



## **ROLE OF CULTURE IN BIBLE INTERPRETATION: A REFERENCE TO ASANTE-TWI BIBLE READING COMMUNITY**

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### **Abstract:**

Bible interpretation plays a major role in helping the local indigenes to understand the gospel message in their mother-tongue. Since the Bible was written in the cultural settings of the original audience, which is different from the culture of the present reader, Bible interpreters try to import the culture of the original readers in the process of interpreting the Bible; making it difficult for present readers to understand some of the concepts of the Judeo-Christian scriptures. Using Paul Hiebert's suggestion for Bible interpreters and missiologists to make the gospel have a proper meaning to the local indigenes through proper interpretation, this article argues that Bible interpreters should interpret the Bible into the Asante-Twi reading community considering their culture, as Bible readers cannot be separable from their culture. It also proposes that proper Bible interpretation should meet the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimension of the new environment such as the Asante, Ghanaian, or African culture to help the Asante-Twi (Ghanaian or African) reading community to understand God's word in their environment.

**Keywords:** Bible interpretation, culture, dimensions of culture, *Asantefoc*, Asante-Twi Bible

### **1. Introduction**

One of the biggest challenges for the study of the Bible involves reading, re-reading, and interpreting in a manner consistent with the concepts of the original languages—Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. According to Eck (2006), the initial Christian efforts for a systematic biblical interpretation can be traced back to Africa. This followed the exegetical development in biblical studies after the Enlightenment, after the allegorical method of interpretation was replaced by the historical-critical reading of the biblical text in the eighteenth century A.D. followed by an array of literary approaches in the nineteenth

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century. He observes that certain post-modern readings of the biblical text like deconstruction and social-scientific criticism came up later (Eck, 2006). This, according to him, has led to the impact of modern methods that were used in the middle of the twentieth century A.D. in south of Sahara Africa (Eck, 2006). And by 1970's the use of these methods in biblical interpretation became the norm (van Eck, 2006). In as much as it is factual that biblical interpretation has its roots in Africa, it is now "...mostly the product of the modern methods of Western interpretation and exegesis" (Eck, 2006). Surprisingly, however, biblical scholars in Africa have developed a parallel method of exegesis, which according to Ukpong (2000) has its main focus on the "*encounter between the biblical text and the African context.*" Eck (2006) teaches that the biblical text is linked to the African context in such a way that the focus of interpretation is on the communities that receive the text rather than on those communities that created the text, or the text itself. Tate (2008) describes this method of interpretation as "Reader-Centred Approaches to Meaning," for it takes into consideration the world of the readers—their language, beliefs, values, and customs—in front of the text. Thus, the reading communities are able to bring to the text their culture—beliefs, values, and customs—of reality; helping them to read and understand within their multiplex and multifaceted world. The purpose of this paper is to find out the role culture plays in the interpretation of the Asante-Twi Bibles (1964 and 2012), to help the Asante-Twi reading community to own the Christian faith in the Asante-Twi, for the Bible is interpreted into their language. It is also to help Bible users and interpreters to do meaningful interpretation that will be suitable in the culture of the present or new readers of the Bible [Asante-Twi reading community]; thereby to enable them to understand God's word in their environment.

## **2. Bible Interpretation**

Bible interpretation falls under the big umbrella of biblical hermeneutics, which has traditionally been defined as that branch of theology which studies the locus of meaning and the principles of interpretation (Tate, 2008). It is one leg of hermeneutics which draws out the implications of exegesis—the process of critically examining a biblical text to discover the meaning as the original audience would have understood—for contemporary readers and hearers (Tate, 2008). In other words, biblical interpretation is that part of hermeneutics that makes a biblical text relevant to contemporary readers and hearers by the applications inferred from exegesis. However, there are times doing biblical hermeneutics and interpreting the Bible connotes the same meaning; they refer to the method of finding out the meaning and significance of a text. In this regard, using the words of Braaten (1966), Bible interpretation could be explained as the scientific reflection on how a biblical word, text, and or an event in the past time and culture of the author may be understood and become existentially meaningful in our present situation taking into consideration our [the new environment] language, culture, and worldview. Bible translation [or interpretation] into the Asante-Twi language (which is part of the Asante culture) "*is like a good modern Asante-Twi translation [or interpretation] being read to*

*make it look like as though it was produced in Asante-Twi language by an Asante, written at the time the original text was written, and giving a reflection of the total context of the original work in language and terms understandable in our time” (Asamoah, 2020a).*

