

Wilhelm (Willie) Joseph Wessels



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Wilhelm (Willie) Joseph Wessels obtained his BA degree in 1975, BA (Hons) Semitic Languages in 1977 and a BD degree in 1978. Here an initial interest in Hebrew led to a passion for the texts of the Old Testament and, more specifically, the prophetic materials. In 1985 Willie completed his doctoral dissertation on *Jeremiah's view of the Kingship: Analysis of Jeremiah 21:1-23-8* under the supervision of Prof Ferdinand Deist. The research included ideological-critical analysis (amongst others). He also had the privilege to study under Dr Robert Carroll in Glasgow and Dr Helga Weippert in Heidelberg during his doctoral studies. Together with Deist, these scholars stirred in Willie Wessels the latent spirit unfolding in a career-long plunging of the depths of biblical prophecy which focussed not only on Jeremiah, but also Micah, Nahum and Haggai and specifically on the perspectives implicit in these books on issues of social justice and righteousness, ethics, power, violence and the role and responsibility of leadership.

Willie Wessels' career was devoted to the life of a full professor in the department of Biblical and Ancient Studies at Unisa since 1994. The research done in this capacity and surrounds included over a dozen chapters in books and more than seventy articles in peer-reviewed journals. As co-editor of publications, Willie teamed up with UNISA colleagues Prof Eben H Scheffler for *Science and Reality* (Verbum Vitae, 1992) and with Dr JG Strydom on Prophetic perspectives on power and social justice (Biblia, 2000). In 2013, Willie's book *Prophets on Power: Conversations with Micah and Jeremiah* was published by Biblaridion. Other notable publications include a chapter on Nahum in the prestigious *Fortress Commentary on the Bible* and his work on Micah featured in major studies, from Carol Dempsey's *Liberation-Critical Reading* (2000) to Daniel Smith-Christopher's *Commentary on Micah* (Old Testament Library series, 2015).

Between 2013 and 2017 Willie conducted research on true and false prophets in the book of Jeremiah in collaboration with Ellen van Wolde at Radboud University in Nijmegen as part of a grant awarded to him by the Dutch government. Local projects include parts of Afrikaans Bible translations like *Die Boodskap* (2002), *Nuwe Lewende Vertaling* (2006) and *Die Bybel: 'n Direkte Vertaling* (2015). He participated in the conference activities of several scholarly societies, including SBL, SPS, OTSSA and SASNES. He acted as expert reviewer for journals such *JSem*, *OTE*, *HTS*, *Acta Theologica*, *Scriptura*, *In die Skriflig*, *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* and *Koers* and published over thirty book reviews.

Willie's status as established researcher (C2 NRF rating) is also evident in his being elected to the editorial boards of the *Journal for Pentecostal Theology* (Sheffield Academic Press) and the *Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research* (Wipf and Stock). His work also stood in the Pentecostal tradition as is testified to by his contributions to the Society for

Pentecostal Studies in the USA and his presentation of papers at their annual meetings on numerous occasions. In 2006 the editor of the commentary on the Book of the Twelve, Dr Chris Thomas, Professor of Biblical Studies at the Pentecostal Theological Seminary in Cleveland, TN, invited him to write a commentary on the books of Micah and Nahum (2017, Deo Publishing, Dorset, UK). In the local church contexts, Willie was also active as board member of the council of the Apostolic Faith Mission Theological Institute in Soshanguve, Tshwane from 1998-2008.

In terms of teaching, mentoring and supervision, Willie supervised a number of doctoral and masters' students and often acted as external examiner for the students of others, both locally and internationally. He was invited to conduct post-graduate seminars at St Petersburg Christian University in Russia (2000 and 2005), at Regent University in Virginia Beach, USA (1993) and at Providence Theological Seminary, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada (2006 and 2008). Willie was also part of the initial pioneers of a post-graduate seminar on the Prophets (Prophsem, 2012).

In January 2018 he graduated with his second PhD, which he earned at the Radboud University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands under Prof Ellen van Wolde.

PUBLICATIONS

Books

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- Wessels, W. J. 2018. Nahum: Oppression as a social justice issue, in Gossai, Hemchand (ed), *Postcolonial Commentary and the Old Testament*, London: Bloomsbury.

Bible translation

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