

thorough exploration. It is puzzling that the author, Carol V. R. George, claims that Mississippi's response to the United States Supreme Court's school desegregation ruling in 1954, *Brown v. Board of Education*, comprised 'delaying tactics and go-slow policies' and 'small changes that gave the appearance of accommodating to the Court' (p. 93). However, in 1956, the state assembly abolished compulsory school attendance requirements and passed an interposition resolution declaring *Brown* unconstitutional. Token school desegregation did not begin until 1964 and, even then, was confined to just four urban localities. George argues that in early 1964 'the Methodist Church remained officially committed to segregation' (p. 121), yet, fifty pages later, she concedes that in 1956 the Methodist General Conference had endorsed the *Brown* decision and called for the abolition of the Central Jurisdiction, albeit relying in vain on white Methodist conferences voluntarily to accept transfers of the Jurisdiction's black conferences and Churches. Individual chapters frequently address events that belong chronologically in subsequent chapters and proof-reading did not detect some missing words. Despite the author's contentions, the March on Washington occurred in 1963, not 1962, and the film *Mississippi Burning* was not filmed in Neshoba County. However, readers unfamiliar with the history of Methodism and race relations in the twentieth century in general and their intersection in Mississippi in particular will find the book a useful and engrossing introduction.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MARK NEWMAN

*Archbishop Ramsey. The shape of the Church.* By Peter Webster. (The Archbishops of Canterbury Series.) Pp. xi + 255. Farnham–Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015. £70. 978 0 7546 6589 2; 978 0 7546 6596 0  
*JEH* (67) 2016; doi:10.1017/S0022046916000531

In his opening address to the Lambeth Conference of 1968 Michael Ramsey publicly attested to the manner in which this scholar-archbishop had, by his elevation to the see of Canterbury, been abruptly precipitated into the cultural conflicts of the 1960s:

Today the earth is being shaken and there can be few or none who do not feel the shaking: the rapid onrush of the age of technology with the new secularity which comes with it, the terrible contrast between the world of affluence and the world of hunger, the explosions of racial conflict, the amassing of destructive weapons, the persistence of war and killing. (p. 206)

With recent new biographies of Rowan Williams, Cosmo Lang and Geoffrey Fisher, archiepiscopal biography has become something of a cottage industry, but Peter Webster's treatment of the one-hundredth archbishop of Canterbury does not disappoint. Rather than a strict biography, *Archbishop Ramsey* offers an assessment of both the man and the office against the backdrop of an era marked by growing disaffection both from the idea of religious establishment and from organised religion more generally. It is in Ramsey's pronouncements that we see an early Anglican attempt formally to define a post-Christendom model for the atrophied Anglican establishment that he inherited. Such a model, while fully comprehensible to most other churches of the Anglican Communion, came as a shock to those who still thought of the Church of England as a bastion of moral – if not

social – order. It earned Ramsey considerable opprobrium from a wide variety of persons both within and outside the Church, even as it proclaimed a fundamentally catholic vision of the Church as the Body of Christ. From the *Honest to God* controversy and structural reform of the Church of England to Anglican-Methodist unity and ecumenical relationships with the Roman Catholic Church, and from homosexuality and abortion to Northern Ireland and Zimbabwe, Webster opens a window on an eventful primacy, reinforced by thirty-five excerpts from the Ramsey papers and Hansard debates. In a comparatively short volume, more than one-third of which is devoted to Ramsey's own words, it seems churlish to complain of omissions, but the relative lack of space accorded to Ramsey's relationships with his fellow bishops is disappointing. While Ramsey's interactions – particularly with such colourful individuals as Mervyn Stockwood of Southwark – are mentioned, this is mostly *en passant* (that Archbishop Donald Coggan of York, Ramsey's eventual successor, is mentioned only twice in the text is striking) but perhaps it merely reflects the splendid isolation in which Ramsey actually functioned. This is, however, a minor point and does not detract from the value of Webster's work for scholars of late twentieth-century Anglicanism and of the ecumenical movement more generally.

DURHAM UNIVERSITY

JEREMY BONNER

*Text and authority in the South African Nazaretha Church.* By Joel Cabrita (International African Library, 46.) Pp. xx + 402 incl. 3 frontispieces and 10 figs. London: International African Institute/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. £65. 978 1 107 05443 1  
*JEH* (67) 2016; doi:10.1017/S0022046916000099

Over the years the Nazaretha, or the Nazareth Baptist Church, one of the largest independent Churches in Southern Africa, has held fascination for scholars, starting with the Swedish Lutheran bishop Bengt Sundkler in the 1940s. This fascination stems particularly from its perceived 'syncretism' with Zulu pre-Christian religion and its promotion of African traditional values within the context of an Evangelical background. Scholars, particularly Western theologians, have branded the Nazaretha 'post-Christian' and a bridge back to African traditional religious practices. This view was seen especially in the earlier works of Sundkler and those of the South African Dutch Reformed theologian G. C. Oosthuisen, but, as Joel Cabrita points out in this fine study, has permeated the literature on African independency ever since. The Nazaretha Church is arguably the most researched religious movement in Africa, certainly in South Africa, where there are thousands of African Independent Churches. One of the reasons that this has been a ready subject for research is the Church's willingness to be accessible to outside researchers. Indeed, Cabrita herself has taken advantage of the movement's readiness to be examined, especially through its archives and copious sacred writings. In this study she presents a new perspective, examining the Church from the angle of its connections with Protestant Christianity and revivalist movements in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and stressing the importance of the written texts associated with the development of this movement.