

LOOKING BACK AND FORWARD: POSTCOLONIALISM, GLOBALIZATION, GOD AND GENDER

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Abstract

The first part of the paper will spend much of its introductory energies on globalization. The rest of the paper will then explore in broad outlines how globalization is related to postcolonialism, gender and religion. My approach, as the title suggests, is through "looking back in order to look forward", which basically means I will briefly assess some of my published works and their position towards globalization.

Key words: Gender, Globalization, Postcolonialism, Religion

Introduction

Globalization is a buzzword in today's world. It is constantly said that we are living in the global village. Judging by the many ringing bells, it seems it is a new era. Yet some argue that it is an ear that has been creeping in for many decades (Lind 1995:31). Others argue that it has been creeping in for centuries (Fall 2000:76-77 & Robertson 2000:53). We also hear many conflicting debates: Some say globalization is the miracle economic era, a blessing. Some say globalization is an inhuman exploitative global structure – a curse (Tulloch 2000:100). Whatever way, globalization is upon us: It has become an important intertext of our lives – shaping our economic, cultural, political and social texts. As Max L Stackhouse points out:

The process that we are all aware of is that globalization seems to be creating the conditions for a new super-ethos, a worldwide set of operating values and norms that will influence most, if not all people, cultures and societies. It is quite possible that most contexts in which humans now live, and their roots in particular sets of values and norms, will be modified by a new comprehending context that owes its allegiance to no particular society, local ethos, or political order, even if it is advanced by Western influences (2000:19).¹

Religion as a social and cultural product is certainly under and overwritten by globalization narrative. It is therefore, important for religious studies to have an understanding of globalization and how to do its academic discourse in the context of globalization. In this paper I will explore the relationship between postcolonialism, globalization, God/religion and gender. This can only be a general discussion given that each of these topics is a very wide field. My work is primarily on postcolonial and gender interpretation of the Bible (see the bibliography). The first part of the paper will spend much of its introductory energies on

¹ Although I open with this quote, I believe it is important not to fall into the trap of mystifying globalization as a power without a source of origin and direction. I am also not for the stance that holds that globalization benefits all members of the world equally, since evidence suggests otherwise.

globalization. The rest of the paper will then explore in broad strokes how globalization is related to postcolonialism, gender and religion. My approach, as the title suggests, is through “looking back in order to look forward”, which basically means I will briefly assess some of my published works and their position towards globalization. The paper will tackle its subject in the following order:

- What is globalization?
- God: Globalization and Religion
- Postcolonization: Globalization in my work
- Resisting globalization
- Articulating Oppositional Biblical Readings in the Global Era
- Gender: Women and Men in the Global Village
- The Way Forward.

What is Globalization?

Different researchers have given their definitions on globalization. I will outline four definitions of globalization and then analyse some common threads. According to Christoph Lind, globalization is a “process which has led to the creation of a single, international (global) financial or capital market. It happened in stages over the last twenty or thirty years and its effects are nothing short of revolutionary” (1995:31). Peter Tulloch describes globalization as “the absorption of all countries and systems into one ... a larger increase in the volume, speed and complexity of financial and direct investment flows and a multiplication of financial markets, again involving greater integration of developing countries...” (1998:101). For Roland Robertson, globalization “may be defined simply as the compression of the world. This notion compression refers both to increasing sociocultural density and to rapidly expanding consciousness. Globalization itself has been a long term process extending over many centuries, although only in recent centuries has it, with increasing rapidity, assumed a particular discernible form” (2000:53–54). According to Yassine Fall, globalization:

refers to trade as well as financial capital, their global mobility, their speed of growth and their volume. Globalization also implies the weakening of national and regional policies as well as the increasing role played by technological innovations and value added information. Globalization refers as well to knowledge generation and accumulation, and above all to a central drive for the conquest of markets and a greater commodification of a greater variety of products and services. Finally globalization also implies cultural imperialism and the homogenization of US pop culture and the English language as universal mileposts for cultural exchange (1000:76–77).

The EATWOT-Asian Theological Conference gave one of the most critical definitions of globalization, holding that it is “The third stage of colonialism that appeared under the label of globalization,” and that it “is more hegemonic: Market was introduced as an exclusive agency for individual and social mediation ... and money with capital M is promoted as the storehouse of value, rather than a medium of exchange ... Market now has control over social, economic, political and cultural relationships of people” (2000:218).

Analysis of the Definitions and Key Features of Globalization

Some of the phrases that reappear amongst these different writers are ‘creation of global market... // ‘the absorption of all ... into one’ // ‘the weakening of national, regional or state...’ // ‘compression of the world’. Words that characterize globalization are ‘market, speed’, ‘greater volume,’ ‘information,’ ‘finance,’ and ‘commodification...’ These words give us a picture of this global village economy.

