

Reading the Bible in post-apartheid South Africa: The contribution of Gerrie Snyman

IZAK (SAKKIE) J.J. SPANGENBERG (UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA)

ABSTRACT

Modern historical criticism came to South Africa in the third decade of the twentieth century. However, analysing biblical books like human documents was not acceptable to church authorities. The historical-critical study of the Bible thus suffered a blow. It took four decades before some reformed biblical scholars felt at ease to reintroduce historical criticism. However, during the seventh decade of the twentieth century, overseas biblical scholars were already experimenting with the research tools of modern literary studies. Some South African biblical scholars followed suit, and soon narrative criticism and reader-response criticism were part of the package of methods for reading and studying the Bible. Gerrie Snyman was one of them, and reader-response criticism assisted him in reflecting on how he as a white Afrikaans speaking male, can continue doing biblical research in the post-apartheid era. He developed a hermeneutic of vulnerability and argued that readers should take responsibility for their readings of biblical texts.

Keywords: Naïve realism, historical criticism, narrative criticism, reader-response criticism, hermeneutic of vulnerability, ethics of Bible reading, Christian religion, superiority, whiteness, apartheid

A INTRODUCTION

“Reading is a dangerous activity. It can change our perspective, stir our emotions, and provoke us to action.”¹

Almost 50 years ago, James Barr published the book *The Bible in the Modern World*.² The book had a profound influence on a younger generation of biblical scholars in South Africa. The book assisted them in formulating well-founded arguments against those theologians who argued a case that the Bible supported the National Party’s apartheid policy. Although their criticisms were not always overt, their views concerning the Bible and how it should be read and interpreted

* Submitted: 15/05/2022; peer-reviewed: 22/02/2023; accepted: 18/04/2023. Izak (Sakkie) J.J. Spangenberg, “Reading the Bible in post-apartheid South Africa: The contribution of Gerrie Snyman,” *Old Testament Essays* 36 no. 1 (2023): 14–40. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2023/v36n1a3>.

¹ Margaret Davies, “Reader-Response Criticism”, in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden. (London: SCM Press, 1990), 578.

² James Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World* (London: SCM Press, 1973).

reflected a different approach. This new approach became evident during the late sixties of the previous century when the younger generation of biblical scholars entered the academy. The new generation's research flourished during the seventies through the nineties benefitting not only theological students and ministers but school teachers and ordinary church members as well. Soon another generation of biblical scholars who studied under the auspices of the previous group entered the academy and continued to reflect on the use of the Bible in Afrikaans speaking reformed churches. Gerrie Snyman is one of them and his book "*Om die Bybel Anders te Lees: 'n Eتيك van Bybellees*" stands out — at least in South Africa — as one of the best discussions the past half a century on how the Bible should, and should not be read.³

The article presents a brief historical overview of discussions concerning the Bible and its use within the Afrikaans speaking reformed churches the past century. This is done to profile Snyman's contribution. It argues a case that since the late seventies some biblical scholars and systematic theologians in the reformed tradition in South Africa no more shared the same outlook on the Bible. One may say that the Bible which these biblical scholars studied and called "ancient religious literature" is not the same one which systematic theologians studied and called "Scripture". The difference impacted the dialogue between systematic theologians and biblical scholars.⁴ Moreover, the traditional use of the Bible to support theological viewpoints and moral values became more and more suspect.

Currently, there are still two ways of reading and using the Bible in Afrikaans speaking reformed churches. Snyman's book not only highlights these ways but gives a thorough analysis of the problems they create when churches are confronted with new ethical and ecclesiastical issues. Post-apartheid South Africa is a different country compared to the one we were born and grew up in. Our situation is similar to that of the post-Holocaust German biblical scholars and theologians. Concerning this Dorothee Sölle, the German feminist theologian, said: "I have never understood how a theology after Auschwitz can be precisely the same as before."⁵ It will be argued that Snyman gave eloquent expression to the conviction that a post-apartheid reading and use of the Bible cannot be the same as the one that gave support to the apartheid policy.

³ Gerrie F. Snyman, *Om die Bybel Anders te Lees: 'n Eتيك van Bybellees* (Pretoria: Griffel Media, 2007).

⁴ Izak J.J. (Sakkie) Spangenberg, "Paradigmaveranderinge in die Bybelwetenskap: 'n Bydrae tot die gesprek tussen die Bybelwetenskap en Sistematiese Teologie," *Religion and Theology* 1/1 (1994), 144–184.

⁵ Dorothee Sölle, "Dorothee Sölle," in *How I Have Changed: Reflections on Thirty Years of Theology*, ed. Jürgen Moltmann, (London: SCM Press, 1997), 22.

B CONSERVATIVE VERSUS LIBERAL: 1930–1970

When Barr published his book *The Bible in the Modern World* most Afrikaans speaking reformed theologians still shunned the historical-critical methods of studying the Bible. This negative attitude was a result of the Du Plessis heresy trial in the Dutch Reformed Church during the early thirties.⁶ During those years Johannes du Plessis was a professor at the theological seminary in Stellenbosch. Although he taught New Testament to theological students, he took a keen interest in the historical-critical study of the Old Testament and shared his views with his students. However, he was soon accused of cherishing heretical viewpoints and subsequently dismissed.⁷ By then two groups with divergent views concerning the Bible could be identified. One group was willing to accept the results of the critical study of the Bible and tried to align the new results with the old reformed confessions of faith.⁸ The other group warned against the results of a historical-critical study because, according to them, it would open the door once more to liberal theology. Liberal theology spelt the death of the gospel.⁹ This group's convictions were rooted in a correspondence theory of truth and can be labelled "naïve realism" or "common sense realism".¹⁰ According to this group, eyewitnesses wrote down what they saw and experienced. Since their words are true reflections of past events, one can trust what they have written in the biblical books.¹¹ Moreover, God guided them through his Spirit during their

⁶ Ferdinand E. Deist, "Naïewe realisme en Ou-Testamentiese wetenskap in die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk," in *In Mensetaal oor God se Woord: Huldigingsbundel opgedra aan professor AH van Zyl*, ed. Willem S. Prinsloo and Wil Vosloo, (Kaapstad: Lux Verbi, 1988), 23–32.

⁷ Jurie H. le Roux, "Johannes du Plessis as Bybelwetenskaplike," *Theologia Evangelica (SA)* 9/1 (1986), 29–33; Piet Strauss, *Gereformeerdes onder die Suiderkruis 1652–2011: Die verhaal van vier Afrikaanse kerke*, (Bloemfontein: Sun Media, 2015), 54–56.

⁸ Ferdinand E. Deist, *Kan ons die Bybel dan nog glo? Onderweg na 'n Gereformeerde Skrifbeskouing*, (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1986), 26–39; *ibid.*, "Die wa van Ussa ofte wel: Johannes du Plessis en die belydenisskrifte," *ThEv (SA)* 19/1 (1986), 57–61; *ibid.*, *Ervaring, Rede en Metode in Skrifuitleg: 'n Wetenskapshistoriese ondersoek na Skrifuitleg in die Ned. Geref. Kerk 1840–1990* (Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, 1994), 31–81.

⁹ Professor J.D. du Toit (also known as "Totius") from the Reformed Churches in South Africa (RCSA) was called upon during the civil trial of professor Johannes du Plessis to serve as an expert witness for the defendant (the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape Province). Fanus (A.S.) Erasmus, *Prof. Johannes du Plessis 1868–1935: Baanbreker, verbreker van die gereformeerde geloof?* (Bloemfontein: UV Teologiese Studies, 2009), 429. Totius played a leading role in arguing that the Bible supported the apartheid policy.

¹⁰ Ferdinand E. Deist, "Naïewe realisme en Ou-Testamentiese wetenskap, 23–32.

¹¹ Johannes Voster N., "The use of Scripture in fundamentalism," in *Paradigms and progress in theology*, ed. Johann Mouton, Andries van Aarde, and Willem S. Vorster, (Pretoria: HSRC Publishers, 1988), 156–159.

acts of writing and therefore questioning what they have written is nothing else but unbelief.

Prior to Ferdinand Deist's thorough analysis of the developments in the Dutch Reformed Church¹² James Loader argued a case that biblical scholars and theologians in the three Afrikaans speaking reformed churches shared the same convictions about the Bible and therefore used it in the same manner: "In spite of their well-known differences in theological tradition and emphasis, *the three Afrikaans churches are much closer to each other in respect of their use of the Bible than is generally imagined.*"¹³ These convictions were promoted through lectures and publications and can be labelled "orthodox fundamentalism."¹⁴ The results of the historical-critical research into the Bible the past three century, were not viewed in a positive light but often labelled as "liberal interpretations." This was the case during the four decades following the Du Plessis heresy trial. The Bible was read with a naïve understanding of how the Bible came into being and what role the ancient writers played. Systematic theologians and even biblical scholars referred to God as the *auctor primarius* of the Bible and the authors of the biblical books as *auctores secundarii*.¹⁵ Theologians and ministers believed that they could hear God's voice coming from the Bible to instruct humans how to live according to his will. They heard one voice and not different human voices. This belief can be presented as follows:

GOD (*auctor primarius*) → human authors (*auctores secundarii*) → the Bible → readers

Moreover, most reformed theologians assumed that the Bible narrated history from Genesis to Revelations. Even the apocalyptic books were treated as historical documents. Daniel and Revelations were regarded as prophecies and prophecies were nothing else but proleptic history.¹⁶ The Bible was read to

¹² Deist, *Ervaring, Rede en Metode in Skrifuitleg*.

