

The Prophetic Witness of Amos and its Relevance for Today's Church in African Countries for Promoting Social Justice, Especially in Democratic South Africa

Noel Woodbridge and Willem Semmelink¹

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to show that the prophetic witness of Amos is relevant for today's church in African countries for promoting social justice, because of the growing corruption in African societies, especially in democratic South Africa. Firstly, relevant concepts relating to the prophetic witness of the church for promoting social justice are defined. Secondly, an attempt is made—using three theological arguments—to demonstrate that the church is called upon by God to be a prophetic witness for social justice in secular society. Thirdly, a biblical examination of the prophetic witness of Amos is presented, especially relating to the context, the call and the message of Amos. Fourthly, a discussion on the relevance of the prophetic witness of Amos for African churches today, especially in South Africa, is provided. Sixthly, recent developments and challenges for today's church in African countries like South Africa to revive their prophetic witness are described. Finally, the

¹ The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the beliefs of the South African Theological Seminary.

article proposes certain practical guidelines—based on the prophetic witness of Amos—for today's church on how to promote social justice in African countries, especially in democratic South Africa.

1. Introduction

An examination of the prophetic witness of the church in African countries, especially in South Africa, is relevant for the reasons listed below.

Firstly, there is growing corruption in African societies. In spite of obtaining independence, many African countries have 'inherited indelible scars of exploitation, injustice and misery from colonial rule' (Nyiauwung 2010:791). Since then, the situation has declined resulting in 'an ever growing chasm between a few elite in leadership positions who oppress and a vast majority of followers grounded by the load of oppression' (Nyiauwung 2010:791).

The situation of corruption in post-apartheid South Africa appears to be no different. Charles Ayoub, in an article entitled, *Corruption in South Africa* indicates that 'the 2010 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index assigned South Africa an index of 4.8, ranking South Africa 54th out of 178 countries.' He further states that in South Africa corruption includes 'the private use of public resources, bribery and improper favouritism' (Ayoub 2011).

Notable incidents of fraud and corruption in South Africa include the following:

- 'The Travelgate scandal, in which 40 members of parliament were found to have illegally used parliamentary travel vouchers

worth R18 million for personal use’ (The Guardian, 25 January 2005).

- ‘Former National Police Commissioner and ex-President of Interpol, Jackie Selebi, was convicted on corruption charges in July 2010, for receiving (at least) R120 000 from alleged crime-syndicate boss, Glenn Agliotti’ (BBC News, 20 July 2010).
- ‘Evidence of a long list of fraud, corruption, tender-rigging, kickbacks, irregular appointments and other cases of wrongdoing has been uncovered by the Special Investigating Unit (SIU) at municipalities nationwide.’ In the Tshwane Metro ‘the SIU unmasked 65 municipal officials with interests in 66 companies doing R185 million worth of business with the municipality. It emerged that this was just the tip of the iceberg’ (IOL News, 30 July 2012).

Secondly, there are glaring weaknesses of the prophetic witness of the church in African societies today; ‘hence the need for the development of a “relevant theology” that keeps abreast with African realities’. Nyiawung (2010:791) points out the following weaknesses in the prophetic witness of today’s church in African societies:

- most African countries have adopted democracy, without defining what it means;
- ‘many people have lost confidence in the church in times of misery’;
- ‘churches seem to have established a dichotomy between theology and societal realities’;
- the church has up to now mainly focused most of its efforts on evangelising the faithful churchgoers and has ignored those on the streets;

- 'armchair sermons' have created passive citizens, rather than challenge them to make every effort to achieve responsible stewardship.

Thirdly, there is a great need for the church in South Africa to speak out against social injustices. Von Broembsen and Davis (2008), in an article entitled, *South Africa Must Address Social Justice* express the following concern:

Amongst poor communities, there is a growing disillusionment and frustration at being treated unjustly: crime and a lack of delivery in critical areas such as education, housing and health provision are just some of the factors fuelling this discontent. Now ... the new challenge is the achievement of social justice as set out in our constitution.

79.8% of South Africans indicated their religious affiliation in the 2001 census as Christian (SouthAfrica.info 2011). This question arises: how should Christians react when confronted with corruption? Theron and Lotter claim that instead of withdrawing from the world, Christians should rather participate in transforming of all areas of society. Instead of keeping silent about political, social, and economic evils, they should be willing to meet the challenge of addressing these problems in society 'by applying biblical, moral and ethical principles' (2009:467, 487). Jesus confirmed this view when he stated that his followers ought to be like salt and light in the world (Matt 5:13–15).

