

Anthology of African Christianity

Anthology of African Christianity chapters 1 through 22 addresses the different aspects of African Christianity. The systematic arrangement leads the reader through a (mostly) linear understanding of the development of Christianity in Africa. The first section of the book deals with the historical development of Christianity in Africa, from its inception in North Africa (largely ignored by the majority of African historians and until recently by African Studies historians, in part because of the predominance of the colonial narrative) to the spread of "classical missions" in the 19th century and the formation of "classical mission churches." The narrative continues to the "young and lively 'sons and daughters'" of these missions (the Pentecostal/Charismatic and African Initiated Church expressions of Christianity that we see proliferating across the continent today) and migrations of people groups, and interactions with other eastern influences such as Islam. It then splits up the forms that Christianity has taken in Northern, Western, Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa and each of their influences.

Each chapter shines a light on the way people in different regions with different influences and cultures think about faith. African Christian thinkers often meditate on how Bible stories and theological ideas can mix with local African beliefs, and they end up with something that is a kind of African spin on interpretation of Scripture. Basically, this part shows you how Christianity in Africa is not just a thing brought from elsewhere but instead it has been reworked and almost reinvented to fit into the way Africans live. The next part of the book delves into what Christianity does socially and ethically for folks in Africa. It discusses teaching, looking after people's health, fairness between people, as well as looking at what churches are doing when facing big deals like poverty or unequal treatment between men and women or diseases

like HIV/AIDS. It points out how believers there have stepped up to make positive changes in their communities by leaning heavily on their faith.

Anthology of African Christianity is strong work. The book has breadth, touching on nearly all the major aspects of the history, theology, culture, and practice of Christianity in Africa. The anthology avoids presenting a monolithic picture of African Christianity. The assembly of the anthology gives a real taste of the Christianity that is lived across the continent. By providing the perspectives of faith in African life and culture, it shows Christianity is not just something brought over from the West but a belief system that is part of African everyday life and thinking. This way of looking at things makes you see how Christianity has really become part of different parts of Africa.

Anthology of African Christianity is big and very academic. The book seems mostly for people who study theology or religion. Also, while it goes over many topics, there are bits where they don't go deep enough given how tricky some issues are. They could have talked more about specific movements in the section on Regional Surveys of African Christianity with detailed examples. This anthology is reasonably made for an academic crowd, like scholars or students into theology or studying religion, and people looking into African studies as well. However, it is also a great find for church leaders or anyone working on missions in Africa wanting to get what makes African Christianity what it is. For those curious about global faiths or how religion mixes with culture, this book is for them.