### 3. Methodology

In Bible interpretation, getting the literary meaning of the text is very crucial, without which interpreters may generate divisions from one or two sources. Three main approaches have been engaged over the years to find the meaning of a text: author-centred, text-centred, and reader-centred (Tate, 2008). The first approach directs its attention to the world behind the text. The interpreter focuses on getting the meaning of the text as intended by the author, taking into consideration the historical authenticity and circumstances of the text to the contemporary readers and hearers (Tate, 2008). Kuwornu-Adjaottor (2012) believes that this method is the oldest form of Bible interpretation. With the second approach, the interpreter focuses on the world within the text, for they hold that authentic meaning of the text is not ascertained from outside world (Tate, 2008). And the third approach which happens to be the newest focuses on the readers or reading community. It helps the interpreter get the meaning of the text taking the readers or the reading community into consideration (Tate, 2008). The approach allows the reading community to bring their own opinion and concerns such as their experiences and interests [thus, their culture] to the text. It holds that *“a text means nothing until someone means something by it”* (Tate, 2008). In other words, the reader generates meaning of the text, for the text engages the reader who could be the interpreter, as the reader engages the text. There is always mutual interaction between the text and the reader; hence, the reader in collaboration with the text is able to bring out meaning of the text, and not the author (McKnight, 1985). The culture of the readers or reading community is central in this approach for interpretation (Tate, 2008).

### 4. Culture

The word “culture” is the most significant concept in anthropology (the study of all aspects of human life, past and present). It has attracted many definitions from many scholars as they engage with the subject. In the widest sense, I will say culture means the way and manner a group of people, normally beyond a family—unitary or extended—live and do things in common as corporate action. Paul Hiebert defines culture as the *“more or less integrated systems of ideas, feelings, and values and their associated patterns of behaviour and products shared by a group of people who organise and regulate what they think, feel and do”* (Hiebert, 1985).

According to the Willowbank Report (1978) culture is

*“an integrated system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to*

*others, talk, pray, dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc.), and of institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law courts, temples or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs, etc.), which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security, and continuity."*

This means that culture shows the belief of a group of people and what they cherish. It brings them together as one and keep them together over a period of time. These groups of people get a sense of belongingness, security, identity and dignity by participating in their culture.

Charles Kraft also adds that culture contains all that people learn from birth which enable them to perform as living beings in their environment (Kraft, 2005). This is so because such people have been carefully indoctrinated with their beliefs, values, customs, and worldviews from before birth in the patterns of their behaviour (Kraft, 2005). This makes it difficult for them to be separable from their culture. Any act to do so will make them irrelevant and functionless, for they have been cut off from what supports their living. This corroborates Howell and Paris (2011) metaphor of culture which says that as a fish cannot stay in any place other than in water or river, so no one can live outside their culture, for they will cease to exist. This suggests that people will find it difficult to understand or relate in a different culture; they have been indoctrinated with their own even before birth. They easily understand conversations in their language which forms part of their culture than in a foreign culture.

In explaining further, Howell and Paris (2011) give other metaphor of culture—as a lens and an onion. As a lens, everyone has a way of viewing, which is dependent on their culture. Thus, a Bible reading community will perceive reality differently when using the culture of the biblical authors. Any attempt to push the culture of the writer or author on the Bible reading community will make it difficult for them to see, for they would have put on a lens they are not familiar with. With the onion metaphor for culture, Howell and Paris argue that culture is seen as onion; it has many “layers” which represents behaviours, and material products as the surface layer, and values and beliefs found in the subsequent ones (Howell & Paris, 2011). “*At the centre is worldview, the deepest assumptions about what is really real and how life works*” (Howell & Paris, 2011). This makes culture for a group of people to be different from that of the other. Thus, the culture of one reading community will be different from the other reading community, for they do not have a common ancestry.

The import of Howell and Paris metaphor for explaining culture is for Bible interpreters to consider the culture of the readers or reading communities and not to be glued to the culture of the original author. In this regard, interpreters are to make meaningful suggestions that will be suitable in the culture of the Bible readers or reading communities before initiating interpretation exercise. According to Tate, this is well done when Bible interpreters allow Bible readers or reading communities to bring their own opinion and concerns such as their experiences and interests [thus, their culture] to the text, for “*a text means nothing until someone means something by it*” (Tate, 2008). It helps

Bible readers or reading communities to generate meaning of the text in their own culture in like manner as the original recipients did.

