



10 | DOROTHY AKOTO'S CONTRIBUTION TO HEBREW BIBLE STUDIES

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Abstract

This chapter discusses Dorothy BEA Akoto's theological contributions in the light of gender and women's liberation, from the perspective of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible studies. The study seeks to highlight the main strengths and contributions of her theology to the world of knowledge and liberation. It argues that Akoto's contextual reading has contributed immensely to knowledge in the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible and made a great impact on faith and women empowerment within the academic space. The task of the chapter is to explore how she develops a theology that embraces and empowers all genders to expose oppressive aspects in society. It also shows how her liberating interpretations affirm the dignity of life, a task that has been the focus of members of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. Exploring how Dorothy Akoto addresses patriarchy, colonialism, racism, tribalism, sexism, marginalization, and discrimination among other social factors would bring out her achievements, strengths, and weakness of her views on African theologies of liberation and Hebrew Studies in West Africa.

Keywords: Hebrew Bible, Women's Liberation, Ewe language, Folk proverbs, Hermeneutics, Culture

Introduction

Women have made meaningful contributions to society despite patriarchal, sexist, classist, and social factors that mitigate against them. Many a time, women who rise above these challenges in the church, under the use and misuse of hierarchical theological perspectives and biblical interpretation, are not given the necessary recognition. That is why a con-

scious effort needs to be made to reflect on the exploits of women in theology, especially those who have made a great impact to remove the traditional interpretations and read the Bible in their rich enigmatic artistry.

This chapter highlights some of the works Reverend Professor Dorothy BEA Akoto¹ used to generate her theological ideas in Hebrew Bible studies and women's liberation, examines the uniqueness and main strengths of her theological discussions and their significance. It begins by looking at her life and achievements in the field of Old Testament/Hebrew Bible studies and as a member of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians. It also establishes how her interpretations/theologies have generated an impact on faith and women's empowerment within the academic space. By exploring how she develops a theological voice that embraces and empowers all genders to expose oppressive aspects as well as offer liberating interpretations that affirm the dignity of life, this chapter highlights how she has contributed toward the theologies of liberation in Africa and the world.

Biographical Sketch

The Rev. Prof. Dorothy BEA Akoto is a native of Avatime Biakpa and Anyako-Asadame in the Volta Region of Ghana. She is the fifth of a family of seven children. She is currently the Vice President of Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon (TTS), Accra for a second term, where she is an Associate Professor of Hebrew Language, Old Testament and Gender Studies. Before she was appointed as a Vice President, she served as the Academic Dean of TTS. She is therefore the "first female" to be appointed as the Academic Dean and the Vice President of Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon. She has also served as an Adjunct lecturer of the Hebrew Bible at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta/GA, USA, and a visiting Lecturer at McCormick Theological Seminary (MTS), Chicago/IL, USA. She is an ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament through the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana (EPCG), and has been pastoring congregations since 2000.

¹ She sometimes writes her name as Dorothy BEA Akoto-Abutiate or Dorothy BEA Akoto (nee Abutiate) or Dorothy Akoto.

Born to Christian parents, Dorothy Akoto grew up in the Christian faith. Her father was the late Rt Rev Andrew Kwami Alifo Abutiate, a minister of the gospel in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church Ghana, and her mother was the late Mrs. Josephine Afi Abutiate-Adonu Wosordoe Attipoe. She lost her mother when she was 9 years old and thus grew up with her father. Due to her father's work as an itinerant minister, she attended three Basic/Primary Schools throughout Ghana: Evangelical Presbyterian Basic School at Avatime, Biakpa; John F. Kennedy Memorial Preparatory School, Accra; and Saint John's Preparatory School, Accra Nsawam Road. She had her secondary education at Mawuli School, Ho Volta Region. After her secondary education, she continued to the Institute of Education, Advanced Teacher Training College (ATTC) Winneba, and then to the University of Cape Coast for her first degree. She started her working life as a teacher and taught English Language and Literature. She worked with the Ghana Education Service (GES) in various schools and colleges including Accra Technical Training Centre (ATTC), Accra; Leklebi Secondary School, Leklebi/VR and E. P. Training College, Amedzofe/VR. While teaching under GES, she was an Examiner of the British-based Royal Society of Arts (RSA) and was among the pioneering Examiners in the process that transferred the RSA examinations to WAEC in Ghana in the early 1980s. She had also been an Examiner of the Middle School Leaving Certificate and Teacher Training College English Examinations of the WAEC for several years. She also served as a National Trainer of Teachers, training teachers of Primary, Middle, Junior Secondary schools and colleges on preparing and using Teaching/Learning Aids. She then moved on to work with Volta Regional Administration as an Executive Officer responding to the Volta Regional Minister. From there, she worked as a Telephonist, operating the Exchange Switchboard at the Volta Regional Administration connecting all the Ministries.

