



“Interpretation” in *RIBLA*: A Multifaceted Meaning

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Abstract: This article analyses the evolution and meaning of “Interpretation” in the journal *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana* (*RIBLA* [Latin American Journal of Biblical Interpretation]) from its inception in 1988 up to 2023, with a focus on the period 2012–2023. Launched in Costa Rica in 1988, *RIBLA* reflects the faith experiences and struggles of Latin American communities and churches from the popular Reading of the Bible in Latin America and the hermeneutics of liberation. In its early days, *RIBLA* focused on biblical hermeneutics as the interpretation of the text in its historic context in relation to the life of the Ecclesial Base Communities (BECs) of the continent. In the years 1988–2011, it emphasised a liberationist interpretation of the Bible, with a focus on Indigenous communities. The dialogue between Revelation in indigenous religions and Revelation in traditional religions is important, as is the figure of Paul in the theology of liberation. Between 2012 and 2023, *RIBLA* restates the importance of biblical narratives in collaborative interpretations. In short, “interpretation” in *RIBLA* is seen as fundamental to confront the challenges of Latin America and the world. With a constant commitment to the Word of God, contextualised liberation and a dialogue between hermeneutics and hermeneutics of liberation, the journal offers an “unfinished” interpretation that is “open” to new considerations, as a beacon of critical reflection in the midst of historic crises.

Keywords: interpretation, *RIBLA*, hermeneutics, Ecclesial Base Communities (BECs), Latin America, Bible, emergent communities, diverse hermeneutical perspectives

This article explores the meaning of “Interpretation” in the journal *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana*¹ (*RIBLA* 1988–2023 [Latin American Journal of Biblical Interpretation]), specifically in the period between 2012 and 2023. The concept of ‘interpretation’ will be understood under the specificity of the context of Latin American biblical interpretation constituted in *RIBLA*, drawing also on the theoretical developments of Hans-Georg Gadamer (2003) and Paul Ricoeur (1995). Launched in the first semester of 1988 in San José, Costa Rica, the journal positions itself in the faith experiences and struggles of Latin American communities and churches. The inaugural topic was “Lectura Popular de la biblia en América Latina. Una Hermenéutica de la liberación” (Popular Reading of the Bible in Latin America: A hermeneutics of liberation) (Richard et al. 1988) and examines the nature of the journal and the choice of the name, *RIBLA*, to encapsulate the key

¹ The Journal is published in Spanish and Portuguese, three times a year. It can be consulted at: <https://www.centrobiblicoquito.org/ribla/>.

words: Journal, Interpretation, Bible and Latin America. It is necessary to mention that this article emphasises the time period from 2012 to 2023, and stops, during this period, at some volumes that invite a direct reflection on Latin American biblical interpretation.

RIBLA's first issue includes an editorial by Pablo Richard (1988) who highlights Biblical hermeneutics as the central argument, that is, the interpretation of biblical text in its historical context and to the service of the Word of God, alive and active today in the Ecclesial Base Communities (BECs) of the continent.

During the 1970s and 1980s, biblical work in Latin America focused on hermeneutics as a liberating and original exercise. Communities interpret the Bible from their position as a people, mostly impoverished and humble, but faithful to historic-critical methods and biblical exegesis. For *RIBLA*, biblical hermeneutics in the region is inseparable from its source: the poor communities.

According to Milton Schwantes (1988, 5–6), in this context the Bible is reclaimed for life by the modest and humble people of the slums and impoverished countryside of Latin America. The reading of the Bible acquires a specific direction and is shared with other groups and contexts involved in similar struggles, with a common language that is accessible to all.

1. “Interpretation” in the Early Days of *RIBLA*

The editorial in *RIBLA* 1 focuses the argument on Biblical Hermeneutics,² understood as the interpretation of biblical text based on the Reading of the Word of God by BECs, in its diverse and complex historical context (Gadamer 2003; Ricoeur 1995). This method attempts to find in the Bible the life and strength needed to advance the existential project (Richard 1988, 7). The introduction and the editorial page establish a synonymous relationship between biblical interpretation and hermeneutics.

