

1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, by Samuel M. Ngewa. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009. xx + 466 pp. \$21.99.

In 2006, in partnership with WordAlive Publishers in Nairobi, Kenya, Zondervan published the *Africa Bible Commentary (ABC)*, a one-volume commentary written by 70 African evangelical scholars. *ABC* was designed to provide a “section-by-section exegesis and explanation of the whole Bible as seen through the eyes of African scholars who respect the integrity of the text and use African proverbs, metaphors and stories to make it speak to African believers in the villages and cities across the entire continent” (p. ix). In my view, the authors accomplished their goal relatively well and produced a commentary that, in many ways, sounds surprisingly close to standard one-volume commentaries written for the Western world. Unique to *ABC*, however, are the nearly 90 articles scattered throughout the book that address African issues such as initiation rites and witchcraft. These articles, along with the commentary itself, provide needed guidance for the African pastor and helpful insight to the African worldview for the Western missionary.

The volume under review here, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus* by Samuel Ngewa expands the vision of *ABC* as the first of a proposed series of commentaries by African biblical scholars on individual biblical books. The series is entitled Africa Bible Commentary Series (ABCS) and will be published under the imprint of HippoBooks, owned by three African publishers (WordAlive in Kenya, ACTS in Nigeria, and Step in Ghana). The volumes will be distributed in the West by Zondervan. Distinguishing features of the ABCS include division of the commentaries into preaching units, relegation of textual issues to the endnotes, inclusion of discussion questions at the end of each chapter, and *Today's New International Version (TNIV)* as the biblical text upon which the commentaries are based.

The author of this volume, Samuel Ngewa, serves as the New Testament editor for *ABC* and for the series, and currently teaches at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST) in Nairobi, Kenya.

In *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus*, Ngewa simply tells us what Paul said to Timothy and Titus and how these instructions and admonitions should be understood and used in twenty-first-century Africa. The exegesis in the body of the commentary is not intended to be thorough, but it is adequate enough to understand the basic meaning of the biblical text and to know when diverse interpretations are present. The extensive endnotes, some 1,059 in all, provide the reader with more detailed information on textual and theological issues. Although the endnotes reflect a broad range of sources, the commentators most frequently referenced include fairly standard works on the pastorals by J. N. D. Kelly, Gordon Fee, Ronald Ward, William Barclay, J. H. Bernard, and William Mounce, with Ngewa most frequently following Kelly's interpretations. Ngewa does a particularly good job tracing

major themes through the letters. This is one of the main strengths of his work.

In line with the series intention, Ngewa divides the chapters into preaching units with an African illustration opening each chapter. Although the chapters are arranged this way, the content is a bit more robust than the average homiletical commentary. Throughout the work Ngewa sprinkles African illustrations and applications. Such illustrations and applications might not always hit the mark for Western readers but, on the other hand, a look at the text from a different viewpoint might help the Western reader grasp timeless truths from a fresh perspective. On the whole, Ngewa presents a balanced view of African culture, praising aspects that reflect a biblical worldview and critiquing those that contradict it.

The only major weakness I found with Ngewa's interpretations related to female leadership in the church. In his less-than-clear comments on 1 Timothy 2:9–15 Ngewa sees the restriction on women teaching as being confined to women teaching their overseers and the restriction on women exercising authority as a restriction on exercising authority in an overbearing way, rather than as a complete restriction on exercising authority (p. 53). Although he does not use the terms egalitarian or complementarian, he seems to reflect more closely the egalitarian position.

A small nuisance with the work is that the biblical text under consideration is not included at the beginning of each chapter. Rather, the full biblical text is fragmented and embedded in the author's sentences as each chapter progresses. I much prefer reading the full biblical text before considering the author's commentary. While this could be done with an open Bible, including the biblical text within the commentary makes this easier.

For African pastors conversant in English or Western missionaries serving in Africa, this volume should definitely be added to one's library. For the broader Western audience, Ngewa's work would be a good addition to one's library as well. Not only will it add to one's understanding of the Pastoral Epistles, but it will also increase appreciation for what God is doing in other parts of the world.

Rob Howell

The New Moody Atlas of the Bible, by Barry J. Beitzel. Chicago: Moody Press, 2009. xii + 304 pp. \$49.99.

Zondervan Atlas of the Bible, by Carl G. Rasmussen. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 304 pp. \$39.99.

In the late 1980s Moody and Zondervan each published a Bible atlas (Barry J. Beitzel authored the former and Carl G. Rasmussen the