

Hervé Talom  
TH502: Theology in a Global Context / Spring 2021  
Tennent Reflection Paper: Chapter 1  
Stanley John, Ph.D.

### **Christianity as a World Religion: Demographic Analysis Tennent Reflection Paper: Chapter 1**

In this chapter, Tennent gives an overview of the entire book, he lays the foundation stones. He starts with the Protestant Reformation ignited by Martin Luther after nailing ninety-five theses to protest the abuses in the Church to the castle Church's door in Wittenberg. This book intends to stand alongside them in a supportive way, helping our students think more globally about the formation of theology and expand our understanding of what it means to be a Christian in the twenty-first century.

Tennent has chosen three "snapshots" taken at different church history points to illustrate the Christian faith's cultural and geographic translatability.

#### **Snapshot #1: From Jewish Birth to Gentile Home**

The Jerusalem Council met to debate and discussed the basis for accepting Gentiles into the Church. The group decided that Gentiles did not need to come to Jesus Christ on Jewish cultural and religious terms.

#### **Snapshot #2: The Fall of the Empire and the Birth of "Barbarian" and Byzantine Faith**

Remarkably, however, Christianity found new vitality outside the empire, among new people groups moving westward into Ireland and Scotland and eastward into Arabia, Persia, and beyond. Christianity experienced some remarkable advances in the East during this time, including significant progress among the Slavic peoples.

#### **snapshot #3: A Faith for the World: Missionaries and Migrations**

The gospel, once again, proved it was culturally and geographically translatable. The English-speaking world, including Britain and North America, became the most important new center of vibrant Christianity.

The Church is not just moving southward, and it is also moving eastward. Today, the Chinese Church comprises over 90 million believers and is the fastest-growing Church on the planet. Church planting in India, particularly in the traditional Hindu north, is taking place at a blistering pace so that many missiologists are predicting that by the year 2050, India will have over 126 million Christians. Tennent lays the chapters' work frames that encompass the book.

Finally, Tennent hopes this book will encourage the thousands of Majority World students who enroll each year in the many hallowed institutions of theological learning in the West and the various electronic libraries.

Tennent writes about various theological points. He is equally aware of the sacrifice of so many missionaries who have given their lives to nurture the gospel in specific contexts. In the end, he hopes all of us recognize the truth that culture is, after all, the best workplace for theology.