

**'REWRITING' THE BIBLE: ITS CANONICAL IMPLICATIONS AND MEANING FOR
ANGLICANS IN THE CITY OF HARARE**

by

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ABSTRACT

The subject of ‘rewriting’ the Bible has caused considerable discussion in several forums. In theological debates this has led to the writing of a number of books. In church situations, there has been a lot of talk concerning this issue. In Zimbabwe, this discussion was popularised by Canaan Banana, in his challenge to the world regarding the unstable situation in Palestine. C. Banana challenged religious leaders particularly, church leaders, to consider the current Bible which he accused of several weaknesses that include, elevating some people such as the Israelites over others, the Palestinians. He also challenged the current Bible for suggesting that space was not homogenous, in that some space such as the Holy Land is much holier than others. His final blow on the current Bible was that it is oppressive in many ways.

Several people were incensed by C. Banana’s proposal and there was a plethora of reactions in the local press from Christians who directed a lot of anger and disappointment at Banana. Most of these people were church leaders, such as the retired Anglican Bishop of Harare, Bishop Peter Hatendi. Lots of discussion also followed in different denominations regarding the subject of ‘rewriting’ the Bible. However, the general trend in most Christian groups was that they were against the idea of rewriting the Bible.

On the other hand history has also shown that there have been efforts particularly within the last quarter of the twentieth century to challenge the current Bible for what the advocates referred to as oppression. To this end there have been feminists, calling for a Bible that is gender sensitive. In other countries people who have a different sexual orientation such as the homosexuals also challenged the current Bible on the basis of its character that seems to present these people as sinners before God.

However, this research established that in the Anglican Church the majority of the people are against the idea of rewriting the Bible. Such a stance is arrived at mainly from a position of faith. Some people also feel that tampering with the Bible in any way is tantamount to ‘adding or subtracting’ something from the Bible, a thing that the Bible strongly discourages (Rev22.18). Any person who advocates ‘rewriting’ of Bible is therefore seen as a Satanist, who deserves to be punished by God. The Bible is taken by many people as having fallen from heaven, directly from God. Given this scenario any talk of the ‘rewriting’ of the Bible is anathema in the Anglican Church in the City of Harare.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother Rosemary Chigweshe, my wife Victoria Faith Musodza and our two daughters Fadzai and Farai Musodza.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.Y.A.H.	Anglican Youth Association of Harare
A.S.B.	Alternative Service Book
B.M.G.	Bernard Mizeki Guild
C.W.A.	Church Women's Association
M.U.	Mothers Union
Y.A.	Young Adults

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