Who Must Lead Decoloniality: A Practical Theological Interrogation on the Possible Qualification to Lead Decolonisation: A South African Study

Magezi Elijah Baloyi
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8665-8297
University of South Africa
baloye@unisa.ac.za

Abstract

The quest for decolonisation and Africanisation of higher education in South African higher educational institutions has reached an uncompromising stage, since colonial divisions between the natives and the colonisers are still evident in the education system. This was also demonstrated by the "#FeesMustFall" campaign, which closed the majority of South African universities in 2015. Since then, decolonisation has kept scholars, academics and researchers busy in search of appropriate responses to the quest, but decolonial projects seem to be very slow. One of the reasons is that those in the leadership of the projects may be using delaying tactics for their colonial benefits. This article questions who should lead in the projects of Africanisation and decolonisation. The author is convinced that this question cannot be avoided if Africanisation and decolonisation must take speed. Reversal of colonial inequalities (including in educational spheres) is of paramount importance for the life of the colonised in general. It is an important demand that the correct or capable and informed leaders are identified and equipped to take the lead with the project. To this effect, this article makes a few practical theological suggestions. This research is interdisciplinary in nature since it starts with decolonisation, and continues with theology—particularly practical theology. These two disciplines are engaging the current problem of the contemporary people within their immediate situation.

Introduction

There is enough evidence to argue that Western colonisation continues to influence not only the way Africans think, but also the way they conduct all spheres of their lives, for example, distortion of African culture, shifts in native languages, urbanisation, and so forth (Ocheni and Nwankwo 2012, 51). For Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986, 1), while imperialism continues to control the economy, politics and African cultures, the communal self-regulation and self-determination that should take place, struggle in such a difficult environment. The dislocation of Africanism by Western philosophies that came as part of the colonial and racial package, will remain a concerning factor for Africans for a longer period. Leibowitz (2017), Helata (2016), and Moosa (2018, 70) make a good suggestion that for decolonisation to take place, a move away from Western hegemony as the locus of the curriculum and institutions is necessary. This is because the process of decolonisation seems to be taking place at a slower pace than was expected. It cannot be inferred that the "#FeesMustFall" campaign is the first cry towards decolonisation, but it was just a reminder of what should have happened since the democratic government toppled racial policies embedded in the apartheid government. Movements like Black Consciousness and African Renaissance were also aimed at similar projects. There is no doubt that decolonisation is one of the slowest transformational projects in South Africa. The reversal of the colonial past seems to be difficult, if not impossible, to dismantle, particularly in the educational arena.

This research contests that any attempt to liberate South Africans from their oppressive past can never be complete without correcting our education system, which is amongst the tools that can be used to change the future of our country. It is important to first see decolonisation as part and parcel of the bigger liberation agenda. That is why the better opinion is that one of the biggest challenges faced by South Africa after the inception of democracy, amongst others, is the epistemic racism that attempts to exclude African history and its epistemologies. According to Moosa (2018, 1–2), the transformation issue had been on the education agenda since the early 1990s, and the 2015 students' call for decolonisation was just a renewal of the scholars' and educators' attention to this neglected issue.

Ramose (2003, 4) is correct when articulating that the teaching of Western philosophies was decontextualised because its inspiration and questions did not attempt to answer or respond to the experience and situation of African people in Africa. This, therefore, demands what he calls a "radical overhaul" of the whole epistemological paradigm underlying the present education system. Garvey famously contended this by saying: "People without knowledge of their history are like a tree without roots" (Garvey, in Pour-Khorshid 2015, 1). Most South Africans who witnessed the "#FeesMustFall" campaign have been alerted to the importance of the decolonisation of the education system. A radical revival of our education system will assist it to be a tool to address not only South African challenges, but the continental challenges that were entrenched amongst other things by colonialism and racial divides. It cannot be ignored that if this

needs to change, radical and uncompromising actions need to be put in place. This paper argues that the leadership of decolonisation must be selected from those with Black Consciousness in their hearts.

