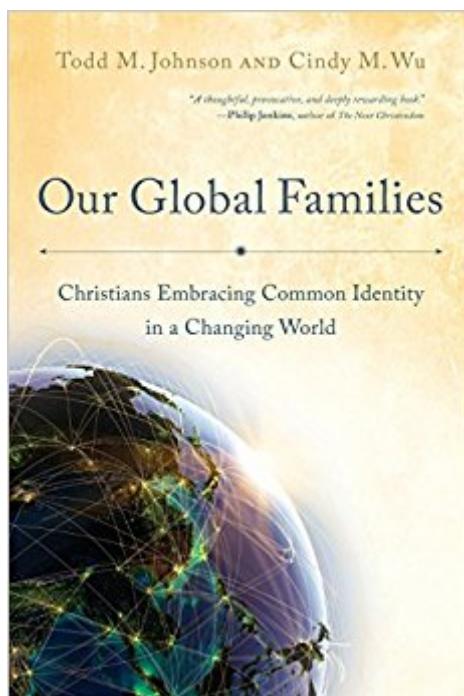


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# Our Global Families: Christians Embracing Common Identity In A Changing World



## **Synopsis**

As Christians, we belong to not only a diverse global Christian family but also a diverse human family. Todd Johnson, a noted expert on global Christianity and world missions trends, and Cindy Wu show how divisions within these families work against our desire to bring about positive change in the world. They provide an overview of global Christian identity, exploring how we can be faithful to our own tradition while engaging Christians across denominations and be better informed as we work with people of other religions. The book utilizes the latest research data on global Christianity and world religions and includes tables, graphs, charts, and end-of-chapter discussion questions.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Embracing Our Common Identity in a Changing World"Plenty of books discuss the process of globalization and the related spread of Christianity to all corners of the world. But I don't think any other book has presented these stories within the framework of family--the Christian family worldwide and the broader human family. The authors ask what would happen if Christians actually took seriously the language of brotherhood and sisterhood. How would we seek to change ourselves and change the world? Our Global Families is a thoughtful, provocative, and deeply rewarding book."--Philip Jenkins, Baylor University; author of The Next Christendom"Todd Johnson and Cindy Wu have usefully underscored the great fact of Christianity's dramatic recent spread around the world. But they have also gone further with sage writing about what should be done with this fact. Their insights, cautions, wise words, careful theology, and practical advice make for

a book that deserves careful attention from a wide readership."--Mark A. Noll, University of Notre Dame; author of *From Every Tribe and Nation: A Historian's Discovery of the Global Christian Story*"For years we have read statistics about the rise of the global church, but here we have a stellar introduction to these realities that makes this phenomenon personal. Behind the numbers we are discovering the family of God in new and profound ways. At a time when we often hear stories of how divided the world and the church are, it is refreshing to discover this deeper connectedness that is emerging in the church. *Our Global Families* is the best introduction to global Christianity you will find. I heartily recommend it."--Timothy C. Tennent, Asbury Theological Seminary"Johnson and Wu have presented worldÂ Christianity in all of its diversity, pointing the way to greater unity in hospitality and grace. More than just a description, this volumeÂ outlines ways forward for Christians to make a differenceÂ in aÂ world filled with poverty and despair."--Scott W. Sunquist, School of Intercultural Studies, Fuller Theological SeminaryIncludes the latest research from the Center for the Study of Global Christianity

Todd M. Johnson (PhD, William Carey International University) is director of the Center for the Study of Global Christianity and associate professor of global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts. Cindy M. Wu (MA, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary) has served in various church-planting contexts and lives in Houston, Texas.

Todd Johnson and Cindy Wu have written one of those books that helps you stand up in the balcony and see the big picture of what's happening at ground level. In this excellent and highly readable book, (1) they document the global shift in the influence of Christianity from the north and western parts of the world to the south and eastern parts of the world. (2) They explore the implications of these shifts for the influence of Christians and offer a clear call - both theologically and practically - to living into a commitment to unity. (3) Finally and most importantly for me, they review key literature on how to engage the process of making change and offer practical help for those of us who want to impact our world with the gospel. Any one who is serious about the mission of the church and who believes that context matters will want to read this book. I commend it to you highly.

This book has helped me to understand how to view Christians who are different from me as well as people of other faiths. We have the responsibility to act as neighbors in every situation, not just the moments we want to be called to. Thank you Todd & Cindy for giving me hope!

The transparency of Todd and Cindy about their own Christian identity combined with the thoughtful charge for the Church to grow in our understanding of our common identity as Christians and as global citizens encouraged me greatly. This was a great read!

Very good read to see what "global" families are to us as Christians.

I have to admit, when I first saw the title of this book, it seemed a little too all-encompassing, as if it were telling me to give up my identity as a Christian. My respect for Cindy Wu as a thinker and a Christian encouraged me to keep reading, however, and I'm glad I did. *Our Global Families* is a wonderful antidote for our tendency to think that America and Christianity are inextricably entwined. It calls us to identify ourselves first as Christians and to love our neighbor regardless of nationality, ethnicity, and yes, even politics. It is a book that calls us to solidarity as citizens of the kingdom of God and thus, it is also a call to unify the church. Particularly helpful was Johnson and Wu's list of organizations concerned with Christian unity, accompanied by notes on the strengths and limitations of each group. If they were to write a second book, I would be interested to see some more practical steps on Christian unity: for example, to what extent does the Catholic-Protestant divide actually affect the churches in the east? Still, this book is a thought-provoking, worthwhile read for any Christian looking beyond American shores. It is very heavy on the data, which can be thick, but that data is also a strength. I would combine it with Brother Yun's *"The Heavenly Man"* for a starter kit to being aware of global Christianity.

Expertly researched and thoughtfully written, *Our Global Families* documents the evolving demographics of global Christianity and the shift of its epicenter towards the global South, which helped me to see and appreciate a much broader view of Christianity that exists in the world today. The book also makes a compelling case for Christian unity in the face of ever-increasing denominationalism, a divisive and negative force, as well as the need to embrace the exploding diversity of the global Church, which can be a very positive and enriching experience. There is also a thoughtful and balanced discussion on ecumenism and interfaith dialogue, which I found to be particularly challenging because it caused me to reconsider both the importance of dialogue with people of other faiths (and non-faiths) as well as my approach to them. Having a strong relational ethos, the book also provides very practical suggestions on how to develop greater cultural awareness and intelligence in order to engage and reach the world for Christ, which I find to be

particularly timely in light of the current humanitarian crises occurring here and around the world and what our response should be as global Christians. Using a combination of rich factual information, profound insights, and often humorous stories, the book is ultimately very applicable for every Christian who wants to learn more about our changing global community as well as some new paradigms for being salt and light in the world. Highly recommended!

As the world we live in undergoes globalization at an increasing rate, how does this affect Christians from diverse cultural groups across the globe? As the world gets *smaller*, what does this mean for Christians who have been accustomed to identifying predominantly with their particular denomination, nationality, and/or socio-economic group? The authors have filled this book with stories (their own as well as others'), statistics and trends, and plenty of food for thought to address these issues facing Christians today. Many, if not most, Christians in the western world need a paradigm shift in order to effectively strategize and engage with our communities in the coming years. We want to grow in our ability to relate to others from different backgrounds. This is especially needed among Christians of diverse traditions and cultural groups, where many opportunities to cooperate and coordinate have been missed, thereby limiting our effectiveness as the unified body of Christ. Most anyone involved in ministry would benefit greatly from reading this book. These ideas will certainly affect the plans and strategies we make to have a lasting impact on our world. Another plus: There's a small group discussion guide at the back of the book.

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