

MEGA-TRENDS IN THE ASIAN CHURCH

1. **Format:** The online conference will run from 11-14 Oct, 2021, every day for 2 ½ hours beginning at 7.30 pm (KR, JP), 6.30 pm (CN, MY, PH, SG, TW), 5.30 pm (ID, TH) & 4.00 PM (IN, SL).

2. **Topic for Each Day**

- i. **Mon, 11 October: *Unity in the Asian Church***

The Asian church today comprises of denominational churches founded by past western missions, numerous networks of indigenous churches in different countries, and a countless multiplicity of independent churches, both imported and indigenous. Given the existing extreme diversity, how can the church in Asia live and minister together in unity? What structures and principles should be put in place to foster unity within the one Body of Christ?

Chair: David Ro

Bible Exposition/Devotion: Dr Patrick Fung

Speakers:

- Bishop Efraim Tendaro (PH): Maintaining and serving in unity in global church, especially in the pan-Asian scene. (40 min)
- Rev Jin (CN): Case Study—Bringing churches in China in unity together for missions. (20 min)

- ii. **Tue, 12 October: *The Shape of the Asian Church in 2021***

The Asian Church has grown from about 2.2% in 1900 to a projected 9.7% in 2025 of the total population of the continent, i.e. to some 450 million Christians. The growth has ranged from slow or even negative (e.g. North Korea) to moderate or even spectacular. This session aims to provide an overview of the broad continental trends as well as those in each nations. What are the things for which we can praise God and what are the challenges for prayer? What lessons should the Asian church draw from these advances, setbacks and challenges before us?

Chair: Theresa Lua-Roco

Bible Exposition/Devotion: Asiri Fernando

Speakers:

- Dr Todd Johnson (US) Overview of the growth of the Asian Church in the past 120 years and the broad continental trends (40 min)
- Dr Steve Moon (KR): A response from an Asian missiologist (20 min)

- iii. **Wed, 13 Oct: *Reaching the Next Gen in Asia—Building Authentic Communities***

The rapid changes in the world today has brought major disruptions to the youth growing up in the past 20-30 years. Numerous factors are at work impacting their lives with modernization and globalization bringing increasing western secularization

and other influences through education, pop culture, social media and the like. Churches in Korea, for example, have lost a large percentage of their youths. The same thing is happening in other countries also. The concern is on how the church in Asia can reach out effectively to the Next Gen, especially the Gen Z, and disciple them. What is distinctive about this session is that it will be done in a manner that befits the cultures of the Millennials and Gen Z.

Moderator & Speaker: Dr David Doong (TW)
Bible Exposition/Devotion: To be appointed by the Younger Leaders Program Team
Presentations & discussions based on the theme of the day:
6 younger leaders (from early 20s to mid-30s):

Sharon Dominica (India)
Yeji In (Korea)
Blessing Sarangapany (Sri Lanka)
Heidi Tan (Singapore)
Sitthavee Teerakulchon (Thailand)
Chloe Wu (China)

They will address the concerns and issues that Asian youths are wrestling with and challenge the churches to respond to their concerns by demonstrating how the gospel is relevant to these concerns, and thereby how the churches can reach them for Christ and disciple them effectively.

iv. **Thu, 14 Oct: *The Shift of the Center of Gravity of the Church from the West to the Majority World***

Over the last century, there has been a dramatic shift of the church from the West to the Majority World (MW), with some 2/3s of all Christians now living in the latter. Despite the growth in various forms of indigenous Christianity in different parts of Asia, the fact remains that much of the Asian church grew out of the western mission enterprise. Thus to a large extent Asian churches have adopted the theology and methodology of western Christianity. But continuing to do so will hinder Asian churches from becoming fully mature within their own respective contexts and also burden them with some of the problematic weaknesses in western Christianity. Key issues on which Asian Christians should seriously rethink include:

- Re-doing apologetics and theology to address the various Asian worldviews;
- Recovering the supernatural dimension in the church's life and mission;
- "Managerial missiology" (Samuel Escobar) versus the dynamics of the Holy Spirit in ministry and mission;
- Can Christians in the MW help western Christianity in its battle against secularism, with its roots in the Enlightenment?
- Reshaping theological education so that much more space is given to spiritual and character formation rather than an over-emphasis on intellectual study.

Chair: Han Chulho (KR)
Bible Exposition/Devotion: Dr Timothy Takahito Iwagami (JP)
Speakers:

- Hwa Yung: What challenges do this shift present to Asian churches? (40 min)
- Lindsay Brown: A critical response from the West, especially from a European perspective. (20 min)

3. **Proposed Daily Schedule**

- i. The following schedule will be followed on all 4 days:
 - a. 5 min Introduction & Opening Prayer
 - b. 10 min Short Bible Exposition/Devotion
 - c. 60 min Presenter (40 min), Respondent (20 min) for Day 1, 2 & 4.
To be arranged by the Presentation Team for Day 3.
 - d. 45 min Breakout session by country/region
 - e. 20 min Plenary Q & A (Questions to be submitted during Breakout session & the Chair will vet these to select 3-4 questions to be discussed.)
 - f. 10 min Praying together with Prayer leader providing prayer points on screen

Additional Note: For Day 4, there will be an extra 10 mins for David Ro to announce Asia 2022.

- ii. Informal Session at the end of each day's program:

It was agreed that each day's program will end promptly at the end of the 2 ½ hours scheduled. (10.00 pm for KR, JP; 9.00 pm for CN, MY, PH, SG, TW; 8.00 pm for ID, TH; & 6.30 PM for IN, SL; except for Day 4 when it will end 10 mins later.)

But the plenary discussions can go on for another 30-45 mins thereafter for those who would like to stay on.

4. **In-Country Conferences**

In our earlier discussions, the idea that some countries may run their own respective national conferences over the same days integrating Asia2021 as part of these. An example comes from a Creative Assess Nation in East Asia. It may then help other countries to think about what they can do in their own respective countries.

Outline of Country Conference:

Delegates check in on the afternoon of Mon, Oct 11, and check out after the lunch on Fri, Oct 15. Expected number is 50 to 60. We will discuss issues relevant to our own situation over the four days. But the issues covered each day will be synchronized with those addressed by Asia 2021 online the night before. These are:

Tuesday: ***Unity and collaboration in our mission.***

Wednesday: ***The shape and trends of the church in our country.***

Thursday: ***Reaching the Next Gen in our country.***

Friday: ***What is our church agenda now that the missionaries have left?***

Besides the face to face four-day meeting, we are using this great opportunity to bring the mission leaders together to work at long-term coordination.

As veterans in the mission ministries, those committee members will focus on 3-5 issues in our mission circle in the country. In the coming years we will collaborate in these areas to develop a national strategy and enhance cooperation.