

Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe By J. Weller and J. Linden. Gweru, Mambo Press, 1984, viii, 224 pp., ISBN 0-86922-323-2, Z\$6.50.

This book is a response to a particular need. It was written as a text for theological students studying by correspondence. The project was planned at a 1971 conference in Malawi which both authors attended. Other commitments delayed the completion of the project until 1979, since when it has been used, in a duplicated form, as a text for theological education by extension in Malawi. This published edition incorporates several minor revisions, and adds an account of the final events of Zimbabwe's independence and a concluding chapter.

The need which gave rise to the book has determined both its form and its content. It covers Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi, not because they form any sharply demarcated political or religious unity, but because the demand came from these three countries. The projected readership has determined the book's academic level as well; although it contains new research, it is essentially a general overview, with no footnotes and only a short bibliography. Above all, the demand has determined its restricted scope — it is the students of the mainstream denominations who will chiefly use the book and it therefore covers these denominations only. It is thus less than a comprehensive history of Christianity in these countries.

In such a treatment of several denominations in several countries, the structuring of the material is all-important. The authors decided to arrange the material in self-contained units, which certainly makes for clarity, readability and ease of reference. The first chapter is a brief description of the Jesuit missions on the Zambezi (1560–1700), and the second an equally brief sketch of the three countries in the mid-nineteenth century. The third chapter deals with the missions in this area in pre-colonial times, giving eight different missions a separate treatment. Chapter four makes up the bulk of the book, describing the mainstream denominations in the three countries from the beginning of the colonial period up to 1980. Here, there are nine sections, dealing with the Anglican, Roman Catholic and major Protestant groupings, in each of the three countries. These Protestant groupings are the Methodists in Zimbabwe (this section contributed by Dr R. Peadar), the Presbyterians in Malawi (contributed by Dr J. Thompson) and the United Church of Zambia (made up of the earlier Paris Mission, the London Missionary Society (LMS), Presbyterian and Free Churches). Chapter five deals with the churches and national affairs. There are only three sections here, one for each country, for generally in these matters the churches tended to work together. Chapter six consists of concluding remarks.

In a book which ranges so widely over what are largely separate endeavours, it is essential to strike a proper balance between them, and to paint a general picture of each without becoming bogged down in confusing detail or giving undue prominence to the more interesting issues or to the more colourful personalities. Here the authors succeed admirably. Due prominence is given to individuals such as Laws and Murray of Malawi, Cripps and White in Zimbabwe, Dupont and Colin Morris in Zambia, without the general overview being unnecessarily complicated. One of the real strengths of the book is the balance struck between the attention paid to the hierarchy, clergy or officials of a church on the one hand, and that paid to the anonymous grassroots membership on the other.

As the authors remark (p. vii), one of the advantages of covering several different denominations in different countries is that it makes 'illuminating comparisons possible'. This is a considerable advantage indeed, for particular countries and churches stand out all the more clearly as a result of these comparisons and contrasts. For example, the number of White settlers in a country determined the clarity with which the churches perceived the interests of the Blacks. This explains how in Malawi the churches could see clearly the evils of the migrant labour system, whereas in Zimbabwe the churches' view was far more ambiguous. It also explains how the churches in Zambia and (particularly) Malawi could denounce the imposed Federation of 1953 whereas Zimbabwean churches were (again) less concerned.

Even more interesting are the 'illuminating comparisons' between the denominations themselves. A Roman Catholic mission, for example, staffed by celibate priests and nuns, could create an entirely different ethos from that of the LMS missions which insisted on married missionaries — even to the extent of sending a missionary off, after the death of his wife, to acquire another one. (In passing, we can note that the mortality rate among these early missionaries was horrendous (pp. 27, 16).) There were interesting and important differences even within denominations. In Malawi, for instance, the two settlements of Blantyre and Livingstonia were founded by different branches of Scottish Presbyterians. Zimbabwe had, and still has, its two branches of Methodists; the Primitive Methodists of Zambia are a third. And there were significant differences even within religious orders in Roman Catholicism: in Zambia, the Polish Jesuits, coming themselves from an occupied country, had considerable sympathy with the nationalist cause (p. 164), whereas the danger for the English Jesuits of Zimbabwe was always that of identifying too closely with the interests of the English settlers (p. 202).