Biblical interpretation has been increasingly centred on God's poor and devout people by scholars and practitioners. They have discovered people's capacity to listen to the Word and to the Teacher of the Word, the Spirit of Jesus who guides us to all the Truth (John 16:13). The power of the Spirit and the accumulated knowledge of biblical scholars unite in the liberating and productive work in the service of

² Biblical Hermeneutics focuses on the study of principles, methods, and theories aimed at interpreting the sacred texts of the Bible. This field encompasses both exegesis, which involves a critical and philological analysis of the text to propose a primary meaning in its historical, cultural, and literary context, and hermeneutics, which is responsible for translating those meanings into contemporary contexts, allowing for a profound understanding of the biblical message in the present. Biblical hermeneutics, therefore, seeks not only to unravel the literal sense of the text but also to analyze its theological, ethical, and existential dimensions, promoting a continuous dialogue between the ancient text and modern human experience.

the Word. Thus, the hermeneutics of liberation was born. This issue offers, in a concise and critical way, some advances in the field of Hermeneutics (Richard 1988, 7).

RIBLA's purpose is to capture the *popular reading of the Bible*, that is, Bible readings by individuals and communities of believers. Biblical Hermeneutics from different human conditions generates varied and diverse "hermeneutics." This dynamic inspires the community through the Word of God to face their daily tasks, forge learning pathways born from assemblies and generates theological-biblical dialogue in Latin America and with brothers and sisters from other continents.

2. "Interpretation" in *RIBLA* 1988–2011

RIBLA highlights the importance of a liberationist interpretation of the Bible. In issue 11, Milton Schwantes and Pablo Richard focus on the reading and interpretation of the Bible by Abya Yala (indigenous name for Latin America), emphasizing the connection between faith, culture and social struggles. Popular reading of the Bible becomes a hermeneutics of liberation, as it enables the Indigenous people to discern their religious traditions and to better understand the sacred texts, and expands the horizons of their religion and culture (Schwantes and Richard 1992, 6).

The fruitful dialogue between God's Revelation in indigenous religions and the Revelation in biblical traditions supports these hermeneutical experiences. Moreover, *RIBLA* emphasises the evangelical practices of the Indigenous people as a referent not only for these communities, but also for believers in Latin America and the Caribbean. It addresses the interpretation of Paul in the last decade of the 20th century, acknowledging its limited use of liberation theology and in the early days of *RIBLA*. The interest in Paul as creator of a counter-hegemonic symbolism in the midst of oppression reflects a new reading of the apocalyptic, as escapist literature and as justified protest and certain hope (Míguez 1995, 5–6).

The study of the Pentateuch in *RIBLA* 23 encourages dialogue with other interpretations of the book and is situated in the praxis of Latin American communities. Liberation theology posits *the Exodus* as a fundamental hermeneutics for reading the Bible; but it is not only limited to what it was but also to the everyday implications for believers (Schwantes 1988, 7).

3. Diverse Hermeneutical Perspectives

Issue 28 of *RIBLA* brings together the academic work of the Third Continental Meeting of Biblical Animation (Medellín, 1995) and focuses on the hermeneutics of

the New Testament, specifically in the Letter to Philemon. The assembly approached the study from diverse hermeneutical perspectives such as feminist, rural, urban, black and indigenous (Reyes 1997, 5–7).

In a subsequent meeting of *RIBLA*'s biblical scholars in Lima in 1996, the decision to compile an issue with the hermeneutical contributions of the Continental meeting was restated. The hermeneutical development emerged from the biblical movement, using as a pretext Aníbal Cañaverl Orozco's study of *Letter to Philemon: A Response to the Longing for Freedom* (1997, 44–52).

According to Francisco Reyes Archila (1997, 5–7), *RIBLA* 28 captures the meaning of collaborative interpretations, and demonstrates a closer and more scholarly relationship between members of the biblical movement. The issue addresses the epistle to Philemon from a hermeneutics of “new subjects,” as a strategic text to challenge the universal exegetical tradition. The Latin American reading redefines the interpretation of Paul's epistles and offers new perspectives on the apostle, his theology and early Christianity (Reyes 1997, 7).

