

Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity? The Gospel beyond the West*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003.

This creative book engages the fact of Christian expansion in the world from the point of view of culturally sensitive Christians concerned that people are “abandoning their values and way of life in favor of a foreign religion” (113). Lamin Sanneh’s overall objective is to catalyze an attitude shift in the academy and post-Christian societies that are predisposed to view world Christianity as “the creature of impulses originating in the west” rather than as the result of “mother tongue mediation and local response” (85).

Despite his description of Protestant *sola scriptura* use of the Bible as breeding sectarianism and reducing the Bible to “ecumenical shrapnel,” Sanneh shows the positive role Bible translation has played in the expansion of Christianity worldwide. Challenging popular assumptions that world Christianity threatens a return to Christendom—what he calls “Global Christianity”—and that Bible translation necessarily results in an injection of outside power interests into indigenous communities, Sanneh is unambiguous that the Bible in the vernacular “does not coerce nor compel.” Translation “guarantees nothing beyond the fact than an inculturated personal response is a necessary and legitimate basis for moral and social empowerment” (123). Sanneh’s own experience of conversion likely influences his opinion that indigenous communities are discovering Christianity and not vice versa. (See Jonathan Bonk’s interview of Sanneh in *Christianity Today* 47:10 (Oct. 2003), 112-113, at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/010/35.112.html>.)

By using the pedagogical style of interview and dialogue, Sanneh covers a vast amount of intellectual territory, exposing a multitude of questions about how western people who value “cultural sensitivity, diversity, and inclusiveness” can relate with solidarity to Christians outside the west. His ability to compare and contrast expanding Christianity with Islamic resurgence makes this book even more relevant and useful.

Sanneh’s primary reference point is Africa. His thesis depends on a commitment to religion and state separation, while affirming that Christianity values human worth in a way that can have positive influence on political structures. It remains to be seen if his explanation of authentic local response to Bible translation can be applied to the Latin American context, where Pentecostalism is blazing within the residue of imperial Christianity.

Sanneh's book provides a shelter under which people from widely divergent Christian commitments could meet and discuss its multiple implications. The author is confident that intentional dialogue between the west and the rest of the world regarding their different experiences of Christianity will result in increased mutual respect and understanding, as well as in the "fruit of obedience and the gift of genuine solidarity" (6). By voicing a wide variety of questions and exposing commonly held presuppositions about western involvement in the expansion of world Christianity, Sanneh convincingly argues that Christianity has broken "the cultural filibuster of its western domestication" and explains why "attitudes must shift to acknowledge this new situation" (130). This book has something for everyone: sceptic or missionary, scholar or layperson.

*Susan Kennel Harrison*, ThD student, Toronto School of Theology

Craig Bartholomew and Fred Hughes, eds. *Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004.

Christian pilgrimages are becoming increasingly popular. Each year thousands of pilgrims travel to Iona, Taize, Santiago, Medjugorje, Jerusalem and other locations of religious significance. In Western Europe alone, 60-70 million religiously motivated travelers annually find their way to sacred sites. Is this burgeoning practice an outbreak of genuine spiritual fervor? Or are pilgrimages simply an elite form of religious tourism—respectable entertainment for affluent Christians?

*Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage* provides a thorough discussion of the current resurgence of Christian pilgrimage. Editors Craig Bartholomew and Fred Hughes organized an academic conference held in January 2000 by the School of Theology and Religious Studies at Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education in England. This collection of conference essays examines the phenomenon of pilgrimage from biblical, theological, historical, literary, and anthropological perspectives in order to contribute to creating a coherent theology of pilgrimage. Although excellent descriptive and historical studies of pilgrimage are now available, much less attention has been given to theology. This book seeks to remedy that lack.