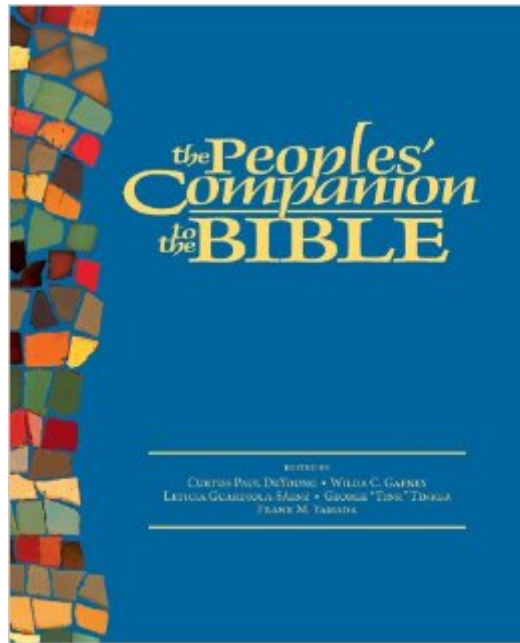


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The Peoples' Companion To The Bible



Synopsis

Building on the enthusiastic reception of and critical acclaim for *The Peoples' Bible*, hailed as "a rich resource" (Elisabeth Sch  ssler Fiorenza) that "will empower people to reclaim the Bible as a multicultural, dialogical, and living tradition" (Kwok Pui-lan), this colorful and engaging biblical textbook brings those same new perspectives in biblical studies to the college classroom.

Highlighting the role of cultures in both the development of the Bible and in its subsequent reception around the world, *The Peoples' Companion to the Bible* enables students to see how social location has figured in the ways particular peoples have understood the biblical text and helps students formulate their own social location as a key to understanding the Bible and its import for them. The groundbreaking articles from *The Peoples' Bible* are all here, including "Culture and Identity"; "The Bible as a Text of Cultures" and "The Bible as a Text in Cultures"; "Jesus and Cultures"; "The Bible as an Instrument of Reconciliation"; "The Bible and Empire"; "Women, Culture, and the Bible"; and "Responsible Christian Exegesis of Hebrew Scripture," along with new essays designed for the classroom, including a Bible Reader's Self-Inventory; introductory essays on the Hebrew Bible and New Testament; and an essay on understanding the biblical theme of "the people of God" in a multicultural world.

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Customer Reviews

Scholars and other readers of the Bible are becoming more and more aware of the importance of listening to readings and interpretations of Scripture from other places and social locations, if we are

to hear the challenge of Scripture more fully within our own locations. I could not agree more, and I keep searching for the perfect "global companion" to Scripture for the introductory courses I teach at Ashland Seminary. This is not yet "it" for me, but I would not want this to distract the reader of this review from the very positive contributions to be found in *The Peoples' Companion to the Bible*. There are a series of introductory essays (about 90 pages) which I find to be exceptionally well-written, well-framed to cover the gamut of relevant issues in social-location hermeneutics, and well-focused. If Fortress would ever publish these as a free-standing publication, it would be a required text in my New Testament Introduction class and my Advanced Hermeneutics: Socio-rhetorical Interpretation class. But I wonder how I could ever use the back two-thirds of the book in any meaningful way in my classes. These consist of the introductions to each of the books of the Hebrew Bible, the Deuterocanonicals/Apocrypha, and the New Testament, excerpted from the more fullsome *Peoples' Bible*. As introductions to biblical books, they just don't give much at all -- and often give less than one finds, for example, in the introductions of the New Oxford Annotated Bible, 4th edition. As introductions to social-location readings of each book, they often provide tantalizingly helpful starting points, but then, because of the nature of what they are (constrainedly brief introductions) develop none of these points. However, if I were more actively involved in leading Christian Education opportunities in a local church, and I just wanted to give my "Sunday School"/"Adult Bible Study" class a one- or two-paragraph dose of what a particular text might say to people in a different global or social location, then I would find this book to be a helpful resource and would make reading a part of it a regular ritual in such settings (though, frankly, I'd still turn to a different source for matters of "historical introduction"). This is not to say that the book is therefore a failure. For one thing, how much would it change the way Christians think about their own country and the world just to have those two paragraphs dropped into their lives every week, to have a brief but authentic glimpse through a window into another world than their own! That would in itself (perhaps sad to say) be a major step forward. But I need more to give my seminary students in terms of "reading from another place." Nevertheless, I will draw upon, and recommend to all my students, the first 90-odd pages as a brilliant introduction to the challenges and possibilities of reading from multiple locations, and would recommend it to pastors and laity involved in Christian education as a way to begin to bring global perspectives into the culture of the church.

I bought this right after I bought the *Peoples' Bible* and I was disappointed to see so little new material. The description of the book was vague enough and there was no preview offered by . All the introductory material and essays in the *Peoples' Bible* are reproduced here, even the Gallery of

images and maps, exactly as in the Bible. The new material here consists of an introductory essay on "a new way of reading" which is fine as far as it goes; three new essays included with all the repeat essays; and two timelines. That's all - 61 pages of new content out of a total 335 pages of content. So the prospective buyer who already has the Peoples' Bible has to decide whether these 61 pages of content are worth paying the price is asking, which is higher than the Bible itself. The Peoples' Bible is one of the best Bibles I have ever bought, but the companion volume was not worth the additional purchase in my opinion. But I can't give it less than 4 stars because the content is excellent, even if most of it is a repeat.

Beginning was really difficult to follow but did improve with later writers.

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