

From the USA

TRACKING GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY'S STATISTICAL CENTRE OF GRAVITY AD 33 - AD 2100

by **Todd M. Johnson and Sun Young Chung**

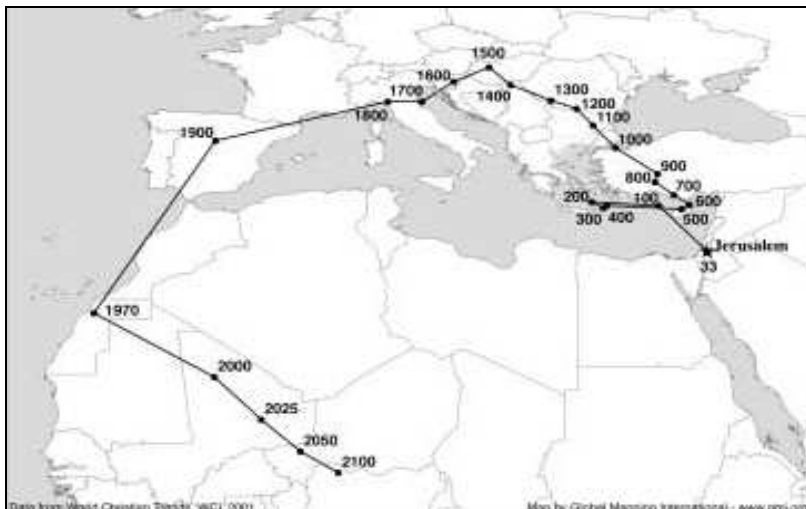
Abstract

Christians, at any given time in history, have definable geographic locations and a demographic or statistical centre. A single geographic point is here identified as the statistical 'centre of gravity' of Christianity for each of 25 different dates in Christian history, beginning with AD 33 (the traditional date for the origin of the church) and projecting to AD 2100 (one hundred years into the future). The methodology for locating these points utilizes demographic and religious affiliation statistics relating to 21 United Nations regions. By connecting these points, a line is formed that can be viewed as the 'trajectory' of global Christianity. In the early Christian centuries the trajectory moved around the eastern Mediterranean but after AD 600 the trajectory was astonishingly consistent, moving both north and west until AD 1500 when it began to move slowly to the south. After 1900, the trajectory moved precipitously to the south, and then, after AD 1970, definitively back to the east. By AD 2100, the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity is likely to be in northern Nigeria. This trajectory is tracked in detail throughout Christian history, and historical comments and interpretation are provided, with one map, one graphic, and two tables. Brief consideration is given to the implications of the present southeastern trajectory of Christianity for theology, translation and mission.

One of the most significant features of Christianity, apart from its theology, ethics and ecclesiastical structures, is the number and location of its followers. These followers, called 'Christians', are individuals, and they have distinct ethnic identities, speak identifiable languages, and make their homes in specific geographic locations.¹ Throughout the history of Christianity, whole villages, tribes and peoples have embraced the Christian

message. Consequently, groups of followers, including their ethnicity and language, can be named, located, listed, counted, mapped and tracked over time. As a result, Christians as a whole, at any given time in history, have a definable geographic boundary and a demographic or statistical centre. In practical terms, a single geographic point on earth can be seen as the statistical ‘centre of gravity’² of all Christian followers at any given date, and the place where the numbers of all Christians living to its north, its south, its east and its west are exactly the same.³

Map 1. Trajectory of the Statistical Center of Gravity of Global Christianity, AD 33-AD 2100



Note. The trajectory is calculated for each of the 25 dates above on the numbers of Christians in the 21 United Nations regions, and utilizing a geographic centre for each region to calculate the centre of gravity for all Christians. See the methodology and Tables 1 and 2 in the Appendix for full documentation.

The demographic history of Christianity is viewed precisely through this lens in Map 1: ‘Trajectory of the statistical centre of gravity of global Christianity, AD 33-AD 2100.’ A single geographic point has been identified in Table 1 as the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity for each of 25 different dates in Christian history, beginning with AD 33 (the traditional date for the origin of the church), and projecting to AD 2100 (one hundred

years into the future). The methodology, which employs current United Nations (UN) regional boundaries for arriving at the location of these points, is found in the appendix (cf. pages 11f). The points have been connected in order to approximate a ‘trajectory’ of the demographic centre of gravity of Christianity throughout its history. A more detailed and precise trajectory could also be drawn up utilizing data on 238 countries instead of 21 regions. Again, one could consider the world’s 13,000 ethnolinguistic peoples as the basic demographic units for yet more detailed demographic analysis.