Nonetheless, when globalization is defined as the creation of a single market economy, an integration of all into one, we need to ask questions that will assist us to judge the ethics and impact of globalization. Some of the questions that need to be posed are: Who is creating the global village? Who is absorbing all into one? Who is compressing the world and weakening the nation state? How is globalization carried out and at what price? Why? Whose interests are served in globalization? Answering the latter question, Mohau Pheko holds that:

labour in transnational companies (TNC’s) home countries was becoming more expensive. The search for more profits became the search for cheap labour. This gave rise to the strategy of export-oriented production in developing countries where labour costs lower than in the USA or Europe. Production was to take place in the developing world ... and then exported to the USA and Europe (2000:90).

Mohau explains that the search for access to all countries logically led to the promotion of “trade liberalization”, that is, policies “which would allow goods and services and money to move easily across the borders” (90). These policies have led many governments in Two Thirds World to seek to ‘attract foreign investors’ to come and do business in their countries, to create jobs for them – so it said. Globalization has also led to what is often referred to as deregulation and privatization. Mohau explains that deregulation is the move to “reduce the state role as a producer and provider of services and promoter of social welfare”, while privatization refers to “the selling of state assets to the private sector and the withdrawal of the state ... to allow the private sector to take over these areas” (92).

Clearly, the above descriptions highlight that globalization is about “maximization of profits” by companies from developed countries, TNCs. It was from its beginning a search for profits that has led to the breaking down of national boundaries, the weakening of state, privatization, deregulation and trade liberalization. What do people of Africa and Two Thirds World² gain? Have they had a say in what and how globalization should be carried out? The above definitions suggest otherwise. In Botswana, government proponents hold that privatization will create high productivity and that the TNCs come to create jobs for Botswana. But, clearly most Two Thirds World governments are not the architects of globalization. They do not define its terms although they have to respond by preparing a room for globalization to tabernacle in their countries. Second, the above definitions indicate that TNC and their goals of creating global economy are neither as charitable nor justice-seeking as they are sometimes made to appear. TNC’s main goal is to maximize profit, and for this, they leave the First World countries and come into Two Thirds World countries to pursue profit vigorously. According to Christopher Lind, a Canadian researcher, in the First World, TNCs “demand that unions ‘roll back’ their wages and benefits or they will move their plants to ... Mexico” (1995:40) and in developing countries the “jobs created by

² In this paper I will use the term Two Thirds World instead of Third World, save where the latter is a quote. My preference disputes the latter for suggesting numeric inferiority, when it is in fact the other way round. The misleading designation is an ideology that continues to sanction the superiority of the Western World, even where it does not exist.

TNCs are low skilled, badly paid and unprotected by labour and health regulations” (Pheko 2000:93). In short, what and who is served is the TNC’s search for maximization of profit.

Unfortunately, deregulation and privatization mean that the average person in Two Thirds World, who already live under scarce social resources, lose many other benefits as their own business cannot compete with the massive TNCs. Secondly, they lose their social welfare benefits as their nations and governments succumb to the demands of globalization policies of deregulation and privatization. It also means that while companies from the developed countries can take their business to developing nations where labour will be cheaper, the same is hardly applicable to most developing countries and Africa. It is hardly profitable for most members of the developing nations to move and settle their business in developed nations, for they cannot afford labour there – nor can they afford to make huge profits through exploiting First World labour, by offering services that are “low skilled, badly paid and unprotected by labor and health regulations,” as TNCs do in the Two Thirds World. The question, however, is with the weakening of the state through privatization, who provides social welfare services such as health, education, social security and water services if all are increasingly privatized in developing nations, especially when the TNCs are offering low paid jobs? Could we say globalization creates a more just society and allows all members of the society to have access to resources? I believe it is not difficult for us to answer No. Indeed, Christopher Lind argues that with globalization ethic of competition, indifference and domination, we are no longer asking “what is the most economically efficient means of establishing a just society,” rather “we are now asking *how much social injustice are we prepared to tolerate* to establish an efficient economy” (1995:40, emphasis mine). In short, globalization is inherently unjust as the above definition of the EATWOT – Asian Theological Conference has underlined. In the age of globalization, the conference underlined, “Market now has control over social, economic, political and cultural relationships of people” (2000:218).

