NXT Move regions inside it. Orange marks the countries where an Initiative project runs today. The lighter shade is the wider East Asia region. Two in three of the world's people live inside the band, and nearly nine in ten of those who are not Christian (Counted; Table B7). [27, 120, 119]

The leaders of the 10/40 Window, the region with the most unreached young people, say the same thing from the other side. When NXT Move convened twenty-plus of them in September 2026, their guiding conviction was that God has already raised leaders across the Window, and that the task is to bring them "from isolation into kingdom collaboration so the next generation reaches the next generation among the least reached" [26]. One of the collective's five goals is *sending from within the Window*. Filipino leaders said their country now needs to step up as a sending nation to its neighbours. Leaders in Central Asia and the Middle East asked for young believers to be equipped to stay and reach their own societies. For Central Asia, which lies wholly inside the Window, that is the more useful frame: a young, growing and mobile region read in its Asian and missional setting rather than a Eurasian one. Diaspora communities were named as a lever [26]. A leader who has served in the Middle East for eighteen years says why staying matters: exposure to the gospel is not enough, and young believers need "to be discipled, to be the agents of Christ, to be the ones who are willing to dwell sustainably in the land and bring change despite the persecution" [158]. Reaching the young there and keeping them are one task. The initiative's own summary: "The world's most unreached young people are not waiting for a better strategy. They are waiting to be activated" [27].

The phrase for this is not new. Michael Nazir-Ali named it in 1990: mission *from everywhere to everywhere* [21], and the Cape Town Commitment made it the working assumption of the global evangelical movement [22]. What this paper adds is the arithmetic. Neither engine on its own will bend the line now. Outside-in

mission cannot, because there is no longer a heartland with the people or the money to send at the scale needed, and because the last century shows that reach without activation goes flat. Inside-out activation in one region cannot, because the flat line is a world average. The next surge requires both at once: every church activated, and every church sending.

What counts as a rise. In this paper a rise is net growth of at least 1% a decade above the world's, sustained for a generation or more: if the world's population grows by 10% in a decade, the church grows by at least 11% (Exhibit 4). By that measure the line has risen twice: in antiquity and in the nineteenth century. By the same measure the projections to 2050 already show a rise, carried mostly by births in Africa. A rise carried by births lifts the line. Only one carried by believers who cross bends it (Finding 3). The first rise ran on for two centuries after 313, although its fuel had been cut. The church is broad, and what moves it takes hold slowly and does not switch off at once. An engine can keep running in parts after the fuel is gone. Stark argues that Constantine's favour followed the church's growth rather than starting it [9]. Inside the Empire, establishment carried the faith to its borders, where it stopped, and that growth neither travelled nor lasted (Section 1.3). Beyond the borders a remnant kept crossing: Ulfilas to the Goths, Frumentius to Aksum, Patrick to Ireland, and the Church of the East into Persia and Central Asia [84, 157]. Frumentius and Patrick had first arrived as captives, and Ulfilas was descended from captives. Effects lag the other way too: the crossing of the nineteenth century bore its harvest in the twentieth (Section 1.6). So the table reads each rise by the marks present when it began.

What the rises had, and the flat line lacks. Andrew Walls describes Christian expansion as serial, not progressive. Its heartlands decline and its margins become new centres, and it survived its first collapse only because it had crossed a cultural frontier at Antioch [154]. Kenneth Latourette read the whole history as pulsations of advance and recession [155]. Read against the flat periods, each rise began with four things at once: believers who were active, a church that crossed the largest frontier of its day, a few leaders who chose one another across a divide, and a church that kept its own young (Exhibit 10). Every rise began with at least three of the four marks in place. Missions themselves followed access first: the Ghana mission records show them going to healthier, safer and more accessible places before moving outward, and the atlases leave out most of the African missionaries who carried the faith inland [156]. A serial faith grows only by crossing. When it stops crossing, it shrinks with its heartland. *Estimated: our reading of five periods, not a count.*

Period	Net growth (Exhibit 4)	Activated	Sent where it needed to be	Leaders who chose one another	Kept its young
AD 33–313	+3.4 a year (Modelled)	Almost everyone (1.2)	Jew to Gentile at Antioch, the deepest divide of the day. "Where Christ was not named" (Romans 15:20)	Jerusalem recognised Antioch. The Acts 15 council (5.6)	Household faith and the catechumenate
313–500, the first rise running on	+0.9 (Unverified)	Falling inside the Empire (1.3). Carried on beyond it by a remnant	Within the Empire, by establishment. Beyond it, by the remnant: Ulfilas to the Goths, Frumentius to Aksum, Patrick to Ireland, the Church of the East	Councils convened by emperors: unity of structure	By birth into Christendom

Period	Net growth (Exhibit 4)	Activated	Sent where it needed to be	Leaders who chose one another	Kept its young
500–1800	About zero (Unverified)	An audience, with renewal movements the exception (1.5)	By orders and a few (Celtic monks, the Church of the East, Jesuits). Northern Europe converted while Asia's church collapsed (1.4)	Division (1054, 1517)	By birth, until the Enlightenment
1800–1900	+0.4 (Estimated)	Re-activated by the Awakenings (1.5)	Carey to the coastlands (1792), Taylor inland (1865)	The concert of prayer across denominations (1.6)	Yes. By establishment in Europe, by revival in America
1910–2026	About zero (Counted)	Regionally: the Pentecostal century (1.7)	Mostly where the church already is (1.8)	Structural unity (Edinburgh to the WCC). Relational in the movements	The North stopped keeping its young (Part 2)

Exhibit 10. What the rises had: the four marks across the rises and the flat periods. Net growth from Exhibit 4. Estimated: our reading of the cases, not a count.

The harvest lags. The rise of 1800–1900 came largely from births in a heartland that kept its own. The crossing of that century bore its fruit in the next: Africa grew from 9.6 million Christians to 754 million [2], and that harvest is why the twentieth-century line held level while the North fell. In our reading, where the church sends now decides the line of the next century, not this one. Five periods are illustrations, not a sample, and a table like this invites reading the cases to fit. The comparison with Islam is demographic and says nothing about crossing.

1.9 Reactivation at scale: the 2033 horizon

That is the reasoning behind the work NXT Move serves as backbone organisation. The **Next Gen Global Collab** brings together more than thirty organisations from more than twenty nations around one goal: that everyone in the next generation has an opportunity to follow Jesus by 2033, roughly two thousand years after Pentecost [60]. Through 2026 the same horizon has drawn other leaders into collaboration conversations about activating believers toward evangelism, from every believer as a witness to the season between Easter and Pentecost [24]. What follows is the thinking those conversations have produced, not an organisation chart.

Four convictions run through the rest of this paper, three from those conversations [24] and one from the leaders of the 10/40 Window [26]:

- **"Duplication is the enemy."** Not the variety of ministries that different contexts need, but unnecessary duplication that spends the same scarce people and money twice. Fragmented effort costs time, and Part 5 shows that time is measured in people: about two million in Africa alone, five million worldwide, for every year the shared response starts later.
- **Activation is the superpower.** Not training or events for their own sake, but activating the believers who are already there. This is engine one, carried everywhere at once.
- **Coming together only matters if it leads to acting together.** The prayer of John 17 is "that they may be one … *so that* the world may believe." Unity is instrumental as well as good in itself. Section 5.6 sets out what working together does and does not do, and where the evidence for each is still thin.

- **Go where the church is not.** The Window's leaders say their young people are not waiting for a better strategy but to be activated (Section 1.8), and about 3 in every 100 cross-cultural workers serve among unreached peoples (Section 3.7). The paper reads that as the fourth mark of a church that accelerates: sent where the church is not.

The same conversations read the generations plainly: Millennials in the West are largely post-Christian. Generation Z may be pre-revival, "islands in oceans" [24]. The islands are real and counted, and the ocean has not yet changed. Section 2.7 weighs that evidence label by label. The teaching series that grew out of this thinking ends with a practice for every believer, **1 : 1 : 1**, which applies the early church's life from house to house, in the temple courts and in the marketplace (Section 1.2): walk with one, discipling another believer relationally, invite one into the fellowship of believers, and reach one by sharing faith in everyday life [23]. It is a way to put the evidence into practice, not a finding, and Section 6.5 and the companion resource *Activate the Church* set it out [138].

BRIDGE TO PART 2

If the next surge must come from the inside out, then the generation now inheriting the church decides whether the engine runs in it, and whether it crosses.

Part 2 shows where that handover is breaking, and in what order. Part 3 shows where it is holding. Part 4 names the four conditions that separate the two. Parts 5 and 6 size the stakes and set out what to do.

PART 2

The Hinge: the handover is where the line bends or breaks

Since 1900 the flat line has been held by one generation handing faith to the next. That handover is now the point of risk, and it fails in a known order.

2.1 The age gap

Pew Research Center pooled surveys from 106 countries taken between 2008 and 2017 and compared adults under 40 with those 40 and over. In 41 countries the younger group is significantly less likely to have any religious affiliation. In only two, Ghana and Chad, is it more likely. The average gap across all 106 countries is about 5 points. It is 28 points in Canada, 26 in Denmark, 24 in South Korea and 17 in the United States [28, 29]. The countries whose churches sent the most missionaries in the second engine now show the steepest generational drop-off. Sub-Saharan Africa is different: in 17 of 21 countries there is no significant age difference in how important religion is [28].

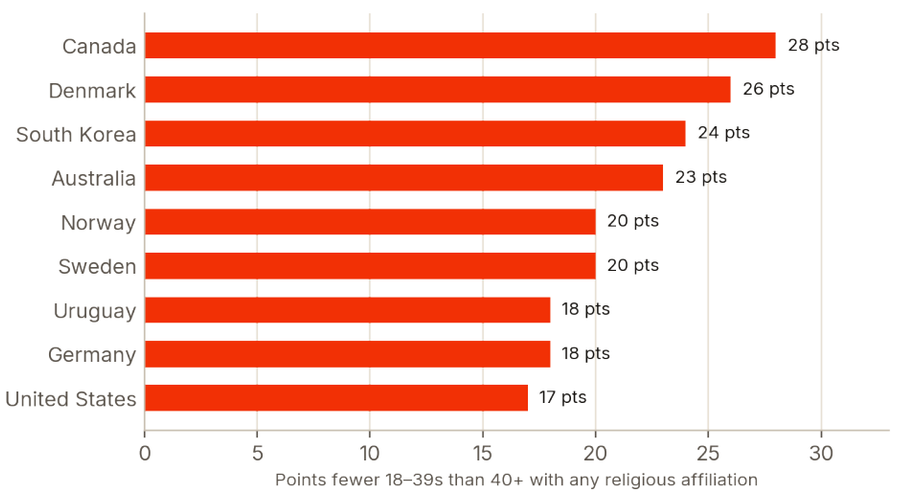


Exhibit 11. Countries with the largest gap between younger (18–39) and older (40+) adults in having any religious affiliation. Survey data 2008–2017. Counted. [28, 43]

2.2 How faith drains: participation, importance, belonging

Religious decline does not happen all at once, and it does not begin with people leaving. Research across many countries, summarised by Pew in 2025, finds a consistent three-stage sequence: **participation** falls first (people attend less), then **importance** (religion matters less to them), and only then **belonging** (they stop identifying with a religion) [30]. Affiliation is the last thing to go. That has two consequences for

everything that follows. First, headline affiliation figures lag reality by a generation: a country can be 95% affiliated and already well into decline. Second, the early warnings are in participation and in what young people say matters to them, and those are the layers to watch.

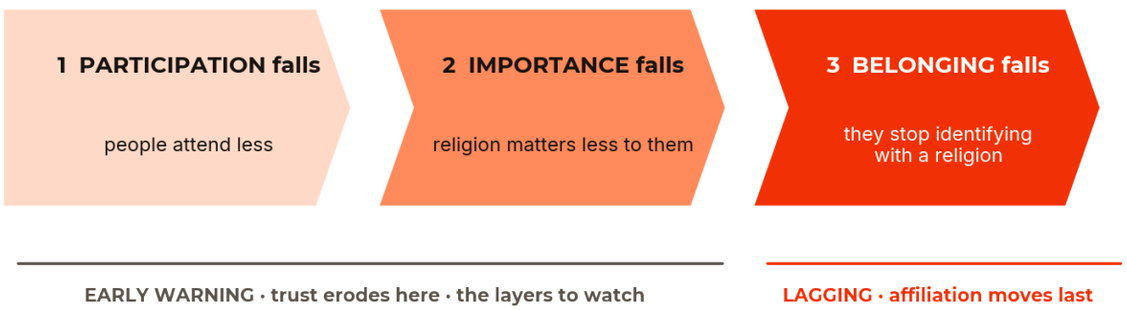


Exhibit 12. The decline sequence. Belonging is the last stage to move, so it is the worst early-warning indicator and the best lagging one. Estimated: Pew's reading of survey research. [30]

2.3 Switching

Pew's 2025 accounting of religious change between 2010 and 2020 finds that for every 100 adults raised Christian, 17.1 have left, while 5.5 people raised outside Christianity have joined: about 3.1 leaving for each one joining. The data cover 117 countries and are lifetime measures (childhood religion against current religion), not annual flows [5]. Christians still grew by 122 million over the decade, so the growth came from births [4]. In this paper's terms, retention has lost about three people for every one that reach has gained, and births have made up the difference. Pew's 2015 projection puts the effect of switching on the world share at about one point by 2050 (31% with it, 32% without) but far more in the North: North America 66% Christian with switching against 75% without. Europe 65% against nearly 70% [8]. Pew's accounting shows what this does at world scale. Christians have a high fertility rate, and switching out of religion overrides it, while Muslim growth comes largely from births [5].

Two patterns in the country data matter for the rest of the paper. **Switching rises with development.** In the 51 places Pew classes as very high on the Human Development Index, a median 18% of adults under 55 have left their childhood religion. In the 16 low-development countries, 3% [31]. As Africa develops, retention will get harder, not easier. **The pattern in Africa is not uniform.** Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya show almost no net loss. South Africa has already lost about one in nine of those raised Christian. The United States and Chile have lost about one in four [6]. Part 5 turns these three observed patterns into the rows of the scenario grid.

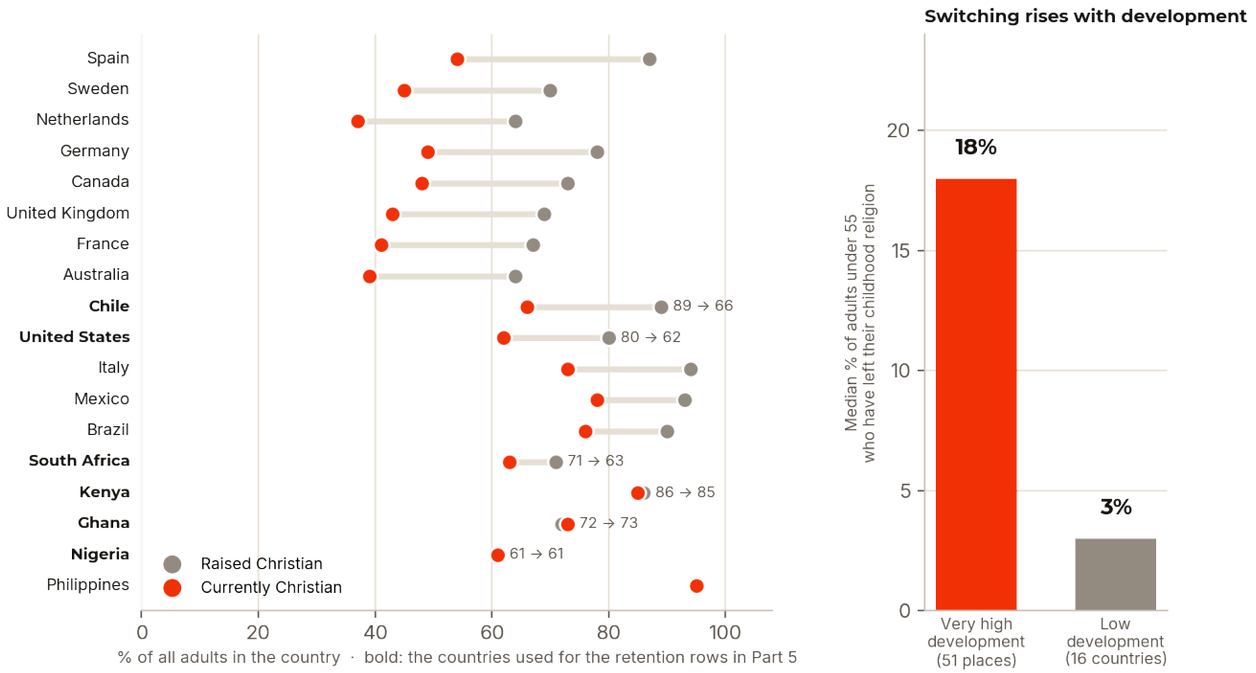


Exhibit 13. Left: adults raised Christian and adults currently Christian, as a share of each country's adults (Spring 2024 survey. Counted). Right: median share of adults under 55 who have left their childhood religion, by development level. [6, 31]

2.4 What defines this generation

Hitting the Ball You Cannot See argues that the next generation is being shaped by six shifts, and that churches suffer a "relevance deficit" because technology changes exponentially while organisations change logarithmically [32] (Ch. 2). The shifts are restated below with the evidence in this paper that bears on each. The point of the table is not that the book is right about everything. It is that the global data and the book's diagnosis converge on the same layer of the problem.

Shift (chapter)	The book's claim	What the data in this paper show
Being human (3)	Identity is received, not constructed. "Who am I?" is the first question of a generation	Identity and calling are the **Lead** layer of the handover: young people held as agents, not audiences (Part 4)
Digital existence (4)	High-tech must be matched by high-touch. Attention is the scarce resource	OneHope's African sample was online teens. 1 in 4 reported suicidal thoughts in the past three months [42] — presence, not programmes
Trust (5)	"Young people aren't walking away from truth, but from trust". Establish trust before presenting truth	Trust in religious leaders is 66% among African 18–25s against 74% among those 65+ [41]. Kenya's Gen Z kept faith in God and confronted clergy [51]
Organization (6)	Empower local leaders. Community over empire. Resources for good	About 76% of church income sits in North America and Europe. Africa has about 28% of Christians and about 3.5% of income [44, 43]
Separation (7)	From rows to circles. Elevate voices with a shared message bigger than themselves	Young Africans trail elders by 18 points in voting but keep pace in protest [56]. Intergenerational tables in Chad and Nairobi (Part 3)

Shift (chapter)	The book's claim	What the data in this paper show
Belonging (8)	Love = Time. Third places. The paradox of connection and loneliness	Belonging is near-universal in Africa (95%) and the last layer to fall elsewhere [41, 30]

Exhibit 14. The six shifts, with the evidence in this paper that bears on each. [32]

Underneath the shifts the book places four questions, drawn from Barna Group research introduced to the author by Mark Matlock, that every generation asks and this one asks with unusual force: **Who am I?** (identity), **With whom do I belong?** (belonging), **What truly matters?** (values) and **What is true?** (epistemology) [32] (Ch. 5, pp. 75–76). Part 4 maps them onto the four layers of the handover. What the book adds is the observation that trust runs underneath all four: without it the questions curdle into "I don't trust who I am", "I don't trust the places where I belong", "I don't trust that what is valued is valuable" and "I don't trust what I believe".

2.5 Trust as the hinge

The book's central diagnosis comes from Luke Greenwood of Steiger, who works among Europe's post-Christian youth: young people "aren't walking away from truth, but from trust … They're not saying truth isn't real. They're saying, 'I just don't trust you to tell me what it is.'" In the United States deconstruction is common. In Europe, "generations never even entered a church—they're not deconstructing. They never built" [32] (Ch. 5, p. 77).

The wider trust environment is the context. Gallup's confidence in the church or organised religion has fallen from about two-thirds of Americans in the mid-1970s to 31% in 2026, and it is one institution among many: the medical system stands at 28%, newspapers at 16% and Congress at 7% [68, 33]. The church is not exempt from a general collapse of institutional trust. It is one more institution asking to be believed.

The sociologist Josh Packard, whose Future of Faith Institute holds one of the largest bodies of research on religion and young people in the United States [67], draws the conclusion this paper builds on: **we are living in a trust story, not a belief story**, and trust has not disappeared, it has relocated from institutions to relationships [65]. His institute's Sacred Listening Study (884 adults and 1,138 teenagers, fall 2024) puts numbers on the relocation. 76% of teenagers and more than 70% of adults report high trust in people they know personally, against 16–26% for institutions and authority figures. 67% of teenagers and 66% of adults say their faith deepens when someone listens to them without judgment. 33% and 34% say the same of sermons. Nearly half of teenagers say they withdraw from communities where they feel dismissed [64, 66] (Counted; U.S. panel sample).

Packard's summary of the practical consequence is the one this paper adopts in Part 6. The old ministry sequence was **Truth → Trust → Time**: broadcast the truth, expect trust to follow, and then engagement. In a low-trust world it has inverted to **Time → Trust → Truth**: Part 6 adopts it as the operating sequence and draws it (Exhibit 40). Belonging precedes believing. That is what the Celts practised (Part 1), what Africa still shows (Part 3), and what the book means by "establish trust before presenting truth".

What makes trust the hinge rather than one factor among many is the decline sequence in 2.2. Participation and importance fall before belonging, and both are expressions of trust: whether a young person shows up, and whether what happens there is believed to matter. Three bodies of evidence from three continents now point at the same layer: Greenwood's witnesses in Europe, Packard's data in the United States, and Afrobarometer's trust gap in Africa, where belonging is intact and trust is where the strain first shows. Trust

has a limit, and it should be named. It earns a hearing, not agreement. Some young people leave over what the church teaches rather than over how they were treated: in one U.S. survey a quarter of those who dropped out disagreed with the church's stance on political or social issues [134] (Counted). Time and trust give the truth a fair hearing. They do not settle every disagreement.

Trust also runs the other way: it is something young people are given, not only something they give. In Lifeway Research's survey of 2,002 Americans aged 23–30 who had attended church regularly as teenagers, those who stayed through their early twenties were more likely than those who dropped out to have had regular responsibilities at church as teenagers (56% against 42%) and to have held a leadership position there (39% against 30%) [86] (Counted; U.S.; correlational). The survey cannot say which way the arrow runs: committed teenagers may simply be given more to do. But it points to the same place as the trust questions in Section 4.3. Being asked to carry something is how a young person learns that they are trusted, and it is where retention and activation meet. Section 6.6 follows that link to church planting.