Dorothy Akoto then proceeded to do her graduate studies in the United States of America. She thus holds several Masters degrees, including a Master of Divinity (MDiv), from the ITC Atlanta/GA, USA; Master of Arts in Christian Education (MACE) from ITC, USA; Master of Theology (MTh) from Emory Candler School of Theology, Deca-

tur/GA, USA; and Master of Theology (MTh) from UNION-PSCE, Richmond/VA, USA. She had her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) studies in Hebrew Bible, Culture and Hermeneutics from Chicago Theological Seminary, Chicago/IL, USA. Her area of specialization and research interests border on Wisdom Literature (especially, the Bible and African Proverbial Communication), Cultural, Postcolonial and Gender Studies.

The Rev. Prof. Akoto has been an Executive Committee member in several organisations. For example, she is with the ABH of SBL, West Africa Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI), Ghana Association of Biblical Exegetes (GHABES), Hokma House, Theta Phi International Honour Society, and World Association of Reformed Churches (WARC). She is a researcher, Christian Educator, Pastoral Counselor, Preacher, and Public Speaker, and has presented papers and held panel discussions at many Church and Academic platforms. She has been involved in Social Activism, HIV and AIDS advocacy as well as Women's/Leadership Conferences in various parts of Africa, America, Middle East, Asia, and Europe.

Akoto has authored some books and articles in books and academic Journals in Africa, the USA, and Europe. She has supervised and examined Dissertations/Theses and Project works. She is married to Rev. Dr. Johnny Atta Yao Akoto with four (4) biological children, and three (3) grandchildren.

Life with the CIRCLE

Dorothy BEA Akoto got involved with the work of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (The Circle) in the early to mid-1990s while studying for her Master's degrees in the USA. She met Professor Mercy Amba Oduyoye at a Presbyterian Church, USA gathering in Louisville, Kentucky when she was mobilizing African women theologians to join the Circle. The discussions they had bordered on the challenges facing African women in theological education, domestic violence, racism, sexism, and other forms of dehumanizing "isms" affecting women were among the concerns Professor Oduyoye pursued. Aunty Mercy Oduyoye had formed The Circle and was encouraging African women to start writing articles for The Circle publications. After meeting with Aunty Mercy,

several other Circle Sisters also sent invitations to Rev. Akoto to this effect to contribute to the publications of The Circle.

Dorothy Akoto with self-motivation started looking at biblical interpretations that addressed various themes regarding issues of injustice in society and related similar issues in the patriarchally-biased stories in the Bible. So, when she was invited to work on some of the papers of The Circle, she focused on biblical interpretations. She wrote some papers and also edited some writings that made her more interested in scholarship. At the same time, she was involved in grassroots advocacy both in Ghana and abroad. Through Mercy Oduyoye's generosity and networking, she attended The Circle Conferences, interacted with other members, and also got her "hands dirty" by doing advocacy at the grassroots in several countries. She involved herself actively in the work of the Circle at the Talitha Cumi Centre for Women in Religion and Culture when she became a lecturer at the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon in the early 2000s.

Dorothy Akoto has presented several conference papers on HIV and AIDS, Health and the Rights of Women and Children, Dehumanizing Cultural practices, Culture and Education, Widowhood rites, the place of Gender in Mission, Marriage of Minors, and Witch Camps, among others. She coedited the book, *Culture Practice and HIV and AIDS: African Women's Voice*, with Elizabeth Amoah and Dorcas Akintunde from the presentations at the third Pan-African Circle Conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2002. The publication grapples with the issue of HIV and AIDS and how African women are disproportionately affected by the virus and therefore need holistic interventions that pay critical attention to the gendered perspective of religion and culture (Amoah, Akoto, and Akintunde, 2005). Since the mid-1990s, Dorothy Akoto has continued to work with Trinity Theological Seminary students to enmesh them into the ideals of feminist theology, and sociological, theological, and legal understandings of practical ministry. Akoto believes that great strides have been made in advocacy issues on the concerns of the Circle but more work needs to be done. She looks forward to a time when fe/males will have a "solid" place at all "tables for discussion" and activism locally, nationally, and internationally.