The text also confronts the necessary dialogue between exegesis and hermeneutics. Specific hermeneutics include the peasant, based on the meaning of *Oikos* (house) which centres on the rural house and its kitchen. Black hermeneutics emphasises Onesimus' social condition as a slave and underlines the historical experience of slavery and the need for freedom. Hermeneutics through women's eyes exalts both the emotional and body language of Apphia and other women in the letter, and reclaims the voice and dignity of the women in the New Testament. Indigenous hermeneutics analyses authority and relationships within the community from the symbolic world of ancestral cultures. Child-centred hermeneutics questions the presence of children in the families of Philemon, Apphia and other women as a central mediation for a believer's reading of the Word of God from childhood. In the framework of collaborative interpretation in *RIBLA* 28, hermeneutics and exegesis are essential in community Bible reading in Latin America. Both processes are interwoven in a constant, mutually enriching dialogue.

4. “Interpretation” in *RIBLA* 2012–2023

This period is central to this article because it is where *RIBLA* reaffirms the importance of biblical narratives in collaborative interpretations. Moreover, it does so especially by appealing to interpretation from a communal biblical perspective. For example, issue 73 (2016), dedicated to the Acts of the Apostles, broadens geographical limits, and addresses the expansion of communities. It invites believers to be witnesses to the Gospel in the complex circumstances of Latin America (Izidoro 2012, 5) and engages in dialogue with the popular religiosities of the continent.

It also examines mediterranean cultures of the first century A.D., and interpretation from the viewpoint of those excluded and impoverished (Izidoro and Noguiera 2016, 7–8). Further, it assesses early Christianity’s interpretation of the apocryphal texts, excluded by conservative clerical and theological prejudices, as they reveal popular spiritualities and practices. Their reading uncovers complex interrelations with everyday life within the imperial context of Rome which articulate poor people’s identity, develop strategies and strengthen memory in the face of adversity and show early Christianity on the social margins.

4.1. “Interpretation” of the Bible in Challenging Situations

RIBLA issue 74 (2017) addresses the conflicts and peace processes in Colombia. It examines the transition from war to a culture of peace, explores the relationship between the Bible and the context, and emphasises the role of religious communities in the peace process (Mena López and Moya 2017, 7–8).

In turn, *RIBLA* 75 explores slavery, oppression, and diverse manifestations of violence, against a backdrop of the Book of Judges, a case study little explored in Latin America (Arias Ardila and Andiñach 2017, 7). The sacrifice of the daughter of Jephthah, judge of Israel, is examined through a paradigmatic hermeneutics; there the young and new peoples are the first victims of the conflict and the “human sacrifices” constitute a recurrent theme that converses with an image of God, as seen in Judg 1:1–3, 6; 3:7–16, 31; 17:1–21, 25 (Arias Ardila 2017, 85–100).

Mercedes L. García Bachmann (2017, 101–18) adopts a paradigmatic hermeneutics when he goes beyond the “traditional” gender roles of women as a daughter, mother, or wife. Although many women as victims of violence are present, the accounts in Judges also introduce women who are brave, warriors, judges, and prophets. For Lucía Riba (2017, 119–36), the story of Levite’s concubine (Judg 19) requires an ethical and political compromise to come to terms with the biblical critique of violence and the androcentric perspective evident in many texts.

According to Zoila Cueto Villamán (2017, 137–50), in Judg 17–21, the structure of the literary passage, on the basis of the phrase ‘there was no king in Israel,’ leaves room to interpret the prominence of women. Despite enduring manipulation, abuse and even slaughter, women open the door to hope and carry out an important role in a kingless society.

In this context, the authors offer a new name for Paul of Tarsus’ Letter to the Galatians, no longer a letter of ‘justification through faith’ or a ‘letter of freedom in Christ’ but as the ‘Epistle of the Opening of Frontiers’ (Ferreira and Izidoro 2017, 7): “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:26–28).

For *RIBLA* 76, this anthem has deep connections with Latin America as it condemns discrimination based on social status, race, language, religion, political choice or gender (Ferreira and Izidoro 2017, 11).

4.2. “Interpretation” of the Bible from Emergent Communities

In *RIBLA* 77, young people critically and creatively convey their realities in the interpretation of biblical passages (Londoño and Torres Millán 2018, 7). This process takes up aspects of Latin American exegesis and biblical theology and addresses contemporary topics such as social pain, injustice, femicide, climate change and corruption.

