

Biblical Justification for Basic Income Grant: The contribution of the silenced voices through a dialogical reading of John 5:1-9.

Abstract

It is said that the life span of contextual theology is short-lived. Once it has achieved its goal, there is no need for it. In the same vein, it is also propagated that contextual theology has “lost its purpose in that it has become the property of academics and intellectuals”¹ This being true, however in reality: Contextual theology remains to be of relevance! Its relevancy can be best observed in the usage of the Bible in our communities, by both the powerful and the powerless as a tool for appropriating answers to questions we deal with in our particular circumstances². As its importance cannot be overemphasized, it has a very important role to play in the Basic Income Grant (hereafter BIG) campaign as a tool for conscientizing and mobilization. It provides a safe space for expression to the silent voices of the marginalized poor through a dialogical reading process in the form of contextual bible study.

Introduction

This paper is motivated by two events. First, the leadership workshop conducted in Windhoek on 4-9th of August 2006 with the Basic Income Grant Coalition of Namibia where I was tasked to co-present a paper on “Universalism and people’s theology”.

At this workshop I conducted a Contextual Bible Study on John 5:1-9 with the participants to demonstrate People’s Theology in Praxis”.

The responses to this Bible Study was so impressive in articulating issues dealing with BIG from Biblical perspective and aroused my curiosity as to the possibilities this Bible Study process can open up.

Second is the report in the Namibian newspaper (22 May). The Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia is quoted as having rejected justification of the BIG on Biblical Basis. He used (Genesis 3:19) “In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread”. Looking at this event from the possible perspective of the ordinary people who uses the Bible everyday, an opposite question provoked: **Is there a biblical justification for a BIG?**

Aim

The aim of this paper is to argue for cognisance of importance of the Bible. First in its provision of safe space for people to reflect on life threatening issues they are facing. Secondly to it provision of a platform for the marginalized poor to express their views on life-giving questions like BIG.

¹ See Speckmann’s contribution in Speckmann and Kaufmann (eds) in *Towards an Agenda for Contextual Theology: Essays in honour of Albert Nolan*

² Derived from Nolan who uses this term when he explains the importance of contextual theologies, which in his words is experienced by believers in particular circumstances as “dealing with ‘my own faith questions’” (Ibid).

And thirdly to proof that his platform can be provided through Dialogical Reading Process aptly named Contextual Bible Study. John 5:1-9 is used as an example to illustrate this point.

Goal

While highlighting the importance of the Bible in Africa and Namibia in particular:

It is anticipated that the need to listen to the silent poor and the marginalized voices will be highlighted.

In addition, the question of how possible extraction of views of ordinary people on Biblical Justification for the BIG can take place through the use of Contextual Bible Study will be explored. Lastly it will be argued that **Contextual Bible study** has relevance as a tool towards **consientizing and mobilization** in the **Basic Income Grant Campaign**.

Paper consist of two sections.

1. **Theoretical part** – Provides background on importance of the Bible Africa and Namibia in particular.
2. **Practical part** – Explain Contextual Bible Study process and demonstrate how it can be used as a tool towards conscientizing and mobilization in the BIG Campaign in Namibia.

Part one

The Importance of the Bible

1. Exploring the Tug of War

Christianity draws inspiration from Bible. The Bible is revered as the visible “word of God”. Any irreverent handling of it is “regarded as an insult to God, which no sane person should engage in” (Nkwoka: 200:327). Having the Bible is like having God on your side.

Important aspect regarding the historical encounter between Western/Christian culture and African culture is best summed up with this well-known anecdote:

“When the white man came to our country he had the Bible and we had the land. The white man said to us ‘let us pray’. After the prayer, the white man had the land and we had the Bible”(West 2003:ix).

Hitherto the Bible became a tool of power in the hands of those using it to their advantage. It became both the property of the colonizer and the colonized, thus the rope in a game of “**Tug of War**” between, those who want to retain power at all cost and those who want to regain the power they lost. In this **tug of war** the Bible is the rope between those in power who uses the Bible as a tool to defend their position keep the masses in check, and those who are subjected and discriminated against who want to regain power.

In the **tug of war** the subjected masses had no other option but to read the Bible using their experiences, the realities they are facing as the point of departure (contextually) as

the Bible represent the rope to reclaim with what was lost, namely the land, the political power as well as economic power.