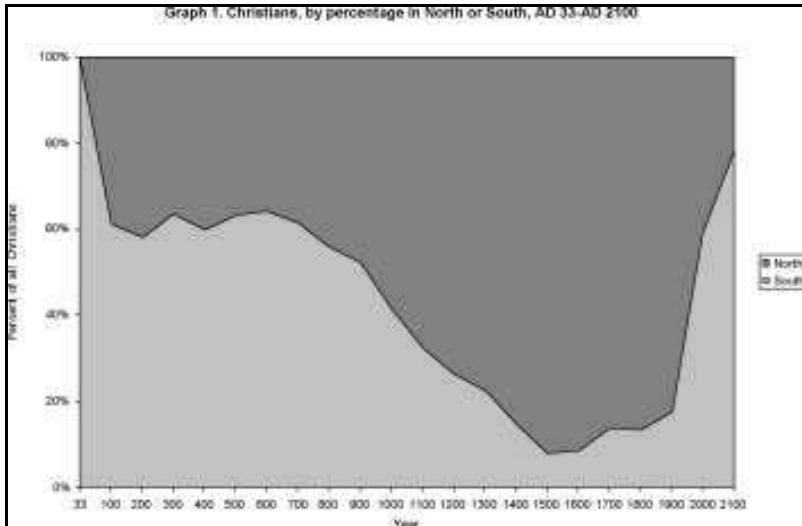
Documenting the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity

Table 1 ‘Global Christianity’s statistical centre of gravity, AD 33-AD 2100’ (cf. page 16) provides more information on each of the dates analysed in Map 1, and on the line connecting them. Column 1 lists 25 different years, from AD 33 to AD 2100, in which Christian demography is examined. Columns 2-8 refer exactly to the date in column 1, whereas columns 9-11 refer to the period leading up to that date. Column 2 gives an estimate of the number of Christians in millions in the world at the corresponding date in Column 1. Column 3 gives the percentage of the world’s population represented by the number of Christians in Column 2. Columns 4 and 5 report the latitude and longitude of the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity for the date in Column 1. Column 6 gives an approximation for the nearest settlement (existing in the year in Column 1) of the latitude and longitude in Columns 4 and 5. Columns 7 and 8 compute the percentage of Christians living in the North or the South⁴ (presented as an area graph in Graph 1, cf. page 5). Column 9 gives the direction of the line leading up to the date in Column 1. For example, leading up to AD 200, the line was headed directly west. After AD 200, the line abruptly headed southeast (represented in Column 9 under AD 300). Column 10 considers the distance, in kilometers, between the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity at two consecutive dates, divided by the number of years, and then presented as a rate in kilometers per year. For example, the distance between the statistical centre of gravity in AD 400 and AD 500 was 560 kilometers, thus the rate for that 100-year period was 5.6 km per year. Column 11 provides a short explanation for why the centre of Christian demographics changed location since the previous date. This could be in the form of an advance into a new area, a retreat from an existing Christian area, or simply gradual growth or decline. Column 11 also accounts for the direction and extent of the demographic shift between consecutive dates.

It is important to point out that a series of single points connected by a line, or a trajectory, is compatible with differing explanations of the geography of Christian growth. All historians are aware that the drama of Christian expansion unfolded in a complex set of events, but differing interpretations are offered. K. S. Latourette explains these events in terms of expansion and recession.⁵ Ralph Winter proposes viewing the expansion in terms of the penetration of new cultural basins in 400-year increments.⁶ Andrew Walls utilizes the motif of serial expansion where Christianity moves into new areas and dies out in areas of previous numerical strength.⁷ Nevertheless, in utilizing any of these explanations or others, a demographic centre of all Christian followers can be identified for any date in Christian history. Locating and following the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity as a trajectory over time helps us to visualize the overall demographic growth of Christian expansion.

The demography of global Christianity

Table 2 ‘Number of Christians in millions by UN region and by North/South dichotomy, AD 33-AD 2100’ (cf. pages 18f) provides further documentation for the trajectory of global Christianity. It lays out in detail the number of Christians (in millions) in each UN region (current boundaries) for each of the 25 dates in Table 1 and in Map 1.⁸ The 21 UN regions are set out in the table under ‘The North’ (Europe and Northern America) and ‘The South’ (Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania).⁹ The North/South dichotomy is significant today for Christians because the term ‘Southern Christians’ or ‘Christians of the Global South’ is increasingly replacing the synonymous term ‘non-Western Christians’.¹⁰ Additionally, Table 2 sets out the geographic centre of each region by latitude and longitude. This centre is essential to the calculations outlined in the methodology found in the appendix. As an additional feature, the UN region with the most Christians is highlighted in grey for each of the 25 dates. This single figure is often helpful in explaining the trajectory of Christian followers at a particular date in Christian history. Totals are given in the table for Christians in the North, the South, and for the globe.



Notes. The graph above represents the percentage of Christians in the North (defined as Northern America and Europe) and the South (defined as Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania). Raw numbers are found in Table 2 on page 16.

