https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

(Southern) African Anglican Biblical Interpretation: A Postcolonial Project

Gerald West[1]

west@ukzn.ac.za

ABSTRACT

This article argues that context is an important fourth factor, alongside the more familiar three, in understanding Anglicanism in (Southern) Africa. As imperialism was an important part of the early context of the Bible's presence within Southern African Anglicanism, the bulk of the present article charts the contours of imperial Southern African Anglicanism. Having mapped this territory, the article then probes what a postcolonial analysis of Southern African Anglican biblical interpretation might look like, outlining two related components: a descriptive component and an interventionist component. The descriptive task asks how Southern African Anglicans have read the Scriptures, and the interventionist task asks how Southern African Anglicans should read the Scriptures. The former requires a careful Foucault-like 'archaeological' analysis and the latter a recognition of the contextually-related resources of African biblical scholarship.

KEYWORDS: African biblical hermeneutics, imperialism, Southern African Anglicanism

Introduction

There are three things to consider, estate agents say, when it comes to property: location, location, and location. There are three things to consider, we are told, when it comes to Anglicanism: Scripture, tradition, and reason.[2] Perhaps estate agents know something that Anglicans do not!

1. School of Religion and Theology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.

2. Rowan A. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture: From the Reformation to the Present* (New York: Herder & Herder, 2006), pp. 13–31.

Journal of Anglican Studies Vol. 8(2) 140–164 [doi:10.1017/S1740355309990015]
© The Journal of Anglican Studies Trust 2009

In his recent analytical history of Anglican approaches to Scripture, Rowan Greer comes close to identifying a fourth factor requiring consideration when it comes to Anglicanism, which he calls 'experience', which I call 'context', and which estate agents call 'location'. In the process of providing a nuanced analysis of 'the triple cord' — Scripture, tradition, and reason — 'a method attributed to [Richard] Hooker [c. 1554–1600] and to the mainline development of Anglicanism', in which he acknowledges that this 'three-legged stool' has 'become something of a shibboleth in current Anglican thinking',[3] Greer draws in a fourth strand. He derives the fourth strand from what he considers the 'attractive' attempt by William J. Wolf and John E. Booty[4] to define Anglicanism 'as a way of being Christian that involves *a pastorally and liturgically oriented dialogue between four partners: Catholics, evangelicals, and advocates of reason and experience*'.[5] Greer goes on to say that 'Presumably, the ''Catholics'' speak for tradition; the ''evangelicals'' for Scripture'. 'We now have', he continues, 'a quadruple cord or a four-legged stool',[6] with Experience being added to the more familiar three.

Though he does not signal the arrival or acknowledgement of 'experience' as a major innovation, he does include it in his own framework for analysing Anglican approaches to Scripture, 'treating reason, tradition, and experience as instruments for interpreting Scripture'.[7] Greer is always attentive to 'the many different meanings that have been and can be given to the terms' throughout his careful descriptive work of Anglican approaches to Scripture from the Reformation to the present.[8] So he recognizes that the difficulties associated with understanding the notion of 'tradition' — for example, 'whose tradition, or what tradition' — apply to the fourth term 'experience'.[9]

That there is some socio-political 'thickness' to Greer's understanding of 'experience' is evident in the examples he uses at this point to highlight the difficulties. 'Can we assume', he says, 'that there is a single black experience or a single female experience?'.[10] However,

3. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, pp. 13–14.
4. William J. Wolf and John E. Booty (eds.), *The Spirit of Anglicanism* (Wilton: Morehouse-Barlow, 1979), p. 165.
5. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, p. xviii.
6. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, p. xviii.
7. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, p. xix.
8. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, p. xix.
9. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, p. xxiii.
10. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, p. xxiii.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

while Greer does situate his primarily ecclesiastical and theological analysis within history, the socio-political dimensions of this history are rather thin, probably deliberately so.[11]

Borrowing from the (socio-political?) wisdom of estate agents, I will foreground location or experience or context in this paper. In so doing I am not assuming that context is one thing; I am, however, assuming that it is a significant thing, especially in (Southern) African Anglican biblical interpretation.[12] My approach in this article will be, first, to locate (Southern) African Anglican biblical interpretation within a postcolonial context. Second, I will argue for an extension of Greer's project to the colonies, calling for many more analytically descriptive 'samples of Anglican attitudes toward the Bible',[13] concentrating as he does on England and 'the writings of the leaders and scholars of the Church of England'.[14] Third, I will argue for an interventionist moment in (Southern) African Anglican biblical interpretation, in which socially engaged biblical scholars, organic intellectuals of faith, and poor, working-class, and marginalized (Southern) African Anglican interpreters of the Bible collaborate for the transformation of the (Southern) African Anglican Church and the wider Communion.

Part of an Imperial Project

Though it was not initially clear what place the Bible would occupy in earliest Anglicanism, what is clear, argues Greer, 'is Henry's concern to establish the independency of his royal supremacy and of England as a self-sufficient ''empire'' '.[15] In other words, Henry's reformation (1529) was part of an imperial project. In line with his reluctance to situate Anglicanism within thick socio-political contexts, Greer does not elaborate; but in my analysis of Anglicanism in Southern Africa, I will.[16]

11. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, p. xvi.

12. I place 'Southern' in brackets because much of what I say may be applicable to the Africa more widely; however, my focus will be on Southern African Anglicanism.

13. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, p. 161.

14. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, p. ix.

15. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, p. 2. See also G.W. Bernard, *The King's Reformation: Henry VIII and the Remaking of the English Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).

16. I drop the bracket around 'Southern' at this point because my focus will be on Southern Africa. The earlier bracketing of 'Southern' was by way of invitation to my colleagues in other African countries. It will return later.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In 1536, the foundations were being laid for Henry's Church, with the Ten Articles and the Royal Injunctions laying its 'Protestant religious party platform'.[17] Within a wider socio-political context, however, other foundations had been and were being laid. The emerging trade in African slaves in the 1440s and the Islamic conquest of Constantinople in 1453 enlarged the perspective and appetite of the nascent European empires; and the technological developments in the maritime industry made exploration, trade, and missionary endeavour possible far beyond European borders.[18] In the first 'scramble for Africa', Pope Alexander VI (Borgia), a Spaniard, in 1493 'divided the world, assigning the West to Spain and the East, including Africa, to Portugal', thus granting the Portuguese 'a sacred document, giving them legal right to govern the new worlds which they felt called to discover'.[19]

From 1470 the Portuguese built forts on the Ghana 'Gold Coast'. They were followed by the Dutch, British, Germans, and Danes,[20] all determined to get their share of the potential trade, including the trade in people, slaves. Similarly, the Portuguese were the first to pioneer the route to the Cape, followed by the Dutch, the French, and the British.[21] In every case Christianity was part of the vanguard of empire. And so it was that Henry's Church made its way to what is now known as South(ern) Africa.[22]

European colonization of the Cape took effect in 1652 when Jan van Riebeeck and a group of 125 other employees of the Dutch East India Company arrived at the Cape as settlers and built a fort.[23] The first Church of England service in the Cape Colony was held in 1749 for British sailors and soldiers on shore leave.[24] The Dutch governor of the Cape Colony agreed to allow the chaplain from the British fleet under the command of Admiral Bascawen, en route from India, to hold a service in

17. Greer, *Anglican Approaches to Scripture*, pp. 3, 4.

18. Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 42.