Obviously, many Two Thirds World countries are more likely to experience themselves being invaded by foreign TNCs and their standards of life, their values, their cultures, economies and their religions downgraded. Moreover, the so-called opening of boundaries is, so far, a one-way traffic. While huge profits can be demonstrated for those who reap the main benefits of globalization, bitterness is unavoidable from those who experience themselves as invaded and disempowered by the powerful and foreign forces of globalization. Resistance is bound to rise as social degradation begins to preface the lives of most people (Maggay 1988:111–117). The question we can ask here, is how is globalisation related to religion, or evoke religious response? How can globalization be interpreted from religious perspectives?

God: Religion and Globalization

Globalization does not only take forms of TNCs and the information super highway, but also religious form. Religions participate in globalization both as forces of collaboration and of resistance. And if we agree that globalization is a process that can be traced to modern colonialism, we cannot exonerate Christian churches from actively participating in suppressing diversity and assisting forces of universalizing the world (Dube 1000:4–21 & Stackhouse 2000:17). Many Western founded churches that did mission overseas were in fact forerunners of chain TNCs for they never changed their names. And so we find Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists, all over the world (Dube Shomana 1998:442 & 449). Today religion’s role in globalizing the world is attested by the American televised evangelized ministries that are supplanting and spon-

soring their reproductions throughout the Two Thirds World countries. Christian religious institutions therefore cannot be exempted from the process of globalization.

Religion's resistance to globalization is also inevitable, for globalization entails cultural imperialism – through selling the religions and cultures of globalizing powers. If we go with globalization as a process that began with modern imperialism, religious resistance in the African continent was characterized by the formation of African Independent Churches (Dube 1995:111–114). Those who are on the receiving end of current globalization feel invaded by powerful controllers of the media – from the computer, CNN, BBC, TV, Hollywood film maker to print media, the globalizing centres have powerful means of selling their ideas, thus successfully competing and devaluing local/national values (Said 1993:332–325). Religious resistance to this invasion is either expressed in a form of holding tight to their own cultures (nativism) or a way of seeking security to politically, economically and cultural conditions that globalization ushers. Consequently Edward Said argues that:

There has been disturbing eruption of separatist and chauvinist discourse, whether in India, Lebanon or Yugoslavia, or Afrocentric, Islamocentric, Eurocentric proclamations. Far from invalidating the struggle to be free from the empire, these reductions of cultural discourse actually prove the validity of a fundamental liberationist energy that animates the wish to be independent, to speak freely without burden and unfair domination. The only way to understand this energy, however, is historically (1993:xxi).

Globalization also creates religious competition for converts, amongst organized religions. As the West and its globalization process are seen to be selling their religions aggressively across the borders, sponsoring Christian ministries, and so do Islamic centres allegedly sponsor the same. Since 9/11 the Islamic fundamentalist forces of resistance against westernization have grown to open and vicious battles, in what George Bush has popularized as the “war against terror”, and what he has marked as the axis of evil.

However, the selling of American Christian fundamentalism is received by some. Young people, in particular, align themselves with the glamour of American church ministries, which preach the gospel of prosperity. This, of course, tallies with other images (computer, Hollywood movies, CNN, magazines, etc.) that sell American life as the very best. Consequently, the sprouting of many American Christian ministries, whose pastors live lives of Hollywood stars, preach in American accent and style, tend to pull a huge following of young people. They pull from a population which already has access to TV, movies and computer, those who are well-fed with images of globalization. Similarly, the Islamic religion offers a good counterpart, where it also carries the image of economic security and traditional values of social and cultural control, especially over women. Those who feel their values invaded by the western globalization can find stability in Islam. The attraction to both religions highlights globalization in action.

Given that globalization is an unavoidable intertext of our lives and given its largely negative impact of economic/social/political aspects of Two Thirds World, how have I dealt with globalizaiton in my work, especially in relation to my postcolonial analysis?

Postcolonialism: Globalization in My Work

In looking over my publications, I find that the word globalization frequently appears as a close associate of imperialism. In my article, “Reading for decolonization John 4:1–42” where I begin by arguing that imperialism of various forms has been a persistent force through many centuries, from the Babylonian times to modern times, I also hold that

“Many of the formerly colonized nations are undergoing new forms of imperialism: Neo-colonialism, or globalization (40). I go on to say. “The latest forms of imperialism are evident in ecological control, military muscle, universal media and economic domination by the former and new imperialist powers” (40). In comparing globalization with earlier forms of colonization, I point out that “globalization largely excludes geographical occupation, or colonization proper, and to some extent it excludes governments as transnational corporations take the lead. The dominated countries in globalization seemingly retain their own political leadership and appear to be in control” (40).

