

Book Review

From Jerusalem to Timbuktu: A World Tour of the Spread of Christianity.

By Brian C. Stiller. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2018. Pp 248. Paper, \$16.20.

There is much to commend this book, especially for informative inspiration regarding the spread of Global Christianity in the past 50-100 years. Stiller served many years in leadership of both para-church organizations and a seminary. Since 2011 he has served as a global ambassador for the World Evangelical Fellowship. This role enabled him to travel and interact in wide ranging regions of the world, seeing first-hand the strength and diversity of Christian faith.

It is that personal engagement that gives this book its particular energy and appeal. Stiller conveys not only a factually informative view of global faith, but infuses his material with enthusiastic passion and curiosity. From an engaging title to chapter themes, this book serves as an introductory volume especially for those new to the changing dynamics in Christianity. The book should also be of interest to those not as familiar with the spread of Pentecostal expressions of Christian faith, as that is where Stiller spends most time and focus.

Stiller's title begins his personal and descriptive journey. As he writes (p. 11), "The metaphorical center of world Christianity has literally moved from Jerusalem to Timbuktu in the nation of Mali. This is not merely some clever title-it is a remarkable sign that points out what we otherwise might miss." He continues writing about a "massive shift, as the location of the center represents a mighty upsurge in Christian faith around the shrinking globe."

There are five "massive shifts" or "drivers" that Stiller identifies and discusses, using each as a theme for a chapter. For those familiar with the growth of world Christianity and rise of the Global South, they are not new, but the strength of this book is in the personal stories and reflections brought to each theme. The five themes include the Power of Holy Spirit for Pentecostal global growth, the Power of Bible translation, the Revolution of indigenous churches/leadership particularly in the Global South, the Re-engagement with the "public square" including politics by the Church worldwide, and the Power of the whole gospel serving the poor and needy. These themes and how they continue to grow and shift are really the heart of the book.

Recognizing and affirming the interesting and informative nature of this book, there is only one missing element. Stiller neglects to mention the growth and spread of the gospel to the East into Asia in the first centuries. Although his emphasis is primarily on 20th and 21st centuries, Stiller does include the westward spread of the Church from Jerusalem in the 1st century, with only passing reference to the Eastern Orthodox Church.

It would have given the book a greater strength of historical context if he had included even a few paragraphs on the Asian spread through the Church of the East. Stiller seems to suggest that the major shifts toward the south and east are relatively new, when actually they have a long history. Even with this caveat, the book is an inspiring and faith-building read.

Steve Cochrane