The purpose of this article is to show that the prophetic witness of Amos is relevant for today's church in African countries for promoting social justice, especially in democratic South Africa.

2. Social Justice from a Biblical Perspective: Defining Relevant Concepts

Firstly, an examination of the prophetic witness of the church for promoting social justice requires the definition of the relevant concepts.

Wehmeier (2000:648) defines justice as ‘the fair treatment of people’. The Christian understanding of justice is based on divine justice, as depicted in Jeremiah 9:24: ‘I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth’ (Jer 9:24, ESV). Divine justice implies that ‘rather than showing favouritism, God treats all persons fairly and impartially’. It also ‘entails compassion, especially for the less fortunate’ (Grenz and Smith 2003:65).

Social justice focuses on ‘the common good of the community’, as manifested in areas such as ‘the fair and equal distribution of goods and benefits’, as well as ‘respect for the rights of others’ (Grenz and Smith 2003:65).

A democratic society is one of freedom, where people exercise equal rights. It is a society where governance is by consent and in the interest of the people. In such societies, government institutions and policies are such that they respond to the needs and priorities of the people (Hyden 2006:10).

According to Vorster (2011:1), corruption is ‘the misuse of a public office or a position of authority for private material or social gain at the expense of other people’.

Prophetic witness is ‘God authorising a voice to speak on his behalf’ (Nyirawung 2010:792).

Churches have a special function to serve as God's agents in civil society. Their prophetic witness can be a vital source of guidance for public discourse in the social arena, since, through a knowledge of the scriptures, they know 'the undisputable moral truths on which a society depends, such as the dignity of every human being' and the need for the poor to be protected against social injustices—a moral principle for which the biblical prophets stood (Bedford-Strohm 2010).

In this article, prophetic witnessing will not be confined to people who are ordained ministers, since there is a strong spiritual link between Old Testament prophets and all believers. Therefore, the duty of prophetic witnessing is that of every believer (Williams 2003:171).

Also, a discussion on the prophetic witness of the church requires a description of social justice from a biblical perspective. The question arises: to what extent are the themes of justice and social justice (as applied to individual believers) raised in the Old Testament, continued in the New Testament?

It is evident that Old Testament prophetic messages were focused on public interest. For example, Amos prophesied against societies that 'trample the heads of the poor as upon dust of the ground and deny justice to the oppressed' (Amos 2:7, NIV). In the New Testament, Jesus used the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus to illustrate prophetic witnessing against the exploitation of the poor that was earlier championed by former Old Testament prophets (Luke 16:19–31). Nyiawung (2010:793) elaborates:

This parable symbolises a society imbued with injustice and the passive attitude of the rich *vis-à-vis* the poor. The prophetic witness of the church is the mouthpiece of Jesus, because, if society fails to listen, its inhabitants will not be convinced if someone should rise

from the dead to communicate God's anger against injustice (Luke 16:30).

It can be argued that the themes of justice and social justice (as applied to individual believers), raised in the Old Testament are continued in the New Testament. Prophets such as Isaiah and Amos raised their voices on behalf of the poor and the marginalised in society. 'The fifth chapter of Amos contains some of the most striking and most famous "justice" language in the Bible.' God rebukes his people 'for turning justice into wormwood' (5:7) (Dominik 2011). Micah 6:8 is the most beloved 'social justice' passage of all; 'Should God's people bring a burnt offering or a thousand rams or a river of oil' (vv. 6–7)? The resounding response is, no! 'The Lord requires that His people do justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly with [their] God' (6:8) (DeYoung and Gilbert 2011:159). In his ministry Jesus develops a Christian ethics of love. The ultimate goal of the Christian life is 'to love God and one's neighbour' (Mark 12:28–34). Jesus urges his disciples to consider always how best to help one's neighbour in poverty. This is clearly portrayed in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29–37) (Dominik 2011).

3. Theological Arguments in Support of the Prophetic Witness of the Church for Promoting Social Justice in Secular Society

The prophet Amos was clearly called by God to speak against the social ills of the people of God. To what extent is the New Testament church (and individual believers) called upon to play a similar role in relation to secular society? Isn't it the specific task of the church to proclaim the gospel of Christ and call people to saving faith? What is the relationship between Israel and the Church? In this section an attempt will be

made—using three theological arguments—to demonstrate that the church is called upon by God to be a prophetic witness for social justice in secular society.

