The World Christianity and History of Religions Program convened its second annual World Christianity Conference, entitled, “Currents, Perspectives, and Ethnographic Methodologies in World Christianity,” at Princeton Theological Seminary from March 15–18, 2019. With more than 200 participants gathered from 36 countries, the conference featured rich discussions on various forms of ethnographic research from the majority world and beyond.

Inaugurated by opening remarks from President Craig Barnes and the conveners (Afe Adogame, Raimundo Barreto, and Richard F. Young,) the conference began with the first plenary that set forth the issues of intersection between ethnographic methods and the current World Christianity discourse. Anderson Jeremiah, Damaris Parsitau, Henrietta Nyamnjoh, and Devaka Premawardhana explored the possibilities of the ethnographic turn to visuals, bodies and gender, mobility, and existential anthropology.

In the first keynote address, James Spickard (University of Redlands) advocated reflexive methods for studying “lived religions,” integrated with an ethnographer’s awareness of her or his intellectual, social, and theological location for the scientific study of religion. Highlighting the suspension of judgment, Spickard suggested several ways that an investigator’s sensitivity towards the conceptual grounds for religious practitioners can lead to reflexive ethnography.

The first day closed with “The Future of World Christianity Scholarship,” which presented ethnographic observations by nine graduate researchers from India, Brazil, the UK, South Korea, and the USA. Dialogue between the graduate researchers and senior scholars filled the room on varying topics: anthropology of Christianity in urban India, sports and the Catholic priesthood, theology and ethnography, the LDS in Nigeria and the question of insider-outsider, gender and disability, translation studies, the convergence of space and class, and spatial transitioning of indigeneity.

The second day continued with discussions on how ethnographic approaches can shape world Christianity discourse. Corey Williams reflected on how African-initiated churches in Los Angeles face sexual violence and rearticulate faith in the age of #MeToo. Briana Wong, drawing from her interactions with Cambodian-American Christians, discussed the significance of the interpretive mode of ethnographers that creates space for interlocutors. Olufunke Adeboye highlighted the ethnographic encountering of feminine space among Yoruba Christians in
Nigeria. Deanna Ferree Womack explored gender discourse in the Islamic world through examining various narrative forms produced by American missionaries.

One of the highlights of the conference was “Remembering Lamin Sanneh,” the fourth plenary devoted to commemorating the legacy of Lamin Sanneh (1942-2019), a former D. Willis James Professor of Missions and World Christianity at Yale Divinity School. A pioneering scholar whose work incessantly challenged the cultural imperialism and Western tribalism within the study of Christianity and religion, Sanneh’s legacy and impact on the field was reviewed by Dale Irvin, Peter Phan, Olufunke Adeboye, Jehu J. Hanciles, and Shobana Shankar.

The second keynote address was presented by Sonja Thomas (Colby College), and responded to by Erin Raffety. Thomas raised questions related to how ethnographers navigate ethical space within multiple forms of oppression. Exploring the global connections between Syrian Christianity and Native American reservations, Thomas argued for “studying up,” an ethically grounded ethnographic method that accounts for the complexity of historical trauma and sexual violence that traverse time and space.

On Sunday, after three paper sessions, the last plenary presented film-director James Ault’s new documentary, “Music, the Gospel, and Culture.” The screening of the documentary generated discussions on how the life of Machanic Manyeruke, Zimbabwean gospel musician, exemplifies the possibilities for bringing social change that responds to challenges within the local community and culture of the Shona people as well as the larger political and economic crises of the nation.

The conference ended on Monday with closing remarks by the conveners, followed by open discussions from the participants on the future directions for the third conference in 2020. The conference celebrated two special issue publications from *The Journal of World Christianity* (Penn State University Press) and *Studies in World Christianity* (Edinburgh University Press) as the fruitful outcome of the first conference in 2018. The conveners also announced their vision for diversifying the conference location to the global South from 2021 and in odd-numbered years thereafter. With the next steps being wide-open the conference ended on March 18th, marking a critical moment that further broadens the field of world Christianity.