



THE CENTER
FOR THE STUDY
of
GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

GORDON  CONWELL
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



CENTER FOR THE STUDY
OF **Global Christianity**

AT GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

HISTORY

Acknowledged as one of the world's most definitive sources of empirical information on Christianity, the Center for the Study of Global Christianity (CSGC) at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary serves as a resource for faculty, students, alumni, visiting religion scholars, church leaders, missiologists, and journalists. Interdisciplinary in nature, the CSGC integrates religion, history, sociology, anthropology, linguistics, missiology, and demography, and other disciplines in the study of global Christianity.



DAVID B. BARRETT

The origins of CSGC lie in the work of the Rev. Dr. David B. Barrett, an Anglican missionary who arrived in Kenya in 1957 to conduct a field survey of church affiliations in that country. Barrett's work expanded to encompass religious affiliation of all kinds, throughout Africa and eventually worldwide. In the process, he established what would become the World Evangelization Research Center (WERC) in Nairobi in 1965.

One product of Barrett's research was the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (WCE), the first edition of which was more than ten years in the making. Published in 1982 and containing information on some 22,000 Christian denominations worldwide, the WCE was hailed by the media, scholars, and the missions community as a vital resource.

VIRGINIA AND THE GLOBAL EVANGELIZATION MOVEMENT

At the invitation of the Southern Baptist Foreign (now International) Mission Board, Barrett and WERC moved to Richmond, Virginia, in 1985. Led by a desire to maintain his independence as a researcher, Barrett established the Global Evangelization Movement (GEM), of which WERC became a part. Todd Johnson, a missionary researcher and doctoral candidate, joined WERC in 1989 and would serve as both a co-author for the second edition of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* and Director of WERC.

Following the publication of the second edition of the WCE and its companion volume *World Christian Trends* (WCT) in 2001, the Rev. Richard Haney (a Richmond pastor and GEM board member) sensed that WERC might accomplish its mission more effectively as part of an academic institution. Haney's friendship with the Rev. Doug Birdsall, Director of the seminary's J Christy Wilson Jr Center for World Missions, set in motion the events leading to the creation of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE CSGC

Dr. Johnson moved to the Gordon-Conwell campus in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, in 2003 as Director of the new CSGC. (Although the intent at the time was for Dr. Barrett to follow some months later, he continued to work from Richmond.) This same period saw the launch of the *World Christian Database* (WCD), an online collection of the data from the WCE and WCT. Information in the WCD is updated on an ongoing basis, and updates are published four times per year. To complement the WCD, the CSGC subsequently launched the *World Religion Database* (WRD) in partnership with Boston University. More recently, the December 2009 publication of the *Atlas of Global Christianity*, which documents the shift of Christianity from the North to the global South over the 20th century, was greeted with enthusiasm by scholars and Christian leaders from around the world.



CSGC TIMELINE

1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2005 2010 2015 2020

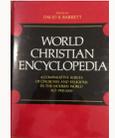
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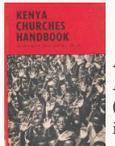
David B. Barrett goes to Africa with Church Missionary Society (Anglican)

Unit of Research of the Province of East Africa is founded in Nairobi, Kenya

"AD 2000: 350 Million Christians in Africa" *International Review of Mission*



World Christian Encyclopedia, 1st edition (Oxford University Press)



Kenya Churches Handbook (Evangel Publishing House)

First annual statistical tables in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* and *Britannica Book of the Year*

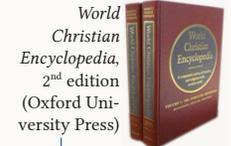


Peter Crossing joins research team in Richmond

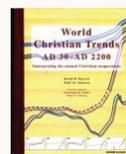
Our Globe and How to Reach It (New Hope Publishers)



Todd Johnson moves to Richmond from Singapore to join Barrett



World Christian Encyclopedia, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press)



