

THE *STUDIORUM NOVI TESTAMENTI SOCIETAS* COMES TO AFRICA

Bernard C Lategan
University of Stellenbosch

Abstract

In 1999, the International New Testament Society (the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas) will meet for the first time on African soil. Following the general meeting in Pretoria, a Post-Conference will be held in Hammanskraal. The focus of the Post-Conference will be on African hermeneutics and theology, with three sub-themes: Emerging concerns of African theologians and biblical scholars, sense-making strategies used by different readers of the Bible and communicating the New Testament in a post-2000 world. Special efforts are being made to invite up to 50 theologians and biblical scholars from Africa, who will be joined by 50 members of the SNTS. The Post-Conference is the direct result of work done by one of the seminar groups of the SNTS over the past decade, dealing with Hermeneutics and the Biblical Text. The article provides a brief overview of the work of the seminar and the topics discussed at meetings since 1990.

For the first time in its history, the international New Testament Society (*the Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*) will be meeting on African soil. The 44th annual meeting is scheduled to take place in Pretoria in the first week of August 1999. Several considerations played a part in the decision to come to Africa and specifically South Africa. One certainly was the widespread desire to 'normalise' relations with South Africa after the political changes in the country and to signal the re-acceptance of colleagues from this part of the world into the international community of scholars. But there were at least two other reasons. One was the recognition of the African 'roots' of Christianity and the New Testament. The earliest of these certainly entered the soil of the continent at its most northern rather than its most southern tip, but these are African roots nonetheless, which signal the beginning of a long and multi-faceted history that affected the continent as a whole. The 2000 meeting is due to take place in Tel Aviv and will continue this close look at the earliest beginnings of the New Testament from a nearby, but different perspective. The third reason, perhaps not shared by the SNTS as a whole, is the growing awareness of the diversity of interpretation and reception of New Testament texts in different contexts and on different continents and a keen interest in the way African scholars and readers deal with this material.

This last interest was directly responsible for the decision to have a distinct 'African' focus in the main programme of the 1999 meeting and to organise a special section devoted to a dialogue with African colleagues. A number of prominent biblical scholars and theologians from the continent will be invited to attend the meeting and to participate in a 'Post-conference' where the focus will be specifically on African hermeneutics and theology. The driving force behind this initiative is Ulrich Luz of the University of Bern and a past president of the SNTS. He has visited the region on various occasions and was also instrumental in securing the necessary financial support to make the participation of guests

from Africa possible. It is also hoped that with the assistance of the United Bible Societies, a number of Bible translators working in Africa will also be invited to attend the meetings.

The program of the Post-conference will to a large extent be the responsibility of the Hermeneutics Seminar of the SNTS. This group has been working together for more than a decade, exploring a wide variety of hermeneutical issues. They will be assisted by inputs from the hermeneutics sub-group of the New Testament Society of South Africa and the annual Stellenbosch workshop on contextual hermeneutics. The precursor of the Hermeneutics seminar was the seminar on the Role of the Reader in the Interpretation of the New Testament. Over the years various aspects of biblical hermeneutics and especially contextual hermeneutics were explored. In the following brief overview, some of these topics will be discussed in order to make the link with the 1999 conference clear.

