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Biblical discourses and the subjugation of Africa: A decolonial-Foucauldian perspective

ABSTRACT

The Western missionaries and colonialists pushed a similar agenda of subjugating the receptor's core aspects of life. Among their targets were aspects of culture, religion, gender, and sexuality. This trend continues in the contemporary era within different global spaces. In Africa, the Americas, and Asia, missionaries promulgated colonial ideologies through the transmission and reception of biblical discourses. This was done under the guise of civilisation, Christianisation, and evangelisation of Africans who were and are still perceived and portrayed as primitive, savages, and pagans. This article argues that biblical resources served as modalities of power in the colonial subjugation agenda. The article uses the transmission and reception of biblical discourses as lenses for examining how coloniality targeted these aspects. The de-colonial motif was used to problematise these discourses. On the other hand, Foucault's perspective on discourses and power shed some light on how colonial power dynamics were at play in this context. A clarion call was then made to shift Christianity's centre of power from the Northern continents to the South.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The missionary-colonial subjugation tendencies are far from over. These tendencies targeted various aspects of receptors' lives and continue to do so within contemporary global spaces

(Foucault 1976; Steady 2005). This subjugation is sometimes referred to as “cultural imperialism” (Tomlinson 1991; Van Elteren 2003). It entails “universalistic claims of Western views imposed by colonial powers at the expense of indigenous conceptual systems” (Dunch 2002:301). Furthermore, this subjugation is embedded in modernist ideologies that are driven by missionary-colonial epochs. The European missionaries pushed the colonial subjugation agenda by promulgating an all-inclusive Eurocentric paradigm that claimed superiority over the cultures of their receptors (Kisiang’ani 2004:9). This subjugation is further reproduced by diverse modalities that help it thrive. Foucault (1976:8) observed this and asserted that there is a need not only to explore discourses of repression, but also to analyse the powers that help sustain them and the strategic intentions that support their existence.

In Africa, as in other former colonies elsewhere, missionaries used biblical discourses as the fundamental modalities to perpetuate and sustain the colonial subjugation agenda. Mudimbe (1988:47) observed that “missionary speeches were predetermined, pre-regulated and colonised”. This article problematises their speeches used in the transmission of biblical discourses and in dictating the reception of biblical discourses. Although the subjugation agenda was directed at African life as a whole, this article focuses primarily on aspects such as African culture, religion, gender, and sexuality. However, this is not done to trivialise other aspects such as languages, politics, knowledge, and traditions which were equally targeted by coloniality. The author is cognisant that all these other aspects were also colonised and converted into objects of study. Furthermore, indigenous knowledge systems were regarded as unsustainable (Mignolo 1999:239; de Onrubia 2013:31). Nevertheless, the focus of this article only serves as an example of the critical aspects that were targeted by the missionary-colonial subjugation agenda. The term “missionary-colonial” signifies the strong interconnection between the missionaries’ transmission of biblical discourses and the colonialist subjugation of Africa. Saayman (1991:xi) calls this interconnection, “the entanglement between mission and colonialism”. This article is about this entanglement and how the transmission of biblical discourses and their reception in Africa can be decolonised to liberate Africans from Western subjugation. Therefore, a clarion call is made to change this narrative, in order to balance the manifestation of Christianity from the North with that from the South (Bediako 1995:3). This move can be a transformation of what Foucault (1978:139) calls “biopower” and can perhaps transform the current status quo.

1.1 Methodology

The systematic desktop research methodology was used to explore and examine issues raised in this study. This methodology involves the exclusive use and analysis of secondary data and sources of information that do not involve fieldwork. Secondary data analysis can be applied in a variety of ways. However, this article uses the Focused Mapping Review and Synthesis (FMRS) for data collection and analysis. FMRS entails giving a specific focus to a defined field of knowledge rather than to a body of evidence and sources. This means that the sources used, in this instance, were examined from within a defined epistemological context (Bradbury-Jones *et al.* 2019:453).