¹³ James A. Loader, "The use of the Bible in conventional South African theology," in *Scripture and the Use of Scripture*, ed. Willem S. Vorster, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1979), 11. Emphasis in the original. Loader was a member of the "Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk van Afrika". The names of the three Afrikaans speaking reformed churches are so similar that a translation in English often creates confusion. I use the following names for the three churches: "Ned Geref Kerk" = Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), "Ned Herv Kerk in Afrika" = Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA), "Gereformeerde Kerke van SA" = Reformed Churches of South Africa (RCSA).

¹⁴ Orthodox fundamentalism and naïve realism are birds of a feather.

¹⁵ Johan A. Heyns, *Brug tussen God en mens: Oor die Bybel*, (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1973), 27; Izak J.J. Spangenberg, "Hoe dink vandag se mense oor die Bybel?" *Verbum et Ecclesia* 23/1 (2002), 183–185.

¹⁶ Izak (Sakkie) J.J. Spangenberg, "Die Suid-Afrikaanse navorsingsgeskiedenis van die boek Daniël en die eksegetiese spel," *Old Testament Essays* 12 (1999), 591–608.

discover truths about God and his relationship with humanity and how humanity should behave and structure civil society to please and honour God. This was the reasoning behind reformed theologians' support of the apartheid policy. The Dutch Reformed Church's policy document titled *Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif* may serve as an example of this kind of theological reasoning.¹⁷

In the policy document the story of the building of a big city with a tower reaching the heavens and the subsequent language confusion and dispersion of the different groups (Gen 11:1–9) is read as if the author narrates history.¹⁸ Moreover, it is read as a direct continuation of the Noah story (Gen 6–9) on account of the following statement: "These are the descendants of Shem. Shem was a hundred years old when he begot Arphaxad, *two years after the flood*" (Gen 11:10).¹⁹ The argument runs as follows: After the flood, Noah and his sons stayed in the vicinity of the mountains of Ararat (Gen 8:4) before moving to "a plain in the land of Shinar" (Gen 11:2) where their descendants commenced with the building of a city and a huge tower. This act did not please God since he wanted humans to spread all over the world: "God blessed Noah and his sons; he said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in numbers, and fill the earth'" (Gen 9:1). The outcome of the languages confusion and the dispersion (Gen 11) was the different nations which are listed in Genesis 10. The authors of the document rearranged the chapters since according to them, the history narrated in Genesis 11 followed directly after the history of the flood (Gen 6–9). Genesis 10 represents the list of nations that came into being *after* the events narrated in Genesis 11. It is evident that the writers' ideology influenced their reading and exposition since there is no warrant for this rearrangement of the texts as Willem Vorster argued in an article.²⁰ From the narrative systematic theologians and ministers concluded that it does not please God when humans act contrary to his will and try to create unity. God prefers diversity not unity and therefore he enforced his will on them. The apartheid policy honours God's will by keeping apart the different races with their different languages and cultures.

Not all ministers who approved the document at the DRC's General Synod held in Cape Town in 1974 were aware that the arguments in this section of the document had a long history which went back to a paper professor J.D. du

¹⁷ DRC, *Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif*, (Kaapstad: N.G. Kerk-Uitgewers, 1975). The document was tabled and approved at the 1974 General Synod of the DRC and published in 1975. It was soon translated into English with the title *Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture* and distributed among English speaking churches for them to read, criticise and to engage the DRC.

¹⁸ DRC, *Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge*, 14–18

¹⁹ Emphasis added.

²⁰ Willem S. Vorster, "The Bible and apartheid 1," in *Apartheid is a Heresy*, ed. John de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio, (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983), 102–106.

Toit ("Totius") delivered in 1944 at a national conference. Totius was a well-known Afrikaans poet and member of the Reformed Churches in South Africa. In the paper titled "Die godsdienstige grondslag van ons rassebeleid" he argued a case that Genesis 11:1–9 and Acts 2:6–11 revealed that God created different nations, each with its own language, history and culture and that those who try to unite the different nations act contrary to God's will.²¹ According to Gerrie Snyman, there was a reciprocal influence.²² Totius influenced the DRC theologians and they influenced him. However, Loubser argues that Totius was influenced by the Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920) whose viewpoints influenced the convictions of DRC theologians as well.²³

A more or less similar argument is found in the pastoral letter dated 1973 of the General Assembly of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA).²⁴ The DRCA limited its membership to whites only and the letter confirms that this limitation is based on an eternal truth found in Scripture. Two texts were cited as warrants for this statement: Genesis 10 (the list of nations) and Psalm 86:9 "All the nations you have made will come to bow before you, Lord, and honour your name". God is the creator of the different nations and he would like to see that humans uphold the diversity he created. Each nation should have its own church where the gospel could be preached and heard in the language of that specific nation.²⁵

C A NEW GENERATION OF REFORMED BIBLICAL SCHOLARS: 1970–1990

From the previous section, one may conclude that for at least 40 years a conservative stance concerning the Bible ruled supreme in the three Afrikaans speaking reformed churches: "The Bible is the Word of God to be interpreted by

²¹ Johann Kinghorn, "Die Groei van 'n Teologie — Van Sendingbeleid tot Verskeidenheidsteologie," in *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid*, ed. Johann Kinghorn, (Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1986), 100–102.

²² Gerrie F. Snyman, "Totius: Die ironie van vergewe en vergeet," *LitNet Akademies (GW)* 12/2 (2015), 211–235.

²³ Bobby (J.A.) Loubser, *The Apartheid Bible: A critical review of racial theology in South Africa*, (Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1987), 56–57.

²⁴ Loader, "The use of the Bible in conventional South African theology," 19.

²⁵ There are currently congregations belonging to the DRCA who are in the process of severing their ties with other congregations of the DRCA. Their motivation for this act is the General Assembly of the DRCA's recalling of the article which states that the DRCA is a church for whites only. Something similar happened in the DRC in 1987 when a number of members severed their ties with the DRC and established a new church called the "Afrikaans Protestant Church." They rebelled against the acceptance of the DRC's policy document *Kerk en Samelewing*. Jan Lubbe briefly refers to this in his book *Kleur verskil: 'n Perspektief op die NG Kerk in 1948 en apartheid as kerklike beleid*, (Bloemfontein: Barnabas, 2002), 53–56.

the conventions of common sense.”²⁶ During those years the common sense in the Western World was that Europeans (with their white skins) ranked higher than people (with darker skins) from other continents and islands around the globe.²⁷ Afrikaans speaking reformed theologians shared in this conviction and they used the Bible to promote and entrench the conviction.²⁸ Their reading of the Bible informed them that God preferred diversity above unity — especially when it comes to the different human races or rather humans with different skin colours. However, a younger generation of biblical scholars entered the academy in the late sixties and started questioning the consensus and labelling any deviation from the consensus as “liberal interpretations”.²⁹ The first signs of a new approach were two books published by Ferdinand Deist, a young Old Testament scholar from the University of Port Elizabeth.

The first book contains a number of short reflections or sermons.³⁰ The book has an extensive introduction in which Deist explains his approach to the Bible.³¹ He formulates five guidelines which could assist an interpreter in understanding a section from the Bible: (1) The Bible originated in history and addressed people who lived in history — therefore a *historical reading* of the biblical books is of utmost importance. (2) The Bible contains a large number of *literary genres* and does not narrate history from Genesis to Revelations. To be able to identify the genre and interpret it according to its own norms is all important for a good understanding of what the author tried to communicate. (3) The *literary context* of the section which one is reading should be taken into account during the interpretation. (4) The biblical book’s *context in the larger history of Israel* should also come into play and cannot be ignored if one would like to understand the biblical book’s message properly. (5) The biblical authors primarily wrote about *God’s acts in history*, or rather how they understood their history and God’s involvement in it.³²

²⁶ Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible*, (Leicester: Apollos, 1991), 45.

²⁷ Nina Jablonski, *Living Color: The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 134–141.

²⁸ Johann Kinghorn, “Die Groei van ’n Teologie,” 37–53.

²⁹ The following scholars belong to this group: Andries Breytenbach, Bernard Combrink, Ferdinand Deist, Bernard Lategan, James Loader, Jurie le Roux, Willem Prinsloo, Andries van Aarde, Herrie van Rooy, Pieter Venter and Willem Vorster. Since it is not possible to discuss the contribution of each one of them, I will only focus on Deist, Lategan, Loader and Vorster since they were the trendsetters.

³⁰ Ferdinand E. Deist, *Die Woord in Beweging: Bybeluitleg vir die moderne tyd*, (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1974).

³¹ Deist, *Die Woord in Beweging*, 1–10.

³² Deist gave similar guidelines in the article “‘God met ons?’ Psalm 46,” in *Hoe lees ’n mens die Bybel?* ed. Pieter G.R. de Villiers, (Pretoria: Universiteit van Suid-Afrika, 1988), 31–55.

