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BOOK REVIEWS

Themes in the Christian History of Central Africa Edited by T. O. Ranger and J. Weller. London, Heinemann, 1975, xvi, 285 pp., £2.50.

The British missionary is one of the more static figures in British fiction and his character has been accepted almost without modification in both American and British films. Occasionally, a writer like Graham Greene will flesh out the type figure by giving to his missionaries varieties of motives, methods and emotions, but for the most part the familiar figure remains. Benevolently paternalistic to the physical welfare of his people, he battles the satanic forces that grip their spiritual lives with whimsical good humour and an absolute certainty that he has a monopoly of the truth. No one is more responsible for these images of the missionary than the great nineteenth century missionary societies themselves. Concerned as they were to raise money for their work abroad — and they raised enormous sums — they sold their product with all the skill of a modern advertising agency. The public knew what a missionary should be like and should be doing and the societies shaped missionary narratives to confirm these images. Carlyle's Great Man, the solitary hero, that curious relic of Romanticism that persisted as a concept well into this century — T. E. Lawrence is a representative type — was able to be incarnated in the best known of the nineteenth century missionaries: Moffat, John Williams, Livingstone.

It is only fairly recently that the myth has begun to be challenged. As far as Central and East Africa is concerned we owe a singular debt to the writings of Professor T. O. Ranger who both in his own work and in books he has edited has made it clear that not only did the societies and individual missionaries bring a wide range of experience, expectations and emphasis to their work but more important came into situations that varied enormously from one another politically, socially and in their religious practices. For if the missionary was a stock figure in the old tradition, the 'heathen', whether he was a nomad on the edge of the Kalahari or belonged to one of the sophisticated cultures of West Africa, was offered to the missionary public as one of an amorphous group of savages waiting only to be enlightened by the gospel.

In his new book the most valuable section is probably the first, significantly entitled 'Christianity and Central African Religions' where the contributors deal with limited localities and the interaction between, usually, a single mission and the existing religion in the surrounding area. It is only through this sort of detailed history which allows no room for generalizations that the real complexity of any mission situation can be reconstructed and its uniqueness emphasized.

The second section of the book, 'Christianity and Colonial Society', shows the different reactions to colonial administrations that were possible within the established missionary and church bodies. Livingstonia, where the emphasis on industrial training sent out generations of skilled workers who were to have a profound effect on the economy of Northern Rhodesia, is shown in D. Cook's essay to have also given a social conscience to its adherents so that they brought with them a habit of social and community concern that resulted in the formation of welfare associations on the Copperbelt. Out of this tradition, that cut across the traditional groupings of clan and family, a national consciousness could arise. A contrast in reactions to

colonial authorities is shown in the essays on John Lester Membe and Bishop May. Membe, with extraordinary energy and organizational ability, was able to make the African Methodist Episcopal Church with its black American origins a significant congregation through large areas of central Africa. Bishop May, on the other hand, an establishment Anglican, saw his role as modifying the harsher effects of colonial office policy. Northern Rhodesian legislation for Africans was less unattractive than it might have been because of the work of a man like May, but the limitations of his background and his role as a Bishop of the established Church, finally made him less important a figure than Membe who as an African was able imaginatively to offer an orthodox and yet African witness that was appropriate to the needs of people moving into the new order that colonialism had created. Steele's important essay on Arthur Shearly Cripps appears in this section and Cripps stands as a useful figure between Membe and May. He was as close to the Shona as Membe was to the various African groups with whom he worked, and closer than May could ever have been. His achievements in terms of new churches and schools were minimal and his influence has to be seen as something far more intangible than the institutional church normally looks for as a sign of the success of its leaders. Cripps, who was more radically active in Southern Rhodesian politics than May was in the politics of the North, lived to see the failure of every cause he had espoused, and yet his grave is now an object of pilgrimage to local Shona. One likes Steele's phrase, that Cripps's mission, despite the outward signs of failure, was in fact a place of 'peculiar influence'.

