

Lecture 2- Global Christianity (1 & 2); “Missions” & “Missionaries” (3)

Each phase (into which Christian history may be divided) represents its embodiment in a major culture area which has meant that in that phase it has taken an impress from that culture. ... Once more the Christian faith is penetrating new cultures. ... This is likely to mean the appearance of new themes and priorities undreamt of by ourselves or by earlier Christian ages; for it is the mark of Christian faith that it must bring Christ to the big issues which are closest to men's hearts; and it does so through the structures by which people perceive and recognize their world; and these are not the same for all.

-Walls, Culture and Coherence in Christian History

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

-Acts 8:1-4

Key Terms

Globalization; plurality; demographics; framework; alternate centers; particularity; migrancy; marginality; Christ's Worldwide Church; organized & unorganized; Diaspora; career & short-term; “changing fortunes;” institution & institutionalization; identity crisis; “center of gravity;” “world”

Lecture Objectives

- Describe the demographic contours of contemporary Christianity around the world.
- Identify some concrete implications for Gospel work of these demographic contours that reflect recent shifts.
- Analyze and draw inferences from the expression “from the West to the rest.”
- Describe the nature of the spread of the Gospel as depicted in Acts.
- Compare and contrast the Gospel's spread as depicted in the New Testament with your own understanding of this spread.
- Identify some implications of these discussions for your role in God's Gospel ministry.

Global Christianity

I. Demographics (See Appendix B)

II. Historical Framework – Six Phases, cf. Walls

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

III. Resulting Contemporary Perspectives

A. Mission theology from alternate centers (cf. Adeney)

1. Continuity (vs. discontinuity)

B. Particularity of theology(ies) (cf. Dyrness)

C. Jesus' migrancy and marginality (cf. Hertig)

1. It is out of date to consider mission as “going from the West to the rest.”

IV. Respect for and Recognition of Christ's Worldwide Church

A. Mission history and church history (cf. Verkuyl, pp.226-231a [not required])

B. Understanding and critiquing the church (cf. Verkuyl, pp.231b-238 [not required])

1. Read
2. Listen
3. Ask questions
4. Admit ignorance

Example: Kazoh Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God*

“Missions” & “Missionaries”

I. Cross-Cultural Mission Initiatives: Unorganized and Organized

A. Unorganized: Diaspora of laborers, slaves, refugees (Acts 8:1-4, 11:19-20)

B. Organized (Acts 13:1-4)

II. “Missionaries:” “Career” and “Short-termers”

III. Mission Agencies’ “Changing Fortunes” (Shenk, 177-185)

A. Origins

1. Institutional precedents: monastic movement, trading companies, voluntary society
2. “A strategic expedient”
3. “A specialized activity of a minority of Christians”

B. Changed situation of the 1960s and 1970s

C. Institutionalization

1. Mainline societies’ decline, evangelical societies’ rise, but....
2. Economics
3. Parachurch multinational agencies

D. Using an identity crisis

1. Cf. 1841 CMS financial crisis and Henry Venn
2. Mark time?
3. Who decides?

E. On to the future

1. Changed center of gravity
2. Mission frontier of Western culture(s) and crises of missionary agencies
3. Crucial importance of “World” mission
 - a. Theological “World” = “the realm that does not yet acknowledge the rule of God”
 - b. Geopolitical “World”

“Celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of the modern missionary society while remaining poised to follow...new paths....”

What is the theological significance of the inherent place of translation within the Christian faith?