RIBLA 80 analyses the capitalist economy and new idolism (Míguez 2019, 11–22) and introduces an ecological hermeneutics (Castillo 2019, 37–57; Lopes 2019, 59–74; Cañaveral Orozco 2019, 145–66). Categories of health, fullness of life and salvation are explored from an eco-theological approach, deconstructing patriarchal images of God. Further, the symbolic imagery of Jesus connects with certain categories: wealth/poverty; economy/ecology; violence/death; land/agriculture; exploitation/usury, all current situations in Latin America.

Issue 81, centred on Nehemiah, explores forced migration (Kaefer 2020, 9). Nehemiah supports the diasporic communities, renews convictions and maintains a joyous hope. José Ademar Kaefer highlights the prohibition of mixed marriages in Neh 13:23–29 as a reflection of the mentality of those returning from Babylon; a current ideology found today to legitimise divisions, prejudices, and violence in the region.

Jhon Fredy Mayor Tamayo (2020, 107–22) analyses the hermeneutics of Nehemiah 4 and 6, which shows the rupture between Jews and Samaritans. In contrast to the traditional version, the Samaritans are victims of the Jews who use Persian interests to reconstruct Jerusalem in detriment to the minorities.

Omar João da Silva (2020, 21–34) examines the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem in Neh 2:1–10 and 3:1–32 and highlights the difference between “wall” in the singular and “walls” in the plural. The former, as an ideological concept, restricts the Jewish community’s sense of belonging whilst the latter emphasises the physical building of the walls.

In response to the COVID context (2020–2021), *RIBLA* 82 suggests models of “good living” from the Bible with categories of imperial, colonisation, decolonisation, colonial and decolonial (Ventura Campusano and Dietrich 2020, 7–9). The Christian biblical-theological interpretation contributes to the struggle against imperialist, colonial and neoliberal systems, present today in Latin America and marked by colonial expansion.

Maria Cristiana Ventura Campusano and Luiz José Dietrich (2020, 8) describes colonialist imperialism and advocates for an antihegemonic reading of the Bible. Interpretation attempts to generate itineraries of decolonisation, a change of mentality,

in the style of Paulo Freire, who proposes overcoming the internal oppressor in the minds of the oppressed.

4.3. A Biblical “Interpretation” from a Critical Analysis of Reality

RIBLA 83 considers “Alternative Communities” and the popular reading of the Bible in Latin America (Mansilla 2021, 7–9). In the base communities, these pastoral practices, daily celebrations and believers’ reflections imply biblical reading and also a critical interpretation of reality. According to Sandra Nancy Mansilla, these alternative communities, situated on the margins and the peripheries, are made invisible and are overlooked, but from there biblical texts are rescued that envisage controversies over power, authority, status and representation in biblical structures and institutions and their written contexts (Mansilla 2021, 7).

This issue also recognises new voices on the continent for biblical interpretation from epistemological, cultural, and economic “otherness” (Villalobos Mendoza 2020). These communities speak of God, community, dignity, justice and diverse spiritualities to contrast the power of capitalism and patriarchal-colonial oppression.

From their liminal position, alternative communities make the border a habitable place. This liminal condition is a path between two fields, a transformative space open to new possibilities (Mignolo 2000; García Paredes 1997; Mansilla 2019a). At the same time, to live on the border implies protecting and threatening, coexisting between civilisation and brutality. Community interpretation emerges from these marginal circles, challenges academic and institutional comfort zones and generates a critical hermeneutics of reality (Mansilla 2021, 10).

4.4. Biblical “Interpretation” of the COVID-19 Pandemic

In the COVID-19 context, issue 84, *Pandemic and Bible*, critically examines the impact of the pandemic, human fragility, solidarity, and the need to see our neighbour as a brother or sister and not as a danger (Fernández and Kaefer 2021, 7–9). Furthermore, a Latin American biblical hermeneutics (LBL) is proposed that focuses on the mystique of giving one’s life for others and being solidary.

RIBLA 85 explores the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on vulnerable populations, questioning health systems that are focused on callous economic benefits. The pandemic triggered economic, political, and sociocultural crises and revealed stark realities such as human trafficking, issues also considered in the Bible (Madrigal Rajo and Lopes 2021, 7–8).

