Hlatywayo, Anniegrace Mapangisana

Unshackling Bible Translations from Colonial Chains : Theologising with Dora Mbuwayesango in the Diaspora

In:

Nelly Mwale, Rosinah Mmannana Gabaitse, Fundiswa Kobo and Dorothy Tembo (Eds.), Nehanda : Women's Theologies of Liberation in Southern Africa (Circle Jubilee Volume 3), Bamberg : University of Bamberg Press, S. 241-254. DOI: 10.20378/irb-95198

Beitrag im Sammelwerk - Verlagsversion

DOI des Beitrags: 10.20378/irb-96501

Datum der Veröffentlichung: 18.07.2024

13 | Unshackling Bible Translations from Colonial Chains: Theologising with Dora Mbuwayesango in the Diaspora

Anniegrace Mapangisana ***Hlatywayo***

Abstract

Undeniably one of the leading female gurus whose academic prowess goes down the annals of history in the field of Old Testament Studies and Biblical hermeneutics, Dora Mbuwayesango is an established academic and a theologian, and in particular, a biblical scholar par excellence. Using document analysis, this chapter explores selected writings of Mbuwayesango focusing on her expertise in biblical hermeneutics. The chapter pays particular attention to Mbuwayesango's engagement with African biblical translations and their Godslaughter which led to the gendering of African deities, the usurpation of African indigenous religion giving rise to patriarchal ideologies and the subservience of the African woman and this became deeply entrenched in African religio-cultural beliefs. The chapter concludes with not only exploring the works of Mbuwayesango, but highlights her endeavour to unshackle colonial chains through (i) adopting a postcolonial feminist approach to biblical hermeneutics, (ii) lobbying for the recovery of indigenous meanings of African languages, (iii) lobbying for interdisciplinary Bible translations and the (iv) decolonisation of the gods of Africa from the colonial heist.

Keywords: Mbuwayesango, biblical hermeneutics, Bible translation, *Mwari*, patriarchy, Shona

Introduction

Undeniably one of the leading female gurus whose academic prowess goes down the annals of history in the field of Old Testament Studies and Biblical hermeneutics, Dora Mbuwayesango is an established academic

and a theologian, and in particular, a biblical scholar par excellence. Besides having residence that spans over decades in the diaspora, Mbuwayesango remains a staunch academic of African scholarship. This is evidenced in her continuing engagement with contemporary social issues bedevilling the African context. Therefore, in honour of Mbuwayesango's remarkable contribution to biblical scholarship, this article focuses on one of her major research focus areas which is the problem of colonial Bible translation in Africa. In her writings, Mbuwayesango (2020; 2001) depicts how the translation of the Christian Bible into African vernacular languages is convolutedly related to the colonial conquest of Africa which was calculatedly aimed at dispossessing the African people of their culture, traditions and resources. She contends that to date, Bible translators still endeavour to 'religiously and culturally' colonize Africa while contributing to the marginalization of African women (Mbuwayesango 2020).

In responding to the mandate of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (hereafter referred to as the Circle) which seeks to empower women as well as promoting gender equality in religion and society, Mbuwayesango uses research and publication to unravel challenges bedevilling the African people, and in particular, African women. The matriarch's engagement with the challenge of colonial biblical translations in Africa exposes how biblical translations contributed to the marginalization of women in Africa. As a way of redressing the effects of the colonial onslaught of African cultures through Bible translation, Mbuwayesango offers alternative ways of redressing the anomalies of colonial biblical translations and their destructive effects in Africa. This writing begins with Mbuwayesango's biography. It pays attention to her educational qualifications, publications and academic expertise and highlights selected publications which are by no means exhaustive. The main thrust of this writing is a focus on Mbuwayesango's engagement with African biblical translation and how this relates to the mandate of the Circle which centres on promoting the wellness and liberation of African women.

Biography of Dora Mbuwayesango

Mbuwayesango is currently a George and Iris Battle professor of Hebrew or Old Testament and Languages at Hood Theological Seminary, Salis-

bury, NC. She joined the faculty of Hood in 1995, holding the first professional chair since 2011. Mbuwayesango is a holder of the esteemed position of Dean of Students, a position she has meticulously held since 2007. She is a co-founder of the African Biblical Hermeneutics section in the Society of Biblical Literature and has both served and chaired its Steering Committee. She is a member of the Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns were she also served on the Steering Committee from 2012 to 2018. Mbuwayesango has also served on the Board of Rowan Helping Ministries where she currently serves on the Board of Rape, Child and Family Abuse Crisis Council of Salisbury-Rowan, Inc. She is a member of the Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars and serves on its Steering Committee.