From South to North and back again

Percentages for Christians living in the North and South for 22 dates, derived from Table 2 and presented in Table 1 in columns 7 and 8, are represented in Graph 1: 'Christians, by percentage in North or South, AD 33-AD 2100' (see previous page). The general outline of these percentages is well known. Christians were all Southerners¹¹ at the time of Christ, and gradually became more Northern until 1500 when fully 92 per cent of all Christians were Northerners (Europeans). This percentage began to gradually decline until 1900, when it was 83 per cent. After 1900 the Northern percentage declined precipitously while the Southern rose meteorically. By 2100, over three fourths of all Christians will be living in the South.¹² This represents a return to the demographic makeup of Christianity at the time of Christ (predominantly Southern) but also depicts a vast extension of Christianity into all countries, as well as to thousands of peoples, languages and culture

What does the trajectory signify?

Having identified a single point as the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity for each of 25 different dates, it is instructive to connect these points and thus create a line that can be considered a trajectory¹³ or general path taken by the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity. The first application of the trajectory is as a visual marker for Christian demographics. The trajectory of the demographic centre of gravity of Christianity throughout the centuries provides a visual context to the Christian story, especially from the standpoint of Christian expansion. For example, in the earliest Christian centuries, Christianity penetrated dozens of peoples in Asia, Africa, and Europe, including Jews, Romans, Greeks, Armenians, Copts, Ethiopians, Indians, Berbers, Syrians and Persians. Within a short period of time, Vandals, Celts, Anglo-Saxons, Vikings, Slavs, Turks, Russians and Chinese were added. The trajectory reveals the general path and direction where the largest numbers of individuals were becoming Christians, and serves as a visual marker of the centre of gravity of Christian expansion.

Second, a trajectory formed by Christian followers signifies more than simply a demographic reality. Where there are more followers there are more churches, more priests and pastors, more Christian institutions, more potential missionaries to be sent out, more theologians, and so on. The trajectory, then, has ecclesiastical, missiological and theological implications. These can be examined in the context of Christian history and the future of Christianity.

The trajectory of the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity can be viewed in four segments: (1) early Christian expansion in various directions from AD 33-AD 600, (2) a consistent northern and western trajectory from AD 600-AD 1500, (3) a slight southern and western trajectory from AD 1500-1970, and (4) a southern and eastern trajectory after AD 1970.

Following the trajectory in early Christian history, AD 33-AD 600

Christians were first concentrated in or around Jerusalem at the time of the origin of the church on the day of Pentecost.¹⁴ From there, Christians began to spread in several directions. The Acts of the Apostles provides an outline of Christian expansion in its initial decades. If Christians had spread out in exactly the same numbers in every direction from Jerusalem then the

statistical centre of gravity of Christianity would have remained in Jerusalem. But the growth of Christianity did not follow a static pattern. Instead, Christianity in its first one hundred years grew more to the north and northwest than to the south or the east.

After AD 100, Christianity grew in an irregular fashion, first in one direction and then in another, and thus pulled the demographic centre in the direction of growth (or away from areas of decline). In fact, this is precisely what can be viewed on Map 1 (page 2) from AD 100-AD 600. After 100, Christianity grew to the west, then back to the east, and finally in the northwestern direction that would define the bulk of Christian history. Maps of early Christian expansion unmistakably illustrate this zigzag growth pattern.¹⁵ Table 2 (page 16) shows that, despite this pattern, Southern Europe was the single region with the largest number of Christians in 100, 200, 300 and 400. Nonetheless, there were more Christians in Asia and Africa as a whole than in all of Europe for all of those dates.

One of the clear features of this zigzag pattern in early Christian history was the emergence of multiple locations of Christian centers of theological study and missions. As churches grew all over the Mediterranean world, theologians were attracted to centers such as Hippo, Carthage, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, Constantinople and Rome. The same was true in terms of missionary sending centers such as Alexandria, Edessa, or Rome, and some farther afield such as Merv in Central Asia and Iona in Scotland. The trajectory depicts the movement of the center point of all of this activity. The fastest rate of expansion in any single direction in this period was from AD 400 to AD 500 where the growth of the Church of the East along the silk road pulled the centre of gravity to the east at a rate of 5.6 km per year over the 100 year period.

Christianity moves decidedly North and West, AD 600-AD 1500

Map 1 illustrates an astonishingly consistent trajectory for Christianity from about AD 600 to AD 1500. The line moved steadily north and west after AD 600, and reached its northernmost point in about 1500. Table 2 reveals that in AD 600 and AD 700, the region with the highest number of Christians was still deep in Asia (Southcentral). In AD 800 and AD 900, more Christians lived in Western Asia and the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity was near Iconium (present-day Turkey). However, after AD 900, the line moved unquestionably to the northwest, and for the first time in Christian history Northern Christians were in the majority.

By AD 1000, the statistical centre was quite near Constantinople, thus coinciding with one of Christianity's great ecclesiastical and spiritual centers. However, during the next 100 years, the great schism between Catholics and Orthodox occurred. Catholics in Europe also launched the crusades, which were disastrous in the end for the Orthodox Christians of Western Asia. In AD 1000 and AD 1100, Southern Europe was, once again, the most populous Christian region. This distinction then shifted to Western Europe for 500 years, from AD 1200 to AD 1700. By AD 1500, the statistical centre of Christianity had reached its northernmost point. The churches in Asia and Africa¹⁶ had waned and Christianity was almost exclusively identified as Northern and European.