19. Sundkler and Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, p. 44.

20. Sundkler and Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, p. 46.

21. Sundkler and Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, p. 64.

22. Here, I use another awkward bracket, signalling that though the Anglican Church of Southern Africa is indeed Southern African, much of what is documented is centred on South Africa.

23. O.M. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa: A Historical Overview* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1999), p. 10; Sundkler and Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa*, p. 64.

24. Suberg, *The Anglican tradition in South Africa*, p. 10.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the Dutch church.[25] 'Thereafter', says O.M. Suberg 'Anglican services were held occasionally at Cape Town, presided over by visiting Anglican naval chaplains for their members from the ships in Table Bay'.[26]

Though the industrial revolution, which was firmly under way in the early 1800s, contributed to the fracturing of the hegemony of the Church of England in Britain,[27] the effects were not readily apparent in the early days of the Church of England in the Cape Colony. While Nonconformist missions in Southern Africa, such as the London Missionary Society (LMS), 'invariably tried to reach beyond the colonial frontier, well away from the secular authorities' — though they too would, like their Church of England cousins, 'pave the way for the Empire of Britain'[28] — the Church of England was more directly linked to the imperial project in Southern Africa.

In the aftermath of the French Revolution of 1789, when French troops invaded the Netherlands in 1795, 'a British force was sent to the Cape, to ensure that the French did not seize it and take control of the sea route to India'.[29] The occupying Dutch forces were defeated and a British administration was established. The peace treaty drafted between the British and the Dutch 'provided for the Dutch Reformed Church to retain its position as the ''established church'' of the Cape', but services were held for Church of England members of the occupying forces by naval or military chaplains.[30] 'These chaplains were under the control of the British governor of the Cape.'[31]

In 1802, hostilities between Britain and France ceased, and under the Peace of Amiens the Cape was returned to the Batavian Republic in February 1803. But the British were back in 1806 when war once again broke out in Europe after Napoleon had crowned himself emperor of France. Once again the British sent a force to secure the strategically important Cape, and once again the Church of England served members of the army garrison and civil administration.[32] With the

25. Suberg, *The Anglican tradition in South Africa*, p. 10.
26. Suberg, *The Anglican tradition in South Africa*, p. 10.
27. Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 76, 77.
28. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 79.
29. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 11.
30. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 11.
31. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p.11.
32. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 12.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

defeat and exile of Napoleon in 1814, the Dutch formally surrendered the Cape to Britain, and the rule of the Cape by Britain was formally ratified by the Convention of London (1814).[33] The Cape was now a formal territory of the British Empire.

From 1634, all British possessions fell under the episcopal management of the bishop of London, and after 1810, civil and colonial chaplains were appointed and paid by the Colonial Office in London 'to minister to the spiritual needs of the British settlers at the Cape'.[34] In 1827, the Cape was included within the diocese of the Bishop of Calcutta (a diocese which stretched from India to the Straits of Magellan in South America). As with almost all Church of England activities in the Cape Colony, when the various Bishops of Calcutta did visit the Cape to fulfill their episcopal duties, 'not one of them travelled into the interior of the colony'.[35] The Church of England in Southern Africa was concentrated on the colonial rim of the continent and focused almost entirely on white colonists.

But as the demands of empire shifted, so too did the focus of the Anglican Church. The British government used the opportunity presented by the depression in Europe and Britain after the Napoleonic Wars to bring British settlers to the Cape in 1820 'to be settled along the Eastern Frontier, to act as a buffer between the colony and the [indigenous] Xhosas'.[36] As these settlers moved into the interior, so too did their Anglican clergymen. But in the period from 1829 to 1846, each congregation in the Cape Colony was regarded as a part of the Church of England 'as by law established in England'.[37]

The close control of the emerging colonial Anglican Church by the Church of England and its Queen (for what had been Henry's empire was now Victoria's) could not last. The transformation of relations of production and, concomitantly, relations among classes brought about by and constituting the industrial revolution[38] ruptured the hegemonic, taken-for-granted signs and concepts of established Church of England Christianity.[39] What would follow in the Cape

33. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 12.
34. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 12.
35. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, pp. 12, 13.
36. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 13.
37. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 16.
38. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 56.
39. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 76.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Colony would be a continuation in another context of the protracted struggle in Europe and Britain for control over religious life provoked by the economic turmoil of the mid-sixteenth century.[40] By the mid-1600s in Britain, Church of England ecclesiastical authority was in tatters, and even the attempt after 1660 'to reimpose a narrow Anglican uniformity failed, and henceforth it could never again be pretended that all Englishmen belonged to a single church'.[41]

> Far from being an unquestioned order of signs and symbols through which nature and society were apprehended, Christianity had itself become an object of debate and political struggle. The growing disunity of the English church was an element in this process.[42]

As more and more British settlers, Anglican clergy, and Anglican mission societies (such as the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and the Colonial Bishoprics Fund),[43] arrived to participate in the imperial project, so too did the potential for contestation. In the 1840s, George Hough, a disciple of the Oxford Movement and a civil chaplain at the Cape, preached a sermon on fasting in Lent which 'antagonised a group of Protestant Anglicans who felt the sermon to be too Roman Catholic'.[44] This relatively minor contestation was the forerunner of more major ones, as the empire attempted to assert itself and the colony struck back. For, as Jean and John Comaroff remind us in their historical-anthropology of mission in Southern Africa, 'the missionary encounter must be regarded as a *two*-sided historical process; as a dialectic that takes into account the social and cultural endowments of, and the consequences for, *all* the actors — missionaries no less than Africans'.[45] And we have not even got to the Africans yet! And neither had the Anglican Church!

The election of Robert Gray, an Englishman consecrated in Westminster Abbey in June 1847, as the first bishop of Cape Town and metropolitan solidified the ecclesiastical authority of the Church of

40. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 76.

41. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 77.

42. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 77.

43. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, pp. 14, 15.

44. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 17.

45. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 54.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

England and the Crown in the Cape Colony. His letters patent 'commissioned Gray as an officer of the British state and gave him the protection of British law'.[46] However, locating a Church of England bishop in the Cape Colony also tested the limits of the empire. The quarrel between Gray and the first bishop of Natal, John William Colenso, which 'began as a question of doctrine and biblical truth rapidly expanded and became a question of the legal rights of members of the Church of England and the constitutional status of the Church in the colonies'.[47] Gray understood himself to be Colenso's superior within the Anglican Province of Southern Africa, but Colenso never accepted Gray's metropolitical episcopal jurisdiction. So when Gray summonsed him to appear before an ecclesiastical court, he refused, refusing also to accept its findings and Gray's subsequent sentence which deposed him of his see. Colenso then, in 1864, appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England. This body had, in another case, argued that the Church of England as established by British law could not exist outside Britain, hence colonial Anglicans could not have access to the ecclesiastical courts of the Church of England. In Colenso's case they ruled, in 1865, that British law recognized Gray and Colenso as bishops, but not of a place, for their ecclesiastical jurisdiction was governed by the colonial legislature. Colenso and Gray were bound by a voluntary association, within which Colenso consented to have Gray as his metropolitan, but the Privy Council argued that it could not force Colenso to accept Gray as his episcopal superior because it did not have the jurisdiction to make Gray metropolitan of the Anglican Church in the Cape Colony.[48] Notwithstanding this decision, Gray excommunicated Colenso in 1866 and another bishop was consecrated in his place. Colenso again went to court, this time to force the Colonial Bishoprics Council to pay his stipend. The Chancery Court ruled in Colenso's favour, and he then successfully sued in the Privy Council for ownership of church property in Natal.[49] The 'logic' of all this is rather succinctly captured by Peter Hinchliff:

> The Church of England cannot exist outside England; colonial bishops in colonies with independent legislatures are therefore ecclesiastical persons but have no jurisdiction; the Crown cannot any longer create such persons; yet those persons are corporations of holding property

46. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 21.

47. Jeff Guy, *The Heretic: A Study of the Life of John William Colenso 1814–1883* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1983), p. 113.

48. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, pp. 24, 25.

49. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 25.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> given to the Church of England elsewhere; therefore there is a sense in which the Church of England can exist outside England, but perhaps especially in Natal.[50]

The logic of empire was beginning to be exposed, and with it further footholds for colonial resistance.

While Gray and Colenso were debating the Bible and Church of England jurisdiction, the colonial frontier was in severe flux. Within and beyond the boundaries of the early Cape Colony, African peoples had well-established lines of relationship and routes for trade in material objects and ritual expertise.[51] Warfare, raiding, and the formation of external alliances and military pacts were also part of clan life for most African peoples in Southern Africa.[52] The first major area in which the colonial presence made itself felt beyond the borders of the Cape Colony in the early 1800s was predictably that of trade. The control of local African chiefs over the movement of persons and the exchange of products was increasingly impacted by, first, those groups (like the armed and mounted Griqua and Kora) who navigated the boundary, serving those on either side and sustaining themselves in the process, and second, the increasing numbers of traders, travellers, explorers, missionaries and colonial functionaries who crossed (and so played a role in expanding) the colonial boundary.[53]

But other forces were also at work in this period. Among these, one of the most significant and historically controversial was the so-called *Mfecane* or *Difaqane*. The rise of Shaka and the expansion of the Zulu state in the eastern region of Southern Africa, the resistance of African chiefdoms to the efforts of the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay who were pushing south in the search for slaves, and raiding parties of Griquas and Bergenaars from the south to meet the demand for bonded labour in the Cape Colony set up a series of chain reactions among neighbouring clans.[54] Within these socio-political upheavals, and

50. Peter B. Hinchliff, *The Anglican Church in South Africa: An Account of the History and Development of the Church of the Province of South Africa* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), pp. 98, 99.

51. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, pp. 161–64.

52. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, pp. 164, 165.

53. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, pp. 165, 166.

54. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, pp. 167–69.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

contributing to them, the emergent Boer republics were extending their control over indigenous populations 'by asserting their sovereign capacity to impose taxation, to regulate land and movement, and to extract labor'.[55] In sum, 'Alongside the state colonialism of Her Majesty's Government and the civilizing colonialism of the mission, settler colonialism was taking its intrusive place.'[56]

Just one year after Colenso's excommunication, any lingering hesitancy on the part of the British Empire about the scope of its imperial project in the Cape was abolished. The discovery of diamonds in 'the interior' in 1867 and gold shortly after, beyond the immediate strategic boundaries of the Cape Colony, catapulted the colonial process. With the opening up of the diamond and goldfields,

> previously parochial conflicts among and between colonizers and colonized alike were to fuse and explode into an all-embracing regional struggle for the future of South Africa. The 'mineral revolution' was to mark the transition of the interior from a frontier, settler society into the core of a sub-continental political economy.[57]

The deliberations and manoeuvrings of Gray must be seen within this socio-political landscape. As a colonial appointee and agent, Gray wanted to retain the ties of his Church with the empire, but as the leader of a settler church he also coveted local control. Gray wanted for his church 'both independence from and an intimate connection with the established Church of England'.[58] This Gray accomplished at the first Provincial Synod in 1870 at which a constitution and code of canons was drawn up and then ratified at the following Provincial Synod.[59] The logic of this relationship is worth noting. The first article of the constitution accepted that the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA) maintain the doctrine, sacraments and discipline of the Church of England; that the CPSA receive the Book of Common Prayer and the English translation of the Holy Scriptures; and that it disclaim for itself the right of altering any of the standards of faith and doctrine unless there was an alteration similarly by the

55. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 278.

56. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 278.

57. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa*, p. 278.

58. Michael E. Worsnip, *Between the Two Fires: the Anglican Church and Apartheid, 1948–1957* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 1991), p. 5.

