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CS 502 The Church as a Social and Cultural Institution
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Interaction Paper #1:

This week's readings on *People Who Know the Story They Are Part Of* by Christopher J. H. Wright argues that the fundamental reason for why the first believers of Christianity were missional was because of their understanding of God's own mission and their part in the story. Wright first explores common assumptions for the missional mindset of the early church. Some Christians have argued that it was because of the Great Commission or that the Christian message, at the time, answered some of society's thought-provoking questions on life. However, Wright quickly refutes these arguments by providing evidence that Christianity was an unfavorable religion at the time. Christians were severely punished and tortured and often faced death. Additionally, Christian practice and adherences were in stark contrast to the common cultural practices at the time. Wright then proposes that the reason Christians were missional was because of their understanding of the full story of the gospel. He examines various passages of Scripture that provide evidence for the sharing of the gospel within the context of the biblical story line: Creation, Fall, Redemption in History, and New Creation. Wright concludes that the early church understood clearly the story of God's own mission and saw their own part in the story, which was to participate by sharing the gospel with the world.

I agree with Wright's statements that the reason the early church was so missional was because of their understanding of their responsibility within the context of God's redemptive story. Gentiles and Jews both were prophesied in the Old Testament to be part of the building of God's kingdom. Despite much persecution, the first believers shared the gospel and expanded

their influence across the world. The underlying motivation behind missions was because they saw an opportunity to participate as God's coworkers in the last great act of God's story.

One area I wish to further research is how the gospel was constantly reframed in a new cultural setting. Christianity first started as a Jewish sect but then transformed into a global religion as the gospel was transcribed to reach audiences of a different cultural context. The gospel is transcultural, however, the mode of sharing the gospel can be different based on the cultural context. I would like to do a deeper dive in how the gospel was translated into various contexts.