Christianity begins to move to the South, AD 1500-AD 1970

After 1500, the statistical centre of Christianity, though still moving west, slowly began proceeding south. The age of discovery brought Christianity to the Americas, which further pulled the Christian centre of gravity to the west.¹⁷ Although first Roman Catholic missionaries (1500s) and later Anglicans and Protestants (1800s) made inroads into Africa and Asia, the resulting Christian communities were numerically small. In 1500, 1600, and 1700, Western Europe still had more Christians than any other region. In 1800 and 1900 Eastern Europe held this distinction, largely due to the growth of the Russian Orthodox Church. But by 1900 Christians were located in significant numbers in most regions and no single region would have much impact on the trajectory.

Even so, by 1900 something profound happened to the trajectory of global Christianity. The line turned precipitously southwest. Around 1950, Christianity's statistical centre of gravity crossed below 31.8° North latitude (where it started in Jerusalem) for the first time since the time of Christ. As Kenneth Scott Latourette's great century¹⁸ was coming to a close, churches outside of Europe and the Americas that had taken root in the 19th century, grew rapidly in the 20th century.¹⁹ Africa, in particular, led this transformation, and grew from only 10 million Christians in 1900 to 360 million by AD 2000. Given current trends, there could be over 600 million Christians in Africa by 2025. Nonetheless, in 1970, Northern America had more Christians than any other single region.

The move to the South had accelerated greatly by the end of this period. From AD 1700 - 1800 the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity did not move at all to the south. From AD 1800-1900 it moved only 3.3° to the south, but over the next 100 years it shifted to the south by an astounding 20°. In the same period, the trajectory moved at its fastest rate (16.3 km/year from 1900-1970, then 19.0 km/year from 1970 to 2000) of any time in Christian history.

Christianity shifts back to the East and continues South, AD 1970-AD 2100

Then in 1970, in an equally stunning development, the Christian centre of gravity turned back east (still moving south) for the first time since AD 600. This was largely due to the rise of Christianity in the tropical countries of Africa and Latin America (south) and in Asia, particularly in China and India (east). Shortly after 1980, Christians in the South outnumbered those in the North for the first time in 1,000 years.

Projections for the future show that while the trajectory continues to move to the southeast, the Christian churches of the Global South (Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania) will likely continue to acquire an increasing percentage of global Christianity. By 2100, the geographic centre of Christianity is expected to be a full 30° of latitude south of where it was at its most northern point in AD 1500, and 20° south of Jerusalem where it began in AD 33. Table 2 shows that in AD 2100 Southern Christians (2.8 billion) will be well over three times as numerous as Northern Christians (775 million).

Features of the present southeastern trajectory

What does it mean for the future of Christianity that the demographic centre of gravity of Christianity continues to move in a southeastern trajectory at the same time as the South is taking an increasing percentage of global Christianity? We have identified three areas for brief consideration here: (1) theology, (2) translation, and (3) mission. Although numerous authors in the past 35 years have written about the southward shift of Christianity,²⁰ we believe that tracking the trajectory of Christianity may shed new light on these areas.

Theological implications of the trajectory

In recent centuries, the dominant theologies of Christianity have been written by Northern scholars, but the massive movements of Southern Christianity will likely chart the future of Christian theology. From the standpoint of the trajectory, theological reflection has emerged along the trajectory from the

Church Fathers in the earliest centuries to Europeans in the next 1000 years (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestant and Russian Orthodox). Today, then, one would expect voices to emerge along the southeastern trajectory. However, one unique feature of Christian demographics today is the near total geographic spread of Christianity worldwide. Therefore one would anticipate not only contributions from near the centre of gravity in Africa, but also from Southern Christians, such as Filipinos, Brazilians, and Chinese, who are far from the trajectory.²¹ Southern Christians can also locate themselves on today's trajectory by interpreting and critiquing Northern Christianity's 1,000 year dominance of the trajectory (AD 950-AD 1950). Furthermore, they can rediscover the theological, ecclesiastical and missiological trajectory of the first Christian millennium when Southern Christians were in the majority and the centre of gravity was in Western Asia.

'They speak in many tongues'

The rapid southern trajectory of Christianity since 1900 also suggests that the dominant languages of Christianity will shift from North to South. Already by 1980, Spanish (primarily in its Latin American forms) was the leading language of church membership in the world.²² But Christians in Africa, Asia and Latin America worship in numerous other languages. Thus, translation of the Christian message has become increasingly important since all peoples, languages and cultures have a unique contribution to make to global Christianity.²³ Northern scholars, no longer at the Christian centre of gravity, will also have to recognize and seriously consider writings in non-English and non-European languages. Consequently, there is a great need for Christian scholarship in Southern languages to be translated into English, French, German, Italian, etc.

Whose mission?

