because they were theoretically outside the community, but because they were a ubiquitous presence within it. Africans could not be accommodated in the so-called democracy precisely because of the uncertainty this would introduce for the ruling white elites.

The author is on more solid ground when he seeks to help us understand the failings of the discipline of political science to explain politics in South Africa. [His point could just as well be made about these approaches in many other places in the world, including the West, whence they originate.] Chapter 3 elucidates three approaches from contemporary theory: liberal, materialist, and African agency. He deftly demonstrates how these approaches often misconstrue factors such as conflict, contingency, opportunity, and intention in South African politics.

Several chapters that follow (5, 6, and 7) provide illustrations of the above, while attempting to integrate details from the South African situation. The author makes the excellent point that the trend of “democratic” transitions in Africa is inappropriately measured against Western democratic constructs. Unfortunately, the author concludes that there is little of independent value in the choices Africans are making as they pursue “democracy”—it is all externally derived and driven. This suggestion undermines the otherwise excellent point regarding the relevance of Western analytic tools. Such tools seem notably inadequate for capturing the “distinctiveness” of the South African experience and getting beyond the residual “inscriptions” of the apartheid system that so sully present efforts at description.

The analysis in this volume is important for our consideration, though the significant pieces do not all come together logically or consistently. Though the author ends up undermining some of his strongest arguments, he draws attention to important analytic problems and to data that are overlooked or misconstrued. He rightly calls our attention to the inability of certain models to explain South African circumstances. He encourages us to get outside the framework set by the residuals of the apartheid system that, alas, the author does not entirely avoid himself.

Minion K. C. Morrison
University of Missouri, Columbia


In the 1970s and the 1990s, British Africanist scholars produced two groups of outstanding studies on Christianity in Africa funded by the Leverhulme Trust. Two works by Adrian Hastings (1979a, 1979b) and one by Edward Fashole-Luke et al. (1978) were in the first series. This volume as well as another by Gifford (1995) comprises the second set. Although they are the result of intellectual collaboration, each volume stands on its own. The 1970s, works situated Christianity in newly-independent sub-Saharan Africa. For many Africanists, they were the first introduction to the transi-
tion of Christian churches moving from mission status to local leadership and autonomy, and above all, to the vibrant New Religious Movements (NRMs) or Independent Churches.

Gifford (1995) looked at the role of Christian churches in the democratization of sub-Saharan Africa. The present study has two goals: to analyze the interrelation of Christian church bodies in Africa, using the methodology of political economy, and to explore the public role of Christianity in Africa. After two chapters that describe changes in the African context from the 1970s to the present, the bulk of this book is devoted to four case histories: Ghana, Uganda, Zambia, and Cameroon. Each in its own way is fascinating.

The introductory chapter deftly sketches social and political patterns that have developed since independence. In each of the case studies this is repeated in detail, covering the present situations of Protestants, Catholics, and NRMs. Showing the network of elites, including clergy, who benefit from and contribute to patrimonial systems, Gifford outlines the ambiguity of the Christian churches. On one hand they are participants in clientism and are similar to the other institutions of the elite ruling system. This is illustrated by the examples that pepper the case studies: the anointing ceremony in Lusaka’s Anglican cathedral when Frederick Chiluba became president of Zambia in 1991 (p. 197); the episcopal praise of Idi Amin as “our redeemer and the light of God.” (p. 118); the close relations between Christian churches and President Paul Biya of Cameroon that opened the north to Christian evangelization.

On the other hand, religious values urge Christian leaders to take stances on justice, corruption, and the plight of the poor. The churches’ activist role often has tragic consequences, such as the murders of Anglican Archbishop Janani Luwum at Idi Amin’s behest, of the Jesuit intellectual Engelbert Mveng of Cameroon, and of Catholic Archbishop Elias Mutale of Zambia—all after strong protests against government misuse of power.

Where Gifford’s book is at its strongest is in the analysis of the internal politics of the individual churches—their decision-making processes, organization, finances, and relationships. Ethnic tensions and strains between expatriate missionaries and local clergy are particularly well outlined, with an objectivity that is refreshing in comparison with much of the religious literature emanating from Africa today. One can only admire Gifford’s thorough and systematic analysis, based on both his familiarity with existing scholarship and his careful field work. His treatment of corruption, tribalism, and financial irresponsibility within the Christian churches is balanced and frank, but never demeaning.

Although there are references to the revivalists who have extended their ministries throughout the continent, this intriguing avenue of research has not been developed. Figures such as Nigeria’s Benson Idahosa and the German/South African Reinhard Bonnke have often brought a message of political conservatism, capitalist economics, and traditional
charismatic submission to authority. Bonnke’s connections with the apartheid regime of South Africa in the 1980s remain largely unexplored. Gifford does give a fuller treatment to the Faith Gospel movement, which promises a share of wealth and success to its disciples; he argues that it offers little for African development (p. 243). This is his own field of expertise, and he uses it to good advantage. The connections between this prosperity teaching, however, and the political impact of the movement, is never made clear.

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Norbert Brockman, S.M.
St. Mary’s University of San Antonio


When the United Nations Security Council decided to end the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Angola (MONUA) on February 26, 1999, it implicitly admitted its latest failure to bring about peace in a country which, according to Henderson (1979), has experienced five hundred years of conflict. While the failure of its fourth attempt is partially due to the unwillingness of the world body to commit the necessary resources, it also attests to the deep-seated roots of this conflict and the ability of the involved parties to draw continued support from a variety of sources. As I write this in May 1999, Jonas Savimbi’s Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA) is allegedly receiving weapons from Uganda and Rwanda via the Congolese Rally for Democracy, the rebel movement attempting to overthrow Laurent Kabila, the man it helped bring to power just a year earlier.

In light of these developments, a new review of the origins of the Angolan civil war is certainly needed, and Guimarães’ volume promises to go beyond the Cold War rhetoric and focus on the deeper roots of the conflict. Specifically, he sets out to demonstrate that the Angolan civil war of 1975–76 was not primarily a result of Cold War politics driven by the interests of the superpowers, but the outcome of a power struggle between