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***The Changing World of Christianity: The Global History of a Borderless Religion***

Dyron D. Daughrity. New York: Peter Lang, 2010.

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The study of Christianity as a world religion is coming into its own. Recent years have seen the publication of a number of substantial accounts of Christianity as a global religion, or, similarly, histories of Christianity that break rank with conventional focus on the western church. This trend is simply the belated recognition among scholars of the fact that the Christian faith dramatically plunged southward last century. In 1900, eighty-two percent of the world's Christians lived in Europe and North America; now, sixty percent of the world's Christians reside in the "global south", and there are already more Christians in Asia (350 million) than in either Europe or North America.

In *The Changing World of Christianity*, Dyron Daughrity tells the story of Christianity from its origins in the Middle East, across centuries and borders, until today—the most numerous, global, diverse, and “arguably influential religion on the globe” (5). Several features set apart this book from other recent contributions in the field. First, its user-friendly format (including charts, graphs, and maps) and clear, casual writing make it ideal to introduce world Christianity to undergraduates and non-specialists. Second, *The Changing World of Christianity* combines a concise global history of Christianity with analysis of the present state and future prospects of the Christian church in eight geographical-cultural blocks: the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. Third, as is fitting for the study of a “borderless religion”, Daughrity's description of Christianity ranges across the disciplines of history, geography, theology, sociology, politics, and current affairs. This invests his studies of global Christianity's eight geographical-cultural constituents with a depth and breadth that belie their brevity.

The academic study of global Christianity being a relatively new field of study, it is not surprising that one detects in *The Changing World of Christianity* a certain methodological uncertainty. Should the map of world Christianity be drawn according to geography? Politics? Language? Culture? Generally, Daughrity's eclectic approach, which prefers what he calls “geographical-cultural blocks” to an exclusively geographical or political or ethno-linguistic map, serves him well, although it will not satisfy everyone. That African Christianity is treated as one, for example, throws together the venerable Copts of the north with the unruly, newcomer African Initiated Churches (AICs) of the south, even though the former have much more in common in doctrine and ethos with the Orthodox (Eastern

Europe) and Assyrian (Middle East) churches. Another drawback of his approach is that key figures or events from one geographical-cultural block (e.g. Martin Luther) are occasionally introduced as important in another block even before they are fully described in their home setting, which may confuse readers who do not already have a basic grasp of the Christian tradition.

The overview of world Christianity provided in *The Changing World of Christianity* will be very useful to academics in need of a classroom resource. But there is also much in this book to teach, provoke, and humble scholars, especially those of us who might not normally look beyond our academic specialization. Above all this book challenges the conspicuous ignorance of the charismatic/Pentecostal movement amongst members of the religious studies' guild. The startling evidence marshaled by Daugherty reminds us that not only is world religious diversity typically exaggerated—over half of the globe belongs to either Christianity or Islam (7)—statistics indicate that Pentecostalism claims more adherents today than Buddhism, and, if current rates of growth are maintained, will draw even with Hinduism within a few decades. Although sociologists of religion have long estimated that well over ninety percent of people keep the faith of their parents, Christianity in Africa has inexplicably grown from 30 million adherents in 1950 to 450 million today—and most of those conversions are to charismatic expressions of the Christian faith. Given the new status quo of global Christianity, the discipline of systematic theology might want to reconsider its disinterest in the theology and church life of *die Schwärmer*. Further, traditionally minded church historians should pause long over Daugherty's claim that the humble beginning of the Pentecostal movement in the 1907 Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles is at least as important from the perspective of world Christianity as Luther's iconic 95 Theses in 1517! *The Changing World of Christianity* serves as a timely challenge to 'minority world' academics of religion to plunge into the changing world of the study of Christianity, so that our confessional studies and denominational histories can find fuller meaning and vigor within the global story of the Christian religion.