1.2 Theoretical framework

This article uses the decoloniality theory and Foucault's perspectives on discourses of power. The decoloniality theory is used as a point of departure in investigating Africa's subjugation and in calling on Africans to liberate themselves from the perpetual subjugation agenda. On the other hand, Foucault's perspectives on discourses of power provide a framework for analysing the power that governs the transmission and reception of biblical discourses in Africa.

1.2.1 Decoloniality

Decoloniality stems from the

de-colonial thinking and doing which were developed in the sixteenth century as responses to the oppressive and imperial bent of modern European ideas projected to and enacted in the non-European world (De Onrubia 2013:6).

On the other hand, Mignolo cautioned that coloniality should not be confused with colonialism. He stressed that the distinction is based on the fact that colonialism was the direct domination of the colonies by one imperial power for the extraction of resources. Furthermore, he defined coloniality as being backed by a pursuit of ontological domination based on the inferiority of the other (De Onrubia 2013:11). De-colonial thinking attempts to break with the imposed position of difference and stands to liberate any remaining ties with Europe (De Onrubia 2013:6).

The transmission and reception of biblical discourses in Africa are yet to be liberated from the European ties, which scholars such as Grosfoguel (2011) and NdlovuGatsheni (2013) identified as the coloniality of power. On the other hand, Mignolo (2008:15) indicated how the coloniality of

power envelops the Global South through four different controls of power, namely:

- The control of the economy based on appropriations of land (and subsequently natural resources) and control of labour, financial control of indebted countries.
- The control of authority based on the creation of imperial institutions during the foundation of the colonies or, more recently, using military strength, forced destitution of presidents of countries to be controlled, the use of technology to spy on civil society, and so on.
- The control of gender and sexuality, with the Christian and bourgeois secular family as a model and standard of human sexual heterosexual relations, and heterosexuality as the universal model established, first, by God (16th to 18th centuries), and then by Nature (from the 19th century to the present).
- The control of knowledge and subjectivity, by assuming the theological foundation of knowledge, after the Renaissance, and the ecological foundation of knowledge, after the Enlightenment, and by forming a concept of the modern and Western subject first dependent on the Christian God, and then on its own sovereigns, reason, and individuality.

All these controls exhibit the coloniality of power and are traceable in the imposition of Western cultures, religions, genders, and sexualities, and in rendering them a hegemonic position and superiority.

1.2.2 Foucault's perspective on discourses of power

Foucault's theory of discourse and his view of power uncover the power dynamics in the transmission and reception of biblical discourses in Africa. Foucault (1978:140) presents the notion of "biopower" as related to the 19th century's repressive hypothesis, which refers to biopolitics and how authorities oppress human life processes by means of power, knowledge, and subjectification. In the same vein, Foucault's view of "biopower" is central to understanding the coloniality of power hidden in the transmission and reception of biblical discourses in Africa.

The kind of power of the Middle Ages, which Foucault calls sovereign power, undergoes two different shifts. The first is disciplinary power exerted upon single bodies through mechanisms of surveillance and normalization, and the second is biological control of life in general through the state's role in protecting life, known as 'biopolitics'. These two forms of power, disciplinary and biopolitics, together

make up the new form of governmentality 'biopower' (De Onrubia 2013:22).

The above citation supports the notion that

in appearance, speech and discourse may well be of little account, but prohibitions surrounding them soon reveal their links with desire and power (Foucault 2000:231).

These prohibitions marking the transmission and reception of biblical discourses in Africa thus reveal the colonial powers behind biblical discourses. Therefore, the prevalence of what Foucault (1978) called "biopower" and what other decolonial scholars such as NdlovuGatsheni (2013) called "coloniality" within Africa stands to be challenged.

This biopower has been exerted since the dawn of the colonial era, by forming a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations that were produced and reproduced in a particular set of practices, whereby meaning is given to physical and social realities (Hajer 1995:44). However, underlying these realities was the biopower that ensured that receptors did not escape the colonial rule.