2.6 The Western warning

The West is the case where the sequence has run to its end. Davis and Graham estimate that about 40 million American adults have stopped attending church in the last twenty-five years, the largest and fastest religious shift in the country's history [35]. The Pinetops Foundation projected that between 35 and 42 million young Americans raised in Christian families could leave the church by 2050 [34]. In Europe the losses are already counted: of adults raised Christian, 36 of every 87 in Spain have left, 30 of 70 in Sweden, 30 of 64 in the Netherlands, 30 of 78 in Germany and 29 of 69 in Britain [6]. Europe's Christian share fell from about 95% to about 74% between 1900 and 2025, and Northern America's from about 97% to about 70% [3, 45].

The warning is not that the same thing must happen everywhere. It is that it happened in the regions that hold most of the church's money and training, and that it began, in every case, with participation and trust, not with belief. The next generation in the Global South is not immune. It is earlier in the sequence, and (Part 3) in a stronger position to change the ending.

2.7 Islands in oceans: reading the revival signals

Since 2025 there have been widely reported signs of a revival among young people in the West. A paper that argues the next generation is the hinge cannot be blind to them, and it cannot repeat them uncritically. Read with the same evidence labels as everything else, they sort into three groups.

1 **Counted, and real.**

In France, more than 20,000 adults and adolescents (about 13,200 adults and 8,200 adolescents) were baptised at Easter 2026, 20% more than in 2025, which was itself a record. The largest group of new catechumens is aged 18–25, most had no religious background, and the bishops' report attributes their journeys to difficult life experiences, a search for meaning or spiritual encounters rather than family tradition [70]. In the United States, Barna finds 66% of adults say they have made a personal commitment to Jesus that is still important today, up from 54% in 2021, the lowest point in three decades of tracking. The rise is led by younger adults, with Gen Z men up 15 points and Millennial men up 19 since 2019 [69]. Barna also reports Gen Z and Millennial churchgoers attending more weekends a month than older generations [66].

2 **Reported, then withdrawn.**

The Bible Society's *The Quiet Revival* (April 2025) reported that monthly church attendance in England and Wales had risen from 8% in 2018 to 12% in 2024, and among 18–24-year-olds from 4% to 16% [71]. In March 2026 the Society withdrew the report after YouGov found that quality controls had not been applied to the 2024 sample, which included respondents outside England and Wales, duplicates and inattentive respondents. No corrected figures have been published, and a new study is due in autumn 2026 [72, 73]. Random-sample surveys show no such rise: the Labour Force Survey has 28% of 18–34-year-olds identifying as Christian in summer 2025, down from 37% in early 2018, and the British Social Attitudes survey has monthly-attending Christians among 18–34s at 6% in 2024 against 8% in 2018 [74].

3 **Counted, and flat.**

Pew's December 2025 review finds "no clear evidence of a religious revival among young adults" in the United States: religious composition, prayer, importance and attendance have held steady since 2020. 18–24-year-olds remain far less religious than their elders (30% pray daily against 59% of the oldest adults. 26% attend monthly against 43%). The narrowing gap between young men and women reflects declining religiousness among young women rather than a rise among men. And among young adults 26% have left Christianity while 5% have joined [75]. The American Time Use Survey shows no increase in young adults' attendance between 2021 and 2024 [66].

How to read the three together. The decline sequence in 2.2 runs participation → importance → belonging. A revival would run the other way, and it would show first in the leading layers (commitment, catechumens, Bible reading, participation among those already reached) long before it showed in population-level affiliation or attendance. That is exactly the pattern in the evidence: the leading indicators are moving in France and in Barna's commitment measure. The lagging indicators are flat. It is what "pre-revival" and "islands in oceans" mean in Part 1: real islands, an ocean that has not yet changed [76]. Packard's warning applies to both: "The Gen Z revival being debated won't happen in churches that talk but don't listen" [66]. And the British episode is a lesson in posture. A movement that asks to be believed must hold its own evidence to the standard it asks of others, which is why every figure in this paper carries a label.

2.8 The hinge around the world

The same sequence is running on every continent, at different stages. Exhibit 15 sets the regions side by side on the measures this paper uses: the long trend in share, the counted retention of the people raised Christian, where each region sits in the participation → importance → belonging sequence, and what it has to teach the others. Every region is a teacher and a learner in this table. None is only a warning and none is only a hope.

Region	Long trend	Raised → currently Christian, % of adults (2024)	Stage in the sequence	What it teaches the rest
Europe	About 95% Christian in 1900, about 74% in 2025 [3, 45]	Spain 87 → 54 · Germany 78 → 49 · Britain 69 → 43 · Sweden 70 → 45 [6]	End: belonging has fallen. A generation that "never built" [32]	What the loss of trust looks like when it runs its course. And the first counted signs of return (France's catechumens, Section 2.7)
North America	About 97% in 1900, about 70% in 2025 [3, 45]	United States 80 → 62 · Canada 73 → 48 [6]	Late: switching decides 2050 (75% without it, 66% with it) [8]	Trust has relocated from institutions to relationships [64]. Commitment can rise while affiliation stays flat [69, 75]

Region	Long trend	Raised → currently Christian, % of adults (2024)	Stage in the sequence	What it teaches the rest
Latin America	Historically Catholic. 8% unaffiliated in 2014, 37% in Uruguay [82]. Brazil's 2022 census: Catholics 56.7%, evangelicals 26.9%, no religion 9.3% [85]	Brazil 90 → 76 · Mexico 93 → 78 · Chile 89 → 66 [6]	Middle: 'softens' to 'erodes' within a generation. Large movement within Christianity	The South can slide fast. Churches that adapt keep people in the faith. That alone does not keep the next generation
Sub-Saharan Africa	9.6 million Christians in Africa in 1900. 754 million in 2025 [2]	Nigeria 61 → 61 · Ghana 72 → 73 · Kenya 86 → 85 · South Africa 71 → 63 [6]	Early: belonging intact (95%). Trust in leaders the first strain (66% among 18–25s against 74% among 65+) [41]	Belonging passes almost automatically. Trust and depth do not (Part 3)
Asia	The largest lay-led growth of the last century (Korea, China, the Philippines) and the largest unreached populations. China's Christian share contested at 2–9% [83]	Philippines 95 → 95 · Singapore 12 → 18 · Sri Lanka 9 → 10 · South Korea 38 → 33 [6]	Mixed: net gains by conversion where the church is small. A 24-point youth gap in South Korea [28]	A revival not handed on fades within a century (Korea). Sending from within (the Philippines) [26]
Middle East and North Africa	12.7% Christian in 1900, 4.1% in 2025, about 4.0% projected for 2050 [3]	Not surveyed in the 36-country study	Survival under pressure. Emigration. In one Window country more than 60% of the population is under 25 [26]	Resilience, and young believers who stay. The 10/40 goals of sending from within
Oceania	Australia: a 23-point youth gap [28]	Australia 64 → 39 [6]	Late, as in Europe	As Europe

Exhibit 15. The hinge around the world: each region on the paper's measures. Counted unless stated.

Exhibit 16 reduces the long trend in the table to three points for each continent. Since 1900 Africa has gained 40 points and Asia 6. Northern America has lost 27, Europe about 21 and Oceania 12, and Latin America has held above 90% while its switching data show the slide beneath it [2, 3, 45, 6]. The continents that have lost most are the ones where the sequence has run furthest.

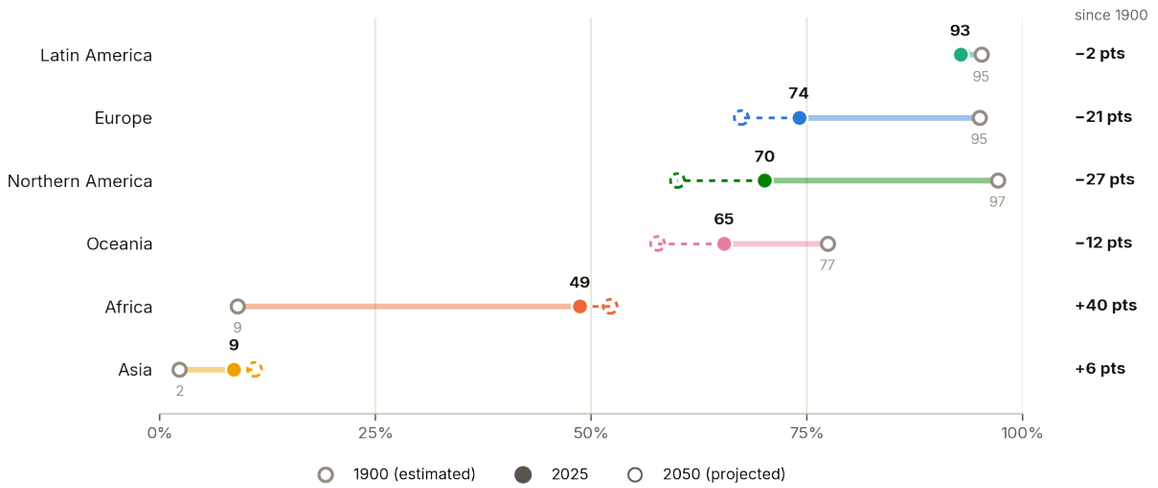


Exhibit 16. Christian share of each continent's population in 1900 (hollow, Estimated), 2025 (solid, Counted) and 2050 (ring, Projected), sorted by the 2025 share, with the change since 1900. CSGC counts of Christians divided by UN population from 1970 onward. Values in Table B6. [2, 3, 45]

Read down the table and the paper's thesis is regional as well as historical. Where the church has relied on institutions it once trusted, the young have left. Where it has relied on relationships and lay networks (Africa's churches, Pentecostal movements in Latin America and Asia, the Philippines), they have stayed or joined. And where a revival was not handed on, it faded. Read across, and the four conditions of Part 4 are the same everywhere. Only the stage differs.

BRIDGE TO PART 3

The West shows the end of the sequence. Africa shows the beginning, and it is where most of the next generation's Christians will be.

In Ghana and Chad the young are more affiliated than their parents. Part 3 asks what is really happening there, with counted data, and what travels.

PART 3

The Exception: what Africa is teaching the world

Most next-generation research studies decline. We studied the two countries where the young hold on better than their elders, checked the finding against census data, and asked what travels.

3.1 The scale

Africa accounts for about 80% of the Christian growth CSGC projects between 2025 and 2050: 535 of 667 million. The rest of the world grows by about 7% [2]. The United Nations' medium projection puts Africa's population at 2.47 billion in 2050, and 40.4% of it will be aged 18–43, the cohorts that reach adulthood between now and then [45, 46]. Sub-Saharan fertility was 4.3 children per woman in 2024, and Africa's share of the world's births is projected to rise from about 36% to about 42% by 2050 [48, 49]. Whatever happens to the next generation in Africa happens to the flat line.

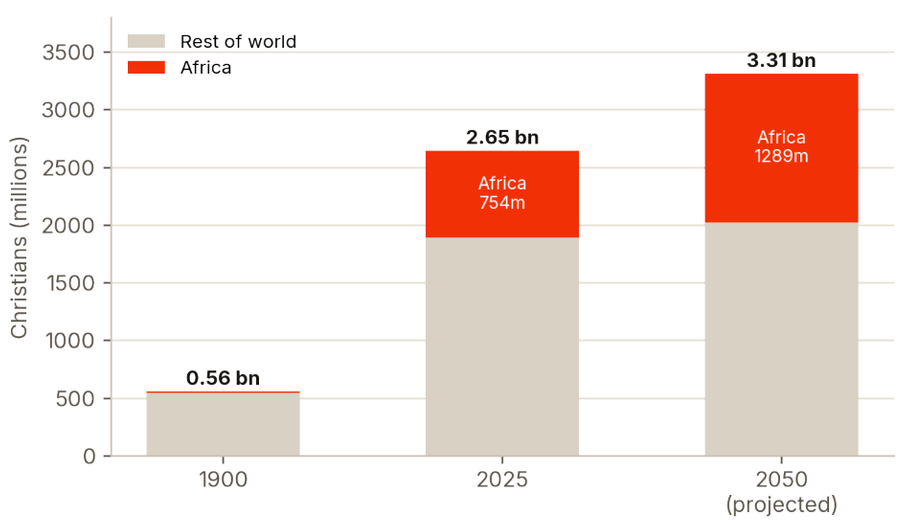


Exhibit 17. Christians in Africa against the rest of the world, 1900, 2025 and 2050 (projected). Africa supplies about 535 of the 667 million Christians CSGC projects to be added between 2025 and 2050. Counted to 2025. Projected for 2050. [2]

3.2 The finding, sized honestly

Pew's exception is real but small. Younger adults are 3 points more likely to be affiliated in both countries: 100% against 97% in Ghana and 97% against 94% in Chad, from surveys taken around 2008–09 [28, 36]. Both figures sit near 100%, so the gap says more about who *isn't* affiliated (a shrinking group of older traditional believers and non-religious people) than about youth enthusiasm. There is also a real, if modest, gain in devotion: young Ghanaians are more likely than their elders to say religion is very important (91% against 85%), and young Chadians are more likely to pray daily (84% against 79%) [29]. Pew's own explanation is insecurity: the countries where the young are more religious "all have something in common: a recent history of violent conflicts" [29]. That is a correlation, not a demonstrated cause.

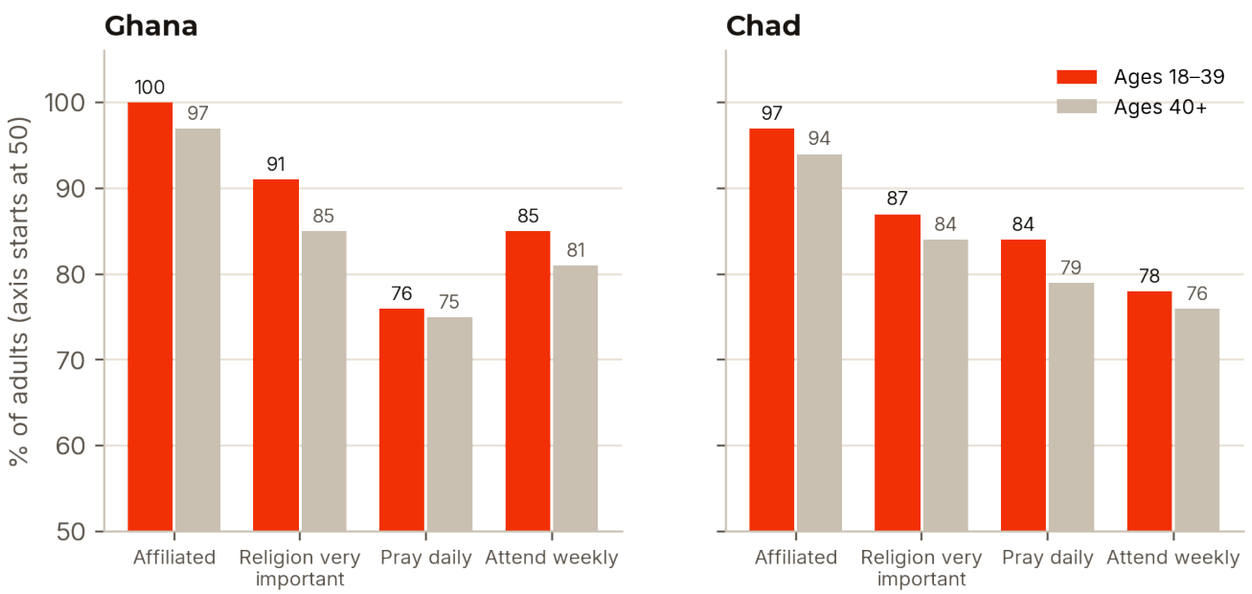


Exhibit 18. Ghana and Chad: adults aged 18–39 against 40 and over on four measures (Pew Appendix B. The axis starts at 50). Counted, 2008–2017 survey data. The Sub-Saharan figures most likely come from the 2008–09 survey (Chad n = 1,503). [28, 36]

3.3 Ghana, counted

To test the finding we pulled Ghana's 2010 and 2021 census tables of religion by age directly from the Ghana Statistical Service's data service [37, 38]. They settle the question for Ghana. In 2021, 5.2% of Ghanaians aged 40 and over were traditionalists, against 2.6% of those aged 15–39. 6.0% of the older group had no religion, against 4.8% of the younger. In 15 of 16 regions the young are less likely to have no religion. In Upper East, 33.9% of over-40s are traditionalists against 15.2% of the young. Older adults were the last to be raised in traditional religion or none. The young grew up Christian or Muslim. Most of the "exception" is one generation replacing another.

Two further findings are more useful than the headline. **There is no sign yet of young Ghanaians leaving religion.** Comparing the same ages across the two censuses, the share with no religion fell or held steady between 2010 and 2021: for ages 15–19 from 4.3% to 3.6%, for 30–34 from 6.1% to 5.3%, for 35–39 from 6.6% to 5.5%. Nationally it was 5.3% in 2010 and 4.5% in 2021 [37, 38]. **And the young are moving within Christianity, toward churches that engage them.** 32.5% of 15–39-year-olds are Pentecostal or charismatic against 28.4% of those 40 and over. Mainline Protestants are 17.0% of the young against 20.0% of the old

[37]. Across the censuses, the Pentecostal/charismatic share rose from 24.1% (2000) to 31.6% (2021) while Catholics fell from 15.1% to 10.0% [39]. Researchers describe young people migrating from mission churches to Pentecostal and charismatic ones [52].

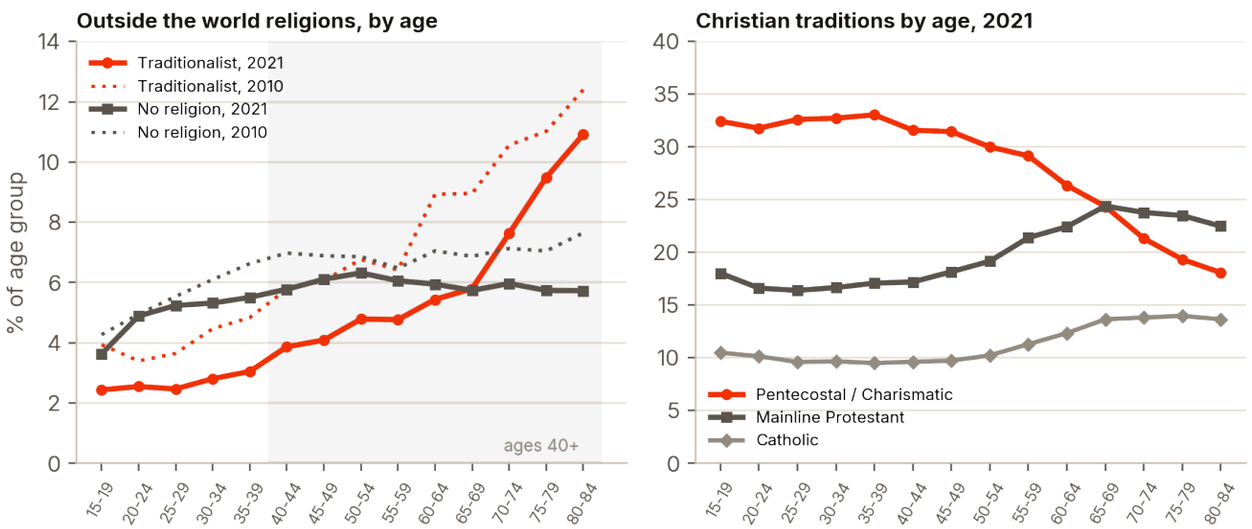


Exhibit 19. Ghana census, 2010 and 2021, national, by five-year age group. Left: traditional religion and no religion. Right: Christian traditions by age in 2021. Religion in a census is usually reported by the household head for everyone in the household. Counted. [37, 38]

3.4 Chad, counted as far as the data allow

Chad has no census by religion and age we could access. What the surveys show is the same replacement pattern: traditional religion fell from 7.3% of the population in the 1993 census to 0.3% in the 2014–15 Demographic and Health Survey [40] (secondary. The DHS microdata are the next check, and registration for them is in hand). A survey of 1,857 Chadians found the most intense religiosity among those with Arabic or Qur'anic schooling, and Pentecostal churches are growing [53]. Chad today hosts more than 1.5 million refugees, and about half its people need humanitarian assistance [54]. The insecurity Pew points to is not hypothetical there.

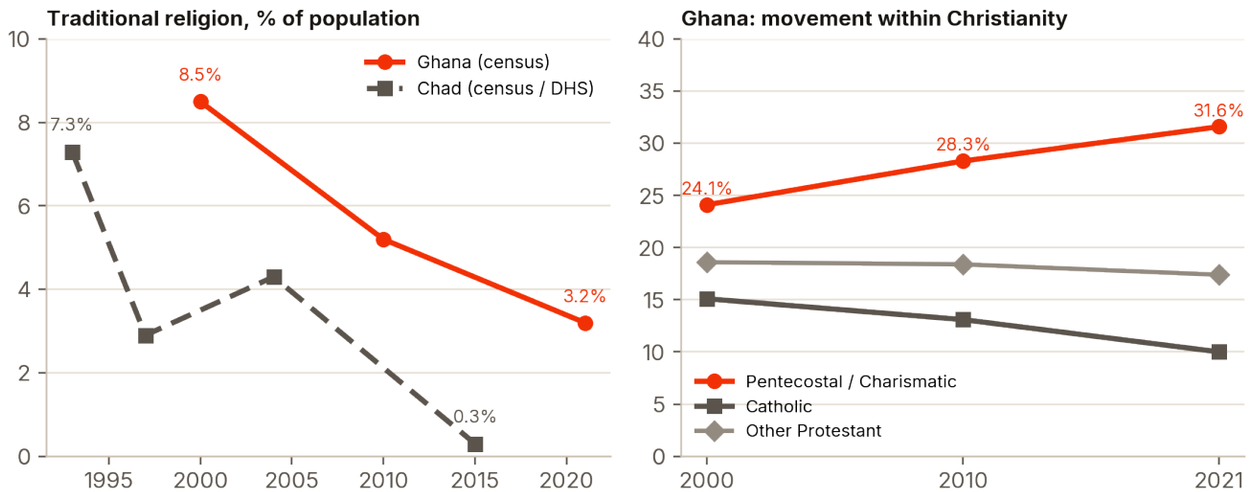


Exhibit 20. Left: traditional religion as a share of the population, Ghana censuses and Chad census/DHS (category definitions vary by source). Right: Ghana's Christian traditions, censuses 2000–2021. Counted, with secondary reporting for Chad. [39, 40]

3.5 Four explanations, tested

	Explanation	Verdict	Evidence
E1	Generational replacement: older adults were the last raised in traditional or no religion	**Confirmed for Ghana (census). Likely for Chad**	Ghana 2021: traditionalists 2.6% of 15–39s against 5.2% of 40+. No religion 4.8% against 6.0% [37]. Chad's traditional share collapsed 1993–2015 [40]. Pew's note on Liberia shows the mechanism: 29% of over-40s hold a traditional religion against 96% of under-40s who are Christian or Muslim [28]
E2	The young are genuinely more devout	**Partly supported**	Ghana: religion very important 91% against 85%. Weekly attendance 85% against 81%. Chad: daily prayer 84% against 79% [28, 29]. Real but modest. Attendance gaps are mostly not significant
E3	Churches and mosques draw the young in	**Plausible (Ghana). Emerging (Chad)**	Ghana's young are concentrated in Pentecostal/charismatic churches (32.5% against 28.4%) [37, 52]. Chad: intense religiosity linked to religious schooling. Pentecostal growth [53]
E4	Insecurity makes faith matter more	**Pew's hypothesis. Not demonstrated**	Pew links the exceptions to recent violent conflict [29]. Chad: 1.5 million refugees. Half the population in need [54]. A plausible link, but a correlation only

Exhibit 21. Four explanations for the Ghana and Chad exception, with verdicts.

