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"Not peace but a sword" (Mt 10:34): Recognising resilience but struggling for resistance

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Abstract

An unexpected outcome of the work of the Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research with marginalised sectors is their sense that Contextual Bible Study resources provide them with an interpretive resilience that enables them to return to the churches that have marginalised them because they are unemployed, HIV-positive, or queer. This article explores the notion of 'interpretive resilience' and reflects on its capacity to reintegrate those who have been marginalised by dominant theologies. "Interpretive resilience" may have the capacity to construct forms of communal peace, but the article asks, what if what is required is 'interpretive resistance', which puts the sword to dominant interpretations in the quest for a more just peace? A particular case study, to do with issues of homosexuality, gives shape and substance to the theoretical reflections.[1]

Keywords

Peace; resilience; resistance; queer; contextual Bible Study

1. Introduction

"Do not think that I came to cast peace on earth; I came not to cast peace but a sword" (Mt 10:34). Though this text has been used to portray Jesus as a Zealot (Aslan 2013), Herman Waetjen argues differently. Waetjen locates the resistance of Jesus within the culture and kindred structures of his time and context: "Jesus' 'ministry of the sword' is directed toward a new

1 I offer this article in honour and celebration of the person and work of John de Gruchy. John has not only embodied a commitment to biblical-theological reflections on contemporary social struggles, he has also encouraged and mentored another generation, including me.

Exodus. Those who refuse to be disengaged from honour/shame culture or the religious traditions of the old moral order for the sake of family security and stability are not worthy of the salvation that Jesus is securing for them as their divinely appointed shepherd" (Waetjen 2017:132).

Matthew's gospel continues: "I came to divide a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a bride against her mother-in-law, and [the] enemies of a human being [will be] those of his own household" (10:35-36).[22] Jesus does not hesitate, Waetjen points out,

> to take responsibility for the anguish and suffering they will experience. The "sword" that he wields is the inevitable outcome of fulfilling the justice of God's Reign that severs the bonds of domination and oppression within both the family and society. It will disengage anyone from the confining structures of honour/shame culture, its patriarchal tyranny, and its legitimation of lying and deception, while the household or the society that refuses to surrender its power, its tradition, and its stability becomes an alienated and perhaps irreconcilable enemy. For the one who is severed from a fraudulent society and its dehumanizing culture, it will be an entry into justice and wholeness of the Reign of Heavens (Waetjen 2017:132).

Jesus goes on to make this clear in the discourse that follows: "The one who welcomes you (plural), welcomes me, and the one who welcomes me welcomes the One who sent me" (10:40). A new community is formed from resistance to the old. But who can bear to be separated from kin, community, and culture? Jesus understands the demand, but is unrelenting in his logic:

> And the one who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And the one who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And the one who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. The one who finds his/her *essential life/soul* (*psychēn*) will lose it, and the one who loses her/his *essential life/soul* (*psychēn*) on account of me will find it (10:37-39) (Waetjen 2017:132).

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2 [2] Here and above I am using Waetjen's translation; (Waetjen 2017:132)

Ironically, contra to what the *Kairos Document* referred to as "Church Theology", "if this essential life is pursued in the immediacy of the dominating culture and its values, it will be forfeited". "But", Waetjen continues, "if it is abandoned in a discipleship that is committed to Jesus and the Reign of God, their essential life as a *pyschē* will be experienced in all of its fullness in the here and now of present historical existence" (Waetjen 2017:133).[33] Unless we take up the sword of resistance in the quest for systemic righteous there can be no life; without the political there is no personal. Taking up the sword with Jesus is the struggle for justice/righteousness in a world rife with systemic injustice. The struggle for justice (the sword) might bring peace, but the only certainty is the sword, is struggle. The kin-dom of God, Matthew asserts, is struggle.

This is not an easy message, but the message itself is clear. The discourse on mission as struggle, as resistance, found in 9:36–10:42, comes at the end of a section of ten "restorations", from 8:1–9:35, where Matthew shows Jesus performing parallel works to the ten works of Moses performed in Egypt prior to the Exodus (Waetjen 2017:105). Jesus constructs, Matthew seems to argue, a post-Moses theology based in the bodies of those he heals, delivers, and restores. Jesus constructs a theology of resistance with these bodies, what the *Kairos Document* called "Prophetic Theology".

