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“My God,” she said, “ships make me so crazy.”: Reflections on Empirical Hermeneutics, Interculturality, and Holy Scripture

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“My God,” she said, “ships make me so crazy.”

Reflections on Empirical Hermeneutics,
Interculturality, and Holy Scripture
Hans de Wit

This book presents an expanded version of Hans de Wit's inaugural address as Professor of the Dom Helder Câmara Chair at the VU University Amsterdam. He defines a new and fascinating research area: empirical hermeneutics in intercultural perspective. Professor de Wit enhances his theoretical proposals with illustrations taken from an international project in which hundreds of Bible reading groups in more than twenty-five countries participated by reading the same Bible text and exchanging views on its content and meaning.

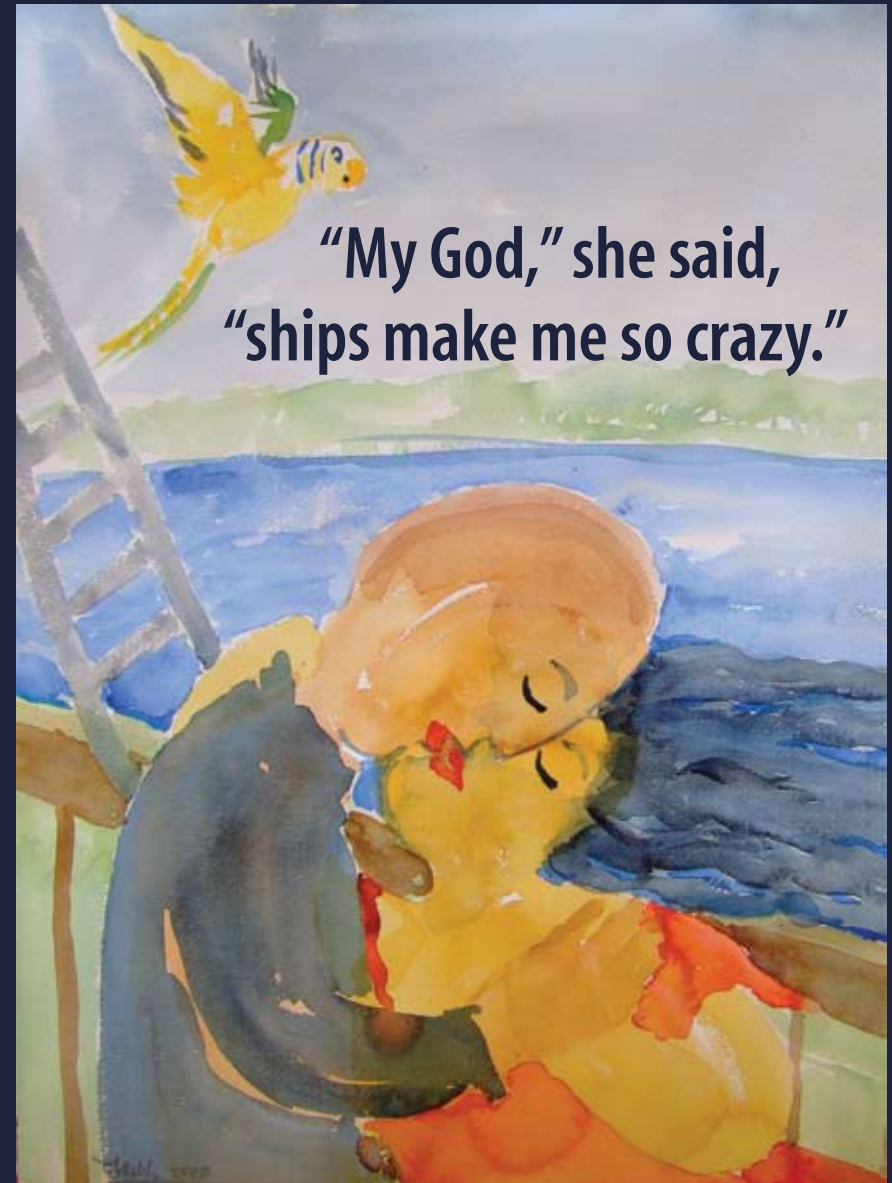
Empirical hermeneutics belongs in the space where the *effect* of the text becomes manifest among common readers. The author describes the contours of the codification system employed in the analysis of empirical material. The concept *intercultural* in this discussion does not merely allude to “cross-border” encounters; rather, it is meant as an *ethical* term connecting interculturality with the ethics of interpretation. In developing that idea the author draws on fundamental notions of transcultural morality and philosopher Emanuel Levinas's proposal on alterity in interpretation. Professor de Wit uses the plot of Gabriel García Márquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera* as the organizing principle of his work.

Hans de Wit teaches contextual theology, intercultural hermeneutics and Old Testament at the Faculty of Theology of the VU University in Amsterdam, where he holds the Dom Helder Câmara Chair. Previously he taught at the *Comunidad Teológica Evangélica de Chile* (1980-1989). De Wit lectures widely in Europe, South Africa, India, and Latin American and Caribbean countries. He is also the author and editor of numerous books, including Bible commentaries, and many monographs and articles. De Wit is one of the initiators of the international project *Through the Eyes of Another: Intercultural reading of the Bible*. He is a minister of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands.



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