

Knox College	KNB 3232HS - Bible in Context: Amos & Social Justice (Winter 2017)	Dr. Greg Davidson, Ph.D. for Prof. Brian P. Irwin, current course syllabus used with permission
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Class: Mondays 11:00am–1:00pm, Room 3, Knox College

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A. Course Description and Student Learning Goals

This course uses the book of Amos as a means of introducing the covenantal values that lay behind Israel's approach to social justice. Students will be required to visit and report on a Church-related ministry with a social justice orientation. Through this exercise and classroom activities, students will reflect on the Church's call to social justice and the way in which this can be realised in the lives of individuals and congregations. If possible, a street orientation will be scheduled to take place on one evening toward the end of the semester. Additional emphasis will be placed on the content and shape of the book of Amos and the task of interpreting it as Scripture of the Church.

Upon successfully completing this course, the student will be able to:

- 1) demonstrate a knowledge of the content and message of Amos
- 2) situate the book and its message within the context of Israelite prophecy and social history
- 3) identify one's own social location, starting assumptions, and interpretative principles in reading Old Testament texts
- 4) identify interpretative issues related to reading Amos in the contemporary era
- 5) exercise the exegetical interpretative skills necessary for interpreting and applying the book of Amos effectively and faithfully for today
- 6) articulate a philosophy of social action that is rooted in covenant faithfulness
- 7) demonstrate the research and writing skills necessary for graduate-level Old Testament study
- 8) demonstrate ethical behaviour, taking responsibility for the expectations of course and showing respect and willingness to listen in the learning atmosphere including class discussions and small groups

B. Required Textbooks

Required texts are available at Crux Theological Books located at Wycliffe College.

- A modern translation of the Bible (e.g., NRSV, RSV, NIV11, NIV, NJPS, NET, or NASB). The NET Bible offers extensive textual notes and is available for use online or as a free download from www.bible.org. The NJPS (Tanakh) is a translation of the Hebrew Bible by the best in Jewish Biblical scholarship. As such, it provides a helpful complement to any of the standard Christian translations.
- Paton, Alan. *Cry, the Beloved Country*. Originally published 1948. New York, NY: Scribner, 2003. *Students must finish reading this book in time for the class discussion to be held Session 6 (February 11).*
- Paul, Greg. *God in the Alley: Being and Seeing Jesus in a Broken World*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook, 2004.

- Smith, Gary V. *Hosea, Amos, Micah*. NIV Application Commentary, ed. Terry Muck. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.
- Some course material will be distributed online in PDF format. Students should, therefore, download Adobe Acrobat Reader, a utility that enables PCs to read PDF files. Adobe Acrobat Reader is available as a free download from the Adobe web-site (www.adobe.com).

C. Recommended Resources

- Alexander, Patrick H. et al., eds. *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999.

An academic style guide based generally on Turabian and used by the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Includes extensive lists of abbreviations related to biblical studies. A recommended purchase for those who plan to continue to do advanced work in biblical studies.

- Badke, William. *Beyond the Answer Sheet: Academic Success for International Students*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse, 2003.

This valuable work explains how the approach to education in North America differs from that common in many other countries. Includes helpful advice on academic expectations, studying, research, writing, avoiding plagiarism, and dealing with professors. This work is highly recommended for all ESL and International students.

- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing, ed. John Grossman and Alice Bennett. 6th ed. Chicago, IL; London: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

This paperback volume has much in common with the larger *Chicago Manual of Style*, which may be consulted for items that Turabian omits. A recommended purchase for students entering a degree programme.

D. Course Requirements and Assignments

The class consists of a single two-hour session each week plus one evening fieldtrip. On some occasions, a portion of class may be devoted to work in small groups. Small group discussions will be based on assigned readings or an exercise given by the Instructor. Other assignments are outlined below.

Students are expected to read through the book of Amos at least three times during the semester and to cover faithfully the other assigned readings.