Accordingly, in his description of the experience of coloniality, Foucault used the verb "subjugate" which implies "to bring under domination or control, especially by conquest" (De Onrubia 2013:31). On the other hand, Mignolo preferred the term "subaltern" rather than subjugation in defining the coloniality experience. Subaltern is associated with exclusion and being of lower status (De Onrubia 2013:31). Although subjugation is fundamentally used in this article, Mignolo's use of "subaltern" has a role in defining the unique experience of coloniality in Africa. Both the notions of "subjugation" and "subaltern" are somewhat traceable in this context, and they were both the products of missionary-colonial interconnectedness.

2. THE MISSIONARY-COLONIAL INTERCONNECTION

Bennet (2011:5) opined that it is important in the discussion about colonialism to first ask what kind of colonialism existed prior to flag independence. She then went further to highlight that British, French, Belgian, and Portuguese colonialism conquered different geographical parts of the African continent (Bennet 2011:5). The terms "coloniality" and "decoloniality" take cognisance of the missionary role in the colonial agenda. Achebe's (1989:84) assertion sums up the kind of coloniality

that used the transmission and reception of biblical discourses for all the wrong reasons:

The missionary who left the comforts of Europe to wander through my primaevial forest was extremely earnest. He had to be he came to change my world. The builders of the Empire who turned me into a 'British protected person' knew the importance of being earnest, they had the quality of mind which imperial Rome before them understood so well: Gravitas. Now it seems to me pretty obvious that if I desire to change the role and identity fashioned for me by those earnest agents of colonialism, I will need to borrow some of their resolves. Certainly, I could not do it through self-indulgent levity.

Saayman (1991:22) concurs with Achebe, noting that "one cannot speak rationally about the mission of the church in Africa without dealing with the consequences of colonialism". The missionary-colonial interconnection was supported by the simultaneous import of Christianity and European cultures to Africa and their representation as superior and only legitimate entities.

In essence, "Christian missions accompanied the colonial expansion and participated with ease in the suppression of other cultures" (Dube 2010:364). Missionaries actively supported the political and cultural conquest of the African people and, in most instances, actively helped the process along (Saayman 1991:32; Bediako 1995:75). This interconnection was also observed by Mudimbe (1998:47) when he opined that

missionaries were also, paradoxically, the best symbol of the colonial enterprise rooted in the expansion of civilization, the dissemination of Christianity, and the advance of progress.

The ambiguous presentations of the gospel message had a strong inseparable bond visible in the ways in which biblical discourses were used to promote subjugation in Africa.

However, Bediako (1995:5) cautioned that

the image of Africa and Africans as inherently inferior to Europe and Europeans that was prevalent in nineteenth-century Europe did not originate with the missionary movement.

Missionaries were the bearers of the European colonisation agenda of Africa. The terms "Africa" and "Africans" need to be brought into perspective, in order to understand this colonisation agenda.

3. AFRICA AND AFRICANS

Although this article is not about presenting an account of “African genesis” (Mudimbe 1988:16), a brief explanation of the usage of the terms “Africa” and “Africans” can suffice in clarifying the geographical angle discussed in this study. This can also help avoid generalisations and misrepresentations of the two terms. Antonio (1997:302) opined that “ideologically, Africa is often defined as one single entity shared by the entire continent”. This has been promulgated by the colonial desire to construct and present Africa as a homogeneous entity (Tamale 2011:1).

However, “Africa” and “Africans” present unique and pluriverse contextual realities. Each African context and African people present different dynamics. This does not suggest that there are no similarities within the African experience. The term “Africa” is used, in this instance, from the premise that Africans, in general, share common experiences and histories. Tamale (2011:1) opined that

any reference to Africa should be used advisedly to highlight common aspects such as cultural ideologies, the ethos of community, solidarity and *ubuntu* (loosely translated as humanness) that are widely shared among most people within the geographical entity baptised as Africa by colonial mapmakers.

To some extent, “*Ubuntu* challenges the individualistic perceptions of Western life” (Kaoma 2018:153). However, it does not entail universalising human lives and experiences. As a continent, Africa shares some common experiences embedded in *Ubuntu*. These experiences also have a bearing on the transmission of biblical discourses in this context which did not take seriously the concept of *Ubuntu*.