One Zulu idiom says: "*Indlela ibuzwa kwaphambili*" which means, "the direction is asked for from those who walked the path" (Madiope 2020, 25). In Tsonga, the idiom says: *Mahlo ya nkwahle ya vona hi* muyevuri, meaning "only the one stripping the iguana's skin will see its eyes," and also meaning, "you cannot see the light in a case without the help of the culprit" (Junod 1978, 46–47). The dilemma is that if there are no clear criteria and qualifications for those who should lead the decolonial project, then it is doubtful if the desired solutions will be found. This informs the author that much of the information for decoloniality is missed until we identify the actual people who were deeply marginalised by colonisation. Who are those people? That is the gist of this article.

Definition of Decoloniality and Africanisation within African Context

According to Mbembe (in Ramoupi and Ntongwe 2017, 197), Africanisation means to get rid of the negative and demeaning things that the West has brought on the African knowledge base and knowledge about Africa in particular. In replacing our African knowledge by enforcing Euro-centric knowledge, the manifestation of injustice—that Mignolo (2009, 159) cries about—became inflicted upon African people. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015a, 24) argues that Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009) saw decoloniality as a search aimed at facilitating self-understanding after centuries of suffering dismemberment and alienation. It means that this is an opportunity for the Blacks, whose culture, including their educational and teaching methods, were closed out, to start reviving and recovering what they lost during the process of colonisation. The author does not need permission to name this process a "self-discovery of what we are worth." Chilisa (2012) and Le Grange (2018, 2) see decolonisation as rediscovery and recovery in the process where the colonised people try to rediscover and find their own history, culture, language, and identity. It is the contention of this article that to do this, the space must be afforded to those who were affected by colonialism to participate in the process, without being told by others as to what and how it is done. This is if we understand the word "self" joined to the word discovery to make it "self-discovery." In Smith's (1999) thoughts about decolonisation, some of the identified elements with regard to decolonisation are: deconstruction and reconstruction, self-determination and social justice, ethics, language, and so forth. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015a, 183) is, therefore, correct in emphasising the issue of "own" in his statement about decoloniality:

> Thus thinking deeper about the possibility of Africans creating their *own* futures, taking charge of their *own* destiny, and mapping their *own* autonomous development trajectory reminds one of Karl Marx's arguments about people making history but under circumstances they have not chosen [italics added].

This articulation is by far the best indication that the colonised people should be the ones at the forefront of decolonising themselves. They should be able to determine their own destiny without interference. For Mignolo (2011), the Bandung Conference (which took place in 1955, April 18–24) where Asian and African states met, fuelled the need for decolonisation. The concern about non-consultation by the Western powers when making decisions affecting countries in Asia and Africa was raised, and the need to condemn colonisation was voiced. Digging out the African epistemologies that were thrown out to give space for Western kinds of knowledge, is work that cannot demand less than decolonisation.

Brief Historical Background on Colonisation and its Aftermath

The assurance of the dislocation of African history, heritage, culture, and livelihood was undoubtedly invested, amongst other things, in education. That is what Wiredu (1998, 1) means when arguing that besides colonialism being a political imposition, it was also a cultural one that affected and infected our religions and systems of education. In South Africa, Bantu Education played a pivotal role in making sure that Black people became secondary people in their own land. Ramoupi and Ntongwe (2017, 196) argue that the African self-image had been distorted and destroyed with the introduction of Eurocentric ideologies and content coupled with White supremacy. The most successful idea that Black Africans managed is self-hatred while they, in fact, tried everything to draw closer to their White colonial masters (Baloyi 2020). The call for transformation of education is as old as the Freedom Charter. It is thus disturbing to hear some voices calling this a "rebellion against the tyranny of the Westerners" (Ndille 2012, 140).

In his paper entitled "Cooking with Two Stones," Opoku (2010, 15) makes it very clear that today, African people have low self-esteem as people saddled with consuming doubts and tremulous uncertainties about themselves and their inherited culture. Sadly, such doubts and uncertainties were inflicted through unjust wars in which education was one of the biggest tools to ensure that oppression became a reality. The demonisation of African culture was managed by the unfounded notion that the African cultural environment was regarded as a *tabula rasa,* and the Western people came to inscribe what they regarded as education and religion in the lives of our forefathers. Our ethical values and taboos, amongst others, were relegated to mere superstition, while the White man's education system remained the one and the only way to make life possible. Moosa's (2018, 49) opinion is correct that decolonisation, therefore, originates from colonisation, as resistance began when colonisation took place. This section concludes by quoting Ramose (in Manghena 2016, 1) that "the future of African philosophy solely depends on the commitment of the Black African philosopher to define his or her space and to guard it jealously." Unfortunately, some Africans resist decolonisation, as seen from some of the signs discussed below. This introduces the reader to some evidence of those who are resisting the project of decolonisation.

