

Because of this, the book will be of interest to all who are trying to understand the Mennonite Mission to Ethiopia, its methodology and practice, as well as the mission's struggles in context. Since Hansen straddled both evangelism and development, *Into Abyssina* is also a useful book for those interested in Mennonite missions more broadly. It covers a period of transition in the attitude of innovation-minded Mennonites regarding the purpose, effectiveness, and methodology required for meaningful international work.

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**Seblewengel Daniel, *Perception and Identity: A Study of the Relationship between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia*, Langham, Carlisle, Cumbria, UK, 2019. 486 pages. \$38.00. ISBN: 9781783686346.**

This work originated as the author's dissertation, submitted at the Akrofi-Christaller Institute, Ghana, and has since been transformed into a book. The book delves into the self-perception of and mutual perceptions between Protestants and followers of the Ethiopian Orthodox *Täwahədo* Church (EOTC) across historical and contemporary contexts.

The EOTC holds a unique and significant place in Ethiopia, being both indigenous and one of the oldest churches globally. The historical interaction between the EOTC and Protestant churches in Ethiopia has been marked by challenges rather than smooth relations. The EOTC's negative experiences with Jesuit missionaries in the sixteenth century left them wary of foreign-based missionary activities; aiming to convert Ethiopians to Catholicism, the Jesuits had ignited doctrinal disputes, sowed discord, and jeopardized the stability of the country. Their expulsion from Ethiopia resulted from their interference with local customs, including circumcision and the Sabbath.

The Jesuit Mission, arriving in Ethiopia in 1557 to serve the resident Portuguese community and support King Lebne Dengel, sought to convert Ethiopians through patient teaching of Scripture, crafts, and science. Their efforts culminated in the conversion of King Susenyos and the court to Roman Catholicism in 1622. However, this Catholic influence was short-lived, as civil war erupted in 1632, leading to the expulsion of all Catholic missionaries. The conflict arose from the Catholics' desire to place the Ethiopian church under the Pope of Rome.

Protestant missionaries faced restrictions in Ethiopia until the reign of Menelik II, as Emperors Tewodros and Yohannes had previously limited their engagement in evangelism. The exploration of the Nile and James Bruce's renowned book, "Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile" (published in 1770), introduced Ethiopia to Europeans. Bruce's depiction of Ethiopia as a unique land in Africa with a Christian ruling house inspired Protestant Europe to send missionaries to the oldest Christian country on the continent. The book played a crucial role in disseminating information about Ethiopia among Europeans.

In the nineteenth century, Ethiopia experienced a degree of openness to missionary movements, prompting various organizations to attempt to reach ethnic groups such as the Oromo and Felashas. Early mission groups included The Church Missionary Society, Swedish Evangelical Mission, German Hermannsburg Mission, Norwegian Lutheran Mission, Danish Evangelical Mission, American Lutheran Mission, and American Presbyterian Mission. Contrary to the aim of establishing new churches, the primary goal of early Protestant missionaries was to renew and reform the existing EOTC, recognizing the need for correction and reformation within the church.<sup>1</sup>

The arrival of Protestant missionaries in the northern part of Ethiopia was met with resistance from the reigning kings and the EOTC. This resistance prompted the missionaries to redirect their efforts toward engaging with non-Christian communities in the south and west of the country. However, even in these regions, the missionaries faced opposition from the EOTC. The Orthodox church leadership, along with local administrators in the south, vehemently opposed the growth of Protestant churches and consistently worked to prevent the establishment of evangelical congregations.

