BOOK REVIEWS

Signs to life: Reading and responding to John's gospel

Kendra Haloviak Valentine (2013). Warburton: Signs Publishing Company

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***Signs to life: Reading and responding to John's gospel* is fascinating. It recognises and encourages readers to bring their own background and understanding to add meaning to the Bible book.**

This sounds similar to literary theorist Tzvetan Todorov's suggestion that text is a picnic where the author brings the words and the reader brings the meaning. The writers of *Signs to life* would disagree and say, "It is based on the conviction that we understand Scripture best when we invite others to 'sit beside' us and read together in community" (p. 139).

Kendra Haloviak Valentine has based her seven chapters on a series of sermons about the seven signs found in the first 11 chapters of John (if you've heard her preach, you can "hear" her voice as you read).

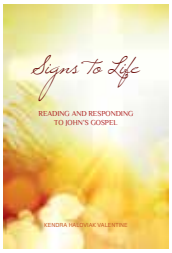
Kendra, who teaches New Testament at La Sierra University (Riverside, California USA), is a gifted communicator who brings insight to these passages. She draws from the Old and the New Testaments and from original languages to give deeper understanding.

Part two of the book has four writers "responding" in a chapter each. They don't respond to what Kendra has written but rather to the challenge of bringing their own reading to the gospel.

Three of them work at Avondale College of Higher Education. Dr Carolyn Rickett writes from her background in literature and communication, Associate Professor Daniel Reynaud teaches the Bible as literature and Professor Jane Fernandez takes what she calls a text-based approach. Nathan Brown, book editor for Signs Publishing Company, writes as a "student of stories and storytelling." What they do well, is demonstrate the added depth possible from this approach.

Signs to life ends with an invitation to 'sit beside' the writers to read John further together—in community.

Fascinating. Worth reading[2]. TEACH



Notes

[1] Bruce is a former editor-in-chief at Signs Publishing Company.

[2] *Signs to life* is available from Adventist Book Centres for $19.95.