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***The Contemporary Theological Project***

# *Ini psanak! Sdurak ini psanak!* Sediq Mother-Tongue Hermeneutics of Deuteronomy 16:18–20 and the Quest for *Msdrux*

Risaw Walis

**ABSTRACT**

This article presents one contribution towards Taiwan Indigenous Peoples' (TIP) search for transformative justice by way of a Sediq mother-tongue reading of Deuteronomy 16:20 ("*Ini psanak! Sdurak ini psanak*!"). Employing the Mother-Tongue Biblical Interpretative Method (TBIM) by Walis Ukan, it contrasts standard interpretations with a Sediq understanding rooted in *msdrux* (right relationship), revealing a holistic justice. This Sediq hermeneutic offers a counternarrative to colonial views and provides critical wisdom for TIP struggles concerning land, culture, and self-determination. It contributes to postcolonial theology and indigenous studies by foregrounding mother-tongue interpretations for fostering a more equitable future.

## Introduction: The Pursuit of Justice in a (Post-)Colonial Context and Sediq Mother-Tongue Biblical Interpretation

In 2016, then President Tsai Ing-wen, speaking on behalf of the Taiwanese government,[1] issued a solemn apology to indigenous peoples and announced the initiation of a "transitional justice" investigation, with the stated aim of clarifying the historical truth of the infringements upon indigenous human rights,

1 I use "the Taiwanese government" as a convenient shorthand for the state authorities in Taiwan under President Tsai Ing-wen. This wording is not intended to settle contested questions of sovereignty, nomenclature, or historical jurisdiction, given Taiwan's layered colonial and political histories and the continuing plurality of narratives that frame them.

Risaw Walis Ph.D. University of Leeds, United Kingdom, Assistant Professor, Yu-Shan Theological College and Seminary, Taiwan <risawwalisukan@gmail.com>

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***Research Articles***

# ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐγνώκαμεν ("By This, we Know That we Know", 1 John 2:3): But What Do we Know?

Frank England

**ABSTRACT**

Are human beings capacitated with the ability "to know" definitively? It is the claim of this article that such self-vaunted certainty betrays the being called, "human". In the current climate when strident claims that "we know that we know", both of Pentecostalism and evangelical Biblicism within Christianity, and of sceptical religious agnosticism and dogmatic atheism within the prevailing secular society, dominate, perhaps a reminder ought to be issued as to the remit and limit of human knowing. For the persistent claim "to know the truth about being human", whether by partisan Christians or post-Christian atheists, may be less than truthful to the condition and reality of being human. Appropriating the assertion in 1 John 2: 3 that "by this, we know that we know" as a foil, this article raises questions about the boundaries of biblical and theological inquiry, of what it may "know"; and that if it may claim "to know", then, by what means does it "know that it knows"? What can be asserted about the "God" at the centre of its concerns? In what intelligible ways may "God" be thought and spoken?[1]

## Introduction

Biblical and theological inquiry is always haunted by *aporiai*. If this were not the case, then the sacred texts of Christianity would no longer be "classics".

1 The author owes a two-fold debt. First, to the St. Aidan's Guild, the theological forum of the Anglican Diocese of Cape Town, where an earlier version of this paper was read on the 26 August, 2022, and for the response paper at the subsequent meeting, which, whilst not citing St Anselm, took an expected Anselmian approach: *Credo ut intelligam*. Second, although, likewise, "*fides quaerens intellectum*" framed the expectations of the anonymous referees, their comments were different. This debt acknowledges their careful reading. However, again rather expectedly, revisions never satisfy reviewers totally, more especially when biblical and theological inquiry, in the view of this author, always must failingly and *sub specie humanitatis*, "see through a glass darkly".

Frank England is an honorary research associate at the University of Cape Town.
<frank.england@uct.ac.za>.

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# Is St. Augustine a Misogynist?

