



TRACKING GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

Introducing the *World Christian
Encyclopedia*, 3rd edition



AT THE CENTER

Pre-pandemic travels and our
upcoming conference.



CONTACT US

Consultations, media inquiries,
upcoming events and speaking
engagements



THE INQUIRY

NEWS FROM THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

Introducing the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd edition

This year marks the publication of a seminal reference work in World Christianity: the 3rd edition of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Edinburgh University Press).

The history of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (WCE) goes back to a meeting of Christian researchers in 1968 who had planned to update a series of handbooks (*World Christian Handbook*) that listed many Protestant and Anglican churches around the world. David B. Barrett, Ph.D., an Anglican missionary in Kenya, wanted to expand the handbook to include all Christian churches including Orthodox, Catholics and what was later called Independents (in particular, new expressions of African Christianity).

Dr. Barrett, in collaboration with an ecumenical team around the world, produced the first edition of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* in 1982 after 14 years of arduous, detailed quantitative research. He documented the existence of 22,000 Christian denominations and, for the first time, represented all Christian traditions in a single volume. The WCE was hailed as a “miracle from Nairobi” in *TIME* magazine, and Dr. Barrett even presented a copy to Pope John Paul II at the Vatican. The 2nd edition of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* was published in 2001 and added a comprehensive list of the world’s peoples and languages with their status in relation to the presence of Christianity.

One important finding of the latest WCE is the continued shift of Christianity to the Global South. In 1900, 18 percent of all Christians lived in the Global South. In 2020, 67 percent of Christians live in the global South. The single greatest change has been the remarkable and rapid growth of Christianity in Africa. From only 1.7 percent in 1900, by 2050, 39 percent of all Christians worldwide will live in Africa. For Protestants, this figure is even higher. Today, 44 percent of all Protestants are Africans and by 2050 it will likely be 55 percent.



Presenting the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd edition,
to Dr. Scott Sunquist, president of Gordon-Conwell
Theological Seminary.

The third edition of the WCE is different from the first two editions in its efforts to highlight pressing social issues of today's world, ranging from conflict and violence, persecution, Christians in politics, and theological education, to medical ministries, gender inequality, etc. All of these have significant impacts on mission in places with low rankings on socio-economic-development measures. While awareness is increasing of the growth of Christianity in, for example, sub-Saharan Africa, many overlook the critical realities that Christians face there. They are simply more vulnerable and less healthy than Christians in the West. Another finding of the WCE is the contribution of women. Women play a tremendous role in churches around the world, ranging from ordained pastoral leadership to healthcare and education. Churches should think clearly about the unique contributions and gifts of women and encourage them to rise up into leadership positions.



Images that Represent a Global Jesus

On Easter Sunday the New York Times printed an article by Eric V. Copage "[Searching for a Jesus Who Looks More Like Me](#)," which shows a collection of images depicting Jesus from a variety of different traditions and backgrounds. One of those printed was the above image "Peace, Be Still" by Chinese-born artist James He Qi. The article is the result of many months of discussion with Copage, an African-American journalist who grew up with a White European Jesus but later discovered a Black Jesus (that looked more like him). Dr. Johnson supplied some of the images and led Copage to several of the people cited in the article. Gordon-Conwell's Dr. Emmett Price supplied the Ethiopian Last Supper, a gift from one of his students.

NOTABLE CITATIONS

Ostling, Richard. "What's Happening to the Religious Makeup of the World?" patheos.com. March 13, 2020.

Ostling, Richard. "Hot Tip: Here's Almost Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Every Religion Everywhere," GetReligion.org. March 11, 2020.

McDow, Heidi. "Spirit-Empowered Christianity is One of the Fastest Growing Global Movements, New Study Shows," Religion News Service. February 25, 2020.

Fowler, Megan. "Christian Martyr Numbers Down by Half in a Decade. Or Are They?" Christianity Today. February 17, 2020.