In this article I will argue that the Contextual Bible Study praxis of the Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research, located in the School of Religion, Philosophy, and Classics, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, mimics the ministry of Jesus as portrayed here by Matthew, constructing theologies of resistance 'with' the bodies of the poor and marginalised with whom we re-read the Bible for systemic and individual (in that order) change. The article will acknowledge, however, that theologies of resistance must be more modestly understood along a continuum of theologies, ranging from theologies of resilience to theologies of reworking, to theologies of resistance.

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3 [3] Here Matthew alludes to the Septuagint translation of Genesis 2:7, God's creation of *ha'adam*; see also (Waetjen 2017:132–133)

2. From people's theology to prophetic theology

Contextual Bible Study as it has developed within the Ujamaa Centre for Community Development and Research over the past thirty years has been focussed on systemic change. Contextual Bible Study (CBS) has been formed in the intersections of South African Contextual Theology, South African Black Theology, and African Women's Theology. What is common to these forms of African theology is that they are all committed to systemic or structural analysis and change. What the South African *Kairos Document* referred to as "Church Theology" has its focus on individual and personal change, while what the *Kairos Document* referred to as "Prophetic Theology" has its focus on structural or systemic change (Kairos 1985). CBS is a form of Prophetic Theology, but a form of Prophetic Theology that is produced by collaboration between ordinary African Christians and socially engaged African biblical scholars and theologians. It is *how* Prophetic Theology is produced that makes it Prophetic Theology.

The Revised Second Edition (1986) of the *Kairos Document* makes an important distinction between 'people's theology' and 'prophetic theology'.

> It should also be noted that there is a subtle difference between prophetic theology and people's theology. The *Kairos Document* itself, signed by theologians, ministers and other church workers, and addressed to all who bear the name Christian is a prophetic statement. But the process that led to the production of the document, the process of theological reflection and action in groups, the involvement of many different people in doing theology was an exercise in people's theology. The document is therefore pointing out two things: that our present Kairos challenges Church leaders and other Christians to speak out prophetically and that our present Kairos is challenging all of us to do theology together reflecting upon our experiences in working for justice and peace in South Africa and thereby developing a better theological understanding of our Kairos. The method that was used to produce the Kairos Document shows that theology is not the preserve of professional theologians, ministers and priests. Ordinary Christians can participate in theological reflection and should be encouraged to do so. When this people's theology is proclaimed to others to challenge

> and inspire them, it takes on the character of a prophetic theology (Kairos 1986:34–35, note 15).

There can be no Prophetic Theology without there first being a "people's theology", according to the *Kairos Document*. This is the starting point of the Ujamaa Centre's work. We begin with the lived reality of local African communities as it is embodied within them. This is the "raw material" of Prophetic Theology. CBS is a process that enables this "people's theology" to become Prophetic Theology.

In the following summary definition of CBS we emphasise the systemic dimension of social change: Contextual Bible Study is a collaborative praxis in which the already present Bible is re-read communally and critically as itself a site of struggle, within a faith-full setting, drawing on the local interpretive resources of particular organised communities of the poor and marginalised and the critical interpretive resources of socially engaged biblical studies, working together for systemic social and theological transformation.

However, over our thirty years of work we have come to recognise an unexpected outcome of our work. It would seem, we have discovered from participant feedback, that our work with them has enabled them to re-turn to family and church. We have understood our work as giving them a sword in the struggle, often against their families and churches, contributing a theological dimension to their systemic resistance. We have understood our work as building interpretive resistance. But it would seem, our work has also facilitated capacities of interpretive *resilience*.

3. Interpretive resilience

"I would rather come to Bible study than go to church", she said (West 2003:335). In the late 1990s when the Ujamaa Centre, under the leadership of our colleague Bongi Zengele, began CBS work with people struggling to live positively with HIV, many of them had been pushed out of their churches because of stigmatising theologies of retribution. They found a safe and sacred refuge within their organised support groups, within which CBS offered biblical and theological resources in their struggle for life amidst the idolatrous theologies of death.

Cycles of praxis are central to the work of the Ujamaa Centre. Moments of CBS action led to moments of reflection on the outcomes and impact of this CBS work among the *Siyaphila* support groups we worked with (West 2016d:377–392). Our formal research-reflections with these support groups have demonstrated that CBS had equipped *Siyaphila* members to resist their churches use of the Bible (West and Zengele 2006, West Forthcoming). This outcome is how we as the Ujamaa Centre would understand our work: we are resisting "church theologies" of stigmatisation, discrimination, and retribution and constructing "prophetic theologies" of acceptance, inclusion, and redemption.