Education, Publications and Academic Expertise

Mbuwayesango holds a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Religion from Emory University, United States of America (1998); A Master's degree in Biblical studies obtained from Harvard Divinity School (1990) and a Bachelor of Arts Honors degree in Religious Studies obtained from the University of Zimbabwe, (1986, 1987). In terms of research and publication, Mbuwayesango has published extensively in numerous academic journals, edited volumes as well as editing a number of collections. Her research areas mainly centre on Hebrew/Old Testament studies, the Torah/Pentateuch and the prophets, sexuality in the Hebrew Bible, Postcolonial interpretations of biblical scriptures, Womanist/Feminist biblical interpretations, and the discourse of HIV and AIDS. Whilst Mbuwayesango holds a considerable volume of publications to her credit, she has also extensively collaborated with other theologians in various publications.

Dora Mbuwayesango's Selected List of Publications

- "The Challenge of Feminist Bible Translations in African Contexts" in Susanne Scholz (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Approaches to the Hebrew Bible*, 2020.
- "Feminist Biblical Studies in Africa" in *Feminist Bible Studies in the Twentieth Century: Scholarship and Movement* (ed. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza; Society of Biblical Literature, 2014.

- *Postcolonial Perspectives in African Biblical Hermeneutics* (co-editor with Musa W. Dube and Andrew Mbuvi) Society if Biblical Literature, 2012.
- "Canaanite Women and Israelite Women in Deuteronomy: The Intersection of Sexism and Imperialism" in *Postcolonial Interventions: Essays in Honor of R. S. Sugirtharajah* (ed. Tatsiong Benny Liew; Sheffield Phoenix Press, November 2009).
- "Zephaniah" in The Africana Bible: *Reading Israel's Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora* (gen. ed. Hugh R. Page, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009).
- Dialogical Beginnings, A Conversation on the Future of Feminist Biblical studies" in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* (with Susanne Scholz) 25(2), Fall 2009, 93-103.
- "The Canaanites Were in the Land": The Book of Genesis as an Anticonquest Narrative" in *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* 15(1), 2008.
- "Joshua" in Global Bible Commentary (Daniel Patte, editor, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004).
- "How Local Divine Powers were Suppressed: a Case of the *Mwari* of the Shona" in *Other Ways of Reading: African Women and the Bible* (ed. Musa Dube; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature; 2001); also in The Postcolonial Biblical Reader, R.S. Sugirtharajah, Wiley-Blackwell, 2006.
- "Childlessness and Woman-to-Woman Relationships in Genesis and in African Patriarchal Society: Sarah and Hagar from a Zimbabwean Woman's Perspective (Gen 16:1-16; 21:8-12)", in *Reading the Bible as Women: Perspectives from Africa, Asia, and Latin America* (ed. Phyllis Bird, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 27-36.
- "The Circle's Contribution to HIV Discourse on the Global Level" in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 28(2), 145-147.
- "Bible Translation in the Colonial Project in Africa and its Impact on African Languages and Cultures" in R.S. Sugirtharaja (ed). *The Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Criticism.*

Committees and Religious Affiliation

Mbuwayesango is a member of the Anglican Association of Biblical Scholars and has served on its steering committee. She is also a member and serves in the steering committee of the Chicago Consultation and also sits on the Advisory Board of the Old Testament Essays: An Old Testament Theological Journal that is accredited by the Department of Education in South Africa. Mbuwayesango is an Anglican/Episcopalian and is actively involved in the life of the church. She is a member of the St Luke's Episcopal where she has served on the vestry between the year 2011 and 2013. She was appointed by the Head of the House of Deputies of the Episcopal Church to serve on its Standing Committee on Anglican and International Peace with Justice Concerns (2012-2018).

Methodology

The chapter used document analysis to reflect on the writings of Mbuwayesango and her contribution to the mandate of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (Circle). Document analysis represents a systematic procedure that is adopted for reviewing documents in the form of print or electronic (Bowen 2009). This is a form of qualitative research whereby data is examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning and to gain further understanding (Corbin and Strauss 2008). The process of analysis included skimming, reading and interpreting selected writings of Mbuwayesango.