In my book, *Postcolonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible*, my focus on globalization appears very early, in the definition of terms. First, I hold that “the term postcolonial as used here describes the panorama of modern imperialism beginning with the process of colonization, the struggle for political independence, and the emergence of new-colonial and globalization era” (2000:4). Secondly, I hold that “postcolonial subjects describe a people whose perception of each other and of economic, political and cultural relationships cannot be separated from the global impact and constructions of Western/modern imperialism, which still remains potent in forms of neo-colonialism, military arrogance and globalization” (16). Since one of my main goals in the book is to highlight the role of texts in imperial domination, I thus argue that the age of “globalization’s interconnection with texts is attested by the age of the information super highway, which is really a flow of information from the former colonial metropolitan centres to the whole world” (48–49). I describe globalization, as the “latest mutation” of imperialism. I also see globalization as an attesting to my claim that “imperialism [is] a central reality in the making of global relations affecting men and women, privileging some and oppressing others and finding ways to repeatedly justify and maintain itself across the globe” (40; see also p. 118).

In short, in most of my works, I find a close, and perhaps direct connection, of globalization with the postcolonial condition of our existence. If we understand postcolonialism as a study of international relations; of how ideology of domination, collaboration and resistance are expounded and enacted between nations, the globalization finds its place very well in this framework. If we understand postcolonialism as underlining the fact that relationships of domination and subordination that were created in modern imperialism, did not end when geographical and independence was won, then globalization is a ‘mutation’, a new form of an old problem. Indeed, if we regard modern colonialism and other forms of imperialism as the search for markets and for profit making, by extending one’s influence beyond their national borders, then the relation of globalization is evident. This indeed can be established by posing the question:

- Who is globalizing and how are they doing it?
- Who is getting globalized and how are they affected?
- Can we say all members of the earth community are equal actors and equal beneficiaries of the globalizing process?
- Is there a relationship between those who are globalizing and those who are being globalized as a relationship of the former colonizer and the colonized, respectively?

I would insist that we are not equal actors in globalization. We are not equal beneficiaries. Indeed, I do not think it is far-fetched to argue that those who are globalizing (USA, Japan and Europe) consist largely of former colonizers and those who are getting globalized consist largely of the former colonized (Two Thirds World).

Of course, we hear a lot of positive things about globalization and concrete evidence is produced. From the Two Thirds World, particularly in my country, when the globalization is sold to us, we hear that:

- TNCs are coming to create jobs for us, and we must adjust our economic policies to create a friendly environment for globalization – or we shall forever be left by the space shuttle of the global village;
- privatization will boost our economies by improving competitiveness among workers;
- it opens the market wide and gives limitless opportunities of making profit.

True. Globalization was designed for the maximization of profit. Those who support globalization can therefore show us impressive results on the wonders of this miracle era (Tolluch 1998:100–103). Yet these statements mask the ugly face of globalization – namely that globalization is not, first and foremost, about improving social lives of individuals or nations of the world as a whole. It is not about consolidation for social justice. Rather, it is first and foremost about the maximization of profit – the drive for market conquest. Globalization is not charitable or a just-seeking socio-economic system that seeks to create equal access to resources for all people, everywhere. Yes, indeed, it seeks to open the markets, for all, but such a statement masks the fact that it is those who are in power who will enjoy and have access to such a global economic village. As Garba & Garba correctly point out, “the enduring lesson of the last fifty years of global trading experience is that the gains of trade are distributed in favour of countries that possess both comparative and strategic advantage in trade, technology political institutions and military might” (2000:38).

Moreover, the claim that globalization is creating a global village, where movements of goods, ideas and people are much easier, and where national identities and boundaries are disappearing, hardly addresses the fact that many First World countries are policing their boundaries ever so tightly regarding who can come in and out. Stringent visa requirements are commonplace. Close interrogation of visitors whose colours are slightly dark and their noses a bit flat in airports are so common, as First World countries guard against the invasion by the Two Thirds World countries.

Meanwhile, we in the Two Thirds World, at least in my country (and Africa), are working on the liberalization of our trade policies, to create global village friendly environments: To attract TNCs to come and do business in our lands. What this means is that we are opening up the access for globalizing forces to enter and operate in our countries – but we cannot say we have reached that point where we feel like the globe is our village to walk around and benefit from ever so easily. We do not feel that the globe is accessible to us. This spells out that the global village is not a playing field where all players experience fair play. There are some who are globalizing and others who are being globalized: Those who act and those are acted upon.

And as for the argument that TNCs create jobs in Two Thirds World countries – hardly tells the whole story, if at all. It hides, for example that these jobs are hardly for the good of Two Thirds World people, but for the TNCs themselves. If TNCs come to create jobs, it is not because they want to offer quality jobs that are people-centered, rather they seek to maximize their profits, by coming to the Two Thirds World where labour is supposedly cheap – they in fact exploit their labour. If modern colonialism was a search for markets, to sell industrial goods and to buy cheap raw material, the trends are hardly different in globalization. It is still about market and goods. Thus research indicates that “jobs created by TNCs are low skilled, badly paid and unprotected by labour and regulations” (Pheko

2000:93). The same TNCs in the First world “demand that unions roll back their wages and benefits or they will move to Mexico” (that is to Two Thirds World) (Lind 1995:40).