For 100 years the trajectory has been moving away from traditionally Christian countries into both non-Christian and newly-Christian lands. As a result, Muslims and Christians are in close proximity in countries like Nigeria, Sudan, Indonesia and the Philippines. The same is true of Christians and Hindus in India, and Buddhists and Christians in Southeast Asia.²⁴ Some see inevitable conflict in the future while others are more hopeful.²⁵ The trajectory has given Christians around the globe a new opportunity to show hospitality to non-Christian neighbours, and to take a genuine interest in their religions and cultures. With the trajectory moving from Europe to the Southern hemisphere, Africa, Asia and Latin America can no longer be seen as the periphery. Instead, 'Christian mission to all parts of the globe will require resources from both

the North and the South to be successful.²⁶ Finally, it is important to remember that there are at least 4,000 cultures (out of 13,000) that have not yet been reached with the Christian gospel.²⁷ Most are Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists in the South. Who from the South (or North) will be presenting the gospel to these peoples? What cultural expectations are likely to be made for those who choose to follow Christ? Perhaps surprisingly for many Northerners (and Southerners?), there are encouraging signs that people from these great religious systems may not have to entirely leave their traditions to become Christians.²⁸ Nonetheless, the frontier mission's task still remains unfinished in the context of global Christianity's southeastern trajectory.

Conclusion

The 2,000-year trajectory of Christianity reveals a fascinating story of Christianity's demographic roots in Asia and Africa, its gradual move into Europe, and its recent return to the South. Christianity's great institutions and leaders have followed this trajectory. Therefore, the present southeastern trajectory of Christian demographics represents a new chapter in global Christianity. What is certain is that Christianity can no longer draw on a dominant Northern cultural, linguistic, or political framework for direction. Neither can the future be seen exclusively through the lenses of Southern Christianity. Global Christianity today is a phenomenon, not of uniformity, but of ever-increasing diversity. Paul-Gordon Chandler writes, 'It is like the canvas of a beautiful painting with contrasting and complementary colours. The foundation for our unity as Christians throughout the world is not our likeness but our diversity.'²⁹ The unanswered question for Christians from both the North and South is, 'How well will we work, minister, and grow together in the context of this astonishing diversity?' Today, the southeastern trajectory of global Christianity's statistical centre of gravity provides clues about where one might look to find both the answers and the leadership for that quest.

APPENDIX

Methodology

The data for calculating the geographic centre of gravity of Christianity are set out in detail from Table 7-2 of *World Christian Trends*.³⁰ This utilizes the United Nations' classification of all countries, from which this article derives its definition of the 'North' as the 48 countries in 'Europe' plus the 5 in 'Northern America'; and the 'South' as all other 185 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania. Table 2 reproduces these estimates for the number of Christians in millions in each of the current United Nations

21 regions at 25 points in history. These estimates were used as the baseline of this analysis. The following steps were taken to estimate the statistical centre of gravity of Christianity. First, latitude and longitude were assigned (second and third columns in Table 2) for an approximate geographic centre for each UN region based on geography and population patterns. Second, these were recalibrated by depicting southern latitudes as negative numbers (50°S = -50) and then adding 90 to all latitudes. This produces a range of 0 at the South pole to 180 at the North pole. Longitude was recalibrated by retaining values for all eastern longitudes while subtracting all western longitudes from 360 (100°W = 260). This produces a range of 0 to 350 (10° west of Greenwich) by moving eastward around the world from Greenwich. Third, the number of Christians (in millions) in each region (found in Table 2) was multiplied by the recalibrated latitude and longitude, summed for every region and then divided by the total number of Christians in the world. This produces an approximate geographic centre (latitude and longitude) for Christianity, expressed in recalibrated form. These were then converted to actual latitude and longitude, and appear in Table 1 in columns 4 and 5. Note that adjusting either the geographic centre of a single UN region or the estimate of the number of Christians in a region would change the location of the statistical centre (latitude and longitude) for any given date.

Notes

- 1 For a detailed enumeration of Christians, past, present and future, see D.B. Barrett, G. T. Kurian, and T.M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: a Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, 2nd edition, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001, 2 vols, 1,699 pages.
- 2 Used here to mean the latitude and longitude which represent the statistical centre of all Christian followers in clearly-defined geographical areas. This term was used in a more general demographic sense by D. Barrett in his 1970 IRM article, 'AD 2000: 350 million Christians in Africa', Vol. LIX, No. 233, January 1970, p. 39-54.
- 3 One half of all Christians in the world live north of this point, the other half live south of the point. In the same way, one half live to the east of the point, and the other half to the west.
- 4 North is defined here in a geopolitical sense by five current United Nations regions (53 countries): Eastern Europe (including Russia), Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Western Europe and Northern America. South is defined as the remaining 16 current UN regions (185 countries): Eastern Africa, Middle Africa, Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Western Africa, Eastern Asia, South-central Asia, South-eastern Asia, Western Asia, Caribbean, Central America, South America, Australia/New Zealand, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Three other geographic ways of dividing North and South could be proposed. First, one could consider that the equator represents the dividing line between North and South (Northern and Southern hemisphere). Second, one could move the line north to the Tropic of Cancer (23 1/2° North latitude), thus capturing

