

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.

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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.

Defining pilgrimage as “a journey to a special or holy place as a way of making an impact on one’s life with the revelation of God associated with that place” (xii), the authors quickly acknowledge that pilgrimage is not unique to Christianity. Pilgrimages flourish in many religious traditions (e.g., Muslim pilgrimages to Mecca) and even appear in secular life (e.g., the continuing popularity of places like Graceland, home of singer Elvis Presley). Even though the idea of pilgrimages has been discredited and denounced at certain points in Christian history, such as the Reformation, the authors are especially interested in examining the enduring desire to go on pilgrimage that seems to be located deep in human experience and spirituality.

The book contributes two main ingredients to discerning a theology of pilgrimage. One is a careful review of Old and New Testament perspectives on pilgrimage, in which both their literal and metaphorical role is examined, along with the relativizing of sacred space experienced in the coming of Jesus and the missionary activity of the church. As one essay states, “If God has an address on earth, it is no longer in Jerusalem but in the incarnate Logos” (39)—and, we might add, in the community called by Christ’s name. The second ingredient is a thoughtful discussion of the spiritual formation potential of pilgrimage. Although literal pilgrimages were not encouraged by the NT church, and despite the ethical and economic issues raised in the Reformation and since then, many Christians long to see and experience the places where Jesus lived, taught, suffered, died, and rose again. Also, the lure of locations associated with the saints or vibrant Christian communities continues to have broad appeal.

Recognizing their enduring fascination, the writers suggest that pilgrimages potentially nourish both personal faith and a lively sense of connection with the Christian church in places near and far. “At its best,” one writer says, “pilgrimage is a seeking after roots that refresh” (88). Our imaginations are stimulated, our minds gain new understanding, our vision of the church’s mission is expanded, and our hearts are renewed as we personally encounter the faith of other Christians. At the same time the writers denounce the exploitation of religious heritage sites and caution against the escapism that sends some people seeking religious thrills in places far from home.

As someone who has led spiritual pilgrimages to ancient, medieval, and modern Celtic Christian sites, I am aware of both the potential and pitfalls of pilgrimage. The sense of Christian community that emerges among a group of pilgrims and the transforming encounters with local Christians in pilgrimage

locations are wondrous gifts. So is the opportunity for prayer and reflection in places of incredible natural beauty, such as the Isle of Iona in Scotland, Glendalough in Ireland, or Holy Isle in England. Because pilgrimage often strips one of the usual sense of security and certainty, pilgrims are opened to new perspectives on life, vocation, and the church. Admittedly, no pilgrimage can guarantee such an outcome. As the ancient Irish Christians understood so well,

*To go to Rome  
Is much of trouble, little of profit;  
The King whom thou seekest there,  
Unless thou bring him with thee, thou wilt not find.*

– Kuno Meyer (tr.), *Selections from Ancient Irish Poetry*  
(Constable, 1911, new ed., 1959), 100

*Explorations in a Christian Theology of Pilgrimage* opens up key issues for the church and provides a rich biblical framework as well as historical and pastoral perspectives. Perhaps a useful next step would be to engage in this conversation with economically deprived parts of the church. Are the gifts of pilgrimage meant only for those who can afford to travel or are they meant for the whole church?

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Karl Koop, *Anabaptist-Mennonite Confessions of Faith: The Development of a Tradition*. Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2004.

This book's title recognizes and describes its subject matter, namely the diachronic identity that defines the continuity and discontinuity between the original Anabaptist movement in the Netherlands and its development into denominationalism in the following centuries. The author contends that the sixteenth-century Anabaptist concerns and character were essentially preserved in the seventeenth-century Dutch Mennonite confessions as their socio-economic situation and political standing changed rather radically.

The study focuses on the seventeenth-century Dutch confessions, especially three: the "Short Confession" of 1610, the Jan Cents Confession