Furthermore, the claim that TNCs create jobs in Two Thirds World countries, masks the fact that with privatization paving the way for globalization, national social welfare services are bought by private companies from outside. These companies indeed provide services, but first and foremost their aim is to make profit. The services that they provide may not be affordable to the ordinary members of the society, who have to cut down or live according to low standards. The inhabitants of Two Thirds World countries at least in Africa, do not only experience bad social services, they also experience themselves as now being controlled and owned by foreign companies who come in to buy government services that are now getting privatized. Lastly, the claim that globalization will create jobs, often masks the fact that when TNCs come they also have the effect of outrunning the local business – thus colonizing economy of Two Thirds World countries. It is on these grounds that in one of my works I speak of globalization in the following terms:

Mama Africa made her last bet – taking the prescriptions of Dr Global Village. Mama Africa also saw with her eyes the arrival of chain stores and companies in her land. Suddenly there was Coca Cola and Pepsi, Kentucky Fried Chicken, MacDonald’s, Wimpy, Hyundai, CNN. The colors were the same everywhere. They bought the touch of sophistication. When the multinational companies came, bringing jobs for Africa, the local companies were bought out. Mama Africa and all her people began to work for the big multinational companies. But soon after high-tech machines rolled in, replacing her children. They were retrenched, asked to go home ... That is when Mama Africa realized that Dr Global Village was a twin brother of new-colonialism and a grandson of Dr Colonial Master (Dube Shomanah 1999:16).

The positive songs about globalization, therefore, are an important ideology for its own perpetuation that serves to mask its ethic of domination, competition, violence and indifference. The narrative of “globalization is good for us” should, therefore, be seen for what it is – an ideology of domination of sanctifying the violence of globalization.

Resisting Globalization

Indeed, globalization evokes resistance – from First World inhabitants who are losing jobs to Third World countries and from the latter who experience themselves invaded by powerful external forces. First World resistance movements are, perhaps, the most visible, in the massive and undaunted demonstrations staged in the WTO summits. Resistance is also evident in manufactured computer viruses that target the computer world. Resistance is evident in letter bombs, sent by those who resist technological development. Globalization is also resisted by the green movement, which feels that market driven economy is not environmentally friendly. Many First World inhabitants also fear that they are being invaded by people from Two Thirds World who come to take their jobs. They almost feel that it is the dream of every Two Third person to move to their countries. They also see Two Thirds World people as bringing disease, theft, strange values, and terrorism to their safe havens. This fear and resistance to unlimited movement is evident at government level where stringent visa requirements and interrogations of people of colour in airports and border crossing is daily bread. Insecurity and resistance therefore is evident even amongst First World countries, who are the architects of globalization.

Similarly, Two Thirds World inhabitants are putting up some forms of resistance even as their governments may very well be working on deregulation and privatization. For ex-

ample, only a month ago South Africans took to the streets demonstrating against privatization, which was giving away their water services to the forces of globalization.

In short, religious resistance to globalization is, therefore, just one response among a host of many little acts of resistance, both in the First and the Two Thirds World contexts. What kind of resistance towards inhuman globalization has advanced in my work and on what basis?

Articulating Liberational Biblical Interpretation in the Globalization Era

As a biblical scholar, I must say, there is part of me that finds the concept of the global village consistent with God's will. This is because when we talk about globalization as the creation of a single market economy, an integration of all into one, I find that God has created the earth, the globe, as one. I find that God created all things as interdependent and when we go back to the creation story, we find that God did not create boundaries, God did not create nations and that God gave both Eve and Adam (all people) access to all the resources of the earth (Gen 1:27–31).

What moves me to resist is when I pose the following questions:

- Does globalization keep the earth and everything in it sacred to God?
- Does it ensure that all members of the human community have access to the resources of the earth and are they enabled to build just societies and to live dignified lives?
- Does it recognize and celebrate diversity as God's mark of creation?
- What are the ethics of globalization: Are they godly?
- Who owns this global village – is it God's village or TNCs village?
- Are all members of the earth community equal actors in globalization – or do we have some globalizing and others being globalized?
- Does Africa (and other Two Thirds World) possess adequate infrastructure to enter the global economy successfully?

