

Intercultural Biblical Hermeneutics Series

The Intercultural Biblical Hermeneutics Series is offered to Bible scholars and interested practitioners with a twofold purpose: to present the fruits of ongoing research in the new field of empirical intercultural hermeneutics, and to foster further conversation and collaboration.

Series Editors

Hans de Wit, Mary H. Schertz



Published by the
Foundation Dom Hélder
Câmara Chair, VU
University Amsterdam, in
collaboration with Institute
of Mennonite Studies, Elkhart, Indiana,
USA (www.ambs.edu/IMS).

Editorial Board

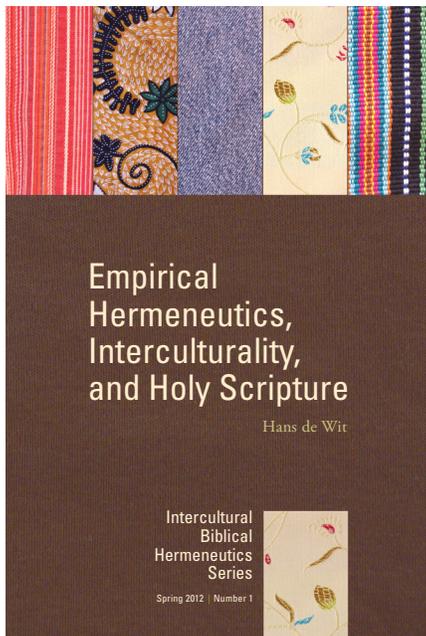
Eric Anum—Ghana
Evangeline Anderson—India
Janet Dyk—The Netherlands
Knut Holter—Norway
Werner Kahl—Germany
Edgar López—Colombia
Miranda Pillay—South Africa
John Prior—Indonesia
Daniel Schipani—USA

Spring 2012 | Number 1

Empirical Hermeneutics, Interculturality, and Holy Scripture

Hans de Wit, Dom Hélder Câmara Chair, VU University Amsterdam

This monograph addresses the question of whether reading Bible stories jointly by groups from often radically different cultural and sociopolitical contexts can contribute to transformation and changed perspectives. In which ways can an intercultural dialogue on the meaning of fundamental narratives—Holy Scripture—contribute to justice and liberation? Can cultural differences, when rendered hermeneutically operative, not give such depth to



the dialogue on the meaning of these stories that faith becomes what it is ultimately meant to be, a searching and reaching for the truth?

The practice consists of bringing small groups together, on all continents, who read the same Bible story at the same time and discuss the meaning of the story with each other. Groups of *desplazados* in Colombia read with groups of Christians from Indonesia, groups of *dalits* from India with Cuban groups, Korean students with Nicaraguan Pentecostals, and Dutch groups with Ghanaian or Filipino groups. Different groups also can read with each other within the same country.

On the basis of these experiences, there is reason to test the hypothesis that the intercultural reading of narratives from sacred texts—in this case, the Bible—can have a beneficial effect and help readers to have more understanding for one another, leading to

reconciliation and more justice. The central questions of this field of research are: Can the Bible also be a positive factor in processes of development and reconciliation? Can Bible stories also be places for transformation and repentance? Can Bible stories also be places for conversations on peace?

© 2012. 97 pages. Paper. ISBN: 0-936273-80-1

“The launching of this new series in intercultural biblical hermeneutics is to be warmly welcomed. For quite some years now, this critical project, which was first given expression in the volume *Through the Eyes of Another*, has yielded impressive results. Indeed, it has established itself as a highly innovative and sophisticated approach in biblical criticism by way of its focus on real readers in small communities reading the same text and exchanging such readings with other communities and readers around the world—all in the wake and interest of a global Christianity.

“That the series should begin with a thorough exposition of the approach by its driving voice, Professor Hans de Wit of the Free University of Amsterdam, is to be highly welcomed as well. After years of work in this area, de Wit provides in this volume a sharp and thorough account of its origins and grounding, its aims and results, its dynamics and mechanics. I cannot think of a better inaugural volume.”