The assignments and their weights are as follows:

- **Annotated Bibliography (10%).** Students shall submit an annotated bibliography of resources (e.g., commentaries, monographs, articles) to be used in their Final Assignment (exegesis paper or one of the passages chosen for their small group study). An excellent annotated bibliography will include general descriptive comments about each source along with some evaluative comments about audience, perspective etc. as well as critical comments about the author's argument as it relates to your passage. All entries should follow the format given in Turabian or the "Citing Sources in Academic Writing" handout. (An introduction to writing annotated bibliographies may be found at: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/annotated-bibliography>.) Due session 4.
- **Final Assignment (Exegesis Paper or Small Group Studies)(40%).** Students may choose from *either* of the following assignments:
 - (1) write a 12–15 page exegesis paper on a passage from Amos to be *chosen in consultation with the instructor*. Evaluation will be based on written clarity, degree of insight, literary awareness and understanding of the text, effective use of secondary sources, and ability to follow assignment instructions,

or

(2) prepare a series of four small-group Bible studies on selected passages from Amos. Each study should engage participants in the world of the text and lead them to responsible application in the world of the present. Evaluation will be based on written clarity, degree of insight, and ability to follow assignment instructions. A completed Assignment Checklist (see Syllabus Supplement) must accompany your final paper. *Your paper must be submitted both in paper (in class) and electronic form (via Turnitin.com).*

Due session 12. Further instructions may be found on Blackboard.

- **Ministry Visit and Class Presentation (25%).** Students shall visit and report back to class on a local church-related ministry that is engaged in some aspect of social justice. In addition to general impressions, the student report should include a description of the theological/philosophical motivation for the ministry, its aims, the challenges it faces, and how members of the church might participate in the work. Evaluation will be based on participation, presentation, and effort at integration into the life of the church. Students are free to visit an organisation of their choosing or may select one from a list provided by the instructor. Given class size and time constraints, *presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes*. If you need guidance on making an oral presentation, then you may wish to consult the following resource: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/oral-presentations>.
- **Book Report & Discussion Questions (15%).** Students may choose between *Cry, the Beloved Country* and *God in the Alley* and shall submit a one-page summary of the book, followed by a second page stating how the book made you think differently about yourself, the world, or your ministry. If the book did *not* make you think differently in any of these areas, try to articulate why this was the case. The student should also prepare six to twelve discussion questions that might allow this book to be used to introduce the issue of social justice in a congregational context. This assignment is to represent your own assessment and thinking. *Use of secondary sources including web-based book reviews is not permitted*. Evaluation will be based on written clarity, degree of insight, ability to interact with the text, and ability to follow assignment instructions. (If English is a second language for you, you may wish to supplement your reading by listening to the audiobook version of, *Cry, the Beloved Country*.) *Your paper must be submitted both in paper (in class) and electronic form (via Turnitin.com)*. Due session 7.
- **Class Participation and Street Orientation (10%).** This element of the course grade will take into account factors such as readings completed, attendance, participation in class. This portion of the grade includes participation in the evening street orientation conducted outside of class through *Bridges for Youth*.

E. Course Policies & Information

Policies for courses are contained in the *TST Basic Degree Handbook* and the *Knox Student Handbook*. See further, the *Syllabus Supplement* available from the class website. In particular, please note the following:

2. **Late Policy:** 4% deducted per week late (2% off per half week).
3. **Attendance:** 80% attendance at a lecture course is required for credit; 100% attendance is required at seminar courses
4. **Completion of Course work:** all course work (including any late work) must be completed by the end of term, the last day of exams. Only in the case of illness (with a note from a doctor), bereavement or other unusual circumstances will an extension be considered (SDF status) and this must be authorised by the Basic Degree Committee and the Faculty.
5. **Style Guidelines for Papers:** see Knox "Style Manual" booklet and *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, by Kate L. Turabian
6. **Email assignments:** Papers and assignments are not accepted by fax or e-mail, except in rare cases by prior permission of professor.

7. **Plagiarism Policy:** See TST Basic Degree Handbook
8. **Use of Turnitin.com.** Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays or other major written assignments to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. Students who have principled objections to the use of this service should see the course instructor early in the semester to arrange an alternative. During the first week of the course, students should download the Student Quickstart Guide from the following link, http://www.turnitin.com/static/pdf/tii_student_qs.pdf, and follow the instructions to create a user profile. The course ID and password will be distributed to students via Blackboard during the first week of the course.
9. **Use of Technology.** Laptops and other computing devices may be used in the classroom for note taking purposes only. The use of the internet is not permitted while class is in session unless it is part of a specific class activity. Students wishing to text message, search for images, fact check etc. should do so during the break or outside of class. Much of the learning that goes on in the classroom is founded upon mutual disclosure that takes place between the instructor and the student and between students. Parties outside of that learning community have not committed themselves to this relationship of trust. For this and other reasons, permission to record lectures in audio format is granted for use by registered students only. Video recording is not permitted without the written permission of the instructor. Recordings and notes of class lectures may not be electronically reproduced, posted or distributed without the written permission of the instructor.
10. **Logging onto your Blackboard Course.** For information on how to access this course on Blackboard, and how to perform basic Blackboard tasks do the following:
 - a) Go to <http://portal.utoronto.ca> and click on the Log-in to the Portal button.
 - b) Enter your UTORid and password
 - c) Click on "? Help" link (at top of the page) to go to Blackboard Learn 9.0
 - d) Click on "Info for Students" link (left hand side)
 - e) Finally, click on "Log in & Accessing your course"