My answers to these questions and what I find in research have put me on the resistant side of globalization, in spite of the fact that I have come across documented evidence on the benefits of globalization. For me, therefore, it is the ethics, assumptions and impact of globalization that put me on the oppositional side and that have impelled me to argue that liberational biblical scholars ought to propound hermeneutics of resistance against globalization forces, and perhaps also seek to articulate globalization that is godly and just. The following will illustrate my oppositional stance towards globalization:

- "Praying the Lord's Prayer in the Global Economic Era"
- "Villagising, Globalizing and Biblical Studies"³

I will now briefly summarize the contents and arguments of each of these papers.

"*Praying the Lord's Prayer in the Global Economic Era*" was a paper that I wrote for the Ecumenical Review journal issue that was preparing for the fifth eighth assembly of the World Council of Churches, which was held in Harare, 1998. As African theologians, we

³ My other papers that focus on globalization in relation to environment and social justice; in relation to the girl-child and HIV/AIDS, see, 2002 *Inhabiting God's Garden: Are We in the Global Village or God's Garden?* *Ministerial Formation* 96:31–37 and *Talitha Cumi! Calling the Girl-Child and Women to Life in the HIV/AIDS and Globalization Era*, 71–93. In Isabel A Phiri et al. 2004. *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

were asked to contribute to an issue that would prepare the church for the Assembly. My audience here, therefore, was the church and Christians in general. I chose to focus on globalization, arguing that it is “incumbent on Christians:

- a. to confront squarely the reality of globalization,
- b. to educate themselves on its mechanisms and ethic,
- c. to place themselves within the parameters of active globalization,
- d. and to ask if the Christian faith offers us an alternative vision” (1998:442).

I thus examined the Lord’s Prayer to “consider whether the vision proposed there may offer us an alternative to confront the ethical challenges of living in a global economic era and amongst corrupt and exploitative governments” (443). My exegesis of the Lord’s prayer was obviously underlined by the intertext of globalization. I argue that the first three petitions of the Lord’s prayer, where we evoke our heavenly Parent, “Our Father”, where we say that God’s name should be sanctified: “Hallowed by your name”; and where we say that “God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” we in fact close the gap between heaven and earth and pray that God’s justice and will should prevail on earth as it is in heaven. I hold that “to pray the Lord’s Prayer is, therefore, to pledge responsibility for being active partners in building the kingdom of God on earth, for building healthy interpersonal and international relations on earth” (445). If we seek God’s will to be realized on earth as it is in heaven, I argue that as Christians we cannot help but stand in opposition to globalization, for it does not seek to keep God’s earth and its members sacred to God.

Turning to the three petitions of the Lord’s prayer, namely: “Forgive us our debts as we forgive others; lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil”, I see the forgiveness of debts as a challenge to the international economical systems that have landed many Two Third Worlds countries in huge debts and as a call for the jubilee – a godly policy of political, economic and social relations, that recognizes that first and foremost, “the earth and everything in it belongs to the Lord,” and that God purposed it that all should have equal access to these resources. I argue that as a church we have ignored the will of our Parent to build the kingdom of God and earth by becoming “silent supporters of exploitative ethics of international markets and corrupt local governments. This”, I hold, “is the fall into temptation, to be led into evil hence the need for deliverance” (448). Praying for deliverance, I insist:

implies willingness to take a position as partners with God, for ourselves and for one another. We will be delivered when we repent form our complacency about oppressive national and international structures, when we seek to build God’s kingdom on earth by hallowing God’s creation at large (449).

I conclude this essay by saying praying the Lord’s Prayer in the global economic era has implications on how the church will carry its mission to the world. Whereas the church of modern colonialism worked hand in glove with the colonizing forces of their countries, I call upon the church of this age to stand in opposition to the globalizing forces of their countries and their corrupt governments. I argue that, as a church, perhaps, we have dwelt too much on the mission that was carried by the disciples of Jesus, “going to the nations” and neglected the mission that was carried by our Lord Jesus, namely a mission to ones’ own nation – which is a demanding, dangerous and deadly mission, for “a prophet has no honour in their own home” – hence Jesus died within a year of evangelizing his own people. The challenge for Christian churches today, however, is to carry out this mission of speaking to the powers that be in their own home countries, to find the TNCs and uplift the

gospel of Jesus Christ as nothing less than “building the Kingdom of heaven on earth as in heaven”. I, therefore, hold:

For Christian communities, nations, institutions and individuals to pray the Lord’s prayer and ask for deliverance from evil in this global age entails repentance accompanied by action, a willingness to hear the Lord’s Prayer and to recapture the implications of praying it. To say “your kingdom come,” to say “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” is to become responsible partners, guardians of justice, active daughters and sons in the establishment of God’s rule in the world (450).

