

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

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### **Udoekpo, Michael Ufok**

*Rethinking the Prophetic Critique of Worship in Amos 5 for Contemporary Nigeria and the USA.* Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2017. Pb. 183 p. \$ 26,00.

The author is a Nigerian biblical scholar, presently teaching in a Roman Catholic seminary in the USA. He has previously published a number of studies, including a monograph on Zephaniah. The present book is a close reading of Amos 5, from Nigerian and US perspectives. Amos 5 is in many ways a summary and exemplification of the prophet's ethical teaching, and it has received much attention from biblical scholars. However, Dr Udoekpo argues, most of these studies focus on matters of social justice, rather than matters of worship. Hence, there is a need for a study that accentuates Amos' theology of worship, and the present book aims to be a contribution in this direction, combining a thorough exegetical analysis of Amos 5 with a conscious definition of two interpretive contexts, those of today's Nigeria and USA.

After a brief introduction that discusses the purpose and context of the book, the book is divided into six main chapters. Ch. 1 presents the background of the prophet (constructed mainly out of the book), the book and its theological message. Ch. 2 offers a translation and textual critical analysis of Amos 5, building a fundament for the following analysis. Ch. 3 discusses Amos in relation to the twelve minor prophets, being open to the current scholarly attention to seeing the twelve as a composite unit, and with particular attention to what this means for the interpretation of Amos 5. Then comes ch. 4, with a discussion of the structure of Amos and in particular of Amos 5, and ch. 5, with an exegetical analysis of the chapter. This analysis has a general focus, but at the same time, it shows particular attention to Amos' theology of worship. Finally, ch. 6 relates the message of Amos 5 to contemporary religious communities in Nigeria and in the USA. As far as Nigeria is concerned, the social and economic injustice is noticed and related to Amos' call for justice in the court system and his care for the poor. And, as for the religious situation, Amos' denunciation of syncretism and abusive use of religious power is read into the Nigerian context. When it comes to the USA, Amos has a similar potential into a society of increasing economic differences, inspiring the church and her worship to be voice of justice. All in all, an interesting contribution, especially because of its paralleling of Nigeria and the USA as interpretive contexts.

*Reviewed 12 May 2018 by Professor Knut Holter*

*Faculty of Theology, Diaconia and Leadership Studies, VID Specialized University,  
Misjonsmarka 12, N-4024 Stavanger, Norway, [knut.holter@vid.no](mailto:knut.holter@vid.no)*