Wilbert Gobbo

**ABSTRACT**

St. Augustine of Hippo (Algeria) is a very important and influential Father of the Church. He has shaped Christian philosophy and theology. On the one hand, Augustine is the father of Western Christian theology. On the other hand, he is also the father of early African Christian theology. He has shaped African and Western patristic theologies. If St. Augustine is accused of being misogynistic, can such an accusation be extended to African and Western theologies which he influenced? "Is St. Augustine a misogynist?" is the focal point of our reflection in which we will follow the theoretical framework of analysis of the primary writings of St. Augustine. It is somewhat related to the dialectic (Gk *dialektos* for discussion) method. [1] First, we will focus mainly on the primary sources and the writings of St. Augustine on his relationship with women. Second, we will evaluate his relationship with women to see if there are some elements of misogyny. Finally, we will give a brief opinion based on our reflections.

## Introduction

St. Augustine is a great Christian philosopher and theologian. He is one of the most influential Christian thinkers of all time. According to some feminist scholars,[2] despite his great contribution to theology, Augustine's attitudes to women and sex are disputable in the Catholic Church and society. St. Augustine and other Church Fathers like Tertullian, St. John Chrysostom, St. Jerome and St. Thomas Aquinas are accused of misogynous (*misos* for hatred; *gunē* for woman) attitudes.

1 Gustav Mueller, "The Hegel Legend of 'Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis'", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 19, no. 4 (1958), 411–414.

2 Judith Chelius Stark (ed), *Feminist Interpretations of Saint Augustine*, Pennsylvania: Penni State University, 2007 ; Janine Hourcade, *L'Eglise est-elle misogyne? Une vocation féminine, antique et nouvelle* (Paris: Cerf, 1990), 33–36; Alice Dermience, *La question féminine et l'Eglise catholique: Approches biblique, historique et théologique* (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2008). 133 ; Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Women and Redemption: A Theological History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998). 73 ; Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Augustine : Sexuality, Gender and Women," in *Feminist Interpretations of Saint Augustine*, edited by Judith Chelius Stark (Pennsylvania : Pennsylvania State University, 2007,) 47–67 ; Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2013), 290–294 ; Tina Beattie, *New Catholic Feminism : Theology and Theory* (New York : Routledge, 2006), 118–120.

Wilbert Gobbo (PhD, STD) is Lecturer and Researcher of Spirituality, Psychology and Systematic Theology, University of KwaZulu Natal. <gobbow@ukzn.ac.za>

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# Joy under Pressure: A Socio-Rhetorical Reading of Philippians in African Contexts of Political Instability

Martin Mukole

**ABSTRACT**

African Christian communities frequently confront political instability, economic uncertainty, and social fragmentation that strain communal life and Christian witness. This study offers a socio-rhetorical reading of Philippians, focusing on key exhortative and Christological passages (Phil 1:27–30; 2:5–11; 3:20–21; 4:4–9), to examine Pauline joy as a theological and communal resource under pressure. The analysis argues that Paul presents joy as a counter-cultural posture formed through participation in Christ, communal solidarity, and eschatological hope. Situated within African political realities, the article proposes joy as a formative practice fostering resilience and faithful witness beyond spiritualised or prosperity-driven interpretations.

## Introduction

Political instability in many African contexts produces sustained social, pastoral, and ecclesial pressures. Electoral violence, contested land and resource disputes, forced displacement, suppression of dissent, economic volatility, and the erosion of civic trust create environments in which congregations and church leaders routinely face fear, fatigue, and fractured communal bonds.[1] Within such conditions, Christian responses to suffering often reflect two recurring tendencies. Triumphalist pastoral theologies frequently promise swift victory,

1 Clayton Hazvinei Vhumbunu, Toyin Cotties Adetiba, and Charity Mawire, "Reflecting on the Plight of Migrants Living in South Africa during COVID-19: A Narrative Lens", *African Renaissance* 22, no. 3 (2025), 57. M. Abel, "Long-run Effects of Forced Resettlement: Evidence from Apartheid South Africa", *The Journal of Economic History* 79, no. 4 (2019), 915–953. P. Meth, M. Belihu, S. Buthelezi, and F. Masikane, "Not Entirely Displacement: Conceptualising Relocation in Ethiopia and South Africa as 'Disruptive Re-placement'", *Urban Geography* 44, no. 5 (2023), 824–849. H. Mostert and G. Mathiba, "Mine Community Displacement and Resettlement in South Africa", in *The Routledge Handbook of Property, Law and Society* (London: Routledge, 2022), 61–74.