Engaging Mbuwayesango and her publications

In her publication (*African Biblical Translations: A Case Study of the Shona People of Zimbabwe* (2006), Mbuwayesango (2006) discusses how, prior to the British colonization of Zimbabwe in 1980, the country comprised of differing religio-political entities. These religio-political entities were united by the Supreme Being of the Shona personally known as *Mwari*. The Shona deity, *Mwari*, was known as a genderless spirit being, representing both the male and the female characters (Mbuwayesango 2006). The historical Shona deity, *Mwari*, had varied attributes dependent upon *Mwari's* transcendence and creative works. Accordingly, as articulated by Mbuwayesango (2006), *Mwari* is also referred to as *Nyadenga* (of the sky); *Mutangakugara* (first to exist); *Muumbi* (one who forms); and

Musikavanhu (creator of humanity). These differing but specific conceptualisations of *Mwari* represented the Shona religious and traditions understanding of their deity. Such conceptualisation, as highlighted by Mbuwayesango, was usurped by the Christian God. The Shona people could no longer relate to the varying creative activities of their deity, but had to conform to *Mwari* of the Bible. Gwaambuka (2019) speaks of the grand spiritual heist in reference to 'how Christianity stole and slaughtered African gods'. Alluding to similar sentiments expressed by Mbuwayesango, Gwaambuka (2019) posit that Bible translators adopted the names of African gods as a strategy for making the Christian religion conversant with African religion. He terms such a practice a colonial Godslaughter, a heist in translation and a fraud of epic proportions (Gwaambuka 2019). In this respect, Gwaambuka posits that Africans should not lose hope regarding their gods who have been trapped in the Christian purgatory. As such, reference is drawn to Musa Dube who strongly believes that the pen should be used as the sword to rescue the Shona deity. It is through writing that married the Shona deity with the biblical deity hence it is also through writing that the identification of *Mwari* with the genderless Shona deity can be recovered. It is thus posited that the African gods were lost in translation, hence it is through writing and publication that their reverence and sacredness can be reclaimed. Therefore, Mbuwayesango, through her writings, is unreservedly sharing her contribution to the unshackling of the Shona deity from colonial fetters.

The Bible as a Propaganda Tool for Dismantling the Religio-Cultural Traditions of the Shona People of Zimbabwe

The Bible was vastly instrumental in the colonization of Zimbabwe. It is positioned as a *propaganda tool* that led to the colonization of the religio-cultural belief systems of the Shona people (Mbuwayesango 2006). Mbuwayesango (2006) also highlights that the Bible was also used as a text in schools. This was the coloniser's calculated strategy to inculcate the precepts of the Eurocentric *Mwari* to those who were beginning to read and write. Such a move, as highlighted by Mbuwayesango, was meant to conscientize those learning to read and write a new perception of *Mwari,* one that was divorced from the Shona religio-cultural belief system.

In her article, *How Divine Powers were Suppressed: A Case of Mwari of the Shona*, Mbuwayesango (2020) unequivocally links the religious colonization of the Shona of Zimbabwe through the colonization of the Shona deity, *Mwari*. The Shona deity was unfairly equated with the biblical deity and the resultant was the consequent transformation of the Shona deity. However, Mbuwayesango (2020) argues there were stringent conditions associated with reverence and allegiance to the biblical-associated *Mwari*. It meant the Shona has to renounce their own identity and conform to Western notions of the biblical God. Resultantly, the Shona religious traditions were deemed incompatible with *Mwari* therefore the Shona people had to adopt to the new precepts related to the biblical deity.

In her writings, Mbuwayesango (2020; 2006) clearly demonstrates the power of the written word as evidenced by the Bible which calculatedly repressed African oral traditions. As a result, the biblical word was considered more authentic than the oral traditions that it usurped. Historically, the Shona belief systems were passed from one generation to the next through folktales, this oral tradition was repressed and interchanged with the written word. Mbuwayesango rightly obliterates that Shona folktales were regarded as myths and unreal therefore, they were denied the same validity as the Bible (2006).