The combined picture: mostly E1, with some E2, likely driven by E3 in Ghana and possibly E4 in Chad. None of it is a youth revival of the kind that would make Ghana a template to copy. Two things *are* transferable. Where churches adapt, the young move to churches that engage them rather than leave the faith. And where life is uncertain, faith that meets real need holds the young.

3.6 The wider African picture: belonging holds. Trust and depth are thinner

Ghana and Chad are the far end of an African norm, not outliers against it. Kenya's 2019 census recorded 1.6% with no religion [50]. In Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya, 96–98% of those raised Christian are still Christian [6]. Across 34 African countries, 95% of people say they have a religion [41]. The strain shows in the layers underneath. Trust in religious leaders is 66% among 18–25-year-olds against 74% among those 65 and over [41]. In OneHope's online survey of teenagers in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, only 28% met the marks of committed Christian faith [42] (the sample is urban and connected, and it is unclear whether the base is all teens or Christian teens).

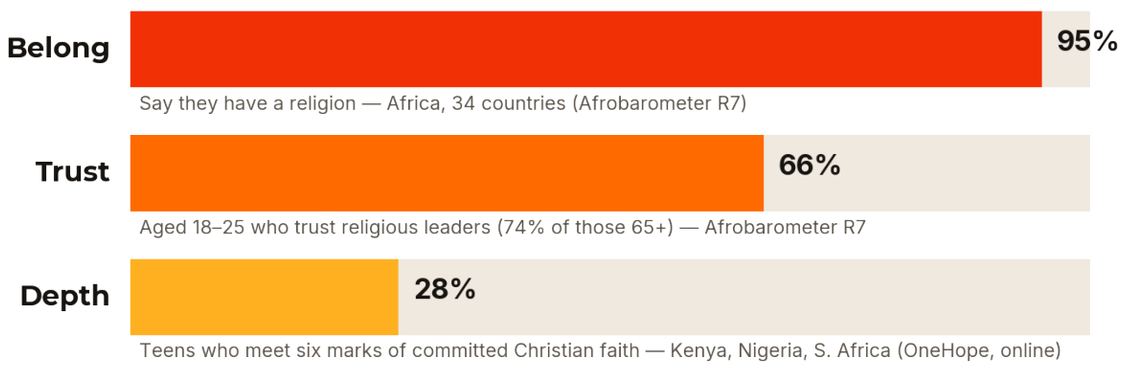


Exhibit 22. Three layers of next-generation faith in Africa. The measures come from different surveys and are shown side by side for comparison only. Counted, from surveys. [41, 42]

Kenya is the warning. In the 2024 Finance Bill protests, Gen Z Kenyans confronted clergy who hosted politicians and took their donations. Many kept faith in God but lost faith in church leadership [51]. That is exactly the layer where the Afrobarometer gap appears. In Africa, disaffiliation, if it comes, is likely to begin as a loss of trust in leaders, not a loss of belief. Joe Gachira, who leads NXT Move's work in Africa, reads it as already under way and quiet, masked by large meetings and events rather than announced by them [137]. And it will come under pressure from development: unemployment in Ghana was 13.6% in 2024, and nearly two million young Ghanaians, 19.5% of 15–35-year-olds, are not in education, work or training [55].

What Nairobi is saying back. The warning is being answered from inside the city. Through 2025 and 2026 NXT Move's Africa team has convened bishops, young leaders and marketplace leaders in Nairobi at one set of tables, and in 2026 those conversations produced a plan for what they call a Missional Garage: church-based spaces where young adults aged 18 to 35 connect faith to work, talent and daily life, using buildings churches already own and supplying the programming and the community, owned by no single organisation [132]. Beside it sits an incubator that takes a stake in the ventures young people start and asks them to give service hours and training back, so that the work is resourced from inside its own economy rather than from outside [131]. One sentence from those conversations has become the way Nairobi's leaders now talk about the decade: if a country is seventy percent young and its churches are seventy percent adult, those churches are dying successfully [131]. The 2027 NXT Move Prospectus reports senior leaders of four traditions, Presbyterian, Anglican, Pentecostal and evangelical, at these tables for the first time in Kenya's history, and the model being carried into Tanzania, Ethiopia and Uganda [158]. That makes Nairobi a place to test whether unity the young can see earns their trust (Section 5.6). None of this is counted

evidence yet. It is the 'softens' row being contested in one city, and the research on trust in Section 4.3 is planned to start there.

3.7 What travels, and where the money is

Model	Evidence	What we found	What might travel
Youth at the elders' table (Chad)	Programme report	The UN Peacebuilding Fund supported an "intra- and inter-generational Confidence Charter" in southern Chad. Joint committees of locals, migrants and authorities resolved 198 resource conflicts in the east [54]	Intergenerational tables with real decisions: the Nairobi model [63]
Campus movements that hand over leadership (PENSA)	Organisation-reported	The Church of Pentecost's student movement reports more than 380 campuses and over 100,000 members in Ghana, run by students with many leadership roles [57]	Real responsibility, and continuity from campus to career
Peer-led multiplication (Dare 2 Share, a Collab member)	Organisation's own survey	"Every teen, everywhere, hearing the Gospel from a friend." Its survey reports far more students sharing faith than in typical groups. No method details are published [58]	Young people as agents, not audiences
Faith that addresses work and civic voice	Counted	NEET rate 19.5% among 15–35s in Ghana [55]. Youth trail elders by 18 points in voting, keep pace in protest [56]	Mercy, justice and livelihoods as retention strategy, not add-ons
Soul care	Survey (online teens)	1 in 4 African teens reported suicidal thoughts in the past three months. 4% reported an attempt [42]	Care built into discipleship, with professional scaffolding: referral pathways, safe messaging and trauma-informed practice

Exhibit 23. Models behind the African pattern, checked, with the lesson that might travel.

One more fact frames everything in Part 6. North America and Europe together hold about three-quarters of the world's church income, while Africa holds about 28% of the world's Christians and about 3.5% of the income. Theological institutions follow the same pattern [44, 43]. Lausanne's summary: "an abundance of investment in a declining Christianity and a growing Christianity institutionally hamstrung by minimal resources." That is the first gap: between where the next generation's Christians are and where the resources and training sit. It is the most direct lever in reach.

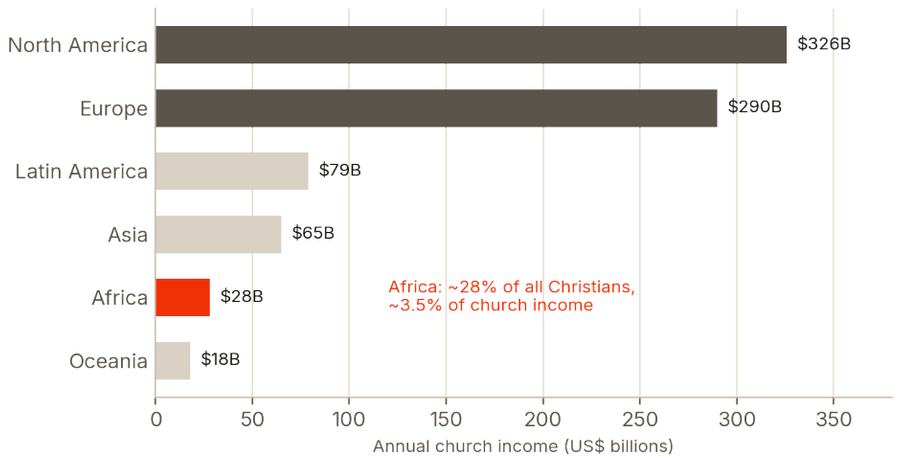


Exhibit 24. Annual church income by region (World Christian Encyclopedia, 3rd ed., as charted in Lausanne 2024, p. 23). Estimated (secondary). [44, 43]

There is a second gap, and it is larger. The first compares money with Christians. The second compares money and workers with the people who have not heard. About 2.3 billion people, 28% of the world, live without realistic access to the gospel, and CSGC projects the number to rise to 2.8 billion by 2050, because the places where the church is smallest are where population is still growing [1, 2] (Estimated; Projected). Fewer than one non-Christian in five personally knows a Christian [1]. Of about 450,000 cross-cultural workers, Lausanne counts about 15,000, about 3 in every 100, serving among unreached peoples [43] (Estimated). The share of Christian giving that reaches them is widely quoted as about 1% of mission giving, or a dollar or two in every $100,000 of Christian income. Those ratios go back to 2001 [109], and CSGC no longer publishes the series behind them [2], so this paper treats them as Unverified and dated. The direction is not in doubt. The precise size is.

Measure	Figure	Label	Source
Christians living in Africa	754 million, about 28% of the world's Christians (2025)	Estimated	[2]
Church income held in North America and Europe / in Africa	About 76% / about 3.5%	Estimated (secondary)	[44, 43]
Non-Christians living in Asia	About 4.4 billion, nearly four in five of the world's non-Christians (2025)	Estimated	[3, 2]
People without gospel access	2.30 billion (27.7%) in 2026. 2.77 billion (28.6%) projected for 2050	Estimated. Projected	[1, 2]
Non-Christians who personally know a Christian	18.9% (2026)	Estimated	[1]
Cross-cultural workers serving among unreached peoples	About 15,000 of about 450,000 (about 3 in 100)	Estimated	[43]
National (citizen) Christian workers	About 14.0 million (2026)	Estimated	[1]
Giving to Christian causes	About $1,081 billion a year (CSGC 2026. The 2025 edition gave $1,383 billion, and the series appears to have been revised)	Estimated	[1, 2]

Measure	Figure	Label	Source
Share of mission giving reaching the unreached	'About 1%'. '$1–2 per $100,000 of income'	Unverified (2001 ratios)	[109]

Exhibit 25. Two gaps. The first compares the church's resources with where Christians are. The second compares resources and workers with where the people without access to the gospel are.

The two gaps call for different responses, and the paper argues for both. Closing the first moves resources and training toward young African leaders (Part 6). Closing the second is not a return to outside-in sending. Most of the church's workforce is already local: CSGC counts about 14.0 million national workers against 455,000 foreign missionaries [1]. The need is to sustain the believers and multipliers already inside the least-reached regions, and the senders from Africa, Asia and Latin America who go to them (Section 6.5). How money is given matters as much as how much. The literature on mission funding records how patronage creates dependency and silences local leaders [111, 112], and also warns against demanding a self-sufficiency no one else is asked for [113]. It is the lesson of 313 again: the building did not deactivate the church. Patronage did.

3.8 The rest of the South: an exception, and a warning

Africa is the largest case of the young holding on, not the only one, and the South also contains the clearest warning. **The Philippines** keeps almost everyone it raises (95 of every 100 adults raised Christian are still Christian) [6], and its leaders came out of the 10/40 Window sessions in September 2026 describing the country as a sending nation to its neighbours rather than a mission field [26]. **Singapore** shows that net gain by conversion is possible in a developed, plural society: 12 of every 100 adults were raised Christian and 18 are Christian now [6]. **Latin America** is the warning. A region that was almost entirely Catholic a century ago now shows Brazil at 90 → 76, Mexico at 93 → 78 and Chile at 89 → 66 [6]. In Brazil's 2022 census 9.3% reported no religion, and Uruguay was already 37% unaffiliated in 2014 [85, 82]. Much of the movement has been within Christianity, from Catholic to Pentecostal churches, and it kept people in the faith for a generation. It did not, by itself, keep the next one. That is the lesson Ghana should read most carefully: adaptation buys time, and the time has to be used to build trust and depth.

BRIDGE TO PART 4

Belonging passes to the next generation almost automatically. Trust and depth do not. They pass through relationships, and through whether leaders share the table.

Part 4 turns that observation into a model with four layers, and maps it onto the book, the history in Part 1 and the Collab's instrument.

PART 4

The Handover: belong, trust, depth, lead

Four conditions decide whether faith passes from one generation to the next. Trust is the foundation. The model draws on the history in Part 1, the data in Parts 2 and 3, and the book's four questions.

4.1 The model

The evidence in Parts 2 and 3 sorts into four layers. Each is a question a young person could answer about their own faith community, and each can be measured. The four are one reading of that evidence, not the only one. Readers in other contexts order it differently: in South Asian thought, for example, "What is true?" is a question of knowledge before it is a question of trust. The research in Section 4.3 is built so that the data can test the order.

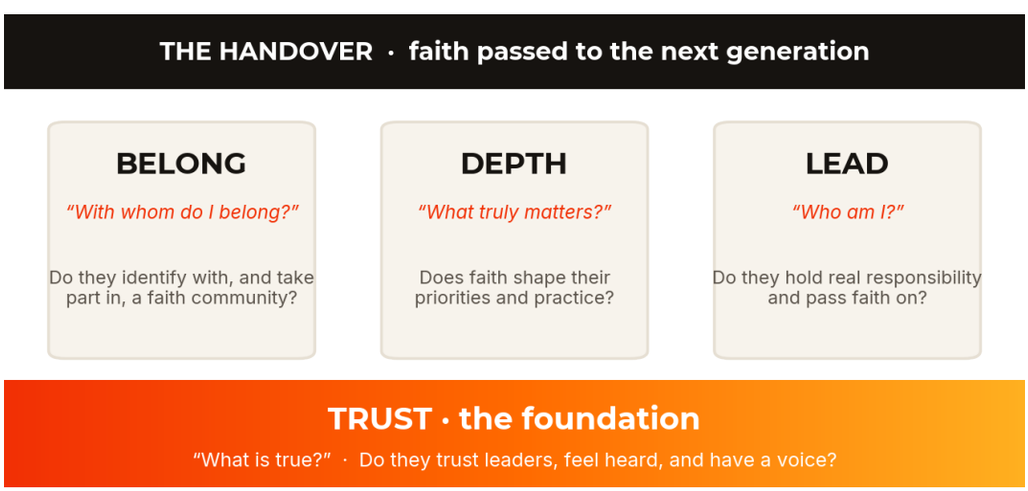


Exhibit 26. The handover model. Trust is the foundation on which belonging, depth and leadership rest. The four questions from Hitting the Ball You Cannot See sit under each layer. Estimated: our reading of the evidence, not a count. [32]

Layer	What it asks	Evidence so far
Belong	Do young people identify with, and take part in, a faith community?	Near-universal in Africa (95% across 34 countries) and in Ghana's census [41, 37]. Collapses late in the decline sequence [30]

Layer	What it asks	Evidence so far
Trust	Do they trust leaders, feel heard, and have a voice?	66% of African 18–25s trust religious leaders against 74% of those 65+ [41]. Kenya's Gen Z confronted church leaders in 2024 [51]
Depth	Does faith shape their priorities and practice?	28% of African teens "committed" (OneHope, online sample) [42]. Young Ghanaians more likely to say religion is very important (91% against 85%) [29]. In the United States, 10% of 18–29-year-olds with a Christian background are "resilient disciples" [103]
Lead	Do they hold real responsibility and pass faith on?	Youth-run campus movements (PENSA, organisation-reported) [57]. Intergenerational tables in Chad and Nairobi [54, 63]. Holding a role as a teenager goes with staying in church as a young adult (U.S.) [86]

Exhibit 27. The four layers, what each asks, and the evidence behind it.

Why trust is the foundation rather than one layer among four: the decline sequence puts participation and importance before belonging, and both are expressions of trust. In Africa, belonging is intact and trust is where the strain shows first. In the West, the book's witnesses say the same thing from the far end of the sequence. A model that treated the four as equal would miss the order in which they fail. One word needs care. **Belong** here asks for more than a label: taking part, with adults outside the family who know a young person by name (Section 4.3). The belonging that falls last in the decline sequence of 2.2 is the label alone, and it can outlast every other layer. A young person can still tick a religion and belong to no one.

The layers are not stages served by time. A young person moves from one layer to the next when something observable changes, not when enough months have passed. The early church admitted candidates to baptism when their sponsors could vouch for how they lived, not when a course was over [97]. The Methodist class asked each member every week how it was with their soul [78]. Two layers carry the link to multiplication. **Depth** is formed in practices: prayer, Scripture, worship, community, serving, giving and sharing faith, the seven practices NXT Move uses with new believers [107]. **Lead** shows when a young person walks with someone else in those practices, discipling another believer relationally, as the early church did from house to house (Section 1.2). A handover that stops at depth produces retention. One that reaches lead produces multiplication. Lead is also where sending begins: the young believer trusted with a role is the one who can be trusted with a frontier (Section 6.5).

The model also reads the book and the history. Each of the book's four questions (with whom do I belong, what is true, what truly matters, who am I) sits under one layer, and the book argues that trust runs under all four [32]. Each renewal in Section 1.5 was strong in particular layers, and the switch-off after 313 can be described as one layer, lead, being removed. The book's six skills are the leader's side of the handover. The three crosswalks are set out in Appendix A.7 (Tables A7 to A9). Where the research sharpens the book: the book is written largely from inside the West's decline ("islands of revival in a sea of decline"). The global data show decline arriving in a different order in the Global South, with trust eroding while belonging holds. That is why this paper presents Africa as the place where the handover can still be secured, and the West as the cautionary case, rather than the other way round.

4.2 JFINDX: the journey to multiplication

The Collab already has a shared instrument. The **Jesus Following Index (JFINDX)** uses the J12 model: three questions (do they follow Jesus, do they join His mission, does their world look different) across four tiers (Exposure, Response, Formation, Multiplication). Member organisations run a survey of about eight minutes with 13–30-year-olds under their own names and the results are pooled. A city is reported once it reaches 400 responses and a country once it reaches 2,000, both working thresholds [61, 62, 136]. The tiers are a journey, and at each one the survey asks what helped the young person on. Those answers are the drivers (Exhibit 28).

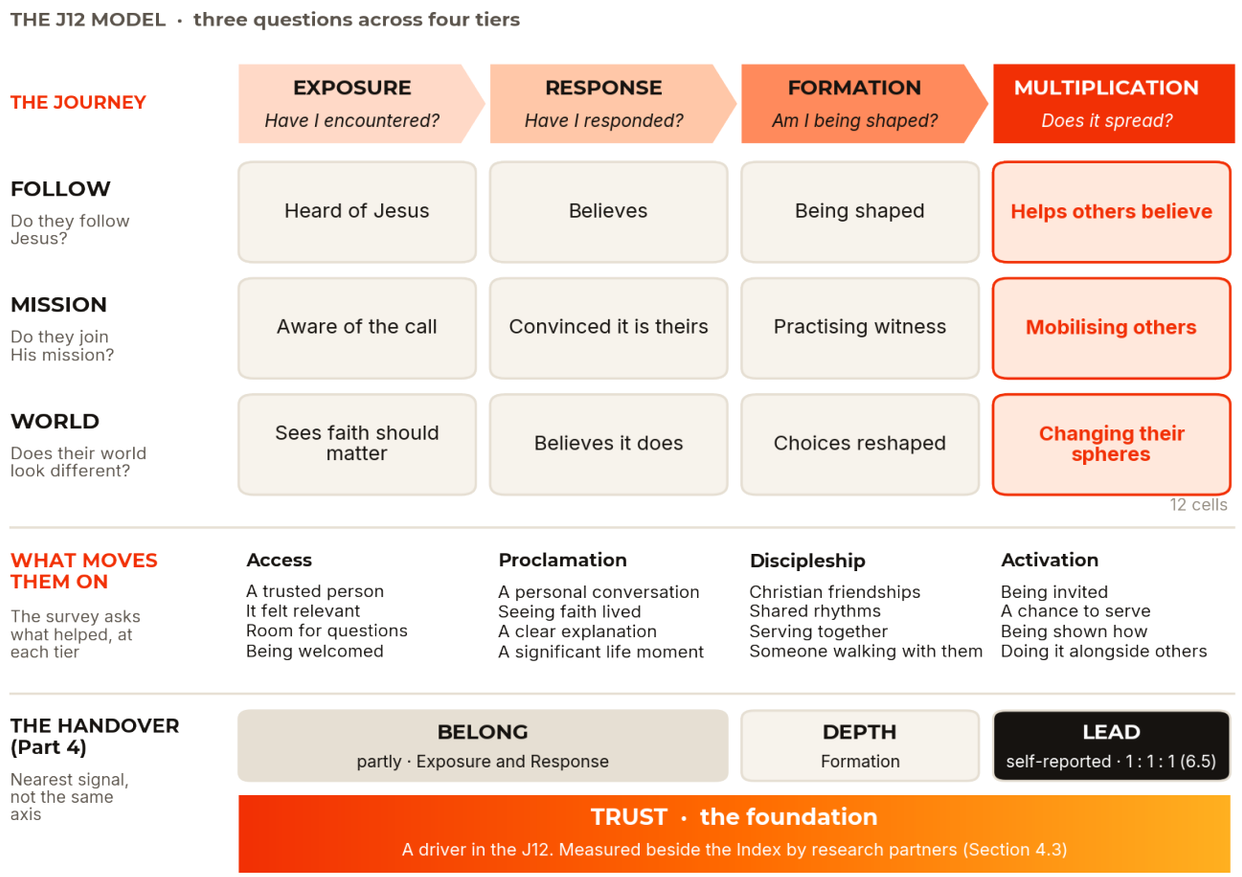


Exhibit 28. The J12 model as JFINDX uses it: three questions across four tiers, the journey items that ask what moved a young person on (abbreviated from the survey's answer options), and the nearest J12 signal for each layer of the handover. Tiers and layers are different axes. Multiplication is self-reported. A framework, so no figure here is Counted yet. [61, 62, 136]

The J12 follows growth from encounter to multiplication. The handover model follows decline in the order it arrives. They are different axes, so the base of Exhibit 28 shows the nearest signal for each layer, not an equivalence. Belong and trust appear in the J12 only as drivers, a trusted person behind an encounter and a welcome behind a community, not as measured conditions. They are researched beside it (Section 4.3). In the Index's own terms, Formation protects the line and Multiplication bends it.