A good example of this is:

In Namibia during apartheid any piece of literature exposing or threatening status quo were banned. During this times Bishop Kameeta (2006:22) regarding the message in the Book of Amos prophesying about injustice against the poor said:

“If the message in the book of prophet Amos was not in the Bible, it could have been banned long ago”³.

According to Bishop Kameeta, it is a surprise that they did not ban the Bible all together.

This statement illustrates the importance of the Bible to both the Apartheid State and the oppressed people alike. The Bible has been both “oppressor and liberator, it has supported apartheid and struggled against apartheid; it stand ‘against them’ and it stands ‘with them’ (West 2003:xvii)”. Thus the Bible is central and important to all classes, both to the powerful and the powerless, wealthy and the marginalized poor, to the government official and the ordinary person alike. These groups constitute the participants in what I term the “**tug of war**”⁴.

Another aspect of **tug-of-war** is in Bible reading process in the church. Historically it played itself out between those who have the authority and the ordinary members who are also ordinary Bible readers”. This process of “religious colonisation”⁵ left reading and interpretation of the Bible in the hands of the selected few, the theologians and the ministers. They are the ones reading an interpreting, even when it is about matters concerning ordinary members.

They are the ones interpreting the interpretations of the ordinary members, thus having sole monopoly over the interpretation and reading of the Bible.

In the context of a parish: Between congregants and the ministers, in most cases the interpretation of the local pastor is final, hence the silencing of the voice of the ordinary bible reader, for whom the bible is “the living book of practical realities” (Nkwokwa 2000:329).

Not that the ordinary members do not read the Bible. On the contrary, ordinary readers do read the Bible and are not just receivers. A case in point is the example of people living in the so-called shantytowns in the informal settlements⁶.

³ In pre-independent Namibia banning of politically and socially conscious literature was the order of the day and the Bishop makes this point in light of the prophesy of prophet Amos regarding compassion for the poor and the oppressed.

⁴ A field game where contestants mark a line in the middle, and hold a rope on both ends to pull. The first to pull the opponent over the line is the winner. According to Merriam Webster dictionary tug-of-war also refers to “a struggle for supremacy, a continual tug-of-war between the authorities and the masses.

⁵ I borrow the term from Nkwoka who define it in Nigerian context as the process where mission-trained ministers had absolute control over the scriptures and their interpretations were final”. See *the role of the Bible in Igbo Christianit of Nigeria in The Bible in Africa.* (2000:327,328)

⁶ In Namibia informal settlements are areas where people go and settle themselves “informally”, that is, without official authorisation municipality or the town council. Often without running water and electricity they build shacks from plastic, boxes, and corrugated iron.

People living in these areas are the poorest of the poor. In most cases, they are also illiterate. Surprisingly if you enter these shacks the only book you will find in most of the houses, is the Bible, even in the house of those who cannot read.

The point being, that the Bible fulfil a very important need in the lives of the people and thus plays an important role in their lives.

The Bible and the silent “but not silent” voices

We live in a strange world. When we argue from a position of power we are quick to dismiss those who try to make a point by citing the Bible as “hiding behind the Bible” and “not wanting to face the reality”.

On the other hand, when we are threatened, we quickly resort in desperation to the Bible to defend our positions. A good example of this is the Prime Minister quoted as having used the Bible verse “in the sweat of your face shall you eat bread” (Genesis 3:19), as justification for not accepting the BIG.

As I showed out already, the Bible is very important in the lives of ordinary people. Yet they are silent. Their voices are not heard even tough the call for the Basic Income Grant is born out of the concern for them, as most of them are the poor and the marginalized in the society.

These voices are not silent out of choice, but because of hegemony, which is the existing order in the society which influences societal behaviour through historical and cultural heritage. Graham Philpott, in his book with the unusual title “*Jesus is Tricky God is Undemocratic*” makes a statement that best sum up the situation of the poor and the marginalized in the Namibian context. He states:

Members of the oppressed community are often the invisible participants of society, the superfluous unknown people, marginalized by the dominant sectors of society. Yet they are usually the majority of the society, and are those who must pay the heaviest price for the maintenance of the current system. Not only are they invisible, but their knowledge and practices, their wisdom and experience, are also invisible or undervalued. It is presume that as uneducated people, they are merely the recipients of the expert’s superior knowledge and solutions. They have no access to the institutions that are responsible for the production of knowledge, and have no way of influencing the development of appropriate and useful knowledge, let alone determining which questions and issues are researched” (1993:17).

