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***Christianity and public culture in Africa.* Edited by Englund. (Cambridge Centre of African Studies.) Pp. ix + 238. Athens, Oh: Ohio University Press, 2011. \ \$49.95. 978 0 8214 1945 8**

Barbara Bompani

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been so dismally consigned. Together the two stout volumes mark a handsome contribution to scholarship. Lange certainly does insist on placing Söderblom firmly in his landscapes, and these are successively intellectual, institutional, ecclesiastical, ecumenical and international. In such a life abstract ideas and practical situations interweave and reinforce each other with genuine vigour. Lange gives the reader valuable insights into the many currents of intellectual life which prospered earnestly in the Swedish faculties in the later nineteenth century. It is the discipline of church history which does much to make the man. But also he is never less than cosmopolitan – in fact, his credentials as an internationalist are established very early indeed, with a spell in the United States and a pastorate in Paris. Subsequently two august academic positions in Uppsala and then Leipzig fall neatly into line. Then, almost suddenly, the primacy comes into view and the man is ready for the moment. It is 1914. By now the book is half done. As Söderblom navigates the high plains of Swedish church life Lange again proves a tidy interpreter, dividing his treatment into themes – the pastor, the preacher, the church leader, the realms of Church and State. Much of this is essentially domestic, but it leans soon enough into the great international narratives of the new ecumenism which Söderblom so confidently made his own. The Stockholm conference of the Life and Work movement in 1925 inevitably marks the high-tide level of the Söderblom effect at large. Here he at last becomes visible to the Christian world, busy with resolutions on war and peace and forging a new international basis for involvement in the affairs of the world. Lange is not overawed by this – he even summons up the temerity to ask: to what did it all amount? A concluding reflection reinforces the overall sense that this is, perhaps, more a Söderblom for historical theologians than one for scholars of the history of international movements. Lange himself is a systematic theologian. But then his subject is indeed a vast one, rich in many dimensions, and there is still much room for development. What the author has given us is invaluable because it opens many doors, not least onto that immense stage once bestrode by *colossi* determined to summon up all their convictions, and combine all their opportunities, in order to redeem the disastrous age which they inhabited. If these ideals are no longer to the taste of theologians they should become all the more consciously the responsibility of the historians.

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*Christianity and public culture in Africa*. Edited by Harri Englund. (Cambridge Centre of African Studies.) Pp. ix+238. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2011. \$49.95. 978 0 8214 1945 8

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African public spheres are not bounded entities but rather evolving spaces subjected to continuous reconstruction and contestation; for this reason it is important to understand these dynamics and to develop a careful understanding of what the public sphere is in the African context and who key actors are. While a few publications have appeared addressing this issue, further investigation is

needed. *Christianity and public culture in Africa* adds to this literature, offering an understanding of the public role of Christianity in several African countries. The starting point is Englund's observation that religion, in this case Christianity, is not a separate entity but rather something that shapes the way in which people perceive, represent and discuss morality, politics and everyday life. Many contemporary publications still present secularisation as a dominant or inevitable process and countries in which religion occupies public spaces as exceptions. This volume uses history to counteract this view. Offering an explanation of why Christianity became a public force in African societies, it reveals how religion always played a role in mediating social and political events and it unpacks and presents how the public role of Christianity changed through many decades, eventually becoming a powerful contemporary presence especially through Pentecostalism. In this volume public culture is presented as a space that transcends old western contrapositions such as 'secular' and 'religious', offering a venue where African and western ideas encounter and dialogue in order to produce new public expressions, attitudes and understandings.

The book is divided into ten chapters and is framed by an introduction. Chapters are grouped thematically into three different parts, one on missionaries and public encounters, one on patriarchy and public cultures and one on Pentecostalism and public representations. While the typical volume of conference proceedings tends to offer a pool of contributions that struggle to cohere, this edited volume succeeds in remaining tightly focused by using a clear analytical framework. The strength of this volume lies in the richness of the chapters that are able to provide thorough accounts of several African contexts and their ability to engage with the main thread of the book: what constitutes the public space in Africa and how this has evolved and interacted with religion through time? Not unusually, certain chapters are more successful than others, but none the less they all provide strong empirical investigations and they are substantially researched. However a shortcoming worth mentioning is the absence of a final overall reflection on the contributions. The book would have benefitted from the inclusion of a coda or conclusive chapter that drew together the major points raised in the chapters. Nevertheless, this is important and relevant reading for academics and students who intend to reflect on the complexity and dynamism of Christianity in African public spaces.

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BARBARA BOMPANI

*Holy hustlers, schism, and prophecy. Apostolic reformation in Botswana.* By Richard Werbner. (The Anthropology of Christianity, 11.) Pp. xiii+268 incl. 2 maps and 13 figs+DVD. Berkeley-Los Angeles-London: University of California Press, 2011. £16.95 (paper). 978 0 520 26853 1

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Richard Werbner's *Holy hustlers* is the eleventh in a series of volumes on the anthropology of Christianity published by the University of California Press. That a majority of these publications – at least eight so far – are on non-western religious traditions especially in their encounter with Christianity serves to underscore the growing interest in the study of Christianity as a non-western religion. Werbner's