In my second essay, “Villagising, Globalizing and Biblical Studies,” my audience was the academy. I wrote this paper as a response to the opening address to a Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) International meeting held in Cape Town in July 2000. I focused on the theme of globalization for two reasons: First, the opening address by my colleague Justin Ukpong had focused on it. Second, SBL has started a series called “*Reading the Bible in Global Contexts*” – which features papers drawn from their international meetings. Both my paper and Ukpong’s will feature in this series.

To start with Ukpong’s opening address – his paper traced globalization from colonial movements, linked it with structural adjustments regimes of IMF and the age of information super highway of computers. Ukpong also problematized globalization, holding that “in a situation where weak economies of the Third World that need protection and strengthening are integrated into the strong economies of the West without regard for the former’s needs, one cannot expect to find a true global situations, for in such a situation, *integration means subjugation*” (2002:46, emphasis mine).

In my response, I say thus:

If we agree with Ukpong’s assertion that globalization is a continuation of colonization, then we must ask about the past and present in our quest to do biblical studies in the global village. We must ask what we understand by “the global village” and the role we want to play in this “new map” of the world. We must also ask about the power positions that we wish to occupy and advance (Dube 2002:47).

Focusing on the new series of *Reading the Bible in Global Contexts*, I ask:

What does SBL wish to achieve by embarking on a project of *Reading the Bible in the Global Village*? What position does SBL and its practitioners wish to assume given the unequal, oppressive and exploitative international relations of our ‘global village?’ ... For my part I will assume the ‘best intentions;’ namely, that SBL’s call to read the Bible in the ‘global village’ seeks to highlight diversity on the globe and the need to read as decolonizing subjects, who do not wish to suppress differences. I assume that SBL, and its various members, want to promote many reading methods; human rights, cultural diversity, justice and liberation in its work. If this is a correct interpretation, the problem is: Does the framework of global village in itself help SBL and its members to achieve their goals, or does it inadvertently counteract their good intentions? (47–48).

Having posed these questions to the SBL guild, I hold that to agree with Ukpong’s view of globalization as an extension or as a new mutation of colonialism requires that biblical scholars should assume a certain position towards ‘the global village’ international framework in their work. I therefore propose that in their reading practices, biblical scholars must constantly ask themselves:

1. Who is globalizing in our biblical reading?
2. Who is being globalized?

3. Who owns the village that we are globalizing?
4. What are the inhabitants of the village saying about being globalized?
5. What if I were to read from and with those in the village?
6. Which global morals can assist a biblical reader to counteract the beastly side of globalization?

How can we occupy a position of vigilance and resistance against globalization?

8. What about the village ethics, can we read from the position of the village for better results than the globe, or should we be combining both?
9. If they are rejecting, revolutionizing, reforming or collaborating with globalization? (48)

I close my response by introduction of a concept of villagizing, drawn from the word village. This would be a concept that insists on a globalizing process which seeks to hear the voices of those who are on the receiving end of globalization – those who are being globalized. Here I argue that as long as we have the concept of globalization, but we do not have the concept of villagizing – the model itself points to a process where the powerful “the globes” are swallowing the powerless, “the village”. But to create a liberating globalization, we need a forum that hears both and works for the good of both and all. I also identify the forum of the United Nations (despite its western centres) as one form of a positive globalization, for issues of the world are discussed with all members participating, and with a sincere attempt to build a just world for all the members of the earth community. Moreover, each member country is given the liberty to take whatever is resolved in the UN and implement it in their countries for the good of their own citizens.

Gender: Women and Men in the Global Village

What is the relationship between globalization, religious resistance and gender? Does religious resistance to globalization empower or dis-empower women and men? Do globalization, religion and resistance affect women and men of the First and Two Thirds Worlds in the same manner? What are the other factors that align themselves with gender issues in globalization? How does gender function when religion functions as a globalizing agent? Obviously this is a huge question that requires a lot more research, for any meaningful discussion, than this paper offers.

In the volume edited by Yassine Fall: *Africa: Gender, Globalization and Resistance* some of these questions are addressed although without focus on the religious link. Fall is pessimistic, as she holds that “globalization as the highest stage of imperialism cannot target gender equality as an objective” (2000:86). In their contribution to the same volume, Garba and Garba hold that:

Trade liberation can and has affected women and men in the same ways but more often in very different ways. One thing it has not done is close the gender, class and international gaps. If anything the gap between men and women has simply widened as the global economic system becomes more unequal. In an effort to compete for the dwindling resources available in the economy, the local ruling elite has aggressively crowded-out women and less opportune men (2000:38).

