

JOY TO THE WORLD: MISSION IN THE AGE OF GLOBAL CHRISTIANITY

Mission Study 2010-2011

Dana Robert, author of the mission study text and Professor of World Christianity and History of Mission at Boston University School of Theology, says this in her introduction:

“Joy to the World” is a shout of celebration, penned by the great hymn writer Isaac Watts in 1819. Although it is a beloved Christmas carol, its message does not stop at Christmas Day. Its deeper message is not about the birth of a baby, but about fundamental changes brought into the world by the coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to bring “abundant life” in place of human limitations, brokenness and death (John 10:10) ... The title of this mission study reflects the conviction that for United Methodists, mission and evangelism flow from the joyous gratitude for the Good News of Jesus Christ.”

Joy to the World: Mission in the Age of Global Christianity by Dana L. Robert, with study guide by Toby Gould, explores the theology of mission and evangelism in the twenty-first century context of Christianity as a world-wide religion. The study invites us to look at why we are involved in mission and how we proclaim the Good News in Jesus Christ. What are the biblical mandates for mission? Does Christ call each of us to be his evangelist?

The study sets the biblical and historical context for the reality that Christianity is now the largest world religion and explores the theological foundations for Christian mission, drawing upon the New Testament model of Jesus Christ and on Methodist history as sources for United Methodist understandings of mission and evangelism. Contemporary practices of world mission will be examined through models of mission rooted in both scripture and history: mission of hospitality, mission of healing and mission of reconciliation—all ways of celebrating God’s intention to bring hope and wholeness to the world through Jesus Christ.

One hundred years ago, in 1910, the first World Missionary Conference was held in Edinburgh, Scotland. At the same time, church women were celebrating a 50 year jubilee of the first women’s missionary society. In 2010, there will be a follow-up to the Edinburgh conference and celebrations of 150 years since that founding of the women’s missionary society. **Joy to the World: Mission in the Age of Global Christianity** gives us the opportunity to “catch up” with the changes in direction, goals, and methods of mission work in these 100 years.

Joy to the World! The Lord is come! We know there is much hard work before us, and yet God is with us. It is time to celebrate! (Dana L. Robert)