

Thursday, April 9, 2015

THE FUTURE OF RELIGION IN THE WORLD: CROSS or CRESCENT?

One of the more provocative reports on the future of world religion, 2010-2050, was recently released by the Pew Forum. Six years in the making, and encompassing data from 234 countries and territories, it is a landmark piece of research.

Based largely on population growth projections, it revealed how rapidly the religious profile of the world is changing. The précis of the report is nearly twenty pages in length, the full report much longer (245 pages), so here are a few headlines:

*The rumors of religion's death have been exaggerated. Almost every major world religion (except Buddhism) will rise in numbers.

*The fastest growing world religion will be Islam.

*Despite Islam's growth, Christianity will still be the world's largest faith by 2050, but only barely. However, by 2070-2100, Islam will gain the numerical edge.

*Islam and Christianity, combined, will represent 6 out of every 10 human beings on the planet.

*In the United States, Christianity will retain its majority but decline, and Muslims will grow to surpass Jews as the second largest non-Christian American religion.

*The "rise of the nones" will continue in the West, but not on the wider global front, where the lack of religious affiliation will actually decline.

There is much more that could be reported – fewer countries will have Christian majorities, the explosion of Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa – but the gist of the report is clear. The race for the world's soul is between the cross and the crescent.

<http://www.churchandculture.org/blog.asp?id=9120>

Posted by Cal in Church at 10:53