



LOC TPS APWH 1900-present World Christianity and the US

9-12 Grades

Period 6

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This activity is sponsored in part by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program, coordinated by Waynesburg University.

45 – 60 minutes

Description of activity: Students examine the spread of Christianity globally - especially over the past hundred or so years.

Activity Goals

Focus Question: Which areas of the world have converted to Christianity in the past one hundred plus years? How is Christianity in the US changing and why?

Context: This would fit into a study of the twentieth century cultural processes/immigration.

Objectives: The student should be able to explain the cause of the recent spread of Christianity and identify the causes of the changing nature of Christianity in the US.

Assessment:

Virginia SOLS

APWH Key Concepts 6.2.II; SOC-3, CUL-3, CUL-4; Causation, argumentation

Activity Details

Primary Sources: find below

Procedure: Students view video, analyze maps, then analyze part of a lecture.

What you will need before implementing:

This lesson is dependent on computer and internet access for all students. The documents, directions, and chart should be shared digitally with all students (in Google Docs or another format).



Students may view

Animated map shows how Christianity spread around the world

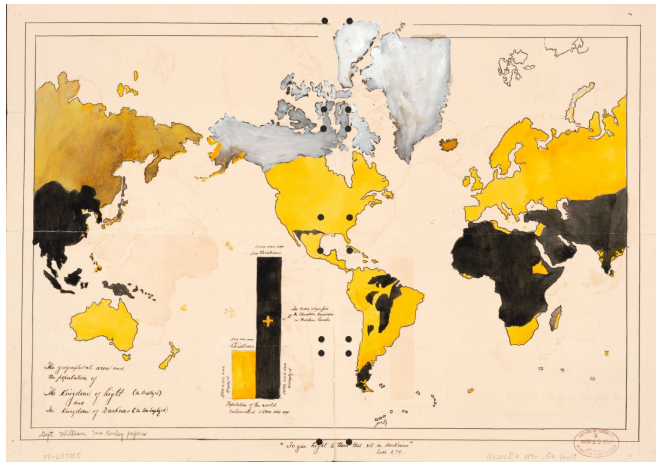
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJ0dZhHccfU>

Or

Maps of Religion

<http://www.mapsofwar.com/ind/history-of-religion.html>

What particular events over the past few centuries led to major expansion of the Christian world?



The geographical area and the population of the kingdom of light (the baptized) and the kingdom of darkness (the unbaptized).

Contributor Names

McKinley, William, 1843-1901.

Created / Published

[189-?]

<https://www.loc.gov/item/85697105/>

Take note of the year this was produced and the language used.

What can you conclude about the author?

Which religious groups were classified as pagan or heathen?

Can you account for this?

Explain how Christianity had spread through much of the Americas.