4. BIBLICAL DISCOURSES IN AFRICA

The transmission and reception of biblical discourses took a shape like other discourses that, according to Foucault, can be conceived as “violence that we do to things or events through the practices we impose upon them” (Mudimbe 1988:27). Therefore, biblical discourses carried characteristics of violence as they were imposed upon Africans. On the other hand, they also found that the ground was already fertile because of African religiosity. Dube (2010:365) asserts that the colonialists and the missionaries were characterised by cultural collisions, which often placed biblical discourses on the side of the coloniser’s cultures. That also operated as a tool for the subjugation of Africans (Dube 2010:365). In essence, the transmission and reception of biblical discourses carried

colonial nuances. Their reception was mandatory for the receptors. The case of the Tswana-speaking people in South Africa is one indication of these colonial nuances.

Even in rejecting the Christian message of the missionaries, the Tswana-speaking people were required to enter the conversation with missionary messages, and that 'long conversation' itself altered the way the Tswana thought about the self, culture, language, work, land, time, and many other elements of their lives (Dunch 2002:311).

Admittedly, the five features of the language of power, which Eboussi-Boulaga viewed as the anchor of the superiority of Christianity, marked the colonial transmission and reception of biblical discourses in Africa. Mudimbe (1988:51-52) highlighted these features as:

- The language of derision that ridiculed the pagan gods.
- The language of refutation which implied that all pagan religions constitute the black side of white transcendental Christianity.
- The language of demonstration that reflects God's truth by nullifying other gods.
- The rule of Christian orthodoxy that related faith to the knowledge of the only truth.
- The notion that no human enterprise can succeed if the true God is not acknowledged.

These features depict how biblical discourses used the language of power in the subjugation of Africa. These features were applicable in both the transmission and the reception of biblical discourses.

The expansion of civilisation and the dissemination of Christianity took advantage of the power of religious discourses, in particular biblical discourses.

The biblical text for the most part is a foreign text, which is inserted into communities. These communities are asked to give it their allegiance. That is, to take their identity from it and make it the primary source from which to create meaning over against any other sources found within them (Niles 2002:306).

The above citation implies that Africans were forced to receive biblical discourses. They were also expected to discard their ways of life and embrace the Western ones. The missionary and colonial enterprises mainly targeted the significant aspects representing Africanism. For example, aspects such as African cultures, religiosity, genders, and sexualities became the target of the Western subjugation agenda.

5. AFRICAN CULTURES

Culture denotes the collective pattern of living that conveys the norms and values handed down from generation to generation in any society (Steady 2004:55). Foucault's concept of biopower described how the governmentality apparatus groups together and controls a population (Foucault 1978; De Onrubia 2013:22). Early Western missionary theology also took a negative view of African culture. It underestimated it and dismissed it as a scant significance (Bediako 1995:177). In the same vein, Mudimbe (1988:47) opined that all non-Christian cultures had to undergo a process of reduction to, or, in missionary language, regeneration in the norms the missionary represents. Although Mbiti (1989) opined that religion permeates every aspect of Africa, Western colonial constructions and representations continue to underestimate African cultures and religions. Mbembe (2001:3) maintained that "in everyday life and language, coloniality installs its tyrannies that describe the injustice against Africa".

Against this backdrop, Fanon (2000:419) posited that "the colonised is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the coloniser's cultural standards". In the same vein, Mudimbe (1988:47) observed that missionaries did not engage in dialogue with those they regarded as pagans and savages, but their main concern was to impose what they deemed to be the law of God. Therefore, the Bible was presented as a

tabernacle among various cultures, not as an equal partner but rather it entered various cultures and demanded superiority over them (Dube 2010:362).

This narrative marked missionary-colonial rule and its legacies on contemporary African cultures.