The third section of the book I find the least satisfactory. Despite Ranger's valiant introduction, it is difficult to see any real connection between the need for contemplative life among Rhodesia's Catholic religious, recent manifestations of ecumenism in Rhodesia, and the combination of Christian spirituality and social activism that marks the Rukwadzano women of Rhodesia. The apparent connecting theme is the recognition that traditional African religion was profoundly involved in the social life of village and chiefdomship, and little distinction was made between the spiritual and the secular. This, it is implied, has been carried over into the particular expectations modern Christians have of the Church. The reservations one has about this section stem partly from the inadequate sampling of Weinrich's essay on the religious, but also from the suspicion, born out of one's own experience, that for many people the Church's chief value is seen to lie in its secular work. If this suspicion is true it could well be more significant than the examples chosen which might well be eccentric within the larger framework of the Christian life of Rhodesia. An article examining Africa's scepticism to Christianity's spirituality would have corrected the possibility of imbalance.

Undoubtedly, however, where the book's particular interest lies is in Ranger's introductions to the various sections. What he has achieved is to spell out the issues that should concern the future historians, sociologists, and missiologists who are attempting to examine the nature and significance of Christianity in Africa. He has described — and the essays to some extent provide — a radical departure from the old imperial history of missions which, however well intentioned, saw the whole process from the point of view of missionaries themselves. As so often before, Ranger, even if his findings are suspect in detail, has shown the way for a new history of African Christianity.

A Practical Ndebele Dictionary By *J. N. Pelling*. Salisbury, Longman Rhodesia in association with the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, revised edit. 1971, 154pp., Rh\$2,60.

Lessons in Ndebele By *J. N. and P. Pelling*. Salisbury, Longman Rhodesia in association with the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, 1974, 210pp., Rh\$3,20.

Ndebele Work Book By *P. Pelling*. Bulawayo, J. and P. Pelling, 1975, 198pp., Rh\$2,40.

Besides serving a long-standing practical need, these three substantial contributions from the Revd and Mrs James Pelling will be particularly welcome in Rhodesia since they mark a turning point in the acknowledgement and recognition of Ndebele as a language in its own right and not just as a 'poor relation' of Zulu. Compared with many of the other languages of Southern Africa, Ndebele has in the past been very poorly served regarding linguistic publications. The first Xhosa and Zulu grammars appeared in 1832 and 1850, respectively; and for Zulu, since that time, at least 11 dictionaries and 30 grammatical works have been published. For Ndebele, before the Pellings' present contributions, the scene was indeed bleak: despite Dr R. Moffat's pioneering efforts, over a century ago, towards treating Ndebele quite separately from Zulu, the only linguistic works produced appear to have been W. A. Elliott's *Notes for a Sindebele Dictionary and Grammar* in 1911 (after an earlier rudimentary vocabulary), and J. O'Neil's *Grammar of the Sindebele Dialect of Zulu* in 1912, plus a pamphlet, *A Sindebele Phrase Book* by S. Mpofo and T. Harvey in 1962 (Bulawayo, Pilgrim Press). The scarcity is of course explainable by the 'convenient' availability of published material for Zulu, which was used instead. There are arguments both for and against a policy of dialectal unification. Latterly, particularly over the past years, feelings have been very strong in Rhodesia that Ndebele should depend less upon Zulu and become self-reliant.

Pelling's *Practical Ndebele Dictionary*, which originally appeared in 1966, is an excellently produced little work, of modest proportions and attractively low price. The present revised edition contains additional entries including a supplementary list of more specialized terms. The first half of the book provides Ndebele-English, and the second English-Ndebele. Appendices 1 and 2 contain very brief grammatical notes, and Appendix 3 provides a short selection of Ndebele proverbs. The book is clearly not intended to fulfil all the critical demands of linguistic specialists, but rather to serve as a handy practical aid for those who wish to communicate, and it certainly goes a long way towards meeting this fundamental need. Like many concise works of this kind, a fair amount of supplementary self-help by the user is called for. Firstly, the very brief introductory notes on pronunciation (offered as 'a guide only') should not be relied upon without obtaining help from other sources — and it is to be hoped that in so doing, users will discover that tone is semantic: there is no mention of this in the book. Of course, without tone-marking, certain words appear to be homonyms when they are not: like the verbs 'sinda' (be heavy or escape) and 'sinda' (smear a floor). These are in fact tonal opposites: high-low and low-high, respectively, *sinda* and *sindá*.) It would be unfair to labour this point, however, since there is considerable precedent for such shortcomings in Southern Africa. Incidentally, when checking back from the English-Ndebele side, neither of the English entries 'heavy' or 'escape' gives us 'sinda'.