Umanga and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2020, 1) raise a good point when they say: "Decolonisation has to remain a revolutionary term with theoretical and practical value.

If it is immediately embraced by everyone and it's easily on the lips of everyone, there is a danger it might transform into a buzzword and a metaphor." If it is unveiled who was offended and humiliated by colonisation, it should not be offending to ask who should qualify to lead decolonisation. This articulation is an eye-opener to ensure that not everyone can do the work of decolonisation faithfully; hence, it is very relevant to ask who may qualify to play a meaningful role in this project. It is also relevant to ask if everyone who is currently involving him/herself in decoloniality is also a revolutionary for the same course. That question gave birth to this article.

Mbembe (2016, 32) truthfully voices the need to decolonise as "undoing the racist legacy of the past." No one doubts that racism and colonialism were brutal to natives and cannot be allowed to continue. Maldonaldo (2007) sees decolonisation as a political process geared towards independence. Nakata (2007) understands the need to decolonise both the knowledge and systems of knowing; hence, education falls within that. It is very true that classrooms in South Africa's higher education institutions are characterised not only by outdated forms of knowledge and pedagogics, but also by irrelevance regarding the African context; hence the need for transformation. According to Ngugi wa Thiong'o (2009), it is the decolonisation of our education system that will help us locate Africa at the centre of its understanding of itself. In short, we cannot fold our arms when the hegemony continues with a curriculum that does not address the situation. That is why students assert that they cannot continue to study the curricula of the White man while their own scholars are being undermined (Makoni 2017).

This research must not be misunderstood to promote racial separations that have existed between Blacks and Whites, because the beneficiaries of colonialism were and are from both Black and White races. In addition, this does not mean that people of Western origin cannot participate in decolonisation, but the gist of the matter is who should lead such projects. The article's main argument is that decolonisation cannot be a serious project if it is led by those who benefited or are still benefiting from colonialism, regardless of race or colour. To check which criteria can be used to qualify those who should lead this project moving forward, does not mean that those who are not leading cannot contribute if requested to do so; however, they will do it based on what the qualified leaders would need. That is what Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2022) refers to when arguing that decolonial projects must not objectify the African people. In Tsonga, we have the idiom: "*Mhisi ya mikoka mimbirhi yi ta phatluka nyonga*." The English translation of the idiom says: "It cannot be imagined how the beneficiaries of colonisation can also become leaders of decolonisation at the same time; these are two opposite directions that cannot be taken by the same person."

Some Signs of Resistance against Decolonisation

In her essay entitled "Dangers of Liberalism," Xaba (2019, 57) makes a very good analysis of how White liberal thought has influenced even the African National Congress (ANC) to come up with a violent response to the student movement called #FeesMustFall, which also challenged the higher education system to decolonise. Such

a response, according to her, was just a confirmation that if one fails to decolonise, one gets assimilated into the system and reproduces the very response Black people used to get from colonial powers. This is in line with what Tshaka (2019) indicates in theological terms while saying that some of the Black theological revolutionaries have been assimilated into Neoliberalism. Not only in government, but in many spheres of South African life (including working environments where Blacks and Whites should compete for positions) the Black competitor will normally lack support. This is what Xaba calls "seductive power" that continues to dehumanise the conquered natives by colonial powers (Xaba 2019, 57). It is not for other people, except Black people themselves, to justify the continued existence of Black theology and other liberal thoughts, given that the continuance of Black oppression, exclusions, poverty and unemployment is still seen on their faces.