Note also the other links for help with "Using the Discussion Board," "Handing in an Assignment," "Joining a Group," FAQ's, etc.
11. **Consultation:** Please do not hesitate to consult with the instructor about any questions you may have.

F. Weekly Schedule of Classes, Readings & Assignments

Session 1 Jan. 11 COURSE INTRODUCTION ♦ THE WORLD OF AMOS ♦ SOCIAL WORLD OF THE PROPHETS

Session 2 Jan. 18 AMOS 1:1-2 ♦ SOCIAL JUSTICE & COVENANT OBLIGATION ♦ STRUCTURE & OVERVIEW OF AMOS



Required Reading:

- Syllabus Supplement
- Citing Sources handout
- "How Not to Plagiarize" (<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>)
- Relevant pages from chosen commentary
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul

Session 3 Jan. 25 ORACLES AGAINST THE NATIONS (1:3-2:3) ♦ DATING & COMPOSITION ♦ PRINCIPLES OF LAW & ETHICS IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from chosen commentary
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul

Session 4 Feb. 1 ORACLES AGAINST JUDAH & ISRAEL (2:4-2:16) ♦ AMOS' OCCUPATION

**Required Reading:**

- Relevant pages from chosen commentary
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul



Due: Annotated Bibliography (10%)

Session 5 Feb. 8 JUDGEMENT SPEECH 1 (3:1-15) ♦ STUDENT PRESENTATIONS 1

**Required Reading:**

- Relevant pages from chosen commentary
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul

Feb. 15 TST READING WEEK, NO CLASSES

Session 6 Feb. 22 JUDGEMENT SPEECH 2 (4:1-13)

**Required Reading:**

- Relevant pages from chosen commentary
- Selected pages from Paton and Paul

Session 7 Feb. 29 JUDGEMENT SPEECH 3 (5:1-17) ♦ CLASS DISCUSSION ON, *CRY, THE BELOVED COUNTRY*

**Required Reading:**

- Relevant pages from chosen commentary
- Selected pages from Paul



Due: Come to class having read, *Cry, the Beloved Country* by Alan Paton. Students should be prepared to engage the discussion the questions distributed in class.

Due: Book Report (15%)

Session 8 Mar. 7 WOE ORACLES (5:18-6:14)

**Required Reading:**

- Relevant pages from chosen commentary
- Selected pages from Paul

Session 9 Mar. 14 JUDGEMENT VISIONS 1-3 (7:1-9) ♦ STUDENT PRESENTATIONS 2

**Required Reading:**

- Relevant pages from chosen commentary

- Selected pages from Paul

Session 10 Mar. 21 AMAZIAH INCIDENT (7:10-17) ♦ STUDENT PRESENTATIONS 3



Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from chosen commentary
- Selected pages from Paul

Session 11 Mar. 28 JUDGEMENT VISION 4 (8:1-9:10) ♦ STUDENT PRESENTATIONS 4



Required Reading:

- Relevant pages from chosen commentary

Session 12 Apr. 4 DAY OF RESTORATION (9:11-15)



Due: Final Paper (40%)

G. Discussion Questions for, *Cry the Beloved Country*

Adapted from, ReadingGroupGuides.com,
http://www.readinggroupguides.com/guides3/cry_beloved_country1.asp)

1. How does the story resemble the biblical parable of the prodigal son? What is the significance of Kumalo's son being named Absalom? Where else does the Bible inform the story?
2. What theological concepts or themes are present in the story and how are they communicated?
3. How in the book does Kumalo experience the absence of God; how does he experience the presence of God?
4. Imagine that you are living in South Africa in 1948. Which character in the book would you be most likely to resemble?
5. Shortly before his death, Arthur Jarvis wrote: "The truth is that our civilization is not Christian; it is a tragic compound of great ideal and fearful practice, of high assurance and desperate anxiety, of loving charity and fearful clutching of possessions." What, if anything, does this statement have to say to Canadian society?
6. What, if anything, does this book have to teach the church?