Providing that outside help with pronunciation is readily available, and that the user already has some idea of the essentials of Bantu grammatical

structure, this little dictionary should prove invaluable; but those with no inkling of Bantu languages at all might be deeply puzzled to find no entries whatever for 'I, me, we, us, you, he, him, she, her, it, they or them'. Appendix 2 does not in fact offer a cryptic solution, with a bare list of 'personal pronouns and concords for all noun classes', but there is no clue at all as to how these are used (i.e. whether or not they get attached to a verb, and to which end of it). In the circumstances, absolute beginners may be relieved to find that the Pellings' *Lessons in Ndebele* provides just the kind of grounding they need in order to make best use of the Dictionary.

Lessons in Ndebele is a beginner's manual that represents the outcome of many years of practical experience in teaching Ndebele to English speakers. The benefit of such experience is clearly evident throughout. The presentation of material is excellently organized: elements of structure, and essential vocabulary, are introduced in a series of concise, well-ordered instalments, with an absolute minimum of grammatical jargon, and are put to immediate use in providing a good stock of useful and practical sentences. No exercises are included, but this need is admirably supplied in the companion volume produced by Mrs Pelling, entitled *Ndebele Work Book*, which contains practical exercises relating precisely to each of the lessons in the main book.

Used either as a basis for class work, or individually, these two volumes should provide the basis for an excellent and thorough grounding in the language, provided — and this is important — that outside guidance is sought concerning pronunciation, as the authors do indeed advocate. A very rough guide to pronunciation is offered in Lesson 1 but this is sometimes rather wide of the mark. For example there is a paragraph of instructions for making the implosive 'b' — 'a very difficult sound to articulate'. In my own experience, this sound, though common in Zulu, does not actually occur in Ndebele at all: instead, they use something like a 'w' (but without lip-rounding), so learners might be well advised not to disregard the initial injunction in Lesson 1, namely that 'it is essential for the student to spend time with a Ndebele person, practising the speech sounds, and imitating intonations of words and sentences'.

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Rhodesian Company Law By M. Tett and N. Chadwick with Contributions by W. J. Millar and Members of the Rhodesia Society of Chartered Accountants. Salisbury, Rhodesian Law Journal, 1976, 296pp., Rh\$14.30.

Rhodesian Income Tax By E. E. Skeet. Salisbury, The Chartered Accountants of Rhodesia Education Trust, 1976, 157pp., Rh\$10.00.

Basic Guide to Rhodesian Income Tax By A. Katz. Salisbury, Pioneer Head, revised edit., 1976, 62pp., Rh\$2.00.

It seems that in Rhodesia, Company Law, like much else, stands still. In England and South Africa substantive changes have been made in the past 25 years, but the Rhodesian Companies Act, modelled on the English Act of 1948, has remained materially unchanged. These developments elsewhere and the lively debate accompanying them have been largely passed over by the

authors of *Rhodesian Company Law*. There are so many excellent textbooks and students' guides on both English and South African Company Law that even a good textbook on the Rhodesian legislation might have seemed superfluous. This attempt, the first of its kind, provides patchy cover to a well-worked field. It makes little attempt to reveal in what respects the Rhodesian law might be unique or might even differ from that of the source countries. It foregoes all attempt to deal with the requirements for a Law of Companies to meet the particular needs of Rhodesia or to furnish any information on the extent and operation in Rhodesia of its Companies Act.

There is also a number of omissions. There is no discussion and no authority cited as to the nature and extent of the ostensible authority of the various company officials. The duty of directors to act towards the company with good faith is treated perfunctorily and there is no mention that such good faith is required to be of the highest order and not merely that of the ordinary honesty required in commercial transactions. There is no mention of the requirements of the Rhodesian Stock Exchange for a public company to obtain and maintain a quotation — an aspect of the regulation of companies in the public interest with potentially far-reaching effects. There is no discussion of the now much publicized shortcomings of the rules governing the duties and liabilities of auditors who certify accounts.

The relevant sections of the Rhodesian Companies Act are cited, often verbatim, and there is a Table listing the comparable sections of the South African Act. Many of the Rhodesian cases are cited, including a number of unreported decisions, but even here no case numbers are given and locating the unreported decisions would require reference to yet another index.