- most of Latin America, Africa, and Asia in the South. Third, one could consider Jerusalem's parallel of latitude (31.8° North) as the dividing line. Each of these alternatives has advantages and disadvantages. For the purposes of this study, the geopolitical model based on current UN regions is the most practical because statistics on demography and religious affiliation are most readily available for these regions.
- 5 K.S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity, Vol 1: Beginnings to 1500*, New York, Harper and Row, 1975, p. xxi.
 - 6 R. D. Winter, 'The Kingdom Strikes Back: Ten Epochs of Redemptive History', in R.D. Winter and S.C. Hawthorne, eds, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, Third Edition, Pasadena, CA, William Carey Library, 1999, pp. 195-213.
 - 7 A.F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 2002, p. 13.
 - 8 Estimates for the number of Christians and the larger demographic context for the 21 United Nations regions (current boundaries) are given in Part 7 'Geotrends' in D.B. Barrett and T.M. Johnson, *World Christian Trends, AD 30-AD 2100: Interpreting the Annual Christian Megacensus*, Pasadena, CA, William Carey Library, 2001
 - 9 A recent United Nations Development Programme document 'Forging a Global South' (New York, May 2003) states, 'The use of the term 'South' to refer to developing countries collectively has been part of the shorthand of international relations since the 1970s. It rests on the fact that all of the world's industrially developed countries (with the exception of Australia and New Zealand) lie to the north of its developing countries.' See footnote 4 for the precise definitions of North and South used in the methodology of this article.
 - 10 For example, Anglicans in the Global South spoke out under the leadership of Nigerian Primate Akinola in the recent document, 'Statement of the Primates of the Global South in the Anglican Communion in Response to the Consecration of Gene Robinson on 2 November 2003' at www.anglicanng.org/glbsouthst.htm.
 - 11 Ancient Palestine is located in the present-day UN region of Western Asia, defined above as part of the South.
 - 12 Increasingly, 'Northern' Christians are Southern Christians who have immigrated to the North. For example, some of the largest single congregations in Europe are led by and comprised of Africans.
 - 13 Defined as 'a path, progression, or line of development likened to a physical trajectory' in Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Chicago, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1966.
 - 14 Technically, there were already followers in Galilee, Samaria and at other places in ancient Palestine. But it is reasonable to assume Jerusalem as a centre when the numbers were still reasonably small.
 - 15 See, for example, F. van der Meer and C. Mohrmann, *Atlas of the early Christian world*, London, Nelson, 1959.
 - 16 With notable exceptions, such as the remarkably resilient Orthodox churches of Egypt, Ethiopia and India.
 - 17 This numerical fact must be viewed in light of the atrocities that accompanied the expansion of Christianity in the Americas. Even when missionaries opposed imperialistic initiatives, they were often inexorably associated with them. Back in Europe things were not much better, where the wars of religion followed the Protestant Reformation.

- 18 Defined as 1815-1914 in K. S. Latourette, AHistory of Christianity, Vol. II: Reformation to the Present, New York, Harper and Row, 1975, p. 1063.
- 19 Note that Latin America was already 95 per cent Christian (Roman Catholic) in 1900. The changes in Latin American Christianity since then refer to the growth of Protestantism and Pentecostalism.
- 20 One of the more recent and thorough treatments is P. Jenkins, The Next Christendom: the Coming of Global Christianity, New York, Oxford University Press, 2002.
- 21 See Hwa Yung's detailed proposal for Asians in global Christian perspective in Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology, Oxford, Regnum Books International, 1997.
- 22 See Global Table 7 'Affiliated Christians (Church Members) Ranked by 96 Languages each with over a Million Native Speakers, AD 1980' in D.B. Barrett, World Christian Encyclopedia, New York, Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 10.
- 23 L. Sanneh summarises his long-standing argument for translation in Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel Beyond the West, Grand Rapids, MI, Eerdmans, 2003.
- 24 With recent surges of immigration from the South to the North, large numbers of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists live in Northern America and Europe, thus giving Christians there similar opportunities.
- 25 Such as T.W. Simmons, Islam in a Globalizing World, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2003.
- 26 S. Escobar, The New Global Mission, Downers Grove, IL, Inter Varsity Press, 2003, p. 18.
- 27 These are listed in Part 8 'Ethnosphere', in Volume 2 of Barrett, Kurian and Johnson, World Christian Encyclopedia, pp. 30-241. Note that the 4,000 least-evangelised peoples are identified as World A in column 34. These peoples receive the least attention from Northern or Southern Christians (scripture translation, radio broadcasting, missionaries, etc).
- 28 See especially H. Hoefler's observations of Hindus in Madras who were following Jesus Christ from within the Hindu context, in Churchless Christianity, Pasadena, CA, William Carey Library, 2001.
- 29 P. Chandler, God's Global Mosaic: What We Can Learn from Christians Around the World, Downers Grove, IL, Inter Varsity Press, 2000, p. 15.
- 30 Barrett and Johnson, World Christian Trends., pp. 319-334.

