

# **BIBLE INTERPRETATION AND THE AFRICAN CULTURE: GOSPEL RECEPTION AMONG THE POKOT PEOPLE OF KENYA PAPERBACK**

by [David J. Ndegwah](#) (Author)

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## **Abstract**

This book can be summarized in one sentence: that culture plays a determinant role in the way people perceive, interpret, and, therefore, respond to reality around them—ideas, events, people, and literature, including sacred literature. It is about how people respond to external stimuli. Thus, when people encounter new reality they perceive and conceptualize it in accordance with their worldview, which is shaped by their culture that is modeled to suit various geographical locations. In order to understand why people around the world behave and act as they do—they choose certain words in what they say and do certain things rather than others—it is important to understand and appreciate this fact. Failure to do so would make it very difficult to engage in any dealings with them, secular or religious, like doing business or evangelization. This is what happened to the Pökot people whose worldview is predominantly communitarian, and yet they were introduced to hermeneutics that are predominantly individualistic, which is at loggerheads with their communal aspirations. The manifestation of this reality is the interpretation of the Good Shepherd parable in the Gospel of John, which the Pökot have understood and contextualized in line with their worldview, against the intentions, goals, and disposition of their evangelizers.

## [Editorial Reviews](#)

## [Review](#)

"In this unique work, David J. Ndegwah analyzes the process of evangelization among the Pökot and its reception. He argues that the evangelizers and those being evangelized always read from different scripts. Thus, in order for the gospel to take root among the Pökot, there is need to

adopt and blend the African worldview with the gospel values. I recommend this seminal work to all interested in the dynamic integral development of the Pökot people." -Joseph Kahiga Kiruki, Moi University, Kenya.

"This book studies the need, opportunities, and limits of the inculturation of the gospel in Africa, particularly among the Pokot of northwest Kenya. . . . The book is worth reading, not only because the Pokot are under-researched, but because it is methodologically sound, combining empirical fieldwork with theological reflection." --Frans Wijzen, Radboud University, Netherlands

"Bible Interpretation and the African Culture is a praxis-oriented work on biblical hermeneutics that brings to light the hidden dangers of 'cultural schizophrenia' that have long plagued the work of inculturation and biblical studies in some African communities. . . . Those interested in developing or understanding how a distinctly African hermeneutics is different from other forms of hermeneutics will find this work very helpful." --Cyril Orji, University of Dayton, USA

"In his description of the Pökot in western Kenya, David J. Ndegwah does not treat them as if they live in a museum. He wants to avoid both the disruptive impact of Western society and the inherent violence of petrified traditions. He values their communitarian spirit and argues they should not receive the gospel of universal love in the tailor-made Western suit of individualism. . . . An indispensable book for everybody in search of social transformation in Africa with love and respect for its past achievements!" --Otto Kroesen, Delft University of Technology, Netherlands.

### About the Author

David J. Ndegwah is a Senior Lecturer of religion and development at Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology. He has authored many articles in refereed journals as well as book chapters on a variety of subjects, ranging from cultural issues to globalization and the challenges of war, peace, and substance abuse in African contexts. Recently, he has focused his research on the role of religion in promoting or stifling development in the African continent.