

Knut Holter's Africana Book Reviews: (1) Books on Africa and the Bible

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Carter, Jason A.

Inside the Whirlwind: The Book of Job through African Eyes. Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2017 (African Christian Studies Series). Pb. 303 p. \$ 38,00.

There is a need for more reflection in Africa on the kind of theological and existential questions that are raised by the Old Testament book of Job, and there is a need for more case studies and reflection in relation to popular interpretation of the Bible. The present book combines the two, and is therefore a most welcome contribution to African biblical studies as well as African theology in general.

Dr Jason A. Carter is a Presbyterian theologian serving as a missionary/professor in a Protestant theological seminary in Equatorial Guinea. Based on what seems to be a very solid empirical work—more than 200 participants in six distinct interpretive communities: one Presbyterian and two Pentecostal churches, a Protestant theological seminary, a leprosarium (mainly Catholics), and a HIV/AIDS support group—Dr Carter is able to present an insightful and challenging study of how Job is read and can be read in an African context. The book consists of two main parts. The first—chapters 1-3—deals with hermeneutical approaches and interpretive contexts, in three chapters. Ch. 1 gives a general overview of the hermeneutics that is adopted in this study and a discussion of the choice of Job as a key into the interpretive context. Ch. 2 offers a survey of the cultural context, an ethnography of the Fang peoples of Equatorial Guinea. Ch. 3 offers a survey of the church context, a Presbyterian church and two different Pentecostal churches. The second part—chapters 4-6—makes use of the perspectives of the first part, offering some illustrative contextual readings of Job. Ch. 4 analyzes how evil and theodicy are met by Fang Christians, based on Job's portrayal of God. Ch. 5 looks at the role of lament and blame in the experiences of leprosy patients and people living with HIV/AIDS, as they dialogue with examples of Job lamenting. Ch. 6 analyzes the eschatological perspectives of Fang Christians, as they in their prayers express hope of a victorious God.

All in all, the book finds its interpretive context and illustrative examples from the Fang in Equatorial Guinea, but its concerns and interpretive potentials deserve to find readers all over Africa.

Reviewed 29 April 2018 by Professor Knut Holter

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