The same narrative grouped and presented African cultures in what Kisiang'ani (2004:10) called "the Western myth of Africa". This myth portrays African cultures as backward and sub-human. Africa was further rendered as a dark continent often prejudicially defined as ignorant, superstitious, static, beastly, savage, and unchanged since the stone age (Bediako 1995:6; Kisiang'ani 2004:10-11). The list of binaries representing the perceived superiority of Europe and the inferiority of Africa is endless. Remarkably, these representations further portrayed Africans as *tabula rasa* (clean slates) waiting to be guided from darkness to light by the Westerners. Bediako (1995:194) aptly captured this narrative:

Africans on the other hand were believed to be without literature, arts, science, government, or laws, cannibalistic and barbarous, were reckoned to be savage and barbarous pagans, as destitute of civilisation as they are of true religion.

The above citation attests to the notion that Africans were and are still regarded as devoid of knowledge. Therefore, the Europeans continue to be perceived as the source of Africa's enlightenment. Oyewumi (2004:1) noted that Europe was presented as the source of knowledge and Europeans as knowers. Consequently, Africans were seen to be intrinsically learners. The missionaries promulgated this narrative and actively propagated the ideology of "superior" Western cultural norms as an inherent dimension of Christianisation. Their attempts to Christianise Africa did not fail to have enormous cultural consequences. This ideology was spread easily because the African social, religious, political, and economic system is an integrated whole. The fact is that "any attempt to change one dimension of the system unavoidably influenced all the other dimensions" (Saayman 1991:31). Nevertheless, Mignolo (1993:131) disputed the self-proclaimed Western superiority complex:

The Third World produces not only 'cultures' to be studied by anthropologists and ethnohistorians but also intellectuals who generate theories and are able to reflect on their own culture and history.

The account of the "Africa" international conference held in September 1926 in Tambaram, India, proved Mignolo to be correct because even the missionary movement began to reflect on their learning from the African experience (Bediako 1995:201). This account demonstrates that not only were Africans learners as previously thought, but they were also teachers. This is further indicated by the move made by the modern missionary movement to ensure that Africans make their own responses to the Christian message (Bediako 1995:203). The subjugation agenda also targeted African religions.

6. AFRICAN RELIGIONS

The reference to African religions as "animism" at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 signified how the West construed African religiosity (Bediako 1995:192-193). Admittedly, this perception is still dominant in contemporary Africa. African religion is often discussed and presented primarily as phallicism, and it is associated with something to be feared (Kisiang'ani 2004:15). Biblical discourses were used to drive a

misleading narrative that God did not exist in Africa prior to the invasion by Westerners. Igboin (2022) aptly documented this narrative, arguing that the search for “religion” (*God*) in and of sub-Saharan Africa is not yet over after decades of European colonial and missionary authorities claiming that there was no religion in Africa and later claiming that there was a religion.

This narrative not only misrepresents the religiosity of pre-colonial Africa, it also demonises African religions and spiritualities. It represents the same hierarchy where the West is regarded as the keeper of African religious life. However, Awolalu (1976:3) disputed this narrative when he opined that African religion was and still is

largely written in the people’s myths and folktales, in their songs and dances, in their liturgies and shrines, and in their proverbs and pithy sayings. It is a religion whose historical founder is neither known nor worshipped; it is a religion that has no zeal for membership drive, yet it offers persistent fascination for Africans, young and old.

The above citation demonstrates that African religion was not understood by Africans by way of European terms. Africans express their religiosity in a unique way through every aspect of their daily lives. Kaoma (2018:9) posited that religion is the key to African identity.

The missionary-colonial agenda thrived easily, taking advantage of Africa’s religiosity. Mbiti’s phrase, “Africans were reputed to be ‘notoriously religious’” (Platvoet & Van Rinsum 2003:126) aptly presents the interconnectedness of African religiosity and African daily lives. This was the case even during the pre-colonial era when religion and everyday lives were not separable. Mbiti (1969:3) further asserted that Africans were “immersed in religious participation from birth till after death”. African genders and sexualities were also targets of missionary-colonial subjugation.