World Christian Trends (William Carey Library)

Center for the Study of Global Christianity is established at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary



Bert Hickman joins CSGC research team



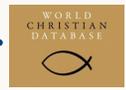
Gina Zurlo joins CSGC research team



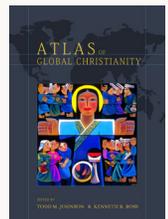
International Religious Demography Project is launched at Boston University's Institute on Culture, Religion and World Affairs



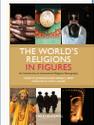
World Religion Database (Brill Online)



World Christian Database (Brill Online)



Atlas is featured at major mission conferences in Tokyo, Edinburgh, Cape Town, Boston

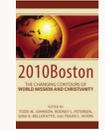


The World's Religions in Figures (Wiley-Blackwell)

First Annual Yearbook of International Religious Demography (Brill)



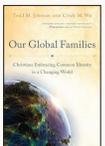
2010Boston (Wipf & Stock)



Barrett passes away at age 83

World Christian Encyclopedia, 3rd edition (Edinburgh University)

Our Global Families: Christians Embracing Common Identity in a Changing World (Baker Academic)



Schism and Renewal: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements (Oxford University)



Barrett gives WCE-1 to Pope John Paul II



Seven Hundred Plans to Evangelize the World (New Hope Publishers)



Barrett travels to more than 200 countries conducting research



Barrett moves to Richmond as consultant to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board



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IMPACT OF THE CENTER'S RESEARCH

The Center's research is used by academics, media outlets, churches, and mission organizations. What follows are examples from each of these.

The Academy

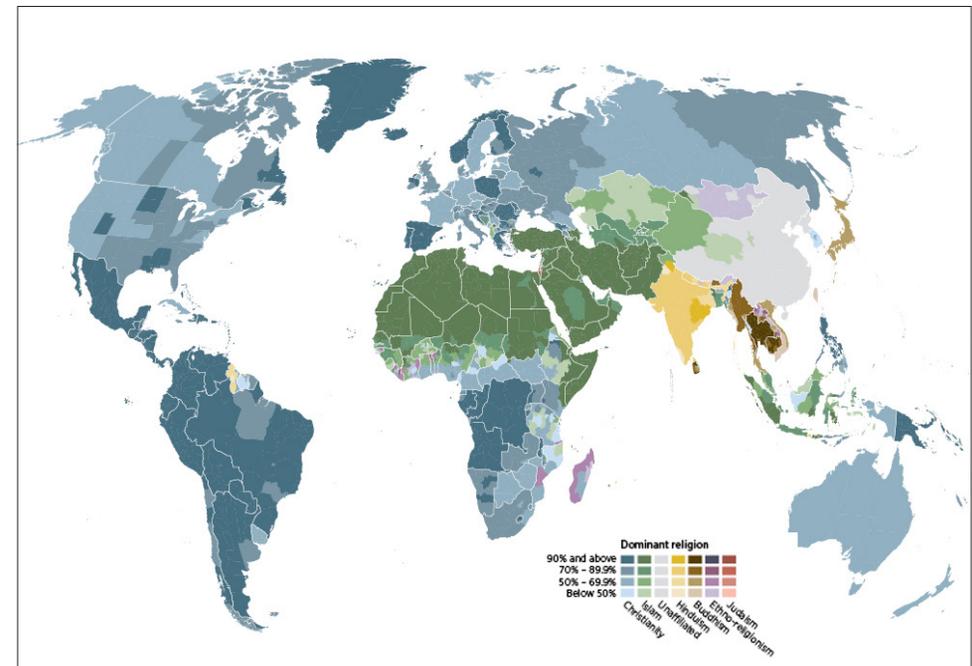
- The Center's data are cited in numerous scholarly articles and books. For example, in his book *Allah*, Miroslav Volf, cites our figures for the global Christian and Muslim populations.
- Robert Barro and Rachel McCleary, at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, used our data in their article "Religion and Economic Growth across Countries" (*American Sociological Review*).
- In 2008, Becky Hsu et al. examined the reliability of the *World Christian Database* in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* by comparing it to other major sources. Their conclusion is that "Religious composition estimates in the WCD are generally plausible and consistent with other data sets."
- Mark Noll, in his recent book *From Every Tribe and Nation*, says that our numbers "provide the wherewithal for outlining the dramatic changes that have recently occurred in the Christian world."
- The Center provides statistical tables on religion to many encyclopedias and dictionaries. Recent examples include the *Oxford Handbook on Conversion*, the *Oxford Encyclopedia of South Asian Christianity* and ABC Clío's *Religions of the World* (6 vols).