#### **4.1 Dimensions of Culture**

Paul Hiebert discusses three dimensions of culture—cognitive, affective and evaluative—that when considered by Bible interpreters and missiologists can help the gospel to have a proper meaning to the people through proper interpretation (Hiebert et al, 1976; Hiebert, 1994). Where Bible message is not interpreted rightly, proper conversion would not be attained; making people not to theologise aright (Asamoah, 2020a). However, the gospel meets its intended purpose when interpretation is rightly done. Hiebert posits that scripture is God’s divine revelation given to humankind in a particular historical and sociological context (Hiebert, 2009); hence, interpreters do not have to carry over the meaning of a particular idea from the author’s world into the new culture, for they may have a different meaning in the new environment (Asamoah, 2020b).

##### **A. Cognitive Dimension**

Hiebert explains that the cognitive dimension has to do with the knowledge shared by members of a group or society. Without shared knowledge, communication and community life is not possible. Shared knowledge arranges the people’s experiences into categories and organises these categories into larger systems of knowledge. It tells people what exists and what does not. It also includes the assumptions and beliefs they make about reality, the nature of the world, and how it works. It provides us with the fundamental ingredients of our thoughts (Hiebert, 2008).

##### **B. Affective Dimension**

The affective dimension has to do with the feelings people have with their attitudes, notions of beauty, tastes in food and dress, likes and dislikes, and ways of enjoying themselves or experiencing sorrow (Hiebert, 2008). People are influenced in their taste in music, art, dress, food, as well as how they feel towards themselves (Hiebert, 2008). This enables them to identify their feelings and caring for someone or something.

##### **C. Evaluative Dimension**

According to Hiebert, the evaluative dimension talks of how the cultural values of the people are used in judging human relationships; whether one is morally good or not. They include notions such as virtues, standards, morals and manners (Hiebert, 2008). These provide standards that are used by the people in judging what is truth and falsehood, likes and dislikes, and right and wrong (Hiebert, 2008). It ranks some forms of behaviour as proper and others as unacceptable (Hiebert, 2008). When a person does something contrary to these accepted values in the community, the person becomes aware of the particular kind of lifestyle they find themselves, for these values judge their actions.

## 5. The Asante-Twi Bible Reading Community

According to Gedzi (2014), an Asante (or *Asanteni*) may be someone proficient of speaking the Asante-Twi language, and whose parents—emphasis is on the mother—being an Asante, and more importantly owes allegiance to the Golden Stool. The Asantes (or Ashanti) known as *Asantefoc* in Asante-Twi language are predominantly found in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, with Kumasi as their traditional capital. Though some *Asantefoc* are located outside the region due to work or whatever, Gedzi (2014) thinks that they form the greater percentage of the population in the Ashanti region. The Ashanti form part of the social-cultural group known as the Akan which journeyed from the Sahel region and the Savannas of West Africa (Gedzi, 2014). Out of 4,780,380 populace in Ashanti region, 3,449,359 are Akan (Gedzi, 2014). The Akan consists of the Guan, Akwamu, Mfantse, Denkyira, Brong, Akyem, Kwahu, Sefwi, Wassa, Assin, Akuapem and Asante (Dophyne, 1988). With numerous linguistic divisions in Ghana, Akan is spoken in nine out of the sixteen regions in Ghana namely, Ashanti, Eastern, Brong Ahafo, Ahafo, Bono East, Ahafo, Oti, Western, and Central Regions (Agyekum, 2006; Ekem, 2009; Asamoah, 2020c). The Akan language include Asante-Twi, Akuapem-Twi, Agona, Akyem, Mfantse, Kwahu, Wasa, Assin, Denkyira, Buem and Brong. These dialects are mutually comprehensible, for a considerable amount of vocabulary are found in them (Agyekum, 2006). The Anyi (Aowin), Sefwi, Nzema, Ahanta, Efutu/Awutu, and Anum-Kyerepong-Larteh people also speak Akan in addition to their mother-tongue (Ekem, 2009).

After migrating from the north, the Asantes wandered for some time till they finally settled at Adanse, Bekwai, Asantemanso, Kokofu, Juaben, Mampong, Nsuta, Kumawu, Offinso, Nkoranza and Kumasi (Gedzi, 2014), till their present settlements in the whole of Ashanti region, and beyond.