4.3 Measuring belonging and trust

JFINDX measures the journey: whether young people follow Jesus, join His mission and see their world change, from exposure to multiplication (Section 4.2). Belonging and trust sit underneath that journey, and they are where decline begins, so they need measuring too. That is research for others to do beside the Index, and we invite it. Some of it is already being done: Afrobarometer asks trust in religious leaders by age across 34 countries [41], and the Future of Faith Institute sets teenagers' trust beside adults' [64]. These are the questions we would most want answered, by age and by city, for co-design with the NXT Move Africa team and young co-researchers:

- **Belong.** Do you identify with a religion, and which? Is it the one you were raised in? Is there a faith community you take part in at least monthly? Are there adults there, outside your family, who know you by name?
- **Trust.** How much do you trust the leaders of your faith community? Is there someone there who listens to you without judgment? When you speak there, do you feel heard? Do you have a real say in any decision? Has a leader ever asked you to lead something? Do the leaders there live what they teach? Do the churches in your city seem to work together, or to compete? (The listening questions are drafted from the Sacred Listening Study so that results can be set beside the U.S. ones [64], and will be reworded with the Nairobi co-researchers.)
- **Context, for the planting comparison (two items).** How old and how large is your faith community (under 3 years, 3–10, over 10. Under 50 people, 50–199, 200 or more)? Before you joined it were you part of another church, of none, or did you help start it?

Asked by age (13–17, 18–22, 23–30) and by city, these would show whether trust erodes before belonging, the early warning Part 3 points to. The Africa team plans to begin at the Nairobi table, then Accra and Kumasi, and remotely with Chadian partners. Four standards apply to any measure this paper relies on, the Index included. **Pre-specification:** the questions and the planned age comparisons are published before data are collected, and every answer stays tied to the version of the question it was answered under, so a later correction re-scores earlier waves rather than discarding them. **Sampling honesty:** surveys that reach young people through participating organisations are not random samples, so results are reported as "of those who completed it", which is already the Index's own rule, with the sample size beside every score, and calibrated against representative sources (Afrobarometer, DHS, censuses), with a school- or household-based random sample in one or two pilot countries. Results from an organisation's own network are never pooled into claims about a population, and what groups in restrictive contexts choose to submit is reported on its own. **Comparison:** the effect of a shared response is read as change from each city's 2027 baseline, in cities with strong collaborative tables against cities without them, allowing for parents' faith. It is never read as the gap between young people in ministry and the general public, because that gap measures who joins as much as what works. **Ethics:** parental consent or an equivalent for 13–17-year-olds, no survey of under-18s where the law restricts their religious activity, data protection, and ethics review through a partner university.

The context questions let this research test the planting argument in Section 6.6 without confusing two things that usually travel together. New communities are also small ones, and small settings generate roles. The pre-registered comparison therefore separates the age of a community from its size, and asks one question: **does holding a role, or having started something, go with staying, after allowing for community size, tradition and parents' faith?** The prior-church question separates transfer from reach. Where members allow a follow-up a year later, retention is measured by what young people did rather than what

they expect to do.

BRIDGE TO PART 5

The model says what to protect. The next question is how much it is worth.

Part 5 puts numbers on the handover: what retention, fertility and collaboration each do to Christianity's share of the world in 2050.

PART 5

What Decides 2050: the regional grid

Two things decide how much of the church's projected growth happens: whether the next generation keeps its faith, and how many of them there are. We modelled both for every continent, with Africa as the test case, then asked what collaboration is worth, what multiplication would add, and where it has to happen.

5.1 How the model works

The model is deliberately simple, so that every number can be traced. It was built for Africa first, because that is where most of the projected growth and most of the variance in 2050 lie (Section 3.1). We combined the United Nations' three fertility paths for Africa with three retention patterns observed today, and computed Christianity's share of the world in 2050 for each of the nine combinations, holding the rest of the world at CSGC's projection. Then we applied the same three retention patterns to every continent, each with its own age structure in 2050, at the UN's medium fertility. The parameters and their sources are in Table A3, and the arithmetic in Appendix A.3.

Christians in 2050 = rest-of-world Christians + (Africa's population × Africa's Christian share × retention adjustment)
Retention adjustment = 1 + (net lifetime switching loss × share of Africa's 2050 population aged 18–43)

5.2 The regional grid: which lever moves 2050

The grid applies the Africa model of Section 5.1 to every continent, with the same three retention levels and each continent's own age structure in 2050, so that the retain and together findings carry global numbers rather than African ones. Everything in it is Modelled, and the inputs and outputs are published (Appendix B.9).

Across the six continents, the difference between the cohorts reaching adulthood before 2050 keeping their faith and following the sharpest observed losses is about 280 million people, 2.9 points of the world's

population (Exhibit 29). Africa carries about 125 million of it, Latin America 55 million, Asia 45 million, Europe 35 million, Northern America 20 million and Oceania 3 million. Oceania's weight lies less in its own numbers than in its nearness to Asia, its diaspora churches and its sending. The figures are ceilings rather than points: each tenth of the drift toward 'softens' that is prevented is worth about 13 million people. Within Africa, where the two can be compared like for like, retention moves the 2050 share about twice as much as the pace of fertility decline: 1.3 points against 0.7 (Exhibit 31. Section 5.3). That is the arithmetic behind the thesis: retention decides the level. One caution on the North: CSGC's 2050 projection for Europe and Northern America already contains a decline (74% to 67%, 70% to 60%), so the 'erodes' row there stacks a further loss on a baseline that holds one. The same is true of the drift toward 'softens' behind the collaboration columns: today's rate of loss is already in the baseline and is not counted twice, but a further worsening in regions already in decline is the less certain case. The North's share of the swing and of those columns is therefore an upper bound. Without Europe and Northern America, a year's delay costs about 4 million rather than 5. Asia is the largest uncertainty the other way: whether China's Christians number nearer 30 million or nearer 100 million adds or removes about one point of world share by itself [83].

Continent	Aged 18–43 in 2050	Holds (m)	Erodes (m)	Retention swing (m)	Points of world	Collaborative from 2027 (m)	From 2033 (m)	From 2040 (m)
Africa	40%	1,289	1,164	125	1.29	56	44	29
Asia	34%	582	535	47	0.49	20	15	8
Latin America	33%	679	625	54	0.56	24	17	10
Europe	30%	474	440	34	0.35	15	10	6
Northern America	32%	256	236	20	0.20	8	6	4
Oceania	35%	33	30	3	0.03	1	1	1
World		3,312	3,030	283	2.92	124	94	58

Exhibit 29. The regional grid: the Africa model applied to every continent. Christians in 2050 from CSGC, population and age structure from the UN medium variant, retention levels as in Table A3. 'Collaborative from' is the gain over a fragmented drift when the cohorts turning 18 after that year hold. Modelled. [3, 46, 6]

5.3 Africa, the test case

Africa carries the largest share of the swing, and it is the one continent where fertility as well as retention is varied. Exhibit 30 shows the nine African scenarios.

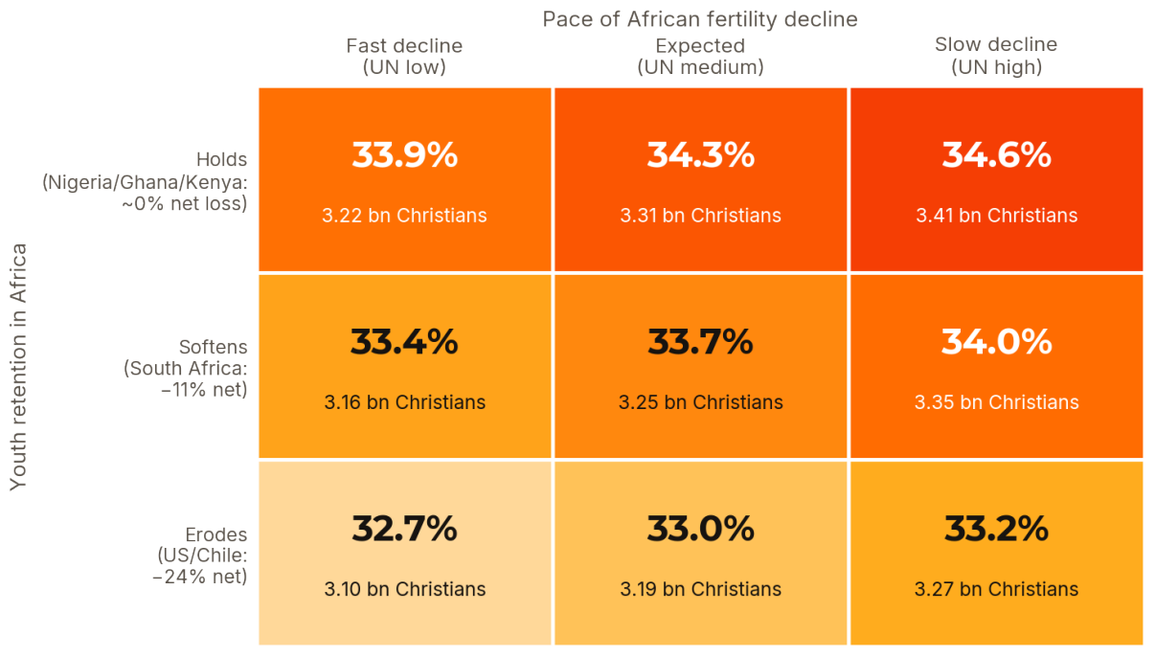


Exhibit 30. Christianity's share of the world in 2050 under nine modelled scenarios. Columns: the UN's three fertility paths for Africa. Rows: retention patterns observed today in Nigeria/Ghana/Kenya, South Africa, and the United States/Chile. Modelled. [45, 2, 6]

1 **The range is 33.0% to 34.6%.**
About 3.19 to 3.41 billion Christians in 2050. The central case (retention holds, expected fertility) gives 34.3%, in line with CSGC's own projection [2].

2 **Retention moves the result about twice as much as fertility.**
At expected fertility, retention eroding to the US/Chile pattern lowers the 2050 share by 1.3 points (125 million fewer Christians). Moving from fast to slow fertility decline changes it by 0.7 points.

3 **The retention rows are not hypothetical.**
South Africa, Brazil and Mexico already show 'softens'. The United States and Chile show 'erodes' [6]. The development link in Part 2 (a median 18% switching in very-high-development countries against 3% in low-development ones) makes 'softens' the default path as Africa develops, unless something changes [31].

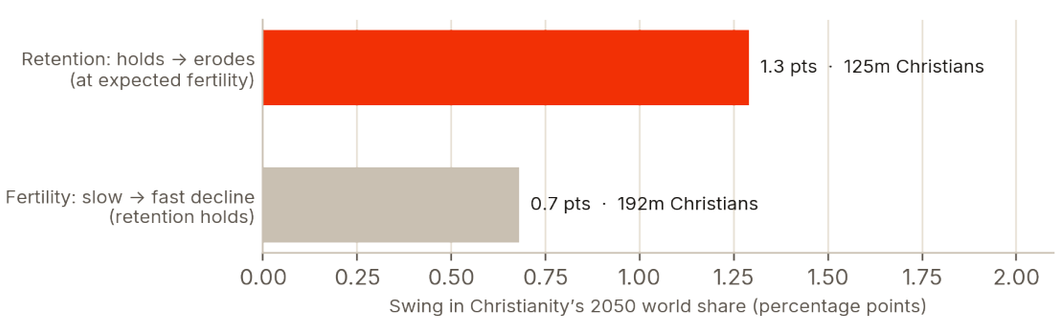


Exhibit 31. How much each lever moves the result, in percentage points and millions of Christians. Modelled.

The difference collaboration makes. The next question is which retention row Africa ends up in, and when. Without a shared response, the likely path is a drift from 'holds' toward 'softens' as development raises switching. A collapse of trust could push it toward 'erodes'. We modelled collaboration as timing: cohorts reaching adulthood before the shared response starts follow the South African drift. Later cohorts keep today's African retention.

1 **Collaboration is worth about 56 million people by 2050.**
At expected fertility, a fragmented drift to 'softens' gives 33.7%. Collaboration that holds retention from 2027 gives 34.2%: 56 million more Christians.

2 **Each year of delay costs about 2 million.**
Starting in 2033 instead of 2027 gives 34.1% (+44 million). Starting in 2040 gives 34.0% (+29 million). Removing duplication shows up mainly as time, and time is measured in people.

3 **A collapse of trust costs about 66 million more.**
If all cohorts follow the US/Chile pattern, the share falls to 33.0%. This is the scenario the Kenyan warning in Part 3 points to.

4 **These are stakes, not predictions.**
The retention rows are observed in real countries. The collaboration pathways are modelled. They show what is at stake if collaboration holds retention. They do not show that it will. Comparing cities with strong collaborative tables against others over time, on the Index's measures and on research into trust by age, is how to test them.

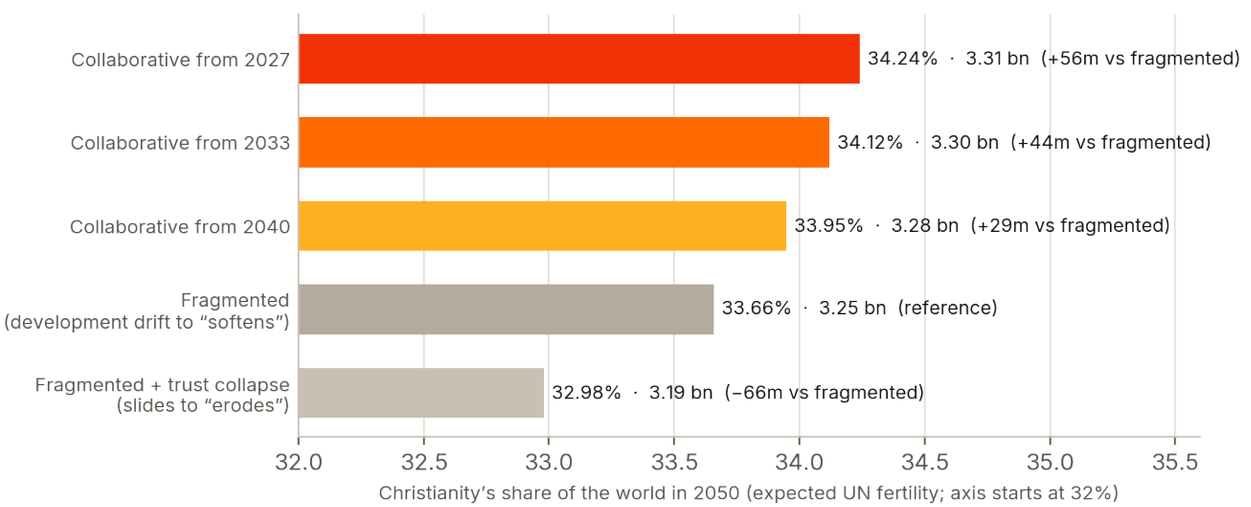


Exhibit 32. Modelled pathways at expected UN fertility. 'Fragmented': cohorts reaching adulthood 2025–2050 follow the South African retention pattern. 'Collaborative from year X': cohorts reaching adulthood after X keep today's African retention. 'Trust collapse': all cohorts follow the US/Chile pattern. [45, 46, 2, 6]

5.4 When: the cost of waiting

The cost of waiting compounds because each year another cohort reaches adulthood under the fragmented pattern. A shared response that holds retention from 2027 keeps about 120 million more people in the faith by 2050 than the drift. From 2033 the gain is 90 million and from 2040 60 million, about 5 million a year lost between 2027 and 2033 and slightly more after (Exhibit 33). The number measures what holding retention

is worth, not what any programme produces, which is why the finding's proof calls it a modelled stake rather than a prediction. The model assumes that a shared response holds retention and computes the value of that. Whether it does is what the test in Section 5.8 exists to show.

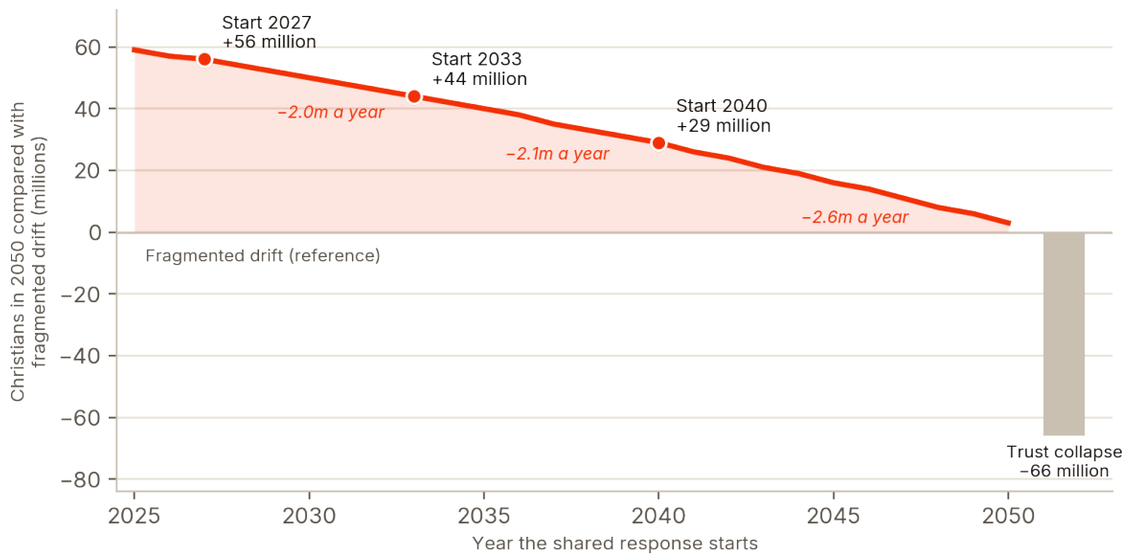


Exhibit 33. The cost of delay: Christians in 2050 under a shared response that holds retention from each start year, against the fragmented drift, Africa (solid) and the six continents (dashed). Modelled at expected UN fertility. [46, 6]

5.5 Who: the generation that decides 2050

The cohorts that carry the modelled effect are aged 18 to 43 in 2050. They are 0–19 years old in 2026, or not yet born, so they are in children's and youth ministry now or will be within a decade. About a quarter of them are not yet born and half are under 13. JFINDX picks them up as they come of age: about half of them are inside its 13–30 range by 2033 and two-thirds by 2040 (Exhibit 34), and the index does not stop at 2033, so the trends it records over the next seven years keep directing the response beyond the goal year. That is why the road to 2033 starts with children's and youth ministry and their parents. The window for the shared response is the next ten years. A baseline in 2027 and trend lines by 2030–31 would show, before 2033, whether each continent is holding its row or drifting (Section 6.7).

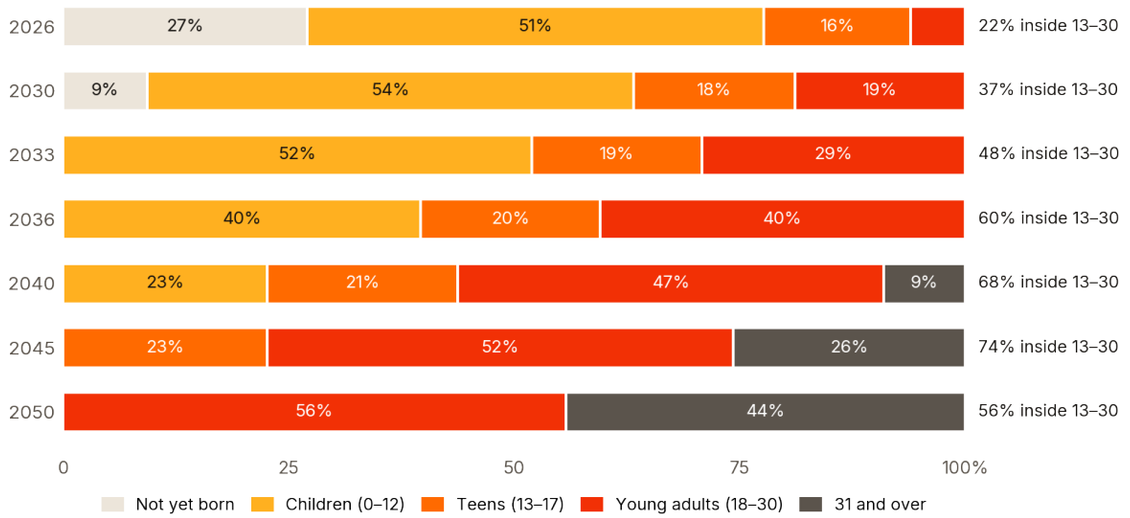


Exhibit 34. The generation that decides 2050: the age in each year of Africa's cohorts aged 18–43 in 2050, and the share inside JFINDX's 13–30 range. UN WPP 2024 medium. Projected. [46]

5.6 Together from below: two effects, one condition, four levers

Working together does two different things, and the evidence for each is different. **Collaboration makes those who reach more effective.** Shared measurement, mutually reinforcing work and the removal of duplication let the same people and money go further. **Unity, kept with integrity, keeps the trust of the young.** Leaders who work together without rivalry, and who answer to one another, give the next generation less reason to leave. Collaboration serves reach. Unity serves retention. Neither reaches anyone. Activated believers do. Both rest on trust between leaders, built by working together over time [128, 135]. Both depend on one condition: power, money and roles moving toward the people who do the reaching, above all local leaders, young leaders and women, who have long carried much of the reaching (Section 1.6). Without that, collaboration consolidates and unity controls, which is the story of 313 (Section 1.3). The authors of collective impact reached the same conclusion about their own model a decade on [139]. Our findings point to four collaborative levers, points where a small shared effort moves a large share of the result. Each is aimed at one layer of the handover, and together they are the difference between the fragmented and collaborative rows of Exhibit 32.