59. Worsnip, *Between the Two Fires*, p. 8.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Church of England.[60] However, the constitution also laid down three provisos, the third of which has come to be known as 'the Third Proviso', which read:

> Provided also that in the interpretation of the aforesaid Standards and Formularies the Church of this Province be not held to be bound by decisions, in questions of Faith and Doctrine or in questions of Discipline relating to Faith and Doctrine, other than those of its own Ecclesiastical Tribunals, or of such other Tribunal as may be accepted by the Provincial Synod as a Tribunal of Appeal.[61]

The first Provincial Synod, Michael Worsnip argues, was also determinative in another respect. He quotes Hinchliff who observes that 'it is … a great deficiency that no African clergyman was at the first Provincial synod'. 'There was not, indeed', continues Hinchliff,

> *any* clergyman who had been born in this country [South Africa] with a seat in synod. There were one or two at work in parishes, but the English Church in this country, after nearly three-quarters of a century's existence, was still unable to find any priest born and lived in South Africa, of any race or colour who could represent it at what was probably the most important synod in its history.[62]

Worsnip pushes Hinchliff's observation further, arguing that this 'great deficiency' was no accident but was directly related to how the colonial Church perceived itself in those early days. Writing in 1991, Worsnip comments that 'Power has remained firmly placed in white (and until very recently in white expatriate) hands.'[63] While Gray wanted self-government, he did not want a fully indigenous Church. 'What he wanted was the freedom of the Church to make its own decisions and to put a stop to the usurpation of his own authority and that of his synodically governed Church.'[64] In more general terms,

> The CPSA had to face the problem which all the colonial Churches had to face. It was fundamentally a problem of how to maintain the sense of that vague and unclarified belonging called 'The Anglican Communion', while at the same time establishing the right and freedom to decide ecclesiastical and spiritual matters on its own terms. This problem was a real one, but it was essentially nothing more than an issue of

60. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 29; Worsnip, *Between the Two Fires*, p. 8.
61. Suberg, *The Anglican Tradition in South Africa*, p. 29.
62. Worsnip, *Between the Two Fires*, pp. 8, 9.
63. Worsnip, *Between the Two Fires*, p. 9.
64. Worsnip, *Between the Two Fires*, p. 10.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

> interior organization. It cannot be seen to be the beginnings of a process of indigenization, because both the structures of power and the assumptions behind them were intended to remain unchanged. And that, indeed, they have done until very recently. And even now [in the early 1990s], it is arguably the case that the structures are changing not through desire, but through force of circumstances.[65]

Having been a force for the empire in its early years in the Cape Colony, the Anglican Church in Southern Africa has shown, in the words of James Cochrane, 'little evidence … of grasping its earthly location'.[66] For example, it would take a further sixty-four years after the first Provincial Synod for the Anglican Church to ordain a black South African priest, Andreas Rakale,[67] and yet another thirty-odd years before the Province would see a black suffragan bishop in the person of Bishop Alpheus Zulu in 1960.[68] Furthermore, the election of Desmond Tutu as Bishop of Johannesburg in 1984 was fiercely contested, with the other main contender being an expatriate white.[69] With regard to the Anglican Church's stance towards South Africa's apartheid racial politics there was a peculiar ambiguity, in which there was 'a consistent anti-apartheid record on paper coupled with a generally manifest powerlessness to translate that record into practical policy, except at the least threatening levels'.[70] Coupled with this ambiguity in the realm of racial politics, the Anglican Church struggled to locate itself in the socio-economic sphere, failing almost completely to connect with black labour, choosing instead to become 'servants of [capitalist] power' well into the 1980s.[71]

Much has happened since the late 1980s in South Africa, but like Worsnip, I wonder whether the structures and outlook of our Church are changing, not through desire, but through force of circumstances. I worry that we really do not have the theological capacity to engage with our current context, shaped as it is by a neo-liberal capitalist

65. Worsnip, *Between the Two Fires*, p. 10.

66. James R. Cochrane, *Servants of Power: the Role of the English-speaking Churches in South Africa, 1903–1930* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1987), p. 3.

67. Worsnip, *Between the Two Fires*, p. 156, n31.

68. Worsnip, *Between the Two Fires*, p. 156, n31.

69. Worsnip, *Between the Two Fires*, p. 157, n31.

70. Cochrane, *Servants of Power*, p. 2.

71. Cochrane, *Servants of Power*, pp. 2, 3. The recent work by Bob Clarke sets out 'to record the witness against racial discrimination by Anglican Church leaders and to suggest this made an important contribution to the liberation of South Africa from apartheid'; Bob Clarke, *Anglicans Against Apartheid: 1936–1996* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2008), p. ix.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

macro-economic policy that generates jobless growth[72] and an HIV epidemic that shows no signs of abating.[73] Add to this the retreat of the Anglican Church (and others) to what *The Kairos Document* referred to as 'Church Theology',[74] and the state's determination to keep religion constrained within a narrow understanding of morality, and there is plenty to worry about.

There were, of course, many individual Anglicans who engaged deeply with their earthly location, as Bob Clarke's recent book *Anglicans Against Apartheid* documents,[75] but the question that haunts us as Anglicans is to what extent their engagement with their earthly location was because of anything 'Anglican'. My purpose in this section has been, first, to demonstrate that the Anglican Church in Southern Africa has been profoundly shaped by the imperial project and, second, to indicate that the logic of this imperial project has been only partially deconstructed by the changing Southern African context. The Bible has, of course, made a direct contribution to both, being both a resource for guiding and sustaining the imperial project and a tool with which to resist empire, ever since Admiral Bascawen's chaplain read from it for the first time in the Cape.

So, in the next two sections of this article I will chart what I consider the task of Anglican African biblical scholarship to be in our postcolonial context.

The Descriptive Task

Because the arrival of the Bible in Southern Africa has always been a part of the colonial project, African biblical scholarship has always been postcolonial in its orientation, even before postcolonial biblical studies emerged as a sub-discipline in biblical studies. One of the features of African forms of postcolonial biblical scholarship has been a particular kind of prescriptive attitude. We have dwelt on how we *ought* to interpret the Bible against the colonial and neo-colonial forces that inflict our locations. What I am calling for in this section is that Anglican African biblical scholars adopt a more descriptive attitude. As the South African theologian Tinyiko Maluleke has said so aptly,

72. Sampie Terreblanche, *A History of Inequality in South Africa, 1652–2002* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2002).

73. Thomas Rehle *et al.*, 'National HIV Incidence Measures: New Insights into the South African Epidemic', *South African Medical Journal* 97.3 (2007), pp. 194–99.

74. Kairos theologians, *The Kairos Document: Challenge to the Church* (Braamfontein: Skotaville, revised 2nd edn, 1986).