The second book focuses on the relationship between "church and state" in ancient Israel.³³ Read between the lines it was evident that the book was critical about the relationship between church and state in South Africa and the reformed churches' support of the apartheid policy. Early in the book one reads about the "apartheid policy" of the Omrid dynasty.³⁴ Throughout his academic career, he critically engaged the DRC's policies and acts especially their support of the apartheid policy of the National Party.³⁵

After reading these books, some readers opined that Deist was reviving the heresy of Du Plessis especially since he questioned the historical validity of some of the Old Testament texts. He, therefore, had to appear before a church board to explain himself and his approach. To defend his viewpoints he wrote a booklet and brilliantly explained how one should read the Bible.³⁶ According to him, one should not start with the statement that the Bible communicates *history*, or that the Bible is a *historical document* that one can use to retell the history of Israel, or the life of Jesus and the early Church. The most basic question that one should start with when reading a piece of literature (and this includes the Bible) is: What kind of literature am I dealing with?³⁷ The Bible is not a historical document but consists of different types of literature. If a person wants to use the Bible to write a history of Israel (or a life of Jesus of Nazareth) then that person is embarking on a venture which requires critical assessment of the biblical books or sections of books. The following words of Lester Grabbe which he wrote concerning the interpretation of the book of Daniel are applicable to Deist's achievement on that day:

There is no such a thing as "liberal" scholarship versus "conservative" scholarship. Scholarship by its very nature is always liberal, and all scholars by definition are critics. That is, scholarship is a method of inquiring which implies being neither bound to dogma nor afraid to challenge the status quo. To be a scholar is to make judgments, to be a judge — a critic. All scholars have to challenge arguments, to weigh evidence, to exercise scepticism rather than taking things at their surface contents.³⁸

³³ Deist, *Die Noodlottige Band: Die verhouding tussen Kerk en Staat in Oud-Israel*, (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1975).

³⁴ Deist, *Die Noodlottige Band*, 9.

³⁵ The following books may serve as examples: Ferdinand E. Deist, *Sê God so? Protes en pleidooi — oor óns tyd, vir óns land* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1982); Ferdinand E. Deist, *Verandering sonder geweld?* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1983).

³⁶ Ferdinand E. Deist, *Historiese Heuristiek, Teologiese Hermeneutiek en Skrifgesag*, (Port Elizabeth: Universiteit van Port Elizabeth, 1976).

³⁷ Deist, *Historiese Heuristiek*, 8–9.

³⁸ Lester L. Grabbe, "Fundamentalism and Scholarship: The Case of Daniel," in *Scripture: Meaning and Method. Essays presented to Anthony Tyrrell Hanson*, ed. B.P. Thompson, (Hull: Hull University Press, 1987), 146.

Deist convinced his audience that he was not a "liberal scholar" but one that is serious about his task as a biblical scholar. Although there is no reference to Barr in these books they breathed the same questioning approach and Deist was adamant that systematic theologians cannot prescribe to biblical scholars how they should view and study the Bible. Research into the text should precede any dogmatic or systematic statement concerning the Bible.³⁹

The new voice from the south soon found support from a voice in the north of the country when Willem Vorster delivered his inaugural lecture at the University of South Africa. The lecture aired the same convictions as those of Deist. However, it was now evident that Barr's book *The Bible in the Modern World* played a role in Vorster's arguments and even the title of his lecture.⁴⁰ In the first paragraph, Vorster emphasises that one cannot use the Bible (an old book) to argue a case for or against modern political policies or ethical questions. The main question which he addressed in his lecture was: How can an ancient document like the Bible still communicate in the modern world? The answer which he gave was: the Bible should be read and studied like *ordinary literature*. His lecture caused a furore but it was evident that Vorster was well aware of the latest discussions concerning how the Bible should be viewed, read and studied.⁴¹ Systematic theologians suddenly became aware of biblical scholars taking a different stance concerning the Bible. Some biblical scholars took leave of the idea that the Bible informs one how it should be viewed, read and interpreted. Moreover, these scholars took leave of the conviction that God is the *primary author* and the writers of the different biblical books *secondary authors*. Vorster, like Barr, emphasised that the Bible is solely the product of human authors. God did not speak or write. In the words of Barr: "If one wants to use the Word-of-God type of language, the proper term for the Bible would be Word of Israel, Word of some leading early Christians."⁴² Vorster wrote: "It has become clear that the Bible is a collection of *ancient* books which have to be interpreted in the light of their own character, that is, occasional religious

³⁹ In 1986, the same year in which the DRC accepted a new policy document concerning the Bible and its authority, Deist published a book in which he formulated and discussed his views concerning the Bible and its authority. He did his best to convince readers that a critical reading of the Bible does not exclude the work of the Holy Spirit. This book more than the others evidenced that Deist wanted to be seen as a reformed biblical scholar and theologian. Ferdinand E. Deist, *Kan ons die Bybel dan nog glo? Onderweg na 'n Gereformeerde Skrifbeskouing*, (Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1986), 19–25, 52, 54–66.

⁴⁰ Willem S. Vorster, *'n Ou Boek in 'n nuwe wêreld — gedagtes rondom die interpretasie van die Nuwe Testament*, (Pretoria: Universiteit van Suid-Afrika, 1977).

⁴¹ Izak (Sakkie) J.J. Spangenberg, "Op pad na 2000 — oftewel, oor al die dinge wat gebeur het," *Old Testament Essays* 11 (1998), 534–566.

⁴² Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World*, 120.

writings of different kinds which were written long ago over a long period of time."⁴³

To profile Vorster's outlook on the Bible one should compare it with that of Johan Heyns, a contemporary systematic theologian of the DRC. His book was published in the same year as Barr's book.⁴⁴ He used the traditional systematic categories to explain what the Bible is and how readers should understand and use it.⁴⁵ However, when it comes to the authority of the Bible he introduced something new. According to him the Bible has a centre and a periphery.⁴⁶ The centre concerns what is all important for all generations past, present and future: God's kingdom, or rather his rule over the lives of individuals as well as church and society. "*God regeer en Sy heerskappy moet gehoorsaam word.*"⁴⁷ The periphery is the less important things or cultural practices which might have been relevant for readers in the past. The fact that it is in the Bible (and thus part of God's Word) does not mean that we as humans living in the 20th or 21st century are bound by these prescriptions or norms. He illustrates this by quoting two verses from the Bible: (1) "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16) and (2) "You must not eat the fat of any ox, sheep, or goat" (Leviticus 7:23). According to Heyns it should be evident why the first verse belongs to the centre of the Bible and the second to the periphery.⁴⁸

Heyns also used a more difficult biblical section to illustrate this distinction: 1 Corinthians 11:2–6. In this section, Paul argues a case that women should have their heads covered when worshipping while men can go bareheaded.⁴⁹ According to Heyns, the women in Corinth were abusing their freedom by not wearing a headdress. By doing this they were blurring the differences between the two sexes. They were thus acting contrary to God's norms that there should be a distinction between male and female. Paul recommends that Christian women should wear a headdress during Christian meetings so that the society of Corinth could see that they respected and adhered to God's will. There is a specific hierarchy: Christ is the head of the congregation

⁴³ Vorster, "The Bible and apartheid 1," 102.

⁴⁴ Johan A. Heyns, *Brug tussen God en Mens: Oor die Bybel*, (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1973).

⁴⁵ Heyns discusses the following categories: (1) the origin of the Bible, (2) its inspiration, (3) its authority (4) its trustworthiness, (5) its perspecuity, (6) its sufficiency, and (7) being its own interpreter (*sacra scriptura sui ipsius interpret*).

⁴⁶ Heyns, *Brug tussen God en Mens*, 87–97.

⁴⁷ Heyns, *Brug tussen God en Mens*, 93. Emphasis in the original.

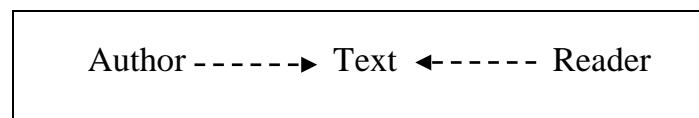
⁴⁸ Hermie van Zyl makes use of the same distinctions and talks about the "kern- en buiterandwaarhede in die Bybel", "Is die Bybel nog God se Woord?" in *So Glo Ons: Gelowig nagedink oor God, die Bybel en ons leefwêreld*, ed. Piet Meiring, (Vereeniging: CUM, 2001), 85.

⁴⁹ Heyns, *Brug tussen God en Mens*, 94–95.

in the same manner that men are the head of their households and thus of their wives.⁵⁰

Vorster criticised this kind of reasoning stating that it is flawed. How does Heyns know that the women in Corinth were rebellious and that Paul wanted Christian women to convey a specific message? The distinction between centre and periphery cannot solve the problems that this old Book creates for humans living in the twentieth century.⁵¹ Furthermore, what one generation regards as peripheral another may regard as belonging to the centre, or vice versa.⁵²

Although there are agreements between how Deist and Vorster viewed the Bible, their approaches to reading and interpreting it differed. Deist focussed on the *genre* and the *historical setting* of the piece of literature while Vorster focussed more on the *genre* and the *role of the reader* in creating meaning. The difference is well illustrated in the book *Hoe lees 'n mens die Bybel?* to which both contributed.⁵³ The diagram below may serve as a help in understanding the differences.



Deist focused more on the left side of the model (*author and text*), while Vorster focussed more on the right side (*text and reader*). This applies to Lategan and Loader's approaches as well.

