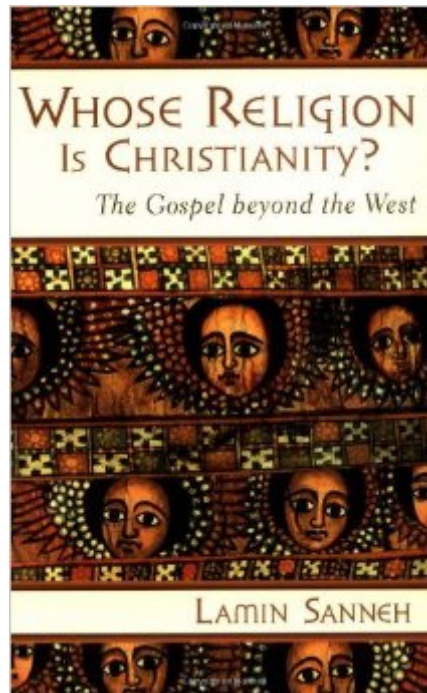


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Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel Beyond The West



Synopsis

Many historians of religion now recognize that Christianity is a global faith whose most vibrant expression and growth are found today in the non-Western world. But no one explores this reality and its implications for modern life with the depth of learning and personal insight of Lamin Sanneh. This book is unique in the literature of world Christianity, not least for its novel structure. Sanneh's engaging narrative takes the form of a self-interview in which he asks questions about the cross-cultural expansion of Christianity and provides insightful answers and meaningful predictions about the future. This technique also allows Sanneh to track developments in world Christianity even while giving attention to the responses and involvement of indigenous peoples around the world. Sanneh's own background and lifelong involvement with non-Western cultures bring a richness of perspective not found in any other book on world Christianity. For example, Sanneh highlights what is distinctive about Christianity as a world religion, and he offers a timely comparison of Christianity with Islam's own missionary tradition. The book also gives pride of place to the recipients of the Christian message rather than to the missionaries themselves. Indeed, Sanneh argues here that the gospel is not owned by the West and that the future of the tradition lies in its "world" character. Literate, relevant, and highly original, *Whose Religion Is Christianity?* presents a stimulating new outlook on faith and culture that will interest a wide range of readers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

We are in a time of extraordinary growth in Christianity fueled primarily, as Sanneh writes, by "several factors: the end of colonial rule; the effect of mother tongue development and Bible

translation; indigenous cultural renewal and local agency; and the theological stimulation of the Christian adoption of the African names of God." (41-42) Sanneh provides new perspective in the study of the expansion of Christianity, which complements my prior reading of Latourette's seven volumes on the Expansion of Christianity. Sanneh suggests the missionary should give "priority to indigenous response and local appropriation over against missionary transmission and direction." In other words, the notion that the gospel has been "from the West to the Rest" has been a false view of the expansion of Christianity. Sanneh, a Gambian born former-Muslim adherent, provides a reversed perspective highlighting the "indigenous discovery of Christianity rather than the Christian discovery of indigenous societies." (10) WHAT IS SANNEH'S CENTRAL PURPOSE FOR THE BOOK? What was Sanneh's central purposes in writing this book? It appears that Sanneh's purpose was to assist the Post-Christian Western Church to make "live contact" with Post-Western Christianity. To accomplish this, Sanneh explains this shift of the Church to the Majority world outside the West, including the One of Sanneh's key points is that "local renewal takes place without global orchestration." Sanneh makes a distinction between "world" and "global" as they relate to Christianity on the grounds that "world Christianity has nothing of the global structures of power and economics that global Christianity presumes.

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