7. AFRICAN GENDERS AND SEXUALITIES

The accounts of African genders and sexualities tend to portray Africans as lacking sexual modesty and are keen to guilt-trip them (Epprecht 2008:36). Culture and society created both African genders and sexualities (Tamale 2011:11). Feminists and critical scholars of masculinity have often explained this relationship as something that is intricately linked (Ratele 2011:406). The use of the term “sexualities”, in this instance, is inclusive of the notion of gender identities and expressions. The plural form “sexualities” dispels the bourgeoisies of monogamous and heterosexual

African family myths that are propagated by Christian leaders (Mignolo 2008:15). Furthermore, Foucault asked why sex was so widely discussed and what it is that was said about sex. He asked: What are the effects of power that generated what was said (Posel 2011:130). These questions are critical in understanding the colonial powers entrenched in biblical discourses used against African sexualities.

Kisiang'ani (2004:19) posited that Christian religious texts effectively reinforced the rigid Western conceptions of gender. These texts are applied, in most instances, with the urge to control and police African sexualities (Posel 2011:132); hence, the saying "control African genitals and you control Africa" (Nyanzi 2011:477). Discourses about African sex always carry a negative impression of its existence. It is against this backdrop that sexuality-dominant discourses on African cultures, including biblical discourses, tend to engage with African sexualities in negative terms (Bennet 2011:92). This negativity is central to the colonial myth-making projects (Lewis 2011:210). This myth includes the portrayal of African sexualities as, among others, promiscuous, irresponsible, contagious, libidinous sexuality, uncultured, uncouth, and uncivilised characters that need taming, improving, civilising, modernising, and rescuing (Nyanzi 2011:477).

Manyonganise (2020:53) and Tamale (2011:15-16) maintain that the history of sexuality in Africa is interlinked with the colonial and missionary eras. In seeking to control African genders and sexualities, what Foucault calls "disciplinary power" was exerted upon African bodies through the mechanisms of surveillance and normalisation. African sexualities and bodies were and still are policed and regarded as abnormal.

Part of colonial assumptions about African sexuality involved defining Africans as 'natural beings', whose instincts, were felt, was entirely different from the sophisticated desires of Westerners (Lewis 2011:207).

This was done to ensure that African bodies, genders, and sexualities remain under the control of the colonial powers.

Admittedly, Christianity and the Bible continue to be used as imperial and colonial vehicles to convert, civilise, and colonise Blacks in South Africa and Africa (Motoage & Mavhandu-Mudzusi 2021:2). Biblical discourses in Africa play a role to sexual repression (Foucault 1976). This repression also represented the coloniality of power and biopower, where Eurocentric Christian views of gender and sexuality took a superior position over those of African origin. African sex is thus portrayed as taboo and something to

be treated with secrecy. Foucault (1976:4) opined that Western discourses present sex as if it did not exist and had no right to exist. Any deviation from the Eurocentric hegemonic sexual norms was and still is punishable. There is indisputably a dire need to transform this narrative.

8. SHIFTING CHRISTIAN'S CENTRE OF POWER

A clarion call is made for a shift of Christian's centre of power. This call is endorsed by decoloniality and can change the current narrative. The power dynamics between Westerners and Africans needs to be decolonised in every way possible. Decoloniality should be applied in this context, as Grosfoguel (2011:1) opined:

Decoloniality seeks to dismantle relations of power and conceptions of knowledge that foment the reproduction of racial, gender, and geopolitical hierarchies that came into being or found new and more powerful forms of expression in the modern/colonial world.

The above citation implies that the historic transmission and reception of biblical discourses and their contemporary manifestations need to be decolonised. Bediako (1995:182) asserts that what is needed is an understanding of power that secures its source beyond the reach of human manipulation and transforms the exercise of power from rule into service. This will constitute joining Foucault in the challenge of "biopower" (Foucault 1978). In addition, it will also mean moving further to define a new power to govern the transmission and reception of biblical discourses. This new power can be called the "African people's power".