Lategan, like Vorster, focussed on the right side of the communication model. He became more and more interested in the role readers play in the process of reading and creating meaning. He realised that no two readers' reading of a text coincides. Being sensitive to the different interpretations helps one to understand that readers are influenced by their political and sociological context as well as their church tradition and the texts they have read. He eventually

⁵⁰ Heyns's distinction played a role in the DRC's resolution in 1986 to take leave of the biblical support of the apartheid policy. With this kind of reasoning he would surely not have supported the solemnising of gay and lesbian marriages, since they are transgressing "the gendered order of God's creation" to use the words of Jay E. Johnson, "Sodomy and Gendered Love: Reading Genesis 19 in the Anglican Communion", in *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*, ed. Michael Lieb, Emma Mason, and Jonathan Roberts, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 426.

⁵¹ Willem S. Vorster, "The Bible and apartheid 1", 108.

⁵² Jurie H. Le Roux, "God se brug na die mens: Iets goddeliks of iets mensliks? ('n Kort woord oor Johan Heyns se Skrifleer)," *Skrif en Kerk* 15/1 (1994), 27–51.

⁵³ Ferdinand E. Deist, "'God met ons?' Psalm 46," in *Hoe lees 'n mens die Bybel?* ed. Pieter G.R. de Villiers, (Pretoria: Universiteit van Suid-Afrika, 1988), 31–55; Willem S. Vorster, "Oor lees, lesers en Johannes 4," in *Hoe lees 'n mens die Bybel?* ed. Pieter G.R. de Villiers, (Pretoria: Universiteit van Suid-Afrika, 1988), 1–30.

organised a conference focussing on reader-response studies and contributed a paper to the conference proceedings.⁵⁴ After doing a structural analysis of Romans 13 (his reading of the text) he looked at how other readers read the text concluding that it is possible to do either an "affirmative reading" or a "resistant reading" of the text.⁵⁵ To claim that only the "affirmative reading" of the text is the Word of God does not hold water. Those readers who did a "resistant reading" can equally claim to have heard the Word of God. What this teaches one is that readers have to read with others and engage others who do not belong to their church tradition and their circle of friends. He also published an article which illustrates how two different political contexts can influence the meaning readers discover in a text.⁵⁶

Loader initially focussed more on the *structure of a text*. By doing structural analysis of a few Old Testament texts, he tried to convince students and ministers that this way of working through a text may serve them well in discovering the meaning of a text and in writing a decent sermon.⁵⁷ He believed that this kind of analysis will enable them to give reasons for the outcome of their reading. However, structural analysis is not the be-all and end-all of understanding what a biblical author tried to communicate with his text. Historical studies should remain important when reading an ancient text. Jurie le Roux's narration of the history of the Old Testament Society of South Africa (OTSSA) went astray when he claimed that Deist and Loader promoted two different and even contrasting approaches to biblical texts. According to him, Deist promoted historical studies (or *diachronic studies*), while Loader promoted structural studies (or *synchronic studies*).⁵⁸ John Barton's assessment of Loader's reading and analysis of the book of Qoheleth, namely that he "... adds structuralists ideas to the historical-critical tool-box" is a better description of Loader's approach.⁵⁹ He did not turn his back on historical-critical methods of

⁵⁴ Bernard C. Lategan, "Reading Romans 13 in a South African context," in *The Reader and Beyond*, ed. Bernard C. Lategan, (Pretoria: HSRC Publishers, 1992), 115–133.

⁵⁵ Bernard C. Lategan, "Reading Romans 13," 129–131.

⁵⁶ Bernard C. Lategan, "Reading the Letter to the Galatians from an apartheid and a post-apartheid perspective," in *The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Ingrid R. Kitzberger, (New York: Routledge, 1998), 128–141.

⁵⁷ James A. Loader, "Gedagtes oor gekontroleerde eksegeses," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 34/1–2 (1978), 1–11; *ibid.*, "Eksegese van die Ou Testament en die vervulling deur Christus," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 34/1–2 (1978), 11–19; *ibid.*, "Die basiese eenheid in struktuuranalise," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 34/1–2 (1978), 19–26.

⁵⁸ Jurie H. Le Roux, *A Story of Two Ways: Thirty Years of Old Testament Scholarship in South Africa*, Old Testament Essays Supplement Number 2, (Pretoria: Verba Vitae, 1993), 28–73.

⁵⁹ John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Studies*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984), 131.

reading the Bible. Moreover, he was also familiar with reader-response criticism (specific reception history) and his book concerning the story of Sodom and Gomorrah confirms this.⁶⁰ The book focuses on how early Jewish and early Christian readers interpreted the Sodom and Gomorrah story and how this may assist modern readers in discovering how the narrative was read at first. These readings reflect that those readers were of the opinion that the story concerns *hospitality* and *care for others*. It is only later on that some readers started focussing on the *sexual aspect* in the narrative which eventually gave birth to the word "sodomy".⁶¹

Reformed systematic theologians took note of the biblical scholars' view of the Bible and their different approaches but did not follow their lead. They adhered to the old reformed ways of viewing and studying the Bible.⁶² It should be evident to anyone with some theological knowledge that a chasm was developing between biblical scholars and systematic theologians.⁶³ The chasm manifested itself when the DRC accepted two new policy documents in 1986 during a meeting of the General Synod. The one concerned race relations and the other the authority of the Bible. The first document was published to inform members of the DRC and other churches that the DRC no more supported the apartheid policy.⁶⁴ This document replaced the old one titled *Ras, Volk en Nasie*.⁶⁵ Since the DRC previously used the Bible to motivate its pro-apartheid stance it had to revise its policy concerning the Bible so that it could motivate the change. This was not published for all to read and criticise. However, one of the DRC's systematic theologians published it as a supplement to a book he

⁶⁰ James A. Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities: Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament, early Jewish and early Christian Traditions*, (Kampen: Kok, 1990).

⁶¹ James A. Loader, *A Tale of Two Cities*, 140.

⁶² Dirkie Smit (a DRC systematic theologian) wrote a book in which he made use of the three worlds-approach: (1) the world behind the text, (2) the world of the text, and (3) the world in front of the text to explain how one should go about in doing a proper reading of a biblical text for the sake or delivering a sermon. However, the traditional reformed talk about the Bible remained intact, cf. Dirkie Smit, *Hoe verstaan ons wat ons lees? 'n Dink- en werkboek oor die hermeneutiek vir predikers en studente*, (Kaapstad: N.G. Kerk-Uitgewers, 1987). This is even more evident in the revised version of the book: Dirkie Smit, *Neem, lees! Hoe ons die Bybel hoor en verstaan*, (Wellington: Lux Verbi.BM, 2006).

⁶³ J.C. Coetzee "'n 'Ou Boek in 'n nuwe wêreld, of 'n nuwe Boek in 'n ou wêreld?'" *In die Skriflig* 13/49 (1979), 4–15; Frans N. Lion-Cachet, "'n Kritiese beskouing van Deist se 'ABC van Bybeluitleg,'" *In die Skriflig* 18/69 (1984), 38–51.

⁶⁴ DRC, *Kerk en Samelewing: 'n Getuienis van die NG Kerk*, (Bloemfontein: Pro Christo-publikasies, 1986), 42–45; David Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009), 190–191.

⁶⁵ DRC, *Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudings in die lig van die Skrif*. (Kaapstad: NG Kerk-Uitgewers, 1975).

wrote concerning the Bible and its authority.⁶⁶ Although the DRC's document tried to do justice to the critical study of the Bible it remained within the ambit of the traditional reformed understanding of the Bible: The Bible is the Word of God and although it has been written by humans, readers should acknowledge that God is the *auctor primarius* who took care that the human authors conveyed exactly what he intended to communicate.⁶⁷ Critical analysis of the Bible is not wrong as long as it concerns the text of the Bible. When a historical-critical analysis of the Bible undermines the church's confessions and doctrines it becomes anathema. This cannot be tolerated within the church and members who adhere to unacceptable critical viewpoints should be excommunicated.⁶⁸

What the new document reflects is that there was not "a shift of paradigm but only of values" to use the words of Vorster.⁶⁹ He wrote his article shortly after the 1983 meeting of the DRC's Western Cape Synod. The resolutions of this synod influenced the resolutions of the General Synod of the DRC which met in 1986.⁷⁰ The criticism of Vorster is thus applicable to the document *Kerk en Samelewing* as well. There was no serious reflection concerning the Bible and its authority and thus no real change in the way the Bible was viewed and used during the apartheid era. The systematic theologians and ministers who were responsible for drafting the document were "strangers in Jerusalem" since they did not take the changes in the study of the Bible seriously.

The research output of the four above-mentioned biblical scholars were extensive but always of an excellent quality. It did not come as a surprise that they gained overseas recognition (even during the apartheid era) and were requested to contribute to a new Dutch series which were planned as "introductions to theological studies." Deist⁷¹ and Loader⁷² contributed to the

⁶⁶ Pieter C. Potgieter, *Skrif, dogma en verkondiging*, (Kaapstad: Lux Verbi, 1990), 59–67.

⁶⁷ Potgieter, *Skrif, dogma en verkondiging*, 59.

⁶⁸ Potgieter, *Skrif, dogma en verkondiging*, 62–65.

⁶⁹ This is the heading of an article Vorster published in 1984 after the meeting of the DRC's Western Cape Synod in 1983. Willem S. Vorster, "The use of Scripture and the N.G. Kerk: A shift of paradigms or of values?" in *New Faces of Africa: Essays in honour of Ben (Barend Jacobus) Marais*, ed. J.W. (Hoffie) Hofmeyr and Willem S. Vorster, (Pretoria: UNISA, 1984), 35–55.