Coming from theology, Black theology, which is the only voice for the Black oppressed masses from a theological point of view, is often called "irrelevant"—even by some Black theologians. Unfortunately, those calling for its demise are just trying to turn a blind eye to the continued harsh realities of landless Blacks, poverty, homelessness, slum lives, and so forth, for their own undisclosed reasons. In the author's previous research article entitled, "The Paradox of the Reopening of Schools under the Lockdown" (Baloyi 2021), the arguments clearly indicate how the entrenchment of Black suffering is continuing after almost three decades of democracy. This article is, therefore, in full agreement with Tshaka and Makofane that there is a sense today that an "old system is just clothed in a new garment" to complete what colonisation and apartheid started (Tshaka and Makofane 2010, 538). These few statements clarify that the decolonisation project is faced with challenges that demand more efforts to ensure that it makes an impact. The truth is that if the right people, who experienced the exploitation and brutality of racism and colonialism, are given a chance to lead this project, they can bring out genuine knowledge and experience that will be helpful to seek the way forward. While Ramose (2003), in a more radical sense, argues that non-Africans should have no place in African studies, I would say they cannot lead such projects, but may participate. Umanga and Ndlovu Gatsheni (2020, 1) are of the opinion that the first impediment to decolonisation is the colonised person him/herself, since he/she underwent colonial schooling before liberation began.

Some Suggested Criteria to Identify possible Decolonisation Leadership

Our ancestors left a Tsonga idiom that says: "*Mahlo ya nkwahle ya vona hi muyevuri,*" meaning, "only the one who is stripping the iguana's skin will see its eyes." Close to this meaning is that the eyes of the lizard are seen by the one who kills it (or a hunter who kills it) (Junod 1978, 46). This saying indicates that there are things that can only be clearly visible to the person who is close or a party to it. There is no doubt at all that the pain and afflictions of the colonial and racial divides and inequalities affected the Black community much more than anyone else. For instance, the displacements and removal of people to homelands as an advancement of apartheid are still fresh in the

minds of those people in the margins, more than anyone else. Those are the people who lost their identity while being taught to separate according to tribal lines so that they would remain separated—even today.

There is an element of correctness when Le Grange (2018, 3) says: "The element of self-determination and social justice relates to the struggle by those who have been marginalised by the Western academy and is about seeking legitimacy for knowledge that is embedded in their own histories, experience, and ways of viewing reality." This statement makes it very clear as to who are those people to be identified as leaders of this life-changing project. It can, therefore, be argued without hesitation that not everyone, regardless of educational qualifications, would ignore this life experience in trying to be part of the project. The right of the indigenous people to self-determination and to preserve their own language, history and knowledge received support from scholars like Sillitoe (2004), Mazrui and Mutunga (2003), and Mbiti (1975). For Le Grange (2018), complicated conversations like decolonisation require scholars of the field. Goldie (1999) agrees with Fanon (1976) on the fact that "true liberation is the achievement of subjectivity" in which the reconstruction of the self is directed amongst the things by remembering the past.

This correlates with what Ramose (2003, 4) argues when saying that Africans were reduced to silence, even about themselves. He goes on to indicate that "the self-appointed heirs to the right to reason have established themselves as producers of all knowledge and the only holders of the truth" (Ramose 2003, 2). Another Tsonga idiom, which supports this view, says: "*Mbita yo sweka yi tlula hi yo chululela eka yona*" (Junod 1978, 206). The English translation of the idiom says: "The pot into which the cooked food is poured is larger than the one in which the food has been cooked." Perhaps the quote was saying: "*Mbita yo chululeka eka yona yi tlula mbita yo sweka*?" The literal meaning is that if one tells somebody else about something he has seen, the second person will enlarge on it when telling others. This just confirms that the originality of the matter is always distorted when it becomes third-hand information. The very same saying receives support from another idiom, which says: "*A mbita yi tiviwa hi muphameri,*" or "the one who serves the food knows the pot" (Junod 1978, 206). The meaning is clear; everyone knows what concerns him/herself. It would be suicidal to neglect or undermine the fact that the effects of colonialism and racism are still fresh in the minds of the afflicted and dislocated people of this continent—Black people. It can be argued that these people, under their traditional leadership, can still retell the stories of their forceful removals as well as the effects of such removals. These forceful movements that saw homelands being formed were a disposition that still divides the Black people from the Whites.