H. Select Bibliography for Interest and Future Reference

1. Social Justice

Alger, B. "The Theology and Social Ethics of Amos." *Scripture* 17 (1965): 109-116.

Bailey, J. G. "Amos, Preacher of Social Reform." *The Bible Today* 19 (1981): 306-313.

Baker, David L. *Tight Fists or Open Hands?: Wealth and Poverty in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009.

D'Souza, Joseph. *Dalit Freedom Now and Forever: The Epic Struggle for Dalit Emancipation*. Greenwood Village, CO: Dalit Freedom Network, 2004.

Donahue, John R. *What does the Lord Require?: A Bibliographical Essay on the Bible and Social Justice*. Series IV-- Study Aids on Jesuit Topics, 23. Revised ed. Saint Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2000.

Epstein, Leon. *Social Justice in the Ancient East and the People of the Bible*. London: SCM; Trinity, 1986.

Escobar, Donoso S. "Social Justice in the Book of Amos." *Review and Expositor* 92 (1995): 169-174.

Frey, Christofer. "The Impact of the Biblical Idea of Justice on Present Discussions of Social Justice." In *Justice and Righteousness: Biblical Themes and their Influence*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, 137., edited by Henning Graf Reventlow and Yair Hoffman, 90-104. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992.

Hill, Alec. "Let Justice Flow like a River: International Business and the Book of Amos." *Crux* 37, no. 2 (2001): 2-12.

Hochschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

The true story of King Leopold of Belgium, who in the late 19th century established a privately-held colony in the Congo River basin and enslaved much of the population. All the while promoting himself as a humanitarian, the king secretly enforced policies that led to the death of millions of Congolese through disease and abuse.

Malchow, Bruce V. "Social Justice in the Wisdom Literature." *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 12 (1982): 120-124.

Malchow, Bruce V. *Social Justice in the Hebrew Bible*. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1996.

A concise and accessible survey of Israel's social concern, which sees it as rising from the broader culture of the ancient Near East. The author discusses the social setting of Israel's concern for justice and examines this interest through each of the main genres of Old Testament literature. Inclusion of endnotes and a bibliography make it a good point of entry to the topic.

Nardoni, Enrique. *Rise Up, O Judge: A Study of Justice in the Biblical World*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004.

The author begins by situating the idea of justice in the cultures of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and proceeds to examine justice as it relates in Israel to the Exodus event, covenantal law, the monarchy, and prophetic, wisdom, and apocalyptic traditions. Approximately half of the book deals with justice in the New Testament writings. Endmatter includes various indices, plus a brief glossary of frequently-used ancient terms related to justice.

Rosen, Christine. *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement*. Oxford: Oxford, 2004.

This thorough and engaging study tells the story of how in the early 20th century, promoters of eugenics found common cause with members of the Social Gospel Movement and how this "progressive" alliance lobbied governments to enact forced sterilization and other restrictive measures throughout North America.

Weinfeld, Moshe. *Social Justice in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East*. Publications of the Perry Foundation for Biblical Research in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. 2nd ed. Jerusalem; Philadelphia, PA: Magnes; Fortress, 2000.

A literary study of the terms "justice" and "righteousness" in the Hebrew Bible and how they figure in the role of the Davidic and Eschatological Kings. The author also examines concepts such as freedom, jubilee and the Sabbatical year in Israel and the ancient Near East.

Wright, Christopher J. H. *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God*. Fully revised, updated and integrated ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004.

2. Amos

Achtemeier, Elizabeth. *Minor Prophets I*. New International Biblical Commentary - Old Testament Series, 17. Peabody, MA; Carlisle, Cumbria: Hendrickson; Paternoster, 1996.

This series is based on the NIV and is directed toward a general audience. This volume covers Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah. Achtemeier is a widely regarded scholar and preacher and so this work

is characterised by a clear explanation of the text and sound theological insight. Notes at the end of each section discuss textual and critical matters. An excellent, concise commentary on the minor prophets.

Andersen, Francis I., and David Noel Freedman. *Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Anchor Bible, 24A. New York, NY: Doubleday, 1989.