Collaborative lever	Effect	Finding it answers	Layer	How we would measure it	Role in the model
1. Research understood together	Impact: line of sight	Trust erodes before belonging falls (participation → importance → belonging) [30, 41]	Belong and Trust: see it early	JFINDX by age, and research on trust by age [61]	Sets **when** the response starts (timing)
2. Methods changed accordingly	Impact	Ghana's young moved to churches that adapted: Pentecostal/charismatic 32.5% of 15–39s against 28.4% of those 40+ [37]. The book's "relevance deficit" [32]	Belong and Depth	J12 Formation. Participation by age	Keeps Africa in the 'holds' row rather than drifting to 'softens'

Collaborative lever	Effect	Finding it answers	Layer	How we would measure it	Role in the model
3. Unity with integrity, trust regained	Trust	Trust in religious leaders is 66% among 18–25s against 74% among those 65+ [41]. Kenyan Gen Z confronted clergy in 2024 [51]. Trust before truth [32]	Trust	Trust by age, measured by research partners (Section 4.3)	Guards against a slide to 'erodes'
4. Unnecessary duplication removed, impact accelerated	Impact: release	About 76% of church income sits in North America and Europe. Africa has about 3.5% of income and about 28% of Christians [44]. Only about 15,000 of 450,000 cross-cultural workers serve among unreached peoples [43]. Thirty-plus Collab organisations are building one shared instrument [60]	Lead: resource young leaders in Africa and where the church is smallest	J12 Multiplication. Resources reaching local leaders, including in least-reached regions	Brings the start date forward and scales it

Exhibit 35. The four collaborative levers, the effect each serves, the finding each answers, and its role in the model.

Collaboration: what the evidence shows. The claim that working together changes outcomes has been tested outside the church. Kania and Kramer's 2011 study of cross-sector initiatives found that large-scale social change came from coordinated effort rather than from the isolated work of single organisations. It named five conditions: a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication and a backbone organisation [128]. A 2018 cross-site study of 25 such initiatives found population-level change in 20 of them, and in the eight studied in depth the collective effort had contributed to that change [129]. That evidence is Estimated. The study was commissioned by the approach's own promoters, the eight were chosen for strong implementation, and the work was civic (education, health and poverty) rather than church-based. The sites were cities, so the evidence supports city tables such as Nairobi's more directly than a global network. The Collab was designed on those conditions: one goal for 2033, JFINDX as the shared measure, the four levers, a rhythm of calls and gatherings, and NXT Move as backbone (Appendix E.1) [60, 61]. The wider movement has turned the same way: the Fourth Lausanne Congress in Seoul in 2024 closed with more than 6,000 collaborative action commitments and 284 action teams [130], which is activity, not yet evidence of effect. What no study has yet shown is the link this paper models, between collaboration and the retention of the next generation. The grid states the stakes. Section 5.8 sets out the test.

Line of sight. The paper's source for Methodist growth, Finke and Stark, explains it by competition between churches [77]. The wider evidence does not settle that either way [140, 141]. What the record does show is that revivals spread where leaders could see one another's progress. Edwards's concert of prayer asked believers in many places to pray at agreed times, each knowing the others were praying [125]. Letters and the first evangelical magazines carried the Awakening from town to town and across the Atlantic [142]. Outside the church the same holds: when hospitals' results were published rather than kept private, those that scored low did more to improve [143] (Counted: a controlled study in one U.S. state). Scripture calls it provoking one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). Rivalry stirs people to act. Line of sight lets everyone learn from whoever succeeds. That is why the shared instrument is the first lever (Section 6.4).

What the history shows. The rises in Part 1 were carried by leaders who chose one another across a real divide (Section 1.8 sets the rises against the flat periods). Jerusalem sent Barnabas to the refugee church at Antioch, and he recognised it rather than ruling it (Acts 11:22–26). Later the two sides divided the work and agreed to remember the poor (Galatians 2:9–10). At Herrnhut in 1727 quarrelling refugees signed a Brotherly Agreement and were reconciled at communion, and the prayer watch and the missionaries followed [16].

Korea's revival began in 1903 with a missionary's public confession at a prayer week shared across missions, and by 1912 those missions had turned from seeking one church to working as one [144]. At Herrnhut and in Korea the first shared act was prayer. In every case the unity that went with acceleration was relational and a division of labour, not a merger, and it released ordinary believers. Structure came later, and the church was never more united in structure than after 313. The record cuts the other way too. The Pentecostal century grew while it divided, and denominations multiplied from about 2,000 in 1900 to about 53,000 today while the share stayed flat [1]. Structures, joined or divided, have not moved the line (Estimated: our reading of the cases, not a sample).

Unity and integrity: how trust is kept. Two kinds of trust are at work, and the paper keeps them apart. Trust between leaders is built by working together over time: small joint actions with modest risk produce results, results raise trust, and higher trust allows larger joint action [135]. The Collab's calls and gatherings and the Nairobi tables are that loop. The trust of the young is earned differently. The emerging generation is right to trust leaders who work together out of trust in one another. Relationship brings accountability, accountability breeds and protects integrity, and integrity is what the young can see. When it fails, they leave. Among Americans who attended church as teenagers and dropped out as young adults, 32% said church members had seemed judgmental or hypocritical [134] (Counted, U.S.). Kenya's Gen Z left church leadership rather than God, over clergy captured by politicians (Section 3.6), and across Africa trust in religious leaders is lowest among the young [51, 41]. The exhibit below sets out the chain link by link, with the evidence for each. One link is untested: whether unity the young can see between churches earns their trust. It is a question we invite researchers to test (Section 4.3). Jesus made the love of believers for one another the mark by which the world would know them (John 13:35) and their oneness the reason it would believe (John 17:21–23) [133]. Where open association is unsafe, as across much of the 10/40 Window, unity cannot mean a public platform. It is built in relationships that are safe and trusted, sometimes through structures that carry no Christian name [137]. In North Africa, established churches lend their cover to training that gathers young leaders from six nations [158].

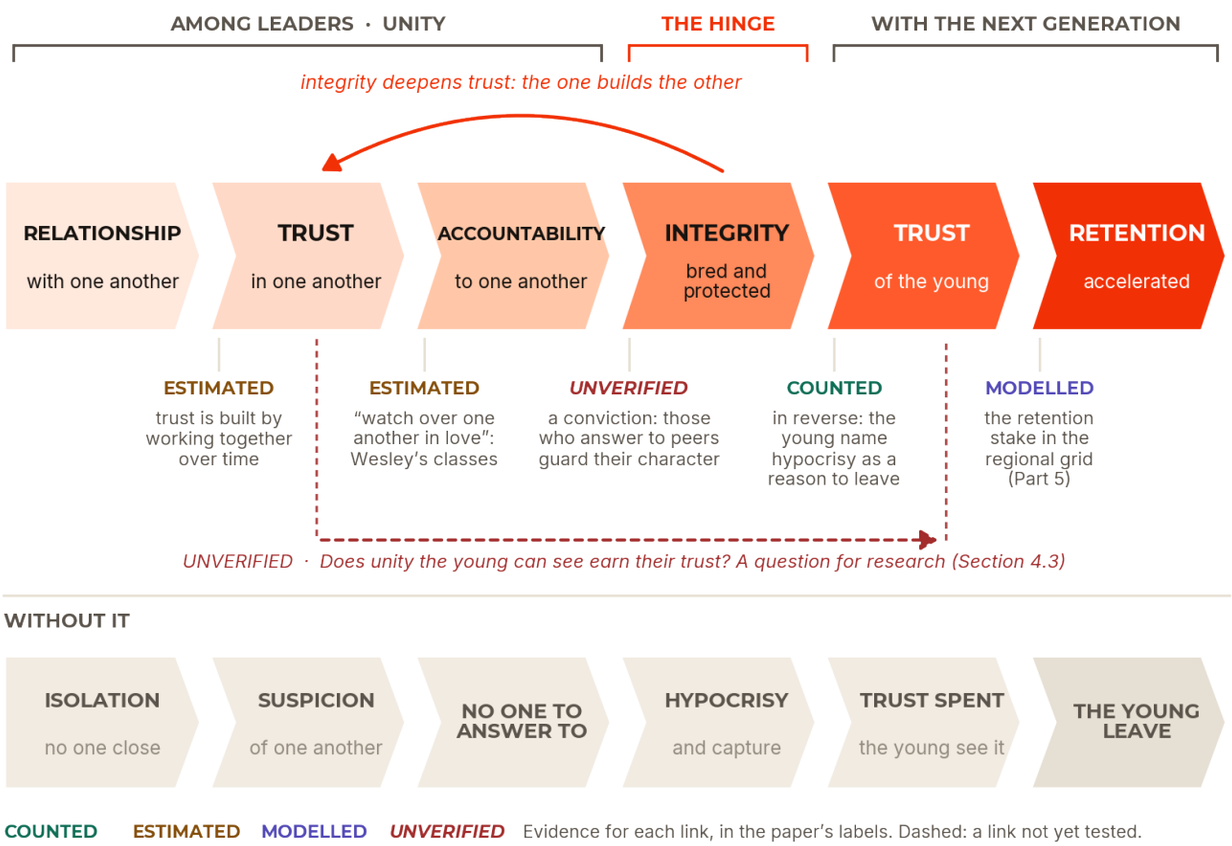


Exhibit 36. The second effect: unity kept with integrity. Leaders in relationship come to trust one another and accept accountability to one another, and that breeds and protects integrity. The young trust what they can see is true, and trust is the foundation of the handover (Exhibit 26). Each link carries its evidence label (Counted, Estimated, Modelled or Unverified). The dashed link, whether unity the young can see earns their trust, is not yet tested and is offered to researchers (Section 4.3). [135, 78, 134, 51]

Just enough structure. The church has accelerated from below and never from the top down. Movements of activated believers grow it, and structure decides whether that growth is kept and carried. Too little, and the fruit leaks away, as Wesley found where there was preaching without societies (Section 1.5). Too much, and the movement becomes an audience, as it did after 313. The sociology of religion has named the dilemma for sixty years: movements must organise to survive, and the offices they build can alienate the believers they were built to serve [145]. Movements that spread are many-centred, held together by personal ties, travelling leaders and shared belief rather than by a central office [146]. The collective impact field has moved the same way, from managing programmes toward building movements [147], and Roland Allen made the missionary case a century ago [148]. The case here is not for stronger unity structures. It is for just enough structure: enough to keep and carry what a movement grows, and no more (Appendix E.1).

5.7 The ‘grows’ row: what multiplication would add

The grid has no upside row. It models whether the church keeps the people it has. It does not model net conversion, because Ghana’s small net gain (72 → 73) is the only counted evidence of it in the African data [6]. But Part 1 shows what sustained net growth has done before, and the arithmetic of what it would do now is simple enough to state.

Net growth changes the share multiplicatively: a sustained net growth rate of *g* per year from 2033 multiplies the 2050 share by $(1 + g)^{17}$. The table applies that to the central case. It is illustrative and Modelled. It assumes world population follows the UN medium path and that the gain comes from people who were not Christian before.

Sustained net growth from 2033	2050 share	Change by 2050	Christians added by 2050	Change by 2075	Historical comparison
+0.10% a year	34.9%	+0.6 points	about 57 million	+1.5 points	about a quarter of the missionary century’s rate
+0.25% a year	35.8%	+1.5 points	about 144 million	+3.8 points	about 60% of the missionary century’s rate
+0.50% a year	37.3%	+3.0 points	about 293 million	+8.0 points	above the missionary century’s rate (about 0.4% a year, 1800–1900)

Exhibit 37. The ‘grows’ row: illustrative effect of sustained net growth from 2033 on the central scenario (34.3%). Modelled. [2, 45]

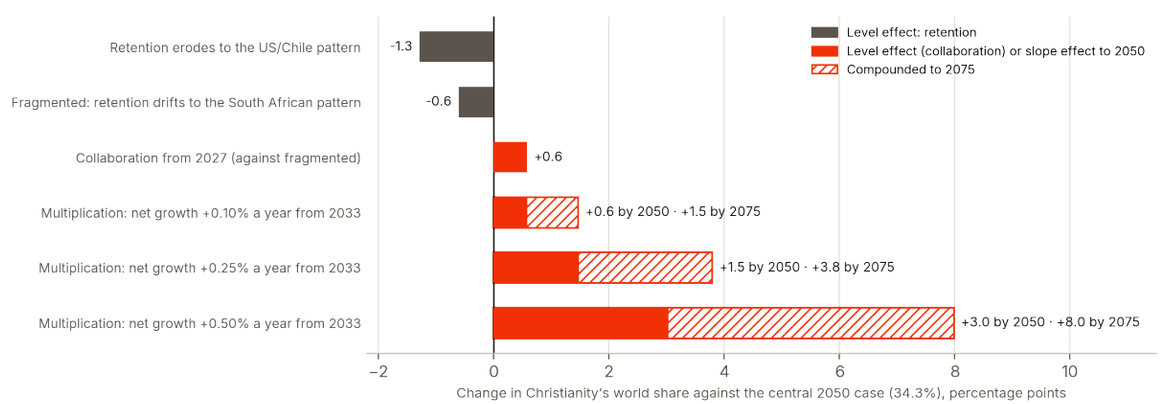


Exhibit 38. Retention, collaboration and multiplication compared: change in Christianity’s 2050 share relative to the central case, in percentage points. Retention and collaboration are level effects. Multiplication compounds. Modelled.

The comparison is the point of the paper. Africa’s whole retention swing is 1.3 points, the world’s 2.9 (Section 5.2). Sustained net growth of a quarter of a per cent a year, about 60% of the missionary century’s rate and a small fraction of the early church’s, adds 1.5 points by 2050 and 3.8 by 2075, and keeps compounding. The comparison is generous to the target: the missionary century’s gain was mostly births in the Christian heartland (Section 1.6), so a quarter of a per cent a year that comes from conversion would be a harder thing than the revival’s generation achieved. Retention is a level: it decides whether the church keeps its third of humanity. Multiplication is a slope. The first protects the line. Only the second bends it. And Part 1’s evidence is that net growth of that order has only ever come from an activated church.

Put per believer, a quarter of a per cent a year is about one additional person for every 400 Christians each year, beyond keeping pace with the world: about 6.7 million people a year at today's numbers (Modelled). The early church's rate, about 3.4% a year, was about one in 29. No programme in an established church has been shown to produce even one in 400 at scale. The vehicles that plausibly can are new congregations and the lay-led movements that start them (Section 6.6). The largest claimed example, church planting movements reporting about 99.9 million believers in 6.8 million house-sized churches [94], would be of that order if much of it were net-new. It is self-reported and Unverified, which makes it a question for measurement, not a number for the grid.

Where multiplication has to happen. The 'grows' row does not say where the growth would come from, and it matters. Net growth means people coming to faith who did not have it, and nearly four in five of the world's non-Christians live in Asia [3, 2]. Because Asia holds about 58% of the world's people and Africa about 19%, a point of Christian share gained in Asia moves the world line about 0.6 points, and a point gained in Africa about 0.2 (Exhibit 39. Modelled at 2025 weights). Africa protects and lifts the level: CSGC's projected rise to 34.1% by 2050 is largely African [2]. Sustained growth beyond that requires the church to multiply where it is smallest: in Asia, in the Middle East, and in Africa's own Sahel and north, most of it inside the 10/40 Window, where about 3 in every 100 cross-cultural workers serve (Section 3.7). There are signs of it. CSGC projects Asia's Christians to grow from 417 million to 582 million by 2050, with the fastest growth in South and South-East Asia, and Mongolia, Nepal and Cambodia among the newest churches in the world [3] (Projected). None of this is in the grid yet. An Asian conversion row for the regional grid is listed as open work (Appendix A.4), parameterised by net conversion rather than by money, because no counted evidence yet links funding to disciples made and kept among the least reached.

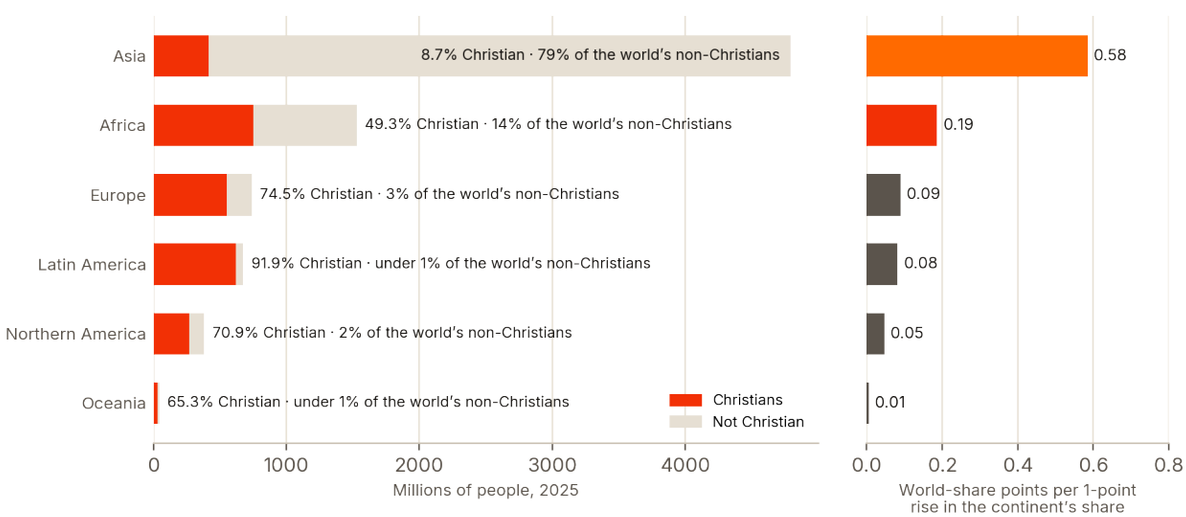


Exhibit 39. Left: Christians and non-Christians by continent, 2025, in millions (Estimated). Right: how far a one-point rise in each continent's Christian share moves the world's, in percentage points (Modelled at 2025 population weights). Middle East countries are counted within Africa and Asia. [3, 2]

5.8 What would prove us wrong

One test for each headline finding, stated in advance.

- **Finding 1.** If CSGC's or Pew's next revision moves the 1900–2026 share outside the 32–35% band, or shows net growth sustained above zero in any 25-year period since 1910, the flat line is not flat. And if a later Pew or CSGC accounting attributes Islam's rise mainly to net conversion rather than births, the comparison does not show what we use it for.
- **Finding 2.** If the regional grid's retention swing shrinks below one point of the world once tracked cohorts replace the lifetime-switching snapshot, retention is not the lever this paper says it is.
- **Finding 3.** If churches and cities whose believers take up 1 : 1 : 1 from the 2027 baseline, discipling one another, inviting others into the fellowship of believers and sharing their faith in everyday life, show no more new believers who were not Christian before, against comparable ones that do not, activation is not the mechanism.
- **Finding 4.** If net conversion in Asia and the Window rises with no shift of workers and money toward the least reached, allocation is not the constraint this finding says it is. If they shift and conversion does not follow, the constraint lies elsewhere.
- **Finding 5.** If cities and networks that pooled measurement and response from 2027 show no better change from their own baseline than those that did not, once parents' faith is allowed for, collaboration is not worth what the grid says. The test reads both effects: activated and new believers for collaboration, and trust and retention among 13–30-year-olds for unity. A strong collaborative table is defined at the 2027 baseline, before any outcome is seen, by the conditions in Section 5.6 and by young leaders holding a vote.
- **Finding 6.** If retention among the cohorts reaching adulthood after 2033 proves no different from those before it, the generation is not the hinge this paper makes it.

One link in these tests is still to be built. The model runs on adults' lifetime switching. Surveys of the young, the Index among them, measure 13–30-year-olds in repeated cross-sections. Turning their results into retention rows needs either a follow-up of the same people or a cohort reading of successive waves, and the research in Section 4.3 is designed for both.

Three further tests, for the rows and the vehicle.

- **Retention data that contradict the rows.** If research on trust by age finds no erosion in African cities as they develop, the 'softens' default is wrong and the stakes of collaboration are smaller. That is a testable prediction, and we would welcome being wrong about it.
- **Roles that do not retain.** Section 6.6 argues that holding a role goes with staying and that planting creates roles at scale. If, with the context questions in Section 4.3, role-holding does not predict staying once community size, tradition and parents' faith are allowed for, or if young people in new communities hold no more roles than those in old communities of the same size, the planting argument is wrong and the 'grows' row has no demonstrated vehicle.
- **Multiplication among the least reached that does not last.** The case for resourcing the church where it is smallest assumes that first-generation believers in restrictive contexts are kept, not only reached. We found almost no longitudinal evidence either way. If partner data show new believers in the Window falling away faster than growth adds them, or local multiplication collapsing when outside funding ends [112], the case weakens. Both are testable, and the 10/40 collective already offers JFINDX to its members,

run locally and anonymised [118].

BRIDGE TO PART 6

Retention protects the line. Multiplication bends it. Both need the same thing: an activated church, sent where the church is not.

Part 6 sets out what that means in practice, for the four levers, for measurement, for activation and planting, and for the road to 2033.

PART 6

ACCELERATE: from everywhere to everywhere

Two jobs, four marks, four levers, one instrument, one sequence, and a road to 2033. This part is written for action, and it ends with an invitation.

6.1 Two jobs, four marks

The evidence sorts into two jobs, and they are not the same job. **Retention** decides whether the church keeps the third of humanity it has. Across the six continents it is worth about 2.9 points of world share by 2050, and a shared response that secures it from 2033 is worth about 90 million people (Findings 2 and 5). **Reach**, once it multiplies, decides whether the line rises. Net growth of a quarter of a per cent a year from 2033 would add about 1.5 points by 2050 and about 3.8 by 2075, and keep compounding (Finding 3). Retention is a level. Multiplication is a slope. The first protects the line. Only the second bends it.

Four marks run through every rise in Part 1 (Exhibit 10), and they are the four things this paper asks of the church. **Kept its young:** the next generation handed the faith, trusted with it and given a real role (Parts 2 to 4). **Activated:** almost every believer taking part, as the early church did from house to house, in the temple courts and in the marketplace, discipling one another, inviting others into the fellowship of believers and sharing their faith in everyday life (Section 6.5). **Sent where the church is not:** crossing to the least reached, nearest first (Section 1.8). **Together:** leaders who choose one another across a divide, united with integrity, which keeps the trust of the young, and working together, which makes those who reach more effective, with just enough structure to carry it (Section 5.6). The first is retention. The second and third are reach: activation reaches the people believers already know, and only believers who cross reach the people who do not know a Christian, four in five of all who are not Christian (Finding 4). The fourth carries all three. Retention protects the line. Only an activated church that crosses bends it.