At the 1990 meeting of the SNTS in Milan, the focus was on three recent publications of special relevance to the group. Stephen Moore's *Literary Criticism and the Gospels* was causing ripples in the guild because of its bold introduction of deconstructionist ideas. For Moore reader-response is not going far enough, because of its pre-occupation with the first reading of the text. Reading is a creative activity – there is no dormant meaning in the text, waiting to be uncovered. The problem that exponents of deconstruction have with their structuralist colleagues is that structuralism lacks self-reflexivity. It is important to recognise the instability of the text, which prevents authors to control their own material. Deconstructionists therefore hear 'counter-voices' in the text which historical criticism does not. One cannot distinguish between form as signifier and content as signified. 'Content' itself is signifier, for that which is signified functions itself as signifier. There is a total mutuality of all signifiers and signified. In the last analysis, everything is a concrete reformulation of what precedes. In his response to the discussion of his Post-modern use of the Bible, Edgar McKnight emphasised that he is not trying to define post-modernism, as that would have been a foundationalist move. He is attempting to describe post-modernism (PM). PM is an approach characterised by imprecision, convoluted logic, and the allowance of multiple interpretations. Modernism is characterised by the ascendancy of reason, science, and the attempt to move society towards these norms. PM modifies this system not by being anti-M, but by moving beyond it. It does not want to replace Modernism, but presupposes it and uses its (Modernism's) own strategies to criticise it. It thus moves away from the originating circumstances of a text toward the reader as sense-maker of the text. McKnight himself practices a 'constructive' form of PM in that he emphasises modern notions of the self and meaning, but at the same time opens him to the insights and values of PM. He is consciously a pilgrim, accepting that his present methodological location is not his destination. All interpretation involves a system of assumptions from the highest to the lowest level and includes assumptions about the enterprise itself and the validity of its conclusions. In the discussion of Daniel Patte's *Discipleship according to Matthew*, the first signs emerged of his later pre-occupation with the ethical responsibility of the exegete. In his book, Patte distinguishes at least four possible interpretations (or 'coherences') of discipleship according to Matthew. The moment a plurality of readings is conceded, the exegete has an ethical responsibility to his or her readers regarding the reading that is proposed or promoted. Patte himself was forced to embrace the concept of multiple coherences from the actual reading of texts. Three years ago a 'critical mass' of black students was present at Vanderbilt University where Patte teaches. The faculty became accused of racism in teaching, although this was the furthest thing from their intention, many of whom were involved in the civil rights movement. Nonetheless, black students claim that the exegetical approach taught at the faculty was asking them 'to abandon their

heritage.' This reaction was similar to women students who experience certain interpretations as sexist. This reaction forced the faculty to re-examine its teaching practice and to accept the ethical responsibility that comes with it.

For the 1991 meeting in Bethel, it was decided to concentrate on actual readings of some New Testament texts. Mt 8-9 and John 17 were selected for this purpose. Detlev Dormeyer's reading of Mt 8-9 provided a valuable overview of the different methodological approaches and reading strategies used by the group. The real reader constructs the implied author from the interaction between the structure of the text and the reading experience. The author, for his part, constructed the text with the implied reader in mind. Author and original reader therefore find themselves in a close, privileged relationship, but this does not preclude further readings by later readers. Religious texts are constantly re-interpreted by a living tradition. In contrast, aesthetic texts resist revision based on reader criticism. The privileged first reader is a construct of the historical-critical scholar and without the implied reader the structure cannot be detected. At the same time, the implied reader cannot be reconstructed without a concept of the real reader. Mt 8-9 reveals not only an internal dynamic, but also fulfils an important function in developing the concept of discipleship. The reaction of both those that are healed and those that enter into dialogue with Jesus, be they sympathetic or hostile towards him, is used to illustrate and to refine the reader's understanding of what discipleship entails. Within the people of Israel a rearrangement of traditional boundaries and categories is taking place, bringing together strange bedfellows (tax collectors, sinners, a roman officer, some scribes, the needy and confused) to form and personify a new people, for whom the kingdom in reality is intended. Over against this new group an opposition is emerging – sceptics who ridicule the claim of healing, those whose economic interests are at stake, those for whom the formal precepts of the law are decisive and those who are unable to read the signs of the time. The underlying tension is signaled already in 9:34, where the healing of Jesus is depicted as demonic and comes to a dramatic denouement in chapter 23.

In 1992 in Madrid, three contextual readings were analysed by the group. Segovia, well known for co-editing the collection 'Reading from this place', reflected on the effect of social location on reading and offered a first theoretical reflection on his praxis as exegete. (The text as other: towards a Hispanic American hermeneutic.) Being a Cuban exegete in the United States in the situation of strained relations between the two countries has had a distinct effect on the way the exegete practices his or her profession. The situation of a 'first world' person in a 'third world' context is quite different from that of a 'third world' person living in a 'first world' context. In the former case, liberation involves integration into the mainstream, in the latter self-affirmation in the face of the mainstream. He therefore opts for an orientation moored in reader-response, social theory and colonial theory. Kitzberger's intertextual reading of John 20:1-20 and Luke 7:36-50 took up several of Segovia's concerns. The social location of this reading is that of a self-reflective, critical feminist reader who is sensitive to the way in which women are portrayed in these texts. This comprises two main aspects: First, when she approaches biblical texts, she does so with a text 'already written on my soul', that is, with her life-experience and her own story. Key is her socialisation and history, as well as her everyday experience as a woman in a patriarchal and sexist society and church. Added to that is her theological training within a Roman Catholic male-dominated and patriarchally structured discipline and its – until recent years – dominating sexist interpretations of the Bible. Second, her social location as a critical feminist. The 'I' of this reading is shaped by her feminist consciousness and her subsequent commitment to women's liberation from patriarchal structures and the quest for justice

between men and women. Her focus is on the actual effects biblical texts had and still have on women and the structures of dominance inherent in these texts. At the same time, the focus is on the liberating potential inherent in the Jesus-tradition. Her ultimate aim is to reconstruct early Christian history and also the history of women via the stories of women in this tradition.

