

10/40 WINDOW UPDATE: FROM MISSION FIELD TO MISSION FORCE

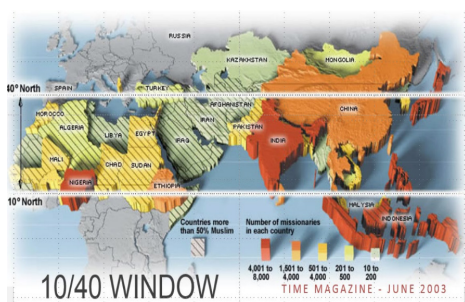
Luis Bush

THE 10/40 WINDOW

The 10/40 Window contains most of the unreached people groups in our world, and is still our primary mission field today. However, increasingly there is emerging a mission force out of this mission field. The thesis of the 10/40 Window Update is that from a mission field thirty years ago, when the first 10/40 Window booklet was written, and now, the 10/40 Window has become a mission force in our day.

We know that the previous 10/40 Window Update was prepared ten years ago¹ (10/40 Window Update in 2013) to see where the unreached and the least reached areas were located. Included in this purpose was also the knowledge and the intention of where and how we pray for these areas. Through the 10/40 Window we learned that prayer does make a difference. The 10/40 Window led us to realize that, as the Body of Christ, we are being called to pray for and engage the upcoming mission force in the 10/40 Window, to mobilize a new generation of missionaries to fulfill the Great Commission through the worldwide proclamation of the gospel, and to catalyze disciple-making movements (DMMS) such that they become church planting movements (CPMS) among every people group (ethne) in the 10/40 Window and beyond.

THE UNFINISHED TASK IN MISSION



Jesus defines the way to complete the unfinished task of the Great Commission that will bring about the end of the age in answer to the question of his disciples as he sat on the Mount of Olives in answer to the question of his disciples: "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?" Matthew 24:3b Jesus answers the question regarding the sign of his coming in two parts. In the first part, he describes the nine notable characteristics of the end of the age in Matthew chapter 24 as follows:

- 1) false Christs, (4-5);
- 2) wars and rumors of wars, (6-7);
- 3) famines, (7);
- 4) pandemics, (7);
- 5) earthquakes, (7);
- 6) martyrs, (8-10);
- 7) false prophets, (11);
- 8) increasing evil and loss of fervent love that is, marked by great intensity of feeling, (12); and
- 9) worldwide proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom to all the ethne/people groups, (13-14) (Matthew 24:4-14).

The best way to define and help complete the remaining global missions tasks is to look first to those unreached ethnic groups around the world, and document them drawing from more than twenty-five years of research, documentation, and publication at Joshua Project: People Groups of the World just as Jesus defined the task in His promise to His disciples and then pray, mobilize and go. *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come* – Matthew 24:14 (ESV)

More than 60% of individuals in the 10/40 Window live among the unreached people groups. The 10/40 Window includes about 70 countries and two-thirds of the world's population. It is also where most of the poor live and is home to Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and other religions. The 10/40 Window vision focuses on the region of the world with the most human suffering combined with the least commitment to the gospel of Jesus. This is the most challenging geographic region for Christian missions today. While it is the greatest challenge in missions today only about one out of ten missionaries serve in the 10/40 Window.

Evangelical missionary societies use the 10/40 Window map to promote missions in Northern Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. The map itself, however, has received minimal scholarly attention. Using insights from the field of critical cartography, the map has been pivotal in directing missionary zeal.

The 10/40 map has reshaped missionary thinking with its meta-geographical proportions, cartographic language, and accompanying rhetoric communicating several novel key propositions about the mission. It shows that maps matter greatly, and that missionary geography should be taken seriously, adopted, and adapted to enlighten and enable the mission force including and especially in the countries of the

¹ [10/40 Window Update in 2013](#)

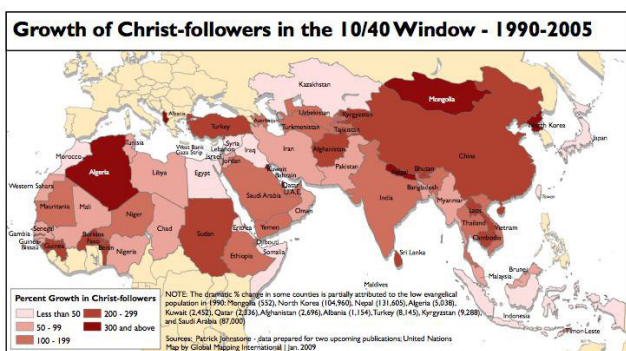
10/40 Window which are from being increasingly transitioning mission fields to becoming mission forces. (NB countries in 10/40 and revised list - (10/40 Window Revised List | Joshua Project) This article highlights some of those nations that model the essence of this article of the 10/40 Window movement from the mission field to a mission force.



