

narrow its audience. The appendix of Adventist statements enhances its utility for church leaders. I recommend it for those navigating these complex topics within a biblical framework, with the caveat that supplementary resources may be needed for broader cultural and pastoral engagement.

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Ngwa, Kenneth N. *Let My People Live: An Africana Reading of Exodus*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2022. Pp. x + 218. Paperback \$35.

Kenneth N. Ngwa, PhD, is Professor of Hebrew Bible at Drew Theological School and the Director of the Religion and Global Health Forum.

This book has been written to add clarity to the modern topic of liberation by raising consciousness to the three major tools of imperialism: erasure, alienation, and singularity. Ngwa argues that this consciousness is an antidote to imperialism. This book offers a new dimension of a reader-centered approach to the Exodus narrative. By replacing go” with “live,” this book proposes an Africana reading of the Exodus narrative that charges the African to stand against rather than run away to escape the imperial grip. The book is poetic. It is not a theory of disembodied fantasy without historical and geographical specifics. Ngwa has used technical terms sparingly. He uses the persuasive and expository methods to get his points across.

The present book includes the following sections: (1) Prologue: When Your Children Ask You, (2) Introduction: Hermeneutics after Erasure, Alienation, and Singularity, (3) Tears of Redesign: Birthing Exodus and Badass Womanism, (4) Triple Consciousness and the Exodus Narrative, (5) A Post-colonial Africana Reading of Exodus 2, (6) Afroecology and Exodus, (7) Miriam: The Water-Woman and Exodus Ecology, (8) Facing and Backsiding the Mountain and, (9) Conclusion: Let My People Live.

In the prologue, Ngwa describes this volume as a monologue representing the stirring and toiling of his interpretative spirit. Ngwa describes Africana as encompassing the various intersecting ways of understanding, theories, and practices related to collective meaning-making and identity development among individuals of African descent throughout history and across different regions. He constructs a comprehensive theoretical framework incorporating diverse Afro-diasporic conversations, merging them be-

yond geographic and ideological boundaries. These conversations come together under a hermeneutic framework that embraces multiple methodologies. Ngwa employs narrative, postcolonial, and ideological hermeneutics to analyze the Exodus, interpreting it as both a Biblical tale and a literary and liberation symbol. In this work, Ngwa illustrates the extensive and nuanced nature of Africana hermeneutics, engaging with Afrodiasporic voices and critical issues relevant to Africana history, current realities, and future potential. Ngwa claims that the struggle in Exodus' narrative involves three interrelated but distinct experiences with repressive governmental, environmental, and religious institutions: First death-erasure; second, social, ecological, and geographical exile; and third, restricted confinement that stifles multiplicity. *Let My People Live*, according to Ngwa, is the hermeneutical and material transition from an erased, marginalized, and singularized existence to creative freedom, wholeness, and community that enshrines the full flourishing of the material and interpretive soul/life. These contribute to the hermeneutics of liberation storytelling.

Ngwa contends that the Exodus liberation movement's catalyst ("Let my people go") serves a larger goal. This change, rather than a need to recall or interpret an original story, guides the Africana reading in this book, which is based on the children's inquiry, "What does this service mean to you?" He adds that telling the story is in order to name and resist the structures of erasure, marginalization, and isolation. He sees the bitter life of Exod 1:13 as genealogical, economic, and political life under the stranglehold of subjugation. His encounter with a friend who was theorizing about the new African diaspora, coupled with his son's experience with blackness as isolation, underpins his interpretative metaphor. This book holds that for Africana, Exodus is more than a liberating movement of one group of people out of Egypt to the Promised Land; it is also about transforming structures of oppression.

Ngwa's adoption of this hermeneutics of interlocution is based on the biblical Exodus story and Africana exodus theories of identity formation that emphasizes power that grants access to and control over *nephesh*, the life force. Ubuntu, the complex Bantu-derived idea of political, social, psychological, and spiritual communal belonging, most widely popularized and implemented by Desmond Tutu, is Ngwa's philosophical and hermeneutical framework for exploring these concerns. He changed the hermeneutical frame from Exodus-exodus (story-motive) to exodus-Exodus (motive-story). The motif, a genre, foregrounds a collective endangered body, investigates and listens to its articulation of survival in between shattered histories and narrative lacunae, and persists to ensure that the tale born

from this motif is fundamentally different from the story to which it reacts. Liberation is more than a reaction to oppression. Ngwa compares the search for life in its fullness to a story of the unending midwifery of badass womanism.