The third contribution, that of an African exegete, complemented the other two contributions in many ways. Welile Mazamisa, trained in Holland but teaching in South Africa, is convinced that an important voice is missing from the present debate on contextual hermeneutics – that of the ‘illiterate’ people, those relying on the power of orality. ‘The overwhelming voice heard Sunday after Sunday in the black church is the voice of the textually uninitiated, and yet in the field of black hermeneutics it is the voice of the initiated black hermeneut, couched in elitist and esoteric jargon, that is heard.’ Two questions need to be answered. One is the question of communication: For whom does the black hermeneut interpret? The other is the more basic question about black hermeneutics itself: How does the black hermeneut see the reality and the meaning of biblical hermeneutics? ‘These two questions are connected: The style of the hermeneut, and the medium is not separable from the message.’ The transition from the (original) phase of orality to the (secondary) phase of textuality can hardly be understood as a positive development – the oral text is transformed from a free text to a fixed text. A foreign medium is introduced to which only a special class of people has access – the wealthy, the officials, the clergy who represent only a minority compared to the vast majority who rely on oral communication. The challenge is to develop a dialogical hermeneutics, in which a subject does not dominate by virtue of conquest, but where subjects interact in order to share and to transform reality.

In 1993 in Chicago, the focus was very much on deconstruction and on feminist readings of the Bible. Stephen Moore presented a paper on ‘Deconstruction and feminism: Derrida and Samaria’ and Ingrid Kitzberger one on ‘Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdalene – two female characters in the Johannine passion narrative: a feminist, narrative-critical response’, while Elizabeth Struthers Malbon responded to both. A third paper was presented by Gary Phillips on ‘A post-modernist/deconstructive reading of John 4.’ The overlap between feminist and deconstructionist reading strategies became clear, but also the differences. Both make use of the principle of suspicious reading to uncover the way the text has been constructed and used for sectional purposes. But these readings should be treated with the same suspicion, as Malbon indicated in her response. We should be suspicious of any twentieth-century reconstruction of a first century reader’s reading, or of an critical reader’s reconstruction of a first-time reader’s reading. Intertextuality should also not be used in such a way that it becomes another form of harmonising the differences between the gospel narratives and their characterisations. What is important in Kitzberger’s approach, is an awareness of the constellation or grouping of characters of a fictional text. The reading of Kitzberger already indicates her interest in auto-biographical reading, which resulted in a collection of essays she edited and which was published by Routledge in 1998: ‘The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation.’

The 1994 meeting in Edinburgh marked the end of the seminar on ‘The role of the reader in the interpretation of the New Testament’ and the first meeting of its successor, the seminar on ‘Hermeneutics and the Biblical Text. The focus has widened, but it was by and large the same group of colleagues that continued their discourse based on their common interests in matters of a hermeneutical matter. Three topics were discussed: socio-rhetorical criticism, an analysis of the role of imagination in the reading of (biblical) texts and the

issue of 'narrated history'. Vernon Robbins presented his method of socio-rhetorical interpretation. Interpreters have come to realise that no one method or approach is sufficient – we are dealing with a complex phenomenon where many different strands meet and which therefore requires an multi-faceted approach. He therefore prefers to speak of 'texture' rather than 'text', because it more effectively describes the 'deeply woven network of signification' which constitutes the text. He distinguishes between inner texture, intertexture, social and cultural texture and finally ideological texture.