It is in this light that the prevailing hegemonic order in the society ensures that these voices remain silent through ideology. Ideology on the other hand, provides the doctrinal and moral basis for hegemony and ensures that people think the way they think and behave the way they behave in the community. Thus, ideological hegemony⁷ makes sure that the voices of the poor people are not heard because historically and culturally they have been groomed to keep quiet and work since they are uneducated. Hegemonic order thus keeps them silent for we live in the world geared towards protecting the interest of

⁷ Note: My understanding of hegemony is largely drawn from West analysis in this regard He defines hegemony as “that order of signs and practise, relations and distinctions, images and epistemologies – drawn from a historically situated cultural field – that come to be taken for granted as the natural and received shape of the world and everything that inhabits it; its power lies in what it silences - what it prevents people from thinking and saying (West 2003:23)

the wealthy. The silent voices make sure that the interest of the wealthy are protected and that they keep the system going as silent partners, not eligible to make a decision for themselves. The only way they can become influential is by either acquiring wealth or through education. Unfortunately, education comes at a price and the silent voices must remain silent much longer. This does not mean that they do not possess wisdom. They do, but are not allowed to express it in public because it will disturb ideological hegemony. Ideological hegemony also influences the use of the Bible in the tug-of-war described above as the following statement by Ukpong indicates⁸:

The Bible itself was written by the elite to serve their interest. It is steeped in the ideology of the elite, is oppressive and in places to serve their interest” (2000:20).

Thus, it is clear that the Bible is abusable in the sense that it can be used to serve the interest of the powerful, the wealthy, as well as, the government official.

Yet, the Bible remains the “most significant resource in Africa, especially in Christian Africa. It is certainly the most widely available and most widely translated book on the continent” (Maluleke 2000:86).

As to the question Why? Let me opt for an alternative, where I propose that the Bible is widely used because it actually provides a safe space where people can express their feelings about issues they face in everyday life. A safe space where they can in honesty and without fear reveal their innermost feeling on issues that confronts them in everyday life.

Give us a safe space: The Bible

Before clarifying why I say that the Bible provides a safe space allow me to introduce another terms besides hegemony and ideology described above. Bear with me as I explain this because together with ideology and hegemony understanding this will aid in understanding the Contextual Bible process, which we will deal with in the second section. The terms I want to introduce is “public transcript” and “hidden transcript”⁹.

To explain this two terms let me use the following example. A principal at a theological institution, himself a clergyman was very harsh with the kitchen-workers of the institution. One day he called all workers together and announced stricter working regulations. Understandably, the workers did not like him, even more the message of the day, but since he was the boss they did not show it, in fact they even laughed at some of his jokes. Among the workers was an old man; lets call him Oupa Jan. The principal asked him to pray at the end of the meeting. Oupa Jan, knowing that the principal do not understand *Damara/Nama* the local language, closed his eyes and said. “*Oupa Jan /gore, Oupa Jan /gore ti, ise ge Oupa Jan a /goresa //kh-//kha ha-i xui khama. Amen.* Literaly translated his prayer went like this. “You say Oupa Jan pray, Oupa Jan pray, as if you ever taught Oupa Jan how to pray. Amen.

⁸ Ukpong’s statement is a warning against uncritical acceptance of the Bible as resource for liberation theology, or black theology for that matter, since it can become a tool for justifying oppressive ideologies . See his essay *Developments in Biblical Interpretations in Africa: Historical and Hermeneutical Directions in The Bible in Africa* (West & Dube eds).

⁹ Once again I use West analysis of James Scott’s work “*Domination and the art of resistance*”. (West 2003:23-25)

Naturally, everyone burst out in laughter after the prayer except the Principal who did not understand a word.

This illustrates how the “public transcript” and “hidden” transcript plays itself out in ideological hegemony. The Principal represents the dominant, and the workers the dominated. Ideological hegemony constrains the workers from displaying their true feelings for the Reverend in “public”. They do not show that they dislike his dominating and oppressive attitude, hence laughing even at his jokes. When Oupa Jan got the change to pray, or rather say something, he uses the opportunity to bring the “hidden transcript” into the public domain. Knowing that the Principal is a Reverend he mocks at the inability of the Reverend to present himself as a man of God (since he oppresses them) by using the opportunity that most symbolises contact with God, namely the prayer, to say what he could not say in the open, thus revealing his honest opinion of the Reverend *i.e.* that the Reverend is so far from being a man of God, and through his oppressive mentality cannot even positively influence him to pray. Of course this serves as relief for the rest of the other workers for they got a change to get back at this dominating Reverend, hence the loud laughter.