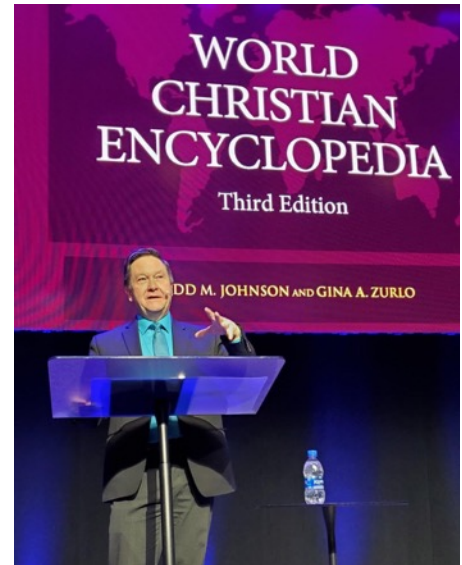
McCombs, Brady. "Bolivia Religious Debate: The Bible vs Andean Earth Deity," The Seattle Times. January 24, 2020.

Shea, Nina. "Africa's Young Christian Communities are now in Islamic-Extremist Crosshairs," National Catholic Register. January 11, 2020.

Sherpa, Phurpa. "Christianity and Hinduism Oscillate Between Hope and Fear in Nepal," nepals24hours.com. January 1, 2020.

The Grand Tour of the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, 3rd edition

Prior to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in the USA Dr. Johnson and Dr. Zurlo were booked for months, traveling from one institution to another to present the World Christian Encyclopedia. One of several trips that did happen was Dr. Johnson's trip to Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he had the opportunity to speak on "Spirit-Empowered Christianity as a Global Movement." There is a link to this lecture on our website, globalchristianity.org, under videos. Dr. Johnson was also invited to travel in June to Jerusalem to speak at the Empowered21 conference. While this event will no longer be taking place live, he will be presenting at the Empowered21 Global Congress Online hosted live from the campus of Oral Roberts University, May 31 – June 2, 2020.



Dr. Johnson and Dr. Zurlo also presented findings from the World Christian Encyclopedia to:



Dr. Johnson and Dr. Zurlo with Dr. Conrad Hackett of the Pew Research Center.

- Board of Trustees of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (February 14)
- SIM International Headquarters (February 14)
- The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs at Georgetown University (February 21)
- Pew Research Center (February 21)

Events at Princeton Theological Seminary, the American Society of Missiology, the International Association of Mission Studies, and Boston University's Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs have been postponed to 2021.

Join us this September!

Join us for a conference at the South Hamilton Campus September 28 – October 1, 2020 as we celebrate the launch of the World Christian Encyclopedia, 3rd edition. The event, which is open to the public, features keynote

speakers Rev. Dr. Casely Essamuah, Secretary of the Global Christian Forum, and Dr. Mary Ho, International Executive Leader of All Nations mission organization. Conference participants can purchase the WCE at a discounted rate and have one-on-one consultations with Drs. Johnson and Zurlo. Please visit our [page](#) for more information, including a full program and registration details.



ABOUT US

The Center for the Study of Global Christianity is an academic research center that monitors worldwide demographic trends in Christianity, including outreach and mission. We provide a comprehensive collection of information on the past, present, and future of Christianity in every country of the world. Our data and publications help churches, mission agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to be more strategic, thoughtful, and sensitive to local contexts.

LEADERSHIP TEAM



Todd M. Johnson
Co-Director
tjohnson@gordonconwell.edu

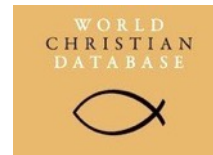


Gina A. Zurlo
Co-Director
gzurlo@gordonconwell.edu

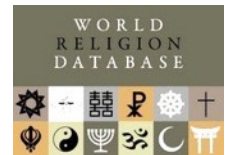


Peter F. Crossing
Data Analyst
pcrossing@gordonconwell.edu

DATABASES



worldchristiandatabase.org



worldreligiondatabase.org

Our research is used worldwide by churches, mission agencies, NGOs, and international media outlets.

Your support makes this research possible.

Will you consider supporting quality research on global Christianity?



To give online,

please visit <http://worldchristianresearch.org/support/>

To give via check,

please make it payable to "World Christian Research" and send to

Todd Johnson, Treasurer
World Christian Research
130 Essex Street, #228
South Hamilton, MA 01982

CONTACT US

Email: info@globalchristianity.org


Website: www.globalchristianity.org

Phone: (978) 468-2750

Address: 130 Essex Street, Box 228, South Hamilton, MA 01982

FOLLOW US

 [/centerforglobalchristianity](https://www.facebook.com/centerforglobalchristianity)

 [@csgc](https://twitter.com/csgc) | [@drtoddmjohnson](https://twitter.com/drtoddmjohnson)