Martin Mukole is a United Methodist Church pastor and lecturer at the Methodist University of Lubumbashi (DR Congo). He is a Doctor of Philosophy (DPhil) candidate in Religious Studies at Zimbabwe Open University (Zimbabwe). <mukolem@africau.edu>

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# Theology as Wrestling with God: A Theological Survey and Reflection

Hassan Musa

**ABSTRACT**

This article takes the story of Jacob and his encounter with God as narrated in Genesis 32:22–32 as the point of departure into a theological survey and reflection on the idea of wrestling or struggling with God. The ideas of "wrestle" and "struggle" are used interchangeably but with regards to our contemporary experience, the term is only a metaphor. Thus, the story of Jacob and "a man" at the river Jabbok is only a point of departure to critically call attention to our human struggles and quests to encounter God differently. The life story and theological accounts of scholars like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Jürgen Moltmann, John de Gruchy, and Oliver O'Donovan are briefly surveyed and are taken as theological accounts of struggles with God in the modern world. The article is a contribution to considering Jordan B. Peterson's book titled *We Who Wrestle with God,* with particular attention to the Jacob narrative, as not only a of lonely struggle with God, as a metaphor for life and religious experience in the contemporary world, but more so as an invitation for faith and hope in a life that is blessed by God.

## Introduction: Wrestling with God? (Genesis 32:22–32)

> That night, Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. Then the man said, 'Let me go, for it is daybreak.' But Jacob replied, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' The man asked him, 'What is your name?' 'Jacob' he answered. Then the man said, 'Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.' Jacob said, 'Please tell me your name.' but he replied, 'Why do you ask my name?' Then he blessed him there. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared.' The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel, and he was limping because of his hip. Therefore, to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

Hassan Musa is a Research Fellow with the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University. He lives and lectures at ECWA Theological Seminary in Jos, Nigeria.
<musahass735@gmail.com>

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# Contesting Contextual Theology: Transcending the Western Theological Capture of Marginal Theologies

David Tonghou Ngong

**ABSTRACT**

This paper retells the story of contextual theology as the story of the Western theological capture of what I call marginal theologies. This theological capture serves to limit the power of these theologies by circumscribing their relevance to specific contexts. It is for this reason that some of the key problems in the field of contextual theology deal with definitional and methodological issues and the problem of the relationship between the local and the global or the contextual and the universal. However, seeing these theologies as making circumscribed claims is a misreading of these theologies that sets up an unnecessary barrier between the local and the global – a barrier which marginal theologies do not recognise. I argue that these problems can be transcended if marginal theologies are seen as simultaneously contextual and global.

## Introduction

As currently practised in the West, contextual theology is a product of the Western mainstream theological gaze on marginal theologies. By marginal theologies, I mean non-Western theologies (such as those from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific) and the theologies in the Western world (such as Black, womanist, and feminist theologies) that are outside the mainstream Christian theological traditions. Contextual theology emerged when Western theologians of the mainstream Christian traditions, such as Roman Catholics and Evangelicals, began to acknowledge these marginal theologies, but they did so with a caveat – that these theologies be seen as situated in a specific place and time, and that they raised questions that were only applicable to those contexts. In other words, these marginal theologies did not raise questions that Western, mainstream theologies grapple with. If Western, mainstream theologies had to grapple with these questions, they had to do so with the awareness that the questions were situated differently, that is, they were non-Western questions and therefore distant. They were not the kinds of questions Western theology was asking. Contextual

David Tonghou Ngong, Ph.D. is Professor and Chair in the Department of Religion and Theology, Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, Alabama. <Dngong@stillman.edu>.