PRAYER DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

In 2008, fifteen years into a worldwide emphasis in missions on the 10/40 Window, there are encouraging indicators that this region has been highly responsive to the presentation of the Gospel. The annual growth rate of Christ followers in the 10/40 Window was almost twice that of those outside the 10/40 Window. Christ followers in the 10/40 Window nations increased from 2.5% of the population in 1990 to 4.7% in 2005. The general population grew at only 1.5% annually, while the population of Christ-followers grew at an amazing 5.4% per year!

10/40 Window Statistics	1990	2005	Average annual growth rate
Christ-followers as a % of total population	2.5%	4.7%	
Estimated population of Christ-followers	87,535,000	205,209,000	5.4%
Estimated total population	3,441,271,000	4,326,363,000	1.5%



CHINA FROM MISSION FIELD TO MISSION FORCE: ADVANCING THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT CHINA AND BEYOND

China, officially known as the People's Republic of

[2. 10/40 Window Revised List | Joshua Project](#)

China is the world's most populous country in the world, with a population exceeding 1.4 billion, which is slightly ahead of India³ (China - Wikipedia). Over the last forty years, the Chinese Church and China have changed significantly. It's a new China! It's a new Church! It's a new world⁴ (China Source | China's New Generation). The twenty-year harvest of the 1980s and 1990s following the decade-long Cultural Revolution in China that ended in 1976 could well be called *the greatest historical revival*, but it's a new day. Like the word crisis in Chinese as a symbol is made up of both danger and opportunity so does the situation of China today presents danger and opportunity. Lead Chinese Pastor Ezra Jin Mingri knows and articulates these realities with clarity and conviction.

In the story by award-winning author, Evan Osnos, international correspondent for *The Chicago Tribune* in Beijing, he concludes that "Christianity's rapid rise is reshaping the officially atheist nation, its politics, and the way many Chinese views the world." Osnos highlights Pastor Ezra because he "embodies a historic change. After centuries of foreign efforts to implant Christianity in China, today's Christian ascension is led not by missionaries but by evangelical citizens at home. Where Christianity once was confined largely to poor villages, it is now spreading into urban power centers with often tacit approval from the regime."⁵ (JESUS IN CHINA - Chicago Tribune by Jun 22, 2008, by Award Winning Author Evan Osnos) The Wall Street Journal reported on the emergence of a new church in a new China by telling the story of Pastor Jin Mingri.⁶ (China's Banned Churches Defy Regime, by Brian Spegele, updated July 28, 2011 - Wall Street Journal) From being a mission field, China is becoming a mission force in the 10/40 Window.

In his book titled: *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power*, author and journalist, David Aikman writes on the Beijing Forum in the chapter titled: The Back to Jerusalem Movement. "It was at the Beijing Forum where I, Luis, met Pastor Ezra for the first time. When I returned to Beijing, the recollection of the meeting ten years prior came to my mind. They had gathered from the main families of the house church, pastors from the Three-Self Church, and the emerging Third Wave of churches in the city made up of entrepreneurs and the educated. I met with several individuals from the Beijing Forum and others to hear their stories and to bring a challenge of raising up a new generation from the 4/14 Window age group to bless the nation of China.