Media Outlets

- After Pope John Paul II died, the Center's data showing the global distribution of Roman Catholics (in both the present and the future) were cited on the front page of the *New York Times*. Our data on Roman Catholics also appeared in *The Washington Post* and at CNN.com.
- *National Geographic* uses the Center's data on religions in its major atlases, including its *Family Reference Atlas*, *Global Atlas*, and *Atlas of the Middle East*.
- Every year, a widely-cited table on world religions and religion in the USA is published in the *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year* and the *TIME Almanac*.
- The Vatican, the BBC, and numerous other media outlets have reported extensively on our estimate of 100,000 Christian martyrs killed every year.

Churches and Mission Organizations

- After David Barrett's death in 2011, the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention released a statement saying that Barrett had helped them refocus their resources on the least-evangelized peoples of the world: "When David Barrett came to the Foreign Mission Board as a consultant in 1985, less than 3 percent of our mission force was deployed to this last frontier. Today, as a result of Barrett's prophetic push, more than 80 percent of the people groups our missionaries serve among are unreached."
- We partnered with mission organizations such as Frontiers and Pioneers to create a list of unengaged peoples, which was circulated to 4,000 leaders at the Lausanne Movement's 2010 meeting in Cape Town, South Africa. This and other such lists are in use today by all agencies that look to place new missions teams.
- Create International, a global media ministry, uses the Center's assessment of the world's peoples to focus on major languages that need indigenous evangelistic media.
- The *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* publishes our data in an annual statistical report, "The Status of Global Christianity," which is their single most cited piece every year.
- In partnership with McCormick Theological Seminary and Globethics, we helped produce a global database of theological institutions. Our data on the number of Christians and churches in every country allow users to see how many theological schools are present per million church members.



The global religion map from the 2015 *National Geographic Global Atlas* uses data on religion from the CSGC's *World Christian Database*.

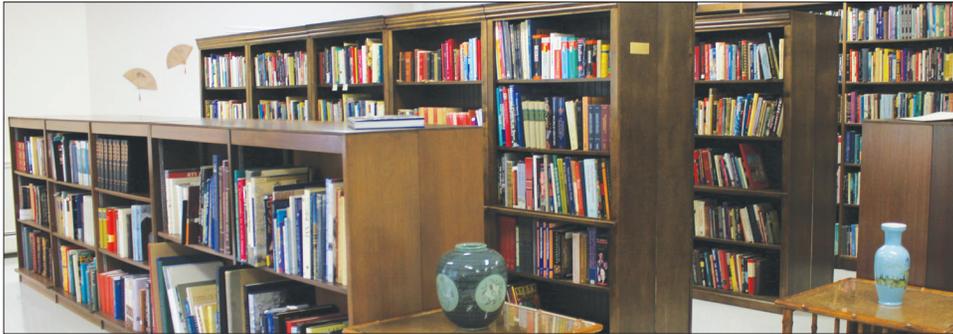
MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

World Christian Database (Brill, 2015)

An online database that includes detailed information on 9,000 Christian denominations and on religion in every country in the world. Extensive data are available on 234 countries and 13,000 ethnolinguistic people groups, as well as 5,000 cities and 3,000 provinces. www.worldchristiandatabase.org