Firstly, it is important to establish the relationship between Israel and the church. According to Replacement Theology, 'the Church has replaced Israel in God's plan' (Parsons 2013). Proponents of Replacement Theology 'believe that the Jews are no longer God's chosen people, and that God does not have specific future plans for the nation of Israel' (What is Covenant Theology 2013).

On the other hand, Covenant Theology 'does not see a sharp distinction between Israel and the Church. Israel constituted the people of the God in the OT and the Church (which is made up of both Jews and Gentiles) constitutes the people of God in the NT ... The church doesn't replace Israel; the Church is Israel and Israel is the Church (Gal 6:16)' (What is Covenant Theology 2013).

The book of Amos begins with a series of eight prophetic oracles which pronounce judgement on the nations that surround Israel. In terms of both Replacement Theology and Covenant Theology, it can be argued that, just as God called Israel (his people) to be a prophetic witness to the nations ('secular' societies), denouncing their sins and calling them to repentance, so God calls the church (his people) to be a prophetic witness to secular society, calling for social justice.

Secondly, it is necessary to define the task of the church, as portrayed in the New Testament. The spiritual mission of the church is to go into the entire 'world proclaiming the saving message and making disciples' (Mark 16:15; Matt 28:18–20). 'In the course of fulfilling the spiritual commission, the church and individual believers with reasonable limits are to do good' to all people, especially to those of 'the household of

faith' (Gal 6:10; 1 Tim 5:3–16; 6:17–19) (Dominik 2011). 'New Testament passages like 2 Corinthians 8–9 and Galatians 6:1–10 demonstrate the gospel motivation for mercy ministry. Because we have been given grace in Christ, we ought to extend grace to others' in his name (DeYoung and Gilbert 2011:174). Tim Keller is correct when he says that 'ministering to the poor is a crucial sign that we actually believe the gospel' (Keller 2008:8–22).

Thirdly, in defining the contemporary role of the church, it is necessary to discuss current trends amongst Evangelical Christians. The 'movement among evangelicals to take up a social and spiritual commission for the church began in a significant way at the First International Congress on World Evangelization called by evangelist Billy Graham, held in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974' (Thomas 2003). In his paper at the congress entitled, 'A new vision, a new heart, a renewed call', Rene Padilla asks the questions: 'How is the mission of the church defined? What is included in its mission?' He responds as follows: 'The mission of the church is multifaceted because it depends on the mission of God, which includes the whole of creation and the totality of human life' (Padilla 2005). To challenge the worldwide church the Micah Declaration was compiled at the congress. It was based on 'the prophetic word of Micah to "act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God" (6:8)' (Micah Declaration 2008). Padilla 'approvingly quotes from the Micah Declaration on Integral Mission. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together' (Padilla 2005). 'David Bosch puts this conception of the church's mission in a mathematical analogy: Evangelism + social action = mission' (Sterling 2011:85). According to Bosch's view, the mission of the church is the total task that God has set for reaching the world.

'The church's mission becomes one of saving souls and societies' (Sterling 2011:97).

However, one needs to add *a note of caution regarding 'the social and spiritual commission for the church'*, as discussed in the previous paragraph. Donald Guthrie has provided a useful 'review of the New Testament teaching on social responsibility'. He concludes: 'Social relief and social reform are not the gospel, but they flow naturally from it' (Sterling 2011:95). Since the primary mission of the church is evangelism and discipleship, it can be argued that 'if we try to combine and balance a spiritual and social mission we may end up doing neither well and may eventually minimize the spiritual mission and drift to a primary social mission. The YMCA and the Salvation Army are good examples of such a drift' (Sterling 2011:97).

4. The Prophetic Witness of Amos: the Context, the Call, and the Message

Firstly, an understanding of the historical setting, in which Amos delivered his oracles to Israel, will help to define the context of his prophetic witness.

