

Planting Seeds During a Time of Death – an Ecofeminist-inspired Contextual Bible Study on 1 Corinthians 15:37-44

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ABSTRACT

This article was written as the research outcome of a Contextual Bible Study (CBS) on 1 Corinthians 15:37-44 with a group of homeless women and men in Tshwane (Pretoria, South Africa) in the aftermath of xenophobic violence and gender-based violence during July to August 2019. The researcher asked herself, ‘Could a Bible Study help the homeless community make sense of these events in any way?’ Her memories of her friend Edward Diba’s garden, and the exchange of seeds among women from southern African countries inspired her to choose the text. The enquiry ‘Show me how resurrection works’ and the seed theme was central to the current research. The CBS took place in a democratic forum; the participants formed with the researcher. Their insights and experiences were trusted to be central to the deliberations of the CBS. The participants recalled their childhood experiences of food gardening and the feelings of joy and achievement it brought. They could relate these to the possibility that planting seeds in rich soil and the sprouting of seedlings might bring about the regeneration of life. These reflections were discussed within the framework of resurrection in 1 Cor 15, leading to reflections on the hope of resurrection in life and after death for themselves as human beings. In the next phase the participants planted heritage beans, thereby reflecting experientially on the possibility of resurrection and regeneration in ecology. In sum, this approach demonstrates the possibility of a regenerative approach to agroecology as one solution to the crises of our times. In this manner the researcher applied an ecofeminist approach to the reading of 1 Cor 15:37-44 as an underlying research methodology.

Dedication to Edward Diba

This article is dedicated to my friend Edward Diba who died under suspicious circumstances on the 15th of March 2019. Early in the morning of that fateful day, Edward got a lift from Pretoria to Beitbridge, the border between South Africa and Zimbabwe. We suspect that Edward was drugged by the people who gave him the lift and left him next to the N1 just south of Bela-Bela. Late that afternoon, he