However, as I have indicated, for many participants CBS resources have been used to build forms of interpretive resilience, enabling them to return to their families and churches. What slowly became clear to us was that CBS resources offered resources for both resistance and resilience. While participants were reclaiming the Bible from the dominant sectors of their churches and resisting dominant interpretations of the Bible in both their families and churches, they were also re-entering and reclaiming family and church space, space from which they had been driven out (West 2017: 271–272). CBS had given them resources for an interpretive resilience through which they were able to reoccupy their place in family and church.

This emerging understanding of our work has been supported through external evaluations of the Ujamaa Centre. In a 2010 external evaluation the evaluators included the category of "Unplanned Impacts", recording how CBS had contributed to capacity building in five related areas: understanding of God, self-confidence, integration of faith and life, reintegration and respect within their families, and an inclusive space within churches (Cossa, Mkhize, and Strydom 2010:16–40). From the 2010 external evaluation it has become clear that these five areas of "unplanned impacts" have together contributed to forms of resilience that in turn have enabled the reintegration of social sectors who had been marginalised by faith communities (including families and churches).

Having noted these "unplanned impacts" we asked the external evaluators five years later to pay attention to factors like this. This they did, and so our reflections on the notion of "interpretive resilience" have become clearer as we have begun to discern the contours of "interpretive resilience". It is

clear from the 2015 external review report that CBS resources contributed towards "emotional healing" and "individual agency" (Msunduzi 2015:33). These "additional outcomes" (Msunduzi 2015:33), in the language of the 2015 external evaluation, are key components of resilience. Some of the CBS participants, it was reported, became "community resource people", and having contributed to "capacity building" within their local communities (Msunduzi 2015:34), some became church resource people, re-turning to their churches with CBS interpretive resources. The "outcome logic" (Rao and Kelleher 2005) of this development is explained by the external evaluators as follows:

> Reaching the most marginalised and vulnerable people > The most marginalised and vulnerable people experience acceptance and a non-judgemental attitude from educated theologians (Ujamaa facilitators) > There is a shift from self-blame to understanding contextual factors contributing to their vulnerability > Increase in confidence and individual agency; increase in group solidarity and cooperation > Mobilisation of community action; marginalised people become resource persons for others in the community (Msunduzi 2015:45).

Unfortunately, the external evaluators have framed this in personal terms. What this formulation of theirs misses is the political formation that led to this personal formation. In all of our work we work with organised groups of the poor and marginalised. This is conceptually central not incidental. The *Siyaphila* support network/movement, for example, is vital to the formation of HIV-positive individuals. They live positively because they are formed by the movement. We have theorised this extensively (see for example West 2016c). As organised groups of church women – women of faith – gather together in safe spaces they control, CBS praxis offers an articulation of body theology. CBS resources set in motion a "crystallization" whereby the other members of the group recognise "close relatives" of their own experience, connecting them to a "single power grid" (Scott 1990:223–224). James Scott is here describing a common experience among marginalised sectors, as they together assemble a vocabulary with which to construct a discourse about shared realities. What we recognise within the Ujamaa Centre is that this experience is a form of body theology. What is present but inchoate and "incipient" (Cochrane 1999:111) within the bodies

of individual women is catalysed by the combination of their own local resources and CBS resources. Slowly, over time, for duration is a key factor, the women forge a way of talking about what is in their bodies (West 2015a). The dignity of being human demands an attempt to articulate what is within the body (Scott 1990:xi, Holloway 1998). And as Philippe Denis reminds us, when articulations are offered in safe places "the elaboration of the painful experience and its validation through empathetic listening" enables a narrative of the embodied traumatic experience to take shape (Denis 2011:11, see also West 2016a).

Such organised sites are sites in which resilience is nurtured. Among the resources around which *interpretive resilience* capacities are built are CBS praxiological and interpretive resources (West Forthcoming). We work with a notion of interpretive resilience that emphasises the agency of CBS participants as they "navigate" and "negotiate" CBS resources (Ungar 2008:225), integrating what is useful to them as they build forms of resilience, including what we refer to as "interpretive resilience". Taught by the poor and marginalised sectors we work with, we now locate our understanding of our work not only as contributing towards interpretive resistance, but as contributing towards a continuum, ranging from interpretive resilience, to interpretive reworking, to interpretive resistance. A brief case study will help to situate this analysis.

