

Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible

Hans de Wit, Louis Jonker, Marleen Kool, Daniel Schipani, editors

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

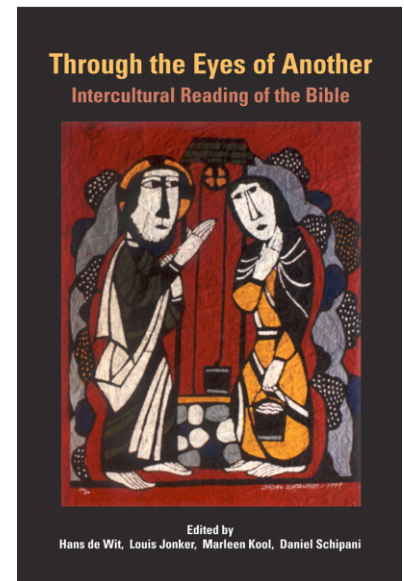
Readers will find in this volume a special testimony to the fascinating nature of intercultural Bible reading and its potential contribution to the life of faith communities and to the work of church agencies and scholars. Far from considering this effort a finished product, the editors present it as an invitation to further reflection, dialogue, and collaboration.

In every respect, the intercultural Bible reading project documented in this volume is a major and praiseworthy achievement. It takes various critical, ecclesial, and theological developments a significant step forward: reader response criticism, with its concern for real readers and their reading sites; basic communities, with their focus on community pairings and sustained interchange; and global Christianity, with its emphasis on intercultural exchange and a worldwide network of readers and groups. All of this by way of a focused discussion on a coordinating text—the encounter of Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4. *Through the Eyes of Another* presents a path-breaking model for future research and reading in intercultural criticism.

*Fernando F. Segovia, Oberlin Alumni
Professor of New Testament and Early
Christianity, Vanderbilt University*

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Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural Reading of the Bible

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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*

For those devoted to seminary teaching and to serving congregations, this work constitutes a dream come true. It explores how intercultural Bible study enriches our reading by nurturing and challenging us with the diversity and wealth of other communities from different social and cultural contexts. This investigation alone is a unique and extraordinary contribution to biblical and theological interpretation, and professors and pastors will find in it valuable educational strategies and insights, laid out with unusual transparency. We learn about the hardships encountered in this endeavor as well as the achievements attained by the groups that participated in the project. This research represents an exceptional model that deserves our study and analysis for a better understanding of intercultural hermeneutics.

*Guillermo Ramírez Muñoz, Academic Dean
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