The coercion of individuals includes, among others, prostitution, slavery, sexual exploitation, forced services and labour. Rebeca Cabrera (2021, 26–40), supported by Gen 16 and 21, highlights the patriarchal right of men to withhold sexual access to women and children, proposing ethical dilemmas due to the threat to an individual’s

dignity. The contextual interpretation of the “womb for rent” goes beyond theological and legal reading to focus on ethics.

Larry José Madrigal Rajo (2021, 41–56), through Gen 37, stresses the hermeneutic production of gender in sibling violence and the commercialisation of a body that is different. According to Madrigal, a gendered hermeneutic deconstruction is possible of the male figure and the links of violence and power in the family.

The Song 8:8–10 is interpreted by Daylins Rufin Pardo (2021, 84–95) from a hermeneutics of liberation perspective, with linguistic and grammatical data. The Song of Songs, which, for Rabbi Akiba, was the most sacred book because it interprets the love between Yahweh and the house of Israel. Without dwelling on sexuality, women’s bodies and marriage, it opens up an important and symbolic mystique in the eloquent and poetic words of women, revealing a free personality and a connection with the primordial rights of Eve’s descendants.

Mercedes Lopes (2021, 119–30) unmask the desperate and degrading situation of the young exploited slave girl in Acts 16:16–20, where Paul removes her gift of divination. The young girl was tricked by her “owners,” her life and body were commodities and a concentration of others’ wealth.

4.5. A Hermeneutics from Childhood

RIBLA 86 addresses the harsh reality of childhood during the COVID-19 pandemic and uncovers additional pandemics within this health emergency (Montemayor López and Madrigal Rajo 2022, 7–9). The first article highlights the active presence of children as clear subjects of revelation in biblical narratives (Mayor Tamayo 2022, 17–32). Children are victims of violence and painful experiences, but they are also the protagonists of processes of change and transformation.

For Alejandro Cussianovich (2022, 44–58), the image of a child in the mother’s womb (Isa 7:10–17; 43:5; 44:3) confirms God’s revelation in life’s details, in the relationship between vulnerable and impoverished communities. Karen Castillo Mayagoitia (2022, 59–74) bases childhood rights on the exegesis of Matt 19:13–15, with a feminist focus that empowers women and children in the face of patriarchal criteria.

Elisa Medina Fuentes (2022, 98–116) uses the methodology of “three photographic views” to compare the Exodus and Matt 2:16–18 narratives and unveils the connection through the painful reality of a sacrificed childhood. Edesio Sánchez Cetina (2022, 131–47) explores “early youth” during the Second Temple and highlights the importance of the family in religious and educational instruction of yesterday and today.

From Isa 9:1–6, in the fragility of the child-king, Ventura and Schiavo (2022, 148–64) uncover the passage from control and power to a life of service. Mailé Vázquez Avila (2022, 178–96) conducts a systematic exegesis of 2 Kgs 5:1–14 from narratives written by children of their understanding of the biblical story.

RIBLA 87 considers it relevant in today’s Latin America to study Saint Paul’s letter to the Church in Rome. Pedro Robledo Ramírez (2022, 11–40) presents a rhetorical analysis of the letter drawing on literary symmetry and its role in the overall structure of the epistle. Pablo Manuel Ferrer (2022, 80–94) uncovers dichotomies in Rom 6–7, exploring tensions between greed/grace and law/grace in a neoliberal and virtuality/corporality context.

For Richter (2022, 111–31), the phrase ‘All Israel will be saved!’ in Romans 6–7 makes Jesus Christ the fulfilment of the law and the salvation of everyone through faith. César Moya (2022, 132–55) reinterprets Rom 13:1–7 in terms of obedience and insubordination and suggests the existence of a “revolutionary subordination” behind the Pauline text.

4.6. Interpretation of the Bible and the Deconstruction of Fundamentalism

RIBLA 88 addresses with concern the increase in literal readings of the Bible in Latin America, with attitudes of hate and discrimination in ecclesiastic and social circles (Mena López 2022, 7–8). This fundamentalism interprets the Bible as a text dictated by God which scorns people’s capacity to question and develop critical thought.

