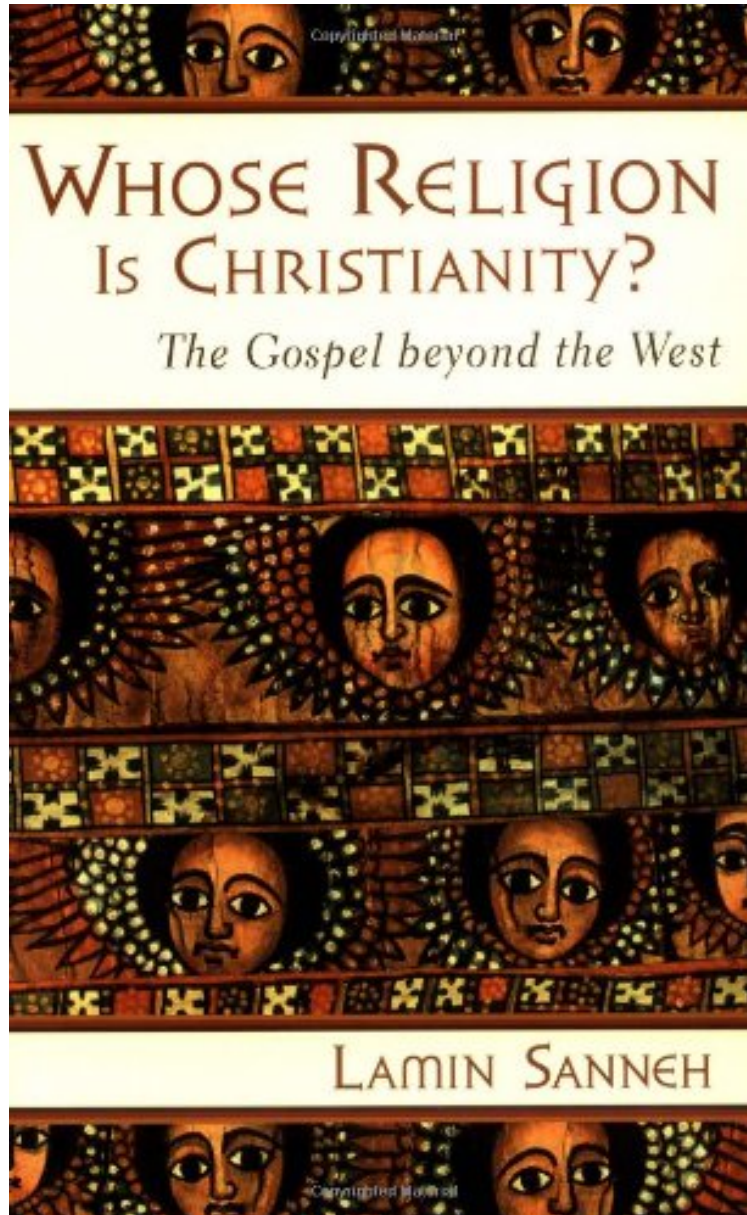


Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel beyond the West

Lamin Sanneh

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Lamin Sanneh : Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel beyond the West before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Whose Religion Is Christianity?: The Gospel beyond the West:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Adocate for World ChristiansBy Orville B. JenkinsSanneh uses a