The global church's own listening names the same two jobs. Across two years of listening calls and a survey of 1,500 leaders, Lausanne found the need for discipleship by far the most often named gap in Great Commission efforts, and reaching younger generations the second [102]. The leaders' perceptions are stark:

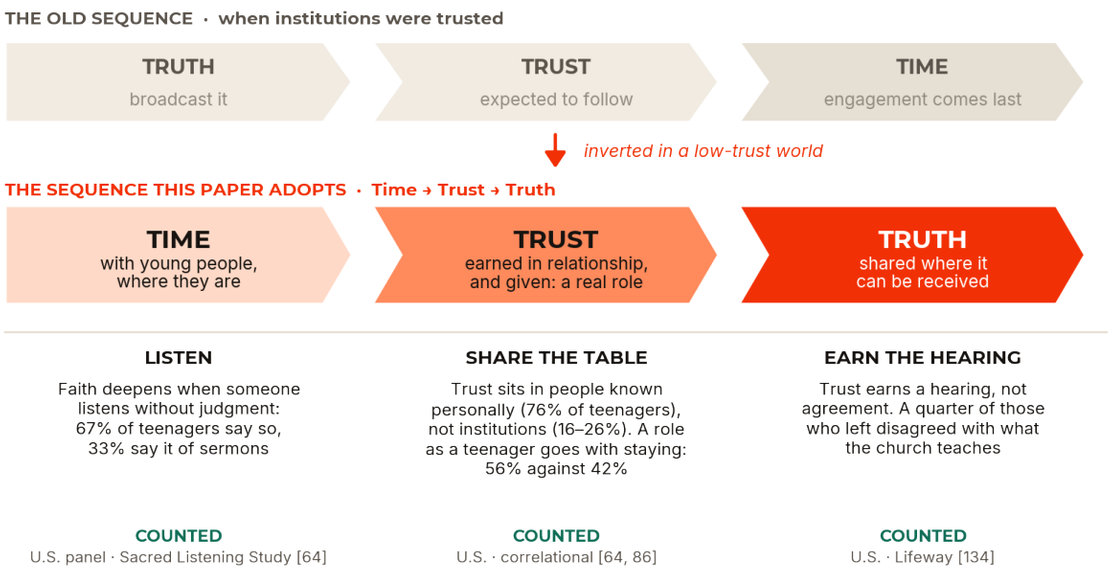
65–80% said churches in their region teach the Great Commission often or regularly, yet they judged only 15–20% of Christians very active in sharing the gospel and 35–40% never or rarely active, with Christians under 30 less active than their elders [43] (SGC pp. 24–26, Estimated: leaders' perceptions, not counts of members). Teaching from the front has not produced activated believers.

Retention without multiplication. North America's Amish keep about 80–90% of their young people and have doubled roughly every twenty years, from about 5,000 in 1900 to more than 350,000 today, with very few converts from outside [104, 105] (Estimated). Deep formation and high fertility have produced a growing, faithful community. They have not bent any wider line. Formation that does not turn outward protects the line. Only formation that reaches someone else bends it.

Both jobs need the same thing, and the eighteenth century shows why they need each other. George Whitefield preached to an estimated ten million people on both sides of the Atlantic [122] (Unverified). John Wesley joined the people he reached into classes of twelve. Whitefield called his own work planting and asked Wesley to water it [124]. When they divided over doctrine in 1741 the work divided with them. In 1749 Whitefield laid down the leadership of his side, and he left the Wesleys a token of his "indissoluble union with them in heart and Christian affection" [124]. The fruit that lasted grew where reach and retention were joined, and the missionary era that followed began as a union in prayer across denominations (Section 1.6). The early church did both jobs at once because almost every believer was active [9]. The strategy that follows is therefore not a programme. It is the deliberate re-activation of the people who are already there, in every region at once, from everywhere to everywhere. None of this makes growth a human achievement. The rises in Part 1 were movements of God among ordinary people. What a paper can measure is whether the church is ready for them.

6.2 The sequence: time, trust, truth

The operating sequence for everything below is the one the evidence in Part 2 forces: **Time → Trust → Truth** [65]. Spend time with young people where they are. Earn relational trust, which now carries the weight institutions used to carry. And then present truth in a context where it can be received. The book's version is "establish trust before presenting truth" [32]. The Celtic version was belonging before believing [15]. Ghana's version is a young generation choosing churches that engage them (Part 3). Exhibit 40 sets the old sequence against the new and puts the practice and its evidence under each step. Two consequences follow for how ministries spend their time. Listening is not a prelude to ministry. It is ministry, and it is measurable (Exhibit 40). And relational ministry has to be designed to scale, as programmatic ministry once was, or it stays a matter of a few hundred coffees.



The decline sequence runs the other way: participation → importance → belonging (Exhibit 12). Trust erodes in the first two layers. This is where it is rebuilt.

Exhibit 40. The sequence this paper adopts. The old order, truth before trust before time, worked while institutions were trusted. In a low-trust world it inverts: time with young people where they are, trust earned in relationship and given through a real role, and then truth, shared where it can be received. Beneath each step, the practice and its evidence. All figures are Counted and from the United States (Section 2.5). Trust earns a hearing, not agreement: the third column states the limit. The decline sequence of Exhibit 12 runs the other way. [65, 64, 86, 134]

6.3 Four levers in practice

Collaboration and unity are the two wings of the together beat. Collaboration makes those who reach more effective. Unity, kept with integrity, makes the faith they carry credible to the young. Neither wing flies on its own, and neither reaches anyone: the activated church does. The levers below are where the two wings are put to work, and lever 4 is where they meet the question of where the church is sent (Section 1.8).

Lever	What it means in practice	Who carries it	First twelve months
1. Research understood together	One shared instrument (JFINDX), with results by age and city and one annual report the whole Collab reads. Research partners measuring belonging and trust by age beside it	The Collab's research group. NXT Move as backbone. The Africa team as co-designers	Publish the planned comparisons. The 2027 baseline. First pooled report
2. Methods changed accordingly	Audit every ministry against the three rooms of the early church (believers discipling one another from house to house, a fellowship others are invited into, faith shared in everyday life) and the sequence (time, trust, truth). Move budget from broadcast to relationship. Campus-to-career continuity. Peer-led evangelism. Soul care inside discipleship	Denominations and networks. City tables. Youth and campus movements	Each partner names one method it will stop and one it will start, and reports the difference

Lever	What it means in practice	Who carries it	First twelve months
3. Unity with integrity, trust regained	Leaders sharing the table with young leaders in real decisions. Visible collaboration across churches "without logos or ego". Leaders who answer to one another. No politics or personal empire in the pulpit. Public confession where trust has been broken	Senior leaders and city tables. The multi-generational Nairobi model	Every city table seats young leaders with a vote. A public joint commitment across churches in each city
4. Unnecessary duplication removed, impact accelerated	One instrument, one shared calendar (Easter to Pentecost), shared proposals to funders. Resources and training moving toward where the next generation's Christians are and where the church is smallest, through local multipliers rather than patronage	Funders, networks and the backbone organisation	A shared funding proposal for the instrument. One joint activation season. A published map of who does what, and of where no one is

Exhibit 41. The four collaborative levers in practice.

What the field is already showing. Two lessons from NXT Move's work in Nairobi, Pretoria and Cape Town in August 2026 belong beside the table [131]. The first is that the levers are being reached for locally before anyone proposes them: two regions, working separately, arrived at the same three moves, to coordinate what already exists, put the next generation at the centre and resource it locally. In São Paulo, leaders of large churches and leaders working on the margins have come to know one another by name and are building one strategy for the city [158]. The second is about money. Leaders in both places concluded that the fundable thing is not any single project but the table itself: the removal of duplication, the shared measurement and the convening, which make the projects that flow through it investable in a way none of them are alone. And a smaller observation that belongs in the same column. The isolated practitioners the team met were exhausted. A leader working under restriction says the same of his colleagues: "they're very creative, but they're very lonely" [158]. Burnout is a cost of working apart, and one of the plainer arguments for lever 4. What is not yet shown is the cost side. No counted evidence yet links funding to disciples made and kept, and there is no baseline of where Collab and NXT Move money goes by region. Both are needed before lever 4 can be measured.

6.4 Measuring what matters

For thirty-four years no one had beaten the original Nintendo Tetris. Only an artificial intelligence had reached the point where the game breaks down. On 21 December 2023 a thirteen-year-old in Oklahoma played to level 157 and the game froze [149]. He did not do it alone. A community of players had streamed every run for years and shared every technique that worked, and a new way of pressing the buttons spread through it within a few years, fastest among the youngest players [150]. The game did not get easier. The community got better together, because everyone could see what worked. Technology showed that it was possible, the community made it possible, and long obedience made it real [32].

How will we know? The Jesus Following Index (JFINDX) is the shared measure the Collab was missing: one instrument any organisation can run as its own, so that for the first time the whole movement reads the same scoreboard. It is an anonymous survey of about eight minutes for 13–30-year-olds, carried under each member organisation's own name and pooled. It costs nothing to join or to run, each ministry's results belong to it, no score is shown for fewer than ten people, and no ministry ever sees one person's answers [61]. The platform is live, and the instrument is being locked with a researcher panel in late 2026. 2027 is the baseline year, launched at the Buenos Aires gathering in September 2027 with a target of about ten

countries with 400 or more responses. Scale, regional benchmarks and longitudinal waves follow (2028–31), and by 2032–33 the Index is to be the shared metric for the 2033 goal [61, 62, 136]. It reports the journey from exposure to multiplication by age every year, and the trends it records keep directing the response beyond 2033. Belonging and trust are measured beside it by research partners (Section 4.3), and the four standards there apply to both. Read together, they test the prediction of Part 5: that trust erodes before belonging as African cities develop, and that cities with strong collaborative tables hold the 'holds' row while others drift. Results are read by change from each city's own baseline, not by rank. What works is published openly. Nothing is published that would put believers in restrictive contexts at risk. What the Window's members submit is reported on its own, so that the least reached are counted without being exposed, and the fourth question in Section 6.5 tells reach from retention.

6.5 Activation

Activation means almost every believer taking part, which is what Part 1 found behind the fastest sustained growth on record (Section 1.2). **1 : 1 : 1** is how this paper proposes a church puts that into practice. It is an application, not a research finding, and it comes from the life of the early church, which met "in the temple courts and from house to house" (Acts 5:42) and took the faith into the marketplace "day by day" (Acts 17:17) [23]. Each of those settings, which we call rooms, carried a function every believer shared. **House to house**, believers discipled one another relationally, by name and at a table: *walk with one*. In the **temple courts**, they gathered as a fellowship of believers, met God together and invited others into that experience: *invite one*. In the **marketplace**, they shared their faith in their everyday activity, as people on mission: *reach one*. Not three tasks, but one person operating in all three rooms. A church that builds only one room trains its people to be one-third of what they are, and each room alone fails in its own way. The temple alone produces people who are moved but not multiplying, the house alone closes in on itself, and the market alone is activity without formation [23]. In our reading, the church after 313 (Section 1.3) was not a bad church. It was a temple-only church. 1 : 1 : 1 is not a growth rate. The early church grew by about a thirtieth of a person per believer per year (Section 1.2), and 1 : 1 : 1 asks more of each believer than that, and asks it of every believer. What it shares with the early church is breadth. It is also what Pentecostal growth has looked like for a century: lay evangelism through personal networks [43]. And the house room has a long pedigree: it is the sponsor of the early catechumenate and the class leader of the Methodist revival [97, 78]. Reaching one is not converting one. The increase is God's (1 Corinthians 3:6–7), and what 1 : 1 : 1 asks is whether every believer is active in all three rooms. Activation also happens inside the local church, whether it meets in a cathedral, a living room or in secret. A believer who leaves the church to follow Jesus alone has not been activated but disconnected. The companion resource *Activate the Church* sets out the whole of it for a local church: where it comes from, what each "one" asks and what it does not, how it grows out of formation and where to start [138].

Where the church is large, activation mostly serves retention: the roles that keep the young, the nominal brought back to life. Where the church is small or absent, it is reach to people who were not Christian, but only if someone crosses (Section 1.8). Both are activation. Only the second bends the line.

From practice to multiplication. Activation is the end of a chain, not a campaign. The chain runs through formation and trust: a young person becomes a deeply formed believer, then a trusted leader, then an activated leader and a multiplier. Activation that skips the middle produces leaders who cannot sustain what they start. Believers are formed in a few shared practices. NXT Move's discipleship material names seven: prayer and devotion, worship, the Word, community, serving, giving and sharing faith [107]. They practise

them with someone else, which is what walking with one means. They do it in a setting small enough to be known, from the Methodist class of about a dozen to the Catalytic Communities NXT Move convenes for youth ministry leaders in Dallas–Fort Worth: monthly cohorts of 10–15 leaders, with a longitudinal study by Dallas Theological Seminary [108]. The chain can be watched in Europe. Six years ago a teenager joined the Amplify Young Evangelists Academy, which NXT Move Europe now runs. Today she leads it, and in 2025–26 its 150 young evangelists shared the gospel with 10,318 people and trained 1,502 others to do the same [158] (Unverified: the academy's own count). A church can see whether its people are living it. Four questions, asked of a church's own people every year, show whether believers are discipling one another, inviting others in and sharing their faith, not only attending. In the past month, have you met with someone to help them follow Jesus? Invited someone to a gathering where they could meet God? Shared what Jesus has done in your life with someone who does not follow him? And was the person you shared with already part of a church? The last question tells retention from reach. They read across the J12 (Section 4.2), where 1 : 1 : 1 sits in the Multiplication tier: walk with one under *follow*, invite one under *mission* and reach one under *world*. They are self-reported, and people over-report sharing their faith, so they are read as a ceiling rather than a count.

Fast, not hasty. Some current models measure activation by speed. Disciple-making movement networks report more than 100 million professing disciples, about 1% of the world [43] (SGC p. 18, Unverified: reported by the movements themselves), and critics such as Matt Rhodes argue that pressure for rapid generations of churches can bypass teaching and formation [106]. Part 1 points the other way. The early church's rate was high because formation was patient and almost everyone was doing it. The aim of 1 : 1 : 1 is breadth, every believer forming someone, not haste.

From everywhere to everywhere. Activation inside one region cannot bend a world line (Section 1.7). Sending from within the Window is one of the 10/40 collective's five goals (Section 1.8). The African church that Part 3 describes is the largest pool of young believers in the world and holds about 3.5% of the church's income [44]. Much of Africa's own least-reached population, in the Sahel and the north, lies inside the 10/40 Window. Chad, half of Part 3's exception, is a Window country. The sending is already multi-directional. MANI's continental consultation in Abidjan in March 2026 brought together more than 400 African mission leaders from about 40 countries and affirmed the African church as an increasingly sending force [114]. Korea's churches reported 21,917 missionaries in 174 countries in 2023, a number that has fallen for several years [115]. And the SG500 Asia Cities Forum is working toward gospel movements in Asia's 500 largest cities by 2033 [116]. The collaborative task is to connect them: young leaders who are already activated, and the resources and relationships that would let them send as well as stay, and sustain the believers already inside the Window. The 10/40 collective puts it plainly: where believers already live, the Window "does not need more senders" so much as believers "activated, and multiplying" [118]. Where there are none, someone has to cross, and the nearest are best placed. Sending from within the Window is cross-cultural evangelism over the shortest distance [152].

6.6 Planting: activation that stays activated

Activation needs somewhere to happen, and the most reliable place the evidence points to is a church that does not yet exist. This is not a claim that new churches are better than old ones. It is a claim about roles, and about the unit that matters: **not churches planted, but believers activated to plant them.** Antioch was planted by unnamed refugees (Section 1.2). The Methodist expansion and the Pentecostal century were carried by lay people starting congregations that did not wait for permission (Table A8).

Why new settings activate. A new church has more jobs than people, so everyone is needed. Behaviour-setting research found that where there are fewer people than roles, people take on more roles and feel more responsible for the outcome, first in schools and then in congregations [92, 93]. Large congregations show the reverse in one respect: people who attend very large churches report less support they can count on from other members [91] (Counted, U.S.). And churches age the way Christendom did: roles become professional and members become an audience. A church that stops sending re-runs 313 in miniature.

What the counted evidence shows, almost all of it from the United States:

- **Roles and retention.** Teenagers who held regular responsibilities or leadership positions at church were more likely to stay through their early twenties (Section 2.5) [86] (Counted, correlational).
- **Activation and age.** Southern Baptist churches founded since 2000 baptise 8.4 people per 100 attenders a year, against 5.1 for churches founded before 1900 [90] (Counted; one denomination, 2023; baptisms include members' children). New churches that start another church within five years report higher attendance and more new commitments [87] (planters' own reports).
- **Reach and transfer.** In U.S. churches planted since 2008, planters estimated that 42% of worshippers had never attended church or had not attended for many years, and about a third of plants were made up mainly of the previously unchurched [87, 88]. In the average U.S. Protestant church today, pastors estimate that 20% of newcomers did not attend church before [89]. (Estimated, different definitions and respondents, so not like-for-like.) Most people in Western plants still come from other churches. The often-quoted claim that 60–80% of a plant's people were unchurched has no primary source (Appendix C.1).
- **Movements.** Church planting movement counts are self-reported (Table A8). The 2020 U.S. national study of disciple-making found no statistically verifiable multiplying churches in North America, and warned that churches over-report their own disciple-making [95]. Neither confirms nor refutes the global counts. Both argue for measuring them.

Two jobs, one mechanism. Transfer growth is usually counted against planting. On this paper's thesis it is half the point. A believer who moves from a seat in an established church to a role in a new one has been activated even if no one has yet been converted: that is the retention job. The share of a plant's people who were not in church before is the multiplication job. Planting does both, in proportions that can be measured. The measure is the planter: how many ordinary believers, above all young ones, have started something (a group, a gathering, a church), and whether what they started has started something else. In South Asia a twenty-month diploma, written by twelve South Asian next-generation leaders rather than imported, is training 110 church planters in India, Bhutan and Bangladesh at about $209 for each leader [158] (Unverified: the programme's own figures). That is a cost per planter trained, not yet per church planted or believer kept, which is the link Section 6.3 says is still missing. This extends **1 : 1 : 1** (Section 6.5) rather than adding a fourth task. Planting is what that practice produces when it compounds: the person reached in everyday life becomes the home where believers next disciple one another, and the next gathering begins.

Three cautions. Selection: activated people choose plants, so the correlations above do not show that planting causes activation. The comparison in Section 4.3 is designed to separate the two. **Duplication:** a plant beside a healthy church duplicates rather than multiplies. The Collab's map of who does what (Section 6.3) is where plants are pointed at gaps, above all among the least reached. **Durability:** new churches age, and the activation they create fades unless they plant in turn, so the measure is generations, not starts.

FOR A LOCAL CHURCH

What a congregation can do before any of this is finished.

Most of what this paper proposes is under construction. JFINDX's instrument is being locked in late 2026, 2027 is its baseline year, and the first trend lines come in 2030–31 (Section 6.7). None of it needs to be waited for. A church can audit its life this year against the three rooms of the early church (discipling one another from house to house, a fellowship others are invited into, faith shared in everyday life) and the sequence (time, trust, truth). It can seat young leaders in real decisions, count how many of its young people hold a role, and ask its own 13–30-year-olds the four 1 : 1 : 1 questions of Section 6.5 (in the past month, have they discipled someone, invited someone in, shared their faith, and with whom), with the companion resource *Activate the Church* as its guide [138]. It can find the others working toward the same generation in its city and share one calendar with them. It can ask who the nearest people are who know no Christian, and who it will send to them. And when JFINDX opens to member organisations it can run the survey under its own name and read its results beside its neighbours'. Churches that want to be part of the baseline, the research on trust or a city table can say so through the form at nxtmove.global/accelerate.

6.7 The road to 2033

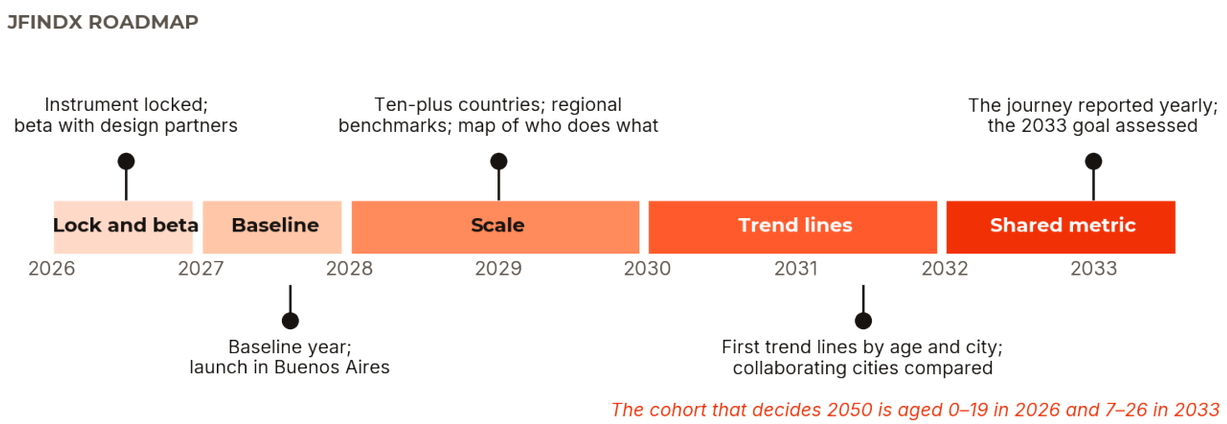


Exhibit 42. The road to 2033: the JFINDX roadmap and the cohort that decides 2050. Projected: planned milestones, not results. [62, 136]

When	Milestone	What it shows
2026	Instrument locked with the researcher panel. A beta planned with a small group of design-partner organisations	The questions everyone will answer
2027	Collab-wide roll-out and the baseline year, launched in Buenos Aires in September. First pooled report shared across the Collab. Research on trust by age planned with the Africa team, beginning in Nairobi	Where young people stand on the journey, by age, of those who have completed the Index
2028–29	Scale to ten-plus countries. Regional benchmarks. A published map of who does what, and of where no one is. The 10/40 collective's members run the Index locally and anonymised, reported on their own	Comparable results. Duplication removed

When	Milestone	What it shows
2030–31	Longitudinal waves. First trend lines by age and city. Collaborating cities compared with others	Whether collaboration holds the 'holds' row, read beside research on trust by age. Whether workers and money have moved toward the gaps the map shows (Finding 4)
2032–33	The Index used as the shared metric. The journey reported each year. The 2033 goal assessed	Whether everyone in the next generation has had an opportunity to follow Jesus

Exhibit 43. Milestones on the road to 2033. [62, 136]

The budget, governance and division of labour behind these milestones are set out in the JFINDX brief and the Collab's own working documents, not here [62, 60]. This paper's job is the argument and the evidence.