From this example it is clear that hegemony and ideology have something in common, namely the “power to silence and dominate”. This does not mean that the silenced and the dominated go mute. On the contrary, they still have means of articulating and reflecting on their circumstances. Thus the issue of “hidden transcript” and “public transcript” (West 2003:24,25) as epitomized within ideological hegemony should be taken seriously. Within the interface of tug-of-war, the oppressed poor and marginalized uses the same Bible with the wealthy oppressor. The difference lies in how they use it. As oppose to the dominant’s usage that imposes subordination and passivity, the oppressed poor and marginalized uses the hidden transcript to “articulate and act out forms of resistance and defiance that is usually thwarted” in environments of constant power application (Ibid 2003:25). This happens in “secluded settings” where the poor and the oppressed speak with “less constraint” on the level of “political action and struggle” about the issues they face in everyday life. This explains the display of silence and subjectivity in the “public transcript” and expression of discontent and rejection in the “hidden transcript”.

Now, for the “hidden transcript” to be revealed it requires a safe environment. While aware that most proponents of contextual Bible study prefer this safe environment to be an “organised group” (West), or even a physical space like the church, for the purpose of conscientizing and mobilization in the Basic Income Grant campaign, I propose that the Bible is enough to provide this safe environment. My preference for the Bible as the safe space stems out of the idea that I expressed already, namely that we tend to use the Bible to our advantage in a threatening situation. Lest we forget, the Prime Minister quotes from the Bible when threatened by the logical solution to poverty reduction offered by the BIG. The same also goes for the marginalized poor whom, while the authoritative figure like the Prime Minister uses the public domain to justify his rejection of BIG, put up a front through “public transcript” and act like they agree with what their leader says. The same people, given a safe space will come out with the “hidden transcript” expressing sentiments that they do not really agree with the Prime Ministers view. Thus,

the Bible provides a safe space even to an individual drawing inspiration from it for facing hardships, or a group of people coming together to do the same by reading the Bible together.

The point is, people feel safe when they express their hardship and articulate their wishes through the Bible.

It is clear that the Bible plays a very important role in the lives of ordinary people. It is also clear that ordinary people are sometimes quiet regarding issues like BIG, that concerns them because ideological hegemony silences them. This silence does not mean that they do not have anything to say. On the contrary, what they want to say is hidden. The public transcript is what we see and hear as that this people are saying and doing, but the hidden transcript needs a safe space so that this people can speak about their realities. The Bible provides this space. Through contextual Bible study process we propose to listen to this hidden transcript and the contribution of this people towards the Basic Income Grant debate. Allow me now to focus on the possible use of the Bible as means of conscientizing and mobilization in the BIG campaign.

Part Two

The use of the Bible as means of conscientizing and mobilization

Introduction

What is contextual Bible study? As the name rightly indicates it is the study of the Bible. But its point of departure is the context of the people, the realities they face daily, the problems they are encountering socially, economically and politically everyday. It is born out of the fact that people do read the bible, in particular those who are poor and oppressed to make sense of their existence. It does not matter whether the person is illiterate or literate, even those who cannot read, “re-member” the Bible from what they heard from the sermons, funerals, Bible Studies and general prayers and can relate this stories to their experience.

As oppose to studying from above as we would do academically, this people read the Bible from below using the resources they naturally possess to interpret the Bible. Thus Contextual Bible study is the reading interface between “biblical scholars and ordinary readers” (West 2003:x,xi). Contextual Bible study is ideal because of the fact that “biblical scholarship” and “ordinary readers reading resources” comes together to let the Bible reading process “turn full circle” (2003:5), employing both the scholarly knowledge of the trained reader and the reading resources of the untrained reader. Through this process the predominant “reading for” rooted in “religious colonialism” or “hijacking” of Biblical interpretation by academics or intellectuals is cancelled out and the process of “reading with” that allows for listening to the “others” contributions and wisdom is established. However, the process of “reading with” is not spontaneous or instantaneous. In the Contextual Bible Study interface, the Biblical scholar assumes the role of the facilitator that guides the Bible study through question for reflection. In this way the Bible study can become the tool for conscientizing and mobilization in the context of Basic Income Grant campaign. How does this happen? I will now give an overview of my utilization of this in reference to John 5:1-9

Approaching Contextual Bible Study

At the leadership workshop I conducted the contextual Bible study on John 5:1-9 as the Bible text. The theme of the Bible study was already determined as BASIC INCOME GRANT. In the preparation of the Bible study I was well aware of this theme. I was well aware of my role in the process, namely that of the facilitator. I had also to make and uphold certain commitments

1. The commitment to read the Bible from the perspective of the context of the people.
2. The commitment to read the Bible in community with others.
3. The commitment to read the Bible critically.
4. A commitment to individual and social transformation through contextual Bible study (West 1993:12).

