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33 1/3% of All Statistics Made Up

We all like to quote statistics. Yet, how many are actually made up? As my mother used to tell me “I’ve told you a million times not to exaggerate.” Actually it wasn’t my mother. I made that up. What is interesting is to look at current statistics of what used to be called “the emerging nations”. When it came to Christianity we saw places like Africa and Asia as “the place” in which to be a missionary. Nowadays missiologists (not a made up word) talk about the global north and the global south. As we once mostly discussed the 10/40 window we’ve changed our spotlight.

In spite of all of this there is no denying that some of the most amazing statistics in Christianity, economics and politics has now come out of China. You know the country. It’s where thousands of missionaries once departed for to bring the Gospel and, as a sideline, a great deal of Western understanding.

HFC International, a U. K. Based charity, assists in leadership training worldwide, including China. It is only through a firsthand observation of the country (well, portions of it anyway) that one begins to see the vast scale of opportunities and growth in every dimension. With a population of almost 1.4 billion it is difficult to arrive at an accurate figure for anything, including population. Taking a census in a Shanghai high rise is markedly different than climbing to a village hundreds of miles from, literally, anywhere. Adding to the secrecy of the numbers of Believers means that everything is a guess. Most church experts working in the country agree on the estimate of the figure of there being around 100 million Christians. New growth, not diminishing as in much of the West, is sustained at another “guesstimate” of 1 million new Believers every year. The year 2025 is the year that many believe China will host the largest number of Christian Believers of any nation on earth. That is remarkable when you understand that much activity that would spur church growth is banned. Here in the West we “pound the pavements” and “knock on doors” with paltry results. Maybe there is a lesson that ease and permissiveness is not a hothouse for spiritual growth.

Watchman Nee, the great Christian writer and hero, said “We cannot measure our lives in terms of "gain"; they must be measured in terms of "loss." Our real capacity lies not in how much we retain but in how much has been poured out.” Brother Andrew tells a fascinating story, in an interview with HFC International in its “Principles of Leadership” TV series. When the Berlin fell and communism overthrown in Germany he just happened to be there. He was overjoyed with the arrangements that God had made for this to happen. On that Sunday he quickly went to one of the church locations. No one was there. He went to another. Again, there were no Believers to meet with. He finally tracked down a caretaker and asked where the Christians were. The man chuckled and looked knowledgeable. His reply? “They’ve all gone shopping in the West of course”. Much of the same is in danger in the East. Consumerism is slowly replacing zeal.

China is currently the 4th largest advertising market in the world. The economy doubles every eight years. While charity giving is waning in the East, in China it is expected that a record £5 billion will make its way into various charities in China. The country’s poverty level has gone from 53% in the 1980’s to 8% at present. Although that is a great advance it still represents vast millions to raise up the standard for,

It’s always said in China: “Whatever you’ve heard about the country - it’s true.”

HFC International is on a mission to assist in raising up and encouraging leaders personally and through the media in over 47 countries and on all 5 continents for work in churches, charities, NGOs and other humanitarian assistance groups. Using the media and cutting edge technology they attempt to work alongside those knowledgeable in each culture and people groups and develop the tools needed. Their website is at: www.principles.tv.