1. Inner texture: The text has some inner texture of its own which is somehow different from a person, but which somehow 'comes to life' when persons read it. From a socio-rhetorical perspective, the inner texture of the text appears primarily among the implied author, the narrator, and the characters, who work together to communicate a message.
2. Intertexture: Kristeva introduced the concept of 'intertextuality'. She argued that not only author and reader were involved in the writing and reading of texts, but other texts may play a decisive role. Every text is in reality a re-writing of other texts, an 'intertextual' activity. Language stands outside the boundaries of the text itself, and other texts represent a manifestation of language that plays a special role in the activity of authors. Verbal signs stand inside the boundaries of the text, representing language outside the text. The arena of intertexture as it is defined in socio-rhetorical criticism concerns the production of the text by the author rather than the reconstruction of the text by the reader.
3. Social and cultural texture: When readers activate the voice of the narrator and the characters in a text, they engage in the process of formation of culture, society and history in the world. The represented world in the text enters into the reader's perception of the world itself, and it refigures experience and reorients life.
4. Ideological texture: Ideology concerns the way in which our speech and actions, in their social and cultural location, relate to resources, structures and institutions of power. The particular way the narrator and characters evoke the message and the particular way in which the implied reader and the real audience receive it, concern ideology.

Detlev Dormeyr offered a reading of Luke 1:26-38 to illustrate the role of imagination. There are many similarities with the way Robbins reads – imagination is needed to link synchronic and diachronic aspects, between deep and surface structure. Naïve and critical readings are possible, even by the same reader and we must be aware of these differences. This also makes it possible to unmask the ideological aspects woven into a text. This may necessitate a 'reading against the grain' – a strategy especially developed by female readers when dealing with male dominated biblical texts.

In his presentation, Watson examined the nature of biblical historiography. Although there are fictional elements in every text, the first order reference is not suspended in historiographic texts as it is in fiction. There is a prior reality on which these texts rest. Although the line between historiographic and fictional narrative is fine, the two genres should not be collapsed. Historical fiction is not a fitting way to describe the gospels, because that privileges fiction too much. The basic Christian claim has a truth content. Although there are different kinds of truth claims, the historical intention of these texts and of a reality outside the subjective experience cannot be denied. Watson describes his position as one of theological realism. From the discussion it was clear that this issue will have to be dealt with in more depth at future sessions.

At the 1995 meeting in Prague, the issue of the role of imagination in the interpretation of texts was examined in more detail, taking Paul Ricoeur's views as point of departure.

Imagination is under suspicion from at least two sides – from positivists who would see imagination as the start of speculation and from post-modernists who would see this as an attempt to save the human subject as a separate entity. For Ricoeur, the contribution of phenomenology is of critical importance in this regard, and more specifically Husserl's claim that the image is an intentional structure. The image does not follow our perception, but makes it possible for us to see in the first place. The image is not a thing at all – it is a relation- an act of consciousness directed at an object beyond consciousness.

Against this background, Ricoeur develops his own understanding of imagination. The starting point for is what he experienced as an inadequacy in the work of his phenomenological predecessors. In order to activate the poetic potential of imagination, the need for a double presence must be affirmed, that is, the ability to say one thing in terms of another or to say several things at the same time. It is by this simultaneous juxtaposition of two different worlds that new meaning is produced. Phenomenology too often conceived of the imaginary world as a negation of the perceptual world. Ricoeur therefore distinguishes between two rival theories of imagination – theories of the reproductive imagination, explaining the process in terms of the object and theories of the productive imagination, explaining our imaginative activity in terms of the subject. If the image is mistaken for the real, this leads to confusion and ends in the lack of critical consciousness. If the image is only understood as the absence of the real, the innovative tension is lost. Both aspects must be held together. To achieve this, the illusion of a direct relation between image and reality must be given up for a more indirect approach and for the acceptance of hermeneutics as the art of deciphering indirect meanings. This will also enable us to overcome the traditional antagonism between will and necessity. 'We have thought too much in terms of a will that submits and not enough in terms of an imagination which opens up.'

From this perspective, Ricoeur distinguishes between three types of imagination – the symbolic, the oneiric and the poetical imagination. It is the latter that has the most direct relevance for biblical hermeneutics. The connecting theme that lends coherence to his wide-ranging forays into the production of meaning, is the fundamental linguistic nature of existence and understanding. In the case of poetic imagination, language is coming into its own. His whole intention is to show how language can extend itself to its very limits forever discovering new resonances within itself. He also wanted to make clear that linguistic imagination is the basic form of imagination that generates and regenerates meaning through the living powers of metaphoricality.