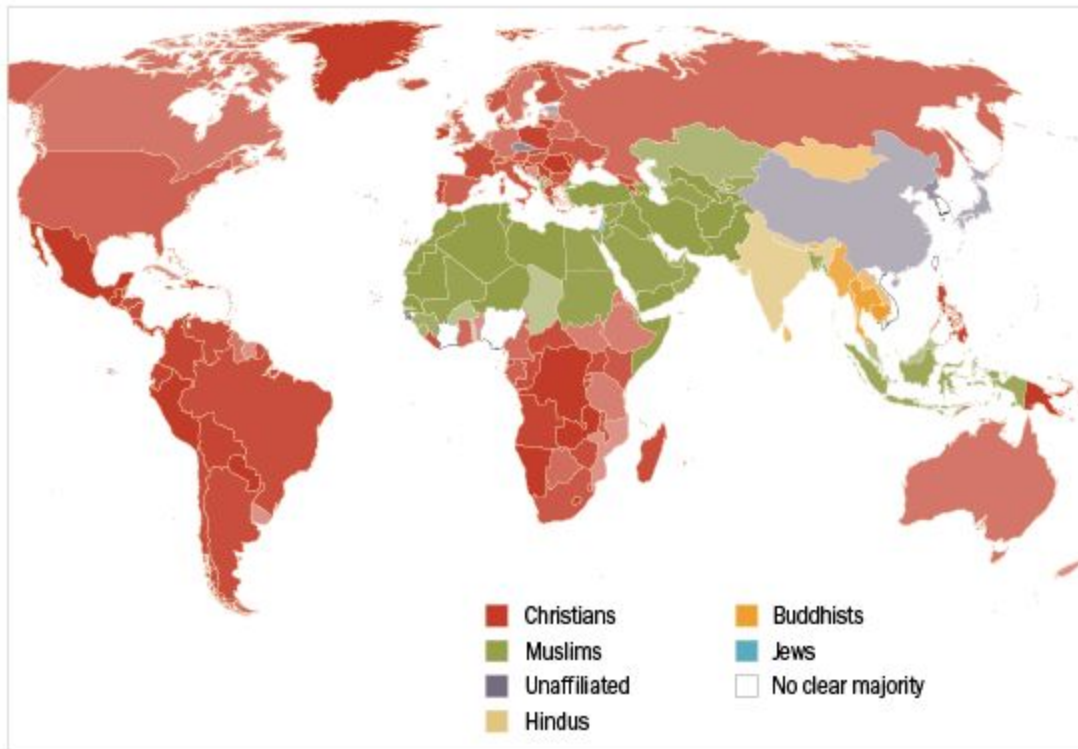
Which areas were left relatively untouched by Christianity?

What factors account for this?



### Majority Religion, by Country

Countries are colored according to the majority religion. Darker shading represents a greater prevalence of the majority religion.



Nine countries have no clear religious majority: Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, Macau, Nigeria, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Togo and Vietnam. There are no countries in which adherents of folk religions make up a clear majority. There are also no countries in which followers of other religions (such as Bahai's, Jains, Sikhs, Shintoists, Taoists, followers of Tenrikyo, Wiccans or Zoroastrians) make up a clear majority.

Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life • Global Religious Landscape, December 2012

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2012/12/18/our-christian-earth-the-astounding-reach-of-the-worlds-largest-religion-in-charts-and-maps/?utm\\_term=.088eb9b8a7bf](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2012/12/18/our-christian-earth-the-astounding-reach-of-the-worlds-largest-religion-in-charts-and-maps/?utm_term=.088eb9b8a7bf)

What area(s) of the world have become more Christian over the one hundred and thirty (or so) years?

Can you give a plausible reason to explain the spread of Christianity?



**TITLE:** The Pilgrimage of World Christianity: A Post-Christian West and the non-Western Church

**SPEAKER:** Wesley Granberg-Michaelson

**EVENT DATE:** 2012/12/13

**RUNNING TIME:** 71 minutes

**TRANSCRIPT:** [View Transcript](#) (link will open in a new window)

**DESCRIPTION:**

Distinguished Visiting Scholar Wesley Granberg-Michaelson discusses the major demographic shifts in the Christian world and the impact on efforts for Christian unity.

[https://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature\\_wdesc.php?rec=5723](https://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=5723)

transcript

<https://www.loc.gov/today/cyberlc/transcripts/2012/121213klu1600.txt>

This is an excerpt from Wesley Granberg-Michaelson's lecture.

Thus the pilgrimage of Christianity measured since the time when the Gutenberg Bible was printed has witnessed continuous and endless fracturing of its organizational life, and this has spread around the world. The dramatic shift in world Christianity also has intensified the division' intentions in the global church and its ecumenical institutions. While the massive growth in the Christian family has come in the global south, financial resources and material power remains concentrated in the global north and west as seen in this graph. This is a simple graph showing, on the one hand, income -- on the right side, income, and on the left side, population, and the disparity is obvious. Geographical divisions are creating serious threats to the sense of unity and mutual belonging seen especially around issues of money, power, international decision-making, and intellectual theological capital. During the last 100 years the dramatic geographical pilgrimage of world Christianity was accompanied by the unpredicted advent and eventual eruption of the Pentecostal movement as a powerful force drastically altering the landscape of the global Christian community. Barely existing a century ago, today, one out of every four Christians in the world is Pentecostal or Charismatic according to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life. Along with the story of the growth of the church in Africa, it is hard to name a more critical and formative development in the last century of Christian history. It is estimated, for instance, that 80 percent of new conversions in Asia are Pentecostal or Charismatic. Almost one in four Pentecostals in the world lives in Asia, and nearly one and three lives in Africa. What northern liberal and Evangelical Christians often fail to recognize is that Pentecostalism comes to the global south without the history and baggage of colonialism. Churches in the Pentecostal tradition and style, with their emphasis on immediate spiritual experiences, detached Christianity from its white missionary control and empowered indigenous expressions of Christian faith within many parts of the world. The Atlas of Global Christianity, the most comprehensive resource describing the changes in world Christianity in the last 100 years, puts it this way: Pentecostalism became the main contributor to reshaping a Christianity