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***African Translation Notes***

# The Difficulty of Translating 'Disability' in the Northern Sotho Bible

Mampaka Lydia Mojapelo

## *Bogole* or *Bogolofadi* (Disability)

A language's vocabulary exists, evolves and develops in the shared knowledge and memory of the society that speaks it. In Northern Sotho, *segole* and *mogolofadi* are conceptually synonymous; they refer to 'a person with a disability.' However, recent language use and practice reject *segole*, with *mogolofadi* being the preferred alternative. Is this merely a case of political correctness trumping linguistic semantics? A search for *bogole* and *bogolofadi* in SEPEDI2021[1] (cf. Faaß 2022), a sampled text corpus of more than two million tokens, yields 781 hits for *bogole* and 20 for *bogolofadi*. Searches for *segole* and *mogolofadi* yield 38 and two hits, respectively.

An analysis of the surrounding co-texts of *bogole* and *bogolofadi* 'disability' in the sampled corpus indicates a synonymous relationship. The question is whether they carry the same contentious connotations as *segole* and *mogolofadi* 'a person with a disability.'

## Linguistic Background

Northern Sotho nouns are categorised into classes, which are marked by prefixes and assigned numbers. Each class has singular and plural forms, a pairing known as gender. Typically, a basic semantic feature sets one class apart from another; for example, class 1/2 (mo- / ba-) consists of nouns with human reference although many nouns with human reference belong to classes other than 1/2. For instance,

1 Text corpus SEPEDI2021. <https://corpus.sadilar.org/> [27 October 2026].

Mampaka Lydia Mojapelo is Professor of African Languages at the University of South Africa. <mojapelo.lydia@gmail.com> <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9946-5809>

# *Book Reviews*

Jione Havea (ed), *Haunting Questions of Liberation Theology.*
London: SCM Press, 2025. ISBN: 978-0-334-06650-7. Hardcover.
Inclusive of Table of Contents and Index. 220p.

Tim Judson (ed), *The White Bonhoeffer: A Postcolonial Pilgrimage.*
London: SCM Press, 2025. ISBN: 978-0-334-06536-4. Softcover.
Inclusive of Table of Contents and Index. 181p.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (ed), *Ethics.* Edited by Eberhard Bethge.
London: SCM Press, 1955, 2024. ISBN: 978-0-334-06587-6. Softcover.
Inclusive of Table of Contents. 283p.

Liberation Theology (hereafter: LT) was the *vita* of the *curricula* in English-medium theological academia in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s. However, the ideological trenchancy of its "preferential option for the poor", its exposure of systematic violence, and its commitment to Marxist-informed economic and political justice has rather dissipated; or, more kindly, segued into eco-biblical, feminist, queer, and trans-focused research. But some of those who were exposed to that adamantine spirit of revolutionary resistance remain "haunted" by its primary gospel call: If the "news" is "good", then it is just. Its replacements "queer the pitch", but they also reveal their limits and, might it be suggested, their ideological paucity. The various studies in *Haunting Questions* (hereafter: *HQ*) do demonstrate that patriarchy is not merely a colonial legacy, re-energised state and regional nationalisms abound, and market-driven wealth accumulation is unrestrained, with consequences that embed traditions of dominance, the economics of individualism, self-pleasure, and egoism. Has the flame of Liberation Theology's torch been extinguished? For as Michael Jagessar concludes *HQ*: "Empire's reach continues to morph with no 'letting-up' ... . to ensure the market flow of resources, capital, labour and wealth from the majority to the one per cent" (207).

*HQ* is divided into three sections – Quests to Liberate, Questioning (of) Praxis, and Queering Quests – preceded by Jione Havea's introduction and succeeded

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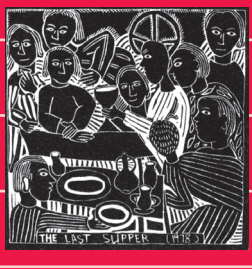


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