Book Reviews


The present comprehensive volume is a multinational effort, written by seventy African contributors for Africans. Its scope is devotional and its orientation is the application of Scripture in a church context. The perspective is evangelical. In the words of the editor:

The ABC (Africa Bible Commentary) is not a critical, academic, verse-by-verse commentary. Rather, it contains 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. The application is both bold and faithful. Thus the ABC does not speak of a Black Jesus. To do so would be a travesty of the Bible story and cheap scholarship. Instead, the ABC is true to the text and honest to its context both in Bible days and in our days (ix).

The volume opens with a ‘General Introduction’ by the editor (viii–x, including a short history of how the ABC came into being), ‘Guidelines for Using the ABC’ (x) and a list of the contributors (xii–xviii).

The commentaries open with an introductory essay by K. Bediako, ‘Scripture as the Interpreter of Culture and Tradition’ (3f.). Other articles interspersed between the commentaries or included in the commentaries are listed below. What follows is a list of biblical books and their commentators:


In the New Testament there is Matthew: J. Kapolyo (1105–70); Mark: V. Babajide Cole (1171–1202); Luke: P. J. Isaak (1203–50); John: S. Ngewa (1251–96); Acts: P. M. Kisau (1297–1348); Romans: D. M. Kasali (1349–98); 1 Cor.: D. Datiri

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(1377–98); 2 Cor.: I. Coulibaly (1399–1412); Gal.: S. Ngewa (1413–24); Eph.: Y. Turaki (1425–38); Phil.: E. Abate (1439–48); Col.: S. Andria (1449–58); 1–2 Thess.: R. Koudougueret (1459–68); 1–2 Tim., Titus: S. Andria (1469–86); Phlm.: S. Soungalo (1487f.); Hebrews: T. Kassa (1489–1508); James: S. Andria (1509–16); 1 Peter: S. Mbura Muriithi (1517–24); 2 Peter: T. Adeyemo (1525–28); 1–3 John: S. Ngewa (1529–38); Jude: T. Adeyemo (1539–42) and Revelation: O. Ngundu (1543–79).

In each case the actual commentary is preceded by a short introduction and an outline of the biblical book. It ends with a short bibliography which usually lists three or four evangelical commentaries by British or North American authors. Only in a few cases are contributions by African authors or contributions published in Africa mentioned.

Of particular interest to African readers and others interested in Africa and African perspectives are the many articles (of different lengths) on issues related to the Bible and African life and culture (given here in alphabetical order; I also list the introductory articles to more strictly biblical subjects):