According to the 2010 population census, the Ashanti (Asante) reading community is made up of 2,823,430 literates from 11 years and above; of which 365,180 people read Ghanaian language [Asante-Twi], 1,968,753 for both English and Ghanaian language, and 30,575 for English, French and Ghanaian language (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Thus, more than two million and three hundred thousand in Ashanti region are able to read (and write) in their mother-tongue (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012).

## 6. The Heart of the Asante Culture

Hiebert et al (1976) postulate that the heart of a culture is the shared beliefs, feelings, and values of a community of people. The Asante culture has a number of beliefs, feelings, and values but this article is limited to few.

### 6.1 Cognitive Dimension of Asante Culture

The Asantes believe in the existence of *Onyankopcn* (the Supreme Being) as the creator of the world and head of the spirit forces (Onyinah, 2012). As a remote and transcendent being, all the other spirits derive their source and power from *Onyankopcn* (Onyinah, 2012). Included in his many attributes among the Asantes of the Akan, for example, are: *Cdomankoma* (creator, the all grace giver, or he who alone is full of abundance), *Tweduampcn* (One leans on him with complete safety), *Bcrebcre* (Architect of being, Maker of all things), *Ahyeaseε ne Jwieceε* (the beginning and the end) (Asamoah, 2020b), etc.

The Akan believe in *bayie* (witchcraft) which according to Onyinah (2012) is “*the belief that some people possess supernatural powers, which may be used for either good or evil*”. Thus, the idea of some supernatural power possessed by some people often used for evil, but it can also be used for good purposes. It must be noted that the adverse outcome from the activities of *bayie* is mostly given attention in the Akan community. This corroborates Debrunner’s definition for the Akan concept of *bayie*, which is “*the idea of some supernatural power of which man can also be possessed, and which is used exclusively for evil and antisocial purposes*” (Debrunner, 1961). McCaskie (1981) observes that the concept of *bayie* (witchcraft) is deeply in the socio-historical psyche of the Asante. This is affirmed by Onyinah (2012) who posits that among the Akan *bayie* is mirrored in all aspects of society, including music, films and day to day activities. In addition to the sources of evil among the Akan are from the works of evil spirits, witches, sorcerers or evil eye, broken taboos, oaths or even the deity or ancestors (Onyinah, 2012).

In describing how prayerful Africans (including Akan) are, E. Bolaji Idowu tells that prayers are said by them at all times and in any place (Idowu, 1962). He observes that Africans often stop on their way to offer brief prayers. They also say their prayers in intimate ways to their divinity, whom they believe to be ever present, as they walk along the road or as they are engaged in their work (Idowu, 1962). They do so for bumper harvest, fruit of the womb, preventing the occurrence of catastrophic events, for protection against evil, and the destruction of the works of evil ones, which include the activities of *bayie* and other spiritual forces.

### 6.2 Affective Dimension of Asante Culture

It is known among the Asante (and Akan in general) that a female lady or woman is considered to be courteous when they do not expose their breast, and other sensitive parts of their bodies in their dresses. They are to cover themselves; hence the word *akatasia* which among the Asantes is used to refer to young ladies. Etymologically, *akatasia* comes from *a-kata* (cover) and *sie* (hide or keep); meaning covering oneself with descent dresses to keep themselves from bad practices till marriage. To the Akans, beauty does not mean how a woman dresses, but how they respectfully and responsibly relate with others—both the old and young. The staple food of the Asante is *fufu* (the pounding of cooked plantain and cassava in mortar). When they are dressed in red and or black clothes—*ayitoma* (which is a cloth for observing funerals which could be red or black depending

on the relationship with the deceased)—it gives an announcement of the passing on of a relation. They will share tears to register their pains to the departed soul. However, in moments of joy such as naming ceremony and marriage, they show signs of happiness.

The *Sikadwa* (Golden Stool) is the most important and greatest stool among the Asantes, for it enshrines the soul of *Asanteman* (Asante Kingdom) (Opuni-Frimpong, 2012). Every chief in the kingdom pays homage to the leader of the kingdom known as the *Asantehene* (Asante king) (Gedzi, 2014). The *Asantehene* is the head of the Asante Kingdom and wields power over all his subjects. He is the final arbitrator of conflicts in the Ashanti kingdom. According to Amankwah (2020), the Asante king does not weep when in public, though he may shed some tears in extreme cases. Even with that, not to the extent that the crowd will realise that he is sharing tears. This was realised during the funeral of the demise of Nana Afia Kobi Serwaah, the queen mother of the Asante kingdom who was the mother of the Otumfuor Osei Tutu II (current occupant of the Asante kingdom).

