

The New Phase of Christianity and Its Implication for the Global Conversation

about Mission

By Samuel Yonas deressa
Assistant Professor of Theology and Global South
Concordia University, St. Paul

Introduction

The church in the Global South is experiencing phenomenal growth and expansion, and have become the center of Christianity. When churches in the west have been continually declining in number, the churches in Africa are growing in large number. This phenomenon has put immense responsibility on churches in the Global South to not only lead the worldwide Christian churches towards the future or the new phase of Christianity, but to also translate the Christian faith in a new way to make it applicable to their context. A number of western theologians have also recognized this phenomenon and predicted its implication for theology and global Christian practices. Andrew Walls, for example, have already indicated twenty-five years ago that the “Third World theology is now likely to be the representative Christian theology.”¹ He further predicted that the “future general reader of Church history is more likely to be concerned with Latin American and African, and perhaps some Asian, theology” than that of the European and/or American.² Following Walls, Philip Jenkins also reiterated that “the emerging Christian world will be anchored in the Southern continents.”³ This article (presentation) will discuss the contribution of scholars from the Global South on the study of Christian mission and how these contributions have continued to shape the global conversation on mission.

¹ Andrew Walls. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of faith* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 10.

² Ibid.

³ Philip Jenkins. *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 14.