In 1996 in Strassbourg, the focus was squarely on the 'text and extra-textual reality'. James Voelz presented a paper on 'The historicity of narrative, 'allegorical' interpretation and external reality', in which he took up the issues raised by Watson in Edinburg and by Lategan and Vorster's 'Text and Reality'. It is clear that when we interpret narrative, we do so on several levels. However, the intended relationship between what is evoked by the narrative and extra-textual reality makes a big difference in the way the text is read. If the narrative is intended as a description of persons and deeds in history, congruence is expected by the reader between the conceptual signifieds evoked by the text and their (extra-textual) referents. If no such congruence is intended, the text is read differently. In linguistic terms, this represents a non-literal use of language, characteristic of metaphorical or even more accurately, an allegorical reading of the text. This is not the way early Christianity intended the gospel narrative to be read. The importance of a specific history and of specific historical events is assumed. Any existential significance that these texts do convey is grounded in special and specific historical events that have forever affected, changed and determined the condition and future of humanity as such.

In his response to Voelz, Kumazawa of Tokyo does not question the scientific basis of historiography. But can this emphasis on 'strict' (that is, strict in terms of objectivity) history be maintained with regard to biblical texts? The need for objectivity is not denied, but does it help us to classify the narrative or story as subjective (existential) and history as 'external world' as objective in the sense of scientific historiography? The problem is not the text, but the position of the reader as subject in this process. The reader is part of history. 'History does not mean anything outside us, but we are born and live in history.' Talk of a location 'outside' history presupposes a position the reader cannot assume.

In a second session, the Ricoeur's concept of 'text' was critically analysed and the implications for the praxis of interpretation were explored of his idea of the three 'worlds' of the text – the world behind, in and in front of the text. The first has to do with origin, context, history. The second refers to the text-immanent features and to the world the text itself creates. The third is the future of the text, that is, its transformative potential. By offering a 'proposed world', an alternative perspective on 'reality', reading could result in persuading the reader to move from the view presently held.

In the third session, Francis Watson introduced his 'Text, Church and World' and explained his attempt to revive the dialogue between exegetes and systematic theologians – a dialogue that has either stopped altogether or has become strained. In itself, this is an important issue – the NT Society of South African has taken a similar initiative to promote the interaction between the two camps. For Watson, exegetes have the obligation to take the theological dimension of the text seriously. In the discussion, several issues that were discussed in Prague, returned.

In 1997 in Birmingham, the topic was 'Ideological Criticism'. Fernando Segovia of Vanderbilt led the seminar in a stimulating exploration of different facets of the issue. Stephen Moore's chapter on the issue in his 'The Post-modern Bible' served as point of departure, with further presentations by Adam on 'Political criticism: Ideologies and their discontents', Broadbent on 'Ideology, culture, and British New Testament studies', and Segovia on 'Postcolonial studies and biblical criticism: Toward a postcolonial optic.' In the latter, Segovia attempts to take his interest in cultural studies in biblical criticism a step further by applying the model of postcolonial studies to biblical criticism. For him, the model is not only hermeneutically rewarding, but also personally satisfying. At the same time, exactly because of what the post-colonial approach teaches us, it is not offered as the method, but as one optic – an optic that is nonetheless in full engagement and dialogue with a host of other models. The goal is not merely one of analysis and description, but rather one of transformation: the struggle for 'liberation' and 'decolonialisation.' The post-colonial perspective is of specific significance for the proposed topic of the 1999 meeting.

In 1998 in Copenhagen, where the attention shifted to the 'ordinary reader' and the reading strategy developed by Gerald West and colleagues, called 'reading with'. The direct cause for the choice of topic was Semeia volume 73 (1996) under the title 'Reading With: African Overtures'. The seminar was fortunate to have both guest editors (Gerald West and Musa Dube) as speakers to introduce their specific contributions to the volume. After explaining in detail what a 'reading with' entails – West in his work with local communities and Dube in her readings with women of the African Independent Churches (AIC's), a rich discussion ensued. The following were important points: The community of readers must be widened. West and especially Dube emphasised that the community closest at home – that of poor, untrained, marginalised readers - has been neglected and needs to be taken seriously. 'Reading with' is therefore a deliberate ethical move. This is reinforced by feminist, post-colonial and historical reasons. The communal aspect of reading is a key -

reading no longer can be an individual activity. The 'ordinary reader' often engaged in resistant readings, defying the dominant reading and bringing to the surface hidden or neglected dimensions of the text. These readings are therefore in most cases also liberative.

'Reading with' clearly requires a commitment and identification of the exegete with others readers. Does this relationship also allow for critical solidarity? In the discussion, Sevogia outlined the differences between a liberation theological and a post-structuralist position. The former privileges the poor and in the process the both the Bible and the poor are essentialised. In the latter approach, the Bible itself is a contested site, with no privileged positions. Others made the same point in the discussion, asking whether bad readings by ordinary readers and good readings by trained readers would also be possible within the framework of a 'reading with' approach.