Despite numerous challenges, several missionary organizations successfully established Protestant churches by engaging redeemed slaves and priests who had converted from the Orthodox Church. Many of these slaves were Oromos initially brought from the interior to be sold to Arabs across the Red Sea. Missionaries intervened by purchasing and freeing these slaves, with some being permitted to attend schools operated by the missionaries. Hika, known as "the translator," was among the freed slaves who had the privilege of studying at the school.<sup>2</sup>

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1 Sven Rubenson, "The Missionary Factors in Ethiopia: Consequence of a Colonial Context" in *The Missionary Factor in Ethiopia: Papers from a Symposium on the Impact of European Missions on Ethiopian Society, Lund University, August 1996*, eds. Getachew Haile, Aasulv Lande, and Samuel Rubenson (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1998), 60. See also Donald Crummey, *Priest and Politicians: Protestant and Catholic Missions in Orthodox Ethiopia 1830–1868*, Oxford Studies in African Affairs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 12.

2 "Interestingly enough, his original name was Hika, 'the translator,' an almost prophetic designation in view of the fact that Onésimos's name was to be immortalized for his translation of the Bible into Oromo language." Bahru Zewde, *Pioneers of Change in*

Through this experience, Hika converted to Christianity and was given the name Onesimos.

In the early twentieth century, missionary activities were largely confined to the peripheries, but the emergence of Pentecostal-type Christianity as an urban movement brought increased visibility to Protestant churches, posing a threat to the national church.<sup>3</sup> This shift led to increased persecution of Pentecostals. They were perceived as a threat due to their bold communication of the gospel, capturing the attention of many. Consequently, Pentecostals faced early persecution from the Derg compared to other evangelical groups.

Seblewengel's books aim to unravel the complex relationship between the Orthodox and Evangelical churches, utilizing historical and theological frameworks to explain the dynamics at play. The exploration of perception and identity in these churches begins with the earliest organized Protestant missionary engagement with the Orthodox Church and extends to the contemporary self-consciousness and perception of each other (9).

The book is organized into seven chapters, with the initial chapter discussing the author's motivations for studying the subject and outlining the intellectual framework of the study. The author utilizes Andrew Walls's framework for the identity discussion. This framework comprises (1) essential continuity in Christianity, (2) the "indigenizing" principle, and (3) the "Pilgrim" principle. The Pilgrim principle encourages both Orthodox and evangelical parties to perceive each other "from a different angle," acknowledging a shared "adoptive past" (404).

These three frameworks, adopted from Walls's insights, encourage Christians to reevaluate their perspective about themselves and other Christian traditions:

1. *Continuity in Christian faith.* Despite the presence of multiple centers and expressions over the years, the "shared Christian identity" (5) persists.
2. *Indigenizing Principle.* This principle "asserts that God accepts people along with their good and bad cultural orientations," attributing this acceptance to Christ's sacrificial death. "Thus . . . to impose one's culture or tradition as *the* correct one has no biblical ground" (5).
3. *Pilgrim Principle.* This principle emphasizes that "God accepts people in order to transform their minds toward Christ. Thus, Christians are to demonstrate Christlikeness," (5) often leading them to clash with societal norms.

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*Ethiopia: The Reformist Intellectuals of the Early Twentieth Century* (Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University, 2002), 47.

3 See Tibebe Eshete, *The Evangelical Movement in Ethiopia: Resistance and Resilience* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009) and Jörg Haustein, *Writing Religious History: The Historiography of Ethiopian Pentecostalism* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz, 2011).

The second and third chapters provide context for the formation of Ethiopian Christian identity in the EOTC and Evangelical/Pentecostal movements. Brief histories of both the EOTC and the Evangelicals are provided to establish a historical perspective. As Ethiopia's first church, the EOTC cultivated its unique heritage and traditions. Subsequently, the introduction of Catholicism and Protestantism influenced the religious landscape of the country.

The fourth chapter illustrates the interactions between the missionaries and their Orthodox counterparts, particularly the Church Missionary Society (CMS). It highlights the missionaries' unsuccessful attempts to "revitalize" the Orthodox Church by promoting Bible reading with the aim of reaching the "heathen." However, they succeeded in distributing scripture copies, playing a crucial role in the expansion of the Protestant movement in Ethiopia.<sup>4</sup> Initially, the missionaries did not intend to establish a separate congregation.