The kind of Leadership Expected within the Process of Decolonisation

When looking for the knowledge that will play a role in reviving people's lives, questions that cannot be neglected are: Who has better knowledge of the needed information? What kind of instrument can be used to retrieve this information? Sparks

(2010) agrees with other African scholars who believe that the death of an old person is like burning a library to the ground. It is already known that much of the African information is not written down, hence oral tradition remains the main way to get the information. This simply means that whether we like it or not, the library of the information needed to decolonise is within the reach of Black people, particularly Black senior citizens of this country. Their life experience is crucial in this project. Before we embark on this discussion in depth, it is important to acknowledge and accept that because of racism and colonialism, the true African leadership was arrested and destroyed. There is a big cry for African leadership[1] to be revived, and the author agrees with Tshaka (2010, 182) that there is a dearth of African leadership. It is, therefore, fair to contend that African leadership has been the custodian of the culture and traditions that we need while rebuilding the indigenous knowledge that will boost the project of decolonisation. There is an echo of the same cry of African leadership from Meylahn (2017a, 1) who infers that there is a crisis in African leadership, which leads to the question of whether Africa can be saved.

Ramoupi and Ntonge (2017) say: "The point of departure for decolonisation is for Africans to be conscious of ourselves, to liberate ourselves (Biko 1978), to decolonise our minds (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986), and to emancipate ourselves from mental slavery." The repeated suffix "self" is not mistaken, but it tells where the information of decolonisation must come from. Of course, education will not take place outside of specific language frameworks, and this is another serious point to raise as we search for those who must take the lead going forward. Moosa (2018) is correct in arguing for the value of academic and vocationally-oriented qualifications.

Language as One of the Vehicles to Carry out Decolonisation

It would be suicidal to undermine the importance of African languages when decolonising ourselves. The power of language in both colonisation and decolonisation can be learnt from the fact that the government of Britain's four East African colonial dependencies, according to Marshall (2015, 1), founded the Inter-Territorial Language Committee (ILC) in 1930 to standardise and promote the Kiswahili language aimed at the efficiency of colonial administration. As much as the language is used to colonise, it can also be used to decolonise. The important questions to ask are: Who is an expert in a particular indigenous language? Is it justifiable to decolonise without tapping into one's indigenous language, which is the vehicle of culture and tradition? Of course, this will raise many other relevant issues, but the point is that it is important to include those people who are possible custodians of such a language, whether written or oral.

The author realises that many African concepts have lost their meanings when they were translated into the English language; for instance, the meaning of "taboos" from the African tradition is more than superstition since it contains an educative element

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1   The idea here is to argue that African leaders in positions do not express PAN Africanism and Black Consciousness to their people.

towards the morality of African people. This implies that without going back to the originality of our languages, which are the vehicles to transmit values and epistemologies, we make it either difficult or impossible to successfully continue with this project. The role of language in shaping the world demands that the experts in the language be afforded the opportunity to express the meaning of what they infer from the concepts. According to Meylahn (2017b, 4), language "carries out" one's worldview. While emphasising the issue of language, he says:

> Even if one shares the same geographical space, that does not translate into sharing the same world. That is, if world is understood as that which is carried out [revealed] by language, or that which comes to light through language, the world view determines what kind of world comes to view. A different world comes to view depending on the world view of the individual or community, and because one does not share the same world view, the worlds that do come to view are very different. Therefore, there needs to be a sensitivity to the plurality of worlds depending on the plurality of world views in each geographical space. A paradigm is necessary that is sensitive to the plurality of worlds, as well as shifting worlds, as individuals transit between worlds throughout the day [work-world, family-world, friends-and-leisure-world, religious-cultural-world, digital-world, and social media world].

From this argument, despite academic skills, each language has its own custodians who—even though they are not really formerly schooled—do have an in-depth knowledge of the particular language, especially vernacular languages. Latukefu (2008, 136) is correct in articulating: "One of the first requirements for successful use of oral traditions is a good knowledge of the local language." Using the vernacular language has always been the best approach to getting the best information out of an ethnic or tribal group. For education to achieve the purpose of preserving the lives of the members of society, it must grow out of the environment of that society. Despite the perception of Graham (2017, 576) on the difficulty that is posed by the complexities of the histories of mother tongues in South Africa, the truth for Fanon and Ngugi wa Thiong'o is that language is the carrier of culture (Fanon 1976; Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986). Therefore, any decolonial project will not easily avoid the inclusion of native languages since they carry a better understanding of such a people.