75. Clarke, *Anglicans Against Apartheid*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the time has come '*to observe and analyse* the manner in which African Christians ''read'' and view the Bible' (my emphasis).[76]

What I am suggesting is a form of what my Southern African Anglican brother Frank England advocates we should do in order to probe (Southern) African biblical scholarship more deeply. He proposes we use Michel Foucault's 'archaeological' analysis of discourse in order 'to question prevailing biblical exegesis and commentary by returning to their sites of emergence at the interface of discourse and material existence'.[77] England's descriptive project has the potential to offer a thicker version of Greer's Anglican approaches to Scripture, and this is a task postcolonial Southern African Anglican biblical scholars should take up. How have Anglicans in Southern Africa interpreted the Bible? This should be our guiding question, and we should attempt to construct a series of samples, like Greer has done, of how Anglicans have approached the Bible in the changing Southern African context.

A Foucault-like archaeological act of research, argues England, 'would disclose the manner in which biblical exegesis and commentary undergirded and buttressed colonial rule, because it would reveal both the acts of resistance and struggle, and those of repression, which produced the dominant interpretive corpus'.[78] I concur, such an act of research would also help us to understand what it has meant in our context to approach the Bible *as Anglicans*.

Some work has already been done in this regard, with a whole range of studies having been done on how Colenso approached the Bible,[79] and some empirical work among ordinary South African Anglicans in the parishes of present day Pietermaritzburg, South Africa.[80] But much

76. Tinyiko S. Maluleke, 'Black and African Theologies in the New World Order: A Time to Drink from Our Own Wells', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 96 (1996), pp. 3–19 (15).

77. Frank England, 'Mapping Postcolonial Biblical Criticism in South Africa', *Neotestamentica* 38.1 (2004), pp. 88–99 (91).

78. England, 'Mapping Postcolonial Biblical Criticism in South Africa', p. 97.

79. Jonathan A. Draper, 'Introduction', in Draper (ed.), *Commentary on Romans by Bishop John William Colenso* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2003), pp. 1–21; Jonathan A. Draper (ed.), *The Eye of the Storm: Bishop John William Colenso and the Crisis of Biblical Inspiration* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2003); R.S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 110–39.

80. Jonathan A. Draper and Gerald O. West, 'Anglicans and Scripture in South Africa', in England and Paterson (eds.), *Bounty in Bondage: the Anglican Church in Southern Africa – Essays in Honour of Edward King, Dean of Cape Town* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1989), pp. 30–52.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

more needs to be done before we have some picture of how Anglicans have approached Scripture in Southern Africa.

Implicit in this descriptive task are the two related prongs of postcolonial biblical criticism, namely, an analysis of how the Bible's own colonial contours have contributed to imperialism, colonialism, and mission, and an analysis of how the Bible has been read by colonial and postcolonial subjects.[81] The latter is particularly important. We as postcolonial Anglican Southern Africans need to understand how we have approached Scripture in the long journey of our Church from a colonial to a postcolonial Church. While there is an assertive and interventionist moment to our work, we must also, I have argued here, hear the voices of our Southern African Anglican ancestors in order to understand in what ways their approach to the Bible was African and Anglican.

The Interventionist Task

Yet the interventionist task remains. How should we as Southern African Anglicans approach Scripture? We must find our voices and make a contribution to the wider Communion, which has not yet received our contribution. A thick/archaeological socio-political descriptive understanding of how we have approached Scripture throughout our history is important for our self-understanding as Southern African Anglicans. But some sense of how we should approach Scripture in our current local and global context is also important.

I have no doubt that a considerable portion of the attitude of the so-called 'Global South' within the Anglican Communion around the 'vehicle' of human sexuality is constituted by an attempt to find a Southern (and African) voice over against the colonial legacy of Britain and the new imperial project of the United States of America. What is clear is that Southern and African voices have not yet reconstituted the Anglican Church at the centre. The colonies have not yet impacted significantly on the previous and current imperial centres. What is not at all clear, however, is what this sector of the Anglican Communion holds concerning how to approach Scripture as Southern (and African) Anglicans. Slogans and prooftexting will not suffice; much more rigorous and careful work is required, which is what I am proposing.

81. Stephen D. Moore and Fernando F. Segovia (eds.), *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections* (London and New York: T&T Clark, 2005). See, for example, R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), *The Postcolonial Bible* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 91–116.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

As African Anglican biblical scholars we have much to contribute to discerning and constituting an African Anglican perspective on biblical interpretation. First, we have substantial resources within African biblical scholarship from which to draw, resources which have proved valuable in our African earthly locations. Among these are African inculturation, liberation, feminist, and postcolonial biblical hermeneutics.

Inculturation hermeneutics

Like other forms of African biblical interpretation, inculturation hermeneutics takes its cue from life outside the academy. The general experience of African Christians was that African social and cultural concerns were not reflected in missionary and Western academic forms of biblical interpretation. Inculturation hermeneutics arose as a response, 'paying attention to the African socio-cultural context and the questions that arise therefrom'.[82] Inculturation hermeneutics, says Justin Ukpong, 'designates an approach to biblical interpretation which seeks to make the African … context the *subject* of interpretation'; which means that every dimension of the interpretive process is '*consciously* informed by the world-view of, and the life experience within that culture'.[83]

Another element in the constitution of inculturation hermeneutics is the recognition that African biblical interpretation is always in some sense 'over-against' or in opposition to the forms of biblical interpretation imposed by and inherited from missionary Christianity and Western academic biblical studies. The missionary-colonial axis is always a factor in inculturation hermeneutics, providing it with a particular ideo-theological orientation.

Alongside this oppositional element is another element, somewhat in tension with it. As Ukpong says, '[t]he focus of [African] interpretation is on the theological meaning of the text within a contemporary context'.[84] This formulation recognizes that the Bible is a significant sacred text with a message for African socio-cultural contexts. As Ukpong goes on to say, 'This involves interactive engagement between the biblical text and a particular contemporary socio-cultural issue such that the gospel message serves as a critique of the

82. Justin S. Ukpong, 'Rereading the Bible with African Eyes', *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 91 (1995), pp. 3–14 (4).

83. Ukpong, 'Rereading the Bible with African Eyes', p. 5.

84. Ukpong, 'Rereading the Bible with African Eyes', p. 6.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

culture, and/or the cultural perspective enlarges and enriches the understanding of the text.'[85] Here he captures succinctly the two-way engagement between text and context; what he also captures here is the predominant attitude of trust towards the Bible within inculturation hermeneutics. Though the Bible has come to Africa as part of the missionary-colonial imperialistic package, the Bible itself has 'good news' for Africa, and/or Africa is able to illuminate the biblical message in a way that Western biblical scholarship has not been able to do. So an attitude of trust towards the Bible itself is a feature of inculturation hermeneutics, alongside its oppositional stance towards colonialism.

