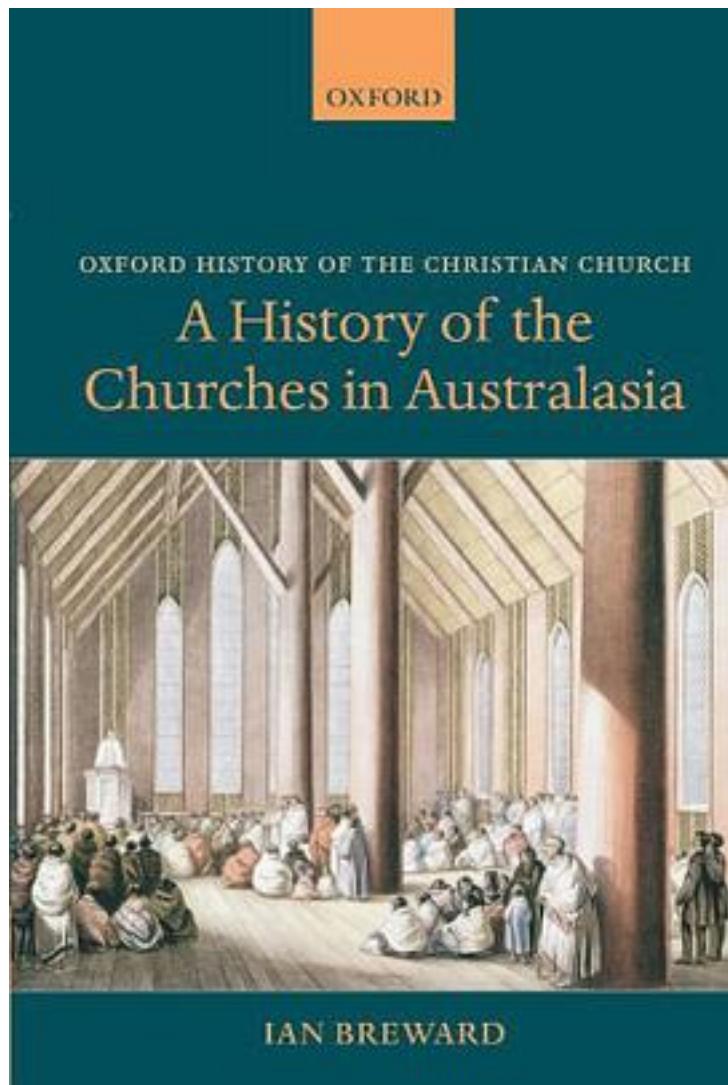


A History of the Churches in Australasia



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This pioneering study of Australian, New Zealand, and Pacific Christianity opens up new perspectives on Christianization and modernization in this richly complex region. The reception of Christianity into Pacific cultures has produced strongly Christian societies. Based on research in widely scattered archives, this book not only deals with regional interactions but pays careful attention to developments in microstates, and to the variety of indigenous religious movements, which were earlier regarded as deviations from Christian orthodoxy but are now seen as significant adaptations of Christian teaching. In Australia and New Zealand too, European Christian beginnings have been given local emphases, producing Churches with distinctive identities. Lay leadership is emphasized - not only in the Churches but as part of the Christian presence in the realms of politics, business, and culture. The broad liturgical, theological, constitutional, and pastoral developments of the 19th and 20th centuries are mapped, as a context for the striking changes which have taken place since the 1960s. The dynamics of religious change and conflict, the ambiguities of religious authority, and the destructive effects of Christian colonialism on indigenous communities, especially Australian aborigines, are all frankly dealt with. The decline of the institutional impact of the Churches in Australia and New Zealand is explored, as is the growth of partnership between government and Churches in education, social welfare, and overseas aid and development. Interchange in personnel and ideas is strikingly illustrated in the missionary activities of the regional Churches and their cultural impact. The author's involvement in Church and community leadership, ecumenism, and theological education makes this volume in the Oxford History of the Christian Church a valuable addition to the series, describing both continuities with world Christianity and little-known local developments.

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