Theological, Cultural and Religious Underpinnings

The interconnectedness between religion and culture has been a major motivation for Dorothy Akoto (2004:33-44). One cannot underestimate the distinct place of religion and culture in African interpretations and hermeneutics. Through such intersections, Africans have come to understand the links between HIV, gender, and religion. In fact, Isabel Phiri and Sarojini Nadar (2006:11) have averred that

... one of the primary defining features of African women's theologies is its focus on culture as a source of theology. Such focus is of course in continuity with African male theologians who also focus on culture as a way of redeeming African identity and culture which has often been demonised by an aggressive Christian missionary agenda to evangelise Africa.

In other words, culture plays a key role in the theological thinking of members of the Circle. Being aware that some have described African culture in a bad taste, the task is to recover the good aspects of African culture for growth and development.

Dorothy Akoto (2004) argues that theology in Africa should best be described as "African theologies" instead of African theology. To her, African theologies are a hybridized product of full-blown elements in the African cultural context and borrowings from the Western/Euro-American culture. From such a premise, she promotes African theologies as a "Hermeneutic of Grafting", a very unique contribution to Hebrew studies. It is a process where "the Western text and African cultural contextual elements are uniquely blended together with neither superseding nor condescending to the other" (Akoto, 2007:304). The hermeneutic of grafting, to Akoto, is useful when interpreting scripture from the socio-cultural conceptualisations of Africa since the multiple and multivalent voices always give room for multidimensional exegetical practice to make scripture meaningful to one's contexts. The concept of grafting has to do with the insertion of a scion upon a stock to become one plant or to unite a different species of plant stock on a different species of plant scion to form a graft.

Dorothy Akoto (2014) sees the cultural elements of the Bible, the Western world, and Africa metaphorically as trees. When cuttings from

the Western tree are grafted onto the African tree, for instance, they can produce blended flavours of both trees. The result will be that, there will be no pure-bred African or Euro-American interpretation/hermeneutics of the Bible/Word of God (i.e., *theo-logos*) but a hybrid that has a uniquely different taste than the fruits of each tree individually. Akoto (2014:23-24), however, says that the “encounter of the two trees of life assigns privilege to the African contextual imagery and recognizes that the fruit that emerges from the blending has a different flavour but it is still genuinely and fully African.” The hermeneutic of grafting, to her, is the work produced by interpreters who serve as intermediaries between the world of the Bible and the world of contemporary peoples. The intermediaries engage in the hermeneutics of grafting when they

... perform the duty of taking the people's requests to God and bringing God's responses back to them [that] can be likened to the multivalent/ pluralistic/polyphonic theologies/hermeneutics, which like the Biblical prophetic voices, have continued to characterize the interpretation/hearing of Scripture in various contexts including African contexts, where mythological and etiological stories come in handy (Akoto, 2007:294).

Hermeneutics of grafting, therefore, aims at weaving some new ideas on an old one. In that light, mutual co-operation and understanding arise from the interaction between the African cultural contexts and foreign ideas.

Generally, Dorothy Akoto emphasizes that African interpreters of the Bible should affirm and portray the rich cultural images and stick to them when doing Bible interpretation. Her goal is to show how an understanding of African cultures helps to elucidate the biblical text. Akoto (2011) argues that the pervasiveness of Ewe folk proverbs and wise sayings are rich theological resources. She rightly posits that Ghanaian proverbs and wise sayings are an indispensable part of normal conversation as they are inextricably bound to every form of communication. Their importance or indispensability shows in the indelible imprints they make on the minds of hearers in the process of every meaningful conversation (Akoto, 2011:41).