Liberation hermeneutics

Almost all of the above elements are also constitutive of liberation hermeneutics, though the mix is somewhat different. Like inculturation hermeneutics, African liberation hermeneutics has its starting point with the experience of the masses. In the words of the South African biblical scholar Itumeleng Mosala, the hermeneutical starting point of liberation hermeneutics is the 'social and material life' of 'the black struggle for liberation'.[86]

However, while African liberation hermeneutics acknowledges the importance of both the spiritual and the material,[87] like inculturation hermeneutics, the emphasis in liberation hermeneutics is on the economic and the political dimensions of African life. Religion and culture are important but peripheral, and economic and political analysis is central. Race and class, not religion and culture, are the critical categories of liberation hermeneutics. And while inculturation hermeneutics is quite eclectic in the kinds of sociological conceptual frameworks it draws on, liberation hermeneutics is more specific, drawing heavily on Marxist conceptual frameworks.[88]

African liberation hermeneutics also clearly shares the oppositional stance of inculturation hermeneutics to the missionary-colonial project, though its categories of contestation are different, as indicated. However, liberation hermeneutics raises questions about the Bible

85. Ukpong, 'Rereading the Bible with African Eyes', p. 6.

86. Itumeleng J. Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), p. 67.

87. Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology*, p. 67.

88. Per Frostin, *Liberation Theology in Tanzania and South Africa: A First World Interpretation* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1988); Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

itself, with a clarity not found in inculturation hermeneutics. The Bible is a resource for liberation, but it is also a source of oppression and domination, and not just in the way it has been used by the missionary-colonial project; the Bible is, in part, intrinsically oppressive.[89] The ideological ambiguity of the Bible is a significant feature of liberation hermeneutics, resulting in an intertwining of suspicion and trust in the ideo-theological orientation of liberation hermeneutics.

The ambiguous attitude to the Bible in liberation hermeneutics has also had methodological consequences for some. The predominant interpretive methodologies for engaging with both the African context and the biblical text in inculturation hermeneutics have been historical and sociological forms of analysis. With respect to the biblical text, historical-critical and an eclectic range of sociological methods are used.[90] With respect to the African context, an eclectic range of religio-cultural forms of analysis within African theology and anthropology are used.[91] African liberation hermeneutics inherits but then rejects this eclectic assortment of socio-historical analytical resources,[92] arguing instead for a more structured and systemic analysis of both the biblical text (within its sites of production) and the African context, using historical-materialist categories of analysis. According to Mosala, the biblical text and African context should not only be brought into dialogue in terms of content, they should also be brought into dialogue in terms of methodology. Both the Bible and the black experience and struggle must be analysed structurally using historical-materialist categories; in other words, African interpreters must recognize that the biblical texts are rooted in the struggles of their material sites of production, just as the life of ordinary black South Africans is rooted in particular socio-historical modes of production.[93]

Feminist hermeneutics

African feminist hermeneutics — and the designation 'feminist' is problematic, with some preferring to borrow the African-American

89. T. Mofokeng'Black Christians, the Bible and Liberation', *Journal of Black Theology* 2 (1988), pp. 34–42 (34); Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology*, p. 41.

90. Ukpong, 'Rereading the Bible with African Eyes'; Justin S. Ukpong, 'The Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Lk. 16:1-13): An Essay in the Inculturation of Biblical Hermeneutics', *Semeia* 73 (1996), pp. 189–210.

91. Ukpong, 'Rereading the Bible with African Eyes'; Ukpong, 'The Parable of the Shrewd Manager'.

92. Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology*, pp. 43–66.

93. Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology*, pp. 31, 32.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

term 'womanist',[94] some adopting an African indigenous designation, such as *bosadi*,[95] and others using the general phrase 'African women's hermeneutics'[96] — emerges from within African inculturation and African liberation hermeneutics, and so shares features with both.

African feminist hermeneutics has been in dialogue with both the religio-cultural emphasis of inculturation hermeneutics[97] and the racial–economic–political emphasis of liberation hermeneutics,[98] though the former is predominant. Because of the predominance of a religio-cultural emphasis in African feminist hermeneutics, it could be argued that much of this work is really a form of inculturation hermeneutics. However, African feminist hermeneutics usually shares the attitude of suspicion towards the biblical text of African liberation hermeneutics. Most importantly, African feminist hermeneutics, like African liberation hermeneutics, insists on a related structured and systematic analysis of both the African context and the biblical text; its distinctive feature is that their focus is on gender and the systemic nature of patriarchy.[99]

A methodological innovation in some African feminist hermeneutics has been its use of literary exegetical modes of analysis of the biblical text. While the predominant exegetical modes of analysis of both African inculturation and liberation hermeneutics have been

94. Sarojini Nadar, 'Power, Ideology and Interpretation/s: Womanist and Literary Perspectives on the Book of Esther as Resources for Gender-Social Transformation', PhD thesis (KwaZulu-Natal: University of Natal, 2003).

95. Madipoane (ngwana' Mphahlele) Masenya, 'A *Bosadi* (Womanhood) Reading of Proverbs 31:10-31', in Dube (ed.), *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2001), pp. 145–57.

96. Beverley G. Haddad, 'African Women's Theologies of Survival: Intersecting Faith, Feminisms, and Development' (KwaZulu-Natal: University of Natal, 2000).

97. Dora Rudo Mbuwayesango, 'Childlessness and Women-to-Women Relationships in Genesis and in African Patriarchal Society: Sarah and Hagar from a Zimbabwean Woman's Perspective (Gen. 16:1-16; 21:8-21)', *Semeia* 78 (1997), pp. 27–36.

98. Bernard Mncube, *Biblical Problems and the Struggle of Women* (Johannesburg: Institute for Contextual Theology, 1984); Bernadette I. Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and the Struggle of Women* (Johannesburg: Institute for Contextual Theology, 1984); Gloria Kehilwe Plaatjie, 'Toward a Post-Apartheid Black Feminist Reading of the Bible: A Case of Luke 2:36-38', in Dube (ed.), *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2001), pp. 114–42.

99. Musa W. Dube (ed.), *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001); Teresa Okure, 'Feminist Interpretation in Africa', in Fiorenza (ed.), *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction* (New York: Crossroads, 1993), pp. 76–85.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

socio-historical, with only a few voices advocating and using literary modes of exegesis,[100] African feminist hermeneutics, like feminist biblical hermeneutics more generally, has been quite receptive to literary modes of interpretation.[101]

Postcolonial hermeneutics

African biblical hermeneutics, whether tending towards inculturation or liberation or feminist trajectories in its ideo-theological orientation, has always been resolutely situated over-against missionary-colonial imperialism.[102] So it is strange that African biblical scholarship has been slow to engage explicitly[103] with emergent forms of postcolonial hermeneutics.[104] However, as with all forms of academic African biblical hermeneutics, the wider world of biblical scholarship has offered African biblical scholarship potentially useful resources, which it can refashion to fit to African contexts.

