

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**ROBERT W.
STRAYER:**

Chapter 10, "How Christianity Became the European Religion." Chapter 10 focuses our attention on the world of Christendom, which refers to those regions that had a major Christian presence during the third wave era. At the beginning of that era, around 500 or 600, Christianity was a transcontinental faith, with flourishing Christian communities in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East that were really more significant than those in Europe itself. But as these communities were overwhelmed by the rise of Islam, Europe became, by default, the center of world Christianity. That startling reversal is a major theme of chapter 10.

A second major theme in chapter 10 lies in the sharp division, both religious and political, within the Christian world between the Eastern Orthodox expression of the faith in the Byzantine and Russian empires and the Roman Catholic version in Western Europe. It is a rift in global Christianity that persists in the present day.

Finally, chapter 10 examines the process by which a distinctively Christian civilization emerged in Europe, often called simply the West since it was located at the Western end of the Eurasian continent. Now unlike China, the West emerged as a fragmented and highly competitive civilization without a common political framework for its many rival states. During the third wave era, this new civilization made only a modest splash on the stage of world history. It was just one of many new third wave civilizations, such as those of Japan, Russia, West Africa, and Southeast Asia.

Compared to the more developed civilizations of China, India, and the Islamic world, the Christian West was long something of a backwater. But after 1500, Europeans became the most prominent and powerful people in the world. So as you read chapter 10, you might want to think about whether its earlier history offers any clues to this later and very surprising development.