

## NEWS

### Dr Charlene van der Walt



Dr Charlene van der Walt graduated from University Stellenbosch with a DTh degree in March 2010. The title of her dissertation was "Ideologie en Mag in Bybelinterpretasie: Op Weg na 'n Kommunale Lees van 2 Samuel 13" ("Ideology and Power in Bible Interpretation. Towards a Communal Reading of 2 Samuel 13"). See the summary of her research below.

Dr Van der Walt served as congregation minister in the Dutch Reformed Church Albany, Grahamstown, for the past years. After completing her Masters degree (Cum Laude) in Old Testament at the University of Stellenbosch in March 2004, she started with her doctorate and received a scholarship to continue her doctoral research at the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands.

She joined CEBITA on May 1, 2010 as a postdoc. Her primary assignment for the next two years would be to do research in a project titled: "The Bible between academy and faith communities: An exploratory study of the interfaces between academic and non-academic engagement with the Bible."

#### SUMMARY OF DISSERTATION:

This study examines the role of power and ideology in a concrete intercultural conversation space which is established when individuals from diverse contexts meet one another to discuss Biblical texts. The intercultural conversation space is theoretically based on the joint presuppositions of Feminism and an African hermeneutics. The communal space provides a theoretical space in which individuals from diverse contexts are given an opportunity to express themselves in the collective.

The hermeneutical framework of the study is discussed in chapter 2 where the fundamental presuppositions of both Feminism and African hermeneutics are explored. Feminism emphasises the importance of the contextual voice of the individual, whereas African hermeneutics highlights the communal space where individual voices are given expression.

The intercultural conversation in this study is conducted with 2 Samuel 13:1-22 as conversation document. Chapter 3 discusses a multidimensional exegetical framework that is applied in order to offer a reflective interpretation of 2 Samuel 13:1-22. A close reading of the text, as well as ideological (rhetorical) critical and reader response critical analyses, are conducted. A reference to the interpretation history of the text concludes this chapter. The dominant Western perspective is discussed and is supplemented with Feminist and African hermeneutical readings of the text.

The empirical component of this study is discussed in the chapters that follow, based on the two-tiered hermeneutical framework and 2 Samuel 13:1-22 as conversation document. The theoretically formulated intercultural space becomes a concrete reality as culturally diverse women meet one another to discuss the story of Tamar as found in 2 Samuel 13. Chapter 5 explains the research design of the empirical study based on key terms such as culture, ideology and power. These are illuminated in Chapter 4. The data that is collected in the concrete intercultural conversation is then analysed qualitatively and in Chapter 6. The collected data is presented as a separate Appendix to the dissertation in order to assist the reader in the read and compare process.

In the conclusion to this study, as presented in Chapter 7, all the diverse discussions converge and an attempt is offered towards a reflective interpretation of how power and ideology function in the intercultural Bible reading process.

The theoretical intercultural space based on the essential presuppositions of Feminism and an African hermeneutics are thus problematised in the study by exploring the role of power and ideology in this space. In analysing the data that was collected in the empirical component of the study qualitatively, it becomes clear that the intercultural space is a place where individuals can find expression and change can be facilitated. It appears, however, that this is not a space without complications, as it does not manage to avoid the influence of the power dynamics. This study concludes that the intercultural conversation space is a singular instrument for social transformation, it however needs to be utilized with great care.