⁷⁰ Frits Gaum, *Die verhaal van die Ned Geref Kerk se reis met apartheid 1960–1994*, (Wellington: Hugenate-Uitgewers, 1997), 42.

⁷¹ Ferdinand E. Deist, "De overlevings- en traditiekritische methoden," in *Inleiding tot de studie van het Oude Testament*, ed. Adam S. van der Woude (Kampen: Kok, 1986), 159–172.

⁷² James A. Loader, "De structuuranalytische methoden," in *Inleiding tot de studie van het Oude Testament*, Adam S. van der Woude, (Kampen: Kok, 1986), 128–142.

"*Inleiding tot de studie van het Oude Testament*" while Vorster⁷³ and Lategan⁷⁴ contributed to "*Inleiding tot de studie van het Nieuwe Testament*." Loader also contributed to two Dutch biblical commentaries⁷⁵ while Lategan and Vorster contributed two chapters each to a book in a series of the Society of Biblical Literature.⁷⁶

The flourishing of Old and New Testament studies in South Africa during the eighties and nineties attracted a number of postgraduate students. Some of these students wanted to do their studies under the guidance of one of the abovementioned scholars since they were the trendsetters. Deist and Loader attracted quite a number of postgraduate students who wanted to further their studies in Old Testament. The two New Testament scholars, Vorster and Lategan, had less students.⁷⁷ Why Old Testament Studies attracted more postgraduate students during those years remains an enigma. Some of them became academics and continued the work their senior colleagues had done.

D POST-APARTHEID AND THE READING OF THE BIBLE IN REFORMED CIRCLES: 1990–2021

The unbanning of the ANC and other liberation organisations early 1990 caught many citizens off guard.⁷⁸ Serious negotiations between die NP-government, the ANC, other parties and organisations commenced in December 1991 ending in a negotiated transfer of power in 1994 and the introduction of a new constitution in 1996.⁷⁹ However, the past with all its murders, atrocities and painful experiences could not be ignored and a "Truth and Reconciliation Committee" (TRC) was set up by the new Government of National Unity in 1995 to allow people to tell their stories of how the violence of the past decades affected them

⁷³ Willem S. Vorster, "De Taal van het Nieuwe Testament;" *ibid.*, "'Formgeschichte' en 'Redaktionsgeschichte';" *ibid.*, "De Structuuranalyse" in *Inleiding tot de studie van het Nieuwe Testament*, ed. A.F.J. Klijn, (Kampen: Kok, 1986), 32–42, 94–111, 127–152.

⁷⁴ Bernard C. Lategan, "Inleiding tot de Uitleg van het Nieuwe Testament," in *Inleiding tot de studie van het Nieuwe Testament*, ed. A.F.J. Klijn, (Kampen: Kok, 1986), 47–70.

⁷⁵ James A Loader, *Esther*, De Prediking van het Oude Testament, (Nijkerk: Uitgeverij G.F. Callenbach, 1980); *ibid.*, *Prediker: Een praktische verklaring*, Tekst en Toelichting, (Kampen: Kok, 1984); *ibid.* *Ruth: Een praktische bijbelverklaring*. Tekst en Toelichting. Kampen: Kok, 1994.

⁷⁶ Bernard C. Lategan and Willem S. Vorster, *Text and Reality: Aspects of Reference in Biblical Texts*, The Society of Biblical Literature: Semeia Studies, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985.

⁷⁷ The other scholars mentioned in footnote 29 should also be mentioned. They too guided postgraduate students and kept biblical studies alive in South Africa.

⁷⁸ Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 382.

⁷⁹ Rodney Davenport, *The Transfer of Power in South Africa*, (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1998); Thula Simpson, *History of South Africa: From 1902 to the Present*, (Cape Town: Penguin Books, 2021), 323–355.

and to hear the confessions of those who were the perpetrators.⁸⁰ It was hoped that churches, financial banks, big businesses and newspaper companies would also step forward and tell how they contributed in supporting the apartheid policy. The three Afrikaans speaking reformed churches at first refrained from taking part in the special session of the TRC dealing with religious communities held from 17–19 November 1997 in East London.⁸¹ However, four theologians of the RCSA attended and addressed the special meeting of the TRC⁸² while two ministers of the DRC attended to acknowledge the role the DRC had played during the apartheid era (1948–1994).⁸³ The RCA refrained from taking responsibility for what went wrong in the past. It is in this context and atmosphere that Gerrie Snyman, a biblical scholar and loyal member of the RCSA, commenced with his reflections on how the Bible had been used and interpreted in the RCSA and why the acceptance of a new constitution cannot be ignored. According to him the new constitution (with its charter of basic human rights) constitutes a radical break with the past and it impacts on the interpretation and use of the Bible in the new South Africa.

When Snyman commenced with his postgraduate studies in Old Testament at the University of South Africa (Unisa) under the guidance of Deist, he was already well versed in narrative criticism and reader-response criticism. He did not learn his trade from Vorster or Lategan but from Wolfgang Iser (1926–2007) and Hans Robert Jauss (1921–1997). Prior to enrolling at Unisa, he studied for a brief period at the University of Konstanz in Germany. After returning to South Africa he published his first academic article focussing on two narratives in John 6. The feeding of the multitude (Jhn. 6:1–15), and Jesus's encounter with his disciples on the sea of Galilee (Jhn. 6:16–21).⁸⁴ In his doctoral dissertation he continued the trend to read the Bible stories as literature and compared the "twin" ark narratives (2 Sam. 6 and 1 Chron. 15–16).⁸⁵ He was able to show why reader-response criticism can assist one in understanding why

⁸⁰ Antjie Krog gives a vivid description of what transpired during the hearings of the TRC in her book *Country of My Skull*, (Johannesburg: Random House, 1998).

⁸¹ Piet Meiring, *Kroniek van die Waarheidskommissie*, (Vanderbijlpark: Carpe Diem Boeke, 1999), 274–275, 288–289.

⁸² They were Alwyn du Plessis, Bennie van der Walt, Amie van Wyk, and Ponti Venter, cf. Meiring, *Kroniek van die Waarheidskommissie*, 289.

⁸³ Gaum's book *Die verhaal van die Ned Geref Kerk se reis met apartheid*, narrated the story of the DRC's involvement in supporting the apartheid policy and how the DRC revised and abandoned its previous convictions. This document was not submitted for use at the hearings of the TRC. Nevertheless it was meant as a "short story" of the road the DRC had travelled with apartheid.

⁸⁴ Gerrie Snyman, "Die wonders in Johannes 6 verklaar aan die hand van vertellersperspektief," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 44/3 (1988), 708–733.

⁸⁵ Gerrie Snyman, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Reception Theory: The authority of biblical texts and the Chronicler's interpretation of the sacred story of the ark*, DTh-thesis Old Testament, (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1991).

the two narratives differ. A different historical context, a different author, a different plot and different original readers contributed towards the differences in the stories. Moreover, the David character of Chronicles is not the David character of Samuel. The thesis was soon followed by an article arguing a case that the Old Testament should not be regarded as a "single pool of stories" but should be read as part of the "Great Sea of Stories". He concluded his article with these words: "The Old Testament is not a document on its own, but as religious tradition it plays the role that other religious' documents and stories play. This greater pool helps us to understand the Old Testament and ourselves."⁸⁶ The article was probably also meant to critique the "canonical criticism" developed by Brevard Childs (1923–2007).⁸⁷ Snyman emphasised that the Christian canon (the Bible as a whole) should not be regarded as the sole guiding principle for interpreting biblical stories. Outside the borders of the canon are other stories which — if read — can open readers' eyes to the wisdom in these stories and thus benefit readers' understanding of the biblical books.

Snyman soon established himself as a biblical scholar whose research and views cannot be ignored and he started engaging the RCSA's theologians and their reading and use of the Bible. According to him they did not keep up with the new developments but feared acknowledging the role readers play in the act of reading. They were afraid of falling pray to subjectivity:

"Die klem by die GKSA se teologiesering val nog sterk op God as outeur en op die Bybelteks as openbaring (van God) wat as vanselfsprekend aanvaar word en waarvan die betekenis net hoef getap te word. Die rol van die leser begin flouerig deurskemer, hoewel op 'n negatiewe wyse, want net een tipe leser word gelegitimeer, naamlik die 'kinderlik-gelowige' een wat op die ou end die Bybel in naïef-realisitiese terme lees."⁸⁸

He was convinced that reformed theologians could benefit from learning how contemporary scholars in departments of literature read texts. Since the early seventies of the previous century, these scholars' focus shifted from the author and his/her text to the readers and the role they play in creating meaning. The arguments of RCSA theologians that a historic-grammatical reading of a biblical text is sufficient in unlocking the meaning of the biblical texts are flawed.

⁸⁶ Gerrie Snyman, "The Old Testament: An absurd Fossil or a Pool in the great Sea of Stories?" in *Old Testament Science and Reality*, ed. Eben Scheffler and Willie Wessels, (Pretoria: Verba Vitae, 1992), 82–85.

⁸⁷ Gerald T. Sheppard. "Canonical Criticism", in *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. John H. Hayes, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 164–167.

⁸⁸ Gerrie Snyman, "Kenteoretiese besinning oor teologiebeoefening," (1992), 263.