4. A case study of interpretive resilience and/as resistance: a sexuality CBS

The advent of HIV has created significant space for working with local faith-based communities and organisations in the related areas of masculinity and sexuality (West 2016b). In its work on sexuality the Ujamaa Centre has established a collaborative relationship with an organised formation, the Pietermaritzburg Gay & Lesbian Network.[44] Among the workshops we have done together has been a series of workshops in 2013 which included church leaders from the KwaZulu-Natal province and members from the Gay & Lesbian Network. The workshop was constructed in two related phases, with the first phase providing a baseline measure of participants

4 4 http://www.gaylesbian.org.za/

experience and perceptions of homosexuality. During this workshop one of the activities was a CBS on Genesis 18–19, which located the notorious Genesis 19 within its literary context, reading Genesis 18–19 as a single narrative (with various sub-plots) (West 2016b). The CBS concluded with participants committing themselves to forms of "action" (Act) that they had agreed upon in their small-group work in response to their engagement with the CBS, an integral component in the See-Judge-Act process of CBS.

This first phase workshop was followed some months later with a second phase. The introductory activity of the second phase workshop was a report by each participant on what 'actions' they had undertaken in response to the CBS on Genesis 18–19 they had done in the first phase. Each participant reported on what they had done. When the process of reporting was complete there was an interruption, as the Gay & Lesbian Network's video operator asked if he too could present a report. As facilitators, we in the Ujamaa Centre were intrigued. The young (self-identified) gay man had not wanted to participate in the CBS itself during the first phase of the workshop activities. We had offered him the opportunity, but he had declined, indicating that he was not that interested in "religion". His role was to film aspects of the workshop for the Gay & Lesbian Network. He was a persistent but self-effacing presence throughout the workshop. His request to offer an 'action' report was therefore unexpected. But we readily welcomed him to share with the group.

He told us that he had paid careful attention to the CBS, filming the plenary sessions and some of the small-group sessions. His apprehensions about "religion" in general and the Bible in particular, he said, had slowly begun to dissipate as he watched and listened. His experience with religion and the Bible, ever since he had been open about his sexuality, was of stigmatisation and condemnation. But his observation of the CBS on Genesis 18–19 had given him pause to reconsider. He had found the CBS "empowering", as had other participants.

During the first phase, a number of the gay, lesbian, and transgender Christian participants had shared how they had become alienated from their churches and the Bible. But when the small groups reported back, having completed the CBS, participants had shared how re-reading this story using CBS processes had affected them. One participant said, this

CBS "takes away the power of the text over us as homosexuals, for we are told that homosexuality is the reason for the destruction of the Sodom; we are told that we pose a threat to the church, that we will bring destruction on the church". "Many have left the church because of this text", another explained, "it has chased us out of the church". And another participant shared that in her context, "Everyone claims to know what this text is about! It will not go away, it must be re-read". Other participants asked, "Why is it that we have not questioned the interpretation of this story?" And still others wondered, "Perhaps this re-reading enables us to go back to the church".

Significantly, some of the participants appropriated the re-read biblical text as a resource with which to confront the church: "The church is like Sodom, just as the men of Sodom wanted to subject others to their power, so the church wants to subject us to its power. Re-reading this text reminds us to question each and every text; God himself will come down to judge the church, just as God himself came down to judge Sodom!" This theme was taken up by others, who asked, "Could not this text, as it is interpreted by Ezekiel and Isaiah and Jesus, be read as a story about receiving and welcoming homosexuals into our churches?"[55]

Amidst all this sharing in the first phase workshop our video operator had not said anything. Yet, as we were to discover when he asked to share during the second phase, these responses by his comrades confirmed his own re-appropriation of Genesis 19, the classic allegedly anti-homosexual proof-text (Gagnon 2001:78, Lings 2013:241). He told us how he had returned home after the first phase CBS and had used the same CBS with his mother. His mother was a devout Christian who loved him dearly but who worried that God might condemn him for being gay. Her acceptance of his sexuality was tempered by her theological apprehension. So, he went home and worked through the CBS with her. The effect was profound, he told us, with tears in his eyes, for she now understood Genesis 19 (within its literary-narrative context) in a new way, recognising that this text (and so

5 [5] I recorded these contributions with the permission of the group, taking notes on the PowerPoint version of the CBS publically so that everyone could see what I was writing and could confirm that I had recorded their comments correctly. They wanted to be heard and they wanted their responses to the CBS to be shared with others.

God) did not condemn him. Our corporate, collaborative re-reading had offered an antidote to the toxic interpretations of this text that characterise the reception history of this text in African faith communities and families.