What I heard over the next few weeks suggested that there has been so much change in the last decade that it's like the emergence of a new China in which a new

3. [China - Wikipedia](#)

4. [China Source | China's New Generation](#)

5. [JESUS IN CHINA - Chicago Tribune by Jun 22, 2008, by Award Winning Author Evan Osnos](#)

6. [China's Banned Churches Defy Regime, by Brian Spegele, updated July 28, 2011 - Wall Street Journal](#)

Church has emerged on a mission to the countries of the 10/40 Window all the way back to Jerusalem.⁷ (China's Next Generation: New China, New Church, New World, by Luis Bush and Brent Fulton | Goodreads)

In the report of Beijing Forum II, held in November 2011, the participants' vision and dreams for the Church in China were agreed to as follows:

- 1) As Christians, we wish to be a blessing to the country of China of which we are citizens.
- 2) We envision an evangelized China and are moving from the coastlands in the east to the relatively less evangelized central and western parts of our country.
- 3) We dream of the unity of the whole Church in China.
- 4) God is calling us to fulfill a cross-cultural vision, not only within our own nation but beyond.
- 5) We are calling forth a mission force numbering 100,000 to take the gospel back along the "Old Silk Road" from where it first came to us in 635 A.D. We call this the "Back-to-Jerusalem Movement" as we intend to take the gospel back to Jerusalem itself where the Commission to be witnesses was first given by the Lord Jesus to his disciples (Acts 1:8). This was a 1930s home-grown movement which began with the idea of carrying the gospel on foot all the way back to Jerusalem by retracing the steps of the Old Silk Road.
- 6) We want the Church outside of China to join us in the Back-to-Jerusalem vision and invite them to help come and prepare us for the cross-cultural mission.
- 7) We desire to bless our country of China by engaging in constructive, compassionate holistic missions to help build our society in the twenty-first century.

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCHES IN CHINA

An article in the British weekly newspaper The Economist, dated September 15, 2020, affirms that Protestant Christianity is growing in China despite the government's efforts to contradict this growth. In 2014, Bibles were confiscated and shepherds were arrested. But despite these activities, Protestant Christianity is still the fastest-growing faith in the land. Ezra Jin, a recognized Christian leader in China, reflected on recent political developments and the effect on churches in China. Ezra described the situation for the Church in China since 2018, when an amendment to the constitution of the People's Republic of China removed presidential term limits, allowing them to rule indefinitely. With the new organizational structure for managing religious affairs, religions began to be treated as ideological competitors of the Communist Party.

The nature of church-state conflicts in the following

⁷ [China's Next Generation: New China, New Church, New World, by Luis Bush and Brent Fulton | Goodreads](#)

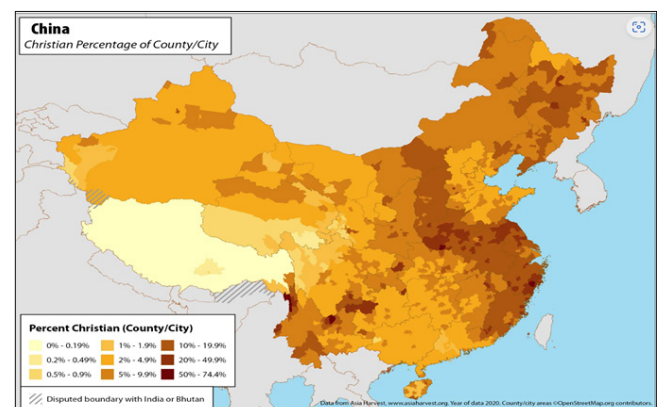
years resulted in persecution and suffering for the Christians. On the 9th of September 2018, Ezra's church was banned, and the government took over the premises. Ezra learned the mystery of suffering. As he read from Isaiah 35:7-8 in the NIV he was greatly encouraged by the prophetic word and what it meant for his homeland. *"The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once laired, grass and reeds, and papyrus will grow. And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way."* (NIV) Ezra understands the prophecy. "The waters quench the thirsty soul, and many come to find refreshment in the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior." This is the story being lived out in China today.

GROWTH IN NUMBERS

Ezra says of the number of Christians in China: "Our estimate is as follows. 'When the Communist Party took power in China in 1949, there were about 700,000 Christians in mainland China. After thirty years of intense persecution and oppression, the Christian presence was erased from public view. But since 1980, for thirty years, there has been a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the resurrection power has been tangible.'"

Today, in 2023, Ezra estimates that there are more than 80 million Christians in China. So, if we look at the total number since 1949, that's over a hundred times more. Perhaps as many as 22 million Chinese Protestants participate in unregistered "underground" churches, according to a new study by researchers at the University of Notre Dame.