The Role of Oral Tradition in Decolonisation Projects

Oral traditions are recollections and living memories of the past that have been transmitted and shared throughout the cultural spectrum, which include riddles, songs, stories, proverbs, and myths that were engraved in the minds of the elderly (Kargbo 2008, 1). This is information that can be used to disprove the misconception of Europeans that Africa is a *tabula rasa*. On this point, Amadi (1997, 209) argues that Africans have long possessed "walking encyclopaedias, proto libraries or libraries without shelves."

In his article, "Oral Traditions: An Appraisal of their Value in Historical Research in Tonga," Latukefu (2008) indicates with examples the very importance of having used oral traditions to write a chapter in a book about the Tonga people. One example he quoted is an oral poem by the Tongan Chief Tafolo:

> Pardon me, noble chiefs and lineages/For the searching place is now far and difficult; The old plantations once scattered on the roads/Have now quite disappeared and gone with them their generation, and although they now lie in very thick bush,/Search will be made at any rate/For Touiafutuna, the first rock/Where our origin began./Though these are only traditions and fables,/T'is here the inquirers get their facts. (Latukefu 2008, 143)

The tales and ancient stories that are valuable in African history can be located, amongst other ways, by oral tradition, and this cannot ignore the information the indigenous people have. The poem quoted above was translated from a vernacular language that only indigenous people could understand, and that means to get this kind of information, there is a need for people on the ground. This sums up the important role that the custodians of indigenous knowledge (which will most probably be people in relevant cultures) must be afforded, and they should be given an opportunity to play a role in giving this information. Therefore, the skills of how to make oral information useful will demand language specialists as well as qualitative skills. Indigenisation demands acknowledgement of oral history, which also includes storytelling that skilled people must understand, document and be able to share the stories of the past (Radu 2018; Srigley and Sutherland 2019).

The Role of Indigenous Knowledge Systems in Decolonisation

According to Biermann (2011, 386), the role of indigenous philosophies, practices, and processes in the areas of curriculum design and pedagogy at universities may be very complex and difficult, but it is imperative that it is done. The view is partially shared by Louis (2007), who realises and acknowledges that it is difficult to write for both an indigenous community and for academia, but it is important for us to engage with that to ensure reciprocity and to decolonise the entrenchment of knowledge products.

If we want decolonisation to be successful, there must be no neglect of indigenous knowledge. It is well-known how difficult it is to obtain indigenous knowledge, which was pushed to the periphery many years ago, and its custodians side-lined. The duty of both language and empirical skills will come into play to retrieve that which was once relegated to superstitions and to make it real knowledge again. The promotion of the relevance of indigenous knowledge in reversing what the Western knowledge systems have done to native education cannot be undermined, particularly in this age when decoloniality should address that.

Kaya and Seleti (2013) say:

> Indigenous institutions of knowledge production, conservation and sharing of such as initiation schools, indigenous games, agricultural systems, dances and songs, storytelling, proverbs, et cetera, remain pillars of indigenous African ways of knowing. The wealth of knowledge that still exists among the elders and other knowledge holders in African local communities demonstrates the vibrant intellectualism to which African researchers and intellectuals should turn. It needs to be documented and shared with the youth for sustainability.

It is very difficult to imagine the success of decolonisation projects without the role of indigenous knowledge. In addition, indigenous knowledge is mastered better by indigenous people. The opinion of Dei (2002, 4–5) is that engaging the topic of indigenous knowledge demands that one also deeply considers the historical and continuing depriviling and marginalising of the already subordinated voices of the oppressed. It is the view of this article that if decolonisation wants to be part of teaching curricula that aim to change the lives of indigenous or native people, then there is no way indigenous knowledge can continue to be side-lined from the centre of knowledge systems. It has been argued very well in the research of Keane, Khupe, and Seehawer (2017), who also appeal for an appreciative thought that the beneficiaries of indigenous knowledge are the colonised communities.