### 6.3 Evaluative Dimension of Asante Culture

The Asantes (part of the Akans) cherish family systems, for they see themselves as one. They always ensure support is given to their family members at all times. In the Akan family system, members of a family show honour and respect to their fathers and mothers. Aside honouring their biological parents, the Akan honour anyone who is a father and mother irrespective of whether the individual is known or not. To the Akans, family is a descendant from a common ancestor, and not parents and their biological children, but from the nuclear and extended family to other families they may not belong. The Akan family relations extend to comprise a large number of relatives, who are connected by blood bond and trace their descent to a common ancestry (Gyekye, 1996).

## 7. Role of Culture in Bible Interpretation in The Asante-Twi Bible Reading Community

As said earlier, good Bible interpretation has to meet the cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimension of the people; taking into consideration the opinion and concerns of the readers or reading community to the text, for “*a text means nothing until someone means something by it*” (Tate, 2008). Because the Asante-Twi reading community is the beneficiary of Bible interpretation, McKnight (1985) posits that there must be always mutual interaction between the text and present readers so they can bring out the meaning of the text.

### 7.1 Cognitive Dimension

The Asante-Twi Bible (2012) interprets the Greek text *to. a;lfa kai. to. ŵ* (*to alpha kai to omega*) in Revelation 1:8 as “*Alfa ne Omega no*”. This interpretation does not bring out the meaning of the text to the Asante reading community. In the cultural setting of the Asante, “*Alfa ne Omega no*” is not part of their shared beliefs, for God is known as



*Onyankopcn* (the Supreme Being), *Cdomankoma* (creator, the all grace giver, or he who alone is full of abundance), *Tweduampcn* (One leans on him with complete safety), *Bcrebcre* (Architect of being, Maker of all things), and *Ahyeaseε ne Jwieceε no* (the beginning and the end). Words such as “*Ahyeaseε ne Jwieceε no*” which is easily understood by the Asantes and portrays the intent of the original author is argued as the right interpretation in the Asante-Twi language, for it meets their worldview and culture (Asamoah, 2020a). In his article, “Understanding and Interpretation of Revelation 1:8 by some Asante-Twi Speaking Scholars,” Asamoah (2020a) argues for the interpretation of *to. a;lfa kai. to. ŵ* (*to alpha kai to omega*) as *Ahyeaseε ne Jwieceε no* (the beginning and the end) instead of *Alfa ne Omega no* (the Alpha and Omega) in the Asante-Twi Bible.

Another interpretation that meets the shared beliefs of the Asante is the interpretation of Ephesians 6:12” *ōti ouvk e;stin h`mi/n h` pa,lh pro.j ai-ma kai. sa,rka avlla. pro.j ta.j avrca,j( pro.j ta.j evxousi,aj( pro.j tou.j kosmokra,toraj tou/ sko,touj tou,tou( pro.j ta. pneumatika. th/j ponhri,aj evn toi/j evpourani,oij* (*hoti ouk estin hēmin ē palē pros haima kai sarka alla pros tas archas, pros tas exousia, pros tous kosmokratoras tou skotous toutou, pros ta pneumatika tēs ponērias en tois epouraniois*) which is literally (or directly) translated by Young (1863) as “*because we have not the wrestling with blood and flesh, but with the principalities, with the authorities, with the world-rulers of the darkness of this age, with the spiritual things of the evil in the heavenly places*”. This is interpreted in Asante-Twi language as *Jfiri sε enyε yene mogya ne honam na anya, na mmom yene mpaninnie ne tumidie ne wiase yi sum mu atumfoc ne ahonhommcne a εwc soro hcnom* (Because we struggle not against blood and flesh, but against principalities and authorities and the forces of darkness in this world and evil spirit that are above). Since the Asantes have belief in the activities of *bayie*, evil forces, etc. as the cause of evil, the interpretation meets their sociological context (Hiebert, 2009). It enables them to pray more by destroying their works.

