constitute about two thirds of all African Christians, Ranger suggests it is time to stop regarding the independent churches as more intrinsically and authentically African than the churches which remain in full communion with their overseas counterparts. The principal deterrent to new histories of those churches is the difficulty of making 'the mission churches as interesting as the independent ones.' (p. 183) In retrospect it is possible to read these words as a portent of the study Ranger was about to undertake of the religious experience of the Samkange family.

There are one or two other forward-looking observations in an otherwise backward looking volume. One is Bogumil Jewsiewicki’s spot-on prediction that the 1990s would 'accord a place—perhaps even a central one—to intellectual history. . . . there will be particular attention accorded to a given situation or specific text which will enable one to grasp the social and political construction of identity (itself a text)' along with more attention to questions of ethnicity and nationalism. (p. 222) Less prescient was Ralph Austen’s hope for a new African historiography that would not 'claim autonomy for Africa in realms where dependency and development crises clearly must be recognised but rather to recognise the autonomy of experience, identity and self-expression which link the glories of past independence, the miseries of domination and poverty, and the hopes for a more fully autonomous future.' After 1989, the goal of autonomy, embedded as the essential subtext of all the works of the Ibadan school, seemed less achievable than at any time since decolonisation.

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The papers collected in this volume come from a conference held in Leiden University in January 1994, being presented by members of an inter-university research group concerned to study the role of religions in situations of religious pluralism. The field is claimed as one of growing importance that has been much neglected in the study of religions. For the contributors to the conference and to this volume the issue presented was the role of ritual in the definition of identities and demarcation of boundaries in situations of religious pluralism.

The topic works well as a focus for the volume, which is divided into three groups of papers: contributions to ritual theory (five papers);
the ritualization of the encounter (three papers); and responses to religious plurality (five papers). There is also an Introduction by the two editors that summarizes and points each of the contributions, and an Epilogue that draws certain general conclusions. It is a substantial, workman-like volume that maintains throughout a fertile relationship between generalization and case-study. In contrast to the a-historical treatment of ritual in much anthropology, the historical treatment of most of the case-studies presented here was especially satisfying.

In Part One Jan Platvoet develops an encompassing definition of ritual that draws well from the anthropological literature and establishes what is in effect a programme for its description and analysis. Jan Snoek in what I thought was the weakest paper (a view the editors would not seem to share) draws upon the theory of group dynamics to suggest conditions in which demarcation between religious groups is likely to occur. Snoek's hypothesis is immediately challenged by the material presented in the next paper in which Wouter Belier examines the case of the Australian aboriginal religions. (In the Introduction it is suggested that the case can be read either way, but that is not reassuring for any hypothesis.) Andre Droogers, in a suggestive comparison between Umbanda and Pentecostalism in Brazil, examines why the latter is very concerned with group boundaries whilst the former is not and relates this difference to the external, internal and supernatural dimensions of the two movements. Gerrie ter Haar explores the transitional position of Ghanaian Christian churches in a newly developed suburb of Amsterdam, which seek to be included in the Dutch Christian community but are in fact excluded from it.

Part Two presents three quite fascinating studies of: the diverse religious groups that have come to be ritually focused on the bodhi tree or its successor under which Gautama Buddha achieved enlightenment (by Albertina Nugteren); the circumstances and history of the decree in the Islamic Yemen which required Jews, despite Muslim principles, to be responsible for the removal of human excrement (by Joseph Sadan); and (most interesting of all) the history of and background to the conflict that ignited around the Ayodhya mosque in northern India in December 1992, when organized Hindu groups pulled down the building in an effort to reclaim the site for the Hindu god, Ram (by Jan Platvoet).

Part Three presents a mixed collection of case-studies that focus in various ways upon the identity-markers for particular religious groups in a plural situation: the rules, followed at some cost to themselves, of not drinking wine, sowing seed, nor building houses by the Rechabites