At close to one thousand pages, this volume represents a major contribution to the study of Amos. Close to 200 pages are taken up with introduction and bibliography alone. The authors approach the Masoretic Text of Amos with a text-critical conservatism, preferring to live with difficulties in the text rather than resort to frequent emendation. Interpretatively, they focus on the final form of the text. Regarding the final form of the book, Anderson and Freedman attribute a significant role to either Amos himself, or to an editor well attuned to the thought of the prophet.

Auld, A. Graeme. *Amos*. Old Testament Guides. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986.

Birch, Bruce C. *Hosea, Joel, and Amos*. Westminster Biblical Companion. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1997.

This series is directed toward a general audience. Concise introductions to individual books typically deal with the character of the prophet and the historical context and message of the book. Comments on the text proceed section by section and offer a basic explanation of each passage with occasional theological comment. Birch prefers to focus on the final form of the text rather than on hypothetical reconstructions isolating the "original words" of the prophet. Very occasionally refers to Hebrew in transliteration. No use of footnotes or references to secondary literature.

Carroll R., M. Daniel. *Amos—The Prophet and His Oracles*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 2002.

Despite the title, this work is not an exegetical treatment of Amos' oracles. Rather, the author presents a valuable survey of past research into the book as well as an overview of current research. Particularly helpful is the section dealing with, "Reading Amos from the Margins". Most of the book contains an extensive annotated bibliography on Amos research.

Craigie, Peter C. *Twelve Prophets. Volume 1: Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and Jonah*. Daily Study Bible (Old Testament). Vol. 1. 2 vols. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1984.

The series, and this volume in particular, is geared toward a general audience. Introductory material is brief and typically deals with the setting and message of the book as well as the character of the prophet. Explanatory footnotes and references to secondary literature are absent. The commentary proper proceeds section by section through each book explaining the text and highlighting prominent themes. Craigie's comments are characteristically well founded. Theological comment is intermittent and generally subdued. At two and a half pages, the introduction to the Twelve Prophets is short, even for a work of this size.

Doorly, William J. *Amos, Prophet of Justice: Understanding the Book of Amos*. New York, NY; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1989.

This short book focuses on the issue of authorship and is written at a popular level. Doorly argues for three stages of composition and editing in the book. The first stage is the work of the 8th-century prophet of Tekoa and the second a late seventh-century Jerusalem scribe who tempered the stern message of Amos with an encouragement to turn to Yahweh for salvation. A final contributor was an exilic figure who included a closing and hopeful oracle of salvation. The author briefly addresses the issue of how multiple authorship affects interpretation and proclamation and concludes by offering a list of ten themes for preaching. Endnotes are minimal as are the suggestions for further reading.

Harper, William Rainey. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea*. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1905.

Harper's comments include a general explanation of the text, often with reference to the history of interpretation. The bulk of the commentary is devoted to a close examination of textual and other critical problems. Introductory material discusses the precursors to written prophecy, the poetry and language of Amos, and the state of the text. As is the case with other volumes in this series, little interest is shown in matters of theology. Generally dated, but still valuable for its textual comments.

Hasel, Gerhard F. *Understanding the Book of Amos: Basic Issues in Current Interpretations*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991.

An accessible and succinct treatment of major interpretative issues arising out of the study of the book of Amos. Many of these revolve around the character of the prophet himself (e.g., Amos' profession, national origin, and intellectual background). Other topics include the use of hymnic doxologies in the book, composition, and the prophet's social criticism. Includes a select bibliography.

Hayes, John H. *Amos, the Eighth-Century Prophet: His Times and His Preaching*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1988.

Hubbard, David A. *Joel and Amos: An Introduction and Commentary*. Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, 22b. Leicester; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1989.

An excellent, concise treatment of the text that includes interaction with relevant secondary sources. Few textual notes. Theological comments are minimal but well-founded.

Jeremias, Jörg. *Amos: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library, ed. Douglas W. Stott. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1998.

Learned treatment of the text that makes full use of European scholarship. Sees much in the book that is exilic or post-exilic and related to Judah. Modest attention to textual issues. Little emphasis on theological reflection.

King, Philip J. *Amos, Hosea, Micah: An Archaeological Commentary*. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1988.

This volume does not include exegesis, so is not a commentary in the strict sense. King examines the general archaeological context for the eighth-century prophets and deals with items in Amos, Hosea, and Micah related to topics such as historical geography, architecture, warfare, the cult, agriculture, etc. End matter includes a glossary, bibliography, general index, and scripture index.

Mays, James L. *Amos: A Commentary*. Old Testament Library. Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1969.