Through CBS he had found interpretive resources with which to engage directly with the theological world of his mother, negotiating an inclusive theology for their home. And many among his comrades from the Gay & Lesbian Network had found interpretive resources with which to resist the hetero-patriarchal theologies of their churches.

5. Resilience, reworking, and resistance

Conceptualisations of "resilience" occupy unstable terrain (Cretney 2014:627) but offer the potential of drawing together discourses from a range of disciplines, with the intersections offering both useful trajectories and worrying incoherence (Béné et al. 2012:12). A particularly useful trajectory for my own work comes from socially engaged scholars working with notions of resistance. In particular, I draw here on the work of Cindi Katz, whose focuses her longitudinal ethnographic research on the effects on children of a constantly changing capitalist environment (Katz 2004). Along with others (Sparke 2008), I have found her linkage of "resilience" with "resistance" particularly useful.

Her linkage of "resilience" and "resistance" can be related to her appropriation of James Scott's work on resistance, but also her concerns about the limits of his conceptualisation of "resistance". Like Gillian Hart (Hart 1991:116–118),[66] Katz worries that Scott's account of "everyday forms of peasant resistance" (Scott 1985) requires further reflection (Katz 2004:48). Yet she locates her own work within Scott's central concept of "dignity" (Scott 1985:236–240, 1990:xi, 114, West 2015b), but re-conceptualises the practices that sustain dignity as "resilience, reworking,

6 [6] Hart's work argues that "the explanation of gender-differentiated labour relations [among so-called 'peasants'] requires a conceptualisation of agency which recognises multiple (and possibly contradictory) sources of identity and interests", so that, for example, we can understand why "male workers failed to define and prosecute their class identity and interests in the same way that women did" because of "their incorporation in political patronage relations" and because of the way "that notions of masculinity/femininity have limited the capacity of men to identify as workers and to act collectively"; (Hart 1991:117)

and resistance, rather than presume that quite varied responses are all resistance or homogenize their distinct qualities" (Katz 2004:152). She argues that, "We cannot understand oppositional practice or its possible effects if we consider every autonomous act to be an instance of resistance" (Katz 2004:242).

She does recognise that those of us "who champion all such [hidden transcript and infrapolitical] (Scott 1990:xii, 198, 200) acts as resistance" do so because we "tout their counterhegemonic nature and note that they draw on and fuel an oppositional consciousness checked by realistic appraisals of success of more grandiose or visible gestures" (Katz 2004:242). And she agrees with those of us who find Scott's analysis persuasive that what is hidden is preparatory to what is publicly enacted. In Scott's words, "subordinate groups have typically learned, in situations short of those rare all-or-nothing struggles, to clothe their resistance and defiance in rituals of subordination that serve both to disguise their purposes and to provide them with a ready route of retreat that may soften the consequences of a possible failure" (Scott 1990, 96). This is because, Scott argues, most protests and challenges "are made in the realistic expectation that the central features of the form of domination will remain intact" (Scott 1990:92). Scott is clear that the hidden transcript is "a condition of practical resistance rather than a substitute for it" (Scott 1990:191), for acts of mass public defiance "had been long and amply prepared in the hidden transcript of folk culture and practice" (Scott 1990:225). But, she asks, should all autonomous 'offstage' (Scott 1990:4–5, 119, 164–165, 222) agency be considered 'resistance' (Katz 2004:242)?

Her own work on children in and around the Sudanese village of Howa shows that "people's responses to almost overwhelming changes in the political economy, political ecology, and socio-symbolic forms and practices in and around Howa have not just been those of immiseration and capitulation, but extraordinary resilience and reformulation as well". "These practices", which she prefers "to distinguish as resilience, reworking, and resistance, rather than presume that quite varied responses are all resistance or homogenize their distinct qualities", are, she argues, "interconnected".

> Their boundaries are blurred and passages between them can be almost imperceptible. They are rooted in and help produce what James Scott (1985) calls "dignity" among people facing gruelling conditions in their everyday lives that are not of their own choosing or creation. If Scott, who does not distinguish between what I am calling resilience, reworking, and resistance, is careful to define the limits of such counterhegemonic practices, he is more intent on how critical they are for undergirding subsequent broader oppositional practices. Beyond their socially reinforcing and fortifying role, these practices also act in and on the world, sometimes changing it (Katz 2004:152).

Locating her work within Scott-like "resistance" discourse, Katz goes on to make "more fruitful ends of such beginnings".