We pray with the Christians in China Psalm 80 and verse 19: "Restore us, O Lord, God of hosts; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved," (December 2022). I think that the strategies to reach the countries of the 10/40 Window as in the example of China is one of the subjects most addressed by churches, mission agencies, and organizations interested in fulfilling the Great Commission given by our Lord Jesus. China is one of the countries where Christianity is growing the fastest in preparation for a great harvest of souls for Christ.



BACK TO JERUSALEM MOVEMENT IN CHINESE CHURCHES⁸

For the Chinese Churches on the Chinese mainland, the Back to Jerusalem Movement became the catalyst for the evangelical revival of the church and a turning point in their missionary role in the propagation of the gospel.

The vision was birthed among the Chinese in the 1920s, and since that time, the churches of China have sought to fulfill what they believe is their integral role in fulfilling the Great Commission. In 1946, the *Back to Jerusalem Evangelistic Band*, would independently develop a similar vision. However, government restrictions and persecution forced the movement to go underground for decades.

Originally founded in the 1940s as an eschatological movement with the engagement of different indigenous Chinese Christian mission movements, they shared the vision of preaching the gospel westwards towards Jerusalem to prepare for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

By the 1980s, despite persecution, *Back to Jerusalem* was known not only in the western part of China but also by the Chinese house church leaders who fled outside to the West for asylum. The zeal of the Band was passed on through the years, influencing China Mission: Mission China 2030 Movement.⁹

Many Chinese Christian leaders believe they are commissioned by God to fulfill the vision they have received to take the Good News to the nations in the 10/40 Window.

The goal of the Chinese Back to Jerusalem Movement is to evangelize the unreached peoples of the 10/40 Window from the eastern provinces of China, westward towards Jerusalem. It is being called the largest missions movement in history.

CHINA MISSION: MISSION CHINA 2030 MOVEMENT¹⁰

Korean Chinese leader Rev. Ezra Jin is the chairperson of Mission China 2030. "Churches in China will commission 20,000 cross-cultural missionaries to spread the Gospel overseas by the year 2030. This is the vision set by Chinese leaders at the 2013 Leadership Summit in Seoul, Korea. The shared mission and goal were also the vision of participants who attended the 2016 "Mission China 2030" summit held in September on the island of Jeju in South Korea. More than 1,000 pastors and individuals who have hearts for missions came to Jeju from all over China and the world to learn from and engage in this event. The theme for the conference was "Son of Peace" based on Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."

"During the summit, with the guidance of the Holy

Spirit, we explored ways to fulfill the purpose of Mission China," stated Rev. Ezra Jin, chairperson of Mission China 2030" (Mission China 2030 | Christian Reformed Church). (China's Next Generation - New China, New Church)

THE DECLARATION OF CHINA MISSION 2030

The Declaration of China Mission 2030 affirmed the following:

1. That we are called to be servants of Jesus Christ.
2. That the Bible is the foundation of our faith.
3. That the Back to Jerusalem vision seeks to continue to advance the gospel westward.
4. That we are committed to preaching the gospel overseas, hand in hand with the universal Church, sending out missionaries to the unreached peoples, until the Lord returns.
5. That we seek to mobilize traditional home churches, team-based house churches, new city house churches preparing professionals to evangelize their communities at work.
6. That we plan to release missionary publications to record the vision that readers may run with it. We will have missionary workshops to promote discussions related to advancing the mission of God.
7. That we will engage in prayer promoting a missionary prayer movement.

CONCLUSION

From being a mission field, the 10/40 Window has become a mission force over the course of the last thirty years. China, as the most populous country in the world with nearly one out of every five people on planet earth, has become a mission force incarnating the reality of the 10/40 Window in our day. This calls for prayer, encouragement and enablement by the Body of Christ worldwide in our day that we may all play our part in advancing the gospel to the glory of God. based on Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."



Luis Bush
luis.bush@gmail.com

Dr. Luis Bush introduced the 10/40 Window concept at the Lausanne II conference in Manila in 1989 which brought into focus the region of the world with the greatest human suffering combined with the least exposure to Christianity. led the Latin American missions' movement, called COMIBAM, during its initial phase now with an estimated 26,500 missionaries serving in 160 countries. He served as CEO of Partners International (PI) from 1986 to 1992 Dr. Bush completed a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies from Fuller School of World Mission in 2003.

8. Jin, Ezra Mingri, [Back to Jerusalem with All Nations.](#)

9. [New China, New Church, New World](#)

10. [Mission China 2030](#)