World Religion Database (Brill, 2015)

An online database that contains detailed statistics on religious affiliation for every country in the world. It is the major source to render a definitive picture of international religious demography. The *WRD* provides both current and historical data, as well as sophisticated forecasts of future developments. www.worldreligiondatabase.org



World Christian Encyclopedia (Oxford University Press, 1982, 2001)

First published in 1982, the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (WCE) immediately took its place as the authoritative, standard work in its field. The second edition's oversized 1,700 pages represent the most extensive survey of Christianity, and of religion in general, ever attempted. The heart of the WCE is a series of 238 chapters on the status of religion and of Christianity in every country in the world. Statistical tables show, in great detail, the religious breakdown of the population and the Christian denominations of every country. The second edition updated and extended this analysis to include the status of Christianity in every language, people, city, and province of the world.

World Christian Trends (William Carey Library, 2001)

A 952-page companion volume to the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, *World Christian Trends* (WCT) includes a first-ever empirical survey of Christian martyrdom, historical trends, future projections, and finance. Included in this volume are a variety of charts, tables, and lists.

Atlas of Global Christianity (Edinburgh University Press, 2009)

The *Atlas of Global Christianity* is a thorough visual reference of the changing status of global Christianity over the 100 years of the epoch-making 'Edinburgh 1910' World Missionary Conference. It is the first scholarly atlas to depict the twentieth-century shift of Christianity to the Global South. It is also the first to map Christian affiliation at the provincial level.

Yearbook of International Religious Demography (Brill, 2014, 2015)

Co-edited by Brian Grim (Religious Freedom and Business Foundation), Todd Johnson (Center for the Study of Global Christianity), Vegard Skirbekk (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis), and Gina Zurlo (Boston University), the *Yearbook* provides an annual snapshot of the state of religious statistics around the world.

The World's Religions in Figures:

An Introduction to International Religious Demography (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)

Co-authored by Todd Johnson and Brian Grim, this unique introduction to international religious demography outlines the challenges in interpreting data on religious adherence and presents a contemporary portrait of global religious belief.

RECENT JOURNAL ARTICLES AND BOOK CHAPTERS

"Christianity 2015: Religious Diversity and Personal Contact."

International Bulletin of Missionary Research (2015)

"Ongoing Exodus: Tracking the Emigration of Christians from the Middle East."

Harvard Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy (2014)

"Global Christianity and Global Diasporas."

Global Diasporas and Mission (Wipf & Stock, 2014)

"The Impact of Ralph Winter's Thinking on Missiological Research in India."

India Church Growth Quarterly (March 2014)

"The Demographics of Religious Conversion."

Oxford Handbook of Religious Conversion (Oxford University Press, 2014)

"Counting Pentecostals Worldwide."

Pneuma (2014)

"Global Survey of Theological Education."

New Urban World Journal (2014)

"Ongoing Exodus: Tracking the Emigration of Christians from the Middle East."

Harvard Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy (2014)

"Christian Martyrdom as a Pervasive Phenomenon."

Society (2014)

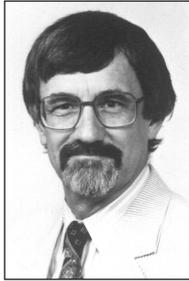
"The Holy Spirit and Global Christianity."

Holy Spirit: Unfinished Agenda (Armour Publishing, 2014)

"Global Christianity and Global Diasporas."