The theologians have to acquaint themselves with modern literary criticism and reflect on the role readers play when reading a text.⁸⁹

Snyman wanted the churches and their theologians to take leave of naïve realism with its belief that God reveals himself and his will through historical events narrated in the biblical text. The theologians should take note of an established truth in literary circles that readers play a vital role in bringing a text to life. Moreover, theologians should acknowledge that not all narratives in the Bible are to be read as history and that the image of God may differ from book to book since the books were written by different authors living in different periods with different audiences in mind. A biblical author may even challenge his intended audience/readers' convictions concerning the God of Israel. The book of Jonah may serve as an example. Readers who erroneously claim that the book narrates history and who cannot unlock the humour in the narrative will probably not understand the altercation between the God character and the prophet in the last chapter of the book.⁹⁰

While engaging the theologians of the RCSA, Snyman became convinced that "reading is a dangerous activity",⁹¹ especially when the reading is done not for the sake of one's own education and entertainment but when it is done in the context of a church congregation, a church circle or a synod. Ministers' and theologians' readings of the Bible are not flawless and do not always have a positive influence on people's lives but quite often leave scars on other people's bodies. Snyman felt compelled to write a book about how theologians of the RCSA read the Bible during the apartheid era and how they continued with this kind of reading after 1994. He wanted them to reflect on the scars which this kind of reading left on other people's bodies and the pain this kind of reading is still causing. He wanted to convince them that there are better ways of reading the Bible. One of the better ways of reading is one called "an ethical reading" of the Bible. An ethical reading encourages readers to reflect on the reading process and the effects thereof. This kind of reading asks questions like: Will my reading harm others, or will it contribute towards their healing and growth? Will the reading do justice to the text, and will it contribute towards a more equitable and just society? Snyman also labelled it "a responsible reading" since readers have

⁸⁹ Gerrie Snyman, "Binnegevegte in die GKSA: Verskuiwing van 'plausibility structures'?" *In die Skriflig* 26/3 (1992), 364–365.

⁹⁰ Gerrie Snyman's mini-dissertation for his ThB-degree concerned this book and the way Deist interpreted it in his popular commentary *Die God van Jona* (Kaapstad: Tafelberg-Uitgewers, 1981). Snyman's mini-dissertation was titled "Die historisiteit van Jona," ThB-skripsie, (Potchefstroom: PU vir CHO), 1983. His endorsing of Deist's viewpoints ruffled some feathers.

⁹¹ Margaret Davies, "Reader-Response Criticism", 578.

to take responsibility for the outcomes of their readings and for how they treated the text.⁹²

The book attracted a lot of attention, and a number of theologians and biblical scholars engaged Snyman's arguments. Jurie le Roux, a biblical scholar, opined that Snyman's critique levelled at the reformed churches' support of the apartheid policy reflects a misunderstanding of the theologians' motifs and the context in which their readings were done.⁹³ Moreover, Snyman is too concerned with the "Others" and the scars which a "wrong reading" of the Bible had left on them. The younger generation uses the wisdom of hindsight to judge previous generations' readings and acts, while that generation was predisposed to falter since they were influenced by the dominant traditions in the Western World. The Western World did not meet the "Others" on an equal footing until the Second World War (1939–1945). Racial prejudice was in the air prior to that war. The reformed theologians were not villains but only children of their times who wanted to create a society where people from different groups and races could live together in harmony.

Snyman took Le Roux's critique to heart but argued that times have changed. We are living in the 21st century and in a democratic dispensation with a new constitution with a charter of basic human rights. Reformed biblical scholars and theologians cannot continue reading the Bible in a naïve realistic way as was done during the previous century when reformed theologians used biblical texts as warrants for the apartheid policy. This kind of reading and use of the Bible are outdated and create problems when theologians discuss current issues like the ordination of women and the endorsing of gay relationships and marriages.⁹⁴ A better way of reading the Bible is to do a "responsible reading" or an "ethical reading", that is, a reading which takes responsibility for the effects of one's reading.

Hans van Deventer, who belongs to the same church tradition as Snyman, expresses his sympathy with Snyman's position as a biblical scholar within the RCSA.⁹⁵ Moreover, he admires his courage to engage the RCSA's theologians and to argue a case for the Old and New Testament to be regarded not as auxiliary subjects of theology but as major subjects on an equal footing with systematic

⁹² Snyman, *Om die Bybel ander te lees*, 4, 53–67.

⁹³ Jurie le Roux, "... En verlos ons van die bose, die waarheid en apartheid," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 31/1 (2010), an addendum to Gerrie Snyman's article "Anders lees, sien, praat en glo — 'n antwoord op ander se lees van 'Om die Bybel anders te lees: 'n Etiek van Bybellees'," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 31/1 (2010), Art. #303, 13 pages, DOI: 10.4102/ve.v31i1.303.

⁹⁴ Snyman, "Anders lees, sien, praat en glo."

⁹⁵ Hans van Deventer, "Eerder anders as elders: Gerrie Snyman se bydrae in die konteks van die Gereformeerde teologie," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 31/1 (2010), Art. #306, 6 pages. DOI: 10.4102/ve.v31i1.306.

theology (or dogmatics). He concurs with Snyman that historical readings and modern literary studies can benefit theology and then writes: "In behoudende kringe is daar alternatiewe beskikbaar wat ons in die Gereformeerde konteks sinvol kan gebruik om voortdurend die vraag na wat die Bybel sê, te kan beantwoord."⁹⁶

The critique of Amie van Wyk, a systematic theologian from the RCSA, on the book of Snyman, can best be described as the critique of someone working in a totally different paradigm from the one Snyman is trying to promote. The two previous diagrams (pp. 17, 24) highlight the differences well. Van Wyk still adheres to the conviction that God is the *primary author* of the Bible and that the biblical authors are merely *secondary authors*. He, therefore, claims a special status for the Bible as a text. It has "something more" compared to ordinary literature.⁹⁷ Concerning the violence in the Old Testament, he does not buy Snyman's uneasiness with the way some of the Old Testament narratives portray the God of Israel and the effect these narratives had and still have on readers. Van Wyk interprets the conquest of Canaan and the extermination of the Canaanites as God's punishment for the wickedness of the Canaanites, and he calls on Deuteronomy 9:4–5 as a warrant for his statement.⁹⁸ According to him, a proper reading of the Old Testament would, however, reveal that the God of Israel is characterised as a God of love and mercy and that this is endorsed by the authors of the New Testament.⁹⁹ Van Wyk acknowledges that he was a card-carrying member of the NP and a supporter of the apartheid policy. However, as years passed, he realised that the policy contradicted the gospel and therefore resigned as a member and became an outspoken opposer within the RCSA.¹⁰⁰ He mentions this to argue a case that there is no need to embrace reader-response criticism and do an ethical reading of the Bible to realise that apartheid was wrong. He as a "conservative reformed theologian" was able to see that. Moreover, there were other conservative reformed theologians who criticised the apartheid policy and the reformed churches' support thereof.

Snyman replied to Van Wyk's critique and elaborated on his conviction that reader-response criticism should not be sidelined when the Bible is read: "Die aanname waarmee my benadering werk, berus op die idee dat die mens as leser nie slegs die betekenis van die teks ontvang nie, maar dat die mens daadwerklik meehelp in die konstruksie van daardie betekenis."¹⁰¹ He also

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Amie J.H. van Wyk, "Oor die Bybel, Bybellees en etiek: In gesprek met Gerrie Snyman," *In die Skriflig*, 42/8 (2008), 691.

⁹⁸ Van Wyk, "Oor die Bybel," 692.

⁹⁹ Van Wyk refers to the following texts: Exodus 34:6, Psalm 86:15, Psalm 103:8, Psalm 145:8, Jonah 4:2, Joel 2:13, Nehemiah 9:17, *ibid.*, 692.

¹⁰⁰ Van Wyk, "Oor die Bybel," 699.

¹⁰¹ Gerrie Snyman, "Om die Bybel *sensitief* en in sy *rykdom* te lees — in gesprek met Amie van Wyk," *In die Skriflig* 44/3–4 (2010).

emphasised that the reading of the Bible serves social interests and that theologians should reflect on whose interests they are serving with their readings. Only when readers take responsibility for their readings will it be possible to enter into a proper dialogue. However, when readers claim that their reading was done in a totally objective way under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in total obedience to God then dialogue becomes an impossibility.¹⁰²

E CONCLUSION

Throughout his academic career, Snyman wrote as a passionate reformed Christian who discovered a better way of reading and interpreting the Bible: narrative criticism and reader-response criticism. This way of reading the Bible opened his eyes to the flaws in the RCSA's reading of the Bible in support of the apartheid policy. He writes with clarity and conviction and continues to associate with his tribe (the white Afrikaans-speaking community) and the church he was baptised in (the Reformed Churches of South Africa). He is not an outsider nor a deserter. Unfortunately, only a few heard his *cri de coeur*.

Being a blue-blooded scholar he continued his research and reflections and joined scholars like Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Daniel Patte who argue a case for an ethical and responsible reading of the Bible in our day and age. However, he regards himself as a perpetrator since he had to do compulsory military service and his church refrained from taking part in the session of the TRC to confess the part they played in supporting apartheid biblically. The story of Cain (Gen 4:1–17) therefore appeals to him since it is a story of a perpetrator who murdered his brother and now finds himself in liminal spaces. He accepts Alan Boesak's reading of the narrative and his identification of the white oppressors in South Africa as Cain. Snyman writes: "As ek deur die oë van die slagoffers van apartheid kyk (soos Boesak) en dan my eie spieëlbeeld sien, sien ek ook die praktyk van witwees sedert 1948 en die geweldadige verwonding van diegene wat nie, soos ek, wit is nie."¹⁰³ But he also takes his cues from Katharina von Kellenbach's book *The Mark of Cain: Guilt and Denial in the Post-war Lives of Nazi Perpetrators* in which "[she] associates the Nazi perpetrators and their collective legacy with Cain."¹⁰⁴ She emphasises that communities of perpetration will only find solace and moral recovery when they do not ignore the past but keep on remembering it.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² Snyman, "Om die Bybel"; Snyman, *Om die Bybel Anders te Lees*, 118.

