

which emphasises the many context-specific ways in which missionaries and indigenous peoples interacted, understood, misunderstood, accepted and rejected one another. Yet, Samson argues, issues of gender and sexuality indicate that there was still ‘unfinished business in the radical universalism preached by missionaries’ (p. 194). In particular she focuses on the place of women within emerging Pacific Christianities and the vexed issue of homosexuality (or elements of homosexual practice beyond the bounds of contemporary middle-class British comprehension). She also considers varying conceptions of the body, appropriate dress, circumcision and heterosexual relations. While this was so across many mission contexts a strength of Samson’s approach, here, is her attention to particular island groups or cultural settings in which these were played out, and also to the ways in which missionary misperceptions reflected both their theological assumptions and metropolitan cultural expectations. Samson concludes that ‘the otherness here was at times too alien to be embraced. The missionary ethnographies that had transcended race and rank, however paternalistically, consistently privileged matters of gender and sexuality as barriers to full equality and leadership in Christian communities’. As such ‘here lies the unfinished business of Christian theological anthropology in the Pacific world and beyond’ (p. 244).

For all these reasons this book is a valuable addition to current thinking about the Pacific, religious and cultural encounter and missionary history. There were a few questions or gaps. By the 1920s what was the relationship of the increasingly frequent faith or non-denominational missions to ‘othering and brothering’? Here we might think of such groups as the Queensland Kanaka Mission and its derivative South Seas Evangelical Mission. In discussion of universal religious concepts among indigenous peoples, why was there no mention of the vexed issue of Io in Māori cosmology, which became a major focus for colonial scholars from the late nineteenth century? Stylistically, the non-macronisation of the word ‘Māori’ was a surprising omission in the text; and the lack of a ‘road map’ for individual chapters means that the trajectory of the book was not always clear. However, none of these detract from the overall argument or its detailed exposition. This is a significant and rich contribution that deserves wide, close and careful reading.

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

HUGH MORRISON

The Evangelical movement in Ethiopia. Resistance and resilience. By Tibebe Eshete. (Studies in World Christianity.) Pp. xiv + 480. Waco, Tx: Baylor University Press, 2017. £43.50 (paper). 978 1 4813 9708 6
JEH (70) 2019; doi:10.1017/S0022046919000083

The Evangelical Churches are late arrivals to Ethiopian society but they have grown quickly and now, with the Orthodox Church and with Islam, make up a diverse multi-faith national community. Ethiopia has been a predominantly Christian nation in a largely Muslim region since 342 when the Orthodox Church and a line of Christian emperors began. Missionaries arrived in the nineteenth century and were active in the twentieth but made few converts. Evangelical Churches only started to grow, perhaps surprisingly, when the missionaries left – expelled by the Italians during their occupation of the country between 1935 and 1941. Growth then continued in spite of hostility from the more traditional parts of

society and was maintained during the period of savage persecution under the Socialist military government between 1974 and 1991. Evangelicalism, here including both mainline Evangelical Churches and independent charismatic groups, has come out of its underground existence to become a major religious grouping. Ethiopia was the only African country to escape colonisation by a European power and the story of its Evangelical movement followed a different path from that of other parts of the continent.

Tibebe is well placed to examine and interpret this process of evangelism. He is himself a part of the story, growing up in the east of the country in a largely Muslim area, becoming a convinced Socialist and then undergoing a conversion to Christianity to join the Baptist Church and now teaching in the USA. He has used a variety of sources. The rapid growth and, for much of its life, underground lifestyle of Evangelicalism, has resulted in a scarcity of written sources, so instead Tibebe begins from his own experience and his familiarity with church leaders to conduct many interviews with those who have been involved in the story. This could have led to confusion due to the unfamiliarity of his readership with the people and places and so, as well as including a helpful guide to previous research and to available literature, he gives full annotation of his interviews to show how he has used his sources and also adds biographical notes about his leading informants. This demonstrates the authority of his oral sources and provides a valuable methodology for the use of oral material in research.