The notion of the "African people's power" implies that ordinary African people govern their own lives (Esteva 1999:154). This has been aptly captured by Borda (1985:94):

People's power may be defined as the capacity of the grassroots groups which are exploited socially and economically to articulate and systematize knowledge (both their own and that which comes from outside) in such a way that they can become protagonists in the advancement of their society and in defence of their own class and group interests.

Against this backdrop, it can be concluded that African people's power seeks to dismantle the superior positions previously occupied by European oppressive structures in both church and society. It then gives Africans the power to articulate their own challenges and solutions. This is a kind of power that is entrenched in the African ethic of *ubuntu*. It is anchored

on the adage “I am because you are”, implying that “individuals consider themselves integral parts of the whole community” (Metz 2007:539). It is the African people’s power and *Ubuntu* rather than the Eurocentric obligation of imposing God’s law that becomes the point of departure in defining the new Christianity’s centre of power.

Bediako (1995:3) asserted that the shift in Christianity’s centre of gravity (power) from the Northern continents to the South has already manifested. Africans now need to take destiny into their hands and occupy the central position of Christianity. This can afford Africans opportunities to read, define, and interpret the Bible for themselves, using their own African frame of reference. This will again mean that any absolutisation of the pattern of Christianity’s transmission should consequently be avoided (Bediako 1995:163). This shift can happen if our methods of reading biblical texts among various intercultural biblical interpretations of cultures should always seek to encourage the liberating interdependence of cultures and the affirmation of the earth community (Dube 2010:363).

However, shifting the centre of Christianity’s power will not be easy. The drivers of the legacies of Western subjugation cannot let go without a fight, since the colonisers did not colonise with playfulness but with a political spirit called a warlike “willpower” (Nietzsche 1968). Africans must stand up for themselves, dismantle, disown, disturb, and disregard every discourse supporting and perpetuating their subjugation. This does not mean that nothing good was brought by Western Christianity to Africa. On the contrary, the good elements should be embraced, while the oppressive and subjugation need to be opposed.

To begin with, Africans need to engage in, what Borda (1985:96) calls, “the participatory theory”. This means engaging in the participatory mode to break up voluntarily and through experience the asymmetrical relationship of submission and dependence implicit in the subject and object binomials (Borda 1985:96).

In the same vein, Freire (1993:1) posited the following:

This is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors who oppress, exploit, and rape by virtue of their power; cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. The only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both.

Therefore, there should be the willingness to break the force of gravity that uses biblical discourses to pull Africa and Africans to the margins.

9. CONCLUSION

Although the colonial era has been declared something of the past, coloniality still manifests in different parts of the global village. The narrative is the same for Africa which is still suffering from the legacies of the past. In this context, the transmission and reception of biblical discourses still serve as modalities of the colonial agenda. The various aspects of Africa, as receptors of colonial rule, continue to be targeted by messages inspired by missionary-colonial interconnections. Western cultures, religions, gender, and sexuality are still perceived as superior to their African counterparts. Africa is still regarded as a dark continent that needs to be guided by Westerners. Africans, on the other hand, are thought to be savages, uncultured, barbaric, and uncivilised. Their religion is thought to be backward and pagan, while African gender and sexualities are viewed as unbridled and promiscuous. The decolonial motif supported by Foucault's perspective on discourses and power was used as a viable instrument in addressing this phenomenon.

This article presented a clarion call for shifting Christianity's centre of gravity from the Northern continents to the South. There is a need to decolonise the narrative, in order to seek an understanding of power that secures its source beyond the reach of human manipulation and transforms the exercise of power from rule into service. This will constitute joining Foucault in the challenge of "biopower" to define a new power called the "African people's power". This power implies that ordinary people govern their own lives. This will also give Africans the power to articulate their own challenges and solutions, based on the African ethic of *Ubuntu*. This move will not be easy. Africans need to engage in the participatory mode. This means breaking up voluntarily and through experience the asymmetrical relationship of submission and dependence. It will also call for their willingness to break the force of gravity that used biblical discourses to pull them to the margins.

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