In the isolation of the early days, individual missions had to solve for themselves the problems they encountered: how to deal with slave traders (p. 35), how to deal with backsliders, how much corporal punishment to administer (p. 41–5), how insistently to promote Black advancement (p. 135–9). One of the lessons of the book is the advantages that came from learning from one another, from pooling and sharing information even across denominational lines. It seems that co-operation was even more evident than friction. The accounts of the unifying of the main Protestant bodies in Malawi and Zambia are particularly illuminating. The authors express the hope that the book will encourage today's church leaders to advance the traditions they inherit (p. vii); this trend towards co-operation and united activity is one worthy of development.

The authors are even-handed throughout, and are determined to show the strengths and weaknesses, the successes and failures, of each denomination. This can at times give an impression of a certain blandness. For instance, on the question as to whether the mainstream churches in Zimbabwe helped or hindered the independence struggle, the authors remain fairly neutral: 'A case can be made [for] either of the two verdicts' (p. 217). There are some other instances of such even-handedness (e.g. pp. 207, 212) — which is probably attributable to the broad readership for whom the book was intended.

The text deserves better maps — and more maps (of tribal groupings or journeys) and charts would lead to even greater clarity. An index would make the

book even more serviceable. There are misprints on pages 13, 15, 54, 66, 94, 99, 120, 143, 149, 155, 178, 186, 187 and 202, and surely Tabora is in Tanzania, not Uganda (p. 61). Mulolani is given the different forenames of Emilio and Otmilio in the space of two pages (pp. 165, 167).

The book covers a wide area succinctly, and presents its fund of information in a balanced and orderly way. It achieves the author's stated aims admirably, and deserves a far wider readership than the students for whom it was originally intended.

University of Zimbabwe

P. GIFFORD

Transnationals in Southern Africa Edited by D. B. Ndlela, A. Seidman, R. Seidman and K. Makamure. Harare, Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1986, iv, 219 pp., Z\$12.50 (p/b), ISBN 0-949225-06-1.

Transnationals in Southern Africa is the result of a workshop held in Harare in 1982 and attended by scholars from America, East and West Europe, and Southern Africa on techniques Southern African countries can use to, 'maximise the benefits and minimise the disadvantages of transnational corporate investment' (p. 1). The book therefore examines a topic of considerable interest in a subcontinent where multinational corporations (MNCs), particularly South African multinationals, play an important role in almost every sector of the regional economy and dominate strategic economic sectors of some countries. While most countries in the region are suspicious of MNCs and often view heavy foreign corporate involvement in their economies as a threat to their sovereignty, most Southern African countries would also agree with the opening statement of Simbi Mubako, then Zimbabwe's Minister of Justice, that 'we need transnational corporations [because] we lack the capital, the knowhow, the technology and sometimes the initiative to exploit our own natural resources or market them in the world' (p. 11). The paradox of countries not-wanting-but-needing multinationals is a challenge both to leaders and to scholars who hope to aid the growth of Southern Africa and the freeing of majority-ruled countries from dependence on South Africa. It is doubtful if this challenge is met by the contributors to *Transnationals in Southern Africa*.

An edited book is designed to be more than the sum of its parts, so it is important to examine the book as a whole as well as to consider the worth of the individual papers. It is unfortunate that the book took four years to be published, as foreign corporate involvement in Southern Africa is a fast-changing topic that demands up-to-date information if it is to be persuasive. For example, the dramatic opening by Mozambique to foreign investment in the last two years would have influenced the authors, or at least called for comment by them. The book is also mistitled. It is not, except for the recommendations, about Southern Africa, as it is concerned almost solely with the anglophone countries of the region. Indeed, most of the empirical work is from Zambia and Zimbabwe. This is unfortunate as there were four Mozambican participants at the workshop, and