Global Diasporas and Mission (Wipf & Stock, 2014)

IN MEMORIAM: DAVID B. BARRETT



The Rev. Dr. David B. Barrett passed away on August 4, 2011, in Richmond, Virginia, after a brief illness. He was 83. Following receipt of his B.A. in aeronautics from Cambridge University, Barrett began his career at Britain's Royal Aircraft Establishment in 1948 (he received his M.A. from Cambridge in 1952). While at the RAE he performed aircraft design flight research on such planes as the de Havilland Comet (the world's first commercial jetliner) and the supersonic Concorde. When the RAE reassigned him to missile and bomb design, however, Barrett left to train for the priesthood in the Church of England. He was ordained a deacon in 1954 and a priest in 1955 and was appointed as a missionary through the Church Missionary Society in 1956.

After serving in Kenya from 1957-61, Barrett studied as a Fulbright Scholar at Union Theological Seminary (M.T.S., 1963) and Columbia University (joint Ph.D. with Union, 1965). He returned to Kenya as a missionary and oversaw research for the Church of England in Eastern Africa for 20 years. In 1985 (still under appointment as an Anglican missionary), he left Nairobi for Richmond, Virginia, and a position as a research consultant at the Foreign (now International) Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, where he remained until 1993. Until his death, Barrett continued as an independent researcher of global Christianity through the World Evangelization Research Center (which he had founded in Kenya in 1965) and its successor, the Center for the Study of Global Christianity (established 2003).

Barrett's contributions to the field of religious demography are extensive. His published research continues to influence both Christian missionary efforts and secular understanding of religious adherence. After his doctoral dissertation on African Independent Churches, *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements*, was published in 1968, he spent more than 10 years compiling and serving as editor of the *World Christian Encyclopedia* (1982). In 2001, this publication was followed by a second edition (with co-editors George Kurian and Todd Johnson) and the companion volume *World Christian Trends* (which he co-authored with Johnson). Barrett was also a long-time contributor of statistics on global religious adherence to the *Britannica Book of the Year* and the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT OUR RESEARCH

"Ask them how many Lutherans there are in Mongolia, and how many Buddhists in Finland, they will within a few minutes come back with reasonably accurate numbers."

Peter Berger, Boston University

"This Atlas is a monumental achievement ... I would suggest that this volume needs to be mandatory reading in all missiology programs."

Amos Yong, Fuller Theological Seminary

"Johnson and Grim's book [*The World's Religions in Figures*] is the benchmark for research on demography and religion. Their comprehensive discussion of complex issues such as methodology, religious identities, and differing measurements appeals to scholars in many disciplines working on religion and demographics. This book is going to be the resource future generations of scholars will build on."

Rachel M. McCleary, Harvard Kennedy School of Government

"The World Christian Database is the most valuable and authoritative source for demographic data on Christian bodies available on the Internet (and elsewhere). The new World Religion Database is destined to extend that valuable service to the entire range of the world's religious groupings. I recommend it highly to all researchers in religious studies."

*J. Gordon Melton, Institute for the Study of American Religion,
University of California, Santa Barbara*

"The World Christian Database is a valuable resource for faculty, students, and religious practitioners seeking information about the religious characteristics of all countries in the world."

Robert Wuthnow, Center for the Study of Religion, Princeton University

"The encyclopedia combines remarkably well scientific objectivity and tolerance with a quiet evangelical faith...the authors have served modern social science and religious believers equally well with this magisterial work"

(Books and Culture, Nov/Dec 2001). James Billington, Librarian of Congress

"[T]his encyclopedia will probably never be surpassed except by its own next edition. ... No other work digests so much data [or] delineates anomalies, novelties and minuscule bodies as scrupulously. All other works ... merely summarize data that is here anatomized. ... [The] World Christian Encyclopedia stands without peer or rival."

Recent Reference Books in Religion

The second edition of the WCE "leaves no stone unturned when it comes to the current state of Christianity in the world...Why add this to your reference collection? Simply put, it is the best statistical work on the current state of Christianity to come along in the 20 years since the WCE was first published."

American Theological Library Association (ATLA)

"The *World Christian Encyclopedia* is an authoritative, monumental work that will find a permanent place in academic, public and special libraries."

Library Journal (New York)



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