Good basic explication of the text. Sparse textual notes and little in the way of theological reflection. The introduction deals with a variety of topics including the character of the prophet and the overall message of the book. Mays attributes most of the sayings and autobiographical narratives to the prophet. Certain of the oracles to the nations and the concluding oracle of salvation are seen as originating in the exilic period.

McComiskey, Thomas Edward. "Amos." In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, edited by Frank E. Gaebel. Vol. 7, 267-331. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985.

Motyer, J. Alec. *The Day of the Lion: The Message of Amos*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1974.

As the series title suggests, the primary interest of this volume is to present the relevance of Amos for the church today. The result is a work that covers Amos section by section, investigating overall themes and offering relevant application. Motyer's comments are theological without being simplistic or devotional. The introduction deals with the setting of Amos' ministry and the essence of his message. No interest in historical-critical issues.

Mowvley, Harry. *The Books of Amos and Hosea*. Epworth Commentaries. London: Epworth, 1991.

Based on the text of the Revised English Bible, this commentary is aimed at a general audience. The introduction examines the historical setting of the books and omits discussion of historical-critical issues. Specific topics of interest are dealt with in occasional, inset excurses. The author provides a basic and accessible explanation of the text and attempts to distinguish between the meaning of the prophetic words for those who first heard them and of the text for those who preserved it. The task of contemporary application is left to the reader.

Paul, S. M. *Amos: A Commentary on the Book of Amos*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1991.

Examines lexical and literary issues in great detail and is well aware of ancient Near Eastern mythic and historical background. The author exercises reserve with regard to redactional issues and shows excellent text-critical judgement. Emphasises unity of the book and attributes the vast majority of it to the prophet himself. Excellent bibliography. General absence of theological reflection.

Rilett Wood, Joyce. *Amos in Song and Book Culture*. Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, 337. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Rosenbaum, Stanley N. *Amos of Israel: A New Interpretation*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1989.

In this study on the identity of the prophet Amos, the author departs from the widely held view that regards Amos as a Judaeon of humble origins to argue that he was a well-educated individual with a prominent place in the administration of the northern monarchy. This understanding is based on various lines of linguistic evidence as well as the prophet's ability to move freely throughout the kingdom of Israel.

Smith, Billy K., and Frank S. Page. *Amos, Obadiah, Jonah*. New American Commentary, 19B. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1995.

Smith writes on Amos. Good concise treatment of the text with reference to other recent English-language commentaries. Minimal references and textual notes. Theological reflection is sparse and superficial.

Smith, Gary V. *Amos*. Mentor Commentaries. Revised and enlarged ed. Fearn: Christian Focus, 1998.

A superb evangelical treatment of Amos characterised by attention to structure, form and textual issues. Consistently observant and theologically insightful. Makes effective use of a wide range of English and German secondary literature.

Smith, Gary V. *Hosea, Amos, Micah*. NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

Smith has written extensively elsewhere on Amos and is thoroughly aware of historical, critical, and interpretative issues related to the book. In this volume, he offers a well-informed assessment of the meaning that the text had for the original audience. In the mediating "Bridging Contexts" section, he attempts to isolate themes and principles conveyed by the text. These principles are developed in the "Contemporary Significance" section where an effort is made to sketch out possible avenues of application in the life of the Church. A good, basic commentary that provides an explanation of the text as well as guidance for preaching.

Smith, George Adam. *The Book of the Twelve Prophets, commonly called the Minor*. George Adam Smith's Works on the Prophets. Revised ed. Vol. 1. 2 vols. Amos, Hosea, and Micah. New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, 1928.

Smith was a Scottish Presbyterian minister and scholar who lived for a time in Palestine. Consequently, his writing exhibits a colour that comes from an intimate acquaintance with the land. As was the case with most of Smith's work, this commentary is intended for a general audience. Even so, it is fully aware of critical issues related to Amos, Hosea, and Micah. The commentary is full of theological comment and insight. Critical, textual, and background issues are discussed in concise footnotes. Although dated, it is still worthwhile for its theological and devotional content.

Staton Jr., Cecil P., ed. *Interpreting Amos for Preaching and Teaching*. Kerygma and Church. Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 1995.

Stuart, Douglas. *Hosea-Jonah*. Word Biblical Commentary, 31. Waco, TX: Word, 1987.

A judicious and thorough treatment of the text with full attention to form and textual issues. A modest degree of theological reflection appears in the Explanation section. Excellent bibliography.

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Joel and Amos*. Hermeneia. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1977.