This very brief and concentrated overview of the work of the past nine years hopefully makes clear that the 1999 meeting in Pretoria has had a long, varied and rich preparation. In many ways, 1999 will be the culmination of these preceding years. The seminar will have its normal three sessions during the general meeting before continuing with the Post-Conference. It is therefore important that the two parts complement each other.

The seminar sessions will focus on four issues: the historical dimension of texts, pragmatics, the interpretative community and the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of texts. The program of the Post-conference will focus on three broad areas:

1. Emerging concerns of African biblical scholars and theologians

The intention of this section is create an opportunity where African scholars will have the opportunity to raise and discuss matters of common interest. One of the many difficulties facing colleagues from this continent is the lack of opportunities to meet with each other in Africa and on an agenda that they themselves can determine. More often than not, they meet each other in other places around the world and for other purposes, which are not very conducive for a focused discussion on 'African' issues. The Post-conference will provide a unique opportunity to do just that. For non-African members of the SNTS, it will mean an opportunity to inform themselves at first hand of what the most important concerns of their African colleagues are. The need for an association or organisation of some kind of African biblical scholars and theologians has been voiced in the past and it might be that the 1999 meeting could lead to something concrete in this regard.

2. Sense-making strategies employed by readers of biblical texts

The second theme will provide the opportunity to survey different readings from Africa, but in comparison with readings from other continents and other locations. The focus will be on sense-making strategies and the factors influencing the choice of strategy. What is at stake here is the issue of plurality – a plurality of readers and readings in different locations using different sense-making strategies for different readings. These include at least the following:

A plurality of readers/subjects. The guild of (professional) biblical scholars has jealously guarded the entrance to their fold. Aspiring exegetes have to meet stringent requirements before being accepted as qualified interpreters of the text. In Africa, like in many other parts of the world, the vast majority of readers of the Bible find themselves outside the guild – they are non-professional, untrained, 'ordinary' readers who read and interpret nonetheless and whose influence most probably exceeds that of the members of the guild. How does the guild deal with this?

A plurality of locations – how does the context, and for that matter, the continent, affect the reading of these texts? Does context have a physical, geographical dimension to it, or is it constituted by a configuration of elements that can occur in more place than one? How enduring is the context, producing the same reading consistently? Or is it a dynamic configuration, subject to forces of change?

A plurality of interests or purpose – what drives the reading, to what need is it answering? What purpose is it serving? Whose interests are at stake? The issue of power is ever-present. A clearer recognition of its role is a safeguard against the possible abuses to which any reading is exposed. But it can also enhance the effectiveness of the interpretation.

A plurality of discourses - orality and textuality, other religions, a plurality of perspectives - pre-/ post-modern readings, a plurality of ...

3. *Communicating the NT in a post-2000 world.*

It is no news that the effectiveness of this communication is decreasing and that the discourse of scholarship alone is no longer sufficient. This raises the underlying epistemological issue, especially in view of the rise of knowledge as the commodity of the new era. The plurality of discourses and audiences, their effect on the shaping of reality, the development of values in a 'secular' context, the nature and goals of theological education, the development of analytical skills and hermeneutical abilities as essential part of a general education, may extend hermeneutics beyond its traditional area of operation. For its survival and effectiveness in the next century, this extension might be essential.

In many ways, the 1999 SNTS meeting and the Post-Conference will be breaking new ground. It is to be hoped that it will also lead to constructive results – for NT studies, for biblical scholarship in general, but especially for the continent of Africa where the SNTS will meet for the first time in its history.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Fowler, RM 1991. *Let the reader understand. Reader-response criticism and the gospel of Mark*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- McKnight, EV 1988. *Post-modern use of the Bible. The emergence of reader-oriented criticism*. Nashville: Abingdon.
- Moore, SD 1989. *Literary criticism and the gospels: the theoretical challenge*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Moore, SD 1990. *Poststructuralism and the New Testament*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Patte, D 1990. *Discipleship according to Matthew*. Philadelphia: Fortress.
- Voelz, JW 1995. *What does this mean? Principles of biblical interpretation in the post-modern word*. St Louis: Concordia Publishing House.
- Watson, F *Text, church and world. Biblical interpretation in theological perspective*. Edinburgh: T T Clark.