

In 2005, two important volumes were published in the German series *Kirchengeschichte in Einzeldarstellungen*. This series, the first volumes of which were published in the late 70s and early 80s of the twentieth century, and which experienced a boost in the early 90s, is now being continued with monographs on the recent history of Christianity. Significant new volumes were published especially in series III and IV, dedicated to the "Neuzeit" and "Neueste Zeit" (which seem to overlap, especially in connection with the twentieth century). These include, for the first time, volumes explicitly dedicated to the developments within Christianity outside Europe and North America, i.e., Latin America (not yet published), Africa (including the Middle East), and Asia. In the earlier volumes, the history of Christianity in the 'Non-Western' world was treated as an appendix of European Church history, with the notable exception of the history of Eastern Christianity, to which a number of separate volumes were dedicated. Only in the context of the "Neueste Zeit" have African and Asian Christianity taken their place as subjects in their own right.

These two volumes, written by Klaus Hock (Professor of the History of Religion, Universität Rostock, special interest in Islam-Christianity) and Friedrich Huber (Emeritus professor of Mission and Religious Studies, Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal), constitute important additions to this series. Both volumes provide excellent introductions to the history of Christianity in these parts of the world, in addition to offering both the beginning student and the experienced scholar useful and up-to-date bibliographical information, and the necessary factual framework of names and dates. In both volumes the bibliographical information concerning publications in German and English is relatively good, though certainly not exhaustive, which is near impossible considering the huge amount of publications in these fields. French contributions, however, are underrepresented in both volumes, and publications in other languages, especially those used primarily in Africa and Asia, have been left out entirely (deliberately, I assume). Both volumes contain a few maps (the ones of Africa slightly more detailed), and the volume on Africa provides some helpful general statistics on the distribution of the various confessional traditions over the regions. Both Hock and Huber treat their subject with an amount of detail and precision not often found in general introductions. This results in a dense style that discourages continuous reading, but well serves the aim of providing readers in the German-speaking academic world with easy access to the basic facts and issues concerning the history of Christianity in Africa and Asia.

A comparison of these two volumes leads one to reflect on some issues pertinent to the historiography of World Christianity. So far, the KGE-series, starting from a basic chronological subdivision, focused on denominational histories, which then were also confined to a certain geographical region. In these two volumes (and possibly also in
the pending volume on Latin America), a regional approach has been adopted instead. In general, this perspective has allowed the authors to do justice to the close relationship of the history of Christianity to the political and economic developments and the religious history of the region, as well as to the fluid way in which churches relate to each other (although the accompanying phenomena of intra-Christian conversions and simultaneous membership of various denominations did not receive much attention). However, the editorial choice to treat Africa and Asia in separate volumes has in a sense orphaned the churches of the Middle East. The earlier history of the Eastern Orthodox churches, which make up the majority of the churches of the Middle East (but by no means represent the complete picture), benefited from separate treatment in a number of earlier volumes (vol. I/4, I/6, II/9 and III/10), but in series IV have been relegated to a small number pages in the volume on Africa. In a consistently regional approach for the modern period, the variegated history of Middle Eastern Christianity would have deserved a separate volume, even more so because in KGE volume III/10 (Erich Bryner, *Die Ostkirchen vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*, 1996) the Orthodox churches of the Middle East are discussed in a mere ten pages.

The volumes by Hock and Huber share this overarching regional approach, but they differ on two other points: the function of a chronological subdivision, and the treatment of the general themes. Hock combines a chronological approach with a relatively short conclusive chapter in which the main themes of the volume are summarized, Huber a consistently regional approach with a long introductory chapter. Hock sub-divides his volume on Africa into five chronological periods: early Christianity, the Portuguese period, the nineteenth century, the early twentieth century, and the second half of the twentieth century. Within these five chapters, most single African countries, grouped by region (West, Central, South, and East Africa, Ethiopia and the North Africa/Middle East) are given due attention, in so far as relevant for that particular period. As may be expected with a volume on the modern period, the number of pages devoted to the earlier periods is relatively small, whereas the history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is treated in extenso. Somewhat disappointingly, the most recent history of the latter part of the twentieth century is not treated in much detail. The positive point of such a chronological approach might have been the integrative description of specific developments characteristic of particular periods. Although Hock has a few introductory sections in which such overarching themes are treated (e.g., Chapter 3A on slavery, mission and commerce, and Chapter 4A on the scramble for Africa), these could well have been more extensive and also have included themes directly related to the history of Christianity, such as the development of independent churches and the trends in African theology.

Huber, on the other side, has chosen a consistently regional approach, divided into three long chapters (2-4) devoted to South, Southeast, and East Asia, each subdivided into individual countries. Within this regional framework, Hock adapts the periodization to regional or national turning points in history rather than global developments. Like Hock, Huber treats the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in most detail, although Huber, too, too tends to neglect the latter decades of the twentieth century somewhat. What could have been the real downside of Huber’s approach, i.e., a fragmented attention to national histories (his long chapters are not introduced by regional overviews), is admirably solved by a long introductory chapter in which all the impor-