

ABSTRACT

Kupepeta ‘winnowing’: A metaphor for reading the Bible *seMadzimai*

Tekweni Chataira

Keywords: *seMadzimai*, kupepeta, winnowing, Shona, Zimbabwe, womanist, womanism, metaphor, Bible, interpretation, hermeneutics, women

My doctoral study engages womanist perspectives in formulating *seMadzimai*, a Bible reading approach that takes into consideration the ancient contexts of biblical texts while addressing comparative Zimbabwean women’s contexts. In the Shona language *seMadzimai* means ‘as women’ or ‘from the perspectives of women’. Womanist scholars and theologians prioritise the experiences, perspectives, and aspirations of women of colour. They recognise that distinctive voices - particularly those of women of African descent from diverse cultural contexts - have been few in theological and biblical interpretation discourses (hence the clarion call for more voices). The Shona language and culture (which are essential to the *seMadzimai* approach), as well as the biblical texts and their ancient contexts, make extensive use of metaphors. Metaphors help people understand new or abstract concepts by relating them to other commonly known concepts. Various metaphors have been suggested to describe approaches to reading the Bible. However, there has neither been gender sensitive Bible reading approaches formulated specifically for Zimbabwean contexts nor metaphors to describe such work. In this oral presentation I propose that *kupepeta*, or ‘winnowing’ is a suitable metaphor that captures the essence of the task of reading the Bible *seMadzimai*. The *kupepeta* metaphor can aid the conceptualization, interpretation, and application of biblical texts in terms of reference that are familiar in Zimbabwean contexts. The presentation surveys several core components of the *kupepeta*, or winnowing process, while expounding their practical functions, and elucidating their corresponding metaphoric value in illustrating the core elements of the *seMadzimai* Bible reading approach.

References

- Cannon, K. G. (1995). *Katie’s Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community*. Continuum.
- Mberi, N. E. (2003). Metaphors in Shona: A cognitive approach. *Zambezia: The Journal of Humanities of the University of Zimbabwe*, (i), 72–88.
- Weems, R.J. (2003). Re-reading for liberation: African American women and the Bible. In S. Schroer & S. Bietenhard (Eds.), *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible and the Hermeneutics of Liberation* (pp. 19–32). Sheffield Academic Press.