The Journal of Religion in Africa began in 1967, founded by Andrew Walls, at the time a Lecturer in Church History in the University of Aberdeen. He had only recently returned to Britain from West Africa where he had taught at Fourah Bay and Nsukka. He was already an experienced founder of journals—of the Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion and the Bulletin of the Society of African Church History. New African journals were multiplying. The Sierra Leone Bulletin had started in 1959, one year before the Journal of African History and the JRA itself began one year before African Historical Studies (since 1972 The International Journal of African Historical Studies). It seemed indeed a founding age for African studies, and for nothing more than the study of African religion. The inauguration of the JRA can only have seemed extremely timely. So many books were appearing in its field. 1967 was, if I may start with it, the year of publication of two books which came clearly out of the old missionary stable but were both calling for a radically new look. The first was Tom Beetham's Christianity and the New Africa, Protestant and West African in background, the second my own Church and Mission in Modern Africa, Catholic and East African, an enthusiastically programmatic approach to the way the church needed to develop in the wake of political independence and Vatican II. Published in Britain and America, it was translated into German and Polish, though not reviewed in the Journal until volume 4 in 1971, by Edward Fasholé-Luke, the Sierra Leonian theologian (Beetham's was never reviewed).

More important for our subject may be a number of other books which made of that period something of a golden age. They were nearly all West African based. In this early phase it was certainly Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone that made the running. Jacob Ajayi's Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite, unques-
tionably a major piece of historical writing, had appeared in 1965, to be followed the next year by Emmanuel Ayande's *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis*. Ayande added to this his biography of *Holy Johnson* in 1970. These and other books of the period were striking in their concern for a genuinely African Christian identity, significantly different from C.P. Groves's *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*, whose four well-researched volumes had been completed only in 1958, different even from Roland Oliver's *Missionary Factor in East Africa* (1952) or his pupil Ruth Slade's *English-Speaking Missions in the Congo Independent State 1878-1908* (1959). All these books remained essentially missionary history while those of Ajayi and Ayande were, instead, African Christian history. The leap in the 1960s from a history of Europeans in Africa to African history was both rapid and exhilarating, obvious as it may seem in retrospect that each required the other and that African church history cannot be written without a great deal of careful missionary history, as is indeed clear from Ajayi's own work. But the focal concern is different. A point of transition from one to the other may be seen in the large symposium, *Christianity in Tropical Africa* (edited by C.G. Baeta), published in 1968, the papers of a conference sponsored by the International African Institute and held in the University of Ghana in 1965. It straddles the borderline of the two approaches. The leap was, it must be stressed, one which Oliver himself helped direct. The *Missionary Factor*, his PhD thesis, has enjoyed a remarkably long life but it represents only the initial wave of his influence. As SOAS's first lecturer in African history, he moved far and fast beyond its parameters. Supervising numerous PhD students, including Ajayi and Ayande, he and his colleague Richard Gray steered forward the whole enterprise and their greatest contribution is to be seen in the publications of their students, ranging as far as two enduringly authoritative contributions to the Christian history of Ethiopia which appeared in 1972: Taddesse Tamrat's *Church and State in Ethiopia 1270-1527* and Donald Crummey's *Priests and Politicians: Protestant and Catholic Missions in Orthodox Ethiopia 1830-1868*.

By 1969 Ajayi and Ayande had contributed a notable and notably outspoken article entitled 'Writing African Church History' to the festschrift presented to Bengt Sundkler for his sixtieth birthday, *The Church Crossing Frontiers*. Their aim was to set out the new agenda and they began with the sharp assertion that 'A bitter pill which the majority of writers on Christianity and missionary activities in Africa should swallow is that they have not been writing African Church History'. I found myself at the time rather honoured to be included with C.P.