Some Practical Theological Guidelines

The call to decolonise theology, particularly practical theology, has long been made by many practical theologians. There is a clear understanding of this call by Nell (2021) of the University of Stellenbosch, who indicates this in his article entitled: "Decolonizing an Introductory Course in Practical Theology and Missiology." From his teaching context, the demographics of students for the past few years made him rethink what his teaching curricula for his theological students could be. This was also at the backdrop of what the 2015 "#FeesMustFall" highlighted in terms of decolonising universities in South Africa. Without getting into the details of his document, it is important for this article to note that the determining factor of whoever should teach and lead in decolonising theology, it is important that they are qualified to do the work. His sentiments receive an echo from Jawitz (2016) from the neighbouring university (University of Cape Town), who also contests that his findings of silence from some White academics were related the feelings of guilt.

Another practical theologian from the University of South Africa also realised the need to decolonise practical theology in South Africa. Dreyer (2017, 3), when discussing the seven challenges for practical theology and practical theologians, clearly states that just like most academic disciplines, practical theology also originated from a European context. Practical theology can thus not be immune from the waves of decolonisation. It will, however, be unfair to confine the decolonisation of practical theology to an African context alone because Lartey (2013), from an Afro-American context, already in the past argued for the decolonisation of practical theology. While reading Graham's "Decolonizing Theology" one gets a better understanding as to why practical theology

and theologians should not be left out from the decolonisation project. The disparagement that has taken place against South Africans and their histories for so many years makes this demand a most important one. The relationship that existed for some years between Christian missionaries and colonialism makes it important that theology, practical theology in this instance, should be part and parcel of the decolonisation project (Graham 2017, 563). These arguments inform this article to continue arguing that the voices from the ground form part of determining factors as to who should not only teach, but also lead the decolonisation project.

There is a biblical story that is relevant to the situation, which can be read from 2 Samuel 18:1–5 (NIV).

> David now mustered the men who were with him and appointed over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. David sent out his troops, a third under the command of Joab, a third under Joab's brother Abishai, son of Zeruiah, and a third under Ittai the Gittite. The King told the troops, "I myself will surely march out with you." But the men said, "You must not go out, if we are forced to flee, they won't care about us. Even if half of us die, they won't care, but you are worth ten thousand of us. It would be better now for you to give us support from the city." The King answered, "I will do whatever seems best to you." So the King stood beside the gate and all his men marched out in units of hundreds and of thousands. The King commanded Joab, Abishai and Ittai, "Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake." And all troops heard the king giving orders concerning Absalom to each of the commanders.

This brief episode indicates how the love of the King was for his son Absalom, who, in this case, was the target of the battle. Now, one can understand that the need for the King to go to war was only to protect his son, but the commanders were on the alert to stop him from going there. The question is, how would the King go to the battle to still be gentle against the enemy (Absalom)? In fact, he had a divided mind because he indeed wanted to come back to his throne, but in order to do that, Absalom was to be defeated, but the King did not want him hurt. In a war, casualty is very common and being gentle is not part of the plan at all.

This short episode argues that if the leadership of the project is not run by those who were colonised, the likely challenge that will be faced later is that the process can be slowed or even delayed or disturbed by allowing it to be led by those not serving the interest of the colonised people. It is questionable if the very same people who benefited from colonisation will have an interest in liberating the very same colonised people. It is part of the article's articulation that not all involved in decoloniality projects are fighting for the real cause of liberating the oppressed. They may be coming to the battle to be able to protect their interests, just like David wanted to in this battle. It cannot be true that the beneficiaries of colonisation can also become the beneficiaries of decolonisation. Umaga and Gatsheni-Ndlovu (2020, 2) say: "If you remove colonialism physically without removing it epistemically, it will not disappear."

We need to be realistic to ask without fear or favour: "Whose struggle is it to Africanise or decolonise?" If we still want to protect some interests, the process will either be flawed or delayed. The removal of Israelites from Egypt back to Canaan was undoubtedly a forceful political and religious move, in which deaths of firstborn children, as well as the drowning of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, were evidenced. If Africans wish to be truly decolonised and Africanised, they should not expect that on a silver platter but be ready to take the struggle to the next level and bear the consequences thereof.