## 7.2 Affective Dimension

In the Bible the Jews often put on sackcloth, which is a very coarse stuff, often of hair when in great calamities, in penitence, and in trouble. This gives a picture of a calamity that has befallen a person, and describes the pain and sorrow one goes through. This is not the case for the Asantes, for they put on *ayitoma* (which is a cloth for observing funerals which could be red or black depending on the relationship with the deceased) to register their sorrow and pain, not sackcloth, which may have its own significance. Carrying sackcloth (literally translated as *bctc ntoma* [cloth made from sack]) into the culture of the Asante people would not make meaning to them; hence, interpreting it as *ayitoma* (which is a cloth for observing funerals which could be red or black depending on the relationship with the deceased) to suit their culture. The reprinted versions of the Asante-Twi Twerε Kronkron (Sacred Writings) (2012) has Genesis 37:34; 2 Samuel 3:1; Matthew 11:22, etc. *ayitoma*. This enables the Asante-Twi reading community to express their feelings in the light of reading God’s word.

Another text that meets the Asante-Twi reading community is John 11:35, *evda, krusen o` Vlhsou/j* (*Edakrysen ho Iēsous*); meaning “Jesus wept.” It must be said that *dakruw*

could mean “cry” or “weep” but the latter fits into the context and happens to be the most accepted one for most Bible interpreters and translators. However, Wiersbe (2007) believes that Jesus’ weeping was a silent one, and not the loud lamentation of the mourners. But irrespective of how Jesus shared tears—be it loud or silent—people around saw the king of the Jews (in John 18:36) weeping, for he made a deep inarticulate sound conveying pain and despair (John 11:36, 38). However, in the Asante-Twi Bible, the text was interpreted as *Yesu sui* (Jesus cried) to meet the Asante culture. Since the Asante king does not weep and groan in public, the interpreters chose “cry” for Jesus instead of “*adwo twa*” (lit. weep). This reflects their feelings of sorrow for someone who is identified as a king. This does not negate the fact that Jesus shed tears, he did.

### 7.3 Evaluative Dimension

The biblical text *goneu/sin u`mw/n* (*goneusin humon*) in Ephesians 6:1 which is literally interpreted as “your parents” means your “own biological or legal parents” in the original context (Zerwick & Grosvenor, 1996). Hence, children are to be obedient to their parents who gave birth to them or acquired them by legal means such as adoption. However, this is not the case with the Asantes (Akans in general). Family system among the Akans is a descendant from a common ancestor, and not the make-up of only the parents and their biological children; hence, obedience to parents extends beyond one’s biological parents to include anyone who happens to be a father and mother irrespective of whether the individual is known or not. This is the context interpreters (and translators) have dealt with the text in the Asante-Twi Bible, for according to Tate (2008), “*a text means nothing until someone means something by it.*” The text is rendered in the Asante-Twi language as “*Mma, montie mo awofoc asem Awurade mu; na yei na etene*” (Asante-Twi Twerε Kronkron 2012) (Children, be obedient to **your parents** in the Lord; that is what uprightness demands) (Emphasis, added). This interpretation, according to Tate, enables the text to take into consideration the readers or the reading community (Tate, 2008). This approach has allowed the Asante-Twi reading community to bring their own opinion and concerns such as their experiences and interests [thus, their culture] to the text (Tate, 2008). It helps the Asantes to generate meaning of the text, for the text engages the reader who could be the interpreter, as the reader engages the text. The mutual interaction between the text and the Asantes has brought out meaning of the text to the Asante-Twi reading community, and not the author (McKnight, 1985).

### 8. Recommendation

From the key role culture plays, biblical interpretation is appropriately done when the dimensions of culture—cognitive, affective, and evaluative—are met, for when a person receives the Bible interpreted according to their culture, they are able to understand God’s word in their environment, making every component of their being become engaged. Hence, Bible interpreters (and or translators) in their line of duties should consider interpreting the Judeo-Christian scripture to meet the cognitive, affective, and

evaluative dimension of the host culture such as the Asante-Twi reading community to help them to theologise aright.

## 9. Conclusion

Biblical interpretation (or translation) is not merely an esoteric exercise performed in a vacuum; it needs careful analysis of the biblical texts in the light of the culture of the indigenous people (in this case the Asante-Twi reading community). This is because the culture shows their beliefs, values, and customs and brings them together as one. It also keeps them together over a period of time, and helps them get a sense of belongingness, security, identity and dignity. Bible interpreters before initiating an interpretation must contextualise the gospel or biblical text in the culture of the people for them to understand God's message properly, and not deviating from the original Greek text. The reason being that *"real life issues are involved and God's mission to lost humanity is involved when Christians interpret the Bible"* (Doss, 2016).

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## Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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