Prof. Dr. Fernando F. Segovia
Oberlin Graduate Professor of New
Testament and Early Christianity
Vanderbilt University

Dr. Hans (J. H.) de Wit is professor at the Faculty of Theology, VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands, and has held the Dom Hélder Câmara chair for liberation and peace there since October 2007. Dr. de Wit studied theology at VU University Amsterdam and specialized in the field of Old Testament. From 1980 to 1989 he worked in Chile, Latin America, at the Comunidad Teológica Evangélica de Chile as professor of Old Testament and Biblical Hermeneutics.

Institute of Mennonite Studies
3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517, USA
574 296 6239 | bnjingerich@ambs.edu

Empirical Hermeneutics, Interculturality, and Holy Scripture

- | | Amount |
|--|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enter my standing order for the monograph series and bill me when each issue is published. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• International standing orders are \$18 per monograph including shipping.)• US subscribers pay \$15/issue per monograph, including shipping. | _____ |

Individuals and institutions placing a standing order for the monograph series may also purchase a copy of *Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible* (see below) for \$20 (20% off of the regular price of \$25).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would also like to order a copy of <i>Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible</i> for \$20. | _____ |
| Add \$5 shipping (international orders) | _____ |
| Add \$3 shipping (US orders) | _____ |

Total amount enclosed (USD) _____

Ship to:

Name _____

Address 1 _____

Address 2 _____

Address 3 _____

Telephone _____

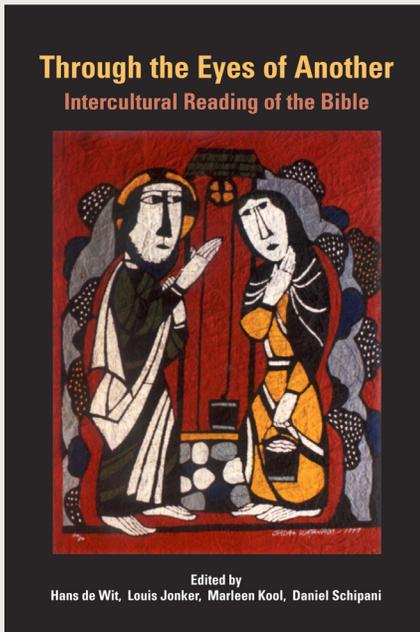
E-mail address _____

Make checks payable to AMBS and send to IMS at:

Institute of Mennonite Studies
Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary
3003 Benham Avenue
Elkhart, IN 46517
USA

574 296 6239 | bngringerich@ambs.edu

Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible



Edited by Hans de Wit, Louis Jonker,
Marleen Kool, and Daniel S. Schipani

This book documents an unprecedented three-year research study centered on the story of the encounter of Jesus with a Samaritan woman. The study involved a unique partnership of committed and creative ordinary readers, expert teachers and other pastoral leaders, and Bible and theology scholars, representing many countries in five continents.

The book starts with a thorough description of the research project together with colorful windows on the actual experience of groups who read the John 4 story and interacted with other readers from very different cultural backgrounds. It continues with several case studies that helpfully focus and deepen those observations, with special attention to contextual and intercontextual dynamics. Then follow critical analyses of various dimensions of the hermeneutical and communication processes involved in the experience. Finally, a

“Quietly, almost imperceptibly, biblical study has been undergoing a Copernican revolution. Much of the impetus comes from the Southern hemisphere, but Eurocentric methods are also undergoing change. People are recovering the Bible’s capacity to act as a catalyst for self-criticism and transformation. They are learning to read scripture from multicultural perspectives, and have their own preconceptions challenged by the authenticity of the experience of others’ encounters with the text. Brilliantly conceived and painstakingly presented, this *tour de force* might just save biblical study from its Babylonian captivity to dogmatism and cultural isolation.”

Walter Wink
Professor of Biblical Interpretation
Auburn Theological Seminary

number of implications are drawn for practical theology and theological education, hermeneutical practices and studies, and ecumenical and missiological endeavors.