¹⁰³ Gerrie Snyman, "'Ek is Kain': 'n Hermeneutiek van weerloosheid as 'n antwoord op die dekoloniale diskoers," *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 55/3 (2021), 7.

¹⁰⁴ Snyman, "A hermeneutic of vulnerability," 651. Katharina von Kellenbach, *The Mark of Cain: Guilt and Denial in the Post-war Lives of Nazi Perpetrators*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

¹⁰⁵ Snyman, "A hermeneutic of vulnerability," 652.

Reading what Snyman writes about Cain being a perpetrator, one cannot but wonder whether his reading (and those who agree with him) goes deep enough. He reads the story of Cain (Gen 4:1–17) as a parable — a parable similar to the one the prophet Nathan told David after having murdered Uriah, Bathsheba's husband (2 Sam. 12:1–4). After reading the "parable of Cain" Snyman confesses "I am Cain!" in the hope of being looked at not only as a perpetrator but as a vulnerable human being remembering the past history of violence and deaths. Already prior to reading the "parable of Cain" he developed a "hermeneutic of vulnerability" to read the Bible with new eyes and with Others who have been wronged not only by the apartheid policy but also by patriarchy, colonialism and Christianity.

Appealing as his "hermeneutic of vulnerability" is, I opine that the "parable of Cain" could be read in another way. Cain stands for Christianity who murdered his brother Abel (Judaism) to become the state religion of the Roman empire and eventually the dominant religion of the Western World. This religion with its supersessionist theology and its claim to absoluteness is the root of many evils in the Western World — from the slaughtering of Jews and the killing of heretics to the crusades, the burning of women as witches, slavery, racism, wars and many more.¹⁰⁶ Concerning the claim to absoluteness the German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) years ago, said: "Both in its motive and in its consequences this claim is a disaster for human beings. We must oppose this fatal claim for the sake of the truth and the sake of our souls."¹⁰⁷ Concerning the conviction that Christianity is superior to other religions one should ask: "Is it possible to break the conviction that white skinned people are superior to others with darker complexions if the ladder of the religions still stands vertical — Christianity at the top and all the other religions below."¹⁰⁸ The Others whom we meet and have to look in the eyes are often darker skinned people with a different religion. It is not only Whiteness that needs to be addressed in the Western World but Christianity with its claim to exclusivism and absolutism. The apartheid policy was built on the foundation of white European superiority and the roots of the claim to being superior are directly linked to the Christian claim to superiority and absoluteness.

D BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Barr, James. *The Bible in the Modern World*. London: SCM Press, 1973.
 ———. *The Scope and Authority of the Bible*. Explorations in Theology 7. London: SCM, 1980.

¹⁰⁶ Philip Kennedy, *A Modern Introduction to Theology: New questions to old beliefs*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 25.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Reinholdt Bernhardt, *Christianity without Absolutes*, (London: SCM Press, 1994), 6.

¹⁰⁸ My free rendering of Theo Salemink's words in his book *De Afrikaanse Mythe* (Kampen: Kok, 1997), 213.

- Barton, John. *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Studies*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984.
- Bernhardt, Reinhold. *Christianity without Absolutes*. London: SCM Press, 1994.
- Coetzee, J.C. "'n 'Ou Boek in 'n nuwe wêreld' of 'n nuwe Boek in 'n ou wêreld?'" *In die Skriflig* 13/49 (1979), 4–15.
- Collins, John J. "Exodus and Liberation in Postcolonial Perspective." Pages 53–74 in *The Bible after Babel: Historical Criticism in a Postmodern Age*. Edited by John J. Collins. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.
- Davenport, Rodney T.R.H. *The Transfer of Power in South Africa*. Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 1998.
- Davies, Margaret. "Reader-Response Criticism." Pages 578–580 in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden. London: SCM Press, 1990.
- Deist, Ferdinand E. *Die Woord in Beweging: Bybeluitleg vir die moderne tyd*. Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1974.
- _____. *Die Noodlottige Band: Die verhouding tussen Kerk en Staat in Oud-Israel*. Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1975.
- _____. *Historiese Heuristiek, Teologiese Hermeneutiek en Skrifgesag*. Port Elizabeth: Universiteit van Port Elizabeth, 1976.
- _____. *Die God van Jona*. Kaapstad: Tafelberg-Uitgewers, 1981.
- _____. *Sê God so? Protes en pleidooi — oor óns tyd, vir óns land*. Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1982.
- _____. *Verandering sonder geweld?* Kaapstad: Tafelberg, 1983.
- _____. *Kan ons die Bybel dan nog glo? Onderweg na 'n Gereformeerde Skrifbeskouing*. Pretoria: J.L. van Schaik, 1986.
- _____. "Die wa van Ussa, ofte wel Johannes du Plessis en die belydenisskrifte," *ThEv (SA)* 19/1 (1986), 36–65.
- _____. "De overlevings- en traditiekritiese methoden." Pages 159–172 in *Inleiding tot de studie van het Oude Testament*. Edited by Adam S. Van der Woude. Kampen: Kok, 1986.
- _____. "Naïewe realisme en Ou-Testamentiese wetenskap in die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk." Pages 23–32 in *In Mensetaal oor God se Woord: Huldigingsbundel opgedra aan professor A.H. van Zyl*. Edited by Willem S. Prinsloo and Wil Vosloo. Kaapstad: Lux Verbi, 1988.
- _____. "'God met ons?' Psalm 46." Pages 31–55 in *Hoe lees 'n mens die Bybel?* Edited by Pieter G.R. de Villiers. Pretoria: Universiteit van Suid-Afrika, 1988.
- _____. *Ervaring, Rede en Metode in Skrifuitleg: 'n Wetenskapshistoriese ondersoek na Skrifuitleg in die Ned. Geref. Kerk 1840–1990*. Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, 1994.
- DRC. *Ras, Volk en Nasie en Volkereverhoudinge in die lig van die Skrif*. Kaapstad: N.G. Kerk-Uitgewers, 1975.
- _____. *Kerk en Samelewing: 'n Getuienis van die NG Kerk*. Bloemfontein: Pro Christo-publikasies, 1986.
- Erasmus, A.S. (Fanus). *Prof. Johannes du Plessis 1868–1935: Baanbreker, verbreker van die gereformeerde geloof?* Bloemfontein: UV Teologiese Studies, 2009.
- Gaum, Frits. *Die verhaal van die Ned Geref Kerk se reis met apartheid 1960–1994*. Wellington: Hugenate-Uitgewers, 1997.

- Grabbe, Lester L. "Fundamentalism and Scholarship: The Case of Daniel." Pages 133–152 in *Scripture: Meaning and Method. Essays presented to Anthony Tyrrell Hanson*. Edited by B.P. Thompson. Hull: Hull University Press, 1987.
- Heyns, Johan A. *Brug tussen God en mens: Oor die Bybel*. Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1973.
- Jablonski, Nina G. *Living Color: The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.
- Johnson, Jay E. "Sodomy and Gendered Love: Reading Genesis 19 in the Anglican Communion." Pages 413–432 in *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*. Edited by Michael Lieb, Emma Mason, and Jonathan Roberts. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Kennedy, Philip. *A Modern Introduction to Theology: New questions to old beliefs*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2006.
- Kinghorn, Johann. "Die Groei van 'n Teologie — Van Sendingbeleid tot Verskeidenheidsteologie." Pages 86–116 in *Die NG Kerk en Apartheid*. Edited by Johann Kinghorn. Johannesburg: Macmillan, 1986.
- Krog, Antjie. *Country of My Skull*. Johannesburg: Random House, 1998.
- Lategan, Bernard C. "Inleiding tot de Uitleg van het Nieuwe Testament." Pages 47–70 in *Inleiding tot de studie van het Nieuwe Testament*. Edited by A.F.J. Klijn. Kampen: Kok, 1986.
- _____. "Reader clues in the text of Galatians." *Journal of Literary Studies* 3 (1987), 47–59.
- _____. "Reading Romans 13 in a South African context." Pages 115–133 in *The Reader and Beyond*. Edited by Bernard C. Lategan. Pretoria: HSRC Publishers, 1992.
- _____. "Reading the Letter to the Galatians from an apartheid and a post-apartheid perspective." Pages 128–141 in *The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by Ingrid R. Kitzberger. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Lategan, Bernard C. and Vorster, Willem S. *Text and Reality: Aspects of Reference in Biblical Texts*. The Society of Biblical Literature: Semeia Studies. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.
- Le Roux, Jurie H. 1986. "Johannes du Plessis as Bybelwetenskaplike." *Theologia Evangelica (SA)* 9/1, 15–35.
- _____. *A Story of Two Ways: Thirty Years of Old Testament Scholarship in South Africa*. Old Testament Essays Supplement Number 2. Pretoria: Verba Vitae, 1993.
- _____. "God se brug na die mens: Iets goddeliks of iets mensliks? ('n Kort woord oor Johan Heyns se Skrifleer)." *Skrif en Kerk* 15/1 (1994), 27–51.
- Lion-Cachet, Frans N. "'n Kritiese beskouing van Deist se 'ABC van Bybeluitleg'." *In die Skriflig* 18/69 (1984), 38–51.
- Loader, James A. "Gedagtes oor gekontroleerde eksegeese." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 34/1–2 (1978), 1–11.
- _____. "Eksegese van die Ou Testament en die vervulling deur Christus." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 34/1–2 (1978), 11–19.
- _____. "Die basiese eenheid in struktuuranalise." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 34/1–2 (1978), 19–26.