It is from within African feminist hermeneutics that the most sustained engagement with postcolonial hermeneutics has come.[105]

100. Allan Boesak, *Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation, and the Calvinist Tradition* (Johannesburg: Skotaville, 1984); Gerald O. West, *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation: Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context* (New York: Maryknoll; Pietermaritzburg: Orbis Books and Cluster Publications, 2nd edn, 1995).

101. Sarojini Nadar, 'A South African Indian Womanist Reading of the Character of Ruth', in Dube (ed.), *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2001), pp. 159–75.

102. Gerald O. West, 'Shifting Perspectives on the Comparative Paradigm in (South) African Biblical Scholarship', *Religion and Theology* 12.1 (2005), pp. 48–72.

103. Jeremy Punt, 'Postcolonial Biblical Criticism in South Africa: Some Mind and Road Mapping', *Neotestamentica* 37.1 (2003), pp. 59–85; Jeremy Punt, 'Why Not Postcolonial Biblical Criticism in (South) Africa: Stating the Obvious or Looking for the Impossible?', *Scriptura* 91 (2006), pp. 63–82; Gerald O. West, 'Finding a Place Among the Posts for Post-colonial Criticism in Biblical Studies in South Africa', *Old Testament Essays* 10 (1997), pp. 322–42.

104. Moore and Segovia (eds.), *Postcolonial Biblical Criticism: Interdisciplinary Intersections*; Fernando F. Segovia, 'Mapping the Postcolonial Optic in Biblical Criticism: Meaning and Scope', in Moore and Segovia (eds.), *The Bible and Postcolonialism* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), pp. 23–78; R.S. Sugirtharajah, 'Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation', in Sugirtharajah (ed.), *Voices From the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 3rd edn, 2006), pp. 64–84. See SugirTharajah (ed.), *The postcolonial Bible*.

105. Musa W. Dube, 'Readings of *Semoya*: Batswana Women's Interpretations of Matt. 15:21-28', *Semeia* 73 (1996), pp. 111–29; Musa W. Dube, 'Toward a Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible', *Semeia* 78 (1997), pp. 11–26; Musa W. Dube,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

As with the other forms of African biblical hermeneutics, postcolonial biblical hermeneutics has its starting point in the realities of ordinary Africans, for whom the Bible has become an African book, but an African book 'that will always be linked to and remembered for its role in facilitating European imperialism'.[106] The complicity of the Bible with European imperialism is explicit and central to the ideo-theological orientation of African postcolonial biblical hermeneutics. What the other forms of African biblical hermeneutics do not address in sufficient detail is the question 'why the biblical text, its readers, and its institutions are instruments of imperialism';[107] this is the first part of the task of postcolonial hermeneutics.

Together with African liberation and feminist hermeneutics, post-colonial hermeneutics is deeply suspicious of the Bible's own imperial charter.[108] In other words, the kinds of imperial attitudes and practices performed by missionaries and colonial forces are related to the imperial tendencies of the biblical texts themselves.[109] The next crucial question, therefore, is how postcolonial African subjects should read the texts which have been instrumental to the establishment of colonialism in their contexts.[110] So the second part of postcolonial hermeneutics is to read the Bible for decolonization.

Reading for decolonization must, Musa Dube argues, follow the logic of imperialism, understanding its grammar and then reading against it. This includes reading against the geography of biblical and Western imperial expansionism, reading against the racializing potential of the biblical text (expressed in ethnic terms) and the racial politics of Western imperial ideology, reading against the sanctioning of unequal power relations in biblical texts and colonial projects, reading against the universalizing tendencies of both the Bible and Western imperialism, and reading against the suppression of the female presence in the Bible and imperial project.[111]

(F'note continued)

Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000); Makhosazana K. Nzimande, 'Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation in Post-Apartheid South Africa: The *gebirah* in the Hebrew Bible in the Light of Queen Jezebel and the Queen Mother of Lemuel' (Texas: Texas Christian University, 2005).

106. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 3.
107. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 6.
108. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 10.
109. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 15.
110. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 16.
111. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, pp. 16–21.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

While the Bible can and must be read for decolonization, it is not the only resource. Among the resources for reading for decolonization are the very languages and literatures (including the oral) denigrated and supplanted by the Bible and Western imperialism.[112] However, African postcolonial hermeneutics recognizes that the vast literature 'born from the encounter with imperialist forces' is itself 'partly shaped by the textual forms of their imperial counterparts'.[113] African resources, particularly those forged in resistance to imperialism, partake in a form of hybridity,[114] in which something new and vital is constructed from the encounter with colonialism.[115] One of the most significant contributions of African postcolonial hermeneutics is this recognition that African postcolonial interpretation (like African postcolonial identity) is itself partially constituted by colonialism.[116] Instead of denying this by claiming an authentically African interpretation, postcolonial interpretation embraces the multiplicity of identities and differences that constitute the postcolonial African context, but always with a view to harnessing these hybrid resources for decolonization.

While all forms of African biblical hermeneutics, whether inculturation, liberation, feminist, or postcolonial, are committed to identifying and recovering African interpretive resources, they also engage critically with the precolonial African heritage. African postcolonial hermeneutics is no exception, recovering but also questioning, for example, the power of precolonial African queens.[117]

These are clearly substantial resources to bring to bear on our reflections on how we as (Southern) African Anglicans might approach Scripture. But what of the contribution of Anglican ecclesio-theological traditions within African biblical interpretation? This brings me to the second and third set of resources we have within African biblical scholarship, namely our inherited ecclesio-theological traditions and the continental issues confronting us.

112. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 49.

113. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, pp. 50, 51.

114. Dube, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, p. 122.

115. R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology* (London: SCM Press, 2003), p. 126.

116. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters*, p. 249.

117. Nzimande, 'Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation in Post-Apartheid South Africa'; Makhosazana K. Nzimande, 'Reconfiguring Jezebel: A Postcolonial *imbokodo* Reading of the Story of Naboth's Vineyard (1 Kings 21:1-16)', in de Wit and West (eds.), *African and European Readers of the Bible in Dialogue: In Quest of a Shared Meaning* (Leiden: EJ Brill, 2008), pp. 223–58.

