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The Marginalisation of the Dead: A Decolonial Re-Reading of 1 Samuel 28:3-25 in Light of the Vhavenḁa Tradition of *Malombo*

Nkhumiseni Mulaudzi and Hulisani Ramantswana

ABSTRACT

This article reinterprets 1 Samuel 28:3-25 in light of the *malombo* ritual of the Vhavenḁa culture. The *malombo* ritual establishes communication between the living and the dead. In 1 Samuel 28:3-25 King Saul consulted a medium to contact the deceased prophet, Samuel. The medium had the power to bring back the dead for communication. The central questions are: What is the relationship between the living and the dead? What do the dead have to do with the living?

Introduction

The 1 Samuel 28 narrative is fertile ground for exploring the cultural encounters between the Old Testament canonical story and African indigenous traditions.¹ However, this narrative has been mostly interpreted through a Euro-Western

1 Kiboko, J.K. *Divining the Woman of Endor: African Culture, Postcolonial Hermeneutics, and the Politics of Biblical Translation*. (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 127.

Nkhumiseni Mulaudzi is an Ancient Near Eastern Studies Ph.D. candidate & Research Assistant in Research and Graduate Studies, in UNISA's College of Human Sciences. mulaun@unisa.ac.za. mulaudzipepsi@yahoo.com. Hulisani Ramantswana is a Professor in the Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies at the University of South Africa. Ramanh@unisa.ac.za.

Research Articles

Mother Earth, Mother Africa: African Women Theologians

Re-visioning and Re-shaping Ecotheology

Beverley Haddad

ABSTRACT

The Circle of Concerned African Theologians have a history of engaging key social issues confronting communities across the African continent, most notably the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The Pan-African Conference of 2019 in Botswana placed issues of the environment firmly on the agenda, meeting under the theme “Mother Earth and Mother Africa in Theological, Religious, Cultural, and Philosophical Imagination”. From this gathering, a series of publications have been produced. This article seeks to analyse this body of work, discerning the African, feminist, and contextual theological impulses, and noting its contribution to the work of global ecofeminism. The article discusses the significance of the employment of the concepts “Mother Earth” and “Mother Africa”, on the foregrounding of themes such as gender, culture, and land, and on the challenges we face in engaging the intersection of African women’s theological reflection as an African contribution to the revisioning and reshaping of global ecotheology.

Introduction

Silent Spring by Rachel Carson, published in 1962, investigated the effect of pesticides on the natural world ultimately leading to new global policies that protected our air, water, and health. The scientific rigour with which she carried out her research has for decades inspired further scientific investigation into the impact of human activity on the environment. *Silent Spring* is remembered as the work that launched the environmental movement¹ and gave rise to ecofeminism.²

1 Lesley Green, “Ecology, Race, and the Making of Environmental Publics: A Dialogue with *Silent Spring* in South Africa.” *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities* 1, no. 2 (2014), 1-20. <<https://doi.org/10.5250/resilience.1.2.002>>.

2 Patricia H. Hynes, *The Recurring Silent Spring* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1989).

Students' Christian Association 1977–1986. Ten Momentous Years and the Movement Towards Integral Mission

Bill Houston

ABSTRACT

The turbulent context of Southern Africa from 1976-1986 was one in which the Students' Christian Association of Southern Africa (SCA) found itself theologically ill-equipped to meet the challenges it faced. Evangelicalism then was characterised by a spirituality which separated the sacred from the secular. South African society, as well as the church, was racially polarised. The framework of the world-wide Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission is used as the interpretive lens to trace the response the SCA made to this difficult situation which in effect became a movement towards integral mission.

Introduction

The 1970s and 1980s were highly turbulent times in South Africa's struggle for freedom. The Soweto student uprising in 1976 and the growth of independent trade unions signalled a new wave of resistance.¹ Apartheid authorities stepped up arrests of political activists, with some detainees being tortured to death. Steve Biko was murdered in 1977. In the middle of the 1980s South Africa's townships erupted and the apartheid government launched a new wave of repression.² The state's response was to declare a State of Emergency, giving the President of South Africa the ability to rule by decree, to heighten the powers of both the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the South Africa Police (SAP), and to restrict and censor any reportage of political unrest.³ This pivotal era in South African history raised enormously challenging questions for the Students' Christian

1 <<https://www.aamarchives.org/history/1970s.html>>.

2 <<https://www.aamarchives.org/history/1980s.html>>.

3 <https://www.saha.org.za/ecc25/ecc_under_a_state_of_emergency.htm>.

Bill Houston was the national director of the Students' Christian Association from 1977-1986. This article is born out of that challenging experience. For thirty-five years after that he was involved in theological education in sub-Saharan Africa and is now retired. <billhouston@sai.co.za>.