Sexist, racist, xenophobic, and homophobic readings circulate from the pulpits and on social media, challenging individual and collective rights in the name of religious freedom and prioritising legal norms over human rights (Mena López 2022, 7–8).

This issue proposes an interpretation of the Bible that promotes non-violence, gender equality, welcoming migrants, women, children, and sick people, respecting even those who do not share a Christian perspective. To counter fundamentalist positions, it suggests beginning the interpretation at the historical evolution of biblical texts, the authors’ cultural background and scientific and critical contributions (Pontificia Comisión Bíblica 1993, 25–26).

In order to counter literal and fundamentalist readings of the Bible, *RIBLA* 88 offers examples such as the deconstruction of punishment and the law in the first chapters of Genesis (Guerra Carrasco 2022, 35–48). Scholarly and critical debate between faith and culture dismantles *biblicism*³ and *bibliolatry*⁴ (P. Riba 2022, 49–61). Another example is based on a feminist exegesis to read the patriarchal reform of King

³ There are various definitions of “biblicism.” It is an expression of a fideistic tendency that makes the reading of the Sacred Scriptures or its exegesis the only point of reference for the truth. It identifies the Word of God only with the Sacred Scriptures and empties Tradition of any meaning. See *FR* 55.

⁴ According to the *Spanish Encyclopaedic Dictionary* (1980), “bibliolatry” is the worship of a sacred book, for example, the Jewish and Christian Bible. It is the adoration of a book, the idolatrous homage to a book or the deifying of a book. It is a form of idolatry that does not permit neither critical exegesis nor interpretation of the text.

Hezekiah of Judah (2 Kgs 18:1–8). Carolina Bezerra de Souza, uiz José Dietrich, and Clóvis Torquato Jr. (2022, 63–76) draw on *kyriarchy*⁵ to unveil women's hidden and silent religious experiences and the love for their feminine divinities in Jerusalem.

In the New Testament, John's letters reflect divisions in Christian communities but confront hate and enmity with "agape: inclusive love." (Mena López and Vergara 2022, 125–42) God's self-sacrificing love, in the face of intolerant and antagonistic stances, is an inclusive experience that does not discriminate against anyone.

4.7. Peasants and the Common Home in Biblical Interpretation

RIBLA 89 highlights the key work of Latin American peasants during the COVID-19 pandemic and how essential their work was in the global food crisis (Cañaveral, Vásquez and Da Silva 2023, 7–8).

Since 1997, Peasant Hermeneutics of the Bible has sought recognition and this was finally achieved in *RIBLA* 89 (2023, 8). This issue emphasises the diversity of peasant faces and reiterates the urgency to preserve nature in the face of climate change. Peasant biblical hermeneutics influences rural pastoral ministry, theology of the land and catechism of the peasant population (Cañaveral Orozco, 12–6). The methodology of this interpretation is described with seven criteria, centred on "*campesinidad*"⁶ (Martínez Cardozo 2023, 27–39).

Vázquez Avila (2023, 40–54) interprets Gen 2:28; Exod 1:10; Hos 6:6 and Qoh 9:7 from the interplay between the Bible and the peasant world. Esteban Arias Ardila (2023, 55–66) explains the serpent in Gen 3 as a symbol of repression of the peasants by the powerful.

Kaefter (2023, 67–79) conducts a peasant analysis of the narratives in Gen 37–50 and evidences the struggles of shepherds and villagers in a context of seasons, famine and violence. Sandro Gallazzi (2023, 93–109) discusses the theologies in Lev 25 and introduces the peasant voice which defends the land as a gift from God. Marcos Paulo Bailão (2023, 124–39) interprets Ps 133 from a peasant hermeneutics, as working together in the field is the basis of the community. Valmor Da Silva (2023, 157–76) explores the parables of Jesus and reveals peasant images and realities in his metaphors.

⁵ The term was coined in English by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in 1992, when her book *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* was published. It derives from the Greek *kyrios* (κύριος), meaning lord and master and from the Greek *archè* (ἀρχή), which can be translated as authority, control, sovereignty. *Kyriarchy* means "sovereignty", rule by a sovereign. According to the author, *kyriarchy* is not so much a hierarchical system that emphasises domination, but a complex pyramidal system because it comprises the creation of a slave class, race, gender or people. The position of oppression and dependency is reinforced with education, socialisation and severe violence, and the rationalisation of masculine ideology.