Ecclesio-theological missionary heritage

Besides the Bible, there are almost always residual, at least, missionary ecclesio-theological influences in all four forms of African biblical hermeneutics. Each of the many missionary movements, which brought the Bible, Christianity, and colonialism to Africa, had its own ecclesio-theological emphasis. The grand narrative of missionary Christianity — 'the religious project which brought the missionaries in the first place'[118] — has an enduring impact in African Anglican biblical interpretation, the clearest cases being those of the Anglo-Catholic and the Evangelical missionary ecclesio-theological legacies and the more recent impact of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianities.

Each of the four primary forms of African biblical hermeneutics mentioned above is impacted by elements of the missionary ecclesio-theological legacy. However, there are correlations between particular ecclesio-theological trajectories and particular forms of biblical hermeneutics. Those biblical scholars from Evangelical ecclesio-theological trajectories, for example, tend to work mainly within inculturation hermeneutics because of its attitude of trust towards the Bible, though this is not without its tensions for those who want to recover aspects of their culture denigrated and denied by missionary Christianity.[119] While those from Catholic ecclesio-theological trajectories have no particular preferred hermeneutic framework, evidence of their ecclesio-theological trajectories can also be discerned, as when, for example, Teresa Okure reads the New Testament divorce texts within an African feminist hermeneutic framework. Her ecclesio-theological tradition concerning divorce leads her to argue that the 'same divine law that prohibits divorce in the small unit of the family prohibits divorce in the larger unit of the human family', namely 'man's divorce of woman', whereby women have been 'divorced' by patriarchy in all spheres of life, experiencing marginalization in the political, social, economic, and religious realms.[120]

118. J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 4.

119. Rebecca Yawa Ganusah, 'Pouring Libation to Spirit Powers Among the Ewe-Dome of Ghana: An Indigenous Religious and Biblical Perspective', in West and Dube (eds.), *The Bible in Africa: Transactions, Trajectories, and Trends* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 278–91.

120. Teresa Okure, 'Reading from this Place: Some Problems and Prospects', in Segovia and Tolbert (eds.), *Reading from this Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), pp. 52–66 (64).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The contribution of particular Anglican (missionary and post-missionary) ecclesio-theological traditions is also to be found in the kinds of case studies envisaged of the descriptive task discussed above, which is why it is so important. For example, how Colenso and how Desmond Tutu approach Scripture will provide valuable resources to place alongside the resources of African biblical scholarship. But so will the approaches of ordinary (Southern) African Anglicans who partially constitute the discipline of African biblical scholarship.[121]

African issues

And so we come to the third set of resources impacting on our African Anglican context and the interpretive task. While a great diversity of African issues are brought to bear on African biblical interpretation, there are moments when particular issues dominate the landscape. The emergence of African feminist hermeneutics as a response to gender issues across the African continent, drawing numbers of African Anglican women into the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians and other similar circles of scholarship and support,[122] is one example. More recently, the continental crisis of HIV and AIDS has summoned all of us African biblical scholars, whichever of the four major forms of African biblical hermeneutics we fit into, to respond.[123] Whether the advent of HIV and AIDS will give rise to new forms of African biblical hermeneutics, remains to be seen; for the present, the four major forms are each in their own ways responding to and being shaped by the epidemic.

121. Okure, 'Feminist Interpretation in Africa', p. 77; Gerald O. West, 'Indigenous Exegesis: Exploring the Interface between Missionary Methods and the Rhetorical Rhythms of Africa — locating local reading resources in the academy', *Neotestamentica* 36 (2002), pp. 147–62.

122. Musimbi R.A. Kanyoro, 'Threading More Beads in the Story of the Circle', in Phiri and Nadar (eds.), *African Women, Religion, and Health: Essays in Honor of Mercy Amba Ewudziwa Oduyoye* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2006), pp. 19–42.

123. Musa W. Dube and Musimbi Kanyoro (eds.), *Grant Me Justice! HIV/AIDS and Gender Readings of the Bible* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2004). See, for example, Musa W. Dube and Tinyiko S. Maluleke, 'HIV/AIDS as the New Site of Struggle: Theological, Biblical and Religious Perspectives', *Missionalia* 29.2 (2001), pp. 119–24; Madipoane (ngwana' Mphahlele) Masenya, 'Between Unjust Suffering and the ''Silent'' God: Job and HIV/AIDS Sufferers in South Africa', *Missionalia* 29 (2001), pp. 186–99; Madipoane (ngwana' Mphahlele) Masenya, 'Killed by Aids and Buried by Religion: African Female Bodies in Crisis', in Holter (ed.), *Let My People Stay! Researching the Old Testament in Africa* (Nairobi: Acton, 2006), pp. 131–46; Gerald O. West and Bongi Zengele, 'Reading Job ''positively'' in the Context of HIV/AIDS in South Africa', *Concilium* 4 (2004), pp. 112–24.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Conclusion

With so much work to be done, it is difficult to know how to conclude this discussion. Our (Southern) African Anglican Church is a product of imperialism, and for much of its history in Southern Africa it served the empire. However, the colonial location exerted its own pressures, exposing and straining the logic of empire. As the logic of the colonial Southern African Anglican Church began to unravel, the Africans were able to weave their own threads into its fabric, slowly reconstituting the Southern African Anglican Church. This process must now be interrogated and made explicit. In particular, we must endeavour to understand how Scripture was and is being used. This analytical and descriptive task will assist us to understand what it means to be Southern African Anglicans, and how Scripture has shaped and been shaped by our African social locations. Alongside these resources we have others, including the contextual resources of various forms of African biblical scholarship, the residual legacies of our missionary ecclesio-theological traditions, and the impetus of the predominant issues confronting our communities and churches.

I fear, however, that the Anglican Church in Southern Africa is under-prepared for the tasks outlined above, for it invests few financial resources and even less vision into Anglican theological education. Indeed, a series of case studies on Anglican theological education and biblical interpretation in Southern Africa should be included in the descriptive task, for unless we understand and then remedy the lack of capacity in theological education in general and in the building of biblical studies capacity in particular, we will not be able to offer a distinctively African Anglican voice to the debate about Anglican approaches to Scripture.

The residue of the imperial project is deeply ingrained in the Anglican Church in Southern Africa, but it is a residue that has been partially reconstituted by local African acts of resistance and contestation. We are a thoroughly postcolonial Church. But we are a postcolonial Church that has yet to talk back to the centre in a substantive way, reconstituting it, though individuals like Desmond Tutu have had some effect. In the sphere of biblical interpretation we have yet to find our own voice, let alone make a contribution to the wider debates about biblical hermeneutics in the Communion. And the prospects for the kinds of biblical hermeneutical projects I have outlined are bleak, given the incoherence surrounding theological education in general and biblical studies training in particular.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355309990015 Published online by Cambridge University Press