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Table 1. Global Christianity's Statistical Center of Gravity, AD 33-AD 2100.

Year 1	Christians (millions) 2	% of world population 3	Geographic Center Latitude Longitude 4 5		Closest Settlement 6	Percentages North South 7 8		Direction 9	Rate km/year 10	Growth or decline of Christianity by geographic region
33	0.01	0.01	31.8°N	35.3°E	Jerusalem	0	100	—	—	Christian followers meet in Jerusalem and surrounding Palestine
100	0.8	0.45	35.6°N	31.4°E	Cyprus	39	61	Northwest	2.7	Followers in Southern Europe, Western Asia, and India
200	4.66	2.43	35.9°N	26.1°E	Crete	42	58	West	4.9	Churches grow in Southern Europe and North Africa
300	14.01	7.3	35.4°N	27.0°E	Karpathos	36	64	Southeast	1	Orthodox churches grow rapidly in Syria and Mesopotamia
400	25.32	13.43	35.6°N	27.3°E	Rhodes	40	60	Northeast	0.4	Edict of Toleration: Roman Empire over 50% Christian for first time
500	37.8	19.86	35.3°N	33.2°E	Cyprus	37	63	East	5.6	Church of the East follows the Silk Road; Patrick evangelizes Ireland
600	40.4	20.83	35.7°N	33.8°E	Seleucia	36	64	Northeast	0.7	Churches strong in Central Asia; Celtic peregrini in Northern Europe
700	40.57	19.8	36.5°N	32.6°E	Side	38	62	Northwest	1.4	Islam expands in North Africa, Central Asia; First Christians in China
800	40.87	18.75	37.6°N	31.1°E	Iconium	44	56	Northwest	1.8	Continued expansion of Islam, Charlemagne crowned emperor
900	40.83	17.13	38.3°N	31.3°E	Iconium	48	52	North	0.6	Vikings convert to Christianity; Islam strong in Spain
1000	44.67	16.94	40.5°N	28.0°E	Cyzicus	58	42	Northwest	3.9	Russia and Iceland convert to Christianity
1100	51.96	16.32	42.4°N	26.2°E	Sofia	67	33	Northwest	2.6	Schism between Catholic and Orthodox; Norman conquest
1200	65.71	18.38	43.8°N	24.9°E	Bucharest	74	26	Northwest	2	Papal and monastic reform; Crusades
1300	83.91	23.18	44.5°N	22.9°E	Sardica	77	23	Northwest	1.8	Nestorians grow under Pax Mongolia; Franciscans and Dominicans
1400	56.73	16.1	45.8°N	19.7°E	Belgrade	85	15	Northwest	2.9	Black Death in Europe, Tamerlane wipes out Church of the East
1500	75.89	17.94	47.3°N	18.0°E	Budapest	92	8	Northwest	2.1	Conquistadors and missionaries arrive in the Americas
1600	100.44	18.4	46.1°N	15.2°E	Zagreb	91	9	Southwest	2.6	Roman Catholic missions to India, China, and Japan
1700	130.11	21.34	44.4°N	12.7°E	Ravenna	86	14	Southwest	2.7	Christianity grows in the Americas; Muslim states declining
1800	204.98	22.68	44.4°N	10.0°E	La Spezia	87	13	West	2.1	Protestant and Anglican missions gain momentum
1900	558.14	34.46	41.1°N	3.6°W	Madrid	83	17	Southwest	11.7	Latourette's Great Century; new churches in Africa and Asia
1970	1'236.38	33.45	26.5°N	13.2°W	El Aaiun	58	42	Southwest	16.3	Churches declining in Europe but mushrooming in Africa and Asia
2000	1'999.56	33.02	21.1°N	3.7°W	Timbuktu	42	58	Southeast	19	Independent churches in China and India grow
2025	2'626.66	33.45	17.5°N	0.0°	Gao	33	67	Southeast	7.2	Southern churches (of all kinds) continue to grow
2050	3'051.55	34.25	14.8°N	3.1°E	Niamey	27	73	Southeast	8.4	Europe and Australia secular; Southern Christians move to the North
2100	3'583.00	35.44	13.0°N	6.1°E	Sokoto	22	78	Southeast	3.9	Vast majority of Christians in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Oceania

Notes.

- Columns 4 and 5 are calculated using data in Table 2 on the numbers of Christians in each of the 21 current United Nations regions.
- Latitude and longitude in Columns 4 and 5 are expressed as decimals (for use in calculations); thus 40.5°-N refers to 40 degrees, 30 minutes North latitude.

