



What Does It Mean to be a World Christian? *An Interview with Ted Ward*¹

Dr. Ted Ward, director of the doctor of missiology and the doctor of education programs at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS), has an uncommon view of what it means to be a world Christian today. According to Dr. Ward, “The church needs to think in terms of the simplicity of John 3:16, which does not differentiate between ‘us’ and ‘them,’ but simply identifies the whole world as the object of God’s love.”

Ward believes that when Christians can see the world through God’s eyes, we will truly be world Christians. “A properly oriented Christian would be conscious of the whole world as the object of God’s love.” Dr. Ward came to TEDS with a wealth of experience and knowledge. He taught at Michigan State University for 30 years, in both the College of Education and the College of Social Science. As part of the University’s Institute of International Studies, Ward worked as a consultant to developing nations. While helping to plan community education and adult development programs, he became involved in several national churches. He served as a consultant to mission agencies in the areas of strategy and training. I believe,” states Ward, “that the people of God should learn to be effective in dealing with cultural differences. That sort of skill is a key to effectiveness in ministry at home or abroad.”

This belief is now an integral part of the education and missiology programs at TEDS. Says Ward, “When I am concerned with training the doctors of the church in educational roles or in mission roles, I am concerned that part of their orientation is a concern for effective coping with cultural differences.” “Cultural competency,” he continues, “is an absolutely necessary component of becoming an effective worker within educational ministries and obviously within missionary work.”

According to Ward, a majority of TEDS students in the doctoral programs are already cross-culturally experienced. Approximately one-fourth are internationals, and many of the rest have lived or worked overseas. During their education at Trinity, the professors help the students unravel their intercultural adventures and understand them more fully. While field experience is not required, 80 percent of the students continue in ministry while they are studying. Students also spend time in informal interaction and learning from each other, which helps to equip them with a high consciousness of the role culture plays in the development of people and churches, and in the relationship between church and society. In summary, to be a world Christian is to be where God wants you.

¹Adapted from the interview by Kimberly Sawatzky. *The Evangelical Beacon*, June 4, 1990: 8. Currently, *EFCAToday*, the magazine of the Evangelical Free Church of America.