To explore the meaning and implications of the massive cultural shift of Christianity from the Northern to Southern continents is one of the most challenging tasks of theological education and scholarship today.

Directors

Dana L. Robert, PhD
Dr. Robert, Truman Collins Professor of World Christianity and Mission History, co-directs the Center. A leading mission historian, she has conducted research on the contributions of missionary women, and published widely in the history of Christianity as a cross-cultural movement.

Marthinus L. Daneel, ThD
Dr. Daneel, Professor of Missiology at Boston University, is co-director of the Center. Over forty years of ministry and research in Zimbabwe have made him one of the leading experts on African traditional religion and African indigenous churches in southern Africa.
Overview

The Center for Global Christianity and Mission at the Boston University School of Theology explores the most important development in Christianity during the early twenty-first century: the shift of Christianity’s demographic center to the southern hemisphere. Whereas in the year 1900, over 70% of the world’s Christians were of European background, by the year 2000 the ethnically European component of the world church had shrunk to less than one-third of the total number of Christians. To explore the meaning and implications of this massive cultural shift is one of the most challenging tasks of theological education and scholarship today.

The Center seeks to address several critical aspects of Christianity’s “shift southward” in the twenty-first century:

- Christianity must be understood as a multi-cultural and global movement, an enduring theological tradition that finds new life in the lived realities of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

- The dramatic growth of nonwestern Christianity begs for analysis of the missionary dimension in these churches, as initiators rather than receptors of mission outreach.

- The expanding churches of the nonwestern world are in need of theologically trained leaders, ranging from seminary professors, to grassroots leaders of indigenous churches.

Priorities

In order to address these critical realities, the priorities of the Center for Global Christianity and Mission include the following:

- To train both western and nonwestern church leaders in world Christianity and mission

- To conduct research and produce publications on western and nonwestern mission history

- To undertake empirical research on new Christian movements

- To provide theological education among indigenous churches in southern Africa

Western churches and theological seminaries are ill prepared to respond to Christianity’s new global reality. The Center for Global Christianity and Mission places the Boston University School of Theology in an ideal position to meet the need for theological training in global Christianity, informed by deep, rigorous, and wide-ranging scholarship in the history and practice of Christian mission in today’s world.

Current Projects

The Center’s priorities are a driving force in its current projects, which include:


- Creation of a web-based collection of classic texts in the history of mission thought

- Speaker series of noted scholars on world Christianity and mission

- Collection of microform mission archives and other valuable library resources for historical research

- Research into African indigenous churches and new religious movements in Southern Africa