from a predominantly Western to a predominantly non-Western phenomena in the twentieth century. The growth in Pentecostal, Charismatic, and renewal movements of Christianity has come at nearly five times the rate of overall growth of global Christianity, dramatically changing its composition and its theological diversity. Brazil today not only has the largest number of Catholics of any country, but also the largest number of Pentecostals. Meanwhile, in Asia it is estimated that there are 873,000 Chinese Charismatic congregations. These dramatically growing Pentecostal independent evangelical and indigenous churches function largely in a separate world from those comprising the organized ecumenical movement, which is mostly the Orthodox and the historic protestant churches. The theological gulf between these two worlds has widened as Christianity's center of gravity has continued its journey toward the global south. This divide involves not only doctrinal issues but also deep differences reflected in the fervent style spirituality, the less structured and more elastic forms of church polity, along with the convictional witness and focus on church growth found in these freshly emerging forms of Christianity. In my judgment, the gulf between these two worlds, between the world of established orthodox and mainline in the north and the growing churches in the south, now constitutes the most pressing challenge to the unity of the church in the twenty-first century. Here's the dilemma: The World Council of Churches has faithfully and courageously carried out the vocation of Christian unity for the past 65 years. That it is comprised of only 349 denominations or member churches in the face of over 40,000 denominations now present. Yet new approaches are emerging, the most promising is called the Global Christian Forum. Begun as a proposal arising out of the World Council's Assembly in Harare in 1998, the Global Christian Forum has become a fresh and credible movement that offers the hope of transcending these divisions. It's been successfully engaging leaders of all the major Christian traditions -- Catholic, Pentecostal, Evangelical, Orthodox, and historic Protestant -- in a new circle of global fellowship. Its first major gathering was held in Limuru, Kenya in 2007. ^M00:26:38Observers called it "a watershed in modern Christian history." A second such gathering took place last year in Manado, Indonesia. Now, the challenges posed by the change in patterns of world Christianity however are not only encountered globally. Increasingly, these are being experienced locally. Migration is transforming the religious life of Europe and North America. This has always been so. Of course. Religious migrants have shaped the history of Christianity in the United States. But attention needs to be focused on how that reality is continuing today in ways often not fully understood or appreciated. Commonly, we view immigration as introducing large numbers of non-Christian religions into U.S. society. Important scholars like Harvard's Diana Eck have documented the fascinating increase in religious pluralism in the United States, particularly in her classic work "A New Religious America." Yet the popular assumptions about the impact of immigration on non-Christian religious practice in the U.S. often disregard more fundamental realities. In fact, immigration to the U.S. is having its most dramatic religious effects on the Christian population of the country. That's because, first of all, an estimated 60 percent of all present immigrants arriving in the United States are Christian. Moreover, they come with practices, traditions, and expressions of their faith that have been shaped in a non-Western context."



What are the speaker's main points about Christianity as a whole?

What assertions does he make about the nature of immigration into the US and its implications?

What historical argument does he make to explain the popularity and rapid spread of Pentecostalism in Africa and Asia?

Students should take a stand on each and respond to each in a short paragraph that backs up their assertions with evidence.

Is the US becoming a more secular nation?

How is the influx of immigrants changing the religious make-up of the US?

Is the shift in religious makeup of the US population a problem or potential problem?