> I have tried to delineate between the admittedly overlapping material social practices that are loosely considered 'resistance' to distinguish those whose primary effect is autonomous initiative, recuperation, or *resilience*; those that are attempts to *rework* oppressive and unequal circumstances; and those that are intended to *resist*, subvert, or disrupt these conditions of exploitation and oppression. The way I have laid out these overlapping responses is obviously toward stronger forms of oppositional practice, but they are interwoven and mutually sustaining. Acts of resilience and instances of reworking often provide the groundwork for stronger responses, but so, too, can an organized oppositional movement, for instance, create the political space or opportunity for various autonomous initiatives – the restorative and strengthening acts of what I am calling resilience (Katz 2004:242).

Her distinctions are helpful, enabling me to be more precise and careful about notions of "interpretive resilience", locating "interpretive resilience" alongside notions of "interpretive reworking" and "interpretive resistance".

In terms of our case study, Katz's continuum offers us an analytical apparatus for understanding the array of ways in which participants access CBS resources. For some, CBS resources offer increased interpretive capacity "to go back to the church". This is an example of interpretive resilience, "just getting by in the face of the oppressive … circumstances"

(Katz 2004:244), which is not insignificant, as the 'survival' theologies of feminist theologians have argued (Williams 1993, Haddad 2004). For others, like the video operator, an increased capacity of interpretive resilience enabled him to enter his mother's theological world, from where he was then enabled to 'rework' her own understanding of Genesis 19, for what Katz refers to as 'reworking' are practices "that alter the conditions of people's existence to enable more workable lives and create more viable terrains of practice". "Reworking", she elaborates, "deploys a different kind of consciousness than the acts of resilience that sustain people facing difficult circumstances … Projects of reworking tend to be driven by explicit recognition of problematic conditions and to offer focused, often pragmatic, responses to them" (Katz 2004:247). And, finally, for some, like those from the Gay & Lesbian Network who asked, "Could not this text, as it is interpreted by Ezekiel and Isaiah and Jesus, be read as a story about receiving and welcoming homosexuals into our churches?", CBS resources for interpretive reworking create capacity for imagining and working towards interpretive resistance. In the words of Katz,

> If reworking reorders and sometimes undermines the structural constraints that affect everyday life both to make it more liveable and to create viable terrains of practice, resistance takes up that terrain with the invocation of an oppositional consciousness. Practices of resistance draw on and produce a critical consciousness to confront and redress historically and geographically specific conditions of oppression and exploitation at various scales (Katz 2004:251).

6. Conclusion

We are coming to understand more fully how our CBS resources, both praxiological and interpretive, contribute to building capacity for interpretive resilience, interpretive reworking, and interpretive resistance. There are clear indications from participants that they are able to re-turn to their families and faith communities, re-establishing a place within these important social domains from which they had been marginalised. Some, as we have seen, do more than resiliently subsist within their families and churches. Some use their interpretive resilience with the Bible to "rework"

and even "resist" dominant interpretations of the Bible. Though interpretive "reworking" and "resistance" are the primary terrain within which the Ujamaa Centre works, we have come to recognise the importance of interpretive "resilience" as a necessary capacity for a re-turn to family and church that so many vulnerable and marginalised sectors yearn for. Such re-turns may also provide a relative "peace" within which to take up forms of interpretive reworking and perhaps even interpretive resistance.

Places re-constructed by interpretive resilience may be considered as places of peace. But, to return to Matthew's metaphor, they are also spaces in which to forge the sword of interpretive reworking and resistance. "Do not think that I came to cast peace on earth; I came not to cast peace but a sword' (10:34). As Waetjen reminds us, "the climax of Jesus' second discourse" which we have here in 10:34-39 "has been structured to parallel the manifesto of 5:17" (Waetjen 2017:131-132), found in Jesus' first discourse (the so-called Sermon on the Mount): "Do not think that I came to tear down the law and the prophets" (5:17). Matthew 5:17–48 "may be considered to be", Waetjen argues, "the consolidation of his ethical teaching. Its interpretation of the Mosaic legislation stands in opposition to the constructions of law that are being pronounced and promulgated by the scribes and Pharisees in the context of the gospel's addressees" (Waetjen 2017:68). Matthew's Jesus, I would argue, is offering his disciples ways of working with the Hebrew Bible, their scriptures, that may offer a temporary place and the temporary peace of interpretive resilience, but that ultimately must lead to an interpretive struggle with the scriptures, forging the sword of interpretive resistance.

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