Leo Rakale – an African Monk, Priest and Political Activist, Community of the Resurrection (CR), South Africa 1913-1980

Henry Mbaya and Thokozile J. Mbaya

ABSTRACT

In this article, we will outline the life of Leo Rakale, the first Black South African monk to be professed in the Community of the Resurrection in 1946 in South Africa, a community based in Mirfield, England. Rakale was born in Springs, near Johannesburg in 1913. He went to St. Peter's High School, and then St. Peter's Theological College, where he trained for the priesthood. In 1946, against family expectations, he decided not to marry, and joined the Community of the Resurrection. This starkly distinguished him in the African community. From the 1940s until his death, Rakale was a close friend and colleague of the renowned political activist and struggle stalwart, Trevor Huddleston. Rakale himself was a political activist and was involved in a number of civic and political organisations. Rakale also played a very important spiritual role and support in the life of political activists notably, Helen Joseph and Winnie Mandela. Rakale died in 1980.

Introduction

Philippe Denis noted that there exists a gap in Church historiography in Southern Africa in regard to the history of the indigenous clergy.¹ Aimed at informing home organisations almost exclusively about the work of the White missionaries on the mission field, church historiography has largely left out or ignored the voices of the African ministers.² Denis also pointed to the 'unbalanced outlook of missionary historiography.' Based on the reports sent to the mission's Home office in Europe and benefactors of the mission, 'written by Europeans for Europeans, these documents were inevitably biased.'³ Hence, there is need to 'unmute' the voices of the African clergy in Southern Africa. In this respect, Denis's observation

1 Philippe Denis, "Missionaries from Within: The Contribution of Indigenous Clergy to Evangelization in South Africa", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* xxxiii (2007), January (2007), 57-69.

2 Denis, "Missionaries from Within", 58.

3 Denis, "Missionaries from Within", 58.

African Translation Notes

Translation Matters?

Maarman Sam Tshehla

As part of *JTSA*'s distinctive character henceforth, we are thrilled to include notes and observations from the field of Bible translation practice under a dedicated section of the journal. Contributions are encouraged from those who are engaged in mother tongue exegesis and/or Bible translation work. These translation notes will generally be bite-sized and presented in accessible format in order to facilitate a general idea of the issues with which translators and exegetes have to grapple.

A number of South African language Bible Revision Projects are underway, under Dr Masenyani Baloyi's capable and patient direction. So, thanks to the Bible Society of Southern Africa's generosity towards South Africa's vernaculars, there should be no shortage of contributions to this slot. To get the ball rolling I draw on a recent observation as I serve on the 1951 Sepedi Bible Revision Team.

When your Translating Hand Scandalizes

Translating the Greek of Matthew 18, in particular the noun *skandalon* and its verb *skandalizō* in verses 6 to 9, presented a stumbling block or two.

First, the Greek notion whose nuances encompass “[1] trap; [2] temptation to sin or enticement to apostasy; [3] that which gives offense or causes revulsion or arouses opposition or an object of anger, etc”¹ will not prove easy to represent via a single Sepedi term.

The Sepedi term employed by the 1951 Sepedi Bible communicates the ‘offense’ sense (meaning 3) while the 2000 Sepedi Bible’s² preference stresses ‘lead astray’ (meaning 2). The former is *sekgopi* (noun) and *kgopiša* (verb) whereas the 2000 version has *kgeloša* for the verbal form and the strained participial phrase (*tše di kgelošago batho* – ‘things that mislead people’) represents the nominal form. *Molaba* would be the prime (but not exclusive) Sepedi noun denoting ‘trap’ (meaning 1).

1 William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (University of Chicago Press, 1957), 760, truncated.

2 The 2000 version was meant to be more functional and target-culture oriented than the literalist 1951 version.

Book Reviews

Book Reviews

Emmanuel Katongole. *Who Are My People? Love, Violence, and Christianity in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2022. ISBN: 978-0-268-20257-6. Paperback. Includes Table of Contents and Index. 222 p.

David Tonghou Ngong
Stillman College
Alabama, USA

Mike Deeb OP, Philippe Denis OP, and Mark James OP (eds).
Reluctant Prophet: Tributes to Albert Nolan OP.

Adelaide/ Johannesburg: ATF Publishing Press/ UJ Press, 2023. ISBN: 978-1-922737-88-5. Paperback. Includes Table of Contents and Index. 462 pp.

Anthony Balcomb
University of KwaZulu-Natal
South Africa

Peter Graham Moll, *Conscientious Objector to the Apartheid Army.*

USA: Author published, Sure Print & Design, 2023. No ISBN. Hardcover. Includes Table of Contents, References, and Index. 344 pp.

Gerald West
University of KwaZulu-Natal
South Africa

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