Mbuwayesango and Advocating for the 'Unshackling Mwari from Colonial Chains'

Having rightly acknowledged the dire and destructive effects of the Bible on the Shona deity, Mbuwayesango advocates for the unshackling of *Mwari* from colonial chains. She posits that "while the past cannot be undone, it is crucial now that the translation of the Shona Bible be done independent of the evangelization of the Shona" (2006:266). For that reason, Mbuwayesango argues that to redress the anomaly raised in translating the Bible from English to Shona, there is need to directly use Hebrew and Greek texts. Furthermore, Mbuwayesango suggests the need for a Hebrew-Shona dictionary as well as a Greek-Shona dictionary. This would enable the Shona to read and understand the Bible based on its original texts of Hebrew and Greek. In this regard, Mbuwayesango (2006) also makes reference to the writing of Canaan Banana (1995), the late Zimbabwean theologian and political leader, who, apart from lobbying for the re-translation of the Bible in original languages, also lobbied for

the rewriting of the Bible. Such a move, as argued by Banana, would ensure the inclusion of some words that were omitted from the biblical texts (Mbuwayesango 2006). Whilst Banana's (1995) assumptions position the Christian and the Shona deity at par, Mbuwayesango (2006) posits the distinctive nature of the two gods should be maintained. As such, it is Mbuwayesango's contention that there should be separate documents that contain Shona stories and traditions in relation to their deity (2006). In this regard, Mbuwayesango suggests that Hebrew names of God should be maintained so as to enable a distinction between *Mwari* and *Yhwh Elohim* (2001). It is therefore, Mbuwayesango's argument that Shona traditions must not be legitimated on the basis of the Bible, but should be taken as authentic on their own.

Mbuwayesango's analogy of the importance of using the written word to subdue oppressive structures succinctly augurs well with the mandate of the Circle which is centred on research and publication. In her writings, Mbuwayesango reflects how African culture was dismantled through the pen, and in particular, through biblical translations. Mbuwayesango therefore argues "writing merged *Mwari* with the biblical god and it is through writing that the identification of *Mwari* with the genderless Shona deity will be reclaimed" (2006:267). This therefore is an intimate call for all Circle theologians, including male friends of the Circle, to use the pen as the sword for fighting against colonial conquests that are still stifling the African people. Mbuwayesango calls for the pen to be positioned as the sword for liberating Africa.

Engaging Mbuwayesango and her Publication on 'The Challenge of Feminist Bible Translations in African Contexts' (2020)

In this publication, Mbuwayesango (2020) interrogates how Bible translations by missionaries misconstrued African cultures and religions. Using the Shona people as a case study, Mbuwayesango (2020) contends that the inclusion of the Shona God, *Mwari* in the Bible subjected the Shona deity to foreign patriarchal notions previously alien to the Shona culture. Whilst the historical Shona God was genderless, the biblical *Mwari* gave rise to notions of gender and sexuality which subsequently led to the subjugation of women as well as instigating homophobic tendencies (Mbuwayesango 2020). This writing points out that western missionaries came up with colonial translations that condemned African

cultures, and positioned western patriarchal ideology as an intrinsic part of biblical instruction (Mbuwayesango 2020). As a result, these biblical translations gave rise to sexist domination and marginalisation of African women, and this became embedded in their indigenous cultures. Mbuwayesango (2020) argues that:

> Explicit and implicit sexist translations in African Bibles have led to African women's exclusion and marginalization are still part of the many official translation projects in many African contexts because most African Bible translation projects are still male dominated.

In this regard, Mbuwayesango (2020) posits that such biblical translations disregard challenges bedevilling women as a result of androcentric semantics and patriarchal imaginings leading to the subjugation of women. This unfortunate situation is aggravated by the exclusion of women as Bible translators thereby perpetuating the continued dominance of women. Through her writing and engagement with biblical translations, Mbuwayesango (2020; 2001) highlights the double jeopardy and oppressive plight of African women. In responding to the mandate of the Circle, Mbuwayesango uses the pen as the sword aimed at disarming the bias in biblical translation, but instead, calls for Bible translators to redress the sexist and patriarchal connotations that have continued to be part and parcel of Bible translation even in postcolonial Africa. She makes an intimate call for Bible translators in the African context to desist from espousing patriarchal insinuations which consequently lead to the subjugation of women in basically all spheres of life which are the political, economic, social and religious (Mbuwayesango 2020).