Together with these commitments I had to make sure that the Bible study addresses the issue at hand namely BIG. At this point perhaps, the aspect of the profile of the groups I will read with comes in. The group that I was going to read was not an “organised Bible study group” but was drawn from wide range of civil organisations. Most proponents of Contextual Bible study¹⁰ proposes that the group the Bible study is conducted with should preferably be an organised group on the grounds that it helps them to identify with each other. As West emphasise, in this way “ they share similar experiences of domination...and finds a safe sequestered social site where the control, surveillance and repression of the dominant...are at least able to reach”. While noting this, for the purposes of sensitising and mobilization in the Namibian context, I am of opinion that the opposite can be true. That is, that the fact that the people came together, whether they are organised or not, to reflect on the Bible is enough, since I am of opinion that the Bible is already providing a safe space for expression and articulation. Another aspect that I support my claim with is the theme of the Bible Study. Guiding the Bible study in the right direction is the theme, which serves as “a kind of indicator as to “why we are together to reflect on the Bible. Therefore, although the profile is important it should not be the determining factor for conducting the Bible study as the theme already indicates as to what can be expected as we come together to reflect on the Bible. Together with the them, the questions guiding the Bible Study also plays an influencing role as they like the theme directs the Bible Study towards a certain aim.

Contextual Bible Study: The report

Let me give a report of the Bible I conducted in Windhoek on the 4-9th of August 2006.. After announcing the theme, we open the Bible study with the following text.

John 5:1-9

1. After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
2. Now there is in Jerusalem at the sheep (gate) a pool called in Hebrew Bethesda, with five porticoes.
3. In these lay a large number of ill, blind, lame and crippled.
4. From time to time, an angel of the Lord comes down and stirs up the water. Then the first one going into the pool after the stirring of the water is cured of whatever disease he may have.
5. One man was there who has been ill for thirty-eight years.

¹⁰ See West (2003:95).

6. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been ill for a long time, he said to him, do you want to be well?"
7. The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am on my way, someone else gets down there before me".
8. Jesus said to him, "rise, take up your mat and walk.
9. Immediately the man became well, took up his mat and walked.

After reading this text we discussed the next questions on the text with a neighbour. Note that this discussion question had a dual purpose. They served as an ice-breaker as well as possible "get to know each other" session.

1. What is the text about?
2. Identify the main characters in the text. What are their roles?

After recording the responses of everybody we proceed to the next stage. Let me briefly state the importance of recording participant's responses. In this way people are given the change to own the Bible study. By taking everybody's responses seriously we allow the participants to cross the boundary from the "public transcript" to the "hidden transcript".

In the next stage we break up into groups. As John 5:1-9 is a known and popular text I had to make sure that this text should be read in unfamiliar way and also guide us to the issue at hand namely the Basic Income Grant. Therefore the groups were provided with an altered text. Note: that this is not the norm and was necessary for guiding the Bible study towards the issue at hand. As we go in groups, it is important to ask the groups to elect among themselves a facilitator as well as a secretary for every group that will facilitate and take notes to report back.

1. After this, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
2. Now there is in Jerusalem at the sheep (gate) a pool called in Hebrew Bethesda, with five porticoes.
3. In these lay a large number of poor, ill, blind, lame and crippled.
4. From time to time, an angel of the Lord comes down and stirs up the water. Then the first one going into the pool after the stirring of the water is cured of whatever disease he may have.
5. One man was there who has been crippled by poverty for thirty-eight years.
6. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been crippled by poverty for a long time, he said to him, do you want to be empowered?"
7. The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am on my way, someone else gets down there before me, so I cannot get empowered".
8. Jesus said to him, "rise, take up your mat and walk, you are empowered.
9. Immediately the man became empowered, took up his mat and walked¹¹.

¹¹ Note that his is an altered version for the purpose of this Bible study. The reason is explained above.

