

PRESENTATION

aecause it has been received as a sacred text, the Bible has been read in a religious key. It has been assumed that it deals with religious themes.

exclusively religious. Understood in this way, the psychological complexity, cultural diversity and philosophical richness of the texts have been left out, as if they were not present in the text. In recent decades, the understanding of the Bible as literature has made it possible to rediscover human and cultural themes treated with such depth and sensitivity that the meaning and relevance of the Bible beyond its intrinsically religious value can be better appreciated. This opens up new spaces for research. It is necessary to reread it and to decode its profound intuitions on human themes, which, as befits literature, are based on archetypes and literary motifs. Along these lines, the study of the Bible requires, among other things, an intercultural reading of the Bible. This is what Professor Francisco Mena does in this work.

The author, a Costa Rican, professor at the School of Religious Sciences of the National University (Heredia, Costa Rica), a methodical and rigorous researcher who has devoted decades to the study of the New Testament, offers a novel reading of Mark 1:16-20. The perspective that



This booklet explains and illustrates is the fruit of years of meticulous study. Its author has achieved an unusual result among the numerous writings on the Gospels. The person who makes a careful *and* reflective reading of this text will discover that he or she has acquired *a point of view*. That is to say, the possibility of seeing the biblical texts from a point of view where understanding is broadened, deepened, *and* is greatly enriched. It is the perception of the texts from the angle of interculturality, of the dialogue that becomes possible when the reader is able to become fully aware, in some cases perhaps for the first time, that the people involved in the gospel texts "did not ride bicycles, talk on mobile phones or eat pizza, so to speak.

To paraphrase Georges Pidoux, we could say that "the psychology of evangelical stories seems close *and* familiar to us because the numerous forms in which it manifests itself are linked to our spiritual conceptions. We use biblical notions, such as spirit *and* heart, to express states of mind, but it is not certain that these words mean the same thing to us as they do to the Bible. The words express a life, but the Israelite view of life is determined by different factors than ours. If we are to understand the gospel accounts, we must first of all examine



what the psychological terms mean in their proper context".¹ This has been brilliantly exemplified by Professor Francisco Mena in this programmatic and, in my opinion, fundamental writing for the serious study *and* understanding of the New Testament.

This issue of *Aportes Biblicos* is of particular personal value for two reasons: it marks the end of a 41-year career at UBL. It is my last official activity at the institution. The text has also been written by a personal friend, a colleague of my generation, a full-fledged academic, a person of integrity *and* consistency, whose contribution enriches *and* honours this series.

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Publisher

¹ Georges Pidoux. *Man in the Old Testament*. Buenos Aires-Mexico: Ediciones Carloslohle. 1969, p. 7. The text, in turn, is an extract from Johannes Pedersen. *Israel. Its Life and Culture*. Vol. I. Atlanta(GA):ScholarsPress. 1991, p. 99.

