

We are not at the center of what God is doing in the world; we are on the border.

This last century has witnessed a great recession from the Christian faith in the west. At the same time, there has also been an equally massive "streaming in" to Christianity in the non-Western world. At the beginning of the century nearly 80 % of those professing Christianity in the world lived in Europe and North America. We are witnessing an amazing shift in that, very soon, at least 60% of professing Christians in the world will be from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the islands of the Pacific. Christianity began in the last century as a Western religion and has ended the century as a non-Western religion on track to become progressively more so. (Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Church History*) In a very real sense, the Son is setting in the West. God may be forsaking the Western world to prove that He can get his work done with others who have far less wealth or technology. God chooses to use us. He does not need us. As Pastor John Marshall put it, the once-beautiful flower of the Church in the United States may expel its seed out into the world as its last, greatest act.

In light of these trends, we will not only support our own American missionaries through the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, who have dedicated their lives to taking the gospel to other countries, but we will be equally intentional in supporting national pastors and evangelists who are evangelizing their own countries for Christ. Finally, in our own church, we will take up the cross and go to the people groups that God will lead us to in order to establish a Christian presence where there is none now.