**Bible, Spirituality and Method: Continuing the Debate**[[1]](#footnote-2)

Christo Lombaard

ChristoLombaard@gmail.com

**Proposal**

There has been a perennial debate within the academic discipline of Biblical Spirituality, on the place of historically oriented exegesis in its relation to the experience of the Christian faith. In international circles, the discussion has been more implied than explicit, with instances given; in open discussion sessions at conferences, the debate has surfaced more clearly, with an instance briefly described; amongst South African colleagues in the discipline of Biblical Spirituality, the debate has been undertaken more openly, with this argument outlined. The latter, with specific reference to the recently again taken position, which holds, strongly, that historical exegesis ought to make place, and is making way for a more spiritual, that is, an experiential engagement with the Bible.

Building forth on earlier publications of mine on this specific matter, I in this contribution point out that the *opposition* between historical exegesis and experiencing spiritual meaning from the Bible cannot be sustained. This, for three reasons:

* *Theologically*, the Christian faith is primarily historically anchored in its experience of the Divine;
* *Academically*, the classic sources on the experience of faith do not sustain an antagonism towards history;
* *Exegetically*, the opposition set in South Africa between historical exegesis and experiencing spiritual meaning from the Bible, is based on an older, then already inaccurate *in toto* characterisation of historical exegesis as harmful to the positive nourishment of faith, in order to add support for, then, pursuing (in a sense, exclusively) a-historical exegetical methodologies within South Africa.

This is illustrated at the hand of an exegetical example.

1. Paper at the "South African Spiritualities: Experiencing God in Nothingness and in Everything” conference, 24-26 November 2021, Wellington, South Africa. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)