It would be dangerous to generalize and expect a patterned impact of religious resistance to globalization on gender. Its impact on gender will depend on various other factors such as geography, economical conditions, class and religion. For example, in modern colonial times religious resistance among African Independent Churches, which turned to indige-

nous beliefs and merged them with Christian teachings, tended to empower women (Dube 1000:39–42).

At the same time feminist studies have highlighted that whenever social values and stability are under threat, for example, when there is shortage of work, patriarchy is likely to tighten. Thus when the Great Depression hit the Western world, women lost most of their public roles. Similarly, postcolonial studies indicate that in imperialized places, where national cultures – be they religious based or not – are invaded by a foreign intrusion, the tendency is to insist on nativism, which more often than not leads to increased subordination of women. Indeed the ancient responses of Pharisees, the Qumran and Essenes Jewish groups, to Roman imperialism, attest to this pattern of resistance, which further suppressed the social role of women.

Coming to the impact of religious/cultural resistance to globalization and its impact on gender relations, further research is needed – especially on Western women or those from globalizing centres. Yet one can say its impact on the lives of women on the receiving end is already observable. For example, in her article, “*Gender and Islamic Fundamentalism; Feminist Politics in Iran*” Nayereh Tohidi highlights how Islamic fundamentalism, which, while ignited by various socio-economic factors, is a movement which cannot be totally separated from resisting contemporary Western cultural and economic imperialism. Its rise, however, has had adverse impact on the lives of women in such countries (1991:251–270). Indeed, the plight of women in Afghanistan, under the Taliban religious regime, perhaps, better illustrates this point. In this context, religious resistance to outside forces has led to “gender apartheid.” Women have been withdrawn from the public space, denied the right to practice their professions, subjugated to clothes that totally cover their bodies, confined to the private sphere as well as subjugated to violence if they dare to resist. We have most probably seen the e-mail bearing the lamentation of Afghanistan women living under gender apartheid, asking for our signatures. Following the September 11 attack, it came again and I quote from it:

Women have been the first victims of the Taliban. Wherever the Taliban came to power, they banned women from working, prohibited women and girls from attending school, and forbade women from leaving their homes without being accompanied by a close male relative and wearing a head to toe burqa shroud. Women who violate Taliban decrees are beaten, imprisoned, or even killed. For the past six years, Afghan women and girls have pleaded with the world to free them from the grips of the brutal militia and have warned that the Taliban’s threat to humanity would extend beyond the borders of Afghanistan... (e-mail sent by Feminist Majority, 18.09.2001).

This is one example of how religious/cultural resistance to globalization does manifest itself in the stringent control of women’s bodies, for the latter represents the land itself in patriarchal conceptions (Dube 2000). Could we say American Christian fundamentalism affects gender relations any differently? Does it operate on the same values in the US as in the areas that it is globalizing, or does it change? These are issues that need close research. Yet, according to Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen: “We should note the explosion of evangelical, Pentecostal and fundamentalist Christian churches in many parts of the world, and that they are influenced by trends in similar churches in Western nations, and particularly the United States. In these churches, forms of ‘soft patriarchy’ have emerged despite (or perhaps in reaction to) three decades of feminist-led gains for women” (2000:213).

While my work has not done a focused study on globalization of God and gender, I have indeed put globalization in the same plot with various colonial masters of different and various ages. In my article, “*The Five Husbands at the Well of Living Waters*”, where I

used creative re-imagination to activate the story of the Samaritan women with her five husbands, I place this story within modern history of postcolonialism. The Samaritan woman is characterized as an African woman who has consorted with various colonizing husbands. But now she is co-habiting with a husband who is not hers. The name of this new husband is globalization. Thus her story reads:

But just then the Berlin Wall collapsed. Mr Cold War had to leave Africa. Then globalization realized that capitalism had no rival in the world markets except for the expensive labour in their own countries. He left the Western centres and went to Two Thirds World countries. He had to pass through southern Africa. Then Globalization arrived at Victoria Falls, tired by the long journey from the United States. As we speak, Globalization is sitting by the Falls, just where David Livingstone sat... A Zimbabwean woman has gone to draw water, and they are talking (Dube 1999:21).

The Way Forward: Postcolonialism, Globalization, God and Gender

Many questions beg attention in so far as globalization is a manifestation of postcolonialism and its relation to God/religion and gender. While this paper raised many of them, I however seek to underline just two of them. First, the question of how can religion participate in imagining and building a global village, which is more godly, more just – one that affirms all members of the earth community and builds a better world? Second, the question of how can we launch a form of resistance that does not depend on patriarchy (exemplified in the extreme case of Afghanistan)? Our study/reflection on the phenomenon of globalization and its impact on the lives of people will make a major contribution if it can sufficiently address these questions and other pertinent issues that surround its manifestation.

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