Not only did western notions of biblical translations give rise to the subjugation of African women, they also brought about the marginalisation of African culture and religion, stripping away the dignity of the African people and dispossessing them from their ancestral lands. Mbuwayesango (2020) contends that the translation of the Christian Bible into African languages is convolutedly linked to the colonial agenda of conquering the African continent and robbing her of her indigenous cultures and resources that give her wealth. As such, Mbuwayesango (2020) attests that missionaries triumphed in converting the African people to a Christianity that was emblematic to Western practice. Furthermore, as a strategy to subdue African religion and culture, Mbuwayesango (2020) posits that the missionaries adopted the names of African deities for the biblical God. As such, this strategy resulted in the suppression of African

local deities which were replaced by the western biblical deities. This ultimately meant that the African people had to conform to the Western religious practices associated with the biblical deities. As a result, the sacred nature and reverence paid to African deities was replaced by the Western deities, masked in African languages. Indigenous ceremonies and rituals for African deities were regarded as heathen and were replaced by Western Christian rituals and ceremonies thereby leading to the disintegration of African indigenous religion. Hence the need to be wary of continuing to feed into the colonial agenda of religiously and culturally subduing Africa that is enabled through Bible translations.

The Gendering of the Shona God in the Colonial Translations

Before the colonial biblical translation, the Shona, according to their indigenous religion, conceptualised their deity, *Mwari*, as genderless and a spiritual reality (Mbuwayesango 2020). Mbuwayesango (2020) further contends that the colonisation of the Shona deity through biblical translation converted the deity to a tangible and gendered male form. This also resulted in the gendering of Shona vocabulary, for example, the male human (Adam) in the Bible was linked with the Shona '*munhu*' (a person, either male or female) and was translated to represent humanity. This ultimately created new western forms of gender ideologies that were in contrast with Shona indigenous religio-cultural conceptualisations. Such a move created gender binaries that gave rise to the subordination of women. This was contrary to the original Shona indigenous religion and culture as expressed by Mbuwayesango (2020) that historically in pre-colonial Africa, there were fluid gender systems as well as gender-bending practices that permitted the interchanging roles, functions, and power systems of both sexes. This is also alluded to by Oduyoye (2001:42) who postulated that:

> Most of Africa has no images of God, so where there are no gender specific pronouns it has been insisted that God is supra-gender. It is also asserted that the God that created males created females, gave both the same spirit and called both human. What is central to our humanity, therefore is that both female and male are akin to God having received the same divine spirit. Gender does not define our worthiness, because it is not present in god. For this reason in the theological writings of African women, the gender of God plays a marginal role.

This therefore calls for people of African descent to reimagine their own historic conceptualisations of the deity, devoid of foreign misconceptions. Biblical inerrancy and infallibility make the Bible sacred and this is also used to defend patriarchalism (Mojola 2018). In most African religious contexts, the Bible is revered and taken as sacred thereby perpetuating a patriarchal ideology that became embedded in the religio-culture of the African people. Mbuwayesango (2020) highlights that the translation of Genesis 2:4b-25 assigns a subordinate position to women as well as introducing the culture of heteronormativity within the Shona culture. As such, this presented heterosexuality as the only acceptable expression of sexuality, thereby instituting male autonomy and associated privileges of lording over women's sexuality. In the article, *African Biblical Translations: A Case Study of the Shona People of Zimbabwe (*2006), Mbuwayesango points out that the historical *Mwari* did not discriminate but spoke through both sexes as well as objects. This indicates God is neither male nor female, hence to assign God a gender is tantamount to idolatry as god cannot be equated with mankind but is spirit (Mojola 2018). However, the gendering of God in biblical translations emanates from the challenge of translatability. Mojola (2018) argues that Bible translators grapple with the question of how to translate the name of God in vernacular languages as they face the challenge of determining the nature and gender of God. He points out that in biblical scripture, God is known as the father which actually contradicts other indigenous cultures that perceive God as female (Mojola 2018). As such, Mbuwayesango calls for the need to remedy the challenge of what translates to androcentric and sexist language in biblical scripture.

Remedying the Transgressions of the Colonial Past

In an attempt to remedy the transgressions of the colonial past, Mbuwayesango (2020) proposes some basic tenets that can also be adopted.