During the reign of Jeroboam II, Israel reached what was probably its height in terms of economic prosperity. Helped along with collusion amongst royalty and judges, a wealthy aristocracy emerged at the expense of the poor. They lived in luxurious dwellings in the cities. It is clear 'that this economic prosperity was not accompanied by a fair distribution of the nation's wealth, hence while some were getting richer from the expanded markets owing to the expansion of Israelite territory and foreign markets, the majority of the people remained poor' (Gunda 2010). The prophet sums up the economic prosperity that was

experienced by the elite in Israel: ‘Woe to those who lie on beds of ivory and stretch themselves out on their couches, and eat lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall’ (Amos 6:4, ESV).

‘It would appear from the prophet Amos that corruption among the leaders, particularly the judiciary system, was rampant’ (Barton 1995:1532). For the wealthy people in Israel, economic prosperity led to complacency and corruption. ‘With all the comfort and luxury in Israel came self-sufficiency and a false sense of security. But prosperity brought corruption and destruction’ (Barton 1995:1532).

When discussing the judges of his time, Amos says: ‘For I know how many are your transgressions and how great are your sins—you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and turn aside the needy in the gate’ (5:12, ESV).

Excessive wealth in Israel led to the creation of an elite upper class—characterised by power and leisure—that increasingly adopted a decadent lifestyle, which included sexual immorality and idolatry. These greedy people profited from trade and benefited from slave labour and usury. They bought up food in the countryside and resold it to a captive audience in the cities making enormous profits in the process (Stuart 2002).

Secondly, Amos was called by God to the prophetic ministry. He was a humble shepherd and a cultivator of sycamore trees from the village of Tekoa, near Jerusalem, when the Lord called him to be a prophet. He was not an official member of the Jewish religious establishment (Wiersbe 2007:1415). While he was tending the flock, Amos heard the voice of the Lord telling him: ‘Go, prophesy to my people Israel’ (Amos 7:15, ESV). During the reign of Jereboam II God gave Amos ‘a profound vision concerning the state of Israel.’ It was clear from the

vision that Amos was God's 'chosen person to declare God's message to Israel' (Word of life 2010).

Thirdly, Amos employed a unique literary style to ensure that his message was clearly understood and perceived as a message that was communicated to him by God himself. The style of Amos's prophetic witness can be illustrated in the following ways (Introduction to Amos 2012):

- 'In his discourse he employs the style of a messenger' speaking on behalf of God: 'This is what the Lord says' (1:3, 6).
- 'He sings a funeral lament for Israel in anticipation of its fall (5:1, 2)'.
- 'He uses many popular metaphors that he learned when he was a shepherd and farmer (1:3; 2:13; 3:12; 4:1; 9:9)'.
- Amos uses his writing skills to join 'a series of proverbs together until reaching a climax (1:3–2:10)'.

In his writings, it is clear that 'Amos had a high view of God as the Creator, and periodically his prophecy breaks into peals of praise' (New World Encyclopedia 2012). Amos 4:13 (NIV) is a good illustration of his view of God: 'He who forms the mountains, creates the wind, and reveals his thoughts to man, he who turns dawn to darkness, and treads the high places of the earth—the Lord God Almighty is his name.'

Fourthly, a closer look at the message of the prophet Amos reveals that, although he addressed various issues, his central theme focused on sin and judgment.

The prophetic witness of Amos was against sin—the social injustices of the people of Israel. The wealthy got rich by exploiting the poor. On behalf of God, 'the prophet Amos denounced luxury and urged the

people to care for the poor.’ He particularly condemned ‘their expensive houses ... their drinking ... and their costly parties.’ Yet, these same people ‘were “religious” and faithfully participated in temple services.’ However, their ‘religion’ was merely a cover-up for their sins (Wiersbe 1991:584).

In chapters three through to six, Amos delivers three sermons to expose Israel’s sins. In his prophetic witness Amos’s words are both frank and brutal, as he denounces sin and calls for repentance. George (2006:138) describes the social and religious problems in Israel during the time of Amos, explaining that the wealthy people were greedy and cruel and through heavy taxation, they exploited the poor. God condemns them for taking bribes and for depriving the poor of justice. Although these rich people profess to serve and worship God, their hypocrisy is shown in their lavish lifestyle. In fact, there is ‘a total absence of social justice and morality’ (George 2006:138).

