

# The next christendom: the coming of global christianity essay

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Christianity is becoming extinct.

In order for it to continue on it must modernize its beliefs. The average Christian is white, middle class and is from Europe or America. The religion of Islam is expanding quickly and will soon dominate Christianity. These are all common claims made about Christianity that many people believe, yet Philip Jenkins claims and proves them untrue in his book, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*. According to his book, Christianity is moving out of the global north and into the global south. In fact, Christianity is growing rapidly in countries such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

He also writes about how Africa and Brazil will, within the next fifty years, replace Europe as the center of Christianity. Both of these countries have been heavily missionized within that past hundred years, and the number of Christians in each has raised millions. The expansion growth in these countries is due primarily to their high reproduction rates and their hunger for the Christian beliefs that the missionaries brought with them. Jenkins says in this book that the missionaries faced no problems trying to explain about a higher deity or other “ bafflingly alien world views” to the Africans, because it followed closely with many of their own tribal beliefs. Many of the tribes worshiped one higher power already and also found that many of the Christian beliefs fell in sync with their own heritage and customs. They did though, encounter one problem: the beliefs fell so in sync with their tribal traditions, that eventually the African culture started to incorporate their customs such as exorcism, dream visions, prophesy, healing, and mysticism into their Christian churches, creating an entire sub group of Christianity.

These sub groups are closely related to the more Pentecostal churches, but <https://assignbuster.com/the-next-christendom-the-coming-of-global-christianity-essay/>

are far from the ritualistic practices of the Anglicans and Catholics that primarily missionized them.

Pentecostal churches, because of the resurgence in countries such as Africa and Brazil will soon be the dominant Christian sects. They strongly emphasize views about personal relationships with God, biblical literism, speaking in tongues, visions and prophecy just as the African churches do. The Pentecostal church tends to mainly attract the poor or lower class of society, which also happens to be what Brazil and Africa are made up of. This means that the future of Christianity is going to greatly contrast the current Christianity norms, which primarily point towards those ideals of the wealthy-global north. The Pentecostal sects also tend to be much more conservative in their morals, stress preaching and gospel more than ritual, and put great emphasis on salvation through faith, greatly differing again the major global-north religions. Being conservative, these countries also hold many different cultural views as well. In stark contrast to most of the newly liberal westernized world, the conservative views usually look harshly at issues such as the woman's movement, sexual education, gambling, democratic views, homosexuality, and many other widely westernized practices. So while the global north tries to modernize itself to attract and retain members, the global south, and the future majority of Christians, are moving toward more traditional and conservative practices. The future of Christianity will go through major changes as the conservative group becomes the majority, and the new liberal group becomes the minority.

It is true; the Muslim population is growing rapidly. It's because of this that many people believe Islam will soon become the dominant religion of the world. The only thing is that while the Muslims are reproducing rapidly, so are the Christians of the global south. People just don't realize it as much because of the spotlight that has been on the Middle East for the past decade.

Islamic mosques are sprouting up all over the world, especially in areas that Christians are also active in. This thought is truly scary. With two very competitive, very strong willed religions in small areas there is a high potential for religious wars, just like in the past. This can already be seen in present history in areas in the Middle East, and also in areas of Europe. Only time will tell what will become of the small spaces they presently, and will in the future, occupy. Jenkins claims Christianity will grow by millions in the global south by the year 2050. He also maintains the ideas that the average Christian will be neither white, protestant, or from Europe or America like many people assume.

He instead claims that the future Christian world will consist mainly of Latin Americans and African Americans, Pentecostal, and from Brazil or Africa, they will be poor, and conservative instead of the modern day middle class liberals. Jenkins makes some very valid and truthful statements in his book, and it is highly regarded as being one of the best books on Christian history, but I myself did not enjoy the book. I found this book to be written in a very confusing manner. In my opinion, Jenkins did not stay on topic very often and quite frequently jumped from subject to subject. He wrote the book as if

each topic in within the chapters was another chapter in itself, instead of including only related topics within each chapter. The book was very hard for the average reader to comprehend, and might be more effective if laid out in a less confusing manner.

I did although appreciate what he had to say after I could understand the text. I believe that he brought up some very good, but much unspoken of topics related to Christianity and the future of Christianity. I was one of the people that believed all the claims that he proved wrong to be true. It wasn't until I saw how he was backing what he was saying that it ever crossed my mind that Christianity was moving toward the global south and was soon to be more conservative than liberal.

One point I thought he completely pushed aside was the obstacles that other religions may impose on Christianity. He did go into the thought that religious wars may occur, but he completely left out the ideas that the Islamic nation, being known for terrorism and other such acts of violence, could potentially eliminate Christianity from any form of mainstream. This is a serious topic to think about considering what they have done to other religions, and to Christian sects residing in the Middle East. I think Jenkins should have presented this as more of an issue and an actual threat then claiming that it might cause slight conflict. The book unquestionably had some strengths and some weaknesses. I believe the information that Jenkins provided was extremely well established and proven. This is exactly the type of information that people need to know, because the truth is being denied.

I think for the book to be effective, it needs to be laid out better. I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone besides a theological scholar due to the manner that it flows, even though it has very good reviews and is on best seller lists for Christian books. I commend Jenkins for going against the flow and writing against the average beliefs, but admonish him for writing the information in such an incomprehensible manner.