6.8 The invitation

This paper was written to rally people to a cause, not to an organisation. The invitation is not to join NXT Move, or to help anyone do what they already do. It is to act on five things the evidence points to, wherever you are, with whoever is near you. People who act on them will find one another.

THE ARGUMENT, RESTATED

Retention protects the line. Multiplication bends it. Only an activated church, working from everywhere to everywhere, does both.

For a century the church has grown as fast as the world and no faster. It grew faster than the world only when ordinary believers carried the faith from the inside out. The next generation, above all in Africa, decides whether that engine runs everywhere. Keeping them protects the line. Activating them, and sending them to those who know no Christian (Finding 4), is what would bend it.

- **Join the conversation.** Take the flat line seriously, and talk about it with the people you work alongside: what it would take, in your city and your generation, for the church to grow faster than the world again. The data, the code and the assumptions behind every chart are published with this paper so that the conversation can be a shared one. We would rather be corrected than believed.
- **Collaborate.** Duplication is the enemy, and time is measured in people. Find the others working toward the same generation in your city and act together: one calendar, one table, one map of who does what and of where no one is, without logos or ego.
- **Research together.** Measure the whole handover by age: the journey with the shared instrument, belonging and trust with research partners, and read the results together. What is understood together gets acted on together. Young people should be co-researchers, not respondents.
- **Build meaningful relationships.** Time, then trust, then truth. Move time and budget from broadcast to listening. Share the table with young leaders in real decisions. Stay long enough to be trusted. Belonging precedes believing.
- **Activate the church.** Live as the early church did, from house to house, in the temple courts and in the marketplace: walk with one person as you disciple one another, invite one into the fellowship of believers, and reach one by sharing your faith in everyday life. Every believer active, in every region at once, sending as well as staying, nearest first to the people who know no Christian, and sent to start what does not yet exist. Retention protects the line. Only this bends it.

APPENDIX A

Methods

How the measures, labels and models in this paper were built, and what remains open.

A.1 Net growth

Net growth = compound annual growth rate of Christians − compound annual growth rate of world population, in percentage points per year, computed from each source's start and end figures for the period. Because share changes multiplicatively, a sustained net growth rate g over n years multiplies the share by $(1 + g)^n$. The 1800–1900 rate (+0.42) uses Barrett's world population for 1800 (about 900 million), which gives the 23% share; on HYDE's higher figure the share is about 21% and the rate about +0.5. "If nothing changes" in Exhibit 3 holds each CSGC group's 2020–26 growth rate constant to 2050. Because it assumes fertility stops falling, it overstates world population by about 0.6 billion compared with the UN.

A.2 Evidence labels

COUNTED	census or survey data
ESTIMATED	scholarly reconstruction from partial evidence
MODELLED	derived mainly from assumptions (for example, a fixed growth rate)
PROJECTED	future scenario
UNVERIFIED	recalled, secondary, or internal. Not confirmed against a primary source

The sources. The paper draws on 159 sources of five kinds, listed in Appendix D: national censuses and official statistics (Ghana's statistical service, Brazil's census, the United Nations' population projections). Representative surveys (the Pew Research Center's studies across 106 and 36 countries, Afrobarometer's 34-country rounds, Gallup, Barna, the Future of Faith Institute). The two global counts of Christians (the Center for the Study of Global Christianity and Pew). Historical scholarship on the early church, the missionary era and the Pentecostal century (Stark, Ehrman, Kreider, Jenkins, Walls, Sanneh, Finke, Robeck and others). And the NXT Move community itself: the conversations and consultations NXT Move has convened across regions and generations, whose notes and summaries are cited as unpublished sources [25]. Primary sources are used wherever they could be reached. Secondary and unverified ones are marked as such.

Where sources disagree, the paper compares them rather than choosing one without saying so. For example, CSGC combines censuses, surveys and church records and counts unregistered churches, while Pew relies on censuses and surveys only. So CSGC counts about 2.65 billion Christians against Pew's 2.3 billion, and the two disagree sharply on the unaffiliated (11.5% against 24.2% in 2020), mostly because of China [2, 4]. The paper shows both, says which is used in each exhibit, and says why.

A.3 The scenario grid and the regional grid

Parameter	Value and basis	Evidence	Source
Africa's population, 2050	Low 2,283m · Medium 2,467m · High 2,653m (UN variants. Fertility about half a child below or above medium)	Projected	[45, 47]
World population, 2050	Rest of world held at UN medium (7,198m) plus Africa's variant	Projected	[45]
Africa's Christian share, 2050	52.2%: CSGC's 1,288.6m African Christians divided by the UN medium population. Held constant across fertility paths	Projected	[2]
Rest-of-world Christians, 2050	2,023.6m (CSGC 2050 total 3,312.2m minus Africa)	Projected	[2]
Retention: holds	About 0% net loss. Raised → currently Christian, % of adults, 2024: Nigeria 61 → 61, Ghana 72 → 73, Kenya 86 → 85	Counted	[6]
Retention: softens	−11.3% net (South Africa 71 → 63). Brazil (−15.6%) and Mexico (−16.1%) are similar	Counted	[6]
Retention: erodes	−24% net (United States 80 → 62, −22.5%. Chile 89 → 66, −25.8%)	Counted	[6]
Share affected	40.4% of Africa's 2050 population is aged 18–43: the cohorts reaching adulthood 2025–2050	Projected	[46]

Table A3. Model parameters (Section 5.1). All inputs and outputs are in the published CSV files (Appendix B).

Christians in 2050 = rest-of-world Christians (2,023.6m, CSGC) + Africa's population (UN variant) × 52.2% × (1 + net retention loss × 0.404). Net retention loss is 0 (holds), −0.113 (softens) or −0.24 (erodes), from Pew's 2024 raised-versus-current figures for Nigeria/Ghana/Kenya, South Africa, and the United States/Chile. 0.404 is the share of Africa's 2050 population aged 18–43 (UN medium, five-year age groups). World population = 7,198m (rest of world, UN medium) + Africa's variant. Collaboration pathways: cohorts reaching adulthood before the start year follow the 'softens' drift. Later cohorts 'hold'. Each five-year cohort is weighted by its size in the UN age distribution. The 'grows' row multiplies the central 2050 share by $(1 + g)^{17}$ for 2033–2050 and $(1 + g)^{42}$ for 2033–2075, and converts points to people at the UN medium world population of 9,664m. The regional grid (Section 5.2) applies the same retention adjustment to CSGC's 2050 Christians on each continent, with the share aged 18–43 from the UN medium age structure of that continent, and the collaboration pathways by cohort in the same way. Africa's pathways are the published ones of Table B5.

Sensitivities. The grid was built to be simple. These are the places where a different choice would move it, and which way.

- **Children of those who leave (upper bound).** If under-18s in 2050 follow their parents out, the share affected rises to 77%. 'erodes' at expected fertility then falls to about 31.8% and 'softens' to about 33.1%. The retention effect would be larger, not smaller.
- **A different baseline for the rest of the world.** Using Pew's lower count of Christians outside Africa (it counts China and India differently) would move every cell down by roughly 2–3 points but leave the gaps between cells about the same [7].
- **Faster fertility decline than the UN low path.** This would shrink the African lever further, and make retention matter more, not less.

- **Simplifications.** Christian and Muslim fertility within Africa are treated as equal. Africa includes North Africa. Retention rates come from one survey snapshot of adults' lifetime switching, not tracked cohorts. The measure is net: it counts those who came to faith as adults as well as those who left, so a rate can improve from either direction. The 'grows' row assumes the gain comes from people not previously Christian and does not model the demographic mix of converts or where they live (Section 5.7).
- **Horizon.** The fertility effect grows after 2050: by 2075 Africa's low and high paths differ by about 1.2 billion people [45]. Retention effects also compound across generations. A 2075 extension should be modelled with cohort methods.

What the findings do not say. They do not add Africa's 125 million to Pew's 66 million net switching loss in the North, which rests on a different baseline, period and method. They assume, and do not show, that a shared response holds retention. Finding 5's test in Section 5.8 exists to check it. The 144 million of Finding 3 rests on an assumed rate, a quarter of a per cent a year, about 60% of the missionary century's rate of about 0.4% a year. It is an illustration of scale, not a forecast. And every regional number depends on CSGC's 2050 projections, which Pew's run below (Exhibit 1).

A.4 Open work

- Chad DHS 2014–15 microdata: registration in hand. Tabulate religion by age to complete Part 3. Any Chad fieldwork stays remote and partner-led for now, given the security situation there [59].
- Johnson & Chung (2004) or the *Atlas of Global Christianity*: library access to verify the AD 300–1800 figures in Exhibits 1 and 4 [20, 19].
- Research on belonging and trust by age (Section 4.3): co-design with the Africa team (Joe Gachira. Ishmael Machaira as Nairobi Research Lead), young co-researchers and research partners. Planned first setting: the Nairobi table.
- A cohort-based 2075 extension of the grid, and an 'expands' row sized from evidence rather than illustration once JFINDX and census data allow it.
- Corrections to the book's citations (Appendix C) for the adapted chapters.
- Church planting (Section 6.6): read the primary sources held back from this draft (Wicker 1969. J. C. Farmer's 2007 dissertation on parent churches. NCLS on congregation size and young-adult retention). Gather planting and role data from African partner networks. Pre-register the context questions in Section 4.3.
- Whitefield and Wesley (Sections 1.5, 1.6, 6.1): page references in Dallimore, Haykin and Bartels; read the critical lives (Stout 1991, Lambert 1994, Kidd 2014) beside Dallimore before the story is told at length anywhere, and name Whitefield's defence of slavery in any longer telling.
- Page references for Kreider, Sanneh, Walls and Robert, and for Lausanne's ranking of discipleship as the first gap. The regional split of Christians in 1800 (Section 1.6).
- Invited readers: a sociologist of religion, an Africa specialist and a Collab member's research lead, described as invited feedback unless a journal process is used.
- A regional grid with an Asian and 10/40 conversion row (Section 5.7), parameterised by net conversion rates rather than by money.
- Retention of first-generation believers in restrictive contexts, with the 10/40 collective, where it can be done safely and anonymously.

- A baseline of where Collab and NXT Move workers and money go by region (Section 6.3), published with the map of who does what and of where no one is, so that lever 4 and Finding 4 can be measured.
- A question for later research: whether reaching someone outside the church can be told apart from renewing someone inside it, so that reach and retention can be read separately (Sections 5.8 and 6.5).
- The mission-finance lineage: trace the '1% of mission giving' and '$1–2 per $100,000' figures to *World Christian Trends* (2001) and replace them with a current estimate if one exists [109].

A.5 Reached, unreached and without access

Reached and *unreached* describe whether a people has a church able to reach the rest of it. *Reach*, elsewhere in this paper, is the act (Purpose and posture). Sources on the least reached count different things, so their totals differ. CSGC measures individuals' realistic access to the gospel. Joshua Project measures ethnolinguistic groups, so a group counts as unreached even inside a majority-Christian country. The IMB measures whether anyone is working among a group. This paper uses CSGC for people without access, as it does for Christians, and Lausanne for workers, and says which wherever a figure appears. Figures on mission giving are labelled Unverified unless a current source is given: CSGC retired its series on the income of foreign missions in 2025 [2].

Term	Who uses it	Definition	Size
Population without gospel access (formerly 'unevangelized')	CSGC	People unlikely to hear the gospel in a way they can respond to	2.30 billion, 27.7% (2026). 2.77 billion projected for 2050. Estimated [1, 2]
Unreached (population)	Lausanne	People living where there is no church able to make the gospel known without outside help	About 3.3 billion, against about 4.6 billion reached (2024). Estimated [43]
Unreached people group (UPG)	Joshua Project	An ethnolinguistic group with 2% or fewer evangelicals and 5% or fewer Christian adherents	7,162 groups, about 3.62 billion people, 44% of the world (September 2026). Estimated [117]
Frontier people group (FPG)	Joshua Project	An unreached group with 0.1% or fewer Christians and no evidence of a sustained movement	4,824 groups, about 2.05 billion people, 25% of the world (September 2026). Estimated [117]
Unengaged unreached people group (UUPG)	IMB and Finishing the Task	An unreached group with no active church-planting strategy or workers among it	Changes with field reports
10/40 Window	Joshua Project. NXT Move 10/40 collective	The region from West Africa to East Asia between 10° and 40° north	About 5.5 billion people, two in three worldwide. About 6% Christian (Table B7). Estimated [118, 117]

Table A5. Terms for the least reached, and the size each source gives.

A.6 Regions, maps and the population basis

The long series. Christian share by continent divides CSGC's counts of Christians by the United Nations' population for every year from 1970 to 2050 (estimates to 2023, medium variant for 2025 and 2050), so that one population source is used throughout. For 1900 we use CSGC's own published shares where they exist (Latin America 95.2%, Northern America 97.1%, Oceania 77.4%, Europe "nearly 95%") and derive Africa and Asia from CSGC's counts and its 1900 world total. CSGC's own percentages differ by up to one point because it uses its own population estimates. There are no counted figures between 1900 and 1970, so lines across that gap are drawn dotted.

The 2020 snapshot. NXT Move's regions and the 10/40 Window do not follow continental borders, so we sum Pew's 2020 country counts to each of them [119]. Pew counts the people who call themselves Christian, and CSGC counts affiliation from church and census records, so the snapshot runs lower than the long series everywhere except Africa (Table B8). The 10/40 Window is Joshua Project's revised list of 68 countries and territories [120].

The working definition of NXT Move's regions. NXT Move's pages do not list countries for each region [121], so the definition follows those pages where they speak and Lausanne's regions where they do not [43]. Five choices are ours. Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and the Caucasus sit in Europe, and Central Asia is the five Central Asian states. Mauritania, Somalia and Sudan sit in the Middle East and North Africa, as NXT Move's regional page names them. Iran sits in the Middle East, where Lausanne places it in South Asia. Myanmar and Timor-Leste sit in Southeast Asia.

NXT Move region	Countries
North America	Canada, United States
Latin America & Caribbean	Argentina, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, US Virgin Islands, Uruguay, Venezuela
Brazil	Brazil
Europe	Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Channel Islands, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom
Africa	Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, DR Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Réunion, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Middle East & North Africa	Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian territories, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Western Sahara, Yemen
Central Asia	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan
South Asia	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

NXT Move region	Countries
East Asia	China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea
Southeast Asia	Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam
South Pacific	Australia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Micronesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu

Table A6. The working definition of NXT Move's eleven regions (2020 snapshot). [121, 119]

Lausanne's report. The *State of the Great Commission* draws its regional figures from the World Christian Database and Encyclopedia (accessed 2022–23) and from Pew's 2015 projections, the same families of sources used here. Its continental chart (p. 29) prints no values, and none of its twelve regional chapters gives a Christian share or a figure for the 10/40 Window [43]. It contributes the regional frame, not new numbers.

A.7 Crosswalks: the book, the history and the skills

The three crosswalks behind the model in Section 4.1: the book's four questions, the history in Part 1, and the book's six skills as the leader's side of the handover [32].

Layer	The book's question	The book's material	Without trust, it becomes
Belong	With whom do I belong?	Ch. 7 (from rows to circles). Ch. 8 (third places. Love = Time)	"I don't trust the places where I belong"
Trust	What is true?	Ch. 5: establish trust before presenting truth. "truth is often found in the tension of debate"	"I don't trust what I believe"
Depth	What truly matters?	Ch. 5: "restore the price to regain the prize". The cost of discipleship illuminates the prize	"I don't trust that what is valued is valuable"
Lead	Who am I?	Ch. 3: identity received, not constructed. Ch. 6: empower local leaders, community over empire	"I don't trust who I am"

Table A7. The four questions mapped to the four layers. [32] (Ch. 5, pp. 75–76).

Period or movement	Layer it shows	What it did
The early church (AD 33–313)	Lead, Belong, Depth	Every believer active (*laos*, not clergy). The faith carried through households and workplaces. Refugees planting Antioch. Sponsors and up to three years of formation before baptism [96, 97]
The switch-off (313 onward)	Lead removed	Ministry became a rationed profession. Believers became an audience. Growth continued while the engine stopped
Celtic mission	Belong	Belonging before believing: welcome into the community first [15]
The Jesuits	Depth	Formation and obedience. A few deeply formed people carried the faith across continents
The Moravians	Trust, Lead, Depth	Ordinary refugees trusted with the mission. A century of prayer. Humility and love for one another [16]

Period or movement	Layer it shows	What it did
The Awakenings and the Methodist class meeting (1730s–1840s)	Belong, Depth, Lead	Lay preachers and circuit riders forming new congregations wherever settlers went. Groups of a dozen watching over one another. Church membership in America from about 17% to 37% (1776–1860) [77, 78]
The missionary era (1792–1910)	Reach. Lead where handed over	Reached the world through sent missionaries. Took root where local catechists, teachers and evangelists carried it, in their own languages [98, 99]
The Welsh revival (1904–05)	Depth	An estimated 100,000 converts in a year. Chapels full, but little structure to hold the next generation [79]
Azusa Street and global Pentecostalism (1906 onward)	Lead, Depth, Belong, Trust	Every believer a minister (Acts 2:17). Lay evangelism through personal networks. Indigenous leaders from the start. A multiracial mission under a Black pastor in segregated America [80, 43]
The East African Revival (1929 onward)	Trust, Lead	Lay "saved ones". Public confession and reconciliation across ethnic lines. Still shaping the churches of Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda [81]
Korea (1907 onward)	Lead not renewed	A national revival built one of Asia's largest churches. A century later South Korea shows a 24-point youth gap in affiliation [28]
Church planting movements (1990s onward)	Lead, Belong	Ordinary believers starting house-sized churches that start others, mostly in Africa and South Asia. About 1,850 movements and 100 million believers, self-reported [94] (Unverified)
Ghana today	Belong, Lead (campus)	Young people move to Pentecostal and charismatic churches that engage them. PENSA hands real roles to students [37, 57]

Table A8. The model applied to the history in Part 1.

Skill (chapter)	Layer	In practice
Expedite clarity in uncertainty (3)	Lead	Name identity as received, not performed. Give young people a clear part in the mission
Employ a high-tech and high-touch methodology (4)	Belong	Use digital reach to create presence, not replace it. The scarce resource is attention and time
Establish trust before presenting truth (5)	Trust	Go where young people are. Listen before speaking. Create safety for doubt
Empower others through resources for good (6)	Lead	Move resources and authority toward local and young leaders. Community over empire
Elevate voices with a shared message bigger than themselves (7)	Trust, Belong	Display unity across churches. Keep politics and personal empire out of the pulpit
Engage all with insight and collaborative leadership (8)	Lead, Belong	Shared tables where the generations decide together. What people design together they own together

Table A9. The book's six skills mapped to the four layers. [32]

APPENDIX B

Data tables

The series behind the exhibits. All are also published as CSV files with the paper.

B.1 Christianity's share of the world (CSGC)

Year	World population (millions)	Christians (millions)	Share of world	Evidence
1900	1,620	558	34.5%	Counted
1970	3,695	1,223	33.1%	Counted
2000	6,172	1,993	32.3%	Counted
2020	7,887	2,526	32.0%	Counted
2026	8,301	2,674	32.2%	Counted
2050	9,709	3,312	34.1%	Projected (2025 edition)
2075	10,250	3,676	35.9%	Projected (2026 edition)

Table B1. The series behind Exhibits 1, 2 and 4 from 1900. [1, 2]

Group	1900	1970	2000	2020	2026	2050 CSGC	2050 if nothing changes	2050 Pew	Multiple, 1900–2026
Christianity	34.5	33.1	32.3	32.0	32.2	34.1	32.6	31.4	×4.8
Islam	12.4	15.6	21.2	24.3	25.4	29.5	29.7	29.7	×10.5
Hinduism	12.5	12.3	13.7	13.9	13.8	12.8	13.5	14.9	×5.7
Chinese folk religion	23.5	6.5	6.8	5.8	5.4	4.0	4.1	–	–
Unaffiliated	0.2	19.2	12.7	11.5	11.0	8.9	9.2	13.2	–
Other religions	17.0	13.3	13.2	12.5	12.2	10.6	10.9	–	–

Table B1b. Share of world population by group, % (Exhibit 3). 1900–2026 Counted (CSGC 2026 edition). 2050 Projected (CSGC 2025 edition. Pew 2015) or Modelled (2020–26 growth rates held constant). The multiple is the number of adherents in 2026 against 1900, Counted. The world's population grew 5.1 times. Pew's "folk religions" (4.8% in 2050) also includes African traditional religions, so it is not shown against Chinese folk religion. [1, 2, 7]

B.2 Net growth by era

Era	Net growth (pts/yr)	Evidence	Christians (start → end)	Source
40–300	+3.40	Modelled	Stark: 1,000 → 6.3m at 40% a decade (Roman Empire). Ehrman: about 3m by 300	[9, 10, 11]

Era	Net growth (pts/yr)	Evidence	Christians (start → end)	Source
300–500	+0.92	Unverified	About 40m by 500 (Barrett/Johnson, recalled)	
500–1000	−0.02	Unverified	About 50m by 1000	[12]
1000–1500	+0.01	Unverified	About 80m by 1500	[12]
1500–1800	+0.06	Unverified	About 204m by 1800 (secondary)	[12]
1800–1900	+0.42	Estimated	204m → 558m, 23% → 34.5% (world 1800 from Barrett)	[1]
1900–1970	−0.06	Counted	558m → 1,223m	[1]
1970–2000	−0.08	Counted	1,223m → 1,993m	[1]
2000–2026	−0.01	Counted	1,993m → 2,674m	[1]
2026–2050	+0.24	Projected	→ 3,312m (34.1%)	[2]
2050–2075	+0.20	Projected	→ 3,676m (35.9%)	[1]

Table B2. Net growth by era, as plotted in Exhibit 4.