- _____. "The use of the Bible in conventional South African theology." Pages 1–25 in *Scripture and the Use of Scripture*. Edited by Willem S. Vorster. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1979.
- _____. *Esther*. De Prediking van het Oude Testament. Nijkerk: Uitgeverij G.F. Callenbach, 1980.
- _____. *Prediker: Een praktische verklaring*. Tekst en Toelichting. Kampen: Kok, 1984.
- _____. "De structuuranalytische methoden." Pages 128–142 in *Inleiding tot de studie van het Oude Testament*. Edited by Adam S. van der Woude. Kampen: Kok, 1986.
- _____. *A Tale of Two Cities: Sodom and Gomorrah in the Old Testament, early Jewish and early Christian Traditions*. Kampen: Kok, 1990.
- _____. *Ruth: Een praktische bijbelverklaring*. Tekst en Toelichting. Kampen: Kok, 1994.
- Loubser, J.A. (Bobby). *The Apartheid Bible: A critical review of racial theology in South Africa*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 1987.
- Lubbe, Jan. 2002. *Kleur verskil: 'n Perspektief op die NG Kerk in 1948 en apartheid as kerklike beleid*. Bloemfontein: Barnabas, 2002.
- Meiring, Piet. *Kroniek van die Waarheidskommissie*. Vanderbijlpark: Carpe Diem Boeke, 1999.
- Noll, Mark A. *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible*. Leicester: Apollos, 1991.
- Potgieter, Pieter C. *Skrif, dogma en verkondiging*. Kaapstad: Lux Verbi, 1990.
- Salemink, Theo. *De Afrikaanse Mythe*. Kampen: Kok, 1997.
- Sheppard, Gerald T. "Canonical Criticism." Pages 164–167 in *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. Edited by Hayes, John H. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.
- Simpson, Thula. *History of South Africa: From 1902 to the Present*. Cape Town: Penguin Books, 2021.
- Smit, Dirkie. *Hoe verstaan ons wat ons lees? 'n Dink- en werkboek oor die hermeneutiek vir predikers en studente*. Kaapstad: N.G. Kerk-Uitgewers, 1987.
- _____. *Neem, lees! Hoe ons die Bybel hoor en verstaan*. Wellington: Lux Verbi.BM, 2006.
- Snyman, Gerrie F. "Die historisiteit van Jona." ThB-skripsie. Potchefstroom: PU vir CHO, 1983.
- _____. "Die wonders in Johannes 6 verklaar aan die hand van vertellersperspektief." *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 44/3 (1988), 708–733.
- _____. *Biblical Hermeneutics and Reception Theory: The authority of biblical texts and the Chronicler's interpretation of the sacred story of the ark*. DTh-thesis Old Testament. Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1991.
- _____. "The Old Testament: An absurd Fossil or a Pool in the great Sea of Stories?" Pages 70–88 in *Old Testament Science and Reality: A Mosaic for Deist*. Edited by Eben H. Scheffler and Willie F. Wessels. Pretoria: Verba Vitae, 1992.
- _____. "Kenteoretiese besinning oor teologiebeoefening aan die Teologiese Skool van Potchefstroom die afgelope twintig jaar." *In die Skriflig* 26/2 (1992), 247–266.
- _____. "Binnegevegte in die GKSA: Verskuiwing van 'plausibility structures'?" *In die Skriflig* 26/3 (1992), 351–367.
- _____. *Om die Bybel Anders te Lees: 'n Etiek van Bybellees*. Pretoria: Griffel Media, 2007.

- _____. "Anders lees, sien, praat en glo — 'n antwoord op ander se lees van 'Om die Bybel anders te lees: 'n etiek van Bybellees'." *Verbum et Ecclesia* 31/1 (2010), Art. #303, 13 pages. DOI: 10.4102/ve.v31i1.303.
- _____. "Om die Bybel *sensitief* en in sy *rykdom* te lees — in gesprek met Amie van Wyk." *In die Skriflig* 44/3–4 (2010). Online: <https://indieskriflig.org.za/index.php/skriflig/article/view/171/73>
- _____. "A hermeneutic of vulnerability: Redeeming Cain?" *Stellenbosch Theological Journal* 1/2 (2015): 633–665. Online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17570/stj.2015.v1n2.a30>
- _____. "Totius: Die ironie van vergewe en vergeet." *LitNet Akademies (GW)* 12/2 (2015): 211–235. Online <https://www.litnet.co.za/totius-die-ironie-van-vergewe-en-vergeet/>.
- _____. "A hermeneutic of vulnerability: Edom in Micah 1:2–5." *Journal of Semitics* 25/1 (2016).
- _____. "'Ek is Kain': 'n Hermeneutiek van weerloosheid as 'n antwoord op die dekoloniale diskoers." *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 55/3 (2021). Online <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v55i3.2738>
- Spangenberg, Izak (Sakkie) J.J. "Paradigmaveranderinge in die Bybelwetenskappe: 'n Bydrae tot die gesprek tussen die Bybelwetenskappe en Sistematiese Teologie." *Religion & Theology* 1/1 (1994), 144–184.
- _____. "Op pad na 2000 — oftewel, oor al die dinge wat gebeur het." *Old Testament Essays* 11/3 (1998), 534–566.
- _____. "Die Suid-Afrikaanse navorsingsgeskiedenis van die boek Daniël en die eksegetiese spel." *Old Testament Essays* 12 (1999), 591–608.
- _____. "Hoe dink vandag se mense oor die Bybel?" *Verbum et Ecclesia* 23/1, (2002), 183–195.
- Sölle, Dorothee. "Dorothee Sölle." Pages 22–28 in *How I Have Changed: Reflections on Thirty Years of Theology*. Edited by Jürgen Moltmann. London: SCM Press, 1997.
- Strauss, Piet. *Gereformeerdes onder die Suiderkruis 1652–2011: Die verhaal van vier Afrikaanse kerke*. Bloemfontein: Sun Media, 2015.
- Van Deventer, Hans. "Eerder anders as elders: Gerrie Snyman se bydrae in die konteks van die Gereformeerde teologie." *Verbum et Ecclesia* 31/1 (2010), Art. #306, 6 pages. DOI: 10.4102/ve.v31i1.306.
- Van Wyk, J.H. (Amie). "Oor die Bybel, Bybellees en etiek: In gesprek met Gerrie Snyman." *In die Skriflig*, 42/8 (2008), 658–707.
- Van Zyl, Hermie C. "Is die Bybel nog God se Woord?" Pages 72–87 in *So Glo Ons: Gelowig nagedink oor God, die Bybel en ons leefwêreld*. Edited by Meiring, Piet. Vereniging: CUM, 2001.
- Von Kellenbach, Katherina. *The Mark of Cain: Guilt and Denial in the Post-war Lives of Nazi Perpetrators*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Vorster, Johannes N. "The use of Scripture in fundamentalism." Pages 155–175 in *Paradigms and progress in theology*. Edited by Johann Mouton, Andries van Aarde and Willem S. Vorster. Pretoria: HSRC Publishers, 1988.
- Vorster, Willem S. *'n Ou Boek in 'n nuwe wêreld — gedagtes rondom die interpretasie van die Nuwe Testament*. Pretoria: Universiteit van Suid-Afrika, 1977.
- _____. "The Bible and apartheid 1." Pages 94–111 in *Apartheid is a Heresy*. Edited by John de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio. Cape Town: David Philip, 1983.

_____. "The use of Scripture and the N.G. Kerk: A shift of paradigms or of values?" Pages 35–55 in *New Faces of Africa: Essays in honour of Ben (Barend Jacobus) Marais*. Edited by J.W. (Hoffie) Hofmeyr and Willem S. Vorster. Pretoria: UNISA, 1984.

_____. "De Taal van het Nieuwe Testament." Pages 32–42 in *Inleiding tot de studie van het Nieuwe Testament*. Edited by A.F.J. Klijn. Kampen: Kok, 1986.

_____. "'Formgeschichte' en 'Redaktionsgeschichte'." Pages 94–111 in *Inleiding tot de studie van het Nieuwe Testament*. Edited by A.F.J. Klijn. Kampen: Kok, 1986.

_____. "De Structuuranalyse," Pages 127–152 in *Inleiding tot de studie van het Nieuwe Testament*. Edited by A.F.J. Klijn. Kampen: Kok, 1986.

_____. "Oor lees, lesers en Johannes 4." Pages 1–30 in *Hoe lees 'n mens die Bybel?* Edited by Pieter G.R. de Villiers. Pretoria: Universiteit van Suid-Afrika, 1988.

Welsh, David. *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009.

Izak (Sakkie) J.J. Spangenberg. University of South Africa, Biblical and Ancient Studies. Email: spangijj@iafrica.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4914-1766>.