The prophetic witness of Amos was a message of judgment on behalf of God. Amos makes it clear that commitment to God must go deeper than worship rituals, such as bringing offerings to the altar (5:18–17). God requires from his people ‘genuine repentance and righteous living’. Amos indicates what will happen to the people of Israel, if they do not turn from their wicked ways: ‘They will be taken away as captives in a foreign land’ (6:1–14) (Knight 2003:193). God would not change his mind, because the transgressions of the Israelites were too many. Their rejection of God’s covenant and his repeated warnings had made the destruction to come inevitable. God cried out against their unjust practices that were harming the poor. ‘Their attention to ceremony and sacrifices, has left the heart of the worshiper untouched’ (Finley 1985:411–412).

Despite his message of judgement, Amos interceded on behalf of the people of Israel. He pleaded with God (ch. 7), to which God reacted by changing his mind. Because of Amos's intercession on behalf of Israel, the first two judgments of locusts and fire did not take place. However, 'Amos did not intercede after the third vision, for the nation had been measured and found wanting' (Wiersbe 1991:587).

5. The Relevance of the Prophetic Witness of Amos for African Churches Today, Especially in South Africa

The 'exploitation of the poor remains a concern in our society today.' It can be argued that the eighth century BC condemnations of Amos are essentially relevant in the quest for social justice in African countries today, especially in democratic South Africa. Gunda argues that the collusion described by Amos between the wealthy elite in Israel, the 'judiciary and the religious leaders in the exploitation of the poor, remains a concern in our society today.' However, Amos's condemnation of the wealthy elite was 'not so much targeted against the political stability and economic prosperity, but against the injustices that were nurtured in these environments' (Gunda 2010).

To assist today's church in promoting social justice in African countries, the authors propose the following four biblical principles, derived from the prophetic witness of Amos:

First, social justice is required of God's people. God speaks out against the abuse of wealth, power, and privilege. The book of Amos 'stands as an eloquent witness against those who subordinate human needs and dignity to the pursuit of wealth and pleasure' (Nelson 1996:249).

Second, the prevalence of social injustices in African countries calls for a relook at the role of the church as a prophetic witness and

representative of God. We are living in a society where it has become apparent that God is no longer a factor in the lives of the majority of people. Godless people are showing the same symptoms that we read about in the book of Amos. Finley (1985:411) suggests that the message of Amos ‘has much to contribute to discussions of social justice.’

Third, the prophetic witness of Amos serves as a challenge to African churches today to take up their role as God’s representatives within society (as ‘salt and light’) and to speak out against the socio-economic and political wrongs of our time. Nyiawung (2010:798–799) claims that it is the urgent task of the church to fight against social justices, through its prophetic witness. Furthermore, the church should continue to denounce injustices for as long as the poor and oppressed exist in today’s society. ‘It should remind society of its responsibility towards God, through committed and responsible stewardship’ (Nyiawung 2010:798–799).

Fourth, the prophetic witness of Amos serves as a challenge to the ordinary believer to speak out on behalf of God against injustices committed in society, whether acting as an individual, or in collaboration with other fellow believers or even globally. In his exposition of the phrase, ‘maintain justice in the courts’ (Amos 5:15, NIV), Motyer (quoted in Finley 1985:413) raises the challenge, ‘What a call this ... constitutes to Bible Christians to rediscover the moral and social teaching of Holy Scripture.’

6. Recent Developments and Challenges for Today's Church in African Countries like South Africa to revive their Prophetic Witness

It is clear that the African churches need to revive their prophetic voice, especially in the current socio-economic and political climate in South Africa. The following recent approaches for promoting social justice need to be developed and applied, especially in democratic South Africa.

Firstly, African churches need to develop a 'relevant theology'. African churches and theologians have not been entirely indifferent towards the plight of the poor and oppressed. In fact, the serious situation has resulted in a trend towards dynamism in theology in recent years to address the wrongs during the colonial and apartheid eras. This has encouraged developments in the field of theology, i.e. Liberation Theology, Black Theology and African Theology. This, in turn, has led to the development of 'relevant theology,' which focuses on contextualisation—interpreting the Bible in conjunction with God's purpose for mankind within a particular context (Nyirawung 2010:791).

Secondly, African churches need to respond to the call to action by the Cape Town Commitment of the 2010 Lausanne Congress. The Lausanne Congress in 2010 in Cape Town compiled 'the Cape Town Commitment a "Confession of Faith and a Call to Action."' In Part II, section IIA of the document the Church is called upon to bear "witness to the truth of Christ in a pluralistic, globalized world."