The interplay between the Orthodox Church and local evangelicals is described in chapter 5 and is marked by mutual antagonism and misunderstanding. It recounts how each group perceives the other and themselves. The encounter is depicted as fraught with miscommunication and mutual hostility. Seblewengel argues that "[a]t the heart of the Orthodox-Evangelical divide, therefore, is their sense of identity (who they think they are) and their perception of others (who they think the other party is)" (400).

The evangelicals labeled the Orthodox Church as erroneous and አከብሮ/’*äbēzab* (“without Christ”), while the Orthodox perceived the evangelicals as መናፍቅ/*männafəq* (“heretic”) and accused them of “sheep-stealing.”<sup>5</sup> Pentecostals were branded as ጸረ ማርያም/*Tärä Maryam* (“the enemy of Mary”), መጡ/*Mäte* (“foreign/new comer”), and unpatriotic. Initially, Pentecostals were derogatorily referred to as ኢንጤ/*Pente*, which later became a general term for Protestants. Each considered the other as not an authentic Christian.

The Evangelical movement challenges certain doctrines of the EOTC, such as Mariology, angelology, and veneration of saints. Differences in worship style contribute to the perception of Evangelicals as foreign. The Evangelical identity reflects aspects inherited from founding missionaries (discontinuity) and local culture and tradition (continuity), differing from the identity of the EOTC and leading to conflicts.

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4 Gustav Arén, *Evangelical Pioneers in Ethiopia: Origins of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus*, Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia (Stockholm: The Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, 1978).

5 Leading historian Tadesse Tamrat wrote an article entitled “Evangelizing the Evangelized” to show the EOTC’s reaction to the aggressive evangelism of Protestants. See Tadesse Tamrat, “Evangelizing the Evangelized: The Root Problem between Missions and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church,” in *The Missionary Factor in Ethiopia*, eds. Getachew Haile, Aasulv Lande, and Samuel Rubenson (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1998), 21–22.

Chapter six discusses the reformation impulses (*Täḥädäso*, or, “renewal” movements) within the EOTC, examining the interaction among themselves and with Evangelicals, who provide financial and other support. Historical figures like the fifteenth-century monk *Abba* Estifanos are discussed in relation to recent reformation attempts.

The final chapter offers recommendations on how to enhance the relationship and foster a harmonious ecumenical connection between the two denominations. It emphasizes the commonalities that unite the two churches, such as faith in the triune God. Additionally, the book features an appendix detailing early attempts at ecumenism and a glossary of crucial Amharic terms used throughout the text.

The book provides a comprehensive historical analysis of the perceptions between Protestants and the Orthodox Church in Ethiopia, addressing a relatively understudied aspect of the interaction between the two denominations. With limited existing publications on the subject, such as “The Missionary Factor” and “Anthropological Insights for Mission,” Seblewengel’s work fills a significant gap and invites further exploration of its multifaceted issues. It stands as a valuable resource for religious and mission historians, as well as those interested in ecumenical relations and modern Ethiopian history. To broaden its impact, translating the book into local languages would help make its insights accessible to a wider audience.

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**Raymond Silverman and Neal Sobania, *Ethiopian Church Art: Painters, Patrons, Purveyors*, Tsehai, Los Angeles, California, 2022. 331 pages. \$74.95. ISBN: 978-1-59907-291-3.**

Drawing on the lives, works, and religious commitments of a wide range of Ethiopian artists, the authors of this groundbreaking volume brilliantly describe the vital but little studied art and craft of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. Authors Raymond Silverman and Neal Sobania, professors of, respectively, African studies and art history, have conducted interviews and carried out in-depth research projects for over twenty-five years to produce this stunning masterpiece. Over two hundred individuals are featured—painters, gallerists, priests, woodworkers, patrons, promoters, and marketers—all participating in a complex matrix of intersectional relationships involving Ethiopian art, creativity, religious culture, faith, and commercial energy.

The presentation of this volume is in “coffee table” format—10 x 13-inch in size, sumptuously illustrated with colorful photography, and amply documented