When Africans use proverbs in interpreting the Hebrew Bible, it helps in teaching some valuable lessons to all and sundry depending on the occasion. The use of proverbs in African societies is one of the most

elevated means of communication that can catch the attention of all, and can be used to fight sexist or gender-sensitive, classicist, or racially biased interpretations (Akoto, 2011:53). African proverbs cut across religious, moral and ethical boundaries, while at the same time speak to the hearts of the people. Akoto (2011:52) says that the “proverbs and wise sayings among Ewe people make proverbs the most fertile grounds upon which the message of the Bible can be planted, nurtured, and brought to fruition.” That is why she agrees that Ghanaian Ewe proverbs are substantially similar to canonical Proverbs and that of the ancient Near Eastern proverbs in that they call upon the people to hear, obey and transmit the moral lessons in them from one generation to the other, yet they differ in some extent (Akoto, 2011:42).

Dorothy Akoto (2011) believes in contextualization of scripture. She draws from the context of the Ewe to show how some images connect with biblical images. The convergence between the role of the mother and that of the firstborn daughter among the Ewes and that of the Good Shepherd recorded in the John 10 and Psalm 23 is an example. She explains that shepherding is not common among the Ewes, and as such a contextual reading will make the text real to the people. Among the Ewe, a mother is a homemaker, protector, custodian of law and order, an intermediary in traditional council, organizer, educator, public relation officer, doctor, nurse, and someone actively involved in community life. The firstborn daughter has to fulfil similar expectations. She concludes that unless the real-life situation, experiences, and stories of the Ewe people are taken seriously, there cannot be true liberation for the woman. Using foreign images recorded in the Bible will continue to make Africans see the Bible as very distant from their world (Akoto, 2011:263-265).

In her exposition on the *book of Esther*, Akoto (2010:268-272) argues that the message of the book of Esther addresses gender and power issues as well as existential issues of identity, survival, and cultural preservation of a minority living in Diaspora and thus have lasting relevance to African people. She related the Jewish festival of Purim, which marks a period of “relief/ rest” following victory over the oppressors to two annual festivals of the Ewe, ie *Glidzi* and *Hogbetsotso*. The message of the book of Esther teaches amicable coexistence amidst tension.

Theological Advocacy

In her work, “Bible and Poverty-Reduction: A Feminist Gender-Sensitive Approach”, Akoto (2021:23-31) looks at the Sarah-Hagar story in Genesis 16 and 21 and the Elisha-widow’s story in 2 Kings 4:1-7 as mirroring the experiences of poor African women who are widows, put under forced slavery or abused. She argues that what appears more disturbing is that some of the injustices associated with poverty in the church and society are fanned by some interpretations that are given when reading the Bible, and that makes it difficult to achieve poverty reduction. By using a feminist gender-sensitive narrative approach, she discusses injustice and violence and how divine interventions can be of help. Hagar is likened to any woman in poverty who works for a “wealthy” mistress of high social standing that displays her authoritarianism, wickedness and lack of personal feeling for fellow human beings (Akoto, 2021:26). Although Hagar flees from Sarah, which probably compounded their plight and pushed them into abject poverty, the angelic visitation becomes a source of consolation for Hagar.

Similarly, Elisha’s intervention made the widow and her sons not taken into slavery for the rest of their lives was poverty reduction strategy (2 Kings 4:1-7). Again, the story highlights the evils of fear, slavery, deprivation, loss of a source of livelihood, displacement. and forced labour. Akoto explains that a typical characteristic of poverty shown in the story is that even though the poor has what is needed to be freed from poverty, they are ignorant about the value of what they have until they are given instructions by their “superiors” about what to do. Elisha had to give another set of instructions to the poor widow. For African women to achieve freedom, they will have to cultivate confidence in themselves and listen to advice. Akoto (2019:42) further says, the church should be intentional about the training of children, as Hebrew parents did for their children by using language and symbols that belong to the world of the understanding of children and which can be easily grasped by them.

Dorothy Akoto (2014:58) believes that “the issue of women’s health is multi-faceted and includes not only the physiological but also issues affecting the psychological, sociological and economic domains, among

others.” Like the woman in 2 Kings 4:1-7 who was emotionally and psychologically ill and poor and through a humanitarian act the prophet produced a miracle of the multiplication of oil to heal and liberate her, African women are devastated and suffering because of the death of others, economic woes, and dehumanization. They should be met at the point of their need (Akoto, 2021:35). African women are to be allowed to “participate actively in the healing process by being in solidarity with each other and by sharing power” (Akoto, 2014:67). Solidarity between women and men, women and the prophet of God, women and the neighbours can bring about the healing women desire.