dialogue format to describe the worldwide character of the Christian faith, in contrast to the persistent secular rationalist myth that Christianity is a western religion imposed upon peoples of the world. He probes the many aspects of this multi-faceted question in terms of an incisive barrage of questions from an opponent with whom he engages in conscientious and respectful dialogue, dealing with each matter in some detail. Lamin Sanneh is a native of Gambia who now serves as a professor at Yale Divinity School. He is professor of Missions and World Christianity as well as professor of History. The range of these disciplines are expressed in the intellectual precision of this short work. Sanneh has personal experience and scholarly background in the cultural forms of Christianity in various parts of the world. He serves as an advocate for the voice of Christians in the areas of the world too often ignored or misunderstood by the west. World Christianity Unfortunately, most Christians are not any better informed about the rest of the world or the Christians there than political leaders are. The Christian faith has steadily grown in to a multivarious world movement, with Christians outside the traditional Christian areas now outnumbered by world Christians of virtually every culture of the world. Strong indigenous missionary movements reach out from many "Third World" countries. Sanneh's descriptions of the indigenous approach of the Christian mission and the indigenous character of mother tongue development enhances and affirms traditional cultures wherever they are, in contrast to most other cross-cultural approaches. He presents "World Christianity" as the forms of Christian faith inculturated in the many cultures that sometimes seem alien to each other. He focuses on the unity in faith beyond the specific variations we find from culture to culture. He develops this view in the African cultural context with which he is most familiar. He contrasts the vibrant indigenized Christianity we find with the paternalistic attitude of secular western rationalism. Many of us who have lived among other cultures in Africa have noted those benevolent, well-meaning foreigners who approach other cultures of the world with a barely hidden impatience with what they perceive as their inferior backwardness. They come to fix things for them if they will allow it. But always on western terms, and usually for western benefit. Inconsistent Secularism In this regard Sanneh aptly highlights the ignorance of many opponents of "mission" who primarily lay bare their outdated prejudice and unawareness of what actually constitutes Christian mission. Sanneh references cultural patterns I have observed in several decades of cross-cultural study and communication, studying cultures around the world. I can especially relate to many of the examples Sanneh uses, coming from Africa, where the depth of my experience was developed. I note that all through the arguments presented by his hypothetical questioner appear the logical contradictions we often observe from westerners who assume a condescending view of other cultures. These westerners seem to think their cultural pattern is the height of a supposed historical evolution of culture, and thus other cultures are necessarily lagging behind. This cultural imperialism in the western paternalistic approach to Africa and other cultures comes out clearly in this discussion, and is rejected by Sanneh in a gentle but clear and firm manner. Sanneh is an advocate for the peoples. Free Choice Sanneh consistently portrays the central role of traditional indigenous cultures in Christian mission and Bible translation into the vernacular. Coupled with this is the principle of free and informed choice, rather than the coerced conversion we have seen so often in the history of other religions and cultural imperialisms, notably the movement of Islam across the geography of the world and its cultures. The diversity and variety of language and cultural expression in the Christian community is not a divisive factor, but rather is seen as the strength of the faith as a universal human phenomenon, freely accessible to all cultures and languages equally, appropriated and adapted and reexpressed by each in a unity beyond their individual diversity. This is a pithy, challenging but highly readable short book packed with value and insight for rationalist and religious alike. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. top notch read By saskkidvery helpful in understanding why Christianity is growing so rapidly outside of North America. the book will be of interest to international workers and international church pastors. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I love his rebel approach to writing an academic piece in ... By Trista Lucas I love his rebel approach to writing an academic piece in a question and answer format to make it more readable to regular people.

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.

International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Outstanding Books for Mission Studies (2003) Christianity Today, Award of Merit, Christianity and Culture (2004) Association of Theological Booksellers, Theologos Award for Best General Interest Book (2004) The Mennonite "Lamin Sanneh uses a question-and-answer format to consider the rise of what he calls 'world Christianity,' a religion that comes from local cultural contexts and challenges assumptions held by Western Christianity. Sanneh is a scholarly, wise and irenic conversation partner." Andrew F. Walls "The astonishing religious changes of the twentieth century have produced a post-Christian West and a post-Western Christianity. Historical and cultural factors often prevent those who live in the post-Christian West from seeing the true face of world Christianity. This intriguing little book disperses these fogs to reveal the new contours of Christianity in the world. The argument moves at a cracking pace, and Lamin Sanneh characteristically provides plenty of supporting information in a highly readable form and with the freshness of perspective we expect from him. A most valuable statement of the place and nature of Christianity in the world." Frederick W. Norris "Lamin Sanneh's accessible dialogue about world Christianity offers a clear vision. Having listened to questions from his students and colleagues, he prints them and answers them. Because 60 percent of the world's Christians live outside of the United States and Europe, we need a view that contrasts globalization and mission, guilt and faith, confusion and confession. This small volume should be the first anyone reads to see that view. All interested persons, including experts, will find these pages eye-opening." Philip Jenkins "Lamin Sanneh is both a formidable scholar and an elegant writer. To nobody's surprise, then, *Whose Religion Is Christianity?* is a thoughtful, learned, provocative, and truly stirring analysis of the growth of global Christianity, including its phenomenal rise in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This book is essential reading for anyone interested in missions, in the impact of the Bible, in the relationship between religion and politics in short, for anyone interested in how Christianity stands in the twenty-first-century world." International Bulletin of Missionary Research "A gem of a book, in an imaginative style: evangelistic, recapitulative, apologetic. Worth buying? even an extra copy to give away." Mission Today "The secular fundamentalists may choose to stand obtuse and dry in the little cave of their own parochialism, but the Niagara of religious fervour is cascading down around them. This is precisely the thesis the book attempts to establish." The Expository Times "This small book is a must for every minister or priest as well as an important book for the concerned laity. . . This book is, as with all Sanneh's writing, clearly and elegantly written."