Questions

3. What does the pool symbolize in this text?
4. What makes it impossible for the poor man to get to the pool.

The groups come together to report and everything is recorded again. After that, we go into groups again to answer the following questions.

5. In your opinion is there a message regarding the ongoing debate on BIG in Namibia in this text?
6. What should we do about this message?

Once again every response is recorded.

Outcomes

Briefly what I tried to demonstrate here is a practical example of the Contextual Bible Study. How does the Basic Income Grant come in. The key is in the response of the participants. The first two questions and the last two are community conscious questions. This questions let the participant read the text, but from their own context. Surely the old way of doing thing, the exegesis is not overlooked. The questions in the middle are critical conscious questions. Here the participants must get behind the text. Although this might not be so visible from this Bible study, the aim is to get the participants to critically reflect on the text by asking questions like, what kind of a pool is this? What did it symbolise in its original context? Surely, the role of the facilitator as a trained reader comes in handy here as to the provision of much needed information on the sociological background to the text.

In the introduction, I said that this way of doing Bible study opens up possibilities to use the Bible in the BIG campaign through providing a safe space for articulating and reflection on issues of concern. Reflecting on the responses of the participants has showed out that a safe space has been created to reflect on the Bible about an issue that is viewed as non-patriotic issue in Namibia. This is because it seems as if the ruling party, through the stance of the government as epitomized by the utterances of the Prime Minister rejected the idea, thereby forcing the citizens to choose between being loyal to the government or disloyal.

The first question, what is the text about has drawn answers like: The text is about healing, miracle, disadvantage, structural exclusion, empowerment, crippled person, human weakness, network for change etc. The responses on the second question were straight forward, as they deal with the characters in the text like Jesus, the cripple man, and others. With these two questions the participants already seemed to display awareness of what benefits the BIG will bring. Responses like structural exclusion, disadvantage shows there is articulation towards identifying economic issues from the text.

The next two questions are the most surprising ones. Responses here were not direct and to the point like the previous ones. There was a sense of trying to relate their world with

the world portrayed in the text. So, the responses were more on the world of the text. The pool was identified as the government or the economy. Participants identified that the man lying there for 38 years does not possess means to partake in the economy or get any help to be accommodated in the government structures. Thus responses were more in the line of “crippled by poverty, that the economic issue they see here is “lack of empowerment”, that there is “no assistance to education”, and “lack of access to wealth or the economy”. These responses indicate the hidden feelings brought onto the public stage, kind of revealing the hidden transcript. I am sure the discussions in the groups were heated debates on this issue.

The last two questions were intended to let the participants reflect on the future and the possible plan of action. Therefore it was not surprising that the participants gave the introduction of the BIG thumbs up and in line with the will of God. Deducing from Jesus action they interpret the text as saying people should be empowered. Even those who cannot get into the pool, those who does not have the means to get there must be helped as Jesus helped the man in the pool. In practice, in the reality we are facing today this can happen through the BIG.

As to what can be done, the responses included commitment to spread the message of the BIG, to take the message to the communities so that they can be sensitised about the issue. There were calls for awareness campaigns to let the people know that poverty is not of their own doing, but is caused by structures, thereby making it a structural sin. Expressed was the feeling that the government should be held accountable for fulfilling its task of empowering the people. Although there was more responses and more interpretations the scope of this paper does not provide enough room forcing me to stop here.

Conclusion

What I tried to do here was to demonstrate that the Bible can be used as an essential tool in BIG campaign, in a country like Namibian where the majority of the people are Christians. Contextual Bible study can be a useful tool in sensitising the people about BIG. Since the call for BIG is born out of a concern for the poor and the marginalized who maintains the economic system and who are in majority but are excluded when it comes to decision Contextual Bible study process can provide a platform for responses to the social hardships people are facing. There is thus an urgent need for contextual theological reflection on the issue of BIG. Surely as much as we can justify rejection of BIG on Biblical basis the opposite can be true given that we listen to the silenced voices. And it is, that there is a Biblical justification for the Basic Income Grant.

In conclusion, Contextual Bible study is a process. It has disciplines built into to make it practical. One can only feel its empowering, sensitising and mobilising power by partaking in the process. What is most important is what it achieves, namely to give voice to poor and the marginalized. Hopefully through using it as a means of conscientizing and mobilising we will be able to move in solidarity with the poor and the marginalized, sharingly and understanding as we strive together for a future embedded in Universalism.

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