Reading Genesis 24 as a prototype for marriage, Dorothy Akoto (2014:54) affirms that women like Rebecca can leave their father and mother and cleave to their husbands, in contradiction to the injunction in Genesis 2:18-24 where it is the man who leaves, and adds that “Rebekah is developed and portrayed as a woman in full control of her sexuality and resolute on her decision to go.” With the assurance of the providence of God, women can realize their destinies through faithfulness and willingness.

Dorothy Akoto (2006:98) is an advocate for the health of women. She says the Bible has enough resources to give hope in the hopeless situation in which HIV and AIDS pandemic has affected African women. She strangely sees the devastation caused by HIV and AIDS similar to the prophetic story of the dry bones in Ezekiel 37:1-14. To Akoto (2014:94-98), if the dry bones can live, there is a need for a prophetic word so that the hand, command, and Spirit of Yahweh can bring new energy into the life of African women. Akoto (2014:102-103) adds: “We are called upon in the face of the devastating HIV and AIDS, to become prophet-advocates for the down-trodden and abused. The call is for us to recognize that we deal with real people in particular locations, with their collective sense of his[her]stories and traditions.”

Significance of Dorothy Akoto’s theological propositions

One significant point is how Dorothy Akoto asserts that there should rather be African theologies rather than African theology, an idea also held by Isabel Apawo Phiri (2004:152). The diversities and varieties of the African

socio-cultural context as well as the images that constitute real-life experiences in all parts of Africa promote the notion of theologies, yet there is a fine thread that weaves into all the theologies. No wonder Temba Mafico (2004:ix) attests that Dorothy Akoto's "rich African heritage served as a great asset in her interpretation of the biblical text." The diversity of women's experiences as well as the differences in race, culture, politics, economy, and religions within Africa make such theologies critical.

Again, Dorothy Akoto's strategy of comparing biblical proverbs with African folk proverbs is a great stride. Her perspective on the identity of motherhood or daughterhood in the Ewe traditions is evidence that the experiences of African women, young and old, have much to teach us when interpreting the Bible. The traditional heteronormative gender paradigm has been that men are heard and women should be silent. However, men cannot speak to the experiences of women in their pure raw form. Women need to speak for themselves.

However, a key weakness of Dorothy BEA Akoto's theological Hermeneutics of Grafting is how she develops the theoretical framework of her approach. Grafting as a horticultural technique is about joining parts from two or more plants so that they appear to grow as a single plant. The process is labour intensive and requires a great deal of skill. One needs to be sure what dominant characteristics are desired before the grafting is done. As such, not every rootstock can take a scion. What one sees in Dorothy Akoto's interpretation is over-reliance on the rich aspects of African proverbs and culture. One hardly finds the promotion of other Western cultural issues that need to blend with African ones. As such, there is a need to develop the approach well to show how one can go about using hermeneutics of grafting. Mercy Oduyoye (2004), however, is right in saying that not everything in African culture is useful for theologizing. Africans cannot blindly sanction every known culture but sift the good from the bad and retrieve what is retrievable. All cultures must be interrogated to know which aspects are life-giving to women.

Hulisani Ramantswana (2017) also observes some weaknesses in Akoto's hermeneutic of grafting. Although the approach is not a matter of Christianization of the African or African systems or different from adoption (inculturation) and adaptation (acculturation), it seeks to blend folk wisdom and the biblical message together by cutting parts of each

tree. According to Ramantswana (2017:364), she does not explain which branches from the African tree of life are cut and why. She “is not clear as to which Ghanaian folk proverbs would have to be cut off, and she does not provide the rationale for cutting them off. In my view, there can be no grafting without the cutting off.” He adds that Akoto’s approach does not clarify what would happen with those branches that are cut off from the African tree of life and that “the hermeneutics of grafting may lead to the process spiralling out of control as more and more branches are cut off from the African tree of life and shoots from the Biblical tree of life are grafted on” (2017:365).

African hermeneutics, for it to be familiar and speak to the hearts of Africans, should be critical of those issues that contradict the biblical truth while assessing the assumptions of readers (Mburu, 2019:212). Aidoo (2018) also argues that Africans place a high premium on wisdom, good public speech and superior rhetorical skills, akin to the prowess of the *okyeame* in Akan culture. If the voices of African interpreters can fall onto the hearts of the ordinary people in Africa, they should be clothed with rhetorical power. As such, the interpretation of Scriptures should not be done in the colloquial language of the past but in dynamic rich linguistic and interpretive insights from African experiences so that succeeding generations can appreciate the rich heritage of African people (Aidoo, 2018:106-107).