Table 2. Number of Christians in millions by UN Region and by North/South dichotomy, AD 33-AD 2100

UN Region	Geographic center		Year																											
	Lat	Long	33	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	1900	1970	2000	2025	2050	2100			
THE "NORTH"																														
EUROPE																														
Eastern Europe	55°N	40°E	0.01	0.1	0.3	0.7	1	1.4	1.7	2.3	2.7	5	8	11.5	14.2	13.5	1	9.8	24	32	56	151.94	158.2	220.27	229.85	212.11	205			
Northern Europe	60°N	10°E	0.01	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.8	0.85	0.9	1.2	2.6	3.5	4.8	6.3	4.7	6.9	8.5	12.3	21.7	56.89	75.76	78.31	78.1	70.54	67				
Southern Europe	40°N	10°E	0.02	0.3	0.7	1.2	1.8	2.4	3.1	3.8	4.7	6.1	7.9	10.2	12.5	15	19.5	14	19	25.5	26.5	39	68.54	112.24	120.92	110.78	91.96	83		
Western Europe	50°N	5°E	0.04	0.15	0.6	1.2	2.7	4.2	6	7.2	7.5	8.5	11.5	17	25	33	44	55	103.27	146.5	140.14	135.86	118.11	110						
NORTHERN AMERICA																														
Northern America	40°N	100°W																			0.4	5.6	78.81	211.42	260.62	290.35	300.68	310		
Total in NORTH			0	0.31	1.95	5.1	10.1	13.8	14.4	15.55	17.9	19.4	26.1	35	48.3	65	48.2	69.7	91	112.2	177.3	459.45	704.11	820.27	844.93	793.41	775			
THE "SOUTH"																														
AFRICA																														
Eastern Africa	4°S	40°E			0.01	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	1	1.2	1.4	1.7	1.8	2	2.5	3	4.52	55.45	151.12	271.31	389.13	550				
Middle Africa	0°	20°E															0.01	0.02	0.04	0.08	0.19	30.29	78.08	156.49	237.1	335				
Northern Africa	30°N	10°E	0.09	0.91	3	3.92	5	5.3	4.8	3.45	2.01	1.06	1.1	1.1	1	1	1	0.8	0.7	0.85	2.7	8	15.86	23.13	29.99	37				
Southern Africa	25°S	25°E																		0.02	0.1	2.06	19.26	38.96	46.78	55.09	61.5			
Western Africa	10°N	0°							0.01	0.01							0.03	0.08	0.15	0.3	0.47	30.82	76.21	136.1	191.9	260				
ASIA																														
Eastern Asia	35°N	110°E						0.01	0.3	0.5	0.1	0.05	0.6	0.8	0.01	0.1	0.4	0.3	2.17	11.59	114.66	166.08	202.33	240						
South central Asia	30°N	70°E	0.2	0.8	2.4	4	10.9	12	11	9	8.5	7	7.3	7.5	7.7	0.8	0.2	0.4	1	0.85	4.6	30.01	73.68	115.37	148.36	185				
South eastern Asia	5°N	110°E						0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.2	1	2.2	8.39	53.7	111.03	164.44	210.84	250						
Western Asia	33°N	35°E	0.01	0.2	1	3.5	7	7.6	8.2	8.6	9.5	9.6	9.5	7.5	7	8	5	3	3.3	3.8	5	6.74	6.1	13.46	18.91	23.18	26			
LATIN AMERICA																														
Caribbean	20°N	70°W																		0.02	0.04	0.3	1.7	6.72	19.58	30.05	38.19	42.37	46.5	
Central America	20°N	110°W																		1	3	5	17.77	66.26	130.21	179.74	209.65	237		
South America	20°S	60°W																		0.1	1.5	5	8.2	37.52	183.36	320.84	423.18	482.42	540	
OCEANIA																														
Australia/New Zealand	30°S	150°E																				0.08	4.44	14.33	18.2	21.17	21.85	23		
Melanesia	15°S	170°E																				0.22	2.88	5.82	9.13	11.72	14.3			
Micronesia	10°N	150°E																				0.01	0.06	0.24	0.51	0.88	1.2	1.52		
Polynesia	20°S	160°W																				0.01	0.11	0.4	0.58	0.83	1.02	1.18		
Total in SOUTH			0.01	0.49	2.71	8.91	15.22	24	26	25.02	22.97	21.43	18.57	16.96	17.41	18.91	8.53	6.19	8.44	17.91	27.68	98.68	539.26	1,179.29	1,771.73	2,238.15	2,808.00			
Global Total			0.01	0.8	4.66	14.01	25.32	37.8	40.4	40.57	40.87	40.83	44.67	51.96	65.71	63.91	56.73	75.89	99.44	130.11	204.98	558.14	1,236.38	1,999.56	2,616.66	3,051.55	3,583.00			

Notes.

1. The methodology employed in this article is based on the United Nations' definitions and statistics of the world divided under 6 continents and 21 regions, as shown above in the first column. The United Nations also utilizes the North/South dichotomy defining the North as Europe and Northern America and the South as Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. The geographic center of the North ranges from 40-60° North and the South from 35°N southwards.