⁶ *Campesinidad* is a category constructed in the grassroots work of peasant communities. There is no corresponding word in English for this term (Martínez Cardozo 2023, 28).

4.8. Job's Interpretation of Contemporary Crises

Under the title *Job: A Current and Situated Reading*, RIBLA 90 reflects Latin American biblical work; the Book of Job goes beyond addressing pain in a postexilic Jewish context. The experience of suffering resonates in current Latin American reality and gives a voice to the oppressed and those in need of justice (Cardoso and Fonseca Ariza 2023, 7).

The focus of the Book of Job becomes crucial in the exegesis, posing questions about divine action in times of crisis and the underlying theologies. In the Latin American context, the Book of Job interweaves social problems, theoretical frameworks, methodologies and offers ethical proposals from a believer's reading.

Based on traits of the Jewish literary community, Santa González (2023, 33–40) emphasises the tradition of *Targumim*. The literary reading of Job provides elements to interpret pain and suffering from a theological perspective. Jovanir Lage (2023, 41–50) highlights the religious and political outcry against forms of ideological repression, questioning the theology of retribution that blames poor people for their inhumane situation. Carmaña Navia Velasco (2023, 51–58) introduces four images of God, in particular that of God as a mystery, based on the experiences of women in Cali, Colombia.

A feminist reading of Job 2:9–10; 28 (Cabrera Piñango 2023, 59–70), achieves an intertextual interpretation of the "monsters of chaos" (Monteiro de Matos 2023, 71–84) and an exegetic reading of Job 38:1–42:6, which explores Yahveh's link with creation in Hebrew terms (Favaretto 2023, 85–100).

According to Nancy Cardoso (2023, 101–18), Paulo Freire's pedagogy is relevant in the interpretation of the Book of Job, with the categories *limit-situation* and *limit-act*. To close, this issue brings a documented testimony of a pastoral group reading of the Book of Job during the COVID-19 period (Rodrigues Da Silva 2023, 134–45).

4.9. Interpretation of Resistance and Violence Today

RIBLA 91 analyses violence in the Bible from structural, symbolic, gendered and religious perspectives and explores new approaches to resistance and resilience in the midst of violent contexts exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of non-violent processes, such as community participation, popular education and academic research confronts the realm of death and devastation (Gareca, Madrigal Rajo, and Starr 2023, 9–10).

Violence emerges in certain biblical texts and even though the texts reflect the cruelty of their context, they do not justify it. The authors criticise violence and propose alternatives. They highlight violence as the result of unjust structures (Rodrigues de Moraes and Dietrich 2023, 17–35), whilst Gareca, Madrigal, and Starr (2023, 51–64) examines biblical narratives that glorify masculine characters despite

having committed acts of violence. The parable of the compassionate Samaritan demonstrates that gender-based violence can be resisted (Rosal 2023, 91–109).

On the other hand, Paul of Tarsus criticises religious violence and defends fraternal love as the foundation of Christian faith (Sales de Lima 2023, 149–62). The editors of this issue emphasise the relevance of harsh regional and global realities, highlighting the importance of returning to life-giving sources, even in the midst of the destructive violence in the Gaza Strip and Israeli civil society (Gareca, Madrigal Rajo, and Starr 2023, 16).

Conclusion

“Interpretation” in *RIBLA* (1988–2023) is fundamental for its multifaceted evolution in response to the challenges of Latin America and the world. The commitment to the Word of God, contextualised liberation and the dialogue between hermeneutics and hermeneutics of liberation are its reason for being. An essential purpose of *Abya Yala* is the fruitful dialogue between indigenous religions and biblical traditions. Inspired by the figure of Paul, creator of a counter-hegemonic symbolism, *RIBLA* promotes an interpretation “unfinished” and “open” to new considerations, because it will always be formative for the faith of communities, in particular for the impoverished and vulnerable ones, to recognise its new expression in Latin America. In the midst of historic crises, *RIBLA* offers the continent a biblical hermeneutics as a beacon of light and assertive, critical reflection.

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