In “Triple Consciousness and the Exodus Narrative,” Ngwa maintains that Africana and the Exodus story use consciousness as an ideological and narrative construct to resist erasure by necessity. Displacement and rescue create a second consciousness. Imperialism’s or patriarchy’s ability and tendency to force global and gendered multiplicity into monologic modes of being and belonging that materialize as homogenizing enclave mentalities and space that support the empire’s claims to totalizing supremacy is a third consciousness.

In “A Postcolonial Africana Reading of Exodus 2,” Ngwa identifies three Exodus 2 scenarios that try to convert the postcolonial nightmare back into a dream: the blending of private and public identities; the role that an oppressed subgroup played in forming communal identity; and institutional response to Moses’ involvement with a marginalized subgroup.

In “Afroecology and Exodus,” Ngwa links the depiction of oppression and embittering distress, of fragmentation and interregional survival, of environmental disaster and the transition into the wilderness and mountain area in the Exodus with the growth of extraction economies. He emphasizes the significance of land as a central element in the Exodus story and highlights the importance of recognizing the changing ecological and material resources within African-descended communities. This viewpoint invites Africana readers to examine their complex connections with land, whether in Africa or the diaspora, while reflecting on the intertwined issues of land dispossession and agricultural practices. By applying this lens to the Exodus narrative, Ngwa urges readers to confront the ecological devastation that occurred in Egypt during the Exodus and the ideological rationalizations present in biblical scholarship.

In “Miriam–The Water-Woman and Exodus Ecology,” he sees Miriam’s name and narrative character to represent the eco-political transformation of alienation, the transformation of erasure, and the manifestation of communal identity over and against single hero narrative.

In “Facing and Backsiding the Mountain,” he asserts that the mountain is not just the sight where Exodus imagination starts but also a site that needs to be transformed by the linking objects of liberation work.

In his conclusion, Ngwa argues that oppression is a choking mechanism and that the Exodus story is a narrative about the audacious claim that life can be created out of death. This creation is not just as a function of moving

from one place to another. It is also a function of process, of redesign, that transforms, to varying degrees, national, global, and imperial structures of oppression.

Ngwa posits that the Hebrew identity emerged as a reaction to efforts at erasure and was influenced by migration. Given that this migration originated in Africa, this Hebrew community in the diaspora should be recognized as part of the African diaspora. This perspective introduces new questions for interpretation, such as: Are there parallels between this historical African diasporic community and modern African diasporas? Additionally, how would our understanding of Ancient Israel's history change if we viewed the experiences of the Exodus community through the lens of an African diaspora?

Let My People Live provides a tangible instance of culturally relevant biblical interpretation within the realm of biblical studies that integrates Africana and womanist interpretations, allowing African diaspora readers to understand their interests and issues through the lens of Africana history, literature, art, and figures. Using an allegory based on the Exodus story, Ngwa shows how Africans in the diaspora currently deal with their circumstances and presents a fresh perspective on the Exodus narrative to combat tyranny on multiple fronts, including political, social, economic, and ecological. *Let My People Live*, apart from its reader-centered reading of the Exodus narrative, can serve as a crucial reference point for contemporary postcolonial struggles and enrich the significance of the Exodus story for Africana. I recommend it as a piece of academic reading for anyone concerned with freeing Africa and African people from oppression, both within the continent and throughout the rest of the world. This book would be suitable for a class of that nature.

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Tooman, William A. *The Torah Unabridged: The Evolution of Intermarriage Law in the Hebrew Bible*. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2022. Pp. 150. Paperback \$33.

In his book *The Torah Unabridged*, Tooman begins with an introduction followed by three chapters in which he explores in detail intermarriage laws.