A book on Rhodesian Income Tax is inevitably more useful as there are particular rules, rates of income tax, special allowances, abatements, which are peculiar to Rhodesia. Skeet's book meets the need for a clear exposition of these rules and the necessary calculations. An accountant's skills are no doubt helpful in this task, but they seem more of a handicap in approaching the broader principles of income tax. Chapter 4 on Capital Receipts and Income consists of little more than a long (but not exhaustive) recital and occasional summary of decided cases, less than expertly done. The result is not only dull and confused but one which avoids rather than raises the difficulties in the topic. There is cursory treatment of schemes of tax avoidance. Whilst the recent case in the Appellate Division of *Commissioner of Taxes v Ferera* is strongly criticized as being 'contrary to customary professional attitudes and beliefs', the extraordinary plea is made for 'a review which will either confirm or reverse the views expressed'. Again no exposition is given of the facts of the case nor any explanation as to why it is 'contrary to professional attitudes and beliefs'. It is a pity that there is no information provided of the importance of income tax as a source of revenue, of how it compares with other forms of tax, especially sales tax, and, not least of all, of its role in the 1969 Constitution. A bibliography would also have been useful.

Katz's booklet deals with the more common questions asked by ordinary taxpayers and answers them simply and briefly and for the most part clearly. It has the fewest pretensions of the books reviewed but, surprisingly, is the only one with a section on improvements in the law.

Town and Country in Central and Eastern Africa Edited with an Introduction by D. Parkin. London, International African Institute, 1975, 362pp., £6.50.

This book is the nowadays familiar presentation of conference papers, in the present instance papers presented at the twelfth International African Seminar in Lusaka, September 1972. It adds to the very large literature which is now available on migration in Africa, concentrating on the East and Central part of the continent. It is in a sense a companion volume to S. Amin's *Modern Migrations in West Africa* (1974) under the same publishing house.

The book is, as the editor says, not exclusively concerned with migratory patterns but looks fairly broadly at a number of factors which mediate the development of social processes in town and country. The new role of multinational corporations in Africa is interesting, and also the observation that much of the unemployment perceived by African governments is often really the shortfall in people's expectations of how many jobs will be generated by industry set up with foreign money. It would seem that the lesson of widespread failure in capital-intensive schemes of socio-economic change still has to be learned in many parts of Africa.

The papers of the conference are divided into four rather loosely-sorted groups. The first, Models of Migration, turns its attention, now that the economic factors have been firmly established, to 'extra-economic motivations' in migration. Nevertheless, Mitchell's paper, severely quantitative, is concerned with male absentee rates in 68 geographical areas in Rhodesia which he proceeds to intercorrelate in a matrix of variables, from which are derived three main factors which predispose to labour migration: distance from major employment centres, extent to which men respond to labour demands, and small number of shops in relation to population. These factors Mitchell builds into a causal model with male absenteeism as the dependent variable.

Garbett makes a praiseworthy attempt to apply a decision model to circulatory migration in Rhodesia, but the application is more suggestive than detailed. The idea is that the gross level of migrant behaviour is determined by processes such as the siting of industry, international economic fluctuations and population pressure of which the migrant is unaware and which provide a set of constraints. Within these he exercises some choice, but this is complicated by other alternatives at different levels of life-system which lead to complexities of behaviour. This total situation is best analysed, Garbett believes, in the notion of an individual set in a network of social relationships seen as part of a field. One is reminded of Barnes's original work in the Norwegian parish of Bremnes.

The second area, Migration and Rural Development, consists of a set of case studies in East and Central Africa which cover the four possibilities of urban-to-urban, rural-to-urban, urban-to-rural and inter-rural migration. The question arises of how with only 10 per cent of its population living in towns at any one time, the African continent can be described as already over-urbanized. The considerable inter-rural migration in East and Central Africa between the large agricultural estates resulting from previous white settlement is an arresting factor.

The third division, Rural-urban Flow of Language Belief and Educational Opportunities, is more concerned with the migration of ideas than of people. It is useful to underline, as we were led to believe from Mitchell's pioneering work, that people from diverse rural backgrounds preserve their distinctiveness in town and yet evolve common assumptions and expectations, languages and codes for urban use. The editor evolves a thought-provoking hypothesis on this section that the more alienated a migrant group is in town, the more

likely it is when using mystical explanations of misfortune to ascribe them to rural rather than urban causative agents.

Finally, the fourth division on Rural Links in Urban Settlement is a rather mixed group of papers on urban ethnicity, independent women in low-income urban areas and the control of urban residence. The whole tends to stress the continuing involvement of most tribesmen in their rural area of origin.

Due no doubt to some constitutional technicality of the International African Institute, the whole of a lengthy Introduction is repeated in French to the extent of another 45 pages, while the text of the papers is entirely in English.

