Tribute to Lamin Sanneh

All members of this network will have learned with deep sorrow of the passing, while still at the height of his considerable powers, of Professor Lamin Sanneh. With the sorrow there is mingled thanksgiving for a scholarly life of immense value and significance, likely to be ongoing in its influence.

For those attending the Yale-Edinburgh conferences he was an ever-present figure, overseeing the Yale end of operations from our very first conference in 1992. In the academic concerns at the heart of the activities of both network and conferences, the historical study of Christian missions and of World Christianity, his influence has been immense; indeed, he is one of the architects of the discourse as we now know it. As scholar he has added to the sum of our knowledge, transformed understanding with illuminating comparisons, and widened debate by insights from different disciplines. And he has done what few of us achieve: he has changed the way people think on important matters (consider, for instance the widespread effect of his little book *Translating the Message*).

He has advanced the study of both Christianity and Islam in Africa with major works, always; he has also advanced understanding between Christians and Muslims in active relationships.

He has been an architect in another sense: his promotion of knowledge and understanding has never been a matter simply for the study or library. The issue of Christianity in contemporary African society occupied him constantly, and his vision and energy were displayed in the remarkable series of conferences he organized in various African locations. It is good that he lived to see the development at the University of Ghana which now bears his name and can give some of his ideas institutional form. The major monograph series, *Oxford Studies in World Christianity* represents another stream of his creative energies that will no doubt continue to flow.

Visionary, man of faith, scholar, teacher, writer, architect, motivator, networker, dear friend and pillar of our fellowship – let us give thanks for the life and work of Lamin Sanneh, remembering his widow Sandra, his children and grandchildren, and all those who will miss him most.

Andrew Walls