The Cape Town Commitment acknowledges the importance of bearing witness to the truth in the interconnected public 'arenas of Government, Business and Academia', which 'have a strong influence on the values

of each nation and, in human terms, define the freedom of the Church’ (Lausanne Movement 2011: Part II, § IIA, ¶ 7).

The Cape Town Commitment (Lausanne Movement 2011: Part II, § IIA, ¶ 7A&B) calls the Church to action in the following ways:

- ‘We encourage Christ-followers to be actively engaged in these spheres, both in public service or private enterprise, in order to shape societal values and influence public debate. We encourage support for Christ-centred schools and universities that are committed to academic excellence and biblical truth.’
- ‘Corruption is condemned in the Bible. It undermines economic development, distorts fair decision-making and destroys social cohesion. No nation is free of corruption. We invite Christians in the workplace, especially young entrepreneurs, to think creatively about how they can best stand against this scourge.’

7. Conclusion

God wants all people to come to know him and to be in a right relationship with him. There is only one remedy for sin—‘Seek the LORD and live’ (Amos 5:6, NIV). Sin seeks to destroy. However, hope is found in seeking God (Barton 1995:1540).

The world, with its growing economic, political, social, and ecological crises has imposed an urgent responsibility on the prophetic witness of the church. ‘This mission is about the proclamation of the kingdom of God, which has a social, political and economic dimension’ (Malina 2001). Sider calls for ‘deep changes in the Christian lifestyle to reflect concern for the poor’. He makes a connection between evangelism and social action by pointing out that ‘the world is attracted to the gospel

when it sees a demonstration of caring and loving concern for society' (Finley 1985:418, 419). For this reason, Christ calls upon his people to perform a two-fold ministry:

Jesus calls Christians to be 'witnesses', to evangelize others, but also to be deeply concerned for the poor. He calls his disciples *both* to 'gospel-messaging' (urging everyone to believe the gospel) *and* to 'gospel-neighbouring' (sacrificially meeting the needs of those around them whether they believe or not!). The two absolutely go together (Keller 2008:18).

God calls upon us to love our neighbours, including the poor, as ourselves. Such love for the poor is demonstrated in our deeds of compassion. It is also expressed through exposing everything that oppresses and exploits the poor. As Christians, 'our loving duty towards our suffering neighbours requires us to seek justice on their behalf through proper appeal to legal and state authorities who function as God's servants in punishing wrongdoers' (Lausanne Movement 2011:Part 1, § 7C&D).

A high responsibility rests on the today's clergy to deepen the awareness of churchgoers to what the Bible says about social morality. With all the issues raised by Amos regarding the need for social action, it is important for believers to remember that prayer combined with the proper exegesis of scripture will help them to gain a comprehensive knowledge of God's will for personal, social, and governmental reform (Finley 1985:420).

Finally, the question arises: how can today's church promote social justice in African countries, especially in democratic South Africa? In response to this question, five practical guidelines, based on the prophetic witness of Amos, are presented: (a) support those believers

who speak out against the evils in our time: crimes, injustices within the socio-economic and political climate of our time; (b) address issues, such as substance abuse, eating disorders, sexual misconduct and AIDS from a Biblical stance; (c) make people aware of the needs of our time; (d) motivate people to get involved in the sustainable development of their environment, and in addressing issues such as unemployment and poor education; and (e) support those people who are still oppressed, maltreated, abused and belittled.

Reference List

- Ayoub C 2011. *Corruption in South Africa*. Online article. Accessed from <http://news.charlesayoub.com/index.php/article/2373/>, 10/12/2012.
- BBC News. 2 July 2010. *South Africa ex-police head Selebi guilty of corruption*. Online news item. Accessed from www.bbc.co.uk/news/10485558, 10/12/2012.
- Barton BB (gen. ed.) 1995. *Life application Bible, NIV*. Eastbourne: Kingsway.
- Bedford-Strohm H 2010. Prophetic witness and public discourse in European societies—a German perspective. *HTS Teologiese Studies* 66(1):784–793.
- DeYoung K and Gilbert G 2011. *What is the mission of the church?* Wheaton: Crossway.
- Dominik MSJ 2011. Social justice in the Bible. *Thinking Faith* Oct 14 2011. Online article. Accessed from www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20111014_1.htm, 13/03/2012.
- Finley TJ 1985. An evangelical response to the preaching of Amos. *The Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 28(4):411–420.
- George J 2006. *The bare bones Bible handbook*. Eugene: Harvest House.

