

BOOK NOTICES / BOEKAANKONDIGINGS

Hermeneutics / Hermeneutiek

West, Gerald 1991. *Biblical hermeneutics of oppression. Modes of reading the Bible in the South African context*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications. Pp 247, including notes, bibliography and index. Price not given.

This book looks at interpretive approaches to the Bible of black, feminist and Latin American liberation theologians. Its primary concern is to demonstrate that what binds these approaches is a hermeneutic which consciously adopts some fundamental commitment to the poor and oppressed. The author argues that this kind of hermeneutic is important for South Africans engaged in reading the Bible in a situation of struggle for justice and peace.

While non-academic texts are incorporated and worked with, the main academic writers to whom Gerald West appeals, reacts and with whom he engages in debate, are Cornel West, Itumeleng Mosala, Alan Boesak, Norman Gottwald, Schüssler Fiorenza, Phyllis Trible and Severino Croatto.

Old Testament/ Ou Testament

Wittenberg, G H 1991. *I have heard the cry of my people. A study guide to Exodus 1-15*. Pietermaritzburg: Institute for the Study of the Bible, in collaboration with Cluster Publications. Pp 77. Price: R10.

Using historical-critical and rhetorical insights, Wittenberg enables Bible Studies to come to grips with Exodus 1-15. As part of the ISB program, Wittenberg tries to establish an interface between biblical studies and ordinary readers of the Bible in the church and community that will facilitate social transformation.

By placing different episodes in Exodus 1-15 in the context of different stages of Israel's history, and by relating those happenings to events, issues and key-phrases in our South-African context, a study guide is developed, aimed at 'challenging trained readers', and 'empowering ordinary readers'.

In addition to the aim of creating an interface between biblical studies and ordinary readers, the explicit option for a liberatory reading of texts 'from below' brings to the fore sociological analyses of oppressive situations of both Israelite history and our own context.

Burden, J J 1991. *Psalms 120-150 verklaar*. Kaapstad: N G Kerkuuitgewers. Pp 195. Prys onvermeld.

Hierdie kommentaar op Psalms 120-150 is deel van die swartband-kommentaarreeks met die titel 'Skrifuitleg vir Bybelstudent en Gemeente'. Die doel

is om die psalms te behandel in eenvoudige Afrikaans in terme van die kategorieë 'opbou en inhoud', 'soort, plek en funksie', en 'boodskap'.

Die kommentaar bespreek die versameling bedevaartsliedere (Ps 120-134), asook die res van die Psalmbundel. Die 'probleme en vreugdes' van 'twyfelaars en gelowiges' word in verband gebring met die tersaaklike teks.

Interreligious dialogue

Kritzinger, J N J (ed) 1991. *Believers in the future. World Conference on Religion and Peace (South Africa)*. Salt River: WCRP-SA. Pp 88. Price: R10.

The South African Chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace held the National Interfaith Conference on the Religion-State Relations in December 1990. The publication consists of the papers and responses to papers, presented at the conference. The main speaker, Prof Ali A Mazrui, spoke about 'Indigenous, Islamic and Christian tendencies in Africa's pro-democracy movement'.

Sections discussing definitions of religious freedom (Chicane, Dadoo, Hellig, Mofokeng and Sooklal), women and religion (Ackermann), religion-state relationships (Sachs, Tlhagale, Sooka, Omar, Assabi), the spiritual reconstruction of South African society (Harris, Saradananda, Mohamed, Molebatsi), and Africa in world politics (Mazrui) follow. Also included in the publication are four addenda, consisting of the UN declaration (1981) on 'The elimination of all forms of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or belief'; recommendations of the conference; an explication of the WCRP-SA's understanding of what they call 'The Charter Process', and details of contributors to the publication.

As one can see from the religious backgrounds of the contributors and from the themes discussed, a wide range of perspectives and issues are presented here. The addenda contain important reference material for those interested in the broad topic of religion in South Africa and the world.

Biblical studies / Bybelstudie

Jacobson, Diane L & Kysar, Robert 1991. *A beginner's guide to the Books of the Bible*. Pp 125. Price not given. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress. Available from Lux Verbi, P O Box 1822, Cape Town, 8000.

Before starting to read one of the 66 books of the Bible, it is helpful to have an overview of the book.

A beginner's guide to the Books of the Bible provides accurate, concise, and easy-to-understand introductions to each of the 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament.

Each description discusses the book's purpose, approximate date of composition, authorship, contents, and distinctive features.

Also included are introductions to larger sections of the Bible, such as the major and minor prophets, the Gospels, and Paul's letters.

In his Preface the publisher writes: 'Individuals will find this book to be a valuable resource for their personal Bible reading or study, and groups or classes will appreciate its summaries as they begin a Bible study or discussion'.

Diane Jacobson is associate professor of Old Testament at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary in St Paul, Minnesota.

Robert Kysar is professor of New Testament and Homilectics at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia.

New Testament / Nuwe Testament

Fowler, Robert M 1991. *Let the reader understand. Reader-response criticism and the Gospel of Mark*. Pp 279, including a Subject, Author, as well as Scripture index. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.

Although many books discuss the story of Mark's Gospel, *Let the reader understand* takes as its focus the discourse or the rhetoric of the Gospel.

Tracing the twists and turns of the temporal experience of reading; uncovering in Mark's narrative rhetoric a stable, determined supply of 'direction' for the reader; yet also disclosing an abundance of shifting, mutating 'indirection' in the form of irony, paradox, metaphor, ambiguity, and opacity - such analyses reveal that Mark's Gospel is intentionally audience-orientated and that reader-response criticism deepens one's appreciation for the pragmatic, rhetorical force of this ancient narrative.

David Rhoads of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago thinks that 'Fowler's book represents a significant breakthrough in the study of the Gospel of Mark'.

Werner Kelber of Rice University writes that in his judgement, 'Fowler's reading of Mark's Gospel ... teaches us a new aesthetics of the Gospel's text'.

Robert Fowler is associate professor of Religion at Baldwin Wallace College, Berea, Ohio.