Firstly, Mbuwayesango (2020) lobbies for the application of a postcolonial feminist approach to Bible translation as an alternative way to decolonise and depatriarchalize Bible translations and their oppressive and misogynist interpretations in Africa. It has been noted that African women are doubly oppressed as they struggle under the yoke of colonialism and patriarchal oppression (Dube 2020). Hence a postcolonial feminist approach to biblical translation seeks to decolonise hegemonic tendencies that revere the Bible as sacred text under the guise of advancing patriarchy and the subsequent subordination of women. Postcolonial feminist

approaches to Bible translation therefore pays attention to the socio-cultural context as well as other factors instigated by colonialism and patriarchy to subdue women, particularly those in the third world.

Secondly, Mbuwayesango also calls for the recovery of indigenous meanings of African languages as an attempt to remedy the transgressions of the colonial past. Currently, there has been incessant calls for the preservation, revitalizing and promotion of African languages across the continent. During a two-day regional consultation in preparation for the Global Action Plan for the International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032 held on the 31st of May 2021, the African Union expressed that "the AU recognises that the cultural emancipation of the African depends on their effective use of languages". Therefore, preserving indigenous languages reaffirms our African identity as language is attached to a people's way of life. Mbuwayesango's call for the restoration of indigenous meanings of African languages, particularly in biblical translation, represents the remedying of colonial translations that were taken out of context.

Thirdly, Mbuwayesango proposes that Bible translations should be an interdisciplinary endeavour at institutions of higher learnings. She further posits that this endeavour should not be solely focused on promoting Christianity but should be an independent and unbiased procedure towards biblical translation. This is because the Bible is considered the most influencing book in the history of mankind and human civilization (Ying 2015). Therefore, an interdisciplinary study of the Bible allows for divergent readings in various fields inclusive of theology, ethics, history etc. Lastly, in all the attempts that can be made to restore the pride of African religion that was subdued through androcentric and biased biblical translations, Mbuwayesango strongly lobbies for the decolonisation of the gods of Africa. This can be enabled by the application of postcolonial biblical interpretations, the recovery of the original meanings of African indigenous languages, particularly in biblical translation, and lastly, through the adoption of interdisciplinary Bible translations.

CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on Mbuwayesango, an esteemed African academic and one of the long-standing members of the Circle. The chapter highlighted Mbuwayesango's biography, paying attention to her educational and professional accolades as well as her community engagement initiatives. Drawing from Mbuwayesango's selected publications, the chapter focused on the challenge of biblical translation in African settings. Mbuwayesango's selected publications reflected the anomaly arising from imperial and hegemonic biblical translations that misrepresented the African conceptualisation of God and also gave rise to patriarchal practices that led to the subordination of African women. Mbuwayesango's publications respond to the mandate of the Circle which strives to proffer theological and ethical reflections that empower and transform oppressive situations for men, and in particular, women who are doubly affected by both colonialism and patriarchal tendencies that subjugate their status.

REFERENCES

Banana, C.S. (1995). The Case for a New Bible. In R.S. Surgitharajah (ed.). *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World* (rev. ed.). Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.

Bowen, G.A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal* 9(2), 27-40.

Corbin, J. & A. Strauss (2008). Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory (3rd ed.). Thousand oaks, Sage.

Gwaambuka, T. (2019). The Grand Spiritual Heist: How Christianity Stole and Slaughtered African gods. The African Exponent. https://www.africanexponent.com/post/4638-colonial-missionaries-were- (Accessed 19 June 2023).

Mojola, A.O. (2018). Bible Translation and Gender Challenges and Opportunities with Specific Reference to sub-Saharan Africa. *Verbum et Ecclesia* 39(1), a1820. https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v39i1.1820 (Accessed 21 June 2023).

Mbuwayesango, D.R. (2020). The Challenge of Feminist Bible Translations in African Contexts. In Susanne Scholz (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Approaches to the Hebrew Bible*. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780190462673013.6 (Accessed 21 May 2023).

Mbuwayesango, D.R. (2006). How Local Divine Powers were Suppressed: A Case of Mwari of the Shona. In R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed.). *The Postcolonial Reader*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470775080.ch17 (Accessed 21 May 2023).

Oduyoye, M.A. (2001). *Introducing African Women's Theology*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, UK.

Ying, H. (2015). Interdisciplinary Interpretation of the Bible Text. *International Journal of English Linguistic* 5(1), 170-174.

UNESCO 2021. UNESCO holds consultations for making a decade of action for indigenous languages in Africa. https://www.unesco.org