The book can be recommended to students of African migration.

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African Hymnody In Christian Worship : A Contribution to the History of Its Development By A. M. Jones. Gwelo, Mambo Press, Occasional Paper, Missio-Pastoral Series No. 8, 1976, 64 pp., Rh\$0,65.

In most mission work, wherever performed, there are certain areas of activity which become isolated and not very well known, although tremendous effort is put into them. Such a sub-field of mission work in Africa is church music and its relationship to the societies in which the work is carried out.

So far there has been no general analysis of the use and history of church music in Africa; this is all the more surprising in that there is outstanding evidence of such music activities having taken place for more than half a century in different parts of Africa within some mission societies.

Therefore it is a most encouraging sign of progress that the excellent Mambo Occasional Papers series has brought this aspect to the foreground by devoting an issue to the general historical background of the development of church music in Africa. The author of the booklet could not have been better chosen: A. M. Jones is one of the pioneers in this field, and has followed the progress of it with thoroughness and zeal.

In his Introduction Jones stresses the fact that the subject matter is of such vastness that 'no one person can possibly know all'. Nevertheless, an effort has been made to cover the most important steps of development in Africa south of the Sahara.

The booklet is divided into three chapters. In the first one the author outlines briefly, but effectively, the approach of mission societies to music in worship in the initial stages, namely that the African converts should sing as in Western Christianity.

Jones points to three main reasons why such an approach was adopted: (i) converts entered a new stage in their lives through Christian baptism and 'therefore pagan associations with their old life must be banished' (p.8); (ii) African Christians would not allow African music in church due to 'heathen associations of the tunes' (p.9); and (iii) African music was not considered to be sufficiently artistic for sacred use in church as it was understood to be 'primitive' (p.10).

All this was disputed from the 1930s onwards when the arguments in favour of the introduction of African music into Christian worship were raised. Missionaries, who favoured the idea of introducing indigenous music into worship, then argued for an adaptation technique in which Christian

texts should be worked out for existent secular tunes. Africans, however, often rejected the use of their own indigenous music in worship, but this was mainly due to the indoctrination carried out by mission societies which had been active for nearly 50 years. Furthermore, from the early twentieth century, when evolutionary ideas on the part of anthropologists (who were mainly missionaries) were emphasized, the belief that African music lacked artistic value developed; the basis for this belief, however, was to a large extent due to the content and meaning of the secular texts of the tunes, and not due to proper musicological concepts.

In the second chapter, Jones points to the growing awareness by some missionaries of acceptance of African languages, and how they were treated completely wrongly in most Western hymns which had been transliterated. Some missionaries also became aware of the tonal character of African languages, which, in turn, raised a few voices to encourage the composition of new tunes for new texts — in other words a new hymnody was advocated in the proper sense of the word as opposed to the adaptation technique previously so widely recommended.

Although Jones's paper 'Hymns for the African' (in *Evangelisation: Report of the General Missionary Conference of Northern Rhodesia Held in Broken Hill*, Lovedale, S.A., Lovedale Press, 1931, 49-70), seemed to have created a veritable explosion in church music activities throughout Africa, the adaptation technique was still firmly adhered to in most areas. It was not until 1946 that Frère Basil joined A. M. Jones in pointing to the problems inherent in adapting African secular tunes to Christian texts. He also recommended the establishment of 'a school of music for Africans where they can . . . develop new music in their own idiom for church use' (p.32).

In the third chapter Jones briefly outlines the more important developments and results achieved not only in the established churches but also in some of the independent churches.

Jones's frequent use of the ambiguous term 'free rhythm' in this last chapter, however, is used without a clear definition of what is meant. In the same chapter the term 'African genuine style' is also used in such a manner that one would interpret this term as a style where rhythmic and melodic idioms of African origin are ingeniously blended with Western harmony elements; yet this is an interpretation which Jones criticizes when commenting on H. Weman's *African Music and the Church in Africa* (Uppsala, Svenska Institutet for Missionsforskning, Studia Missionalia, 1960): 'The limitation of this approach is that he [Weman] considers music for African Christian use should be a *fusion* of African and European styles' (p.51). But this is exactly what most African church music of today is all about — a rich blend of idioms from both Africa and the West which is usually termed 'Neo-African' music.

Nevertheless, this booklet is a milestone in the discovery of a history of African church music, and one hopes that others will add further knowledge to what Jones has presented in such a personal and inspiring manner.