B.3 Ghana census: religion by age

Group	Ages 15–39, 2021	Ages 40+, 2021	Ages 15–39, 2010	Ages 40+, 2010
Traditionalist	2.6%	5.2%	4.0%	7.5%
No religion	4.8%	6.0%	5.3%	7.0%
Pentecostal / charismatic	32.5%	28.4%	29.9%	23.4%
Mainline Protestant	17.0%	20.0%	18.1%	21.1%
Catholic	9.9%	11.0%	13.0%	13.8%

Table B3. Ghana, national, population-weighted from five-year age groups (15–39 and 40 and over). [37, 38]

B.4 The scenario grid

Retention	Fertility	Africa pop. (m)	African Christians (m)	World pop. (m)	World Christians (m)	World share
Holds	Low	2,283	1,193	9,481	3,217	33.93%
Holds	Medium	2,467	1,289	9,664	3,312	34.27%
Holds	High	2,653	1,386	9,851	3,409	34.61%
Softens	Low	2,283	1,138	9,481	3,162	33.35%
Softens	Medium	2,467	1,230	9,664	3,253	33.66%
Softens	High	2,653	1,323	9,851	3,346	33.97%
Erodes	Low	2,283	1,077	9,481	3,101	32.71%
Erodes	Medium	2,467	1,164	9,664	3,187	32.98%

Retention	Fertility	Africa pop. (m)	African Christians (m)	World pop. (m)	World Christians (m)	World share
Erodes	High	2,653	1,252	9,851	3,275	33.25%

Table B4. All nine scenarios (Exhibit 30).

B.5 Collaboration pathways (expected fertility)

Pathway	World share 2050	World Christians (m)	Against fragmented
Fragmented: drift to Softens	33.66%	3,253	reference
Fragmented + trust collapse: Erodes	32.98%	3,187	-66 million
Collaborative from 2027 (Holds after)	34.24%	3,309	+56 million
Collaborative from 2033	34.12%	3,297	+44 million
Collaborative from 2040	33.95%	3,282	+29 million
Fully held (Holds all cohorts)	34.27%	3,312	+59 million

Table B5. Pathways plotted in Exhibit 32.

B.6 Christian share by continent, 1900–2050

Continent	1900	1970	2000	2025	2050 (proj.)	Christians 2025 (m)	Christians 2050 (m)
Latin America	95.2%	94.5%	92.6%	92.8%	93.0%	620	679
Europe	about 95%	74.7%	77.2%	74.1%	67.4%	552	474
Northern America	97.1%	88.2%	81.3%	70.1%	60.0%	272	256
Oceania	77.4%	92.6%	77.7%	65.4%	57.7%	30	33
Africa	9.0%	37.7%	46.2%	48.7%	52.2%	754	1,289
Asia	2.3%	4.6%	7.5%	8.6%	11.0%	417	582
World	34.5%	32.9%	32.2%	32.1%	34.3%	2,645	3,312

Table B6. Exhibits 7 and 16. 1900 Estimated, 1970–2025 Counted, 2050 Projected. Christians: CSGC. Population: UN from 1970, CSGC for 1900. [2, 3, 45]

B.7 NXT Move's regions and the 10/40 Window, 2020

NXT Move region	People (m)	Christians (m)	Christian	In the Window
North America	378	238	62.9%	0%
Latin America & Caribbean	438	379	86.5%	0%
Brazil	209	168	80.6%	0%
Europe	767	509	66.3%	2%

NXT Move region	People (m)	Christians (m)	Christian	In the Window
Africa	1,103	697	63.2%	43%
Middle East & North Africa	635	13	2.1%	100%
Central Asia	76	6	7.3%	100%
South Asia	1,896	36	1.9%	100%
East Asia	1,666	48	2.9%	97%
Southeast Asia	675	149	22.0%	83%
South Pacific	44	27	60.6%	0%
10/40 Window	5,260	322	6.1%	100%

Table B7. Exhibit 8. Pew's 2020 country counts summed by region (Counted). On Pew's count 59% of the Window's Christians live in NXT Move's Africa region, and a higher count for China would lower that share. The Central Asia figure needs care: there, affiliation can reflect ethnic and cultural identity as much as faith, and the region's population has grown and moved considerably since 2020 [137]. [119, 120]

B.8 The two counts compared, 2020

Continent	CSGC	Pew	Gap
Africa	48.1%	50.9%	+2.8
Asia	8.2%	5.4%	−2.8
Europe	75.6%	67.0%	−8.6
Latin America	92.9%	84.6%	−8.3
Northern America	72.4%	62.9%	−9.5
Oceania	67.1%	60.6%	−6.5
World	31.9%	28.8%	−3.1

Table B8. Christian share by continent in 2020: CSGC's counts divided by UN population, against Pew's self-identification counts. [2, 45, 119]

B.9 The regional grid

Continent	Aged 18–43 in 2050	Holds (m)	Erodes (m)	Retention swing (m)	Points of world	Collaborative from 2027 (m)	From 2033 (m)	From 2040 (m)
Africa	40%	1,289	1,164	125	1.29	56	44	29
Asia	34%	582	535	47	0.49	20	15	8
Latin America	33%	679	625	54	0.56	24	17	10
Europe	30%	474	440	34	0.35	15	10	6
Northern America	32%	256	236	20	0.20	8	6	4
Oceania	35%	33	30	3	0.03	1	1	1

Continent	Aged 18–43 in 2050	Holds (m)	Erodes (m)	Retention swing (m)	Points of world	Collaborative from 2027 (m)	From 2033 (m)	From 2040 (m)
World		3,312	3,030	283	2.92	124	94	58

Table B9. Exhibit 29 and Section 5.2. Inputs and outputs in Regional_Grid_2050.csv. Built by regional_grid.py from CSGC 2050 Christians by continent, UN WPP 2024 medium population by age, and the retention levels of Table A3. Modelled. [3, 46, 6]

APPENDIX C

Correction logs

Claims we checked and could not confirm, or had to correct, in the inputs to this paper. They are listed so that no reader has to rediscover them.

C.1 External research reports used as inputs

Claim	Finding
"Pew projects Christians falling to 28.8% by 2050."	Wrong. 28.8% is Pew's measured share for 2020. Pew's latest 2050 projection (2015) is 31.4% [4, 7]
"Globally, 3.1 people leave Christianity for every one who joins."	Needs context: lifetime switching across 117 countries, not an annual flow [5]
"The Empire was over 50% Christian by AD 350."	Stark's extrapolation, not evidence. The rate it assumes cannot have been sustained [9, 10]
"A lower starting number requires a slightly lower growth rate" (on Ehrman).	Backwards: a lower start needs a higher rate [10, 11]
"China could reach 450 million Christians by 2040."	No source found. Surveys suggest growth has stalled [83]
"45.4 million Christian martyrs in the 20th century."	Contested. A broad definition, and most of the 2000–10 count were war deaths in DR Congo. CSGC's current estimate is 900,000 per decade [1]
"By 1950 the centre of gravity crossed into the Global South."	The commonly cited crossover is "shortly after 1980" [20]
Ghana and Chad show "exceptional youth religious vitality".	Overstated: a 3-point gap near 100%, mostly generational replacement (Part 3)
A named GPCC leader urged churches to turn sanctuaries into vocational centres.	Not found. The GPCC is led by Apostle Eric Nyamekye. The nearest real statement is John Mahama urging the Assemblies of God (2024) to scale up youth skills training
OneHope: 1 in 14 African teens attempted suicide. Dare 2 Share: "3x more youth group growth".	Not as stated: 4% reported an attempt and 1 in 4 suicidal thoughts (online sample) [42]. Dare 2 Share's own survey claims "30x greater ministry impact" with no published method [58]
Chad: 7.5 million vulnerable. 3,200+ young people vocationally trained.	About 8 million (half the population) need assistance. 3,254 received awareness sessions alongside training, number trained not given [54]

Claim	Finding
Church planting brief (September 2026): "60–80% of a new church's people were previously unchurched". "new churches bring 6–8 times more new people".	Agreed: no primary dataset found. The counted U.S. figure is 42%, from planters' estimates [87]. Not used.
Same brief: "churches under ten years old baptise 10.8 per 100 members against 2.5 for older churches" (SBC).	Not found. The 2023 Annual Church Profile gives 8.4 per 100 attenders for churches founded since 2000 against 5.1 for those founded before 1900 [90]. The paper uses that.
Same brief: "parent churches grew 21.5% in the five years after planting" (624 SBC churches).	Traced only through secondary sources to a 2007 doctoral dissertation (J. C. Farmer), not accessed. No comparison group visible. Not used until the primary is read.
Same brief: independent verification found "no clear examples" of movements.	Overstated: the 2020 U.S. study found no statistically verifiable multiplying churches in North America. It did not test global counts [95].
Same brief: "larger churches retain young adults better", from NCLS "census data".	NCLS is a survey of church attenders, not a census. The size finding was not found in a primary NCLS source. Plausible. Listed as open work.
Same brief: Ghanaian rural–urban migrants "9.2% more likely" to join Pentecostal/charismatic churches. "up to 96% transfer growth". UK youth-worker attrition.	No sources given or found. Not used. Ghana's counted age pattern (Part 3) stands.
Lausanne leaders "perceived that 30 to 40 per cent of Christians globally view the Great Commission as optional".	30–40% is Africa, Asia and Latin America. In North America, Europe and Oceania leaders put it at about half [43] (SGC p. 24)
"1 : 1 : 1" read as one disciple making one disciple in one year.	Not what the paper means. 1 : 1 : 1 is a practice, not a measure: walk with one believer as you disciple one another, invite one person into the fellowship of believers, and reach one by sharing faith in everyday life, after the early church's life from house to house, in the temple courts and in the marketplace (Section 6.5)
The *Apostolic Tradition* as the work of Hippolytus of Rome, c. 215.	Attribution and date contested. Treated here as a composite church order [97]
Hurtado: Christianity grew by riding trends toward literacy and monotheism.	Not as we read Hurtado, who stresses how distinctive Christianity was. Not used
Disciple-making movements defined as 100 churches, four generations, within three years.	The movements' own definition has no three-year window. Figures used only as reported, labelled Unverified [43] (SGC p. 18)

C.2 Lausanne, State of the Great Commission (2024)

Statement	Update
"A larger increase by 2050 to 35.0 percent of the world's population" (p. 127).	Superseded: CSGC's 2025 edition projects 34.1%. Name the edition when quoting [2]
"The unaffiliated will shrink from 16% to 13% of the world, 2010–2050" (p. 81).	Out of date: Pew's 2025 method counts them at 23.3% (2010) and 24.2% (2020) and rising [4]
"Average annual rate of change (2.76)… Africa" (p. 434).	2.76% is Western Africa only. Middle Africa 3.27%, Eastern Africa 2.93% (p. 29)

C.3 Hitting the Ball You Cannot See (2025)

Item in the book	Issue	Fix
"Knowledge doubles every 12 hours" (Ch. 2)	An unsupported projection, often traced to Buckminster Fuller and an IBM remark	Drop, or reframe as a metaphor for acceleration
"42 million young people could leave the Church by 2050" (Ch. 2, n. 6)	Misattributed: Pinetops, *The Great Opportunity* (2018), worst case of a 35–42 million range [34]	Recite as above
The Great Dechurching authors as "Whitehead & Graham"	The authors are Jim Davis and Michael Graham, with Ryan Burge [35]	Correct the citation
US trust in mass media "36% in 2024" (Ch. 5)	Gallup: 31% in 2024. 28% in 2025 [33]	Update
The four generational questions, "research by the Barna Group"	Primary Barna source not cited	Add the specific Barna/Matlock publication
"Only 67% of U.S. churchgoers returned" after the pandemic (Ch. 8)	Not verified against the cited Pew 2023 report	Verify or drop
"41% of Gen Z report mental-health challenges" (Ch. 4)	Source unclear	Verify or drop

C.4 Internal notes and recent reports

Claim	Finding
"80 million a year net growth" (convening notes).	This is close to the world's annual population increase (about 70 million), not the growth in Christians, who add roughly 25 million a year at CSGC's 2020–26 growth rate of 0.95%. The paper uses the correct figure and makes the point: growth in numbers hides a flat share [1]
"8 billion, doubled in 50 years" (convening notes).	World population: 4 billion in 1974, 8 billion in 2022. Correct [45]
Early-church figures for AD 30–100 (convening notes).	Differ from Stark (about 7,500 believers by AD 100). The paper uses Stark, labelled Modelled [9]
"3 billion by 2033" (YouVersion, from handwritten notes).	Unverified. Not used
"Inside out / outside in" as the framing of the two engines.	NXT Move's own framing, not a quotation from the 10/40 Window sessions. Supported by the collective's 'sending from within' goal and testimonials [26]
The Bible Society's *Quiet Revival* figures for England and Wales (2025).	Withdrawn by the publisher in March 2026 after the survey sample proved faulty. Not used except as a cautionary case [72, 74]
Gallup institutional-confidence figures as presented in the April 2026 lectures (church 36%. Medical system 32%).	Those were the 2025 readings. Gallup's July 2026 release has the church at 31% and the medical system at 28%. The paper uses the 2026 figures [68]
"86% of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists have never met a Christian."	Misquoted. CSGC's 2013 figure is that 86% do not personally know a Christian, which is not the same as never having met one. The current CSGC measure is that 18.9% of all non-Christians know a Christian (2026). The paper uses that [110, 1]
"$2 of every $100,000 of Christian income reaches the unreached" (10/40 initiative materials).	Traces to finance ratios in *World Christian Trends* (2001) applied to current income. CSGC retired the underlying series in 2025. Labelled Unverified and dated wherever used [109, 2, 118]

Claim	Finding
Disciple-making movement tallies (about 1,965 movements, about 90% among unreached peoples) presented as counted (external research brief, September 2026).	Self-reported by the movements' own networks. If used, they are labelled Unverified. Not used in this draft
"Focusing on Africa will not expand global share". "biological retention" (same brief).	Overstated: CSGC projects a rise to 34.1% by 2050, largely from Africa. The paper's claim is narrower (Section 5.7). 'Biological retention' conflates fertility and retention, which the paper models separately. Not used [2]
"The church is growing at 1.8% a year" (ATKI materials, 2026, carried into the ATKI Canada synthesis report).	Not a growth rate. 1.8 is Pew's fall in the Christian share of the world between 2010 and 2020, from 30.6% to 28.8%, 1.8 points over ten years [4]. On Pew's count Christians grew about 0.5% a year in that decade and on CSGC's about 1% since 2020, against the world's 0.9% [4, 1]. The error is ATKI's, raised with its leadership in October 2026, and the Canadian baseline is being revised. The paper uses the correct figures [159]

APPENDIX D

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Numbers in brackets in the text refer to this list. Figures were checked against these sources between September and November 2026 unless marked secondary, not accessed, or unpublished.

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APPENDIX E

About NXT Move, the Collab and JFINDX

E.1 Where the thinking comes from

NXT Move's contribution is the room: gatherings that are consultative rather than informative, collaborative rather than self-promoting, representative rather than built on historic power centres, and relational rather than transactional, on the conviction that the room is smarter than any one individual. The data in this paper come from the sources above. The questions it asks, the model in Part 4 and the levers in Parts 5 and 6 came out of those rooms. Exhibit A lists the conversations that shaped it, so that readers can see where each part of the argument was formed [25]. The room is not a substitute for measurement. It decides what to measure, and it is held to what it measures (Section 6.4).

Conversation	When	What it shaped in this paper
Collaboration conversations among leaders working toward 2033	July–September 2026	Duplication is the enemy. Activation as the superpower. Coming together only matters if it leads to acting together. "islands in oceans" (Sections 1.9, 2.7)
The 10/40 Window collective: strategy sessions and testimonials from twenty-plus leaders across the Window	September 2026	Sending from within. The Philippines as a sending nation. "waiting to be activated". Everywhere to everywhere (Sections 1.8, 2.8, 6.5)
The REACTIVATE teaching series: Shoreline Church staff (Austin) and church-leader gatherings in South Africa	August–September 2026	The early church as engine one. The switch-off after 313. House to house, temple courts, marketplace. 1 : 1 : 1 as their practice today (Parts 1 and 6)
Catalytic Communities of youth ministry leaders in Dallas–Fort Worth, and the discipleship material used with new believers	2025–2026	The seven practices. Formation in small cohorts. Activation as the end of a chain (Sections 4.1, 6.5)
The Nairobi Model City tables: bishops, young leaders and marketplace leaders deciding together, with the NXT Move Africa team	2025–2026	The handover as a shared table. Trust as the layer to measure. The research on trust and its first setting (Parts 3, 4 and 6)
Conversations with next-generation researchers and practitioners, including Josh Packard of the Future of Faith Institute	April–July 2026	A trust story, not a belief story. Time → trust → truth. Listening as ministry (Sections 2.5, 6.2)
The ATKI Canada Gathering: church, network and denominational leaders at Centre Street Church, Calgary, with a pre-gathering survey of 159 of them. Facilitated by NXT Move [159]	October 2026	Connection before coordination: trust between leaders first, and shared work grows from it. Leaders ready to work together but not yet connected, with trust and burnout tied as the struggle they rank first. Duplication as the waste. The under-30s as missionaries, not an audience (Sections 1.9, 5.6)

Conversation	When	What it shaped in this paper
Consultations NXT Move facilitated for wider bodies: ICETE (Istanbul, Tirana), the World Evangelical Alliance's Future of the Gospel (Istanbul), the collaboration afternoons at the Fourth Lausanne Congress (Seoul), ATKI's regional tables, the NXT Move NOW gathering (Dallas)	2024–2026	The four collaborative levers. Collaboration "without logos or ego". What people design together they own together (Sections 5.6, 6.3, 6.8)

Exhibit A. The conversations behind the paper. Notes and summaries are cited as unpublished sources. None of them is presented as counted evidence.

NXT Move Global is a next-generation leadership organisation whose tagline is *Elevating Leaders. Multiplying Impact.* Its convening practice rests on the conviction that the room is smarter than any one individual, and that what people design together they own together. Four principles shape every room it convenes: consultative over informative. Collaborative over self-promoting. Representative over historic power centres. Relational over transactional. It serves as backbone organisation for the Next Gen Global Collab and the 10/40 Window collective, works through regional teams, including the Africa team and the Nairobi Model City, and facilitates consultations for wider bodies [60, 63, 25]. Across eleven regions and six initiatives its work aims at three shifts: from isolation to relationship, from disempowerment to impact and from duplication to multiplication [158]. The thinking in this paper, like the book before it, was formed in those rooms.

The backbone role, and the standard we hold ourselves to. A collaboration of many organisations needs someone to carry the work between gatherings: to convene the tables, keep the shared instrument and serve those who do the reaching. Kania and Kramer call this the backbone [128], and it is the role NXT Move holds in the Collab. It gives us an interest in the argument of Section 5.6, and we name it so that readers can weigh what we say. We hold ourselves to the standard the paper sets for any structure that serves a movement. We add structure only where growth has created the need for it (Acts 6). We ask no more of partners than the shared goal, the shared instrument and a few shared commitments, and leave everything else with the local church (Acts 15:28). We connect without owning. We move decisions, money and roles toward local leaders, young leaders and women, and we go first where the church is smallest. And we build so that we can step back, because the history of mission shows structures that outlived the movements they were built to serve. We keep the room accountable to Scripture and to what it measures, so that no agenda, ours included, takes the place of the gospel. We invite our partners to hold us to it.

The Next Gen Global Collab brings together more than thirty organisations from more than twenty nations around one common goal: that everyone in the next generation has an opportunity to follow Jesus by 2033. Annual research is one of its shared activities. NXT Move has served as its backbone organisation since 2024 [60].

The Jesus Following Index (JFINDX) is the Collab's shared measurement instrument, built on the J12 model: three questions (do they follow Jesus, do they join His mission, does their world look different) across four tiers (Exposure, Response, Formation, Multiplication). Member organisations run the survey, about eight minutes long, with 13–30-year-olds under their own names. Results are pooled, and a city or country appears once it passes a working threshold (400 and 2,000 responses) [61, 62, 136].

The author. Jurie Kriel is the founder of NXT Move Global and the author of *Hitting the Ball You Cannot See* (NXT Move Inc., 2025), and served the Lausanne Movement as Global Director of Collaboration until 2025. Correspondence: through the feedback form at nxtmove.global/accelerate. **How to cite this paper.** As the

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E.2 Who shaped this draft

These readers in the NXT Move community commented on Drafts 3 to 5, and Drafts 5 and 6 carry what they found. Naming them records their contribution, not their agreement with every finding. Their comments are cited as [137].

Name	Role in NXT Move	What they shaped
Lynnae Kucera	Financial Director	The numbers: units, rounding, ranges, the cost side and the North's share of the collaboration columns (Sections 5.2, 5.4, 5.7, 5.8, 6.3)
Ulrich Lombard	Special Projects Manager	The JFINDX framework (Exhibit 28), collaboration hinged on duplication (1.9, 5.6) and the two kinds of trust (5.6)
Boshoff Grobler	Board Chairman	One frame, collaboration at scale, the shorter companion, and release and the Africa-led model city (5.6, E.1)
Michelle Janse van Rensburg	Executive Director	The audience decides the content: the shorter companion
Karin Kriel	Director	The test that someone can pass the argument on
Colin Piper	Director of Global Community	The paper as NXT Move's defining narrative. The author note
Dan Randall	Regional Team Leader, Europe	What the paper is for (Purpose and posture)
Amit Khaira	Co-lead, South Pacific	Restrictive contexts, Oceania and soul care (1.8, 5.2, 5.6, 5.7, Exhibit 23)
Joyson Cherian	Co-lead, South Asia	A South Asian reading of the model, and God's part in growth (1.1, 1.9, 4.1, 5.6, 6.1)
Alvan Tauli	Co-lead, Southeast Asia	Switching, duplication and the formation chain (2.3, Exhibits 35 and 41, 3.5)
Ruslan Zagidulin	Regional Team Leader, Central Asia	Central Asia, the 10/40 Window and unity under pressure (1.8, 5.6, Table B7)
Joe Gachira	Regional Team Leader, Africa	Kenya and the quiet loss of the young (3.6)
Rev. Dr John Snelgrove	Board Member	Retention as well as sending, China, clergy and laity

Exhibit E. Readers whose comments shaped Drafts 5 and 6, with their roles in NXT Move. Comments by email, message and conversation, September–October 2026.

NOTES