

WORLD CHRISTIANITY



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World Christian Studies

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I remember the first time I was introduced to the World Christian Studies. I was asked to teach a course on non-Western Theology and entered into one of the more fruitful conversations and studies in theology that I have had. Quickly, I was used to the names of scholars like Lamin Sanneh, David Wells, among others. The work these authors were producing was in the fields of missions, history, theology, and others and all were addressing the realities of globalization and its effects on Christianity. The critique was made about the centrality Western thought has in scholarship. Timothy Tennent states it well when he claims, “We continue to talk about church history in a way that puts Europe at the center, and church history outside the West is reserved for those preparing for the mission field or church historians pursuing specialist studies.”¹ This sentiment is greatly important to ponder as future books and articles are written, curricula is developed, and methodologies are established. If the gospel is intended for all people then shouldn't our theological and missiological work represent all people? In his own reflection to the globalization of Christianity Mark Noll recognizes that “full attention to the non-Western world had become essential for any responsible grasp of the history of Christianity.”² He later comments on Revelation 5 and states, “The lesson for a historian from this passage would seem obvious. If the people of God come from every tribe and nation, so then should a history of the people of God try to take in every tribe and nation.”³ Effort needs to be made by not just missiologists and historians, but all Christians, to incorporate better the perspectives and work of all Christians around the globe.

As part of the effort to engage the work in World Christianity Southwestern Seminary began a doctoral program in World Christian Studies. Students in this program are already working in non-Western contexts and are involved in researching and writing from these contexts. The present issue of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology* is a collection of articles from this program. The initial article is an introduction to World Christian Studies by

¹Timothy C. Tennent, *Theology in the Context of World Christianity: How the Global Church is Influencing the Way We Think about and Discuss Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), xviii.

²Mark A. Noll, *From Every Tribe and Nation: A Historian's Discovery of the Global Christian Story*, *Turning South: Christian Scholars in an Age of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), xi.

³Noll, *From Every Tribe and Nation*, xiii.

Keith Eitel. Following this introduction are articles on Christianity in the African context. The first article is by Kenny Vines who explores the role of diffusion. Next Olayemi O.T. Fatusi looks at the historical work of the Anglican Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther. Following him is an examination of the non-Western origin of Pentecostalism in Nigeria by looking at the work of Garrick Sokari Braide by Jacob K. Oladipupo. Also looking at the Nigerian context is Moses Audi's work on the effects of the *Boko Haram* insurgency on the Baptist churches. Finally, Mitch Hamilton examines globalization, glocalization, and migration and their effects in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In these articles we find not only the fruit of the labors of students engaging in World Christianity, but we also hear from those who are engaging these cultures with the gospel. As practitioners they are learning and disseminating their knowledge in an effort to have better missiology, church history, and theology, all from a non-Western context.