

‘Do this to Remember Me’:

A Commentary on The Remembered Gospel

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ABSTRACT

Remembering the story of Jesus Christ is one part of the life of faith of his followers. This paper presents a series of shared rememberings of that story from communities in the UK forming a corpus that the writer calls the Remembered Gospel (RG). Relating such remembering to autobiographical biblical criticism, it demonstrates ways in which biblical remembering is linked to the life and context of the participants who, when provided with a safe space for their rememberings, can construct liberative interpretations of the life and ministry of Jesus even though they may not use written texts.

Introduction

A bible commentary seeks to explain sections of the bible, usually one book at a time based on academic studies. The remembered bible (RB), the bible in us, is different from the printed bible. RB is both a strategy and a product of working with ordinary readers using the bible in daily life. Ordinary people are essentially non-scholarly users of the bible.¹ They may be any age or ability and they may or may not use speech. Therefore, a commentary of the remembered gospel looks different than a book produced by biblical scholars. I propose an example here in which remembered episodes are grouped together around a basic framework of the birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus. Based on twenty years of listening to people interpret their remembered versions of the gospel in community projects and schools in Yorkshire, UK, this paper demonstrates the rich multi-layered insights that may be found using this method. From the work illustrated in this paper, I conclude that RB is a highly accessible form of the bible.

Putting the ‘I’ First

I am a follower of Jesus Christ and a biblical scholar. This paper will use an autobiographical approach to biblical criticism to explain my approach to

¹ G.O. West (2007) “An Introduction”, in West (2007) *Reading Other-wise: Socially Engaged Biblical Scholars Reading with their Local Communities*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.

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