African women theologians within the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians have consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to responding to challenges raised by HIV and AIDS in Africa and that is what Dorothy Akoto is doing. African women have pointed out clearly that the time that churches condemned those with HIV and AIDS is past and gone. Those times when the church thought that “sin” from sexual activity outside of a monogamous heterosexual marriage led to HIV-positive status or the consequence of bad behaviour is no more. The stigma attached to HIV cases deters persons from accessing help, getting tested or going through treatment. Hence the church cannot simply assume that by remaining silent, the stigma would go away. The fight against such a deep-rooted view, as Dorothy Akoto (2014:102) avers, is for all to rise up and criticize and dismantle the dominant consciousness,

myths, and ethical challenges to give way for systematic awakening. Mitzi J. Smith (2016:109) puts it clearly,

Women continue to be taught that they are to be good 'foot stools' for men. When a woman 'acts up' or refuses to be that footstool, a 'biblically' submissive woman, then she deserves any violence inflicted upon her. Too many women remain shackled to this type of thinking, and so they do all they can to be 'good girls,' always submissive to male authority and abuse.

Certainly, the church and religious groups have a duty to change the narrative. Teresa Okure (2009:412) also makes the point that "prejudice in all its forms kills and destroys the opportunities and talents God gives to individuals and communities in Africa and around the globe to improve themselves and to promote their growth in all spheres of life." Despite such perceptions, it needs to be noted that the church has contributed immensely to people's wellbeing and continues to do so in poverty reduction for women as well as men; building of hospitals and schools, providing food, shelter, and basic needs of many from which some renowned Africans have emerged.

Dorothy Akoto epitomises women who are themselves living sources of hope that resonates with an African ethos. It is said that someone who knows proverbs can sit to eat with elders. She is a role model to upcoming theologians. Africans are fast losing our traditions and those who are documenting them are making a great contribution. She is an African interpreter who speaks to the hearing of African people and to their hearts of Africans.

Women who are disenfranchised by socio-economic inequalities, social status, and poor health, need to be empowered to contribute to the wider society. The task is not to empower individual women but a collective whole, for Africans believe in communalism and one's person's identity is tied to the other – I am because we are. Individual healing is therefore incomplete without the total liberation of all women and men. This calls for solidarity, friendships, spiritual care, and conscious provisions of opportunities toward a holistic sustainable way of life. The church and religious groups may be making inroads through women like Dorothy Akoto, yet there is the need to embrace the challenges of transmitting

scholarship to the doorsteps of the world outside of the church that ought to hear the gospel. By so doing, the church will not only be impacting the lives of a few women within its fold but the whole of humanity so all will experience the liberating power that brings healing, restoration, forgiveness and wholeness, but will participate in the struggle and stand in solidarity with African women. Musa Dube (2005:177) gives an example of solidarity and how a biblical story can be an African women's story. Reading Rahab's story she sees herself like any other African woman as Rahab leaning on a small window, stuck in a world divided by a great wall that divides the powerful and the less powerful and where the powerful threaten to wipe out cities. As Mercy Oduyoye (2019:135) puts it, the way to becoming fully human should begin by standing with each other so that transformation of relationships, accountability, and participation in life can be achieved. Such has been the significant task of Dorothy Akoto in the study of Biblical studies and hermeneutics in Africa.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has demonstrated how Dorothy BEA Akoto, as a biblical scholar from Africa, has made an impact in biblical interpretation. It has highlighted her valuable snippets of knowledge and how she has been using African cultural paradigms to address the concerns of women. It has shown how as an African she has something to offer in the area of biblical hermeneutics, especially concerning the struggles of African women. It affirmed the role and authority of culture as curators and producers of knowledge. Dorothy Akoto has highlighted the stance on African theologies rather than African theology bearing in mind that there are diversities and varieties of African socio-cultural experiences, hence interpretations will be varied. Yet, one finds that there is a common thread that weaves into all the theologies. To be authentic interpreters, Africans need to take the good aspects of African culture that are cherished, and creatively use them to dialogue with the Bible. Again, African theologies cannot be exclusive from what is happening elsewhere in the world. Mutual co-operation and understanding should be an on-going process.

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