

Course: CS 502 – Church as a Social and Cultural Institution Date: 01/25/23
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Topic: Interaction Paper on *The Mission of God's People*

This paper is a discussion on the Chapter Two of Christopher Wright's Book on *The Mission of God's People*. This chapter looks at the whole mission of God, the Bible's story line and how the people who knew the story were motivated to actively participate in the mission of God. Wright points out that the Jews who were the first followers of Jesus or Christians knew the story they were in. They knew the story because they knew their scriptures from the Old Testament to the New. They knew God's promise to Abraham, they understood what the prophets prophesized about the restoration of the house of David and the salvation for the gentiles. They understood the Biblical story of Creation, the Fall, Redemption and the New Creation. It is for this reason that they were motivated to make the world a mission field. The Christian Church grew rapidly because these Jews understood what the scriptures say. Stark argued that the Jews in Diaspora provided the numbers needed to fulfill plausible growth curves well into the Christian era.¹ He mentioned that Ephraim Isaac recently reported that according to Ethiopian tradition, when Christianity first appeared there, "half of the population was Jewish and... most of them converted to Christianity."² Scripture reveals that Paul preached to the gentile world and wherever he went he entered the Synagogue and preached to the Jews (Acts 13:14, 14:1, 17:1-2, 17:10, 17:16-17, 18:4, 18:19, 19:8, 28:17). These Jews in diaspora provided the impetus for Christian growth outside of Jerusalem. I believe these Jews were more receptive to change from the burdens of the law and Jewish religious traditions unlike those in Judah and Jerusalem.

Would Christianity have grown the way it grew if there were no Jews in Diaspora or if Paul did not go to the gentile world?

¹Stark, Rodney *The Rise of Christianity-How the Obscured, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries* (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1997) 69

² *Ibid.*, 70