- Grenz SJ & Smith JT 2003. *Pocket dictionary of ethics*. Downers Grove: IVP.
- Gunda MR 2010. Reconsidering the relevance of the prophet Amos in the quest for a just society in contemporary Zimbabwe. *BOTSA Electronic Forum* 3(2):2. Online article. Accessed from www.mhs.no/article_1109.shtml, 11/12/2012.
- Guthrie D 2013. *The New Testament approach to social responsibility*. Online article. Accessed from www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/vox/vol08/social-responsibility_guthrie.pdf, 08/03/2013.
- Hyden G 2006. *African politics in comparative perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Introduction to Amos (author anonymous). Online article. Accessed from www.angelfire.com/sc3/we_dig_montana/Amos.html, 27/12/2012.
- IOL News. 30 July 2012. *Massive corruption in Tshwane exposed*. Online news item. Accessed from www.iol.co.za/news/politics/massive-corruption-in-tshwane-exposed-1.1351845, 10/12/2012.
- Keller T 2008. The gospel and the poor. *Themelios* 33(3):8–22.
- Knight GW 2003. *The layman's Bible handbook*. Uhrichsville: Barbour Publishing.
- The Cape Town commitment. Online article. Accessed from www.lausanne.org/ctcommitment, 27/12/2012.
- Malina BJ 2001. *The social gospel of Jesus: the kingdom of God in Mediterranean perspective*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Micah Declaration 2008. Online document. Accessed from <http://micahnetwork.org/en/integral-mission/micah-declaration>, 07/03/2013.
- New World Encyclopedia. *Amos (prophet)*. Online article. Accessed from [www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Amos_\(prophet\)](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Amos_(prophet)), 17/12/2012.

- Nyiauwung MD 2010. The prophetic witness of the church as an appropriate mode of public discourse in African societies. *HTS Theologiese Studies* 66(1):791–799.
- Padilla R 2005. *A new vision, a new heart, a renewed call*. Online paper. Accessed from www.lausanne.org/documents/2004forum/LOP33_IG4.pdf, 07/03/2013.
- Parsons JJ 2013. Israel and the Church—understanding some theological options. Online article. Accessed from www.hebrew4christians.com/Articles/Israel/israel.html, 11/03/2013.
- SouthAfrica.info. *South Africa's population*. Online article. Accessed from www.southafrica.info/about/people/population.htm, 12/12/2012.
- Sterling PR 2011. Is there a hole in our Gospel? Does the Church have a social commission too? *Grace Evangelical Society*. Online journal. Accessed from www.faithalone.org/journal/2011i/Sterling.pdf, 07/03/2013.
- Stuart D 2002. *Hosea-Jonah*. Word Biblical Commentary (vol. 31). Dallas: Word.
- The Guardian (Pretoria). 25 January 2005. *40 accused in South African MPs' fraud case*. Online news item. Accessed from www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/jan/24/southafrica.andrewmeldrum, 11/
- Theron M and Lotter GA 2012. Corruption: how should Christians respond? *Acta Theologica* 32(1):96–117.
- Thomas J 2003. *From Lausanne to Manila: Evangelical social thought*. Delhi: ISPCK.
- von Broembsen M and Davis D 2008. South Africa must address social justice. *The South African Civil Society Information Service*. Online article. Accessed from <http://sacsis.org.za/site/article/186.1>, 14/12/2012.
- Vorster JM 2011. *Managing corruption in South Africa: the ethical responsibility of the church*. Unpublished article written as part of

a research project of the Faculty of Theology at the North-West University, Potchefstroom.

Wehmeier S (ed.) 2000. *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English* (6th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

What is Covenant Theology? [2013]. Online article. Accessed from www.gotquestions.org/covenant-theology.html#ixzz2NCixGOLq, 11/03/2013.

Wiersbe WW 1991. *Nelson's pocket reference Bible commentary: Old Testament*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Wiersbe WW 2007. *The Wiersbe Bible commentary: Old Testament*. Colorado Springs: David C Cook.

Williams MJ 2003. *The prophet and his message: reading Old Testament prophecy today*. Phillipsburg: P & R.

Word of life. 2010. *Learning from Amos: The prophet and his call*. Online article: Accessed from www.wordoflife.uk.com/amos/amos1/amos1_1the_prophet_&_his_call.htm, 04/06/2013.