Liberation theology needs to be allowed to play a pivotal role in assisting the formerly colonised or oppressed people to rediscover and find themselves again. One of the fathers of liberation theology, James Cone, was correct to argue that when redressing the previous injustices, the oppressor will feel some pain. It is not surprising that some scholars are arguing that liberation theologies, particularly Black theology, are irrelevant today, because they still want to protect the interest of those colonial inequalities that have benefited some of them. This thought is just an attempt to ignore or even postpone the challenges that are raised by those theologies, which must be dealt with currently. Guiterrez (1971) was a Roman theologian who also became one of the pioneers of liberation theology and who argued that as long as the Black, poor and oppressed are still available, liberation theologies like Black theology must continue to speak on their behalf.

As long as Jonah was still on the ship to Tarshish, the travellers did not enjoy the storm that was rocking their vessel in the sea. This was all because the wrong person was inside the ship. It may theologically be asked exactly why the decolonial ship is being rocked by the winds which drag it so slow? Are there no wrong people inside who pretend to be sailing it while they are drilling holes from below? That is why the author often asks himself whether Jonah was asleep at the bottom of the ship, or was he trying to drill a suicidal hole.

We conclude this theological discussion by highlighting one of the dilemmas that can help the reader understand the need to ask the question: Who should lead the decolonisation project? This refers to whether White males should teach theology in South African universities or not (Wepenar 2021). To be precise, since this article is about the leadership of a particular project, the author of this article would like to quote Urbaniak (2022, 5) when saying: "For Whiteness to the full upward, we, White people, need to consciously open and empty spaces which we unjustly occupy and let those spaces be filled by Black people, on Black people's terms, without interfering, unless we are explicitly asked to contribute." Sometimes, it is important to allow those who were affected to lead the change, while those who were at the front before, now accept their role of support, being led by the formerly colonised. On another level, there is a failure of some White theologians and academics to accept what Nell (2021) argues when saying that some of the problems that the Black townships are faced with were

not caused by them. Instead, their mindset of what was brought by colonisation can be a hard nut to crack for them in teaching theology to Black theologians.

In his article, "Decolonizing an Introductory Course in Practical Theology and Missiology," Nell (2021, 2) is very specific to indicate how the changing context through the demographics of the students that are taught at the universities affect changes in the minds of the teaching staff in terms of how to make the teaching context work for the students. For Masvotore (2021, 3), the very basic question of how and whether the trained clergy are truly indigenous, relevant, and able to respond to the contemporary challenges within their own Zimbabwean context, translates very well to what I term the proverbial question: "Are African theologians just Western Christian theologians in Black skins?" It is the author's opinion that whenever the question of the relevance of the clergy is raised, not only their training is involved, but the kind and the quality of the trainer in that content must also be questioned. In one of the indigenous languages, Xitsonga, we have the idiom: "*Ku tlula ka mhala ku letela n'wana wa lendzeni*" (Junod 1978, 38), meaning "the parents' ways are an example to the child and his real teaching." This is also equivalent to what the Bible means when saying, "a student cannot be above his teacher" (Matthew 10:24). It is the continuity of this duplication that must be addressed by decolonisation. Lastly, teaching is one matter that also affects how people will behave or conduct themselves later. As much as Whites can still teach in African universities, the specific curriculum for decolonisation must be led by the people who were affected by colonialism. Consultation with the White teachers is another matter that can be determined by the previously colonised—only if they want to. I conclude this section with a statement by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2022): "One issue that was very clear in this is that we need to do African Studies with Africans, rather than making them objects of study."

Conclusion

Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2008) indicate very well that decolonisation must be a continuous process of the anti-colonial struggle that honours indigenous approaches to knowing the world and recognising indigenous land. It is a process of unlearning and relearning, which must be uprooted from the colonised people. Indeed, the crux of the matter is that decolonisation is meant to help the previously colonised people to find themselves. Enough safe spaces must be created for the colonised to ensure that they radically find out who they are and what they should have been before the unjust conquests that dislocated them. By enough safe space, the author means without interference or disturbance by anyone who would be pretending to feel the pain they never shared with any other person. It will be in the best interest of the transformation agenda for the colonised to ensure that the leadership of the decolonisation project is in their hands to avoid a repetition of what the colonialists have done. Every muted epistemology of the indigenous people can undoubtedly be unveiled by the colonised, aided by their traditional leaders and other relevant people.

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