Tibebe locates the Evangelical movement in the context of Ethiopian history and society. There is an introductory chapter about the history of Ethiopia. This describes a traditional African society and shows how modernist ideas had a sudden impact and led to the disorientation of a growing generation. The new modernism was the root of both the Marxist revolution and the Evangelical Church. He shows how western missionaries arrived and set up centres of medical and educational service as well encouraging the reading of the Bible and a personal faith. This eventually led to the emergence of a local leadership and the formation of Ethiopian national Lutheran, Baptist and Mennonite Churches. Alongside this went the arrival of Pentecostalism, growing within the existing Churches and especially among young members of the Orthodox Church. It led to the formation of the Mulu Wengel, or Full Gospel, Church, a local movement resolutely avoiding dependence on outside groups – with the slogan ‘the gospel for Ethiopians by Ethiopians’. They adapted to the church closures, imprisonments and executions under Communism, building up an underground network of groups of believers. These were ready to burst into new life when political conditions changed.

The book explores not only how but why this took place. It analyses the tensions and disillusion which led to the revolution and vividly describes the growth of para-church and student movements. It also describes the ways in which the Pentecostal experience was shared through regional conventions, informal communication and music.

The book describes the background of the authoritarian monarchy, the traditional Church and the Socialist revolution, and suggests that the process of evangelism was the acceptance of a simple biblical faith which had an almost inevitable success. Simple truth prevails over misguided conservatism. There was support

from the sympathetic emperors who were glad to encourage the hospitals and other social projects and were willing to welcome missionaries but there was hostility from Orthodox. But this does not recognise ambiguities and complexities. It is much too simple an account and overlooks events which do not fit this picture. For example in a brief account of the early period we are told that the Emperor Tewodros II had amicable relations with missionaries but there is no mention that he expected missionaries to make him ever larger guns and eventually imprisoned them for several years, leading to the huge British rescue operation led by General Napier in 1868; nor, while describing the illustrious career of the missionary doctor Thomas Lambie, does the book report that, during the Italian occupation, Lambie angered the emperor through his attitude to the invaders and thereafter was denied access to the country. More significantly he consistently portrays the Orthodox Church as reactionary and rigid, and so rejected by large numbers of its young members. But the Orthodox Church has its own mission methods and has shown great resourcefulness. It successfully adapted to the Communist government, setting up new democratic structures and developing an effective educational programme, so that it has also grown dramatically since 1991, although admittedly less rapidly than the Evangelicals.

The book describes the origins of the movement and ends with brief reference to the next stage, after the fall of the military Derg regime and the formation of a new government in 1991 which ended persecution and introduced an era of toleration. Since then growth has continued until the Evangelicals now form a major faith community along with Orthodox and Muslims. They are part of a diverse multi-faith society which, in the context of a region where extremism flourishes, provides a model and a significance which goes wider than the borders of Ethiopia.

This thorough and carefully researched study introduces a little known but important episode of church history, Evangelical expansion and church growth.

INSTITUTE FOR ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN STUDIES,
CAMBRIDGE

JOHN BINNS

The Bible in Australia. A cultural history. By Meredith Lake. Pp. vi + 439. Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2018. AU\$39.99 (paper). 978 1742 23571 4

JEH (70) 2019; doi:10.1017/S0022046919000873

This is a remarkable contribution to Australian historiography written with verve and is endlessly interesting. Written as part of the bicentennial celebrations of the Bible Society of Australia, the longest continuously running organisation in Australia's history, it is certainly not an institutional history. It is in fact a vernacular story of people and occasions from across the whole spectrum of Australian life from the first settlement to the present. Lake was already known as a distinguished historian but here she shines as a masterful, at times lyrical storyteller. Endless stories of people and occasions show how the Bible shaped conversation: it provided life-guiding encouragement and expletives for protest from rock surfers to an elderly Robert Menzies, Australia's longest serving prime minister. By taking stories from across the range of conversation, literature, art and music in the life